

# Chapter 11

## Women at the Crossroads of Climate Change: Advancing Gender Equality Through Climate Action

**Tanmeet Kaur Sahiwal**

*SVKM's Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies, Bengaluru, India*

**Jay Kumar Gupta**

*SVKM's Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies, Bengaluru, India*

### **ABSTRACT**

*“We are still living with the results of millennia of patriarchy that excludes women and prevents their voices from being heard,” - António Guterres. In underprivileged countries including Ghana, Egypt, Costa Rica, and Malawi, women face such challenges and risks regularly as per the IMF Report. Unique challenges have often been faced by women and girls when it comes to climate disasters because of deep-rooted inequalities, especially towards girls and women which make them much more vulnerable to its effects. Issues in health care, food security, earning for living, and being forced to migrate often show up because of disasters. Hence, it would be correct to say tackling climate change needs to be equal from the ground up, or everyone suffers. Including women and girls in the climate policies will make solutions more practical and relevant. It will consider the needs of everyone, not just a select few. Empower girls and women to be not just victims, but as an active participant in shaping a sustainable future and will make the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26 & 33) successful.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

It will not be incorrect to say that the global climate crisis isn't just an environmental issue but it's a stark example of injustice. The recognition of this disparity is crucial as the burden is further amplified for marginalized groups within these communities, particularly women (United Nations, 2009) and girls despite they are those who contributed least to greenhouse gas emissions (U.N. Women,2023) but bearing the highest of its impact (U.N. Women, 2024).

Prioritizing and addressing the gendered impacts of climate change becomes an essential pillar as the UK takes on the responsibility of leading COP26. It should be done alongside emission reduction, financial support, and collaborative action. The fundamental to achieving a successful COP26 and building a climate-resilient future is to empower women and girls through education, economic opportunities, leadership roles, and decision-making. Women face unique challenges and heightened risks due to climate change in countries including Ghana (U.N.D.P., 2019) Egypt, Costa Rica, and Malawi.

Studies like “Adapt Now” from the Global Commission on Adaptation further stress how ignoring gender inequalities in adaptation efforts intensifies the existing vulnerabilities and creates new forms of exclusion because for the clear reason that the path forward demands a paradigm shift.

It requires addressing the broader context of inequality, discrimination, and sociocultural barriers that disproportionately burden marginalized groups to tackle climate change effectively.

A recent UN policy report opens the window to a new way to face this crisis. i.e., putting women and diverse voices at the heart of the solution. The report highlights how countries are finally starting to achieve gender-neutral climate policies. Countries are working on climate adaptation plans that listen to women’s voices and consider their specific needs and strengths. The report further highlights that even LGBTQ+ communities and other diverse communities often face their own set of challenges but they hold their reservoirs of resilience (U.N. Women Watch, 2024).

## 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The intensifying climate change has its adverse impacts which disproportionately burden women and girls and promote existing gender inequalities. Systemic barriers, including resource limitations, decision-making exclusion, and unequal access to financing, hinder their full participation in climate action strategies despite their unique knowledge and leadership are crucial for building climate resilience. Suppose, A heavy storm hitting a village causes heavy rain flooding the fields and

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