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Beyond man, woman & the third gender—Viewing Gender & DRR through a public health lens



Why the need

- Disasters lower women's life expectancy more than men's, according to data from 141 countries affected by disaster between 1981 and 2002.
- Women, boys and girls are 14 times more likely than men to die during a disaster.
- It is more likely that women will be victims of domestic and sexual violence; many even avoid using shelters for fear of being sexually assaulted.



Quote Unquote

*“Our generation is becoming so busy trying to prove that Women can do what men can do” so much that women are losing their uniqueness. Women weren't created to do everything a man can do.
Women were created to do everything a man can't do.”*

- Advocate Seema Anjum.



EQUALITY



EQUALITY = SAMENESS

Equality is about SAMENESS, it promotes fairness and justice by giving everyone the same thing.

BUT it can **only work IF everyone starts from the SAME place**, in this example equality only works if everyone is the same height.

EQUITY



EQUITY = FAIRNESS

Equity is about FAIRNESS, it's about making sure people get access to the same opportunities.

Sometimes our differences and/or history can create barriers to participation, so we must **FIRST ensure EQUITY** before we can enjoy equality.

UN Meeting, 29th & 30th, Bangkok, Thailand



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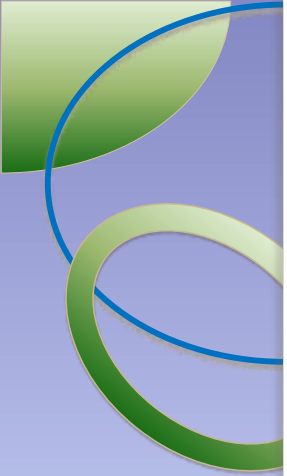
The upstream parable in a Risk Reduction Context

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Concern on the front-lines

- Privacy
- Cultural barriers
- Hesitancy
- Herd mentality
- Free and Irresponsible media networks.
- Film depictions which convey messages loosely.
- Medical Interpreters as Cultural brokers and Gate-keepers
- Need for english proficient communities or well versed translators as rural volunteers.





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What does neutralizing, rather equalizing in a not so equal world mean to stakeholders engaging in risk reduction and change adaptation ?



Woman, woman and more woman !

- Women's responsibilities among their families and in the midst of communities, and as stewards of natural resources, position them well to develop strategies for adapting to changing environmental realities of our times.
- The Borewell Story
- Underhill Case study

Man and the blind-side

- Other kind of dis-comfort and dis-advantage in their gender-role socialization.
- Men as guardians have greater risk and responsibility within their families and also as volunteers and rescue assistants during a post disaster scene.
- A sense of failure and inadequacy sets in by witnessing the chaos and melancholy in futile submission.

Inclusive Recommendations for the future

- Engaging in dialogue with **faith based coalitions** to mainstream gender security in DRR and CCA. (Existential crisis in Churches, Mosques and Temples).
- **Merit based involvement** of women in decision making rather than quota based.
- Pushing the **media to exercise responsibility** in their conversations (Barkha Dutt – Indian Media case study- first day period leave).
- Building gender sensitivity from the very roots and bringing **co-ed education as a uniform pattern.**



- Emphasizing **compulsory sex education in all schools**, all over the world and fostering the philosophy of mutual respect.
- Engaging barefoot doctors and ASHA workers who communicate with local household to promote gender equity and address social determinants of health which affect women more.
- A separate risk reduction policy for the **third gender** ?

- A separate policy to engage **gender mainstreaming, DRR and CCA in social media**, video blogging, Radio Jingles and large scale community level sensitization.
- Sustainable DRR efforts and community action will require to channelize the energies of men, women, children and the elderly into the entire discourse in our quest to create a more equal world.

- More strategies on how **aid distribution systems can ensure gender equity.**
- Need for more thinking on how **nutrition accessibility** to women and also the girl child at home can be made more fair.
- Create **women circles** in local community networks and begin qualitative dialogue. (Eg: Needs, Problems, Expectations, Experiences, understanding and reactions).

Last Appeal

- While promoting Gender equality and bringing forth gender equity, please remember to teach people and societies to understand, rather realize that women are the cornerstone to social and economic progress. While we empower them, also inculcate a sense of family solidarity in them. They are the only people on earth who can understand what it means to bear a child and build a family and what it also means to not have one.

Reflections

- Man remains a stranger in the world, he has mechanically created. – Dr.Alexis Carell, in “ Man – the Unknown.”

Can we make attempts to prove this wrong ?

The solutions we need are simple, which ought to be sustainable and which must be repeatedly re-enforced.

