



SHE-LEADS

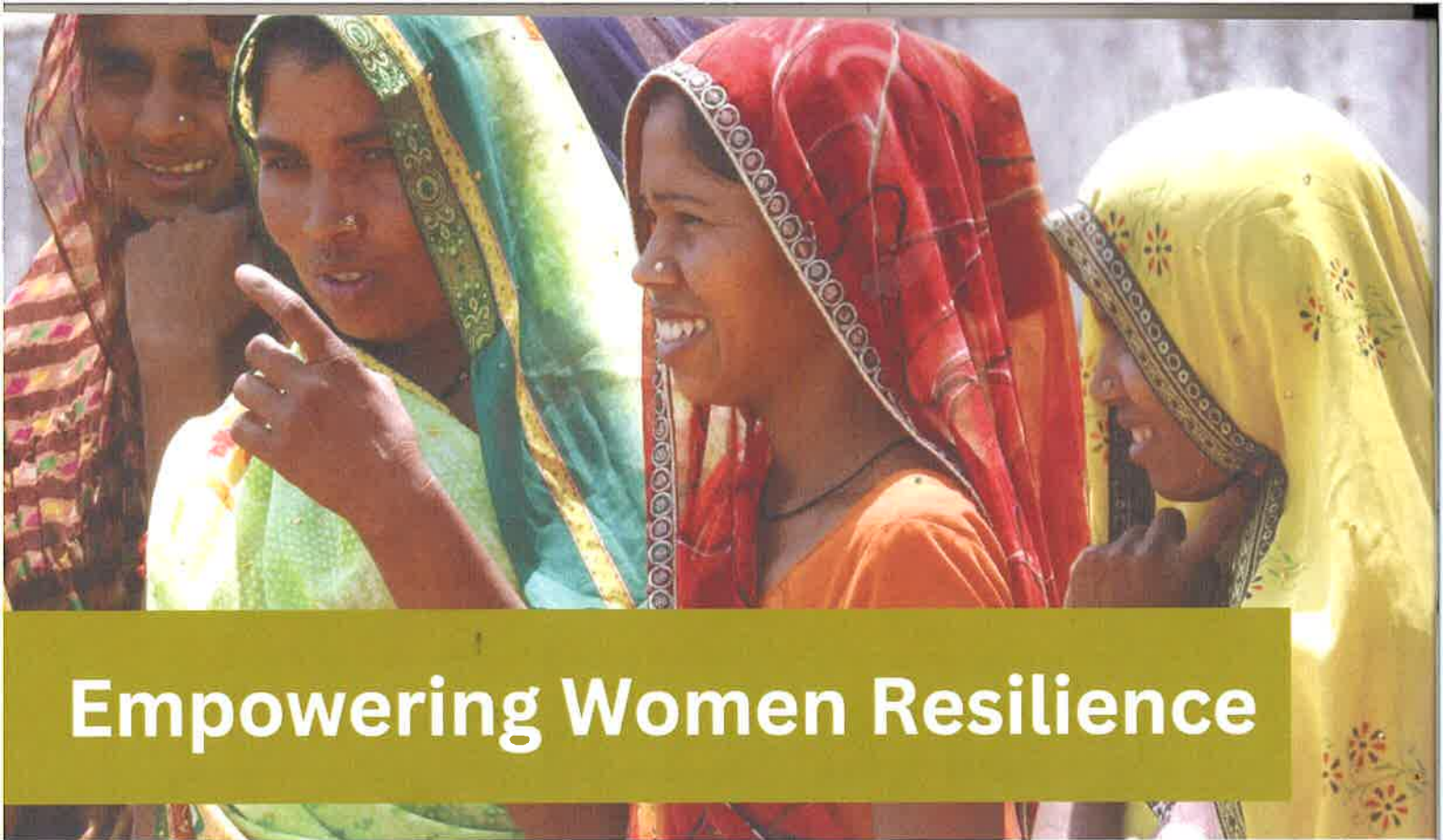
STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP & PARTICIPATION IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION & DRR

SUMMARY REPORT

Technical & Knowledge Partner



CHANGE ALLIANCE



Empowering Women Resilience

The aftermath of disasters, as witnessed in events like the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, accentuates gender disparities, leaving women with mortality rates 14 times higher than men. Ongoing systemic imbalances, encompassing caregiving responsibilities and restricted decision-making, heighten vulnerabilities, confining women to high-risk zones. Addressing these gender-specific challenges is pivotal for constructing resilient communities, dismantling detrimental feedback cycles, and empowering women to confront forthcoming shocks effectively. A meticulous examination of gender dimensions in disaster risk reduction proves indispensable for crafting effective policies, and recognizing women as proactive contributors. Despite advancements in global and national gender equality and DRR frameworks, a noteworthy gap persists in their systematic implementation, particularly in vulnerable Indian states. Prioritizing women's involvement in decision-making, planning, and resource allocation emerges as a critical imperative for effective disaster risk reduction. Understanding this urgency in formulating and executing more inclusive, just, and equitable DRR processes that incorporate a gender perspective, safeguarding the autonomy of women and girls to bolster overall household resilience, **Caritas India**, with support from **START FUND**, conducted a study on "**Women Inclusive DRR Governance**" in disaster-prone states of Assam, Bihar, Odisha, and West Bengal, focusing on assessing women's roles in decision-making and DRR program implementation.

Women's Empowerment as a Key to Achieving SDGs



Advancing gender equality and empowering women, ensuring their full and effective participation in decision-making processes and reducing gender disparities in disaster impacts.



Reducing gender-based inequalities, by ensuring vulnerable groups, particularly women, have equal access to resources, decision-making processes, and opportunities during and after disasters.



Emphasizes collaboration between governments, organizations, and communities to jointly address disaster risks, leveraging diverse perspectives, and promoting collective action for effective and sustainable solutions.

Scope of the Study

This study explores the underrepresentation of women in Disaster Governance and its impact on their vulnerability during natural hazards. Focused on intersectional challenges, including those faced by marginalized communities, it aims to advocate for women's empowerment in decision-making to shape gender-sensitive policies for effective disaster management. The study covers Assam, Bihar, Odisha, and West Bengal, considering their diverse exposure and coping capacities to climate and disaster risks, aiming to provide insights into socio-economic and cultural factors influencing women's decision-making for disaster resilience. Backed by technical support from Change Alliance, the study aims to create an action framework for effective Emergency response and DRR initiatives with a focus on women, promoting peer learning and feedback within the humanitarian network.

Objectives

- 1 Generate a comprehensive report assessing women's representation, DRR governance practices, perspectives, and barriers in hazard-prone areas of India.
- 2 Develop a framework for "Women Inclusive DRR Governance" to enhance local resilience building.
- 3 Prepare an action plan for gender-responsive DRR and humanitarian response initiatives by various stakeholders.



Steps to Framework creation



Themes of Inquiry

The study delves into the status of women's inclusion in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) governance through a comprehensive exploration of four key themes: safe and meaningful participation, leadership and capacity building, influence and engagement, and partnership and funding. These thematic inquiries serve as crucial lenses through which the study illuminates the intricate facets of women's roles in DRR governance, offering key insights into the actual status. They unveil the challenges, opportunities, and varying degrees of women's engagement, providing a nuanced understanding essential for informed decision-making and targeted interventions in disaster resilience initiatives..



Safe & Meaningful Participation

- Examine women's participation across disaster platforms at different administrative levels
- Assess women's involvement in recovery planning, risk assessments, and their representation in teams, while gauging safety and active participation perceptions



Leadership & Capacity Building

- Assess women's representation in leadership roles in disaster and climate forums
- Identify forums with women in leadership, their duration, and perceived recognition of capacities
- Explore barriers, rank settings of women's influence, and assess their engagement in resilience activities



Influence & Engagement

- Assess women's impact on national disaster and climate policies, strategies, and plans
- Evaluate alignment with women's priorities, and gauge influence on gender-responsive actions by women-led organizations



Partnership & Funding

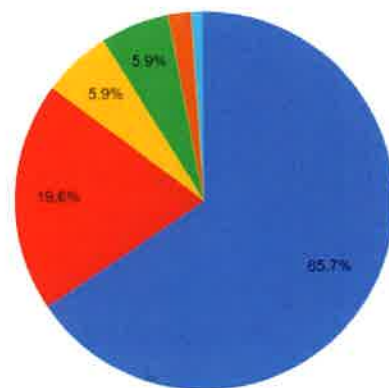
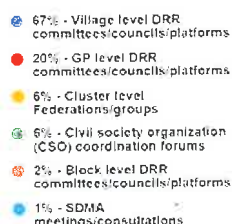
- Evaluate women's participation in deciding the focus of resilience activities
- Assess women's involvement in co-design, implementation, and evaluation of projects
- Examine funding allocation for women's leadership within organizations
- Investigate funding received for women's leadership activities within organizations



Unlocking Insights

Theme 1: Safe & Meaningful participation

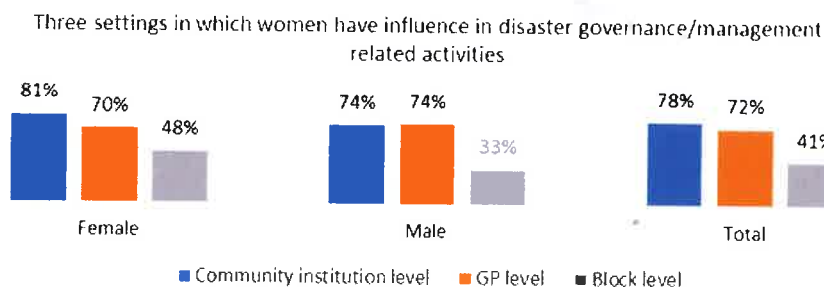
- **Low Overall Women's Participation:** Participation in DRR governance and meetings ranges from 29-49%, with higher representation (67%) at the village level but a significant gap at block and state levels.
- **State-wise Disparities:** Assam and Odisha exhibit better female representation (25-49%), while Bihar has teams with less than 25% women, and West Bengal has the highest percentage of such teams.
- **Active Participation:** Despite 82.6% agreeing that women can contribute actively, cultural hesitancy and lack of knowledge often limit their expression of capabilities.
- **Safety of Participation:** While 86% believe women find it safer to participate, only 48% think physical barriers are actively addressed, emphasizing the need for logistical and financial support to enhance women's engagement and overcome state disparities.



Theme 2: Leadership & Capacity Building

- **Limited Leadership Opportunities:** 55% agreed that leadership positions are held by women however these mainly stand at Village task force levels only or DRR village meetings. Higher women leadership reported in Odisha and Assam compared to Bihar and West Bengal. As in states, men outnumber women, attention is needed to address disparities in leadership roles, especially at higher administrative levels.
- **Community Participation Challenges:** Women face challenges in rising to leadership roles at higher levels (GP/Block/Cluster) due to limited capacity building and awareness.
- **Barriers to Women's Leadership:** 55% agree there are some barriers, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to remove obstacles. Specific challenges include unrecognized expertise (25%), limited funding (23%), discomfort in expressing in male-dominated forums (17%), and lack of participation invitations (14%).
- **Engagement in DRR Activities:** There is a need to focus on activities where women are less engaged mainly Risk assessment, hazard mapping, and vulnerabilities assessment which leads to a key gap in bringing forth their gender-specific needs, interests, and risks in making interventions more gender-responsive.
- **Challenges in Women's Engagement:** Addressing challenges reported by women such as safety in movement (57%), being prevented from having a voice (55%), and ensuring physical barriers are actively addressed such as lack of education and knowledge, transportation, engagement in agricultural activities (48.7%).

Theme 3: Influence & Engagement



- **Inclusion in Decision Making:** A majority (27%) express uncertainty or believe women's inclusion in disaster governance decision-making and projects with government institutions is not assured, with 39% feeling inclusion has happened at times, mainly for representation purposes.
- **Regional Disparities in Influence:** Only 28% of women report influencing national disaster governance legislation, with higher agreement percentages in Assam and Odisha at the village administration level, indicating regional differences.
- **Policy Reflecting Gender Perspectives:** While 61.2% believe women's views are included in disaster governance programs for gender equality, state-wise variations suggest differing satisfaction levels. Assam and Odisha show higher confidence in policy reflecting women's needs.
- **Gender Responsive Activities:** Around 36-41% note women's active inclusion in designing, implementing, and evaluating disaster programs, with higher agreement percentages in Assam, Bihar, and Odisha regarding gender-responsive prevention and preparedness activities.

Theme 3: Partnership & Funding

- **Limited Funding Allocation:** 68% of respondents disagree that their location/ organizations allocate funding for women's leadership in DRR.
- **Scarce Funding Receipt:** While notable regional disparities exists, 71% disagree that their villages/ organizations receive funding for women's leadership activities in DRR.
- **Uncertainty and Knowledge Gap:** Noteworthy percentages express uncertainty and lack of awareness for tapping into funding sources for women's leadership in DRR.

Framework for Action



At least 50% of DRR committees at all levels have active women leaders and participants

All hindrances to women's participation are proactively addressed through gender sensitization measures, appointment of women leaders and convergence with women's groups e.g., Gender Action Committees, Social Action Committees, Gender Forums

Women leaders appointed with roles & responsibilities and monitoring mechanism established

Socio-cultural & structural barriers resolved proactively through dedicated awareness generation programs & by facilitating linkages with schemes & programs

Address socio-cultural barriers faced by women; resolve transportation issues, link with economic empowerment programs & schemes & gender sensitization measures to remove hindrance & facilitate women's meaningful participation in disaster governance.

Ensure the appointment of women leaders at all levels, remove structural barriers faced by women in accessing information around hazards, preventive and recovery measures in coordination with DRR committees

Pillar 1: Safe & meaningful Participation



More number of women leaders rise to the GP, Block, State level leadership in DRR

50% increase in women leaders after the gender sensitization training at government level committees/forums at all the government levels & to women leaders at the village level

Gender sensitization & technical training organized at all government level committees/forums and at the village level

Provide technical training & gender sensitization training to government level committees/forums at all the government levels on impacts of disasters and inclusive policies to ensure women to take on leadership roles in disaster management

Facilitate capacity-building initiatives for women leaders at the village level, including training on disaster preparedness, response, and leadership skills, training on life-saving techniques, first aid, and mock exercises

Pillar 2: Leadership & Capacity building



50% increase in women leading Risk Assessment, Hazard Mapping, Vulnerabilities assessment, preparedness & response at both government and community levels

More women are able to influence GP, block, State, & national level policies

Institutional support established making women's participation & leadership mandatory, women lead key DRR activities & participate at higher administrative levels

Establish institutional support so that women can lead Risk Assessment, Hazard Mapping, Vulnerabilities assessment where women currently are least engaged at both government and community levels.

Develop and implement institutional policies to make it mandatory for women to participate & lead in prevention, preparedness, & recovery activities

Strengthen community-led advocacy and empowerment programs, so that women can influence the development of national disaster governance/management related legislation & policies

Pillar 3: Influence & Engagement



GO-NGO network & coordination committee created with a monitoring sub-committee for 5 years to monitor fund allocation, utilization and activity-wise results; report to be generated by the GO-NGO DRR network on a yearly basis

50% increase in funding allocated for building women's leadership in DRR governance at both government and community levels

100% allocated funds utilized in building women's leadership in DRR governance at both government and community levels

Address the limited funding constraints faced by community organizations and women's groups by establishing dedicated funding streams through GO-NGO collaboration to leverage knowledge sharing, resources, and support for enhancing women's leadership in DRR governance.

Funding mechanisms should be earmarked for advancing women's leadership skills for training, capacity-building, and leadership development programs targeted at women

Pillar 4: Partnership & funding

Draft Framework for Action for strengthening women's leadership in DRR

Outcomes

Output

Input

Recommendations

- Create **specific funding channels** for women's leadership programs in DRR governance by government and NGOs.
- Establish **collaboration mechanisms for financial support** from the government, NGOs, and corporation
- **Formalize partnerships with women's organizations** for active involvement in decision-making and project implementation.
- Foster **networking among community organizations, NGOs, and women-led groups for mutual support.**
- Expand **training on gender-specific impacts and inclusive policies** for women in DRR governance.
- Develop and implement **training programs focusing on women's leadership** in disaster management at all levels.
- Develop **institutional support and comprehensive training** for women's leadership aligned with **community-led advocacy efforts.**
- Integrate **gender equality principles** into DRR policies and initiatives.
- Prioritize **gender balance in decision-making** within community organizations.
- Conduct awareness campaigns on the importance of women's leadership in DRR governance.
- Establish **mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating initiatives promoting women's leadership.**
- Implement **grassroots monitoring mechanisms** for progress tracking in women's leadership initiatives.



START
NETWORK

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"SheLeads"

**Strengthening in Women's Leadership
and Participation in Humanitarian
Action & DRR Governance**

**Study Dissemination and Roundtable on
Strengthening Framework for Action**

Date: 28th February 2024

Time: 10 am- 4 pm

Venue- YMCA, New Delhi

BACKGROUND NOTE

Gendered Impacts of Disasters & Resilience



Gender-differentiated impacts of disasters are not a new story for the humanitarian sector. Studies say that women and children are 14 times more likely than men to die when a disaster strikes. Indian Ocean Tsunami 2004, floods, and several other disasters have been anecdotal evidence of this statement. Existing **gender dynamics and systemic inequalities have heightened women's exposure to disaster risk** thus weakening their individual and community resilience. For instance, women lacking access to bank accounts face higher asset loss risks, worsening inequality. These differences create negative feedback loops. Social norms may confine women to flood-prone areas, limiting income opportunities and hindering efficient responses, ultimately diminishing their individual and household capacity to cope with future shocks. While there's a broad understanding of gender concerns, a **deeper exploration of specific gender dimensions in post-disaster recovery is needed. Understanding gender dynamics in disaster risk and resilience is crucial for informed policy and program design**, a mandatory national framework for gender-inclusive post-disaster recovery and resilience is essential.

Despite several and persistent barriers, it is important to shift the frame from looking at women as 'victims' alone to acknowledging them as **agents of change** through their active role in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts. The Sendai Framework recognizes women's significant role in disaster management, emphasizing the need for enhanced leadership in universally accessible recovery approaches. Promoting women's active involvement in decision-making is vital for enhancing community resilience to natural disasters.

For instance, Government initiatives in Vietnam allocate an official space for women in disaster decision-making bodies, while the Philippines' local government reserves a budget for women's involvement in community consultations. In Bangladesh, the Comprehensive Disaster Management Plan mandates women's representation and gender sensitivity training in disaster planning councils. Women's engagement in community mobilization efforts in Bangladesh has proven efficient, in addressing cultural barriers during disasters. Female participation in post-disaster phases fosters transformative effects on gender dynamics, which otherwise gets reinforced post-disasters. Gender equality is crucial in strengthening a nation's resilience to disasters. Not only as a human rights issue, but it also undermines a country's commitment in addressing imbalances in hard-fought development gains. As Disasters provide an opportunity to institutionalize gender-inclusive practices and emphasizing women's leadership, Caritas India with support of **START FUND** undertook a study from on **"Women inclusive DRR Governance- Barriers and Opportunities."** The primary objective of this study was to **identify existing gaps in women's participation and decision-making in DRR in context to Indian States at higher disaster risk** such as Assam, Bihar, Odisha and West Bengal. The ultimate goal was to formulate a comprehensive ground-level action framework that would facilitate the successful implementation of Emergency response and DRR initiatives with women in focus. With the **support of Change Alliance, Caritas India has completed the study** and is ready to share it with the larger humanitarian network for peer learning and feedback for strengthening framework.

SESSION PLAN



SESSION DETAILS	FACILITATOR	TIME
Registration & informal introductions		9:30 am to 9:50 am
INAUGURAL & WELCOME ADDRESS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome Address by Caritas India Inaugural Message from CI Asst. Executive Director Key Note Address by Guest of Honor Guest Address by Distinguished Speaker. 	Fr. (Dr.) Jolly, Guest of Honor- Shri Kamal Kishore Ms. Kanta Singh, Ms. Joana Villafior	10:00 am to 10:30 am
STUDY DISSEMINATION & FRAMEWORK LAUNCH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key Highlights of the Study. Recommendations & Draft Framework for Action for integrating Women's Leadership in DRR Governance in India. Q&A 	Caritas India & Change Alliance	10:30 am to 11:15 am
TEA BREAK		11:15 am to 11:30 am
ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Session 1: <u>Empowering Women in Disaster Leadership through Capacity building and inclusive participation</u> Context Setting- Ms. Kanta Singh, UN WOMEN Role & Status of Women Leadership in DRR Gaps and Challenges in Participation & Leadership Strategies for Inclusion Tailored Capacity Building Initiatives 	Moderator- Ms. Kanta Singh, UN Women Panelist- UN WOMEN, UNFPA, START NETWORK, UNNATI, SEEDS Participants- ADRA, Caritas, Mukti, NEADS, ECHO INDIA	11:30 am to 11:45 am 11:45 am - 12:30 pm
ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Session 2: <u>Fostering Women's Leadership through Funding, and strategic collaborations</u> Context Setting-Mr. Krishna Vatsa, NDMA (TBC) / Dr. Elia Jafar, TANYAK Enhancing Funding Opportunities Technical, knowledge & research partnerships Integration of gender equality in DRR Policies Creating Holistic Gender Responsive DRR System 	Moderator- Dr. Elia Jafar, TANYAK Panelist- CDDMASS, NCDHR, Bal Raksha Bharat, CASA Participants- HAI, Caritas India, START Network, UN WOMEN	12:30 pm to 12:45 pm 12:45 pm to 1:15 pm
LUNCH BREAK		1:15 pm to 2:00 pm
REFLECTIONS ON FRAMEWORK STRENGTHENING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarizing Discussions from Roundtable Q&A Actionable Takeaways 	Caritas India & Change Alliance	2:00 pm to 2:30 pm
CLOSING SESSION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closing Remarks Joint Vote of Thanks 	Caritas India & Change Alliance	2:30 pm to 3:00 pm
NETWORKING TEA		3 pm onwards

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GOAL OF THE WORKSHOP



Objectives

- To **demonstrate the Key Findings and reflections** from the study from 4 states- Assam, Bihar, Odisha and West Bengal
- To introduce and **launch the Gender-responsive DRR Governance Framework for Action** in India.
- To **seek inputs and feedback** from Govt and CSOs including NDMA, UN Agencies, women's groups, women's organizations, gender experts, DM & DRR experts, and humanitarian practitioners on the DRR Framework.
- To develop a **Blueprint Document**, implementation plan and **PoA for integration of the Framework** for vulnerable & Multi hazard States of India.

TARGET GROUP



NDMA, NIDM, State Disaster Management Authorities, other government bodies



Humanitarian networks, UNDRR, National Level NGOs, CSOs, Women Rights Group



Academic and Research Scholars/ Institutions



CSR Partners and funding associations



GUIDING QUESTIONS



Session 1: Empowering Women in Disaster Leadership through Capacity building and inclusive participation

In Session 1, we aim to assess the current status of women's leadership in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Disaster Management (DM), identifying gaps in their representation at various administrative levels. Additionally, we seek insights into strategies and initiatives for empowering women through capacity-building programs and ensuring their inclusive participation in DRR governance. The discussion will focus on fostering a deeper understanding of challenges and effective approaches to strengthen women's roles in disaster leadership.

Discussion Points

- a) How can we assess and enhance the role and status of women as leaders in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Disaster Management (DM)?
- b) What are the identified gaps and challenges in providing women with leadership positions in DRR at the state, district, and block levels, and how can these be addressed?
- c) What strategies can be implemented to ensure the inclusion of women leaders in DRR committees, platforms, and governance structures at all levels?
- d) In what ways can capacity-building initiatives be effectively tailored to strengthen women's leadership in DRR and DM?

Session 2: Fostering Women's Leadership through Funding, and strategic collaborations

In Session 2, "Fostering Women's Leadership through Funding and Strategic Collaborations," our aim is to formulate actionable strategies and recommendations. By addressing the questions posed, we seek to enhance funding mechanisms, establish impactful partnerships with women's organizations, design effective capacity-building initiatives, integrate gender-sensitive approaches, and identify concrete steps to overcome barriers, ultimately fostering a supportive environment for women's leadership in disaster governance.

Discussion Points

- a) How can we enhance funding opportunities for women's leadership in DRR governance at both government and community levels?
- b) What strategies can be implemented to formalize Technical, knowledge and research partnerships with women's organizations for active involvement in decision-making and project implementation in disaster-related initiatives?
- c) How can governments and community organizations collaborate to integrate gender equality principles into DRR policies effectively?
- d) What concrete actions can be taken to address barriers hindering women's participation and leadership in disaster governance, fostering inclusivity and equal representation?