INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses the link between gender inequality and the vulnerability of maasai indigenous pastoralists’ women to climate change and its impacts. Focusing on a case study of Namalulu Village, Simanjiro district, Northern Tanzania, the paper will look into experiences of domestic /gender violence, human rights violations and discrimination of indigenous women that are directly or by necessary connection attributed to the drastic impacts of climate change, including disaster risk management, adaptation and mitigation efforts.

This paper also reflects on existing community norms/practices that are contributory to the vulnerability of maasai indigenous pastoralist women. It also provides a number of recommendations to address these towards combating the high representation of maasai indigenous pastoralists’ women in the vulnerable/high risk sector. More importantly this paper also highlights what the maasai women themselves in Namalulu Village are doing to prevent further occurrence of such gender violence/discrimination.

The paper is divided into four parts. Part one contains an introduction to the study area. Part two contains the general overview of the situation of Women in Tanzania. Part three contains the Specific situation of Maasai Indigenous pastoralists’ women, in particular residents of Namalulu village. Part four contains a discussion on the vulnerability of Women in Namalulu to climate change and its impacts. Part five contains measures adopted by women to address the situation whereas part six contains the conclusion and recommendations.

The study Area: Namalulu Village, Simanjiro District, Northern Tanzania.

Namalulu Village is found in Manyara region, Simanjiro district, northern Tanzania. The village is located 115 kilometers from the city of Arusha. It has seven sub-villages which are ormoti, samaya, ngarkashi, orkilorit, orkokoto, olaimirori and madukani. Namalulu is the leading maize producer in the whole of Simanjiro district. It has approximately 250 households. According to the village
council chairman Mr. Mathayo Oromboi, the estimated population of Namalulu village is 6000 people. As it will be shown elsewhere in this paper, the number excludes many young men and women who have left the village over the last few years in search of jobs in towns and cities due to impacts of climate change which is casting a bleak picture to the future maasai cattle herders in East Africa.

There are two main climatic seasons in Namalulu village: the dry season and the wet season. The rainfall is bimodal, with short rains normally falling in November-December and the long rains in March through May. January, September and October are usually the driest and hottest months of the year, with livestock movements heightening during that time in search of either water or pasture. Namalulu village consists of extensive plains and a few scattered hills covered with bush and grasslands. The altitude of this village is 1200m above sea level.

1.0 AN OVERVIEW OF WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT IN TANZANIA

In Tanzania, women constitute more than 52% of the population. In terms of production, women in rural areas provide 80% of labour force and produce 60% of food. However, due to discriminatory traditional practices women do not control the means of production such as land; neither do they control wealth they create as a result of working on the land. Many rural women’s daily activities revolves around carrying water, firewood and farm produce on their head, taking care of children, cooking and farming. The situation in the urban setting is not different either; many women are assigned to jobs that are seen as low status and pay.

In order to improve the situation of women above explained, the Government of Tanzania has put in place constitutional, legislative and policy measure for the purpose of enforcing rights of women. The Constitution of the united Republic of Tanzania of 1977 for example explicitly forbids discrimination based on gender. Examples of legislative measures include the enactment of the Land Act no. 4 and the Village Land Act No.5 respectively. These pieces of legislation provide for the legal framework aimed at ensuring equal access and ownership of land for both men and women. For example, the Land Act No. 4 of 1999 [R.E 2002] provides under Section 3(2) that women have the right to acquire, hold, use and deal with the land in the same manner as men. The conditions for land ownership by women and men are the same. These conditions are provided forth in the land Regulations.

Another relevant law is the Penal Code (Cap. 16) as amended by the Sexual Offences Special Provisions Act (SOSPA) of 1998. This law seeks to protect women and children from sexual harassment. It provides for example that a male person commits an offence of rape if he has sexual intercourse with a girl or a woman who is not his wife or even if she is his wife if they have separated. The most important thing is consent of a woman during sexual intercourse.
If consent is obtained by the use of force, threats or intimidation by putting a woman in fear of death or of hurt when she is in unlawful detention, the same will be presumed to amount to rape. The punishment for rape is life imprisonment or imprisonment for not less than thirty years (30).

Another relevant law is the **Law of Marriage Act (LMA)**. The LMA under **section 59** requires the consent of each spouse in transferring a matrimonial house. Regarding policy and administrative measures, government bodies specify that women should comprise at least 1/3 of members of each district council and ½ of each township and ½ of each village council.

Despite enabling constitutional, legal and administrative framework there are still gender imbalances and inequalities in Tanzania. These imbalances prevent the society as a whole from realizing its full potential in all social, economic, legal and political development spheres. In practical terms therefore, women are still marginalized and many are dependent on mercies of men. Worse still, approximately 30% of households in Tanzania are headed by women. Women access to education is also still unpleasant. For example, only 17% of students at tertiary and University levels are female. All these factors increase women vulnerability to abject poverty as compared to men.

By way of further comparison, maasai women in Tanzania are even more vulnerable. Their vulnerability is not only as women but also as being members of a group which is marginal as a result of a number of factors ranging from historical injustices, poor policies and lately, due to the impacts of climate change. The group in question to which the women belong is the maasai indigenous pastoralists who are found both in Kenya and Tanzania in East Africa. In the next part of this paper, vulnerability of maasai women as a result of climate change is explained; focusing on Namalulu Village, Simanjiro District, Northern Tanzania.

2.0 **VULNERABILITY OF MAASAI PASTORALIST WOMEN TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS**

As it is the case elsewhere in Africa and undoubtedly in the third world generally, maasai pastoralist women in Namalulu village do not know of the existence of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), contents of the Convention or even whether Tanzania is a party to it or not. This is however not to say that these women are unaware of the fact that climate has changed and that they are disproportionately affected compared to the mainstream society.

One elderly woman called Ng’oto Naipima, before concluding that she does know climate change and its impacts narrated how less than twenty years ago, Namalulu was known by its beautiful and lush grazing areas which had a carrying capacity for thousands of heads of cattle. She says that by then, all house holds had plenty of milk and meat. The village had a number of natural wells and an army of wild animals ranging from small antelopes to elephants and lions. Impacts of climate change have rendered the then little paradise a semi desert. In response to this situation the community has been even stricter in protecting refuge grazing areas commonly known as **olokeri or alailili** using traditional
rules and practices. Such refuge grazing are protected and used only during very acute drought, no one is allowed to graze during wet season, and violation of this traditional rule is punishable by fines. Women are also responsible for the enforcement of these rules through reporting the violations to the council of elders. Women also ensure that they teach young shepherds not to breach such rules.

Currently, the maasai of Namalulu have no enough milk, 20 years ago a household would have approximately 14 liters of milk but now they hardly get three liters. As far as corn production is concerned one household would harvest up to 20 sacks of maize per acre, one sack carries 100 kilograms whereas now the same acre can hardly harvest five sacks.

It should be noted that the production is not guaranteed annually. For example in the year 2009 there was great drought whereby no family harvested anything at all. Everyone depends on corn to get them through this difficult time. The harvest was meager this time around and the price of corn has risen astronomically. Many households have to pay sixteen dollars for a sack of corn compared to the normal prices of six thousand Tanzanian shillings which is equal to four US dollars and almost one dollar to have it ground into flour. This is presenting tremendous hardship because people must sell their few remaining livestock to get cash. In response to low corn and livestock production women have developed or adopted a new technology/farming systems to ensure better harvest and livestock. This includes construction of cost effective corn storage facilities using locally available materials, in relation to livestock husbandry women cooperate with the department of veterinary services by regularly attending/dipping livestock to kill pests and parasites which infect and lower the production of livestock.

The above sad state of affairs as a result of impacts of Climate change has also resulted into the change in gender roles, hence increasing vulnerability of women and children. Traditionally as documented by Naomi Kipuri (1989, 1996), the primary responsibility of men is looking after livestock. This entails herding, watering, treating sick animals and management of pasture, water points, building and maintaining fences for settlements and protecting livestock from any possible predators.

It is also the role of men to supervise sales and exchange of animals. The task of herding is undertaken mostly by boys and young men, with the older men playing a more supervisory role, providing direction on animal husbandry, range management and making decisions about the overall use of communal resources.

Women on the other hand, mainly manage the home, along with the tasks associated with them. Their duties include building and maintaining houses, milking, cooking and feeding the household and visitors, fetching firewood as well as water, building houses and raising children. Some of these roles are performed with the help of young girls and boys. In their roles as milkers, women have an extra task of rearing and domesticating animals.

Due to the impacts of climate change, men are finding themselves away from home for longer periods of time and their previous roles have ended up being
performed by women. As indicated albeit briefly in the introduction section, many maasai men have been forced to go to towns and cities to look for employment as night guards in order to support their families. Women still perform their natural traditional roles due to the fact that they are the ones left to play both roles. This lowers to some degree the efficiency of the work done but it is better for these families and the dependants at large.

The implication of this is that in addition to the numerous domestic chores already performed by women, they have additional ones hence denying them the right to rest and enjoy life. It can also be argued that such urban exodus separates families and hence occasion denial of a wide range of human rights. One respondent told the author that she has not seen her husband for ten months now, thanks to the mobile phone technology that enable them to talk and inform each other how children are doing.

It is also important to note that while women remain managers of households, they do not have regular access to cash for which to purchase foods. Women depend upon their husbands or male relatives to make decisions as to whether livestock should be sold to purchase alternative food. Once food-usually maize has been bought, women have to carry it on their head or on backs of donkeys to access grinding mills.

As a result of men exodus from the village to towns and cities some women have assumed the roles of decision making at the household levels. Traditionally this role has been played by men. Currently some women make decisions relating to selling of livestock, however this takes effect after consulting other male relatives present in the village or if there is any means to communicate with the man in town then after his approval. The assumption of decision making role is interpreted by women as amounting to empowerment.

Some other women of Namalulu village have been forced to move to big towns and cities where they end up doing petty business such as selling tobacco, sugar, milk, salt and bead works. They are forced to eat ‘culturally inappropriate’ foods such as sardine and fish. Traditionally the Maasai people do not eat sardines or fish; these are considered as snakes. Still others find themselves caught up as cheap laborers earning as low as $ 13 per month. It is obvious that this amount money earned is not enough to cater for living expenses in an urban setting. As a result, these women are exposed to prostitution and hence increasing their vulnerability to the HIV-AIDS pandemic.

There is no concrete available number of infected HIV/AIDS women due to the nature of secrecy and stigma associated with one publicly declaring his/her status. Three weeks ago in Namalulu village, a woman died of HIV/AIDS and she was buried out of the boma in the bushes this was because the members of the family were afraid to be near the grave of the person who has died of HIV/AIDS. However these death have served as eye openers to maasai pastoralists women that AIDS “Blitya” is real and is not a disease of town dwellers or a curse from God “Enkai”.

In an interview with Mr. Emanuel ole Naputi a number of indigenous maasai women have decided to declare their HIV status in Namalulu village. This author talked to one woman who says that her husband left her alone to take care of a
family of six children. The husband went to the mining areas called Mererani. This woman suspects that it is in Mererani where her husband contacted the deadly killer disease and infects her. This author learnt that HIV positive women in Namalulu village are in the process to forming a group in order to conduct awareness campaigns to rescue other people.

3.0 NAMALULU WOMEN’S EFFORTS TO ADAPT TO IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

In response to the hardships caused by the impacts of climate change indigenous women have done the following to prevent further vulnerability:

Firstly, they have promoted the traditional practice of sharing locally known as “engelehe”. It happens therefore that if one family is lucky enough to have a little flour, it shares it with a neighbor that has none. The situation could then be reversed. Although this is a tradition of hospitality and kindness that has been practiced for a long time, it is even more common now following deprivation as a result of impacts of climate change. The practice can portrays a wrong picture that the village is self sustaining but in fact is a precarious way to live for families especially to one with a many young children.

Secondly, the women in Namalulu have formed groups for making and selling bead works this initiative was motivated by NGOs such as MWEDO and CORDS, initially women used to do bead work individually and it was hard for the said NGOs to access and assist them for such reason they advised them to be in groups. This has been very instrumental and providing women with cash for buying corn, paying fees for their kids and other social needs. The problem with this is the market, and when one is found, another problem relates to how to get there on regular basis. According to Mrs. Ngowama, women in Namalulu target both local markets in terms of middle men in Arusha city as well as the International market.

Access to the international market is mainly facilitated by NGOs such as the Maasai Women Development Organizations (MWEDO) and the Community Research and Development Services (CORDS). Recently, the international market has been unreliable due to the global economic crisis. When asked whether they have a say on the prices, Mrs. Ngowama says they don't, although she praises NGOs for looking for the highest available prices.

Another thing that women in Namalulu have done to reduce their vulnerability is the formation of Corn grinding cooperatives. After forming the cooperative, these women were in 1990s provided with a grinding machine by an NGO called Inyuat E-Moipo. The aim, apart from income generation, was to reduce the distance covered as well as the time spent by women in search of grinding machines. However, experience has shown that maintenance of the machine is a big issue because spare parts and expertise at repair are in short supply especially because the grinding machine itself is old.
Namalulu women have also engaged in small businesses. They sell food to miners in the newly discovered mines in the village. Apart from selling cooked foods to miners, they also sell firewood, tobacco, sugar, salt, wild growing vegetables known as “mnafu” and tea leaves in the village market place. In the past, particularly when the herds of cattle were enough for the households, maasai women had no time with business.

Formation of adult literacy classes for HIV/AIDS awareness is another commendable initiative. Women in Namalulu use such a platform to educate each other. This initiative has gained momentum when some women have decided to declare their HIV AIDS status. These women conduct tremendous awareness campaign with the view to preventing further spread of the killer disease.

4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This paper has shown that maasai pastoralists’ women are more vulnerable to climate change and its impacts. These women’s vulnerability is evident in increased poverty as well as susceptibility to HIV AIDS pandemic. In order to reduce the level of vulnerability, these women have come up with a wide range of initiatives ranging from forming cooperative groups to engaging in small scale business. The HIV-AIDS killer disease is also confronted using massive awareness campaigns. In order for these efforts to bear more fruits, the following recommendations are given as part of the concluding remarks.

Firstly, there is a need to educate the women in Namalulu on climate change including its impacts as well adaptation and mitigation. In line with education, local adaptation mechanisms such as diversification of income generating activities should be promoted.

Secondly, various benefits attached to international mechanisms for adaptation such as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation in developing countries (REDD plus) should trickle down to women at the village level, including women in Namalulu Village.

Thirdly, the government should play its important role of ensuring reliable markets to small scale entrepreneurs such as women in Namalulu who engage in bead works and lack reliable markets for their products.

Fourthly, the government should implement the provisions of the United Nations declarations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). This document contains important safeguards that if implemented will not only address vulnerability of Namalulu women but will also address historical factors that put the women in question in a more vulnerable position compared to the mainstream society. One of such factors is the fact that pastoralism was looked
down upon by colonialists who developed only areas where they could grow cash crops for their industries.