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Gendered Impact of Climate Migration: Analyzing the Differential Effects on Women and Children Left Behind

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ABSTRACT

Let us take an example first. Fatima Begum and her two kids were left behind by her husband, Sadullah, who migrated to Guwahati city from a small remote town, Bohori, in the Barpeta district of Assam, India in search of work. Their families were engaged in rice cultivation and livestock rearing business. Owing to extreme flood, they lost their agricultural land and livestock in the hands of flood. Once, her husband migrated, she went to live with her parents-in-law. She has very little say when it comes to the management of household expenditures, livestock farming and other household decisions. The money which is sent by her husband straightaway goes into the hands of her father-in-law. Although she helps her mother-in-law with household chores, she still feels that she has less freedom now as her husband is not there with her. But she is still grateful that at least her children are getting food to eat and have a roof over their heads. This is just one example of how male migration owing to local climate change can affect the women the most.

As a result of global climate change, millions of people have been forced to migrate to cities or sometimes to different countries in search of better opportunities and improved living conditions. The vulnerable groups, especially women and children, are the most suffered ones, as this increases their responsibilities with respect to taking care of the children, running the household, looking after the farm, working in agricultural fields, etc. This article explains how male migration owing to local climate change has differential effects on women and children. The articles further employ a comprehensive review of existing data and case studies from climate-affected regions to analyze the consequences faced by women and children as a result of male migration. In light of these findings, the article suggests a policy alternative that emphasises the adoption of a gender-responsive strategy in all policies and strategies for reducing the effects of climate change on vulnerable groups like women and children.

Keywords: *Male Migration, Women and Children, Climate Change, Vulnerable Groups, Social Implications.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

(A) What is climate migration?

Climate Migration is sometimes also referred to as environmental migration. The term has been defined by different people in different ways. There is not a single globally accepted definition of the term Climate Migration. IOM,² in 2017, has put forth the working definition of the term environmental migration or climate migration. The term has been defined by IOM as "the movement of an individual or group of individuals who, primarily because of a sudden or gradual change in the environment brought on by climate change, are required to leave or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, within a State or across an international border."

In short, people move away from their homes as a result of extreme weather conditions. This type of migration is expanding as a result of the failure to stop the increase in greenhouse gas emissions and the average global temperature.

(B) Why are certain individuals, especially women and children, more likely than others to be affected by climate change?

There are certain factors like wealth, poverty, age, sex, health status, etc which expose a certain section of society to climate hazards. Moreover, certain sections of society, especially women, have been subjected to historic discrimination since time immemorial and they have less or zero resources to adapt to climate change.³ Women are more prone to Climate Change for many more reasons. In rural areas, to date, women play specific gender roles like looking after their children, elderly parents of her husband, cooking, cleaning, etc. These roles make women more susceptible to the effects of climate change, such as greater water shortages and food insecurity. Women are more likely to have restricted access to possibilities for resources, education, and employment, which can make them even more vulnerable.

Men and women have different physiological differences, which also makes women more vulnerable. For instance, women and children in general experience higher health risks during natural disasters because of conditions like pregnancy, menstruation, malnutrition and weak immune system. The impacts of climate change can also be seen in a variety of areas, including mobility, food security, and health. Furthermore, pandemics like COVID-19 can create more imbalance. Due to discrimination, inequality, patriarchal systems, institutional barriers, and

²*Environmental Migration*, IOM UN MIGRATION (July. 20, 2023, 10:00 AM), <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/environmental-migration>.

³ *An Introduction to Climate Change and Human Rights*, UNCC: E- LEARN (July. 20, 2023, 10:00 AM), https://unccelearn.org/mod/scorm/player.php?scoId=2337&cm=3981¤torg=articulate_rise&display=popup.

variations in attitudes, experiences, and needs between men and women, women are more likely than men to experience the harmful effects of climate change.⁴

Children's human rights are also gravely threatened by climate change. Children have unique physiology, metabolism and development needs. The changes in the environment, like changes in temperature, water and air quality, affect them. In addition to this, as recognised by the UN in the year 2020, climate change equally affects the human rights of future generations as well.⁵ The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has also come forward and addressed the issue that there are impacts on overall children's development.⁶ Moreover, according to UNICEF, poor children, the ones with disabilities and children of indigenous, ethnic, religious and linguistic minority backgrounds and girls will be among those worst affected.

UNICEF has also highlighted the fact that the basic human rights, including the right to life, right to education, right to health, right to life, right to food and water, etc, will be impacted by climate change. *For instance*, the right to access to education can be destroyed when in emergency situations like cyclones, floods, typhoons, etc, schools and other educational structures are destroyed or converted into shelters to be used during the calamity. Similarly, with the rise in sea levels and flooding, people are losing their lands to flood. In such situations, the children are at a loss because they might never be able to learn about their culture, their land, their traditions and territories.⁷

(C) What are the social implications of male migration?

In terms of migration, male migration usually results in an increase of workload for women. Women are expected to take up new roles and responsibilities with respect to the household like taking care of the children, participating in both farm and off-farm work and other traditional household rules like taking care of children preparing food washing clothes etc. When the male members of the family migrate, the women who are left behind are more exposed to the impacts of climate change as they are highly involved in farming livelihood and they also lack the necessary knowledge and skills which are required to adapt themselves to the changes.⁸

Moreover, women in the absence of male members of their families often face increased risks of violence, including sexual exploitation and abuse. Women are exposed to dangerous

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Secretary General's Call to Action for Human Rights*, UNITED NATIONS (July. 22, 2023, 12:22 AM), <https://www.un.org/en/content/action-for-human-rights/index.shtml>.

⁶ *Climate change and environment: A liveable planet for every child*, UNICEF (July. 22, 2023, 12:42 AM), <https://www.unicef.org/environment-and-climate-change>.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Tata-Cornell Institute: Annual Report, 2019-20*, TATA-CORNELL INSTITUTE (July. 25, 2023, 11:42 AM), https://live-tci-tata.pantheonsite.io/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/TCI_Annual_Report_2019-20_Web.pdf.

environments, making them vulnerable to various forms of violence. *For instance*, at times of scarcity of resources like water, food and firewood, women are forced to venture into unsafe areas to gather food, water, or firewood, putting them at risk of encountering violence, especially sexual violence.⁹

In addition to the above, in patri local households, where the couple lives with the husband's family, once the husband migrates to another place to earn a livelihood, either his father or his brothers take on the role and become the household head. They take all the major decisions of the family, like selling livestock, crops, selling their assets, investments, etc and women are left with no choice but to follow them blindly. They lose their freedom.

When it comes to children, they usually experience the feeling of abandonment, anxiety, and depression when their fathers migrate. The sudden separation often leads to a sense of loss and insecurity among children. Also, children who are left behind may experience social isolation. They could lose out on critical social and emotional growth, which could make it difficult for them to establish relationships and create a strong feeling of belonging. *For instance*, the children, especially the eldest daughter, experience disruptions in their education. When the mother works in the field, the eldest daughter is responsible for household chores and she feels isolated from peers who attend school regularly. The absence of their father and the workload on their mother's shoulders lead to emotional distress and feelings of abandonment. In certain circumstances, due to lack of security, a girl child is often married off at a very young age.¹⁰

II. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE RECENT CASES OF MALE MIGRATION WHICH HAS AFFECTED WOMEN AND CHILDREN WORLDWIDE?

India:

Starting from India, there are several instances from different parts of the country. A recent case which came into focus was from the state of Orissa. The case is from Satabhaya, a small village in Orissa, Kendrapara district.¹¹ According to a report issued by the Climate Change Department, at least 36.9% of Orissa's coastline is being eroded by the sea. The inhabitants of

⁹ *Climate change exacerbates violence against women and girls*, UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER (July. 25, 2023, 5 PM), <https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2022/07/climate-change-exacerbates-violence-against-women-and-girls#:~:text=It%20is%20estimated%20that%2080,High%20Commissioner%20for%20Human%20Rights.>

¹⁰ *Children uprooted in a changing climate: Turning challenges into opportunities with and for young people on the move*, UNICEF (July. 26, 2023, 7 PM), <https://www.unicef.org/media/109421/file/Children%20uprooted%20in%20a%20changing%20climate.pdf>.

¹¹ Rakhi Gosh, *Odisha Climate Migrants: In Satabhaya, Resettled Women Left to Fend for Themselves*, NEWS CLICK (July. 28, 2023, 11: 11 AM), <https://www.newsclick.in/odisha-climate-migrants-satabhaya-resettled-women-left-fend-themselves>.

these villages travelled farther inland and established new settlements, including Satabhaya, Kanhupur, Magarakanda, and Barahipur. Owing to soil erosion, the male members of most of the families have migrated to the state of Kerala. Since the men migrated, the women have shifted to Bagapatia village. Men migrated to work in plywood factories while women and children were left to struggle to survive. Women are struggling for everything. Their husbands send approximately Rs 3,000 to 4,000 (INR) monthly, depending on their income. That meagre money is usually spent on food, clothes, health and education. After spending, nothing is left in hand. When girls turn 16, they are expelled from school and married off. In addition, the majority of the girls had to stop studying. But the situation is so bad that even after marriage, women still have to make a livelihood on their own since their husbands move to Kerala to find work. Around 80% of the men of Bagapatia have moved to Kerala in order to find work and left their families behind.

Another instance is from Madhya Pradesh, a state in India. Farmers having agricultural land less than 1 Bigha often migrate to Bundi, in Rajasthan to work in mines. The yield is not enough to earn a living. Thus, in the non-agricultural season, males usually migrate to earn an additional income. The children who are left behind have low nutritional outcomes and are often not sent to school. Children found it difficult to access subsidised food and thus, children of seasonal or short-term migrants are more susceptible to nutrition insecurity.¹²

China

China has been going through the greatest internal movement. The number of people moving between rural and urban areas has increased to 145 million. The majority of migrants from rural areas migrate to cities to look for employment opportunities. They leave their children at home. According to a recent survey, there are currently 58 million children who have been abandoned in their homes. Although they receive remittances, but the absence of adult household members has a negative impact on the school attendance of the children would enrol in high school. The effects are more evident in the case of girls and those children who are from poor households. It is also evident that on one hand, although parental migration increases the household income, on the other hand, migration also results in parent-child separation. Separation can result in a lack of parental care, supervision, and protection of the children. It is also evident that children who are left behind are more likely to experience bullying, accidents, and injuries in schools.¹³

¹² Azera Parveen Rahman, *Falling Through The Cracks: Children Of Seasonal Migrants*, INDIA SPEND (July. 28, 2023, 1 PM), <https://www.indiaspend.com/development/falling-through-the-cracks-children-of-seasonal-migrants-858865>.

¹³ Feng Hu, *Migration, remittances, and children's high school attendance: The case of rural China*, 32 IJED 401, 401-408 (2012).

Bangladesh

Migration is common in Bangladesh due to changes in the local climate. This is the case of Hafiza Khatun,¹⁴ who was left behind by her husband, who migrated to Malaysia for work. In Cox's Bazaar, the embankment wall separating her house from the fields was breached, allowing seawater to rush in. Due to climate change, crops could no longer be cultivated, and houses and possessions were all destroyed by the sea. Hafiza's husband was unemployed. Her husband made the decision to travel to Malaysia for employment with other men from adjacent villages. Hafiza, who was left with three children, started working as a domestic worker and in the afternoons, she worked as a labourer on a betel leaf farm. The younger kids stayed at home instead of going to school while the oldest son assisted her in her work. The four of them could never eat enough with the money they earned.

Pakistan

The burden on women is growing, according to a recent study conducted by FAO.¹⁵ Male migration has been viewed as an adaptation technique, but from a gender viewpoint, it is not helpful in maintaining a household or surviving. The study highlighted the case of Faryal from West Karakoram region of Pakistan. Her family was engaged in keeping livestock and cultivating wheat. Due to unpredictability of the local climate, which made agriculture less reliable, her husband migrated to Karachi to find work. She lives with her parents-in-law. She has a son and a daughter. Although she receives her husband's remittances, but she has a very little say in the management of the family. She feels like she is under the control and surveillance of her in-laws, 24 x7, in the absence of her husband.

Decisions like buying any land or livestock are made by her father-in-law or her husband when he's back from work or over the phone. Although she looks after the house but the village officials do not consider her the head of her household. Once there was a dispute related to her grazing land, she was not allowed by the village officials to participate and put her family's interest forward as they do not consider her as the head of the family. These are the common instances of every West Karakoram region of Pakistan household where the husband has migrated to find work in other cities and women and their children are left behind by them.¹⁶

¹⁴ Manipadma Jena, *Women bear the brunt of climate-forced migration*, ECO BUSINESS (July. 28, 2023, 2 PM), <https://www.eco-business.com/news/women-bear-the-brunt-of-climate-forced-migration>.

¹⁵ *Migration and Climate Change*, FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (July. 29, 2023, 9 PM), <https://elearning.fao.org/mod/scorm/player.php?scoId=1720&cm=5219&mode=review&display=popup>.

¹⁶ *Id.* at 28.

III. ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK WHICH ADDRESSES THE ISSUE OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS?

Gender inequality and its interactions with climate change are two significant issues that have drawn attention on a global basis. No international treaty expressly addresses the issue of how women and children are affected by climate migration when male members leave them behind. Human rights, gender equality, and climate change are among the issues covered in a variety of international treaties and accords, therefore, they could be somewhat related to this situation.

Multiple international frameworks, agreements, and treaties have stressed the need for gender-responsive policies to address the unique consequences of climate change on women and children. These frameworks also acknowledge these groups' vulnerability. These frameworks place a strong focus on the importance of empowering women and ensuring their active participation in initiatives to combat and adapt to climate change. Some of such frameworks are discussed as follows:

*Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979 (CEDAW)*¹⁷

- Although it has nothing to do with climate migration specifically, the convention is a significant international treaty that aims to end discrimination against women.
- This treaty acknowledges extensive discrimination that continues against women and it further emphasises that such discrimination violates the principles of equality of right and respect for human dignity. Further, by virtue of Article 1,¹⁸ the term discrimination has been defined by the treaty as any form of distinction, exclusion or restriction in the field of political, economic, social, cultural, or civil on the basis of sex.
- Further, Article 3¹⁹ also directs all the state parties to undertake appropriate measures and pass specific legislations which ensure the development and advancement of women and guarantees them the right to exercise and enjoy basic human rights.
- Talking about its relevance in climate change efforts, Article 14²⁰ under this treaty puts an obligation upon the parties to take appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in rural areas and ensure that women and men both

¹⁷ *Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979)*, UN WOMEN, (June 23, 2023, 1 P.M), <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cedaw.pdf>.

¹⁸ *Id.* at Art. 1.

¹⁹ *Id.* at Art. 3.

²⁰ *Id.* at Art. 14.

equally participate and benefit from rural development.

- In 2018, General Suggestion 37²¹ was approved by the CEDAW Committee to explicitly address the growingly unequal danger that climate change and disasters pose to women. The suggestion highlighted the fact that although actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change create new employment and livelihood opportunities in sectors like agriculture, sustainable urban development, and clean energy, it however fails to address the structural obstacles that are faced by women in securing their rights. Thus, this also increases gender-based inequality and various forms of discrimination.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1992 (UNFCCC)²²

- UNFCCC is the main international body which is charged with tackling climate change, overseeing global climate policies, undertaking programmes, and stabilising GHG concentrations at such a level that would prevent interference of dangerous anthropogenic gases with the climate system.
- Further, it serves as a forum where State Parties can cooperate and discuss steps to be taken for the advancement of scientific research, creating financing schemes, and development of climate change-related agreements. It also encourages the creation of laws/agreements that defend the rights of the populations most adversely affected by climate change.
- In order to forward the goals of the UNFCCC, State parties meet annually at the Conference of the Parties (COP). A number of key climate agreements have also been made by State parties.

The Paris Agreement²³

- According to the Paris Agreement, parties when taking action to address climate change, are required to promote and consider the following aspects, including human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities, and people in vulnerable situations.

²¹ *General recommendation No.37 (2018) on gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in a changing climate*, UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER, (June 24, 2023, 4 P.M), <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-recommendation-no37-2018-gender-related#:~:text=The%20objective%20of%20this%20general,the%20context%20of%20climate%20change>

²² *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992)*, UNITED NATIONS, (June 23, 2023, 4 P.M), https://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/background_publications_htmlpdf/application/pdf/conveng.pdf.

²³ *Paris Agreement (2015)*, UNITED NATIONS, (June 23, 2023, 6 P.M), https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf

- One of the outcomes of the Paris Agreement was that developed countries consented to provide financial assistance to address the needs of developing countries by mobilising jointly US\$ 100 billion annually by 2020 for climate action.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995²⁴

- As part of global initiatives to advance gender equality and women's rights, BPfA was supported during the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. Although there is no specific provision which addresses the issue of vulnerability faced by women and children due to climate migration, but it has a few specific objectives/ goals that focus on involving women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels, incorporating gender issues and perspectives into policies and programmes for sustainable development.

The Sendai Framework²⁵

- It was adopted in Sendai, Japan, in the year 2015. It also does not specifically talks about vulnerabilities faced by women and children during climate change. The main objective of the framework is to prevent new and reduce existing disaster risks.
- The framework imposes an obligation to implement an integrated and inclusive measures which will enable prevention, reduce hazard exposure and vulnerability to disaster and at the same time, increase preparedness for response and recovery.
- The Framework includes the gender element. It emphasises on the need to promote women's and young people's leadership and take into account gender, age, disability, and cultural perspective while framing policies and practises pertaining to disaster management.
- The framework also acknowledges the critical part that women and minorities play in effectively controlling disaster risk. In addition, the framework underlines the necessity for accurate planning, finance, gender-sensitive disaster risk policies, initiatives, and strategies to give women enough capacity-building for preparedness and obtaining alternative forms of income in post-disaster scenarios.

²⁴ *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)*, UNITED NATIONS, (June 23, 2023, 6. 30 P.M), <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw59/feature-stories>.

²⁵ *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015)*, UNITED NATIONS, (June 26, 2023, 8. 30 P.M), <https://www.undrr.org/implementing-sendai-framework/what-sendai-framework>.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)²⁶

- CRC describes children's civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. It states that children have a right to a safe and healthy environment and that their best interests should be given priority in all decisions involving them, even if it is not only focused on climate change.
- Protecting children from the effects of climate change is relevant to many of the rights stated in the CRC. Parties while framing specific policies with respect to child protection during climate change, can take the following provisions into consideration.
- For instance: Article 2 of the Convention states that parties should undertake appropriate steps to ensure that children are protected from all types of discrimination and punishment based on the status, pursuits, spoken opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents.²⁷
- Similarly, Article 3,²⁸ while framing policies, taking decisions by public authorities with respect to matters concerning children should be made keeping in mind the best interests of the children. Article 6 further recognises that every single child has the right to life and parties to the Convention are under an obligation to ensure the overall development of the child to the maximum extent possible.²⁹

IV. HOW STATES CAN IMPLEMENT CLIMATE POLICY AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL THAT EMPHASISES THE ADOPTION OF A GENDER-RESPONSIVE STRATEGY?

It is evident that climate change effects on women, men, and gender-diverse individuals are different. This is all due to existing social, economic, and cultural inequalities they have among them. Therefore, a gender-responsive international treaty is required in order to ensure that policy actions take these variations into account and address them, resulting in more equal results and reducing additional gender gaps. Further, the policy should incorporate specific provisions which address the issues faced by women and children who are left behind while the male members migrate.

State parties can take the example of the *Climate Change Act adopted by Fiji in the year 2020*.³⁰

²⁶ *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990)*, UNITED NATIONS, (June 26, 2023, 9. 30 P.M), <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/crc.pdf>.

²⁷ *Id.* at Art. 2.

²⁸ *Id.* at Art. 3.

²⁹ *Id.* at Art. 6.

³⁰ *Climate Change Act (2021)*, REPUBLIC OF FIJI, (June 26, 2023, 10. 30 P.M), <https://www.parliament.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Bill-31-Climate-Change-Bill-2021.pdf>.

This piece of legislation may be regarded as a model of how gender equality and human rights could be included in climate change policy which should be adopted at the Global level. The legislation is based on the principle that Fiji will take into account gender equity, social inclusion, SGGs, women's human rights, rights of the elderly, children and people with disabilities. Further, the Act lays down provisions like while implementing the Act, the Government must consult the Minister who is in charge of Women's welfare and development in all aspects.

Further, with respect to children, the Act also recognises that climate change is a threat to the rights of children. Also, there is a provision which specifies that while appointing members for National Adaptation Plan, the Ministers must at all costs promote gender balance.

Suggestions:

Comprehensive policies that place a high priority on the welfare, safety, and empowerment of women and children who are left behind as a result of climate migration are the need of the hour. Here are a few recommendations for global policy that stakeholders might take into account while framing a policy addressing climate migration and its impact on vulnerable classes, especially women and children:

1. While formulating a global Climate Change policy, a specific provision should be inserted to ensure that educating farmers with respect to new knowledge to enhance agricultural practices and skills training are equally available to all, i.e., women, youth, indigenous people, and other marginalised groups.

2. Further, in addition to this, the stakeholders should consider that there is a specific provision that focuses on the vulnerable groups who have stayed behind, such as women, children and the elderly. *For instance*, the Climate Change Policy should have a provision which ensures that women who are left behind and have to indulge in agricultural practices on behalf of male family members have access to extension services and credit facilities.

3. Further, the Policy should also ensure that financial support for education is made available at local, rural and urban levels so that child, especially girl child, is not forced to drop out of school and he/she can continue to study.

4. Also, in addition to this, the stakeholders should take into account the need to provide childcare services free of cost to all women so that they are not overburdened. Further, if the services are available but they are not aware of the same, efforts should be made to educate them about the same. In addition to this, women should be consulted about their preferences and what types of daycare they desire.

5. Further, the Policy should ensure that agricultural livelihoods are viable and sustainable. The stakeholders should conduct extensive research and should develop a comprehensive strategy which can help them to manage both non-climate and climate stressors. In supporting and educating people more on sustainable management of natural resources.

6. Where male members in climate change-prone countries are seen migrating to other cities for work due to a lack of alternate livelihoods available at their place of origin, stakeholders should focus on counselling them, upskilling and arranging alternative livelihood options for them. For instance, schemes should be implemented which ensure rehabilitation, skill building, livelihoods and resilience of those who are displaced as well as those who are left behind (women and children). Self-Help Groups (SHGs) should be formed by women in order to start projects like kitchen gardens, backyard poultry, and tailoring.

7. With respect to children, who feel left out and develop separation anxiety when their fathers migrate, stakeholders should ensure that children should have access to counselling centres. Such centres should also appoint babysitters or caregivers. States should also ensure that a small get-together is arranged between the three, the father, the caregiver and the child, before the father leaves the child. In this manner, it won't seem unusual to the child when the moment comes when the father must leave the child with a caretaker for a while.

8. Stakeholders should encourage individuals, scholars and organizations to conduct detailed research on climate change and its effects on vulnerable communities. Such findings should be encouraged to be published in academic journals and the same must be reported to the concerned Ministry so that findings and suggestions can be incorporated in the policy.

9. In addition to the above, stakeholders should undertake empowerment initiatives that emphasise women's participation in leadership, decision-making, and community development. Their responsibilities and agency within their communities can be strengthened by these approaches.

10. Further, stakeholders should also ensure that there is a specific provision which ensures that women who have been left behind have information about their reproductive rights and accessible healthcare options.
