

## Women and Disaster Management (Analysis of the Role of Women in Disaster Management in Aceh Utara Regency)

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### ABSTRACT

Women face greater risks during disasters, including floods, because of gender constructs that place them in the domestic sphere and ignore their role in decision-making. Qualitative research in Aceh Utara (2021–2022) revealed that women were involved in disaster management through domestic activities, information dissemination, and post-disaster efforts aimed at enhancing income. However, they have not been involved in strategic meetings or structured programs due to gender stereotypes, lack of government support, and internal factors. This study recommends that the Aceh Utara Government develop local wisdom-based mitigation that is inclusive and gender-responsive, and ensures women's participation in flood management policies and programs

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Women are one of the social groups that have a higher level of vulnerability and face a greater risk of becoming victims in disasters compared to men. Gender construction in society positions women as a subordinate group, which influences their access to involvement in activities aimed at improving disaster understanding and decision-making. Aboobacker & Nakray (2011) stated that women often have limited access to disaster preparedness, mitigation, and rehabilitation. Women are often seen as weak and powerless when a disaster occurs. (Yulianti & Hastuti, 2019).

Women are a more dominant group of victims in disasters, not only because their numbers are greater than men's but also because their knowledge and understanding of disasters are very limited. Khairunnisa & Alhadi (2020), that the Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD) of Padang City recorded that the most victims of the 2009 earthquake in Padang City were women. Furthermore, Suyito et al., (2019) stated that because they have an instinct to protect their families and children, women often neglect their own safety so that they are 14 times more at risk of becoming disaster victims.

The lack of women's involvement in decision-making has resulted in unresponsive treatment of women's specific needs. Hanani (2014) stated that women in the Mount Sinabung refugee camps experience health challenges during their menstrual cycle due to issues with sanitary pads and limited toilet and bathing facilities (MCK) due to the lack of gender-based policies in addressing issues in the refugee camps.

Women also face other challenging situations after recovering from a disaster. They are vulnerable to becoming victims of violence, particularly sexual violence, during the disaster or post-disaster rehabilitation period. Cases of sexual violence are difficult to uncover due to their distinct characteristics compared to other forms of violence. Victims generally choose to remain silent to avoid stigmatization and further violence. The National Commission on Violence Against Women (2006) found that cases of sexual violence/assault in various forms accounted for 74% of the 146 total cases in post-tsunami and post-conflict refugee camps in Aceh. Forty-six percent of the victims were girls and young women under 28 years of age.

Nur Hafida (2019) stated that the main problem that often arises in disaster situations is gender issues, namely the minimal involvement of women in pre-, during, and post-disaster situations, because society still considers women weak and lacking the necessary capacity, where existing disaster management policies still pay very little attention to this issue. This view is clearly seen in the reality in society that has not realized the importance of women's involvement as an effort to reduce vulnerability. Enarson & Chakrabarti (2009) stated that limited access to information and mobility of women and children makes them vulnerable in disaster situations.

The government has issued Regulation of the Head of the National Disaster Management Agency Number 13 of 2014 concerning Gender Mainstreaming in Disaster Management (PERKA BNPB No. 13/2014). This policy complements existing laws and regulations on gender-responsive

development. Implementation of this policy has not been optimal and has not addressed existing issues because relevant parties are unaware of its existence and have not yet used it as a reference guide in carrying out disaster management activities at the regional level.

The existence of women who are vulnerable and considered victims, and cannot participate in various disaster mitigation efforts. The presence of PERKA BNPB No. 13/2014 is one of the strategic steps for this paradigm shift in the context of disasters. Women need to be seen as subjects who can take on important roles because they have potential or capacity. Experience has proven that women are able to save themselves and others during disasters, and are involved in other necessary activities even if they are carried out in an unstructured manner. Alam & Rahman (2019) stated that the problem of water and sanitation after the storm/cyclone Aila in Bangladesh was successfully addressed through the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH) program in Koyra due to the active participation of women from beginning to end, and received support from the community.

Women have also proven their ability to survive difficult situations caused by disasters and remain active in carrying out their social roles. Nur Hafida (2019) states that a paradigm shift must be accompanied by a public understanding of disasters, including an understanding of the meaning, purpose, impact, and benefits of disasters, as well as the consequences of a series of activities undertaken in disaster management.

Optimizing the role of the community must involve all members of society, both men and women. Therefore, the author believes it is crucial to examine the role of women in flood disaster management because they face significant vulnerabilities and are potentially at significant risk as victims. This is legally covered by policy but has not yet been considered by the government for optimal implementation.

This research was conducted in Aceh Utara Regency and was limited to the flood disaster in late 2021 to early 2022. The flood water level in 2021-2022 occurred repeatedly. The highest flood water reached 1.5 meters, which occurred in late December 2021 to early 2022, inundating settlements for 3-7 days. BPBA (2015) stated that Aceh Utara is ranked 3rd as an area with a high potential for flood hazards with a high category, reaching 152,506 ha, a high category for the level of losses estimated at Rp1,355.23 billion, and potentially causing 560,430 victims. BPS United Nations Population Fund (2015) stated that the projected population in Aceh Utara in 2020 was 627,265 people, consisting of 309,780 men and 317,485 women. This means that women are at greater risk of becoming victims in Aceh Utara, which is currently experiencing intense flooding.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

A disaster is defined as a natural or non-natural event that disrupts human life, causing loss of life, environmental damage, and psychological impacts (President of the Republic of Indonesia, 2007). Disaster management must be based on the principles of speed, precision, inclusiveness, and

sustainability, to protect communities, respecting local culture, and fostering active participation. These efforts include prevention, emergency response, and rehabilitation, implemented in an integrated manner pre-, during, and post-disaster.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is a systematic approach to managing threats and vulnerabilities (UNISDR, 2009). In Indonesia, DRR involves the government, communities, and stakeholders through a national platform (BNPB, 2020). Disaster risk analysis assesses potential negative impacts such as loss of life, material losses, and environmental damage (BNPB, 2012).

Women are considered a vulnerable group due to gender constructions that limit their access to decision-making and resources. Aceh Governance Law No. 11/2006 (Article 231) and the ratification of CEDAW (Law No. 7/1984) affirm Indonesia's commitment to gender equality, including in disaster management. Policies such as BNPB Regulation No. 13/2014 on Gender Mainstreaming (PUG) encourage women's involvement in access, participation, control of resources, and program benefits.

Aceh strengthens this through Qanun No. 6/2009 (Women's Empowerment) and Qanun No. 5/2010 (Non-Discriminatory Disaster Management), as well as Governor Regulation No. 6/2014 on gender-responsive planning. These policies align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5 on gender equality, with the principle of "no one left behind."

Patriarchal culture exacerbates women's vulnerability, limiting their roles to the domestic sphere and reducing access to resources (Yumarni & Amaratunga, 2018). During disasters, women and minority groups often struggle to access assistance due to structural inequalities (Gaillard et al., 2015). However, women at the grassroots level play a crucial role in meeting the basic needs of families post-disaster (Enarson, 2012).

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research was conducted qualitatively to describe the role of women in flood disaster management as an existing reality. Qualitative research aims to understand the phenomena experienced by the research subjects holistically and through descriptive language, within a specific context, utilizing various scientific methods (Moleong, 2021). This research was conducted in Asan Krueng Kreh Village, Pirak Timue Subdistrict, and Tumpok Barat Village, Matang Kuli Subdistrict, Aceh Utara Regency.

Primary data were obtained through field research using structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and direct observation. Researchers interviewed 22 people, 11 men and 11 women, two of whom were disabled. Interviewees were representatives from the Aceh Utara Regency Government (Regional Disaster Management Agency, the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, Social Service, and the Community Empowerment, Population Control, and Family Planning Service), village officials, community members, and NGOs. Researchers also conducted focus group discussions (FGDs) involving village residents to obtain and confirm the data obtained.

Observations were conducted at the research sites to directly observe post-flood conditions, available facilities, and community activities following the disaster. Observation results were used to strengthen or compare the results of the interviews and FGDs to obtain more accurate data.

Relevant information from the data collection results is classified into 3 (three) groups, namely pre/before disaster, emergency response, and post/after disaster. This classification aims to facilitate researchers in reading and analyzing the data obtained. Data processing uses a gender pathway analysis framework as an indicator of the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming (PUG) in PERKA BNPB No. 13/2014, namely aspects of access, participation, control over resources and decision-making, and benefits from policies and programs (BNPB, 2014).

Secondary data was obtained from library research. Researchers collected and studied data from books, reports, journals, news, and other related materials with the research theme used as references. The presentation of research data uses a descriptive method by systematically describing the conditions or descriptions and explanations regarding the data obtained in the research based on the existing problems and problem formulations by referring to the four aspects of gender mainstreaming indicators in flood management programs as stated in PERKA BNPB No. 13/2014.

## RESULTS

Aceh Province is a disaster-prone region, with flooding being the most frequent. Aceh Utara Regency ranks third in terms of the region most frequently hit by flooding. Flooding in Aceh Utara is caused by relatively high rainfall, which occurs in certain months. Rainfall times have become unpredictable due to climate change. This disaster was also caused by floodwaters from neighboring Bener Meriah Regency. The incoming waters were not comparable to the reservoir's capacity. Deforestation and land conversion have significantly reduced water catchment areas. Forest cover, which has been shrinking year after year, is no longer able to retain water, leading to runoff flowing directly into rivers and residential areas, from forest fringes to urban and coastal areas. This situation is further exacerbated by the unfinished construction of reservoirs, which are experiencing issues with their durability. Aceh Utara has five major rivers that overflow annually due to high water discharge from the mountains, which also carries sediment, causing the rivers to become shallower.

Flooding has increased in intensity over the past three years, with water levels reaching between 1.5 and 2 meters. According to data from the Aceh Utara Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD) circulated via WhatsApp and reported by various online media outlets, the latest flood, which occurred in late 2021 and early 2022, inundated 15 subdistricts and 113 villages. 1,111 homes were submerged, causing significant damage to property and public facilities. A total of 8,536 families, or 29,621 people, were affected by the disaster, and 9,766 families, or 32,852 people, had to evacuate to relatively safe

places. Two people died. Some residents, particularly children, the elderly, and women, experienced health problems.

Asan Krueng Kreh Village, Pirak Timue Subdistrict, and Tumpok Barat Village, Matangkuli Subdistrict, Aceh Utara, are frequently flooded areas in Aceh Utara Regency. The worst floods occurred in 2014, 2020, and 2021-2022. Since the construction of the Krueng Keureuto Reservoir, flooding has become more frequent in Tumpok Barat Village. In 2021-2022, flooding occurred approximately 10 times, with water levels fluctuating. By December 31, 2021, the water level had risen again, reaching 1.5 meters, inundating the village for six days. The community suffered significant losses due to damaged goods and several crop failures. This situation has left them trapped in debt.

Building a community that is prepared for flooding is urgently needed to reduce losses, loss of life, and other potential problems. The National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) (2012) states that Regulation of the Head of the National Disaster Management Agency Number 2 of 2012 concerning Disaster Risk Assessment (PERKA BNPB No. 2/2012) has formulated a formula for calculating the level of risk in a disaster (Figure 1). Each element in this formula is closely related and influences each other.

$$\text{Risk} = \text{H\_azard} \times \text{V\_ulnerability} / \text{C\_apacity}$$

Figure 1. General Disaster Risk Equation

The figure above shows that the level of risk depends heavily on the type and severity of the disaster, the level of vulnerability, and available support capacity. Vulnerability is determined by the level of community or social preparedness in the affected area. In every disaster, the local community is required to be able to protect itself independently. Assistance cannot be waited for, as it takes time to arrive at the disaster site. Therefore, community capacity, both knowledge and skills developed in the pre-disaster phase, are important factors to consider, as they significantly influence the level of risk experienced during a disaster.

Communities that understand and possess disaster knowledge, are skilled and trained in self-rescue and rescue efforts for themselves and others in the vicinity, will reduce the risk. This is even better if various supporting facilities are in place, including systematic and applicable response mechanisms. Conversely, communities with minimal disaster knowledge, a lack of training in organized rescue activities, and a lack of understanding of rescue mechanisms are at high risk of becoming disaster victims, even if various supporting facilities are adequately provided.

Communities' capacities to cope with disasters vary by gender, age, and disability. These differences serve as indicators for determining vulnerability. Women and men have different vulnerabilities. Women, with their limitations and various gender burdens, are considered to have a higher level of vulnerability than men. Women experience social vulnerability based on gender, and their presence will impact the level of risk of becoming victims in a

disaster of a certain magnitude (BNPB, 2012). This condition is reflected in various disasters, where the number of women victims exceeds that of men.

The underlying cause of this situation is the persistent patriarchal culture that permeates society. This culture creates distinct roles and domains for women and men. One practice is to place women in the domestic sphere, limiting their access to information and opportunities for self-actualization in the public sphere. This limited access to information also occurs on disaster issues, resulting in women's capacity to deal with disasters being lower than that of men. This understanding also leads to women being viewed as objects in disaster management, designed to accept and implement political decisions agreed upon by men. However, not all women's needs can be recognized and understood by men, due to natural differences, such as their sexual organs, which create different situations.

Women continue to perform various domestic tasks and roles during disasters. This data and information were obtained from research locations in two villages: Asan Krueng Kreh, Pirak Timue Subdistrict, and Tumpok Barat, Matang Kuli Subdistrict, Aceh Utara Regency. The data obtained were relatively similar between the two research villages. Descriptions of women's roles in flood management at the research locations have been categorized into three stages of disaster management, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The Role of Women in Flood Management in North Aceh Regency.

Pre-Disaster	Emergency Response	Post-Disaster
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maintaining and cleaning drainage systems</li> <li>- Managing household waste</li> <li>- Storing important documents</li> <li>- Monitoring weather and rivers/ watercourses with the community (those living along riverbanks)</li> <li>- Distributing information about rising water levels to families and fellow women</li> <li>- Preparing stocks of rice and medicines needed during floods</li> <li>- Contributing insights into building flood-resistant homes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Saving equipment, valuables, and important documents</li> <li>- Supervising children</li> <li>- Providing food and clothing for family members</li> <li>- Caring for vulnerable family members (elderly, children, people with disabilities)</li> <li>- Providing clean water for consumption during floods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cleaning up flood debris and salvaging items that are still functional</li> <li>- Rearranging furniture</li> <li>- Storing valuables and important documents</li> <li>- Supervising children</li> <li>- Providing food and clothing for family members</li> <li>- Caring for vulnerable family members (elderly, children, disabled) and those sick due to the flood</li> <li>- Checking rice fields, assessing the extent of damage, and drying salvaged rice</li> <li>- Starting work to earn an income (as a wage laborer)</li> </ul>

## DISCUSSION

The data above shows that women play a significant role before, during, and after a disaster. These roles are predominantly related to their domestic duties and gender roles. Women's primary role is to provide food and protection for family members, including children, the elderly, and those with illnesses or disabilities. Women continue to fulfill these roles despite challenging circumstances, not only due to flooding of homes but also due to dwindling family finances and limited food availability, which have psychological impacts.

Repeated flooding has caused crop failures, as rice fields remain submerged for days. In Aceh Utara, women are predominantly involved in rice field work, either as pickers or wage laborers, from seeding and planting to maintenance and harvesting. Based on this responsibility, women immediately survey the rice fields when floodwaters recede. They assess the damage, collect whatever can be salvaged, and sell it cheaply or take it home to eat. Earning a

living is crucial to meeting family needs and offsetting the losses caused by the floods. Men prefer to seek other odd jobs in other sub-districts or villages.

Women are required to manage existing supplies to ensure sufficient food for all family members. Flooding that persisted for days resulted in dwindling food supplies. Clothes and blankets became unusable due to being wet. They relied on solidarity with neighbors or assistance from families in flood-safe areas. Wijayanti et al. (2019) stated that to maintain the household economy, women employed adaptive strategies such as utilizing natural and human resources from immediate family members, extending work hours, seeking new jobs, reducing expenses, and borrowing from banks or neighbors.

Despite their extensive contributions, these contributions have not received adequate recognition from society. Their role is considered unequal to that of men, who engage in public activities in dangerous areas. Women's roles are viewed as routine, consistent with socially imposed gender roles. This view has limited women's access to public activities related to disaster management. Utami et al. (2021) state that women experience discrimination because they fulfill both reproductive and productive roles, while men are confined to community management roles.

The state guarantees women's involvement in all stages of a disaster through PERKA BNPB No. 13/2014. This policy represents a significant breakthrough by the state aimed at implementing the principles of gender justice and equality, encouraging gender mainstreaming in planning and budgeting, and promoting the protection and fulfillment of women's and men's rights in disaster management.

The gender mainstreaming mentioned in this policy uses four aspects as indicators: access, participation, control over resources and decision-making, and benefits from policies and programs. All gender mainstreaming indicators are reflected in every stage of disaster management, from pre-disaster, emergency response, and post-disaster. Gender-disaggregated data is needed that clearly and measurably illustrates the similarities and differences in the needs, perspectives, experiences, knowledge, and risks faced by women and men. Access is understood as the deliberate opportunity provided for equal participation between men and women. The meaning of "intentional" is understood as something determined from the outset and prepared for. Specifically mentioning women's involvement is a temporary affirmative measure until the ideal situation is achieved. Participation aims to ensure that men and women are seen and given equal opportunities to express their views, whether in agreement or disagreement with what is being discussed in a forum. Contributions of views are highly dependent on their level of knowledge. Therefore, if women are excluded due to a lack of understanding, it is necessary to provide open access to information and knowledge to support substantive participation. This way, lack of understanding and low capacity should no longer be barriers to women's participation. Control over resources and decision-making, measured by the extent to which policies, implemented programs, allocated funds, and so on, fairly accommodate differences in conditions and needs and can be used equally by women and men.

Accommodate the views and needs of women and men. The benefits of implemented policies and programs are measured by how men and women equitably benefit from the results of disaster management planning and implementation. This includes ensuring that available infrastructure meets needs and addresses existing challenges.

These four aspects of gender analysis were not met in flood mitigation efforts in Aceh Utara, particularly at the research site. The Aceh Utara Regency Government does not yet have a policy regulating gender mainstreaming in development as a derivative regulation to accommodate local contexts down to the village level. This information was obtained from interviews with sources from the Aceh Utara Government.

Minimizing the risks faced must be achieved by increasing women's capacity. This improvement effort is carried out by providing space and opportunities for women to participate in various awareness-raising activities and skills for self-rescue and the safety of others. Women's participation in these activities must be systematically guaranteed through policies that specifically regulate the level of women's participation in decision-making and the development of disaster mitigation plans.

The Aceh Utara government also lacks a flood contingency plan to serve as a guide for all relevant parties in carrying out their respective roles and functions in a measurable manner. The available budget is also very limited, unable to support the various efforts required to ensure that the disaster management concept is developed in a participatory, inclusive, and gender-responsive manner. The flood mitigation budget is allocated for structural mitigation activities. Wesli (2021) stated that community participation in flood mitigation efforts in Aceh Utara Regency remains low, and the local government also provides few opportunities for community participation. Furthermore, he stated that structural approaches to flood mitigation tend to be expensive, while local governments have limited budgets. Therefore, non-structural strategies involving the community and relying on trust as a concept of social capital are necessary.

Meetings dedicated to discussing disaster management plans are not only minimal at the district level but also virtually non-existent at the village level. Despite frequent disasters, strategic mitigation programs have not been prioritized in proposed development plans. This is reflected in the program proposals submitted at Village Development Planning Meetings (Musrenbang), which are dominated by physical development.

At village meetings, women's attendance is very limited, even though each village has a female member of the Village Leadership Council (Tuha Peut Gampong). This is due to both internal and external factors. Meetings are often held at night, mandatory domestic duties, a reluctance to share a room with their husbands or other respected men in the extended family, and limited knowledge of the topics discussed are all reasons why women choose not to attend. Women Tuha Peut will attend daytime meetings but fail to contribute substantial insights because they often lack a thorough understanding of the discussions.

Tokan & Gai (2020) stated that participatory and sustainable village development processes should actively involve women, thereby realizing their essential interests in gender-responsive village planning and budgeting. They further stated that quantitatively, women have a relatively high level of awareness in supporting village development. However, qualitatively, women lack the ability and courage to express ideas and criticisms in village deliberation forums.

Women are perceived as lacking adequate knowledge and skills regarding disasters and public affairs. Socially, women's space for movement is also limited to the domestic sphere, so their time is spent fulfilling household chores. Women receive information from their husbands or adult males who attend these meetings. This information is often incomplete, as it depends heavily on how much the men absorb and understand. Female heads of households who do not have an adult male at home face greater challenges in obtaining sufficient information. However, women possess the ability to disseminate information through various social activities. If managed properly by developing women's understanding and awareness of disasters, this important role will contribute to disaster management. Bakti et al. (2017) found that women play roles as communicators, mentors, trainers, and facilitators in environmental resource utilization and advocacy.

Limited access and minimal participation by women also prevent them from controlling available resources. Agreed-upon policies only accommodate general community needs and ignore women's specific circumstances. The majority of disaster management programs involve physical development that does not provide space for women's involvement from the planning stage. Non-physical programs, which are more open to women, are not specifically designed to accommodate women's unique circumstances, either in terms of material or implementation strategies. Fitri (n.d.) stated that a lack of basic knowledge about disaster mitigation results in women being late or even failing to rescue themselves and their families. Women's attitudes and preparedness can be developed by providing them with roles in every flood mitigation effort (Vitasari & Fujiawati, 2018).

These activities are rarely conducted due to limited budgeting. To address funding constraints, these activities are conducted at the sub-district level and are generally attended by men. Women in Tumpok Barat village are never involved in training, outreach, or simulation activities. This limited female presence stems from the perception that flood mitigation is a dangerous and physically demanding activity, making it more appropriately the domain of men, whom the community considers more capable than women.

This understanding was refuted by the experience of a neighboring village that served as a pilot project, where women were involved as members of the disaster task force. They participated in training and simulations alongside men. In addition to training, the village also received government support. Women became an independent community group, carrying out various roles during floods. Unfortunately, the number of pilot project villages, which was

only three, did not represent the 852 villages in Aceh Utara, the 113 villages that experienced the disaster in late 2021 and early 2022.

Women's needs are taken into account in the gender-responsive disaster management service innovation program, in addition to the use of gender-disaggregated data, as well as the implementation of women-specific programs such as disaster and mitigation outreach, public kitchen and evacuation training, participation in the village-level disaster resilience forum, post-trauma recovery, and the "Jitu Pasma" program (Parasari & Nurhaeni, 2021).

Asan Krueng Kreh Village was the site of the Participatory Mapping for Disaster Risk Reduction program of the Aceh Utara Disaster Risk Reduction Forum in 2009-2010. In addition to training and simulation activities, the village was also provided with boats to facilitate transportation for residents during floods. However, these facilities were no longer functional during the floods at the end of 2021. In 2006, the village was also provided with one shelter for residents. Unfortunately, this shelter was completely unusable because it was built in a low-lying area and submerged during floods.

The absence of women in strategic meetings during the planning stage results in their specific experiences and needs not being accommodated in emergency response. This is evident in the very limited availability of supporting facilities. Gender-responsive shelter infrastructure is lacking. Evacuation centers typically use prayer rooms (*mushala/meunasah*), religious study centers (*balee*), and Islamic boarding schools (*peusantren/dayah*) as open spaces occupied by the community. There is no space for women to engage in specific activities due to their reproductive function. Limited sanitation and clean water are also serious challenges faced by women after childbirth or menstruation during floods. In these conditions, nutritional intake for pregnant and breastfeeding women is no longer a priority, despite its critical importance. Reduced nutritional needs can impact the health of the fetus, the breastfeeding baby, and the woman herself.

Another issue is the availability of water transportation during floods. Women's mobility is severely limited, making them highly dependent on men because they lack the skills to operate traditional means of transportation. Public kitchens cannot be established due to the lack of dry land in the village. Women manage the kitchens in groups consisting of several families. During the floods, food and other aid were not available because they were piled up at posts managed by the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB). Aid could not be distributed evenly to refugee camps, especially in locations with high water and danger due to limited equipment and staff. Aid distribution and public kitchens were only started when the floodwaters began to recede. Given these limitations, women played a crucial role in distributing food to all family members.

Food and clothing provision is also not designed to meet the specific needs of women, unless assistance is provided from other parties. There is no specific mechanism for distribution or disaggregated data. There are no standard operating procedures (SOPs) or guidelines for logistics distribution. Distribution procedures are still based on experience. Coordination between the

Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD) and stakeholders, including the community and vulnerable groups, is not well-planned and well-organized. There is no joint concept or plan for flood management initiated by the Aceh Utara Government. BPBD intensively coordinates with the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), the police, the Social Services Agency (Social Services Agency), and the Health Agency only during the emergency response period.

The government, down to the village level, has also not yet established a disaggregated data collection system to capture not only the numbers but also the community's needs and the level of disaster awareness between men and women. This data is needed to develop mitigation concepts that are responsive to the various gender issues encountered in the field. Cvetković et al. (2018) noted that the 2014 flood disaster in Serbia demonstrated problems in disaster response management due to gender imbalances and suggested that the National Disaster Management Agency take gender-based differences in awareness and preparedness into account.

Women can survive because they have strong spiritual beliefs. Disasters are seen as God's will (qadarullah) that must be accepted with sincerity and trust. Disasters will inevitably occur because they have been determined by Allah SWT, and believers will not complain or blame God for what happens. However, this acceptance is not accompanied by systematic efforts to prepare for the next disaster. This also weakens women's demands and their fighting spirit to ensure their right to participate is fulfilled in all stages of disaster management. Women fail to critically recognize that recurring floods are also influenced by human contributions to environmental damage that causes flooding. Therefore, human involvement is also needed to reduce the risk of loss and damage caused by disasters.

This spiritual attitude makes women apathetic toward the full impact of disasters. No strategic plan has been prepared to deal with disasters. There has been no demand for accountability from the government, which must protect its citizens. There has been no greater push to advocate for themselves and to participate in systematic disaster management. Women also haven't seen the urgency of actively participating in structured disaster management efforts. Meanwhile, women have great potential if their abilities can be managed and directed. Their ability to disseminate information and persist with all activities has not been developed and directed to support vulnerability reduction.

Fatalism regarding natural disasters hinders preparedness, and overcoming it is a key element in preparing communities for disasters (McClure, 2017). Aksa (2020) states that in Islamic teachings, tawaqal (trust in God) is demonstrated by human hard work, as God's will does not change human destiny unless humans strive to change their destiny. The use of knowledge and technology in disaster risk reduction is one form of effort that humans can take to mitigate the impact of disasters, a manifestation of tawaqal.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Women in the villages of Asan Krueng Kreh and Tumpok Barat, Aceh Utara, engage in several activities before, during, and after a flood. These roles

are still dominated by domestic and unorganized activities. Women do not play a significant role in decision-making, planning, and implementing disaster management programs, as men do. PERKA BNPB 13/2014 has not been effectively implemented because officials' understanding is very limited, influenced by community understanding, and limited supporting facilities. Consequently, women's knowledge and skills related to disaster management remain very limited, leaving them less independent and at risk of becoming victims due to their high level of vulnerability.

On the other hand, women have proven themselves capable of surviving difficult conditions caused by disasters. Women are also competent in disseminating information. The belief that disasters are God's will foster optimism for resilience while fostering apathy and accepting the disaster as it is. There is no visible evidence of more serious efforts to advocate for themselves to be involved in flood mitigation efforts, despite their potential not being fully explored. Recommendations for the government and other stakeholders include reducing women's vulnerability by increasing their capacity and skills, and providing sufficient space for women to play an active and structured role in flood mitigation efforts in Aceh Utara, from planning, implementation, and monitoring.

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