

Carrying the Burden”: Gender-Based Vulnerabilities in Climate-Induced Migration in South Western Uganda

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Abstract:

Climate change is an increasingly significant driver of human mobility, with impacts that are deeply gendered in both their causes and outcomes. In Sub-Saharan Africa, environmental stressors such as drought and land degradation are not only intensifying migration but also reinforcing existing gender inequalities. This examines how climate-induced migration shapes gendered vulnerabilities and livelihood adaptation in Kiruhura and Isingiro districts. Using a cross-sectional mixed-methods design, the study integrates data from 288 households, gender-stratified focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and secondary sources. The study was underpinned by feminist political ecology and push and pull migration theories. The findings indicate that migration is highly gender-differentiated where men are more likely to migrate, women who remain behind experience increased workloads, heightened food insecurity, and greater exposure to gender-based violence. Consequently, structural constraints, including unequal land tenure systems and restricted mobility, further limit women's adaptive capacity. The study concludes that climate-induced migration exacerbates gender inequalities. Therefore, it recommends a call for gender-responsive policies, including equitable land rights, inclusive adaptation planning, and targeted livelihood support to enhance resilience in vulnerable communities.

Keywords:

Climate change, migration, gender-based vulnerabilities, feminist political ecology, food systems.