

Call for Contribution: Volume 32, Issue 3

Disaster and Resilience: intersectional approaches towards establishing resilient communities during crises

About the journal

Gender & Development (G&D) is a unique journal that offers a forum to share experiences and analysis between feminist activists, scholars and women leaders across the globe working in research, policy and practice. The November 2024 Issue of G&D will focus on Disaster and Resilience: intersectional approaches towards establishing resilient communities during crises.

The context

Extreme weather events, conflicts, wars, and complex humanitarian emergencies have increased significantly with devastating impacts on communities, the natural and built environment, and our overall ecosystem. Nearly 8.8 million people live in earthquake affected areas in Syria and close to 56000 people died in Turkey and Syria in February 2023 (CDP 2023d); in Myanmar, approximately 3.4 million were subjected to destructive winds of Cyclone Mocha in May 2023 (CDP 2023f) ; in China, nearly 1.5 million people were affected by floods as reported in August 2023 (CDP 2023a); as of October 2023, over 4000 people had died in Libya and 8000 were missing in the aftermath of Storm Daniel (CDP 2023e); and about 3000 people died and over 5000 were injured due to the earthquake in Morocco in September 2023, likely an underestimation (CDP 2023c). On the other hand, in 2023 alone, 2 billion people have thus far been affected by conflicts (UN Press 2023). As of 2022, 84 million people were displaced due to conflict and violence (Archie 2022) and the Global Conflict tracker showed 32 countries across the globe were experiencing some form of conflict resulting in loss of lives and forced displacements with millions having to seek refuge in neighbouring countries. At the time of writing this call, armed conflicts in West Asia, North Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe are underway. All these crises are unfolding in the backdrop of the global pandemic, whose long-term social and economic implications still mark our lives, and the threat of its impending waves looms large.

Disasters, even when triggered by natural events, are human made. They are often the results of poor policy decisions and have severe development related implications on impoverished and disadvantaged communities in both global North and South. They are also more than just 'events' and their multidimensional implications continue to shape the collective lives and memories of those affected, far beyond the occurrences (also called a 'disaster cycle'). "A disaster process is not a spectacle, but a normal condition stemming from colonialism, and resulting in intergenerational trauma, marginalisation, and dispossession of land" (Mosurska et al 2023, 195). Furthermore, the interconnectedness of human and ecological systems renders these crises to have serious, cascading and long-term effects.

Socially, economically and historically marginalised people are disproportionately affected during disasters (Yonder et al 2005; Saeed 2023; UN Press 2022; Frank 2020, United Nations Entity for

Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women 2022). Reports indicate that women and girls face unique vulnerabilities during crises such as early and forced marriages, trafficking, sexual violence and increase in domestic violence (UNICEF 2021, 2023). Women and children are 14 times more likely to die during disasters. In the aftermath of hurricane Katrina in the US, “most of the victims trapped in New Orleans were Afro-American women with their children” (UNISDR, n.d.). Extreme weather events in 2022 led to the displacement of 12 million children (UNRIC 2023). In India, 36 per cent of Dalits were refused relief shelters after Cyclone Fani in Puri in 2020 (Study by National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights and Ambedkar Lohia Vichar Manch cited in Majumdar 2022). In the context of the global pandemic and the multiple lockdowns that ensued, trans persons’ and persons with disability were further exposed to food insecurity, loss of livelihoods, and disrupted access to financial relief schemes, physical security, health care and ongoing treatments. Furthermore, they reportedly experienced isolation, fear, stigma, and lack of access to accurate information regarding the virus (Kothari et al. 2020; Goyal and Raghavan 2020). At the same time, there are innumerable cases of marginalised groups leading disaster relief, recovery and rebuilding, highlighting the collective capacities of affected communities.

Increasingly, the role of women and women’s organisations in responding to emergent needs during a crisis is being recognised (Coger et al 2022). The critical role of collective and community-oriented approaches in designing viable gender-responsive, disaster resilient and inclusive recovery strategies is well documented (1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; Yonder et al 2005; The Huairou Commission and the Community Practitioner Platform for Resilience 2015; Rushton et al 2021; Lee and Im 2022; Banerjee and Mukhopadhyay 2022; Narayan 2022), with women led groups and collectives offering effective, sensitive and timely emergency and relief response to those in need, given their extensive local experience and embeddedness within affected communities. “Women’s groups can collectively mobilize local resources and rebuild community networks to help restore and operate essential services, such as childcare, education, health, water, and explore new livelihood activities.... Women’s groups can provide effective support and guidance to women from new disaster areas” (Yonder et al 2005, p 35).

Yet, women’s needs and the critical role of their organisations are overlooked during crisis response and funding allocations, and their voices and experiences often do not find space in policy discussions. This is reflected in the lack of access to development and relief funds for local groups and collectives, particularly those working with women and youth. Existing humanitarian and development systems, despite the lip service, continue to exclude local and national actors as well as affected groups, especially women and their organisations, which results in poor and inequitable access of affected communities to their needs. National and international systems are constantly designing and implementing mechanisms aimed towards disaster preparedness and increasing resilience of infrastructures and communities to help economies and communities ‘bounce back’. They often do not adequately and meaningfully address climate change, economic inequality, inequitable access to housing, healthcare, water and sanitation, gender and racial injustices, and inequitable planning, which result in the most vulnerable communities living in precarious and compromised environments.

Moreover, the significant focus on building resilience within the disaster policy landscape has been challenged within academia as well as humanitarian and development work. There is debate around the term ‘resilience’ and the often overly positive portrayal of individual (and collective) agency and capacity embedded within a neoliberal, colonial and top-down/technocratic approach that discounts how local communities understand, experience, and enact resilience (Rushton et al 2021). Humber and Joseph (2019) insist on the need to interrogate the relationship of resilience with neoliberalism,

while placing it within the community and the everyday. There is also a need to understand how disasters and resilience are articulated across different disciplinary positions ranging from Disaster Studies, Sociology, Geography, Urban Studies, Rural Studies, Economics, Gender Studies, Disability Studies, as well as within activism, policy and humanitarian action.

The global policy impetus in relief and reconstruction work continues to be on managing and avoiding the negative impacts of disasters on labour markets, productivity, resources, and building resilience while ensuring timely action to avoid damage (The UN Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction by UNDRR 2023), without adequate engagement with the priorities and needs of those on the ground. Often the disaster mitigation action is seen as imposed from 'outside' and 'top', in adherence to agendas of the state and international NGOs (Rushton et al 2021). There is thus a need to engage with the specific needs and experiences of communities, particularly groups that are marginalised due to their class, caste, race, sexuality, gender, religion, ability, including indigenous groups, refugees, migrants, displaced groups, and underscoring their priorities is critical (Mosurska et al 2023) and not addressed adequately in the global policy space. In this issue, we hope to shine light on the efforts, needs, and the action taken by local groups and communities who directly face crises, advocate for their efforts to be valued and recognised within global policy as well as funding spaces, and draw learnings from their collective experiences.

Key objectives and themes of the Issue

1. This issue aims to bring attention to community and collective efforts, especially efforts and role of women and other specific groups, in disaster management, response and recovery, and understand the multiple ways in which they build resilience(s), and how these can speak to local, national, and global policy discourse and development.
2. The issue also hopes to unpack what disaster, vulnerability, resilience and even care are conceptually, and in terms of lived experience.
3. Through the contributions, the issue would like to forefront learnings from diverse contexts and collectively work towards carving a feminist, gender just humanitarian and development system based on the active participation of those most affected.

In particular, the issue would like to address the following sub-themes:

- What are the multi-dimensional/intersectional implications of disasters on most vulnerable groups?
- What are the ways in which a community or group understands, experiences, and enacts resilience?
- What are some community-led resilience strategies, their nuances, intersections with gender, class, caste, ability, citizenship, and challenges therein? How do these pan out in rural and urban areas?
- What is the role of state responsibility (or lack of) during a disaster/crisis in supporting women and the most marginalised in building resilience?
- What is the role of women, trans and queer, and disability rights organisations, collectives and groups; international development organisations; humanitarian agencies; donor organisations in leading disaster management, response and recovery?

- What are some case studies and learnings about resilience on the ground – (such as theoretical aspects/ operational aspects including financial/funding challenges/ mental health aspects/ movement building, collective care)?

Call for contributions:

Gender and Development published a special issue titled *Gender and Resilience* in 2015, and we hope that the contributions in this issue nine years later would engage with the theme from the current standpoint and continue to deepen our understanding.

Guest editors for the November 2024 Issue

This issue will be guest edited by Dr. Ayse Yonder, Dr. Gayatri Menon and Suranjana Gupta.

Submissions

We want to hear from community and grassroots leaders, climate justice advocates, women's rights and human rights activists, civil society organisations and networks, researchers and academics, policymakers, and practitioners who are directly involved in work related to disaster management, risk mitigation and emergency response; community led response; technologies for disaster recovery; feminist leadership and movement building; humanitarian action; vulnerability and resilience; and healing and collective care during and post disaster- to contribute to this critical theme. We especially invite contributions that share case studies and practice-based recommendations.

Please send your abstract of no more than 250 words with details about your research and preliminary findings or a small multi-modal proposal (a two-minute video clip abstract or 250 word abstract with images) here: <https://forms.gle/oWGXNvukF7vt8Ung6>

Please send any queries to genderanddevelopment.south@gmail.com.

Guidelines for content

- Full research articles should be no more than 7,000 words excluding references, abstract and annexures. The annexures can include photographs, maps, images, graphs, etc. Multi-media content can be embedded within the article and should be kept below 500MB file size.
- Shorter essays should be 4000 words, and these can include photographs, maps, images, graphs. Multi-media content should be kept below 500MB file size.
- Photo essay and illustrations can be uploaded on Flickr or any other image sharing platforms and then shared with the editorial team.
- All content must be original and authors are responsible for obtaining necessary consent and permission for the use of any third-party material.

For more information on the journal, visit: www.genderanddevelopment.org

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