

Gender and Social Vulnerability to Climate Change: A Study of Disaster Prone Areas in Sindh



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Overview

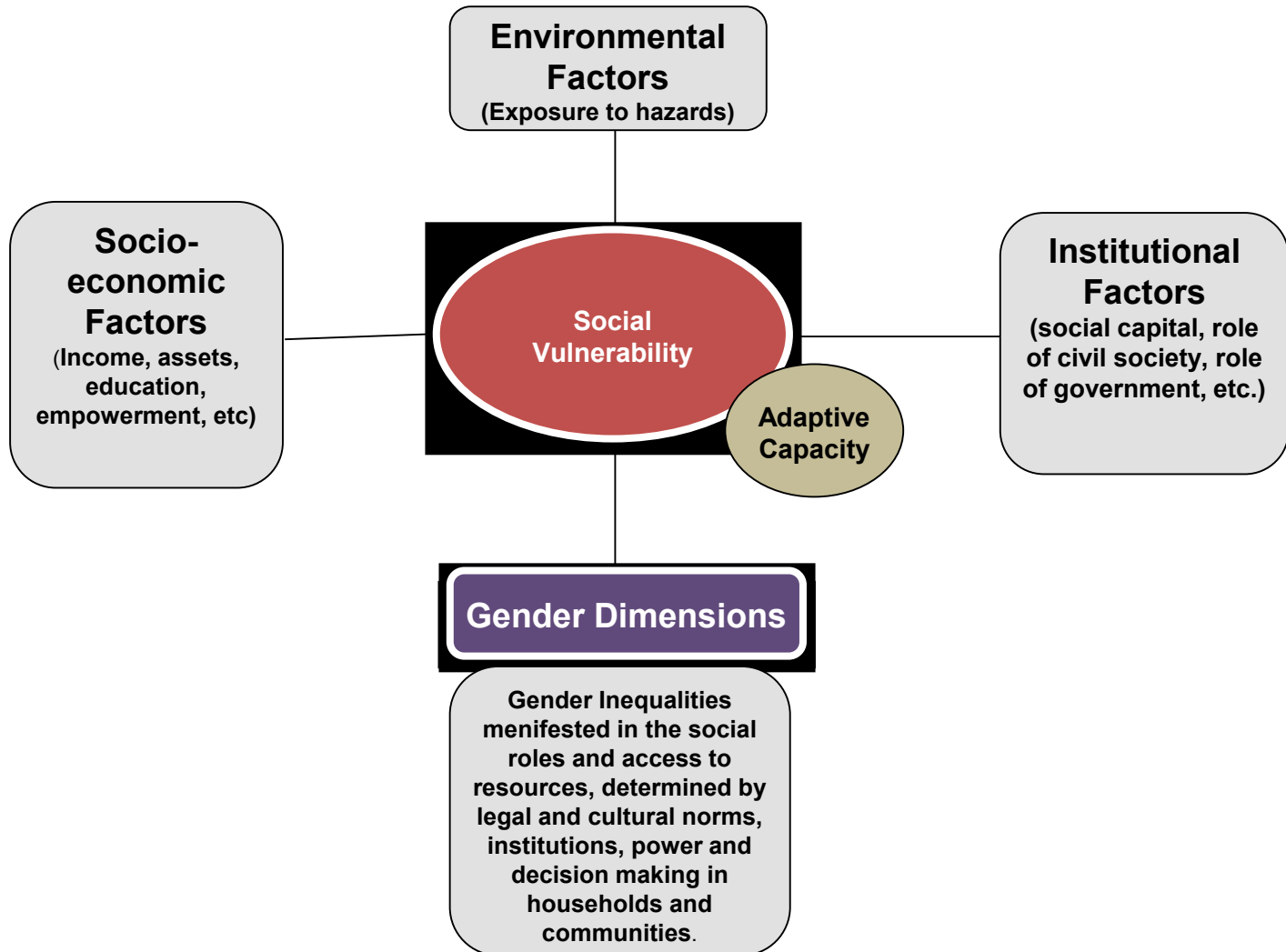
The study aims to:

- investigate gender dimensions of **social vulnerability** to climate change
- assess the adaptive capacity of men and women at community level and the **social capital** available to them
- formulate a set of **gender specific** policy recommendations for provincial and district governments
- build awareness and understanding among stakeholders

Theoretical framework

- **Vulnerability**: susceptibility to suffer damage from an environmental extreme and relative inability to recover from that damage [Mustafa, Ahmed and Saroch (2008)]
- chronic **state of being** rather than an outcome of environmental extreme
- can be explained by a combination of socio-economic, political and environmental **factors** [Adger (1999); Brook, Adger & Kelly (2005)]
- gender as cross-cutting factor

Theoretical framework



Methods

- Mix of qualitative and quantitative techniques
- Analysis of secondary data
- Multi-group dialogues
- Household and community survey
- Focus group discussions (male, female)
- Key informant interviews
- Vulnerability and Capacities Index

Methods

Vulnerability and Capacities Index:

- A tool for assessing relative vulnerability of selected communities
 - Material
 - Institutional
 - Attitudinal

Results

- Primary survey has recently started
- A preliminary set of discussions with groups of farmer (men and women) and multi-group dialogues with stakeholders were held
- Some impressions from meetings and focus group discussions are shared here
- **Caution:** these are preliminary observations

Results

- People have observed significant variation in climate over the years -- increase in rain as well as extreme temperatures during the summer and winter seasons (Secondary data also indicates increasing trend in average temperatures)
- Impact of climate change/variability:
 - People generally do not differentiate the impacts of climate change and that of environmental degradation due to disasters
 - Some do feel that rising temperatures are also responsible for making the ground dry and decreasing the soil's water retention rate

Results

- There have been changes in **sources of income** over the past few years due to climate variability and disasters
 - continuous decline in the availability of fresh water led to a decrease in harvesting of various crops
 - fish ponds have been destroyed as a direct consequence of frequent floods; also impacted livestock rearing
 - switch over to ‘non-farm’ related labour work --- decline in overall income, increased uncertainty

Results

- Difference in experiences and impacts of climate change on men and women
 - women now have to bring water over long distances
 - During and after floods, the vulnerability of women further increases due to increase in diseases, lack of access to proper sanitation or health facilities and loss of livelihoods
 - lower literacy level amongst women as compared to men was also identified as one of the factors increasing gender differentiated impacts

Results

- Access to social capital
 - NGOs helped the communities to cope with the disasters. These interactions have resulted in an increase in social cohesion and social networks
 - increased focus on education of children in general due to the loss of farming as a livelihood

Results

- Institutional responses and people's access to government resources
 - The farmers, in general, are not very positive about the role of governments to deal with the impact of climate variability and disasters
 - the district and provincial governments lack detailed mapping and skills that are important for rescue efforts
 - accountability mechanisms are also poor
 - The general impression is that the resources were used inappropriately by the government without proper coordination and planning