

Gender **N**eeds **A**ssessment

Myanmar Floods, 2015

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November 2016



Gender Equality
Network

The Gender Equality Network
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Executive Summary

Introduction

In June 2015, heavy monsoon rains caused flooding and landslides in several parts of Myanmar. Cyclone Komen made landfall in Bangladesh on July 30th, bringing strong winds and additional heavy rains, which led to widespread flooding across 12 of the country's 14 states and regions (Ayeyarwady, Bago, Chin, Kachin, Kayin, Magway, Mandalay, Mon, Rakhine, Sagaing, Shan and Yangon). The National Natural Disaster Management Committee of Myanmar (NNDMC) reported that 132 people died and 1,676,086 people were temporarily displaced by floods and landslides.¹

Generally, women and girls tend to be the main victims of natural disasters. Assessing gender needs in disasters helps to identify and address the consequences of lack of conceptual analysis on gender issues and rarity of documentation of indigenous knowledge and information on ground level. This assessment is focused on the needs of women and girls in the most affected natural disaster zones. In the case of the 2015 floods, the Myanmar Government determined these zones to be Chin and Rakhine states, and Magway and Sagaing regions. Attention the gender needs in the 2015 floods can help the country better prepare for future flooding, climate risks, and other disasters.

¹ National Natural Disaster Management Committee [NNDMC] (2015) Situation Report No. 6., Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Naypyidaw, p.3.

Research Methodology The methodology of the present research comprised desk research and primary field data collection. Specifically, field research was conducted in four areas within the two states and two divisions declared as the most affected areas by Myanmar Government in 2015.² Two townships per area and two villages per township were selected to cover total 16 villages in eight townships. Villages and townships were selected based on the existing relationships with GEN members that nominated to participate in field research.

Field researchers (enumerators) were then trained in Yangon on topics including gender sensitisation, handling gender based violence (GBV) issues, interview skills and facilitation skills before going to their assigned villages. Field research in each village included Focus Group Discussions (FGD), Key Informant Interviews (KII), and the collection of case studies. In each village, the research team conducted three FGDs targeting women, men and youth, and nine KIIs targeting village administrators, religious leaders, education and health staff, development workers, youth, and persons with disabilities. Case study stories were also collected, targeting current and potential women leaders.

The present study reiterated that women and men in the flood areas have different gender needs in disaster situations. Some needs are immediate, visible and can be addressed within a short period of time: these are *practical* gender needs. However, some needs – particularly those relating to gender equality, rights, and resilience – are invisible and may take time to address: these are *strategic* gender needs. This assessment served to cover both practical gender needs and strategic gender interest and needs in the four assessment areas, and identified key gender gaps in the flood response.

² Despite being severely affected by the floods, Ayeyarwady division was not declared an emergency area and was, therefore, not included in the scope of this research.

Key Findings

Practical Gender Needs

- Infrastructure seriously affected gender livelihood in Chin State and Rakhine State more than Magway and Sagaing Regions. Among the four assessment areas, Chin state was the worst in terms of access to all forms of resources and opportunities as well as poor capacity and flaws institutional structures.
- It was clear that there was no early warning system being established during the flood period. The early warning information sources predominantly came from villagers themselves, radios, TV, telephone messages, social media (such as Facebook) and weather forecasts. Men were more likely than women to hear about the floods in advance.
- Both women and men were excluded from emergency planning and emergency responses at the community level.
- During the floods, the respondents had to live in temporary shelters such as schools, relatives' and friends' houses and religious buildings such as monasteries and churches. There were no proper shelters or buildings in the assessment areas to use as evacuation spaces, and this posed particular challenges for both women and men. Most of the respondents claimed that shelters were not safe for women.
- The findings showed that both men and women engaged in productive roles to generate income. However, all the household responsibilities were still put on women's shoulders.
- The common health issues of women were mostly related to hypertension, flu and illness. Women respondents from Chin and Magway said they faced menstrual pain and uterine problems. Sagaing and Rakhine reported skin diseases and diarrhoea due to unclean water access. Malaria was reported as an issue in Magway, Sagaing and Rakhine areas. Depression was a major issue; thus, trauma healing and psychosocial support were essential needs in all four assessment areas.

Strategic Gender Needs

- Most individual capacities relating to gender roles, in terms of productive activities and reproduction, were quite similar. However, an examination of the capacities in terms of community roles highlighted major differences, which were based on perspectives and acceptance on what was deemed – by the community itself – to be appropriate women's participation in community-level settings.
- According to the findings, it was obvious that women were more vulnerable than men in terms of decision-making powers and social networking. Lack of information and good infrastructure seemed to be major vulnerabilities for both women and men.
- All respondents identified National Registration Card re-application as the most common hindrance or risk, since this required a visit to township level offices, a number of recommendations and a monetary payment.
- According to the findings, men in a family often controlled women's mobility and social engagement. Women usually assumed that husbands would have the right to control them and assumed themselves as followers because of their existence as wives. It clearly indicated that both men and women in the community were not fully aware of the concept of GBV or gender equality.

Capacities, Vulnerabilities, Opportunities and Risks

- Most individual capacities relating to gender roles, in terms of productive activities and reproduction, were quite similar. However, an examination of the capacities in terms of community roles highlighted major differences, which were based on perspectives and acceptance on what was deemed – by the community itself – to be appropriate women’s participation in community-level settings.
- According to the findings, it was obvious that women were more vulnerable than men in terms of decision-making powers and social networking. Lack of information and good infrastructure seemed to be major vulnerabilities for both women and men.
- All respondents identified National Registration Card re-application as the most common hindrance or risk, since this required a visit to township level offices, a number of recommendations and a monetary payment.
- According to the findings, men in a family often controlled women’s mobility and social engagement. Women usually assumed that husbands would have the right to control them and assumed themselves as followers because of their existence as wives. It clearly indicated that both men and women in the community were not fully aware of the concept of GBV or gender equality.

Gender and Service Gaps

- People responded to the problems of flooding in their own ways. There were several strategies and plans for disaster management at the national level; however, strategic and policy communication was not properly addressed at the local level.
- The respondents identified three main gaps: lack of food and water distribution, lack of healthcare services, especially in terms of psychosocial support and lack of infrastructure development.
- Flood responses were limited by discrimination and restrictions on female humanitarian workers and flood response volunteers.

Key Recommendations

- Review the policies of the National Disaster Preparedness Central Committee (NDPCC) to include gender dimensions.
- Increase genuine political accountability and financial resources for mainstreaming gender and appoint a gender focal person for the NDPCC.
- Provide oversight on the implementation of Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Operational Guidelines on the Protection of Persons in Situations of Natural Disasters (2011).
- Organise forum on gender-responsive disaster management to share good practices from international, regional and local levels.
- Conduct further research on good practices and lessons learned from emergency and flood response activities.
- Consult with community members and specialists to identify the possible need for designing activities in specific ways to ensure that these groups have access to the available resources and can participate equally in decision-making.

Abbreviations

CEDAW	The Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GEN	Gender Equality Network
GNA	Gender Needs Assessment
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
KII	Key Informant Interview
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NNDMC	National Natural Disaster Management Committee
NSPAW	National Strategic Plan for Advancement of Women 2013-2022

1.

Introduction

In June 2015, heavy monsoon rains caused flooding and landslides in several parts of Myanmar. Cyclone Komen made landfall in Bangladesh one month later, bringing strong winds and additional heavy rains to Myanmar on July 30th. The next day, the Myanmar Government declared Chin and Rakhine states and Magway and Sagaing regions to be natural disaster zones. Throughout August and September, 12 of the country's 14 states and regions (Ayeyarwady, Bago, Chin, Kachin, Kayin, Magway, Mandalay, Mon, Rakhine, Sagaing, Shan and Yangon) experienced widespread flooding. According to the NNDMC, 132 people died, over 1.6 million were displaced by floods and landslides, and over 1.1 million acres of farmland were damaged.³

While extreme, the 2015 floods were not unique. Annual monsoon flooding is common to many areas in Myanmar, and the country's recent history is dotted with natural disasters that can have lasting effects on people and the places they live and work. For example, Cyclone Nargis in 2008 had immediate and catastrophic impacts on those living in the Ayeyarwady Delta and Yangon city, affecting more than two million people. Nargis' effects persist today in the form of lost land, houses, and livelihoods. Myanmar is one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change, which can bring changes to rainfall and extreme weather events. With the prospect of more frequent, widespread and severe floods and other climate-related disasters in mind, this assessment aims to identify immediate and strategic gender needs, local capacities, challenges, and opportunities, and critical gaps in the 2015 floods to inform future preparation and response.

Considering gender in planning and responding to emergencies is important in order to limit impacts and enable speedy recovery, particularly in settings where men and women have different roles, challenges, and opportunities. Women and girls tend to be the main victims of natural disasters and face unique problems in and after a flood. Myanmar has acceded to the Convention Against all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and produced its own National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women 2013-2022 (NSPAW); both of which prioritise gender equality, and demand attention to women's particular needs in emergency settings.

By assessing gender needs in the 2015 floods, the following report aims to conceptualise gender issues in disasters, provide documentation of indigenous knowledge and ground-level practices, and suggest operational guidelines and tools to address gender issues in disaster mitigation and management. Ensuring the recovery and resilience of Myanmar women and men to future disasters requires attention to both immediate, or practical, gender needs, as well as long-term, or strategic, gender needs.

³ NNDMC, p.3

This report is structured as follows:

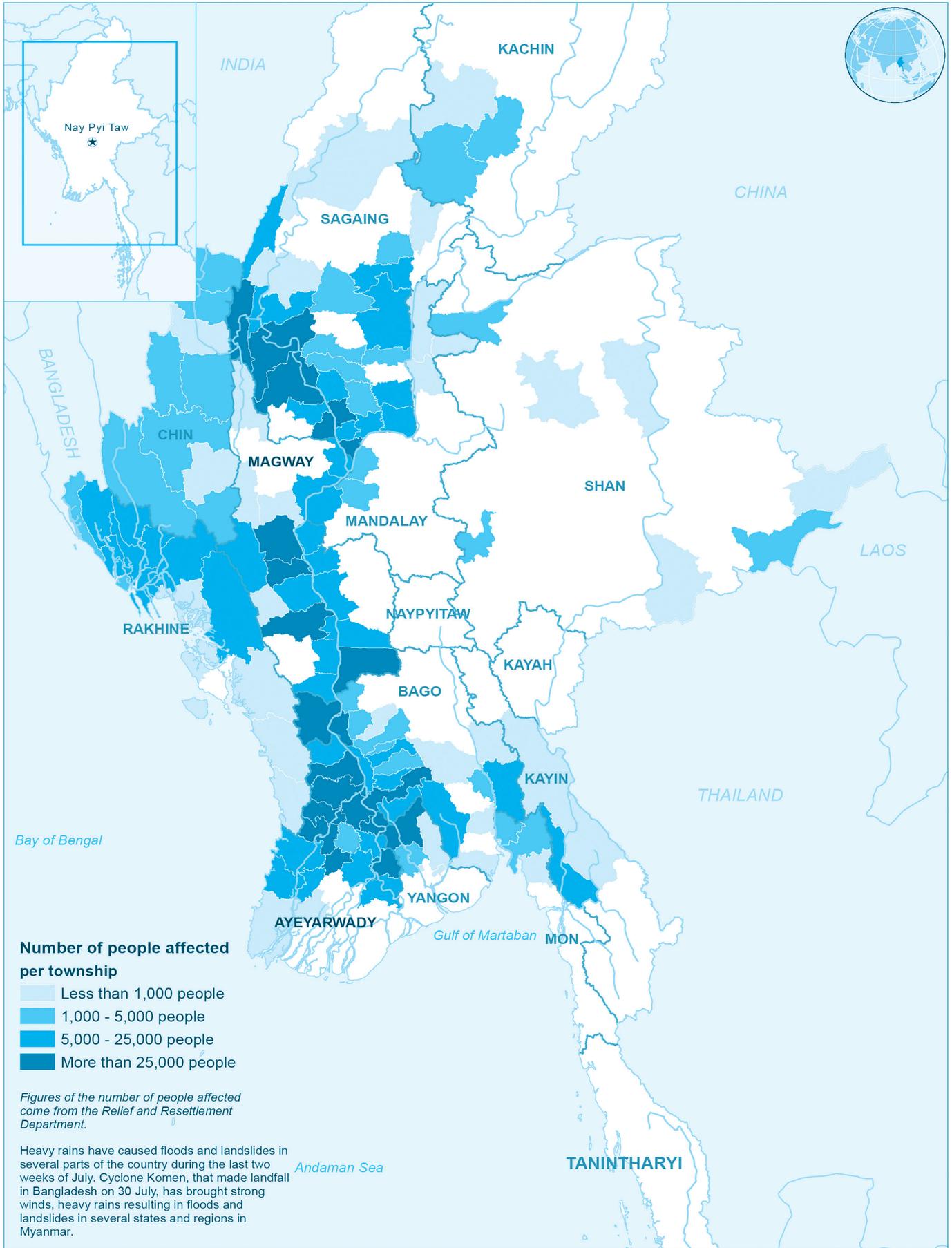
Section 1 introduces the context and objectives of the Gender Needs Assessment for the 2015 floods in Myanmar;

Section 2 describes the research methodology;

Section 3 draws on secondary literature to give an overview of specific areas and sector-specific needs;

Section 4 identifies findings of field research related to practical and strategic gender needs, as well as women and men's capabilities, vulnerabilities, opportunities and risks;

Section 5 presents the key gender gaps in the flood response and experience of flood volunteers; and Section 6 presents the key recommendations that should be pursued for future floods and disasters in Myanmar.



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Creation date: 21 8 2015 Glide number: FL-2015-000089-MMR Sources: RRD, MIMU. Feedback: ochamyanmar@un.org, www.reliefweb.int

Figure 1: Flood-Affected Areas

2.

Research Methodology and Process

This assessment focused on the gendered needs of the women and girls in the government-declared ‘most affected’ flood zones: Chin and Rakhine states and Magway and Sagaing regions. Participatory research methodologies, tools and techniques were adopted in the target communities in order to collect detailed information and accommodate the different perspectives of various subjects.

2.1 Methodology

This study consisted of both desk research and primary field data collection. Desk research involved content analysis of reports and a literature review on gender and disasters.

Field research was conducted in the four states and regions. Specifically, these four areas were selected because they were declared as the ‘most flood-affected’ areas by Myanmar Government in 2015. Two townships per area and two villages per township were selected to cover a total of 16 villages in eight townships. Villages and townships were selected based on the existing relationships with GEN member organisations who volunteered to participate in field research.

Field researchers (enumerators) were trained in Yangon on topics including gender sensitisation, ethical handling of gender based violence (GBV) issues, interview skills and facilitation skills before travelling to their assigned villages.

Field research included Focus Group Discussions (FGD), Key Informant Interviews (KII), and case studies. In each village, three FGDs targeting women, men and youth were conducted. In addition, the research team conducted nine KIIs, targeting Village Administrators, religious leaders, education and health staff, male and female development workers, male and female youth, and persons with disabilities.

FGDs and KIIs focused on issues including access to information, shelter conditions, and responses to GBV before, during and after the flood (see GNA questionnaires in Annex 1). In addition, case study stories were collected, targeting current and potential women leaders. Altogether, this study covered 531 respondents (253 male and 278 female) from 16 villages.

Gender Needs Assessment (GNA) team	State/Division	Township	Village
Charity Oriented Myanmar	Sagaing Division	Kawlin	Inn Bo
			Thae Gyi Gone
		Kanbalu	Sar Kyin
			Kan Gyi
Ratana Metta	Magway Division	Sidoktaya	Than Se
			Nga Ma
		Pwintbyu	Zee Taw
			Let Pa Nwe
Women Hand Myanmar	Chin State	Matupi	Matupi
			Tibual
		Razua	Ha Ya Htan
			Kay Lone
Yaung Chi Thit	Rakhine State	Minbya	Myit Nar
			Gwa Son
		Mrauk-U	Sin Kyat
			Gone Kyun

Figure 2: Research Sites and Teams

Types	# of male	# of female	Total #
KII	69	66	135
FGD	184	181	365
Case Study	0	31	31
Total Number	253	278	531

Figure 3: Research Respondents

2.2 Process and Timeline

GEN formed a Gender and Emergency Working Group immediately after the declaration of disaster in August 2015, and hired two national consultants to conduct the GNA in September 2015. These consultants organised a Gender Needs Assessment consultation workshop with organisations working on the flood response in September 2015 at GEN's Yangon office.

Four GEN members – Charity Oriented Myanmar, Women Hand Myanmar, Ratana Metta and Yaung Chi Thit – volunteered to conduct the assessment in Sagaing division, Magway division, Southern Chin state and Rakhine state. The two consultants then drafted the GNA questionnaires and conducted GNA methodology training for data collectors from the respective organisations in the third week of September 2015. Data was collected from late September to mid October 2015. A preliminary analysis was shared at the November GEN monthly meeting and a draft report was completed in December 2015.

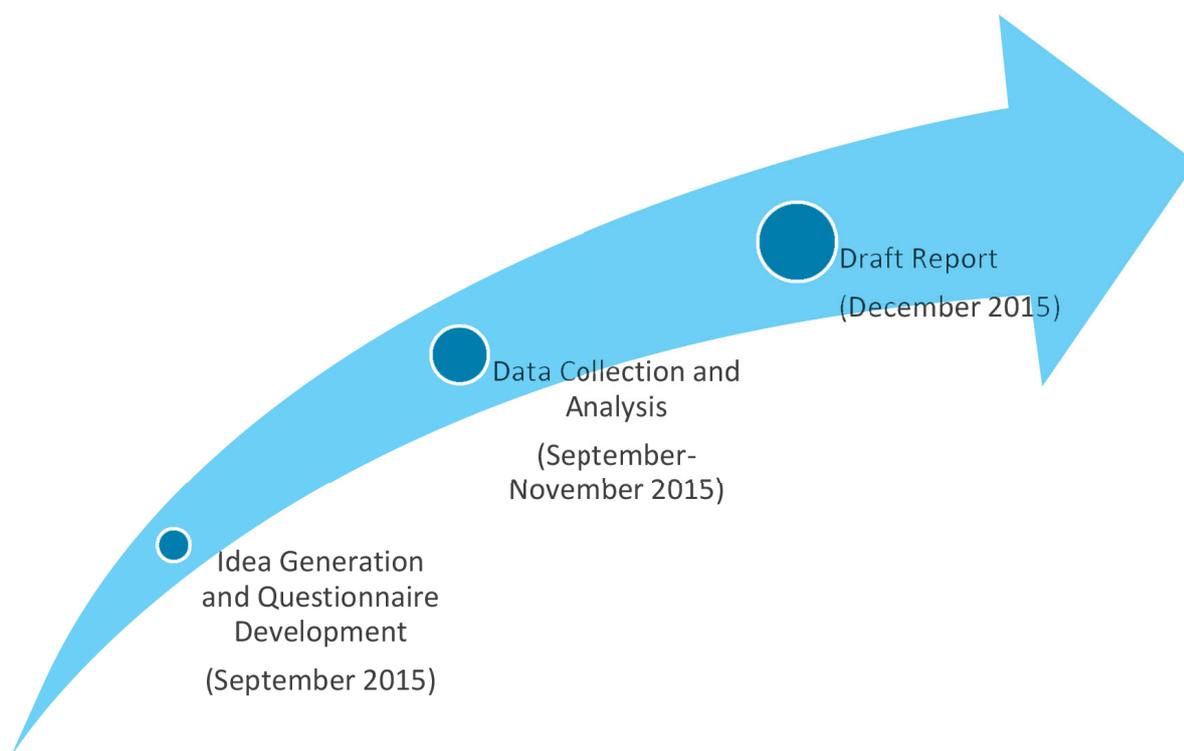


Figure 4: GNA Process

3.

Overview of Assessment Areas and Sector-Specific Needs

The following section provides an overview of study areas and sector damages as reported in existing literature, in order to set the scene for inquiries into gender needs in the study sites.

3.1 Assessment Area Overview

The NNDMC reported that 132 people died and 1,676,086 people were temporarily displaced by floods and landslides in July and August.⁴ The majority of these people have since been able to return to their homes as flood waters have receded in most areas. However, affected areas have suffered MMK 231.3 billion (US \$192.8 million) in direct economic losses, with the most severe impact in Rakhine State and Ayeyarwady Region.

Additionally, 487,550 houses were damaged by flooding and 38,951 houses were destroyed, with Chin and Rakhine states and the Ayeyarwady Region suffering the highest number of destroyed homes.⁵ A total of 1,146,275 acres of farmland were damaged, of which 872,667 acres were destroyed. Since this time of the flooding, 494,892 acres have been re-cultivated.⁶

Located on Myanmar's western coast, Rakhine state was reported as suffering the highest level of destruction of farmland, with 273,254 acres of cropland torn up or filled with mud, representing 31% of total flood-related crop damage throughout the country. The people of Rakhine state also suffered severe losses, with 13,741 homes destroyed and 114,666 homes damaged by floods.⁷

Chin state was also heavily affected. Chin State borders India in northwest Myanmar, and is a mountainous region with few transportation links. Chin state is sparsely populated and remains one of the least developed areas of the country, creating challenges for speedy recovery efforts.

⁴ *ibid*, p.2

⁵ UNICEF (2015) Myanmar CO Humanitarian Situation Report 9, issued on 14 Oct 2015, p.2

⁶ NNDMC, p.3

⁷ *ibid*, p. 7

Magway region is an administrative division in central Myanmar and the second largest of Myanmar's seven divisions. Over 95% the population of almost four million are Bamar, with very small numbers of minorities. In neighbouring Sagaing region, in north western Myanmar, 1,963 houses were destroyed and 106,241 damaged, with damage concentrated in the western part of the region.



Figure 5: Most Affected Areas in Myanmar⁸

⁸ <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/death-toll-from-floods-climbs-to-more-than-100-08102015161823.html>

3.2 Sector-Specific Needs

3.2.1 Agriculture, Livestock and Labour

The assessed regions and states fall under different agro-ecological zones, where diverse climatic conditions, soil composition, geographical settings, and water availability affect cropping patterns as well as the means of supporting livelihoods. Chin, in the hilly and mountainous region, Sagaing and

lower compared to losses of seeds.¹¹ Losses of inputs were mainly reported in Magway, Rakhine and Sagaing.¹²

Livestock losses occurred in all affected areas. Rakhine was recorded to have been the most affected in terms of non-poultry animal losses, with about 20,000 head of cows, buffalo, pigs and goats killed, followed by Sagaing and Ayeyarwady. According to one assessment, “Women were

State/Region	Damaged farmland re-cultivated (%)	Inundated farmland (acres)	Damaged farmland (acres)	Re-cultivated farmland (acres)
Rakhine	79%	291,219	273,154	215,792
Kachin	55%	33,552	15,944	8,804
Bago	46%	376,446	229,989	106,330
Sagaing	40%	223,855	184,691	74,172
Yangon	35%	116,894	76,941	27,232
Ayeyarwady	17%	318,843	255,408	44,271
Kayin	16%	1,162	648	106
Magway	16%	96,846	96,846	15,339
Shan	11%	13,513	4,166	469
Chin	6%	5,911	5,911	372
Mandalay	2%	3,583	283	5
Mon	0%	13,010	2,294	-
Grand Total	43%	1,494,834	1,146,275	492,892

Figure 6: Flood Impacts on Farmland¹⁰

Magway in the central and dry zone and Rakhine in the coastal zone, all differ in these aspects. While the respective population density varies across the states and regions, all study areas had 51% to 54% female population, with 22% to 25% of female-headed households.⁹ Several thousands of acres of farmland were damaged, and this seriously affected women of households dependent on agriculture.

Across all affected states and regions most villages reported to have lost seeds due to the floods. In Sagaing region, most villages reported that more than 75 percent of households had lost seeds. Rakhine, Magway and Chin were also affected by seed losses. In fact, losses of agricultural inputs – mainly fertilisers and pesticides – were relatively

particularly affected by small livestock losses. In the case of female-headed households, many women were unable to rescue livestock since they had no access to boats. As many of these women are largely dependent on small livestock, these losses will particularly impact on their livelihoods.”¹³

The flood seriously affected labour opportunities, especially seasonal agricultural labour, in which women’s wages had been already almost 20 percent less than those of men.¹⁴ According to the Agriculture and Livelihood Flood Impact Assessment, “Women are expected to be more affected than men, and the lack of seasonal labour opportunities will have a major impact on their livelihoods.”¹⁵

⁹ Ministry of Agriculture (2015) Crop Production Report, March 15

¹⁰ Union of Myanmar (2015) Agriculture and Livelihood Flood Impact Assessment in Myanmar, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation; Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries & Rural Development; FAO and WFP, Naypyidaw

¹¹ Ibid, p.27

¹² Ibid, p.30

¹³ Ibid, p.31

¹⁴ Oxfam (2014) Small scale farmers in the country’s dry zone, Yangon

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 38

3.2.2 Shelter

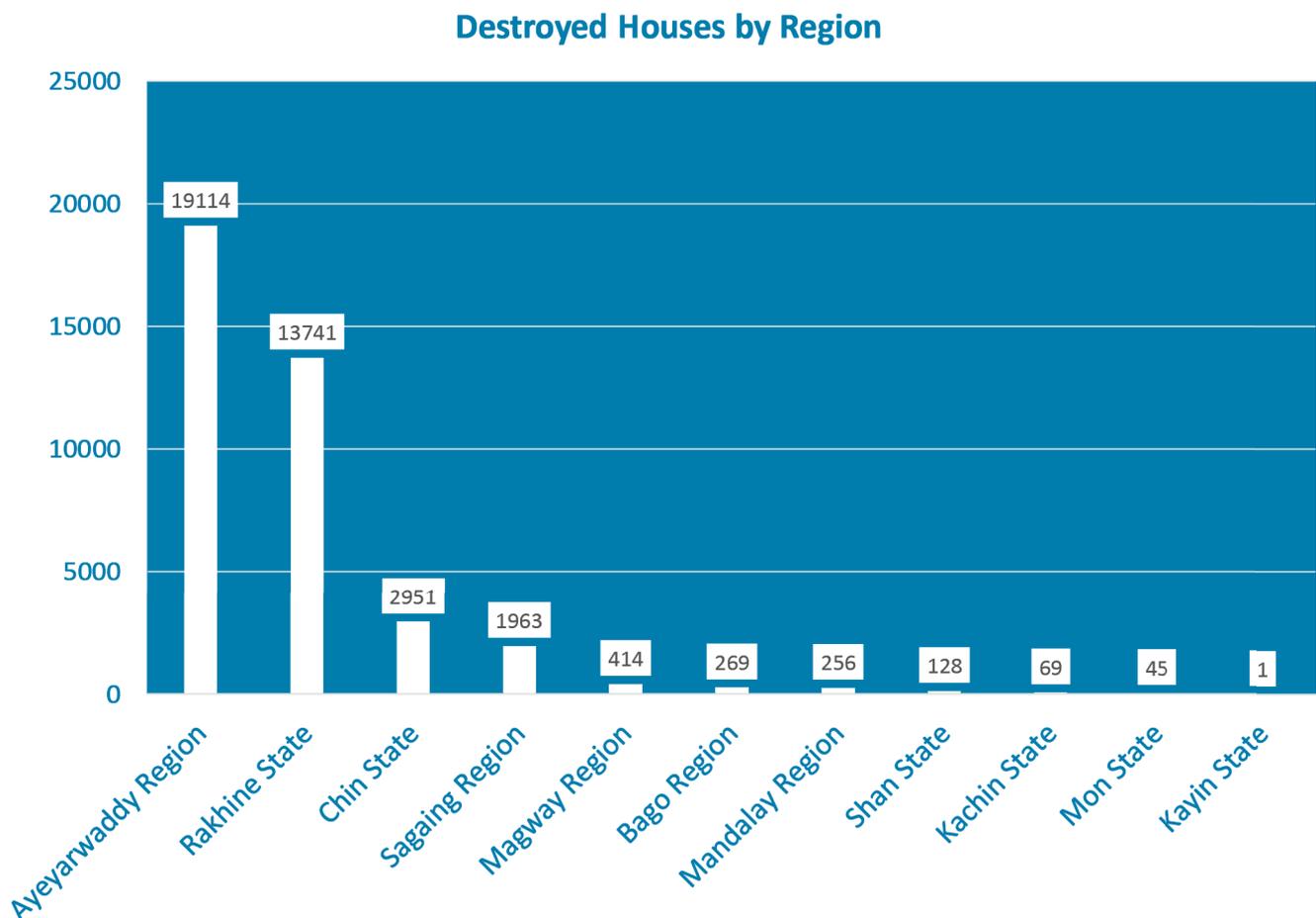


Figure 7: Number of Destroyed Houses by Region¹⁶

According to the NNDMC report, 526,501 houses were damaged due to floods, strong winds and landslides during the 2015 Myanmar floods. This included 38,951 destroyed and 487,550 partially damaged homes.¹⁷ Damaged households bring security concerns, particularly for women and girls in temporary, often overcrowded, accommodation with little or no privacy. Poor families who cannot

afford to build new houses or who have difficulties with resettlement may endure prolonged periods of inadequate shelter, which can, in turn, contribute to various social problems such as GBV, human trafficking, prostitution, and psychosocial abuse.

¹⁶ MoSWRR, MNPED, as of 4 October 2015

¹⁷ NNDMC, p. 6

3.2.3 Health

from respiratory infections, skin problems, and influenza.²⁰

State/ Region	Damaged Health Facilities	Facilities with loss of medicine and damaged equipment
Rakhine	62	-
Sagaing	11	21
Magway	9	6
Chin	7	-

According to World Health Organization (WHO), access to health facilities was a challenge for both flood-affected people and health workers in remote areas. Particular challenges included a lack of funding for preventative nutrition services, such as blanket supplementary feeding in flood affected areas, and a nationwide shortage of

Figure 8: Damaged Health Facilities in each study Region/State¹⁸

According to the Ministry of Health, a total of 224 health facilities were damaged in the floods, with the worst hit areas being Rakhine state, Sagaing region, Magway region and Chin state.¹⁹ The floods also elevated some risks facing communities from water- and mosquito-borne infectious diseases, including malaria, diarrhoea, and dengue fever. Dengue fever was endemic to Rakhine state and Sagaing region, where thousands of people were living in makeshift camps in schools, monasteries and churches immediately after the flooding. In Magway region, many flood victims suffered from diarrhoea and skin problems, while others suffered

emergency household water treatment tablets and sachets.²¹

According to the NNDMC, over 150,000 children under the age of five and 62,000 pregnant and lactating women were estimated to have been affected by the floods. The report also identified that malnutrition was a major concern in some areas prior to floods, particularly in Chin, Rakhine, Ayeyarwady and Magway.²² Compromised water sources and inadequate access to nutritional food resulted in increased mortality risks for children under five.

3.2.4 Education

An estimated 4,116 schools were damaged in the flooding, 608 of which were completely destroyed.²³ Significant destruction occurred in Rakhine State, where over 290 schools were damaged, followed by Ayeyarwady, Chin and Bago.²⁴ Across the country, schools were used as evacuation centres and, thus, were closed for teaching for the duration of the response.

After the floods, education partners responded by cleaning and rehabilitating schools, providing textbooks, uniforms and stationary, and supporting nutrition program in schools. However, there were no documented programs targeting girls, especially on their return to school in flood-affected areas.

¹⁸ NNDMC, p. 8

¹⁹ <http://www.msf.org/article/myanmar-flood-victims-vulnerable-dengue-fever>

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ WHO (2015) Emergency Situation Report (SR-3), 17 August, 2015, p.3

²² NNDMC, p. 9

²³ IOM (2015) Myanmar: 2015 Floods IOM Response, September 8 2015, p.1

²⁴ IOM (2015), Myanmar: Situation Report. August 2015, p.3

4.

Gender Needs Assessment Findings

4.1 Practical Gender Needs in Flood-Affected Areas

Women and men in the flood areas have different gender needs in disaster situations. Some needs are immediate, visible and can be addressed within a short period of time: these are practical gender needs. However, some needs related to gender equality, rights, and resilience are invisible and might take time to address: these are strategic gender needs. This assessment covered both practical gender needs and strategic gender interests and needs in four assessment areas.

According to the findings, women and men were identical in terms of basic human needs, but differences in gender could affect access to information, isolation, security and mobility, leading to greater risk and burdens during the immediate post-flood period. All four areas demonstrated gaps between needs and resource allocations for men, women, and children. The key practical gender needs were: early warning information for all community members, awareness on emergency response, safe shelter, recovery support, access to urgent healthcare and continuing education. Among the four assessment areas, Chin state was the worst in terms of access to all forms of resources and opportunities, as well as having poor capacity and flaws in institutional structures.

4.1.1 Early Warning Information

Over 70% of FGD respondents from all four areas indicated that they had not received any early warning of the floods, and it was clear that there was no official early warning system in place during the flood period. The only respondents who received some alert information came from Youth FGDs and some male FGDs, and they often relied on informal social channels.

Interviews with different types of villagers further demonstrated unequal access to information. At

least some of the Village Administrators from all four townships received early warning information, making them the best-informed people in the village. Some of the Village Administrators claimed to have received information from Township-level administration bodies. The lack of dissemination of these early warnings demonstrates an information accessibility gap between the administrative bodies and the people.

In fact, residents of all four areas also claimed that they had not received adequate early warning from Government. Rakhine and Sagaing respondents received flood information four days ahead and Chin and Magway respondents stated they received flood information just one day before the flood. From their perceptions, no planning was conducted by local authorities to raise emergency alerts and there were no formal or organised process available to reduce the effects of the impending flood disaster.

Among various groups of key informants, people with disabilities and female youth leaders were least likely to receive early warnings. Some claimed that this was due to their poor engagement with the community. Along with a lack of



I monitor the tide and weather situation every day since the flood information. Constant monitoring of the water level is one of the best natural early warning signs.”

(Male FGD respondent from Rakhine)

communication came challenges for young women and persons with disabilities in terms of mobility. None of the sites had drawn women’s mobility maps or systematically assessed gender needs.

Reported early warning information sources were mainly other villagers, radios, TV, telephone message, social media such as Facebook and weather forecasts. Out of four assessment areas, the respondents from Rakhine were the best-informed. Many indicated radios and TV as main information sources, and credited previous experiences living in disaster prone coastal zones with preparedness.

One of the respondents said most men received information about early warning rather than women because men usually went outside the come more frequently and had broader social networks. In all study sites, men were more engaged with the community than women, who were generally busy with children and household work and who also shared responsibility with men in terms of working in agriculture fields and managing livestock. Thus, women’s mobility and access to information was restricted due to the unequal division of labour, which posed a threat during the floods.

4.1.2 Emergency Response

The findings showed that women and men played different roles in emergency preparedness and response. As per usual practices, male members of the family took livestock to protective embankments or distant places away from the flooded areas and regularly arranged for their fodder. Men also looked for the safe spaces to which to move people, repaired houses, monitored the weather and sought transportation and means of rescue. When preparing to evacuate, men packed important documents such as National Registration Cards, household registrations and land ownership certificates. By contrast, women packed food, clothes, and water, and took care of children and elders, while also doing other household-level activities.

As soon as the flooding started, men first shifted people and cattle to safe spaces. With the exception of Chin state, men from the assessment areas prepared boats to shift people and possessions. During the disaster, women took responsibility for feeding and caring for others, and men took life-saving responsibility since they thought themselves to have more knowledge and information on where to go, which places were safe and what was important to take with them. Women were never assumed to have such a level of knowledge.

Very few focus group discussants and key informants claimed to have awareness on emergency response. Respondents from Chin state and Magway division claimed that they had no awareness on emergency response, whilst over 50% of respondent from Sagaing division and Rakhine state claimed that they had only a little awareness on emergency response. Those who had awareness on emergency response procedures had obtained this through Non-Government Organisation (NGO) Disaster Risk Reduction trainings, and mostly comprised the youth demographic, according to interviews and discussions in this study.

There existed no organisation providing emergency response awareness in the assessment villages, and it was obvious that both women and men were excluded from emergency response plan, initiated by local community leaders. All respondents

highlighted that they received support from their family members, relatives and religious organisations during the emergency, without having effective emergency rescue and resettlement.

4.1.3 Shelter and Security

During the floods, the respondents had to live in temporary shelters, such as schools, relatives' and friend's houses and religious buildings such as monasteries and churches. There were no proper shelters or buildings in the assessment areas to use as evacuation places. Usually, the flood-affected people had to use public schools, interrupting student learning as the schools had to close down for two or three weeks to accommodate evacuees.



The flood victims used desks and benches from the classrooms for temporary sleeping places resulting in some breakages. The school toilets were used by the victims without proper care. The school closed for a long time and when it opened, the students suffered from damaged goods and materials. I think each and every disaster-prone area should have shelters where people can stay temporarily.”

(One KII respondent from Yangon)

This assessment was conducted one month after the flood. Thus, nearly all of the respondents had returned home at the interviewed time, except some from Chin State who were unable to return home due to the lack of money to rebuild their houses. There were no organisations that could support rebuilding homes in Chin State, where most of the organisations could only assist in supplying food.

All FGD respondents from Chin, Magway and Rakhine, and half of the FGD respondents from Sagaing region, claimed the temporary shelters in their respective areas were not safe for women. FGD respondents from Rakhine said that shelters were also not safe for men, whereas the other three areas indicated that shelters were safe for men. Key concerns for women and men in shelters are described in Box 1 below.

Most respondents said they had not faced GBV in the shelters. However, these situations were probably underreported due to cultural norms of acceptance that do not acknowledge GBV as a problem.²⁵ Enumerators observed that most respondents lacked awareness of GBV and regarded many types of violence as normal actions. Only a few from Chin state reported that they faced psychological violence on occasions when men in their family got short tempered and scolded, shouted and blamed the women and children. However, Sagaing division reported one sexual violence case related to temporary shelter.

Regarding decision making patterns of going back to the flood-affected areas, the respondents claimed that both men and women decided together. This division of responsibility shows that women played equal role in the decision making of post-flood return and resettlement.

²⁵ See Gender Equality Network, 'Behind the Silence: Violence Against Women and their Resilience, Myanmar.' 2015.



Safety Challenges for Women in Shelters

No separate rooms for women. No curtain or separate covers.

“As we all have to live at public schools, monasteries and church halls, there is no separate room to be settled for women. The worst case is that there was even no curtain to feel safe while changing clothes. So it’s really difficult and we feel unsafe when we change clothes. Some breastfeeding mothers also face feeling shamed and unsafe as they have to breastfeed in front of strangers.” *(Sentiments repeated by many female FGD respondents)*

No bathing space. In Rakhine, women had to go to streams and rivers which were often far away from the shelter.

Not enough toilets. Toilets were pit toilets with bad odours as there was no water to clean the toilets.

No place to dispose of sanitary napkins.

“It would be great if women’s organisations took consideration for disposal issues while they distribute sanitary pads. For example, we can add black bags for easy disposable purposes.” *(KII from Yangon and Chin)*

No place for cooking. No stove.

“Elders and children need frequent feeding. They can’t eat hard food. We felt sorry when we saw them hungry and we had nothing to cook for them. We couldn’t wait until the food distribution period. We should have a small place to cook for them while we stay in temporary shelters.”
(Women FGDs from four locations)

Living in crowded places might cause psychological insecurity.

Box 1: Safety Challenges for

Safety Challenges for men in Shelters

Men gave priorities to women, children, the elderly and persons with disabilities to sleep inside shelter. Men often stayed with cattle and slept outside the shelter. In Rakhine, men usually slept on boats.

Some reported that sleeping on the ground was unsafe as they were scared of snakes, especially in Magway and Sagaing.

Not enough toilets for men as they gave first priorities to women to use the toilets.

No bathing space and no separate space to change clothes.

“We feel uncomfortable to change cloths in front of others. Even we, men feel like this, we can sympathise with women’s feelings.” (Male FGDs)

No electricity. Darkness at night.

4.1.4 Gender Recovery and Livelihoods

There were no major changes to livelihood options after the flooding, and in all four assessment areas farming and livestock breeding remained the main economic activity. Each area had slightly different forms of supplemental income generation; for example, carpentry work in Chin state, bamboo business in Magway region, and fishery work in Sagaing region and Rakhine state.

During and after the flood, villagers received livelihood support through youth groups and religious groups in Chin State, Shwe Taung Company and the ruling Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) in Magway Region, and civil society organisations such as Pan Pyo Let, Koe Taung Boet and National League for Democracy (NLD) political party in Sagaing Region. However, there were no supporting organisations in the study areas in Rakhine state.

4.1.5 Access to Urgent Healthcare

The findings clearly show a shortage of healthcare staff, along with poor healthcare facilities, in the four assessment areas. All four villages from Chin State had no doctors. The other three areas had only auxiliary midwives and midwives, usually not based in the village. No hospitals were present at the village levels, although there existed some healthcare centres established by the Government.

In some areas, local NGOs had been providing health education and medical healthcare support alongside government entities. The '3MDG' organisation and MRSC provided healthcare support and health education in Chin State, as well as a nearby government hospital. Save the Children and a local Civil Society Organisation (CSO) named Shwe Parami provided mobile clinics serving Magway areas. Doctors from the military provided mobile clinics and a local CSO named Koe Taung Boet provided healthcare in Sagaing. In Rakhine, the Myanmar Medical Association, Myanmar Health Association and military medical services provided healthcare support. Despite this support, healthcare facilities were still reported as inadequate, in part because they were difficult to reach. Indeed, transportation was one of the key

challenges for access to health, especially in Chin and Rakhine.

The most common health issues of women in all four assessment areas were hypertension, flu and diarrhoea. Women respondents from Chin and Magway said they faced menstrual pain and uterine problems. Sagaing and Rakhine respondents reported skin diseases and diarrhoea due to unclean water access. Malaria problems were reported in Magway, Sagaing and Rakhine areas. Depression was one of the major issues in these areas; thus, trauma healing and psychosocial support were indicated as essential in all four assessment areas.

The common health issues of men were similar to those of women. For children, high fever, dengue fever, diarrhoea, skin diseases, and flu were common.

Respondents from Chin and Rakhine state claimed that HIV patients could obtain access to antiretroviral therapy, whereas Magway and Sagaing respondents claimed that there were no HIV-positive people in their villages. On the ground, some HIV patients had no desire to disclose their illness and seek healthcare, especially in Sagaing.

Additional health challenges were posed after the floods by a lack of access to clean water. Approximately 50% of the respondents indicated that they had access to clean water, but not in large enough quantities. All four areas relied on rain water without access to effective water distribution system. Streams were major water sources for Chin and Rakhine state, whereas Magway and Sagaing used wells; many of which were destroyed during the flooding.

4.1.6 Access to Education

In Chin and Rakhine states, respondents mentioned that almost 90% of schools had collapsed and school toilets were also damaged. In Magway and Sagaing, about 20% of the schools were destroyed, not school toilets.

The interviews with teachers from all four areas revealed serious shortages of teachers. Moreover, there were not enough desks and benches at nearly all schools. One teacher from Sagaing raised



Organisations supporting for Education

Chin: UNICEF

Magway: Yay Kyi Ta Pauk (A Drop of Water) organisation

Sagaing: Myat Thu Kha organisation

Rakhine: Rakhin ThaHar Ya organisation

Ministry of Education: textbooks and uniforms in all assessment areas

Box 2: Organisational Support for Education in each area



concerns for school toilets and student health, saying “school toilets need to have enough access to water as they were too smelly, and that can seriously affect students’ health.”

Despite these challenges, several organisations supported education in the assessment areas.

4.2 Strategic Gender Needs in Flood-Affected Areas

Strategic gender needs are often linked with particular gender stereotyping in norms and practice. These gender stereotypes can affect disaster planning, preparedness, response and resilience in subtle and profound ways. For example, beyond the safety concerns for men and women in shelters explored in the previous section, flood shelters also challenged social and religious norms around separate spaces for women and men. For example, one village administrator from Magway said “We should have separate shelter arrangements for women as it is not suitable for women to live in the monasteries which are religious places.” Such statements rest on gender stereotypes of women’s untidiness, and the need for their exclusion from religious places, even in emergencies. However, others took a different view; for example, a religious leader said “we need strong and large monasteries to be built in the safe places to accommodate both women and men from villages if necessary.” These different views, rooted in particular cultural and gender norms, have direct implications for future disaster response.

While gender stereotyping practices took place across study sites, they were considered stronger in isolated areas and patriarchal ethnic societies. About 90% of the respondents from Chin state identified social cultural norms as the biggest challenges for women to access services and self-development. Surprisingly, all key informant interviews from Sagaing reported there was gender equality in their villages and they thought there was no need to provide any improvements. According to one of the village administrators from Sagaing: “In our village, women can do as men. Girls can go to school, women can make their own decisions.” Despite these assertions, differences in women and men’s roles and access to opportunities persisted across all study sites.

Across the assessment sites, key strategic gender needs to protect women and men in future disasters lie in reconsidering gender roles, addressing long-term livelihood strategies, providing equal and equitable access to healthcare and education, and addressing GBV.

4.2.1 Gender Roles

The findings showed that both men and women engaged in productive roles to generate income before and after the flood. However, women played roles more focussed on reproduction. Most household work was done by women and only 10% of men shared household work. Men usually contributed by carrying water and collecting firewood.

In contrast, while both women and men participated in community activities, men usually took decision-making and leadership positions and the women's roles in the community were limited to following and supporting this leadership. However, the level and type of women's participation in community differed in various places and societies. For example, respondents in Chin state emphasised women's roles as social workers and in prayer sessions, while those in Magway described women as community supporters and contributors to religious affairs. Respondents from Sagaing and Rakhine said women participated in distribution committees, road repair works, and rehabilitation activities.

4.2.2 Long-term Livelihood Needs

The respondents also identified women's and men's livelihood needs beyond the floods and into the future. The needs that the respondents identified were quite similar across four assessment areas. Overall, livelihood needs for women and men were quite similar, predominantly focused around improving agriculture and some supplemental forms of income. In addition to work in the village, migration patterns existed since before the flood that provide for local livelihoods. Respondents from Chin state reported women were more likely to migrate than men in response to female opportunities elsewhere and few livelihood opportunities at home. To the contrary, Magway and Rakhine claimed that more men migrated to other areas than women. They had not allowed women to go far away from home. Respondents from Sagaing reported that there was no migration in their areas.

4.2.3 Access to Healthcare Services

The assessment explored the different patterns of access to healthcare services. Most of the respondents claimed effective healthcare was not affordable and they had never received health awareness information. Interviews with government officials confirmed that resources were stretched thin in many areas, and inadequate to address issues such as malnutrition. Both men and women were concerned with food security problems in their respective areas, including high prices, not enough food, lack of mechanisms to address food insecurity, unemployment issues and bad transportation. The most common reported challenges of women and men for health issues were a health awareness, lack of money, lack of healthcare clinics or centres at the village level, no healthcare staff, not enough medicine, bad communication and bad transportation.

All the respondents from the four assessment areas claimed that women used health services more often, as they had the baseline knowledge of the needs of family members. As the primary care assistants of family members, they were responsible for bringing them to the hospitals and healthcare centres to gain access to healthcare services. Male respondents often pointed out they were too busy with their livelihood duties to create spare time for access to healthcare.

Despite of the healthcare practices done by women, their decision making role was severely limited. Men were described as key decision makers in health issues in all areas except in Sagaing, where respondents claimed both men and women were decision-making partners. Respondents in Chin particularly emphasized that women had to follow male decisions and ask permission before seeking care.

Cultural norms of sacrifice also negatively affect women's health, especially during the lean season, women commonly give priority to feeding children, elders and sick people. In this case, women described going hungry as a sacrifice and expression of love and care for others, saying men needed energy to work outside. One respondent from



Women's Livelihood Needs

- Technical skills and capacity building in sewing, making snacks, handicrafts, shoe-making, weaving; other training such as livestock breeding and agriculture-related skills
- Investment for farming, livestock breeding and conducting own businesses.
- Support and grants for food security
- Job opportunities
- Provision of farming tools (e.g. tractors and harvest machines)
- Good transportation systems and feasible roads

Men's Livelihood Needs

- Investment and loans with low interest rates
- Technical skills
- Farming tools
- Cattle
- Water pumps
- Fertilisers and pesticide
- Land rights (mentioned by one respondent from Sagaing)

Chin State asserted “It is women’s responsibility to sacrifice and give priority for family members if needed.” Similar claims were made in all four assessment areas, indicating that many women and men have internalised gender stereotypes that give less recognition to women’s own value and rights.

4.2.4 Access to Education

Rebuilding schools was a major strategic need after the flood. As schools were collapsed and damaged, the respondents claimed that it was not safe to send children to school. In Magway and Rakhine, school fences and walls had collapsed, affecting the safety of children as students could go out and run away during school time. Sagaing respondents did not raise these issues as the schools in their villages were not damaged.

The assessment also explored major challenges for girls to continue their education after this disruption. Social norms – particularly that boys should be educated while girls stayed at home to help their mothers by taking care of their younger siblings and doing household work – contributed to female drop-out issues. Poor parents who could afford to send all children to school often gave priority to boys to continue their education. In addition, since most villages lacked middle and high schools, students had to travel far and even stay outside the village to obtain a middle school education. Travel is often seen as expensive, dangerous, and inappropriate for girls. One participant in a female FGD thought: “If there is school in the village level, I am sure parents might support their girl’s education. Now, though, we dare not send our girl to other places.”

4.2.5 Gender Based Violence

Many types of GBV can make women vulnerable before, during, and after disasters; however, awareness of GBV was generally low in the assessment areas among both women and men. While many respondents considered physical and sexual violence to be violence, harmful social and cultural practices were never thought as one of the types of GBV. Interviewees in Chin and Rakhine states claimed that men in their family controlled women’s mobility and social engagement. Many women usually assumed that husbands will have

the right to control them and consider themselves followers because of their status as wives. Magway and Sagaing FGD respondents claimed both men and women in the area awareness of GBV; however, KII findings indicated a very problematic conception:



Women should dress properly so that GBV accidents can be reduced.”

(Male KII from Sagaing)

The study also showed that there were only a few organisations working on GBV awareness programs in these areas. FGD participants identified awareness programs on GBV, legal awareness and law enforcement as ways to address GBV issues. No respondents mentioned respecting women’s rights as a means of addressing these issues; instead both male and women usually mentioned that women should wear proper attire (see Annex 3 for key perceptions in different areas to address GBV issues). Acceptance of violent behaviour as a normal condition is very dangerous, and can become more problematic during disaster situations.

All respondents claimed that there were no human trafficking issues despite the existence of migration. This may be due to a lack of understanding on trafficking, or merely a non-existence of trafficking in the assessment areas.



“Women should not go alone. If they want to go out, they have to ask permission from their family.”

(Female KII from Magway)

4.3 Gender Capacities, Vulnerabilities, Opportunities and Risks

Ultimately, practical and strategic gender needs in a disaster context stem from everyday social norms and relationships that define capacities, vulnerabilities, opportunities, and risks for men and women. This section briefly explores these themes in the four assessment areas, in order to get a broader picture of gender dynamics.

4.3.1 Gender Capacities

This assessment identified the capacities of women and men based on their context. Most individual capacities relating to gender roles, in terms of productive activities and reproduction, were quite similar. However, an examination of the capacities in terms of community roles highlighted major differences, which were based on perspectives and acceptance on what was deemed – by the community itself – to be appropriate women’s participation in community-level settings. Respondents mainly regarded women’s capacities in terms of housework; for example, women’s ability to cook curries, clean the household and wash clothes. The assumption of women’s domestic role was reinforced by the fact that none of the respondents identified those capacities as male.

When asked about women’s public or community contributions, participants in each area described

different roles. In Chin State, women were regarded as ‘prayers’ who stayed behind the scenes. Women supposedly had the ability to support others in the community and to sacrifice themselves for family and relatives. Participants in Magway and Sagaing emphasized women’s skills in communication, speaking and facilitation. Women in Rakhine were recognised as contributing to various social activities including funeral and wedding ceremonies. While these are significant social roles, none were construed as leadership; all four assessment areas specified leadership as men’s key capacities.



Capacities of women and men

Women

- Farming (weeding, planting, harvesting)
- Picking vegetables and fruits
- Livestock breeding
- Selling products (food, snacks, vegetables, goods)

accepted by local communities

Men

- Farming (ploughing, harvesting)
- Livestock breeding
- Cutting woods, cutting bamboo
- Trading
- Motor repairs (motorcycles, trucks)
- Owning own business
- Migrating to other places
- Hunting (only in Chin)



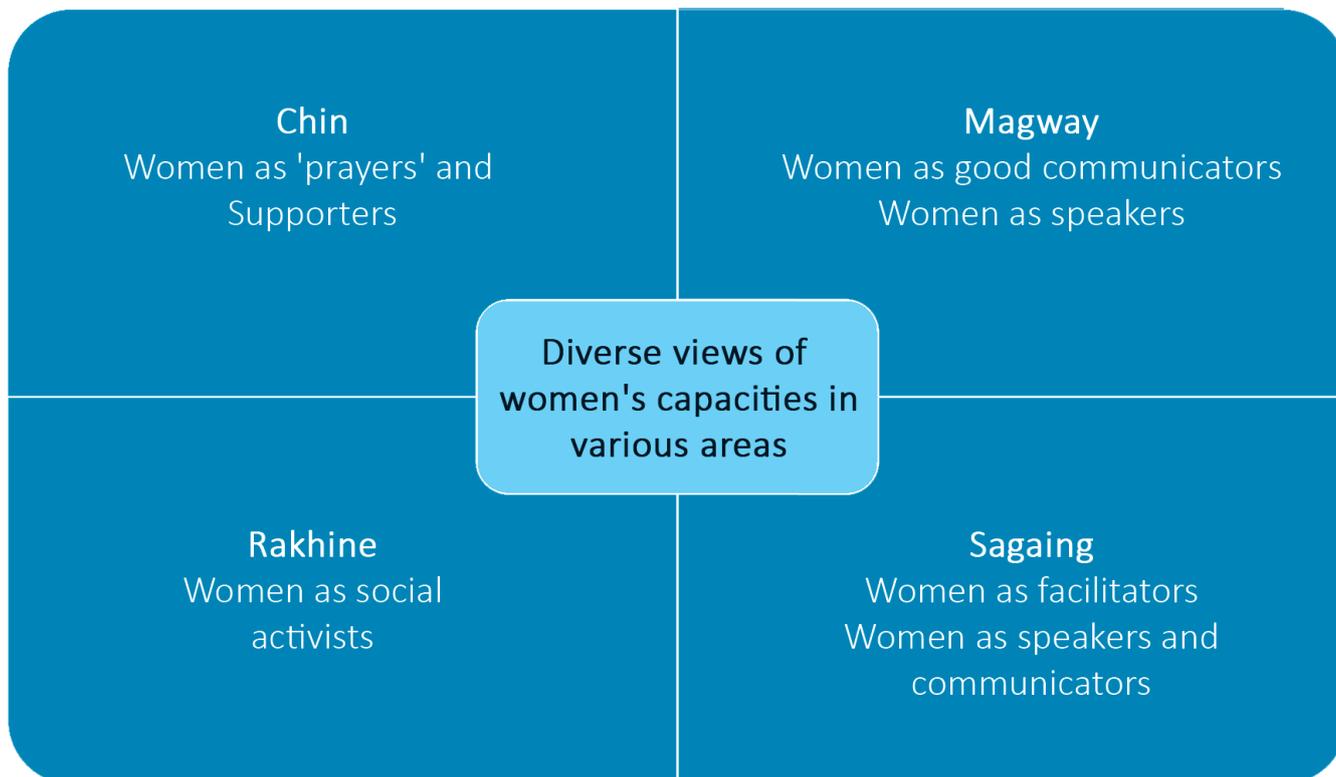


Figure 9: Diverse views of women's capacities in various areas

4.3.2 Vulnerabilities of Women and Men

General vulnerability factors prominent in all four areas included lack of services, bad transportation, food insecurity, lack of information, lack of networking and coordination. However, distinct vulnerabilities for men and women can be explained with the following diagram.

In general, women were more vulnerable than men in terms of decision making powers and social networking. Lack of information and adequate infrastructure seemed to be a major vulnerability for both women and men.

Vulnerabilities for Men	General Vulnerabilities	Vulnerabilities for Women
Lack of information	Lack of services	Lack of decision making power (especially in Chin state, where men control the decision making process)
Lack of experience	Poor transportation	Lack of information (all areas)
Lack of job opportunities	Food insecurity	Lack of job opportunities (all areas)
Lack of adequate infrastructure	Lack of information	Lack of networking with other women
	Lack of networking and coordination	

Figure 10: Vulnerabilities

4.3.3 Opportunities for Women and Men

Opportunities for women common across all sites were identified by the respondents as follows:

- Engagement in income generation activities, subject to the availability of job opportunities;
- Starting own business depending on investment opportunities, microcredit programs or entrepreneur grants for women;
- Participation in social activities to achieve social recognition;
- Being members to social organisation;
- Continuous education by pursuing high school programs. In some areas, there was no high school in the local village, so women would have to travel far to attend another school. Respondents believed that women would have more opportunities if they had better access to high school level education.

Opportunities for women varied in terms of social and culture context. In Chin, marriage was seen as a major opportunity for women. Respondents from Magway and Sagaing provided similar patterns of opportunities for women that emphasised economic independence, including migration to obtain high-paid jobs, and access to credit as an empowerment tool. Moreover, respondents from

Sagaing and Rakhine claimed that women received opportunities through participation in emergency response planning as data collectors. Almost 80% of the respondents claimed that there were no opportunities for women from Rakhine state. Only very few mentioned that sewing training might be one of the opportunities for women.

Rakhine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No prominent opportunities • Possible sewing training
Chin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marriage
Magway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migration • Access to credit
Sagaing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migration • Access to credit • Employment

Figure 11: Opportunities for women in study areas

Common opportunities for men across all four areas were reported as follows:

- Setting up own business, subject to investment or access to credit with low interest rates;
- Access to resources via capacity building training programs provided by NGOs;
- Being or becoming members of coalitions, networks and associations.

Opportunities for men also varied in terms of social and culture context and were, in some cases, similar to local opportunities for women.

Rakhine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No prominent opportunities
Chin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT learning • Village leaders
Magway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migration • Participation in NGO activities
Sagaing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migration • Participation in NGO activities

Figure 12: Opportunities for men in study areas

4.3.4 Risks for Women and Men

Common risk factors were identified by both women and men. For instance, all respondents identified National Registration Card re-application as the most common risk, due to the need to go to township level offices, obtain many recommendations and pay money. Without NRC cards, it was very difficult to maintain household registration card to obtain access to credit. Language barriers also contributed more prominently as risks for some respondents; particularly those from Chin state, where ethnic

Chin language is widely spoken among local people. Those respondents who were weak in speaking Myanmar language encountered difficulties in engaging in dialogue with government officers, who were predominantly not from the local area and did not speak Chin ethnic language.

Specific risks for men and women were also identified by the respondents, and are displayed in Annex 4.

5

Gender Gaps in Flood Response

Both practical and strategic needs, as well as existing capabilities, vulnerabilities, opportunities and risks, have different forms for women and men in different places, and affect communities' and individuals' abilities to recover from disaster. This section identifies critical gaps in the flood response and examines their gender components in order to guide future disaster management planning.

5.1 Service Gaps

The FGD and KII respondents clearly identified service gaps in the flood affected areas, many of which had different effects on women and men. Despite flood response programs by Government, NGOs and donors, there was not a coordinated or communicated set of guidelines or instructions for emergency response. As a result, people responded to the problems of flood on their own ways.

The first critical gap was a lack of preparedness, awareness, and early warning systems. While there were several strategies and plans for disaster management at the national level, emergency response awareness and, in particular, early warning systems, were missing or inadequate at the local level. The fact that people at the community level had no awareness of emergency response and evacuation plans was a critical gap that should be addressed in future disaster planning. Emergency plans and strategies must be communicated to women and men at the local level to have effective implementation.

In terms of response during and immediately following the disaster, respondents identified three main gaps: lack of food and water distribution, lack of healthcare services – especially in terms of psychosocial support – and lack of infrastructure development and safe shelters.

“

People are not familiar with early warning systems. Although they heard news from the radio and the loud speaker announcements of the Village Administrators, some villagers do not believe the news, some don't know what to do and how to prepare.”

“

I got the news but I don't know where the safe places are. I didn't know where to go.”

Box 6: Voices of respondents on early warning systems

“

During the flood, some people ran away, leaving elders at home. The elders still felt bad and sad about this experience.”

(KII respondent from Chin state)



Most of the elders and children were traumatised. Now, whenever there is heavy rain and thunder, they cry and become nervous. They said they were really scared of these situations and we don't know how to provide psychosocial support.”

(KII respondent from Rakhine state)





Safe shelter suggestions for women

- Provide a separate place for women (e.g. women-only shelters)
- If women-only shelters are unavailable, there should be partition or curtain between the women and men.
- Identify a separate bathing space and toilets for women.
- Provide for food security and healthcare in shelter.
- Allow people to use stove for cooking.
- Increase electricity accessibility, especially at night time.
- Provide rescue materials such as boat and life jackets at the shelter for emergency evacuation if needed.
- Provide regular updates and information sharing about the weather and developments in the disaster situation.

Safe shelter suggestions for men

- Provide a separate place for men (e.g. men-only shelter), which should be near the women-only shelter, to maintain family communication where possible. Alternatively, provide temporary tents which can be placed next to existing temporary shelters.
- Shelter should be built on mountains or other safe places.
- Life-saving and rescue materials should be available inside the shelter, including boats, life jackets, old motor car tyres, lights and lamps, ropes, rain coats, communication devices such as mobile phones, and other locally-appropriate materials.
- Provide enough food and water.
- Provide medical care.
- Form or provide an emergency preparedness team in each shelter.
- Provide regular updates and information sharing about the weather and developments in the disaster situation.

Long Term Needs:

- **Good Infrastructure**
- **Effective Early Warning System**
- **Consistent Disaster Risk Reduction Plan**
- **Reliable trading system**
- **Government Services for Health and Education**

Short Term Needs:

- **Food Security**
- **Clean Water**
- **Safe Shelter**
- **Healthcare**
- **Good Transportation**

According to the assessment findings, the service gaps had different levels of impact on women, girls, men and boys. For example, one of the FGD respondents mentioned the importance of having more high schools at the village level, as women and girls were forced to leave school rather than continue to go to school in other villages due to

the perception of family and relatives that it was unsafe for girls to go and stay at other villages after the disaster. These situations clearly revealed a key gap in the lack of services on women's mobilisation, education and social capacity

5.2 Response Volunteer Perspectives

In Myanmar, people are eager to assist victims of disasters and, as such, the role of volunteers in disaster response is highly valued. During and after the 2015 Myanmar floods, many youth, men and women stepped forward to help the flood victims. Many travelled across Myanmar and engaged in flood response activities, such as distributing food, emergency kits and dignity kits.

In volunteer teams, women often contributed by cooking food for the team; however, men were never engaged in cooking, according to the respondents. This pattern of gender stereotyping the roles and responsibilities, as well as the division of labour among men and women, created more burden for women volunteers. Women also faced additional risks due to discrimination and gender stereotypes, which often limited their efficacy as humanitarian workers and leaders. In the words of one female development worker, “Communities do not pay attention to women development workers. Women development workers had to request help from male development workers to ensure communities would listen when giving instructions.”

In one case, women’s groups and other donors from Yangon donated boxes of women’s sanitary napkins. Some prohibited those boxes being kept at monasteries, claiming it was not suitable to store women’s sanitary napkins in a holy place. Some male volunteers from the community refused to carry the boxes of sanitary napkins as they assumed these as related to dirty matters. These perceptions and cultural norms were indicative of different levels of discrimination against women; in these cases, by limiting women’s access to necessary supplies and participation in leadership positions. These represent key considerations in mainstreaming gender in emergency settings.

The community in flood-affected areas and their leaders – especially religious leaders – often perceived women as followers and men as leaders. This form of attitude created barriers for women to participate in flood response measures. The following case studies from female response workers demonstrate how community leaders’ negative attitudes towards women limited effectiveness of the flood response.



Case Study 1

One woman CSO leader went to a village in Rakhine state with aid packages, as part of the flood response. She was capable and able to manage this work by herself. As there was no woman staff member to accompany with her, she went to village with a male colleague and a boat driver. She felt safe and secure among male colleagues.

However, when she arrived at the village, a local monk did not allow her to go alone. The monk ordered women's groups to accompany her wherever she went, for the sake of her safety. She felt guilty as she had no intention of burdening the community's women.

On the other hand, it was surprising that women from the community also supported the perception of monk that woman should not go alone during distribution and flood response activities. Women from the community agreed that she should find someone to accompany her for her dignity and safety on daily activities. This pattern of attitudes and perceptions, if unchanged, could limit women's mobility and abilities in flood response activities in the future.

Case Study 2

In Chin State, when the flood response committee was formed, both men and women accepted as natural the roles of women as followers and men as leaders. Only a few women were confident enough to perform leadership roles; however, it was very difficult to obtain acceptance and recognition from the community to allow them to be leaders.

A KII respondent from Chin State also mentioned that no one was listened when one female volunteer gave instructions to shift boxes from one place to another. When a male volunteer gave the same instructions, the community followed his instructions. Indeed, they thought that they should follow the instructions of male leaders rather than women. As a result, the female volunteer felt upset.

The present research also suggested that similar scenarios occurred in other regions and that these could further limit women's participation – and willingness to participate – in disaster prevention and response.

5.3 Gaps in Gender Equality

The cases above highlight the ways in which gender inequality can have negative effects on flood response activities, as well as on women's experience during and after disaster. Common suggestions to achieve gender equality from all four areas include: gender and human rights training, capacity building and empowerment programs for women, creation of more job opportunities for women to decrease dependency on men, and identification and countering of negative social cultural norms. Various states and regions had specific views on how to achieve gender equality, including the review of customary law (Chin state) and promoting women's participation in events and training programs (Magway region).

Although respondents from Sagaing region claimed that there was no gender discrimination, respondents also said that women in the villages were often assumed to be breadwinners, and their husbands – who were, in many cases, regarded as being alcoholic – frequently beat their wives. In these instances, respondents said that women mainly accepted beatings as being 'right' of the husband. This points to a critical gap, not only in addressing GBV, but also in raising awareness of gender equality in these areas and in countering harmful social norms.

5.4 Dreams of Flood- Affected Communities

Men and women from the assessment areas also participated in an activity to describe their dreams for their respective communities. The common aspirations from all FGDs were related to adequate transportation and housing, good availability of electricity and stronger, more resilient buildings such as schools, monasteries and churches, which that could be used as temporary shelters in emergency situations. Longer-term needs identified by respondents varied in accordance with the regional needs. For instance, participants from Chin State highlighted gender equality; those in Rakhine prioritised high schools at the village level, as well as GBV awareness, and Magway and Sagaing respondents focused on village development. The other factors related to gender, location and age are shown in Annex 4.

In particular, the findings highlighted that, by and large, women gave priority to safety and security of their family and community in terms of safe housing and shelter. Their dreams were more related to their children's future: to have a good education, good healthcare and good social security. On the other hand, men focused more on business, infrastructure and systems for the sake of community as a whole. For youth, the focus for the future was on improving communication, as well as and social development activities such as developing libraries and a football stadium. The above findings clearly demonstrate the value of voices from diverse groups to create comprehensive and concrete plan of action based on the principle of inclusion.

6.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The 2015 Myanmar floods exposed many ways in which women and men were impacted by existing norms and practices in rural communities, the disaster itself, and the recovery process. Overall, there is a need to address the key gender gaps outlined in the previous sections and to increase awareness of gender issues in disaster response planning and activities. Consideration of the information in this report, in conjunction with the following recommendations, will help Myanmar people better prepare for future disasters.

6.1 Recommendations for Government

- Review the policies of National Disaster Preparedness Central Committee (NDPCC) and include gender dimensions and considerations.
- Increase genuine political accountability and financial resources for mainstreaming gender and appoint a gender focal person for the National Disaster Committee.
- Develop strategies that ensure women's groups are actively involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of mechanisms for National Disaster Management.
- Promote and provide incentives for the meaningful participation of women in flood response planning, decision making and implementation efforts at the community level.
- Using the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Operational Guidelines on the Protection of Persons in Situations of Natural Disasters (2011) and other existing guidelines on humanitarian standards in situations of natural disasters, ensure the implementation of a rights-based approach to disaster preparedness, response and recovery activities.
- Increase focus on prevention and protection as well as disaster response.

6.2 Recommendations for Parliamentarians

- Increase oversight on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Operational Guidelines on the Protection of Persons in Situations of Natural Disasters (2011).
- Ensure emergency-related law and procedures are gender sensitive.

6.3 Recommendations for Development Partners

- Ensure gender budget allocation for emergency response.
- Organise a forum on gender responsive disaster management to share good practices from international, regional and local levels.
- Further support primary and adult education to increase literacy among girls and women, so that they are able to learn about, and respond to, disasters effectively.
- Secure support from local partners in identifying 'gender champions' among their funded communities.
- Include gender terms and perspectives in project appraisals for aid grants.
- Evaluate whether adequate financial and human resources are being allocated to the implementation of gender and diversity-sensitive activities, and explicitly earmark for these activities.

6.4 Recommendations for Research Institutions

- Conduct further research on good practices and lessons learned from emergency/flood response activities.
- Provide advice on gender response planning and effectiveness.
- Conduct service mapping activities on various types of disaster in disaster-prone areas, and the associated needs and risk factors for communities.

6.5 Recommendations for CSOs and Local Communities

- Conduct gender analysis or assessments in disaster impact areas.
- Consult with community members and specialists to identify possible needs, for use in designing and tailoring response activities to ensure that groups have adequate access to resources and can participate equally in decision-making.
- Initiate gender capacity building programs relating to disaster management.
- Develop skill-building workshops on gender sensitive advocacy.
- Establish women's networks in the disaster-prone areas and build knowledge on disaster management skills, capacities and coping mechanisms of these groups.
- Create women-friendly volunteer programs design for disaster response.
- Organise community drills on disaster emergency response and preparedness to ensure local women and men are well equipped to cope with, and respond to, future hazards and disasters.

Annex 1: Research Questionnaires for KIIs and FGDs

Note: The research questionnaires were generally the same, but differed slightly for KIIs based on the knowledge of the informant.

I. Disaster Information

(1.1) Did you get prior information about disaster? Yes () No ()

(1.2) If yes please tick the information source

Newspaper	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mobile Phone message	<input type="checkbox"/>
Journal	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Media (e.g. Facebook)	<input type="checkbox"/>
TV	<input type="checkbox"/>	Information from Villagers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Radio	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other please specify	<input type="checkbox"/>

(1.3) How many days apart between dates of the flood info received and actual flood?

(1.4) Who receive first about the flood information

Men () Women () Both()

(1.5) Why he/she knows first?

II. Capacity on disaster prevention and response

(2.1) Do you know how to response flood after receiving the emergency information?

Yes () No ()

(2.2) If yes how do women and men prepare?

(2.3) Any organization support for emergency preparation? Yes() No ()

(2.4) Who support? (GAD/Development organization/Party/ social groups/ religious groups/ family/ relative etc.)

III. Information on Temporary Shelter

(3.1) Did you live in temporary during flood? Yes () No ()

(3.2) How many percentage of village move to temporary shelter?

(3.3) Where did they replace?

Monastery/ Church		Relative house	
School		Friend House	
Temporary Camp		Other please specify	

(3.4) Describe the safety condition for women and men in the shelter. (Sleeping place, Bath room, toilet, space for changing cloth, Menstrual period time and how to dispose the sanitary pad, breast feeding time, keeping children among the stranger etc.)

Safety condition for women

Safety condition for men

(3.5) Have you heard or faced violence against women cases or issues during your temporary stay?

Yes () No()

(3.6) If yes identify types of violence according to incident rate.

Types of Violence	1-5	Causes of Violence
Physical violence		
Psychological violence		
Sexual violence		
Economic violence		
Harmful social culture norms		

(3.7) How was VAW addressed at the camp? (Health service, psychosocial support service, legal service)

(3.8) Suggestion for safe shelter for women and men.

IV. Housing Condition

(4.1) % of return home.

(4.2) Who decide to return home? Please show with %

Women () Men () Both

(4.3) Who supports for house repair? Is there any organization? Yes() No ()

(4.4) If yes please identify the name of organization.

V. Gender Roles and Livelihood information before and after flood

(5.1) Common livelihood before flood. List from 5 to 8.

(5.2) Please identify % of work done by men and women (Productive activity, reproductive activity, community activity)

(5.3) After flood do men and women exchange their activity or not. If yes how many % do they change? Please identify.

(5.4) If so why?

(The questions repeat for all three roles: Productive, Reproductive and Community)

(5.5) Any organization support for livelihood? Yes() No()

(5.6) If yes what kind of support do they provide?

(5.7) Needs for livelihood recovery for women and men.

(5.8) Anyone migrate from this village after flood? Yes () No ()

(5.9) Who migrates more? Women or Men? Why?

VI. Health & Nutrition

(6.1) Please list common health problem for Women, Men and Children after flood.

(6.2) Any organization provided healthcare support? Yes () No ()

(6.3) Identify the name of healthcare provided organization.

(6.4) Who seek healthcare more? Women or men?

(6.5) Who make decision to seek healthcare? Men/Women/Both

(6.6) Challenges for Men and Women to get healthcare.

(6.7) Condition of access to ART regularly.

(6.8) How many meals do you usually take before flood?

(6.9) Is there any food security after flood? Yes () No ()

(6.10) If there is no food security to whom should they prioritize? (Women, Men, Children, Elderly, sick) Why?

(6.11) Who sacrifice during lean season? (Women, Men, Children, Elderly, Sick) Why?

(6.12) Any organization support for food security? Yes () No ()

(6.13) Any concern for food security?

(6.14) Where do you get water?

(6.15) Do you get clean water? Yes () No ()

(6.16) Do you get enough clean water? Yes () No ()

(6.17) Who fetch water in the family? Men/Women/Son/Daughter

(6.18) Bathing space condition. Safe for women/ is there partition/ too far from home?

(6.19) Latrine condition. Enough latrine? Too far from home? Safe for women?

VII. Education

(7.1) School damage condition due to flood.

(7.2) School attendance condition. % of female student who could not come back to school? % of male student who could not come back to school?

(7.3) Does the school toilet have water or not.

(7.4) Safety condition at school, roads to school, school condition, violence issue at school etc.

(7.5) Any organization support for education at your village.

(7.6) Identify challenges for women to continue their education.

VIII. Capacity, Vulnerability, Opportunity, Challenges

(8.1) Skills of women and men in your village. Please identify 5 each.

(8.2) Vulnerable faces of women and men for their development, decision making.

(8.3) Any opportunities for development? What are opportunities for women and men?

(8.4) Risks and challenges for women's and men's safety, dignity?

IX. Gender Based Violence

(9.1) GBV situation in your village before and after flood. (Types of GBV, incident rate etc.)

(9.2) Is there any GBV service provided for survivor? (Who and how? Health service, Psychosocial support service, legal service, economic support etc.)

(9.3) GBV awareness among the women in the village? (Do they know where to go?)

(9.4) Suggestions to reduce GBV and VAW.

(9.5) Is there any trafficking after flood?

(9.6) Is there any organization working on anti trafficking?

X. Current Needs and Future Dreams

(10.1) Identify the short term needs (3 months) of both women and men and long term needs (3 years).

Note: Please ask men FGD for men needs and women FGD for women's needs. Please ask youth FGD for both needs)

(10.2) Request the participant to draft their future dream. Dream about how do you want to see your village after next three years.

(10.3) What support do you need to fulfill your needs and dream?

(10.4) Any other suggestions?

Annex 2: Perceptions and Prevention of GBV in Assessment Areas

FGDs in each assessment area identified strategies to raise awareness on GBV:

<p>Chin</p> <p>More training</p> <p>Legislative changes in Chin customary law (this currently favours men in terms of inheritance, divorce, etc.)</p>
<p>Magway</p> <p>Formation of more women's groups</p>
<p>Sagaing</p> <p>Formation of youth groups</p>
<p>Rakhine</p> <p>Formation of women's networks</p> <p>Strengthening networking capacity</p>

KIIs highlighted the different perceptions of various groups on addressing GBV:

Village leaders	Legal awareness and law enforcement
Religious leaders	Women should dress appropriately
Education	Job opportunities, elderly as mediators in GBV cases
Health	Community responsibility, referral services
Development workers	Capacity development of women's and men's groups to respond GBV cases
Persons with disabilities	Awareness raising, outreach to disability groups
Youth leaders	Self defense training for women

Annex 3: Risks for Men and Women as Identified by Respondents

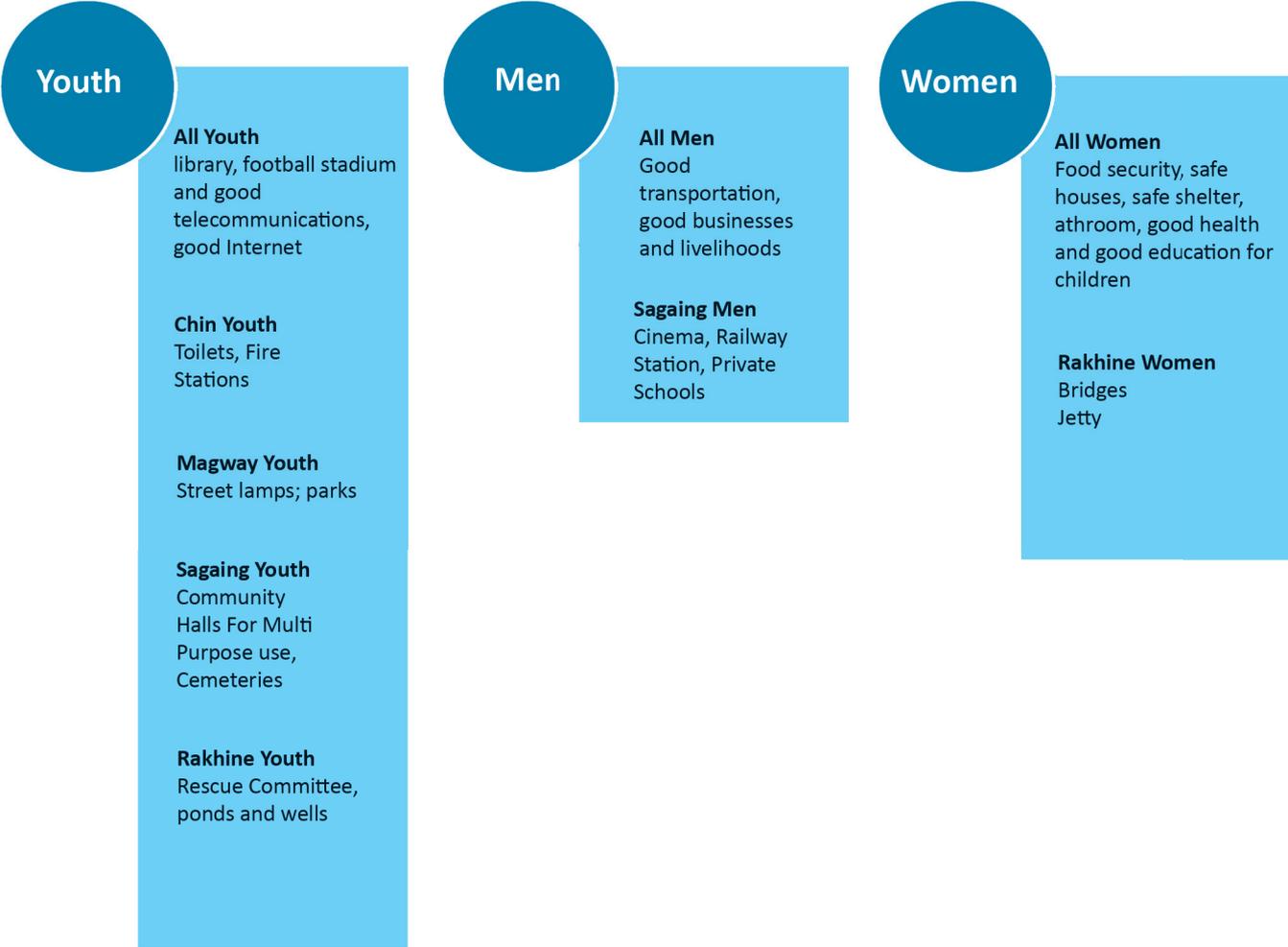
Risks for men

Lack of job opportunities

Risks for women

Negative social norms
No appreciation of capacity/worth
Negative attitudes towards women's capacities
Limited opportunities
Limited participation in public and community life
Discriminatory practices

Annex 4: Dreams for the Future of Flood-Affected Communities



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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



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