

GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN TO COMMUNITY BASED DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

Although women are considered as 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 Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction as well as Management in both natural and manmade disaster. In Pakistan a very limited number of organization are working to address the issue of mainstreaming of women in pre and post disaster activities. The goal of this paper is to synthesize and review the issue of disaster and gender mainstreaming. This paper highlights the gaps in terms of disaster preparedness by adopting CBDRM; and also critically analyzes the importance of the mainstreaming the element of gender in the phase of Disaster Mainstreaming overall in general and specific in the context of Pakistan. Recommendations and suggestions of the paper can be used to design and implement comprehensive CBDRM Preparedness Plan by mainstreaming the element of Gender sensitivity.

Keywords: Gender mainstreaming, disaster, CBDRM

Introduction:

Disaster both natural and manmade, strike all over the world 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. After the declaration of International Decade of Natural Disasters in 1990, significant work has been done to counter the impact of disasters. But most of the steps taken are scientific in nature and don't take into account the social impacts of disaster. Gender biasness is one of the core issues in disaster mainstreaming 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 – this is the case particularly in low-income countries (Alice Fothergill and Lori Peek, 2004). Natural disasters and climate change often intensify existing disparities and discrimination, this includes gender-based discrimination. 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

Literature Review;

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 address the issue of gender biasness. Very limited number of organization are working to address the issue of Gender Mainstreaming into CBDRM, this clearly highlight the gap areas in terms of disaster preparedness and planning activities. 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 (Elizabeth Ferris, Daniel Petz and Chareen Star; 2012).

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 (Eric Niemeyer and Thomas Plümper, 2007).

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 2010)

Natural disasters and climate change often intensify existing disparities and discrimination, this includes gender-based discrimination. During tsunami men and women's livelihoods were equally disrupted, but it was hard for women to recover from this loss. This may be due to many reasons which include but not limited to being neglected from NGOs, lack of women's ability to engage in micro-credit program schemes, and lack of capacity building activities for women (UNIFEM-ESEASIA n.d.; International Labour Organization 2005). Although before tsunami, women's engagement in income generating activities remained less substantial and after the tsunami, the focus of international NGOs projects remained concentrated on the head of household, typically men, neglecting the widowed women (International Labour Organization 2005; Nowak & Caulfield 2008). 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.

Methodology:

The methodology of Meta-Analysis has been used for this research. As it is an objective and quantitative methodology for synthesizing previous studies and research on a particular topic into an overall finding. Meta-Analysis is a more efficient and effective way to summarize the results of large numbers of studies than subjective judgement or eyeballing.

Discussion and Analysis:

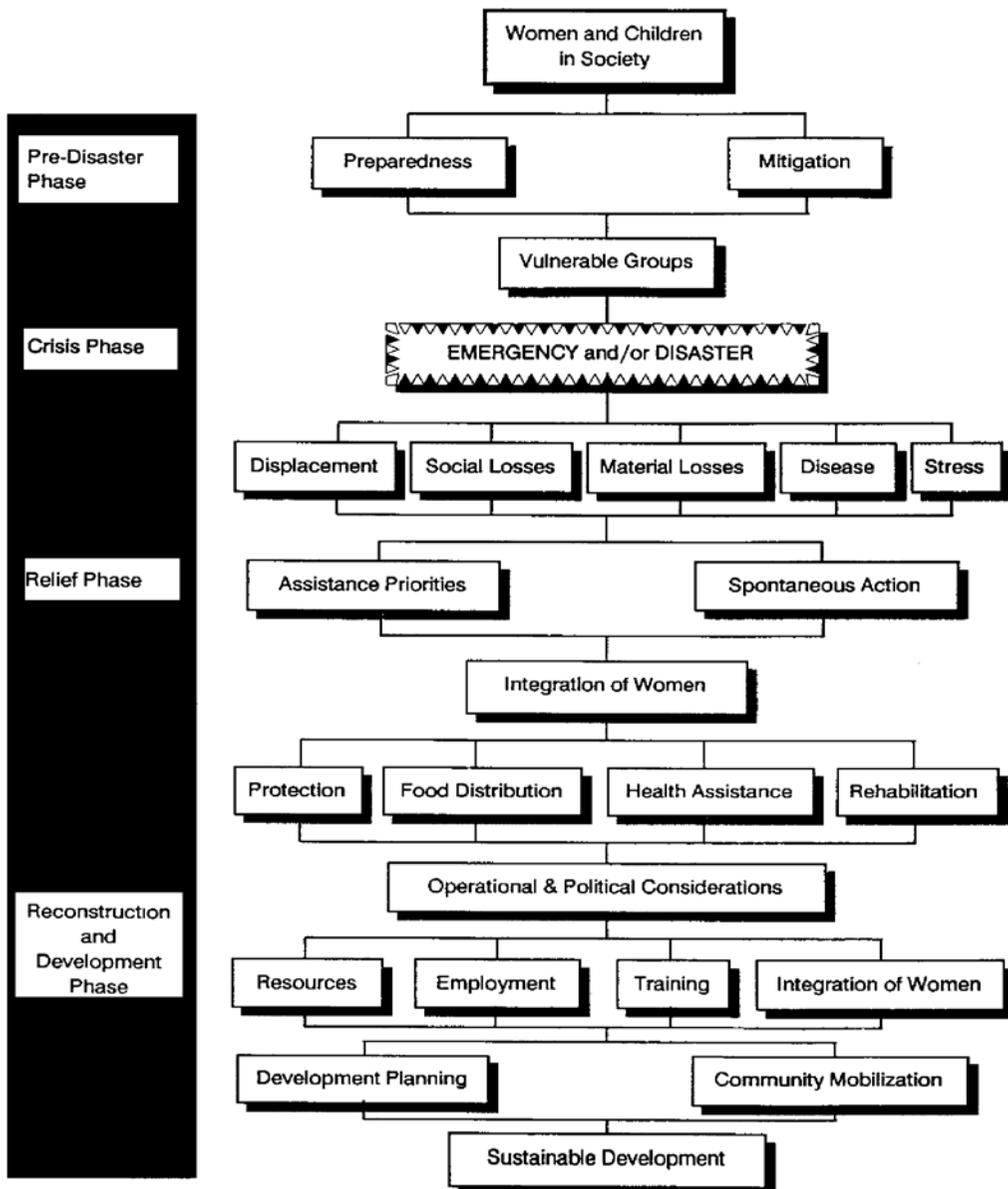
Disasters both natural and manmade whenever hit an area women are the ones who suffered a lot in every aspect i.e. in terms of social loss, economic loss, loss of livelihood and lives losses. This is not due to that disaster discriminate among different groups but it is the human response that led to 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 realize 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 considered as a demographic variable instead of in the context of social and dynamic sets of relations.

Generally it is being considered that women are the victims of disaster because of their low economic status; and no significant steps have been taken to analyze mainstream the element of gender in any stage of disaster neither pre-disaster nor post-disaster. Till now neither Non-Governmental Organization nor Governmental agencies have fully incorporated gender

relations as a factor in disaster vulnerability and response, nor have they engaged women as stakeholder in disaster preparedness and mitigation planning activities. The model in Fig.1 “The Need of Women and Children in Disasters & Emergencies” prepared by UNDP & UN Disaster Relief Coordinator” explain the scenario and identify the areas where gender streaming need to be done .

Figure 1.

Temporal Model of Women and Children in Response to Emergencies and Disasters



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 during 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; this paper analyze the areas where there is shortcoming in terms of Preparedness & Mitigation and gender mainstreaming need to be done. These are protection, skills to protect oneself during pre and post disaster phase, active participation in disaster mitigation programs and training etc.

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 preparedness & mitigation programs during CBDRM approaches. At the time when drills and rehearsals being done the women are usually remains busy in household task so cannot participate in all important activities which can make them resilient as well as their communities from upcoming disasters. Secondly we can see the issue while 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 unable to get their share because of their physical nature and social constraints. 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 CBDRM programs.

Establishment of food distribution point at relief camps needs special attention to reduce the risk of sexual abuse and to ensure 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 and mitigation by working according to CBDRM approach, if women do not involved during planning process they cannot learn and give suggestion for their protection in case of disaster. If women are to be involved in community based disaster risk management & planning they will better communicate about their need like showing concern about separate food distribution point, separate washrooms / latrines and special health needs.

In Pakistan, like other developing countries, 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 earth quake 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. As we experience that disaster create set back to 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 by gender is to be mainstream in all the community based disaster management activities; For instance, instead of making the compensation to the family male head; this compensation to be made to family female head, this will led to women empowerment and will improve the overall status of women.

The female poverty results in vulnerability of women and this trend is just not restricted to developing countries; As UNEP (2004) cites a study by the Japanese government that concluded that during the Kobe earthquake in 1995 number of women died was 1.5 times to the men. In Kobe, being lived in poor residential areas was the reason for the death of many elderly single women. Other studies revealed that number of women drowned in tsunami 2004 were more than men; A survey by Oxfam for this report in Indonesia showed that in the four villages in the Aceh Besar district, 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 Cangkooy, the ratio of women's death was 1:4 — or in other words, 80 per cent of deaths were female. (OXFAM Briefing Note; The tsunami's impact on women).

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 community based disaster risk

management intervention one element was 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 avoid being trapped in a collapsed structure or how to evacuate if there struck an earthquake; similarly in the case of floods and tsunami women don't know swimming as they don't get any training and that's why they are the one who suffered more than men. If we summarize the above analysis then we can say that gender mainstreaming is the gap area which is required in all the community based disaster risk management activities.

Conclusion & Recommendation

From the above analysis and discussion following can be concluded:

For effective response to disaster management activities, gender mainstreaming should be fully incorporated into community based disaster risk management planning.

The data on disaster related to morbidity, mortality or other should be sex-disaggregated.

Women should be involved in planning phase, they will able to communicate better about their needs like showing concern about separate food distribution point, separate washrooms / latrines and special health needs.

Disaster preparedness should be improved. Contingency planning and response should also focus and address the gender perspective and should be able to 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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