

-CLIMATE CHANGE AND AGRICULTURE-
IMPLICATIONS FOR WOMEN
FARMERS IN NIGERIA



Photo credit: The Guardian Nigeria

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Background

Across the globe, agriculture is recognised as an important engine of growth and poverty reduction. The sector which grew by 3.58%, contributed 26.84% to the overall GDP in real term in the 4th quarter of 2021, lower than the contribution in the 4th quarter of 2020 and 3rd quarter of 2021 which stood at 26.95% and 29.94% respectively. Thus, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the sector is under-performing in many countries in part because women, who are often a crucial resource in agriculture and the rural economy, face constraints that reduce their productivity. Thus, this brief draws on the available empirical evidence on how climate change affects women in agriculture, to what degree and suggest solutions to mitigating the impacts on women farmers for effective productivity and food security.

Climate Change and Women in Agriculture

The word climate change refers to the significant and long-lasting change in the Earth's climate and weather pattern ¹. Evidence indicates that climate change, such as rising sea levels, changing weather patterns, heat waves, drought, and other natural disasters, have particularly adverse impacts on those who depend on agriculture for their livelihood and survival, peculiarly women. The productivity of crops and livestock is directly impacted by temperature, precipitation, CO2 concentration, and extreme weather. In some of these contexts, women are more vulnerable to their effects than men primarily as they constitute the majority of the world's poor and are more dependent for their livelihood on natural resources that are threatened by climate change ². According to UNFPA, "the poor are especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change, and the majority of the 1.5 billion people living on \$1 a day or less are women" ³.

Meanwhile, women constitute 60% of the agricultural labour force and 80% of food producers ⁴ and 50% of animal husbandry and other related activities in Nigeria ⁵. Despite this population, they have poor access to information on climate change mitigation, especially information on good farming practices, seasonality, data on yields, soil health, and weather patterns. Also, small holders' women farmers are often confined to the traditional tools, which in most cases prolong working hours, reduced productivity than advanced technologies ⁶. This makes them more vulnerable to the impact of climate change.

Effect of Climate Change on Women Farmers

It is estimated roughly, 30–40% of all food produced is lost between harvest and consumption. Thus, in Underdeveloped countries, about 40% is lost on farm or during distribution due to poor storage and distribution ⁷. In Nigeria, women smallholders and subsistence farmers suffer the impacts of climate change greatly. For instance, Godwin Susan - a 60 years old, recounted how 2020 was a year with great losses for her and many smallholders' farmers. In her words "*...rain started earlier last year and we planted our crops early. But after planting, the rain ceased for almost five weeks,*" ⁸. She also recounted how Mellon planted early started drying up and finally died when it was about to flower after the rain suddenly stopped ⁹.

1 <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/climate%20change>

2 Women_and_Climate_Change_Factsheet.pdf (un.org)

3 COP19 Gender and Climate Factsheet October 2013

4 Yekeen Akinwale, "As climate change hits Nigeria, small scale women farmers count losses", Premium Time, May 6, 2021 <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/agriculture/459780-as-climate-change-hits-nigeria-small-scale-women-farmers-count-losses.html>

5 Mohammed Dahiru Lawal, "Farming: Agri-Tech Cushioning COVID-19 Disruption but Rural Women Yearns for Access", PR Nigeria, August 3, 2021, page 1, <https://prnigeria.com/2021/08/03/farming-agri-tech-covid-19-women/>

6 Jeandré van der Walt, "Data: key to empowering Africa's women farmers", Farmers Weekly, August 14, 2021.

7 <https://www.bsr.org/reports/BSR-Cambridge-Climate-Change-Implications-for-Agriculture.pdf>, Page 8.

8 <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/agriculture/459780-as-climate-change-hits-nigeria-small-scale-women-farmers-count-losses.html>

9 <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/agriculture/459780-as-climate-change-hits-nigeria-small-scale-women-farmers-count-losses.html>

Note that changes in rainfall patterns are likely to lead to severe water shortages and/or flooding. Zainab Issa a Smallholder farmer in Zamfara North West was at loss having harvested 7 bags of rice in 2020 against 15 in 2019 due to flood ¹⁰. Hajia Safiyah in Kogi state Northcentral also had its rice swept away by flood causing her a great loss. In the same vein, Monica Aleku planted 2000 heaps of yams but couldn't harvest up to 600 tubers of yams due to a lack of rain ¹¹. Many of these women farmers have little or no knowledge about climate change and its impact. They have little information on rainfall patterns. Some of them are still inclined with the traditional method of determining when rain falls which may not always be the case due to the increased global warming. Also, rural women farmers do not often insure their farm produce. This may be due to lack of awareness or availability of insurance schemes, funding, or distance. This causes great losses to them in most cases.

Key Messages

1. As the compelling reality of climate change sets in, there is need for government at all levels to provide irrigation facilities and equipment to women farmers to mitigate the impact of drought ¹².
2. There is need to promote the use of alternative energy sources such as biofuel to curb the deforestation.
3. There is need for government to carry out gender-specific in-depth evidence-based research on climate change ¹³.
4. There is also need for government at the national and subnational levels to develop a framework that will ensure that gender-sensitive indicators are used during government climate change adaptation and mitigation planning. This will integrate gender perspectives into government's climate change action plans ¹⁴.
5. There is need for government to provide affordable modern technology for women farmers to adapt and mitigate the adverse effects of climate change.
6. There is need for the government at all levels to act on the recommendations of Beijing Declaration to “increase training in technical, managerial, agricultural extension and marketing areas for women in agriculture, fisheries, industry and business, arts and crafts, to increase income-generating opportunities, women's participation in economic decision-making, in particular through women's organizations at the grass-roots level, and their contribution to production, marketing, business, and science and technology” ¹⁵.
7. There is a need to redeem the pledged to reduce Nigeria greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent by 2030 in lined with the Paris Agreement ratified in 2017.
8. Effective implementation of the National Climate Change Policy for Nigeria 2021-2030 as well as the National Action Plan on Gender and Climate Change for Nigeria 2020-2025.

• 10 <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/agriculture/459780-as-climate-change-hits-nigeria-small-scale-women-farmers-count-losses.html>
• 11 <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/agriculture/459780-as-climate-change-hits-nigeria-small-scale-women-farmers-count-losses.html>
• 12 <https://www.icirnigeria.org/climate-change-oyo-smallholder-female-farmers-count-losses-see-govt-support/>
• 13 UNDP (2016): Gender and Climate Change, Overview of linkages between gender and climate change
• 14 UNDP (2016): Gender and Climate Change, Overview of linkages between gender and climate change. Page 6
• 15 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/educa.htm>



PAWED Profile

Partnership for Advancing women Empowerment in Development (PAWED) is two years project with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation (BMGF). It aims at building a Nigerian CSO advocacy and communications coalition to advance evidence, policies and programs that further women's economic empowerment vanguard organizations such as Women's Empowerment Collectives. The project is being implemented by development Research and Project Centre (dRPC). The three primary objectives for the PAWED project are:

- Increase the salience of women's economic empowerment with national and state government ministries
- Increase the salience of effective policies and programs to advance women's economic empowerment with donors and national and state government ministries, with a primary focus on women's empowerment collectives
- Increase the salience of women's economic empowerment amongst civil society and influential leaders and their appetite to support change that might be in opposition to cultural and social norms.

PAWED is currently working closely and supporting the Association of Women in Trade and Agriculture (AWITA) and Nigerian Association of Women in Agriculture (NAWIA) member of the PAWED coalition in monitoring the effective implementation of the National Action Plan on Gender and Climate Change for Nigeria 2020-2025 and the National Climate Change Policy for Nigeria 2021-2030.

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Women's Economic Empowerment is National Economic Empowerment



ABUJA OFFICE: No 5, I. E. Madubuke Close, Off Ebitu Ukiwe Street, Jabi, FCT Abuja, Nigeria
KANO OFFICE: No 63B Sultan Road, Nasarawa G.R.A Kano State, Nigeria

