

Gender vulnerability and adaptation to climate change

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Abstract: Climate change is evolving as a serious global issue with the potential to cause social, political, environmental and economic hardships. The inequitable distribution of rights, resources and power as well as repressive cultural rules and norms constrain many people's ability to take action on climate change. It is found that women are more vulnerable to climate change than men due to their maximum dependency on natural resources, their responsibility for water and food procurement and their increased risk exposure during times of disasters and severe weather crises. Furthermore, most women are made vulnerable by their reduced access to sources of disaster information, as well as their lack of decision-making power in disaster prevention and preparedness programs. They are often excluded from disaster recovery operations and from planning at the local and national levels. However, climate change brings opportunities that can collectively reduce vulnerability and enhance adaptive capacity. Because men and women have different roles in society, they can each participate and contribute positively to climate change adaptation planning and decision-making perspectives. Gender-sensitive adaptation measures to climate change are vital to reduce the risks that vulnerable populations encounter. In order to reduce the disproportionate effect of climate change upon women, it is crucial that gender be considered when designing and implementing climate change adaptation measures. Concerns and experiences of women's as well as men's should be an integral dimension of the design and implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs. Gender analysis can be used to understand women's and men's different activities and responsibilities, and their access to resources and decision-making, making programs more efficient and relevant. Hence, every effort should be made to ensure that women and men contribute to and benefit equally from climate change policies, financing and implementation at all level.

Keywords: Gender vulnerability, Climate change, adaptation