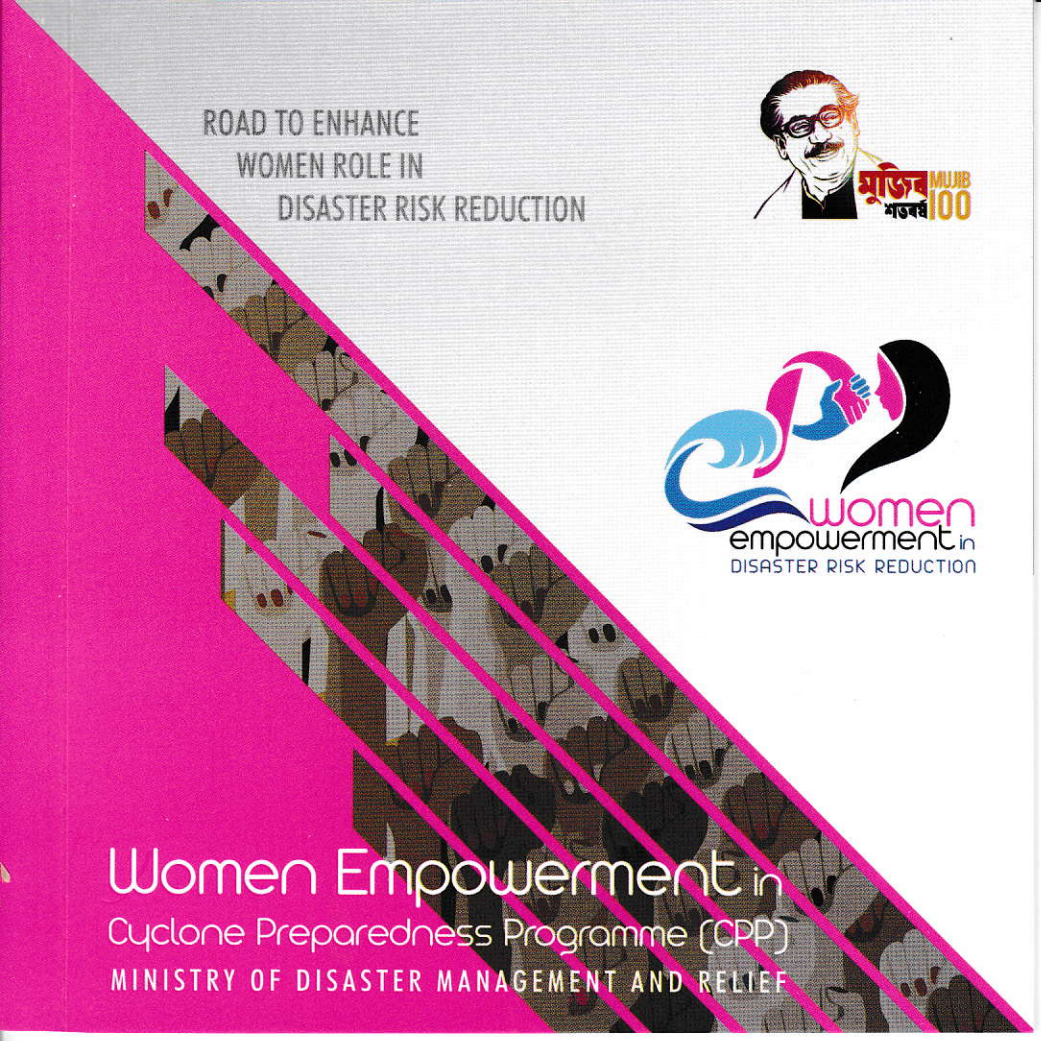
ROAD TO ENHANCE
WOMEN ROLE IN
DISASTER RISK REDUCTION



Women Empowerment in Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP)

MINISTRY OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND RELIEF

Context

Bangladesh is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world mainly due to her geographic location. In the current social, economic and cultural contexts of Bangladesh, the women are very vulnerable to natural disasters. The differentiated impact of disasters on men and women is primarily caused by the existing manifested gender inequalities.

However, gender relations in Bangladesh have been undergoing a process of considerable transformation over the last two-three decades as part of political commitment, broader process of economic transition and social change.

Under the strong will of honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, women are now considered as a force of building gender equitable disaster resilience. They are well positioned to be 'agents of change' for disaster management and climate change adaptation in household, workplace, community and institutions.



New
CPP volunteer unit
(10 Female + 10 male)

Background of the Initiative

A small change initiative with an objective to increase access to information by women and girls on early warning and lifesaving services during disaster was the driving force of this journey. The change initiative, jointly done by CPP and UNFPA with the knowledge supported by MSB Sweden, was one of the key motivators of this gender endeavor.

Identified gap

A study was made by CPP and UNFPA jointly for the Development of Early Warning Dissemination Guideline for Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) specially focused on women perspective. Findings of the study are:

Women Volunteer perspective

Disparity in number- One third women in current CPP volunteer structure

Backwardness in capabilities

Lack of participation

Poor number of women volunteers in leadership role

Women's access to information, early warning message and GBV concerns

Early Warning message limitations

- Understandability
- Accessibility

Gender Digital Divide

Gender based violence (GBV) risks in disasters

Practice and Perceptions

Due to the custodian role of the women in the family, they decide to evacuate to shelter only at the twelfth hour.

Women volunteers cannot become fully active at the height of the cyclone as they have their responsibility in their own families.

Many women and girls are reluctant to move on common perception of their personal safety.

Women are considered primarily as recipient of Early Warnings but not 'Agents of Change'.

Although the women manage their family in normal time, their potentialities are not considered for management in disaster situation.

The representation of women in the leadership of CPP is very appalling which is evident from the following table:

SL No	Particulars	Number of Incumbent	Number of Women
1	Upazila Team Leader	41	0
2	Union Team Leader	355	1
3	Unit Team Leader	3,701	11
4	Wireless Operator	90	4

Women Representation at Leadership of CPP

Minimizing the gap

Recommendation for Immediate Implementation

1. The number of women volunteers in CPP should be increased from five to ten in unit level which will make the structure gender balanced.
2. Women volunteers of CPP, alongside their male counterparts, should engage equally in every stage of approaching cyclone.
3. They should be trained and motivated through creating proper environment and opportunity to take up this challenging task equally.
4. CPP should equipped them with the necessary equipment and gears e.g. siren, microphone etc. for dissemination of early warnings for the vulnerable women in a timely manner.
5. Female CPP volunteers must have functional and leadership role in the management of cyclone shelters, particularly the areas in the shelter earmarked for women and girls.
6. The women volunteers should lead the identification and protection of most vulnerable people like elderly, pregnant, lactating mother, persons with disabilities, etc.

Guidelines for Mid-term Implementation

1. Leadership of women volunteers should be established at all the hierarchies of the volunteers of CPP i.e. Upazila (sub-district), Union and Unit levels by effecting necessary changes in the volunteer by-law.
2. During normal time the women volunteers should conduct courtyard sessions with women and girls in their respective working areas on preparedness and response of health, social, cultural, economic issues, protection issues; GBV issues during disaster in the shelter and proper interpretation of early warnings messages, and actions which need to be taken at family and community level at different stages of disaster.
3. Women volunteers and the community women should play active roles in the mock drills, not remain as passive observers.
4. The leadership of volunteers of CPP in the management of cyclone shelter should be established through policy documents and operational instruments.
5. Case studies of successful women leadership on disaster management should be documented and shared among the women volunteers through training and orientation courses, and it could also be disseminated among women and girls of the community at courtyard sessions.



Women-led CPP volunteer Unit

Implementation status

Policy interventions:

Identifying policy gap and drive towards minimization.

Quantitative measure:

Bringing parity in number- CPP has increased the number of female volunteers which has been doubled to make it gender balanced. New 18,505 women volunteers are enrolled (5 persons in each 3701 units). Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to inaugurate the new women volunteers' inclusion in International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction, 13 October 2020.

Enhancement of Leadership- promoting women volunteer leadership in CPP's every tier, also it brought required changes in CPP volunteer by-law.

Qualitative approach:

Training- All the new recruited women volunteers will be trained in the financial year of 2020-21.

Motivation- They will get more opportunity in recognition.

Role- guideline has been developed to enhance their active role in drills, demonstrations and in real time response.

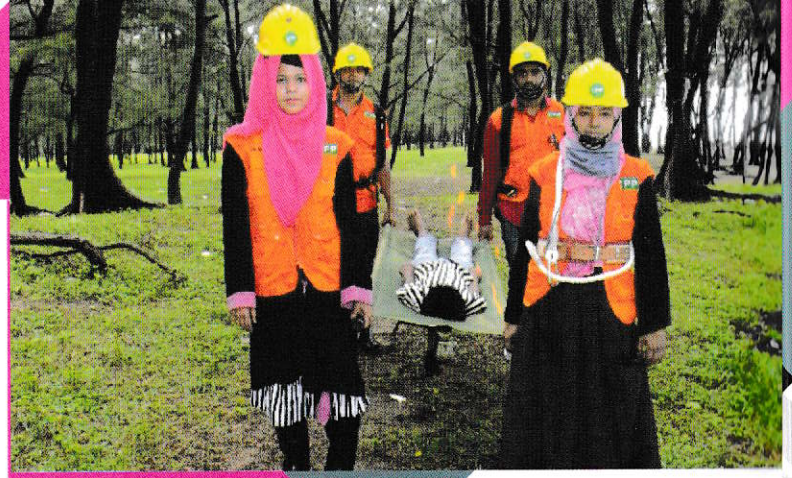
Equipping with regular and customized gears- All the new women volunteers will be equipped with personal protective equipment by this financial year. Dignity kit is included in CPP volunteer equipment schedule for protection of their health.

Women friendly Early Warning (EW) dissemination- Prepared.

Social measures (advocacy and engagement)

Creating community engagement and responsiveness

Changing negative perception towards early warning



Short-term benefit

- Disaster risk of women will be addressed more.
- More women will take shelter in disaster situation.
- Women will receive early warning properly.
- Gender-based violence in disaster period will be reduced.
- Access to disaster related information will be increased.

women empowerment in DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Long-term outcome

- Women empowerment and leadership in DRR will be enhanced.
- Participatory and inclusive disaster risk management will be developed.
- More women participation in DRR will help creating Disaster-resilient communities in coastal region, especially in marginal areas.
- The women death toll from the cyclone has declined due to increased access to early warning and life-saving services for women. The female-male death ratio from cyclones was 14: 1 in 1970, 5: 1 in 1991 and now reduced to 2: 1 in 2016 1: 1 in 2020.



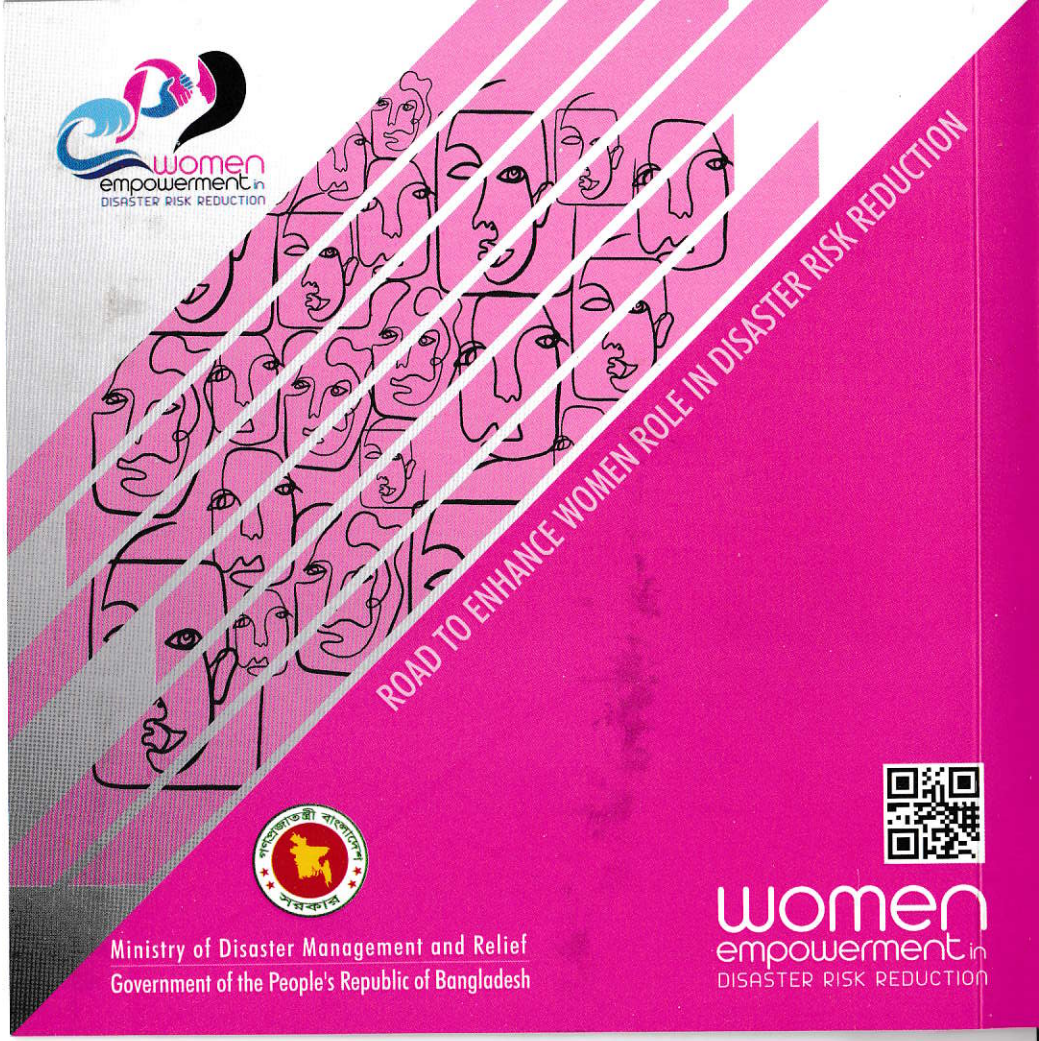
Women in Early Warning Dissemination



Agent of Change-
Committed, trained and equipped
CPP Woman Volunteer

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Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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