



# Climate

Change has a Woman's  
Face

By Nakku Aidah

# ICE BREAKER

GLOBAL



NATIONAL



LOCAL



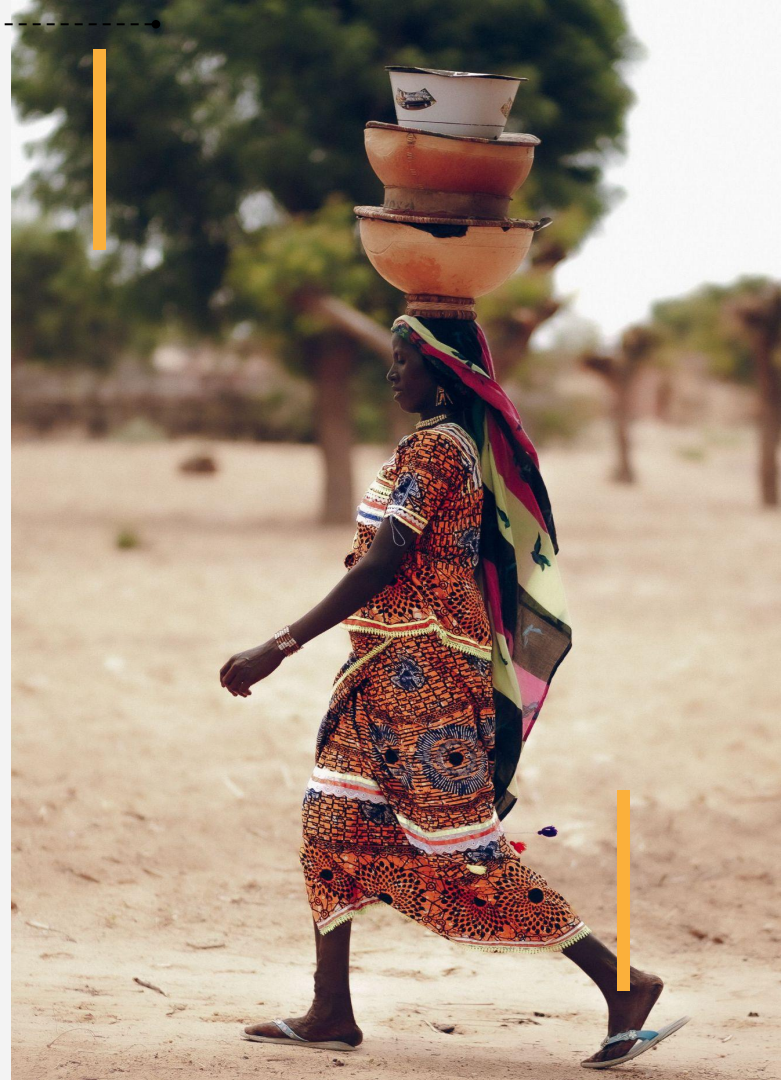
Pick a region and share one gender inequality issue that you know or that comes to mind.

# Back Ground

The world faces a worsening climate crisis, hitting MAPA communities hardest, especially women and girls, who bear the brunt due to existing inequalities and traditional roles. Driven by industrialization and resource exploitation, this crisis is already here, not a distant threat. Religious teachings urge stewardship over exploitation, but that call is still unheeded. Now, climate change deepens global disparities, with women in developing nations on the front lines.

# LECTURE OBJECTIVES

- Biblical basis for stewardship
- Climate change + key global agreement
- Intersectionality at the gender and climate context
- How climate affects women/girls differently
- Link climate action to gender equality (SDG 13 & 5)
- Why gender injustice in climate demands action
- ~~Practical solutions for gendered climate effects~~



# Our Environment and the Bible

The Scriptures (Bible ) declare that God created the world and saw that it was very good (Genesis 1:31). He entrusted this perfect creation to humanity, not for exploitation, but for faithful stewardship.

God called us to protect creation , However, humanity has failed in this sacred duty. Greed, industrialization, and the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources has led directly to Climate Change

# Climate Change

Climate change is the long-term shift in Earth's temperatures and weather. To address this crisis the United Nations came up with policies and interventions like;

- UNFCCC as the foundational 1992 treaty that sets out the overall objective to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations.
- The Paris Agreement 2015, a legally binding global pact under the UNFCCC committing nations to limit global warming.
- The Kyoto Protocol 1997

# The Intersectionality of Climate Change



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# Is Climate Change Gender Blind ?

Climate Change does not affect everyone in the same way. Intersectionality in the context of climate change examines how multiple dimensions of a person's or community's identity (gender, race, class, age, and disability) combine with systems of power and inequality. This interaction produces distinct and compounded vulnerabilities, ultimately widening existing inequalities when environmental disasters strike.

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For today's study, we will focus specifically on how climate change affects women and girls. We will relate two interconnected Sustainable Development Goals: SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality) .

To understand the intersectionality between climate change and gender, we need to comprehend the concept of gender roles and how they relate to the climate crisis.

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# **GENDER ROLES AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS (AFRICA)**





Gender roles are social ideas about what men and women should do. These traditional gender roles place women and girls at the front line of climate shocks.

Some of the gender roles that are mostly left for the women include but are not limited to;

- Care work for the sick and weak
- Fetching water,
- Collecting firewood.
- Preparing food

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# Gender Roles

These responsibilities are not merely chores; they are time-consuming, physically demanding, and often dangerous. When a climate crisis strikes, performing these roles becomes even more tedious. It exposes women and girls to heightened forms of insecurity and risk, including physical assault and gender based violence.

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# An Example Karamoja Indigenous Tribe, Kotido District

During a period of prolonged drought, the wells and water sources closest to home typically dry up first. Women and girls in this region are then forced to travel much longer distances, sometimes several kilometers in search of water. This extended journey not only consumes hours but also places them in vulnerable situations.

# Intersectionality of Climate and Gender

## Agriculture & Livelihoods

Women provide up to 80% of agricultural labor in some regions, yet legal and cultural barriers block their access to land, credit, and farming inputs. When climate disasters like droughts or floods strike, their crops fail—but without land ownership, they cannot secure loans to recover, and without credit, they cannot buy resilient seeds or alternative livelihoods. This traps them in a vicious cycle: climate shocks destroy their resources, and systemic inequality prevents rebuilding. The outcome is deepening poverty and food insecurity for entire communities.

## Health & Caregiving

The caregiving burdens are placed on women and girls. These intensify during climate-driven health crises. Floods spread cholera, droughts cause malnutrition, and heatwaves threaten the young and elderly. These care needs fall on the, women. They provide unpaid, round-the-clock care, often neglecting their own health and skipping meals. This invisible labor takes a severe toll on their mental and physical well-being, yet their own healthcare needs remain unmet.

## Displacement and Migration.

The Climate disasters displace millions. In shelters, women and girls face increased risks of sexual violence, with poor privacy and weak protection. When men migrate for work, women become household heads, managing families with fewer resources. They must make decisions and navigate systems alone all while continuing domestic responsibilities.



# Why We Must Address Gender Injustices

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# Addressing Gender injustice

History often overlooks women's leadership, but the Bible highlights women like Deborah, Esther, Huldah, and the Queen of Sheba who led, counseled, saved nations, and shaped history. These examples show women's God-given authority and influence.

Women comprise half of the world's population. Ignoring half the population in planning is unwise and unjust especially in climate action. Addressing gender injustice brings multiple climate action benefits.



- Addressing the gendered effects of climate change dismantles the cycle where poverty and climate change feed off each other. When droughts or floods strike, girls are often pulled from classrooms to collect water or nurse ailing family members, while others are pushed into child marriage as a desperate survival tactic trapping families in poverty for generations.
- At its heart, this is about living out what we believe. The Bible makes it clear, women and men matter equally to God. So we can't say we're caring for His earth while we ignore the women who suffer most from climate shocks. That's not stewardship that's a blind spot.

- More lives are saved by it. Ignoring gender inequality implies enabling avoidable deaths because women and children are up to 14 times more likely than males to die during climate-related disasters.
- It results in more effective climate solutions. Generations of local ecological knowledge such as which seeds can endure drought, where to get water, and how to manage forests sustainably are held by women, particularly in farming, fishing, and resource-dependent communities.

- Addressing women injustices accelerates climate action. Studies from the UN and World Bank show that countries with more women in leadership are quicker to sign climate agreements and pass stronger environmental laws. Simply put when women have a seat at the table, real action happens faster.



**HOW CAN YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE ?**

Greta (A young climate leader ) once said, “No one is too small to make a difference”. Small actions, taken together, create a wave big enough to create change.

Here are some of the actions you can take to make a difference;

- Educating yourself. learn about climate justice and gender inequality in different regions.
- Speak up. Ask your local representatives what they're doing to include women in climate planning.

- Support. You can donate to or volunteer with organizations that empower women in climate-vulnerable communities.
- Lead. If you are in a position of influence, make sure women have a seat at every decision making table.

# BEST CASE EXAMPLE



Climate Change and Gender are interconnected. This section expands on the findings of my research and experiences in my career. With a combination of these and faith.

My research in the area of climate change and gender for the past two years focused on two main community contexts, a rural semi arid community with indigenous people (Kotido ) and an urban - peri urban community(Namugongo and suburban area of Kampala).



# The rural & semi arid community

This study was done in the Karamoja Sub region of Uganda , Kotido District. This area is particularly hit hard by prolonged drought .

The research was not only focusing on women and girls, however among other things it also extended to studying the extent of local community involvement in the planning and development of climate policies in Uganda

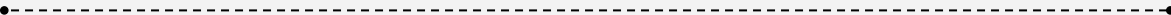


# Some of the findings

There are a number of inequalities that the young women and girls are facing at the moment.

- The women and girls have no access to formal education. The study found that 80% of the respondents with no formal education were women .
- Unpaid care work, 69% of respondents were female as the men were away tending to cattle.
- Women's economic activities are limited. Many women depend on climate-sensitive livelihoods and have fewer alternative income opportunities, this creates economic dependence.
- How climate affects women/girls differ , this attributed to the strong culture norms.

- Women and girls carry a disproportionate burden of water collection. Limited access to water places particular pressure on women and children. In Kotido, families have historically travelled long distances to access unsafe water sources, exposing women and children to health and security risks.



# How climate change worsens these inequalities.

- Climate-related food insecurity can increase child marriage. When households lose livelihoods and food security deteriorates, marriage is commonly used as a coping strategy for vulnerable families, in our research we linked climate-related food insecurity with increased pressure toward child marriage.
- Drought makes girls' education even harder. During prolonged droughts, households face greater pressure to secure food and water. Girls may be pulled further into household and care responsibilities, making school attendance and retention even more difficult.

- Drought increases girls' care responsibilities. When water and food become scarce, girls can spend more time collecting water, caring for younger children and supporting household survival instead of attending school. This is a classic example of climate change multiplying an existing gender inequality rather than creating a completely new one. In Kotido we saw that water scarcity already places particular burdens on women and children.
- Water scarcity increases women's unpaid care work.
- Climate shocks in Kotido deepen women's economic dependence.
- Food insecurity increases women's and girls' vulnerability.

# The urban - peri urban community.



# The urban - peri urban community.

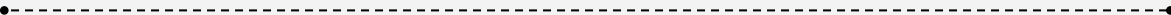
This study was conducted in a small marginalized community within the Namugongo suburb. This small subset (community) is primarily composed of climate-displaced people.

There were three biggest climate-related problems identified.

- Food insecurity was the most mentioned issue..
- Loss of income, farms and crops destroyed. Household's income collapses.
- Disruption of girls education, when finances are strained, girls are removed first when school fees can not be paid.

# The significance of Religious leaders in both communities

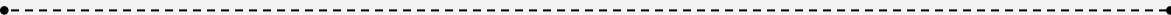
In the semi-arid community of Kotido, the primary religious leaders are those of the African Traditional Religion and Christianity. While in urban centers, we found a broader mix including Muslims, Christians, and African traditionalists. Across all settings, these leaders hold significant influence and are deeply integrated into society.



- Moral Authority and Trust Within Communities. In both cases Religious leaders are deeply trusted figures who serve as custodians of moral authority and social influence. Their voices carry significant weight and can be capitalized on to address this crisis.
- They Amplify Women's Voices and Leadership in Climate Solutions. Religious leaders can create women groups that address particular women needs. For example, the mother's union is a group that dresses the needs of women in the Christian religion. These groups are usually tailored to meet the respective needs of women in their respective communities.



- Bridging Grassroots Realities with Government Policy. Religious leaders are uniquely positioned to connect local communities with national and international climate processes. In our study in Kotido, with the help of religious leaders, we witnessed communities making contribution to the National Adaptation Plan document



# Thank You

Women

**Aidah Nakku**

**An Associated Partner of the Erasmus+ project**

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Girls



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