

LEARNING AND UNDERSTANDING INTERSECTIONALITY OF WOMEN LED DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESILIENCE

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LEADERSHIP OF WOMEN IN DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

Major General M K Bindal, VSM Former ED National Institute of Disaster Management, Government of India, India

Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, during the 2nd Asian Ministerial Conference on DRR (AMCDRR), in November 2016, highlighted a 10 Point Agenda Roadmap on Disaster Risk Management (DRM). It concisely encompasses issues, tools and approaches to address almost all the critical challenges in achieving sustainable development objectives. The PM's 10 Point Agenda Roadmap enables synergies of SFDRR, Paris Climate Agreement and SDGs. The point no. 3 in it, states **"Encourage Greater Participation and Leadership of Women in Disaster Risk Management"**. And this publication furthers this objective most effectively.

During disasters the most affected are those who have least access to or control over resources and these groups are slowest to recover. A disproportionate effect is seen on the weakest and those already marginalized. During disasters it is observed that pre-existing vulnerabilities are enhanced and magnified and it often has a gender dimension.

This Experience Learning Series (ELS) titled 'Learning and Understanding Intersectionality of Women Led Disaster Preparedness and Resilience', focuses on the pertinent role of women leadership in disaster scenarios. Intersectionality of women led disaster preparedness and resilience, encompasses understanding the differences among men and among women and the predicaments with which these differences intermingle to aggravate marginalisation. Intersectionality offers a promising framework for contextual assessment as it can boost development outcomes for women. It also ensures that a particular group of women are not excluded in policy and practice. Women's strategic means comprises of access to credit and other financial resources, elimination of institutionalized forms of discrimination, the drive to rebut domestic violence and mitigating the burden of household chores.

The gender division of labour that is prevailing in the given environment can mean that men and women are heterogeneously exposed to disasters due to the disparate nature of their work for example a fishermen faces a different tsunami risk at sea in comparison to his spouse who works inland. This apparent contrast of labour affects post-disaster benefits and livelihood bolstering for men and women differently. Women due to this in both households and global economy are less able to control economic resources and alleviate the affects of catastrophe than most men.

Not enough can be dwelled, on the principal ascendancy of decision making by women, related to disaster resilience. Women are more likely to be interdicted at all levels from the household to national policymaking because in most of the societies, women have considerably less access than men to remunerative and social resources.

A precise state of affairs can only be assessed by retaining a gender alert perspective. It comprises of men and women in recovery, according to their potential to chip in. It also lays impetus, explicitly on gender specific issues and aids in incorporating the understanding of power dynamics in the community, allocation of its resources and formulating policy potential in bracing the reconstruction efforts. Ultimately it has the strength for reinforcing wider emphatic social changes.

Keeping in mind that a major chunk of people involved in decision making position in disaster risk management are men- so men should be included in a big way to address and advertise the reasons of gender-based vulnerabilities in disaster. Ensuring women led disaster preparedness and resilience involves: conducting gender assessment for all the principal stages of disaster cycle (preparation, emergency and recovery) for different hazards; to distinguish and amalgamate the ingenuity and capacities embodied by women into a disaster management process; recognising effective mechanism for addressing the absence of gender mainstreaming in natural disaster management; to identify the main factors giving rise to the reduced engagement of women in leadership role and to evolve effective procedures to overcome such hurdles of conflict, and developing basic and noteworthy tools for gender analysis in emergency and DRM.

Woman organisations, private sector and communities have played a pivotal role in fighting disasters, they need to be strongly fortified in their current role which includes the financial aspects of funding. Various tools like mobilising police and judicial services, assistance of volunteers etc should be implemented to support women especially where digital access is lacking.

This ELS has rightfully endeavoured to capture the interplay of roles among women and men in various strata of society and the need for women to take up leadership positions in a disaster scenario in all its facets. Quoting examples and showcasing finest practises from different countries and organisations, advocate an affirmative and progressive mindset of the government and of the policymakers. This publication will serve as a resource document for the functionaries and the practitioners in this field so that the woman are involved in leadership positions while mainstreaming DRR, structuring the policies and executing interventions.

I congratulate AIDMI for this welcome and much needed initiative of national significance through publication of This ELS titled 'Learning and Understanding Intersectionality of Women Led Disaster Preparedness and Resilience.'



UK Research
and Innovation



HOW TO DEAL WITH AND 'DO' GENDER AND INTERSECTIONALITY ON THE GROUND

*Dr. Louisa Acciari, Co-Director, Centre for Gender and Disaster, University College London (UCL), UK;
Global Network Coordinator, GRRIPP project*

The Experience Learning Series (ELS) titled “Learning and Understanding Intersectionality of Women Led Disaster Preparedness and Resilience” offers a collection of case studies from South Asia, of local projects led by or involving women leadership in disaster preparedness and response. This original initiative, launched by AIDMI, takes place in the context of the project GRRIPP (Gender Responsive Resilience and Intersectionality in Policy and Practice), and represents, therefore, a valuable contribution beyond South Asia.

GRRIPP is a global collaboration and knowledge-exchange project, implemented by a collective of universities in the UK, Peru, South Africa and Bangladesh. It aims to bring together theory, policy and practice to promote a gender-responsive approach to disaster management and development. Our main goal is to bring to the forefront initiatives from the Global ‘South’, in order to renew theory and implement better policies and practices in the fields of gender-responsive disaster risk reduction, climate change action and development.

In this sense, the present book provides a series of concrete examples of how to deal with and ‘do’ gender and intersectionality on the ground. It brings the voices of very different organisations so that we can all learn from them. The diverse case studies insist, in particular, on the crucial role played by women as leaders, workers and family caretakers; they invariably show that women know what they need and know how to respond to and adapt in a context of crisis. What is often lacking is getting the right resources and the right level of support to put women in a position of decision making.

The insights from this compilation are extremely relevant not only for South Asia, but also to foster a dialogue with the other GRRIPP regions and projects, in Latin America, Africa and the UK. Crucial themes such as resilience, employment, environment and the Covid-19 pandemic crisis are covered, giving us scope to think and act. Thus, this book represents a key piece for the GRRIPP project and should be used as a guideline for action both locally and globally. Of course, contexts vary, and each country has its own set of challenges. Nonetheless, some of the reflections that come out of the South Asian case studies can certainly orient theory, policy and practice elsewhere.

One key learning I would particularly like to highlight, is that, according to AIDMI’s own words: “women, if given a chance, turn their intersectionality as an asset for resilience building at the local level where it matters the most.” Now, our collective task is to understand how and under which circumstances this can be done. Drawing on the lessons learnt from the South Asian experience, we can thus add to our repertoire of knowledge and practices.

Thank you to the organisers All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) and National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) all the projects involved in making this ELS, which is without doubt a much-needed contribution to global debates on gender and intersectionality in disaster contexts.

GOOD SNAPSHOT OF LOCAL PRACTICES, RESEARCH, AND POLICIES FOR WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN SOUTH ASIA

Dr. Mahbuba Nasreen, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Bangladesh Open University & Regional Lead, Gender Responsive Resilience and Intersectionality in Policy and Practice (GRRIPP), South Asia, Bangladesh

Exposure to disaster risk is often dictated by social constructs such as gender, class, race, sexual orientation, (dis) ability, ethnicity etc. The overlap and interconnectedness of these constructs is known as 'intersectionality'. This Experience Learning Series (ELS) is titled '*Learning and Understanding Intersectionality of Women Led Disaster Preparedness and Resilience*' and focuses on the important aspect of women led disaster risk reduction (DRR).

It has been observed that men and women have differentiated vulnerability to disasters. This differentiated vulnerability needs to be articulated and understood so that appropriate risk reduction policies can be implemented. This ELS tries to highlight not only women's differentiated vulnerability but also the fact that women's leadership in reducing risk against extreme events has been hitherto neglected. The pioneering research (Nasreen, 1995) on gender and DRR, conducted three decades back in Bangladesh indicated that rural women are the major contributors in household levels disaster response. So is true in context of India and other countries in South Asia. Gender Responsive Resilience and Intersectionality in Policy and Practice (GRRIPP) is one of the major global initiatives, launched in 2019 in addressing the gender specific vulnerability and resilience using intersectional lens. South Asian region is also implementing GRRIPP. By discussing, the intersectionality of risk, resilience and gender a meaningful dialogue with concrete action can be started in this direction.

This ELS by All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) highlights the interplay of risk, resilience and gender. It seeks to highlight the concept of 'differentiated vulnerability' to disasters and extreme events as experienced by women and girls as compared to boys and men. Social divisions of race, religion, ethnicity, economic status, class, caste and sexual orientation also drive a person's vulnerability and exposure to disasters. Intersectionality or the overlap of complex social processes determines an individual's vulnerability as well as adaptive capacity to a disaster or extreme event. To highlight this theme of intersectionality by providing a snapshot of the good practices, research, policy and grassroots interventions in promoting women's leadership and agency in disaster risk reduction (DRR) in India and beyond in South Asia.

This ELS is for those local authorities and organisations in South Asia that aim to address intersectionality and gender in their work and plans. I congratulate AIDMI for once again coming up with this pioneering publication and all the efforts that the contributors have put in to make women's role in reducing risk and building resilience more central.



1. LEARNING INTERSECTIONALITY OF WOMEN LED DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESILIENCE

Mihir R. Bhatt, AIDMI, India

‘Intersectionality’ refers to the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. The intersectionality of gender, risk and resilience very often makes women much more vulnerable to the adverse impacts of disasters and extreme events. AIDMI has observed this in it’s work in India.

In popular perception, disasters are often seen as these big cataclysmic events that cause indiscriminate death, destruction and distress. However, the vulnerability to the adverse impacts of disasters and extreme events is also driven by several social and economic factors. Gender is one such important social construct that often determines the extent of a disaster’s impact on a person. It has often been observed including in AIDMI’s work that the same disaster or extreme event can have differentiated impacts on men and women and other sexual minorities.¹

During various disasters in India, the mortality of women has been higher than that of men. For instance, during the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, more women died as compared to men because of their restrictive attire traditions, long hair that got entangled with bushes, lack of physical ability to run, as well as their efforts to save valuables from homes and to protect children by taking higher risks.² In fact, pre-existing, structural gender inequalities mean that women and girls bear a disproportionate burden of the adverse impacts of disasters than men and boys. And this is the reason why AIDMI was one of the first in tsunami response to address women’s needs first and directly.

Economic infrastructure – beyond roads and buildings – for women’s enterprise in social sector needs tremendous investments, sustained and substantial, shows recent assessment by AIDMI.



¹ Gender Dynamics of Disaster Risk and Resilience, The World Bank Publication, March 3, 2021,

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/disasterriskmanagement/publication/gender-dynamics-of-disaster-risk-and-resilience>

² (Pittaway et al. 2007)

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted this differentiated vulnerability like never before. As the pandemic unfolds, its impacts on women's welfare, food and livelihood security are becoming increasingly clear. The pandemic and its concomitant lockdowns have disrupted livelihoods and value chains in rural and urban areas. Research by sector experts from organizations like International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), World Bank and Centre for Global Development, highlight the differential impacts of the pandemic on men and women and their ability to cope with these multiple shocks. Recent work of GRRIPP has highlighted this.

For instance, women tend to experience more lingering income shocks and have greater difficulty accessing food than men. Furthermore, the pandemic is increasing the work burden on women due to school closures and the additional care needs of sick family members in the household. An increase in gender-based violence and deteriorating mental health of women have also been noted. AIDMI has found that casual women workers have suffered loss of income upto 50% due to the pandemic impact.

Another debilitating factor is that the role of women is often ignored in risk reduction and relief contexts which in turn limits their participation in such activities. This is unfortunate, because not only do women suffer the adverse impacts of disasters more; they also possess the ability to prepare against such extreme events. *Duryog Nivaran* in South Asia has pointed this out for now two decades.

Thus, 'Intersectionality of Women led Disaster Preparedness and Resilience' has emerged to be an important policy agenda as it challenges our pre-existing notions of risk and vulnerability driven by gender dynamics. Furthermore, it is imperative to understand and address this 'intersectionality' to redeem the pledge of India's NDMP and PM's 10-point agenda on DRR which lay stress on improving the disaster preparedness and participation of women in risk reduction activities across different levels. With this in mind AIDMI has put together this document.

2. WOMEN, PANDEMIC AND SMALL BUSINESSES

Vishal Pathak, AIDMI, India

With the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the limited gains made in the past decades on gender equality are at risk of being rolled back. The pandemic is deepening pre-existing inequalities, exposing vulnerabilities in social, political and economic systems, which are in turn amplifying the impacts of the pandemic.

The government's latest Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) shows the unemployment rate for women during the January to March 2021 period was 11.8 per cent, even before the second wave of the pandemic hit. This is higher than 10.5 per cent in the corresponding time in 2020.

Female entrepreneurs have had to content with unclaimed inventories owing to order cancellations and higher raw material costs³. Of the 61 million proprietary MSME enterprises in India, only 20% are women-owned (MSME Annual Report, 2019-20). Social norms prevent women from accessing mentorship and training. In 2018-19, 4.9% of women received informal business training, vs. 12.9% men⁴ (PLFS, 2018-19). During the lockdown, only 9% of women respondents learned a new skill⁵ (IWWAGE, 2020).

Every COVID-19 response plans, and every recovery package and budgeting of resources, needs to address the impacts of the pandemic on women. The long-term recovery must mitigate the impact of pandemic and benefits women and girls (refer priorities of UNWOMEN).

UN Women's Response Focuses on Five Priorities⁶:

1. Gender-based violence, including domestic violence, is mitigated and reduced.
2. Social protection and economic stimulus packages serve women and girls.
3. People support and practise equal sharing of care work.
4. Women and girls lead and participate in COVID-19 response planning and decision-making.
5. Data and coordination mechanisms include gender perspectives.

³ Small businesses, big challenges - How will female-owned micro-businesses recover from COVID-19? (March 2021), Times of India, Opinion - Mitali Nikore, Economist.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/irrational-economics/small-businesses-big-challenges-how-will-female-owned-micro-businesses-recover-from-covid-19/>.

⁴ Periodic Labour Force Survey (June 2020), Government of India. National Statistical Office, http://mospi.nic.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/Annual_Report_PLFS_2018_19_HL.pdf.

⁵ Women Entrepreneurs as the powerhouse of recovery, KREA University and IWWAGE, https://ifmrlead.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Report_Women-Entrepreneurs-as-Powerhouse-of-Recovery-upd.pdf.

⁶ UN WOMEN Response to COVID-19 Crisis, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response/un-women-response-to-covid-19-crisis#data>.

3. WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM IN INDIA: EARLY FINDINGS

Dr. Prabodh Dhar Chakrabarti⁷

Women in India like women in general, due to the unique role they play in family and society, are endowed with the qualities of empathy, humility, inclusiveness, and the ability to communicate effectively with other women and children, who comprise nearly three-fourths of the population of the country. These qualities of the head and heart make women natural leaders during humanitarian crises. Women play this leadership role effectively but silently in dealing with crisis situations within household and communities, which often go unnoticed and do not get adequately recognised in the formal humanitarian systems of the country.

The gap between the de facto and de jure leadership position of women can be attributed to their lack of education, overburden of work, culture of inhibitions and patriarchal social norms and practices, which do not allow women to come out openly in public space to assume formal leadership positions during humanitarian response, relief and recovery operations. The nature of humanitarian response during emergency situations – evacuation, search and rescue, emergency relief – demands very high degree of physical exposure and sometime during odd hours which make women's participation in such operations problematic.

Despite all these odds women are breaking the shackles of the past and slowly beginning to assume positions of leadership in humanitarian systems at the local level. Spread of education among women, increasing awareness of their rights, exposures to the outside world through television, etc., and opportunities of interaction through mobile telephone have contributed to this change. Millions of self-help groups of women in the rural areas, large number of highly active women's organisations, and hundreds of thousands of women people's representatives in both rural and urban local bodies, thanks to reservation of minimum of thirty percent of such seats since mid-nineties, have brought women into the focus.

Women have started to assume positions of leadership at the local level. They are in a better position to present their problems and difficulties before the authorities. The trinity of women functionaries at the grassroots – ASHA, Anganwadi and ANM – deal with issues of child and female reproductive health and nutrition which assume critical

⁷ retired civil servant who served as Executive Director NIDM, Secretary NIDM, and Director SDMC. He is presently leading a study on Strengthening Humanitarian Systems in India.

importance post emergencies. These official functionaries along with the elected Panchs and Sarpanchs are involved with post disaster need assessment at the local level. In the cyclone affected States of Odisha and West Bengal majority of local level committees to manage shelter camps were led by women. Similar trends were beginning to be noticed in the flood affected regions of Bihar and Tamil Nadu.

Women's leadership at the local level has enabled highlighting issues of violence against women, privacy of women and other women specific needs that were ignored during emergencies. Women's representatives in shelter, relief and other committees have articulated the needs of food, nutrition, water and sanitation much more effectively than their male counterparts.

Many experienced, educated and articulate women have graduated from local level to assume leadership positions at sub-national and local levels. In the recently held Mayor's conclave at the World Congress on Disaster Management in Delhi women Mayors of many cities including that of Mumbai, Indore and Ranchi stole the show with their impassionate interventions regarding the role they played in leading from the front the fight against the Corona Virus.

It can be expected that with the increasing leadership of women in all spheres of society, their roles in humanitarian systems which were hitherto the exclusive domain of men would also increase.

4. WHY INVESTING IN WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IS IMPORTANT FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESILIENCE

Yogesh Ghore, Coady International Institute, Canada

Mobilising Rapid Response

While the pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on women and threatens to reverse decades of progress on gender equality, what we find in our stories is the resilience, innovation and agency demonstrated by women to not only tackle the most immediate threats to public health but to find practical solutions to the problems created by the lockdowns, loss of work and family income. For example, the most pressing and immediate issue at the start of the outbreak was the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE), including face masks that provide first line of defence against the virus. Realising this, about 500 women from SEWA learned how to make the masks and produced half a million masks even before the entire country went into a national lockdown in March 2020. These masks were then distributed to the association's membership of over 1.9 million women workers in the informal economy spread across the length and breadth of the country. The decentralised production model of SEWA involved less logistics and time for delivering it to local hospitals and customers and created employment and income for women at a time when the entire economy came to a standstill.

Raising Public Awareness

Raising public awareness about the pandemic was another area where women took the leadership. Using technology (video messaging, social media) to spread messages on social distancing, hand washing, masking, and subsequently on vaccination. This kind of messaging from trusted sources was especially important given the stigma, and misinformation about the disease, public health protocols, treatment, and vaccines.

Ever since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, we at the [Coady International Institute](#) have been working with our graduates and partner organisations across the globe who are leading the fight against coronavirus. Their stories give us a glimpse of how women in local communities are coping with and responding to the global crisis, and why investing in building their leadership is important for disaster preparedness and resilience. Below are some lessons from India and our ongoing work with the Self-Employed Women's Association ([SEWA](#)).



Photo credit: SEWA.

Providing Care to the Most Vulnerable

Providing care to the most vulnerable is a major challenge in a disaster as they are the hardest to reach and yet are most affected by it. The stories we collected during the pandemic show that women were at the forefront of identifying such groups, be it the informal sector workers—migrant labourers, street vendors, home-based workers, cigarette rollers, rickshaw pullers, domestic workers, waste pickers, construction workers, agricultural workers—or the malnourished children with weak immune system, lactating mothers with low incomes, people with disabilities, single mothers, widows, victims of gender-based violence and others in difficult situations. Working alongside governments at various levels, SEWA members leveraged their community assets (over 2000 self-help groups, district level associations, and various trade groups and social enterprises) to provide immediate shelter, food and medical help.

Stimulating Local Economy through Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Global supply chains were severely affected during the pandemic which included the supply of essential goods and services. While the lockdowns were a huge problem for the traditional ways in which supply chains function, it opened new opportunities for local businesses and community institutions. For instance, SEWA's RUDI (a grassroots business owned and operated by rural women with an innovative circular model of local production, local processing, and local distribution through a network of last-mile saleswomen who make home deliveries) saw an increase in their procurement as well as sales during the pandemic. They did all this while observing the social distancing norms and used mobile-based apps for accepting orders and inventory management. When the big businesses and wholesale markets were shut, women obtained permissions and worked with the local administration to supply essential goods to the remotest of places during the crisis.

Key Take Away

Stories collected highlight the extreme impact of the pandemic on women and how that has been translated into agency. Going forward, what difference is it going to make for disaster preparedness and resilience? Particularly given the fact that women have been recognized to have both been impacted by and have done the most in response.

The once in a century pandemic took everyone by surprise. Governments across the world struggled to control the spread and its extreme impact on public health, economy and society. At the same time, the stories from SEWA tell us how women emerged as capable and compassionate leaders who took the challenges head on. The response provided by SEWA stands on years of investments in building women's agency and leadership. By organising women in the informal economy, SEWA has given them identity, voice and means to build assets thereby increasing their ability to cope with crisis. The stories also point to the ability of women-led organisations to rapidly leverage social capital—in the form of relationships, trust, community connections, institutions, leadership—to mobilise mass action in the time of crisis. Just as they have played a vital role in responding to the crisis, SEWA's experience calls for greater role for women and investments in building their leadership for disaster preparedness and resilience.



Photo credit: SEWA.

5. WOMEN IN WASH ALLIANCE: BUILDING RESILIENCE TO DISASTER AND CLIMATE THREATS

Shaila Shahid, Chief Operating Officer; and Rifat Binte Jia, Gender Expert, Disaster Climate Change Support Unit, CWIS-FSM Support Cell, Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), Bangladesh Government

Water and sanitation are the primary areas and key medium by which we feel the impacts of climate change. As climate vulnerable people experience changing weather patterns, less predictable rainfall, drought, salt-water intrusion and increased exposure to disease, improved WASH (access to water sanitation and hygiene) becomes a critical line of defense. In many instances, climate change impacts on WASH sector are disproportionately affecting women, girls, elderly and people with disabilities. When women and people with disabilities have relatively lower social and legal status and hold less political power within a community, this limits their influence on decisions about how families and communities should respond to maintain WASH access against climate change impacts.

Challenges Faced by Women: WASH Context

In local communities of South Asia, women are the key managers of water and sanitation at the household level – collecting safe water from a safe space is a major activity of women. They are left with little to no time for work, school or to care for family and important time for their own leisure. Further, adding to the needs, women have a lack of education on health and poor concern about menstrual hygiene. Women’s WASH-related decision-making is low as their participation in water governance is [constrained by a range of factors](#). WASH-related decision-making is dominated by men in this region.

Addressing the WASH needs of women in the changing climate scenario: In the case of Bangladesh, it has the Women Advancement Policy (2011) included a section on women and children in disasters. Bangladesh Climate Change Strategies and Action Plan, also states that every effort shall be made to ensure that vulnerable groups will be protected from the impacts of disaster and climate change impacts. The Gender Action Plan (ccGAP) 2013 of Bangladesh in its capacity building initiatives of GoB and other organizations gave more emphasis on gender issues in general and relevant organizations on gender and WASH and Climate Change in particular.

Practice Level WASH in Bangladesh

The government approved the National Strategy for Water Supply and Sanitation in 2014, and the Fecal Sludge Management Institutional and Regulatory Framework (FSM - IRF) developed in 2017 in the country.

Women in WASH resilience.



To execute those strategies by 2030, a ‘National Action Plan’ has been adopted to better execute and monitor those national policies in the Department of Public Health and Engineering (DPHE) under the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and Cooperatives. A comprehensive approach is being applied to focus on CWIS indicators (City-wide inclusive sanitation) in DPHE to ensure gender, equality and inclusion at all level of programme implementation WASH, DRR, and Water and Sanitation entrepreneurship. Bangladesh has made its cyclone preparedness programme more inclusive of women.

Women are involved in the design of early warning systems, the building of cyclone shelters, and in raising community awareness. This has managed to lower the ratio of female to male deaths by almost two-thirds. Women’s voice in water governance is critical for inclusive policies that benefit both women and men and support the sustainability of water resources.

Way Forward

Ensure women’s meaningful participation and leadership in WASH governance, climate governance, disaster management and integrated water resources management (IWRM) at all levels (household, community, national, and trans-boundary) are key stepping stone to adapt to the changing climate.

Since, low levels of awareness and poor understanding of climate change risks, combined with significant knowledge gaps about climate change processes, have hindered effective societal decision making, there is a need to initiate massive campaign to challenge the social norms around unpaid care work, women’s leadership, and gender-based violence, with special focus on WASH sector and sanitation value chain.

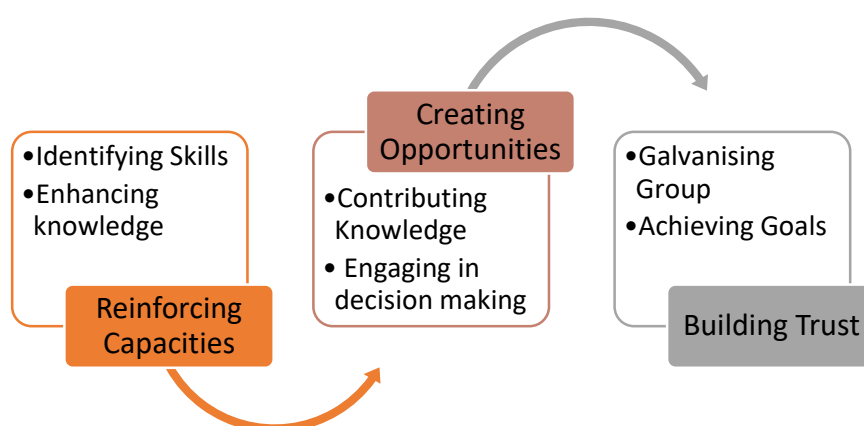
6. ROLE OF REDR INDIA IN PROMOTING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Prasad Bhagwan Sevekari, Advisor & Interim CEO, RedR⁸ India

Time and again, statistics of a disaster aftermath have indicated high mortalities and morbidities among those sections of society that are chronically vulnerable. Gender inequalities that persist within the societies get exacerbated during the disasters, putting women and girls most at risk. However structural barriers, social norms and capacity gaps have seen to limit the opportunities for women, to get into the decision making and leadership roles for better disaster risk governance.

RedR India understands that leadership is not an overnight phenomenon but an outcome which passes through stages, a resultant of rigorous ground work and calibrated support. Capacities need to be reinforced, opportunities need to be created and trust needs to be built, to ensure that women not only attain but sustain in a leadership position.

- Capacity reinforcement would happen only if the gaps are understood, inherent skills are identified and knowledge is enhanced.
- Opportunities will be created if women engage actively in contributing their newly gained knowledge and skills towards the process of decision making.
- Building trust, amongst the women members about their capacities and then, within the group members about the abilities of women as leaders is necessary. The community needs to be 'galvanised' to achieve a greater common goal, under the new leadership. A sustained support is indeed necessary to ensure that those already established do not hinder the advancement of the deprived in different positions.



⁸ RedR India is part of RedR International Federation, a humanitarian aid, non-profit organization, which maintains a register of experienced humanitarian professionals who are available to assist governments and external support agencies that work in the humanitarian sector.



This ideology is manifested in RedR India's humanitarian interventions under the three foundational pillars of Roster and Deployments, Capacity Building and Project support.

Roster and Deployments

RedR India's humanitarian roster currently has 203 members of varied sectoral specialties. Proportion of women on the roster however is not more than 20% (43 out of 203 members); probably a manifestation of limited number of women professionals in humanitarian sector. RedR India has however made efforts towards increasing the proportion of women members through networking, interviewing and recruiting women for humanitarian deployments and jobs. As yet, RedR India has deployed 154 number of women professionals as against 513 deployments for men members. In the most recent deployment for COVID response in Maharashtra (July-December 2021) with UNICEF Maharashtra Field Office RedR India deployed 66% women professionals, paving way for eliminating gender disparity in humanitarian response deployments.

RedR India has also consciously supported capacity development of its women staff members through mentoring and handholding. It is worth noting that over last five years and as a result of the sustained nurturing, at least five of RedR India's women staff have moved on to take position of greater responsibility at major humanitarian think tanks, policy support and donor agencies.

Training and Capacity Building

RedR India organises calendar and customised training courses, to build humanitarian capacities for the thematic and operational aspects of humanitarian response. These topics include technical sectors such as WASH, Shelter, Nutrition, Education etc. as also the essential operational functions like logistics. RedR India has been consistently supporting processes for creating equal opportunities for women to learn from experts within these sectors and operations. RedR India's approaches have included:

- Providing **Scholarships** and discounted course fees for deserving women candidates to join calendar courses;
- Organising **Cohorts** to enable women trainees better understand the nuances of the trade;
- Offering **Mentoring** opportunities with experienced RedR India Members.

Over last two decades RedR India has trained 86600 number of participants through various training programs, of which nearly 30% have been women from different humanitarian organisations. The number increases with every training event.

Project Support

In the backdrop of 2005 Kashmir earthquake, RedR India in collaboration with AKDN designed and conducted capacity building project on community based disaster preparedness in 17 earthquake affected villages of Uri block of Baramulla district of Jammu & Kashmir. This project was planned in three phases. The first phase of the project dealt with capacity building on understanding hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities of the community emphasising the need for community organisation for preparedness. Conscious efforts were made to ensure participation of women PRI members. RedR India and AKDN emphasised upon organising the capacity building events within the environs of the villages to enable women members to participate at times of their convenience.

The second phase of project helped communities gain knowledge and skills of search and rescue and first aid. There was a significant increase in the number of women who gained from the knowledge of the practitioners, helping enhance their confidence. The third phase of the project was about community-led camp management and training of trainers. Herein the women learnt about nuances of managing individuals and institutions during critical times. All together 51 onsite training courses were conducted reaching out to almost 500 men, women and youth.

This episode highlighted the role of onsite training and capacity building for enhancing participation of women in decision making processes related to disaster risk reduction. RedR India has continued with the approach ever since, while supporting humanitarian responses in the South Asian region.

In Conclusion...

Ensuring active involvement of women and girls in decision making processes, particularly within those aspects of life that matter for safety, security and wellbeing of their own selves and their families, is a key tenet of community-based disaster risk reduction.

RedR India takes pride in calling itself an 'equal opportunity capacity builder' to usher in the culture of risk resilience within the affected communities.

7. THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN HOUSEHOLD PREPAREDNESS TO IMPROVE THEIR LIKELIHOOD FRAGILITY THROUGH WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN INDONESIA

Debby Paramitasari, Post Graduate Student, School of Health and Related Research, The University of Sheffield, UK

Women are part of marginalised groups within the society, including in Indonesia. Based on the concept of the triangle of vulnerability by Wisner et al. (2012), marginalisation has a causal relationship with lack of accesses and resources on people's everyday lives and during disasters due to residing in an unsafe location and having fragile livelihood (1). This article will only focus on the role of women in improving their livelihood fragility.

Women's inclusion in the disaster has been recognised and regulated in Indonesia by enacting a Head of BNPB regulation No 13/2014 about Mainstreaming Gender in Disaster Management (2). At the same time, women have been locally involved in several movements that promote empowerment and inclusiveness in tackling family-related problems to strengthen their everyday livelihood, which indirectly supports household preparedness to face many difficulties, including disaster.

Women Empowerment through PKK Movement

PKK (or Empowerment and Family Welfare) was founded in 1957 for grassroots women (3). The PKK movement, which initially focused on supporting men in family management, income earner, and community development, shifted to empower women by collaborating with men in

Illustration of the PKK's Cooking Workshop: Snack Making Workshop by the PKK members in Sukodadi Village, Semarang City, Central Java Province. (Ref.: Sukodadi Village Government. 2019 [cited 2022 Jan 22]. [Available from.](#)



every aspect of life, from household management, community development, and even country development (3,4). The PKK conducts their programs through five different working groups, including ensuring the practicality of Pancasila and Gotong Royong (communality) as our country tenet; education and training; food, housing, and household management; health and environmental management; and small businesses and community coop (5).

Through the PKK programs, the likelihood of women across Indonesia has improved in many aspects. For instance, people in Pasar Minggu sub-district, DKI Jakarta Province, have experienced the benefits of PKK programs, particularly on preschool education, managing household waste through composting workshops, and regular integrated health service programs for children and elderly (5). Similarly, people in Ciputat sub-district, South Tangerang City, Banten Province, the PKK have regularly conducted Muslim study groups, religious festivals, and charity events (5). In Candimulyo Village, Kedu District, Temanggung Regency, East Java Province, the PKK workshops teach women to cook and sell food products, such as crackers, banana cake, and noodles which help women increase their income (6).

The Role of Women as Kader for Active Village Preparedness

The Ministry of Health initiated Active Villages Preparedness in 2006 to improve health quality in villages across Indonesia for a better quality of life. The program focuses on improving health services and developing community-based health surveillance, emergency and disaster management, and environmental health (7). Other than village-based health practitioners, cadres, primarily women, have a critical role in empowering and leading community participation throughout the programs.

For example, in Wonokromo Village, Surabaya, East Java Province, cadres actively promote a healthy lifestyle, raising awareness on health and bridging between health practitioners and people in the community (8). Further, in Sukoharjo Village, Kader actively promotes mental health problems to reduce stigma and supports patients with mental illness who are being shackled by their families (9). In Pasie Nan Tigo Ward in Padang, West Sumatra Province, Kader's role is critical in earthquake and tsunami disaster preparedness, including facilitating workshop and disaster simulation and facilitating in developing household disaster response plan: evacuation plan and survival bag (10). During COVID-19 pandemic, Kader in Kediri City, East Java, together with the local Campus, provided online COVID-19 awareness-raising through WhatsApp Group, which positively improved knowledge of people within the community about COVID-19 preparedness and Management (11).



We do very little about the impact of COVID-19 in women's economic enterprise – activity to organisation – even though the impact is negative and huge, indicates initial assessment by [AIDMI](#).

The Srikandi of Disaster Preparedness

BNPB facilitates workshops for representatives of the existing women-led organisation to increase awareness of disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction, aiming to strengthen women's capacities and capabilities in facing disasters within their area (12). This initiative is known as "Srikandi Siaga Bencana". After the workshop, every representative would initiate and support disaster preparedness measures within their own family and community.

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8. THE KEY ROLE OF WOMEN IN PREVENTING DISASTER RELATED AVOIDABLE DEATHS

Ms. Lauren Macleod and Mr. Julian Coetzee, Avoidable Deaths Network (ADN), UK

This article explores the key role of women in preventing disaster-related avoidable deaths. Women are consistently becoming more involved at senior leadership levels in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and disaster risk management (DRM) organisations and government bodies (UNDRR ROAP, 2021). The United Nations ‘Sendai Framework for DRR’ highlights the indispensable role of women in reducing disaster risks, emphasising that there should be a mobilisation of women leading resilience building.

This article highlights influential women leading DRR and DRM initiatives at senior levels, helping to prevent avoidable disaster deaths. The methodology for this article is a qualitative review of literature pertaining to women in positions of influence, and those women who are not perceived as influential, yet who play a critical role in avoidable disaster deaths.

As the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for DRR, Ms. Mami Mizutori leads the global DRR community towards disaster prevention and mitigation. Speaking at the Avoidable Deaths Network’s Symposium on ‘Integrating Disaster Risk Management with Emergency Services and Defence to Reduce Avoidable Deaths in the Caribbean Region’ that was held on the 10th of December 2021, Ms. Mizutori detailed that reducing avoidable deaths is a key mandate of the UNDRR. To reduce deaths in the Caribbean region, the UNDRR supports disaster risk governance, builds risk knowledge capacities and supports resilient investment. Addressing women of Latin America and the



“Dr. Fatima Akter (Asst. Professor, Dhaka University, ADN RC (left) and Dr. Nibedita Ray-Bennett (ADN President - right) with a renowned Human Geographer and Director at DRTMC, Dhaka University, Prof. Hafiza Khatun. Picture taken in 2019.”

Caribbean on the International Day for DRR, Ms. Mizutori commended women's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in both their professional and home lives (Waddington, 2021).

The Women's International Network on DRR (WIN DRR) (UNDRR ROAP, 2021) is an initiative to develop leaders, showcasing women's extraordinary achievements. Recipients of the 2021 WIN DRR Leadership Awards included Dr. Nuraini Rahma Hanifa and Ms. Vasiti Soko (UNDRR, 2021). Dr. Hanifa is regarded for her work with earthquake related DRR through the Research Centre for Geotechnology, Research Organization of Earth Sciences, National Research and Innovation Agency, whilst Dr. Soko is the first female Director of the Fiji National Disaster Management Office (UNDRR, 2021).

As well as the individuals who are exemplifying of the professional role of women in DRR, there is statistical evidence supporting women's general roles in DRR. Fioramonti, Coscieme and Trebeck (2020, p.?) observed that "countries with female leaders have suffered one-sixth as many COVID-19 deaths as those led by men", predicting that these countries will recover sooner from the effects of the COVID-19 recession following the pandemic. Ruszczuk et al. (2020) found that women are willing to lead DRR efforts and be more involved, if they were afforded the opportunity. In line with these studies, the United Nations Development Programme (2020) published a Gender and recovery toolkit to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in crisis and recovery situations.

On a community level, stories of women in leadership positions in small towns and villages, and families are not heard often enough. Last year, the Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR) started an innovative initiative to capture stories of local woman leaders, and to provide them with the recognition that they truly deserve.

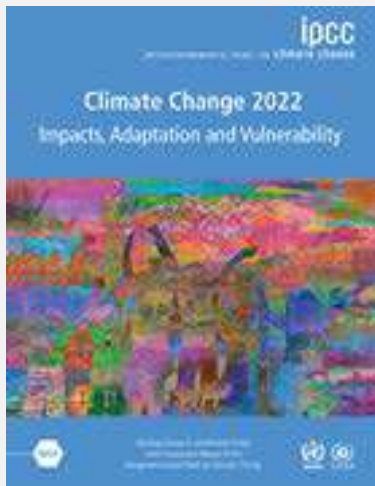
Acknowledgements:

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Adaptation not at the Cost of Mitigation

AIDMI welcomes the [IPCC Sixth Assessment Report](#): Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability and argues that adaptation cannot be at the cost of mitigation, that is, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and accelerating curbing of global warming must match adaptation.

9. WOMEN ROLE IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN

Taj Mohammad Bassiry, Managing Director, Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA), Afghanistan

Afghanistan is one of the few countries around the world where natural and man-made disasters are quite frequent. Avalanches, floods, drought, landslides, insurgency and war are the most common ones. Other than those, harsh temperatures in winter and summer and lack of cooling and heating equipment are the other reasons which adds to disasters in the country. Due to five decades of war and an unending instability, the infrastructures have been damaged badly. The international community intervention could not boost the disaster preparedness infrastructures as expected.

Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) was established in 1973 and started to respond to the natural and man-made disasters within the country, but their work was not sufficient in building the resiliency of the communities prone to natural disasters. Afghanistan due to being affected by climate change has lost a huge portion of its herbal covering and huge mountain erosion has happened, as a result of which floods happen regularly in the winter and spring seasons. Due to lack of financial as well technical skills, vulnerability amongst Afghans are high. In the male-dominated country like Afghanistan, children and women tend to be affected from disasters more.

Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA), established in 1987, has a functional Disaster Risk Reduction department which works on disaster risk management and building resilience in the communities prone to natural and man-made disasters. The department runs projects to build resilience, decrease the destructive effects of the disasters and

train people on how to be prepared in the areas prone to natural disasters.



At the field level, women were active in precreation of the plans, meetings and capacity building but with the latest political changes, it is challenging. Women as an inseparable part of the community and have quite an eminent role in the houses and on the field before and after disasters. The humanitarian organizations



in Afghanistan working in the disaster prone areas established community based disaster risk management committees (CBDRM). CBDRM members are comprised of community elders, women and youth. These committees were comprised of volunteers that were capacitated on first aid kit application, early warning systems as well as search and rescue methods. The trainings by the organizations have been blended into the local system of flood and avalanche signs. Women have taken quite a positive role in the capacity building exercises. CBDRM also has female groups in the areas prone to disaster. They have learned how to deliver first aid to the wounded persons. They also practice early warning methods such as use of phone calls or special sounds to inform other women about the threat of a flood or an avalanche.

Building the capacity of women in disaster management and preparedness is crucial as women can transfer the messages to their household members as well as adhere to the existing protocols and plans. Women's role during and after a disaster is important because of the fact that they are responsible to organize food, water and drug as well as shelter for their family members.

There is an increasing need for women and girls to be at the core of disaster risk reduction, given that they often bear the brunt of climate change and hazards such as storms and floods.

In conclusion, other than financial means, Afghans still need ample awareness raising campaigns on natural disaster mitigation, management on climate change, early warning systems and putting them in place, reinforcing women's role in disaster preparedness and management systems and building their capacity.

10. WOMEN ARE CENTRAL IN RESILIENT HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: A VIEW

*Prof. Dr. Sanjukta Bhaduri, School of Planning and Architecture (SPA),
New Delhi, India*

Human Development as mentioned by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) refers to having a long and healthy life (assessed by life expectancy at birth), being knowledgeable (assessed by years of formal education) and having a decent standard of living (assessed by per capita income). Corey L.M. Keyes (2004) states that human development consists of constancy and change in quantitative and qualitative aspects of behaviour and functioning throughout life and that it is multi-dimensional, multi directional., multi determined life long process. Over the last few decades, human beings have been exposed to increased risks. The risk dynamics have been triggered by climate change, climate change induced disasters like cyclones, storms droughts, heatwaves, erosion, floods, etc. and pandemics that have led to adverse impacts on human development. Repeatedly, research has demonstrated that at-risk individuals were more likely to develop undesirable developmental outcomes than individuals without or not exposed to the risk factor (Keyes, 2004). With the prevailing pre-existing gender inequalities, discrimination, the vulnerability in natural disasters of the marginalized sections of the urban population, particularly women increases.

Resilient Planning identifies the contributory factors, vulnerabilities, processes of risks and related implications. It aims to overcome or address the risk factors related to human development at various levels i.e. individual, family and community. Decades of research has attributed various factors as enablers of resilience at the above mentioned levels. At the individual level, resilience is enabled by education, competence and enhanced capacities, while family cohesion, parenting quality, higher household income contribute to resilience at the family level. Community level resilience is attributed to support programmes and capacity building initiatives.

*"A woman is
the full circle.
Within her is
the power to
create, nurture
and transform."*

- Diane Mariechild

In recent years, various organizations such as the UN Women and government bodies have acknowledged the role of women allowing them to contribute to risk preparedness. In most cases, women act as the caregivers in the family, to the children, youth and elderly, provide aid to the family, are experts on the adaptive traditional knowledge, and in some cases as community leaders to provoke the thought of disaster management, empowerment, community resilience, policy, and institutional response, thus building an ecosystem. Women are also proficient leaders, enact a significant role in disaster mitigation and towards resilience building through the adaptation of their indigenous

knowledge and skills, paving the way towards an equitable and sustainable approach to disaster management. Thus, women contribute to resilience building for the individuals, at the family level and also at the community level.

Various success stories across the world show the contribution of women as leaders, decision-makers, stakeholders, educators, caregivers and experts across sectors can lead to long-term solutions to mitigate the impact of disasters. One such example is that of the group of marginalized women from the state of Odisha. To reduce poverty and improve the lives of poor and marginalized people prone to cyclones and floods, the project was initiated by a group of 70 poor and marginalized women from the Jaypur village turning into all-around community resilience leaders in male-dominated local government institutions. The story of the Jaypur Mahila Mandal, a community-based rural women organization showcases the power of strengthening the lives incorporating the women's needs, rights, and entitlements into community-level processes making disaster resilience a huge success. It is argued women's knowledge of the community, their ability helps the communities mitigate disasters.



11. UNDERSTANDING INTERSECTIONALITY IN WOMEN LED DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESILIENCE IN SOUTH ASIA

Mihir R. Bhatt, AIDMI, Ahmedabad, India

Intersectionality of risk, resilience and gender cannot be understood without recognising that disasters affect men and women differently and it is women at the lowest level who have been leading the recovery process for the longest time. This is what AIDMI has found since its 2004 tsunami response in India, Maldives, and Sri Lanka with local organisations of women. And it is also found that increasingly the women are differently affected by age, occupation, social position, income levels, work, and ownership of assets.

Disasters are often seen to be great levelers as they unleash indiscriminate death, destruction and distress in the areas they hit. May that be desert of Kutch where AIDMI is working with reopening schools during the pandemic to understanding uncertainties faced by local women leaders in the delta of Sunderbans in India and Bangladesh. However, in reality the impacts of disasters are not equally distributed. In fact, the vulnerability and exposure to disasters risks depends on a variety of social and economic factors. For instance, women and girls suffer greater and more lingering impacts of disasters and climate extremes as compared to men and boys. Women suffer greater loss of livelihood than men in India and Bangladesh delta. Women are more likely to drop out of social protection during disaster and following recovery than men in Himalayas. This 'differentiated vulnerability' to disasters is driven by the gender inequalities caused by socioeconomic conditions, cultural beliefs, and traditional practices.⁹

Across many countries, entrenched patriarchy and power imbalances limits the access of women to resources and opportunities making women highly vulnerable to disaster and climate extremes. However, gender alone is just one dimension of the 'differentiated vulnerability'.¹⁰ It is crucial to note that the interplay of gender along with race, religion, ethnicity, economic status, class, caste and sexual orientation drives a person's vulnerability and exposure to disasters. This 'inter-connectedness' or overlap of highly complex social processes is called as 'intersectionality'. And AIDMI has found that social processes are part of economic processes as well as they shape economic processes

⁹ Gender Equality, GFDRR. <https://www.gfdr.org/en/genderequality>

¹⁰ Erman, Alvina; De Vries Robbe, Sophie Anne; Thies, Stephan Fabian; Kabir, Kayenat; Maruo, Mirai. 2021. Gender Dimensions of Disaster Risk and Resilience: Existing Evidence. World Bank, Washington, DC. © World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/35202> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO.

such as income and work. The intersectionality of risk, resilience and gender needs to be better understood and articulated in order to drive action for meaningful and sustainable disaster risk reduction (DRR) outcomes. AIDMI has also found that more women lead action to control wild fires in high altitudes in India and Nepal; more women care about birds and other living beings in their farms and fields and plantations in India and Pakistan; and more women take efforts to address healing of coastal ecosystems in India and Sri Lanka, negotiating their intersectionality.

While the enhanced vulnerability of women to disaster risks is acknowledged at the policy level, the role of women in disaster preparedness and resilience building barely finds any mention. Women leaders, especially from at-risk and marginalized communities have also risen up to be agents of change in addressing disaster risk and building community resilience. For example, women members of Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) have become beacons of hope and resilience in their own communities by undertaking various livelihood activities that have brought aspects of peace, prosperity and resilience to many external shocks. Similarly, women leaders of CARITAS in Bihar and Odisha and of ADRA in refugee camps in Tamil Nadu also took a decisive leadership role as 'frontline warriors' in India's fight against the COVID-19 pandemic as several women doctors, nurses, aganwadi workers, ANMs and police personnel facilitated awareness building, patient care and vaccine administration.

Thus, understanding the intersectionality of women led disaster preparedness and resilience can help in leveraging women's voice, leadership, and agency for resilience. AIDMI has found that it helps women organise across markets; draw cover of social protection; and build mutual capacities. In order to accomplish this, we need certain basic minimum requirements in humanitarian and development action. Firstly, there is a need to institutionalize the systematic collection, use and reporting of gender data. Secondly, it is essential to develop gender responsive laws, strategies, policies and plans. Thirdly, increasing financial resources and allocation for gender responsive actions is extremely important as it would help embed gendered approaches to DRR in the various response and preparedness mechanisms and partnerships in the larger humanitarian landscape. Most importantly, we need to promote women's leadership in DRR through legal and policy framework, political will, organizational culture, accountability and responsibility, technical capacity, and adequate resources. And in addition this leadership needs to be protected from uncertainties of changing climate, both, top-down and bottom-up that women face.

Changing climate is already undermining South Asia's food and water security, AIDMI has found in its work with IDS, UK and IIT Mumbai while understanding the uncertainty faced by local leaders including women. It is women farmer's hard work and agricultural



Training on Women
Led Disaster
Preparedness,
Ahmedabad, Gujarat,
India.

productivity and her social and mental determination that slows down or in rare cases steps undermining of food and water security.

AIDMI has invariably seen in the field that when victim women are given a chance they do come up and ahead to take the lead, with modesty and grace, a bit slow but in sustained manner, and aim at taking everyone – family to community – along the resilient recovery path. **That is, the women, given a chance, turn their intersectionality as an asset for resilience building at the local level where it matters the most. Similarly, women can, given a chance, turn their intersectionality to their advantage to transform the institutions and organisations that they form and run.** How do women do this? Under what conditions? What works? And what is likely to fail? It is the list of these questions that attracts AIDMI's attention and time in South Asia.

The above are some of the normative prescriptions that can help in improving women's enhanced vulnerability to disasters and help them further evolve as effective and credible agents of resilience building in South Asia.

12. THE PANDEMIC HAS PUSHED WOMEN OUT OF WORK: THESE POLICIES CAN HELP¹¹

Sameer Khatiwada, Social Sector Specialist (ICT), Southeast Asia Department, ADB; and Souleima El Achkar-Hilal, Economist and Labor Market Information Specialist

In Southeast Asia, women workers were disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Urgent policy action is needed to address the issue and improve the welfare of women in other areas as well.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating impacts on labor markets worldwide and Southeast Asia is no exception. Although both men and women were hit hard, the greater impact on women must be well understood and to explicitly targeted them in policies aiming at improving labor markets and people's lives in the post-pandemic era.

According to our [research](#), the disproportionate impact on women is most evident in the area of job losses. At the height of the COVID-19 impact on labor markets in the second quarter of 2020, women represented approximately 91% of manufacturing job losses and 58% of overall job losses in Thailand.

Beyond job losses however, the differential impact was reflected in far more labor force exits among women, in all our sample countries and across nearly all ages, while men were more likely to become unemployed. This means that in contrast to men, most women who had lost their jobs were not searching for work and/or were not available to take up work.



Women in Southeast Asia were more likely to lose their jobs during the pandemic than men. Photo: ADB.

¹¹ Asian Development Blog, Published: 10 February 2022, <https://blogs.adb.org/blog/pandemic-has-pushed-women-out-work-these-policies-can-help>

The pandemic has painfully highlighted the vulnerability of women in Southeast Asia's workforce.

Labor force survey data suggest that labor force exits among women were mainly temporary, and at least as many women re-entered the labor market in the second half of 2020 as those who had left in the first half of the year.

However, a close look reveals that many women who re-entered the labor market did so into 'lower quality' jobs than they had prior to the crisis, often informal, own-account or contributing family work. This is indicative of an 'added worker effect' or 'distress employment' whereby additional family members join the labor force to compensate for lost household income.

It reflects the fact that many low-income households in these countries – in a context of weak social protection and without savings to draw upon – cannot afford to stay without employment income for long. We should ensure that these female workers do not remain 'trapped' in lower quality forms of work, which would represent significant disruptions to their working lives, including potential 'scarring effects' for young labor market entrants.

The disproportionate impact on women reflected in their share of job losses is largely related to their sector of employment, and their occupations. In much of Southeast Asia, there remains a significant amount of gender segregation in employment.

Manufacturing – hit hard by the pandemic through supply chain disruptions and declines in global demand – constitutes an important source of female employment, and particularly of wage and salaried work in the region. However, much of this employment remains in lower value-added industries, where wages and productivity – although generally higher than in agriculture and low-skilled services – remain low.

In particular, many workers along global supply chains have temporary contracts, and informal employment remains elevated even within formal enterprises. As a result, they have high levels of job insecurity and limited access to social protection. This compounds the vulnerability of workers in these occupations at high risk from automation.

In the services sector, large shares of the region's female workforce are in middle-skilled sales and service occupations and low-skilled elementary occupations, which were heavily affected by containment measures and mobility restrictions, and by the decline in aggregate demand and tourism.

In these occupations, physical proximity is key and few tasks can be undertaken remotely. Conversely, with the exceptions of health care and education, female employment in higher skilled services and in the professional and associate professional occupational categories remains limited in the region.

Beyond sectoral and occupational segregation are gender-specific barriers to female labor force participation, often rooted in social and cultural norms with respect to gender roles. As schools closed and the health emergency was maintained, women exited the labor market *en masse* to take care of children and ill relatives. The 'care burden' fell more heavily on women, along with its associated trade-offs as women transitioned from paid work outside the home, to unpaid care work within their households.

The pandemic has painfully highlighted the vulnerability of women in Southeast Asia's workforce, and the growing inequalities across workers, based on skills and the nature of their working arrangements, among other dimensions. As technology and other factors continue to drive these inequalities, improving women's access to decent work would have substantial spill over effects for societies and economies.

As countries develop their post-COVID recovery strategies, both demand- and supply-side hurdles to the expansion of decent work for women must be addressed.

On the demand side, labor force activation measures and employment creation incentives must target women. On the supply side, women's access to economic and productive resources and to skills development (including reskilling and upskilling in digital and technical areas) must be expanded.

Barriers to female labor force participation must be dismantled, through investing in family support services, and improving legal and institutional frameworks to tackle social norms that discriminate against women, eliminate gender-based violence, protect women's rights, and recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work.

Additionally, social protection has a key role to play: as women face numerous disruptions to their working lives, life-cycle programs and policies (including maternity benefits, unemployment insurance) can help limit these impacts. All of these constitute elements of the SDG 5 (gender equality) of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Another critical issue is how climate change affects men and women differently. With the strong impetus building to make post-pandemic recovery pathways green, there may be several opportunities to have a positive impact on both women and climate.

While the pandemic has cast a spotlight on persistent labor market challenges faced by women worldwide, it has also opened a window of opportunity to make decisive policy changes in many other areas as well that benefit women. It is time for policymakers and communities to take action.



13. ROLE OF GOVERNMENT OF INDIA IN WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SUPPORT IN DISASTER RECOVERY

Ashwin Srivastava, CEO, Sapio Analytics, Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, India

Recently, while helping to create policies for the Government of Uttar Pradesh, we evaluated certain benefits of driving the said policies with support from women citizen leadership. The resulting perceived benefits showed better possibility of on-ground execution through involvement of women at the forefront, particularly in the context of empathy driven localised impact.

When it comes to disaster recovery, the need to drive leadership with care and empathy is critical. It is important that multiple complex parameters are considered while executing the right decisions needed for such recovery. Hence, the said evaluation of women leadership makes the need of women's leadership support in disaster recovery even more prominent.

Atal Innovation Mission, by NITI Aayog, has promoted the involvement of women in driving an innovative mind-set in India, through Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs) and Atal Incubation Centres. The current gender distribution of ATL In-charges across India (numbers derived based on a secondary evaluation, through unofficial checks with various ATL mentors) show a favourable number for women. Hence, there is a possibility to use this workforce towards significant actions in the context of disaster management.

Program led by Women Teachers

The ATL In-charges are academicians and teachers with the responsibility to promote innovations amongst students. They are shaping young minds towards creating practical products that can be brought into regular usage with some professional guidance.

If the children of India are ready to provide technology based preventive support in disaster recovery, the impact of disasters is expected to be low, and the recovery can be expected to be faster. A program, that is led by the women ATL In-charge, owing to the leadership benefits mentioned above, can help achieve this.

This program is proposed to create special call for action to create technology driven solutions used in disaster recovery, with clear case studies and step-wise guidance provided by industry experts. The women leaders shall be expected to deliver upon successful creation of these technologies, as part of their existing roles with Atal Tinkering Labs, but with an additional focus on the vision of such a program. These technologies shall then be shortlisted for practical usage, and regular



File Photo of an Atal Tinkering Lab in Mumbai led by a Woman In-charge.

preparation of innovators for disaster recovery shall remain the responsibility of the shortlisted winning ATL In-charge leaders.

Innovations by Women in STEM

This does not require any special program, as there are existing programs around promotion of innovations by women in the field of science and technology. What is additionally needed is involvement of these innovations for the purpose of disaster recovery.

This is proposed to work in two tracks: firstly, shortlist existing innovations by women leaders and find use cases of the same for disaster recovery, and secondly, create specific problem statements based on a data driven evaluation on the kind of innovations done by women in STEM to create specific solutions. These leaders can then be empanelled for further support in designing disaster recovery technologies through various government schemes.

Women Leadership in Civil Defence

Civil Defence Professionals and Home Guards need to be on their toes when it comes to taking actions related to disaster recovery. We are also working on empowering them further through smart training sessions and added responsibilities of further training relevant citizens.

The above programs can be enhanced with women leadership focus. Women leaders amongst the civil defence professionals can be identified to train and empower more citizens, particularly women in the education and healthcare spaces, to improve their capabilities for disaster recovery. As an example, climate changes are leading to significant changes and new types of disasters are getting created and are being anticipated. A deep knowledge of the same is needed, and must be driven through leading female voices in the society, to generate the right kind of impact. Such drive is possible with women leadership in civil defence at the fore.

For the above, the first program with ATL in-charge leaders can also have synergies, thus combining forces and increasing benefits.

Overall, by enhancing existing programs around disaster recovery or women empowerment, and in some cases by combining them, as well as by creating new programs around the concept, we can help create a stronger nation when it comes to disaster recovery.

14. WOMEN LED DISASTER PREPAREDNESS: LEARNINGS FROM SEWA

Mansi Shah, Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), Gujarat, India

Women are the backbone of a poor informal workers' household. They not only shoulder the responsibility of fulfilling the family's food and nutritional needs as well as "Care" needs, but also financial responsibilities. And yet, due to their natural tendency of putting family first, women often are the most affected in any disaster situation.

SEWA, a national trade union of over 2.1 million poor self-employed women workers from the informal economy has been working relentlessly for almost 5 decades to organize these poor and vulnerable women workers for full employment and self-reliance. SEWA's experience has shown that whether they are affected by cyclone or earthquake, or the pandemic like the current, women demanded work. Women want to rebuild their lives and livelihoods through work and income security.



"I am a landless laborer... a few years back I took training from SEWA to become a hand-pump repair technician. During the current pandemic and lockdown... when the majority of informal worker's livelihoods had come to screeching halt... we had work in their hand, which brought us economic security and above all a peace of mind... initially I was afraid... On the one hand, we would all starve of hunger if I stop working... On the other, if I got COVID-19 and died, who would look after my children?... but then I thought... through my work I will be able to live a life with dignity, without begging and also reduce suffering of villagers who have no access to water.... So I underwent safety training, put on my mask and gloves and went to work. And when I saw the gratitude in the eyes of the villagers, I felt satisfied... it overrode my fear." ... says Sushilaben, a grassroots hand-pump repair technician from Aravalli district in Gujarat.

The story of Sushilaben is similar to that of thousands of poor grassroots women who look for dignity rather than charity. These women have shown that the key to disaster recovery and resilience building is through a new kind of economic model that we call the "Economy of Nurturance" – a model that values the work of the worker, her relationship with the community, society as well as environment... An economy that understands that human capital is inseparable from other forms of capital (community

assets) and values the role of organizing as a key to unlocking the human capital potential.

And when we are looking at the human capital, it is also important to understand that some of the major challenges faced by these women workers from the informal sector are access to working capital that would help them to restore and resume economic activities; Growing Input Costs; Affordable access to new technology; traditionally gendered roles and access to skill development.

Therefore, there is a need to mainstream gender concerns in a constructive way that leads to economic models that do not create concentration of wealth in hands of few at the cost of many. Such economic models would promote and invest in the local decentralized economies. It would also facilitate improvements in financial, social and environmental aspects of the women's lives and livelihoods – including long term social impact in addition to the financial profits. Some of examples of these social impacts are – an increase in the number of educated girls in the families and villages, increased respect, negotiating power of women workers in their homes, workplaces as well as community; increased assets in the name of women worker; reduction in rural out-migration etc.



And for the success of such an economic model, there is a need for Policies and design which are informal sector women worker centric and that promote Local and Decentralized Supply Chain model. There is also a need for an innovative financing mechanisms to facilitate formation and scaling of women-led microenterprises and supply chains – a fund which is a mixture of equity, grant, loan, patient capital etc., will look for moderate returns and help the women entrepreneurs/social enterprises to grow at a pace that is comfortable to the poor. We at SEWA call it the Livelihood Recovery and Resilience Fund.

15. WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN CASH TRANSFER IN THE PANDEMIC: ADRA EXPERIENCE

Imran Majid, Programs Officer, Adventist Development and Relief Agency India (ADRA India)

While the Cash Transfer programs are designed to alleviate poverty, they can also play a critical role in empowering the marginalised sections of the communities especially Women. Cash Transfer programs can improve the lives of women by providing them cash and control over it. It enables them the control and decision making around the expenditure of the cash. ADRA India implemented a similar project in three districts of Tamil Nadu providing unconditional cash transfers to the most marginalised and vulnerable communities affected by the impacts of COVID-19.

ADRA India's assessment reveals that generally during a disaster, women and children, particularly female heads of household, the elderly, and pregnant and lactating women suffer the most due to cultural norms and lack of sufficient access to food. Due to COVID-19, most of the families have lost their income and most of the marginalised households still depend on raw food materials distributed by the public distribution system. Mostly children are given more importance while distributing the food in the family. Then the men consume food and women generally consume the leftovers by children and men in the family. Most of the families have restricted the food intake for two meals per day than three



meals. The team also found that both the quantity and the quality of the food intake reduced a lot, especially among the women. Lactating and pregnant women faced a major challenge because of the lack of food. According to the World Development Report (WDR) 2012, gender is defined as socially constructed norms and ideologies which determine the behavior and actions of men and women. Understanding these gender relations and the power dynamics behind them is a prerequisite for understanding individuals' access to and distribution of resources, the ability to make decisions and the way women and men, boys and girls are affected by political processes and social development. One of the objectives of this intervention is to understand the gender dynamics among the affected communities and contribute towards the achievement of gender equality. Hence the project undertook gender analysis among the affected communities.

In most of the families, men are the breadwinners for the family, thus holding a stake in taking the decisions over the spending of money. To transform gender balance at the household level, ADRA India prioritises women as the primary project participants in its Unconditional Cash Transfer programs. It also prioritises women in the leadership roles in the village level committees which boosts their confidence to participate in the community level decision making.

Prioritizing women as project participants, helps the project to create awareness among community members, especially among the men and boys to acknowledge the differences between women and men, based on the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, constraints, and power.

The formation of village level committees under the leadership of women helps the project to ensure the direct participation and role of women in selection of deserving participants and decision making. In addition, organizing focus group discussions and receiving feedback from women on the project implementation and progress, especially in the presence of men gives them the confidence and makes them think/feel that they too can contribute positively for the development of their community in the future.

Besides, the conscious decision to register women as participants, helps not just to avoid the risk of cash being misused, but also contribute monetarily for the welfare of the family and make women feel confident about it.

Also, by following gender integrating strategies such as promoting women's participation through village level Committees, involving women where possible in the targeting process, and putting security measures in place so that women feel safe and protected in accessing or receiving the cash, the projects can minimize the barriers to women in accessing project benefits.



Anecdotal evidence from ADRA India's project strongly suggest that gender dynamics have changed for the better in households that benefit from these Projects.

Gender strategies in the village level committees have given women the confidence to voice out their opinions and mobilize other women in the community towards the community development initiatives vis-a-vis tanking up small entrepreneur activities such as making lunch bags, needle work, tailoring, etc.

Integration of gender strategies not only include engaging women but also including men in the intervention areas. Engaging men to allow women participation and encouraging women decision making remains the integral part of the gender inclusion/ gender integration strategies in the cash transfer program implementation. Also, the key to achieving women's leadership is the awareness of youth (boys & girls) on the gender roles in community development and better management of cash transfer programs is central to successful program implementation.

16. WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN CONSERVING NATURE: THE CASE FOR ECO-SAFE ROADS IN NEPAL THROUGH NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

*Anu Adhikari, Senior Programme Officer
(Climate Change, Gender and Social Inclusion), IUCN Nepal*

Nepal is one of the most disaster-prone (20th) countries in the world due to its topography and climatic conditions. It is exposed to many natural hazards and human induced disasters. Ecosystems and more than 80 percent of the total population of Nepal are at the risk of multiple natural hazards, such as floods, landslides, drought, windstorms, hailstorms, fires, earthquakes, epidemics and Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs). Landslide is the most common natural hazards in the hilly regions of Nepal (DRR portal, 2021). In the year 2021, 673 people lost their lives, 69 people went missing and 181 people were injured due to the water- induced disasters between June to 27 October 2021 (MoHA, 2021). Both natural and human factors such as steep slopes, fragile geology, high intensity of rainfall, deforestation, and unplanned human settlements are the major causes of landslides (Kathmandu Post, 2019). In recent years, there has been rapid construction of rural roads in Nepal as the demand and need for rural development increases. Most of this road construction happens without a proper Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of that particular landscape. Of the 53,143 kilometers of rural roads in Nepal, the majority have been built without following the correct environmental measures and are prone to natural disasters during the monsoon. This anthropogenic activity further exacerbated the risk of landslides and directly impacted the livelihoods of communities and in the worst cases, took lives.

During a disaster, women and girls are more affected and vulnerable than men and boys. Out of the total 8970 deaths from Gorkha



Mother groups practicing bioengineering techniques.

Earthquake 2015, 56% were women (IFRC 2017, cited in CDMS). In the 2021 landslide, Ministry of Home Affairs reported that 178 dead of which 41% were women and girls. The impacts of disasters and crises are not gender-neutral, and global evidence shows that when disasters strike and humanitarian crises unfold, women and girls bear a disproportionate impact, which is even greater in the rural areas. In order to address above mentioned vulnerability, a research project on Ecosystem based Disaster Risk Reduction (Eco-DRR) approach was implemented in Panchase Area of Western Nepal where the focus is to build resilience to landslide risk through application of Nature based Solutions i.e. demonstration of eco-safe roads or use of low-cost bioengineering technology to stabilise slopes and reduce landslides in three pilot sites. Initially, all the sites were managed by the community people (in leadership of male) but one site i.e. Tilahar from Parbat district the leadership was handed over to a community of women which helped the initiative becoming successful. As women are powerful agents of change and their leadership is critical to solving problems. Before implementation of activities at field level capacity of women group members was built to strengthen their leadership in ecosystem restoration practices at community level. The community women group actively engaged from the beginning of the project implementation.

During the course of implementation, the women group was led all the project activities at community level i.e. awareness raising, establishing demonstration sites for eco-safe roads, establishment of community nursery of bioengineering species, selection of grass species for bioengineering research, training on bioengineering technology, generating the evidence, engaging policy makers, sharing the lessons learned and practicing nature conservation practices with the technical support of District Soil Conservation Office (DSCO) and facilitation of IUCN Nepal. They were successful in demonstrating the results of protecting infrastructure (school and community houses) especially from the effects of landslides through the Nature based Solutions approach.

Members of mothers group ready for bioengineering training.

This initiative demonstrated that the leadership of local women groups in collaboration with the local communities, government and the



Initial situation of demonstration sites.

Sites after mothers group interventions.



policy makers how effectively build eco-safe roads that eventually protect communities and infrastructure from land degradation caused by haphazard road construction and improve the roadside ecosystem, environment leading to have resilient community in terms of DRR.

As the initiatives demonstrated that women's leadership is powerful and more effective in enhancing the resilience of communities and ecosystems, however, we must empower the young women to lead nature conservation initiatives and link the conservation with livelihood opportunities. For the empowerment of women in nature conservation we should focus on removing the barriers of women in the society i.e. structural barriers, institutional and individual mindsets and parallelly need to strengthen the women's institutions, joint community actions and economic activities and local governments (LG) should recognize link between reducing vulnerabilities of women and DRM and resilience building of local area and include women as a stakeholder group that can act as a force of resilience building. Similarly, civil society actors should support local government by mobilising women's social capital by facilitating stronger networking, institutional development, capacity building, negotiating for and taking responsibilities for delivering solutions.

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17. CLBRC AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT FOR ADDRESSING VULNERABILITIES

Neeta Trivedi, SEWA, India

SEWA is an organisation of women workers of informal economy, believes and follows Gandhian philosophy of Swavlamban for empowerment of our members with objective of full employment and self-reliance, - economically and in decision making.

In the time of disaster, the poor and particularly women are most vulnerable within the community. SEWA's CLBRC – Community Learning and Business Resource Centres, established in the cluster of villages. This centers run by women and a hub for women to come together, work together in an enabling environment, which led to the thriving of women led businesses, thereby increasing their participation in the local economy. At CLBRC, SEWA ensures that women have access to microfinance, training on technical, financial and managerial skill for market led trade and business and networks needed to create businesses that contribute to their economic development. Around the world, women are being hit hard by the economic impacts of COVID-19. As the fallout from the pandemic deepens, so do the short and long term effects on women's empowerment. In such a hard time, the CLBRC established in Ladakh with its decentralized process and with women leadership stands out as a key example of women's economic development.

Due to limited economic opportunity in ladakh, men migrate and women stay alone at home. This impacts the mental health of women, because being women, they fear unforeseen difficulties and challenges from the family and society.

We have learnt from more than 4 decades of experience of organising women in unrest, across the country including Kashmir and



“All the time we are alone in the house, performing daily chores with anxiety to be alone. I have joined SEWA and visited SEWA center in my village and met many women like myself., This is a place, where we can have good and quality time pass with sharing and caring to other women members. It is also opportunity to learn new skill as well as knowledge and information from other women, which help us to be mentally and emotionally strong.”

Fiza Bano, Member of SEWA, Phyang village, Leh District, Ladakh, India

neighbouring country Afghanistan that, work in the hands plays a healing role in life of women keeping them mentally occupied and helps them in leading a normal life after a shock and trauma of an extreme event. The feeling of togetherness, gives them mental peace and stability, where they can share her concern with other women at SEWA.

The CLBRC is one example of concrete action at grassroots level that have multiple linkages for achieving SDG goals. In the response to the 2001 Gujarat earthquake, SEWA initiated the process of establishment of community learning centre that facilitates the needs of local communities for building capacities. Later on, SEWA responded more systematically with local women that resulted into CLBRC. Based on learning with local communities the CLBRC process expanded to other states of India and neighbourhood countries that facilitates various social economic actions with and for local women and populations in need to build community resilience.

18. WITH WOMEN ON THE WAY OF REDUCING CRISES: A SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCE

Fatemeh Ashrafi, HAMI Founder, Iran

The worldwide out-break of the COVID-19 pandemic has emerged as one of the greatest challenges facing humanity in recent history. This crisis threatens all humans regardless of economic, social, educational, or gender conditions. Moreover, vulnerable groups including social, gender, refugees and economic minorities; often low-income groups, are exposed to more threats and damage.

The COVID-19 crisis started at the beginning of January 2019 in Iran and expanded and deteriorated with an increasing speed and gradually spread to a large number of urban and rural areas. The extent of this crisis, both geographically and demographically was so great that the government and its agencies did not have ability to meet the minimum basic needs of people for preventing the spread of COVID-19. Then it was necessary to absorb fully participation of Non-governmental organizations (NGO) for dealing with COVID-19 and its various effects through public call and mobilization, in order to use all available capacities; including economic, social, health and educational to provide services for all especially those who are most vulnerable social minorities.

The largest social minorities in Iran are refugees, asylum seekers and forced migrants with the vast majority of Afghans. Their population is estimated between 5-7 million, of which only 1.5 million have legal residency. They, respectably, are among marginalized, vulnerable and deprived groups of the society which expected to have shown alarming effects and signs by involvement of this crisis, due to both economic shortcomings and social constraints.

For the same reasons, [HAMI Organization](#), as one of active NGOs in the field of refugees and forced immigrants, mobilized the facilities and





upgraded available abilities, simultaneously with the outbreak of COVID-19 to meet the needs of the refugees and migrants in Iran, especially at two level of micro and macro impact in the field of policy for facilitating non-discriminatory access of refugees to health services and also the implementation of support and empowerment plans for local community of refugees, including women, children, corona victims' families and those who are most at risk..

Setting up the first center of face mask and hospital clothing production for medical centers, by the active cooperation of refugee women from the first days of prevalence of COVID-19 was one of the most effective activities of HAMI in dealing with this crisis. The presence of women in the entrepreneurship of HAMI center for producing needed tools and items to prevent and confronting the spread of corona, was a multilateral opportunity to use the capacity of refugee women for advancing a pervasive social issue, and at the same time, this presence in economic pressure condition which was caused by the pandemic could compensate the economic weakness of the at-risk and vulnerable families. Production of millions masks and thousands of hospital clothing in less than 3 months from the beginning of out-break and distributing them among vulnerable groups and even sending them to Afghanistan for use at medical care centers and social services, with maximum participation of women refugee and minimum facilities was an opportunity to enhance the individual and social abilities of women, even to prove once again that by focusing on women's capabilities and their management power for planning and executing we could achieve the maximum impact from our efforts.

19. WOMEN OF PAKISTAN REDUCING DISASTER RISKS: A VIEW FROM PATTAN

Rabia Ghani, Gender Coordinator, Pattan Development Organisation, Pakistan

Like rest of its neighboring countries, Pakistan too has been suffering from serious gender-based prejudices and disparities. Its manifestation is evident in almost all forms of public life and within family institution. Such as having fewer women in population, staggering registration gap between male and female as voters, and literacy gap. Consider. Only 5% women, while 57% male own immovable assets. Similarly, more men than women have access to digital world. According to PATTAN's researches (2014 & 2019) on gender-based disparities in the disaster prone areas, as many as 97% women were likely to have no participation in public life such as participation in congregations, festivals, politico-cultural rallies etc.

Despite these prejudices and discrimination, whenever and wherever girls and women are provided equal opportunities, they would perform better than their male counterparts. For instance, most top positions of academic examinations have been won by women for the last many years. Today, there are more women in universities than men.

Moreover, PATTAN's own experience of working with poor and marginalised communities established the fact that women had taken their newfound public role very seriously. Pattan Development Organization began community development work in the aftermath of 1992 mega floods. During early phase of our work, we observed in almost all areas that traditional restrictions on women were relaxed. However, as the normalcy returned, restrictions would come back. It was a critical moment, required strategic intervention. We decided to use the opportunity. PATTAN first sensitized its own field teams about gender issues and then negotiated with each [male]partner community for the involvement of women. There was some passive resistance in the initial stage of dialogue, which was gradually evaporated.



Unleash hidden potential of women.

To assess the acceptance of the gender strategy, we selected the most conservative community for testing. In village Sunnakhi, more women than men participated in a brainstorming session on the role of women in reconstruction and rehabilitation. We were pleasantly surprised to see burqa (veil) clad women being articulate and frank while giving analyses and suggestions. The women of Megha village, district Sargodha disagreed with the male community. The village was situated on the left bank of River Jhelum and prone to annual flooding. While male members wanted us to reconstruct houses, the women suggested us to build embankment around the village. They argued embankment would save them from future inundations. It will save our mud houses too. They also argued floodwater would not spare even the *pukka* house. So, what's the point of building houses. After some discussion many men changed their opinion in favour of women's position. In other villages where men and women decided to have reconstruction of houses, both genders got equal ownership of the newly built houses¹². These interventions not only diminish some gender disparities but also opened new avenues for more pro women interventions.

In the following years, women were trained to assess risks and vulnerabilities, to conduct need and damage assessment, and to distribute relief items. Their performance and honesty were appreciated by most including men.

In October 1999, General Musharraf sacked the civilian government and introduced a radical local government system including 33% seats for women. Many women who had served their respective communities since 1992 in PATTAN's program villages expressed their willingness to contest elections. But prior to announce their candidacy, they wanted to have endorsement of their respective communities. Village assemblies were held in most villages. The women who intended to contest presented themselves for community approval. Amazingly, two-third of the women who had obtained prior endorsement won and some of them defeated nominees of large feudal lords.

By 2003, they played an important role in forming the countrywide Women Councilors' Network, which played the lead role in the aftermath of 2005 Earthquake and 2010 super floods. During 2013-16, more than 500 women of ten flood affected districts participated in the gender-based disparities survey and were involved in governance monitoring surveys. Since the outbreak of COVID19, women have been playing an important role in highlighting issues of poor governance.

Lesson: Unleash hidden potential of women and that will build resilience of communities.

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20. UNDERSTANDING INTERSECTIONALITY OF RISK, RESILIENCE AND GENDER

Kshitij Gupta, AIDMI, India

Gender is a social construct which is often employed to assign certain roles and functions to men and women. In fact, according to the World Health organization (WHO) gender refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. Moreover, access to power and resources is also determined by gender to a large extent. Thus, gender can also determine the extent of a person's vulnerability to various disasters and emergencies.

This concept of 'gendered vulnerability' to disaster and extreme events is espoused by many disaster risk reduction experts, researchers and practitioners. For instance, GFDRR describes disasters as not being gender neutral. They often affect women and girls disproportionately to men and boys due to gender inequalities caused by socioeconomic conditions, cultural beliefs, and traditional practices.¹³ However, gender is just of the dimensions of intersectionality. A person's ethnicity, race, caste, sexual orientation, class, etc. also play a huge role in determining her exposure to the adverse impacts of any disaster or crisis. This interconnectedness or 'intersectionality' of risk, resilience and gender has great implications in for DRR outcomes in India and the world.

We have seen the intersectionality of risk, resilience and gender play out in the aftermath of many disasters and extreme events. For instance, the mortality of women was higher than that of men after many disasters due to resource and structural constraints.¹⁴ Similarly, evidence has also highlighted that women suffered more lingering impacts of the COVID-19 lockdowns than men as they are finding it difficult to join back the workforce or are forced to take up low paying jobs.¹⁵

The All India Disaster Mitigation Institute's (AIDMI) work in India and South Asia has worked to address the intersectionality of disaster risk and gender to achieve lasting DRR outcomes. In Kutch district of Gujarat,

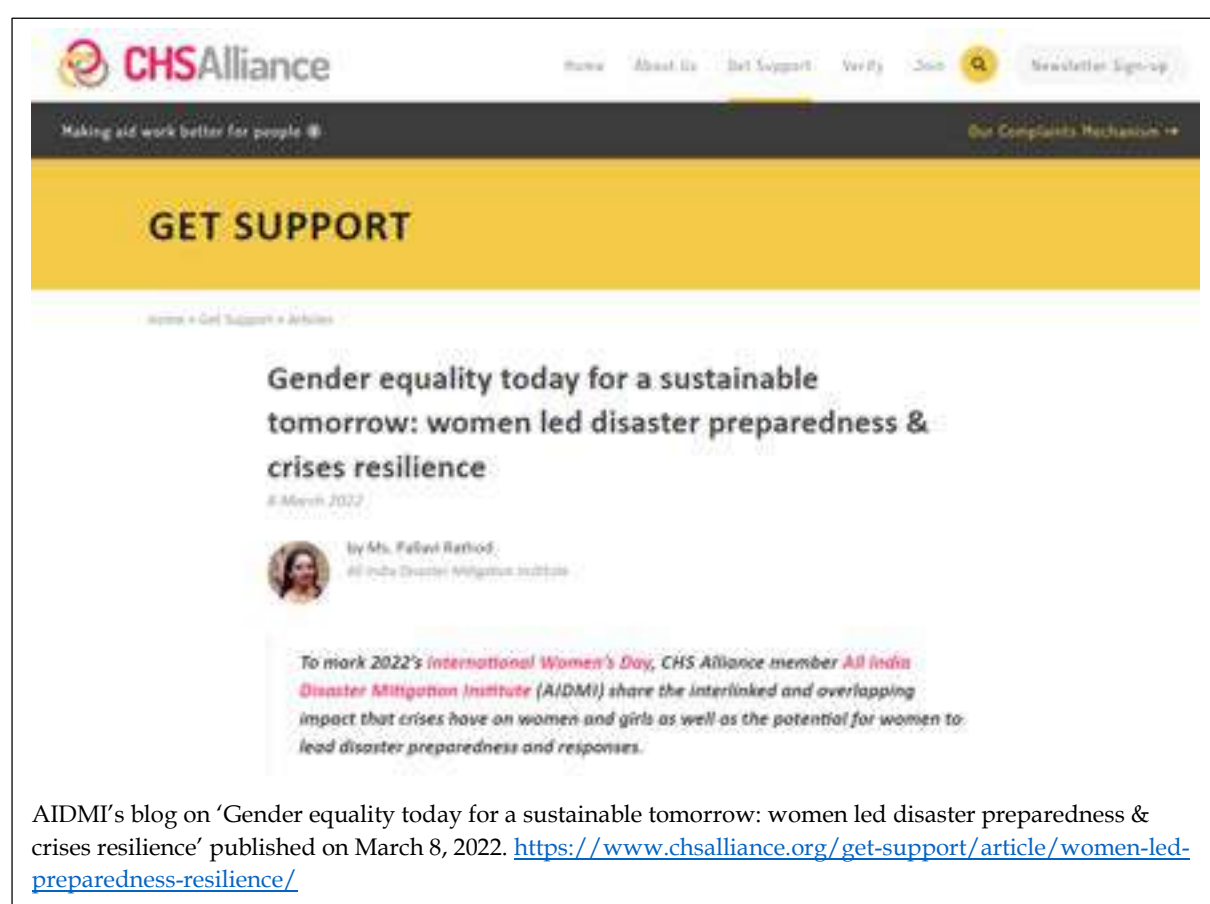
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¹⁴ Gender Dynamics of Disaster Risk and Resilience; Publication March 3, 2021; World Bank Group; <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/disasterriskmanagement/publication/gender-dynamics-of-disaster-risk-and-resilience>

¹⁵ COVID-19 and gender equality: Countering the regressive effects; Article July 15, 2020; McKinsey; <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/covid-19-and-gender-equality-countering-the-regressive-effects>

AIDMI has been helping government schools to come up with safe school re-opening norms and guidelines with special emphasis on revamping WASH facilities. This initiative focuses a lot on the access of girl students to WASH facilities in schools so that they can be adequately protected from any potential outbreak of another wave of COVID-19. Similarly, AIDMI is working to build capacity and monitor the progress of women cotton farmers to cultivate and grow sustainable cotton in the face of climate extremes in three states of India (Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh).

This publication of AIDMI pushes the envelope of research and practice to address the intersectionality of risk, resilience and gender. It sets out a normative list of solutions that can not only address the enhanced vulnerability of women to disasters and extreme events but also highlight the crucial leadership role played by them in such exigent times.



The image is a screenshot of a webpage from CHS Alliance. At the top left is the CHS Alliance logo with the tagline "Making aid work better for people". To the right are navigation links: Home, About Us, Get Support, Verify, and a search icon. Further right is a "Newsletter Sign-up" button. Below the navigation is a yellow banner with the text "GET SUPPORT". Underneath the banner, there is a breadcrumb trail: "Home > Get Support > Articles". The main content area features a large heading: "Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow: women led disaster preparedness & crises resilience". Below the heading is the date "8 March 2022" and a small profile picture of the author, Ms. Felicit Barrios, with the text "by Ms. Felicit Barrios, All India Disaster Mitigation Institute". A short paragraph of text follows: "To mark 2022's International Women's Day, CHS Alliance member All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) share the interlinked and overlapping impact that crises have on women and girls as well as the potential for women to lead disaster preparedness and responses."

AIDMI's blog on 'Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow: women led disaster preparedness & crises resilience' published on March 8, 2022. <https://www.chsalliance.org/get-support/article/women-led-preparedness-resilience/>

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOUTH ASIA

Dr. Mahbuba Nasreen, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Bangladesh Open University & Regional Lead, Gender Responsive Resilience and Intersectionality in Policy and Practice (GRRIPP), South Asia, Bangladesh

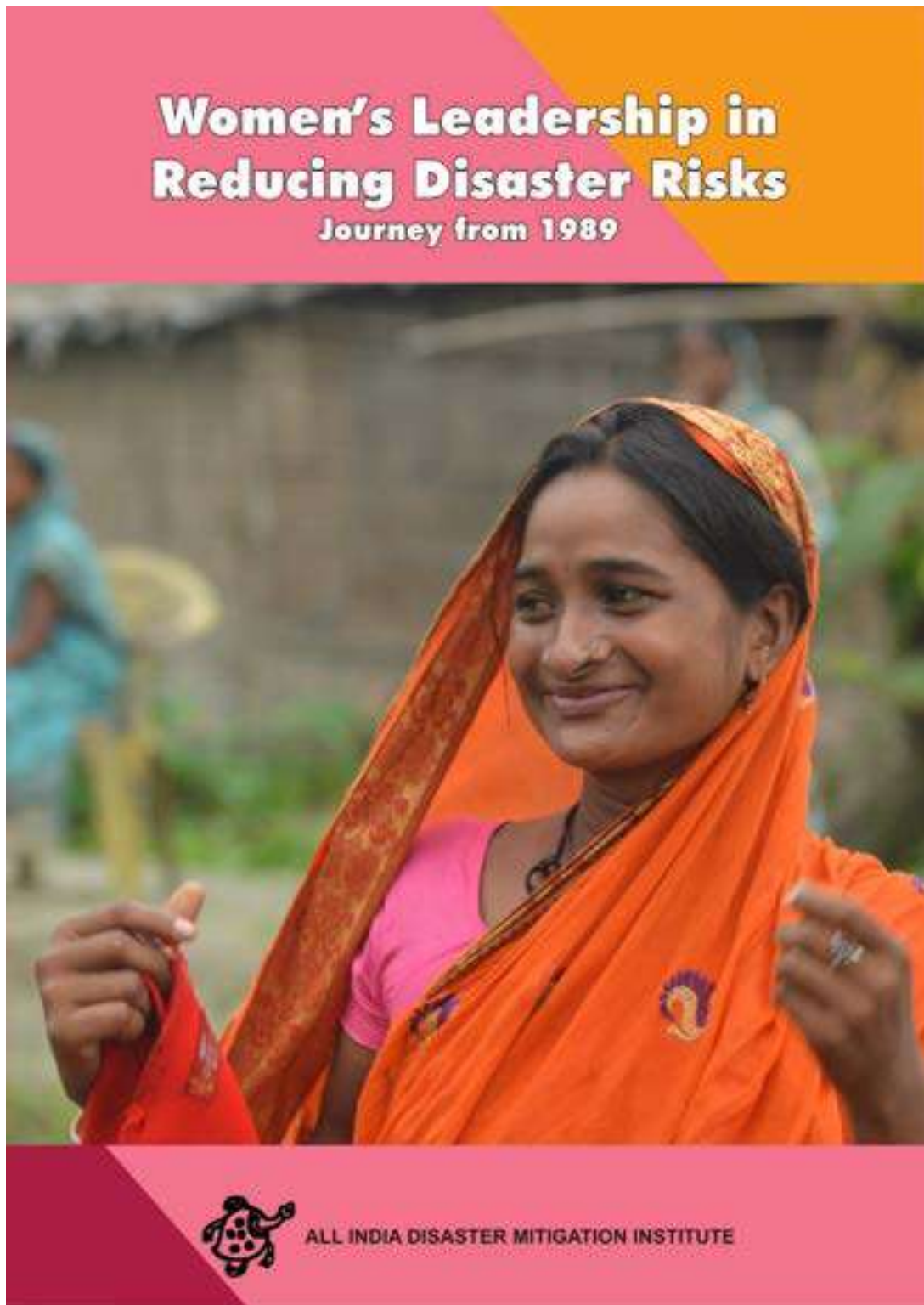
From the ideas and activities that have been presented here, we may conclude that:

- It is imperative to understand and address this 'intersectionality' to redeem the pledge of India's National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP) and PM's 10-point agenda on DRR which lay stress on improving the disaster preparedness and participation of women in risk reduction activities across different levels in India, as indicated by National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) India.
- The long-term recovery must mitigate the impact of pandemic and benefit women and girls in South Asia as AIDMI work on safer schools since 2001 suggests in Gujarat, Kerala, and Assam in India and Nepal and Bangladesh in South Asia.
- Governments across the world struggled to control the spread of pandemic and its extreme impact on public health, economy and society, especially, as current research of Janathakshan shows in Sri Lanka.
- By 2030, a 'National Action Plan' has to be adopted to better execute and monitor national policies in the Department of Public Health and Engineering (DPHE). Government of Bangladesh has already taken key initiatives and has more ways to offer to South Asia.
- Ensure women's meaningful participation and leadership in WASH governance, climate governance, disaster management and integrated water resources management (IWRM) at all levels (household, community, national, and trans-boundary) are key stepping stone to adapt to the changing climate in South Asia.
- Ensuring active involvement of women and girls in decision making processes, particularly within those aspects of life that matter for safety, security and wellbeing of their own selves and their families, is a key tenet of community-based disaster risk reduction planning in South Asia.
- Women are consistently becoming more involved at senior leadership levels in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and disaster risk management (DRM) organisations and government bodies (UNDRR ROAP, 2021) and investments must be made at each level to accelerate such involvement that helps gender and intersectionality work.
- The Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR) started an innovative initiative to capture stories of local woman leaders, and to provide them with the recognition that they truly deserve. This effort must continue in South Asia for several years to track the trend and draw learning around gender and intersectionality.

- Afghans still need ample awareness raising campaigns on natural disaster mitigation, management on climate change, early warning systems and putting them in place, reinforcing women's role in disaster preparedness and management systems and building their capacity. IFRC has a key role to play in women's leadership in these gender and intersectionality activities in South Asia.
- Various success stories across the world show the contribution of women as leaders, decision-makers, stakeholders, educators, caregivers and experts across sectors can lead to long-term solutions to mitigate the impact of disasters. UNDRR has made this progress possible and APMCDRR 2022 must build on this achievement in its plans for South Asia.
- The women, given a chance, turn their intersectionality as an asset for resilience building at the local level where it matters the most. UN Women can further support such initiatives of supporting gender and intersectionality in local organisations in South Asia.
- While the pandemic has cast a spotlight on persistent labor market challenges faced by women worldwide, it has also opened a window of opportunity to make decisive policy changes in many other areas as well that benefit women. ICVA's work in this direction will further address this challenge of making gender and intersectionality in South Asia.
- Women leaders amongst the civil defence professionals can be identified to train and empower more citizens, particularly women, in the education and healthcare spaces, to improve their capabilities for disaster recovery. IFRC can play a lead role in taking intersectionality and gender activities ahead in South Asia.
- An increase in the number of educated girls in the families and villages, increased respect, negotiating power of women workers in their homes, workplaces as well as community; increased assets in the name of women worker; reduction in rural out-migration. UNICEF has developed methods to reach this last girl, and address her intersectionality in South Asia which must be depended at local level.
- Gender integrating strategies such as promoting women's participation through village level Committees, involving women where possible in the targeting process, and putting security measures in place so that women feel safe and protected in accessing or receiving the cash. Duryog Nivaran work in Sri Lanka underlines the usefulness of such integration of strategies and must be directly supported.

The above conclusions and recommendations are drawn for action and research in South Asia in upcoming years. Without increased awareness about intersectionality of women's risk additional investments will not be made in addressing intersectionality in South Asia. The global initiative GRRIPP has come up with more solutions to the challenges and support mainstreaming of the suggested actions above using intersectional lens. I hope AIDMI will take these recommendations to suitable authorities, civil society, donors, and networks in South Asia where possible.

ANNEXURE 1.



Women's Leadership in Reducing Disaster Risks



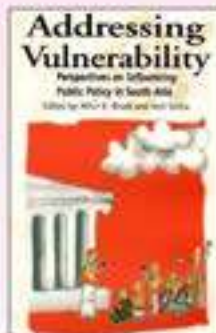
Impact study on Drought and Women through Report Card.

1989

Pilots and Capacity Development Actions for Rainwater Harvesting Structures in drought prone areas with women.

Exchange for Change Internship Programme initiated. So far 61 female interns out of 122 to promote and strengthen young women leadership in DRR.

1997



Replication of Women and Livelihood Relief in Odisha Cyclone.

Addressing Vulnerability: Public Policy in South Asia.

1999



Design and conduct more than 50 women-led (Relief and Response, Preparedness and Mitigation, Livelihood Security) trainings, covering more than 1500 women leaders.

2002

1996

Joint the Evaluation of Latur Earthquake Recovery Programmes (Gender as one of the core area).



Color indicators:
 ■ Sub-national
 ■ National
 ■ Regional (South Asia)

1998

Facilitation of Women-led Action Planning in 1998 Kandla Cyclone.

Set up Livelihood Relief Fund for disaster victims. Reach out 7000 women.



2001

Set up School Safety Campaign that reached out more than 10,000 schools addressing girls' vulnerability issues and teachers as DRR promoters.

Community capacity building cycles, more than 18 subjects, 579 trainings with Gender and DRR as one of the key parts. So far 21,098 participants. Covering 8800 women.

Experience Learning Series on Importance of Women's Role in Disaster Mitigation.

2003

Support to set up Community Learning Cycle in rural areas as disaster recovery efforts for local women leaders.





Launch of first Southasiadisasters .net, so far 180 issues developed that have contributions from 300 women leaders.

2004



Tsunami Evaluation Coalition with one objective to assess gender differences and experiences.

2006



Bringing Gender in the Disaster Management Planning process at district, city, state, and department levels. It was started in 2011 and so far developed / review / audit more than 89 plans.

2011



Assam 27 district CDBP training with 1055 participants, covering 697 women.

2015

2005

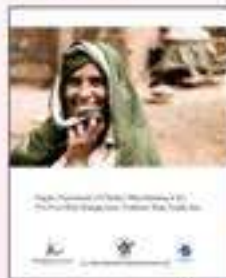
Launch of Risk Transfer and Insurance mechanism for more than 5000 women clients and women as strong campaigners for the grassroots actions.

Women in Recovery: Issues and Integrated Approaches of UNIFEM Partners in Sri Lanka.

Tsunami, Gender and Recovery: Special Issue of Southasiadisasters.net for IDDR.

2008

Impact Assessment of Disaster Micro-insurance: Gender Evidence from South Asia.



2013

Disaster Insurance Impact Study with Women Leaders in Puri, Odisha.



2016

AMCDRR 2016 Gender and DRR Guidelines with UNISDR.

Chapter in book on Women and Disasters in South Asia.

Contribution to SADR on "Building Back Better" with focus on gender sensitive approach.



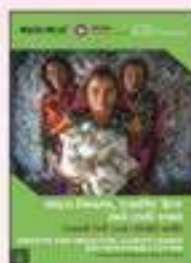
Pan-India Study on the Existing Mechanisms of Ensuring Accountability to the Affected Population in India.

Documenting Lessons Learnt and Good Practices on WASH by Women Leaders.

Documenting Case Studies of Women Farmers from 7 States of India.

Documenting Efforts and Plan Ahead of "Agroecology Measures in Rural Areas" for and with Women Farmers.

Incorporating Disaster and Climate Risk in Women-led Campaign for Empowerment and Gender Equality.



Electricity Usage Trend and Hidden Needs in Indian Rural Sector Project.

Supporting teachers for building safety against COVID-19.

Case of Ahmedabad City.



Situational Analysis of Women and Children in Char Areas, Brahmaputra, Assam.

2017

2019

2021

2018

Development of 3 years action plan with women leaders for setting up Community Resource Centre (at Leh and Ganderbal, Jammu and Kashmir and South Sikkim, Sikkim).

Documentation of 'Bharat Darshan' - 8 exposure visits by 196 girls and women as peace building and



better local economic connection of women from Jammu & Kashmir.

Celebration of "World Toilet Day" with Rural Women of Jaipur and Dungarpur, Rajasthan.

Community Survey (Officials from Government, Civil Society, and Private Sector on "Clean Air")

Exposure Visit of Women Leaders from Rajasthan on Women-led Organisation Management.

AMCDRR 2018 Gender and DRR Report with UNFPA and CA.

2020

Training and Capacity Building of 2100 Women Farmers for Sustainable Cotton Producing Practices.

Documenting response to COVID-19 pandemic by women driven businesses.

India Agriculture Scoping Study.

Impact of COVID-19 and Lockdown on 300 Women in Informal Business.

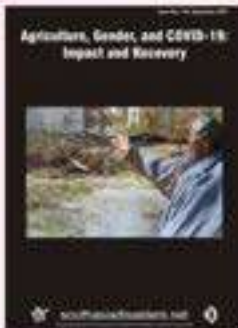
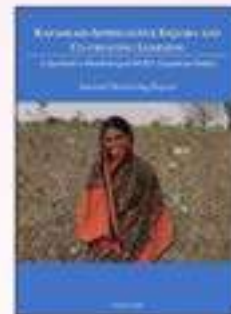




Publication on Learning and Understanding Intersectionality of Women led Disaster Preparedness and Resilience.



Sustainable Cotton: Women Farmers and Climate Smart Cotton Farming (Process Document) with 2100 women farmers.



Policy, gender, and governance during double disasters in Sri Lanka with Duryog Nivaran (DN), supported by Asia Foundation.

2022

2022

Training on Women's Leadership in Disaster Preparedness of 130 Women from Maharashtra.

Community Learning and Business-Resource Centre: Women Led Livelihood Development in Ladakh.

Support quantitative and systematic data collection for agriculture and climate change information services for 4000 vulnerable women farmers in 8 districts of Gujarat.

Appreciative inquiry of women farmers to strengthen adaptation practices with 96,855 women farmers in 3 States of India.

Conduct a National Training Programme on Intersectionality, Gender, and DRR for over 200 participants from local authorities and NGOs.

Study of 7 women led enterprises with focus on impact, response and recovery from the pandemic.



Thematic Areas – Women’s Leadership in DRR

AIDMI and Priorities of Action of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

Priority 1 Understanding Disaster Risk	Priority 2 Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk	Priority 3 Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience	Priority 4 Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response, and to Build Back Better in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Role in Peace and Security • Programmes for and with Women • Enhancing Women’s voice by engaging Men and Boys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in Local Actions • Role of Active Young Girls • Governance and Local Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of SDGs, NDCs and SFDRR • Education, Health and Social Protection Services • Ownership and control of physical and financial assets – Land, Housing, Finance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Economic Empowerment • Making Humanitarian Action Flexible • Removing constraints for more and better jobs for young girls



Knowledge Products



This is neither a book, nor a report, not even a reference document or an edited collection, and yet this is an effort to offer early, as-in-formation record of ideas and actions about intersectionality and gender in South Asia.

What matters even more is not the structure but insights, not the outline but reflection, and not the coherence but collaboration in making these ideas available for use by activists, scholars, postgraduate students, policy makers, and all practitioners interested in more just and inclusive disaster risk reduction.

Domination of this or that knowledge framework is avoided, so is domination of this or that policies or practices in this publication.

The effort is to not offer a universal or standard understanding of gender and intersectionality but encourage unique and diverse insights and actions of different individuals, institutions, and environments mainly from South Asia.

Please keep in mind while reading the above.

Key Partners

International and UN Organisations:

Government Organisations:

Non-governmental Organisations:

Universities:

Networks:

