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Disaster Management Community



Gender Community



Dear *Members*,

The World celebrated the United Nation's International Day for Disaster Reduction (IDDR) on 13th October 2012. To mark the occasion, we at Solution Exchange - **Disaster Management** and the **Gender Community of Practice** - bring to you a *collection of stories* on the IDDR 2012 theme, **Women and Girls: The Invisible force of resilience**.

The stories in this *special ISSUE* on IDDR are inspiring stories of women and girl's courage, resilience and triumph in extreme situations. They have been taken from varied disaster contexts, be it flood, drought, tsunami, cloudburst or earthquake, and from different geographical areas of the country.

Often, policies and practice label women as helpless and vulnerable excluding them as actors in disaster mitigation, response and recovery. Historically though, it has been the women who in their day to day roles, reproductive and productive, have contributed to building their communities, their community's resilience and in post disaster recovery.



Photo credit: RVC, Assam

Invisible and unacknowledged for their immense contribution in resilience and recovery, it is time we celebrate our unsung "champions".

Besides celebrating the heroic efforts of women and girls in disaster risk reduction (DRR), this special ISSUE brings to you other features viz. **Experts Speak; a Must Read; in capsule forms - Did You Know? and Recommended Resources**.

Interested members may like to check out the Recommended Resources section for information on training tools/manuals that is likely to help in integrating gender in disaster risk management; books/articles; and informative portals on DRR. In the Experts Speak section, Madhavi M Ariyabandu (UNISDR-Asia Pacific) and Janki Andharia (TISS -Mumbai) reiterate the resourcefulness of women in DRR and their resilience building capacities. Did You Know? in capsule forms, provides facts and figures on disasters in India and reflects on some key policies of the government that can help build women's resilience but currently overlook disaster situations and disaster affected persons. A Must Read Section brings the story of valour of a young girl who saved lives of 20 children during Mumbai floods (2005).

We hope this **special ISSUE on IDDR** reaches out far and wide, and our little endeavor helps to motivate and inspire women and girls to recognize their inherent trait - Being Resilient; besides motivating many others to recognize women and girls as significant actors and champions in building community's resilience.

We take this opportunity to thank all our members whose contributions helped us to prepare this Special ISSUE. We also thank **Shri M Shashidhar Reddy**, Vice-Chairman, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Government of India, for his message and encouragement.

In Solidarity,

G. Padmanabhan and Rani Sahay
Resource Team,
Disaster Management Community
Solution Exchange

Malika Basu
Resource Person & Moderator
Gender Community
Solution Exchange

A Woman "Saviour" in Nadia, West Bengal



Photo Credit: Chaman Pincha



Vice Chairman
National Disaster Management Authority
Government of India

MESSAGE

It gives me immense pleasure to note that the theme of this year's International Disaster Reduction Day is, "Women and Girls: The Invisible force of Resilience". The National Disaster Management Authority endorses the idea of 'Inclusion' and has addressed the concerns of Women and Girls in the National Disaster Management Policy 2009 and in its National Disaster Management Guidelines.

The Disaster Management Authorities at various levels can make women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs such that inequalities between men and women are not perpetuated through the routine disaster management operations.

NDMA envisions empowering all stakeholders, including Women and Girls, for improving the effectiveness of Disaster Management in the country. This is reflected in our efforts to include women not just as beneficiary but to enhance their capacity and resilience.

Disaster specific guidelines that have addressed the concerns for women and girls are Guidelines on Management of Cyclones, Urban Flooding, Flood, Drought, Chemical Terrorism and Biological disasters. These guidelines have encouraged women and youth groups for active participation in decision making process, training and awareness, emphasis on women volunteers in development of village DM plans, boosting capacities with special emphasis on women among others. The Drought Guidelines has addressed nutritional security of women and girls. The Cyclone Guidelines has also addressed the need for augmentation of additional surveys by the census commissioner to get detailed information from household

levels including gender disaggregated data. Other NDMA documents such as Guidelines on Psycho – social support and mental health services in disasters, Guidelines on Incident Response System and Preparation of State Disaster Management Plans have also substantially addressed the issue. Inclusion of Women personnel in the SDRF battalions and inclusion of women in the livelihood restoration and recovery are some of the highlights of the Government’s intention for gender mainstreaming and inclusion in disaster risk reduction.

The Solution Exchange Disaster Management Community was launched jointly by NDMA and UNDP in April 2007. This is a unique concept of exchange of ideas feeding into both policy and practice by bringing together professionals from government, NGOs, donors and field practitioners. The online discussions and list of referrals on varied issues of disaster risk management has been benefitting DM practitioners on the field and at policy level.

I thank Solution Exchange – DM Community and Gender Community for taking up this important exercise of bringing together stories of women’s resilience in the face of disaster from across the country. I hope these stories would inspire the communities to undertake similar resilience building initiatives, and the policy makers to provide necessary facilitation support for it.

New Delhi
09 Oct 2012



(M. SHASHIDHAR REDDY)

Experts Speak

Women and Girls –an integral part of resilience building

Contributor: *Madhavi Malalgoda Ariyabandu, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), for Asia & Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand; mmariyabandu@yahoo.com*

It is well accepted that disasters are not gender neutral. This is often observed in the immediate impacts and in the post disaster phases. Within the prevailing gender relations, gender-based prejudices and divisions disproportionately affect women in many societies.

The vulnerability of men and women to a disaster, their personal capacities, and the options available to them for recovery differ in character and scale. Gender division of labour equips men and women with specific expertise, sets of skills, capabilities and life experiences. No one set is better or superior than the other, and the gendered divisions in labour are interchangeable and mutually supportive. There are ample examples which show the productive roles of women and men in each phase of the disaster cycle - in preparedness, risk management, and in recovery.

However, the patterns of participation, decision making and other opportunities in the public and institutional spaces which have evolved, and maintained, are more geared to marginalize the engagement of girls and women. Thus, the perspectives and life experiences of women and girls have fewer chances to get incorporated in the institutionalized spheres of development and disaster reduction.

Review of the progress of the implementation of the Hyogo Framework of Action – the Global framework for Disaster Risk Reduction reports, that progress in incorporating gender considerations into disaster risk management has been much slower in comparison to the progress in other areas. More specifically, few risk assessments consider or generate gender disaggregated data, and only a few countries incorporate gender based issues into recovery. More alarmingly, the overall discussion on gender issues in disasters largely concentrate on vulnerability of women and girls as opposed to their skills, strengths and capacities, and their role in risk reduction and resilience building.

The theme of the International Day for Disaster Reduction 2012, 'Women and Girls –Invisible force of resilience' draws our attention to the resourcefulness of women in disaster risk reduction. The theme raises a pertinent question- how to achieve effective disaster risk reduction when half the resourceful population is excluded from access to information, knowledge and decisions of the productive processes? A change in the outlook towards women and girls from 'vulnerability' to 'capacity' will make a significant change in how development and disaster risk reduction is approached, and in reaching the desired outcomes. It is a choice we need to make, taking into account increasing trends in hazards and disaster risks.

Women's Resilience in Disaster Situations

Contributor: *Janaki Andharia, Jamsetji Tata Centre for Disaster Management, School of Habitat Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, Maharashtra; andharia@tiss.edu*

Consequences of disasters are gendered as disasters are experienced differently by diverse social groups within the same society. In other words emergency situations are not gender neutral and it is well established that women and girls are amongst the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. This is because women have less access to resources and have to negotiate societal structures, which are often restrictive and demanding. In many societies the structurally unequal position of women is institutionalized in laws, which establish unequal inheritance rights, set different ages for legal adulthood by gender, and tacitly condone domestic and sexual violence or sanction differential wages for equal and comparable work. Often women's contribution to the family income is crucial but largely unnoticed. Further statistics reveal that mortality rates in disasters tend to be higher among women than men. So women and girls are more vulnerable than men to impacts of disasters.

Having said this, women are often seen to take on new roles and responsibilities, new economic skills, adapt after a disaster effecting social transformation. Throughout the world women have also worked to assert their rights and address their social vulnerabilities in the aftermath of a disaster. They have supported each other to identify their concerns, and overcome innumerable barriers. It is in these myriad everyday actions that women show resilience. Conceptually vulnerability and resilience are viewed as opposites. Resilience is nothing but coping ability or the ability to absorb changes potential stresses or destructive forces through adaptation or resistance and still persist. In disaster situations women's and girls' resilience implies their ability to anticipate, minimize and absorb impacts and to manage or maintain certain basic functions and structures and to bounce back.

The idea of Resilience helps develop strategies and measures for risk reduction and management, with a clear focus on enhancing capacities. With its emphasis on strengths it helps identify resources and adaptive capacities.

Stories of Courage, Resilience and Triumph

ASSAM

Aamaar Bazaar (Our Market)– Ensures Flood Affected Women’s Access to Income Generation

Location: Dhemaji & Lakhimpur District

Year: 2011

Type of Disaster: Floods

Contributor: *Ravindranath*

The traditional livelihood of the people living in the flood plains of Brahmaputra River Basin is mainly Agriculture followed by animal husbandry, sericulture, fishing etc. But it has been witnessed that sand deposition, bank line erosion, shifting of river course and other adverse effects of chronic floods on fertile agricultural land have permanently affected the agro-based traditional livelihood practices. In these circumstances, women, children and elderly people have become more vulnerable. To overcome this situation, women from Peopleguri village situated at the bank of river Brahmaputra approached Rural Volunteers Centre (RVC) to address problems of total breakdown of surface communication system due to flood. Animal husbandry, traditional handloom and handicrafts sector was severely affected due to inaccessibility to market and in turn making the producers dependent on exploitative middlemen of their village. RVC organized and trained the women about market mechanism, demand and supply, quality of products, market linkages and provided information on a range of income generation activities based on their skills and facilitated quality upgradation opportunities. RVC also helped production and selling of goods and facilitated setting up of local market. Women SHG with collective efforts introduced a good practice called ‘*Aamaar Bazaar*’ (our market), which enabled women living in flood plains of Brahmaputra River basin to learn, choose and take up income generation activities from wide range of choices, that contribute towards supplementing the losses they face due to loss of traditional livelihood. *Aamaar Bazaar* retains the existing village weekly markets or facilitates opening of new markets covering cluster of villages. These weekly markets serve as sole market avenues which were earlier run by influential individual/s with, authority to collect revenue. RVC facilitated the market establishing process by mobilizing support from community and Government in favor of the women groups. For more information please contact, rvassam@gmail.com

Protected Water Sources for Flood Resilience

Location: Dhemaji and Lakhimpur District

Year: 2011

Type of Disaster: Floods

Contributor: *Ravindranath*



Photo credit: RVC, Assam

The inundation of the hand-pumps during flood compels people to go for unsafe water consumption as well as using of water far below the required level triggers health hazards as well as environmental degradation in large scale throughout the Brahmaputra River Basin. Access to basic needs (water, sanitation provisions etc) of the flood affected population is a challenge. The impact of the flood resilient hand-pumps in the lives of the people mainly on the lives of the women was best reflected during flood 2008 in Dhakuakhana Block of Lakhimpur District. In the given situation, RVC with the women community members came up with the ***flood resilient Raised hand-pumps*** concept for the flood plains of Upper Brahmaputra River Basin.

Many raised platform with hand pump were set up in some of the villages. Initially it was observed that the square shaped raised platform get eroded from the edge line by high velocity current. The observation led RVC to think over the design and ultimately design had been modified to cylindrical shaped raised

platform which is yielding result.

The other changes that has been introduced to the initial design is that in the initial design the foot-steps were of the height 12 feet which were not convenient for the pregnant women as well as for the persons with disability. With the understanding the design has been changed and presently the steps are constructed of the height 8 feet. The technology involved in the process is simple mason works and to make the community self-reliant on technology application training has been provided to 1 or 2 numbers of community selected volunteers on hand-pump repairing, hand pump installation and mason works. The hand-pumps are maintained by the water-user group which consists of women from each of the user household. Accessibility to protected water sources during flood period and post-flood session has largely brought about behavioral changes at community level regarding hygiene practices. *To know more about this story, please contact rvcassam@gmail.com*



BIHAR

Women Use Resilience Fund for Collective Jute Cultivation

Location: Supaul District

Year: 2011

Type of Disaster: Floods

Contributor: *Ramesh Kumar*

At Jeera Araji Birpur, Supaul District, Bihar, women groups received resilience fund to initiate activity on enhancing their capacity and building resilience. A women's group identified Jute cultivation as a group initiative with mutually shared labour. When their husbands refused to provide a small piece of land for this activity, the group decided to lease land and start cultivation. All members agreed to contribute and they leased an acre of land for 2 years and began cultivation in June 2012.

Apart from the sale of jute fibers in the market, Jute has the potential of preventing water from floods, strengthening the soil health from its leaf, can be used as a nutritious food by the community, prepared as dry food and used it in flood situation, etc. Nearly every part of the plant is useful and has the potential to survive in every season. It also enhances soil fertility after the harvest for sowing a vegetable crop. The women's group is expecting a good production from the jute cultivation. *For More information on this story, please contact gpsvsjp@gmail.com*

Women Led Disaster Task Force

Location: Darbhanga

Year: 2010

Type of Disaster: Floods

Contributor: *Vijay Kumar*

Recurrent flooding has affected the lives of people in Darbhanga; most are poor farmers dependent on small land farming and daily labour. Due to **Swayam Shikshan Prayog** (SSP) and **Kanchan Seva Ashram's** (KSA) intervention especially in the villages of Sadar and Hanuman Nagar block, Darbhanga district, women groups have organised themselves and systemized the community practice in prevention and mitigation practices. Take for instance, **Leela Devi and Manju Devi from a village, Maulaganj**. They have taken the lead in organising the community under women led disaster task force. The Task Force was formed in 2010 and was the beginning of spreading the message and scaling up of initiatives to neighbouring villages. In less than two years, the task force guides the village communities in preparing dry foods, ensuring grain banks, updating the knowledge of task force teams, arranging medical kits, etc., especially before the monsoon season. A training manual on Disaster Task Force has also been prepared

to teach other villages. This story showcases women's resilience initiatives and their role in risk reduction activities and local development. Given the opportunity women leaders emerge in the community and take up problems and challenges of local development and resilience initiatives. For more information on this story, please contact vijayksa@rediffmail.com

Building Partnerships to Access Resources and Schemes

Location: Darbhanga District

Year: 2011

Type of Disaster: Floods

Contributor: *Vijay Kumar*

Grassroots women leaders from Darbhanga have made good progress in negotiating with local panchayat, block level officials and district level authorities in accessing resources and schemes that help in addressing local vulnerability and disaster risk reduction. Empowered and informed women groups have demonstrated that they could take a lead role in local development and DRR. In Harichanda village for instance, women leaders took action in resilience building activities. They negotiated and were successful in getting funds for a school building, constructing roads, raised hand pumps with local partnership. They also lobbied with district authorities to access resources and programmes and were appreciated for taking action in reducing flood risk.

Recently Government of Bihar introduced 3 new schemes to adapt to climate change. They are Daincha (Hari Khad) scheme, SRI and SWI. The women groups have used the opportunity and accessed Daincha, a flood resistant variety seed which can be grown even in flood conditions.

For More information on this story, please contact vijayksa@rediffmail.com

Gujarat

Triumph over Disability: Story of Resilience

Location: Kutchh

Year: 2011

Type of Disaster: Earthquake (10 years following 2001 Earthquake)

Contributor: *Bhavesh Sodagar*

The Earthquake in Gujarat was devastating. Two girls from Kutchh lost their mobility under the rubble; and doctors diagnosed their inability to walk all through their lives. Motivation, inspiration and other factors including support from family, friends, doctors and staff of Bidada Hospital of the **Bidada Sarvodaya Trust**, the girls, **Jyoti Jayesh Solanki from Mandvi and Bavita Amrutlal Chawla from Anjar** are true picture of resilience. Ten years later, they are capable of walking. One of the girls even drives a scooter without any difficulty. When asked what makes them hopeful today the girls respond, '*The Trust which supported their treatment and surgery and offered lifetime support.*' It was not just the help or support from the external agency to the women affected by disasters; faith, trust, motivation and a continuous association with the Hospital Trust that engaged in motivating and helping have built their inner strength and resilience. Acceptance and support has been the force which added to building their resilience. The girls now volunteer their services at the Trust, motivating others and have become a visible force to build resilience of the community. *For More information on this story, please contact bhavesh_99@yahoo.com*

Jammu & Kashmir

Following Flashfloods, Women Rebuild their Livelihoods

Location: Leh

Year: 2010

Type of Disaster:

Flashfloods/Cloudburst

Contributor: *Sejuti Basu*

The flashflood in Leh on 5th August 2010 caused unprecedented loss of life and property with over 233 dead, 79 missing and about 80% of infrastructure in Leh destroyed. After relief operations, **Pragya**, a development organisation concentrated its efforts in livelihood rehabilitation with special focus on women farmers and women headed households in the region.

The women of *Ney, Nang, Umla, Chaksa, Hanu Yogma, Igoonankur, Taru, Stambardo* villages under the guidance of Pragya's Thematic Specialists have since then been working towards rebuilding their lives. **Sonam Yandol, Dechen Dolma** along with some others has reclaimed over 7 acres of land to set up fodder farms and woodlots in their villages. The



Photo Credit: Pragya, New Delhi

early gains have been visible within just 5 months, reducing the physical stress on women. An inspired Sonam is confident as she shares, "Next year we will double the area under fodder farm". The women farmers are also being helped to repair irrigation channels that serve their fields, use efficient farm tools, and set up nursery/greenhouses to generate planting materials. Such endeavors have benefited around 200 households in Leh so far. For more information, contact research@pragya.org

Maharashtra

Women Groups Combat Drought through Innovative Farming

Location: Osmanabad

Year: 2011

Type of Disaster: Drought

Contributor: *Prema Gopalan*

Traditional agriculture is the main livelihood for Devsingha village five kms from Tuljapur town in Osmanabad district of Maharashtra. The village is witnessing not only the emergence of women farmers but their eco-friendly innovations in cultivation. Most of the households own small pieces of land. Their livelihood depends on land, climate, limited resources and market. For the last 10 years, the community has had less rain and has suffered drought and water scarcity. Some of the problems faced by the community are unexpected weather conditions, lack of information and training on new methods to cope with climate risk. The Women's Federation in Tuljapur organized a meeting of SHGs of this village to think and act collectively for understanding the capacities and vulnerabilities of the village which led the women to undertake a hazard mapping in May 2011. Community leaders, SHG members, youth and Panchayat members participated in the mapping process. It was decided that local problems should be taken up with elected Panchayat and government officials to solve them and also initiate their own remedies. Agrarian concerns were discussed as livelihood option for resilience. This community has shown that collective work with Gram Panchayats and local administration is essential to pool local capacities to identify and solve local problems and to bring about some enduring impact. The women group have emerged as leaders in

combating drought with innovative farming, collective labour, collective marketing in neighbouring Tuljapur and has helped their entire community become drought resilient. *For more information, contact sspinfo@gmail.com*

Tamil Nadu

Fisherwomen's Advocacy on Housing in the Aftermath of Tsunami

Location: Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu

Year: 2004

Type of Disaster: Tsunami

Contributors: *Jesuratnam Chrisy, Gandhimathi and Ranjani K Murthy*

On 24 December 2004, the Indian Ocean Tsunami struck parts of Asia including Nagapattinam District of Tamil Nadu; it is estimated that 2406 women, 1883 men, 889 girls and 887 boys died. The Tamil Nadu Government housed all those affected in a temporary camp, proposing to build permanent shelters at a distance from the sea. This, the fisher folks of the area knew, would lead to their walking a long distance for their livelihood. For women who were into occupations like fish auctioning, fish vending and dry fish processing the problem of traveling long distance was all the bit more problematic as they had to manage dual responsibilities of taking care of the house and child care as well as managing their market activities. The fishing community was also worried that if they did not stay near the coast, the coast would be encroached by industries, resorts and housing projects. They articulated their concerns to NGOs and along with them advocated with the government that they should be given a choice of in-situ housing repair or housing elsewhere to fisher folks. They also advocated for the house title to be on women's name in the case of new houses, and money be paid to women in the case of in-situ housing repair. Housing was ensured for single women as well. Those women and men who opted for in situ housing are today able to engage in traditional livelihood activities; those who opted for housing far away are not able to do so. This case conveys three policy messages. First, the importance of consulting affected women and men before making policy decisions on relief and rehabilitation (R&R) in the aftermath of any disaster; second, to take into account gender differentiated impact of any R&R measure on women and men; and third, to use R&R measures to transform pre-existing gender norms, for e.g. in this case, giving women the title deeds for new houses or the money to repair the existing ones. For More information on this story, please contact snehangt@gmail.com

Women Led Equitable Relief Distribution Post Tsunami

Location: Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu

Year: 2004

Type of Disaster: Tsunami

Contributor: *Chaman Pincha*

When NGOs interventions made a shift from distributing relief through traditional Panchayats with exclusive membership for men to distributing it through women's collectives, it made women reflect on their position in the political structure of the community and circumvent it with the twin strategies of resistance and collaboration. The resistance was to claim substantial decision making power on part of the women which was unheard of prior to the tsunami and the collaboration was to give only that much recognition to the traditional panchayat which would not result in a violent rejection of women's initiative backed by NGOs support.

SNEHA, an NGO, channelled the relief through its federation and extended its support when women's groups were negotiating the resistance from the traditional Panchayats. This also became a strategic opportunity for institutionalizing women's groups in disaster preparedness. SNEHA's federation had done a

quick survey to prepare a gender disaggregated database to verify the list prepared by the traditional panchayats. In the process, the federations were quickly able to spot out the excluded women and men. The gender disaggregated survey made it possible to procure age and gender appropriate clothing and other sanitary items for each household in the community. The entire process went through several stages in a quick and coordinated manner. Distribution was according to the family size, thus setting a precedent to prove that it is possible to make emergency response equitable and gender sensitive. *For more information on this story, please contact pincha.chaman@gmail.com*

West Bengal

'We Save Ourselves and Are Capable of Saving Others'

Location: Nadia, West Bengal

Type of Disaster: Floods

Contributor (and Photo Credit) : *Chaman Pincha*



Women building temporary shelter in Nadia

Leading a rescue team and even training men and boys in the skills of rescuing may be unheard of. But in villages of Nadia district, women search and rescue, they lead the early warning team; they swim fiercely in a special life jacket, made by them together with their children and as efficient rescuers. Hats off to these women who can now put together their own boats, build temporary shelters, repair their tube wells, and lead the search and rescue team. "We no longer depend on men to rescue us", "we save ourselves, and are capable of saving others too" is what women would say here with a sense of relief, legitimate pride and sparkle in their eyes.

Women in West Bengal through the Community Based Disaster Preparedness (CBDP) program supported by UNICEF have captured considerable personal and political spaces. They have come together for the purpose of resource mapping and transect walk which PLA (Participatory Learning and Action). It opened the doors for them to participate in meetings of *Gram Sabha* not as silent spectators. They formed a pressure group to also demand from *Panchayat* for better roads and sanitation, subsidised loans, distribution of poultry, etc. Strategic change in gender roles of women has thus changed the gender dynamics of the community in a visible manner. *A clear lesson can be drawn from this story*: Equipping women with non-traditional skills make women visible forces for DRR. *For More information on this story, please contact pincha.chaman@gmail.com*

*Disasters lower women's life expectancy more than men's, according to data from 141 countries affected by disaster between 1981 and 2002**

**Neumayer, E. and Plumper, T. "The Gendered Nature of Natural Disasters: The Impact of Catastrophic Events on the Gender Gap in Life Expectancy, 1981-2002", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 97(#), 2007, pp 551-566*

MUST READ

Story of the little *Champion* in Mumbai Floods (2005)

Excerpt from Mid-Day, Mumbai, April 18, 2012

<http://www.mid-day.com/news/2012/apr/180412--mumbai-The-rescue-operators.htm>

The Rescue Operators

*In a world dominated by glamour, grit gets the spotlight at a recent event saluting brave hearts in the defence and civilian world by **Saloni Dutta***

The Mumbai floods of 2005 are still etched in the city's memory. The extreme panic, hardship and loss of life that ensued actually changed the way the city views the weather. Today, a torrential downpour that sustains for a few hours sends we-can-take-everything-in-our-stride Mumbaikars, scurrying home, as they are scarred by the torment they endured in 2005.

Asma Ayub Khan *rescued more than 20 small children from flood waters* during those floods the city will never forget. Asma is an orphan and was raised at Sneha Sadan, at Chakala in Andheri. An emotional Asma said, "I was at the Mankhurd home for orphans during the Mumbai floods in 2005. The area is a low lying one and was quickly getting flooded. The house had children in the age group of 3 to 5 and we were getting quite worried about their safety as the rains continued." Asma started shouting for help, none came. She then shifted children to a dispensary nearby. The roads were water logged and she and another woman from the home carried the children in turns to the dispensary. But soon the water level reached about five feet and even the dispensary was starting to get flooded. Asma then remembered a building nearby and transported the children in groups of two to three by carrying them on her shoulders to the building. "All those kids were like my own brothers and sisters. I could not even think of leaving them in a situation where their lives were in jeopardy," said Asma. Now pursuing a course in nursing, she stays at the Holy Spirit Hospital's hostel at Andheri and visits Sneha Sadan, which is her home, during holidays.

"Don't hesitate to help people who are in need," is her rousing message.

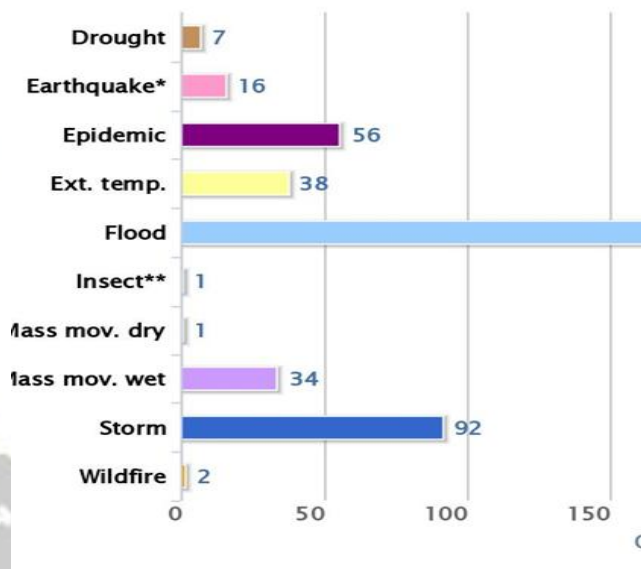
Did You Know?

Natural Disasters in India from 1980-2010

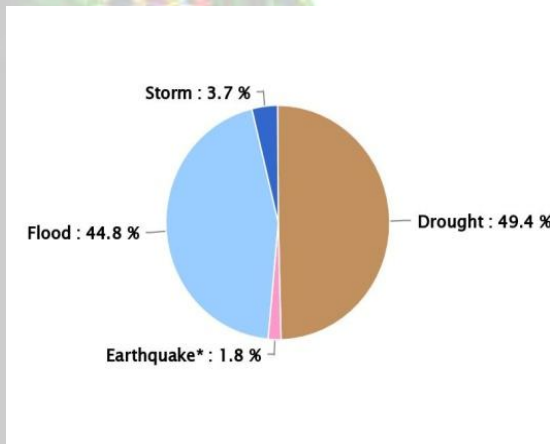
Source of Data and Charts: CRED, EM-DAT: The International Disaster Database, Classification, 2009a, URL: <http://www.emdat.be/classification>, accessed on 9 October 2012

No of disaster events	431
No of people killed	143,039
Average killed per year	4,614
No of people affected	1,521,726,127
Average affected per year	49,087,940
Economic Damage (US\$ X 1,000)	48,063,830
Economic Damage per year (US\$ X 1,000)	1,550,446

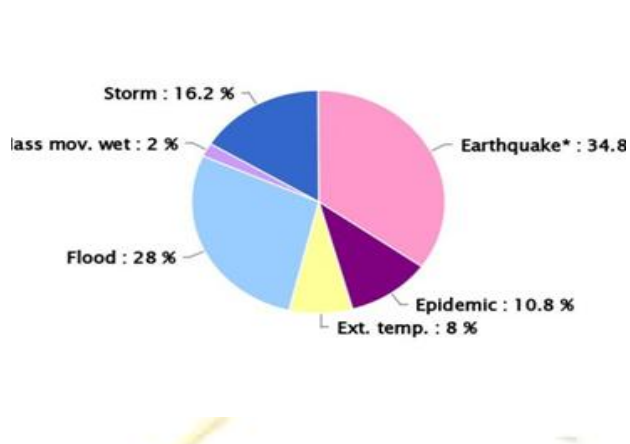
Women, girls and boys are 14 times more likely to die in a disaster than men

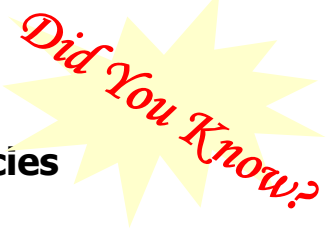


Percentage of people affected disaggregated by disaster types (India)



Percentage of people killed disaggregated by disaster types (India)





'Building Women's Resilience' - India's Laws and Policies

The National Disaster Management Policy 2009

http://nidm.gov.in/PDF/policies/ndm_policy2009.pdf (PDF; Size 1.38 MB)

Provisions

(Chapter 1, section 1.2.2) High exposure of women to disaster risks
(Chapter 3, section 3.4.5) Inclusion of women in SDRF battalions
(Chapter 5, section 5.3.2) Inclusion of women in community decision making committees and action groups for management of disasters
(Chapter 9, sections 9.4.1 and 9.5.1) Inclusion of women and women headed households for livelihood restoration in reconstruction and recovery

National Disaster Management Guidelines

<http://ndma.gov.in/ndma/guidelines.html>

Guidelines Containing provisions for women

Guidelines on Biological disasters (2008); Guidelines on Cyclones (2008); NGO Guidelines (2010); Guidelines on Urban flooding (2010); Guidelines on Chemical Terrorism (2009); Guidelines on Incident Response System (2010)

Some Key Provisions

Services:

- Safe food, clean water and minimum standards of hygiene and sanitation for pregnant and lactating women, women and children in cyclone shelters and relief camps; special healthcare support for pregnant and lactating women.
- Incident Response System Medical group would prioritise treatment of pregnant and lactating women

Training, Awareness and Capacity Building:

- Training to livestock farmers including women on mitigation of disaster losses covering post-earthquake, flood, cyclone and fire situations.
- awareness programme (Early Warning System, dos and donts, safety kits) at HH level especially women and children and women SHGs at community level
- To boost capacities at all levels with special emphasis on women to address disasters for reducing vulnerabilities.

Gender Mainstreaming:

- Recruit SDRF women personnel
- Adequate representation of women in ULBs with devolution of responsibility and financial power
- Encouraging women and youth groups decision making committees

Livelihood:

- Special skill training on disaster resistant technologies to construction, health and education workers including women's work force.
- Integrating DRR in Restoration of Livelihoods and including women
- Support to be given to revitalization of dairy, handicraft, handloom & small industries with special focus on women

Insurance:

- Insurance for disaster risk reduction to enable local communities to share risk for losses that are inevitable.
- Vital household assets, life and health of the family members including women and children to be covered.

Gender disaggregated data in Census Surveys:

- Need for augmentation of additional surveys by census commissioner for detailed information from household levels including gender disaggregated data.

Other Policies and Programmes

Flagship Programmes, Key Legislations and Policies of the Government do not cover disaster situations or make specific reference to disaster affected persons; though they may be making provisions to cover women and children and other vulnerable and marginalized groups. An overview of some of the programmes and policies show:

<p>The National Food Security Bill (NFSB)</p>	<p>NFSB covers disaster situations. While under its Chapter II, NFSB provisions include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutritional support to pregnant women and lactating mothers (Sec 4) • Allocations for other food based welfare schemes for women and children <p>Under its Chapter III - <i>Entitlements of special groups</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal rights to women, children and other Special Groups such as destitute, homeless, disaster and emergency affected persons and persons living in starvation, to receive meal free of charge or at affordable price, as the case may be. • State Governments in emergency or disaster situation to provide the affected households, two meals, free of charge, for a period upto three months from the date of disaster in accordance with such scheme <p><i>Access NFSB at</i> http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/draft/Draft_National_Food_Security_Bill_%202011.pdf (PDF; Size: 146 KB)</p>
<p>National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)</p>	<p>NRHM does not specify emergency or disaster situations; nor does it mention disaster affected persons. Its aim however is to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access of rural people, especially poor women and children, to equitable, affordable, accountable and effective primary healthcare. • One of the seven goals includes women's health; • Universal access to public health services such as Women's health, child health, water, sanitation & hygiene, immunization, and Nutrition. • Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) to include Women sanitary complex <p><i>Know more about NRHM at</i> http://mohfw.nic.in/NRHM/Documents/Mission_Document.pdf (PDF; Size: 52.1 KB)</p>
<p>Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)</p>	<p>NREGA does not specify emergency or disaster situations; nor does it mention disaster affected persons. However, provisions for women has been included in Schedule II section 6;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority shall be given to women in such a way that at least one-third of the beneficiaries shall be women who have registered and requested for work under this Act. <p><i>Access NREGA provisions at</i> http://nrega.nic.in/rajaswa.pdf (PDF; Size 8.96 MB)</p>
<p>Saakshar Bharat Mission</p>	<p>This flagship programme also does not specify emergency or disaster situations; nor does it mention disaster affected persons. Its aim is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and strengthen Adult Education, specially of women, • Extends educational options to adults who missed opportunity of formal education • Provides literacy, basic education (equivalency to formal education), vocational education (skill development), physical and emotional

	<p>development, practical arts, applied science, sports, and recreation. <i>Know more about Saakshar Bharat at</i> http://saaksharbharat.nic.in/saaksharbharat/homePage.action</p>
<p>National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)</p>	<p>NRLM does not specify emergency or disaster situations; nor does it mention disaster affected persons. Under its various provisions it however covers women and marginalized groups. For instance, Section 9.1: Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to identify and mobilize BPL households into SHGs, with priority being given to the SC and ST households, poorest of the poor households, women headed households and households engaged in declining occupations; NRLM would ensure that at least one member from each identified rural poor household, preferably a woman, is brought under the Self Help Group (SHG) network</p> <p>Section 15.1: The state agencies and the district units will target only BPL households in all Mission activities starting with social mobilization, SHG formation, federation building, capacity and skill building, pro-poor financial services, technical and marketing support and skill-based wage employment. However, the district units will particularly focus on the vulnerable groups among the rural BPL households such as the SCs, the STs, the women-headed households and households living vulnerable circumstances. In the sanction of financial assistance for the Mission, 40% of the total members assisted in a year should be women. The Special safeguards have been provided to vulnerable sections by way of reserving 50% benefits for SCs/STs, 40% for women, 15% for minorities and 3% for disabled persons <i>Read about NRLM at</i> http://www.indg.in/social-sector/rural-poverty-alleviation/nrlm_mission_document_in_english.pdf (PDF; Size: 52.1 KB)</p>
<p>Persons with Disability Act (1995)</p>	<p>The Disability Act 1995 does not cover emergency or disaster situations nor does it provide for women with disability in disaster situation. <i>Read about this Act at</i> http://www.lvpei.org/patientcare/vision-rehabilitation/images/disabilities-act1995.pdf (PDF; Size: 52.9 KB)</p>

*The **Recovery and Reconstruction** program in Gujarat (after January 2001, earthquake) Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry (post Tsunami December 2004), Sikkim (Earthquake 2011) and Bihar (Kosi Floods, 2008) consciously **included Women in the property ownership**. Gender concerns were incorporated in allocating land and house titles by jointly registering the names of both the male and female heads of the family and resale was not permitted to avoid forcing of spousal signatures.*

Recommended Resources

Tool Kits/Training Manuals

Training of Trainers Manual on Gender Mainstreaming in Disaster Risk Management

Training Manual; by GOI-UNDP DRM Programme, 2008

Available at <http://www.in.undp.org/content/dam/india/docs/gndrmainstreamingdm.pdf> (PDF; Size 1.48 MB)

A Training of Trainers module for mainstreaming gender concerns in all phases of disaster cycle

Guidance Note on recovery: Gender and knowledge for Recovery Series: Info Kits

Guidance Note; by IRP and UNDP, 2008

Available at http://www.in.undp.org/content/dam/india/docs/guidance_note_on_recovery_gender.pdf (PDF; Size 1.70 MB)

The Guidance Notes on Recovery: Gender is an effort towards documenting, collecting and sharing disaster recovery experiences and lessons through case studies

Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender-Sensitive

Policy and Practical Guidelines; by UNISDR, UNDP and IUCN; Geneva, Switzerland, 2009

Available at http://www.preventionweb.net/files/9922_MakingDisasterRiskReductionGenderSe.pdf (PDF; Size:3.14 MB)

Policy guideline on gender mainstreaming, and practical guidelines on how to institutionalize gender-sensitive risk assessments, implement gender-sensitive early warning systems, and use gender-sensitive indicators to monitor gender mainstreaming progress.

Series on Gender and Disaster Risk Management

Guidance Notes; by Helene Carlsson Rex and Zoe Trohanis; The World Bank, Washington D.C, 2011

Series of Guidance notes on integrating gender issues in various phases of disaster management.

- Guidance Note: Overview and resources;
Available at http://www.wds-worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2011/12/11/000333037_20111211230945/Rendered/PDF/658410WP0REPL0idance0Note0Overview.pdf (PDF; size: 796 KB)
- Guidance Note 2: Integrating gender issues in disaster risk management policy development and in projects;
Available at http://www.wds-worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2011/12/12/000333038_20111212010748/Rendered/PDF/6583400WP0REPL0web0Guidance0Note002.pdf (PDF; size: 1.02 MB)
- Guidance Note 3: Gender informed monitoring and evaluation in disaster risk management;
Available at http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2011/12/12/000333038_20111212011710/Rendered/PDF/6583500WP0REPL0web0Guidance0Note003.pdf (PDF; size: 1.21 MB)
- Guidance Note 4: Integrating gender issues in community based disaster risk management;
Available at http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2011/12/11/000333037_20111211230639/Rendered/PDF/6583600WP0REPL0web0Guidance0Note004.pdf (PDF; size: 1.23 MB)

- Guidance Note 5: Integrating gender issues in recovery and reconstruction planning;
Available at http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2011/12/12/000356161_20111212014908/Rendered/PDF/659160WP0REPLA0fo00Guidance0Note005.pdf (PDF; size: 1.22 MB)

Gender Sensitive Disaster Management: A Toolkit for Practitioners

Toolkit; by Chaman Pincha; Published for Oxfam America and NANBAN Trust by Earthworm Books, Mumbai, 2008

Available at http://www.preventionweb.net/files/7792_GndersensitivedisastermanagementToolkit.pdf (PDF; Size: 5.56MB)

Provides the nuts and bolts for mainstreaming gender sensitive interventions in disaster management in all phases of disaster management from preparedness to recovery

Guidelines for Gender Sensitive Disaster Management

Guidelines; by Shyamala Gomez; Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, Thailand, 2006

Available at http://www.apwld.org/pdf/Gender_Sensitive.pdf (PDF; Size: 2.73 MB)

Guidelines formulated to assist governments, the non-state sector and civil society, suggest practical steps to be taken in responding to women's concerns in post disaster situations

Books/Articles

Women as Equal Partners: Gender Dimensions of Disaster Risk Management Programme

Book; Compilation of Good Practices GOI-UNDP DRM Programme, 2008

Available at http://www.in.undp.org/content/dam/india/docs/women_as_equal_partners.pdf

Collection of success stories and good practices from DRM programme areas across the country

Building Better Futures: Empowering Grassroots Women to Build Resilient Communities

Document; by Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood (GROOTS), Booklyn-NY, 2007

Available at http://www.preventionweb.net/files/1576_10356.pdf (PDF; Size: 1.42MB)

Highlights roles of grassroots women in building resilient communities, insights emerging from resilience building efforts led by grassroots women in different countries including India

Women, Gender and Disaster: Global Issues and Initiatives

Book; by Elaine Enarson & P G Dhar Chakrabarti , SAGE Publications Pvt. Ltd , 2010

Information on the book available at <http://www.uk.sagepub.com/books/Book234495/toc>

Focuses on women's knowledge, capabilities, leadership and experience in community resource management for building resilience to hazards and disasters.

Portals

Prevention Web

A project of the UNISDR (The United Nations office for Disaster Risk Reduction)

<http://www.preventionweb.net/english/>

Serves the information needs of the disaster risk reduction community, including the development of information exchange tools to facilitate collaboration

Gender and Disaster Sourcebook, Gender and Disaster Network

<http://www.gdnonline.org/sourcebook/>

A one-stop, user-friendly electronic guide on Gender and Disaster Issues

ReliefWeb

UN Portal for Humanitarian Crisis Analysis

<http://reliefweb.int/>

Makes available the most relevant and updated information on humanitarian crisis and emergencies

National Institute of Disaster Management

<http://nidm.gov.in/default.asp>

Nodal agency for Disaster management; website also provides Information on efforts and initiatives in India on disaster prevention and preparedness at all levels

Background Image (Watermark)

Search and Rescue Drill on the Bank of Koyana River, Pimplegaon, Satara District, Maharashtra

Photo Credit: Tom Pietrasik/ UNDP India

Many thanks to all who contributed to this Special Issue!

If you have further information to share, please send it to the Solution Exchange for the Disaster Management Community and the Gender Community in India at se-drm_se-gen@solutionexchange-un.net.in with the subject heading "SPECIAL ISSUE- International Day for Disaster Reduction 2012"

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