

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2022 "GENDER EQUALITY TODAY FOR SUSTAINABLE TOMORROW"-  
STORY FEATURE SERIES**

**"Deputy Mayor leading DRRM in Rajapur "**



Deputy Mayor -Mankala Kumari Chaudhary (please specify what is happening in the photo.)-Rajapur Photo: Tayar Nepal

Women, girls, and LGBTI communities face greater vulnerability and exposure during the post-disaster context in Nepal due to the discriminatory practices and gender disparity. Women's potential contributions as leaders, responders, donors, and rescuers in building a community's resilience are untapped assets in DRRM strategies. Women's leadership and their active role can save the life of dependents in their families, i.e. children, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and the community.

One such active woman leaders is Mankala Kumari Chaudhary, the deputy mayor of Rajapur municipality, Bardiya. Each year Rajapur faces the dangers and risks, of flood and inundation, as two major rivers, borders the municipality on the east and west. Mankala has been actively contributing to disaster risk mitigation through the local disaster management committee and raises issues on gender-based violence during a disaster. She Last September 2021, due to unseasonal heavy rainfall people, the community faced shortage of rice and also a huge financial loss by local farmers, as the crops were swept away. The deputy mayor immediately took an initiative and coordinated with the local and ward level disaster management committee members, and reached out to various different donor organizations, **civil society organizations** (CSOs) and political parties' representatives, to collect supports : cash supports, warm cloth collection and distribution, relief supports (foods items), sensitization on GBV for the impacted people for reducing domestic violence.

Her quick thinking and suggestion on collecting disaggregated data of those who were impacted proved very useful, as this provided much-needed information on those who were the most vulnerable and in need of more support, such as elderly people, people with disability, children, women and those with lower income. She also, led the municipality team on a warm clothes collection drive, which was distributed to the needy.

She opines that "Women and girls are not represented in DRRM efforts sufficiently. They do not receive DRRM trainings and are not given an enabling environment to lead in disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery phases. Due to the social norms and values which restrict women's mobility, women's contribution is not seen significant. If the, women and girls are trained, provided supports from family and created enabling environment by laws and practices, they have potentials to contribute to DRRM."



Deputy Mayor in relief materials distribution in Rajapur during last flood affected Photo: Tayar Nepal

This is part of USAID's Tayar Nepal's International Women's Day Story Feature Series, which features and honors women leading and contributing to various roles for disaster risk reduction and management, challenging gender roles, and emerging as role models.

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