

Eighth Monthly Forum

ASSESSING THE GENDER IMPLICATIONS IN POST DISASTER RECONSTRUCTION PERIOD

EVENT REPORT

KATHMANDU, 27 April 2018: South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE) organized a discussion program titled “Assessing the Gender Implications in Post- Disaster Period”, here, today.

The experts present in the forum discussed the need of gender-responsive disaster risk reduction and recovery policies as existing gender disparities put women in disadvantage to withstand disasters and their impacts.

Women are left more vulnerable after the 2015 Gorkha earthquake due to loss of livelihoods and increased risk to sexual and reproductive well-being, said Ms. Neelu Thapa, Programme Coordinator, SAWTEE while making presentation on the topic. The impact include; 56 per cent of fatalities were women; two-third of the existing basic emergency obstetric and neonatal care sites or birthing centres in the affected areas were damaged; in the year following the earthquake 23,000 cases of trafficking or attempts to traffic were reported; more than 40,000 women were in considered to be in danger of sexual violence; estimated loss to women’s livelihood due to earthquake was approximately NPR 15 billion, among others.

Ms. Thapa pointed out that government and National Reconstruction Authority’s attempt at making the reconstruction policies gender-responsive has helped in promoting opportunities for women but still women find accessing relief and reconstruction efforts difficult due to social, cultural and political issues.

Ms. Chandni Joshi, senior gender expert and Chairman of Homenet South Asia, said why women’s socially constructed roles put women in vulnerable position need to be analysed in order to make women resilient.

Ms. Nirmala Dhungana, president, Women for Human Rights, called attention to multiple burdens faced by women during the earthquake as they were rendered homeless but have to care for young children and elderly family members while look for income opportunities, more so in the migrant households.

She also pointed out how the disaster has led to increase in trafficking cases, especially among young children.

Ms. Bhubaneswari Parajuli, Gender, Social and Environment Management Specialist, National Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET) pointed out the reconstruction activities could be an opportunity to bridge social and technical aspect by incorporating gender concerns in the policies.

She pointed out that coping mechanism of women and their networks, such as *Aama Samuha*, at the face of disaster are exemplary. Women should be made an integral part of community disaster preparedness by strengthening them at an individual level.

Dr, Renuka Joshi, Campus Chief, Padma Kanya Campus emphasized on the continued discourse regarding gender concerns in the disasters risk reduction and reconstruction so that Nepal can be better ready to withstand fallout of the future disasters.

This is such eighth discussion forum organized by SAWTEE under the project ‘Initiating dialogue on Post Disaster Reconstruction Experience’ undertaken with support from The Asia Foundation (TAF).

Some 25 participants from various organizations, including research institutions, experts, activists and development partners, participated in the event.

SAWTEE has undertaken similar discussion forums related to post-disaster reconstruction under themes such as “Nepal Post Disaster Reconstruction Experience: Current Status and Lessons learnt”, “Migration and Labour Dynamics in Post Disaster Nepal”, “Expenditure Analysis and Tracking of Post-Earthquake reconstruction programmes”, “Rebuilding Safer Urban Spaces” , “Post-Disaster conflict resolution mechanism”, “Unpacking and operationalizing resilience”, and “Initiating dialogue on Post Disaster Reconstruction Experience”.