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RESOURCE

Gendering Climate Change: Geographical Insights

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Description / Abstract

Although climate change is expected to increase vulnerabilities, marginalization, and sufferings of many in the Global South, impacts will be unevenly felt across social strata. Intersectionalities of social difference, especially along gender and class lines, differentiate the ways in which impacts of climate change are experienced and responded to. Feminist political ecology and feminist geography insights can explain how different groups of people understand, respond to, and cope with variability and uncertainties in nuanced and critical ways, thereby elucidating the gendered implications of climate change. With a regional focus on South Asia, the article underscores the key issues that can be applied geographically elsewhere. Gendered implications of climate change in South Asia are particularly poignant as patriarchal norms, inequities, and inequalities often place women and men in differentiated positions in their abilities to respond to and cope with dramatic changes in socioecological relations but also foreground the complex ways in which social power relations operate in communal responses to adaptation strategies. This is particularly evident in water-related productive and reproductive tasks in agrarian societies that constitute the majority of South Asia. As climate change is expected to exacerbate both ecological degradation (e.g., water shortages) and water-related natural hazards (e.g., floods, cyclones), thereby transforming gender–water geographies, it becomes imperative to undertake careful multi scalar and critical analyses to better inform policymaking. This article elucidates the complex ways that climate change will affect gender and social relations, thereby highlighting the ways that existing policy narratives and adaptation programs might be better informed by geographical insights. To this end, the article encourages feminist and critical geographers to more forcefully and fruitfully engage with global debates on climate change.

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