

Abstract

Around 40 percent of Bangladesh's population are poor people for whom a variable and unpredictable climate can critically restrict livelihood options. This is true in rural and urban areas alike, but this study focuses on the latter. Urban poverty continues to be neglected in research, policy and action for climate change adaptation in the country. The study builds on three propositions: (i) poor urban communities are places where physical and socio-economic vulnerability coincide; (ii) urban areas are exposed to three forms of climate change impact: rapid-onset events, gradual-onset processes, and cascade effects; and (iii) poor urban people are already adapting to emergent climate change impacts by actively developing various practices. The analytical framework places a strong emphasis on poor people's adaptation practices in order to understand their agency, cultural resources and economic strategies and the structural factors that both support and constrain their agency. The practices are examined in terms of three key elements: the socio-economic resources of poor urban households and communities; institutions and political economy; and external actors and resources. Six low-income settlements have been chosen for case studies from three cities – Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna. Data collection involves: mini-surveys; qualitative methods; dialogues with local academics, policymakers and civil society groups; and action research. Key analytical findings include the identification and analysis of existing practices under five broad themes (e.g. livelihoods, built environment, networks, institutions, and external supports).

Keywords: adaptation practice, Bangladesh, climate change, institutions, low-income urban settlements, political economy, poor urban communities, urban poverty

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Acknowledgements: The *CLIMURB* programme received generous initial support from the Rory and Elizabeth Brooks Foundation. The Sustainable Consumption Institute (SCI) at the University of Manchester has then offered a two-year research grant. Recently, the programme has received a prestigious three-year research grant under the ESRC-DFID Joint Scheme for Research on International Development (Poverty Alleviation) Phase 2 Call 1 (RES-167-25-0510).