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HOW INCLUSIVE ARE PAKISTAN'S DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE FRAMEWORKS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND WHAT POLICY GAPS REMAIN

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Abstract

With respect to disaster risk reduction and climate resilience in Pakistan, it is critical to know if the country's national frameworks are accessible and inclusive for persons with disabilities. This study takes a close look at the Disaster Management Act, National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy, National Disaster Management Plan, the NDMA Guidelines on the Protection of Vulnerable Groups, National Climate Change Policy and the Pakistan National Adaptation Plan, and benchmarked them against the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Sustainable Development Goals 13.1 and 1G.7. The analysis of the document reveals general commitments towards the disabled, but the effectiveness of policies is hindered. The findings expose a lot of empty promises to "vulnerable groups" who do not have operational support, in seven areas: early warning systems, training drills, shelter and evacuation, continuity of care, and financing. Since accessible facilities, consultations, and clear monitoring aren't addressed in the plans, there are real gaps in the safety nets and the country's ability to respond to disasters. The study basically says that Pakistan's current disaster reduction and climate plans don't use a person-centered, holistic approach to getting people with disabilities involved in the decision-making process. The paper concludes with a single, actionable recommendation: institutionalize the participation of DPOs in the National Disaster Management Commission to ensure consistent representation, policy feedback, and accountability in DRR and climate governance.

INTRODUCTION

The monsoonal seasons, each year, serve as a term of salvation from the intense heat that plagues the Pakistani summers. However, on June 2Gth, 2025, the season revealed itself to be a devastating calamity for the people of Pakistan. The disguised season unleashed a fury of floods nationwide: urban floods in cities of Sindh, flash floods across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), glacier lake outburst flood in Gilgit Baltistan, and destructive thunderstorms in Punjab. This disaster has caused "785 deaths and over 1,000 injuries nationwide, with KPK worst affected, reporting 4G5 fatalities." Furthermore, damage to thousands of roads, bridges, and houses has had a severe impact on people's livelihoods, mobility, and access to services (UNOCHA 2025). This isn't an anomalous occurrence but a part of a perpetual cycle of disasters that highlights Pakistan's vulnerability to disasters and its heightened sensitivity to climate change, as evidenced by the World Bank report which "ranks among the top 10 countries worldwide most affected by climate change" (World Bank 2022).

These disasters disproportionately threaten individuals with disabilities or any functional limitations – an often overlooked community in Pakistan, consisting of ***55+ million*** people that faces higher risks during crisis (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2023). The recurrence of destructive disasters in Pakistan, combined with the distinct

needs of disabled individuals, poses a series of questions. What procedures are currently in place to protect and assist persons with disabilities (PWDs) during and after disasters, and how effective are those procedures in practice? Although international frameworks emphasize disability-inclusive risk reduction and relief, do Pakistan's national policies and planning processes align with those frameworks, or are disability considerations treated as peripheral when designing emergency responses and recovery programs?

This paper examines the current national policies implemented in Pakistan for disability inclusive disaster risk reduction (Di-DRR) and addresses a persistent gap in national-level policy analysis. While prior research has examined the country's vulnerability to climate-related disasters and highlighted institutional fragility in governance, relatively little attention has been given to how persons with disabilities are situated within Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) frameworks. By conducting a qualitative document analysis across key national policies, this study extends the current discussions around inclusive governance and policy gaps to the neglected domain of disability. This paper further delves into the themes of accessibility, resource allocation, and monitoring across Pakistan's DRR and climate resilience policies. It systematically compares international frameworks with the enforcement of domestic policies and identifies where they lag. Ultimately, this research presents the current status of inclusivity in DRR and provides a foundation for actionable national recommendations to close the gap that exists in domestic frameworks.

Key Terms and Research Parameters

Firstly, before evaluating Pakistan's policies, it is essential that we clearly define disability, disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction (Di-DRR), and disability-inclusive climate resilience (Di-CR) frameworks for this paper. For the purposes of this research, we will adopt the definition of disability articulated in 'Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)': "Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (United Nations 200G, art. 1). Secondly, to clarify Di-DRR and Di-CR, this research draws upon 'Article 11 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)' which states "all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters" (United Nations 200G, art. 11).

Accordingly, any DRR or climate resilience (CR) frameworks can only be considered disability-inclusive if it incorporates provision to cater for specific needs of persons with disabilities during evacuation and other response measures, and if it avoids implementing safety practices that are discriminatory or exclusionary.

Moreover, the scope of this study is limited to national-level policy instruments governing DRR and CR frameworks. Provincial and district-level frameworks, as well as the operational dimensions of implementation, are excluded in order to maintain a holistic analysis of Pakistan. This national focus is justified because federal policies establish the overarching legal and institutional frameworks that shape subnational policies and programs. Additionally, since each province has developed separate mandates, with varying levels of capacity, including them would introduce significant variation that would go beyond the scope of a single study.

Structure

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 will include a literature review of the international frameworks that shape domestic policies. We will then define our methodology in Section 3, and introduce the DRR and CR policy landscape of Pakistan in Section 4. Section 5 situates domestic policies within the existing literature to identify the remaining gaps. Finally, in section G, we will present our concluding remarks and an actionable national recommendation.

- **Literature Review**

Extensive literature illustrates that disasters worsen inequality for persons with disabilities, who often lack accessible warnings, transportation, and post-disaster

services. International frameworks aim to ameliorate this complication.

CRPD's general articles bar disability-based discrimination and mandate states to ensure "the protection and safety of persons with disabilities" (United Nations 200G, art. 11). Accessibility to services must be safeguarded. Article 9 delves deeper into instructing member countries that at all times, PWDs have the same access to technology and services. In no way must a state voluntarily or involuntarily impede the access of proper disaster risk management services: "These measures, which shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility" (United Nations 200G, art. 9).

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) further embeds disability inclusion as a guiding principle and practice. Its text repeatedly stresses "all-of-society engagement" (United Nations 2015, cl.19d). and explicitly lists "persons with disabilities" as a key stakeholder whose perspective must be included in "the design and implementation of policies, plans and standards" (United Nations 2015, cl.7). Sendai's guiding principles call for a "disability and cultural perspective" to be integrated in all policies (United Nations 2015, cl.19d). This is to be ensured through a

"multi-hazard approach and inclusive risk-informed decision-making based on the open exchange and dissemination of disaggregated data" (United Nations 2015, cl.19g). Furthermore, it aims to expand the access to multi-hazard early warning systems for all people, including reaching those with sensory or mobility impairments.

On the climate front, the Paris Agreement, a legally binding international treaty that superseded the Kyoto Protocols, and UNFCCC emphasize the resilience of vulnerable communities.

Additionally, the Sustainable Development Goals enshrine inclusive climate action. SDG 13.1 calls to "strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries", emphasizing the criticality of DRR, which are adaptive to the vulnerabilities of the population (United Nations 2015a, cl.13(1)). Furthermore, as previously exemplified by the Sendai Framework, SDG 1G.7 calls to "Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels". That is to say, persons with disability must be proportionately represented in the legislature to ensure inclusivity and responsiveness to PWDs (United Nations 2015b, cl.1G(7)).

International guidance compels Pakistan to mainstream disability in DRR and climate resilience frameworks. Therefore, any credible national policy must be assessed not just by its general DRR provisions, but through the lens of inclusive disaster risk management. This paper further draws on that normative scaffold (CRPD, Sendai, SDGs) in evaluating Pakistan's national documents, and concludes whether they are put in place in accordance with international treaties and guiding principles.

- **Methodology**

This study utilizes a quantitative document analysis approach to examine the extent of disability inclusion in Pakistan's national disaster risk reduction and climate resilience policies. The analysis will be limited to national instruments and their comparison with the benchmark set by international frameworks. The specific national policies that we evaluate in this study are the following: National Disaster Management Act (2010), National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy (2025), National Disaster Management Plan (2025), NDMA Guidelines on Protection of Vulnerable Groups (2024), National Climate Change Policy (2021), Pakistan National Adaptation Plan (2023). For normative comparison, this study draws on the CRPD, the Sendai framework, and relevant SDG targets (13.1 and 1G.7).

However, this study does not analyze provincial documents or any field data on implementation. This is because national policy forms the legal and strategic foundation of Pakistan's

DRR and climate resilience frameworks, upon which the provincial policies are built. Analysing

only the core policy will give us a better understanding of how disability inclusion is

embedded or overlooked within the state's policy vision. Going beyond this context and touching upon provincial policies might create variations that fall beyond the unified national analysis. Hence, this study pertains to policy design and the expected outcomes, because its purpose is to assess formal

commitments, not operational delivery, which may differ in practice.

The documents were read iteratively. The first cycle involved extracting all passages referring to individuals with disabilities or related themes (e.g., "vulnerable groups," "accessibility," "warning," "shelter," "evacuation," "medical," "monitoring," "funding," "participation"). In a second cycle, these passages were grouped into thematic domains: Early Warning Systems, Drills and Training, Shelters and Evacuation, Continuity of Care (medical and assistive devices), Budget and Finance, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Participation of Disabled Persons' Organizations (DPOs). For each domain, we:

(a) summarized what the national texts require or recommend, (b) noted explicit mentions or omissions regarding disability, (c) compared provisions to CRPD/Sendai/SDG expectations, and (d) identified policy gaps or ambiguities likely to impede inclusive implementation. The findings of our analysis will be presented under each thematic categorization. Wherever possible, we link national provisions to international guidelines to highlight compliance or gaps. The paper will then give a targeted policy recommendation derived from the gaps existing in the current DRR landscape.

- **Pakistan's Policy Landscape**

The structural and strategic planning of DRR frameworks and climate policies started with the National Disaster Management Act (2010), which has provided a formal basis for disaster management. The 2010 act establishes Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and mandates "minimum standards" for relief with "special provisions to be made for vulnerable groups" (The Pakistan Code 2010). However, the act does not define "vulnerable", and in its non-discrimination clause (Section 37) prohibits bias only on "sex, caste, community, descent, or religion" conspicuously omitting disability. Additionally, it does not specify how PWDs should be reached in practice, providing a broad mandate for disaster management, but it lacks explicit disability inclusion.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy 2025-30 (NDRRS), approved in July 2025, is Pakistan's latest DRR roadmap. Its vision explicitly embeds social inclusion: explicitly naming "persons with disabilities" alongside women and children as a vulnerable population (National Disaster Management Authority 2025b). The strategy's goals include "promote inclusive and sustainable DRR" with themes of gender equity and social inclusion (National Disaster Management Authority 2025b). In its action plan, the NDRRS goes further: one measure (13.G.G) is to "establish accessible communication systems for early warnings tailored to the needs of persons with disabilities" (National Disaster Management Authority 2025b). Other actions include encouraging inclusive governance and collecting gender-disaggregated data. (National Disaster Management Authority 2025b). Overall, the NDRRS is relatively progressive on paper: it commits to disability-specific early waning and stakeholder participation.

The National Disaster Management Plan 2025 (NDMP) is the operational blueprint for disaster response. It recognizes that disasters have "disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups including persons with disabilities" and emphasizes that the relief must be non-discriminatory and mainstream the needs of such groups (National Disaster Management Authority 2025a). The NDMP lays out sectoral measures and calls for modernizing early warning and response systems. However, the NDMP's detailed activities rarely single out disability: for instance, drills, shelters, and medical support are discussed in general terms without special provisions for PWD. Its "Vulnerable Groups" chapter highlights the need to integrate PWD needs into plans, but the ensuing guidelines focus more on broad categories than on concrete disability-specific protocols (National Disaster Management Authority 2025a). In short, NDMP stresses equal access and attention to PWD but lacks operationalized guidelines for inclusive service delivery.

To solidify policy into practice, NDMA issued the National Policy Guidelines on Vulnerable Groups in Disasters (2024) and its implementation plan. These guidelines (and an accompanying implementation framework) provide checklists and SOPs. They mandate measures such as constructing special shelter areas with ramps and assistive features for PWD (National Disaster Management Authority 2024a) (National Disaster Management Authority 2024b). Pre-disaster actions include "training an extensive pool of

persons to technically assist and care for persons with disabilities of all natures" (National Disaster Management Authority 2024b). These guidelines and plan go well beyond high-level policies by spelling out inclusive practices, though they are advisory rather than legislative mandates.

On the climate side, the National Climate Change Policy (2021) aims for a "climate-resilient and low-carbon" Pakistan (Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination 2021). It is mainly sectoral and focused on mitigation and adaptation measures. Notably, it does include one disability-sensitive action: it instructs that "the elderly, children, disabled and women get particular priority in evacuation strategies" (Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination 2021). It also calls for building cyclone shelters in vulnerable coastal areas, though without explicitly mentioning accessibility features. Otherwise, disability is almost absent from the climate policy: it refers broadly to "vulnerable ecosystems" and "vulnerable communities" but does not detail social protection for PWD (Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination 2021).

The Pakistan National Adaptation Plan (2023) is the most recent climate resilience document.

It explicitly adopts an inclusive vision: "Leave No One Behind" (Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination 2023). The NAP highlights that Pakistan has ratified the Persons with Disability Act 2020 and prioritizes "Inclusive Participation of Vulnerable Groups in Climate-Related Policy" (Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination 2023). Notably, it explicitly mentions "persons with disabilities" among marginalized groups to engage in decision-making.

However, while the NAP's test strongly endorses inclusion, its specific adaptation initiatives make only a general reference to "vulnerable groups" rather than concrete measures for PWD (Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination 2023).

Findings: Policy Analysis

Below, we assess each theme by examining what national policy currently provides versus the international standard, identifying the key gaps that remain in the frameworks.

Early Warning Systems (EWS)

The National DRR Strategy is notable in calling for accessible warning channels, specifically, its action 13.G.G explicitly directs NDMA to "establish accessible communication systems for early warnings tailored to the needs of persons with disabilities" (National Disaster Management Authority 2025b). This is a concrete commitment to adapt technology or formats for PWD. The NDMP and NAP discuss modernizing existing early warning systems (NCOP platform, mobile apps,
community-based systems) but generally do not mention disability (Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination 2023) (National Disaster Management Authority 2025a). For example, the NDMP focuses on hazard detection and broad dissemination, with no special guidance for making alerts accessible to all. Similarly, the NAP promotes community participation in dissemination, but again without PWD-specific modalities. The Climate Policy 2021 emphasizes forecasting and evacuation for vulnerable areas but only mentions priority evacuations for "disabled" persons; it does not address warning formats.

Examining the CRPD, it highlights the importance of inclusive warning systems. This is witnessed in CRPD Article 11, which requires that states take all necessary measures to ensure PWD safety in disasters, which implies accessible
information (e.g. tactile alerts, captioned broadcasts) (United Nations 200G, art. 11). In good practice, warnings should use multiple formats (audio, visual, text) and ensure sign-language and braille materials. Pakistan's NDRRS pledge goes in this direction.

While comparing the national and international provisions, it becomes clear that outside the NDRRS action, there is no systemic requirement in national plans for disability-friendly alert systems. NDMP typically assumes a broadcast alert to all, which risks exclusion of deaf or blind persons. There is no mention of training warning officers in sign language or producing braille-embedded maps, accessible to PWDs. The NDMA Vulnerable Guidelines do not explicitly cover EWS, focusing more on shelter and health. In short, aside from the NDRRS target, Pakistan lacks binding rules for

accessible warnings. This gap contradicts CRPD Art. 11's spirit: without accessible alerts, many PWD cannot benefit from early warnings. Hence, Pakistan overlooks addressing several inclusive components essential for an effective EWS.

Drills and Training

Regular disaster drills and training exercises are widely endorsed in most national policy documents. The NDRRS (Actions 7.4.5) calls for community mock drills to test preparedness and promotes first-responder training (National Disaster Management Authority 2025b). The NDMP includes tables of drills for tsunamis, snowstorms, industrial hazards, etc; additionally, it encourages schools and communities to run exercises (National Disaster Management Authority 2025a). These exercises aim to familiarize people with evacuation routes and response roles. NDMA's Vulnerable Groups guidelines go a step further and provide disability specific training: training a pool of assistants to care for PWD and educating community volunteers on hygiene and care. (National Disaster Management Authority 2024b).

The CRPD's overarching principle is non-discrimination and full participation, implying that PWD should receive adequate disaster training with their disabilities. Best practice would be to conduct specialized drills for PWD, such as practicing evacuation with wheelchairs and
teaching sign language to responders.

Pakistan is missing plans for such specialized training and drills for persons with disabilities. Although NDMA guidelines suggest training PWD assistants, no mechanism is mentioned to ensure that district disaster exercises actually involve simulated assistance. In practice, disaster simulations likely focus on average citizens rather than PWDs. A key omission is inclusive training curricula: neither the strategy nor the plan mandates that rescue workers learn how to assist a blind or deaf person during an evacuation. Without formalizing such content, PWD may remain peripheral in planning. Thus, compared to CPRD's ideals of inclusive readiness, Pakistan's existing drills are only implicitly inclusive rather than explicitly so. In the few times it does explicitly mention PWDs specific training, it remains a statement rather than an in-depth plan and procedure to ensure standard operations require inclusive rehearsal practices.

Shelters and Evacuation

The national provisions ensure that providing safe evacuation and shelter remains central in all frameworks, but few give disability-specific guidance. The NDMA Vulnerable Groups guidelines are the strongest here: they require "designated special shelter areas … constructed for persons with disabilities and older persons" with ramps and other features (National Disaster Management Authority 2024b). They also call for special transportation and handling assistance for PWD during evacuations (National Disaster Management Authority 2024b). The NDRRS generally encourages anticipatory action (education, health, shelter) and local monitoring, but does not detail how shelters must be made accessible (National Disaster Management Authority 2025b). The NDMP emphasizes mapping safe shelter, evacuation routes, and even includes cyclone shelter construction in coastal zones (National Disaster Management Authority 2025a). Other policies and their mention of shelter are generic without any specific attention to or projects on disability-specific shelter standards.

CRPD Article 11 requires that evacuation and shelter services be accessible to all (United Nations 200G, art. 11). This is shown through Sphere Standards and UNDRR guidance, which emphasize that emergency shelters must accommodate PWD and evacuation plans must account for mobility limitations. Additionally, the Sendai Framework advocates safe shelter "for all" but does not enumerate features; in fact, the expectation is drawn from human-rights (CRPD) obligations.

However, national DRR policies lack enforceable rules on accessible shelter. Neither the NDMP nor the DRR Strategy incorporates the shelter guidelines' specifics. There is no mention of allocating a certain number of wheelchair-accessible spots in camp plans, or of priority seating for wheelchair users on evacuation buses. Similarly, special needs are not at all discussed. The one positive mention in the Climate Policy - giving disabled persons priority in evacuation - is about process, not physical shelter design (Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination 2021). Thus, while the issue is recognized, it is often an ad

hoc consideration rather than a mandated standard in the
main policy texts. In practice, this gap can leave PWD with no guarantee of accessible refuge. Pakistan's policies should clarify that all public shelters meet universal design and that NDMA include aid for immobile evacuees.

Continuity of Care

Continuity of medical care and assistive services for PWD is scarcely addressed in high-level DRR documents. The Implementation Plan of the National Policy Guidelines on Vulnerable Groups in Disasters emphasizes health access: they call for mobile health and rehabilitation units serving vulnerable groups, and "safe interim care" units for children and persons with disabilities (National Disaster Management Authority 2024b). They also mandate that doctors and relief workers are trained to understand PWD needs. Outside these guidelines, the NDMP mentions ensuring hospitals are earthquake and cyclone-resistant, and coordinating with health departments, but does not single out PWD medical needs. It plans for stockpiling general medical supplies and trauma care capacity, without discussing assistive technology or continuity of prescriptions (National Disaster Management Authority 2025a). Other policies again focus on broad health adaptation, but do not delve into disability-inclusive adaptations.

CRPD Article 25 guarantees PWD equal access to health and services and continuing care (United Nations 200G, art. 25). In disasters, this means plans must provide for PWD's chronic needs, like wheelchairs, hearing aids, medication, etc.

National plans fail to ensure uninterrupted care for PWD. There is no mention of registering PWD for priority evacuation to the hospital, of evacuee lists including assistive equipment needs, or of maintaining rehabilitation services post-disaster. For example, an amputee's prosthesis breaking in a flood is not anticipated by any listed policy action. The NDMP's medical planning is oriented to mass casualty, not to maintenance treatment. This gap is critical: international guidance (CRPD) would call for mobile therapy teams, continuity of medication, and stockpiles of essentials. Pakistan's policies do not allocate a budget for such items, nor assign PDMA roles for disability rehab. In short, the formal frameworks overlook the longitudinal needs of PWD in crises, focusing only on immediate first aid.

Budget and Finance

None of the national documents earmarks funds specifically for disability inclusion. The NDMP acknowledges the need for contingency funds and risk financing, encouraging provinces to prepare "contingency funds for emergency relief" (National Disaster Management Authority 2025a). The NDDRS advocates integrating DRR in development budgets and seeking diverse funding from the government, donors, and the private sector. The guidelines on vulnerable groups in disasters and other policies call for responsive relief for PWD, but do not address the financing for the mentioned responsive relief.

International frameworks are vague on financing, only implicitly mentioning the need for financing disability inclusive processes and procedures. This is because every country must allocate a separate amount of capital to fund the inclusive DRR strategies, and there cannot be a universal financial allocation.

The absence of finance lines for disability inclusion is a major shortfall. Neither at the national nor provincial level are there directives that DRR budgets cover ramps, interpreters, or special training. There is also no mechanism to ensure that humanitarian budgets for relief include disability assistance. Policymakers often assume existing DRR funds suffice for all, but without safeguards, PWD can be the last served. Pakistan should consider a requirement that a percentage of any disaster relief fund go to disability-specific services, or that international grants for climate adaptation explicitly incorporate accessibility. Hence, budgeting for disability inclusion is virtually silent in current policy, creating the risk that identified measures go unfunded.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Strong monitoring frameworks exist in principle, but rarely parse disability. The NDRRS includes a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) system, with actions to set indicators, conduct baseline surveys, and learn from exercises (National Disaster Management Authority 2025b). Yet these actions focus on overall DRR performance and do not require disaggregating data by

disability status. Notably, the NDRRS does include an item to "monitor and evaluate the inclusion of marginalized groups in DRR efforts" (National Disaster Management Authority 2025b), implying some oversight of groups like PWD, but it stops short of specifying metrics. The Climate NAP establishes a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation process, emphasizing cross-sectoral transparency. It stresses participatory monitoring and evaluation - with local stakeholders - which could incorporate PWD input, but again mentions nothing of disability-specific indicators. Other policies have not mainstreamed a proper monitoring and evaluation system.

In disability-inclusive DRR, best practice is to track outcomes for PWD: e.g., how many received warnings, how many were reached by relief, and how many PWD served on committees. This is exemplified in CRPD Article 31, which obliges states to collect and maintain statistics, especially on disabilities (United Nations 200G, art. 31).

Currently, there are no standardized indicators for disability inclusion in Pakistan's DRR/climate monitoring. For instance, after a natural disaster, government reports typically list casualties and villages affected, but do not specify how many injuries or losses involved PWD. Without this data, progress on inclusion is invisible. The one nod in NDRRS is too vague to ensure systematic evaluation. Furthermore, there is no requirement for any other organization, not limited to the government, to monitor exercises or to collect disability-disaggregated impact data. Thus, even if funds were allocated or measures taken, we wouldn't know if the PWD benefited; filling this gap would align with CRPD Article 31. Hence, Pakistan's policies should explicitly mandate tracking disability outcomes and publish them annually.

Participation (Disabled Persons' Organization - DPO)

The importance of stakeholder participation is emphasized in all strategies, but direct mention of DPOs is rare. The NDRRS repeatedly encourages "community participation" and "empowerment of marginalized groups", and one action (13.G.7) is to train PWD to serve on local disaster committees (National Disaster Management Authority 2025b). This shows some intent to involve PWD as actors. The NAP is the strongest: one guiding principle calls for prioritizing PWDs in decision-making, and one objective explicitly aims to "promote inclusive participation of vulnerable groups in climate-related policy and development planning" (Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination 2023). These passages signal high-level support for including PWD voices. Pakistan's commitment to the CRPD suggests that NDMA should consult DPOs in planning, but no policy text currently enshrines this. Other policies list the assistance of civil society organizations and NGOs in coordination groups, which is not tailored to DPOs. In practice, there is no mandated seat for a national DPO in the NDMA council or in provincial PDMA committees.

When it comes to the involvement of people with disabilities in the development process, Article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is crystal clear, and it's closely in line with the principles behind Sustainable Development Goal 1G.7 which calls for the creation of institutions that bring people together for decision-making, and sends a strong message on the need to give people with disabilities a seat at the table in the management of disasters. This thinking is reflected in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, where people with disabilities are considered key stakeholders and are asked to be included in all decision-making levels.

In Pakistan, policies fall short in this regard, and we need to do much better. Some language on consultation and inclusion isn't fully implemented, resulting in a lack of meaningful DPO input. The NDMA Act does not explicitly list Disabled Persons' Organizations as members of the National Disaster Management Committee or the NDMA Council, and participation is largely left to chance, with NGOs invited to meetings or treated as beneficiaries rather than partners. The National Action Plan is excellent in its intention to include PWD in planning, but so far hasn't translated into any concrete systems, so the goal of SDG 1G.7 is still far from being met.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Pakistan's DRR and climate resilience frameworks have made great progress in recognizing disability. The evolution from the 2010 Act to the 2025 strategy/plan shows that people are becoming more

aware. People with disabilities are now included in strategic goals, early warning systems must be accessible, and the NDMA has detailed guidelines for ramps, medical care, and training. The "leave no one behind" philosophy and goals for inclusion in the 2023 Adaptation Plan are also promising. In general, these policy steps are in line with international commitments. Article 11 of the CRPD calls for the safety of people with disabilities,

and Sendai's people-centered, inclusive approach
But there are still large gaps. In real life, accessibility and inclusion often seem like extras instead of the main things. Most of the time, key elements like evacuation drills, shelter design, and resource allocations don't include any information about PWDs, except for the NDMA guidelines. There are no disability metrics in monitoring, and DPOs are not institutionalized partners. Pakistan's vision is open to everyone, but in many ways, its operational plans still don't take disabilities into account.
Because of this, people with disabilities may not get the help they need in real disasters, which goes against the "leave no one behind" promise and the CRPD's promise not to discriminate.
Pakistan must establish disability-inclusive planning as a matter of law or regulation to fill in these gaps. The federal government should change the NDMA Act or make NDMA/PDMA rules that everyone has to follow to make sure that all disaster management processes include people with disabilities. This could mean (a) setting aside money in the budget for accessible infrastructure and services; (b) making sure that all relief programs follow the NDMA Vulnerable Guidelines' standards (ramps, mobility aids, interpreters); (c) adding disability indicators to DRR monitoring; and (d) making sure that DPO representatives have seats on NDMA/PDMA councils and committees. By enshrining these measures in the legal framework, Pakistan will move from good intentions to accountable action. One major national priority, making inclusion compulsory, would bring Pakistan in line with its CRPD and Sendai commitments and move the SDG targets related to resilience (13.1) and inclusive governance (1G.7) forward. It would be a way of making sure that disaster preparedness and response reach every Pakistani.

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