

Char Areas in Assam: Risk Assessment Tools for Women and Children

In India, *Char* areas are most commonly found in the states of Assam and West Bengal. These areas can be described as tracts of land surrounded by the waters of an ocean, sea, lake, or stream; it usually means, any accretion in a river course or estuary. These areas emerge and submerge in large river beds such as those of the Brahmaputra in Assam are uniquely vulnerable to disasters such as floods and cyclones.

The All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) works in Assam to

make local plans in the districts and holds mock drills in the towns. This work has indicated a special need for capturing what women and children in *Char* areas want in terms of safety and security. How best to capture what women and children want?

The following is a table of tools that are required to be applied, modified, and revised to make women and children of *Char* areas in Assam central to reducing risk and building resilience.



Photo: AIDMI

Thematic Risk Area	Main Risk Components	Risk Reduction Tools
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and Planning • Legal and Regulatory System • Resource And Capacities • Integration with Development • Institutional Mechanism, Capacities and Structures • Political Commitment • Accountability and Participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in Guidelines Development • Joint Codes and Standards Tasks • Building Byelaws Review by Women
Risk Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazard/Risk Data and Analysis • Vulnerability and Impact Data/Indicators • Early Warning System • Scientific and Technical Innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Based Early Warning System Audit • Land-use Planning Review by Children • Hazard Micro Zonation by Women • Risk Mapping by Children in Schools
Knowledge And Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Management and Sharing • Education and Training • Public Awareness • Learning and Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on Women Safety and Hygiene During Disasters • Mock-drills on Flood and Cyclone Evacuation • Skits/Drama on Safety Awareness • School Curriculum on Disaster Management • Social Media for Women Safety
Risk management and Vulnerability Reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental and Natural Resource Management; Climate Change Adaptation • Sustainable Livelihoods • Social Protection • Financial Instruments • Structural and Technical Measures • Planning Regimes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Transfer Assessment for Women • Environmental Impact Assessment Tool for Children • Retrofitting Audit by Children of Vulnerable Schools and Houses
Disaster Preparedness And Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational Capacity and Coordination • Preparedness and Contingency Planning • Emergency Response Mechanism • Participation and Voluntarism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Planning for Women • Disaster Management Plans Review by Children and Women • Standard Operating Procedures for Schools • Engagement Methods for Women's SHGs

Sources: Adapted from UN/ISDR, Hyogo Framework of Action 2005-2015, Geneva: United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, 2005 as adapted by Rishi Garhwal, AIDMI, Ahmedabad on 30 Nov, 2017.

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