

ABSTRACT

The assertion linking climate change vulnerability and adaptation behaviour to gender has gained traction within climate change literature in recent years. The assertion is based on the much-proven link between vulnerability and poverty in a general sense. However, the exact nature of the relationship between climate change vulnerability and adaptation behaviour and gender has not been empirically proven. This study sought to contribute to climate change vulnerability assessment and adaptation planning in Uganda by assessing the relevance of the a priori determination placed on the role of gender on climate change vulnerability and adaptation behaviour of households.

Using primary data collected in 2016 from randomly selected households in Eastern Uganda, a gender vulnerability index (GVI-IPCC) was constructed to determine the difference in vulnerability between households and the contributing factors using gender-disaggregated data. The GVI-IPCC index was further used to assess whether vulnerability differentials were indeed gender linked by assessing intra-gender variations. The results showed that female-headed households were more vulnerable to climate change but the difference was not as pronounced as earlier thought. The main contributor vulnerability disparity was difference in adaptive capacity. The results also showed that there were variations in vulnerability even within household categories with single male-headed households being the most vulnerable. The heterogeneity of gender limits the singular use of gender for vulnerability targeting.

Household adaptation decision making and mode of adaptation were assessed using discrete choice and logit model techniques and the results showed that adaptation decision making among households was haphazard, not even based on the reported perception of climate change. The results did not reveal any gender related constraints to adaptation decision making or mode of adaptation to climate change implying that gender-based affirmative action in anti-vulnerability and adaptation planning are not justified. It is recommended that the assertion linking vulnerability and adaptation behaviour to gender be relaxed or else assessed on a case-by-case basis.