

Women's Resilience Index

Evidence from disaster affected
communities in Bangladesh

ActionAid defines resilience as “the ability of people to recognise, challenge and transform the unjust and unequal power relations that dictate their vulnerability to adapt positively to changing circumstances and to mitigate, prepare for and rapidly recover from shocks and stresses such that their wellbeing and enjoyment of human rights is being safeguarded.”

The concept of resilience is fairly new and as such the different stakeholders are investing in efforts to understand the vast breadth of work. One of the key areas that remain unanswered focuses on measuring resilience. Finding solutions requires the establishment of parameters for resilience and ensuring that the indicators can be measured, verified and reported. Failure to do so can jeopardize our past and future investments in building resilience and impede us from attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 7th Five Year Plan of Bangladesh which target national development priorities.

Our development reflections are still male dominant. As such, to ensure a holistic view of the interventions, a feminist perspective must be utilized. The Women's Resilience Index (WRI) is a tool through which resilience of a community is measured from women's perspective. The objective of the index is to help make informed development interventions that has benefits across social, economic, and institutional sectors. The WRI generates scores against 36 indicators that are contextualized and enables comparisons between women and men.



261 respondents took part in this study

FGD	KII	Questionnaire Survey	Total
			
51	10	200	129
			
			132

Economic



Infrastructure



Measuring Resilience

A toolkit for practitioners to measure and compare men's and women's resilience to disaster risks at local levels

Based on the South Asia Women's Resilience Index (WRI), this toolkit¹ examines the role of women in preparing for and recovering from disasters in countries across South Asia. It also builds upon ActionAid's Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) and ActionAid's Resilience Framework.

Why this toolkit?

This toolkit measures both men's and women's resilience. It helps to identify any differences that exist between the two sexes in terms of resilience to disaster risks. Once measured, the results then can be used to identify areas that need to be strengthened, and can be advocated for positive change to build women's and community resilience at the local level.

This toolkit is aimed at scoring the resilience of local communities. It uses four categories with a set of 36 indicators to assess different aspects of people's resilience at the community level, in the context of South Asia. Practitioners must collect responses from an equal number of men and women for each indicator. This will result in two resilience scores: one for men and one for women, which can then be compared to demonstrate any inequalities that exist between men and women on the following broad sectors.

Economic: Access and control of economic resources makes it easier for people to prepare for and respond to disasters. This category considers the overall economic strength of households, the availability of personal finance and opportunities to access financial instruments. Key indicators in this category also measure people's access to, and control over, natural resources and livestock to support their livelihood options, as well as their engagement in small and medium-sized business enterprises.

Infrastructure: Reliable infrastructure ensures communities to reduce the initial effects of a disaster, minimise structural damage and allow for evacuation. Thereafter, good infrastructure enables faster recovery. Key indicators in there measure the extensiveness and reliability of infrastructure for people to access basic services (i.e. safe locations, housing, clean water and sanitation, transport, power and communications technology); and whether there is a functioning early warning system (EWS).

Social: Human resources (for example, people's health status and educational attainment) and social resources (e.g. being able to rely on support from household members or neighbours and belonging to community or religious groups) are critical to the resilience of people in terms of being able to prepare for, cope with and respond to natural disasters. Key indicators in this category also assess how people's resilience is influenced by migration patterns, prevalence of gender based violence and the level of personal preparedness against disaster.

Institutional: This category examines the extent to which people are participating in and leading decision-making processes and whether their perspectives are accounted for by public institutions. Key indicators in this category measure how effective the government is in the implementation of disaster management plans and activities and whether people trust local government and the media to reflect and respond to their needs.

¹This toolkit was developed by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in collaboration with ActionAid Bangladesh and ActionAid Pakistan, and commissioned by ActionAid Australia with support from Australian Aid.

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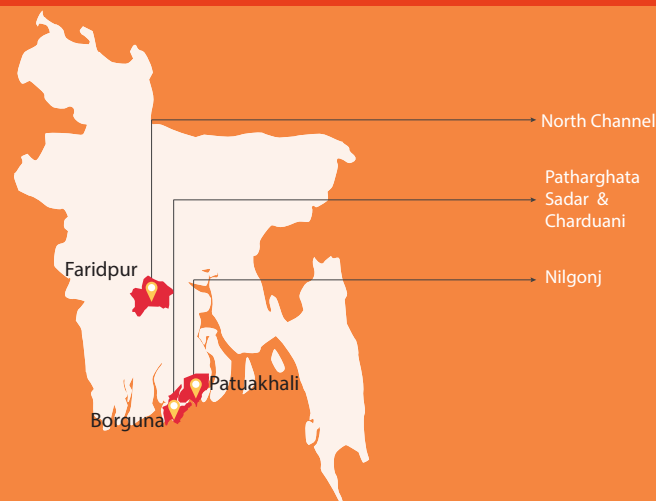
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Policy Recommendations

The Government of Bangladesh commenced implementation of its 7th Five Year Plan from 2015. The plan is compartmentalized (inter-connected) into 13 broad sectors. Due to the importance of resilience across all the sectors in GOB's 7th Five Year Plan, it is vital to address these indicators and most specifically on women.

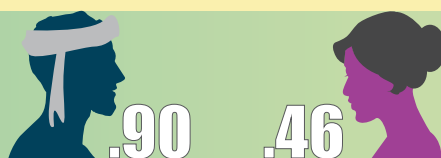
- Conceptualisation of communities and women as victims of disasters has been problematic in the past. It has precluded them from being considered as active agents in building resilience and fulfilling their rights to do so. The narrative must be changed to recognise women as Change Agents for Resilience and invest in developing their leadership skills.
- Women lag behind when it comes to their participation in disaster risk reduction (DRR) at community level and in their representation in project planning and execution. It is imperative to empower women to actively engage in decision making processes and implementation of development initiatives.
- The ability of stakeholders in measuring progress on gender sensitivity in DRR and resilience building is limited by a dearth of data disaggregated by sex. There is a need to develop gender-specific and sex-disaggregated data in monitoring and evaluation, and assign accountability to stakeholders for gender specific DRR targets.
- Building resilience in communities is about providing women with the opportunity to enhance what they are already doing to cope and recover in the face of quick-onset disasters. This needs to take place alongside continued poverty reduction efforts to effect transformative change. It must be recognised that disaster resilience is not poverty reduction but it has a critical interplay with sustainable development. It is a necessity to match DRR and resilience building with broader efforts for poverty reduction and sustainable development.
- Develop contextualized indicators emphasizing women's resilience building while developing the indicators for the implementation of The Post 2015 Development Agenda [including Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)]. It is imperative to allocate financial resources based on the findings of indicator based measuring that will enable strategic decision making on priority projects for building women's resilience to disaster and climate change impacts.

Geographic location of the study

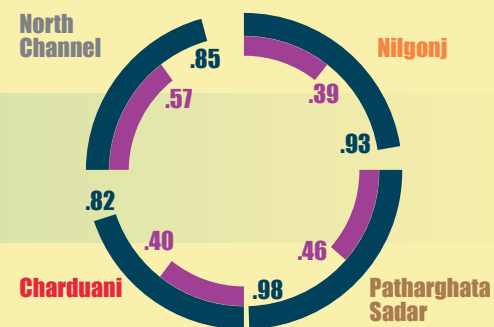


Women cannot take decision on personal income

49%



Control over Expenditure



Women have partial or no say on family expenditure

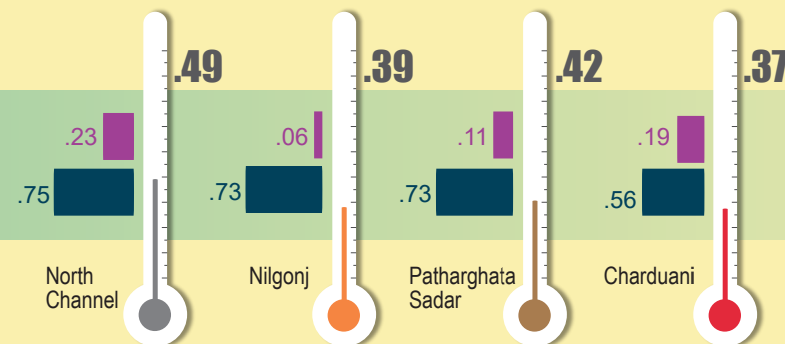
72%

Women are housewives

65%

Women earn 100 BDT/day or less

94%

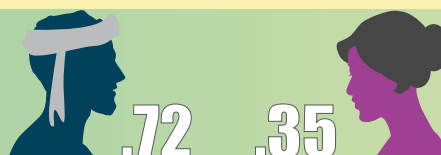


Women do not feel safe going outside village

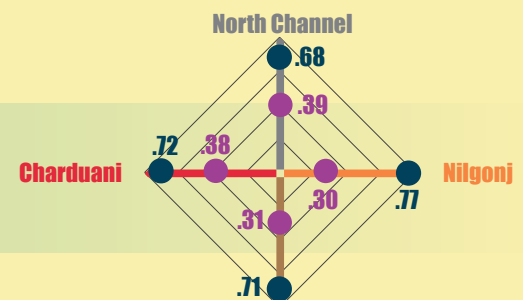
71%

Women do not have access to market at all

37%



Access to Market



Women think their houses are not built on permissible land

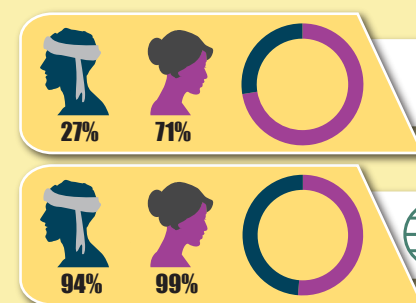
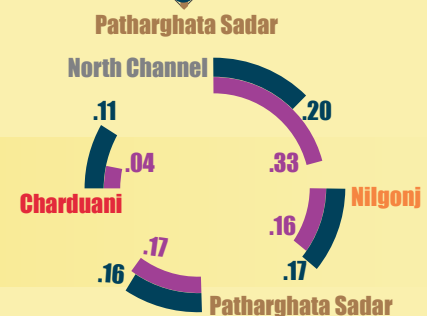
87%

Women know about building codes

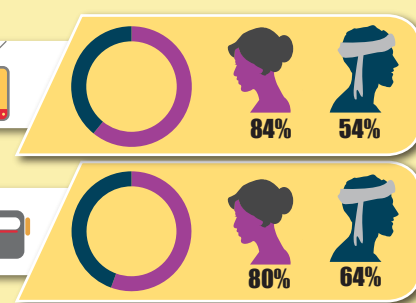
16%



Robust/Resilient Housing



No access to technology

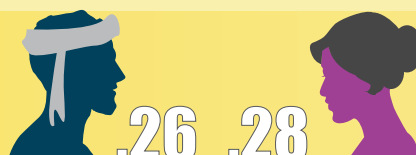


Women do not feel their houses are in safe areas

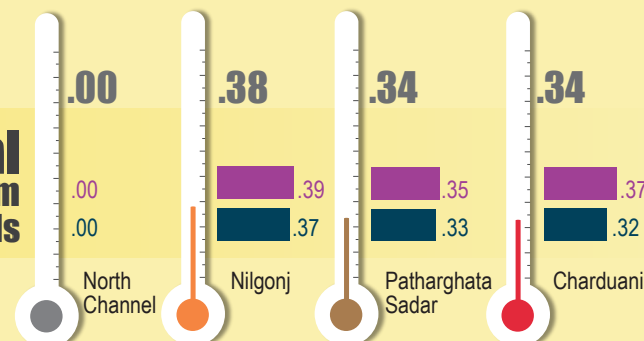
77%

Women do not feel safe staying in the shelter/safe place

55%

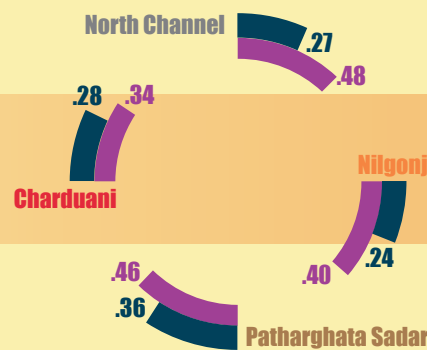


Structural Protection from Natural Hazards





Access to Formal Education

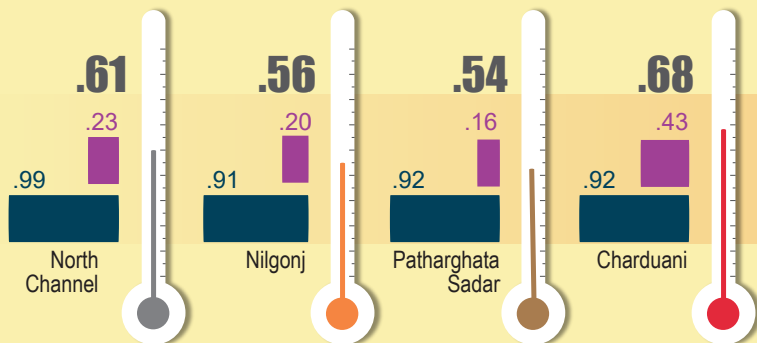


51%

Women received informal education

56%

Women can read and write



Social Mobility



24%

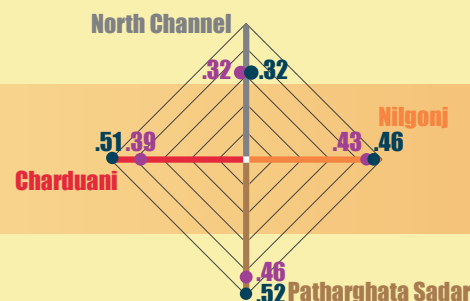
Women need family accompany to go outside

71%

Women do not feel safe going outside of the village



Access and affordability of healthcare

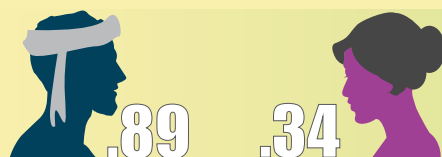


51%

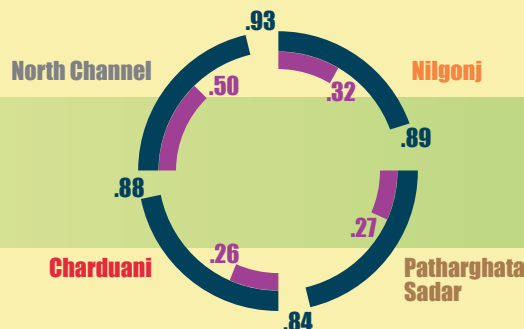
Women unable to access reproductive healthcare

71%

Women need middleman to access healthcare



Equal and just Power



18%

Women enjoy equal access to financial resources

47%

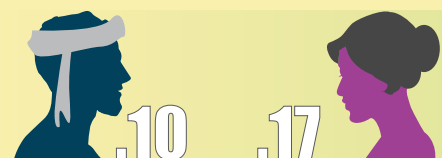
Women are not allowed to vote on their choices

"We do nearly 2½ times more work compared to what men do. These are unpaid and domestic work."

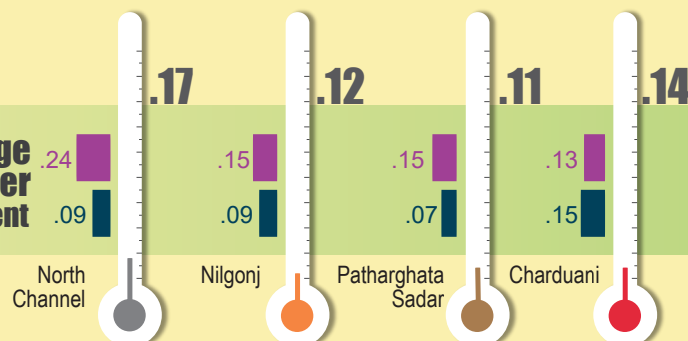
(Women's reaction during FGD, Faridpur)

I do earth work (non-agriculture work) to earn some money. I handover to my husband all that I earn. He provides me with my daily necessities. I have no complaints about that. He gives me small amount of money so I tend to household expenditures."

(Women's reaction during FGD, Faridpur)



Knowledge on disaster Management



53%

Women do not go to shelter if they get an early warning

31%

Women do not have access to external help after disaster