

Climate Change in Nepal

Women's Leadership and Voice in Public Discourse

Second Edition



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Preface

—
Shahida MacDougall



I am delighted to present this compilation of stories, produced by a talented cohort of emerging journalists from Nepal. Over the past two years, British Council worked with 26 journalists to bring attention to the urgent issue of climate change and its impact on communities across their country.

What is particularly noteworthy about this initiative is that it was an all-women cohort, who have contributed greatly to highlighting the intersections of climate change and gender. Through their reporting, they have given voice to communities that are often marginalized in mainstream media.

Leading up to the COP27 conference, the British Council has taken an active role in mentoring and training 10 more journalists from the national press and media. This latest group of professionals has been given the opportunity to learn from experts in journalism, filmmaking, and storytelling from both Nepal and the UK.

The result is a compelling collection of articles, TV documentaries, and radio shows that have reached thousands of viewers and listeners across all seven provinces of Nepal. The British Council's commitment to diversity and inclusion has been integral to this initiative, providing a dedicated space for women to discuss intersectional challenges and receive one-on-one support in developing their skills, networks, and knowledge.

I hope that readers of this compilation will appreciate the ground-level realities that are presented through the amazing work of these committed women journalists. By championing marginalised voices, they are helping to foster a more robust and inclusive creative economy in Nepal while addressing some of the most pressing issues of our time.



Foreword

—
Jocelyn Timperley



Across the world, climate change is already impacting women in different, and often worse, ways than it affects men.

Climate change is often referred to as a “threat multiplier”, and where women are already more at risk or vulnerable, they are often also impacted by climate change.

This is certainly the case in Nepal, where women have less education, lack access to resources and can be bound by gender norms. They make up the majority of the agricultural workforce, typically have the responsibility of collecting household water, and often don't own the land they farm on. When disasters come, they can be left more vulnerable than men.

This often goes unmentioned in reporting about climate change. This is why the British Council in Nepal ran its workshop and grant opportunity for women reporters on climate change again in 2022. We delivered this workshop online, allowing us to deliver information in a digestible way over five weeks. The workshop covered technical aspects of climate journalism and provided in-depth information about different ways women can be impacted by climate.

In their stories, most of the reporters focussed on how climate change is already impacting women. They especially sought out stories highlighting the links between climate impacts and agriculture.

The choice makes sense. Nepal is a low emitter of greenhouse gases, [sitting around 70th on the list of emitters globally](#), but it is among but the [most vulnerable countries to climate change](#). Some three-quarters [of women in Nepal are employed in agriculture](#), compared to [52% of men](#).

It's hard to overstate how important it is to tell these stories, and to keep telling more like them. It's been a privilege to meet and support these talented journalists, and to hopefully have provided them with a basis for reporting many more stories on climate change and gender in the coming years and decades.



Foreword

—
Subina Shrestha



As a journalist working in Nepal, covering disasters becomes an annual event. The fragile landscape, coupled with climate change and poor governance means when the inevitable happens, the poorest and the most socially vulnerable are the worst impacted. Not surprisingly, in the frontlines of these disasters are women.

As a Nepali woman, I've always been acutely aware of power structures and how tenuous it can be for women to strive in most parts of the country. It is for these reasons I was delighted at the idea of working with women journalists, contemporaries and colleagues, from across the country.

To me, the workshop was more about understanding these power structures in relation to the larger world and climate change. To understand this better, we brought in women climate scientists from South Asia, Nepali climate filmmakers and had conversations with working farmers. Even though it was virtual, we wanted the sessions to be as interactive as possible. Participants discussed the then ongoing floods in Pakistan and the global response to changing farming practices in Nepal.

I'm awed by the stories that my colleagues brought to the table. Some were deeply personal and almost always, everyone wanted to tell these stories because they cared. Not every story was successful straight away but participants were forced to build connections and move away from their comfort zones. The journey is as important as the product.

This process has been a personal growth for me. I'd always avoided working in Nepali language but this time around, I found myself revising my stance after working with colleagues writing in and broadcasting in the Nepali language. It was a challenge at times but after seeing the effort of some of the participants in their storytelling, it was worth it. I hope it has been as enjoyable a process for the participants as it has been for me





Bhagirathi Pandit

Bhagirathi Pandit is from Sindupalchowk. She is a post graduate student in mass communication and has experience in community radio and online media. Currently she is working at aayomail.com, where she reports about social issues.

“ This program has helped me a lot professionally. I have chosen the subject of how changing patterns of rainfall destroyed apple farming in Helambu, and the farmers farmed potatoes and radish for a long time before turning to kiwi farming as a new hope for income generation. I chose this subject because I believed that the history of apple farming in Helambu should not be forgotten, and that the pain of the farmers should be documented. It was challenging to look for the horticultural farm in the jungles of Sermathan and to meet the local officials. Although I am a resident of Helambu, I was from a different community, and language was a barrier. In future, I will internalize the knowledge I received in the mentoring sessions. ”







Bhasha Sharma

Bhasha Sharma is from Sukhaura, Baglung. She started her career from local newspapers and radio and has been engaged in the media sector for quite some time now. She is working as the senior correspondent for the political bureau of Nepal Republic Media.

“ Since climate change and gender are important subjects which should be continuously raised, I will continue to work on them. I chose the subject of silkworm farming because it is declining in Nepal despite having good possibilities and being women-friendly. I wanted to draw the government’s attention to this fact. I found that this sector has many opportunities for women farmers. The silkworm farmers in Lamidanda of Myagang Village Municipality in Nuwakot were quite pleased when I got there to report. Why? How? How come you are interested in this subject? They asked many such questions. The British Council Grant has widened my knowledge of climate change. I have taken this program as a good opportunity to understand this subject, and an important achievement. ”







Chandani Kathayat

Chandani Kathayat is from Lekbeshi, Surkhet. She started her journey from Radio, working as news producer and presenter. She has also worked as Surkhet Correspondent for Kantipur Daily. Currently, she is working as trainee reporter for globalpressjournal.com

“ I had rarely reported about climate change. From this training, I got the opportunity to learn not just the basics of climate change, but also about how the media presents the activities related to the impacts of climate change. In this training I got in-depth knowledge of the subjects related to climate change and gender, and how to look for possible sources for such stories. For the grant, I chose the subject of the impact of drying water sources on Raute women. Though there have not been any scientific studies about this subject, it is being discussed. Informed by my learning in the grant, in future I commit to raise climate change related issues in the media. ”



**Changing
weather:
A troubled
Raute woman**

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Durga Rana Magar

Durga Rana Magar is from Dhading and currently residing in Pokhara. She started her career as a radio journalist and now is associated with an online news portal. She writes on the issues of children, women, gender equality, disability rights and climate change.

“ I am happy to learn and understand more about climate change issues through this grant. Prior to this, I did not have formal understanding of climate change, but was interested to understand and write about it. I felt that the impact of climate change on Fewa lake in Pokhara, the aquatic animals there, and the Jalari community dependent on it is a serious issue which should be highlighted, which is the reason I chose this subject. The guidance from the trainers in the program helped me understand multiple facets related to climate change and women, and inspired me to write about it. Now I feel the need to write and talk about the serious and sensitive issue of climate change. ”







Indra K.C

Indra KC is from Kailali. She started her journey through radio, currently she is working as a news anchor in Radio Ghodaghodi. She also works as a correspondent for Sudur Sandesh daily newspaper, covering gender and social issues.

“ I had the opportunity to learn many things from this grant, and also faced many challenges while working. In the beginning, it was difficult to reach remote places like Chure and Bhajani of Kailali. The local residents there hesitated to talk, saying ‘journalists just come and go.’ As my research progressed, I understood that the situation of the flood victims was quite fragile, they were deprived of education and health services. I chose the subject of how human factors combined with climate change have increased instances of floods and landslides, because I write on environment and climate change frequently. I will continue to write on these topics in future. From the mentors I learnt how to work well. I got the opportunity to be trained by expert trainers, which led to good learning. ”

 **Kalikadarpan**

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 **Those who were driven to the forest by landslides: those who stay awake all night to save their lives**

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Monika Malla

Monika Malla is from Sankhu, Kathmandu. She has been working as a freelance photojournalist for quite some years. She has worked with many media outlets and is in constant search of stories, shots that stand different and are least reported.

“ Women have a secondary status in Nepali society. Men, regarded as the breadwinners of the family, have the highest status. But whenever there is an economic shortfall in the family, it's the female members who suffer. Climate change impacts female farmers heavily. This grant gave me the opportunity to get closer to the issue of climate change and its deep rooted implications for farmers. Female farmers in Sindhuli are already bearing losses and facing an economic crisis, but the government is yet to take concrete steps to solve their issues. The British Council fellowship helped me to distinguish between climate change and environmental issues, which helped me work on my story. ”

Nepali farmers battle twin problems of climate change and contagion

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Rupa Gahatraj

Rupa Gahatraj is from Banke. She started her career from radio and later worked in print media. She has worked before in Gorkhapatra daily and is now associated with Kantipur daily where she writes about the issues of women and girls.

“ This training taught me to produce stories related to climate change, and to analyse phenomena which may seem unimportant but which leave a deep impact. I believe I have strengthened my career with such knowledge and skills. A woman’s life can be spent in farming. I was able to see from up close, how those who live on their own prowess are cheated by nature. More stories about the impacts of climate change on women are yet to come. This gives me more energy to write about climate change. ”

Sometimes a flood, sometimes a woman in a drought

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Women in flood and drought problems

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Sarah Sapsanamma Rai

Sarah Sapsanamma Rai is from Bhojpur. She is currently engaged as Assistant Senior Sub Editor and News Anchor at Kantipur Television. She believes in the power of storytelling that can fuel a change and initiate conversation on issues concerning the general public.

“ My engagement with the ‘Women Reporters on Climate Change’ programme came when the second general elections since the implementation of federalism were approaching. My first story on election manifestoes of various parties looked at how sensitively the parties took climate change and how they treated its differential impacts on women. With my second story I tried to dissect the reasons and solutions to air pollution. BC’s program helped fine tune my reporting skills, thanks to the courses presented and the access to experts and achievers. As a journalist, I am committed to continue highlighting the impacts of climate change and the global need for environment friendly decisions. ”



Winter
Smog A
Leading
Cause For
Pulmonary
Issue

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Parties Fail to
Acknowledge
Women’s
Vulnerability
Towards Climate
Change

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Sarala Regmi

Sarala Regmi is from Sunsari, Dharan. She started her journalism career from radio, moving on to newspapers, and now is engaged with online media. She has been covering stories with gender lens and is keen in covering climate change and its intersectionality with gender.

“ This training helped me to gain the professional skills required to select subjects related to environment and climate change, to report, to figure out the right sources, to verify the statistics I receive, and to highlight the impacts of climate change. Black cardamom is the chief source of income in the area where I work. I have seen from up close the direct and indirect impacts of black cardamom farming on women, which is why I chose the subject. I liked the style of translating languages in the program. Every session was important because the trainers were very easy to work with, were experts well trained in teaching skills, and listened to the trainees. I received a lot of information that helped me to highlight the various facets of the impact of climate change on our society. ”



Diseases and insects in the “black gold” of the eastern hills, women’s income is drying up

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Usha Tamang

Usha Tamang is from Boch, Dolakha. She started her career from Kalinchok FM, Dolakha and is currently working at CIN, a network of community radios across the country. She is interested in the intersection between climate change, agriculture and indigenous people.

“ This training helped me to gain the professional skills required to select subjects related to environment and climate change, to report, to figure out the right sources, to verify the statistics I receive, and to highlight the impacts of climate change. Black cardamom is the chief source of income in the area where I work. I have seen from up close the direct and indirect impacts of black cardamom farming on women, which is why I chose the subject. I liked the style of translating languages in the program. Every session was important because the trainers were very easy to work with, were experts well trained in teaching skills, and listened to the trainees. I received a lot of information that helped me to highlight the various facets of the impact of climate change on our society. ”



The outbreak of Michaha species of vegetation is increasing in Nepal.

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Khabar

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Michaha
vegetation
is spreading,
experts say –
Belima Budhi
Puryaun

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