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Sustainable Development Policy Institute

Climate Induced Migration Among Women

Stories from Muzaffargarh & Tharparkar districts Pakistan

Policy Recommendations

Following recommendations are made to address the challenges women face due to climate induced migrations.

Local:

- In Tharparkar and Muzaffargarh districts, women should be imparted training on information technology so that they might access online platforms to sell their handmade products (such as embroidered shirts and caps, traditional clothes), and offer online tailoring services. Women of both areas have excellent skills in sewing, embroidery and hand made products, but they lack market access, therefore, earn very little and often paid less. This is important to make their economic condition better and if they start contributing to the earnings, she will have a say in decision making.
- There is a need to launch awareness campaigns on climate change impact for the communities at grass roots level so that people can make arrangements what to do at the time of disasters.
- There is a further need to invest in the poor communities' adaptive capacities and resilience building so that they can fight the climatic events instead of roaming or migrating from one place to another.
- Miscarriages often occur due to women's poor health conditions and mobility during migration. After 18th constitutional amendment, health is a provincial subject, therefore, Punjab and Sindh governments should provide health facilities to women especially the pregnant women during and post disaster. Some make-shift delivery services may be provided to them near the staying places of migrants.
- Pregnant women should also be provided food supplements. Under Sindh govt ration scheme, food items were distributed among pregnant women. The scheme should be revived, and similar schemes should also be introduced by the Punjab government as well.
- Most of the women in both districts are involved in agriculture either as labourers or as small landholder farmers. Small landholders either have less production of crops or they get very low amount upon selling. Crop production can be increased by providing women farmers with trainings through district level agriculture extension. The low-cost issue can be solved by removing middleman, whose involvement causes loss to farmers.
- Women should be given chance in decision-making. In most of the cases head of family (men) takes decision related to investments, agriculture, or mobility. Institutions like National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) should step in and start awareness sessions for both men and women to include women in decision-making.



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National

Currently, linkages between climate change and migration/displacements are missing from the government policies. There is a need to demonstrate this link in our national policies. In this regard, the scope of National Climate Change Policy needs to be extended to climate induced migrations and related issues.

- There is also a need to introduce long-term social protection schemes for the poor and vulnerable communities. Schemes like Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) does provide some relief to the people below poverty line, but it requires National Identity Cards (NICs) whereas many women (and men too) have lost their identity cards due to floods in areas of the Punjab. They can neither vote, nor can own land. Their issues should be solved by the administration and they should also be included in National Socio-Economic Registries (NSER).
- The government should invest on the projects which can improve mobility between urban and rural areas. This will improve connectivity and will make mobility of women (and men) less painful during disasters.
- National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) should develop a long-term plan which may overcome the impact of climate change on communities during disasters. There is a need to devise plans and strategies to build community resilience.
- There is also a need to improve early warning system. Though an early warning system is in place in most of areas, timely messages and information cannot be communicated to communities. Local methods such as announcement through mosques, SMS service and radio should be used to inform people about floods. Information should readily be available in local languages at district, Tehsil and Union Council level.
- Government should build community halls/camps for temporary stay of migrants where safety of everyone, including women, might be ensured during disasters. Women caretakers should be posted there to take up the harassment issues.
- In view of the complaints of women harassment, the government should devise a long-term strategy for their protection during disasters. Though laws are in place, mechanisms to implement these laws is required.
- Women needs sanitary pads during disasters. This special need is greatly ignored which causes a lot of stress among them. Such topics are taboo in our society which make women them more vulnerable. • Women suffer from depression, trauma, and anxiety due to climate induced disasters.

NDMA and Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (NHSRC)



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should together devise a long-term health plan for women. Trauma counselling sessions should be organized after disasters to build their resilience.

- Water should be provided door-to-door post disaster, as women have to travel long distances to fetch water. Ministry of Water Resources should devise a plan to provide water to the communities. During disasters, communities do not have access to drinking water which makes them more vulnerable. Their livestock also die due to unavailability of water. Majority is dependent on agriculture and livestock at both the study sites.
- Areas prone to flooding in the Punjab should be declared “non-residential areas” and communities should not be allowed to settle along Indus river. For that purpose, communities should be provided with land ownership to build their houses at safer places

Regional and International

- South Asian countries are more vulnerable to climate change. Data pertaining to climate induced migrations should be organized while agreements and learnings should be shared between countries so that best practices might be implemented to build adaptive capacities for women. There is a need to build cooperation between countries to manage cross-border migrations and protect rights of international migrants.
- There is a need to share data between countries related to weather stations and water levels in shared rivers to improve early warning systems and protect communities from the devastating impact of flooding.
- Internal institutions and organizations working on women and climate change should focus more on training and capacity building of women.

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