GENDER IMPACTS OF DISASTER & DISASTER RECONSTRUCTION PROCESSES

(INSIGHTS AND LESSONS)

State Planning Commission
Ezhilagam, Chepauk
Chennai - 600005
Workshop on

Gender Impacts of Disaster & Disaster Reconstruction Processes

(INSIGHTS AND LESSONS)

Presented by

All India Disaster Mitigation Institute, Ahmedabad
and
The Prajnya Trust, Chennai

Organised by

Tamil Nadu State Land Use Research Board
State Planning Commission
Ezhilagam, Chepauk,
Chennai - 600005

December 2014
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# Workshop Team

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<td>Member Secretary(i/c) &amp; Head of Division (Land Use), State Planning Commission.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tmt. R.B. Koteeswari,</strong></td>
<td>Planning Officer (Land Use).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thiru. P.Suresh Kumar,</strong></td>
<td>Senior Research Fellow, Tamil Nadu State Land Use Research Board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thiru. M.Thirumavalavan,</strong></td>
<td>Technical Assistant (Land Use).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tmt. R.V.Meenakshi,</strong></td>
<td>Planning Assistant (Land Use).</td>
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## INSTITUTIONS/ DEPARTMENTS / NGOs

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<tr>
<td>Presidential Address</td>
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A workshop on “Gender impacts of disaster & disaster reconstruction processes” was held on 23.12.2014 under the Chairmanship of Vice Chairman, State Planning Commission. The key objective of this workshop was to focus on the issues, challenges and responses on gendered impact of disasters and to highlight the best practices and relief & reconstruction processes of Tamil Nadu. The presenter of ‘Gender & Disaster’ highlighted the role of “gender” in times of disaster and during the reconstruction process. In a community, each person has a role and performs certain functions, and all of these should be part of the disaster story. Women, men and everyone else should have the right to be a partner in relief, recovery and reconstruction. The presenter of ‘10 Years Later: Reviewing Recovery of Tsunami Affected Women from India’ shared the results of a comprehensive study undertaken by the All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) with its associated partners. The focus of their study was to discuss and highlight key findings from Tamil Nadu in India. The overall exercise showed that given an opportunity, women do take up leadership positions from response to recovery phases after a disaster. They need visibility in the process and voice in the decision making. The presentors of ‘Tsunami Recovery and Gender: The Case of Tamil Nadu, India’ stated that Disaster brings an opportunity. The recovery process of Tsunami has proved it as it has been observed that affected areas and affected communities are growing and developing in income generation, social status, infrastructure, education, health and hygiene, leadership, decision making process etc. The presenter of ‘Grassroots Women as Partners in Disaster Recovery and Resilience’ stated that the Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) reached out to a total of thirty-five affected villages in two districts of Tamil Nadu in the aftermath of the Tsunami. SSP has facilitated women at the grassroots transferring innovations to strengthen community response for preparedness. It undertook risk reduction measures that addressed vulnerabilities – disaster safe shelter, sustainable and alternate livelihoods, access to health, water and sanitation and psycho-social issues. Disaster and climate risk mapping is a starting point for communities to map their risks. For women, it builds their skills to benchmark their priorities and lead community plans that protect assets. The final presentation of the day was made by the Consultant of Tamil Nadu State Disaster Management Agency. He drew
attention to the common perception that one shouldn’t raise the cry of gender in a disaster situation. This perception is problematic, since women and men experience disaster in different ways. He stressed the need to have equal respect for male and female survivors. Speaking of some of the main features of Tamil Nadu Disaster Management, he spoke of the presence of planning at various levels, and various time frames. He also advocated the importance of increased participation of women at decision making levels, the importance of education about disaster management in schools, and incorporating SHGs in capacity building. The presentation was followed up by a roundtable discussion.
Introduction

On December 26, 2014, it will have been ten years since the tsunami devastated the coasts of almost a dozen countries around Asia. In these ten years, after the tsunami and other disasters around the coastal regions of Tamil Nadu devastated the gendered impacts and gender-sensitive stories manifold. A briefing and roundtable discussion may obliging to share the understanding of the gendered impact of disasters, best practices and lessons learned about gender-sensitive relief and reconstruction and the stories of women’s agency and leadership etc., from the institutional research studies with those charged with responding to disasters and planning relief and reconstruction projects of Tamil Nadu on the ground.

In this regarding a workshop on “Gender impacts of disaster & disaster reconstruction processes” was organized by Tamil Nadu State Land Use Research Board, State Planning Commission, Chennai and presented by All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI), Ahmedabad, Swayam Shikshan Prayog, Pune, and The Prajnya Trust, Chennai, held on 23.12.2014 under the Chairmanship of Vice Chairman, State Planning Commission. The key objective of this workshop is to focus on the issues, challenges and responses on gendered impact of disasters, best practices and relief & reconstruction processes of Tamil Nadu. The following questionnaires were mainly focused on the discussed

- How do disasters differently affect men, women and sexual minorities?
- How do our choices in the relief and reconstruction changes perpetuate or remove gender inequality in society?
- What are some good practices that have facilitated lasting, positive change?
- Where do we seek and find examples of women’s leadership and agency?
- Having identified women as architects of change, how do we build on their initiative and skills?
Three statements are considered absolute truth among academics and field practitioners who write about disasters:\footnote{This note draws primarily from case studies and chapters contributed to Linda Racioppi and Swarna Rajagopalan, eds., 
*Gender, Women and Disasters: Survival, Security, and Development* (forthcoming). The examples come from chapters by Sana Saleem; Julia Novak; Sabrina Regmi; Prema Gopalan; Chaman Pincha; Madhavi Malalgoda-Ariyabandu, Ramona Miranda, Kusala Wettasinghe; Eklavya Prasad; and Mihir Bhatt, Mehul Pandya and Hui Chi Goh.}

1. Relief and recovery efforts need to pay attention to how gender plays out in disasters.
2. Women are particularly vulnerable in the post-disaster period.
3. Disaster risk reduction, disaster management, and disaster recovery can reinforce or undermine longer-range development programs and strategies as well as women’s empowerment.

What is “gender”? “Gender” refers to the roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men, women and others. It is different from “sex,” which refers to biological characteristics. When we say “gender,” it is important to remember that we are not referring just to women, but also to men, transgendered persons and people of different sexual orientation and gender identity.

Stories from the field offer insights into the role “gender” plays in times of disaster and during the reconstruction process.

1. Disasters have gendered consequences. For instance:
   a. Lack of privacy affects women in very specific ways. During the Indus floods in Pakistan in 2010, for instance, volunteers found many women in advanced stages of pregnancy. They were living in tents that gave them little privacy and lack of privacy seemed to delay labour.
b. Men suffer the same shock, injuries and bereavement as women, but are expected to continue unaffected and shoulder responsibility for the family income and the physical activities of reconstruction.  

c. After the tsunami, aravanis were excluded from the relief camps, and ended up sleeping in the open, hungry and vulnerable to gender-based violence.

2. We solve the problems we see. This means the problems we overlook remain For instance:

a. The work that women actually do in a community may be at variance from gender stereotypes. For instance, in one community in Sri Lanka, women used to work in coral mining, but post-tsunami livelihood projects sought to give them work in fast-food preparation and coir weaving.

b. Men go out to fish, but women are an important part of the ancillary work in fisheries. Post-tsunami relief focused on providing men with boats and nets.

3. When we see selectively, we miss important things. For instance:

a. While men migrate for work, women experience every phase of a disaster (like floods) and by not taking that into account, we do not benefit from their insights.

b. In many places, clearing debris and repairing homes are done by women and girls. This means they have the experience to participate in the planning of community reconstruction.

c. Women work in fields and observe and monitor river water levels in the monsoon. This knowledge is invaluable in planning early warning mechanisms.

d. When one person has to handle both household and livelihood responsibility, their capacity to earn is diminished, and the entire family pays a price as older children take up jobs and care giving responsibilities, abandoning their education.

4. Where women are not included in policy and decision-making circles, their experiences and perspectives do not get factored into those policies and decisions.

5. Where women are involved in planning, implementing and monitoring reconstruction, they emerge as partners, architects of change and finally, are taken seriously in the community as economic and political players.

A ‘gender-sensitive’ perspective on disasters is ultimately this: You take note of every person in a situation and of their strengths and vulnerabilities, how they respond, what they think is their need

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and what problems they want solved. Going into a crisis situation with a gender-sensitive approach means taking into account each person’s vulnerability, visibility and voice.

1. **Vulnerability:**

“Vulnerability is a set of conditions that affect the ability of countries, communities and individuals to prevent, mitigate, prepare for and respond to hazards. High levels of vulnerability increase the likelihood that natural hazards will be unmanaged and end in disaster.”

Mapping vulnerability is where you start by asking the following questions: Who is vulnerable? Who else is vulnerable? What makes them vulnerable? In what way are they vulnerable? What increases or lessens their vulnerability? Does a particular action or project reinforce their vulnerability? What are the systemic fixes that will make them invulnerable?

2. **Visibility:**

By visibility, I mean, using a perspective wherein women and others don’t merge into men, but appear as they are, as humans with different experiences. The stories of those who are not men are also audible and visible because you are looking for them. You see reality as being different for everyone and as being gendered.

Gender stereotypes determine what we look for and find: crying women, labouring men, lost children. What we see and whom we listen to determine the solutions that we seek. In our choosing not to see or hear from one section of society, we are left with incomplete information, possibly with devastating effects.

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3. Voice:

“Voice” means, to my mind being able to speak up and having people listen; being able to participate; being able to decide for oneself; being recognized as someone who can do and who does what it takes, and being included in real terms.

Our answers to the following questions tell us whether we are ready to give marginalized people a voice:

- To whom do we reach out and listen?
- Who do we consider authoritative in a given situation?
- Whose perspective frames the context for us?
- Do we approach our interlocutors with preconceived (gendered) notions about what they want to talk about, what they care about, what they will say?

To summaries: Women’s voices, men’s voices and others’ voices should all be heard. Everyone knows something, and each person’s knowledge should be taken into account. In a community, each person has a role and performs certain functions, and all of these should be part of the disaster story. Women, men and everyone else should have the right to be a partner in relief, recovery and reconstruction.
This short article is based on the results of a comprehensive study undertaken by the All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) with its associated partners in August, 2014 to examine the impact of the response to tsunami relief and recovery efforts in Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka. AIDMI has worked on tsunami recovery issues from December 27, 2004 onwards. The focus of this article is to discuss and highlight key findings from Tamil Nadu in India.

The study used innovative methodologies, including appreciative inquiry, self-organizing group interviews, and some quantitative methods to better reach out to women and youth. Data was collected from about 15 locations along the coast from Chennai to Kanyakumari, from over 1500 families. There are not many methods or tools available to reach out to women to find out the impact.

The Women’s Resilience Index (WRI), assessing the extent of women’s involvement in preparedness and recovery in eight countries of South Asia (including Japan) stated that ‘current data for the monitoring and evaluation of DRR are inadequate to track and measure progress on gender equality’ (EIU 2014: 6). Four key observations from the AIDMI study in Tamil Nadu in India with relevant findings from other studies are discussed below.

First, the number of families that were counted as being Below the Poverty Line (BPL) had decreased in the past ten years. Income has gone up. Far less poor were visible in Tsunami communities now.

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and even less poor women in need of a home and income. Direct focus on women's income and a place to live from response stage has made a difference. The housing support was identified as an important driver of the livelihoods recovery in the recent impact evaluation of Swiss Solidarity Asian Tsunami Programme in India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka (Ferf. A., et al 2014: 5)\(^5\).

Second, almost all children of school-going age were enrolled in and attended school regularly. More schools were available. More types of educational options were available. Girl child was in school in almost all locations. Listening to women’s request to focus on education in response and the relief stage set the direction. A Save the Children study in Sri Lanka and Indonesia (Ache Province) shares similar insights, ‘new schools are standing in the place of those that were destroyed and in both countries there has been progress made in incorporating DRR into the school curriculum’ (Featherstone A. 2014: viii)\(^6\).

Third, the overall investment in houses (built by the government as part of the relief measures) had increased, improving the asset by addition of rooms, facility, service, and more. Invariably toilets were added as soon as kitchens were in place. The yard had more spices planted. Fruit trees had come up due to care offered by women and children. Men bought cars. Women added rooms to the house with additional savings. Experience of Duryog Nivaran members across South Asia (including Indonesia) shows that prioritizing investment in areas where women have direct control such as household level food security, WASH and traditional livelihoods lead to positive outcomes for resilience building (Duryog Nivaran 2014:13)\(^7\).

Fourth, though income from coastal fisheries had decreased, an increase was observed in fishing mainly due to rise in deep sea fishing. Smaller boats had given way to more motorized boats, group fishing to early but successful corporate fishing. As a result role of women in fishing had decreased, but income from fishing had gone up in families. A recent Oxfam report noted that because most livelihood rehabilitation activities focused on male-dominated sectors such as fishing, livelihood


needs of women were overlooked and found limited support (Oxfam 2014: 20). But in many cases tsunami recovery also opened new opportunities for women through vocational training and education in non-fishing jobs such as construction and masonry, including coir industry.

Tsunami response and relief work have created mainly favorable social and economic opportunity in the affected regions for women and on gender relations. Hardly any violence on women due to their active role in this process was reported. For example, the response to send a girl child to school as soon as possible and long term measures to offer free public bus transport towards girl students lead to many girls going out of village to vocational training centers. There was robust improvement in Rights of Child in the region where UNICEF had done work with other Child Rights agencies.

There was a rising awareness of “green energy” at all levels of the community and authorities; in spite of this, inexplicably, green energy was featured neither in the response phase nor in the recovery phase. Why were solar and wind energy not used as key sources of the energy for the households? A good case for Climate Smart Disaster Risk Management was clearly desirable. Also visible was the need for integration of eco-system based adaptation with recovery efforts. CDKN and PfR have picked up this area.

The history of SHGs in the coastal region in Tamil Nadu—good work of SNEHA, DHAN, and others—meant that there was some familiarity among the victims, and their families with concepts like financial discipline and financial literacy. This familiarity helped families use money in a more planned and thoughtful manner. Though all SHGs did not survive beyond initial 3 to 5 years, the ones that did, indeed, made a sustained difference in the lives of the poor and women. It was also felt that SHGs need to move beyond their traditional functions of promoting savings and credit to include risk transfer.

Overall exercise showed that given a chance in response women do take up leadership position from response to recovery phases after a disaster. They need visibility in the process and voice in the decision making. Complaining all the times about lack of women’s involvement and leadership in recovery can help, but only to an extent, what is equally if not more important is to promote and share appreciative inquiries and their results if we want to achieve far reaching impact. Only than we can make women as a force in resilience building and achieving gender equality in DRR through HFA2.

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The Indian Ocean Tsunami that occurred on December 26, 2004 is infamous for the widespread death and devastation that it brought in its wake. Caused by a massive 9.00 earthquake that had its epicenter under the west coast of the Indonesian island of Sumatra, the Tsunami caused killer waves to be sent from the epicenter of the quake to the coastline of 11 different Indian Ocean countries that lay between Thailand and East Africa. Overall, the tsunami caused the deaths of 285,000 people, resulted in injuries to 500,000 people, damaged property over $10 Billion and rendered 1.6 million people homeless sans an access to food and water. India also bore the brunt of the Tsunami as it first hit the Indian islands of Andaman and Nicobar to then proceed to the eastern coast of India where it severely affected the states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and the union territory of Pondicherry.

Thus, we see that the Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004 was one of the worst natural disasters of recent times. The scale and extent of the devastation caused by the Indian Ocean Tsunami required recovery and rehabilitation efforts on a war footing. A lot of governments and donor agencies took the onus to rebuild a more resilient society by pledging financial and other material resources for the recovery and rehabilitation process. As a consequence of this support extended by the various governments and donor agencies, a lot of academic inquiry and research has taken place to gauge the efficacy and efficiency of the post Tsunami recovery and rehabilitation process. Some interesting early observations are made during our visits to various villages. Let us know them one by one. The livelihood support is key component in long term sustainable recovery programme. In tsunami recovery process women were provided livelihood support with keeping local context in mind. For

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instance, women were provided special vessels, Ice-box for storage of fish to promote fish selling. The women were provided alternate livelihood support and skills like provision item selling, tailoring, rope making, soap and detergent selling etc. promote. Access to business development and skills training in areas such as tailoring, Soap and detergent making, Candle making has increased.

“I am able to cope up with future Tsunami and cyclone,” one artisan woman came to me, while I was trying to observe recovery in their village. She happily called group of 15-20 artisan women to give me assurance of her statement. I tried to know reason for their statement and they had said that their SHGs have so much of savings now. Most of the women are earning members of their family and they have their own savings. Almost all women know about preparedness kit and they keep it ready in their home. They are able to do financial transaction at individual level as well as family level.

As the tsunami damaged and destructed larger part of the Tamil Nadu Coastal Zone, the efforts with inclusion of community in infrastructure and development programme appeared more robust. The government have ensured shelter design with earthquake and cyclone resistant as well as connected with nearby town and with basic infrastructure facility. The government have also implemented and integrated various programmes for development, environment protection and risk transfer initiatives with tsunami affected area to sustained recovery of tsunami affected community. One of the important points observed that most of the tsunami affected community holds government card to access the government schemes. It must be observed that the shelters at relocated site were
registered jointly in the names of both male and female household members, creating a feeling of security and ownership among the women and reducing the vulnerability of uncertainty.

While moving around villages, we found most of the women seating in groups and we could observe the socialisation after tsunami. The tsunami recovery efforts made the community reunite and feel them protected. The tsunami-affected have feeling of being part of their community; have better family community ties, more trust to each other, participation in social events and better social network.

After the devastating tsunami the coastal communities were provided huge relief from governments and numerous agencies. The permanent shelter with ownership documents leaves memorable impacts and shelter have been proudly consider as physical assets. Due to the permanent shelter, communities have less maintenance expenses, focused on livelihood and able to increased livelihood and household asset. The communities are able to access community infrastructure for various purpose, Pay off debt with increased income, reduction of interest expenses to moneylender, more access of SHG fund and bank facility, value addition through shelter are other feature of tsunami recovery process.

The tsunami created great epidemic vulnerability as numerous coastal people were died and dead bodies lying over beach, infrastructure damage was extreme and there was utmost need to provide medical treatment to affected community. The villages were provided free medical camp, medical treatment and health and hygiene awareness camps. The government had established PHC with doctors within village and or proximity of 1 to 1.5 km of village which facilitate coastal community till today. The health and hygiene awareness and sensitization on solid waste management had reduced consequences of medical expenses.

The positive impact of Tsunami is that in case of Tsunami affected villages, it is found that every single family of village sends their children to school. Eventually, education ratio has increased.

“This is my community. I am responsible for its development”, said Kasturi Amma of Singarthoppu village of Cuddalore district, Tamil Nadu. Kasturi Amma is 65 years old and leader of women headed
Self Help Group, Cuddalore, and such type of statements made by women and adolescent girls during our visit to villages. This is because of the inclusion of women in various stages of Tsunami recovery process such as relief distribution, shelter design, supervision and monitoring.

**Conclusion:**

Disaster brings an opportunity. The recovery process of Tsunami has proved it as it has been observed that affected areas and affected communities are grown and developed in many ways such as income generation, social status, infrastructure, education, health and hygiene, leadership, decision making process etc.
Grassroots Women as Partners in Disaster Recovery and Resilience

Prema Gopalan, Swayam Shikshan Prayog, Pune

Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) or Self Education through experimentation is a learning and development organization based in Pune, Maharashtra. It has an outreach to over 5,00,000 rural poor households across 1800 villages in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil-Nadu and Bihar States in India with a mission to empower grassroots women to take leadership in resilience building in areas affected by disasters and climate change. SSP’s efforts illustrate that it is possible for women to act as powerful change agents and partners in the journey from disaster recovery to development.

In SSP’s perspective a people-led process from disaster to development:

- Ensures equitable access to information and public resources
- Rebuilds housing and infrastructure with full participation of poor women and their households
- Re-establishes livelihoods and restores community priorities in essential services
- Strengthens local governance mechanisms to increase responsiveness to community needs.
- Recognizes community institutions such as grassroots women’s groups in establishing safety nets for survivors.

SSP worked as Community Participation Advisor to the Government of Maharashtra in the World Bank supported project after the massive 1993 Latur earthquake. SSP was to re-design the rehabilitation effort to enhance participation of affected communities. Crucial to the success of this large scale reconstruction effort, was the government’s decision to officially mandate school educated women as monitors and interlocutors in the repair and reconstruction of houses. Taking this opportunity, SSP motivated and mobilized over 500 women in their villages to act as Samvad
Sahayaks or Communication Facilitators. The women defied the long-held gender stereotypes and there was a significant shift from their being restricted to house and farm work to entering public roles.

Centre-staging grassroots women’s groups, as information providers, planners, monitors and leaders in disaster recovery to participate actively as change agents has become the central model that SSP has fine-tuned over the years and transferred within India and to a few other countries.

Taking lessons from disaster reconstruction after the Maharashtra earthquake, SSP and women’s Sakhi federations travelled to Gujarat after the earthquake, Tamil Nadu after tsunami and Bihar after the floods to operationalize the innovative approach that centrally involved grassroots women in rebuilding their livelihoods, homes and communities.

In the aftermath of Tsunami in December 2004, SSP reached out to a total of thirty-five affected villages in two districts of Tamil Nadu. SSP has facilitated grassroots women transferring innovations to strengthen community response for preparedness. It undertook risk reduction measures that address vulnerabilities – disaster safe shelter, sustainable and alternate livelihoods, access to health, water and sanitation and psycho-social issues.

**Replication of the SSP Model**

SSP has piloted the Community Resilience Fund (CRF) and scaled up the initiative with the support of the Huairou Commission and later the World Bank. The Fund managed by women’s federations spurs innovations to protect natural resources and livelihoods in climate threatened belts, in eight States in India. While the Fund helps women’s groups to demonstrate initiatives, it also results in leveraging of resources for rebuilding schools, roads to health centers and water infrastructure in flood prone belts and drought areas.

Since 2009, SSP has partnered with NGOs as facilitators in flood and cyclone prone areas to create a vibrant grassroots ‘Community Practitioners Platform’ for building women’s leadership in resilience. As part of SSP’s scaling up strategy with the partnership of thirteen organizations across five States - Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Assam has ensured the replication of initiatives. In Bihar, SSP has facilitated a committed network across multiple districts of NGO partners and SHG federations at the grassroots from various flood prone and vulnerable areas.
SSP’s approach and partnerships ensure that grassroots women lead to advocate for their priorities and are recognized as change makers in national and global disaster-reduction agenda setting. SSP and its grassroots networks are part of technical support teams to scale up Huairou Commission’s Campaign on Community Resilience (www.huairou.org).

**Value of Empowering Women and Communities to drive the Recovery and Resilience**

Disaster and climate risk mapping is a starting point for communities to map their risks. For women, it builds their skills to benchmark their priorities and lead community plans that protect assets. For this to happen:

- Organized women’s groups need to be recognized as stakeholders in the community level disaster risk reduction (DRR) and development decision-making process
- Mechanisms for engagement need to be created for partnering with local actors
- Facilitating flow of resources for community driven plans through mainstream DRR and development programs is best achieved when grassroots groups leverage money and resources.

However, despite enough evidence, that women can be enabled to participate in large numbers in disaster recovery and in building resilience many myths persists even after two decades of work in India and globally. Arising from the experience of SSP and other like-minded organizations is a sampling of myths which, influence policy makers, planners, donor agencies, multilateral agencies and NGOs. These agencies do not place adequate emphasis or resources on building community capacities, probably influenced by the following myths:

- Myth 1: Grassroots equals small scale. Fact: Grassroots equals very big scale.
- Myth 2: Grassroots work means low-tech work. Fact: Grassroots work can be very high-tech work.
- Myth 3: Grassroots equals people who need to learn and be trained. Fact: Grassroots can train and teach experts.
- Myth 4: Affected people are victims need to be provided with aid. Fact: Village communities have tremendous resilience and they are the first ones to spring to action in calamities and with a little technical assistance, they become prime movers of rehabilitation process.
Impact

- Over 1000 grassroots groups trained as preparedness and response task forces to map risk, make community plans and leverage resources to build resilience in disaster prone communities.
- Financing mechanisms such as the Community Resilience Fund, which puts funds directly into the hands of local women’s groups /networks for innovations that protect natural resources.
- An advocacy platform ensures that grassroots priorities/practices are brought to the national DRR -disaster-reduction agenda.

Key Messages for Changed Strategy for Scaling Up

- Facilitates proactive leadership of women (groups and networks) working to combat poverty and develop community resilience in the face growing challenges (climate change, depletion of water, energy resources, growing food insecurity and health risks, agriculture).
- Existing grassroots women-led networks have the potential to be one of the fastest growing “Community Ecosystem or Platform” for organizing for resilience and up scaling microfinance, insurance, livelihoods/economic empowerment through social entrepreneurship.
- Women bring changes in the village when they identify and prioritize own initiatives, implement and manage
- Conduct cross learning exchanges and workshops
- Create knowledge products– reports, guidelines
- Lobby with National Disaster Management Authority on the role of women in recovery process.
Session – 5

Gender Based Relief and Reconstruction measures in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu State Disaster Management Agency (TNSDMA)

What is Gender?

Gender is a socially constructed, artificial roles and responsibilities and power relationship between men women, evolved historically which varies from society to society. It is changeable.

Gender refers to the socio – cultural definition of man and women, the way society distinguishes men and women and assign their social roles.

Concept clearance

- It is man made.
- It is not related with sex.
- Women as a whole are considered inferior to men.
- They enjoy very few rights.
- Their works remain undervalued or unrecognized.
- They face systematic violence in the hands of men and society.
- Less decision making power in social, economic and political institutions.

How gender differs from sex?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>SEX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is socio – cultural and manmade.</td>
<td>Sex is natural.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refers to masculine and feminine qualities, behavior patterns, roles and responsibilities, etc.,</td>
<td>It is biological, refers to visible difference in sex organs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is variable time to time, even family to family.</td>
<td>It is constant, remain the same everywhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It can be changed.</td>
<td>It cannot be changed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why gender issues to be mainstreamed?

- Sex ratio in India: 933 women / 1000 men.
- Women sex ratio is declining drastically in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and many other states of our country.
- Using technology, girl babies are terminated in the fetus condition at the mother’s womb itself.
• Dowry system is one of the major problems prevailing in the society.
• Domestic work traditionally performed by women generally remains unacknowledged.
• Common perception is that women work less than men.

**General role performed by women**

• Productive work.
• Reproductive work and
• Community work

**Discriminative practices**

**Family level**

• Preference to male infants and abortion of female infants.
• Parents pay more attention towards male child.
• Education for boys and girls are practiced for household works.
• Boys enjoy more freedom compared to girls.
• Girls are given less freedom to choose their life partners.
• Women are not considered at the time of decision making.
• A woman looses privacy and freedom as a whole.
• Usually the properties are registered in male’s name.

**Society level**

• Child marriage.
• Widow Remarriage & other social activities.
• Ladies are not allowed in worship place.
• Killing of female infants.
• Dowry system.
• Not allowed in decision making.
• Females are not allowed in burial ground.
• Eve teasing.

**Community Level**

• Not allowed in public meetings.
• There are no women members in village panchayat.
• Not allowed in Mosque to pray or Temple Poojas.
• The Priest in a temple is always a male person.
• Widows are not allowed for Remarriage.
• Cultural practices and customs. (Wearing Parda, etc.)
• Not allowed in public places or in front of unknown persons.
• Not allowed in burial grounds.
Gender in disaster situation

*Please don’t raise Gender now!!!*

*We are in an emergency.*

**Why does gender matter in Humanitarian responses?**

- Women and men respond differently
- Gender roles and power dynamics change in an emergency / post conflict situation
- Women and men bring different issues to the table

**Consider impact on women and on men in all activities ...**

- Emergency, security & food distribution
- Transport and Health services
- Provision of housing and shelter
- Training and livelihood opportunities
- Reconstruction of economy and infrastructure
- Elections and governance
- Media, justice and reconciliation......

**Equal respect for male and female Survivors**

Men wounded in conflict are perceived as heroes; women raped in conflict are seen as shameful and rejected by their communities.

**Gender mainstreaming ingredients**

- Organise men and women.
- Equal balance of women and men in decision-making positions
- Gender Audit / mapping
- Sufficient budget and resources
- Emphasis on women participation in development initiatives and various training programmes.
- Developing leadership qualities both among men and women.
- Creating earning opportunity.
- Strengthening the groups to address the issues of violence.
- Enhance the capacity of men and women to assert their rights.
- More emphasis on women empowerment along with men to bring them up.
Salient Initiatives of Gender focused Disaster Management Programs

- Women gave equal importance in DM activities like team formation, Trainings, capacity Building and other livelihood initiatives.
- In reconstruction phase, assets has been created as a joint ownership
- In the rehabilitation process, all the programs have been implemented through CBOs.
- In health related initiatives, special emphasis has been given to marginalized women
- In CBDRM program special focus is being given to the fisher folk considering equal importance to both men and women to build their capacity to face future fury of nature.