A rethinking of concepts based on field studies

Climate environmental hazards and migration in Bangladesh: beyond binaries

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Beyond binaries

- Sudden and slow onset disasters
- Forced and voluntary migration
- Trapped people vs those who wish to stay
- Highlands and lowlands
- Permanent and temporary stay

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Basis

- Adaptation policy options and interventions for climate change induced displaced people of Bangladesh – CDKN (Sussex Centre for Migration Research, Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Centre, University of Dhaka). 2012 - 2014
- Humanitarian policy and practice in a changing climate – Research Council of Norway (Institute of Development Studies, UK, International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCAD, Dhaka) 2014-2016
- Follow up research on climate finance and weather forecasting

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Sudden and slow onset disasters

- Polder 32 : Impacts of Cyclone Sidr 2009 and Aila 2011 continued for over three years – adding to salinity, making land infertile.
- Gabura: Cyclone Aila continued for over three years, driving large-scale migration for work

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Khulna
Mongla
Dacope
Koyra
Shyamnagar
Elevation - EGM96 (m)
15
14
12
10
8.0
6.0
4.0
2.5
1.5
50 km
Legend
Sundarbans
Polder 32
SW poldered region
SE poldered region
tide gauge location
other cyclone-induced embankment failures

Migration across time and space

- Men and women migrate – to villages, towns, and cities.
- Cross-border migration – informal networks, political issue, still lack of data,
- Day labour, seasonal, medium-term, long-term migration, settling.
- Displacement – embankments, mosques, family, for a few days to months…

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Spectrum – voluntary to forced

- Sudden disasters leading to slow onset disasters - eg. Cyclonic storm surge leading to salinity, water logging
- Livelihoods affected for years,
- Forced to move on from cross-border destinations
- Habitats made unsafe, unhygienic, unliveable

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Trapped populations

- People unable to move as they have no assets; can’t afford to migrate
- People unwilling to move due to place attachment, perceived risks associated with migration
- Policy hurdles at migrants point of origin, destination and on way (most starkly visible across State borders)

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Forecasting from above and below

Weather up there

- Geographic location of Bangladesh: Great Delta of three fast-flowing Himalayan rivers
- Catchment largely outside
- Changes in the Himalayan precipitation
- It is rain across the border that matters.

Possible solutions

- Forecast-based financing – Red Cross Climate Centre
- Planned resettlement, evacuation
- Bi-locationism - a safe place to go when there is rough weather/ disasters. Fishers' shacks, hamlets
- Hosting facilities in migrant destinations.

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How to get out of silos?

- Interdisciplinary approach
- Co-production of knowledge
- Listen to the people involved
- Again, listen to the people involved

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Thank you