



GENDER | VULNERABILITY | CLIMATE CHANGE

A CASE STUDY OF THE LABDU DHIKURE SHERA IRRIGATION SYSTEM, NEPAL

Command Area

366.39 ha Khaigau + Ganesthan VDC
Nuwakot, Nepal

Constructed

1983 Before construction of channels: **2 crops** After construction of channels: **3 crops**

Methodology

Anthropological Participatory Research Methods

- Participant observation
- Case Study
- Unstructured Interviews

5.7% female headed
2900 Male
2840 Female
Households **1100** Total Population **5740**

Division of labour

Women's tasks: Sowing, Threshing, Weeding, Transplanting, Hauling Manure, Breaking Clods, Growing Vegetables

Quote: These activities provide more food for the family. We can also sell the products at the local market to earn some extra money.

Men's tasks: Ploughing

Considered a manly task; taboo for women

Quote: Ploughmen are called *lattey*. Ploughing and making ridges for sowing are considered physically hard tasks that require strength. Women are perceived as physically weak compared to men.

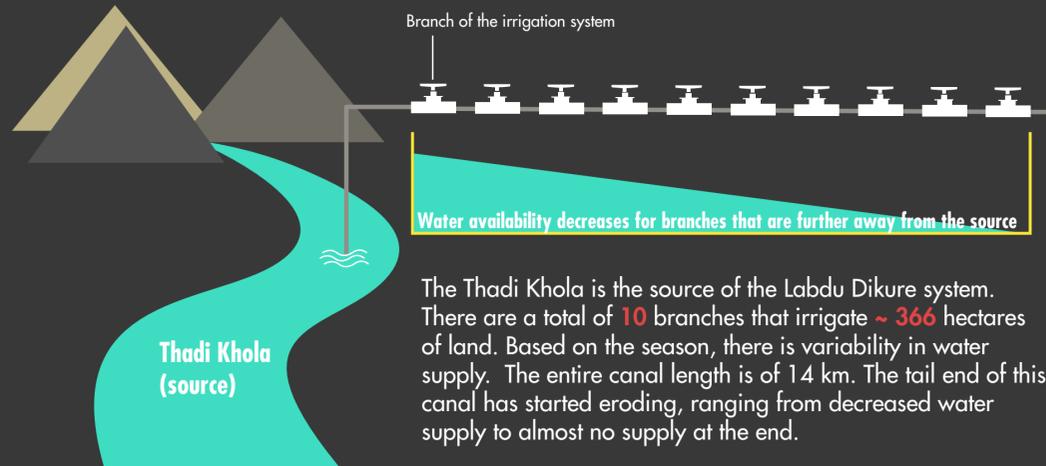
Background of Labdu Dikure Shera Irrigation System

The Water Users' Association (WUA) registered has

11 members

Till date all presidents of the WUA have been men

Layout of the Labdu Dikure System



Climate change impact and Gender

Of 50 interviewees

96% of male respondents knew of climate change

84% have heard the term 'climate change'

68% of female respondents knew of climate change

Shortage in drinking water increases women's work load and vulnerability: they are the ones responsible for collection of drinking water-as water shortage increases, women have to walk farther.

- Drinking water shortage
- Dew, fog, cold wave
- High wind speed
- Flood
- Hailstorms
- Land slides
- Precipitation
- Heat

Ranked in decreasing order of priority

THUS...

Climate change **is not gender and or socially neutral**. The impact of climate change is distributed and felt differently among women and men, and also among different social groups based on caste, class, etc.

A brahmin family used to live on the earnings of the male member who acted as the village priest. After the irrigation system began, he found that his earnings from agricultural activities would be more than from religious functions. Hence, the family purchased farm land and intensified commercial farming with water available from the system.

However, irrigated farmland in the command area next to the river is under threat of flood every year. Recent flooding in the area also affected his own land. To cope with the loss, the man has started to pay attention to his earlier role of offering ritual services. At the same time with an increase in the growing demand for religious counseling.

The occurrence of diseases and pests has increased in the area. Newer pest trends such as aphids are being reported in millet crops. Potato growers have also complained about the increasing occurrence of blight, linking the incidence to increase in the number of foggy days, and variability in temperature and precipitation.

To cope, chemical pesticides have been intensively applied to the crops. Along with this, the frequency of the spraying of pesticides has increased. Men being involved in off-farm activities, has led to an increased involvement of women in farmwork. Due to a lack of awareness, chemicals are handled improperly, making the community more vulnerable to climatic stressors.

Looking Ahead

Though, irrigated scenarios are considered as more resilient systems to climatic stressors, the systems do suffer from differential impacts on women and men; these gendered differential impacts are compounded by other social stratifiers based on class, caste, ethnicity, and age among others. Policies and program to address climate adaptation need to address gender based vulnerabilities in irrigated scenarios.