

From Climate Crisis to Gender-Based Violence: Understanding the Links in Rural Malawi

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Abstract : Climate change has disproportionately impacted Southern Africa, exacerbating vulnerabilities and inequalities, particularly among women who face unique exposure to climate shocks. This study investigates the intricate relationship between climate change impacts and gender-based violence (GBV) in rural areas of Malawi, focusing on how increasing climate shocks such as prolonged droughts, devastating floods, and dwindling natural resources create additional burdens for women and girls. Using a mixed-methods approach that includes surveys and in-depth interviews in climate-affected districts, the findings reveal that climate-induced hardships, including food insecurity and lack of access to clean water, often force women into precarious situations to secure basic needs, thereby heightening their risk to violence. Additionally, heightened tensions within households during extreme weather events correlate with increased incidences of domestic violence as economic pressures mount and conflicts over scarce resources intensify. This study underscores the urgent need for gender-sensitive climate adaptation policies that address GBV risks and advocate for integrated support systems prioritizing the safety and well-being of women. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of collaborative efforts among governments, NGOs, and communities to develop holistic strategies that safeguard women's rights and promote gender equality in climate action initiatives.

Keywords : climate change, gender-based violence, Malawi, vulnerability, adaptation

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