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POLICY BRIEF

Climate-related Disaster Adaptation Policy in Bangladesh Through a Gender Lens

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Climate change has emerged as the most pressing issue of our time and one of the greatest risks to humanity. Because of its potential to worsen many of the present issues and risks already being faced in some countries, such as infectious illness, terrorism, and conflict over finite resources, climate change is also referred to as a "threat multiplier". It has the potential to exacerbate insecurity, cause displacement and migration, exacerbate existing conflicts, and jeopardize global security (IISD, 2015).



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Climate Change Has a Greater Impact on Women

The truth is, climate change is not gender neutral. It may affect all human being but it magnifies the existing inequalities while reinforcing the disparity between women and men in their vulnerability and capability to cope with climate change (UNDP, 2007; Mitchell et al., 2007). However, as the majority of the world's poor, women are the most vulnerable to the effects of

climate change (WEDO, 2007) and the impact disproportionately damaged their livelihoods and security. Women are also frequently depicted as victims of the climate catastrophe, unable to participate in negotiations or strategic project planning, and as potential contributors to climate change solutions, and therefore to human security (Njuki, Parkins, and Kaler 2016; World Bank 2009).

The Incomplete List of Women's Roles

Women's social placement frequently implies that the duties they are expected to perform are often supportive and reproductive in nature. Despite having an essential part in agricultural production and activities that are critical to long-term livelihoods and national economies, their contributions are typically less visible and recognized than men's. In most cases, women are expected to shoulder the majority of the responsibility for their families' survival, especially in impoverished rural communities. Moreover, women who work for a living often earn less than men, making them more vulnerable to changes in their workplace caused by external variables such as climate change (Zahan Tanny & Wakilur Rahman, 2017). Climate change and natural disasters, on the other hand, may give women with a unique opportunity to confront and modify their gendered standing in society, as Enarson (2000) and O'Brien (2007) have pointed out. Women have shown a willingness and ability to participate actively in traditionally 'male' disaster response jobs.



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Bangladesh As One of The Most Climate-Vulnerable Countries

Due to its geophysical location, hydrological influence of the monsoons and regional water flow patterns, low-level resilience of the affected people in terms of technical and financial capacity, and lack of proper arrangement and implementation of policy and institutions to address the challenges, Bangladesh faces significant impacts and vulnerabilities from climate-related hazards (Rahman et al., 2008). More than 150 million people in Bangladesh faces a number of challenges including environmental hazards, socio-political conflicts, development crisis, and effects of climate change. The country's vulnerability stems from difficulties related to factors such as access to reliable drinking water, insufficient dam capacity, insufficient sanitation infrastructure (e.g., drainage) and service delivery, insufficient medical staff, growing urbanization, and inadequate transport infrastructure such as paved roads (The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited, 2014; ND-GAIN, 2015).

Several studies indicated that following the 1991 cyclone and flood catastrophes, women aged 20 to 44 died at a rate of 71 per 1000, compared to 15 per 1000 for men, despite the fact that the current research do not take into account the gender element of the consequences. Even if a cyclone warning is provided, many women die while waiting for relatives to return home and accompany them to a safe location during a cyclone. According to studies performed by the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS), 25-30% of women in the affected districts died as a result of the devastating hurricane of 1970. (Dankelman, I. E. M., 2008).

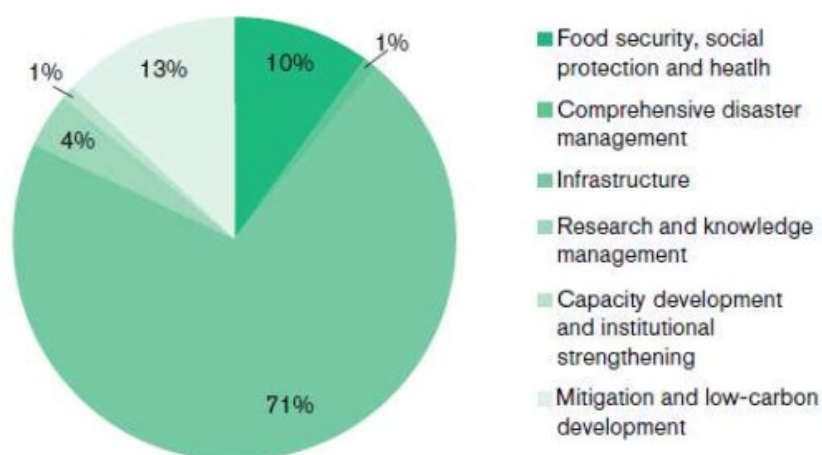
Bangladesh As One of The First Countries to Prepare NAPA

Bangladesh was one of the first countries to prepare National Adaptation Programs of Action (NAPA) under the Ministry of Environment and Forests, despite its susceptibility. The government has also established particular climate change-focused institutions and funding, such as the Climate Change Unit and the Climate Trust Fund, as well as a number of high-level committees with specific functions to assist with adaptation (Zamudio, A. N. and Parry, J (2016). Bangladesh joined the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on June 9, 1992, ratified it on April 15, 1994, and ratified the Kyoto Protocol on October 22, 2001,

as well as being a member of the G-77 and China. Civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as the commercial sector and development partners, are all working to mitigate the effects of climate change in Bangladesh. Hence, the country is a non-Annex I Party to the Kyoto Protocol and this implies that it is not constrained by any specific greenhouse gas emission targets.

BCCSAP: Policy Limitations and Challenges in the Face of Climate Disasters

Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) is the government's most recent policy statement addressing both adaptation and mitigation for the coming decade, which includes Vision 2021 and the objective of entirely eliminating poverty by 2021. It



proposes 44 medium- to long-term action plans based on six pillars (MOEF, 2009). The food security, social protection, and health pillar, which attempts to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable populations, especially women and children, is the only pillar that addresses women's vulnerability. It focuses on the group's requirements for food security, safe housing, work, and essential services, such as health care.

Figure 1: BCCTF spending per BCCSAP theme (Pervin and Moin, 2014)

Figure 1 shows how the Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF) invests various projects arranged around the BCCSAP themes. Infrastructure receives the most funding (71%), followed by mitigation and low-carbon development (13%), food security, social protection, and

health (10%), research and knowledge management (4%), capacity development and institutional strengthening (1%), and comprehensive disaster management (1%) (Pervin and Moin, 2014). Through its Community Climate Change Project, the BCCTF also provides money to NGOs to develop community-driven climate resilience measures (CCCP). Neither fund, however, appears to have concentrated on funding projects that benefit Bangladesh's most vulnerable regions and people (Khan, Haque, & Rouf, 2013). Furthermore, the challenges remain in effectively implementing policies and ensuring that lessons are learned, acted on in a timely manner, implementing transparency and effectiveness, and remaining a work-in-progress to make changes in action prioritization when new knowledge emerges (Huq, S and Rabbani, G) (2011). This is especially true now that a growing number of efforts appear to recognize the importance of prioritizing the most vulnerable, such as the poorest and women. Through a gradual process of ensuring that adaptation activity is pro-poor and gender-sensitive, which is essential for the country's development goals to be achieved (Zamudio, A. N. and Parry, J. 2016).

Policy Recommendations

Bangladesh has shared lessons learnt from the country's case study on human security, gender, and climate change, as well as opportunities for improvement. To begin, it is critical to identify the role of stakeholders in adaptation processes, such as other ministries, local governments, NGOs, and the private sector, while building institutional capacities and reallocating funds for vulnerable regions and populations, particularly women (Zamudio, A. N. and Parry, J. 2016).

Second, actions and strategies must be established to accomplish a pro-poor and gender sensitive implementation, monitoring, and evaluation design. Women's capacity development and catastrophe management should be prioritized. As a result, gender-disaggregated data on the community's most marginalized and vulnerable members must be collected and used to impact relief, rehabilitation, and disaster mitigation efforts.

Then, as part of their resilience development, women's active participation in catastrophe anticipation, early warning, and prevention must be implemented, along with women's

empowerment through capacity-building before, during, and after climate-related disasters. This encourages policies that build on and expand from women's experiences, knowledge, and coping abilities, as well as ensuring that women's needs are considered in livelihood adaptation measures.

Finally, rather than signing international agreements and protocols, the government should take greenhouse gas emission targets seriously and specifically, while also recognizing the importance of educating society and encouraging more women's participation in negotiations and strategic project planning.

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