

Barriers and Enablers of Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Management in Northern Bangladesh

Background

- ❖ Persons with disabilities are **among the most vulnerable groups** during disasters due to existing social and structural inequalities.
- ❖ Inaccessible infrastructure, communication barriers, and social stigma increase disaster risk and limit resilience.
- ❖ The Sendai Framework calls for the **meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities** in disaster risk reduction.
- ❖ Evidence on the barriers and enablers of disability-inclusive disaster risk management in Bangladesh remains limited.
- ❖ This study **identifies key barriers and enablers** to inform more inclusive and equitable disaster risk management policies and practices.

Methods

- ❖ **Study area:** Northern Bangladesh
- ❖ **Design:** Qualitative Approach
- ❖ **Data collection:** 6 Focus Group Discussions, 10 In-depth Interviews, 12 Key Informant Interviews
- ❖ **Analysis:** Thematic analysis

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Main Argument

- ❖ Disability-inclusive disaster risk management requires more than accessible infrastructure and services—it depends on **transforming social attitudes, strengthening institutions, improving communication systems, and fostering meaningful participation** of persons with disabilities.
- ❖ Disability-inclusive disaster risk management is shaped by multiple interacting barriers, but **community-based and institutional interventions can transform these barriers into enablers.**

Key Findings

Barrier Category	Major Barriers	Relative Prevalence (High, Medium, Low)
Attitudinal	Disability viewed as a burden; stigma; exclusion from routine activities	★★★
Physical	Inaccessible shelters, toilets, transport, housing and WASH facilities	★★★
Communication	No formal sign-language early warning; inaccessible communication channels	★★☆
Social	Poverty, gender inequality, weak livelihood opportunities, limited caregiver training	★★★
Policy & Institutional	Limited government support, lack of policy instruments to support persons with disability	★★☆



Photo: NGO-supported construction of disability-inclusive housing using indigenous resources and local knowledge to enhance accessibility, safety, and disaster resilience for households with persons with disabilities.

Barrier-Enabler Matrix

Barrier	Existing Enabler
Social stigma	Disability rights awareness campaigns
Inaccessible infrastructure	Accessibility advocacy by NGO and local government initiative
Weak preparedness	Inclusive planning (CRA) and simulation drills
Limited evacuation support	Volunteer teams and distribution of assistive devices
Livelihood insecurity	Disaster-resilient livelihood programs
Weak coordination	NGO-government coordination platform
Limited participation	Multi-stakeholder dialogue and community engagement
Caregiver knowledge gaps	Caregiver training and counseling

- ### Applications
- ❖ **Facilitate NGO-government partnerships**
 - ❖ **Enhance locally led inclusive resilience**
 - ❖ **Identify existing resources to transform barriers into enablers**

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