

Natural Disasters and Gender Statistics: Lessons from the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami

By

Nahoko Mitsuyama

Counsellor for Gender Equality Analysis, Cabinet Office, Japanese Government

Abstract

From earthquakes and tsunami to volcanic eruptions and typhoons, natural disasters have been a regular occurrence throughout Japan's long history. This deep experience with disaster has molded our society and continually taught us fresh lessons about how to respond. Today, in the spirit of *kaizen* – Japanese for “continuous improvement” – we continue to learn. And in the spirit of global cooperation, we are eager to share what we learn. From our most recent tragedy, the disaster of March 11th, 2011 known in Japan as “The Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami,” we have gained important new insights into the relationship between gender equality and disaster risk reduction. With the recognition that disasters affect men and women in different ways, it is critical to have the concerns and voices of both genders reflected in disaster planning, disaster response, and reconstruction. Further, gender equality must be a fundamental value in good times and bad to build a society that teems with disaster resilience. In this session, we are going to share with you Japan's experience of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami from the perspective of gender statistics.