



# THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

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## Gandaki Province

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The research was conducted in collaboration with CN and Miss Jule Leitenberger, an intern from Denmark. The internship was facilitated through CN's collaboration with Danish NGO DIB, as part of Miss Leitenberger's master's degree in Human Security at Aarhus University, Denmark. The interviews were translated by CN staff when necessary.

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# ■ Executive Summary

Nepal is increasingly confronted with the escalating impacts of climate change. Owing to its geographic location in mountainous terrain, Nepal is experiencing more acute effects than many other regions. The population faces mounting pressure from extreme weather events, climate-related hazards, and altered rainfall patterns. These changes disproportionately affect rural households that depend on subsistence farming. The resulting strain is often transferred to children, limiting their access to education and forcing them to balance schooling with household labour—an issue intensified by growing uncertainty around rainfall and fears of losing an annual harvest.

This report is based on research conducted in the autumn of 2024 by the local NGO CHILDREN-Nepal, examining the effects of climate change on children’s access to education in Gandaki Province. Data were gathered through interviews and surveys with children, parents, teachers, and local civil servants. The report aims to raise awareness of the constitutional right to education and to highlight the long-term risks of inaction. Its findings provide evidence-based insights to inform and strengthen local policy development.

## ■ List of Abbreviations

- CN** - Children Nepal
- GDP** - Gross Domestic Product
- GoN** - Government of Nepal
- NAP** – National Adaptation Plan 2021-2050
- NGO** - Non-Governmental Organisation
- SDG** - Sustainable Development Goals
- SESP** - Social and Environmental Safeguard Policy
- SSDP** - Social Security Development Program

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## 5 Climate Concerns

On September 28, 2024, heavy rainfall caused widespread flooding in Nepal, damaging large areas of the country, destroying hundreds of houses, displacing thousands, and severely affecting the economy. The agricultural sector, vital for most Nepalese families, was particularly impacted due to large-scale crop losses just before harvest. This disaster, triggered by extreme weather, is the latest in a series of climate-related events that recently hit Nepal, including the devastating 2017 floods and the 2015 Gorkha earthquake. These extreme weather events have damaged public and private property and deepened vulnerabilities for those already at risk (Ngakhusi, 2024; Prasain, 2024).

Nepal remains a developing country with limited infrastructure and weak disaster management, exacerbating the socio-economic impact of extreme weather. Its geographical location in a seismically active zone, increases the risks of earthquakes. Furthermore, extreme weather events brought about by climate change place over 80 per cent of the Nepalese population at risk of natural hazards, including floods, landslides, windstorms, hailstorms, fires, earthquakes, and Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs).

Nepal is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The Asian Development Bank estimates a potential annual GDP 2.2% loss due to climate change by 2050. The cost of climate threats is considered moderate until 2050. The consequences of a probable loss of GDP might be severe for food security and the marginalized and poor members of society (Ahmed & Suphachalasai, 2014, pp. 15-16).

But who is affected by these incidents and possible scenarios in the future? The society of Nepal, families, men and women—but especially children. Children are physically and socially more vulnerable, requiring greater support. Their future rests in the hands of society and policymakers. Their needs should not be overlooked or forgotten in times of change and uncertainty.

Given children's heightened vulnerability to climate change, the Government of Nepal (GoN) has recognised the country's limited adaptive capacity and established the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) to strengthen the country's resilience by 2050. However, the education sector remains largely overlooked in the NAP (Government of Nepal, 2021a).

These challenges, along with the urgent need to support Nepalese children, form the basis for this report formed by CHILDREN-Nepal's (CN) research on:

The Impact of Climate Change on the Right to Education in Gandaki Province.

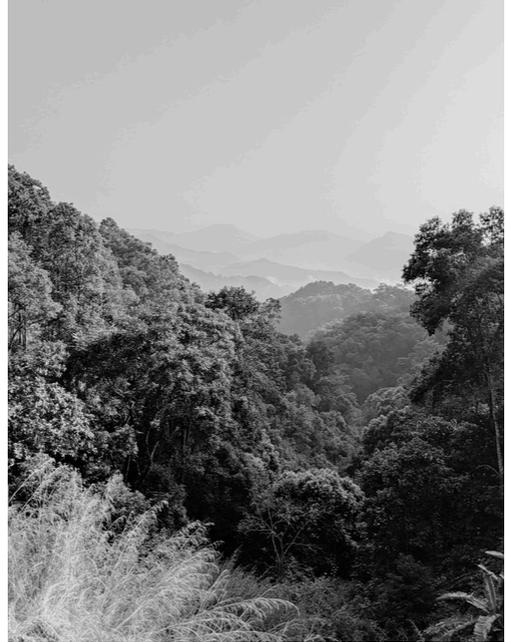
Through interviews and surveys conducted with children, parents, teachers, and local civil servants in Gandaki Province, qualitative and quantitative data were collected to address the following research question:

- What are the main challenges that climate change poses to children's right to education in Gandaki Province?
- How does climate change influence children's access to education in Gandaki Province?



## 5.1 Education in Nepal

Nepal's vulnerability to climate change extends beyond the expected declining GDP, as increasing climate-related disasters continue to significantly damage infrastructure, agricultural production, and the educational sector.



In recent decades, Nepal as a country, has made notable progress in providing access to education and improving literacy rates. Despite these changes, the right to education, enshrined in Nepal's 2015 Constitution, remains at risk due to the growing challenges posed by climate change (GoN, 2018; Ministry of Education, 2022).

The Constitution of Nepal explicitly guarantees children's right to education.

***§31 Right relating to education: (1) Every citizen shall have the right of access to basic education. (2) Every citizen shall have the right to get compulsory and free education up to the basic level and free education up to the secondary level from the state. (3) The citizens with disabilities and the economically indigent citizens shall have the right to get free higher education following the law (FAO, 2024).***

Over the years, the GoN has introduced multiple programs to uphold children's constitutional right to education. The School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) (2016/17–2022/23) aimed to reform school education in its core dimensions; equity, quality, efficiency, governance and management, and resilience, to ensure equitable access to quality education. Its vision was to "contribute to the development of self-sustainable, competitive, innovative, and value-oriented citizens for the socioeconomic transformation of the nation," while its target was "to produce the necessary human resources to elevate Nepal's status from a Least Developed Country by 2022 and to achieve middle-income country status by 2030." (Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 6). The SSDP was followed by the School Education Sector Plan (SESP) (2022/23–2031/32), which serves as Nepal's main policy framework for ensuring inclusive and quality education for all children (Ministry of Education, 2022). Gandaki Province has outlined its educational strategy in the Gandaki Province Education Policy 2078 (2021). This five-year policy serves to implement national educational goals at the provincial level (Gandaki Province Ministry of Education, 2021).

The GoN is committed to strengthen the education sector, aiming to achieve an equitable society based on social justice, inclusion, and human rights (Ministry of Education, 2022, p. 11).

It seeks to develop an educational system aligned with the Constitution of Nepal, ensuring free and compulsory basic education and free secondary education. Despite the GoN's commitment, budgetary allocations have declined as a percentage of total expenditure since 2009/10, falling short of the 20% commitment (Kundu, 2023). The reduction of investment in the nation's education could have adverse consequences in the long run. In 2022, UNICEF data based on 2019 surveys showed that while 82% of pupils complete primary education (grades 1–5), 73% complete lower secondary education (grades 6–10), and only 27% complete upper secondary education (grades 10–12). While Nepal has achieved a high primary completion rate, universal primary completion has not yet been reached. Particularly significant are the disparities along socioeconomic lines, with completion rates of 76% among the poorest and 96% among the wealthiest (Oostrum et al., 2022). For the progress of the educational sector in Nepal, understanding why attendance declines after primary and lower secondary levels remains critical, despite constitutional guarantees of free and compulsory education.

With climate change increasingly impacting Nepal, its long-term effects on the education sector must be considered. Rather than viewing the issue solely through the lens of disaster response to hazards, which is done in the SESP, an additional long-term adaptation strategy for the education system may be necessary.



## 5.2 Gandaki Province

Gandaki Province (Province 4) is one out of seven provinces of Nepal. The province stretches from the lowland Terai region in the south, through the hills, and up into the mountains. It comprises 11 districts and 85 local governments, including one Metropolitan City, 26 Municipalities, and 58 Rural Municipalities, divided into 759 wards (Ministry of Education, 2022).

With 2,403,014 residents, Gandaki Province accounts for 9.06% of Nepal's population, which is significantly lower than other more populated provinces like Madhesh Province (Province 2) located in Terai, where 21% of the population live. 85% of the population across 73 local governments have electricity access, while 14.19% live below the poverty line (GoN, 2019; Ministry of Education, 2022, p. 7).

According to the 2021 National Population and Housing Census, Gandaki Province has a literacy rate of 81.7% (male: 88.8%, female: 75.3%), exceeding the national average of 76.2% (male: 83.6%, female: 69.4%). It also has the highest proportion of children (aged 7–14) with foundational reading and numeracy skills. However, this figure remains at only 50%, underscoring the need for further progress towards universal literacy and numeracy (Oostrum et al., 2022, p. 15).

While out-of-school rates in Gandaki are relatively low, challenges persist. The province's out-of-school rate for upper secondary education stands at 10%, compared to 24% in Province 2 (see Figure 1).

### Regional disaggregation

FIGURE 33 Out-of-school rates by province

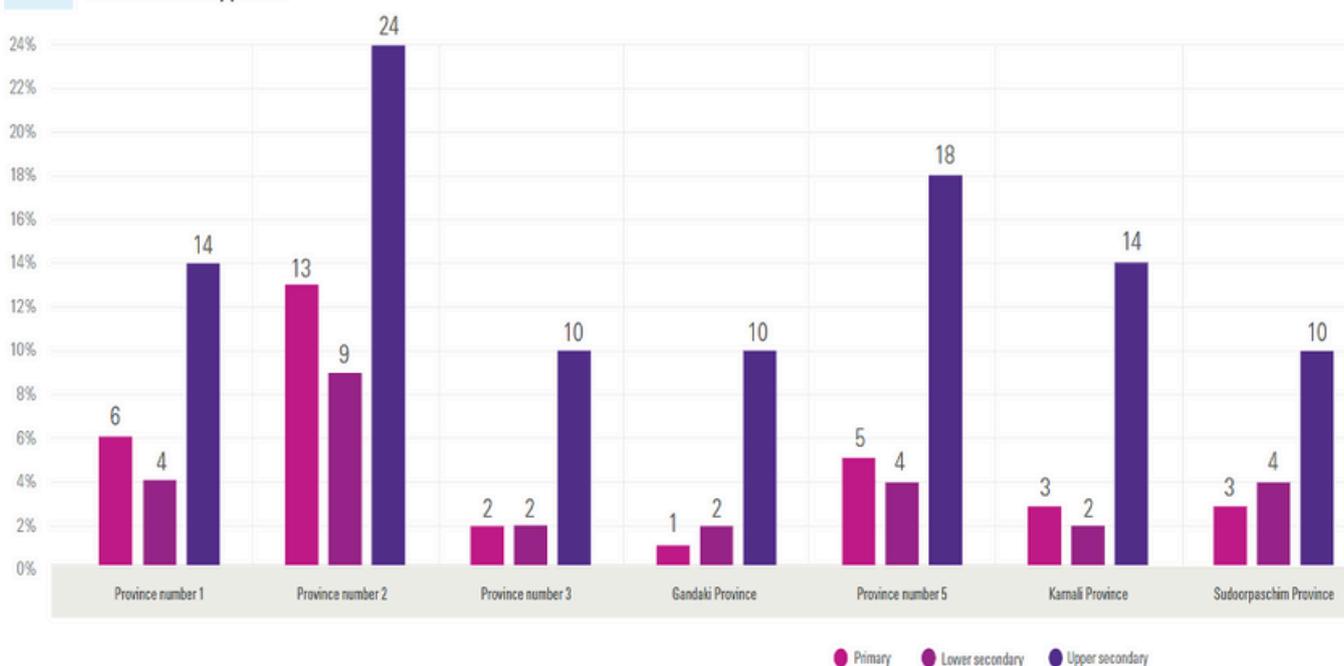
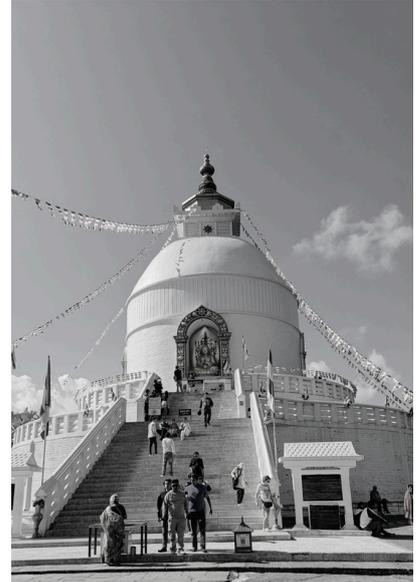


Figure 1- Regional disaggregation – (Oostrum et al., 2022)

This figure highlights Gandaki Province's progress in education, with literacy rates above the national average and relatively strong reading and numeracy skills. It further suggest the need for continued efforts in the education sector to achieve equitable access to quality education for every child in Gandaki Province (Government of Nepal, 2021b; Ministry of Education, 2022).

## 5.3 CHILDREN-Nepal

The non-profit, non-governmental (NGO), and guaranteed fair trade organization CHILDREN-Nepal (CN) was founded in 1995 by a group of Nepalese professionals. Having grown up in discriminatory and violent conditions, their aim was – and is - to support children from marginalised families unable to provide basic needs such as shelter, food, healthcare, and education. Many children have been exploited, exposed to violence and crime, and suffer from ongoing physical and mental health issues. CN is committed to a vision of a society where children fully enjoy their rights, placing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child at the centre of change in Nepal (CHILDREN-Nepal, 2024).



DIB, the partner organisation of CN, is a small Danish member-based organisation working to reduce inequality, alleviate poverty, and mitigate climate change through collaborations with local organisations and NGOs (DIB, 2023). The partnership between CN and DIB, which has developed since 2016, underpins projects funded by the Danish Civil Society Fund, managed on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the Danish umbrella organisation CISU. Within this collaboration, DIB is responsible for management and monitoring, while CN applies its local expertise to implement activities on the ground.

## 6 Methods

This report builds upon a case study of mixed methods, combining both qualitative and quantitative data (Stokes & Wall, 2017). This approach was chosen to link individual experiences with the broader perspectives of the public. The two data types will be integrated using an explanatory sequential design, where quantitative results are further clarified with qualitative data. The quantitative data will offer a broader overview of Gandaki Province, while the qualitative data will help to explain and add depth to these findings (Creswell et al., 2023).

Before the collection of data, CN defined four participant groups: children (puils and dropouts), parents, teachers, and local civil servants. These groups were selected for their perspectives on children's access to education. The research centres on children, but their education does not occur in a vacuum, it is influenced by external factors such as parents' income, government laws and policies, and, among others, school conditions (Dahal et al., 2019).

### 6.1 Quantitative

CN staff developed four surveys, one for each participant group, based on CN's knowledge and expertise. Each survey contained between 28 and 30 questions and was available in both English and Nepali. The surveys were conducted using Kobotoolbox.org, an online tool provided free for nonprofit organisations.

The survey questions aimed to gather measurable data on the extent to which climate change affects livelihoods in Gandaki Province (Stokes & Wall, 2017). All questions were voluntary, except one, which was included in all four surveys: *Do you think climate change has an impact on children's right to education?* This mandatory question ensured that feedback on this key issue was gathered, enabling comparisons across participant groups regarding their perceptions regarding their perception of the impact on education of climate induced challenges (ibid: 2017). When formulating the surveys, we were aware that the large number of questions could cause participants to lose interest and skip questions. This concern was kept in mind when making this question compulsory and leaving all other questions open for voluntary response.

CN staff members were on hand to clarify questions when needed, as some participants, particularly those who were illiterate, required additional support to complete the surveys. For data analysis, the open-source software R was used, providing strong data visualisation tools and allowing effective cross-referencing of the four datasets. Participation was voluntary, and all data were stored confidentially and anonymously.



## 6.2 Qualitative

For qualitative data collection, interviews were conducted with each of the participant groups mentioned earlier. The interviews were semi-structured and were designed to last between 10 and 15 minutes (Bernard, 2006, p. 195). The decision to keep the interviews relatively short was made due to the four participant groups and the objective of interviewing an equal number of female and male participants. Given the limited scope of the research, and the qualitative data supplementing the quantitative data, it would not have been feasible to analyse a minimum of 48 long lasting interviews.

The interviews were recorder and conducted in pairs: consisting of the intern, and a CN staff member who helped with translation when participants required an English translator. An interview guide was developed for each participant group, with questions formulated in close collaboration with the CN staff. The guide served as a tool to ensure that all relevant topics were addressed consistently across interviews. This approach was chosen because each participant could only be interviewed once, and it was important to collect reliable and comparable data. At the same time, the method allowed participants to shift the focus toward themes and concerns that were particularly relevant to them (Bernard, 2017, pp. 219-261).

For analysis, all interviews were transcribed and coded according to the following topics: climate change, gender differences, access to education, and desires for change regarding schooling in Nepal (Saldaña, 2020).

Participation in the interviews was voluntary, and all collected data were kept confidential and stored anonymously to protect all participants.

# 7 The Data

The data was collected between **November 21, 2024**, and **December 5, 2024**. The data collection took place in six out of eleven districts in Gandaki Province, encompassing both urban and rural areas: Tanahun, Lamjung, Baglung, Kaski, Myagdi, and Parbat.

**During this period 382 participated in survey and interviews**



114 Pupils  
(62F, 50M, 2N/A)



97 Parents  
(71F, 26M)



89 Teachers  
(37F, 52M)



65 Local Civil  
Servants  
(28F, 37M)



17 Dropout  
Children  
(10F, 7M)

## 325 Surveys

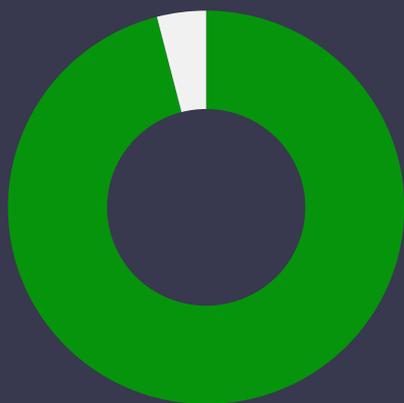
- 100 Pupils (55F, 43M, 2N/A)
- 12 Dropout Children (7F, 5M)
- 83 Parents (62F, 21M)
- 75 Teachers (31F, 44M)
- 55 Local Civil Servants (25F, 30M)

## 57 Interviews

- 14 Pupils (7F, 7M), age 13–19
- 5 Dropout Children (3F, 2M), age 16–18
- 14 Parents (9F, 5M), age 21–69
- 14 Teachers (6F, 8M), age 24–59
- 10 Local Civil Servants (3F, 7M), age 26–53



The aim was to achieve equal gender participation in each group; ultimately, 208 females and 168 males participated.



**96%**

*Aware of  
Constitutional Right*

## 8 Findings

The following section will emphasize the findings related to the four previously defined groups of participants.

### 8.1 Children

In this group, the participation rate was 55.3% female and 42.8% male respondents. The participants were between 13 and 19 years old. Out of the 112 participants, 108 confirmed being aware of their right to education as stated in the Constitution (Question 05).

88% of respondents confirmed that they attend school regularly, with 78.5% stating they "always" go to school. Only 9.8% responded that they attend school "often" or "sometimes" (Question 06). The pupils' ability to attend school was influenced by multiple factors, of which one was their place of residence. In more urban districts like Kaski, where many pupils would attend school in Pokhara, they were more likely to be able to attend school regularly. Conversely, pupils living close to their schools in Baglung and Myagdi found it easier to attend school regularly, even though they were living in more rural districts. Pupils with longer commutes (over 30 minutes on foot) were more affected by the weather. One student from Kaski district initially stated that she always attended school and only missed classes when she was sick. Later, she recalled that heavy rain or strong winds sometimes made it impossible for her to walk the 30 minutes to school (pupil 02). Similarly, two pupils from Parbat mentioned that during heavy rainfall, they were unable to attend school as they also lived in rural areas where getting to school was difficult (pupils 05, 06).

111 out of 112 children responded to the survey question: Do you experience climate change/extreme weather in your daily life? (Question 13). Most reported phenomena such as heavy rainfall, the spread of new diseases, forest fires, droughts, cold waves, and floods. In the interviews, excessive rainfall, flooding, and landslides were mentioned in all 14 interviews. The most significant change noted by the children was the altered precipitation patterns, which have a direct impact on farming families. One student from Myagdi shared that he could not attend school regularly because he had to help with rice harvesting, a task his friends also had to undertake. Besides missing school due to needed assistance in his home, he shared: "When he was sleeping at night, it rained heavily, and the flood came and destroyed the house. Is damage, the house damage." (translated by CN staff, pupil 12). When the children were asked in the survey what would help ensure their access to education, they chose the following answers (Figure 2):

**Figure 2 - Question 9: What would help you to ensure your right to education?**



The interviews showed that changes in precipitation patterns have caused income losses for the families. Children both pupils and dropout children suggested that the government should create more job opportunities for parents to ensure that they better meet their children's needs and become financially stable (pupils 03, 05). Long periods of drought are reducing agricultural production, leading to food shortages and negatively impacting the children's ability to study (pupil 02). Particularly, children from economically disadvantaged families face multiple challenges that hinder their access to education, including worsening economic conditions, an increase in extreme weather events, and the need to assist with household responsibilities. As a result, many children are unable to receive the education to which they are entitled. A pupil from Baglung shared his concerns: "Children from remote areas are suffering; they are not getting their proper rights. They are deprived of the rights listed in the constitution." (pupil 09).

In addition to these indirect consequences of environmental change, rising temperatures have contributed to the spread of new diseases across all districts. One survey question asked pupils to assess the impact of different climate-related phenomena on their lives. Among all the participating pupils, diseases were ranked as having the most significant impact on their education (Question 22). In the interviews, when asked about reasons for not attending school, many pupils responded they only miss school when they were ill. Some described this as a normal occurrence (pupils 08, 07, 04, 02). Others emphasised an increase in sickness due to the emergence of new mosquito-borne diseases previously unknown in the region (pupils 13, 10, 09).

When asked in the survey who should take responsibility for ensuring children's access to education, children responded as follows (Questions 27, 28, and 29):

**82,1%**

***said the government  
should take action***

**81,25%**

***said the community  
should take action***

**83%**

***said parents should  
take action***

Regarding the role of the government, children emphasized the need for effective policy implementation, awareness campaigns, stricter regulations for environmental protection, and government-led initiatives to support education and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

For the parents, the children proposed actions at the household level. These included maintaining a clean environment, ensuring proper sanitation, educating children about climate change, providing necessary resources, promoting gender equality in education, and consistently supporting their children's schooling. Across all groups (government, community and parents), children agreed on the need for awareness programs, increased education on climate change, and initiatives addressing its impact on children's education (Questions 27, 28, and 29).

During the interviews, when asked who should be responsible for ensuring the right to education, children agreed that parents should be made more aware of the importance of education and prioritise sending their children to school. They also expressed the view the government should do more than "just pass laws". There were calls for proper policies, as many pupils criticized the constitution's provisions as not reaching everyone. Many pupils criticised the fact that constitutional provisions on education do not reach all children, and that not all children are receiving the education to which they are legally entitled.

Pupils also called for the elimination of discrimination in schools based on economic background or gender. The need for infrastructure improvements, to be facilitated by the government, was also strongly emphasised (pupils 13,10,03,04).

The children who had dropped out of school and participated in the survey and interviews conveyed the pressure they face in their everyday lives. For some, the decision to leave school stemmed from a lack of social connection or motivation, often linked to limited prospects for future employment. Others left school to take on household responsibilities, or because they married and their husband could not or would not support their continued education. Alongside the perspectives of current pupils, it became evident that children from economically disadvantaged families are particularly vulnerable to dropping out in order to support agricultural work at home. These families are increasingly affected by unpredictable rainfall patterns, placing further strain on livelihoods. For many children, education is at risk of being exchanged for labour on their family farms.

The changing climate is making life increasingly difficult for families in Gandaki Province, and these challenges are directly affecting children. Many children face disruptions to their education due to economic hardship, food insecurity, and health issues. Without action, more children risk missing out on the education they are entitled to.





## 8.2 Parents

Parents play a crucial role in shaping their children's lives and personalities. The majority of parents who participated in the survey and in the interviews were women, and all respondents were between the ages of 31 and 60 years.

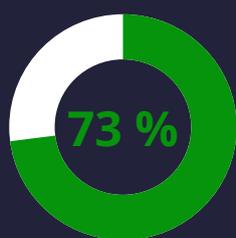
In Gandaki Province, 72.4% of families rely on agriculture as their primary livelihood, with paddy as the most cultivated crop, followed by maize and wheat. Paddy cultivation, in particular, is heavily dependent on a stable rainfall pattern (GoN, 2019; MOALD, 2022). According to the survey, 57.8% of parents mentioned that climate change is reducing agricultural production and increasing hunger (Question 11). All parents agreed that monsoon rain has become unreliable, the drought is increasing, and when the rain comes, they experience it all coming at once. The increasing unpredictability has created insecurity in their livelihoods. Some parents have felt a bigger impact than others, but the commonality is that the insecurity caused by climate-induced environmental change is affecting children's education.

Since many families rely on rainfall for their agricultural production children are often required to help at home instead of attending school. Changing precipitation patterns have also begun to shift the harvesting period, as the monsoon rain is starting later and ending later. Rising temperatures observed in some districts have caused rice crops to mature earlier, increasing their vulnerability to heavy rain or hailstorms, which can devastate harvests. When crops are at risk of destruction, families have no choice but to ask for every available helping hand, including their children, to secure the harvest. A failed harvest leaves families with little or no food until the next season, forcing them to buy expensive food, putting further economic pressure on household finances. The economic pressure limits resources available for children's education, making it harder for families to prioritise schooling (Parent 06,09,10). The decrease in income caused by crop destruction also indirectly affects children's education. In the survey, 62.6% of parents agreed that climate change is impacting their children's education by damaging school materials and uniforms (Question 11).

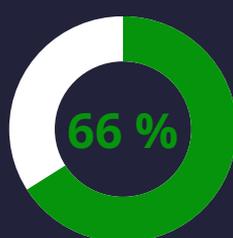
Families may struggle to afford essential items, such as warm clothing for the winter or basic school supplies, which are often damaged by heavy rainfall and, in many cases, cannot be replaced.

While most parents recognised the importance of their children’s education, the difficult economic circumstances sometimes left them with no choice but to withdraw their children from school. One mother shared that she could only attend school until grade 7 before being married. Her husband could not afford to pay for her education, giving her no other option than to give it up (Parent 13). A father from Tanahun, who himself had limited education, was unaware of his children’s right to free education under the constitution (Parent 08). Another single mother, a Dalit from Lamjung who had only completed grade 7, did not know that Dalit girls are entitled to free education up to higher education under the constitution (Parent 14).

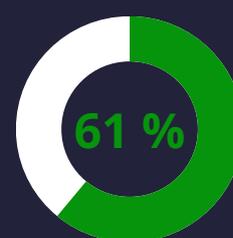
Beyond the barriers to education caused by economic struggles and lack of access to education, climate change is introducing new environmental risks. 73.4% of parents mentioned experiencing droughts and an increase in new diseases, while 66.2% noted heavy rainfall and forest fires in their daily lives (Question 13). Several parents spoke about how extreme weather events like heavy rainfall and landslides had caused significant problems, including the destruction of their homes (Parent 02). Some families reported that natural springs have dried up or been destroyed by floods, further exacerbating their hardships (Parents 07, 11). The destruction caused by climate change extends beyond personal property. 61.4% of parents mentioned that climate change has damaged infrastructure, including roads leading to schools (Question 11). In some cases, extreme weather events have made children fearful of leaving home, forcing parents to persuade or pressure them to attend school despite the risks (Parents 02, 06, 09, 10).



*Parents experience droughts and an increase in new diseases,*

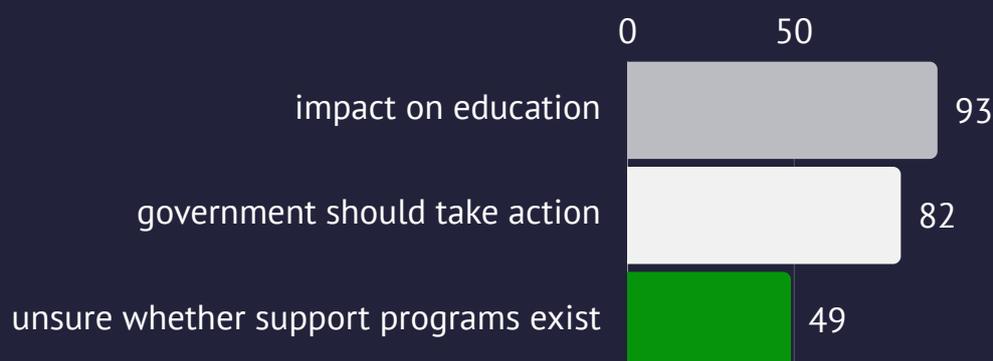


*Parents noted heavy rainfall and forest fires*



*Parents reported that climate change has damaged infrastructure*

Overall, 92.7% of parents agreed that climate change is having an impact on their children's education (Question 10), and 81.9% agreed that the government should take action to ensure all children receive their right to education (Question 28). 49% of parents were unsure whether government programs exist to support children's education during extreme weather conditions (Question 24). A father from Kaski criticized the government for not doing enough (Parent 05). A mother from Kaski expressed frustration that the constitution is discriminatory because not every child receives free education (Parent 04). The families who need the most support and are often not being reached by the constitution.



If no action is taken, families risk falling into a vicious cycle. Climate change continues to alter precipitation patterns, disrupting agricultural patterns, and leading to crop failures. This results in families facing increasing financial strain, limiting resources for families to prioritise their children's education. While the Constitution guarantees free education, many families remain unaware of their children's rights, and the reality is far from ideal for those most in need. Despite the government's efforts to strengthen climate resilience and improve education, these initiatives are not reaching the communities who need them most. In rural areas, where schools are often distant and transportation is limited, parents struggle to make ends meet.

### 8.3 Teachers

The 75 participating teachers in the survey were from urban and rural area schools. Their age was in average between 30 and 60 years. Gender participation was nearly equal, with slightly more male participants than female.

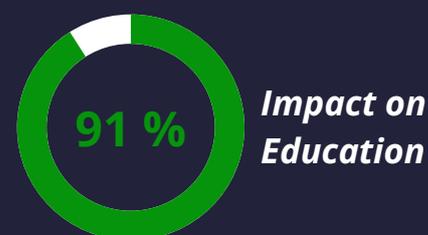
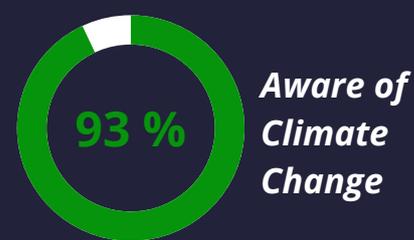
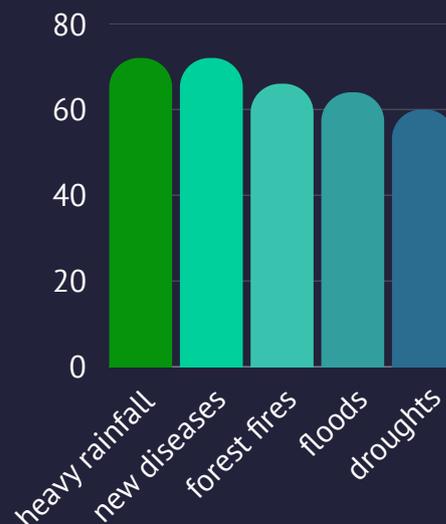
When asked which climate phenomenon teachers experience most in their daily lives, 72% reported heavy rainfall, 72% noted an increase in new diseases, 66.6% mentioned forest fires, 64% identified floods, and 60% cited droughts (Question 12).

The majority of teachers (93.3%) are aware of climate change (Question 06), and 90.6% acknowledge it has an impact on education (Question 08). When asked which factor they believe most affects education, the most common response was that climate change is reducing agricultural production and increasing hunger, with 56% of teachers selecting this option (Question 9). Interviews confirmed this response, highlighting the indirect influence of climate change on education. One teacher from Lamjung explained how parents' economic situations were forcing them to rely on their children for help. A Teacher from Myagdi noted how irregular rainfall was exacerbating poverty for families who rely on agriculture. The teacher from Baglung shared that crop damage during harvest and water pollution causing shortages in the summer were major concerns. These extreme weathers disrupt the infrastructure and agriculture and impact the education of children indirectly, by making it difficult or impossible for pupils to attend school.

When asked how climate change affects education (Question 08), the primary response was the difficulty children face in reaching school due to extreme weather conditions, including heavy rainfall, landslides, flooding, and cold temperatures.

In the interviews, teachers shared similar observations, describing how children, particularly during the rainy season when rain and flooding create obstacles for children, struggle with long commutes to school (Teacher 9).

The extreme weather damages school infrastructure, like buildings and roads, causing educational facilities to close and forcing children to stay home. Two teachers, one from Lamjung and one from Baglung, shared that their schools had to close the previous year due to air pollution (Teachers 13, 10).



Climate change is directly impacting children's education by damaging school infrastructure and creating barriers to school attendance.

The rise in diseases such as dengue fever and other infectious diseases due to climate change has also significantly impacted children's health, preventing them from attending school regularly. The increase in diseases was frequently mentioned in the interviews (Teachers 06, 11, 04, 02). One teacher explained how the increasing diseases burden is placing additional pressure on the already weak healthcare system in rural areas, which is often unable to meet the demand (Teacher 14).

In response to the question of what the government should do to ensure children's right to education, 93% of teachers agreed that action is necessary. Several ideas were suggested during the interviews to improve the learning environment. One teacher proposed creating "hostel schools" where children from rural areas could stay at school rather than risk traveling home during extreme weather (Teacher 13). In the survey, many teachers called for awareness campaigns to educate the public and parents about climate change and for climate change education to be integrated into school curricula from an early age. Long-term strategies, such as developing and implementing climate policies for the education sector, introducing sustainability measures, and incorporating climate adaptation into government programs and infrastructure planning, were also suggested by the teachers. Other suggestions included exploring alternative education models with more practical and hands-on approaches, adapting school infrastructure, and strengthening preparedness for climate-related crises (Question 26).

***Action is Necessary***

**93%**

Teachers are well aware of the direct and indirect impacts of climate change on education. They recognize that changes are needed at both the school level and within the broader education sector to ensure every child, whether in rural or urban areas, receives the education they are entitled to. Which hopefully will help children in Gandaki Province to become more resilient and better equipped to adapt to the ever-changing environment.

## 8.4 Local Civil Servants

The local civil servants who participated in the survey and in the interviews held various positions, ranging from mayors to secretaries, and were employed at Municipalities, Rural Municipalities and Wards across the seven districts in the province. Among the participants, 54.5% were male, and 45.4% were female with an age of 19 to 40 years.

All participants stated being familiar with the concept of climate change, with the most common answers aspects including rising temperatures (96.3%), heat waves, heavy rainfall, flooding, cold waves, pollution, and landslides. Additionally, 96.3% ticked “yes” when asked *Do you think climate change has an impact on children’s right to education?* (Question 07,08,09).

**96,3%**

*yes, climate change has an impact on children’s right to education*

As the other participant groups, civil servants were asked whether they experienced climate change and extreme weather in their daily lives. Heavy rainfall was the most frequently reported phenomenon, with 85.4% of respondents selecting it, followed closely by the increase in new diseases (also 85.4%) (Question 12). In Myagdi, a civil servant mentioned that members of the municipality had lost their lives due to dengue fever and that many others had been affected (Gov.05). Two officials from Baglung also highlighted the growing prevalence of diseases in their region. One noted a rise in mosquitoes carrying dengue, while the other linked rising temperatures to a higher incidence of illness, leading to reduced productivity (Gov.03, 04).

A similar situation was described in Lamjung, where various diseases were disrupting children’s education. Eye infections were particularly numerous, as noted by one servant, while another emphasised that rising temperatures were contributing to the spread of vector-borne diseases such as dengue. Additionally, viral and bacterial infections were reportedly becoming more common due to worsening water pollution in the district (Gov.06, 07).

Figure 3 illustrates the impacts of climate change on education as identified by the local civil servants. The most frequently mentioned consequences included school closures, reduced agricultural production leading to increased hunger, diminished access to clean water for families, and damage to school buildings.

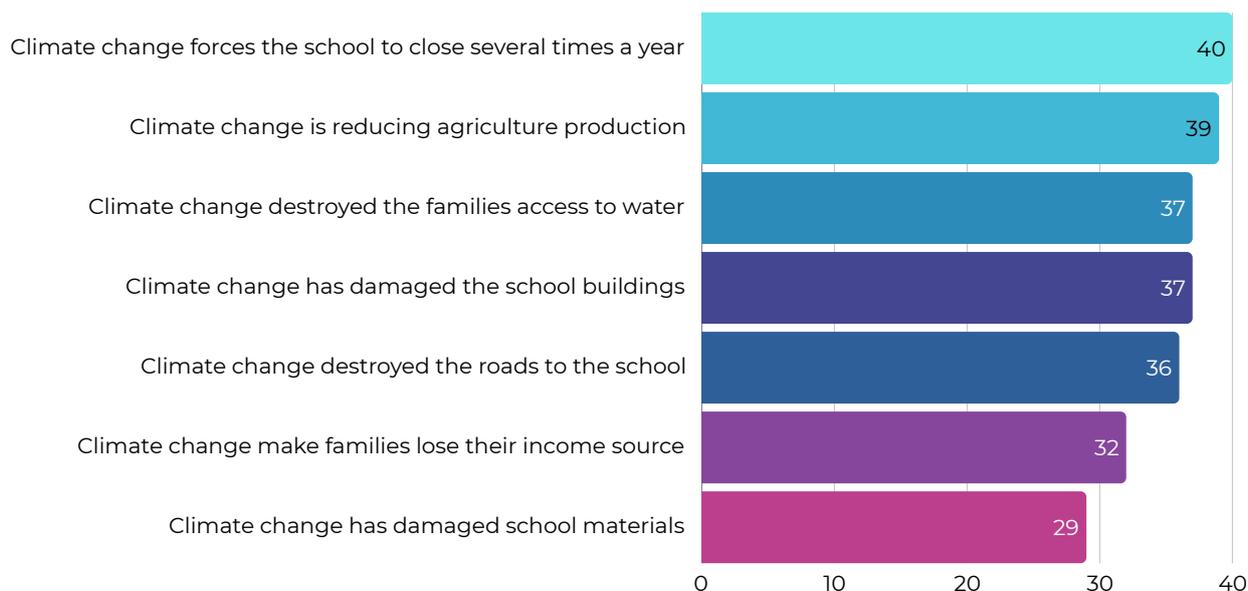


Figure 3 – Responses to the question: *If yes, how do you think climate change is impacting children's education?*

Local civil servants were asked about their awareness of government programmes addressing the securing of the right to education during and after climate crises (question 11). Of the respondents, 24 participants chose “I don’t know”, and eight chose “No,” making a total of 58.1% unaware of any actions taken to ensure the right to education regarding climate crisis and the impact of it. The participants were from various positions within the local governments and were not connected to education, which could explain their lack of knowledge about such programmes.

A couple of civil servants mentioned programmes aimed at mitigating climate-related educational challenges, such as supporting economically vulnerable families and dengue awareness campaigns. These responses painted a picture of districts facing challenges but believing they were well-prepared to handle them (Gov. 07, 05, 09). They had begun to develop strategies to minimise repeated school closures, such as adjusting holiday schedules to coincide with extreme weather seasons. While this represents a positive development, the measures did not appear sufficient, as pupils, teachers, and parents from the same district continued to report challenges linked to climate change. Teachers excused that schools were forced to collect money from parents due to insufficient government funding, making it difficult for families to afford education beyond grade 8 as the costs for higher secondary schooling continued to rise (Teacher 13).

The financial burden on families is further exacerbated by climate change. A servant from Lamjung shared that while they were aware of the right to “free” education, they could not cover the costs with the available funding. Educational expenses such as materials, uniforms, and transportation pose significant financial challenges, particularly for families already struggling with climate-related economic stress.

A civil servant from Tanahun explained, in a middle-class family, food comes first, and when food is scarce, child marriage becomes more likely, leaving the children unable to attend school (Gov.02). Poverty, compounded by climate change, leads to food insecurity, diminishes the perceived value of education, trapping families in a cycle where schooling becomes secondary.

A civil servant from Myagdi explained: “Because of climate change, everyone is getting poorer, as they are losing their production. This automatically impacts access to education for children in various ways.” He also shared that the previous year, 12 households were destroyed by floods (Gov.05).

The first civil servant who was interviewed, said: “Education is needed for every child because every child is the future of our country.” While the right to education was clear to all (question 06), none of the other ten interviewees highlighted how children's education directly influences the future of the country or the idea that future lies in the hands of the children.

Climate change is having a profound impact on education, yet municipalities lack the resources to implement comprehensive strategies to address its many effects. A significant challenge remains that, despite government efforts, education is not truly free and remains inaccessible for many, particularly at the upper secondary level. Families already struggling with shifting rainfall patterns and agricultural losses find themselves increasingly unable to afford school-related expenses. The future of the province depends on its children, yet the barriers to education are growing.

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## 9 The Impact of Climate Change

The extreme rainfall in September 2024 serves as a stark reminder that climate-related disasters are intensifying, posing growing risks to infrastructure, livelihoods, and education (Government of Nepal, 2021a, p. 14). As the NAP focuses on strengthening infrastructure, water and irrigation systems, and climate-resilient agriculture, the role of education in climate adaptation remains limited. While integrating climate change education into 90% of schools is a step forward, it does not address the structural barriers preventing children from accessing education in the first place (Government of Nepal, 2021a, p. 28).

The constitution of Nepal guarantees free education, yet families struggle to cover school-related costs, particularly at the upper secondary level.

Many of those families who are entitled to support from the state under Article 31, Section 3 remain unaware of their rights due to a lack of education, leaving them and their children without access to the rights they are legally guaranteed (Oostrum et al., 2022). All four groups identified poverty, exacerbated by climate change, as one of the greatest threats to children’s right to education in Gandaki Province. Rising temperatures are linked to the spread of diseases, particularly vector-borne diseases such as dengue fever, resulting in fatalities and growing anxiety among pupils and their families. In some districts, children face water shortage, either on their way to school or within school premises when wells dry up. Combined with extreme heat and limited food, these conditions create an environment where learning is increasingly difficult.

Changes in precipitation patterns further disrupts the access to education. Delays and uncertainties in rainfall have disrupted the agricultural productivity, increasing food insecurity among families who rely on subsistence farming. At the same time, extreme weather events, such as heavy rainfall, floods, and landslides, have caused significant damage to already fragile infrastructure, made travel to school dangerous, forcing frequent closures. Figure 4 (page 27) shows that all participant groups, except children, believe children are missing 5-10 days of school due to climate change.

Interviews with pupils, parents, teachers, and local civil servants highlighted growing concerns that children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are being left behind. Furthermore, climate change-induced losses in agriculture are pushing many of these families deeper into poverty.

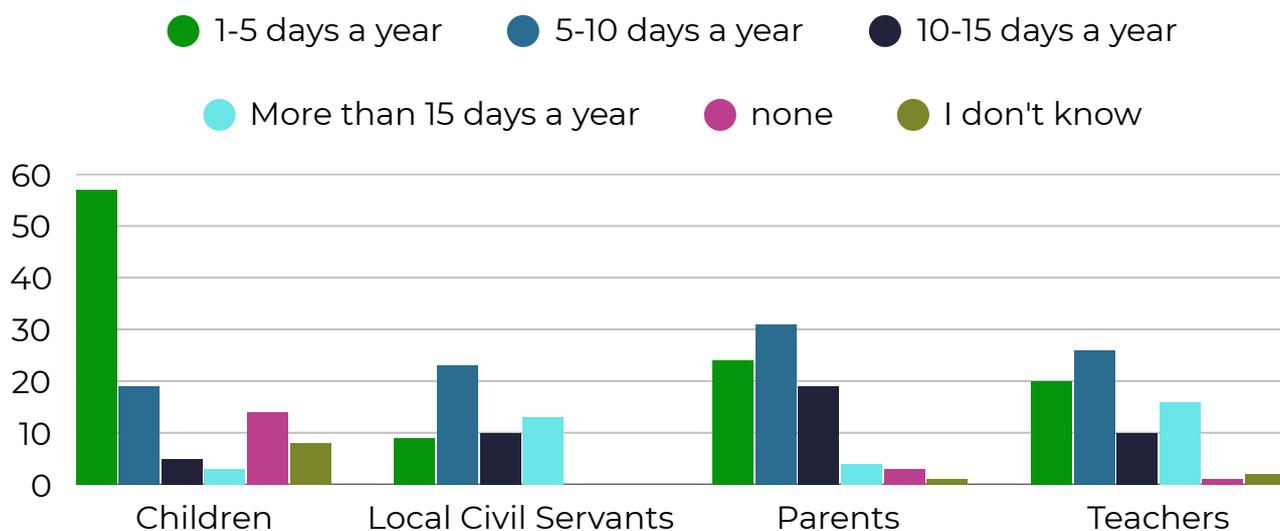


Figure 4 - School Attendance from all participant groups

If this trend continues, it will increase the vulnerability of communities across Gandaki Province and Nepal.

Addressing these challenges requires more than sector-specific interventions. Climate change's direct and indirect effects on education must be considered and integrated in policy planning and implementation. Long-term solutions are necessary to protect that children's right to education, especially for those living in rural areas further away from the schools.

Nepal's national policies (NAP and SESP), demonstrate a commitment to education; however, effective implementation remains a significant challenge. Similarly, the local policies of Gandaki Province offer limited recognition of the barriers posed by climate change. Multiple participants in the study stressed that policies alone are insufficient; there must be concrete action to ensure that commitments are translated into real improvements, particularly in marginalized and rural areas. The three levels of government, must work together with the communities to develop climate-resilient education strategies, ensuring that children's right to education is upheld in practice, not just in law.

Without sustainable, long-term interventions, climate change will continue to undermine the education system in Gandaki Province, widening inequality and limiting the long-term development prospects of Nepal. Ensuring that all children, regardless of socio-economic status, have access to safe, uninterrupted and quality education is not just a policy goal; it is a necessity for the future of Gandaki Province.



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