



Climate Adaptation and Resilience  
(CARE) for South Asia Project

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**Gender Inclusive Climate Resilient  
Agriculture in Bangladesh: A Review of  
Policies and Practices**  
2023



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# List of Acronyms

<b>ADB</b>	Asian Development Bank
<b>BCCRF</b>	Bangladesh Climate Change Resilience Fund
<b>BCCSAP</b>	Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan
<b>ccGAP</b>	Climate Change Gender Action Plan
<b>CFF</b>	Climate Fiscal Framework
<b>CIF</b>	Climate Investment Fund
<b>CPD</b>	Centre for Policy Dialogue
<b>CSA</b>	Climate-smart Agriculture
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations
<b>FY</b>	Fiscal Year
<b>FYP</b>	Five-Year Plan
<b>GAP</b>	Gender Action Plan
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GFP</b>	Gender Focal Point
<b>GGCA</b>	Global Gender and Climate Alliance
<b>GRB</b>	Gender-responsive Budget
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>MoA</b>	Ministry of Agriculture
<b>MoEF</b>	Ministry of Environment and Forest
<b>MoEFCC</b>	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
<b>MoF</b>	Ministry of Finance
<b>MoP</b>	Ministry of Planning
<b>MoWCA</b>	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
<b>MTBF</b>	Mid-term Budget Framework
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>WB</b>	World Bank
<b>WEDO</b>	Women's Environment and Development Organization

# Executive Summary

The Global Climate Risk Index (GCRI) 2021 has ranked Bangladesh as the 7th most climate-vulnerable country in the world. Located in the delta of three major river basins, Bangladesh is extremely vulnerable to climate events such as tropical cyclones, floods, thunderstorms, and droughts. These events have significant social and economic impacts, particularly on the country's poorest; including women and marginalized communities. These communities live across diverse agroclimatic zones, and their vulnerability has increased due to climate change (WB and GFDRR 2021).

This study was undertaken primarily to review and assess key documents such as policies, plans, and strategies related to agriculture and climate change through a gender lens, in order to promote gender equality in climate-resilient agriculture in Bangladesh. The review assessed 14 policy documents pertaining to agriculture and climate change, using gender inclusion criteria previously used by the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) and others (WEDO 2016; Aura et al. 2017; Paudyal et al. 2019).

The study notes that the Government of Bangladesh has demonstrated a strong commitment to climate change adaptation and mitigation, and that an allocation of significant resources has been made for several climate change-related projects and programs. However, gender equality-related initiatives remain significantly under-budgeted, and women and indigenous groups are viewed only as vulnerable groups, and not as agents of change possessing knowledge and experience which help address the impacts of climate change.

This review also identifies a gap in terms of recognition of gender considerations, in setting priorities and building synergy, and an absence of cross-linkages between gender, climate change, and agriculture-related sectors. Most of the reviewed policy frameworks and plans are not supported by gender analysis and lack references to the provision of women's participation and engagement in planning, budgeting and monitoring processes across all governance levels.

The gender equality agenda is not prioritized in most of the policy discussions, project planning, and progress reviews, because there is no feedback mechanism for gender-related concerns and challenges. Moreover, the capacity of relevant staff of the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) and Department of Livestock Services (DLS) is limited to leading the gender equality agenda within the departments.

Other gaps are: not having functional GFPs with the necessary technical capacity across institutions, and the absence of assessment of GFPs' roles and responsibilities to enhance institutional coordination. The study recommends addressing the gaps at two levels: policy development and institutional.

Key policy-level recommendations include: the urgent need for additional investments in evidence-based gender research and data analytics regarding how present climate-smart measures have improved the resilience of women and other vulnerable groups; ensuring provisions for establishing a gender-sensitive approach, especially during the updating of agriculture policies and plans and throughout the entire policy process, through the mandatory participation of women, etc.

Similarly, at the institutional level, the following recommendations are suggested: Immediate need to establish gender monitoring cells within the MoF, MoP, MoEFCC, and MoWCA to track project-specific gender budgets for climate change; Developing a budget-tracking framework and gender mainstreaming roadmap with a monitoring and evaluation system to track progress; Improving the understanding of GFPs on climate action and that of CCFPs on gender budgeting; Strengthening technical capacities of GFPs on mainstreaming gender considerations and gender-responsive budgeting; Provisions needed for gender-sensitive extension services targeting women at local levels as the key agents of climate change in order to strengthen resilience.



# 1 | INTRODUCTION



*Women's key domain -Winnowing*

*Photo by HM Shahidul Islam/ Shutterstock.com*



## 1.1 Background

Bangladesh's agriculture sector is under threat from climate change, which could cause up to 70 percent loss of rice yield in the coming years (WB 2019). This is due to a combination of geographical and socioeconomic factors, including low-lying delta and coastal areas, high population density, levels of poverty, and lack of adequate infrastructure (Sirazoom et al. 2021). A decreasing trend in rice production and declining GDP have resulted in serious problems like food and nutrition insecurity, lack of assets, and vulnerability, particularly among those who are heavily dependent on agriculture.

In many parts of Bangladesh, agriculture is the primary occupation of women and many ethnic groups such as Santals, Chakmas, and Garos, who have been working as agricultural laborers for centuries. In any form of climate event, women are the most vulnerable and bear the worst effect; while they play the central role in adaptation to climate change (MoEF 2013). However, women's participation in climate change initiatives in Bangladesh remains largely shaped by gender divisions of labor, social norms, and customary traditions (Tanjeela and Rutherford 2018).

In some cases, due to male out-migration, women's roles are changing from those of unpaid family workers to active managers of livestock and poultry farms. They are more likely to switch from one livelihood option to another as a coping mechanism. There have been cases in Bangladesh where women quit rice farming and opted for duck farming instead, until they were given access to flood-resistant varieties of rice (Shabib and Khan 2014).

Climate change impacts on agriculture perpetuate existing social and gender inequalities, pushing women further towards poverty and vulnerability. The COVID-19 crisis significantly impacted the agriculture sector because of prolonged lockdowns, restrictions on movement and transportation, and labor shortages throughout the supply chain. As a result, an overall 7 percent loss in yield is estimated (Das et al. 2020).

Women's access to productive resources, information, and participation is mostly determined within their socio-cultural setting. Inadequate access to land, credit, market, and information, as well as lack of representation and participation, are all major barriers for women farmers hoping to benefit from climate-smart agriculture (CSA). Gender-specific measures to address these barriers can help increase production and women's access to benefits, and in building resilience to climate change (ADB 2020).

There has been a growing consensus about the strong linkages between advancing gender equality and progress toward sustainable development by establishing a closer relationship between climate-resilient agriculture and rural women's economic empowerment.

It is imperative that climate-resilient agriculture target women as essential stakeholders, harness their knowledge and potential, and empower them to contribute to poverty reduction, sustainable development, and climate action.

For instance, emissions from household energy use and smallholder agriculture could be significantly reduced if women who are managing household energy and food resources are provided with more efficient technology, are trained in sustainable farming, and are empowered to lead their communities toward sustainable development (Adams et al. 2014).

A lack of gender-responsive policies, strategies and action plans may further reinforce existing gender inequalities that have created disparities in access and control over resources, services, information, training and decision-making. Gender-responsive policy and action plans supported by institutional capacity strengthening mechanisms and budgets are key steps towards gender equality, which is important for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Of all SDGs, at least 11 require specific indicators related to social and gender dynamics. For example, working towards SDG 2, 5, and 13 (Zero Hunger, Gender Equality, and Climate Action, respectively) requires a holistic approach towards building adaptive capacity and resilience of climate-vulnerable population, including women, by supporting them through gender-responsive policies and practices.

To fully integrate the gender agenda into climate-resilient agriculture, it is vital to enforce gender-responsive policies, strategies, and action plans to harmonize gender mainstreaming across governance levels, supported by operational coordination mechanisms and budget. Thus, the gender mainstreaming process enables countries to increase their ambitions on climate action by ensuring that Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are as effective and just as feasible, by considering social factors (UNFCCC 2021).

Bangladesh government's commitment to promoting and supporting gender equality in climate-resilient agriculture has been expressed firmly through the development of a number of crucial documents, such as: the Climate Change Gender Action Plan (ccGAP) in 2013, National Women Development Policy (2011), Bangladesh 8th Five Year Plan (2020- 2025), Bangladesh Country Investment Plan for Environment, Forestry and Climate Change (2016 - 2021), Bangladesh Climate Fiscal Framework (2020), Third National Communication of Bangladesh to the UNFCCC (2018), etc.

Moreover, the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MoFL) are overseeing agriculture and livestock-related affairs, whereas the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) provides support towards mainstreaming gender considerations in policies, projects, and programs, building capacity and monitoring performance as necessary.

Though attempts are made, implementation of gender-responsive climate actions remain a challenge and Bangladesh requires further efforts to meet the sectoral targets set under the Paris Agreement for 2030.

Closing gender gaps in agriculture in the context of climate change through investment in climate-resilient agriculture will not just open a window of opportunity for women's empowerment and resilience; it will prevent rural women from falling into a downward spiral of vulnerability and poverty.

Moreover, addressing gender gaps is also important for attaining strategic and economic development goals from human rights and equality perspectives. Climate-resilient agriculture is defined as the ability of an agricultural system to maintain viability in the face of climate variability and extremes (Eeswaran et al. 2021 and Huyer et al. 2021).

Climate-resilient agriculture has been interchangeably used with climate-smart agriculture in this study primarily because, in the South Asian context, the CSA approach has emerged as a paradigm for adapting agriculture to the changing climate. CSA is an approach that aims to sustainably increase productivity while helping farmers adapt their farming systems to climate change and manage climate risks more effectively. It promotes three objectives: sustainably increasing productivity, building the resilience of farming systems, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions (World Bank, FAO, IFAD 2015; Campbell et al. 2016).

CSA has the potential to bridge the gender gap by providing a range of benefits to women. For CSA to be gender-responsive, differences in priorities and the abilities of women and men to adopt new practices need to be considered (Huyer et al. 2021). When women are able to access CSA technologies and climate information, they can be just as inclined to implement CSA practices as men (Gumucio et al. 2020; Huyer et al. 2021). Gender-responsive actions are, therefore, integral to effective adaptation strategies, and approaches are needed to ensure that gender equality and women's concerns in climate-resilient agriculture are addressed.

This study has been conducted as part of the Climate Adaptation and Resilience (CARE) for South Asia project supported by the World Bank. The overall objective of the project is to contribute to an enabling environment for climate-resilient policies and investments in agriculture, transport, water, planning, and finance sectors in South Asia.

## 1.2 Scope and objectives

The geographical scope of the study is at the federal level. The study reviewed and assessed national-level key policy documents related to climate change and agriculture. Knowledge generated by this study holds significance for policymakers and practitioners in developing future gender-responsive policies, strategies, and action plans.

Specific gender gaps identified by the study and suggested recommendations offer a window of opportunity for relevant ministries and departments like the Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Agricultural Extension, Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change, and Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, toward effective implementation of policies, plans, and strategies, with due consideration to inclusivity. The findings also present an opportunity for convening national policy dialogue to further discuss national climate change gender action plan commitments on sectoral strategies and investment plans, and addressing climate impacts with a gender-informed approach.

This review is guided by the following specific objectives

1. To review agricultural and climate change policies, plans, and strategies through a gender lens
2. To assess gaps with respect to the inclusion of gender considerations in agriculture and climate change-related policies
3. To provide recommendations for promoting gender equality with regard to future policies, plans, and strategies

## 1.3 Methodology

The review and assessment are based on the literature and primary data collection through key informant interviews (KIIs) and stakeholder consultations, in order to gain a deeper insight into policy and institutional gaps and implementation challenges. KIIs and stakeholder consultations were undertaken during the 3rd and 4th quarters of 2021. All consultations were carried out at the national level.

The review and assessment adopted a four-step methodology. The first step involved accessing key sectoral documents, such as policies, strategies, frameworks, etc. The second step involved a content analysis to understand how gender considerations have been integrated into the texts of policy documents.

In the third step, documents in the review were assessed and analyzed against the gender inclusion criteria previously used by the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) and others (WEDO 2016; Aura et al. 2017; Paudyal et al. 2019). The criteria were adapted and refined accordingly to suit the country context for this assessment.

The fourth step entailed verification of the facts with the relevant key informants through consultations and dialogues. Before finalization, the draft report was presented in a stakeholder consultation workshop to receive feedback and all the inputs were incorporated. The gender inclusion criteria used for assessing the policy documents are as follows.

### **1. Reference to gender and/or women in agricultural and climate change policy documents**

This criterion includes the context for the reference to gender and/or women and the way the reference is made in policy documents. For example, are they being referred to as direct beneficiaries and stakeholders, as agents of change, or only as vulnerable groups.

### **2. Recognition of gender differentiated-impacts of climate change in agriculture**

Recognition of gender-differentiated impacts of climate change in agriculture criterion examines how women's roles in agriculture are being identified in the policy document and whether the policy document highlights the specific impacts of climate change on female and male farmers. For instance, whether the policy has considered the uneven impact of climate change on men and women because of their traditional gender roles and their differentiated access to and control over productive resources.

### ***3. Gender-sensitive policy provision for climate change adaptation in agriculture***

This criterion represents the extent to which gender-sensitive provisions for adaptation are mentioned in the policy. This focuses not only on recognized gender-differentiated impacts of climate change in agriculture, but also on specified necessary measures for adaptation with proper plans for, and allocation of, resources based on women's vulnerability and adaptive capacity.

### ***4. Provision of women's participation and engagement in planning, budgeting, and monitoring***

This criterion includes any citation that suggests measures to improve women's participation, as one of the key stakeholders. This criterion facilitates to assess whether any policy provisions are suggested to ensure equal representation and participation of men and women in policy planning, budgeting, monitoring, and implementation.

## **1.4 Limitation**

Given the structure and scope of the project, the study is confined to the review and assessment of national-level policies through a gender lens to understand the policy and institutional gaps and challenges that hinder achieving gender equality in climate-resilient agriculture. The study was limited to the extent of availability of information, based on secondary data, especially federal policy documents, and other relevant literature focused on climate change in relation to agriculture. Due to COVID-19-related restrictions, most of the key informants' interviews were carried out virtually, with key experts from government and non-government institutions.



2

# GENDER-DIFFERENTIATED IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN AGRICULTURE

*Happy Harvest*

*Photo by HM Shahidul Islam/Shutterstock.com*





The impacts of climate change are gendered. The perspective of gender-differentiated vulnerabilities is linked to natural hazards in Bangladesh. For example, in the case of flooding, collecting drinking water and fuel becomes extremely challenging as women, often burdened with the task of carrying out these activities, become disproportionately vulnerable from spending time wading through unsafe waters (UN Women and IUCN 2022).

Women face the risks of the additional burden of unpaid workload, low level of nutrition, and health hazards with the loss of livestock and crops (WB 2019), and bear psychological stress related to household income and food insecurity. Climate vulnerability increases health insecurity, loss of livelihoods and infrastructure, and production risks to agriculture and food security in Bangladesh (MoDMR 2020).

Vulnerabilities and implications for women and men due to climate change are different in the case of adaptation and resilience. Any emergency exacerbates violence and conflict, and the manifestation of systematic inequalities between men and women (World Bank 2021). Therefore, the evidence on differential climate change impacts faced by women and men—in terms of roles, needs, knowledge, and responses—is essential for identifying and contributing to sustainable solutions for climate change adaptation and resilience-building pathways (GGCA 2016).

Gender-differentiated vulnerabilities and impacts reflect and reinforce gender relations, alter social relations, and increase risks related to economic and social well-being and participation in community decision-making (Hans et al. 2021). Most importantly, the COVID-19 pandemic has further deepened inequalities in the market-related economy and value chain, including access to resources (land, water), and other basic services (FAO et al. 2021).

Figure 1 demonstrates the impact of climate change aggravating pre-existing socio-economic vulnerabilities. During and after disasters, women tend to remain in their native places and continue to deal with environmental stress, while men migrate to search for jobs. Gender impacts in the changing context of climate are the result of access to social, economic, environmental, political, and technological resources, and exclusion from the decision-making process for adaptation and coping (ibid).

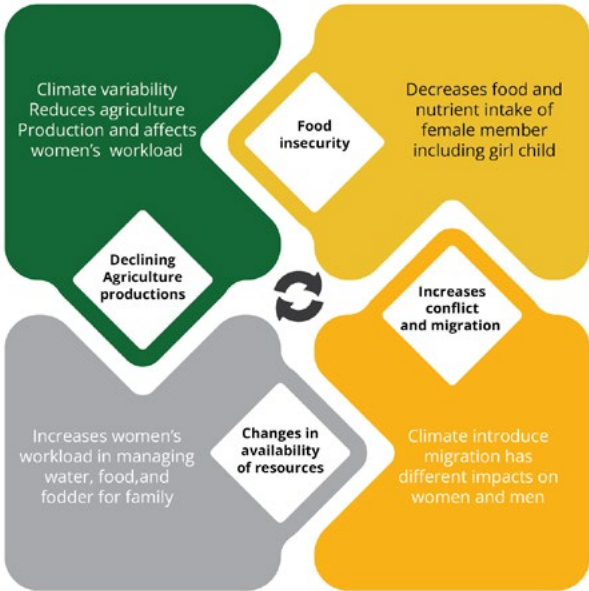


Figure 1: Gender-differentiated impacts of climate change in an agrarian society

Source: (Hans et al. 2021)

Poverty, inequality and gender power dynamics are the important external factors that tend to magnify the negative effects of other drivers of gender inequality in Bangladesh. These drivers are unequal access to assets and services as well as information and technology, and limited participation and low decision-making.

Disasters caused by climate change disproportionately affect women and girls because of their limited access to resources and decision-making processes (UN Women and IUCN 2022). Therefore, policies, strategies and programs, need to strengthen women’s active participation in recognizing their indigenous knowledge, experiences, skills and practices living with disasters, in the context of multiple socio-cultural and gender inequalities.

### 2.1 Assets and services

Even though women in Bangladesh significantly contribute to agriculture and occupy more than 40 percent of the workforce, they lack relative access to land, information and extension services, credit, improved agricultural technologies, etc.

FAO’s gender and land rights database shows that women own only 10.1 percent of Bangladesh’s agricultural land in terms of area (FAO n.d.). The most significant difference is in land holdings, with husbands owning 96 percent of total household land. Husbands exclusively own much larger amounts of land than wives, and than is owned jointly by husbands and wives (Quisumbing et al. 2017; Solotaroff et al. 2019).

Since most women do not have legal titles to land and other household assets, they are denied access to formal financial services. Besides, banks and financial institutions require female-headed households to find a guarantor. For example, a single woman has to find a male guarantor and those who do not have any documents to mortgage need a guarantor to avail financial services.

### 2.2 Participation and decision-making

Only a third of rural women in Bangladesh get any chance to participate in the decision-making process. For example, their participation in decision-making related to crop production, sale of produced crops, and fish cultivation have been found to be low compared to their male counterparts. Although women are found to be most active in income-generating activities like rearing poultry and livestock, only about 20 percent of them make decisions on their own at various stages of the production cycle (Tanjeela and Rutherford 2018).

According to government regulation, women must be included at a minimum of 30% while designing, formulating, and implementing policy. The participation of women in the labor market, employment and development processes, policy and planning, environment protection, management, and financial decision-making bodies must also be guaranteed to be at least 30% (MoWCA 2011). But, in reality, this policy provision hasn’t been effectively implemented and women’s participation depends on donor priority.

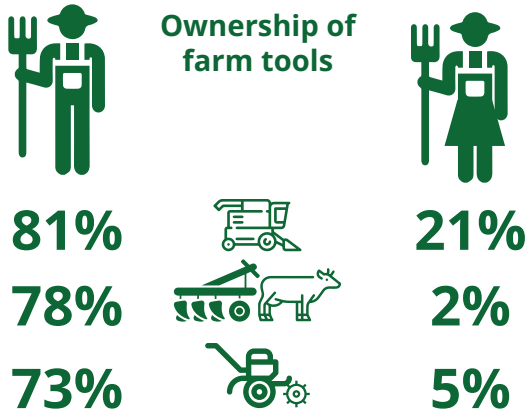


Figure 2: Gender differences in ownership of the farm tools and equipment

Due to such gender differences, women in Bangladesh face greater challenges in accessing information and networks for CSA practices and with regard to the adoption of CSA technology. There is gender heterogeneity behind the adoption of choice itself as women from different subgroups of Bangladeshi society have different roles and rights and face different barriers. Thus, the generalization of women's preferences for the adoption of CSA practice could be challenging.

Women's participation in CSA practices often tends to be confined to homesteaded production, grain, and food production, and storage. Likewise, they have no decision-making opportunities about cash crops, as their domain is mostly homestead-based and subsistence-focused.

## 2.3 Information and technology

Inclusion and engagement of women farmers in CSA practices and adoption of climate-smart technology not only reduce women's workloads, they also help improve their access to agricultural inputs, equipment, tools, and assets and, more importantly, to new market opportunities and decisions.

Increased productivity, strengthened resilience, and reduced emissions offered by climate-smart technologies have the potential to set the agriculture sector on the path to resilient growth, to dramatically close gaps, towards 2040 targets and diversify production and value creation (World Bank 2019). However, women in Bangladesh have very limited access to agricultural technology and equipment in general.

A study (Kabir et al. 2021) about gender roles in agricultural technology in three sub-districts—Sadar, Purbadhala and Durgapur of Netrokona—in Bangladesh finds that the level of access to technology depends on the costs involved in buying and maintaining the technology (Kabir et al. 2021). Further, it suggests that women had very limited access to tools and, that often men made decisions about the ownership of farm tools.

For example, there are 81 percent, 78 percent and 73 percent (Figure 2) of men-owned small equipment and threshers, ox-ploughs, and power tillers, respectively, whereas there are 21 percent, 2 percent and 5 percent respectively of this kind of small equipment ownership by women (ibid).

Limited information and knowledge about new technology and training, price of the equipment, male-oriented machinery, absence of institutional support and non-availability of credit are the hindering factors for rural women in Bangladesh to fully derive the benefits of technology and innovation.

Women's needs and priorities are rarely considered while developing and designing communication content as well as when choosing the appropriate mode of communication. Besides, gender-specific needs and challenges, including the voices of women farmers, have not been adequately captured in the Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) and Behavior Change Communication (BCC) materials.

Limited ownership of land and inadequate access to financial services, training, modern technologies, and information not only hinder women's capabilities to negotiate better conditions but also limit control of agricultural assets and incomes by them.



3

# GENDER CONSIDERATIONS IN CLIMATE CHANGE AND AGRICULTURAL POLICIES

*Women farmers stripping fiber  
from water soaked jute*

*Photo by Mamunur Rashid/ Shutterstock.com*



A total of 15 documents related to climate change, agriculture and other national policies<sup>1</sup> were reviewed. These policies and plans were assessed and analyzed using the gender inclusion criteria explained earlier. The findings of the assessment are summarized and presented in Tables 1 and 2.

### 3.1 Climate Change Policies, Plans, and Strategies

A total of eight national policy documents related to climate change were reviewed (Figure 3). Of them, five (Bangladesh Climate Fiscal Framework 2022, Bangladesh 8th Five Year Plan 2020-2025 Third National Climate Change Strategy, Gender Action Plan 2013, Communication of Bangladesh to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2018), and Bangladesh Country Investment Plan for Environment, Forestry and Climate Change (2016 – 2021) have included clear provisions for women’s participation in planning, implementation, budgeting and monitoring (Table 1). These documents have recognized gender equality as a strong priority for achieving inclusive growth and equity.



Figure 3: Timeline of Climate Change Policies Formulation in Bangladesh

For example, Bangladesh Country Investment Plan for Environment, Forestry and Climate Change (CIP-EFCC) 2016-2021 has included a gender-specific program design with a gender result framework as well as related actions and indicators for result monitoring. Likewise, the 8FYP has clear strategies, actions, monitoring and accountability mechanism for enhancing women’s voice, agency, participation, and access to financial resources and opportunities.

Other policies – BCCSAP, Perspective Plan 2021-2041, NAPA 2009—have not referred to women’s needs and priorities and a significant gap exists in terms of translating policy measures into adaptation and mitigation plans, setting gender indicators, and allocating necessary budgets. The summary of the assessment of specific policies is presented below (Table 1).

<sup>1</sup> National Women Development Policy 2011 and plans: Bangladesh 8th-Five-year Plan (2020-2025), Making Vision 2041 a Reality: Perspective Plan of Bangladesh (2021-2024).

**Table 1: Assessment of Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Policies, Strategies and Guidelines using Gender Inclusion Criteria**

Policies, Strategies, Plans, and Guidelines Analyzed	Reference to gender or women	Recognition of gender-differentiated impacts of climate change on agriculture	Mention of gender-sensitive measures for climate change adaptation	Provision of women's participation and engagement in planning, budgeting and monitoring
<b>Bangladesh 8<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan 2020- 2025</b>	Gender equality and women's empowerment has been recognized as a strong priority for achieving inclusive growth, equity, and efficiency	No specific recognition of the gender-differentiated impact of climate change on agriculture, neither any impacts on women are mentioned	Partially. Has identified key objectives and strategies for environmental and climate change protection. But, no specific gender-sensitive priority or target has been set for climate change adaptation and mitigation	Clear strategies, actions, monitoring, oversight, and accountability are identified for enhancing women's voice, agency, participation, access to resources, and opportunities  Yes, includes year-wise gender budget targets
<b>Making Vision 2041 a Reality: Perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2021-2041</b>	Not a single reference to gender equality and women's empowerment	Agriculture has been identified as a priority with rapid change and transformational perspectives but gender-differentiated impacts are missing	Agricultural transformation and climate change adaptation and mitigation have been discussed, but has overlooked gender considerations	No provision for women's participation in any stage of agriculture-extension, research, value chain, production system, resilience building, etc  No gender-specific budget has been mentioned
<b>Bangladesh Climate Fiscal Framework 2020</b>	Mention about women's empowerment and social inclusion in the context of the agriculture sector	Yes, gender impacts of climate change have been identified. Has included a comprehensive framework to include gender and development perspectives	Envisions women's effective and meaningful participation to transform their access to financial services	Has identified the requirement of gender auditing to assess how effectively different government policies have met the objectives of climate change and gender equality-related budgets and measures  Yes. Has included climate dimension in the budget format of the budget circular from a gender perspective

<p><b>Third National Communication of Bangladesh to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2018)</b></p>	<p>Strong reflections on gender and women</p> <p>Grounded on all national policies and plans, specifically the 7FYP and BCCSAP</p>	<p>Yes, acknowledgment of CC and its differential impacts on gender, agriculture, and livelihoods</p>	<p>Yes. Has identified gender gaps in policy provisions, women's participation in disaster-related activities, and management</p>	<p>Yes. Has highlighted a clear gap between gender and climate adaptation design and delivery, but gender and climate mitigation analysis are absent</p> <p>Has mentioned women's participation in agriculture employment, but without clarity on the provision of resources</p>
<p><b>Bangladesh Country Investment Plan for Environment, Forestry and Climate Change (2016 - 2021)</b></p>	<p>Yes, there is a clear reference to gender and women</p> <p>Has highlighted environmental governance and gender as one of the four pillars</p>	<p>Yes. Agriculture and gender are seen as two of the four priority themes</p> <p>Gender equity is considered an essential part of CIP formulation</p>	<p>Yes. Has identified gender-specific programs and gender mainstreaming in other programs</p> <p>Women's roles and contributions are seen as crucial for the environment</p>	<p>Yes. Specific priorities are set for gender equity, empowerment, and inclusion of minorities in the EFCC sectors</p> <p>Has identified the need for a gender-sensitive mechanism and a plan</p> <p>Has identified the existing gap in financing, and recognizes the need for improved stakeholders' participation and gender equity in the EFCC sectors</p>



<p><b>Climate Change and Gender Action Plan (ccGAP) 2013</b></p>	<p>Strong consideration of women and other marginalized groups (mostly poor, vulnerable, and geographically disadvantaged)</p>	<p>Agriculture is considered the most important sector</p> <p>Has highlighted climate change impacts on food security, nutrition, agri-economy, crop diversity, and livelihoods</p> <p>Women's contribution is firmly recognized</p>	<p>Specific gender-sensitive objectives, actions, measures, and indicators are mentioned</p> <p>Has identified gender division of roles, gender norms, and geographical contexts that determine women's participation in the CC adaptation process</p>	<p>Has clear indication for women's participation in planning, implementation, and monitoring processes with a set of specific success indicators</p> <p>Has a budget estimation and gender analysis in line with the BCCSAP core pillars</p> <p>Has prioritized all sectoral gender budgeting under comprehensive resource allocation for gender and DRR</p>
<p><b>Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) 2009</b></p>	<p>Needs of the poor, vulnerable, women, and children have been prioritized</p>	<p>Gender-differentiated impact is not considered, rather women are seen as a vulnerable category</p>	<p>Not any gender-sensitive measure or specific intervention is prioritized</p>	<p>Women's participation in planning and monitoring has not been highlighted</p> <p>No perspective on gender budget</p>
<p><b>National Adaptation Programs of Action (NAPA) 2009</b></p>	<p>Gender perspective is missing in country context analysis, climate change-related concerns, needs, and measures</p> <p>Gender and women's issues are mentioned loosely with inadequate attention</p>	<p>Gender-differentiated impacts of climate change on agriculture are not recognized</p>	<p>Gender-sensitive measures are not considered</p>	<p>No reflection of women's participation in climate change and livelihood-related priority setting and planning</p> <p>Nothing has been mentioned about gender budgeting</p>

### **3.1.1 Bangladesh 8th Five Year Plan 2020-2025**

Though the 8FYP builds on the progress of the 7FYP targets, the success of the 8FYP rests mostly on securing gender equality in education, health, and political participation and on minimizing the gender gap. Gender equality has been set as a priority concern for achieving inclusive growth, equity, and efficiency. Further, the 8FYP identifies key objectives and strategies for environmental protection and climate change, but no specific gender-related target has been set for climate change adaptation.

The gender budget baseline (2019) has been shown as 30.82 percent (percentage of the total national budget of Bangladesh) and the target for gender budget is 35 percent by 2025. The Plan also features rigorous result-based monitoring, and evaluation of five gender equality strategic objectives. While none of those are directly related to agriculture and climate change, urban environment and disaster management have been prioritized and women and girls are considered active agents of national development, crucial for achieving gender equality.

### **3.1.2 Making Vision 2041 a Reality: Perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2021-2041**

The key aim of the Perspective Plan 2021-2041 is to eradicate extreme poverty and achieve the status of an upper-middle-income country by 2030. To achieve the goals of the Perspective Plan, Bangladesh has internalized the SDGs 2030 agenda and has been accelerating the implementation of the 8FYP.

Gender equality and intersectional dimensions are missing in the Perspective Plan in the priority setting. Gender equality has been mentioned under good governance, without any goal and priority for gender equality in general and climate change aspects in particular. There is no provision for women's participation in any stage of agricultural extension, research, value chain, production system, and resilience building.

Moreover, aspects related to strengthening local adaptive capacity, climate information service, research, resource allocation, and coping strategy have been overlooked. Gender budget baseline status is indicated but without explaining the basis of the baseline, and how the climate change-related gender budget is considered in line with the long-term vision.

### **3.1.3 Bangladesh Climate Fiscal Framework (CFF) 2020**

The CFF 2020 gives perspectives on climate change, gender-sensitive strategic priorities, and related action plans. Although Bangladesh has the ccGAP, the six BCCSAP thematic areas and program priorities are the key considerations for climate financing, and the gender mainstreaming priority has been set therein, very loosely under the capacity building and institutional strengthening.

In such a context, while the CFF features a strong reflection of gender and social inclusion, financing depends on the priorities set by other policies and strategies for gender and climate change.

The framework has proposed a cross-sectional platform consisting of policy-makers, regulators, financial institutions, analysts, entrepreneurs, and development practitioners to develop innovative solutions and create opportunities for women's economic empowerment. The CFF has identified climate-relevant criteria for strengthening gender considerations in climate change management, but not for agriculture research and capacity building, crop systems, and technologies. Though there has been a mention of specific priority-based indicators, there are no indicators for gender-responsive investments.

### **3.1.4 Third National Communication of Bangladesh to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2018)**

The third national communication has a strong reflection of gender perspectives. The climate change scenario and its differential impacts on gender, agriculture, and livelihoods have been analyzed and presented clearly. Gender gaps in policy provisions and women's participation in disaster management have also been identified with clear provisions for adaptation. This document presents a financial analysis of economic and other services based on gender ratio. Yet, there is a lack of a proportionate gender budget for addressing climate change impacts on women.

### **3.1.5 Bangladesh Country Investment Plan for Environment, Forestry and Climate Change (CIP-EFCC) 2016 – 2021)**

CIP-EFCC (2016-2021) has a strong reflection on intersectional perspectives and has acknowledged women and marginalized groups and their active participation in environmental protection, climate change mitigation, and adaptation.

This plan has expressed the need for clear implementation frameworks to bring climate change policies into practice. The five-year roadmap will not be translated into measurable results unless effective inter-ministerial coordination and collaboration take place.

Though a clear approach and principle are outlined for gender-sensitive programs, plans, and systems, it will be difficult to bring the CIP-EFCC into practice without ensuring a gender mainstreaming approach. The analysis of sector-specific gender equity-based investment requirements and gaps along with required investment for women's advancement, gender indicators, and data tracking priorities are the key strengths of the CIP-EFCC. They need to be ensured through effective implementation.

### **3.1.6 Climate Change Strategy and Gender Action Plan (ccGAP) 2013**

The ccGAP<sup>2</sup> has been a strategic document to support mainstreaming of gender in climate change adaptation and resilience-building processes which facilitates transformational change as outlined in the BCCSAP and NAPA. It has also highlighted the severe impact of climate change on food security, nutrition, the economy, crop diversity, and livelihoods. Women's contributions have been firmly recognized by the plan, making a clear reference to disaster risks and vulnerabilities associated with women.

The ccGAP has analyzed data related to women, including participation, unpaid labor, ownership of productive assets, etc., and identified gender division of roles, gender norms, and geographical contexts that determine women's participation in the climate change adaptation process. The plan has set specific objectives, actions, and measurable indicators.

The ccGAP has core priority theme-specific budget estimation and gender analysis of BCCSAP. It also prioritizes gender budget and comprehensive resource allocation for gender and disaster risk reduction for all sectors with a clear indication of women's participation in planning, implementation, and monitoring process with a set of indicators. Women's representation has been considered one of the active climate resilience actors throughout the process.

### **3.1.7 Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) 2009**

Although the needs of vulnerable people, women, and children have been prioritized in all activities under the action plan of BCCSAP, gender priority has been loosely set under capacity building and institutional strengthening. This priority has not been linked to any other thematic priorities and no gender-specific actions have been identified to be carried out with other priorities.

The BCCSAP may overlook certain gender dimensions concerning climate change and agriculture. For instance, there is no reflection on the gender differentiate-impacts of climate change and nothing has been mentioned under climate change impact, mitigation, and adaptation vis-à-vis agriculture. Women's special roles in community-based disaster preparedness and resilience actions are set without considering existing gender relations, roles, and needs.

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<sup>2</sup> The objective of ccGAP is to mainstream gender concerns into climate change-related policies, strategies and interventions and ensure participation and contribution of diverse group of stakeholders for sustainable and equitable development.

### 3.1.8 Updated National Adaptation Programs of Action (NAPA) 2009

The gender perspective has not been adequately reflected in the NAPA 2009. The NAPA has not elaborated on the different roles of men and women, as well as the responsibilities, needs and support required for women as the key stakeholders in adaptation. Women are being portrayed as dependent, weak and vulnerable, and the impacts of climate change on women's and other marginalized groups' livelihoods are being overlooked. There is a need to mainstream climate change in national and sectoral development planning and to ensure the minimization of impacts on vulnerable groups and women.

While the NAPA has set gender equality as a cross-cutting indicator across other priorities, there is no indication of how the indicator will be achieved. There is no acknowledgment of the role of women at the pre-disaster stage, during, and post-disaster awareness and mitigation processes. Similarly, there exists no identification of women's needs, strategies, and coping mechanisms.

## 3.2 Agricultural Policies and Strategies

Among the six agriculture policy documents reviewed five, have neither acknowledged women's contribution to the agriculture nor have any gender considerations (Figure 4). These policies<sup>3</sup> have no clear linkages to other national and sectoral policies, nor any reference to gender-differentiated impacts of climate change. No policy provision for women's participation in planning, budgeting and monitoring is mentioned.

In relation to climate change, these policies have mostly focused on crop variety for food security, adaptation and mitigation, without making any reference to women's and marginalized groups needs and priorities (Table 2).

However, National Women Development Policy 2011 (NWDP) reflects an example of good practice of gender responsive policy. NWDP 2011 has ensured women's equal participation and decision-making in planning and implementation, highlighting various provisions like institutional arrangements and strategy, removing gender gaps, and promoting equal opportunity in all aspects of the implementation of policies and programs (Figure 5). It has also identified gender-differentiated impacts, and provided measures for reducing vulnerability and building the adaptive capacity of women farmers.



Figure 4: Timeline of Agricultural Policies Formulation in Bangladesh

<sup>3</sup> National Agriculture Policy (2018), National Agriculture Mechanization Policy (2020), Bangladesh Wheat and Maize Research Institute Act (2017), Early and Short Duration Crop Variety and Technology Development for Adaptation to Climate Change Impact Policy (2010) and National Seed Policy (1993)



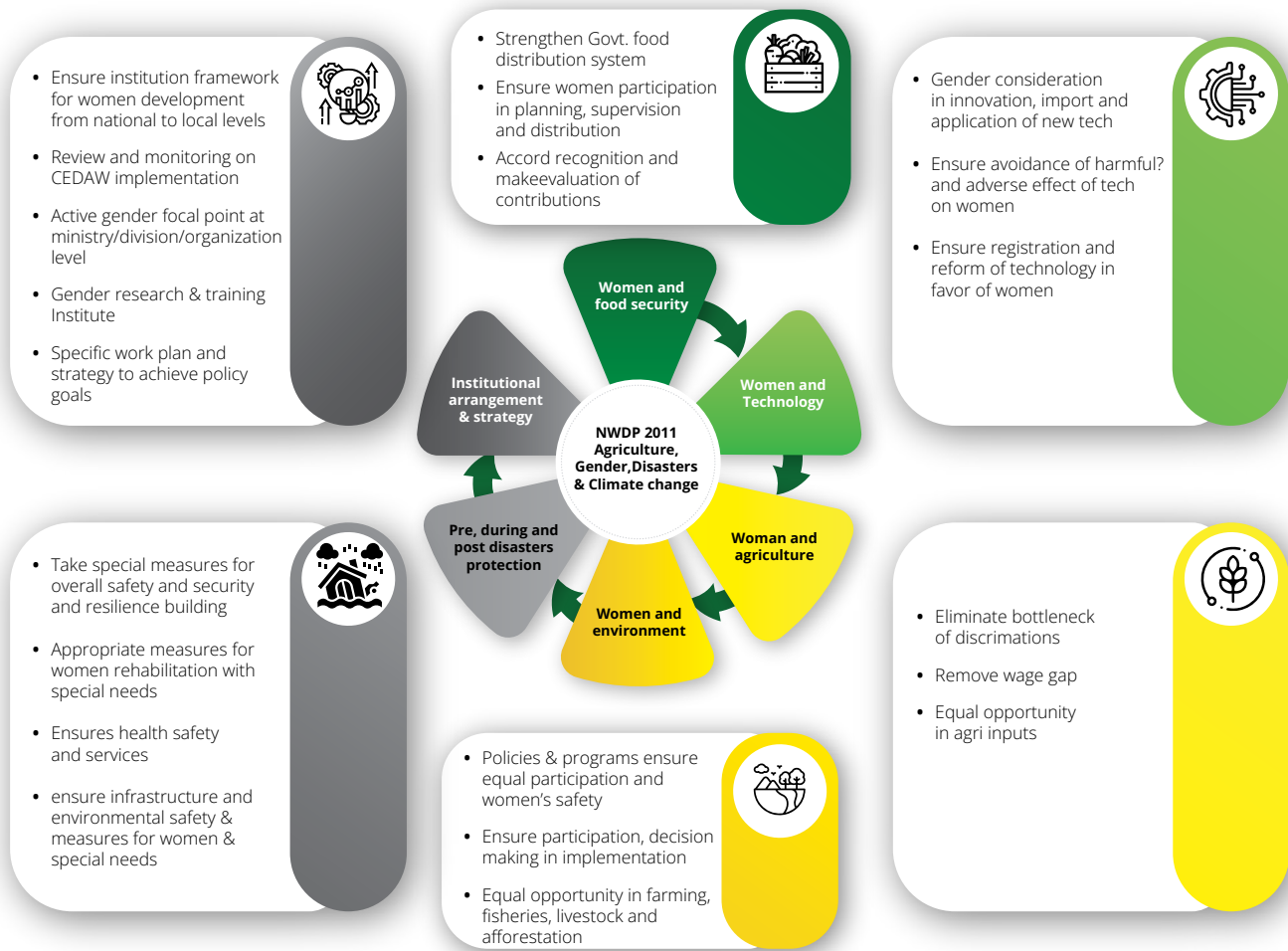


Figure 5: Priorities of NWDP 2011 for women’s empowerment and gender equality

**Table 2. Assessment of Agricultural Policies and Strategies using Gender Inclusion Criteria**

Policies, Strategies, Plans, and Guidelines Analyzed	Reference to gender or women	Recognition of gender-differentiated impacts of climate change on agriculture	Mention of gender-sensitive measures for climate change adaptation	Provision of women's participation and engagement in planning, budgeting and monitoring
<b>Bangladesh Wheat and Maize Research Institute Act 2017 (2021)</b>	No reference to gender or women	No recognition of gender-differentiated impacts on agriculture	Nothing mentioned with regard to gender-sensitive measures for climate adaptation	No. Nothing on women's participation in policy planning, implementation, and budgeting monitoring
<b>National Agriculture Mechanization Policy 2020</b>	No reference to gender or women	Nothing regarding the gender-differentiated impact	Nothing related to gender-sensitive measures and climate change adaptation	Neither any specific measures for women, nor budget provisions are mentioned
<b>National Agriculture Extension Policy 2020</b>	Women and other marginalized groups related to agriculture extension services have been recognized	Climate change has been seen as the biggest challenge to food security and the SDG	Partially. Has a specific objective on climate change, but farmers are referred to as men only	No policy provision for women's participation and engagement in planning, budgeting, and monitoring
<b>Early and Short Duration Crop Variety and Technology Development for Adaptation to Climate Change Impact Policy August 2010 (Bangla)</b>	Not a single reference to gender	Nothing specific related to gender or women	Nothing specific on gender-sensitive measures for climate change adaptation is discussed	Climate adaptation issues are discussed, but women's access and capacity development issues are overlooked  Nothing on budget specific to women, climate change, and agriculture
<b>National Women Development Policy 2011</b>	Women's contribution has been well recognized  Has referred to women's rights, priorities, and needs explicitly, harmonizing with agriculture, DRR, and environment sectors and other sub-sectors	Has identified the gender-differentiated impacts of CC  Need for necessary measures for reform to achieve women's rights in agriculture and food security is emphasized	Yes, various gender-related measures are suggested for women's empowerment, including innovations and the application of new technology  Has prioritized measures for women's resilience building	Has ensured women's equal participation and decision-making in planning and implementation by initiating provisions like institutional arrangements for developing tools, guidelines, capacity building and financial allocation for gender-sensitive plans and programs

<p><b>National Agriculture Policy 2018</b></p>	<p>No reference to gender or women</p>	<p>No. Importance is given to biodiversity, crop production, and extension</p>	<p>Nothing on climate change and gender-specific measures</p>	<p>Doesn't mention women's involvement or participation in any section, except under a specific section, women's empowerment</p> <p>Nothing has been mentioned about gender and/or women's specific budgets</p>
<p><b>National Seed Policy 1993</b></p>	<p>No reference to gender or women</p>	<p>Nothing on gender-differentiated impacts of climate change on agriculture</p>	<p>No specific measures are mentioned from gender perspectives</p>	<p>Has highlighted different departments, and stakeholders' roles and responsibilities, but not specific to women's participation</p> <p>No gender budget provision is included</p>

### **3.2.1 National Agriculture Policy (2018)**

The main objectives of this policy are to ensure food security and improve the socio-economic condition of people by increasing productivity, income, crop diversification, and efficacy in natural resource use. Although the policy sets 10 specific objectives, not a single one refers to either women's empowerment or gender equality. The policy has identified and elaborated on 19 specific agriculture research areas. Among these, one priority area is identified as climate change, stress-tolerant varieties, and technology, but there is no specific mention of women's involvement in agriculture and provision of women's participation.

Agriculture research financing has been prioritized for short-, medium-, and long-terms based on national priorities, but nothing specific to climate change has been specified. Women's participation in planning and supervision are highlighted only in the context of food security. Nothing has been stated about women's contribution to agriculture, gender differentiated impacts of climate change, and provisions for women's participation in planning, budgeting and monitoring.

### **3.2.2 National Agriculture Mechanization Policy (2020)**

The policy has identified 10 objectives and 9 challenges, but without any reference to gender and/or women. The gender-responsive budget has not been considered, only financing issues related to types of machinery, industry, repair, maintenance, and farmers' groups have been considered.

Despite being relatively new, this policy rarely considers women's potential that could be harnessed in the wake of the growing feminization of agriculture. Instead of promoting specific measures to ease women's access to technology, it merely aims to make women aware of the safe use of machinery through training. The policy looks forward to the development of a plan by the Ministry of Agriculture for proper implementation and a framework for coordination and monitoring.

### **3.2.3 National Agriculture Extension Policy (2020)**

Climate adaptation and resilience-building have been considered top priority issues to overcome the risks and challenges to agriculture extension services, but without the inclusion of gender considerations. Only men are referred to, and there is no reference to the impact of climate change on women. The scope and priorities for agriculture extension services and grants during and post-disasters ignore gender dimensions and women's needs and priorities as farmers.

### **3.2.4 Bangladesh Wheat and Maize Research Institute Act (2017)**

The Act proposes assessing the impact of climate change on wheat and maize production and undertaking relevant research activities. It has mentioned the sources and uses of the funds collected from the government and others. Although it has emphasized institutional perspectives of research and roles and responsibilities of concerned bodies, there has not been any reference to gender and/or women-specific concerns and priorities.

### **3.2.5 Early and Short Duration Crop Variety and Technology Development for Adaptation to Climate Change Impact Policy (2010)**

The policy has discussed the dimensions of salinity, drought, changes in land patterns and fertility, etc., as happening due to the impacts of climate change. Policy measures have been broadly considered for crop variety, technology adaptation, water management, and environmental protection, but nothing is specific to gender. The policy has highlighted different climate adaptive agriculture practices, technological transformation, disaster-tolerant initiatives, etc., but it has overlooked gender considerations completely.

### **3.2.6 National Seed Policy (1993)**

The policy has identified seven objectives related to the development and sustainability of high variety crops, timely and quality seed supply, engagement of farmers in production, etc., and female farmers have been referred to as the category that needs capacity-building.

The policy has emphasized introducing specific curricula in integrated pest management (IPM) training courses for female extension workers, female farmers, and other women household members to help increase their productivity. The policy has no perspective on the gender-differentiated impacts of climate change, and neither has mentioned any women-specific priority.

### **3.2.7 National Women Development Policy (NWDP) 2011**

The policy is very comprehensive and has set various gender-sensitive measures towards women's empowerment including innovations and application of new technology, environment, resilience building, support services, security, collection, monitoring, and reporting of disaggregated data, and gender analysis. For example, it has recognized and acknowledged women's roles and contributions in agriculture, highlighting the importance of their contribution to the agro-based economy in achieving food security, employment, and national economic growth.

NWDP 2011 has highlighted gender-sensitive approaches and priorities explicitly. One of them is to innovate and import technology favoring the interest of women and promote women-friendly technologies. Furthermore, it shows commitment to ensuring equal wages for the same job and removing wage discrimination against women in agriculture.

With regard to resource allocation, it has explicitly indicated that a gender-responsive budget process shall be continued to be observed in state budget-making under the mid-term budget framework and shall be appropriately implemented.

Besides, it suggests taking steps to ensure that farming women have equal opportunity in having access to agricultural inputs like fertilizer and seeds, as well as farmers' cards and credit facilities, etc. There is an ordinance for minimum wages for the agricultural laborer but no concrete measures are formulated to ensure equal wages for men and women farmers (Rahman et al. 2017).



# 4 | GOOD PRACTICES

*Farmer with rice seedlings in  
Rangpur, Bangladesh*

*Photo by Sk Hasan Ali/ Shutterstock.com*



The following section describes gender-sensitive CSA practices in some recently completed and/or ongoing projects in Bangladesh. The key criteria used while selecting the projects and programs for consideration were; 1) projects that are being or have been successfully implemented with gender-sensitive activities; 2) projects that have potential for scaling up and/or replication. Gender-sensitive programs and projects are referred to as such initiatives that aim to ensure women and men are included and have their voices heard and their opinions valued (UNDP 2015).

Donor-funded projects such Livestock and Dairy Development Project (LDDP), Resilience-building and Women’s Leadership in Bangladesh (REE-CALL) and National Agriculture Technology Program (NATP-2), place significant emphasis on developing gender-focused approaches and indicators to understand the project impact.

The LDDP (2019-2025), funded by the World Bank, aims to improve agricultural productivity and market access of 2 million smallholder farmers and small and medium-scale agro-entrepreneurs. Livestock accounts for 1.7 percent of Bangladesh’s Gross Domestic Product, but employs 14 percent of the total labor force. It accounts for a third of the total agricultural employment. The project has considered integrating gender, analyzing gender gaps, and undertaking gender analysis.

Three approaches (CSA, farmer demand-driven support services, and market access) have been highlighted in LDDP with gender analysis, which offers clear opportunities to address the gender gaps identified by the project. Value chains are considered strategic for both food security/nutritional supply and for their comparative advantages in the regional markets and associated income generation potential. As a result, gender-sensitive approaches and monitoring indicators are developed. Additionally, gender experts were appointed to these projects to implement the gender action plan.

Similarly, the REE-CALL program (2010-2021) aims to strengthen community resilience to climate change by fostering economic resilience and inclusive leadership. The REE-Call program targeted the worst affected 14 districts of 3 of the most vulnerable agro-ecological zones of Bangladesh. It seeks to achieve the following four interconnected outcomes; Better preparation for climate change adaptation; Sustainable income and employment options; Better use of policy and legal frameworks; Claiming rights and entitlements and promoting women’s leadership (Figure 6).

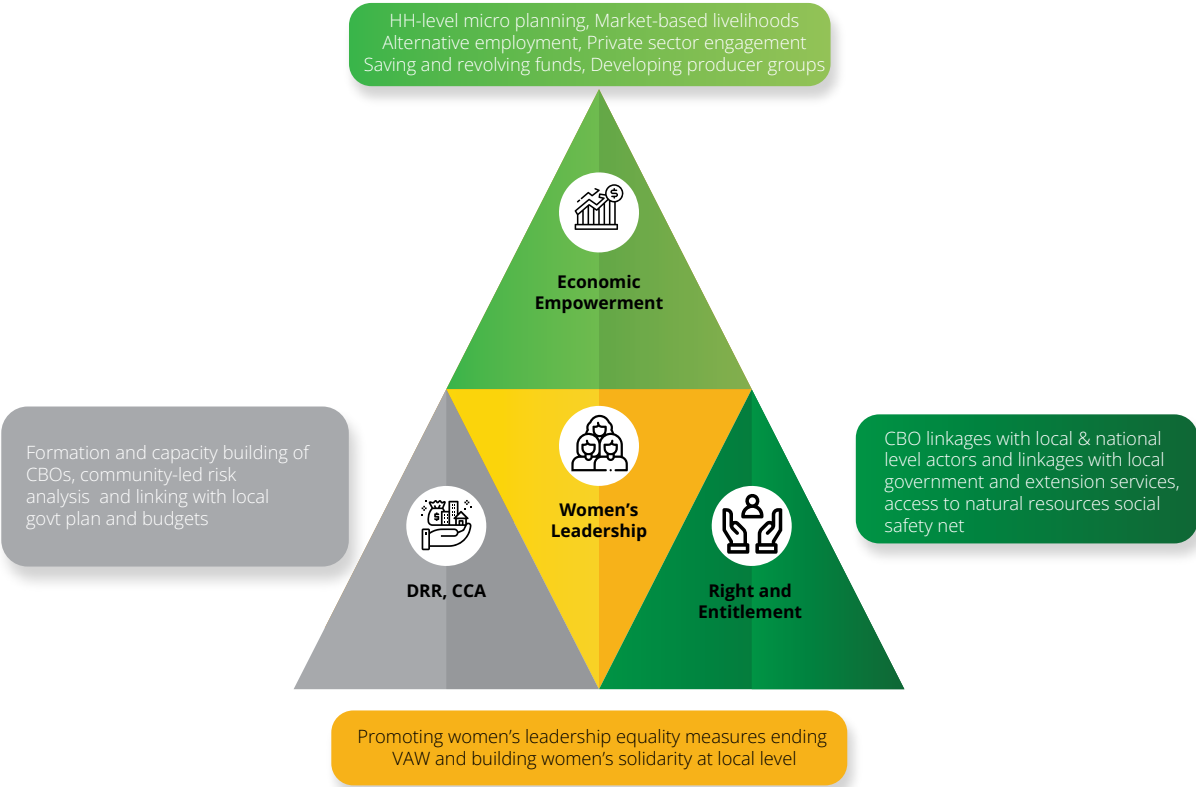


Figure 6: REE-CALL Transition Framework (OXFAM 2017)

Another good example is NATP-2 (2015-2023), a multi-departmental collaborative gender mainstreaming program under the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MoFL). The overall objective of the program is to increase the agricultural productivity of smallholder farms and improve smallholder farmers' access to markets in selected districts.

Gender, environmental and social safeguards (GESS) are mainstreamed in all aspects of the NATP-2 program cycle. Gender integration and social inclusion perspectives are mandatory criteria for all NATP-2 related interventions. The program is being implemented in 52 districts with a priority allocated to women, indigenous communities, intersectionality among farmers, and geographical vulnerabilities. NATP-2 aims to empower women by promoting their active involvement throughout, including in leadership roles, and facilitating women's access to intended benefits. GESS are mainstreamed in all aspects of the NATP-2 program cycle.

In summary, these projects have certain elements in common that qualify them as gender-sensitive projects. They show a strong commitment to mainstreaming gender-specific activities, including women's empowerment, by directly implementing empowerment interventions and influencing changes in stakeholder engagement and practices.

From the beginning of the planning process, projects emphasize social and gender equality as one of the mandatory criteria for their interventions. For example, these projects ensure that the resilience of the targeted beneficiaries, including women and vulnerable groups, will be strengthened by mainstreaming CSA practices, implementing measures that improve food/feed safety, and developing livestock insurance.

The reflections and the learning from these good practices are;

- Ensuring adequate resources including technical capacity is vital for effective gender-sensitive service delivery. The projects and programs must clearly state at least one of their objectives to empower women by promoting their active involvement throughout, including in leadership roles, and facilitating women's access to intended benefits. This objective should be supported by corresponding activities and indicators of monitoring gender equality outcomes of the projects.
- Shifting power structures is a long-term process that requires institutional and policy changes as well as changes in social norms and practices. CSA can be an entry point for promoting women's empowerment and building their resilience. CSA has been proven instrumental in improving women's access to agricultural inputs, productivity and household incomes through linkages to market opportunities while reducing their labor in farms. REE-CALL and LDDP projects are examples to name a few.
- Achieving impact at scale requires strong links between program delivery and influencing diverse stakeholders including the government and private sectors at different levels (local, national, international) as this type of collaboration is seen in the abovementioned projects, through demonstrating efficient service delivery and promoting gender-sensitive CSA business models.



A woman in a purple shirt is kneeling in a rice field, surrounded by other workers and umbrellas. The field is filled with young rice plants. A decorative geometric pattern of triangles in various shades of green and yellow is overlaid on the right side of the image.

# 5 Institutional Coordination Mechanism for Gender Inclusion

*Working in the field*

*Photo by pixabay.com*



The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MoFL) are responsible for overseeing agriculture and livestock-related affairs at national and local (district, upazila and union) levels. Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) and the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) under the MoA hold the overall responsibility for extension services and irrigation. However, source clearance is needed from the Water Resources Planning Organization (WARPO) under the Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR) for project formulation.

Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) is the apex body of the national agricultural research system (NARS). BARC has the responsibility to coordinate research and foster inter-institute collaboration, monitor and review the research program of NARS institutes, assist institutes to strengthen research capacities, establish system-wide operational policies and standard management procedures and assure that each institute is optimally governed.

The mandate of the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI) is to undertake research to ensure stable and productive agriculture through scientific management of land and water, evaluation of new varieties of various agricultural products and development of appropriate technologies and pest management methods. BARI also provides farmers with information necessary for carrying out their farming business, and carries out demonstrations, tests and trials of new varieties of crops and their management practices.

The apex agency responsible for overseeing gender mainstreaming is the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA). MoWCA provides support to mainstream gender in policies, projects, and programs, gender capacity building, and performance monitoring, as necessary.

Bangladesh government introduced Gender Focal Points (GFPs) in 1997 at the Ministry and department levels for the inclusion of gender perspectives within projects/programs, as per the Government guidelines. GFPs are tasked to coordinate women's empowerment aspects within respective ministries, guide on the collection of sex-disaggregated data and statistics, gender-responsive budgeting, monitoring, and reporting. However, some GFPs lack the technical capacity to contribute to the GRB and the planning process (Siddique 2013).

MoWCA is responsible for maintaining regular communication with the GFPs of the concerned ministries/divisions or the nominated officials (Cabinet Division and GED, 2020). But in reality, the majority of the ministries' GFPs are not functional. There is no systematic assessment of GFPs' roles and responsibilities, effectiveness, and capacity to lead the agenda within ministries.

There are more than 35 ministries delegated with responsibilities to deal with various impacts of climate change. The Ministry of Planning and the MoWCA are responsible for climate actions in the areas of their core mandate (UN Women and IUCN 2022). But in the absence of functional GFPs and a feedback loop mechanism for gender-related concerns during policy planning and formulation processes, the gender equality agenda is either missing or not prioritized in most of the policy discussions, project planning, and progress review processes.

## 5.1 Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB)

The GoB initiated practicing GRB in 2005. Then, GRB was a part of the government's first poverty reduction strategy, entitled Unlocking the Potential: National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction (NSAPR). The poverty reduction strategy has identified pro-poor and gender-responsive budgetary processes for integrating gender equality into national development (Parveen 2010).

The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA), as the designated government entity, has played a significant role in capacity-building, awareness-raising, and budget monitoring about GRB. In FY 2009-10, for the first, an analysis on gender budgeting titled Women's Advancements and Rights along with the annual budget was presented in Bangladesh.

GRB is a gender-based assessment of the national budget, which incorporates gender perspectives at all levels of the budget process and restructures revenues and expenditures to promote gender equality (Taleb and Khan n.d). Three steps are taken by the government under Medium Term Budget Framework (MTBF) to facilitate the implementation of GRB (Figure 7). These steps are integrating gender issues within MTBF; developing a database of allocated funds to benefit women; and publishing a gender budget report with explanations on gender-responsive activities handled by different divisions or ministries of the government by using the budget





Figure 7: Three steps for gender-responsive budgeting

allocated for projects and programs (Siddique 2013; Budlender 2014). The GRB process helps transform government, especially line ministries' (Figure 8) accountability and transparency in the gender mainstreaming process.

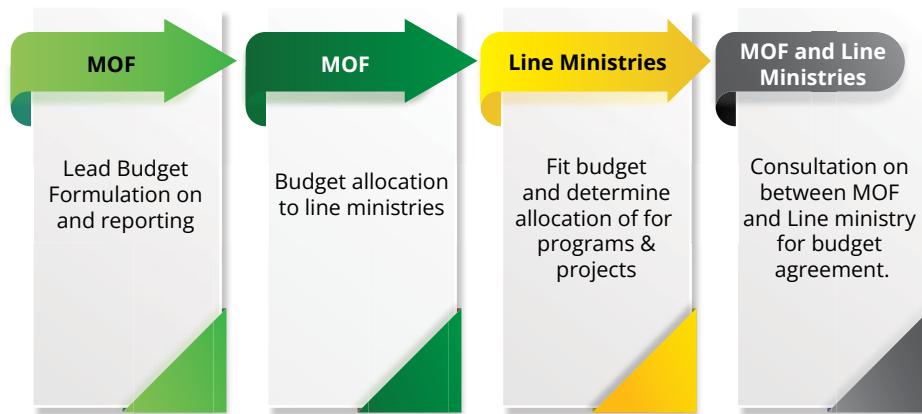


Figure 8: Ministry roles in budget formulation and allocation

The first gender budget report was prepared only for four ministries (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Social Welfare, and Ministry of Disaster Management).

Subsequently, in FY 2016-17, a total of 43 ministries reported their progress in advancing gender equality (Taleb and Khan, n.d). The GoB has demonstrated a strong commitment to climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts to achieve SDGs.

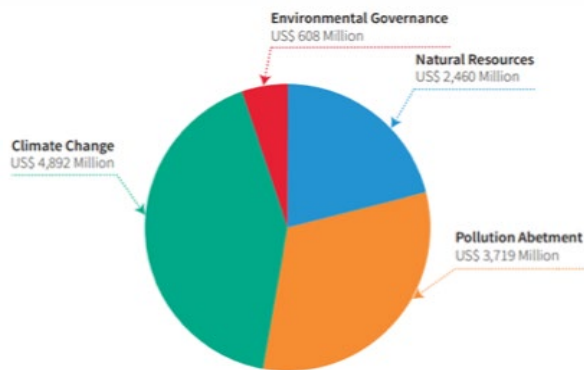


Figure 9: Resource requirement for CIP-EFCC implementation (MoF 2020)

Accordingly, the allocation of significant resources has been made for a number of climate change-related projects and program (Figure 9). Over the past years, Bangladesh has been receiving funds from developed countries as part of the multi-lateral and Bi-lateral Climate Change Resilience Fund (BCCRF).

However, a significant fund gap has been prevalent in the gender equality and stakeholder engagement budget (MoF 2020). Bangladesh needs to demonstrate robust transparency and accountability standards to improve its eligibility for global climate funds (BCAS, BU, ICCCAD, 2017).

Since the Ministry of Finance (MoF) is the lead agency for the GRB and the Ministry of Planning (MoP) plays a central role in budget development and shares the responsibility for gender mainstreaming, these ministries have to have strong coordination and accountability on GRB tracking within other ministries. For example, the MoF's budget report for 2021-2022 on Climate Financing for Sustainable Development has identified nine national documents as legal and policy frameworks and the ccGAP is not included among them.

Though the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) is the lead agency for the climate change agenda, it does not influence the budget development process. Multi-lateral, bilateral, and non-official funds from donors have played important supporting roles for the GRB. At the same time, it has to be recognized that GRB won't be sustained unless the process is internally driven and owned by national stakeholders. There is no alignment of gender-related budget preparation, sectoral allocation, and accountability for budget execution and monitoring with the government's policy frameworks, plans, and institutional architecture.





# 6 | Conclusion

*Paddy farming*

*Photo by pixabay.com*



This section presents the conclusion of the review and analysis, followed by specific policy and institutional level recommendations in the succeeding section. Likewise, conclusions related with policy and implementation levels are presented below separately under respective sub-sections.

## 6.1 Policy planning and development

The review has suggested that the national policies and plans pertaining to climate change are more gender-responsive compared to agriculture-specific policies. Issues directly related to women's empowerment, such as their participation, roles, needs, and decision-making, have not been addressed adequately by agriculture policies. Since the policy processes are not backed by gender analysis, policy commitments on gender equality issues are not explicitly detailed.

Bangladesh's agriculture sector lacks consistent and comprehensive sex-disaggregated data and records on climate change adaptation and mitigation. In most cases, data digitalization has yet to happen within Government services. Gender analysis tools, equality indicators, gender impact assessment, gender auditing, and budgeting methods are not utilized in most of the policy processes and project planning

Except for Bangladesh Country Investment Plan (2016-2021), Bangladesh Climate Fiscal Framework (2020), National Women Development Policy (2011), the 8th FYP and ccGAP (2013), the majority of the agricultural policies (National Agriculture Policy 2018, National Agriculture Mechanization Policy 2020, Bangladesh Wheat and Maize Research Act 2021, Nation Seed Policy 1993 and National Agriculture Extension Policy 2020) have neither recognized climate change impacts on women nor suggested any provisions for climate adaptation (Table 1 and 2).

Women are considered a homogeneous group by the reviewed agriculture policies. The inherent social diversity and intersectional aspects in the agriculture sector have been overlooked. Therefore, the identified priority action areas neither fully meet women's practical and strategic needs, nor challenge the gender norms; they rather tend to reinforce existing gender inequalities. Women's skills, coping mechanisms, and contributions toward building resilient communities are overlooked, and women are not perceived as actively contributing to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Moreover, there remains a challenge of maintaining coherence between provisions and priorities of various national documents that have been endorsed as fundamental documents related to climate change, namely: BCCSAP (2009), NAPA (2009), ccGAP (2013), CFF (2020) and CIP-EFCC (2021), and other national strategic documents. For example, the BCCSAP has limited alignment with most of the core national policies and with the National Women Development Policy (2011), the 8FYP, and the ccGAP priorities for climate change adaptation and mitigation. Thus, significant gaps exist in terms of recognition of gender considerations and in building synergy and cross-linkages among gender, climate change, and other sectors.

## 6.2 Institution and implementation

While the GoB has demonstrated commitment toward women's empowerment in climate-smart agriculture through some gender-responsive climate change policies, the review suggests that climate-smart agriculture interventions are being implemented without a gender-sensitive strategy, action plan, and corresponding resource allocation.

Rural women's and other ethnic groups' indigenous knowledge about CSA practices is not adequately recognized and taken into consideration while designing programs and projects. Women, in general, are excluded from the planning processes of agriculture mechanization and new technology design, development, and demonstration. Decisions on agricultural tools, equipment, and CSA innovations are made without consulting them.

Adoption of CSA innovations and practices is likely to vary depending on gender roles, geography, institutional support mechanisms, distribution of resources and services, and other factors. The first few steps required towards achieving gender-sensitive CSA are having specific gender strategy and action plans, followed by recruitment of gender technical working groups, and/or gender focal persons (GFPs) within the line ministries.



Similarly, the absence of tools to track and report on gender activities with their corresponding budget allocation and expenditures is hindering the regular tracking of investments in gender-sensitive adaptation and resilience-building initiatives. Also, the challenge lies with the internalization and institutionalization of GRB within departments and ministries.

In Bangladesh, inter and intra-agency coordination in policy planning and development has been a long-standing challenge. For example, though the ownership of the climate change related policy lies within the MoEFCC, close coordination and collaboration with MoDMR are required, as environment, disaster and climate change issues are inter-connected.

This challenge is being compounded by the absence of functional GFPs and the inadequate capacity of the agriculture extension services. As a result, the implementation of gender-sensitive sectoral plans is being affected. Except for a few gender-integrated targeted donor-funded projects, (Livestock and Dairy Development Project (LDDP), Resilience-building and Women's Leadership in Bangladesh (REE-CALL) and National Agriculture Technology Program NATP-2), there is no gender-focused climate resilient agriculture-related programs/projects within the MoA nor jointly with other ministries.

7

# RECOMMENDATIONS



*Sun or shade, weeding  
must go on*

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Recommendations based on the findings of this study are expected to help support the inclusion of gender considerations in the design and delivery of future policies, strategies and programs. The following specific recommendations related to policy development, institutional, and delivery aspects have been suggested to minimize the gaps identified by the review.

## 7.1 Policy planning and development

- Immediate attention is required toward further investments in evidence-based gender research and data analytics. Further research on gender-differentiated impacts of climate change, and how current climate-smart interventions have enhanced women's and vulnerable groups' resilience is critical. Other subjects that require research are: climate-smart innovations that reduce women's workloads; and, women's access to services and credits.
- Proactive approach is required to amend the National Agriculture Policy 2018, National Seed Policy 1993, National Agriculture Mechanization Policy 2020, and National Agriculture Extension Policy 2020 to ensure that they are backed by social and gender analysis to practically promote women's empowerment through livelihood options associated with climate resilient agriculture. With such evidence-based analysis, it would be helpful to develop CSA programs and projects with due consideration to geographical challenges, context-specific disaster vulnerability, and intersectional socio-economic dimensions of the communities.
- Promote a gender-sensitive approach, informed by a thorough gender analysis, which must be followed throughout the entire policy and planning process. Mandatory involvement of women throughout the policy process must be enhanced by allocating women more space for meaningful participation, as it will enable better recognition and reflection of women's specific needs and priorities in policy documents.
- Immediate attention is needed for alignment between the upcoming revised BCCSAP and other core national policies such as NWDP 2011, the 8th FYP, and others like NPDM (2021-2025) and the updated ccGAP to ensure policy coherence between and among various sectors toward the common goal of having gender-responsive policies, plans, and strategies.

## 7.2 Institution and implementation

- Immediate investment is required towards strengthening the technical capacities of Gender Focal Persons (GFPs) at the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) on mainstreaming gender considerations, including gender budgeting for climate-resilient agriculture-related initiatives. Improving the understanding of GFPs on climate action and that of Climate Change Focal Persons (CCFP) on gender budgeting could be instrumental for effective GRB planning, monitoring, and tracking, as well as for better inter-ministerial coordination on these thematic issues.
- The establishment of gender monitoring cells within the MoF, MoP, MoEFCC, and MoWCA to track project-specific gender budgets for climate change is crucial. It is also necessary to develop a budget tracking framework and related monitoring and evaluation system for projects to track the overall outcomes, as well as to monitor specific impacts on women. Such a mechanism will also contribute to the availability of sex-disaggregated data on government expenditure.

- Urgent need to dedicate funds to commission a gender audit (GA) for core ministries accountable for climate action. The GA will help assess how efficiently and effectively government policies, systems, and mechanisms are functioning toward gender mainstreaming into climate change adaptation and mitigation. Subsequently, the GA will help develop a gender mainstreaming roadmap with short, medium, and long-term milestones.
- Immediate attention is required towards the development of tools to track expenditures and assess the impact of GRB on target beneficiaries; strengthening the monitoring system; and, building the technical capacity of concerned officials at different levels of the Government.
- It is crucial to ensure community engagement throughout the program and project design and implementation, as it enables consideration of intersectionality and diverse needs, priorities, and knowledge of women and men, and other vulnerable farmers. There is also a strong need to highlight women's roles at local levels (district, sub-district, union parishads, and wards), towards building family and community resilience.
- Proactive actions and provisions are required for gender-sensitive extension services targeting women, and indigenous and vulnerable farmers as key stakeholders to help deliver innovative solutions to increase productivity and build adaptive capacity.
- To build synergy for climate change responses and to achieve gender targets as stated in the National Plan for Disaster Management (2021-2025), close coordination is required among MoDMR, MoEFCC, MoF, MoP, and MoWCA.
- MoWCA has to play a proactive role to provide overall gender technical support to all other ministries. While developing policies and plans, the MoWCA needs to be involved in providing gender leadership in setting the strategic goals, targets, outcomes, and actions to ensure the development and implementation of gender-responsive policies, strategies, and plans.
- Ensure a proactive approach to engage INGOs/NGOs, CBOs, private sector, farmers' federations, and networks working on women's rights and gender equality throughout the course of developing and implementing CSA initiatives. Utilizing the findings, recommendations, lessons, and reflections generated from the latest research studies, these entities could jointly develop concepts and proposals for larger future projects to benefit a wider population. To aid this process, ADPC is planning to facilitate the integration of gender considerations into CSA through capacity-building, awareness, and leadership-oriented programs.



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