

**What are good examples of lessons learned and best practices in prioritizing/incorporating gender in the process to formulate and implement national adaptation plans in your country or constituency?**

Sharing a civil society's perspective, our experiences at the Ground Zero, we put forth our experiences, green practices and our views

India Water Foundation, a national NGO & think-tank designated as a Knowledge Partner of Meghalaya Basin Development Authority (MBDA) of the Government of Meghalaya, a North- Eastern State of India to implement Integrated Basin Development Livelihood Programme (IBDLP) in 2011 and integrate various SDGs with Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (goal 5). Keeping SDG 6 (Water) as the key socio-economic connector to build 'Water infrastructure' which served instrumental to bridge the gap between the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development.

Taking the case of Meghalaya, endowed with unique status under Constitution of India under 6th schedule, most of the administration is within local community and hence citizens were re-conceptualized as active "partners" and not as passive "beneficiaries". Women were seen increasingly involved in income-generating activities, and adaptation strategies enabled their socio-economic empowerment. How gender issues are taken into adaptation framework, it is possible to seek references to 'equality, social inclusion, participatory and inclusive adaptation decision-making processes' under the IBDLP program.

There existed a sense of Empowerment where Women were engaged in agribusiness, self-help groups to diversify activities alongside men. With focus on Competence & Capacity building for entrepreneurial community, prior focus was laid on Vocational training, up-gradation of semi-skill workers to upgrade skills and undertake profitable activities. For instance, Missions like Tourism and Sericulture provided considerable employment and economic returns, facilitated local market interventions to earn for their cultural produce without dislodging them from their homesteads whereas initiatives like 'Women Economic Empowerment Scheme' promoted self-employment prospects.

Emphasizing to promote livelihoods through enterprise among women rather than being dependent on direct subsidies and grants, entrepreneurial capability was the prime focus. Under the Village Energy Committee (Energy Mission), arrangement for continuous availability of biomass, collection of payments from users and requisite Motivation amongst the villagers ensured a big step towards optimising energy efficiency and committee leadership. By Promoting eco-friendly steps, efforts were enhanced to improve quality of life of women by providing clean cooking fuel (Gasifier plant) by shifting from wood to cleaner fuel i.e. biogas for cooking. Provision of environmental services like better access to water or monitor of water resources were entrusted to the local women so as to inspire them to take up qualitative access, availability at an affordable cost. Women acted as key implementers along Mission Green/Organic where sustainable green cover, catchment protection and carbon sequestration was possible due to adoption of green technologies, green practices and intense afforestation drives. Undertaking a gender-balanced and inclusive stakeholder engagement through Social Impact Assessment (SIA) with women being an important participant were carried on thematic areas of Land Acquisition, natural resource management, requisite compensatory afforestation were undertaken to understand the sustainability of the project viz its socio-economic objectives. We expect that such gender analysis must be incorporated in the NAPs and the requisite policies.

Structural barriers that limit women's access to land, technology, financial services, education and skills make them more defenseless as compared to men, thereby limiting their coping capacity in after situations. Attempts were taken to convert Non-functional resources to Functional resources through 'Value-added entrepreneurship'. Knowledge exchange was also acknowledged through creative and innovative tools of information via stakeholder dialogue and public outreach programs. This prepared the community for in-situ balanced & inclusive regional development.

Signifying the importance of Water as a socio-economic connector, women were made a part of restoration of man-made wetlands and Climate change coping strategies (mitigating and adaptive measures) like Community Water Jalkunds (nearly 1000), Spring-sheds revival and restoring the Water-Land-Biomass balance augmented appropriate natural resources planning and management which improved water use efficiency by 50 %. We also scaled the project to another North-Eastern state of India Sikkim (Comprehensive Water Resource Plan from Source to Tap) where the core thrust was based on creating an inclusive water ecosystem for better growth and sustainable development.

With a new focus on Disaster Risk Reduction and the mandate to protect community from the vagaries of climate change, we tried addressing the vulnerabilities among women. We influenced building climate resilient infrastructure in Meghalaya (bamboo house), Integrated Water Sheds for water management & flood control, proposed community water reservoirs and storm water management.

Currently, the success of model with special focus on SDGs is being tailored in the Aspirational Districts of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand (Eco Routes, supported by NCSTC, Ministry of Science and Technology) in the Aspirational Districts of Uttar Pradesh & Uttarakhand as a part of converging 6 indicators of health & nutrition, education, agriculture & water resources, skill development, basic infrastructure and financial inclusion. Therefore, we believe policy planners and development partners should adapt gender considerations across sectors, agriculture, health, water and sanitation, forestry, energy and infrastructure, and at all levels including planning, financing and implementation of climate responses to understand the gender dynamics in NAP-related institutional arrangements. As a part of soft solution, we are focusing on sensitizing, incentivizing and galvanizing the people at Pan-India level by raising awareness on water, climate change and environment sectors.

**In your experience, what are remaining gaps related to incorporating gender considerations into adaptation planning and implementation?**

Climate change is the most pressing development challenge that has the potential to undo decades of development and jeopardize gains made in key development sectors such as food security, access to health, and education. Moreover, climate change has a disproportionate impact on women because of gender differentiated roles at household and community level. Socio-economic and political marginalisation makes women structurally more vulnerable. In developing economies, women are rendered more dependent on natural resources that are threatened by environmental change, as they are considered primarily responsible for securing water, food, and fuel for cooking and heating. Such gaps need to be identified and solutions to address these must be implemented.

Our experience says that different states face similar challenges of gender inclusion where adaptation actors are different. Access to water, sanitation, and hygiene for women is a common issue highlighted preventing women working for long duration. It is also difficult to introduce sociocultural issues in the rural communities. The big scenario faced is bringing positive socio-cultural change while shedding traditional mindset by overcoming approvals or disapproval from diverse cultures, opinions and

mindset of the people. To meet gender-related adaptation goals requires sustained actions from multiple actors and institutions and promising efforts to make woman as ‘Catalyst of Change’.

### **How can gender best be incorporated into adaptation action?**

Apart from sharing our experiences and best practices, we would like to put forward ‘Entry points’ for mainstreaming gender in NAPs

-Climate change does not impact everyone in a community or country in the same way. A good starting point for integrating gender is ‘commitment’ towards a gender-responsiveness by making Women as Catalyst of Empowerment and secondly climate action will not be sustainable, without the careful consideration of gender issues.

- Gender equality is a fundamental human right and integral to all dimensions of inclusive and sustainable development. Engagement with women activists to capture diverse perspectives and ensure that participation and influence in decision making are gender-balanced. Approaches to gender integration must focus on respecting the differences between women and men in order to be inclusive and address social norms that present barriers to gender equality.

--Identify existing capacities and gaps with adaptation actors requiring awareness of gender issues, skills in gender-responsive knowledge of methods and tools. This measure must be collaborated with investments in Capacity Building to reverse the challenges related to gender and climate change adaptation.

-Civil Societies must be given opportunities as Development partners to support country governments in filling capacity gaps, creating opportunities for participation, dialogue among gender to mainstream capacity of stakeholders and social inclusion perspective. Real life assessments of gender at the grass root level in addressing gender norms, challenges in the society can be bridged with the help of the fourth pillars of governance.

-Strengthen Participatory governance at the Ground Zero with women spearheading decisive, financial decisions. Improve gender balance by addressing the challenges faced included absence of entrepreneurship culture, orthodox attitudes & mindsets, lack of awareness making a way for mainstream, equal and inclusive society.

-It’s time to understand women as essential stakeholders and harness their knowledge and potential to help them effectively fight climate change vagaries. Participation, mobilization and empowerment, shall benefit a “triple dividend” of gender equality, empowerment and inclusion in a long term.

-Incorporating gender components in State-level Climate Change Action Plans (SAPCCs)- Quantitative and qualitative outcomes at the local level must be incorporated at the national level priorities where sharing information, knowledge and best practices on gender at the grass root level can help reveal deprivations and inequalities to a large extent.

In conclusion, more efforts are required for consistent and deeper integration of gender equality to identify strengths and weaknesses which requires commitment by NAP stakeholders for a more nuanced understanding of gender and climate change linkages. Seeing through gender lens, Gender balance must be enveloped at all levels of the decision-making and action process in every country’s NAPs.

**What are useful sources relevant to this topic?**

<https://www.orfonline.org/research/making-climate-action-count-mainstreaming-gender-in-climate-action-to-accelerate-climate-compatible-development-45408/>

<https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/INDIA%20SECOND%20BUR%20High%20Res.pdf>

<http://unsdn.org/2016/08/29/economic-inclusion-and-environmental-sustainability-case-study-meghalaya/>

[The Inspirational Cycle of Aspirational Indicators: What does this really mean?](#) Published article in MEDC, July issue, 2019

[http://www.in.undp.org/content/india/en/home/library/democratic\\_governance/SSS-delivery-good-practices-2015.html](http://www.in.undp.org/content/india/en/home/library/democratic_governance/SSS-delivery-good-practices-2015.html) (Integrated Basin Development Livelihood Programme: Fostering a spirit of entrepreneurship in Meghalaya)