



ANNEX III

CASE STUDY: IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON WOMEN FARMERS IN NORTH-EASTERN GHANA

Introduction

Climate change affects women unequally across the world, especially in developing regions where their role in subsistence agriculture is crucial. In northeastern Ghana, women play a vital role in food production, but face unique challenges due to the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as droughts and floods. This case study looks at how extreme weather conditions have affected the lives of subsistence women farmers in the Upper East Region of Ghana and highlights the importance of including their perspectives and knowledge in climate change adaptation policies.

Context of the Case

In 2007, the north-eastern region of Ghana experienced droughts followed by devastating floods caused by heavy rains and the release of water from dams in Burkina Faso to the north. These floods resulted in the deaths of 31 people and left more than 100,000 people homeless. For subsistence women farmers, who make up a significant part of the region's agricultural population, these extreme weather conditions had devastating effects.

Women in this region rely heavily on subsistence farming to feed their families and other dependents. On average, each woman cares for 6.2 dependents, including children, the elderly and other vulnerable family members. The loss of crops due to the floods meant that many women were unable to adequately feed their families or cover basic costs such as their children's education.

Specific Impacts on Women Farmers:

1. Crop Loss and Food Security:

The 2007 floods wiped out the crops of many women farmers, who do not grow crops for sale but for the subsistence of their families. The loss of these crops directly affects the nutrition and health of children and other dependents, creating long-term effects such as child malnutrition.

2. Lack of Community Support:

Single women face additional challenges. For example, reconstruction of damaged houses is a serious problem as house construction and repair are community tasks coordinated by men. Single women do not have direct access to these work groups.



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3. Limited Access to Resources:

Women farmers in Ghana face a number of constraints, such as restricted access to credit, machinery and agricultural extension services. They also suffer from weak land tenure rights, which limits their ability to invest in long-term improvements to their land.

4 Traditional Knowledge and Adaptation:

Despite these challenges, women possess in-depth knowledge of sustainable agricultural practices that could be valuable for climate change adaptation efforts. Their expertise in crop rotation, improving soil fertility, and using natural pest control methods offers resilient strategies that may be essential for coping with changing climatic conditions.

Discussion Questions:

- How does climate change affect women differently than men in this region of Ghana?
- What barriers do women farmers face in adapting to the impacts of climate change?
- Why is it important to include women's voices and experiences in climate policy making?
- What types of support (political, social, economic) would be most effective in helping women farmers in situations like this?
- How can women's traditional knowledge be used to improve climate change adaptation strategies?

Conclusion

This case illustrates the urgent need to include women and their knowledge in climate change discussions and policies. Despite their crucial role in food production and community resilience, women subsistence farmers in Ghana continue to be excluded from key decisions that affect their future. Integrating their perspectives can lead to more equitable and sustainable solutions to climate change challenges.



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