

INCLUSION-EXCLUSION DEBATE AND CLIMATE CHANGE: THE CASE OF RAJBANGSHI ETHNIC COMMUNITY OF BANGLADESH

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides an insight on how the politics of identity produces vulnerability for ethnic community in Bangladesh. It explores the outcomes of the social exclusion of ethnic people in terms of climate vulnerability, adaptive capacity, and successful adaptation. Aiming to provide equal opportunity, social inclusion of indigenous ethnic and scheduled caste communities in line with equal facilities to mainstream brings about crucial potentials to improve their socio-economic condition. Social exclusion lessens their capacity and resiliency associated with the amelioration of risk and vulnerability factors in terms of climate change. Rajbangshi people of Assasuni Upazila in the district Satkhira of Southwestern Bangladesh identify themselves as the distinct indigenous ethnic community. Locally they are known as scheduled caste (engaged in catching fish in the Bay of Bengal). Socially included mainstream communities have high individual, communal and institutional capacities to face climate change induced hazardous events. On the other hand, communities like Rajbangshi are more vulnerable to these events. This study found that Rajbangshi people have to pass the perilous time during cyclone, storm, thunderstorm, and lightening. The geographic location of the household makes this community more fragile to the direct heat of the storm, cyclone, salinity intrusion and flood. We know that socio-economic and institutional capacities make adaptation strategies effective. Because of their marginalized situation, these Rajbangshis have few options for successful adaptation to climate impacts. Following the methods like observation, in-depth interview, key informant interview, FGD, and case study, this study urges for the inclusion of Rajbangshis in order to enhance their adaptive capacity to meet the challenges of climate change.

KEYWORDS: *Climate Change, Ethnic Community, Identity, Inclusion, Exclusion, Vulnerability*