

# Invisible Climate Refugees: Women and Children at Risk in India

Irin Xess<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Lalit Kumar Roy<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Law, University of Gour Banga, Malda (W.B)

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Law, University of Gour Banga, Malda (W.B)

## Abstract

Climate change is a growing cause of forced displacement that disproportionately affects women and children in India. Often remaining invisible due to a lack of formal legal recognition, these groups face intensified socio-economic inequalities as environmental hazards act as threat multipliers. Displacement leads to severe disruptions in health, nutrition, and education, exposing women to heightened risks of gender-based violence and maternal health complications. At the same time, children face increased trafficking, labour, and school dropouts. Although international instruments like CEDAW and the CRC provide normative standards, they do not explicitly address climate-induced displacement, resulting in fragmented protection. Furthermore, while the Indian judiciary recognises the right to be free from the adverse effects of climate change under Article 21, current policies remain largely gender-neutral and relief-oriented. This paper highlights these gaps and argues for gender- and child-sensitive legal reforms to move beyond temporary aid toward long-term rehabilitation and the protection of fundamental dignity.

**Keywords:** Climate Refugees, CEDAW, CRC, Gender-Sensitive Reform, Climate Justice, Internal Displacement, Gender-Based Violence, Threat Multiplier

## Introduction

Climate change creates a complex web of effects that are deeply linked. One of the most critical yet hardest to measure outcomes is the rise of climate refugees, people forced to move due to environmental shifts. Across the globe, increasing disasters like floods, fires, and intense storms are driving families from their homes. According to a 2018 World Bank report, over 140 million people could be displaced within their own countries by 2050, with the most severe impacts hitting South Asia, South America, and sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>3</sup> It is essential to distinguish these individuals from traditional migrants. In contrast, migrants may be drawn by "pull factors" like economic opportunity, while climate refugees are driven by "push factors" such as extreme heat waves and salination that make returning home nearly impossible.<sup>4</sup> In 2021 alone, catastrophic climate events internally displaced approximately 4.9 million people in India.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Law, University of Gour Banga, Malda (W.B), Email: irinxess19@gmail.com Mb. 9800842396

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Law, University of Gour Banga, Malda (W.B), Email: [lalitikumarroy@ugb.ac.in](mailto:lalitikumarroy@ugb.ac.in), Mb. 9832410049

<sup>3</sup> World Bank, Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration (Issued on January 1, 2018).

<sup>4</sup> Sumudu Atapattu, Climate Change, Human Rights, and Forced Migration: Implications for International Law, 27 WIS. INT'L L.J. 607, 610-12 (2009).

<sup>5</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Global Report on Internal Displacement 2022: Children and Youth in Internal Displacement (Issued on May 19, 2022).

Despite these staggering figures, current theoretical models of migration are often gender-blind. A new gendered conceptual framework identifies that migration is rarely an individual choice; rather, it is the result of intra-household bargaining where men often hold more power due to asset ownership and social norms. Data from 2020 further highlight the scale: the number of individuals in India displaced by environmental disasters was nearly 989 times that displaced by political conflict.<sup>6</sup> Migration triggered by climate-related factors may occur either within national borders or across them. Environmental degradation and climate change are progressively becoming major forces that directly initiate, intensify, or interact with other factors to create conditions in which individuals are compelled to leave their countries of origin.<sup>7</sup>

As early as 1990, the “Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change” (IPCC) acknowledged that climatic changes would cause millions of people to move. They pointed out that as the coastline washes away, floods hit the shores, and farming becomes harder, many people would have no choice but to leave their homes.<sup>8</sup> One of the most frequently cited projections suggests that approximately 216 million people could be displaced by 2050.<sup>9</sup> Climate change, together with its associated impacts such as rising sea levels, soil salinisation of farmland, desertification, increasing water scarcity, and climate-induced disasters, including storms and floods, constitutes a dominant driver of population movement.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, migration is not shaped by climate factors alone. Elements such as state policies, population growth, and the degree of community readiness to respond to natural disasters also play a critical role. Each of these factors influences an individual’s level of vulnerability.<sup>11</sup> Research indicates that life-threatening environmental disasters, such as droughts, floods, and hurricanes, are expected to happen more often and with greater intensity. This trend is primarily driven by shifting rain patterns and an increasingly unstable water cycle. Projections indicate that by 2050, the South Asian monsoon will intensify, potentially resulting in up to a 20 per cent increase in rainfall in areas such as eastern India and Bangladesh.<sup>12</sup>

Climate drivers can broadly be categorised into climatic processes and extreme climate events. Gradual phenomena such as rising sea levels, increased salinisation of agricultural land, desertification, worsening water shortages, and food insecurity represent slow-onset consequences of climate change.<sup>13</sup> Certain coastal areas and small island nations are increasingly becoming uninhabitable due to sea-level rise, forcing residents to relocate permanently.<sup>14</sup> In contrast, sudden climate events such as hurricanes, storms, monsoon floods, glacial lake outburst floods, and typhoons can rapidly and unexpectedly displace populations from their land. For instance, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, which struck the Gulf Coast of the United States in August and September 2005, led to the displacement of nearly two million people, leaving many without homes.<sup>15</sup> Despite this, non-climatic factors continue to play a significant role.

<sup>6</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre [IDMC], India (Issued on May 14, 2025)

<sup>7</sup> IOM & Georgetown Univ., Periodic Global Report on the State of Solutions to Internal Displacement (PROGRESS 2024) (Issued on Dec. 2024).

<sup>8</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], First Assessment Report (1990).

<sup>9</sup> IPCC, Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report (Issued on March 24, 2023).

<sup>10</sup> Marina Romanello et al., The 2023 Report of the Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change: The Imperative for a Health-Centred Response in a World Facing Irreversible Harms, 402 LANCET 2346 (2023).

<sup>11</sup> IDMC, *supra* note 5.

<sup>12</sup> World Meteorological Organisation, State of the Global Climate 2023 (Issued on March 19, 2024).

<sup>13</sup> Nirupama A.K. & Jeffin Thomas Mammen, Redefining the Refugee Crisis: Examining the Status of Climate-Induced Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons with Special Reference to India, 13 CHRIST UNIV. L.J. 53, 64 (2024).

<sup>14</sup> IPCC, *supra* note 8, at Annex I: Glossary.

<sup>15</sup> Sumudu Atapattu, Climate Change, Human Rights, and Forced Migration: Implications for International Law, 27 WILJ. 607, 610-612 (2009).

Climate science research consistently shows that climate change hits women much harder than men. This is clearly seen in migration patterns: while women make up about half of all refugees, they represent 80% of those forced to move because of the environment.<sup>16</sup> Beyond just moving homes, climate change increases the risk of violence against women. This can force women to seek safety even when there isn't a natural disaster happening.<sup>17</sup> The dangers are high; UN data shows that 60% of preventable maternal deaths happen in humanitarian crises, and 20% of displaced women experience sexual violence.<sup>18</sup> Essentially, whenever a society is disrupted, women and girls suffer the most. Since global data shows men commit 95% of homicides,<sup>19</sup> women who may be more physically vulnerable or restricted by social roles often become targets of male aggression. Because of this, a working legal system is the most important tool for keeping women safe and a barrier to violence.<sup>20</sup>

This article is historical, analytical, and descriptive in nature. It is divided into four parts. The first part explores the conceptual framework of climate-induced displacement with special reference to women and children, including the meaning and scope of “climate refugees”, “internally displaced persons”, and gender and child-specific vulnerability in the light of climate change. The second part analyses the global and national legal framework relating to climate refugees, with particular emphasis on international human rights instruments such as the CEDAW and the CRC, along with relevant constitutional provisions, laws, and policy responses in India. The third part focuses on the challenges and issues faced by climate-displaced women and children in India through selected case studies, highlighting concerns related to housing, health, education, livelihood, and protection from exploitation and violence. The final part critically examines the existing legal and policy gaps in addressing the climate refugee crisis and suggests gender- and child-sensitive legal and policy reforms to ensure effective protection, rehabilitation, and resettlement.

### **Conceptual Framework of Climate Refugee Vulnerability of Women and Children**

Climate change has emerged as a significant non-traditional cause of forced displacement across the globe. Environmental factors such as rising temperatures, floods, droughts, cyclones, sea-level rise, and erratic rainfall patterns increasingly render human settlements unsafe and uninhabitable, compelling populations to migrate either within national borders or across international boundaries.<sup>21</sup> Such displacement has given rise to the concept of “climate refugees” or “climate-induced displaced persons,” although these terms are not formally recognised under existing “International refugee law”. The absence of a universally accepted definition has resulted in conceptual ambiguity and legal uncertainty regarding the status and rights of persons displaced due to climate-related causes.<sup>22</sup>

The term “climate refugee” is commonly used to describe individuals or communities who are forced to leave their habitual place of residence primarily due to sudden or slow-onset environmental changes linked

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<sup>16</sup> Erika Schueman, *Explainer: How Gender Inequality and Climate Change are Interconnected*, U.N. WOMEN (Apr. 1, 2026, 11.30 A.M), <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/explainer/2022/02/explainer-how-gender-inequality-and-climate-change-are-interconnected>.

<sup>17</sup> U.N. Env't Programme [UNEP], *Gender, climate & security: sustaining inclusive peace on the frontlines of climate change* (Issued on February 19, 2020).

<sup>18</sup> U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], *Global Trends Report 2023* (Issued on May 17, 2024).

<sup>19</sup> U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], *Global Study on Homicide 2013* (Issued on August, 2014).

<sup>20</sup> Schueman, *supra* note 15.

<sup>21</sup> U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement* (Issued on Oct. 15, 2019).

<sup>22</sup> Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees art. 1, July 28, 1951, 189 U.N.T.S. 137.

to climate change.<sup>23</sup> While traditional refugees are covered by the 1951 "Refugee Convention" because they are escaping unfair treatment due to things like their race or beliefs, climate refugees are different. They aren't running away from human-led persecution or political opinions; instead, they are forced to leave because of changes to the environment.<sup>24</sup> Instead, their displacement is driven by environmental degradation and climate hazards, placing them outside the scope of existing refugee protection regimes.<sup>25</sup> This definitional gap is particularly problematic for vulnerable groups such as women and children, whose specific needs remain largely unaddressed in climate displacement discourse.<sup>26</sup>

Women and children constitute a disproportionate share of climate-displaced populations and experience heightened vulnerability due to pre-existing social, biological, economic, and cultural inequalities. Natural disasters significantly lower the life expectancy of women. During natural disasters, women and children are at higher risk and are 14 times more likely to die than men.<sup>27</sup> Women often face restricted access to resources, limited decision-making power, and increased caregiving responsibilities, which intensify their exposure to climate risks and displacement-related hardships.<sup>28</sup> Children, on the other hand, are especially affected by disruption of education, malnutrition, health risks, psychological trauma, and exposure to child labour, trafficking, and exploitation during and after displacement.<sup>10</sup> These vulnerabilities underscore the need to view climate-induced displacement through a gender- and child-sensitive lens.

From a rights-based perspective, international human rights instruments such as the CEDAW and CRC provide important normative standards for the protection of women and children.<sup>29</sup> These instruments recognise rights related to housing, health, education, dignity, and protection from violence and exploitation. However, they do not explicitly address climate-induced displacement, resulting in fragmented and inadequate protection for climate-displaced women and children.<sup>30</sup> This conceptual gap highlights the necessity of integrating climate justice, gender justice, and child rights within the broader framework of displacement and refugee protection.

In the Indian context, climate vulnerability is closely linked to poverty, marginalisation, and geographical exposure, particularly in coastal regions, flood-prone river basins, drought-affected areas, and ecologically fragile zones. Women and children from marginalised communities are often the worst affected by climate-induced displacement, facing long-term socio-economic insecurity and exclusion.<sup>31</sup> Understanding the conceptual foundations of climate refugee vulnerability is therefore essential for framing effective legal and policy responses that address the unique needs of women and children in the face of climate change.

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<sup>23</sup> International Organisation for Migration [IOM], World Migration Report 2022 (2021).

<sup>24</sup> Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, *supra* note 21, at art. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Frank Biermann & Ingrid Boas, Protecting Climate Refugees: The Case for a Global Protocol, 50 ENV'T MAG. 8 (2008).

<sup>26</sup> Schueman, *supra* note 15.

<sup>27</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability (Issued on Feb. 28, 2022).

<sup>28</sup> UNEP, *supra* note 16.

<sup>29</sup> UNICEF, The Climate Crisis is a Child Rights Crisis: Introducing the Children's Climate Risk Index (Issued on August, 2021).

<sup>30</sup> Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Dec. 18, 1979, 1249 U.N.T.S. 13; Convention on the Rights of the Child, Nov. 20, 1989, 1577 U.N.T.S. 3.

<sup>31</sup> Ministry of Env't, Forest & Climate Change, India: Third Biennial Update Report to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2021).

## International and National Legal Framework on Climate Refugees with Special Reference to Women and Children

The phenomenon of climate-induced displacement poses serious challenges to existing international and domestic legal frameworks, particularly in relation to the protection of women and children. At the international level, no legally binding instrument explicitly recognises or defines “climate refugees.”<sup>32</sup> The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol limit refugee status to persons fleeing persecution on specific grounds such as race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, thereby excluding individuals displaced due to environmental or climate-related factors.<sup>33</sup> The 1951 Convention glaringly omits the terms “environment,” “climate,” or “disaster,” leaving the current global system unequipped to protect those fleeing climate distortions.<sup>34</sup> As a result, climate-displaced women and children remain outside the formal protection regime of international refugee law.

Nevertheless, international human rights law provides indirect protection to climate-displaced persons, particularly women and children. The CEDAW obligates State Parties to eliminate discrimination against women in all spheres of life, including access to health care, livelihood, housing, and social security.<sup>35</sup> Although CEDAW does not expressly address climate-induced displacement, its substantive equality framework is relevant in addressing the disproportionate burdens borne by displaced women, such as loss of livelihood, increased unpaid care work, and heightened exposure to gender-based violence during displacement and resettlement.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, CRC recognises the right of every child to survival, development, education, health, and protection from exploitation and abuse. Climate-induced displacement directly threatens these rights by disrupting schooling, exposing children to malnutrition and disease, and increasing the risk of child labour, trafficking, and early marriage.<sup>37</sup> The CRC Committee has acknowledged that environmental harm and climate change pose serious risks to the enjoyment of children’s rights, thereby reinforcing the applicability of the Convention in climate displacement contexts.<sup>38</sup>

Other international instruments also offer normative guidance. The United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement recognise natural disasters and environmental degradation as causes of internal displacement and emphasise special protection for women and children.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030) stresses the need for inclusive, gender-responsive, and child-sensitive disaster risk governance.<sup>40</sup> However, these frameworks remain largely non-binding and inadequately implemented at the national level.

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<sup>32</sup> A.K. & Mammen, *supra* note 12, at 56.

<sup>33</sup> Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees art. 1(A)(2), July 28, 1951, 19 U.S.T. 6259, 189 U.N.T.S. 137.

<sup>34</sup> Atapattu, *supra* note 14, at 615.

<sup>35</sup> Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women art. 2, Dec. 18, 1979, 1249 U.N.T.S. 13.

<sup>36</sup> U.N. Comm. on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, Gen. Recommendation No. 37 on Gender-related Dimensions of Disaster Risk Reduction in the Context of Climate Change, U.N. Doc. CEDAW/C/GC/37 (Issued on Feb. 7, 2018).

<sup>37</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child, arts. 6, 24, 28, Nov. 20, 1989, 1577 U.N.T.S. 3.

<sup>38</sup> U.N. Comm. on the Rights of the Child, Gen. Comment No. 26 on Children’s Rights and the Environment with a Special Focus on Climate Change, U.N. Doc. CRC/C/GC/26 (Issued on Aug. 22, 2023).

<sup>39</sup> U.N. Secretary-General, Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, Princ. 4(2), U.N. Doc. E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2 (Issued on May 1, 1998).

<sup>40</sup> Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, G.A. Res. 69/283,19(g), U.N. Doc. A/RES/69/283 (Issued on June 23, 2015).

In the Indian context, there is no specific legislation addressing climate refugees or climate-induced displacement. Furthermore, the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act of 1979, which regulates interstate migration, contains no specific classification or protections for those displaced by climate change-related risks, and an inclusive national-level policy for the planned repositioning of these individuals remains absent.<sup>41</sup> Existing regulations, such as the 1946 Foreigners Act and the 1955 Citizenship Act, lack provisions to address modern migration issues, treating all migrants under a single, undifferentiated framework.<sup>42</sup> While the Asylum Bill (2015) and the Climate Migrants (Protection & Rehabilitation) Bill (2022) represent attempts at reform, they still lack the specific gendered considerations needed to address women's unique challenges in migration.<sup>43</sup> However, constitutional provisions provide a foundational basis for protection. Article 14 guarantees equality before the law, while Article 15 prohibits discrimination on grounds of sex.<sup>44</sup> Article 21, as expansively interpreted by the Supreme Court of India, encompasses the right to life with dignity, including the rights to livelihood, shelter, health, and a clean environment.<sup>45</sup> These constitutional guarantees are particularly significant for displaced women and children whose basic survival and dignity are threatened by climate-induced displacement. Further, Directive Principles of State Policy, such as Articles 39, 42, 47, and 48A, impose obligations on the State to ensure adequate livelihood, maternity relief, public health, and environmental protection.<sup>46</sup> While not enforceable, these principles guide state action and policy formulation concerning vulnerable populations affected by climate disasters.

India has also adopted several policy frameworks relevant to climate vulnerability, including the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) and State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCCs).<sup>47</sup> However, these policies largely adopt a technocratic and mitigation-focused approach, with limited attention to displacement and insufficient gender- and child-specific safeguards.<sup>48</sup> Welfare legislations such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, and the National Food Security Act, 2013, provide fragmented protection but fail to address the structural vulnerabilities arising from climate displacement. While a specific legislative framework for climate refugees is absent, the Indian judiciary has progressively filled this gap. In the landmark case of *Ranjitsinh*, the Supreme Court explicitly recognised a 'right to be free from the adverse effects of climate change' as a fundamental right under Articles 14 and 21.<sup>49</sup>

Thus, while international human rights instruments and Indian constitutional provisions offer indirect protection to climate-displaced women and children, the absence of explicit legal recognition of climate refugees results in significant protection gaps. A coherent, rights-based, gender- and child-sensitive legal framework is therefore essential to respond effectively to the growing crisis of climate-induced displacement in India.

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<sup>41</sup> Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979, No. 30, Acts of Parliament, 1979 (India).

<sup>42</sup> Foreigners Act, 1946, No. 31, Acts of Parliament, 1946 (India); Citizenship Act, 1955, No. 57, Acts of Parliament, 1955 (India).

<sup>43</sup> Climate Migrants (Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2022, Bill No. 142 of 2022 (India).

<sup>44</sup> India Const. arts. 14, 15.

<sup>45</sup> India Const. art. 21.

<sup>46</sup> India Const. arts. 39, 42, 47, 48A.

<sup>47</sup> Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change, National Action Plan on Climate Change (2008).

<sup>48</sup> National Centre for Disease Control, National Action Plan for Climate Change & Human Health (2024).

<sup>49</sup> *M.K. Ranjitsinh v. Union of India*, (2024) 6 S.C.C. 1 (India).

## Issues and Challenges Faced by Climate-Displaced Women and Children in India

Climate-induced displacement in India produces layered and disproportionate impacts on women and children, shaped by ecological vulnerability, socio-economic inequality, and weak protective frameworks. Displacement in India has been a growing crisis since the 1980s, driven by major floods in states like Assam, Odisha, and Bihar.<sup>50</sup> In the 21st century, displacement has accelerated in coastal regions such as West Bengal and Gujarat due to rising sea levels, and in Himalayan states due to glacial melt and frequent extreme weather events.<sup>51</sup> Recent empirical evidence demonstrates that climate change operates as a “threat multiplier,” intensifying existing gendered and age-based disadvantages across India’s diverse agro-ecological zones (AEZs).<sup>52</sup> Women and children experience compounded risks during displacement due to loss of housing, livelihood insecurity, breakdown of social support systems, and inadequate access to health, education, and protection services.<sup>53</sup>

One of the most severe challenges faced by climate-displaced women relates to food insecurity and livelihood loss. Studies indicate that by 2050, nearly 240 million women and girls are projected to be affected by food insecurity due to climate impacts, significantly exceeding the number of affected men.<sup>54</sup> This nutritional insecurity is worsened by cultural dynamics where women consume smaller portions or skip meals to ensure males in the family have enough to eat, a behaviour reported by 82% of women surveyed in disaster-affected regions.<sup>55</sup> Biologically, women’s needs are unique; in pre-menopausal periods, they have a 66% higher iron requirement compared to men. Despite this, 1 in 3 women in emergencies suffers from anaemia, a gap that remains largely unfilled.<sup>56</sup> In flood- and drought-prone regions such as Bihar, Odisha, Assam, and parts of Maharashtra, displacement disrupts women’s engagement in agriculture and informal labour, while increasing unpaid care responsibilities within households.<sup>57</sup> Women who remain behind during male out-migration face increased workloads, reduced health expenditure, loneliness, and heightened food insecurity, particularly in agrarian distress zones.<sup>58</sup> Health impacts constitute another critical dimension of vulnerability. Climate-induced displacement disrupts access to reproductive, maternal, and general healthcare services. Climate hazards often cascade; for example, coastal erosion does not just displace a family but simultaneously destroys their access to fundamental facilities like clean drinking water and sanitation. The scale of this crisis is reflected in the fact that 71% of transitional settings and nearly half of refugee camps fail to meet the UNHCR standard of 20L of water per person per day.<sup>59</sup> The failure to provide specialised nutrition and water to displaced women is a breach of the 'Right to Health' established in the Ram Lubhaya Bagga case (1998), where the Supreme Court held that the government has a constitutional obligation to provide health facilities.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, in the Occupational Health and Safety Association case (2014), the Court reiterated that the

<sup>50</sup> Atiqur Rahman, An Assessment of Climate Change-Natural Disaster Linkage in Indian Context, 5 J. GEOGRAPHY & NAT. DISASTERS 1, 4-6 (2015).

<sup>51</sup> Rishu Garg, Dipak Zade et. al., Climate-Induced Displacement and Migration in India, CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK SOUTH ASIA (April 3, 2026, 10:12 AM), <https://cansouthasia.net/climate-induced-displacement-and-migration-in-india>.

<sup>52</sup> A.K. & Mammen, *supra* note 12, at 60-63.

<sup>53</sup> Int’l Displacement Monitoring Ctr. [IDMC], Global Report on Internal Displacement 2024 (Issued on May 14, 2024).

<sup>54</sup> Schueman, *supra* note 15.

<sup>55</sup> PARIS21 & UN Women, Gender Data Outlook 2024: Unlocking Capacity, Driving Change (2024).

<sup>56</sup> World Health Organisation [WHO], Maternal Mortality (Issued on Apr. 7, 2025).

<sup>57</sup> A.K. & Mammen, *supra* note 12 at 62-64.

<sup>58</sup> Nitya Rao et al., Gendered Vulnerabilities to Climate Change: Insights from the Semi-Arid Regions of Africa and Asia, 9 CLIMATE & DEV. 459, 462-65 (2019).

<sup>59</sup> A.K. & Mammen, *supra* note 12 at 64-66.

<sup>60</sup> State of Punjab v. Ram Lubhaya Bagga, (1998) 4 S.C.C. 117 (India).

right to health is integral to the Right to Life.<sup>61</sup> This legal precedent suggests that neglecting the biological water requirements of pregnant climate refugees is a direct violation of their fundamental rights. For menstruating women and adolescent girls in displacement, the lack of sufficient water and privacy to wash or dry menstrual rags leads directly to urinary tract infections and perineal rashes.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, a woman's water requirement increases by 11% during pregnancy to support metabolic synthesis and lactation; failing to meet these requirements is associated with severe dehydration in hot and humid climates. By 2050, South Asia is projected to see up to 40 million internal climate migrants, with changes in water availability serving as a primary driver.<sup>63</sup>

According to World Health Organisation data, approximately 303,000 women die annually from preventable pregnancy-related causes, with climate stressors further aggravating these outcomes.<sup>64</sup> Indoor air pollution from biomass use prevalent in rural displacement settings has been linked to pregnancy complications, hypertension, and cognitive decline among women, particularly those from low-income households.<sup>65</sup> Floods and cyclones such as Cyclone Fani and Cyclone Amphan further expose women to anaemia, malnutrition, mental stress, and gender-based violence in overcrowded relief camps with inadequate sanitation and privacy.<sup>66</sup> This risk of violence is part of a broader "Shadow Pandemic" linked to climate stress. Women uprooted by climate-induced disasters frequently find themselves compelled to travel long distances in search of shelter. During these journeys, they become easy prey for traffickers and face desperate circumstances as predators look to capture the opportunity presented by their displacement. The UN Environment Programme has noted a 20 to 30% increase in trafficking after natural disasters, with INTERPOL also warning of increased exposure.<sup>67</sup> Reports from contexts like the Sayam Forage camp in Niger show that 60% of preventable maternal deaths occur in these settings, and at least 1 in 5 women experience sexual violence.<sup>68</sup> Findings from Frontiers in Sustainable Cities (2024) indicate that extreme heatwaves in India correlate with increased domestic aggression. As climate-induced poverty reduces working hours and income for daily wage earners, the resulting household tension often manifests as physical or emotional abuse against women when they are unable to meet increasing resource demands.<sup>69</sup>

Children face acute and often irreversible consequences due to climate-induced displacement. Nearly one billion children globally are classified as being at extremely high risk due to combined exposure to heat stress, pollution, disease, and extreme weather events.<sup>70</sup> In India, floods and cyclones significantly

<sup>61</sup> Occupational Health and Safety Association v. Union of India, (2014) 3 S.C.C. 547 (India).

<sup>62</sup> UNICEF, The Climate Crisis is a Child Rights Crisis: Introducing the Children's Climate Risk Index (Issued in August, 2021).

<sup>63</sup> World Bank, Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration (Issued on March 19, 2018).

<sup>64</sup> World Health Organisation, Trends in Maternal Mortality 2000 to 2017: Estimates by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group and the United Nations Population Division (Issued in September 2019).

<sup>65</sup> Kirk R. Smith et al., Millions Dead: How Do We Know and What Does It Mean? Methods Used in the Comparative Risk Assessment of Household Air Pollution, 35 ANN. REV. PUB. HEALTH 185, 187-191 (2014).

<sup>66</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability (Issued on Feb. 27, 2022).

<sup>67</sup> Taran Deol, How disasters, poverty fuel human trafficking, DOWN TO EARTH (April 3, 2026, 12:00 P.M.), <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/climate-change/how-disasters-poverty-fuel-human-trafficking-82965>.

<sup>68</sup> U.N. Population Fund [UNFPA], State of World Population 2022: Seeing the Unseen: the case for action in the neglected crisis of unintended pregnancy (2022).

<sup>69</sup> Sofia Castelo et al., The Impact of the Climate Crisis on Gender Inequality: Looking to the Frontlines in Search of Priorities for Policy, 6 Front. Sustain. Cities, 1, 5 (2024).

<sup>70</sup> U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), The Climate Crisis Is a Child Rights Crisis: Introducing the Children's Climate Risk Index (Issued on August, 2021).

increase risks of injury, displacement, and death among children, with drowning and post-disaster diarrhoeal diseases accounting for nearly 300,000 child deaths annually.<sup>71</sup> Displacement acts as a major barrier to education and economic opportunity. Water scarcity forces girls to spend long hours fetching water, resulting in chronic school absenteeism and eventual dropouts. Additionally, the loss of male breadwinners often forces women into hazardous migration pathways, such as the 20-25% uptick of migratory sex workers noted in Kolkata following Cyclone Aila in the Sundarbans.<sup>72</sup> This loss of traditional livelihood is not merely a social tragedy but a constitutional violation. Under the precedent set in the *Olga Tellis* case (1985), the Supreme Court established that the Right to Life (Article 21) includes the Right to Livelihood.<sup>73</sup> When environmental degradation, such as salinisation or flooding, destroys a community's means of survival, the state's failure to provide adequate rehabilitation is a direct infringement on this established constitutional right. Displacement also disrupts schooling, leading to learning losses, increased dropout rates, and child labour, particularly among migrant children in construction, brick kilns, and agricultural sectors.<sup>74</sup> The challenge is further intensified for those migrating to urban centres. Rapid, unregulated growth in cities like Delhi and Mumbai creates "Urban Heat Islands" in informal settlements. Displaced women and Children often live in poorly ventilated housing made of heat-retaining materials, facing significantly higher risks of heatstroke and maternal health complications compared to those in more established urban areas.<sup>75</sup> When families are forced to flee, they often end up in informal urban settlements where they face the threat of eviction. The Delhi High Court in the *Sudama Singh* case ruled that the state has an affirmative duty to rehabilitate displaced persons, not just relocate them.<sup>76</sup> The court emphasised that the 'Right to Shelter' is not merely a roof over one's head but includes the right to live with dignity and access to basic amenities. For a climate-displaced woman and Children, this means the state is legally obligated to ensure her new home provides the safety and sanitation necessary to prevent the Shadow Pandemic of violence.<sup>77</sup>

Girls experience distinct and heightened vulnerabilities during climate displacement. Water scarcity forces girls to spend long hours fetching water, resulting in school absenteeism and dropouts.<sup>78</sup> Disasters also exacerbate harmful coping mechanisms such as child marriage, with studies linking irregular rainfall and post-disaster economic stress to increased early marriages in regions like Assam, Odisha, and the Sundarbans.<sup>79</sup> In temporary shelters, lack of safe WASH facilities disproportionately affects adolescent girls, creating menstrual hygiene challenges and increasing risks of exploitation and abuse. Specifically, menstruating women and adolescents in these displacement settings often lack the necessary privacy and water volume to wash or dry menstrual rags properly. This hygienic deficit leads directly to increased rates

<sup>71</sup> World Health Organisation, World Health Statistics 2023: Monitoring Health for the SDGs (Issued on 2023).

<sup>72</sup> IOM UN Migration, Environmental Migration Portal, Climate Change Knows No Border: An analysis of climate-induced migration, protection gaps and need for solidarity in South Asia (Issued on Dec. 8, 2016).

<sup>73</sup> *Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation*, (1985) 3 SCC 545.

<sup>74</sup> International Labour Organisation, World Report on Child Labour: Paving the Way to Decent Work for Young People (Issued on June 10, 2015).

<sup>75</sup> Castelo, *supra* note 68, at 4-6.

<sup>76</sup> *Sudama Singh v. Gov't of Delhi*, (2010) 168 DLT 218 (Del.).

<sup>77</sup> U.N. Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing as a Component of the Right to an Adequate Standard of Living, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/43/43 (Issued on Dec. 26, 2019).

<sup>78</sup> U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], The Global Education Monitoring Report: Gender Report (Issued on June 23, 2020).

<sup>79</sup> Archana Sarkar et al., Climate Change and Child Marriage: A Study in the Indian Context, 14 J. CLIMATE CHANGE & HEALTH 102, 105-108 (2023).

of urinary tract infections and perineal rashes.<sup>80</sup> The provision of clean water and sanitation in displacement settings is reinforced by the Virender Gaur case (1994), where the Court ruled that the right to life includes the right to a hygienic environment.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, the Public Trust Doctrine, established in the M.C. Mehta case (1997), mandates that the State acts as a trustee for natural resources like water.<sup>82</sup> This implies a mandatory obligation for the State to ensure that displaced women and Children who bear the primary burden of water fetching have guaranteed access to standard water supplies.

The differential impacts of climate change are particularly evident across India's agro-ecological zones. Hotspot regions, such as the Deccan Plateau (AEZ-6 and AEZ-7), the Eastern Ghats (AEZ-8), the Eastern Plains (AEZ-13), and the Western Plain of Kachchh (AEZ-22), experience overlapping vulnerabilities where extreme weather events coincide with poor socio-economic and health indicators. These regions report higher prevalence of underweight women, domestic violence, child marriage, and limited access to healthcare and education, amplifying the effects of climate displacement.<sup>83</sup>

Despite the scale and severity of these impacts, existing disaster response and rehabilitation mechanisms in India remain largely gender-neutral and short-term in orientation. Climate-displaced women and children frequently fall outside long-term rehabilitation, social security, and legal protection frameworks. The absence of legal recognition for climate-induced displacement further excludes them from entitlement-based welfare schemes, education continuity, healthcare access, and legal remedies. These realities highlight the urgent need for gender and child-sensitive legal and policy interventions to address climate-induced displacement in India.

### **Legal and Policy Gaps and the Need for Gender- and Child-Sensitive Reforms**

The lack of a gendered lens in policy is a critical gap. It is essential to recognise that climate impacts are intersectional; factors like wealth, education, and social status intersect with gender to determine whether an individual has the actual ability to migrate or is 'trapped' in a high-risk environment." Despite the increasing scale of climate-induced displacement in India, existing legal and policy frameworks remain inadequate in addressing the specific protection needs of displaced women and children. Neither international refugee law nor domestic legal mechanisms explicitly recognises climate refugees, resulting in significant protection gaps for those displaced due to environmental degradation and climate-related disasters. This legal invisibility disproportionately affects women and children, who face heightened risks of exploitation, deprivation, and violations during displacement and resettlement.

At the international level, the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol limit refugee status to individuals fleeing persecution on specific grounds, excluding climate-induced displacement from their scope.<sup>84</sup> While international human rights instruments such as CEDAW and CRC provide broad protections relating to health, education, dignity, and non-discrimination, they do not explicitly address displacement caused by climate change.<sup>85</sup> As a result, the application of these

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<sup>80</sup> WaterAid India & UNFPA, Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management during Emergencies: A Framework for Action in India (Nov. 2021).

<sup>81</sup> Virender Gaur v. State of Haryana, (1995) 2 SCC 577.

<sup>82</sup> M.C. Mehta v. Kamal Nath, (1997) 1 SCC 388.

<sup>83</sup> CRIDA, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Atlas on Vulnerability of Indian Agriculture to Climate Change (2013).

<sup>84</sup> Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees art. 1(A)(2), July 28, 1951, 189 U.N.T.S. 137; Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, Jan. 31, 1967, 606 U.N.T.S. 267.

<sup>85</sup> Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Dec. 18, 1979, 1249 U.N.T.S. 13; Convention on the Rights of the Child, Nov. 20, 1989, 1577 U.N.T.S. 3.

instruments to climate-displaced women and children remains indirect and fragmented, often dependent on state discretion rather than enforceable obligations.

In the Indian context, the absence of a dedicated legal framework for climate-induced displacement further aggravates these challenges. India is not a signatory to the Refugee Convention and relies on ad hoc executive and judicial responses to displacement.<sup>86</sup> While constitutional provisions, particularly Article 21, which guarantees the right to life with dignity, have been expansively interpreted by Indian courts to include the rights to shelter, health, and livelihood, these protections have rarely been extended explicitly to climate-displaced populations.<sup>87</sup> Disaster management laws, including the Disaster Management Act, 2005, primarily focus on emergency response and relief, lacking provisions for long-term rehabilitation, gender justice, or child protection.<sup>88</sup>

Policy initiatives such as the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) and State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCCs) acknowledge vulnerability and adaptation but largely adopt a gender-neutral approach.<sup>89</sup> They fail to incorporate child-specific safeguards, continuity of education, reproductive health services, protection against gender-based violence, or long-term livelihood restoration for displaced women.<sup>90</sup> Relief and compensation schemes also tend to prioritise property loss over human development indicators, excluding landless women, informal workers, and migrant children from meaningful assistance. The lack of legal recognition for climate displacement also creates barriers to accessing welfare entitlements. Climate-displaced women and children often face documentation challenges, exclusion from public distribution systems, healthcare, education, and social security schemes.<sup>91</sup> Migrant and displaced children, in particular, remain outside child protection mechanisms under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, despite facing heightened risks of labour, trafficking, and exploitation during displacement.<sup>92</sup>

Given these gaps, there is an urgent need for comprehensive legal and policy reforms. India must move towards recognising climate-induced displacement within its legal framework, either through dedicated legislation or by expanding the scope of existing disaster and social protection laws. A gender- and child-sensitive approach should be mainstreamed across climate adaptation, disaster management, and rehabilitation policies. This includes ensuring access to reproductive and maternal healthcare, safe wash facilities, protection from gender-based violence, continuity of education, and livelihood security for displaced women and children. At the international level, the study supports calls for the evolution of refugee and human rights law to incorporate climate displacement, with explicit recognition of women's and children's vulnerabilities. Until such reforms are realised, states must rely on a human-rights-based interpretation of existing instruments to ensure dignity, protection, and long-term rehabilitation for climate-displaced women and children. Addressing climate displacement through inclusive and rights-based legal frameworks is crucial for achieving climate justice and protecting the most vulnerable populations in India.

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<sup>86</sup> Roshni Shanker & Prabhat Raghavan, *The Invisible Crisis: Refugees and COVID-19 in India*, 32 INT'L J. REFUGEE L. 680, 680-84 (2020).

<sup>87</sup> *Coralie Mullin v. Union Territory of Delhi*, (1981) 2 S.C.R. 516.

<sup>88</sup> The Disaster Management Act, No. 53 of 2005.

<sup>89</sup> Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change, *National Action Plan on Climate Change* (2008).

<sup>90</sup> United Nations Development Programme, *Climate Change, Migration and Displacement* (2017).

<sup>91</sup> *Ashwani Kumar v. Union of India*, (2019) 2 SCC 636.

<sup>92</sup> Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, No. 2 of 2016, India Code (2015).

## Conclusion

Climate change-induced displacement has evolved into a complex humanitarian and legal crisis that exposes the structural limitations of existing international and domestic protection regimes. This study demonstrates that climate-induced displacement is not gender-neutral nor age-neutral; rather, it is deeply embedded within pre-existing social hierarchies that systematically disadvantage women and children. Climate hazards such as floods, cyclones, droughts, sea-level rise, and extreme heat operate as threat multipliers, intensifying gendered poverty, care burdens, health risks, and social exclusion.

Women's vulnerability to climate displacement arises not merely from biological or social roles but from historically entrenched inequalities in access to land, credit, education, political participation, and legal remedies. Displacement disrupts informal economies, care networks, and community support systems, forcing women into precarious labour, unsafe migration pathways, and increased exposure to sexual and gender-based violence. Children, on the other hand, experience displacement as a profound violation of their developmental rights. Loss of stable housing, disruption of education, malnutrition, psychosocial trauma, child labour, trafficking, and early marriage represent long-term harms that often remain invisible within disaster-response frameworks.

The Indian experience reflects these global patterns with particular intensity. Climate-vulnerable regions such as coastal Odisha and West Bengal, the Sundarbans delta, flood-prone Assam and Bihar, drought-affected Bundelkhand, and heat-stressed urban settlements reveal how climate displacement intersects with caste, tribal identity, informality, and gender. Despite constitutional guarantees of equality, dignity, and social justice, displaced women and children frequently fall outside formal rehabilitation mechanisms due to a lack of documentation, land titles, or legal recognition as displaced persons.

At the international level, the absence of legal recognition of climate refugees under the 1951 Refugee Convention represents a foundational gap. While international human rights instruments such as CEDAW and the CRC provide normative safeguards, their failure to explicitly address climate-induced displacement results in weak enforceability and fragmented implementation. Domestic frameworks, including India's Disaster Management Act, remain reactive, short-term, and relief-oriented, rather than rights-based and rehabilitation-focused.

This study concludes that climate-induced displacement must be reconceptualised as a matter of climate justice, distributive equity, and intergenerational human rights. Addressing the vulnerability of women and children requires moving beyond technocratic climate solutions toward transformative legal and institutional reforms that recognise structural inequality, redistribute power and resources, and prioritise human dignity.

## Suggestions

### 1. Reconceptualising Climate Displacement through a Rights-Based Prism

Climate-induced displacement must be formally recognised as a violation of fundamental human rights, specifically the rights to life, dignity, housing, and livelihood. The landmark ruling in the *M.K. Ranjitsinh* case has already laid the groundwork by recognising a fundamental right to be free from the adverse effects of climate change under Articles 14 and 21.<sup>93</sup> This legal shift mandates that displacement policies move away from charity-based emergency relief toward enforceable rights-based frameworks. For the 80% of climate refugees who are women, this means the state has a positive constitutional duty to mitigate the

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<sup>93</sup> *M.K. Ranjitsinh v. Union of India*, (2024) 6 SCC 276.

double burden of gender inequality and environmental disaster through dedicated legal status and protection.<sup>94</sup>

## 2. Financial Inclusion and Resource Allocation

A critical barrier to resilience is the current maldistribution of climate finance. While women are on the frontlines of the crisis, they receive a disproportionately small fraction of international climate funding, often estimated at less than 2%.<sup>95</sup> To achieve genuine gender justice, it is suggested that at least 50% of all climate funds, including those from 'Loss and Damage' provisions, be mandated for direct access by women and women-led grassroots organisations. This would shift the focus from top-down, technocratic projects to community-led adaptation that prioritises the most vulnerable and ensures that financing reaches the household level where the climate burden is most acute.<sup>96</sup>

## 3. Ensuring Educational Continuity and Climate-Resilient Learning

Climate disasters frequently lead to learning poverty, as displaced children often drop out permanently due to a lack of documentation or available facilities. To counter this, policy must mandate Portable Education Records, a digital tracking system that allows children to re-enrol in schools immediately upon relocation without bureaucratic delays.<sup>97</sup> Furthermore, schools and Anganwadi centres in high-risk districts should be redesigned as Climate-Safe Havens. This involves retrofitting buildings with heat-resilient materials and flood-protection infrastructure, ensuring that these spaces remain functional during extreme weather to provide both education and physical safety.<sup>98</sup> In line with the Best Interests of the Child principle, the judiciary should interpret Article 21 to include a Shock-Responsive Education Net, guaranteeing that a child's schooling is a non-negotiable state priority during any form of climate-induced relocation.

## 4. Specialised Nutritional and Health Interventions for Developing Bodies

Because children have unique biological requirements, they are the first to suffer from the metabolic stress and water-borne diseases common in displacement camps. It is suggested that the government establish Mobile Pediatric Clinics and specialised nutrition centres within climate hotspots to provide immediate care.<sup>99</sup> These centres must be equipped to handle severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and provide fortified micronutrients to combat the high rates of anaemia found in flood-affected populations. Furthermore, as a legal protection, the state should be held responsible for providing a "Healthy Start Guarantee." This means that regardless of their migration status, every displaced child must have guaranteed access to mandatory vaccinations and clean drinking water.<sup>100</sup>

## 5. Gender-Responsive Urban Planning and Infrastructure

As climate migration pushes more women into precarious informal urban settlements, gender-neutral urban planning is no longer viable. Adaptation strategies must integrate a specific gender perspective into infrastructure development to mitigate the risks associated with Urban Heat Islands and flooding. For

<sup>94</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, General Recommendation No. 37 on Gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change, U.N. Doc. CEDAW/C/GC/37 (Issued on Mar. 13, 2018).

<sup>95</sup> Schueman, *supra* note 15.

<sup>96</sup> UNFCCC, Decision 1/CP.27, Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan, U.N. Doc. FCCC/CP/2022/10/Add.1 (Issued on Nov. 20, 2022).

<sup>97</sup> UNESCO, Global Education Monitoring Report 2019: Migration, Displacement and Education – Building Bridges, Not Walls (2019).

<sup>98</sup> UNICEF, The Climate Crisis Is a Child Rights Crisis: Introducing the Children's Climate Risk Index (2021).

<sup>99</sup> World Health Organisation, Climate Change and Child Health: A Review of Pathways, impacts and measures to improve the evidence base (Issued on Jan. 27, 2010).

<sup>100</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child, art. 24, Nov. 20, 1989, 1577 U.N.T.S. 3.

instance, designing safe, private, and women-friendly WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) facilities in urban slums is essential. This is not merely a matter of comfort but a public health necessity, as nearly 70% of women and Children in such settings face increased risks of urinary tract infections due to a lack of safe sanitation and privacy.<sup>101</sup>

## 6. Strengthening Governance through Female Leadership

Effective climate policy requires a significant increase in female representation within national and global negotiation bodies, where women currently occupy only about 33% of leadership roles.<sup>102</sup> Research indicates that female leadership correlates with higher environmental standards, increased collaboration with scientific communities, and a greater likelihood of protecting vulnerable populations.<sup>103</sup> Therefore, a mandatory quota for women in climate governance at the local, national, and international levels is suggested. This ensures that the unique frontline experiences of women are translated into high-level policy priorities and that climate mitigation strategies are inclusive by design.

## 7. Social Protection and Safety Frameworks

Climate adaptation plans must be integrated with explicit protections against the 'Shadow Pandemic' of gender-based violence (GBV). Disasters and extreme heat are directly linked to spikes in domestic and sexual violence due to increased household stress and the breakdown of social structures.<sup>104</sup> Consequently, disaster management strategies should include GBV-responsive early warning systems and the establishment of safe, secure shelters that provide adequate privacy and physical security for women and girls. This mitigates the heightened risks of trafficking and exploitation that typically follow large-scale environmental displacement.<sup>105</sup>

## 8. Economic Autonomy through Livelihood Diversification

To address the loss of traditional livelihoods such as agriculture and fishing destroyed by soil salinisation and rising sea levels, policies must provide displaced women with specialised skill development and vocational training. This economic autonomy is crucial for climate-displaced women to transition into stable urban sectors. Training programs should focus on sustainable and resilient industries, ensuring that women are not just surviving displacement but are equipped with the tools for long-term economic independence.<sup>106</sup> Identifying and leveraging women's particular skills in resource management can transform them from victims of climate change into active leaders of environmental mitigation.

## 9. A Four-Step Methodological Policy Framework

To ensure these suggestions are effectively integrated, policymakers should adopt a structured four-step approach toward gender-responsive climate action:<sup>107</sup>

- a. **Recognition, Assessment, and Attribution:** Systematically identifying gender-specific impacts and resource use patterns through disaggregated data.

<sup>101</sup> UN-Habitat, Gender Issue Guide: Urban Planning and Design 14-18 (2012).

<sup>102</sup> UNFCCC, Gender Composition: Report by the Secretariat, U.N. Doc. FCCC/CP/2023/4 (Oct. 6, 2023).

<sup>103</sup> Bina Agarwal, Gender and Forest Conservation: The Impact of Women's Participation in Community Forest Governance, 68 *ECO. ECONOMICS* 2785, 2785-99 (2009).

<sup>104</sup> Matthew F. Chersich et al., Climate Change and Gender-Based Violence: A Systematic Review, 8 *FRONTIERS IN SUSTAINABLE CITIES* 1, 4-7 (2024).

<sup>105</sup> UN Environment Programme [UNEP], Gender, Climate & Security: Sustaining Inclusive Peace on the Frontlines of Climate Change (Issued on Feb. 19, 2020).

<sup>106</sup> UNDP, Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025: 2024 Annual Report (2025).

<sup>107</sup> UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Establishment of a Gender Action Plan, 3-5, U.N. Doc. FCCC/CP/2017/11/Add.1 (2017).

- b. Cooperation and Collaboration:** Ensuring inter-agency coordination between environmental, gender, and home ministries to address cross-cutting issues like trafficking and health.
- c. Plan of Action:** Developing clear, time-bound objectives that prioritise women's biological and social needs.
- d. Implementation and Monitoring:** Establishing independent bodies to oversee the execution of these policies and ensure accountability to the displaced populations.