

NEPAL



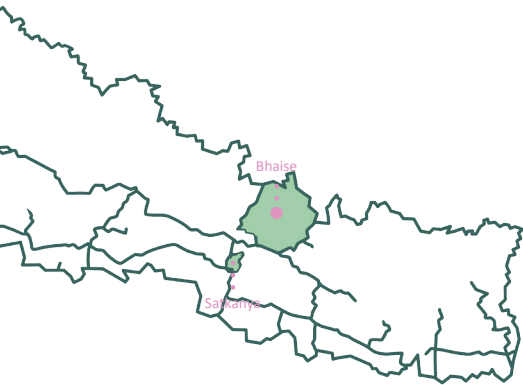
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Rural & Indigenous Women Advocating for Gender Responsive Budgeting to Tackle Climate Catastrophe



Nepal: Rural and indigenous women advocating for gender responsive budgeting to tackle climate catastrophe



This country briefer is based on the Climate Justice Feminist Participatory Action Research (CJ FPAR) journey of rural and indigenous women in two villages, Bhaise and Satkanya, located in the southern part of Lalitpur. Since 2019, the communities have worked together with a young woman researcher of the Women Network for Energy and Environment (WoNEE), a national women-led network aiming to engage women to strengthen their involvement in environmental issues, including in analysing the impacts of the climate crisis. Through CJ FPAR, rural and indigenous women in Bhaise and Satkanya aimed to increase their understanding of the impacts of the climate crises and influence their local government to strengthen gender responsive budgeting for adaptation to climate change.

Nepal at a glance

Despite the relatively small size of the country, Nepal has very diverse climatic conditions, ranging from tropical in the south to alpine in the north. The country's three distinct geographies - the snow-covered mountains, the mid hills and the plains - embody this diversity. This is also seen in Nepal's multiple ecosystems and abundance of flora and fauna species.¹ Nepal is an agricultural country with 66 per cent of its peoples directly engaged in subsistence farming.² With only two per cent of its land area cultivable, climate change clearly has major implications on the country.

Nepal is a least developed country that is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate crises despite being one of the least contributors to global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, with a total of 0.027 per cent.³ The country faces challenges with the changes in precipitation patterns and rates and timing of a glacial melt, which impacts on agriculture, biodiversity and hydropower energy production. Floods and landslides are common in Nepal, often triggered by heavy rains, while droughts are also becoming more frequent.⁴

These changes have caused a massive impact on grassroots women in Nepal, especially those belonging to rural and indigenous communities. The drought, unseasonal and uncertain rainfall and other changes to the environment have caused decreased crop production along with increased risks to natural disasters and calamities. Despite lack of access to information and lack of efforts of the government in reaching out to grassroots communities on the impacts of climate change, rural and indigenous women continue to show their resilience and are already unwittingly adapting by adjusting their farming cycle according to the changes in the seasons.

Through the FPAR, rural and indigenous women strongly affirmed their challenges on the huge inadequacies of opportunities to participate in decision-making processes at all levels, facilities for education, health, transportation and public services that would be extremely helpful in the face of climate impacts.

¹ Climate Change in Nepal: Impacts and Adaptive Strategies (2008). Retrieved from <https://www.wri.org/our-work/project/world-resources-report/climate-change-nepal-impacts-and-adaptive-strategies>

² Nepal at a glance (2015), Retrieved from <https://www.fao.org/nepal/fao-in-nepal/nepal-at-a-glance/en/>

³ NDC Report Nepal (2016). Retrieved from <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Nepal%20First/Nepal%20First%20NDC.pdf>

⁴ Nepal Climate Vulnerability Profile (2013). Retrieved from <https://www.climate-links.org/resources/nepal-climate-vulnerability-profile>

Overview of Nepal's Second Nationally Determined Contribution⁵

Mitigation

Energy



Energy Generation

Expand clean energy generation from 1,400 MW to 15,000 MW, of which 5-10 per cent will be generated from mini and micro hydro power, solar, wind and bio-energy.

Ensure 15 per cent of total energy demand is supplied from clean energy sources.



Transport

Increase sales of e-vehicles to cover 90 per cent of all passenger vehicle sales.

Develop 200 km of electric rail network to support public commuting and mass transportation of goods.



Residential cooking and biogas

Ensure 25 per cent of households use electric stoves as their primary mode of cooking.

Install 500,000 improved cookstoves, specifically in rural areas.

Install an additional 200,000 household biogas plants and 500 large scale biogas plants (institutional/industrial/municipal/community).

Agriculture, Forestry and other Land Use (AFOLU)



Maintain 45 per cent of the total area of the country under forest cover (including other wooded land limited to less than 4 per cent).

Manage 50 per cent of Tarai and Inner Tarai forests and 25 per cent of middle hills and mountain forests sustainably, including through the use of funding from REDD+ initiatives.

Waste



By 2025, 380 million litres/day of wastewater will be treated before being discharged, and 60,000 cubic meters/year of faecal sludge will be managed.



⁵Nepal Second Nationally Determined Contribution (2020). Retrieved from [https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Nepal%20Second/Second%20Nationally%20Determined%20Contribution%20\(NDC\)%20-%202020.pdf](https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Nepal%20Second/Second%20Nationally%20Determined%20Contribution%20(NDC)%20-%202020.pdf)

Adaptation

Adaptation priorities and actions, as per the National Climate Change Policy (2019), adopt an integrated approach to cover climate-sensitive sectors exemplifying the inter-sectoral nature of the responses. The adaptation priorities cover eight thematic and four cross-cutting areas.

Thematic areas are:

- Agriculture and Food Security;
- Forests, Biodiversity and Watershed Conservation;
- Water Resources and Energy;
- Rural and Urban Settlements;
- Industry, Transport and Physical Infrastructure;
- Tourism, Natural and Cultural Heritage;
- Health, Drinking Water and Sanitation;
- Disaster Risk Reduction and Management.

The cross-cutting areas are:

- Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), Livelihoods and Governance;
- Awareness Raising and Capacity Building;
- Research, Technology Development and Extension;
- Climate Finance Management.

Means of Implementation

Mitigation activities estimated to cost USD 25 billion.

Adaptation activities initially estimated to cost USD 3.4 billion.

Nepal anticipates financial, technological and capacity-building support from the Green Climate Fund, Global Environment Facility, Adaptation Fund, Least Developed Countries Fund and bilateral/multilateral agencies and development partners.

Rural and indigenous women in the NDC



The Nepali government has signed on to the Paris Agreement⁶ as part of its international commitment to act domestically to tackle climate crises. It envisions achieving socio-economic prosperity by building a climate-resilient society, and is targeting to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emission by 2050. Nepal's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), which was first submitted in 2016, emphasises the promotion of renewable and clean energy and energy efficient technology along with increasing greenery. The government also seeks to implement climate adaptation actions to protect life as well as to improve the livelihoods of climate vulnerable communities.

⁶Paris Agreement (2015). Retrieved from <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>

Important national policies, including the 2019 Climate Change Policy and National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA) and Local Adaptation Program of Action (LAPA), aim to address medium and long-term adaptation needs and reduce climate vulnerabilities. The second NDC submitted in 2020 has incorporated some gender issues particularly towards achieving targets on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) by 2030. It emphasises the need for developing specific programmes with dedicated resources (human and financial) to ensure equal and meaningful participation of women, Indigenous Peoples and marginalised groups in climate change-related policy development.

The NDC was supposedly developed through an inclusive and participatory process, with a series of consultations at national and provincial levels. It must be noted, however, that in the NDC revision process, civil society engagement, let alone the involvement of rural and indigenous women, has not been effective because of the limited access to information and avenues for feedback to the NDC.



WoNEE team consulting with grassroots women on the FPAR process.

Rural and indigenous women's realities amid the climate catastrophe

The FPAR found that climate change-related problems of rural and indigenous women have not been adequately addressed during the preparation and implementation of national and local adaptation plans. Challenges in the localisation and proper programme implementation meant that these policies have very little impact on women in the communities in terms of addressing the gendered impacts of climate crises.

Although rural and indigenous women generally understand fundamental human rights, their understanding around how women's human rights link with gender, climate crises and local budgets still need to be strengthened. The government of Nepal must be bold in ensuring that rural and indigenous women are aware of their human rights and how they are affected by policies, programmes and budget planning especially at local level. The FPAR women highlighted the importance of having gender-responsive budgeting for climate action, especially in the rural areas, where they have almost no access to information on where and how the government is using the budgets allocated

All women in the Satkanya and Bhaise communities are involved in agriculture. The women are aware of the changing pattern of seasons and how this impacts their daily routines in the household and in the fields.

They spend almost 10 hours daily tending the fields and animals, and spend about six hours more on household chores. Most women said that because of the irregularity of rainfall and drought, the 'land is not similar as it was before'. A woman from Bhaise said, 'our vegetables and crops are affected by insect attacks. Our animals also suffer from diseases like Namle Juka, dengue.' Rising temperature affects the land, and its impacts are seen in the presence of new insects in crops and new kinds of diseases in animals which are directly affecting community livelihoods. Land is becoming infertile and traditional seeds and technology no longer yield bountiful crops, while frequent pest attacks force the women to purchase hybrid seeds, pesticides and chemical fertilisers.



FPAR young woman researcher leading community consultation process.

Extreme weather patterns that bring excessive rainfall cause floods and landslides putting their homes, families and livelihoods at risk. Landslides block major routes, and they have to find alternative ways to get to the market, hospital, school and to other villages. Women are more affected by landslides because they also need to go to collect grass and firewood in the jungle. There is no safe road for travelling and walking, and public transportation is not easily available.

The climate crisis adds another layer of burden to the already difficult situation women face in their homes and communities. Although women in the communities were not very open about sharing their internal problems, they alluded to being overworked because of patriarchal norms that leave the burden of unpaid care work to women, deprive their economic opportunities and fuel gender-based violence both in their homes and workplace. Women were hesitant in disclosing these out of concern of repercussions in their families and communities, but also because they fear getting thrown out of their homes and divorced by their husbands, especially since they neither have any property nor income.

Bhaise and Satkanya women taking action

The rural and indigenous women of Bhaise and Satkanya, because of their strong relationship with the environment, undertook a number of initiatives to find solutions to the challenges they faced.

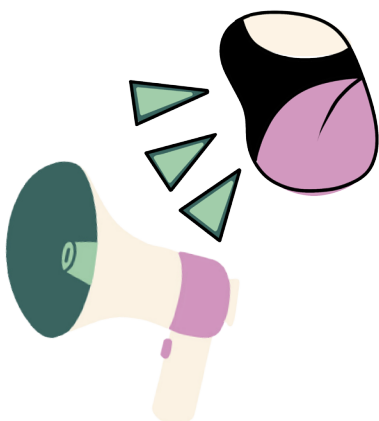
The mothers' groups and women's cooperatives, organised with the support of the municipality, enabled women to be more independent and provided them with a safe space to discuss their concerns around gender-based violence experienced at home and in the fields. As part of the FPAR, women from Bhaise and Satkanya communities increased their involvement in these groups. Women's cooperatives provided opportunities for women to become involved in various economic activities. Discussions were initiated at community-level where women shared their experiences and knowledge regarding protection of local seed varieties, adjusting their agricultural practices to the changing weather patterns, carrying out some disaster risk reduction activities, and even how to sensitise and advocate with their local governments.

These increased women's confidence in themselves, and the women became role models for the rest of the community. They have begun to actively engage with local governments to advocate for gender-responsive budgeting and the adoption of a climate adaptation plan that is inclusive and responds to the needs of rural and indigenous women. The women of Satkanya community, for instance, demanded from their local government a programme to mitigate landslides and protect their water resources. Meanwhile, the women of the Bhaise community are engaging with their local government for better road infrastructure.



What do we want?

The rural and indigenous women in Satkanya and Bhaise have immediate needs to build resilience in light of the negative impacts of the climate crisis in their communities. However, it must also be noted that initiatives must be undertaken with a longer-term vision of upholding women's human rights in climate action. Whatever mitigation or adaptation policies and programmes that will be initiated, especially by the Nepali government, must be inclusive, participatory and address the multiple burdens that women experience at home and in the larger communities they belong to.



At the local level, the government must:



Develop an environment and human rights protection strategy for infrastructure development projects such as road, hydropower, bridge constructions;



Localise formulation, implementation and review of climate adaptation plans and programmes with the participation and leadership of women;



Strengthen and institutionalise capacity building activities targeting rural and indigenous women to increase their awareness on women's human rights and climate change;



Create an enabling environment for the equal and democratic participation of rural and indigenous women in the social, political and economic spheres including the climate related decision making processes; and



Conduct a gender audit of existing policies, programmes and budgets related to climate, environment and energy with the meaningful participation of grassroots women.

At the national level, the government must:

- Ensure meaningful participation of rural and indigenous women in discussions and decision making processes related to Nepal's Nationally Determined Contribution;
- Develop stronger mechanisms for the proper implementation and regular impact assessment of its policies and programmes regarding climate change;
- Develop and fund national gender policies and gender action plans on climate change in consultation with women and their communities. Laws and policies related to energy and the environment must also be amended in order to uphold women's human rights and gender equality;
- Promote and implement Gender Responsive and Participatory Budgeting (GRPB). Special programmes for rural and indigenous women must be promoted along with their capacity building in adapting to climate change.

At all levels, the government of Nepal and its agencies must protect, respect and fulfill the collective rights of indigenous women particularly to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). These recommendations, when taken together with feminist climate solutions such as redistribution of resources, energy democracy and genuine participation in decision-making, the rural and indigenous women of Satkanya and Bhaise will come closer to realising their human rights and Development Justice.



Community consultation with CJ FPAR women.



About APWLD

The Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) is the region's leading network of feminist and women's rights organisations and individual activists. For 35 years, we have been carrying out advocacy, activism and movement-building to advance women's human rights and Development Justice. APWLD worked with and supported seven partner organisations from seven countries to conduct a Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) between 2019 and 2021. This FPAR is part of APWLD's Climate Justice Programme.

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