

## Rapid Gender Needs Assessment of flood affected communities



*Courtesy: Asad Zaidi*

## Table of Contents

1	Objective .....	3
2	Methodology .....	3
3	Findings of Rapid Gender Needs Assessment.....	4
3.1	Protection of rights related to basic necessities of life (practical needs).....	4
	• Early warning/ Communication.....	4
	• Evacuation .....	5
	• Forms of shelter .....	6
	• Access to distributed aid .....	7
	• Food availability .....	8
	• WASH .....	9
	• General health .....	10
	• Reproductive health .....	11
	• Livelihoods .....	12
	• Education.....	14
3.2	Protection of life, security, integrity and dignity (strategic needs).....	15
	• Security in camps .....	15
	• Elimination of gender based violence .....	15
	• Mobility .....	17
4	Issues to track in early recovery.....	18
	• Protection .....	18
	• Need for tailored approaches .....	18
	• Environment .....	19
	• Cultural propriety .....	19
5	Limitations of data .....	20
	• Women’s coping mechanisms .....	20
	• Balochistan .....	20

## Annexure

I	McRAM Survey Form - Household and Community.....	21
II	Concept Note - Gender Needs Assessment Survey.....	22
III	Gender Needs Assessment Survey Form .....	24
IV	McRAM COMMUNITY Survey Summary September 2010.....	36
V	McRAM HOUSEHOLD Survey Summary September 2010.....	49
VI	Gender Needs Assessment Survey Summary September.....	74
VII	Humanitarian Partners Involved in the Process.....	84

## 1 Objective

This Rapid Gender Assessment Needs (RGNA) Report attempts to substantiate findings as outlined in the Preliminary Rapid Gender Assessment (PRGA) Report, of 4<sup>th</sup> September 2010, and flag issues emerging from gendered readings of early data.

This document aims at a rapid gender assessment of the humanitarian crisis as well as the initial response to it.

## 2 Methodology

Using the IASC guidelines as the minimum response benchmark, this assessment report analyzes emerging trends and data, relying primarily on the Gender Needs Assessment (GNA), the Multi-cluster Rapid Assessment Mechanism (McRAM), case studies and emerging secondary information.

UNIFEM collected 141 case studies from across Pakistan in the immediate aftermath of the floods. All of them were analyzed and cross referenced. The Gender needs Assessment (GNA) survey was conducted with 253 respondents, with 55% female respondents and 45% males. The survey sites did not include Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and only 4% of respondents were from Balochistan. Across the other three provinces, the breakup was: 38% in Punjab, 36% in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and 22% from Sindh.

It also utilizes the Multi-cluster Rapid Assessment Mechanism (McRAM) conducted by UN OCHA. This was a two-part survey, the first with 2,442 households - of these, 4% were from GB, 19% from KPK, 51% from Punjab and 26% from Sindh. Only one per cent of surveyed households were headed by women. The second set was with community groups conducted separately with men and women, with 359 men's groups and 309 women's groups, 689 in all. The assessment was not conducted in Balochistan province.

The report also reflects on findings of a desk survey of secondary literature produced by various organizations on the impact of floods. Due to the on-going crisis and fast evolving situation, this document also draws from media briefs and reports.

### Format

The assessment report chronologically maps gender concerns from the onset of floods to current relief camps, identifying gaps in information and flagging issues for upcoming stages of early recovery.

It is structured into two broad categories of practical and strategic gender needs, congruent with the first two categories of IASC guidelines most relevant in the immediate aftermath of humanitarian crises;

1. Protection of rights related to basic necessities of life, and
2. Protection of life, security, integrity and dignity

<i>GNA respondents by Province:</i>	
	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Punjab</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>KPK</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Sindh</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Balochistan</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Gilgit-Baltistan</i>	<i>Nil</i>

<i>McRAM respondents by Province:</i>	
	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Punjab</i>	<i>51</i>
<i>Sindh</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>KPK</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Gilgit-Baltistan</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Balochistan</i>	<i>Nil</i>

## 3 Findings of Rapid Gender Needs Assessment

### 3.1 Protection of Rights related to Basic Necessities of Life - PRACTICAL NEEDS

#### Early warning systems/Communication

Pakistan had not operationalized an early responsive warning mechanism for floods, even though disaster management measures exist in planning documents. From the north of the country, where there were flash floods started, to the south where the floodwaters swept into two weeks later, stories of sudden inundation, shock and chaos remain consistent.

In Mianwali, a thirty year old woman, Jawwahi, rushed out with her family in waist high water and saw her house crumble before her; In Charsadda, women awoke to cries and found water rushing into their houses. Where people were warned in advance, in many cases they refused to leave, and after the deluge they had to be rescued. Anecdotal evidence and media reports suggest that reasons for not leaving included disbelief of flood warning; concerns of theft or occupation of or losing claim to property as many people did not possess land entitlement papers; reluctance to move to camps, and hesitation about taking women and girls out of protected environment of homes exposing them to strangers.

In Sindh, where the flood waters reached almost a month later, people did know of the flood in advance, but did not have information available about where to relocate to and neither were there organized modes of evacuation.

The McRAM data shows differential access men and women have to means of communication. For a significant majority of men surveyed, personal face-to-face interaction was the most common means of communication, whereas women do not have such interface with others outside their home.

Next to direct exchanges, men relied mostly on radios and telecommunication. For women the best means of access was through male relatives, as pointed out by both male and female respondents. Almost half the women said community gatherings were effective loci of communicating.

Health care providers were cited as an important source of information by a small minority of women, and may provide a proverbial window of opportunity for outreach programs. On the other hand, traditional advocacy tools such as banners were seen to have no utility for communication purposes.

<b>MC4: How are most women at this site getting information?</b> (McRAM Community Survey Summary Sept 2010)				
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b>Male Groups</b>	<b>Female Groups</b>	<b>Gender unknown</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Husband/Male Member</i>	311	269	16	596
<i>Female gathering</i>	132	135	7	274
<i>Radio</i>	126	74	4	204
<i>Mosque announcement</i>	59	50	4	113
<i>TV</i>	73	39	5	117
<i>Healthcare providers</i>	27	22	0	49
<i>Newspaper</i>	30	20	1	51
<i>Other</i>	4	5	0	9

Analysis of media reports shows that where communities knew in advance about the floods, women considered word-of-mouth news of impending flood a warning, whereas for men the news of flood did not constitute a warning, and they felt official communication channels must be deployed and evacuation ordered for it to be considered a warning. This may explain why the McRAM data that more women than men affirmed being forewarned despite having less access to means of communication.

Interventions designed for communication also need to factor in the high provincial variation in terms of accessing communication means. Case study analysis shows that one of the main tools of communicating flood warnings in KPK were loudspeakers in mosques, and people who lived beyond hearing distances of mosques were the last to receive the news. Cell phones and text messages were used, and in Sindh, FM radio was used by rangers and the navy for announcements. Women and girls had no independent access to either of these means.

Sindh, for example, features lowest in terms of access of all communication tools. According to McRAM findings, it has the lowest adult literacy (GB has the highest); least cellular phone penetration (KPK has the highest); least newspaper readership and least radio listener-ship (GB has the highest). Considering that initial reports suggest Sindh is the most highly impacted province with regard to floods, this presents specific challenges of reaching out to both, men and women, girls and boys there.

The McRAM data indicates uniform approaches would not work. In order to be effective, outreach programs would need to devise different mechanisms for men and women, and in response to provincial trends.

### Evacuation

The officials managed the evacuation process unevenly whereas the national and international humanitarian community were absent during the evacuation phase. This was true even in Sindh where floodwaters reached a month after the flashfloods in the north of the country. However, the low death toll relative to the scale of the disaster shows that state organs were able to carry out rescue operations in most parts of the country.

Jamal Khatoon, a fifty year old woman from Shikarpur in Sindh, paid her entire life's earnings to hire a tractor trolley to evacuate her family. Truck transporters and boat ferries have been charging many times over than the usual rates, and newspaper reports show sometimes as much as hundred times more. There are media reports of distress sales of assets to finance transportation. Mostly people were left to their own devices to find means of relocation in a context where public transport and transportation between towns and villages was already under-serviced.

The National Disaster Management Authority has provincial counterparts and district disaster management plans and printed reports, but these did not function as envisioned even where there was ample warning.

<b>BIS: What is the status of the site ?- Displacement figures</b> (McRAM Community Survey Summary Sept 2010)				
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b>Male Groups</b>	<b>Female Groups</b>	<b>Gender unknown</b>	<b>Total</b>
% community still at place of origin	27%	33%	24%	29%
% with some displaced from homes within community of origin	16%	17%	19%	17%
% displaced < 20 min from place of origin (same community)	11%	11%	10%	11%
% displaced < 20 min from place of origin (mixed communities)	6%	6%	0%	6%
% displaced > 20 min walk (same community)	10%	11%	14%	11%
% displaced > 20 min (mixed communities)	22%	13%	24%	18%
% Other	5%	4%	10%	5%
% who do not know	3%	6%	0%	4%

People were not organized to evacuate village to village, as a result, many camps have people from mixed communities leading to problems of segregation and interaction against a backdrop of prior feuding and conflict. People who were able to evacuate with assets such as livestock have not evacuated into camps, and there are spontaneous settlements along roads and in towns.

Evacuation plans must include orderly transportation, free of cost or subsidized, that ensures families are kept in tact and preferential treatment is given to vulnerable people within communities.

## Forms of shelter

The on ground situation regarding shelter changed rapidly in sync with flow of floodwaters. The decision to relocate and which district or camp to shift to was primarily taken by male heads of households. Factors considered were accessibility, proximity to point of origin and anticipation of relief and assistance.

Where the UNIFEM GNA shows that the highest concentration of displaced persons was in community structures such as school buildings followed by those in camps, McRAM household data shows that there are significant provincial variations regarding where people have found emergency shelter.

There are large and significant variations on where people have managed to find emergency shelter. In KPK, the McRAM data highlights that three-fourths of households are living in makeshift arrangements on the site of their damaged houses. The highest concentration of people in camps was found in Sindh and in GB, but evidence collected by the media post-McRAM survey shows majority of people from Sindh are in spontaneous settlements on embankments. Punjab provides a case study of how people use diverse coping strategies: the highest concentration of people were staying in damaged houses, whereas an equal amount of households were evenly distributed between host families, spontaneous settlements and camps, with camps ranking the lowest.

People's location has implications for ensuring access to aid. In KPK, villages are fairly large centers with multiple family and hundreds of inhabitants, whereas in Sindh, the population is scattered and an extended family of fifty people could constitute a village. This illustrates the complexity of targeting relief goods and distribution and measuring scale of displacement and damage.

Women have specific concerns that vary in accordance with the location and form of shelter. When staying in camps or buildings such as schools, they may be wary of strangers and men from other communities and feel threats of sexual harassment. When staying on site of damaged homes, this concern may not be as significant as the need for latrines and sewage systems or the issue of availability of food. According to one television report, a family said they would marry their daughter to a family member of the host family in gratitude for giving them shelter and food in their time of need.

In the documented case studies, women and girls narrate complete, and in some cases partial destruction of their homes. Tents were the slowest form of aid that was made available. As families tried to cobble together makeshift shelters or lived under the open skies for days on end, women felt particularly exposed without the protection of enclosure. Many said they could not sleep at night. Reflecting on their socio-cultural context, women and girls said this was a conditioned response, whether there were actual cases of harassment or not.

<b>GNA: Forms of Shelter</b>	
	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Shelter</i>	6.7
<i>Living in family house</i>	5.9
<i>Living in friend's house</i>	1.6
<i>Uninhabited building</i>	4.0
<i>A tent on the ruins of destroyed house</i>	9.5
<i>A tent in a camp</i>	17.4
<i>A partially destroyed house</i>	3.2
<i>A house with no damage</i>	0.4
<i>Hosting IDPs</i>	15.0
<i>Building of a school</i>	26.9
<i>No Information</i>	9.5

<b>SH2: Rank the top housing concern - 1st Concern</b> (McRAM Community Survey Summary Sept 2010)				
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b>Male Groups</b>	<b>Female Groups</b>	<b>Gender unknown</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Overcrowding</i>	95	54	7	156
<i>Lack of money</i>	50	61	4	115
<i>Security</i>	53	53	1	107
<i>Lack of water and sanitation</i>	31	28	0	59
<i>Privacy</i>	29	20	1	50
<i>Lack of cooking facilities</i>	19	22	3	44
<i>High costs of goods/services</i>	13	13	1	27
<i>Harsh winter conditions</i>	10	3	0	13
<i>Others</i>	13	15	1	29
<i>Not applicable</i>	17	7	0	24
<i>Missing Values</i>	29	33	3	65

Fouzia, from Mianwali in Punjab narrates how her husband was out looking for missing relatives when tents were distributed to people in her camp, and since he was not there at the time, they did not get one, and were either out in the open or requesting other people to allow them in to their tents for over two weeks till they received one. Where tents were received, women said it was extremely hot inside, and customs prevented them from sitting outside.

Reports state that even four weeks after the flooding, many people in Balochistan do not have tents to live in. A national level disaster needs assessment has not been conducted and limited surveys are either speculative or indicative. A more nuanced understanding is required of different needs of groups temporarily housed in different sites.

It is important to focus on immediate provision of shelters or materials with which people can construct temporary shelters and people should be facilitated to move back as soon as possible, with enough resources to begin reconstruction. Gender stereotypes should not be reinforced that allow shelters and reconstruction resources to be given only to men, and men and women should be joined custodians.

### Access to distributed aid

Disasters such as this flood exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities and crises with gendered underpinnings. Women have complained that it is usually the men who can access relief distribution as they push their way forward and women would need to physically jostle and compete with them. The distribution mechanism and the teams hired had no women or there was little planning about the locations of the distribution hubs that were reachable by women.

In an action strategy consultation organized by PODA, supported by UNIFEM, women pointed out that the same families accessed relief goods over and over again, and men were both, distributors and recipients. Reflection on media reports shows men feel bound by their gender roles as providers of food and shelter to use aggressive tactics which are not only meted out towards boys and men but extended to girls and women as well. In flood related circumstances beyond their control, many men express their sense of responsibility towards and hence need for control over their food source, even if it means battling it out.

The McRAM data shows three quarters of households find distribution points for non-food items not accessible, a consistency found through all provinces. There were discrepancies in perceptions, with more men than women believing women had access to non-food items. Access to distributed aid is contingent upon visibility. IDPs are most prominent when concentrated in tents and camps. When they live in diffused groups, it is hard for them to reach centers whenever distribution occurs, and they blend in with others and aid workers are not able to reach them as effectively.

<b>SH5: Are NFI distribution points accessible for community groups?</b>				
<i>(McRAM Community Survey Summary Sept 2010)</i>				
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b>Male Groups</b>	<b>Female Groups</b>	<b>Gender unknown</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Access for Men</i>	141	93	6	240
<i>Access for Women</i>	49	28	2	79
<i>Don't know about the access</i>	87	76	2	165
<i>Not applicable</i>	61	81	3	145
<i>Missing values</i>	21	31	8	60

Case studies and media reports show that all of the flood-affected displaced people were not the poorest of the poor. McRAM's household data that shows that 86% of respondents said they owned the land they lived on before the floods, even though a small tract of land in non-agricultural rural areas is not a sign of prosperity, more so when nuclear families live in joint dwellings with collectivized livelihoods.

Half of the respondents had between two to four rooms in their houses. Testimonies point that relatively economically secure men and women found it the most difficult to access distributed aid for personal reasons.

They find it a challenge to their dignity and self respect to wait for alms or relief goods and services. They have narrated how demeaning the distribution process is in places, with food being flung to people while they wrestle among themselves.

### Food availability

State efforts, private philanthropy and humanitarian organizations have managed to largely stave off extreme hunger so far, at least once people were rescued from flood zones. Before moving to a camp, Attiya Batool had to scramble downhill to get a share of the supplies helicopters would drop off in Mianwali, while making sure she doesn't fall into the raging river below, and this was only one of many harrowing stories including media reports of severe hunger while people were stranded.

However, once in camps, all women report of eating at least once a day and in many places, twice a day through distribution of cooked food by various actors. The situation is particularly unstable in Sindh as more villages are inundated and evacuated and new IDPs reach new camps, there are periods of extreme disorganization, lack of coordination and shortage of relief goods and services. Unless pipelines of smooth food supplies are ensured, the situation may deteriorate as private philanthropy lessens after the initial assistance, assuaged by Ramzan, the month of giving charity and donations, which has now ended. The IDPs living in off-camp sites in Sindh and Balochistan have the least access to food.

UNIFEM's GNA shows that while over a quarter of respondents said they were spending more money on food after floods, indicating shortages and price hikes, another 44% reported having to spend less money on food, indicating its availability through distribution.

The GNA data points out that when there is a shortage of food, half the respondents gave preferential treatment to nutritional needs of boys, the next prioritized category of mothers / wives trailing far behind. The data signals that least attention is paid to food intake of the elderly. McRAM on the other hand, presents little evidence of discrimination in food intake between men and women, and between boys and girls.

The significant variation between the two data sets could be explained methodologically, but anecdotal evidence also suggests that crises forge solidarities and women and children are given preferential treatment in the immediate aftermath as they are seen as weaker and in need of rescue. Men's

<i>GNA: In case of food shortage in the house, whose food needs are prioritized?</i>	
	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Mother / Wife</i>	<i>15.0</i>
<i>Father / Husband</i>	<i>10.3</i>
<i>Boy children</i>	<i>50.6</i>
<i>Girl children</i>	<i>10.7</i>
<i>Elderly women</i>	<i>3.6</i>
<i>Elderly men</i>	<i>2.4</i>
<i>Others</i>	<i>1.2</i>
<i>Don't know</i>	<i>4.0</i>
<i>Missing values</i>	<i>2.4</i>

<i>GNA: Who usually collects food items and water for the family?</i>	
	<i>Percent</i>
<i>No one</i>	<i>3.6</i>

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