CLIMATE CHANGE AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN:
STUDY OF A FLOOD-AFFECTED POPULATION IN
THE RURAL AREA OF SINDH, PAKISTAN

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Abstract

Climate-induced gender-based violence is an emerging area of study. Although studies on women and climate change are not new, a fresh understanding of gender-based issues and related problems are becoming of greater concern now. Women in Pakistan are generally at a disadvantage due to their societally-perceived norms, roles and responsibilities. This study aims to examine the experiences of women in flood settlement camps and to identify an association between natural disasters and violence against women. For this study, with the help of qualitative research methodology, 20 women were interviewed in the flood-prone areas of Sindh. Findings show that most women experience different types of violence, physical as well as emotional, committed by partners and even by complete strangers. The rate of such violence rises when women are displaced and are in temporary shelter facilities during a post-disaster period. Committing violence under such situations results in critical implications for both

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women victims and the development and implementation of gender-sensitive climate change and disaster planning policies.

Keywords

Climate change, disaster, gender-based violence, Pakistan, flood shelter-homes

Introduction

The United Nations Declaration on Elimination of Violence Against Women in its Resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993, defines violence as “Any act of gender based violence that results in physical, sexual or physiological harm or suffering and deprivation of liberty and needs in public and private life” (Sujatha, 2014). Gender-based violence around the globe is linked with gender inequalities and environmental instabilities which affect a community’s wellbeing and hinder its development. In most countries, women reportedly experience more violence than males do (Camey et al, 2020). According to statistics, around one in three women experiences gender-based violence (The World Bank, 2019). This widespread gender-based discrimination and actual violence results not only in curtailing victims’ ability to grow and to survive as normal persons, but often results in acceptance of violence and harassment as natural and normal phenomena of their lives.

Domestic violence, which has a long history, has been part of discussion and debates for a long time. Domestic violence can be defined and explained from different points of view; some list it as dowry violence, while others define it as wife beating or partner assaulting. Research studies which are concerned with violence against women caused by their economic marginalization, women’s low social status and unequal treatment of women during climate disasters, have defined it as climate change-induced violence against women. Climate change has undoubtedly created a large and increasing amount of credible risk to the livelihood of risk-prone population around the globe. Among all the countries, South Asian countries are the most vulnerable to the risks caused by climate change, with its after-effects of food and water scarcity, risk of displacements, and risk of health hazards (McAdam and Saul, 2010). Thus, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2018) reported that climate change impacts different populations differently. In several countries, shoreline intrusion and erosion, coastal flooding, agricultural disruption, and water scarcity will lead to massive migrations (McAdam and Saul, 2010).
Climate change has a deeper sociological perspective too (Myers, 1996). The World Health Organization warns that during any type of disaster, natural or otherwise, women are the most vulnerable with an increased rate of sexual and domestic violence causing serious and injurious repercussions to their reproductive and sexual health (WHO, 2015). During disasters or the post-disaster period, women who are already the most abused and subjugated group, are further victimized by physical and emotional violence within households and relief-settlement camps (Rahman 2013). For instance, cases of sexual and physical violence and sexual harassment, of even young girls, were reported during the 2005 earthquake in Kashmir (Mehta & Manjari, 2007). The latest United Nation Women report specifies that despite the crucial need of time and scenarios, the lack of gendered-lens research has not produced noteworthy results (Glemarec, 2016). An important point made by this report is that women are marginalized when they are categorized only as ‘vulnerable groups’. Consequently, women’s agency as change-makers is also reduced. Another significant recommendation of this report is that planning for climate management must include attention to gender concerns by listening to the voices and agency of women and girls, who are at an increasing risk of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation in the aftermath of disasters. In the words of this report, much of the abuse is caused by ‘transactional sex to [gain] access to food and other basic necessities for family members and themselves’ (ibid, 23).

The focus of gender-based violence during the post-disaster period is emerging area of study in current gender and development studies. There is an emerging pattern of women’s exposure to violence subsequent to natural catastrophes. This violence may be aggravated by discrimination that persists even after disaster and impairs physical and social wellbeing, thus multiplying chances of domestic violence. Loss of job, poverty, and missing loved ones leads to severe mental stress that results in frustration and triggers domestic violence (Molyneaux et al, 2019). It is a well-documented fact that natural or anthropogenic disasters cause an increased risk of depression and decreased mental wellbeing. Among these risks, one particular one is violence against women in the post-disaster period due to their roles and responsibilities. There is growing evidence that gender-based violence increases in post-disaster situations (Norris et al, 2002).

Mcleod et al (2018) in their study have highlighted how women in the Asia Pacific region are underrepresented in any kind of research related to climate change and its impacts. Gender experiences and information are rarely explored. H. Djoudi and Brockhaus (2011), in their study of Mali, reported that the workload of women increases as their livelihood pattern and dependency on water and forest change. A
study conducted by Westermann and Pretty (2005) documented an increase in risk pertaining to violence against women due to climate-change induced droughts in South Asia. Girls and women need to go far to collect firewood and water, making them vulnerable to violence. Similarly, different studies conducted in Bangladesh highlighted that floods create conditions that expose women to excessive harassment and make them more vulnerable and exposed to violence (Nasreen, 2012; Azad et al, 2014).

The frequency of climate-change induced migration varies with different economic classes. Economically poor and marginalized segments are expected to migrate more frequently as compared to financially sound people in a society (Udas et al, 2019). Sahavagi et al (2015), in their research, document an increased rate of violence against women in Nepal during the post-earthquake period. Increased chances of rape and sexual assault are also reported in temporary settlements (Udas et al, 2019). Another aspect of gender-based violence is the social norm of accepting the male domination and a religion-based view of male superiority (Masson et al, 2019). Similarly, Azad et al (2014), in their study of flood-induced vulnerabilities and problems encountered by women in northern Bangladesh, document flood-created conditions that exposed women to excessive harassment (196). These vulnerable women, however, as found by Nasreen (2012), also proved resilient in the face of disasters.

**Literature Review**

Climate-change impacts are not gender or wealth neutral. Recent studies show that their adverse impact on men and women are as different in effect as their impact on the wealthy and the poor. Evidence shows that women, on account of their gender, experience greater inequalities during any climate-stressed situation (Rahman, 2013). Women are documented as experiencing the impact of disaster differently and also as reacting differently. Similarly, women’s deaths outnumbered men’s in the 2004 tsunami (Dasgupta et al, 2010), 2003 European heat waves, 2007 Bangladesh cyclone, and the 2010 Pakistan mega floods (Rahman, 2013).

The severity and intensity of natural disasters is increasing due to climate change. Around 24.2 million displacements are recorded in 2016 alone (Cerna-Turoff et al, 2019). During disasters, the separation of families and the collapse of social and community control leads to risks of violence against women and young girls in particular (Kolbe et al, 2010). The concept of women’s vulnerability is the main concept behind all the disparities against women. Women’s lack of access to resources, information, education and preparedness campaigns, makes them more
vulnerable compared to men in a similar context. The subordinate role of women in Pakistani society also adds to the vulnerability of women. Women’s role as primary caretaker of the injured, ill, elderly and children, further increases their work load, which in turn leads to emotional stress (Dasgupta et al, 2010).

Cerna-Turoff et al, (2019) in their study, explained violence against women specifically as physical violence and sexual violence. In various scenarios, the emotional or psychological violence is underestimated and is not documented properly (Sriskandarajah et al, 2015). Researchers, however, agree that emotional violence does have a lifelong impact like any other form of violence and can lead to major trauma (Madkour et al, 2011).

Since women are generally responsible for care work such as providing food and water in any climate stressed situation, they are the ones who physically and mentally exhaust themselves to fulfill the needs of others. Their duties, like fetching drinking water, cooking food, and disposing of waste, becomes first priority, and in most cases girls leave their schools to help their mothers in these activities. This requirement can be termed psychological violence (Rahman, 2013). Domestic and partner violence during a stressed scenario leads to the breakdown of family; loss of a child or a loved one can lead to more psychological stress which impacts negatively the mental condition of the victim (Mcleod et al, 2018). The study conducted by Molyneaux et al, (2019) emphasized that disaster-induced high levels of mental stress in a family can also lead to violence against women. In this study, conducted in Australia, it was reported that cases of violence against women increase with post-disaster stress and in addition result in changes in income status.

It is also observed that in countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh or India, women’s mobility is highly restricted. Gender norms do not allow women, during times of need, to leave their houses to reach shelter homes or access other rescue facilities due to fear of being blamed for being disobedient to their husbands, fathers, brothers or even sons. Their inability to secure themselves, and their lack of knowledge of means and methods of self-protection, often tends to make their position more vulnerable and exposes them to both domestic and community-based violence. Women often avoid using public toilets because of the concept of shame or because of the stigma of being seen by men in inappropriate attire, without veil or in wet clothes, which further restricts their options for a good life (Rashid & Michaud, 2000) and access to basic community facilities.

In case of any natural disaster, refugee camps or temporary housing lack appropriate personal hygiene facilities for females, which further increase the risk of
sexual harassment for girls and women. Lack of privacy, proper and separate toilets and baths are issues that multiply the risk of violence (Nasreen, 2010). The infrastructure and mechanisms of refugee camps are, as a result, the most serious challenges to women’s safety. Thus, during floods, the number of rapes and kidnapping of girls and women increases. In addition, human trafficking also increases as the vulnerable population of young girls and women are not in a position to safeguard themselves (Rahman, 2013).

Violence committed against women because of their biological gender, is a chauvinist phenomenon which is engrained in the psyche of most men and women across the globe (Masson et al, 2019). Gender-based violence is one of the most powerful mechanisms in the hands of men to subjugate women and to keep them subordinate. Studies which document gender-based violence include relief work studies whose prime focus is not understanding this dimension (Glemarec, Qayum & Olshanskaya, 2016). Researchers focus on general vulnerable population studies, but women generally are missing as a special segment in these studies. This negligence has often resulted in hiding the issue of violence against women in post-disaster situations (Masson et al, 2019).

CARE (2015) reports on Cyclone Pam Vanuatu stated that the number of cases pertaining to domestic violence against women increased by 300% post cyclone or during re-settlement. Meleod et al (2018) in their study discussed how disaster affects women and how chances of violence increase, not just physically but mentally also. Further, many girls are forced to leave school to share the newly increased household workload which ultimately reduces the chances of their self-growth. Sadly, in most studies devoted to exploring knowledge and capacity-building opportunities for girls and women, the link between climate-change induced disaster and gender-based violence is often overlooked.

Rational of Study

Pakistan is recognized as one of the top ten countries which will be affected by climate change in the long run (Germanwatch, 2018). Major vulnerabilities of Pakistan, such as extreme weather conditions, sea and river water intrusion, and droughts and floods, lead to food and water scarcity, along with increased risk of diseases and epidemics. The position of women in all these situations becomes more difficult. Curiously, during the review of literature, no direct study on climate-change induced violence or gender-based violence in climate change references about Pakistan were found. To fill that gap in literature and to explore this direction of climate change, this research was conducted. Table 1 summarizes the list of studies which were
conducted in the last decade highlighting the research gap in each study. It was identified that gender-based climate-induced violence came up in different contexts, but no proper study was conducted in Pakistan. The main objective of this study is to explore the evidence of increased cases of violence in any climate-induced situation by getting first-hand information as narrated by the victims.

**Theoretical Framework**

Women’s human rights, as endorsed by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, are applicable to all phases of climate change and disaster response planning. Additionally, several international frameworks focus on women’s disaster reduction and humanitarian assistance along lines of gender equality. The Rio Conference on The Environment and Development (1992) accredited the predominantly vulnerable situation of gender equality and its need of inclusiveness in all initiatives associated with climate change. Similarly, the “Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction” (2015-2030) highlights the need for gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction policies, plans and programs (CEDAW, 2018).

Myers (2002) highlighted the nexus between resource scarcity, population growth and violence. Though Myers’s focus was not on women, later researchers identified masculinized control of resources and responsibilities resulting in climate-related threats against women (Sasser, 2012). With the rising debate of gender discourse, a focus on the gendered-oriented vulnerabilities of climate change also become a matter of interest. Women are categorized as one of the most vulnerable segments of a population even though they are an integral part of household livelihood (Annecke, 2014). Masika (2002) emphasized that unequal gender relations make women vulnerable, especially in developing areas. During any climate-induced disaster, resilience depends upon the economic and social standing of an individual. Therefore, severe impacts will be observed prominently on women in developing countries where the social and economic divide is huge.

Several studies that have identified the vulnerability of women have missed focussing on violence against women. Frameworks that are available for vulnerability analysis were mainly generic in nature and focus on vulnerability in a holistic perspective (Yohe & Tol, 2000). For this study, the framework adapted is the Risk-Hazard (RH) Model (Warrick,1980; Turner et al, 2003). In the RH model, a hazardous event leads to exposure and ultimately leads to vulnerability and its consequences. According to the framework shown in figure 1, women’s vulnerability in terms of violence is evaluated by taking a climate-induced hazard scenario (i.e.
The impact of the hazard is identified by the type of violence women experience in flood settlement camps, and otherwise in their lives, in any climate stressed situations. Exposure explains the elements that make them vulnerable to violence like lower social or economic status.

**Research Question**

The present study aims to explore the evidence of climate-change induced violence against women in rural parts of Sindh. It identifies the type of violence women have experienced in flood settlement camps.

This research is guided by two basic questions:
Q1) Do women realize that climate change induced violence exists?
Q2) What is the evidence of violence against women due to climate-change stressed situations?

**Methodology**

To seek answers to these two questions, this study, which is of an exploratory nature, applied both quantitative and qualitative research methods to collect primary data. For quantitative research, a field survey was conducted to identify women impacted by disasters who were living in shelter camps. Due to the exploratory nature of this study, and to seek women’s responses through their own narratives, a qualitative interview method (Merriam, 2009) was also used. The main data collection was undertaken in the area where temporary flood-relief shelters were made near Larkana and Khairpur (ADB, 2017). Ten women from each area were interviewed; in total twenty women were interviewed to understand the gravity of the situation. The purpose of collecting data from two different districts was to contrast the data and validate it through data triangulation (Holloway, 1997).

**Data Collection and Analysis**

An interview guide containing twelve questions was developed. The first six questions addressed research question one, and the remaining questions addressed research question two, as given above. The qualitative data was collected by the researcher herself. In order to use the data for academic published studies, consent was obtained by the participants. Interviews were conducted in the Sindhi language and were later transcribed into English to increase readability. Data was carefully analysed and themes were identified to address the research questions.
Participants

Participants in this study were selected through the purposive sampling method. Women selected were those who had been living in the settlement camps for at least two years or more. Women who were in camps for some time were more aware of living in camps and were more open in sharing their experiences than women who were new. The researcher, being native Sindhi-speaking and belonging to one of the selected districts, was able to communicate with women participants at a more personal level. Women were assured of their anonymity and the reason for research explained in detail before starting the formal interviews. A consent form of voluntary participation and use of data for research purposes was also signed. All efforts were made to provide a trustworthy environment for women. Interviews were conducted individually due to the sensitive nature of the research topic.

Limitations of the Study

During the data collection phase, the main limitation faced by the researcher was women’s unwillingness to participate in the study process as they were afraid of their identity being disclosed. Upon counselling and agreeing to maintain their anonymity and avoid using audio-recording, respondents finally agreed to in-depth interviews. Later, the data was transcribed into English and codified. The edge was the researcher’s native fluency in the Sindhi language, which helped a great deal in continuing the flow of the dialogue.

Results and Discussion

The interviews were analysed, and detailed thematic analysis was performed. The following themes were identified after the analysis of collected information. The women’s experience of violence can be broadly categorized in three main areas: (1) Emotional violence, which is referred to as verbal, mental or emotional abuse by an intimate partner or stranger due to a stressful scenario or gender-specific task and cultural barriers (Masson et al., 2016); (2) Physical violence, which is referred to as physical abuse that women experience during and after disaster scenarios where women bear physical abuse by their partners because of low social status and stress due to loss of income (Masson et al., 2016); 3) Sexual violence, which is referred to as the sexual nature of harassment in the form of inappropriate touch, increased risk of assaults and harassment due to lack of privacy or, in some extreme cases, human trafficking and rape (Masson et al., 2016).
Emotional Violence

The participants in this study highlighted the emotional trauma they went through during the natural disaster that led to the first theme of gender-based violence, that is emotional. A respondent told me, “We don’t have enough food here in camps, I feel guilty that I am unable to provide my son his nutritional needs.”

The hopelessness of not providing enough to the family is the basic stress women suffer from. Specially in Pakistani society, women are the main care givers and relief providers in families. They often consider themselves the primary responsible person to meet the needs of the family especially children, persons with disabilities and elders. The UN Women Watch (2015) reports that women are responsible for cooking and providing meals, and this responsibility, along with their limited mobility options, puts them under immense stress to fulfil family needs. Enarson (2009) has rightly observed that the responsibility of women in developing countries is itself a stressor in any climate-induced disaster scenario.

Mcleod et al (2018) in their research, also identified similar responses when women reported that, in climate-induced drought scenarios, the lack of availability of water for basic tasks like washing, cooking and drinking results in domestic violence from partners or other family members. The situation worsens as Udas et al (2019) explains that when male members of the family die or become disabled during any natural calamity, the burden is assumed by women. Often, these women are targeted for verbal abuse by the partner/family members.

One woman narrating her trauma told me, “I lost everything even my daughter in floods, all I ask my self is why am I alive.” Losing loved ones creates immense stress that often leads to depression, and since in rural areas the awareness of mental illness is very low, these types of incidents are often brushed under the carpet. The high level of mental stress is usually associated with the death of a family member during disasters (Alston and Vize 2010). This woman, however, instead of being comforted, was blamed for not taking good care of her daughter. She told me: “My husband is in city so that he can provide food for us, I haven’t seen him since the last eight months. We were never separated even for a single day before the floods.”

Spousal separation is another stress-building factor in women’s lives. Financial crunch and the need for survival often lead families to live apart, but responsibilities for children lie with women, as men go out to earn. Separation of family was identified as the major emotional stress in many cases. Structural
inequalities and lack of an immediate support system are categorized as emotional violence. During the post-disaster period, many male members of a family often migrate to cities to earn for the family. Women have to go through the trauma arising from loss of home, financial burden and separation from partner. The situation often worsens when the husbands do not give women due credit for their hardship. Studies suggest that intense social and psychological pressure leads to increased risk of psychological violence in rural areas (UNCC, 2019). One women respondent said, “I have never been out of my home before all this, no man ever saw my face and here we live like this with no privacy; I was a shy woman earlier but now it seems as if I have become shameless.”

Due to the migration of male family members, women have to act as the man of the house, a role for which they are not prepared, and are often ashamed for behaving like men. The cultural and religious norms of Sindh are highly segregated: under normal conditions, women are confined to homes and are often not allowed to interact with the opposite gender without veils. Living in an open space and being unable to observe veiling is the biggest cause of stress for many women. Stress and the emotional health of women, thus, get compromised when they have to live in a common space, open to the male gaze. Women reportedly experience the stress of displacement more, which raises their level of depression (Mcleod et al, 2018).

Physical Violence

Domestic violence and men’s resistance to women’s independence is considered normal in rural settings of Pakistan’s society. Thus, rural women displaced by disaster, and interviewed in shelter camps, continued to face the violent behaviour of their husbands. How these rural women, under the weight of misogyny, have internalised domestic violence as normal, is well-expressed in the following statement:

Yes my husband shouts at me and slaps me if I am unable to give him cold water when he is back after a hard day’s work; but what can I do, at times I don’t find ice and sometimes I can’t afford to buy it for him.

This statement leads to the development of my second theme – physical violence. What came out as an astonishing surprise was a majority of women’s acceptance of this type of violence as tokens of male superiority and their own helplessness. The same respondent further explained, “I have nowhere to go. Besides if he will not take his frustration out on me, then on whom? I am his wife. I have to bear it.”
Connell (2011) understands acceptance of violence against women as the normal behaviour of their husbands to be part of a world-wide order wherein male gender is considered superior and dominant and the female gender accepts a secondary position happily. The main reason behind the social practices that have constructed these norms is also women’s unquestioned submission to it. The practices are rooted deep in our society; religious arguments in support of women’s subordination have further strengthened violence against women as being normal. During the interviews, women were more accepting of physical and verbal violence as they were convinced that their male family members too were stressed by the situation. Neelormi, Adri and Ahmed (2009) report that traditionally women are considered as the principal caregivers of the family, accepting the responsibilities of handling and cooking food; gathering drinking water; tending to the needs of family members, children and the sick; and managing livestock. If they face violence, in case of failing in the performance of these socially assigned and expected domestic tasks, they consider it a punitive act and not as violence against them.

Bourdieu (2001) also found that male domination continues to exist in set-ups where female and male members of a society not only accept gender discrimination but justify it as normal male behaviour. Thus, women’s acceptance of their status as punching bags allows their husbands and other male members of their family to vent their anger and frustration, perpetuating violence. Physical violence is a punishable act; most women, however, never report these acts and often accept them as their fate. Climate change and disasters, as data of this study also confirms, worsens domestic violence—and aggravates it further. Indeed, this plight of women is not restricted to countries in under-developed regions of the world. The United Nations reports these cases from developed countries as well (UNCC, 2019).

Another form of violence is community-based physical violence where women have to fight for basic needs in camps and shelters. As one respondent reported, “Now things are a little better. In the first few months we used to get hurt while collecting food because of the chaos and males fighting for food.”

During these types of situations, necessities are distributed and often the stronger ones get the edge over weaker ones; women, being vulnerable, generally suffer most in these scenarios. Mcleod et al (2018), in their research, identified cases of possible physical assault on young girls during water collection from far-off areas in drought season. Their study further reveals that in a majority of cases of this type, as women do not feel comfortable discussing it and making it public, they do not report it. A study conducted in Bangladesh revealed the same: around half of the women in
shelters felt that facilities were not gender appropriate and shelters were not safe for women and young girls, yet they avoided discussing it. They also talked about the discomfort of sharing the toilets with men (Khan foundation and Arrow, 2015). The findings of this study reveal that almost all respondents, 93%, were of the view that ‘the shelters or the emergency/transitional homes are not women friendly’ and reported lack of sanitation and decent toilet facilities. They also experienced discomfort due to men and women sharing the same space, bathing and toilets. Along with this, pregnant women and lactating mothers face additional problems due to the unavailability of private space (Khan Foundation and Arrow, 2015).

Sexual violence

Cases of sexual harassment or violence are not documented and are considered taboo in Pakistan. During my interviews, one respondent, however, said, “Bathrooms in camps are so far away. I have heard that a few men rape the girls in bushes.”

That leads to the development of the third theme which focuses on the sexual dimension of violence. The shelter camps are not designed to keep women’s presence and their needs in mind, and this lacuna often lead to sexual assaults. The majority of these cases are kept hidden by family members to save their reputation. As one respondent further added, “We all know about it but we don’t talk as this was the family’s pride and we don’t want to defame the family.”

This supports the findings of a study conducted by the Khan foundation and Arrow (2015) in which respondents agree that even though they are being sexually molested and harassed, they try to hide this abuse from male family members and authorities to safeguard their family name and dignity. A majority women agreed that coming to the shelters was their last option, as this situation is a highly uncomfortable way of living. One participant commented, “Men here stare at us all the time and when our men are away, they try to give a shove or try to touch inappropriately, but what can we do?”

Sexual violence and harassment is a common practice in these types of camps. Reports suggest that women and girls are affected beyond just domestic or physical abuse; cases of sexual harassment and molestation are common in these refugee shelters (UNCC, 2019). Bartlett (2008), in his study, found that adolescent girls go through a higher level of sexual harassment, especially due to lack of privacy and flaws in shelter design. Davis et al (2005) explained that during periods of climate-induced crises, there is a high probability of women experiencing sexual harassment and violence in overcrowded transitional housing camps and shelters. Even toilets are not considered safe as the camps are never planned keeping women’s safety and
specific needs in mind. A senior respondent explained this scenario to me by saying, “I never leave my daughter alone, I even go with her to the bathroom, as it is not safe here, you see.”

Similar findings are reported in the study conducted by the Khan Foundation and Arrow (2015) in Bangladesh flood prone areas. Women are more likely to be victims of sexual violence in shelters; thus they try to stop using them. Emotional stress is frequently intensified after catastrophes, predominantly where people are expatriates and have to live in alternative or temporary accommodations. Congestion, absence of privacy and the lack of regular routines and living patterns can result in annoyance, frustration and violence. Parkinson et al (2014), in their study, demonstrate the prevalence of violence during or after disasters, not only in developing countries, but even in countries like Australia where during disasters cases of violence against women increase.

One elderly woman explained about her experience, “I lost my daughter when I came to this camp; she was twelve, now people say she must have been sold by bad people.” Women and child trafficking cases also increase in disaster times. There were several respondents who talked about a missing child or girl. Researchers document that due to lack of security and privacy, women prefer to stay back during natural calamities rather than come and live in shelters (Sharmin and Islam, 2013). Researchers agree that since climate change studies are more focussed on scientific aspects of disasters, issues of this sort often get neglected. Thus, socially constructed do’s and don’ts for women limit their survival choices (Baten and Khan, 2010). The Khan Foundation and Arrow study (2015) results corroborate my findings in which around 20% women referred to sexual harassment (forced sex and rape) in camps. Similarly, to the Khan Foundation and Arrow study, women whom I met, mostly remained silent about it.

Conclusion

This study documents women’s acknowledgment that climate stress situations lead to increased cases of violence against them. They also narrated their experiences of emotional, physical and sexual violence by family members and even by strangers. In view of this first-hand evidence, there is an urgent need to include climate-change induced violence in the main climate change studies and related debates. Gender-focused climate actions can act as the essential component in campaigns and programmes focusing on elimination of gender-induced violence. This goal can only be achieved by incorporating the different dimensions of climate change studies focusing on women. The world also needs to involve women more in climate-change
action programmes, for example, by focusing on gender mainstreaming and ensuring women's participation in decision-making and policy development. Undertaking and resolving the issue of gender violence is a significant phase in the direction of accomplishing the essential objective of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In order to create enhanced resilience systems and better disaster preparedness, women’s participation and recognition is inevitable. In order to develop a gender-responsive approach, planners must respect and accept the basic differences and issue a underlying the experience of each gender.

Table 1: Summary of Latest Studies and Research Gap Analysis

| Year | Factor Analysed                                      | Research Gap                                      | Reference                          |
|------|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2000 | Adolescence/ Purity issues in settlement camps issues (social context orientation) | Climate-change induced violence study is missing | Rashid, S.F. & Michaud, S. 2000.   |
| 2005 | Disaster risk management orientation                  | Gender Dimension of climate change is missing     | Davis, I. et al. .2005.            |
| 2008 | Adaptation and mitigation study                      | Women enteric vulnerability analysis is missing    | Bartlett, S. 2008.                |
| 2009 | Disaster Risk management study                        | Women enteric violence focus was missing          | Enarson, E. 2009.                 |
| 2009 | Climate change and health focused study              | Gender and violence dimension is missing          | Neelormi S., Adri N., & Ahmed A.U. 2009 |
| 2010 | Disaster Risk management study                        | Women enteric violence focus was missing          | Dasgupta, Samir, Ismail, S. & Sarathi De P. 2010. |
| 2010 | Disaster Risk management study                        | Women vulnerability analysis focusing on violence but in regional context only | Nasreen, M. 2010                  |
| 2010 | Climate change and gender general study              | Gender Dimension of climate change is missing     | Alston, M. and Vize, S. 2010.      |
| 2010 | Literature on women in disaster                       | Any empirical study is missing                    | Baten, M.A. & Khan, N.A. 2010.    |
| Year | Title                                                                 | Focus Area                              | Source                                                                 |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2013 | Disaster Risk management study                                       | Climate change impact violence study is missing | Rahman, S. 2013.                                                       |
| 2014 | Disaster Risk management study focusing health issues                | Climate change impact violence study is missing | Parkinson, D., Dunca, A., & Weiss, C. 2014.                             |
| 2015 | Disaster Risk management study                                       | Climate change impact violence study is missing | CARE. 2015.                                                           |
| 2015 | Climate change policy and gender mainstreaming study                 | Climate change impact violence study is missing | Glemarec, Y., Qayum, S. & Olshanskaya, M. 2016.                        |
| 2015 | Vulnerability analysis focusing health                              | Climate change impact violence study is missing | Khan foundation and Arrow. 2015.                                       |
| 2018 | Climate change Adaptation study                                     | Climate change impact violence study is missing | Mcleod et al., 2018.                                                  |
| 2019 | Vulnerability discussion focusing climate change violence            | Empirical study is missing analysis focus on random data published in different context | UNCC. 2019.                                                           |
| 2019 | Gender equality orientation focusing violence and resilience's       | Vulnerability analysis is missing         | Masson et al., 2019.                                                  |
| 2019 | General violence against women study                                | Climate change orientation is missing     | World Bank (WB). 2019                                                 |
| 2020 | Policy Document                                                      | use a source for future researches       | Camey et al., 2020.                                                   |
Figure 1: Research Framework

Source: Author’s constructed (Adapted by vulnerability framework by Turner et al., 2003).

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