

ASSESSING THE RURAL COMMUNITY'S AWARENESS TOWARDS THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN TANZANIA: A CASE OF SELECTED MSAMBARA WARD IN KASULU DISTRICT

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Abstract

The study focused on assessing the rural community awareness on gender roles towards the impacts of climate change in Tanzania. Msambara ward in Kasulu District in Kigoma region was used as a case study. The study was based on one objectives which was to examining the rural community's awareness of the impact of climate change on gender roles. The study used a case design with qualitative approach. The sampling procedures used were convenient and purposively to obtain 15 respondents. Data were collected through interview and focus group discussion whereby it was analyzed by thematic method. The findings revealed that rural community were unaware with impact of climate change on gender roles as they had limited information that gender roles influence climate change interchangeably. It was concluded that, the rural community had no awareness on how gender roles influenced the climate change. It was recommended that the government should put more efforts in providing climate incentives to the meteorologists so as to promote awareness of climate change caused by gender roles in rural community in order to help them in enhancing their livelihoods or climate change vulnerability.

Keywords: Climate change, Awareness, gender roles and livelihoods

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Recently, climate change has necessarily become to be embedded in large issues connected with the interaction among human livelihoods and ecological systems that have been evolving over time (Robson & Herbert, 2001). On the basis of lines of evidence shown above, it indicates that humans are changing the global climate whereby it made climate change to be one of the global defining phenomena issue in recent time. Thus, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2007) defined climate change as a systematic change in the key variables of climate which include temperature, wind and precipitation configurations over a long period. Hence, climate change is described as the differences in the statistical dissemination of weather patterns that were typically being recorded over an extended time alongside human activities as a major source of the variation of weather replicas. Therefore, the impact of climate change is now known as a serious risk to human survival and future development, not only it has brought about the spread of an extraordinary awareness of climate change but also it has become challenge to police makers to build public awareness and encouraging an appropriate behavior in utilizing available resources in the environment (Bako, 2015; Weingart, Engel, Pansegrau, 2000). However, the deleterious impacts of climate change need person's awareness in taking the ecological initiatives as well as the capacity to access the climate related-information through understanding those climate change risks. But awareness has become more important and it has got specific features of gender dimensions and is not uniform for rural community to build responsiveness originating from shared roles between men and women in the impacted environment that can be utilized for climate change adaptation (Blaikie *et al*, 1997; Brody, Demetriade Bord, Fisher & Robert, 1998; Brody, Demetriade & Esplen, 2008; Hassan & Akhter, 2011; Kwauk, Cooke, Hara & Pegram, 2019). As a result, various studies on gendered climate change awareness indicated that women were aware with the impact of climate change due to their dependent on natural resources and from the roles they play in the production for livelihoods. For example, the studies conducted in Canada and America, Philippine and South Africa revealed that rural women had a great awareness than men on the threats of climate change that tend to threaten their customary gender roles and undertaking managerial concern to control social problems brought by climate change (Tatlonghari & Paris, 2013; Mayiwa *et al*, 2014; Davidson Haan, 2012; Pease, 2017). In Tanzania, studies showed that rural women had less awareness than men as they are unlikely to labor off-farm as the impact of climate change altered gender roles because men become aware in helping women in collecting firewood and fetching water which

were seen as women's roles (Arntzen, 2015; Van Aelstic & Holvoet, 2016). The reviewed literatures have failed to indicate any study that have been conducted in rural areas to assess the rural community awareness on gender roles towards the impacts of climate change in Tanzania specifically at Msambara ward. Hence, the study aimed at setting out on how rural community is aware with the contribution of gender roles on the impacts of climate change.

GENERAL AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

The general objective of this study was to assess the rural community's awareness on gender roles towards the impacts of climate change in Tanzania with a case study of Msambara ward in Kasulu District. Particularly the study intended to assess one objective that was to examine the rural community's awareness of the impacts of climate change on gender roles. The specific objective was followed by the research question which was;

i. To what extent does rural community is aware of the impact of climate change on gender roles?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study will increase the awareness among the rural community on the impact of climate change and adding to a body of knowledge that gender roles can be a major means of contributing to climate change which affect their livelihoods.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed qualitative approach with a case study design which was Msambara ward. Data were collected through interviews and focus group discussion. Fourteen respondents were selected through convenience sampling. 1 respondent was selected using purposive sampling from the Ward. Data were analyzed through thematic approach where all data were coded into related or similar themes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDING

The findings obtained from the rural community were presented and discussed below basing on one objective as follows;

RURAL COMMUNITY'S AWARENESS OF THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON GENDER ROLES

In this objective the researcher intended to examine rural community's awareness of the impact of climate change on gender roles. In order to examine the rural community awareness, the researcher interviewed households and the ward executive officer. During interview with the households, 2 households out of 6 responded that they were aware of the climate change with gender roles as they were able to mention or identify the effect of climate change such decline of rainfall and the increase of heat wave or temperature on the earth hence increase of drought. They also gave examples on how the effect of climate change on the sources of water things which made men to participate on housework such as helping women to fetch water. The 4 respondents were not aware of the climate change as they were not able to mention or explain anything about the climate change. They claimed that they don't know any effects of climate change or how the gender roles are involved in the climate change. During the focus group discussion, all 8 members argued that they were not aware of the climate change in their village or ward as they do their daily activities as usual and no anyone who raised doubt about the climate change on gender roles. They continue to argue that it was the first time to hear from the researcher hence they will try to open their eyes on that.

On insisting this, one of the household members argued that:

"... I don't know about the climate change and how gender roles affect climate change since I live in the village I think that climate change happens in town and in the big cities..."

This quote was also supported by one of the household member in focus group discussion who explained that:

"...It is the first time to hear about climate change and its effects in this group discussion hence it is starting point to know about this thing..."

This quotes implied that most of the people in the rural community were not aware of the climate change and its effects on gender roles.

During the interview with the ward executive officer about the awareness of the rural community on climate change with gender roles, it showed that the ward executive officer was aware with the climate change in his ward as he was able to identify the effects of climate change brought by human being through gender roles such as droughts and inconsistency of rainfall. Also, the researcher wanted to know if the ward executive officer used to provide information about climate change to the households, the officer argued that the budget

is low to conduct seminar relating to the climate change and also there are no expertise for the climate change in the ward, we used to hear from the media only such as radio.

Although the ward executive officer was aware with the climate change but he is not passing the information about climate change caused by gender roles to his people. For this case there is a need to orient the rural community about climate change that are caused by gender roles so as they can be aware on the cause and effects so as to be in a position to overcome the negative effects. This can be done by ward officers or to invite the expert on climate change to orient the rural community or to orient the ward officers and later they can orient their people as they are always with them.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study revealed that rural community were unaware with impact of climate change on gender roles as they had limited information about the impact of climate change. For rural community to be aware with the impact of climate change, the researcher recommended that the government should put efforts in providing, establishing and extending climate services as well as climate incentives that could provide information to promote and build awareness of climate change caused by gender roles in rural community in order to help them in enhancing their livelihoods together with the vulnerability of climate change.

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