

Integrating SRHR into Climate Resilience: A Policy Pathway for Bangladesh



Climate change is the defining health challenge of the 21st century, intensifying extreme weather events that threaten human well-being and disrupt essential services. In Bangladesh ranked seventh on the Global Climate Risk Index (2000–2019)—climate hazards such as cyclones, salinity intrusion, flooding, heatwaves, droughts and displacement are undermining access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services.

While Bangladesh has built a robust climate policy architecture, the integration of SRHR into climate action remains minimal. Research conducted by Ipas Bangladesh between 2020 and 2025 reveals that women and girls in climate-vulnerable areas face unsafe childbirth conditions, unmet contraceptive needs, unsafe abortion, heightened gender-based violence, and restricted reproductive autonomy during and after climate shocks.

This policy brief highlights emerging evidence from studies, showcases climate-resilient SRHR intervention packages, and proposes actionable recommendations for embedding SRHR into Bangladesh's adaptation and resilience strategies.

Assessing Women's SRHR through a Climate Justice Lens

Evidence from Ipas Bangladesh Research

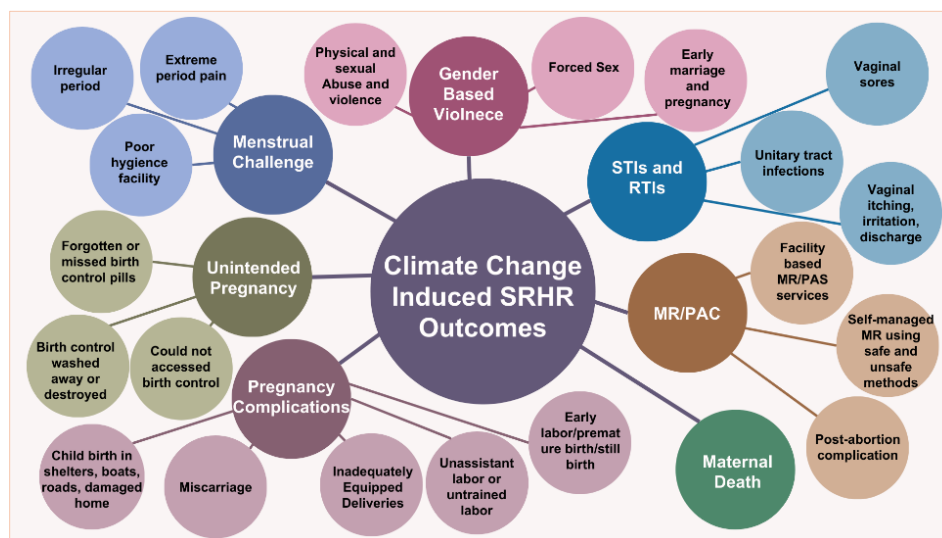
- **Study 1 (2020–2021, Coastal Areas):** Cyclones, salinity intrusion, and displacement disrupted SRHR services—women faced unsafe childbirth conditions, lack of contraception, and poor menstrual health facilities.
- **Study 2 (2024–2025, Chars, Haors, and Urban Slums):** Confirmed heightened SRHR risks across diverse settings, showing geographic and socio-economic inequalities in access. *Naripokkho* was partner with Ipas in this study.



Key Findings

Worsening Inequalities: Climate change exacerbate gender inequities, further reduce women's agency, and intensify already existing restrictions on their mobility.

Changing Reproductive Choices: Climate change disrupt contraceptive use, alter fertility intentions, and negatively affect pregnancy outcomes—contributing to unsafe abortions, maternal and perinatal deaths, stillbirths, and premature deliveries. While some women delay pregnancy due to disaster risks, others increase fertility as a perceived safety net against child loss and family insecurity.



Disrupted SRHR Services: Women and girls are disproportionately affected, with climate change and disasters disrupting maternal and perinatal care, family planning services, menstrual regulation (MR) and post-abortion care, STI and RTI treatment, GBV management, and

other essential SRHR services.

Heightened SGBV Risks: Shelters lack safety, lighting, and privacy; crises are linked to spikes in intimate partner violence, child marriage, and exploitation.

Family Instability and Economic Precarity: Climate-induced migration forces many women into unsafe and exploitative forms of work, while significantly limiting their livelihood opportunities. Unmarried, widowed, or divorced women are particularly vulnerable, facing heightened risks of poverty and violence.

Climate-Resilient SRHR Intervention Packages

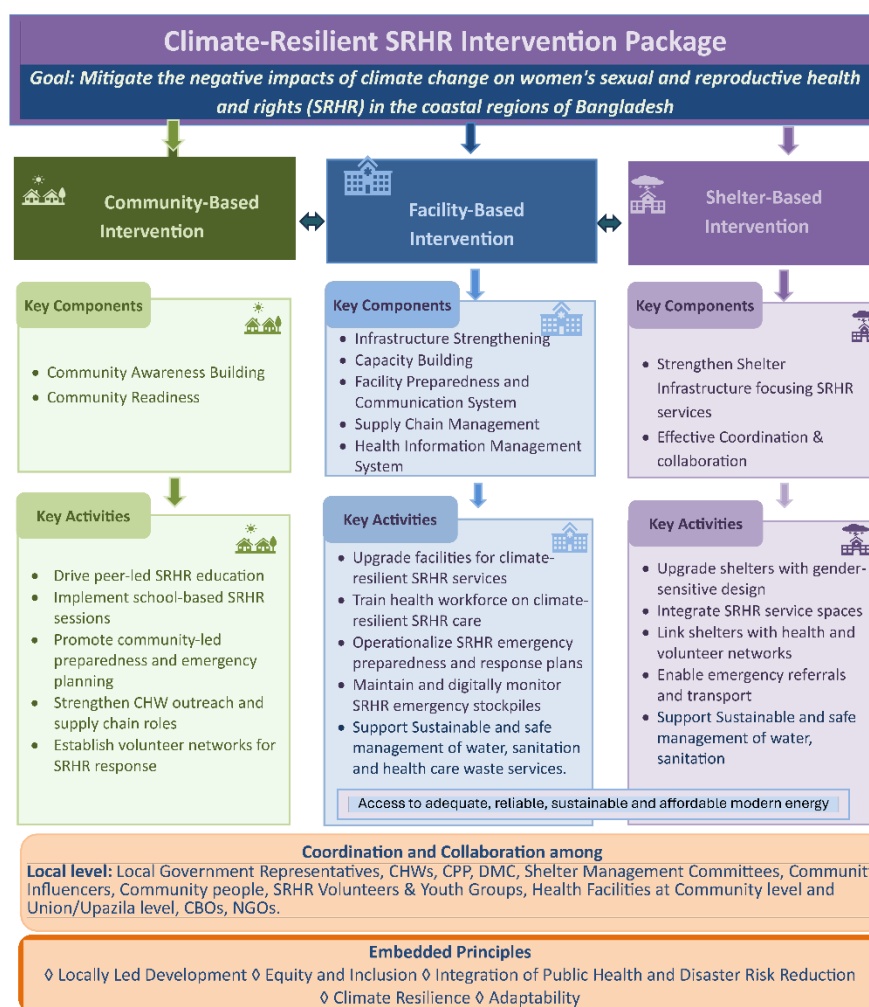
Using a **User-Centered Design (UCD) approach**, Climate Change and Health Promotion Unit (CCHPU) Ipas Bangladesh co-created SRHR packages tailored for climate-vulnerable populations:

Community-Based Intervention Package

The Community-Based Intervention Package aims to strengthen the resilience of communities facing climate-induced health challenges, particularly around sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). It focuses on building community readiness, promoting local, community-led solutions, and empowering individuals through awareness, behavior change communication, capacity-building, and grassroots mobilization.

Facility-Based Intervention Package

This package focuses on strengthening health facility systems and capacities to ensure climate resilient uninterrupted, inclusive, and rights-based SRHR service delivery in the face of climate-induced disruptions. It addresses infrastructure, workforce, data systems, and emergency preparedness to enhance the resilience of health facilities.



Shelter-Based SRHR Intervention Package

This package aims to ensure that emergency shelters are equipped to deliver safe, inclusive, and rights-based climate resilient SRHR services during climate-related disasters. It focuses on upgrading shelter infrastructure and enhancing inter-agency coordination for timely and effective SRHR response.

Policy Recommendations

1. **Mainstream SRHR into Climate Policy Frameworks**
 - o Incorporate SRHR indicators into NAPs, DRR strategies, and humanitarian frameworks.
 - o Ensure budget lines for SRHR within climate and disaster funds.
2. **Strengthen Intersectoral Coordination**
 - o Link SRHR, gender, WASH, education, social protection, and climate governance actors.
 - o Elevate women-led organizations and youth voices in decision-making.
3. **Integrate SRHR into Climate Vulnerability Assessments**
 - o Embed SRHR in risk assessments, early warning systems, and adaptation monitoring.
4. **Operationalize SRHR interventions in Climate-Resilient Health Systems**
 - o Strengthens community readiness through awareness, behavior change communication, capacity-building, and grassroots mobilization, empowering women and marginalized groups to claim SRHR during crises.
 - o Ensures uninterrupted SRHR services during climate shocks by strengthening infrastructure, workforce preparedness, supply chains, data systems, and emergency response.
 - o Equips emergency shelters to provide safe, inclusive SRHR services through improved privacy, upgraded infrastructure, and inter-agency coordination.
5. **Ensure Inclusive Participation**
 - o Guarantee meaningful engagement of women, girls, and marginalized groups in policy design and monitoring.
6. **Mobilize Climate Financing for SRHR**
 - o Leverage the **Green Climate Fund**, **Global Financing Facility**, and other mechanisms to scale SRHR integration into climate resilience programs.

Conclusion



Bangladesh stands at the frontline of climate vulnerability, but also at the forefront of innovation. To build true resilience, climate policies must embed SRHR as a central pillar. Scaling and institutionalizing climate-resilient SRHR packages will safeguard the rights, health, and dignity of women and girls, ensuring no one is left behind in the country's adaptation journey.