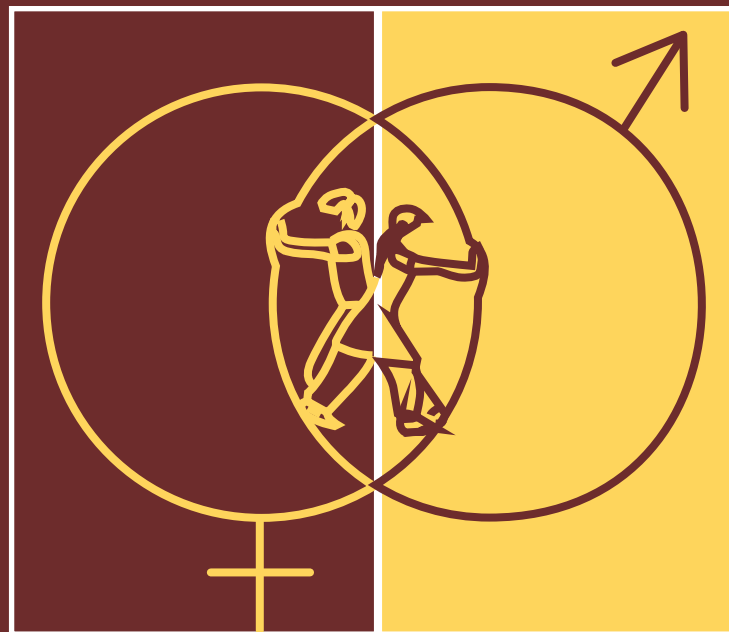


# Gender Sensitive Disaster Management

A Toolkit for Practitioners



Chaman Pincha

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*A Toolkit for Practitioners*

*Chaman Pincha*

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## Contents

Foreword	v
Preface	vi
Acknowledgements	viii
Introduction	xi
1. Let us understand Gender	1
2. Disaster through a Gender Lens	19
3. Proactive Measures	51
4. Responding to Disaster	93
Glossary of Tamil Terms	117
Short Profile of Participating NGOs	119
References	121
Speak to Us	123





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New Delhi, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2008

### FOREWORD

Chaman Pincha's new publication "**Gender Sensitive Disaster Management: A Toolkit for Practitioners**" and the companion volume titled "**Indian Ocean Tsunami Through the Gender Lens: Insights from Tamil Nadu, India**" are welcome contributions to the disaster discourse because they centre-stage gender analysis in the context of the post-tsunami responses of the Government, civil society and the disaster-affected communities. The Toolkit for Practitioners provides the nuts and bolts for mainstreaming gender sensitive interventions in disaster management in all phases of disaster management, including preparedness, mitigation, response, rehabilitation and recovery phases. In this Toolkit, Chaman Pincha has integrated the concepts and strategies related to gender, analysed disaster risk and vulnerability profiles, interfaced the logic with field insights garnered through interactions with disaster-affected communities and development practitioners and compiled the tools and techniques for mainstreaming gender in all phases of disaster management.

I am confident that this Toolkit will be a significant contribution to the disaster management literature in India. This Toolkit can also be a valuable resource material for Trainers and to the students of social sciences and humanities, especially to those pursuing their studies in social work, psychology, sociology and gender studies. I am sure that this Toolkit will also be welcomed by development practitioners and representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations as it will provide them useful insights on gender-aware disaster management interventions. I hope Chaman Pincha's contribution in this field will encourage academics, practitioners and other stakeholder groups concerned with various aspects of disaster management to explore similar studies.

I wish both these publications all success and hope that it will benefit humanity by reaching out to those organisations, institutions and individuals working at the cutting edge level with disaster-prone communities.

(N. VINOD CHANDRA MENON)

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## Preface

Oxfam International is a confederation of thirteen organizations working together with partners and allies around the world in over 100 countries to create lasting solutions to poverty, hunger and injustice. When disaster strikes, Oxfam and our partners move quickly to provide life-saving assistance to those in need. Once the immediate danger has passed, we work to rebuild lives and reduce the risk of future disasters. In this endeavor, Oxfam adheres to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which entitles all people to physical safety, secure livelihood, basic social services, a life with dignity, and a say in the decisions that affect them.

Oxfam believes that disasters result from the interaction of social vulnerability and natural hazards, which combine to put certain groups of people at greater risk than others. This understanding of vulnerability and risk is crucial to our efforts to address the differential impacts of a disaster on men, women, children, the elderly, and the physically challenged. Oxfam believes that disaster response and risk reduction activities—viewed through a vulnerability lens—have the potential to be important catalysts for social change.

Experience has time and again highlighted the particular vulnerability of women and girls in disasters. Oxfam seeks to respond to women's needs after a disaster and, equally important, to engage in work to address the root sources of their vulnerability (social, economic, and political). Oxfam works worldwide to help women campaign for legal reforms, acquire literacy skills, raise the income of their families, strengthen their voice, build peace in their communities, and understand their human rights.

Over the last few decades, Oxfam affiliates have conducted a number of research studies aimed at understanding and addressing the gender-differentiated impact of disasters. However, every disaster presents new challenges and opportunities for learning. The magnitude of the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami triggered a massive humanitarian response; thousands of local, national, and international organizations rushed to the Tsunami-affected areas to provide assistance. Not all of them had previous experience in disaster response and recovery and many did not have a deep understanding of the gender considerations.

This Toolkit builds on a comprehensive research conducted by Ms. Chaman Pincha and her team on gender differential impacts of the Tsunami and gender mainstreaming strategies of NGOs in Tamil Nadu in their Tsunami relief and rehabilitation efforts. The key strength of this Toolkit is that the tools for gender mainstreaming in disaster management are sharpened by a bright and committed group of NGO staff and grassroots women's federation members, with their insights, experiences, emotions, and inputs. The process of working with the NGO staff and grassroots women in developing these tools helped the author understand and address issues and facilitating factors in mainstreaming gender equity considerations into disaster management policies and practices.

We applaud and appreciate the committed work of the author and her team, which has yielded remarkable insights grounded in both concept and the field experience. We hope humanitarian agencies involved in disaster relief and risk reduction will find in it a useful tool for integrating gender-equal strategies and approaches.

**N. Hari Krishna**

*India Humanitarian Country Team Representative*

*Oxfam America*

October, 2008

vii

## Acknowledgements

This Toolkit would not have been possible without the intimate revelations of women, men and Aravanis\* who readily participated in focus group discussions and in depth interviews and shared their turbulent experiences in settings marked by trust and mutuality. I am deeply grateful for their courage and willingness in recounting their painfully personal feelings and circumstances which cannot be adequately described in words.

I profoundly value the keen co-operation of the NGOs who, in spite of their busy work schedules readily spared time for us throughout our research process and were eager to be informed of our research findings. BLESS, AVVAI, CARE Trust, EKTA, FPAI, PEDDA, PURA, SASY, SNEHA, HOPE, and PRAXIS collaborated substantially with the research process described in the Toolkit.

The contribution of my team members has been immense. Terrence Berger convinced me of the relevance of the chapter on tools and also persuaded me that “a talk to me” sort of Toolkit would be more effective than a descriptive one. His illustrations are scattered throughout this Toolkit. Usha meticulously tested and validated most of the tools in the field along with me. Usha’s translation will help take the findings of this research across Tamil Nadu and reach the large Tamil Readership. Judy, a visual communication student at Loyola College, Chennai, worked hard to understand and translate the nuances of the content into illustrations.

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*\* A distinctly recognized, at the same time most marginalized and stigmatized group of persons in India. Some of them are born androgynous, and do not identify themselves with either male/ men or female / women. Contrary to popular perception, they prefer not to describe themselves as men trying to be women, although they like to wear women’s clothes. In different areas in India, they are also known as Hijras or Jogappas.*

Notwithstanding his busy calendar, Professor N. Vinod Chandra Menon, Member, National Disaster Management Authority, Government of India, put in long hours reviewing the draft and providing pointers for further refining and deepening the content through his insights and counsel. Professor Menon has encouraged me all through the process of finalizing this Toolkit and its title. The Toolkit has benefited immensely by his ideas and inputs.

Mr. N. Harikrishna, Humanitarian representative India, Oxfam America, has been a constant source of inspiration and encouragement. He tirelessly went through several versions of the chapters and his critical contributions helped me enrich the contents. The total engagement and intellectual rigor that he brought to bear on the draft versions have significantly added to the depth of this work. In addition, his creative inputs. In addition, he contributed creative inputs to the cover design.

Mr. Russel Miles and Ms. Gabriel Kurk Wisner, Oxfam America too have gone through the draft version of the present Toolkit and offered new perspectives, the additions of which made the Toolkit more relevant to humanitarian agencies.

The participants from different NGOs and Federations in the Gender and Disaster workshop where the draft Toolkit was piloted deserve special thanks. Their viewpoints have made us take a fresh look, leading to major revisions in our work.

I value the editorial support from Dr. Kanchan Mathur and Dr. Shobhita Rajgopalan, Professors from Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur, Rajasthan, for the first draft of the present work. Valuable contributions have come from the review of the second draft of the Toolkit by Dr. Thamizoli, Social Anthropologist; Ms. Kanchan Gandhi, Research Scholar, National University of Singapore; Dr. Bhanu, Chair Person, Inter-agency Group, Uttar Pradesh, and Ms. Nilovna, Director, SPARSH, Orissa.

I thank Ms. Sunita Rabindranathan for working together with me in the preparation of the initial version of the Toolkit. My sincere thanks to Dr. Nalini Keshavraj, Manager, the erstwhile TNTRC for her advisory inputs. Many thanks to Ms. Bimla Chandrasekar, Director, EKTA, and Mr. Prithvi Raj, CARE Trust, for their participation in the consultation process to sharpen the initial version.

I greatly value contributions from members of the Gender Community of Solution Exchange. I had raised queries in the Gender Community in the process of developing this Toolkit, and members' responses have been very useful. Please refer to *Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit in Disaster Response* at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/gender/cr-public/cr-se-gen-06070701-public.pdf> for full text of the individual responses.

I thank Ms. Usha Thiagarajan for her crisp copy editing which sometimes extended into content editing. I specially wish to register my appreciation for her ability to understand the writer's intent and convey it effectively.

I am grateful to Earthworm Books, an alternative publishing house for issue-based literature, who happily agreed to publish the Toolkit.

Many thanks to Mr. A.N. Subramanian from Madras Graphics for the excellent work he has done in producing these books and providing me space and hospitality at his office, whenever necessary.

My heart-felt thanks to Brother James, Secretary, NANBAN Trust for hosting the publication and dissemination process. His generous support all through the publication and dissemination process kept me motivated. My warm acknowledgement to the support I received from all my colleagues at NANBAN Trust.

I fondly remember the support I received from Ms. Shanthi Devapiriam, Director, Anawim Trust, for hosting the first phase of the research project and initial version of the Toolkit.

Many thanks to Oxfam America without whose support for this independent study, the publication would not have been possible.

I dearly thank my family, especially my mother-in-law, Ms.Arokiya Mari, and my friend Indira Kadambi for their childcaring support without which I would not have been able to work on this project. I cherish Vishakha, my 12-year-old daughter's support by way of enduring my absences even while I was at my home - office, with a cheerfulness that amazed me. Her innocent belief in her mother kept my spirits high.

**Chaman Pincha**

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## Introduction

The risks and vulnerabilities that people face from natural disasters are as much a product of their social situation as their physical environment. Vulnerabilities and capacities of individuals and social groups evolve over time and determine people's abilities to cope with disaster and recover from it. Social networks, power relationships, knowledge and skills, gender roles, health, wealth, and location, all affect risk and vulnerability to disasters and the capacity to respond to them.

There is enough evidence that in any disaster disproportionately large number of women are affected more severely relative to men . Worldwide, it has generally been established that when gender issues are not addressed fully or sufficiently, in both development and disaster contexts, they perpetuate and in many instances augment existing gender-based inequities. Since the world conference on women in 1995, in Beijing, "gender mainstreaming" has been recognized as an overarching strategy to ensure that gender concerns are incorporated in all areas, sectors, and levels to promote gender equality. Mainstreaming gender in disaster preparedness and response involves viewing and analyzing situations through a gender perspective and render gender inequities explicit. To build gender-sensitive strategies and initiatives in disaster management process, it is necessary to address both the practical gender and strategic gender needs of women and men as well as transgender persons.

This Toolkit is the outcome of a research study undertaken to understand gender mainstreaming strategies used by NGOs and the Government in the context of their responses to and management of the Tsunami aftermath in Tamil Nadu. The field outcomes were analyzed through a gender perspective to understand the differential impact of disasters and coping strategies on women/girls, men/boys, and other marginalized groups, including Aravanis.

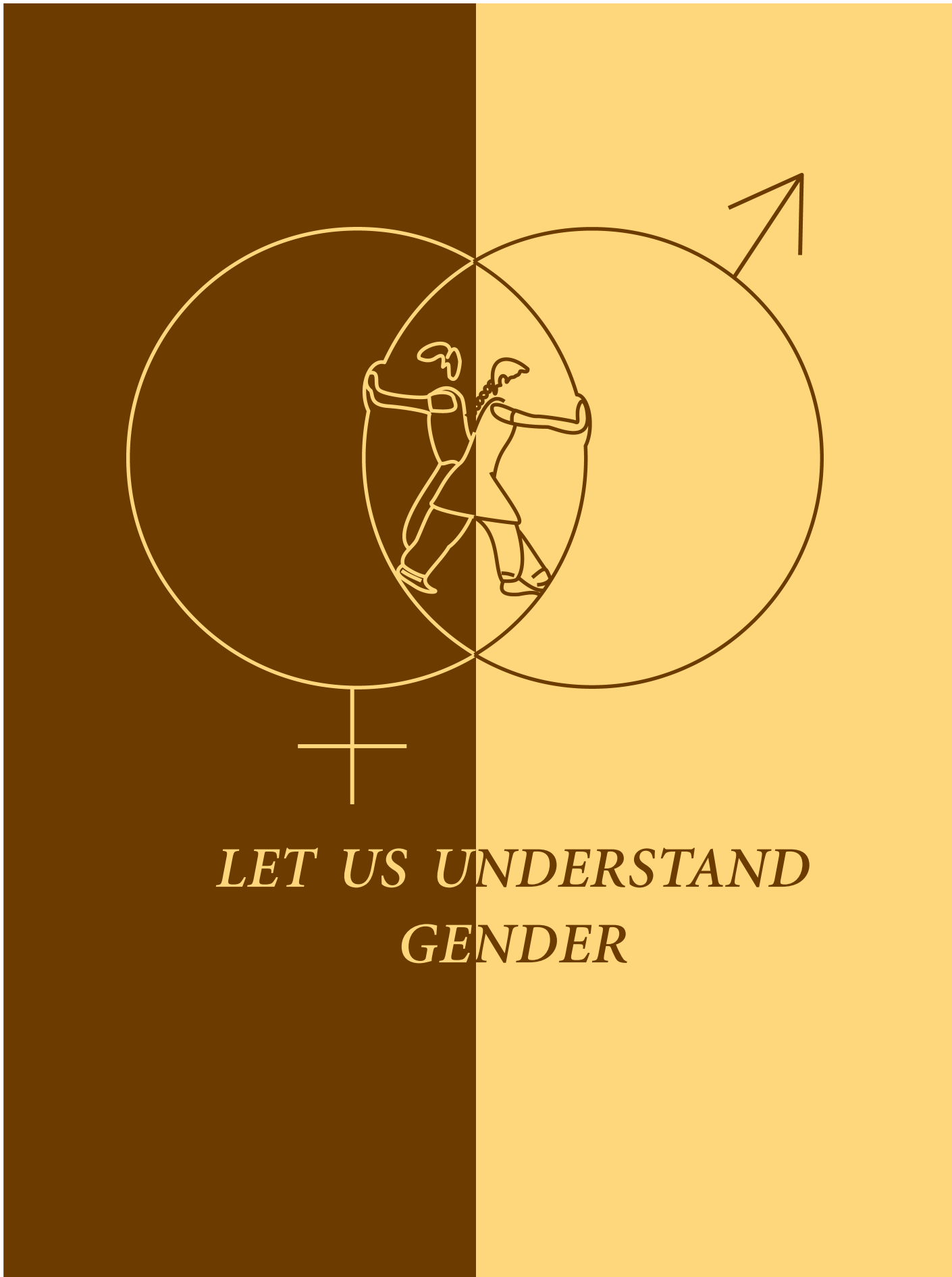


In the design and presentation of all components of this Toolkit, our chief focus has been on the development of the `how-to' of incorporating a gender perspective in the overall planning and practices of disaster management.

The Toolkit is divided into four chapters. The first Chapter clarifies concepts related to gender. The matter is presented in a manner that both facilitates an understanding of the concepts as well as lends itself to being used by concerned agencies in gender sensitization exercises. The second Chapter spells out the consequences that arise when disaster and gender issues interact. The Indian Ocean Tsunami that struck Tamil Nadu in December 2004 is the broad contextual backdrop that illustrates some of the gendered consequences of disasters and disaster management. It comprises multiple cases and outcomes of numerous focus group discussions with the grassroots women, men, and transgender persons. The chapter demonstrates how to view situations through a gender lens. It helps answer the question `Why gender mainstreaming?'

The third Chapter is populated with tools which when applied would promote good practices in integrating gender concerns in disaster response and preparedness. The last Chapter highlights some good examples of NGOs' (Non Governmental Organizations) gender sensitive interventions. The chapter also underscores the importance of gender analysis by focusing on some of the unintended negative consequences of seemingly gender sensitive interventions through field based evidences.

Although the Toolkit is location/region specific and draws from disasters in a specific context, it has developed the nuts and bolts for gender mainstreaming by building on the lessons gleaned from the Tsunami response. The tools are intended for use by all those engaged in the disaster management, i.e., policy makers, donors, NGOs and researchers in their efforts to build resilient and gender-just communities.





### **Before We Begin...**

Throughout this Toolkit on gender, our focus is primarily on women, not because gender is equated with them alone but because women typically suffer the burden of gender more than men. We are aware that in many instances men too are disadvantaged as a consequence of conventional gender related role expectations. We acknowledge these throughout.

The concept of gender essentially pertains to power relations between men and women. These power relations are further compounded when gender interacts with age, marital status, caste, ethnicity, religion, and refugee status, etc.

When we speak of men and women, we also mean boys and girls, depending on the context.

This Toolkit is largely derived from case studies that have been documented and analyzed in the year 2006–2007 in Tamil Nadu. In a few instances, cases from West Bengal's CBDP (Community-Based Disaster Preparedness) program have served to corroborate our findings in Tamil Nadu.



## Gender ≠ Sex



This chapter explains the basic and most critical concepts related to gender.

### What is Gender?

- **Sex** refers to **biological** differences associated with being male or female.
- **Gender** refers to the **socially** constructed stereotypes, roles, opportunities and relationships associated with being male or female.



We are born male or female; we are socialized to become boys and men or girls and women. In the process of socializa-



tion the sex differences that are only a few are given undue importance and become accentuated. The innumerable similarities on the other hand are made invisible.



These two categories of sex (male and female) and gender (men and women) do not include human beings who do not belong to any of these categories. In some of the states in India, they are known as *Hijras*, *Aravanis*, and *Jogappas*<sup>1</sup>. Let us call them transgender persons.

<sup>1</sup>Historically, the existence of transgender persons has not been accepted by mainstream institutions including the family. Consequently in our language, there are no words that describe their existence or world view.

Gender Roles

4



## Remember

- Sex is given, static and does not change over time.
- Gender is dynamic and can change over time, within and across cultures.

## Gender Roles

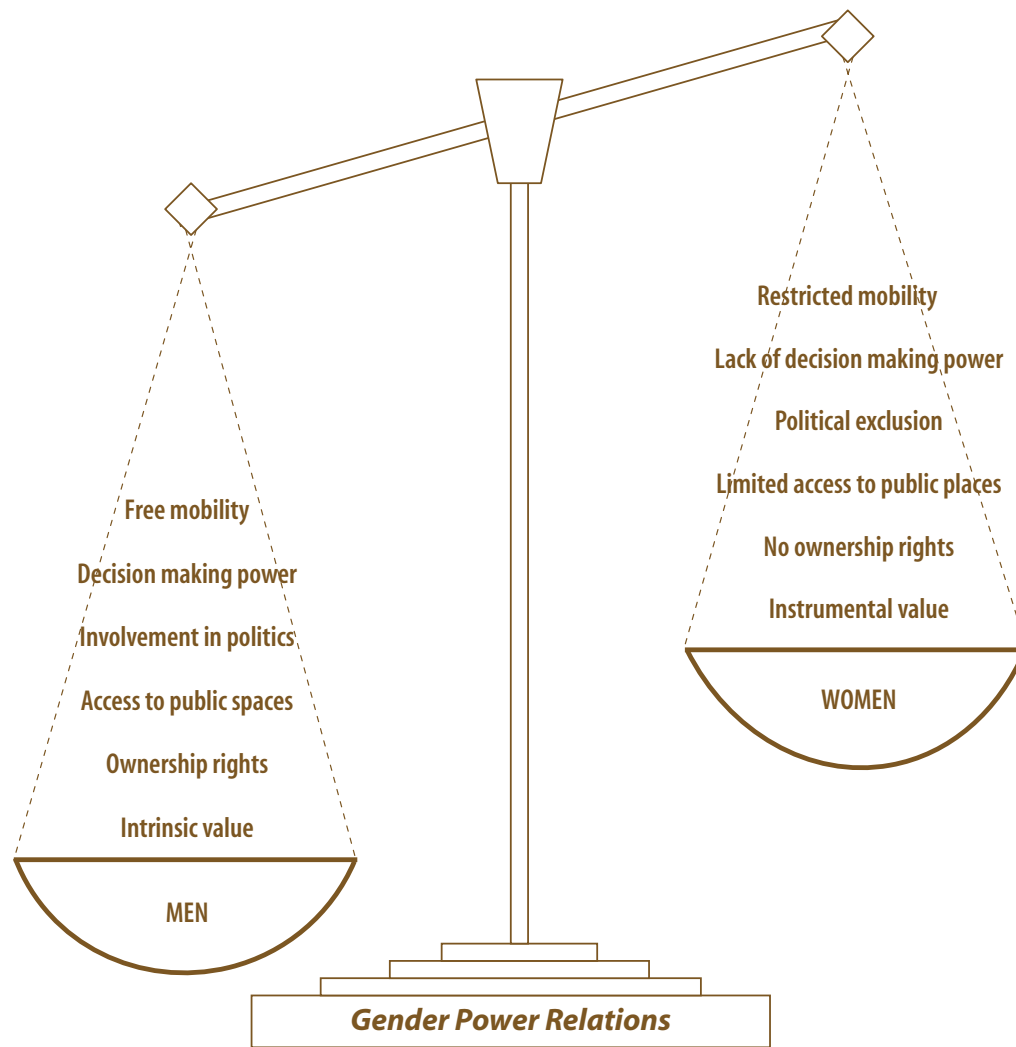
Traditionally, division of labour based on gender has existed in most societies. This has resulted in allotting one set of roles to women and another set to men.

## Gender Roles in Society

Roles	Women	Men
<b>Reproductive Role</b> <i>(Typically women)</i>	<i>Biological reproductive work:</i> bearing and breast feeding babies <i>Social reproductive work:</i> bringing up children, cooking, cleaning, laundrying, fetching water/fuel wood, etc.  Invisible and unpaid Favor dependent decision making*	Minimal reproductive work  Involves more mobility  Is optional  Is visible Holding decision making power
<b>Productive Role</b> <i>(Typically Men)</i>	Livelihood activities Lowly paid (relative to men) Invisible/secondary importance Nature of work generally based on reproductive role	Livelihood activities Highly paid (relative to women) Visible Recognized as breadwinners
<b>Community Role</b>	Maintaining kinship relations, religious activities, social interactions and ceremonies (births/marriages/deaths) etc.  Unpaid work  Nature of work similar to the reproductive work	Political in nature Assigns prestige and power  Paid work  Highly visible

\*Women's decision making acts typically depend on the goodwill of the male members in the households.

Gender used as a tool of analysis highlights the unevenness of relations between women and men.



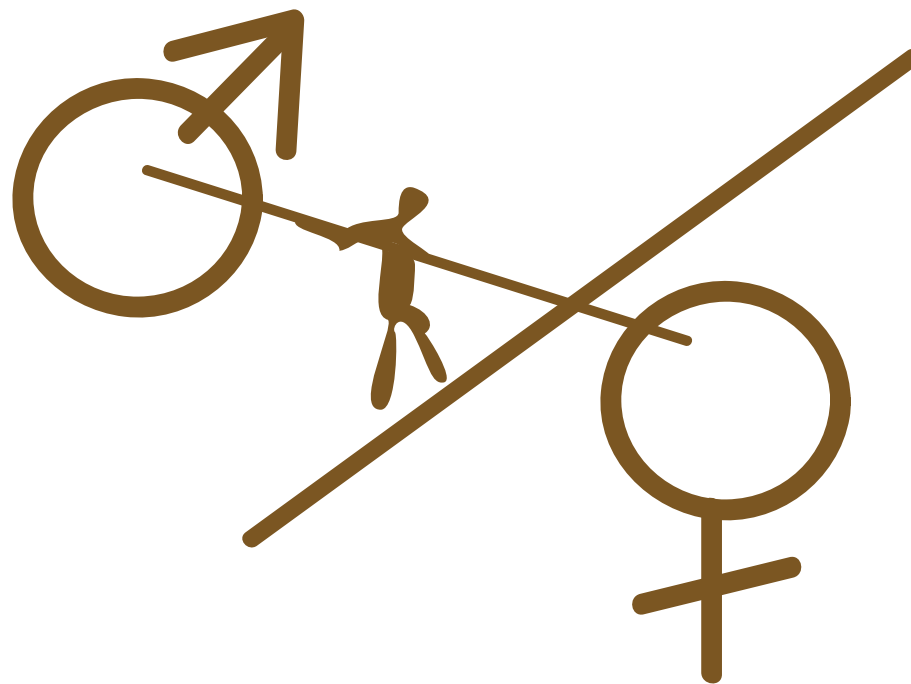
**Power Relation**

The process that recognizes that women and men as well as transgender persons do not function on a level playing field and hence have different needs and power structures and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies imbalance between the sexes is known as Gender equity. Gender equity recognizes that different approaches may be required to produce equality of results for all human beings based on individual aptitudes, abilities and interests, regardless of gender.

As in the case of sex and gender, it is important to understand the socially constructed distinction between biological and social reproductive work. Biological reproductive functions remain static and unchangeable: only women can conceive, go through pregnancy, and breast feed babies, while only men can provide the sperms to fertilize eggs (while this is largely true, science and technology are in some ways able to surpass it).

In contrast, socially reproductive work on the other hand is changeable and can be performed by both women and men. Raising children, cooking, and other household chores can be done by both. Traditional gender-based division of household responsibilities generally assigns this function to women.

We need to become conscious of the lack of any biological basis for the existence of these distinctions in socially reproductive work.





### **Look around and see gender division of work**

- A sharp division exists between reproductive and productive spheres, despite the fact that they form an inter-related whole and feed into each other.
- Women do most of the reproductive work which is completely unpaid.
- Women's reproductive work is less valued.
- Although women contribute significantly to the household economy, they are not recognized as breadwinners.
- Women are often excluded from decision making roles at various levels: Family, community and larger political bodies.

Women and men can both do reproductive as well as productive work of similar nature except the anatomically dependent biological reproductive functions mentioned earlier. Socially constructed gender boundaries are fluid and breachable.





**What do you see in the picture?**





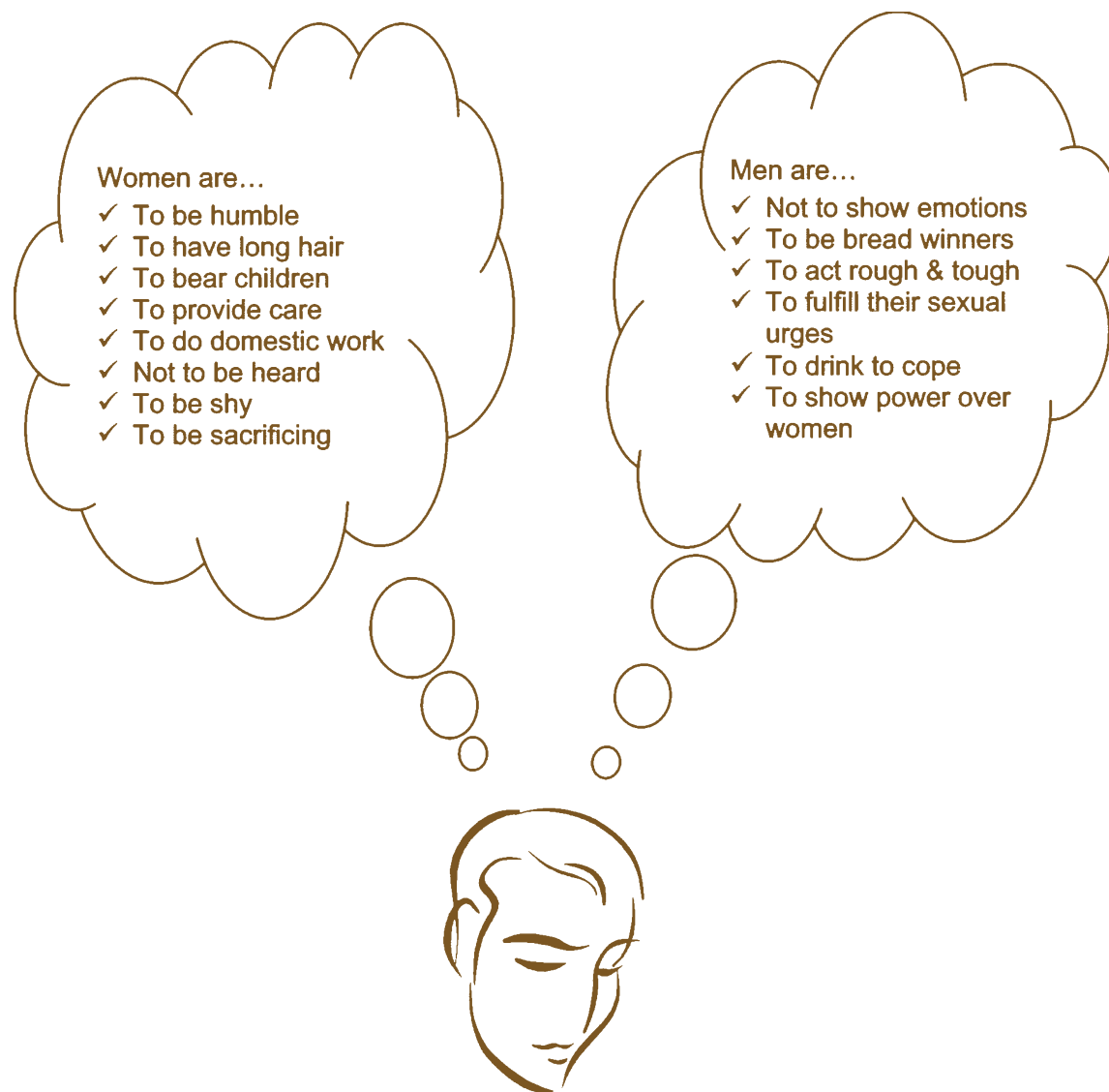
**What did you expect?**



*Nine out of ten people who saw the picture said they saw two men and two women and one was unable to decide.*



## GENDER STEREOTYPES<sup>2</sup>



### Stereotypes

Our assumptions led by gender stereotypes can sometimes cause us to make decisions that do not serve the needs of gender equality and gender justice.

<sup>2</sup>These are culture-specific, stereotypical gender attributes found in the Indian cultural context.



To fully understand gender needs, we need to use a gender lens that will clarify the distinction between prevalent approaches in policy and programs that perpetuate conventional gender roles, and the new ones that are needed to transform them for achieving gender equality. The distinctions are highlighted below :

Practical Gender Needs (PGNs)	Strategic Gender Needs (SGNs)
PGNs of women and men relate to their socially accepted roles within existing power structures.	SGNs of women arises from their subordinate position in relation to men in their society.
The policies and programmes to meet women's PGNs tend to focus on ensuring that women and families have adequate living conditions, such as health care and food provision, access to safe water and sanitation, childcare as well as income-generation opportunities.	Policies and programmes to meet SGNs include increasing decision making powers of women, increased entitlement to leadership positions, equal access to employment, equal pay, equal legal rights, as well as protection from violence, reproductive rights, enhanced mobility and property rights etc.
These policies and programmes do not directly challenge gender inequalities.	Programmes and policies designed to meet SGNs challenge customary gender relation and subordination of women. They demand changes in relationships of power and control between women and men.

***In men too, certain very human needs of expressing freely, feelings of tenderness, grief and fear are not met as a result of their exclusion from traditional 'women's domains' such as childcare or the imposition of 'manly' roles and attributes that prevents them from displaying tender emotions.***

### Consider the following

- A livelihood opportunity programme trains women in the skills of pickle making and sewing as home-based or small scale occupations.
- Another one trains women in masonry.
- Free distribution of bicycles to women and girls.
- A childcare center at father's workplace.
- A childcare center at mother's workplace.
- A community-based childcare center, with flexi timings.
- Induction of women in rescue teams in disaster risk reduction programs and induction of men in teams responsible for childcare.
- Women's representation in emergency planning and disaster management committees.

### Which needs do these programs address?

- Training in pickle making and sewing may meet practical gender needs, while training in masonry allows a woman to transcend traditional gender roles and earn higher wages. This programme also affords leadership opportunities where she may lead a team of men and women in a masonry project meeting her SGNs.
- A woman receiving a bicycle may use it only for fetching water and household provisions meeting some of her PGNs. On the other hand a girl receiving a bicycle would make her more mobile, facilitate her education as it would enable her to travel longer distances to better schools, classes on legal awareness etc. It would enhance herself esteem and empower her. This programme would contribute more towards meeting women's SGNs.

- A childcare center at father's workplace meets both PGN and SGN of women. A childcare center at mother's workplace meets only her PGN.
- The other programs in the list may be similarly scrutinized. The objective of such an exercise is to underscore the importance of evaluating policies and programs through a gender lens to promote gender equality and gender justice.

### Remember

Programs based on skills-training alone are not enough. It is necessary to create equal opportunities and an enabling environment to optimally use these skills and benefit from them.



When policies and programmes either exclusively address SGNs of women or address them through programmes which meet their PGNs, they bring gender into the mainstream of development and disaster management objectives. Gender mainstreaming thus is a process to achieve balanced relationships between and among women as well as men together with the socially and culturally unrecognized groups, i.e., those from the transgender community.



For gender mainstreaming to occur, it is necessary to always use a gender lens. A gender lens does not take gender roles and relations for granted. On the contrary it



- 🔍 **Focuses** on SGNs and PGNs of women and men.
- 🔍 **Makes** women's concerns visible in development and disaster policies, programs and implementations.
- 🔍 **Points** to the need for gender mapping before devising intervention strategies. Gender mapping involves looking at the relative spaces

and resource entitlements, women and men have in different institutions: family, community, markets and the state.

- 🔑 **Identifies** the stumbling blocks (threats, weaknesses, vulnerabilities) and stepping stones (strengths, opportunities, capacities, etc.).
- 🔑 **Envisions** those measures which diminish rather than augment vulnerabilities.
- 🔑 **Sees** clearly the nuances of a context affecting women and men differently due to different socio-cultural values applied to them.

Gender lens requires that we cross out the myths and prejudices in our heads while devising, analyzing and evaluating a programme, activity or policy:

<u>Myths</u>	<u>Facts</u>
	
Women are vulnerable	Women are rendered vulnerable by social, economic and political arrangements of society.
Gender is women and their problems	Gender unpacks and questions the power relationship between women and men as well as the invisibility of transgender persons.
Addressing PGNs is enough to empower women	Interventions to be sensitive need to address both PGNs of women and men as well as SGNs of women
Only men do 'productive' work	Women's household work sustains the productive work of men and typically consumes more time than men's work.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Myths</u></b></p> 	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Facts</u></b></p> 
<p>'Access' is enough to empower women.</p>	<p>Access is different from having control over what one has access to.</p>
<p>Domestic violence is private affair.</p>	<p>Domestic violence impacts societal gender relations.</p>
<p>Domestic violence affects only the spouse (typically women).</p>	<p>Domestic violence against women affects the entire household, including children and the elderly. It is a far reaching problem, effecting all sectors of social system and demands to be in the forefront of political discourse</p>
<p>Income generation activities addresses the livelihood concerns of women.</p>	<p>For women livelihoods encompass the patterns of expenditure as much as the sources of income generation.</p>
<p>Transgender persons are perceived to be abnormal.</p>	<p>Transgender persons are as normal as any man or woman.</p>

***Always wear a gender lens while  
Assessing and Analyzing  
Planning and Designing  
Implementing  
Monitoring and Evaluating***

