

G2C2<>>

A Study on Current Situation, Local Opportunities, and Barriers That Hinder Girls' Participation in Climate Solutions in Madhesh Province

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Consortium Partners



Abbreviations

G2C2	Global girls creating change
FGD	Focus group discussion
KII	Key informant interview
NCCP	Nepal National climate change policy

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Nepal's fragile ecosystem and vulnerability to natural disasters pose significant challenges for youth well-being and livelihoods. Climate change impacts, such as erratic weather patterns, glacial melting, and landslides, disproportionately affect rural and marginalized communities.

Nepal is a country with rich biodiversity and stunning landscapes, yet it faces significant challenges due to climate change. The impacts are diverse and far-reaching, with alterations in weather patterns and an increased frequency of extreme weather events, such as erratic rainfall, prolonged droughts, and intense monsoons. These changes disrupt agriculture, exacerbate water scarcity, and increase the risks of landslides and flooding, particularly in mountainous regions (World Bank, 2022).

The socio-economic impacts of climate change in Nepal are equally concerning, particularly for vulnerable populations in remote areas. Declining agricultural productivity threatens food security and livelihoods, while sectors like tourism and hydropower face uncertainties due to the changing climate (Sapkota, 2016). Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach that integrates adaptation and mitigation measures into national policies. Investing in climate-smart agriculture, sustainable water management, disaster risk reduction, and renewable energy is vital for safeguarding livelihoods and promoting sustainable development. International cooperation is crucial for Nepal to access the necessary resources and technologies to effectively combat climate change and build a resilient, sustainable future (Dahal, 2010; Climate Action, 2023).

Nepal's National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) 2019 prioritizes youth engagement, recognizing young individuals as crucial for increasing awareness about climate change. Section 8.10 of the policy specifically emphasizes capacity development initiatives to empower youth in educating their communities on climate-related issues. Furthermore, the policy addresses climate change, research, and technology development. At the local level, it advocates for the formation of youth volunteer committees to enhance community resilience to climate-related disasters.

Nepal's National Youth Policy 2015 underscores the pivotal role of youth in addressing climate change challenges and promoting sustainable development. It links youth engagement with climate action by mobilizing young people to protect ecosystems, address climate change issues, and participate in broader sustainable development programs. The policy aims to instill a sense of ownership and responsibility among Nepal's youth, recognizing their multifaceted role. Specifically, it outlines strategies to mobilize youth in protecting biodiversity, Himalayan ecosystems, wetlands, and water resources, as well as engaging them in efforts to mitigate global climate change impacts and promote sustainable development initiatives.

The Global Girls Creating Change (G2C2) Project

With the aim of preparing youth leadership for climate action—focusing on young girls and women—Hivos in Brazil, Humanis in Indonesia, and Restless Development in Nepal and Uganda are implementing the Global Girls Creating Change (G2C2) project.

Goal:

To foster and elevate a diverse movement of girl-centered climate action to lead, shape, and inform equitable, inclusive climate policies and actions.

Objectives:

- Objective 1: To support girls, in all their diversity, to develop the skills and capacity to engage in and lead inclusive climate action.
- Objective 2: To foster a diverse coalition of girls from 4 in-country programming countries (above) and up to 25 coalition countries to participate in and influence equitable climate policies at local, national, regional, and global levels.
- Objective 3: To provide 26 grants, training, and other support for girls in four countries to co-create climate innovations in their communities.

The G2C2 project operates through Girl Champions—young girls aged 18–24. While the impacts of climate change are global, countries like Nepal—which emit fewer greenhouse gases and have limited economic capacity—are disproportionately affected. Nepal is responsible for only 0.027% of global greenhouse gas emissions, yet climate-induced disasters such as floods, droughts, heatwaves, storms, untimely rainfall, cold spells, and disease outbreaks have surged, severely disrupting the economic and social activities of the people.

This project was launched to amplify voices against such climate injustice—primarily caused by wealthy and developed nations—through global collaboration. In Nepal, Restless Development is implementing the project in partnership with the Social Organization District Coordination Committee (SODCC) and LIFE Nepal, working through Girl Champions across all eight districts of Madhesh Province.



1.2 Objectives of the study

General Objective

Cohort of girls in each target community will co-lead inclusive research to analyze the current situation, barriers, local needs, and opportunities onwards climate solutions.

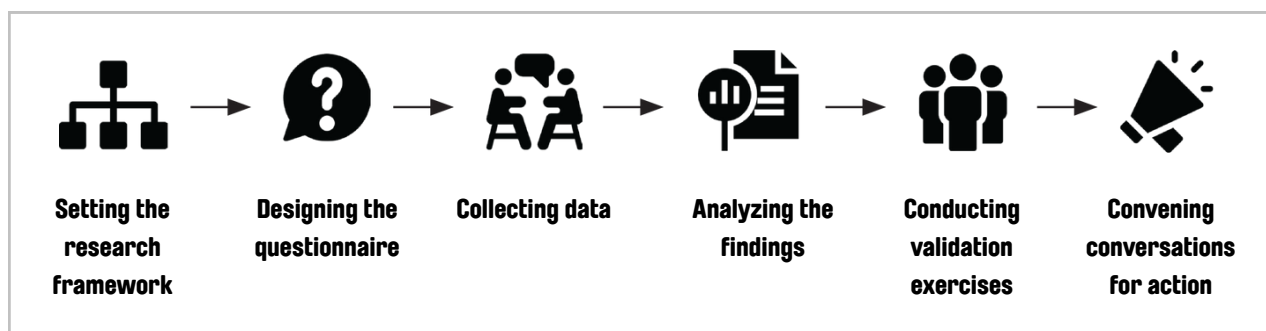
Specific Objectives

- To analyze the current situation and barriers that hinders girl's participation in climate solutions and action in working municipalities. Of G2C2
- To assess the local needs and opportunities that exist that girls can tap into a response to climate change in the working municipality of G2C2.

2. Methodology and Approach

2.1 Study Approach

Cohort of girls in each target community will co-lead inclusive research to analyze the current situation, barriers, local needs, and opportunities onwards climate solutions. The research is conducted using a standardized six-step process, which includes setting the research framework, designing the questionnaire, collecting data, analyzing the findings, conducting validation exercises, and convening conversations for action.



Girl-led Research Methodology

2.2 Sampling Design

The study was conducted in eight municipalities representing eight districts of Madhesh Province. The study sites were chosen based on the G2C2 project locations. The population studied consisted of young girls and

women aged 10 to 24. Quantitative data was collected from 765 individuals through a survey. Additionally, qualitative insights were gathered through 32 key informant interviews conducted with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, DRR Focal Person, Women, Children and Senior Focal Person, and Head Teacher. Furthermore, 24 focus group discussions were conducted with school and out-of-school girls.

2.3 Tool Development Training and Piloting

5 days training was provided to the girl champions. During the training Girls champions had developed both qualitative and quantitative. Tools are piloted with school teacher and students.

2.4 Qualitative Component

The purpose of the qualitative tools is to explore more in depth the result to get information that it is not possible to get through closed-ended questions.

Participants in KII and FGD

Tool	Level	Number of KII	Participants
KII	Municipality	24	Mayor, Deputy Mayor, DRR Focal Person, women children and senior Focal person, head teacher
FGD	School and community girls	32	Young girls aged between 10 to 24 of the selected municipalities of G2C2 project area.

2.5 Study Population

The study population are girls from the age group between 10–24 years of the working area of the G2C2 working municipalities.

2.6 Sample Size, Technique and Size

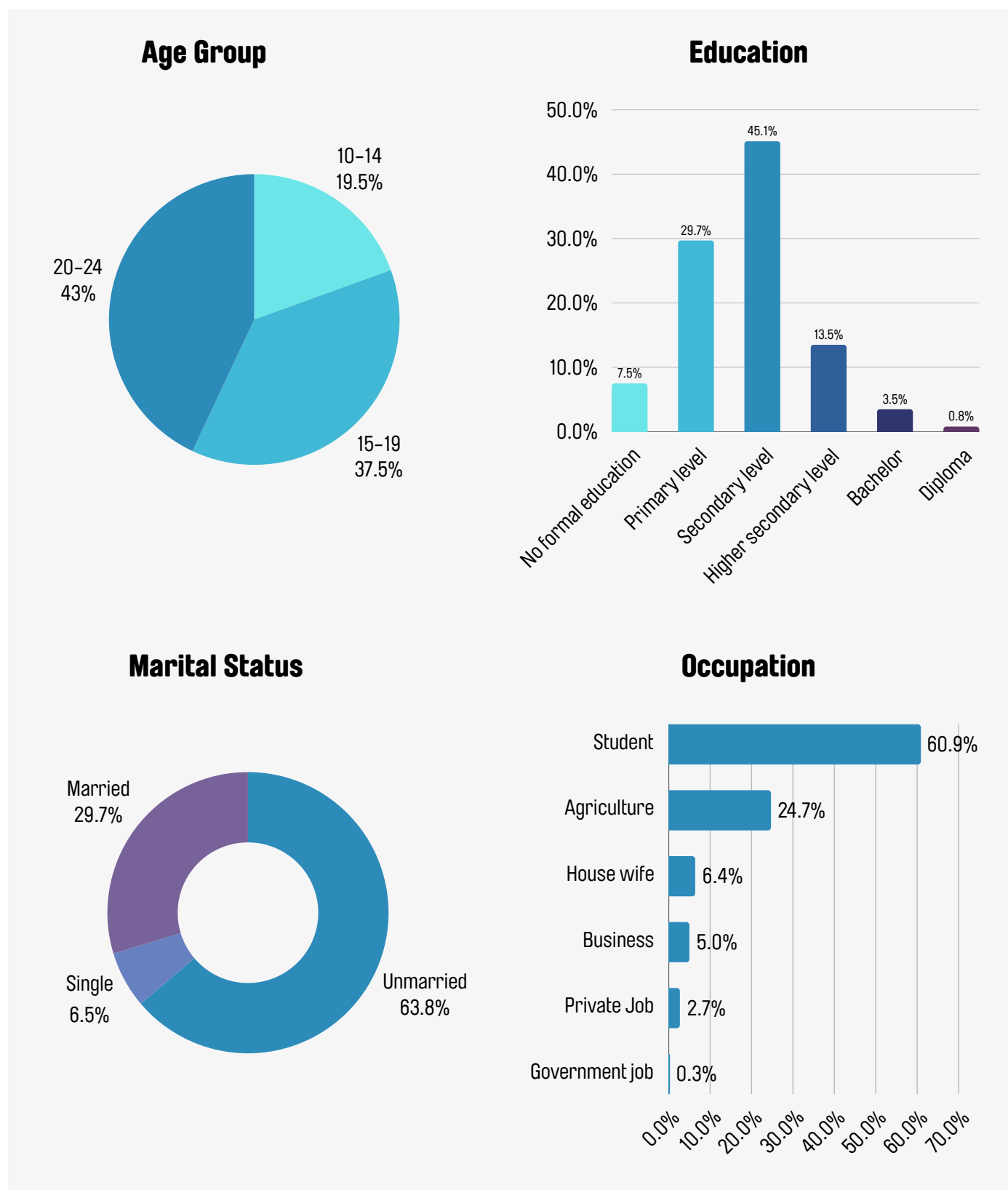
A probability sample was calculated (<http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm>) with a 95% confidence level and 5% Confidence interval, based on the ward's population of girls and women. The sampling size is 765.

The surveyed girls and women were selected randomly from the household. Only one girl or woman was interviewed per household.

3. Findings

3.1 Demographic Information of Respondents

Figure 1 : Demographic information of respondents



The demographic breakdown highlights a balanced representation across municipalities, education levels, age groups, and occupations. Most respondents were girls, with 41.1% aged 10–14, 37.52% aged 15–19, and 19.48% aged 20–24. In terms of education, 45.1% were at the secondary level, 29.7% at the primary level, and 7.5% had never attended school.

Regarding occupation, 60.9% were students, 24.7% worked in agriculture, 6.4% were housewives, 5% ran their own businesses, 2.7% were in private jobs, and only 0.3% held government jobs. Marital status data shows that 63.8% of respondents were unmarried, 29.7% were married, and 6.5% were single.

3.2 Knowledge on Climate Change

Figure 2 : Percentage of respondents who have heard about the climate change

Respondents who have heard about climate change



When respondents were asked if they had heard about world climate change, 56.5% said they had, while 43.5% said they had not.

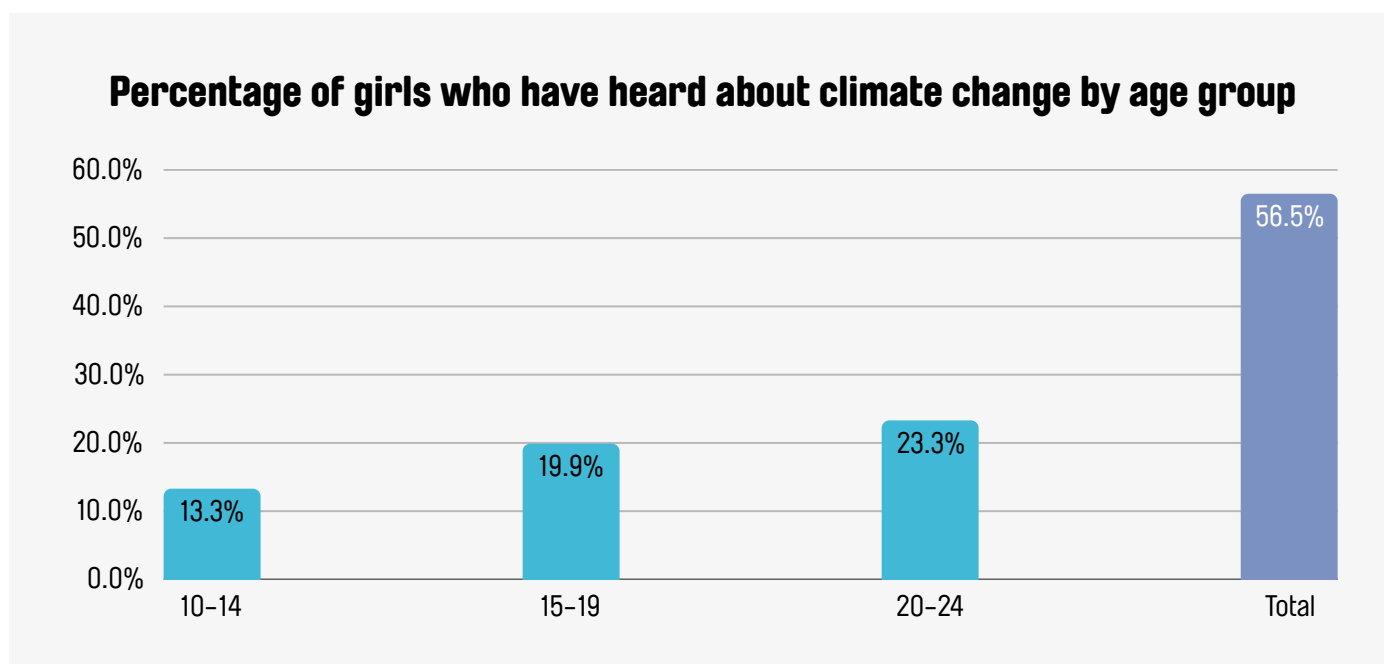
In the FGD, it was found that more than 50% of the girls had not heard about climate change and its effects.

In the KII, low knowledge and awareness of climate change and its issues were found among government-elected bodies. Some were aware of climate change but lacked the skills to develop plans and activities to address it.

“ We have a local level disaster management committee in our municipality but it’s not functional properly, there are no budget activities and plans. It is due to our local level elected representative had not clear understanding on the climate change and it issues. ”

– DRR focal person, Bara district

Figure 3 : Percentage of respondents who have heard about climate change by age group



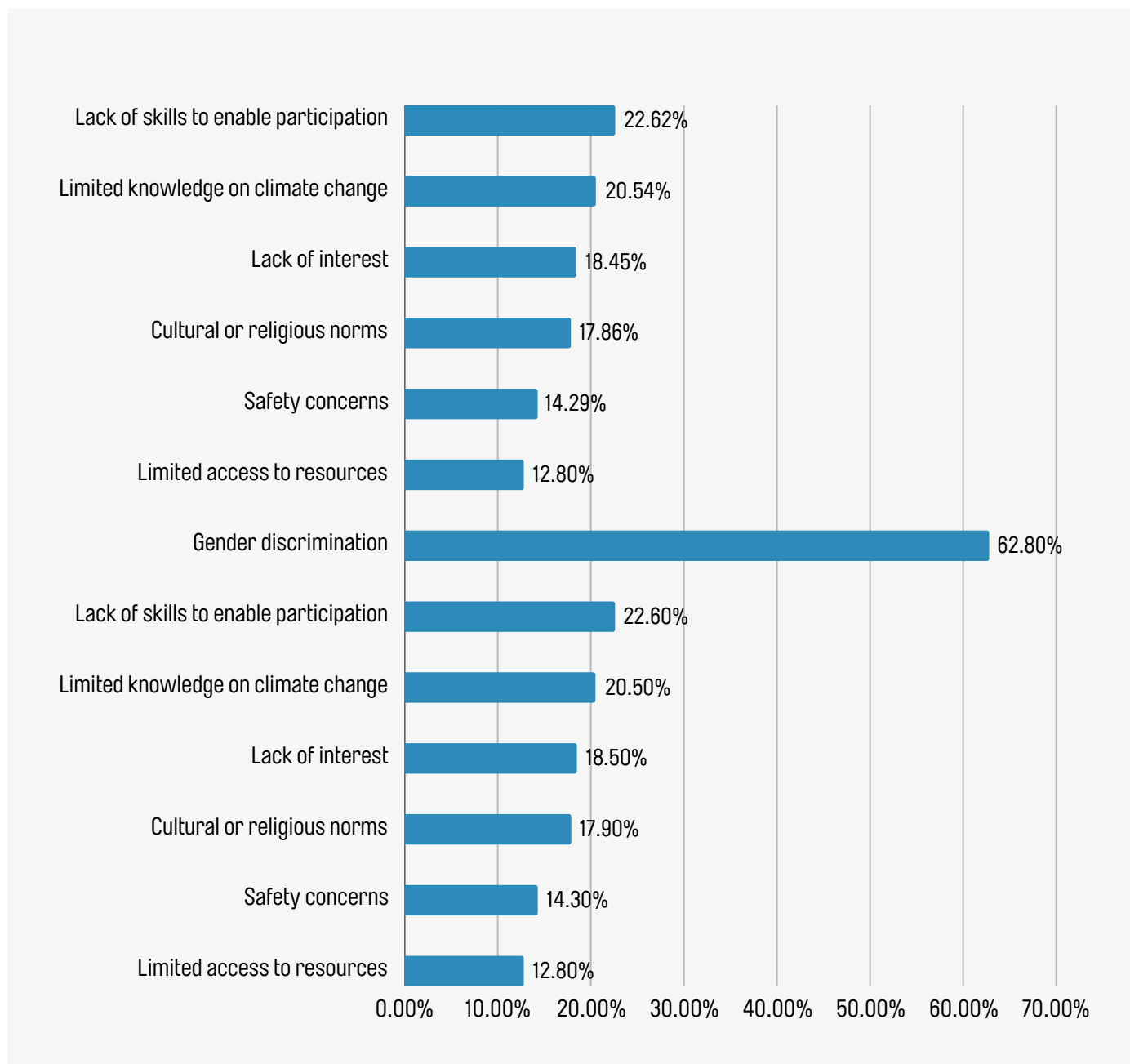
Among the young girls interviewed in the survey, 56.28% said they have heard about climate change. When the data was disaggregated by age group, 23.30% of girls aged 20-24 reported having heard about climate change, followed by 19.90% of those aged 15-19, and only 13.35% of girls aged 10-14. This finding shows that as the age of the girls increases, their knowledge about climate change also increases.

In the FGD, older girls and women responded to this question. They did not provide an exact definition of climate change but shared the effects they are experiencing in their community and health.



3.3 Barrier for Girls and Women Participation in Climate Change Action

Figure 4 : Types of barriers that hinder girls from participating in climate action



The majority of respondents, 60.8%, identified gender discrimination as a major barrier preventing girls from participating in climate action. The second most common barrier, cited by 22.62% of girls, was a lack of skills necessary for participation. Other barriers included limited access to information on climate change (20.54%), lack of interest (18.45%), cultural or religious norms (17.86%), safety concerns (14.29%), and limited access to resources (12.8%).

In a Key Informant Interview (KII), respondents highlighted that the patriarchal society confines women and girls to household work, restricting their opportunities for skill and knowledge development. A major challenge is the absence of dedicated budgets or programs to address climate change issues, particularly for women and girls. Additionally, a lack of awareness and low confidence among women and girls serve as significant barriers.

In focus group discussions, most of the girls and women mentioned that a lack of time due to household responsibilities prevents them from participating in community-level activities. In the community, girls are expected to focus on household work, while boys are allowed to engage in external activities.

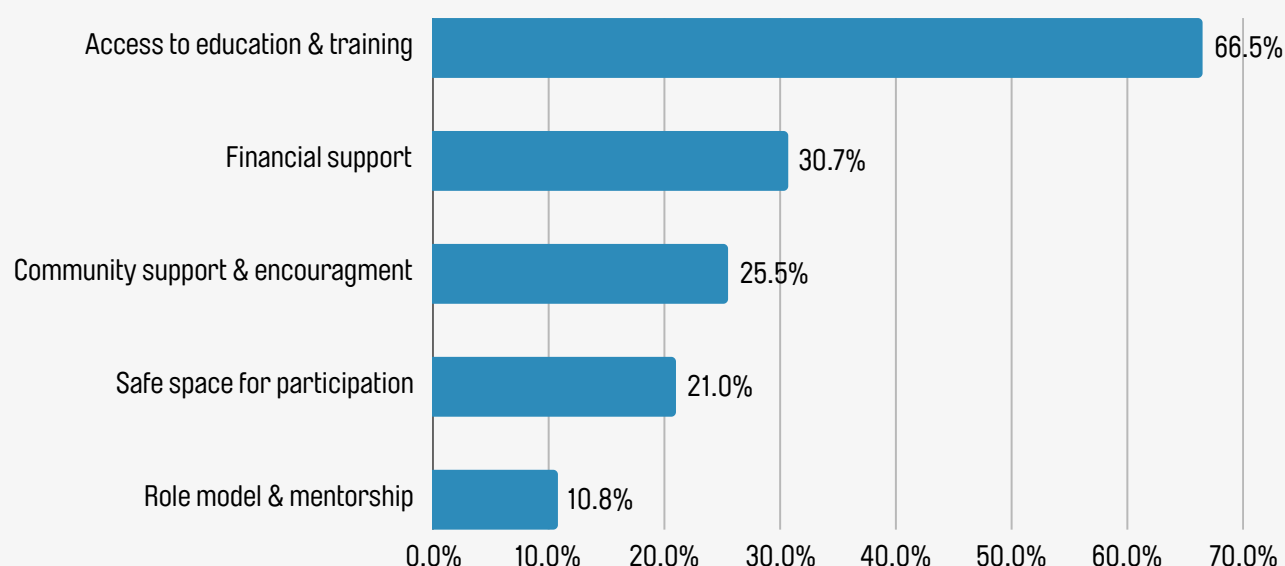
“ Social obstacles, including deep-rooted superstitions and lack of education, prevent girls and women from participating in activities. In the community, newly married girls face restrictions on going out, as families and society do not permit their mobility. Additionally, most girls and women are burdened with household responsibilities, limiting their ability to engage in such activities. ”

– Education Officer, Siraha district

3.4 Types of Support Required to Girl and Young Women to Encourage Participation in Climate Change Action

Figure 5: Percentage of types of support needed to encourage more girls to participate in climate action

Types of Support Needed to Encourage More Girls to Participate in Climate Action

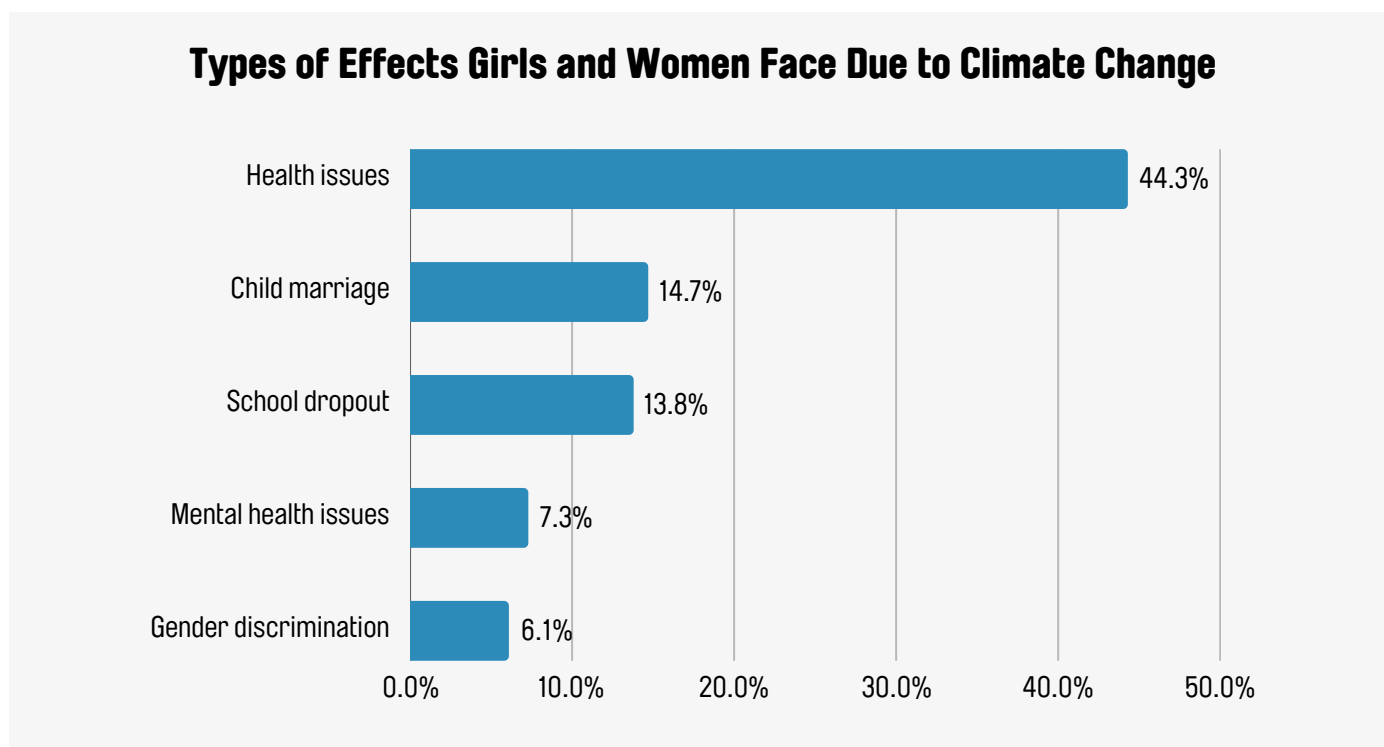


When respondents were asked about the types of support needed to encourage more girls to participate in climate action, 66.47% identified access to education and training as the key requirement. Additionally, 30.24% of respondents mentioned financial support, while 25.45% emphasized the need for community support and encouragement. Similarly, 30.96% of respondents stated that a safe space for girls' participation is essential. Only 10.8% highlighted the need for role models and mentorship.

To motivate girls and women, respondents suggested building parental confidence through awareness programs and public advertisements to assure parents that their daughters' participation is safe and beneficial. One KII respondent recommended working with the PTA committee to integrate climate change activities into the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and organizing extracurricular activities such as essay writing, debates, and environmental discussions. Additionally, local government representatives emphasized the need for skill-based training for girls and women.

3.5 Effects of Climate Change on Girls and Women

Figure 6: Percentage of effects girls and women face due to climate change



A majority of respondents (44.34%) reported that climate change affects the health of girls and women, leading to issues such as menstrual irregularities, coughs and colds, joint pain, and diarrhea. Additionally, 14.07% of respondents stated that climate change has contributed to early child marriage, while 13.76% linked it to school dropouts. Other reported effects included gender discrimination (6.12%) and mental health issues (7.34%).

“ Due to climate change, menstrual cycles are either delayed or occur earlier than expected. My sister got her period at the age of 9.”

– FGD Participant, Rautahat District

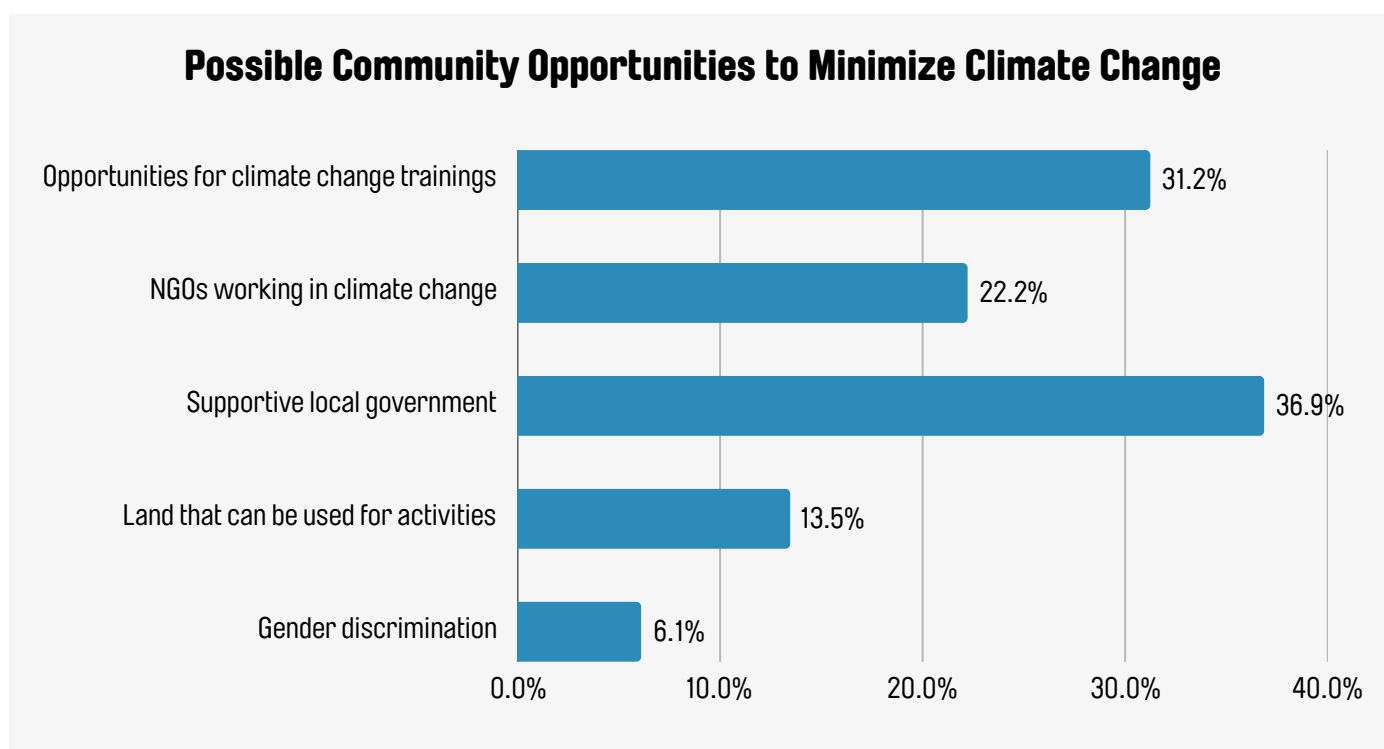
In KII, a majority of respondents also cited health issues as a major impact of climate change.

“ Due to climate change, agricultural production has decreased, leading to food shortages in families. As a result, parents are marrying off their daughters at an early age.”

– Women and Development Officer, Sunsari District (KII Participant)

3.6 Local Opportunities for Climate Change Action

Figure 7: Percentage of possible community opportunities to minimize climate change



Girls and women respondents identified various opportunities for climate change initiatives. About 31% pointed to the availability of training programs in their communities, while 22.22% noted the presence of NGOs working on climate-related issues. Additionally, 36.75% felt that local governments were supportive of climate change activities. Respondents also highlighted the presence of unused land that could be utilized for plantation and other community projects. Overall, the majority believed that a supportive government structure exists for climate action.

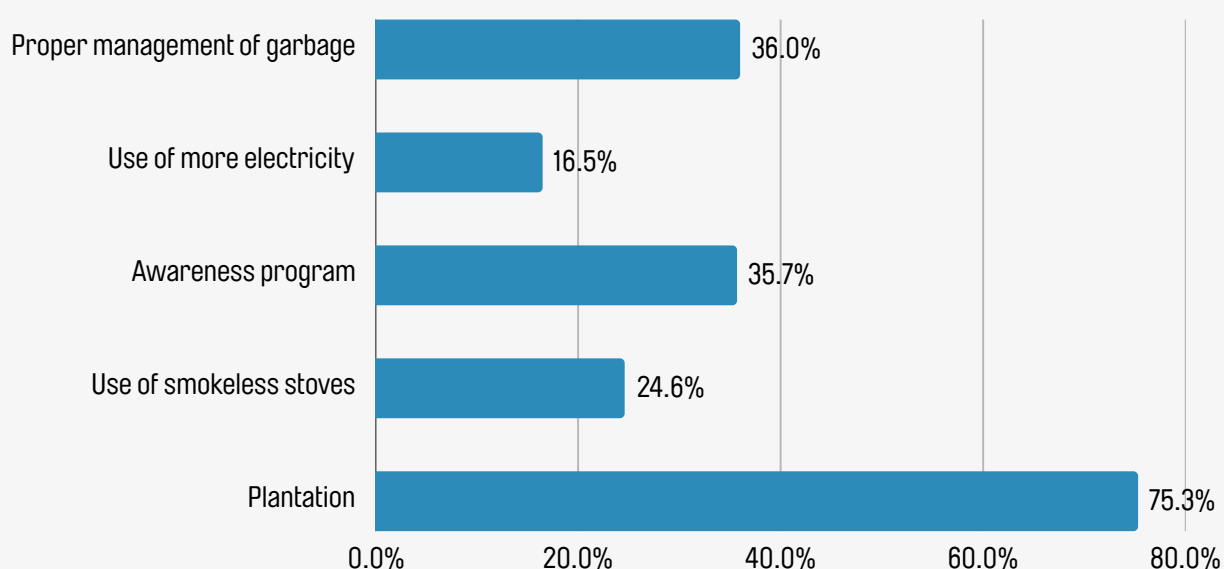
“ We want to work on climate change issues, but we don’t know how to develop activities and engage young people in climate action. Last year, we organized a plantation campaign in our community with the support of school children. ”

– Ward Representative, Parsa District (KII Participant)

3.7 Activities to Minimize Climate Change Effects in the Community

Figure 8: Activities that can be implemented in communities to reduce climate change effects

Activities That Can Be Implemented in Communities to Reduce Climate Change Effects



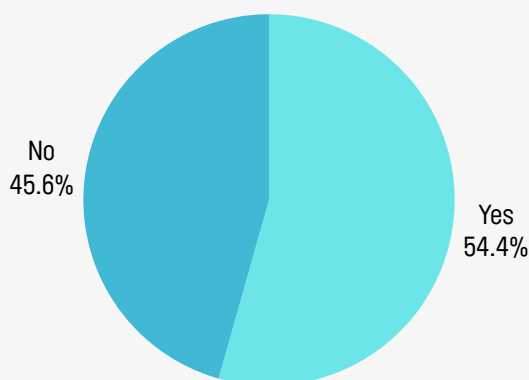
When asked about ways to minimize the effects of climate change, the majority of respondents suggested plantation on unused land as a key solution. Additionally, 36% emphasized proper garbage management, while 35.7% highlighted the importance of community awareness programs. Other proposed solutions included the use of smokeless stoves (24.6%) and increased use of electricity (16.5%) to reduce environmental impact.

In KII, respondents stressed the need for awareness programs in communities and suggested that young girls and boys should be motivated to lead climate change awareness activities. A respondent from the municipality emphasized the importance of tree plantations on unused land and reducing or reusing plastic materials to minimize environmental damage.

3.8 Gender

Figure 9: Percentage of respondents who have heard about gender discrimination

Respondents Who Have Heard About Gender Discrimination



A total of 54.38% of respondents reported that they had heard about gender discrimination, while 45.62% said they had not.

In FGDs, respondents expressed experiencing discrimination in their households and communities, particularly regarding education and personal freedom.

“ There are differences in educational opportunities for boys and girls in our community. Families provide more support for boys' education by enrolling them in private schools, while girls mostly attend community schools and are also engaged in household work. ”

– FGD Participant, Janakpur



4. Conclusion

Awareness of Climate Change

The study highlighted low awareness of climate change among girls and local government officials. More than 50% of respondents in Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were unaware of climate change and its effects. Additionally, climate change is a relatively new topic for municipalities, with very few Civil Society Organizations actively working on climate issues in Madhesh Province.

Barriers to Participation

The survey identified gender discrimination as the major barrier to women's participation in climate change-related activities. Other barriers include a lack of necessary skills, limited access to information, lack of interest, cultural and religious norms, and safety concerns. Additionally, the patriarchal society and low confidence among girls and women further hinder their involvement in climate-related initiatives. The study also found low participation of girls in extracurricular activities in schools.

Support Needed

The study identified key support factors that motivate girls and women to participate in climate action, including access to education and training on climate change, financial support, community encouragement, safe spaces, and mentorship. Additionally, it highlights the importance of building parental confidence through awareness programs and public advertisements.

Effects of Climate Change

The study found that 44.34% of respondents believe climate change affects girls' and women's health (e.g., menstrual issues, respiratory problems), while 14.07% associate it with early child marriage and 13.76% with school dropout rates. Other effects noted include gender discrimination (6.12%) and mental health issues (7.34%).

Available Local Resources and Opportunities

Local governments are supportive and can provide funding for climate change initiatives benefiting women and girls. Additionally, NGOs, green entrepreneurs, and training centers at the local level, along with unused government land, can be utilized for climate-related activities.

Solutions to Minimize the Effects of Climate Change

Suggested solutions include utilizing unused land for tree planting, improving garbage management, raising community awareness, promoting smokeless stoves, and increasing electricity usage. The study also suggests that local governments should develop climate action plans and allocate budgets accordingly.

5. Recommendations

- Develop a climate education program in schools and communities that is solution- and action-oriented, integrated across all disciplines, and inclusive of local and indigenous knowledge.
- Empower young people to engage in climate action through awareness programs, hands-on training workshops, and youth-led initiatives. Provide platforms for youth participation in climate-related decision-making processes.
- Ensure the inclusiveness and equity of climate change interventions by actively engaging girls, women from marginalized communities, indigenous peoples, and other vulnerable groups. Allocate resources to address their specific adaptation and mitigation needs.
- Motivate school management committees to form or reform child clubs and ensure the participation of girls. Child club activities should focus on climate change awareness and training.
- Address gender discrimination, which is a major challenge in the study area, through community awareness campaigns, orientations, and advocacy programs to promote gender equality.
- Since climate change is an emerging topic for local governments and communities, there is a strong need for orientation and awareness programs for both groups.
- Currently, only a few I/NGOs are working on climate change issues in Madhesh Province. More NGOs should prioritize climate change in this region to better support local communities, enhance resilience, and address pressing environmental challenges.



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