



GENDER BASED VIOLENCE INDUCED BY CLIMATE CHANGE

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

DAM	Dhaka Ahsania Mission
DiC	Drop in Center
MHM	Menstruation Hygiene Management
SCAN	Street Children Activist Network
CMC	Community Management Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

INTRODUCTION

Violence Against Women (VAW) is a common global phenomenon, happens both in the east and the west. There is a complex relationship between gender and climate change. Gender issues interface with different facets of climate change. This brief is intended to explore this complex relation with evidence. Climate change is not gender-neutral, it affects women and men differently. Women are generally more vulnerable. Climate change exacerbates existing gender inequalities, often resulting in more negative impacts for women. During and after disasters, women are at greater risk of GBV, including rape, sexual exploitation, and assault.

According to the Global Climate Risk Index (CRI), Bangladesh is the seventh most climate change vulnerable country in the world. In the contrary, Violence Against Women Survey 2015 conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics recommended that gender equality and ending violence against women is crucial for achieving the SDGs.

To find the linkage, the brief will present a comprehensive scenario of GBV in Bangladesh induced by climate change. This brief is based on intensive desk review, all the available online literature and published reports, information from the government on-line portal and narrations have been captured. The helplines administered by the government and NGOs have also been included. The year 2015 and onward data has been considered for this brief.

DEFINITION OF GBV

- ‘Gender-Based violence (GBV) refers to harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender. It is rooted in gender inequality, abuse of power and harmful norms. – UNHCR
- Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life’. –WHO
- The prevalence and the nature of VAW in Bangladesh included five forms of violence: physical violence, sexual violence, economic violence, emotional violence, and controlling behaviour’- [Violence Against Women (VAW) Survey 2015, BBS]

WHAT IS CLIMATE CHANGE?

- Climate change refers to a change in the state of the climate that can be identified (e.g., using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties, and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer.-The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).
- Being a low-lying river delta with a long coastline and floodplains that occupy 80% of the country, Bangladesh’s extreme vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change
- Bangladesh has experienced an average rise in temperature of 0.5°C between 1976 and 2019. By 2050, Bangladesh is expected to experience an increase in temperature of about 1.5°C

INTERSECTION OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND GBV

Addressing gender-based violence and promoting gender equality are fundamental for environmental work that meaningfully contributes to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. As a demographic group, women also have low adaptive capacity, wherein their vulnerability to climate change is increased because

- Women enjoy lower levels of access to financial information and productive resources
- Women are having few assets and inadequate resource bases
- Women face gender-based discrimination on ownership of land and other resources, such as access to credit and technology
- Women and girls are more exposed to and vulnerable to climate change induced disasters on account of socially constraining norms and values
- Women's gender roles (e.g. collecting water and fuel wood) make them more dependent on natural resources that are vulnerable to climate change
- Culturally imposed attire constrains women's mobility, potentially exposing them to dangers during disasters, particularly floods.
- Climate related vulnerability amplify and accelerate pre-existing gender inequalities, exacerbating dispossession, marginalization, and discrimination of women and girls in affected communities.

THE FRAME HOW GBV IS ASSOCIATED CLIMATE CHANGE



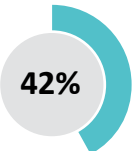
IUCN proposed the following frame to explain the challenges to include GBV in the climate change programs



Security issues



Lack of access to data and information



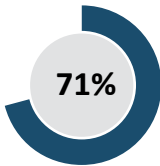
Lack of access to manuals / tools



Unsure of how to work with gender and GBV



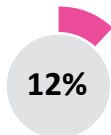
Financial constraints



Staff lack of understanding of how GBV may relate to environmental projects



it is not considered a priority / important in my office / programme



Others

Data from: IUCN(2020)

STATISTICS: BANGLADESH CONTEXT

- Bangladesh ranks 4th in VAW by intimate partner, 50% of women aged 15- 49 have experienced physical or sexual violence by their partners during their lifetime (WHO, March 2021)
- 72.6% of ever married women experience any form of violence by their husband at least once in their life time, Physical violence (49.6%), Emotional violence (28.7%), Sexual violence (27.3%), Economic violence (11.4%). (Violence Against Women Survey 2015, BBS)
- The prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is about 45.29%, where 44.12% are emotionally abused, 15.29% physically, 10.59% sexually, and 19.22% are abused either physically or sexually (Journal Heliyon, Volume 7 Issue 3, March 2021)
- Bangladesh has the 4th highest child marriage rate in the world, 1st in South Asia, 52% girl child are getting marriage before they reach their 18th birthday (UNICEF State of the Worlds' Children 2015)
- 96% women are harassed in public transport and public spaces. (BRAC and BRAC University 2017)
- 14% of the RMG women workers experience sexual harassment at their workplace and 19% on their ways. (MJF, 2018)
- 98.58% women experience sexual indication and 45.19% have the experience of any form of sexual violence at their workplace. In most of the cases the abusers are their

managers, supervisors or the recruiters. (Girls Advocacy Alliance of PLAN International and the Hunger Project, 2020)

- In year 2019, from January to June, 826 children became the victims of rape or any other form of sexual violence. Among them 224 girl child were after being raped.
- 79% among the digital platform users are the victims of cyber bullying. Among them 53% are women who women experienced GBV on online platform. (Prothom Alo & Plan/ November 2020)
- 165 women murdered by their husband during January-August 2021 (Ain o Salish Kendra)
- 978 women raped, 35 deaths after rape, 230 attempts to rape, 8 committed suicide during January-August 2021(Ain o Salish Kendra)
- For dowry, 90 women are physically tortured, 52 tortured to death, 100 cases filed during January-August 2021 (Ain o Salish Kendra)

MYTHS RELATED TO GBV THAT NEEDS TO BREAK

- Poverty, war or disaster leads to attack on and abuse women
- The perpetrators of violence are a minority group of men with mental health issues
- Gender-based violence is caused by substance abuse such as alcohol drugs etc
- Gender-based violence is an inevitable part of intimate partner relations

- Violence against women is an inherent part of maleness or a natural expression of male sexual urges.
- In humanitarian disasters, life-saving interventions, like food and shelter, are more critical than responses to sexual and gender-based violence.¹

15 TYPES OF ABUSIVE BEHAVIORS AGAINST WOMEN:

1. Restriction from the company of friends
2. Restrict from going to parental house
3. Insist on knowing (with suspicious mind)
4. Ignore feelings and opinions
5. Become angry if partner speaks with relative or non-relative males
6. Suspicious and consider the partner unfaithful
7. Expect to ask permission before seeking health care
8. Force to maintain veil/hijab (Parda)
9. Obstruct studies or employment
10. Forbid in going out for recreation
11. Utter attacking words against partner's parents
12. Force to use contraceptive method for birth control or forbid using it
13. Misbehave for giving birth to a girl child
14. Misbehave due to complain of mother-in-law or sister-in-law or other family members
15. Get angry without any reason

¹ *Shattering five myths about sexual violence in emergencies/UNFPA/August 2017*

HOW THE CLIMATE CHANGE ACTS AS A REASON FOR INCREASING GBV IN BANGLADESH:

- Sexual exploitation in the form of human trafficking has notably increased in the region following natural disasters. After Cyclone Sidr struck Bangladesh in 2007, criminal networks forced some women and girls into prostitution along the Indian border. ²
- Child marriages increased after Cyclone Sidr, as a means of reducing families' financial burdens.
- Increase of child marriages include maintaining the honor of male relatives who may have lost their livelihoods to climate events and to “protect” girls from sexual harassment in the cities to which families have migrated. ³
- During flood 2020, 3.3 million people affected in 21 Districts more than 50% are women and girls (1.7 million); of them 84,195 are Female Headed Households and 101,000 are pregnant women; and 1.6 lac are girls aged between 5 and 18.
- Gender Based Violence has been in the upward trend since March this year due to COVID and lock down conditions.
- Flood shelters accommodating around 25,377 women, likely for a prolonged period of stay, are inadequately equipped to offer protection measures for women and girls. Inadequate safety provisions in shelters, such as

² *CLIMATE CHANGE AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: WHAT ARE THE LINKS? / Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR) Helpdesk*

³ *CLIMATE CHANGE AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: WHAT ARE THE LINKS? / Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR) Helpdesk*

absence of separate toilet, unavailability of sanitary napkins and soaps, inadequate lights etc. ⁴

- Pandemic-related travel restrictions and physical distancing make it difficult for girls to access the health care, social services and community support that protect them from child marriage, unwanted pregnancy and gender-based violence.
- As schools remain closed, girls are more likely to drop out of education and eventually got married under the legal age.
- The COVID-19 consequences alarmingly increased GBV. 4,249 women and 456 girl child in total experienced GBV in the first two months of COVID-19 appeared in Bangladesh. 672 women and 424 children who participated in the survey never experienced violence before. (MJF)
- According to Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), at least 13,886 girls in 21 districts were victims of CM between April and October 2020. Of the total 48% were between 13 to 15 years old. (MJF)
- BRAC found that CM increased by 13% due to Corona pandemic in a survey conducted in 11 districts, 85% marriage conducted due to uncertainty of future with girls, 71% for closure of schools and 62% for getting good match for the girls.
- In April 2020 Child Helpline 1098 received 450 phone calls related to CM.

⁴ *Preliminary Rapid Gender Analysis of Monsoon Flood 2020/Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group*

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

- Governments and environmental organizations need to better understand the linkage between gender-based violence and climate change
- Continuous effort needed for raising awareness on the intersections between climate change and SRHR
- Need to apply a human right and social-justice based approach to climate action that includes the full range of SRHR
- Need advanced legal protections and to take gender-specific risks into account in the policies and interventions
- Address GBV in environmental work, polices, standards and safeguards should include GBV feedback
- Throughout project cycles of any climate change related project, gender analyses should be conducted to identify GBV and develop preventative and responsive measures
- Governments and environmental organizations should partner with humanitarian and health organizations that have knowledge and expertise on GBV to develop environmental policies and projects
- Invest in knowledge and solutions. While we know that GBV is exacerbated by environmental degradation and environmental crime, many gaps in our understanding remain
- Public and private environment and gender-focused funders should prioritize research that enables evidence-based action, investing in promising practices that can be developed, replicated and scaled up.

LIST OF NGOS AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS: WORKING ON GBV IN BANGLADESH

- National Violence against Women Forum (Action Aid Bangladesh)
- Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK)
- Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (Blast)
- BRAC
- Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers' Association (BNWLA)
- Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP)
- ManusherJonno Foundation (MJF)
- National Girl Child Advocacy Forum (NGCAF)
- Acid Survivors Foundation
- Dhaka Asania Mission (DAM)
- PLAN
- UNFPA
- UNWOMEN
- WHO

ACTS AND LEGAL MECHANISMS ADDRESSING SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN BANGLADESH

- The Children's Act, 1974.
- The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1980
- The Cruelty to Women (Deterrent Punishment) Ordinance, 1983
- Nari O Shishu (Bishesh Bidhan) Ain, 1995
- Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Daman Ain, 2000 (as amended in 2003 and 2020)
- The Acid Control Act, 2002 and
- The Acid Crime Control Act, 2002.
- Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2017
- Dowry Prohibition Act, 1980
- Nari O Shishu Tribunals
- Acid Tribunals
- Bangladesh approved capital punishment against rape in 2020 by amending the Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Daman Ain, 2000 Act

THE FOLLOWING INITIATIVES ARE AVAILABLE FOR SUPPORT FOR SEXUAL VIOLENCE SURVIVORS:

- One-stop Crisis Centre
- National Trauma Counselling centre
- One stop Crisis Cell
- National Helpline Centre for Violence against Women and Children
- Victim Support Centre
- Women Support and Investigation Division, Bangladesh Police
- Women-Friendly Hospital Initiatives

HOTLINE AND PROTECTION MECHANISM

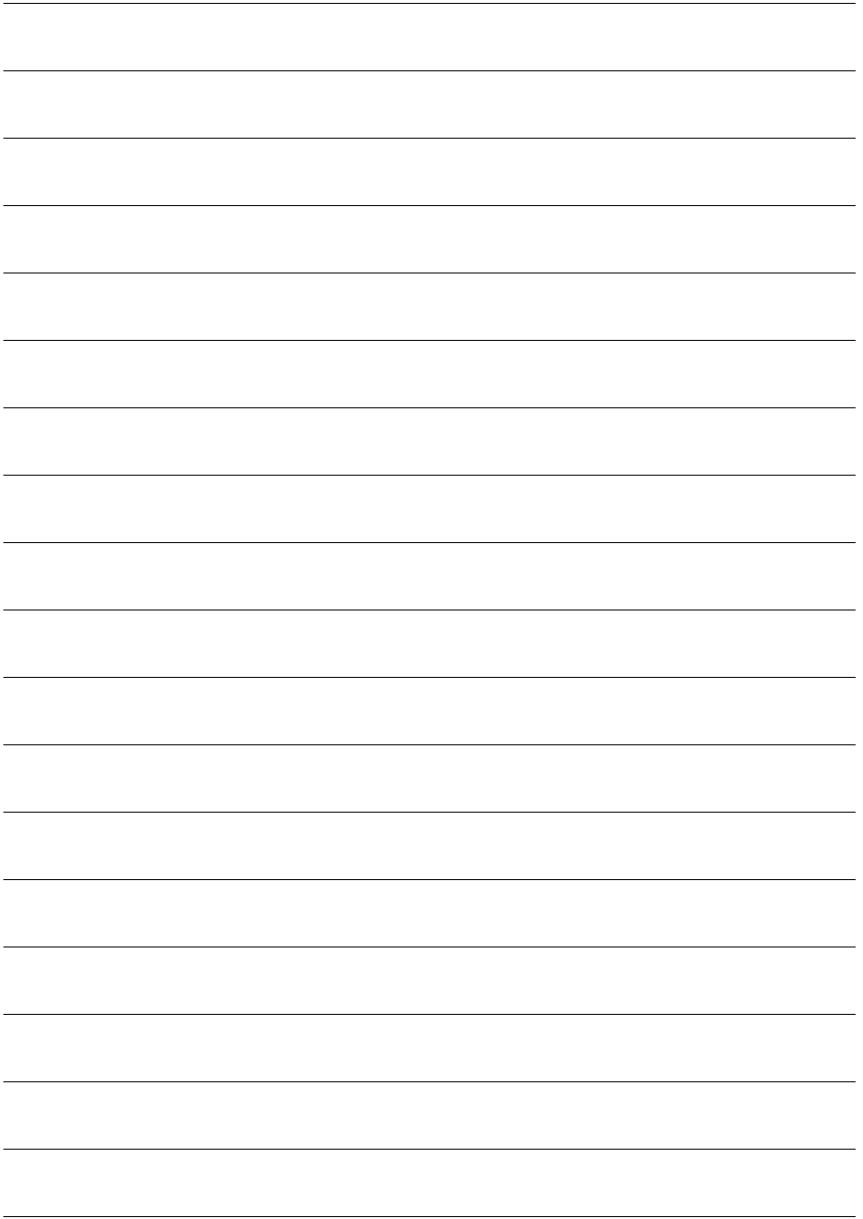
Helpline Number	Name of Organization	Description/Details
109	Government helpline number for Violence against women/ prevention of child marriage	Multi sectoral referral and psychosocial support
999	National Emergency Hotline Number	Immediate services to police and hospitals
333	National Hotline Number	Immediate reports/help for any social problems from enquiring after COVID 19 to child marriage and sexual harassment cases
1098 (Child Helpline)	A toll-free Child Helpline to provide a free telephone service to children facing violence, abuse and exploitation.	Enables anyone to report child rights violations, child abuse, exploitation or any other act of disruption to the protection of children
10921	National helpline center for violence against women	Immediate service to victims and links up to relevant agencies: doctors, counselors, lawyers, DNA experts, police officers
Police Cyber Support for Women (PCSW)	PCSW is a Facebook page run by Police Headquarters, Bangladesh Police.	It works to ensure safe cyberspace for women providing necessary advice and legal assistance toward female victims.
01779554391/ 01779554392	Kaan Pete Roi	Mental Health & Psychosocial helpline
01688709965/ 01688709966		Mental Health & Psychosocial helpline

Helpline Number	Name of Organization	Description/Details
01985275286		Mental Health & Psychosocial helpline
01852035634		Mental Health & Psychosocial helpline
01517969150		Mental Health & Psychosocial helpline
01776632344	Moner Bondhu	Mental Health & Psychosocial helpline
9678771511; 01777771515 (9 am-5 pm);	Sajida Foundation	Mental Health & Psychosocial helpline
9612600600	Dosh Unisher Mor Helpdesk for GBV/SRHR/ psychosocial support	Mental Health & Psychosocial helpline
01724415677 (9 am-5pm)	Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK)	Legal assistance, emergency shelter and mental healthcare
01714048418 (SRHR); 01771 444666 (legal)	Bandhu Social Welfare Society (In collaboration with Ministry of Social Welfare)	Psychosocial support as well as guideline for SRHR and legal aspects
01880081111 (24/7 Helpline) based in Cox's Bazar	Friendship Bangladesh	Advices on primary healthcare, SGBV and psychosocial support
01888066747 (For Chittagong Region, including Cox's Bazar district); 01869859757 (For Dhaka and rest of the districts)	Action Against Hunger (ACF BD)	Psychosocial support and case management

Source: <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/focus-areas/end-violence-against-women/shadow-pandemic-evaw-and-covid-response/list-of-helplines>

REFERENCE

1. Violence Against Women Survey 2015, BBS
2. 'Prevalence and associated factors of intimate partner violence (IPV) against women in Bangladesh amid COVID-19 pandemic' Journal Heliyon, Volume 7 Issue 3, March 2021 March 2021 by Istihak Rayhan and Khaleda Akter
3. 'Roads free from sexual harassment and crash for women', BRAC and BRAC University, March 2018
4. Why climate change fuels violence against women: JANUARY 28, 2020
5. CLIMATE CHANGE AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: WHAT ARE THE LINKS? by Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR) Helpdesk



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