

Centre for Peace, Development & Reforms (CPDR)

Climate Change Gender Action Plan for Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJ&K)



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Centre for Peace, Development
and Reforms (CPDR)

Climate Change Gender Action Plan for
Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJ&K)
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About CPDR

The Centre for Peace, Development and Reforms (CPDR) is a nongovernmental, nonprofit and nonpartisan research, training and advocacy organization dedicated to promoting peace, development and reforms through dialogue and reconciliation.

Founded in 2010, the CDPR is registered with the Government under the Societies Act 1860 (Act XXI of 1860), having specified Memorandum of Association.



Our Vision

Promoting and encouraging peace and development at all levels through dialogue, reconciliation and reforms.

Our Mission

Strengthening civil society to ensure transparent and participatory governance through peaceful interaction between stakeholders and government and to propose necessary reforms for peace and development. Promoting accountability, cultivating civic culture, values of freedom, tolerance, economic development and democracy. Providing an effective platform for conflict resolution with special reference to the divided State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Our Objectives

- ★ Empowering civil society; promoting peace, participatory governance, transparency and reforms through dialogue and reconciliation.
- ★ Supporting democratic values, accountability, and human rights while striving for economic development and social justice.
- ★ Promoting ethical values, civic culture, and tolerance and striving to ensure that due attention to the marginalised and vulnerable sections of the society.
- ★ Providing an effective platform for conflict resolution with special reference to the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

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Abstract

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K) region is highly susceptible to climatic changes and continues to witness environmental volatility. What is missing from the policy frameworks of the successive governments and administrative departments of Azad Jammu and Kashmir is the inclusion of women at the ground level to face and mitigate climate disasters. This study brings into light the much disenfranchised and overlooked segment of society in one of the most volatile regions in the world climate-wise.

This paper is carefully designed to assist policymakers in building strategies for refining and strengthening the pathways of women's inclusion and empowerment in Azad Jammu and Kashmir's climate action plan. It also offers suggestions to mainstream and prioritize women, as the vulnerable group, in the decision-making for regions prone to climate disasters and explores ways they can be trained, supported, and empowered to survive and live equally in times of climate disaster. The study highlights that reducing gender discrimination and empowering women are essential for the progress of any country. It is also one of the main objectives of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs).

PART

01

Introduction

The need for the Climate Change
Gender Action Plan (CCGAP)



The need for the Climate Change Gender Action Plan (CCGAP)

Pakistan is a signatory to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change 2016 and ever since has been an active member of the agreement. It indicates the willingness and commitment of the country to work towards a cleaner and safer world and making steady efforts to address gender considerations on the issue to meet its international obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The core purpose of the Climate Change Gender Action Plan is to enable and integrate gender considerations into policies, programs, and strategies associated with climate change and to offer equal options and opportunities of participation to women in responding to climate change. It also intends to offer facilitation in granting access to, participate in, and gain an advantage of climate change initiatives being taken by the climate-related institutions.

Pakistan is engaged as a key partner in disaster management and climate change adaptation initiatives with the international support and sustenance offered by the global climate institutions. However, there is a growing need to give more attention to improving climate adaptation procedures and implementation mechanisms in AJ&K.

Azad Jammu and Kashmir Climate Gender Action Plan requires support and help from all the relevant stakeholders to safeguard gender representation in climate related policies. Pilot projects should be made including capacity building to engage women exclusively.

About this CCGAP

The updated National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) of 2021, which also applies to AJ&K, is an important document with a key objective of gender-sensitive adaptation, thus focusing on the underprivileged and vulnerable segments of society.

The CCGAP Azad Jammu and Kashmir is developed through a series of wide-ranging discussions with representatives of government bodies, ministries and focal departments, civil society leaders, gender specialists, and relevant experts, including a group of crucial stakeholders.

Based on NCCP, our study focuses on galvanizing climate action across five main tracks, each covering a significant area aligned with the NCCP.

1. Disaster Risk Reduction
2. Forests
3. Water and Sanitation
4. Food Security
5. Energy and Transport

Each of these sections gives an in-depth summary on gender-related concerns and priorities. This study underscores a comprehensive assessment and achievable targets for gender-inclusive progress. It also highlights pertinent institutional frameworks and strategies to fight against the negative impacts of climate and explores pathways for gender-responsive policy implementation for AJ&K.

PART

02

Climate of
Azad Jammu and
Kashmir (AJ&K)



Introduction

Azad Jammu and Kashmir region rests in the north of Pakistan comprising 10 districts namely Muzaffarabad, Hattian, Neelum Valley, Bagh, Haveli, Poonch, Sudhnuti, Mirpur, Kotli, and Bhimber, with approximate population of 4,045,366 (Census 2017) and has an area of 13,297 sq. km.¹ The state of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K) is characterized by a mountainous terrain susceptible to high climate variability. The topography differs between the southern districts which are partially hilly including Kotli, while Bhimber and Mirpur are plains. The central and northern areas of the state are mainly hilly and mountainous with valleys and stretches of plain.²

Pakistan is one of the ten most climate-endangered countries in the world and the mountainous north of the country including Azad Jammu and Kashmir is one of the most vulnerable areas at risk of climate-induced disasters. The past decades are a testament to it. More frequent climate shifts and extreme weather events resulted in affecting the most disadvantaged communities notably, women and children, which gave rise to gender exclusion and partiality. To meet these challenges, women's awareness, participation and early warning mechanisms are essential in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Weather patterns of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K)

To understand the severity of climate impacts on Azad Jammu and Kashmir one should be familiar with its typical year-round weather trends. The average maximum and minimum temperature of AJ&K increased from max. 25 °C and min. 12 °C in 1962 to 27 °C and 13°C in 2013.³

Most of the rural population of AJ&K depends on agriculture, forestry, and livestock for subsistence, only 13 percent of the total state land, or 166,432 hectares is under cultivation, 92 percent of which is rain-fed. Major crops include maize, wheat, and rice. Of the total land area, 42.6 percent is controlled by the forest department. Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) gives evidence of rapid climate change occurring in AJ&K. Temperature and rainfall records over the last 50 years (1960-2007) in the region show rising climate trends in the hilly region with average maximum temperature increased by 0.82 degrees Celsius and precipitation by 75mm. This has resulted in several extreme weather events such as delays in normal rainfall patterns. The PMD data reveals that the region is experiencing longer hot days and increased heat waves in the summer season and decreased cold waves in the winter.⁴

¹AJ&K BUREAU OF STATISTICS, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT AJK. (2022). STATISTICAL YEAR BOOK 2022. Retrieved from

<https://pndajk.gov.pk/uploadfiles/downloads/AJK%20Statistical%20Year%20Book%202022%20.pdf>

²Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change (CSCCC). (n.d.). *Stakeholder Recommendations for Climate Change Implementation Framework, AJK*. Retrieved from <https://www.cscce.org.pk/attachments/news-bulletin/AJK%20Implementation%20Framework.pdf>

³Climate Change Center Planning & Development Department Azad Government of the State of Jammu & Kashmir. (2017, August). *AJ&K Climate Change Policy*. Retrieved from <https://pndajk.gov.pk/uploadfiles/downloads/CC%20AJK%20Policy%202017.pdf>

There are 239 glaciers with a total area of 92.229 square kilometers. Most of the glaciers and glacial lakes are in Neelum district.⁵The impact of temperature surge has adversely affected the glaciers and biodiversity in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, which can have disastrous impact on the ecosystem in the region. Current climate data and imminent forecasts reveal that in the absence of sound climate mitigation and adaptation action plan AJ&K's water resources, food security, forests' biodiversity, and eventually the livelihood and safety of the people would be directly impacted. There is thus an increased likelihood that women would be the most affected segment of the population.

⁵Climate Change Center Planning & Development Department Azad Government of the State of Jammu & Kashmir. (2017, August). AJ&K Climate Change Policy. Retrieved from <https://pndajk.gov.pk/uploadfiles/downloads/CC%20AJK%20Policy%202017.pdf>

PART

03

Nexus between
Gender & Climate



Disaster Risk Reduction



The economy of Azad Jammu and Kashmir is dependent mostly on climate-sensitive sectors, in particular food, water, energy, and forestry. Climate-related disasters appear to be a key problem in the near future with the potential to negatively impact economic advances of the region made over the last many decades. Floods, droughts, and landslides, are common hazards affecting the region.

The percentage of women living in poor households (the female poverty rate) is higher than that of men (12.8 vs. 12.3 percent). This means that, after taking into account the share of women and men in the total population, there are 104 women for every 100 men living in poor households.⁶

The women and young girls are potentially in more vulnerable positions to climate risks having minimal resources in periods of climate stress, while sharing the heavy burden of managing house chores such as fetching water becomes more time-consuming and tougher.

Basic health services become inaccessible when roads are swept away in floods or buried under snow. Transport and travel become more challenging and riskier, increasing the chances of accidents due to slippery and broken roads, with no availability of transportation. Women and children are also at the highest risk of succumbing to preventable diseases due to the absence or shortage of clean water, lack of hygiene, or limited accessibility to nearby hospitals.⁷

Incidents of disaster bring about additional challenges, such as a lack of capital (including issues related to the availability and accessibility of funds, limited access to land, hilly terrain, and a shortage of trained human resources). Another critical factor is a lack of direction, specifically concerning whom to approach for assistance and where to find help.

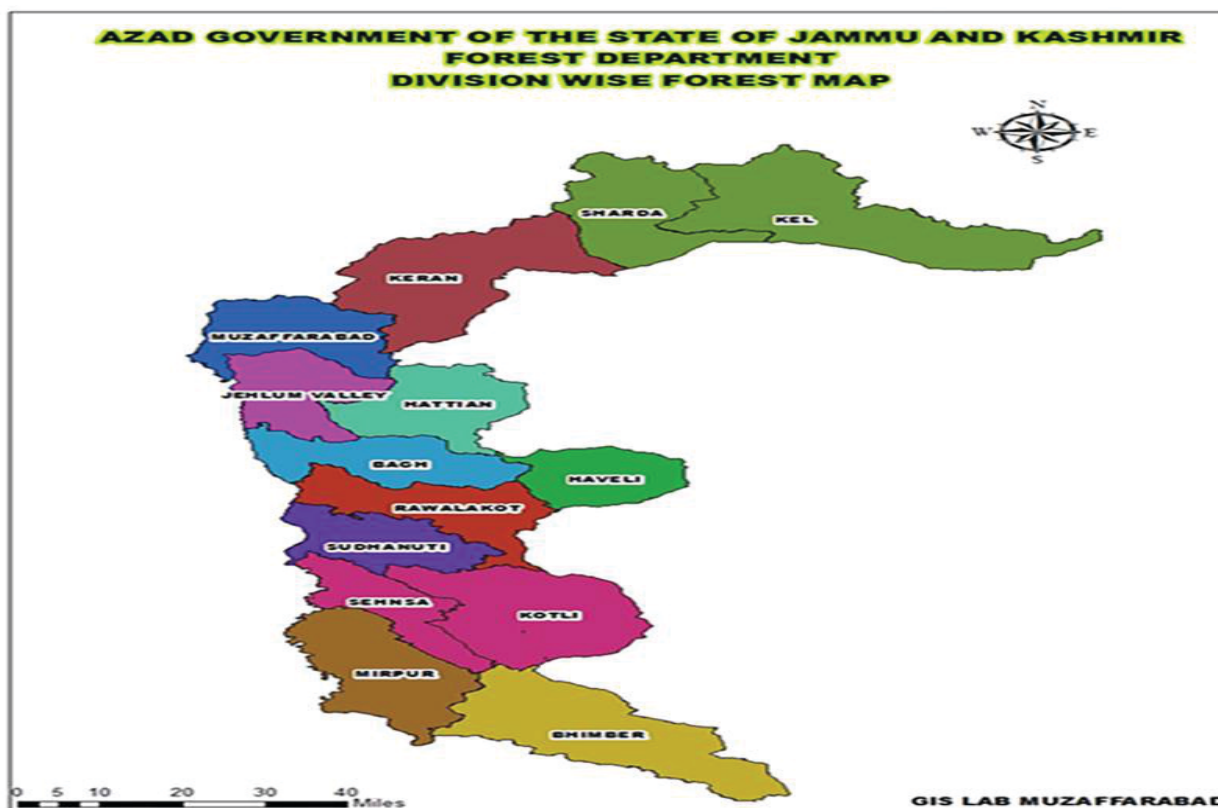
⁶UN WOMEN, WORLD BANK GROUP. (2018, April). GENDER DIFFERENCES IN POVERTY AND HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION THROUGH THE LIFE CYCLE. Retrieved from <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2018/SDG-report-Spotlight-01-Gender-differences-in-poverty-and-household-composition-en.pdf>

⁷International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). (2022). *Climate Change Gender Action Plan of the Government and People of Pakistan*. Islamabad: IUCN Islamabad. Retrieved from https://iucnhq-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/saeedh_iucn_org/EZIs5uveRwDlktR9RDnqd2QBVu7mTRyb2v2OqwyHiLiJtQ?e=Z8HsQL

Insufficient knowledge and limited access to climate information services is a grey area with very little, if any, information available. However, in case of emergencies, men in AJ&K are reported to have greater access to climate information, enabling them to receive early warnings (if any), compared to women. This discrepancy results in men having a higher tendency to use climate information services than women.

Emergency response centers have already been established, providing radio announcements on floods, earthquakes, and more in many areas of Azad Jammu and Kashmir since 2017.⁸

Forests



(Source: Department of Forestry, Wildlife & Fisheries AJ&K)

The area under forest department of AJ&K covers a significant portion, constituting 42.6 percent of the total geographical area, spanning approximately 0.567⁹ million hectares. Of this 11.59 percent boasts an extensive area under actual forest comprising of thick forest patches of Deodar, Kail, Blue Pine, Silver Fir, and Chir, while an additional 16.9 percent comprises of thinly wooded forests¹⁰. The landscape is adorned by eight National Parks, including Deva Vatala, Ghamot, Gurez, Machiara, Pir Lasura, Poonch River Mahaseer, Toli Pir, and Panjal Mastan, alongside game reserves and wildlife sanctuaries. However,

⁸Reuters. (2018, May). As Climate Risks Grow, Pakistani Kashmir Boosts Emergency Plans. Voice of America. Retrieved from <https://www.voanews.com/a/as-climate-risks-grow-pakistani-kashmir-boosts-emergency-plans/4395941.html>

⁹AJ&K BUREAU OF STATISTICS, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT AJK. (2022). STATISTICAL YEAR BOOK 2022. Retrieved from <https://pndajk.gov.pk/uploadfiles/downloads/AJK%20Statistical%20Year%20Book%202022%20.pdf>

¹⁰AJ&K BUREAU OF STATISTICS, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT AJK. (2022). STATISTICAL YEAR BOOK 2022. Retrieved from <https://pndajk.gov.pk/uploadfiles/downloads/AJK%20Statistical%20Year%20Book%202022%20.pdf>

deforestation remains a concern, with a loss of four hundred hectares documented between 2001 and 2021.¹¹

The local populace, predominantly engaged in agriculture, livestock, and forestry, heavily relies on this ecosystem for sustenance. Notably, women play a crucial role in these activities, encompassing non-timber forest products and natural resource trade. However, women's involvement is often centered on lower-return products, while men control the exploitation of high-value resources.¹² Despite possessing specialized local knowledge, women's representation in these areas is disproportionately low. Structural inequalities, including limited access to economic rights and resources, impede women's active engagement in forest management. Empowering women in the forests and biodiversity sectors can not only enhance their livelihood opportunities but also yield broader benefits such as food security, improved health, and better education access for families and communities.



¹¹Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change (CSCCC). (n.d.). *Stakeholder Recommendations for Climate Change Implementation Framework, AJK*. Retrieved from <https://www.cscce.org.pk/attachments/news-bulletin/AJK%20Implementation%20Framework.pdf>

¹²Kiptot, E., & Franzel, S. (2011, July). *Gender and agroforestry in Africa: a review of women's participation*. Springer Science+Business Media. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10457-011-9419-y>

Water and Sanitation



In the past few decades, global concerns about water security have escalated due to a growing world population and the impact of rising temperatures causing climate change. Pakistan is particularly affected, experiencing significant water scarcity. The increased frequency of floods has negatively affected the country's economy and standard of living.

Globally, 2.3 billion people live in water-stressed countries, of which 733 million live in high and critically water-stressed countries.¹³ According to a report published by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) this year, more than 80 percent of Pakistanis face “severe water scarcity” for at least one month each year. The report stated that Pakistan ranks 14 out of 17 countries designated as extremely high water-risk nations.¹⁴

During the mid-1990s, we began to see a positive change within the country, and international climate change pacts and pledges were taken by the Pakistan government.

Two major rivers, the Neelum, and the Jhelum, run directly through Azad Jammu and Kashmir, while the Chenab, which also flows through the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir under Indian control, eventually reaches Punjab in Pakistan. These rivers underscore the significance of Azad Jammu and Kashmir for Pakistan as they play a crucial role in supplying water to the country. Azad Jammu and Kashmir's rapid climate change is another cause for the severity of the shortage of water since this sector has a direct and substantial impact on almost every other area. Lack of water also leads to poor hygiene in the local population. The water cycle is linked with climate; therefore, the probable climate change has serious implications for AJ&K's water resources. In rural areas of AJ&K, women carry water from long-distance sources. Freshwater stocks in AJ&K depend on monsoon rains, snow, and glacier melt, which are highly sensitive to climate change.

The rise in the frequency and force of rainfall patterns inside Azad Jammu and Kashmir will bring about higher floods, frequent risk of Glacier Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs), land-sliding while threats of

¹³UN-Water. (2021, July). Summary Progress Update 2021: SDG 6 - Water and Sanitation for all. Retrieved from https://www.unwater.org/sites/default/files/app/uploads/2021/12/SDG-6-Summary-Progress-Update-2021_Version-July-2021a.pdf

¹⁴Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE). (2022, March). PIDE KNOWLEDGE BRIEF. *Water Crisis in Pakistan: Manifestation, Causes and the Way Forward*. Retrieved from <https://file.pide.org.pk/uploads/kb-060-water-crisis-in-pakistan-manifestation-causes-and-the-way-forward.pdf>

avalanches also will rise due to extreme rains. The upsurge in temperature and drastic rainfall patterns lead to an essential shift in the undercurrents of glaciers, with rising consequences on the AJ&K Rivers.¹⁵

Climate change brings about three main health hazards: (i) direct harm, such as physical weather disasters, (ii) impact determined by climate-related fluctuations in ecological systems and (iii) indirect consequences related to poverty, displacement, economic sectors, resource struggles (e.g., food, water, forest, land), and post-disaster mental health problems, as indicated in the AJ&K climate change report.¹⁶

Although better sanitation practices are becoming more common, they are not yet widespread in the rural areas of AJ&K. Data reveals a stark contrast between urban and rural areas of AJ&K in terms of recovering water sources. The majority of households in rural areas depend on spring water, with a significant portion belonging to the lower-income population.

A study by the World Bank in AJ&K shows that the proportion of the population with access to improved water sources has reached 57 percent in AJ&K, in comparison to national coverage, which is 89 percent. The accessibility of water is also unevenly distributed. The study found that 78 percent of women, including girls of less than 18 years of age, are responsible for fetching water at the household level, spending up to 15 minutes traveling and queuing at a water source in both rainy and dry seasons. It also suggests that poor home hygiene, lack of basic sanitation, and unsafe drinking water have impacts on the health of the population and economy, at 3.94% of the GDP.¹⁷

There is a gender disproportion in access to basic sanitation services for men and women. This is consistent with levels of poverty and low literacy amongst households headed by women. Data reveals the majority of households in AJ&K do not purify drinking water, between 33 to 66 percent of households use improved latrines despite their dependency on communal water sources. The findings also explain that the majority of schools and educational institutions have no purpose-built toilets in their complexes or are impaired and a large number are girls' schools.^{18,19}

Sanitation practices are also unsatisfactory, spreading waterborne diseases, particularly diarrhea, typhoid, hepatitis A, fever, and skin diseases which are a direct result of poor hygiene and lack of awareness.²⁰

¹⁵Climate Change Center Planning & Development Department Azad Government of the State of Jammu & Kashmir. (2017, August). AJ&K Climate Change Policy. Retrieved from <https://pndajk.gov.pk/uploadfiles/downloads/CC%20AJK%20Policy%202017.pdf>

¹⁶Climate Change Center Planning & Development Department Azad Government of the State of Jammu & Kashmir. (2017, August). AJ&K Climate Change Policy. Retrieved from <https://pndajk.gov.pk/uploadfiles/downloads/CC%20AJK%20Policy%202017.pdf>

¹⁷World Bank Group. (2016, June). Water and Sanitation Sector Analysis of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Retrieved from <https://opendata.com.pk/dataset/3bd42404-2478-4c0f-9b7f-bd4d3def70ce/resource/5c5081a3-1d16-4122-834a-22bdd4980c28/download/water-sanitation-sector-analysis-of-ajk-2016.pdf>

¹⁸SDGs Support Unit Planning & Development Department GoAJ&K. (2018, November 1). AJK POLICY BRIEF: SITUATION ANALYSIS OF POVERTY, AGRICULTURE, HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WASH. Retrieved from <https://pndajk.gov.pk/uploadfiles/downloads/Policy%20Brief%20AJK.pdf>

¹⁹World Bank Group. (2016, June). Water and Sanitation Sector Analysis of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Retrieved from <https://opendata.com.pk/dataset/3bd42404-2478-4c0f-9b7f-bd4d3def70ce/resource/5c5081a3-1d16-4122-834a-22bdd4980c28/download/water-sanitation-sector-analysis-of-ajk-2016.pdf>

²⁰Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2020). Disease Threats and Global WASH Killers: Cholera, Typhoid, and Other Waterborne Infections. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/pdf/global/GlbWASHBrf_UPDATE_H.pdf

Food and Agriculture



Azad Jammu and Kashmir's Planning and Development Department (P&DD) has been following the agenda of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to ensure an effective integration of this agenda in AJ&K. P&DD is working towards a strategic direction for sustainable development in the region assuring women's equal rights to land, water and securing food and nutrition since 2018.²¹

Agriculture in AJ&K mainly comprises crop production, animal husbandry, and non-timber forestry. This area is experiencing increased strain because of climate degradation. Women play a crucial role in soil and water conservation, afforestation, and crop domestication. In AJ&K, women face a higher risk of food insecurity due to preventable inequalities. Unfortunately, they often are unable to advocate for their rights, especially in terms of land ownership. The agricultural sector serves as the economic backbone for food security in rural AJ&K, but social and cultural taboos compel women to be powerless in improving their food status. Challenges such as limited education, fewer employment opportunities, and, most significantly, restricted access to and ownership of productive resources, including land, livestock, and food resources, further hinder women's progress in this area.

Empowering women in agriculture can be transformative; they have the potential to contribute to 50 percent of the world's food production, thereby enhancing food security. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 2011, elevating agricultural production from 2.4 to 4 percent can be achieved through the active involvement of women in farming globally.²²

Food insecurity also occurs due to the limited availability of food to vulnerable groups including women. 20 percent of the population in Pakistan is undernourished, and 45 percent of children younger than five years of age have stunted growth due to a high rate of population growth, speedy expansion, and recurrent price fluctuations.²³

*It is projected that by the year 2050, Pakistan will witness approximately 9.32 climate-related deaths per million/year annually, directly linked to the insufficient availability of food.*²⁴

21 Planning & Development Department, GoAJ&K. (2022, September). AZAD JAMMU & KASHMIR SDGs FRAMEWORK. Retrieved from https://www.sdgpakistan.pk/uploads/pub/AJK_SDG_Framework.pdf

22 FAO. (2011, March). The role of women in agriculture. Retrieved from <https://www.fao.org/3/am307e/am307e00.pdf>

23 USAID. (2020, April). FOOD ASSISTANCE FACT SHEET PAKISTAN. Retrieved from https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022_05/FFP_Pakistan_Fact_Sheet.pdf

24 United Nations Development Programme. (2021, July). Development Advocate Pakistan. WALKING THE CLIMATE TALK, 8. Retrieved from <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/pk/aa2dcd777e4f43413633eba1ed4683c3fe45f38e0966fc5f434afc7f0bf1bd61.pdf>

The AJ&K Government has expressed a commitment to address the impact of climate change on the job, family responsibilities, and community activities of Kashmiri women. Its policy emphasizes the core principle of impartiality in empowering women, particularly those in fragile ecosystems within the region. Likewise, the Planning Commission of Pakistan has initiated a comprehensive agenda aimed at transforming institutions, policy procedures, and coordination which contains strategies to provide women with employable skills and avenues for high-income opportunities through leadership pathways. However, implementation remains unsatisfactory.

*While women comprise the agricultural labor force, they are mostly engaged in unpaid family work, their very real economic contribution is unaccounted for. In Pakistan, women own less than three percent of land which impacts their economic empowerment. Their participation in the labor force is a mere 25 percent compared to 83 percent for men.*²⁵

Assigning women to vital sectors will enhance overall productivity levels. Generating awareness of this will kindle support from the community members on the importance of supporting men and women alike to promote gender-responsive executions. For a region that is intensely dependent on the government of Pakistan for its primary sectors, investments in innovation, mechanization, or improving management practices demand serious efforts.

The threat of climate change has roused partners within government and the bureaucracy to take timely action, but it's mostly on paperwork and the tools for adaptation are still untrained and waiting to be installed.

In Azad Jammu and Kashmir, women's control over land is extremely insufficient, and hindered by various customary practices, which leads to low economic power, poverty, and women's low output. This presents an opportunity for the legislative body of Azad Jammu and Kashmir to gender mainstreaming by creating a rather new ministry, cut out from other climate change organizations.

25 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2016, July). Development Advocate Pakistan. Inequality: Missing from the Public Agenda, 3(2). Retrieved from <https://www.undp.org/pakistan/publications/development-advocate-pakistan-volume-3-issue-2>

Energy and Transport



Endowed with four major rivers, AJ&K possesses substantial hydroelectric potential. The installed grid capacity stood at 677.3 MVA in 2015, with a per capita electricity consumption of 353 KWH.²⁶ Despite its potential, the hydropower sector faces challenges arising from hydrology variations and extreme weather events. AJ&K's Climate Change Policy aims to reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions through shifts in the energy mix.²⁷

Rising oil and gas prices particularly impact the access to energy for low-income households. Women's lives are intricately connected with energy, especially in rural communities where significant time is spent on gathering fuel. The health implications of using certain fuels disproportionately affect women and girls. The traditional energy paradigm often neglects women's needs, excluding them from policy development and decision-making.

Additionally, transport infrastructure profoundly affects livelihoods, education, healthcare, and social activities, disproportionately impacting women and girls due to safety concerns. Gender-restricted mobility negatively affects women's work, education, and daily lives, perpetuating gender disparities in travel behavior. This can severely impact women's ability to participate in the workforce and avail themselves of essential services.

²⁶Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change (CSCCC). (n.d.). Stakeholder Recommendations for Climate Change Implementation Framework, AJK. Retrieved from <https://www.cscce.org.pk/attachments/news-bulletin/AJK%20Implementation%20Framework.pdf>

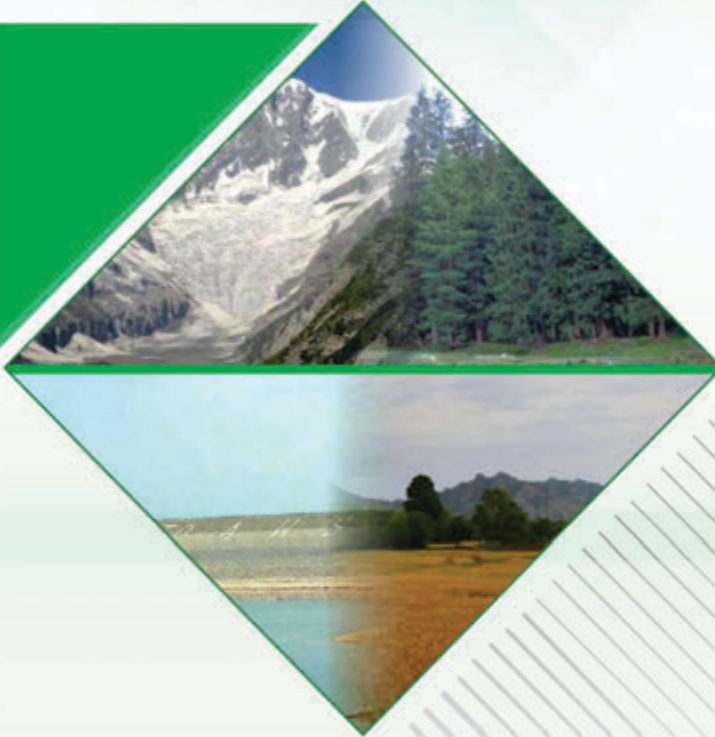
²⁷Climate Change Center Planning & Development Department Azad Government of the State of Jammu & Kashmir. (2017, August). AJ&K Climate Change Policy. Retrieved from <https://pndajk.gov.pk/uploadfiles/downloads/CC%20AJK%20Policy%202017.pdf>

PART

04

**Climate Change
Gendered Policy
Analysis**

AJ&K Climate Change Policy



**Climate Change Center
Planning & Development Department
Azad Government of the State of Jammu & Kashmir**

August 2017



Azad Jammu and Kashmir AJ&K Climate Change Policy 2017

Azad Jammu and Kashmir Government's Climate Change Policy is a comprehensive document outlining the region's approach and strategies to address climate change challenges made by the Climate Change Center of the Planning and Development Department of AJ&K Government.

The policy is based on assessments of the impact of climate change on the region, considering factors such as temperature changes, precipitation patterns, and their effects on glaciers and biodiversity. The AJ&K Climate Change Policy aligns itself with the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) of 2012, which serves as the overarching framework for climate actions in Pakistan.

Although on paper the joint empowerment of men and women exists in the climate policy of AJ&K, the action on the ground level is minimal. Some areas regarding gender inclusiveness in the newly revised policy of 2017 are as follows:

Disaster Risk Reduction

Azad Jammu and Kashmir Environmental Protection Agency was established in 1998 to tackle and work out the environmental problems of the region but none of its acts mention gender mainstreaming in climate emergency.

The majority of the projects shifted from the federal government of Pakistan towards Azad Jammu and Kashmir either geared towards evaluating the vulnerability to the climate change effects or capacity building. The Disaster Management Act of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Chapter 10, Article 30, includes **Prohibition against Discrimination** but it is noticed, that the AJ&K Government and Climate Ministry of Pakistan have not yet taken any concrete measures to merge their gender policy into the disaster response policies to serve women in a climate disaster scenario.

Forests

The AJ&K Climate Change Policy 2017 contains a section on Forests and Biodiversity that recognizes the significance of gender dynamics. It acknowledges women's pivotal role in resource collection and underscores the potential impact of climate change on their well-being. The policy strives for gender-inclusive decision-making and knowledge integration, emphasizing capacity-building, education, and community engagement efforts. Representation of both genders in initiatives, like forest protection clubs, is promoted.

Energy and Transport

The policy contains a section on Energy Policy that acknowledges gender considerations in energy planning but lacks a comprehensive analysis. The policy emphasizes resilient infrastructure, renewable energy, and efficiency but should include gender perspectives to ensure effectiveness. The 2017 policy also contains a section on transport that addresses climate change but also lacks a comprehensive gender analysis. Recognizing women's specific mobility needs, safety concerns, and travel patterns is crucial for inclusive and effective policy implementation.

Social Welfare and Women Development

The Women Development section explicitly emphasizes the inclusion and active participation of women and vulnerable groups, irrespective of gender, age, education, ethnicity, geography, and the capacity to adapt to the impacts of climate change. This is especially crucial as poor and underprivileged women, being disadvantaged with minimal resources, are likely to suffer the most. Women face heightened vulnerability during extreme climate actions and disasters.

Sustainable Development Goal 5 focuses on gender equity, while Goal 10 aims to mitigate disparities among disadvantaged groups.

While the AJ&K Climate Change Policy takes significant steps in recognizing gender dynamics and promoting inclusivity, there is a noticeable gap between policy intentions and effective implementation. The identified areas of improvement include concrete measures for gender mainstreaming in disaster management, more comprehensive gender analysis in energy and transport policies, and the development of targeted interventions for vulnerable women. Strengthening the link between policy frameworks and on-the-ground actions is essential to ensure the resilience of both the environment and the communities in the face of climate change. Continuous monitoring, evaluation, and adjustments are crucial to bridge the existing gaps and make strides toward genuine gender-inclusive climate policies in AJ&K.

PART

05

Gender Sensitive
Programs & Initiatives
in Azad Jammu and
Kashmir (AJ&K)



State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA)



Established in 2006, the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) in Azad Jammu & Kashmir plays a pivotal role in handling disaster situations. Despite its significance, the authority encounters challenges in acquiring specialized skills and sufficient resources necessary for effective disaster management. Particularly, the SDMA has faced difficulties in establishing a robust presence on social media platforms and websites, impacting its capacity to promptly disseminate updated and valuable information to citizens requiring assistance during disasters.²⁸

SDMA's responsibilities extend to early disaster response at the district level, in collaboration with District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMA). To anticipate climate-induced calamities, SDMA maintains an on-ground preparedness plan. This involves regular reviews of the monsoon contingency plan, coordinated with the Physical Planning and Housing (PPH) and Communication and Works (C&W) Departments. Focal persons are designated in all districts of AJ&K by the authority to provide updates on rainfall and other pertinent information across the region.

Recognizing the importance of gender mainstreaming, SDMA has partnered with a United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women called UN Women to extend gender-sensitive initiatives to Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Furthermore, it has directed humanitarian aid efforts towards raising awareness about challenges faced by women at a district level in post-disaster situations.

An innovative initiative, the Gender Disaggregated Management Information System (MIS), implemented by the Punjab Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), focuses on providing gender-disaggregated statistics. This data aids policy-makers in ensuring gender-sensitive relief efforts, an essential aspect of disaster management. During an interview for this report with Mr. Saeed-Ur-Rehman Qureshi, (SDMA Director of Operations), it was noted that the additional measures undertaken by SDMA included the collection of data on a gender-segregated basis, informing both analysis and policy-making processes. Notably, the response to the COVID-19 pandemic by SDMA was organized with a gender-segregated approach, emphasizing specific spaces allocated for women in disaster situations to ensure gender inclusivity.

SDMA prioritizes coordination with other government departments for effective disaster policy-making, in addition to regular inter-departmental collaboration. Notably, Rescue 1122 has established a dedicated wing for females in seven out of the ten districts in AJ&K, underscoring the commitment to gender sensitivity and inclusion in disaster response and management efforts.

²⁸Mahmood, H. (2022, July). Dealing with AJK flooding. The News. Retrieved from [https://www.thenews.com.pk/tns/detail/973918 dealing with ajk flooding](https://www.thenews.com.pk/tns/detail/973918%20dealing%20with%20ajk%20flooding)

Semari Valley



Semari Valley in AJ&K stands as an exemplary case study of a community-led environmental initiative that seamlessly integrates environmental preservation with socio-economic development, incorporating gender-sensitive practices. Spearheaded by Mr. Muhammad Arif Urfi and Mr. Asif Raza Mir, prominent figures in the journalist community of AJ&K, this initiative has brought about substantial positive changes in the region.

The primary objective of the Semari Valley initiative was to implement a "no tree-cutting" policy, emphasizing the importance of conserving the region's natural resources. This policy aligns with the broader aim of eco-tourism, recognizing the significance of preserving the valley's pristine natural environment as a valuable asset for sustainable development.

To foster community inclusion, the leaders of the initiative, along with the local youth, conducted bi-weekly two-day visits to Semari Valley. During these visits, they actively engaged with the local residents, fostering relationships, and conducting meetings in local mosques and homes to ensure the success of their mission, despite initial resistance rooted in cultural norms and the natural human tendency to resist change.

In total, the initiative successfully launched 12 to 16 projects within Semari Valley, each playing a vital role in socio-economic development and environmental conservation for the community.

Remarkably the initiative secured funding from the World Bank for Village Development Programs (VDP), encompassing diverse initiatives such as establishing water channels, organizing plantation drives, creating kitchens for divorced women, initiating TEVTA (Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority) Women Skill Centers, conducting health camps, and implementing a reliable water supply scheme. These projects are collaboratively aimed at elevating the community's living standards while respecting the delicate ecosystem.

An outstanding feature of this community-driven initiative is the active involvement of local youth in decision-making processes. Furthermore, a gender-sensitive approach was integral, ensuring the active participation of women in decision-making. To facilitate effective discussions, dedicated female-only conversations and training sessions were thoughtfully organized. The Semari Valley initiative stands as a paradigm for sustainable community-led environmental projects, underscoring the significance of community engagement and the inclusion of women in decision-making processes, ensuring that development projects are not only effective but also attuned to local needs. The case study serves as an embodiment of the harmonious relationship between environmental preservation, community development, and gender sensitivity, imparting valuable lessons for akin initiatives in AJ&K and beyond.



SEMARI VALLEY

Insights from the United Nations SDG Unit

In a comprehensive interview with Mr. Ali Gillani from the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Planning and Development Department in AJ&K, critical insights surfaced, shedding light on the current status of gender-sensitive programs and initiatives in the region.

A notable revelation is the prevalence of the informal economy in AJ&K, where a significant 73 percent of women are involved in work without formal contracts and benefits.²⁹ This stark reality underscores the necessity for programs that can formalize these employments, ensuring job security, and social benefits for women workers.

The relatively modest livelihoods in AJ&K have resulted in limited educational opportunities, especially for women. A concerning gap identified is the absence of an integrated policy that addresses gender-specific concerns comprehensively. It is apparent that a unified strategy is essential to effectively drive gender-sensitive development. To inform policy decisions adequately, the interview underscores the importance of disaggregated data collection. Such data can offer a nuanced understanding of gender disparities and guide the development of tailored solutions. In response to these challenges, AJ&K has launched the Gender Integrated Management System (GIMS) within the Women Development Department, focusing on health, education, and employment. This initiative, funded by the AJ&K Government, aims to improve gender equity in these key areas, potentially serving as a model for other regions.

Despite the critical role of women in AJ&K, their political representation in the legislative assembly is relatively low, at 10.6 percent. The interview underscores the need to empower women politically to ensure their voices are heard and their interests protected. The current approach by government departments is reactive, signaling the necessity for proactive gender-sensitive strategies in disaster response and climate change mitigation.

The interview also spotlighted the valuable efforts in conducting gender training, such as those led by Dr. Farzana Bari, ex-director gender studies department Quaid-i-Azam University, in Muzaffarabad. These initiatives aim to build capacity and awareness among women and men to promote gender equity.

While the Gender Empowerment Policy of 2012 is significant, it is constrained by the expired Gender Action Plan for 2016-2017. Renewed efforts and strategies are essential to propel the gender empowerment agenda forward.

A notable positive point is the increase in female employment from 4.9 percent in 2014-15 to 7.9 percent in 2017-18, signaling progress while emphasizing the need for further improvement.³⁰

²⁹SDGs Support Unit Planning & Development GoAJ&K. (2019, February). AJK POLICY BRIEF #2: SITUATION ANALYSIS ON GENDER, ECONOMY & INEQUALITIES. Retrieved from <https://pndajk.gov.pk/uploadfiles/downloads/Policy%20Brief%20AJK%20No.%202.pdf>

³⁰Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. (2019, February). LABOUR FORCE SURVEY 2017 -18 AZAD JAMMU & KASHMIR. Retrieved from <https://www.pndajk.gov.pk/uploadfiles/downloads/AJ&K%20LFS%202017-18%20Reports%20&%20Tables%20Combine.pdf>

Recommendations provided include mainstreaming gender in policies, with a special focus on UN SDG 5 (Gender Equality). The importance of tailored approaches for women of different ages, including live training modules, is also underscored. It also underscores the specific need for gender-responsive disaster financing.

Challenges faced include the limited number of projects due to geopolitical constraints, the need for greater government capacity in advancing SDG 5, the lack of effective policy implementation such as the Women Harassment Act of AJ&K, and the requirement for evidence-based data to guide policy decisions effectively.

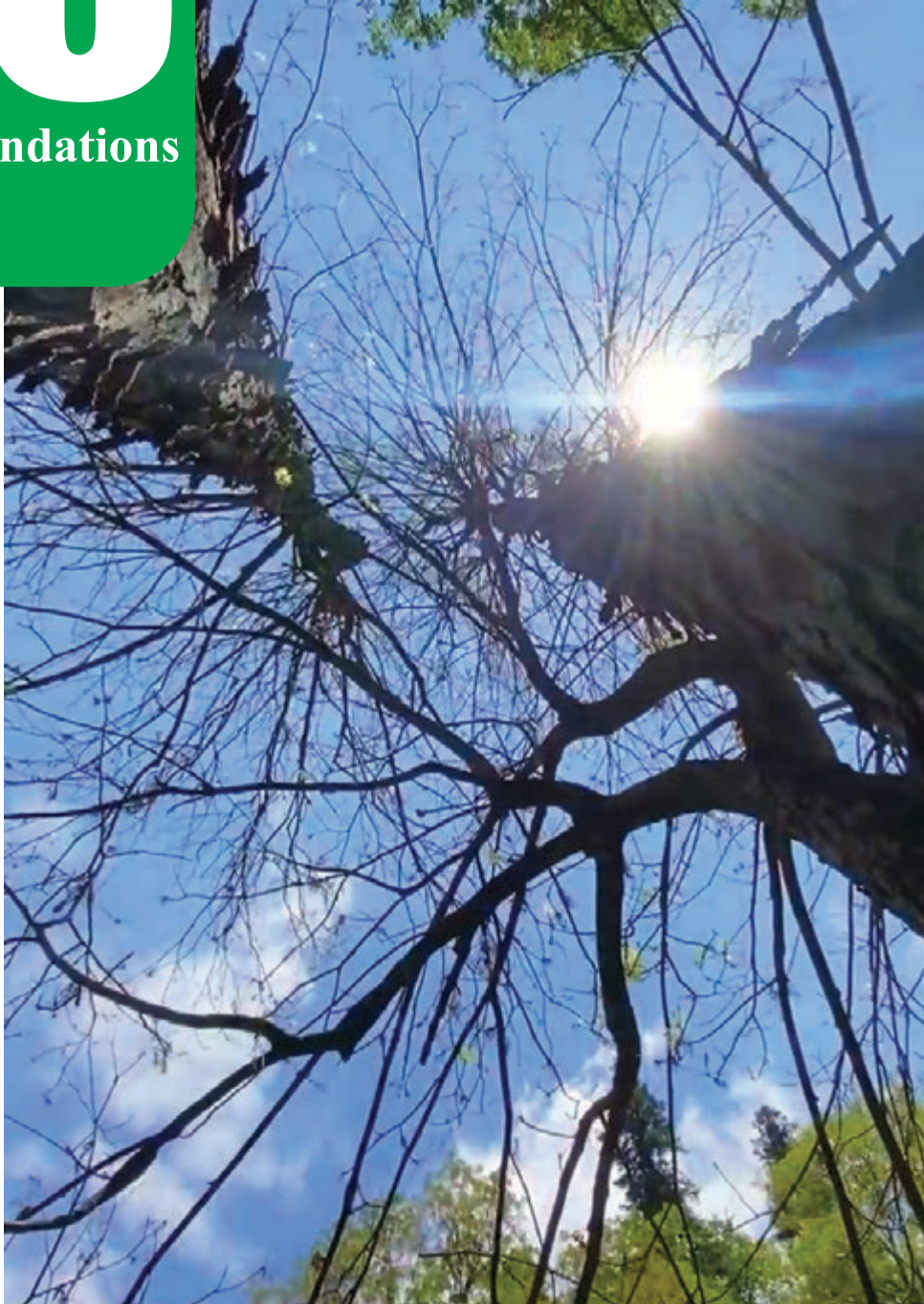
The pressing issue of child marriages in Neelum Valley and the ongoing work on a sanitation policy are highlighted, signifying continuous efforts to tackle deeply rooted challenges. Initiatives like the "Pink Bus" for government employees and the forthcoming "Pilot Scotty Project" are encouraging steps forward to overcome the low participation of women due to a lack of confidence, cultural norms, and capacity issues. The interview concludes with a series of pivotal recommendations, encompassing capacity building for policymakers, the implementation of gender-responsive financing mechanisms, the enhanced participation of women in decision-making processes, and vigilant monitoring of gender-sensitive programs and initiatives.

Civil society capacity building and the significance of community-led initiatives, as exemplified in the Pakistan Voluntary National Review Report 2019 (PK VNR), can contribute significantly to progress. Lastly, the proposal for a "Gender Champion" in every district underscores a clear commitment to gender sensitivity and equity throughout Azad Jammu and Kashmir. These insights, shared by Mr. Ali Gillani, were unveiled during an interview conducted by Mr. Huzaifa Khan of CPDR on October 7, 2023, in Muzaffarabad, Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The interview offers a comprehensive overview of the gender-sensitive landscape in AJ&K, shedding light on both the progress made and the areas that urgently require attention.

PART

06

Recommendations



How can this study make a difference in Azad Jammu and Kashmir?

The CCGAP AJ&K study advocates for a more substantial and expanded role for women in climate solution development, aiming to address gender disparities. The report presents a set of recommendations to enhance inclusivity in both groundwork and action for climate change adaptation in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The case study findings reveal the presence of numerous monetary, human, intellectual, and productive resources available to address climate challenges.

To leverage the momentum for climate action, the study addresses key questions such as the effectiveness of AJ&K adaptation mechanisms and whether governmental efforts adequately accommodate women. This report not only contributes to refining policy frameworks across Azad Jammu and Kashmir but also serves as a guide for decision-makers. Furthermore, it aims to engage a global audience in understanding AJ&K climate challenges, with a particular focus on the impact on women.

Our findings confirmed that engaging in interactions and interviews with multiple stakeholders (government, civil society, and the private sector) to promote women's rights in the context of climate change proved instrumental in understanding and enhancing the conditions of AJ&K government's commitments in the realm of gender participation.

- Women should have a lead role in the climate policy for encouragement and support as well as mainstreaming all endangered women since they listen to and understand women better.
- Training and informative programs are crucially needed for the local population.
- The report also indicates that a unified approach is essential for addressing gender-based climate strategy implementations with highly adaptive programs alongside teamwork between the five target sectors.
- The CCGAPs should be merged into the medium-term development plans for SDMA, EPA, and PDD involving NGOs and CSOs. They should be required to mainstream gender and climate change district-wise into the preparation and application of their particular medium-term development plans.
- Coordination power between different agencies should be effectively resourced to successfully harmonize gender and climate change issues. The lack of coordination usually leads to distrust and misunderstandings resulting in replication of programs and waste of limited resources. It is important to back all projects and work with relevant legislative power.
- To boost gender receptiveness within the five target areas the proposed actions require satisfactory financial and logistical backing.
- The importance of data collection and coordination is also compulsory

Cross-cutting partnership for mainstreaming Gender and Climate change

Strong coordination is critical for the successful implementation of the AJ&K Gender Action Plan, as various federal and Azad Jammu and Kashmir ministries and agencies including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), State Disaster Management Authority of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (SDMA), Planning and Development Authority (PDD) Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Climate Change Ministry of Pakistan to work together and coordinate routinely.

While this string of ministries and institutions presents opportunities to ensure higher-handed and more robust multisector results, on the contrary, there is little cooperation and these institutions need greater partnership with each other to achieve targets. Poorly managed inter-sectoral arrangements and weak harmonization among them were one of the key challenges identified by our report.

Introduce capacity training to enable people to mainstream gender and climate change effectively into their programs and activities. Capacity training is crucial for the sustainability of programs, and it is important to inspire trained officers to guide junior staff.

On the part of the Government of AJ&K, it should not just be a matter of a budgetary pledge that is never released by the federal government or partners, but one that has regular and timely release of funds and other resources to ensure the program's smooth implementation including monitoring and evaluation.

Sector-wise Recommendations

1. Disaster Risk Reduction

The national and regional Azad Jammu and Kashmir agenda should be shifted from the strategy of disaster response to a disaster prevention and risk reduction approach. The intensity and frequency of extreme rainfalls are expected to increase over coming areas, paving the way to more abundant floods and landslides.

This brings us to the recommendation of Climate information centers in disaster susceptible districts of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Early warning systems are essential in disaster-inclined areas. The 2005 South Asian earthquake exposed the weak early warning and disaster preparedness system of Pakistan, as Azad Jammu and Kashmir were gravely hit by that. In local villages and susceptible areas, early warning system was put in place by local capacities (loud, speakers, mobile networks, and community mosques for the diffusion of early warning to the whole surrounding areas. Alarms (siren) and mobile SMS are the other options for the dissemination of early warning systems with mobile phones (34 percent), followed by television, radio, mosques, and word of mouth.

As claimed by SMDA, their future long-term projects in AJ&K consist of strengthening and establishing new machinery and services, scientific warnings, and forecast systems within coming years as priority projects. New prioritized initiatives with the latest highly innovated equipment are also said to be anticipated.

The CCGAP Azad Jammu and Kashmir proposes meaningful activities in capacity building, training and education for women, and access to relief, and self-help trainings in times of crisis.



2. Forests

The AJ&K Climate Change Policy 2017 contains a section on Forests and Biodiversity that recognizes the significance of gender dynamics in the context of forests and biodiversity. It acknowledges women's pivotal role in resource collection and underscores the potential impact of climate change on their well-being. The policy strives for gender-inclusive decision-making and knowledge integration, emphasizing capacity-building, education, and community engagement efforts. Representation of both genders in initiatives, like forest protection clubs, is promoted.

In line with this, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Implement a gender quota within the AJ&K Forest Department to enhance women's participation in policy, planning, and decision-making.
- Conduct a gender assessment of existing initiatives in the forestry and biodiversity sectors to evaluate their responsiveness to women's needs.

- Facilitate policy dialogues with lawmakers on gender equity in forest and biodiversity management within the context of climate challenges.
- Incorporate provisions in forest and biodiversity legislation to facilitate women's participation in decision-making and implementation.
- Organize awareness workshops on the intersections of gender, forestry, biodiversity, and climate challenges.
- Develop training programs that equip women with climate adaptation tools for effective forest and resource management.
- Support the establishment of local-level women's groups to provide training and technical assistance for resilient forestry and natural resource use.
- Create incentives, such as scholarships and skill training, to encourage women's involvement in forestry and biodiversity management.
- Train women for roles like forest rangers and wildlife protection officers.
- Establish benchmarks and indicators to monitor gender-sensitive progress in forest and biodiversity management.

3. Water and Sanitation



There is a need for comprehensive policies on water, sanitation, and hygiene to address all loopholes. Currently, gender-specific programs are sporadic, and there is limited inclusion and awareness among women, particularly in low-income households.

Proposed legislative actions include:

- Allocating a suitable budget by the Government of AJ&K for the enhancement of water, sanitation, and hygiene within the Annual Development Plan (ADP), following approved policy guidelines with special attention to women and girls' hygiene.
- Enact legislation, with a specific emphasis on sanitation, mandating all schools and communities in AJ&K to have toilets, with a special focus on households led by women.

- Implement a systematic and calculated approach for awareness-raising programs at the community level to enhance knowledge, mindset, and practices related to water, sanitation, and hygiene. Allocate equal funds targeting women for these initiatives, utilizing television and radio as important communication channels. Both women and men should actively participate in the planning and implementation of water, sanitation, and hygiene programs in their towns and communities. Mere attendance without active participation will obscure gender issues and will not ensure gender-responsive implementation.
- Given that women are primarily responsible for fetching and handling drinking water at the domestic level, they should be the primary target for campaigns promoting sanitation and water.
- Youth can serve as agents of transformation to disseminate messages on the importance of safe water, sanitation, and hygiene practices to the new generation and their families.
- In Pakistan, improving farming methods is crucial. Implementing measures such as piping water to decrease evaporation, laser leveling of fields, adopting drip irrigation, and adjusting water prices are policies that can enhance water productivity for agricultural production and reduce overall water usage.

4. Food Security and Agriculture



- Conduct gender sensitization and training for integrating gender into the work of climate-related organizations and governmental departments in AJ&K, especially those with inadequate gender policy frameworks.
- Emphasize the significance of collecting separate data on vulnerable women.
- Introduce climate-smart agricultural (CSA) practices, considering the differential contributions and benefits of men and women in the sector. Planners should pay attention to gender differences in food security while promoting adaptation, mitigation, and resilience. Involving women in CSA increases the likelihood of favorable gender-related outcomes, reducing poverty and enhancing sustainability.

- Ensure that technologies and IT services are responsive to women's needs. The smooth operation of new technologies for drought-resistant harvest and irrigation practices relies on catering to the needs of women. Women's participation in decision-making related to technology adoption and land is currently inadequate.
- Simplify women's access to critical agricultural inputs, including land, labor, credit, equipment, and services, enabling them to adapt their agricultural practices effectively.

5. Energy and Transport



- Implement gender quotas in AJ&K Energy and Transport departments to elevate women's roles in policy and decision-making.
- Support women's participation in professional networks and forums related to renewable energy and transport.
- Assess ongoing energy and transport initiatives for gender responsiveness.
- Foster policy dialogues on gender equity in energy and transport management.
- Raise awareness through workshops on gender, energy, transport, and climate change linkages.
- Establish local-level women's groups to provide training and advocacy for energy and transport issues.
- Create educational videos on renewable energy technologies accessible on social media.
- Provide technical training for women in climate-smart transport and renewable energy.
- Pilot energy-efficient cooking technologies catering to women's needs.
- Launch a commuter helpline and compile gender-disaggregated data on complaints.
- Engage with women to identify area-specific energy and transport issues and develop suitable solutions.
- Develop benchmarks to monitor gender-sensitive progress in energy and transport initiatives.

Report Centric Recommendations

Regrettably, significant progress has not been achieved in improving the underprivileged status and marginalized situations of women due to near-stagnant institutional/policy implementation and the absence of concrete measures focused on women in disaster scenarios by the government and partners.

- This report underscores the need to address gender concerns through an attainable mechanism. The Paris Agreement highlights the promotion of equal opportunities for women in climate change adaptation and mitigation, emphasizing the need to mainstream gender issues at every level of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir governing machinery.
- We recommend aligning AJ&K Government priorities with the global development program in which Pakistan is already a partner, ensuring coordinated efforts. This alignment will strengthen the implementation of global goals on gender equality in Azad Jammu and Kashmir through sustained engagement with high-level policymakers and sponsors nationally and internationally.
- To accelerate gender-responsive actions, it is crucial to encourage and enhance decision-makers understanding of gender and social dynamics, challenging regressive customs.
- The government's outreach should extend comprehensively, especially in mapping all areas of AJ&K, notably far-flung and hard-to-reach regions where women are most defenseless and vulnerable during catastrophes. The Planning and Development Department of AJ&K's annual review report can serve as a guiding tool, and its database for monitoring and evaluation should be adopted for future reference.

Conclusion

To demonstrate its commitment to an eco-friendly environment, Pakistan became a responsible signatory to international pacts, including the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1994, the Montreal Protocol on Ozone-Depleting Substances, the Basel Convention on Biological Diversity in 1994, and the International Convention to Combat Desertification in 1994.

With a focus on women, the Azad Jammu and Kashmir CCGAP gender-inclusive report should be considered a launching point for gender mainstreaming, emphasizing the need for persistent and continuous efforts in the field of climate change in the upcoming years before substantial improvement can be realized. Gender mainstreaming in climate change is still a new phenomenon in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, requiring steadfast work before the fruits of labor in this sector become evident. A secure action plan should be provided for Kashmiri women to experience better disaster response, particularly in the volatile natural climate zone of AJ&K.

Prioritizing gender activities across the recommended five sectors should be backed by a well-constructed mechanism. Enhanced coordination serves as a platform for sharing experiences and lessons learned, additionally, it helps avoid the repetition of efforts while creating synergy among partner institutions to take tangible measures and plan cooperation.





Dr. Syed Asif Hussain

*Former Additional Chief Secretary Development,
Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K)*

"I have gone through the Climate Change Gender Action Plan for Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJ&K) prepared by the Centre for Peace, Development & Reforms (CPDR). I find it very well conceived and realistically aligned with the AJ&K Climate Change Policy and needs on ground. It addresses the cross-cutting challenges of Climate Change and Gender and Development in the area. I would strongly recommend that the planners and decision makers to use this document while planning the projects and interventions in AJ&K targeted towards DRR/DRM and GAD".



Dr. Shafqat Munir Ahmad

*Deputy Executive Director (Policy)/Head Sustainability and
Resilience Programme, Sustainable Development Policy Institute*

While all eyes are on the COP29 (November 2024) in Baku, Azerbaijan and beyond the COP process with a focus on climate finance, gender inclusive climate action, and other commitments, the Centre for Peace, Development and Reforms (CPDR) has developed the 'Climate Change Gender Action Plan for Azad Jammu and Kashmir (CCGAP). Pakistan's National Climate Gender Action Plan reaches the conclusion that "women disproportionately bear the brunt of climate change impacts, facing greater risks of livelihood insecurity, ill health, poor education outcomes and threats to personal safety, including gender-based violence". The CCGAP 2024 through segregated data focusing on Azad Jammu and Kashmir along five key pillars: Disaster Risk Reduction, Forests, Water and Sanitation, Food and Agriculture, and Energy and Transport has come up with the first tangible framework to address the brunt of climate change the women in AJK bear and capacitating them to prepare against disasters and can become part of the disaster response planning and implementation. The report provides a candid gender gap policy analysis and connects the impacts of climate change on women with social welfare and women development lens looking at their vulnerability to the climatic hazards. The gender-inclusive CCGAP of AJK also discusses and analyses the damage to the cryosphere of AJK that is largely impacting water resources. The report links the voices of the women of AJK with that of the global women movements across the world for their rights and climate justice and mainstreaming gender into policy domain. In line with global conventions on climate change, CCGAP adequately highlights how the women in AJK can play their role to promote nature-based solutions to the climate crisis, especially through adaptation practices, to achieve the goal of ecosystem restoration.

CPDR PUBLICATIONS



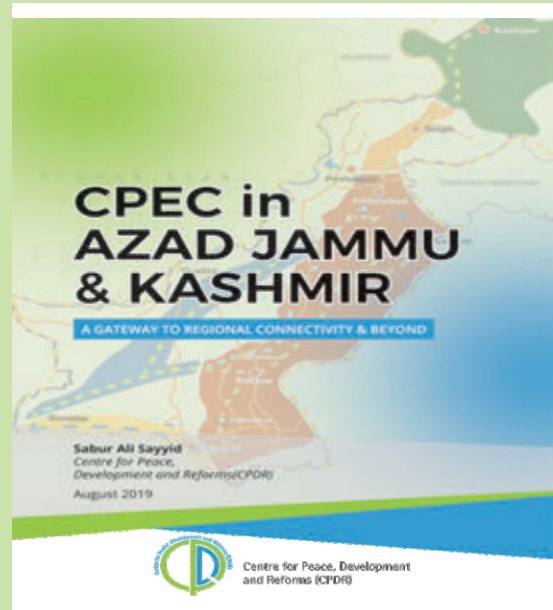
**AZAD JAMMU & KASHMIR
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COMMUNITIES**

Ershad Mahmud
Irtaza Muhammad
Aniqa Aziz Khan

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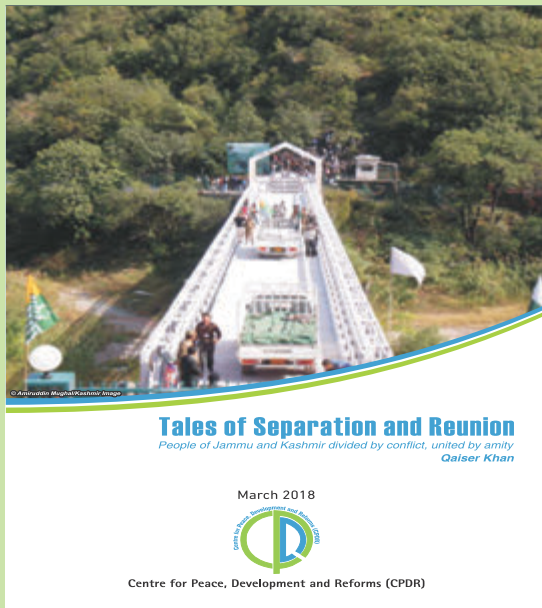
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A GATEWAY TO REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY & BEYOND

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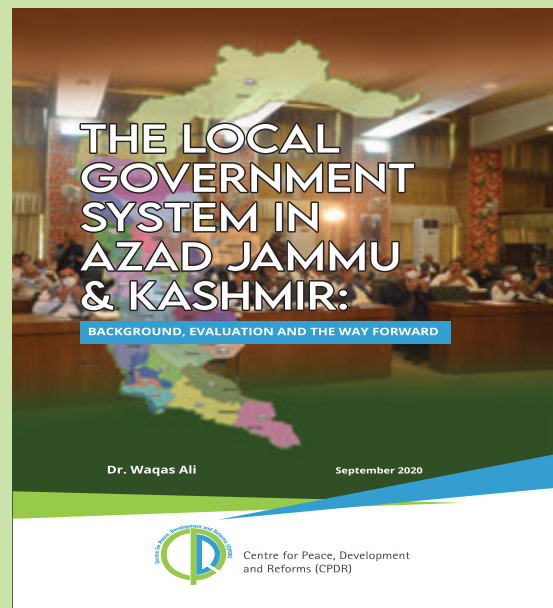


Tales of Separation and Reunion
People of Jammu and Kashmir divided by conflict, united by amity
Qaiser Khan

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**THE LOCAL
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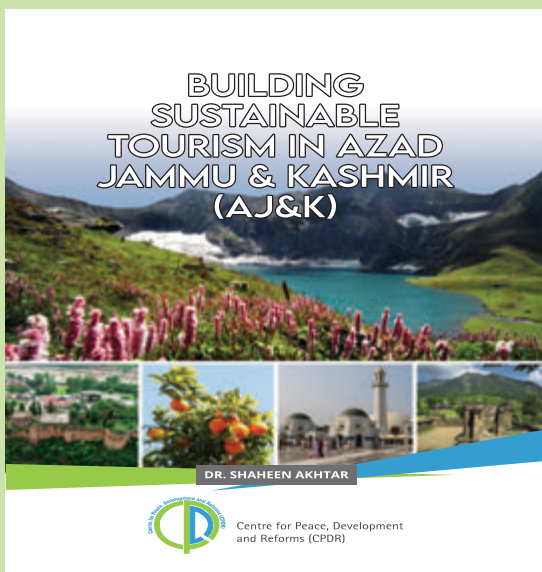
BACKGROUND, EVALUATION AND THE WAY FORWARD

Dr. Waqas Ali

September 2020




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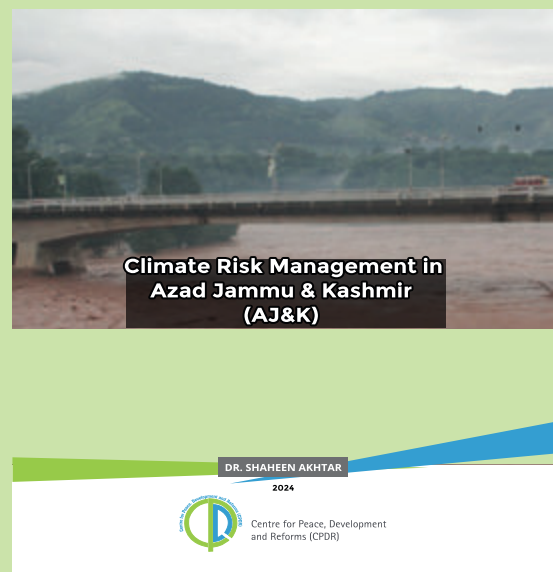


**BUILDING
SUSTAINABLE
TOURISM IN AZAD
JAMMU & KASHMIR
(AJ&K)**

DR. SHAHEEN AKHTAR




Centre for Peace, Development
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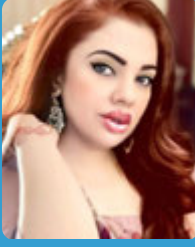
**Climate Risk Management in
Azad Jammu & Kashmir
(AJ&K)**

DR. SHAHEEN AKHTAR
2024



Centre for Peace, Development
and Reforms (CPDR)

About the Author



Miss Ayesha Khan is the Founder of Skyline Trading and CEO of Innovative Solutions Hub Pvt. Ltd., recognized for her entrepreneurial leadership with awards such as Woman Entrepreneur of the Year 2024 and the Inspiring Business Award in 2019. Miss Khan is also actively involved with the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI). She serves as a Global Goodwill Ambassador for Pakistan (GGA) since 2017 and is the Chairperson of the Women Empowerment Committee for the All Pakistan Exporters Association (APCEA). Ayesha Khan is a passionate advocate for women's empowerment and education. She established the first-ever girls' school in the Diamer region of Gilgit Baltistan and played a pivotal role in uniting the Gilgit Baltistan & Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chambers of Commerce. She has also contributed to peace-building efforts in Kashmir and is a published writer on environmental and women's issues.

About the Author



Huzaifa Khan is a dedicated student of economics with a specialized focus on the impacts of climate change. Since 2023, Huzaifa has been working as a project coordinator and researcher with the Centre for Peace, Development, and Reforms (CPDR). In this role, Huzaifa has extensively engaged with a diverse range of stakeholders, including government officials, public representatives, and local communities. Through this involvement, Huzaifa has played a key role in initiatives aimed at raising awareness about climate change and its socio-economic impacts. This report is a reflection of his commitment to addressing climate challenges through research, advocacy, and collaboration.

It is my privilege to introduce the pivotal "Climate Change Gender Action Plan for Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K)." In light of the intensifying climate challenges, it is essential to recognize that the impacts of climate change disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, especially women and marginalized groups. This comprehensive action plan offers an in-depth analysis of the gendered dimensions of climate change in AJ&K and provides critical recommendations for fostering gender equity in climate resilience efforts.

As we strive to build a climate-resilient future, it is imperative to ensure that our strategies are inclusive and empower both women and men to be active agents of change. This report calls upon policymakers, development partners, and all stakeholders to take decisive action in addressing gender-responsive climate challenges and advancing sustainable development for AJ&K. Let us collectively commit to implementing the insights of this plan and building a more equitable, resilient, and sustainable future for the region.



Zulfiqar Abbasi - President CPDR



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