

Women leadership in Climate Change Policy

If we took away barriers to women's leadership, we would solve the climate change problem a lot fasterMarry Robinson¹

Women are powerful organizers, visionaries, turn knowledge into action, work out in the present and plan to construct the future. Women have the solutions, and also have taken the initiative as key leaders in social and environmental movements. Nepalese women belonging to different castes, culture, and socio-economic backgrounds have made various choices in their lives. Women have always been a very real, although unrecognized, force in society. Many theorists have vigorously rejected the notion that women have been oppressed. Women have been active, assertive, competent contributors to their societies. Women of Nepal who have played an active role in the restoration of democracy in the country whether it was 1950, 1990 or 2006 have not equally benefited from development. On paper, the Constitution of Nepal, guarantees various rights to women, and various bills concerned with women welfare have been passed. But in practice, however, women do not enjoy equal benefits as men in the civil, political, social and economic advancement because of the discrimination institutionalized by family, society, market and the state.² Women can lead the society with psychological understanding and its role in responding to climate change through change of humans' behavior towards nature and awareness towards climate change, addressing and sharing experience with its impacts. First, psychologists' provide a theoretically and empirically based understanding of human behavior at the individual level. This level of analysis is relevant for understanding the human-causes of climate change because it is the collective impact of human behaviors that are contributing to climate change (Clayton & Brook, 2005³; Gifford, 2008⁴). Put efforts to realize them. Each and every behavior is responsible for disasters. Most people are ignorant to the cause of actions that facilitate or hinder climate control.

Climate Change is a product of human behavior that affects mental health. In Nepali context social values and beliefs count a lot to acknowledge the climate change and how to live with the change. They think it is the result of retribution by God/Goddess so they have to accept it. They never think it is the result of their behaviors they blame or fear to supreme powers and propitiate them offerings. They want social justice for these issues. In Nepal, a total of 25 professional women trekked to the Everest Base Camp for advocating climate justice and to bring the impact of climate change on women to the mainstream on March 8, International women day 2022 at Kalapather. Women are the most impacted by climate change. Indigenous and rural women in particular are the most vulnerable to climate change and environmental degradation.⁵ Gendered roles in much of the world also make women more susceptible to the negative impacts of climate change. Women are the primary gatherers of water, food, and fuel, and they dominate

subsistence farming, caregiving, and cleaning. These duties are more prone to feel the effects of environmental degradation and rising global temperatures as they rely heavily upon natural resources. In the future, this can drive a negative feedback loop of increasing poverty. However, research shows that empowering women within these roles can reverse poverty and unlock effective climate change solutions. Due to their close relationship with the land, Indigenous women hold unique and invaluable traditional ecological knowledge, as well as a spiritual and philosophical approach to healing the Earth and its climate. This can contribute greatly to building resilience, cutting greenhouse gas emissions, and scaling environmental preservation on a global level. Their traditional knowledge provides natural solutions to energy, waste management, and agriculture. Climate anxiety, sometimes, is also contributing to the downgrading of human resilience and diminished well-being. Women turn knowledge into action. This can contribute greatly to building resilience, cutting greenhouse gas emissions, and scaling environmental preservation on a global level. Their traditional knowledge provides natural solutions to energy, waste management, and agriculture.⁶

Further, COP26 brought together world leaders to act together to limit temperature rises and climate change in 2021. The main objectives of the COP26 meeting were to: commit to more ambitious targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, and discuss measures to adapt to the inevitable impacts of climate change. Many expectations of Nepalese to the prime minister to raise the issue of loss and damage are mounting in the country and demand compensation for climate-induced disasters, since the country is experiencing increasingly disruptive extreme weather. We are now facing the worst-case global warming scenario. The climate change emergency, its environmental deterioration, and extinction threat can only be slowed down by our governments immediately enforcing the correct 2025 global fossil fuel reduction targets.⁷ we should preserve our unique planet for generations to come. We do not have another planet to migrate nor any antidote for climate change. Despite these challenges, women and girls have a crucial role in achieving the climate targets set at COP26. As valuable members of society, they deserve to participate equally in public life. Research demonstrates that due to socially prescribed gender roles, women assess risk differently to men and typically prioritize the welfare of their families and communities in resource-management decisions.⁸

Unfortunately, women continue to face barriers to equal participation in environmental decision-making, and women-led community organizations commonly struggle to access climate finance. Support for women's initiatives and access to resources can drive effective climate action that meets the needs of communities. The inclusion of these women in creating sustainable practices is thus central to ensuring the effectiveness of climate-related decisions.

Women are better leaders in times of crisis. Research has also shown that women adopt innovative and preventative measures at a faster rate than men. In a review of 17 studies from around the world, the presence of women in conservation and natural resource management

resulted in stricter and more sustainable extraction rules, greater compliance, more transparency and accountability, and better conflict resolution⁹. This research has also shown that women tend to think for the collective whole rather than themselves. Women are shown to make more decisions that support the public good, provide fair pay and benefits, and encourage honest and ethical behavior.

Furthermore, there are policy and knowledge-action gaps between grassroots and regional/national levels, but also between the cultural sector and other sectors. There is still a lack of understanding among politicians and the broader public of what arts and culture can do to communicate the complexity of climate change, develop empathy, and create behavior change. Storytelling can transcend geography and politics to imagine shared solutions that are regenerative and resilient. Collective intelligence and bottom-up approaches are needed to improve policy¹⁰. The art is long but time is short. Each and every line of the policy should be applicable to humankind and used in practices as it is uttered in Hamlet “Suit the action to the word, the word to the action.”

As we have explored, transformational change begins deep beneath that which we can see. Our beliefs shape our identities, just as soil health shapes plant life, and paradigms shape societal systems and structures. Genuine change involves reparative work and reweaving relationships across each of these nested domains, but what does this entail exactly? ¹¹

Fortunately, living systems and those who draw lessons from them illuminate our path.

Reference:

1. In 2015, the international arena formally gave this women-climate nexus a platform within the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2. Journals and Campus Publications > JIWS > Vol. 21 > Iss. 2 (2020)
3. Clayton, S., & Brook, A. (2005). Can psychology help save the world? A model for conservation psychology. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy (ASAP)*, 5(1), 87–102. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1530-2415.2005.00057.x>
4. Psychology's Essential Role in Alleviating the Impacts of Climate Change: November 2008 *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne* 49(4):273-280
5. <https://www.nepallivetoday.com/2022/01/18/trek-to-kalapathar-to-advocate-for-climate-justice>
6. <https://daughtersforearth.org/women-are-essential-to-solving-the-climate-crisis>
7. <https://www.nepalitimes.com/opinion/who-will-pay-for-climate-disasters>
8. <https://simavi.nl/en/social-and-economic-empowerment-of-women-and-girls>
9. <https://www.oneearth.org/why-women-are-key-to-solving-the-climate-crisis>

10. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000371488>
11. <https://www.salzburgglobal.org/news/latest-news/article/an-invitation-towards-healing>