

EGU2020-20602

<https://doi.org/10.5194/egusphere-egu2020-20602>

EGU General Assembly 2020

© Author(s) 2021. This work is distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License.



Displacement, marginalization and changing economic structure: counting the intangible costs of riverbank erosion in Majuli island of India

Avijit Sahay

Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, Humanities and Social Sciences, Mumbai, India (avijitsahay@gmail.com)

The paper focuses on the impact of riverbank erosion on the island of Majuli. Majuli is a large and populous river island in the India state of Assam. However, the island suffers from the erosional work of Rivers Brahmaputra in the south and Lohit in the north and this has led to the loss of land and the resultant displacement of population in 110 out of 243 villages of Majuli. The most significant impact of riverbank erosion has been on the livelihood pattern of the island, as erosion has affected both agriculture and fishing activities. However, the impact of erosion is not felt equally by the entire population of Majuli. Those who live near the banks of the river are disproportionately affected by erosion, while those living in the more central parts of the island have benefitted from it by using the changing economic structure of the island. Riverbank erosion has thus, had a profound impact on the society, economy and livelihood structure of the island and has created a more unequal society. The paper tries to count this intangible cost of riverbank erosion by analyzing the disparity in the economic impact of riverbank erosion from the perspective of political ecology with the help of survey and personal interviews carried out in Majuli.

Keywords: Majuli, Brahmaputra, Riverbank Erosion, Displacement, Economic Impact, Political Ecology