

TITLE: Shifting Agrarian Landscapes: Climate Change and Adaptation in Bangladesh

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Projected changes in global climate will have an impact on people throughout the world. However, their effects may be particularly severe in the densely populated and ecologically fragile lowland areas of the Ganges Delta, in which the vast majority of Bangladesh is situated. For rural peasants, these transformations are already yielding dramatic demographic, social, ecological, and economic shifts as new patterns of circular migration, farming practices, and pressure on agricultural land and water resources are rapidly reorganizing village-life and changing Bangladesh's agrarian landscapes. Far from occurring in isolation, these shifts may overlap and work in parallel or in conflict with each other generating further changes in the organization of rural production. Such changes include the increasing concentrations of land in large-holder farms in new commodities (e.g., shrimp cultivation) focused on urban and international markets. They also may include the changing role of conservative Islamist religious institutions in the countryside who have increasing purchase in the provisioning of resources for the rural poor. While many of these phenomena have been explored in isolation, there remains a critical dearth of information about the relationships between climate change and other forms of agrarian transformation.

As these processes of change accelerate, there emerges a pressing need to understand not just the dynamic relationships between them but, as importantly, the responses and strategies of those on the "front lines" of climate change. Such perspectives might yield information critical not just in project planning, but also in scientific and social scientific understandings of the intersection between ecological and social processes. As such, understanding climate change from a community-level can provide a critical complement to broader-based assessments of environmental change. We wish to engage these issues by exploring the micro-processes of adaptation and survival in four villages in Bangladesh. Specifically, the study asks two timely and pressing questions that shed light on both the present and future of rural responses to climate change in Bangladesh. First, *how do rural dwellers think about climate changes and link them to their daily lives and production practices?* Second, *what strategies of adaptation are rural dwellers employing to address the range of different changes and challenges they link to climate change?* Third, *how and to what extent are these changes linked to other forms of social, ecological, and agrarian transformation in Bangladesh?* We suggest that using community-based approaches to address these questions might, potentially, yield new and critical perspectives in ongoing discussions about climate change, adaptation, and grounded responses to rapid rural change.

