Gender, Development and Disasters

Sarah Bradshaw, Principal Lecturer in Development Studies, Middlesex University, UK

Sarah Bradshaw critically examines key notions, such as gender, vulnerability, risk, and humanitarianism, underpinning development and disaster discourse. Case studies are used to demonstrate how disasters are experienced individually and collectively as gendered events. Through consideration of processes to engender development, it problematizes women’s inclusion in disaster response and reconstruction. The study highlights that while women are now central to both disaster response and development, tackling gender inequality is not. By critically reflecting on gendered disaster response and the gendered impact of disasters on processes of development, it exposes some important lessons for future policy.

‘Gender, Development and Disasters is a valuable and essential call for all parties to be attuned to the enormous complexities involved in incorporating gender into a disaster response. . . This book implores us to be gender reflective at every level. For those of us working in disaster response, we need to learn from development’s positive and negative practices regarding gender, rather than simply lifting gender debates out of development and inserting them into a disaster context – if nothing else, it assumes that gender in development is working. It is a difficult but vital truth: we still aren’t getting gender right.’

– Beth Evans, Gender & Development

‘Disaster research owes a lot to development studies and yet the debt is often not acknowledged. In this scholarly but accessible book by Sarah Bradshaw, we see a very effective linking of gender, disaster and development that will be of value to academics and practitioners working in and across all these domains.’

– Maureen Fordham, University of Northumbria, UK

‘Bringing gender into the foreground in both development and disaster discourse, the author challenges received wisdom and offers cautionary notes about reinforcing inequalities through feminized disaster interventions. The book is an outstanding platform for fundamental change in how we think about and act toward gender in disaster contexts, leaving readers cautiously optimistic. This is one for the top shelf – a book we have been waiting for and must put to use.’

– Elaine Enarson, founder, Gender and Disaster Resilience Alliance

‘Once in a while a book is published which offers an empirically and theoretically informed analysis of an under-studied topic which helps to carve out a new field of enquiry. Such is the case with Dr Sarah Bradshaw’s breathtakingly detailed, richly first-hand informed, and incisive, account of the frequently paradoxical co-option of women into the analysis and practice of “disaster” in developing economies. Bradshaw’s eminently comprehensive, well-substantiated, perceptive and sensitive treatment of the “A to Z” of gender and “disaster” in developing country contexts constitutes a 21st century volume which will be a definitive benchmark for scholars, policymakers, practitioners, and feminist activists at a world scale.’

– Sylvia Chant, London School of Economics, UK

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