

Gender biased inequality in humanitarian assistance, response and relief

2nd Asian Ministerial conference on Disaster Reduction
7-8 November 2007, New Delhi

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- Gendered differences in disaster impact
- Implications of gender insensitive response
- Changes required in policy and action

Introduction

- The effects and impacts of disasters, dealing with, and responding differ for men women, boys and girls.
- The differences are due to a combination of factors and dynamic interrelationships between them.
- Biological/sexual factors, socio-cultural factors within gender relations in communities and societies.

Gendered biases

- Disasters showcase of prevalent gender issues
- Mostly reflected on women – due to pre-existing socio-structural biases
- Implications on men – also reflect the gender based social norms and expectations

Gender issues in disaster response and recovery

Mitigation, relief, and reconstruction policies do not consider:

- Differential impact
- Different capacities and needs of men/women

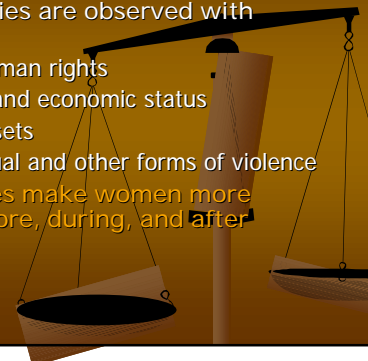


Gender based inequalities

Gender inequalities are observed with respect to:

- Enjoyment of human rights
- Social, political, and economic status
- Ownership of assets
- Exposure to sexual and other forms of violence

These inequalities make women more vulnerable before, during, and after disasters



Issues specific for women

- Women's economic and social rights are violated:

Disproportionate access to relief and recovery assistance

- The right to the security of persons is violated:

Women become victims of sexual and other forms of violence while in relief camps or temporary housing.



Cont...

- Civil and political rights are denied

Women denied opportunity to participate fully at all decision making levels in matters regarding mitigation and recovery.



Changing lifestyle- situation arising from displacement

Main issues concerning women and girls

Specific (biological, re- productive, social) needs overlooked

- Childbirth and pregnancy-related health considerations: neglected or not adequately attended
- Lack of privacy
- Gaps in security and safety

Main issues concerning women and girls

- Gaps in accessing relief, information
- Poor consultation/dialogue with women in resettlement planning
- Livelihood recovery- women largely overlooked

Impact on men

- Large numbers of widowers
- Difficulties in raising young families – gendered roles and social norms
- Emotional trauma of men in coping with the loss
- Falling victim to alcohol

Scenario from post Asia tsunami

Basic needs – biological

- Sanitary wear as part of the relief needs
- Accessing appropriate sanitary wear, possibilities of washing (rags and under garments)
- Most camps have male managers- issue of awareness and sensitivity
- Humiliating practises of distribution of female underwear and sanitary napkins

Reproductive health

- Difficult access to family planning methods and advice in camps
- Poor attention to specific needs in the camps which might lead to unwanted pregnancies, with a consequent increased risk of HIV and STD s

Protection and Privacy

- Greater risk and incidents of domestic and sexual violence
- Incidence of rape, molestation of children -not many cases get reported.
- Concerns about their own safety and that of children, both within and outside the camps

Rising alcoholism and drug use

- Increased alcohol consumption, drug use by men in camp situations aggravating violence against women and children
- Relief cash grants handed to men making accessing alcohol easier
- lack of privacy impacting on family relations, compounded by more inclination to alcohol consumption by men
- Changed and violent behaviour of men in the family due to post disaster trauma, and related alcohol consumption

Issues of privacy

- 2- 3 families sharing one tent over 3 months, many families on the same compound
- Women fear of breaking socially accepted ethics
- Many camps have no designated areas for women
- Toilets and bathing areas are not sufficiently covered

Access to relief and recovery assistance

- Severe gaps in women having direct access to relief
- Head of the Household basis relief and other support distribution
- Women's less knowledge / capacity in how to access emergency assistance –also due to confinement to the camps
- Gaps in legal literacy issues of land/house ownership

Intensified multiple roles

- Responsibility of dependents
- Women and girls taking care of the families, children and the elderly in camps
- Secure firewood, ensure meals for the family-nutrition aspects
- Ensure safety of children

Recovery planning

Data and information for planning

- General failure to recognize the diverse groups composed of different sub-groups
- No gender-disaggregated data
- None of the post tsunami national and sector based assessments contain gender analysis (except UNCT phase II study)

Education

- Schooling disrupted, no conducive environment in the camps for studies
- Young girls are kept with relations for safety, logistical difficulties in attending school
- More likelihood for girls to drop out

Participation

- Lack of avenues for women to express their concerns
- Discussions by officials and other visitors held mainly with men
- Low representation of women in emergency management and disaster mitigation efforts
- Women are not consulted in camp management, relocation, in the design of houses

Livelihoods

- Focus placed on major sectors – Fishery, tourism without categorisation on occupations
- Less attention on livelihood sectors where women feature high - micro enterprise, home based income generation, small scale business
- Data and analytical gaps hamper access to compensation and official support schemes
- livelihood compensation grant claimed by the man

Tsunami- a showcase of gender issues

- Gender blind emergency and relief management and recovery
- Absence of women in planning and management capacities
- Downplay of women's knowledge, skills and capabilities
- Deployment of women in unskilled manual work
- Poor attention paid to women's livelihood options in recovery planning.

Conclusions

- Gender-biased attitudes and stereotypes can complicate and hamper women's recovery, deny their rights
- Inaccurate gender assumptions of policy-makers and practitioners deny women benefits, worsen the situation for women
- Loss for women as individuals, loss for society and country as a resource