

Gendering Climate Change Methodologies



Avantika Singh

Research Scholar,
Deptt.of Political Science,
Delhi University,
Delhi

Abstract

This paper argues that methodologies adapted in context of climate assessment impact with its ultra highly technical terms, glosses over complex issues like gender in a simplified manner within global responses to climate change. Methodologies generally operate in constructed public 'masculinised' domain devoiding women of their space making them invisible with apparent masculinisation. Very scant regard has been given by policy makers to integrate women's sustainable knowledge, concerns and capacities in to 'malestream' climate change policies and strategies. Such policies may work well at household and community level but not necessarily at gender level. Thus, it is important to ensure methodologies concerning climate change impact assessment and otherwise shall include gender as an important variable. People in this job shall be trained in gender sensitivity. Gender equity shall be promoted to tackle climate effects through various mediums. For instance in India, women through Mahila Mandal's (self help groups) and development centric flagship programmes like MGNREGA (undertakes environmentally sound projects) have created a niche for themselves. Climate Change Gender sensitive research method while tailoring the implementation strategy to these multiple activities have not only tackled climate concerns but is also empowering women.

Keywords: Gender, Gender Impact Assessment, Gender Mainstreaming, Gender Responsive Budget, Mahila Mandal, MGNREGA.

Introduction

Most of the debates about climate change have revolved around countries relative responsibility for limiting the growth of greenhouse gas emissions and funding efforts to shift to low carbon energy and other green technologies system. What is little acknowledged is that climate change threatens to erode human freedoms, engulf inequalities between men and women in relation to climate risks and vulnerabilities. Non gender sensitive approach colours them as essentially masculine, thereby leaving a wide knowledge gap. This non gender sensitive approach has a strong backing of the methodological input and output, on the basis of which interpretations are made and decisions are reached at. Male centric decision and policies then add up to the layers of vulnerabilities for women making their situation more precarious.

Objective of the Study

This paper argues, that methodologies adapted in context of climate assessment impact with its ultra highly technical terms, glosses over complex issues like gender in a very simplified manner within global responses to climate change. Methodologies generally operate in public 'male' domain. Private 'women' domain is largely and invisible domain for its operation as still private is not regarded as public.

This paper structures itself mainly into four parts. The first point of analysis will be to locate gender into climate change and infer its importance. The second point of intervention will be to analyse whether climate methodologies are gender sensitive or not. The third level will be to comprehensively put various gender tools of methodologies. The paper will in last conclude with suggestions and conclusion.

What is Gender and why is Gender an Important Variable

It is insightful to note that UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol two most important treaties in relation to global efforts to deal with climate change does not mentions the words 'gender' and women. Dominant discourse thus, does not attribute that gender is a socially constructed image with fixed social responsibilities for both men and women whereby often women assumes the relegated position. With justification of been a

natural design, public and private domain (separately for men and women) are constructed. Gender for many have come to mean only women and not men. Such an assumption also explains as to why the dominantly male concentrated public domain does not see gender as crucial investigative variable.

Gender is a concept that structurally organises virtually every aspect of social life in all cultures.

(Peterson and Runyan, 1999)

Climate Victim

Women limited access to resources, restricted rights, widespread patriarchal structure, limited mobility and muted voice in decision making makes them highly vulnerable to climate change risks. For instance, dry shock or wet shock due to global climate change, can further cause difficulties for women in health, sanitation, continuation of paid labour, attendance at school by young girls, potential violence etc. Terry Cannon in his work has pointed at vulnerabilities which caused maximum deaths of women in Bangladesh 1991 cyclone. He hinted that information signals on radios by government was only accessible to men. Women waited for long for their family men to rescue them as culturally they were restricted of not taking help of anyone one else and were incapable to swim as they were not trained and even those who had little ability to swim were not able to swim because of their attire.

Particularly women of marginalised population are doubly burdened. They not only share caste, class division with their male counterparts but additionally bear the burden of socially constructed gender image. For instance women belonging to Dalit clan in India cannot fetch water from the same well meant categorically for high caste people use, since it is assumed that it will pollute the water source. Infact due to climate stress, instances of dowry deaths, bride trafficking in some parts of India are also coming into notice. With droughts and floods, often, economic resources of the family reduces. In many cases married girl family are pressurised to fill that vacuum by sponsoring boy's family economic needs. In case of failure to meet the demand, dowry death takes place. With the death of wife (which in most of the cases is fabricated as suicide) husband can make himself available on the marriage market again and pocket another dowry. Another stress implication have resulted into bride market for those prospective grooms who are unable to traditionally find a match for them owing to locational aspect affected by climate stress. All these combine to make some women more vulnerable in particular locations, situations and time since they face different condition of vulnerability than men.

Evidence of women inequality according to UNDP report 2009:

1. 70% women live on less than a dollar a day.
2. 10% of income despite working for 2/3 of world's working hours
3. Owns 1% of property, 10% of land despite engaging in 50-80% of world food production.
4. Only 8% of cabinet members are women.
5. 75% are illiterate.

Villages in Rajasthan, see girls as not a household member until they join their husband's family, therefore they are not counted as water consumers before they are married.

(Kathleen o' Reilly)

Many of the authors have stressed poverty as a key factor for women's vulnerability. Poverty and vulnerability have a spiral effect, but then not all vulnerable women are poor. Other non economic factors are essentially important.

Climate Activist

Often an iconic imagination of lone south Asian women standing chest high in rising flood water is used in popular media trends. These images and portraits are problematic since the result is that rural women in south are constructed as climate victims (Sherilyn Mac Gregor, 2010). However, while underscoring the vulnerability of women to climate change, it should be acknowledged that women play an important role in supporting households and communities to adapt to climate change. Women because of their constructed gender role in household and community have generated a great deal of wealth in-terms of indigenous environmental knowledge. But, very scant regard has been given by policy makers to integrate their concerns and capacities in to mainstream policies. Adaptation strategies which are not gender sensitive may disadvantage women, even, though they seem to work well at household and community level.

Methodology – Gender Sensitive?

After gaining an insight into importance of gender as a variable, a focus on methodology is also an important area of investigation. Methodological tools can serve for a comprehensive gender sensitive imagination for policy discourse. However, there are inherent problems in methodologies in terms of data collection and assessment. Thus, an investigation into a larger question is needed. Are climate assessment methodologies gender sensitive ?

Due to gender roles and differential gender access to resources, men and women experience climate variability and changing climate patterns differently. However for an unequal society, universal and same methodological assessment tools are used. Mainly due to reason that methodologies generally operate in public 'male' domain and not private 'women' invisible domain (still private is not regarded as public). Omission and curious silence on gender in terms of methodological interventions remains the rule rather than the exception.

Methodological institution which are responsible for giving data for the purpose of planning in development and administration are not exempt from the gendered processes (Naila Kabeer, 2011). Since it is majorly concentrated with male employees, they do not upfront reflect the values of the wider society. They upholds the hierarchy of gender, mainly to satisfy their own active interest. Margreet Zwateveen (2011) argues that the hegemonic strength of this tradition has long been maintained and to some extent continues to be maintained through the socialisation of generations of data collectors, assessors, engineers, bureaucrats etc. Such socialisation is not restrictive to males only but

to women as well. There are few women in relation to men at top levels of decision making and even fewer who are willing to challenge dominant agency practice. Consequently even organisation that have adopted goals of gender equity have frequently failed to implement them. The so called women desks are often literally no more than a desk. Thus, a biased non gender sensitive reflection on data do not communicate the realities to the policy making organisation. Thereby, what we receive is a biased male centric policy response.

The problem also accrues to absolute reliance on one form of methodology, that is quantitative since numbers are assumed to deliver the true reflection of the reality. This undermines other form of methodological assessment like qualitative. Therefore what is needed is a balance of both. Although an ingredient of gender sensitivity is essential. Another problematic is on part of policy making organisation, who dictate the data houses to do only one form of enquiry and that is essentially scientific enquiry. As already mentioned that scientific climate regime terms climate change as gender neutral, they don't see the need of wasting time and money into something which is not productive. This reflects the dominant masculine voice and insensitivity towards gender. Therefore, methodological problem is that active stakeholder of power is not willing to see the other side of story.

Even where certain regard to gender concept is given, transformation from regard to actual policy measure is still not visible. Whatever little research has been attributed in this direction suffers from some basic problem which ultimately fosters more level of complexities. There is a heavy reliance on correcting things via a top down route without looking at dominating patriarchal practices dwelling at intra household and community level. "Add on" women has become the current favourite tag line with those aiming to correct things without strengthening the autonomy of women and thus overburdening the overburdened. Thus, an effort shall be made for their integration as an integral part of policy development.

In India, National Action Plan of climate change (NAPCC) recognizes that climate change has different effects on women and men due to gender relation and roles and it effects relation between them too. Thus for the first time in India a high level policy document has acknowledged the significance of gendered impacts of climate change and the need to address gender concerns in adaptation interventions. Unfortunately this understanding has not been translated into NAPCC's assessment of the effects of climate change or its outlines of mechanisms that could support people to adapt. Partly this has to do with the lack of gender/sex disaggregated data on climate risks and the relatively poorer documentation of adaptation programmes or the lesson they can provide, in terms of building resilient communities. Technological solutions or administrative machineries have failed to respond adequately for a problem that also requires a gender sensitive intervention

Thus gender mainstreaming appears to be an important corrective methodological interventionist

tool towards achieving a society of equity which respects gender.

Gender Sensitive Methodologies

Given the apparent masculinisation of research methodology what can be gender sensitive methodologies?

Research must integrate a gender perspective to have a better understanding of the multidimensional aspects of climate change. Women and men are likely to face common challenges, but their capacity to react, to adapt or to change will not be the same due to their different positions in the society. It is important to recognize that there are various actors operating through series of power relationship. Gender tokenism or ticking off the gender box shall not be the sole objective. Therefore studies must be gender mainstreamed through use of gender analysis techniques like gender disaggregated data, gender impact assessment, gender responsive budgeting.

Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences as integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economical and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated (Vandana Shiva).

Gender mainstreaming requires positive action at,

1. Policy level to ensure that the challenge of gender equality becomes a visible and key concern. It allows policy makers and practioners not only to focus on outcomes of gender inequality but also to identify and address the processes and circumstances that cause it.
2. Programme level, to ensure that all interventions create opportunities for women's empowerment and gender equality.
3. Organisational level to ensure that space and opportunities are available to women as well as men.
4. Enquiry into wider political, economic and ideological contexts which create the subjugation. (Ostengaard 1992, Longwe 1997).
5. It involves more then simply adding women's participation to existing strategies and programmes.

Gender Analysis

It provides the necessary information base for gender mainstreaming. It uses sex-disaggregated data or information and analyze it from a gender perspective. This analysis needs to be based on relevant established theories about gender relation and should make conclusions about the causes and effects of any gender disparities it uncovers.

Sex disaggregated data

It is central to the formulation and implementation of "evidence based" policies affecting women. It is important to take effective policy

decisions. Sex-disaggregated data can be applied to ascertain the different conditions of women and men at different points of time, impacts of national activities on women and men. It can help in allocating resources and work in a fairer way, evaluating and monitoring outcomes and conclusions by sex and so on.

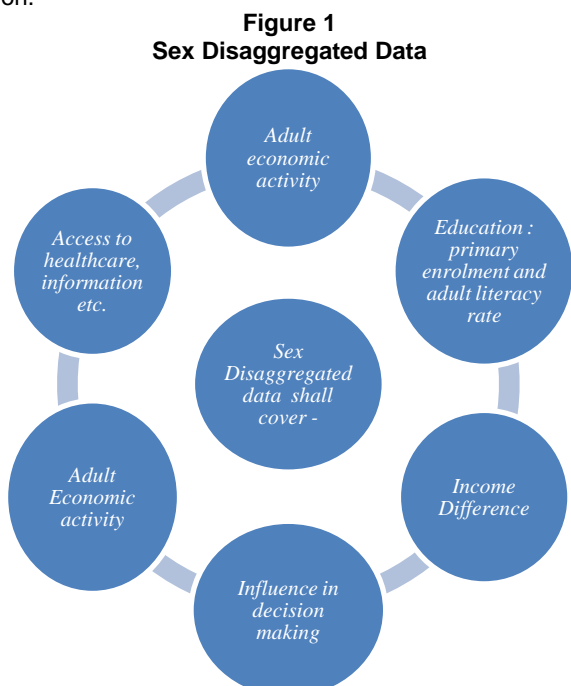


Figure 1
Sex Disaggregated Data

(Source - Ashbindu Singh)
Gender Impact Assessment

It is one type of gender analysis that is used specifically in analysing public policy. GIA, largely considers the effects of policies on the individual rather than the household or community. These assessment seeks to reveal how men as a group and women as a group may differ from each other in terms of their capacity to participate in and benefit from a given policy. GIA has a positive role to play in determining policy opportunities to actively increase and enhance equality between men and women.

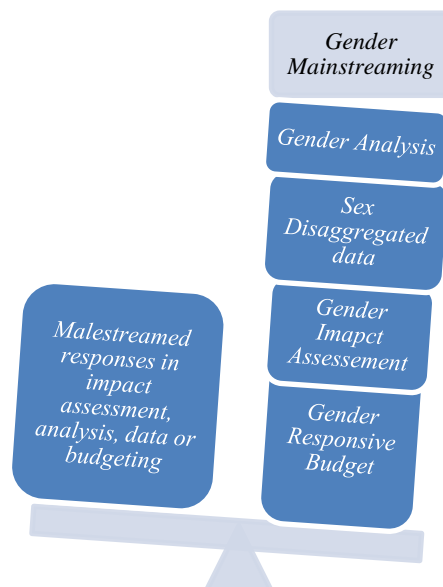
Gender Responsive Budget

It is often touted as useful tool to support mainstreaming of gender in government policies. However often those involved in GRB end up focussing on targeted allocation for women rather than considering how to make all government policies and allocations gender sensitive. Targeted allocations are sometimes necessary as a form of affirmative action or to cater for special needs. However true mainstreaming requires changing of the ordinary programmes and budgets which account for the bulk of government activity.

Figure 2. is a diagram depiction suggesting that inequalities accruing because of non gender responses can be corrected with introduction of various gender sensitive tools in research. A situation of imbalance as communicated to agencies of power at all levels will put a pressure on them to respond to needs of people and empower them (particularly women) for a just and equitable society. It is also

essential to nullify the dominant neutrality discourse of the climate.

Figure 2
Correcting Gender Imbalance



(Source – Self)

Explaining the importance, Fordham (2004) explored the need to develop a gender fair approach to vulnerability analysis. She also points out that vulnerability analysis remains partial if unaccompanied by corresponding capacity analysis. Active gender intervention is necessary both to increase efficiency and social justice aspects of adaptation projects. Gender analysis is not about polarising the differences between men and women. But if gender dynamics remains invisible or are seen as polarised then this obfuscates meaningful analysis and intervention

Conclusion and Suggestions

Gender sensitivity is essential for effective mitigation and adaptation responses to climate change. Along with thinking about how these processes can be tailored to the specific needs of poor and vulnerable men and women, there is also need to recognise the capacity of women and men to contribute important knowledge and insights. With more gender participative processes these strategies and intervention can truly identify and meet the needs of those they aim to assist. With this underlining thought I propose few suggestions.

Gender streaming Data houses

Thus, what is needed as the first step towards climate equity is to gender stream the institutions whose datas are used for framing policies along with offices of power. National statistical offices should be trained in gender analysis, disaggregated data collection. Scientific enquiry should combine with ground level sociological enquiry for better understanding of climate implications on human society and for formulating better ways to adapt and mitigate it. A sense of importance of gender equity to

tackle climate stress shall be communicated with the methodological tools and data to policy makers .On part of government, gendered data collection should not be made a one time affair but a continuous feature which keeps on adding to the vulnerability list affecting men and women differently. Vulnerability index shall be used to provide vulnerability security in terms of finance, property, participation. There by, making women presence and voice more autonomous.

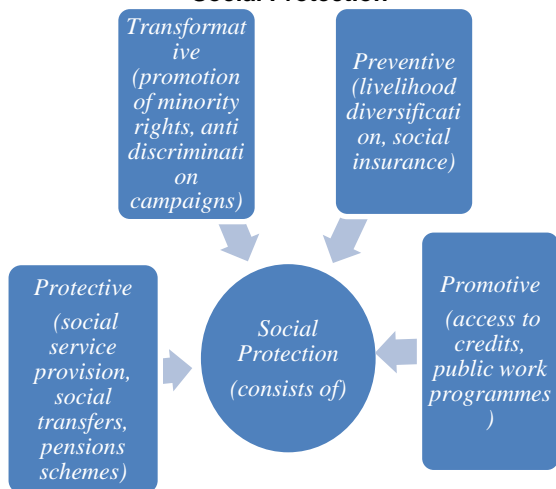
Integration Approach

An approach shall be towards women’s integration as an integral part of policy development and not overburdening women with more responsibilities. Without strengthening women’s autonomy in decision making new conditions of conflict will be created. Correcting centuries of inequality requires that affirmative policies are supported by systematic changes in attitudes, work culture, organisational priorities, resource allocation and monitoring system (Ramachandran (1998)). For instance in India, women through Mahila Mandal’s (self help groups) and development centric flagship programmes like MGNREGA (it undertakes environmentally sound projects) have created a niche for themselves. With 33% reservation in decentralised councils, women play a crucial role in terms of giving volume to their voices. However caution must be taken that all multiple activities undertaken for the empowerment of women shall be promoted in an integrated and comprehensive manner.

Social Protection Policy Incorporation in Disaster Risk Reduction and adaptation

Getting a sense from Mark Davies work, I suggest that Social protection policy can be incorporated in Disaster Risk Reduction and adaptation approaches to ensure programmes continuing to effectively support livelihoods and protect the poor and excluded from shocks and risks in the face of climate change.

Figure 3
Social Protection



(Source – Mark Davies)
Gender Funding

There is also need of changing funding opportunities since most funding still flows into disaster relief. Funding shall not be a restrictive relief programme but shall be accommodated in various programmes aiming at development. Gender Budgeting in development programme shall be designed such that it provides easy credit to women in particular along with securing their livelihoods. In India’s 8th, 9th, 10th. Five year plan, mainly gender intentions and commitments were espoused. For the first time real inclusion of gender budgeting along with establishment of Gender Budgeting cells in 52 ministries/departments have been done by 11th five year plan (2007-2012).

Thus to conclude, there is an urgent need to make women more visible. Gender datas, policy discourses, targeted gender research will be useful in this regard. Gender blind climate programmes are potentially harmful to development as they tend to exacerbate existing inequality. An approach towards gender mainstreaming helps to ensure that such don’t happen. In our societies gender inequalities are very entrenched and objective of gender analysis is thus to make visible any differences between men and women. Gender analysis also investigates the causes and consequences of these differences in order to appropriately address them through policy intervention. By providing the necessary information and analytical base gender analysis can achieve its ultimate goal: more equitable, effective and targeted policy formulation and decision making. Pro-active, inclusive top down measures shall be combined with bottom up gender sensitive participation. We need to remember that scientific policies operates at land, land which is concentrated with men and women, their relations. Thus, one side enquiry will be fatal if not incorporating the people for which they are made.

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