

“NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US”

The Barriers and Enablers of Persons with
Disabilities as Climate Change Agents

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Graduate School, M.Sc. Development Studies.



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Disabilities as Climate Change Agents

A Master Thesis

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates what the barriers and enablers are for persons with disabilities and organisations of persons with disabilities to engage in climate action. The countries analysed are Bangladesh and Madagascar as two countries in the Global South who are similarly impacted by climate change. Persons with disabilities are one of the most marginalised groups in any society and one of the most heavily impacted groups by climate change. Living with a disability, they have invaluable knowledge on risk assessment and problem-solving skills, yet they often have no voice in policy making on climate change. Using the Capability Approach and Ableism within an Environmental Justice framework, this paper analyses the respondents' stories gathered via interviews and surveys to better understand how they are impacted by climate change, and what their experiences have been engaging in climate action. The results show that whilst persons with disabilities are very concerned and impacted by the consequences of climate change, their engagement in climate action is riddled with accessibility issues, prejudice, and discrimination. Often, they are not represented in governmental, NGO, or civil society efforts on climate change, and many report to lack the capacity to bring climate change onto the agenda within the organisations of persons with disabilities. Thanks to awareness-raising and advocacy efforts, the situation has improved somewhat, but much more work and research needs to be done for disability inclusion within the climate sector.

Key words: disability, climate change, environmental justice, accessibility, discrimination, capability approach, ableism

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

Climate change and environmental hazards disproportionately affect marginalised communities, such as women, children, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) and people living in poverty. According to Moran et al. (2017) the challenges that people who experience marginalisation face “reduces their resilience to climate change and can also impair their adaption and mitigation responses.” (p. 801). One group often overlooked in climate research is that of persons with disabilities. As disabilities disproportionately affect already vulnerable populations, it puts persons with disabilities especially at risk of the effects of climate change. (Moran et al., 2017, p. 801).

The disability community is rarely included in climate change discourses, despite composing 15% of the world’s population (Crawford et al., 2021, p. 1; Moran et al., 2017, p. 802). In addition, they are amongst the poorest communities in the world, and are recognised as one of the most marginalised communities of any society (CCD et al., 2019, p. 6). Moreover, up to 80% live in low-income countries, often in disaster or conflict-prone areas of the world (Hemingway & Priestley, 2014, p. 2). Ton and Adamson (2020) claim that “disability and poverty are strongly linked in a vicious cycle” and that persons with disabilities “often have limited access to health care, shelter, food, education and employment, and are more likely to live and work in hazardous conditions” (p. 126).

Bell et al. (2020) claim that persons with disabilities have been increasingly highlighted in international climate change agreements since the creation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (pp. 683), yet a critical disability lens is lacking in climate research (*ibid.* pp. 685).

“There is an urgent need for more inclusive climate change discourses that recognise impairment as an ordinary – not ‘specialist’ or exceptional – dimension of human experience; this is important if we are to minimise the risk of exacerbating health inequalities with exclusionary political responses to these

global scale environmental shifts.” (Bell et al., 2020, p. 683).

There is evidence that including marginalised communities in decision-making and respecting their rights, “can lead to stronger climate actions and more resilient societies” (CCD et al., 2019, p. 4), yet persons with disabilities have been overlooked and excluded from conversations around climate change and its effects. The impacts of including the disability community in mitigation and adaptation designs and efforts also extends to the broader society as accessibility benefits individuals such as pregnant mothers, the elderly, children and others (CCD et al., 2019, pp. 4-5). In addition, studies show that many persons with disabilities want to be involved in these discourses (Villeneuve et al., 2021, p. 9). Disability scholars argue that persons with disabilities have a unique set of skills and knowledges about overcoming hazards, problem-solving, physical safety, and risk assessments, as they come across barriers needing these problem-solving skills on a daily basis (Abbott & Porter, 2013, p. 843; Bell et al., 2020, p. 684; Belser, 2015, p. 25), showing the importance of lifting these voices.

Despite an increase in international recognition of the importance of including persons with disabilities in climate action, national level action is needed moving forward to ensure tangible changes locally (CCD et al., 2019, p. 5), so is research on the national and local scale. Organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) are development organisations working towards lifting the voices and claiming the rights of persons with disabilities. They work at all levels of society, from within international policy making, to local on-the-ground impacts. As representatives and advocates for persons with disabilities, with staff often having disabilities themselves, they provide an excellent field of study for this research.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION & AIM

This study aims to contribute to disability and climate research by increasing an understanding of the issues persons with disabilities face in engaging with climate action. There is little research on the interconnections between disability and climate, and even less so on what factors contribute to how persons with disabilities, and OPDs, can engage in climate action. This will be done from two perspectives—persons with disabilities

themselves and their individual and collective experiences, as well as within OPDs. To contextualize the issue, two countries in the Global South—Bangladesh and Madagascar, will be used as case studies. Thus, the research questions are as follows:

1. What are the barriers and enablers for persons with disabilities and OPDs to engage in Climate Action in Bangladesh and Madagascar?
 - How are persons with disabilities impacted by climate change in Bangladesh and Madagascar?
 - What are the experiences of persons with disabilities' participation in national and local decision-making processes about climate change?

1.3 CASE STUDIES

To answer the research questions, two case studies were used to provide local contexts, and to gain a better understanding of these issues. In this study I worked in collaboration with CBM Global Disability Inclusion—a development organisation of persons with disabilities, to gain insight into OPDs and their work, as well as gain access to the field. CBM has country offices in several countries across the world. According to Nematchoua et al. (2018) “the poorest countries of Africa and Asia are the most badly affected” (p. 886) by climate change. Thus, in collaboration with CBM the countries of Bangladesh and Madagascar have been chosen for this study. They are two countries located in different parts of the world whilst having similar struggles in their vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters, as well as an established network of OPDs. What follows is an overview of the state of climate change impacts in Bangladesh and Madagascar, as well as of CBM Global and their work in the two countries.

1.3.1 Bangladesh

Bangladesh is amongst the world’s poorest countries, with more than half of the population estimated to live below the poverty line (Humanity & Inclusion, n.d), and as previously mentioned, poor communities are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change. As a result, Bangladesh has limited capacity and resources to invest in policy-

making and other measures to reduce the negative impacts of climate change on its citizens. Naturally, the poorest households are most affected by disasters in the country, making them increasingly vulnerable to further disasters in the future. A large portion of the country is situated along the Ganges-Brahmaputra delta, which is classified as a climate change hotspot (Ahmed et al., 2020, p. 306). Some of the most frequently occurring disasters are “drought, flood, waterlogging, cyclone, tornado, storm/tidal surge, thunderstorm, river/coastal erosion, landslides, and hailstorm” (Ahmed et al., 2020, p. 307), of which floods and thunderstorms are responsible for the highest amount of injuries and deaths (*ibid.* p. 312).

Recently, north-eastern Bangladesh has experienced record-breaking floods where an estimated 7.2 million people have been affected. In the month of June 2022, after unexpected floods in May, torrential rains and upstream water “completely submerged around 94 per cent of the town of Sunamganj and 84 per cent of Sylhet districts” (IFRC, 2022). Seven other districts have also experienced flash floods. As a result, almost 500,000 people have been evacuated to shelter centres which experienced overcrowding. Access to clean drinking water and sanitation facilities have led to an increase of waterborne and other diseases in the area (UNCT Bangladesh, 2022). There have also been reports of disruptions in power supply, land and air transportations, loss of livelihoods and food security, as well as the closure of education and health facilities. As a result, there are reports of high risks of gender based violence and family separation (ReliefWeb, 2022). Reports on the effects of persons with disabilities are low, but as extreme weather and natural disasters exacerbate existing inequalities of marginalised groups, it can be inferred that persons with disabilities also face high risks and impacts by the floods.

An estimated one in seven people in Bangladesh will be displaced by climate change by 2050 (Saha & Ahmed, 2019, p. 146). Though the country is one of the most affected by natural disasters, there is a limited understanding of disaster-related effects on health. The poorest households are the most vulnerable as they are most likely to endure material and human loss following a disaster, leading to an even higher future climatic risk (Ahmed et al., 2020, p. 306). According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2015)

“the prevalence of disability in Bangladesh is believed to be high for reasons relating to overpopulation, extreme poverty, illiteracy, lack of awareness, and above all, lack of medical care and services” (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2015, p. 3)

Furthermore, persons with disabilities in Bangladesh face great difficulties in accessibility of services, facilities, and opportunities, likely due to a lack of awareness of disability and the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities. UNICEF Bangladesh (2014) claims that “the belief that disability is a curse and a punishment for sinful behaviour permeates all levels of society and affects access to adequate care, health, nutrition, education and participation.” (p. XII). Thus, they are marginalised from mainstream society, and rarely consulted in planning and policy making efforts regarding infrastructure or services. In addition, they are excluded from “existing governmental and non-governmental development programs” (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2015, p. 3)

1.3.2 Madagascar

Madagascar is a country of great biodiversity, with flora and fauna unique to the rest of the world due to its geographic location as the fourth largest island in the world, about 400 km from the shore of Africa, separated by the Mozambique Channel (Nematchoua et al., 2018, p. 887). According to Nematchoua et al. (2018) the effects of climate change have been evident as the heat has been increasing in every region, and cooling has rapidly been decreasing. Changes in rainfall pattern have affected water resources, and extreme climatic events such as heatwaves, droughts, floods, and cyclones have been evident (p. 895). Moreover, an estimate of three quarters of the population lives below the poverty line, which is subject to increase due to environmental degradation (Weiskopf et al., 2021, p. 3).

In April 2021, the WFP warned that southern Madagascar is experiencing a devastating drought leading to famine in the country (World Food Programme, 2021b, pp. 4, 11). “Consecutive years of drought in the South have left at least 1.35 million people in need of emergency food and nutrition assistance” (World Food Programme, 2021a). In February 2022, the fourth tropical storm in four weeks hit the country, an example of weather extremes as a result of the climate crisis, WFP claims, affecting communities already heavily

affected by the drought (World Food Programme, 2022). While a study show that the drought is not significantly impacted by climate change, it cannot be ruled out as a contributor to worsening the crisis (Harrington et al., 2021). It is clear the country is suffering major climate impacts, exacerbating the issues of already at risk individuals such as persons with disabilities.

In Madagascar there is no data on the prevalence of disability, but Khan et al. (2015) estimates, using the worldwide disability prevalence rate-estimation of 15%, that there are around 2.8 million persons with disabilities. In 1997, the Malagasy Government implemented the Law on Disability, which promoted equal social rights and freedoms for persons with disabilities as the rest of the population, advocating for “access to medical and rehabilitation services, education, employment, and social participation” (Khan et al., 2015, p. 690). Some policies exist but more work is needed to implement them, and monitoring to enable reporting of healthcare data needs establishing. Accessibility to buildings and transportation can be improved, as well as access to advocacy, aids, counselling and assistance with community integration, and the public’s general knowledge of the economic and social implications for persons with disabilities (*ibid.*) According to Humanity & Inclusion (n.d) unemployment is high, especially amongst persons with disabilities, and there is a high level of discrimination against individuals with both physical and mental disabilities in the country.

1.3.3 CBM Global Disability Inclusion

According to their website, CBM Global Disability Inclusion “works alongside and is accountable to people with disabilities in the world’s poorest places” (CBM Global, n. d.). They work based on four strategic goals which aim to 1. Strengthen the voice and autonomy of persons with disabilities; 2. Build inclusive, resilient communities; 3. Build inclusive and sustainable local and national systems and services; 4. Ensure populations affected by natural and manmade disasters have access to inclusive humanitarian assistance and protection (CBM Global, 2020, p. 2).

CBM is one of the few OPDs around the world which is becoming increasingly active in

work linking disability and climate change. Some examples of this work are supporting programmes in areas such as food security, WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene), livelihoods, accessibility, and disaster risk reduction. CBM is also working towards ensuring that persons with disabilities are mainstreamed into activities such as forest preservation, tree planting and female empowerment in Africa's 'green' economy. They also work alongside other OPDs and international NGOs to reduce their environmental footprint (Lewis & Ballard, 2012, p. 7).

Through their work, CBM has identified six key issues impacting the quality of life and wellbeing of persons with disabilities because of climate change. These are: 1. Decreasing food security and resulting malnutrition; 2. Decreasing access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); 3. Increasing emergencies due to extreme weather events; 4. Reducing access to infrastructure, shelter and basic services; 5. Increasing displacement/migration, or necessary migration not being possible due to disability; 6. Increasing human security and protection issues, including conflicts resulting from climate change (Lewis & Ballard, 2012, p. 3).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

There is little research done on the interconnections between climate change and disability. The research available tends to focus on disaster risk reduction and preparations for persons with disabilities during disasters, as well as emergency responses and a lack of representation in policy discussions. These studies focus on topics such as evacuation protocols, or the lack thereof, accessibility to information about incoming disasters and shelter options, accessibility in the shelters themselves, and other factors which contribute to the risks of persons with disabilities in disasters. Little is known about the involvement of persons with disabilities in the climate movement, or the inclusion of climate issues in the disability movement. Furthermore, little is known about how OPDs are working with these issues on the ground, and about the factors which are enabling or hindering persons

with disabilities and OPDs from engaging in climate action within their communities. What follows is an overview of the usage and understanding of the term disability, as well as the existing literature on disability and its interconnections with climate change and environmental hazards.

2.1.1 Definitions of disability

According to Kett et al. (2021) the term *disability* has different meanings depending on the context, which have been categorised into models such as the medical, charity, social and biophysical model. The medical model “seeks a ‘cure’ for the ‘problem’ of disability”, the charity model aims to provide assistance to persons with disabilities, the social model sees the “inherent problems for people with disabilities as external”, and the biopsychosocial model borrows from all these approaches “and sees disability as an interaction between the body and the environment” (Kett et al., 2021, p. 18).

The medical model sees the individual as disabled “based on a disease or health condition that limits his or her ability to carry out expected individual and societal obligations” (Patel & Brown, 2017). Here disability is seen as a problem located within the individual, and only a cure or adaptation will allow the individual to participate in mainstream society. Thus, the individual must change to fit society as designed for non-disabled persons (Lawson, 2005, p. 270). Lawson (2005) claims that because of this, a ‘predictable consequence’ of the medical model is the segregation of persons with disabilities (p. 270).

The social model, on the other hand, places the problem within societal and environmental factors. There are distinctions to be made between ‘impairment’ and ‘disability’. According to Ungurean (2021) ‘impairment’ refers to “any temporary or permanent loss or abnormality of a structure or function of the body” (Ungurean, 2021, p. 249). ‘Disability’, then, is “a barrier or inability to perform an action in the manner or range considered normal for a human being” (*ibid.*). Patel and Brown (2017) expand on this and claim that in the social model, “disability is based on the fact that by itself any function impairment at an individual level may not create disability, but sociocultural expectations and built environment together” (p. 248). ‘Impairments’ are psychological, functional, or structural

abnormalities at the individual level, whereas ‘disability’ is when an impairment causes an inability or difficulty to perform an activity as expected (*ibid.*). Ton et al. (2019) make a distinction between “impairment as a biological trait and disability as a social construct” and how these are manifested socially. Disability is not considered as an individual problem but “as a failure of society to accommodate individual differences” (Ton et al., 2019, p. 12).

According to Ton et al. (2020) there are two perspectives in research concerning disability in the context of disasters—the individual and the social. “The individual perspective reduces disability to impairment-related difficulties in times of disasters” (Ton et al., 2020, p. 602), and bodily limitations, and sees persons with disabilities as ‘victims’ and in need of ‘special assistance’ during disasters. This seemingly encompasses both the medical and charity model Kett et al. (2021) referred to. The social perspective opposes this and views disability as “rooted in social arrangements and practices”. Here, pre-existing barriers for the safety of persons with disabilities are invisible in society and thus exacerbated by disasters (Ton et al., 2020, p. 602).

Many researchers (CCD et al., 2019; Kett et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2017; Ton et al., 2020) who use the social model take the rights-based approach to disability, which moves towards addressing social justice based on participation through economic redistribution, cultural recognition, and political representation (Kett et al., 2021, p. 18)

“The key to a rights-based approach to disability is the idea that the inability of disabled people to participate fully in the life of their communities is not to be attributed solely to the limitation of function resulting from their impairment. Societal factors operate to exclude them. These include the design of buildings and vehicles, the structure and operation of organisations, and the hostile or mistaken attitudes of individuals towards them” (Lawson, 2005, p. 272).

This means that the exclusionary barriers that laws and policies should tackle lie outside of the individual. Society disables, leading persons with disabilities to be a marginalised group in society. Disability organisations have taken a lead role in the development and promotion of the social model, and a rights-based approach to disability (Lawson, 2005, pp. 273, 277).

2.2.1 Disability and Climate Resilience

These differing definitions of disability have resulted in persons with disabilities being categorised as a ‘vulnerable group’. This approach “denies people with disabilities any agency or even rights”(Kett et al., 2021, p. 19), as it views them as inherently vulnerable to aspects of climate change, instead of recognising that they are *made* vulnerable by lack of access to shelters, information, and participation in climate change forums. Instead, the focus has shifted towards resilience as a term, which opens for transformational societal change, yet resilience is not equally distributed. Over-emphasising resilience can be problematic if used to shift responsibility and blame onto the individual, instead of examining failures within the system (*ibid.*).

According to Kett et al. (2021) this ‘vulnerability’ grouping views persons with disabilities without the capability to deal with climate and disaster risk, despite being experts on their own lives and experiences of risk (p. 24, 26). It also causes a lack of disaggregation of the impacts of climate change for different marginalised groups, despite social characteristics such as gender, age, disability, poverty, and other minority statuses being inextricably linked to their climate resilience (*ibid.* p. 26). Persons with disabilities are not a homogenous group. There are varying degrees and categories of disability, each with varying degrees of climate risk, and resilience. Acknowledging the different disability types, along with different identity categories, only increases our understanding of the lived experiences of persons with disabilities, thus increasing participation within policy-making, as well as our understanding of their capabilities to engage in climate action (Kett et al., 2021, pp. 27, 29). Further links between climate risk and disability can be found given that extreme weather events may also cause or exacerbate. Thus, rights-based, and participatory approaches are particularly relevant to marginalised groups in climate action.

Previous research by UNISDR in 2013 shows the impact and awareness of climate change on persons with disabilities:

“From 5,717 responses from people with disabilities across 137 countries, 85.57% of respondents reported that they had not participated in community disaster management or risk reduction plans; 72.2% said they had no personal

preparedness plan; only 14.29% reported an awareness of national plans, and only 17.32% were aware of community-level plans”(Kett et al., 2021, p. 33)

Another survey of persons with disabilities, OPDs, and humanitarian actors by Handicap International shows that in situations requiring humanitarian responses, persons with disabilities are at risk:

“Based on 769 responses to three online surveys, 54% of respondents report experiencing direct physical impacts, including new impairments, in humanitarian situations; 27% report psychological, physical or sexual abuse; and ‘three quarters’ of respondents report that they have not had adequate access to water, shelter, food or health services. ‘Half’ of the respondents also report that they cannot access the specific services they need, including assistive devices, access to interpreters and rehabilitation. Interestingly, 85% of humanitarian actors responding in the survey recognise that people with disabilities are more vulnerable during disasters, yet 92% of those respondents do not believe people with disabilities are properly accounted for.” (Kett et al., 2021, p. 33)

More research is needed taking intersectionality into account, as well as to understand the impacts of climate change on persons with disabilities. Little research can be found on the experiences of persons with disabilities to engage in these issues in their communities and provide the expert knowledge several previous researchers state persons with disabilities possess.

2.2.2 Policymaking and Climate Action

The rights of persons with disabilities have been recognised by the United Nations with the creation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which

“understands disability as an ‘evolving concept’, based on a dynamic interaction between a person’s long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment and environmental, attitudinal and other barriers that ‘hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others’”(Kett et al., 2021, p.

19).

Kett et al. (2021) argue that this definition allows for addressing social justice issues based on participation, meaning that a society is only just “through three things: economic redistribution, cultural recognition and political representation” (p. 19). Further, they argue that climate justice should allow for wider societal transformation for all, including those with disabilities. Disability issues and inclusive climate justice are increasingly addressed, yet they claim there is a gap in the application of the UNCRPD to an environmental justice framework (Kett et al., 2021, p. 29).

Moreover, Twigg et al. (2018) claim that while it is the states who sign up to ratify the UNCRPD who should ensure its implementation, it is often up to the international community to provide humanitarian support. As a result, the UN has increased disability inclusion in their interventions (p. 10). However, Twigg et al. (2018) also claim that the UN body monitoring the UNCRPD has been the least active on climate change out of all UN human rights bodies, showing a lack of prioritisation, understanding and knowledge about the issues persons with disabilities are facing with climate change, ensuring less favourable outcomes (p. 30).

However, several agencies have developed standards and guidelines such as UNHCR’s “Guidance on Working with Persons with Disabilities in Forced Displacement” (2011), IFRC’s “Disability-inclusive shelter and settlements in emergencies” (2015), and WHO’s “Disability and emergency risk management for health” (2013). Several international NGOs have added to this including CBM’s “Protection: Issues for People with Disabilities and Injuries” (2006), Handicap International’s “Mainstreaming Disability into Disaster Risk Reduction” (2009), and Women’s Refugee Commission’s “Disability checklist for emergency response” (2010) (Twigg et al., 2018, p. 10).

One framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), which has been influenced by disability advocates, is the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (Twigg et al., 2018, p. 5). According to Pertiwi et al. (2019) the framework aligns with the UNCRPD on some parts, most notably Article 11, “which concerns the rights of people with disabilities to be protected in situations of risk and emergencies” (p. 1421). They note that this alignment

represents a paradigm shift from viewing persons with disabilities as ‘passive’ and ‘vulnerable’ to ‘active agents’ and contributors in disaster preparedness (*ibid.*). However, Kett et al. (2021) argues that the focus on DRR, which partly stems from frameworks such as this, misses valuable perspectives “missing the attention on structural inequalities that a broader justice and equity lens might have” (p. 30). Whilst disasters are inextricably linked to climate change, it misses parts of the structural issues which a broader climate lens could help shine a light on, which is where this research aims to fill a gap.

The 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals does take climate change into account, and Goal 13 specifically focuses on Climate Action (Twigg et al., 2018, p. 14). Target 13.b is relevant for persons with disabilities as it promotes “mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities”, which may include persons with disabilities. Several goals do specifically mention disability, though none also mention climate change. These are Goal 4, Target 4.5 and 4.a which concerns education facilities, Goal 8, Target 8.5: which concerns employment; Goal 10, Target 10.2 which concerns social, economic and political inclusion of all, Goal 11, Target 11.2 which concerns inclusive transportation systems, and Target 11.7 which concerns safe, inclusive and accessible green and public spaces, and Goal 17, Target 17.8 which concerns capacity-building support to developing countries to increase disaggregated data (United Nations). However, Twigg et al. (2018) notes that “UN member states that have committed to the 2030 Agenda have commented on the lack of disaggregated data on vulnerable groups” (p. 7), including persons with disabilities, making it more difficult to implement these goals in practice.

McKinnon (2021) argues that successful disability inclusion has three core elements:

1. The physical and digital environments must be inclusively designed to be used by as many people as possible without special adaptations.
2. Where there remains an accessibility gap disabled people must have access to high quality, affordable assistance products and services.
3. Society must have an inclusive attitude.

However, most persons with disabilities do not have access to all three of these elements. McKinnon claims that what fuels this is the view of “disability inclusion as part of a deficit model – something that is good to do but costly to the economy. [...] The focus on the problem of exclusion rather than the value of inclusion is an ongoing and problematic framing of disability, increasing stigma and limiting growth.” (McKinnon, 2021, p. 382)

3. METHODOLOGY

3.2 RESEARCH METHOD

This research used purposeful sampling as selection criteria was needed to reach the specific population relevant to this study. According to Emmel (2013) purposeful sampling selects “information rich cases that best provide insight into the research questions and will convince the audience of the research”, where the scientific observation is a person’s real-life experience (p. 2). Moreover, in qualitative studies, researchers often seek to solve real-world issues through understanding the mechanisms and systems behind them. Thus, Emmel (2013) claims that in a purposeful sampling strategy, choices are made for pragmatic reasons, making the most appropriate choices with the resources available, whilst aiming to seek out the richest of information (p. 3).

For this reason, this study has chosen to do an initial survey from which interviewees were identified to gain a more in-depth understanding of the issue, and to better answer the research questions. To identify relevant individuals a set of criteria was predetermined. These were staff at OPDs who all had disabilities themselves, some of which were also disability activists, with varying degrees of engagement in climate action, or an interest to be more engaged. In this study climate action refers to any active participation in events related to climate change and natural disasters such as DRR, emergency responses, policymaking, educational meetings and so on.

To gain access to the field, I worked alongside CBM Global Disability Inclusion. To start, CBM’s country offices in Bangladesh and Madagascar respectively were where the initial surveys were distributed, and they were given free range to send out the survey to their

respective OPD networks in the country. The idea was to get the perspectives of staff at the OPDs as professionals in the disability field, as well as their personal perspectives as a person with a disability. The country offices sent the survey to interested individuals within their contact network of OPDs and persons with disabilities, thus utilizing a snowball sampling. This provides the study with a wider perspective than solely including the staff at the two CBM country offices alone, which already have established work and discussions on climate change as mentioned in the introduction.

As qualitative research uses non-probability sampling and statistical representation is not the goal, a smaller sample size was used. The hope was to reach 10-20 survey responses in total and conduct 3-4 interviews with individuals from each country. The interviews used the survey responses as a guide, deepens the understanding of the survey responses, as well as allows for a potential uncovering of further details of note.

The survey was sent out to 120 people in CBM Bangladesh's network all over Bangladesh, both to OPD staff and disability activists. Due to the centralisation of organisations in the country, most OPDs were in Dhaka. Eight surveys were filled out in the end, though two of these were largely empty, with two disability activists, five OPD staff, and one person who identified as both. Three of the respondents were women, five were men. There was a wide range of ages with three respondents who were between the ages of 20-35, four were between the ages of 36-50, and one was between the ages 51-65. Five respondents reported to have physical disabilities, and three reported to have visual impairments. The interviews were conducted with four individuals, three men and one woman, working at an OPD and were sourced from the survey respondents to allow for a deeper conversation around the topics, as well as one key informant from the network of CBM Global who did not fill out the survey. Two interviewees had a physical disability and used wheelchairs, and two had visual impairments.

The Madagascar version of the survey was translated into French by CBM Madagascar and sent out to their network both as an online survey as well as being conducted over the phone to those without internet access, thus having a more concentrated reach than the Bangladesh survey. Four survey answers came in from three women and one male. One

respondent was in the age range of 20-35, two in the range of 36-50, and one in the range of 51-65. Three respondents had a physical disability, and one was deaf. All respondents stated they were both a disability activist and staff at an OPD. The interviews were conducted with three of these respondents, two women and one male, two with physical disabilities and one Deaf person.

To allow for anonymity but maintain that these are personal stories and experiences by real people, each participant has been given a pseudonym. Names were chosen from a Top 100 list of common names in Bangladesh and Madagascar respectively to avoid any tangible relation to the original name but keeping respect to culture and gender. To distinguish between survey and interview answers each participant will be given an S for a survey response and an I for an interview response.

3.3 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis has held many different meanings since it first appeared as a term and there has been confusion about what exactly it entails (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 222). The approach used in this study is based on the one outlined by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke. Clarke et al. (2015) describe their approach as a 'Big Q' approach to thematic analysis, meaning qualitative research conducted within a qualitative paradigm. This refers to the idea that universal meaning cannot be found as meaning is understood to be tied to the context in which it is produced. The Big Q approach emphasizes the active role of the researcher and embracing researcher subjectivity as part of the process instead of viewing it as an issue to be dealt with. Small q qualitative research, on the other hand, aims to bridge the gap between qualitative and quantitative data within a positivist paradigm (*ibid.*). As this study looks for the lived experiences, thoughts, and concerns of the respondents—purely qualitative data—this study fits into the Big Q approach.

Thematic analysis is a flexible method of analysing research data and is just that, a method, not a methodology. Thus, it can be used to address a variety of research questions and analyse most qualitative data. It can also take a range of different forms, including inductive, deductive, semantic, latent, descriptive, and interpretative thematic analysis (Clarke et al.,

2015, p. 225). This study aims for an inductive approach, which Clarke et al. (2015) defines as an analysis grounded in the data, rather than existing theories and

“is always shaped by a researcher’s theoretical assumptions, disciplinary knowledge, research training, prior research experiences, and personal and political standpoints — inductive TA aims to stay as close as possible to the meanings in the data.” (p. 225)

Clarke et al. (2015) developed six phases of conducting a thematic analysis which will be used in this study. First is *familiarization* where the researcher gets familiar with their data set by “reading and rereading transcripts, listening to audio-recordings, making notes of any initial analytic observations” (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 230), which helps uncover more than the obvious meanings of the data. Second, coding helps identify and label relevant features of the data to identify patterns. Third, the researcher searches for themes by clustering codes together to map key patterns in the data. Fourth, the researcher reviews the themes to make sure they constitute a good fit with the data set, and that each theme is clear. Fifth, the researcher may write theme definitions and select theme names to “ensure the conceptual clarity of each theme and provide a road map for the final write-up”. Lastly, the report gets written with the themes providing an organisational framework for the analysis, yet conclusions are drawn across themes. (*ibid.*)

3.4 DELIMITATIONS

The purposeful sampling strategy “must be selected to fit the purpose of the study, the resources available, the questions being asked, and constraints being faced” (Emmel, 2013, p. 3). For this reason, I have chosen to conduct an online survey, as well as online interviews. This is to fit the constraints of the current COVID-19 pandemic, as well as to be able to reach a population otherwise unavailable to me. Furthermore, I have chosen to focus my research at the OPD-level, as I believe this will provide knowledge about the international level whilst more adequately and reasonably fitting the scope of the study. As OPD staff often consist of persons with disabilities themselves, this will allow access to both the individual perspective, as well as an organisational and local perspective. However, this

research has a limited scope and is therefore forced to make choices regarding what to include, and what to exclude, from its focus. Similar research employing an intersectional approach would be pivotal in providing more information on how the cross-section of identities affect one's experiences, and how this can be used in mainstream climate research and policymaking. Another aspect which would be interesting to highlight is that of the disability movement versus the climate movement, their differing perspectives on the matter, and how they may be brought together to reduce stigma.

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

3.5.1 Participatory research

Persons with disabilities have had an integral role in the entire process of this research, from conception to execution, including myself. As part of the ethos of this study a focus has been put on empowering OPDs by having the survey translations and distributions be done by disability activists and local OPDs who also tested the survey and gave valuable feedback. From the moment of conception up until its completion this study has been made in collaboration with CBM Global, including the local Bangladesh and Madagascar country offices, most of which have disabilities themselves and are therefore well equipped to give invaluable constructive feedback throughout the process. Inclusive and participatory research is an important step forward towards understanding the issue at hand and making sure that it is done in an ethical way with sensitivity in mind for all involved. Research should never harm the participants involved, and a participatory method is an important step towards ensuring that.

Having a variety of disabilities represented in the research is important. However, I recognise that there are limitations in who I can interview, as all interviews will be conducted online. Furthermore, not all persons with disabilities may be able to fill in the survey, nor will all relevant persons have access to the internet or technology needed to participate in this study. However, it was made as accessible as possible by using easy to read information sheets, access to sign language interpreters, and invitations to the local country offices for access to a stable internet connection and technology for those living in proximity.

Conducting interviews online also provides its own challenges. Online research may refer to several different types of inquiry. Some examples include studies on how people use and access the internet, others utilize the internet as a tool to collect data or information (Markham & Buchanan, 2012, pp. 3-4). Due to COVID-19 travels to the field prove more difficult, thus online surveys and interviews have been used. This means I may miss details I would be privy to in person, but it also means I am able to reach individuals I otherwise would not.

3.5.2 Using translated data

To keep from limiting who can answer the survey due to language barriers, the survey has been translated to Bangla and French. The Bangla translation was conducted by an OPD in Bangladesh, outsourced via CBM Global and reviewed by a disability activist, and the French translation was conducted by the Madagascar country office. The Bangladesh interviews were held using the live interpretation from Bangla to English, and the Madagascar interviews were conducted with a Malagasy to English interpreter. One interview also had a Malagasy Sign Language to Malagasy interpreter present.

As the surveys and interviews have been conducted in the local language and translated back to English, there may be some things lost in translation. There are always risks involved with using translated data. However, I found it necessary to use translations and interpretations as to allow respondents to express themselves freely and not exclude locals who may not feel comfortable expressing themselves in another language. However, I acknowledge that nuances may get lost in translation, and the quotes I use in this study cannot be considered direct quotes. They have been edited to be in first-person perspective as the interpreters used a third-person perspective. Beyond this, the quotes have been left as they were relayed back to me by the interpreter.

According to Björk Bramberg and Dahlberg (2013)

“A competent interpreter for qualitative interviewing is described as a person who is experienced in verbal translation and who shares a cultural background with the person being interviewed” (p. 241)

Björk Bramberg and Dahlberg (2013) argue that the researcher should exhibit an openness to the phenomenon being studied, which required a level of presence in the situation which may be hindered by interpretation due to their being an extra step in the communication process (p. 242). Thus, immediate contact between interviewer and researcher is interrupted, yet interpretation can offer a level of support in being able to bridge cultural differences. An interpreter is not only translating from one language to another, they are needing to grasp the questions asked by the researcher and translate it in a culturally sensitive way, and then translate back to the researcher in a way that is understandable to them. The interpreter needs to understand the context of the questions, but also the context of the answers, thus “bridging the horizons of understanding” (Björk Bramberg & Dahlberg, 2013, p. 243). Both interpreters used were locals with ample knowledge of the country contexts which became apparent in their interpretations as they explained context I as an outsider may not know, such as how the local governments worked.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Table 1. Theoretical frameworks

Capability Approach	Understanding the capabilities of persons with disabilities to engage in climate action, and what aspects hinder and enable these capabilities.
Environmental Justice	Complementing CA as a partial theory of justice using environmental justice framed by five aspects of justice: distributive, procedural, cultural, representative, and capacity/capability.
	Understanding social and structural

Ableism Theory

barriers to disability inclusion to deepen an understanding of the enabling and hindering factors.

As a cornerstone in this study's theoretical framework, Amartya Sen's Capability Approach will be used to analyse the factors which contribute to persons with disabilities' capabilities to engage in climate action. Furthermore, Environmental Justice as a theoretical framework will be used to supplement the partial theory of justice of the Capability Approach, and to account for the environmental perspective. Lastly, Ableism will be used to help understand the social and structural barriers persons with disabilities face. For a visual understanding of how the three theories relate to one another and help uncover and come to a better understanding of what the barriers and enablers are for persons with disabilities to engage in climate action, see below.

Figure 1. Mind map of theoretical framework.

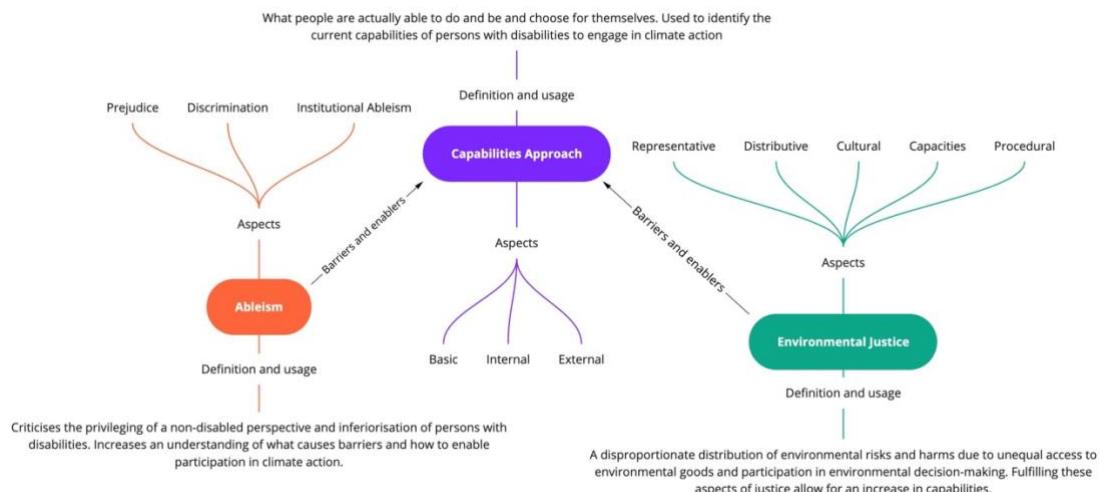


Figure 1. explains that the Capabilities Approach is a tool to explain and understand what individuals are *actually* able to do and be, and what path they are able to choose. As an example, a Deaf person may be invited to a policy-meeting on climate change in their area and thus on paper have the resources available to participate in said policy making.

However, if the meeting is not accessible, e.g., no sign language interpreter is present, that person is not *actually* able to participate in that meeting. Ableism describes some of the underlying social and structural causes to the discrimination and exclusion persons with disabilities face in climate discourses. Environmental justice, then, describes the aspects of justice required for an inclusive approach to climate action for all humans, thus increasing a person's capabilities to engage in climate action. What follows is a more detailed explanation of the theories.

4.1 THE CAPABILITY APPROACH

Amartya Sen's Capability Approach (CA) has been widely used in disability research, as well as research concerning disaster injustices by at-risk people (Verchick, 2012). According to Robeyns (2017) the Capability Approach is a multidimensional approach concerned with

“aspects of people’s lives such as their health, the education they can enjoy and the support they enjoy from their social networks; it is also concerned with what people can do, such as being able to work, raise a family, travel, or be politically active. The capability approach cares about people’s real freedoms to do these things, and the level of wellbeing that they will reach when choosing from the options open to them.”(Robeyns, 2017, p. 8).

Nussbaum (2000), notes that the CA focuses on human capabilities — "what people are actually able to do and to be – in a way informed by an intuitive idea of a life that is worthy of the dignity of the human being" (p. 5). What follows is an overview of the Capability Approach as initially developed by Sen, and as further developed by Nussbaum and Sen into what Nussbaum calls a partial theory of justice (Nussbaum, 2000, pp. 6, 11), as well as how the approach can be used in disability and climate research.

4.1.1 Capabilities and functionings

The CA was developed in the 1980's as a framework for evaluating individual wellbeing and social arrangements. Sen values freedom and sees development as a process which expands the freedoms people enjoy (Sen, 1999, p. 3). Capabilities refer to the opportunities

of an individual to achieve functionings that they value. Sen argues that account should be taken for not only primary goods, like Rawls recommends, but also for the personal characteristics which converts primary goods into the ability to achieve values. Sen draws the example that “a person who is disabled may have a larger basket of primary goods and yet have less chance to [...] pursue her objectives than an able-bodied person with a smaller basket of primary goods” (Sen, 1999, p. 74).

In turn, functionings “reflects the various things a person may value doing or being”, which might be different from primary goods such as avoiding disease or starvation, and can extend to things such as self-respect and taking part in one’s community (Sen, 1999, p. 75). Capabilities are the combination of functionings which are feasible for a person to achieve. Thus, when using the CA for evaluative purposes, Sen notes that one can investigate the functionings of a person (what she is actually able to do), or her capabilities (the real opportunities she has) (*ibid.*). Sen gives an example to clarify:

“For example, an affluent person who fasts may have the same functioning achievement in terms of eating or nourishment as a destitute person who is forced to starve, but the first person does have a different "capability set" than the second (the first can choose to eat well and be well nourished in a way the second cannot).”
(Sen, 1999, p. 75)

According to Sen, questions about injustices and inequalities are best raised within the Capability Approach (Nussbaum, 2000, p. 12). Sen notes that “capabilities can be enhanced by public policy”, but that public policy can also be influenced by “the effective use of participatory capabilities by the public” (Sen, 1999, p. 17), making capabilities important building blocks for development.

4.1.2 Nussbaum’s theoretical development

Martha Nussbaum developed the theory into a partial theory of justice with more explicit philosophical foundations (Harnacke, 2013, p. 769). Nussbaum’s goal is to expand CA beyond a comparative approach, and to provide an account of how capabilities can be used

as a basis for what citizens can demand from their governments. Nussbaum's account of capabilities is what she considers the minimum standard of justice that should be applied to everyone. It is universal, yet it makes no statements about what social justice requires once that minimum has been met, or how to treat inequalities above the threshold (Harnacke, 2013, p. 771). She also claims that her CA is compatible with other accounts of justice (Nussbaum, 2000, p. 12). This is where Environmental Justice comes in as a measurement of achieving equality for persons with disabilities in the face of climate change and the environment, beyond the minimum requirement for human life and dignity, as Nussbaum puts it.

Nussbaum distinguishes between three types of capabilities: basic, internal, and combined. Basic capabilities are the capabilities that are needed for developing more advanced capabilities, and "are sometimes more or less ready to function" such as the capability for seeing and hearing. She notes, however, that these capabilities are more often than not "very rudimentary, and cannot be directly converted into functioning" (Nussbaum, 2000, p. 84). She provides the example of how a child is born with the capability for speech and language yet is not yet able to convert it into a functioning. Internal capabilities refer to the sufficient conditions to exercise one's functionings, which may take time and bodily maturity such as speech. "More often, however, internal capabilities develop only with support from the surrounding environment", such as learning how to love, or how to exercise political choice (*ibid.*). Last, combined capabilities Nussbaum refers to as "internal capabilities with suitable external conditions for the exercise of the function" (Nussbaum, 2000, p. 85), such as citizens who live in repressive regimes who may have the internal capability for exercising thought and speech as they like, but not the combined capability (*ibid.*).

Harnacke (2013) explains that every individual has different conversion factors, which is what determines the degree of which resources can be turned into functionings. These consist of:

"personal factors that are internal to the person (physical condition, age, sex, intelligence, etc.), social factors depending on the society in which one lives (policies, norms, power relations, etc.) and environmental factors that reflect the

physical living environment.” (p. 772)

An impairment, then, becomes part of the conversation factors of the individual, and interacts with the social, economic, and physical environment to create one’s capabilities (Harnacke, 2013, p. 773).

4.1.3 Capability, dis/ability, and environment

Several authors have used CA within disability studies (Harnacke, 2013; Ton & Adamson, 2020; Ton et al., 2020; Ton et al., 2019; Villeneuve et al., 2021). “Under the capability perspective, disability is often associated with restricted capabilities or dis-capabilities” (Ton et al., 2019, p. 14), and is viewed as “the outcome of the interaction between personal characteristics (including health conditions and impairments), resources, and the environment”. According to Ton et al. (2019) CA focuses on individual actions, yet recognises that individuals do not act alone, or in a vacuum. For example, an individual with a disability may ask friends, family, or neighbours for support during disasters, thereby achieving an external capability. If this capability is achieved by collaborating with other disabled individuals, or with OPDs, it becomes a collective capability (*ibid.*), or as Nussbaum puts it, a combined capability. This way, persons with disabilities may achieve capabilities otherwise unavailable to them.

In situations of environmental hazards, the impacts can be understood as “manifestations of the deprivation or restriction of capabilities” to cope with disasters. Moreover, persons with disabilities may require more or different types of resources than others to achieve the same living conditions, causing disasters to lead to a higher deprivation of capabilities than for abled-bodied individuals (Ton et al., 2019, p. 15). Ton et al. (2019) argues that disaster risk efforts for persons with disabilities should not only focus on increasing availability of resources but should create and enable factors for persons with disabilities to convert their resources into valuable functionings, as well as removing the factors preventing them from achieving these functionings, which expands their capabilities (p. 15). However, a study by Villeneuve et al. (2021) found that the individuals that a disabled person may receive support from in their daily life may not be able to in times of disasters, making it difficult

for persons with disabilities to achieve their combined or collective capabilities in these times (p. 6).

4.2 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

It is widely recognised that climate change exacerbates environmental hazards, affecting every individual on earth, yet further marginalising already vulnerable groups. Because of this, sustainable development has become a buzzword in international debates. However, there are different ideas of what sustainability is. One definition often referred to is the Brundtland rapport which defined three types of sustainability: economic, social, and environmental. However, this approach has been highly critiqued as focusing too much on economic development and too little on environmental protection and, even more so, social development (Salkeld, 2016, p. 451). Sustainable development, where development means growth, is an unrealistic approach to sustainability for those who understand natural resources as finite. Instead, growth can be thought of as an increase in quantity, and development as an increase in quality, challenging the prioritisation of a neoliberal economy as perpetuating inequalities (Salkeld, 2016, pp. 451, 453).

Recently, the inclusion of the social sustainability pillar has increasingly been the focus of the environmental discourse. Terms such as *environmental justice*, *climate justice* and *disaster justice* are often used to highlight the importance of the social justice element of sustainability, bringing the issues of marginalised groups to the frontlines of climate change discourses. Ton and Adamson (2020) describe the concept of disaster justice as being strongly linked to the concept of Environmental Justice (EJ), emphasising the failure of institutions and governments to provide the protections and resources needed to ensure the safety of marginalised communities in times of disasters. In addition, EJ is described as focusing on the “disproportionate distribution of environmental risks and harms among social groups that result from unequal access to environmental goods and to participation in environmental decision-making” (Ton & Adamson, 2020, p. 125).

CA as a partial theory of justice outlining the minimum requirements for a decent standard of living lends itself well to be used in combination with EJ as a theoretical framework. The

concept of EJ is very much linked to the issue of disability and climate as climate change further exacerbates environmental harms which disproportionately affect persons with disabilities, as well as highlights the inaccessibility of persons with disabilities to engage in climate action and decision-making.

4.2.1 Five Aspects of Justice

EJ is quite new as a framework and is a complex and varied concept. It emerged over thirty years ago, and considers both environmental and social justice issues, highlighting environmental injustices where minorities are disproportionately affected (Allen, 2013, p. 227). Allen (in Ton & Adamson, 2020) has identified five aspects of justice which are relevant to EJ. These are distributive, procedural, cultural, representative, and capability justice (p.125).

Allen (2013) cites Rawls who defined *distributive justice* as concerning “the just distribution of goods and best principles for their distribution”. In Rawls view distributive justice focuses on fairness of distribution and relies on objectivity, yet in EJ it is often used to understand the maldistribution of environmental “bads” on marginalised communities (p. 227). *Procedural justice* is connected to distributive justice in the sense that it links “the functions and procedures of institutions and juridical bodies to just distribution of goods in society”, yet places it in the hands of institutional processes, often the state (*ibid.*). *Cultural justice* is recognition-based, and considers the underlying causes of maldistribution to be the social context in which they occur, showing the importance of examining local, social and cultural contexts in the area of research to fully understand a phenomenon (Allen, 2013, p. 228). *Representative justice* focuses on equal participation as “full partnership in social interaction” according to Nancy Fraser (in Allen, 2013, p. 228). Representative justice has a strong political dimension and examines states, NGOs, and other institutions where interactions concerning distribution and recognition occur. (*ibid.*) Lastly, *capabilities justice*, or *capability justice* as Ton and Adamson (2020) refer to it, understands justice as what abilities we have to choose our own path and what we do with the resources we are given, rather than the quantity of resources available to us. This aspect is where CA comes into play and will thus be afforded a larger focus than the other four aspects of justice, though

all will be considered in the analysis.

As has been depicted above, the concept of EJ uses a plurality of justice concepts, much like Sen does. Allen (2013) claims that EJ has a similar "linked" view of justice as Sen. They both see justice as more than a "one size fits all theory" (p. 229) and rather as a moral set of ideas subject to change, making the two ideas of justice closely related yet able to provide varying explanations and understandings of the same issue.

4.3 ABLEISM

"Ableism is when you assume that I'm automatically strong and courageous simply because I'm disabled"

"Ableism is making buses accessible but not the streets leading to the bus stop"

"Ableism is calling my needs "special" and then ignoring them"

"Ableism is believing I need to be fixed. Ableism is you refusing to fix what's really broken"

Excerpts of the poem "Naming Ableism" by Maria R. Palacios (2017)

To gain a better understanding of the structural inequalities at play that may create barriers or restrict capabilities for persons with disabilities to engage in climate action the concept of *Ableism* will be used. Much like other -isms such as sexism, racism, and classism, ableism puts one group of the population below others in the social hierarchy, but is much less discussed despite being intertwined with other forms of oppression. Carey (2022) defines ableism as "a worldview that assumes the superiority of able bodies and minds and the inferiority of those who do not fit in within the normative expectations." (p. 368). Chouinard (In Nario-Redmond, 2020) defines ableism as "ideas, practices, institutions, and social relations that presume able-bodiedness, and by so doing, construct persons with disabilities as marginalized ... and largely invisible 'others'"(p. 5).

Nario-Redmond (2020) claims that "ableism privileges a nondisabled perspective and

promotes the inferior and unequal treatment of disabled people” (p. 5). These attitudes manifest in everyday interactions such as overgeneralizing a trait e.g. “assuming that people who are deaf lack intelligence or can’t enjoy music”, or assuming that people with disabilities have a tragic life. Other examples are excluding persons with disabilities and demanding to do something in a particular way without considering alternate ways (*ibid*). All these examples, and more, have so eloquently been highlighted in the poem above.

As mentioned, ableism is intertwined with other forms of oppression. Talila Lewis (In Carey, 2022) claims that ableism is

“a system that places value on people’s bodies and minds based on societally constructed ideas of normalcy, intelligence, excellence and productivity. These constructed ideas are deeply rooted in anti- Blackness, eugenics, colonialism and capitalism.” (p. 369)

Wolbring and Lisitza (2017) argue that marginalised groups all experience injustices based on expectations of ability. They give the example of cognition as an expectation which is used to oppress people with certain intellectual disabilities but is also used to justify racism by seeing one race as cognitively more able than another. This same line of arguing can be extended to help understand the injustice humans show animals and nature as seen as less cognitively abled, or without rationality. This links to environmental justice as a movement viewing all living things as having value independent of their capabilities. Thus, in this view, anthropocentric behaviours would be seen as disabling to nature (Wolbring, 2013, p. 44).

Ableism is also deeply intertwined with inaccessibility. According to Carey (2022) “access refers to the power and opportunity to enter into, use, participate in, and have a sense of belonging or control over a social space or interaction” (p. 376). Moreover, Carey claims that access may both be physical, relating to architecture and technology, as well as social, relating to relationships, policy, and communication (*ibid*.). Inaccessibility, then, is the idea that persons with disabilities neither need nor should have access, and seeps into all areas of life (Carey, 2022, p. 877). The processes of inaccessibility are shaped by power, and stem from ideas on who should be included or not, who has value in society, subsequently restricting persons with disabilities’ capabilities to achieve their valued functionings.

4.3.1 The three dimensions

Carey (2022) argues that ableism is played out on many levels, which she divides into three dimensions. These are prejudice, discrimination, and institutional ableism. *Prejudice* refers to “a set of negative attitudes and beliefs about a social group” (Carey, 2022, p. 369) and is tied to stereotypes, which are often false, simplified, or negative generalizations about a group. Stereotypes about persons with disabilities often affect them negatively and are used in a judgemental way. For example, blind people may be stereotyped to be helpless, or deaf people may be perceived as dumb (Carey, 2022, p. 369).

Stereotypes like this “simplifies the impairment and the person, leads to a narrow set of expectations, and ultimately discounts the humanity of people with disabilities” (Carey, 2022, p. 370). Even “positive” stereotypes can be harmful. The stereotype of being heroic, for example, is often rooted in the belief that having a disability is a tragedy, and something that is wrong or should be done away with. If having a disability is worse than death, then merely surviving, and any accomplishments you achieve “despite” your disability becomes a heroic act. (*ibid.*)

Moreover, persons with disabilities, as well as children and the elderly, are often considered friendly and compliant, but also dependent and incapable, and thus unthreatening, resulting in pity or paternalism (treating people like children) (Carey, 2022, p. 371). This results in persons with disabilities not being taken seriously, and not being viewed as competent agents with knowledge and experience worth a seat at the table.

On the flip side, persons with disabilities may also be seen as threatening, and be subject to objectification and segregation. History proves the best example of this, with eugenicists believing “disability to be the root cause of crime, poverty and social dysfunction” (Carey, 2022, p. 371), leading to mass sterilization and institutionalization. Another example we still see today is that of mental illnesses being seen as making people violent and dangerous.

Discrimination relates to questions on in/accessibility. Prejudice shapes our behaviour, and views of persons with disabilities as incompetent, dependent, and tragic lead to discrimination (Carey, 2022, p. 372). Discrimination seeps into every part of society and

can affects persons with disabilities' access to decision-making. Some commons areas persons with disabilities are discriminated against are healthcare, education, and employment. In the example of education, "students with disabilities have lower rates of high school and college graduation than students without disabilities", which studies have shown to be partly due to ableism. Prejudice like this may cause further discrimination for students of colour and of low socioeconomic backgrounds, as they are overidentified as disabled and are less likely to receive helpful resources, and more likely to find themselves in segregated educational tracks (Carey, 2022, p. 373). This carries on into the workplace where stereotypes of dependence and incompetence affect employment abilities. Moreover, those who are employed often report receiving lower pay and job security as well as other forms of discrimination.

Institutional ableism refers to the structural inequalities that create barriers for persons with disabilities. Carey (2022) highlights two things to illustrate how institutional ableism perpetuates inequalities. The first is the patterns found in the social structures of society. Here, institutional ableism highlights patterns of inequality which are embedded in and manifest through policies and laws. The second refers to the physical institutionalisation of persons with disabilities in segregated institutions. These structural inequalities occur when "broad institutional patterns such as policies, procedures, and funding systems disadvantage or harm people with disabilities more than other groups" (Carey, 2022, p. 374). This can be both intentional and unintentional, much like prejudice and discrimination, yet even when unintentional it creates and perpetuates systemic inequalities. As is the nature of structural/systemic problems, these inequalities can be perpetuated even in instances of people expressing positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities (Carey, 2022, p. 374), proving that a change in attitudes is not enough to change the system.

Some aspects of EJ overlap with both CA and ableism. Procedural justice is concerned with the institutional processes which shape the distribution of goods, or environmental 'bads', as does institutional ableism yet from a disability perspective. As this paper focuses on the experiences of persons with disabilities, procedural injustice, and institutional ableism overlap. Similarly, capacities justice in the EJ framework is very similar to CA and will thus

not be mentioned in the analysis.

5. RESULTS & ANALYSIS

The results have been divided into themes based on themes identified in the respondents' answers. These are loss and damage to better understand the impacts climate change and natural disasters have had on the respondents and persons with disabilities in their communities, climate and disability awareness as many respondents mentioned awareness-raising and lack of awareness as major issues, in/accessibility and exclusion as one of the main issues identified by the respondents, and stigma and discrimination as the basis of many of their experiences. At the end there is a 'visions for the future' section which highlights what kind of world the respondents' hope for persons with disabilities and what factors may enable their engagement in climate action.

5.1 LOSS AND DAMAGE

As can be understood by listening to the respondents' stories, there is an unequal distribution of environmental 'bads', meaning that persons with disabilities are both differently, and at times higher impacted by the consequences of climate change than those without disabilities. This section will investigate the experiences of the respondents when it comes to their climate risk and impacts and attempt to arrive at a better understanding of these experiences using distributive and procedural justice/institutional ableism. These aspects of justice will help describe how the loss and damage persons with disabilities face creates barriers and shapes the capabilities of the respondents in engaging in climate action.

5.1.1 Bangladesh

Many respondents noted that their communities are suffering the consequences of climate change, and that persons with disabilities are at high risk, though many are not aware of how they are impacted. Zahir/S claimed that persons with disabilities are at high risk in his community and that "as a result of climate change, human health, nutrition, and immunity are declining". Hasan/S expanded on this and said that:

“[The] changing climate is constantly having a negative impact on our daily lives. Seasonal irregularities, rising sea levels, declining yields, disrupted ecosystems, etc. continue to have a negative impact [because of] climate change.”

Akash/S stated that “because of this climate [we are] in a lot of danger. We are trapped in the water and can't get out anywhere”. Mehedi/I described his experience of the floods affecting north-eastern Bangladesh at the time of writing where some houses on his land have floated away: “People are suffering a lot out there. Around 5 million people are affected by flood situation. [...] I lost contact with the people out there and I've also lost belongings”.

Mehedi/I also described his experience in the floods the year before where the prime minister provided relief bags to the community via helicopters, which persons with disabilities were struggling to access due to heavy crowding in the areas where they were dropped. He thinks that “these bags should be received particularly to people with disabilities”

Zahir/I also described his experiences with being unable to access emergency aid during floods. He said he lives in the north-eastern part of Bangladesh where almost every year he experiences floods, droughts, or other natural disasters:

“In 2017 the area where I live in the north part of Bangladesh was also flood affected. At that time I had to move to using a raft. So, using a raft for a disabled person is quite difficult. There was no other alternative for me to make movement during the flood”

These experiences show how persons with disabilities can be differently affected and more highly impacted than those without disabilities. Emergency aid, access to shelters and information, and mobility issues were brought up many times by the respondents, which show evidence of distributive injustice. It also displays procedural injustice or institutional ableism where the disability community is differently impacted due to inaccessibility issues, where the state chooses to provide emergency aid such as relief bags and rafts that are not available to persons with disabilities. This hinders their capabilities to evacuate and safely

navigate a world where extreme weather events are increasing.

This is also evident in Rupa/I's account of the recent floods. She said it gave her mobility issues where she was not able to go to her office or the markets, leading to disruptions to her family and business income, causing a financial crisis for her family. This is a great and common example of how persons with disabilities are differently impacted than those without disabilities.

Arun/I said that "I am in a room which is very hot, now we are around 36 [Celsius] temperature, which is unusual, nearly unbelievable, because of the climate change happening. In my city, in the high tide, it is gone under the water.". He also described mobility issues during these floods and loss of livelihoods due to the salinity of the water.

Hasan/S mentioned that he feels "weakness in the body due to lack of proper nutrition. The level of disability is constantly increasing. Struggling to stay healthy instead of a better life.", which is consistent with previous literature suggesting that extreme weather events and other impacts of climate change will lead to an increase in disabilities. He also mentioned the effects on people with disabilities in his community in general:

"The standard of living is becoming increasingly expensive. People with disabilities who are unable to control their lives are becoming more socially backward. They are not getting proper nutrition due to poor diet. They are being displaced due to river erosion. As a result of deforestation, they are facing terrible natural disasters."

Hasan/S also said that persons with disabilities are more at risk as they rely on different types of aid, which Mehedi/S echoed, saying that he must deal with more risks than others and that "it takes a lot of effort to get relief, treatment is not available". The different types of aid many with disabilities use may be unavailable during natural disasters, such as wheelchairs, hearing aids, and white canes, or necessary treatments are unavailable, causing a decrease in the capabilities of persons with disabilities during disasters. These experiences show evidence of distributive injustices where persons with disabilities are more at risk than those without disabilities.

5.1.2 Madagascar

All respondents mentioned ways in which they have been impacted by the consequences of climate change, stressing that their disability puts them more at risk. Dina/S mentioned what she would need during natural disasters: “Apart from being warned in time, concrete measures such as the availability of a safe and accessible place for people with disabilities in the event of a tropical cyclone or flooding, for example”. However, she also mentioned that she feels prepared enough to evacuate “but for my compatriots, some of them have encountered difficulties when disasters occur.”

Hasina/I spoke of the many floods in Madagascar the year prior that came one after another:

“People almost didn’t have time to recover from the destruction left by the first cyclone and then the second cyclone already hits again. This caused much damage for everybody, especially for people with disabilities.”

She explained how communication is a problem in these situations, especially in isolated areas. She said the government tends to focus on the south of Madagascar, but stresses that there are victims all over the country that are not receiving aid due to isolation and a lack of cell phones and television. Due to this, there is a great delay in the responsiveness of humanitarian aid and other forms of action, showing distributive and procedural injustices. Similarly, Hasina/S explained that she feels more at risk

“Because we cannot move in case of evacuation (for those who are physically disabled), for us deaf people we do not hear the alert (e.g.. whistle) and instructions. So, we suffer the consequences when disasters occur.”

She further explained that “The rising waters and flooding during the cyclones destroyed part of my house”, and that she has experienced power cuts, and mobility issues. Similarly, Aina/S said that in disasters and situations where evacuation is needed, she experiences mobility issues— “I can't escape due to my disability, so I stay where I am.”, much like the respondents in Bangladesh.

Andry/I gave the example of cyclones in the east coast of Madagascar:

“People with disabilities are among the most vulnerable people even if there is preparedness, protection, and resilience when it comes to cyclones. They’re always victims because most of them are poor, and they have bad houses. And then after the cyclone most of the houses are destroyed and it is very difficult for them to get back to the normal life.”

Andry/I’s example shows how persons with disabilities may be more at risk during natural disasters as they are often part of two marginalised groups, living in poverty and with a disability. This is not the case for all, but as previous research has shown, persons with disabilities often live in poverty or unemployment due to discrimination, showing evidence of both distributive and procedural injustice/institutional ableism.

Dina/I described mobility issues and gave two examples of her own experience during a flooding in her office, as well as during the drought in southern Madagascar:

“[My office is] in the centre of the town, it’s mostly surrounded by foreign sellers, and there’s water there. What happened was there was flooding three times in the beginning of this year, [...] and in order to get out of the office and to a place where there was not much water, we had to pay someone to take us on their backs in order to escape from...get out of the office. [...] Now the second example is when we went to southern Madagascar where there is acute and severe drought, it was difficulty for people, especially people with disabilities, to go to a point of water and to do their minimum needs. Because there was not enough water, they have to go far away to get water and if they manage to go to the source of the water, they cannot bring some water back, so they have [...] to drink there and do their washing there and come back.”

Andry/I described his experience of heavy rains in his region:

“Many people had to leave their homes because there was an unexplained rain, heavy rain, for a few days, and consequently there were flooding in the town. Yes, there’s always rain in that place but [...] it was out of the rainy season, but we still have lots of rain and heavy rain for a longer period and there was floods. Some of

the houses built in the low regions were even surrounded by water and they had to flee away.”

Andry/S described the ways in which the country of Madagascar has been impacted by climate change:

“Because Madagascar is a country in a situation of vulnerability, seen by the socio-political and economic reality, this vulnerability is in turn exacerbated by the recurrence and extent of major hazards such as cyclones, flooding, drought which are aggravated by climate change as well as by the locust invasion, fires, which affect almost permanently. The resulting socio-economic damage and losses erode livelihoods and often require large-scale humanitarian interventions.”

It stands clear from this data that persons with disabilities in both countries face a great amount of loss and damage because of climate change, adding to the importance of including them in decision-making around climate action and adaptation. This would increase their capabilities for mobility, safe housing, evacuation, and to be heard, as well as increase distributive and procedural justice.

5.2 CLIMATE & DISABILITY AWARENESS

As seen in the above section, persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected by climate change, but they may not always be aware of how climate change is impacting them or their community. Moreover, the climate movement may not always be aware of disability issues and how different groups are differently affected. Awareness-raising came up many times in the data collection as one of the areas where more support was needed, and that hindered their capabilities of engaging in climate action. Institutional ableism/procedural justice and representative justice are relevant for this section, to help understand why awareness of the issue is lacking.

5.2.1 Bangladesh

Most respondents reported to be concerned about climate change, with varying degrees of knowledge of its consequences. Arun/I explained that despite being badly impacted,

persons with disabilities are not very aware of how or why they are impacted as information is not accessible, and that, in his experience, climate change issues are not ‘disability friendly’. Arun/I said that mainstream climate organisations do not include persons with disabilities, neither do climate policies. When asked why he thinks this is the case he answered:

“Basically, firstly lack of awareness about disability issues and the people who are implementing [policies], they thought ‘okay climate change is an environmental issue, it is not really related to people with disabilities, and maybe people with disabilities are not active part of it’. Even there are many projects implemented by the government for climate change adaptation programs but people with disabilities are not much engaged with them.”

Arun/I expanded on this answer and said that persons with disabilities have no voice, and that there is not much advocacy or awareness raising about climate change by OPDs, showing a lack of representative justice. He also mentioned a lack of funding on disability and climate change, as well as a lack of research.

Akash/S explained that he gets an idea of climate change from his organization:

“[My] district [...] is a water-borne village so I give some idea about the climate of the disabled through my organization.”¹ [...] “People with disabilities in our area are not aware so I do some research through those who are involved with our organization.”

Concern about the lack of information was apparent in some respondents’ answers. Tarina/S said that:

¹ Some information has been omitted to preserve the anonymity of the respondent. Similar changes will be made throughout

“No, I don't know about that. No one in our society is so concerned about climate change. It is not advertised in print or electronic media. That's why I don't know that way.”

Rupa/I explained that information about climate change comes from the internet, Facebook, and newspapers. Mehedi/I had a different experience and explained that he does not get much information about how climate change is impacting persons with disabilities at all, neither from his organisation or from the government. He said that “I have never seen any type of reasonable accommodation from an organizational or government level for letting us know about the effect of climate change”. Neither has he seen the disability movement spreading climate awareness. This was echoed by Zahir/I who said that he has never seen initiatives being taken by the government or NGOs to have news on natural disasters and climate change reach persons with disabilities, until now, suggesting the situation may be improving.

Mehedi/I also said that information about natural disasters come from radio and phones, and these are not accessible, in some cases neither to persons with disabilities nor without:

“Most of the people here don't have access to electricity, and even if they have access to electricity, they have no phone. They might not have access to radio, even if they have mobile phone they don't have access to internet so there are various problems in the accessibilities”

Arun/I has attended several events on climate change as a consultant and advocate, yet states that persons with disabilities have not been represented much. He does try to bring persons with disabilities onto the agenda in the meetings he attends, and he has experienced an improvement in the number of organisations involved in disability inclusive climate change issues.

Rupa/I is actively engaged in issues on climate change and her organisation holds discussions and workshops on “how to consider people with disabilities and each of them adapting with climate change”. They are also conducting research on climate change issues, as well as working towards raising awareness of the issue. These workshops and activities

have been successful in her experience, “because they are working to make people united on this issue and people are getting more and more united on these issues in an organisational level”, though it was difficult in the beginning.

Mehedi/I explained that as far as he knows, his organisation does not include climate into their work, but he expressed a will to include it onto the agenda as he believes it is an important topic and helpful for persons with disabilities. He also said that he has not attended or been invited to any events on climate change by organisations in his community, though he believes these events exist. As far as he knows, persons with disabilities are not invited to participate in these meetings, showing a lack of representation, as well as procedural injustice where persons with disabilities are continuously excluded from these meetings.

Arun/I works with several organisations, some of which do include the climate into their work. He said that his organisation is one of the first to discuss climate issues, and that several OPDs have begun to implement projects on climate change, mitigation and adaptation, and awareness-raising, showing an improvement in procedural justice. Arun/I thinks that representation is important, showing how procedural justice can be improved:

“Firstly, the disability movement should raise the issues [of climate change] as one of the core issues on disability rights movement. Secondly, I think international agencies who are supporting climate change, they must include disability inclusion. [...] Like UN agencies who are working on climate change, they need to raise the issues and bring the issues to the front, and they can ask their partner to include disability in their activities, it is very important. I’m not seeing the implementation of the UNCRPD or SDG issues in climate change movement, for ensuring disability issues.”

Zahir/I highlighted a similar point and explained that the committees set up for the protection of persons with disabilities at Agenda 2030 are not functioning, showing institutional ableism/procedural injustice:

“Those committees have some responsibilities for protecting people with

disabilities, instead these committees are not functional. [...] The local government, both on political level and the official level, they don't include us.”

The participants mentioned several areas in which they feel they would need more support to better be able to raise the topic of climate change onto their agenda. These included more accessibility, funds and capacity building, awareness-raising, and more cooperation with others. Respondent Zahir/S said that they would be able to raise the topic onto their agenda “if domestic and foreign funds are allocated”, and Rupa/I mentioned that if facilities and government offices are more accessible, they will be better able to continue their current workshops and activities. Zahir/I mentioned that the pandemic has affected them, and financial support is especially important now and a lack thereof is causing them to be behind on their abilities to hold events and conferences. Hasan/S and Tarina/S agreed, and Tarina/S said that “We want to know more about how [the] climate is affecting us.”.

Zahir/I agreed:

“I strongly believe that this type of work needs to be included and maybe somewhere it is being started. On the other perspective [...] the people who work on climate change are not concerned about people with disabilities. Even if they are, they don't think that people with disabilities are important or significant enough to include them in these events.”

Arun/I argued for an increase of capacity of persons with disabilities to be able to work as advocates. He wants to see that “people with disabilities are leading the development projects regarding climate change. NGOs, INGOs, and UN agencies should support people with disabilities and their organisations regarding climate change issues.”

Lastly, Respondent Mehedi/S listed a few areas in which they would need more support, thus greatly summarizing the sentiments of the other respondents:

“I think with the help of the following, [organisation] could take the work of including people with disabilities into the climate change agenda:

- Information delivery

- Economic cooperation
- Capacity building
- Raise awareness
- Networking with other organizations”

5.2.2 Madagascar

As in the case of Bangladesh, all respondents were concerned about the changing climate and had experienced impacts of it, though some mention their inability to do anything about it, or to access information. The situation does seem improved from Bangladesh with greater participation in climate action.

Aina/S said that she is concerned about the changing climate “but I can’t do much. What I can do is ask for help”. When it comes to receiving information about climate change or natural disasters, the respondents have different experiences. Hasina/S who is Deaf said “I receive news by SMS or Facebook from other disabled people (Deaf), or I see through National Television which is the only channel that has Sign Language translation. [There is] limited access when there is no sign language translation (so radio and phone calls are not accessible)”, a sentiment which was echoed by Aina/S who said that “it is the community that transmits the information”.

Hasina/I gave an example of this information delay. There is only one tv channel which dispatches information about coming natural disasters in sign language—the national channel run by the government called TVM. However, she explains that this is not enough:

“Because it’s only once, and there are people who cannot see that information. Sometimes people will try to get information from Facebook, that happens as well. When they get that information, for example when a cyclone is supposed to strike Madagascar, they will get information and they will try to dispatch it between [her organisation], the associations [connected to her organisation] and all the people in all the regions of Madagascar in order to make sure those people get prepared to face it.”

Dina/I also mentioned problems with communication and information reaching persons with disabilities but from a different perspective:

“Access to information depends on the type of disability.[...] Let’s say for example if it comes to a person with a mental disability then it’s going to be a problem for that person to access information on climate change, unless for example there is a relative, a member of the family, the surrounding people who knows him or her, helps him or her understand what’s going on “

Every respondent from Madagascar reported to be actively engaged in issues on climate change. Some mentioned wanting to be more involved, but that a lack of accessibility, material and financial means are causing barriers. Aina/S said that “We do not have the material means to be able to commit ourselves fully.”, yet they have attended meetings through their organisation:

“I report the specific needs of people with disabilities in meetings, I encourage people with disabilities to express their needs, to make known what we know how to do and can do [...] But in general it is solidarity and awareness between us that is very important to us.”

Dina/S explained that the OPD she works for is not very involved in climate change, but a youth network she is also involved in has climate change at its focus. In the interviews she explained that as a result, the youth network has started including more persons with disabilities, and the OPD has started discussing climate. This is a great example of how the two movements can work together in achieving environmental justice. She described how the youth network has inspired the OPD work and their ambition to do more:

“Our organization will collaborate with this network, and we will do training on climate justice and especially the protection of the environment, because the network is still asking other people with disabilities to join. Given the situation of people with disabilities in the south of Madagascar, this situation encourages us to strengthen our work on climate change and address the problems faced by people with disabilities.”

Andry/I described five activities his organisation is involved in related to climate change, all of which include persons with disabilities. These included sensitisation to locals who were cutting down trees to make charcoal to have them plant trees beforehand; they cleaned up beaches and their town from single-use plastic bags; and they conducted a tree planting project. In the tree planting project, for example, persons with disabilities were the ones planting the trees into holes dug by people without disabilities. Andry/I said that “it’s always inclusive, we always include all the people with disabilities, whether it’s mental, physical, audible or blind people also.”

Andry/I said he and his organisation is regularly called to meetings on disaster risk management as he is a member of a national bureau for fighting natural disasters, where they bring people with disabilities onto the agenda:

“It has been discussed how to help the vulnerable people which are the women, children, people of age, and surely the disabled people...how to evacuate them when there is a flood.”

Andry/I also mentioned that he used to have difficulties in accessing these types of meetings, but with time people have gotten more aware of accessibility issues and he now struggles much less.

Hasina/I explained that her organisation gathers information on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing victims of natural disasters and reports these number to their donors who provide materials and food, which is distributed to the victims via her organisation. However, she highlighted an issue with this. The ministry of population, who organises these distributions, is very selective in the places they want the statistics from:

“When ministry of population asks for the information or the statistics on the victims of a cyclone, they just ask...they’re very selective on the region. In all regions of Madagascar there are cyclones, but they only ask the statistics of one precise place [...] without considering all the other places where we have victims as well. And that’s a problem.”

Hasina/I further explained that she believes this to be due to a lack of funding for this type

of support, causing them to have to be selective on where they can send aid to.

Dina/I brought up a similar point in her interview when talking about a project where support was provided for people with disabilities in areas prone to flooding and cyclones. She wondered what location was included and what happened to the other regions that were not.

Dina/I thinks that support needs to come from the private sector because there have been issues with governmental support. Dina/I explained that when they try to advocate for persons with disabilities they run into issues because the government personnel are frequently changed, so working with the private sector would ensure a quicker turnaround:

“If you send an advocacy today, maybe after a couple of weeks that person is not there anymore, then [...] the new person will wait for the advocacy again [...] so in this case it’s better to do a cooperation with a private sector and intensify the sensitisation and advocacy”

5.3 IN/ACCESSIBILITY AND EXCLUSION

One of the main barriers seen in the results is that of inaccessibility. This is a wide category and a term that can be prescribed to many different facets of their experiences, including physical inaccessibility in terms of access to buildings or to emergency aid and mobility during disasters, or social inaccessibility in terms of not having a voice in meetings or events on climate change, or being excluded from decision-making. Representative justice, and institutional ableism/procedural justice will be used to arrive at a better understanding of these experiences and to help describe how inaccessibility shapes the capabilities of the respondents in engaging in climate action. Many of the experiences of the respondents show evidence of institutional ableism as persons with disabilities are often ignored by the government in policymaking. Many respondents, both in Bangladesh and Madagascar, reported that they want to be more actively involved in climate issues, yet inaccessibility creates barriers to their engagement, and accessibility needs to be varied and adapted to many different types of disabilities.

5.3.1 Bangladesh

The current involvement of participants in the climate movement was split in half, where half of them had been engaged in some way, and half of them hadn't, yet all respondents expressed a will to get more engaged in climate action. On the question of why she is not engaged, Tarina/S mentioned accessibility issues and that "we are not aware of how it affects people with disabilities". Neither organisation was particularly involved in issues around climate change besides Zahir/S who mentioned that they are "contacting the current Ministry of Disaster Management" and that he had tried to raise climate change onto the agenda but doesn't "get any kind of cooperation to work". Hasan/S mentioned that they are "conducting various advocacy activities at government and private levels".

The interviews shed more light on this topic. Zahir/I attended an event for the international disability day. However, the meeting was on the first floor of the building, causing accessibility issues for those with mobility impairments, a problem which most government buildings have. In this case, they put in a request for the office to be moved to the ground floor. By the time of the interview, the officer in charge had given them a commitment to move the office, though it hadn't happened yet. Zahir/I also explained that there are committees, such as for women's development and for persons with disabilities, who are working with the district and sub-district governmental offices to notify them of events or initiatives:

"But we face the problem of accessibility in those offices and most offices don't yet provide those accessibility facilities to us."

This leads to a loss of voice, representation, and safety for persons with disabilities. If they are not represented in government proceedings, policies are not being made with them in mind, and they have no say in any level of society, their safety and food and income security is at risk in times of environmental hazards.

Arun/I stated that most meetings he attended have not been very accessible to persons with disabilities. He specifically mentioned one case where the meeting itself was accessible to him as a visually impaired person, but when he wanted to receive information, the printed

material was not readable to him. Rupa/I had a similar experience and mentioned that as a wheelchair user she was not able to attend all meetings that have been held on climate change, something which is an issue for many:

“Accessibility can be the biggest contributor for the participation in the climate change activities, including programs, meetings and many other facilities for people with disabilities”

Inaccessibility was seen in many instances, hindering the respondents’ capabilities to include climate action into their OPDs, attend meetings on climate change and have their voice be heard. Rupa/I explained that whilst climate change is included in the disability movement, it is not a priority for many as they are still too busy fighting for their fundamental human rights.

Several respondents also expressed concern about the possibility of having to evacuate or migrate due to the changing climate. Sumon/S, Mehedi/S and Tarina/S expressed a worry over safely migrating or moving to shelters during a natural disaster due to accessibility concerns. Sumon/S said:

“People with disabilities face many dangers due to the lack of shelters for people with disabilities in our vicinity. [...] The cyclone center [is] too far away and there are no facilities for people with disabilities to enter and there are no suitable bathroom facilities.”

Sumon/S expanded on this and said that the washrooms experience waterlogging, which may cause diseases for persons with disabilities, and Akash/S agreed that the shelters lack accessible toilets. Tarina/S said that she cannot access shelters easily as “I have to go there to see if there is a toilet, ramp, etc.”. Three respondents expressed that they did not have knowledge on evacuation measures for persons with disabilities in their community, whereas two respondents said that they did have knowledge, which shows that shelters might be available but information about them, or how to reach them, is not reaching all. Respondent Hasan/S said:

“There are shelters in every district of Bangladesh as well as in my district where

measures are taken to protect other people, including people with disabilities, from natural disasters.”

Zahir/I gave an account of what may happen in instances where shelters are not accessible:

“What I have seen, especially for people with disabilities, in some cases even family members also leave them as they have to go through many ups and downs. No one wants to provide a special shelter for them”

Many of the respondents have faced the recent floods in Bangladesh and told stories of inaccessibility to emergency aid, as well as to roads and transportation causing a loss of livelihoods, and shelters causing them to be more at-risk during disasters. Zahir/I and Arun/I reported to have experienced inaccessibility in access to meeting materials or government buildings where meetings they had been invited to talked about disability issues were held, which may provide an example of institutional ableism and representative injustice and how the government is lacking in their understanding of disability issues.

5.3.2 Madagascar

Aina/S, who has a physical disability, said the meetings she has attended tends to be quite accessible to her personally, but more is needed to aid the inclusion of persons with disabilities in climate work: “We need a place adapted for disabled people with the necessary facilities so that we do not need to depend on an accompanying person.”

Hasina/I said she has not attended many meetings on climate change due to a lack of sign language interpreters. However, an interpreter received climate change training and then distributed information to people with hearing impairments throughout the country, so she received training that way. Hasina/S would like more support in the form of “translation into sign language, possibility of coming with an accompanying person, and more media coverage to show the participation of people with disabilities”. This answer was expanded upon in the interviews where Hasina/I explained that more support is needed in the form of sign language interpreters during climate training and dispatch of information. She also thinks “that society needs to get further training on climate change work in order for the society to cross help, if I can put it that way, so everybody can help each other.”

Dina/I explained that despite it being a good thing that the national tv channel (TVM) has information about climate change in sign language at certain times of the day, there is more information to be shared that is not accessible, causing a delay in information like Hasina/I mentioned:

“Most of the time they only give information that is suitable for the regime or the general politics of the government, and they kind of reject many other information if it’s judged not suitable for the government. So many information won’t be shared there but there are other channels who can broadcast in some places but they [...] are not accessible to people with disabilities. For example, people with mental disability and hearing disability have big problems to access the information. Because they don’t get it on real time anymore. The information is late coming to them. For example, for blind people, sometimes people tend to say ‘well if you think you’re a victim of a flooding just call this number, this red number, call it for free, it’s on the screen’, but blind people cannot see the screen so they don’t have access to that number.”

Another issue is that not everybody has access to the common means of distributing information such as radio or television, which also affects people without disabilities. Dina/I argues that because of this, information needs to be spread through other means as well for those who do not have access otherwise: “It is better if the head of Fokotany which is the chief or local head of the community, that should be the first person who gives the information.”

The capabilities to have a voice, to be heard and to lead and enact change are important yet severely lacking for persons with disabilities in both countries. However, the respondents in Madagascar seemed more positive about their current situation compared to their previous experiences, which they state to be because of an increase in advocacy and awareness-raising, showing the importance of information, and of being seen and heard in one’s society.

Representative justice, like procedural justice/institutional ableism also has a political dimension as it examines states and other institutions where interactions concerning the

distribution of goods and recognition happen and focuses on equal participation in these processes. As can be seen in the results, representative justice is lacking in both countries as persons with disabilities are not represented in governmental processes. Procedural justice is also lacking as the respondents think governmental processes do not include persons with disabilities enough, nor do they take disability issues into account. This hinders the capabilities of persons with disabilities to have a voice and to engage in climate action, which may lead to increased climate impacts, or distributive injustice. These structural inequalities may also be explained by institutional ableism, where government processes and the lack of representation in them perpetuates inequalities of persons with disabilities.

5.4 STIGMA & DISCRIMINATION

There are many instances of discrimination in the respondents' stories. It is not always clear from what these discriminations stem from, though I argue that discrimination, prejudice, and institutional ableism are intertwined and sometimes hard to separate. I have made the distinction in this section to focus on prejudice and discrimination and reserve the main part of the institutional ableism discussion to previous sections in this analysis. This section will also discuss cultural justice, alongside CA to help understand how stigma and prejudice create barriers for persons with disabilities' engagement in climate action.

5.4.1 Bangladesh

Inequalities and issues the respondents reported to experience included unemployment, discrimination, stigma, lack of accessible transportation systems and access to education. Rupa/I said that persons with disabilities get shown "abnormal behaviour" and odd looks when they go outside. Zahir/I explained that during the pandemic, many persons with disabilities were the first to lose their jobs. He said that accommodation provided for persons with disabilities is not up to par, and the local government is not offering financial support for persons with disabilities. Mehedi/S added "[lack of] rights, [in]justice, torture, etc.", to the list, and Tarina/S agreed that there is a "lack of access to educational institutions and trained teachers" and no employment opportunities. Hasan/S explained that "people

with disabilities in Bangladesh are the first victims of discrimination”.

Mehedi/I said there are three reasons why he thinks persons with disabilities are not being included in meetings on climate change:

“First of all, those who hold these types of discussions [...] they don’t think people with disabilities are such important to take part in such kind of discussion. Higher officials or people from the offices think themselves that they are enough [...] for representing people with disabilities. That’s why they might not include persons with disabilities. Second point is that in most of the case, people with disabilities themselves are not aware of the contents and such events, where they are held. [...] Another point is I want linkage between organisations who work with climate change and organisations who work with disabilities. So that the organisation can be concerned about climate change and let us know about which day they will operate, which place it will offer, this kind of thing.”

Institutional ableism, for example in Mehedi/I’s account of the government feeling themselves to be enough to represent persons with disabilities, or prejudice amongst the general society as can be seen in Rupa/I’s account of people without disabilities behaving “abnormally” to persons with disabilities on the street, are examples of how stigma and prejudice of persons with disabilities lead to discrimination, or ableism. As seen in the ableism theory section persons with disabilities are often viewed as harmless, unthreatening, and incompetent. This can be considered one of the barriers disabled people face as they as they are not taken seriously, if even considered at all when engaging in climate action.

In short, stereotypes lead to prejudice, which can cause discrimination. The stereotypes put onto persons with disabilities may differ from place to place depending on the social and cultural contexts of each area. These discriminations, in turn, affects persons with disabilities’ capabilities. In Bangladesh, both Arun/I and Zahir/I reported that the people in charge of policy making or climate work in their communities do not see climate change as an issue that concerns persons with disabilities and therefore it is not important to include them. However, as has been reflected in the respondents’ stories, the consequences of climate change affect persons with disabilities to a great extent, causing issues that are not

experienced by people without disabilities, or to a lesser extent. This can be seen in Mehedi/I's description of persons with disabilities not being able to reach emergency aid, Zahir/I's problem with using rafts, Rupa/I's loss of livelihood caused by mobility issues during floods or Mehedi/S's account of needing to deal with more risk than others because of his disability.

As mentioned, persons with disabilities are not always included in governmental or NGO projects on climate change. According to the respondents this is due to a lack of awareness of how climate is impacting persons with disabilities, and a belief that they would not be able to contribute much to the cause. This may be due to prejudice towards persons with disabilities. The respondents in Bangladesh did not give too many examples of specific stereotypes, but their stories still show evidence of being treated as 'less than' or differently to their peers without disabilities, which results in not being taken seriously, or viewed as competent individuals with agency and knowledge worth listening to.

5.4.2 Madagascar

Hasina/I shared an interesting reflection on shame in her description of how information on climate change and natural disasters gets shared within the Deaf community, and how this information chain often gets interrupted along the way:

"What happens is some people get information, but some Deaf people are ashamed to share information so they kind of keep the information they get for themselves, so the dispatch stops somewhere. The consequences of that is not everybody...not every Deaf person gets information."

When I asked why she thinks this happens she responded that it is a shame of their disability and a fear of how they are treated because of it:

"Mostly it's a kind of mindset, some people with disability are kind of ashamed to share the information because they already...almost all of the time they get rejections, they face discrimination from the other people, and if they give that [information] the people will just kind of blame them or say bad words on them."

She also explained that some are ashamed to admit that they do need and deserve assistance: “If a person is Deaf, he or she thinks that ‘I’m only Deaf and that’s all, I’m still a normal person so why should I be considered as a person who needs a gift or support?’”. This can come from stigma and prejudice of persons with disabilities causing differential treatments in negative ways.

Andry/I gave some insight into the three main contributors he thinks prohibits the inclusion of persons with disabilities in climate action, showing examples of institutional ableism, representative injustice, and prejudice:

“The first is knowledge. The second is accountability or responsibility. And the third one is a lack of sensitisation. Concerning knowledge...it’s still a culture here in Madagascar that people with disabilities are people who have received spells or a kind of curse. [...]. The second problem is the responsibility or the accountability of the government. Sure, Madagascar signed a treaty regarding the rights of people with disabilities, that’s right, but even if they signed it there’s not enough commitment that we can see. [...] And the last point is the sensitisation. As said there is always not enough sensitisation to tell people, I mean the average people, the general people, that people with disabilities are just people like among the others so we need to give them consideration, we need to give them their rights, respect their rights, and we need to include them in society”

However, Aina/S reported that the situation with discrimination has been improved in Madagascar because of awareness-raising actions, a point which was echoed and expanded on in subsequent interviews. Andry/I explained that he feels information is easier to access now than it used to be because of a change in the mentality, but more is still to be done:

“For example, when elder people share their experience, they tell younger people that before, the climate did not used to be like this. [...] And when elder people share their previous experiences to younger people there is a fluidity of information which helps the younger people to understand easier the situation. [...] I don’t mean that 100% of the people are aware of the situation, there is always a little portion of people who don’t know anything about climate change. [...] There’s

been a great change between what it used to be and what it is now.”

When asked what he thought had contributed to this improvement he mentioned two things:

“The first one is [...] as of December 3rd, 2012, the house of the parliament in Madagascar approved the ratification on the respect of the rights of people with disabilities and it became a law, a vetted law in Madagascar. That’s the first reason. And the second reason is there were ongoing sensitisation advocacies and sometimes lobbying [that] worked a lot towards the respect of the rights of people with disabilities, and their visibility in Madagascar society.”

Dina/S highlighted the intersections between being a woman and a person with a disability where stigmatization is a big barrier to her participation in society:

“As a person with a disability, one is the victim of discrimination and stigmatization in the community and the non-accessibility of certain services (infrastructure, transport...) Sometimes, as a woman and as a disabled person, we have experienced double discrimination, especially when it comes to participating in the life of society.”

The respondents from Madagascar also had many experiences of prejudice and discrimination, though as the cultural and social context differs, as does the presentation of the prejudice. Several respondents reported prejudice of persons with disabilities as incapable of doing things, and indifference from community leaders, much like in Bangladesh. Dina/I also mentioned that there is shame in families of having a child with a disability causing isolation of those children and Andry/I mentioned the belief that persons with disabilities have received a curse, showing cultural injustice.

When stereotypes, stigma, and prejudice is allowed to shape views of persons with disabilities, it restricts their capabilities. If they are not given a seat at the table, their capabilities of enacting change and engaging in climate action is limited regardless of their knowledge. As Ton et al. (2019) say, disability within the CA is seen as “the outcome of the interaction between personal characteristics (including health conditions and impairments),

resources, and the environment“ (p. 14). The impairments of persons with disabilities may restrict capabilities to a certain extent, but it is the resources and the environment that make the bigger difference. By being given support from their environment, as well as the appropriate resources, they can achieve external capabilities to engage in climate action in ways that may otherwise be unavailable to them. Thus, their capabilities need not be any less than those without disabilities, if the social environment is open, and resources are available.

However, some respondents claimed that the situation has improved for persons with disabilities, mainly due to sensitisation and awareness-raising campaigns, proving how important knowledge on disability issues and how climate change is impacting them is to create change and increase capabilities. This shows that awareness-raising and advocacy work are enabling factors for persons with disabilities to engage in climate action, thus increasing their capabilities to do so.

5.5. VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Lastly, I asked each interviewee what type of world they envision for persons with disabilities in their country.

Zahir/I gave four areas in which he wants to see an improvement:

“First point is I want the cooperation both from the government and private level with people with disabilities and their organisations. The second one is I want that we should be given full participation in all kinds of development and social activities. The third point is I want accessibility in the roads, infrastructure, and all kinds of places for people with disabilities, also including the entertaining places. Fourth point is participation of people with disabilities in the national and local election as a candidate.”

The last point he expanded on and explained that there is a quota for women to be a people’s representative in national and local elections. Zahir/I wants to see the same for persons with disabilities. He also said he wants to see a ministry for persons with disabilities,

just as there are ministries for social welfare and Indigenous communities, which is a great step on the way to ensuring procedural and representative justice.

Mehedi/I agreed and mentioned the increase of accessibility in technology:

“The government should respect us. If the government respects us, then the commoners will automatically respect us. [...] The second thing is I have great expectation on science and technology. [...] If the smartphones are more convenient for us, providing sound for people with visual impairments or video interpretation for people with hearing disabilities, then it will be more convenient for us to deal with the world in day to day life. We want more privilege from the government. We just want our rights.”

Rupa/I’s vision was centered on persons with disabilities receiving their fundamental human rights:

“I want more fair work for people with disabilities where there would be no discrimination and people will change their perceptions of people with disabilities, and we will be given our basic fundamental rights and facilities.”

Arun/I said that disability inclusive international commitments and policies on climate change, as well as local frameworks and implementation is needed. Dina/I’s vision for the world includes governmental action and sensitisation for families with children with disabilities:

“There are still some people, some families, who have children with disability in their family, and [...] they feel ashamed that they have a person with disability in their family so they kind of isolate that child. [...] So consequently, that child will not have full access to education or the growing up needs that are required for that child. [...] And the reality still that the situation in Madagascar is politicised. I mean everything goes through politics, and if even leaders say something [...] most of the time this remains words, there is not visible action put in place in order to implement these words”

Hasina/I envisions a world where persons with disabilities are not discriminated against and are always considered, and there is more accessibility in the distribution of information:

“The government should visit all the places in Madagascar, not only target or focus on one or two places, because in every region of Madagascar there are people with disabilities. [...] When there is aid, most of the aids go to the people with physical disabilities, I notice very little help for people with hearing disabilities. I want to see it like this—that there is no discrimination, there’s no exception, but all the people with disabilities get exactly the same assistance, the same aid. [...] There should be no more discrimination, there should be inclusion.”

Lastly, Andry/I explained that he wants more projects sponsored by technical and financial partners to have a continuous improvement in the consideration of persons with disabilities. He said that “there will be more consideration, more value given to people with disabilities”, though stressed that this will not happen immediately, but hopes to see it happen within the next ten to fifteen years.

Persons with disabilities are excluded from events and activities on climate change, statistics are not being gathered on how persons with disabilities are faring in extreme weather events, they are not given a voice, nor a seat at the table at any decision-making opportunities. As a result, knowledge about how climate change is affecting them will not reach the higher officials in the government, which causes one to wonder how they can represent a population they are not listening to. Arun/I said this very eloquently:

“Nothing about us without us. We want to lead, we want to talk ourselves, we want to build ourselves, we want to contribute for the community.”

6. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The most marginalised groups are the most heavily impacted by the consequences of climate change, yet they are not given a seat at the table to contribute to the fight against it. As argued, persons with disabilities have skills and knowledge that come from living with a disability in an ableist and inaccessible world, which could be crucial to fighting climate

change and to understanding what the world is like for persons with disabilities. Decreasing their barriers for engaging in climate action would ensure that policies and laws are better equipped to handle evacuations and emergency aid for all, including persons without disabilities who may still have mobility issues such as pregnant people, the elderly, children, and injured people. Furthermore, participatory measures in policy making may also lead to more ‘sensitisation’ as my respondents’ put it, or more acceptance of persons with disabilities in society, and a more inclusive and accessible world.

Many of the barriers that hinder persons with disabilities to engage in climate action seem to stem from inaccessibility and prejudice. However, positive evidence emerges from Madagascar with respondents reporting that the situation has been improved due to advocacy and awareness-raising measures. This shows that awareness-raising efforts may be the first step towards acceptance and inclusivity, yet more needs to be done. The respondents from Madagascar also reported that whilst there are laws, policies, and committees for the rights of persons with disabilities, these are not always well implemented and may not be functioning. Furthermore, the government focuses their efforts on a few select regions, whereas issues remain in all areas of the country. In Bangladesh we can see that climate action is less common on the agenda of OPDs than in Madagascar, despite climate change having very similar impacts on persons with disabilities. The sensitisation and governmental support have seemingly not come as far as in Madagascar, and many are still fighting for their basic human rights and lack the resources and support to be able to focus their efforts on the impacts of climate change.

Moreover, we can see that the experiences of the respondents in both countries are quite similar in the prejudice, discrimination, and inaccessibility they face. As are their experiences of climate change and extreme weather events. It stands clear that shelters and information about coming disasters, climate change and evacuation routes need to be made more accessible, as do meetings and events on climate change, both on a national, district, and local level. Persons with disabilities need to be considered in climate change efforts in all areas—mitigation, adaptation, emergency aid, policymaking and especially information and communication. As it stands the respondents’ capabilities to engage in climate action

are limited by the government and general society's lack of awareness and consideration of disability issues and rights.

In conclusion, many of the barriers persons with disabilities face in engaging in climate action stem from ableist points of views, causing structural inequalities in decision-making processes, inaccessibility and discrimination. Persons with disabilities have knowledge and ideas which stem from their every-day life experiences dealing with risk and social and structural barriers creating problem-solving skills invaluable in the fight against climate change. Furthermore, persons with disabilities are clearly highly impacted by climate change and have experiences and perspectives which may contribute valuable insight in mainstream climate discourses. In short, persons with disabilities want to, and are capable to, lead and share their knowledge. As the disability movement slogan says so eloquently—“Nothing about us, without us”—inclusive climate action is an important step moving forward in ensuring social and environmental justice for all.

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8. APPENDICES

8.1. INFORMATION SHEET & CONSENT FORM

INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

1



INFORMATION SHEET



Thank you for contributing to my Master Thesis by agreeing to participate in this study!
Please read and sign this form at the end to participate in this study.

Dear participant,

Thank you for filling out my survey on disability and climate action. I am inviting you to participate in the data collection for my Master Thesis in Development Studies at Lund University, in collaboration with CBM Global Disability Inclusion.

My name is Eleonora Moen and I am a final-year Development Studies student at Graduate School, Lund University. I am currently writing my final Master Thesis, under the supervision of Yahia Mahmoud at the Department of Human Geography.

Purpose: To understand the experiences of persons with disabilities and OPDs in Bangladesh and Madagascar of engaging in climate action, and the challenges and opportunities that present themselves in the process.

Why me? You are a person with a disability, or work at an organisation for persons with disabilities, in the country of Bangladesh or Madagascar, with varying experience of engaging in climate change or disaster risk related topics.

What it entails? I respectfully and gratefully ask you to fill out an initial online survey covering your knowledge of climate change in your country, your experiences of disability, your experiences of engaging in these topics, and as an OPD worker. After this initial survey there will be the option of participating in an approximately 30 minutes to an hour interview at a time of your convenience, ideally using Zoom or Google Meets. We will speak more freely and deeply about the topics covered in the survey, and you have the opportunity to share your stories and experiences. You have a right to withdraw your participation at any stage of the interview or choose not to answer certain questions.

If you are willing to participate, please read and sign the consent form on the following page (easy-to-read version at the end). Please email me noramoen96@gmail.com with a signed copy to set up a time for the interview.

I look forward to hearing from you. Should you have any further questions before choosing to participate, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Warm regards,
Eleonora Moen

Graduate School, Lund University.
Email: noramoen96@gmail.com
Tel or WhatsApp: +46703062931

CONSENT FORM

I understand and agree to the following:

- This research is carried out by Eleonora Moen, a final year (M.Sc. Development Studies) student at Graduate school, Lund University in Sweden.
- The choice to participate in this study is entirely voluntary, and I have the right to withdraw from the process at any time should I change my mind. In this case, all my personal data shall be destroyed.
- My participation will be kept confidential and anonymous, and no identifying characteristics will be included in the final research. Any quotes used will be entirely anonymous, and my identity will be protected and kept confidential throughout the process. The information used in the final paper will not include identifying characteristics leading to the discovery of my person.
- I will be asked to fill out an online survey, after which I may choose to participate in an interview with the researcher for approximately 30 minutes to an hour.
- Participation is entirely voluntary, and I may choose to only fill out the survey and not participate in an interview.
- Interviews will be conducted online. Upon request, accessibility needs may be accommodated (such as closed captioning, interpretation, presence of personal assistant or the likes). Accessibility needs may be disclosed at the end of this document.
- All interviews will be recorded. These recordings will be accessible only by the researcher.
- The results will be published by the researcher in the form of a Master Thesis and may be used to form reports or other forms of publication in the future.
- There are no anticipated risks or negative consequences envisaged or participants taking part. No penalties for non-participation apply.
- I have been provided with an information sheet about what the research entails.
- I may contact the researcher at any point should I have concerns or questions regarding my participation in this study.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this consent form. Should you have further questions, do not hesitate to reach me by email noramoen96@gmail.com

“I have read and understood the information provided in this Information Sheet and Consent Form and agree to voluntarily participate in this research.”

Signed (participant): _____

Date: _____

Signed (companion): _____

Date: _____

Accessibility requirements:

To participate in this interview, I will need the assistance of

Easy-to-read Consent Form

You are an individual with a disability and/or working at an organisation of persons with disabilities. You are, or have in the past, been engaged in climate action.



I invite you to participate in an initial online survey, and subsequent interview with me for my master thesis. Participation is optional and you may choose to participate in the survey but not the interview.



This interview will take up to 1 hour. You will be asked questions about your experiences with disability in relation to climate change.



Interviews will be audio or video recorded with your permission.



You will not be identified in this interview or in the final research.



You may have your interpreter or personal assistant with you during the interview. Closed Captioning (CC) is available.



Please sign this form if you wish to participate and email the signed document to me to set up a time
[\(noramoen96@gmail.com\)](mailto:noramoen96@gmail.com):



Participant: _____

Assistant: _____

Date: _____

8.2. SURVEY QUESTIONS

Demographics:

1. What is your gender identity?
 - Female
 - Male
 - Other _____
2. What is your age?
 - 20-35
 - 36-50
 - 51-65
 - 66-80
 - 80+
3. Do you have a disability?
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, what type is it? _____
4. Are you a disability activist active in climate issues, or a worker at an OPD/community group?
 - Disability activist
 - OPD staff
 - No
5. Would you be interested in participating in an interview?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Accessibility needs_____
6. What is your email address?

Climate awareness:

1. Would you consider yourself a person concerned about the changing climate/environment?
2. Are you aware of how the changing climate is affecting your country? Do you have access to information about how it is affecting persons with disabilities specifically? Explain more, what type of information have you had access to?
3. Have you personally experienced a change in your life due to the changing climate? Explain more.
4. Are you aware of evacuation measures in case of natural disasters for persons with disabilities, what do they look like in your area? Have you been involved in the

design of these measures? If yes, in what way?

5. Are you aware of any programmes to gather disability data in your country/community?

Personal experiences of disability:

1. What barriers do you face as a person with a disability? (E.g., discrimination, stigma, lack of awareness, employment etc.) Do you feel other parts of your identity increase these barriers? (E.g., sexuality, gender, Indigenous community, etc.). Explain more and give examples.
2. In your opinion, what do you feel are the top issues persons with disabilities face in your community/country? Do you think your disability makes you feel more vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters? If so, in what way?
3. What would be your main issues in times of disaster? (e.g., evacuation, shelter accessibility, being warned in time etc). Do you feel adequately prepared to evacuate, or find shelter, in case of natural disasters?

Climate action:

1. Are you actively engaged in the climate movement? How?
2. Would you like to be more involved in climate action (e.g., meetings/consultations/organised actions surrounding climate change or natural disasters) in your community or country? What is stopping you from getting involved?
3. Have you been invited to any meetings, discussions or forums in your community/country related to climate change or disaster risk? Did you go? If not, what stopped you from going?
4. If yes, did you find the meetings accessible to you? What inclusive measures can be put in place to support your participation in meetings/discussion in the future?
5. If you have previously been involved in any event related to climate change or disaster risk, can you share your experience? What were the positive and negative aspects of this engagement?

OPD experiences (if you do not work at an OPD, disregard):

1. Which organisation do you work for? How long have you worked with persons with disabilities? How many of those years have been with your current organisation?
2. What is your organisation doing to increase awareness of the needs of persons with disabilities in the community, and fight stigma and discrimination?
3. In what ways is your organisation working with issues related to climate change? Please provide details.
4. Has your organisation, or an organisation you know of, been invited, or participated

- in consultation about climate change or disaster risk policy? Please provide details.
5. What is your organisation doing to engage persons with disabilities themselves in local and national climate related discussions? What are you doing to lift persons with disabilities onto the agenda?
 6. What are the main obstacles you have faced in bringing discussions of climate change to the table within your organisation? Did anything make the process easier?
 7. What support do you think could help your organisation bring persons with disabilities onto climate change agendas moving forward? (E.g., capacity-building, awareness-raising, networking with other organisations etc.)

Anything else you want to share? _____

Thank you for your participation!

8.3. INTERVIEW GUIDE

Involvement in climate issues

1. Is your organisation involved in issues about the environment, climate change or disaster risk reduction? Are you personally involved in climate issues?
2. If none - why is this? Has it been brought to the table but decided against, or has it none been spoken about at all? Why do you think this is? If not brought up to the table at all - why? What made you decide against bringing it up?
3. If yes - What are the main obstacles your organisation has found when trying to get persons with disabilities onto the agenda in your organisation? What are the main factors that seem to have made a positive impact? What has been working and not working?
4. Have you felt personally affected by climate change, or seen effects in your community? (for example by having to evacuate due to natural disaster, droughts, floods, increase in natural disasters)? Have you experienced any loss or damage due to climate change? What were those experiences like as a person with a disability?

Community awareness/involvement

5. In your community, what is the main form of prejudice and/or discrimination that persons with disabilities face on a daily basis that you have seen? Why do you think this is? What do you think is the main contributor that makes it difficult to include persons with disabilities into climate work? Have you experienced anything that was successful? Why was it successful?
6. In the community you work in, what type of discussions are held around climate change and natural disasters that you know of? How are they organised? Are they open to the public?
7. How do people receive information about climate change in your community? Is there anything lacking in the communication of climate change and natural disasters to persons with disabilities? Has there been anything that has worked/is currently accessible?
8. What is your experience of climate awareness within the disability movement? And what is your experience or perception of disability awareness within the climate movement? How can the relationship between the two be improved?
9. Many mentioned in the survey that the support they need to include climate change into their work would require capacity building, networking with other organisations and more awareness raising of the problem. How do you think this could be improved in your community? What type of resources and support would be needed to help you do so?

Climate action

10. Have you or your organisation been invited to, or attended an event or meeting on climate change?
11. If attended - What was your experience like, did anything prove difficult during your attendance, was there anything you appreciated? Did you speak, did you feel heard? Did you feel that the information shared was easy to receive and use? Were people with disabilities on the agenda? Did you, your community or

movement feel included? Did you experience discrimination or a lack of accessibility?

12. If not attended - What is stopping you from attending? What would need to change for you to attend an event on climate change or natural disasters?
13. Are you aware of national climate adaptation plans? Have you in any way been involved in them, or know anyone who has? Do you have any knowledge on whether or not it includes persons with disabilities?
14. What kind of world do you want for people in Bangladesh?
15. Do you have anything else you want to share that you think is important or relevant?