

## WOMEN AND CLIMATE CHANGE

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this research is to investigate the role of women in climate change and how women are affected by climate change. Climate change is certainly a current concern that affects Pakistan and practically every nation. Climate change is becoming more difficult in Pakistan. Those locations where women are forced to provide for their families are most affected, increasing the number of women suffering from health problems. According to the findings of the literature study, climate change is having a particularly negative impact on women. To get this crisis under control, the federal and local governments must work together to ensure that catastrophic conditions are not exacerbated.*

**Keywords:** Women, Climate change, Social Impact, Economic Impact, Environmental Impact

### INTRODUCTION

Short-term climate change impacts include natural disasters like landslides and flooding, in addition to long-term environmental degradation such as deforestation. Agricultural and food safety, biodiversity and ecologies, water resources, people's life, human settlement and migratory patterns, as well as energy, transportation, and industrial growth have all been negatively impacted by the use of fossil fuels (UNDP, 2020).

For a variety of reasons, women are more likely than males to be affected by the effects of climate change, including their greater reliance on natural resources that are threatened by the effects of climate change. They are constrained in their ability to deal not just by physical and psychological obstacles, but also by social, economic, and political ones (United Nations, 2020). Because their livelihoods are heavily dependent on the availability of local natural resources, rural women and men in developing nations are particularly susceptible. Clean water, food, and cooking and heating fuel are some of the most difficult issues encountered by individuals in charge of ensuring that these necessities are available. Due to their restricted mobility and lack of access to resources and decision-making processes, women in rural regions are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Gender-sensitive responses to climate change's environmental and humanitarian concerns are essential for success (Mirovitskaya, 2017).

When discussing climate change mitigation and adaptation, it is important to remember that women have a significant role to play in both areas. Women often have a lot of experience and skills that may be put to good use in climate change prevention, catastrophe reduction, and adaptation programmes. In addition, because of their role as stewards of natural and domestic resources, women in families and communities are well-suited to help devise livelihood strategies that can keep pace with the fast changes in environmental conditions (Mirovitskaya, 2017).

Climate change is putting a greater strain on Pakistan's women and children than it has on the rest of the country's population. As a result, women and children are more prone than men to suffer from hunger and other food-related hardships (Climate Change Division, 2013). Temperature extremes, such as heat exhaustion and droughts, are expected to worsen as a consequence of climate change and other causes, resulting in food poverty and malnutrition for pregnant women and nursing mothers alike

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(Kunbher et al., 2017). The effects on children, in particular, are severe and might last a lifetime (Arif et al., 2019). Agriculture-related jobs that rely on natural resources that are vulnerable to climate change put rural women at risk. Adaptation to climate change will be more difficult for women because they lack "equal power, decision-making skills, and financial resources" (Climate Change Division, 2013). This research focuses on Pakistani women's involvement in climate change. Women's roles in climate change in Pakistan will be examined in terms of their effects on the economy, the environment, and society.

### **Research Objectives**

The main objectives of this study are

- To explore the role of women in climate change
- To understand how the climate change influences women

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Female livelihoods are especially affected by climatic disruptions. When men relocate for greater economic prospects, women tend to take care of the agricultural labor, but they seldom own or control the productive assets (WFP, 2020). Only 44% of women in a recent survey (NIPS and ICF, 2019) reported being able to make key household buying choices, restricting their capacity to deal with emergencies. If anything happens to their property, they may not be able to claim compensation from the government since women are less likely than males to own it. As a result, women have a lower degree of information access than males (MOHR, 2020). Further, the literature extensively discusses the effects on society, the economy, and the environment. Sustainability is linked to these three aspects.

#### **Social Impact**

When discussing social sustainability, it is critical to highlight sustainable development's financial and ecological components on equal terms. However, it is critical to consider the social dimension because it has received less attention. Administrators and their organizations must learn more about the social dimensions of sustainability and devote more attention to them. The social dimension of sustainable development — emphasizing equal opportunity — is perhaps the most politically contentious of the three and, consequently, the most difficult to resolve. It entails facing adverse trends such as widening wealth gaps, increased unemployment, and an enduring gender divide. As a result of the economic crisis, some countries are enacting policies to encourage green development, green economies, and green jobs. The programmes' long-term sustainability will be jeopardised if they do not address fundamental societal requirements including economic parity, job quality, and gender equality. Progress toward economic, environmental, and broader goals of long-term sustainability will be hampered unless social issues are addressed (Mirovitskaya, 2017).

#### **Economic impact**

Since the financial crisis, the voices of those who oppose the free market and the pursuit of profit have become louder. Both domestically and globally, banks and other financial institutions are guilty of corporate irresponsibility— resulted in economic catastrophe and a downturn that affected practically every country. It is possible that this economic system was formed largely on the desires and viewpoints of males is not a coincidence. One female leader said, “Had Lehman Brothers been Lehman Sisters, we would not be in this economic mess.” Some have blamed our present economic troubles on foreign nations' actions because failing banks and financial organisations' boards of directors are nearly exclusively composed of males (Stevens, 2010). Also, only a tiny percentage of people hold senior-level roles in business and management in which women are underrepresented. A failure to adjust the male labour paradigm to meet the needs of women may be a sign of institutionalised gender discrimination. The bulk of children and housework is done by women across the world, resulting in a lack of time flexibility and mobility. They tend to leave the workforce at the same time as their male counterparts get to the top of the corporate ladder. Later, because to the larger demands of family life, they reappear at an older age and often peak later than males. Working mothers require flexible work hours to meet the needs of their families since their careers often take longer to progress than those of their male colleagues.

#### **Environmental impact**

Finally, but certainly not least, surveys conducted in various nations demonstrate a gender divide in the environmental sector. According to OECD surveys on household behavior, When compared to males, women are more inclined to purchase environmentally friendly products. Women presently account for

more than 80% of household spending in wealthy countries (Stevens, 2010). The role that women play in creating environmentally friendly production and consumption habits, and in establishing environmentally friendly techniques for managing natural resources, must be highlighted in the discussion of women and the environment, as well as the importance of women participating in all levels of environmental decision-making.

### **METHODOLOGY**

Research for this project relies on secondary sources, particularly qualitative literature studies. Using Pakistan as a case study, the research examined how climate change affects women and what role women might play in addressing climate change. Approximately half of Pakistan's population is female, and about 70% of the rural female workforce is employed in agriculture (Makhijani et al., 2015). Local traditions, customs, and tribal laws play an important part in shaping women's standing in rural Pakistan's many villages. Rural Pakistan is largely an agricultural community. Women in rural areas are more vulnerable to the consequences of climate change since the bulk of their jobs involves climate-sensitive activities like farming. In addition, the effects will be amplified due to cultural norms, economic disparities, and biological and physical variations (Hyder & Mahmood, 2015). It has been determined that the variables that increase women's susceptibility to climate change in Pakistan may be utilized to develop gender-sensitive policies that consider these reasons.

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

For some individuals, it's a question of weather; for others it's an issue of life and death. A review of the literature suggests that recent climate change has affected people throughout the globe. It's not only the weather that's changed due to recent climate change; for some, it's the threat to their very existence. As a result of climate change, poorer countries bear the brunt of its consequences, even if they contribute to annual global carbon dioxide emissions. This is the most egregious injustice of global warming. Due to climate change, extreme weather occurrences such as floods, droughts, storms, and tornado are predicted to increase in frequency (Mirza, 2003; Field, 2012). Since they are located in the world's most vulnerable locations, they have grown more resilient due to their fragility, limited resources and rapid population expansion, as well as their potential for resilience (Huq et al., 2004; Khan, 2011).

Climate change poses the greatest threat to South Asian countries, especially Pakistan (Ali & Erenstein, 2016). Pakistan's sensitivity to climate change has increased over time, despite the country's little contribution to global warming. Pakistan was ranked 12th in 2012, 8th in 2015, and 7th in 2017 by the United Nations Development Program as one of the world's most vulnerable countries to globalisation (IUCN, 2009). Pakistan has been badly struck by disasters associated with climate change, including floods, droughts, cyclones, and storms (Mueller et al., 2014; Khan, 2013). These tragedies have been more common, but they have also inflicted greater damage (Qasim et al., 2015). However, despite the fact that the United States is plagued by a climate emergency every year, the government's approach to solving the issue has been dismal. The magnitude of natural catastrophes in Pakistan is underscored because they have impacted millions of people and killed thousands (Khan, 2013). Among other things, increasing population, uncontrolled development, and unregulated infrastructure expansion contribute to the reality that more people are more prone to external dangers than ever.

According to Ali and Erenstein, women in rural Pakistan are especially susceptible to climate change (2016). People in rural Pakistan are the most susceptible to climate change, according to Deressa et al. (2009) and Füssel (2007). Climate change has had a disproportionate effect on communities, especially in the developing world, according to several research undertaken around the country (Khan, 2013; Qasim et al., 2015; Abid et al., 2015). Given agriculture's vulnerability to climate change and the vast number of rural populations who rely on agriculture as their primary source of income, this is particularly important. Women farmers in Pakistan face several difficulties due to a shortage of irrigation water as well as a paucity of extension services and other resources for education. Extreme poverty among farmers and a lack of financial resources; high costs of farm inputs like seeds and fertilisers; a lack of roads that link fields to markets; and poor agricultural commodities' pricing all provide further hurdles to the industry (Abid et al., 2015). The use of modern agricultural inputs, such as pesticides and fertilisers, has contributed to further environmental harm (Yousaf and Naveed, 2013; Saif-urrehman and Shaukat, 2013; Saif-urrehman and Shaukat, 2013).

The agricultural sector of the population is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. 74.2 percent of all working women were in agriculture between 2010 and 2011. 72.4 percent

of Pakistani women rely on agriculture as their major source of income in 2018. Despite the fact that women in Pakistan face various social, political, and religious restrictions, they are nevertheless an important part of the country's agricultural sector.

### **Major Outcomes**

Women are particularly vulnerable to climate change for social, economic, and cultural—most women live in poverty in a country like Pakistan. Women make up a disproportionate share of disadvantaged communities heavily reliant on local natural resources for survival, particularly in rural areas. They are primarily responsible for home water supply, cooking and heating energy, and food security. They are mostly responsible for time-consuming and labor-intensive jobs that must be completed manually or with rudimentary instruments. Rural populations have been declining throughout Pakistan for years. Women are mostly engaged in subsistence agriculture, including gardening, poultry, and small animal husbandry for personal consumption.

Women have little control and access over environmental products and services; they participate in decision-making in a minor way and are excluded from benefit distribution from environmental management. As a result, women are less equipped to deal with climate change.

Women work more to ensure household livelihoods during harsh weather, such as droughts and floods. This means that women will have less time to acquire training and education, develop skills, and earn an income. Climate change disproportionately affects women when limited mobility is combined with inaccessibility to resources and decision-making processes.

In many civilizations, sociocultural traditions and childcare obligations restrict women from fleeing, finding sanctuary in other locations, or working during times of calamity. This condition is expected to increase the load on women, as they will have to go far to obtain drinking water and wood for fuel. Women face gender inequities in many developing countries, Human rights, political and economic standing, property ownership, living conditions, violence vulnerability, education, and health are just a few examples of the many factors that are taken into account while making these decisions. Climate change will add another layer of stress, exacerbating women's vulnerability. It is well accepted that women risk increased domestic abuse, physical coercion, human trafficking, and rape during times of conflict.

Furthermore, in Pakistani society, women confront certain environmental challenges such as heat in the summer season, especially in rural areas. They are not able to arrange resources for mitigating it. Owing to this, they have confronted certain health challenges which have played havoc with them. Numerous women in Sindh and Balochistan have also reported severe back pain, headaches, and hair loss due to the arduous task of carrying heavy metal water pots on their heads. All ills are not insignificant, even more so when the result of direct government failure. When combined with ineffective government policies and severe poverty, climate change is a stress multiplier. However, cultural and societal standards preclude women from exercising true decision-making authority in many locations. Patriarchal constraints reduce a woman's adaptive capability in response to climate change, making her more vulnerable to its repercussions and the aftermath of climate-related calamities.

### **Implications**

This study has some implications and suggestions. (National Climate Change Policy) should be used as a catalyst for mainstreaming women's climate change issues and emphasizing the especially dramatic implications on women of climate change migration. Women must participate in the decision-making and implementation stages to build gender adaptation practices for the country. Women's empowerment advocacy must also contain a special mission for those affected by climate change. The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) is mainly accountable for establishing and implementing measures to investigate and address the vulnerability of women in disasters following the eighteenth amendment of the Constitution of Pakistan.

Gender and Child Protection Cells are available for PDMA's to help address vulnerable segments in times of tragedy or crisis and support voluntary migration. Women are no longer exposed to challenges in the event of a crisis but fight against the consequences of climate change daily. The acceptance of gender differences will be vital for the success of any national adaptation strategies. Government policies need to be channeled into protecting women by giving them the opportunity, in the first place, to decide how to confront the consequences of climate change themselves, rather than leaving them vulnerable to the decision-making powers of men.

If a woman does not want to relocate, yet climate change inhibits traditional income sources, the State needs to ensure that she has the option to learn a new skill she can use to gain. Even something as important as ensuring that every remote hamlet has its own well enough and water pump willow women to recover their space and possibilities.

The Government will benefit by maintaining good collaboration with domestic and international NGOs currently working on climate change concerns within the country. For fine-tuned policy, information collected at a grassroots level is needed. The unforeseen repercussions of climate change necessitate awareness-raising in local communities, particularly most affected women. The numerous complexities of climate change and its elementary effects on Pakistan require considerable efforts, which the cultivation of a billion trees cannot replace.

Although the differential vulnerabilities of women due to climate change are recognized, Pakistan's adaptation efforts must take a holistic approach to overcome the cultural constraints and increase the livelihood opportunities for the implementation of successful adaptation measures that are gender-sensitive. Climate change affects women directly and indirectly as they remain locked in the intentional poverty cycle, gender discrimination, and increased susceptibility. The State has important reasons to emphasize the link involving climate change and women in its adaptation plans. It should be seen not simply through a legal perspective, but the varied and grossly unfair effects of climate change make the problem moral and ethical.

## **CONCLUSION**

For further research on how rural Tharparkar District women may be affected by global climate change, the results of this literature review will be used as a starting point. Despite the fact that women work in agriculture at higher rates than males, their contributions go unappreciated due to the social stigma associated with female labour. Among the many responsibilities that women carry out both within and outside the house, water collection is one that is especially vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. Gender-inclusive policies and prompt action are required by local and national governments in light of the uneven distribution of resources between men and women as well as between landowners and the poorest sections of society. In Pakistan, in particular, the government should look into why previous attempts to enhance the social, political, and economic standing of women failed. Women's daily lives in the area are illuminated by a review of current social, political, and institutional issues, as well as the obstacles they encounter and the war for women's liberation. In order to address these problems, a variety of policy options are evaluated.

Environmentalists argue that Pakistan is extremely sensitive to climate change and needs to recognize its impact on the population. Climate change and gender sensitivity are closely connected; gender discrimination is a global concern. According to the 2015 UNDP report, "80% of people moved by climate change are women." The assumption that women are entirely responsible for domestic duties and child care is prevalent in many countries, therefore being locked inside during a climatic crisis. Equal access to higher education and political power decision-making is blocked for women, undermining their ability to make quick judgments in emergencies.

Oxfam International reports that the tsunami in 2004 killed up to four times as many women as men. According to an article called 'Climate Change and Women Health: impacts and guidelines' (Sorensen, Murray, Lemery, Balbus). The physical and sexual violence following climatic calamities is disproportionately affecting women.

In Pakistan, gender sensitivity and several other problems have also risen dramatically due to climate change. Because of the droughts of Sindh, women have the weight to fetch water from miles away. Pregnant women's health is negatively impacted by climate change-induced poverty. Women's work prospects are being harmed as a result of climate calamities. 'Climate Change and Women, a Study in Selected Rural Areas of Sindh' was undertaken by Shirkat Gah in 2011, 'time spent looking for water and wood has increased significantly, with exaggerated deforestation and over-exploitation of land resulting in inevitable scarcity of supplies.' 'The increase in financial problems for families due to a tragedy of climate change leads to denial of various vital rights of women, such as education and nourishment, under the domination of a patriarchal culture.'

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Paris Agreement, have been accepted by Pakistan in many international conventions and agreements to promote women's rights. In Pakistan's Climate Change Policy 2012, sensitivities to

sex are also included. The NMA has a Gender and child cell to establish the "National Policy Guidelines for Vulnerable Disaster Groups." However, the gap between policy design and implementation is urgently needed to address the sex-discriminating implications of climate change. Given climate change, there is a range of policy recommendations for managing gender sensitivity. It is essential to gather data on gender sensitivity due to climate change based on the evidence. The availability of trustworthy figures helps to formulate and implement sound policies. Credit constraints also prevent the pursuit of climate-resilient careers for underprivileged women. In addition, to ensure smooth consumption, customers are afraid to invest in new technology or companies because of the chance of failure.

Access to simple loans or financing for women to develop firms that are resilient to climate change them adapt to disasters. Banks and the corporate sector can work with the government to create programs of this nature. However, these loans should be subject to certain requirements, such as setting minimum income levels and a fair likelihood of climate hazards.

To help the most vulnerable women affected by such tragedies, the Government should establish insurance programs for women covering health, agriculture, and infrastructure losses induced by climate change. Women can be helped by knowledge and education in their fight against climate disasters. The National Disaster Management Authority and the Ministry of Human Rights should work more closely together to build successful companies that handle sexual sensitivity. More women should also be involved in decision-making processes as gender sensitivities are better understood in crises. On a worldwide scale, rich countries need to participate in a Green Climate Fund to empower women to protect themselves against disasters related to climate change. There are several countries, such as India, and Bangladesh, Case studies are used to demonstrate how climate change impacts women and men in a variety of ways. These are examples of successful techniques or interventions that have been implemented in other locations and may be replicated in Pakistan. Attempts to mainstream gender and create a space for women to participate in decision-making are discussed. This paper suggests strengthening grassroots capacity, enhancing agriculture-based livelihoods, and assessing the significance of environmental migration. The probability of systemic change is doubtful due to shortcomings in current legal structures and political procedures, a lack of money, and cultural norms. However, capital commitment and governance mechanism to the recommended initiatives have the potential to improve women's social and economic standing in Pakistan significantly.

To conclude the debate, women in Pakistan are circled plenty of problems, and the impact of climate change is a priority now. Their issues are multiplied when coupled with climate change. Women are considered a driving force in making and developing innovative climate solutions. Despite the interruption to health care systems and facilities which force pregnant women to deliver in life-threatening settings such as inundated delivery rooms or, in the worst-case scenario, at home without access to rapid medical treatment, their active role cannot be denied. In Pakistan, as explained earlier, the health system is not well organized because plenty of females suffer a lot. We argue that a safer environment for a women will provide the driving force to handle climate change in a innovative ways.

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