

Awareness & Sensitization Session for Women on CBDRMC's and Issues faced by Women during Disasters

Arkari, Chitral
27th April, 2021



An output report on the session held in Arkari, Chitral for women about Community Based Disaster Risk Management Committees and the issues specific to women that arise due to disasters



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Awareness & Sensitization Session for Women on CBDRMC's and Issues faced by Women during Disasters

**Arkari, Chitral
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Introduction

Arkari, Chitral:

Arkari Valley is located at a distance of seventy kilometers from Chitral city and can be accessed through an unpaved jeep-able track which is prone to flooding and land sliding. There is only one route of transport to the valley, which remained closed for months in 2015 and 2017 as many parts of it were washed away by the main river and its tributaries. It comprises of 16 villages including Mirzi Gram, Rahim Abad, Shoal, Sadam, Shunjour Koch, Besti Payeen, Besti Bala, Afzal Abad, Pur Pooni, Ali Abad (Siak), Sufaid Arkari, Rabat Mukhi, Sultan Abad, Rabat, Oweer and Oweer Lasht.

Around 6500 persons divided into 9 major clans are living in the valley and are mostly dependent on agriculture and livestock. The land is owned by the local community and there is no protected forest area, however, the local communities have imposed a ban on timber smuggling and tree cutting in the area. The economy of the area largely depends upon agriculture, livestock, and businesses in Chitral city as well as other parts of Pakistan. The locals keep livestock through which they derive a major proportion of their food for personal consumption. The valley is surrounded by high mountains including the famous Terichmir peak. The timeline of natural disaster in the area shows that the Deer Gol river has received floods as a result of outburst of a glacier at the foothill of the Terichmir peak and a glacier lake at the top of Meshtar Gol joining Deer Gol while flowing towards main Arkari. The village across this sub-valley of Deer Gol have already lost their agriculture lands and communal infrastructure and are still vulnerable.

Awareness & Sensitization Session for Women:

The need to involve women in all aspects of disaster risk management and disaster risk reduction is crucial to the capacity building and resilience of any community threatened by natural disasters. This is even more crucial given the fact that women tend to be the first respondents at home when a disaster strikes, as men are usually occupied at work outside of their homes. This tends to put

women at a higher disadvantage as they are likely to have limited or no access to early warnings. Therefore, there is a dire need to ensure that women are equally trained in the process of being able to survive a natural disaster as well as coping mechanisms after it. Moreover, women of the community require sensitization of how their opinion matters when devising Disaster Risk Management (DRM) plans, hence, the role played by women in the established Community Based Disaster Risk Management Committees (CBDRMC's) needs to be highlighted. Considering the above, a session on women's role in CBDRMC's as well as the issues specific to women which may arise due to disasters was held on 27th April, 2021 in Arkari, Chitral, which was organized and executed by Ms. Amal Durrani - Awareness & Sensitization Consultant (KP). To ensure that the session was kept interactive, it was further facilitated Ms. Navroza Sher Ali – Communication & Reporting Assistant, Chitral.

Objectives of the Session

1. Ensuring maximum participation of women while adhering to COVID-19 SOP's.
2. Ensure participants are made aware of why it is essential to equally involve women in the process of Disaster Risk Management and Reduction (DRM & DRR).
3. Ensure participants are aware of the critical role women play as first respondents.
4. Ensuring participants are given refresher information about the GLOF-II Project as well as concepts of DRM, DRR, climate change, disasters, and the process of preparedness and responsiveness.
5. Ensure participants are made aware of the importance of the established Community Based Disaster Risk Management Committees (CBDRMC's) as well as the crucial role played by women within these committees.
6. Providing a safe space for women to freely discuss issues faced by women before, during or after a disaster, which would otherwise not be discussed due to social and cultural norms in the region.
7. Providing input to women of how the aforementioned issues can be addressed and gaining feedback from the participants.
8. Ensuring participants are made aware of the projects Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), allowing them to route their concerns and/or complaints through the appropriate channel.

Detailed Proceedings of the Session

Time: 11:00 am

Date: 27th April, 2021

Location: Arkari, Chitral

Number of Participants: 19 women

Sessions Commencement:

The session was commenced by Ms. Navroza Sher Ali – Communication & Reporting Assistant, GLOF-II project, who welcomed the participants and elaborated the agenda for the session. This was followed by a brief introduction of the project and then calling upon participants for recitation of the Holy Quran.

Community Based Disaster Risk Management Committee's:

The Awareness & Sensitization Consultant (KP), Ms. Amal Durrani proceeded further by welcoming the participants to the session and giving a brief introduction of the GLOF-II project, its objectives and what it aims to achieve through such sessions. The consultant highlighted the need to conduct awareness and sensitization sessions in order increase the resilience and capacity building of the locals who are vulnerable to potential disasters. It was further elaborated why it is essential to impart equal knowledge to women in order to ensure they are fully equipped to reduce the risks that they may have to face during a disaster, as well as how best to tackle the disasters aftermath and ensure they have access to livelihood sources.

The consultant went on to highlight the importance of the establishment of CBDRMC's and the role these committees play in mobilizing the community which is crucial to the success of the project. Participants were made aware of the criteria upon which these committees have been formed, the responsibilities that fall under the committee's jurisdiction, the eligibility of becoming a member, as well as the roles and responsibilities of each member within the committee. Participants were also made aware of the fact that women play an equal part in the committee's formation as well as its operations. This point was stressed upon to ensure that women could gain confidence in the knowledge that the GLOF-II project attempts to take into equal account the opinions and concerns of women in the community.

Participants were informed that the formation of CBDRMC's will serve the communities in the long-run, allowing them to use its structure to mobilize the community for potential future projects as well. Thereby, aiding to sustainable development in the region where the communities can take on the ownership of their progress and living conditions. Participants were keen to know all the tasks that fall under the established CBDRMC's and were departed the required knowledge such as its role in implementation of the ongoing project, proper record keeping of project activities in the region, identifying and resolving issues within the community, developing linkages with the government, non-government organizations and other stakeholders.

Issues faced by Women:

The Awareness & Sensitization Consultant (KP) proceeded further by moving on to a discussion about issues which are specific to women and girls only, which may arise during or after a disaster. The valley of Arkari was an ideal valley to start such a discussion as the project had already built rapport with the community and the locals had already been familiarized with the project and its objectives on numerous occasions. A safe space was provided to women to speak freely without fearing judgement or societal pressures which would have been present had the session also included men. A series of questions were asked from the participants which would allow the discussion to touch upon other relevant topics as well. This not only allowed input to be gained about how much knowledge the participants already have about the project and its activities, but it also provided insight into what the local women were hopeful for as well as their input and concerns.

The following were the key finding points of the discussion:

- Most of the participants were unaware of the project's objectives, the surrounding glaciers, as well as the different concepts of disasters, risks, vulnerabilities capacities.
- Only a few women could recall previous GLOF-II project activities which included first aid trainings and aware sessions regarding disasters and the project. Generally, women had little knowledge about the project's objectives and initiatives in the region and were more prone to approaching men within the family to gain insight on the matter.

- Women who had attended the basic first aid training conveyed that they used their newly learnt skills to treat small wounds such as nose bleeds but had not had the need to use them further as no recent disasters had taken place in the region.
- Women claimed that they were not equally involved in the decision-making process or implementation of project activities, rather that this was generally an area which was covered by local men.
- When asked about any prevalent local indigenous practices to detect disasters, women shared a local myth that the river water would have a distinct change in smell before the arrival of a flood.
- Women also mentioned that they are warned through sirens in the village about potential disasters as well as people calling out to each other to inform one another.
- During and after disasters, women are generally assigned the tasks of tending to the sick and injured, as well as the elderly, disabled and children. They also have the responsibility of ensuring there is food for those who require it.
- Upon inquiring about what issues they feel are specific and pertinent to women alone, they were hesitant to answer. However, upon probing the topic further, a few women and young girls mentioned the potential issue of miscarriages caused by disasters. Women were in agreement that they would be unable to tackle an issue such as this as health workers are generally located further away from their village. They were at a consensus that if potential trainings were given on the matter to certain members of the community, it would allow them to be better prepared in the future.
- When inquired about whether women were equipped to lead their households in the unfortunate event of losing male members of the family – who are responsible for income generation – due to a disaster, they were in general agreement that they would not be able to do so in more than the very basic of capacity as they lacked the required skills to generate income.
- Based on the aforementioned points, the following recommendations were put forth by the participants:
 - i. Training for emergency response of premature labour.
 - ii. Technical and vocational training specific to women for income generating activities and building linkages to markets.

- iii. Sessions for young girls about what form of income generating opportunities are available to them, as in general women of the area are only aware of teaching, sewing, and cooking.
- iv. Further sessions for women only, allowing them to speak freely without fear of judgement and societal pressures.

Several observations were noted by the consultant and facilitator which included the following:

- i. Women and girls in the valley of Arkari were mostly unaware of the projects aims, objectives, activities, and initiatives.
- ii. Women and girls were not actively involved in discussions regarding the project and its activities.
- iii. Younger girls were hesitant to talk freely about issues specific to women such as premature labour, miscarriages, personal hygiene issues, even though they had knowledge regarding the matters.
- iv. Women were more conservative and hesitant to speak, potentially due to the fact that they were not directly engaged in such discussions previously without the presence of local men.
- v. Women and girls of the valley require further sessions which are specifically for them only so that they are able to discuss and question relevant topics and issues freely.

Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM):

As per directives of the project, participants were made aware of the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM). They were made aware of the purpose of the mechanism, which would allow them to report complaints so as to ensure their timely resolution. Participants were informed that the mechanism was open for all and would allow them to identify and report any environmental and social concerns, thereby allowing relevant authorities to address the matter in a timely manner. The modes through which they can reach out were also highlighted (i.e. website, via phone, written letters to PMU, PIU or FO). The requirements and the GRM procedure was highlighted as well as the 5 tier solution to any given issue. Participants were appreciative of the introduced mechanism as they claimed it would allow the process to be simplified and more transparent.

ANNEX I - Pictures









Image 1: Participants at the Golden Jubilee English Medium School and College Arkari, Chitral







Image 2: Portrait of participant



Image 3: Portrait of participant

ANNEX II – Attendance sheet

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<h3>GLOF-II Project</h3> <h2>Focus Group Discussion Consent Form</h2>			
<p>Purpose You have been invited to participate in a focus group discussion sponsored by the GLOF-II Project under UNDP on <u>27-04-21</u> held in <u>Arbore</u>. The purpose of this focus group is to understand the concerns, feedback, and knowledge that women have regarding the GLOF-II Project, as well as their experiences about any disasters that they may have encountered. The information learned in this focus group will be used to further improve the content of the project for future interventions, taking into account the perspective of women.</p>			
<p>Procedure As part of this study, you will be placed in a group of ____ individuals. A moderator will ask you several questions while facilitating the discussion. This focus group will be audio-recorded and a note-taker will also be present. However, your responses will remain confidential, and no names will be included in the final report, unless otherwise given permission by yourself.</p>			
<p>You can choose whether or not to participate in the focus group, and you may stop at any time during the course of the study. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers to focus group questions. The representatives of the GLOF-II Project want to hear the many varying viewpoints and would like for everyone to contribute their thoughts.</p>			
<p>Out of respect, please refrain from interrupting others. However, feel free to be honest even when your responses counter those of other group members.</p>			
<p>Benefits and Risks Your participation may benefit you and other women in the many GLOF vulnerable valleys. However, no risks are anticipated beyond those experienced during an average conversation.</p>			





Confidentiality

Should you choose to participate, you will be asked to respect the privacy of other focus group members by not disclosing any content discussed during the study. Researchers within the GLOF-II Project will analyze the data, but—as stated above—your responses will remain confidential unless permission is given by yourself.

I understand this information and agree to participate fully under the conditions stated above.

	Name	Occupation	Contact Number	Consent for the Focus Group Discussion	Consent for mentioning name in potential documents
1.	Mehak Ali	student student	03445697346	Ready	
2.	Shafiq Khan	Student	03495471227	Ready	
3.	Farhana Khan	Student	03495471227	Ready	
4.	Reyat baig	Student	03456431982	Ready	
5.	Rashida	House wife	Null	Ready	
6.	Shekila	House wife		Skull, Ca	
7.	Nazira	Teacher	03400244338	Ready	
8.	Zarina bibi	House wife	03439426357	Ready	
9.	Haji Gul	House wife	03478133756	Ready	
10.	Shahira Naz	Student	03409638075	Suma	
11.	Nahida Bibi	Student	03409479763	Ready	
12.	Somirou Bibi	Student	03422478254	Ready	
13.	Manhira Bibi	Student	03409479763	Ready	
14.	Bibi Malika	House wife	03485073897	Ready	
15.	Hamshira	Student	034722478256	Ready	

Name	Occupation	Not#	Sign 1	Sign 2
16. Rahila	Student	03468851506		
17 Adila Bibi	Student	03499177956		
18 Amal Durani	Consultant - GLOF-II Project	03415267866	Amal	Amal
19. Navroza Sher Ali	Comm. & Reporting Assistant (Jhu)	034089128	