

GENDER AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT ON FISHER FOLK LIVELIHOODS: EVIDENCE FROM NIGERIA AND CAMEROON

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Fishing is among the most prominent and accessible economic activities for people in inland and coastal fishing communities around the world, but particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where it provides livelihoods and essential nutrition to over 200 million people. However, numerous compounding threats limit ocean ecosystem services along the west African coast. In particular, the combination of climate related stressors exacerbates challenges to livelihoods, food security, and wellbeing of millions of fishers and women fisherfolk. This study aims to enhance the resilience of marine ecosystem services for sustainable livelihoods under climate change scenarios; it investigates the socio-economic attributes of small-scale fishing communities in Nigeria and Cameroon, with detailed references to their vulnerability to climate change stressors, gender roles and strategies adopted for resilience to multidimensional poverty to attain sustainable livelihoods. This research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods with an ethnographic focus. It incorporates theories from the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach to address the resilience and livelihood requirements of fisherfolk. Findings indicate that fisherfolk employ diverse coping and adaptation strategies, involving a dynamic interplay of actions influenced by their available resources, skills, beliefs, socio-cultural context, and past experiences with challenging circumstances. These strategies encompass survival, economic, physiological, social, institutional, and religiosity-psychological aspects. However, the research reveal that climate change impacts disproportionately affect women fisherfolk compared to fishers across five key livelihood areas. The findings will provide key information for policies and programs to build resilience to climate change in sub-Saharan Africa, address major challenges, and empower fishing communities in Nigeria and Cameroon.