

The Road to Preparedness: Implementing Anticipatory Actions in a World of Climate Change



Co-located hazards in Gujarat. Photo credit: AIDMI.

Extreme climate changes are emerging as a defining challenge of our era, altering ecosystems and disrupting livelihoods across the globe. On January 24, 2025, experts from diverse fields came together for a virtual roundtable hosted by All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) and Institute of Development Studies (IDS) to address the unpredictable nature of modern weather patterns and explore strategies for resilience. The event spotlighted the compounded impacts on impoverished communities and underscored the need for tailored, grassroots solutions informed by data and local realities. Inspired by the special issue of [Southasiadisasters.net](https://southasiadisasters.net) produced by the panel members themselves, the discussion explored **Climate Extremes: Pathways for Preparedness and Anticipatory Action**.

As the effects of climate change become more severe, traditional patterns and historical weather data are proving increasingly unreliable. Regions once defined by aridity are now grappling with floods, while areas traditionally accustomed to rainfall face prolonged droughts. This erratic nature of climate phenomena complicates planning and heightens vulnerability, especially in resource-constrained areas. Experts stressed that reliance on historical context is no longer sufficient to anticipate the trajectory of future climate events.

Impoverished communities, disproportionately affected by these climate extremes, often find themselves in a precarious cycle of coping rather than adapting. These populations face significant barriers, including limited infrastructure, inadequate access to information, and insufficient financial resources, which hinder their ability to implement long-term adaptation strategies. The roundtable discussions highlighted how this systemic inequality exacerbates the impacts of climate unpredictability, leaving millions at the mercy of these increasingly frequent and severe weather events.

Grassroots preparedness emerged as a central theme of the discussion. Participants emphasized the importance of leveraging localized data to develop predictive models and early warning systems tailored to specific community needs. Such measures, rooted in a deep understanding of local contexts, enable communities to better anticipate and mitigate risks. Additionally, panelists called for empowering local actors through education and training, fostering resilience that originates within the communities most affected.

The need for innovative, inclusive, and scalable solutions was repeatedly underscored. Collaborative efforts that integrate government policies, private sector investments, and

community-driven initiatives are critical to addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by climate extremes. Examples of effective interventions discussed during the roundtable included shaded marketplaces to combat urban heat, community cooling centers, and the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices in rural areas. These solutions, while addressing immediate concerns, also contribute to broader, long-term resilience.

Participants also stressed the urgency of moving beyond conventional approaches to adaptation. Transformative strategies, such as nature-restoring solutions, were proposed as a means to address the root causes of climate challenges while building resilience. Urban greening initiatives, coastal mangrove restoration, and sustainable water management systems were identified as potential game-changers in creating environments capable of withstanding climate shocks. Such approaches not only mitigate risks but also enhance biodiversity, improve air quality, and support local economies.

The roundtable concluded with a resounding call for integrated, adaptive, and forward-thinking solutions to combat the growing risks of climate extremes. As panelists emphasized, the complexity of the challenges requires a multifaceted response that prioritizes equity, inclusivity, and sustainability. By embracing data-driven insights and fostering partnerships across sectors, the global community can accelerate progress toward a resilient and sustainable future. These efforts are not just about surviving in the face of climate adversity but about thriving despite it. The insights from this discussion offer a roadmap for action, charting a path toward a more adaptive and equitable world.

To watch the full roundtable discussion, visit the [YouTube link](#).

** Panel members: Shilpi Srivastava, IDS; Akhil Srivastava, IMD; Chaithra ST, IITB; Megha Sheth, IDS; and Mihir R. Bhatt, AIDMI.*