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Towards improved flood disaster governance in Nepal: a case study in Sindhupalchok District

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Abstract

Recent flood disasters in Nepal have been the result of a combination of a fast-growing vulnerability of the local population and variable, possibly changing climatic conditions. In the future, flood disasters are likely to occur if vulnerability does not decrease. Nonetheless, the current state of flood disaster governance in Nepal, including flood risk assessment, is limited. To better inform policy and flood disaster governance, we created a flood risk assessment model that maps and quantifies the vulnerability of populations in flood-prone areas in Sindhupalchok District, Nepal. Three scenarios were considered in the model: a baseline-flood scenario, a medium-extreme-flood scenario, and a high-extreme-flood scenario. Overall, the model demonstrates that the local population is indeed vulnerable to flood risk, and increasingly for extreme floods. The model results indicate the following: (1) vulnerability to flood risk increases significantly from the baseline-flood scenario to the two extreme-flood scenarios; (2) houses are especially vulnerable to flood risk in the Village Development Committees (VDCs) of Gloche, Pagretar, Tatopani, Kadambas, and Bahrabise; and (3) income and food from crop production are most vulnerable to flood risk in the VDCs of Gloche, Fulpingdanda, Kadambas, Tatopani, and Batase. Based on these results, moving towards improved flood disaster governance, we make recommendations to improve measures for flood risk reduction with a focus on implementing flood early warning systems, clarifying the assignment of roles and responsibilities to stakeholders in flood risk governance, and increasing the development/use of flood risk assessment models.

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