

H – 06

Challenges in Implementing Climate Change Adaptation Policy in Bhaktapur, Nepal: A Case Study on Reluctance to Adapt

B.N.G. Perera¹, K.A.S. Udayanga^{1*}, M.G. Thilini¹, O.A.Y. Chamathya¹, S.D.T. Batuwanthudawa¹, N. Ruwanpathirana¹, B.K.A. Bellanthudawa² and E.C.D. Perera¹

¹*Department of Sociology, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka*

²*Department of Agricultural Engineering and Technology, University of Ruhuna,
Sri Lanka
senithsrismi@gmail.com*

The impact of climate change produces disruptive effects that are unpredictable and context-dependent. The negative impact of climate change on the developing world is severe, and studies indicate that robust and sustainable approaches to resilience are vital for those countries. For example, Nepal, being a land-locked country in the Himalayan region, is often subjected to climate change. Strengthening the resilience and adaptive capacities of climate-vulnerable communities, such as land-locked areas, would bring about favourable opportunities globally. However, some communities in the developing world encounter difficulties in establishing appropriate adaptation policies. Thus, this study was conducted to understand why people in the most climate-vulnerable communities fail to actively incorporate themselves with such climate change adaptability policies. The case study design was employed, and data were collected through in-depth interviews (n=15, 10 women and 5 men mainly employed in agriculture) and two focus group discussions with individuals who had experienced the devastating impacts of climate change in Bhaktapur, a remote village in Nagarkot, Nepal. Data were analyzed thematically using MAXQDA. The analysis revealed five themes that describe why people in the said vulnerable community are not ready for climate change adaptation. Firstly, people are unaware of the impact of climate emergencies because information about climate change emergencies is not properly communicated to them, and they receive information only through informal sources. Secondly, as a result, particular focus is not given to communities facing such emergencies, in Bhaktapur. Thirdly, people are bound by certain cultural values and traditional normative structures that are not aligned with climate change adaptability programs, making them less likely to change. Fourthly, migration to a another location within Nepal is not considered as a viable solution, since many places in Nepal also experience the same climate change impacts. Finally, despite the strengthening of internal social networks among people (social capital), it is not effectively incorporated into implementing climate change adaptation policy due to inadequate connection with external policy organizations (disparaging linking social capital). Overall, the research found that implementing climate change adaptation policies in the most vulnerable communities can be jeopardized when people are not empowered before the adoption of policies.

Keywords: climate change adaptation, Nepal, resistance to change, social capital, vulnerable communities