

CLIMATE CHANGE AND INTERNAL MIGRATION: AN ANALYSIS ON SECURITY CHALLENGE FOR BANGLADESH

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“For my country, Bangladesh, the goal of combating climate change and its impacts is crucial, as we are on the frontline of this global threat... This can create millions of environmental refugees, though Bangladesh's contribution to climate change is negligible”. - Sheikh Hasina, UN's 'Champion of the Earth' award laureate and the Honourable Prime Minister(PM) of Bangladesh.

INTRODUCTION

Climate change is commonly defined as a long-term change in the earth's climate, especially a change due to an increase in the average atmospheric temperature. Climate change poses a grave threat to Bangladesh. The adverse effects of climate change in the form of natural calamities undermining livelihoods, reducing basic human security and creating tension in the society. It has been estimated that there is the impending threat of displacement of more than 20 million people in the near future (BCCSAP 2009). This may turn in to a major non-traditional security threat where sea level rise, possibility of loss of huge land mass, food shortage, internal chaos and unrest due to fierce competition for existing scarce resources, mass displacement and internal migration, etc may pose existential threats for the country.

The growth centres are saturated already and the cities are expanding rapidly due to intense urbanization. More and more people are leaving their lands and moving to Dhaka and other growth centres as effects of climate changes are becoming phenomenal. Nearly half a million people move to Dhaka every year (Sach2007). A one meter sea level rise will inundate one-third of the country, and by 2050 about 20 million people will be required to be relocated (IPCC 90). This could upset the existing delicate national and regional demographical and ethnic balance and provoke a repercussion that may stress internal and regional security. India has almost completed about 2,100 miles of fencing along its long and unstable border with Bangladesh. Isabel Hilton, a London based environment commentator forecasts, “Bangladesh is a country that could provide more climate refugees than anywhere else on earth. What that fence says to me is, wherever those people are going to go, they're not going to India“(Friedman 2009). India is not taking any chances.

If local and national government cannot develop measures to cope with the pressures of climate change and migration, then the risk of intense violence is very high. As warming temperatures continues altering land mass, already-vulnerable communities in Asia and Africa could descend into conflicts and even wars. Climate change is now an issue that has to be included in national security policy. The political sensitivity of migrants issue has led to a dearth of studies on environmental migration patterns in Bangladesh. “The country is not yet prepared to know how to deal with it. The prevailing attitude is that climate change is a big problem, migration is a big problem - let’s not link it. Let it happen in the next generation” (ibid). Therefore, it is essential to identify what is needed at the national and regional level to respond to and prevent the risk of heightened insecurity and conflict in near future as a result of climate change.

CLIMATE CHANGE BRINGING ABOUT CHANGES IN THE SECURITY CONCEPT GLOBALLY

Climate Change and its Impact

There has been an increase in reported natural disasters over the last 30 years, especially hydro meteorological events, and an increase in the people affected, averaging more than 255 million people worldwide every year between 1994 and 2003. Desertification, reduction of soil fertility, coastal erosion, etc hampering existing livelihood patterns, disrupting food production and triggering different types of migration. The mass international migration from Syria and many African countries are the burning examples of grave impacts of climate change (Guardian 7 September 2015).

Global Security Scenario Due to Climate Change

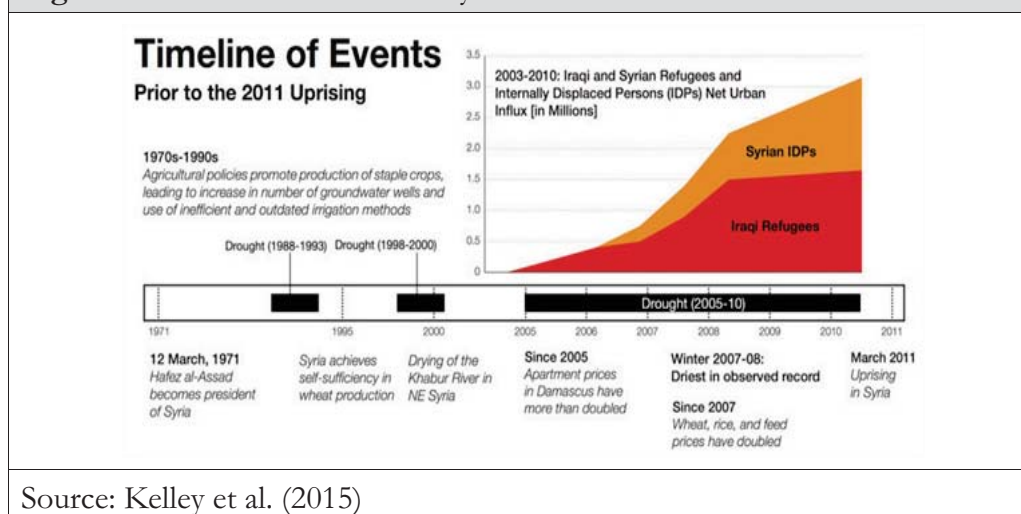
Climate Change Intensifying Existing Crisis. Climate change impacts may intensify crisis situation and exacerbate existing conflicts like in Sudan and Somalia. State collapse and destabilizing internal conflicts are more likely outcomes of climate change. Climate change may add to tension even in stable world regions like in European Union (EU). There are greater potentials for failed states and political instability like Syria, Sudan, Eritrea, Pakistan and Somalia. (IDA 2009).

Creating New Tensions Globally. Coupled with rapid population growth, climate change may undermine the carrying capacity of many developed countries. “Climate and vegetation zones are shifting, so the Mediterranean will likely keep getting drier this century, with knock-on negative social and economic impacts.” In other words, the Mediterranean countries currently trying to cope with migrants from other parts of the world may eventually have a migrant crisis of their own (Guardian 18 August 2015).

Conditions Favoring Terrorism. In already-weakened states, climate change impacts will likely result in further instability. Violent extremists can use climate-exacerbated stresses to fuel existing causes. Osama Bin Laden has spoken several times on the inequities of climate change (Mabey 2008). Rise of Boko Haram, Syrian civil war and rise of Islamic States of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) are far deeply rooted in the consequences of climate change effects and food crisis in those countries (Guardian 18 August 2015).

Climate Change and Internal Migration- Root Cause of Syrian Civil War and European Refugee Crisis. Syria gets almost all of its rain during its six-month winter, from November to April. In 2007-08, winter rainfall across Syria fell by a third, with some areas receiving no rain at all. Harvests of staple crops such as barley and wheat fell by 67 per cent and 47 per cent, respectively causing food prices to more than double. Around 1.5 million people migrated to Syrian cities during the drought, adding to the high population growth and recent arrival of 1.2 to 1.5 million Iraqi refugees. The growing urban populations resulted in overcrowding, unemployment and crime, but the worsening situation was neglected by the Syrian government. This growing unrest, the researchers say, was the trigger for the uprising (Carbon Brief 2015) as shown graphically below.

Figure 1: Timeline of events of Syrian crisis



CLIMATE CHANGE, IDPS AND MIGRANTS- A COMPOUND SOCIO-POLITICAL ISSUE IN BANGLADESH

Climate Change in Bangladesh

Bangladesh Recognized as most Vulnerable Country to Climate Change Globally. Bangladesh is on the top of among 16 countries that are most vulnerable to climate change in next 30 year. Maple croft rates Bangladesh as the country most at risk due to extreme levels of poverty and a high dependency on agriculture, whilst its government has the lowest capacity of all countries to adapt to predicted changes in the climate. In addition, Bangladesh has a high risk of drought and the highest risk of flooding (CCVI 2011).

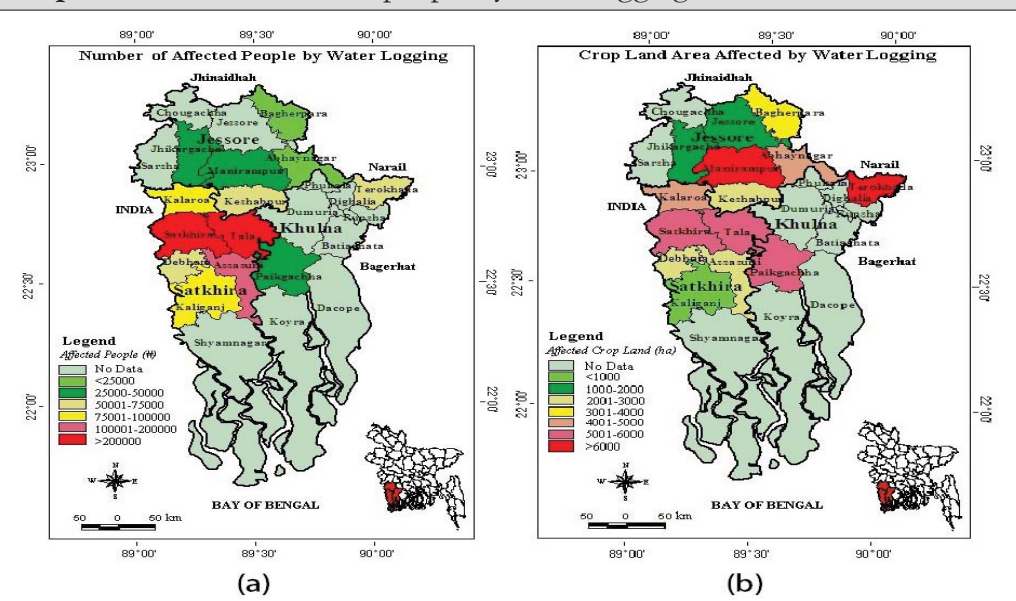
Trends of Climate Change. Projected temperature rise in Bangladesh predicted by U.S. Country Studies Program is 1.3°C by 2030 and 2.6°C by 2070. The central findings reveal that winter warming would be greater than summer warming. There would be little change in winter precipitation and enhancement in precipitation during the monsoon. Precipitation in Bangladesh in general was 30% more than as usual in September 2015 while in Rajshahi division, it was less by 40% in the same month. It indicates that there would be drier weather at places while other places would have excessive rainfall in monsoon (Prothom Alo 2 October 2015). The country would also be highly susceptible to increased flooding, salinity intrusion and increased drought (Mamun 2009).

Mapping Climate Change Impacts in Bangladesh

Flooding. Monsoon rainfall increased in 18 out of 32 meteorological stations. There is an increase in the pre-monsoon rainfall as well (CEIGS 2014). The flood control dam of Jamuna at Sariakandi Upazilla of Bogra was washed away by early monsoon flood of first week of June 2015 (Prothom Alo 13 June 2015). Climate models and hydrological studies suggest that flood will recur sooner and the range of flooded area will be approximately 50,000-57,000 sq km.

Water Logging. For more than last 15 years, massive water-logging has taken place in three coastal districts namely Satkhira, Jessore and Khulna. Satkhira being the most affected district was inundated by 5-7 feet of water that caused massive displacement in the population.(UNDP 2011). The Cyclone Sidr and Aila caused permanent water logging in the coastal districts of Bagerhat, Khulna and Satkhira (map 3).

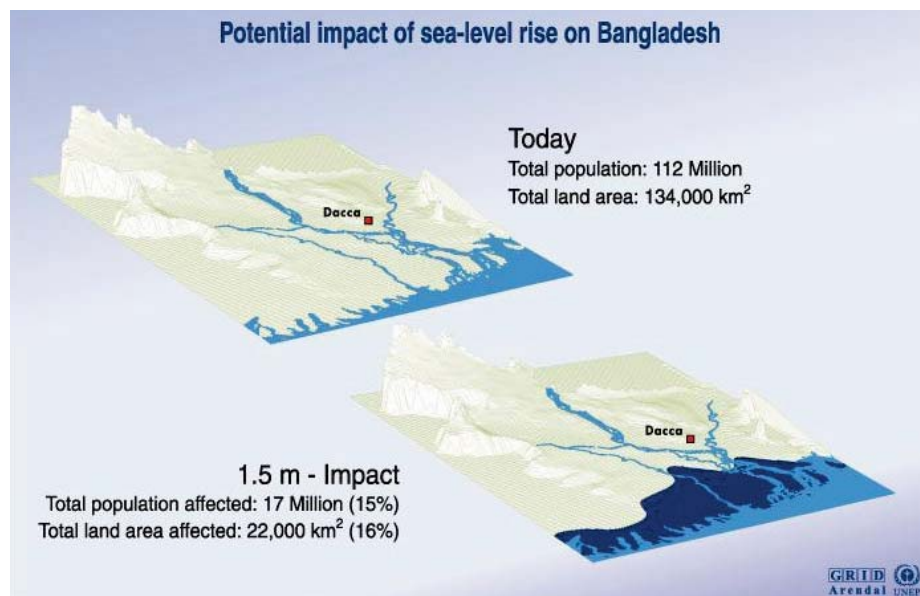
Map 3: Number of affected people by water logging



Source: Awal MA, 2014, Water logging in South Eastern coastal region.

Sea Level Rise (SLR). SLR is a threat to the existence of many people in Bangladesh. SLR of Bay of Bengal is the world highest, at 10 mm/year(CDMP 2014). If sea levels rise by one metre, one sixth of Bangladesh will be under water as shown in map 4. Already, in the Sundarban and Cox's Bazar part of Bay of Bengal, the mean SLR is identified as 5.05 mm and 7.4 mm/yr respectively (CEGIS 2011).

Map 4: Potential Impact of SLR in Bangladesh



Source: German Watch, SLR in Denmark and Bangladesh

Tropical Storm and Tidal Surge. Super-cyclonic storms (with winds greater than 220 km/hr) damages averaging 2.4 percent of GDP. When combined with an expected rise in sea level, cyclone-induced storm surges are projected to inundate an additional 15 percent of the coastal area as shown in map 6 below. On 23 March 2015, a tidal surge overtook the existing dam and flooded 16 villages in Shamnagar Upazilla of Satkhira (Prothom Alo 24 March 2015).

Map 6: Projection of storm surge inundation in a changing climate-2050



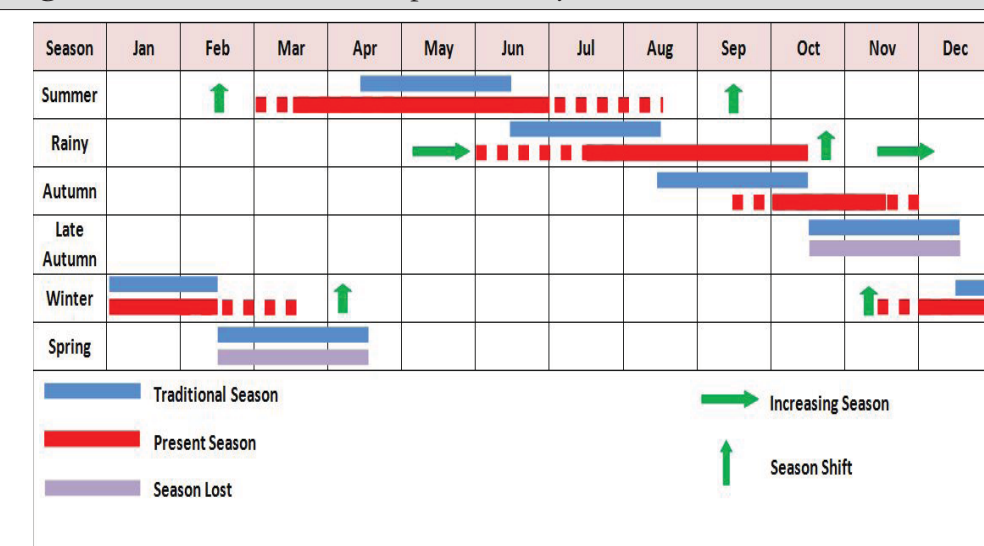
Source: World Development Report, 2010, World Bank

Socio-economic Impacts of Climate Change in Bangladesh

Impacts on Fisheries and Aquaculture. It is seen that coastal fisheries are affected by SLR in three ways: by salinity, by flooding and by increasing cyclone frequency and damage (CDMP 2014). During the Cyclone Sidr and Ila, coastal fisheries suffered huge damage (Mahfuzur 2015). If the coastal fisheries decrease, it will hinder country's inflow of foreign remittance as fisheries stands as the second largest remittance earning sector.

Impacts on Agriculture and Food Security. Salinity intrusion due to SLR would decrease agriculture production by unavailability of fresh water and soil degradation. The rice production in Koyra and Paikgacha Upazilla of Khulna district has reduced 40% (Mahfuzur 2015) while another investigation revealed a reduction of 69% in some villages of Satkhira district (CDMP 2015). Besides, crops pattern cannot match with the changed rainfall and seasonal variations. Since the seasonal calendar perceived by the farmer (marked in blue in figure 2) becomes offset (marked in red), farmers suffer heavy loss and struggle to adopt to uncertainty of seasonal change. The production of rice and wheat in general could fall by eight per cent and 32 per cent respectively by 2050 (IPCC 1990).

Figure 2: Seasonal calendar as perceived by farmers



Source: Presentation by Dr Ainun Nishat at National Defence College, 01 June 2015

Territorial Loss, Impacts on Eco-system and Health. By river bank erosion, Hatiya has reduced from 100 sq km to only 21 sq km and Swandip has lost 180

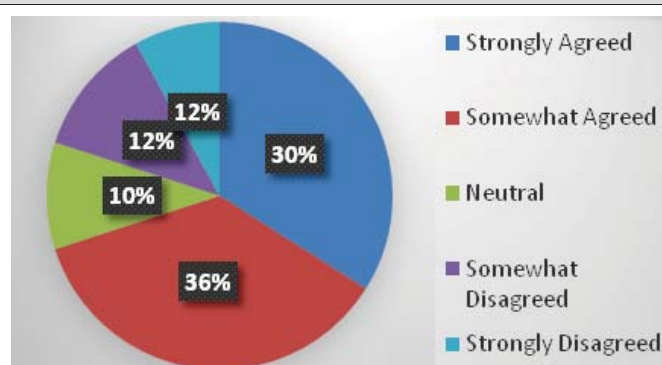
km in last 100 yrs. Bhola Island has been reduced to 3400 sq km from 6400 sq km in 1960. With this rate, it is apprehended that Bhola may completely disappear from map by next 40 years and the total population of Bhola may need to relocate elsewhere (Patwary 2009). The Sundarbans would be completely lost with 1 meter SLR (WB 2000). Climate change is also a significant threat to coral reef health.

Economic Impacts of Climate Change. By 2050, total investments of \$8,446 million and \$112 million in annual recurrent costs will be needed to protect against storm surge risk and constructing cyclone shelters. Overall, climate change is expected to decrease agricultural GDP by 3.1 percent each year-a cumulative \$36 billion in lost value added during 2005–50. Bangladesh invested over 10 billion USD for the last three decades to make the country more climate resilient. Implementation of BCCSAP will need 5 billion USD for the first five years (Rabbi 2012).

Climate Change, Internal Displacement and Migration

Primary Causes for Displacement. The primary causes of climate displacement in Bangladesh are increased tidal height in the coastal areas (leading to tidal flooding) and riverbank erosion in the mainland areas. The key secondary causes of displacement are tropical cyclones and storm surges in the coastal regions and river flooding in the mainland. Out of 64 districts, 24 coastal and mainland districts are already producing climate displaced people (Displacement Solution 2012). In a survey conducted among various walks of people including climate experts, it was found that 66% respondents (figure 3) agreed that climate change is causing forced migration in small scale at present.

Figure 3: Climate change is causing forced migration in small scale



Source: Prepared by author

Cyclones and Displacement. In 2007, the country was ravaged by Cyclone Sidr, which displaced 650,000 people and killed 3,447 (official record). In the year 2009, two cyclones hit (cyclone BIJLI, April 2009, and cyclone Aila, May 2009) Bangladesh. About 200,000 people were displaced by cyclone BIJLI. In May 2009, cyclone Aila crushed the coastal area and nearly 4.82 million people were affected (ibid).

Water Logging and Displacement. A survey conducted in the cyclone Aila affected district of Khulna depicted that coastal water logging resulted in a huge population movement to nearby safer elevated places. Approximately 106,000 people were displaced from water logging in the area to nearby safer, dry places and other distant districts and in some cases, even to India (Kushol 2009).

Future Prediction of Displacement. In addition, Bangladesh is expected to have massive environmental displacement, which is calculated to be about 49 million, 63 million and 78 million in 2010, 2015 and 2020 respectively (CDMP II 2014). Project Director of CDMP II, Mr Abdul Kayum mentioned, “In 19 coastal districts of Bangladesh, 2-2.5 million people are in a risk of becoming homeless for climate change effects...by 2050 there will be one homeless person out of 7 in the country” (Janokantha 29 January 2015).

Destination within and Outside the Country. UNDP suggests that part of causes for rapid urbanization in Bangladesh is internal migration caused by climate change. More than half of poor migrants live in private slums and 44 % squat on public land. Many victims continue to relocate themselves either directly to India, or to overcrowded city slums in Dhaka (Afsar 2010). Not only that, recent studies confirmed that a substantial fraction of illegal immigrants to Malaysia, Thailand and EU countries are from the coastal areas of Bangladesh (Prothom Alo, 23 May 2015).

CLIMATE INDUCED INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDP) AND MIGRANTS-A SECURITY CONCERN FOR BANGLADESH

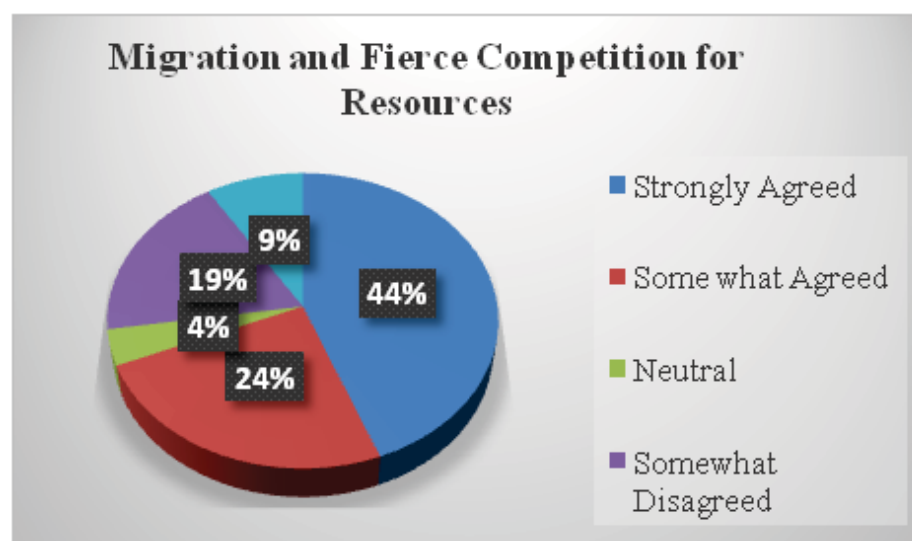
Migration Posing Traditional and Non-traditional Security Threats

Migration and Human Security. Disaster induced displacement is associated with a number of socio-economic issues. Most of the IDPs particularly women

and children, become victims of human rights abuses. They also become the prime targets of human traffickers and a number of women are forced to get involved in prostitution for survival. Displaced people also become indebted as they move to new places. And even when they find a place in slums of major cities, they are in constant risk of eviction by the authority. “Climate induced migrants of Paikgacha, Koyra, Dakope, etc upazillas are crowding in already congested slums of Khulna city. Finding not many suitable livelihood options, many have chosen the path of crime and drugs, even some forcing their daughters and wives to prostitution”- mentions the panel Mayor of Khulna City Corporation (KCC), Mr. Anisur Rahman Biswas in a recent interview (Biswas 2015).

Migration and Traditional Security. These internal migrants and IDPs would cause rapid urbanization, youth bulge, unemployment, socio-political disorder and unrest. They would dare to challenge existing rules and regulations for survival and entangle into conflict for securing scarce resources. 68% of respondents agreed that there may be chances of violent movement by the displaced population in particular by the unemployed youth demanding for food, shelter and access to other resources as shown in figure 4. They may also attempt for transnational migration illegally emanating heightened tension with neighbours and defaming national image.

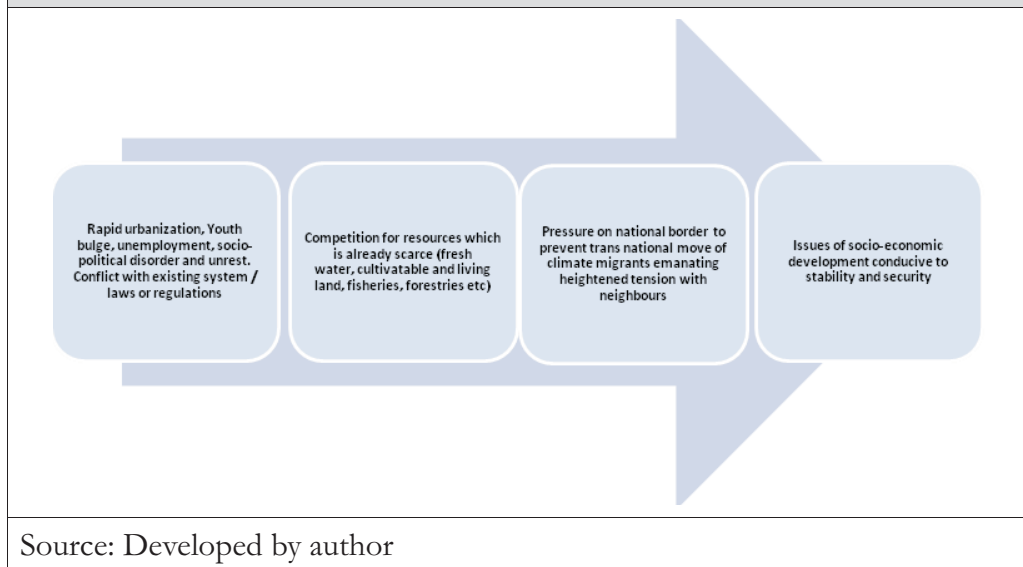
Figure 4: Migration and fierce competition for resources



Source: Prepared by author

Climate Migrants and Social Stability. The migrants are mostly illiterate or half educated capable male with meager savings to sustain a new settlement. Many of them have a loan to repay. They do not possess enough skill to make a dignified living in the new destination. KCC Panel mayor refers that the migrants from distressed area are the main habitants of many slums and are the major player in different illegal activities(iband).They are susceptible to be trapped in to the vicious cycle of poverty and adopt any means, fair or unfair, to make a living. They, therefore, become the major catalyst for creating a severe security situation in the rapidly urbanized destination. Graphical elaboration of migration and security nexus is shown in figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Migration security nexus in Bangladesh



Migration Posing Challenges to the State

Migration Posing Operational Challenges to the State. Dhaka's population is projected to increase to 22.9 million by 2025 (Maxmillan 2013). There could be increased demands for housing, water, land-use, sanitation, waste disposal and social needs of people.

Migration Posing Geopolitical Challenges. Certain climate change scenarios could involve 'unplanned, unpredictable and concentrated movements of people' and crossing of sensitive borders could pose challenges. Migration to India could be a case in point.

Migration and Regional Security Situation in light of ‘State Versus State Conflict’

Climate Change and Illegal Migration. The prospect of international migration is a touchy subject in Bangladesh. Air Commodore J Chalapati narrates, “Bangladesh does not recognize irregular migration as a problem and has denied its existence. At the head of states, irregular migration is probably discussed behind closed doors, but not recorded as an agenda point”(Chalapati2013). But for national security experts, it is the most feared global consequence of climate change(Friedman2009).

India Views Climate Change and Migration as a National Security Issue. For India, climate change is a serious concern. Many in India argue that India should not have to accept the victims of a problem caused by the industrialized world. A.K. Singh, the former commander of India’s Air Force, mentioned,” If one-third of Bangladesh is flooded, India can soak in some of the refugees, but not all.” Cleo Paskal, an associate fellow at the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London, said the prospect of large-scale migration from Bangladesh represents a real threat to India. (Friedman 2009).One of the reasons that India went to war with Pakistan in 1971 was the refugee crisis (Ashok 1996).

Increased Tension in the Border. As the means of livelihood are shrinking, more and more people are going to India by illegal means. Some are going for a certain period for 3-4 months while others are trying to settle in India. From Uttar and Dakshin Betkhali villages of Koyra Upazilla of Khulna districts, 4000 peoples from 2000 families have already left to India. They are going for 3-6 months job options, falling back and again going to India (Rabbani 2015). Many of these migrants are also getting entangled with the cross border crime and smuggling. BSF has claimed that they have arrested 2, 823 illegal Bangladeshi migrants till September 2015 (Pothom Alo 19 September 2015).

Illegal Migration, National Image and Tension with Neighbour. The recent illegal migration through open sea is complicating Bangladesh’s relations with Myanmar, Thailand and Malaysia. More than 150,000 Bangladeshis were illegally transported by sea to Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia as reported by UNHCR in April 2015 (Prothom Alo 9 May 2015). Myanmar declared that she would deport any Bangladeshi migrants found in her territorial sea migrating to Thailand or Malaysia. It was revealed that, most of the Bangladeshis kept in the detention camp of Thailand are from coastal area and climate change vulnerable

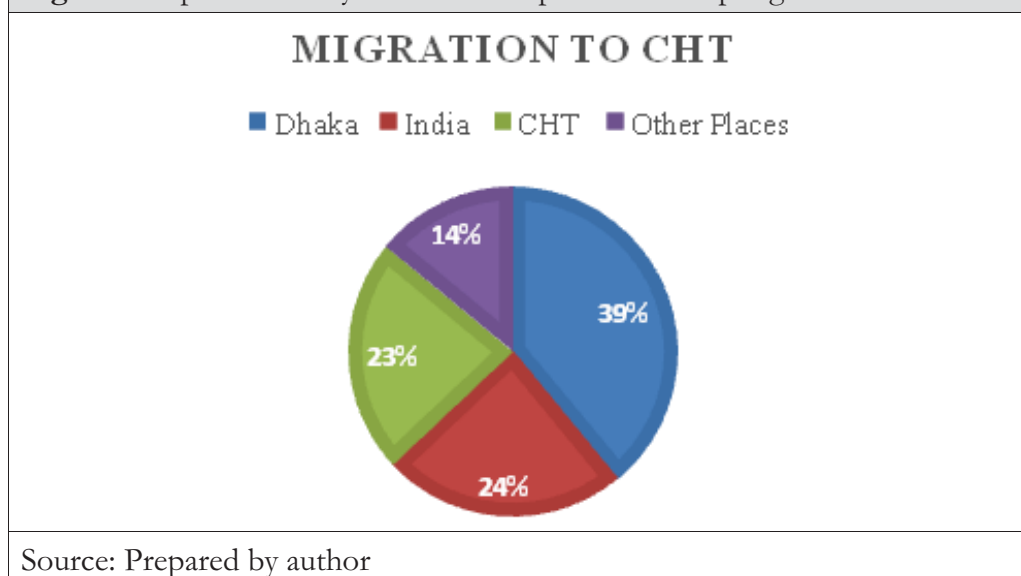
districts of Bangladesh (Prothom Alo 23 May 2015). Mr Tasnim Ahmed, head of an immigration research centre in Bangladesh mentions, “people from natural disaster prone areas, where crop production is not enough or beneficial, have become desperate to migrate at any cost” (Prothom Alo, 22 May 2015).

Migration and National Security Situation in light of ‘State versus Group Conflict’

The climate-induced migrants are in a fierce competition for homestead land, food, water and other fundamental rights. There are many vested groups waiting to exploit them. The southern belt is always infested by the undergrounded leftist organization. Their presence, though not very significant in these days, still possesses a great risk of future ignition of armed leftist movement in the coastal and southern regions of Bangladesh (Zia 2015). The religion based extremists have also reasonable activities in the same area. They will definitely exploit this social chaos and poverty if adequate prevention and development measures are not adopted forthwith (ibid).

Besides, huge internal migration towards urban areas would bring unemployment, petty crimes and would cause degradation of social security. The ill motivated and unemployed youth bulge together with the mass poor migrants may demand equal distribution of land, food and even change of regime. The Sudan drought in 1985 in the countryside resulted mass migration to urban areas, and the cities exploded in violence leading to the collapse of the government. The abundance land of CHT is a lucrative option for the internal migrants. The survey at coastal areas (figure 6) suggest that a reasonable amount of migrants have already attempted to settle in CHT in the recent past.

Figure 6: Opinion survey on distressed persons attempting to settle in CHT

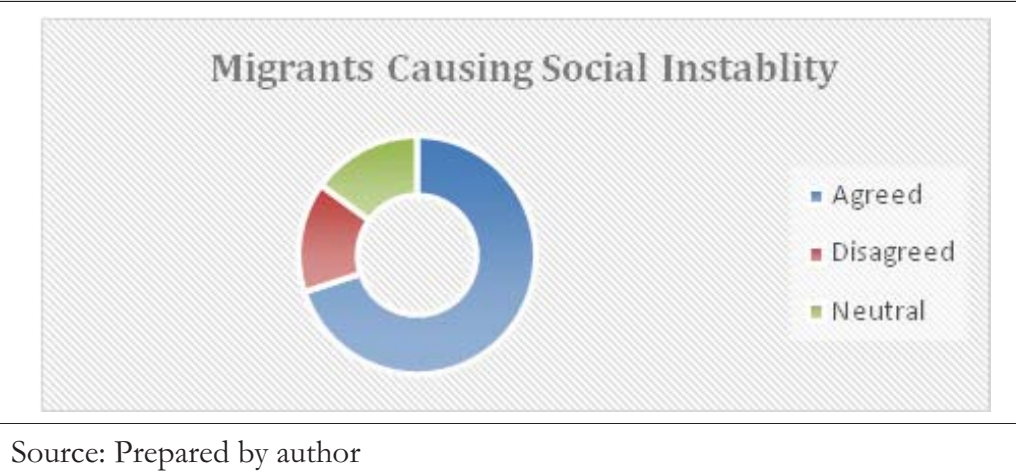


Yet, there is a legal restriction to settlement in the CHT. But how long these migrants could be stopped? The cities are saturated, the borders are sealed and the disasters are phenomenal. At some point, this issue may give rise to a national conflict scenario between migrants, CHT habitants and the state.

Migration and National Security Situation in light of ‘Group versus Group Conflict’

Since, the migrants are not enough skilled to get a job opportunity in the already overpopulated urban areas, the city is not welcoming them any more. The other options are kidnapping, dacoity, hijacking etc (Rabbani 2015). The women are not spared as well. Many a times, they were forced to submit to the illicit desire of kidnappers to rescue their family members. (ibid). The survey in those area also reflected that a general sense of social instability and anxiety prevails in those area due to mass jobless desperate youth population as shown in figure 7 below.

Figure 7: Migrants causing social instability



POLICY OPTIONS AND WAY FORWARD

Existing Policies, Policy Gaps and Options

Existing Policies and Policy Gaps. National Environment Policy (1992), The Coastal Zone Policy (2005), NAPA (2005), and Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2008) discuss about climate change phenomenon, but there is no clear indication about the problems of population displacement. For instance, it is written in coastal zone policy, 2005 that susceptibilities of coastal communities will be addressed. However, how will their sufferings in regards to displacement be addressed is not mentioned anywhere. National goals for Bangladesh as set by UN after reaching Millennium Development Goal (MDG) available at UN-BD website only highlighted the issue of climate migrants without any precise course of action.

Outline of Future Policy Options. Migration and human mobility due to climate change will require robust national policy decisions in the future. These may focus on the followings (IOM 2010):

- Raising policy and public awareness on the complex linkages between migration, the environment and climate change.
- Supporting the development of policy coherence at a national level in Bangladesh, including systematic mainstreaming of migration considerations, across all relevant sectors and in particular in development and humanitarian action.

- Working to minimize forced migration but also to facilitate the role of migration as a planned adaptation strategy.

Immediate Steps/ Short Term Measures

Proper Housing Facilities. It has been found that nearly 87% persons have kutchha and wood houses which are not healthy for a better life (CDMP 2014). The authority should designate a governmental agency responsible for addressing shelter and housing needs of displaced persons.

Creating Employment Opportunities. There should be certain policy options on technical and vocational guidance and training programs as well as opportunities to achieve full and productive employment. The policy should recognize the right to work and the right to social security for IDPs.

Ensuring Social Security and Access to Basic Needs. Slum dwellers cannot get land 'holding numbers' required for legal access to utility services such as water and electricity. Legal recognition of slums and provision of a legal identity for slum dwellers is an essential first step. Eviction of slums without an adequate resettlement policy should not be done.

Multistoried Abason Project. As Gucchogram, Adorshogram, etc require substantial lands for resettlement and rehabilitation, multistoried Abason project at Upazilla level in the distressed area may be undertaken forthwith. The flats may be sold to the migrants in minimal rate with long installments.

Political Awareness and Migration to India Political sensitivity has led to a dearth of studies on what climate change will mean for migration patterns in Bangladesh (Friedman 2009). The government may identify the issue of migration sincerely and take enough serious measure to avoid any further security consequences.

Coordinated Approach with India. Observer Research Foundation (ORF) of India, working on connectivity and reduction of border crisis proposed to introduce work permit in limited scale to have peaceful border and reduce trans-border crime and smuggling (Prothom Alo 5 June 2015). Bangladesh is the 5th remittance source of India. More than half a million of Indian works in Bangladesh in different capacities. A legitimate proposal for legal trans-border work permit for climate migrants may not be turned down by the Indian government.

Approaching International Communities. United Nations Climate Change Conference, Conference of Parties 21(COP21) will be held in Paris, from November 30, 2015. This is an important opportunity for Bangladesh to address climate change related migration complexities. As “Champion of the Earth” award laureate, the PM of Bangladesh may have a lead role in highlighting the sufferings of many distressed countries and ask appropriate compensation from the world communities. In this regard, climate induced population displacement, internal and international migration can be considered as one of the key negotiating topics among others.

Recognition of Climate Migrants as Climate Refugees. International refugee lawyers generally agree that persons displaced by climate change would not be the subject of protection under the 1951 ‘Refugee Convention’ (Hodgking 2009). The international communities have no interest to accept any climate migrants as refugee in their countries as reiterated by the British High commissioner in an inter-active session at National Defence College (Gibson 2015). Therefore, a multilateral convention to address climate change displacement – an issue which is global in its causes, scope and consequences should immediately be formed.

Long Term Measures

Identifying Climate Migrants and Planned Relocation. The government may systemically identify the vulnerable people, specially those who are poor and ultra-poor and have not much support to relocate themselves. The divisional administration would identify the number of people could be rehabilitated within the available khas land and government infrastructures needed to support the resettlement. List of rest should be forwarded to the ministry to further redistribution in other divisions as per existing khas land and other facilities. Chittagong, Sylhet and northern districts may take major share in this regard.

Development and Public Awareness- a National Integral Approach to Reduce Climate Migrants. With the latest plan of making EZ in Mongla, Padma Bridge, Rampal Electric Generation Project (coal will be shipped in Rampal through Mongla port), connectivity with India, Nepal and Bhutan, etc would boost up the importance of Mongla port in near future. If government is sincerely implementing the model, the effect of development will reach the poor people of this region and would definitely discourage migration. Besides, mass public awareness programme on climate change and its effect on livelihood,

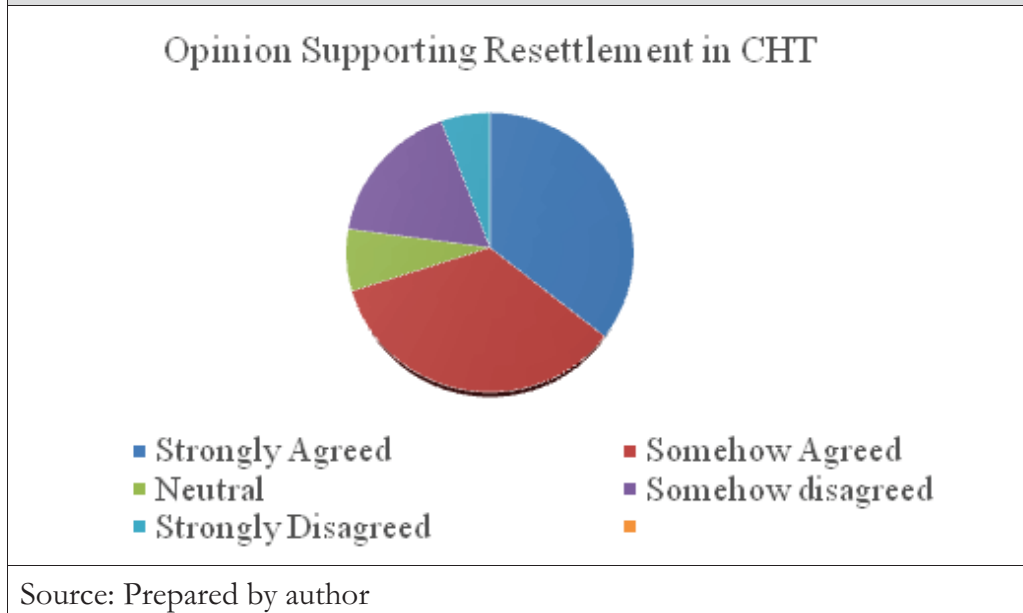
social and national security including adaptation strategy need to be undertaken forthwith. The effort is already on as the PM says, “we are not waiting for the international communities to look after the climate change issues in BD, we have started taking care of things with whatever means we have”(Huffington 2015).

Developing Climate Migrants as Skilled Labour Force. GoB may adopt a strategy to develop climate migrants in technical skills and turn them as human resource. More technical colleges and quota for climate migrants and separate cell at DoE in consultation with Ministry of Labour and Employment and Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment may be introduced.

Land Acquisition, Land Raising and Land Set Aside Policy. Land purchase, land acquisition, and land set-aside programmes should immediately be undertaken by the GoB. Such programme should identify and isolate land purchase for future use by climate migrants. GoB should review public land holding policy, select possible long term resettlement sites like cluster village that would be away from land market as land set-aside policy. Besides, efforts should be taken to raise new lands in the Bay of Bengal with technical and monetary support from the international communities.

Reforming Charter of MoCHTA. It is evident from different survey opinions, interview with experts and research (YPSA2014) that climate migrants have chosen CHT as a suitable destination for resettlement considering its vast abundance land and other resources. After Aila in 2010 a good number of people have moved to CHT. The settlement in CHT is going on already, but has not been identified or recognized by the government. It is there and likely to continue (Ali 2015). A large number of displaced people who had lost their homes and lands due to river erosion, drought and cyclone are living in the CHT much before the 1997 Peace Accord. However, provisions in the CHT Peace Accord now restrict the settlement of displaced people in the CHT. Considering the likely future crisis and national security interest, resettlement in CHT exclusively for climate migrants may be considered. Most of the respondents during an opinion survey also agreed the same as shown below.

Figure 8: Opinion supporting resettlement in CHT



RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the preceding discussions, following recommendations are brought forward:

- Massive development projects in the growth centres near the distressed areas including multistoried housing project for the climate IDPs may be undertaken by the government to facilitate settlement and job opportunity.
- Planned long term settlement should be introduced by identifying the victims and likely victims. This is to be planned at every Upazilla level by the Upazilla administration finally coordinated and executed by the government
- Government may consider reviewing the CHT Policy and allow re-settlement for exclusively climate migrants in CHT.

CONCLUSION

The IPCC has identified Bangladesh as one of the most vulnerable least developed countries and most vulnerable to climate change. Declining environmental conditions denying many millions of people their right to adequate housing and shelter. Where there is a direct and immediate threat to life or where environmental

pressures compound socio-economic stresses and households cannot adapt, families are being forced to abandon their homes and land. Over 35 million will be climate migrants in Bangladesh by 2050.

Climate-induced migration has the potentiality to trigger different kinds of conflict. There might be state versus state conflict; state versus group conflict and group versus group conflict. As the means of livelihood are shrinking, more and more people are going to neighbouring countries by illegal means. The border is getting restless and violent every day. The climate-induced migrants are reckless. The ill motivated and unemployed youth bulge together with the mass poor migrants may demand equal distribution of land, food and even change of regime. At some point, the demand to settle at CHT may give rise to a national conflict scenario between migrants, CHT habitants and the State. The IDPs are also getting involved in kidnapping, dacoity, hijacking etc. Considering the predicted scenario, the climate change induced migration undoubtedly has become a compounded issue for the national socio-political and security stability.

The country is not yet prepared to know how to deal with it. There is not much effort to reform land policy to accommodate this people. Developed countries are responsible for environmental degradation in developing countries like Bangladesh. As a result to such degradation of human life, it is the responsibility of the international community to provide enough assistance to these vulnerable people. COP21 is an important opportunity for Bangladesh to address climate change related migration complexities.

To address the issue, an adequate development guideline is a pressing demand on decision makers. Besides, immediate steps and long term measures to be adopted by the state to overcome the likely challenges being posed by climate change and climate induced migrants. These should include planned resettlement, land reclaim, decentralization of government, multistoried Abason Project in the distressed area, massive development projects in the growth centres near the distressed areas, recognition of climate migrants as environmental refugee, etc.

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