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GENDER MAINSTREAMING INTO DISASTER RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

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Abstract: Although women are considered the most vulnerable group in the society; but very little attention has been made to take into consideration the issue of gender sensitivity during the phase of response and recovery in both natural and manmade disaster. In Pakistan, a very limited number of organizations are working to address the issue gender based Violence in disaster response and recovery. The goal of this paper is to synthesize and review the issue of disaster and gender mainstreaming. This paper highlight the gap areas in terms of disaster preparedness, response and recovery; and also critically analyzes the importance of the mainstreaming the element of gender in the phase of disaster response and recovery overall in general and specific in the context of Pakistan. Recommendations and suggestions of the paper can be used to design and implement comprehensive response and recovery plan by mainstreaming the element of gender sensitivity.

Keywords: Disaster, response, gender issues, recovery plan

INTRODUCTION

Disasters, both natural and manmade, strike all over the world equally in one form or another. Disaster are not specific to any geography, ethnicity or religion; Disaster don't discriminate as it is evident from Sandy hit the America, Flood-2010 hit Pakistan, Fire-2011 hit Australia, Earthquake in Japan, Droughts in Africa and lots of other examples. Disasters don't discriminate and its impacts are similar to all but it is the man response which diversifies and diverts the impacts of disasters. Disasters are the 21st century core issue men are facing. Since, 1990 after the declaration of International Decade of Natural Disasters significant work has been done to counter effect the impact of disasters [1]. But most of the steps taken are scientific in nature and don't take into account the social impacts of disaster, and gender biasness is one the core issue in disaster response and recovery that miss the shot.

Women and girls, who account for over half of the 200 million people affected annually by natural disasters, are typically at greater risk from natural hazards than men, particularly in low-income countries and among the poor. Natural disasters and climate change often exacerbate existing inequalities and discrimination, including those that are gender-based, and can lead to new forms of discrimination [2,3]. The term "gender" refers to the socially-constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a society considers appropriate for a person based on his or her assigned sex at birth.

It is obvious; if we look into the goals and objectives of International bodies and key stakeholders and local agencies that no or very little attention has been made to tackle the issue of gender biasness. Very limited number of organization are working address the issue gender based violence in disaster response and recovery, this clearly highlight the gap areas in terms of disaster preparedness, response and recovery [4]. International awareness of the

importance of gender in humanitarian and development programs dates back some three decades, and national governments and international organizations have taken important steps to incorporate gender into disaster risk management policies and programs. And yet, in almost every major disaster of the past three decades, there are reports of women facing discrimination or neglect in assistance or recovery planning [5].

Women are typically more vulnerable than men to the effects of natural disasters and climate change, not only because of biological and physiological differences, but also, notably, because of socioeconomic differences and inequitable power relations. After natural disasters strike, pre-existing vulnerabilities and patterns of discrimination are usually exacerbated and women face protection risks including unequal access to assistance, discrimination in aid provision, loss of documentation, and inequitable access to property restitution Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) operational guidelines on the protection of persons in situations of natural disasters [6,7,8]. The natural disasters and climate change often exacerbate existing inequalities and discrimination, including those that are gender-based, and can lead to new forms of discrimination. Although men and women's livelihoods were equally disrupted by the tsunami itself, women had a more difficult time recovering from this loss for many reasons including neglect from NGOs, lack of women's ability to engage in micro-credit program schemes, and lack of capacity building activities for women [9,10]. Prior to the tsunami women's income generating activities remained less substantial and after the tsunami, the international NGOs focused the majority of their development projects on the head of household, typically men, neglecting the widowed women. Women were overburdened with an increase of unpaid work, continuing to take on the responsibility of domestic duties

including caring for the sick, the elderly and children further limiting their ability to recover.

The main purpose of this paper is to evaluate the issue of disaster and gender mainstreaming, in terms of disaster scenarios, and to suggest recommendation for streaming the gender sensitivity. The methodology of “Meta-Analysis” is used for this study.

DISCUSSION

Disasters both natural and manmade whenever hit an area women are the ones who suffered a lot in every aspect i.e.in terms of social loss, economic loss, loss of livelihood and lives losses. This is not due to that disaster discriminate among different group but it is the human response that led to such discrimination in loss. Gender relations as well as natural disasters are socially constructed under different political, economic, social, cultural, geographic conditions and have complex social consequences for women and men. If we critically look into the phenomenon and various aspects of disaster we will realized the facts that why women carry the major weightage of loss in one form or another during disaster. In most of the disaster literature and research gender has been consider as demographic variable instead in the context of social and dynamic sets of relation.

NGOs nor the governmental agencies have fully incorporated gender relations as a factor in disaster vulnerability and response, nor have they engaged women as stakeholder in disaster response and recovery [11]. The model in Figure 1, illustrates the scenario and identify the areas where gender streaming need to be done.

Although no specific data has been made available to categorize the economic, social, live and livelihood losses on the basis of gender; but it is estimated that more women loss their lives during earthquake 2005, more women loss their live during tsunami 2004, women are the most sexually abused in floods in Bangladesh. All these are not just a natural phenomenon that women are the most vulnerable but it is the human approach that exposed women to such situation and make women more susceptible. Keeping in view the model in Figure 1.0, this paper analyze the areas where there in shortcoming in terms of response and recovery and need to be done gender mainstreaming. These are protection, food distribution, health assistance and rehabilitation

In both natural and manmade disasters social and physiological differences as well as society norms and values disadvantage women. We have also observed that the evidence is ambiguous on whether these differences will affect women more adversely to a large extent or little. But it is evident that the prominent disadvantage that is got by women due to its physiological and social differences when we look into the practices of food distribution during the response and recovery phase of disasters, it is observed that usually food packets are drop by air operation or it is distributed at some points. In both these ways women are unable to get their due share, because of their physical nature and social constraints [12,13]. Women can't reach to food packages drop by air nor they get their place in queue at food distribution point and it is the women suffered at the end.

Protection is one the core issue that need gender mainstreaming. Disaster whether natural or manmade always induce displacement and during displacement women and children need to be taken care of as they are highly vulnerable in terms of gender based violence, especially in camps, where they risk higher levels of human trafficking and sexual abuse. During response and recovery phase the condition unintentionally made in such way that it creates a favorable environment for one to abuse women and children; all this happen because of not involving women in planning for disaster response and recovery.

Settlement of camps of food distribution point needs special attention to reduce the risk of sexual abuse and equal distribution. If food is not provided to women on separate distribution point and when they are excluded while management for camps from the phase of preparedness to response and recovery phase, women's vulnerability to sexual exploitation and abuse increases will be the end result . If women are to be involved in response and recovery planning they will better communicate about their need like showing concern about separate food distribution point, separate washrooms / latrines and special health needs.

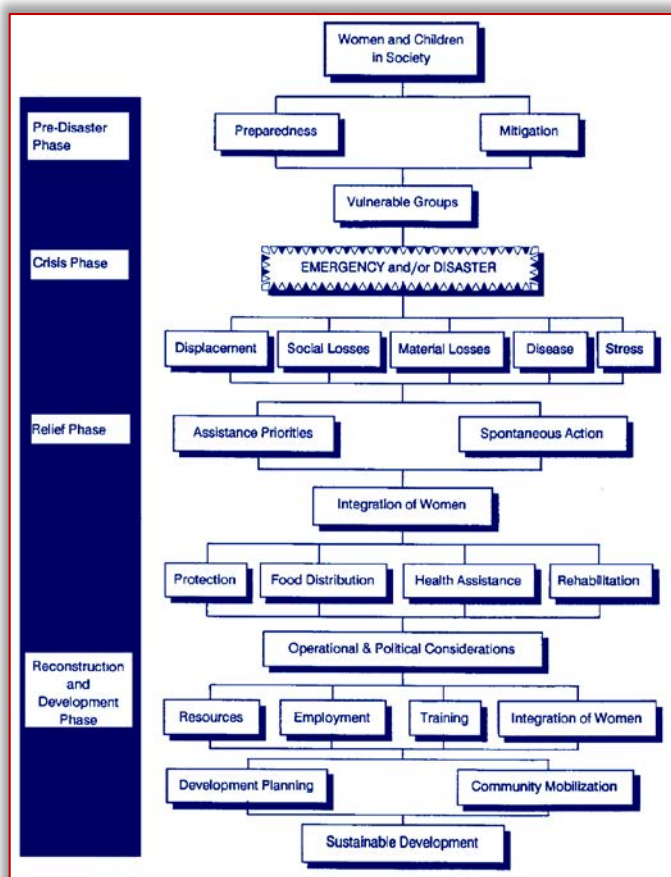


Figure 1. Temporal model of women and children in response to emergencies and disasters

Generally it is being consider that women are the victims of disaster because of their low economic status; and no significant steps have been take the analyze mainstream the element of gender in any stage of disaster neither pre-disaster nor post-disaster. Till neither now, neither the

Like other developing countries in Pakistan there is patriarchal hierarchy and women are ignored in the policies and procedures. Usually when disaster hit any area along with economic and social loss; there also occurs loss of livelihood. In most of disasters usually compensation is being made for the rehabilitation and uplifts of the community. In past like Earthquake 2005, and Flood 2010, 2011 all these compensation were made to the family head and as discussed earlier that Pakistan running a patriarchal hierarchy system this mode of compensation ignored women and mostly compensation were made to male as they were the family heads; in this way women were become more less empowered [14]. As we experience that disaster create setback development but disasters also create opportunity for development. Same is in the case of gender sensitivity; women can be empowered and their resilience can be build be gender is to be mainstream in disaster response and recovery; Like instead of making the compensation to be made to family male head; this compensation to be made to family female head, this will led to herd effect, and will improve the overall status of women.

The vulnerability resulting from predominantly female poverty is not confined to developing countries. A study by the Japanese government that showed that during the Kobe Earthquake in 1995 1.5 times as many women as men died. In Kobe, many elderly single women died because they lived in poor residential areas, which were more heavily damaged and more likely to catch fire; similarly studies identified that more women drowned in tsunami 2004 than men. In Indonesia, in the four villages in the Aceh Besar district surveyed by Oxfam for this report, only 189 of 676 survivors were female. Male survivors outnumbered female survivors by a ratio of almost 3:1. In four villages in North Aceh district, out of 366 deaths, 284 were females: females accounted for 77 per cent (more than three-quarters) of deaths in these villages. In the worst affected village, Kuala Cangkoy, for every male who died four females died or in other words, 80 per cent of deaths were female [15].

Now the question arises why women trapped inside the collapsed structures or engulfed by the waves of tsunami. This need an in-depth research but when we search the literature for emergency preparedness and response intervention one element common in all activities and that is; in all these activities women were not considered as stakeholder of these activities. Women generally take the role of house wife and bound to boundary wall of house, whenever capacity building or mock and drill exercise carried out in communities these major chunk of communities were ignored and that's why women don't know how to trap a collapsed structure or how to evacuate if there struck an earth quake; similarly in the case of floods and tsunami women don't know swimming as they don't get any trainings and that's why they are the one who suffered more than men. Figure 2, summarizes the area that need gender mainstreaming during disaster.

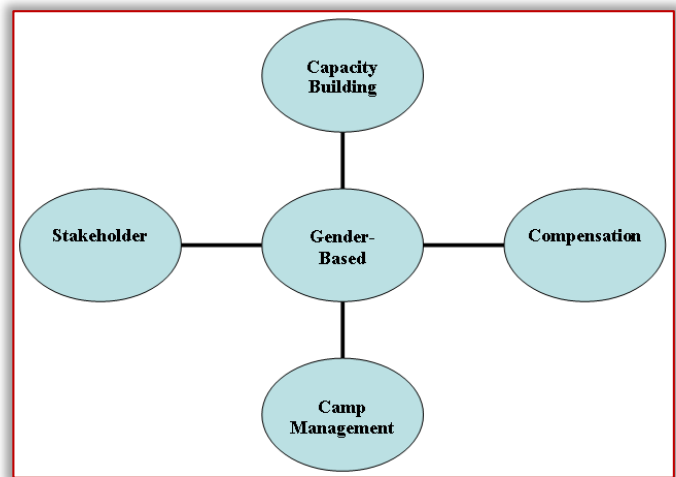


Figure 2. Gender mainstreaming during disaster

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

To effectively respond to disaster and recover from disaster gender mainstreaming should be fully incorporated into disaster response and recovery planning. The data on disaster related to morbidity, mortality or other should be sex-disaggregated. If women are to be involved in response and recovery planning they will better communicate about their need like showing concern about separate food distribution point, separate washrooms / latrines and special health needs. Improve disaster preparedness, response and contingency planning from a gender perspective and make them respond to the specific needs and concerns. There is a need to increase awareness of disaster management practitioner and policy maker about gender bias in disaster practice, planning guidelines, and training. Recruitment and retention of gender-aware staff, and ways for professional accountability to gender issues;

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