

Gender, Climate Change, and Resilience in Kenyan Pastoralist Communities

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Abstract : Climate change is threatening pastoral livelihoods in Kajiado County, Kenya, through water shortages, livestock deaths, and increasing poverty. This study examines how these impacts differ for men and women within these communities. Limited access to resources, limited land and livestock rights, and limited decision-making power increase women's vulnerability, which is further burdened by traditional gender roles in water procurement. The research recognizes the complexity of climate change and emphasizes that factors such as wealth, family dynamics, and socioeconomic status also influence resilience. Effective adaptation strategies must address all genders. While livestock farming provides a safety net, socioeconomic empowerment through access to credit, healthcare, and education strengthens entire communities. An intersectional perspective that takes ethnicity, social status, and other factors into account is also crucial. This research, therefore, aims to examine how gender-specific adaptation strategies interact with gender and socioeconomic factors to determine the resilience of these Kenyan pastoralist communities. Such strategies, which address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of men and women, are expected to lead to increased resilience to climate change. The aim of the study is to identify effective, gender-specific adaptation strategies that can be integrated into climate change planning and implementation. Additionally, research awaits a deeper understanding of how socioeconomic factors interact with gender to influence vulnerability and resilience within these communities. The study uses a gender-sensitive qualitative approach with focus group discussions in four different pastoral and agropastoral communities. Both qualitative and demographic data are used to capture sources of income, education level, and household size of focus group respondents to increase the power of the analysis. While the research acknowledges the limitations of specific focus sites and potential biases in self-reporting, it offers valuable insights into gender and climate change in pastoral contexts. This study contributes to understanding gender-based vulnerabilities and building resilience in these communities.

Keywords : climate adaptation strategies, climate change, climate resilience, gendered vulnerability, pastoralism

Conference Title : ICCCMAR 2024 : International Conference on Climate Change Mitigation, Adaptation and Resilience

Conference Location : New York, United States

Conference Dates : November 07-08, 2024