

RAPID GENDER ANALYSIS

DROUGHT RESPONSE 2025



Introduction

On 10 July 2025, Satish Kumar Singh, the Chief Minister of Madhesh Province, officially declared the province drought-affected. In response, a Rapid Gender Analysis (RGA) was conducted to examine the gendered impacts of drought in the districts of Mahottari, Sarlahi, and Siraha in Nepal.

This analysis was undertaken under the UK International Development funded Resilience, Adaptation, and Inclusion in Nepal (RAIN) programme, led by People in Need (PIN) Nepal. The RAIN programme is grounded in a locally led approach to resilience building, adopting a systemic, inclusive, and localised strategy to strengthen community resilience while enhancing national government systems for early warning (EW), early action (EA), and climate adaptation.

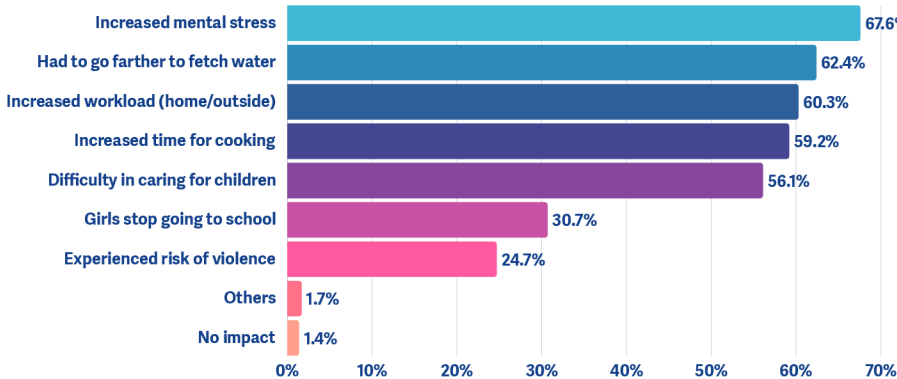
Methodology

The study employed a quantitative methodology, where 289 women and girls were surveyed and the results analysed. Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs) facilitated data collection, focusing on challenges, at-risk groups, and their specific needs. Data was analysed with Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), to identify key trends, challenges, and risks.

Key Findings

The findings indicate that vulnerability in the community was perceived as multi-dimensional, with caste, landlessness, disability, age, and gender all shaping who is most at risk during droughts. Dalits were the most frequently mentioned vulnerable group (65.4%), followed by landless families (63.6%), showing the close link between caste, land ownership, and vulnerability. Persons with disabilities (50.2%), children (44.2%), and senior citizens (43.5%) were also commonly cited. Adolescent girls (41.7%) and single women (41.3%) highlighted the gendered nature of risk, while 5.3% mentioned other groups.

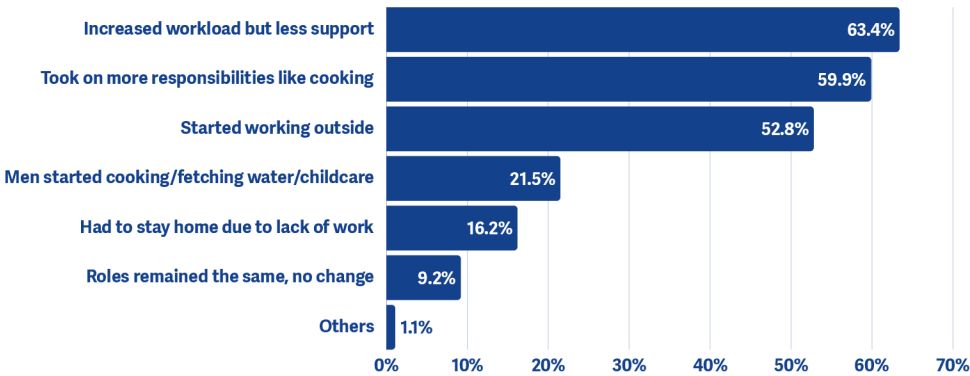
Figure 1: Effect of Drought on Girls and Women



Building on this, it is clear that the drought has severely impacted women and girls, intensifying their mental stress and workload. Many have had to travel farther for water, spend more time on household chores, and face greater childcare challenges. Some girls dropped out of school, while others experienced increased risks of violence (Refer to Figure 1).

Additionally, the study demonstrates that drought has brought changes in gender roles and responsibilities, 63.4% of respondents expressed increases in workload with less support. While 59.9% expressed that they had assumed added responsibilities. Apart from this 21.5% noted men doing household chores like cooking, fetching water, childcare, etc. (Refer to Figure 2).

Figure 2: Changes in Gender Roles and Responsibilities



The study further underscores the urgent needs of women and girls facing droughts, with



72.3%

responded drinking water as their top priority



69.5%

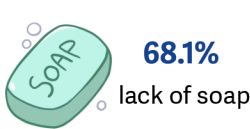
food



61.1%

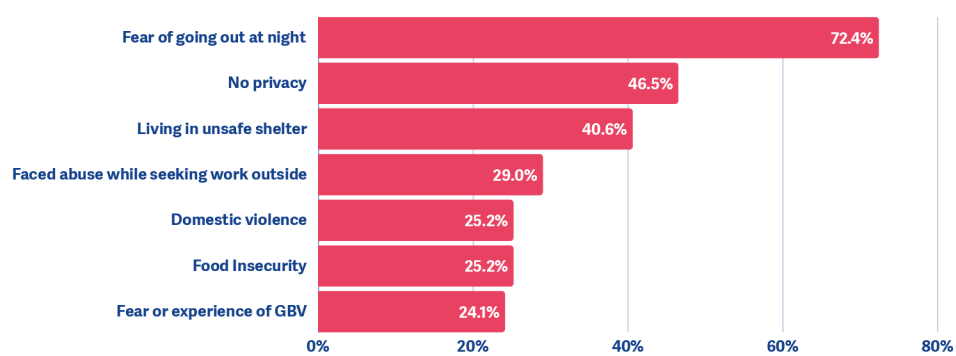
Safe Shelter

Accompanying this, proper hygiene & sanitation, health services, education, psychosocial support were also necessities of women and girls reflected in the survey. Majority experienced challenges in menstrual hygiene and sanitation due to the water shortage



The study also explored safety and protection concerns after the drought, with most respondents (72.4%) expressing fears about going out at night. Lack of privacy (46.5%) and unsafe shelters (40.6%) were also reported, alongside issues such as abuse while seeking work, domestic violence, food insecurity, and GBV (Refer to Figure 3).

Figure 3: Safety and Protection concerns after Drought



In response, most participants said they would share their concerns with women’s groups or health volunteers, followed by seeking help from security services, local government, or other authorities.

Linked to these concerns, access to information and services was found to be uneven. Nearly half of the respondents (46.5%) found it easy to

get information, yet many faced challenges related to unclear (31.7%) or delayed (27.8%) messages, and exclusion of certain groups like persons with disabilities, women, and Dalits (24.3%). Access to services was further hindered by distant service centres (59.8%), lack of documentation (39.1%), and social barriers such as fear, shame, or male-dominated environments. Overall, the findings show that women and girls faced multiple, overlapping barriers such as physical, structural, and social, that limited their access to timely and inclusive information and services during drought.

Conclusion

The RGA shows that drought disproportionately affects women and girls, particularly those from marginalised groups such as Dalits, landless families, persons with disabilities, and single women. The findings demonstrate that drought amplifies both physical and emotional burdens on women and girls, reflecting the compounded nature of their vulnerabilities. Water scarcity emerged as the most critical issue, worsening nutrition, health, and hygiene - especially menstrual hygiene due to lack of materials and privacy. Food insecurity, unsafe shelter, and limited access to health and psychosocial support further undermined their safety and dignity. While many sought help through women’s groups or local authorities, others remained silent due to stigma and harmful norms. Overall, the findings highlight intersecting vulnerabilities shaped by gender, poverty, and social status, emphasising the urgent need for gender-sensitive interventions that ensure access to water, food, health, and protection while addressing discriminatory social norms.

Key Recommendations

