
EXPLORING GENDER SUSCEPTIBILITIES IN CLIMATE JUSTICE

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ABSTRACT

Climate change, through the lens of climate catastrophes, is a threat multiplier amplifying social, political, and economic pressures in unstable and conflict-affected environments. Gender is not a neutral variable when discussing policies for mitigation, recovery, and resilience. Climate change disproportionately impacts women and girls, intensifying existing gender disparities and increasing risks to health and safety. During climate crises, women and girls are at an increased risk of gender-based violence, human trafficking, child marriage, and sexual assault. Gender empowerment is a critical element in formulating a wholesome climate change response framework. It is essential to incorporate the gender perspective in climate change policy analysis to ensure the most vulnerable populations are catered. This research examines the top five and bottom five countries on women, peace, and security index and how each mitigates and responds to climate change. The research aims to establish and analyze the link between gender empowerment and climate policy.

Keywords: Climate Policy, Justice, Vulnerability, Gender Disparities, Women Peace and Security Index, and Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

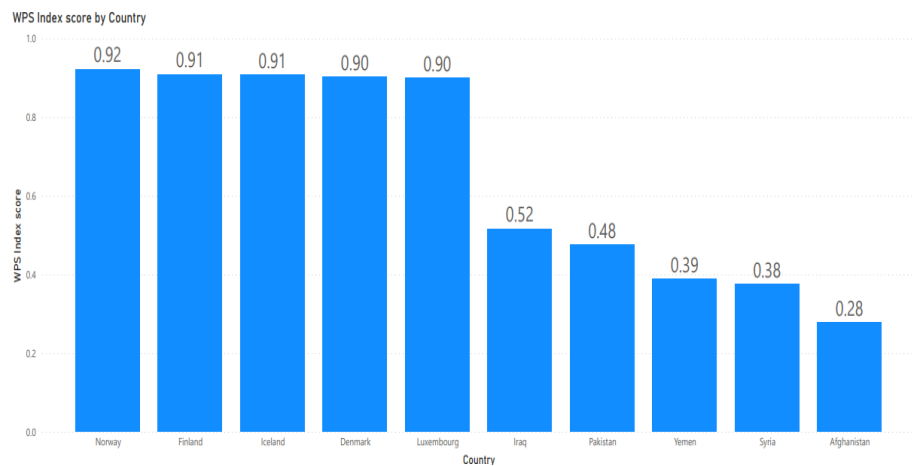
According to the United Nations, in the past two centuries the global average temperature has increased by 1.1 degrees Centigrade (UN, 2023). The long term shift in temperature and weather patterns mean growing temperatures, intense droughts, melting ice, flooding, and rising sea levels amongst other associated phenomena. The growing global temperatures impacts societies in all spheres; political, social, and economic among others. Due to the effects and nature of

climate change, it further intensifies the divide already present in the societies. It is best described as a phenomenon that multiplies the preexisting threats within different realms of an already fragile ecosystem, societal inequalities, class divisions, rising poverty etc. Another element deeply impacted by the climate catastrophe is the gender divide. It has been acknowledged by the UN, that the climate threat we face today is not a gender neutral phenomenon (UN Secretary General, 2008). Individual's ability to adapt and respond to the climate threat varies. These are then further exacerbated by the economic, political and social inequalities that exist within different gender groups (IPCC, 2014). This research aim to touch upon three main areas; it first hopes to address the gender vulnerabilities present within the realm of the climate change sphere, then it would link the relationship between gender empowerment and climate affiliation, and finally it hopes to underline whether or not these have been reflected in the climate policy framework.

The Intergovernmental panel on climate change's 2007 assessment report acknowledges that gender roles define and shape the way in which individuals adapt to and experience vulnerabilities regarding climate change (IPCC, 2007). Particular attention is paid to the sensitivity of rural women in underdeveloped countries, who frequently rely on natural resources for their subsistence, perform the majority of agricultural labour, and have to traverse long distances daily for gathering water, fodder and cattle. All of these aspects of women's life are expected to suffer as a result of climate change. Agriculture, for instance, is becoming more uncertain due to growing climatic unpredictability, and the domestic fuel shortage is being made worse by some regions' ongoing desertification. Women from the lower economic strata of society are more prone to suffer from health issues brought on by "urban heat island" effects, as well as increased susceptibility towards vector-borne illnesses like malaria brought on by variations in temperature and rainfall patterns (UN Population Fund, 2007). Their increased risk and vulnerability is heightened due to lack of information, lack of decision making power, and non-involvement in planning (Rahman, 2013). Threat to their safety and well-being in post disaster spaces is also a focal point of concern. Even within the post disaster stage, female vulnerability can be noted in

forms of sexual harassment, coercion, hygiene issues, child care amongst other things. An analysis of this gender perspective amongst the top leading and bottom nations can be very intriguing.

This paper aims to understand the gender variable within the climate change phenomenon, highlighting the need for incorporating a deeper discussion regarding the implications this would pose for the women. Furthermore, this research tries to find the link between gender empowerment and climate policy. Analysis conducted takes into account the top five and the bottom five countries ranking on the basis of their Women, Peace and Security Index. These countries include Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Finland, and Luxembourg in the top five, and Pakistan, Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, and Iraq in the bottom five.



Source: Data visualization conducted through data sourced from Women, Peace and Security Index (GIWPS, 2023).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a Mixed Methodological approach to form its research design. In an attempt to better grasp the research topic, a mixed methods research design has been applied for the process of gathering, analyzing, and combining both quantitative and qualitative research and methodologies. The data collected for the quantitative portion of the research has been sourced through the World Value Survey (WVS) database Wave 7 (Haerpfer, et.al., 2022). The time period taken into account for the WVS wave 7 ranged from 2017-

2022. The research consists of a series of surveys conducted on a range of different topics. For this study questions on mainly environmental organization membership have been tested against the gender variable. Other data sources used for quantitative analysis include Peace Research Institute Oslo's data on Women, Peace and Security in collaboration with Georgetown institute of women, peace and security (Peace Research Institute Oslo, 2022). Other sources included in the quantitative analysis framework include data collected through the World Bank Knowledge Portal (World Bank Knowledge Portal, 2022).

The Qualitative research element is mainly composed of secondary sources such as research articles, various online web sources, statements from organizations, and various policies by the aforementioned countries regarding climate change and gender.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although the knowledge about the interconnectivity of gender vulnerabilities and growing climate threat is expanding, there is limited research on the triangulation of gender empowerment, gender vulnerability and climate threat. There has been a plethora of case studies conducted in the South Asian context pertaining to the rural Sindh and coastal zones of Bangladesh amongst others. Luke Juran and Jennifer Trivedi's work on natural disaster impacting gender in Bangladesh highlights the magnitude of threats encountered by women. These are primarily due to lack of information, preparedness, mobility, and societal contexts. The lack of roles in decision making is also underlined as a problematic element when discussing the gender variable (Juran and Trivedi, 2015). Research conducted by Centre of international forest research, highlighted the importance of expanding the sphere in which women are key actors in decision making (CIFOR and CGIAR, 2015). This is not only limited to roles in the time at which disasters strike but rather also extends to active participation of women in disaster management and preparation. Literature spotlights the importance of the presence of women in key roles so that their voices and concerns can be heard. Nila Pratiwi, et.al, emphasizes on the importance of information, by default connecting it to the crucial role education of the female masses plays in terms of reducing climate

based threats (Prativi, Rahmawati, & Sentiono, 2016). The authors emphasize on the ways through which greater access to information improves disaster preparedness. Lack of resource control or ownership by women also multiplies vulnerability. This can be linked to an element of class structure and poverty, individuals belonging to a lower income household or strata may experience and suffer the impact of changing climates a lot more so than their wealthier counterparts.

Inequalities in the form of gender-based divisions of labour, where women have historically had numerous duties, are prevalent in poor communities. These inequalities are exacerbated by the consequences of climate change. Fetching water and food production are often the responsibilities of women in the household, and climate change makes it difficult for them to carry out these duties (IUCN, 2023). Women are positioned to take on the duty of caring for sick family members whenever an outbreak of disease occurs, which further increases their duties and workload. Additionally, the migration of males as a result of the catastrophic occurrences adds to the burden placed on isolated women. Women's ability to adapt is limited in undeveloped nations since they frequently lack land control (Lambrou & Piana, 2006). Social norms have a big impact on how women respond to catastrophes since they often have limited mobility. For example, studies show that women are unable to swim during disasters, thereby limiting their abilities of navigating disaster environments (Macdonald, 2005). Social standards and family obligations further reduce women's chances of surviving sudden climatic disasters. Even after a natural disaster, women still have to endure dealing with violence and sexual harassment (Ahmad, 2012).

As per Bari, women in Pakistan are more severely impacted by catastrophes since they have limited mobility outside their villages and completely depend on males for survival. During the rehabilitation phase, wife bashing becomes widespread due to the psychological issues. Thus, highlighting the insecurity faced by women in both disaster and post-disaster phases (Bari, 1998). Birkeland, et.al. highlights that in Pakistan, the "purdah" rules made it difficult for women who had been evacuated by floods to access sanitation facilities, emergency supplies, and physicians, which resulted in

negative effects on their health and cleanliness (Global overview 2011-internal displacement, 2012). Poor rural Afghan women struggle to access financial services, which limits their ability to take advantage of employment opportunities or prepare for the effects of climate change (Afghan Women are close to the Earth, 2009).

Cultural context and the persistent norms further complex and limit women's ability to tackle the climate crisis. It places them at a susceptible position, heightening the already persistent insecurity. The current literature supports the argument that men and women experience the climate crisis differently. It is noted that social obligations, poverty, social norms, lack of financial literacy, among other factors, increase and complicates the vulnerabilities faced by women.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Depending on peculiar cultural, economic, environmental, and social contexts, various individuals will encounter the effects of climate change. According to a number of contemporary studies, social distinction is an important factor in determining susceptibility. Although the integration of the social science framework on the climate debate is an extremely useful strategy, it has been extremely slow. The application and use of feminist theory has been far, few and bounded by geographical constraints. Individuals and organizations are embedded in larger socio-cultural, political, and economic ties. Power dynamics that determine access to resources, knowledge, and the availability of alternatives and choices have a significant impact on one's ability to adapt and respond to change (Tschakert & Machado, 2012).

In discussions on susceptibility and adaptive capacity to climate change, the idea of intersectionality can address some of the critical challenges. In order to counter binary gender analysis, the terminology of intersectionality was initially employed in the early 1990s in the field of critical racial theory. Under the umbrella of intersectionality not only is the phenomenon of gender neutrality opposed, it also defines other parameters within gender categories that would cause women from different strata of society to be differently exposed and affected by climate change. The idea behind intersectionality is that

social categories like race and ethnicity, gender, class are constructed and dynamic.

Within feminist theory, intersectionality has developed and is based on a feminist perspective of power and knowledge creation. It functions as an analytical tool to illuminate the emergence and interaction of power hierarchies. According to Davis, intersectionality is "the interaction between gender, race, and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power (Davis, 2008:67-85). Social structures based on factors including gender, socioeconomic class, ethnicity, nationality, health, sexual orientation, age, and location may be blamed for the responsibility, susceptibility, and decision-making power of people and groups in connection to climate change. Furthermore, the effects of climate change as well as mitigation and adaptation measures may support or undermine existing structures and classifications.

More components of social interactions are being discussed as social factors in climate change research become more widely acknowledged. According to an intersectional perspective, how people interact with climate change is influenced by their status in context-specific power structures that are based on social classifications. Tuana blurs the lines between "social" and "natural", illustratively demonstrating how power dynamics and climate change are intertwined. She adds insight on how the 2005 hurricane Katrina was mediated through materialized and non-materialized power systems in her research of the hurricane, which devastated New Orleans in USA. Tuana places the destruction of New Orleans in relation to various intersecting forms of marginality, arguing that "the knowledge that is too often missing and is often desperately needed is at the intersection between things and people, between feats of engineering and social structures, between experiences and bodies" (Tuana, 2008). People who were marginalized were less likely to be able to evacuate or relocate and had unfavouring prospects if displaced.

Intercommunity relationships as well as complex, national or regional level interactions are recognized by the intersectional multidimensional framework. It covers not just the effects of various

policies at various levels, but also the unequal power relationships between communities that are founded on social identities or are a response to policies. We must remember that this term is still vague and that it has to be defined, as well as to what levels it should be correctly applied, in order to address some of the gender concerns that are at stake in the debates about climate change and other topics (Winker & Degele, 2011).

Intersectionality provides a helpful lens to address the gender variable within the climate crisis spectrum. Women from lower economic standings, belonging to developing countries, namely from the global south are more vulnerable to threats than their northern counterparts. Apart from the fact that the global south is a part of the most vulnerable regions despite contributing little in terms of global emissions, due to economic disparity, political unrest, low level of overall security, and cultural and social norms, women often find themselves at the short end of the stick within the climate debate. Using intersectionality as a theoretical framework of analysis, the study hopes to critically analyze the different elements present within the gender variable under the climate crisis. These include ethnic identity, economic standing, norms and cultural context to name a few. This also involves looking beyond the myopic binaries of gender, and also incorporating the role of women in political public spheres and decision making.

GENDER- CLIMATE NEXUS

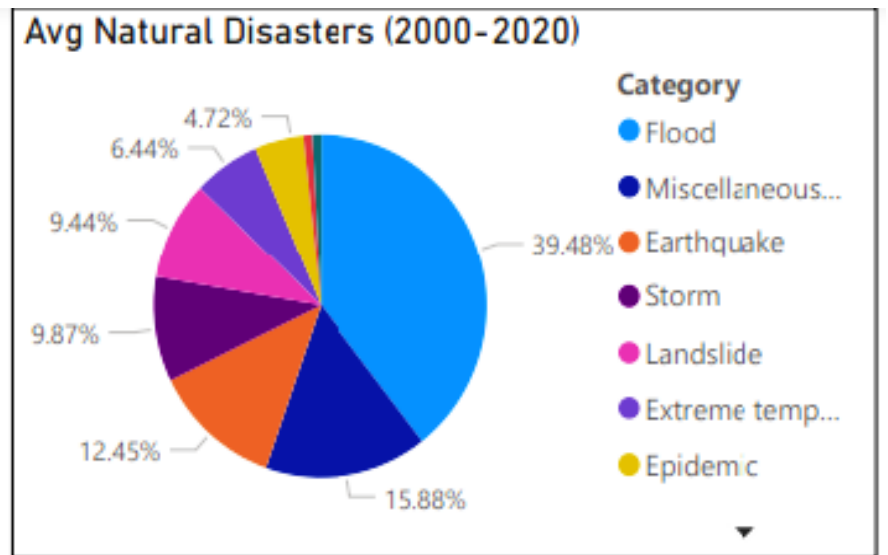
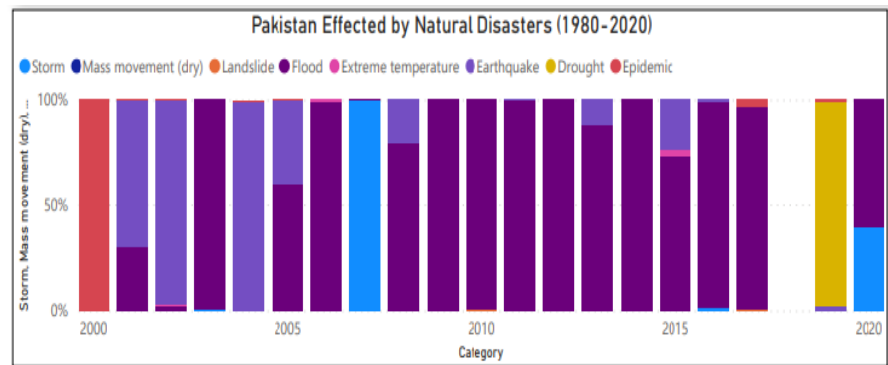
In addition to being a basic right, gender equality is essential for development and breaks the cycle of poverty. Gender equality and women's empowerment were declared development objectives and crucial steps toward achieving the millennium development goals in a General Assembly resolution (UN General Assembly, 2010). In the Sustainable Development Goals 2030, we have the interconnected Goal 5 on Gender Equality, Goal 10 on reduced inequalities and Goal 13 on Climate Action.

While there is a worldwide concern from climate change, we are aware that some nations and social groups, especially women, are likely to bear an unfair share of the burden. Women labour makes up for two thirds of the world's working hours, yet they barely control 1%

of the production means and get only 10% of the global revenue (UN Food and Agriculture Organization, 2011). Women labour is an integral part of agriculture throughout many African nations. We also understand that women in communities have significant information that may be used to address climate concerns. Women are effective and crucial change agents. Therefore women must be included in every phase of adaptation and mitigation activities if they are to be sustainable and wholesome (Das, 1995).

It has now been established that, the climate crisis acts as a conflict multiplier. Climate change can raise the likelihood of violent conflict, put human security at risk, and complicate conflict resolution and peace building efforts in many situations (Barnett & Adger, 2007; Mobjörk & van Baalen, 2016; Krampe, 2019). Due to the inherent disparities they face connected to gender roles in their communities, women and girls are disproportionately affected by the respective and compounding consequences of conflict and climate change in many regions of the world (Coomaraswamy, 2015; Tanyag & True, 2019; United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 2018). On all levels, gender inclusion and equality are associated with lasting peace and more resilient societies; successful conflict prevention calls for consideration of women's experiences and engagement in the social, economic, and political realms. When they arise, security threats connected to the climate should be defined and addressed by women and girls. Therefore, it is important to examine how programming and policy concentrating on gender and security have grown to confront climate change as its effects continue to grow and alter the landscape of peace and security. It's critical to think about how women's and girls' engagement in these initiatives is encouraged in particular (Kronsell, 2019).

Looking at the Pakistan floods in 2022, we can see that women have been particularly impacted by the travesty that took the country by storm. As per the numbers provided by the United Nations Population Fund; Women, young girls, and pregnant women made a significant portion of the affectees. Like much of the global south, Pakistan is one of the most vulnerable countries to the impacts of climate change.



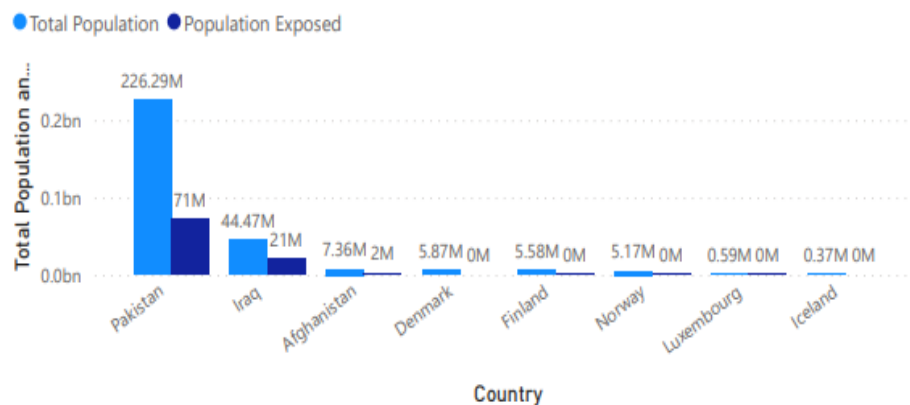
Source: Natural Disasters, Our World in Data (Ritchie, Rosado & Roser, 2022).

Pakistan over the past twenty years has dealt with consistent flooding. On average mass flooding makes up for 39.48% of the overall makeup of Pakistan’s natural disaster patterns. Among the countries known to be most sensitive to climate change is Pakistan. Agriculture, which accounts for over 23% of the GDP, continues to be particularly vulnerable to extreme weather occurrences and their after effects. Almost 7.2 million women work in agriculture in Pakistan, making it the country's largest employer of female workers. But the

majority of their employment is still unofficial, unrecognized, unpaid, and undervalued. Their susceptibility to climatic dangers is made worse by pervasive gender inequality and strict gender standards. The 2010 floods are evidence of this inequity. Women made up 49% of the 1.5 million internally displaced individuals in the Sindh province at the time. In the flood-affected areas, the maternal death rate was 381 per 100,000 live births (Puskur, n.d.). More worse was the situation in the 2022 floods, where the slogan was that what happened in Pakistan will not stay in Pakistan.

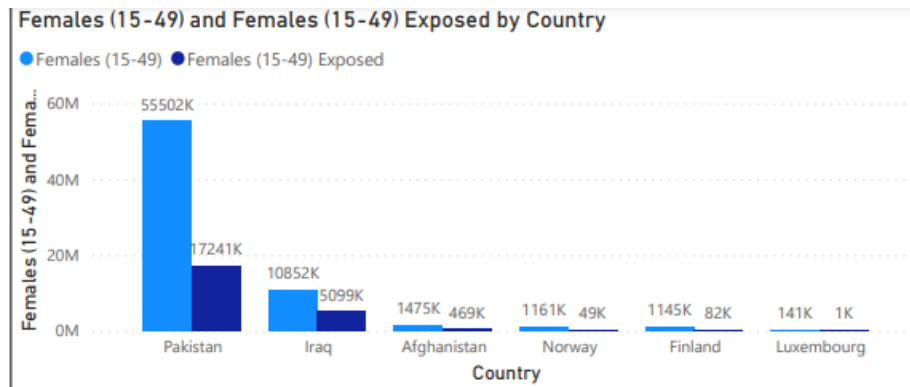
In comparison to the other countries under the WPS index, Pakistan ranks highest in terms of women and girls impacted by flooding. Data gathered from UNFPA when marked against the ten countries namely Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, Syria, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, and Luxembourg showed the following results (Population data portal, n.d.).

Total Population and Population Exposed by Country



Source: Population Data Portal, UNFPA.

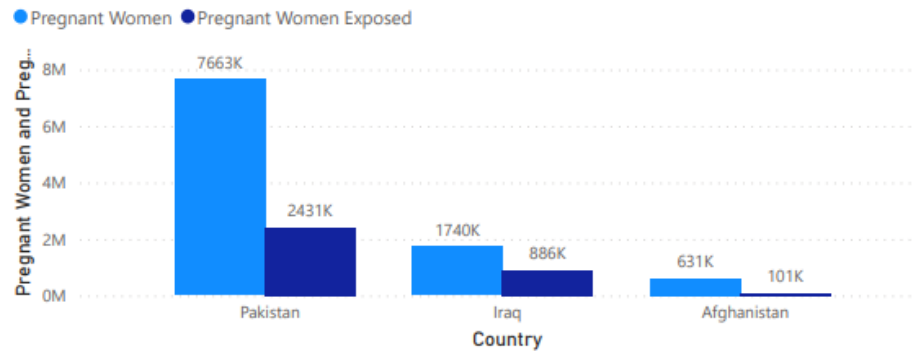
The number of young girls exposed to flood risk also remained highest in Pakistan in comparison to its counterparts that were part of the analysis. Out of a total population of 55502000 females aged 15-49, 17241000 were in some way or form impacted by the calamity. In comparison, Pakistan's counterparts showed low numbers throughout with the top countries showing incredible low numbers in comparison.



Source: Population Data Portal, UNFPA.

Pregnant women also made a vulnerable section of the affected. In the paradigm of gender vulnerabilities the needs and protection of mothers and expecting mothers is crucial.

Pregnant Women and Pregnant Women Exposed by Country



Source: Population Data Portal, UNFPA.

Thus the situation in Pakistan in regards to Climate change is bad and gender vulnerabilities is worst. Together, they pose the greatest challenge to the women in Pakistan and developing nations.

GENDER VULNERABILITIES

There is a substantial and ever-growing body of literature on vulnerability. Although not thorough, this brief discussion aims to position vulnerability as intrinsically complex and cross-disciplinary. Vulnerability is described as being multifaceted in this context and is defined as the lack of physical and ecological traits, natural and human

resources, and social, economic, political, and technical skills that provide protection from the shocks of natural disasters (Juran & Trivedi, 2015).

To tackle climate-centered security issues, it is crucial to adopt a thorough, human security-based strategy. Climate change may exacerbate gender disparities and have a detrimental impact on the security of women. Women will directly be impacted by how human security is impacted by climate change, whether on its own or in conjunction with the consequences of war. Women are and will continue to be disproportionately impacted by climate change in a variety of situations because gender roles and disparities can hinder women's access to resources and mobility, which are necessary for adaptation to its consequences (Seymour Smith, 2020). The capacity of women to own property, inherit estate, or manage natural resources can all be impacted by gender prejudices in various contexts. In the aftermath of natural catastrophes, women's mobility and capacity to obtain aid may be impacted by socio-cultural norms (Sultana, 2014).

Gender vulnerabilities are unique in their nature, the issues birthed by the societal norms attached to female identity and roles defined by society created unlikely seen vulnerabilities. These are then further impacted by factors such as race, ethnicity, class etc. Due to historically restricted access to natural or agricultural resources as well as the deaths of male family members due to violence, families led by women or single women may experience rising food insecurity as well as other difficulties in adjusting to climatic disasters. In addition, women who must travel farther to acquire natural resources in conflict-ridden areas owing to climate change may be even more vulnerable to gender-based violence (Tanyang & True, n.d.).

Women's viewpoints are not adequately taken into account in catastrophe planning, preparation, and management procedures, which is another systematic, institutionalized factor contributing to female vulnerability (Aryabandu & Wickramasinghe, 2004). The challenge with women's vulnerability to natural catastrophes is their lack of decision-making capacity. The underrepresentation of women in decision-making reduces the value of their perspective and creates disparities in freedom of choice before, during, and after disasters. For instance, many women were left waiting for their husbands to get

home during the 1991 cyclone in Bangladesh, forcing them to make decisions on their own about possible family evacuation (Begum, 1993). Many lost their lives at home while waiting for their husbands to come home and decide whether to evacuate or not. This is a practical problem, which seems to be a fiction in the advanced countries of the global South.

Women's primary responsibility as family caregivers places additional dangers and vulnerabilities on them in addition to their reduced decision-making powers. Women are in charge of carrying babies, holding children's hands, and taking care of elderly relatives. Women frequently only have one or no free hands to fight catastrophes because of these obligations, in addition to the possibility of restricted movement in late-stage pregnancy. Women who provide care for children and the elderly often encounter serious difficulties.

Finally, many concerning interviews given to Reuters by women who are forced into prostitution, human trafficking, and other exploitative activities after being uprooted by disasters, acknowledge that Bangladesh's poverty, frequent disasters, and unique geographic context significantly contribute to forcing women into such risky situations (Simonsson, 2018). In general, the post-disaster arena is a setting where women's subordinate status is both reified and exaggerated, resulting in higher illness and death long after the disaster's original effects have subsided (Qasim, 2019).

ANALYSIS - CLIMATE POLICIES

The effects of climate change on men and women vary regarding experience and burden. Despite the fact that Women have a smaller ecological footprint than men, they are forced to bear a largely disproportionate share of the burden of harsh effects resulting from climate change. Experience, expertise, and specialized talents of women are different from those of men; and just as climate change negatively disrupts men's economic activity, climate change also makes women's household work and everyday battle for a living more challenging. The repercussions of climate change endanger people's access to food, their health, and their ability to prosper.

When looking at the policies adopted by the top and bottom five countries we see a stark difference in not only the approach but also in

the vulnerabilities faced by the two. When examining the bottom half we find a lack of National policies regarding climate change. Those countries that have a document outlining their policies (such as Pakistan) have little mention of gender vulnerabilities. Pakistan does acknowledge the difference in how different genders are impacted by the climate crisis. However, it fails to go into depth about the various challenges. Furthermore, it also does not underline a clear plan to deal with the obstacles that are to be faced by the female populace (Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security and Peace Research Institute Oslo, 2021).

Similarly, the other bottom five countries show a similar, if not worst trend. According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2021, Iraq was placed 154th out of 156 nations, with women having fewer chances for economic participation, schooling, and political empowerment. Due to pre-existing gender roles and inequality, which frequently leave women without the same resources and choices for a living as men, women in Iraq are particularly impacted by climate change. Although it is not well known in Iraq how precisely vulnerable women are to climate migration, water-related risks, such as loss of income and increased care giving, frequently have disproportionately negative effects on them. Given that the ability of female-headed families to manage resources and gain access to services is frequently constrained by prevalent social standards, they are likely to be especially susceptible to the impacts of environmental change.

Following in line, Yemen also shows women and girls to be the most vulnerable strata of society. Approximately 73 percent of the more than four million homeless persons in Yemen are women and children. An estimated one million pregnant and nursing women will experience severe malnutrition during a given year. Yemeni women are responsible for providing for undernourished infants while also struggling with their own growing hunger. Five million women and girls are expected to have either little or no access to reproductive health care. Yemen is extremely susceptible to the effects of climate change, including greater storm frequency, unexpected disease epidemics, changes in rainfall patterns, and sea level rise. These are significant issues because the rural natural resources make up a significant part of Yemen's economy. Additionally, more than 75% of

the population lives in rural areas and is employed in farming and pastoralism, making them extremely dependent on a favorable climate to support their way of life.

Afghanistan is not an exception when it comes to gender inequality, and many human rights organizations have even gone so far as to name Afghanistan as one of the worst nations in the world for women to reside in (Nijhowen & Oates, 2023). The contributions Afghan women make to domestic production, children's schooling, and resource management are all too frequently overlooked and underestimated. In Afghanistan, women also disproportionately experience illnesses and deaths brought on by climatic and other natural hazards. This is frequently because they lack access to information and early warning systems, are excluded from planning and decision-making processes, and are subject to cultural norms that limit their freedom of movement and participation in public life (Afghanistan Resilience Consortium, n.d.).

In contrast to this, the top five countries show a much more inclusive approach within their policies. Many of them go as far as including the gender element within their aid policies as well. Iceland's Development Strategy places a priority on natural resources, with a particular focus on energy and fisheries. Like many other industries, the division of labor in fishing is frequently dependent on gender. Men typically conduct the actual fishing while women would commonly handle various onshore roles in the industry. When considering the fishing industry in Iceland, we observe a strong focus on gender equality when developing fisheries-related projects and the allocation of funds to international organizations and initiatives. Additionally, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs & Icelandic International Development Agency (ICEIDA) pushes for additional measures to enhance gender equality in the sector of fisheries and incorporate gender perspectives in cooperation projects. The authorities of ICEIDA's partner nations have been urged to address the negative effects of aquaculture and other fisheries-related issues on the environment.

The Icelandic government seeks to encourage both men's and women's participation in income-generating pursuits. Additionally, it is stressed that gender equality and women's empowerment are incorporated into all facets of development programs, and that both

men and women should participate in decision- and policy-making regarding environmental, resource, and climate change problems (OECD, n.d.). Iceland devotes over 90% of its bilateral collaboration to issues relating to women and over 50% to environmental concerns (UNESCO, n.d.). Human rights, gender equality, and the environment all form a major part in Iceland's economic cooperation.

Luxembourg is committed to implementing strategies to mitigate climate change that prioritize equality, women's and girls' empowerment, and human rights. The country acknowledges that climate change impacts women differently from men and recognizes that empowering women and girls can help in the fight against climate change. To this end, Luxembourg has made it mandatory for projects seeking international climate financing to consider gender inclusion as an eligibility and selection criterion. The country's financing is contingent upon applicants demonstrating compliance with the most stringent human rights standards and engaging with marginalized stakeholders, including those discriminated due to their race, color, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Luxembourg also prioritizes funding that contributes to gender equality and has included a category in its budget to promote gender equality and human rights in the context of climate change. The country also emphasizes gender mainstreaming as an important aspect of cooperation activities, focusing on human rights, gender equality, and environmental stability as cross-cutting priorities (UN Human Rights Office, n.d.).

Much like the other states in the top five, Finland released an Action Plan for Climate Smart Foreign Policy in early 2021, which emphasized human rights, gender equality, and non-discrimination as key topics. The plan includes various actions to promote equality in climate policy, such as assessing the impact of climate action on human rights, highlighting the link between equality and climate change in international forums, empowering environmental activists, and educating officials on the connection between the climate and human rights.

In collaboration with the Global Women and Climate Alliance, Finland launched a unique equality project between 2008 and 2016, which aimed to support female negotiators from the Global South in the new global climate agreement. The project, which received an

annual investment of EUR 1.2 million, was overseen by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Finland is committed to various international agreements related to equality, including recommendation 37 of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, which calls for the consideration of the rights of women and girls in climate change adaptation efforts. According to the Report on Development Policy across Parliamentary Terms, the primary objectives of Finland's development policy, which includes the distribution of developmental money and expert work, are the rights of girls and women. The report recognizes that climate change exacerbates inequality and that gender perspectives are essential to understanding climate issues. All forms of cooperation in Finland prioritize improving the rights and position of women and girls (Equality in the Climate Crisis: How Finland can Promote Gender Equality in the International Climate Policy, Plan International, 2022).

Following suit, the policy "The World We Share" adopted by Denmark in 2021 seeks to establish a safer and more sustainable world without poverty. The main objective of their development cooperation is to generate optimism and support for individuals in the most challenging areas by tackling poverty, inequality, conflict, displacement, irregular migration, and fragility. Furthermore, Denmark aims to lead the fight against climate change and address the imbalances on our planet. In 2022, the government's priorities for development cooperation involved setting ambitious environmental targets, placing greater emphasis on fragile and conflict-ridden states and regions, and encouraging civil rights and public participation (Development and Co-operation Profile, Denmark, OECD, 2022).

We observe the contrasting approaches in the policies adopted by the different nations and their approaches towards the integration of gender into climate policies. There is a constant effort to make the fight against the climate crisis one that incorporates the vulnerabilities of the masses. It acknowledges that the way forward for a more adaptable and safer future is one that is inclusive of all genders. The climate crisis is a fight for equality. It highlights the need for inclusivity in all realms.

LINKAGES-CLIMATE CHANGE POLICIES AND GENDER EMPOWERMENT

Having dilated on the nature of growing gendered vulnerabilities, we move on to possible solutions. A more sustainable policy framework cannot be adopted without the use of tools and policies that elevate women. For a comprehensive way forward it is critical that the disparities and vulnerabilities that plague the current framework are lessened, so that we may take the appropriate steps towards a more sustainable, peaceful and better equipped framework to handle the coming threats.

Using the World Value Survey (World Values Survey Wave 7 2017-2022, 2022), this research connects the gendered variable to associations with environmental organizations within the masses. The world value survey conducts mass surveys to gauge out the responses regarding certain topics. For the purpose of this research we correlated the responses to gender related questions to their likelihood to join environmental organizations (World Value Survey).

Individuals that showed a more positive response also showed higher likelihood to obtain environmental organization membership. Thus, highlighting that better gender empowerment in society also leads to a greater likelihood to understand and take into account the seriousness of the climate threat. It is also important to note that the climate crisis poses a serious threat to the peace and security of women globally. As discussed earlier, the climate crisis is a tool that, by nature, multiplies the already pre-existing inequalities and violence in society.

As per the Women, Peace and Security index, countries that showed higher WPS index generally also showed higher and better scoring in overall justice, education and other factors. As per the WPS Justice analysis, the top five countries showed a higher WPS index score and also portrayed lower discriminatory norms overall. Whereas in comparison countries that allowed for a lower WPS score also showed higher injustice levels, thus, showing that social inequalities impact women's security.

SUGGESTED WAY FORWARD

Incorporating gender into climate change policy is crucial for addressing the differentiated impacts of climate change on women and men. Here are some ways forward for achieving this:

Conduct Gender Analysis: Conducting gender analysis is crucial to identify the differentiated impacts of climate change on women and men, and their access to resources and decision-making power. It helps to determine the most vulnerable groups and the appropriate gender-responsive actions needed.

Engage Women in Decision-Making: Women should be involved in all stages of climate policy development and implementation, including decision-making processes. Their voices should be heard, and their expertise should be integrated into climate policy development.

Build Gender-Sensitive Climate Indicators: The development of gender-sensitive climate indicators is necessary to measure the impacts of climate policies. Such indicators help policymakers to determine the effectiveness of gender-responsive policies.

Allocate Resources: Allocating resources towards gender-responsive policies is essential for creating meaningful change. Funding should be targeted towards gender-responsive programs that promote gender equality in climate action.

Capacity Building: Capacity building is necessary for enhancing the skills of policymakers, civil society organizations, and the private sector on gender-responsive climate action. This should include training on gender analysis, gender-sensitive indicators, and gender-responsive budgeting.

Develop Gender-Responsive Climate Strategies: Governments should develop gender-responsive climate strategies that address the differentiated impacts of climate change on women. Such strategies should prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable groups, including women, girls, and marginalized communities.

CONCLUSION

Climate Change remains one of the most important issues of the present era and more so for the next generations. There is an urgent need to form a sustainable framework that cooperates and includes the gender variable. The emphasis on female participation in public spheres remains the most crucial element, focusing on higher and more prominent decision making skills. Furthermore, equal access to land, resources, information, and education. The root of a more sustainable policy framework lies with the increase of gender empowerment

within these societies. In order to have a comprehensive combat plan for climate change we must look and access all our vulnerabilities. The Gender element in this analysis is critical as it makes up for a large percentage of the masses that are to be affected. The climate crisis highlights the inequalities and injustices that prevail around us. If we fail to assess and correct these, we fail to move towards adapting to the dangers confronting humanities biggest challenge. Thus, amply addressing gender vulnerabilities is crucial to climate justice.

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