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SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION OF CLIMATE MIGRANT OLDER WOMEN: A STUDY ON SLUM DWELLERS IN DHAKA CITY

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Abstract

Climate migrants living in the urban slums are searching for better and secure life. But urban slums located mostly in low lying environmentally hazardous area are coupled with inadequate facilities of food, shelter, sanitation and health care that make their life even worse. The current paper is a descriptive type of quantitative study conducted in Dhaka to review socioeconomic living condition of the slum dwellers. Older Women are the vulnerable groups in the society in terms of climate change. Such older women living with messy and unhealthy environment are the target group for this research. The study conducted among the slums of Dhaka with purposive sample survey, KII and in depth qualitative interviews of 50 selected climate migrant slum dwellers. The study reveals the severe need to give the proper facility and services as the basic requirements for their standard of living. The real challenge was to upgrade the people's mind to rethink about older person. Finally, planned migration and secured socio-economic factors are suggested through this paper to lessen the exposure to further poverty of urban poor.

Keywords: *Climate migrant, older women, slum dweller, living condition*

1. Introduction

Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries facing the adverse effects of climate change, including migration (Sikder, 2015). Many Bengalis have pushed to migrate out of their communities due to climate change-induced pressures such as more frequent extreme weather events, rising sea levels, soil salinity and flooding (Ismail, 2016). Environmental displacement has already become intense in geographically and environmentally vulnerable areas in Bangladesh. Thus, climate induced migration to big cities or nearby places is getting spontaneous over the last few decades. For instance, frequent exposure to natural disasters makes coastal people often bound to migrate in search of secure lives and livelihoods. Migration to urban areas is a regular phenomenon but climate induced displacement forced to migrate to cities over the recent years is a matter of concern (Akter, 2009).

During disaster, this vulnerability increases. Though disasters do not discriminate, the socially constructed role of women makes them the vulnerable group during disaster. Because women have less access to resources, they are victims of the gendered division of labor, they are primarily responsible for domestic duties and they do not have the liberty of migrating to look for work following a disaster (World Bank, 2005). In Bangladesh, the situation of older women is much worse than older men because of their longer life expectancy and extreme vulnerability due to social and economic marginalization. Other reasons behind the feminization of poverty in old age include gender discrimination, pattern of economic dependency, reproductive and family responsibilities, widowhood, rural and religious tradition etc (Rahman, 2010). However, for the purpose of the topic under discussion, climate change as among the problems they face happen to

be the focus (Chiemeka, 2013). Older people may be physically, financially and emotionally less or none resilient in coping with the effects of a changing climate than the rest of the population (Haq, Whitelegg & Kohler, 2008).

In Dhaka, meanwhile, a teeming megacity of more than 15 million people packed into a 325 square km radius, the climate refugees are finding a city where everything is clogged – from roads and pavements to rivers and drains. The slums, already home to hundreds of thousands, are expanding rapidly. Within two decades, the city's population could double to 30 million ("Dhaka: the city", 2015). Furthermore, the nuclear family is increasing in Bangladesh day by day and older people left alone living separately from their family and becoming vulnerable. This condition demands more health and welfare services and more provision to the elderly support system (Islam, 2012). Furthermore, the nuclear family is increasing in Bangladesh day by day and older people left alone living separately from their family and becoming vulnerable. This condition demands more health and welfare services and more provision to the elderly support system (Islam, 2012). Due to widespread problems of climate migrant older women it is now a national concern of the developing countries like Bangladesh. Many studies related to situation of older women were done internationally. There are few researches on socio economic condition among climate migrant of Dhaka city in Bangladesh context. But no national and international research paper focused on the climate migrant relationship between the socio-economic condition and climate migrant older women. So, the study represents the relationship between socio-economic condition and climate migrant older women of Dhaka city in Bangladesh context which will be more useful for academic purpose in worldwide and helpful for taking preventive measurement against climate migrant older women stress.

The policy makers of Bangladesh may be benefited from this study for developing policy against mental stress among climate migrant older women. Such study on ageing can also be the tool for the societal progress, provided the Bangladeshi policy makers to come up with appropriate policy responses to activate the potential of older person. Wellbeing of the ageing population has become a main concern for the government and policy makers. This is a concern from socio-economic, socio-psychological and health perspective. Therefore knowing the condition and role of vigorous aged residents is of great significance to the researchers and policy makers.

2. Objectives

The principal objective of the study is to know the current socio-economic situation and vulnerability of those who have moved to urban area and started living as the slum dwellers. The secondary objectives of this study are to make out the reason of migration for the settlement of urban slam, identify their basic requirements according to their standard of living and give recommendations how to make planed migration and socio economic factors lessen exposure to further poverty of urban poor.

3. Literature Review

A series of studies were conducted using a monthly panel data collected in the Chitwan Valley of Nepal that covers a period of ten years. Though the primary objective was only to study the effects of environmental degradation on out-migration, all the studies disaggregate the effect by gender. The methods and results of these studies somewhat differ. However, a common conclusion is that for women in the Chitwan Valley, an increase in the collection time for fodder and firewood, and decline in agricultural productivity increases the probability of local (within district) out-migration. Climate change-induced migration for women is therefore closely linked with deterioration of natural resources as they are both the primary collectors and users (Shrestha & Bhandari 2007, Bohra-Mishra & Massey 2010). In addition to environmental degradation and reduced access to natural resources, climate variability and natural disasters also have an impact on women's likelihood of migration. Using a cross-sectional survey of North Carolina coastal residents conducted in 1999 following the disastrous Hurricane, Bonnie, Bateman & Edwards (2002) argue that women are more likely than men to evacuate in the wake of a natural disaster. Their findings indicate that women are more likely to evacuate than men because of socially

constructed gender differences such as family obligations and care giving; greater response to evacuation incentives such as availability of a vehicle and neighbor evacuation; higher exposure to risk due to their low economic status and special medical needs; and higher perceived risk due to care giving responsibilities (Bateman & Edwards, 2002).

In contrast, however, in developing countries where women's mobility is highly restricted such as Bangladesh, women are more likely to not evacuate and die due to natural disasters (Fothergill 1996, p.41). Therefore, even voluntary migration of women due to climate change is highly correlated to social contexts. Women's ability to cope is another aspect of their vulnerability to climate change-induced migration (Fothergill, 1996).

In another study, Lambrou & Piana (2006) argue that women's ability to adapt to climate change depends on their control over land and money; access to credit and safeguards; low dependency ratios; good health; personal mobility; and household entitlements. These arguments are supported by ethnographic evidence which was collected by Action Aid and the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) in a report on the impacts of climate change on poor South Asian women (India, Bangladesh and Nepal) and their adaptation needs and priorities (Mitchell, Tanner & Lussier, 2007). The study, which was conducted in the Ganga river basin in the aftermath of massive riparian flooding, also finds that poor women particularly from Nepal were forced to migrate locally due to their low adaptive capacity (Mitchell et al, 2007).

Most of the writers give importance on climate change, women and migration problems and show how the problems affected the lives of the people. For this perspective, this paper particularly represents living condition of older women slum dwellers, its implications for life security and focusing planned migration of displaced people as one of the adaptation measures of climate change can reduce vulnerability of the poor.

4. Methodology

A descriptive type of quantitative study was carried out from September to December 2017. General information was collected from the *Jhilpar* slums of Shahjadpur area in Dhaka. A purposive sampling technique was adopted. A total of 50 participants were interviewed. The respondents belonged to the age 60 years and above. KII (Key Informant Interview) includes household's Socio-economic factors characterizing living conditions, physical environment, dietary practice and health outcome have been analyzed by applying statistical technique, frequency distribution.

A pre-tested, modified, semi structured, self administrated interview schedule was designed based on living condition of the climate migrant older women in Dhaka City. Data were checked, cleaned and edited properly before entry and analysis.

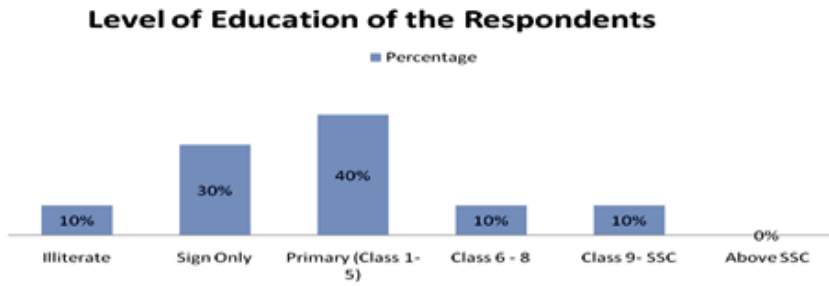
5. Findings and Discussion

The results description has been made with obtained data and presented that with tables, charts, diagrams and by other formats.

Table 1: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to Education

Level of Education of the Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	5	10%
Sign Only	15	30%
Primary (Class 1-5)	20	40%
Class 6 - 8	5	10%
Class 9- SSC	5	10%
Above SSC	0	0%
Total	**50**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2017



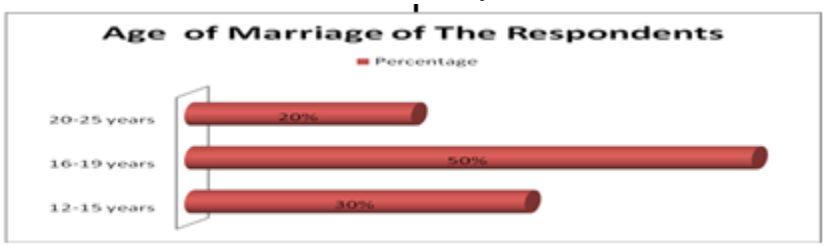
Source: Field Survey, 2017

Based on survey data, 10% of older women have no education. Though, only 30% respondents have to do sign only and 40% respondents have some sort of primary education. Besides, there have not found any of the respondents educated above SSC.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to Age of Marriage

Age of Marriage	Frequency	Percentage
12-15 years	15	30%
16-19 years	25	50%
20-25 years	10	20%
Total	**50**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2017



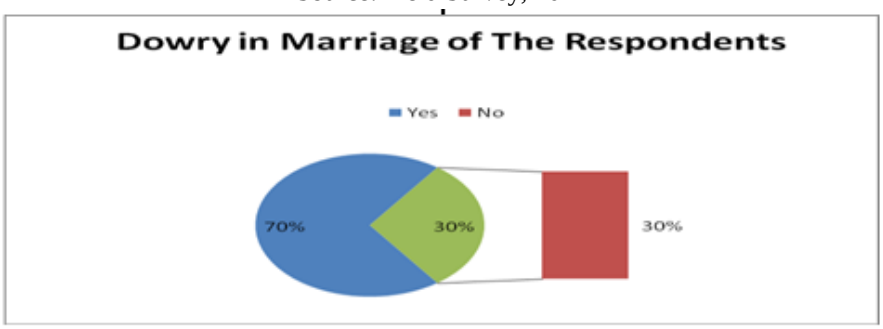
Source: Field Survey, 2017

According to survey data, 50% of the respondents had to get married within 16-19 years.

Table 3: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to dowry in marriage

Dowry in Marriage	Percentage
Yes	70%
No	30%
Total	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2017



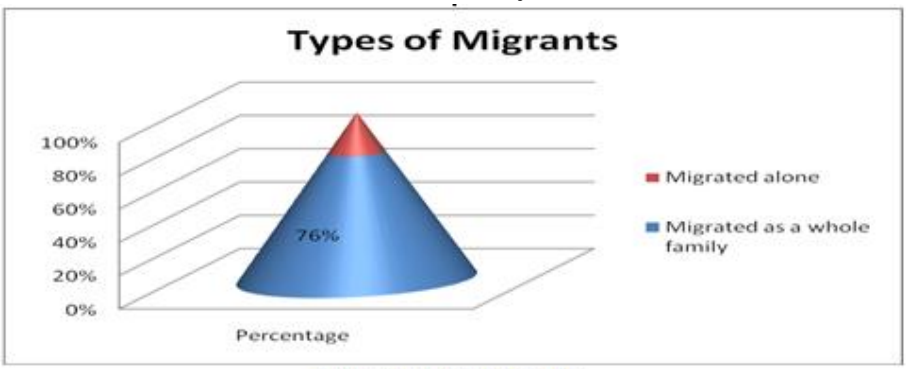
Source: Field Survey, 2017

According to survey data, 70% of the respondent's families had to give dowry in marriage of the respondents.

Table 4: Types of migrants

Types of Migrants	Frequency	Percentage
Migrated as a whole family	38	76%
Migrated alone	12	24%
Total	**50**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2017



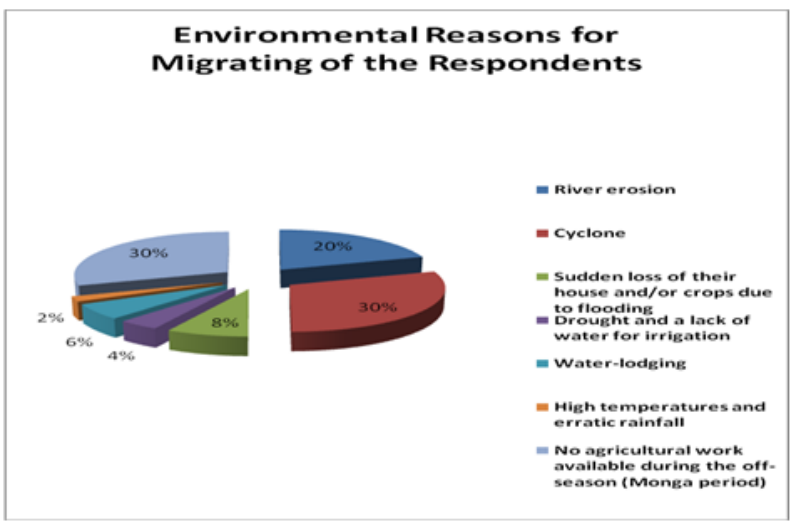
Source: Field Survey, 2017

Major portion (76%) of climate migrant older women migrated as a whole family.

Table 5: Stated Environmental Reasons for Migrating (through In-depth Interviewees)

Environmental Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
River erosion	10	20%
Cyclone	15	30%
Sudden loss of their house and/or crops due to flooding	4	8%
Drought and a lack of water for irrigation	2	4%
Water-lodging	3	6%
High temperatures and erratic rainfall	1	2%
No agricultural work available during the off-season (Monga period)	15	30%
Total	**50**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2017



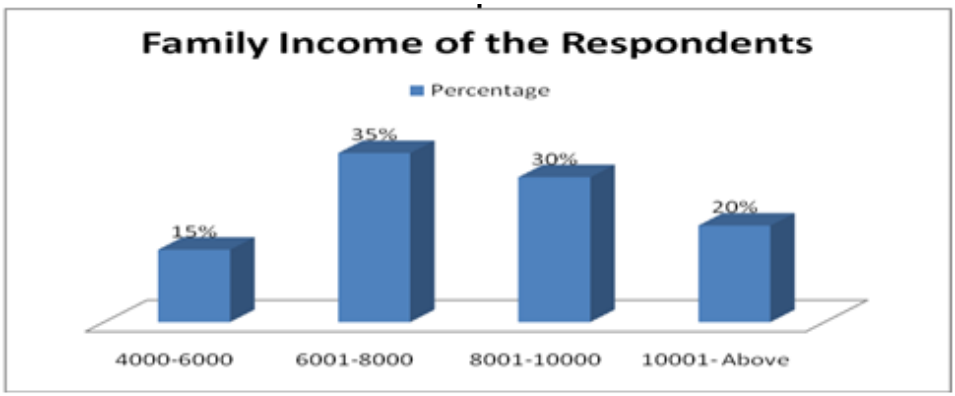
Source: Field Survey, 2017

During the study it has been seen that 30% of the repondent migrated because of Cyclone and no agricultural work available during the off-season (Monga period). Among the respondents 20% of them migrated for the reason of river erosion.

Table 6:Frequency distribution of the respondents according to Family Income

Family income	Percentage
4000-6000	15%
6001-8000	35%
8001-10000	30%
10001- Above	20%
Total	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2017



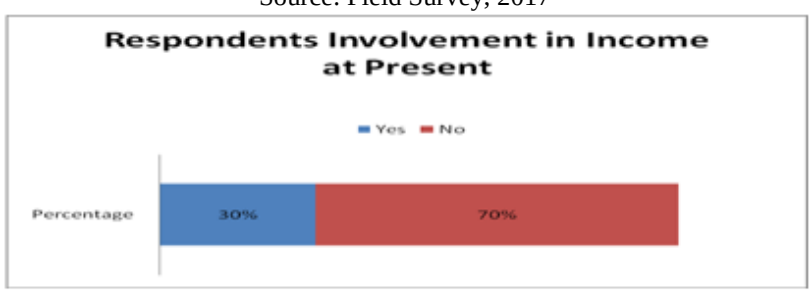
Source: Field Survey, 2017

Family income depends on so many aspects. According to survey data, 15% of households of respondent's family have income less than Tk. 5000. On the other hand, only 20% of the households earned more than 10,000 Tk. In this study want to represent scenario of the earning of the family depends on two or more person.

Table 7: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to present involvement in work

Involvement in work	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	15	30%
No	35	70%
Total	**50**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2017



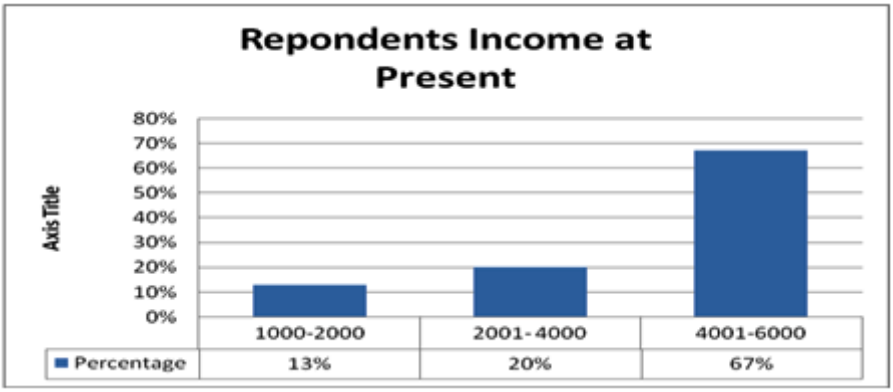
Source: Field Survey, 2017

During the study time it has been found that most of them (76%) cannot do work due to their health condition of old age. However, 30% of older women do work at the present time.

Table 8: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to Income at present

Income Range of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
1000-2000	2	13%
2001- 4000	3	20%
4001-6000	10	67%
Total	**15**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2017



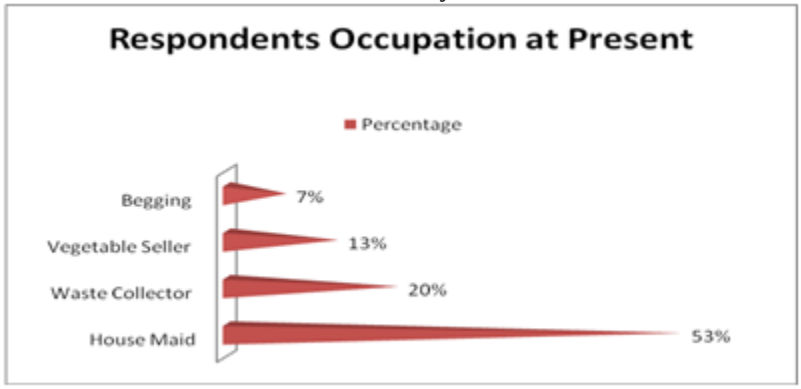
Source: Field Survey, 2017

According to survey data, 67% of respondents (who were involved in work) have income around Tk. 5000 at present and nearly every one of the members of the household involved in work. But price of resent days high could not help to improve life standard by earning.

Table 9: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to their current occupation

Occupation of respondents	Frequency	Percentage
House Maid	8	53%
Waste Collector	3	20%
Vegetable Seller	2	13%
Begging	1	7%
Total	**15**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2017



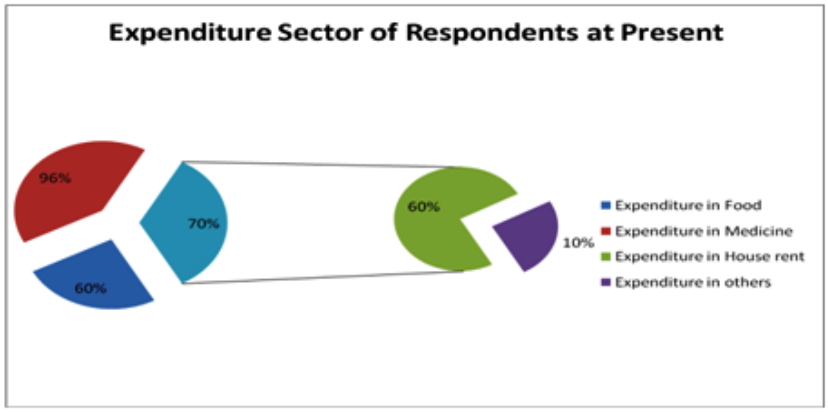
Source: Field Survey, 2017

Among the respondents, the greatest percentage that is 53% of the respondents work as a house maid. Rest of them have to do work as waste collector, vegetable seller and begging.

Table 10: Frequency distribution of main Expenditure Sector of respondents at present

Expenditure sector of respondents at present	Percentage
Expenditure in Food	60%
Expenditure in Medicine	96%
Expenditure in House rent	60%
Expenditure in others	20%

[More than one answers by one respondent] Source: Field Survey, 2017



[More than one answers by one respondent] Source: Field Survey, 2017

The main expenditure sector of older women in medicine. A major portion of older women's income is spent on medicine those who involve in work. Survey data reveals that a major share of their income is spent on food and medicine, followed by house rent and others respectively.

Table 11: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to Family Members

Family members of the respondents	Frequency	Percentage
0 to 2	5	10%
3 to 5	30	60%
6 to 8	10	20%
More than 8	5	10%
Total	**50**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2017



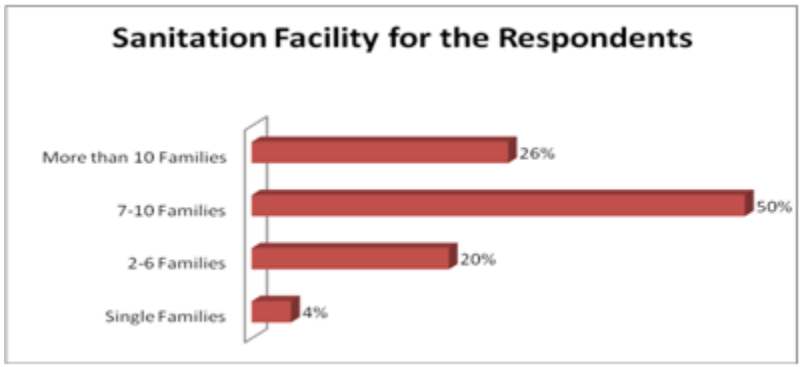
Source: Field Survey, 2017

Among the respondents, the greatest percentage that is 60% of the respondents have to live with 3 to 6 person of family members. At the other end 10% respondents have to stay alone or any of her known person.

Table 12: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to Sanitation Facility

Sanitation Facility for the Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Single Families	2	4%
2-6 Families	10	20%
7-10 Families	25	50%
More than 10 Families	13	26%

Source: Field Survey, 2017



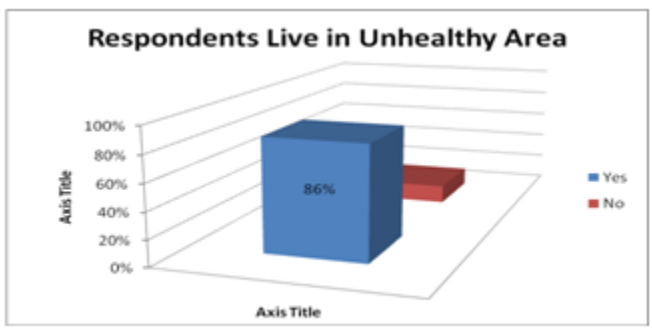
Source: Field Survey, 2017

As the respondents live in the informal settlements, their place of defecation is very poor with unhygienic condition. During the study it has been shown that major respondents (50%) 7 to 10 number family use one latrine for defecation.

Table 13: Frequency distribution of the respondents
(According to their living in unhealthy area)

Living in unhealthy area (Physical Environment)	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	43	86%
No	7	14%
Total	**50**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2017



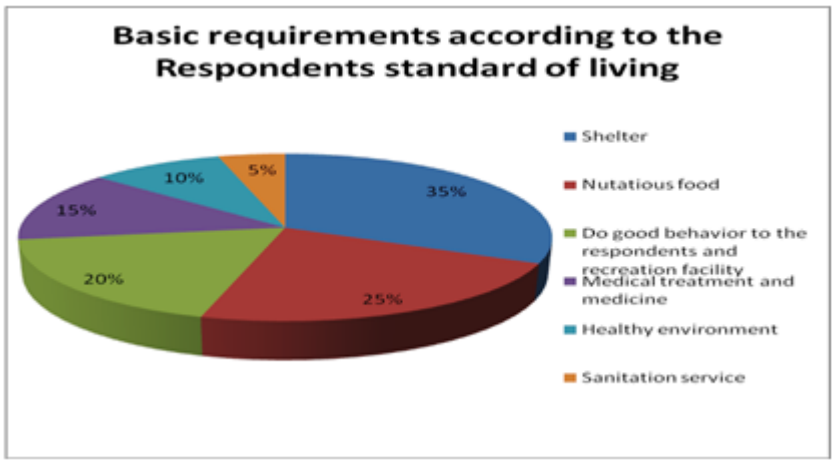
Source: Field Survey, 2017

According to respondents, 86% of them live in unhealthy area. Generally, wastes are disposed wherever they live like on the ground or on the street or above the water body. Exposure to such dirty environment is very risky for health.

Table 14: Frequency distribution of the respondents' basic requirements
(According to their standard of living)

Basic requirements	Frequency	Percentage
Shelter	35	35%
Nutatious food	25	25%
Do good behavior to the respondents and recreation facility	20	20%
Medical treatment and medicine	15	15%
Healthy environment	10	10%
Sanitation service	5	5%
Total	**100**	**100%**

[More than one answers by one respondent] Source: Field Survey, 2017



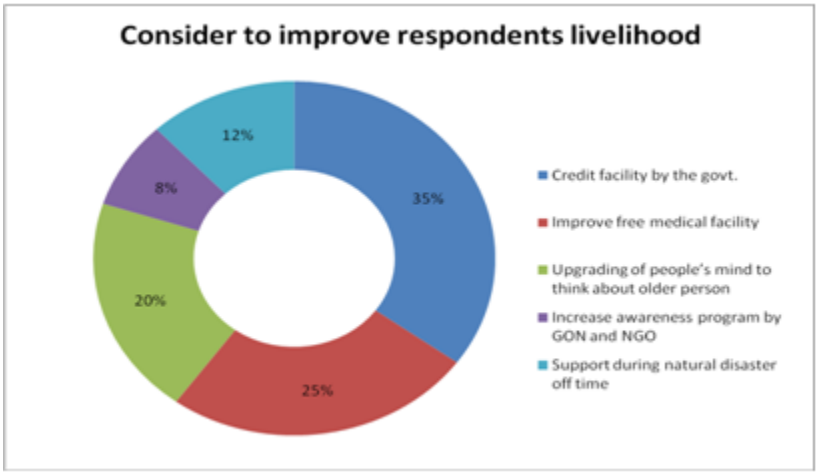
[More than one answers by one respondent] Source: Field Survey, 2017

Most of respondents think that shelter is the basic requirement for their standard of living and need to increase nutrtious food. On the other hand, other respondents give priority to do good behavior with them, medical treatment, recreation facility and sanitary services.

Table 15: Frequency distribution of the respondents
(According to their consideration of improving livelihood)

Consideration of improving livelihood	Frequency	Percentage
Credit facility by the govt.	35	35%
Improve free medical facility	25	25%
Upgrading of people's mind to think about older person	20	20%
Increase awareness program by GON and NGO	8	8%
Support during natural disaster off time	12	12%
Total	**100**	**100%**

[More than one answers by one respondent] Source: Field Survey, 2017



Source: Field Survey, 2017

Among the predefined recommendation highest support need to get from credit facility by the government, then improve free medical facility. Actually need to upgrade of people's mind to think about older person but most of them situated in the city create reason to migrated people.

6. Interpretation of the analyses

First of all, the study represents maximum respondents migrated because of Cyclone, River erosion and no agricultural work available during the off-season (*Monga* period). This study represents that most of them are of lower class. Lower classes are unable to take various preventive measures before disaster. They try to survive how long they can stay their home land. When they are unable to live on, they start being migrated towards the city. The study also found that 70% respondents cannot work due to their health condition of old age. However, 30% of older women do work at the present time.

The main expediture sector of older women in medicine. Most of the women in our society depend on house head (husband). Some of the older women worked to contribute to make a better family living. Some of them have lost their husband; they bound to work for themselves. Another outcome of this study is that respondents think that healthy shelter, nutritious food, medical treatment, recreation facility and sanitary services as the basic requrement for their standard of living.

Last but not least, the study result stand for improving livelihood of climate migrant older women is highest support need to get from credit facility by the government, free medical facility, Support during natural disaster off time and Increase awareness program to do good behaved by GO and NGO. This paper suggests some recommendations for policy makers of the country to develop policies for climate migrated women.

7. Limitations of the study

It was difficult to access to get information sometimes because of giving respondents own suitable place and time. The sample of the respondent were found non co-operative and failed to adequately reveal the fact lying at times. On the other hand, only fifty respondents are not enough for representing the actual scenario of this study. In this research, I did not represent the direct impact of living condition of climate migrant older women because of unavailable data. Finally, they study will be more efficient to represent various aspect of community if I get enough time and money.

8. Recommendations

While research over the years has focused on migration as a challenge to be addressed, more recent research has focused on migration as a form of adaptation. Large greenhouse emitting countries generally accept that they hold some responsibility in resettling people displaced due to climate change, particularly in vulnerable countries such as Bangladesh that account for a very low percentage of global emissions. There is a lack of international policies, however, that help facilitate and manage climate-induced international migration, making the large-scale resettlement of "climate refugees" unlikely.

a. To create healthy environment including infrastructure, sanitation facilities.
b. Decentralization of slum settlements to nearby cities can be considered.
c. Internal migration within Bangladesh also requires more attention, with many migrants facing challenges due to the lack of services, resources and employment opportunities. Those moving from a rural to urban setting require a different set of skills to find employment, while more capital is required for urban living costs.
d. Strategies that assist migrants, including education programs, training and affordable accommodation will be required for an effective adaptation plan.
e. Sufferings of such people considering recent and future urban hazards need to be integrated during policy preparation.
f. To relocate to safer areas for climate affected people.
g. Supportive Adaptation measure of climate change help to make planned migration of climate induce displacement.
h. By increasing existing old age allowance.
i. GO and NGOs should take infrastructure development and income generating activities for older women in the climate affected areas.
j. Local administration should take strong initiatives to avoid the events of torturing women and other unexpected events during disasters.
k. Older women are now the senior citizen of our country. So, proper honor should be given to them.
l. More and more research should be conducted to find out the coping and mitigation strategy and other relevant issues for the climate affected areas of Bangladesh.

9. Conclusion

The aim and purpose of the study were explained with the participants and then different questions were asked to them on the basis of that they expressed their response and comments. All the participants were given assurance of confidentiality before conducting interview. The interview was conducted with privacy as much as possible. Alongside these, the study also tries to level best to show respect to all the participants in the same manner and maintain local norms, values and believes in all respect. However, climate induced displacement added into urban migration is very alarming for city dwellers as it creates increasing pressure on existing system and challenges to government. Slum improvement not only uplifts living quality of urban poor but also supports adaptation measure of climate change, while planned migration of climate induced displaced is a present-day concern.

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