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Untangling the climate change-gender-based violence nexus: Household-level insights from Tanzania

MARTHA SWAMILA¹, HAJI ATHUMANI MSANGI², ANTHONY KIMARO³

¹*The Center for International Forestry Res. and World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF), Tanzania Country Programme, Tanzania*

²*Rwanda Institute for Conservation Agriculture, Entrepreneurship in Conservation Agriculture, Rwanda*

³*The Center for International Forestry Res. and World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF), Tanzania Country Programme, Tanzania*

Abstract

Climate change is a pressing global challenge with far-reaching consequences, particularly evident through extreme weather events like droughts, floods, storms, and forest fires that exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and affect various facets of human life, including security. These events have significant social, economic, and environmental repercussions, disproportionately affecting marginalised populations. Within these vulnerable groups, gender dynamics play a pivotal role, as underscored by Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5. Distinct cultural norms, work roles, and resource access influence how women and men experience climate-related crises. In regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa, where women already contend with vulnerabilities encompassing poverty, hunger, unemployment, and limited education, their susceptibility to the impacts of extreme weather events is heightened, often resulting in gender-based violence. This study delves into the intricate interplay between climate change and gender-based violence in Tanzania, shedding light on the specific household-level dynamics and mechanisms. Our research harnesses household-level data from national panel surveys conducted in 2014/15 and 2020/21, encompassing 3,352 and 4,709 households, respectively. Additionally, we integrate climate data from the Tanzania Meteorological Authority and the Data Distribution Centre of the IPCC. The fusion of these datasets aims to unravel the intricate connections between climate change and gender-based violence within the Tanzanian context. Preliminary findings from our study uncover a compelling association between climate change and gender-based violence. Areas characterised by recurrent climate and extreme weather events exhibit a higher prevalence of gender-based violence cases. These initial results underscore the imperative of conducting a comprehensive investigation into the complex interplay between climate change and gender-based violence, a focal point of this study. Furthermore, our findings underscore the significance of considering localised, household-level dynamics when addressing violence stemming from climate-related factors, advocating for targeted interventions designed to mitigate these consequences in a more context-specific manner.

Keywords: Climate change, dynamics, extreme weather events, gender-based violence, household, Tanzania

Contact Address: Martha Swamila, The Center for International Forestry Res. and World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF), Tanzania Country Programme, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, e-mail: marthaswamila@yahoo.com