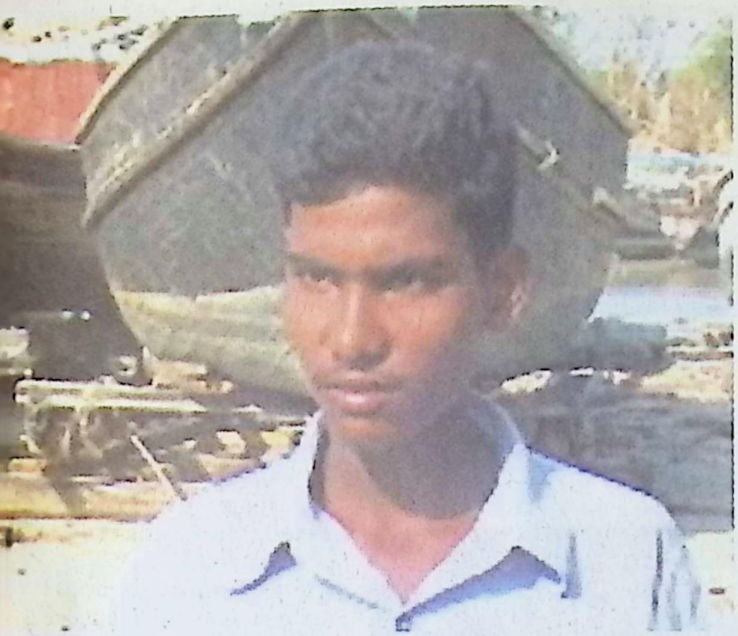
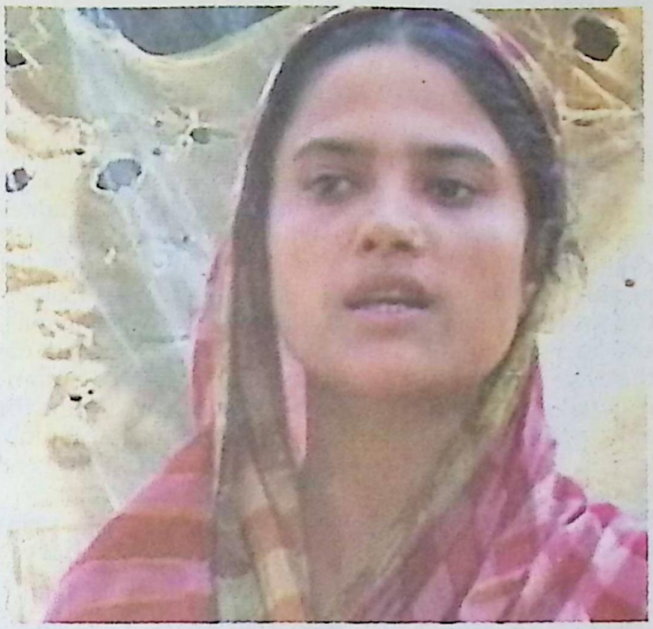


Mohommmad Shahidul, Patharghata, Borguna

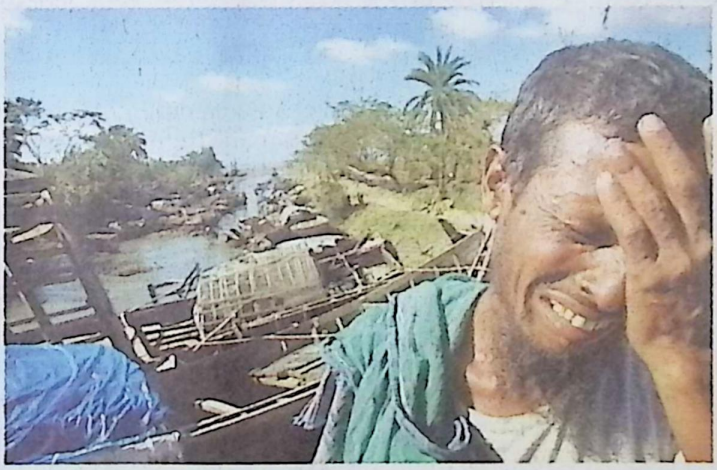


Aklima, Golachipa, Patuakhali

When the water subsided, the husband, who made it to the embankment swimming with the son, came crying and shouting, looking for his wife and daughter. When Aklima saw the rescuers looking around for the survivors, she shouted as loud as she could from the tree top (which was weak from the struggle with the waves) crying for help, pleading to save her daughter, but they would not hear her due to the deafening sound of the ferocious wind storm. After hours they were rescued; and the next day at the Upazila health complex 130 thorns were taken out of her body.

Aklima, Golachipa, Patuakhali

Aklima said, she felt restless all the time: "I don't know where to go, what to do, to get back my peace of mind." When she was speaking she looked like a woman in a trance, as if under a spell, as if she was compelled to speak about that horrific night of her life. Aklima seemed like she was under a compulsion to divulge her guilt of letting go of her baby to save her own life! "When I am left alone, all those memories of pain and horror haunt me." When I finally had to stop Aklima talking, in order to take another woman's interview, Aklima sat in one corner speechless, with empty eyes! Jannatul doesn't talk much and clings on to her mother all the time. The son has lost his appetite and doesn't talk much.



Badol Howladar of Garjanbunia Sadar Upazila of Borguna District was trying to put up a shanty on his washed away homestead. He was constantly talking to himself. I went near and tried to listen to him. He was narrating a similar horror story of that frightful night. He had married off his daughter Shahinoor a few months back. The wave had washed her away with her all her in-laws. Many of her in laws died. She is alive and was found at the bottom of the bridge, half naked, trembling with fear. She is now admitted in the Upazila health complex. The medicines aren't doing her any good. Her condition is deteriorating. Badol, the distressed father was bemoaning his daughter's plight.

Shahidul, Aklima, Jannatul, Shahinoor are the faces of the innumerable traumatised people in the coastal Districts of Bangladesh, ravaged in that fateful night by Sidr, the super cyclone.

According to the World Health Organistaion (WHO) 'health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity', while 'mental health is the balance between all aspects of life-social, physical, spiritual and emotional. It impacts on how we manage our surroundings and make choices in our lives-clearly it is an integral part of our overall health'.