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Opinion

The Disproportionate Effect of Climate Change on Women

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While many hormonal or socio-economic factors impact woman's health, there is a new addition of "Climate Change", which is adding this list of threats to her overall wellbeing. Surprisingly, women are disproportionately affected by this "already existed" but newly talked about "environmental change".

While numerous scientific studies and observations from around the world have already provided enough evidence of the mother earth changing climate, primarily due to human activities; it is thought-provoking to see the dimension of its negative effect in human's life. It easily poses significant risks to human health, food security, water resources, infrastructure, economies, and ecosystems.

Women facing more socioeconomic disparities, including limited access to resources, education, and economic opportunities; and being primary caregiver of children at home, they may have fewer options to adapt to environmental changes. They already have limited access to land ownership, financial services, and decision-making power, which undermines their resilience to climate impacts. Predominantly in rural geographies, their struggle to access clean water and energy intensifies their vulnerability. In addition, the climate linked disasters can increase the risk of gender-based violence.

Furthermore, the Reproductive Health Risks can aggravate existing health risks of vector-borne diseases, malnutrition, and reproductive health issues. Limited access to healthcare services and maternal care further compounds these risks, particularly in marginalized communities.

By pushing the gender-sensitive lens in climate action agendas, risk mitigation can come into action. Ensuring her representation in policy dialogues, easy access to reproductive healthcare services, including contraception, maternal care, and family planning. Her continued education and availability of livelihood opportunities shall support her adaptation to climate change impacts. An improved access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities will directly reduce the likelihood of waterborne diseases and ensure menstrual health.

In addition to the coordinated actions, we talk about today, both at country and global level; much investment in research is required to better understand the specific needs and vulnerabilities, and design more systematic "women focused" interventions, to reduce the negative effect of deteriorated environment on them.

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