

“DISASTER MANAGEMENT, SECURITY AND JUSTICE” REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP 2

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I- DISCUSSION FRAMEWORK

Natural disasters can cause loss in human lives and injuries, physical and economic losses, social and ecological destructions. Especially in the dense populated urban centers which grow out of control, these cause poverty and frailty. The effects of natural disasters differ for different genders. Heavier damages can be seen especially in fragile and easily affected societies and the recovery and reconstruction processes take longer. Because of this reason, especially the women along with the aged, children and the disabled people are seriously affected by the destruction that was caused by the natural disasters. Women and men are experiencing the surrounding conditions differently. Due to gender based inequalities, the outcome of the disasters can be experienced differently. Before, during and after the disasters the gender differences can put women into a vulnerable position.

In this workshop, the outcome of gender based inequalities on *disaster management, security, and justice* is discussed. The basics concepts and the common agreements are undertaken as follows.

Gender: Aside from the biological distinction, gender conveys different social roles. These roles are influential to create distinct life practices and specific needs for different sexes. On the basis of the gender based differences, natural disasters cause different results and needs. Thus, the effects of the natural disasters and the related policies need to be studied by taking this distinction into consideration.

Disaster: Disasters are the incidents which are triggered by the nature, technology or human decisions and cause physical, economic and social losses, hold or interrupt daily life and activities, harm human lives and human environment.

Disaster management: Disaster management is an interdisciplinary administrative method which is used before, during and after the disasters to prevent it and reduce the destructions of the disasters and mobilizes all sources of a society. Disaster management consist of prevention and reduction of destruction, preparation, reduction, immediate response and betterment stages. These all need to be implemented in program and by the rules of law.

Security: In a place where disaster takes place, general security of the society has to be considered as the number one priority. Both in normal and abnormal periods, one of the responsibilities of the state and the constitutional establishments is to defend its citizens rights in a gender blind way. During the crises security rights can be breached in various forms. The implementations of the disaster management activities can create negative results especially for women because of the lack of sensitivity for gender differences. For instance, under post-disaster conditions, women living in shelters (such as tents) and temporary housings

(prefabricated houses and containers) can be the victims of various types of abuses and violence starting with sexual harassment and molestation.

Justice: Natural disasters cause different results for the people because of the inequalities in a given society. In every stage of managing disaster unjust practices can be seen. Because of the disasters, the work and household conditions of women along with their productivity can be interrupted and their link to the rescue/support sources can be diminished because of gender based differences. When the rescue/support work and re-structuring policies are organized without gender sensitivity, unjust implementations can be seen and the human rights of the women are infringed upon.

II- PROBLEMS, VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES

General Points

During and after the disasters, especially the more vulnerable groups such as women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities can be more affected.

In these crises periods, there can be administrative and security breaches can be seen in disaster zones. Related to this the legal system cannot function properly.

During the disaster related chaos, the people of the region might end up carrying responsibilities for security and normalization. During the disaster periods, social, legal and administrative structure might either partially function, or stop functioning entirely and under these kinds of circumstances people might handle the control of some decision making by themselves. Sometimes this type of attitude expands the problems of the crises, deepens the problems and causes traumatic results.

In a post-disaster social setting the social roles played by both men and women can be observed to diminish. Although this is seen for both women and men, in specific societies this might cause deeper problems for women. Because of many factors such as unemployment and housing related problems, the responsibilities cannot be shared equally and this might bring traumatic outcomes. Dominant groups in any given society place pressure on other groups, including women and this situation doubles the inequalities in disaster settings.

The improper distribution of support materials, sending of unnecessary, inappropriate support material to disaster zones as well as mismanagement of materials to be received by the families in need and problems related to the storing of materials can cause significant management and legal problems.

The gender perspective of political authorities plays significant roles. This perspective might play a significantly positive or negative role on the social and political actors in any given society.

The lack of knowledge of the legal rights in a disaster context is one of the significant issues affecting people involved in disasters. Although the post-disaster experiences are functional for raising awareness for these types of issues, they may not necessarily produce results (for instance as in the case of housing rights for the couples with no official marriage). In a traditional socio-cultural background with weak economic conditions, women and other vulnerable categories become the most affected part of the society during a disaster.

Particularly, the expectation placed upon women to get the support material for her family can deepen women's suffering and cause traumatic situations when these materials are distributed in a disorderly fashion leading to a furthering of an already chaotic environment.

According to the previous experiences, there are two major reasons for the suffering of women in post-disaster settings: 1- Increase in violence, 2- Economic problems and poverty.

Another significant problem is the lack of chance for the lawyers and jurist to play an active role in the post-disaster environment. Lawyers can only enter the scene if and when there is a lawsuit. While there is a dire need for educated and experienced people in this arena.

The personnel (from another region) who play a role in the disaster region generally suffer from a lack of education and experience. This situation generally slows the intervention process and obstructs the use of the full capacity of rescue and support efforts.

The Problems that are Caused by Gender Differences in Disaster Setting:

Women do not place the highest priority on themselves to survive in disasters. Consistent with their given gender roles, women generally spend the majority of their time in private sphere/houses which creates a disadvantage for them in terms of surviving during a disaster. In disaster settings even the clothing of a woman can be important for her survival. A cloth is a crucial ingredient of a woman's honor, during the disaster a woman cannot go out naked and the effort and time involved in having to wear proper clothing to escape can cause further danger. This stands as a significant example to display the importance of surrounding socio-economic factors.

Everyone is affected by the disasters. However women are more vulnerable. For instance, in Turkey, Pakistan and India, it was widely observed that men left their wives for different reasons. The majority of the women do not have property and this situation generally makes women poorer, and puts their life and property security in danger. While men can easily marry other women after the death of their wives, women could not do the same because of social pressure in various occasions. This also stands as another example to show the gender based inequalities.

All forms of violence against women increase after disasters. Socio-economic factors play a crucial role in this.

Gender Based Approach in Disaster Management:

The responses to the natural disasters are corresponded with the life styles of the people in disaster zones. For instance because of nomadic lifestyle, the disaster related support material cannot be sent successfully to the people in need in Kenya. The inverse proportion between the sufferings of women and children and the support that they receive marks the administrative problems in these efforts.

The necessary statistical data on women at the household level to choose accurate methods for a better disaster management are generally not available. This situation creates negative effects in the process of support and service delivery stage for the women. Having these types of records, therefore, is critical to create a just and logical support delivery system. It is very important to create information collection centers at the city level.

In every country the perspective of political authorities on gender issues plays a significant role. The preparation of the political arena on these subjects appears as one of the key factors for awareness raising. The preparation of educational programs and psychological support programs in advance are very important and necessary. Both pre-disaster efforts to reduce risk and the extension of awareness raising programs to the larger parts of the society are very important to shorten the recovery process in which people can easily return to their normal life.

Coordination for Successful Disaster Management:

The lack of coordination between central government and the local administrations are widely seen especially in developing countries. While there is none or very little authority given to the NGOs, central agencies are dominating the decision making processes against the local ones. This situation causes unsuccessful results in disaster recovery and the following betterment implementations. The communication problems, the lack of power sharing, reduce the level of participation between the central government, the local agencies and the NGOs. These communication problems diminish the capability and effectiveness of these agencies. Gender is also an effective factor which directly influences decision making processes. Gender based inequalities and injustices, increase the fragility of the society and interrupt the recovery process. For a successful disaster management model, gender inequality needs to be cured and role needs to be given to the whole agencies in all levels. The success of these efforts does not only increase the success of the pre-disaster risk reduction, but also post-disaster efforts.

To create an effective risk and disaster culture is only possible and successful with a coordinated effort that includes all possible actors.

Law Related Security and Gender:

The disaster process is the occasion in which the legal security perception is being tested. Any of the personal, administrative, private, and public decision and implementation cannot be considered legitimate without being secured by the law. If the issues that are highlighted in this workshop and in the other sessions are divided into two group as controllable issues by people and the ones which cannot be controlled by the people, it can be clearly seen that controllable problems of people generally appear with the lack of law.

In addition to this finding, the lack of gender consciousness also appears as another element for this reason. Even in the cases in which the law is abided, some issues such as the limited social access of women to the courts and the habit of choosing men for official communication between the courts and the people influences the success of the legal systems. The difference between the intent and the reality needs to be highlighted here. Even if there is a well structured legal system, if people are cut off from their normal safe environments the legal system will not function as intended.

The influence of administrative problems on the legal system needs to be highlighted. As an extraordinary period, the implementation of the regular norms of the legal system requires more time and energy during and after the disasters.

Recently, the disaster management process has evolved into a risk management process. The models and plans that have been created on the concept of risk must include administrative frailty and the absence of law.

Looting, corruption in the delivery of the support material and the unjust use of public sources can be seen during the natural disasters. Since these are widely known patterns of corruption that are seen all over the world, the plans to respond to these issues need to be prepared in advance. However it is difficult to describe a systematic effort in this nature.

Disaster Management and Education:

It is critical to highlight the significance of education in disaster management. Besides information, educational programs provide survival techniques to survive, talents to reduce the level of destruction and hope for the future.

Previous social roles among the gender categories provide a base for the disaster and post-disaster behavior. Because of this reason, the education of the people who are the focal point of administrations is very important.

III- CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Gender needs to be implemented in all plans and programs including disaster management. It is known that in all over the world, traditional disaster management models have been discarded and a risk management approach has been adapted instead. Therefore, gender perspective must be considered in the planning and management of the risk.

Policies regarding disasters should be reorganized with the consideration of gender issues. A new institutionalization and organization process is needed.

Even though disaster risk management requires a holistic approach, local aspects of disasters should not be ignored. The plans should be made according to regional and local characteristics of disasters with the consideration of local needs. Vulnerable sections (such as women) of the society should be especially given importance, and efforts for raising consciousness and capacities of these sections should be given priority.

A reductionism of equality between sexes exists at the constitutional level. This regulation is not sufficient in terms of gender mainstreaming including the area of disaster management. Gender equality should be implemented in the constitutional text. It should also be given place in laws and other written legal texts.

Permanent commissions should be formed in the Parliament, which could lead a social transformation by allowing the representatives to self educate themselves.

Within the context of disaster management, institutions, organizations and individuals should act together in all phases of disaster management such as prevention, preparation, intervention, and reconstruction.

In case of a disaster, the most urgent responsibilities of the government are; the strengthening of relations between central and local governments, providing effective coordination for

standard service and practices, ensuring safety and security of both life and property, of disaster victims and women.

Disasters cause destruction of social order. Disorder that emerges after disasters and the perceptions related to it are not the same in all societies, therefore specific mechanisms need to be developed in order to understand local dynamics. Decisions to respond to the changing needs (according to the place, the situation, and the time), should be made by gathering traditional/local knowledge.

Education for raising consciousness about natural disasters is very important. It is important to assure women's participation in educational activities during and after disasters. Education should be gender based.

Preventive measures should be taken against security problems such as dark streets, distant toilets to the shelters during the sheltered life conditions after disasters.

Household information, including data regarding women, (not the kind that is based on the head of the household) is needed for choosing the accurate method in disaster management. Including women's data in the household information is crucial to provide the records in order to transmit post-disaster aid to them. In this context, it is important to establish and operate town information systems.

Women's needs play an important role in planning and designing of the residences. Women's contribution should be considered in the efforts for the durability of the residences against disasters. Women's roles are especially important, in not allowing changes that would impair the durability of the house against disasters. Along with others who are the actual users of the residences, women's expertise in this area would strengthen the self-inspection mechanisms which would have an important role in risk mitigation. Steps to organize awareness raising activities should be taken in this direction, and necessary plans should be made.