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Gender disaster nexus: Toward an intersectionality approach

Over the last decades Bangladesh played crucial role in strengthening women and men's indigenous knowledge-based disaster response and provided support to build resilience of different categories. Government, non-government and development actors, academia and other actors unitedly contributed to make the country a resilient one.

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open ended calling to theorists and pedagogues, practitioners and policy makers to recognize the various vectors of power that operate on identity. A woman in lower income category with disability, for instance, will not experience discrimination "separately" or "chronologically" for being a woman, or for being lower income group, or for being a person with any disability. The interlocking nature of oppression (Collins, 1989) is an important feature of intersectional thought.

ATTEMPTS IN REDUCING DISASTER RISKS AND VULNERABILITIES

Over the last decades, Bangladesh played a crucial role in strengthening women and men's indigenous knowledge-based disaster response and provided support to build resilience of different categories. Government, non-government and development actors, academia and other actors unitedly contributed to making the country a resilient one. The National Plan for Disaster Management (NPD 2021-2025) focuses on the 'whole of society' in managing disaster risks and response initiatives. It adopts gender responsiveness and disability-inclusive approach for resilience as well as promotes mainstreaming of climate change adaptation and mitigation to reduce risks for all categories of people. However, to implement the strategies and plans for reducing disasters and building resilience in facing the challenges of disasters and pandemic, the voices from the intersectional communities and/or their representatives need to be on the centre of discussion.

The increasing rate of



People within a rural area traveling by boat after a tremendous flood.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUI

frequency and intensity of disasters, along with different impacts have identified Bangladesh as one of the most vulnerable countries. Living with hazards have contributed to develop disaster coping and adaptation mechanisms based on the affected people experiences. Disasters have also enhanced the management capacities of the government and other actors to device policies including regulatory frameworks over the time. However, it is crucial to have gender-inclusive intersectional disaster management strategies as there are significant

differences amongst and within a single category. It must be mentioned that disaster risk is socially constructed, and thus, who will be most at risk should be understood by context and characteristics, such as gender, class, and age. It should also be noted that vulnerability is constituted by the combination of specific economic, social and cultural characteristics in any given context (Bradshaw and Nasreen, 2023). This notion of the combination of characteristics and the context in which they occur as key, must be the major focus of intersectionality

approach in disaster risk reduction mechanism.

A global project Gender Responsive Resilience and Intersectionality in Policy and Practice (GRRIPP, 2020-2023) led by University College London, UK has been implemented in South Asia, Africa, Latin America and Caribbean countries. Under the leadership of the author, the GRRIPP-South Asia (implemented by the Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies, University of Dhaka) has awarded several research on disasters, violence against

women, reproductive health of women during the pandemic, people with disability, realities of elderly, curriculum development and others adopting gender and intersectionality approach. Based on the research findings and workshops at various levels, a framework for gender, disaster and intersectionality has been adopted and validated with government, non-government and relevant other actors. This framework has the potential to revolutionize disaster response and recovery strategies. By integrating these principles into every aspect of disaster

management, it is expected that it will increase resilience, reduce vulnerability, and establish a more inclusive, and equitable society. However, the success of the framework depends on the cooperation and dedication of academia, governments, non-government actors, and communities. The gender and intersectionality in disaster risk reduction framework, essentially will provides a visionary path to disaster resilience in achieving goals, plans and policing alignment with international drivers.



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