



Monitoring Gender and Social Inclusion in the Context of Climate-Related Urban Migration: Jaipur's Case

Climate Mobility Context

Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan, is one of northern India's fastest-growing urban regions. Its population is currently estimated at 4.5 million with annual growth rates around 2.4% ([Population Census Data, 2026](#); [MacroTrends, 2026](#)). Much of the growth is fed by rural-to-urban migration, and climate stress is a recognisable driver of it. As a regional commercial hub, Jaipur serves as an attractive destination for migrants from neighbouring rural areas seeking better prospects, thereby accelerating urbanisation ([Vaishnav et al., 2024](#)).

Drought is a statistically significant driver of rural-to-urban movement: a state-representative study found that almost one third of the analysed households in Rajasthan reported drought as a reason for migration ([Bharadwaj et al., 2022](#)). Water scarcity compounds this pressure in an already arid region. Jaipur's groundwater table has fallen by 25 metres in the last decade ([Rukshar et al., 2023](#)), and one model projects that by 2028, 58% of Jaipur district's population will live in areas where groundwater lies below 60 metres — a threshold associated with acute scarcity ([Mondal, 2024](#)). This development will likely lead to further migration movements.

The effects of climate stress are sharply gendered: household stress correlates with higher rates of crime against women, and girls face earlier school dropout and a higher risk of early marriage ([Bhardwaj, 2026](#)). At the same time, the benefits of urbanisation, such as improved job and education opportunities, often do not reach women and girls equally. Additionally, women in origin communities who stay behind bear a disproportionate and largely invisible burden: they manage households, agriculture, and childcare alone during male absence, with reduced income and no compensatory support.

Migrants arriving in Jaipur typically settle in the city's informal settlements — roughly 65 recognised slum areas under the Jaipur Development Authority, some of which are slated for relocation or upgrading under the city's post-2015 urban renewal push ([Choudhary et al., 2024](#)). This matters for protection: relocation can improve housing and services, but it can also disrupt the informal networks that new arrivals — especially women — rely on for safety. This is the gap Suraksha Lens is designed to address.

Approach

The South Asian Institute of Crime and Justice Studies ([SAICJS](#)) developed the Suraksha Lens, a community-driven climate risk intelligence platform and early warning system, operating across India, Sri Lanka and Nepal, built around a “people-first” approach. This means that it takes into account household circumstances, intersectional vulnerabilities and exploitation, community inputs, and existing informal networks of protection. It is built to identify, connect and act on exploitation risk signals before harm occurs — shifting protection from response to prevention. It rests on three pillars:

- **Intelligence:** Continuously synthesising climate data, socio-economic indicators, and community-level signals to answer where risk is emerging.
- **Activation:** Structured protocols that connect frontline workers, NGOs and government agencies, answering who responds and how.



- **Capacity** – Community Safety & Evidence Leaders ([CSEL](#)) programme: Community-based actors build digital and evidence-generation skills and gather hyperlocal, qualitative data on how climate stress, displacement, migration and household decisions actually unfold. This creates a community-generated data layer that can complement existing government and institutional datasets, so communities can interpret and act on risk themselves.

The Suraksha Lens does not operate in isolation – it sits alongside other efforts addressing related pressures in Jaipur. For example, the Jaipur Municipal Corporation partnered with the NGO Centre for Advocacy and Research (CFAR) to design and deliver gender-inclusive, accessible community toilets in the Jawahar Nagar slum, a climate-exposed informal settlement ([CFAR, n.d.](#)). The wider CFAR programme aimed to deliver climate-resilient and socially inclusive WASH facilities in 125 informal settlements in Jaipur between 2018 and 2024 ([CWAS, 2025](#)).

“Climate risk in Jaipur is clearly gendered and migration functions less as a choice than as a coping strategy, as households face water scarcity linked to climate pressures (increasing women’s unpaid care work and is associated with domestic violence), land selling to fund children’s education, and adoption of rising debt.”

Ntasha Bhardwaj

Founder, South Asian Institute of Crime and Justice Studies

Impact to Date

Suraksha Lens operationalised its approach through the Climate Exploitation Risk Index (CERI), a composite 0–1 risk metric that links climate hazard, exposure and socio-economic vulnerability indicators to identify geographic areas where climate-related exploitation risks may be emerging. For Jaipur, CERI provides an analytical layer that can help connect climate information with social vulnerability and prioritise areas for further investigation and community-led response. Jaipur’s overall score of 0.58 indicates that risk stems from the convergence of multiple pressures rather than any single driver. Additionally, Jaipur East has been identified as the highest-priority sub-district, directly informing recommendations for child-protection programming and early-warning activation there ([Bhardwaj, 2026](#)).

Many WASH committees in Jaipur now include members from transgender communities, persons with disabilities (PwDs), and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST) groups (which are historically disadvantaged communities who receive constitutional protections), ensuring a more inclusive governance framework. Moreover, about 25% of the services in Jaipur’s settlements were upgraded to be climate-resilient, for example through raised toilet pits and resilient hand pumps that address waterlogging and flooding ([CWAS, 2025](#)).

Funding

- Suraksha Lens was initially developed and piloted with approximately USD 50,000 during its first year. Unlike a conventional project with a fixed implementation budget, it is developed as a social-impact entrepreneurship model, with resources supporting continued development, community implementation, technology, research, and scaling. It is now being expanded across its pilot geographies, with a blended sustainability approach combining partnerships, external support, and future earned-income opportunities.
- The WASH project involving CFAR as partner of Water for Women Fund received USD 4 million from the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) for the financial year 2021/2022 ([Water for Women, 2023](#)).



Learnings

- **Intersectionality matters:** Poor women from marginalised communities face layered, compounding vulnerabilities that require differentiated programming, not one-size-fits-all responses.
- **Strengthen, don't duplicate:** The persistent gap is "last-mile" access, as people often do not know what support exists or cannot reach it. Strengthening and accelerating existing local systems, rather than replacing them, should be the priority to ensure that support reaches those who need it most.
- **Community-generated data can strengthen climate intelligence:** Existing climate and administrative datasets can identify broad patterns of hazard and vulnerability, but hyperlocal community evidence can help explain how these risks translate into changes in mobility, livelihoods, household decision-making and access to services.
- **Risk intelligence should connect to action:** Data systems are most useful when they help local actors identify emerging risks, prioritise attention, and strengthen existing response mechanisms rather than functioning as stand-alone dashboards.

This case study was presented as part of the South-South-Dialogue Series organised by the [GIZ Global Programme on Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change](#) and facilitated by [Clima Trust](#) (formerly SLYCAN Trust). If you want to learn more about HMCCC please check [here](#).

For specific questions and further inquiry on the case study, please contact communications@saigjs.com.

Imprint

Published by: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
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Bonn, 2026

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Design and layout: Clara Engelsleben
Photo Credits: Page 1: Ansh Yati, Page 2: Priyanka Nahada



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