



**UNDERSTANDING GENDER DIFFERENTIAL IMPACTS OF TSUNAMI
&
GENDER MAINSTREAMING STRATEGIES IN TSUNAMI RESPONSE
IN TAMILNADU, INDIA**



**Research Study
conducted by
Anawim Trust
With Support
from
Oxfam America**

Research Team

Research Team Leader & Lead Author of the Report:

Chaman Pincha

Research Team Members:

Joseph Regis

Maheswari

Mareeswari

**Research Coordination & Quality Control
N Hari Krishna**

Period of Study

(June 2006–April 2007)

Copy Right of the contents of this report is with Oxfam America & Anawim Trust. Contents of this report can be referred for research, training & program development with due acknowledgement to the authors.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	03
Acronyms	04
Glossary of Tamil Words	05
Short Profile of NGOs	06
Executive Summary	07-13
Chapter 1: Introduction	14-18
Chapter 2: Concepts and Definitions	19-23
Chapter 3: Differential Gendered Impact and Analysis of Government Response	24-46
Chapter 4: Analysis of NGO's Gender Mainstreaming Strategies	47-67
Chapter 5: Recommendations for Strengthening Gender Mainstreaming	68-78
Chapter 6: Conclusions	79-81
References	82-83
Annexures Annexure-1: A List of Villages Visited Annexure-2: A Sample of Output Sharing with the NGOs	84-85

Acknowledgments

Our Sincere Thanks to:

First and foremost, women, men, and Aravanis¹ who shared their experiences of living with disaster;

The participating NGOs who were able to spare time, amidst their pressing schedules, during as well as after the field research, directly on the phone and through e-mails;

Our Advisory Committee members, Ms. Miriam, Madras Christian College; Dr. Rama Kashyap, UNDP; Dr. Swarna Tulasi, Concern World Wide, Dr. Tamizoli, Social Anthropologist, who had provided enriched inputs, especially on the scope of study;

Ms. Asuntha Dorothy, Mr. Coen Van Kessel, M. Nanditha Hettitantri, Ms. Kate, Mr. K.M. Jose, and Ms. Vijayalakshmi from Oxfam for their useful feedback on analysis of the research findings;

Ms. Ranjani Krishnamurthy and Dr. Nalini Keshavraj, project advisers, for research study and tool kit respectively, for their deep interest, continuing guidance, and encouragement;

Mr. N. Hari Krishana, Oxfam America, for his constant encouragement, feedback, critical insights, and inputs;

Mr. Keshavraj, co-researcher, in the initial phase of the study (his own pressing schedules did not allow him to continue with the study);

Ms. Sunita Rabindranathan for working on the Draft tool kit;

Ms. Gabi Kruks Wisner for copy editing & Mr. F. Jude Rajkumar, for his meticulous proof reading

Tamil Nadu Tsunami Resource Centre for providing us space for meetings and easy access to reference materials;

Our colleagues and Director, Ms. Shanthi Devapiriam, Anawim Trust and Oxfam America for readily funding this project and allowing us enough space to work independently.

Chaman Pincha
Joseph Regis
Mareeswari
Maheswari

¹ A distinctly recognized, at the same time most marginalized and stigmatized group of persons, some of them born inter-sex, who do not identify themselves with either male/men or female/women.

List of Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	The Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic Social and Cultural Council
Gol	Government of India
G.O.	Government Order
OD	Organizational Development
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
LIC	Life Insurance Corporation
NGO	Non-Government Organization
SHG	Self-help Groups

Glossary of Tamil Words

Aravanis: A distinctly recognized, at the same time most marginalized and stigmatized group of persons, some of them born inter-sex, who 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 known as Hijras or Jogappas.

Irula: The Irulas, indigenous people, are a semi-nomadic tribe, spread over a vast area of northern Tamil Nadu and Southern Andhra Pradesh and were initially hunter-gatherers depending on forest products for their survival and sustenance. The Irula typically live in small groups on the outskirts of villages. The Irula diet includes herbs, tubers, rats, termites, mongoose, turtles, and monitor lizards (ITWS, Undated).

Azhi: A type of shell, mostly available in the backwaters. It is not the same as crab. Azhi may be of different sizes—big ones and smaller ones. Although shell of one type of small size Azhi is boiled and eaten, the shells of some Azhis are used for manufacturing lime powder.

Dalit: Dalit is the latest and currently most politically correct of many terms used for the former "Untouchables" of India, who are at the bottom of the social hierarchy in the Indian Society.

Kanatoni: A canoe or small boat, without engine, used by Irulas for fishing in the backwaters.

Narikuravars: One of the most marginalized, Narikuravars are a gypsy community, originally belonging to indigenous community with hunting as their main source of livelihood. With prohibition on their entry into forests to pursue their livelihoods, they were forced to take up other livelihood activities such as selling ornaments made of beads. Not settled at one place, they are a nomadic community moving from place to place to sell their wares. Children accompany adults wherever they move.

Panchayat (Traditional): Traditional local self-governance mechanism. Typically, unlike elected Panchayats with mandatory 33.3 percent representation for women, it excludes women entirely or has minimal representation of them, for example in Parish Councils in Kanniyakumari. In case of Irulas in some areas, i.e., Kalaigarnagar in Cuddalore, the representation is slightly higher but still falls short of a gender balance.

Sangam: Rights-based self-help groups who do not focus entirely on savings and credits but make use of the platform to share and reflect on their experiences and work towards expanding their socio-cultural and political spaces.

Taluk: Taluk is an administrative unit, below district. A district comprises a number of Taluks.

Short Profile of Participating NGOs

AVVAI: Avvai Village Welfare Society has been working in the field of education, health, women empowerment, and community development in Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu.

BLESS: BLESS has been working for social and economic empowerment of rural community in Cuddalore district in Tamil Nadu.

CARE Trust: Care Trust focuses on advocacy and lobbying for development and rights-based issues including human rights of women. Research and documentation remain its area of focus across Tamil Nadu.

EKTA: EKTA, established in 1990, with its base in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, is a resource center for women, which works with women staff of the NGOs, rural and urban poor women through a gender development approach.

FPAI: Family Planning Association of India, Chennai Chapter, committed to ICPD, focuses on the issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and men.

HOPE: HOPE Foundation, established as a charitable society in 1991, is an independent affiliate of HOPE World Wide Ltd., works for changing the lives of the poor. It has been working in Nagapattinam since post-tsunami.

PRAXIS Vision: Empowering the marginalized, since 1980, by enabling them to fight against injustice and exploitation and ensure sustainable development.

PEDA: People's Education for Development Association, PEDA, has been working for the empowerment of Dalits, fishers, and the backward community in Nagapattinam and Pondicherry districts since 1985.

PURA: PURA, run and managed by women, has been engaged in upliftment of oppressed women and destitute children in rural areas in Kanniyakumari District since 1993.

SASY: Social Awareness Society for Youths, a support center, has been working for the emancipation of Dalits, protecting and promoting their human rights in the state of Tamil Nadu since 1983.

SNEHA: Social Needs Education and Human Awareness, is engaged, since 1885, in Nagai district for the empowerment of the unorganized and marginalized fishing community and allied fish workers, especially women, children, Dalit, minorities, and other marginalized sections.

Executive Summary

“Gender shapes the social Worlds within which natural events occur.”

Elaine Enarson

Background and Rationale

The Tsunami disaster killed over 8,010 people in Tamil Nadu. The most affected districts were Nagapattinam, Kanniyakumari, and Cuddalore, with a death toll of 6,065,828 and 617, respectively, and 3,400 people reported missing. In all, according to the Government of Tamil Nadu (GoTN), 984,564 people were affected with over 8,000 deaths and 1,26,182 homes damaged/destroyed (ibid) besides loss of massive properties and livelihoods.

The impacts of the tsunami and the response that followed reflected the pre-existing gender-based vulnerabilities of women, marginalized men, and *Aravanis*. Disaster response from the state has, in some cases, challenged and in some others, reinforced the existing institutional norms which make their gender needs invisible. Although both women and men were affected, women are facing more challenges for survival, increased work burden, bore a disproportionate burden in terms of survival, absence of compensation, and deepening debts. Further, women have been discriminated in compensation for loss of their assets. There is also an increase in the number of women heading the households in adverse circumstances. Similarly, more men are facing the challenge of household responsibilities and single parenting which remained invisible in the post-tsunami interventions.

There has been a continuous aspiration among humanitarian agencies to improve their disaster response with the focus on speed, effectiveness, and gender mainstreaming. Donor agencies prescribed guidelines to the implementing partners to integrate gender issues in disaster response. The Tsunami disaster created a challenge and also provided an opportunity to humanitarian organizations to put their concerns for gender equity and gender mainstreaming to test. Although there are studies carried out on the gendered impact of Tsunami, few, if any, have attempted to probe deeper into and document the gender mainstreaming strategies of NGOs in their response to disaster. The present study attempts to fill this gap.

The fundamental objectives of the study was to map the NGOs’ gender mainstreaming strategies against the backdrop of both the socio-culturally and the policy-induced gendered issues emerging from the field in Nagapattinam, Cuddalore, and Kanniyakumari districts. Another objective of the study was to convert research findings into an evidence-based tool kit to set forth indicators for infusing gender sensitivity in the process of relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.

The methodology comprised both desk and field research. The desk research entailed a process of reviewing the concept of gender, gender mainstreaming, and gender in disaster, studies on tsunami and its gendered differential impact. Websites of INGOs, NGOs, Gender and Disaster and Disaster and reproductive health networks were also examined. The vision and mission statements and objectives of all the participating organizations were examined to understand how gender and women’s empowerment are perceived by them and reflected in their programme implementation.

For the field research eleven NGOs were selected from the most affected districts of Kanniyakumari, Cuddalore, and Nagapattinam districts. The NGOs’ selection was based on their interest and willingness to participate in the study. Care was also taken to maintain a

balance between organizations which are governed and managed by women and those governed and managed by men.

Extensive research at the field level was a salient feature of the study. The team visited 45 villages in the selected districts. These villages were selected with the help of the participating NGOs. Field research had consisted of over 150 focus group discussions with women, men, *aravanis*, adolescent girls and boys; wherever needed, semi-structured individual interviews were facilitated. Discussions with scattered poor and other excluded groups such as the destitute, the *Narikurvars*, and *Azhi* Pickers were held on their accessibility to relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction entitlements.

Putting Research Findings to Instant Use:

NGO leaders and staff were interviewed to map their understanding of gender and the process of gender mainstreaming that they adopt at the implementation and organizational levels. Sharing outcomes of the field findings was an integral part of the study. After each phase of the field work with a particular organization, the NGO was briefed on its good practices in terms of its potential and actual outcome of gender equality. Gaps in their response and the emerging needs from women, men, and Aravanis were also brought to the attention of the NGOs (refer to Annexure-2).

In keeping with the ethics of research, it was decided that the NGOs' name will be highlighted in the case of good practices and not in the case of unaddressed issues which may, in fact, cut across several or all NGOs.

Conceptual Frameworks Used in the Study

The concepts of practical and strategic gender needs have been used to analyze the gendered issues faced by women, marginalized men, and *Aravanis*. The state responses are analyzed to understand whether the response is gender blind/neutral/ gender-specific/gender-redistributive. Gender mainstreaming strategies of NGOs are analyzed to find out if interventions have challenged the existing norms of mainstream institutions (although the gains in terms of enhancing women's agency through targeting the interventions to address their practical gender needs have also not been ignored). The changes that have been brought about post-tsunami as regards gender infrastructure and within organizations have been analyzed and documented within the scope of available information.

Major Findings:

The major findings are categorized in terms of (i) gender issues in survival, (ii) access to relief, (iii) temporary shelter and permanent housing, (iv) ex-gratia payment, (iv) health, (V) social safety net, (VI) violence against women, (VII) livelihoods and (VIII) political participation.

Survival

An analysis of the primary information from focus group discussions reveals that the traditional and cultural constructs of men and women impacted on their chances of survival. For instance, Women's sense of shame and honor in the prevailing norms of their appearance and dressing pattern (Cultural norms on what makes a woman look like a woman—long hair, jewels, traditional dress pattern etc.) affected their chances of saving themselves. The strict gender division of labor which leaves child caring primarily to women emerged as a major factor for higher death rate among women. Another reason of high death and survival rate among women and men, respectively, was the strict gender division of labor which saw women either near the shore waiting for the fish catch or in their houses while men were in the deep sea for fishing (thus safe from the destructive waves of Tsunami).

Access to Relief

The government relief package did not include sex and gender-based needs such as sanitary towels, innerwear, and *Burka* (Veil). Excluding *Burka* in the relief package curtailed mobility of Muslim women, thus putting them at a disadvantage to access relief items, water points, and toilets. Caste, ethnicity, and occupational hierarchy and age-based non-gender identities compounded the gender-based vulnerabilities of women. *Aravanis* did not have access to relief because their sexual and gender identity is not captured by male/female and man/woman categories and a general sense of apathy towards their existence. When relief was channeled through traditional Panchayats or religious bodies, it did not reach elderly women and men, widows, and single women.

Temporary Shelters and Permanent Housing

The lack of analysis of gender constructs of women and men for designing the temporary shelters disadvantaged both. For instance, men opted to remain outside in the nights due to constricted spaces. One of the main reasons in the increase in domestic violence against women—both verbal and physical—has been the physical proximity of the temporary shelters. It resulted in the inmates lacking privacy which affected the sexual relations between the couples. With tents without secure doors and lights in many places, women reported high levels of anxieties about boys loitering in the night.

Permanent housing policies of the government are a mix of transformative and gender blind approaches. The joint ownership of housing, its non-transferability for 10 years and gender-aware inheritance right, has helped to challenge structural inequalities in the gender–power relationships. However, the housing for the tsunami affected, overlooks the case of single women who are not heading households. Although the related government order was meant for all affected people, on the ground housing needs of *Aravanis* were completely ignored.

Ex-gratia Payment

Delivery of ex-gratia (compensation) payment for orphans—children, adolescent girls, and unmarried women—have been gender-redistributive in nature. The payment was earmarked for the purpose of higher education and training for employment rather than for the purpose of marriage for girls. However, in other cases, delivery of ex-gratia payment was not based on gender analysis. For instance compensating the child who lost both parents in tsunami is Rs. 500,000/-. When only one parent died, compensation to the child was only Rs. 50,000/- . Given the fact that a man is considered to be the bread winner for the family, the loss of breadwinner was not compensated on the basis of its impact on the family.²

Socio-cultural norms had determined the recipient of ex-gratia amount, as the payment was based on the headship of the house (male, in case where both husband and wife survived). The analysis of the field information reveals significant differences in how the ex-gratia payment was managed, based on the gender roles of women and men. In many cases the compensation money given to men was spent on drinking and gambling. Consequently, women and children suffered most, as many households slipped into secondary poverty and saw an increase in the work burden of women and girls. In contrast, the compensation money in the hands of women was spent on health care, repairing the houses, and paying the debts including those incurred by their husbands for buying productive assets such as boats and nets.

To the knowledge of field researchers at least 5 *Aravanis* had died. For *Aravanis*³ who had died in tsunami, no ex-gratia was offered to their community network. In a case where an *Aravani* spouse had survived, she was deprived of the compensation by her marital family.

² G.O.MS.NO.541, stipulates Rs.50, 000/-for children who have lost only one parent.

³ No information has been collected on loss of life of *Aravanis* either by Government or NGOs.

Health

The field research indicates that health issues of women are intrinsically linked to the factors such as conditions of toilets, availability of water and firewood, domestic violence, overburdened schedules with low wages for productive work, lack of control over the household income, lack of decision-making power, and social norms and tradition which make women and girl children eat last and least. While the Government Order on reversal surgery, on the one hand, has expanded reproductive choices for women, on the other it has also increased a sense of inadequacy, family pressure to conceive as well as fear of rejection in case of failure to conceive after the surgery. Tsunami has thus compounded gender-based vulnerabilities. The discussions with Dalit and Irula finger fishers and Dalit Azhi Pickers reveal that the need for occupational health needs have not been adequately addressed.

Social Safety Net

The social safety net plays an important role in mitigating the impacts of disaster and reducing vulnerabilities in the face of future disasters. However, in all the areas visited, there was a lack of accurate information, particularly on pension provisions. Poor implementation and leaving the interpretation of destitute widows to the concerned officials had deprived them of their entitlements. There is an acute need for pension and support for helping the vulnerable women and men in accessing it. Although the Public Distribution System and Balwadis⁴ are, by and large, functioning well, Anganwadis⁵ were seen functioning in very few areas for partial food security for the elderly.

Violence against Women

Tsunami has also fore-grounded debilitating impacts of gender stereotypes shaped by the domination–subordination paradigm. Post-tsunami, when their productive role declined, resulted in adverse coping mechanisms such as drinking, gambling, and domestic violence. The domestic violence manifested in forced marriages of minor girls, silencing their voices by the traditional Panchayats in case of resistance, physical and verbal abuse and forced sexual demands on wife are some of the manifestations of domestic violence against women.

The heavy death toll of women in tsunami left men unprepared for taking up household responsibilities. Many men and some young boys got married for no other reason than their gender-role-induced inability to perform household chores. However, there are instances where men decided against remarriages for several reasons and took upon themselves the responsibility of taking care of the children and doing household chores. Significantly, men who adopted a proactive role-shift, reported reduction and, in some cases, complete abstinence from alcohol.

Livelihoods

The asset loss for women which comprised work spaces, tools of their trade, stocks of fish and shells, personal assets of crucial value, livestock, and catamarans were not taken into account in the rehabilitation process. Discriminated by the traditional Panchayats, in instances where elderly men have been excluded from the ownership of assets like catamarans; elderly women find themselves pushed to resume livelihood activities. In the face of dwindling wage opportunities in the agriculture sector due to salination of vast tracts

⁴ Child care centers established by both government and NGOs to provide a safe and stimulating environment for young children, in the 3–5 age group, of economically weaker sections to learn and develop through play. In Tamil Nadu, Balwadis provide nutritious snacks and mid-day meals to the children to enhance their nutritional status. They also meet a need in the community for a place where mothers can leave their children to go out for both productive and reproductive work. However, the timings of most Balwadis do not correspond with the work time of those responsible for child care.

⁵ Although basically a child care centre for children below 6 years of age and a service provider, at the community level, for pregnant and lactating mothers, they can provide mid-day meals to the elderly.

of cultivable land, while men have started migrating for short duration, women are left behind with increased work burden and scarce resources to maintain the households. Absence of child care facilities in some areas and insensitive timings where they are available have also had a negative impact on women's livelihoods.

An analysis of gender-based coping strategies of women and men reveals that pro-active and adverse strategies have more to do with gender roles than with being a male or a female. Being responsible for sustaining households implies that livelihood includes not only sustainable income but also sustainable expenses and is perceived in terms of meeting the livelihood needs.

Major Findings: Strategies of Gender mainstreaming

Three main strategies that the NGOs adopted to challenge the male-dominated Panchayats, in the distribution of relief, are: (i) direct distribution with an emphasis on the excluded; (ii) distribution through SHGs, and (iii) empowering them with decision-making powers, skills of needs analysis, and carrying out surveys of the affected women, men, and children. These strategies have resulted in less corruption and more sensitivity to the vulnerable and marginalized groups of women as well as men.

Another strategy was an exclusive focus on the girl children of single mothers with the assistance of educational aids linked with meticulous health monitoring. It challenged patriarchal norms which relegates the existence of girl children to a subordinate position. The use of human rights instruments such as CEDAW, Beijing Platform for Action to upscale the gender-sensitive advocacy and lobbying with the government have again challenged the subordination position of women and girl children.

Non-traditional skills training by some NGOs, such as training in masonry, hand pump repairing, and running a courier business, have on the one hand, challenged the norms of gender division in tasks in labor and service markets, and on the other, raised their esteem in the eyes of both their husbands, children, and the community at large.

Institutionalizing joint ownership of houses and equal wages in cash-for-work programmes as well as on the construction sites by the NGOs, giving ownership of the high-impact productive assets or assets that facilitate safe mobility to women's federations and women's SHGs members, have challenged the gender norms of ownership of assets. Productive assets for women also include assets, such as boats, auto carriers, and inventory of vessels, which fetch them rental income. Organizing women and dalits on a cooperative principle has challenged their marginalized positions in the market. Similarly, building collaborative spaces has also opened up new avenues for women/girls and men/boys to come and work together, thus challenging gender segregated spaces in the communities.

NGOs have also attempted to tackle the issue of alcoholism by (i) supporting women in organizing campaigns at the community level; (ii), making the loans to men's sangams conditional on their abstaining from alcohol; (iii), getting men engaged in multi-tasking which benefits the community, and for sensitizing men and at the same time building assertiveness among women.

At the gender infrastructure level, most NGOs are now in the process of evolving gender policies and are recruiting more women. Some of them have gender-sensitive criteria for recruitments which accept women's managerial experience in running the households and child-care as valid experience for recruitment, provided their gender perspectives are in place. A few organizations periodically go through gender-sensitive organizational development processes. Post-tsunami, it has emerged that organizations—irrespective of presence or absence of gender infrastructure—are consciously thinking of strengthening collective agency and thereby expanding political spaces of women in the communities. At

the level of organizational change, most organizations send their staff for gender training including training on sexual and reproductive health rights and legal training on women's rights etc.

Gender sensitivity of the leadership and the way gender is perceived in vision and mission statements of organizations, donor sensitivity to gender issues, sustained and prompt findings to sustain gender-sensitive programs, respect for local knowledge and expertise and presence of vibrant women's movement emerged as important factors for influencing the process of gender mainstreaming.

In spite of the several good practices in gender mainstreaming, there remain some areas of strengthening. The absence of analysis of the implication of a program from a gender perspective results in unintended negative impact of increasing the work burden of women. Such lack of analysis has also resulted in bringing gender biases in communities with fluid division of labor. The lack of gender analysis may involve an adverse impact of micro-credit on women in terms of a deepening debt burden in cases where it does not dovetail with integrated provision of infrastructure and ensure that women have control over the resources.

Recommendations for the Stakeholders (Practitioners and Policy Makers)

For strengthening gender mainstreaming to bring about transformation in the institutions, it is recommended that women's groups should be strengthened with the skills of needs analysis as well as decision-making in relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. Disaster should be used as an opportunity to build high-impact assets for women, marginalized men, and Aravanis. It is also recommended that all decision-making bodies at the community level should have 50 percent representation of women. Gender mainstreaming should also focus on sensitizing women and men on their internalized patriarchal norms with men/boys being motivated to share responsibilities of non-monetized work at home like cooking, cleaning, washing, fetching firewood, and water etc. These skills are directly linked with disaster preparedness, as sharing household responsibility by men/boys would relieve girl children from a disproportionate work burden. Further, post-disaster interventions should recognize the issues of alcoholism and domestic violence and their inter-linkages with survival, health, and livelihood etc.

NGOs and government may like to initiate vertical programmes which underscore the inter-linkages across programmes. For example, livelihood interventions may be dovetailed with child-care facilities until late evening. Round-the-clock child care facilities can also be piloted with the support of the community, especially the elderly. In the same manner, credit programmes should be strengthened by the provision of necessary infrastructure such as warehouses with locker rooms, tricycles, and cycles to increase the mobility of women and where necessary, market places. Skills training should also be started for the Aravani population.

Gender-sensitive norms of ethnic community—in this context the Irulas—need to be researched, documented, and fed into the interventions across sectors in the context of both disaster and development. The findings should be widely disseminated so as not to bring in gender inequalities in the name of modernization, in a community with collaborative spaces, and lesser rigidity.

Gender-sensitive lobbying and advocacy may be taken up along with an analysis of government policies from a gender perspective. BPFA and Human rights instruments like CEDAW should be widely used as benchmarks for gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation. Most good practices for mainstreaming gender have focused on institutional changes. However, gender mainstreaming at 'infrastructure' and 'organization level' remains essential for addressing issues of exclusion. When institutional changes are guided by

systematic up-scaling in gender infrastructure and organizational changes, there may be a stronger political will to address controversial issues such as domestic violence and reproductive/sexual rights in the context of disaster. This symbiotic relationship will more effectively address gender concerns of men, and ensure that gains made on the ground continue beyond existing committed leadership.

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION

The December 2004 tsunami affected nearly 2,260 kilometers of India's mainland coast, spanning the states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, and Pondicherry, as well as the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The tsunami waves killed at least 10,881 people in India, and affected the lives and livelihoods of more than 2.79 million across more than 1,000 villages. In Tamil Nadu—the worst affected state on the mainland—over 8,000 deaths were reported, the majority of which were concentrated in the districts of Nagapattinam, Kanniyakumari, and Cuddalore which recorded 6,065,828 and 617 deaths, respectively. Over 3,400 people were reported missing across the state. In all, the Government of Tamil Nadu (GoTN) estimates that 984,564 people were affected by the tsunami; 126,182 homes were damaged or destroyed, and countless losses of property and livelihood were sustained (GoTN, 2005).



Tsunami on 26 Decembe2004

The loss of lives and livelihoods was greatest among those who lived and worked in close proximity to the sea, fisheries being the most affected, but in no way the only, sector. In fact, in absolute terms those engaged in non-fishing sectors of coastal economy (including daily wagers) exceeded the number of fishers among the affected ones (UN Country Team, 2005). Boats, nets, catamarans, and other fishing crafts were damaged or destroyed including fisher women's vessels and knives, stock of shells, salt and thatched platforms for drying fish and so on, as were coastal agricultural and grazing lands, livestock, raw materials for various home-based occupations and other enterprises and tools of the trade for electricians, carpenters, tailors—a majority of them being women—and so on.

Significantly, assessment reports have not been able to adequately capture the loss of work sites which has a long-term impact on micro-enterprises and home-based occupations of women. Although loss of work opportunities is much harder to quantify, it has severely affected large groups of vulnerable women and men as well as daily wage earners in both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors (ibid).

The tsunami also caused extensive damage to social, occupational and physical infrastructure such as schools, primary health centers, drinking water supply, *anganwadis*, harbors/*jetties*, and roads and bridges. The environmental impact comprised generation of debris and rubble, erosion or accretion along the coast, reduced fish catch, sedimentation of lagoons and waterways and denudation of green cover etc. (TISS, 2005).

Rationale: the need for a gender focus

The tsunami, however, was not simply a natural phenomenon; it occurred in a social world shaped by gender (ILO, 2000). Although both men and women were affected, the severity of the tsunami's impact varied in accordance with the pre-existing social, economic, and political vulnerabilities, among which gender is a cutting theme. Gendered vulnerabilities, compounded by non-gender identities such as caste, ethnicity, occupation, location, age, and disability, influenced the differential rates and conditions of survival between women, men, and Aravanis.

The gendered impact of the tsunami has been captured in a number of research studies that have applied a gender framework of analysis. For example, a number of reports have highlighted the fact that many women died in the tsunami than men (Oxfam, 2005; Global Funds for Women, 2005; EKTA, 2006). Other reports have focused upon how women—across caste, class and occupations—have been disadvantaged in tsunami relief and recovery by pre-existing gender norms and gender neutral/blind state policies (Woman Kind, 2005). Even within the fishing community, which remained the most visible in the global response to the tsunami given its massive losses, women remained marginalized with their practical gender needs being only partially met by the government and their strategic gender needs remaining invisible or attracting the attention of political and social actors only after lobbying and advocacy by rights-based groups.

While a number of studies have examined the gendered impact of the tsunami, few have examined the gender mainstreaming strategies of NGOs in their response to the tsunami. NGOs were a major player in the tsunami response, working alongside government in the delivery of relief and development of rehabilitation programmes. To date, the gender mainstreaming strategies of the NGOs—their successes and challenges—have not been systematically captured. The present study attempts to fill in this gap.

Against this backdrop, Anawim and Oxfam initiated research to understand and analyze the steps taken by NGOs to enhance the agency of women, vulnerable men, and excluded groups (such as Aravanis), for the purpose of cross-agency learning and replication. It is hoped that by documenting both good practices and challenges (particularly at the implementation level) will lead to a deeper understanding of what works and what does not in integrating the strategic and practical gender needs of both men and women in the response to a disaster.

Policy Context: the gender mainstreaming agenda:

Following the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995), numerous development agencies have adopted “gender mainstreaming” strategies to ensure that gender perspectives are incorporated in all areas, sectors, and levels to promote gender equality. Gender mainstreaming strategies go beyond an exclusive focus on women to look at both women and men as actors in beneficiaries of development, examining how their rights are defined in relation to one another.

In the aftermath of the tsunami disaster, the United Nations adopted a new ECOSOC resolution on Economic Social and Cultural (ECOSOC) rights, ratified by a majority of UN member states, which reaffirmed the commitments to gender mainstreaming made in the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA). The resolution asks governments to integrate a gender perspective in disaster management and disaster preparedness policies and practices, as well as to ensure that women have an active role in all phases of disaster management (*Droits Humains*, 2006).

The principle of gender equality is also enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its preamble, fundamental rights, fundamental duties, and directive principles and is to be read across all contexts, including disasters. India has also ratified the International Human Rights Treaties, committing to secure equal rights for women. Key among various international conventions and human rights instruments is the endorsement of the Beijing Declaration as well as the Platform for Action and ratification of Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women for affirming its commitment to working towards gender justice.⁶

⁶ India has ratified the convention with two declaratory statements on article 5(a) and 18(1) and 16(2). However, India also commits to consider the withdrawal of the declaration in future (CEDAW periodic Report, Gol, 2005).

India's National Empowerment Policy also makes an explicit statement for gender mainstreaming in the development process. A close reading of the policy unpacks a mix of approaches to mainstream gender with an articulated shift from a welfare approach to the one which recognizes women as catalysts, participants, and beneficiaries in the development process (National Empowerment Policy, 2001).

Research Objectives

Within the policy context of global and national efforts to mainstream gender within development and disaster management, the fundamental objectives of this study are to:

- Document, understand, and analyze the gender differentiated impacts of the tsunami disaster;
- Document, understand, and analyze the gender mainstreaming strategies adopted by humanitarian agencies (NGOs) in the tsunami relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction processes;
- Contribute to the gender mainstreaming efforts of participating NGOs by regularly sharing and discussing the findings and insights of the field research;
- Contribute to global and local knowledge on gender mainstreaming in disaster response;
- Develop an evidence-based tool kit that highlights the lived realities of women, men, and Aravani populations in tsunami recovery, which develops indicators and methods for infusing gender sensitivity in the process of disaster relief and recovery.

Research Methodology

The study relies on both field (primary) and desk (secondary) research. The desk research entailed a process of reviewing the concepts of gender, gender mainstreaming, and the gender dimensions of disasters, including a review of existing studies on the tsunami and the websites of government agencies, INGOs, NGOs, and civil society networks on gender and disasters. A group NGOs in the districts of Nagapattinam, Cuddalore, and Kanniyakumari were selected for study (see below), and their vision, mission statements, and objectives were examined to understand how the themes of gender and women's empowerment are perceived and reflected in programme implementation.

Sample Selection

The research team selected eleven NGOs from Kanniyakumari, Cuddalore, and Nagapattinam districts that were willing to collaborate in the study. The districts were chosen as they were the most affected by tsunami in Tamil Nadu. Time was a crucial factor in deciding how many NGOs could be covered within a period of 45 days, roughly 15 days each for Nagapattinam, Cuddalore, and Kanniyakumari districts. Initially, ten NGOs were selected on the basis of their willingness to participate and devote their time to the study. An eleventh NGO was later added to the study in order to capture the practices of an organization with replicable experiences in mainstreaming the concerns of elderly women and men. An attempt was made to maintain an almost equal balance between NGOs headed by men and those headed by women. Out of 11 NGOs, there are 4 NGOs headed by women or where a woman is in charge of the entire program.

Participating NGOs were asked to facilitate the visit of the research team to what they considered as their best gender mainstreamed projects. The research team assumed that the mainstreaming of gender will be reflected at the field level in terms of implementation of the programs and the strategic leverage they have given to women, marginalized men, and Aravanis for enhancing their social, economic, and political spaces. Simultaneously, holding focus group discussions with women, men, and Aravanis (not only about the project outcomes but also issues falling outside of it) gave the study insights into what has been achieved, what holds potentials for furthering the process of equality outcomes, and what is yet to be addressed.

A little over 150 focus group discussions were held with different groups of women, men, adolescent girls, and Aravanis across 45 villages in the three districts. Among women, focus group discussions were held with single women (pre and post-tsunami), elderly women, and men, unmarried women living with their parents, adolescent girls and boys, and a few women and men with disability. Focus groups were also conducted for Aravanis in the three districts; wherever needed, semi-structured individual interviews were facilitated. Discussions on their accessibility to relief and rehabilitation entitlements were also held with scattered poor and other excluded groups such as the destitute, the *Narikuravars*, and *Azhi* Pickers. The focus group discussions were confined to the participating NGOs' project areas. Some occupational groups such as saltpan workers, seaweed collectors etc. have not figured in the present study.

After each group discussion, issues that required urgent attention were reported back to respective NGO. NGO took the feedback seriously and responded to the reported issues.



Sharing the outcomes of the field findings with the participating NGOs was an integral part of the study. After each phase of the fieldwork with a particular organization, the NGO was briefed on its good practices in terms of its potential and actual outcomes for gender equality. Unaddressed issues and emerging needs of women and men were also brought to the attention of the NGOs. Where NGOs' heads were not available to discuss the research findings in person due to time constraints, output sharing was done through e-mails (see Annex-2 for a sample output sharing format and its contents).

In keeping with the ethics of research, it was decided that the NGOs' names would be highlighted in the case of good practices but names would be withheld in cases of unaddressed issues which may, in fact, cut across several or all NGOs. The intention of the study is to understand and contribute rather than to evaluate. This point was made clear at the outset by the research team in its interaction with the participating NGOs.

An attempt was made to maintain an almost equal balance between NGOs headed by men and those headed by women. Out of 11 NGOs, there are 4 NGOs headed by women or where a woman is in charge of the entire program.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The present study is primarily qualitative in nature, as the real life situations of women, men, and *Aravanis* are best expressed in their own words and are not adequately captured through quantitative data. Where necessary, attempts have been made to substantiate qualitative statements with quantitative data, although this is not a primary or consistent focus of the study. Only those gender issues that emerged as themes across the focus

groups discussions, irrespective of differences in caste and occupation have been documented. The findings presented from the cases cited in the study, however, cannot be generalized given the limited number of cases. For very personal and sensitive information, not enough cases were documented within the given time framework. Despite these limitations, the authors believe that even anecdotal evidence of neglect and victimization due to the gendered tsunami response will serve as a warning and lesson for those working in future disaster response and disaster preparedness. From a human and women's rights perspective, all cases documented in this study—irrespective of their small number—play an important role in the documentation of gender issues in disaster response.

Structure of the Report

Chapter two defines the various concepts that underpin the analysis of the differential impacts of the tsunami and tsunami response on women, men, and *Aravani* population. The good practices and challenges that NGOs face in integrating gender concerns in their response were analyzed according to these concepts.

Chapter three brings a gender lens to the gamut of issues (both socio-cultural and policy induced) which emerged over the course of more than 150 focus group discussions. The chapter also analyzes the relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction policies of the government in the context of issues that were reflected in the narratives of tsunami-affected women, men, and *Aravanis*.

Chapter four illustrates the gender mainstreaming strategies of the participating NGOs, highlighting areas that can be further strengthened. Based on the analysis of the NGOs' strategies in terms of gender infrastructure and the potential for organizational and institutional change, an attempt has been made to understand how gender is perceived by the participating organizations.

Chapter five lays out a series of recommendations for the strengthening of gender mainstreaming drawing from the good practices of the NGOs in this study. It also highlights the gaps and challenges that remain in the gender mainstreaming agenda, drawing from the experience of the participating NGOs. It draws lessons concerning the internal structure and practices of NGOs, highlighting the need for strengthened gender infrastructure and for organizational change, respectively. Finally, it reflects on the factors that have facilitated or hindered the take up of good practices in gender mainstreaming.

Chapter six summarises major insights gleaned through the analysis of gendered issues and gendermainstreaming strategies and concludes with an outline of the draft chapters of evidenced- based toolkit—emanating from the analysis of the filed information-- for mainstreaming gender in the disaster response.



CHAPTER 2: Concepts and Definition

This chapter offers working definitions of the various concepts employed by the researchers in this study. A gender framework of analysis is introduced, and concepts of gender discrimination, gender needs, and gender mainstreaming are discussed.

2.1 Sex and Gender

At a descriptive level, 'Gender' is used to define those characteristics of women and men, which are socially constructed, whereas 'Sex' refers to those that are biologically determined. Most people are born female or male but learn to be girls and boys who grow into women and men. This learned behavior makes up gender identity and determines gender roles.

As a tool of analysis, Gender challenges the cultural norms placed on a person's biological sex and the unequal power relations between men and women. It also recognizes gender inequality as the outcome of social processes which can be challenged, and are changeable between and within culture rather than being perpetuated as biologically given.

2.2 Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination refers to the systematic, unfavorable treatment of individuals on the basis of their gender that denies them rights, opportunities or resources. The The 1979 *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* brought into international focus the rights of women such as human rights, including the right to be free from discrimination in all spheres of life. The Convention defines discrimination against women as "...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."

2.3 Gender Equality

Gender equality denotes women having the same opportunities in life as men, including the ability to participate in the public sphere. This expresses the idea that removing discrimination in opportunities for women allows them to achieve equal status with men. In effect, progress in women's status is measured against a male norm. However, this formal equality does not demand or ensure equality of outcomes.

2.4 Gender Equity

Gender equity denotes the equivalence in the life outcomes for women and men, recognizing their different needs and interests, and requires that a principle of shared power and responsibilities should be established between women and men at all levels (Beijing Platform for Action, 1995). The goal of gender equity is achieving substantive equality. As an approach it implies that all policies and interventions need to be scrutinized for their impact on gender relations (DAC, 1998).

2. 5 Women's Empowerment

Women's empowerment is "the expansion in women's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them." It suggests that women's empowerment needs to occur along six different dimensions: economic, socio-cultural, familial/interpersonal, legal, political and psychological (Kabeer,

2001). For example, economic dimension indicators of empowerment include women's control over household income; their access to employment, credit and markets; representation of women in high-paying jobs that require non-traditional skills; and representation of their interests in macroeconomic policies.

2.6 Aravanis⁷ and Gender Equality

Gender equality posits equality between and among men and women. This excludes Aravanis whose gender category cannot be explained under two-gender frameworks (Kay and Barbara, 1975). Aravanis may be born inter-sex or apparently males; they dress in feminine clothes and generally see themselves as neither women nor men; they are not men trying to be women (Singh, 2001, focus group discussion with Aravanis, Vepenjery in Nagai and Kodimunai in Kanniyakumari).⁸ However, they remain most disadvantaged by gender identity discrimination. Although in 2005, Indian Passport applications were updated with three options: M/F/E (The telegraph, 2005), the policies, laws and institutions discriminate and exclude them on the basis of both their sexual and gender identity.⁹ The explicit absence of their existence in the definitions of gender and gender-mainstreaming makes this group invisible and most deprived, in most sectors, with the notable exception of the HIV/AIDS discourse in which Aravanis are one of the primary target groups.

2.7 Gender Needs and Gender Interests

Gender needs can be understood in both practical and strategic terms. Identified by women and men, practical gender needs (PGN) arise out of the customary gender division of labor. They are a response to immediate perceived necessity. Practical gender needs of women are those immediate needs that are required for their survival in their socially accepted roles within existing power structures. The policies to meet women's tend to focus on ensuring that women and their families have adequate living conditions, such as health care and food provision, access to safe water and sanitation, child care as well as income-generation opportunities. Practical gender needs do not directly challenge gender inequalities.

The concepts of practical and strategic gender needs are in themselves capable of bringing the gender needs of *Aravanis* into focus, provided that *Aravanis* are mainstreamed into the definitions of gender and gender-mainstreaming even though these needs may be a direct result of women's subordinate position in society (Moser, 1989). Practical gender needs of men may include tools of their trade and employment opportunities.

In contrast, the articulation of **strategic gender needs** challenges customary gender relations and demands changes in relationships of power and control between women and men. The strategic gender needs of women arise from their subordinate position in relation to men in their society; for example, strategic needs include equal access to employment, equal pay, and equal legal rights. It is difficult to think of men's strategic gender needs, although there are needs that arise from their exclusion from traditional "female" domains such as child care, and from the imposition of customary "male" roles and attributes, such as hesitancy to express emotions like fear and grief or to shed tears. Concepts of practical gender needs and strategic gender needs are in themselves capable of bringing the gender

⁷ In different areas they are known as Hijras or Jogappa. The term third gender has been consciously avoided, as the term raises the question of which is the first and which is the second gender.

⁸ I am not a man trying to be a woman. It is your society's problem that you only recognize two sexes." (Hijra/Aravani Mona Ahmed to author Dayanita Singh).

⁹ M/F/E stand for male, female and Eunuch, respectively. It should be kept in mind while reading these categories that in most institutions in India, the documents confuse sexual and gender identities. For example, there are instances where in the procedural forms, against gender M/F is indicated which are biological categories rather than gender identities i.e., men/women.

needs of Aravanis into focus, provided Aravanis are mainstreamed into the definitions of gender and gender-mainstreaming.

2.8. Gender Mainstreaming

The concept of “mainstreaming gender,” as it is most commonly applied, refers to efforts that transform the existing development agenda through the application of a gender perspective. Gender mainstreaming attempts to integrate the concerns of women and men in development planning and practice, with the objective of promoting gender equality.

Gender mainstreaming involves both women and men, with an explicit—although not exclusive—focus on the subordinate position of women relative to men. While many men may face severe obstacles in life due to their ethnic, political and social backgrounds, men do not usually face gender discrimination and, if they do, are not substantially disabled because of it. Women, in contrast, face discrimination and obstacles due to both gender and non-gender identities. Thus, the focus of gender mainstreaming remains on women’s empowerment, but at the same time recognizes the gendered vulnerabilities of men and boys.

The commonly accepted and most widely used definition of gender mainstreaming is that adopted by the United Nations’ Economic and Social Council:

“Mainstreaming gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes in all areas and all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve Gender Equality (UN ECOSOC 1997).”¹⁰

According to the endorsement of the Beijing Platform of Action, gender mainstreaming requires that

“...governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes, so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively.”¹¹

Building on the UN and Beijing Platform definitions, this study defines gender mainstreaming with an additional component of including the concerns of *Aravanis* along with those of women and men. Gender mainstreaming requires an analysis of gender roles and relationships, as well as the social rules and institutions that produce and reproduce such relationships, and which determine who gets, does and decides what, in both public and private domains. Such an approach must be reflected in the collection of data which forms the foundation of gender-sensitive programmes. Gender analysis also unearths nuanced biases in policy and programming that invisibly render the gender needs of women, marginalized men, and *Aravanis*.

2.9 Conceptual Framework for Gender Mainstreaming Strategies:

¹⁰ Even this comprehensive definition of gender mainstreaming does not include mention of Aravanis.

¹¹ Platform for Action, Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995, paras 79, 105, 123, 141, 164, 189, 202, 229, 238, 252, 273. Quoted in Schalkwyk, Thomas and Woroniuk, *Gender Mainstreaming: A strategy for achieving equality between women and men*, SIDA, 1996.

This study borrows from a conceptual framework, developed by Rao and Kelleher (2003), which identifies different levels of gender mainstreaming including: organizational change, gender infrastructure, and institutional change. Researchers in this study have applied this framework to analyze NGO gender mainstreaming strategies to analyze the qualitative information on the NGOs' gender mainstreaming strategies and their impact on the target groups, as well as gender infrastructure and organizational change. Our primary focus is on institutional changes within the group of selected NGOs. Components of gender infrastructure and organizational change have also been analyzed and documented where possible.

Framework proposed by Rao and Kelleher

Approach	Outcomes	Notes
Gender Infrastructure	Gender policy, including family friendly policy Gender in vision and mission Gender unit/gender coordinator Increased female staff and managers Increased resources for programme work targeting women Changes in the deep structure such as power relations, work–family balance	Institutions such as family, community-level institutions like traditional Panchayats, market and the state etc.
Organizational Change	Accountability to client constituency	
Institutional Change for Gender Equality	Analysis of institutions relevant to the programme, developing programmes and process to challenge these institutional norms, building organizational capacities.	
Adapted from <i>Institutions, Organizations and Gender equality in an era of globalization</i> by Aruna Rao and David Kelleher (Source: Gender and Development, Vol.11.No.1, May 2003).		

Additionally, the instrumental practices at the grassroots implementation which meet the practical gender needs of women and men, in a way that positively impacts on the transformation of institutional gender norms and values, have also been documented.

2.10 Gender and Policies

Policies exist at all levels and different sectors of society: government, private sector, civil society and households. Gender may be present or absent in policies in different ways (Kabeer, 2001) with the following differing approaches.

Policies may have a **gender blind** approach, which means that they do not talk about men and women, but general categories like development of households, communities, agriculture sector etc. It is blind to gender differences in the allocation of roles and resources.

On the other hand, **Gender-neutral** policy remains aware of gender differences; takes account of them not for addressing practical gender needs or strategic gender interests, but for other development goals. For example, making use of the fact that due to social construction women take care of children, and including them in the monitoring committee of Integrated **Children's Development Centers** for strengthening its implementation.

Gender-specific policies and programmes are those that are aware of gender differences, but take them into account only to address the practical gender needs of women and men,

and not the strategic gender interests of women, e.g., income-generation activities without ownership of assets in women's name.

It is, in fact, the Gender **redistributive** policy in contrast specifically intended to transform existing gender relations to create a more balanced relationship. Gender redistributive policy targets both women and men (or one group in particular), by trying to change the roles, resources, and allocation of power and responsibilities between men and women in society to promote gender equity for achieving the outcomes of gender equality. For example, government order requiring that title deeds for permanent houses should be given in the names of both women and men, or requiring that inheritance rights go to the eldest child (rather than the eldest son) are gender redistributive policies. An example is the government order mentioning that title deeds for permanent houses should be given in the joint names of women and men and the inheritance right should go to the eldest child (rather than the eldest son).

CHAPTER 3: Differential Gendered Impacts of the tsunami and Government Response

*“Appa yerenda Aasthi Pochu, Amma yerenda ellaam pochu”
(When father dies only property is lost, but when mother dies everything is lost)
Suguna, 18 years from Serathur, Nagai, who lost her mother in tsunami*

While an event such as the tsunami may be a natural phenomenon, its *impact* is defined by vulnerabilities that are the product of social, economic, and political exclusion and inequality. Rates of survival and the experience of relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction reflect pre-existing vulnerabilities defined by gender, caste, class, religion, and ethnicity. Gender, in particular, is a cross-cutting issue that interacts with other sources of vulnerability. Within any group, men and women exist in unequal power relationships shaped by social perceptions and expectations of gender in a given society. As a result, people’s experiences of a disaster vary. Given the differential impact of a disaster on men, women and *Aravanis* (and the different coping strategies these groups adopt), it is now widely acknowledged that a gender perspective must be integrated within disaster management (Byrne 1995, CAW 1998, Madhavi et al., 2005).

This chapter examines the differential impact of the tsunami on women, men, and the *Aravanis*. It captures gendered issues that emerged in the context of tsunami relief and rehabilitation processes, and analyzes the responses of social institutions (at the level of households, communities, and the State) to the challenges thrown by loss of lives and livelihoods. The analysis underscores how pre-existing gender roles and relations have shaped the impacts of tsunami, and how such gender relations are themselves reshaped in the aftermath of the tsunami. The report highlights various forms of gender discrimination that emanate from patriarchal institutions—socio-cultural, economic and political, and unpacks how policies either reinforce or challenge such discrimination (Murthy and Sagayam 2006).

Based on the issues that emerged from focus group discussions, the following areas are examined using a gendered lens: survival, access to relief, temporary and permanent shelter; livelihoods; gender roles and coping mechanisms, and political participation. Policies are analyzed in terms of their impact on women, men, and *Aravanis* in their real life, post-tsunami situations.

3.1 Survival

Sex disaggregated data from the government reveal that, by far, the largest number of people killed in the tsunami was women and children. Across India, together they represented 75% of the death toll (Government of India, 2005). In Tamil Nadu, the worst-affected state, on an average three times more women died than men. However, in certain places the sex-ratio of the death toll is much higher. In Samiarpet, Cuddalore district, for example, 12 times as many women than men died while in Chandrapadi Village, Nagai, and in Silladi Nagar (a Muslim temporary settlement) 5 and 4 times more women than men died, respectively. It is not known whether official statistics have recorded the deaths of *Aravanis*. The present study reveals that five *Aravanis* had died in Veppanchery, Nagapattinam district, although there may have been more deaths in other villages across the three districts.

The capacity to survive itself was determined, largely, by socio-cultural norms, although the biological differentials also put women at a disadvantage (pregnant women, for example). Women and girls living in coastal communities do not remain in touch with the swimming

skills,¹² which they may have acquired as children (Murthy, 2005). The restrictive nature of the saree¹³ and inskirts,¹⁴ long hair and jewels (symbols of womanly appearance) caused many to drown or get stuck in the thorny bushes and palm trees. In some cases, the waves were so violent that women were stripped of their clothes. Some refused to climb naked into rescue boats because of the internalized sense of shame and honor. Although many reported in the field that men were asking women to give up their sense of shame and offered them their shirts to cover their bodies, women refused the offer, reportedly, for lurking fears of gender-based violence and the consequences post-survival (Discussions with women in Sonan Kuppam, Cuddalore). A recent study on Vulnerability of Coastal Communities to HIV/AIDS in Tsunami affected areas have brought out the fact that some of those who were rescued by men are being asked for sexual favors in return; in some cases, women succumb to their demands, with a sense of obligation (SWASTI, 2007).

In some cases women surrendered themselves to waters because their children were taken away by the ferocity of the waves (focus group discussions, Sonan Kuppam, Cuddalore District). The dominant identification of women with motherhood and the internalized values that assign the responsibility for child survival almost exclusively to women may have been the reasons for these deaths and possibly the deaths of their children too.¹⁵ During the tsunami, women were trying to rescue multiple children as well as the elderly and the sick. The corpses of many women were reportedly found intertwined with those of small children, and the aged (UNIFEM, 2005).

A number of studies have pointed out that the gender division of labor for those engaged in deep sea fishing was one of the reasons that accounted for fewer casualties among men. Men who were out in deep sea were safe from the ferocious waves of tsunami that pounded the shore. However, this study finds that even where both men and women were at home, more number of women had died than men (In Nagaur district, a Muslim settlement, now in temporary shelters in Sildi Nagar, Nagai, lived in the proximity of sea shore for reasons of poverty and were engaged in small business activities).

Many among those who survived have slipped into the vulnerable category of widows and womenheads of the households. They experience poverty more severely than men due to unequal wages, lower position in the socio-cultural hierarchy, constraints on their mobility imposed both by their child-caring roles and socio-cultural norms. The gender roles, while leaving a majority of men idle due to poor catch and loss of work-days, in the areas visited, have put a disproportionate burden on women across occupations to evolve coping strategies on their own for meeting the livelihood needs of their families.

Some women, having disabled spouses due to tsunami-induced injuries, have become de-facto supporters of their households. Women previously engaged in unpaid household work find it difficult to adjust to head-load and walk long distances to sell fish or cope with gender-based harassment in market places (Discussion with women in Keechankuppam, Nagai).

3.2 Access to Relief

The state was prompt in responding to the disaster and attended to the immediate needs of the affected people, delivering supplies of cooked food, clothing and bed sheets and other materials. Immediate relief camps were arranged at the villages that had seen the loss of lives. However, the sex- and gender-specific needs of women were not reflected in

¹² It was reported in some areas, though, that the waves were so powerful even those who knew swimming were helpless.

¹³ Length of cloth, of at least six yards, draped round the body, worn as the main garment by women.

¹⁴ A woman's undergarment worn from the waist to the ankle, worn with a saree.

¹⁵ Many women reported that it was difficult for them to run fast carrying the children in their arms or holding them in their hands.

government relief package. As reported in focus group discussions, this neglect was evident in the distribution of immediate relief packages, and in the distribution of cash relief. Caste and occupation-based discrimination further compounded gender vulnerabilities, while *Aravanis* have been all but completely excluded from the relief process.

The distribution of clothing illustrates the lack of attention to women's practical gender needs. Although undergarments were missing for every one, young women and girl children were relatively more affected as they could not move around with dignity in the absence of innerwear and sanitary towels when needed.¹⁶ The absence of age-appropriate clothing also put girl children and adolescent girls at a disadvantage. Further, clothing packages did not meet the needs of Muslim women who wear the Burka. For example, the Muslim women of Nagur in Nagapattinam reported experiencing major discomfort in the relief camps since their mobility in public spaces (such as toilets, water points, and health centers) was constrained by the lack of the Burqa. In another example of the invisibility of women's needs; aid packages distributed in rural areas failed to provide households with firewood, thus placing a burden on rural women who depend on wood and fuel cakes for cooking. Rather, the government distributed kerosene stoves, despite lack of local familiarity with such stoves.¹⁷

In the initial phase, the delivery of relief was not based on an understanding of the gender roles of women and men. Hence, with the exception of women-headed households, cash relief was delivered into the hands of men. This money, in a majority of the households, was spent on alcohol, aggravating vulnerabilities of the households and putting women, children and the elderly at a great disadvantage. Subsequently, however, another government order recognized the critical role of women in managing households, making it mandatory that relief including cash for incidental expenses be handed over to the women in the presence of community leaders.¹⁸

When relief was routed through the traditional *panchayats*, it often did not reach or partially reached single and elderly women and men, even within their own community. *Traditional Panchayat* often operated under the (often false) assumption that single and elderly women do not require much ration for their survival, since other family members will care for them. Some were turned away by the public distribution system on the grounds that they receive old-age pensions and therefore do not require additional post-tsunami rations. This socio-cultural exclusion forced single and elderly women (both widows and those living with their spouses) to resume work to fend for themselves and support their spouses. The traditional *Panchayats* also favored families with men going to sea for fishing as they paid tax to the *Panchayats* (Woman Kind, 2005). This socio-cultural exclusion forced elderly women, both widows and those living with their spouses, to resume work to fend for themselves and support their spouses.

Another important point that emerged from the study is denial of individual identities to widows and unmarried women within the households. Discounting their individual identity had marginalized, especially, unmarried women, widows without children and elderly women and men in the intra-household distribution of relief food and cash for incidental expenses. The situation in this regard seems to be the same not only in Nagapattinam and Cuddalore where the traditional *panchayats* are strong but also in Kanniyakumari district where relief was mediated through religious institutions.¹⁹

¹⁶ Pre-tsunami women's innerwear, except elderly women, included in skirts and brassieres, and in addition panties for adolescent girls.

¹⁷ In villages women prefer to use firewood and fuel cakes rather than stoves and kerosene. Many were cooking in and outside the temporary shelters with firewood—stoves remaining unused.

¹⁸ GO No.57-4-2-2005

¹⁹ Focused group discussion with women and discussion with CARE Trust.

Her Existence not counted....

Selvi, her face lined with deep wrinkles and bent back, has been selling earthen pots at the roadside near the fruit market, in Cuddalore OT, since long before the tsunami. Many years ago, she was thrown out of the house by her son and daughter-in-law. She gets pots from a potter on credit and sells them with a daily payment to the potter. When asked if she pays the interest, she says she does not know—all that she knows is that she has some money to buy her food. Selvi lost all her earthen-ware in the tsunami, not in the waters but in a stampede that followed it; some were stolen in her absence. Selvi did not receive any immediate relief or compensation for her loss; her ration card is with her son, and she has never contacted him for years (she does not remember how many). She sleeps on the roadside. Although an entrepreneur, she is not a member of any SHG and does not know about it. Authorities refuse to grant her the old age pension because as per records she has a grown up son who is earning!



Caste and occupation-based discrimination and socio-cultural exclusion, coupled with the near-exclusive initial focus of the policy makers on the fishing community left others in the coastal economy at a severe disadvantage. Dalit and Irulas in general, and women in particular, bore a disproportionate burden of the trauma caused by such barriers for access to relief entitlements until a subsequent government order extended these entitlements to the entire affected population of the coastal districts. However, at the time of this study, certain groups remained excluded. The Dalit *Azhi* pickers²⁰ in Mallumiyarpeta, Cuddalore, for example, reported that they had received no relief, and did not know how to access their entitlements. The *NariKuaravars* and the scattered poor also remained excluded from the relief packages distributed both by the government and the NGOs.

Pre-tsunami socio-cultural as well as policy-induced discrimination has rendered the *Aravani* population invisible in the relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction agenda. Literature on the impacts of tsunami has, so far, not mentioned the deaths and the losses incurred by this group or the subsequent trauma and hunger they experienced. Their vulnerabilities were further exacerbated by their systemic exclusion from the mainstream gender discourse.

3.3 Temporary Shelters

People affected by the tsunami were moved from immediate relief camps to the interim shelters. While the design of some of these shelters demonstrated an understanding of the practical gender needs of women, others did not. A shelter is not a gender-neutral place. Women spend more time in the shelters than men due to their reproductive as well as productive roles—many women pre-tsunami were also engaged in home-based work. Gender issues emerged in temporary shelter related to issues of space, privacy, security, and sanitation.

The size of temporary shelters in most cases was uniform, for all families, regardless of size, leaving large families with highly constricted space. Lack of space negatively affected men as well as women. Men were often forced to sleep outside and sustained insect bites and other wounds (Pillaihoppu, Kanniyakumari). Adolescent boys began loitering outside the shelters due to restricted space. Women have expressed anxieties about the boys

²⁰ The reason reported by them is that they were told that they are not fishers; fishing community effectively blocked the relief coming to them. Since the discussion was held while they were engaged in their work, neck-deep in waters, further probing on the issue was not possible. They found it difficult to talk for a long time due to their parched tongues.

loitering in the night in close proximity to the tents without secure doors or adequate lighting (Kesavanpalayam, Cuddalore). In one of the temporary shelters, residents reported that a woman had committed suicide following the unintended entry of a man who had mistaken the temporary shelter for his own (Keechankuppam, Nagai). Many widows with girl children reported that they could not sleep through the night because of security concerns. Due to constricted space, coupled with escalating domestic conflicts, the elderly were reported to be more depressed; one old man had even committed suicide (Keechankuppam, Nagai).²¹



It is the state's responsibility to provide basic amenities to its citizens in a gender-just manner. However, even two years after tsunami, with a number of studies coming out on the issue, many temporary shelters do not have usable toilets (Silladinagar, Nagapattinam, Kuzhaiyaru, Cuddalore, Chandrapadi, Nagapattinam, Aruthenganvillai, Kanniyakumari).²² The absence of community toilets and bathrooms create security concerns for women who, given the lack of privacy, must use the toilet only at night or very early in the morning. While this practice is not desirable, men are able to defecate along the seashore at any time. Women, however, cannot use public spaces unless it is sufficiently dark and have a green shield to give them privacy. Women report discomfort and adverse health effects related to suppressing the urge to defecate/urinate. The tsunami also denuded the area of green cover which pre-tsunami gave women a protective cover for their sanitation needs. With no usable community toilets²³ or other private places, women live in constant anxiety and discomfort.

Feelings of suicide, increased blood pressure, severe depression, and a sense of helplessness are a few themes that had emerged repeatedly in the focus groups with adolescent girls, tsunami widows, young married women and men, and physically battered old women in the temporary shelters. Income poverty, coupled with lack of privacy seems to be altering the behavior of men, as a majority of women had reported escalation in domestic violence against women and children.

Pre-existing institutional exclusion of Aravanis is reflected in the post-disaster management practices. Aravanis were out in the open, as some of them had lived in their non-Aravani friends' houses, which were destroyed. Aravanis need privacy to change their clothes, and as a fundamental human right, a shelter to live in dignity. Because of their exclusion from temporary shelters, some Aravanis prefer to change their clothes, standing in the backwaters (Discussion with Aravani group in Veppanchery, Nagai). Two years after tsunami, some of them are still in the streets and some live off the charity of their non-Aravani friends, with a resigned knowledge that they can be thrown out any time.

²¹ Discussion with SNEHA, Nagapattinam.

²² Women said that they would like to first have community toilets and bathrooms in the village rather than permanent shelters.

²³ Adolescent girls and women reported high level of anxiety, frequent abdominal pain and constipation in Silladinagar Nagar, Nagapattinam District. In some areas eco-san toilets have been constructed, yet—to date—these are not a success, in the areas visited. In one such toilet, insect bites from the pit have caused rashes and bad itching in the private parts of women and children. Children are especially frightened to use the toilet with the result that both women and children have started the practice of open defecation.

Benchmarks for Temporary Shelters based on Women's /Girls' Articulated Needs	Benchmarks for Gender Sensitive toilets Women's/Girls' Articulated Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adjacent temporary shelters should have adequate space between them. ➤ Temporary shelters should be made of that which keeps away the heat as well as the cold. ➤ Within the temporary shelters there should be a strong partition ensuring a safe corner for the personal needs of women and girls. ➤ Doors of the temporary shelters should be strong and secure. ➤ Kitchens should be located outside the temporary shelter. ➤ Kitchens should have Chulhas and Chimneys. ➤ There should be provision of either solar lanterns or electricity in the night in common spaces as well as within the shelters. ➤ The size of the temporary shelter should be in accordance with the number of members in the households. ➤ A shed should be provided for women to engage in their home-based occupations; and spaces should be available for holding meetings and gatherings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Five temporary shelters should share one toilet. This would facilitate a sense of ownership and maintenance of the toilets. ➤ Adequate water should be available for using the toilets. ➤ Toilets should have strong and full-length doors. ➤ Doors should be provided with secure bolts. ➤ Toilets should have ventilators only at a height from where none can peep through. ➤ The women's toilet should be closer to the shelters, while the men's should be further away. ➤ Toilets as well as the pathways leading to them should be well lit with sufficient lights.

Aravanis get no relief...

Padma and Kavya aged 45 and 28, respectively, from Nagapattinam district, lost their rented house during tsunami in Thirukkadaiyur. With the exclusion of *Aravanis* in the immediate relief camps and later in the temporary shelters, they would sleep in the open with a known risk of gender-based violence. All those interviewed reported that due to lack of privacy they had to change their clothes, standing in the waters. None figured in the list of affected people and hence did not receive the immediate relief assistance of food, clothes, and bedding. They now live outside the temple shed on the charity of the temple priest but are not sure when they will be chased off.



3.4 Permanent Housing

The permanent housing policies of the government, in the reconstruction phase, demonstrate a mix of both transformative and gender-neutral approaches. It should be noted that even prior to tsunami, the government had given joint entitlement to land ownership for habitats in some areas. This is a fine example of how pre-existing transformative policies are replicated in the context of post-disaster reconstruction.

Government Order 172,²⁴ which requires that permanent housing is given in the names of both women and men, has challenged structural inequalities such as the prevailing norms of male ownership of land and property. The order stipulates that the houses in the name of women cannot be transferred to their husbands.

²⁴ G.O. Ms. No. 172-30-3-2005 is transformative in nature as it attempts to institutionalize gender equality in housing and housing rights.

The order also considers the sale of the house null and void for the first 10 years. The G.O. challenges customary norms of male inheritance by declaring that the inheritance right would go to the eldest child, male or female. The Irulas, who did not have pucca houses²⁵ pre-tsunami, have since the tsunami obtained ownership of permanent houses for the first time. Such examples underscore how reconstruction can move beyond returning to status-quo through transformative policies. Reconstruction policies did not play a transformative role in the case of *Aravanis*. Since most *Aravanis* do not have ration cards, most were unable to access to housing.

The security needs of *Aravanis* are no less important than that of other vulnerable groups, yet their pre-tsunami vulnerabilities have worsened their situation in the aftermath of the tsunami. In their interaction with the researchers, *Aravanis* have suggested that they do not need separate houses but a common shelter with basic amenities where they can live together in security.

She Lives in Terror...

Hasina, aged 22, *Kodimunai, Kanniyakumari* District, a qualified plumber from ITI, remains without a job and shelter. She was thrown out of her (non-Aravani) friend's house in the temporary shelter; though pre-tsunami, she used to live with him. Living in the open is a terror for this young Aravani who needs a job badly and does not like to beg any more—she begged only to support her study in Bangalore. During her life in the open, she has been raped several times over; sometimes gang raped too. She feels a common shelter for Aravanis, with basic amenities, would give them a sense of security and, to some extent, prevent the type of trauma she is going through.

The Tamil Nadu Government Order related to housing for tsunami victims also overlooks the case of single women (unmarried and divorced women and widows) who are living with relatives. In many cases, despite their roles as primary breadwinners of the household, such women fear that the houses will be inherited by their brothers, even younger to them, following their parents deaths, even if their brothers never supported the parents and lived separately.²⁶ The affected women realize that it is an unjust practice and feel they would have been secure if they also had been included in the joint ownership of the houses along with their parents. The government order has not addressed the concerns of single women living with their parents, and their fears of being neglected by their male siblings.

Some discretionary powers of the district administration appear to have reinforced gender biases by denying entitlement to the three cent of land in rural areas to widows who did not have children, while widows with girl children were given land and Rs. 5,000/- to build a hut (*Kuzhaiyaru, Cuddalore* District). Although no verification of these facts has been sought from the District Collector in Cuddalore, the very fact that the community has perceived it this way reinforces the traditional norms of identifying women with motherhood. It also goes against the human rights of women to enjoy the right to land entitlement and the security that comes from the shelter.

3.5 Ex-gratia payments

²⁵ A pucca house is one, which has walls and roof made of the following material.

Wall material: Burnt bricks, stones (packed with lime or cement), cement concrete, timber, etc.

²⁶ Although the government order related to the ownership of housing stipulates that after the demise of the parents the house will be inherited by the eldest child along with the survivor, many fear that it will not happen in practice due to socio-cultural norms to which many women surrender. House ownership, in such cases, will be with the brother.

The ex-gratia payments from state and central government were generous (Murthy et al., 2006) to those who had lost their immediate family members. However, the present study suggests that with a few exceptions²⁷ the delivery of such payments were not based on a gender analysis of the differing roles of women and men. On the one hand, men are considered to be bread winners and the source of primary income (the government pension policy underpins the breadwinner role of husbands and sons),²⁸ while at the same time, the semi-orphans, who lost their fathers, have not been offered the same compensation as orphans. Women who were engaged in the household work and dependent on the income of their deceased husbands are still not engaged in productive work. However, the share a child gets in the case of the death of his/her father is only Rs. 50,000/, much below that of an orphan child.

There was no specific requirement in the case of ex-gratia payment for semi-orphans on the specific use of the money for higher education and self-employment. In fact, such amounts are earmarked for dowry by the surviving parents (Samiarpet, Cuddalore). Socio-cultural norms had mediated the recipients of ex-gratia amount. In the households where the children alone had died, men received 2 lakhs and above depending on how many children had been lost to the tsunami. The payment was based on the headship of the household rather than on an analysis of who is responsible for sustaining the well-being of the households.

In cases, where men spent the money on drinking and gambling, there was an escalation in domestic conflicts not only between the spouses but also between fathers and children. While boys started spending relatively more time outside, girls could only 'wish' to get out from such situations. Driven by heavy depression and suicidal feelings some have even committed suicide. In Keetchankuppam, Nagapattinam district, a young girl had committed suicide after her father remarried, shortly after he received the ex-gratia for his wife's death. Yet, another girl (in Tudvai, Nagapattinam) reported to be struggling constantly with suicidal feelings, after her mother's death, as her father had increased his drinking bouts and repeatedly verbally abuses her and her sibling. There are also reported instances of abandonment of parenting responsibilities after receiving the ex-gratia payment for the death of the wife.

Ex-gratia in the hands of men mostly resulted in intra-household inequalities in access to and use of the money for household sustenance, forcing women and children into secondary poverty²⁹ where, despite the income ostensibly available to the household, insufficient funds are directed to the needs of women and children (Sarah Bradshaw, 2004). When ex-gratia payments have been received by women for the death of their spouses, the money is generally spent on meeting livelihood needs, settling debts incurred by their husbands for buying productive assets pre-tsunami, repairing houses and for providing healthcare of children and elderly parents (focused group discussions with women in Pudupet,

Multiple implications:

²⁷ G.O. Ms. No. 6, dated 8-1-2005, which specifies that money should be spent on self-employment/education/for adolescent girls in the age group of 18 and unmarried women above 18 is transformatory in nature, as it transfers agency to girl children by addressing their strategic needs for higher education and initiating their own business. Significantly, it does not stipulate the use of money for marriage.

²⁸

²⁹ The concept of secondary poverty refers to the fact that men do not generally spend the entire income to meet the livelihoods needs of the household, including savings. Secondary poverty is as significant as poverty per se for women. Sometimes poverty itself is a result of secondary poverty as houses become poor when men spend part of their income on alcohol, gambling etc. This is not to deny that secondary poverty also is caused by practices such as dowry.

Children's Rights and Work and Economic Burden on the elderly...

Rajan, 35 years, with a daughter and son, lost his wife in Tsunami. He used up the ex-gratia money for drinking. His drinking continues unabated with borrowed money... Rajan has abandoned his parenting responsibility. The children are now living with their maternal grandparents, who themselves lost their assets in tsunami. Rajan never comes to see them and when asked to pay for the maintenance of the children, he abuses his wife's parents. He has even refused to pay any money for the children's educational expenses which would have helped the grandparents to tide over the difficult situation.

Cuddalore). As several studies point out—and as confirmed by this study—the money in the hands of women, furthers the fulfillment of the basic needs of the entire family (Murthy and Sankaran, 2001). Interestingly, tsunami widowers who started taking care of their children and took up household chores along with their daughters reported the same spending pattern. However, both men and women, in some instances, have spent the entire money for marrying off their daughters.

Unmarried women, who have been supporting but not heading households, did not receive any share in the ex-gratia amount, although there are reports that it was shared among brothers. In some instances, the money has either been kept aside for the dowry of the younger sister or deposited in the name of the son. Ex-gratia, based on headcounts, in the names of men in case of surviving couples, seems to have reinforced existing gender inequalities. Application for ex-gratia for missing persons requires a lengthy procedure and sometimes can be a stressful experience, especially for women who have a relatively low level of legal awareness, and who lack communication skills and mobility in public spaces. One of the tsunami widows reports running from pillar to post to get ex-gratia payment for her missing son and has reportedly spent Rs. 50,000/ in the process (C. Pudupettai, Cuddalore district).

A gendered analysis of the roles, norms, and behaviors in pre-disaster times may in all probability have indicated the possible coping strategies and spending patterns of women and men in the context of their socially constructed roles. Although Aravanis had died in the tsunami, no ex-gratia was paid to their closely-knit community which has a network of filial relationships. For example, due to Institutional discrimination, a married Aravani, in spite of her inclusion in the ration card, was denied from her rightful claim to ex-gratia (reported by her Aruvani sister in a discussion with the researchers).

Did She Deserve it?

Kalyani aged 40, married to a non-aravani, was well accepted in her spouse's family, particularly by her mother-in-law, who never taunted her. Her name was also included in the ration card. Kalyani's spouse and mother-in-law died in the tsunami. The ex-gratia amount due to Kalyani for her spouse's death was taken by her father-in-law after kicking her out of the home. Kalyani had nowhere to go and against her wishes had to migrate to Bombay to make a living.

(focus group discussion with Aravanis in Cuddalore District).

3.6 Health

Following the tsunami, viewed from a gendered lens, run the gamut from tsunami-induced injuries (and the increased burden on women who care for the disabled), to the increase in physical and work burden among women and girls, to poor nutrition, to gender-specific themes such as reverse-sterilization (re-canalization) for women, and increased alcohol abuse among men. Certain groups, such as *Azhi* picking and finger-fishing also carry occupational health risks that disproportionately burden women. The health needs of the Aravanis, largely neglected in the tsunami response, are also discussed below. The health

effects on women of poor sanitation and the issue of violence against women (which is also a health issue) are discussed separately in the same chapter.

3.6.1 Tsunami-induced injuries

There was a major (and justifiable) initial focus among the government and NGOs involved in tsunami relief on assessing the death toll, and on compensating those households who lost members to the tsunami. However, injuries and disabilities caused by the tsunami went largely unnoticed, bearing long-term consequences for the survival conditions of affected individuals and households.

Tsunami-induced injuries dealt a severe blow to the health and economic livelihoods of both women and men. Severe and permanent disabilities prohibited many from working, yet these opportunity costs were not factored into the determination of compensation (ex-gratia) amounts. The realistic cost of treatment for injuries and disability were also not factored in; in some cases, the cost of treatment of severe injuries have far exceeded the government stipulated amount of Rs. 25,000/-.

Valarmathi, aged 35, a construction worker fell down while running for safety and severely injured her neck. She can no longer do head-loading at the construction site. Not only is her family deeper in debt but she has also dropped out of the SHGs group due to her inability to save for retaining her membership in the Sangam. Her daughter aged 10, studying 5th standard, has now taken upon herself all the household work that her mother used to do, i.e., taking care of younger siblings, cooking, cleaning, and fetching water and firewood. She also takes care of her sick mother. She has not, however, dropped out of school although she is not able to finish her home work regularly.

In some cases, complicated procedures and narrow deadlines have resulted in the denial of compensation even in the case of grievous injuries. Some households, where members are still undergoing treatment, report medical expenses of more than Rs. 1,000/- per month. Such expenses clearly have an adverse effect on the household income.

3.6.2 Increased Burden on Women and Girls

Although both men and women have suffered injuries, the consequences of injury are gendered. Gender-based division of labor has an indirect as well as a direct bearing on poverty and health. Women's heavy workloads lead to higher levels of ill health, giving them less time to recuperate from health problems (Murthy and Sankaran, 2001).

In times of crisis, women fall back on the elasticity of their time, which stretches in proportion to the severity of the situation, to devise new coping and income-generation strategies. Where men have become unfit to work, the burden on women and girls to provide for their families has increased manifold. Women have become sole breadwinner for their households where men have suffered injuries. Women must struggle to sustain their families with fewer resources, often bearing high medical expenses as well as the burden of caring for those who were disabled by the tsunami. Where women have become disabled, girls are now overburdened with household chores. This has obvious impact on the health of girl children, who in many cases, have no time to relax, as before and after school they must cook food, take care of their siblings and mother, and fetch water and fuel wood.

The destruction of substantial green cover and loss of livestock following the tsunami caused a shortage of firewood as well as fuel cakes (made from animal manure), forcing women and girls to cover greater distances and spend more time for collecting firewood. Post-tsunami, women report that they are forced to walk 15–20 kilometers to collect a week's supply of firewood, (about 4 trips of 3–4 kilometers each) (focus group discussion, Poraiyar, Nagai).

This has obvious implications on the health status of women and girl children as the calories spent on these activities far exceeds the calories required (Venkteswara et al., 1996).

Women's Work Burden

After the tsunami, fisherwomen, due to inadequate catch locally, have started going to Kanniyakumari in the evening at 6 p.m. and are back home only at 2 o'clock in the morning. Segregating and ice packing the fish takes them another hour or so. The arduous work schedule, without compromising the household chores, has made them chronically fatigued.

Avoidable Stress

In Silladi Nagar women need to walk 4 kilometers to access ration from the Public Distribution System and come back with the ration by auto, thus spending a sizeable amount of money on transport, which could have been spent on other basic needs. There again, if men go to collect the ration, they go by cycle (Silladi Nagar, Nagapattinam districts). This stress on women and household economy could have been easily avoided, if a ration shop had been temporarily located in the vicinity of the temporary shelters.

I walk in Pain

I never went for fish vending...I am going now. The injury (She shows her lacerated abdomen and swollen back) has made it difficult for me to carry head load. Sometimes, I take an auto along with others but at other times I walk in pain." Meenakshi, C.Pudupettai, Cuddalore District.

3.6.3 Nutrition

One of the coping strategies of households, and particularly of women, is to cut down on the quantity they eat to manage the scarcity of resources (focus group discussions across villages visited). Women's nutritional intake and health are adversely affected by social norms dictating that women eat last and least in their households. Women who are fish vendors and day laborers, for reasons of occupation and poverty, seldom eat thrice a day; they forgo either their breakfast or lunch. Post-tsunami, women who have lost livestock reported a steep decline in their consumption of milk and curds, as well as loss of income that came from the sale of milk. In villages in Nagapattinam and Cuddalore, women reported that the loss of kitchen gardens due to the ingress of seawater has resulted in the reduced consumption of vegetables and varieties of greens, thus affecting household nutritional status, particularly among women and girl children.

3.6.4 Reverse-Sterilization

Following the tsunami, the issue of reverse-sterilization (or re-canalization) emerged as a major health and social issue for women. Women who lost children in the tsunami and who had previously undergone sterilization procedures were given the "choice" of reversing the operation in order to try to conceive again. A government order offering free re-canalization surgeries has had a mixed impact. On the one hand, the G.O. expands the reproductive choices of women in deciding whether or not to conceive again after the loss of their children in tsunami.³⁰ However, examining this G.O. from a gender perspective, we must ask whether women really will be able to make informed choices or whether they will come under pressure from their spouses, families, and communities to opt for the reversal surgery.

According to a paper, published by Population Reference Bureau, the reversal surgery may feed into broad cultural biases (Cohen 2005). Many women fear that, if they fail to conceive, there is a higher chance that their husbands will remarry due to mounting pressure from friends and relatives. Sometimes pressure on a husband to remarry comes from the wife herself. The study has revealed high level of frustration, feelings of inadequacy and guilt among women who have not yet conceived after re-canalization. The long-term impacts of re-canalization on the reproductive health of women and the success rate of such surgical interventions are not clear. Out of 16 women who underwent reversal surgeries in

³⁰ G.O. MS. No. 30, Health and Family Welfare Department, dated. 21.3.05.

Aaryanattutheru and Akkaripettai, Nagai, four women have conceived and successfully delivered.³¹ However, in Nambiar Nagar, Nagapattinam, out of 10 women who have gone through recanalisation, none have conceived yet. In Keechankuppam only 5 out of 52 have conceived.³²

Choice without freedom to choose!

Anbuja, aged 37, of Chandrapadi, Nagai, lost her four children in the tsunami. She went through the reversal surgery in Chennai, which cost her Rs. 1,50,000 but has not yet conceived. Although the couple wanted to adopt children, now her entire focus is on how to conceive and have at least one child of their own again. Her depression becomes severe when she hears news of other women who have conceived. With all the money she has—she got Rs.8,00,000/- as compensation for her lost children—she does not find a meaning in her life. She also feels hurt when the community perceives her to be one of the privileged for her enhanced material status (she is no longer economically poor). Anbuja, however, feels that she is poorer, no happier and more emotionally drained than what she was, pre-tsunami.

3.6.5 Alcohol Consumption

Alcohol consumption among men increased following the tsunami, in part in response to the stress and trauma of the disaster and in part a response to the availability of cash relief. Numerous focus group discussions have suggested that the increase in the consumption of alcohol post-tsunami has aggravated the conditions of wheezing, asthma, and general weakness among men with the result that some of them find themselves unfit to work. Among men having wives who were injured in the tsunami, many have started justifying their increased in-take of alcohol with the frustration that they experience because their wives are sick at home (focus group discussions). Many women cite increased alcohol consumption as a factor in increased depression and violence within the home.

3.6.6 Occupational Health Risks

The health risks encountered by sea shell collectors, *Azhi* pickers and finger fishers from the Dalit and Irula communities have become more frequent and severe, post-tsunami. Dalit *Azhi* collectors spend nearly 8 hours neck-deep in the waters, under the scorching sun with their catamarans. Infections and injuries to their feet and fingers due to *Azhi* bites can cause temporary disability. Post-tsunami, deposits of thorny bushes, rubble and debris in the backwaters have further increased their risk of injuries. The tsunami rehabilitation efforts have passed by this occupational group. Given a range of options, men and women *Azhi* pickers report that they would like to give up the risky occupation.



Azhi picker's (left side picture) occupation requires them to stand neck-deep in the back waters for many hours every day. They get sever *Azhi* bites. Most of the post Tsunami health interventions have not conceived addressing such occupational hazards. Similarly many other individuals in remote areas have suffered injuries during Tsunami but are left untreated.



The practical gender needs of women *Azhi* pickers include good quality gloves as well as goggles (sunglasses) and catamarans. Men *Azhi* pickers use goggles to protect their eyes from the hard sun; however, women do not use them as they associate them with male outfits. A few NGOs (non-participating in this study) seem to have reinforced this stereotype

³¹ Discussion with SNEHA and referencing the data base at SNEHA.

³² Discussion with women in Nambiar Nagar, Nagai.

by distributing protective glasses to men alone. Women as well as men *Azhi* pickers suffer from severe back pain, frequent fever, asthma, and fits. Women, in particular, suffer severe abdomen and hip pain, giddiness and excessive bleeding when they menstruate, due to the physical strain of pushing a catamaran with one hand and picking up *Azhis* with the other. Finger-fishers from the *Dalit* and *Irula* communities also experience similar problems.

Women in these occupations are doubly disadvantaged as, after returning home, they need to take care of household chores. While men have time to relax and drink “to forget physical pain and have good sleep”, women rely on painkillers and suffer from insomnia (focus group discussion, Malumiyarpet, Cuddalore). Although some of the health effects and vulnerabilities described here are not tsunami-specific, they remain an important part of the disaster vulnerability context (Lewis, 1999). Development processes, which are not able to offer livelihood security to vulnerable women and men, push them to take up risky occupations, which, in turn, make them more vulnerable to disaster as well as poor post-disaster recovery processes.

3.6.7 The Health of Aravanis

Aravanis who had severe injuries on their legs and backs are no longer able to go for begging or dance. Although the doctors in Government Hospitals treated the injured Aravanis, they did not get the Rs. 5,000/- compensation which was perceived to be meant for women and men only.

The vulnerability and health of *Aravanis* generally only get mentioned in the area of HIV/AIDS.³³ However, other health issues, such as the *Aravanis*' lack of basic amenities, such as toilets and drinking water, their poor food security, and insecure livelihoods were generally not considered in the tsunami response and rehabilitation process. Despite the massive involvement of humanitarian and human-rights organizations and their emphasis on intervention for transformation of institutions in the recovery process, this vulnerable group still awaits sustained intervention to integrate them within the gender-mainstreaming discourse.

3.7 Access to Social Safety and Related Information: Pensions and Public Distribution System

In addition to tsunami relief and compensation, existing social welfare provisions, if accessible and gender-sensitive, are a crucial component in mitigating the impact of disaster among the poorest and most vulnerable categories of women, men, and Aravanis.

The tsunami presented an opportunity for all social actors including the government, to re-examine social welfare policies and their implementation in order to address issues of gender concern, by simplifying application procedures, increasing awareness of various schemes, and sensitizing concerned officials to provide for speedy, gender-sensitive implementation, and sustained monitoring. Yet, for the destitute and elderly populations that depend upon existing pension schemes, this opportunity was missed. It emerged, from the focus group discussions that destitute widows, irrespective of their age or whether or not they have a son were aware of the fact. This lack of awareness concerning welfare schemes was also true in the case of deserted wives above the age of 30.

Maneuvering as a strategy for survival

Gomathi in Perumalpettai, Nagai, found it difficult to support her bed-ridden husband without the support of additional money, especially after tsunami. With support from the women's group, she

³³ Discussion with Aravani Groups in Nagapattinam and Cuddalore districts.

declared herself a widow in spite of her husband being alive; she now gets a pension. Another widow in Cuddalore, on the advice of the concerned official, maneuvered to get a pension under the pretext that she does not have a son. According to her, it is like “not having a son when they do not respect and support us.”

A shared understanding among the officials³⁴ that a woman must wait for 5 years after separation or desertion before receiving a pension is not based on knowledge of the prevailing socio-cultural norms and gender roles. Especially in rural areas, widows generally do not get re-married due to internalized patriarchal norms and other considerations that stem from their subordinate position in the society, which outweigh socially and culturally perceived advantages of re-marriage.³⁵ This is so, even in areas where remarriage of widows is being consciously encouraged post-tsunami i.e., in Kanniyakumari district.

Within the marginalized groups, women without any children, unmarried women not heading households, destitute women, women with only girl children, elderly women, and men and women with their spouses disabled or chronically sick, remain most marginalized. In times of scarcity, these women are the first to be neglected and abused. The lack of clearly articulated policies that focus specifically on the needs of these groups renders them vulnerable and contributes to their further marginalization in the disaster-management process.

Post-tsunami, reconstruction processes do not seem to have improved the social infrastructure of Dalit areas,³⁶ such as health sub-center, public distribution systems, and water collection points, which are mostly located in the adjoining areas where the fishing community forms the majority. Field research revealed that elderly women and men go through regular periods of hunger, especially in Dalit villages, due to loss of agricultural wage labor. Even before the tsunami, wages to agricultural laborers were falling due to changes in land-use patterns driven by the commercialization of land. The ingress of sea waters into existing agricultural lands which were used for food cropping dealt an additional blow. Although the economic vulnerability of Dalit agricultural workers is not tsunami-specific, their example underscores the importance of including access to social safety net as an integral component of disaster preparedness (Lewis, 1999).

Surviving Only on Shells

Chinnamaal, aged 65, from Cuddalore Old Town, lives with her semi-orphaned grand daughter, aged 12 years, a student of class 5. Almost every day, they survive on boiled shell that Chinnamaal finger fishes in the backwaters. During holidays the grand daughter also accompanies her for finger fishing, although she is mortally afraid of the bites of the Azhi. The neighbors said this is the only way they survive. Chinnamaal does not have a ration card nor does she know about old-age pensions. When told about the old-age pension scheme by the author, she said it will do a lot of good to her and her grand daughter if someone could help her to access it. She was not aware of post-tsunami government schemes that support tsunami-affected children's education.

3.7.1 Aravani: an excluded group

Aravanis are not covered by any of the social security schemes. Surprisingly, the review of literature shows that hardly any research in the context of tsunami has been focused on the issue. Most Aravanis, who were interacted with, do not have ration cards. They face hunger

³⁴ Discussion with official at the Collector's office, Chennai.

³⁵ The other considerations include bearing the burden of not only her own but also the children of other men; pressure later on to bear him children (which may result in discrimination against her own children especially if she/they happen to be girl children) and the possibility of having to undergo other manifestations of domestic violence (interviews in Kanniyakumari).

³⁶ By areas we mean only the areas visited by the study team.

in the context of any disaster, as their livelihood activities are equally affected, i.e., begging by clapping their hands and dancing. Aged Aravanis are not covered under any pension scheme. Aravanis' exclusion from policies and discourse on gender are responsible for their marginalization, which compounds in the aftermath of a calamity. Hunger, starvation, shelterless conditions and institutional rejection also push them into prostitution.

A typical conversation related by Rajam, Nagappatinam when they go to apply for a ration card

Are you a man or a woman?

Man

You do not look like one

I am Aravani

But you need to fill this column which asks of sex

M/F

Then , put me in the category of woman

Well, can you give birth to a child?

No

Then get away, you are not eligible for something that is meant for either a man or a woman.

3.7.2 Poor Implementation and Lack of Awareness

At times, even where welfare policies and programs are in place, their poor implementation and lack of awareness of the schemes become a barrier for accessing basic entitlements such as food security among vulnerable women and men. For example, post-tsunami, although there was a focus on building Balwadis where none previously existed, Anganwadis were seen functioning in very few areas. Within the villages visited across all three districts, almost no one knew about the role that Anganwadis can play in ensuring the food security of the elderly. Where Anganwadis had previously³⁷ functioned, there was a huge demand for restarting them by impoverished families (Silladinagar, Nagai). Where Anganwadis were previously³⁸ functioning, there was a huge demand for restarting them by impoverished families and consequent neglect of elderly women and men (Silladinagar, Nagai).

3.8 Livelihoods

The tsunami had a devastating effect on coastal livelihoods in both fishing and non-fishing sectors of the economy. Field-level interviews and focus group discussions reveal that incomes among both fish and non-fish workers have fallen substantially (by half or more, according to respondents' own estimates). Women, in particular, have had to compensate

³⁷ In Silladi Nagar (Source: Balwadi Workers).

³⁸ In Silladi Nagar (Source: Balwadi Workers).

Losing his own catamaran to Tsunami, now he survives on someone else's mercy....



for loss of household income by devising new livelihood and coping strategies. The following examples highlight the gendered impact of the tsunami on livelihoods of men and women. An increasing number of women are becoming sole breadwinners, post-tsunami, due to the death of or severe injuries suffered by their husbands/sons.

Not that I wanted to...

Pushed by a dwindling income, increased expense on alcohol and battering by her husband, Kalyani from xxx in Cuddalore district, she sells fish in the day time and herself in the night. Her daughter goes to stay with Kalyani's mother in the night. She needs money for her daughter's upkeep and has dreams of educating her so that she does not have to lead a life similar to hers. She says she is not bothered about the comments of others, that people do not feed her children and that it is her responsibility to feed and educate her children (name and area withheld).

Tsunami-affected households have sunk deeper and deeper into debt. Women, in particular, take on the responsibility of repaying the debts. In many cases women work off their debts by selling their labor and catch, at lower than the market price, to moneylenders. Some women have no option but to take up jobs of domestic servants in relatively well-off houses with long hours of work and low pay, i.e., Rs. 150/- per month. In some cases, women have engaged in prostitution as a means of providing income for their families.

Although wage opportunities have decreased post-tsunami for both women and men, men have the option to migrate to increase their chances of finding work. While women stay behind with their families, men migrate to nearby areas for 7–15 days in a month. Women report that the money men bring home is less than half of what they used to, pre-tsunami. Many in focus group discussions in Cuddalore and Nagapattinam attributed this fact to men's increase in maintenance expenses while away from home—food, alcohol, traveling, etc. Some women reported that at times their spouses come with paltry sums, and report theft to justify their small contribution. However, women guess that it is not a theft but a relative increase in drinking that drains their income.

Migrations from their responsibility

When they are with us they give 30 percent of their income to us; but when they are not with us, they do not give us even that much. So we lose that money when they go out in search of work. They have a hard life away from home...and we also remain worried about them. Sometimes, they come back sick and cannot return to work for even a month or two.

(Panchkuppam, Cuddalore, women in the Focused Group Discussion)

There is also the possibility of money being used for having sexual relations outside of marriage while away from home. A study on the vulnerability of the coastal community to HIV/AIDS in the areas affected by tsunami, underscores the link between male migration and the rising risk of HIV/AIDS for the couple (SWASTI, 2007).

Field interviews reveal that women, who are exclusively responsible for childcare without a reliable support system, face major difficulties working outside the home. Women previously engaged in unpaid household work feel the need, post-tsunami, to engage in paid work, but are not able to do so because of lack of childcare centers with timings sensitive to their schedules. Single men responsible for childcare and household work have the same need for childcare centers with sensitive time schedules (focus group discussion Samiyarpettai, Cuddalore). The salinization of cultivable lands and loss of livestock in the tsunami have affected both women and men farmers and women engaged in growing kitchen gardens. The loss of kitchen gardens has affected women's earnings, which in the past ensured that essential household needs were met to some extent. The savings that women traditionally generated, often without the knowledge of their men, from the sale of dairy or kitchen garden products, for example, has been lost, thus affecting women's survival strategy in the times of crisis.

Women farmers, especially, have become poorer and malnourished due to the loss of livestock. For them, livestock and farming activities are organically related. They depend on agricultural operations for activities such as cooking and managing nutritional requirements for the household. Significantly, both women and men have linked the pre-tsunami vulnerabilities (aquaculture, cash cropping, and buying large holding of farmlands which remained unused) to their conditions post-tsunami.

Elderly women are particularly vulnerable. Before the tsunami, many elderly women were engaged in agricultural wage labor livestock rearing. Post-tsunami, work opportunities have been reduced, and elderly women are generally not called for work. Some elderly women, who had given up fish vending due to their old age and physical frailty, have been forced to resume work after the tsunami. The practical gender needs of these women have not been taken into account in terms of transportation, health care facilities, or access to old-age pensions. Their precarious survival strategies include incurring heavy debts to private moneylenders and self-starvation to feed the dependents in the family.

Gender stereotypes put boys under pressure to drop out of school in order to work on the boats to contribute to the family income. In Kanniyakumari and Nagapattinam, boys have started going to the sea as wage laborers and remain away from their families for 15 days altogether. The institutional exclusion of *Aravanis* pre-tsunami is reflected in their exclusion from the rehabilitation process. Some report that they can no longer dance due to tsunami-induced injuries to their legs, thus losing a major source of their income apart from begging.

3.8.1 The Gendered Impact of Government's Livelihood Response

The stark reality from the field has brought into focus the plight of women—particularly single women and the elderly—and the need for livelihood rehabilitation and compensation programs that meet their needs. However, as the following examples illustrate, many of the government's compensation policies have not adequately considered the needs of women.

Before the tsunami, women whose husbands were disabled were the de facto owners of boats, catamarans, and nets. Sons would use their mothers' assets, giving these women a degree of status in the home. After the tsunami destroyed their boats and nets, government compensation restored assets in the names of the sons rather than their mothers.

Similarly, women who lost both their husbands and their assets—boats, nets, catamarans, tools, etc.—did not receive compensation for their losses, thus reinforcing the stereotypes which deprive women of access to and control over productive assets. Many women report that they have spent their entire ex-gratia money to pay off the debts incurred by their husbands for buying boats and nets. Moneylenders approached them as soon as they came

to know about the ex-gratia for the death of their husbands. This increased the vulnerabilities of the women-headed households, post-tsunami.

The livelihood recovery policies promoted by the government have also failed to respond to the loss of the productive resources such as tools and materials used in home-based work and micro-enterprise, as well as personal assets of crucial value such as small savings, jewelry, sarees, and household goods. Such assets formed an important part of household savings and survival strategies as they can easily be converted into cash by selling or pawning. Although members of women's self-help groups incurred heavy losses in their micro-business activities, their loans were not waived and their assets not restored.

Who counted their loss?	No Proof of Loss—No Compensation!
In Perumalpettai, Nagapattinam District, Pre-tsunami, two SHGs together had run the business of selling dry fish. The SHG took a loan of 2 lakhs and built an infrastructure to dry fish and invested Rs. 100,000/- in fish stock, salt, utensils, and other tools. They lost everything in the tsunami. However, neither has their loss been compensated nor the remaining loan amount of Rs. 100,000/- (they had repaid half the loan pre-tsunami) waived or rescheduled. The members have to repay the loan by getting into heavy debts and pawning their jewelry.	In Jeeva Nagar, Nagai, a dalit village, 300 livestock, mainly goats were lost but it was reported that they were not able to access the compensation as they were asked to show the carcasses of the lost livestock which the women and men had disposed of for reasons of health and hygiene.

Livestock-rearing was a main source of women's livelihoods engaged in subsistent economies. Women especially, the elderly, have now been rendered almost destitute, since the Government Order³⁹ relating to compensation for livestock was not implemented in many areas.⁴⁰

Lack of Space and Shattered Business	They catch fish and sell their freedom to make profit for the lords!
Noor Jahan, a single woman, engaged in the home-based business of making hand fans, was a successful entrepreneur, pre-tsunami. She had a ready market for her product in Delhi, Bombay, and Chennai. Her house was destroyed by tsunami and along with it her tools of trade and a huge stock of raw material. The temporary shelter does not have enough space for her to start business again. She also needs a minimum amount of Rs. 50,000/- to start her business again. However, she is now too poor to access credit from the bank or a private moneylender. She is confident, that given an opportunity and space enough to run her business, she can train many other women in the skill as well as provide them employment (Silladi Nagar, Nagai).	Irula women and men who borrowed from moneylenders (belonging to the fishing community) could not fix the price on their catch and had to sell it at the price fixed by them which is 50–75 percent lower than the market price. Moreover, they have to part with the best of their catch to the moneylender and sell the remaining in the market at a lower price. Similarly, widows and elderly women who sell fish buy them from the moneylenders from their own community at a higher price due to their weak negotiating power, thus obtaining only a meager profit.

Stereotyped perceptions of occupations and asset ownership appear to have intersected with both gender and caste identities. Dalit women who used catamarans remained invisible in the relief process, as the use of catamaran and boats is normally associated with men fish

³⁹ G.O. (Ms.) No. 39 Dated 25.1.2005

⁴⁰ Kesavapallyam, Chan drapadi, Jeevanagar, Cooksnagar in Nagapattinam district and Panchkuppam, Kodimaratheru, Madhakoil street, Sivanarpuram in Cuddalore district. No such data are available from the areas visited in Kanniyakumari district possibly because the main sources of livelihoods were fishing and allied occupations, shell selling, shell crafts etc.

workers. Women who collect and sell *Azhi* also use catamarans, but were not compensated for lost boats or stocks of *Azhi*. The Dalit villages are situated in the *kada madai*, right at the tail end of the pipeline that carries water. The supply, if any, is scanty and irregular. Women must walk ½ km to buy desalinated water at Rs. 2/- or 3/- per pot from a tsunami housing project. This price is too expensive for many, who must go long distances in search of water.

Elderly men are also at a disadvantage. In some instances, old men who used to go to sea on their catamarans have been excluded from the distribution of new boats by the traditional *Panchayats* that oversee the distribution of tsunami relief. Depriving elderly men of their occupational assets has placed a disproportionate burden on elderly women for meeting the household needs.

The practical gender needs of men at the lower rung of occupational hierarchies, sometimes intersecting with caste and ethnicity, have also not been taken into account. Electricians and carpenters who work on the boats and trawlers have not got any replacement for their lost tools. Small fish workers, marginalized even pre-tsunami by the commercialization and mechanization of boats and the spread of aquaculture (ICSF, 1996; Sharma, 1998), have been adversely affected by the indiscriminate distribution of FRP boats which have replaced catamaran-based fishing activities in several villages in the three districts.

3.9 Gender Relations Post-Tsunami

The impact of the tsunami, and of the various tsunami-related interventions of the government and NGO, have contributed to changes in gender relations at the household and community levels.

3.9.1 Remarriages/Early Marriages

The tsunami was followed by a spate of marriages; many of them among very young girls and boys. In Kesavpaliyam, Cuddalore, within a day's time there were 7 cases of early marriages, while in Nagapattinam 32 villages saw 210 marriages of girls below 18 years, within 2–3 months after Tsunami.⁴¹ Marriages in haste were conducted due to the oral order of the collector (which was later withdrawn) without proper analysis of its gendered impacts.

Pressure on men and women including adolescent girls and boys to get married has its roots in strictly defined gender roles. Assigning parenting and other household responsibilities to women, excludes men from sharing household work and childcare with women in the family. The heavy death toll of women in the tsunami left men unprepared for taking up household responsibilities. Many men remarried for no other reason than this. There are cases where young boys of single mothers or widows married young girls following their mothers' deaths in the tsunami. The socially dictated exclusion of boys from participation in the household work left them helpless, and marriage seemed the only solution.

Another reason for the spate of marriages, after tsunami, was the availability of ready cash in the form of ex-gratia amount, which was either given away as dowry or spent in the celebration from the groom's side (Cuddalore). Social pressure on widowers to get remarried was also high, either forcing even those who did not want to remarry or needed time to grieve. In some instances, while men themselves did not remarry, they instead married off their young daughters to be free of the responsibility of raising them.

Resisting Pressure

"Lots of people have asked me to marry again...but how can I? I have not got over the tragedy...she died in front of my own eyes; her eyes still haunt me. There is no meaning in my life now." Selvam from Cuddalore district

⁴¹ Discussion with SNEHA

Some men, however, did not get married for fear that the stepmother may not treat the children properly; some others felt that marriage might affect the children psychologically. Yet another reason men cited for hesitancy to re-marry was the age of their children. In some cases, where the children were reaching adolescence or adulthood, men did not want to get married as they considered it awkward.

3.9.2 Violence Against Women

The economic and psycho-social stresses of the tsunami, coupled with changes in men's livelihoods and productive roles, have coincided with increased reports of violence against women. Through focus group discussions, women highlighted the following factors which, in their view, contribute to increased violence within the home.

Though alcoholism was pre-tsunami prevalent, women now relate it more forcefully with poverty and violence, not only against spouses but also against children and the elderly within the household. Alcohol has emerged as one of the significant causes of deepening debts, increased work burden on women, and escalating conflicts within the home and community.

Lack of privacy in temporary shelters⁴² has also contributed to violence against women. The over-burden of both productive and reproductive activities and physical fatigue, and the subsequent lessening of women's desire to be sexually active, emerged as one of the core reasons for domestic violence. Both married and single women in temporary shelters without secure doors and bolts remained in fear of their own and their daughters' safety.

Post-tsunami, Devi of Pudukuppam, Cuddalore district, is engaged in making pickles, a newly started income-generating project for a newly formed SHG. Most women, during the day, do not find time to engage in complex activities that go into the making of fish pickles. All of them gather and work in the night and by the time the process is over, it is sometimes midnight. During the day—normally 10 days in a month—when Devi remains busy making pickle, she feels tired and does not want to be sexually active. This has repercussions and normally results in verbal and at times physical abuse. Devi says most women go through these reactionary responses from men.

Sleepless Nights...	Freedom is Expensive
<p>Indumathi, a young widow who lived with her children in the temporary shelter had encountered sexual harassment. Every night she started going to sleep with her mother. She feels insecure of living alone and wants to get married for security; however, remarriage for women is by and large not yet a socially acceptable practice. For women having children is a sort of barrier to remarry, while for men having children is an acceptable reason for remarrying.</p>	<p>Vijaya, aged 17, in Nagai, not interested in marriage and wanting to continue her studies, got married under pressure due to the rumor that Rs.50,000/- would be given by the collector's office for meeting the expenses of the marriage. She resisted and did not go to her husband's house. The traditional panchayat decided that either the girl should go to her husband's house or pay Rs.30,000/- as fine. Vijaya decided to pay the fine rather than succumb to the pressure from the community.</p>

⁴² Lack of privacy in the temporary shelter did not just mean lack of separate spaces for adults and children. Temporary shelters without any gaps between them had made the inhabitants feel as though they are in the open street for, whatever was done within one temporary shelter was known to those residing in other shelters. Even the ruffling of changing clothes, voices, and movements were heard by others. Within temporary shelters it was reported that children and the elderly never slept soundly due to heat and insect bites.

Early and forced marriages are another expression of domestic violence.⁴³ Political disempowerment of women and silencing their voices, through the imposition of fine and threat of social exclusion within the community by the traditional *panchayats*, is another form of violence against women. Tsunami further aggravated the gender based vulnerabilities of women.

Who do I blame, my violent husband or the society which created him



Improved gender relations—instrumental to better survival
“We men and women need to help each other—it is a matter of survival. Krishnan Vadakku Theru.

3.9.3 New “Reproductive” Roles for (Some) Men

The tsunami has underscored the need to sensitize men for sharing and caring role at home to rule out adverse coping strategies in the face of calamities. Through the present study, it becomes amply clear that the gender division of labor varies across caste, class, age, and ethnicity and more importantly degrees of resilience in a particular context.

The focus on childcare and other reproductive activities to meet the livelihood needs whether by women or men, may lead to more pro-active coping strategies and behavior patterns among men, including habits of saving which is traditionally assigned to women. Men in the Irula community in Indira Nagar, for example, reduced expenses on drinking to channel the money for the education of their children. In the Irula community, women and men share most of the household work including cooking, washing, fetching water, and firewood. In the Vadakku Theru, a Dalit colony of Manikapangu, Nagai district, men help women fetch water. Men also participate in other household work like tending the fire in the kitchen, looking after the children, caring for the livestock, and occasionally even cooking.

Is he a lesser or a better man?

Naguran of Samiarpet, Cuddalore District, father of two girls and a boy, lost his wife to tsunami but did not remarry. Post-tsunami, he has learnt the hard way, the important role a woman plays at home. He brings ration and grocery, helps his daughter in the kitchen, when at home. In case his children are sick, he attends to them. He has come to realize now what has never crossed his mind before: it is non-stop and hard work for women and not just “sitting at home” (as the common expression goes). He has compromised the time he spends at sea so as to be with his children. This means that he does not stay more than a day at sea. To compensate for the loss of income, he has taken up fish vending which is primarily seen as a woman’s job. Also, his son, aged 15, has dropped out of school to go to sea as Naguran, post-tsunami, burdened with double roles, is not able to earn enough.

Women in focus group discussions highlighted the need for programs that focus on men in order to benefit women. For example, some pointed out the need to place more emphasis on forming men’s self-help groups so that women alone do not have to bear the burden of

⁴³ Domestic Violence Act, 2005.

acquiring and managing loans. A majority of women were of the opinion that more emphasis should be placed on the problem of alcohol addition, both because it dehumanizes men, and because of the problems it causes for women.

Significantly, men who took it upon themselves to care for their children reported a reduction in or abstinence from alcohol consumption. Some men even migrated to places near their children’s school. In such cases, men are learning to carry out new “reproductive” roles as primary caregivers in the household, such as bringing rations and vegetables, helping the daughters in the kitchen, taking the children to the hospital, and taking care when they are sick.

3.9.4 Gender-based Coping Strategies

Men	Women
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Channeling fears and frustration in alcohol consumption (Adverse) ▪ Gambling/playing cards (Adverse) ▪ Remarriage (Adverse, if it results in limiting the choices of girls, and early marriages) ▪ Asserting themselves through violence against wives, elderly mothers, and children (Adverse) ▪ Some men have started participating in reproductive as well as in home-based productive activities: less alcoholism in such cases (Pro active) <p>MEN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Migration for wage labor (Adverse) ▪ Shift from self-employment to wage labor (Adverse) ▪ Pulling out boys from school to work (Adverse) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shift from self-employment to wage labor (Adverse) ▪ Mobility of some fisher women to construction sites as head loaders (Proactive) ▪ Reducing nutritional consumption (Adverse) ▪ Increasing debts from moneylenders (Adverse) ▪ Selling or pawning jewelry (Adverse) ▪ Selling the household goods including vessels (Adverse) ▪ Loans from SHGs (Proactive) ▪ Ignoring their own health problems (Adverse) ▪ Going without food (Adverse) ▪ Getting newly initiated into work in the informal sector (Proactive) ▪ Resuming work after retirement from work in the case of the elderly (Adverse) <p>WOMEN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initiating collective activities (Proactive) ▪ Maneuvering to get pension with the connivance of social network: certifying oneself as widow when the husband is bed-ridden, certifying oneself to be without any male child when not cared for by son, etc. (?) ▪ Resistance to male dominant political institution when interests are in conflict with the traditional norms. Collective lobbying and confronting local political bodies to get entitlements (Proactive) ▪ Acceptance of community norms out of helplessness (Adverse) ▪ Supporting destitute women, although not necessarily members of SHGs/Sangam groups (Proactive) ▪ Transferring the work burden to the girl children. Girl children bear the triple burden of caring for siblings, going to school and performing household chores, and may drop out of school (Adverse)

Two important factors emerge from an analysis of the aforementioned coping strategies in the context of a disaster. First, the separation of “productive” and “reproductive” roles of men and women in the mainstream social and cultural practices, which is often mirrored in programmes and policies, has aggravated the poverty of the households by an increase in alcohol consumption and domestic violence.

Second, seen from a gender approach, rebuilding livelihoods requires not only income but also meeting livelihood needs (PEACE, 2004) through sustainable income as well as

sustainable expenses. Significantly, an overwhelming majority of women whom the research team interacted with was aware of secondary poverty, and the role of a weak political will to take anti-alcohol measures as its major cause.

Many women stressed the possible positive uses of money currently spent on alcohol, such as increased food security, expenses for children's education, improved clothing, and house repair. The most important point made by all of them was that tackling alcohol consumption would help take them out of the debt trap.

It is important to note that the focus on child care and other reproductive activities to meet the livelihood needs whether by women or men, may lead to more pro-active coping strategies and behavior patterns among men, including habits of saving which is traditionally assigned to women.

3.10 Political Participation

One of the main reasons cited by women for their deteriorating condition, post-tsunami, is their exclusion in matters of distribution of relief goods and rehabilitation assets, especially in the fishing community. Women's participation in public decision-making processes is both a value in itself, and may be instrumental in furthering pro-women and pro-poor policies. However, in the majority of communities visited in the course of this research, women have been systemically excluded from local political participation. This observation held true across both Dalit and fishing communities, with the exception of the Irula communities and a few areas visited where women enjoyed relatively greater representation in the local *panchayats* or parish councils.

Although women in general remained largely excluded from decision-making bodies, those women who are young, widowed, unmarried, childless, those not heading households, those with only girl children, the elderly and the destitute face the most severe forms of exclusion. These most vulnerable groups of women have suffered in terms of their equal access to relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction entitlements. While such vulnerabilities existed pre-tsunami, gender-based disadvantages have been mediated and reinforced by gender-blind and gender-neutral policies and interventions in the tsunami relief and rehabilitation process. The result has been hunger and deprivation, and the denial of entitlements in relief, housing, and old-age pensions.

3.11 Pointing Towards Reconstruction with Transformation

This chapter has flagged important gender issues in the aftermath of the tsunami. The tsunami also presented a window of opportunity for integrating gender concerns in disaster response. How this can be accomplished is dealt with in detail in the following chapter.

The experience of the Irula community provides us with an example of how a post-tsunami focus on reducing vulnerabilities has empowered the most marginalized. The Irulas consider it a "Golden Tsunami"; but for the "churning of nature," they say, the churning of social norms, which has given them a higher level of acceptance and visibility, would not have been possible. In the same way, women and adolescent girls across communities have become more mobile and vocal about their needs and aspirations following the tsunami. In the process, some have gained the capacity to reflect on the biased nature of social norms and political institutions, such as the male-dominated traditional panchayat structure. The fact that women have seen what positive difference policy interventions can make in their lives points to the possibility of a bottom-up mobilization for gender mainstreaming.

Chapter 4

*The Woods are lovely, Dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep*

Robert Frost

Analysis of NGOs Gender Mainstreaming Strategies

Each Step Counts

The tsunami has clearly demonstrated the multiple implications of socially constructed gender stereotypes for disaster recovery. Against the backdrop of the tsunami's gendered impact, this section attempts to outline NGOs' strategies for mainstreaming gender within their relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction agendas. Primary focus is given to the implementation of policies and programs with a gender focus. Additional components, such as changes to an NGO's internal organization and gender infrastructure, are also discussed to the extent that information is available.

The NGOs' gender mainstreaming strategies are analyzed with respect to their impact on their respective constituencies. Both tangible and intangible gains, along with unintended positive and negative impacts, have been taken into account in the analysis. The content is based primarily on the analysis of qualitative information gathered from the field, interviews with the NGO heads, and available organizational documents and web sites.

4.1 Framework for Analysis

Rao and Kelleher's framework for gender mainstreaming (described in Chapter 2) has been adopted in order to reflect upon the gender mainstreaming strategies of the NGOs selected in this study. The framework suggests that there are three approaches to gender mainstreaming, namely the creation of "gender infrastructure," organizational change, and institutional change.

"**Gender infrastructure**" refers to the basic systems, internal to an organization, that are required for gender mainstreaming, such as an organizational gender policy, gender planning systems, gender indicators for monitoring, gender-sensitive recruitment, quotas for women in leadership, and facilitating non-stereotypical roles for women and men [and Aravanis]. **Organizational changes** for gender mainstreaming include modifications to internal processes such as promoting a gender-aware organizational culture, creating "pressure" groups among women staff, and building alliances with the broader women's movement. Gender mainstreaming with a focus on **institutional change** attempts to bring about changes in societal institutions like the household, markets, community, and the state through the implementation of policies, programs, and activities.

Among the NGOs selected in this study, organizational change and the creation of gender infrastructure has been analyzed to the extent that such information was made available by the participating NGOs amidst their busy schedules. Our primary focus is on the extent to which the policies and programs of the NGOs promote institutional change by addressing the strategic and practical gender needs of women, men, and Aravanis. Interventions to address strategic gender needs attempt to promote gender equality within institutions such

as the family, community, markets, and the state. Interventions to meet practical gender needs play an important role in the survival, food security, health, and livelihoods of vulnerable women, men, and *Aravanis*. In some instances, the practical gender needs of women are met in such a way that they also address strategic gender interests; for example, women's practical need for sources of livelihood can be coupled with strategic gender interests by providing non-traditional training for women to hold a leadership position in higher paying occupations traditionally reserved for men such as masonry and plumbing.

The NGOs that were part of the study have formally not adopted any one model of gender mainstreaming. However, we can observe in their implementation practices an attempt to bring about changes in the institutions of the local market and community, and to some extent the family and the state. This chapter first examines the NGOs' practices and implementation that reflect an institutional approach to gender mainstreaming. Next, the chapter examines the presence or absence of gender infrastructure and gender mainstreaming at the organizational level in order to better understand the strength and weaknesses of the NGOs' practices.

Sections 4.2 and 4.3 describe the NGOs' efforts to create the necessary gender infrastructure and organizational change to increase gender equity both internally within the organization and in its programs. The remainder of the chapter, Sections 3.4 through 3.10 describes various strategies implemented by the NGOs to challenge prevailing gender norms and promote institutional change at the level of the household, community, market, and the state.

4.2 Gender Infrastructure: Organizational Approaches to Gender

The participating NGOs varied in their understanding of gender, whether or not they, explicitly or implicitly, follow a gender policy, and the extent to which gender concerns are reflected in their staffing practices.

All but two of the participating NGOs have an implicit understanding of gender as socially constructed differences between men and women. A majority of the NGOs are explicitly or implicitly aware of women's subordinate position relative to men across institutions. Some organizations think that bringing about changes in gender relationships is a slow process, whereas others see the tsunami as a disaster, which set gender roles in flux, as an opportunity to bring about rapid and profound changes in women's position relative to men. Most NGOs understand women's empowerment in terms of creating income-generation opportunities. Six out of the participating NGOs articulated women's empowerment in terms of achieving an equal power relationship between women and men. Significantly, all the participating organizations implicitly or explicitly have an understanding that gender roles and relations are context-specific and changeable.

All organizations have focused on the practical gender needs of women. Seven out of eleven NGOs also emphasize strategic gender needs, attempting to change power relationship between men and women through programs and strategies that target women. Of these seven organizations, four are also working with men to sensitize them to gender issues. However, none of the organizations have directed their interventions to integrate the gender concerns of the *Aravanis*.

4.2.1 Gender in Vision, Mission and Objectives

An analysis of the vision and mission statements and objectives of the participating organizations points to the following:

Most NGOs operate on an explicit or implicit understanding that women and girls occupy a subordinate position in society and that, among women, the Dalits and Irulas are made doubly vulnerable by their caste and ethnic in addition to gender identities. While organizations may or may not use the term “gender,” a majority of the participating NGOs’ leaders are aware that the subordinate status of women and girls stems from socially constructed power relations. Many organizations do not employ explicit gender policies, or planning frameworks, and most do not practice gender budgeting or pursue specific gender indicators. Further, gender-integrated job descriptions and performance appraisal systems do not seem to exist in many organizations (with a few exceptions). Nonetheless, an implicit understanding of gender has guided program design and implementation for many of the organizations; a few were consciously guided by an explicit understanding of gender. Considerable investment has been made by most participating NGOs on gender training before tsunami, and in some cases post-tsunami, which also explains the causal factors for gender aware strategies. The commitment to gender most of the organization’s leaders (and in some cases their Board members)—women and men—has played a role in shaping programs and implementation.

4.2.2 Existence and Content of Gender Policy

A majority of the NGOs has a tsunami program plan, but do not have an explicit gender policy or plan. Women’s strategic gender needs have been reflected in the program design and implementation of 6 of the participating NGOs (described in detail below). However, the study reveals that the tools of gender analysis have been consciously employed by only a few. The organizations’ implicit understanding of gender concerns needs to be strengthened by sharpening gender analysis skills to better understand the lived experiences of vulnerable women, men, and *Aravanis*. Needs assessment, seen from a gender perspective, must look beyond the socially constructed roles and perceived needs of men and women. Analysis of program impact must take into account implications (intended and unintended) for women such as impact on work burden, opportunity costs, domestic violence, etc. Such gender analysis will also gauge the impact of policies and programs on men’s behavior and gender needs, looking beyond their traditional “productive” roles to consider untraditional “reproductive” roles for men in childcare and household management.

Only one among the participating organizations has a post for gender coordinator whose responsibility is to ensure that gender concerns are integrated across programs. The result is a conscious analysis of the implications of its interventions on the daily lives of women. Put together, the organization’s livelihood, housing, and childcare program are based on an understanding of the inter-linkages of women’s various needs including the need for mobility.

4.2.3 Gender Mainstreaming in Recruitment and Staffing

While the ratio of male to female staff varies among the NGOs, most have achieved a degree of a gender balance. In some organizations, women staff outnumber men staff. Innovative and gender-sensitive practices are being adopted for recruitment and promotion among many of the NGOs. Recognizing the value and importance of the lived experiences of women, some organizations have relaxed the qualification requirements for women vis a vis men for the same post. However, a majority of organizations do not have women in managerial or decision-making positions. As such, women’s strategic role in program design and implementation is limited.

A few innovative practices emerged from the study. In one of the participating organizations, SNEHA, the employment criteria are considered within a gender equity framework. The lived experience of a woman is taken into account, even if she does not have work experience. In the same way, women with a +2 qualification are given the same opportunities as men with

a graduation degree. As a result, men with degrees are working under women with less formal qualification. Among potential staff, SNEHA looks for sharp perspectives, not in terms of academic knowledge, but in terms of one's capacity to analyze a specific context from a gender perspective. SNEHA assesses these skills through a test that requires a gendered analysis of the material. The organization also helps girls who are not able to continue their education by bearing 50 percent cost of their higher education. There are men who are graduates and working with formally less qualified women in leadership positions. SNEHA has also taken a conscious decision to keep a 60:45 ratio of male to female staff.

Another organization, PURA, has hired an activist Muslim woman from STEP (another organization which works for the rights of Muslim women), instead of employing its own staff for working with Muslim women. This has helped PURA to organize Muslim women, who had traditionally remained within the confines of their houses, to form in self-help groups as well as to build gender awareness among the Muslim grassroots women. For the first time, Muslim women in Pillaithopu, Kanniyakumari district have come together for meetings to discuss issues of common concerns that affect their lives. The women report that traveling outside of their homes and their village with their husbands' permission is a positive change and a liberating experience. These changes were made possible through the confidence that PURA's staff was able to build with both women and men in the community (focus group discussion, Pillaithopu, Kanniyakumari).

Post Tsunami response processes gave an opportunity for some Muslim women to come together and participate in development processes.



4.2.4: Empowerment, Training, and Awareness among Local Staff

The strategic and conscious decision of almost all participating organizations to recruit from the affected communities has enhanced the mobility of women. They have gained confidence and self-esteem while working outside of the home, and the paid work has given sustenance to their families in time of scarcity and hardship. Young women employed by the NGOs now carry handbags⁴⁴ and travel alone. The initial resistance from the community has reduced; the handbag now is identified with work rather than a matter for gossip about the girl's character. This is no small change. Many girls have come to know the joy of being independent and are aware of their own capacities. There is also a growing awareness on the importance of theirs and their mothers' contribution to the family, both in terms of cash and non-cash activities.

4.3 Organizational Change for Gender Mainstreaming

Two of the participating organizations periodically go through a gender-sensitive organizational development process, facilitated by gender experts of high credibility. These participatory sessions help in reflecting on the gains and gaps in mainstreaming gender in various institutions: family, community, market, lobbying, and advocacy with policy makers. Although a number of other NGOs are in the process of developing a gender policy, it is too

⁴⁴ Many women staff from the fishing community take special pride in carrying handbags and coming out to work. They have been able to break through the prejudice of the community against young and unmarried women who carry bags and go out alone. Young women with handbags traditionally are not considered "good women" (discussion with the staff of EKTA, FAPI, and PRAXIS in Cuddalore, and Kanniyakumari Districts, respectively).

early to determine how many of these organizations will carry out these policies within the context of an internal organizational development process rooted in promoting gender awareness.

4.4. Gender Mainstreaming in Training and Awareness Building

The staff of a number of NGOs (including EKTA, SNEHA, PURA, PRAXIS, SASY, and CARE Trust, discussed below) regularly participate in the trainings on gender issues, reproductive health, and women's human rights within the broad framework of human rights etc. Most organizations consider training as an effective means of building and strengthening awareness on gender issues.

FPAI staff regularly participate in training on sexual and reproductive health and rights, thus gaining a basic understanding of gender and gender equality. The trainings have emphasis on involving men in the health concerns of women and vice versa. The staff take the trainings forward among the grassroots through meetings, street plays, and audio-visual media.

4.5. Transforming Institutions through Gender Mainstreaming⁴⁵

At the level of program design and implementation, NGOs have adopted different gender mainstreaming strategies to meet both the practical and strategic gender needs of women in disaster recovery. At the household level, NGOs have attempted to deliver aid in a gender-sensitive manner, and have sought to expand women's ownership of assets, and to increase girls' access to education. In the market place, NGOs interventions have, in a number of instances, challenged the gender division of labor, the low valuation of women's work, and women's low bargaining power, and unequal access to markets vis-a-vis men. At the community level, the norms of male leadership and representation of male interests within the traditional *Panchayats* have—at least in part—been challenged. Gendered segregation of public spaces, workplace and household gender roles, and male alcoholism are all being questioned and challenged through NGOs' efforts. At the state level, gender-focused advocacy and lobbying have started the process of bringing gender-sensitive changes to existing policies.

Broader Institutional Changes at a Glance

- Contributing to institutional change through women's training in non-traditional skills, breaking the stereotypes of assets ownership, occupation, and gender roles.
- Challenge entrenched norms that subordinate women by denying them high-value skills necessary for market leadership and high economic returns.
- Breaking caste stereotypes and social norms that ascribe lower position to Dalits in social, cultural, political, and economic spheres.
- Creating collaborative spaces where men and women, girls and boys sit together for discussion of issues of concern, thereby challenging customs that require separate spaces for women and men.
- Institutionalizing equal wages to meet the strategic gender needs of women for balance in the power relationship between women and men.
- Focusing on the needs of single women by reaching out to their girl children, challenging norms of preferential treatment for male children.
- Development and dissemination of gender focused research.
- Use and implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and CEDAW as tools for lobbying and advocacy.

⁴⁵ Implementation level here refers to gender mainstreaming strategies which informed the program implementation at grassroots level as well as in the areas of research and advocacy.

4.5.1 Gender Sensitive Relief Distribution: Strategies to Challenge Male Dominated Traditional Panchayats or Religious Institutions

NGOs played a key role in the distribution of immediate relief. A majority of the NGOs participating in this study have attempted to address the sex- and gender-differentiated needs of women in at least one of the three ways:

direct distribution;

- distribution through self-help groups (SHGs), Balwadis or through women's federations;
- addressing gender-specific practical needs of women and girls in the relief process.
- These strategies are inclusive of the most marginalized groups of women and men such as single women, unmarried women not heading households, disabled women and men, and the elderly.

4.5.2 Addressing Sex and Gender Differentiated Needs in Relief Distribution

A number of NGOs have carried out gender-sensitive needs assessments, and have fashioned their relief efforts accordingly. Where the needs of women and girls were taken into account, the content of immediate relief packages reflected gender differentiated, practical needs. For example:

- FPAI has an articulated mandate for working on sexual and reproductive health issues. From the initial stage of tsunami response, FPAI intervened to meet the sanitary and reproductive health needs of women and men. Apart from sanitary napkins and emergency contraceptives for women, FPAI carried out a wide distribution of condoms to men.
- Most participating NGOs have distributed sanitary towels to adolescent girls and women, as well as gender and age-appropriate clothing.
- PURA and PEDDA also realized that innerwear distributed by the government did not include brassieres, creating discomfort for women and adolescent girls and women at discomfort. Networking with other support organizations, PURA got the supply of innerwear including brassieres.
- PURA also networked with other support NGOs such as IWID and People's Watch to pool resources for relief distribution, underscoring the importance of collaboration with others to pool money and channel gender-sensitive relief.
- PRAXIS provided cooking facilities, repaired toilets, and distributed undergarments to affected women. It organized cleaning of villages and houses to reduce the work burden of women.

4.5.3 Target Groups: Meeting Practical Gender Needs

All the NGOs have given special emphasis to women in their relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction programs, demonstrating their understanding that women are more disadvantaged than men in accessing resources and benefits. In addition, some NGOs have focused on specific vulnerable groups of women. Single women and their gender-based disadvantages have drawn the attention of almost all the participating organizations. For example:

- SASY had distributed an additional 60 kgs of rice to widows and unmarried women not heading households, elderly women living with their children, and destitute women (across castes and religious groups) to ensure that in times of scarcity they are not considered as a burden by their family members or community.
- CARE Trust and PRAXIS adopted a similar approach to reach out to those excluded from relief channeled through the mainstream institutions. Given their limited resources, both organizations opted to focus on the needs of less visible sections of the affected population, such as widows, children, the disabled, and the elderly.
- PRAXIS took special care to meet the needs of malnourished children, lactating mothers, and pregnant women.
- CARE Trust distributed relief to target groups left out in the wider distribution of aid such as inland fisher people, seashell collectors, and landless Dalits in the coastal region. These categories of people were among the most neglected in the relief distribution carried out by NGOs, the government, and other mainstream institutions.
- CARE's initial survey helped identify these groups and guided their distribution choices. CARE placed special emphasis on single women, chronically sick women and men, the disabled, and women living off the charity of their children or the community.

4.5.4. Channeling Relief through Alternative, Women-friendly Channels

As discussed in Chapter 2, the representation of women in local institutions such as the traditional *Panchayats* and Church parish councils is limited. Such institutions have played a role in the exclusion of women, the elderly, Aravanis, and other vulnerable groups from the relief process. A number of NGOs have sought alternative channels for the delivery of relief in order to promote greater gender equity. For example:

- Six of the eleven participating NGOs have routed relief through channels other than the traditional Panchayats (in Nagapattinam and Cuddalore) or the Church or the Jamat (in Kanyakumari district).
- SNEHA was firm that relief would be channeled through its federation and extended its support when the Sangams were negotiating resistance from the traditional *Panchayats*. This also became a strategic opportunity for institutionalizing women's groups in disaster preparedness.
- SNEHA's federation completed a quick survey to gather gender disaggregated data in order to verify the relief beneficiary lists prepared by the traditional *panchayats*. In the process, the federations were quickly able to spot women and men who had been excluded from the distribution of relief. Based on their survey, SNEHA was able to procure age and gender appropriate clothing and other sanitary items for each household in the community. The entire process went through several stages in a quick and coordinated manner.

- Distribution took place according to the family size. SNEHA's experience demonstrated that it is possible to carry out emergency response in an equitable and gender-sensitive manner.

Replicable Steps of Relief Distribution

-
- Needs analysis through federations
- Beneficiary list prepared by federations
- Quotation obtained by federations
- Selecting the quotations with competitive price and best quality
- Purchase at whole sale price—large quantity
- Packing by federation members on paid basis—daily wages
- Each village prepared the list of families
- Traditional Panchayat asks the right to distribute
- Resistance from the federation
- Traditional Panchayat agrees that the federation can distribute
- Federation arranges load vehicles
- Traditional Panchayat leaders invited by federation
- Tokens issued to rights holders
- Distribution of the relief items
- Rechecking if any body is excluded
- Single women with children got drier ration relative to those who were not living with children.
- List prepared for the children in terms of sex and age and clothes given on equity basis to the
- Households
- The efficient logistics, handled by women themselves also went beyond the extension
- of women's domestic role to community services such as cleaning the surroundings or
- distributing relief to women alone.

- PURA adopted a direct approach to relief distribution, after learning from discussion with affected communities that initial distribution through Churches and Jamat had missed out many single women, widows, and adolescent girls.
- PEDDA, BLESS, and SASY channeled the relief through SHGs. Focus group discussions revealed that when relief is mediated through women's groups it is more inclusive of the needs of both women and men and less susceptible to corruption. When distributed through women's SHGs, relief is more likely to reach vulnerable groups such as destitute and deserted women, or women with disabled spouses. In SASY's case, a women's group in Kodimarthatheru guided the organization's direct distribution of relief. The group oversaw relief in both Dalit and Muslim communities, as well as among other castes so as to preserve the pre-tsunami harmony among different caste, occupational and religious groups.

Wherever relief was mediated through women's SHGs and federations, there are fewer instances of exclusion or discrimination against vulnerable women and men. Women's groups have become aware of the capacities in assessing the differing needs of women and men and in ensuring equitable distribution. Women's groups were/are able to see a link between their participation in disaster response and preparedness and their work in caring for and sustaining of lives and livelihoods. The strategic positioning of women's SHGs to meet the practical gender needs of affected households have furthered women's strategic interests by building their decision-making capacities, skill, and self-esteem.

4.5.6 Facilitating Access to Entitlements

NGOs also played an instrumental role in helping vulnerable women to access public entitlements such as pensions and ration cards. EKTA's, for example, helps identify those who are eligible but have yet to access government schemes. The field staff coordinates with concerned officials to help both women and men through the necessary application procedures and follow-up. A program coordinator also helps investigate legalities if they suspect an individual or group's right to benefits are being violated. For example, lobbying and advocacy by EKTA has challenged gender bias within the pension scheme for widows. EKTA's strategy has given the much needed support to those who previously had given up efforts to access their entitlements. EKTA has filled an important gap by making the community more aware of their rights and entitlements. SASY and CARE Trust have also taken recourse to legal assistance to access entitlements such as ex gratia and housing for Irula women and single women.

4.6 Challenging Patriarchal Norms: Focus on Single Women and their Girl Children

A number of organizations have targeted children. One such organization is EKTA, which has highlighted the needs of the girl children of single women. Such girls are likely to be the first ones to drop out from school. To address this problem, EKTA implemented a well thought out strategy to help girl children remain in school by providing them with educational materials, thus helping to reduce the economic burden on single women.

EKTA is committed to sustaining its strategy of helping girl children remain in school for a period of 3 years. It was a conscious and difficult decision for the organization to target girl children, as boys were left out in the process. Nevertheless, where the choice had to be made, EKTA took affirmative action in favor of girl children of single women. If funds remain after giving assistance to the girl children of single women, EKTA then targets the girl children of other poor and vulnerable women. EKTA is in the process of constructing a shelter home for 25 girls, giving preference to those orphaned or semi-orphaned by the tsunami and to girl children of single women.

Affirmative Actions

- Resisting the pressures from the community to give the aid to every one.
- Using strategic opportunity to advance the rights of girl children.
- Converting it as an opportunity to focus on the single women.
- Combining concerns of single women and their girl children.

Underpinning the programme is the philosophy of the holistic development of girl children, with a focus on reproductive health. EKTA makes the provision of educational accessories conditional on regular health check-ups by a woman doctor, paid for by EKTA. EKTA maintains a health card for each child in order to record their health and follow up on the doctor's advice. The conditional health check-up is a success in that mothers are required to accompany their children; the EKTA staff exempts them only in extremely difficult situations. A visit to the doctor orients mothers to the health status of their girl children. Mothers are now taking their girl children for regular health check-ups, i.e., twice a year, and do the necessary follow-up.

Many single women admitted that, but for this gender-focused intervention, they would not have been able to afford the school expenses of their girl children. It is not an unusual

practice for the girls to drop out because of the poverty and/or increasing work burden of women. To consolidate EKTA's gains, the 14 women staff, who come from local Dalit and fishing communities, maintain regular communication with mothers, motivating them to encourage their children to go to school regularly.

4.6.1 A Focus on Adolescent Girls

Another organization, SNEHA, has focused attention on the needs of adolescent girls. Following the tsunami, SNEHA collected and analyzed field data, which showed high levels of depression, suicidal feelings, feelings of loneliness, a need for sharing and being guided, and a low awareness of reproductive health issues among adolescent girls. In response, SNEHA formed groups of adolescent girls to help orient and raise their awareness of issues such as alcoholism, children's rights, and hazards of early marriages as well as reproductive health concerns. Prior to the formation of this group, it was considered taboo to speak of reproductive health issues; this is no longer the case.

Experience of Empowerment

The adolescent group of SNEHA's project in Seruthur, Nagai, has successfully extended pressure on parents and stopped the early marriage of group members. Similarly they have stopped eating last and least. Although mothers still eat last, girls from this group reported that after attending sessions on the reproductive health, they have started eating when they feel hungry without waiting for the male members to finish their meal. Other family members have now accepted it too. The group meetings are an opportunity to share their concerns with the staff of SNEHA and learning the skill of managing their anxieties and emotions.

4.7 Ability to Bring Gender Aware Change in Rules, Norms and Resource Allocation of Household, Community, Markets, and State

4.7.1. Challenging Gender Division in Tasks in Labor and Service Markets and Strengthening Livelihoods of Women

Attempts to impart non-traditional productive skills to women have both direct and indirect effects on gender relations in labor and service markets, meeting both practical and strategic gender interest. The example of one NGO, HOPE, which does not have an explicit gender mainstreaming policy or overt commitment to women's rights, is able to meet the strategic interests of women by equipping them with non-traditional skills.

HOPE (in Tranquebar) has provided masonry training to 60 women from both fishing and non-fishing communities. Seventy-five percent women participating in the program are now engaged as masons in construction work (some for a housing project of an NGO which hires women masons trained by HOPE). Women previously engaged in carrying earth and materials at the construction sites ("head-loading") are now working as masons and receiving daily wages that are twice as high than what they used to receive as head loaders (Rs. 150/- per day).

She Wields a Mason's Tool

Pushpa, aged 35, is engaged in a housing project of an NGO in Tranquebar, Nagai. She is a trained mason from HOPE, now refining her skills with the help of a master mason. For her it is a powerful experience. She says, "she never imagined that she would be recognized as a mason and be paid Rs. 150 every day, double the amount she used to get as a construction/agricultural worker." Together with her husband's contribution to the home, she has been able to pay off her debts. She is confident that she can now have four persons working under her. She also feels that men take her seriously

and are generally supportive, although she gets Rs. 50/- less because she is not able to lay the roof. However, she is not convinced that women masons cannot lay roofs. She says it is possible with practice. She also laughs away the difference between men and women masons as merely men's strategy of keeping themselves a bit above women. She is now more confident at home now and feels that handling a mason's tools has given her respect in the eyes of her husband and children.

As explained in the box above, although there is still a difference between the wages of women and men masons (who make Rs. 50/- more per day), the gains to the women masons cannot be denied. Through masonry-training received, women have strengthened their basic literacy and math skills necessary for masonry. Women are proud that they are now measuring the walls, and laying and plastering bricks. Handling a mason's tool has become a symbol of empowerment for these women. (Men, however, continue to defend the gender-gap in the daily masonry wages by questioning the women's experience or their capacity to lay the roofs.)

Girls have enrolled in all the courses that HOPE offers except driving and electrical courses. A good number of them have opted for courses such as mobile phone servicing and spoken English in order to improve their chances of employment. HOPE combines its vocational training with linkages to recruitment agencies and other NGOs, thus helping students to identify job opportunities. Five girls trained in these programs have now taken up employment in Chennai and towns closer to Nagapattinam. Three women students who have finished HOPE's computer courses are already employed with one of the NGOs in Nagai, each getting an income of Rs. 3,000/- per month.

Another organization, BLESS, is also working to help women venture into non-traditional income-generating activities. For example, a women's SHG in Old Town, Cuddalore established a courier service with assistance from BLESS. Embarking on such a non-traditional enterprise required extraordinary leadership qualities, resourcefulness, organized group efforts, a good business plan, the development of new skills such as riding cycles and bikes, as well as support from men. The women in the SHG built up an enabling business environment by obtaining a certificate of recognition from the District Collector, by establishing links with institutions such as banks and government offices, and by mobilizing favorable public opinion.

Men (including the husbands of group members) also supported the initiative by teaching the group to cycle and ride bikes. Men also accepted the enhanced mobility of women and their need to sometimes come home late in the evening. Group members report that the relationship between husbands and wives improved in terms of mutual respect and recognition of each other's worth. The 20 women in this SHG have been traveling throughout Cuddalore District, making their mark in the public space.

BLESS has also trained women in repair and maintenance of hand pumps. Women were inconvenient due to the need for frequent repairs and their dependency on male mechanics. Now, women no longer depend on men for repairs and do not have to spend money to hire a mechanic. Additionally, the training skills have given the women enhanced self-esteem. Handling tools has helped to challenge occupational stereotypes along gender lines, and has changed the perception of men, women, and children in the community concerning what women can and cannot do.

4.7.2 Challenging Gendered Valuation of Work Towards Equal Wages

In most parts of Tamil Nadu women draw lesser wages than men for work of equal value. This is often justified by the gender division of tasks, and false claims that tasks that men do are more difficult than the tasks that women do. Post-tsunami all organizations but one has institutionalized norm of equal wages for women and men in their housing construction as well as cash for work programmes. However, once construction work for permanent housing is over, the practice needs to be sustained by powerful advocacy and lobbying with private sector. In Tamil Nadu, men traditionally own the houses (with the exception of those households headed by single women).

4.7.3 Challenging gender norms on ownership of houses

Most houses in Tamil Nadu are traditionally owned by men, single women being the exceptions to this rule. The participating NGOs who have taken up housing construction have given joint ownership to women and men. It is a process of empowering women through meeting their strategic gender need of having ownership and joint control over the housing.

NGOs participating in this study working in post-tsunami housing construction have challenged this norm by giving joint ownership to women and men. In the process, the NGOs have empowering women by meeting both their practical need for housing and their strategic gender need for ownership and joint control over housing.

SNEHA's strategy of rebuilding in situ houses through community participation had its positive impact on both women and men. Cash was transferred in the name of women on installment basis with a close monitoring that see that money is strictly spent on house construction. It emerged from focus group discussion with women and men that men have reduced drinking to channel money in building their houses. It is the first time that women have their own bank accounts. The housing design and construction was carried out entirely by the community excepting for calling masons from outside as the community as of now do not have trained men and women masons.

The housing design and construction was carried out entirely by the community except for calling masons from outside, since at present the community does not have its own, trained masons. It emerged from focus group discussions that men have reduced their consumption of alcohol in order to contribute more money to the rebuilding of their houses.

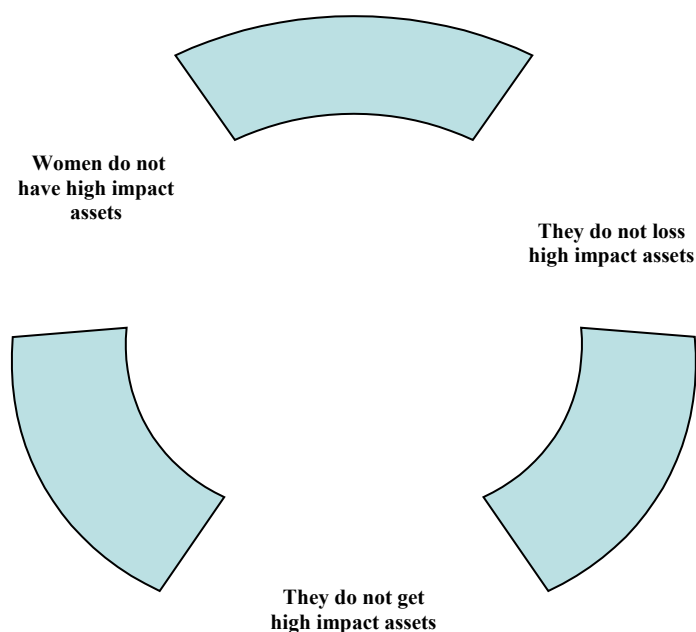
Emerging Aspirations

An unintended, positive impact of SNEHA's intervention is that there is an emerging need for masonry training in the community. Both women and men have realized the importance of having skilled masons for cost effectiveness and better employment opportunities with higher wages in the construction sector.

4.7.4 Challenging Gender Norms on Ownership of Productive Assets: Collective and Household Strategies

The simple logic of the status quo approach creates a vicious circle: women generally do not possess high-impact assets; hence, women do not lose and get assets in the event of a

disaster. SNEHA and BLESS have broken out of the status quo approach for reconstruction.



Challenging the Norms of Ownership of High-Impact Assets and Popular Perception of Micro-Credit

SNEHA's seed money (of Rs. 3,000/-) for women fish workers provided them with an initial impetus when they needed it most, as many had nothing else with which to re-start their business. Given high levels of pre-tsunami debt, women benefited from SNEHA's initial seed capital in the form of grant. Some used the money to start vending fish; some others used it to replace assets and tools of their trade, which they lost in tsunami.

In addition to providing grants to individual fisherwomen, SNEHA also provided a fisherwomen's federation with an auto⁴⁶ to relieve the burden of head loading and increase their mobility. Not only has the burden of head loading been reduced, but the use of the auto also saves time for women who used to walk 10 kms per day or who faced harassment in buses. The auto carrier has restored their dignity and increased their sense of security. The women own and use the auto collectively, although they all get off to vend at different places. Asset ownership has also strengthened the institutional capacities of federation.

The federation is now ready to buy another auto in view of the increased demand for it as well as the sustainable income it ensures to the federation. SNEHA has also given a stock of vessels to all the taluk-level fisherwomen federations. The federations rent out the vessels, fetching good income. The venture appears to be both profitable and sustainable, as the federations have reinvested the profit in buying more vessels.

The NGO PEDDA has adopted the strategy of facilitating the collective ownership of boats by women's SHGs. This approach is especially significant where most agencies have operated

⁴⁶ A three wheeler

on a “boat for boat” basis, giving boats only to those who lost them in the tsunami. Since women did not own boats before the tsunami, they typically have not been eligible to receive boats in the relief process. Women lost relatively low-value productive assets such as vessels, knives, raw materials etc., which became invisible in the rehabilitation process and based on the false assumption that “fishing” only means catching fish in the deep sea.

In an effort to transform the social norms that shape ownership of highly valued productive assets, PEDDA handed over 20 boats to 6 women’s SHGs. Their approach centered on promoting collaboration between spouses or between mothers and sons. Groups of four women jointly own the boats, which are rented out to the husbands or sons of the group members. Around 8 widows are now owners of the boats; this has enhanced their position within homes as well as in the community. It has enhanced their esteem both in the eyes of the community as well as in the traditional *panchayat*. Women have reported that they now participate more often in decision-making at the household level. Widows, who did not want the ownership of boats, were instead given Rs. 20,000/- as cash..

Implementing this strategy required a tough stance both from PEDDA and the women’s SHGs. PEDDA made it explicitly clear that the boats would only be made available under the joint-ownership of women. The traditional *panchayat* was hesitant about this, on the premise that this would set a precedent contrary to the customary practice in the fishing communities. The dominant Tharangambadi traditional *panchayat* tried to bring pressure on its counterpart in Pudupettai to oppose PEDDA’s strategy. There were fears of gender-based violence as women often go to Tarangambadi for shopping and accessing health care facilities. But the women stood their ground, arguing that if their joint-ownership of the boats was not accepted they would return the boats to the donor. In turn, the traditional *panchayat* eventually accepted the arrangement, particularly because the husbands of the SHG women would make use of the boats.

Women now go to to the net-mending shed—the previously exclusively male bastion—and in doing so have made their presence felt in the public domain. Women have also taken up the work of getting the nets ready for fishing and men at times help them. The work burden on women has increased; but so too has the satisfaction they gain from earning their own income. The traditional *panchayat*, reportedly, has started taking the groups seriously.

Collaborative ventures where both men and women participate in the same business activities have increased following the tsunami through the efforts of NGOs. For example, PURA had replaced coir rope-making machines that were destroyed in tsunami, putting the new machines in the names of women (pre-tsunami they were under men’s names). Men have not protested this arrangement, as both men and women are engaged in the same occupation, and the machines are used by the family of each of the members of the self-help groups. Income is divided between the workers who are mostly family members. In an apparent effort to maintain peace and harmony within families, men are given marginally higher wages for men than women.⁴⁷

Challenging Rules of the Market Interventions: Strengthening Collective Agency of Women and Negotiating Power

In tandem with their effort to restore and strengthen existing means of livelihoods for fisherwomen, SNEHA is in the process of facilitating group activities that will strengthen their primary livelihood options. In order to increase their negotiating powers and to make their presence felt in the domestic market, they are federated under the Tamil Nadu Women Fish Workers Forum (TNWFF). SNEHA also works with women in the trade union to raise an awareness of their rights. For SNEHA, fish workers are not just fisherwomen engaged in fish

⁴⁷ Discussion with the head of PURA on the unequal wages. Although ownership of assets by women were accepted by both men and women, the move for dividing the income equally between husband and wife was not accepted by the women themselves as they feared the possibility of domestic conflict.

vending and fish processing but also others including Dalit women engaged in allied activities such as net mending and making, and women working in fish processing companies.

SNEHA is in the process of organizing women engaged in the fisheries sector to strengthen their negotiating position in the market. SNEHA aims to use its position in the domestic fish market, 35% of which is being handled by fisherwomen, to bring about strategic changes in women's position in the markets.

BLESS has also empowered women's SHGs in the Irula community, through their ownership of a mini tempo⁴⁸ and stock of vessels for renting out. The tempo is rented out on a daily basis or is used to transport the vessels, thus ensuring a small profit each day.

BLESS has leased an acre of land and has handed it over to an SHG in *Madhakoil Street* for cultivation of fodder crops. BLESS has implemented a well thought out strategy to meet both women's practical need for income generation and their strategic needs for ownership of productive assets. One group is engaged in the cultivation of green fodder (which is scarce, particularly after the tsunami). Other members of 30 SHGs have received 4 goats each with insurance coverage. The repayment for goats is in kind and not in cash; each woman needs to return four male kids to BLESS. This is very popular among women who do not feel the burden of cash repayment and subsequently do not take on debts to repay the money. Both ventures strengthen each other, demonstrating the importance of occupational interdependencies.

There is a local demand for fodder not only from the SHGs who rear goats, but also from the nearby villages. In the face of many unsuccessful post-tsunami experiences with goat rearing, BLESS's strategy of giving four goats rather than one or two, with the assurance of continuous green fodder supply, has started yielding results in terms of increased income for women.

Interest Free Credit: A Mixed Blessing for Mainstreaming Gender Concerns

Both SASY and PRAXIS had disbursed revolving funds, although the amount and method of giving them varied. Both organizations gave a lump sum which could kick-start a small business such as street vending, expanding shop premises, or increasing stocks for existing businesses. Both SASY and PRAXIS consciously focused on the most vulnerable widows, elderly working women, the destitute, and women living with their spouses under difficult circumstances.

Expanding Choices and Collective Strength

Six women got together and invested Rs. 60,000/- for sending boxes of processed crabs via commission agents to an export company. With self-evolved efficient division of work (cleaning, de-shelling, boiling and packaging crabs; hiring a man to transport the boxes for daily wages), these women make a profit of Rs. 165/- each. This collective action of women is a value in itself pointing to rich possibilities once finance is available. Muslim women (housemaids with very low pay, pre-tsunami), have started cloth vending from door to door and earn much more than what they used to. Self-employment, they say, has made them regain their self-respect as "now they need not mop the floors of other houses.

Unintended Positive Impacts: Men Taking on Non-Traditional Roles

Although the venture of Health Food, a PRAXIS-supported project, does not yet have ready-market linkages, its non-cash benefits have already reached the households of a few group members. The preparation of health food involves cleaning and roasting large quantity of grains. Spouses of a few members help in cleaning and roasting the grains as well as running the errands in the market. Men have started cooperating with the women in other areas too, such as taking care of the children when

⁴⁸ A four wheeler, small van.

women are at meetings, and sometimes even cooking.

SASY had left it to women's choice whether to use money on her own or to hand it over to male members of her family. PRAXIS, in contrast, evolved a structured system of monitoring the usage of the revolving funds by men and women. PRAXIS' revolving funds have ensured a steady source of income; many loan recipients have successfully repaid their first loan, and have taken out another loan without interest.

Revolving funds had some unintended positive impacts. In one case, a revolving fund helped to bring women together to initiate a collective venture. In another case, the revolving fund helped being a process of reshaping gender relation, although change at the household level has been limited. In one SHG, women were able to realize the potential and feasibility of collective action by pooling together loans worth Rs. 10,000/- for each member to start a business activity. But for this lump sum, starting such a collective enterprise would not have been possible.

Challenging Caste and Gender-Based Access to Markets:

Dalit men and women have been largely excluded from fish markets. SASY, one of the participating NGOs, has sought to challenge this exclusion. Post-tsunami, a group from the Dalit community around Parangipettai, Cuddalore, made history by gaining a place in the market to run their own fish trade. Before the tsunami, Dalit men worked only as wage laborers. After the tsunami, a group of enterprising Dalits, with support from SASY in the form of initial capital and training, hired space in the rebuilt market near Parangipettai to begin their business operation. In the pre-tsunami years, this would have been unimaginable even to the Dalits themselves since the market was entirely dominated entirely by non-Dalits and more affluent men.

SASY helped to facilitate a woman's presence in men-dominated space. A Dalit woman is managing the accounts. Managing finances in the wholesale fish market is a strategic task that was previously handled by men alone. The tsunami not only destroyed the market facilities, but also disrupted the traditional control and dominance of powerful caste and class interests. The rebuilding of the market infrastructure provided an opportunity for both Dalits and women to gain market entry. A number of internal factors also made these changes possible. Several Dalit men who previously worked as wage laborers in the market have established good contacts with local fish suppliers and markets in Kerala. These linkages were mobilized to the full advantage of the business venture.

The Dalit group's openness to the inclusion of a woman in a strategic position such as financial management marks an important shift in the gender roles. SASY played a key role in promoting a woman to this position. Although the individual qualification and capacity of the woman were crucial to her selection, her acceptance points to the possibility that other women may find a place in different positions in the market in the future.

Challenging Gender Norms on Separate Community Spaces for Men/Boys and Women/Girls

Gender-sensitive interventions by SNEHA, HOPE, PEDDA, BLESS, and SASY have opened new avenues for women/girls and men/boys to come together on common platforms, rather than traditional spaces of interaction that separate women and men.

In Nagapattinam District, PEDDA encouraged the formation of farmers' group. Although it was formed more than a year after tsunami, the impact of the disaster motivated the formation of such a group. The tsunami exposed the vulnerability of the farmers and the livelihood they

depend on. Women are encouraged to become members, and four women farmers have already joined the group.

Women's participation in the group is significant in a context where women are traditionally not considered farmers, despite the significant role they play in agriculture, especially in subsistence farming. The coming together of women and men around issues of rights, food, and livelihood security, discussing their differing needs and priorities has the potential for bringing about profound changes in gender power relationships.

In Cuddalore District, BLESS helped form a farmers' group involving the villages around Samiarpettai. Both women and men, of different castes and classes are members of this group. The members admitted that it was only after the formation of this group that women and men began to come together to discuss matters such as irrigation, choice of crops, and improved methods of farming that were normally considered part of the male domain. The research team witnessed women disputing men's standpoint or arguing their case against men's preference for cash cropping. These opportunities for women, who are agricultural producers and managers of land but excluded from decision-making, give greater visibility to women farmers and the problems and solutions they perceive. Both women and men representing small landholders were vocal in criticizing NGO projects that, in their perception, favored big landholders.

When the creation of a collaborative space, for example for skills training and non-formal/vocational education, involves both young women and men, a new "culture" of gender relationships emerges, facilitating more equal and free interaction among young women and men. For example, in Muttom, Village, Kanyakumari, Care Trust's computer training center provides a space in which young women and men interact with each other. Both women and men share views on mutual expectations, alcoholism and domestic violence, dowry, future livelihood options, the migration of men, and other issues.

Similarly, programs offered by HOPE in Nagapattinam and Trunquebar, provide a range of vocational courses for a large number of young women and men catering to the emerging aspirations of young people in masonry, dress making, cell phone assembly, computer courses, and courses for driving. These courses cut across gender, enable women and men to acquire non-traditional skills, widen options for their future livelihoods, and help to build social networks. Because they are affordable, well equipped and professionally managed, these courses have attracted a lot of participation from women who, due to financial constraints, otherwise would not have opted for them.

Opportunities for employment or self-employment after training appear bright. Ex-trainees help each other to find jobs. There are cases of women who found jobs for their male co-trainees and vice versa. Husbands or wives who completed or are undergoing courses bring their spouses or siblings to undergo the training of their choice. All ex-trainees maintain links and support each other socially and occupationally.

SNEHA's children's *panchayats* consist of both girls and boys who sit and talk together in the *Panchayat* meetings. Girls are overcoming their shyness, and parents' resistance to such collaborative spaces is dwindling. Although teenagers were not included in this project, the strategy has the potential to be replicated in various contexts to create platforms where women and men can engage in a dialogue on an equal basis.

Shifting the Focus to Specific Target Groups: Meeting Practical Gender Needs

All the NGOs participating in this study have placed special emphasis on women in their rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes; pointing to their understanding

that women are more disadvantaged than men in accessing resources and benefits. The following section describes the NGOs' attempt to address the needs of the other excluded and marginalized groups:

Working with Elderly Women and Men

AVVAI Village Welfare Society adopted a two-pronged strategy to address the issues of neglect and violence against the elderly at the hands of their sons, and the need for livelihood for those who could still work. AVVAI worked to both restore and create assets for the elderly. For those who could no longer work, it started a welfare scheme called "Adopt a Granny". The program caters to the elderly who are too old to do any productive work. It provides care, support, and monthly provisions for meeting their basic needs. In addition, a monthly Medical Camp is organized to provide medical care. In Nambiar Nagar, 12 elderly women and men are benefiting from this scheme. AVVAI is also forming "Village Elders Care Committees" to sensitize the community to its responsibility towards the elderly.

AVVAI also works to empower the elderly by giving them access to resources and assets. For example, a group of 4 elderly men were given collective ownership of 15 boats. AVVAI desalinated 30 acres of land belonging to poor elders in Palpannaicherry and provided groundnut seeds for cultivation. In Akkaraipettai, elderly women were given goats. Revolving loans were established for the elderly who are still engaged in livelihood activities. These loans helped start a wide range of income-generating projects, including artisan programs such as bamboo basket making. For instance, in *Vengaya Koodai Mudaithal* Colony in Velipalayam, Nagai, elderly women and men have revived the traditional occupation of making bamboo products such as baskets. Such livelihood activities not only increase the economic security of the elderly, but also helps to reduce neglect and abuse from the sons.

Muslim Women

Although Muslim women have benefited by a number of programs run by the NGOs participating in the study, five organizations (HOPE, EKTA, SASY, PURA and AVVAI) have particularly targeted this group. PURA has coordinated with a women's activist organization working for the empowerment of Muslim women, by deputing its staff to work with the Muslim women and men in Pilaithopu, KK district. AVVAI is working with Muslim women in Silladinagar, Nagai to assist them in restoring their home-based occupations by disbursing interest-free loans through self-help groups.

Irula Women and Men

EKTA, SASY, and BLESS are three organizations that have mainstreamed the concerns of Irula women and men into their response to the tsunami. SASY helped the Irula to arranged birth certificates to enable them to claim ex-gratia and other entitlements, and taught each one to sign their names. EKTA's and BLESS' efficient monitoring have motivated Irula women and men to send their children to school. In some areas, such as Kalaingar Nagar, Irula parents have been so highly motivated to send their children to school that men have reduced consumption of alcohol.

SASY and BLESS are also constructing houses for the Irula community. BLESS has, in fact, constructed a well-integrated complex with a Balwadi, a health center, shops, playgrounds, and a community hall. The construction is community driven, and Irula women have been given equal wages as men. The skills acquired in construction may be used for alternative livelihoods in the future. SASY has restored or created an asset base for Irula men and women by providing them with small boats or canoes ("Toni") for backwater fishing.

4.8 Redefining the Community Roles of Women and Men

NGOs' efforts at gender mainstreaming have gone a long way towards addressing the practical needs of women and other vulnerable groups. Yet some of the effects of gender mainstreaming are less tangible, but rather are seen in slow, but impressive, changes in gender relations at the community and household levels.

4.8.1 Women's SHGs in Community Leadership Positions

Post-tsunami, due to reduced catch, fisher families experienced periodic food crises. They no longer remain credit worthy at the grocery shops from where they used to access rice on credit. PEDDA evolved a community-based food security mechanism. It has provided rice worth Rs. 64,000/- to women's self-help groups. The SHGs run an outlet providing families in the community with 15 days worth of rice on credit. The payment schedule is flexible, and depends on the day when there is a good catch. If someone defaults on repayment intentionally due to wasteful expenses (such as alcohol) the traditional *Panchayat* intervenes. Until now the system is running smoothly.

Once every 15 days, members of SHGs manage the outlet for 2 hours. PEDDA chose to run its community food security program through women's SHGs because of the level of trust that the community has placed in the integrity of women, the fairness of their distribution, and their capacity to maintain meticulous accounts. Although the SHG women do not get cash benefits, they benefit from increased collaboration with the traditional *Panchayats*, which offers a strategic opportunity for transforming gender roles in other spheres.

Women's SHGs are also influencing the behavior, and attitudes of men. Men who would not take up brooms and sweep the houses, or by extension streets, have been motivated post-tsunami by the health committee (comprising women's SHGs representatives) to sweep the streets clean. In Sivanarpuram, Cuddalore district, women noted the joblessness and idleness of men following the tsunami. Women's SHGs have earned respect within the community. Breaking with gender norms in community work, women assertively persuaded men to share the work of cleaning the streets and segregating the garbage into bio- and non-biodegradable piles. Men have started to clean up the streets and water points and segregate the waste once a week. This marks a significant change in a community where previously men had seldom done such things either in private or public spaces.

To consolidate the gains made by the Sangams' mechanism Sangams themselves may be empowered to resolve conflict with the persons who default in payment rather than allowing the intervention of the traditional panchayat for the same. Elsewhere there is successful intervention by the federation for conflict resolution, albeit between women. Building such alternative institutions for conflict resolution will enhance the political spaces of women.

4.8.2 Challenging the Stereotypical Image of "Man"

Alcoholism among men, particularly when viewed as a coping mechanism, is more or less accepted as a social norm. The escalating rate of alcoholism following the tsunami has been discussed in a number of studies (TNTRC and CDOT, 2006). However, there are a few interventions which have addressed this issue.

Among the participating organizations, the gender mainstreaming strategy of PRAXIS and PURA have tackled concern over alcohol abuse, which affects entire households including the health of men and which has repercussions for wives in terms of domestic violence. In Aaruthanganvilai, alcoholism and domestic violence, as elsewhere, are very serious issues. The interventions of PRAXIS through housing and micro-credit projects have offered a strategic opportunity to address this problem. PRAXIS adopted twin strategies to address

the issue. On the one hand, it supports women's organizing campaigns at the community level, while, on the other, it works with men's Sangams which were formed post-tsunami.

One effective strategy employed by PRAXIS is to make de-addiction and the rejection of violence against women mandatory among the norms promoted within the men's *sangams*. Access to benefits such as micro-credit, housing or boats has been made conditional on de-addiction, which is to be verified by the wives. The group takes disciplinary steps against any member who fails to abide by these group norms.

Permanent houses are an incentive to motivate the members to respect the norm related to alcohol. Micro-credit is, significantly, contingent on strict compliance with the norm of de-addiction and its verification by women. A member of the men's group was expelled from the group for non-compliance.

There has been a noticeable change among members of the two men's Sangams. Most members have reduced their alcohol consumption and a few have given it up altogether. Notably, those who had given up alcohol are older widowers and are the sole providers for their children. The approach engages both men and women to tackle the issue. The combination of sensitizing of men and influencing them through coercive means appears to have yielded results.

Out of the 20 members of a men's Sangam, in Aaruthnganvilai, KK district, 12 have reduced it drastically or given up the drinking altogether. Alcohol reduction, they admitted, has reduced their aggression towards their children and wives. They also feel healthier and are able to work without getting tired. The money they save is used for household purpose. Indebtedness has come down, which motivates them to give up alcohol completely. (focused group discussion with members of Men's Sangam)
--

Men's sensitization is also a crucial component in PURA'S work, as is empowering women with leadership qualities and raising awareness through SHGs. Organizing periodic meetings in which men abstaining from drinking for the day helped build men's confidence that they could survive without drinking. Some have extended the period to 3 days in a week. One man, part of a group in Vathakkavillai, Kanniyakumari, reports that he has completely given up alcohol and that he feels healthier and happier now. He also reports a marked decrease in verbal and physical abuse of his spouse at home. He is now more respected both in his community and in his home. Although this is one small example, it marks a monumental change within the household.

PURA's dual focus on sensitizing men's groups while simultaneously working to empower women's SHGs around issues of domestic violence has had a visible impact on communities. Post-tsunami, arrack-vending in the neighborhood of Pillaithoppu and Muttom has been completely stopped. Since alcohol is unavailable in the vicinity, the frequency of alcohol consumption has been reduced. At the same time, PURA engages with both women and men through its social advocacy program which helps to keep men busy (at times when they are idle) with activities such as pond cleaning, preparing time-tables for the bus services, and rearing chicks which can be distributed to the group members as incentives to stop drinking.

4.9 Gender-Focused Documentation, Research, and Monitoring

As this chapter has demonstrated, the NGOs in this study have employed varied and creative strategies for gender mainstreaming. Their good practices, in many cases, stem from a gender-sensitive approach to program design and implementation, including the collection of gender-specific data and needs assessment; the development of gender-

focused action research; and on-going efforts to monitor the gender impact of their programs.

4.9.1 Gender-Focused Documentation

FPAI maintains impressive documentation on the sexual and reproductive health work it carries out in Cuddalore District. Although its modest office in Cuddalore does not have computers or other sophisticated facilities, staff keep meticulous manual records on a daily basis. Field visit reports, records of psycho-social counseling, and case histories are well documented and act as reference materials for the study of issues such as violence against women, misuse of ex-gratia payment, and the escalating rate of alcoholism and its impact on women, men, and children. Their meticulous, gender-sensitive documentation helps to facilitate follow-up activities, monitoring, and tracking the psycho-social changes in the communities with which they work.

CARE's documentation has a strong focus on widows, the destitute, girl children, and the physically disabled. The identification of the target groups (such as inland-fishers and sea shell-collectors) for its relief work and its post-relief interventions such as livelihood assistance to widows and training to health workers were influenced by the gender focused documentation it carried out in the selected villages. CARE maintains meticulous data on the widows in six villages; the data are disaggregated in terms of age and health status including the conditions of disability.

SNEHA maintains documentation of such sensitive matters as suicides among women and girls in the aftermath of tsunami, the status of child labor, violations of rights of fisherwomen, SNEHA's documentation is an important resource for any gender-sensitive research, and helps to inform their critique of policies that have sidelined fisherwomen by equating fishing with male-only occupation.

4.9.2 Gender-Focused Research

CARE Trust has carried out a research study on the status of widows in 9 tsunami affected villages in Kanniyakumari; building a database of information is a pre-requisite for initiating any CARE program. In its research, CARE incorporates the vulnerabilities of both pre-tsunami widows and those who lost their husbands in the tsunami, situating them in a critique of the socio-cultural norms and traditional values that subordinate women. It also carried out a vulnerability study post-tsunami with special focus on girl children.

EKTA's research on gender issues in the context of the tsunami has helped to increase the visibility of women and their needs; their study is an important document for charting out any plan for disaster preparedness. Based on a gender analysis that is rooted in a women's human rights framework with reference to the Beijing Platform of Action and CEDAW, EKTA offers recommendations to stakeholders including policy makers to mainstream gender in the disaster management processes.

4.9.3 Regular Monitoring of Results

Regular monitoring of program implementation and impact is a crucial part of the gender mainstreaming process. For example, EKTA and BLESS monitor on a daily basis whether children have gone to school, and attempt to persuade them not to miss school days. Girl

children in particular have benefited from this meticulous monitoring, without which many girl children would have dropped out due to the difficult life situations of their mothers. The effectiveness of monitoring has had a special impact on the Irula community in Indira Nagar and Shanmuga Nagar. Not only children but also parents have benefited, as parents now take interest in sending their children to school punctually. Education for their children has become a dream for the Irulas. Another, unintended but positive impact of the program has been a dramatic decrease in alcohol consumption and a strong motivation for saving among men.

4.10 Gender-Sensitive Advocacy and Lobbying

While the majority of NGOs have focused on household and community-level interventions, a number of them are using the data and experience they have collected at the grassroots to inform advocacy and lobbying efforts at the district and state levels. For example, EKTA, SNEHA, and PURA participated in state-level workshops to discuss the gamut of disadvantages women face in tsunami recovery. SNEHA and PURA have also lobbied with the government to bring about changes in their relief and rehabilitation policies. Gender-sensitive advocacy and lobbying efforts have helped bring to the fore debates over “equity vs. equality,” where gender equity, above and beyond formal equality, is required to meet sex- and gender-specific needs. As a result of gender advocacy, government policies and orders were analyzed through a gender lens.



Chapter 5: Recommendations for Strengthening Gender Mainstreaming

No intervention is neutral when the players do not start as equals...

The previous chapter has highlighted good practices in gender mainstreaming among the NGOs, particularly in the ‘implementation’ of programs designed to increase gender equity in tsunami relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. However, significant areas remain in which ongoing efforts to mainstream gender can be strengthened, both in the implementation of policies and programs intended to influence institutional change, and internally within an organization’s own gender infrastructure and organizational development.

Section 5.1 lays out a series of recommendations for the strengthening of gender mainstreaming drawing from the good practices of the NGOs in this study. Section 5.2 highlights the gaps and challenges that remain in the gender mainstreaming agenda, again drawing from the experience of the participating NGOs. Sections 5.3 and 5.4 draw lessons concerning the internal structure and practices of NGOs, highlighting the need for strengthened gender infrastructure and for organizational change, respectively. Section 5.5 reflects on the factors that have facilitated or hindered the take up of good practices in gender mainstreaming.

5.1 Implementing Gender Mainstreaming at the Grassroots

Chapter 3 presented detailed analysis of the various gender mainstreaming strategies employed by the NGOs in this study. This section attempts to draw lessons and recommendations from their experiences. Activities such as data collection, capacity building, provision of credit and productive assets, and skills training are highlighted. Challenges to gendered division of labor and gender roles, as well as efforts to increase women’s political participation, are also discussed. Several program design issues are taken up, such as the need for integrated programming that treats gender as a cross-cutting, rather than an isolated, issue and the need for gender focused research. Finally, an ongoing agenda for advocacy and lobbying around gender concerns is laid out.

5.1.1 Sex and Gender Disaggregated Data

Most NGOs have attempted to collect gender and sex disaggregated data. However, such data may be collected and solicited in a more comprehensive and context-specific manner. Inadequate gender analysis may mean that organizations do not recognize the importance of, and hence do not collect or disseminate gender-specific data necessary to aid program design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, as well as future disaster preparedness.

Sex and gender disaggregated data should include three categories of gender: male, female and Aravani. The list of required data below is indicative and not exhaustive. For example gender and age disaggregated data in the existing socio-cultural norms in the areas would require data on the position and needs of the following groups:

- Aravanis, including the number of professionally qualified Aravanis;
- unmarried women and widows not heading households;
- men as home makers and engaged in child care;
- elderly women and men engaged in productive activities in spite of frail physical conditions;
- scattered poor women, men and children;
- women deserted by their husbands/sons and living alone;

- women with only girl children;
- women with chronically sick spouse or spouse with disability;
- indigenous and minority men and women;
- destitute women chronically sick and women and men with disability;
- women living in violent situations;
- women heading or maintaining households. Data should include not only single
- women heads of the households but women whose spouses are either not engaged in productive activity or do not contribute much to maintaining the household;
- pregnant women;
- women and men who are HIV positives.

Since most NGO interventions are directed at livelihoods, understanding livelihoods from a gender perspective will help to empower women and their households. Data should be collected and sought on the vulnerabilities and capacities of women, men, and Aravanis. From the perspective of disaster management and risk reduction, constructing a capacity profile of women and men will help to indicate the sources of resiliency, coping strategies, and alternative livelihood opportunities that exist within communities.

5.1.2 Facilitating Women's Collective Agency

The strengthening of self-help groups, federations, and Sangams should be incorporated as a necessary component of all phases of disaster management including preparedness and risk reduction. Women's groups should be given training in disaster preparedness, strengthening existing, and building new capacities. Such trainings should include a major component of gender awareness building, emphasizing the strategic gender needs of women including the need for women's participation in non-traditional roles and occupations, for women's decision-making in relief distribution, and the need for women's engagement in needs assessment. Women's SHGs/Sangams and federations should be equipped with skills to carry out gender-sensitive needs analysis. Funding agencies have an important role to play in supporting NGOs in their efforts to build capacities for grassroots women, marginalized men, and Aravanis.

5.1.3 Facilitating Equitable Access to and Control over Resources

Asset creation for women, marginalized men, and Aravanis is necessary to break the vicious circle of relief distribution that excludes the very people who, because they lack visible assets, are most in need of relief. At present, only those with visible and documented assets are eligible to claim compensation for losses in a disaster. Collective assets such as markets, business assets, land, assets that fetch rental value should be transferred to the ownership of women's federations in the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Disaster recovery can be viewed as an opportunity to increase women's (as well as marginalized men's and Aravanis') access to and control over resources at all levels. However, simple provision of micro-finance and credit is not sufficient (Johnson, Undated). Broadly speaking, micro-finance and revolving funds have the greatest impact on gender equity when accompanied by strategies aimed at affecting social norms and legal frameworks. For example, advocacy and lobbying is required to change women's rights to property (ibid).

5.1.4 Addressing Gender Division of Labor and Alcoholism

The opportunities that the tsunami has created for the integration of women's strategic needs is also an opportunity to begin work with men and men's groups. A focus on men is necessary in order to sensitize them to issues such as alternative gender roles and images

of men and women.⁴⁹ Efforts must also be made to sensitize men to accept women's ownership and control of assets, as well as women's right to live violence free in both private and public domains.

Both men and boys must be motivated to share responsibility for non-monetized work at home including cooking, cleaning, and washing, fetching water and firewood, and taking care of children. Building these skills among men and boys has direct implications for disaster preparedness; involving boys and men in household responsibilities relieves the burden on women and girls, positively influencing the retention of girl children in schools.

5.1.5 Gender and Political Participation

Decision-making bodies at all levels, including the traditional *Panchayats*, should include 50 percent representation of women, including leaders of SHGs and federations. A separate association of Aravanis should be formed and trained in voicing their concerns. Simultaneously, the traditional *Panchayats* should be sensitized to accept women in leadership positions and as owners of high-value productive assets. Gains made must be consolidated. An ongoing process to strengthen the elected *Panchayats* should also be initiated as part of a process of strengthening the political space afforded to women's federations. Leadership training for women should be facilitated on a sustained basis to make their voices heard in decision-making processes.

5.1.6 Focusing on Unaddressed Issues: Gender and Domestic Violence

Most NGOs are aware of domestic violence but have limited scope to work on the issue because it is interpreted as a private affair that takes place within the confines of the home. However, domestic violence remains a public and political issue. Disasters provide opportunities to make violence against women visible through the intensive engagement of NGOs with women and men. Disaster recovery represents a strategic period for networking with feminist organizations and for up-scaling advocacy and lobbying to promote the human rights of women as well as of marginalized men and Aravanis. Capacity-building workshops should be organized on the nature and multi-faceted nature of domestic violence. Documentation and research is also needed to highlight the various facets of domestic violence.

Prominent issues which affect women's dignity and well being, namely domestic violence and alcoholism, forced marriages, and reproductive health issues remain sensitive and difficult-to-change issues. NGOs must do more to highlight these issues, and think creatively about interventions to mitigate the effects on women, children, the elderly, and other vulnerable groups.

Shattering Lives

"We have marched along with men for many struggles such as the struggle against prawn farming. We thought we are strong women. It was the concern of both men and women. Men's habits of drinking are breaking each household and yet there are no such marches. We had the prawn farming closed down, but we are not able to come together to eliminate this very force of destruction from our own homes which stripes us of our meager resources and self-respect."
—SHG leader, Chandrapadi, Nagai.

5.1.7 Vertical Programming

⁴⁹ "Alternative" gender roles refers to those which are not generally accepted by women and men and the community at large, such as men taking care of the household and children or men being emotional, soft, and expressive.

Although the need for women-specific interventions cannot be denied, gender concerns may be integrated across programs and their implementation. To that end, funding should be directed at vertical programming (Femida, Meenz et al., 2006). For example, funding for livelihood interventions should make the provision of child-care and healthcare facilities and transportation mandatory. In the context of disaster management, round-the-clock child care facilities can be piloted by organizations with considerable experience in running Balwadi centers in order to support disaster-affected women, girl children and, in some cases, single men who take care of their children. In the same manner, livelihood interventions including credit programs should be dovetailed with necessary infrastructure such as ware-houses with locker rooms, tricycles and cycles, and market linkages. Anganwadis should also be put in place in order to increase the food security of elderly women and men. Unconditional pension schemes for elderly women and men, deserted women, unmarried women not heading households, and widows should also be instituted.

5.1.8 Documentation of Gender Sensitive Norms and Practices of Ethnic Groups

NGO interventions in the Irula community have highlighted the many gender-sensitive cultural norms practiced in that community. For example, gender division of labor, violence against women, restriction on women's mobility, are less in the Irula community, while common spaces for interaction between women and men are prevalent. NGOs, unaware of the local cultural context, may run the unintentional risk of imposing gender hierarchies and biases. To avoid such outcomes, gender-sensitive norms and practices must be researched and documented and disseminated to form the basis of interventions across sectors.

5.1.9 Gender Focused Research

Field-based, gender focused research should be encouraged and funded in order to highlight both the gains and the gaps made by various programs in the process of tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction. Research findings should be widely disseminated to facilitate cross-learning among organizations. Research findings should be taken seriously by all stakeholders; NGOs, INGOs, funding agencies, policy makers, and government alike should earmark funding for gender focused, field-based research. Studies commissioned and carried should be pooled together to build a strong repertoire of qualitative and quantitative information on gender issues for ready reference.

Studies focused on gender issues should be widely disseminated through various forums to build and strengthen awareness on how issues can be interpreted and analyzed through a gender perspective. It will also help the stakeholders in mainstreaming gender by looking into and integrating the gender concerns in their policies and programmes. Dissemination workshops may be organised for the stakeholders including grassroots.

5.1.10 Advocacy and Lobbying

Many organizations are involved in lobbying and advocacy with government. However, the efficacy of advocacy efforts can be further enhanced by analyzing policies and their implementation from a gender perspective. Based on a careful analysis of the impact of government relief and rehabilitation measures on women, men, girls and boys, and Aravanis, NGOs can prepare sets of demands and recommendations for presenting to the government. Special attention must be paid to dimensions of gender discrimination that cut across issues of caste, class, and ethnicity.

A human rights framework gives structure to advocacy demands focused on women's rights, as well as the rights of other groups including children, the elderly, and Aravanis. International agreements such as the Beijing Platform for Action, the International Convention on Population and Development, the Convention on the Elimination of

Discrimination Against Women, and national laws such as the Domestic Violence Act are effective tools for advocacy. Advocacy is necessary in order to integrate gender concerns within the agenda for disaster preparedness. For example, feminist groups are lobbying for the mandatory registration of marriages in order to prevent child marriage against the backdrop of the spate of such marriages in the aftermath of the tsunami.

National and state policies, including the National Disaster Management Act, must be analyzed through a gender lens. Grassroots constituencies, including Aravanis, should undergo capacity-building exercises to build their policy analysis and advocacy skills. Rights-based organizations must explicitly place the rights and concerns of Aravanis on their agenda.

5.2 The Need for Strengthening Gender Mainstreaming

Successful design, implementation, and sustained practice of gender-sensitive policies and programs are possible where organizations possess the necessary internal organizational culture of gender sensitivity. Where gender perspective and analysis are missing among the leadership, staff, or donors of an organization, the following pitfalls are difficult to avoid:

A) NGO induced gender segregation

In the absence of gender analysis, organizations run the risk of implementing programs that impose gender hierarchies on communities where such hierarchies are less pronounced. A case in point is the Irula community wherein there is a relatively less strict gender division of labor. The NGO practice of segregating women and men when forming SHGs may inadvertently introduce new practices that may weaken the relatively high level of gender fair practices in the Irula community.

Technology for men only

One NGO (not covered by this study) that is working with the Irula community for instance, distributed cell phones to men SHG while depriving women SHG of the same. Aligning technology with men and depriving women of it is a classic example of bringing mainstream biases in community (Irulas) who are not known for such gender biases. This example highlights the shortcoming in gender perspective of the program staff.

B) NGO induced increase in the workload of women

In some cases, women, with assistance from NGOs, may take on new productive and community roles, without any change in the division of “reproductive” tasks in the home. Women’s work burden has increased in such instances. Implementing gender-targeted programming without complete gender analysis may result in an unintended negative impact.

Through a Gender Lens

With the interest-free credit they received from one of the NGOs, a women’s SHG bought a large capacity freezer to make up for the reduced availability of fish locally as well as to reduce heavy head loading. Women started going to the Kanniyakumari harbor late in the evening and came back home only around 2 a.m. the next day. After returning, they would clean the fish and stock them in the freezer. By the time they are ready to go to bed, it is time, for their husbands to go to sea. While some women reported that they have started waking up late, some others suffered from inadequate sleep hours. In some instances, old women experienced an increase in the work burden as they took up household chores in the morning. Overall, women remained extremely fatigued and suffered severe body and leg pain.

C) Increased burden of loans on women

While access to credit has had a positive impact on women's role in production and on their family's access to resources, women are also increasingly burdened with the responsibility of repayment. This is particularly true in cases where women, who were not working outside home before tsunami, have taken up economic activities without the necessary support or infrastructure.

Field research indicates that single women with years of business experience pre-tsunami were in a better position to make the repayment without resorting to borrowing from another source, than women who did not work outside the home before the tsunami. Revolving funds have had a remarkable success with women who were engaged in their business and had a ready market pre-tsunami, for example, shell sellers and trained tailors. On the contrary, where new experiments were tried in the absence of market linkages, women were fraught with anxieties and increased work burden.

Many women living with spouses report that their spouses drink excessively. Some of them live in violent situations, and lose workdays when they are physically battered and incapacitated. Women in such situations may need to borrow money from other sources in order to meet their consumption needs and make repayments on their loans. Among single women, those living with their daughters appear to fare better, as daughters tend not to take money from their mothers (focus group discussion in SiluvaiNagar, Pillaithopu, Muttom and Kolachal, Kanniyakumari district).

D) Unintended consequences of targeting

At times interventions targeted at one group of men or women have been successful, but have had unintended detrimental impacts on another group. For example:

Some One's Gain, Some One's Loss

A majority of men, primarily Dalits, who were engaged in transporting fish from the shore to the lorries, and workers in the ice plants are now without any work as NGO interventions have assisted fishermen to directly send their catch markets in Kerala. This has increased the burden on women, who must compensate for loss of men's income by working for low wages or borrowing from the moneylender. Women fear that, with accentuation of poverty, they will not be able to borrow money from the moneylender; it is through borrowing money that most women there are able to retain their membership in SHGs to avail of the internal loans in times of crisis (focus Group discussion with women and men in Kesavpalliyam village, Cuddalore).

E) Exclusion of certain target groups amongst women

In the absence of context-specific, gender disaggregated data, certain groups may be marginalized or rendered invisible in the delivery of relief and rehabilitation. A number of NGOs have targeted the fishing community, single women, the Dalit and Irulas. However, there is additional need to target other marginalized groups that have remained largely invisible in the tsunami relief and rehabilitation process such as religious minorities, Aravanis, the elderly, and disabled and single men.

The Aravani population and Dalit Azhi Pickers, for instance, seem to have been largely left out from the rehabilitation process. Similarly, the needs of the elderly population are also often neglected. Post-tsunami, many elderly women are forced to work, despite their age and failing health, not only for their own survival but also for the sake of their dependents. There are many cases of elderly women supporting their grandchildren, either because the parents were killed in the tsunami, or because the father remarried or abandoned his

parenting responsibilities after his wife's death in tsunami. Concerted focus should be placed on elderly women and men in the tsunami relief and rehabilitation agenda. Attention should also be directed to the practical gender needs of single men who have started looking after their children as well as assisting their daughters in household chores.

<u>Where Food Security and Life Cycle Approach?</u>	<u>Empowering or Reinforcing Stereotyped Gender Roles?</u>
<p>An elderly woman in a remote village in Cuddalore District survives on the rice she gathers from the spilled husk fallen on the wayside while being transported from the paddy fields. She collects them the whole day during the harvest season and even store some for the post-harvest season. Most NGOs have done little to respond to the needs of the elderly.</p>	<p>A particular project was initiated by an NGO to introduce new methods to increase soil fertility and productivity of the land. This required the cooperation of both women and men to share responsibilities for the successful implementation of the project. But the allocation of responsibilities among men and women was such that the home-based labor intensive and time-consuming tasks were apportioned to women whereas the control, supervisory, and marketing tasks were assigned to men. The implementation of the project reinforced gender role stereotypes rather than effecting any change in the direction of gender equality. Although the illustrated role allocation was not NGO-induced, it conformed to the constructed gender norms of the societal institutions and went unchallenged. The inventiveness and efficiency of the said project did little to influence women and men who were organized to work as equal partners.</p>

F) Reinforcing gender roles and gendered division of labor

While many NGOs recognize the need to break away from the stereotyped roles of women and men, their programs and interventions, at times, may still reflect prevailing gender roles and division of labor.

5.3 Building Gender Infrastructure within Organizations

To avoid the aforementioned pitfalls and to build upon the good practices of NGOs documented in this study, internal organizational changes, including the creation and strengthening of gender infrastructure, are required. Gender infrastructure can be developed in the following areas.

A) Strengthening the evolution of gender policy

Although a majority of participating NGOs have an implicit understanding of gender, only a few consciously and critically articulated their position on gender in disaster management. Five out of the eleven organizations studied are currently attempting to develop a gender policy. This process can be strengthened by gender-sensitive organizational development, including workshops and the development of toolkits, as well as by cross-learning among organizations (including feminist groups) at the regional, national, and international levels.

NGOs need support in developing gender policies to establish targets for gender-sensitive changes internally, including in vision/mission, program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and budgeting. A gender policy in the organization itself helps present a framework to support gender aware implementation.

B) Deliberate gender planning

A majority of participating organizations have integrated gender concerns into their programs implementation, but have done so without a formal process of gender planning or budgeting. A more deliberate move can be made to integrate gender planning by analyzing the implication of each program on the practical gender needs of women and men and the strategic gender needs of women. Capacity building workshops on gender analysis should be organized to facilitate the formation of gender action plans in the context of tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction. Gender plans should integrate gender as a cross-cutting issue, rather than as the purview of exclusively women-centered programs.

C) Gender indicators in monitoring and evaluation

Putting in place benchmarks for gender-sensitive monitoring is an integral part of the gender infrastructure that facilitates gender-sensitive project implementation. Essentially this means ensuring a gender dimension to all existing components of project monitoring.

D) Gendered budget analysis

Most participating organizations have implemented women-specific economic programs in their response to the tsunami. However, budget analysis from a gender perspective is required to ensure that resources are spent to empower both women and men. NGOs may sharpen their budgeting and gender analysis tools through participation in periodic workshops. Organizations can benefit from breaking down their budget according to its impacts on women and men.

E) Gender sensitive recruitment and staffing

Post-tsunami there has been an increase in women staff in all the participating organizations. Staffing practices, however, can be strengthened by making a gender perspective a core criterion on which to assess candidates for recruitment and appraisal. Innovative, gender-sensitive practices may be studied to evolve gender responsive recruitment policies at all levels. For example, a candidate's life experiences (which form the basis of their gender perspective) should be given emphasis along with formal qualifications. Formal qualification requirements should be relaxed in the case of women and marginalized men if their life experiences and gender perspective are strong.

F) Creating a gender coordinator position

The study indicates that the recruitment of a gender coordinator helps to integrate a gender perspective and analysis within an organization's programs and activities. Creating the post of gender coordinator will help organizations to gauge the implications of any program or component of a program on the lives of women and men.

5.4 Gender Aware Organizational Change

The creation of gender infrastructure takes place within the context of broader changes in organizational development that are conducive to the gender mainstreaming agenda. Organizations must look within themselves to examine the practices, relationships, culture, and level of gender awareness among their own staff and leaders. Organizational culture can be strengthened in the following manner:

A) Democratizing relationships within the workplace

To increase gender sensitivity, organizations must strive for an internal culture that is open and conducive to challenges for prevailing gender norms. The gender equality agenda can be furthered by making women's voices more powerful within the organization, finding ways to increase the participation of women staff in decision-making and leadership, and building relationships with other organizations. Gender is a context-specific and constantly evolving theme, and organizations must be able to adapt, as new gender issues are put on the agenda.

B) Gender sensitive organizational development

Organizational development processes rooted in a grounded understanding of gender concepts and realities can help organizations to build their own culture of gender sensitivity. Internal development processes may be led by gender experts experienced in analyzing both achievements and gaps for mainstreaming gender in the disaster management process. The process of organizational development may also help evolve gender-sensitive policies in the areas of recruitment, performance appraisal, family friendly policies, flexi timings, gender budgeting, and the infusion of gender analysis throughout the program cycle.

C) Gender awareness and trainings

Gender mainstreaming in operations is of paramount value for empowering grassroots women, marginalized men and Aravanis. Strengthening gender infrastructure and organizational culture through trainings on gender issues is an effective way to promote the consistent and rapid integration of gender concerns across programs. Staff at all levels, including both women and men, should attend regular training sessions, and be afforded the opportunity to discuss gender issues of common concern with one another.

D) Developing a toolkit for gender mainstreaming in disaster management

The development and application of an evidence-based and field tested toolkit can facilitate gender mainstreaming practices in the context of disaster response and preparedness programs. Chapter 5 of this study presents an overview of a pilot toolkit, developed with the 11 participating organizations, intended to strengthen their analysis of the life situations of disaster affected women and men, and the impact of their programs from a gender perspective.⁵⁰ A toolkit can also be used to sensitise and strengthen the capacity of other stakeholders such as policy makers and funding agencies.

5.5 Factors Facilitating and Hindering Gender Mainstreaming

The last section highlighted the limitations of NGOs working to mainstream gender in their response to the tsunami. This final section examines factors that facilitated or, when absent, hindered, the implementation of good practices.

5.5.1 Gender sensitivity of the leadership

A majority of the good practices among the 11 organizations participating in this study are an outcome of gender sensitivity of the leadership, which in turn influences the target groups. Where the leaders of the NGOs operated in a gender-sensitive manner, programs reflected a focus on addressing practical gender needs in such a way that also meets the strategic gender needs of women. A gender-aware leadership also offers opportunities to the staff to participate in capacity-building activities and trainings on gender issues. Innovative ideas

⁵⁰ This is a need-based recommendation from a majority of the participating organizations.

materialize into practice, both internally within organizations and in the implementation of their programs, when leadership wears a gender lens.

5.5.2 Gender sensitivity of donors

Wherever donors are gender-sensitive, programs strive to integrate gender concerns of gender-sensitive donors, working in consultation with their partners, have influenced the structure and delivery of relief packages. For example, some donor agencies have insisted that relief be routed through the SHGs or Balwadis. Most INGOs have also included sex- and gender-specific needs of women in their relief packages.

Donor agencies have also influenced the redistribution of assets and entitlements between women and men in consultation with partner NGOs. For example, a donor agency with an explicit focus on Dalits, Adivasis, minorities, and other most vulnerable groups has influenced its partner organization to reflect on its vision, mission, and objectives to make them more inclusive, especially in the context of the tsunami.

<p>One of the participating organizations received funding for a fish drier and skill building for women to use it. While women were ready to use it, the funds had stopped. There were no resources sanctioned as working capital. The drier now remains unused. It has put the NGO under pressure to explain why after the trainings women cannot use it for income generation.</p>	<p>When donors respect local knowledge and expertise, it facilitates effective implementation. If local expertise is not trusted, it may have the potential to cause conflicts between the NGO and the donor agency. One of the organizations had advised on the design of the eco-san toilet which was discounted, and external technical experts were called in. The design, finally approved against the wishes of the participating NGOs, has however seen the construction of the eco-san toilet but not its usage.</p>
---	--

Donor flexibility is also necessary to facilitate sustained programmes. Some NGOs have refused the funds from donors with complicated requirements and demands, such as having separate staff for their programs. For bold strokes of gender mainstreaming, the synergies between donors and the implementing partners have been described as the major facilitating factor.

Prompt dispersal of funds by donors facilitates timely delivery of relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction entitlements to women and men. Conversely, when funds are sanctioned very late, their very purpose in disaster response is defeated.

Sustained funding yields better results and builds mutual capacities. Most NGOs said that where sustained sources of funding are available spanning 5–9 years, integrated programming with a long-term vision can be implemented. One of the organizations has a 9 years' time frame for its intervention and feels that vertical integration of the programs is possible. The time frame reduced the need to hurry to spend the funds, gave enough space to reflect on successes and challenges, and allowed for continuous interfacing with the grassroots. Sustained funding will also help organizations to focus on their programs vertically, for instance, combining livelihood programs with childcare or health facilities, and efforts to sensitize women and men on sustainable household budgeting. When funding is not ensured for integrated programs, it becomes more of a liability for the organization.

It is not always necessary to have big funding for efficient programming. As the good practices described above have shown, some organizations may have a low profile, but are

doing useful by building close contacts within communities to understand their vulnerabilities, capacities, and needs.

When building temporary huts in Dalit areas, the procedural expenses related to donor requirements exceeded real construction costs. The delay had left those whose hutments had been damaged in the tsunami shelterless. This had major repercussions for women and children, who spend most of their time at home and need greater security and protection (interview with one of the participating NGO's Heads)

5.5.3 Presence and Vibrancy of Pre-tsunami Women's Movement

Advocacy and lobbying by the national women's movement has helped to increase the visibility of gender issues in disaster relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. The leaders of a number of the NGOs in this study also participate in the broader women's movement. Placing gender discourse at the center of disaster management processes and raising the concerns in international arenas have facilitated a conscious and multi-level thrust for gender mainstreaming in disaster response and preparedness.

The following recommendations for the NGOs stem from an analysis of gendered issues and the NGOs' gender mainstreaming strategies in the context of tsunami in Tamil Nadu. However, most recommendations can be taken up by the policy makers as well as the INGOs. The recommendations may be of relevance to mainstream gender in the context of disaster management processes, i.e., relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction as well as disaster preparedness.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

This study has underscored four important facts.

First, disasters and disaster recovery are not gender neutral. Processes of relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction, if not consciously directed from a gender perspective, reflect and perpetuate pre-existing social and economic vulnerabilities that are rooted in the unequal relationships of gender, caste, religion, ethnicity, and class. Gender, in particular, is an issue that cuts across all other sources of vulnerability because, within any group, men and women exist within unequal power relationships.

The present study has highlighted that women typically possess fewer resources, have less autonomy and mobility, and bear the bulk of care-giving responsibilities at the household level compared to men. Together these factors increase women's vulnerability to disaster risk, and place them at a disadvantage in disaster relief and recovery (Morrow, 1998; Enarson and Morrow, 1998a; Blaikie et al., 1994). Thus, gender is an important dimension of any disaster response, and gender mainstreaming strategies are essential part of the process of building gender equality.

While women in communities with rigidly defined gender roles and sexual division of labor remain marginalized, men too are trapped by gendered demands and tightly defined notions of manhood. Thus, mainstreaming gender in disaster management foregrounds the need for interventions that challenge gender relationships by empowering women and sensitizing men.

Second, NGOs, acting as catalysts for development, are concerned with issues of gender equality but may adopt differing perspectives and strategies on gender. The study has revealed that gender mainstreaming is a complex process. It may occur at the institutional level with its essential linkages to grassroots issues, even without gender infrastructure and gender-aware organizational practices, provided that an organization's leadership and donors are gender aware.

The process of gender mainstreaming may have small but important beginnings; the gains from integrating gender concerns in disaster management may be economic or non-economic (such as the benefits of collective action or enhanced self-awareness and self-esteem), may be confined to a particular context (for example, where a man has learned to sweep the streets clean) or may be more generalized (such as the granting of joint housing deeds in many cases). What remains important is the process itself and the way it is sustained and replicated.

Third, gender mainstreaming can be initiated at the grassroots by disaster-affected women themselves. When women come together on a common platform (often facilitated by NGOs, especially in the area of livelihood), the enhanced mobility and space they enjoy for sharing the experiences is, in itself, a driving force. Through collective action, women are demanding their entitlements and challenging entrenched patriarchal norms in an effort to make disaster response more inclusive and gender sensitive.

Fourth, gender mainstreaming must also take place at the 'infrastructure' and 'organizational' levels. Internal changes within organizations are essential for addressing issues of exclusion and necessary in order to bring about deep and sustained changes in social institutions in favor of women and girls, marginalized men, and Aravanis. When institutional changes are guided by systematic development of gender infrastructure and organizational change, there is a stronger will among organizations to address controversial issues such as gender-based violence and reproductive/sexual rights in the context of a

disaster. Further, gender mainstreaming within organizations helps to ensure that gains made are sustained.

The benefits of gender-aware organizational changes, gender infrastructure, and institutional changes will be reflected in the consistent and deliberate nature of gender mainstreaming in the analysis of issues, and design and implementation programs.

Areas for Further Research

Areas for further research have emerged in the course of this research. Research studies can be taken up to examine issues such as whether grants or interest-free loans have a bigger impact from a gender perspective in the context of disaster. The present study has touched upon success stories concerning both grants and loans; more systematic research is required to investigate this theme.

Women's groups and federations, in some instances, have guided the partner organizations in the delivery and distribution of relief, helping in making the process more gender-responsive and equitable. Studies can be taken up across tsunami-affected states to examine the strategies employed by the self-help groups and federations as they have variously collaborated with or resisted traditional decision-making bodies such as the traditional *panchayats*.

NGOs' strategies for engaging with men around issues of gender roles and domestic violence can also be analyzed and documented across tsunami-affected states. The present study has highlighted the fact that lessened sexual desire due to increased work burden among women, coupled with men's adverse coping strategies (such as alcohol consumption) has contributed to increased domestic violence. Further studies may analyze and document women's coping strategies when dealing with domestic and sexual relations in times of upheaval.

A more focused study on Aravani groups and their needs in disaster settings is necessary. This study has touched upon and analyzed several gendered issues related to the Aravanis. Each issue briefly touched upon here deserves an in-depth study in its own right. Such studies will be a rich reference for stakeholders involved in bringing a gender focus to the agenda of disaster management.

Finally, an analysis of the National Disaster Management Act is necessary from a gender perspective, and effective lobbying and advocacy must be taken up to incorporate gender-sensitive changes in the bill, including the explicit inclusion of Aravanis.

Toolkit for Gender Mainstreaming in Disaster Response: an outline

The research team and participating NGOs have developed an evidence-based tool kit that builds on the analysis of the gender issues that emerged from the field, and the gender mainstreaming strategies the participating organizations evolved to address these issues. This chapter introduces the tool kit, which is available separately.

1) The important features of the tool kit are:

- It is evidence-based, including case studies of the experiences of women, men, and differently sexed and/or gendered people affected by the tsunami;
- It builds on research outcomes; It links the experiences of men, women, and Aravanis to gender concepts that are important in the context of disasters.

- The kit is useful for those who work directly with disaster-affected communities, including those in leadership positions in humanitarian agencies, policy makers, field researchers, and practitioners.
- This tool kit contains eight chapters, which are summarized below. The tool kit makes reference to the two most relevant international instruments for guidance in gender mainstreaming:
 - The Beijing Platform for Action, agreed upon by UN Member States during the [Fourth World Conference on Women](#) in Beijing, China, in 1995; and
 - The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
- References are made to the National Empowerment Policy and Domestic Violence Act.

Tool Kit Chapters

Chapter one documents the key issues that affect women and girls during and after disasters. While the tool kit demonstrates their marginalization in relief schemes, it also documents their desire and wish for an alternative scenario.

Chapter two focuses on the experience of men and boys in the tsunami, documenting through case studies the ways in which patriarchal society defines gender roles both in general and during disasters, in particular. Through the case studies, themes emerge with direct links to the socially constructed identity of men, such as alternative livelihoods, remarriages, issues related to ex-gratia, and the adverse impacts of gender stereotypes in the context of a disaster.

Chapter three brings to focus the needs and concerns of Aravanis (differently sexed and/or gendered people), who are among the most marginalized and neglected in society. Their needs, desires, and skills have been documented from field case studies, which are otherwise overlooked in disaster response and development programs. This chapter also documents unaddressed issues related to other invisible groups like the Azhi Pickers, the Irula tribe, and the scattered poor.

Chapter four documents the practical and strategic gender needs of women and men in a disaster situation. The chapter also develops the concept of livelihood through a gender lens. Good practices of NGOs are documented with the potential for replication.

Chapter five highlights the issues surrounding ex-gratia compensation in a disaster situation. Case studies shed light on the gendered pattern of ex-gratia usage.

Chapter highlights pre-disaster issues of gender-based violence, aggravated manifold in the aftermath of disasters. Case studies are used to demonstrate that domestic violence is not a private issue, but one that needs to be brought to the public domain.

Chapter seven highlights the initiatives of several organizations, which, if strengthened, will be feats in themselves, with the potential for replication by other organizations.

Chapter eight lays out a series of actions, based on the learnings and findings of the study, which humanitarian agencies may take forward in integrating gender concerns and in disaster preparedness.

References

Agarwal, Bina, Jane, Humphries, Robeyns, Ingrid. Amartya Sen's Work from a Gender Perspective, Capabilities, Freedom, and Equality. Oxford University Press, India, 2006.

Alcohol Abuse among the Coastal Communities in Chennai District, TNTRC and CDOT, Chennai, 2006

Ariyabandu, Madhavi, Malalgoda, Wickramasinghe and Maithree. A Guide for South Asia: Gender Dimensions in Disaster Management. ITDG South Asia. 2003

Blaikie, P.T. Cannon, I. Davis, and B. Wisner. At Risk: Natural Hazards, People's vulnerability and Disasters. Routledge, London, United Kingdom, 1994

Bradshaw, Sarah. Socio-Economic Impacts of Natural Disasters: A Gender Analysis, Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division. Women and Development Unit, Santiago, Chile, 2004

Chew, Lin and Ramdas, Kavita. Caught in the storm: The impact of Natural Disasters on Women by and, Global Fund for women, 2005. Accessed from <http://www.Globalfundforwomen.org/cms/content/view/32/160>.

Domestic Violence Act, 2006. Accessed from <http://www.hindu.com/2006/10/26/Stories>. Accessed on 21.1.2007.

EKTA Resource Centre for Women. A micro level study in coastal districts of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry, Gender concerns in the context of Tsunami, 2005

Enarson, E. and B.H. Marrow ed. "Women will rebuild Miami: A case study of Feminist response to Disaster": In the Gendered Terrain of Disaster through Women's eyes. Connecticut United States of America; Prager, 1998

Government of India. Periodic Report on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, II and III report, Government of India, 2005. Accessed from <http://wcd.nic.in/cedawrep2005>.

Gender Mainstreaming, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/gendermainstreaming.htm> Accessed on 17.08.2006.

G.O.Ms.No.172-30-3-2005

G.O.Ms.No. 6, dated: 8-1-2005

G.O.Ms.No.457, dated: 9.3.2005

G.O. Ms. No.39 Dated. 25.1.2005

Government of Tamil Nadu, Tiding over Tsunami, Government of Tamil Nadu.2005.

Handy Femida, Kassam Meenz, Feeney Suzanne, and Ranade Bhagyashree. Three Driving Force of Development in India, Grass-roots NGOs by Women for Women. SAGE, New Delhi, 2006

Irula Tribal Women's Welfare Society. Empowerment Literacy: Combining Empowerment of Irula Women and Environmental Conservation. ITWWS (Undated)

I.L.O. A Conceptual Framework for Gender analysis and planning: Moser's Gender Planning Framework, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/manila/gender/module.htm>. Accessed on 12.7.2006

I.L.O. A conceptual Framework for gender analysis and planning: Social Relations Framework (ibid)

Johnson Susan. Gender and Micro Finance: Guidelines for good practice, Centre for Development studies, University of Bath (Undated)

Karat, Brinda, and Tjree. Essays. Notes from Indian Women's Struggles, Survival and Emancipation. Haryana, 2005

K Murthy Ranjani, Sankaran Lakshmi. Gender, Poverty and Human Rights in Asia, Denial and Distress. Books for Change, Bangalore, 2001

K Murthy Ranjani, Josphene Sagayam. A Study on Non-Discrimination in the Tsunami Rehabilitation Programme In India. Save the Children, Chennai, 2006.

Lewis James. Studies of Vulnerability, Development in Disaster-prone Places. Intermediate Technology, London, 1999

National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001. Accessed from <http://www.wcd.nic.in/empwomen.htm> on 11.12.2006

NGO Coordination and Resource Centre-Nagapattinam (NCRC), Government Orders Related to Relief and rehabilitation of Tsunami Affected Areas and Communities, A compilation of Government Orders as on 10th August, 2005

OECD.DAC Source Book on Concepts and Approaches Linked to Gender Equality

Oxfam Briefing Note OXFAM International: The tsunami's Impact on Women, 2005.

PEACE, Appeal Handbook for field activists' action Programme for people's economics and allied literacy, New Delhi, 2003

Rao, Aruna and Kelleher, David. Gender and Development, Vol.11.No.1, May 2003.

Sebro Meryl, James. Enhancing Development Effectiveness of Non-governmental Organizations in Africa. Inter Action's Commission on the Advancement of Women Washington, 2005

Sen, Amritya. Social Exclusion: Concept, Application and Scrutiny, Asian Development Bank. Office of Environment and Social Development, 2000

James, Meryl, Sebro. Revealing the Power of Gender mainstreaming: Enhancing Development Effectiveness of Non-Governmental Organizations in Africa. Interaction's Commission on the Advancement of Women, 2005

Singh Dayanita, Myself Mona Ahmed, Scalo Verlag, Zurich, New York, 2001

Tata Institute of Social Sciences, the State and Civil Society in Disaster Response, an analysis of the Tamil Nadu tsunami experiences, TISS, 2005

SWASTI Health Resource Centre and Oxfam. Understanding Vulnerability of Coastal Communities to HIV/AIDS in Tsunami Hit Areas in India. SWASTI, Manuscript, Hyderabad, 2007

Unifem 2005, presentation, CSW 49th session, New York, <http://www.isiswomen.org/wia/wia1-05/www.apwid.org/tsunamisurvivors.html>. Accessed on 15/12/2006

UNRISD. States of Disarray: An UNRISD report for the World Summit for Social Development, The social effects of globalization, UNRIDD, 1995

United Nations Country Team India Recovery Framework in Support of Government of India for a Post-tsunami Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Programme, 2005.

Venkateswara, Sandhya, and Friedrich Edbert Stiftung. Living on the Edge, Women, Environment and Development. FES, New Delhi, 1992

Womankind World Wide, Gender and Tsunami Relief and Rehabilitation: Issues and Recommendations, Womankind, 2005

Annexures

Annex-1

Villages/ Project Areas Visited

Kanyakumari		Cuddalore		Nagapattinam	
NGO	VILLAGES	NGO	VILLAGES	NGO	VILLAGES
CARE	Simon Colony	EKTA	Parangipettai	PEDA	Chandrapadi
	Kodimunai		Kalaingar Nagar		Kesavanpalayam
	Muttom		C. Pudupettai		Perumalpettai
PURA	Pillaihope		Kuliyaru		Manikapangu Theru
	Akkaraipalli	FPAI	Sonankuppam/ Singarathpoe		Pudupet
	Pallam Annainagar	SASY	Indira Nagar	AVAI	AVVAI Office
	Vathakavillai		Madhakoil		Nambiar Nagar
PRAXIS	Kanyakumari		Kodimaratheru		Vellipalayam
	Pudugramam	BLESS	Shivanarpuram		Goods Nagar
	Siluvainagar		Karikkamnagar		Sildi Nagar
	K.K.Thurai		Cuddalore OT	SNEHA	Keechankuppam
	R.M.Thurai		C. Pudupettai		Seruthu
	Kovalam		Shanmuganagar		Karaikal
	K.P.Thurai		Enikkaraitthottam		Jeeva Nagar
	Rajakamangalam		Panchakuppam		Thoduvai
	Kovalam		Samiarpettai		Keechankuppam
	Aruthenganvilalai		Pudukuppam	HOPE	Nagapattinam
			Pudukuppam		Tharangambadi
		Transgender	Cuddalore OT	Transgender	Vepencherry
				Kuruvars (Gypsy Groups)	

Annexure : 2

A Sample, based on the preliminary analysis of field information, of Output sharing with the participating NGO immediately after the field research

Best practice/positive impacts	Gaps/problems	Clarification
<p>Women-friendly toilets with space enough for bathing and enough water storage, clean toilets, sound monitoring and follow-up, women's involvement in Health and WATSAN Committees, explicit awareness for solid waste management and community's sustained interest in clean environment—the recent practice to involve men in cleaning the street once in a week which previously women used to do is a sure attempt to break the sexual division of labor and encourage men to participate in what was previously considered as a woman's work—this practice will get into our tool kit</p>	<p>Toilet usage confined to women and children. In the health training, the crucial issue affecting the community is not addressed: alcoholism—men die at young age due to drinking at a younger age, many young widows and possibly female-headed households, women's work supports the family as men squander it on drinking—deeper implications for the women and children and depletion of household resources</p>	<p>Who cleans the toilet? Men or women? Or both take turns? What about other houses which do not have toilets? The environmental implications of open defecation by the remaining families not having toilets and male members of those families already having them and its implication on the environment on the whole if excreta is not safely disposed off.</p>
<p>Have been accepted by women and men and children, visuals pictures, manure used by the community. Awareness on hand washing and hygiene.</p>	<p>Itching on the private parts, insects coming out of the pits, frightened children, used only by school children, have started going back for open defecation due to the problems of itching. Facilitation not as good as WATSAN in the first Village. Lack of awareness on how to dispose off sanitary napkins safely, right now throwing into the water, old women and men are not able to use it.</p>	<p>What of those who do not have toilets due to lack of space? .Especially its implication on women. How many women and how many men in inspection teams? Ideally speaking one woman and one man should be there in the team so that women can openly share their concerns and do not feel shy.</p>
<p>Goats given to women, repayment in terms of kind and not in cash a good strategy. Women happy and look forward for economic gains, no financial burden in terms of cash and hence no fear of being indebted. Landless helped.</p>	<p>Women who have lost goat due to diseases have to spend money in times of scarcity and reducing employment opportunities post-tsunami to replace the goat, additional burden and anxieties. Women who do not have support system cannot rear goats as they cannot manage both; taking care of the children and goats—livelihood activities without child care facilities may keep those women at a disadvantage who have children and no child care facilities. Fodder production on a small patch of land may not be sufficient for the goats and cows; women may not be able to buy it, or use it due to certain beliefs resources available free of cost too. No demonstration unit for the community to dispel their fears on using the fodder at specific times.</p>	<p>Why not given to elderly women who could have reared and have been secure in terms of food and income, not an integrated approach. Similar projects elsewhere had put stress on reducing malnutrition in the household—UNICEF project in Nigeria, income generation through selling goat milk, cheese, butter, and curds, selling only one or two of the kids for cash requirement for health and other food requirement, improved health and freedom from hunger, thus saving money and women's time that go into taking care of the sick members, excellent manure. Fodder production on a small patch of land may not be sufficient for the goats and cows, resources available free of cost too.</p>