

Roundtable on “Ending Gender-Based Violence in Disaster Risks and Climate Resilience by 2030”

Tuesday, March 10, 2026 | 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM IST

Meeting Summary

Recap

The virtual roundtable on “Ending Gender-Based Violence in Disaster Risks and Climate Resilience by 2030” brought together policymakers, disaster management authorities, researchers, and practitioners to discuss how gender-based violence (GBV) intensifies during disasters and climate stress. The event coincided with **International Women’s Day** and marked the launch of the special issue of [Southasiadisasters.net](https://southasiadisasters.net) on Ending Gender-Based Violence in Disaster Risks and Climate Resilience by 2030.

Over 100 participants from government institutions, civil society organisations, academic institutions, and international agencies joined the discussion. The session highlighted that disasters — including floods, cyclones, extreme heat, displacement, and health crises — often magnify existing gender inequalities and expose women and girls to increased risks of violence. Speakers emphasised that GBV should be recognised as a core disaster risk, requiring systematic integration into disaster risk reduction (DRR), climate adaptation, and humanitarian response systems.

The roundtable was moderated by **Sushma Modi (World Bank)** and featured presentations from **Rita Bansal (National Disaster Management Authority, India)**, **Sujata Saunik (Former Chief Secretary, Government of Maharashtra)**, and **Mihir R. Bhatt (All India Disaster Mitigation Institute)**. The discussion examined policy frameworks, field experiences, and practical pathways to embed protection-centred approaches within disaster governance systems.

1. Gender-Based Violence as a Disaster Risk

Sushma Modi opened the session by emphasising the importance of recognising GBV as an integral issue within disaster risk reduction. She highlighted that disasters often weaken institutional protections and disrupt social systems, creating conditions where violence against women and girls can increase.

The roundtable aimed to examine how disaster management institutions can better integrate gender perspectives into preparedness, response, and recovery planning. Participants were encouraged to share questions through the chat to ensure an interactive discussion.

2. Policy Perspectives from the National Level

Rita Bansal from the **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)** discussed the need to strengthen gender-responsive disaster policies and operational guidelines.

She highlighted that disasters and climate stress often increase the risk of violence due to displacement, overcrowded shelters, and disruptions in livelihoods and social protection systems. Rita emphasised the importance of training disaster response teams, including **NDRF, SDRF, and Aapda Mitras**, to recognise and respond to GBV risks.

She also underscored the importance of **gender-inclusive shelters**, psychosocial support systems, and evidence-based research to better understand GBV risks before, during, and after disasters. Increasing women’s participation in disaster response teams was identified as a critical step toward strengthening protection systems.

3. State-Level Experience: Lessons from Maharashtra

Sujata Saunik shared insights from her experience in disaster management in Maharashtra. She highlighted the importance of embedding gender perspectives within state-level disaster planning and risk assessments.

She discussed how disasters often increase women’s vulnerability due to unsafe shelters, lack of sanitation facilities, and the additional burden of unpaid care responsibilities. Sujata emphasised the role of the

Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) guidelines supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in ensuring that relief camps include provisions for women's health and safety.

She also stressed the need for stronger coordination between disaster management authorities, women and child development departments, and local administrations to ensure that gender-sensitive policies are effectively implemented during crises.

4. Community Perspectives and Prevention Approaches

Mihir R. Bhatt highlighted the importance of listening to women and affected communities when designing disaster policies. He noted that GBV prevention must be embedded in everyday governance and not treated as a secondary issue during emergencies.

He suggested several practical approaches to reduce GBV risks in disaster contexts:

- Integrating GBV awareness and prevention into **school safety programmes**
- Ensuring **women's livelihoods and economic security**, including protection of women's enterprises during climate stresses such as extreme heat
- Strengthening **community-based organisations and women-led networks**
- Expanding year-round awareness efforts beyond short campaigns

Mihir R. Bhatt emphasised that ending GBV in disasters by 2030 requires sustained commitment from governments, civil society, and international organisations.

5. Questions and Reflections from Participants

The Q&A session highlighted several important issues raised by participants from India and internationally.

Participants asked about the **implementation gap between national policies and local-level practices**, noting that gender-sensitive policies often weaken during disaster response. Questions were also raised regarding:

- Awareness of GBV prevention policies in **rural and panchayat-level governance**
- Ensuring **Sphere standards** in temporary shelters and safety centres
- Monitoring how gender-sensitive policies are implemented during disasters
- Integrating **behavioural and psychosocial approaches** to prevent violence during crises
- Strengthening collaboration between **NGOs, governments, and local administrations**

Participants also emphasised the need for **more research on GBV risks in disaster shelters** and greater international knowledge exchange on gender-responsive disaster risk reduction.

6. Concluding Reflections: Way Forward

In his concluding remarks, Mihir R. Bhatt emphasised that gender-based violence during disasters is **predictable and preventable**. He noted that effective prevention requires integrating protection into disaster risk governance rather than treating GBV solely as a humanitarian or social issue.

The roundtable reinforced the need to strengthen collaboration between disaster management institutions, gender and protection systems, and local communities. Participants agreed that achieving the goal of ending GBV in disasters by **2030** requires sustained policy attention, institutional coordination, and community engagement.

The discussion identified several actions moving forward:

1. Strengthen integration of **GBV prevention in disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation policies**
2. Expand training of **disaster responders on gender and protection issues**
3. Improve coordination between **disaster management authorities and women's departments**
4. Promote women's leadership and participation in disaster governance
5. Strengthen awareness, research, and monitoring systems to track GBV risks during disasters

AIDMI will continue to advance this agenda through **research, policy dialogue, and the ongoing campaign to end gender-based violence in disaster risks and climate resilience by 2030**.