

Building Women Leadership in Assam for Disaster Risk Reduction: Celebration of International Day for Disaster Reduction Recognize the Efforts of Girls and Women

International day for Disaster Reduction (IDDR) is a day globally acknowledged and celebrated to promote awareness on Disaster Risk Reduction with a theme concerning different dimensions of DRR. For the year 2012, UNISDR has decided to celebrate the unending, not very well acknowledged but valuable contribution made by women and girls for Disaster Reduction all over the world.

Celebrating IDDR in Assam:

Two simultaneous 3-days of trainings on School Safety (including School Disaster Management Plan and Mock Drills) were organized by Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) and facilitated by All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) at Goalpara and Darrang Districts of Assam from 11-13th October 2012. 103 schools from Darrang and Goalpara districts of Assam prepared the action plan for building knowledge on DRR with school community. Enhanced focus was on girl child and female teachers.

On October 13, 2012, the training group celebrated IDDR through following key actions.

Group discussion on Girls and Women's Contribution in Disaster Risk Reduction.

The case of Tilly Smith had been the dominant example during the debate favoring the valued contribution of young girl to save thousands of lives from Tsunami in a small island of Thailand filled with tourists. But each disaster has its own Tilly Smith. Let us find her, let us recognize her.

In Goalpara, the program was organized by the District Disaster Management Authority to celebrate the occasion where women from different parts of the District were present. The discussion attracted a very handsome participation of the gathering. *"Mur Ghoreinine okole das jon manuk bochale eta tempo accidentor pachot (My wife rescued 10 passengers by herself after a tempo accident)"* says Mr. Adul Kader Mullah, a participant in the training. *"Without involvement of women and girls, we cannot think for reduction, mitigation and prevention of disaster. Though considered vulnerable, they can be a force in disaster reduction if significant steps are taken to increase their involvement thorough enhancing their capacities to deal with disaster."* Says Dr. Hemanta Baishya, District Project Officer, District Disaster Management Authority, Goalpara District, Assam, India.

Another very special attraction of the program was Mock Drill. The women teachers who were participants in the 3-day training were conducting the mock drill at Goalpara High School. The girl students were encouraged to lead. Women teachers not only excited but also have demonstrated the real learning from the training and presence of mind.

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Mr. Pritam Saikia, Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara district emphasising on importance of girl's and women's participation in DRR efforts.



Women trained participants from training facilitated the training at Goalpara High School for and with girls students.

However, the difference is not so huge, but a theme such as this acknowledging the unappreciated efforts having immense importance of women and girls to reduce disaster can be an inspiring fact to motivate and gear up this section of the population to bring more examples as of Tilly Smith and ensure that the risk of disasters have been reduced.

Mr. Pritam Saikia, Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara district emphasized that Disaster Reduction should be an everyday concern especially for Assam citizens due to multiple hazard scenario. He further added that the contribution of Women and Girls is highly needed and must be recognized for achieving effective result on disaster reduction. Training ended with school disaster management plan, mock drill and teacher's action plan of different activities to build students knowledge on disaster risk reduction on October 13, 2013.

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