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Where the Land Ends: Climate Change, Migration, and the Disappearance of Gosaba's People

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Abstract

Gosaba, a cluster of islands located in the Sundarbans delta of West Bengal, India, is increasingly subjecting itself to the multifaceted outcomes of climate change, including higher sea levels, fiercer cyclones, and continuous ground salinization. These environmental changes have brought about considerable migration, thus disrupting customary ways of life and deconstructing the community's social fabric. In an attempt to examine the phenomenon of disappearance in Gosaba, the research contextualizes it against the extensive body of work on environmental displacement and socio-psychological vulnerability. Based on qualitative interviews, oral histories, and secondary environmental research, the study explains how episodic floods and ground salinization are not merely physical barriers but are rather triggers of immense cultural and physical loss. In positing that the disappearance of the people of Gosaba is both literal, as seen through migration and relocation, as well as symbolic, reflecting an erosion of site-specific identity and shared memory, the paper contextualizes environmental disappearance as an urgent human rights and socio-ecological problem. The findings underscore the pressing need for adaptation strategies, policy responses, and people-centric planning for building resilience in order to prevent further dislocation. In conclusion, Gosaba is a stark example of the human cost exacted by climate change and shows us how environmental disasters are capable of causing both physical migration and the subtle disappearance of people.

Keywords: Gosaba, environmental disasters, climate change, vulnerability, disappearance

Introduction

Sundarbans, the largest continuous mangrove forest on earth, lies in the southern extensions of West Bengal and Bangladesh. It is the Sundarbans that is frequently represented as a border of beauty, danger, and survival in ecological and literary fantasy. But behind this poetic picture is another reality. The Sundarbans is a place of extinction too. Whole households, communities, and even whole islands have been lost off the books of the state, publicity, and even collective memory, over the last few decades. Gosaba Island is one of its numerous inhabited territories, an eloquent example of which disappearance, either by climate change, migration, human trafficking, or a gradual ecological extinction, has become a characteristic of life. Things disappear not necessarily in dramatic explosions but by the slow work of disregard and forsaking in Gosaba.

Disappearance has several intentions in this regard. At its simplest definition, it can be known as the disappearance of land and houses in the rivers and the Bay of Bengal as a result of erosion, cyclonic destruction and rising of the sea levels. Families living along the embankments usually wake up to discover that some of their farming fields have been submerged overnight by the tide. Still, disappearance is also social, political: there are migrants who go to other cities or other countries to find a way of living and never come back; and there are women and children who go to work or are sold to exploiting labour markets, losing their connection with the island. Many of such people are not recorded as displaced, missing or deceased in government files. They just no longer exist in the official accounts. Therefore, disappearance in Gosaba is not simply a matter of physical absence, but also one of disappearance through rights, recognition and justice. Sundarbans has been a dangerous terrain. Historically, settlements in this area were the projects of reclamation of the colonies, and embankments were planted in order to convert mangrove swamps into farmlands. The history of weak negotiation between man and nature persists today, with the

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struggle with the tides, salinity, and cyclones being a day-to-day affair. The risks have however become acute with climate change. The embankments of Gosaba were destroyed by cyclones like Aila (2009), Amphan (2020) and Yaas (2021) causing hundreds of people to be homeless. The effect of the rising sea levels is that even the well constructed embankments are just temporary safeguards. With every disaster more families are forced to migrate usually permanently leaving behind deserted villages and fractured communities.

The extinction of the people of Gosaba cannot be interpreted as an environmental problem. It merges with deep entrenched poverty, poor governance, and institutional marginalization. The relief activities by the state are infrequent, frequently inadequate, and do not deal with the structural realities that drive people to migrate or make them susceptible to trafficking. Consequently, disappearance becomes a quiet crisis which is simultaneously environmental, economic and political. Researchers have observed that the Sundarbans is a climate precarity laboratory, some of the most disadvantaged groups, are first affected and last to be noticed. Gosaba is the personage who embodies this movement, in which disappearance has been made natural and even anticipated. This paper aims to examine the extinction of individuals in Gosaba Island within the varying perspectives, namely environmental degradation, livelihood crisis, migration, trafficking, and state neglect. It presents an analysis based on structural analysis and the experiences of life in the Sundarbans that this is not merely about natural misfortunes in the Sundarbans, but about systematic abandonment. Through the tracing of the layers of absence, the disappearance of land to the invisibility of people in state policies, the study puts Gosaba in context with the bigger discourse of climate justice and human rights. This poses a basic question: how a community can gradually die out, and how can these deaths be identified and acted on in our policy and collective consciousness? The paper employs qualitative interview analysis of the respondents of Gosaba island along with secondary data from different books and reports.

Historical and Geographical Context

The susceptibility of Gosaba arises not solely from its geographical position but also from a fragile hydrological equilibrium that has been disturbed by a combination of natural and human-induced elements. Traditionally, the Indian Sundarbans experienced a consistent influx of freshwater and sediment supplied by the Ganges and Brahmaputra river systems. Nevertheless, as highlighted by Hazra and Samata (as cited in Conservation Action Trust), alterations in upstream water management practices and a decline in freshwater availability have led to a significant reduction in the sediment required to mitigate the erosive impacts of the sea on the Indian sector of the delta. This sediment shortfall is a pivotal element that differentiates the Indian Sundarbans from its accreting counterpart in Bangladesh, where the continuous supply of sediment from the Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers facilitates the formation of new land. As a result, the landmass of Gosaba and its adjacent islands face threats not only from increasing sea levels but are also experiencing active shrinkage attributed to coastal and riverbank erosion (Hazra *et al.*, 2016) ^[15]. This ongoing loss of land constitutes the primary crisis from which a multitude of socio-economic and demographic

challenges arise.

The Sundarbans, covering areas both in India and Bangladesh, is the largest unbroken mangrove forest of the world. Gosaba, located in the Indian Sundarbans of South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal, is one of the most critically exposed inhabited islands of this sensitive deltaic habitat. Historically, Gosaba was one of the earliest reclaimed islands in the early twentieth century due to the efforts of Sir Daniel Hamilton, who saw it as a utopian cooperative. Agricultural reclamation, the construction of embankments, and the growth of settlements enabled Gosaba to thrive as a sustainable agrarian society. However, this early human intervention into a tidal landscape has set the stage for its present-day vulnerabilities (Mukhopadhyay, 2021) ^[16]. Geographically, Gosaba is bordered by tidal rivers like the Matla and Bidya, rendering it extremely vulnerable to saline intrusion, flooding, and riverbank erosion. The island lies in the cyclone-dominated Bay of Bengal, which exposes it to periodic climatic shocks (Hazra *et al.*, 2016) ^[15]. The same location that facilitated its prosperity also makes it vulnerably situated during the Anthropocene period, where sea-level rise and more powerful tropical cyclones threaten its habitability. Gosaba's settlement patterns also demonstrate the paradox of dwelling in a marginal environment. Land reclamation via embankment opened up the possibility of rice farming, shrimp aquaculture, and small-holder agriculture, but the same embankments now often breach under the pressure of storm surges, flooding fields and dwellings with saline water. In the last twenty years, the compounding impact of the breaches in embankments has accentuated land loss and livelihood uncertainty, triggering the large-scale movement of populations. The history of Gosaba is therefore a palimpsest of human resistance and ecological vulnerability, every cycle of recovery overshadowed by impending erasure.

Causes

People's livelihoods and ways of life in Gosaba are organically connected with the well-being of their environment, an environment under levels of pressure from climate change it has never experienced before. The major stressors are rising sea levels, the enhanced frequency and intensity of cyclones, and heightened soil and water salinity. Although they are related to each other, they each present a distinct and ruinous danger to the local population.

The slow, but unrelenting, rise in sea level is probably the most subtle danger. With an average rate of rise of 2.6 to 4 mm/year at Sagar Island (Hazra *et al.*, 2016) ^[15], the tidal surges and periodic flooding are becoming more frequent and intense. These perennial inundations, in turn, induce the second important stressor: salinity intrusion. The increasing saltwater of the Bay of Bengal infiltrates the vast network of tidal creeks and rivers, filtering into cropland and polluting freshwater ponds, the main sources of drinking water and irrigation. The salt content makes the land unfit for traditional paddy cultivation and freshwater aquaculture, compelling a fundamental change in the agrarian economy. A research discovered that commercially valuable freshwater fish species are being substituted by less valuable, salt-resistant ones, directly affecting fishing communities' income (World Bank, cited in World Bank Open Knowledge Repository). The social and health impacts are just as severe, with women specifically facing

reproductive and skin problems from extended contact with saline water (SaciWaters, cited in Gendered Vulnerabilities).

Adding to these low-onset occurrences are the more frequent and intense tropical cyclones. Cyclone Amphan in 2020, for example, devastated the area, breaching embankments, destroying houses, and inundating large expanses of land under saltwater. The report of the damage assessment undertaken by the Government of West Bengal brought to light the devastating magnitude of the catastrophe that left millions homeless and reduced the physical and economic infrastructure of Gosaba and surrounding blocks to rubble. The repetitive occurrence of the cyclones—every one of them a setback from which they recover with a long fight—bars the community from rebuilding and adjusting. A 2009 survey in Gosaba following Cyclone Aila revealed an observable connection between extreme weather events and rising socioeconomic hardship, particularly among more out-of-the-way villages (Sarma *et al.*, 2011) ^[8]. This trend has been compounded by more recent disasters such as Amphan, which hastened the existing stresses on the populace.

Confronted with an imploding agrarian economy and periodic disasters, migration has become a chief, and frequently desperate, survival tactic for the residents of Gosaba. As Paul and Mandal (2020) and Roy (2019) ^[18] have shown, this movement is multifaceted, encompassing seasonal and permanent out-migration, mostly of male workers, to cities such as Kolkata and elsewhere in India. Its impetus is a quintessential example of "push factors": the destruction of customary livelihoods, lack of food security, and the very survival threat posed by the vanishing homeland (Roy, 2019) ^[18]. The 2011 Census of India gives the population baseline, indicating the rural population of Gosaba, while post-2011 information, especially following large cyclones, would most probably indicate a pattern of rising out-migration and resulting demographic changes (Census of India, 2011).

Migration is usually a last choice and is undertaken to ensure survival of the remaining family. Males depart to seek employment opportunities in construction, fisheries, or other informal economies, remitting money home. This "circular migration" provides a tenuous economic safety net, but it entirely transforms the social fabric of the community. It leaves women in charge of households, children, and an ever-changing local environment (Banerjee, 2021) ^[14].

The feminization of the Sundarbans as a result of male out-migration disproportionately burdens women, who have to confront both domestic chores and the increasingly tricky task of earning a living. With men away for employment, women become the *de facto* household heads, for which they are ill-prepared and which institutional support does not provide (Khatun, 2022) ^[6]. They are compelled into low-income, insecure jobs, including prawn seed gathering or hand work under government programs, which tends to leave them open to health hazards from extended exposure to saline water (SaciWaters, cited in Gendered Vulnerabilities).

Aside from the economic cost, women suffer social and physical vulnerabilities. The lack of male protection and capacity for income generation may leave them with greater exposure to domestic violence, trafficking, and social exclusion (Banerjee, 2021) ^[14]. Clean drinking water becomes a priority concern, as the natural ponds become

salinized, and potable water has to be fetched from a long distance away. Coupled with the employment of contaminated water for household activities and personal cleanliness, it causes a high prevalence of reproductive and dermatological health problems among women (SaciWaters, as cited in Gendered Vulnerabilities). The gendered effects of climate change in Gosaba are a stark example of how environmental emergencies converge with pre-existing social disadvantage, putting the most vulnerable at the greatest risk.

The environmental transformations have not just displaced people but also compelled an intimate reinvention of the local economy. With conventional agriculture becoming economically unfeasible because of salinity, most farmers have turned to brackish water aquaculture in the form of shrimp and prawn culture. This shift, though providing a short-term economic cushion, is not without its own problems. Shrimp farming is capital-intensive, and the high-density ponds are prone to disease and market vagaries, thus offering a new kind of economic vulnerability. In addition, this change has a ripple effect on the environment since the process tends to involve mangrove destruction to establish ponds, yet another decimation of the natural cyclone and erosion defences.

Where alternative livelihood has been destroyed, there has been a desperate quest for substitutes. When farming does not work, landless workers have little choice but to move out. For those who remain behind, the battle is unrelenting. The economy here is now a patchwork of insecure pursuits, such as small fishing, casual work, and off-the-books gathering of wild resources (Roy, 2019) ^[18]. This economic instability adds to the social vulnerability of the people.

The economic and ecological crisis in Gosaba has far-reaching socio-political impacts. The growing vulnerability of the population places enormous stress on civic society and local governance. Although a recent study identifies some innovative community-led strategies, including the deployment of drones and mobilization of Village Disaster Management Forces (Humanitarian Aid International, cited in ODIHP), these tend to be reactive and might not be enough to address the underlying drivers of displacement. The sheer magnitude of the issues demands a coordinated and adequately funded response from the state as well as from the international community.

But Gosaba's residents are not mere victims. They have improvised their own strategies of resilience and coping, usually based on customary knowledge and mutual support. Individuals have constructed houses on elevated land, fortified their embankments with vegetation and other natural materials, and established self-help groups to cooperate on labour and resource sharing. Women, especially, have exhibited exceptional agency, establishing self-help groups for earning livelihood and using rainwater harvesting methods to counter groundwater salinity (Asia in Global Affairs, cited by Women as Climate Crusaders). The Gosaba tale is not only one of despair and vanishing but also of fierce, stubborn resistance in the face of insurmountable adversity.

Finally, the convergence of climate change effects, forced displacement, and changes in livelihood is precipitating a deep demographic and cultural change in Gosaba. The migration of young, healthy men empties the community and leaves the women, children, and elderly behind. The demographic skew that results renders the population

dependent on external remittances and more vulnerable to subsequent shocks.

The "disappearance" of Gosaba's population is not only one of physical removal; it is also a cultural forgetting. As families are dispersed and customary livelihoods erode, those cultural practices, social norms, and community ties that have endured across generations hang in the balance. The deep understanding of the tides, forests, and seasons of the delta, passed down by generations of farmers and fishermen, is being lost as the younger generation dreams of a new future in the concrete jungles of the city. The tragic tale of this slow-motion disaster is eloquently told in fiction such as Amitava Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2012), which is a timely reminder of the profound, personal connections to a country that is slowly being engulfed by the ocean. The Gosaba case offers a stark and haunting demonstration of how an isolated environmental disaster can unleash a chain of socio-economic and demographic effects, ending in the displacement and possible disappearance of a whole community. The unrelenting power of climate change, expressed through sea level rise, salinity, and extremes, has rendered historic livelihoods untenable, driving migration as a first line of defense. This migration has, in turn, imposed gigantic burdens on the women who were left behind, creating a feminization of poverty and range of health and social issues. Although local communities have shown exceptional resilience, the magnitude of the crisis needs a more effective and sustained response from national and international agencies. The gradual but inexorable loss of the land and the people of Gosaba is a harrowing prediction for hundreds of other coastal low-lying communities worldwide, illustrating the need for an expanded understanding of climate justice and adaptation.

Policy, Governance, and Institutional Responses

The Sundarbans zone, a shared UNESCO World Heritage location between India and Bangladesh, is a one-of-a-kind socio-ecological landscape of co-existing human habitations and sensitive ecosystems. Its management vacillates between disaster response at the moment and planning for long-term adaptation. Following cyclones like Aila (2009) and Amphan (2020), state interventions have remained concentrated on the distribution of disaster relief, rehabilitation of embankments, and compensation for losses suffered by the affected populations. Relief measures generally include provision of food, temporary shelters, and medical care. But such interventions often do not respond to the structural vulnerabilities that increase the threat of disaster for the people of Gosaba. Evidence from Hazra, Das, and Choudhury (2016) ^[15] shows that relief interventions are typically unevenly targeted, disproportionately impacting marginalized sections like women-headed households, aged-in-residence, and landless labourers, who become neglected either through bureaucratic inefficiencies or poor targeting mechanisms. Long-term institutional responses are intended to build resilience, but their impact is limited. The Sundarbans Development Board (SDB), which is a state-level organization, has been implementing projects including infrastructure development, restoration of mangroves, and diversification of livelihoods in order to address the effects of climate change. Bureaucratic gridlocks, administrative corruption, and weak community participation negate the desirable outcomes of such initiatives in spite of such

efforts. For example, infrastructure projects like cyclone shelters and embankments are frequently not designed with climate-resilient standards because of cost savings or procrastination, exposing communities to repeated threats (Mukhopadhyay, 2021) ^[16]. Even, the lack of strong healthcare centers, climate-adaptive housing, and sustainable livelihood options further enforces the cyclical vulnerability of the inhabitants, leading to repeated cycles of displacement and economic exclusion.

Policy discourse has predominantly ignored the experience of migration as an adaptation strategy to environmental distress. Climate displacement in the Sundarbans has become a matter of urgency, while government programs to safeguard migrants' rights or ensure dignified resettlement are non-existent. Gosaba inhabitants who are compelled to migrate live under conditions of urban precariousness, such as irregular work, poor housing, and absence of social security cover. Such a lack of institutional backing mirrors the more general challenge of climate justice, where poor communities producing very little of the world's greenhouse gas emissions receive disproportionate impacts from climate change. According to Roberts and Huq (2015) ^[17], loss-and-damage funding under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an urgent but insufficiently mobilized path to addressing these imbalances. Gosaba residents' experiences highlight the need to include climate-induced migration in national and sub-national policy priorities, focusing on both protection and empowerment of affected populations.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations have frequently filled the governance gap, offering vital assistance in disaster relief, livelihood promotion, and women's empowerment. For instance, micro-credit access, small-scale entrepreneurship, and development of community networks to support localized resilience have been made possible for women through self-help groups organized by NGOs. These interventions are typically patchy, small in scale, and highly donor-driven, and hence circumscribe their long-term sustainability. In addition, the domain of NGO action is often circumscribed to post-disaster relief or short-term livelihood activities, and not to filling systemic governance vacancies (Banerjee, 2021) ^[14].

At the international scale, Gosaba is the embodiment of the imperative for climate justice initiatives that focus on populations disproportionately impacted by environmental shift. Without making any contribution to world carbon emissions, the inhabitants of this region suffer the entire gamut of climatic effects, such as super cyclones, sea-level rise, and salinization of agricultural lands. The Sundarbans case shows the ethical mandate behind appeals for loss-and-damage finance, climate adaptation assistance, and participation by vulnerable groups in decision-making under global climate regimes. Empowering Gosaba's situation within global policy narratives has the potential to close the gap between scientific knowledge about climate vulnerability and real-world institutional responses.

Voices from the Ground

Field-based research underscores the lived reality beneath the statistical and policy narratives of Gosaba. Post-Cyclone Amphan interviews unpack the psychological and existential nature of vulnerability presented in official policy reports. A farmer recollected repeated threats to encroaching

waters, as he said, “আমাগো জমি প্রতি বৎসর ছোট যাसे...জল বড় কাছে চলে আসসে... আর কতদিন লরুম জানা নাই।” Meaning “Every year the water is closer, and every year my land is smaller. How long can we fight?” These accounts highlight not only physical adversity in living but also emotional fatigue and inevitability among residents as environmental stresses mount. The gendered aspects of exposure are especially severe. Women in Gosaba are doubly burdened by the confluence of social norms, economic vulnerability, and exposure to disasters. One widow from Satjelia explained her plight after her husband was killed by a cyclone: “মোর স্বামী গত বৎসর ঝড়ে মারা পরসে...ছেলেগুলোকে কেৱালা পাখিয়েছি... এখানে না আছে জমি না আছে কাজ... আমি আর মেয়ে একা থাকি...লড়ে যাচ্ছি রোজ খাবারের জন্য... কোনোদিন খাবার জোটে কোনোদিন জোটে না।” Meaning “My husband died in the cyclone. I have sent my sons to Kerala to work. I remain here alone with my daughter. We don't have land to farm. At times we eat, at times we don't. What remains here for us?” Her account demonstrates the double burden experienced by women, including both material poverty and social isolation and the instability of care work in the absence of male household members. Young people's accounts also shed light on the intricacies of climate migration and social change. Numerous young men report having dreams of permanent migration to cities, driven by the belief of restricted future opportunities in Gosaba. A migrant worker explained, “আমাদের লিগে কলকাতা বড় কঠিন জাইগা... কিন্তু গোসাবা আরও কঠিন... শহরে অন্তত কিছু রোজগার হবা।” Meaning “Kolkata is tough, but Gosaba is impossible. At least in the city I will earn something”.

These words express the ambivalence that is present in migration as a survival strategy offers short-term economic gains while concurrently eroding community continuity, intergenerational transmission of knowledge, and cultural bonding. Together, these stories tell of a multifaceted disappearance, involving physical displacement, erasure of cultural identity, and disintegration of social networks traditionally supporting island societies.

The lived experiences of residents as documented through personal testimony underscore the insufficiency of traditional policy approaches premised on material reconstruction or immediate relief alone. Although rebuilding embankments or distributing relief covers immediate survival needs, it barely addresses the underlying structural vulnerabilities aggravated by past marginalization, gender disparities, and socio-economic precariousness. As such, the everyday experiences of residents call for a more situated understanding of disappearance that incorporates environmental, social, and psychological aspects. Discussion: The disappearance of Gosaba's populace can be best explained not as one catastrophic event but a long and interconnected process that is influenced by environmental deterioration, socio-economic fragilities, and governance lapses. Cyclonic catastrophe, soil salination, and sea-level rise produce material conditions that question the sustainability of human settlement. At the same time, poverty, marginal land holding, and restricted access to education and healthcare contribute to hastening the displacement of residents.

Migration, in this regard, serves as both a survival

mechanism and a vehicle for cultural erosion. As the younger generations migrate in quest of economic opportunities, traditional knowledge systems, social solidarity, and community practices gradually become disrupted. This multi-faceted vanishing goes beyond bodily relocation to include what disappearance scholars refer to as social and cultural erasure. The word “disappearance” holds not only the literal removal of individuals from their native land but also the slow disappearance of identity, heritage, and intergenerational continuity.

Women, especially, face multiplied vulnerabilities as they deal with both environmental risks and social binds, commonly shouldering disproportionate responsibilities for household survival, child-rearing, and informal work (Banerjee, 2021) ^[14]. As with youth migration, there is also a break in place-based identity as well as a change in aspirations, values, and intergenerational relationships. The metaphor of “where the land ends” finds powerful resonance in this regard. The very literal soil erosion of Gosaba's embankments and agriculture metaphorizes the contracting material and existential boundaries of survival. At the same time, the loss of social and cultural life is a loss of identity based in place.

Ecological, economic, and social aspects converge to make Gosaba a microcosm of the Anthropocene crisis, showing how human societies are intertwined with ecological processes in ways resistant to oversimplified policy interventions. The Gosaba example underscores the need for urgent interdisciplinary responses that mesh climate science, social policy, and human rights frameworks to enable grappling with the multifaceted dynamics of climate-driven disappearance. In addition, the governance deficits witnessed in Gosaba underscore the deficiencies of traditional disaster management paradigms. Relief-based strategies, notwithstanding their immediacy and necessary role in survival, do not address structural drivers of vulnerability like landlessness, economic marginalization, and social exclusion.

Likewise, long-term adaptation strategies, in theory well-conceived, are subject to top-down implementation, inattention to community participation, and inadequate resources. The intersection of policy deficits and environmental stressors creates a feedback loop of displacement, strengthening both material exposure and socio-cultural degradation. Gosaba's residents' experience sheds light on key lessons for climate justice and policy design. First, there is a necessity for the recognition of climate-driven migration as a valid and urgent concern on national and sub-national policy agendas. Second, adaptation measures need to be inclusive, context-aware, and attentive to the voices of the marginalized, especially women and the youth.

Third, international climate architectures like loss-and-damage funding under the UNFCCC need to be implemented to offer real assistance to vulnerable communities under existential threat with little contribution to international emissions.

Fourth, interdisciplinary methodologies that combine the environmental, social, and psychological can enable a more integrated comprehension of disappearance and resilience within at-risk regions.

Lastly, the Gosaba case highlights the necessity of recording and projecting local voices in academic and policy discussions. Studies rooted in the field that reflect lived

realities offer subtle understandings of vulnerability, resilience, and survival techniques that fill gaps between numerical models and high-level planning. Local accounts show that disappearance is not just a spatial event but a temporal and emotional process involving the aggregation of losses, its accommodations, and negotiations across time.

Conclusion

The loss of population in Gosaba is a complex phenomenon that represents the convergence of environmental factors, socio-economic marginality, governance failure, and cultural disintegration. While cyclones, sea-level rise, and soil salinity make the physical conditions for displacement, structural inequalities, administrative inefficiencies, and weak policy responses amplify the difficulties for the inhabitants. Temporary and permanent migration serve as a survival mechanism while concomitantly disintegrating social cohesion, cultural continuity, and inter-generational stability. Successful governance for the Sundarbans entails an integrated, multi-scalar strategy that includes immediate relief, adaptation for the longer term, and climate justice. NGOs and community-based organizations are pivotal in filling governance gaps, but their actions need to be scaled up and accompanied by strong state policy. International climate agreements can complement localized resilience with loss-and-damage funding and acknowledgement of climate-related displacement as a human rights concern. Finally, the Gosaba crisis shows that disappearance is not just physical removal of individuals but a multifaceted phenomenon involving environmental degradation, socio-economic exclusion, and loss of culture. The "where the land ends" metaphor holds both literal and metaphoric meaning, underlining an inextricable nexus between human survival, place, and environmental integrity. Responding to the vanishing of Gosaba's citizens needs policy action that is context-specific, inclusive, and based on climate justice principles so that the worst-hit are both safeguarded and empowered against an increasing climatically altered environment.

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