Gendered impacts of climate change, environmental degradation and disaster risk within Asia and the Pacific

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Gender and Climate Change: The Global Policy Framework

- The following international frameworks call nations to increase women's participation and leadership in climate change and disaster risk reduction (DRR) platforms:
 - The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA)
 - The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) 2015–2030
 - the Paris Agreement on Climate Change
 - the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- The theme of the 66th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 66) is
 - "Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction (DRR) policies and programs."

Climate change impacts are not gender neutral



Gender-differentiated impacts of climate change on women

Source: World Bank & FAO (2017)



- Unpaid work burden (e.g., water and fuel collection time)
- Women's lack of decisionmaking power
- Women's responsibility care for children and elderly
- Women's responsibility care for livestock and household asset
- Women's lack of life skills (e.g., swimming, tree climbing)
- Long clothes and hair, lack of mobility, lack of access to information

Pre-existing gender differences

- Women's poverty and lack of asset and land ownership
- Women's sub-ordinate status in the society
- Unrecognition of women's contribution to agriculture and household production
- Intra-household discrimination of resource and food allocation
- Lack of access to education
- Gender wage gap
- Lack of access and utilization of healthcare
- Lack of access to mobile phone, information, training





Women's sexual & reproductive health



- Climate change induced food insecurity causes malnutrition for mothers and children.
- Climate change increases barriers for meeting women's and girl's sexual and reproductive health needs.
- Access to contraception is disrupted in the aftermath of a natural disaster leading to a higher rate of unplanned pregnancies.
- Lack of or no access to healthcare facilities after a natural disaster leads to maternal and neonatal birth outcomes (e.g., mortality, low birthweight).
- Climate change induced financial hardships are linked to the increased incidence of forced and early marriage for girls.



Gender-based violence

- Domestic and sexual violence against women increases (Rai et al., 2020) due to
 - disaster-induced stress
 - alcohol abuse
 - the (temporary) breakdown of law and order
 - breakdown of the formal and informal support system
- Women experience rape, sexual abuse and assaults during transit to and in makeshift shelters/camps
- Demand for dowry (a transfer of parental property, money, gift) increases in India after weather shocks
- A 1 SD fluctuation of rainfall below its long-term mean results in a 7.8% rise in dowry deaths and a 4.4% increase in domestic violence in India (Sekhri & Storeygard 2014).
 - The estimates are lower bounds of the true effects

Policy Recommendations

- Gender inclusive and responsive disaster risk reduction programs
 - Gender specific disaster preparedness training programs
 - Development, testing and implementation of gender specific damage and need assessment tools
- Gender inclusive social safety net programs
 - Include gender considerations in disaster relief and recovery programs
 - Design programs to reduce women and girls vulnerability in the wake of disasters

• Gender mainstreaming in climate change adaptation programs

- Sex-disaggregated data collection
- Research to understand gender gaps and gender specific barriers in different cultural contexts

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