



Assessing the Climate Change, Environmental Degradation and Migration Nexus in South Asia

2nd Annual Gobeshona Conference
8-11 January, 2016

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Background

Emerging issue around the globe

Climate change will intensify existing migration drivers

Sudden and slow onset events impact development, livelihoods, settlement and food production. People migrate to areas that present better opportunities

Environment and its interaction with other stressors have always led to direct or indirect migration. Migration is a common coping strategy

IPCC 1st Assessment Report (AR) -1999: “The gravest effects of climate change may be those on human migration”

IPCC 5th AR (2013): “The migration and mobility dimensions of the impacts of climate change and the central role of mobility in adaptation has become apparent

Terminology

- Several interchangeable terms: climate/ environmental refugees, environmental displaced, environmental/climate migrants, and climate-change-induced migrants
- IOM's proposed working definition of **Environmental Migrants**: persons or groups of persons who, for reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad.



Global & Regional Level

- Migration and Climate Change: Reflected in various global, regional processes, forums and dialogues.
- CoP16 of the UNFCCC led to the incorporation of “climate change induced migration” in the Cancun Adaptation Framework.
- CoP21 agreement also acknowledges the rights of migrants and calls for addressing displacement arising from climate change.
- The Climate Vulnerable Forum’s (CVF) 2013–2015 Action Plan considers “migration and displacement” as being one in six of the priority multilateral sectors



- Nansen Initiative Southeast Asian Regional Consultation Human Mobility in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change in Southeast Asia: One consultation held in Khulna, hosted by Government of Bangladesh under the Chairmanship of the Nansen Initiative and supported by IOM Bangladesh
- Areas where inclusive and comprehensive action is required:
 1. Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation
 2. Protection of Displaced Persons in Context of Disasters and the Adverse Effects of Climate Change
 3. Migration as Adaptation
 4. Planned Relocation
 5. Data Collection and Scientific Knowledge



Overview

- South Asia is affected by a range of natural disasters including floods, glacial lake outburst floods, storm surges, droughts, cyclones, sea level rise and heavy precipitation.
- 16 to 26 million people in Bangladesh are expected to migrate internally from their areas of origin between 2011 and 2050 due to floods, storm surges, riverbank erosion and sea level rise (RMMRU 2014).
- Due to multi causal nature of migration, it is challenging to quantify “Environmental Migrants”.
- A plethora of literature supports that migration can also be a form of adaptation.

Patterns of Mobility

- Displacement arises out of sudden onset disasters, whereas slow onset disasters gradually affect the environment and livelihoods compelling people to first undertake economic migration which might initially be temporary or seasonal followed later by permanent migration. (Shamsuddoha 2012)
- In the initial stage, migrants are likely to move over short distances to nearer locations, rather than moving to the capital or other cities. (Uddin and Basak 2012)
- Often rural-rural migration is common within the poor groups that are vulnerable to climate change. (Martin et al, 2014)

Consequence of increased mobility in the context of Climate Change



- Increased number of people living in slums
- Human insecurity
- Pressure on infrastructure/services

In addition:

- Diversification of livelihoods
- Increased remittances which can be used for social development
- Investments/insurance
- Skills circulation



- SAARC: Kathmandu Declaration
- Thimphu Statement on Climate Change (TSCC)
- Natural Disaster Rapid Response Mechanism (NDRRM)
- SAARC Action Plan on Climate Change
- SAARC Disaster Management Framework
- SAARC Social Charter



Policies-Bangladesh

Policy	Migration aspect
Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) 2009	Macroeconomic and sectoral economic impacts of climate change A4. Assessment of climate change and its impacts on out-migration” (page 56 / Programme T4P5 / Actions A4)
National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA) 2005	“Social consequences of mass scale migration to cities would to some extent be halted” (page 36 / Project No. 11)
Disaster Management Act 2012	It is not stated explicitly. But mentions “Rehabilitation means: If necessary, to transfer affected people in other region to resume natural way of living.” (Article 15 (C))
National Plan for Disaster Management 2010-2015	Additionally, the poor are more vulnerable to any kind of disaster due to a) depletion of assets, b) income erosion due to loss of employment, c) increased indebtedness and d) <u>out migration</u> .

IOM and MIGRATION, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- Establishment of a fully dedicated “Migration, Environment and Climate Change (MECC) Division” in 2015
- <http://environmentalmigration.iom.int>
- Regional Project on “Assessing the climate change, environmental degradation and migration nexus in South Asia” implemented in Bangladesh, Nepal and Maldives



1. Assessing existing evidence of the linkages between climate change, environmental degradation and migration through a policy and literature review. Field research will be carried out on the nexus in selected districts of each of the three countries that experience high out-migration and are vulnerable to environmental events.
2. Drafting a regional strategy framework and model national action plans (NAP's)
3. Organizing a regional dissemination meeting for policymakers to present the assessment study, model NAP's and regional strategy framework.



Way Forward

- Interventions need to range from national-regional-international level
- Developing a system to monitor/quantify the stock and flow of such migration. Example: IOM's displacement tracking matrix
- Delivering training and capacity building programmes for policymakers on migration, environment and climate change
- Developing operational tools and implementing programmes on the ground dealing with all aspects of forced and voluntary migration in relation to climate change



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Thank You
