

# Children in Emergencies

---

Situation Analysis and Policy Review



**Save the Children**

सोशल साइन्स बहाः  
SOCIAL SCIENCE BAHA

This page has been intentionally left blank.

# Children in Emergencies

Situation Analysis and Policy Review

APRIL 2020



**Study Team**

Jeevan Baniya

Tracy Ghale

Nilima Rai

Amit Gautam

**with research support from**

Ratna Kambang

Swarna Kumar Jha

Mohammad Sabir Hussain Ansari

Binod Dulal

**Technical support**

Lachhindra Maharjan

© Save the Children, 2020

Social Science Baha

345 Ramchandra Marg, Battisputali, Kathmandu – 9, Nepal

Tel: +977-1-4472807 • Fax: +977-1-4461669

info@soscbaha.org • www.soscbaha.org

# CONTENTS

---

<i>Abbreviations and Acronyms</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Executive Summary</i>	<i>ix</i>
1. Background	1
2. Rationale for the Study	3
3. Research Objectives	4
4. Methodology and Approach	5
5. Brief Background of the Research Sites	6
6. Quality Assurance and Research Ethics	8
7. Limitations and Challenges	9
8. Findings	10
• Policy Frameworks and Provisions	10
• Difficulties Faced by Children and Caregivers	18
• Impact on Food and Nutrition	19
• Impact on Children's Education	20
• Impact on WASH	21
• Mental and Psychosocial Health of Children	23
• Displacement of Children and Risk of Abuse and Trafficking	24
9. Vulnerabilities and Needs of Children and Caregivers	26
10. Consideration of Needs and Vulnerabilities	28
11. Recommendations	31
<i>Annex 1: List of Relevant Legal and Institutional Instruments</i>	<i>34</i>

This page has been intentionally left blank.

# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

---

CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CDO	Chief District Officer
CMC Nepal	Centre for Mental Health and Counselling Nepal
CRED	Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters
DDRC	District Disaster Relief Committee
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DRRM	Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECDC	Early Childhood Development Centre
FCHV	Female Community Health Volunteer
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GoN	Government of Nepal
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KII	Key Informant Interview
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MoUD	Ministry of Urban Development
NDRF	National Disaster Response Framework
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPC	National Planning Commission
NRA	National Reconstruction Authority
PDRF	Post Disaster Recovery Framework
PwD	Person/People with Disability
SCI	Save the Children International
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SSB	Social Science Baha
SSI	Semi-Structured Interview
TLC	Temporary Learning Centre
TPO	Transcultural Psychosocial Organization
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNISDR	UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
VDC	Village Development Committee
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization

This page has been intentionally left blank.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

Save the Children, Country Office Nepal, and Social Science Baha would like to thank the research team for undertaking this study and bringing it to this form. Thanks are due to Sara Dang, formerly with Save the Children Nepal, for sharing her insights on Early Childhood Care and Development, and to Jamuna Maharjan of Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation Nepal for leading an orientation session on conducting research among individuals who have had traumatic experiences.

Thank you to all the respondents across the study sites and representatives of various government and non-government agencies for sparing the time and providing invaluable information. In particular, the research team benefitted from the facilitation of the research process by Sarala Dulal in Thuladurlung, Lalitpur; Anil Lal Das in Gaur, Rautahat; and Narayan Parajuli in Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk; and are deserving a special thank you.

At Social Science Baha, Pooja Chaudhary and Roshana Dolmo Lama supported the literature review; Ajaya Subedi and Rita Bhujel provided logistical support; Khem Shreesh edited the report; and Manoj Suji helped with the references.

This page has been intentionally left blank.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

Nepal experiences a wide variety of natural disasters, namely, floods, landslides, earthquakes and weather extremities in the form of cold waves every year, leading to destruction of physical property as well as loss of lives. The degree and intensity of the consequences of disasters vary along age, gender and various other social factors. Among children, who are one of the groups made most vulnerable by disasters, the negative effects are even more pronounced as they have the least capacity to raise their voice, and it is often the case that issues specific to children are overlooked as there persists a general tendency to couple their priorities with those of other vulnerable groups. Disasters impact children's physical safety, undermine their health and nutrition needs, interrupt education, compromise parental care, introduce protection risks, and harm their psychosocial wellbeing. In this context, Save the Children commissioned this study to explore and document the effects of disasters on the children aged 0-8 and the challenges their caregivers are faced with, and provide recommendations to mitigate those effects while providing protection to this most vulnerable of groups.

The findings of the study, conducted in three sites in three districts, show that the economic hardship and mental distress faced by families following disasters are among the main factors that affect children, more specifically those who are between 0 to 8 years old. The children's lack of access to basic needs and necessities, particularly food, was evident across all the research sites. The persistent lack of nutritious food to children, lactating mothers, pregnant women, and those in the post-partum stage led to malnutrition, with the impacts further exacerbated amongst those already suffering from lack of nutrition.

The inadequacy in the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) aspects intensified the effects on the children and their caregivers in general. There was widespread incidence of water-borne diseases

and other health effects compounded by a shortage of clean drinking water and the impact of disasters on healthcare infrastructure. The scarcity of clean and safe drinking water following disasters forced most of the caregivers to travel long distances to fetch potable water, which was an additional burden especially to those with small children. Mothers had difficulty breastfeeding their children on time because of which children fell sick, further heightening the risk of malnutrition. The shortage of water combined with unavailability of latrines in the temporary shelters led to unsanitary practices such as open defecation, making younger children susceptible to sanitation-related illnesses. During their stay in temporary shelters or under the open sky during emergencies, women and children also suffered due to lack of private spaces.

Furthermore, disasters resulted in numerous school closures, often for prolonged periods. Schools were closed where facilities were damaged, destroyed, or rendered inaccessible, or, in some cases, repurposed as temporary shelters. The number of absentees or those dropping out of schools soared after disasters, mainly due to damage to and destruction of school buildings and study materials as well as lack of proper water and hygiene condition in schools. Parents said that they were reluctant to send children to school due to concerns about their children's safety, and that children lost interest in education due to fear and anxiety. Temporary learning centres (TLCs) were established in order to support children to resume their education and bring children back to a sense of normalcy. It was widely evident across the study sites that the children had lost their appetites, had become cranky, clingy and restless, and, where children had lost parents or guardians, were found crying, screaming and agitated. Many others wanted their parents and guardians to be with them all the time. Both children and caregivers reported mental distress following the disasters, and the parents' anxiety could not be hidden from

the children. Disaster-induced displacement added economic and psychological stress to the parents.

Despite the efforts from several governmental and nongovernmental agencies to alleviate the effects of mental distress brought on by the disaster on children and their caregivers, mainly by resuming schools and establishing TLCs, individualised care could not be provided due to the lack of private counselling space and the limited number of counsellors. In addition, the stigma around mental illness and the temporary nature of their stay in the shelters meant follow-up counselling and support could not be provided to many of them.

A wide range of government agencies, NGOs, INGOs, community-based organisations and individuals have been involved in search-and-rescue and relief-and-recovery activities in emergency and post-disaster situations. The roles and presence of NGOs and INGOs were more visible compared to government agencies. Nonetheless, except for a few, most organisations and individuals did not recognise the specific needs and priorities of children and their caregivers. There was a lack of proper and children-specific response measures and disaster-resilience mechanisms for children to help them mitigate and recover from the adverse impacts of disasters. Lack of institutional capacities and mechanisms for disaster risk reduction and management, lack of resources and sensitivity towards the risks and needs of children at the district and local levels seem to be the primary limitations and weaknesses impeding prompt and adequate support to children in emergencies.

Based on the findings at the policy level and evidence on the ground, the study draws attention to the following key issues.

- Keeping smaller children and their caregivers safe and protected during emergencies requires comprehensive, multi-sectoral and strategic efforts.
- Since subnational governments are in the process of drafting disaster mitigation plans at their respective levels, there is an opportunity

to ensure that these plans encompass the special needs of children and their caregivers, particularly since most local governments will require technical support from experts and institutions in drafting these plans.

- Institutions and available mechanisms need to be strengthened and equipped with adequate human and technical resources to implement the Disaster Risk Reduction National Policy 2018 and the Disaster Risk Reduction and National Strategy Action Plan 2018-2030. Given the near-total absence of the different needs of children and their caregivers in plans such as these, effective coordination and synergies between different agencies, stakeholders and communities will be even more crucial.
- The protection agenda of children needs to be mainstreamed in the development plans of the federal, provincial and local governments, with the planning process taking into account the voice of stakeholders working with and for the rights and well-being of children including during and after disasters.
- Mechanisms that have to be set up to govern disaster responses at the local level should prioritise children and their caregivers. It is crucial that local governments and agencies maintain disaggregated data about children and their socio-economic condition in order to ensure effective and timely responses during emergencies.
- Local institutions and stakeholders should be entrusted with re-opening schools in post-disaster contexts, including by setting up TLCs. In addition to conducting regular safety drill/disaster simulations at school, attention needs to be paid to ensure a children-friendly environment with safe space and appropriate learning materials along with proper WASH facilities and special consideration given to drinking water during emergencies.
- Children and caregivers require psychosocial support in post-disaster contexts. Awareness needs to be created about both disaster-induced psychological problems and against

- social stigma attached to psychosocial needs.
- Finally, it is critical that there be greater awareness-raising and sensitisation at the

local and community levels about the risks, vulnerabilities and needs specific to small children and their caregivers.

This page has been intentionally left blank.

# BACKGROUND

---

Global figures at the end of the 20th century estimate that 66.5 million children are affected by disasters every year.<sup>1</sup> The available literature recognise children as one of the most vulnerable groups in disaster situations and they suffer from adverse impacts arising out of lack of access to health, food and nutrition, education and shelter, and also face risks of physical and sexual abuse and trafficking as well as induction into child labour.<sup>2</sup> The impact of disasters on children's mental and psychosocial health becomes manifest in heightened fear and anxiety, clinging behaviour, aggression, nightmares, bedwetting and panic attacks.<sup>3</sup> Studies have also established that disasters have uneven effects on vulnerable groups such as women in general, single women, children, the poor, etc.<sup>4</sup>

1 Angela Penrose and Mie Takaki, 'Children's Rights in Emergencies and Disasters,' *Lancet* 367, no. 9511 (2006): 698-699.

2 Sheridan Bartlett, 'The Implications of Climate Change for Children in Lower-Income Countries,' *Children, Youth and Environments* 18, no.1 (2008): 71-98; The Centre on Conflict and Development, Texas University, *Impact of Natural Disaster on Childhood: Evidence from Nepal* (Texas: The Centre on Conflict and Development, Texas A&M University, 2016); Kathrine Olsen Flate, 'Human Trafficking Following the 2015 Nepal Earthquake: A Case Study of How a Natural Disaster Impacts People's Vulnerabilities and the Role Disaster Response and Recovery Plays in Countering It' (Master's Thesis, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, 2018); Tran Seballos, Thomas Tanner, Marcela Tarazona and Jose Gallegos, *Children and Disasters: Understanding Impact and Enabling Agency* (Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, 2011).

3 Bartlett, 'The Implication of Climate Change'; The Centre on Conflict and Development, 'Impact of Natural Disaster'; Penrose and Takaki, 'Children Rights'; Daniel S. Pine and Judith A. Cohen, 'Trauma in Children and Adolescents: Risk and Treatment of Psychiatric Sequelae,' *Biological Psychiatry* 51, no.7 (2000): 519-531 cited in Jodi Morris, Mark Van Ommeren, Myron Belfer, Shekhar Saxena and Benedetto Saraceno, 'Children and the Sphere Standard on Mental and Social Aspects of Health,' *Overseas Development Institute* 31, no.1 (2007): 71-90.

4 Julia Watts Belser, 'Disaster and Disability: Social Inequality and the Uneven Effects of Climate Change,' *Tikkun* 30, no.2 (2015): 24-25; Austin Lord, Bandita Sijapati, Jeevan Baniya, Obindra Chand, Tracy Ghale, *Disaster, Disability and Difference: A Study of the Challenges Faced by Persons with Disabilities in Post-earthquake Nepal* (Kathmandu: United Nations Development Program, 2016);

The importance of improved knowledge about the vulnerabilities children face in disaster contexts and also in developing children-specific risk-reduction strategies has been well demonstrated.<sup>5</sup> Focus is required not only on building schools that can withstand natural disasters but also in supporting the education of children with proper water, sanitation and healthcare facilities in a post-disaster context.<sup>6</sup> There is a need to prioritise creating an adequate environment through recreational, engaging and interactive activities for children in emergency and disaster contexts in order to enable them to improve their psychosocial, emotional and physical wellbeing as well as contribute further to their learning.<sup>7</sup> After a disaster, there is also the increased chance of children's growth being stunted, with impacts related to health and nutrition being more severe among poorer households.<sup>8</sup>

While studies elsewhere highlight the need for government agencies and actors at the local level to understand the needs, capacities and agency of children that come with the realisation of the responsibility to protect and engage with children, there is also an equal emphasis on raising awareness among caregivers<sup>9</sup> of children

Jeff Dayton-Johnson, *Natural Disasters and Vulnerability* (Paris: OECD Development Centre, 2006).

5 Seballos et al., 'Children and Disasters,'

6 Virgil Fievet, Kanta Singh and Anthony Davis, *Children's Voices, Children's Rights: One Year After the Nepal Earthquake* (Kathmandu: Plan International, Save the Children, Terre Des Hommes, UNICEF and World Vision, 2016). <https://plan-international.org/publications/Children-Report-One-Year-After-Nepal-Earthquake>

7 Save the Children, *Early Childhood Development in Emergencies Manual* (Connecticut: Save the Children, 2017). [https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/12408/pdf/tbd\\_ecdie\\_manual\\_2017.pdf](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/12408/pdf/tbd_ecdie_manual_2017.pdf)

8 Seballos et al., 'Children and Disasters'; Lucia Withers and Nir Dahal, *After the Earthquake: Nepal's Children Speak Out, Nepal Children's Earthquake Recovery Consultation* (Kathmandu: Plan International, Save the Children, UNICEF, World Vision and the Government of Nepal, 2015).

9 'Carer', 'caretaker' or 'caregiver' is defined as 'a person with whom the child lives who provides daily care to the child, without

about being prepared for and equipping them with coping strategies to deal with the impacts of disasters.<sup>10</sup> Others draw attention to the need for the protection of children being fostered by families not related to them in post-disaster contexts and who can be at risk of exploitation and abuse.<sup>11</sup> Likewise, children may also be at the risk of being trafficked based on false promises such as providing care, support and job opportunities.<sup>12</sup> Children and their needs are grossly overlooked during natural disasters and is often based on the false assumption that children ‘grow out of it’.<sup>13</sup> Disasters further exacerbate the plight of children as their particular needs are often underestimated by adults closest to them, especially during trying times.<sup>14</sup> Being often unable to voice their particular needs and problems further contribute to the marginalisation of children.<sup>15</sup> Most importantly, the long-term effects of young children having to grapple with adversities such as war, disasters and displacement lead to a much higher risk of their impaired development as adults.<sup>16</sup> As a

---

necessarily implying legal responsibility’ (Save the Children, 2007). ‘Protection Factsheet: Child Protection and Care Related Definitions’ UK, accessed 15 August 2018. resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/sites/default/files/documents/5608.pdf

10 Seballos et al., ‘Children and Disasters,’

11 David Tolfree, ‘Community-Based Care for Separated Children,’ *Responses to Young Children in Post-Emergency Situations*, *Early Childhood Matters* 104 (2005): 40-46, cited in Bartlett, ‘The Implications of Climate Change,’

12 Flate, ‘Human Trafficking,’

13 Lori Peek, ‘Children and Disasters: Understanding Vulnerability, Developing Capacities, and Promoting Resilience—An Introduction,’ *Children, Youth and Environments* 18, no.1 (2008): 1-29.

14 Alexander C. McFarlane, ‘Family Functioning and Overprotection Following a Natural Disaster: The Longitudinal Effects of Post-Traumatic Morbidity,’ *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* 21 (1987): 210-218 cited in Peek, ‘Children and Disasters,’

15 Wendy K. Silverman and Annette M. La Greca, ‘Children Experiencing Disasters: Definitions, Reactions, and Predictors of Outcomes,’ Annette M. La Greca and Wendy K. Silverman, E.M. Vernberg and M.C. Roberts, eds. *Helping Children Cope with Disasters and Terrorism* (Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2002): 11- 33 cited in Peek, ‘Children and Disasters,’

16 World Health Organization, United Nations Children’s Fund and World Bank Group, *Nurturing Care for Early Childhood Development: A Framework for Helping Children Survive and Thrive to Transform Health and Human Potential* (Geneva: World

Health Organization, 2018), [apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/272603/9789241514064-eng.pdf](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/272603/9789241514064-eng.pdf)

result, there is increasing recognition globally regarding issues of children and their protection in emergency and disaster contexts. For example, international instruments and frameworks such as the UN Convention on Rights of the Child, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, the Paris Agreement 2015, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have all recognised the rights and protection of children, including in the context of disasters, and offer some guidelines as well.<sup>17</sup>

---

Health Organization, 2018), [apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/272603/9789241514064-eng.pdf](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/272603/9789241514064-eng.pdf)

17 United Nations, General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, Resolution 44/25 (20 November 1989); United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: International Strategy for Disaster Reduction International Strategy for Disaster Reduction* (Geneva: United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2005) [unisdr.org/files/1037\\_hyogoframeworkforactionenglish.pdf](https://www.unisdr.org/files/1037_hyogoframeworkforactionenglish.pdf);

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, *Paris Agreement* (Bonn: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2015) [unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english\\_paris\\_agreement.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf); United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030* (Geneva: United Nations International Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2015); United Nations, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (New York: United Nations, 2015). [https://www.preventionweb.net/files/43291\\_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf](https://www.preventionweb.net/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf)



# RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

---

Nepal is highly prone to natural disasters, particularly landslides, floods and earthquakes. Recent years have seen the country experience a number of such events, leading to devastating consequences for affected communities, including deaths, damage to houses, and destruction of infrastructure as well as obstruction of transportation, trade and everyday mobility.<sup>18</sup> The degree of adversity varies with age, gender and other social factors in different phases of disasters, with women, children and those in vulnerable situations disproportionately affected. As the group with the least capacity of raising a voice, children find themselves grouped together with other vulnerable groups and issues specific to them are generally lost, leading to their particular needs often being overlooked almost in their entirety. Adequate legal and institutional frameworks and strategies informed by evidence and effective implementation of the same are considered important in disaster preparedness and response as well as for the protection of children. Following the 2015 Gorkha Earthquake, Nepal has introduced legislation such as the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act (2017) to deal with disasters in general. However, neither past nor existing laws appear to be adequate and effective in protecting and supporting children and their specific needs during times of disasters. In this backdrop, this study was conducted to generate empirical evidence on key problems faced by children and their caregivers and to understand the adverse effects on them in the context of emergencies. The study also reviewed existing policies as they respond or do not respond to the learning and development needs of children. The study limited itself to children from the three age cohorts of 0-3, 3-5 and 5-8 years at the time of disasters. Children aged 0-3 are at a stage when

they acquire various skills vital for school but are also developing social-emotional, language and literacy, physical motor and thinking skills, all of which are building blocks for the future. Those aged 3-5 are extremely vulnerable to traumatic effects of any sort arising from prolonged upheavals such as natural disasters and are likely to face problems with social and emotional development in the absence of proper care and support from parents and caregivers. As children advance to the 6-8 age group, there is tremendous mental and emotional strain on them as they are in transition from home or pre-school to primary school.<sup>19</sup> The current study recognises the limitation of focusing only on children up to the age of 8 and not covering pre-pubescent and adolescent children. But since the three age groups included in this study demonstrate greater vulnerability to unexpected changes in their immediate social and physical environment, the focus on these cohorts is well justified.

It is expected that the evidence gathered by the study in conjunction with the policy analysis will not only identify gaps in Nepal's policies in relation to children, their caregivers and emergencies but also provide a push for evidence to be used in policy and programme design by the government, the non-governmental sector and development stakeholders. The findings from the study are expected to help inform future programming and also be used as a key advocacy tool to create a more enabling policy environment for the needs of young children during emergencies.

---

18 National Planning Commission, *Post-Disaster Needs Assessment, Volume A: Key Findings* (Kathmandu: National Planning Commission, 2015).

---

19 Save the Children, *Delivering Education for Children in Emergencies: A Key Building Block for the Future* (London: International Save the Children Alliance, 2008). <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/2710/pdf/2710.pdf>

# RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

---

The primary objective of the study was to understand how young children between the ages of 0 and 8 years and their caregivers are affected by natural disasters and the ensuing emergency situations. It also aims to review the current policy environment related to disasters and the protection of children during emergencies in order to identify and ascertain gaps and challenges in these policies, and, with evidence from the ground, in their implementation. To this effect, the study aimed to answer the following questions:

- What are the impacts of natural disasters and the emergency situations that follow on children aged 0-8 years?
- What are the impacts on the caregivers of these children?
  - What are the vulnerabilities and needs specific to children and their caregivers in these situations?
- If and how have assistance and responses in emergency situations and disaster contexts by the state and non-state actors considered the specific needs of children and their caregivers?
- To what extent do mechanisms such as regulations regarding disaster-risk reduction and management recognise the risks and specific needs of children and their caregivers?
  - What are the gaps and opportunities for strengthening related laws, policies and strategies?
  - How do local disaster management committees recognise risk to children and why?
- What lessons can Nepal learn from good practices from other country contexts?
- What roles and strategies can state and concerned civil society and development partners play in terms of improving legal and policy instruments and their implementation and how?

# METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

The study was undertaken using a qualitative approach that included a review of the literature, key informant interviews (KIIs), semi-structured interviews (SSIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). An extensive review of the available literature related to disaster, emergency responses and the rights of children was conducted in order to understand the policy terrain, identify the gaps and opportunities for improvement, and also to formulate research tools. The literature included legal and policy documents, academic publications, as well as grey literature.

The KIIs were conducted in the field sites, district headquarters and the Kathmandu Valley, with the informants consisting of school teachers, local government representatives, political party leaders, village/ward secretaries, officials of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) working on disaster as well as children, facilitators with Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDCs), health workers and health officers, Chief District Officers (CDOs), psychosocial counsellors, journalists, advocacy groups, civil society activists, representatives of

international organisations and senior officials at the Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

The field sites consisted of Bahrabise in Sindhupalchowk District, Gaur in Rautahat District, and Thuladurlung in Lalitpur District. Fieldwork for the study was conducted by three teams (consisting of two researchers in each site) from Social Science Baha (SSB) in the month of September 2018. A total of 34 SSIs, 38 KIIs and 7 FGDs with parents/caregivers was carried out across the research sites.

Most of the SSIs were conducted with married and widowed women and also some men. The FGD participants represented mothers, fathers, and, in some cases, grandparents of children from the age cohorts of interest to the study, all of whom had experienced significant difficulties during emergency situations following natural disasters. The research team took the help of local social mobilisers in identifying informants and FGD participants in all three study sites.

**Table 4.1: Interviews and Focus Groups**

Type of engagement	Location	Number	
Semi-structured Interviews	Thuladurlung, Lalitpur	11	
	Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk	9	
	Gaur, Rautahat	14	
<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>34</b>	
Key informant interviews	Thuladurlung, Lalitpur	9	
	Bahrabise/Chautara, Sindhupalchowk	9	
	Gaur, Rautahat	14	
	Kathmandu Valley	6	
<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>38</b>	
Focus group discussions	Thuladurlung, Lalitpur (Age Group)	0-3	1
		3-5	1
		5-8	1
	Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk (Age Group)	Mixed (0-8)	1
		0-3	1
	Gaur, Rautahat (Age Group)	3-5	1
		5-8	1
<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>7</b>	
<b>Total</b>		<b>79</b>	

## BRIEF BACKGROUND OF RESEARCH SITES

---

The study focused on three different sites with different histories of natural disasters in the recent past, namely, the 2015 earthquake that particularly affected both Sindhupalchowk and Lalitpur; and the 2014 Jure landslide in Bahrabise of Sindhupalchowk; the floods of 2017 and the annual cold waves in the Tarai. The choice of these three sites with experience of different forms of disasters was expected to provide important varied insights into the impacts, experiences, vulnerabilities and strategies as well as preparedness, response and protection of children in different disaster contexts.

a) **Thuladurlung** in the southern part of Lalitpur District is now a part of Mahankal Rural Municipality in Province 3. Lalitpur District was one of the 14 worst-hit districts by the 2015 earthquake and is also a district that was affected by the 2017 monsoon.<sup>20</sup> Thuladurlung, bordering Kavrepalanchowk and Makwanpur districts, is a hilly area with dispersed settlements. According to the 2011 census, Thuladurlung consists of 291 households and has a total population of 1479 (718 male and 761 female).<sup>21</sup> The community faced hardships after the 2015 earthquake, which included lack of access to immediate relief and rescue efforts in its immediate aftermath. Thuladurlung is located adjacent to the-then Gimdi VDC in the southern part of the district, a distance that takes around eight hours to cover by road from Chapagaun Bus Park in urban Lalitpur. There is only one dangerous, twisty, steep, fair-weather road that goes up to Thuladurlung. As one of the badly affected communities in the district, the people from Thuladurlung faced several challenges during

different phases of the earthquake, owing mainly to its remoteness despite its geographical proximity to the Kathmandu Valley. The area is home to a mix of Bahuns, Tamangs, Barams and a few Chhetris. Through observations and informal discussions, it became apparent that Bahuns were in positions of authority in schools, local bodies and other community institutions, with Tamangs making a few exceptions.

b) Sindhupalchowk District in Province 3 is one of the districts most prone to water-induced disasters, as three large rivers systems of the Bhotekoshi, the Indrawati and the Sunkoshi flow through it. The field site of **Bahrabise** experienced heavy landslides in Jure locality as a result of continuous heavy rainfall in August 2014, resulting in the loss of 156 lives, including 31 children studying at the local Bansanghu Secondary School, the displacement of entire communities, affecting 476 people, and ecological changes in the area.<sup>22</sup> The 2014 landslide affected the Jure area of the-then Mankha, Ramche, Tekanpur and Dhuskun VDCs of Sindhupalchowk District, out of which the three settlements of Mankha VDC, Bhalukhop, Kagune and Dam site were the most affected.<sup>23</sup> The landslides killed people and livestock and also destroyed houses and the market in Jure.<sup>24</sup> The people of Mankha and Ramche VDCs were still recovering from the landslides when the 2015 earthquake struck, putting additional stress on them.<sup>25</sup> The Bahrabise area is home to a patchwork of different groups, consisting of Tamang, Chhetri, Bahun, Newar, Magar, Tamang, Kami, Damai/

---

20 Ankit Bhetwal, 'Lalitpur Worst Hit in Valley by Monsoon,' *The Kathmandu Post*, August 14, 2017, <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2017/08/14/lalitpur-worst-hit-in-valley-by-monsoon>

21 Central Bureau of Statistics, *National Population and Housing Census 2011: Village Development Committee/Municipality, Lalitpur* (Kathmandu: Central Bureau of Statistics 2014).

---

22 Ministry of Home Affairs, *Nepal Disaster Report 2015* (Kathmandu: Ministry of Home Affairs and Disaster Preparedness Network-Nepal, 2015). <http://www.drrportal.gov.np/uploads/document/329.pdf>

23 Observation during field visit by the researchers.

24 From the KIIs.

25 From the SSIs.

Dholi, Sarki, Sherpa, Gharti/Bhujel, Thami and others.<sup>26</sup>

c) **Gaur**, a municipality in Rautahat District of Province 2, is situated between two rivers, the Bagmati and the Lal Bakkaiya.<sup>27</sup> As per the 2011 census, its total population was 34,937 (18,290 male and 16,647 female) with the major groups being Muslim, Teli, Kaanu, Kalwar, Brahun, Yadav and Mallah. Most of the important district offices of government agencies and NGOs are located in the small town of Gaur, with farming, livestock, wage labour, services and business being the primary sources of livelihood. Gaur covers an area of 21.53 sq. km and has Rajdevi Municipality to the east, Ishnath Municipality to the west, Rajpur Municipality to the north, and Sitamari (in the Nepal-India border) to the south.<sup>28</sup> In the southern part of Rautahat, India has built the Bairgania Circular Dam in order to protect its lowlands.<sup>29</sup> As a result, during the monsoon, when the Lal Bakkaiya River starts flowing in full spate, it finds its path obstructed once it reaches the Indian border, causing inundation in Gaur and the adjoining villages.

Rautahat is a district that has historically been very vulnerable to floods. The biggest flood in recent times was in 1954, resulting in the

deaths of hundreds and massive damage of infrastructures and crops along with devastation to farm land as a result of sand deposits from the rivers with no farming possible for seven years.<sup>30</sup> The floods of 2017 affected more than 300,000 people in the district, with 18 deaths reported and two missing.<sup>31</sup> The destruction of houses, food stocks and agricultural land was also very high, making Rautahat the worst-hit district among the 12 in the Tarai affected by the flood.<sup>32</sup>

Additionally, the Tarai has also had to deal with cold waves during the winter, which is often reported to affect day-to-day activities of the people as well as their agricultural productivity, not to mention children's education.<sup>33</sup> Schools, factories and other places of work are shut down for long stretches due to lack of visibility, the biting cold and dangerous road conditions.<sup>34</sup> People trying to keep warm by lighting fires in such harsh conditions unknowingly contribute to the cold wave by adding to the mixture of smoke and fog already in the atmosphere. The long closure of schools not only impacts the education of the children but brings up a number of child protection-related issues such as their health and overall development.<sup>35</sup> In fact, people do recognise the fact that they are living in a danger zone.<sup>36</sup>

---

26 Central Bureau of Statistics, National Population and Housing Census 2011: Village Development Committee/ Municipality, Sindhupalchowk (Kathmandu: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2014).

27 Field observation and from KIIs and SSIs.

28 'Home: Introduction: Brief Introduction,' Gaur Municipality, accessed April 17, 2020, <http://gaurmun.gov.np/en/node/4>

29 Field observation and informal conversations with stakeholders.

---

30 Sharad Ghimire, 'Flood of 1954: The Beginning of a Developmental State.' *Nepal Policy and Research Network* 3, no.1 (2014): 5-48.

31 United Nations, *Nepal: Flood 2017, Office of the Resident Coordinator Situation Report No. 3*. (Lalitpur: United Nations Office of the Resident Coordinator, 2017).

32 Rural Reconstruction Nepal, *Nepal Flood-2017: Situation Report No.4 (26 September 2017)* (Kathmandu: Rural Reconstruction Nepal, 2017).

33 From KIIs and SSIs.

34 From KIIs and SSIs.

35 From KIIs and SSIs.

36 From the KIIs.

## QUALITY ASSURANCE AND RESEARCH ETHICS

---

The research approach and instruments designed along the lines of the terms of reference (ToR) as well as a review of extensive literature were discussed with Save the Children International (SCI) and finalised after integrating the inputs received. The Principal Investigator of the study was responsible for ensuring the quality of the overall activities, from data collection and management to cleaning, analysing and writing.

In preparation for the fieldwork, SSB invited an Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) expert from SCI for a briefing session to researchers involved in the study (as well as other researchers at SSB) on the process of child development. SSB also organised a one-day training session for its researchers with an expert counsellor and psychosocial trainer from the

Transcultural Psychosocial Organization Nepal (TPO Nepal), focusing on conducting research among people facing trauma. The orientation included ethical guidelines to be followed by researchers. All the researchers involved in this evaluation had also completed the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Online Training Module for the Social Sciences and Humanities.

As part of the standard protocol followed by SSB, the data and information collected by the researchers are password-protected and saved in SSB computers, and it is ensured that the information is accessible only to the researchers involved in the study. Also, all the names of research participants have been anonymised in the report to protect their identity.

## LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

---

The study was conducted without facing any major hindrances or difficulties. However, the researchers came across some practical and technical challenges in the field sites as outlined below. First, as most of the families who lost their children in the landslide in Bahrabise as well as many others affected had resettled outside the district, it was difficult to find the required numbers of respondents with children from the three age groups. Hence, one FGD had to be conducted with the caregivers of a mixed-age group. A similar challenge was faced in Thuladurlung due to the sparse and scattered nature of settlements in the area. Another notable difficulty encountered in Bahrabise was researchers having to remind the interviewees that the queries asked were specific either to the landslide or the earthquake, and oftentimes the respondents would provide mixed information from their experiences of both the landslide and the earthquake. It was also apparent that they struggled to recollect accurate

information because the landslides had happened four years earlier.

Collecting data from the respective district authorities and relevant organisations about the number of children affected and the number and types of organisations and their responses in the post-disaster period was also challenging. The researchers would either be referred to other authorities or asked to consult other sources. Hence, they were unable to get hold of all the kind of data the study was hoping for.

In Rautahat, in a departure from the two other sites, the difficulties and challenges faced by the researchers was in accessing women for interviews, mainly because they did not feel comfortable to talk to male researchers (even though each team also had a female researcher) while some restrictions were also placed by male members of their families. It was also difficult to organise FGDs with a mixed group of male and female caregivers for the same reason.

# FINDINGS

---

## Policy Frameworks and Provisions

### National

After the 1950s, Nepal introduced a number of legal and policy frameworks related to disaster risk reduction and management as well as child protection. Nepal became party to the UN Declaration on Rights of Children 1959, which recognises the need for special care and protection of children before and after birth, as well as priority in receiving relief in all circumstances.<sup>37</sup> The country thus has a legal and moral obligation to these commitments. However, closer scrutiny suggests that while these frameworks were focused on aspects of governance and enhancing safer and disaster-resistant buildings as well as operation and distribution of relief, they did not deal specifically with reference to the impacts on, vulnerabilities faced by, and protection of children and caregiver in post-disaster situations. For example, the First Periodic Plan (1956–1960) focused on the resettlement of farmers,<sup>38</sup> and the Seventh Periodic Plan (1985–1990) emphasised mitigation of the impact of disasters on food grain and property,<sup>39</sup> neither of them mentioned children or caregivers. The Eighth Periodic Plan (1992–1997) gave priority to rescue and controlling the negative impacts of disasters such as landslides and floods through tree plantation<sup>40</sup> while the Ninth Periodic Plan (1997–2002) emphasised the need for the establishment of emergency health services at central-, regional-,

---

37 United Nations, General Assembly, *Declaration of the Rights of the Child*, UNGA Resolution 1386 (XIV), (20 November 1959). [https://www.umpod.cz/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Pravni\\_predpisy\\_AI/declaration\\_child1959.pdf](https://www.umpod.cz/fileadmin/user_upload/Pravni_predpisy_AI/declaration_child1959.pdf)

38 National Planning Commission, *First Five-Year Plan, 1956-1961* (Kathmandu: National Planning Commission, 1956). [npc.gov.np/images/category/FirrStPlan\\_Eng.pdf](http://npc.gov.np/images/category/FirrStPlan_Eng.pdf)

39 National Planning Commission, *Seventh Five Year Plan, 1985-1990* (Kathmandu: National Planning Commission, 1985). [npc.gov.np/images/category/seventh\\_eng.pdf](http://npc.gov.np/images/category/seventh_eng.pdf)

40 National Planning Commission, *Eighth Five Year Plan, 1992-1997* (Kathmandu: National Planning Commission, 1992). [npc.gov.np/images/category/eighth\\_eng.pdf](http://npc.gov.np/images/category/eighth_eng.pdf)

and district-levels health institutions to reduce impacts and serve the injured.<sup>41</sup>

The Natural Calamity (Relief) Act 1982 provides a broader framework for relief work and protecting life and public and private property and envisages institutions such as district and local natural calamities relief committees, with their roles and responsibilities in policy-making and planning, coordinating, monitoring and distributing relief outlined.<sup>42</sup> The Prime Minister's Disaster Relief Fund was established in 2007 to provide rescue and relief to victims.<sup>43</sup> Further, although according to provisions in the Social Welfare Act 1992 and the Children's Rules 1995, it is the responsibility of the government to provide social welfare to vulnerable groups such as the weak, old people, helpless and disabled, it is not clear how such programmes will be implemented in post-disaster situations.<sup>44</sup> The Disaster Victims Rescue and Relief Standards 2007 includes several provisions and mechanisms on rescue, disaster relief, food and housing arrangements, information management, management of resources, monitoring and evaluation.<sup>45</sup> However, there are no provisions

---

41 National Planning Commission, *Ninth Five Year Plan, 1997-2002* (Kathmandu: National Planning Commission, 1997). [npc.gov.np/images/category/ninth\\_eng\\_2.pdf](http://npc.gov.np/images/category/ninth_eng_2.pdf)

42 Nepal Law Commission, *Natural Calamity (Relief) Act, 1982* (Kathmandu: Nepal Law Commission, 1982). <http://www.lawcommission.gov.np/en/archives/category/documents/law-archives/statutes-acts-law-archives/natural-calamity-relief-act-2039-b-s-1982>

43 Prime Minister's Disaster Relief Fund Rules, 2062 (2007), was established under the section 2 of Administrative Procedure (Regular) 2013 BS. ['Prime Minister's Disaster Relief Fund – About: Niyamawali (Rules)'; Government of Nepal.

44 'Home: Documents: Prevailing Law: Statutes / Acts: Social Welfare Act 1992', Nepal Law Commission, accessed November 12, 2019, <http://www.lawcommission.gov.np/en/archives/17950>; Nepal Law Commission, *The Children's Rules, 2051 (1995)* (Kathmandu: Nepal Law Commission, 1995). <http://www.lawcommission.gov.np/en/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/childrens-rules-2051-1995.pdf>

45 Minister of Home Affairs, 'Prakop Pidot Uddar ra Rahat Sambandhi Mapdanda (pachaun samsodhan)2064' (Disaster Victims Rescue and Relief Standard (Fifth Amendment) (in



specific to children and caregivers. Similarly, the Building Act 1998 sets guidelines for constructing disaster-resistant and safer buildings and makes it mandatory to receive government approval for building designs, however, it does not have any consideration about the vulnerabilities and needs of children and caregivers in disaster situations.<sup>46</sup>

The Three-Year Interim Plan ((2007/08–2009/10) proposed the establishment of an Emergency Natural Disaster Relief Fund at the departmental level to mitigate disaster risks, coordinate disaster management, and address disasters and supply of emergency support. Although the plan for the first time underscored the need for the formulation of laws regarding adopted children, foster care and children's homes, these not specific to disaster contexts and emergencies.<sup>47</sup> Subsequently, in 2012, the Guideline for the Relief to Cold-Wave Victims was issued, which makes the provision of providing relief materials to the most backward families (*ati bipannna pariwar*) in 22 Tarai and Inner Tarai districts.<sup>48</sup> However, the guideline does not mention anything specific to children.

Many of the acts and policies enacted in the last decade appear to be relatively more sensitive towards the issues of children and their protection in disaster situations. One such is the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management 2009 even though it contains only a few provisions that address the needs of women, children, the marginalised and other vulnerable groups.<sup>49</sup> Priority Action (4) of the strategy does acknowledge the need for developing and implementing special disaster risk reduction (DRR)

measures for vulnerable groups, including children, among others. Subsequently, the Government of Nepal (GoN) passed the Emergency Child Mitigation Fund (Operation) Rules 2010, which specified that funds collected from various sources would be utilised and mobilised by a board currently in the Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens for the rescue, relief and rehabilitation of the children in emergencies.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, since the process and criteria for funds allocation and distribution and determining the affected was not specified, the effective use of the fund in the protection of and support to children in disaster-induced emergencies seems unlikely.

The Twelfth Periodic Plan (2010/11–2012/13) stated that disaster management-related work plan and implementation should identify vulnerable groups such as senior citizens and children at risk, they should be provided with ration cards, and arrangements should be made for safe houses for rehabilitation.<sup>51</sup> Along the same lines, the Guidance Note: Disaster Preparedness and Response Planning 2011, aimed at assisting government officials, NGOs, INGOs and UN agencies involved in disaster preparedness and planning, also emphasises the need for providing relief materials to the children among the marginalised.<sup>52</sup> The Thirteenth Periodic Plan (2013/14–2015/16) highlighted the need for both public awareness and urgency to implement safety measures in responses and disaster risk reduction/management (DRR/M) with due focus on health insurance and social protection programmes to protect vulnerable groups during disasters and

Nepali) (Kathmandu: Minister of Home Affairs, 2007).

46 'Home: Documents: Prevailing Law: Statutes / Acts: The Building Act, 2055,' Nepal Law Commission, accessed November 12, 2019, <http://www.lawcommission.gov.np/en/archives/category/documents/prevailing-law/statutes-acts/the-building-act-2055>

47 National Planning Commission, *Three Year Interim Plan, 2007/08-2009/10* (Kathmandu: National Planning Commission, 2007). [npc.gov.np/images/category/14th-plan-full-document.pdf](http://npc.gov.np/images/category/14th-plan-full-document.pdf)

48 Ministry of Home Affairs, *Guideline for the Relief to Cold-Wave Victims, 2012* (Kathmandu: Ministry of Home Affairs, 2012).

49 Ministry of Home Affairs United Nations Development Programme and European Union, *National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management, 2009* (Kathmandu: Ministry of Home Affairs, 2009). <http://un.org.np/sites/default/files/report/2010-08-06-nsdrm-in-eng-2009.pdf>

50 'Home: Documents: Prevailing Law: Rules and Regulations: Emergency Child Mitigation Fund (Operation) Rules, 2067 (2010),' Nepal Law Commission, accessed November 12, 2019, <http://www.lawcommission.gov.np/en/archives/5829>

51 National Planning Commission, *Twelfth Three Year Plan, 2010/11-2012/13* (Kathmandu: National Planning Commission, 2010). [npc.gov.np/images/category/14th-plan-full-document.pdf](http://npc.gov.np/images/category/14th-plan-full-document.pdf)

52 Ministry of Home Affairs, *Guidance Note: Disaster Preparedness and Response Planning, 2011* (Kathmandu: Ministry of Home Affairs, 2011). <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2011-06-17-RCHCO-Guidance%20Note%202011%20for%20Preparing%20Disaster%20Preparedness%20%26%20Response%20Plan-English.pdf>

ensuing emergencies.<sup>53</sup> The plan, however, did not contain any specific provision and programme targeted at children and caregivers.

The National Disaster Response Framework (NDRF) 2013 is an important and relatively more comprehensive national disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) framework, which provides guidelines on national responses to be taken before, during and after a disaster as well as on the coordination of assistance between and among various governmental and non-governmental agencies towards reducing the effects of disasters. Even though it does not include the needs of children and caregivers in disaster situations comprehensively, it clearly acknowledges the importance of and need for providing protection to marginalised groups and nutrition support to children under 5 years of age, and care to children and lactating women. It also points out the need for an action plan for the protection of children against gender-based violence in post-disaster contexts.<sup>54</sup>

The National Strategic Action Plan for Search and Rescue 2013 includes in its action plans the need to plan and carry out disaster-response activities, paying special consideration to vulnerable groups.<sup>55</sup> However, it does not define whether children are to be considered part of the vulnerable groups nor does it describe the support and assistance to be provided or any mechanisms thereof. Nepal also enacted the Water Induced Disaster Management Policy 2015 with the objective of making plans and strategies to mitigate the risks, save lives during emergencies, reduce the adverse impacts of floods and landslide and other water-induced disasters.<sup>56</sup> The policy, however, does not specify any provisions relating to the

issues, needs and vulnerabilities of affected groups, including those of children and their caregivers.

The Directive Principles of the Constitution of Nepal 2015 does deal with disaster preparedness, response, risk reduction and management, but without any specific reference to children. However, some of the articles of the constitution have guaranteed the rights of children, including in disaster situations. For example, Article 18 recognises the need to frame special provisions for the empowerment or development of children, senior citizens, the disabled, Dalits, indigenous nationalities (Adivasi Janajati) and other socially and culturally backward groups. In addition, Article 39 recognises children's right to education, health, maintenance, proper care and identity, while Sub-section 9 of the same Article states that children who are displaced or vulnerable, orphaned, have disabilities, and victimised by conflict should be provided with special protection and facilities.<sup>57</sup>

In the School Sector Development Plan 2016-2023, the GoN has incorporated mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction in the education sector and ensuring school safety by focusing on three pillars: safe infrastructures, strengthened disaster risk management, and strengthened resilience in the communities and among stakeholders. One of the strategies includes reaching out to children, parents, communities, school staff and education authorities, and increased awareness among children about disaster-risk mitigation and their ability to make adequate responses to minimise human losses.<sup>58</sup> Although the plan was developed after the 2015 earthquake, surprisingly, the plan does not take into consideration the impacts of disasters like the earthquake on children's psychosocial and educational growth and the needs of children such as provision of proper space and learning environments.

---

53 National Planning Commission, *Thirteenth Three Year Plan, 2013/14-2015/16* (Kathmandu: National Planning Commission, 2013). [npc.gov.np/images/category/13th-Plan\\_nep.pdf](http://npc.gov.np/images/category/13th-Plan_nep.pdf)

54 Ministry of Home Affairs, *National Disaster Response Framework (NDRF), 2013* (Kathmandu: Ministry of Home Affairs, 2013). <http://drrportal.gov.np/uploads/document/113.pdf>

55 Ministry of Home Affairs, *National Strategic Action Plan for Search and Rescue, 2013* (Kathmandu: Ministry of Home Affairs, 2013). <http://drrportal.gov.np/uploads/document/164.pdf>

56 Government of Nepal, *Water Induced Disaster Management Policy, 2015* (Kathmandu: Government of Nepal, 2015). [drrportal.gov.np/uploads/document/329.pdf](http://drrportal.gov.np/uploads/document/329.pdf)

---

57 'Home: Documents: Prevailing Law: Constitution: Constitution of Nepal,' Nepal Law Commission, accessed November 12, 2019, <http://www.lawcommission.gov.np/en/archives/category/documents/prevailing-law/constitution/constitution-of-nepal>

58 Ministry of Education, *School Sector Development Plan, 2016/17 - 2022/23* (Kathmandu: Ministry of Education, 2016).

After the 2015 Earthquake, the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), in coordination with some key ministries and donors, prepared a four-year recovery and reconstruction framework called the Post-Disaster Recovery Framework (PDRF) 2016-2020. The PDRF has also developed sectoral plans to ensure that recovery and reconstruction is disaster-resilient and support the overall development agenda of the country, facilitate capacity strengthening, restoration and recovery from impacts, and construction of disaster-resilient social infrastructure in order to provide safe learning places for children, adolescents and the youth. The framework also underscores, in both recovery and reconstruction processes, the need to give priority to re-strengthening and re-establishing functional maternal, new-born and childcare services; on providing specialised assistance to people with special needs, like children; and providing children and youth with access to quality and safe learning environment. In the GESI (gender equality and social inclusion) section of the framework, there is the commitment to identify the vulnerable population and those at risk, like children, and to formulate and implement rescue-, relief-, and rehabilitation-related programmes. It also notes that consideration would be required to provide special assistance to those marginalised groups deprived of economic and social rights for preparedness, DRR, rescue and relief, response and recovery.<sup>59</sup>

The Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, (SDGs) came into effect in January 2016 as a global framework with the objective of fighting poverty, inequalities and climate change. Member states like Nepal are expected to take the necessary measures, including formulating and implementing plans, policies and programmes to achieve the goals. Some of the goals, although not directly related to children and vulnerable groups during and after disasters, recognise the need for education, health,

---

<sup>59</sup> National Reconstruction Authority, *Post Disaster Recovery Framework 2016-2020* (Kathmandu: National Reconstruction Authority, 2016).

water and sanitation. For example, the priority of Goal 4 is to provide access to quality education to children in a safe, inclusive and effective learning environment; Goal 6 emphasises ensuring access to water, sanitation and hygiene needs with special consideration of the needs of those in vulnerable situations; Goal 1 emphasises the need for building resilience among the poor and people in vulnerable situations, and reducing their vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and disasters; and Goal 13 calls for integrating policies and strategies for combating climate change and adapting its impacts as well as strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity against natural disasters, while also underlining the need to improve education and awareness-raising capacity for DRRM.<sup>60</sup>

Nepal enacted a very comprehensive Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017 to amend and consolidate acts related to minimising the risk of disaster and protecting private and public property from destruction. The Act provides the institutional structure for DRRM and envisages a National Council for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, Provincial Disaster Management Committee, District Disaster Management Committee and Local Disaster Management Committee. It also clearly defines the rights and responsibilities of these institutions in terms of disaster response and management such as the Executive Committee of the National Council for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management having to take into account special provisions and programmes for children among many other vulnerable and marginalised groups while formulating and implementing DRRM policies and plans.<sup>61</sup> The Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens has also developed the Monsoon Emergency Action Plan 2017 for disaster management and to mitigate the impacts of the monsoon rains on life and property. The plan has

---

<sup>60</sup> United Nations, *Transforming Our World*,

<sup>61</sup> Nepal Law Commission, *Bipad Jokhim Niyunikarn tatha Byabsthapan Ain 2074* (Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017) (in Nepali) (Kathmandu: Nepal Law Commission, 2017). <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/106076/129931/F1996604288/NPL106076%20Npl.pdf>

several provisions for the protection of children, including establishing an emergency fund for children who have been displaced or have lost their parents, and to provide recreational kits to them. It also has provisions to protect children from trafficking and gender-based violence while providing the necessary support, including psychological assistance.<sup>62</sup>

The Local Government Operation Act 2017 has made local governments responsible during the time of disasters by granting them the authority to ensure that people build earthquake-resistant buildings, and take into account disaster preparedness, management and response while formulating their plans. It stresses that local governments should be prepared for any local disasters, should stock up on relief materials, and establish disaster management committees for the distribution of funds and materials when required. The Act grants rural municipalities and [urban] municipalities the rights and responsibilities for the operation, management and monitoring of rehabilitation centres established to rehabilitate children, orphans, the disabled and mentally challenged people.<sup>63</sup> However, it is not clear whether this considers children affected by natural disasters as well.

Subsequently, the GoN formulated the Disaster Risk Reduction National Policy 2018 with the objective of reducing the impact of disasters, enhancing preparedness, executing disaster management works, and providing policy guidelines for reconstruction. In addition to disaster education that encourages the use of technology, enforcement of building codes, developing a culture of safety against natural

disasters, strengthening national DRR platforms at the local level, forming rescue team at all levels, and establishing trauma care centres, it emphasises the principles of gender and social inclusion in disaster planning and implementation. Further, it states that public buildings should be made children-friendly. The policy acknowledges and emphasises the need to include disaster education in schools and make special plans and programmes for women, children, senior citizens, marginalised communities and disabled people. It also states that a minimum standard of relief distribution should be created and implemented with the objective of benefitting children, women, senior citizens and the disabled.<sup>64</sup>

The Government of Nepal has also prepared the Disaster Risk Reduction and National Strategy Action Plan 2018-2030, covering natural hazards like landslides, floods, cold waves and earthquakes, among others. The plan also reviews the implementation, progress, and limitations of previous policies and strategies related to DRRM. The plan states that DRRM will be guided by the principles of participation and partnership with all the sectors of society. The Plan has also established various priorities for DRRM, with the primary one considering institutionalised risk and conducting a vulnerability assessment of multiple disasters based on disaggregated data for gender, age, disability and diversity, for which it stipulates the need for a Common National Framework and inter-agency coordination between the Ministry of Home, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority, etc.

These priority areas are important for addressing the needs and protection of children and women and other vulnerable groups in disaster and emergency situations. For example, there is the stipulation about the need for dissemination and broadcasting of information on disaster risks to women, children, disabled students; training programmes for women and children, among others; the establishment of emergency operation centres at the provincial and local levels as well. The Plan also specifies that there be guidelines

---

62 Ministry of Home Affairs, 'Mansun Aapatkalin Karyayojana 2076' (Monsoon Emergency Action Plan 2019) (in Nepali) (Kathmandu: Ministry of Home Affairs, 2019).

63 Nepal Law Commission, 'Sthaniya Sarkar Sanchalan Ain 2074' (Local Government Operation Act 2017) (in Nepali) (Kathmandu: Nepal Law Commission, 2017). [http://mofald.gov.np/sites/default/files/News\\_Notices/%E0%A4%B8%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%A5%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%A8%E0%A5%80%E0%A4%AF-%E0%A4%B8%E0%A4%B0%E0%A4%95%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%B0-%E0%A4%B8%E0%A4%9E%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%9A%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%B2%E0%A4%A8-%20%E0%A4%90%E0%A4%A8%20.pdf](http://mofald.gov.np/sites/default/files/News_Notices/%E0%A4%B8%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%A5%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%A8%E0%A5%80%E0%A4%AF-%E0%A4%B8%E0%A4%B0%E0%A4%95%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%B0-%E0%A4%B8%E0%A4%9E%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%9A%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%B2%E0%A4%A8-%20%E0%A4%90%E0%A4%A8%20.pdf)

---

64 Ministry of Home Affairs, *National Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2018* (Kathmandu: Ministry of Home Affairs, 2018).

on the protection of vulnerable communities and prevention of gender-based violence at all levels of government; gender-sensitive and inclusive DRRM policy-making and governance; provisions and implementation of special DRR programmes for vulnerable groups such as women and children. It provides for improvement of livelihoods of women and children through implementation of employment and skills development programmes; improvement in basic health services in disaster-prone areas with consideration given to reproductive health, child health and improvement in adolescents' health and nutrition; children-friendly schools, hospitals and shelters; storage houses and sufficient material, including food, medicine, hygiene kits and other equipment, for women, women in the post-partum period and children. It also stresses establishing early warning systems and provision of materials and training on early warning with the participation of women and children; preparing guidelines for developing collaboration and partnership between various agencies and organisations, including mothers' groups and children's clubs for DRRM; and the provision of education, health, nutrition and drinking water along with the construction of orphanages and community buildings friendly and useful to women and children.<sup>65</sup>

The recently enacted Children's Act 2075 (2018) has laid down some important provisions for the protection, care and support of children in general, and a few related to children's protection and care in post-disaster contexts. The Act has also provided a definition and categorisation of children in need of special protection, consisting of orphans and children who have lost one or both parents in disasters or armed conflict, are physically injured and/or psychologically affected, and suffer disabilities. More importantly, the Act makes the state and other stakeholders responsible for the management of their needs such as livelihoods, protection, health and education as well as support in rescue, temporary protection, health treatment,

---

<sup>65</sup> Ministry of Home Affairs, *Disaster Risk Reduction National Strategic Plan of Action 2018-2030* (Kathmandu: Ministry of Home Affairs, 2018).

psychosocial support, family reunification, rehabilitation, alternative care, family support, social security and socialisation. It has also made provisions for the alternative care of orphans, according to which the Children's Welfare Officer is responsible for the management of alternative care of children through immediate relatives, foster families as well as other individuals, organisations and orphanages. The Act has also provisions for children's homes in each province, established with the support of federal, provincial and local governments. It also emphasises that schools, public agencies and social organisations working directly on children's issues should formulate child protection standards at the institutional level to prevent child abuse as well as physical and sexual abuse. The Act also provides for a Child Rights Committee in all the provinces and Child Rights Committees at rural municipal and [urban] municipal levels with local governments granted the authority to recruit the required number of social workers or child psychologists to provide services related to child protection. The Act envisages the establishment of Children's Fund as well for the immediate rescue, relief and rehabilitation, and compensation to children.<sup>66</sup>

The Post-Disaster Dead-body Management Guideline 2012 (first amendment 2018) also recognises a need for special assistance and care to helpless orphan children and old age people.<sup>67</sup>

Also, the GoN has set up a data portal<sup>68</sup> related to disaster with the objective to provide crucial information on the resource capacity about the health institutions, financial institutions, schools, banks, stockpiles, road network, inventories, NGOs, government agencies, etc. in relation to the incidents.

---

<sup>66</sup> Nepal Law Commission, *The Act Relating to Children, 2075 (2018)* (Kathmandu: Nepal Law Commission, 2018). [lawcommission.gov.np/en/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/The-Act-Relating-to-Children-2075-2018.pdf](http://lawcommission.gov.np/en/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/The-Act-Relating-to-Children-2075-2018.pdf)

<sup>67</sup> Ministry of Home Affairs, 'Bipad Paschatko Sab Byawasthapan Sambandhi Margadarshan 2068' (Pratham Samsodhan, 2076)' (Post-Disaster Dead-body Management Guideline, 2012 (first amendment 2018) (in Nepali) (Kathmandu: Ministry of Home Affairs, 2018).

<sup>68</sup> Government of Nepal, BIPAD, [bipad.gov.np/](http://bipad.gov.np/)

## Local

The study also reviewed DRRM plans and strategies prepared at the provincial and local levels relevant to the research sites.

The District Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan (DPRP) 2016<sup>69</sup> of Lalitpur District's District Disaster Rescue Committee is quite comprehensive. It takes into account the impacts on various marginalised groups along with their needs and vulnerabilities. It has specified various measures and action plans to be taken under Disaster Preparedness Activities, Action Plan for Emergency Responses, Coordination and Information Management, Need and Demand of Food Items, Health and Nutrition, Landslide and Flood, Food and Agriculture Sector, Shelter and Non-food Item, Education in Emergency, Emergency Protection, etc. Although the Plan does not include children under the 'most vulnerable group', it has extensively recognised the needs and vulnerabilities of children, pregnant and lactating mothers during search and rescue; in health and nutrition; and in WASH; as well as in the distribution of relief materials. It emphasises that children's learning, provision of temporary shelters, temporary learning centres (TLCs) and extra activities be carried out in schools. The Plan directs that infants, school-going children and people with disabilities (PwDs) be given priority while conducting rescues during disasters. Although the reference to relief material include medicines to treat diarrhoea and hygiene kits, there is no specific materials for children, lactating mothers, or pregnant women even though it does mention the need for the distribution of nutritious food to women in the post-partum period, lactating mothers and malnourished children and emphasises storing adequate nutritious food for children from 6 months to below 5 years of age, pregnant and post-partum women, and also blankets for 6- to 11-month-old infants.

Under emergency support, the Plan states that

---

69 District Disaster Rescue Committee, 'Jilla Bipad Purwatayari tatha Pratikarya Yojana-2073' (District Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan-2016) (in Nepali) (Lalitpur: District Disaster Rescue Committee, 2016).

there should be coordination with the health sector to manage safe spaces for pregnant and post-partum women, and the concerned authorities like politicians, the police and the army should be provided orientation on child protection. In health and nutrition, it stipulates the need for protection kit for pregnant women, meeting maternity needs, management of infant management centres, providing vaccination, distribution of mosquito nets, spraying of insecticides, and additional and nutritious food for children. Along with the importance of resumption and continuation of education immediately after disasters, the Plan emphasises provision of drinking water, kits related to sanitation and hygiene, child-friendly TLCs, safe spaces, child protection kit, child development box, learning materials, and training to teachers. Similarly, it has also stipulated that latrines and water taps at schools be accessible to children of both genders, adolescent girls and PwDs. There are also measures mentioned for the prevention of children and women from being trafficked and from possible violence.

Recognising the risks of landslides, earthquakes various other disasters, Bahrabise Municipality of Sindhupalchowk District has prepared the Local Disaster Management Guidelines, 2075. The guideline stresses safe, resilient and children- and women-friendly community buildings and shelters, storage of search-and-rescue materials, training and orientation on disasters, safe drinking water and water purification support, and toilets. It highlights the need for drinking water and toilets accessible to children and PwDs, provision of TLCs for children, and special support to pregnant and post-partum women and to children. It also considers the need for nutrition for children below 5 years of age and of pregnant and post-partum women. For disaster and emergencies management, the guidelines recognise that pregnant women and children should be prioritised during search-and-rescue operations, and provisions of sports, songs, drama, drawings should be made for children's learning and physical growth.<sup>70</sup>

---

70 Bahrabise Municipality, *Local Disaster and Climate Resilience Plan (LDCRP)* (Sindhupalchowk: Bahrabise Municipality, 2017).

Gaur Municipality of Rautahat District has allocated funds for disaster risk management and responses in its annual development plans. Gaur's proposed Fiscal Year Programme for 2018/19 has set aside NPR 50,000 (c. USD 500) for formulating of action plans for the provision of nutrition in emergency situations, NPR 320,000 for distributing blankets and warm clothes to poor people during cold waves, NPR 400,000 for disaster relief, NPR 800,000 for raising awareness about food, NPR 400,000 for disaster and disaster management programmes, and NPR 6 million for disaster management.<sup>71</sup>

The policy and plans of the Government of Province 3 has stated that a Province Disaster Management Fund would be established and mobilised to support rescue operations for people affected by floods, landslides, fire and other natural calamities. It has also drafted a law related to mobilisation of the Disaster Emergency Fund. The province has also allocated NPR 50 million towards the Disaster Emergency Fund. However, it does not mention whether and how issues of children and vulnerable groups would be given special consideration while mobilising the Fund.<sup>72</sup>

## International

Nepal has also adopted three important global agreements on DRRM: the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action (1994); the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015; and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. All of these frameworks have recognised that the effects of disasters are severest amongst the poor and the socially disadvantaged, particularly in developing countries<sup>73</sup> and provide crucial recommendations

71 Gaur Municipality, 'Barshik Karyakram Swikrit Faram aa wa 2075/76' (Annual Fiscal Program Approval Form (Proposed Annual Fiscal Program for 2075/76) (in Nepali) (Rautahat: Gaur Municipality, 2018).

72 Government of Nepal, Province 3, 'Pradesh Sarakaar, Pradesh Number 3 Ko Niti tatha Karyakram (aa wa 2075/76)' (Provincial Government, Province Number 3, *Policy and Programs FY 2018/2019*) (in Nepali) (Kathmandu: Government of Nepal, 2018).

73 Department of Humanitarian Affairs, *Yokohama Strategy*

to various stakeholders for reducing, mitigating and managing the disaster-induced impacts. In addition to the need for cooperation between and among various actors (at individual, community, country, regional and international levels),<sup>74</sup> they have also noted that DRRMs should provide equal consideration for people with varied characteristics.<sup>75</sup> For the protection of children and their recovery from the adverse impacts of the disaster, the Hyogo Framework and the Sendai Framework underline the need to inform and educate children about the effects of disaster by incorporating DRRM-related knowledge in curricula, setting up social safety net mechanisms, and providing psychosocial support in the aftermath of disasters. The Sendai Framework further stresses that the government should not only identify risks specific to groups but also be more responsible and engage continuously with women, children, PwDs, the poor, migrants and indigenous people through livelihood enhancement programmes and support for basic healthcare services, including maternal, newborn and child health, sexual and reproductive health, food security and nutrition, housing and education.<sup>76</sup>

In sum, the various plans and policies from the early 1950s indicate a strong acknowledgement of Nepal's being prone to natural disasters. But a close reading of the same in relation to the protection of children and their caregivers in disaster contexts clearly indicates that earlier plans and policies were very weak. Laws, plans and policies formulated in more recent years are more sensitive on this matter. As specified in the Paris Agreement 2015 children are one of the vulnerable groups that require particular consideration while taking

and for a Safer World: *Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation*, Geneva: United Nations International Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 1994; UNDRR 2005; UNDRR 2015.

74 *ibid*; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, *Sendai Framework*,

75 United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, *Hyogo Framework*,

76 United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, *Sendai Framework*,

action to address climate change.<sup>77</sup> However, these, too, appear to be inadequate and have limited provisions for specific disaster-risk reduction and protection of children and their issues during disasters, with the implementation part being at best weak and ineffective. Further, although provincial and local governments are supposed to come up with the necessary legislation while aligning with existing national frameworks, and in coordination and partnership with various agencies and stakeholders, it is yet unclear as to whether, when and how these will materialise and be implemented, and whether and to what degree these will consider the issues of children and caregivers in emergencies.

## Difficulties Faced by Children and Caregivers

Disasters and the emergency situations that follow invariably disrupt and negatively affect human lives. There are basic needs that continue to be needed even during an emergency such as drinking water and sanitation, food, medical assistance, shelter (housing and clothing) and fuel (for cooking and heating); protection from physical violence; and psychological and social support.<sup>78</sup> As can be expected, the needs and priorities of children go beyond basic life support during emergencies.<sup>79</sup>

Disasters put many families under economic and psychological strain, increasing the likelihood of tensions within the family, and, consequently, have adverse effects on children. Women, children, the old and the poor are likely to be more affected.<sup>80</sup> As an Education Officer from

the Gaur Municipal Office put it, adults can endure difficulties but it is the children who face problems during emergencies.<sup>81</sup> In Thuladurlung, children, especially those under the age of 5, did not understand what was happening and had panicked when the earthquakes struck.<sup>82</sup> Children felt insecure living away from their native settlement.<sup>83</sup> Caregivers themselves were sensitive to the possible effects of the disasters on children aged 0-3 years. A caregiver from Lamosanghu in Bahrabise shared that she switched to cartoon television channels instead of watching the news to avoid having to watch disaster-induced devastation.<sup>84</sup> Disasters, as stated by a respondent, also deprive children from love, tenderness and protection from their parents.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, caregivers, especially from poor families, are more vulnerable since disasters can take away everything they possess.<sup>86</sup>

The massive earthquake that struck Nepal in 2015, a year after the landslide in Jure, worsened the already fragile situation in that part of the country. No one remained unaffected but the impacts were invariably severe for children and their caregivers, especially breastfeeding mothers. Because of the extra household chores, they had to take on, they could not feed their babies on time. One of the female caregivers from Lamosanghu who was breastfeeding her baby at the time of the earthquake said that she had to take shelter at her relative's house, where she was hard pressed to find free time to feed her child.<sup>87</sup>

In Rautahat, apart from regular floods during the monsoon, people also have to deal with other forms of natural calamities such as winter cold waves, fire, thunderstorms and crop failure.<sup>88</sup> During an FGD in Gaur held with mostly male caregivers (of children aged 5–8), it emerged that it

77 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, *Paris Agreement*.

78 International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *Disaster Emergency Needs Assessment: Disaster Preparedness Training Program* (Geneva: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2000). [alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/disemnas.pdf](http://alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/disemnas.pdf)

79 United Nations International Children's Education Fund, *UNICEF Annual Report 2015* (Kathmandu: United Nations International Children's Education Fund, 2015). [unicef.org/about/annualreport/files/Nepal\\_2015\\_COAR.pdf](http://unicef.org/about/annualreport/files/Nepal_2015_COAR.pdf)

80 KII 17: 10 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk; SSI 20: 7 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk; KII 43: 26 Nov 2018, Lalitpur, Kathmandu; KII 12: 8 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

81 KII 32: 8 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

82 FGD 03: 7 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur; SSI 7: 7 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

83 KII 22: 13 Sep 2018, Chautara, Sindhupalchowk.

84 SSI 12: 6 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

85 KII 17: 10 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

86 KII 12: 8 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

87 SSI 12: 6 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

88 KII 25: 6 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.



is the children and the elderly, especially from poor households, who suffer the most due to the cold as their houses are not properly insulated.<sup>89</sup>

## Impact on Food and Nutrition

‘In emergency contexts, it is important to reaffirm the fundamental right of everyone to have access to adequate and safe food.’<sup>90</sup> A study conducted after the earthquake noted that children did not have enough food to eat and lacked vegetables and other fresh food.<sup>91</sup> The present study also showed that the fundamental right of everyone to adequate and safe food was not fulfilled during emergency periods brought on by various disasters. The scarcity of food posed greater difficulties not only in the lives of small children but also for lactating mothers, pregnant women and caregivers in general. According to an NGO worker from Gaur,<sup>92</sup> the feeding of 6- to 8-month-old infants relying on breast milk or milk formula was completely disrupted. Due to lack of proper nutrition and stress, mothers also stopped lactating and could not feed their children during the floods owing to their poor diets and the stress of having to manage shelter as well as the needs of their babies.<sup>93</sup> A local journalist in Gaur said that a lot of children suffered various health problems due to the lack of proper nutrition as children younger than eight need more protein and other forms of nourishment.<sup>94</sup>

The situation was no different in the hills, as in the words of a young mother from Thuladurlung:

It was eight days after I had given birth when the earthquake occurred. In the beginning, I didn't have any milk, so I couldn't breastfeed my baby. Later, the FCHV [Female Community Health Volunteer] came and gave me vitamins

89 FGD 07: 9 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

90 World Health Organization, *Emergency and Humanitarian Action, WHO Nepal: Nepal Floods and Landslides Health Update, World Health Organization, Situation Report No. 5* (Kathmandu: World Health Organization, 2007). [who.int/hac/crises/npl/sitreps/nepal\\_sitrep\\_5\\_19aug2007.pdf](http://who.int/hac/crises/npl/sitreps/nepal_sitrep_5_19aug2007.pdf)

91 Withers and Dahal, *After the Earthquake*,

92 KII 26: 7 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

93 KII 41: 15 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

94 KII 28: 7 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

from the health post and only then I could begin breastfeeding. It would rain as well. We were in a shelter made of tin and wood, and it was difficult to keep the baby safe and warm sometimes.<sup>95</sup>

Disasters and emergencies can have negative impacts on nutrition as it leads directly to reduced household income and hence to lower food consumption.<sup>96</sup> The findings from this study also suggest that the intensity of suffering during the winter cold was associated with the poor economic situation of the families as they could not afford sufficient nutrition, which was also the reason many children fell sick. A health official from Gaur said that thick clothes are not sufficient to protect children from the cold.

If you roam around the villages in the early morning, at around 6 during the cold, you will find small children sitting around the *ghur* [fireplace] and eating leftover rice from the previous night and drinking tea. It is because they feel hungry due to the cold, and if their mother cannot provide milk, they give them tea in order to keep their children warm.<sup>97</sup>

In Gaur, the consumption of food items like *chiura* (beaten rice) and instant noodles increased following the floods of 2017 since these came as part of the relief materials, because of which many children faced problems of indigestion and diarrhoea.<sup>98</sup> In a rather troubling development, children began to prefer externally supplied food and parents and caregivers had to buy these even after the relief had run out.<sup>99</sup> Such support not only seems to have an adverse impact on children's health, it also puts families under additional economic stress.

Evidence from other disaster contexts show that children are more likely to suffer from stunted growth and other symptoms of malnutrition as a

95 SSI 01: 7 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

96 Seballos et al., 'Children and Disasters,'

97 KII 33: 8 Sept, 2018 Gaur, Rautahat.

98 KII 26: 7 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

99 SSI 20: 7 Sep 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

direct and long-term impact of disasters.<sup>100</sup> Many mothers of malnourished children shared similar experiences across the study sites. Affected families lost regular access to food and all other necessary goods in the post-disaster days.<sup>101</sup> The persistent lack of food led to malnutrition, especially among children and caregivers during and after the flood in Gaur.<sup>102</sup> Stakeholders across the sites stated that since the focus was to ensure that everyone got something to eat, very few cared whether the distributed items were healthy, hygienic, or nutritious for children. In this regard, an Auxiliary Health Worker in Thuladurlung attributed the lack of nutritious food as well as a lack of awareness among parents about the types of foods to feed the children as being responsible for Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM)<sup>103</sup> among 20 children in the area.<sup>104</sup> Caregivers fed their children whatever was available, most of which belonged to the category of junk food to fill the children's hungry stomachs.<sup>105</sup> There were no government officials or any other agency to check and verify the standards of relief materials.

## Impact on Children's Education

With schools damaged, destroyed, or closed, natural disasters have a devastating impact on children's education.<sup>106</sup> Absenteeism and dropouts increase after a disaster.<sup>107</sup> Findings from this study showed that across the research sites, the physical and financial condition of victims in the disaster-hit regions was responsible for an increase in the number of children quitting schools. In Rautahat, it was a given that absentee rates would

increase following a cold wave.<sup>108</sup> A head teacher of a secondary school in Sindhupalchowk said that the number of dropouts increased after the Jure landslide and soared after the 2015 earthquake.<sup>109</sup> Following the landslide, some women had gone to their natal homes for shelter and taken their children with them, another reason for the significant number of absentees in schools. A respondent said that she and her children took shelter at her natal home for four months following the landslide and the children did not go to the school during that period. She added that she did not send her children to school since she was afraid of a disaster striking again.<sup>110</sup>

According to a Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) representative in Gaur, the floods hamper children's education in various ways: first, the destruction of school infrastructure along with loss and damage to the learning materials such as textbooks and copy books; second, teachers are unable to complete the syllabus and conduct exams due to interruption of regular classes; and, third, the use of schools as communal temporary shelters, making it impossible to run classes.<sup>111</sup>

The head of an NGO in Gaur said: 'During floods, people took shelter in the local community school. They brought along domestic animals like cows and goats. Due to that, the school's environment was ruined: the doors, windows and benches were broken. Cow dung was smeared all over the floor. As a result, no children wanted to go back to the school.'<sup>112</sup>

Parents also tend not to send their children to the school because the disaster would have damaged school buildings. That was true for both earthquake-affected areas and those hit by floods. According to an NGO official in Gaur, a total of 30 school buildings were damaged in the district due to the floods in 2017. Although not destroyed completely, they were not in a condition to be used even after the floods subsided.<sup>113</sup> The father of four

---

100 Gaire, Surya, Tefera Darge Delbiso, Srijana Pandey and Debarati Guha-Sapir, 'Impact of Disasters on Child Stunting in Nepal.' *Risk Management and Healthcare Policy* 9 (2016): 113-127; Seballos et al., 'Children and Disasters,'

101 FGD 06: 11 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

102 KII 33: 8 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

103 A measure looking at weight-to-height ratio.

104 KII 03: 6 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

105 FGD 03: 7 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

106 Save the Children, *Delivering Education*; Peek, 'Children and Disasters,'

107 Chipso Mudavanhu, 'The Impact of Flood Disasters on Child Education in Muzarabani District, Zimbabwe, Jamba,' *Journal of Disaster Risk Studies* 6, no.1 (2014): 1-8.

108 KII 25: 6 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

109 KII 10: 7 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

110 SSI 16: 6 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

111 KII 35: 12 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

112 KII 25: 6 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

113 KII 41: 15 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

cited earlier said: ‘The school building was totally affected due to the flood. It remained closed for 15-20 days. It is because school was filled with heavy mud that it remained closed for a long time.’<sup>114</sup>

Children also came under stress upon seeing their schools damaged, further discouraging them from resuming classes after a disaster.<sup>115</sup> Caregivers and government representatives were unanimous in their view that quicker reconstruction of permanent school buildings would have contributed a lot in improving the learning environment in schools, encouraging more students to go back to school. An ECD (early childhood development) teacher from Lalitpur put it succinctly: ‘We have been facing many difficulties. We haven’t been able to teach them what we thought we would and they haven’t been able to learn what they thought they would.’<sup>116</sup>

A local government official<sup>117</sup> from Sindhupalchowk said that the TLC built immediately after the landslide was a temporary measure that could not be used in all weather conditions and the delay in reconstruction has caused a lot of problems for students.

There were also cases in which children refused to go to schools even after everything had come back to normal. A respondent from Sindhupalchowk said that her daughter had lost interest in studies and become disobedient.<sup>118</sup> The experience of caregivers in Lalitpur was similar with children not too keen to begin studies when schools re-opened a month or two after the earthquake.<sup>119</sup> Other children lost interest in studies as the environment in and around the temporary shelters were not ideal for learning and it took a while before their academic performance went back to normal.<sup>120</sup>

Caregivers also expressed a lack of interest in sending their children to school following the

disasters since they were concerned their children would not get proper care. A female caregiver in Gaur said that parents do not send their children to school following the cold waves as they are afraid that the children might fall sick despite being aware that absence from classes would affect their children’s education.<sup>121</sup> In Thuladurlung, parents were not eager to send their children to school as most of the interviewees were worried about more earthquakes and landslides along the trail to and from school.<sup>122</sup>

## Impact on WASH

Disasters leave a very pronounced impact on community water sanitation and hygiene (WASH) as well. According to the WHO, along with food, shelter and healthcare, the supply of safe drinking water is one of the top priorities for disaster victims.<sup>123</sup> And, although everyone is at risk of disease, children are even more so,<sup>124</sup> especially young children whose ‘levels of physical development and immature immune systems... [makes them] more susceptible to sanitation-related illness, malaria and other vector-borne diseases.’<sup>125</sup>

According to a UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) report, after the 2015 earthquake, due to severe damage to water supplies, an estimated 1.1 million people lost access to protected water supply and toilets, increasing the risk of spread of WASH-related diseases.<sup>126</sup> Informants across the study sites said that in the period following the disasters, there was an immense scarcity of clean drinking water, because of which several children had fallen

114 SSI 25: 7 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

115 KII 41: 15 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

116 KII 04: 10 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

117 KII 12: 8 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

118 SSI 15: 7 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

119 SSI 08: 10 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

120 KII 12: 8 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk; SSI 03: 9 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

121 SSI 31: 9 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

122 SSI 10: 10 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

123 World Health Organization, *Emergency and Humanitarian*,  
124 Bartlett, Sheridan, ‘The Implications of Climate Change for Children in Lower-Income Countries,’ *Children, Youth and Environments*, 18, no.1 (2008): 71-98.

125 Peek, ‘Children and Disasters,’

126 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Nepal: Flash Appeal Revision, Nepal Earthquake (April-September 2015)* (Lalitpur: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2015).  
[reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/nepal\\_earthquake\\_2015\\_revised\\_flash\\_appeal\\_june.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/nepal_earthquake_2015_revised_flash_appeal_june.pdf)

sick even though no cases of epidemics were reported. In Bahrabise, because of the lack of clean drinking water, children suffered from dysentery following the earthquake.<sup>127</sup> In Gaur, some children had bathed in the flood waters and fallen sick, according to an NGO worker.<sup>128</sup>

A female caregiver from Gaur said: 'We brought water from the hand pumps and drank. After drinking the water, everyone fell sick. We were surrounded by water and had no escape. We had to walk through the floodwater to fetch drinking water from the hand pumps. From drinking such water, my grandchild got sick. He had fever and pneumonia.'<sup>129</sup>

Similarly, cases of fever, flu and diarrhoea were reported in Thuladurlung<sup>130</sup> even though women there were aware about potential water-borne diseases and hence boiled the water before drinking.<sup>131</sup> However, in Gaur, despite understanding the risks involved, caregivers were desperate and used contaminated water. On this regard, a father of three from Gaur described his predicament thus: 'For survival, we just drank the water out of the hand pump. We did not care if it was safe or not. We could not afford bottled water from the market.'<sup>132</sup>

Bad weather following the disasters exacerbated existing difficulties. The rain that continued for a couple of days following the 2017 floods aggravated the lives of the affected.<sup>133</sup> Bad weather conditions coupled with the lack of an appropriate shelter following the earthquake meant that women with small babies found it particularly difficult to protect their children, leading to illnesses.<sup>134</sup>

It was evident that caregivers, especially mothers of small children, had a very difficult time collecting water. In some areas, as in Thuladurlung and Bahrabise, it took them hours to carry water back to their shelters. In Thuladurlung, the

landslide following the earthquake had dried up the water sources near the settlement.<sup>135</sup> Breastfeeding mothers had to leave their children unfed for hours to travel down to the stream to wash clothes and bring back water.<sup>136</sup> Similarly, established gender roles meant that female caregivers were tasked with the extra burden of collecting water, often resorting to collecting rainwater or hauling it from the river, which meant extra time and effort on the part of the women who also had the additional responsibility of looking after their children.<sup>137</sup> It was especially difficult for lactating mothers to maintain hygiene as there was a scarcity of clean water. A female caregiver from the Bahrabise area said that following the landslide, she had a very difficult time washing her baby's clothes; she had to travel a long way down to the riverbank carrying her baby.<sup>138</sup>

Those displaced (both temporarily and permanently) by the disasters in Gaur were compelled to live in shelters that were often overcrowded and dirty. There were no toilets either. Therefore, the affected families had to defecate in the open, due to which several people, mainly children, had fallen sick.<sup>139</sup> Similarly, temporary toilets without appropriate sanitation and water supply caused hardship to students during school hours. A mother of a young girl in Thuladurlung said: 'My daughter wouldn't eat her food before going to school, and I used to wonder why. I asked her about this and she said that if she ate and went to school, she would have to use the toilet and that there was no water in the toilet and she couldn't clean herself properly.'<sup>140</sup>

Similar stories were reported in Gaur. An NGO worker said that children would not eat and drink enough so that they did not have to urinate or defecate.<sup>141</sup>

Across the sites, there were few serviceable toilets after the disasters. It was very difficult for

---

127 SSI 13: 7 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

128 KII 26: 7 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

129 SSI 30: 9 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

130 SSI 06: 8 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

131 FGD 3: 7 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

132 SSI 25: 7 September 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

133 SSI 31: 9 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

134 FGD 01: 9 Sept 2018 Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

---

135 KII 03: 6 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

136 FGD 01: 9 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

137 SSI 02: 6 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

138 SSI 12: 6 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

139 SSI 31: 9 Sept 2018 Gaur, Rautahat.

140 SSI 10: 10 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

141 KII 26: 7 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

those affected to maintain hygiene and cleanliness in such conditions.<sup>142</sup> And, the problem worsened since the prime concern following the disaster was survival.<sup>143</sup> Due to the lack of proper sanitation and hygiene, menstruating women in particular faced health issues because it was not possible for them to look after personal hygiene during the disaster.<sup>144</sup>

## Mental and Psychosocial Health of Children

Mental health is a delicate issue in any setting and especially so in a disaster situation and among children<sup>145</sup> in particular and their caregivers.<sup>146</sup> Disasters can cause significant distress to children, causing disruptions in their learning and development as well as negatively affecting their interactions with those around them. The head of an NGO in Gaur said that they had conducted a psychosocial assessment in 500-550 households and most caregivers were diagnosed with mental distress, and the poor and marginalised were found to be under the risk of psychological stress.<sup>147</sup> In Bahrabise, children were terrified following the disaster, and they became cranky and clingy, and had blank stares.<sup>148</sup> They were also reported to have lost their appetite following the disasters.<sup>149</sup>

Literature from various disaster contexts demonstrates that the mental state of parents/caregivers do have a profound effect on their children's wellbeing while opportunities for play and other activities become limited as caregivers become more restrictive.<sup>150</sup> Similarly, findings across the sites show that as the parents themselves

were in a state of panic due to the disaster, it was difficult for them not to demonstrate their anxiety to their children.<sup>151</sup> Since they themselves were fearful about the uncertainties looming around them and their children, they would not even be able answer their children's queries.<sup>152</sup>

In some cases, the effects on the caregivers were more severe. For example, women caregivers were diagnosed with depression following the landslide and the earthquake in Bahrabise.<sup>153</sup> In Rautahat, it was reported, several caregivers (especially lactating mothers) showed unusual signs and symptoms of stress following the disaster whereas males had an easy escape from the stress by resorting to alcohol.<sup>154</sup> Additional psychological burdens were borne by parents/caregivers as they would have more work than their usual set of duties. Most of the caregivers and stakeholders interviewed held the view that the lives of parents/caregivers of children with disabilities became more difficult.

According to a psychosocial counsellor, the effects on smaller children were of grave concern, especially because they responded not only to their own experiences but also the emotional state of their parents in the aftermath of the disaster.<sup>155</sup> Older children were also diagnosed with conversion disorder<sup>156</sup> as they were forced to stay in the camps for a long time and were haunted by memories of their dead friends. The effects were more severe in the case of children who had lost their parents/guardians. They could be found crying, screaming, and would be in a state of panic most of the time.<sup>157</sup>

In Gaur, female caregivers in the flood-hit area suffered psychological trauma and noticed some

142 KII 06: 6 Oct 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

143 SSI 28: 13 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

144 KII 35: 12 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

145 FGD 03: 7 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

146 KII 41:15 Sept 2018, Gaur Rautahat; SSI 15: 7 Sept 2018 Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk; SSI 6: 8 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur; FGD 03: 7 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

147 KII 25: 6 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat. When asked about the report, it was learned that the institution had conducted the survey for needs assessment and the results have not been published.

148 KII 23: 28 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

149 KII 37: 14 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat; KII 24: 6 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat; SSI 31: 9 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat; KII 41: 15 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat; FGD 03: 7 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

150 Bartlett, 'The Implications of Climate Change,'

151 FGD 03: 7 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung; KII 25: 6 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat; KII 23: 28 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

152 FGD 03: 7 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

153 SSI 15: 7 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

154 KII 41: 5 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

155 KII 23: 28 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

156 Conversion disorder is a mental condition in which a person has blindness, paralysis, or other nervous system (neurologic) symptoms that cannot be explained by medical evaluation. [medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000954.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000954.htm)

157 KII 23: 28 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

physical changes in themselves. However, they did not know if these resulted from psychological stress or something else.<sup>158</sup> In Thuladurlung, the use of shamans in a particular case was reported by the participants of one FGD: ‘There was a neighbour, Maili, who would walk around in a daze after the earthquake. Yes, it was like she was possessed. They called a *jhankri* [shaman] for her, but it didn’t work, and I heard that they took her to the hospital for x-rays and things like that. But that also didn’t make any difference, and I heard that the shaman cured her in the end’.<sup>159</sup>

Psychosocial counselling was provided in schools in Lalitpur by various organisations.<sup>160</sup> In Sindhupalchowk, according to a counsellor attached to one such mental health organisation,<sup>161</sup> the counselling sessions were not very effective due to the absence of private space for counselling and the limited number of trained professionals in the area. Further, the frequent movement of people to different shelters meant that counsellors were unable to track and provide regular counselling sessions.

## Displacement of Children and Risk of Abuse and Trafficking

There is plenty of evidence from studies that point to impoverishment caused by disasters, leading to a cycle of losses, poverty traps, and a slowing of efforts to reduce poverty.<sup>162</sup> ‘Poverty is therefore both a cause and consequence of disaster risk’.<sup>163</sup> This study identified that many of the disaster-affected families had to move following the disasters. In Sindhupalchowk, a permanent displacement of the community occurred after the

Jure landslide since the landslide had swept away the entire settlement.<sup>164</sup> People in all the study sites had taken shelter in public places and public buildings. The flood-affected families in Gaur stayed for two or three days either in schools or at the Bairgania Circular Dam site, both of which were overcrowded,<sup>165</sup> while others stayed in an open space until the floodwaters had subsided.<sup>166</sup> Similar experience of overcrowding was also expressed by a caregiver in Sindhupalchowk who had taken refuge in a room at the ‘Magnesite Colony’,<sup>167</sup> where she faced a lot of difficulties as the whole family had to adjust in a single room.<sup>168</sup> Whether they had to stay in temporary shelters or under the open sky, women and children suffered in the absence of private spaces and unfavourable living conditions for children in particular. The choice of shelter was also determined by cultural norms and practices such that in Gaur men and women from the same family had to stay in different places, which made life difficult for caregivers.<sup>169</sup>

Studies from other disaster contexts demonstrate that ‘the human cost of disasters falls overwhelmingly on low and lower middle-income countries: vulnerability to risk and degrees of suffering, are determined by levels of economic development, rather than simple exposure to natural hazards per se’.<sup>170</sup> It was clearly evident in Sindhupalchowk that poorer caregivers who were relatively late to begin reconstruction work due to lack of finances had to live in temporary shelters for years following the disaster,<sup>171</sup> or they had to

158 KII 41: 15 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

159 FGD 01: 9 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

160 KII 1: 8 Sept, 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

161 KII 22:28 Sept 2018, Sindhupalchowk,

162 Andrew, Shepherd, Tom Mitchell, Kirsty Lewis, Amanda Lenhardt, Lindsey Jones, Lucy Scott and Robert Muir-Wood, *The Geography of Poverty, Disasters and Climate Extremes in 2030* (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2013). [odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8633.pdf](https://odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8633.pdf)

163 Ben Wisner, Piers Blaikie, Terry Cannon and Ian Davis, *At Risk: Natural Hazards, People Vulnerability and Disasters* (London: Routledge, 1994).

164 KII 14: 8 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

165 FGD 07: 9 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

166 SSI 26: 7 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

167 A colony of houses built for Chinese geologists who had come to the region for research on the possibility of magnesium deposits a few years back; it lay vacant at the time of the Jure landslide prompting many displaced families to break in and take shelter – information gathered from informal conversation.

168 SSI 16: 6 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

169 KII 24: 6 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

170 Pascaline Wallemacq, Regina Below, Denis McClean, *Economic Losses, Poverty & Disasters 1998 – 2017* (Brussels: Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters and Geneva: United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2018). [https://www.cred.be/sites/default/files/CRED\\_Economic\\_Losses\\_10oct.pdf](https://www.cred.be/sites/default/files/CRED_Economic_Losses_10oct.pdf)

171 KII 15: 9 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

take shelter with their relatives for months, where the space would be too small to accommodate two families.<sup>172</sup> The poor flood-affected families in Gaur whose simple houses were inundated also had to compromise in terms of providing proper shelter to their children.<sup>173</sup> In the case of landslide victims in Sindhupalchowk, the situation deteriorated further after the earthquakes hit the region a year after the landslide. The earthquake led to the displacement of even larger section of the population in the region.<sup>174</sup> In Thuladurlung, too, some families had to reconstruct their new houses at different sites as the previous location of their houses were deemed unsafe and at high risk of future landslides.<sup>175</sup>

An Oxfam study showed that gender-based violence, domestic violence and trafficking of women and girls increased during the emergency period. Most cases of domestic violence were under-reported as women were afraid to come forward for a lack of safe spaces and sympathetic local security officials.<sup>176</sup> This tendency is also confirmed by this study where except for a few incidents of domestic violence and rape attempts against women by drunken males following the floods in Rautahat<sup>177</sup> and domestic violence incidents in Lalitpur and Sindhupalchowk,<sup>178</sup> there were no officially reported cases.

On the issue of low prevalence of reported incidents of abuse against and trafficking of children, informants in Thuladurlung and Rautahat attributed this to the safety net and support provided to each other, and precautions

taken respectively by the affected communities in the post-disaster situations. This indicates the importance of social safety net mechanisms and strong sense of community and social camaraderie for protecting children from vulnerabilities.<sup>179</sup> Explaining this safe net, respondents stated that since everyone is familiar with one another, news of a new visitor to the community spreads quickly, thus warding off any potential threat.<sup>180</sup> Similarly, caregivers in Rautahat adopted a different kind of precaution to protect their children from possible trafficking. As recalled by one such woman: 'We built a tent and kept our children inside the tent. We always kept our children on our lap or kept carrying them and stayed awake whole night. It is because we were very afraid that our children would fall in the water and drown, and might also be kidnapped by *chor-daku* [robbers and thieves]'.<sup>181</sup>

One of the striking findings of this study in Bahrabise was that some parents/guardians affected by the disasters would not even bother to ensure if their children went to school or even if they were fed.<sup>182</sup> In Rautahat, in order to quieten their children, some mothers would even beat them when they cried out in hunger and the parents did not have anything to feed.<sup>183</sup> Children would thus be subjected to violence from their own parents besides being quite neglected. Additionally, across the research sites, there were several incidents of violent activities that mostly involved alcohol and male drunkenness.<sup>184</sup>

---

172 SSI 20: 7 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

173 KII 35: 12 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

174 KII 14: 8 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

175 KII 03: 6 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur. An interesting trend was reported in Lalitpur with the number of households increasing from 312 to 432 after the earthquake as people who had previously moved to the nearest bazaar of Chapagaun decided to come back to their native villages to make use of the government's housing reconstruction grants. KII 06: 7 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur; FGD 03, 7 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

176 Hanibal Camua, Camila Inarra and Valerie Buenaventura, *Influencing in Emergencies: A Joint After Action Review* (Nairobi: Oxfam, 2014).

177 KII 41: 15 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

178 KII 13: 8 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

---

179 UNDRR 2005.

180 KII 06: 6 Oct 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur; SSI 08: 10 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

181 SSI 30: 9 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

182 KII 14: 8 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

183 FGD 06: 11 Sept 2018, Dhagad Tole, Gaur, Rautahat.

184 FGD 02, 8 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur; KII 17: 10 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk; KII 13: 8 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

## VULNERABILITIES AND NEEDS

---

As recognised by and acknowledged in various international and domestic policy instruments, children are one of the vulnerable groups during disasters and are also the ones disproportionately affected. In all the research sites, it was apparent that there was a lack of proper response measures that focused on children and caregivers to help them recover from or deal with the adverse impacts of disasters. Due to strict gender roles, the primary caregivers are usually women. Coupled with the lack of access to information, mobility, and decision-making powers, it puts them and their children at a higher risk of getting killed and injured during a disaster.<sup>185</sup> Caregivers, especially those pregnant and from poor families, also struggle to provide proper healthcare and protection to their children in disaster situations. Only a handful of children survived the Jure landslides.<sup>186</sup> A woman pregnant at the time reported suffering loss of appetite and having difficulty travelling long distances,<sup>187</sup> while a child fell sick from pneumonia. The difficulties faced by pregnant and post-partum women and mothers of small children were of a specific nature since they had to run away from their abodes carrying their children. Women with young children could not even go to collect relief materials.<sup>188</sup>

It was clear from the interviews that the poor and the socially marginalised suffered a lot. Those who relied on daily wages for their livelihoods did not have enough time for children. Single women (particularly widows) faced difficulty receiving emergency relief while also taking care of their

children for long periods as they needed to stand in a queue during relief distribution.<sup>189</sup> Dalits and their children were not allowed into the houses of non-Dalits due to caste discrimination, and hence forced to seek shelter in open spaces.<sup>190</sup>

Children with disabilities and their parents and caregivers had a challenging time during emergencies due to geographical remoteness and difficult road conditions, loss of existing support systems, and the lack of access to health facilities.<sup>191</sup> A mother of an 11-year-old physically disabled child described how difficult it was for her to look after her since she was completely dependent on her physically and emotionally. Her husband was employed abroad, and as their house was destroyed, she also had to fix a temporary shelter in adverse weather conditions all by herself.<sup>192</sup>

In some instances, where children had lost their parents, or husbands their wives and had no one to take care of them, they were either sent to an orphanage and/or had to be taken care of by other family members.<sup>193</sup> Likewise, single women also expressed a sense of loneliness and not having an emotional support system during such hard times, especially if their children were very young or they lived alone without adult children.<sup>194</sup> As single women are usually the sole breadwinner of their family or in some cases do not have a steady income, their economic condition became worse after the earthquake. They had to take loans to supplement the government's housing grant to build their houses, pushing them further into debt in many cases. On the difficulties faced by single women, a representative example was shared by a widowed grandmother of two boys thus: 'I had

---

185 Mandira Shrestha, Chanda Goodrich, Pranita Udas, Dil Rai, Min Gurung and Vijay Khadgi, *Flood Early Warning Systems in Nepal: A Gendered Perspectives (ICIMOD Working Paper 2014/4)*. Kathmandu: International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, 2014. <http://lib.riskreductionafrica.org/bitstream/handle/123456789/1305/Flood%20Early%20Warning%20Systems%20in%20Bhutan.A%20Gendered%20Perspective.pdf?sequence=1>

186 FGD 04: 10 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

187 FGD 04: 10 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

188 SSI 13: 7 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

189 SSI 07: 7 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur; KII 28: 7 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

190 FGD 06: 11 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

191 SSI 31: 9 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat; KII 33: 8 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat

192 FGD 03: 7 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

193 KII 26: 7 Sept 2018, Gaur Rautahat.

194 SSI 06: 8 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.



to contribute another 30,000 to 40,000 rupees to the grant of 50,000 to build that house as it wasn't enough. Even the old wood from the destroyed

house wasn't enough. I took a loan of 25,000 from the cooperative, I still have to pay back completely. I'm paying them on a monthly basis.<sup>195</sup>

---

<sup>195</sup> SSI 06: 8 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur, KII 04: 10 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

## CONSIDERATION OF NEEDS AND VULNERABILITIES

---

The study examined if and how institutions, authorities and individuals responded in emergency and post-disaster situations and to what extent such responses considered the specific needs of children and caregivers. A wide range of government agencies, NGOs, INGOs, CBOs and individuals were involved in rescue, relief and recovery activities. In many instances, the informants were unable to identify the organisations and agencies that had provided relief support to them and referred to the responders as 'they', 'some people', 'people from outside', etc. In only a few instances could the informants name the governmental agencies, local stakeholders, or I/NGOs.<sup>196</sup>

Evidence suggests that the affected people adopted locally developed strategies and available tools to cope with the disasters in general and also to protect their children. Such responses were particularly common in contexts such as Gaur's, where floods and cold waves have become common phenomena, and people talked about strategies learnt from their elders. In an FGD, a father of four said: 'Our family lives in a small hut, which was flooded last year. Since floods are not new for us, we knew that it could come any time. We have made a *machan*<sup>197</sup> in our house. Whenever there is a flood, we keep our small children and all other essential goods there. Also, we have raised our bed by adding blocks of bricks so that we can keep our goods and other materials safe from flood water'.<sup>198</sup> In Thuladurlung, until relief efforts reached the area three days after the earthquake, the local community themselves led the rescue and relief efforts<sup>199</sup> and stayed in small groups in flat areas,

public buildings, and people's vegetable gardens. However, no activities were carried out giving special consideration to the vulnerabilities and needs of children. In Gaur, the caregivers would perform some day-to-day activities to cope with the severe cold during the winter such as buying warm clothes for children, burning *guitha* (dried cow-dung cakes) and wood within the house and outside. According to the Chief District Officer (CDO) of Rautahat, in disaster situations, people move to safer areas along with their cattle and other essential goods and manage to keep themselves safe long before the rescue teams come.<sup>200</sup>

Prior to the Jure landslide, there had been no attempt to prepare locals in dealing with disasters.<sup>201</sup> It was the locals, youth clubs, the Armed Police Force and the Nepal Red Cross Society who used to be involved in the rescue work.<sup>202</sup> After the landslide, however, a voluntary initiative was undertaken to establish a fund to support affected people with relief and rehabilitation, and to which various organisations and village councils contributed cash and in kind.<sup>203</sup> Nonetheless, these responses have not targeted children and caregivers specifically.

Most of the informants in the study were of the view that there exist no proper disaster risk reduction mechanisms and were sceptical of the capacity of first responders at the local level. Hence, those affected have to wait for interventions from elsewhere. Even when there is equipment installed in disaster-prone areas to provide early warnings, they were not of much help as with the siren system in Sindhupalchowk.<sup>204</sup>

---

196 KII 07: 25 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur; KII 02: 10 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur; KII 07: 25 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur; KII 03: 6 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur; KII 22: 13 Sept 2018, Chautara Sindhupalchowk; KII 13: 8 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk; KII 17: 13 Sept 2018, Bahrabise Sindhupalchowk; KII 24: 6 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

197 An elevated space in the house.

198 FGD 07: 9 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

199 KII 03: 6 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

200 KII 30: 8 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

201 KII 13: 8 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk; KII 43: 26 Nov 2018, Lalitpur.

202 SSI 13: 7 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk; KII 13: 8 Sept 2018, Bahrabise Sindhupalchowk.

203 KII 13: 8 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk; KII 16: 10 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

204 KII 43: 26 Nov 2018, Lalitpur, Kathmandu; SSI 14: 11 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk; KII 13: 8 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

In Sindhupalchowk, the Central Child Welfare Committee and District Child Welfare Committee had distributed relief materials for children following the landslide.<sup>205</sup> In Rautahat, nine DRRM clusters were involved in regular coordination and consultation with INGOs, international humanitarian bodies, and government and security agencies for effective disaster management.<sup>206</sup> The Relief Distribution Committee under the VDC Secretary in Thuladurlung had the responsibility of managing and distributing relief items that made their way to Thuladurlung.<sup>207</sup>

In terms of providing relief and rehabilitation support, informants across the study sites were of the view that NGOs and INGOs were more visible compared to government-led initiatives. While most of the focus of the government authorities was on management and governance of relief, humanitarian organisations and individuals were reaching the affected people and communities with relief.<sup>208</sup> But, in only a few instances did humanitarian support consider the vulnerabilities and needs of children and their caregivers. As the president of an NGO working with children said: 'During emergencies what we focused on is *dal*, *bhat*, *chamal*,<sup>209</sup> salt and oil, especially for lactating mothers and pregnant women. But, I don't think we really thought about children's nutrition. During emergencies, what we have experienced is that we have a different mind-set. It is like just get the basics; at least, they will have food. I think all we can think about is food to eat, not about nutrition.'<sup>210</sup>

In Gaur, all the caregivers who received relief materials said that they received rice, lentils, *chiura*, *dalmot* (savory pulses), clothes, sugar, *bhuja* (puffed rice), biscuits, lentil, tarpaulins, cash, blankets and mosquito nets, water-purifying chlorine tablets and bottled water.<sup>211</sup> Only some

of the organisations and agencies provided relief materials targeting the needs of children and women such as school bags, books, pens and clothes for children, electrolytes, bottled waters and chlorine tablets, home-made multigrain nutritious flour (*sarbottam pitho/litto*), milk formula, sanitary pads, and carpets and cushions in schools during winter.<sup>212</sup> An NGO collaborated with the erstwhile District Health Office to set up baby-friendly spaces to engage children, and also established a separate psychosocial unit to provide support to children, mothers and the elderly.<sup>213</sup>

As a government official in Sindhupalchowk said that since the focus was primarily on the distribution of relief, very few were concerned about counselling.<sup>214</sup> Affected people received food items such as biscuits and instant noodles, rice and cereals, cooking utensils and plates, multi-grain flour, books and stationery, tarpaulins, clothes, towels and blankets, and sanitation kits as relief materials.<sup>215</sup> However, a few organisations were also reported to have provided material support that considered the needs of children and women even if the coverage was limited.<sup>216</sup>

Relief provided in Thuladurlung consisted of food, tarpaulins, health services, psychosocial counselling, and some WASH-related items.<sup>217</sup> Some clothes and dignity kits for disaster-affected children and materials for WASH for children aged eight, nine and 10 years were also distributed by Save the Children in Sindhupalchowk.<sup>218</sup> INGOs working with the District Education Office installed TLCs made of corrugated galvanised iron sheets and bamboo, where there were facilities for children to play and read books, which helped children resume their class and also have

2018, Gaur, Rautahat; KII 35: 12 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat; FGD 06: 11 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

212 KII 40: 15 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat; KII 26: 7 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

213 KII 41: 15 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

214 KII 13: 8 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

215 KII 10: 7 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk; KII 11: 7 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk; KII 14: 8 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

216 KII 17: 10 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

217 KII 03: 6 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

218 KII 22: 13 Sept 2018, Chautara, Sindhupalchowk.

205 KII 22: 13 Sept 2018, Chautara Sindhupalchowk.

206 KII 30: 8 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

207 KII 06: 6 Oct 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

208 KII 20: 12 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk; KII 13: 8 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

209 Constituting the staple Nepali food of rice and lentils.

210 KII 24: 12 Sept 2018, Gaur Rautahat.

211 FGD 06: 11 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat; FGD 07: 13 Sept

recreational activities.<sup>219</sup> On mental health and psychosocial issues-related training to children, a local head teacher said: 'CMC Nepal [NGO] gave us this basic training along with parents of the children. They came around 15/20 days after the school re-opened. It was good because we didn't know all this could happen to children after the earthquake. Maybe around 25-30 per cent of children did not show any interest in studies at that time.'<sup>220</sup>

During the time of the fieldwork, it was noted that there were ongoing interventions related to nutrition and construction of schools in Thuladurlung. The role of external assistance is illustrated in the following quote from a female caregiver.

I think the TLC in Gumrang Adharbhat [Basic] School was built a month after the earthquake. The earthquake had damaged the school building; the children had their classes out in the open for a long time. And, later, they got bamboo and tin sheets from a donor and built a shelter for the classes. It was better than not having anything and having classes out in the open. The studies might have been affected if the school had been shut for long.<sup>221</sup>

However, several interviewees expressed dissatisfaction about the assistance provided, citing reasons such as distribution being disproportionate, responses being slow, low coverage and support not meeting the needs. An elderly male from Gaur said: 'During flood we didn't get any relief. We fed our children *chiura*, *dalmot*, biscuits and bread we bought ourselves. Relief agencies had reached Gaur 15-20 days after the flood, but we didn't get anything from them.'<sup>222</sup>

The study also identified many of the limitations and weakness in terms of timely and adequate support, which were often constrained by the

lack of institutional capacities and mechanisms for DRRM and lack of resources at the local and district levels.<sup>223</sup> Except in those cases where the interventions had been planned and directed to be implemented at the local level, adhering to existing DRRM policy guidelines became challenging for local government agencies. Even while the government, in some cases, tried to regulate the relief interventions through a one-door policy, it did not give priority to needy and vulnerable groups like children.

An official from the Sindhupalchowk District Education Office recalled why they failed to intervene immediately after the Jure landslide: 'The local authorities did not have enough resources. We had to wait until donor agencies came with relief materials and other supports. Not having own resources, the government bodies had to accept whatever the donors come with, even if those were not good for children's health.'<sup>224</sup>

A similar helplessness was expressed by the CDO of Rautahat: 'We failed to distribute relief materials because of the shortage of goods. In many cases, there is not enough relief material to distribute. Locals turn aggressive. In many cases, they threw stones and broke into the office and quarrelled with officials.'<sup>225</sup>

219 KII 25: 6 Sept 2018, Gaur Rautahat; KII 06: 6 Oct 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur; SSI 08: 10 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

220 KII 01: 8 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

221 SSI 08: 10 Sept 2018, Thuladurlung, Lalitpur.

222 SSI 24: 7 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat.

223 KII 35: 12 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat; KII 33: 8 Sept 2018, Gaur, Rautahat; KII 25: 6 Sept 2018, Gaur Rautahat; KII 23: 28 Sept 2018, Bahrabise, Sindhupalchowk.

224 KII 19: 12 Sept 2018, Chautara, Sindhupalchowk.

225 KII 30: 8 Sept 2018, Gaur Rautahat.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

---

Based on the findings of this study, the following issues have been identified as requiring the attention of policy-makers, implementing agencies and concerned stakeholders in order to better protect and support children in future emergency and post-disaster situations.

## **Policies and Strategies**

- There is a need for better coordination between ministries and state institutions (at the federal, provincial and local levels), related international and domestic humanitarian organisations, and local communities for the protection of children and their caregivers in emergency and rehabilitation phases. Given the importance of this coordinated effort for this most vulnerable group, the government should take the primary responsibility in ensuring such a partnership.
- As per the principles and guidelines on disaster preparedness, risk reduction and management reflected in the recent Disaster Risk Reduction National Policy 2018 and the Disaster Risk Reduction and National Strategy Action Plan 2018-2030, governments at all levels need to formulate and implement DRRM policies and concrete action plans. It is crucial that such policies and strategies that are yet to be prepared at the provincial and local levels specify provisions aimed at protecting and supporting children.
  - Technical support will be required by provincial and local governments in designing DRRM policies and action plans.
  - The District Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan 2073 of the District Disaster Rescue Committee, Lalitpur, can serve as a good template for other subnational governments.
- DRRM needs to be mainstreamed in the broader development plans at all levels of government. Efforts need to be made to ensure that plans and

policies integrate GESI strategies that consider the needs, sensitivities and vulnerabilities specific to children and caregivers in the context of disasters.

- It is essential that strategic action plans at the subnational level prioritise the needs and vulnerabilities of children in emergency situations during rescue and protection as well as in the provision of food and nutrition, education and development, WASH and health.
- DRRM plans and strategies at the subnational level should clearly assign and delineate responsibilities to agencies towards the protection of and support to children in emergency situations, as has been done to a large extent in the Disaster Risk Reduction and National Strategy Action Plan 2018-2030.
- It is essential that the policy- and strategy-making processes be inclusive and participatory and ensure the voice of children, caregivers and relevant stakeholders working with and for these groups in the population.
- Since local government agencies, communities and organisations are usually the first responders in emergency situations, their capacities need to be enhanced and strengthened with adequate human and financial resources and equally important, with adequate awareness and training about the needs of small children and their caregivers.

## **Food and Nutrition**

- Support provided to affected families should take into consideration that children aged 0-8 years need specific and different food than adults, and the dietary needs of pregnant and lactating mothers are also different. The government and concerned agencies should introduce plans to ensure that food distributed as relief are both nutritious and hygienic for these two specific groups as well.
- It is recommended that concerned agencies

and authorities identify as well as store locally available food rich in protein and vitamins for potential emergency situations. More importantly, the local people and communities should also be made aware of such sources of nutrition. This can be done in concert with health personnel such as FCHVs, AHWs and social mobilisers raising awareness on the possible implications of nutritional deficiency to children during emergencies and how to cope by utilising locally available resources.

### **Children's Education and Learning**

- There is a need to carry out regular safety drills and disaster simulations in schools so that children can react in a disciplined manner in case of emergencies. School management committees, teachers and parents also need to be provided training to deal with future emergencies brought on by disasters.
- Local communities need to allocate adequate economic and human resources to ensure the continuity of children's education in post-disaster situations. Emphasis should be placed on children resuming their studies. Care should be taken to ensure that schools are not used as temporary shelters for long periods since such practices can have a detrimental effect on children's learning and education.
  - It is vital for local government bodies to ensure child-friendly spaces for learning. To encourage students, a sufficient number of ECD facilitators equipped with necessary materials needs to be in place.
  - TLCs and 'baby-friendly' spaces should be designed in such a way that they do not pose any threat to children.

### **Health Awareness and WASH**

- Children and their caregivers need to be provided quick access to safe water, sanitary facilities and safe hygiene practices following disaster-induced emergencies.
- Awareness-raising activities on the importance of hygienic practices to keep children and families healthy as well as potential exposure

to increased risk need to be carried out in local languages at the community level. Such programmes can include hygiene promotion and the use of water purification methods and the distribution of treatment kits. Those working in the WASH cluster in post-disaster contexts should be made aware of the specific needs of children during emergencies.

- Support and awareness should focus on proper containment and disposal of human excreta as well as hand-washing techniques in emergency situations. The use of low-cost arrangements such as deep trenches, pit latrines and latrine blocks for community use could be important while giving due consideration to local cultural contexts.
- Lessons can be learnt from the examples and experiences of Community Approaches to Total Sanitation (CATS)<sup>226</sup> and the Pakistan Approach to Total Sanitation (PATS)<sup>227</sup>, which are considered to be robust, integrated and sustainable.

### **Psychosocial and Mental Health Support**

- Mental health services need to be integrated into primary healthcare services at federal, provincial and local levels to mitigate the adverse impacts of disaster as well as to provide access to adequate support and services without ignoring the special needs of children and their caregivers.
  - Since extensive stays in temporary shelters can affect children psychologically, a proper strategy is required to shift children from temporary shelters to permanent houses and provisions should be made to provide recreational activities in TLCs and schools.
- There is a need for increased awareness at the school, community and leadership levels regarding the links between the instantaneous trauma caused by disasters and possible long-

<sup>226</sup> 'UNICEF Innovation,' UNICEF, accessed November 15, 2019, [unicef.org/innovation/innovation\\_101492.html](https://www.unicef.org/innovation/innovation_101492.html)

<sup>227</sup> 'Home: Pakistan Approach to Total Sanitation (PATS), Community-Led Total Sanitation, accessed November 15, 2019, [communityledtotalsanitation.org/resource/pakistan-approach-total-sanitation-pats](https://communityledtotalsanitation.org/resource/pakistan-approach-total-sanitation-pats)

term psychosocial impacts and the existence of medically proven ways to deal with such damage.

- Since visual media content can be disturbing to children, formulating a 'code of conduct' that ensures warnings that scenes being shown can be distressing to children should be considered to ensure broadcasts friendlier to children.

### **Effective Protection**

- Security agencies involved in rescue and relief need to be sensitive in terms of giving priority to poor and vulnerable people, particularly women, children and people with disabilities. There should be gender/child-responsive trainings and orientation to such agencies and others who are invariably likely to be involved in rescue and relief operations.
- Communities need to be made aware of the potential risks to their children such as abuse and trafficking following disaster situations, including in temporary shelters.
- Adequate support for the protection and raising of orphans, including through foster homes and childcare centres, should be institutionalised at the local level.
- In areas where early warning systems are in place, warnings should be children-friendly. Further, children need to be involved in drills but in a manner that takes into account their particular sensitivities.

### **Better Knowledge Generation**

- Disaggregated data on children and women should be maintained and updated so that response measures can make the best use of the data for appropriate and immediate interventions in emergency and post-disaster

situations. The local level in coordination with provincial and federal governments or related departments needs to collaborate to create such comprehensive and integrated data so that future preparedness and responses can be made effective.

- State agencies, humanitarian organisations and workers conducting assessments of the affected should be made aware of the necessity of focusing on the needs of children and caregivers during emergencies.
- There are limited studies on and knowledge about disasters and their impacts on children in Nepal. Research on a much larger scale is needed to generate evidences to enable a better understanding among decision-making circles.
- Considering that the ongoing state structuring process entails the formulation of laws, policies and plans at all three tiers of government, it is of paramount importance to explore whether and to what extent these different levels have recognised the impacts and needs of children and their caregivers in emergency situations and whether and how this has been reflected in policies, plans and resource allocation. A comprehensive study on whether and to what extent laws, policies and plans already in place or under preparation adhere to the national policy framework, strategies and provisions as well as to international DRRM and children-related instruments can provide better guidance in the present context.
- Good practices and lessons about responses to needs and vulnerabilities of the children in disaster contexts need to be captured and documented for future disaster preparedness and responses in Nepal and beyond.





## Annex 1: List of Relevant Legal and Institutional Instruments

Instrument	Year
Constitution of Nepal	2015
Natural Calamity (Relief) Act, 1982	1982
Treaty Act, 1990	1990
Social Welfare Act, 1992	1992
The Building Act, 1998	1998
Sthaniya Sarkar Sanchalan Ain 2074 (Local Government Operation Act 2017) (in Nepali)	2017
Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, 2074	2017
The Act Relating to Children, 2075	2018
National Agriculture Policy, 2004	2004
Water Induced Disaster Management Policy, 2015	2015
Disaster Risk Reduction National Policy 2018	2018
First Five Year Plan, 1956-1961	1956
Seventh Five Year Plan, 1985-1990	1985
Eighth Five Year Plan, 1992-1997	1992
Ninth Five Year Plan, 1997-2002	1997
Three Year Interim Plan, 2007/08-2009/10	2007
Twelfth Three Year Plan, 2010/11-2012/1	2010
Guidance Note- Disaster Preparedness and Response Planning, 2011	2011
Thirteenth Three Year Plan, 2013/14-2015/16	2013
National Strategic Action Plan for Search and Rescue, 2013	2013
Fourteenth Three Year Plan, 2016/17-2018/19	2016
Jilla Bipad Purwatayari tatha Pratikarya Yojana-2073 (District Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan 2016) (in Nepali)	2016
School Sector Development Plan, 2016-2023	2016
Local Disaster and Climate Resilience Plan (LDCRP)	2017
Disaster Risk Reduction National Strategic Plan of Action 2018-2030	2018
Mansun Aapatkalin Karyayojana 2076 (Monsoon Emergency Action Plan 2018) (in Nepali)	2018
The Children's Rules, 2051 (1995)	1995
Prakop Pidot Uddar ra Rahat Sambandhi Mapdanda (pachaun samsodhan) 2064 en [Disaster Victims Rescue and Relief Standard (Fifth Amendment) 2007]	2007
Emergency Child Mitigation Fund (operation) Rule, 2010	2010
Guideline for the Relief to Cold-Wave Victims, 2012	2012
National Disaster Response Framework (NDRF), 2013	2013
Nepal National Building Code	2015
Post-Disaster Needs Assessment, Volume A: Key Findings	2015
Post Disaster Recovery framework 2016-2020	2016
SAARC Convention on Regional Arrangements for the Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia, 2002	2002
Barshik Karyakram Swikrit Faram (AaBa 2075/76) (Annual Fiscal Programme Approval Form [FY 2018/19]) (in Nepali)	2018



