

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) for Strengthening Disaster Resilient Village

Tri Yumarni^{a*}, Lilis Sri Sulistiani^b, Rukna Idanati^c, Guntur Gunarto^d

^{a-d} Jenderal Soedirman University, Jl.HR Bunyamin Grendeng Purwokerto

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ABSTRACT

Gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) is essential to ensure gender equality and to achieve sustainable Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). The implementation of decentralisation reform in developing countries has transferred roles of implementing DRR program to lower level of government including to community or village government. Hence, effective strategies to mainstream GESI in DRR activities in the community or village government is important to promote gender equality and to achieve sustainable development. However, what key issues and effective strategies to mainstream GESI in the lower level of community or village has not well-documented in developing countries. This study aims to identify key issues and GESI strategies for strengthening disaster resilient village based on existing literature in developing countries. Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) was used to identify GESI strategies for strengthening disaster resilient village in the existing literature. We able to find 142 studies related to GESI and disaster risk reduction in community level which published on SCOPUS, Web of Science, and Med Line between 2009 and 2019. From 142 studies we select 10 studies which are strongly relevant with the aim of this study. Five key issues are identified such as low human capital, patriarchal culture, resistance from traditional society, weak GESI institution and poor governance, and lack capacity of policy makers and implementers. There are four key GESI strategies area for strengthening disaster resilient in community level: (1) Organizational, (2) Capacity, (3) Operational, and (4) Resources. In the organizational area, the main strategy is provision of GESI sensitive policies and practices. In the capacity area, the main strategy is capacity development and lesson learning in the community disaster resilient program. In the operational area, the main strategy is embedding GESI in all phases of the community disaster resilient program. In the resources area, the main strategy is mobilizing funding and GESI expertise in the community disaster resilient program.

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1. Introduction

There are more people at risk to hazards in developing countries and this number was predicted to increase in the future without any effort from government and policy makers for strengthening DRR in the affected disaster countries. Indeed, it is vital to reduce the impact of tsunamis, earthquakes, flooding, mountain explosions as well as extreme weathers by anticipating such events

through developing better disaster risk reduction and community resilience. This urgent need of establishing better Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience (DRR) has been highlighted within the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda. There are 25 targets related to DRR in 10 of the 17 SDGs goals. These targets have strong linkage with the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030 that set out specific targets and priorities for action focusing on disaster risk

* Corresponding author. e-mail: tri.yumarni@unsoed.ac.id

management, the reduction of disaster risk, the prevention of new risk and on reducing existing risk and strengthening resilience (Pearson & Pelling, 2015). Hence, DRR was one of core agendas of the Sendai Framework 2015-2030 and the 2030 SDGs strategies (Wahlström, 2015; Esquivel & Sweetman, 2016).

Gender and development literature highlight that one of key issues for establishing better disaster risk reduction and resilience are Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) (Bradshaw, 2015). The important of GESI has also been highlighted in the SDGs agenda that state the need for achieving gender equality and empower all women and girls in all aspects of nation development (Esquivel & Sweetman, 2016). In the DRR contexts, GESI addressed the need for mainstreaming gender equality and inclusion of vulnerable and marginal groups before, during and after disasters. It is recognised that disasters create unfavourable situation for women, older, babies and disable groups. The detrimental effects of disasters on women, older, babies and disable groups are greater at developing countries due to weak anticipation.

Studies reported that these vulnerable groups occupied majority death following the Aceh, Thailand, and Sri Lanka Tsunami (Aguilar, 2012). Moreover, after the disaster they often to be marginalized to participate and to access various DRR program. Without full participation of these groups, effort to establish better DRR in disasters affected countries often not be successfully achieved (Bradshaw, 2015). Hence, GESI framework gives special attention to promote gender equality and social inclusion of marginal and vulnerable groups within affected community by involving and empowering them in all phases of DRR activities (Aipira, Kidd, & Morioka, 2017).

Recently, the DRR activities in developing countries have been focused to local level including community or village government. Following the implementation of political decentralisation across developing countries, effort to develop DRR has been focused on the lower level of community or village government as an autonomous institution which responsible to plan and to implement various DRR related activities (Pearson & Pelling, 2015). Hence, developing effective bottom-up strategies to mainstream GESI within community or village disaster management plan is vital for implementing community based DRR (Drolet et al., (2015).

Accordingly, village DRR activities refer to a list of activities a village agrees to follow to prevent livelihoods of vulnerable and marginal groups following disasters and most importantly to prevent loss of life (Pearson & Pelling, 2015). It also identifies in advance, various actions that should be taken by communities and everyone including vulnerable and marginal groups who living in the community so that each of them knows what should do when a disaster strikes or when a warning is received (Bradshaw, 2015). The main objective is to empower all community members to deal with disasters on their own as a way of life.

Although GESI is believed to be a fundamental element to achieve and sustainable disaster resilience

program, what key issues and effective strategies to mainstream GESI in DRR activities in the lower level of community or village has not well-documented in developing countries (Aguilar, 2012). Most of GESI research have been focused on how to implement GESI in nation and local development in general (Buckingham & Le Masson, 2017). Therefore, knowledge to understand how and what strategies to implement GESI in the contexts of DRR in community or village government level is needed. By addressing these knowledge gaps, we may be able to provide an effective strategy that contribute to achieving better DRR in local level. In doing so, this study aims to conduct a systematic literature review to identify existing research on GESI and DRR in community or village and then based on this review we identify key issues and main strategies to mainstream GESI in the lower level of community or village. We then develop a conceptual framework for mainstreaming GESI within DRR in the community or village level.

2. Research Method

This study aims to identify key issues and strategies for effective GESI for strengthening village DRR based on existing literature in developing countries. Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) was used to identify GESI strategies for strengthening disaster resilient village in the existing literature (Moher et al., 2010). Figure 1 describes steps by steps systematic reviews was conducted in this study. First, preparation by identifying research aim and objectives.

Second, doing the database search by searching studies related GESI and DRR published on SCOPUS, Web of Science, and Med Line between 2009 and 2019. In doing so, we used keywords: “gender equality”, “gender inequality”, “gender mainstreaming”, “gender and social inclusion”, “disaster risk reduction”, “community resilience” and “village resilience”. In this phase, we found 132 articles contains the keywords. We also used additional sources from Google Scholar with same keywords and found 42 related articles.

Third, remove all duplicates articles to avoid reviewing same article that appear more than one. We used a citation manager software, EndNote version X.82, to manage database and to remove all similar articles we collected. After removing all duplicates, we found 142 articles which can be used for next screening. Fourth, screening articles by conducting fast reading of 142 articles. Fast reading was conducted by thoroughly reading the title, abstract and keyword of each article. Then, we identify aim and research questions of each article that relevant with the purpose of our study. After we screened all those articles, we found only 96 articles that closely related to the purpose of our studies. Fifth, select eligible articles by reviewing all 96 full-text articles. After thoroughly review the articles, we found only 10 articles that specifically related to the aim of our

study. We used these 10 articles as main sources for our systematic review.

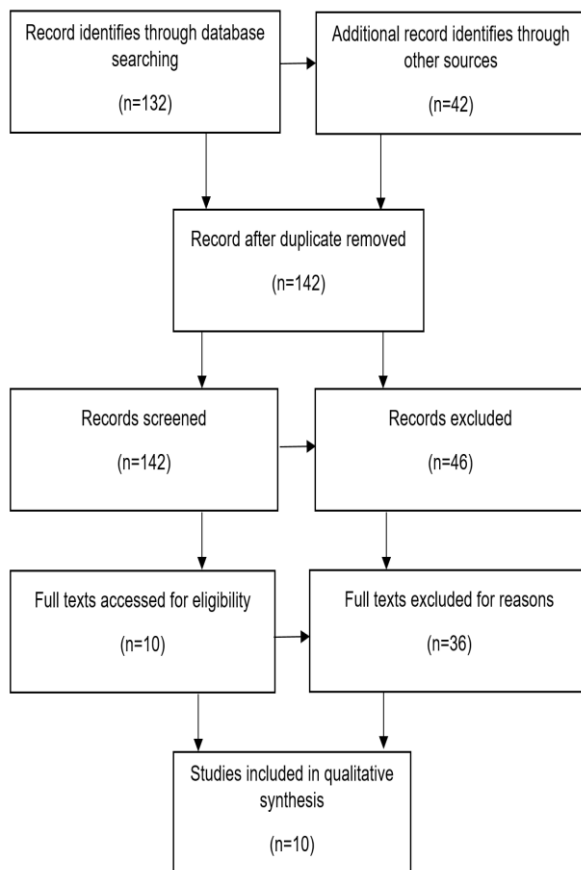


Figure 1. PRISMA steps by steps for systematic literature review of GESI within DRR in developing countries

Our systematic review was divided into four sections. The first section discussed about the concept of GESI within village DRR. Next, we discussed why GESI is important for village DRR? Then, we identified issues of implementing GESI within village DRR. Lastly, we discussed about strategies for mainstreaming GESI within DRR literature. The next section elaborates our findings.

3. Results

3.1 Understanding the concept of GESI within village DRR

As suggested within selected literature, there is no specific definition of GESI within village DRR. The authors explain the concept of GESI and DRR in general. GESI is pre-requisite for achieving other development outcomes. The SDGs agenda specifically highlight that woman high participation and women

empowerment are crucial to achieve the goals. As United Nations states:

“Across regions and countries, evidence suggests that sustainable development strategies that do not promote gender equality and the full participation and empowerment of women and girls will not succeed” (Fordham & Meyreles, 2013).

The 2030 SDGs also specify achieving gender equality and social inclusion will give essential contribution in progression all the goals and targets as written in the document:

“Realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress all the goals and targets. The achievement of full human potential and of sustainable development is not possible if one half of humanity continues to be denied its full human rights and opportunities. Women and girls must enjoy equal access to quality education, economic resources, and political participation as well as equal opportunities with men and boys..... the systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the SDGs agenda is crucial” (Bahadur et al., 2015).

GESI is thus essential for enhancing the sustainable of development. As sustainable development is not possible without GESI. In fact, it is a pre-requisite for any action aimed at improving people’s quality of life. This implies that GESI is essential for social justice and human rights. Accordingly, it is also a precondition for environmental protection, sustainable reconstruction, and development.

The United Nations defines gender equality as *“the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys”*. Meanwhile, social exclusion is defined by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations as:

“The involuntary exclusion of individuals and groups from society’s political, economic and societal processes, which prevents their full participation in the society in which they live” (Bahadur et al., 2015).

It is believed that inequality and exclusion come at a high cost and therefore without equal participation of all community members including individuals at risk of exclusion, society has less of an opportunity to reach its full potentials. Gender equality and social inclusion are

social goods, more than simply being something, we intrinsically feel is “the right thing to do”. GESI is a concept that addresses unequal power relations experienced by individual based on their gender, wealth, ability, location, caste or ethnicity or a combination of these dimension. GESI focuses on the need for action to reduce inequality and ensure equal rights, opportunities, and respect for all individuals regardless of their gender, wealth, ability, location, caste or ethnicity and others. Hence GESI approach is focused on delivering equal rights, opportunities, and mainstream services to all citizens which in turn in the future will benefit to strengthen the whole society.

What is DRR? According to UNISDR, DRR is “*the concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyse and reduce the causal factors of disasters*” (Etinay, Egbu & Murray, 2018). Reducing exposure to hazards, lessening vulnerability of people and property, wise management of land and the environment and improving preparedness and early warning for adverse events are all examples of DRR activities. The UNISDR further highlights that DRR includes disciplines like disaster management, disaster mitigation and disaster preparedness, but DRR is also part of sustainable development. For development activities to be sustainable they must reduce disaster risk. On the contrary, unsound development policies will increase disaster risk and disaster losses (Mehta, 2009). Thus, DRR involves every part of society, every part of the private sector and most importantly every part of government from national to local government including village government. Following decentralisation reform across developing countries, village government become cornerstone of DRR activities at local level.

Based on those understanding, GESI within village DRR can be defined as a concept that addresses unequal power relations experienced by individual based on gender, wealth, ability, location, caste or ethnicity or combination of those dimension that occurs in the process of DRR activities within village or community. In the contexts of village DRR, GESI is a means and not an end. In other words, GESI within village DRR refers to a strategy to promote and to integrate the concept of gender equality and social inclusion within DRR activities. By doing so, village DRR activities meet the needs and interests of marginal and vulnerable groups within communities.

3.2 Why GESI is important for village DRR?

Why GESI is fundamental for achieving better village DRR? All authors agree that increasing gender inequality and social exclusion across developing countries are main issues that challenges any effort to achieve an effective DRR implementation. Disasters

are an avoidable interruption which requires effective systems and sustainable strategies. Hence, the increasing number of disasters across the developing world makes careful planning and a holistic approach to DRR is critical as disasters are an avoidable interruption which requires effective DRR systems and sustainable DRR strategies. However, gender inequality and social exclusion are one of the weak lines of many DRR policies in developing countries. Many DRR policies and practices in developing countries often ignores women, girls, older individual and disable person concerns and preferences during DRR lead to poor DRR performance. Therefore, integrating GESI framework within DRR activities is the answer to solve the challenges (Amaratunga, Haigh & Ginige, 2009).

The authors explain at least three reasons why GESI is fundamental to achieve an effective village DRR. First, the main aim of GESI is to increase awareness about gender equality and social inclusion in turn to help in reducing the detrimental impact of disasters to women, girls, older individual and disable person before, during and after disaster. Hence, GESI is vital to protect those vulnerable and marginal groups from poverty and even death due to disasters (Amaratunga, Haigh & Ginige, 2009).

Second, since women, girls, older individual and disable person are more vulnerable in a disaster, their needs and concerns should be widely integrated in the village DRR plan from both perspective of beneficiaries and decision makers. GESI is considered as an important component within village DRR policies as strategies to achieve gender equality and to promote social inclusion through thinking and including the needs of women, girls, older individual and disable person in the process of DRR (i.e., disaster management, disaster mitigation and disaster preparedness) (Amaratunga, Haigh & Ginige, 2009).

Third, GESI is pre-requisite for sustainable village DRR. The authors highlight the linkage of promoting GESI on social, economic, and environmental sustainability of DRR. In terms of social sustainability, gender stereotypes, social values, and norms, limited and unequal access and control to resources, limited women, girls, and older people’s capabilities to involve fully due to poor health and education services before, during and after disasters. However, it is also recognized that women, girls and older people’s social networking capacity and knowledge are essential to achieving sustainable DRR. Hence, GESI to achieve social sustainability not only protect women, girls and older people from social and cultural discrimination and violence against them but also promote and enlarge their access to disaster relief and training process, education services and more importantly within decision-making in the DRR activities. In terms of economic

sustainability, integrating GESI within DRR ensure women, girls, and older people to have equal access of economic benefits provided by DRR activities, such as jobs, property rights, funds, benefits, and insurance. In terms of environmental sustainability, promoting GESI is vital to increase environmental sustainability of affected communities, such as maintaining clean and safe water, green environment, and good sanitation (Amaratunga, Haigh & Ginige, 2009). Hence GESI strategies not only protect women from environmental degradation and pollution but also promote their capacity to build better biodiversity and environment.

3.3 Issues of implementing GESI within village DRR

However, implementing GESI within village DRR is another major challenge. Although GESI agenda has been included in the national and local development planning, but in practice the implementation of GESI agenda often fail. The authors identify some major issues within GESI implementation facing by community or village government (Bock, 2015). First, strong existence of patriarchal culture. Most of villages across developing countries still maintain strong patriarchy and patrilineal system. In this system men hold primary power and predominate in roles in every aspect of community life, especially in political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property. With strong patriarchal and patrilineal culture, it is impossible to promote GESI as the root cause of existing gender inequality and social exclusion in the society are beliefs and cultures that view man must dominate, oppress, and exploit women (Amaratunga, Haigh & Ginige, 2009).

Second, resistant of religious leaders and bureaucrats. The roles of religious leaders, traditional leaders and senior bureaucrats are important in most villages in developing countries. For centuries, women across developing countries have struggled to gain equality in their life due to resistant of religious leaders, traditional leaders and senior bureaucrats who having misunderstandings or misinterpretations of religious texts that have justified the differences roles and responsibilities between man and women in public spaces. Without changing of understanding and changing of their attitudes, the implementation of GESI would be failed. In other words, GESI implementation needs leadership that beliefs gender balance is vital for achieving better society (Amaratunga, Haigh & Ginige, 2009). Third, lack capacity of implementers. Many policies in developing countries often failed not due to the content of policy but the implementation of policy. The lack of policy implementation experience and less knowledge how to translate the policy into activities often lead to failure implementation. In the case of

GESI, the authors found that this lack capacity of implementers is one of major challenges of the GESI implementation in the DRR activities (Bock, 2015).

Fourth, weak of GESI institution is also other issue often found in developing countries. Most of developing countries face issue of poor governance, lack accountability and responsibility, lack of financial and incentive supports, low participation and responsiveness. Hence, policy makers often fail to realise that DRR is an intervention of development that must accommodate participation of all community members and therefore responsiveness of policy makers are vital.

With absence of strong institution to implement GESI it seems that most effort to integrate GESI within village DRR would be failed. Fifth, poverty and low educated women and girls. Another major challenges of GESI implementation are developing countries is the high number of poverty and low educated women and girls (Bock, 2015). GESI is about how to empower women and girls so that they can participate in the decision-making process. To be able to participate in the decision making, basic economic capital and human capital are necessary. With high women poverty and low educated women, GESI implementation in developing countries would be failed (Bock, 2015).

3.4 Strategies for mainstreaming GESI within village DRR

Based on identification of major implementation issues, the authors suggest some strategies for mainstreaming GESI within village DRR. There are four key GESI strategies area for strengthening disaster resilient in community level: (1) Organizational, (2) Capacity, (3) Operational, and (4) Resources.

In the organizational area, the main strategy is provision of GESI sensitive policies and practices. DRR activities can be defined as the organization and management of resources and responsibilities for mainstreaming GESI in all aspects of DRR preparedness, response, and recovery in order to reduce the detrimental effects of disasters. The authors point out several strategies to mainstream GESI through strengthening DRR organisation within village government including providing GESI sensitive policies and practices, building DRR organisational structure that suitable for mainstreaming GESI, decentralisation of GESI and village DRR planning, GESI sensitive training, values, staffs appraisal, job description and partner selection, and GESI sensitive community boards and management. Among those strategies, providing GESI sensitive policies and practices is the most crucial organisational strategies for ensuring GESI implementation work in DRR in the village government as one major organizational issues of village

government in implementing GESI is absence of GESI sensitive policies and practices that guided policy makers and implementers (Aguilar, 2012).

In the capacity area, the main strategy is improving capacity development and lesson learning in the community disaster resilient program. The authors suggest that improving capacity of policy makers and implementers to incorporate GESI in the DRR operations and behavioural change among women, girls, older individual and disable groups are vital strategies to engage them in DRR implementation activities. The authors highlight how DRR across developing countries often left women more vulnerable as they have little access to house, health services, jobs, financial supports, and other benefits of DRR program. On the other hand, few studies found that women capacity and leadership are necessary to achieve an effective DRR. They pointed out that one woman is empowered, they will have capacity to improve their lives and families as well as their communities both in a short- and long-term development (Mehta, 2009).

In the operational area, most authors suggest the important of implementing strategies including conducting GESI analysis in all DRR activities, ensuring DRR activities are GESI sensitive, inclusion of GESI supported projects and providing system for beneficiary feedback. All those strategies are purposed to ensure GESI integrated in all phases of the community DRR activities (Aguilar, 2012). The authors suggest that the integration of GESI within all phase of DRR include ensuring GESI analysis within planning assessments, building objective on gender equality and women empowerment within planning and budgeting, awareness of gender inequality and concerns of different vulnerable groups and assess the different implications of planned programme for vulnerable and marginal groups within community (Aguilar, 2012).

The authors noted how GESI within DRR include ensuring women and men can access and to participate in reconstruction; work with men to secure their support for reconstruction activities that uphold women's rights and empowerment; involving women leaderships within management of construction projects; ensure accountability by establishing mechanisms that enable both female and male beneficiaries to give feedback on reconstruction programs. It is also important that this stage includes feedback on reconstruction program that particularly relates to gender issues. Moreover, the authors illustrate of how grassroots women undertake public roles that accelerate community recovery and ensure community participation in DRR. Women roles include activities from mobilizing affected communities to strengthening government accountability on DRR program (Aguilar, 2012).

In the resources area, the authors suggest the vital roles of adequate funding and support of GESI expertise. Therefore, all authors point out that mobilizing funding and GESI expertise in the community disaster resilient program is vital so that the implementation of GESI supported by GESI technical expertise who readily available at any time to support actions and fund that available for GESI related activities. The authors highlight that GESI implementation also need more time. Therefore, adequate funding for all staffs and volunteers, as well as time for implementing every step of GESI, are vital for effective GESI implementation (Aguilar, 2012).

4. Discussion and conclusion

The aim of this study is to understand how and what strategies to implement GESI in the contexts of DRR in community or village government level. By addressing this knowledge gap, we may be able to provide an effective strategy that contribute to achieving better DRR in local level. In doing so, this study aims to conduct a systematic literature review to identify existing research on GESI and DRR in community or village and then based on this review we identify a conceptual framework for mainstreaming GESI within DRR in the community or village level.

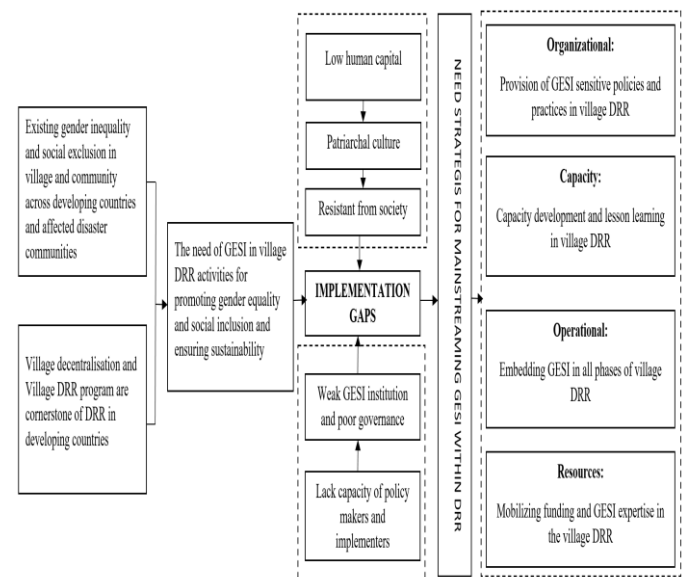


Figure 2. GESI within village DRR framework

Figure 2 shows framework of GESI for village or community DRR based on our literature review. The framework explains the need of GESI in village DRR activities for promoting gender equality and social inclusion as well as ensuring sustainability of development. GESI is fundamental due to the fact of existing gender inequality and social exclusion across communities in developing countries. On the other hand, developing countries massive decentralisation reform

transfer political autonomy to community and village government for planning and implementing their program including DRR.

However, implementation GAPS exist which may hinder GESI and DRR policy agenda in developing countries. Results of systematic reviews explain that low human capital, existing patriarchal culture, resistant from society, weak GESI institution and poor governance, and lack capacity of policy makers and implementer are key issues that significantly lead to failure of GESI and DRR effort in the village or communities. Therefore, strategies to address these gaps are needed to ensure effective implementation of GESI and DRR program. There are four key areas that should be introduced for ensuring effective implementation of GESI and DRR program.

First, organisational area. In this area, the authors suggest it is vital to provide GESI sensitive policies and practices as one of major organisational issues of village government in developing countries is an absence of GESI sensitive policies and practices that can be used by policy makers and implementer as guidance for integrating GESI within DRR activities.

Second, in the capacity area, the authors suggest that the need for capacity development and lesson learning so that more women, girls, older people and disable groups able to participate within DRR process. The authors pointed out that empowering vulnerable and marginal groups will not only improve their lives and families but also their community in short- and long-term development.

Third, in operational area, the authors suggest that ensuring GESI analysis in all phases of DRR is vital. Finally, effort for mainstreaming GESI within DRR activities need enough funding, support of expertise, and take time.

The conceptual framework for mainstreaming GESI within DRR above can be used for understanding the need of GESI within DRR as well as to identify key challenges of integrating GESI within village DRR. It also benefits for evaluating the effectiveness of GESI implementation within village DRR activities.

This study concludes the need to integrate GESI within village or community DRR. GESI and village DRR are vital to promote gender equality and to achieve sustainable DRR. However, developing countries often fail to implement GESI and DRR. Five key issues are identified such as low human capital, patriarchal culture, resistance from traditional society, weak GESI institution and poor governance, and lack capacity of policy makers and implementers. A comprehensive approach within four areas: organisational, capacity, operational and resources should be taken to address those issues. This research suggests a framework which can be used to understand and to identify key challenges

and to evaluate the effectiveness of GESI implementation within village DRR activities.

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