



RESOURCE

Gender, Agriculture and Water Insecurity

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Description / Abstract

Rural female farmers are becoming increasingly vulnerable to climate variability and water insecurity.

El Niño has already had devastating impacts on countries in Africa that primarily rely on agriculture. Drought, loss of livestock and failed harvests push poor households into food stress and result in children being removed from school or families migrating.

Policy and programme implementation for water insecurity must consider social norms around gender and other drivers of inequality. Too often, policies and programmes on agricultural water management are gender blind and don't consider women's unique needs and experiences.

This paper explains how and why improved water management on the farm matters for women and girls, and what can be done to better support opportunities for them, as well as for men and boys, in the face of climate change.

The authors identify three areas where gender-focused programming needs to address the unique vulnerabilities of women to water (in)security:

- Women are often at the pinch point of water-related tasks in the home and on the farm, with pressure intensifying around seasonal periods of scarcity in many developing countries.
- Compared to men, women may have less access to or control of assets that can be used to buffer against the effects of rainfall variability.
- Women often have fewer opportunities to pursue off-farm work or migrate to urban areas as a temporary coping strategy for seasonal food and income shortages, or for shortages caused by droughts and floods.

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