

BANGLADESH

Women's Sexual & Reproductive
Health and Rights (SRHR)
and Climate Change:
What Is the Connection?

SCOPING STUDY

Building New Constituencies for Women's
Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR):
Climate Change and SRHR



KHAN FOUNDATION

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centre for women



A Scoping Study

Women's Sexual & Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and Climate Change: What is the Connection?

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Abdul Momen Khan Memorial Foundation (Khan Foundation)
Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW)

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Abdul Momen Khan Memorial Foundation (Khan Foundation)

Momenbagh, Dhaka 1217, Bangladesh

Tel: +880 2 9330323

Fax: +880 2 9331589

Email: info@khan-foundation.org

Website: www.khan-foundation.org

Facebook: Khan Foundation

Twitter: @Khan_Foundation

Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW)

1 & 2 Jalan Scott, Brickfields

50470 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Tel: (603) 2273 9913/9914

Fax: (603) 2273 9916

Email: arrow@arrow.org.my

Website: www.arrow.org.my

Facebook: The Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW)

Twitter: @ARROW_Women

YouTube: [youtube.com/user/ARROWomen](https://www.youtube.com/user/ARROWomen)

Production Team:

Writer: Nausheen Khan

Contributors: Rokhsana Khondker, Dr. Md. Ashraful Islam, Abu Naser, Mahfuza Khan,
Noor Taslima Jahan, Md. Salauddin and Md. Mizanuzzaman

Reviewers: Sunitha Bisan, Joan Castro

Copy Editor:

Layout:

Cover Photo Credit: Md Mustafizur Rahman, Md Mohsin Kabir

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ARROW	Asian Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women
BCCSAP	Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan
BSFYP	Bangladesh Sixth Five Year Plan
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CC	Climate Change
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DC	Deputy Commissioner
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
KF	Khan Foundation
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NEP	National Environment Policy
NHP	National Health Policy
NPDM	National Plan for Disaster Management
NWDP	National Women's Development Policy
KII	Key Informant Interview
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
RR	Reproductive Rights
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UP	Union Parishad
UZ	Upazila Parishad

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of this research is to identify and establish linkages between Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and Climate Change in the context of Bangladesh, given the urgent need to understand and establish how gender, along with socio-demographic factors of age, wealth and class impact the ways in which climate change is manifested. The scoping study relied on existing literature on gender and climate change issues, survey of rural women from flood-prone, disaster-prone and coastal communities, key informant interviews with members of the health, water and sanitation and disaster management standing committees at different tiers of local government, focus group discussions with the local community, key discussions with climate change experts and review of national policies and legislation on women, health and climate change.

Key findings reveal that there is significant inter-linkage between Climate Change and SRHR. It is observed that the social and political context for women in Bangladesh, such as socio-cultural norms and limited access of women to decision-making increases their exposure and vulnerability to climate change, especially during and post climate change related disasters. Insecure environments in cyclone/flood shelters including overcrowded spaces and lack of privacy exist and there is occurrence of gender-based violence. During and after disasters, gendered impact of climate change is substantial. Women are especially vulnerable due to lack of access to medical care, services, privacy, security and safety as well as hygiene products such as sanitary napkins and contraceptives.

Key recommendations include incorporation of gender perspectives on climate change impacts and ensuring coherence among and implementation of national policies and programmes. The role of women in decision-making process should be recognised as vital in the households and also in the community as well as within respective institutions and committees. Political empowerment of women is found to be essential in achieving resilient communities where women and girls can adapt to climate change to ensure secure livelihoods.

INTRODUCTION

There is growing evidence that climate change is real and it significantly impacts nature and people across the globe.¹ According to the World Disaster Report 2012, Asia accounted for 63.67% of the disaster deaths and 40.73% of the disasters affected globally between 2002 and 2011.² Current research also shows that climate change and gender are linked; women are more susceptible among the vulnerable groups to the adverse effects of climate change. People from developing countries, especially vulnerable groups such as poor, elderly, women, and minorities are the worst sufferers from the adverse effects of climate change.³

Bangladesh has been recognised globally as the most vulnerable to climate change. According to the survey conducted by Maplecroft that looks 42 indicators across 170 countries, Bangladesh is on the top of among 16 countries that are most vulnerable to climate change in the next thirty years.⁴ Ahmed (2012) reinforces that some factors contribute to this vulnerability. For instance, Bangladesh has a very high population density, which is 1045/km² and is the sixth largest densely populated country in the world. It has a very high poverty level with 29% of the population earning less than US\$1 per day and 84% of the population earning less than US\$2 per day while 35% of the population is below poverty line. It is a disaster-prone country and the people are exposed to natural hazards. It primarily has an agrarian economy that is dependent on natural resources.

The climate change impacts that have been observed include temperature extremes, erratic rainfall, increased number of severe flood, increased frequency of cyclone, salinity intrusion and riverbank and coastal erosion.⁵ Bangladesh recently faced devastating floods in the months of August and September 2014 due to several weeks of intense rain. Heavy floods in Bangladesh's northern part affecting more than 3 million people and have left up to half a million homeless. Official reports stated that more than 325,000 people (68,000 families) have been displaced with almost 34,000 homes destroyed and around 200,000 damaged. The situation has been described as the worst flooding since the mega floods in Bangladesh in 2007, when more than 10 million people were affected.⁶

In a society like Bangladesh, women are more susceptible among the vulnerable groups due to gender inequality. Women's and men's roles in the private (households/communities) and public (decision-making) spheres are set in motion by the differential access to social and physical goods and resources. This means that women take on roles as child-bearers,

¹ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), (2007), 'Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, Chapters 1 and 3, IPCC,

https://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/publications_ipcc_fourth_assessment_report_synthesis_report.htm

² International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), (2012), 'World Disasters Report 2012: Focus on forced migration and displacement, IFRC, <http://www.ifrcmedia.org/assets/pages/wdr2012/resources/1216800-WDR-2012-EN-FULL.pdf>

³ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), (2007), 'Climate Change: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability', IPCC Working Group II Report, Chapter 19, IPCC, <http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/wg2/ar4-wg2-chapter19.pdf>

⁴ Maplecroft. (2011). Maplecroft: Climate change vulnerability index 2011. Retrieved from <https://maplecroft.com/about/news/ccvi.html>

⁵ Ahmed, F.R.S. (2012) Climate Change Issues in Bangladesh & Need for Adaptation to Climate Change, Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)

⁶ International Planned Parenthood Foundation (2014), SPRINT Initiative is responding to Bangladesh's flood victims with life-saving services, News Section, <http://www.ippf.org/news/SPRINT-Initiative-responding-Bangladesh-s-flood-victims-life-saving-services>

caregivers whereas men are assumed to be the decision-makers and wage earners.⁷ In flood-prone and disaster-prone areas, during natural hazards and other disasters, critical family planning services are not available for women in need and pregnant women are at risk of death and injury. Due to socio-cultural norms, women are also not taught how to swim which reduces their chance of survival in disasters such as flood.⁸

The design of cyclone shelters is not found to be gender-friendly, as reported by coastal cyclone vulnerable women. After the disaster, risk of sexual violence perpetrated against women increases. Sexual harassment takes place on the way to shelter where they lack gender friendly sanitation facilities.⁹

Even relief efforts do not take into consideration health needs of women. Contraception options as well as other health and hygiene products including sanitary pads are often missing from the disaster relief packages. Miscarriage increases in crowded shelter houses. Also prolonged exposure to filthy water during post disaster period causes severe skin diseases and gynecological problems to women. These are just some examples of the adverse impacts of climate change on women, specifically women's health.¹⁰ The issue of impact of climate change on health, specifically women's sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) is being ignored in the national policy of many developing countries including Bangladesh.

This scoping study aims to inform and influence future policy, research and interventions in the area of gender and SRHR within the context of climate change. This scoping study has availed existing literature on gender and climate change, key discussions with experts in the field of gender and climate change, key informant interviews with government officials in charge of local level adaptation, a survey of rural women living in coastal and flood-prone areas, focus group discussions with community members in climate change affected areas, as well as review of national policies and legislation on women and climate and change.

This study brings to light the linkages between climate change and women's SRHR using Bangladesh as a case study. Two key areas have been identified to assess how women's SRHR are impacted by climate change. These are 1) Infrastructure & Accessibility and 2) Gender Based Violence. The paper concludes with a set of recommendations for policy planners and donor and multilateral organisations that design development programmes to address climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Khan Foundation has been working in the field of democracy, governance, human rights and environment for over two decades. Khan Foundation has climate change mainstreamed throughout their programmes as described: 1) Strengthening of Local Government- Khan Foundation conducts environmental awareness and provides training to Elected Women

⁷ Institute of Development Studies. (2008). Gender and Climate Change: Mapping the Linkages, A Scoping Study on Knowledge and Gaps, http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/sites/bridge.ids.ac.uk/files/reports/Climate_Change_DFIG.pdf

⁸ Röhr, U., (2005), Gender and Climate Change - a Forgotten Issue?, in Tiempo: Climate Change Newsletter, UEA, SEI and IIED, <http://www.tiempocyberclimate.org/newswatch/comment050711.htm>

⁹ Davis, I. et al. (2005), Tsunami, Gender, and Recovery - Special Issue for International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction, South Asia Disasters.net, <http://www.gdnonline.org/resources/tsunami%20-genderandrecovery.pdf>

¹⁰ Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Center for Women (2014), Identifying Opportunities for Action on Climate Change and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Bangladesh, Indonesia, and the Philippines, Arrow Working Papers, <http://www.arrow.org.my/download/Scoping%20Study%20-%20Climate%20Change%20and%20SRHR.pdf>

Representatives (EWR) about climate change adaptation strategies. Our EWRs also assist during climate change related disasters such as floods and cyclones with information gathering, support with medical services, shelter services, food assistance and so on 2) Social Accountability Program- Khan Foundation uses social accountability tools such as citizen monitoring to bring transparency and combat corruption in building and development of post natural disaster shelters and other infrastructure 3) Rural Microcredit Program- Khan Foundation conducts environmental awareness and provides training to microcredit borrowers and women entrepreneurs about climate change adaptation 4) Research and Advocacy - Khan Foundation conducts research in different areas including democracy, governance, human rights, access to justice, climate change and gender issues. It creates an evidence base, which is then used to conduct advocacy across the different tiers of government. It also targets specific policymakers such as Members of the Parliament and Cabinet/Portfolio Ministers to influence policy and legislation. Other stakeholders such as civil society organisations, media, academicians, government officials, law enforcement agencies and international donor community are also included in our advocacy efforts. This scoping study falls under the fourth programme area.

Objectives

The main objective is to build the resilience of communities and empower women and girls to adapt to climate change.

The specific objectives are:

- Identify the gender impact of climate change in relation to SRHR
- Identify the relationship between CC and SRHR and generate evidence base
- Identify the challenges and constraints that emerge in trying to understand the SRHR lens to climate change
- Lobby the policy makers to integrate SRHR into National CC Policy
- Advocate for SRHR services to women and girls during disaster/post-disaster
- Increase awareness and understanding of CC and SRHR issues among of policy makers and general public

This study will create knowledge and awareness on the impact of global climate change on sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) of poor and marginalised people in Bangladesh in an effort to improve SRHR services at the local community level as well as influence climate change policy and women's policy decisions at the national and international levels. It will support continued lobbying efforts and target crucial decision-makers more strategically to ensure that SRHR remains high within the climate change agenda.

With about twenty five years of working at the grassroots level with a wide range of beneficiaries including rural and marginalised communities, government officials, law enforcement agencies and elected representatives, we found that in Bangladesh, there is a lack of awareness and understanding about issues of SRHR among these groups. The link between SRHR and climate change is not yet fully understood among these groups. Even the policymakers have not explored the explicit links in the climate change and women's policies. This study seeks to explore whether this lack of awareness of these issues prevents

the effective delivery of SRHR services and consequently leads to lack of access to SRHR rights.

Khan Foundation's experiences in the area of local government strengthening has also found that there is an absence of initiative and commitment to SRHR issues among the members of the standing committees for instance the health committees, water and sanitation committees and the disaster management committees. Also, the committee members are not aware of their roles and responsibilities. The members of the committees are primarily the local elected representatives and the government officials such as the Health Complex officer, the deputy commissioner of the district and so on. The absence of commitment and lack of knowledge of members prevents the convening of regular meetings, and therefore most of these committees remain inactive or have not yet been formed, especially at the different tiers of local government such as the Upazila level and Union Parishad level.

This study also aims to influence development programme planners and practitioners to strengthen the interventions at the local level that would activate these standing committees and ensure gender specific climate change adaptation methods for resilient communities that empowers women and girls to adapt to climate change.

Methodology

This study was carried out using mixed-method research design, which involves both quantitative and qualitative methods using primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected quantitatively through a survey of 3360 women from coastal communities, flood prone or disaster prone areas using purposive sampling methods to gather their perspectives on and assess their understanding of the issue of climate change and women's sexual and reproductive health and rights in Bangladesh.

To conduct the study, 12 flood and disaster prone districts were identified. These are Chandpur, Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Habiganj Sunamganj, Moulvibazar Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat, Patuakhali, Barguna, Satkhira and Sirajganj. Six out of seven divisions of Bangladesh were covered which include Chittagong, Sylhet, Rangpur, Barisal, Rajshahi and Khulna. The formula for calculation of target area and respondent selection is:

12 Districts X 2 Upazilas (per District) X 2 Union Parishads (per Upazila) X 2 Villages (per Union Parishad) X 35 Respondents (per Village) = 3360 Respondents

The districts, Upazilas, Union Parishads are the different tiers of the local government. The districts, Upazilas, Union Parishads and Villages were chosen purposively based on their characteristics, i.e. vulnerability to climate change. These target areas have been chosen due to their geographical location and their vulnerability to climate change related disasters and hazards. At the last stage, the respondents per village were selected randomly on a household counting basis.

Primary data was also collected qualitatively through key informant interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) in order to better understand the interlinkages between climate change and women's SRHR. These individuals are particularly chosen as they play an

important role in the climate change adaptation plans as well as post disaster recovery efforts including designing of cycle shelters.

Key informant interviews of members of the different standing committees were taken. The three types of standing committees include the Health Committee, the Water and Sanitation Committee and the Disaster Management Committee. A total of 36 Key Informant interviews were taken, 3 per district. From each district, one Upazila was selected and 3 types of interview took place, one with the president/member of the Health Committee, one with the president/member of the Water and Sanitation Committee and one with the president/member of the Disaster Management Committee.

Twelve (12) FGDs were taken, one per district. A total of about 15 participants were present in the FGDs, which consisted of members of the community. Of these participants, at least 4 were women and there were representations from different members of the community such as school teachers, religious leaders, shopkeepers, parents, students, farmer, housewives, and community leaders among others.

Key discussion with experts in the field of gender and climate change also took place. This included communication with Dr Saleemul Huq, who is the Senior Fellow of the Climate Change Group at the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). He is a key contributor of the assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Under secondary research, we gathered data from online and print sources from different newspapers, journals, magazines, and websites on climate change and gender related issues. The sources included web portals, Google, (www.google.com) Climate Change Research in Bangladesh - A Web Portal (<http://ccresearchbangladesh.org>) and Gobeshona-Making Research on Climate Change in Bangladesh More Effective Knowledge Sharing Platform (www.gobeshona.net) using the terms "Climate Change" and "Bangladesh". We have also reviewed different policies, initiatives and legislation that highlight climate change and women's sexual and reproductive health.

Two areas have been identified as key areas to focus on during the study:

1) Infrastructure & Accessibility

In Bangladesh, infrastructure and accessibility play a big role on how women are impacted by climate change. Women suffer more during disasters and are displaced. They are subject to arsenic contaminated water, which can lead to poisoning. The socio-cultural norms limit women's accessibility during times of disaster. Pregnant women are at risk of death and injury during disasters.¹¹

The design of cyclone shelters in Bangladesh is one big factor. These shelters are not gender-disaggregated. They are not found to be women-friendly, as reported by coastal cyclone vulnerable women. Multi-purpose cyclone shelters are generally built on high stilts, deliberately so in a bid to avoid tidal surge. However, the stairs are reportedly steep and

¹¹ Neelormi S., Adri N., & Ahmed A.U.. Gender dimensions of differential health effects of climate change induced water-logging: A case study from coastal Bangladesh. IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science, 2009, Vol 6.

unfriendly for the elderly women, children, disabled women and pregnant women. Almost no cyclone shelter has a ramp to safely carry the disabled persons and pregnant women. Family planning and SRH services and supplies are not just constrained but unavailable during disasters.¹²

2) Focus on sexual and gender based violence

After a natural disaster, women are more likely to become victims of domestic and sexual violence and may avoid using shelters as a result of fear. Psychological stress is likely to be heightened after disasters, particularly where families are displaced and have to live in emergency or transitional housing. Overcrowding, lack of privacy and the collapse of regular routines and livelihood patterns can contribute to anger, frustration and violence, with children and women most vulnerable.¹³

Challenges faced while conducting the study

The primary data that was collected faced some geographical limitations. The target areas have been chosen due to their exposure to climate change disasters and hazards and are in coastal regions as well as disaster and flood prone areas. There was a physical risk involved because of weak infrastructure and harsh weather conditions. We ensured the physical safety of both the interviewers and the respondents while the study was conducted. This was done through Pre Assessment of Survey Environment, When, Where, How, as well as a Field Test.

The political situation of the country was also not ideal during the period the study was undertaken. There was a bit of delay regarding data collection and compilation as a result of the ongoing political crisis in the country and disruptions in travel and communication. We ensured that data was not compromised and we were able to effectively capture the evidence from the field level.

In Bangladesh, it is important to understand the local cultures and the social contexts that exist. Respondent selection and gender balance are important issues to be kept in mind while conducting the survey, focus group discussions as well as the key informant interviews. To address these issues, we provided training on the scoping study - the when, how, whom and why. We also included in our trainings topics such as Timing of the interviews, who is present at the households or in the environments when interviews are being carried out.

Here, it is important to note that when our interviewers went out to the field and asked the questions on the topic of SRHR; very few respondents could understand the exact terms, SRH and SRHR (in Bengali since the survey was completed in the Bengali language). Our interviewers had to carefully explain what these terms entailed and the situations or conditions and only then, they understood what is meant by the questions. This can explain why most literature cites the lack of awareness and knowledge about SRHR and climate change issues.

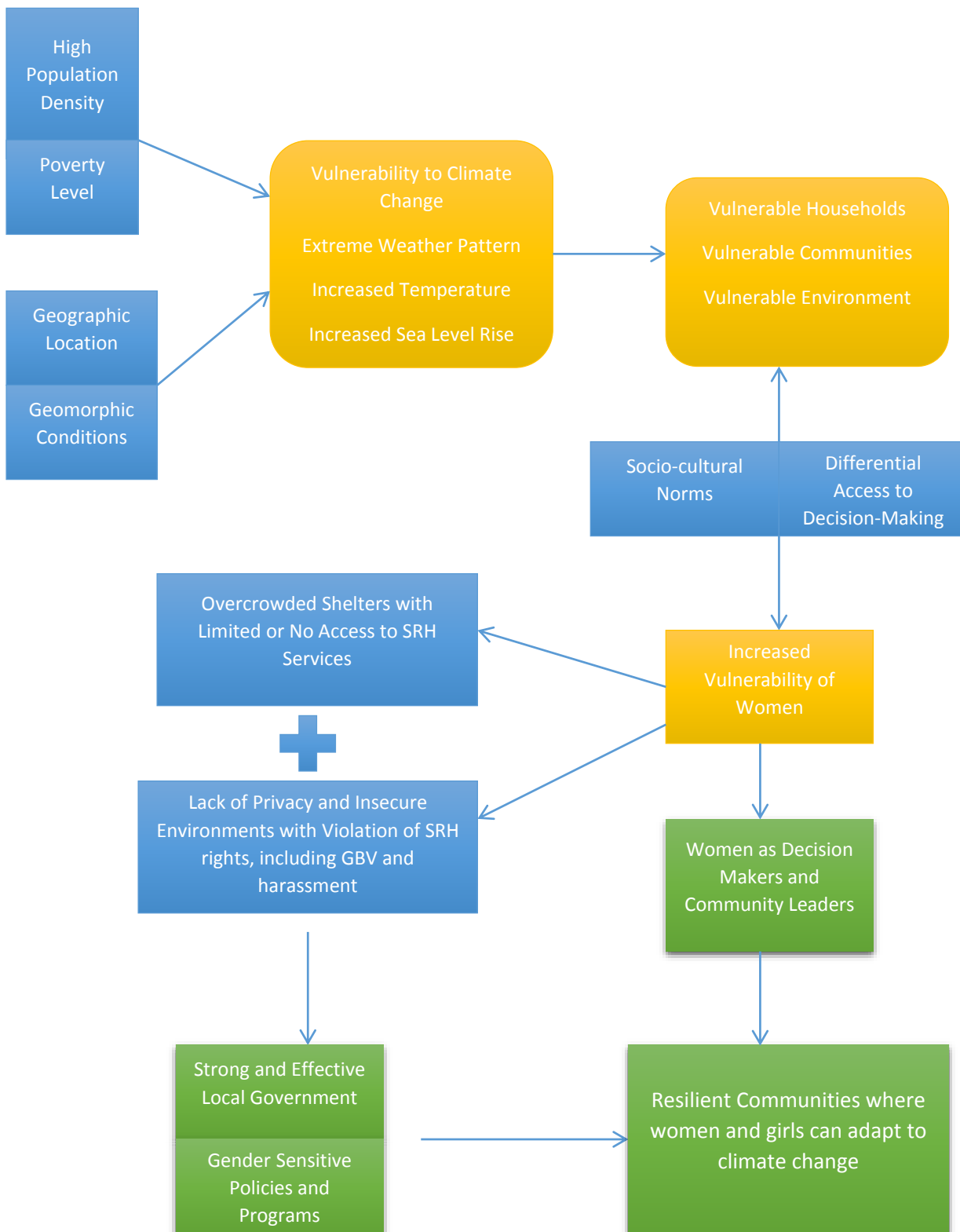
¹² World Health Organization (WHO). (2010). Gender, Climate Change and Health, Draft Discussion Paper, http://www.who.int/globalchange/publications/reports/final_who_gender.pdf

¹³ World Health Organization (WHO). (2010). Gender, Climate Change and Health, Draft Discussion Paper, http://www.who.int/globalchange/publications/reports/final_who_gender.pdf

In this context, it is important to identify that discussions around SRHR are private, stressful, and uncomfortable. The discussions around SRHR are very delicate and they require such treatment by the interviews. Again, it is important to keep in mind the gender issues in climate change and SRHR. Interviewers with experience in these issues were selected to encourage honest and open conversations. An understanding of gender sensitivities as well as SRHR issues was ensured and a willingness to talk about these issues although they are considered to be sensitive subjects. Khan Foundation ensured that the majority of interviewers were women.

UNDERSTANDING THE INTERLINKAGES

Framework for Understanding the Interlinkages: Climate Change and SRHR¹⁴



¹⁴ Khan Foundation has developed this framework based on the findings of the study. In the framework, blue indicates the different factors that have an impact, yellow indicates the problems and vulnerabilities and green indicates the opportunities for change.

Literature Review

Researchers are keen to explore the linkages between gender and climate change as it is slowly emerging as a key policy area. While there is a growing set of evidence on the issue of gendered impact of climate change, it is important to acknowledge that there is a massive information gap on the issue of sexual and reproductive health rights within the context of climate change. There is a lack of hard evidence and studies that explore and establish the critical linkages between SRHR and climate change.

Two areas within the SRHR and climate change context that this research focuses on include the gendered impact of climate change-related disasters and the gendered impact of the aftermath of climate change-related disasters and both quantitative and qualitative data in these areas are severely lacking. Since the effects of climate change hits the poor the hardest, it is essential to identify the urgent and immediate research on countries such as Bangladesh so that we can protect the people in countries most at risk.

As mentioned in the Methodology section, under secondary research, we used a multitude of online and print sources. The online journals and policy briefs were a good source as these looked at the quantitative and qualitative data, case studies, policy analysis and offered recommendations.

Gender inequality is an important factor during climate change-related disasters, which contributes to increased vulnerability of women and girls in disaster situations. Infrastructure and accessibility are important factors to consider when looking at the gender impacts of climate change. According to a report from the World Conservation Union/ Women's Environment and Development Organization (IUCN/WEDO), women and children are 14 times more likely to die than men during disasters (IUCN/WEDO 2007)¹⁵.

Both social and physical factors increase women and girls' vulnerability to climate change. Röhr (2008)¹⁶, focuses on differences in socialisation where girls are not equipped with the same skills as their brothers, such as swimming and tree climbing. Using Bangladesh as a case study, he found that women in Bangladesh did not leave their houses during floods due to cultural constraints on female mobility and those who did were unable to swim in the flood waters.

The increased vulnerability of women and girls in disaster situations as a result of gender inequalities is a global threat, and not limited to Bangladesh. The threat of harassment and violence during or post disasters is a real concern even in developed countries. In a paper entitled, "The Impact on Women's Health of Economic and Climatic Disaster" Parkinson, Duncan and Weiss (2014)¹⁷ found that the impact of climate change-related disaster on

¹⁵ Araujo, A. & Quesada-Aguilar, A., (2007), Gender Equality and Adaptation, USA: Women's Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO)/IUCN, https://www.gdonline.org/resources/IUCN_FactsheetAdaptation.pdf

¹⁶ Röhr, U. (2008), Gender aspects of Climate Induced Conflicts, Environment and Conflict Special Edition Newsletter on "Gender, Environment, Conflict", Germany: Adelphi Research, <http://www.ecc-platform.org/images/stories/newsletter/eccgender07.pdfv>

¹⁷ Parkinson, D., Dunca, A., & Weiss, C. (2014) The Impact on Women's Health of Economic and Climatic Disaster, Australian Women's Health Network (AWHN). Position Paper 2014, http://awhn.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/174_ImpactonWomensHealthofClimaticandEconomicDisaster2014.pdf

Australian women are evident through increased male violence against women after disaster.

In the aftermath of climatic disasters, previous gains in community recognition of domestic violence as a crime seem to dissipate. Empathy for men arises especially in cases where the men took a leading role in disaster/crisis management and this has the effect of silencing the women, especially in cases when the men were suffering or suicidal. The post disaster chaos is particularly dangerous as it poses threats to women's status and equal rights. The understanding of political situations and circumstances is important for actions related to climate change and women's inequalities.

Bartlett (2008)¹⁸ looked at the probable impacts for children of different ages from the increasing risk of storms, flooding, landslides, heat waves, drought and water supply constraints as a result of climate change. He found that adolescent girls report especially high levels of sexual harassment and abuse in the aftermath of disasters and complain of the lack of privacy they encounter in emergency shelters.

This has important implications for Bangladesh where there are 27.7 million adolescents aged 10-19 years – 13.7 million girls and 14 million boys – making up about one fifth of the total population.¹⁹ Therefore in Bangladesh, it is important that adaptations to climate change, in particular preparedness and response plans take into account the disproportionate risks for children.

Davis et al (2005)²⁰ reported that there is a higher probability that women and girls will become victims of domestic and sexual violence during periods of humanitarian crises. This is likely to happen after a disaster, particularly when families have been displaced or forced to move into shelters and are living in overcrowded emergency or transitional housing where they lack privacy. The increase in violence often has some roots in the stress caused by men's loss of control in the period following a disaster, in addition to longer-term unemployment or threatened livelihoods.

This also has severe implications for the Bangladesh context. As mentioned above, high population density increases the burden of provision of adequate cyclone and flood shelters. This means that overcrowding is a common occurrence in the shelters. Additionally, Bangladesh has one of the highest rates of violence against women. In Bangladesh, about 60% of ever-married women of reproductive age report lifetime physical and/or sexual violence perpetrated by their husbands.²¹ This makes women and children more vulnerable to violence in the aftermath of disasters.

There is also significant research being carried out by Bangladeshi researchers on gender and climate change issues in Bangladesh. It is important to identify and acknowledge the

¹⁸ Bartlett, S., (2008) 'Climate Change and Urban Children: Impacts and Implications for Adaptation in Low and Middle Income Countries', International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) Human Settlements Discussion Paper – Climate Change 2, <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/10556IIED.pdf>

¹⁹ UNICEF Bangladesh, Profile on Children, http://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/children_356.htm

²⁰ Davis, I. et al. (2005), Tsunami, Gender, and Recovery - Special Issue for International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction, South Asia Disasters.net, <http://www.gdnonline.org/resources/tsunami%20-genderandrecovery.pdf>

²¹ International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr.b) (2013) From Evidence to Policy: Addressing Gender-Based Violence against Women and Girls in Bangladesh, http://www.icddr.org/what-we-do/publications/doc_download/4057-abstract-

local expertise and experience of Bangladeshi researchers in an effort to guide meaningful and positive responses to climate change in Bangladesh.

Sharmin and Islam (2013)²² argue that social issues play a primary role in assessing the threats to climate change and developing relevant plans and policies. They argue that the links between gender and climate change is still weak due to the focus on scientific and technological factors in assessing the climate change problem. They highlight that there are important gender perspectives in all aspects of climate change. Women make up a large number of the poor in communities that are highly dependent on local natural resources for their livelihood and are disproportionately vulnerable to and affected by climate change.

Sharmin and Islam (2013) also found that women's limited access to resources and decision-making processes increases their vulnerability to climate change. Using case studies from the Khulna region, they reported: "Women in the coastal areas are aware about issuance of warnings. However, they have informed that their male counterparts receive the warning first and sometimes do not pass on the information to their respective family members. Consequently, women generally fall victim to delayed response to such warnings. Even if the warnings are conveyed quickly enough, the male members often rapidly quit after giving the warning, but the women cannot act as promptly as their respective counterparts. They manage the whole household and take precautionary measures to safeguard all the assets including livestock before taking temporary refuge to cyclone shelter (p.9)".

They also reported that since women feel unsafe and insecure in the shelters, they prefer to stay in their homes during crisis. These are important to note since these underlie the patriarchy of the system. Women's political decision-making in the private and public sphere are limited which have a number of negative consequences as highlighted above.

Baten and Khan (2010)²³ also found that women are more vulnerable to climate disasters than men through their socially constructed roles and responsibilities, and their relatively poorer and more economically vulnerable position, especially in the developing world. Their study was based on existing literature on climate change and gender. The authors looked at studies and reports of several intergovernmental agencies and international organisations such as IPCC, IUCN, UNDP, UN, FAO, research studies of climate change experts as well as Bangladesh's national policies and legislation on climate change.

Baten and Khan (2010) highlight that in Bangladesh, gender inequalities with respect to enjoyment of human rights, political and economic status, land ownership, housing conditions, and exposure to violence, education and health (in particular reproductive and sexual health) make women more vulnerable before, during and after climate change-induced disasters.

The authors recommend enhancing institutional capacities to mainstream gender in global and national climate change policies and programmes. Although sexual and reproductive

²² Sharmin, Z. & Islam, M.S. (2013) Consequences of Climate Change and Gender Vulnerability: Bangladesh Perspective, Bangladesh Development Research Working Paper Series 16, Bangladesh Development Research Centre (BDRC), http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2200116

²³ Baten, M.A. & Khan, N.A. (2010), Gender Issue in Climate Change Discourse: Theory versus Reality, Research Paper Series, Unnayan Onneshan- The Innovators, <http://www.unnayan.org/reports/genissue.pdf>

health rights are not explicitly mentioned, the authors underscore the importance of establishing a “human rights” approach in assessing gender issues within the context of climate change. SRHR is a human rights issue and SRHR needs to be included in the sustainable development agenda and the post-2015 development framework.

In order to fill the knowledge gaps surrounding the inter-linkages and relationships between gender and climate change, including gender equality and SRHR issues, a number of renowned research institutes and regional and international organisations have prepared concise and strategic briefs that aim to influence and introduce gender-sensitive policies and planning within the climate change context.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Ministry of Environments and Forests, Government of Bangladesh²⁴ has prepared an information brief, where the key highlights include that climate change is not a gender neutral issue, factors that influence the higher vulnerability of women to disasters include lack of means of assets to ensure their own safety during disasters and climate change results in traditional food sources becoming more unpredictable and scarce.

Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW)²⁵ (2014) has also conducted a scoping study to provide basis and guidance for addressing gender equality and SRHR in the context of climate change. Their findings highlight that although gender equality objectives are being mainstreamed and incorporated in national level adaptation plans and policies, the level of implementation and political will is not established. As a regional research and advocacy organisation, ARROW recommends the importance of increasing evidence on this issue and stresses the need for governments to deliver on gender equality and SRHR commitments and also calls for support to local women and organisations to play a vital role in climate change adaptation and mitigation measures.

Another important paper is the scoping study conducted by BRIDGE, Institute of Development Studies (2008)²⁶ that seeks to inform and strengthen future interventions on and research into gender and climate change. The paper looks at the gender impacts of climate change in different areas such as health, water and sanitation, conflict and so on.

Of particular relevance to Khan Foundation’s scoping study is the gender impacts of climate change-related disasters and aftermath of these disasters and the data suggests that social and physical factors including the exclusion from decision-making processes and the social responsibilities of women make them more vulnerable. Women are also subject to various sexual and gender violence, which is compounded by overcrowding and lack of privacy in shelters. The key recommendation of this paper is to increase women’s political empowerment through the supporting of grassroots awareness raising, confidence-building

²⁴ International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF), Government of Bangladesh, Climate Change and Gender in Bangladesh, Information Brief, <http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/gender.pdf>

²⁵ Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW), (2014), Identifying Opportunities for Action on Climate Change and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Philippines, ARROW Working Papers, <http://www.arrow.org.my/download/Scoping%20Study%20-%20Climate%20Change%20and%20SRHR.pdf>

²⁶ Brody, A., Demetriades, J. & Esplen, E. (2008) Gender and Climate Change, Mapping the Linkages: A Scoping Study on Knowledge and Gaps, BRIDGE, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/sites/bridge.ids.ac.uk/files/reports/Climate_Change_DFID.pdf

and advocacy and leadership training programmes which is needed for developing effective climate change policies and programmes.

Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA) and UNDP (2013)²⁷ in a policy brief reinforce the need for increased women's participation and leadership in climate change policy and planning. In addition, they underscore the need to incorporate gender perspectives into national and international climate change finance mechanisms and strategies. This policy brief also asserts Sharmin and Islam's finding that socio-cultural norms are one of the most significant factors increasing women and girls' exposure and vulnerability to climate change including lack of information, skills and tactics among women, unfavourable dressing attires of women, and so on.

Findings and Analysis

Survey of Rural Women

One part of the scoping study was a survey of 3360 rural women from coastal communities, flood prone or disaster prone areas in 12 districts covering six divisions of Bangladesh. Districts were identified using purposive sampling methods in an effort to gather the perspectives of vulnerable women on and assess their understanding of the issue of climate change and women's sexual and reproductive health and rights in Bangladesh.

The finding showed that 50% of the respondents are of 18-30 years of age. Majority of respondents received only primary education. The respondents are mostly housewives, 96.4% and generally live in a 3-6 person household. Almost all the respondents are married, 98.8%. Of the respondents, about one third do not have any children, a quarter of them have 1-2 children and about one third have 3-4 children.

The survey was divided into four sections. The first section looked at demographic and socio-economic information of respondents, the second section looked at the respondents' awareness and understanding of climate change and SRHR issues and their interlinkages, the third section focused on the shelter homes, their design, accessibility and environment and the fourth section looked at gender equality issues within climate change particularly during climate change related disasters and aftermath of disasters.

Most of the literature explored asserted that climate change is not gender neutral and women's social positioning in society including roles as homemakers, child bearers and caretakers increase their vulnerability and exposure to climate change. They often do not earn a wage and hence more likely to be excluded from decision-making in private and public sphere. This also has implications in the sense that girls are expected to help their mothers with household chores and child rearing and hence excluded from opportunities to gain an education.

²⁷ Habtezion, S (2013) Overview of Linkages Between Gender and Climate Change, Policy Brief, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/gender/Gender%20and%20Environment/PB1-AP-Overview-Gender-and-climate-change.pdf>

Through our survey, we found similar trends in demographic patterns. Of the 3360 respondents, the majority only received up to primary education and almost all were housewives, which meant they did not earn any wage. Majority of the respondents had 1-4 children. This highlights that women undertake supportive and reproductive roles centred on the home and are primarily responsible for caring and upbringing of the children.

When looking at vulnerability issues, some of the findings are important to note. More than four-fifths of the respondents relied on tubewells as their source of drinking water and they themselves collected water. In addition to that, majority of respondents had to collect the water from far distances and more than two-thirds of respondents had to collect water when they were expecting. This has several implications. It means the entire burden of ensuring water falls on the women in the household. It also implies that access to water is not readily available and the women have to put their health at risk to carry this water.

This supports the study of Neelormi, Adri and Ahmed (2009)²⁸ who reported that women are often the primary caregivers of the family, shouldering the burden of managing and cooking food, collecting drinking water, taking care of family members and livestock and because of these household responsibilities they often spend time in waterlogged premises and other settings. In addition to spending time around unhygienic water, they also drink unhygienic water since tubewells become polluted. This severely affects the health condition of women in affected communities.

In saline and drought prone areas where freshwater is in short supply, we see that stress is put on women who have responsibility to supply it to their families; often being forced to walk long distances, risking their health and their safety in the process. Water and salinity adversely affect women's health including pregnancy.

The survey looked at the gendered impacts of climate change through an examination of shelter homes, including their designs, their infrastructure and their accessibility. During disasters, about one third have taken shelter in their own homes, one-third in cyclone/flood shelters, one fifth in local schools/colleges/Union Parishad offices and one-fifth in neighbour and relatives' homes. More than three quarters of the respondents expressed that there are not sufficient shelters in their area. This has several implications. It reflects the high population density problem of Bangladesh and the limitations in provision of adequate emergency and transitional housing for those affected by climate change.

The findings also reveal that almost all respondents, 93% stated that environment in the shelters or the emergency/transitional homes are not women friendly. Of those, about one-third feel there is a lack of sanitation and toilet facilities in the shelter homes, just over a quarter feel discomfort due to men and women inhabiting the same space, one fifth feel so because they are not able to do their daily routines, and about one-fifth feel so since there is an absence of separate bath and toilets for women.

²⁸ Neelormi S., Adri N., & Ahmed A.U.. Gender dimensions of differential health effects of climate change induced water-logging: A case study from coastal Bangladesh. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 2009, Vol 6.

This supports Bartlett's (2008) findings that overcrowding, lack of privacy and the collapse of regular routines and livelihood patterns can contribute to anger, frustration and violence, with children and women most vulnerable. This is highlighted in the literature review. An important component of SRHR is access to appropriate healthcare services that will enable women to safely go through pregnancy and childbirth, as well as access to sexual and reproductive health services and information. Hence this study focused on the accessibility and provision of necessities in the shelters and/or transitional housing.

Almost all the respondents, 90% stated that medical care and services/treatment facilities are not available to women. When asked about the problems they faced, two-fifths, 41% cited absence of emergency doctors, another two-fifths stated lack of necessary medicines, sanitary and hygiene products and one-fifth stated lack of emergency and delivery kits. This has a number of negative consequences on the sexual and reproductive health rights of women and girls within the context of climate change. Mahmuda Begum, an interviewee, is a 35-year old housewife from Fakirghona village of Moheshkhali sub-district and has seven children. She expressed, *"During times of disasters, the biggest problem faced by the women in our community is the lack of access to medical care, including health services and facilities."*

Another important component of SRHR is the right of all persons, free of coercion, discrimination and violence, to the highest attainable standard of health in relation to sexuality. Hence, this study looked at the issue of gender-based violence, sexual violence and harassment during disasters. Findings reveal that one-third of the respondents mentioned that sexual harassment takes place during disasters/at shelters and transitional/emergency housing. Although this number may not seem high, it is significant. This is a sensitive topic and many respondents may not feel comfortable expressing this statistic in public and hence the figure may be lower than the actual.

Among those who have stated that harassment occurs, about three quarters stated that harassment occurs occasionally and the type of harassment is verbal. About one-fifth of those respondents, 19% who stated that harassment occurs said that the type of harassment is sexual and this includes forced sex and rape.

This supports the studies of Davis et al. and the Australian Women's Health Network that has been presented in the literature review in which the findings reveal the aftermath of disasters is when women are most vulnerable to sexual and gender based violence since in the moments of stress and uncertainty, women become silent to the acts of their partners or other members of the community who have played heroic roles during the crises.

Of those who agreed to occurrence of violence, about three quarters stated strangers conducted that offense. However, just over a tenth of respondents have mentioned that relatives conduct this violence. When respondents were asked about the occurrence of harassment and violence, more than four-fifth, 85% stated that they have not spoken about this issue with anyone, and those who did, the majority expressed this issue to their husbands/partners. Here, we can understand the sensitivity and the tendency not to report these incidences due to socio-cultural norms since those who are subject to these harassments feel shame whereas the perpetrators are to blame.

When we look at gendered impact of climate change in particular during/post disasters, an important factor is the involvement of women in decision-making. Our survey revealed some interesting statistics. The survey asked if there is different treatment between men and women when providing relief materials and there was a 50-50 response. About half said men and women are treated differently while the other half did not.

The survey also revealed that just less than two-thirds of respondents feel that pregnant or at risk women are given priority/preference while providing medical and healthcare services during/post disasters. At risk women includes those who are elderly, those with disabilities and children. It is important to ensure that the most vulnerable group is provided with the services immediate and efficiently. We found that just over two-thirds of the respondents feel that during/post disasters, women citizens and local women representatives come forward to help alongside the male representatives. This is a positive statistic since it shows that women are politically and socially empowered at the local levels and are willing to take responsibilities and come forward. Although they are able to participate in crisis management and such situations, there is a lack of access to policy and decision making processes.

We also found that about two-thirds of the respondents shared that the local administration provides necessary and specific information/ instruction to women for disaster rehabilitation. This also indicates there is some efforts on the part of the local administration to ensure that women are taken into account and special considerations are made.

Several papers highlighted in the literature review section stress on the need for women to be involved in the decision-making process. Brody, Demetriades and Esplen (2008) state the following: "It is by now widely accepted that failure to include women in decision-making processes around climate change mitigation and adaptation at local, national, regional and international levels not only exacerbates gender inequalities, but also undermines the effectiveness of climate change responses. There is thus an urgent need to clearly identify obstacles to women's participation in decision-making, and find ways to address these constraints (p.21)."

During primary data collection, the interviewers met with a wide range of respondents/stakeholders which included rural women from marginalised and climate change affected communities, local community residents including teachers, lawyers, students, religious leaders and members of the standing committees on health, water and sanitation and disaster management which included government officials and elected representatives. Therefore it is important for the interviewer to be aware of the specific culture and social context.

Case Study

Ismot describes the impact of Climate Change in the coastal zones



This is Ismot. She is only 18 years old and comes from Borobil village in the Moheshkhali sub-district, one of the coastal zones of Bangladesh. The primary profession of the community members is fishing. This is one of the lowest wage earning jobs in the country and also often looked down upon profession socially, although fish dishes are currently turning out to be delicacies in the dining tables of the rich and the privileged. As a result of poverty, the girls are victims of child marriage. She says, "I am also subject to this path of life." She also says, within two months of my marriage I got pregnant and at the same time natural disasters fell upon our village which is a way of life in this delta terrain of Bangladesh. Meanwhile, lack of nutrition during my pregnancy I had to suffer from lots of physical problems. Besides, gradually I had fallen ill as I did not get proper health support and services timely during the disaster period. At one stage, in the 8th month of my pregnancy I had miscarriage since my physical state of my body could not take it anymore. Because of premature pregnancy and natural abortion I am still suffering with the problem of sexual reproductive health, my natural movements are periodically disrupted and my family including myself have to live a cautious life. She explains that the changing weather patterns such as the irregular high tides and low tides have a significant impact on their lives. People of that community want to get rid of early marriage, miscarriage and many other critical diseases It affects their communication with the mainland district headquarter affecting access to food, medicare and other emergency services, the naural hostile climate pattern contributing to uncertainties facing the deltaic severity of seafaring lifestyle, making their livelihood ever challenging !

Focus Group Discussion with the Local Community

Twelve (12) FGDs were taken, one per district. A total of about 15 participants were present in the FGDs, which consisted of members of the community. Of these participants, at least 4 were women and they are representations from different members of the community such as school teachers, religious leaders, shopkeepers, parents, students, farmer, housewives, and community leaders among others.

When asked about what they understand by climate change and its impacts, they highlighted changes in temperatures, harsh winters, irregular seasons, sudden floods, soil erosion and so on. When asked about sexual and reproductive health and rights, they admitted that their knowledge is limited and that they would like to know more on this sensitive topic. They understand it as the right to safe delivery of child, maternal healthcare, the right to access birth control tablets and family planning services, access to delivery kits and so on.

When asked about the various sexual and reproductive health risks during the disasters in the shelter homes or around the shelter homes, the ones mentioned include lack of medical facilities, different forms of harassment faced by women, lack of emergency and urgent care for expecting women, lack of separate bedroom and toilets for expecting women. In order to reduce these risks, they proposed setting up of family planning centres, presence of family planning officers near the shelter homes, free birth control tablets, regular presence of doctors, arrangement of transport facilities to and from shelters by the government, organising training to inform about sexual and reproductive health and right issues, ensuring awareness of these issues through campaigns and other mediums organised by both government and NGOs.

When asked about the challenges to ensuring and/or protecting sexual and reproductive health and rights of women, they mentioned that the constraints include lack of awareness, superstition, religion, social norms, poverty, and lack of medical care.

When asked about the different services and programmes available to them from government to ensure sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and the status of these services, they mentioned the family planning program, community clinics, hospitals with maternity wing, but they said that these services are not adequate and there is a strong demand for these services from the citizens that the government needs to address.

Emerging Themes: Water and Food Security

Almost all the rural women surveyed highlighted the problems of water and food security in relation to the climate change and SRHR. As mentioned earlier, agriculture is the primary profession of majority of the population in rural communities. These communities and households are negatively impacted by climate change related events such as flooding. Flooding and cyclones have not only become more frequent but they also increased in their intensity levels. As a result of flooding, there is shortage of safe and clean water both for consumption and use. Since the majority of household burdens fall on women, they are more susceptible to illnesses and diseases that may arise from the consumption and use of

polluted water. For women of reproductive age as well as pregnant mothers, the exposure to polluted water as well as high salinity water negatively affects their sexual and reproductive health.

Climate change related events such as cyclones and flooding threaten food supplies and production since these destroy the crops. The crops are blown, washed away or submerged in water. For those families dependent on fishing, flooding as well as changes in the high tides and low tides also negatively affects the number of catches per day. Rural women highlighted that malnutrition is a major problem for pregnant mothers and their unborn child, which leads to severe decline in the sexual and reproductive health.

There are also a number of other factors that further limit the access to water and food which in turn negatively affect the women's sexual and reproductive health and rights. With destruction to the infrastructure and the communication systems, there is limited access from the villages to the sub district or district headquarters where the food markets and healthcare centres are located. They are not able to purchase even basic food items such as rice, lentil, eggs etc. They are also not able to get access to medical facilities and services and for women of reproductive age and pregnant mothers, their health needs may be life threatening. Additionally, the loss of household income further limits their ability to acquire food and medical care.

Sumitra Mondol, an interviewee is a 21-year old housewife from Dumuria village of Satkhira district, which is extremely disaster-prone. She said, *"When Cyclone Sidr struck, our village had limited access from the sub-district for one whole year, obstructing or making extremely difficult our access to food, water, transport, medical care."*

Key Informant Interviews with Health, Disaster Management and Water and Sanitation Committees

Key informant interviews of members of the different standing committees were taken. The three types of standing committees include the Health Committee, the Water and Sanitation Committee and the Disaster Management Committee. A total of 36 Key Informant interviews were taken, 3 per district. From each district, one Upazila was selected and 3 types of interview took place, one with the president/member of the Health Committee, one with the president/member of the Water and Sanitation Committee and one with the president/member of the Disaster Management Committee. Twelve (12) FGDs were taken, one per district.

When asked about the different services or steps taken by the Health and Disaster Management Committee to ensure Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Women during/post disasters, the responses include provision of safe drinking water and medicines, providing institutional support of different local government offices, formation of volunteer group, ensuring safe spaces for shelter, instruction and information delivery. When asked about the different steps or services provided by the Water and Sanitation to ensure water and sanitation facilities during/post disasters, they echo the urgent need to provide safe drinking water for shelter home inhabitants and the provision of adequate toilet and sanitation facilities for women, and particularly the availability of proper services for expecting women.

These findings suggest that the capacity and functioning of these standing committees under local government need to be strengthened. The members of these standing committees have some general idea about the concepts of climate change and sexual and reproductive health and rights but not specific knowledge on what exactly it entails. They have also not been successful in establishing the linkage of SRHR with climate change and the relationship still seems unfamiliar or indirect. This provides an important area for knowledge building.

Similar findings have come up from the focal group discussion in relation to the individual's existing knowledge and understanding of the SRHR and climate change issues. When we compare these results to our survey of rural women, we see the following: Almost all the respondents, 88% have a general idea about climate change and three quarters of these respondents feel that this poses a risk for Bangladesh. More than four-fifth of the respondents feel that climate change impacts women. About half, 47% feel that the risk is physical while two-fifth, 41% feel that the risk is psychological. Of the respondents, about three quarters, 79% know about women's sexual and reproductive health while about two-thirds know about sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Review of National initiatives, policies and legislation

In terms of policy and legislation, the Government of Bangladesh has taken a firm stand on the issue of climate change and the urgency to address this issue. There are ongoing efforts not only regarding the formulation of policies to tackle climate change but also to mainstream climate change in the national plans. A number of climate change policies that have mainstreamed gender are in place. **BCCSAP- Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan** was prepared in 2008, modified and approved by the Government in 2009 with wide consultation with Government and non-government sector, community-based organisation, development partners, experts, academia etc. BCCSAP–2009 is a one of the first landmark document among the developing countries. This identifies women as an important group for the protection of livelihoods and achieves equitable and sustainable growth.

The **Bangladesh Sixth Five Year Plan (SFYP) 'FY2011-FY2015'** provides strategic directions and policy framework as well as sectorial strategies, programmes and policies taking consideration of CC adaptation for accelerating growth and reducing poverty of the country. This has also been prepared with a gender perspective.

In order to assess the governmental responses to climate change, specifically in the area of women's sexual and reproductive health, it is essential to also highlight the different policies and initiatives taken by the government to address the issue of violence against women, The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act (2010) was passed in 2010. It criminalises domestic violence, which is defined as physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, as well as financial damage, inflicted on a woman or child by any member of the family. It does not specifically prohibit spousal rape. The Prevention of Women and Children Repression Act (2000) prohibits rape, acid throwing, and dowry-related crimes, among other forms of gender-based violence. Separate legislation also exists to control the unlicensed sale and use of acid.

In the area of policy and legislation, the Bangladesh government has developed a number of important policies, however two factors prevent the successful outcomes of these policies. The policies are formulated and passed however dissemination, implementation and monitoring of these policies are weak. It is often the case that Ministry representatives, government officials and service providers both at the national and local levels are not aware about the existence of these policies/laws or the mechanisms by which these can be implemented.

One of the most common recommendations made by international agencies and governments such as the U.S. State Department, UNHCR and UNDP is to improve the capacity of those responsible for implementation of laws. In the area of dissemination, it is essential not only for the implementing bodies but also for the beneficiaries or the users of the law. The general public must be aware about their rights and responsibilities and hence it is important to conduct mass awareness campaigns at the local levels.

Another factor regarding policies and legislation is the lack of coherence between the different national policies and legislation. The lack of policy coherence horizontally across government ministries and vertically among government levels prevents effective formulation or implementation. This is true in the case of Bangladesh. If we consider the area of climate change, we have the Ministry of Environment and Forests, the Ministry of Water Resources, the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and Cooperatives and if we want to explore the impact of climate change on women's sexual and reproductive health, we would also need to consider the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs and the Ministry of Health and Family Planning. When formulating policies, although efforts are there to make these inclusive and coherent among the different ministries, we see a lack of coordination and flow.

In a paper by Islam (2014)²⁹, entitled "Coherence and Contradiction in National Policies" he argues that policies should be interdependent and the higher the degree of coherence among relevant policies, the higher the likelihood of better and proper implementation of policies. In his methodology, he set up a points based system from 0-10 (10 being the best score and 0 being the worst score). To measure interdependence, he assessed the extent by which climate change policies address the issue of women's health and the extent by which women's health policies address climate change.

He found that the Women Development Policy³⁰ and the National Health Policy³¹ scored the lowest (Very Poor), only 0/1 out of 10 because these have little to no mention of climate change. The National Environment Policy³² and the National Plan for Disaster

²⁹ Islam, K.M (2014), "Coherence and Contradiction in National Policies", <http://gobeshona.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/PPT31.pdf>

³⁰ Government of Bangladesh, National Women Development Policy (2011): This was formulated in 2011 after revival of the 1997 Women Development Policy and it seeks to provide women with full control over their right to land, earned property, health, education, training, information, inheritance, credit, technology and opportunity to earn.

³¹ Government of Bangladesh, National Health Policy (2011): The committee was formed in 1996 and the National Healthy Policy was finally published in 2011 in an effort to modernize the health sector and ensure the mental, physical and social wellbeing of all individuals.

³² Government of Bangladesh, National Environment Policy (NEP) 2013: The NEP 2013 is a revision of the 1992 National Environment policy in line with the recent understanding and updated patterns of climate change. It highlights the extent and magnitude of environmental degradation including problems of population growth, poverty, illiteracy, lack of awareness and healthcare services, limitation of arable land, unplanned development and urbanization, and industrialization.

Management³³ scored second (Poor), 2/3 out of 10 because they address some issues of gender and women's sexual and reproductive health in these two policies. The BCCSSAP, SFYP and NAPA scored the highest (Average) 4/5 out of 10 because they have taken into consideration the gender elements and reproductive health concerns of women into these plans and policies.

It is important to highlight here that one of the major challenges identified is the lack of relevant literature that looks specifically on the issue of SRHR within the context of climate change. When exploring the relevant literature, policies and interventions, it was found there is increasing focus on the gendered impacts of climate change. Specific areas that receive attention include gender and food/nutrition, gender and water and sanitation, gender and health, gender and disaster management. While all of these touch upon the issue of gender equality, the language and actions is more technical and scientific. A detailed analysis of social factors and conditions that are more difficult to measure quantitatively is largely absent.

Additionally, the absence of inclusion of SRHR language within Bangladesh's national policy framework maybe one reason why the link between SRHR and climate change is still weak in Bangladesh. Our government only recognises SRH and RR and does not acknowledge SRHR although it is a signatory to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Another important observation is the lack of disaggregated data not just by gender, but also age, race, ethnicity, geographical location and setting (urban vs rural), socio-economic status, disability which is needed to monitor progress and make policy recommendations. Aside from quantitative data, qualitative data is also lacking that is essential for a more vivid understanding of critical issues in the area of SRHR within climate change.

³³ Government of Bangladesh, National Plan for Disaster Management (NPDM) 2010-2015: This plan was developed as outcomes of national and international commitments of the Government of Bangladesh and the Disaster Management and Relief Division for addressing the disaster risks comprehensively in an effort to reduce the vulnerability of the poor to the effects of natural, environmental and human induced hazards to a manageable and acceptable humanitarian level.

CONCLUSION

The year 2015 is a special year for global development. It is the expiration date for the Millennium Development Goals and the adoption of a new post-2015 development framework that proposes a comprehensive set of goals entitled “Sustainable Development Goals” (SDGs). Climate change is at the heart of this framework since it plays a crucial role in sustainable development. One critical challenge in the climate change context is universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

The Sustainable Development Goals that were finalised at the 13th session of the Open Working Group held in New York, have failed to advance on agreements made more than 20 years ago by not recognising that a truly transformative agenda must ensure the full respect, protection, and fulfilment of SRHR. This scoping study has been undertaken to identify and establish the important linkage between gender equality and SRHR within the context of climate in an effort to build the resilience of communities and empower women and girls to adapt to climate change.

The study enhanced knowledge on the gendered impacts of climate change, particular climate change-related disasters and aftermath of these disasters. Findings from the survey of 3360 rural women from coastal communities and flood and disaster prone areas revealed that women are more vulnerable as a result of greater household burdens and responsibilities compared to their male counterparts. As a consequence of high population density, there is a shortage of shelters or transitional/emergency houses.

In addition to the inadequate supply, the design of these shelter homes including the infrastructure, accessibility and environment are not women-friendly. The shelters are overcrowded, lack privacy and perpetuate sexual and gender based harassment and violence. The survey findings support the minimum existing literature in this area of gender and climate change. The impact of climate change on women’s SRHR is being ignored in the national policies and legislations. Besides the absence of dissemination and implementation of these instruments, there is also incoherence between policies and programmes.

This scoping study emphasises the need to end the silence and complacency around gender justice issues. This requires formulation and implementation of laws and programmes that enable women in vulnerable communities to make decisions about their lives in the private and public spheres. It also requires that training and capacity building of the relevant stakeholders at the local level be carried out to ensure the successful implementation.

This study aimed to fill the gap in the qualitative data on SRHR and climate change issues. This study has collected voices from the grassroots that can be used for lobbying and advocacy at both national and international levels. Khan Foundation through the Special Consultative Status with the ECOSOC of the UN has been participating in the intergovernmental negotiations as a member of the Women’s Major Group (WMG) through the support of ARROW and WMG. In these sessions, Khan Foundation has been communicating the demands and priorities identified through the project and ensuring that the needs of the most marginalised and vulnerable communities are reflected in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

RECOMMENDATIONS & ADVOCACY

The scoping study offers the following recommendations in an effort to increase the resilience of communities and empower women and girls to adapt to climate change, in particular lessen the negative impacts of climate change-related disasters and aftermath of these disasters on women and girls. The findings of this study will be disseminated to advance SRHR issues in the national climate change agenda as well as integrate these issues in the women's policy and the health policies that are in place in an effort to improve SRHR of vulnerable groups such as poor and ultra-poor women, who are susceptible to climate change.

Recommendations for Government -

- **National Government:** In terms of policies and programmes, there needs to be a two-step approach. Firstly, the various policies that have incorporated gender mainstreaming exist in isolation. There is a need to integrate and provide coherence among the various policies. For instance, integrate SRHR into National Women Development Policy that exists in Bangladesh, integrate SRHR in the climate change policies including the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and integrate SRHR into National Disaster Health Service delivery.

The government must also ensure that the policies and programmes on women's rights and climate change are coherent and reinforce each other. Secondly, those policies and programmes that have already been formulated need to be implemented through proper allocation of human and financial resources. In this regard, there should be strong coordination among all the ministries and actors at the national level for comprehensible policy and implementation for instance cooperation between the Ministry of Women Affairs and the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

In order to establish the SRHR of women and girls within the context of climate change, it is also important for governments to recognise, implement and deliver on the commitments already made. This includes SRHR commitments made and adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. This needs strong political will and commitment. Although the issue of child marriage and sexual and reproductive health of women has been introduced to the secondary school curriculum, there is no implementation. Therefore, the Government should organise training, capacity building and awareness raising of school teachers and school authorities.

Government should improve the overall data collection and management system. One idea is to create an extensive gender disaggregated database comprising of information on marginalised and vulnerable communities including data all kind of displacement and migration. This should be in panel data style so that follow up can be carried out. The Government should ensure gender sensitive climate change planning and should organise training and capacity building of local government

officials so that these programmes can be operationalised. Specific training should be on how to address gender-based violence in all aspects of disaster risk management.

- **Local Government:** Activate the standing committees at the different tiers such as Union Parishad and Upazila since these play an important role in local climate change adaptation, including planning, budgeting, financing and implementing the various programmes. The standing committees that look at climate change and SRHR issues include health committee, water and sanitation committee and disaster management committee. These can be activated through the convening of regular meetings, identifying roles and responsibilities of committee members and developing action plans.
- **International Donor Community and Multilateral Organisations:** International development agencies to co-operate to better design development projects and avoid duplication. They need to allocate financial resources to projects that incorporate gender equality and SRHR within the context of climate change.

Recommendations for Civil Society -

- **NGOs/CSOs/CBOs-** NGOs/CSOs/CBOs should organise national level seminars and workshops to create advocacy among the national policy planners to incorporate SRHR in national climate change agenda. The idea is to create an enabling environment for SRHR, at the local and national level. These seminars will gather important stakeholders such as policy planners, government officials, civil society, media representatives, national think tanks, scholars and the project staffs which may bring all the environment activists, organisations, government bodies working on environment issues among others.

NGOs/CSOs/CBOs should act in collaboration and should have more sharing or dialogue on their experiences, documents and evidence of SRHR issues within climate change. These organisations need to collect and use gender-disaggregated data on marginalised and most vulnerable sections of the community to inform adaptation and mitigation policies and ensure regular update of the database.

NGOs should carry out grassroots awareness campaigns and knowledge building on what SRHR and climate change entails, how citizens can become more active in climate change preparedness and response and so on. Methods such as rallies, human chains, mike announcements, cultural shows and local media will be used to highlight important issues, distribution of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials, and activation of the relevant committees and so on. These organisations need to implement programmes women's capacities and knowledge in disaster management and promote their empowerment, before, during and after climate related disasters.

- **Academic Institutions and Research Centres -** Research Communities have to ensure knowledge and evidence building in the area of specific interlinkages between

gender equality, climate change and SRHR. They should conduct periodic review of policies related to disaster response and preparedness from a gender perspective. They can focus on existing models of best practice for communities in disaster prone areas – such as the provision of gender-sensitive training and involving women and men equally in hazard management activities. Sensitive qualitative research is also needed to explore the links between climate change and violence against women. The particular concerns and needs of girls and adolescents should be central to this.

- Media- Media interventions are needed to promote behavioural change efforts and awareness on SRHR issues within climate change. Digital and social media can use new mediums such as digital storytelling to highlight the successes of the women community leaders in adapting to climate change and the important role they play during disasters. Sensitive qualitative research is also needed to explore the links between climate change and violence against women. The particular concerns and needs of girls and adolescents should be central to this.

ACTION PLANS & INTERLINKAGES WITH KHAN FOUNDATION'S PROGRAMMES

Khan Foundation, a national NGO prioritises networking and advocacy in an effort to ensure successful implementation of programmes and influence policy. Since Khan Foundation has a number of working areas such as democracy, governance, human rights, climate change, access to justice, rural microcredit and has interlinkages among the projects under these areas, it can use the findings of the scoping study to develop and implement its programme and advocacy strategy. Khan Foundation aims to enhance progress and minimise the adverse impact of climate change-related disasters on women and girls.

The various partners, networks and stakeholders of Khan Foundation will be involved including NGO Network, Women Lawyers Network, Elected Women Representatives, Youth Volunteers, Government officials, service providers, and beneficiaries such as vulnerable and marginalised groups amongst others. KF's Combating Violence and Trafficking against Women and Children runs local hotlines to provide immediate assistance to victims of violence and trafficking, which include psychological-social, medical and legal services. Under this program, specialised awareness campaigns can be organised to include information and awareness around gender based violence in during and post disasters. This will also seek to challenge existing social norms around the issues of sexual/gender based violence and SRHR. Tying up to KF's existing programmes ensures a local mechanism that can be used for sustainability.

Khan Foundation's Social Accountability Program is also socially innovative as it increases citizen participation in public service delivery. This has a twofold positive consequence; the citizens are being empowered as they are able to influence decision-making and the quality of the services is improving. KF uses social accountability tools such as citizen monitoring to ensure smooth delivery of public services in the area of education, health and social welfare. It can ensure dissemination of SRH information in schools through the curriculum in the public schools and ensure access to family planning, abortion services, and emergency contraception during post-disaster related events through the public hospitals and health

centres. It is also bringing transparency and combating corruption in building and development of post disaster shelters and other infrastructure.

KF strongly believes in empowering women in decision-making and the political process and hence has prioritised strengthening of Local Government- KF conducts environmental awareness and provides training to Elected Women Representatives (EWR) about climate change adaptation strategies, their roles and responsibilities. Our EWRs also assist during climate change related disasters such as cyclones with info gathering, support with medical services, shelter services, food assistance and so on. This is to enable and/or promote access to decision making on post-disaster recovery efforts. KF plans to systemise this and develop a gender-disaggregated database that tracks the most marginalised and vulnerable communities.

Social innovation is an idea or a process for solving existing problems but with new techniques or approaches. One of the major problems identified in the scoping study is the lack of evidence or data to support the interlinkages between climate change and gender. With the emergence of social and digital media, Khan Foundation hopes to tap into a wide range of stakeholders to increase knowledge on SRHR and improve access to SRHR services within the climate change context. Khan Foundation together with ARROW has been preparing postcards that highlight rural women's' experiences during/post disasters including the use of photojournalism.

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APPENDICES

Survey Questionnaire for Women from flood and disaster prone areas

Section 1: Demographic and Socio-Economic Information

1. Name of respondent
2. Address: Village: Union: Upazila: District:
3. Age of Respondent
4. Educational Qualifications
5. Occupation
6. Number of Family Members
7. Family Monthly Income
8. Religion
9. Marital Status? Yes (Married)/ No (Not Married)
If Yes, Number Of Children.....

Section 2: Information on Climate change and Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

1. Have you heard about global climate change? Yes / No
If yes, what sort of impact has climate change had on Bangladesh?
1. Risk 2. Great Risk 3. No Risk 4. Don't know
2. Does climate change impact women? Yes / No
If yes, what kind of impacts?
1. Physical 2. Mental 3. The Risk of Death 4. Other
3. Do you know about women's sexual and reproductive health? Yes / No
4. Do you know about women's sexual and reproductive health right? Yes / No
5. Does climate change impact women's sexual and reproductive health? Yes / No
If yes, what kind of impact?
1. Bad Impact 2. Very Bad Impact 3. Moderate Impact
6. What is the source of your drinking water?
1. Tube wells 2. Pond 3. Well 4. River 5. Water Supply 6. Bottled Water
7. Who collects the water?
1. Yourself 2. Husband 3. Other Members of the Family (write)-----
8. Do you have to collect the water from a far distance? Yes / No (Applicable for the child's mother)
9. Do you have to/did you have to collect water when you are/were expecting a child?
Yes / No (Applicable for the child's mother)
10. Does your household have toilet and sanitation facilities? Yes / No
11. What is the type of Toilet?
1. Waterborne 2. Dry 3. Semi dry 4. Other.....
12. In your opinion, does climate change increase the risk of miscarriage for women?
Yes / No

Section 3: Information on Shelters; Design, Infrastructure, Accessibility, Environment

1. During disaster, where do you take/have you taken shelter?
1. Own home 2. Neighbor's home 3. Relative's home
4. Local School/College/Union Parishad Complex 5. Shelter home
2. Are there sufficient shelter homes in your area? Yes / No

3. Are there women friendly environments in the shelter homes? Yes / No
If no, what kinds of difficulties are you exposed to?
 1. Unable to do daily routine tasks
 2. Discomfort due to men and women inhabiting same space
 3. Lack of sanitation and toilet facilities in the shelter home
 4. Absence of separate bath and toilets for women
 5. Other-----
4. Does sexual harassment of women occur during times of disaster or at shelter homes?
Yes / No
If yes, what is the frequency?
 1. Occurs Occasionally 2. Occurs all the time 3. Occurs Rarely 4. Don't Know
 What types of harassment occurs? (Applicable to more than one answer ")
 1. Verbal harassment (Eve-teasing) 2. Physical harassment (Touching)
 3. Sexual harassment 4. Other (write)-----
5. Who is the responsible for the sexual harassment?
 1. Strangers 2. Relatives 3. Elders
 4. Shelter home authorities 5. Local Influential persons
6. Have you mentioned or spoken to anyone regarding the sexual harassment events?
Yes / No
If yes, who? - 1. Mother 2. Father 3. Elder brother 4. Husband
7. Is purified water (ex. tube well) available in the shelter homes? Yes / No
If no, how is the water managed/arranged?
 1. Water Management Committee 2. Local Union Parishad
 3. Local NGO 4. Voluntary Organization
 5. Other.....
8. Are there Medical care/treatment facilities for women available at the shelter homes?
Yes / No
If no, what kinds of problems do you face?
 1. Absence of emergency doctors 2. Lack of necessary drugs/medicine
 3. Lack of emergency kits 4. Lack of delivery kits
 5. Other.....

Section-4 Gendered Impact of Climate Change, in Particular During/Post Climate Related Disaster

1. When providing relief materials, is there're differential treatment between men and women? Yes / No
2. While providing medical and healthcare services during or post disasters, are pregnant women or at risk women given priority/preference? Yes / No
3. During disasters, do able women come forward to help alongside the men? Yes / No
4. During disaster/post disasters, do local women representatives come forward to help alongside male representatives? Yes / No
5. During disaster/post disaster, does the local administration provide specific and necessary information/instruction to women for disaster rehabilitation? Yes / No
6. Your overall assessment of impact of climate change on women's sexual and reproductive health

The information you provide will be kept completely confidential. Only through a secret code that will be used in the data analysis studies. Providing the information you absolutely risk free. Thank you for providing information

Data provider name:

Signature:

Date:

Mobile Number:

Information Receiver Name:

Signature:

Date:

Mobile Number:

This research is an initiative of a regional partnership that are working together on building the interlinkages of climate change and SRHR. The 8 partners are from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and the Philippines. The regional partnership generates evidence on the linkages of the issues and advocates for the integration of SRHR in climate change frameworks to advance sustainable development.

Khan Foundation is a non-profit PVDO based in Dhaka, Bangladesh and has consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Since its inception in 1988 in the wake of massive Countrywide Flooding, a major recurrent natural calamity in Bangladesh, it has been working to advance women's health, affirmative sexuality and rights, and to empower women through information and knowledge, evidence generation, advocacy, capacity building, partnership building and organisational development as well as towards the cause of economic wellbeing of the poor and the other disadvantaged groups in Bangladesh, in particular women and children, also considering Bangladesh's vulnerable position in the context of its Ecological Footprint and the Global Climate Change.

ARROW is a regional non-profit women's NGO based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and has consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Since it was established in 1993, it has been working to advance women's health, affirmative sexuality and rights, and to empower women through information and knowledge, evidence generation, advocacy, capacity building, partnership building and organisational development.

**Abdul Momen Khan Memorial Foundation
(Khan Foundation)**

Momenbagh, Dhaka 1217, Bangladesh

Telephone +880 2 9330323
Fax +880 2 9331589
E-mail info@khan-foundation.org
Web www.khan-foundation.org
Facebook Khan Foundation
Twitter @Khan_Foundation

**Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women
(ARROW)**

1 & 2 Jalan Scott, Brickfields 50470, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Telephone (603) 2273 9913/9914/9915
Fax (603) 2273 9916
E-mail arrow@arrow.org.my
Web www.arrow.org.my
Facebook The Asian-Pacific Resource & Research Centre for Women (ARROW)
Twitter @ARROW_Women
Youtube youtube.com/user/ARROWomen
Pinterest [arrowomen](https://pinterest.com/arrowomen)



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