




The Voices of Zionist Women in Responding to Disasters in Chivi District, Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

While global warming affects people globally, in Africa, women are particularly more vulnerable than men because of the gendered nature of climate change impacts. Climate change increasingly threatens humanity by causing disasters such as droughts, floods, cyclones and heat waves which negatively impact human beings and the ecosystem. The socio-cultural beliefs and practices of women in African Independent Churches (AICs) increase their vulnerability as they are socialised to depend on decisions made by their male counterparts. The study focuses on Zionist women in Chivi, a rural area where women practice agriculture for their livelihoods. Many men migrate to neighbouring countries in search of employment, leaving women at the centre of climate change discourse. The study was guided by the intersectionality theory and Moser's gender analysis framework as there are connected variables. A constructivist paradigm utilising a qualitative approach was adopted. The study used the narrative research design through in-depth interviews from stories and experiences of women in Zion church as primary participants and key informants who are knowledgeable about the phenomenon under study. In-depth interview guides and focus group discussion guides were used to collect data. The data collected was analysed thematically as follows: response to early warning signs, effects of droughts and flooding, resistance towards vaccinations, alternative livelihood strategies, collaboration and partnership with different organisations and proposed initiatives to church leadership including women in leadership positions. The study concluded that a multi-disciplinary approach to integrating environmental issues, religion, and gender is needed to preserve Mother Earth for sustainable use.

Keywords: gender, pandemics, religion, Zionist women, Zimbabwe.

Introduction

Climate change represents a significant global phenomenon that affects populations in both the Global North and Global South. Human beings are inherently connected to their physical environment, which underscores the interdependence between society and nature.



Projections indicate that the impacts and vulnerabilities associated with climate change are likely to escalate dramatically, particularly in the African region, where women are disproportionately affected by this environmental crisis. Responses to disasters vary considerably among individuals during the stages of preparedness, the disaster itself, and the recovery phase.

Although there is a growing body of literature that examines the role of women in religious contexts concerning climate change-related disasters and leadership (Mupangwa & Chirongoma, 2024; Manyonganise, Chitando, & Chirongoma, 2023), there remains a significant gap in research focused on the narratives of women, particularly those within African Independent Churches, in the climate change discourse. The experiences of Zionist women are not fundamentally distinct from those of other women, as both groups share similar needs and vulnerabilities in the face of disasters and pandemics. Therefore, it is imperative to amplify the voices and contributions of Zionist women in discussions on climate change, as their perspectives are essential for fostering adaptation, mitigation, and social transformation.

To effectively address these issues, it is necessary to extend beyond traditional Christian values and doctrines in awareness campaigns aimed at disseminating critical information to women within these churches. This outreach should empower them to educate elders and children about the importance of ecological justice and disaster preparedness, ensuring that no one is left behind. Such efforts promote inclusive participation in the realization of the 2030 Agenda, which seeks to engage all stakeholders in addressing the impacts and vulnerabilities associated with climate change. Consequently, this paper explores the intersections of religion, gender, environmental stewardship, pandemics, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in developing actionable solutions to the climate change impacts affecting women within religious contexts, thereby advocating for a response that transcends mere prayerful sessions.

Background

Disasters, both anthropogenic and natural, are destabilizing the environment, significantly impacting women, particularly within church communities who rely on the natural environment for their daily needs. Mutanda (2022) asserts that women, as "ecosystem people," depend on the environment for their livelihoods, highlighting the importance of including their voices in discussions to formulate effective interventions. The metaphor of "Mother Earth" symbolizes care, nurture, and sustenance, underscoring the need for women's empowerment to ensure environmental sustainability (Chireshe, 2023; Mukurazhizha & Matanga, 2023).

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality), call for inclusive partnerships, aligning with the view that women's involvement is crucial in addressing climate change (Schliesser, 2023). Climate change, exacerbated by human activities, is further disrupting ecosystems that religious institutions and congregants rely on, with religious women often excluded from climate change dialogues (Chirongoma & Chitando, 2021; Chitando, 2024). Women's exclusion from leadership roles in environmental decision-making undermines their contributions to sustainability. Women have also significant roles in agriculture, caregiving, and energy collection, particularly during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Matanga & Mukurazhizha, 2023).

Religion often perpetuates gender inequalities, sidelining women from climate-related information and decision-making. As climate change intersects with gender, religion, and justice, eco-feminism has emerged to challenge these inequities (Owusu-Ansah & Owusu-Ansah, 2021). Women's representation in leadership remains limited, with their contributions undervalued, yet their involvement in Christian churches could be key to advancing climate action.



The exclusion of religious women from climate change initiatives, as noted by Dube and Shumba (2023) and Ngwenya (2022), restricts potential solutions to environmental injustices. For example, open air gatherings of some Apostolic churches contribute to land pollution, disproportionately affecting women through health risks such as cholera (Vengesai & Naicker, 2023). Including women, particularly in African Initiated Churches where they are the majority, in environmental discourse is essential for achieving sustainability and several SDGs (Muyambo, 2023). Nhamo and Chikodzi (2021) emphasize that engaging religious communities in climate action aligns with the UN's mission to leave no one behind. Women's representation in positions of power and decision-making is often invisible, leading to questions about their identity and visibility. Therefore, it is essential to involve women in Christian churches to enable their impactful participation in the climate change discourse. Against this backdrop, this research aims to examine the responses of women in the Zion church to environmental disasters in the Chivi District, Masvingo Province, to develop sustainable solutions.

Conceptual Framework

The study utilised Caroline Moser's gender analysis framework and intersectionality theory to explore how Zionist women are responding to disasters caused by climate change in Chivi in Zimbabwe. According to Moser women have triple roles and responsibilities in communities and Zionist women are not spared despite their religiosity. In Chivi, women generally have different needs to those of men in terms of roles, responsibilities, accessibility to natural resources, religious and cultural norms. Women should therefore be included in planning to ensure that they are not left behind (Mishra, 2022; Warren, 2007). Women's roles in production, reproduction, and community work significantly shape their responses to disasters. Their involvement in production and community workplaces make them in direct contact with the environment, particularly through agricultural practices, energy sourcing, land clearing, and participation in religious activities. Socially constructed roles, particularly the gender-based division of labour, influence how individuals engage with their environment (Vengesai & Naicker, 2023). These roles can foster or deter how Zionist women actively participate during disasters and pandemics in trying to preserve and conserve the environment.

Intersectionality addresses the gaps in Moser's gender planning and development framework by highlighting how gender inequalities are perpetuated within patriarchal structures, such as the Zionist church, where women are excluded from decision-making and leadership roles. This exclusion means that gender and religion intersect to influence how women engage in protecting the environment and responding to disasters and pandemics.

The patriarchal doctrine of the Zionist church limits women's agency, thereby affecting their ability to contribute to environmental sustainability and disaster response efforts. Intersectionality complements the gap in Moser's argument, which emphasizes the role of gender in planning and development as the main factor causing gender inequalities. In the context of this study, the patriarchal nature of Zionist church doctrine, where women do not hold decision-making and leadership positions while men take the lead, demonstrates that both gender and religion affect how women respond to protect Mother Earth and react to disasters and pandemics. Carastathis (2014) argues that intersectionality is not only about critical analysis and reflection but aims to challenge inequalities. This opens new space for women in the Zionist church to participate in decision-making as well as multi-sectorial meetings in the fight against disasters. According to Andharia (2020) intersectionality calls for the inclusivity of women in issues that affect them like pandemics and disasters. Wilde and Al-Faham (2018) posit that religion is also a factor that can perpetuate oppression as some churches hold on to patriarchy. The theory takes into cognisance of the overlapping nature of gender, religion, and pandemics in upholding the SDGs. Therefore, there are intersections in



which eco-feminists seek to advocate for and determine the level of involvement and participation of Zionist women.

Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative approach to explore how Zionist women are responding to disasters in the Chivi District in Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe. The qualitative research approach allows the researchers to have an in-depth understanding of the experiences of Zionist women. The research adopted a narrative research design giving Zionist women time to share their voices about the gendered impacts of disasters and how they participate in preparedness, mitigation and response. The study was carried out in Chivi which is located in Region 4 which is agro-based and is characterised by high temperatures and erratic rainfall resulting in eminent droughts and periodic tropical cyclones.

Non-probability sampling was utilised, specifically using convenience sampling for Zionist women and purposive sampling for key informants with expertise and knowledge about the phenomenon of climate change hazards and pandemics. The total sample size comprising of fifteen participants: twelve primary participants and three key informants, determined by the level of saturation. In-depth interviews were conducted with both primary participants and key informants, utilising in-depth interview guides to collect data. Thematic data analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2013) six key steps, was used to present the findings. These steps include familiarisation of data, generation of codes, combining codes into themes, reviewing themes, determining the significance of themes and reporting of findings. Ethical considerations such as clearance to carry out the research among Zionist women was granted by the Zionist Church Council. Confidentiality, the right to withdraw, voluntary participation and consent to participate were emphasised.

Findings

Results from the study are categorised according to the voices of Zionist women in responding to disasters and pandemics during critical stages of the disaster management cycle namely preparedness, response and recovery. This enables various stakeholders to understand how women in churches experience and narrate how they are involved in addressing climate change impacts. The study revealed mixed feelings on how the women respond to disasters and pandemics from a religious perspective in the attainment of SDGs.

Response to Early Warning Signs

Findings from the study indicated that women in the Zionist church are aware of the changes in temperatures, and rainfall patterns. The young women in the Zionist church receive early warning signs through cell phones, radios and televisions and are therefore prepared to move to safer places when necessary. In terms of outbreaks like COVID-19 and cholera, the women are educated, through awareness raised by environmental technician officers in their area to curb the spread as described below:

“As a young woman in Zion church, I can read messages sent from the Ministry of Health on outbreaks such as cholera, dysentery and COVID-19 and take precautionary measures to save the lives of my family and relatives. Again, on issues of floods, the Civil Protection Department sent messages of approaching dangers through Econet lines so that we are prepared for our safety. Even the radio and television are used to spread the message on disasters like



flooding and heat waves due to increased temperature (Participant 2)."

Another participant said:

"An early warning sign, especially of drought, is when our crops start to wilt and even animals die. These are indicators that drought is around the corner. Furthermore, the abundance of wild fruits like "mazhanje" predict a bad year in terms of rain. As such we start to store food and dried vegetables for future use (Participant, 12)."

However, an elderly Zionist woman had this to say:

"As old as I am, I cannot read as my parents did not send me to school so am left out and I don't have a radio or even a set television [to access awareness campaigns]. At church, we come to pray for our problems, not about troubles that affect us because of weather changes taking place. If the young do not tell us [about it], we just find ourselves in unexpected disasters causing us to lose our food as we would not have stored for future use (Participant 6)."

This was supported by a Doctor from the Zion church that preparedness is still lagging not only among Zionist women but also among Zionist men as presented below:

"Preparedness especially in responding to disasters is non-existent but awareness campaigns on pandemics are there as I lead the Health Directorate in the church, maybe if we identify professionals with expertise in environmental issues within the church who can educate women in the Zion church to be prepared for disasters like droughts and tropical cyclones to save their lives and animal livestock (Key Informant, 1)."

Effects of Floods and Droughts on People and Animals

The study findings revealed that women in the Zionist church are aware of the challenges and problems associated with floods and drought. Excessive rainfall causes death and injures people, crops, and livestock, indiscriminately, that is, without regard for whether they are religious women or not. During droughts, the women walk long distances in search of energy and water sources where conflicts occur between villages because of the scarcity of these precious resources. The outbreak of waterborne diseases like cholera and typhoid are heightened. The sentiments are echoed below:

"During droughts, the shortage of water for drinking, cooking, gardening and livestock is a major problem. Although we are religious women, we have roles and responsibilities to provide for children, the sick and the elderly. We walk long distances where violence and conflicts are evident in search of water for consumption. At times we return home very late at night (Participant 1)."

Another participant reiterated that:

"Very high temperatures affect our health. The heat affects people with different illnesses as it takes too long before the rains come. Again, veld fires destroy houses. Stored food is lost as well and



livestock die because of the shortage of grazing lands (Participant 2)."

In support of the above verbatim, another participant lamented the impacts of droughts or flooding as shown below:

"Personally, as a Zion woman, I rely on rain-fed agriculture for feeding my family. However, too much or too little rainfall prevents a bumper harvest as some soils require normal water distribution. If production is lowered, hunger and malnutrition affect our children and those who are sick as they also require special diets (Participant 7)."

A key informant from the agricultural extension services also lamented the effects of floods and droughts as follows:

"The shortage of food and grazing lands for livestock is the most pressing problem as it does not discriminate even women in the Zionist church as their crops are destroyed either by heavy rainfall during cyclones or affected by the heat scourge. Malnourishment especially for children, the sick and the elderly becomes a problem. The Department of Social Development normally chips in through food provisioning through their drought mitigation programme for affected areas like Chivi (Key Informant 2)."

Livelihood Alternatives during Droughts for Women in Zion Church

Results from the study showed that during women's fellowship, women in the Zionist church teach and educate each other about engaging in income-generating projects through various alternative activities as presented below:

"We encourage each other to do gardening near the Tokwe Mukosi dam and engage in fishing in order to generate income. However, the Department of Parks and Wildlife requires licenses for these activities. Acquiring licenses is beyond our reach as they are expensive so at times, we do these activities clandestinely. If caught, a penalty in the form of a monetary fine needs to be paid. Again, as women in Zion church, we can grow different crops during different seasons so that we have enough food for future use to fight hunger. (Participant 4)."

Another primary participant also said:

"Women in Zion churches can also be linked with Governmental and NGOs who drill boreholes in times of droughts so that water for irrigating gardens for personal and commercial purposes is done. Furthermore, chicken rearing needs water. Engaging in the sewing of clothes, school uniforms and knitting of jerseys is more beneficial than waiting for donations. Through such activities, women in Zion church are empowered to be self-reliant even during droughts (Participant 6)."



To corroborate the above another key informant added the following:

“As a leader in the Zion church, I realise that women in this church have many responsibilities and duties to provide nutritious food to the children, the sick and the elderly. Therefore, alternative sources are needed to generate income to supplement their husbands’ efforts. In the Bible, it is stated that they are helpers to their husbands. If they get water for irrigation, it will go a long way in reducing poverty and hunger (Key informant 3).”

Resistance against Vaccinations before and During Pandemics

The findings from the study revealed that the outbreak of pandemics is regarded by many women in the Zionist Church as having spiritual and Satanism connections as presented below:

“Many people, particularly women in Zion Church, distrust pharmaceutical drugs and vaccinations because they believe they are a means of spreading Satanism and of experimenting on Africans unethically. As a result, women do not get their children vaccinated due to inaccurate and various speculations. As a woman in religion, I feel that prayers and intercessions will free people from diseases such as COVID-19 and cholera as God is above all (Participant 8).”

To support this viewpoint, another participant expressed similar sentiments below:

“For me, I know of a woman in Zion who resisted vaccinating a child against six killer diseases. The child was affected by measles until he was blind. This child up to now is levelling blame against her mother and has bitterness. So I think the pandemics like cholera do not require prophetic interventions but education as well as treatment from nurses, doctors and ENT officers so that women in Zion church receive accurate and relevant information such as practicing hygiene all the time, and even involved in campaigns in the church to enlighten other women in Zion church. Education ensures that women know about the risks and dangers of resistance as it affects the good health and well-being of children (Participant 11).”

A key informant also lamented Zionist women’s reluctance to embracing advice from health experts on the issue of pandemics as outlined below:

“In Zion church, it’s high time we established a Health Directorate. A Health Directorate would assist not only women but men in the church to follow precautionary measures and guidelines from the Ministry of Health and Child Care to safeguard their lives against communicable diseases which are contagious and kill many people if not properly handled. The teaching integrates religion and health interventions, instead of killing [resisting] prophets in the church, to treat communicable diseases. Instead, we encourage women in the church to report any cases where they suspect these



communicable diseases immediately to save the lives of many people as church gatherings are super-spreaders of pandemics (Key Informant 1)."

Lack of Professionals to Educate People on Climate Change-related Disasters in the Church

It is evident from the study that women in the Zion Movement acknowledge that currently there are more experts covering health issues than there are addressing the question of whether churches have full knowledge on hydro-meteorological challenges. This is fully explored below:

"For now, we do not have enough knowledge on weather changes, what causes them and how our surroundings are affected by such changes. As of now, we do not know the responsible department to work with us as women in Zion church so that we are not left behind in such important issues that affect us, the children, the elderly, crops and livestock (Participant 10)."

A complementary assertion was echoed by another participant below:

"As women in Zion church, I think we have a mandate to protect and look after the natural environment properly because what we eat and survive on comes from the surroundings. If the environment is troubled, we also suffer as we rely on rainfall for our survival. For example, trees are an important source of fruits, shade and for feeding animals. However, we want to be educated on the preservation methods and activities we can engage in rather than cutting down all trees for firewood as we use it for cooking (Participant 4)."

Collaboration and Partnership with Organisations during Recovery for Future Sustainability

Results from the study revealed that women in Zion church are welcome to work with other organisations as they feel that they are not a closed entity. They are also part of a larger community as presented below:

"I think it is high time even to work with the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) which educates the public on how to preserve the environment e.g. addressing the pollution surrounding our churches where people dispose of rubbish and garbage everywhere. They also educate the public on how to plant trees to replace the ones we cut for firewood. We can also become ambassadors in the church and teach others outside our church to conserve the environment. (Participant 1)"

To support the direct words above another participant had this to say:

"I recommend that different organisations can come and work with us, especially after experiencing disasters like floods, tropical cyclones and pandemics to recover from shocks of death, illness and hunger. These affect women extending to us women in Zion. We think about what happened and what the future holds for us. We become fearful and anxious, so mental health professionals are



needed to help us properly think about these changes and face the future with hope (Participant 5)."

A key informant lamented the partnership of the government, Non-Governmental Organisations and church members generally, not only Zionist church members, as presented below:

"It is necessary to work and collaborate with other organisations as the issue of disasters is a topical issue. Hence, collaboration also promotes the attainment of SDGs of which women in Zion should not be left out. Their participation is key and can be passed on to future generations especially as they do much of the teaching to their children who are future leaders. Data generated from women in Zion church in responding to pandemics and disasters can be used to look for climate finances to increase inclusion in these important topics (Key Informant 3)."

Environmental Initiatives that can be Implemented by Church Leadership for Women in Zion Church

According to the study's findings, women also wanted leadership positions where they participate in decision-making with men, particularly on environmental issues, so that they are literate on climate change-related disasters, as presented below:

"If permitted by church leadership and our husbands, we could also attend climate change and pandemic-related meetings with various stakeholders. There, we can gain knowledge and impart it to other women in the church to make the Earth inhabitable, as it is our home, through environmentally friendly measures. For now, we do not have the independence to do it without consultation. Again, those with expertise from outside the church can be invited to come and conscientise us when we conduct our women's fellowship (Participant 10)."

Another participant echoed similar sentiments as presented below:

"I feel that women should have leadership positions to have first-hand information in meetings where men and women share their ideas on disasters and pandemics and do away with patriarchal tendencies which make us women not to voice our ideas in churches. Again, experts could be invited especially at big gatherings like Easter and big conferences so that we get knowledge that can continue to be used in the future. If money is availed for these activities, it will be fine even from church resources (Participant 8)."

Discussion of Findings

The results indicate that women in the Zion church rely on indigenous knowledge systems, particularly in response to drought, by drying and storing vegetables for future use. This aligns with Mukurazhizha et al. (2023), who noted that a plentiful harvest of "mazhanje" signals an impending drought, with erratic rainfall expected. Moser's gender analysis framework (1994) remains relevant here, as women bear the primary responsibility for food production and ensuring the sustenance of families during disasters like droughts and floods.



The study also revealed that elderly Zion women often view church as solely a place of prayer for social issues, unaware that environmental teachings can be integrated into religious activities. This finding supports Humbe (2022), who observed that some religious sects during the COVID-19 pandemic prioritized prayer over World Health Organization guidelines, with resistance to vaccinations still prevalent among Zion women who believe in divine intervention. Muridzo et al. (2023) suggest targeting church leaders to increase vaccination uptake and dispel myths surrounding vaccines. However, applying intersectionality theory to disaster response can be slow, as religious beliefs often reject medical interventions like vaccinations and treatments for diseases such as cholera and COVID-19.

Dube and Shumba (2023) argue that the challenges faced by women in religious communities are similar to those faced by other women, underscoring the need for their inclusion in environmental and disaster response efforts. Despite their vulnerability, Zion women demonstrate resilience in adapting to and mitigating climate-related disasters and pandemics, a sentiment echoed by Chitando (2017), who calls for African religious leaders to engage in climate change discourse and influence their congregations. Financial support for environmentally friendly education and awareness campaigns is crucial to ensure comprehensive outreach and promote the attainment of SDG 5 on gender equality.

Moser (1994) emphasizes that women should hold decision-making roles for effective disaster and pandemic response, particularly within religious contexts where they are often excluded. The intersection of religion, gender, and disasters highlights the need for advocacy to include Zion women in achieving SDGs such as SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being).

The findings also underscore the importance of collaboration, with Zion women recognizing the need for exchanging ideas on pandemics and disasters, rather than relying solely on prayer, which poses risks for the spread of communicable diseases. This supports the attainment of SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) and SDG 3, as diseases like cholera and COVID-19 spread rapidly in religious gatherings. Zabaniotou et al. (2020) argue that faith-based inclusion fosters positive coping strategies to combat pandemics, and with proper education, Zion women could play a key role in controlling disease transmission. Early detection and reporting are crucial for disease surveillance and timely intervention.

Finally, the study highlights the innovative use of health professionals and the establishment of a Health Directorate within the Zion church to educate women on health and environmental issues. Integrating religious activities with sustainable development initiatives through local expertise strengthens the church's capacity to disseminate accurate information on pandemics and disasters, fostering resilience and sustainability.

Implications for Practice

A multidisciplinary approach is essential to enable Zionist women to proactively understand and respond to disasters and pandemics in a timely manner. Their exclusion from such efforts would likely result in increased fatalities and further land degradation, jeopardizing the preservation of the environment. Maintaining ecological stability and justice is crucial to ensuring that Zionist women, their families, and those under their care remain healthy and live in harmony with the natural environment. This also contributes to the prevention of species extinction, both flora and fauna. The inclusion of Zionist women facilitates the intersection of religion and gender, allowing for their effective participation in all phases of the disaster management cycle. Additionally, the development of models and frameworks based on this approach can benefit not only Zionist Churches but also other stakeholders, advancing the achievement of SDGs such as no poverty, zero hunger, gender equality, and climate action.



Recommendations

The findings reveal a lack of environmental education for Zionist women, as they struggle with understanding climate change terminology. To address this, partnerships between the Zionist Church and agencies such as the Environmental Management Agency, Agroforestry, and NGOs involved in climate change programs are essential for raising awareness and conducting educational sessions. These efforts would equip Zionist women with the necessary knowledge and enable their participation in disaster-related activities.

Within the Zionist Church, the Health Directorate plays a crucial role in teaching women safe hygienic practices to prevent diseases like COVID-19 and cholera. Integrating Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) with religious practices is also vital. For instance, early warning signs of drought can guide women in drying vegetables, storing wild fruits, and engaging in crafts for livelihood support.

Additionally, raising awareness among men in the Zionist church is important to ensure that women are empowered to lead discussions on disasters and pandemics. This would help challenge patriarchal beliefs that delay critical decisions, which can lead to loss of lives, livestock, and property during emergencies.

Conclusion

The study concludes that women in the Zion Church are essential stakeholders in disaster management as is demonstrated by their active involvement in responding to disasters. Key findings highlight their responses to early warning signs, the impacts of droughts and floods, and the livelihood alternatives they adopt during such crises. The study also identifies a significant gap in expertise and knowledge transfer from professionals, underscoring the need for collaboration between the Zion Church, government agencies, and NGOs. These partnerships could implement initiatives informed by the experiences of Zionist women.

Women in the Zion Church, like those in other African Initiated Churches (AICs), serve as a broader representation of women in similar religious contexts. Their voices provide valuable insights to relevant stakeholders, revealing how they are adapting to changes and addressing disaster-related challenges. Their needs and experiences are comparable to those of other women, as they bear the triple responsibilities of production, reproduction, and community work. By acknowledging and incorporating their contributions, disaster management efforts can become more inclusive and effective, addressing both gender and environmental concerns.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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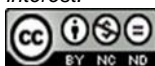
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Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.



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