

Gender and Disaster Resilience Lens: Recommendations and Way Forward

Policy Review Exercise

The adverse effect of natural disasters puts the lives and livelihood of women at greater risk. To minimise the impact of natural disasters, the Government of Pakistan and international agencies support affected communities. However, due to lack of preparedness at the policy and government levels, the gender perspective remains missing when it comes to natural disaster risk. The Revenue Mobilisation, Investment and Trade Programme (REMIT) initiated a 'Gender Policy Review Exercise', in collaboration with Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), which mainly looked at the impact of natural disasters, such as the recent super floods in Pakistan, with a special focus on the gender perspective.

Under the initiative, the following three national level policy documents were reviewed from a gender and disaster resilience lens:

1. 'National Financial Inclusion Strategy' by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to review financial inclusion measures with a focus on women, especially when disasters strike.
2. 'Asaan Karobar Act' by the Board of Investment (BoI) to review enabling business legislation from the gender and disaster resilience perspective.
3. 'National Gender Policy Framework' by the Planning Commission to assess governmental policy and planning from a gender and disaster resilience standpoint.

REMIT held a workshop with the BoI's federal and provincial participants to present its review of the 'Asaan Karobar Act' to include gender-related issues. This has been approved by the Cabinet. Another workshop was held on the Planning Commission's 'National Gender Framework' with suggestions that will be incorporated in future plans and actions with a specific focus on working with the SDGs Unit to strengthen gender and climate change-related interventions. The review of the 'National Financial Inclusion Strategy' by the SBP was presented to the Deputy Governor State Bank and product designs for gender and disaster resilience were shared to be considered by the Bank. In all three documents, one common issue was highlighted - none focused on gender from a disaster resilience lens. One reason may be that these were pre-disaster documents or that the gendered impact of disasters is not understood fully. This exercise was able to identify gaps in policy and offer solutions that can be taken up and added in future policy work. As a subsequent action from these discussions, the National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF) has requested a gender audit. This audit aims to evaluate and enhance the Fund's effectiveness and impact concerning gender and climate change.

In addition, REMIT worked with key economic reform ministries as part of the 'Economy for All' session (a strategic forum convening diverse experts to review REMIT's work through a gender and inclusion lens, and to facilitate greater inclusivity in its endeavours). Lack of coordination was identified as a key gap within ministries, especially in women economic empowerment initiatives.

The current *Policy Review Exercise* has been designed to take stock of the recommendations from three policy reviews and to chart a path forward. The objective is to present stakeholders with potential areas or initiatives that can be viewed through the prism of gender and disaster resilience. As the culminating panel of this review process, it will also feature brief discussions on the 'Asaan Karobar Act', 'National Financial Inclusion Strategy', and the 'National Gender Policy Framework'.

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