

## Gender perspective in the Food, Energy and Water Nexus and adaptation to Climate Change

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# Gender perspective in the Food, Energy and Water Nexus and adaptation to Climate Change

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# Growing understanding of the nexus between gender and climate change

- ▶ Developing countries face a difficult challenge in meeting the growing demands for food, water, and energy, which is further compounded by climate change.
  - ▶ Effective adaptation to change requires the efficient use of land, water, energy, and other vital resources, and coordinated efforts to minimize trade-offs and maximize synergies.
  - ▶ However, as in many developing countries, the policy follows a sectoral approach that does not take into account the interconnections and interdependence among the three sectors.
  - ▶ Although the concept of a water–energy–food nexus is gaining currency, and adaptation to climate change has become an urgent need, little effort has been made so far to understand the linkages between the nexus perspective with respect to gender and adaptation to climate change.
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- ▶ Climatic change impacts on all aspects of human security: on people's security of life, their security of livelihood (including food, water, energy and shelter, economic and ecological security), and on people's dignity—including meeting basic human rights, development of capacities and societal participation (Dankelman 2010).
  - ▶ By impairing these securities, climatic changes will increase existing social inequalities.
  - ▶ Gender inequalities are among the most pervasive inequalities in the world.
  - ▶ Disasters tend to impact more heavily on those living in poverty, and other disadvantaged groups. Not only do these groups lack the assets and capacities to resiliently cope with the consequences of disasters, they also tend to live in more vulnerable situations
  - ▶ This results in poorer health and lack of resources to avoid or escape these insecurities.





# Gender matters when it comes to vulnerability to climate change

- ▶ Women and men play different roles in household livelihoods and they experience the impacts of climate change differently.
- ▶ Although women are crucial actors in managing households, bearing and raising children, in food production and managing land, forest and water resources, their roles and responsibilities are often taken for granted.
- ▶ Women do not receive equal rights, opportunities or decision making opportunities as men do.
- ▶ Even though in many countries remarkable progress has been made over the past decades, gender inequalities are still reflected in women's poverty, lack of resources, and the violence they meet in many societies.
- ▶ When poor women lose their livelihoods, they slip deeper into poverty, and the inequality and marginalization they suffer from increases. Therefore, in debates on sustainable development and climate change, the subject of intersectionality (between factors such as gender, welfare, ethnicity, age and education) needs specific attention.



## ▶ **Role of Women**

- ▶ Women in developing countries are already on the front line of adapting to climate change, with increasing floods and droughts impacting upon their livelihoods.
- ▶ As pivotal managers of natural and environmental resources and key frontline implementers of development, women have the experience and knowledge to build the resilience of their communities to the intensifying natural hazards to come.
- ▶ But without the full participation and contribution of women in decision-making and leadership, real community resilience to climate change and disasters imply cannot be achieved.

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- ▶ Vital nexus between women's experiences of natural resource management, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, and how they can come together to make whole communities strong and sustainable needs to be understood.
  - ▶ Despite the clear connection between climate change, disaster risk reduction, and gender-focused approaches to development, there still needs to be an increased awareness of this important nexus.
  - ▶ Because climate change impacts will exacerbate these disparities, it is essential that policy makers, planners and scientists take gender differentiations into account in their climate change and related energy and land-use planning, decisions and activities.

# Links between climate chaos, food security & gender issues

- Rural women are the backbone of agriculture throughout much of the developing world. They produce half of the world's food; in some developing countries women produce as much as 80 percent of the food.
- It is estimated that women's agricultural work produces 35-45 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in developing countries.
- Weather-related hazards put natural resources used by communities, particularly women, at risk. Women in developing countries are still largely responsible for securing food, water, and energy for cooking and heating.
- Drought, desertification, and erratic rainfall result in shortages or lack of resources to fulfill the needs of not only women, but also of their entire families and communities.
- When women are supported to be active participants in preparedness and response efforts, their role within families and communities has been used to great advantage.





# Linkages between gender, energy access and climate change actions within sustainable development

- ▶ Women's access to cleaner, more efficient energy sources and technologies for household use and productive activities is critical, since women bear a disproportionate share of the burdens of providing energy.
- ▶ Women need training, financing and support for business activities—including designing, producing, marketing and managing new energy products and services.
- ▶ Promoting improved environmental health through improvements in areas such as water, sanitation and hygiene services.
- ▶ Women's valuable experience, indigenous knowledge and ideas about climate change adaptation, mitigation, resilience and disaster risk management need to be incorporated by ensuring their decision-making and participation in climate change policies, mechanisms and funding.

## Access to improved Chulha, solar energy




# Safe Water

- ▶ Access to safe water for household use, as well as for agriculture is an ongoing challenge for many poor communities in remote areas and particularly women.
- ▶ In many areas, this challenge is getting exacerbated by climate change affecting both the availability and quality of water.
- ▶ Establishment and improvement of water supply and sanitation systems to meet the demand is a priority.



# Women improved farm tools – Drudgery Reduction






# The key insights towards gender-sensitive approaches

- ▶ **Access to information is a major determining ability to act in adaptation**
- ▶ Adaptation is a process. Ongoing learning, analysis, planning and adjustments are required to respond to an evolving context and changing risks.
- ▶ To do this effectively requires availability of appropriate, timely and locally relevant climate information such as weather forecasts, seasonal forecasts and early warnings for climate hazards.
- ▶ **For adaptation policies and programmes to reach the most vulnerable, they must have a voice in the process.**

Engaging all relevant stakeholders, including the rural women in local and national level planning can help in ensuring that the most vulnerable people are not left out and have a voice in decision – making process

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- ▶ **Participatory decision-making promotes** empowerment and transparency and accountability of policy makers to citizens.
  - ▶ Giving voice to vulnerable people particularly the poor women in decision-making will ensure that adaptation initiatives are responsive to their needs, priorities and aspirations.
  - ▶ **Access to basic services would facilitate adaptation**
  - ▶ when women are unable to meet basic needs such as health care, safe water it is very difficult to think beyond their immediate needs and make plan for long term adaptation. Therefore access to health, agri extension, financial services must be ensured in determining the feasibility of different adaptation actions.



# Gender-Sensitive approaches

- ▶ **Positioning women as key environmental resource managers**
- ▶ Empowering women with education about the environment and giving them skills to diversify their livelihoods in an environmentally conscious way.
- ▶ **Strengthen indigenous knowledge of climate prediction with scientific inputs for better decision making in agriculture production and management.**
- ▶ **Recognise women as knowledge managers in establishing linkages between the FEW nexus and adaptation to climate change**
- ▶ Strategies that increase women's bargaining power.



# Need for a Collective Approach

- ▶ The connections between cross-sectoral issues discussed provide unique opportunities to have a collective approach to build a diverse movement to work towards common solutions on issues that seem disconnected from one another.
- ▶ Addressing the challenging issues of climate change, food security, energy, water and human rights requires bold, new thinking and strategies.
- ▶ Most of all it will require that governments, opinion leaders, and civil society highlight the central role of food systems and promote new visions and solutions grounded in ecological and social justice principles that relate to people's everyday realities.
- ▶ Civil society can galvanize and encourage ambitious public policies that realize goals of building climate and food security and safeguarding human rights.

# Value added Communication Perspective

## FOUR FACETS

1. Move ahead “From Gender mainstreaming to Gender Harmony”
2. Taking Technologies to women at grass root level
3. Create a Community of Practitioners of local stakeholders to advise need based adaptations
4. Help converge in women in agriculture



# Recommendations

- ▶ Help converge in bridging the gap by creating a knowledge network among all the stakeholders
- ▶ Create a platform for knowledge exchange
- ▶ Create a Information Clearing house – one knowledge window on Technology interventions in agriculture for women farmers
- ▶ Use of mobile technology to reach the unreached
- ▶ Developing best practices with robust social, gender and environmental safeguards and showcase the success stories
- ▶ Communicate interventions that can improve efficiency, technical competency and reduce drudgery and help in overall quality of life.