

Impact of Climate Change on the Education of Coastal Bhola District, Bangladesh

Abstract

Bhola is a coastal district in the southern part of Bangladesh which is prone to natural disasters, mainly cyclones, tornadoes, and upsurges of saline water in the sea due to the impact of climate change through increasing temperature. Natural disasters are the key forces for river erosion, loss of assets, increasing poverty along with some other socioeconomic impacts. The objectives of the study were to check the impact of climate change through natural disasters on the education sector of the district by creating various challenges and vulnerabilities in the education system, resource allocation, and maintenance resulting in students dropping out, child marriage, livelihood changes, etc. There is much research on climate change and its impacts on the coastal areas of Bangladesh but publications, and research works on the same topic were not found. Content Analysis has been adopted for this study to investigate the causes and effects of a tabulation method. Related books, articles publications in journals, and features on the topic in the reputed online media have been scrutinized for this study. The coding of the content analysis has been carefully checked and synchronized with the problem statement based on the research question of the study. The impact of climate change has a significant role in student dropout because of the destruction of infrastructures, migration of people, increasing poverty, child marriage, changes in the livelihoods of the people, etc. To address this problem massive and comprehensive intervention is necessary along with increasing capacity building and adaptation of the people.

Keywords: Natural disasters, child marriage, climate change, sustainable development

Introduction:

Bangladesh, the largest deltaic plain in the world is the 7th digester-prone country due the climate change (Islam S. N., 2016). The major driver of climate change is rising temperatures due to anthropogenic activities. Global temperature has been raised by 0.11 Fahrenheit (0.06 Celsius) in each decade since 1850 which is about threefold after 1982 (0.36 Fahrenheit and 0.20 Celsius) (Lindsey, 2024) . From history back, it is observed that Bhola has been suffering seriously from cyclones, tornadoes, floods, flash floods, and droughts. As the livelihoods of the people were agriculture and farming, they suffered much and that kept them under development (Hossain, 2022). Natural calamities not only impacted livelihoods but also, their shelter, housing, infrastructures, and road communication that impacted comprehensively against the rural as well as urban development of the country. One of the scientific reports¹ published by Nature has claimed SDG 13: Climate Action is the main agenda for sustainable development for addressing other 16 SGDs by 2030. Education, health, business, entrepreneurship development, and cottage industries are the other sectors that have been impacted due to natural calamities (Biswas, 2017).

Bhola is a coastal district, in the southern part of the country which is one of the most affected districts due to climate change as the frequency of cyclones has increased gradually. Three massive cyclones attacked Bangladesh in 2023, which impacted the coastal areas as well as the southern and middle parts of the country with causality and damage to assets. Cyclone causes inundation, swipe, and damage to assets, housing, crops, castles, bridges, culverts, erosion of river banks, and damage to plantations, forest areas, and biodiversity of the districts. Bhola was seriously impacted by the Bhola Cyclone on November 12, 1970, as near about 3,00,000 people died immediately and passively more than 2,00,000. Another historic cyclone on 29 April 1991 killed 1,35,000 people and caused damage of at least 1.5 billion USD including killing innumerable castles, totally damaging the croplands, swiping and destroying road communication, institutions, etc.

Research Questions:

1. What are the impacts of climate change on the education of Bhola?
2. What is measured to address the problem in the short term and the long term substantially?

¹ The Central Role of Climate Action in Achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals by Walter Leal Filho, et al (2024)

Research Objectives:

1. To add to the existing knowledge about the impact of climate change and its causal effects of cyclones, upsurges, floods, rising sea levels, droughts, irregular monsoons, etc., especially in the coastal areas to the education with other sectors
2. To investigate the required measures to address the problem and justify the measures already taken by the government of Bangladesh and other development partners of the country.

Statement of the Problem:

Climate change is a major concern and a threat in the contemporary world. The causal effects of climate change are increasing carbon, and rising temperatures for which the frequency of cyclones, tidal waves, irregular rain, and droughts are frequently observed in the Indian Sub-continent with some other parts of the world. Bhola, a coastal district is the most affected by the rage of climate change in Bangladesh located in the southern part of the country. Due to random cyclone effects, river bank erosion, and migration of landless people, the education sector is mostly affected by sectors like agriculture, communication, infrastructural development, entrepreneurship, etc. due to river bank erosion, landslide, govt primary schools, private schools, madrasa (schools for the study of Islam) have washed away, causing troubles to the community.

Literature Review: Bhola is a district for natural calamities. Due to its geographical location, it has been prone to hazards like cyclones, tidal surges, tornadoes, erosion of river banks, etc. According to the Bakerganj Gazetier, Bhola was raised in 1235 and people started living from around 1300 AD. In 1500, both of Mogs and Portuguese established their power there and used to take tolls from the farmers and the fishermen. Bhola was under the Noakhali district up to 1869 and later it was included in the Barisal district. In 1984 Bhola was declared as an individual district with an area is 3403.48 sq. kilometers and a population of around 1.932 million (according to the census of 2022).

From the historical period, the education sector of the coastal district has been vulnerable to other sectors like agriculture, and infrastructure. The area was poverty-laden and impoverished in

Table 1. Natural disaster occurred in the study area.

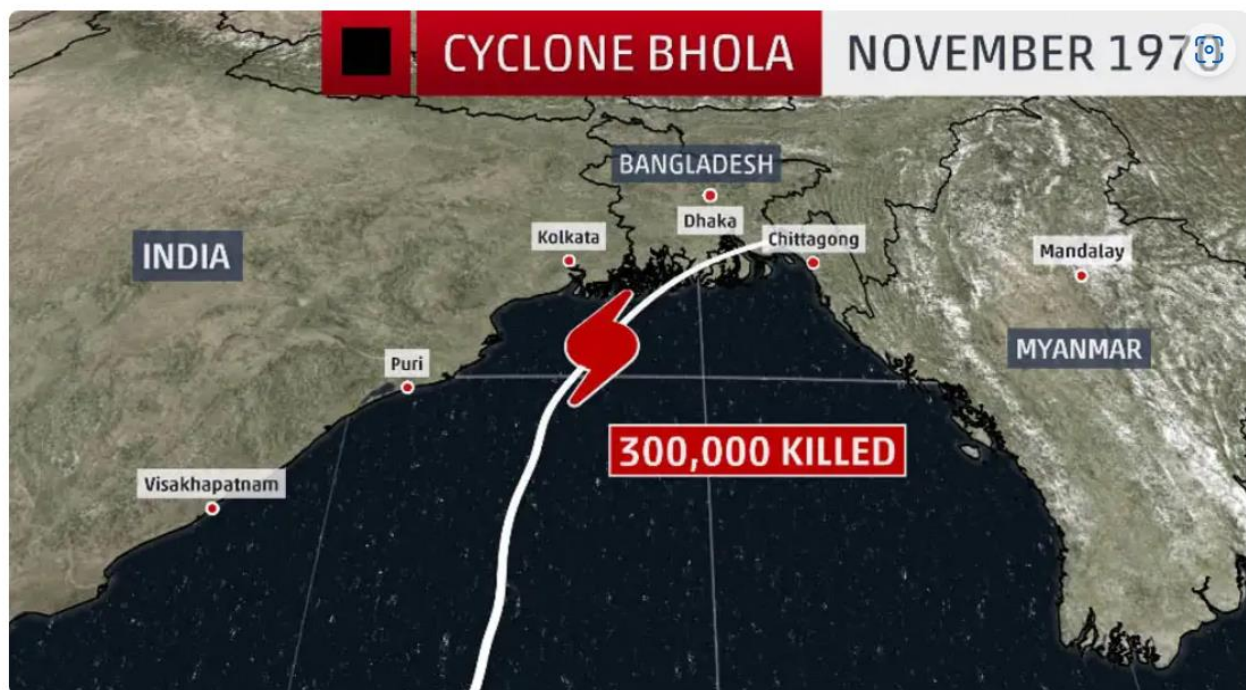
Year	Disasters	Month of occurrence	Affected district	Affected locations of Bhola district	Observed devastating features
2007	Cyclone Sidr	15 th November	SIDR has affected some 22 districts of the country. The most seriously affected districts are the coastal districts of Barguna, Patuakhali, Bagerhat, Barisal, Bhola, Pirojpur, Satkhira, Khulna, and Jhalakati.	All upazila of Bhola district was affected but Charfesson upazila comparatively mostly affected.	Heavy rain accompanying cyclones and tidal waves due to wind effects caused extensive physical destruction, damage of crops and fisheries by inundation of low land areas and ponds.
2009	Aila	25 th May	Satkhira and Khulna districts of Bangladesh suffered the severed damage along with Bagerhat, Pirojpur, Barisal, Patuakhali, Bhola, Lakshmpur, Noakhali, Feni, Chittagong, and Cox's Bazar.	Bhola district comparatively less affected than Khulna district. Though Daulatkhan, Charfesson and Monpura Upazila faced heavy losses of crop production.	It caused about 190 human deaths on coastal areas people. A heavy loss of livestock's as well as standing crops on vast tracts of land were smashed. Such kind of frequent climatic events severely affected agricultural land and caused of changed the land use pattern.
2013	Mahasen	16 th May	This tropical Cyclone mostly affected in Barguna, Patuakhali, Bhola, and Chittagong.	Low lying areas of Monpura, Charfesson, Daulatkhan and Bhola sadar upazila under Bhola districts were inundated by 1-2 feet water.	Crop losses in the Barisal division amounted to taka 40 crore more than half occurring in Charfesson and Bhola alone.
2014	Flood	July and August	Kurigram, Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat, Sirajganj, Bogura, Rangpur, Jamalpur, Nilphamari, Bhola, and Sherpur.	Bhola Sadar, Monpura, Charfesson and Daulatkhan Upazilas.	More than 30,000 people had been marooned as tidal water broke through dykes in Monpura, Daulatkhan and Tazumuddin upazilas and some crops in Kharif-II season washed away.
2017	Flood	June	Kurigram, Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat, Jamalpur, Tangail, Manikgonj and Gaibandha, Bhola, Barisal.	Monpura, Bhola Sadar, Charfesson and Daulatkhan.	Parts of the Ilisha, Kachia, in Bhola Sadar upazila had been damaged by the depression-triggered tidal pressure. The 400 hectares of low land areas was inundated by flood.
20018	Flood	July	Sylhet, Sunamgonj, Habiganj, Kurigram, Nilphamari, Sherpur, Jamalpur, Bhola.	Tazumuddin, Monpura, Bhola Sadar and Charfesson upazilas.	Low lying crops land and pond were drowned by flood and T. Aman rice cultivation in Kharif-II season being late to cultivation.

logistic support, communication, and even a good look at political wills (due to lack of consciousness of the society). It may be due to the regular hits of cyclones, tornadoes, and river

bank erosion, the consistency of development in different sectors was interrupted. In Table 1 details of some natural disasters are given.

Adapted from Islam, et al (2020): Impact of Cyclone and Flood on crop and fish production in Bhola District of Bangladesh

Two historic cyclones of Bhola: Bhola was seriously affected by a heavy cyclone named Bhola on November 12, 1970. Around 3 lacs people died instantly by the storm and upsurge of the Bay of Bengal. Standing crops, road communication infrastructures, and cattle were damaged seriously. Almost the coastal district was far behind from the other parts of the country. The country was going through a nationalistic movement to be freed from the Pakistan regime. Pakistan's Government didn't take proper measures to address the incurring loss of Bhola which expedited the movement of independence of the country. The mass movement for the independence of the country has been grown up against the rulers of then Pakistan who ignored the fatal impacts of the cyclone.



The white line denotes the track of the Great Bhola Cyclone in November 1970.

Fig 1: Route map of cyclone Bhola

Fig 2: Devastation by cyclone Bhola



(Source: The Deadliest Tropical Cyclone on Record Killed 300,000 People by Chris Dolce and Brian Donegan May 01, 2019)

Aerial view of the coastal area of Patuakhali littered with dead cattle after it was hit by the tropical cyclone center in November 1970. (Express Newspapers/Getty Images).

Education in the Coastal District, Bhola: Education in Coastal Bhola district is somewhat challenging and different from other parts of the country due to the hardship of easy communication as major parts of the districts are **disconnected by waterbodies like rivers, canals and being the shore of the Bay of Bengal. Though Bangladesh has achieved the target of 100% enrolment achievement in primary education as per the target** of SDG-4, the enrolment in the Bhola district is unsatisfactory. According to Ph.D. research² by Md Ahasun Habib, from Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP), the dropout rate is 24.34%. At least 66.7% of the primary

² Stakeholders' perception of SDG-4: Investigating inclusiveness and quality in primary education of selected char areas in Bangladesh

schools are out of smooth communication. Though almost all of the schools have school committees, only 43.3% have taken the initiative to achieve SDG-4³. The researcher claims that most of the schools do not start school on time. Not only that, Schools are run by proxy and para teachers⁴. There are only 15 % of teachers who are appointed systematically by the government. Only there are 10.12% and 40% from non-government primary schools. The unfortunate finding of the report is that the teachers visit schools only two to four days a month. It is clear that these schools lack teachers, teaching, monitoring, and supervision, and the factors arise only from remoteness, inaccessibility, and lack of permanent structures which have increased the sufferings of the education sector of the country in the coastal area of the country. In brief, the sorry state of the education sector of Bhola is the inaccessibility due to the impoverishment communication network which is also caused by river erosion, landslides, and likewise other hazards.

An investigation and scientific report accomplished International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) recently published in the Daily Star (Dated February 12, 2024) from Bangladesh has claimed that 12-18% (1/7 of the total population of the country) of the coastal area of Bangladesh will go under the sea by 2050, creating a huge number of people as refugees for the climate change. Currently, the average yearly loss by the cyclone is 0.7% of the GDP which is \$ 1 billion. 6-9% of the total rice production will be decreased with severe intrusion by saline water in the sub-layer mainly in the coastal area.

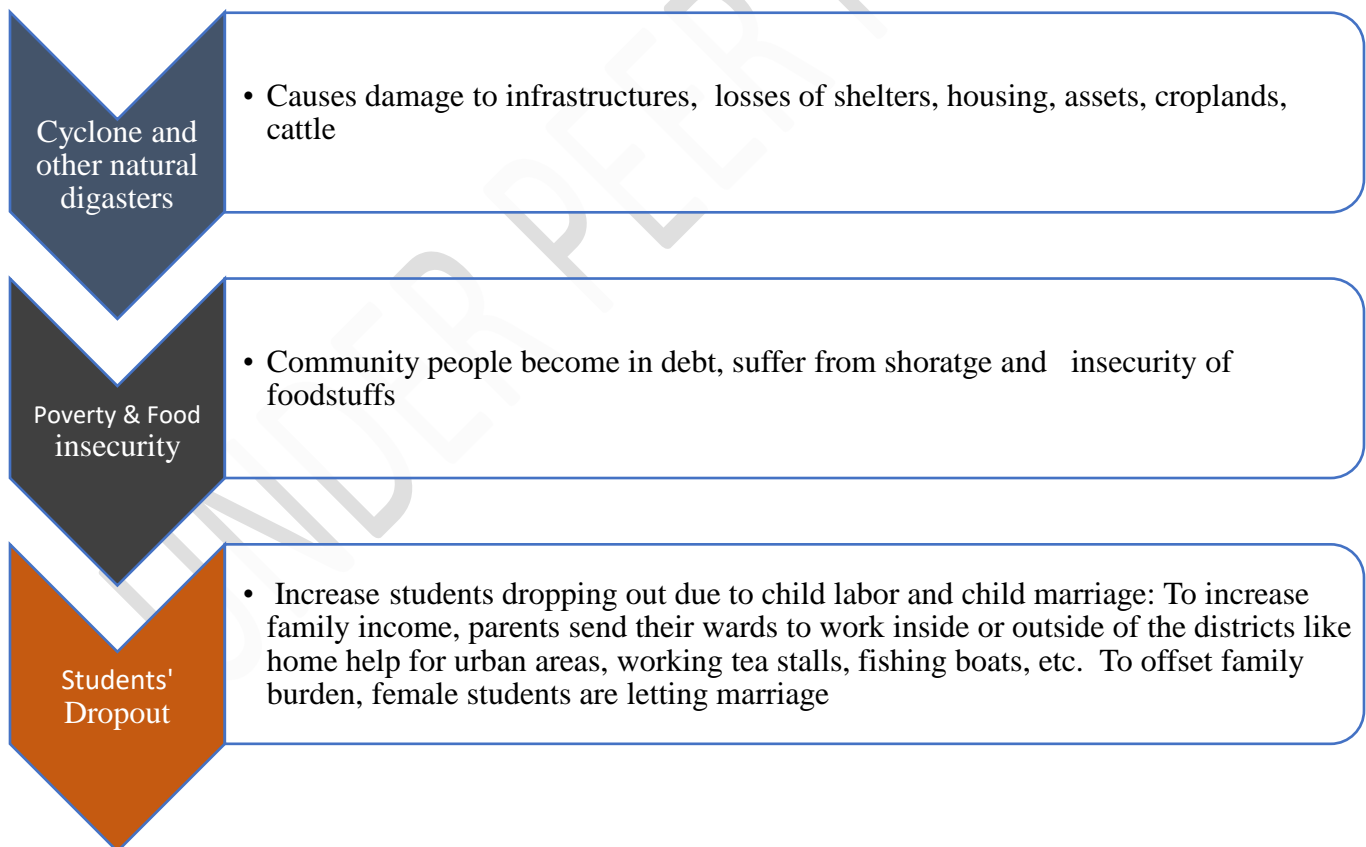
A report published by the World Economic Forum (WEF) claims that vulnerability due to climate change has caused many difficulties including dropping out of students increasing poverty, food insecurity, and other social impacts like child marriage, polygamy, malnutrition, etc. (trust.org., 2022). In Table 2, the drivers of students dropping out have been chalked out, connecting natural calamities like cyclones, flash floods, etc.

³ Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education

⁴ Permanent teachers select teachers from the available resources

Another report titled *Climate Disasters Drive Bangladesh Children from Classrooms to Work*⁵ published in the Thomson Reuters News by Mosabber Hossain on May 9, 2022, focused on the issues discussed in Table 2. It is unfortunate, that children who drop out mainstream of education are engaging in risky hazardous works like shipbreaking yards, chemical factories, etc. The same report claims that 7 million children are working in Bangladesh and the schooling students drop out rate is 17% which is alarming for the nation.

Table 2: Drivers Connecting students' dropout



⁵ <https://news.trust.org/item/20220507212405-85gbq>

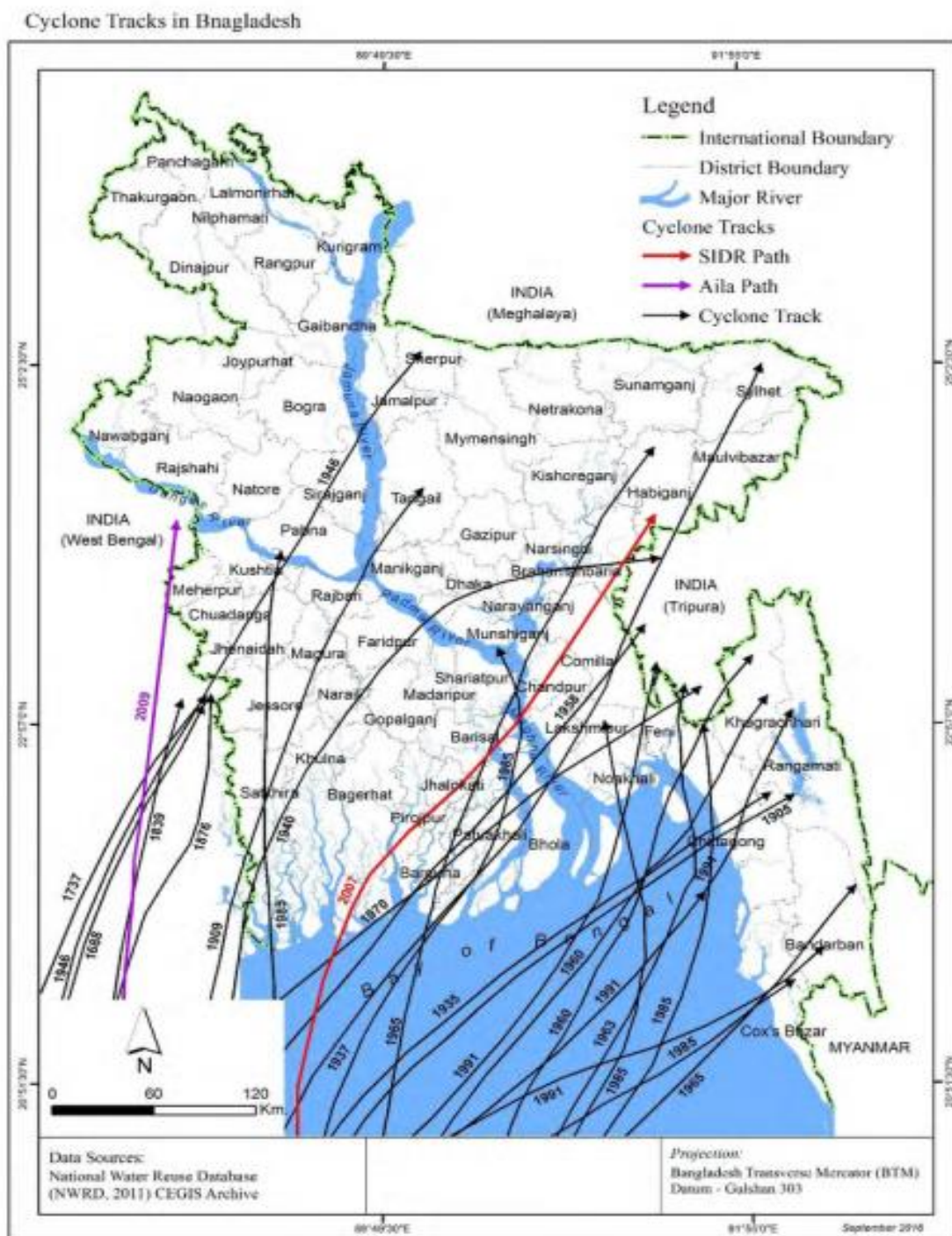


Fig 3: Risk from major cyclones during 1960-2009

Source: CEGIS, 2011

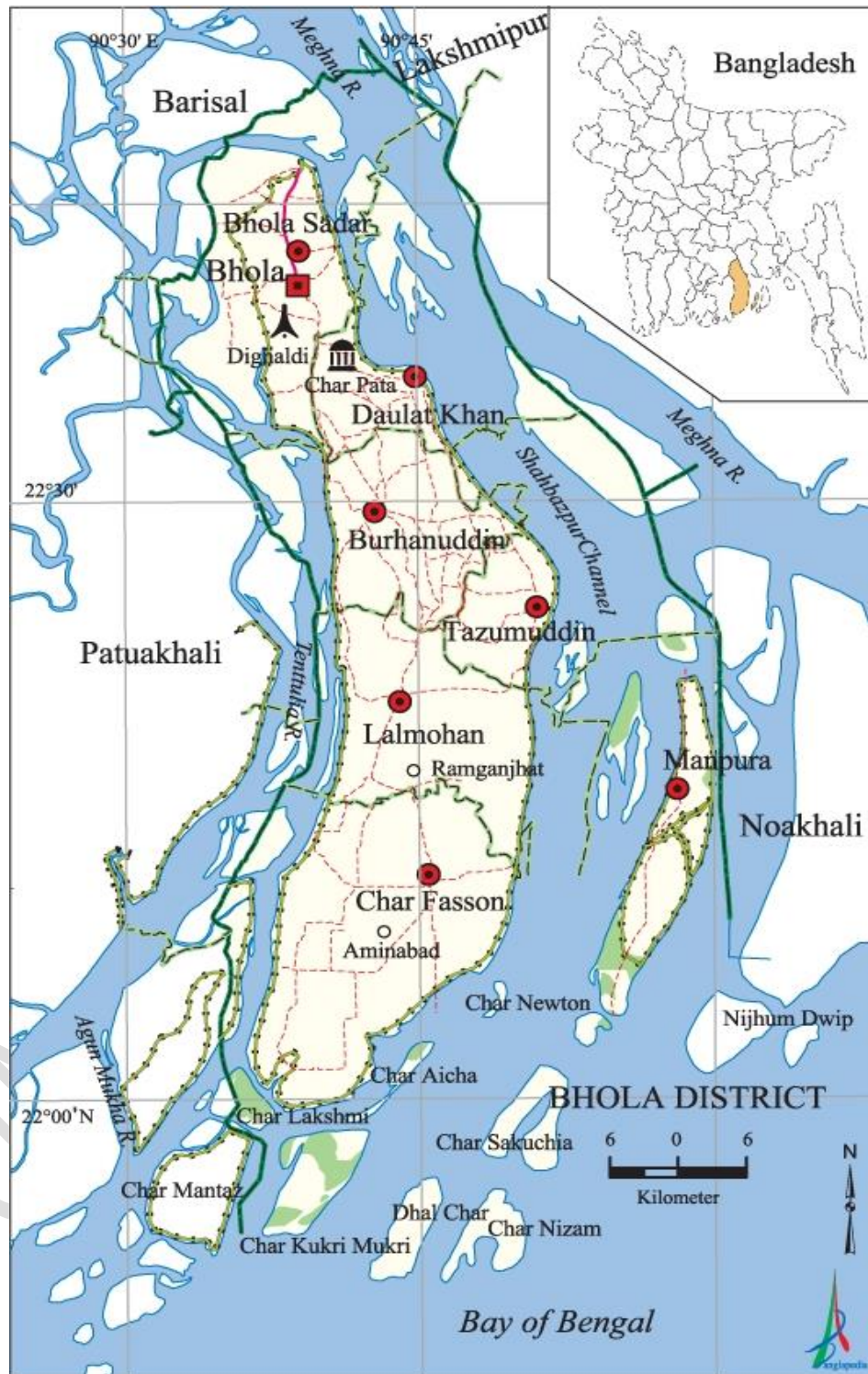
from the mainstream of education due to river bank erosion, infrastructures damaged by natural disasters, early marriage of female students, and migration of the people due to natural calamities. ‘There is many case

studies published in different print and electronic media that people who are migrated due to river erosion, changing of livelihoods, people hardly think about the education of their wards' that has been reported by the Daily Standard on its June 13, 2021, in its report named 'How climate change is undermining education in coastal areas of Bangladesh''. In 2016, at least 50 primary schools of Bhola were damaged totally with partial and full damage to 105 high schools, 20 madras, and colleges due to a cyclone that has been reported by then the District Education Officer Nalini Ranjan Roy (Jewel, 2016). It is also noted that all the educational institutions were damaged by the deadly Bhola Cyclone and Cyclone Gorki that was in 1970 and 1991 which led to massive damages in the education sector of the district. Cyclone Aila, Sidr, and Ampan, also have heavy impacts on the same sector.

Climate Change impact and development of Bhola:

Research Gap: Though there are many kinds of research about the impact of climate change in different sectors including the education sector of the country and different parts of the world with the best of my search any research, article, or any form of report was not found as the same or close title.

Fig 4: Study Area⁶: Coastal District, Bhola



⁶ Source of the Map:

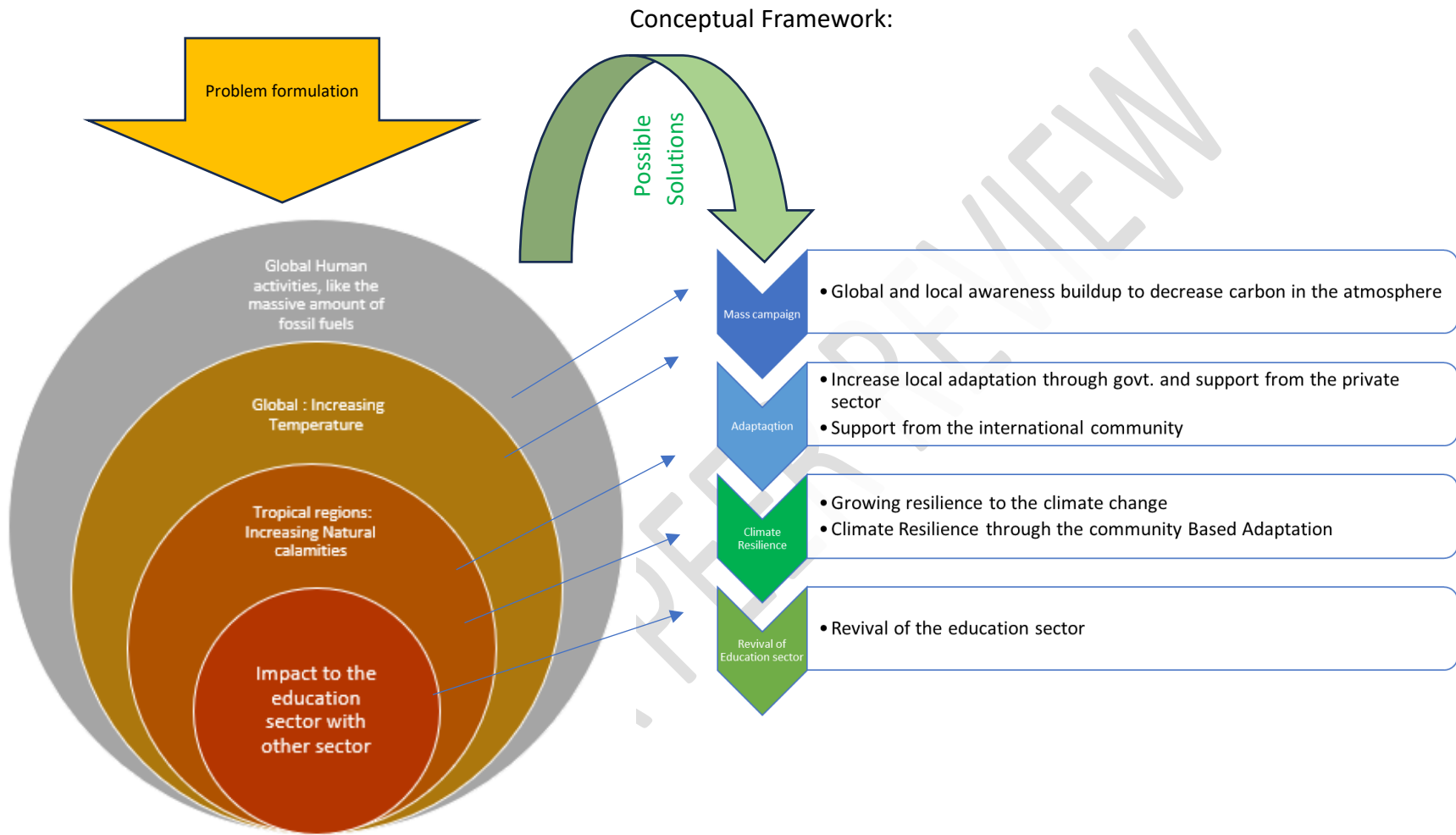


Fig 5: Conceptual Framework

Methodology: This research has been administered based on content analysis. Data have been collected from different research papers, journals, books, and print and electronic media from home and abroad. Coding has been done as per the research questions and objectives of the research. The findings of the research have been accumulated through coding and keywords which are connected to the answers to the research questions. At the same time, justification of the coding has been accomplished by the team and compared with other research close to this topic.

Reasons behind the content analysis method: The qualitative analysis name content analysis has been adopted for the convenience of the study to keep the research low-cost, more explanatory to address and find out the divers of climate changes, its impacts and aftershocks and easy to interpret by a large number of audiences, even by the common people who are much related with climate change, its research, academic activities its impacts, etc.

Table 3: **Content Analysis**

Content Analysis Tabulation Techniques

Research Question	Interpretation Content & Coding (Causes and effects)	Explanation with example(s)	Our points/Counter argument if any)
1. What are the impacts of climate change on the education of Bhola?	Students dropout	The education sector is more vulnerable in the coastal areas (Jui, 2021). Bhola is seriously impacted by almost every major cyclone, tornadoes, erosion of river banks, and their subsequent effects (Bank, 2024).	From the cited content this argument is well-recognized that due to natural calamities, students drop out is taking place.
	Destruction of academic structures	In each of the cyclones, most of the academic structures were impacted. Most of the schools had permanent damage or even partial destruction. Due to poor infrastructure, the sustainability of the education is not working.	Due to the river bank erosion, permanent structures cannot be established which is another reason for increased vulnerability to the education sector

Research Question	Interpretation Content & Coding (Causes and effects)	Explanation with example(s)	Our points/Counter argument if any)
	Migration	River bank erosion is the main driver of migration of the people causing the loss of their homes, cropland, and livelihoods which is evidenced in Bhola. For example, the sustainable forests and livelihoods (SUFAL) project run by the Forest Department of Bangladesh has found that their beneficiaries have left one location for another for the erosion of the river bank at Char Jahiruddin FCV ⁷ .	River bank erosion induces migration as people lose their homes, livelihoods, and croplands and it is evidenced in another research 'River Bank Erosion, Induced Population Migration, and Adaptation Strategies in the Sirajganj Sadar Upazila, Bangladesh' by Ali, et al (2021)
	Child Marriage	Due to the loss of everything in the erosion of the river bank, and loss of livelihoods, agricultural/farmland poverty arises which increases child marriage in the community (Bhuiyan, 2017). Around 150 are at risk of child marriage out of them a huge number are in the affected areas of climate change (Islam M. , 2021). the sub-Saharan region is at the top of child marriage followed by India and Indonesia according to a report by UNICEF in 2019 though Bangladesh has reduced the trend from 90% to 51% from 1970 to 2019 (Islam M. , 2021)	Social instability occurs after any natural calamity due to a shortage of food and economic burden. It is quite normal; families try their best to offset the family cost and let the underage female child marry.
	Social unrest	It has been evidenced that after natural calamities, and political unrest some social unrests like encroaching of other homelands, and belongings have been occupied by the influential peoples of the community.	Economic unrest is the key driver of social unrest. All of the economic unrest influences social unrest and vice -versa which is much evidenced in the famine of 1943 in Bengle and 1974, in Bangladesh.
2. What is measured to address the problem in the short term and the long term substantially?	Interpretation Content & Coding (Solutions)	Explanation with example(s)	
	School on Boat	As to stopping cyclones, tornadoes are not a problem to address overnight, some measures should be taken just as	This type of schooling is already in practice by <i>Shidhulai Swanirvar</i>

⁷ Forest Conservation Village

Research Question	Interpretation Content & Coding (Causes and effects)	Explanation with example(s)	Our points/Counter argument if any)
		temporary or movable schools. For easy movability and effective learning, schools on the old ship may be set up by the government which may be full of resources with classrooms, libraries, and other facilities.	<i>Sangstha</i> (SSS) for the flood-affected areas with the financial support of the Commonwealth of Learnings (COL) ⁸
	Setting Cyclone ⁹ Shelter	More schools cum cyclone centers should be built to support the disaster-impacted people and schools after disaster can continue their academic activities.	There are very few cyclone centers in the study area with low maintenance and required facilities. Though it has been practiced, as per the requirement, these are not enough. Last but not least, Spacious cyclone shelters should be prepared for the cattle so that, people might not lose their animal husbandry
	Training	Teachers' students and even the community should bring under training how they can save their schools, academic logistics, and what they will do after the impacts of the digesters.	Hands-on and skill development training should be adopted for smart agriculture ¹⁰ , temporary farming in the marshy land, vegetable cultivation in the canal, river water in the off-season—poultry farming, duck rearing, etc.
	Community-Based Adaptation ¹¹ (CbA)	Community-based adaptation should be used to resilience to the impact of climate change if a community helps the govt to set up its schools on the safe and relatively high land rather than on the low land and river bank (Sultana, 2022).	Some of the schools, and madrasas are already in the high or relatively settled land and have been set up with the help of the community and local govt.

⁸ <https://www.col.org/news/floating-boat-schools-bangladesh/>

⁹ Some of the cyclone centers in the coastal areas are working as temporary schools just after natural calamities before repairing schools. In some case this is permanent.

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Research Question	Interpretation Content & Coding (Causes and effects)	Explanation with example(s)	Our points/Counter argument if any)
	Indigenous knowledge/skills	In everywhere in the world indigenous knowledge for every problem may be applied. In the case of agriculture in the coastal area of Bangladesh, to save the crops from salinity intrusion, farmers are using different methods creating dams, rotation of crops, digging canals to pass the saline water, etc. (Barua, 2023) .	Community members apply their indigenous knowledge to protect the setups by creating fencing using wooden piles, pillars, sandbags, temporary dams to protect from flood water, etc.
	Community-Based learnings ¹²	Community-based learning both for skills development training ¹³ , capacity building ¹⁴ , and academic activities is to be based on the geographical position of the community.	Due to continuous fighting with nature, community people are more resilient, hardworking, and have much experience in fighting climate change. Sometimes they know best how to survive in a challenging situation.

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Summary of the Findings: From the literature review, through the process of content analysis, information connecting climate change has been gathered in the coding system where the causes and effects of climate change on education in the coastal area of Bhola have been outlined. Students dropping out mainly causes the loss of assets, infrastructure, livelihoods, food insecurity, and migration due to river erosion. Measures to address the problem have been outlined like capacity building of the people through training, infrastructure development, community-based adaptation, community-based learning, and using indigenous knowledge.

Conclusion: Coastal Bhola is the region that is much impacted due to climate change. Many natural disasters have raged in the region resulting in the killing of hundreds and thousands of people, cattle, and wildlife, destroying forest ecosystems, agriculture, along with education sector of the district. Salinity intrusion is one of the major problems of the land which also impacts agriculture, the health of living beings, forest crops, and the biodiversity of the forest land. Govt has set its key priorities for the coastal area of the country to increase resilience, capacity building, and infrastructure development in its plan Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan (MCP) 2022-2041. Coastal afforestation is one of the measures named for creating a ‘coastal belt’ by the plantation of mangrove species which is not sufficient to fight climate change rather a massive realistic comprehensive plan should be taken immediately.

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