



ONE-DAY NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN DISASTERS Report

Voices from the Frontlines: Women and Girls Shaping Disaster Resilience

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1. Executive Summary:

On 6 August 2024, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) of Pakistan, in collaboration with UN Women, UNICEF, and key civil society and humanitarian partners, convened the inaugural National Dialogue on the Role of Women and Girls in Disasters in Islamabad. This landmark event catalyzed a multi-stakeholder, evidence-informed, and action-oriented discussion on gender-responsive disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies.

The Dialogue recognized that Pakistan, ranked among the most climate-vulnerable countries globally, faces intersecting disaster risks exacerbated by deep-rooted gender inequalities. Women and girls, especially those with disabilities and from marginalized communities, remain disproportionately impacted by disasters while being underrepresented in decision-making roles.

Participants underscored that sustainable DRR efforts require women's and girls' full inclusion—not only as beneficiaries but as leaders and changemakers. Promoting their leadership in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery enhances community resilience and reduces systemic vulnerabilities. The Dialogue identified persistent structural and socio-cultural barriers—including gender-based violence, lack of access to reproductive health services, limited mobility, and exclusion from data systems—that hinder women's engagement in DRR.

Women's intergenerational and indigenous knowledge remains under-documented and under-integrated into formal DRR frameworks, despite its critical role in anticipatory action and community-based adaptation. Current DRR policies and frameworks often lack gender-disaggregated data and fail to reflect intersectional realities. The absence of community-level inclusion and feedback mechanisms limits their relevance and impact. A need was identified for disaster education in schools, community-level awareness, culturally sensitive IEC materials, and tailored training programmes to elevate women's technical and leadership capacities in DRR.

The participants strongly emphasized the need to institutionalize women's leadership in disaster risk reduction (DRR) by mandating their participation in national and local decision-making bodies. To support this, they advocated for the establishment of leadership development programmes, mentorship initiatives, and inclusive policy platforms tailored for women and girls. A critical recommendation was to invest in robust, intersectional, and gender-sensitive data systems with centralized and accessible repositories, underpinned by standardized indicators. The dialogue further called for comprehensive gender audits of existing DRR frameworks, with an urgent need to align national strategies with the Climate Change Gender Action Plan (CCGAP) and promote anticipatory, community-driven policy models rooted in lived realities.

In advancing inclusive DRR, the participants highlighted the importance of supporting grassroots women's groups and leveraging their lived experiences and intergenerational traditional knowledge in shaping localized resilience strategies. The integration of women's perspectives into DRR was seen as vital to fostering more responsive, culturally grounded, and sustainable interventions. The dialogue also underscored the prioritization of essential services in disaster contexts—particularly reproductive health, menstrual hygiene, prevention of gender-based violence (GBV), and trauma support—as indispensable to effective planning and recovery.

2. Background

Pakistan stands at the frontline of the global climate crisis, grappling with intensifying extreme weather events that pose significant humanitarian, economic, and development challenges. The catastrophic floods of 2022 served as a sobering reminder of the country's acute vulnerability. Ranked 5th in the Global Climate Risk Index, Pakistan witnessed unprecedented rainfall that submerged one-third of its landmass, affected over 33 million people—including 16 million children—and led to the displacement of more than 12 million individuals. These floods not only claimed 1,730 lives but also decimated critical infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, and transport systems, with economic damages estimated at over US\$30 billion. These losses unfolded against a backdrop of pre-existing economic fragility and institutional stress, further straining national capacity to respond and recover.

Beyond the visible destruction, disasters in Pakistan deepen systemic inequalities, particularly those faced by women and girls. The 2019 Inform Risk Index ranks Pakistan 18 out of 191 countries in terms of overall disaster risk, pointing to a compound vulnerability driven not only by environmental hazards—such as earthquakes and flooding—but also by entrenched socio-economic disparities. Historically, disasters have disproportionately impacted women and girls, who are often excluded from early warning systems, decision-making processes, and post-disaster recovery schemes. Yet, since the 2005 earthquake, Pakistan has seen growing recognition of the indispensable role women and girls play in disaster risk reduction (DRR). They are not merely passive recipients of aid but are active agents of resilience, mobilizing families, sustaining social cohesion, and fostering community recovery.

Despite this emerging recognition, significant implementation gaps persist. Gender is still not systematically integrated into DRR frameworks at the planning, policy, and operational levels. As a result, women's and girls' unique needs, perspectives, and capabilities are often sidelined in preparedness, response, and recovery efforts. This not only undermines the inclusiveness of disaster management strategies but also reduces their overall effectiveness and sustainability.

Pakistan has demonstrated a formal commitment to addressing these disparities through the ratification of key international frameworks such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030), the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Nationally, legal and policy instruments—including the National Disaster Management Act (2010), the DRR Policy (2013), and the National Disaster Management Plan (2012–2022)—reflect a stated intent to foster inclusivity. The introduction of the 2014 National Policy Guidelines on Vulnerable Groups in Disasters and the 2017 NDMA Gender & Child Cell Policy Guideline marked significant milestones in institutionalizing gender responsiveness. However, operationalizing these frameworks remains a key challenge. There is an urgent need to bridge the gap between policy and practice through localized implementation, capacity development, intersectional data systems, and sustainable financing for gender-responsive DRR.

In sum, Pakistan's context underscores a dual imperative: to strengthen its disaster risk governance and to center women and girls in this transformation. By harnessing their knowledge, leadership, and lived experiences, and addressing structural barriers to their full participation, the country can lay the foundation for a more equitable, resilient, and climate-ready future.

3. Introduction:

“A disaster is often a perfect emergency, imperfectly met.” This poignant observation encapsulates the challenge faced by communities around the world when confronted with increasingly frequent and severe disasters. The imperative for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) has never been greater, particularly in the face of a growing climate crisis and persistent social inequalities that magnify its impacts. DRR is now recognized as a cornerstone of sustainable development. It is not only about responding to emergencies, but about preventing risks, mitigating vulnerabilities, and building resilience at every level of society. This requires an “All of Society Inclusive Approach” and a firm commitment to the principle of “Leaving No One Behind,” both central tenets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Critically, disasters do not affect all people equally. They are not gender neutral. Women, girls, men, and boys experience risks and impacts in different ways due to social roles, power dynamics, access to resources, and pre-existing vulnerabilities. Evidence globally, and in Pakistan, demonstrates that gender inequalities shape exposure to disaster risks, the capacity to respond, and the pace and sustainability of recovery. A gender-responsive approach to DRR acknowledges that women and girls are not merely passive victims of disasters but are agents of change and resilience. When empowered and included in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts, they bring invaluable insights, leadership, and community mobilization capacity. Conversely, neglecting to integrate gender perspectives in DRR planning and implementation risks undermining the effectiveness of interventions and exacerbating pre-existing inequalities.

Yet, gender-sensitive DRR remains under-prioritized. In many contexts, including Pakistan, gender considerations are often inadequately reflected in DRR strategies, budgets, institutional frameworks, and operational plans. This oversight contributes to missed opportunities for transformative change and inclusive resilience building. Therefore, this document underscores the urgency of mainstreaming gender in DRR at all levels. It advocates for a shift from viewing women and girls solely through the lens of vulnerability, towards recognizing and investing in their capacities, knowledge, and leadership in risk management. Strengthening gender equality and promoting the meaningful participation of women and girls in DRR is not only a matter of rights—it is essential for the effectiveness and sustainability of resilience efforts.

Furthermore, gender equality in DRR is not simply a matter of justice or inclusion—it is a strategic imperative for more effective risk management. Policies and programmes that are blind to the differentiated impacts of disasters miss the opportunity to engage the full range of human capacity and knowledge. In the context of Pakistan’s increasing exposure to climate-related and complex emergencies, advancing gender-responsive DRR is crucial not only to meet international obligations but to ensure that national resilience efforts are grounded in the realities and needs of all citizens. Investing in women’s leadership, protection, and agency in DRR is both a pathway to sustainable development and a vital component of national preparedness and security.

4. Methodology:

The National Dialogue adopted a three-pronged strategic framework to facilitate inclusive engagement, evidence-based exchange, and consensus-driven action planning. Rooted in the principles of self-representation, mutual respect, and participatory inclusion, the dialogue aimed to create a safe, candid, and empowering environment for all participants—especially women and girls—to share experiences, articulate needs, and contribute to disaster risk reduction (DRR) solutions. The process was designed to reflect the voices of a diverse array of actors, including representatives from civil society organizations, government institutions, UN agencies, academia, grassroots leaders, persons with disabilities, and traditionally marginalized populations.

The methodology was anchored in the principle of participatory consensus-building, recognizing that effective DRR must reflect the intersecting priorities of women, girls, men, and boys. Emphasis was placed on ensuring the meaningful inclusion of those most often excluded from policy and planning processes, such as persons with disabilities, ethnic and religious minorities, and rural community members. By integrating lived experiences with technical knowledge, the dialogue ensured that discussions remained grounded, context-specific, and strategically aligned with both national frameworks and international commitments.

A. Strategic Orientation Sessions

The dialogue opened with a series of high-level orientation sessions to set the context, align stakeholder understanding, and frame the agenda. These sessions included:

1. A comprehensive briefing on Pakistan's climate vulnerabilities and the National Disaster Management Authority's (NDMA) role in DRR, delivered by Chairman NDMA, Lt General Inam Haider Malik.
2. A policy-level overview of the Government of Pakistan's commitment to gender-responsive climate action, presented by Ms. Romina Khursheed Alam, Coordinator to the Prime Minister, Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination.
3. Technical and thematic framing of the Dialogue by Dr. Salman Asif, Senior Gender Equality, Human Rights and Humanitarian Action Specialist, to unpack complex DRR and gender concepts.
4. Vision and mission statements from partner UN agencies (UN Women, UNICEF, UNFPA) and national civil society organizations, reinforcing a collective commitment to advancing the role of women and girls in DRR.
5. First-hand accounts and lived experiences shared by grassroots women and girl champions, highlighting community-driven practices and the gendered impacts of recent natural disasters.

B. Thematic Breakout Group Discussions

To facilitate deep-dive dialogue and generate actionable recommendations, participants were divided into three thematic breakout groups, each guided by expert facilitators from UN Women and UNICEF:

1. Empowering Women and Girls Leaders in Disaster Response and Recovery
2. Building Women's and Girls' Capacity for Disaster Preparedness
3. Integrating Gender into Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Frameworks

Each group engaged in structured discussions to identify gaps, propose solutions, and develop pathways for integrating gender considerations across all phases of the disaster cycle. Group work emphasized intersectionality, drawing attention to the compounded vulnerabilities of women and girls with disabilities, adolescent girls, and those from marginalized communities.

C. Documentation, Validation, and Strategic Consolidation

The deliberations of all breakout groups were meticulously documented by designated rapporteurs to ensure comprehensive capture of insights, proposed actions, and nuanced personal reflections. These findings were subsequently presented to all participants for validation, creating space for real-time feedback and ownership.

The outcomes of the dialogue, as presented in this report, represent a consolidated synthesis of shared knowledge, strategic recommendations, and participant-driven insights. This documentation will serve as a guiding framework for subsequent provincial and district-level dialogues, aimed at localizing the national DRR agenda and embedding gender responsiveness across governance levels.

5. Key Findings from the National Consultation:

The National Dialogue on the Role of Women and Girls in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) brought to light a range of interconnected challenges that hinder gender-equitable and inclusive disaster management in Pakistan. Through rich, multi-stakeholder discussions, participants shared insights, evidence, and lived experiences that illuminated systemic gaps across DRR policies, practices, and institutional frameworks. The findings reflect persistent disparities in representation, access, and protection for women, girls, and marginalized groups—alongside underutilized opportunities for community resilience rooted in indigenous knowledge and local leadership. This section synthesizes the most critical and recurring themes identified during the dialogue, serving as a foundation for targeted recommendations and future action.

1. Leadership and Resource Access in DRR

The Dialogue revealed a pronounced and enduring imbalance in the representation of women in leadership roles within disaster risk reduction (DRR) structures. Despite women frequently taking on critical responsibilities in community-level response and recovery, their roles remain largely informal, unrecognized, and unsupported in institutional frameworks. At national and subnational levels, women are significantly underrepresented in decision-making bodies such as disaster management authorities, planning commissions, and emergency response committees. This exclusion not only limits the diversity of perspectives in policy formulation and implementation but also hinders the development of DRR strategies that are responsive to the distinct needs and strengths of all community members.

In addition to leadership barriers, women and girls face substantial obstacles in accessing disaster-related resources, services, and information. These challenges are often rooted in entrenched patriarchal norms, socio-cultural restrictions on mobility, digital exclusion, and inadequate outreach mechanisms. Women-headed households, for instance, may be overlooked in aid distribution, while adolescent girls may lack access to safe spaces or essential services like reproductive health care during crises. The lack of institutional mechanisms to prioritize and facilitate equitable access further compounds these disparities, reinforcing existing gender inequalities. Without intentional policy measures to address these access barriers and promote women's leadership, the promise of inclusive and effective DRR remains out of reach.

2. Inclusive Participation and Protection in Disaster Preparedness

Women and girls continue to face significant structural and socio-cultural barriers that hinder their meaningful participation in disaster preparedness activities. Limited access to education, especially for girls in rural and marginalized communities, constrains their ability to engage with DRR information and training opportunities. Traditional gender norms that confine women to domestic roles and restrict their movement in public spaces further exclude them from community-level planning and decision-making. These constraints are often intensified by caregiving responsibilities, which disproportionately fall on women and reduce their availability to participate in preparedness initiatives. As a result, disaster preparedness efforts frequently lack the voices and insights of women and girls, whose experiences are essential for developing inclusive and contextually relevant responses.

Protection-related risks further inhibit participation, particularly in humanitarian and displacement contexts. Women and girls are at heightened risk of gender-based violence (GBV) during and after disasters, yet many lack access to safe spaces, protective services, and psychosocial support. For displaced women, those with disabilities, and individuals from religious or ethnic minority communities,

these vulnerabilities are even more acute due to compounded layers of marginalization. The absence of targeted support mechanisms and the invisibility of these groups in preparedness planning perpetuate cycles of exclusion and risk. Addressing these challenges requires not only increasing women's access and safety but also reimagining DRR processes through an intersectional lens that recognizes and responds to diverse identities and lived realities.

3. Gender-Specific Needs and Service Provision During Disasters

Disaster response mechanisms in Pakistan have repeatedly fallen short in addressing the gender-specific needs of women and girls. Critical services such as sexual and reproductive health care, menstrual hygiene management, trauma counselling, and protection from gender-based violence (GBV) are often absent or insufficiently prioritized in emergency planning and response. The 2022 floods underscored this gap starkly: thousands of women, including pregnant and lactating mothers, were left without access to maternal health facilities, skilled birth attendants, or basic hygiene supplies. Shelters and relief camps were largely unprepared to cater to the specific needs of women and adolescent girls, lacking both privacy and safety features. These deficiencies not only violate fundamental human rights but also place women and girls at increased physical, psychological, and economic risk.

Beyond the immediate crisis, the lack of gender-sensitive service provision undermines long-term recovery and resilience-building. When women and girls do not receive the support they need, they are less able to participate in recovery activities, return to work or education, and rebuild their lives. Moreover, trauma from gender-based violence or unsafe birth conditions can have lasting health and mental health consequences. These issues are compounded for women from marginalized communities, who may face intersecting barriers such as language, disability, or caste. A gender-blind response approach perpetuates exclusion and inequality, making it imperative for DRR systems to integrate gender-specific service planning as a core component of preparedness and response strategies.

4. Marginalized and Diverse Groups from DRR Planning

A recurring and critical theme that emerged from the National Dialogue was the systemic exclusion of diverse and marginalized population groups—such as persons with disabilities, transgender and intersex individuals, ethnic minorities, and rural women—from disaster risk reduction (DRR) planning and implementation. These groups often experience multiple, intersecting forms of vulnerability, yet their specific needs, insights, and resilience strategies are largely absent from formal DRR frameworks. This exclusion is compounded by the predominantly top-down nature of DRR policymaking in Pakistan, where decisions are made without adequate community consultation or localized needs assessments. As a result, DRR strategies, though technically designed, often fail to address the lived realities of those most at risk, rendering them ineffective or even harmful in practice.

The lack of structured community feedback mechanisms and participatory governance processes perpetuates this marginalization, limiting opportunities for these populations to influence the very policies that affect their survival and recovery. For instance, emergency protocols may not account for physical accessibility for persons with disabilities, or the safety and dignity of transgender individuals in communal shelters. Similarly, the absence of rural women's voices in planning phases overlooks valuable indigenous knowledge and social cohesion networks that are critical to community resilience. Addressing this requires institutional reforms that prioritize inclusive consultation, intersectional data collection, and a recognition of lived experience as

vital expertise. Only through such systemic shifts can DRR frameworks become truly inclusive, equitable, and aligned with the principle of “leaving no one behind.”

5. Traditional Knowledge in DRR Frameworks

Traditional and indigenous knowledge systems, often nurtured and passed down through generations by women, are vital assets for localized disaster risk reduction (DRR). These knowledge forms—ranging from food preservation and water conservation techniques to herbal medicine use, traditional weather forecasting, and informal community alert systems—have long enabled communities to anticipate, adapt to, and recover from disasters. However, despite their proven value, such insights remain largely absent from formal DRR frameworks and national policy documents. Participants in the Dialogue expressed concern that the technocratic orientation of most DRR systems in Pakistan has marginalized local, experiential knowledge in favor of top-down, externally imposed strategies.

The exclusion of women’s traditional knowledge from DRR planning not only erodes cultural relevance but also diminishes the effectiveness and sustainability of disaster interventions. When DRR policies ignore these practices, they miss opportunities to build on existing community resilience and foster trust among local populations. Moreover, sidelining these contributions reinforces gender biases that undervalue women’s expertise and informal leadership. Integrating traditional knowledge into official DRR strategies requires systematic documentation, intergenerational learning platforms, and recognition of such practices as legitimate, evidence-based components of resilience. By institutionalizing these knowledge systems—while respecting local contexts and practices—Pakistan can ensure that its DRR efforts are not only more inclusive but also more adaptive and community-owned.

6. Gender Integration and Community Engagement in DRR Policies

Although Pakistan has adopted several national frameworks aimed at disaster risk reduction, gender integration within these policies remains largely superficial. References to gender are often limited to the existence of a “gender cell” or isolated activities rather than embedded across the full policy cycle—from risk assessments and contingency planning to implementation and monitoring. This tokenistic inclusion fails to recognize gender as a cross-cutting factor that critically influences vulnerability, access to services, and community resilience. Without embedding gender-responsive analysis, policies miss the opportunity to address systemic inequalities that heighten disaster risk for women and girls.

Equally concerning is the lack of meaningful community engagement in policy design. Grassroots stakeholders, particularly women and marginalized groups, are rarely consulted in the drafting or review of DRR frameworks. This results in policies that are disconnected from on-the-ground realities and fail to reflect diverse local contexts, traditional knowledge, or lived experiences. A more inclusive, participatory approach is necessary to ensure that DRR policies are equitable, grounded in community priorities, and capable of delivering gender-sensitive outcomes.

7. Siloed Approaches and Weak Coordination Among Stakeholders

Stakeholders noted that the fragmentation of disaster risk management efforts in Pakistan emerged as a major barrier to effective and inclusive DRR. Stakeholders observed that government entities, UN agencies, NGOs, civil society organizations, and academic institutions often operate in silos, with limited information sharing and coordination. This lack of coherence hampers the development of integrated, system-wide responses that leverage complementary expertise, mandates, and resources. Competition for funding and recognition further exacerbates institutional fragmentation, often to the detriment of gender-focused initiatives.

The absence of shared accountability frameworks and inter-agency collaboration results in critical issues—such as women’s protection, leadership, and specific needs—being diluted or sidelined. Coordinated platforms for planning, implementation, and monitoring are essential to bridge these gaps. Building multi-stakeholder coalitions and cross-sector partnerships can help ensure that gender equality is not treated as an ancillary concern, but as a core outcome of national resilience efforts.

8. Inclusive and Intersectional Data for DRR Decision-Making

A foundational challenge to gender-responsive DRR in Pakistan is the lack of inclusive and disaggregated data. Existing data systems often fail to capture the differential impacts of disasters across genders, ages, disabilities, and socioeconomic backgrounds. This limits the ability of policymakers and practitioners to design interventions that are responsive to the actual risks and needs faced by marginalized groups. The absence of intersectional data also obscures the realities of populations such as transgender individuals, ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities—who often experience compounded vulnerabilities during crises.

Even where data is collected, it is frequently underutilized or inaccessible to local communities and frontline responders. Data silos and weak feedback mechanisms hinder the application of this knowledge in policy and planning. Strengthening data systems to be more inclusive, representative, and transparent is critical for evidence-based DRR. This includes building community capacities to collect and interpret data, integrating qualitative insights, and using data to monitor gender equality outcomes across all stages of disaster management.

9. Gender Representation in National DRR Plans

Despite increasing global recognition of gender-responsive disaster planning, Pakistan’s key DRR strategies—such as the National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP)—continue to treat gender as a peripheral issue. Mentions of gender are often limited to generic statements or standalone references, with no binding commitments, actionable targets, or accountability mechanisms to ensure women’s participation, protection, and leadership. This approach results in the under-prioritization of women’s issues during planning, resource allocation, and emergency response.

10. Societal and Cultural Norms Hindering Women’s Leadership in DRR

Deep-rooted patriarchal norms continue to shape perceptions of women’s roles in society and disaster management, limiting their ability to assume leadership positions within DRR structures. Societal expectations often confine women to caregiving roles and the private domain, undermining their visibility and voice in public planning processes. These norms also foster skepticism or resistance toward women in leadership, particularly in male-dominated sectors such as emergency response and civil protection.

This cultural resistance not only affects how women are perceived but also how policies and institutions are structured—often lacking the safeguards or support systems needed to elevate women’s participation. Transforming this dynamic requires long-term investment in gender-sensitive education, public awareness, and leadership development initiatives that challenge stereotypes and build inclusive civic spaces. Without addressing these cultural barriers, efforts to enhance women’s participation in DRR will continue to be constrained by structural and societal resistance.

6. Recommendations

Mandate Women's Participation in DRR Leadership and Decision-Making: To ensure equitable and effective disaster management, it is essential to institutionalize women's representation in all DRR governance structures. This includes mandating quotas or targets at national, provincial, and local levels, as well as embedding gender parity principles in disaster management agencies. Creating enabling environments for women's leadership—through policy reform, organizational accountability, and supportive legislation—can ensure women are not only represented but actively influencing DRR decision-making.

Develop and Support Women-Led Structures for Community Preparedness: The establishment of structured women-led groups dedicated to disaster preparedness at the grassroots level is a foundational step toward inclusive resilience. These groups should be formally supported through technical assistance, small grants, capacity-building initiatives, and connections to local government mechanisms. Local leadership should be encouraged to ensure sustainability and cultural relevance, particularly in hard-to-reach or disaster-prone areas.

Invest in Gender-Sensitive and Inclusive Data Collection Systems: There is an urgent need to create robust data systems that are inclusive, intersectional, and gender-sensitive. This includes the regular collection and analysis of sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data and the development of context-relevant indicators to monitor gender equality in DRR. Data repositories must be accessible to all stakeholders—including community members—and used to inform DRR design, monitoring, and decision-making processes.

Integrate Gender Considerations into All DRR Frameworks and Policies: Gender responsiveness must be mainstreamed across all phases of DRR planning and policy-making. This requires conducting gender audits of existing frameworks, aligning national plans with instruments such as the Climate Change Gender Action Plan (ccGAP), and developing guidelines that ensure inclusive programme design. Gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation systems should be built into implementation plans to track progress and accountability.

Strengthen Grassroots Engagement and Intersectoral Coordination: Effective DRR relies on bottom-up approaches. Policies and frameworks should be co-created with affected communities, especially women and marginalized groups. Coordination among government agencies, civil society, academia, and development partners should be enhanced through joint platforms, multi-stakeholder dialogues, and community feedback mechanisms that ensure mutual accountability and policy coherence.

Promote Cultural Sensitivity and Localized DRR Training for Women: DRR training programmes must be tailored to local cultural contexts and designed to accommodate the lived experiences of women and girls. This includes offering multilingual materials, mobile outreach, and locally led sessions.

Integrating traditional practices, menstrual hygiene management, and rights-based approaches into training can boost community acceptance and women's confidence to participate actively in DRR.

Enhance Access to Reproductive Health and GBV Services in Emergencies: Disaster preparedness plans must include essential health and protection services for women and girls. These should encompass sexual and reproductive health services, menstrual hygiene support, maternal care, and mechanisms for GBV prevention and response. Establishing women-friendly spaces and deploying trained community care workers are key to safeguarding the rights and well-being of women during crises.

Leverage and Institutionalize Traditional Knowledge in DRR Plans: Traditional and indigenous knowledge—often held by women—offers valuable insights for localized DRR. Governments and agencies should invest in the documentation, validation, and institutional integration of these practices. Community-friendly tools such as seasonal calendars, participatory risk maps, and intergenerational learning platforms should be leveraged to ensure traditional wisdom complements modern approaches.

Mainstream Gender Across NDMA Policy Commitments and Implementation: The integration of gender should go beyond token references in DRR documents. Each pillar of the NDMA's strategic framework should include gender-specific objectives, targets, and indicators. Regular policy reviews, supported by gender experts and civil society partners, should assess progress and recalibrate actions to ensure real and measurable impact on the lives of women and girls.

Engage Men and Boys in Advocacy for Gender Equality in DRR: To dismantle societal norms that limit women's participation in DRR, it is essential to engage men and boys as allies. This includes creating male support groups, conducting awareness campaigns, and involving faith leaders to promote positive masculinities and gender equity. Encouraging open dialogue and shared responsibilities can shift community mindsets and foster inclusive leadership cultures.

7. Conclusion:

The inaugural National Dialogue on the Role of Women and Girls in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in Pakistan marked a transformative moment in the nation's pursuit of inclusive resilience. It brought into sharp focus the untapped potential of women and girls as leaders, knowledge holders, and first responders in disaster contexts. While the dialogue provided a platform for showcasing progressive policy commitments and grassroots innovations, it also revealed deep-seated structural barriers and gender-based disparities that continue to hinder women's participation and leadership in DRR. A clear consensus emerged that achieving gender equality in disaster management is not only a moral imperative, it is a strategic necessity for building sustainable, resilient communities.

One of the most pressing calls to action from the dialogue was the need to institutionalize women's participation across all levels of DRR governance. From national policy formulation to local emergency planning, women's inclusion must be proactive, not symbolic. This requires confronting and dismantling discriminatory social norms, expanding access to education and resources, and fostering political will to support women's leadership. Equally important is the mainstreaming of gender in DRR frameworks, ensuring that every phase—from risk assessment to recovery—is shaped by intersectional analysis and inclusive data.

The importance of preparedness education tailored to women and girls, especially adolescent girls, was another critical theme. While initiatives such as the Pakistan School Safety Framework offer a foundation, implementation at the district and community level remains a gap. Effective preparedness must be underpinned by localized curricula, trained educators, and culturally relevant content that promotes gender equality and safety. Simultaneously, the role of indigenous knowledge—particularly that held by women—must be elevated through systematic documentation and integration into formal DRR strategies.

Ultimately, the dialogue reaffirmed that women and girls are not passive victims of disaster—they are catalysts for resilience. Their leadership, lived experiences, and traditional wisdom are essential to navigating the complexities of an increasingly volatile climate and humanitarian landscape. To convert dialogue into action, Pakistan must commit to sustained investment in gender-responsive DRR policies, capacity building, and service delivery. By doing so, the country can forge a path toward a more inclusive, equitable, and disaster-resilient future for all.



NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY GENDER AND CHILD CELL



Roadmap Recommendations from Local Women and Girls: Aligning with the Gender Action Plan (GAP) of the Sendai Framework

SF Priorities	Sendai GAP Key Objectives	Recommendations for the Way Forward
1: Understanding Disaster Risk Reduction	Increase the availability of sex, age, income and disability disaggregated data and qualitative information on gender and disaster risk.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Establish a comprehensive data repository: Collect and maintain accessible gender disaggregated data. Ensure that data collection and analysis are inclusive of all marginalized groups, including women, girls, and people with disabilities, to inform effective DRR strategies. 2.Provide comprehensive training: Train data collectors and researchers. 3.Integrate traditional knowledge: Establish a research system to collect and integrate traditional knowledge. 4.Implement community-friendly tools: Use tools like seasonal calendars and transit walks.
	Use gender analysis to generate and apply disaster risk knowledge in decision-making	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Integrate gender analysis into DRR decision-making: Use gender analysis that is inclusive of voices of women and girls on ground to generate and apply disaster risk knowledge in decision-making processes. 2. Ensure comprehensive and integrated gender Analysis: Collect and analyze gender-disaggregated data on GBV and SRH to inform policy development and implementation.
2: Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk.	Mainstream gender equality across laws, policies, strategies, plans and institutions for disaster risk reduction, informed by relevant international treaties and agreements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Conduct gender audits: Assess existing DRR policies and programs for gender sensitivity. 2.Ensure two-way communication: Establish two-way communication channels between communities particularly women and girls, women right organizations, women led organizations, DRR stakeholders/practitioners and policymakers. 3.Promote multi-stakeholder partnerships for DRR: Encourage collaborative efforts among government agencies, civil society, academic institutions, and women-friendly community groups. 4.Develop supportive policies: Create policies that address gender-specific needs in DRR. 5.Enable co-creation of policies: Involve marginalized communities in decision-making ensuring Leaving No One Behind. 6. Ensure the Comprehensive Inclusion: of Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (GEWE), Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) in National Adaptation Plans, Disaster Risk Reduction Policies, and Response Plans.
	Increase meaningful participation and empowerment of women and gender stakeholders in disaster risk governance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Empower women's leadership: Ensure women's involvement in disaster management at all levels particularly at the decision-making levels. 2.Strengthen partnerships: Foster collaboration among government, civil society, academia and women-led grassroots organizations. 3. Strengthen women focused advocacy and coordination platforms at all levels





NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY GENDER AND CHILD CELL



Roadmap Recommendations from Local Women and Girls: Aligning with the Gender Action Plan (GAP) of the Sendai Framework

SF Priorities	Sendai GAP Key Objectives	Recommendations for the Way Forward
3: Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience	Mainstream gender equality criteria into risk-informed development and disaster risk reduction investments	1.Impact Investing: Encourage gender-responsive investment decisions. 2.Insurance: Develop gender-responsive insurance products. 3.Safe Spaces: Establish risk-informed safe spaces for women and girls. 4.Resource Allocation: Allocate adequate resources to support GBV and SRH services, particularly in disaster-affected areas.
	Increase funding allocations and improve access to financing for disaster risk reduction initiatives that advance gender equality	1.Gender Bonds: Issue bonds for gender-focused projects. 2.Dedicated Funds: Create separate funding streams or allocations within existing disaster risk reduction funds specifically earmarked for gender-responsive initiatives. 3.Gender Budgeting: Integrate gender considerations into existing budgeting processes to ensure that funds are allocated equitably and effectively address the needs of women and men. 4. Build the capacity of women focused and local women rights organizations in DRR
4: Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction	Implement gender-responsive and inclusive end-to-end multi-hazard early warning systems and anticipatory action	1.Gender-Specific Risk-Informed Early Warning Messages: Tailor early warning messages to address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women and girls, including those with disabilities. 2. Ensure platforms, tools, IEC material are accessible for women and girls to receive timely Early Warning messages and Anticipatory Action assistance.
	Plan for and invest in gender responsive disaster recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction	1.Economic Recovery: Provide targeted support for women-led businesses and livelihoods to promote economic recovery in the aftermath of disasters. 2.Gender-Responsive Housing and Infrastructure: Design and implement housing and infrastructure projects that take into account the specific needs of women, girls and person with disabilities such as safe spaces, accessible facilities, and childcare facilities.
	Ensure access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, and prevention and response to gender-based violence in the context of disasters	1.Mobile Health Units: Deploy mobile health units to provide essential sexual and reproductive health services, including contraception, safe abortion and maternal care, in disaster-affected areas. 2.Provide GBV and SRH training: Provide training to government officials, health workers and community leaders on GBV and SRH prevention, response, and recovery. 3.Community-Based Initiatives: Support community-based initiatives that promote gender equality and address gender-based violence, such as women’s self-defense training and awareness-raising campaigns engaging men and boys as integral part of these actions.

