

Belief Formation and Adaptation to Climate Change

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Climate change poses an existential threat for hundreds of millions of people across developing countries. In the absence of severe mitigation measures by the rest of the world, these households must take steps themselves to address the dramatic shifts already occurring in their local environments. The project asks how households learn about and adapt to climate change. This research dives into the underlying mental models guiding farmers' decisions in agricultural production to understand how the relatively slow, incremental environmental changes characteristic of climate change can often fail to prompt appropriate reactions. The focus is then on the critical issue of rising soil salinity in rural Bangladesh, which drastically reduces rice yields under status quo production. Combining new satellite-based measures of flooding with experimental variation in information and technology access, the research team estimates how households react to the changes in salinity brought on by flooding events and how these beliefs shape climate change adaptation.

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2022/05/harvard-awards-1-3m-to-fund-climate-change-solutions/>