



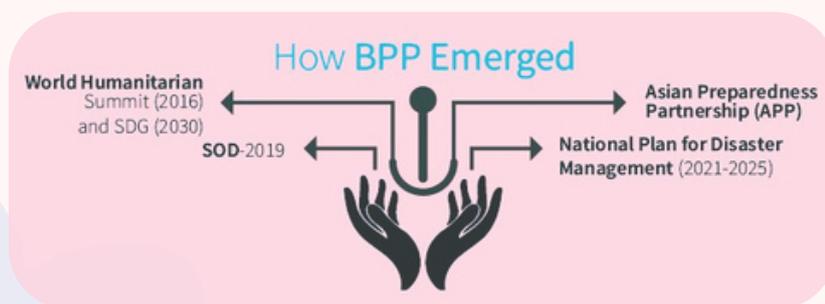
## Advancement of Gender Equality and Disaster Preparedness

Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in disaster preparedness, with improved early warning systems and response saving many lives. However, women—over 50% of the population—remain underrepresented, increasing their vulnerability. This often leads to higher mortality and longer recovery, yet these issues are often overlooked in disaster planning and response.

In celebration of International Women's Day 2025 (March 8th) themed "**For ALL women and girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment.**" and Bangladesh's National Disaster Preparedness Day 2025 (March 10th) themed "**Disaster forecast and preparedness save lives and reduce losses.**" This inaugural Newsletter highlights the critical intersection of gender equality and disaster preparedness within the Bangladesh Preparedness Partnership (BPP).

### BPP: A Catalyst for Change

Launched in 2021, BPP is led by the **Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR)**, with support from the **Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC)** and the **Gates Foundation**. It aligns with global and national frameworks, including the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015–2030,



World Humanitarian Summit (2016), SDGs 2015–2030, Standing Orders on Disaster (SOD) 2019, National Plan for Disaster Management (2021–2025), and the Asian Preparedness Partnership (APP).

All emphasize gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) under the principle of "Leave No One Behind." This commitment is reinforced by the ADPC Gender Policy, Bangladesh's National Women Development Policy 2011, Gender Action Plan 2021–2025, the Dhaka Declaration 2015+1–2017, and other policies that stress the need to mainstream GEDSI.

## Empowering Women and Marginalized Communities: Integrating Gender in BPP's Disaster Preparedness Efforts

BPP brings together government, private sectors, academia, NGOs, and CSOs in a multistakeholder partnership, using a whole-of-society approach to disaster preparedness. This ensures gender mainstreaming and social inclusion are central to all preparedness efforts. By engaging all sectors, BPP makes preparedness comprehensive, equitable, and responsive to all, especially marginalized groups. It aims ***to empower women and vulnerable communities to participate actively in disaster risk reduction and response.***

BPP's efforts focus on three pillars: ***strengthening partnerships, building capacity, and applying knowledge and research to integrate gender into disaster preparedness.*** Below are examples from our recent work reflecting the themes of International Women's Day (IWD) and National Disaster Preparedness Day (NDPD).

### Strengthening Partnerships

BPP's partnerships play a key role in shaping disaster policy and improving local access to resources. On January 15, 2025, BPP facilitated a policy discussion to activate the underutilized Disaster Management Fund (Rules 2021). The initiative recommends strengthening local capacity and revising fund management structures to better support disaster preparedness.

[Read more](#)



*Ms. Shaty Das, Assistant Commissioner/Magistrate (right), and Mari Abdullah Tarin, Deputy Manager of the Disaster Risk Management Programme (DRMP) at BRAC (left), actively engage in a BPP workshop, highlighting the power of women in driving positive change and resilience in disaster Preparedness*

On February 26, 2025, BPP held a brainstorming session to develop a technical report guiding the revision of the National Plan for Disaster Management (NPDM 2021–2025), ensuring BPP’s preparedness measures are included. In consultation with partners, the BPP Mobilization Desk is drafting technical guidelines to support MoDMR in addressing gaps and strengthening the disaster management framework. The revised NPDM is expected to reflect BPP’s interventions and align with National Disaster Preparedness Day (NDPD) 2025.

BPP champions multisector coordination in disaster preparedness in Bangladesh. It has mobilized government, academia, the private sector, NGOs, and civil society into a network. **Regular coordination meetings foster collaboration and strategic planning, strengthening preparedness and supporting policy development.** [Read more](#)

## Capacity Building

### Empowering Women in Disaster Management

Farzana Akter, a young woman from the District Youth Forum in Bagerhat, had never heard of the Standing Orders on Disaster (SOD) until she attended a BPP training on gender and SOD operationalization in February 2025. Inspired by the experience, she said, **“We now know our voices matter. We are the ones who will lead our communities in disaster preparedness.”** The training, focused on SOD operationalization for women DMC members and DRR practitioners, covered disaster risk reduction, gender-responsive early warning, shelter management, evacuation, and emergency response. It significantly boosted participants’ knowledge, highlighting the impact of BPP’s empowerment efforts. [Read more](#)



*Participants engaged in a gender training session in Kurigram, promoting awareness and empowerment for gender equality in the community*

## Building an Inclusive Disaster Management System in Bangladesh

BPP recently held a series of "Disability Inclusive Search, Rescue, and Evacuation (DISRE)" trainings to ensure persons with disabilities are included in disaster risk reduction. The program covered their unique vulnerabilities, barriers to inclusion, and strategies for participation in search, rescue, and evacuation. Aligned with the principle of "Leave No One Behind," the training emphasized women's participation, empowering them to take active roles in disaster preparedness. [Read more](#)



*Participants practicing sign language and essential techniques for communicating with individuals with hearing and speech disabilities during the training*

## Knowledge and Research Application

BPP's commitment to gender equality and preparedness is reflected in its ongoing research, including a baseline assessment with academic partners like the Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies (IDMVS) at Dhaka University. This research helps shape future disaster management frameworks that are inclusive and gender-responsive.

The BPP's Locally-Led Action Research for Disaster Preparedness and Resilience in Bangladesh focuses on developing community-driven solutions to enhance preparedness and resilience in vulnerable regions. By combining local knowledge with modern technology, the research aims to create scalable solutions for addressing floods, cyclones, and other hazards. A proposal pitching event was held in Dhaka on February 8, 2025, where proposals were presented to the technical committee for selection and finalization. [Read more](#)



*Meeting with a community women's group as part of a baseline survey to understand their challenges in disaster preparedness and gather insights (left), and researchers presenting proposals to the Technical Committee for feedback and review (right).*

## Looking Ahead: BPP's Vision for a Resilient Future

As Bangladesh confronts climate change and rising disaster risks, BPP continues to advocate gender-responsive disaster preparedness policies and strategies to build a resilient, equitable future. By empowering women and marginalized groups, BPP ensures that all communities can better withstand and recover from disasters—leaving no one behind. As we mark IWD 2025 and NDPD 2025, BPP's efforts highlight that true resilience is rooted in equality, inclusion, and empowerment for all.



*We are proud to honor and respect the champions of gender equality who guide our work, including Professor Mahbuba Nasreen, co-founder of IDMVS, and Ms. Sanzida Yasmin, Deputy Secretary of MoDMR and the Gender Focal Point of the BPP Mobilizing Desk*

***"Our country's women are making their mark by displaying tremendous courage in their respective fields. They are contributing to the advancement of politics, economics and national development despite facing numerous obstacles."***

*said Professor Muhammad Yunus,  
Chief Advisor to the Government of Bangladesh,  
while speaking at an International Women's Day event on March 8, 2025  
Source: <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/86fa3a4de0fb>*

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