



Nepal's Roshi Faces Devastation: A Sobering Tale of Loss and Damage

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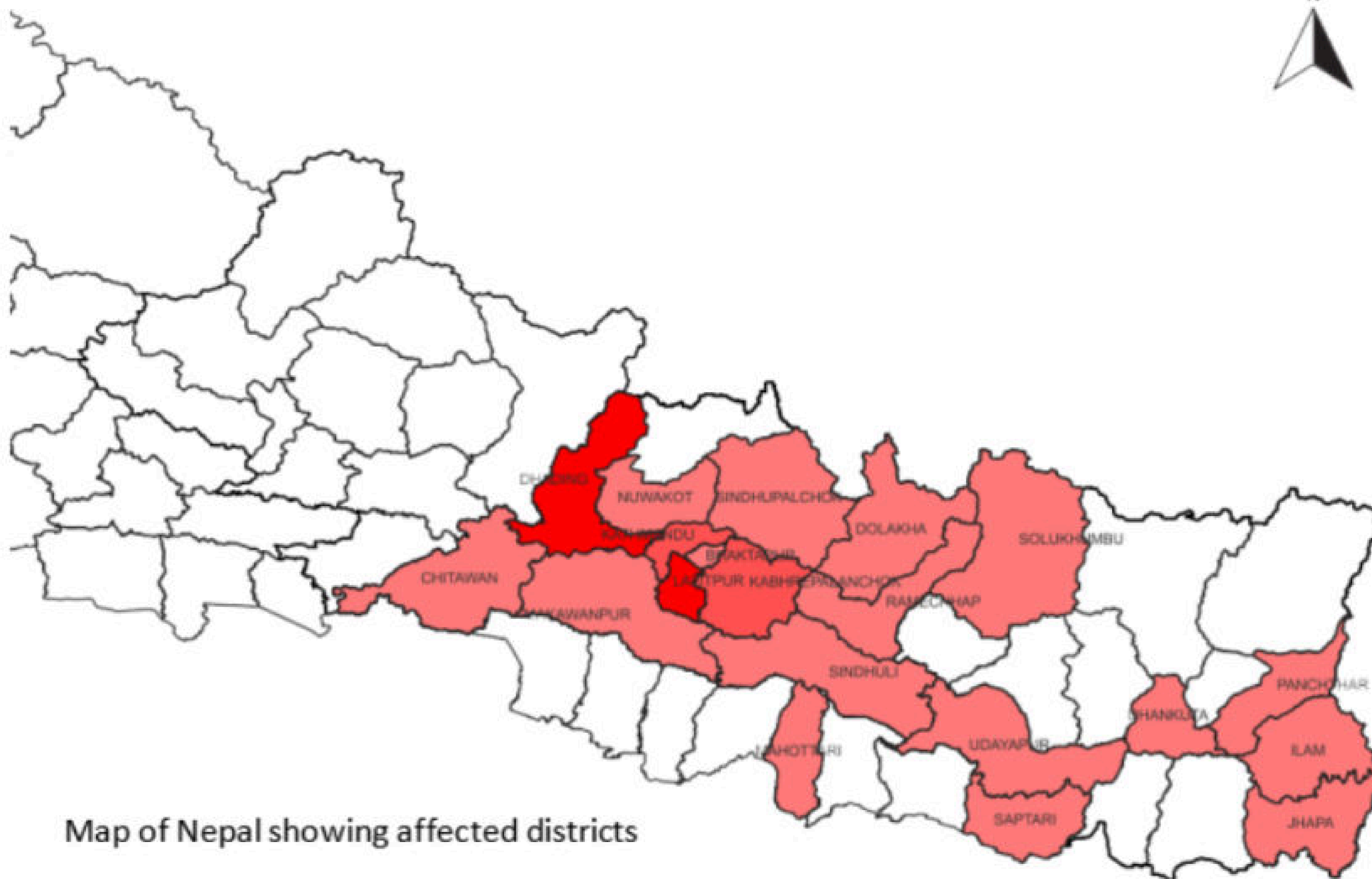
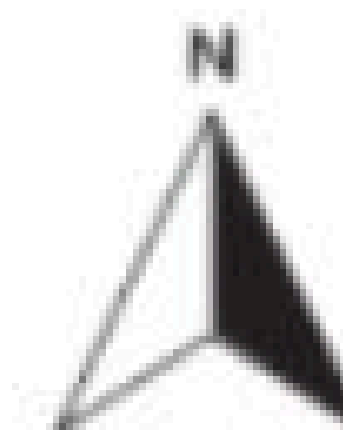


A story on Lived Impact of The
Climate Crisis in Nepal



Nepal is one of the most vulnerable countries in terms of climate change. Hazards like landslides, floods, GLOF (Glacial Lake Outburst Flood), flash floods, and soil erosion have become very common now. Nepal's delicate geography, varied ecosystems, and over-reliance on climate-sensitive sectors like agriculture and water resources make it exceedingly prone to climate change's consequences. Women, Indigenous groups, and marginalized communities are disproportionately affected by the interaction of these elements, which not only endangers lives and livelihoods but also jeopardizes the nation's development efforts.

The small and serene village of Roshi, located in Panauti Municipality, Ward No. 12, has been left in ruins following an intense flood triggered by continuous heavy rainfall that began on September 26, 2024, persisted through September 27, and finally ended on September 28. The disaster caused severe devastation, leaving behind a trail of destruction and despair for the affected residents. The flood and landslide destroyed 177 homes, and another 100 were slightly damaged in Roshi Village alone. Sadly, the disaster claimed the lives of five people, including one foreigner and four Nepali citizens.



Map of Nepal showing affected districts

Following the tragedy, the Roshi River Path was promptly covered and shut down. In Panauti Municipality, 19 people lost their lives, while one person is still missing. The disaster struck many places in Central and Eastern Nepal, not only Roshi Village.

However, Bagmati Province, located in Central Nepal, is the most affected province. Roshi Village lies in Bagmati Province and is one of the most severely affected regions. Ms Bibhuti Pokhrel, Chief of the Climate Section at the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM), said, “Nepal witnessed a record-breaking rainfall in September 2024.”. The rainfall in these 3 days set new records in many places of Nepal, with new rainfall records in 11 measurement stations of Kathmandu Valley alone.

Mr Gautam Khanal, a Geologist at the Department of Mines and Geology, said that Climate Change is one of the causes of the devastation. We experienced intensive rainfall in many regions of Bagmati Province in September, resulting in floods and landslides in various places in Nepal.





However, Climate Change is not the sole reason. There are other anthropogenic causes, such as improper road expansion and destruction of vegetation, mainly through deforestation. During Road Widening, the river was encroached by squeezing the floodplain, leading to a bigger bed load. It not only caused heavy flooding but also caused the river to change its course, ultimately entering the houses of people. He fears that such a disaster may happen later as well because the reconstruction work is making similar mistakes in the village.

The damage is mostly seen in those areas of Nepal with high residual soil thickness. The family of Mr Rabindra BK, a local farmer, described the terrifying experience as one of the hardest tragedies in his life. He said, "We, the three brothers, stayed together and shared three homes with our families of fourteen people. One house was partially damaged, and the other two were fully damaged by the flood. Mr. BK stated, "We are an agricultural family, and the flood swept away everything—our fields, livestock, and homes." They are currently renting a place nearby and have no clear plans.

Mr. BK's family lost cattle, including three boars, more than twenty chickens, a buffalo, and a buffalo calf. The family right now is in the dilemma of how to make a living because their main source of income, their agricultural land, is totally damaged. The family calculates that they have lost about NPR 13 million in total. The neighborhood is having difficulty rebuilding its life in the wake of the disaster. Since agriculture and livestock are the main sources of income for the majority of the population, their destruction has left many in dire straits.

Some displaced families are compelled to live with relatives or live in rented homes in nearby areas, while others are looking for temporary housing. Disaster response teams and local authorities are attempting to evaluate the total economic effect and offer assistance to the impacted households. But the extent of damage is very dangerous and will take a long time even for reconstruction. Mr Bir Bahadur Tamang, a 55-year-old farmer whose entire life's labor was washed away, is one of the displaced. "We lost everything except the clothes we were wearing," Tamang said in a dejected tone.





The floods destroyed his two-story house and six ropani, or about 0.8 hectares, of agricultural land, forcing his family to relocate to Panauti Bazaar for rental housing. The loss is as terrible for Suntali Lamichhane, an elderly woman who relied on her seven ropani of agricultural land as a major source of livelihood. The value of her fields exceeded NPR's 10 million dollars. "It's all gone," she murmured, her sorrow evident. Like many others, her family is currently facing an uncertain future.

Mrs Suntali recalls the flood of 1981 AD in the same village, which had swept away many houses in Roshi. We never thought that we would witness such a big calamity in our village. Her son and daughter lost more than 5 million NRS worth of clothing stock due to the Nakkhu River Flood. This year has been nothing less than an endless storm of disaster and despair in our family.

Ward Chairman KC said that over 100 families have been uprooted by the terrible floods and landslides caused by the 331.6 mm of torrential rain that wreaked havoc on Roshi. It is the highest amount of precipitation ever recorded in the nearby meteorological station. The devastation caused by the catastrophe, which locals have called unprecedented, is estimated to be worth NPR 1.2 billion.

Many residents are dealing with depression and uncertainty, although the death toll was nominal. "We are still evaluating the full extent of the damage, but the initial estimates are staggering," said the Chairman, characterizing the situation as catastrophic. People's spirits are broken, and they are depressed. It could take longer for the emotional wounds to heal than the physical ones. Just as important as the material losses is the psychological toll. At first, residents were so distraught and traumatized that few would not discuss their experiences. According to Ward Chairman KC, "People appeared upset, unwilling to revisit the painful events."





Even while some people have begun to return to normalcy, the persistent worry and melancholy highlight the substantial but less obvious effects of such tragedies. Some residents have demonstrated incredible fortitude in the face of adversity. Small acts of hospitality stood out amid the melancholy. Mr. BK offered me food and tea even when he had little food for themselves. "Even in tremendous misfortune, these deeds of goodwill demonstrate the resilience of communal ties. Many others in the village agree with Mr. BK's plea: "We don't know what we're going to do next. It seems impossible to provide for a family of 14 without assistance." Now dispersed among Panauti and Banepa Bazaars, the displaced families are either renting rooms or depending on the kindness of relatives.

The immediate loss of property and farms is not the only economic loss and damage. The lengthy path to recovery is exacerbated by the loss of livelihoods and the stress on mental health. The community needs urgent assistance, psychological support, and long-term recovery strategies while Panauti Municipality continues its assessment.

The loss of homes and farmland poses an existential threat to this largely rural population, even if no cultural heritage monuments in the ward were harmed. Now, the people of Roshi are demanding urgent help, including resources to re-establish their livelihoods, financial aid, and rehabilitation support. This flash flood and landslide gives a clear picture of how increasingly vulnerable Nepal's rural inhabitants are to severe weather conditions, which are frequently made worse by anthropogenic activities. It serves as a sobering reminder of the pressing need for disaster preparedness and climate-resilient infrastructure in Nepal's vulnerable areas as Panauti Municipality struggles with the tragic loss.

The floods in Roshi serve as a sobering reminder of how susceptible Nepal is to Calamities caused by Climate Change and Anthropogenic Causes. There has never been a greater need for proactive disaster management and support systems due to the increasingly unpredictable weather patterns. The tenacity of its people provides a ray of hope among the destruction as Nepal struggles with the fallout from this disaster.

