

Integration of Indigenous knowledge in addressing climate change

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Household survey, focus group discussions, participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools, viz. trend analyses for temperature, rainfall intensity and farming, pair wise ranking and matrix ranking to get people's perceptions and experiences on climate change in the Pokhara Khola watershed in the Middle-Hills of Nepal. Moreover, local meteorological data was analyzed to see the trend of changes in rainfall and temperature. Analyses of both Indigenous farmers' perceptions and meteorological data showed an increase of temperature with longer summers and warmer and shorter winter during the period of 1982 - 2007. There was a decreasing trend of rainfall over the years in an erratic and unpredictable manner. Water shortage, disease and pest infestation in crops and soil fertility loss are seen as major climate risks and hazards. Marginal and small groups of farmers are more vulnerable with low ability to cope with climate hazards due to lack of familiarity with these conditions. In order to adapt to these adverse conditions (trend of increased temperature and decreased rainfall), people's increasing tendency to apply chemical fertilizer instead of manure and practice less water demanded vegetables farming while decreasing trend of cereal farming was apparent in trend analysis of farming. The conversion of *khairbari* (grass production for roofing thatch and livestock feed) to barren wasteland and grass shortage caused the reduction in production of large livestock. The reduction in number of large livestock (cattle) due to fodder shortage results in less available manure and increased need for fertilizing and pesticide applications against disease, pest attacks and invasive species in crops induced loss of soil fertility for long term. The presence of mosquitoes was seen all year-round except it was only found during summer in the past.

Keywords: Climate risk, Farmers, Livelihood, Soil fertility, Vulnerable, Water shortage, Middle-hills

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Warming in the Himalayas has been much higher than the global average of 0.74°C over the last 100 years¹. Recent studies showed that Nepal's temperature is rising at rate of about 0.41°C per decade¹ and the mean annual temperature is expected to increase by 2.9°C by the middle of the 21st century². As in other regions of the world, climatic and ecological changes caused by global warming have resulted in an array of negative consequences for people's health, economy and livelihoods in Nepal³. Agriculture – the mainstay of rural food and economy that accounts for about 96% of the total water use in the country – suffers from erratic weather patterns such as heat stress, longer dry seasons and unpredictable rainfall, since 64% of the cultivated area fully depends on monsoon rainfall⁴. Changing climate results in heavy showers which induce flooding, longer wetter, land slides, and invasion of weeds on farmland. During the dry

season, increased evaporation will lead to water scarcity⁵. With reference to climate change at the local scale, therefore, studies conducted in Nepal^{6,7} are of paramount importance. Because, climate change is found to be relatively new challenge of global scale however, at a global scale climate change may have negligible impact rather than local and regional scale. Impact may be severe and substantial at local scale⁷.

Among five physiographic zones of Nepal, the Middle Mountains (200–3000 masl) zone, also known as the “Middle-Hills”, comprises the central belt, which can be characterized as a network of ridges and valleys with less than 5% flat area. It occupies about 30% of Nepal's total land area and hosts about 44% of its human population⁸. About 32% of the country's forests occur in the Middle-Hills. The complementary relationships of crop, livestock and tree components fulfill the livelihood needs of resource-poor farmers and maintain ecological stability is paramount in the

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Integration Of Indigenous Knowledge In Addressing Climate

David Kirk



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