



Gender-Sensitive Social Welfare Policies and Community Resilience

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Abstract

This study examines the role of gender-sensitive social welfare policies in strengthening community resilience within vulnerable socio-economic contexts. The research aims to analyze how inclusive welfare governance contributes to adaptive social capacity, institutional trust, and collective resilience. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis involving government officials, welfare administrators, women's organizations, community leaders, and welfare beneficiaries. The findings reveal that gender-sensitive welfare policies significantly improve community resilience by enhancing women's participation, strengthening social solidarity, and increasing institutional responsiveness during periods of economic and social disruption. Women-centered welfare initiatives were found to support local coordination, mutual support systems, and participatory governance structures that facilitate collective adaptation. The study also identifies several structural challenges, including institutional fragmentation, patriarchal norms, and unequal digital access, which affect the sustainability of inclusive welfare governance. The study implies that sustainable resilience requires participatory and inclusive welfare institutions capable of addressing structural inequality and strengthening collaborative community adaptation.

INTRODUCTION

The increasing complexity of social vulnerability in contemporary societies has intensified the demand for inclusive and adaptive social welfare policies. Economic instability, climate-related disasters, public health crises, and social inequality have exposed structural weaknesses in welfare systems across both developed and developing countries (Azad et al., 2026; Smith et al., 2022; Knight, 2024). Within this context, gender-sensitive social welfare policies have emerged as a critical framework for addressing unequal access to resources, protection, and social participation. Gender-sensitive policies recognize that women and men experience social risks differently due to unequal power relations, labor division, caregiving responsibilities, and socio-cultural expectations. Consequently, welfare interventions that fail to

incorporate gender dimensions often reproduce structural inequalities and weaken community resilience in times of crisis (Belloso & Strid, 2023; Rubery et al., 2026). Recent global discussions on sustainable development and social protection increasingly emphasize that gender-responsive governance is not only a matter of social justice but also an essential determinant of societal resilience and long-term development outcomes (Gavrilovic et al., 2022; Buba, 2025; Akinwale, 2025; Chowdhury et al., 2026).

Community resilience is the ability of communities to prepare for, withstand, and bounce back from social, economic and environmental challenges (Cavaye & Ross, 2022; Järvelä, 2023). Past work shows that resilient communities have a robust social network, trust in institutions, economic stability, and inclusive participation processes. Yet, resilience is not 'neutral' in society. Gender differences have a significant impact on the experiences of vulnerability and recovery processes during crises. Women are often underrepresented in decision making processes and economic opportunities and also often bear the brunt of caregiving, informal working and coping mechanisms for survival in the household (Waterhouse et al., 2022; Chatterjee et al., 2022; Lalani et al., 2025; Rexhaj et al., 2023; Hashim et al., 2025). Research on social policy and disaster governance shows that gender inequality undermines the ability of collective adaptation by systematically excluding vulnerable groups from welfare benefits and institutional mechanisms. Hence, it is important to incorporate the gender dimension in social welfare policies to enhance the social cohesion, policy responsiveness, and community adaptive capacity (Adhikari & Ghimire, 2025; Djafar et al., 2025; Shemshad et al., 2025; Tamasiga et al., 2024; Suhaeb et al., 2024).

There have been other studies that have examined the link between social welfare systems and community resiliency in different ways. Studies on welfare regimes have demonstrated that extensive social protection measures can play an important role in poverty alleviation and social stabilisation. Comparative studies in Scandinavian countries show that countries with inclusive welfare policies and the development of gender equality measures have higher levels of public trust and social solidarity. These programs have also been shown to bolster family resilience in developing countries during economic shocks, such as targeted social assistance for women (conditional cash transfers and maternal health support) (Matata et al., 2023; Balana et al., 2023; Dasgupta, 2024). Gender mainstreaming of public policies and its impact on more equitable development outcomes have been considered by other scholars and a link has been established between institutional recognition of socio-economic roles for women and more equitable development outcomes. However, literature on social welfare policy is still fragmented with some studies emphasizing economic efficiency as the primary interest, while some others on resilience studies emphasizing primarily on disaster management and adaptive governance. Gender-sensitive welfare policies and community resilience have not been analysed in a holistic way (Islam et al., 2022; Aziz & Anjum, 2024; Balan & Sreechandana, 2025; Camacho et al., 2023).

With the COVID-19 pandemic and other similar global crises, the need for such an issue has grown more and more pressing on the empirical level. The pandemic shed light on the unequal economic precarity, unpaid care responsibilities, and elevated level of social exclusion faced by women relative to men (Zulfiqar & Shafique, 2022; Corsi & Ilkharacan, 2023). International organisations reported that many welfare measures in response to the pandemic were poorly structured to take into account gender-specific vulnerabilities, such as that of low-income families, informal workers and single mothers. Lack of gender responsive welfare mechanisms reduced social recovery processes in many communities and aggravated inequalities. Meanwhile, communities that had more women-centered support systems had higher collective

adaptability, collective helping, and institutional responsiveness. The results highlight the significant link between gender-responsive welfare policies and community resilience, particularly in times of systemic change (Islam et al., 2022; Balan & Sreechandana, 2025).

Many scholars see the need for gender equality in development policy, but there are a number of conceptual and empirical problems in existing studies. First, most studies define gender-sensitive welfare as a social inclusion policy, and do not look at its implications for collective resilience and institutional sustainability. Second, research on resilience often takes a technocratic or environmental perspective, neglecting the importance of social welfare institutions and gender relations for the adaptive capacities. Third, most available studies have focused on macro-level analysis, with minimal knowledge of the impact of gender-sensitive welfare policies on social cohesion and resilience at the local/regional level. This fragmentation also leaves an important research void on how gender-sensitive welfare interventions can help improve community resilience in a socially vulnerable context.

Social policy research has come to the age of intersectionality and governance. Recent research highlights the need to go beyond material provision and to enable the empowerment of marginalised segments of the population through participatory and inclusive institutional processes in effective welfare systems. Feminist policy analysis scholars have maintained that gender-inclusive welfare policies should not merely symbolically represent gender equality but must also tackle structural inequalities in the labour market, family arrangements and public institutions that are deeply rooted in socio-cultural norms and practices (Bermúdez Figueroa et al., 2023; Karambiri et al., 2024; Shoaib et al., 2025). At the same time, resilience researchers emphasize the role of social trust, local involvement, and cooperation in the development of adaptive communities. However, there has been limited research to systematically link these two lenses into a clear analytical model that can explain the effect of gender-responsive welfare institutions on resilience outcomes within the communities (Abdalla et al., 2024; Gumucio et al., 2022; Esariti et al., 2026).

This study aims to overcome these theoretical and empirical weaknesses by considering the link between gender-responsive social policies and community resilience from an integrated social policy perspective. This research is novel in its attempt to situate gender-sensitive welfare policy as a more than just a tool of redistribution but also as a strategic tool to improve collective resilience, social cohesion and adaptive governance. This study builds on the previous studies which examine the concepts of welfare policy and resilience separately and brings together the three concepts of gender inclusion in a more comprehensive framework of welfare policy and institutional responsiveness and community adaptive capacity. The study is designed to examine the gender-sensitive nature of welfare policies in the context of enhancing community resilience, and to discuss the institutional aspects that can enhance inclusive and sustainable social protection systems. The results are anticipated to have a theoretical and practical impact on the current discussions on gender-responsive welfare governance and the design of more gender inclusive social policy strategies for dealing with social vulnerabilities in the present.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design with a descriptive-analytical approach to examine the relationship between gender-sensitive social welfare policies and community resilience. Qualitative research is particularly appropriate for investigating complex social phenomena because it enables researchers to explore social experiences, institutional dynamics, and contextual meanings in depth (Lim, 2025). The descriptive-analytical approach was used to identify how gender-

responsive welfare policies are implemented within communities and how such policies contribute to strengthening adaptive capacity, social cohesion, and collective resilience. This design also allowed the study to capture the interaction between policy structures, institutional actors, and community perceptions within a specific socio-political context.

The research adopted a case-oriented approach in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the institutional and social dimensions of welfare governance. Through this approach, the study analyzed the implementation of social welfare programs that specifically integrate gender-sensitive principles, including social assistance, women's empowerment initiatives, and community-based social protection mechanisms. The qualitative framework enabled the researcher to interpret social realities beyond statistical representation and to understand how policy beneficiaries perceive resilience and social inclusion within their daily experiences.

Research Context and Location

The study was conducted in urban and semi-urban communities characterized by socio-economic vulnerability and diverse welfare challenges. These areas were selected because they represent communities with relatively high exposure to economic instability, informal employment, and gender-based social inequality. In such contexts, social welfare policies play a crucial role in supporting vulnerable groups, particularly women and low-income households. The research focused on local social welfare institutions, community organizations, women's groups, and policy implementation agencies involved in delivering social protection programs. These institutions were considered relevant because they directly interact with beneficiaries and contribute to community resilience-building processes. The selected locations also experienced significant social and economic disruptions following recent public health and economic crises, making them suitable for examining the effectiveness of gender-sensitive welfare interventions.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted to obtain comprehensive information regarding participants' experiences, perceptions, and evaluations of welfare policies and community resilience mechanisms. Semi-structured interview guidelines were used to ensure consistency while still allowing flexibility for participants to elaborate on their perspectives. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2015), semi-structured interviews are effective for exploring subjective meanings and institutional experiences within qualitative research.

Participant observation was conducted during community activities, welfare program implementation meetings, and local empowerment initiatives. This technique enabled the researcher to observe social interactions, institutional practices, and participatory processes directly within the research setting. Field observations also helped contextualize the interview findings and identify patterns of gender participation within welfare governance structures. In addition, document analysis was employed to examine policy documents, institutional reports, program guidelines, and official regulations related to gender-sensitive social welfare policies. Document analysis provided secondary data that strengthened the interpretation of empirical findings and facilitated triangulation between institutional narratives and community experiences.

Informants and Sampling Technique

The informants in this study consisted of local government officials, social welfare administrators, community leaders, women's organization representatives, and

beneficiaries of welfare programs. Participants were selected using purposive sampling because this technique allows researchers to identify individuals who possess relevant knowledge and direct experience regarding the research topic (Patton, 2015). The study initially involved 20 informants, with additional participants identified through snowball sampling during the fieldwork process to expand data richness and contextual understanding.

The selection criteria emphasized participants' involvement in welfare policy implementation, community development activities, or direct experiences as recipients of social assistance programs. This combination of institutional and community perspectives enabled the study to capture both policy-level and grassroots-level dynamics related to gender-sensitive welfare governance.

Data Analysis Technique

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis process involved several stages, including data transcription, coding, categorization, theme identification, and interpretation. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and policy documents were systematically organized into analytical matrices to facilitate comparison between institutional perspectives and community experiences.

Thematic analysis was selected because it allows researchers to identify recurring patterns, meanings, and social relationships embedded within qualitative data. Through this approach, the study examined how gender-sensitive welfare policies influence social participation, institutional trust, adaptive capacity, and collective resilience within communities. The analytical process was conducted iteratively to ensure conceptual consistency and interpretative depth.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, this study applied triangulation, member checking, and prolonged engagement techniques. Data triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documents to enhance analytical reliability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checking was performed by confirming selected findings with several informants to ensure the accuracy of interpretation and representation.

The study also maintained methodological transparency through systematic documentation of data collection and analytical procedures. Reflexivity was applied throughout the research process to minimize researcher bias and maintain interpretative rigor. These strategies strengthened the validity of the findings and ensured that the analysis accurately reflected the social realities and institutional dynamics examined in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the empirical findings regarding the implementation of gender-sensitive social welfare policies and their contribution to community resilience. The findings are derived from triangulated qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The analysis identified three major thematic dimensions: (1) institutional implementation of gender-sensitive welfare policies, (2) women's participation in strengthening community resilience, and (3) structural challenges affecting inclusive welfare governance. Before discussing the thematic findings, this section first presents the empirical profile of informants, observation activities, and analyzed institutional documents to ensure methodological transparency and analytical consistency.

Profile of Informants and Research Data

The study involved 27 informants consisting of government officials, welfare administrators, community leaders, women's organization representatives, and welfare beneficiaries. The informants were selected purposively based on their involvement in welfare policy implementation and community resilience activities. Additional participants were identified through snowball sampling during fieldwork to enrich contextual understanding.

Table 1. Profile of Research Informants

Informant Category	Number of Informants	Main Role
Local government officials	5	Welfare policy coordination
Social welfare administrators	6	Program implementation
Community leaders	4	Local social coordination
Women's organization representatives	5	Community empowerment
Welfare beneficiaries	7	Program recipients
Total	27	—

Source: Processed field interview data, 2026

The research also involved direct observation of community welfare activities and institutional coordination meetings. Observations were conducted to identify participatory dynamics, institutional interaction, and community adaptation practices related to gender-sensitive welfare implementation.

Table 2. Observation Activities Conducted During Fieldwork

Observation Activity	Frequency	Main Focus
Community welfare meetings	6 sessions	Participatory governance
Women's empowerment training	5 sessions	Economic empowerment
Social assistance distribution	4 sessions	Welfare implementation
Community health programs	3 sessions	Social protection
Neighborhood resilience forums	4 sessions	Community coordination

Source: Field observation records, 2026

In addition to interviews and observations, document analysis was conducted to strengthen triangulation and contextual interpretation.

Table 3. Institutional Documents Analyzed

Type of Document	Quantity	Analytical Focus
Local welfare policy documents	8 documents	Gender-responsive policy framework
Social assistance reports	6 reports	Welfare implementation
Community program guidelines	5 documents	Participatory mechanisms
Women's empowerment reports	4 reports	Social inclusion indicators
Community resilience reports	3 reports	Adaptive governance

Source: Institutional documentation collected during fieldwork, 2026

The triangulation between interviews, observations, and institutional documents revealed strong analytical consistency regarding the role of gender-sensitive welfare policies in strengthening community resilience.

Institutional Implementation of Gender-Sensitive Social Welfare Policies

The findings indicate that gender-sensitive welfare policies have gradually become integrated into local social protection programs through women-centered assistance schemes, community empowerment initiatives, and participatory welfare mechanisms. Several local institutions introduced adaptive welfare programs targeting economically vulnerable women, female-headed households, and informal sector workers affected by social and economic instability. The implementation process emphasized not only economic assistance but also social inclusion, institutional participation, and community support systems.

Field observations revealed that local governments increasingly collaborated with women's organizations and neighborhood associations to distribute social assistance and organize community-based empowerment programs. These collaborations strengthened communication between institutions and beneficiaries while reducing social exclusion among vulnerable groups.

Table 4. Forms of Gender-Sensitive Social Welfare Programs Identified in the Research Area

Welfare Program	Target Group	Institutional Objective	Observed Social Impact
Conditional cash assistance	Female-headed households	Economic protection	Increased household stability
Women's entrepreneurship training	Informal women workers	Economic empowerment	Improved income diversification
Community health assistance	Mothers and children	Social protection	Improved healthcare access
Community food security program	Low-income families	Crisis adaptation	Strengthened social solidarity
Women's participation forums	Local women groups	Participatory governance	Increased institutional trust

Source: Processed field interview and observation data, 2026

The findings demonstrate that institutional responsiveness toward gender-specific vulnerability contributed significantly to improving community participation and collective adaptation. Participants frequently emphasized that welfare programs became more effective when women were directly involved in decision-making and implementation processes.

One local welfare administrator explained the importance of institutional adaptation toward women's social realities:

“Previously, many welfare programs were designed in a general way without considering how women actually experience economic hardship. During the crisis period, we realized that women carried multiple responsibilities at once. They had to manage household survival, care for children, and often continue informal work. Because of that, the welfare programs started to change. Women were invited into local meetings, and community organizations were given more authority to identify vulnerable households directly. This made the assistance more accurate and socially accepted within the community.”

This statement illustrates how institutional learning processes encouraged more adaptive welfare governance structures. The inclusion of women in policy

implementation improved the accuracy of welfare targeting and strengthened institutional legitimacy at the community level.

Another participant from a women's empowerment organization highlighted the significance of participatory welfare mechanisms:

"The most important change was not only the financial assistance itself, but the fact that women were finally treated as active social actors. Previously, community meetings were dominated by male representatives, while women were mostly recipients without participation. Through the newer welfare programs, women became involved in discussions about community priorities, health services, and economic recovery programs. This participation created stronger communication between residents and local institutions."

The interview indicates that participatory inclusion generated broader social effects beyond economic protection. The involvement of women in welfare governance contributed to stronger institutional trust and collective engagement.

A beneficiary of the welfare program also described the practical impact of gender-sensitive assistance:

"When my husband lost his job, the community program helped us survive. I joined a women's cooperative supported by the local welfare office, and we received small business training. The assistance was not large, but it helped us maintain income and communicate with other families facing similar problems. We no longer felt isolated during difficult situations."

This finding reinforces the argument that welfare interventions functioned not only as financial support mechanisms but also as instruments for strengthening social cohesion and emotional resilience within vulnerable communities.

The institutional implementation of gender-sensitive welfare policies demonstrated a transition from centralized assistance approaches toward more participatory and socially adaptive welfare governance structures.

Women's Social Participation and Community Resilience

The second major finding reveals that women's participation significantly strengthened community resilience by enhancing social networks, mutual support systems, and local adaptive capacity. The research identified that women frequently played central roles in organizing community responses during periods of economic and social disruption. Their involvement extended beyond domestic responsibilities into broader community resilience initiatives, including food distribution, neighborhood coordination, informal caregiving, and local economic adaptation.

Participant observation showed that women's groups became important actors in facilitating communication between local institutions and community members. In several cases, women-led community organizations coordinated emergency assistance distribution, organized health awareness campaigns, and established informal support systems for vulnerable households.

The findings suggest that women's participation strengthened resilience because community adaptation depended heavily on social cooperation and collective trust. Informants consistently emphasized that women often became mediators between institutions and local residents during periods of uncertainty.

A community leader described the importance of women-led social coordination:

"During the economic crisis, women were the first to organize neighborhood support. They collected food supplies, identified families in urgent need, and coordinated communication with local authorities. In many situations, formal

institutions moved slowly, but women's groups responded immediately because they already understood the social conditions within the community."

This statement demonstrates that women's informal social networks functioned as adaptive community infrastructures during periods of instability. Their proximity to everyday community dynamics enabled faster and more responsive social action.

A representative from a local women's organization further explained how participation influenced collective resilience:

"Resilience is not only about infrastructure or economic resources. Communities become resilient when people trust each other and cooperate during difficult situations. Women's organizations created spaces where residents could share information, support each other emotionally, and coordinate practical assistance. These social relationships became extremely important during crisis conditions."

The interview highlights that resilience was closely connected to social trust and participatory solidarity rather than merely institutional intervention. Community resilience emerged through continuous interaction between welfare support and local social cooperation.

Another participant explained the transformative impact of participation on women's social position:

"Before joining the welfare program, many women did not participate in community discussions because they felt their opinions were not important. After becoming involved in local programs and training activities, women became more confident in expressing concerns about health, education, and social assistance. This changed the way communities viewed women's contributions."

The statement indicates that gender-sensitive welfare policies contributed not only to resilience but also to shifts in social recognition and participatory inclusion within community governance structures.

Collectively, these findings demonstrate that women's participation strengthened community resilience by increasing social trust, communication capacity, and collective adaptation mechanisms during periods of uncertainty.

Structural Challenges in Sustaining Inclusive Welfare Governance

Despite positive developments, the findings also reveal several structural and institutional challenges affecting the sustainability of gender-sensitive welfare policies. One of the primary obstacles identified during the research was limited institutional coordination between welfare agencies, local governments, and community organizations. Several informants argued that welfare programs remained fragmented and dependent on short-term administrative priorities.

Field observations showed that some welfare initiatives lacked long-term sustainability due to insufficient funding, inconsistent policy implementation, and limited institutional monitoring mechanisms. In certain cases, women's participation remained symbolic rather than substantively integrated into decision-making processes.

A local policy administrator acknowledged the institutional limitations affecting policy sustainability:

"The biggest challenge is maintaining coordination between institutions. Sometimes welfare programs are implemented effectively at the local level, but there is inconsistency between administrative agencies. Funding changes and

leadership transitions also affect program continuity. As a result, some community initiatives cannot be sustained in the long term.”

This finding suggests that institutional fragmentation weakened the effectiveness of resilience-oriented welfare governance. Sustainable community resilience requires stable coordination and long-term policy commitment.

A women’s rights activist also emphasized the persistence of socio-cultural barriers:

“In some communities, women are still expected to focus only on domestic responsibilities. Even when welfare programs encourage participation, patriarchal attitudes sometimes limit women’s ability to become active decision-makers. Participation exists formally, but social influence remains unequal.”

The interview demonstrates that gender-sensitive welfare governance is influenced not only by institutional capacity but also by broader socio-cultural structures that shape participation and authority relations.

Another beneficiary highlighted challenges related to information access:

“Some families did not receive assistance because they lacked access to digital information or administrative documents. Women in rural neighborhoods often depended on community volunteers to understand welfare procedures. Without community support, many vulnerable residents would have been excluded from the programs.”

This statement indicates that digital inequality and bureaucratic complexity continued to create barriers to inclusive welfare access, particularly for marginalized groups.

The findings reveal that while gender-sensitive social welfare policies contributed positively to community resilience, their long-term effectiveness depended on institutional coordination, sustainable governance, social inclusion, and structural transformation. The results confirm that resilience-building processes require not only economic assistance but also participatory institutions capable of addressing gender inequality and strengthening collective adaptive capacity within communities.

Gender-Sensitive Welfare Governance as a Foundation for Community Resilience

The findings demonstrate that gender-sensitive social welfare policies contribute significantly to strengthening community resilience through participatory governance, institutional responsiveness, and collective social adaptation. This study confirms previous research arguing that welfare systems become more effective when they recognize gender-based vulnerability and integrate inclusive participation mechanisms within policy implementation. Existing studies by Esping-Andersen and Saraceno emphasized that welfare institutions shape social stability by redistributing resources and reducing structural inequality. The present study extends these arguments by showing that gender-sensitive welfare governance does not merely function as a redistributive mechanism but also as a resilience-building framework capable of strengthening social cohesion and adaptive community capacity during periods of crisis.

The findings align with previous international studies indicating that women frequently become central actors in local resilience processes. Research conducted by Enarson and Chakrabarti demonstrated that women’s participation in community governance increases collective responsiveness during social and environmental disruptions. Similarly, studies on feminist governance approaches have shown that women’s social networks contribute to faster information circulation, stronger mutual support systems, and more adaptive local decision-making structures. The

present study supports these perspectives by revealing that women-led community initiatives strengthened neighborhood coordination, food security mechanisms, and institutional communication during periods of economic instability (Khofi et al., 2025; Hokoza, 2026). However, unlike previous resilience studies that often focus on disaster management or environmental adaptation, this research specifically highlights the strategic role of gender-sensitive welfare institutions in producing long-term social resilience.

Several findings also reveal important differences from earlier studies. Previous welfare policy research has frequently focused on economic assistance effectiveness, poverty reduction, or administrative efficiency. In contrast, this study demonstrates that welfare interventions generate broader socio-political effects by transforming participation structures and institutional legitimacy within communities (Neuhuber, 2025; Mumtaz & Kühner, 2025). The integration of women into welfare governance processes increased institutional trust and strengthened collective solidarity among vulnerable groups. This finding contributes theoretically to the growing literature on adaptive governance by demonstrating that resilience is strongly influenced by inclusive institutional relationships rather than solely by economic resources or technical policy capacity.

The study also contributes to gender policy scholarship by emphasizing that women should not be positioned merely as welfare beneficiaries but as active social actors within resilience governance systems. Existing studies on gender mainstreaming often discuss representation symbolically without sufficiently explaining how participation affects collective adaptive capacity. This research addresses that limitation by showing that women's participation strengthened communication networks, accelerated local response mechanisms, and improved community-level coordination during crisis conditions. Consequently, the novelty of this study lies in its integration of gender-sensitive welfare governance and community resilience within a single analytical framework that connects social inclusion, institutional responsiveness, and adaptive social capacity.

The results imply from a practical perspective that policy-makers need to bolster participatory welfare mechanisms that actively engage women in policy design, implementation and monitoring. Financial distribution alone may have short-term impacts that are limited, but do not tackle structural participation inequality (Ernst et al., 2025; Rusydiana et al., 2025). The study shows that community resilience grows as welfare institutions nurture community solidarity and women-led groups and cooperative governance processes. Thus, in order to maintain inclusive welfare systems, institutional coordination by government agencies, civil society organizations and community organizations is needed.

The research also has a number of implications for future governance strategies. First, gender-responsive welfare policies need to be embedded as part of wider resilience planning processes, rather than as standalone social assistance policies. Second, there is a need to enhance digital inclusion and administrative accessibility, to avoid welfare exclusion within vulnerable groups. Third, institutional monitoring systems should include participatory evaluation processes to guarantee accessibility of policies in the long term and social accountability.

This study has a few limitations, however. The major focus of the research was qualitative results in specific socio-economic contexts, therefore the results were not widely applicable across the national or cross country context. Further, the study focused mostly on institutional and community views, and the indicators and outcomes of resilience and policy impacts were not measured quantitatively. In the future, a combination of qualitative institutional analysis and quantitative resilience measurement models might be used. Comparative studies between different welfare-

regimes and cultural contexts would also help to advance the insights into the functioning of gender-sensitive welfare governance in different political and institutional settings. This study provides further evidence that the implementation of gender-sensitive social welfare policies is a strategic tool for building community resilience through participatory governance, flexible governance and social solidarity. The results support the view that only economic measures are not enough to ensure sustainable resilience and that institutional systems need to be able to respond to current social vulnerability, in order to face it through collaborative adaptation of the community and to fight against structural inequality.

CONCLUSION

Based on this study, the following conclusions are drawn: Gender-sensitive social welfare policies are strategically important in increasing community resilience by ensuring participation, responsiveness and adaptation at the collective level. The results highlight that the adoption of a welfare system with a gender dimension leads to economic protection as well as to an increase in social cohesion, in trust in institutions and in adaptive capacity within the community in times of social and economic disruption. Women's involvement in welfare governance proved to be beneficial to build communication networks, local coordination and mutual support systems which further strengthen the resilience of the community.

This study is of theoretical importance for strengthening the literature on welfare governance and resilience; merging gender-sensitive social policy with the conceptual frameworks of community resilience. The research extends the previous works, which have largely been on either the welfare redistribution or disaster adaptation, by showing the linkage between gender inclusion, participatory governance and resilience building processes. From the practical perspective, the results imply that it is important for policy makers to enhance participatory welfare institutions, promote inter-agency coordination, and foster women-led community initiatives for the sustainable development of inclusive resilience governance. The study, however, has been limited to a qualitative analysis of the situation in certain socio-economic settings, thus limiting generalizations. Future research should use comparative and mixed-method studies to explore the impact of welfare policies on gender outcomes in various institutional/cultural contexts, such as quantitative resilience measures and longitudinal policy evaluation.

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