

Climate Resilience and Disability: Bangladesh Case Study

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Introduction

- The impacts of Climate Change include enhanced frequency and intensity of disasters as well as slow on-set changes
- Climate Change disproportionately affects vulnerable groups including women, children, elderly population and persons with disability
- Generalizing solutions will no longer work, actions need to target vulnerable groups

Case Study Purpose

- How do disabled persons in Bangladesh experience the impacts of climate change, both in their daily lives as well as during extreme events?
- When designing actions for adapting to Climate Change is Bangladesh including all segments of the vulnerable population, especially the disabled? And is this enough?

Study Description (I)

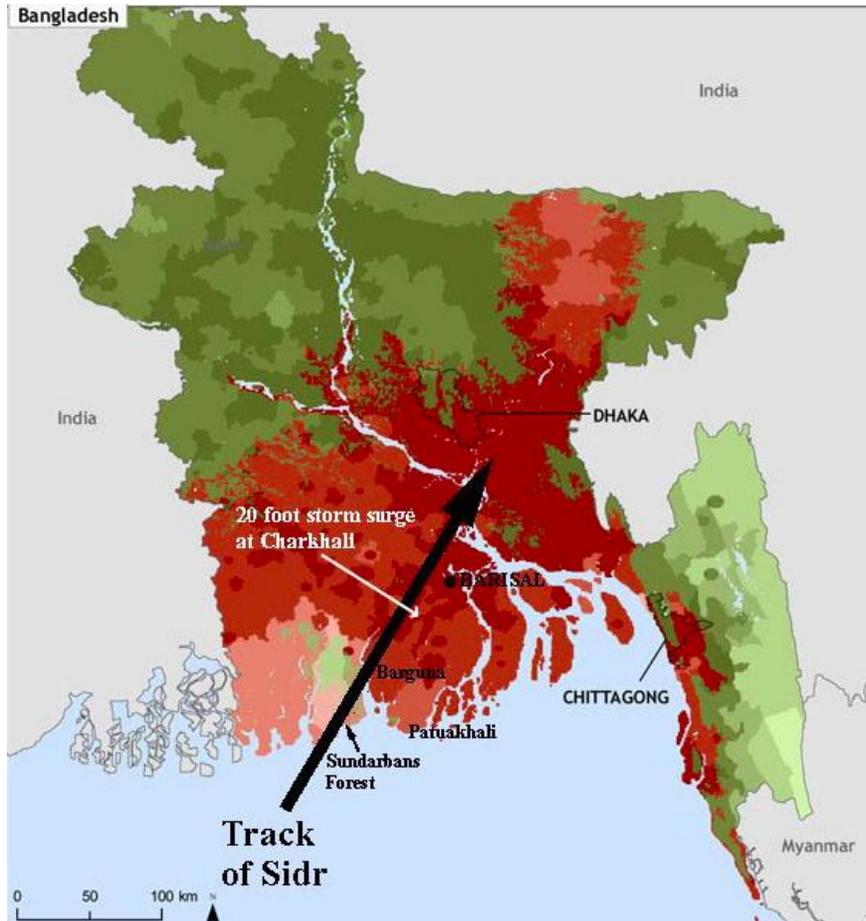
For the Bangladesh case study, Focus Group Discussions have been conducted in two parts of the country; **Barisal** and **Gaibanda**.

Gaibanda

- located in the northern part of the country and faces climatic stresses such as river erosion and flooding during the monsoon season.

Barisal

- located in the southern part of the country. It is a coastal region susceptible to cyclones and flooding.
- In 2007 when Cyclone SIDR struck the south-west coast of Bangladesh, a large segment of the population was affected, especially persons with disability



Damages caused by cyclone SIDR in Barisal

Study Methodology

- **Policy review and rating**
- **FGDs in Barisal and Gaibanda**
- **Key Informant Interviews with:**
 - Local leaders
 - Teachers
 - Adults with disability
 - Children with disability
 - Parents of children with disability
 - Government Officials in the Climate Change Sector



Women's FGD session at Barisal

Personal Experience (I)

It is extremely difficult to understand what someone else went through without actually going through it. In an attempt to present the snapshot of an individual with disability during Cyclone SIDR I will share some of the experiences of one of our interviewees; Lipi

- Could not access education facilities; infrastructure of school
- Unable to commute from household due to waterlogging
- Husband abandoned marriage
- Elderly parents cannot fully support her and her son
- Could not reach shelter during SIDR, got injured
- Could not claim relief fund as she could not go to collect it personally

Personal Experience (II)

Lipi feels let down by the justice system in place for disabled and poor people like herself. Her parents are old and her family is poor, she has no resources or connections to bend the system or make it work for her. Lipi feels helpless and cannot claim her rights.

Lipi falls within a vulnerable segment of the population, but even within that group the context of each individual will vary greatly.

Lipi alone does not represent the case for all disabled persons in the country or even her own community. We spoke to people who do have better access to resources, but there are those who are like Lipi or face circumstances which are much worse. When we promise to not leave anyone behind it is important that we take into account every experience.

Integration within National Policies

- The policy analysis was aimed:
 - to understand how inclusive national climate policies are overall
 - to assess if climate policies considered persons with disability
 - to check if funds have been allocated specifically for this cause

Reviewed Policies (I)

- Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP)
- 7th Five year plan
- Standing Order on Disasters
- Climate Change Gender Action Plan
- Vision 2021 Outline perspective Plan

Reviewed Policies (II)

Our review of policies indicate the following:

1. Government programs and plans cover disability issues, for example the 7th Five Year Plan discusses programmes for persons with disability including children with disability. However, specific actions targeted to disabled persons are missing, which makes it easy to ignore their needs.
2. When it comes to climate change the issue of disabled persons often falls under the umbrella of 'vulnerable persons', which is usually dominated by women and children's issues.
3. Interviewing some of the government officials working on climate change and environment sector shed light on the fact that sectors are still working in silos and awareness about disability issues is still missing in many sectors

Recommendations: Policy Level (I)

- Ensuring **effective participation** of persons with disability in planning and policy documents
- A better and more **inclusive warning system** needs to be developed that includes a variety of warning signals
- There should be **provisions for funds and HR persons** for disability issues, and appropriate mandate should be in place

Recommendations: Policy Level (II)

- Disability issues should be **mainstreamed** within all national plans and policies
- The range of vulnerabilities need to be better understood and **specific issues** need to be mentioned within national policies
- Improved access to financial aid and relief money
- Provide assistance for persons with disability to **migrate** from areas that are severely affected by climate change and help them **resettle**

Recommendations: Community Level

- **Awareness Raising in the Community:** If society is more aware of disability related issues their families would not feel ashamed of them. This would improve their self esteem and quality of life overall
- **Capacity Building of Community Members:** Teachers in schools need to be aware of disability related issues and need to be able to teach children who are differently abled. An orientation program is suggested to train new teachers when they join the school.
- The local community members need to be trained so they are better able to help those with disability around them during disasters

Recommendations: Personal Level

- **Accessibility to facilities:** public spaces need to be made accessible to those who are disabled. Example: Toilets in schools, better road facilities, handles and ramps in buildings. Especially important to make sure that cyclone shelters are accessible for persons with disability.
- **Availability of counselling facilities** to help recover from mental trauma after disasters. These damages should not be ignored. Counselling to better cope with everyday life and to instill confidence.
- **Capacity Building of disabled persons** to enable them to engage in economic activities. Diversify livelihood opportunities for disabled persons and help develop skills that go beyond traditional education.
- Climate change might affect certain livelihood options, it is important that persons with disability are able to **transition to other work forces easily.**

Thank you for listening!

