Article

Building Resilience to Gender-Based Violence Connected to Climate Change.

Nnamdi Azikiwe Journal of Political Science (NAJOPS).
2024, Vol. 9(2)
ISSN: 2992-5924
©NAJOPS 2023
Reprints and permissions:
www.najops.org.ng

EZEH, Kelechukwu Dennis
Department of Political Science
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Nigeria.

OBI, Chinenye Blessing
Department of Political Science
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Nigeria.

EZE Chinwe.
Department of Political Science
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Nigeria

Abstract
This study examines how resilience can be built against gender-based violence (GBV) and climate change in the West African sub-region. No doubt, Climate change exacerbates violence but disproportionately women are more vulnerable, which often increases the risks of GBV during and after climate-related disasters. Delving further into this inquiry, this study made use of the documentary method of data collection from official documents like the UN, ECOWAS, and Journal articles to ascertain the linkages between climate change and GBV. Through a comprehensive review of existing literature and case studies from ECOWAS countries, the study anchored its framework of analysis on Eco-violence theory. Major findings of this study revealed that, because women have a closer affinity to nature through agricultural activities and other cultural beliefs, investing in women can foster effective resilience to climate-related violence against them. Amongst other recommendations, the study identified key areas where policy interventions can mitigate GBV risks, such as improving access to resources, enhancing legal protections, and promoting women's leadership in rural communities for effective climate resilience initiatives. Also, by addressing the gender role factor, this study emphasizes more effective and equitable resilience-building measures to mitigate or adapt to the adverse effects of climate change in the West Africa sub-region.

Keywords: Climate change, ECOWAS, Gender-Based Violence, Gender Roles

Corresponding Author:
Obi, Chinenye Blessing. Department of Political Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Nigeria. Email: cb.obi@unizik.edu.ng

Introduction

Studies by researchers on climate change suggest that there is an undeniable connection between rising temperatures brought on by climate change and Gender Based Violence (GBV), which is slightly different from physical impacts but intertwined (McOmber, 2020: IPCC, 2022: CARE, 2023). Before now, Gender-based violence (GBV) has been recognized as a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between men and women, often resulting in domination and discrimination by the former over the latter (Ndiaye, 2021). Some of the reasons attributed to this opinion are anchored on the patriarchal nature of some African societies, especially in West Africa, and also some gender-stereotyped roles of men and women in society. Over time, the advent of unwavering adverse effects of climate change ushered in different dimensions and perspectives to the issue of GBV. Although the impacts of climate change know no gender, however, the existing inequalities between the two genders became a chasm through which climate change has further exploited the vulnerabilities and exacerbated them. Consequently, it increases the susceptibilities of women to violence. (Carr and Thompson, 2014)

In recent times and as a security challenge facing humanity in the 21st century, the expanding adverse effects of climate change have brought enormous relevance to international peace and security (Huntjens & Nachbar, 2015; Sanders, 2016). Drawing instances from geographical regions, a study by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), which estimates the effect of climatic change on Africa by 2050, indicates that the Sahel, the Great Lakes region, and the coastal zones of Eastern and Western Africa, will be chiefly at risk (DFID, 2006). Consequently, nowhere is this prediction, or reality, more acute than in West Africa where surging population growth, rising urbanization, persistent environmental degradation, the emergence of violent extremist organizations, and weak state capacity have created a perfect storm of insecurity that is greatly undermining people's well-being and compounding the fragility of states (Onuoha, 2022, Onuoha and Akogwu, 2022). In extension to this, there is an intrinsic observation by scholars, development practitioners, and (non)government institutions that the adverse effect of climate change significantly impacts gender. For example, the Geneva Centre of Security and Governance report stated that;

> "*In the aftermath of extreme weather events and climate change-induced societal and economic shocks, women are at a higher risk of being victims of sexual exploitation, domestic violence, and human trafficking*". (DCAF 2021 p.1)

In Support of the above assertion, the Women's International Peace Centre (WIPC) report posits that "Climate change is thus seen as a risk multiplier, as part of a complex matrix of people's lives in conflict and post-conflict contexts and is inherently gendered" (WIPC, 2020 p. 4). Hence, this report tilts towards the affirmation of the adverse effects of climate change on women. Also, the CARE's 2020 report has underscored that "all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls spike during disaster and conflict" and the "climate extremes exacerbate existing inequalities, vulnerabilities, and negative gender norms." (CARE 2020, p. 4), making it a security threat to women in times of conflicts and disaster. In lieu of this, the growing worldwide evidence shows that GBV against women increases during and after disasters (UN, 2021) For example, The UN Secretary General's remarks to the Security Council on 23 February 2021 have graphically underscored the climate-related security risks that are devastating for girls and women who are forced to walk far to collect drinking water as a result of low rainfall increased drought in Darfur region (cited in Bharat and Mandal 2021 p. 3-4). In addition to this FAO (2019a) report noted that, "the periods of disasters including climate change-related migrations or displacement have also shown women and girls face more domestic and sexual violence" (p.5). Consequently, instances of displacement, forced displacement, and re-displacement in the West African region have proven that the primary driver of displacement in Nigeria, Mali, and Burkina Faso is hinged on the consequences of climate change, while the greater victims of the conflicts that result from this are women (FAO, 2019c).

On the other hand, there is a significant relationship between gender roles and climate change in West Africa. For example, climate change and pastoralist movements in some places made cattle raids frequently seen as a means of restocking cattle herds. And when some men don't go out for raiding the women folk see them as less a man (Adano et al., 2012, Ensor, 2013; Schilling et al., 2012). Again, though not in West Africa, Ide et al (2021) observed that "Cattle raiding in Kenya, Uganda, and South Sudan is strongly tied to gender roles and identities" (p.4). Also, the Chipko movement and some places where the groom is made to pay a large number of cattle concerning the bride's price affirms this notion of gender roles being aligned to climate related issues. Inferring from these examples, there are attributes of gender roles to the environment which are often seen as cultural identity but inherently on the environment. Taking a cue from these instances, it now becomes pertinent to explore the prospects of building a resilient community to stem the issues of gender-related violence resulting from climate change. Therefore, It is against this backdrop that this study examines the nexus and dynamics of climate change and GBV to highlight examples from the ECOWAS sub-region by underscoring the roles of women as a contributing factor in the region

Conceptual clarifications

Climate Change

In the simplest sense, climate change refers to changes in climate over time, as a result of either or both natural variability and anthropogenic factors. According to Article 1 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 1992), "climate change refers to a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable periods" (Huntjens & Nachbar, 2015, p. 1). Human activity, such as burning fossil fuels and changing how human beings use the land, is the leading cause of climate change. The climate impacts that confront the world are a result of the over-exploitation of natural resources and land use, land change, and forestry (LULUCF) which serve as a source and sink of emissions are drastically affected. (Ghosh, 2022). Ecosystems and their biodiversity provision services are also affected. As a result, Climate change, through hazards, exposure, and vulnerability, in turn, generates impacts and risks that can surpass limits to adaptation and result in losses and damages (IPCC 2022, p. SPM 4). In extension, several key variables make West Africa region especially vulnerable to climate change. Bube et al. (2016) noted that "the geographical positioning of the continent makes it one of the warmest regions because of its proximity to the equator; High reliance on rainfed agriculture which is sensitive to climate change; Lack of technology and resources to improve the adaptive capacity of vulnerable communities to overcome exacerbating factors including socio-economic gaps in governance, government financing, high rates of poverty and growing populations; Decreased rain fed agriculture driven by droughts in already hot and dry regions such as Sahel has increased the region's susceptibility to climate risks" (p.15). These enumerated features encapsulate the current situation of the dynamics of climate to the West Africa region

Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

By way of explanation, GBV is perpetrated against a person due to their sex and the place given to them by a given society or culture (UNECA, 2020). It is rooted in the inequality between men and women around the world (CCFJS, 2005). Due to the historical domination and discrimination of women by men and the disproportionate number of women and girls who are victims of violence, the term "violence against women and girls" (VAW) as widely used, the issue of Gender Based Violence has gathered attention. (WHO, 2013; UN 2015). According to the United Nations Population Fund, "Gender-

based violence […] stems from unequal power relations between men and women. It targets women because it affects women disproportionately. It includes, but is not limited to, physical, sexual, and emotional abuse (UNFPA, 2018 p. 5). However, and for the purpose of this study, GBV is defined as violence against women that arises from the climate change effect as a result of the roles women play in our society.

Theoretical framework of analysis

Following the most preferred framework of analysis, the arguments of this study will be best understood from the excerpts of the **Eco-violence theory**, propounded by Thomas Homer-Dixon. The core arguments of this theory underscore the struggle for scarce resources due to climate change as the major driver of violence. According to Homer-Dixon & Blitt (1998), large populations in many developing countries are highly dependent on four key environmental [natural] resources that are very fundamental to crop production: freshwater, cropland, forests, and fish. Therefore, the scarcity or shrinking of these resources as a result of misuse, over-use, or degradation under certain circumstances will trigger conflicts. Given these basic assumptions, this theory is preferred in the sense that GBV results from the struggle for scarce resources and other environmental disasters posed by adverse climatic conditions. Moreover, the West Africa sub-region is evidenced in these assumptions owing to the increased dependence on agricultural and natural resources by women such as firewood, water, etc. In addition, the gender roles of women have aligned the majority of them to struggle for means of livelihood, especially in their relation to the environment making them susceptible to GBV as witnessed in the number of women involved in agriculture and other natural resources. Instances where this theory is justifiable in application in the region are seen in the Lake Chad region where the struggle for scarce resources has exacerbated conflicts in access to clean water and agricultural activities which have so much involvement of women in that area.

Literature review

Contemporary studies on climate change and GBV are mostly centered on the consensus that climate change exacerbates conflicts that now spill over to gender-related violence. The West African region is characterized by adverse effects of climate change conflicts, disasters, displacements, refugees, and internally displaced persons which are being interrogated in growing literature. On another note, some believe that GBV in climate change increases as a result of inadequate response to some official

resolutions such as; the Russian draft resolution (S/2020/1054) of 30 October 2020 which did not find enough votes to be passed in the UN Security Council (UNSC), the 5 out of 75 member States recognition of gender considerations in climate change conflicts at The Dominican Republic debate on "Climate-Related Disasters on International Peace and Security." 25 January 2019, (UN 2019), amongst others. However, available climate change evidence for Africa suggests that individuals who are dependent on land and natural resources as a means of livelihood are significantly affected (Adano and Daudi, 2012). With over 5.3 5.3million displaced individuals across West and Central Africa, 56% of which are women and girls, climate change is proven as a major factor in this displacement tragedy. Under these circumstances, climate change becomes a significant factor that drives or compounds conflicts amidst resource scarcity, thereby resulting in Gender-based Violence

Some official documents have alluded to gender, climate change, and the significant relationship between women and their environment in what is often termed -*Eco feminism* (UNEP. 2016). This concept of eco-feminism was further affirmed by different movements and activities that brought the issue of women-environment linkages to the forefront of the global discourse. For instance, the Chipko movement of 1973, wherein the local village women hugged the trees to prevent their commercial felling at the cost of the local environment. The idea was to serve as an ecological movement for the protection and preservation of forests in the sub-Himalayan region. Also, slogans such as "Ecology is a permanent economy" allude to this movement as it is associated with the environment and economic livelihood of people (Jan. 2021). Another linkage of women to the environment can be deduced from the 1970s and 1980, movements to save the Silent Valley in the Western Ghats of peninsular India (Baharat. and Mandal, 2021). In this environmental movement, a female Malayalam poet Sugatha Kumari, played a key role in saving the tropical rainforest from the hydroelectric dam project. This act ushered in the connection between rainforest and fears of climate change that led to the preservation of the Silent Valley as a National Park in 1984 (Baharat, 1986). There are many other instances of the eco-feminism perception of gender and environment, however, the instances above are associated with cultural traditions which may be different in some other places. Though the fight against climate change is focused on protecting our environment, for many women activists and scholars it is also a direct cause of different forms of gender-based violence (UNDP 2020).

In West Africa, the linkages connecting women to the environment can be reiterated and witnessed in their roles and responsibilities such as dependent on natural resources and agriculture as a means of livelihood such as land, planting, fetching of firewood, home carers, and keepers amongst others

(Akogwu et.al., 2022). From this linkage, there tends to be a perceived threat of GBV resulting from climate change in West Africa. This is because, taking a cue from the understanding of women and their roles in the region as home carers, major dependents on land and its resources to eke out a livelihood, the challenges of climate change and the eventuality of GBV occurring is imminent. OXFAM (2019), reported that these roles and the inequalities in Africa have reached a high crisis level, especially in West Africa where it is associated with climate adaptability. In a similar vein, the 2017 UNDP Gender Inequality Index (GII), revealed that all West African countries are at the bottom of the global GII rankings, between 131st and 158th out of 158 countries classified (GII, 2020) which is a clear indication of the wide gap of inequalities and access to economic livelihoods between both genders. Moreso, gender inequalities are reflected in the human development gap, as measured by the UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) of 2019. All but three countries in West Africa (Cape Verde, Ghana & Senegal) fall into the last category on the UN agency's gender-based human development index. This means that the level of disparity between men and women in the region is very high in terms of health, education, and living standards (HDI 2019, OXFAM, 2019, and Ndiaye 2021). Globally, gender inequality continues to be inescapable in household and community-level activities including income inequality. Division of labor within the household continues to fall overwhelmingly on women, from childrearing to cooking and cleaning, as women tend to take on 'triple roles', that of productive, reproductive, and community-based responsibilities (Zibani. 2016). In addition, the social positioning of women in their roles as expected to be supportive and reproductive limited around the home and local community rather than the public space is a factor to be examined (UNECA, 2020). These gender roles contribute significantly to GBV when the adverse effect of climate change is at its peak. But this does not mean that women do not play important crucial roles in national economic development but theirs seem to attract less recognition (Brody et al. 2008). Amid this social positioning and gender roles, women are involved in multiple livelihoods in West Africa. For example, Blackden & Wodon, (2006) observed that countries like Burkina Faso have made an effort to obtain a better estimate of women's contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by measuring their activities in the processing of agricultural products which is associated with their dependents on land and natural resources. Unfortunately, when affected by climate change, the struggle for the scarcity of resources will result in conflicts making them susceptible to violence. For instance, in a situation where women or girls need to travel long distances to get necessities such as water and firewood, they can also be at increased risk of physical and sexual violence (Epule et al., 2018). Traveling farther for water puts women and young girls at risk for violence, and the social repercussions resulting from sexual assault (Sorenson et al., 2011). Health concerns include dehydration, back and spinal injuries,

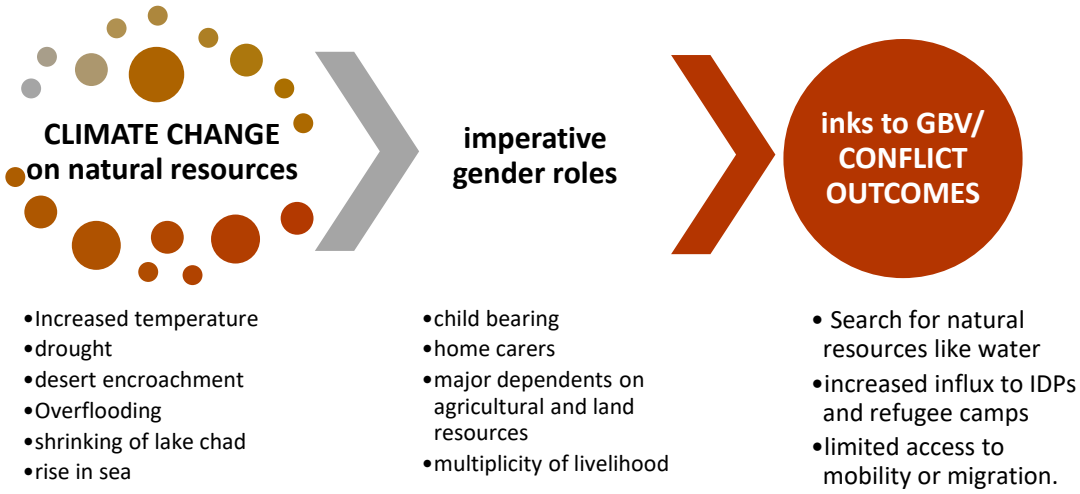
fatigue, and reproductive complications that can result from carrying heavy water containers over many years and many kilometers (Nagel, 2015).

From a political point of view, the presence of environmental politics and the politics of climate change and governance have necessitated the need for good leadership in decision-making and a significant gender representation in government. This is because, women are more likely than men to be absent from decision-making, whether in the household or at community, national, or international levels. This can either be because their contribution is not valued or held back by social norms and practices in their community. Necessary and unavoidable as it may be, there is a need to incorporate women in national climate change decision-making levels, particularly in disaster risk reduction (Brody et al. 2008; Mitchell et al. 2008). In West Africa, there is a staggering low representation of women in politics and decision-making despite the 35% threshold proposed by the international community UN. For example, a mere 17 women were appointed or elected to parliaments, ministerial, or electoral offices in the West Africa/Sahel region out of 134 available positions from December 2021 to June 2022 (Banjo, 2022).

From the perspective of migration and mobility, West Africa has a long history of migration, with a large population of pastoralists and traders developing generations of social networks to facilitate mobility within and across borders. Also, the ECOWAS protocol of free movement of goods and services within her member states for a maximum of 90 days contributes significantly to the nature of migration in the region. However, the present nature of climate change and environmental instability has affected migration to a large extent (Dube T. et al., 2016). Although the major cause of forced migration is hinged on climate change, other factors have increased the number of displaced persons and also drive migration patterns in the region (Neumann and Hermans, 2017; FAO 2019a). Studies have shown that the primary drivers of displacement in some West African states like Nigeria, Mali, and Burkina Faso are violence and conflicts. For example, conflicts within the regions of Gao, Ménaka, and Timbuktu in Mali have a big number of internally displaced people, with approximately 10,000 people becoming newly displaced each month (FAO, 2019b). In west Africa, Nigeria has the highest number of IDPs (3.2million) followed by Burkina Faso and Chad respectively (2021 Statistica report). The reports show that 2.5 million people have been displaced by violence across Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe States in Nigeria and the nearby communities/provinces of Chad, Niger, and far North Cameroun (UNHCR 2020). Most camps for displaced people across the region have over 56% female gender. According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), during the month of December 2019, in the Diffa area, 36 cases of gender-based violence were reported and documented. Three cases of physical violence and 6 cases of emotional abuse were

also documented. Similarly, 18 cases of denial of resources and 3 cases of forced marriages were recorded, 2 of which involved minors aged 15 and 16 (UNHCR. 2019).

Furthermore, climate change has also affected displacement. In a region so highly dependent upon agricultural and pastoralist livelihoods, fluctuations and unpredictability of climate conditions make these livelihoods less viable. This study showed that largely male household heads turned to off-farm livelihoods including mining, construction, and transportation. Elderly and youth populations were less likely to adopt these alternative livelihoods due to a lack of capital and spatial mobility. Migration is a gendered issue as women and men do not always have equal opportunities for mobility. In some ways, this is directly linked to asset inequalities. Those with modes of transportation or the financial assets to utilize transportation services are better able to migrate. Women often do not have equitable access to these types of resources. Constraints over household responsibilities, including reproductive division of labor means that women often have fewer mobility options outside of the village. This limits women's options for mobility in the context of climate change (Deshingkar, 2012; Kima et al., 2015). The illustration below captures the idea of the linkages of gender roles to GBV drawing insights from adverse effects of climate change on natural resources.



Authors' illustration

From the forgoing analyses of gender roles in the context of climate change and GBV, it becomes imperative to note that these inequalities have important implications on Men and women as they have different access to financial, social, or political resources. They also often hold different roles and

responsibilities within the household. According to Twyman, et al., (2014), women tend to balance reproductive roles such as cooking, cleaning, and childrearing in addition to agricultural responsibilities and it is common for them to maintain kitchen gardens for household consumption. In addition to this, McLeman and Hunter(2010), observed that because of gender inequalities about financial assets, women tend to be responsible for poultry and small ruminants while men tend to care for larger and more financially advantageous livestock such as cattle. Consequently, men and women tend to experience the effects of climate change differently as a result of gender roles.

From the foregoing, there is an established significant relationship between women and the environment but inherent inequality that is manifested through gender roles has also exposed women to be disproportionately affected by the imminent adverse effects of climate change. These vulnerabilities take the form of trafficking of girl children, and early and forced marriages (McLeod, 2019; Mason, 2016).

BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

Recognizing how climate change disproportionately affects both genders and how access to and utilization of natural resources exacerbates conflict, this has indirectly exposed the prospects to invest in resilience-building initiatives in West Africa. For instance, Rural women's livelihoods in this region, rely heavily upon access to natural resources (Dankelman and Jansen, 2010). Moreso, their productive/reproductive roles, and responsibilities as women are closely tied to these natural resources, whether it be through the collection of firewood and water for drinking, cooking, and washing, or acquiring animals and plants for the provision of food (Nagel, 2015).

According to McOmber, C (2020), there is some evidence that women, at least in some contexts, may respond to scarcity differently than a more Malthusian economic theory may expect them to behave. While resource scarcity may increase the likelihood of competition, some research has shown that women may respond differently. Gendered experiences of social exclusion and marginalization create situations in which women are more likely to cooperate, rather than compete when presented with conditions of scarcity (Patt et al., 2009). While this cannot be generalized to all women's experiences, it can be said that because women are often restricted from operating outside formal institutions due to access barriers, many women are conditioned to cooperation rather than competition to achieve their goals. Moreover, a study conducted in 2013 in Kaffrine, Senegal revealed that through cooperation among women folks, simple and good suggestions about climate-smart agriculture practices were engendered using the

'chatterbox' system of information sharing (Tall et al., 2014). This system involves receiving updates on climate about planting season from extension services or the meteorological office which is shared by a trainee (a woman) to her fellow women folks.

The CCAFS project that worked in rural agricultural communities in Senegal revealed that there is a different understanding of climate adaptation by both genders. For example, in the community of Malem Thierign, women explained that they needed more information and support around improved storage strategies. Women expressed this concern because they were responsible for allocating and preparing food for the household and were therefore more aware of issues around food storage. Men, who are often responsible for cash crops that do not require storage but instead go directly to the market for sale, did not prioritize improved storage as an information need. Because men were responsible for making household decisions, this need was therefore not necessarily addressed or acknowledged (McKune et al., 2018).

Other initiatives and programs in the region that aim to address climate change and community resilience challenges that are not gender-specific include the Abuja Declaration to raise global awareness of the dramatic shrinkage of Lake Chad by the Lake Chad Basin Commission countries in 2018 (UNODC, 2022). Also, there is the Lake Chad Development and Climate Resilience Action Plan (or simply the Lake Chad Action Plan) which is an Initiative undertaken by the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and the member countries of the Lake (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Libya, Niger, and Nigeria) to preserve environmental capital of the lake, restore peace and security and turn Lake Chad into a rural hub for regional development (LCBC, 2015).

Specifically, in Nigeria's northeast, the Buhari Plan for Rebuilding the North East has been implemented (UNODC, 2022). In Chad**,** the Government has embarked on the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) to address short-, medium- and long-term climate risks; build capacity; integrate climate change into development planning and budgeting processes; and catalyze investments for climate change adaptation (UNDP, 2019). There is also the CARE Chad which is aimed at responding effectively to emergencies in different parts of the country and addressing the underlying causes of climate change, chronic food insecurity and endemic malnutrition by developing holistic community and community resilience strategies. Institutions and integrating changes in policies, practices, systems, and institutions (https://careclimatechange.org/where-we-work/chad/).

In Niger, there is the distribution of drought-resistant seeds, livestock feed, fertilizers, and other sustainable land management technologies and coaching through the Community Action Project for

Climate Resilience (PACRC) and also, and innovative farming technics have also been piloted under the Climate Smart Agriculture Support Project (PASEC) where more than 80,000 hectares of degraded land have been rehabilitated and 800 hectares have been irrigated (World Bank, 2021). Because agriculture and natural resources (on land) remain one of the predominant livelihood strategies in the ECOWAS region, making the economy within the region vulnerable to climate shocks there is need to adopt the best possible strategy to community resilience through women. from the foregoing analyses, women play a very crucial role climate adaptation and resilience. The imperative gender role of women can also be a platform for engendering climate adaptation.

Major findings and discussions

The ECOWAS is made up of 15 member states established by the ECOWAS Treaty in May 1975 with the primary objective of promoting economic integration in all fields of economic activity. The ECOWAS, CILSS, and WAEMU communique on COP26 and Climate Change of 11th November 2021 acknowledged that the region is in a situation of climate emergency and called upon COP26 and GCA3 to recognize this state of emergency and to emphasize the urgency of increased action to fight climate change (ECOWAS, 2021; Onuoha, 2022). Therefore, there is a consciousness of the devastating effects posed by climate change across the region that requires urgent attention. Though Climate change is a global phenomenon, nations are affected by the impacts in different ways, some regions of the world are particularly susceptible to effects that will challenge current ways of life, from food systems to livelihoods. In regions where those systems are already fragile, climate instability poses a severe risk to intensify weaknesses within those systems (CNA, 2007, Onuoha and Ezirim 2010)). The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report and other scholarly articles have identified the ECOWAS subregion as a "climate change hot spot" that is, countries, where human security is threatened due to projected climate change and impacts on natural resources (Onuoha, 2010; IPCC, 2019 p.197; Diffenbaugh and Giorgi, 2012, de Sherbinin, 2014). The West African region has the highest recorded instances of climate stressors, that is, drought, wind, and flooding (Epule et al., 2018).

Among those most vulnerable to the effects of climate change are women. With over 65% of the approximately 1.8 million women population of the region heavily reliant on land and natural resources to eke out a livelihood, they are prone to the major hits of climate change. With the food economy making up 66% of total employment in West Africa, the regional economic system is reliant upon climate stability (Allen et al., 2018). In countries such as Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger, and Mali, where the food

economy contributes to over 80% of employment, climate variability puts both national and local economies in a vulnerable state (FAO, 2014). By extension, women and girls are found to be more involved in agriculture and farming in this region. Women in the West Africa region overwhelmingly rely on the agricultural and food economies, with women contributing to 40% of agricultural production, 80% of agricultural processing, and 70% of agricultural distribution labor regionally (Allen et al., 2018). Therefore, the justification for choosing the ECOWAS sub-region is hinged on the following; the unwavering effects of climate change in the region, the increased population, urbanization, and migration in the region, the overwhelming dependency on natural resources (land) as a means of livelihood, the records of gender roles and disparities in the region in an attempt to eke out a livelihood.

Conclusion.

Climate change is often discussed in relation to violence against women but not adequately to gender roles. Therefore, it has become a global common concern due to its role as a contributing factor in exacerbating SGBV. Though entire populations are affected by climate change, women and girls face double victimization as human beings as well as because of their gender (IDS, 2008) During emergencies, especially conflicts and disasters, women are at high risk of SGBV because of crisis in the family and society as well as due to sudden breakdown of family and community structures arising from forced displacement. (UNHCR, 2003). The existing gender inequalities heighten much more during this kind contingencies or emergencies such as disasters and pandemics, calamities and conflicts (UNHCR, 2021), however, gender-stereotyped roles tend to be the reason for this disproportionate effect. Inherently the gender role can become a very platform and medium through which community resilience and adaptation can be realized. For example, the introduction of solar energy stoves can have women as their targeted consumers and users. The analysis of gender cooperation amongst women can also help in this regard.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing analysis of gender roles in relation to climate change and GBV, this study recommends the following

1. Social inclusion and adequate representation of women in the decision-making process as to suggest and implement climate adaptation strategies being highly vulnerable to climate change-related conflicts,

2. Robust investment in women as the anchors and frontiers of climate adaptation and community resilience programs will be of optimum value. This is because use, as they are highly vulnerable to GBV, prioritizing them in climate and community resilience adaptations and strategy plans, will reduce the number of GBV and affected women
3. Having explored and examined gender roles, they can also be used as a platform or an avenue to foster community resilience plans on climate adaptation.

REFERENCES

Adano, W., Dietz, T., Witsenburg, K. M., & Zaal, F. (2012). Climate change, violent conflict and local institutions in Kenya's drylands. Journal of Peace Research, 49(1), 65–80.

Allen, T., P. Heinrigs and I. Heo (2018), "Agriculture, Food and Jobs in West Africa", West African Papers, No. 14, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/dc152bc0-en

Bharat H. D (1986), "Destroying the Global Environment," International Perspectives (Ottawa), pp.27–29 (on file with the author). Also see, Prabhakaran G, "A rainforest's saga of survival", the Hindu, 1 December 2009; available at: https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/ A-rainforestrsquos-saga-of-survival/article16851225.ece (accessed on 28 April 2021).

Bharat H. D, and Mandal, M (2021) Role of Climate Change in Exacerbating Sexual and Gender-Based Violence against Women: A New Challenge for International Law. Environmental Policy and Law 51 (2021) 137–157 DOI 10.3233/EPL-210055 IOS Press.

Blackden, M. and Q. Wodon (2006), "Gender, Time Use, and Poverty: Introduction", in Gender, Time Use and Poverty in sub-Saharan Africa, World Bank Working Paper, No. 73, The World Bank, Washington, D.C

Brody, A. (2008). Gender and Climate change: Mapping the Linkages a Scoping Study on Knowledge and Gaps. BRIDGE, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton.

CARE International (2020), Suffering In Silence: The 10 most under-reported humanitarian crises of 2016; available at: https://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/report suffering in silence web version.pdf (accessed on 28 April 2022).

Carr, E.R. and M.C. Thompson (2014), "Gender and climate change adaptation in agrarian settings: Current thinking, new directions, and research frontiers", Geography Compass, Vol. 8, Issue 3, pp. 182–197, https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12121.

Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System, 2005, available at: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/law-crimeand-justice/about-bc-justice-system/justice-services-branch/ fjsd/final-05-05.pdf, accessed 4 August 2020

Dankelman, I. and W. Jansen (2010), "Gender, environment, and climate change: Understanding the linkages", in I. Dankelman (ed.) Gender and Climate Change: An Introduction, Earthscan, London, pp. 21-54

DCAF (2021) Climate change, gender-based violence: Implications for the security sector. ISSAT Thursday 21 january. International Security Sector Advisory Team.

Deshingkar, P. (2012), "Environmental risk, resilience and migration: implications for natural resource management and agriculture", Environmental Research Letters, Vol. 7, No. 1, https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/7/1/015603.

DFID. (2006). How climatic change could cripple African agriculture. Africa Today, 8

Donno, D., and A. Kreft (2019), "Authoritarian institutions and women's rights", Comparative Political Studies, Vol. 52, Issue 5, pp. 720-753, https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414018797954.

Dube, T., Moyo, P., Ncube, M. and Nyathi, D. (2016). The Impact of Climate Change on AgroEcological Based Livelihoods in Africa: A Review. Journal of Sustainable Development, 9(1):256.

ECOWAS. (2008). *ECOWAS conflict prevention framework.* Abuja: ECOWAS Commission,

ECOWAS. (2021). ECOWAS, CILSS, and WAEMU communique on COP26 and climate change. https://ecowas.int/ecowas-cilss-and-waemu-communique-on-cop26-and-climate-change/

Eizenga, D. (2018), "The unstable foundations of political stability in Chad", West African Papers, No. 12, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/508844d3-en.

Ensor, M. O. (2013). Youth, climate change, and peace in South Sudan. Peace Review: A Journal of Social Jus- tice, 25(4), 526–533.

Epule, T.E. et al. (2014), "The causes, effects and challenges of Sahelian droughts: a critical review", Regional Environmental Change, Vol. 14, Issue 1, pp. 145-156.

FAO (2019a), "Sahel-Regional Overview", The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome, http://www.fao.org/3/ca4321en/ca4321en.pdf.

FAO (2019b), "Mali: Response Overview", The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome, http://www.fao.org/3/ca7307en/CA7307EN.pdf.

Ghosh, J. (2022, March 28). Who should be responsible for emissions reductions? *IPS-Journal*. https://www.ips-journal.eu/topics/economy-and-ecology/who-should-be-responsible-for-emissions-reductions-5816/

Homer-Dixon, T.F & Blitt, J. (1998). *Eco violence: Links among environment, population, and security*. Rowman and Littlefield.

Human Development Report 2019, "Les inégalités de développement humain au XXIe siècle Note d'information à l'intention des pays concernant le Rapport sur le dévelopement humain" (Inequalities in human development in the 21st century Briefing note for countries on the 2019

Human Development Report), 2019, available at http://hdr.undp. org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/fr/SEN.pdf, accessed 21 October 2020.

Huntjens, P., & Nachbar, K. (2015). *Climate change is a threat multiplier for human disaster and conflict.* The Hague Institute for Global Justice. Working Paper 9. The Hague Institute for Global Justice Sophialaan 10 2514 JR The Hague, Netherlands 1-24.

Ide, T., Masson, V.L., Ensor, M.O., & Kozak, S., (2021) Gender in the Climate-Conflict Nexus: "Forgotten" Variables, Alternative Securities, and Hidden Power Dimensions. Politics and Governance. 9(4), pp 43–52.

Institute of Development Studies (2008), Bridge development-gender: Gender and Climate Change: Mapping the linkages; available at: https://siteresources.worldbank.org/ EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/DFID Gender Climate Change.pdf (accessed on 28 April 2021).

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). (2007, November 16). *Summary for policymakers of the synthesis report of the IPCC fourth assessment report*. United Nations.

IPCC, (2022). Climate change 2022: Impacts, adaptation and vulnerability; summary for policymakers.

Jain S (2021) "Standing up for trees: Women's role in the Chipko Movement", FAO; available at: http://www.fao.org/3/r0465e/ r0465e03.htm (accessed on 28 April 2021)

Kima, S.A. et al (2015), "Adapting to the impacts of climate change in the sub-humid zone of Burkina Faso, West Africa: Perceptions of agro-pastoralists". Pastoralism, Vol. 5, Issue 16, https://doi.org/10.1186/s13570-015-0034-9.

McKune, S. et al. (2018), "Reaching the end goal: Do interventions to improve climate information services lead to greater food security?", Climate Risk Management, Vol. 22, pp. 22-41, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.crm.2018.08.002.

McLeman, R. A., and L. M. Hunter (2010), "Migration in the context of vulnerability and adaptation to climate change: insights from analogues", Climate Change, Vol. 1, Issue 3, pp. 450-461.

McOmber, C. (2020), "Women and Climate Change in the Sahel", West African Papers, No. 27, OECD Publishing, Paris. https://doi.org/10.1787/e31c77ad-en.

Nagel, J. (2015), Gender and climate change: Impacts, science, policy, Routledge, New York.

Ndiaye, A.N (2021) Gender-Based Violence in West Africa: The Cases of Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Peace and Security Competence Centre Sub-Saharan Africa.

Neumann, K. and F. Hermans (2017), "What drives human migration in Sahelian countries? A meta-analysis", Population, Space and Place, Vol. 23, Issue 1, https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.1962.

OECD/SWAC (2020), The Geography of Conflict in North and West Africa, West African Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/02181039-en.

Onuoha, F.C (2022). Climate change and natural resource conflicts in Africa. Insight from ECOWAS and ECCAS. Lecture presented to the Executive intelligence management course fifteen (EIMC, 15), National Institute of security studies, (NISS) Abuja, 31st March.

Onuoha, F.C. & Ezirim, E.E. (2010). Climatic change and national security: Exploring the conceptual and empirical connections in Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa,* 12(4), 255-269.

Onuoha, F.C. (2008). Environmental degradation, livelihood and conflicts the implications of the diminishing water resources of Lake Chad for north-eastern Nigeria. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, 8(2), 36-61.

Onuoha, F.C. (2010). Climate change, population surge and resource overuse in lake Chad: Implications for human security in the north-eastern zone of Nigeria. in D.A. Mwiturubani & V.W. Jo-Ansie. (Eds,). *Climate change and natural resource conflicts in Africa*. Institute for Security Studies.

Onuoha, F.C., & Akogwu, J.C. (2022). Armed non-state actors in Nigeria and challenges of peacebuilding in a fragile state. In B.T. Bakut., P.A. Gwaza., G.I. Okafor., & N.L. Ikelionwu (Eds.), Towards sustainable peace and security in Nigeria. IPCR, Abuja, pp. 130-161

OXFAM Briefing Report, July 2019, available at: https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620837/ bp-west-africa-inequality-crisis-090719-en.pdf, accessed 21 October 2020

Patt, A. G., A. Dazé and P. Suarez (2009), "Gender and climate change vulnerability: what's the problem, what's the solution", in M. Ruth (ed.) Distributional Impacts of Climate Change and Disasters: Concepts and Cases, Northeastern University, Boston, pp. 82-102.

Schilling, J., Opiyo, F., & Scheffran, J. (2012). Raiding pas- toral livelihoods: Motives and effects of violent conflict in north-eastern Kenya. Pastoralism, 2(25), 1–16.

Sorenson, S. B., C. Morssink and P.A. Campos (2011), "Safe access to safe water in low income countries: Water fetching in current times", Social Science and Medicine, Vol. 72, Issue 9, pp. 1522-1526

Tall, A., Kristjanson, P.M., Chaudhury, M., McKune, S. and Zougmoré, R.B. (2014). Who Gets the information? Gender, Power and Equity Considerations in the Design of Climate Services for Farmers. CCAFS Working Paper, No. 89, CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS), Copenhagen, https://hdl.handle.net/10568/49673. https://hdl.handle.net/10568/49673 [Accessed 1 Oct. 2020].

The GII measures inequalities in achievement between men and women in three areas: reproductive health, empowerment (including political representation) and labour markets (including real wages). See: http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/ gender-inequality-index-gii, accessed 21 October 2020.

UN (2020), Gender, Climate & Security Sustaining inclusive peace on the frontlines of climate change; available at: https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/32638/ GCS.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (accessed on 28 April 2021);

UN News. (2019, January 25). Climate change recognized as 'threat multiplier,' UN Security Council debates its impact on peace. UN News. https://news.un.org/en/ story/2019/01/1031322

UNDP (2020), Why climate change fuels violence against women; available at: https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/ home/blog/2020/why-climate-change-fuels-violence-againstwomen.html (accessed on 28 April 2022).

UNEP (2016), Global Gender and Environment Outlook (GGEO), p. 2; available at: https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/ handle/20.500.11822/14764/Gender and environment outlook HIGH res.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (accessed on 28 April 2021). Also see, Bharat H Desai (1992), n.

UNESCO (2016), Climate change is a threat multiplier for women and girls; available at: http://www.unesco.org/new/ en/unesco/themes/gender-equality/resources/single-view-gender/ news/climate change is a threat multiplier for women and girls/ (accessed on 28 April 2021).

UNFCCC (2019), Climate Change Increases the Risk of Violence against Women; available at: https://unfccc.int/news/climate-change-increases-the-risk-of-violence-against-women (accessed on 28 April 2022). Also see, IPCC (2018), Special report: Global Warming of 1.5 ºC; available at: https://www. ipcc.ch/sr15/ (accessed on 28 April 2022).

UNHCR (2003), Sexual and Gender-Based Violence against Refugees, Returnees, and Internally Displaced Persons: Guidance for Prevention and Response; available at: https:// www.unhcr.org/protection/women/3f696bcc4/sexual-genderbased-violence-against-refugees-returnees-internallydisplaced.html(accessed on 28 April 2021).

UNHCR, “Situation en matière de violences sexuelles et basées sur le genre - Diffa, Niger” (Fact sheet on sexual and gender-based violence in the Diffa region), 2019.

UNHCR, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence; available at: http://www.unhcr.org/sexual-and-gender-based-violence.html (accessed on 28 April 2021)

WHO, “Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence: Executive summary”, Geneva, 2013.

WIPC (2020) Defending the future: gender, conflict and environmental peace. Women’s International Peace Centre.

World Bank, 2021). This is How Niger Acts Against Climate Change. https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2021/10/20/this-is-how-niger-is-battling-climate-change

Zibani T (2016) The Triple burden and triple role of women. Empowerwomen available at https://www.empowerwomen.org/en/community/discussions/2016/11/the-triple-burden-and-triple-role-of-women accessed 21/11/2022