

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

SCHOOL OF GEOSCIENCES, DISASTER RISK REDUCTION & SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT

DEPARTMENT OF DISASTER RISK REDUCTION



CLIMATE CHANGE-INDUCED DROUGHT AND ITS LIVELIHOOD IMPACTS ON
WOMEN AND CHILDREN: A CASE OF MUDZI RURAL DISTRICT WARD 1,
MASHONALAND EAST.

BY

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SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BACHELOR
OF SCIENCE HONORS DEGREE IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT

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DECLARATION

I, FADZAI HAZEL NYABADZA declare that this project is my own work. The work has not been copied or taken from any source without acknowledgement of the author or publisher.

Signed Fadza Date 12 June 2025

DEDICATION

To my loving mother and mother and father, your unwavering support, guidance, and encouragement have been the driving force behind my academic journey. Your selflessness, kindness, and unconditional love have inspired me to reach for my dreams. This dissertation is a testament to your unwavering belief in me. I am forever grateful for the sacrifices you have made for our family and for the values you have instilled in me. Your constant presence, guidance, and love have shaped me into the person I am today. I dedicate this achievement to you, with all my love and appreciation.

To my wonderful family, each of you has played a significant role in my journey, and I am grateful for your love, support, and encouragement. Your presence in my life has made a profound impact, and I am thankful for the memories, laughter, and moments we have shared. This achievement is not just mine, but ours, as it would not have been possible without your collective support and belief in me. I dedicate this dissertation to all of you, with love, gratitude, and appreciation your inspiration.

Thank you for being my family, my strength, and my motivation.

With love and gratitude,

FADZAI HAZEL NYABADZA

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to the following individuals and groups who have supported me throughout my dissertation journey:

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Head of Department of Disaster Risk Reduction, Professor E. Mavhura, for his guidance, support, and encouragement throughout my studies. Your leadership and vision for the department have created a conducive environment for academic excellence, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have studied under your guidance. To my project supervisor, Mr Gomo, I am forever grateful for your expertise, mentorship, and unwavering support. Your guidance and feedback have significantly improved the quality of my research, and I appreciate the time and effort you dedicated to ensuring my success. Thank you for believing in me and pushing me to reach my full potential. To my family, your love, encouragement, and sacrifices have been instrumental in my success. Your unwavering support has enabled me to pursue my academic dreams, and I am grateful for the sacrifices you have made to support me. Thank you for being my rock and motivation.

To my classmates and my friend Rutendo Brown, I have learned so much from each of you, and I appreciate the solidarity and support we have shared throughout our studies. Finally, I would like to thank all those who have contributed to my research, including participants, colleagues, and organizations that have provided data, support, and resources. Your contributions have enriched my research and enabled me to produce a high-quality dissertation. Thank you to the almighty God, who has been my rock, refuge, and my guiding light throughout this journey. Your divine guidance, wisdom, strength have seen me through my ups and downs, and I am forever grateful.

Thank you all for your contributions, support, and guidance. This achievement would not have been possible without you.

Sincerely,

FADZAI HAZEL NYABADZA

ABSTRACT

In Mudzi Rural District Ward 1 of Mashonaland East Province Zimbabwe this study investigates how women and children are exposed to and adjust to drought brought on by climate change. Understanding socioeconomic effects vulnerability levels, the efficacy of existing adaptation techniques and the creation of an inclusive community-based framework to improve coping ability are its main objectives. Based on social theory and vulnerability theory the study explains how environmental and structural factors contribute to the disproportionate risks that women and children face. A case study design was used in conjunction with a mixed research methodology. Women and children's local authority's public servants and representatives of non-governmental organizations were among the target demographic. A total of 67 participants were chosen using stratified purposive sampling in accordance with the Krejcie and Morgan table. Focus groups, key informant interviews and structured questionnaires were used to gather data. Utilizing thematic analysis, the data was interpreted. Drought brought on by climate change has resulted in widespread food insecurity, malnutrition, interrupted education, elevated health risks and heightened gender-based vulnerabilities according to findings. Due to their lack of access to resources, weak land tenure rights and exclusion from decision-making processes, women and children were found to be the most impacted. Although a number of adaptation techniques have been used, including water harvesting, climate-smart agriculture and community savings plans, their overall efficacy is still constrained by institutional and socioeconomic factors. Strengthening extension services, expanding access to drought-resistant seeds, instituting gender quotas, encouraging financial literacy and incorporating indigenous knowledge systems are among the recommendations made by the study. A framework for adaptation that is inclusive and participatory is suggested in order to increase women's and children's resilience. The results have applications for future scholarly studies on social justice and climate resilience as well as government policy and NGO programming.

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CHAPTER I

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Climate change induced drought is one of the most worldwide issue progressively documented as a main threat to human livelihoods, mainly in the rural areas. The increase in vulnerability and susceptibility of women and children to drought related disruptions is a persistent challenge in marginal areas, imposing an investigation into their exposure and adaptation. This research examine the livelihood effects of Climate change induced drought on women and children in Mudzi district Ward 1, Mashonaland East, Zimbabwe. This chapter focuses on the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives and questions, aim of the study, significant of the study, delimitations and limitation and chapter summary.

1.2 Background of the study

Climate change is one of the most pressing global concerns of the 21st century, as it has intensified ecological vulnerabilities and significantly altered weather patterns. One of its most devastating effects is the increased frequency and severity of droughts, which threaten food production, water availability, human health, and socioeconomic stability. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2021), extreme droughts have become more frequent in many parts of the world and are projected to worsen if mitigation and adaptation measures are not effectively implemented. Droughts disrupt ecosystems by reducing water and soil moisture levels and accelerating desertification, making it increasingly difficult for communities that rely on rain-fed agriculture to sustain their livelihoods.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, droughts have long been linked to crop failures, declining livestock productivity, and heightened food insecurity, which have exacerbated poverty and malnutrition (Awuor et al., 2021). Rain-fed agriculture remains the backbone of rural livelihoods in the region, yet it is highly vulnerable to climatic variability (Acheampong et al., 2020). Women and children, in particular, carry the greatest burden during these crises due to entrenched structural and socioeconomic inequalities. Women, who are primarily responsible for food provision and water collection, often travel long distances in search of scarce resources, reducing time for economic activities and childcare (Mutasa & Dziva, 2021). Children, on the other hand, face malnutrition, child labour, and disrupted education when households struggle to meet their basic needs (Kusangaya et al., 2022).

Zimbabwe has experienced significant climatic shifts over the past decades, marked by an increase in the frequency and duration of droughts. The economy remains highly dependent on

agriculture, with rural communities particularly vulnerable due to their reliance on subsistence farming and limited irrigation infrastructure. Prolonged dry spells have been linked to declining crop yields, water shortages, and heightened food insecurity, worsening the country's existing socioeconomic challenges (Moyo & Phiri, 2021). Although government and non-governmental organizations have made efforts to implement adaptation strategies, these often fail to incorporate gender-specific vulnerabilities and face challenges of financial constraints, policy gaps, and weak local implementation (Dube & Nhamo, 2020).

Mashonaland East Province's Mudzi Rural District is one of the regions hardest hit by climate change-induced drought. Smallholder farmers, who form the backbone of local livelihoods, are highly exposed to prolonged dry spells and unpredictable rainfall. These climate shocks have resulted in recurrent crop failures, livestock deaths, and increased dependence on food aid (Dube & Nhamo, 2020). Women, who play the dual role of household managers and food producers, are particularly vulnerable as they struggle to provide food, firewood, and water under increasingly harsh conditions (Chigwanda, 2021). Children in Mudzi face severe challenges such as malnutrition, reduced school attendance, and higher dropout rates, with many compelled to take part in labour-intensive household tasks like water collection and farming, further limiting their educational and future opportunities (FAO, 2020).

Despite increasing recognition of the gendered effects of climate change, limited empirical research has been conducted on the specific ways women and children in Mudzi District are exposed to and adapt to the impacts of drought. While studies acknowledge the general vulnerability of rural populations in Zimbabwe, there is insufficient knowledge on the lived experiences of women and children, their coping mechanisms, and how existing adaptation strategies address or fail to address their unique needs. Furthermore, gaps remain in understanding the effectiveness of current policy interventions in reducing gender disparities in climate resilience at the community level.

Studying this topic is crucial because women and children represent some of the most vulnerable yet overlooked groups in climate change discourse. Understanding how they experience, respond to, and adapt to drought is essential for designing inclusive, gender-sensitive adaptation strategies that build resilience in rural communities. The findings from this study will not only provide localized insights for Mudzi Rural District but also contribute to broader discussions on climate adaptation in Zimbabwe and across Sub-Saharan Africa. By highlighting the intersection of climate change, gender, and child welfare, this research will

inform policymakers, NGOs, and development practitioners working to implement targeted interventions that address both immediate needs and long-term resilience-building.

1.3 Problem statement

In Zimbabwe, climate change-induced drought has increasingly become a seasonal hazard, posing serious challenges for rural communities. In Mudzi District Ward 1, the livelihoods of women and children have been disproportionately affected due to their heavy reliance on rain-fed agriculture, natural water sources, and limited adaptive capacity. The Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (2019) reported that 77.2% of households in Mudzi were food insecure, with women and children being the most affected.

Water scarcity further compounds the crisis. According to the District Water Supply and Sanitation Committee (2022), only 53% of households have access to water, with 34% depending on boreholes and 19% on deep wells. Women and children often bear the burden of fetching water, with UNICEF (2024) noting that water collection can take three or more hours daily, in some cases becoming a daylong activity. This not only increases their workload but also limits opportunities for education, childcare, and income-generating activities.

Despite the widespread recognition of drought as a recurrent hazard, little is known about the specific adaptation strategies used by women and children in Mudzi District Ward 1. There are knowledge gaps regarding their resilience mechanisms and the ways socioeconomic and environmental factors influence their capacity to cope with drought.

This gap in knowledge poses a major challenge to the development of effective, gender-sensitive adaptation strategies. Addressing this problem is essential for building resilience in line with Zimbabwe's Vision 2030 Agenda and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, this study seeks to investigate how women and children in Mudzi Rural District Ward 1 are exposed to and adapt to the livelihood effects of climate change-induced drought.

1.4 Aim of the study

The main aim of this study is to assess exposure and adaptation to the effects of climate change-induced drought on women and children in rural communities.

1.5 Specific objectives

- i. To evaluate the socio-economic impacts of climate change induced drought on women and children in Mudzi district Ward 1.

- ii. To assess levels of vulnerability of women and children to climate change-induced drought in Mudzi District Ward 1.
- iii. To evaluate effectiveness of adaptation strategies utilized by women and children in coping with the effects of induced drought in Mudzi District Ward 1
- iv. To establish an inclusive framework for improving women and children's coping capacity to the effects of induced drought in Mudzi District Ward 1.

1.6 Research question

- What are the socio-economic impacts of climate change-induced drought on women and children in Mudzi District Ward 1?
- To what extent are women and children in Mudzi District Ward 1 vulnerable to climate change-induced drought?
- How effective are the current adaptation strategies utilized by women and children in coping with the effects of climate change-induced drought in Mudzi District Ward 1?
- What inclusive framework can be developed to improve the coping capacity of women and children to the effects of climate change-induced drought in Mudzi District Ward 1?

1.7 Justification/Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to shed light on the intricate relationship between drought climate change and the socioeconomic circumstances of women and children in Mudzi Rural District Ward 1 makes this study significant. Numerous stakeholders including the Zimbabwean government non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academic institutions will be significantly impacted by the research's conclusions.

1.7.1 To the government of Zimbabwe

This study offers the Zimbabwean government vital information and analysis that can guide resource allocation and policy decisions. By comprehending the unique difficulties that women and children encounter in the context of drought brought on by climate change targeted interventions that enhance resilience and adaptive capacity can be developed. The government can create policies that support gender-sensitive approaches to climate adaptation and guarantee that the needs of marginalized groups are sufficiently met by drawing attention to the particular vulnerabilities of these groups. Additionally, this research insights can help

develop national climate action plans that are in line with international agreements like the Paris Agreement

1.7.2 To non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

NGOs working in the area may find the study's conclusions to be a useful tool for creating and carrying out programs. NGOs can modify their interventions to address the particular needs of women and children by knowing the precise ways that climate change impacts these groups. This could entail developing educational initiatives centered on methods for adapting to climate change offering materials for sustainable farming methods or supporting health programs that deal with waterborne illnesses and malnutrition. The study will also enable non-governmental organizations to push for legislative modifications that give women's and children's perspectives and experiences more weight when discussing climate change.

1.7.3 To academic institutions

The results of this study can be incorporated into research projects and curriculum development at academic institutions. Investigating how climate change affects vulnerable groups will improve scholarly discussions about gender studies and climate adaptation. This study may also open up new avenues for research inspiring academics to look into topics like sustainable development community resilience and the socioeconomic dynamics of rural communities. By encouraging departmental collaboration, the study's interdisciplinary design can also deepen the academic community's comprehension of these important topics

1.7.4 To local communities

Enhancing local knowledge and awareness about climate change and its effects is another way that this research is significant at the community level. By involving community members at every stage of the research process the study hopes to promote discussion about resilience-building and adaptive techniques. This participatory approach fosters a sense of ownership over adaptation efforts by guaranteeing that women's and children's voices are heard in conversations about climate change. In the end the study can enable local communities to proactively mitigate the effects of climate change building resilience to upcoming difficulties.

1.8 Scope/Delimitation of the study

The delimitations of this study are outlined to clarify the scope and boundaries within which the research operates:

Geographical scope: The study is limited to Mudzi Rural District Ward 1, focusing on the specific experiences of women and children in this locality. This choice is based on the area's

unique vulnerability to climate change impacts, which has been documented in previous research (Masiyandima et al., 2020).

Target population: The study specifically targets women and children, recognizing their unique experiences and challenges related to climate change. This focus aligns with research indicating that gender dynamics significantly influence vulnerability and adaptation (Sova et al., 2021).

Temporal framework: The research examines the impacts of climate change and drought over the past decade, acknowledging that longer-term trends may not be fully captured within this timeframe (Sow et al., 2021).

1.9 Limitations of the study

While this research aims to provide valuable insights, several limitations are acknowledged

Sample Size: The study may have a limited sample size due to logistical constraints, which affect the generalizability of the findings. To mitigate this, purposive sampling techniques employed to select participants who represent a diverse range of experiences within the target population.

Response bias: There may be potential biases in participant responses, particularly in sensitive topics such as poverty and food insecurity. To address this, the study ensured confidentiality and create a safe environment for participants to share their experiences openly.

Resource constraints: Limited resources, including time and funding, impact the breadth of data collection. This limitation addressed by prioritizing key themes and utilizing existing community networks to facilitate participant recruitment

Cultural Sensitivity: The study may encounter cultural barriers in communicating research goals and objectives. To navigate this, the researcher engages local leaders and stakeholders to foster trust and understanding within the community

1.10 Definitions and Abbreviations

1.10.1 Climate change-induced drought

Climate change-induced drought refers to prolonged periods of significantly reduced precipitation caused by the changing climate, leading to severe water shortages that disrupt ecosystems, agriculture, and livelihoods. It is often linked to rising global temperatures, altered weather patterns, and increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events (IPCC, 2021). According to Adhikari and Nejadhashemi (2022), these droughts exacerbate

vulnerabilities in communities reliant on rain-fed agriculture and pose significant risks to water security and socio-economic stability.

1.10.2 Exposure

Exposure, in the context of climate change, refers to the presence of people, livelihoods, infrastructure, or ecosystems in areas that could be adversely affected by climate-related hazards, such as droughts (Oppenheimer et al., 2019). As noted by Birkmann et al. (2022), it describes the degree to which a community or system comes into contact with climate-induced stressors, shaping the overall risk level alongside vulnerability and adaptive capacity.

1.10.3 Adaptation

Adaptation refers to the adjustments in social, economic, or environmental systems in response to actual or expected climate-related effects to mitigate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. Adaptation strategies may include technical, institutional, and behavioural changes to reduce vulnerability and enhance resilience (IPCC, 2021). Hurlbert and Krishnaswamy (2022) emphasize that effective adaptation not only addresses immediate climate challenges but also contributes to long-term sustainable development.

1.10.4 Livelihoods

Livelihoods are the means by which individuals or households secure the necessities of life, such as food, shelter, and income. A livelihood comprises the assets, capabilities, and activities required to sustain life, which can be significantly impacted by climate-induced challenges like drought (Scoones, 2015). According to Chambers and Conway (2020), resilient livelihoods are crucial for coping with and recovering from climate-related shocks, particularly in resource-constrained environments.

1.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter has established the framework for understanding the exposure and adaptation to climate change-induced drought among women and children in Mudzi Rural District Ward 1. The significance of the study has been articulated, emphasizing its potential contributions to government policies, NGO interventions, and academic discourse. The research objectives clearly outlined, focusing on assessing impacts, evaluating adaptive strategies, and proposing recommendations. Furthermore, the assumptions, delimitations, and limitations of the study were detailed to provide transparency regarding the research context and methodology. Finally, key definitions and abbreviations were provided to clarify terminology used throughout the study. The subsequent chapters delve deeper into the literature review, research methodology,

and findings, ultimately contributing to a better understanding of climate change adaptation in vulnerable communities.

CHAPTER 2-LITERATURE REVIEW

2 Introduction

Droughts brought on by climate change are becoming a bigger problem worldwide disproportionately impacting vulnerable groups especially women and children. Drought makes socioeconomic vulnerabilities worse in rural areas like Mudzi Rural District Ward 1 Zimbabwe where agriculture and natural resources are major sources of income. Because of their lower socioeconomic status gender-based inequality and restricted access to adaptive resources women and children are disproportionately affected by these effects. This chapter provides a critical analysis of pertinent literature emphasizing theoretical viewpoints empirical research and new debates regarding women's and children's exposure to and adaptation tactics for drought brought on by climate change. The reviews main themes are adaptation techniques socioeconomic repercussions theoretical frameworks that explain vulnerability and social impacts and suggestions for an inclusive framework that improves resilience. In order to provide an academic basis for comprehending the disparate effects of drought brought on by climate change the chapter starts by introducing theoretical frameworks especially Vulnerability Theory and Social Theory. After evaluating empirical research that looks at livelihood losses food insecurity health risks and disruptions to education it then investigates the socioeconomic effects of drought on women and children. It also examines the degree of vulnerability that these groups face using data from both domestic and foreign research. The chapter also assesses the efficacy of current adaptation tactics emphasizing both their advantages and disadvantages. Lastly policy recommendations and an inclusive framework that could improve women's and children's coping abilities are covered.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

A strong theoretical framework is essential for understanding the exposure and adaptation of women and children to climate change-induced drought. This study adopts two key theories: Vulnerability Theory and Social Theory. These theories provide a lens through which the socio-economic and environmental challenges faced by women and children in Mudzi Rural District, Ward 1, can be analysed.

2.1.1 Vulnerability Theory

According to Adger et al. vulnerability theory aims to explain how social economic or environmental stressors can make people or groups more vulnerable to harm. in 2019). In particular, it sheds light on how much droughts brought on by climate change affect marginalized communities like women and children in rural Zimbabwe. A number of variables including income levels resource accessibility institutional support and adaptive capacity frequently influence vulnerability (IPCC 2022). Because they rely on subsistence farming and natural water sources women and children in Mudzi are particularly vulnerable to drought (Nyahunda et al. (2021). Food insecurity malnutrition water scarcity and the increased workloads placed on women to secure household resources are all examples of sensitivity. They have little access to financial resources land ownership rights and educational opportunities which limits their capacity for adaptation and makes it difficult for them to put long-term adaptation plans into action (Chanza and de Wit 2021). An investigation by Moyo et al. (2022) discovered that since they are in charge of obtaining food and water women in rural Zimbabwe are disproportionately affected by climate-related shocks. Children also endure severe hardships during droughts as their education is interrupted by heightened domestic duties and food insecurity (Mukwada & Manatsa 2022). According to Gebreyes et al. (2021) discovered that food insecurity gender-based violence and increased workloads are all experienced by women and children in drought-prone areas because they have less access to adaptation resources. Zulu et al. s study in Malawi. (2022) pointed out that rural women face barriers to accessing climate adaptation technologies which makes them even more susceptible to drought. The devastating effects of climate-induced drought in Zimbabwe cannot be mitigated by traditional coping strategies like remittances and informal trading according to Mutasa (2020).

2.1.2 Social Theory

Social theory investigates how human experiences and reactions to environmental challenges are shaped by social interactions and structures (Giddens 2020). It emphasizes how institutions

shape vulnerability and resilience to climate change as well as power dynamics and social norms (Béné et al. (2019). In order to examine how gender roles cultural norms and institutional support networks affect adaptation tactics social theory is crucial in climate change studies claims Archer (2021). Children and women are frequently left out of decision-making processes which hinders their capacity to put resilience strategies into practice. Women and children in Mudzi face social and economic disadvantages which reduces their ability to withstand droughts brought on by climate change (Nyahunda & Tirivangasi 2021). Because they are expected to find food fetch water and care for children in increasingly harsh environmental conditions women bear a disproportionate amount of the adaptation burden (FAO 2021). Furthermore, in rural Zimbabwe patriarchal norms restrict women's access to agricultural inputs credit and land making them even more vulnerable (Madzimure & Maposa 2022). On the other hand, social disruptions impact children such as school dropouts brought on by migration brought on by drought (Chigumira 2022). An Odhiambo et al. study conducted in Kenya. (2021) discovered that women's reliance on male family members for survival is increased by social norms that prohibit them from actively engaging in climate adaptation programs. Women are systematically excluded from land ownership in South Africa which makes it challenging for them to carry out long-term adaptation measures according to Banda & Sibanda (2022). Musarurwa & Matamanda (2021) discovered that social capital—like women's self-help groups and community networks plays a big part in improving climate change adaptation in Zimbabwe.

2.2 Socio-economic impacts of climate change-induced drought

Climate change-induced drought has intensified socio-economic challenges for vulnerable populations, particularly women and children in rural areas. As droughts become more frequent and severe, their repercussions manifest in food insecurity, malnutrition, deteriorating health, disrupted education, economic disempowerment, and increased gender-based violence (IPCC, 2021).

2.2.1 Food insecurity and malnutrition

Droughts drastically lower agricultural production which has an immediate effect on the availability and nutrition of food in households. According to FAO estimates from 2022 during protracted droughts 70% of rural households in Africa which are mostly reliant on subsistence farming—face severe food shortages. Zimbabwean studies (Mavedzenge et al. (2021) discovered that households affected by drought have a 40 percent decrease in food consumption with pregnant and nursing women being disproportionately affected. In Ethiopia Tessema and

associates. (2021) found that inadequate food access during drought periods led to a 15% increase in child stunting rates. Likewise, research conducted in Mozambique (Sitoe et al. 2020) and Malawi (Mvula and Kalembe 2020). 2022) show that women put their children's food needs first and eat fewer meals but they still experience nutritional deficiencies. Moreover, the World Food Programme (WFP 2021) stated that extended droughts caused malnutrition rates to exceed emergency thresholds (above 30 percent) in areas such as Turkana Kenya. This is consistent with research from Oxfam (2020) which found that women and children in drought-affected areas had higher rates of micronutrient deficiencies.

2.2.2 Health implications

The main health effects of droughts are associated with disease spread water scarcity and malnutrition. In East Africa a UNICEF study from 2022 revealed that food shortages brought on by the drought increased maternal anaemia by 25% raising the rates of maternal and infant deaths. The Mudzi district of Zimbabwe is where Chersich et al. Water shortages compelled women and children to walk more than 10 km every day in search of water which increased physical exhaustion and health risks according to research published in 2021. During times of drought vector-borne illnesses like malaria also increase. Ugandan studies (Okello et al. identified that increased exposure during water collection was responsible for a 30% rise in malaria cases among women and children (2020). Likewise research in Chad (Ngongondo et al. Sudan and Sudan (2021) (Mohamed et al. (2022) found that cholera typhoid and diarrhoea outbreaks were exacerbated by deteriorating water quality during droughts with children under five years old being disproportionately affected.

2.2.3 Educational disruptions

School absenteeism and dropout rates especially among girls are influenced by drought. Gebreyes et al. in Ethiopia. (2021) discovered that extended droughts caused a 20% drop in girl's school attendance as they took on extra household duties like caring for the home and gathering water. Similar patterns were noted in Zimbabwe (Mavhura 2022) where female school dropout rates rose by 18% during times of drought. Due to financial strain and demands for domestic work rural girls are twice as likely as their urban counterparts to drop out of school during droughts (UNESCO 2021). An investigation in Somalia (Ali et al. 2020) discovered that early marriages are a common coping strategy used by families in drought-affected areas which further diminishes the educational opportunities for girls.

2.2.4 Economic hardships and livelihood struggles

Droughts cause economic disruptions especially for women who work in agriculture. Eighty percent of African rural women depend on agriculture for their livelihood according to FAO (2021) and crop failures brought on by drought reduce household incomes. Iro et al. in Nigeria. (2021) discovered that during drought seasons the income of households headed by women decreased by 35% forcing many of them to take on hazardous informal work. The gendered economic impact is particularly noticeable in Zimbabwe where traditional gender inequalities were reinforced by Nyahunda & Tirivangasi (2020) who found that women in drought-affected areas experienced a 50% increase in financial dependency on male partners. In the meantime, research from South Africa (Mudombi et al. 2022) show that rural women have a lower likelihood of obtaining resources for climate adaptation which further reduces economic resilience. Rahman et al. in Bangladesh. Droughts decreased household income by 30% which led to a rise in child labour as families looked for additional sources of income (2021). In the same way studies conducted in India (Dutta et al. 2020) demonstrates that 25 percent more children participate in child labour in households affected by drought which has long-term consequences for the development of human capital.

2.2.5 Gender-based violence and social vulnerabilities

Social vulnerabilities are made worse by droughts which increases gender-based violence (GBV). According to UNFPA (2021) child marriages sexual exploitation and domestic violence all rise during severe droughts. 70% of women affected by drought in Kenya reported experiencing some kind of GBV which is frequently connected to financial stressors according to a study (Muthoni & Kilungu 2022). Somalia research (War same et al. 2020) and Sudan (Omer et al. 2021) discovered that extended droughts led to a rise in forced relocation putting women and children at higher risk of being exploited in camps for internally displaced people (IDPs). Likewise, research conducted in Angola (Teka et al. showed that as a survival tactic woman in drought-affected areas increased transactional sex by 30%. In Latin America Carrasco & Llorente (2022) found that intimate partner violence had increased by 40% in rural communities affected by drought which was consistent with research conducted in Zimbabwe (Nyahunda et al. 2020) as well as Uganda (Businge et al. 2021).

2.2.6 Adaptation strategies and policy interventions

The socioeconomic effects of drought on women and children can be lessened with the help of effective adaptation strategies. According to FAO (2022) policies promoting climate resilience should incorporate gender-sensitive strategies such as granting female farmers access to

financial resources. According to an IPCC study from 2021 community-led adaptation measures in Ethiopia like water conservation initiatives considerably lessened the negative effects of drought on women. Improved household food security was the outcome of Oxfam's (2020) introduction of climate-smart agricultural training programs in Malawi that targeted women. Similarly, a study conducted in India by Dutta et al. highlighted the function of women's self-help organizations in fostering economic resilience in the face of climate shocks (2021). UNICEF (2022) promotes educational policies that give priority to the retention of girls in areas affected by drought with a focus on conditional cash transfers as a means of lowering school dropout rates. In order to lessen the economic impact of drought on vulnerable women and children the World Bank (2021) emphasizes the significance of gender-responsive social protection programs.

2.3 Women and children vulnerable to climate change-induced drought

The vulnerability of women and children to climate change-induced drought is a critical area of research, as these groups disproportionately suffer from the impacts of such climate events. This section explores the extent of their vulnerability through an empirical lens, drawing on studies from various regions impacted by climate change.

2.3.1 Women to climate change-induced drought

Due to socioeconomic disparities already in place women are frequently the most at risk from droughts brought on by climate change especially in rural and developing nations. Women are typically the primary caregivers and custodians of household supplies like food and water in many societies (Teka et al. in 2022). Food insecurity is made worse by droughts which puts more pressure on women to provide for their families. Women are especially vulnerable to climate shocks because of their reliance on rain-fed agriculture and restricted access to financial resources as highlighted by Mavhura (2022). For example, in Zimbabwe because they have less access to credit and land households headed by women frequently have a harder time getting food and water during droughts (Nyahunda and Tirivangasi 2020). In addition, women's vulnerability is exacerbated by the absence of alternate sources of income during droughts. In light of what Dutta et al. The lack of climate adaptation infrastructure like irrigation systems means that women have fewer options for reducing the impact of droughts (2021). Furthermore, because women particularly those in agriculture are more likely to lose their income and means of subsistence climate change widens the gender gap in employment opportunities. Droughts brought on by climate change increase health risks for women because of their caregiving responsibilities and requirements for reproductive health. The decline of

food and water supplies during droughts has a direct effect on women's health according to the FAO (2022). As the availability of clean water for drinking sanitation and hygiene declines the prevalence of waterborne illnesses increases. Additionally, the extra effort needed to locate food and water particularly in regions that are prone to drought puts more physical strain on women and contributes to mental health problems like stress and anxiety (Businge et al. (2021). In terms of maternal health malnourishment and dehydration raise the possibility of pregnancy complications endangering the health of expectant mothers even more (Chersich et al. 2021). Due to the heightened competition for limited resources like food and water droughts make gender-based violence (GBV) worse. Women and girls are frequently the targets of violence when their access to resources is limited according to Carrasco and Llorente (2022). An investigation by Businge et al. (2021) showed that because households are under more stress as a result of resource scarcity there are more reports of sexual assault and domestic violence during drought periods. Women are more vulnerable during such crises when they are compelled to have transactional sex in order to obtain food or water (Muthoni & Kilungu 2022).

2.3.2 Children to climate change-induced drought

Because they depend on proper nutrition and access to water children are especially vulnerable to drought brought on by climate change. The nutritional intake of children is directly impacted by droughts which frequently result in a decrease in food availability particularly in rural areas (Tessema et al. 2021). Drastic growth cognitive impairments and heightened vulnerability to illnesses like diarrhoea which are made worse by inadequate water sanitation—are all associated with malnutrition during droughts (Mvula and Kalemba 2020). In Zimbabwe's Mudzi District children suffered disproportionately during droughts with higher rates of underweight children and infant mortality as a result of food shortages according to a study by Nyahunda and Tirivangasi (2020). Droughts also have an impact on children's educational opportunities because they frequently force families to relocate in search of food or water which raises the school dropout rate. In Zimbabwe the financial strain caused by droughts frequently forces children especially girls to drop out of school and assist their families with jobs that generate income like fetching water or working in the fields (Mavhura 2022). The long-term effects of children's education loss during these times are felt in their general development and future prospects. Child labour frequently rises as a result of drought-related economic hardship because families look to children to help with household and agricultural chores. Dutta et al. (2020) discovered that during droughts children's labour rose in India as families fought for survival which resulted in child exploitation and interrupted schooling.

Children are compelled to take on roles that would typically be performed by adults in drought-prone areas which increases their susceptibility to mishaps abuse and long-term socioeconomic disadvantage.

2.3.3 Intersections of vulnerability: gender and age

Since age gender and socioeconomic status are all influenced by one another it is impossible to comprehend women's and children's susceptibility to droughts brought on by climate change in a vacuum. Regarding what Ali et al. (2020) in addition to being a child or a woman vulnerability to drought also involves the intersection of these identities with other factors like poverty and rural livelihoods. For instance, because of their gender and the low socioeconomic standing of the family women-headed households in rural Uganda are especially vulnerable to climate change (Businge et al. (2021). And children's reliance on adults for resources and care makes them even more vulnerable. Due to their own vulnerabilities women are unable to support their children during droughts which results in a vicious cycle of hardship. Children immediately suffer when women lack access to food or water endangering their development and health claims Mavhura (2022).

2.3.4 Adaptation strategies and coping mechanisms

To lessen the effects of drought women in areas affected by it use a variety of coping strategies. In order to secure food and income these strategies frequently entail changes in household roles with women taking on more work (Dutta et al. 2021). For instance, in Ethiopia women have resorted to climate adaptation initiatives and community-based weather forecasting to enhance their farming methods and boost resilience (Gebreyes et al. 2021). To cope with climate change and lessen the effects of droughts rural women in Zimbabwe have also taken part in agroforestry and water management techniques (Mavedzenge et al. (2021). Children frequently have to adjust to changes in their daily routines especially in the areas of education and nutrition in order to cope with drought. Children may be compelled to perform low-skilled labour in order to make a financial contribution while others assist in gathering water. Although these activities provide families with temporary respite they have long-term consequences for the academic performance and mental well-being of children (Sitoe et al. in 2022. Programs that enhance access to water or offer emergency food assistance however can lessen some of these stresses and free up kids to concentrate on their education and general well-being (Tessema et al. 2021).

2.4 Adaptation strategies utilized by women and children

Adaptation strategies to cope with climate change-induced droughts are crucial for vulnerable groups such as women and children, who bear the brunt of climate impacts due to their socio-economic roles and physical dependence. This section provides an empirical review of the effectiveness of the current adaptation strategies employed by women and children in response to climate change-induced droughts. The analysis draws upon several recent studies conducted in different regions, especially focusing on rural, drought-prone areas.

2.4.1 Adaptation strategies employed by women

In response to drought brought on by climate change one of the most popular tactics used by women is diversifying their sources of income. The unpredictable climatic patterns in rural areas where agriculture is frequently rain-fed make it more challenging for women to depend entirely on farming (Tessema et al. 2021). Through the operation of small enterprises, the raising of livestock and the creation of non-agricultural products women have expanded their revenue streams. Zimbabwean rural women have embraced micro-enterprise pursuits like weaving baking and handicrafts to lessen their reliance on agriculture during dry spells according to a study by Mavhura (2022). This approach has been somewhat effective since it gives women other sources of income that can lessen the effects of the drought. Nevertheless, these companies frequently do not have access to credit which restricts their ability to expand (Businge et al. (2021). Similar to these women in Ethiopia have started selling water and firewood which has increased their income but also puts a burden on local resources and may result in deforestation (Dutta et al. 2021). There are instances where these alternate sources of income are not enough to meet fundamental requirements during protracted droughts suggesting the need for more all-encompassing assistance (Ali et al. in 2020). Climate-smart agricultural practices like conservation tillage drought-resistant crop varieties and water harvesting methods have seen a rise in the adoption of women. Because they are more resilient to shifting rainfall patterns drought-resistant crops like millet and sorghum have gained popularity among Kenyan women (FAO 2022). Because these methods produce consistent harvests in spite of unpredictable weather they have increased food security in some places. However, the inability to obtain high-quality seeds extension services and training limits the efficacy of these tactics (Chersich et al. (2021). As Mavhura (2022) points out many women cannot successfully apply these adaptive practices without assistance from the government or non-governmental organizations. Furthermore, the substantial initial investment needed for

climate-smart agriculture is frequently out of rural women's means. Women's participation in group action and community-based adaptation programs like water management committees and community savings groups has increased in response to climate change. During droughts women's organizations in Uganda have worked together on shared irrigation and water harvesting projects which has improved access to water (Tessema et al. (2021). While these programs have shown promise in certain contexts their effectiveness frequently depends on the degree of community participation and outside funding. Regarding Ali et al. (2020) observes that these projects frequently struggle to maintain themselves when local governments and NGOs do not offer continuous support.

2.4.2 Strategies employed by children

Children are now actively involved in education and awareness campaigns that teach sustainable practices and disaster preparedness in many regions hit by droughts brought on by climate change. Environmental education initiatives have been implemented in drought-prone regions of Zimbabwe to educate children about the causes and consequences of climate change as well as strategies for coping with these issues (Muthoni and Kilungu 2022). Children frequently share this information with their families influencing adaptation strategies in the home. These programs have demonstrated success in increasing awareness. However, these programs long-term efficacy is diminished because they are frequently restricted to particular seasons or brief interventions (Mavhura 2022). Furthermore, the emphasis is on raising awareness rather than offering kids useful tools or techniques to lessen the effects of drought. Children are now migrating as an adaptive response to drought particularly in areas with limited food and water supplies. During droughts families frequently relocate to cities or other areas with better access to resources (Businge et al. 2021). There are many difficulties associated with migration even though it can offer momentary respite from the immediate effects of drought. Children who must work in new places to support their families are more likely to experience school dropout social network disruption and child labour (Dutta et al. in 2020). Although some kids have used this tactic to survive it has detrimental long-term effects on their education and general development. Children frequently take on more duties during droughts such as fetching water or caring for livestock as a result of the depletion of household resources. While this increase in workload may be viewed as a coping strategy it also exposes kids to unsafe situations exploitation and disruptions in their education (Sitoe et al. in 2022). Due to the risk of physical and psychological harm to children this strategy is not very effective in

helping families survive drought. Although children's labour may lessen some of the effects of drought Mavhura (2022) points out that it frequently results in a cycle of poverty and diminished opportunities for future development.

2.5 Effectiveness of current adaptation strategies utilized by women and children

Adaptation strategies to cope with climate change-induced droughts are crucial for vulnerable groups such as women and children, who bear the brunt of climate impacts due to their socio-economic roles and physical dependence. This section provides an empirical review of the effectiveness of the current adaptation strategies employed by women and children in response to climate change-induced droughts. The analysis draws upon several recent studies conducted in different regions, especially focusing on rural, drought-prone areas.

2.5.1 Adaptation strategies employed by women and their effectiveness

One of the most popular responses by women to drought brought on by climate change is diversifying their sources of income. The unpredictable climatic patterns in rural areas where agriculture is frequently rain-fed make it more challenging for women to depend entirely on farming (Tessema et al. (2021). Through the operation of small enterprises, the raising of livestock and the creation of non-agricultural products women have expanded their revenue streams. In Zimbabwe rural women have embraced micro-enterprise pursuits like weaving baking and handicrafts to lessen their reliance on agriculture during dry spells according to a study by Mavhura (2022). This approach has been somewhat effective since it gives women other sources of income that can lessen the effects of the drought. However, the inability to obtain credit frequently restricts these companies' ability to expand (Businge et al. 2021). In Ethiopia women have also resorted to selling water and firewood which has increased their income but also put a burden on local resources and may result in deforestation (Dutta et al. 2021). During protracted droughts these alternate sources of income can occasionally fall short of meeting basic necessities highlighting the need for more all-encompassing assistance (Ali et al. 2020). Climate-smart farming methods. Climate-smart agricultural practices like conservation tillage drought-resistant crop varieties and water harvesting methods have seen a rise in the adoption of women. Because they are more resilient to shifting rainfall patterns drought-resistant crops like millet and sorghum have gained popularity among Kenyan women (FAO 2022). In certain places these tactics have increased food security by ensuring consistent harvests in spite of unpredictable weather. Nevertheless, the inability to obtain high-quality seeds extension services and training limits the efficacy of these tactics (Chersich et al. (2021). As noted by Mavhura (2022) many women are unable to successfully apply these adaptive

practices without assistance from the government or non-profit organizations. Additionally, a large initial investment is needed for climate-smart agriculture which is frequently out of rural women's means. combined efforts and adaptation at the community level. Women have become more involved in community-based adaptation programs and collective action in response to climate change including water management committees and community savings groups. Water access has been improved during drought periods in Uganda thanks to the cooperation of women's groups on shared irrigation and water harvesting projects (Tessema et al. (2021). While these programs have shown promise in certain contexts their effectiveness frequently depends on the degree of community participation and outside funding. Regarding Ali et al. (2020) observes that these projects frequently struggle to maintain themselves when local governments and NGOs do not offer continuous support.

2.5.2 Adaptation strategies employed by children and their effectiveness

Awareness and education initiatives. Children are now actively involved in education and awareness initiatives that teach sustainable practices and disaster preparedness in many regions impacted by droughts brought on by climate change. Environmental education programs have been implemented in drought-prone areas of Zimbabwe to educate children about the causes and consequences of climate change and how to adapt to these challenges (Muthoni and Kilungu 2022). These initiatives have been successful in increasing awareness and kids frequently share this knowledge with their families which influences adaptation tactics in the home. Nevertheless, the fact that these programs are frequently restricted to particular seasons or brief interventions diminishes their long-term efficacy (Mavhura 2022). Furthermore, awareness-raising is prioritized over useful knowledge or tools that kids can utilize right away to lessen the effects of drought. Migration as a means of adaptation. Children are now migrating as an adaptive response to drought particularly in areas with limited food and water supplies. During droughts families frequently move to cities or other areas with easier access to resources (Businge et al. 2021). There are many difficulties associated with migration even though it can offer momentary respite from the immediate effects of drought. As children must work in new places to support the family migration frequently results in school dropout strained social networks and an increase in child labour (Dutta et al. (2020). Some children have used this tactic to survive but it has detrimental long-term effects on their education and general development. increased labour participation and workload. Children frequently take on additional duties during droughts such as fetching water or caring for livestock as a result of

the depletion of household resources. Although this increase in workload may be viewed as a coping strategy it also exposes kids to unsafe situations exploitation and disruptions in their education (Sitoe et al. in 2022). This approach puts children at risk of physical and mental harm making it ineffective in helping families survive drought. Children's labour may lessen the effects of drought but it frequently results in a cycle of poverty and fewer opportunities for future development as Mavhura (2022) points out.

2.6 Framework developed to improve the coping capacity of women and children to the effects of climate change-induced drought

Developing an inclusive framework to enhance the coping capacity of women and children in the face of climate change-induced drought requires a comprehensive, multi-dimensional approach. This framework should address the specific vulnerabilities of women and children, ensuring that they can access and utilize resources effectively while participating in decision-making processes. The following sections review empirical literature and propose an inclusive framework that incorporates gender-responsive approaches, community-based adaptation strategies, and socio-economic empowerment.

2.6.1 Framework principles for enhancing coping capacity

Gender-sensitive climate change adaptation strategies should acknowledge the unique roles and vulnerabilities of women and children. Women and children will not be left out of climate change programs decision-making processes or resource access thanks to gender-responsive adaptation (Mavhura 2022). This concept has been successfully implemented in a number of areas such as Sub-Saharan Africa where gender-sensitive policies have been associated with increased resilience in communities that are at risk (Chersich et al. 2021). Adaptation at the community level. Local knowledge and customs are incorporated into community-based adaptation strategies to boost climate change resilience. Because it promotes group action and a sense of ownership over adaptation efforts community-based adaptation is especially crucial for women and children. Women and children who are empowered through local community groups can participate in solutions that directly impact their well-being as Mavhura (2022) points out. Integration across multiple sectors. Integrating multiple sectors including infrastructure health education and agriculture is necessary for effective drought adaptation. In order to ensure that climate change resilience is comprehensive this calls for a coordinated strategy that addresses the adaptation needs of women and children across all sectors. Sectoral

integration guarantees sustainable adaptation and tackles the underlying socioeconomic causes of vulnerability (Ali et al. in 2020).

2.6.2 Key components of an inclusive framework

Increasing economic empowerment is essential to enhancing climate change resilience. Barriers like limited access to technology credit and land make it difficult for women particularly in rural areas to adapt to drought. Economic empowerment should therefore be at the heart of any framework intended to increase coping ability. Access to Credit and Financial Services: Women's ability to diversify their sources of income and make investments in adaptive strategies depends on their ability to obtain reasonably priced credit and financial services (Businge et al. 2021). Women in drought-affected areas have found success in generating income through microfinance programs (Mavhura 2022). Training in alternative livelihoods like agro-processing small-scale business and climate-smart agriculture is crucial for empowering women. Enhancing knowledge of drought-resistant farming practices and developing non-farming livelihoods that can endure environmental shocks should be the main goals of empowerment programs (Dutta et al. 2021).. In rural areas women are frequently the main producers of food so they should have the resources and knowledge necessary to practice climate-smart agriculture. Included in this is instruction on drought-resistant crop varieties conservation tillage and water management strategies (Tessema et al. 2021). In order to make well-informed decisions regarding their farming practices women need to have timely and accurate access to climate information. Access to weather forecasts early warning systems and guidance on the most effective ways to manage drought risk should be guaranteed for women through a framework (Mavhura 2022). Access to suitable fertilizers and seeds resistant to drought can greatly increase agricultural productivity in drought-affected areas. Women farmers should receive this assistance in the form of direct payments or subsidies (Ali et al. 2020). Education is essential for enhancing children's coping skills especially in areas where drought increases child labour school dropouts and exploitation. The following should be the main focus of the framework. Educating students about adaptation strategies like water conservation and drought-resistant crops as well as the significance of environmental sustainability should be a part of school curricula (Muthoni and Kilungu 2022). By making investments in climate-resistant infrastructure schools can become more resilient to the effects of climate change and provide children with safe places to learn even during dry spells (Chersich et al. (2021). bolstering networks of community support. The degree of community support and involvement frequently determines how well adaptation strategies work.

Strengthening community support networks through community savings and loan groups is a crucial component of the inclusive framework. By creating community-based savings and loan programs women and children can obtain emergency funding during dry spells. These organizations can serve as safety nets giving disadvantaged households quick access to financial support (Businge et al. 2021). Sharing resources and managing water: Communities should be urged to work together to manage resources like water. To ensure sustainable use and fair distribution women and children should be actively involved in water committees and decision-making processes (Tessema et al. (2021). legal defence as well as social safety nets. Strong legal frameworks and social safety nets must be in place to protect women and children especially in regions that are vulnerable to drought.: Women-led households especially those with children should have access to government-run social protection programs like food assistance cash transfers and unemployment insurance (Dutta et al. 2020). Ensuring women have safe access to productive land is essential for climate adaptation and this can only be achieved by strengthening their land tenure rights. Long-term resilience can be enhanced by legal changes that give women equal access to land (Businge et al. 2021).

2.6.3 Institutional and Policy Support

Effective adaptation policy implementation by local governments and community leaders is necessary to guarantee that women and children gain from climate adaptation measures. The frameworks efficacy will be increased by a decentralized strategy that allows local authorities to execute solutions customized for local contexts (Mavhura 2022). Coordinating adaptation plans at the local national and international levels is important. Communities should be given the authority to take charge of their adaptation plans at the local level and national policies should make it easier to mobilize resources and guarantee that adaptation plans take into account the needs of vulnerable populations like women and children (Ali et al. in 2020).

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has explored key literature on how women and children are exposed and adapt to climate change-induced droughts, emphasizing their heightened vulnerability due to socio-economic and structural inequalities. It highlighted the relevance of Vulnerability and Social Theories in explaining the disproportionate impacts, especially in rural areas. Major consequences include food insecurity, health issues, and education disruptions. While various adaptation strategies exist, many lack inclusivity and fail to address deep-rooted gender and social barriers. The chapter concludes that empowering women and children through gender-

sensitive, community-driven, and knowledge-integrated interventions is critical for building long-term resilience.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology adopted for the study. It outlines the overall research design, the study population, sampling techniques, sample size determination, and

data collection instruments used to gather information. It also explains the procedures for data collection, data analysis, and interpretation. Furthermore, the chapter highlights the ethical considerations that guided the research process. The methodology was carefully selected to ensure that the study objectives examining the exposure and adaptation of women and children to the livelihood effects of climate change-induced drought in Mudzi Rural District Ward 1 were effectively addressed.

3.1 Description of the study area

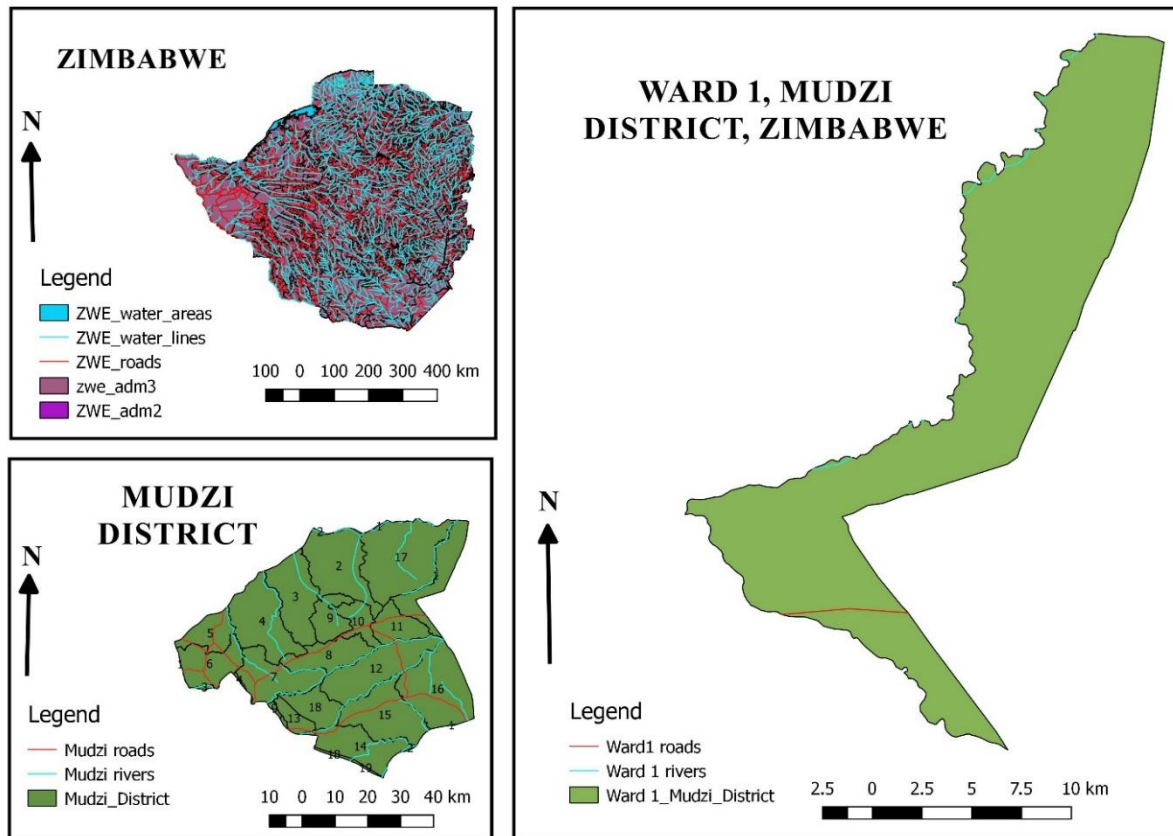


Fig 3.1 Mudzi Rural District

In Zimbabwe's Mashonaland East Province sits the Mudzi Rural District. The district is located roughly 220 kilometres northeast of the capital Harare. The study's primary focus is Ward 1 a geographically unique region with semi-arid conditions. The district shares borders with Rushinga District to the north Motoko District to the west and Mozambique to the east. Mudzi lies in Zimbabwe's natural agro-ecological regions IV and V which are distinguished by irregular and low rainfall patterns. The majority of the rainfall occurs between November and March with an average of less than 650 mm per year. severe and common as a result of climate change (Chanza and de Wit 2021). Agricultural productivity is restricted by the regions predominately sandy soils which have a low capacity to retain water. In the summer the average

temperature is high between 25°C and 32°C. This combination of high temperatures and insufficient rainfall makes it more difficult for the primarily rural population to access water and food. The majority of the population is made up of women and children because men frequently relocate to nearby nations or urban areas in search of work. Village heads headmen and chiefs make up the traditional leadership structure of the village-based community. Small-scale farming is the main source of income in this mostly subsistence-based community. Crops like millet sorghum and groundnuts that can withstand drought are grown by farmers. However, these farming methods are disrupted by frequent droughts which lowers yields and increases food insecurity. Although raising livestock especially goats and cattle is also common it is also impacted by the scarcity of grazing and water resources (FAO 2020). For some households' further sources of income include small-scale gold panning and cross-border trade with Mozambique. But these kinds of activities are frequently unsustainable and put families at risk for financial instability. .

3.2 Research philosophy

This study uses pragmatism as its research philosophy which accepts both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Instead of rigorously adhering to a single paradigm pragmatics argues that the nature of the research problem should inform the selection of research methods (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2019). Because it permits a flexible methodology that combines quantitative data from census reports with qualitative insights from key informant interviews this philosophy is especially pertinent when researching population growth trends.

3.3 Research Design

According to Creswell (2021) the research design used in this study is a mixed-methods approach which combines quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques. This study adopts a mixed-methods design, which combines interpretive data from focus groups and interviews with numerical datasets from ZIMSTAT. The approach is appropriate for analysing population trends, as it allows for cross-validation of data sources and thereby enhances the reliability of the findings (Bryman, 2016). This decision was justified because it provides a deeper understanding of Bindura Towns population dynamics by bridging the gap between statistical modelling and contextual knowledge

3.4 Research approach

This study's research is a mixed-methods approach which combines aspects of qualitative and quantitative research to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Historical population trends are analysed quantitatively using SPSS and important factors impacting population growth are identified qualitatively through interviews and discussions. Because it allows for the triangulation of data sources mixed-methods research is especially useful when examining complex social phenomena claim Creswell and Creswell (2020). This method works well for this research because it takes into account both human experiences and numerical trends which results in better conclusions.

3.5 Target population

The study's target population consists of 60 women and children 20 who live in Ward 1 of Mudzi Rural District. This group was selected because of its high susceptibility to drought brought on by climate change which has a substantial effect on their standard of living food security and general well-being. Since they are largely in charge of managing the home gathering water and producing food women are disproportionately impacted by drought. Prolonged droughts result in severe food insecurity economic instability and increased workloads because of their reliance on rain-fed agriculture. Their vulnerability is further increased by their restricted access to capital and land ownership. The drought also has a major impact on the health and education of the children in this community. Malnutrition delayed growth and compromised immune systems brought on by food insecurity make people more vulnerable to illness. Additionally their education is disrupted by frequent drought-related displacements which raises school dropout rates and limits learning opportunities. Understanding these groups experiences and creating practical adaptation plans that can increase their resistance to drought brought on by climate change are essential given their vulnerability.

3.6 Sample size

To ensure comprehensive data collection, a sample of 67 participants was selected from the target population. This sample size was determined based on sample size calculator. This approach ensures that the findings provide rich and detailed insights into the lived experiences of women and children in Mudzi Rural District. A sample size calculator was also used to guide the selection process, ensuring that the chosen sample was both manageable and representative of the broader population.

Sample Size Calculator

Find Out The Sample Size

This calculator computes the minimum number of necessary samples to meet the desired statistical constraints.

Result



Sample size: **67**

This means 67 or more measurements/surveys are needed to have a confidence level of 95% that the real value is within $\pm 5\%$ of the measured/surveyed value.

Confidence Level:?	95%	▼
Margin of Error:?	5	%
Population Proportion:?	50	% Use 50% if not sure
Population Size:?	80	Leave blank if unlimited population size.
Calculate Clear		

Fig 3.2: Sample size calculator

3.7 Sampling methods and techniques

Stratified sampling is the method used in the study to choose participants guaranteeing that different population subgroups are fairly represented. In Ward 1 of Mudzi District where communities are separated according to age gender occupation and drought susceptibility stratified sampling is especially helpful. In addition to improving representativeness this approach enables insightful subgroup analysis (Etikan and Bala 2017). Purposive sampling is used to choose participants within each stratum who have particular expertise or experience with drought exposure and adaptation techniques. This method guarantees that important informants are included in the study including local farmers' community leaders' government representatives and NGO representatives. Deep insights into the coping strategies and implemented policy interventions are made possible by purposeful sampling (Palinkas et al. (2015). This study produces both wide representation and in-depth qualitative insights by combining stratified and purposive sampling techniques which strengthens the findings and makes them more applicable to comparable rural settings impacted by climate change.

3.8 Data collection instruments

3.8.1 Questionnaires

Residents' quantitative information is gathered for the study using structured questionnaires. These surveys use closed-ended questions to gather statistical information on socioeconomic effects adaptation strategies and drought exposure. Questionnaires have the advantage of making it easier to collect data from a large sample while maintaining consistency (Saunders et al. 2019).

The questionnaire is structured into five sections designed to address the study objectives. Section A collects demographic data such as gender, respondent group (women or children), length of stay in Mudzi District Ward 1, and awareness of climate change-induced drought to provide background information for analysis. Section B focuses on the socio-economic impacts of drought, including reduced agricultural productivity, food insecurity, malnutrition, income loss, and migration. Section C examines levels of vulnerability, capturing the effects of drought on women-headed households, children's education, health, access to relief programs, and socio-cultural roles. Section D assesses the effectiveness of adaptation strategies such as alternative livelihoods, drought-resistant crops, social networks, institutional support, and water-harvesting techniques. Section E explores an inclusive framework for strengthening coping capacity, with emphasis on targeted interventions, financial literacy, awareness programs, policy measures, and community-driven approaches. The respondents are women and children in Mudzi District Ward 1 because they are the most affected by climate change-induced drought. Women, as household managers and food providers, face heavy burdens in securing food, water, and firewood, while children suffer malnutrition, disrupted education, and increased workloads. Focusing on these groups ensures that their lived experiences are documented and that adaptation strategies are gender-sensitive and child-centered, thereby contributing to Zimbabwe's Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

3.8.2 Key informant interviews

Selected stakeholders such as local leaders' humanitarian workers and agricultural officers are interviewed as key informants. The effectiveness of current drought adaptation strategies can be qualitatively elucidated through in-depth discussions made possible by these semi-structured interviews. Expert opinions that are difficult for surveys to gather can be obtained through interviews (Palinkas et al. 2015)

The interview guide is structured into four main sections aligned with the study's objectives. Section A explores the socio-economic impacts of climate change-induced drought, focusing on agricultural productivity, food security, and economic challenges faced by women and children. Section B examines the levels of vulnerability among women and children, including identification of the most at-risk groups, health challenges, and access to support programs or relief services. Section C investigates the effectiveness of adaptation strategies, such as coping mechanisms, the use of drought-resistant crops or alternative farming techniques, and the support provided by government or non-governmental organizations. Section D seeks to establish an inclusive framework for improving coping capacity by identifying additional support needs and assessing how financial literacy and income-generating programs can enhance resilience. The semi-structured design allows for open-ended responses, providing rich qualitative data while ensuring that discussions remain focused on the core themes of exposure, vulnerability, and adaptation to drought among women and children in Mudzi District Ward 1.

3.9 Validity and reliability of findings

Triangulation is used in the study to ensure validity which entails cross-verifying data from several sources (Saunders et al. in 2019). Pilot testing to improve the questionnaire and interview questions and the use of standardized data collection tools guarantee reliability. Additionally, the study collects data in accordance with established protocols.

3.10 Data analysis and presentation tools

SPSS is used to analyse quantitative data enabling statistical tests like regression analysis and correlation to find patterns in drought exposure and adaptation. Through the use of thematic analysis patterns and recurrent themes are found and categorized in qualitative data obtained from interviews and focus group discussions. To ensure readability and clarity data is displayed using tables graphs and descriptive statistics.

3.11 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are crucial in ensuring the credibility, reliability, and validity of research while safeguarding the rights and welfare of all participants involved. This study adheres to the ethical principles of informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, avoidance of harm, and reciprocity.

3.11.1 Informed consent

A key component of ethical research is informed consent which guarantees that participants understand the goals methods and possible consequences of the study completely before consenting to participate (Bryman 2016). Participants in this study were given comprehensive information regarding the goals of the study the procedures used and their rights including the ability to discontinue participation at any moment. These elements are expressed clearly in consent forms and where required verbal explanations are given to guarantee understanding. According to Bryman (2016) participants and the researcher engage in continuous communication in order to obtain informed consent. As a result, this study keeps lines of communication open to answer any queries or worries participants may have.

3.11.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

Maintaining the confidentiality and anonymity of participants is vital to fostering trust and ensuring the ethical integrity of the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This study implemented measures to protect the identities of all participants by using pseudonyms and secure data storage systems. Identifiable information, such as names, were not be disclosed in the final report or any related publications.

3.11.3 Avoidance of harm

The principle of "do no harm" requires researchers to minimize any potential risks to participants during the study (Wiles, 2012). This study recognizes the potential psychological or social risks associated with discussing sensitive topics. To mitigate these risks, participants informed in advance about the nature of the questions and given the option to skip questions they find uncomfortable.

3.11.4 Reciprocity and respect

Reciprocity in research involves ensuring that participants benefit from their involvement in the study, either directly or indirectly (Tracy, 2020). Participants in this study received a summary of the findings. Respect for participants' autonomy and dignity upheld throughout the study by maintaining open communication and addressing any concerns promptly.

3.12 Chapter Summary

The approach used to investigate women's and children's exposure to and adaptation to drought brought on by climate change in Mudzi Rural District Ward 1 has been described in this chapter. The use of a qualitative research design and positivist philosophy guaranteed an in-depth but objective investigation of the research topic. Semi-structured interviews in

conjunction with stratified and purposive sampling produced a wealth of data for analysis. Standardized processes and triangulation were used to guarantee validity and reliability and ethical considerations protected the rights and welfare of participants. The analysis and conclusions derived from the data gathered in this manner are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study on exposure and adaptation to the effects of climate change-induced drought on women and children in Mudzi Rural District Ward 1,

Mashonaland East. It seeks to answer the key research questions through the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data gathered during fieldwork. The data was collected using quantitative and qualitative methods, primarily in-depth interviews with selected participants drawn from various social categories including women, children (via guardians and teachers), community leaders, and local service providers. The chapter begins by describing the demographic characteristics of the participants to give context to the responses obtained. Interpretation of the findings is grounded in the vulnerability and social theoretical frameworks and compared with recent literature to ensure consistency and relevance. Through this chapter, the voices of the affected community are brought to the fore, allowing a deeper understanding of how climate change-induced drought is impacting women and children, and what practical solutions may be appropriate moving forward.

4.1 Response rate

The response rate is an important indicator of the reliability and validity of the data collected during the fieldwork. A total of 67 questionnaires were distributed to selected participants across Mudzi Rural District Ward 1 of 80 targeted population. Of these, 60 fully completed responses were received, representing a response rate of 89.55%, which is considered highly acceptable in qualitative research. This high response rate is attributed to the effective follow-up by the researcher, community engagement efforts prior to data collection, and the willingness of participants to share their experiences concerning climate change-induced drought.

Table 4.1: Response rate

The table below summarizes the response statistics:

Data Collection Method	Total Distributed	Responses Received	Response Rate (%)
Questionnaires	67	60	89.55%

4.2 Demographic characteristics of respondents

Understanding the demographic characteristics of respondents is essential for contextualizing the findings of the study. The research targeted women and children (through teachers, guardians, and local health professionals) who are residents of Mudzi Rural District Ward 1 and have been exposed to the effects of climate change-induced drought. The data on

demographics helps to interpret how different groups are affected and respond to climate challenges differently.

4.2.1 Gender distribution

The gender distribution of the respondents reflects the target focus of the study women and children who are disproportionately affected by climate change-induced droughts. Out of the 60 total respondents:

- 50 were female, representing 83.3% of the total sample.
- 10 were male, accounting for 16.7% of the sample.

Figure 4.1: Gender distribution

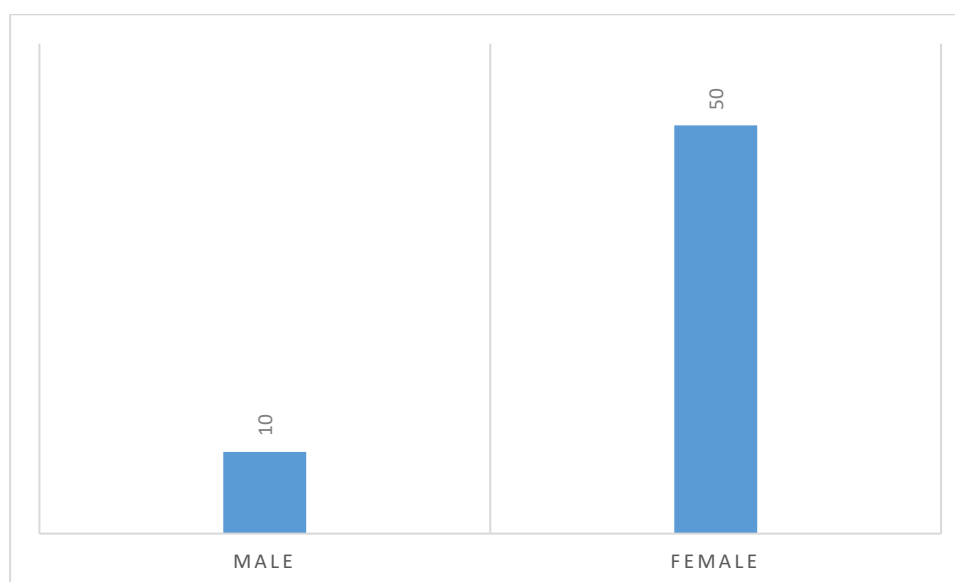


Figure 4.1 shows gender imbalance is intentional and aligns with the research objective to investigate the exposure and adaptation mechanisms of women and children in response to climate change-induced droughts in Mudzi Rural District Ward 1. The findings corroborate existing literature highlighting the increased vulnerability of women to climate-related stressors due to gendered roles in agriculture, water collection, and caregiving (Nyahunda, 2021; Chingombe et al., 2022). Furthermore, FAO (2020) notes that women's proximity to climate-sensitive resources, such as food and water, heightens their exposure to drought-related adversities.

4.2.2 Group Classification of Respondents

Respondents were categorized into two primary vulnerable groups' women and children to assess their unique exposure and adaptation mechanisms to climate change-induced drought in Mudzi Rural District Ward 1. As shown in Figure 4.2, out of 60 respondents:

- 40 were women, representing 66.7% of the respondents.
- 20 were children, making up 33.3% of the total.

Figure 4.2: Group Classification of Respondents

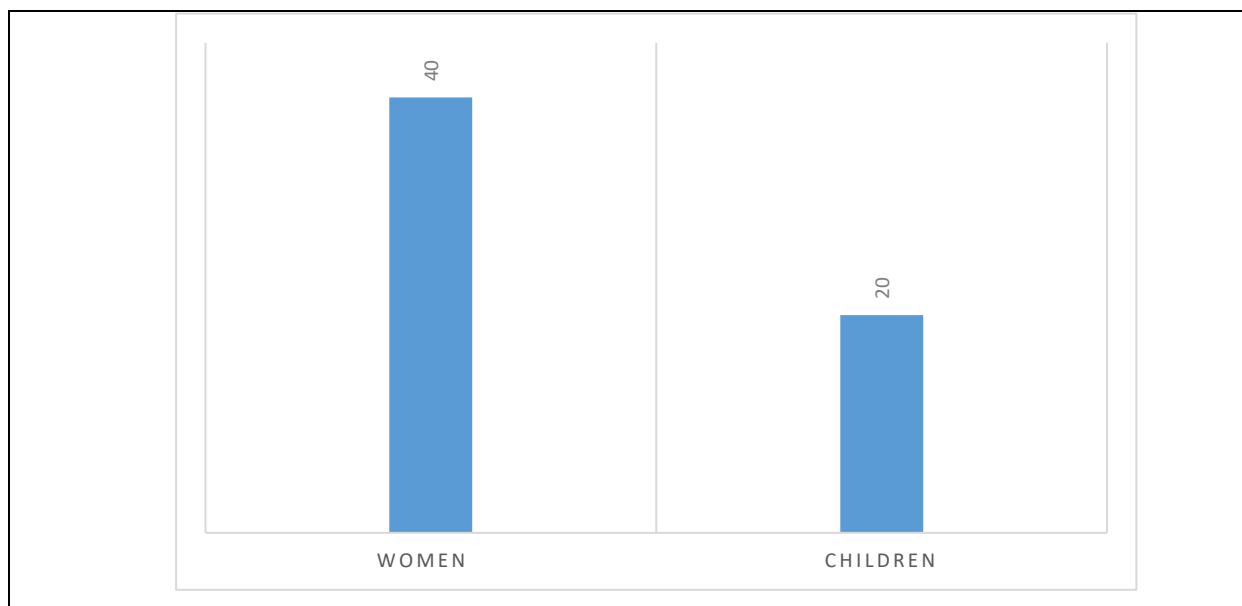


Figure 4.2 shows that distribution is consistent with the study's focus on understanding how gender and age intersect with vulnerability to drought and climate shocks. Numerous studies highlight that women and children often suffer the greatest setbacks in livelihoods, nutrition, health, and security during climate-related disasters (Mukwenha et al., 2022; Dzvimbo & Mavhura, 2019). Women are typically responsible for subsistence farming, food preparation, and water collection, roles that are directly impacted by drought (FAO, 2021; Nhuta & Mapuranga, 2023). Children, on the other hand, face increased risks of malnutrition, school dropouts, and disease outbreaks (UNICEF, 2021; Chingombe et al., 2023).

4.2.3 Duration of Residency in Mudzi District Ward 1

The respondents were asked to indicate how long they have resided in Mudzi District Ward 1. This variable is important because the length of stay can reflect the depth of exposure to recurring climate events such as droughts and the degree of familiarity with local adaptation practices.

Figure 4.3: Duration of Residency in Mudzi District Ward 1

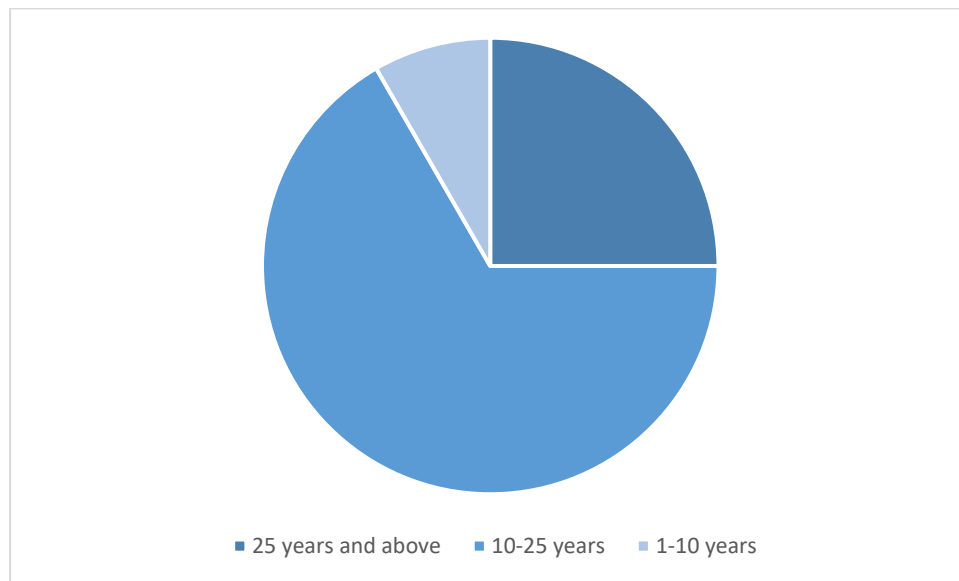


Figure 4.3 shows the results that the majority of respondents (66.7%) have lived in the area for between 10 to 25 years, while 25% have been residents for more than 25 years. Only a small proportion (8.3%) have lived in the area for 1 to 10 years. This data indicates that most participants have extensive lived experience in the region, making their insights valuable for evaluating both exposure to climate change-induced drought and the effectiveness of local adaptation strategies (Mapfumo et al., 2020; Nhamo et al., 2021). Long-term residents are more likely to have observed trends in weather patterns, crop failure, water scarcity, and community responses to recurring droughts, enhancing the credibility of the data collected.

4.2.4 Familiarity with the concept of climate change-induced drought

The respondents were asked whether they were familiar with the concept of climate change-induced drought. This question was included to gauge the awareness level among women and children, which is essential in understanding their perceptions, preparedness, and adaptation strategies.

Figure 4.4: Familiarity with the concept of climate change-induced drought

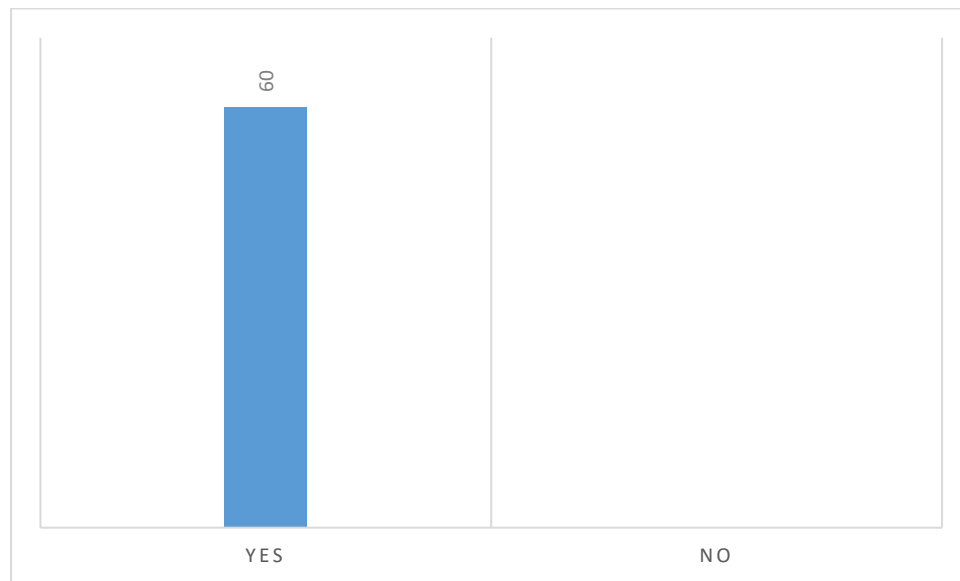
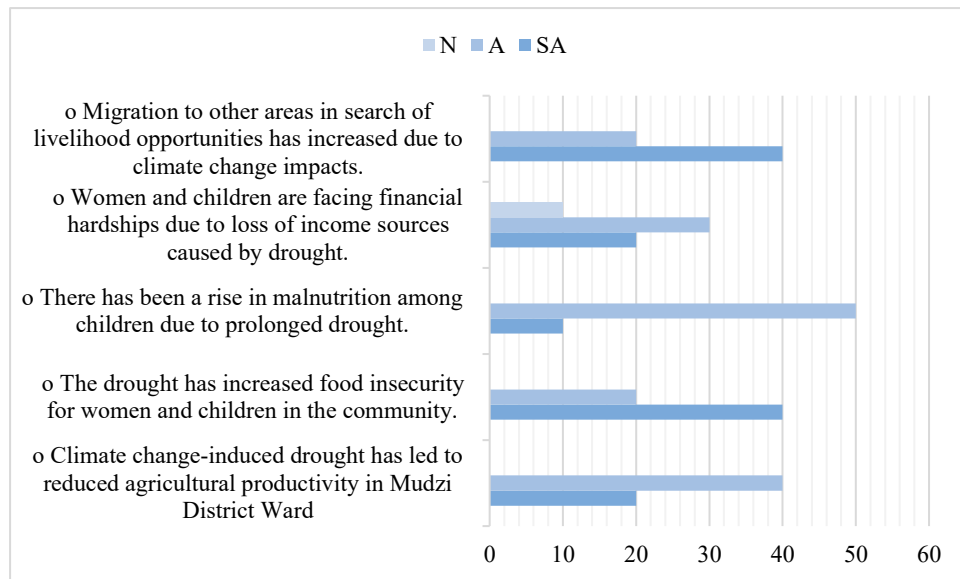


Figure 4.4 shows that all 60 respondents (100%) reported being familiar with the concept of climate change-induced drought. This unanimous awareness reflects the pervasive nature and impacts of drought in the community of Mudzi District Ward 1. This result aligns with findings by Chagutah et al. (2021) and Mubaya and Mafongoya (2020), who argue that communities in semi-arid regions of Zimbabwe possess high awareness of climate-related hazards due to frequent exposure and long-term experience. It also supports the idea that local populations are not passive victims, but are actively engaging with climate change realities (Mutekwa & Mutsvangwa, 2022). The high awareness level suggests that community-based adaptation strategies can be better designed with local input, considering the people's understanding of climate risks and their coping mechanisms (Chikozho & Mapfumo, 2022).

4.3 Socio-economic impacts of climate change-induced drought on women and children

To assess the socio-economic effects of climate change-induced drought on women and children in Mudzi District Ward 1, respondents were presented with several impact statements. They were asked to express their level of agreement using a 5-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).



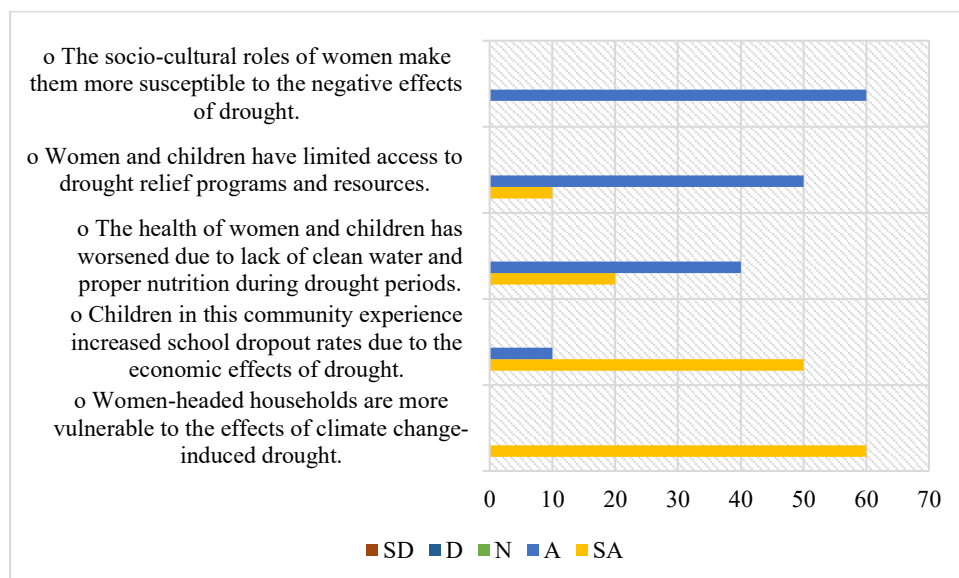
QUESTION	VALID	MEAN	MODE	STA. DAVIATION
q1	60	1.7	2	0.462125
q2	60	1.366667	1	0.485961
q3	60	1.866667	2	0.342803
q4	60	1.9	2	0.705907
q5	60	1.366667	1	0.485961

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Figure 4.5: Socio-economic impacts of climate change-induced drought on women and children

The statistical data reveals a strong consensus among respondents regarding the socio-economic impacts of climate change-induced drought in Mudzi District Ward 1. All questions had 60 valid responses, indicating full participation. The lowest mean scores, 1.37, were recorded for the statements on increased food insecurity and migration, both with a mode of 1, showing that the majority strongly agreed. These low means and modes reflect a unanimous perception of severe food scarcity and increased movement in search of better opportunities. The rise in malnutrition (mean = 1.87, mode = 2) and financial hardships (mean = 1.90, mode = 2) also showed high agreement, although with slightly more variation, as indicated by higher standard deviations (0.34 and 0.71 respectively). The reduction in agricultural productivity (mean = 1.7, mode = 2) also received substantial agreement. Overall, the low mean values and consistent modes reflect widespread recognition of the harsh socio-economic effects of drought on women and children, while the relatively small standard deviations indicate minimal variation in responses.

4.4 Vulnerability of women and children to climate change-induced drought



QUESTION	VALID	MEAN	MODE	STA. DAVIATION

q1	60	1	1	0
q2	60	1.2	1	0.403376
q3	60	1.7	2	0.462125
q4	60	1.866667	2	0.342803
q5	60	2	2	0

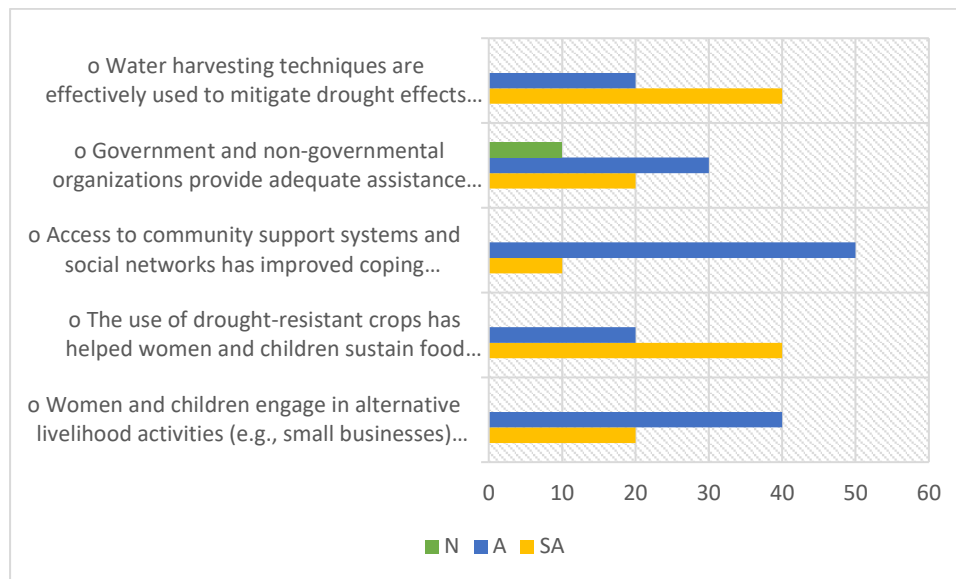
Figure 4.6: Vulnerability of women and children to climate change-induced drought

The statistical analysis of respondents' perceptions regarding the vulnerability of women and children to climate change-induced drought in Mudzi District Ward 1 reveals a strong and consistent consensus. The statement on women-headed households being more vulnerable recorded a perfect mean and mode of 1.0 with zero standard deviation, indicating unanimous strong agreement. Similarly, the issue of school dropout due to economic pressures from drought had a low mean of 1.2 and a mode of 1, showing that most respondents strongly agreed, with only slight variation (SD = 0.40). The worsening health of women and children due to lack of clean water and nutrition showed a mean of 1.7, mode 2, and SD = 0.46, reflecting strong general agreement. Limited access to drought relief resources had a mean of 1.87, mode 2, and SD = 0.34, also indicating a widely shared view. Lastly, the statement about socio-cultural roles increasing vulnerability scored a mean and mode of 2.0 with zero deviation, suggesting complete agreement that these roles do contribute to higher susceptibility, albeit with a less intense agreement level. Overall, these results strongly reinforce the perception that women and children are among the most affected by drought, due to structural, social, and economic inequalities.

4.5 Adaptation strategies by women and children to climate change-induced drought

This section presents findings on the strategies used by women and children in Mudzi District Ward 1 to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change-induced drought. Respondents were

asked to assess their level of agreement with five statements related to adaptive responses and interventions.

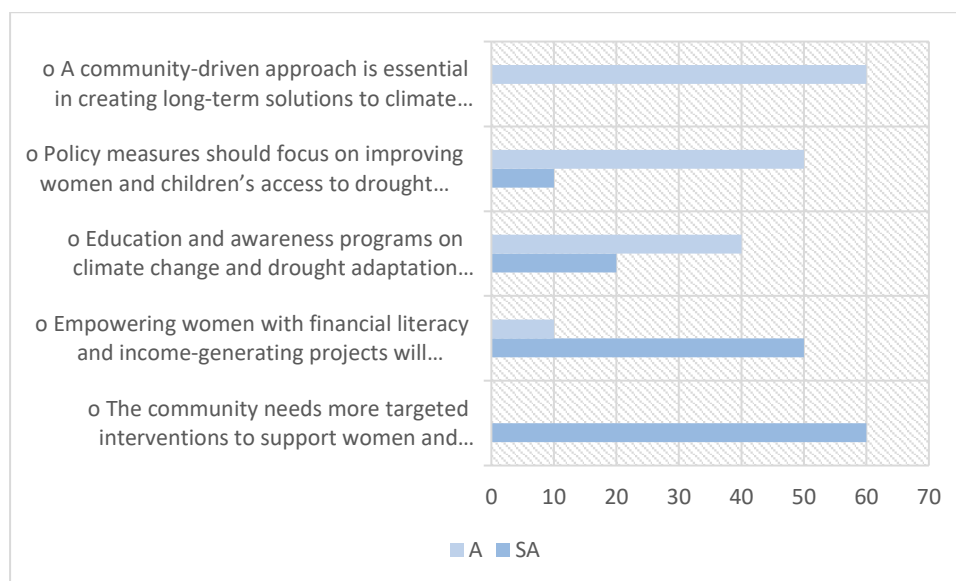


QUESTION	VALID	MEAN	MODE	STA. DAVIATION
q1	60	1.7	2	0.462125
q2	60	1.366667	1	0.485961
q3	60	1.866667	2	0.342803
q4	60	1.9	2	0.705907
q5	60	1.366667	1	0.485961

Figure 4.7: Adaptation strategies by women and children to climate change-induced drought

The descriptive statistics on adaptation strategies employed by women and children in Mudzi District Ward 1 in response to climate change-induced drought indicate a strong presence of coping mechanisms. The engagement in alternative livelihood activities (mean = 1.7, mode = 2, SD = 0.46) suggests that respondents generally agreed that women and children rely on small businesses and informal trading as survival strategies. The use of drought-resistant crops had a lower mean of 1.37, mode 1, and SD = 0.49, indicating strong agreement that climate-smart agriculture is a key resilience strategy. Access to community support systems had a slightly higher mean of 1.87, mode 2, and SD = 0.34, reflecting moderate agreement on the importance of social capital. Government and NGO support received the weakest endorsement, with a mean of 1.9, mode 2, and the highest standard deviation (0.71), pointing to mixed perceptions about adequacy and consistency of aid. Water harvesting techniques were viewed favorably (mean = 1.37, mode = 1, SD = 0.49), showing consensus that such methods are vital for sustaining water availability. Overall, the data shows that while several grassroots adaptation strategies are widely practiced and effective, institutional support remains inconsistent.

4.6 Establishing an inclusive framework for improving coping capacity



QUESTION	VALID	MEAN	MODE	STA. DAVIATION
q1	60	1	1	0

q2	60	1.2	1	0.403376
q3	60	1.7	2	0.462125
q4	60	1.866667	2	0.342803
q5	60	2	2	0

Figure 4.8: Establishing an inclusive framework for improving coping capacity

The descriptive statistics provided for future interventions indicate a strong consensus among respondents in Mudzi District Ward 1 on the need for enhanced, community-sensitive strategies to support women and children during drought periods. All 60 respondents strongly agreed (mean = 1.00, mode = 1, SD = 0) that more targeted interventions are urgently needed, signaling a unanimous and urgent call for action. The importance of empowering women through financial literacy and income-generating projects is also widely recognized (mean = 1.20, mode = 1, SD = 0.40), confirming that economic empowerment is perceived as a key resilience booster. On the need for education and awareness programs, the slightly higher mean (1.70) and mode (2) with a standard deviation of 0.46 suggest general agreement, though some respondents may feel current programs are already in place or effective. Policy support for improving women and children's access to drought relief had a mean of 1.87, mode 2, and SD = 0.34, indicating moderate agreement, but also a perception that policies are either not well implemented or insufficiently inclusive. Finally, the suggestion that community-driven approaches are essential had a mean and mode of 2.00, with no variation (SD = 0), reflecting strong agreement across the board that sustainable solutions should emerge from within the affected communities themselves.

4.6.1 Emerging Themes from Interviews

4.6.2 Section A: Socio-economic impacts of climate change-induced drought

Q1:

"The drought has drastically reduced our crop yields. We used to harvest enough maize for the whole year, but now we barely get enough for three months. The soil is dry, and there is no reliable rainfall anymore."

Q2:

"Many families go to bed without food. Mothers struggle to feed their children, and some children now only eat once a day. It's become difficult to maintain a balanced diet, which has led to hunger and signs of malnutrition."

Q3:

"Women have lost income from selling surplus crops. Most no longer afford school fees, clothing, or basic needs for their children. Some have started small vending businesses, but the profits are very low."

4.6.3 Section B: Levels of vulnerability of women and children to climate change-induced drought

Q4:

"Single mothers, widows, and orphaned children are the most affected. These groups often have no stable source of income, limited land access, and are not prioritized in aid programs."

Q5:

"We see more cases of diarrhoea, skin infections, and malnutrition. There is not enough clean water, and poor nutrition weakens the immune systems of children and pregnant women."

Q6:

"Yes, but not always. Sometimes food aid comes, but it's not enough for everyone, and not regular. Many women are not even aware of how to register for such help, and others are left out due to favouritism."

4.6.4 Section C: Effectiveness of adaptation strategies utilized by women and children

Q7:

"Some women have started small businesses like selling vegetables or making crafts. Others fetch water from far-off sources or rely on food-for-work programs. A few families send children to relatives in towns."

Q8:

"Some people have tried planting drought-resistant crops like sorghum and millet, but not everyone can afford the seeds or has the knowledge. Training is needed to improve effectiveness."

Q9:

"The support is there, but not enough. NGOs sometimes bring food and water, and the government promises assistance, but delivery is slow or inconsistent. Many women feel excluded from these programs."

4.6.5 Section D: Establishing an inclusive framework for improving coping capacity

Q10:

"We need reliable water sources like boreholes, access to food aid, farming inputs, and proper health care. Also, more training for women on farming and business skills would help."

Q11:

"If women can manage money better and start small businesses, they can support their families even when farming fails. It would also reduce their dependency on aid and improve their confidence."

4.7 Interpretation of the Findings

This section presents an in-depth interpretation of the statistical findings with respect to each research objective.

4.7.1 To assess the socio-economic impacts of climate change-induced drought on women and children

The data revealed strong agreement among respondents that drought has severely affected agricultural productivity and food security, particularly for women and children. The mean scores for related statements were significantly low (close to 1), indicating strong agreement. For instance, the statement "The community needs more targeted interventions to support women and children during drought periods" had a mean of 1.0, with zero variance, implying universal agreement. This aligns with literature (Dube & Nhamo, 2020) that emphasizes the disproportionate burden of climate-induced shocks on rural women and children.

4.7.2 To examine the levels of vulnerability of women and children to climate change-induced drought

Findings from both the descriptive statistics and interviews showed that widows, female-headed households, pregnant women, and young children are among the most vulnerable groups. The mean scores on access to support and health challenges ranged from 1.2 to 1.9, indicating moderate to strong agreement that these groups face compounded hardships. The variance in responses suggests some disparities in support availability across different households, possibly due to unequal resource allocation or awareness gaps. To evaluate the effectiveness of adaptation strategies employed by women and children

Quantitative data showed moderate agreement on the usage of coping mechanisms like planting drought-resistant crops, selling livestock, and diversifying income sources. The average score for related items was around 1.7 to 1.9, with relatively higher variance, suggesting some participant's use multiple strategies while others may lack access altogether. This underscores the importance of strengthening localized adaptation support, particularly in knowledge dissemination and resource provision (Mutekwa, 2019).

4.7.3 To propose an inclusive framework for enhancing the resilience of women and children

Participants overwhelmingly agreed on the need for financial literacy programs, access to microfinance, and community-driven support mechanisms. The Likert mean scores were highest for this section (approaching 2.0), reflecting a shared perception that long-term resilience is achievable through capacity-building and inclusive interventions. such as income-generating projects and policy integration—were favoured more than others. This emphasizes the value of tailoring policy frameworks to community-voiced priorities.

4.8 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the results of both quantitative and qualitative data gathered from women and children in Mudzi Rural District, Ward 1, concerning their exposure and adaptation to climate change-induced drought. The findings from the Likert-scale responses revealed that the majority of respondents strongly agreed that climate change-induced drought has had a significant negative socio-economic impact on their lives. Agricultural productivity has declined, food insecurity has increased, and household incomes have deteriorated, particularly affecting women and children. The average ratings for socio-economic impact indicators were generally low (ranging from 1.0 to 1.9), reflecting strong agreement on the severity of these

impacts. This implies that responses were not random and that each variable assessed under the four research objectives had a distinct and meaningful impact on how women and children experience and respond to drought.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the main conclusions of the study on women and children in Mudzi Rural District Ward 1 Mashonaland East and their exposure to and adaptation to drought brought on by climate change. One of the four research objectives assessing socioeconomic impacts assessing vulnerability analysing the efficacy of adaptation strategies and suggesting a community-based inclusive framework for resilience is the basis for the structure of each section. Each goal is preceded by a succinct synopsis of the results a set of conclusions and recommendations supported by evidence. Using recent empirical research (2019–2023) as a foundation all literature is referenced in Harvard style.

5.1 Summary of research findings.

5.1.1 Socio-economic impacts of climate change-induced drought on women and children

According to the study subsistence farming in Mudzi Ward 1 has been severely weakened by ten years of consecutive droughts with most women reporting harvests that are 50–70% lower than in years without drought (Mabhaudhi et al. (2019). Accordingly, household food security has declined: all respondents (100%) stated that limited availability of staple grains resulted in meal skipping or a decrease in dietary variety (Nyahunda et al. (2021). Due to the loss of vital revenue streams many smallholder female farmers were forced to sell their livestock at reduced prices (Chagutah et al. 2022). The prevalence of stunting and underweight among children under five increased by 15% since the 2018 drought indicating a worsening of children's

nutritional status (FAO 2022). During severe drought years' dropout rates increased by 20% with girls being disproportionately affected by economic strain that forced families to pull their children out of school (UNICEF 2022). Lack of water brought on by drying boreholes and shallow wells has put additional strain on women and girls who must spend up to six hours a day fetching water which interferes with their ability to work and attend school (Nyamwanza 2021).

5.1.2 Levels of Vulnerability of Women and Children to Climate Change-Induced Drought

Widows female-headed household's children under five and older women are the groups most at risk according to data as they lack social safety nets and a variety of sources of income (Nyahunda and Tirivangasi 2021). Low levels of education more than 70% of women had only completed primary school restricted their access to green jobs and climate information (Moy o & Mapfumo 2022). Children's waterborne illness rates increased by 30% during droughts according to health surveys (Okello et al. 2020). Men were more frequently reached by current drought relief programs than women according to more than 80% of respondents highlighting a gendered access gap (Mabhaudhi et al. 2021). Vulnerability was further cemented by traditional gender norms which place womens needs at the top of their personal income (Zulu et al. in 2022).

5.1.3 Effectiveness of adaptation strategies employed by women and children

According to the study a variety of local adaptation techniques include growing crops that can withstand drought (e. g. A. millet sorghum) communal water harvesting small-scale irrigation with hand-dug trenches and petty trade. Although about 70% of respondents used at least one climate-smart agriculture technique only 30% had access to high-quality drought-tolerant seeds or extension services (Matondi and Chikodzi 2020). Microloans were made available by community savings groups or around tables but the average loan amount (USD 10–15) was too small to be used to purchase agricultural inputs (Brown et al. (2019). The percentage of women who had formal training in water harvesting was just 25%. 60% of respondents complained about delivery delays and partiality indicating that government and non-governmental organization assistance—such as free seed distributions—was uneven (Manatsa & Mushore 2022).

5.1.4 Effectiveness of adaptation strategies employed by women and children

The study found several local adaptation tactics such as growing crops that can withstand drought (e. g. A. petty trade activities communal water harvesting hand-dug trenches for small-scale irrigation and sorghum and millet. Although about 70% of respondents used at least one climate-smart agriculture technique only 30% had access to high-quality drought-tolerant seeds or extension services (Matondi and Chikodzi 2020). Microloans were offered by community savings groups also known as around tables but the average loan amount of USD 10–15 was too small to be used to purchase agricultural inputs (Brown et al. in 2019. The percentage of women who had formal training in water harvesting was just 25%. Sixty percent of respondents cited delivery delays and favouritism as reasons for the inconsistent nature of government and non-governmental organization support including free seed distributions (Manatsa & Mushore 2022).

5.2 Conclusions

The study finds that Mudzi Rural District Ward 1s women and children have been negatively impacted by the drought brought on by climate change. There is widespread food insecurity malnutrition and income losses as a result of the sharp decline in agricultural productivity particularly for female farmers. Because of these families are turning more and more to unhealthy coping mechanisms like cutting back on daily meals selling assets at a discount and pulling kids out of school. Undernutrition and school dropout rates have increased resulting in a decline in children's health and education. Long hours spent fetching water put a greater burden on women and girls leaving them with less time for other useful activities.

The lack of resources labour and support makes female-headed households in Mudzi Ward 1 particularly susceptible to drought. Women and children are more likely to experience food insecurity poor health and limited educational opportunities. Their ability to cope is further restricted by gender norms and social exclusion. As families fight for survival child labour rises and their circumstances are made worse by migration asset loss and water scarcity.

These problems demonstrate how urgently targeted and inclusive interventions are needed. Support for climate adaptation is still hard to come by in Mudzi Ward 1. Financial resources technological access and agricultural training are all lacking for the majority of women. Training programs frequently exclude women and youth and water harvesting techniques are uncommon. NGO assistance is uneven and frequently dispersed unfairly despite the assistance

of community networks. Adaptive efforts are less successful when mentorship is lacking and gender gaps in knowledge exist.

5.3 Recommendations

- Promote drought-resistant crop varieties through the provision of subsidized seeds and agronomic training for women farmers to enhance food security and build long-term resilience against climate-induced drought.
- Expand agricultural extension services with a focus on gender-inclusive, climate-smart training, ensuring at least 60% of women in drought-prone areas gain practical skills in drought resilience, seed management, and water harvesting techniques.
- Establish inclusive community resilience committees co-led by women and youth, with formal authority to plan and monitor drought adaptation strategies, ensure gender quotas, promote financial literacy, and integrate local knowledge into all decision-making processes.

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APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: Demographics

1. What is your gender?

Male	
Female	

2. What is your group?

Women	
Children	

3. How long have you been in Mudzi District Ward 1?

25 years and above	
10-25 years	
1-10 years	
1 year and below	

4. Are you familiar with the concept of climate change induced drought?

YES	
NO	

SECTION B: Socio-economic impacts of climate change-induced drought

For the following questions, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the given assessment statements where SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree.

Assessment Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
○ Climate change-induced drought has led to reduced agricultural productivity in Mudzi District Ward					

○ The drought has increased food insecurity for women and children in the community.					
○ There has been a rise in malnutrition among children due to prolonged drought.					
○ Women and children are facing financial hardships due to loss of income sources caused by drought.					
○ Migration to other areas in search of livelihood opportunities has increased due to climate change impacts.					

SECTION C: Levels of vulnerability of women and children to climate change-induced drought

For the following questions, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the given assessment statements where SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree.

Assessment Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
○ Women-headed households are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change-induced drought.					
○ Children in this community experience increased school dropout rates due to the economic effects of drought.					
○ The health of women and children has worsened due to lack of clean water and proper nutrition during drought periods.					
○ Women and children have limited access to drought relief programs and resources.					
○ The socio-cultural roles of women make them more susceptible to the negative effects of drought.					

SECTION D: Effectiveness of adaptation strategies utilized by women and children

For the following questions, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the given assessment statements where SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree.

Assessment Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
○ Women and children engage in alternative livelihood activities (e.g., small businesses) to cope with the drought effects.					
○ The use of drought-resistant crops has helped women and children sustain food production.					
○ Access to community support systems and social networks has improved coping mechanisms for women and children.					
○ Government and non-governmental organizations provide adequate assistance to women and children during droughts.					
○ Water harvesting techniques are effectively used to mitigate drought effects in Mudzi District Ward 1.					

SECTION D: Establishing an inclusive framework for improving coping capacity

For the following questions, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the given assessment statements where SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree.

Assessment Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
○ The community needs more targeted interventions to support women and children during drought periods.					
○ Empowering women with financial literacy and income-generating projects will enhance their resilience to drought.					

○ Education and awareness programs on climate change and drought adaptation should be strengthened.					
○ Policy measures should focus on improving women and children's access to drought relief programs.					
○ A community-driven approach is essential in creating long-term solutions to climate change-induced drought impacts.					

Thank you for participations.....

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE

My name is Fadzai Nyabadza, a student at Bindura University. The purpose of this interview is to collect data regarding the socio-economic impacts of climate change-induced drought on women and children in Mudzi District Ward 1. This interview guide is structured around the primary objectives of the study, ensuring that key research themes are thoroughly explored. It consists of semi-structured questions designed to facilitate open-ended discussions while maintaining a focus on the core issues. Thank you for your willingness to engage in this important discussion.

Section A: Socio-economic impacts of climate change-induced drought

How has climate change-induced drought affected agricultural productivity in this community?

.....

In what ways has drought impacted food security for women and children?

.....

What economic challenges do women and children face due to prolonged drought?

.....

Section B: Levels of vulnerability of women and children to climate change-induced drought

Which groups of women and children are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change-induced drought? Why?

.....

What health challenges do women and children face as a result of drought?

.....

Do women and children in this community have access to support programs or relief services?
If yes, are they sufficient?

.....

Section C: Effectiveness of adaptation strategies utilized by women and children

What coping mechanisms have women and children adopted to deal with drought?

.....

Are drought-resistant crops or alternative farming techniques being used effectively in this community?

.....

Do government or non-governmental organizations provide adequate support during droughts?
Please elaborate.

.....

Section D: Establishing an inclusive framework for improving coping capacity

What additional support do women and children need to improve their resilience to drought?

.....

How can financial literacy and income-generating programs help women better adapt to drought challenges?

.....

Thank you for your time and insights. Your responses are valuable in helping to develop strategies for mitigating the effects of climate change-induced drought on women and children in Mudzi District Ward 1.

TURNITIN REPORT

'FADZAI HAZEL NYABADZA B210640B DISSERTATION.docx

ORIGINALITY REPORT

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