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**THEME: HOW ARE GENDER, CLIMATE, AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY  
INTERCONNECTED IN YOUR COMMUNITY OR COUNTRY?**

*SUB-THEME: DISCUSS HOW CLIMATE IMPACTS AFFECT WOMEN AND MEN  
DIFFERENTLY, THIS SHAPES ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS.*

## **ABSTRACT**

Climate change poses significant environmental, social, and economic challenges globally, with developing countries such as Tanzania experiencing disproportionate impacts. These impacts are not gender-neutral. Socially constructed gender roles, unequal access to resources, and structural inequalities shape how women and men experience climate change and how they respond economically. This essay examines the interconnectedness of gender, climate change, and economic opportunity in Tanzania. It highlights how climate impacts affect women and men differently, how these differences influence economic vulnerability and opportunity, and how gender-responsive climate solutions can promote inclusive and sustainable development. Drawing on real community examples and existing literature, the essay argues that integrating gender equality into climate action is essential for economic resilience and climate justice.

## INTRODUCTION

Tanzania is among the countries most vulnerable to climate change due to its reliance on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, and natural resources. Increasing temperatures, erratic rainfall, prolonged droughts, and frequent floods have become common across the country. While climate change affects all people, its impacts are mediated by gender, socio-economic status, and access to resources.

Gender roles in Tanzanian society influence exposure to climate risks, access to coping mechanisms, and participation in economic opportunities. Women, who constitute the majority of smallholder farmers and informal workers, often face greater climate-related burdens, while men experience different pressures linked to livelihood expectations and economic provision. These gendered climate impacts shape economic outcomes and opportunities in profound ways.

This essay explores the intersection between gender, climate change, and economic opportunity in Tanzania by analyzing gender-differentiated climate impacts, their economic implications, and possible solutions that promote equity, resilience, and sustainable development.

### **Gender Impacts of Climate Change in Tanzania**

Climate change affects women and men differently due to differences in roles, responsibilities, access to resources, and decision-making power. These impacts can be clearly understood through the following dimensions:

#### **Impacts on Women**

- Increased unpaid care and domestic labor

Women are primarily responsible for water collection, food preparation, and household energy. During droughts and water scarcity, such as in Dodoma and Singida regions, women walk longer distances to fetch water and firewood, increasing physical exhaustion and reducing time for education or income-generating activities (UN Women, 2022).

- Reduced agricultural productivity and income

Women form the majority of subsistence farmers but often lack access to land ownership, irrigation, quality seeds, and climate-smart technologies. Erratic rainfall and soil degradation reduce crop yields, increasing food insecurity and limiting women's economic independence (FAO, 2021).

- Limited access to climate adaptation resources

Access to climate finance, extension services, and decision-making platforms remains male-dominated. This restricts women's ability to adapt to climate shocks or transition to alternative livelihoods.

- Heightened vulnerability during climate disasters

Floods in areas such as Kilosa and Rufiji have displaced households, with women facing higher risks of income loss, insecurity, and gender-based violence in temporary settlements (UNDP, 2023).

### **Impacts on Men**

- Loss of traditional livelihoods

Men engaged in fishing, livestock keeping, and cash crop farming face declining productivity due to rising temperatures, overfishing, and droughts. For example, reduced fish stocks in Lake Victoria have significantly affected male fishermen's incomes (URT, 2022).

- Economic pressure and migration

Social expectations position men as primary providers. Climate-induced livelihood loss pushes many men to migrate to urban areas such as Dar es Salaam in search of informal employment, often resulting in job insecurity and unstable incomes.

- Psychosocial and mental health stress

Economic failure linked to climate shocks can affect men's mental well-being, though such impacts are often underreported due to norms surrounding masculinity and emotional expression (WHO, 2021).

### **HOW GENDERED CLIMATE IMPACTS SHAPE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES**

The differential impacts of climate change directly influence economic opportunities for women and men, often reinforcing existing inequalities.

#### **Economic Opportunities for Women**

- Climate change has reduced women's productivity in traditional sectors while limiting access to alternative livelihoods. In coastal communities such as Bagamoyo, women involved in seaweed farming have experienced declining yields due to warming sea temperatures, resulting in reduced income and youth disengagement from the sector.

- However, where support exists, climate action can create economic opportunities. Women-led initiatives in clean cooking, solar energy distribution, and waste recycling in Dar es Salaam and Morogoro have generated income while contributing to environmental protection. These initiatives demonstrate that women can be powerful agents of climate-resilient economic development when provided with skills, finance, and institutional support.

### **Economic Shifts for Men**

- Men affected by climate-induced agricultural decline often transition into informal urban employment such as construction or motorcycle transport. While these activities provide short-term income, they are vulnerable to economic shocks and lack social protection. Climate change thus reshapes men's economic opportunities, often increasing precarity rather than resilience.

### **CLIMATE ACTION AS A PATHWAY TO INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**

Despite its challenges, climate change also presents opportunities for economic transformation if gender considerations are integrated into solutions.

- Green Jobs and Innovation

Climate-smart agriculture, renewable energy, sustainable waste management, and environmental health offer new economic pathways. Youth and women engaging in solar installation, rainwater harvesting, recycling, and climate education initiatives are creating employment while addressing climate risks.

For example, youth-led environmental health campaigns promoting sanitation, waste segregation, and climate awareness in urban Tanzania have improved public health outcomes while generating volunteer-to-employment pathways.

- Education and Skills Development

Access to climate education, digital tools, and entrepreneurial skills empowers women and men to participate in green economies. Integrating climate literacy into schools and community programs ensures long-term resilience and innovation.

### **BARRIERS TO GENDER-RESPONSIVE CLIMATE AND ECONOMIC INCLUSION**

- Despite progress, several challenges persist:
- Unequal land and property ownership
- Limited access to climate finance for women
- Gender-blind climate policies
- Underrepresentation of women in climate governance
- Heavy unpaid care burdens on women
- Without addressing these barriers, climate interventions risk reinforcing economic and gender inequalities.

## **Solutions for Gender-Just Climate and Economic Development**

- **Gender-Responsive Climate Policies**

Climate strategies must incorporate gender analysis, inclusive budgeting, and women's participation in decision-making at all levels.

- **Access to Finance and Resources**

Women and youth should be prioritized in climate finance, land rights, and access to technology to support climate-resilient livelihoods.

- **Education and Capacity Building**

Investing in girls' education, digital literacy, and green skills enhances long-term economic resilience and leadership in climate action.

- **Support for Community-Led Solutions**

Local, community-driven climate initiatives are more sustainable when they involve both women and men equally and respect indigenous knowledge.

## **CONCLUSION**

In Tanzania, gender, climate change, and economic opportunity are deeply interconnected. Climate change exacerbates existing gender inequalities by disproportionately affecting women's livelihoods and unpaid labor while reshaping men's economic roles and vulnerabilities. However, when climate action is gender-responsive and inclusive, it can unlock economic opportunities, empower communities, and promote sustainable development.

Addressing climate change is therefore not only an environmental necessity but also a pathway to gender equality and economic justice. Tanzania's future resilience depends on integrating gender equity into climate strategies and ensuring that both women and men can thrive in a changing climate.

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