Chapter 7: Urban Environmental Migrants

Demands for a Unique Category of Refugees
to Ensure their Right to Land and Resettlement

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INTRODUCTION

Environmentally induced migration is quite an old phenomenon, yet its recognition as a distinct category remains a topic of debate (Myers 2005). Along with it, persons displaced chiefly due to the consequences of climate change do not hold an important place on the agendas of the relevant international organisations (e.g. International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)) so as to be treated with the attention they need. In his publication 'Environmental refugees: myth or reality', Black (2001) argues that the phenomenon of such migration is evident and supported by scholarly literature yet, unfortunately, the concerned organisations do not address this issue with the gravity that it merits. Lambert (2002) argues that even though the problem of environmentally induced migration exists, its lack of recognition among political organisations makes it more troublesome to address. The lack of political will to acknowledge this problem is the root cause of the failure to create any framework to assist environmental migrants or displaced persons. Furthermore, the literature on environmental risk management (e.g., Mallick and Akter 2013; Etzold and Mallick 2016; Roy *et al.* 2017) reports the increased risk among socially and economically vulnerable communities located in tropical coastal belts, due to the adverse effects of environmental disruptions.

Very few steps have been taken to bring these people into an institutional framework. Some studies, for example, Kolmannskog (2008), point to the fact that applying the term 'refugee' to such displaced groups is inaccurate and thus needs to be addressed separately. This author suggests that closer consideration

should be made for the prevailing policies of prevention and protections before bringing in new measures to deal with this issue. Further, various scholars and authorities have offered draft conventions to address people who have been displaced by climate change, in an effort to enclose them within an international regime of status and treatment in accordance with the challenges these people face due to the climate effects of rising global temperatures (Aylett 2014). Finally, the literature shows that a significant number of people are in need of protection and thus deserve attention at both national and international political levels. Even though the number of such displaced persons is not yet known, Myers (2005) suggests that by 2050 an estimated 200 million people will fall under this category. Hence the time has certainly arrived for all actors to take necessary action on this critical issue.

Keeping all of these issues at the forefront, the main focus of this research is to address the problem of recognising that environmental migrants should have a separate identity. In addition, when the typology of such migrants gains considerable ground in the arena of policy support, it will then become necessary to prepare a policy framework for their protection and, more so, for their right to land that has not incurred environmental degradation, which appears to be the most significant and troublesome issue for these migrants. Therefore, the main problem this research focuses on and is about identifying 'environmental refugees' with a clear understanding of what this term actually refers to (Black 2001). Preferably, this would be treated as a separate category of migrants rather than adding them to the long list of political or economic refugees or the like. Along with this, another issue that has been largely ignored is the lack of a clearly acknowledged identification for these people and this has led to the problem of how to provide this migrant group with adequate structural support and assistance. The remainder of this chapter provides a literature review, the research strategy, some discussion, the findings and some conclusions.

"ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRANTS": AN IDENTITY IN THE MAKING?

The hurdle in linking environmental degradation to human migration is that the victims of such consequences are nowhere when it comes to the devising of policies and initiatives that would ensure they are accorded the basic rights they are supposed to be entitled to. However, scholars have acknowledged that the terminologies used to indicate this group are not only confusing but also insufficient to incorporate the totality of such migrants. Thus, a distinctive categorisa-

tion of this population bears utter significance, both in terms of recognising them as the most vulnerable group when environmental calamities strike and in formulating policies to integrate them into a support-and-assistance framework.

It is undeniable that population displacement mainly caused by environmental changes (that eventually trigger other driving factors behind migration and displacement) must be recognised as a distinctive identifiable category beyond those identified under risk management strategies (Dun and Gemenne 2008; Etzold and Mallick 2016). With this recognition comes the necessity of establishing an identity base for those who are the victims of such displacements. Therefore, a definition that separates this particular group from other types of migrants is of utter importance. Very little space in the contemporary literature has been assigned to defining those forced to migrate due to environmental disasters. Most of this literature focuses on policy gaps and how to mitigate this deficit. The urgency of a clear definition and, hence, a particular identity for these migrants has attracted even less attention from policy makers and academics, mainly because there are already quite a few terms one can refer to when it comes to writing about this population; for example, 'environmental migrants' (Boano *et al*. 2008); 'climate refugees' (Berchin *et al.* 2017); 'people displaced by climate change' (Hodgkinson *et al*. 2009). Nonetheless, attempts have been made to find a concise definition for this group of migrants. Dun and Gemenne (2008, p.10) clearly state that 'without a precise definition, practitioners and policy-makers are not easily able to establish plans and make targeted progress'. They also indicate that the current definition of refugee set out in the 1951 Refugee Convention has helpful elements with which to create an identity for these migrants. The literature also brings forward the fact that even though the definition might have some elements of creating an identity, the migrants or displaced people who fall under this definition remain unrecognised and, thus, nonrecipients of proper assistance.

In an attempt to define 'environmental migrants' Kolmannskog (2008) mentions two well-known definitions, one of which is that of El-Hinnawi (1985) and another of Myers (2002). El-Hinnawi (1985) clearly stated that people who are forced to migrate due to environmental factors, be it permanent or temporary, are to be labelled as such, given that their natural habitats have been seriously compromised to such an extent where the normal possibility of a livelihood is next to impossible. Even though El-Hinnawi's definition gives some clarity to a separate group of people who are suffering from environmental disruptions (Kolmannskog 2008), it still is not inclusive of all of the situations under which people are forced to relocate. Myers and Kent (1995) offered yet another definition, when they stated that, when people are faced with being forced from their tradi-

tional habitats, due to various environmental changes, notably, soil erosion, water shortages, deforestation and the like, and the challenge of securing a livelihood whether on a semi-permanent or permanent basis, inland or out, this group of people falls under the definition of 'environmental refugee'. Furthermore, these authors considered the fact that people living under such conditions have no other alternatives but to migrate within or outside the country and that environmental disasters eliminate the chances of their returning home when things got back to normal, if ever. Thus, the crucial question is one of status and whether these people should be recognised as environmental/climate migrants and be granted proper treatment.

Boano et al. (2008) argued that the existing terminologies used to identify environmental forced migrations are problematic as these terminologies often represent a more subjective classification and the decision to migrate is being made mostly by the refugees themselves (El-Hinnawi 1985; Berchin *et al*. 2017). Taking a look at Zetter (2017), however, terms like 'environmental refugees', 'tsunami refugees', 'development refugees' and so on, offer an initial identification of a group of people who have been forcefully displaced from their habitats; further, these terms provide insights into and interpretations of the actual causes and consequences of the real situation this group finds itself in. Keane (2004) suggested that these terms do not fall under the definition of refugees as set out in the 1951 Refugee Convention. On one hand, the absence of a proper definition makes the term unsuitable and hence unacceptable by most. On the other hand, there is a consensus, in the literature, that not all people who are displaced by environmental degradation, such as climate change, which can be caused by either rapid- and slow-onset events, will migrate or relocate outside their national borders; hence, it is crucial to avoid referring to them as refugees (Boano *et al*. 2008). Yet from another definitional perspective, since the status of refuge assumes a 'persecutor' whom people fear, unless the 'environment' or 'nature' is seen as such, it is not authentic to label as 'refugees' people who are forced to migrate due to environmental causes (Keane 2004).

All of this literary evidence hints at the two-fold aspect of a need for an identity for this population and the inadequacy of the existing terminologies and also the real need for a distinctive identity base for this migration type and population. Amidst the discussion about whether the term 'climate refugees or 'forced climate migrants' (Berchin *et al.* 2017, p. 148) should be used, the former has gained popularity over the latter. This label provides the public with an emotionally sensitive and open approach to the issue (Brown 2007); it also helps differentiate environmentally induced migrants from the other types of migrants. Due to severe climatic events, people continue to leave their homes or countries and

seek asylum in other regions or countries. As such, they are left in situations of insecurity and hopelessness (Berchin *et al.* 2017). However, the general category of 'migrant' has an adverse implication, since these people had decided to move spontaneously in search of a considerably better future (ibid.).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter aims to focus on people who are forced to relocate to new places due to environmental events and it also addresses their sense of being around new localities, which is a consquence of their having to relocate due to environmental impacts. This relocation or displacement takes place mainly due to severe environmental events that seriously disrupt their everyday lives and damage their livelihoods; in most cases, these former lives and livelihoods are not repairable. Therefore, these people are either forced to change their usual earning strategies or their place of living or both. Making the decision to migrate does not rely only on the event that forced people to move; rather, it triggers other hurdles that in themselves are difficult enough to overcome. Hence, the construction of the conceptual framework for this research is based on perceptions gathered from the preliminary or initial fieldwork and literature reviews. This investigation took place in three interconnected phases. Figure 1 (below) shows the relational diagram of the phases that served as a conceptual framework for this research. All three phases were intertwined and played crucial roles both during the migration decision and in the post-migration identity-making process.

The effects of upcoming climate-change events on livelihood strategies are expected to be significant (Black *et al*. 2013). Phase one describes the principal drivers for migration. Being one such driver, environmental events contribute to people making migratory decisions either directly or indirectly due to other aggregating factors (Sikder *et al*. 2015). This phase shows the initial thrust environmental factors and other drivers provide. This thrust also serves to agitate the existing environmental degradation and helps accelerate the process of displacement. For example, during the fieldwork, one of the interviewees described how her family survived Sidr, one of the deadliest cyclones on record, and avoided migration. Two years later, she was forced to migrate to her current location due to being a victim of an even deadlier cyclone, Aila. The latter event intensified the gravity of the catastrophic situation cyclone Sidr had created.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for identity making of the 'environment migrants'.
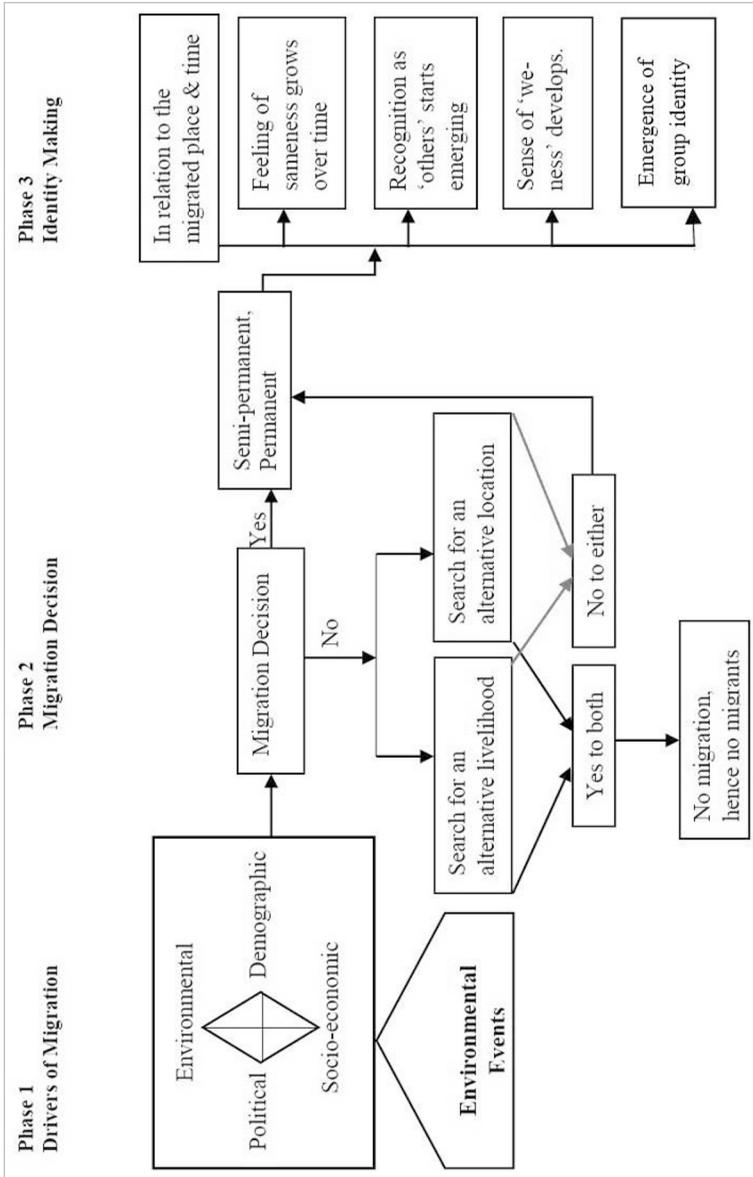
Source: Authors' own draft, based on secondary literature survey.

The number of displaced persons due to environmental disasters is not insignificant. The United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP) Human Development Report suggests that, as of 2009, there were approximately 740 million internal migrants due to circumstances related to climate change (UNDP 2009). The process of migration takes place in two phases. The decision-making process begins during phase one and can speed up, depending on the context and severity of the events. Phase two describes the actual migration decision-making stage; this migration decision could be to migrate internally, externally (transboundary) or to not migrate at all. It also shows the relationship between the decisions taken in favour of or against migration. In this phase, migration may or may not take place, depending on the success of finding a suitable location in which to live and in securing another means of livelihood around the location where these people had lived prior to the event. If the latter occurs, then migration is unlikely to take place. Phase three shows the building of a sense of self among the people who took the necessary steps to move away from their original living place of habitation. Once the displacement is completed over time, these people become aware of the fact that their livelihood pattern and the meaning of their lives have both changed in relation to the place in which they currently reside. This building of sense also gives them an understanding of how and why they are different than those who are native to the place. This phase is where the research focuses greater concentration.

RESEARCH STRATEGY

This research adopted the case study method, through fieldwork and analysing secondary literature. Being inductive in nature, it focused on understanding how environmentally displaced people gain a distinct sense of identity. This study aimed to find the probable link between environmentally induced migration and identity. Simply put, it argues for the need of an identity base for those who are displaced internally or internationally due to environmental events. In so doing, it is important to consider whether there is a connection between the two processes through which the displacement decision must be made in the first place. For this study, three slums were selected, namely Khora *Bastee*[1], Labanchara Bastee and Rupsha Bastee located in Khulna city in Bangladesh. A high percentage concentration of internal migrants due to climatic events was a priority when selecting these slums.

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1   *Bastee* is a local term for slum.

Data collection methods for this research included in-depth interviews; non-participant observations, followed by informal discussions; and an analysis of secondary literature. As the migrant households were dispersed throughout the slums and sometimes were found in some pockets of these slums, this research first identified the pockets and locations of these migrants. Then, households were randomly selected from the listed locations, using an unbiased view of the perceptions that people held about these slums. A total of 20 households were considered for the in-depth interviews. Interviewees were selected regardless of gender, age, educational qualifications or professional standings. For this study, unstructured interviews (Bryman 2008) were used so as to keep the data-extraction process close to a regular conversation. Respondents talked freely and in an informal tone, since the focus was to grasp the perceptions and understanding of the people being interviewed.

This study also heavily depended on an analysis of the literature on identity and migration as they related to environmental factors. Both phenomena are complex and are driven by multiple factors. The aim was to find a functional link between the two so as to provide a basis for the groups that were displaced and hence bound to migrate due to environmental degradation (Warner 2010). There-fore, the literature was reviewed from both arenas to find similarities and differences. Investigating the literature also provided an understanding of people's perceptions regarding both the causes of their migration and the subsequent identity-making processes. Moreover, the literature review helped reveal the existing bridges and gaps between the two phenomena under discussion. One form of observation is a non-participant one that permits the researcher to observe while remaining aloof. Here, the aim was to grasp an understanding of what people from and around a particular age group thought about themselves and how they perceived their existence. Thematic analysis was adopted as a data analysis method; here, themes were validated by evidence found in scholarly literature. The next section reports the results of a case study of Khulna. The empirical study was conducted in three distinct large slums/informal settlements in Khulna city. The discussion on the key findings include a review of the conceptual framework that was introduced in an earlier section.

THE CASE OF KHULNA CITY

Migration decision

This section addresses why and under what contexts people migrate once an event takes place. Migration decisions are based on multiple concerns that each act in conjunction within a particular situation. After a climatic incident, people may decide to either migrate immediately or gradually, depending on the type and intensity of the incident, the extent of the damage it caused and the sources available to restore these people's livelihoods within the shortest time possible. A climatic event has impacts on both social and economic factors. The extent to which these factors are affected determines the decision to migrate. Figure 2 shows the relational links among the various factors that influence the migration decision.

Depending on the situation, migrants vary by type, and this is mainly a reflection of their pre-migration condition and how this had been altered during or after an event or calamity. The three slums selected for the fieldwork are settlements of migrants who had moved mainly due to environmental events. Among the three slums, Labanchara had the largest population of these types of migrants and Rupsha slum had the least number of environmental migrants. Findings from these three slums are not exactly the same; while some of the data and information obtained were identical in relation to migration and identity-making, other data on these migrants differed. When struck by a climatic shock, the people in the affected areas tended to relocate to ensure they could continue to carry out their primary livelihoods. This tendency was found throughout these three slum areas.

In most cases, it was found that cyclones Sidr and Ailahad caused the environmental degradations that had resulted in migrations. Jahanara Begum, a migrant living in Labanchara slum (interviewed on 8th April, 2016), described why she had to migrate after cyclone Aila. She had lost her source of income due to the damage caused by this cyclone. She expressed her helplessness and inability to support her family after the event, when she said, 'sob jhoree nei gaeilo', which literally means that everything was destroyed during Aila. She noted that she had run out of options to care for her family. Better employment opportunities influenced her to make the decision to migrate to the nearest city. In their theoretical model on migration patterns, Maurel and Tuccio (2016) provide similar perspectives on the impact of environmental events on migration decisions. The aforementioned model highlights climate shocks, such as floods, cyclones and so on, that push the transition of labour from agriculture to modern manufac-

turing and the service sector, causing the migration of rural people to urban-centres.

Figure 2: Links among various factors that influence the migration decision.
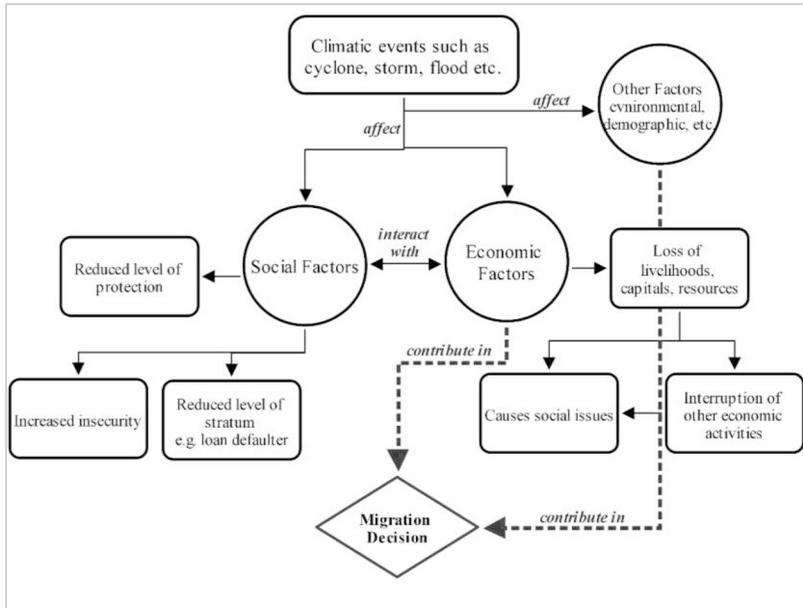
Source: Authors own draft based on findings from field survey and secondary literature.

People also make migratory decisions for socio-economic reasons. But then again, an area's socio-economic conditions often worsen due to climatic shocks, whether sudden or gradual. For example, interviewees found in the slums Labanchara and Sonadanga expressed how they had been forced to migrate to their current location due to cyclone Aila and the consequent irrecoverable losses in economic activities. They noted how they had taken out loans from local money lenders so as to establish and carry on their main sources of income. Borrowing from local moneylenders is quite a normal scenario in rural areas of Bangladesh, due to the availability of this type of financing and the fact there is less paper work than there is in banks and other financial institutions. However, when Aila caused irreparable damage to their primary sources of income, these people were no longer able to repay the moneylenders and had no choice but to 'escape'. In the words of the interviewees, 'ki koire mukh dekhabo, taka diti parini', which means that they were ashamed of being a loan defaulter. When people become loan defaulters, this adds social pressure to the economic ones,

since their status quos have been interrupted. Both factors contributed equally to making the decision to migrate, to escape both social and economic pressures, and these factors were largely influenced by Aila a climatic event.

In addition to socio-economic conditions being intensified by environmental ones, many other factors also heavily influence the migration decision. For example, the demographic pressure exerted on people who are victims of a climatic event pushes them out of their places of origin. At the same time, they are mainly pulled by the availability of work and support from relatives who live in nearby cities. Both of these factors work in conjunction to influence the migration decisions of populations affected by environmental events. While migration may be 'one of the fundamental choices to be made' (Collins 2013, p. 113), the reasons for so doing are complex and interconnected. Thus, the decision to migrate depends on the contexts and the intensity of the primary drivers.

Identity making

Identity is an abstract reality; the concept of 'the self' is the generic definition of the term. Identity evolves and takes on various roles in people's lives, in relation to particular points of reference. Being a perceived sense of existence, identity is fluid in nature and thus changes in form. The displacements that take place chiefly because of environmental shocks can create a unique base of identity for a migrant population, and this is the main premise of this study.

The need for a distinctive identity

Environmental events can trigger displacements, either internally or across borders. Fieldwork shows similar traits of human mobility, as discussed earlier. While scholars, such as Myers (2002), emphasise that there is growing concern for a group of people around the world who face forced displacements due to environmental problems, findings from fieldwork suggest that environmentally induced migrants identify themselves as being different from the slums' non-migrants, who are mostly land owners. When asked if he felt any different here, one of the respondents replied,

'Where will we go? We have lost everything there [previous living place]. Now this has become our home. They [the land owners] help us more or less, we survive this way' (Interview with Abdul Momin, Rupsha slum, 30 October, 2016).

In another interview, one of the interviewees, Shefali, expressed how she felt different from the native dwellers. She also expressed how she felt 'connected'

to those who migrated from *Koyra* (a sub-district of Bangladesh), her native land, due to cyclone Aila. She said,

'We are all the same. Most of us [tenants] have come here after the 'big storm' [cyclones like Aila, Sidr etc.]. They [native dwellers] helped us live here, but we have to pay them. We live here but they own it' (Interview with Shefali, Rupsha slum, 30 October, 2016).

Such case studies show how people develop an understanding of their existence in relation to those who are not subject to the same challenges, in these cases being forced to migrate due to environmental events. Climatic events are by no means the sole drivers of displacement, be it internal or external; rather, these events work as catalysts that aggravate existing problems and, hence, cause mobility (Kartiki 2011). Likewise, in Bangladesh, people who are internally displaced, due to various environmental catastrophes, are a cause for concern.

Table 1: Sense of the self: present and level of concentration.

Slums	Sense Type: Strong » Less	Concentration of Migrants
Rupsha	Individual	Least
Labanchara	Group » Individual	High
Sonadanga	Individual » Group	Moderate

Source: Authors, 2016.

Table 1 shows that in, Rupsha slum, migrants were inclined toward feeling a sense of the individual. In Labanchara slum, interviewees noted a strong prevailing sense of feeling togetherness as a group and a weaker sense of the individual. Migrants in Sonadanga slum felt more individualistic in type and had a more moderate awareness of sameness, but their group feeling was still somewhat prevalent. One of the reasons for the interviewees expressing such a differentiation of senses was the concentration of migrant groups in those slums. Whereas in Labanchara slum, there was a high concentration of homes of such groups, it was obvious that the sense of being the same as a group was stronger than for being part of another type. The opposite was true for Rupsha slum, while respondents in Sonadanga slum showed a varied view of leaning toward both descriptions. These findings also suggest the growing need to recognise the movements of these migrants so it becomes easier and less confusing to conceptualise

and identify them. In a personal communication, Mitu Akter, a 19-year-old girl living in Sonadanga slum, expressed her feelings toward people her same age and explained why she liked to spend more time with those who had migrated from the same place of origin as she had. Here, she showed a feeling of sameness that was based on the migration context and the similar locality of origin. She termed these migrants as 'nijer lowk' to point out the type of connection she felt toward them. This is a unique finding that shows why identity creation for such groups is significant.

Table 2 presents an overall picture of migrant's understanding of the type of senses people hold in terms of whether they are the same or different in relation to their different contexts. This is a manifestation of the types of identity group or individual found among the migrants in the study. The relational references here play a role in the elements of identity that are described in the study's conceptual framework.

Table 2: Differences in perceptions and related cause, according to age group.

Age groups	Perception type	In relation to
> 20	Mostly collective	Same age group
20-30	Individual, if not undecided	Income opportunities, employment
30-40	Overlaps; ⟷ Collective Individual	Social networking, relatives
40<	Mostly individual, overlaps	Sources of income, assets, social strata

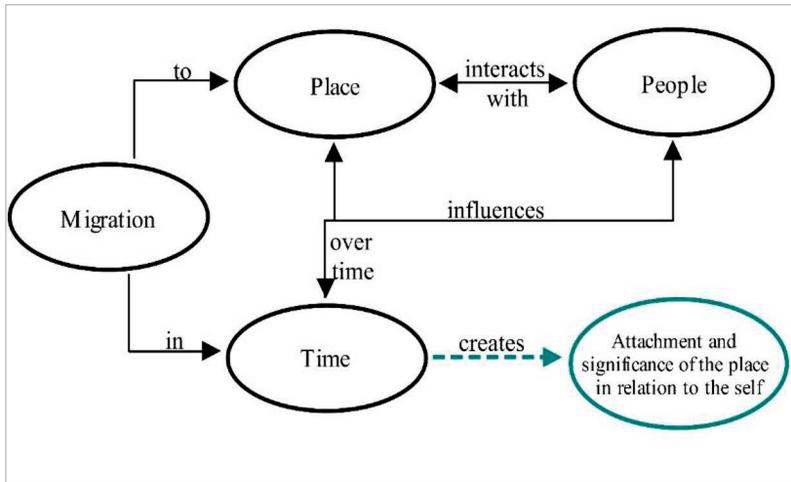Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Sense of place and the self

The empirical findings from the three slums within the city area of Khulna suggest that Khulna is the first choice among coastal residents because it is the nearest urban area in the event of a climatic disaster, such as cyclones Aila and Sidr. While conducting the fieldwork, these particular city slums were chosen based on the concentration of migrants who had faced such displacements. The fieldwork findings show that most of the migrants who had to relocate to these slums, due to environmental catastrophes such as a cyclone, flood, excessive salinity and such, wished to remain in their current dwelling locality and had developed

a 'sense of place' (Relph 1976). One of the interviewees showed his sense of connectedness when he said:

'We have lost everything there. This place has become our home now' (interview with Abdul Momin, Rupsha slum, 30th October, 2016).

In terms of the findings in the literature, similar observations were also made during this study's fieldwork. The sense of place grows over time. Abdul Momin referred to himself in relation to his current locality. His social identity became centred around that place of living. At the same time, when asked, he noted that the place provided him with a point of recognition. Thus, in nature, the interactions are two way. Similarly, scholars such as Hauge (2007) emphasised that the interdependent relationship between the place and the people narrates as a unit that centres the reciprocal influence between the people and the place. Place is also seen as a product of its physical attributes, human conceptions, and the activities that take place there, as termed by Canter (1997). The migrants' feelings of being at home, otherwise known as rootedness (Hauge 2007), which they had developed over time in relation to their current dwelling places and the local environment indicated that their had taken on a sense of place a positive feeling for the locality they were currently in. Scholars have termed this positive psyche as having a place identity (Proshansky *et al.* 1983). When people show signs of recognising themselves in relation to the physical place they are located in, they are in fact manifesting one of five central functions of place identity (Hauge 2007). Thus, they attach a socio-cultural meaning to their physical environment. Figure 3 shows that after migration, interactions between the people and the place become significant to the process of identity-making. Over time, these interactions help migrants grow attachments and assign significance to the places to which they have migrated. The place refers to the socio-cultural meanings people attach to it in relation to the physical environment and then there emerges the identity people attach to the place or the place identity they establish (Proshansky *et al.* 1983).

Figure 3: Identity-making process through interactions between place and people over time.

Source: Authors own draft, based on findings from a field survey and secondary literature, 2016.

Migrants also develop a sense of sameness that is based on various criteria. These criteria include similar migratory conditions, places of origin, the similarity of events for which they had chosen to migrate, and so on. During informal conversations in the fieldwork, informants noted how their relocation had changed their lifestyles and livelihoods, along with how they had been treated once they had migrated after the two climatic events. One such respondent, Motahar, age 33, had owned land and run a business back 'home' (he referred to his original location as the home from where he had to migrate to the current location). After Aila which was a devastating cyclone he and his family were forced to relocate because of decreasing business conditions and being trapped by loans. In the slum where he was residing, he had relatives who had been living there for a long time prior to his and his family's relocation. After the environmental event, he got in touch with these relatives and made the decision to relocate to secure his family's livelihood and children's education and, thus, their future. He felt at home there, at the time of the study, after having lived there 'all these years'. He also felt a connectedness to those who had also migrated under similar conditions to his. In his words, his relatives made it feel more like home for him, since he mentioned them as 'nijer jon'.

Migration experts, such as Massey et al. (1993), point out that social network theory is one of the prime theories of migration used to describe different aspects

of migration. In the cases discussed in this study, this theory seems to have served more significantly over the other theories presented in the literature. In the above case, the family had sought social networks in an urban area, with a view to migrating from the affected zone. Once they were settled, they began the process of blending in with the original non-migrant slum dwellers. Yet, there remained a clear distinction between these two groups migrants and non-migrant slum dwellers. When asked, a non-migrant household could easily pinpoint a migrant household by referring to the event that had forced them to migrate. Even though the two groups did not hold to any noticeable identity crisis, during the informal interviews it would be interesting to know whether this came from the migrants themselves or whether the original community members sensed this need. In addition, the forced migrants also recognised themselves as a unit against the 'other' and had developed a sense of being a group-self, which indicates the internalisation of a distinctive categorisation process taking place in their psyches.

'PEOPLE OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT'

During the fieldwork, it was evident that the migrants that had been displaced mainly due to environmental factors were in a disadvantageous position relative to the local (non-migrant) inhabitants. This does not mean that there were no interventions in local and international forms of assistance; rather, the issue for these migrants was the insufficiency in the lack of a proper and distinctive identity. Dim and Gemenne (2008) urged for a need for a definition of a term that could be used to conceptualise the issue of identity in an effective way. Another insufficiency was housing and land or homeownership. For such migrants, housing is particularly challenging. In informal discussions with the slum dwellers, it was made clear that their right to land had been degraded due to being treated as 'homeless', as being seen as such by the land and homeowners of the localities they had migrated to. In general, this homelessness status may be implicit in nature but it becomes evident when it comes to receiving any aid, especially from non-governmental organisations. This also creates a sphere of political power where the landowners play the deciding role in determining who gets what type of facility. The senses of insideness and outsideness (Relph 1976) are simultaneously functional in the psyche of both groups of inhabitants. Landowners generally have an influential presence over those to whom they rent their houses but more so if the tenant is a migrant. Regarding tenants, even though they are seen as being in the same group, they heavily differ in relation to their

stay time and migratory status. Therefore, tenants who are not migrants seem to enjoy greater status in the social hierarchy. In any case, the findings of this study note that migrants were the least-preferred group to be sanctioned assistance. For example, some of the migrants (who wished to remain unnamed) stated that they were not accepted for reasonably sized loans because they did not own any land or a house. 'Bariwalarai sob pabi. Amager to bari nei, tai hreen daei na', which translates to 'people of such forced displacement within or across a boundary, are mostly left with the fewest number of opportunities to return to their original homes' (Myers and Kent 1995). Hence, they encounter higher degrees of social discrimination, which in the case of housing and land-owning, becomes more visibly noticeable. They seem to belong to no eligible group (Keane 2004) of migrants that can receive specialised assistance after being forcefully displaced and have no clear identifiable term with which to be labelled.

Migration scholars heavily contest environmentalists' use of the term 'environmental refugees' for dislocated groups of people; they argue that in international law the term 'refugee' is specifically defined to include a group that does not fit the group under discussion (Martin 2013). Dun and Gemenne (2008) argue that this recognition is an unavoidable fact in the case of providing such migrants with appropriate assistance. The conceptualisation of such migrants also requires that a crucial step be taken to establish a precise identity (Dun and Gemenne 2008). This study finds likewise: there is a need for a distinctive categorisation for people who are displaced due to environmental events. The literature indicates the necessity of expanding the existing definitions (Dun and Gemenne 2008; Kartiki 2011; Martin 2013) and of incorporating these terminologies into a policy framework that prioritises and identifies those in need of adequate and appropriate assistance. To effectively address the future flow of such migrants, scholarly works should also signify the need for a distinctive identification both for migration and for policy-making. Despite the absence of a full-scale manifestation of the impact of climate events on migration, many argue for the prediction of migratory behaviour, to some degree, by analysing the impact of the effects of past environmental events on human migration (Reuveny 2007). Drawing on instances of mobility cases in Bangladesh, Joardar and Miller (2013) show that the type of migration, whether permanent or temporary, depends on many factors, such as migrants receiving appropriate assistance immediately after an environmental event as these migrants are more likely to be permanent in nature. McMillan (2015) argues that as climate change is thought to have substantially contributed to increasing human mobility, it will influence the scale and nature of future human displacements. Fieldwork findings suggest similar traits.

CONCLUSION

This research has contributed to a deeper understanding of how environmentally induced migration takes place and how the people who migrate perceive the process in line with where they stand in the conceptual framework of environmental migration. Two principal factors are the key points of focus here: the migration decision and the identity of an environmental migrant. On one front, the migration decision that is due to environmental shocks or hazards is hardly a separate event; rather, it is a complex mixture of interrelated variables that are socio-economic, demographic, political and environmental. On another front, once the migration decision is taken and the movement has been completed, the new place and people act as points of comparison and recognition for these migrants. These points give them a meaning that is one of both outsideness and insideness (Relph 1976). Eventually their interactions with the entire environment define what they understand about themselves and help them form new identities. Experts are concerned that the environment and its changes are playing significant roles in creating a type of human mobility that will become more complex than it already is. Findings from the study's fieldwork, though limited in context, also show this fact. People who face this type of mobility must undergo numerous changes and adjustments on various levels, starting from socio-cultural to individual ones. Nevertheless, until policy-makers properly recognise and acknowledge this group (Arnall and Kothari 2015), these migrants will always be in a constant situation of deterioration, given the catastrophes that are expected to be brought about by future environmental events. This study acknowledges the fact that the spatial scope for this study makes it difficult to get an overall idea on the questions being searched for, since the fieldwork was conducted locally. Despite the limitations, scholars have agreed on and note that the number people affected by climatic events is big enough to count as a separate migratory process, though it is not yet being added. Therefore, this study could also be conducted in some other countries so as to cross-check and validate the responses and overall scenarios pertaining to the research questions. Moreover, a transboundary research may reveal even more interesting aspects of this study in relation to how migration shapes identity in reference to place and time.

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