

SCHOOL DROPOUT RATE OF CHILDREN IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

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Introduction

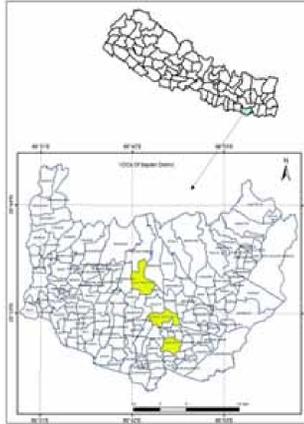
Poor and marginalized people with few livelihood options are often the most vulnerable to climate hazards such as floods and droughts (IPCC, 2007). The changing climate is exaggerating the frequency and intensity of disaster (Sharma, 2011) and integration among climate change, disaster and social protection issue is the call of the time (Sharma, 2013). It is the children who live in the world's poorest communities, are particularly vulnerable to climate change but in contrast if they acquire the proper knowledge they would be the good messenger to transfer the knowledge to family and community (Plan, 2012). Today's children bear a disproportionate share of the climate change impact, both in the immediate and longer-term while those of them living in marginal environments and situations of poverty are more vulnerable still (UNICEF, 2009). This study aims to generate the first hand data on impact of climate change and recent disaster on different aspects of children viz. education, health and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, child protection and livelihood in two Villages (Rayapur and Bisahariya) and one Municipality (Rajbiraj) of Saptari District of Nepal (map 1). Ultimately, this study explores the relations about the school dropout rate of children due to changing climate and disaster.

Materials and Methods

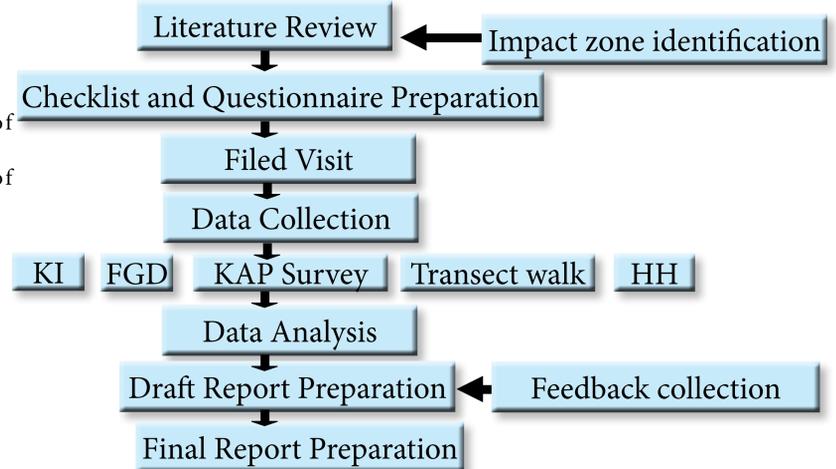
A total of 80 children (30 Girls and 50 Boys) from 20 child clubs were participated during focus group discussion and Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) survey. Altogether, there were 64 Household (HH) surveys to know the hazard scenario and community's perception on climate change and disaster (flow chart 1). Both primary and secondary sources data were collected during the study and analyzed to determine the impact of climate change and disaster on children and established the correlation pattern of school dropout rate children in a changing climate.

Result

This study found that children (47%) have heard about the climate change but they do not have clear idea what exactly climate change means and what they have heard were from school (67%). Some key climate induced disasters identified during the study were flood, fire, cold wave and drought. Increasing trend (51% increasing trend from child response and 87% increasing trend from their parents) of all these disasters was found. The study found that the greater impact of disaster was on agriculture (29%) followed by education (25%). Radio programme (32%) and street drama (24%) were the recommended means for climate and disaster risk reduction awareness. This study has clearly established two ways of correlation patterns. First, agricultural drought due to climate change was the cause reducing the agricultural production which increased the work load of children. This work load has enabled them for school dropout (49%). Second, seasonal flood and cold wave due to climate change were the causes of poor school attendance that let them to school dropout (51%). This school dropout ultimately let them for early child marriage negatively affecting the quality of life (figure 1).



Map 1: Study area



Flow chart 1: study design

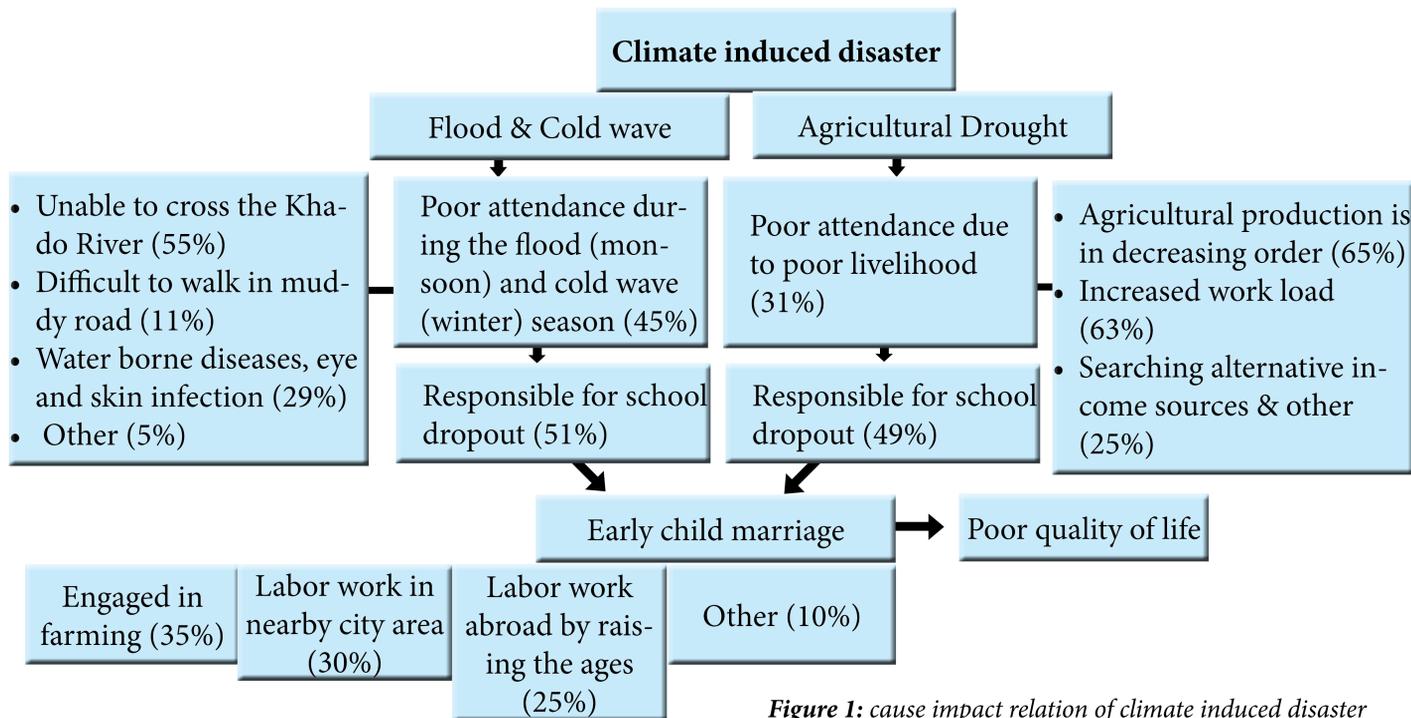


Figure 1: cause impact relation of climate induced disaster

Conclusion

The study area was highly vulnerable to flood, fire, cold wave and drought. These disasters were the cause of; poor attendance of children in school, reduced agricultural production, increased respiratory diseases, dehydration and water borne diseases and increased work load. This study has clearly established the negative consequence of climate induced disaster in school children. First, agricultural drought was the cause of reducing agricultural production which increased the work load of children. This work load has enabled them for school dropout. Second, seasonal flood and cold wave were the causes of poor school attendance that let them to school dropout. This school dropout ultimately let them for early child marriage negatively affecting the quality of life. This study strongly recommends;

- Establishment of hazard specific child focused risk reduction programme
- Incorporation of climate change and disaster risk reduction subject in school curricula
- Strengthening the knowledge and capacity of existing child clubs
- Discouragement for child labour and
- Promotion of drought resilient crop species

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