Why and how does the risk to gender-based violence increase during disasters?

Evidence from the Philippines, Indonesia and Lao PDR

Dr Priyanka Bhalla



What is Gender-based violence?

"an umbrella term for any harmful act that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to a woman, man, girl or boy on the basis of their gender. GBV is a result of gender inequality and abuse of power." Includes but is not limited to:

trafficking for domestic sexual sexual sexual violence violence exploitation or harassment domestic slavery gender-based harmful discrimination forced or early forced traditional (e.g. denial prostitution; marriage practices service access)

Why is this research important?

- Gender-based violence during disasters is an under researched and overlooked topic.
- 2) The literature that exists states that the risks to GBV increase during disasters BUT most of this research has been in developed countries
- 3) There is little to no information for low to middleincome countries which are regularly disaster affected
- 4) A lot of information is anecdotal from "grey" literature or includes short, qualitative studies
- 5) Long-standing failure in humanitarian community to adequately prevent and respond to GBV during disasters and other crisis.

Main points in existing literature review







Primary research questions and sub-research questions

Primary research question:

Why and how are the risks to gender-based violence exacerbated during disasters?

Sub-research questions:

- 1) What characterizes GBV in disasters? How does SGBV, during and in the direct aftermath of disasters, affect boys, girls, women and men differently?
- 2) To what degree are GBV prevention and response incorporated in the national disaster risk management laws and policies? Can disaster law be an effective tool in preventing the risk to GBV during disasters?
- 3) How can public authorities (focus on national ASEAN governments) and humanitarian actors (focus on National Societies and IFRC) prevent and respond to SGBV during disasters? How can the coordinated community intervention approach serve as a model for improved coordination and response by disaster actors?

Theoretical Framework

1) Coordinated Community Response based on Duluth Model: Minnesota, criminal justice intervention in domestic violence cases (Pence and Shephard, 1999) – 8 principles in this model

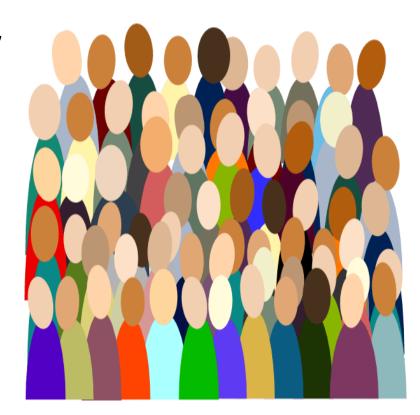
2) Disaster Law as a Tool

Main argument

The coordinated community response, in combination with a strong, national disaster law framework can result in effective preventative measures for the risk to GBV during disasters.

Who Participated and Research Methods

- 1,779 disaster affected individuals (846 men and 933 women) participated in the household survey
- 358 disaster affected individuals (83 adult men, 93 adult women, 91 adolescent boys and 89 adolescent girls) participated in the FGDs
- 58 key informant interviews (KIIs)
 across the health, legal, security,
 psycho-social and government
 department sectors were conducted.



Where and which disaster?

Country	Data Collection Sites	Disaster and population description
The Philippines	Aklan and Leyte	Large scale: Typhoon Haiyan (2013) – urban, rural, coastal / shelter and non-shelter
Indonesia	Aceh and Bima	Mid scale: Pidie Jaya earthquake and Bima floods (2016) – rural and urban, shelter and non- shelter
Lao PDR	Oudomxay and Sekong	Small scale: Floods (2016) – rural and non- shelter

2018 Disaster Risk Governance Academic Seminar

Organisational Process

- Partnership between IFRC and the ASEAN Disaster Management Committee, Working Group on Prevention and Mitigation
- Raising awareness within the National Society on SGBV and response during disasters (PRC, PMI, LRC)
- Formation of intersectoral steering committee
- Recruitment of data collection team
- Fieldwork planning and data collection
- Lessons learned and psycho-social debrief workshop



Results – all three countries

(Household surveys, FGDs and KIIs)

- Adolescent girls, followed by adolescent boys and elderly women are most at risk of GBV during disasters
- Household survey respondents were distressed by the rise in early marriage and domestic violence 6 months following the disaster
- Overcrowding in evacuation centres and shelters, lack of separate toilets for men and women, too few safe spaces for women and children.
- FGDs brought attention to many existing GBV cases and the need for stronger referral pathways and survivor services
- Emphasis on strengthening child protection in schools.

Results – all three countries

Disaster Laws and Provisions for GBV survivors

Philippines (most robust)

2010 Philippines DRRM Act, the 2015 Children's Emergency Relief and Protection Act, the Department of Social Welfare (DSWD) Guidelines on Women Friendly Spaces, the Council on Anti-Trafficking and the Violence against Women and Children (VAWC) Information desks

Indonesia (only one regulation)

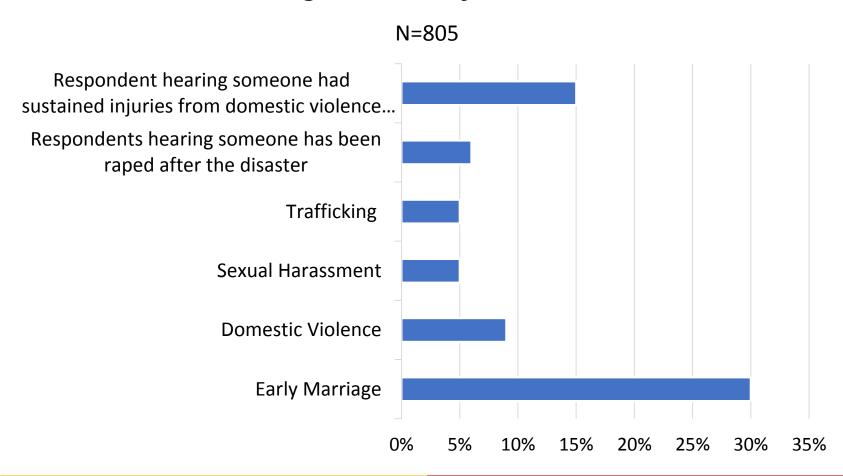
BNPB Perka (Regulation) no.13 on Gender Mainstreaming in Disaster Management / Disaster Management Law no.27 (2007), article 3, 4, 8 and 48

Lao PDR (no framework but the opportunity exists)

Decree on social welfare no.169 (2013) – emphasis on child protection

Results – Philippines

Incidents causing distress after the disaster



Results – Philippines (FGDs and KIIs)

Emergent Themes:

- The lack of separate spaces for men and women, separate toilets and bad lighting in evacuation centres
- The need for child protection committee, SGBV prevention awareness in schools.
- The need to better understand and incorporate preparedness, response and recovery for the LGBTQ+ community.
- The need to train and build stronger referral pathways at the barangay level and to ensure that the VAWC desks are permanently there.



Results – Indonesia

Incidents causing distress after the disaster

Type of incident	Response	
Early marriage	18%	
Domestic violence	13%	
Women who experienced injuries due to domestic violence and a ccessed health services	12%	
Sexual harassment	7%	

Results – Indonesia (FGDs and KIIs)

Emergent themes:

The increase in sexual harassment in temporary shelters

The importance of well-designed livelihoods interventions

The dependence on village level dispute resolution mechanisms

Results – Lao PDR

Incidents causing distress after the disaster

N = 265	Early marriage	Domestic Violence	Communal Violence	Respondents hearing someone had been raped after the disaster	Respondents hearing someone had sustained injuries from domestic violence after the disaster
Women and girls	47%	32%	n/a	27%	43%
Men and boys		29 %	30%		

Results - Lao PDR

FGDs

"The violence increased because of the lack of safety and surveillance [after the disaster]. It started to get worse after 2 weeks" said an adolescent, male participant in Oudomxay.

Adolescent girls emphasised that livelihoods trainings are needed to prevent and decrease GBV. They also spoke about having proper toilets with locks and early warning systems which reach all community members during the onset of floods.



Discussion

Coordinated Community Response as a Framework and Disaster Law as a Tool

Most likely to be effective in the Philippines because of institutional strength

Lessons that can be learned for other contexts

Future Research Recommendations

- Stronger coordination between in-country protection and shelter clusters before the onset of disaster and crisis.
- Integrate GBV prevention and response into national disaster law frameworks
- Use RCRC auxiliary role to help identify safe evacuation centres
- Stockpile dignity kits
- Budget and prepare for implementation of safe spaces
- Partner with other organisations for longer term GBV prevention programming (beyond emergency phase) – addressing root causes
- Future research on the linkages between livelihoods programmes and violence prevention / on coordination systems between disaster and non-disaster actors / best practice exchanges on national disaster law frameworks

And finally...

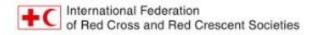
Even if you have reams of evidence on your side, remember: numbers numb, jargon jars, and nobody ever marched on Washington because of a pie chart. If you want to connect with your audience, tell them a story.

- Andy Goodman

THANK YOU AND QUESTIONS ?

Co-organized by:







In partnership with:

















Canadian Red Cross



