

Women's Health, Climate Change & Poverty:

An analysis of Canadian media content

The Canadian Poverty, Health Equity, and Climate Change Initiative

This initiative was established by a network of experts, policy makers and community organizations.

Goal: provide education, research, policy, and service direction based on the best available evidence.

Risk at the Poverty-Climate-Health Intersection

The study explores how media coverage shapes public perceptions and influences policy responses at the intersection of climate change, women's health, and poverty, with particular attention to the ten-year anniversary of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2025.

There is limited understanding of the intersecting effects of climate change and poverty on women's health, but media coverage highlights a few core themes:

- Climate change poses distinct risks to the livelihoods, health and safety of women & girls, exacerbating existing inequalities for those already disproportionately affected by climate change.
- Women are more likely to report the negative impacts of extreme climatic events on their health.
- Women are more concerned about current and future risks of climate change.

Globally, girls are more at risk of education loss when their families are plunged into poverty or during pandemics and climatic disasters.

(Toronto Star, Jun 23, 2021)

Key Gaps in Reporting

Limitations in the coverage in Canadian print media of the impacts of climate change on girls and women may hinder public access to accurate information on true risks and responses.

Major gaps include:

- **Inconsistencies in media coverage**
Coverage is almost exclusively on topics of crises and during periods of crisis.
- **Limited inclusion of voices of those directly affected**
Reporting rarely features the lived experiences of women dealing with these overlapping issues.



- **Minimal coverage of women and girls' leadership in designing responses**

This is seen in the development of effective adaptation techniques to extreme weather events.

- **Key populations are entirely excluded, while others are significantly underrepresented**

None of the articles focused on women with disabilities and there is a lack of attention on Indigenous communities' disaster experiences.

- **An incomplete framing of climate change issues**

Reports presented certain issues, such as droughts, as challenges specific to developing countries, when they are also of significant concern in Canada.

An Intersectional Lens Matters

Applying an intersectional lens highlights that the impacts of climate change are not consistent across communities. Rather, they vary considerably depending on the intersectional identities at play.

Using this lens allows us to see the full picture—not only the challenges but also the strengths and solutions emerging from within affected communities.