Privatized Resilience and Systemic Abandonment: A Qualitative Study of Climate Migrants and Climate Affected Urban Informal Settlements in Bangladesh

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Background

- Migration is a **trade-off** where migrants flee from **rural acute shocks** (cyclone, tidal surges) to **urban chronic stressors** like heat and waterlogging (Rana & Ilina, 2021)
- Projections suggest **35 million** people are at risk of migration **by 2050** (Rana & Ilina, 2021)
- **Women and marginalized groups** experience additional barriers in accessing healthcare (Evertsen &Van Der Geest, 2020)

Operational Definitions

- **Climate Migrants:** Individuals displaced by acute disasters (cyclones, floods) or slow-onset environmental degradation (erosion, salinity) (IOM, 2019)
- **Climate-Affected Communities:** Groups facing extreme risk where climate vulnerability intersects with socioeconomic factors to degrade health and security

Methodology

- 10 case studies through repeated in-depth interviews with climate migrants living in two climate-affected informal urban settlements in Dhaka and Khulna cities in Bangladesh
- Thematic framework analysis guided by the ReBuild for Resilience framework
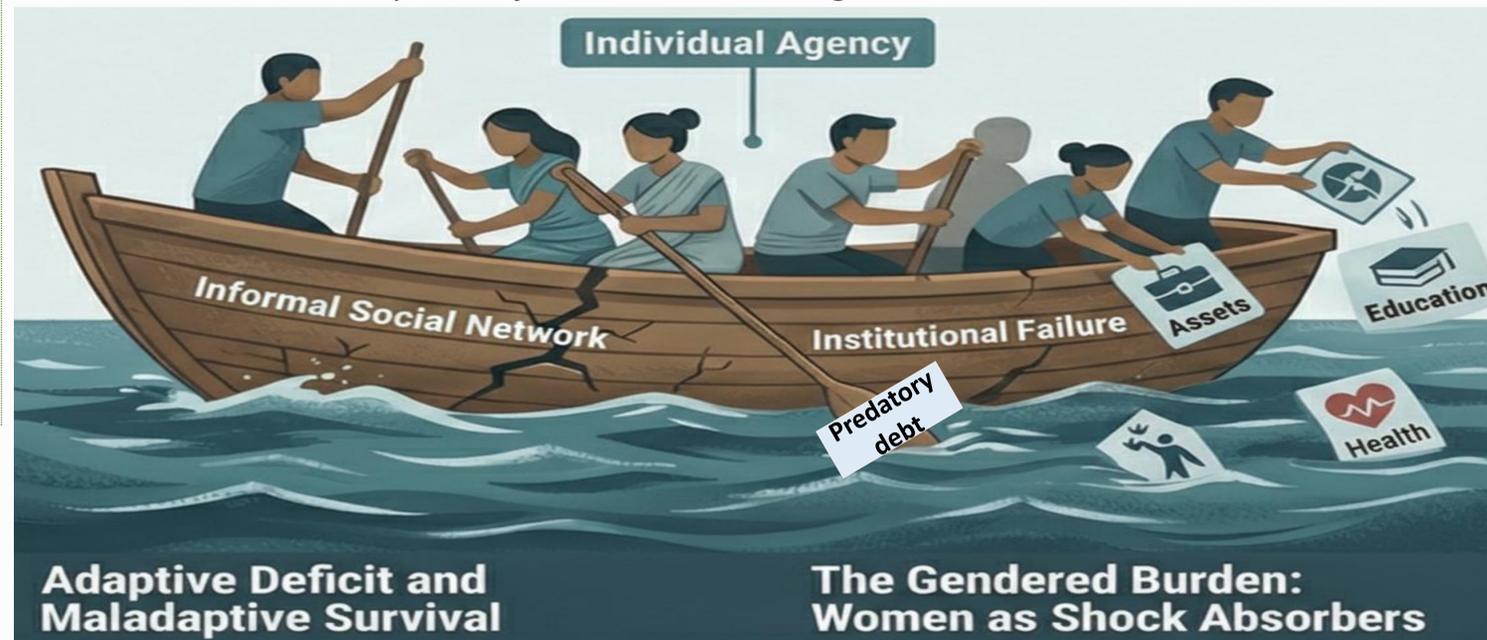
Recommendations

- Establish **climate-resilient urban health hubs** with gender-sensitive care
- **Reform social protection mechanisms** as an **alternatives** to predatory loans and **support women-led peer networks**
- **Embed gender indicators in policy** to support the marginalized women who act as the community's primary shock absorbers

🎯 Objectives

1. To examine how climate migrants and climate-affected communities living in informal urban settlements **adapt, cope,** and **build resilience strategies**.
2. To analyze **gender-based differences** in **healthcare access, health-seeking behavior,** and **physical** and **mental well-being**.

Key Massages

Resilience in Bangladesh's urban informal settlements is an individualized struggle against systemic abandonment, sustainable safety requires a shifting from a **'leaky lifeboat'** of survival toward a framework of systemic justice and inclusive governance.

Systemic Exclusion Forces Risky Choices: An "Adaptive Deficit" accrue when formal system fail to adjust to migrants (e.g., lost IDs blocking aid), compelling residents toward maladaptation strategies

Double Burden of Care and Labor: Women disproportionately absorb crisis impacts, managing household management and informal labor while sacrificing their own health

Rare Moments of Transformative Agency: True transformation is rare and emerges not from institutional support, but through exceptional individual agency and micro-acts that restore social dignity

"At least now nobody would demean me by calling me a tenant." — Farzana a female participant on the dignity gained by securing an informal community loan to build her own room

Informal Networks as Lifelines: Households rely heavily on informal social networks and relatives as the only safety net when formal systems are absent

*"My husband managed work by **talking to the people living in the same locality**... my sister's husband talked to a garage, became a **guarantor**, and managed a rickshaw for him."*- Shamima, female

Predatory Dept Spiral: When networks are exhausted, residents turn to predatory informal debt to cover food and medical emergencies

References

Evertsen, K. F., & Van Der Geest, K. (2020). Gender, environment and migration in Bangladesh. *Climate and Development*, *12*(1), 12–22. International Organization for Migration. (n.d.). *Environmental migration*. Rana, M. M. P., & Ilina, I. N. (2021). Climate change and migration impacts on cities: Lessons from Bangladesh. *Environmental Challenges*, *5*, 100242.