**Compact Township Foundation**

**Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Domar, Nilphamari Visit Report

Visiting Team Members:

1. Professor Salim Rashid, President, CT Foundation
2. Dr Abul Hossain, Gen. Secy., CT Foundation
3. Ekram Hossain, Core Group Member, CT Foundation

Purpose of the visit:

1. To search for land to build a compact township.
2. To find land and land owner/s enthusiastic for considering cooperative agriculture with eventual plans which include a Compact Township suitable for tourists.

Facilitated by:

1. Mr Abu Hena Mustafa Kamal, also land owner
2. Mr ABM Shafiqul Bari (Nasim), Agriculturist

Date visited: 15 – 16 November, 2019

Area visited: Village/Mouja: Sheter Kamat, UP: Bhogdaburi, UPZ: Domar, District: Nilphamari.

The Area is very close to Border Out post (BOP) market in Bangladesh adjacent to Haldibari Railway station of India, and not very far from the old Chilahati railway station, which is newly renovated. Train services with Khulna, Rajshahi and Dhaka have increased and train line with India is under construction.

**The meeting with the local land owners attended by:**

1. Abu Hena Mostafa Kamal Prodhan 01797425570
2. ABM Shafiqul Bari Nasim 01767453445
3. Iftekharul Haque 01817049707
4. Shariar Karim Prodhan 01714254315
5. Md. Monjurul Haque Prodhan (Nasim) 01716676116

**Dr Abul Hossain and Ekram Hossain** gave a short introduction about the formation of the organization and its goals and objectives.

**Professor Salim Rashid** explained how the existing land use pattern has squeezed arable land in the last few decades through maps. Why do people go to the capital leaving their own locality? Can some urban facilities not be provided in rural areas? Without cooperative efforts economic growth will produce increasing inequality.

Prof Rashid said: there are several things we need to know before planning any long term project for this area. These are:

1. Future plans of LGED, RHD and other GoB agencies for upgradation of the area, including Saidpur Air Port, rail and road connection with neighbouring Indian state West Bengal through Chilahati and Haldibari.
2. Detailed plan of the government “Amar Gram – Amar Shahar” programme.
3. Government plans for Chilahati, Bhogdaburi BOP bazaar.
4. Need to talk with the distinguished personalities of the locality, like: politicians, bureaucrats, intellectuals, cultural personalities, business people and others.
5. The potential cooperative participants need to talk to their children about their mind-set--- what do they see as their own future.

Prof Salim Rashid also made three points on why people avoid long-term plans. According to him, these are:

1. People do not have farsightedness. They do not look far out.
2. People are impatient. They do not like to wait years to see the result.
3. People do not have the financial ability to wait for distant gains, however great.

He says:

1. First we need to draw up a schedule with the size of the land and the land owner/s name.
2. We need to know the probable production from the land and the market, both domestic and foreign.

In preparing a document that binds the cooperative, Prof Rashid also proposed 4 heads:

1. Entry,
2. Control,
3. Management, and
4. Exit

The local land owners opined their initial thoughts of taking up projects on parjatan, agriculture, i.e. rice and fruit production and small, initial compact township. And it can be a multi-purpose cooperative.

The visiting team members, along with the land owners visited the proposed land areas in the village.

**Decision:**

1. A detailed plan will be prepared by both Mr Kamal and Mr Nasim by December next, on potential of agriculture.
2. A constitution for the cooperative will also be prepared by Mr Kamal and Mr Nasim.

Report prepared by:

Ekram Hossain

17 November 2019