



National Commission for Women

Press Note

New Delhi, 17th December 2019, Disasters impact the most vulnerable people hardest. Women and children get impacted the most in case of a disaster and have greater risks to their recovery post any disaster. With this thought, the National Commission for Women organised a consultation on policy formulation on 'Women & Children in disasters' at India International Centre. 48 representatives from civil society, State Commissions for Women, National Disaster Management Authority, National Disaster Relief Force, National Institute for Disaster Management, NHRC and NCPCR participated in the deliberations.

Smt. Rekha Sharma, Chairperson, NCW said, "Women and children are the ones impacted first and most in the case of any disaster. Incidents of sexual crime against women and domestic violence rise rapidly during and post any disasters. Disasters also result in early marriage, minor marriages, trafficking, health issues and other sorts of exploitation. The policy on Women and Children in disasters needs to incorporate these issues and provide for measures to curb these. Women also need to be included in the response and rescue teams and mechanism. This will help their quicker recovery too."

Sh. GVV Sharma, Member, National Disaster Management Authority mentioned that there was an existing policy on disaster management, which included the aspects of handling women and children in times of disasters. NCW and other departments could review these and suggest ways and means of ensuring the welfare of women and children in times of disasters. Maj Gen Manoj Kumar Bindal, Executive Director highlighted the efforts made by the National Institute of Disaster Management towards policy formulation on disaster management by means of helping various departments and ministries formulate or suggest amendments to the existing policy.

Dr. Atulya Mishra, Additional Chief Secretary to the Government of Tamil Nadu spoke about how their state had adopted various women friendly measure during natural and other sort of disasters. The state has made a list of 27 essential items that are required by the victims in case of any disaster and this involves all the essentials required by the women. An app has been made to convey warnings in case of any disaster, etc.

Ms. Rosy Taba, Member NCPCR highlighted the increase in illegal trafficking of women and children during disasters and the ways to curb these. Ms. Meenakshi Gupta, Co-founder, Goonj suggested that a survey/ audit can be commissioned post a disaster to assess the effectiveness of any disaster relief mechanism and the findings can be utilized to understand the loopholes which will help us to improve the mechanism going forward.

The role of grassroot level organisations like Gram Sabha, Panchayats, etc. in disaster management and planning was discussed. It was also discussed that women SHGs could be involved and trained in disaster management which could help arrest the damage caused to women and children. Gender sensitization and awareness, provision of dignity kits, as a part of preparedness for a disaster was discussed.

NCW will organise follow-up consultation on the issue going forward and then share recommendations with the National Disaster Management Authority.