

BRIEF

Addressing Gender in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA)

Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP II)



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CONTEXT

Bangladesh is highly vulnerable to the impacts of natural disasters and its geography makes them a frequent occurrence. Located at the top of the Bay of Bengal cyclones are funnelled towards it while its low lying delta geography results in seasonal flooding and waterlogging. The geography also makes Bangladesh extremely susceptible to slow onset disasters such as those caused by sea level rise, salinity intrusion and fresh water availability. When disaster strikes its effects are compounded by a long list of social and political issues including; high population densities, unplanned urban developments, and high levels of poverty.

Women constitute nearly half Bangladesh's 150 million citizens. Due to gender inequalities they are disproportionately vulnerable to disaster and climate risks, and bear more of the resulting impacts compared to their male counterparts. Women are often discouraged from learning coping skills and strategies, such as swimming or climbing trees, and are frequently not permitted to evacuate without the consent of husbands or elders.

Cultural dress codes inhibit mobility during crises and have been linked with a higher mortality rates during disasters (in the 1991 cyclone approximately 59% of deaths were women -Begum, 1993). During disasters women and girls frequently suffer from; intimidation, gender-based violence, sexual

harassment, and rape, and the long term social impact of disasters often lead to early marriage, unplanned displacement and trafficking.

CDMP IN ACTION

CDMP II focuses on six outcome areas paying special attention to gender as a cross cutting issue in all activities. CDMP believes women have a key role to play in achieving effective disaster management in Bangladesh.

Gender in DRR and CCA Mainstreaming

CDMP promotes DRR and CCA mainstreaming in The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR), and The Department of Disaster Management (DDM), by supporting policy and regulation development, planning and implementation.

The followings are key policies and capacities where CDMP has successfully advocated for the incorporation of gender issues:

Disaster Management Act 2012: The act recognizes women as priority group "The Government can take appropriate measures to rehabilitate the vulnerable and affected community and for reducing the risks resulting from a disaster as per the applicable rules and procedures. Provided that while extending such assistance and support priority will be given to the people who are extremely needy and who are deprived of any kind of facilities especially: elderly people, women, children and person with disability"(Section 27 paragraph 1).



HIGHLIGHTS FROM IMPACT AND PROCESS ASSESSMENTS

Third Party Impact Assessment

- 88.4% of beneficiaries reported that risk reduction schemes have been benefiting women by reducing risk and offering others social benefits.
- 91.6% of respondents maintain that women participate in local DRR activities and 87.8% say women participate in DRR discussions.
- 82.2% of community members perceive CRA to be beneficial in addressing women issues.

Third Party Process Monitoring

- 75% of respondents reported that gender issues were considered in the design of the LDRRF schemes.
- 100% of respondents reported that pond sand filter and pipe line water supply options have considered the gender issues and 83% said that excavation, re-excavation of pond/canal has successfully considered gender issues.
- The survey finds that female UP members are enthusiastically involved in project implementation.

at the inaugural session of the IDDR in Dhaka on 12th October 2012.

CDMP also supported the Centre for Disaster and Vulnerability Studies (CDVS) at the University of Dhaka to organise a round table discussion on the same theme.

These initiatives successfully drew the attention of people to the efforts of women in protecting and rebuilding their communities before and after disasters, bringing them the forefront of the disaster management dialogue.

Addressing Gender in Rural Risk Reduction:

Over 3 million people of which about 50% are women in 39 districts benefited from local DRR interventions designed through the Community Risk Assessment (CRA) and Fast Track CRA processes. CDMP invests in both structural and non-structural interventions to reduce disaster and climate risks in rural areas paying careful attention to gender issues. Non-structural interventions include capacity development of local level DRR and CCA practitioners to better perform their roles and responsibilities.

CRA Guideline: Provide guidance on assessing community risks, vulnerabilities and the preparation of Risk Reduction Action Plans (RRAP). Gender is emphasized through the inclusion of a separate women's group in the process which is facilitated by woman to identify specific vulnerabilities and risk reduction interventions.

970 CRAs have been completed in targeted vulnerable communities all of which followed this process. Women constituted approximately 50% of the total participants ensuring their needs are properly represented in risk reduction interventions.

Facilitators Guidebook– Practicing Gender & Social Inclusion in DRR: The guidebook enhances the capacity of disaster management personnel to assess risks and vulnerabilities relating to; gender, ethnicity, social exclusion, and disabilities. The guidebook promotes the gathering information directly from target groups to balance priorities and prevent bias in DRR programmes. It also promotes women as actors in local decision making processes to further improve their representation in disaster planning & programing.

Pro women structural interventions: CDMP supports specific infrastructure interventions focused on improving women's lives and reducing their risks.

Women are primarily responsible for gathering **water** which can be difficult during disasters. They often travel for kilometres to find clean water putting their safety at risk to do so.

Through various interventions CDMP, working with GIZ, UDMCs, and other NGOs, has improved access to



safe drinking water to over 550,000 women reducing their risk to water borne diseases, possible case of abuse as well as reducing the domestic workload.

Lack of proper sanitation facilities can pose a severe risk to women. Not only increasing the risk of disease outbreaks, women have to wait until after dark to relieve themselves. This is unhealthy and puts them at an increased risk of violent attack. CDMP has established 5,700 disaster resilient **toilets**, benefiting 30,000 families in flood and tidal surge prone communities.

Lack of electricity and adequate **lighting** further increases the risk of safety, abuse and injury to women during their stay at the cyclone shelter in the time of emergency, CDMP provided solar lanterns and repaired 7 cyclone shelters benefiting about 3,500 women.

CDMP constructed and rehabilitated **roads** improving access for more than 100,000 women who can now easily reach emergency shelters, healthcare and other services.

More than 18,000 women are benefitting from disaster resilient habitat and cluster village **housing** interventions. Women are the worst victims of any disaster, these habitat and cluster houses improves their security, privacy, health and sanitation facilities, and reduces domestic workloads.

Employment: In 2013 Local Disaster Risk Reduction Fund (LDRRF) schemes provided short term employment for more than 60,000 women and 100,000 men.

Gender in Urban Risk Reduction:

On October 22, 2009, the government evicted 340 households located in the slums of Gopalganj. After the eviction CDMP, in association with UPPR and GPJ Municipality, came forward with a comprehensive pilot program to house 260 evicted households in disaster resilient housing complex. The initiative took an innovative approach to signing lease agreements with female members of the households giving them greater control over.

This project is empowering women, 4 of the 7 member Project Implementation Committee (PIC) were taken by women giving them a leadership role in the project ensuring their voices were heard. This gave them

active control over the implementation process.

Gender in Disaster Preparedness and Response:

CDMP trained 430 secondary and 1,500 primary school teachers and instructors of which about 40% are female to facilitate school earthquake drills.

In 70,000 schools earthquake drills have been conducted; among the total students participated there are about 52% are female.

Climate change adaptation:

418 women beneficiaries are provided with non-farm livelihood options under LDRRF schemes of CDMP. Lessons from this pilot are helping to scale up the initiative to a wider population.

Women in DRR and CCA Mainstreaming across the partner ministries and departments:

Women traditionally do not participate in disaster relief activities, this can cause problems especially when providing assistance to female victims. To address this issue over 5,000 female urban community volunteers have been trained and now work under the Fire and Civil Defence Services across six major cities. These volunteers played a crucial role in the search and rescue operations during the Rana Plaza collapse in April 2013.

CDMP supported Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) has trained over 16,000 female volunteers to improve gender representation in cyclone preparedness and responses across Bangladesh.

Working with the Dept. of Agricultural Extension, Dept. of Livestock and the Dept. of Fisheries CDMP delivered targeted training to over 8,000 women farmers and officers. CDMP supported Integrated Homestead Farming options under the Disaster and Climate Risk Management in Agriculture (DCRMA) project that is specifically designed for women beneficiaries. Disseminating information on improved and disaster resilient agricultural practices for women dominated agricultural activities. Reducing their vulnerability to disaster and improving their livelihood outcomes.

CDMP supported Department of Women Affairs (DWA) to develop a Risk Reduction Action Plan for 2013-2018, earth quake contingency plan and DRR toolkit. DWA developed a training module on Gender Sensitive Disaster Management to raise gender awareness gender and increase sensitivity.



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