GENDER AND CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT
By altering the earth’s ecosystems, climate change directly impacts the human race affecting people of different genders. Both climate change and gender have been central to debates on development. Even the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s Fourth Assessment Report recognizes that gender roles and relations impact both vulnerability and capacity to adapt to climate change. Gender analysis in climate change studies engenders the need to provide answers to questions such as, what are the gender dimensions of both adaptation and mitigation; and to supply a standard for gaining insight into gender differentiated impacts of climate change. This study particularly examined the interrelationship between climate change and gender through a review of previous studies and explored the various ways that equity could be attained in the effort to mitigate the effect of climate change. From the study, it was observed that there is no focus on gender in policy responses to climate change as a result of the imbalance in the power relations connected to climate change. The study recommends that females should be as involved as their male counterparts in disaster response decision making and gender specific policy formulation. It is a bid that will help lessen the negative impact of climate change on women and children.

Keywords: Gender, women, climate change, policies, development, mitigate

INTRODUCTION
Climate change is a lasting variation in the global climate in response to natural and human factors. Climate change and more specifically global warming can cause glaciers to melt and sea levels to rise, pushing salt water into fresh water system (Denton, 2002). Significant change like the salinization of water pushes species to new locations, directly impacting on global ecosystems. Climatic change affects weather patterns, increasing the frequency and intensity of floods, droughts and extreme weather events. These types of conditions also result in natural disasters. While climate change is not solely destructive, the negative impacts of global warming on health and agriculture are greater than the benefits for the majority of the world, and these may increase as global temperatures rise. A two degree rise in temperature threatens 25 percent of all plant and animal species on the planet with extinction. These climatic changes will cause the most harm for the most vulnerable populations or those who lack the ability to cope with and adapt to climate change because of lack of access to essential resources (Chambers 2006). Population groups such as women, children, the elderly, and the impoverished have less access to and control over resources and therefore is most likely to be negatively impacted by climate change. This study seeks to examine the interrelationship between climate change and gender through a review of previous studies and explore the various ways in which equity can be attained in an effort to mitigate the effect of climate change.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND GENDER
(a.) The Interface of Climate Change and Gender
This is the interaction between the environmental phenomenon of climate change and the social category of gender. By altering the ecosystems of the planet, climate change and global warming are assumed to directly
impact the human race. The effects vary for different segments of the population, specifically for people of different genders. In many cases, women are more vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change because of their lower social status in most countries. Many impoverished women, especially those in the developing world are farmers and they depend on the natural environment for subsistence and income. By further limiting their already constrained access to physical, social, socio-political and fiscal resources, climate often burdens women more than men.

A study by the London school of Economics found that in natural disasters, gender differences in deaths correlated to women’s economic right in those countries(Nelson, et al., 2002). Due to their social standing, women in developing countries are not generally taught survival skills like swimming or climbing, meaning they are more likely to die in a natural disaster from the collective social differences between males and females, as determined by culture. Gender is one of the many components of vulnerability to climatic change. Changes in the climate affect gender differently, magnifying existing gender inequality. Both women and men are affected by and are vulnerable to climate change and global warming, but women often seem more affected by these changes. When women have fewer rights and less power in society, more of them die due to climate change, but when there are equal rights for all groups, death rates are more equally matched.

The gender equality aspects in climate change policies are important as they represent a question of equality and equity. Both women and men need to be equally and meaningfully involved in planning and decision making. Furthermore, different implications for women and men of planned legislation, policies and programmes need to be assessed because climate change and climate policy might otherwise exacerbate existing inequalities (Alber, 2010). Secondly, it is a question of effectiveness and efficiency. If climate change policies are not targeted at relevant customers, they are likely to be less effective. As Alber states, “only inclusive and gender-sensitive climate policies will be able to reach a majority of citizens”. Gender does not refer only to women. Gender is often interpreted as referring to the requirement to take into account women’s needs and vulnerabilities and include women in decision making. This is because most data on gender focus on gender differentials, often underlying “socially constructed roles and opportunities associated with being a ‘man’ or a ‘woman”, the interactions and social relations between men and women are not adequately analyzed. (Aguilar, et al., 2008). Furthermore, a generalization of women and men is problematic; attention must be paid to differences within each gender. Therefore, it is important to take intersectionality into influencing factors, such as social class, income, education, living and working conditions and cultural ethnic background (Weller, 2007).

(b.) Gender Difference versus Gender Dimensions of Climate Change Policies

Socially constructed roles and identities of women and men and the underlying power dynamics affect the way women and men experience and respond to climate change (Skinner, 2011). Often, differences between men and women are their perception and attitudes. Needs, vulnerabilities and use of resource are the main starting point for addressing gender issues in climate change as in any other area of environmental policy. These gender differences are explained well by Schultz and Stiess (2009) and arise from a variety of reasons. On an individual level, they reflect personal attitudes, beliefs, values and expectations. On a structural level, they are related to the different time use and work duties of women and men and gendered biographical patterns. The differing life situations of women and men are predominantly explained by the gendered division of labour assigning the responsibility for housework and caring activities to women rather than to men. (Schultz and Stiess, 2000).

Gender differences relating to the impacts of climate change, as well as perceptions of and contributions to climate change have been investigated in different countries and cultures (Carlsson – Kanyama and Raty, 2008; European commission, 2008; OECD, 2008; Roehr et al., 2004; Schultz and Stiess, 2009). However, simply noting these differences without analyzing the underlying societal dynamics that gives rise to these differences runs the risk of reproducing traditional gender roles and stereo – types, instead of contributing to gender equality. Therefore, it is essential to shift away from a gender difference framework to one investigating the effects and implications of gender. The gender dimensions should be at the focus of such a framework analyzing the complexity, the tension and contradictions between different dimensions, thus making the gender and climate nexus more understandable and researchable (Henwood, Parkhill and Pidgeon, 2008).

Skinner (2011) points out that there is serious risk that, by failing to take into account underlying gender inequalities, the very policies that aim to address the problem may magnify existing inequalities. Gender differentiated roles and responsibilities in families and households, as well as gender segregated labour markets and income gaps, cause differentiated vulnerabilities of women and men to the effects of climate change.
In industrialized countries, research points to differential impacts on well-being and, in particular on mental and physical health. Several researchers (Hansson, 2007; Johnson – Latham, 2007; Roehr, 2009) looked at how different gender dimensions can be important for climate change adaptation approaches in developed countries. They found power perspectives in the process of finding solutions to adapt to climate change, the appropriate adaptation strategies and national adaptation plans. This means not only taking into account and addressing the impacts of climate change on natural and technological infrastructures, but also considering the impact on the population, with particular attention to gendered roles and responsibilities.

Furthermore, existing economic disparities lead to differences in adaptive capacity. On the average, women’s salaries and assets tend to be lower than men’s. This may place single mothers and elderly women in a disadvantaged position when expensive adaptation measures are required as they may not have the means to address climate change and protect themselves. The gendered division of household labour needs also to be considered, as it leads to different effects of climate change as well as different requirements for climate change adaptation. Caring work may increase due to health impacts of climate change, or due to natural disasters, putting additional burdens on those who are mainly responsible for caring.

(c.) Women and Climate Change

Climate change has been observed in many regions of the globe and its different effects on various parts of society have been noticed (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2007). Higher temperature and more frequent heat waves have detrimental effects on particular sections of the population and are likely to affect women and men differently, as already observed during the 2002–2003 heat waves that hit Europe. The groups most affected were young children, the elderly, the sick and the poor. More women than men are elderly and poor and women are the ones providing care for children, the sick and elderly persons. They are therefore affected in multiple ways with regard to their own health as well as to carrying responsibilities imposed by the impact of climate change (World Health Organization, 2011; Duncan, 2007; European Environment Agency, 2006; Filleul, et al., 2011; Flechsig et al., 2000; Nogueira et al, 2005). For example, in Portugal, the estimated excess mortality rate for women resulting from the 2002–2003 heat waves was more than twice the rate estimated for men (Nogueira et al, 2005). In France similar findings showed a 70 percent increase in excess of total fatalities for women (where elderly women aged 75 years and above were particularly affected) compared to a 40 percent increase for men (Pirard et al, 2005). An earlier study by the Potsdam Institute of Climate Impact Research (PICIR) also discovered higher than average mortality rates for women, particularly the elderly, during extreme heat in Germany.

Natural disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina in the United States of America in 2005 or the floods in Europe in 2010, provide further examples of the differing effects of climate change on women and men. Women, especially elderly women and single mothers are likely to bear the greatest burden during these times of distress. The gender approach adopted in research into disaster risk management points to the significant role played by women in disaster management and the benefit of integrating them into all phases of preparation and implementation of disaster planning. As hurricane Katrina illustrated, the Global North is not immune to extreme climate events either, and the degree of vulnerability people in New Orleans experienced was closely correlated with gender, poverty race, age and class and the intersections between them (Enarson, 2006; Hartmann 2006; Oswald, 2008; Dankelman, 2010). Not only do women constitute the majority of victims of floods and experience the greatest difficulty in recovering from a disaster, they are also more likely to be subjected to sexual violence in the aftermath of disasters (Dankelman, 2010; Roehr and Hemmati, 2008).

(d.) Gender Roles and Climate Change

Gender roles and identities are significant for analyzing the causes of climate changes. Women and men living in Europe contribute differently to green house gases (GHG) in terms of amounts, consumption fields and purposes (Clancy and Roehr, 2003; Johnson – Latham, 2007; Nordell, 2003; Nordic Council of Ministers, 2009; OECD, 2008a; OECD 2008b; Raty and Carlsson- Kanyama, 2009; Raty and Carlsson–Kanyama, 2010; Schultz and Stiess, 2009). These differences are based on the existing, prevailing gender roles and identities expressed by behaviour and consumption patterns. According to OEDC (2008b) report, gender has a huge influence on sustainable consumption. This is because women make over 80 percent of consumption decision, although men may spend more than 80 percent on household funds.

These gender differentials in the consumption of services and goods can be explained, among other things, by gendered socialization and the social roles assigned to, and performed by women and men. There are
lots of revelations from previous studies. For instance, women are more likely to have a higher recognition of health issues and more highly developed risk perceptions, often acting on their internalized health and environment orientation, men tend to be more strongly oriented towards convenience and a ‘consumption-is-annoying’ attitude (Schultz and Stiess, 2009) Women’s decisions on consumption are to a larger extent based on aspects of ethics and fairness; and women feel a stronger need to adhere to social norms (e.g. slenderness) by controlling their eating habits more strictly, while men are able to follow their personal tastes and preferences and not follow strict gender body ideals.

Research on gender related disparities in nutrition has led to the conclusion that body image as well as social norms, play an underlying role in the development of nutrition behaviours. Studies of daily meat consumption for example, identified gender differences. In Sweden, for example, men’s food consumption, in terms of energy intake, is on average 14 times higher than women’s, partly explained by men’s higher levels of meat consumption (Raty and Carlsson-Kanyama, 2010). In Germany, research showed that men consume on average 103g meat products as compared to only 53g for women (Max – Rubner Institute and Federal Research Center for Nutrition and Food, 2008). In Denmark, men eat on average 139g meat a day, while women eat 81g (Nordic Council for Ministers, 2009). These patterns of consumption can be confirmed by data available from various countries throughout the world. Although these patterns of meat consumption might start changing, for example, in Sweden, nearly half of women and 41 percent of men indicted that they had reduced their meat intake during the last two years (Naturvardsverket, 2009), the gap between women’s and men’s meat consumption might also be widening, because more women are willing to reduce their already modest level of meat consumption. Women seem to show a greater willingness to change their consumption behaviour for the benefit of the environment. Some 94 percent of the respondents in the Women’s Environmental Network study stated that they had recently started to make such changes (The Women’s Environmental Network and the National Federation of Women’s Institutes, 2007). In Sweden, women are more likely to feel guilty about their ecological foot prints (61 percent compared to 43 Percent of men) (Naturvardsverket, 2009) and are therefore more willing to reduce their emissions and to buy products from companies and producers that support climate change initiatives or offer organic products. Additionally, women are more likely to accept higher prices for such products. Similar findings are presented in a Danish study where 62 Percent of women and 54 percent of men stated that they would be willing to pay more for sustainable goods (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2009).

Women’s willingness to change their everyday behaviour may be linked to their roles and responsibilities as careers that sanitize their environmental consciousness. Exercising this responsibility could explain why men who are involved in caring activities become more knowledgeable and aware of climate change impacts and effects (Nordic Council of minister 2009). People who are changing their consumption patterns and switching to companies and products that are more environmentally friendly can be considered political consumers. According to Stolle and Micheletti (2005), quoted in Schultz and Stiess, (2009), such consumers choose particular producers of products because they want to change institutional or market practices. They make their choice based on considerations of justice or fairness or on an assessment of business and government practices.

(e.) Gender Differentials and Energy Consumption

Gender differentials in energy consumption have not yet been sufficiently investigated. No research or study has yet attempted to allocate the direct energy consumption of households to women and men. In her study “Gender, cities and climate change”, Alber (2010) makes an assessment of women’s and men’s contributions to climate change and points out that if, for example, energy and fuel consumption data could be broken down to the individuals in a household, the question would remain unresolved whether this consumption could be attributed to caring work for the other house hold members, to commuting trips, to employed work, to earn income for the family, to informal work in the house, to transport of family members, or to personal consumption. Raty and Carlsson-Kayama (2011) collected data by analyzing the expenditures of single-person households and average energy intensities of products and services in four European Countries (Germany, Greece, Norway and Sweden). The direct and indirect energy consumption and carbon emissions were calculated for different purposes (transport, energy consumption in the home, food and beverages, etc.). On average, single men proved to consume more energy than single women in all four countries, independent of income and age. The most significant differences in energy consumption were in Greece and Sweden, with men consuming 39 percent and 22 percent more energy than women, respectively. At the moment, this is the only study that has systematically analyzed gender differentials in energy consumption including transport.
Another study carried out in the Netherlands explored energy consumption in households. The results show that the specific energy consumption in a dual income household was greater than the consumption in households where the female partner stayed at home (Clancy and Roehr, 2003). The researchers pointed out that gender role might actually influence energy consumption, with traditional gender roles potentially contributing to lower energy consumption in terms of production and consumption cycles. They support the view that gender roles contribute to differences in energy consumption. The research of House, et al., (2007) suggests that when women enter the labour market, a household’s consumption is expected to rise roughly 8-10 percent to compensate for lost home production. This could mean a number of measures, including substituting time for fresh food preparation with buying packaged ready – made meals. The research of Machado (2003) shows that the employment status of women in a two person household has significant effect on the demand for services in Portugal. Households with an employed wife allocated a higher proportion of their budget to culture, travel, childcare, food away from home and domestic services, when compared to the households where the women do not participate in the labour force.

Many purchasing decisions have a major influence on energy consumption, ranging from household appliances to larger investments such as the renovation or purchase of a house. As observed by Clancy and Roehr (2003), men are mainly responsible for technical decisions and investments in the thermal insulation of homes, boilers and hot water installations. In contrast to this, women take responsibility for energy conservation by reducing their use of electrical appliances, such as washing machines and dishwashers and encouraging the rest of the family to do likewise (Clancy and Roehr, 2003). The area of women’s and men’s involvement in the decision making process for different aspects of their lives, including investments in renewable energy installations in homes clearly needs investigation.

THE CLIMATE CHANGE, GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT NEXUS
(a.) The Impact of Climate Change on Economy and Women’s Welfare

In many least developed countries (LDCs), women live in rural areas. These women have limited mobility and power in society. When warning of extreme climate events is issued, women die because they have to wait at home for their family members to return before they can seek shelter. As climate change results in lack of drinking water in a place, women are responsible for procuring it regardless of the distance they have to travel or the terrain they have to cover. In the face of natural disasters, male unemployment rises and women’s responsibilities increase. This is because they must secure and manage income and resources on top of feeding the family and caring for the elderly. As the number of men at home without income or occupation rises, more women report mental and physical abuse by their male relatives. To cope with climatic change, women store matches, food for the family, and fodder for the livestock, medicine and fuel sources in safe places in case of disaster. They also encourage their children to learn skills such as swimming to prepare them for crisis. The global relief agency care believes that climate resilient jobs such as duck rearing can help increase women’s resilience to climate change (Enarson, 2006).

In Africa, more than half of the population lives in poverty and many are unemployed. Impoverished populations of Africa depend heavily on agriculture and natural resources to live. Minerals are also significant contributing sectors of the African economy, but are decreasing in the 21st century due to climate change and globalization. In 2007, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicted that Africa would warm due to climate change 1.5 times more than the rest of the world. It is also being predicted that water, agriculture, mining and forestry would all be affected by these changes in temperature and weather. The Human Sciences Research Council found in 2004 that Africa’s poor are at risk for negative change effects because they depend on rain-fed agriculture, and climate change in Africa is expected to cause longer and more intense periods of drought over time. Many of the rural poor in Africa are women who have only limited access to property, income, credit, resources and social power. Poverty research reveals that many of the poor are women because as a group, they have less social power (Onyenechere, 2008).

(b.) Feminization of Underdevelopment

Contrary to the international standard of measuring development, local factors such as environmental cultural practices are also important in examining women’s experience in development. The activities of males and females affect the environment which may be degraded. For instance, decline in agriculture in Nigeria has had a negative impact on both the status and the decision making capacity of women because changing land use patterns and industrialization facilitate rural-urban migration and have led to an increase in the number of female
headed households in the rural areas with limited access to land, income and health facilities. Degradation of ecosystem on which women depend for agricultural activities often leaves women handicapped in the provision of adequate nutrition for their households and limits their ability to provide a varied diet. Also, the promotion of monoculture economy and export of petroleum have reduced the biodiversity in the oil producing areas of Nigeria. The reduction in biodiversity occasioned by monoculture economy has led to a reduction in the availability of household food with adverse effect on health of women and other members of their household (Odejide, 1998; Aina, 1998; Oyekanmi, 2000).

Recently, a few studies have examined the linkages between climate change, migration, and gender using empirical evidence. Besides empirically supporting the theories, these studies are also methodologically relevant. Example of such studies were conducted using monthly panel data collected in the Chitwan valley of Nepal that covers a period of ten years (Shrestha and Bhandari 2007, Massey et al 2007). Though the primary objective was only to study the effects of environmental degradation on migration, all the studies disaggregate the effect by gender. The methods and results of these studies somewhat differ. However, the conclusion is that for women in the Chitwan valley, an increase in the collection time for fodder and firewood, and decline in agricultural productivity increase the probability of local (within district) out-migration. Climate change induced migration for women is therefore closely linked with deterioration of natural resources as they are both primary collectors and users.

(c.) Climate Change Induced Migration

In addition to environmental degradation and reduced access to natural resources, climate variability and natural disasters also have an impact on women’s likelihood to migration. Using a cross sectional survey of North Carolina coastal residents conducted in 1999 following the disastrous hurricane Bonnie, Bateman and Edwards (2007) argue that women are more likely than men to evacuate in the wake of a natural disaster because of socially constructed gender differences such as family obligations and care giving, greater response to evacuation incentives such as availability of a vehicle and neighbour evacuation, higher exposure to risk due to their low economic status and special medical needs, and higher perceived risk due to care giving responsibilities.

Women’s ability to cope is another aspect of their vulnerability to climate change induced migration. Lambrou and Piana(2006) argue that women’s ability to adapt to climate change depends on their control over land and money, access to credit and safeguards, low dependency ratios, good health, personal mobility and household entitlements. Studies and surveys conducted in post hurricane Katrina, New Orleans find that poor women who lacked home or renter’s insurance were the ones who not only lost their insurance but their homes as well, thus making it difficult for them to return (Enarson, 2006).

Climate change-induced migration, both voluntary and forced, is a gender and socially embedded process. To examine the linkages between climate change, migration and gender more formally, a gender-sensitive, vulnerability assessment framework was proposed. Drawing upon previous literature on vulnerability to climate change, climate-change induced migration was defined as the exposure and sensitivity of groups or individuals to stress as a result of the impacts of climate change which in turn makes them susceptible to migration due to their low levels of or absence of capacity to adapt (Adger, 1999; Brooks et al, 2005; Chamber, 2006; O’Brien, et al, 2008).

In terms of exposure, hazards attributes, that is, magnitude frequency, duration and areal extent, will be important determinants of who will be affected and thus, who will most likely be confronted with migration choices, when and for how long. For instance, if the climate disaster is sudden and high in magnitude, there might be a sudden spike in climate change–induced migration from that particular affected region, but it may only be temporary. However, if the climate change impact is gradual and irreversible such as rising temperatures or sea levels over a relatively large area, then migration might occur over a period of time and may be permanent, with those having the capacity moving first and the poorest being left behind.

Brown (2008) asserts that just like other internally displaced women, climate induced-women migrants are at a greater risk of sexual and gender based violence. Evidence on this can be found in the Action Aid and Institute of Development Studies (IDS) report where many women state lack of safety shelters upon being evacuated or forced to migrate as one of their primary concerns (Mitchell et al., 2007). There are also other issues of safety and security arising from the state of women’s health and disintegration of social networks. Mitchell et al. (2007) observed that women suffer from psycho-social impacts of natural disasters to a greater degree compared to men. The extra burden of looking after their family members, even when they themselves were in great distress, resulted in many women suffering from anxiety and post –traumatic stress. Further, the breaking
of social ties and separation of families also had a severe impact on these women. Similar signs of stress were also observed among the women who were displaced by Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans (Enarson 2006). In addition to these, often women are not allowed direct access to relief aid when they are not the head of the household (Oswald, 2008). Such exclusion is likely to make them more vulnerable.

(d.) Gender Dimensions of the Outcomes of Climate Change Induced Migration

A major issue is that of providing timely and adequate emergency relief to women who have been displaced due to climate change. A study by Enarson (1999) involved in-depth interviews and focus groups sessions with women who were displaced due to two major natural disasters in U.S. Hurricane Andrew that hit Miami in 1992, and the 1997 Red River valley flood. She found that the temporary trailer camps provided by emergency relief works were not designed for the needs of women and children. There were no provisions for their safety and mental and reproductive health.

Hunter and David (2009) argue that migration outcomes are not uniform across men and women. This is especially true when the effects of climate change are felt gradually and a member of the family, usually a male member, migrates in search of alternative livelihoods. Even when women are not the ones who are forced to migrate in search of livelihoods, climate change-induced migration has an impact on them. In a study conducted in the Sonora State of Mexico, where many communities are engaged in processing fruits and vegetables, it was found that declines in water availability due to climate change reduced the prospects in the food processing industry, forcing a lot of men in the community to migrate. This increased the workload of women, as many of them had to care for their families in addition to working part-time in the food processing industry (Buechler, 2009). Similarly, in Nepal, as more and more males migrate from mountainous regions and rural areas to newly developed cities, more and more women are becoming heads of households, remaining in areas prone to flooding and are therefore, most vulnerable to climate-related disasters (UNFPA, 2009). In contrast, male out-migration due to climate change can also have positive impacts such as increased autonomy and decision-making power for the female members of the family (Brown, 2008).

TOWARDS THE ATTAINMENT OF GENDER EQUITY IN CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION

The successful implementation of climate change mitigation options needs to overcome many technical, economic, political, cultural, social, behavioural and/or institutional barriers which prevent the full exploitation of the technological, economic and social opportunities of these mitigation options. The potential mitigation opportunities and types of barriers vary by region and sector, and over time. This is caused by the wide variation in mitigation capacity. The poor in any country are faced with limited opportunities to adopt technologies or change their social behaviour, particularly if they are not part of cash economy. In this situation, women are the most disadvantaged, because they have little or no access to modern technologies, and are restricted, most often by culture from changing their social behaviour.

One major step to be taken is to slow down the rate of green house gases build up which is a major cause of climate change. The government should take necessary measures like educating the people on the disadvantages of using products that produce green house gases. They should be advised to use more environment friendly products. Also, policies and actions to address climate change should be integrated and linked to sustainable development. This is more important for the developing countries as they cannot allocate separate resources for climate change activities due to their limited financial capacities and different overriding priorities. Developed countries, in order to meet their emission reduction commitments have taken several measures ranging from the promotion of less carbon intensive practices, increased use of alternative sources of energy to boosting energy efficiency in industrial, residential and commercial sectors etc. They also devised and adopted several fiscal measures and financial incentive to support such measures.

Another major step is to sensitize the women of areas that are most prone to extreme weather events and climate change on ways to prevent the incidence of climate change which will destabilize their environment. They should learn to practice afforestation instead of deforestation and they should carry out their chores in a more environmental friendly manner. Also, the men should use environmentally friendly appliances in the home and at work, especially those that operate factory machinery (Metz and Van Vuuren, 2006).

The last major step is to get women to be more involved in disaster response decision-making, through local committees and community organizations established by government and NGOs. In line with the United Nations framework convention on Climate Change’s National Adaptation Programme of Action
Nigeria and other African Nations should publish a Poverty Reduction Strategy paper that will incorporate gender mainstreaming into its climate change adaptation plan.

CONCLUSION

The study has revealed that climate change is a major menace in the lives of humans as its impacts are very disastrous. Also revealed is the fact that the worst hit by the effect of climate change are the women, especially the poor and elderly ones. The reason for this is clearly known as the social/gender imbalance of the society. Women are generally attributed to be the weaker sex, and are most times and in most countries, not given the opportunity to equip themselves properly, in terms of knowledge and otherwise, for any sudden environmental hazard that might occur as a result of climate change. If the women are given the kind of opportunity given to men, the negative impact of natural disaster and climate change on both women and children would be less and the men would have less to worry about, in terms of the safety of their families. Countries that are often affected by natural disasters should formulate gender specific polices, which would go a long way in controlling the effect of climate change on the men and women of that country. Lastly, further researches on climate change explicitly delineating the experiences of and effects on men and women are required for a more nuanced understanding of the gender dimensions especially in Africa.

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