

**ASSESSMENT OF LAND AND
AGRARIAN CONTEXT: CHAUKUNE,
RAKSIRANG AND SANI TRIVENI
RURAL MUNICIPALITIES**

2026



PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS



**NEPAL LITTLE FLOWER
SOCIETY (NLFS)**
Baraghare, Narayangarh, Bharatpur-03
Chitwan, Nepal



SAHAKARMI SAMAJ
Kohalpur Municipality -10, Rajhena Road
Kohalpur, Banke



**COMMUNITY SELF RELIANCE
CENTER (CSRC)**
Tokha-7, Dhapasi
Kathmandu, Nepal



**FEMINIST DALIT
ORGANIZATION (FEDO)**
Kupondole, Lalitpur, Nepal

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION



FASTENAKTION
Chhetrapal Bhagvati Marg Paschim,
Lalitpur 44600

TEAM MEMBERS

Jagat Basnet, PhD - Team Leader
Mr. Bishwash Nepali
Ms. Sushma Neupane
Ms. Rekha Bhattarai
Ms. Champa B.K.
Bishuman Chepang

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This study was undertaken with the objective of generating evidence on land rights, land tenure, agrarian livelihoods, and the challenges faced by marginalized communities, including landless households, Dalits, Indigenous Peoples, sharecroppers, smallholder farmers, and informal settlers. The completion of this assessment would not have been possible without the collective efforts and support of many stakeholders.

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We hope that the findings and recommendations presented in this report will contribute to informed policy dialogue, strengthen local planning processes, and support ongoing efforts toward equitable land governance, agrarian justice, and sustainable livelihoods for marginalized communities in Nepal.

Jagat Deuja
Executive Director
Community Self-Reliance Centre (CSRC)
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key Observations and Findings

The study across Raksirang (Makwanpur), Chaukune (Surkhet), and Sanni Triveni (Kalikot) demonstrates that land relations in rural Nepal are not simply unequal but are structurally exclusionary, historically produced, and continuously reproduced through governance failures, market forces, and ecological pressures. Field evidence from FGDs, KIIs, case studies and literatures consistently show that land is concentrated among dominant groups, while marginalized communities survive through insecure and informal tenure arrangements, with very limited or no legal protection.

A central finding is the depth and persistence of landlessness and near-landlessness among marginalized groups, particularly Chepang (Indigenous), Dalit households and landless families. In Chaukune, field data indicates that approximately 20% of households are landless, while more than 70% experience chronic food insecurity, relying heavily on seasonal migration and wage labor. In Sanni Triveni, Dalit households reported extreme land fragmentation, with ancestral holdings reduced over generations to as little as 4–6 aana per household, making subsistence farming largely unsustainable. In Raksirang, Chepang communities continue to depend on Khoriya cultivation practiced for across generations without formal land ownership certificates, reflecting long-term exclusion from formal land registration and state recognition of indigenous land use.

The research further identifies tenure insecurity as the dominant and cross-cutting condition shaping rural livelihoods. In Raksirang Rural Municipality, Chepang households continue to practice Khoriya (shifting cultivation) as their primary agricultural system; however, most families still lack formal land ownership. Recent forest and conservation policies have further threatened their traditional land-use rights and livelihoods, increasing the risk of displacement from ancestral lands. Field interviews reveal that securing land ownership and tenure recognition remains one of the most critical concerns for the Chepang community. In Chaukune Rural Municipality and Sanni Triveni Rural Municipality, the Mate[1]/sharecropping system operates almost entirely through informal verbal agreements, leaving tenants without legal protection. Landlords frequently reclaim land without compensation, even after tenants have invested labor, seeds, fertilizers, and other agricultural inputs over multiple cropping seasons.

The findings also reveal systematic inequality in land distribution rooted in historical cadastral surveys and entrenched social hierarchies. In Sanni Triveni, Dalit participants reported that during land measurement and registration processes, fertile and irrigated lands were disproportionately registered under upper-caste households, while Dalits were allocated dry, less productive, or fragmented plots. In Raksirang, Chepang households are largely confined to bari (upland dry slopes), while more productive khet (irrigated lowlands) remain concentrated among dominant caste groups, reinforcing long-term agrarian inequality and productivity gaps.

[1] *Mate - Usufructuary Mortgage* -A usufructuary mortgage is a type of mortgage in which the borrower (mortgagor) gives the lender (mortgagee) possession of the mortgaged property, and the lender has the right to use the property and enjoy its income (called the usufruct) instead of, or in addition to, receiving interest on the loan.

The findings show that across Chaukune Rural Municipality, Sanni Triveni Rural Municipality, and Raksirang Rural Municipality, women's land ownership remains extremely low, with 93.59% of 12,802 women-headed households lacking any property rights. Chaukune records the highest number of landless women (4,929 households) but slightly better partial ownership than the others. Sanni Triveni shows severe exclusion, with only 1.9% of households reporting land or housing ownership under women's names. Similarly, Raksirang shows persistently negligible number of female ownerships despite its Indigenous composition, indicating that customary systems (Khoriya) have not translated into formal land rights for women.

Another significant finding is the rapid agrarian transformation accompanied by declining ecological and livelihood resilience. In Chaukune, field narratives show the disappearance of indigenous seed varieties such as traditional rice types (e.g., Koilo Jado, Basmati Jhili, Gude Jado), which were previously stored and reused by households. Livestock holdings have sharply declined from 20–22 cattle per household in earlier generations to minimal current ownership, and traditional reciprocal labor systems (arma–parma) have been replaced by wage labor markets. Agriculture across all sites is increasingly dependent on hybrid seeds, chemical fertilizers, and pesticides, reducing autonomy, increasing input costs, and weakening ecological sustainability.

The study further finds that migration and indebtedness have become structural survival strategies rather than pathways to economic mobility. Seasonal migration to India typically generates only NPR 50,000–60,000 per migration cycle, while the cost of land purchase ranges from NPR 500,000–700,000 or more, making land ownership virtually unattainable for most households. Field narratives also reveal repeated cycles of borrowing small amounts (e.g., NPR 5,000–10,000 or equivalent amounts in Indian currency), often for migration expenses, food, healthcare, or other emergency needs, thereby reinforcing long-term debt dependency and livelihood precarity. In many cases, savings earned through labor migration to India are primarily used to engage in Mate farming arrangements and to sustain household food needs, rather than enabling long-term economic advancement or secure land ownership.

The field findings across Chaukune Rural Municipality, Sanni Triveni Rural Municipality, and Raksirang Rural Municipality recorded a total of 2,609 tenure-related cases, reflecting significant variations in local agrarian relations. Sharecropping (1,046 cases) was the dominant tenure arrangement in Raksirang, followed by Mate farming (912 cases) concentrated in Chaukune and Sanni Triveni. Other tenure practices documented in Raksirang included shifting cultivation (579 cases), contract farming (59 cases), and mortgage arrangements (13 cases). Chaukune (201 cases) and Sanni Triveni (711 cases) were characterized almost entirely by Mate farming, whereas Raksirang (1,697 cases) exhibited a more diversified but highly unequal tenure structure, encompassing all forms of tenancy and informal land arrangements. In Chaukune and Sanni Triveni, approximately 62.58% of households were engaged in Mate/sharecropping systems, with the proportion increasing to 67.32% among Dalit households, indicating a clear caste-based concentration of insecure and dependent tenancy relations.

The field findings further show that across Chaukune Rural Municipality, Raksirang Rural Municipality, and Sanni Triveni Rural Municipality, the evidence clearly shows that unequal land access is a direct driver of chronic food insecurity, with only 29.98% of households in Chaukune able to meet annual food needs while 70.02% remain food-insecure[2]. In Chaukune alone, 76.65% of households cannot produce sufficient food for the year, reflecting the severe impact of fragmented holdings and limited productive land. In Raksirang, 50.6% of households survive only 3–6 months from their own production and no surplus production is recorded, indicating a structurally non-commercial, subsistence-constrained agrarian system. Sanni Triveni shows a similar pattern of prolonged food deficit due to widespread landlessness, reliance on sharecropping and wage labor, and low agricultural productivity in fragile hill ecology. Collectively, the findings confirm that insecure tenure, land scarcity, and unequal distribution of productive land systematically reproduce food insecurity across all three municipalities.

The findings show that fallow land is minor number of plots across all three rural municipalities, though Chaukune and Sanni Triveni report shows some instances. Chaukune records 126 households with fallow land, while Sanni Triveni has 33.33 hectares of uncultivated plots; in both areas, inadequate irrigation, low agricultural productivity, and cultural beliefs related to deities contribute to land abandonment. In contrast, Raksirang Rural Municipality reports no fallow land, suggesting more continuous land use, potentially supported by Indigenous systems such as shifting cultivation.

Finally, the report identifies a deeper structural condition in which land functions not only as an economic asset but also as a critical determinant of social citizenship, dignity, and institutional access. Across FGDs, participants consistently reported that lack of land ownership restricts access to credit, healthcare, formal loans, investment in business and social recognition, with statements such as “without land, no one trusts us for treatment or loans” reflecting this exclusion. In some cases, even households that buy small pieces of land are labeled as hukumbasi or informal settlers, indicating that they continue to face social and political marginalization.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that rural land inequality in these municipalities is not accidental but is produced and sustained through interlocking systems of historical dispossession, unequal cadastral practices (during the land survey, powerful landowners or powerful people registered fertile land in their own names, while poor and Dalits were registered marginal and less productive land), insecure tenancy relations, financialized debt systems, ecological marginalization, and agrarian transition without protective safeguards for vulnerable groups.

[2] *Chaukune Rural Municipality Profile, 2021, Surkhet*

ASSESSMENT OF LAND AND AGRARIAN STATUS OF THREE MUNICIPALITIES

1. Research Background

1.1 Background

The issue of land and agrarian livelihoods remains one of the most critical socio-economic concerns in Nepal, particularly for rural and marginalized communities. Land is not only the primary basis of agricultural production but also a key source of identity, dignity, livelihood security, and food sovereignty (CSRC, 2021; Adhikari, 2014). In rural Nepal, access to cultivable land determines household survival, economic opportunities, and social inclusion. For smallholder farmers, indigenous peoples, Dalits, landless peasants, women, and marginalized groups, secure land tenure is essential for reducing poverty, strengthening resilience, and ensuring sustainable livelihoods (World Bank, 2019; UNDP, 2020). Despite the agrarian nature of Nepalese society, unequal access to land and insecure tenure systems continue to reproduce structural inequalities and social exclusion across many rural communities (Regmi, 1978; CSRC, 2021).

In recent years, Nepal's agrarian system has been undergoing rapid transformation due to changing socio-economic and demographic dynamics. Large areas of agricultural land have gradually remained uncultivated or fallow as a result of labour shortages, youth outmigration, fragmented landholdings, declining agricultural productivity, and reduced interest in farming among younger generations (Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development [MoALD], 2022). Migration, both internal and foreign employment migration, has significantly reduced the active agricultural workforce, weakening local food systems and traditional farming practices (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2019). At the same time, climate vulnerabilities, limited irrigation facilities, inadequate agricultural support services, and weak market access have further discouraged subsistence and small-scale farming (FAO, 2021). Consequently, rural livelihoods in many municipalities are becoming increasingly fragile and dependent on remittance economies rather than agriculture (CBS, 2021).

The problem of land inequality remains particularly severe among landless households, Dalit communities, informal settlers, and historically marginalized peasants in Nepal. Although the country has introduced various land reform initiatives and land distribution policies over the decades, implementation has remained inconsistent, politically contested, and institutionally weak (Regmi, 1976; CSRC, 2020). Historical patterns of feudal land ownership, unequal tenancy arrangements, and exclusionary state structures have contributed to persistent inequities in land access and control, particularly among socially marginalized groups (Adhikari, 2008). The recent initiatives carried out through the Land Issues Resolving Commission (LIRC) sought to address the concerns of landless Dalits, squatters, and unmanaged settlers by facilitating land identification, registration, and ownership distribution (Government of Nepal, 2021). However, the dissolution and restructuring of the commission have created uncertainty regarding the continuity, consistency, and effectiveness of these efforts. At the local government level, policy implementation often remains slow, fragmented, and unclear due to limited institutional capacity, inadequate inter-agency coordination, political instability, and insufficient evidence-based planning mechanisms (UN-Habitat, 2020; CSRC, 2021).

These challenges are particularly relevant in Raksirang Rural Municipality, Makawanpur, Chaukune Rural Municipality Surkhet, and Sanni Triveni Rural Municipality, Kalikot, where agriculture continues to serve as the primary livelihood source for a majority of households. These rural municipalities are characterized by diverse indigenous and marginalized populations, challenging geographical conditions, limited infrastructure, weak market connectivity, and persistent socio-economic inequalities (National Planning Commission [NPC], 2021). Many households in these areas continue to experience insecure land tenure, low agricultural productivity, food insecurity, and increasing dependence on seasonal migration and wage labour for survival (MoALD, 2022). Furthermore, the expansion of fallow agricultural land, coupled with declining youth engagement in farming, has weakened local agrarian systems and raised serious concerns regarding sustainable livelihoods, local food systems, and long-term rural development (FAO, 2021; IOM, 2019).

Despite growing national discussions on land reform, agrarian transition, and rural livelihoods in Nepal, there remains a significant gap in localized and evidence-based studies focusing on the actual status of land access, tenure security, and changing agrarian systems at the municipal level. Existing studies and policy discussions have largely concentrated on national-level land reform agendas, migration trends, and agricultural productivity, while limited attention has been given to the lived realities of marginalized households in remote rural municipalities. In particular, there is inadequate empirical evidence regarding how landlessness, insecure tenure arrangements, fallow land expansion, labour migration, and declining agricultural engagement are affecting local livelihoods and food systems in municipalities such as Raksirang Rural Municipality, Chaukune Rural Municipality, and Sanni Triveni Rural Municipality. Furthermore, there is limited documentation on how local governments are responding to land-related challenges and implementing land governance and agrarian development policies in these geographically and socio-economically marginalized areas.

Another important gap relates to the insufficient integration of marginalized voices, particularly those of Dalits, indigenous peoples, women farmers, landless peasants, and informal settlers in research, policy formulation, and development planning processes. Although several governmental and non-governmental initiatives have attempted to address land inequality and agricultural development, there remains a lack of comprehensive and participatory assessments that connect land tenure issues with broader agrarian transformations, social exclusion, livelihood insecurity, and local governance dynamics. Moreover, little research has explored the relationship between increasing fallow land, youth outmigration, declining farming practices, and the sustainability of rural livelihoods within these local contexts.

In response to these gaps, Community Self Reliance Centre (CSRC), in collaboration with Sahakarmi Samaj, Feminist Dalit Organisation (FEDO) Nepal, and Nepal Little Flower Society, with partnership support from Fastenaktion, has initiated a collaborative effort to assess the status of land and agrarian livelihoods in these three local governments. Each organization brings distinct expertise and long-standing engagement with marginalized communities. CSRC has been actively working on land rights, agrarian reform, and land governance advocacy across Nepal. Sahakarmi Samaj has contributed to community empowerment, local governance strengthening, and livelihood promotion among vulnerable populations.

FEDO Nepal has focused particularly on Dalit rights, social inclusion, women's empowerment, and advocacy against caste-based discrimination, while Nepal Little Flower Society has worked extensively in community development, social justice, and sustainable livelihood support in rural areas. Through this collaboration, the organizations aim to generate localized evidence on land access, tenure systems, agricultural practices, fallow land dynamics, and the socio-economic conditions of marginalized households.

The study is expected to fill critical knowledge and policy gaps by producing context-specific information that can support evidence-based advocacy, strengthen local government planning, and contribute to inclusive land and agricultural development strategies. By documenting the realities of vulnerable rural communities and examining emerging agrarian transformations, the assessment seeks to support more equitable land governance, sustainable agricultural systems, and improved livelihood opportunities for marginalized populations in Nepal.

1.2. Objectives of the Assessment

Considering the growing challenges related to land inequality, agrarian transformation, declining agricultural engagement, and insecure land tenure among marginalized communities in rural Nepal, this study aims to assess the existing status of land and agrarian livelihoods in selected local governments. The study particularly focuses on understanding the realities of landless households, smallholder farmers, Dalits, sharecroppers, and other socially and economically marginalized groups. Furthermore, the assessment seeks to generate evidence that can support local governments, civil society organizations, and policy stakeholders in strengthening inclusive land governance and sustainable agrarian development.

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. Mapping and analyze the land rights (access, use and ownership) context in the selected rural/municipalities, with a focus on marginalized communities including Dalits, landless families, sharecroppers and smallholders.
2. Identify trends and issues related to landlessness, tenancy, sharecropping, fallow land, and commercialization of agricultural land.
3. Document the challenges and opportunities within the ongoing land allocation and land governance processes.
4. Produce report to support land rights campaigns, policy dialogue, and evidence-based advocacy.

1.3. Scope of Work

This assessment was conducted in three selected local governments: Raksirang Rural Municipality, Chaukune Rural Municipality, and Sanni Triveni Rural Municipality. The study focused on examining the contemporary status of land access, land tenure systems, and agrarian livelihoods within these rural municipalities, with particular attention to marginalized and vulnerable populations.

The scope of the assessment included an analysis of ownership structures, and access to agricultural land among different social groups. Special emphasis was placed on understanding the socio-economic conditions of landless households, land-poor farmers, Dalit communities, squatters, sharecroppers, and other marginalized populations who continued to experience exclusion from secure land ownership and productive resources.

Furthermore, the study examined various forms of land tenure arrangements, including tenancy, leasing, sharecropping, and informal land-use practices that shaped local agrarian relations and livelihood systems.

Another important area of inquiry involved assessing the land utilization, and rural livelihood sustainability. In addition, the study reviewed the current status and effectiveness of government-led land allocation and land governance initiatives, particularly those targeting landless households, informal settlers, and marginalized communities.

Finally, the assessment explored potential strategies and opportunities for improving equitable access to agricultural land for landless and smallholder peasants.

2. Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods research approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the status of land and agrarian livelihoods in Raksirang Rural Municipality, Chaukune Rural Municipality, and Sanni Triveni Rural Municipality. The assessment was carried out collaboratively by Community Self Reliance Centre (CSRC), Sahakarmi Samaj, FEDO Nepal, and Nepal Little Flower Society, with support from Fastenaktion. Greater emphasis was placed on participatory qualitative approaches to capture the lived experiences, perceptions, and realities of marginalized communities, including landless households, Dalits, sharecroppers, smallholder farmers, and informal settlers.

The methodology was designed to generate both descriptive and analytical information regarding land access, tenure arrangements, agricultural practices, fallow land dynamics, migration impacts, and local land governance processes. Multiple data collection methods were used to ensure triangulation, reliability, and contextual understanding of the issues under study.

2.1 Orientation and Planning of Study with Partner staffs

An initial online orientation and planning session for the study was conducted with the partner organizations to share the study objectives, methodology, tools, and implementation plan. This was followed by in-person orientation sessions facilitated by the study team leader with the staff of all partner organizations in the three selected local governments: Raksirang Rural Municipality, Chaukune Rural Municipality, and Sanni Triveni Rural Municipality.

During these face-to-face orientation sessions, practical exercises were conducted to familiarize partner staff with data collection tools and field procedures, including Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and community observation techniques. The orientations also helped to ensure a shared understanding of the study framework, roles and responsibilities, and ethical considerations in data collection.

Following the orientation process, the study team leader, in coordination with partner staff, carried out preliminary field engagement activities, including FGDs and KIIs with ward chairpersons, municipal representatives, and community members. These early engagements helped refine the data collection process and ensured effective collaboration between the research team and local stakeholders throughout the study implementation.

2.2 Review of Secondary Data

The study reviewed a range of secondary sources to understand the broader socio-economic and land governance context of the selected municipalities. Secondary data included municipal profiles, population and housing data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) 2021, records and reports related to the Land Issues Resolving Commission (LIRC), and land-related documents available at municipal and district-level offices. In addition, reports, publications, and program documents produced by the partner organizations were reviewed to understand previous interventions, local land issues, and agrarian trends within the study areas. These sources helped provide background information, contextual insights, and comparative understanding for the primary data findings.

2.3 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted with a range of stakeholders directly involved in land governance, agricultural development, and community-level interventions. Participants included staff members from each partner organization, municipal land section focal persons, ward chairpersons, chairpersons/mayors or vice-chairpersons/deputy mayors of the selected municipalities, farmers, and representatives from civil society organizations (CSOs). The KIIs provided in-depth information regarding land ownership patterns, land allocation processes, agrarian challenges, migration trends, fallow land issues, and the implementation status of local land-related policies and programs.

2.4 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted to collect collective community perspectives and experiences regarding land access, agrarian livelihoods, and local governance issues. A total of eight FGDs were organized across the study areas. Among these, four FGDs were conducted with landless households and landless Dalit communities, while another four FGDs involved sharecroppers, smallholder farmers, and communities affected by increasing fallow land. The FGDs explored issues related to land tenure insecurity, agricultural practices, livelihood challenges, migration, access to government support services, and local coping strategies. The discussions also helped identify community priorities, perceptions, and potential opportunities for improving land access and agrarian sustainability.

2.5 Community-Level Observation

Field-based community observations were conducted in the selected municipalities to gain a deeper understanding of local settlement patterns, agricultural land use, housing conditions, tenancy arrangements, and socio-economic realities. During field visits, researchers observed cultivated and fallow land conditions, irrigation access, housing structures, and community infrastructure. Informal interactions and conversations with local residents, community leaders, and farmers further enriched the understanding of local land and agrarian dynamics. These observations helped validate and complement information collected through interviews and group discussions.

2.6 Case Studies

The study also documented selected case studies to highlight unique and significant experiences related to land rights, tenancy practices, landlessness, migration, fallow land management, and agrarian livelihoods. Case studies were collected from individuals, households, or communities whose experiences reflected critical issues, innovative practices, or particular challenges relevant to the study objectives. These case narratives provided deeper insights into the human dimensions of land and agrarian issues and helped illustrate the broader realities faced by marginalized rural populations in the study areas.

3. LAND CONTEXT OF SELECTED THREE MUNICIPALITIES

3.1 Introduction of Rural Municipalities (Palikas)

A. Chaukune



Chaukune Rural Municipality is located in Surkhet District and was formed through the amalgamation of the former Village Development Committees (VDCs) of Lagam, Betan, Bijoura, Gutu, and Ghatgaun (Government of Nepal, 2017). According to the National Population and Housing Census 2021 (2078 BS), the municipality has a total population of 26,950 distributed across 5,336 households, comprising 13,236 males and 13,714 females (CBS, 2021). It covers an area of approximately 381.03 sq. km and is predominantly characterized by steep and sloping terrain shaped by the Bheri and Karnali river systems. Administratively, the municipality is divided into 10 wards and is marked by considerable ethnic diversity, including Bishwakarma, Chhetri, Magar, Raji, Dalit, and other caste and ethnic groups. The area possesses potential for agriculture, livestock rearing, tourism, and river-based activities such as rafting; however, its rugged topography constrains intensive agricultural production.

According to the National Population and Housing Census 2021, the municipality is home to at least 16 caste and ethnic groups. The largest group is the Bishwakarma (Dalit) community, with a population of 7,752 (28.76%). The second largest group is the Chhetri community, with 3,108 individuals (11.53%). Other Dalit groups include Pariyar (1,642; 6.09%), Mijar (128; 0.47%), and Sunar (29; 0.10%), alongside several other smaller ethnic and caste groups residing in the area.

According to the National Population and Housing Census 2021 (2078 BS), out of the total population of 26,950 in this rural municipality, 16,677 individuals (61.88%) fall under the extreme poverty category. Similarly, 8,866 individuals (32.9%) are classified as poor. Based on this data, 94.78% of the population lives in poverty, while only 4.42% belong to the middle class and 0.79% fall under the wealthy category. According to the report prepared by the Survey Department (Napi Bibhag) for the fiscal year 2020/21 (2077/78 BS), the total land area of Chaukune Rural Municipality is 38,032.38 hectares. Out of this, 4,984.77 hectares of land is used for agricultural purposes

Historically, the area remained part of Dailekh District until 2028 BS (1971 AD), after which it was incorporated into Surkhet District. Settlement expansion began through forest clearance around 2022 BS (1965 AD), gradually increasing cultivable land; however, agricultural production has remained insufficient to ensure year-round food security, resulting in persistent patterns of seasonal and external labour migration, including migration to India (NPC, 2019). Systematic land administration and cadastral surveying began after 2028 BS (1971 AD), with most households receiving land ownership certificates in 2030 BS (1973 AD), and additional land allocations made in 2042 BS (1985 AD) through the Rapti Settlement Commission (CSRC, 2020).

B. Raksirang



Raksirang Rural Municipality was established on 27 Falgun 2073 BS (2017 AD) by the Government of Nepal through the merger of four former Village Development Committees (VDCs): Kankada, Raksirang, Sarikhet, and Khairang, located in the northwestern part of Makwanpur District (Government of Nepal, 2017). According to the National Population and Housing Census 2021 (2078 BS), the municipality has a total population of 25,996, comprising 13,201 males and 12,795 females, distributed across 5,044 households. It is divided into 9 wards and covers an area of 226.7 sq. km. The overall literacy rate of the municipality is 70.2% (CBS, 2021).

The municipality is ethnically diverse, with major population groups including Tamang (46.25%), Chepang (43.96%), Chhetri (2.75%), Dalit (2.38%), Magar (1.50%), Newar (0.56%), and Brahmin (0.06%). Geographically, Raksirang Rural Municipality lies in the northwestern corner of Makwanpur District, with elevation ranging from 300 meters to 2,300 meters above sea level, resulting in varied climatic and ecological conditions (MoFAGA, 2022).

Agriculture is the primary livelihood of the local population. The area is largely dominated by high hills and forested land, and although arable land is limited, farmers have utilized available land for cultivation. Major agricultural products include rice, wheat, maize, fruits, and a variety of off-season vegetables (MoFAGA, 2022).

In terms of land use, although detailed classification data is limited in the municipal profile, the local government has formulated and initiated the implementation of a Land Use Policy and Land Management Plan (2078 BS). According to available municipal records, 1,369.61 hectares of land are covered by forest, while 8,355.87 hectares are under agricultural cultivation (Raksirang Rural Municipality Profile, 2022).

Poverty remains a major challenge in the municipality. According to the National Population and Housing Census 2021 (2078 BS), out of the total population of 25,996, 15,118 individuals (58.16%) are classified as extremely poor, while 7,358 individuals (28.30%) are categorized as poor. This indicates that 86.46% of the population lives under poverty conditions. Only 9.47% belong to the middle class, while 0.66% fall under the wealthy category (CBS, 2021).

Similarly, a poverty assessment report of Ward No. 7, where Nepal Little Flower Society has been working, shows a total population of 3,288 (1,698 males and 1,590 females). The report reveals that 99.09% of the population is living in poverty, with 3,090 individuals (93.98%) in extreme poverty and 169 individuals (5.11%) classified as poor (Nepal Little Flower Society, 2023).

C. Sanni Triveni



Sanni Triveni Rural Municipality is located in Kalikot District of Karnali Province, Nepal. It is a predominantly hilly rural municipality characterized by mixed settlements of various caste and ethnic groups, including Dalit, Brahmin, Chhetri, Shahi, Thakuri, and others. The area is largely dominated by steep terrain with limited availability of fertile agricultural land. Settlements are scattered, and transportation facilities are minimal. Road access is mainly limited to newly opened track roads, and public transportation services remain insufficient for local mobility. Although the areas surrounding the Karnali River are rich in natural beauty, essential infrastructure such as roads, transportation, communication, and other basic services is still underdeveloped. Forests, rivers/streams, and agricultural land constitute the major natural resources of the municipality (MoFAGA, 2022).

The municipality is administratively divided into 9 wards. According to the National Population and Housing Census 2021 (2078 BS), it has a total of 2,422 households with a population of 13,491, comprising 6,903 females and 6,588 males. The municipality covers a total area of 136.71 sq. km, of which 30.21 sq. km (22.1%) is arable land (CBS, 2021).

According to the same census, 11 caste and ethnic groups reside in the municipality. The Chhetri community constitutes the largest population group with 3,961 people, followed by the Brahmin community with 3,108 people. Among Dalit communities, Bishwakarma, Pariyar, and Mijar groups are present, with populations of 2,132, 1,097, and 985 respectively (CBS, 2021).

Poverty remains a critical issue in the municipality. Out of the total population of 13,491, 8,010 individuals (59.37%) are classified under extreme poverty, while 34.46% are categorized as poor. Only 6.17% of the population belongs to the middle or relatively better-off economic category, indicating a very high level of poverty and livelihood vulnerability in the municipality (CBS, 2021).

3.2 STATUS OF DEMOGRAPHY, LITERACY, POVERTY, LAND AND LIVELIHOOD

Table 1: Basic Information Table of Chaukune, Raksirang and Sanni Triveni RMs.

Indicators	Chaukune	Raksirang	Sanni Triveni
Population	26,950	25,996	13,491
Households	5,336	5,044	2,422
Dalit HHS	1896	120	761
Dalit Populations	9577 (35.54%)	619 (2.38%)	4236 (31.06)
Indigenous HHs	999	1896	9
Indigenous Populations	5044 (18.72%)	24009 (92.36%)	50 (0.37%)
Area (sq. km)	381.03	226.7	136.71
Literacy Rate	78.10%	70.20%	70.22
Extreme Poverty	94.78%	58.16%	59.37%
Total Poverty	94.78%	86.46%	93.83%
Middle/Wealthy Class	5.22%	13.54%	6.17%
Major Caste Groups	Bishwakarma, Chhetri, Dalit groups	Taman g, Chepang	Chhetri, Brahmin, Dalit groups
Agricultural Land	4,984.77 ha	8,355.87 ha	3,021 ha
Forest Area	Not specified	1,369.61 ha	Limited/fragmented
Main Livelihood	Subsistence farming & migration	Subsistence farming & forest-based livelihood	Subsistence farming & migration

Source: Created Land and Agrarian Context Report CSRC, 2026

Chaukune, Raksirang, and Sanni Triveni Rural Municipalities showed significant similarities in terms of geographic fragility and socio-economic deprivation; however, a comparative analysis of available data reveals important variations in demographic structure, poverty intensity, and livelihood conditions (CBS, 2021; MoFAGA, 2022). In terms of population size, Chaukune (26,950) and Raksirang (25,996) are relatively larger compared to Sanni Triveni (13,491), indicating a lower demographic pressure in the latter but also a smaller internal market and human resource base (CBS, 2021). Household distribution in all three municipalities reflects typical rural settlement patterns, with dispersed habitation due to hilly terrain conditions. Literacy and human development indicators are relatively better documented in Chaukune, which has a literacy rate of 78.1%, suggesting comparatively improved access to education (CBS, 2021; MoFAGA, 2022).

A more critical comparison emerges in the area of poverty. Chaukune shows an extremely high poverty incidence, with 94.78% of the population living in poverty, including a significant proportion in extreme poverty. Raksirang, although still highly vulnerable, shows a comparatively lower poverty level of 86.46%, with 58.16% in extreme poverty. In contrast, Sanni Triveni records 93.83% of its population in poverty, including 59.37% in extreme poverty and 34.46% in relative poverty. This places Sanni Triveni closer to Chaukune in terms of severity, though with slightly lower extreme poverty concentration. Overall, this comparison indicates that while all three municipalities are structurally poor, Chaukune and Sanni Triveni experience more severe poverty depth, whereas Raksirang demonstrates relatively better socio-economic resilience, though inequality remains high, particularly among indigenous communities (CBS, 2021).

Ethnically, the three municipalities differ significantly in composition, which directly influences their development trajectories. Raksirang is predominantly indigenous, with Tamang (46.25%) and Chepong (43.96%) forming the majority population, reflecting deep socio-cultural marginalization. Chaukune has a more mixed caste composition with strong representation of Bishwakarma (28.76%) and Chhetri groups, while Sanni Triveni is dominated by Chhetri (3,961) and Brahmin (3,108) populations, alongside Dalit communities such as Bishwakarma, Pariyar, and Mijar. These differences are critical because poverty in Raksirang is strongly associated with indigenous marginalization, whereas in Chaukune and Sanni Triveni, poverty is more broadly distributed across caste hierarchies but still disproportionately affects Dalit groups.

3.3 LAND TENURE AND AGRICULTURE PRACTICES

Land use and livelihood structures further highlight significant disparities. Chaukune has 4,984.77 hectares of agricultural land out of 38,032.38 hectares. In comparison, Raksirang has a comparatively larger cultivated area of 8,355.87 hectares along with 1,369.61 hectares of forest resources, indicating relatively better natural resource availability. In contrast, Sanni Triveni is the most land-constrained, with only about 30.21 sq. km (3,021 hectares) of arable land in a highly fragmented terrain. Despite these differences, all three municipalities remain heavily dependent on subsistence agriculture, with increasing reliance on seasonal and external migration due to limited local productivity and weak livelihood diversification.

Table 2: Land and Agriculture Land

Land Use Indicators	Chaukune RM	Raksirang RM	Sanni Triveni RM	Total
Farming Households (No.)	5,009	4,661	2,409	12,079
Total Agricultural Land Used (ha)	2,080.80	1,716.70	590.8	4,388.30
Cultivable Land (ha)	1,767.70	1,516.70	524.9	3,809.30
Temporary Crop Area (ha)	1,699.40	1,619.10	514.4	3,832.90
Other Cultivable Land (ha)(to be used)	68.3	98.5	10.5	177.3
Land under Permanent Crops (ha) [3]	104.2	13	17.7	134.9
Pasture / Forest / Ponds & Other Land (ha)	208.8	186.1	48.1	443

Source: National Agricultural Report, 2021

Agriculture in all three municipalities is predominantly subsistence-oriented and low-productivity-based.

The major agriculture cropping are as follows:

- In Chaukune, farming is dominated by rice, maize, millet, and pulses, with increasing dependence on chemical fertilizers and hybrid seeds, leading to the erosion of indigenous seed systems.
- In Raksirang, farming is strongly influenced by the Chure ecosystem, with limited terracing and increasing reliance on shifting cultivation and forest-based resources.
- In Sanni Triveni, steep terrain restricts mechanization, and agriculture remains highly vulnerable to climate and environmental risks.

Across Raksirang, Chaukune, and Sanni Triveni, land tenure and agricultural practices reflect the interplay of ecological fragility, historical land-use change, and widening agrarian inequalities. In the Chure landscape of Raksirang, the fragile terrain has shaped livelihood patterns, where shifting cultivation (khoriya farming) among the Chepang community remains important. Although community forestry has transferred more than 6,500 hectares of forest land to local users and involves nearly 4,000 households, secure access to agricultural land remains constrained. This is reflected in the municipality's policy focus on "One Settlement, One Product" and the promotion of selected cash crops, indicating a gradual move toward market-oriented agriculture. However, this shift coexists with indigenous practices, resulting in a mixed and uneven agrarian transition.

In Chaukune, agricultural change is characterized by the decline of indigenous seed systems, livestock-based livelihoods, and subsistence diversity, including informal tenancy (Mate). Earlier farming systems were marked by agro-biodiversity, local seed preservation, mixed cropping, cattle rearing, and reciprocal labor exchange. These practices have gradually been replaced by hybrid seeds, chemical-dependent agriculture, mechanization, and wage labor. This transformation has weakened ecological resilience and seed autonomy while increasing dependence on external inputs and non-farm income. At the same time, agricultural land is increasingly being converted into residential plots due to population growth, road access, and rising land values, reducing the area available for cultivation.

In Sanni Triveni, land tenure insecurity is most evident in the persistence of informal sharecropping (Mate) arrangements. Although this system has long supported landless and Dalit households, it remains largely undocumented and based on verbal agreements, exposing tenants to insecure and short-term access. The concentration of Dalit households in mate farming highlights how caste and landlessness intersect in shaping agrarian inequality. Rising rents and uncertain tenure discourage investment in land improvement, limiting productivity and reinforcing vulnerability. While local government policies recognize landless and small farmers through initiatives such as land banks and land use planning, implementation gaps remain significant.

A comparative perspective on agricultural land use across the three municipalities further highlights structural differences. Chaukune has the largest agricultural base, with over 5,000 farming households and about 2,080 hectares under cultivation, yet production remains dominated by seasonal crops, indicating limited diversification and continued reliance on subsistence farming. Raksirang, with a slightly smaller cultivated area, shows a more mixed system combining crop fields, pasture, and forest-linked livelihoods. Field evidence, particularly from indigenous settlements such as Ward No. 7, suggests that official classifications underrepresent permanent and forest-based practices, including agroforestry, fruit cultivation, and the use of wild edible resources.

In contrast, Sanni Triveni has the smallest agricultural base, limited land availability, and minimal diversification, resulting in subsistence-oriented production and higher livelihood vulnerability. Overall, these patterns illustrate a broader agrarian transition marked by declining subsistence diversity, growing land insecurity, and increasing socio-economic differentiation across rural landscapes.

Table 2: Land and Agriculture Land

Name of Local Government	Fallow land HHs	Fallow Land (Area)
Sanni Triveni Rural Municipality	81	33.33 hec.
Chaukune Rural Municipality	126	0
Raksirang Rural Municipality	0	0
Total	126	33.33

Source: Primary Information collection, Land and Agrarian Context Report 2026

The pattern of fallow land, based on the field report, shows notable variation among the three local governments. Chaukune records 126 households with fallow land, mainly attributed to inadequate irrigation facilities, weak agricultural productivity, and in few cases cultural beliefs related to deities. Similarly, Sanni Triveni reports 81 households left 33.33 hectares of fallow land, which is also associated with limited irrigation facilities and traditional beliefs related to deities. Local residents reported that people became sick after cultivating certain plots of land, and faith healers attributed these illnesses to spiritual causes (Deuta Lagchha). As a result, some land has remained uncultivated due to fear and adherence to these cultural beliefs. In contrast, Raksirang Rural Municipality reports no fallow land, indicating more continuous land use practices, possibly influenced by Indigenous land-based systems such as shifting cultivation.

3.4 LAND TENURES

Table 3: Summary Table of Different Tenure/Types of Land

Name of Local Government	Mate Farming [4]	Share Cropping [5]	Mortgage Farming [6]	Contract Farming [7]	Shift Agriculture [8]
Chaukuney RM	201	0	0	0	0
Raksirang RM	0	1046	13	59	579
Sanni Triveni RM	711	0	0	0	0
Total	912	1046	13	59	579

Source: Primary Information collection, Land and Agrarian Context Report 2026

The pattern of fallow land, based on the field report, shows notable variation among the three local governments. Chaukune records 126 households with fallow land, mainly attributed to inadequate irrigation facilities, weak agricultural productivity, and in few cases cultural beliefs related to deities. Similarly, Sanni Triveni reports 81 households left 33.33 hectares of fallow land, which is also associated with limited irrigation facilities and traditional beliefs related to deities. Local residents reported that people became sick after cultivating certain plots of land, and faith healers attributed these illnesses to spiritual causes (Deuta Lagchha). As a result, some land has remained uncultivated due to fear and adherence to these cultural beliefs. In contrast, Raksirang Rural Municipality reports no fallow land, indicating more continuous land use practices, possibly influenced by Indigenous land-based systems such as shifting cultivation.

The table shows clear and sharp differences in land tenure systems across the three rural municipalities. Overall, out of the total recorded cases (2,609), sharecropping is the largest single category (1,046 cases), followed by mate farming (912 cases), shifting cultivation (579 cases), contract farming (59 cases), and mortgage arrangements (13 cases).

A strong spatial pattern is visible in the distribution. Chaukune Rural Municipality (201 cases) and Sanni-Triveni Rural Municipality (711 cases) rely exclusively on mate farming, indicating a more stable and individualized tenure structure with no recorded cases of sharecropping, mortgage, contract, or shifting cultivation. In contrast, Raksirang Rural Municipality (1,697 cases) accounts for the entire diversity of tenure types. It alone records all sharecropping (1,046 cases), all shifting cultivation (579 cases), all contract farming (59 cases), and all mortgage arrangements (13 cases).

This comparison highlights a stark contrast: while Chaukune and Sanni-Triveni show a homogenous and relatively fixed tenure pattern dominated by Mate farming (100% of their cases), Raksirang represents a highly diversified and flexible, but also more complex and potentially insecure tenure system. The concentration of multiple tenure forms in Raksirang suggests greater agrarian differentiation and livelihood adaptation, whereas the other two municipalities reflect more traditional and less diversified land tenure arrangements.

Participants in community discussions mentioned that the rent for Mate land has become increasingly expensive nowadays. Moreover, after farmers invest labor, apply manure, and plough the land to improve soil fertility, landowners often reclaim the land within one or two years. As a result, farmers incur high labor costs and losses. On the other hand, the income generated from farming is no longer comparable to the investment made. Peasants also reported that although the Mate system is very old, it is not formally documented. Since it is based on verbal agreements, landowners can reclaim land whenever they wish, which increases insecurity for landless and poor farmers regarding their investments and livelihood.

[4] Sharecropping is a farming arrangement in which a tenant farmer cultivates land owned by someone else and pays the landowner with a share of the harvested crop instead of paying fixed rent in cash.

[5] A mortgage is a legal agreement in which property (usually land or a house) is used as security for a loan. If the borrower does not repay the loan, the lender has the right to take or sell the property to recover the money.

[6] Contract farming is a system of agriculture in which farmers and buyers (such as companies or processors) make a formal agreement before production begins.

[7] Shifting agriculture is a farming practice in which farmers grow crops on a piece of land for a few years, then move to a new area when the soil becomes less fertile, allowing the old land to recover naturally.

[8] Mate farming refers to cultivating land under a sharecropping or informal tenancy arrangement, rather than farming land that the farmer legally owns.

3.5 LAND RIGHTS SITUATION

Table 4: Tables of Landless Dalits, Landless People, and Informal Settlers (Application Submission)

Local Government	Landless Dalits [9]	Landless People [10]	Informal Settlers [11]	Total
Sanni Triveni Rural Municipality	14	0	113	127
Chaukune Rural Municipality	221	139	4654	5014
Raksirang Rural Municipality	1	29	289	319
Total	236	168	5056	5460
#%	4.32	3.08	92.6	100

Note: The Source of data - Chaukune and Saanni- Triveni from RMs and Raksirang from NALCIS of Land Issues Resolving Commission.

The table has been prepared based on applications submitted by landless Dalits, landless people, and informal settlers, as recorded in the NALCIS (National Land Commission Information System). The data from Chaukune Rural Municipality, Raksirang Rural Municipality, and Sanni Triveni Rural Municipality reveal that, among the total 5,460 applications submitted, informal settlers constitute an overwhelming majority (92.60%), while landless Dalits and landless squatters account for only 4.32% and 3.08%, respectively. This indicates that insecure land tenure remains a widespread structural issue across these municipalities.

Among them, Chaukune Rural Municipality alone accounts for 5,014 cases, including the highest number of landless Dalits (221), landless squatters (139), and informal settlers (4,654). This reflects severe land insecurity and socio-economic vulnerability within a socially diverse municipality where Dalit populations are also significantly represented.

During the field visits and interviews, several participants strongly expressed that many eligible people were still left out from filling out the forms due to inadequate information dissemination by the local governments and concerned authorities. This issue was reported particularly in Raksirang Rural Municipality and Sanni Triveni Rural Municipality, where many people were unable to submit applications. In Raksirang, the problem mainly affected the Chepang community, while in Sanni-Triveni it particularly impacted Dalits and other landless households.

[9] Landless Dalits are Dalit households that have no legally registered land of their own.

[10] Landless people are those who have no legally owned land

[11] Informal settlers are people living on land without legal rights or official recognition.

3.6 WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS SITUATION

Table 5: Women's Land Ownership

Indicators	Chaukune Rural Municipality	Raksirang Rural Municipality	Sanni Triveni Rural Municipality	Total	Percentage (%)
Ownership in House (Hhs)	16	19	10	45	0.35
Ownership in Land (Hhs)	60	55	53	168	1.31
Ownership in both House and Land (Hhs)	176	68	50	294	2.3
Without Ownership of both House and Land (Hhs)	4929	4843	2209	11981	93.59
Not Mentioned (Hhs)	155	59	100	314	2.45
Total Household	5336	5044	2422	12802	100

Source: National Census Report, 2021

The situation of women's access to land and housing rights across Chaukune Rural Municipality, Raksirang Rural Municipality, and Sanni Triveni Rural Municipality reveals a profoundly unequal gendered land regime characterized by extreme exclusion from ownership. Out of 12,802 households, an overwhelming 93.59% of women have no ownership of either house or land, while only a very small proportion hold ownership in land (1.31%), house (0.35%), or both (2.30%), indicating that legal and cultural barriers continue to restrict women's property rights across all three municipalities. In Chaukune, despite having the largest number of female households without ownership (4,929), there is slightly higher representation of women with partial land ownership compared to the other two municipalities, reflecting marginally better but still highly constrained access to property rights in a socially diverse setting. Raksirang, with its strong Indigenous population, shows very limited female ownership despite cultural diversity, suggesting that Indigenous land-use systems have not translated into equitable formal ownership for women. Similarly, Sanni Triveni exhibits severe exclusion, with more than 2,000 women-headed households lacking ownership, highlighting deep-rooted patriarchal norms and limited access to formal land registration systems.

3.7 LAND RIGHTS STATUS OF DALITS AND INDIGENOUS AND FOOD SECURITY

(Chaukune Rural Municipality Profile, 2021); (National Agricultural Census, 2021)

Land ownership patterns across Chaukune (Surkhet), Raksirang (Makwanpur), and Sanni Triveni (Kalikot) reveal a structurally unequal and highly fragmented agrarian system dominated by smallholders, landless households, and informal tenancy arrangements. In Chaukune, out of 2,351 households, only 705 households (29.98%) can meet food needs from their own production, while the remaining 1,646 households (70.02%) are food-insecure, indicating very limited land ownership and productivity (Chaukune Rural Municipality Profile, 2021). Similarly, in Raksirang, land distribution is constrained by fragile Chure ecology, where only 8,356.06 hectares are cultivable out of the total land area, and land ownership remains concentrated in small fragmented holdings, with 4,661 farming households operating under insecure tenure arrangements (National Agricultural Census, 2021). In Sanni Triveni, although detailed land-use data is limited, community-level findings indicate widespread landlessness and dependence on tenancy and sharecropping systems among Dalit and marginalized groups. Across all three municipalities, formal land reform instruments such as land banks, land use planning, and land registration systems exist but are weakly implemented, reinforcing structural land inequality and insecure tenure relations (CBS, 2021).

Dalits and indigenous communities (particularly Chepang in Raksirang and Dalit groups in Chaukune and Sanni Triveni) experience the most severe forms of landlessness, tenure insecurity, and food deprivation. In Chaukune, 62.58% of households engaged in Mate/matiya tenancy are Dalit, and 67.32% of Dalit households depend on such insecure land arrangements, which are orally based and subject to landowner withdrawal (CSRC Land and Agrarian Status Study 2026). In Raksirang, the Chepang community largely depends on shifting cultivation and forest-based livelihoods, with 6,575.72 hectares of forest land managed under community forestry by 3,954 households, yet access to private cultivable land remains extremely limited (Raksirang Rural Municipality, 2021). In Sanni Triveni, similar patterns of landlessness and informal tenancy persist among Dalit and indigenous households, compounded by weak land registration and limited access to state land redistribution programs.

Agricultural production in all three municipalities is predominantly subsistence-based, climate-sensitive, and insufficient for year-round household food security. In Chaukune, only 19.15% of households can sustain themselves for 10–12 months from their own production, while 76.65% cannot meet annual food requirements, and 18.81% cannot even sustain for three months (Chaukune Rural Municipality Profile, 2021). In Raksirang, 50.6% of households can sustain food needs for only 3–6 months, while no households were found producing surplus for market sale, reflecting extremely low agricultural productivity (Raksirang Rural Municipality Survey, 2018). In Sanni Triveni, steep terrain, limited irrigation, and low mechanization further reduce productivity, making households heavily dependent on seasonal migration and wage labor.

3.8 LAND ISSUES

The comparative overview of land and agrarian issues across Chaukune, Raksirang, and Sanni Triveni Rural Municipalities, as shown in table 6, highlights a shared pattern of structural land insecurity, although the forms and intensity vary by local context. Across all three municipalities, landlessness, informal tenancy arrangements, and limited access to productive agricultural land remain persistent challenges.

Table 6: Land Issues in Three RMs

Local Government (Palika)	Major Land and Agrarian Issues	Brief Description of Issues
Chaukune Rural Municipality	Landlessness; Informal Settlers; Sharecropping; Smallholder Farming; Informal Land Relations	Large number of informal settlers and landless households relying on sharecropping and cultivation of Unmanaged or public land for subsistence farming
Raksirang Rural Municipality	Landlessness; Informal Settlers; Sharecropping; Smallholder Farming; Shifting Cultivation; Informal Use of Ailani and Government Land	High dependency on informal and forest-based land use, prevalence of shifting cultivation among Indigenous communities, insecure tenure, and limited access to productive agricultural land
Sanni Triveni Rural Municipality	Landlessness; Smallholder Farming; Informal Land Relations; Seasonal Farming Constraints	Small and fragmented landholdings, limited irrigation and agricultural productivity, and dependency on informal access to land and seasonal farming practices

Source: Land and Agrarian Status Study Report 2026

In Chaukune, the prevalence of informal settlers and reliance on sharecropping on unmanaged or public land reflects a fragile agrarian structure dominated by smallholder subsistence farming. Raksirang presents a more complex scenario, where landlessness intersects with shifting cultivation practices among Indigenous communities and continued dependence on forest-based and informal land use systems such as Ailani land. [12] This indicates both ecological adaptation and tenure insecurity, where access to land is shaped more by customary use than formal ownership. In Sanni Triveni, the issue is primarily characterized by fragmented landholdings, seasonal farming constraints, and weak irrigation infrastructure, resulting in low productivity and continued dependence on informal access to land resources.

Despite contextual differences, a common underlying trend across all three municipalities is the gradual erosion of traditional agrarian systems and the growing shift toward market-oriented agriculture, which often marginalizes landless and smallholder farmers. This transition has intensified tenure insecurity and contributed to the displacement of peasants from cultivable land. Field interviews and focus group discussions further reinforce this pattern, emphasizing that insecure land tenure and the loss of access to land for cultivation are among the most pressing livelihood concerns. Overall, the findings suggest that agrarian change in these municipalities is not merely a shift in farming practices but a deeper transformation in land relations, marked by increasing inequality and exclusion in access to land resources.

[12] Ailani land (also spelled Ailani Jagga) is a term used in Nepal to refer to government-owned public land that has not been legally registered in the name of any individual or private organization.

3.9 POLICIES, REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES TO BE FORMULATED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Table 7. Policies, Acts, Regulations, and Guidelines to Be Formulated by Local Governments under the Exclusive Powers Granted by the Constitution (Unbuilding Report).

Article	Subjects Listed in the Constitutional Schedule of Powers	Sub-article	Detailed Elaboration of the Subjects Included in the
14	Land Ownership Certificate Distribution	14.1	Management of local land ownership certificate (title deed)
		14.2	Land records based on land classification.
		14.3	Parcel subdivision of local land and preparation and
		14.4	Coordination and facilitation in land acquisition,
		14.5	Resolution of land disputes.
		14.6	Maintenance of records relating to land containing

Source: Federalism Implementation and Administrative Restructuring Steering Committee Report - dated 2073 3/05/21 (6 September 2016 (A.D.))

The Constitution grants local governments exclusive authority over land ownership certificate distribution, including the management of land ownership records, maintenance of land records based on land classification, parcel subdivision and cadastral record management, coordination of land acquisition and compensation for public purposes, resolution of land disputes, and maintenance of records relating to heritage sites, forests, wetlands, and riparian areas. To effectively exercise these constitutional powers, local governments are expected to formulate appropriate policies, Acts, regulations, and implementation guidelines. However, a review of the legal instruments adopted by Chaukune Rural Municipality, Raksirang Rural Municipality, and Sanni Triveni Rural Municipality reveals that none of the three municipalities has enacted a dedicated Act, regulation, or guideline specifically addressing land ownership certificate distribution or its related constitutional functions. Although Chaukune Rural Municipality formulated use plan, land classification, it is not approved, Raksirang Rural Municipality has enacted the Agricultural Enterprise Promotion Act, 2017 (2074 B.S.) and Sanni Triveni Rural Municipality has adopted the Standards for Agriculture and Livestock Pocket Development, these legal instruments focus on agricultural development rather than land administration.

4. LAND AND AGRARIAN SITUATION DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Insecure Land Tenure

A. Disposition of Chepang/Indigenous people

Evidence from Raksirang Rural Municipality (Chepang community FGD) shows a long-term process of land dispossession driven by distress sales, environmental shocks, and broker-mediated transactions. Participants reported that during the 2005–2009 period (2061–2065 B.S.), land was systematically transferred to external actors through informal campaigns (means not registered groups local and district level land broker groups continuously work on this) and intermediaries. A commonly cited local expression, “the land goes to you, the money also goes to you, only the ownership certificate remains with me”, reflects symbolic retention of ownership while actual control shifted away. During a targeted group discussion in Raksirang, a local participant said, “You get the land and the money; I only get the land ownership certificate.” The campaign ran from 2061 to 2075 B.S. (2004–2018), during which much of the Chepang community’s land ended up in the hands of outsiders. The Chepang people were forced to sell their land due to landslides and the resulting hardships. Further, disasters such as floods and landslides in 2002–2003 A.D. (2059 B.S.) intensified vulnerability, forcing Chepang households to sell land at very low prices due to livelihood crises and lack of institutional protection. This aligns with findings that marginal landholders often prioritized immediate cash needs over long-term land security. (FGD, Ward 7).

According to representatives of the rural municipality, land transactions in the area are primarily driven by three groups: first, individuals using land as collateral to obtain loans from banks and cooperatives; second, families seeking to secure ownership while managing legal or social complications within households; and third, businesspersons and commercial agricultural entrepreneurs. During interviews, one participant noted that land previously sold for NPR 55,000 in 2009-2010 had later been repurchased for approximately NPR 1.2 million, reflecting increasing demand for agricultural and commercial farming land.

Many community members were unaware of the eligibility criteria for completing the forms of the Land Issues Resolving Commission or the appropriate offices where the forms should be submitted. Among the Chepang community, shifting cultivation (Khoriya) has traditionally been the primary agricultural system; however, most households lack secure land tenure and formal land ownership certificates. While some households possess legal ownership certificates for residential land and small agricultural plots, they do not hold formal rights over Khoriya land, which has been cultivated for generations. Consequently, a large number of community members were unable to complete or submit the Commission’s forms. Participants reported that although Chepang households have been cultivating land for more than five decades and across generations, many still do not possess formal land certificates.

Participants also recalled that during the Panchayat period, King Mahendra had intended to provide land to Chepang families who were living in caves and experiencing severe marginalization. However, the land was reportedly registered in the name of the then District Development Committee (DDC) rather than directly under Chepang ownership, due to concerns that it might later be sold. According to participants, land was allocated in two locations: approximately 16 ropani in Darang and Mirang, and around 150 ropani in Gattekhola in total 166 ropani.[13]

[13] 1 Ropani is equal to exactly 0.05087 Hectares, or conversely, 1 Hectare $\approx$ 19.65 Ropani

B. Khoriya Farming

The Chepang community's historical relationship with khoriya (shifting cultivation) reflects both an adaptive livelihood strategy and the structural marginalization they have faced within Nepal's agrarian system. Traditionally, Khoriya allowed Chepang households to use forested hillsides for rotational farming, supporting subsistence in ecologically fragile and marginal lands where permanent agriculture was difficult.

Shifting cultivation remains a central agricultural practice for the Chepang community, yet many households still lack formal land ownership certificates. Community members expressed that if the Forest Office restricts or prohibits shifting cultivation, the survival and livelihoods of Chepang people would be seriously threatened. In Raksirang, many Chepang households continue practicing khoriya without formal tenure security, despite cultivating the same plots for more than 50 years across generations.

During focus group discussions, ("Without khoriya, the Chepang cannot farm. Without khoriya, the Chepang cannot sustain their livelihoods. Without khoriya, the Chepang cannot continue living in their villages") Chepang participants emphasized that they, along with other Chepang communities across the municipality, do not possess secure property rights. The primary concern is survival through the use of unused forest and barren lands, alongside the urgent need to secure tenure rights over khoriya land. They further stressed that without khoriya, sustaining their traditional livelihood would be extremely difficult.

C. Mate Farming - Insecure tenure and farming (Chaukune and Sanni-Triveni)

Mate farming is the main agricultural system for landless groups in these two municipalities, Chaukune and Sanni Triveni, but it is based on verbal agreements. Landowners often reclaim land after short cycles, even after tenants invest in soil fertility and inputs. Tenants bear production risks without tenure security.

Case Study 1: Mate in Sanni Treveni Rural Municipality

A Life Dependent on Mate Farming

Hangse Sunar (71), from Ward No. 6 of Sanni Triveni Rural Municipality, is a farmer. He has a family of 13 members and lives in a large household. He owns only a small amount of land. Since his own land is not enough to feed his family, he has been cultivating land leased under the local mate system and making a living from it for the past 40 years. He has paid NPR 200,000 for the mate land around 1.5 ropani x.

Hangse says, “I struggled a lot to support my family. I spent 30 years in India working as a laborer. The money I earned there through daily wage work was used to educate my son. Later, I bought mate land and started farming.”

He adds, “Our family has never owned much land, even since my grandfather’s time. My father spent most of his life working as a plowman on other people’s farms. Through that hardship, he raised and supported us. After my father passed away, it became difficult to provide for the family, so I went to India for labor work.”

He had a small piece of land of his own, but it was swept away by a landslide. The mate land he acquired for NPR 200,000 produces enough food for only about three to four months of the year. For the rest of the time, he survives through wage labor and with the financial support of his sons. One of his sons has now secured a job. Hangse says that since his son started earning, some of the burden and hardship of working as a laborer has eased.

Hangse explains, “Farming on mate land is not easy. It is difficult to find land. Even if land is available, the owners demand a lot of money. While you are cultivating it, if someone else offers a higher payment, the landowner may give the land to them instead. There is a lot of risk. The harvest is often lower than expected, and irrigation is also a major problem. This is something we do out of necessity, not choice.”

For Dalits and landless people, mate farming is the main form of agriculture. Since the land is not in our own name, there is no alternative except mate farming. Even then, when the landlord asks for the land back after receiving payment, we must leave it.

“What can we do with the seeds when we have no land to plant them on? What is the use of cultivating land on a sharecropping basis when we are not allowed to cultivate it the following year? We go to India, earn NPR 40,000–60,000, and return home to survive.”

People migrate to India, earn around NPR 50,000–60,000, and then engage in Mate (a kind of specific tenure system in western Nepal) farming. To purchase land, they would need to bring back NPR 500,000–700,000. If those who migrated to India fall sick, the Dalit families back home face hunger.

Before leaving, they often borrow NPR 5,000 in debt, and after six months they are required to repay INR 5,000, which places them under heavy financial burden.”

In focus group discussion, participants shared that the forest authorities are more powerful than the Government of Nepal. We are Nepali, and this is also our ancestral land.

“Here, the forest authorities are more powerful than the Government of Nepal. We are Nepali, and our ancestors have lived here for generations. For Dalit and landless families, sharecropping is the main means of cultivation. Since the land is not registered in our names, we have no alternative but to cultivate through sharecropping. Even then, we have to leave the land as soon as the landlord demands it. Those who do not own land cannot even afford medical treatment when they fall sick. No one is willing to lend them money. People may lend money for going to India for work, but if you need a loan for medical treatment, you need to have land as collateral.”

Because we do not own land, we cannot even afford medical treatment when someone becomes ill. Nobody trusts us enough to provide loans. People can get loans if they are going to India for work, but if we need a loan for medical treatment, land ownership is required as collateral.

People say that we should return to where we originally came from, but there is nothing left in the hills, so how can we go back? If someone buys even a small piece of land, they are labeled as hukumbasi (illegal settler/squatter). Political party representatives say one thing, but in practice they behave differently.

D. Land Access for Dalits and Indigenous People

Sanni Tribeni: “Our sources of income and livelihood depend on others. We either have to work for a landowner, a trader, or a contractor, or migrate to India for work. My grandfather had some land, but by the time it was passed down to us grandchildren, each of us was left with only four or six aana. The land was divided among the brothers. When the land survey was conducted, the upper castes and landlords surveyed and registered the better-quality land in their own names. The dry, less productive land, which was difficult to cultivate, was not surveyed or registered in the names of Dalit families. Even what was left was only in very small plots. We go to India, earn NPR 50,000–60,000, and then return to cultivate sharecropped land. To buy even a small piece of land, we would need to bring back NPR 500,000–600,000 from India. When Dalit workers who have gone to India fall sick, their families back home are left struggling even to eat. If someone borrows NPR 5,000 before leaving, they have to repay it as INR 5,000 after six months.”

During the focus group discussions in Sanni Triveni, Dalit participants reported that during the cadastral land survey process, fertile and productive agricultural land was largely registered under the ownership of upper-caste groups and local landlords. In contrast, dry and less productive land, which is difficult to cultivate and yields comparatively low agricultural output, was either not registered in the names of Dalit households or allocated only in small and fragmented plots. This reflects longstanding structural inequalities in land distribution and access to productive resources.

Similarly, in Raksirang, the Chepang and Tamang communities predominantly rely on dry upland farming areas (bari). In contrast, Brahmin/Chhetri and Newar households generally have greater access to irrigated lowland fields (khet), which are comparatively more productive and economically valuable. Participants in Sanni Triveni further reported significant land fragmentation across generations, with ancestral landholdings being reduced to as little as 4–6 aana per household. The absence of formal land ownership has also severely constrained access to institutional credit, healthcare services, and emergency financial support, as banks and other financial institutions require land certificates as collateral. Participants explicitly stated that “without land, no one trusts us for loans or treatment,” highlighting the close relationship between land ownership, financial security, and social citizenship.

“They tell us, ‘You should go back to where you came from.’ But there is nothing left for us in the hills, how can we go back? If we manage to buy even a small piece of land, we are called ‘Hukumbasi’. Political party leaders say one thing, but their actions are completely different.”

In Chaukune, participants reported a case involving approximately 383 ropani of land that had been mortgaged and subsequently auctioned by banks following loan default, despite the land having been cultivated for many years by 16 Dalit households who continue to remain landless. Participants further noted that land is increasingly being used as collateral for formal bank loans, often resulting in dispossession and auction in cases of repayment failure. In addition, land brokers, construction companies, sand extraction industries, and hydropower-related projects were identified as major drivers of land displacement and insecurity in the study areas. Respondents also reported that several displaced households are currently residing in community forest areas, including Gadhe Gadhe and areas associated with companies, following landslides and excavation activities linked to infrastructure and extractive projects.

Case Study 2: Insecure Land Tenure

Insecure Settlement of a Landless Dalit Woman

Dhanasara Nepali lives in Schooldanda Tole, Ward No. 6 of Chaukune Rural Municipality. Her family survives mainly through wage labor. She says she sometimes goes to India for work and other times searches for jobs within Nepal.

She explains that she owns only one house in her name, but even that has no official land ownership certificate. The land where they are currently living falls within the premises of Jeevan Jyoti Secondary School. The school administration is now trying to evict them from the area.

Dhanasara says they have no alternative place to go. “We have been living here for 55 years. There are other landless families like mine here as well. All of us are now feeling pressure to leave,” she says. She is a single woman with two sons and one daughter. Her children are not yet financially independent, which adds to her worries.

Dhanasara and other villagers have submitted an application for land registration and management through the ward office to the Land Commission, but they have not received any assistance so far. She says, “My husband also passed away as a landless person. I constantly worry that I may end up in the same condition. That fear keeps troubling me.”

4.2 Land, Food Security and Migration

The findings from Ward No. 7 of Raksirang Rural Municipality reveal a strong interrelationship between insecure land tenure, subsistence-based agriculture, chronic poverty, and food insecurity. The predominance of informal land-use practices such as sharecropping (adhiya farming), mortgaging land, and cultivating leased land indicates that a significant proportion of households lack secure ownership and long-term control over productive land resources.

For the Chepang community in particular, dependence on khoriya cultivation on marginal upland slopes reflects both historical exclusion from fertile agricultural land and limited access to irrigated and productive farming areas. Such farming systems are highly vulnerable to low productivity, environmental degradation, and climate-related risks, thereby constraining household livelihood security and agricultural sustainability.

In Chaulkune Farmers in this area used to cultivate indigenous rice varieties such as Koilo Jado, Makar Jado, Basmati Jhili, Gude Jado, Tiuri Jado, and Kalanathe around 50 years ago. However, these traditional seed varieties are no longer available today. In the past, farmers used to preserve and store local seeds in their homes throughout the year. Households also practiced extensive livestock rearing, and it was common for a single family to own as many as 20–22 cows and buffaloes.

Case Study 3 - Commercial farming

A Women Commercial Farmer

My name is Pabitra Sapkota. I live in Ward No. 8 of Chaulkune Rural Municipality. I am a farmer and have been engaged in agriculture for a long time. I grow and sell vegetables, mangoes, bananas, and guavas, which provide me with income.

I own land and have developed agriculture in a commercial way. Farming has become my profession and main occupation. I believe we need to try new approaches in agriculture. After learning about dragon fruit farming, I started cultivating it. The market price is also good. It has been four years since I began this cultivation, and I have developed it as a farm enterprise.

After registering my farm, I received a grant of NPR 300,000 from the Agriculture Office and NPR 75,000 from Chaulkune Rural Municipality Office. I am growing dragon fruit on 6 ropani of land. Last year, I earned NPR 250,000, and I expect to earn even more this year, possibly around NPR 500,000. In this way, by properly utilizing my land and doing farming as a business in my village, I have been able to earn a good income. This has allowed me to avoid wage labor and the need to go abroad for work.

In addition, farmers cultivated lentils, peas, chickpeas, and various leafy vegetables for household consumption. Vegetables such as radish, bitter gourd, snake gourd, sponge gourd, bottle gourd, pumpkin, long beans, and flat beans were commonly grown and consumed as part of the local diet. All of these crops were cultivated using indigenous seed varieties. However, these local seeds have now largely disappeared from the villages.

Agricultural practices have changed significantly in recent years. The tradition of rearing cattle at the household level has declined, and fewer people now keep oxen for ploughing farmland. Instead, the use of tractors for cultivation has been increasing. Reciprocal labor-sharing practices (arma-parma) have also gradually been replaced by daily wage labor systems.

In agricultural production, hybrid seeds have become dominant, while crop yields now heavily depend on the extensive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Without these chemical inputs, production is either very low or insufficient.

The increasing use of pesticides has contributed to the disappearance of indigenous seed varieties and has also reduced the practice of multi-cropping systems.

In the past, Dalits were often told that they did not need land because they were considered occupational caste groups engaged in traditional professions such as making agricultural tools, tailoring clothes, producing pottery, and other artisanal work. Since they were not regarded as agricultural farmers, they were excluded from land ownership and access to agricultural land. Furthermore, many Dalit households currently residing in this municipality migrated from other places, which has increased their concerns regarding secure settlement and residential stability.

Dalit communities were historically denied opportunities to engage in income-generating activities that could provide direct economic benefits. As a result, they were unable to accumulate wealth or purchase land, and even today their capacity to buy land remains extremely limited. Although many Dalits migrate to India and other places for wage labor, the income earned is often insufficient even to meet basic household expenses. Consequently, the possibility of purchasing and securing land ownership remains very low among Dalit households in this municipality.

4.3 Comparative Table: Land and Agrarian Status of Municipalities

This table has been developed based on class analysis conducted with partner staff, as well as field-based KIIs and FGDs. Using the selected indicators, the table was prepared through a critical analysis of the field data.

Table 7: Status of Land and Agrarian in Three RMs

Analytical Dimension	Chaukune (Surkhet)	Raksirang (Makwanpur)	Sanni Triveni (Kalikot)
Land Structure & Ownership Pattern	Highly fragmented landholdings; (20% are landless), 80% dalits have negligence land - 50% are squatters) among dominance of smallholders and land-poor households. Over 70% households food insecure, indicating weak land ownership base. Informal tenancy (mate/matiya) widely practiced, especially among Dalits and landless, reflecting insecure and oral land relations.	Cultivable land limited and ecologically fragile (Chure region). Around 8,356 ha cultivable land but uneven access. Small fragmented holdings dominate; strong dependence on forest and community land rather than secure private ownership of Chepang people.	Extremely constrained arable land due to steep terrain. High prevalence of landlessness and marginal holdings of Dalits.

Analytical Dimension	Chaukune (Surkhet)	Raksirang (Makwanpur)	Sanni Triveni (Kalikot)
Tenure Security & Land Governance	The land tenure system is predominantly informal, with limited legal documentation or tenure security, allowing landowners to reclaim land arbitrarily. The traditional Mate farming system remains dominant, and Dalit and landless households are disproportionately engaged in this form of tenancy arrangement.	Community forestry expansion improves resource access but not agricultural land rights. Land governance weakly institutionalized especially in shifting agriculture; tenure insecurity persists among indigenous groups, especially Chepang.	Informal tenancy systems, particularly the Mate system, remain dominant, with Dalits constituting the majority of Mate farmers. As a result, many Dalit households are highly dependent on landlords' land for agricultural production and livelihoods.
Agricultural Production System	Subsistence farming (rice, maize, millet, pulses). 76.65% households cannot meet annual food needs. Increasing dependence on hybrid seeds and chemical inputs, reducing sustainability.	Mixed and shifting cultivation system influenced by Chure ecology. 50.6% households food secure only 3–6 months. No surplus production.	Subsistence-oriented agriculture with very low productivity. Limited irrigation and mechanization. Strong dependence on seasonal migration income
Food Security Situation	Severe food insecurity: only 19.15% households food secure for 10–12 months; 4.20% have surplus production. Majority dependent on external income sources.	Chronic poverty: 86.46% population below poverty line. Seasonal food insecurity widespread; no surplus agricultural production.	High and persistent food insecurity. Majority households unable to meet year-round food needs; reliance on wage labor and remittances from India.
Dalits & Indigenous Peoples' Condition	Dalits heavily dependent on insecure mate tenancy (62.58% participation; 67.32% of Dalit households). High exposure to land loss and exploitation due to urbanisation.	Chepang and Tamang communities rely on shifting cultivation and forest resources. Limited access to private land; strong structural exclusion despite community forestry.	Dalit and landless households face extreme landlessness and weak institutional recognition. Limited access to land registration and state redistribution programs.

Analytical Dimension	Chaukune (Surkhet)	Raksirang (Makwanpur)	Sanni Triveni (Kalikot)
Agrarian Transition & Change	Shift from traditional seeds to hybrid agriculture; declining livestock and communal labor systems. Increasing wage labor and migration.	Transition from forest-based subsistence to mixed livelihood systems; increasing ecological pressure on Chure landscape.	Slow agrarian transformation due to remoteness; migration-driven livelihood shift rather than agricultural improvement.
Structural Interpretation (Critical Insight)	Reflects semi-feudal land relations with market pressure and tenure insecurity reinforcing inequality.	Illustrates ecological marginalization where environmental fragility shapes agrarian stagnation.	Shows extreme peripheral agrarian stagnation with weak state presence and chronic underdevelopment.

Source: Created Table for Land and Agrarian Status Study Report 2026

Across all three municipalities, land and agrarian systems are shaped by structural inequality, ecological constraints, and weak land governance, producing persistent food insecurity and rural poverty. Chaukune reflects tenancy-based agrarian insecurity, Raksirang reflects ecological fragility combined with indigenous marginalization, and Sanni Triveni reflects extreme geographic and institutional marginality. Despite differences, all three demonstrate a common pattern of failed food security transformation, where land reform policies remain largely symbolic and disconnected from local realities.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The land and agrarian status study conducted in Chaukune Rural Municipality (Surkhet), Raksirang Rural Municipality (Makwanpur), and Sanni-Triveni Rural Municipality (Kalikot) reveals that land and agrarian relations in rural Nepal are shaped by deeply rooted structural inequality (class-based agriculture/farming), insecure tenure systems (formal and informal tenancy), caste- and ethnicity-based exclusion (caste-based occupations), ecological marginalization, and weak governance. The findings from field evidence strongly correspond with broader national agrarian trends, demonstrating that Nepal's rural land crisis is both historically produced and institutionally reproduced (historically extractive land tenure system, like *jamindari*, *jagir*, *birta*, *rakam* or *guthi*) .

At the national level, agriculture contributes approximately 24–25% of Nepal's GDP and continues to provide livelihoods for nearly 60% of the population. However, national agricultural census data reveal that Nepal's agrarian structure is increasingly characterized by fragmented and unequal landholdings. According to the National Sample Census of Agriculture 2021/22, the average size of agricultural parcels declined from 0.21 hectares in 2011/12 to 0.19 hectares in 2021/22, while the total agricultural land area also decreased significantly over the past decade. The census further shows that the majority of farmers cultivate multiple small and scattered plots, with the average number of parcels per holding remaining around 2.8 nationwide. A significant proportion of rural households operate on small and marginal holdings, while landlessness and near-landlessness are disproportionately concentrated among Dalits and indigenous peoples. National poverty data further indicate that provinces such as Karnali and many indigenous regions continue to experience the highest rates of multidimensional poverty and food insecurity.

In Raksirang Rural Municipality, the findings demonstrate severe ecological fragility, weak tenure security, and acute food insecurity among the Chepang community, with clear gendered implications in access to land and productive resources. Municipal data indicate that approximately 8,356 hectares of land are cultivable; however, much of this area lies within the highly vulnerable Chure landscape (Siwalik hill), where agricultural productivity is low, rainfall-dependent, and increasingly climate-sensitive. Poverty remains extremely high, with around 86.46% of the population living below the poverty line, reflecting deep structural deprivation. Food insecurity is chronic, as only 50.6% of households are able to secure food for 3–6 months annually, while almost no households produce a reliable agricultural surplus, underscoring the subsistence and risk-prone nature of local livelihoods. Field evidence further shows that Chepang households remain heavily dependent on Khoriya (shifting cultivation) and forest-based livelihoods; however, most households continue to lack formal land ownership certificates despite cultivating the same Khoriya plots for generations, indicating persistent tenure insecurity.

FGD findings reveal that during 2005–2009, significant portions of Chepang land were transferred to outsiders through distress sales, broker-mediated transactions, and informal land deals, often under conditions of economic pressure and limited awareness of legal rights.

Environmental shocks, particularly the 2002–2003 floods and landslides, further intensified vulnerability, forcing households into distress land sales at very low prices and weakening long-term land security. Women within Chepang households face compounded disadvantages, as limited formal land ownership and customary control structures restrict their recognition as landholders, reducing their decision-making power over production and income use. Participants consistently emphasized that “without Khoriya, Chepang livelihoods cannot survive,” highlighting the central role of shifting cultivation in sustaining both household food security and cultural survival, while also reflecting the deep inseparability of land, gendered tenure insecurity, and chronic food vulnerability in the community.

In Chaukune Rural Municipality, the study reveals severe agrarian insecurity shaped by high landlessness, weak food security, gendered inequality in land ownership, and widespread dependence on informal tenancy arrangements such as the Mate and sharecropping system. Municipal data indicate that approximately 20% of households are landless, while around 76.65% are unable to meet their annual food needs through own agricultural production. Only 19.15% of households are food secure for 10–12 months, and a mere 4.20% produce any agricultural surplus, underscoring a structurally weak and subsistence-oriented agrarian economy. Within this context, women’s land ownership remains extremely limited, with most female-headed and married women lacking formal land certificates, thereby restricting their control over production decisions, access to credit, and claims over agricultural income.

Field data further show that approximately 62.58% of households are engaged in Mate/sharecropping arrangements, with participation among Dalit households rising to about 67.32%, highlighting the caste-based concentration of insecure tenancy relations. The mate system operates predominantly through oral agreements without legal documentation, allowing landowners to reclaim land at any time without compensation, even after tenants have invested labor, seeds, and inputs. This insecurity disproportionately affects women, who are often engaged as unpaid or secondary labor within tenant households while lacking formal recognition as cultivators or landholders. A significant case documented during fieldwork involved 383 ropani of land auctioned by banks following loan default, despite being cultivated for years by 16 Dalit households, illustrating how formal financial mechanisms intersect with informal tenancy to intensify dispossession. Overall, these dynamics demonstrate how weak land tenure security, gendered exclusion from land ownership, and expansion of informal tenancy systems collectively reinforce agrarian vulnerability in Chaukune.

The findings from Chaukune also reveal a rapid decline of traditional agrarian systems. Participants stated that indigenous rice varieties such as Koilo Jado, Makar Jado, Basmati Jhili, Gude Jado, Tiuri Jado, and Kalanathe widely cultivated around 50 years ago, have now nearly disappeared. Households previously owned 20–22 cattle and buffaloes, but livestock numbers have sharply declined due to changing agricultural systems and migration. Traditional reciprocal labor systems (arma–parma) have weakened significantly and have largely been replaced by daily wage labor and mechanized farming using tractors. Agriculture is now increasingly dependent on hybrid seeds, chemical fertilizers, and pesticides, reducing local seed sovereignty and ecological sustainability.

In Sanni-Triveni Rural Municipality, the findings highlight extreme land fragmentation, weak women's land ownership, and widespread dependence on Mate farming as a central but highly insecure tenancy arrangement shaping rural livelihoods. The municipality's steep and ecologically constrained terrain severely limits cultivable land availability, while historical land distribution patterns continue to systematically disadvantage Dalit households. Field participants reported that ancestral landholdings have fragmented over generations into extremely small parcels, in some cases as little as 4–6 aana per household, making subsistence agriculture increasingly unviable. Within this context, women's land ownership remains very limited, with most women, particularly from Dalit and other marginalized households, lacking land registered in their names, thereby restricting their control over production decisions, access to credit, and recognition as independent farmers in formal systems.

Field data further indicate that a significant proportion of land-poor and landless households depend on Mate farming, an informal sharecropping system that operates primarily through verbal agreements without legal documentation or tenure security. Under this system, tenants cultivate land by making advance payments such as NPR 40,000 to 50,000 for approximately 8 mana (around 2 ropani) of land but remain highly vulnerable to sudden contract termination and receive no legal protection for their investments in labor, seeds, and inputs. Participants explained that the arrangement generally results in an “equal investment–equal return” situation, where households can meet subsistence needs but rarely generate any surplus or meaningful economic benefit. Instead, Mate farming primarily ensures continued engagement in agriculture for food self-provisioning rather than income generation or accumulation.

Participants also reported that during historical cadastral surveys, fertile irrigated land was largely registered under upper-caste households and landlords, while Dalit families were assigned dry, fragmented, or low-productivity plots, or were excluded entirely from land registration. As a result, women's already limited land ownership is further weakened within these households, reinforcing their marginal position in agricultural decision-making and access to resources. This structural exclusion continues to deepen dependence on Mate farming, wage labor, and seasonal migration to India as key survival strategies among land-poor and marginalized households.

Across all three municipalities, the findings reveal that migration and indebtedness have become structural survival mechanisms rather than pathways to economic mobility. Nationally, remittances contribute more than one-fourth of Nepal's GDP, reflecting the country's increasing dependence on labor migration. However, field data show that seasonal migration to India generally generates only around NPR 50,000–60,000 per migration cycle, whereas purchasing 2–3 ropani land requires approximately NPR 500,000–700,000 or more, making land ownership economically unattainable for most marginalized households. Participants also described recurring cycles of debt associated with migration, healthcare expenses, and daily subsistence needs.

The study further demonstrates that land functions not only as an economic resource but also as a basis of social citizenship (rights and entitlements that allow individuals to fully participate in society and enjoy a basic standard of living), institutional recognition, and dignity. Across all field sites, participants repeatedly emphasized that without land ownership they cannot access loans, healthcare, or formal institutional support.

Statements such as “without land, nobody trusts us” illustrate how landlessness reproduces multidimensional exclusion extending beyond agriculture into broader social and political life.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that land inequality and agrarian distress in these municipalities are not isolated local problems but part of a broader national pattern of historical dispossession, unequal land distribution, insecure tenure systems, financialized land relations, ecological marginalization, and exclusionary governance structures.

5.2 Recommendations for Action and Priority

Based on the findings, the following issues require priority attention from government agencies, local governments, CSRC partners, and other relevant stakeholders.

1. Strengthening Land Tenure Rights for Khoriya Farmers, especially Chepang in Raksirang Rural Municipality

Khoriya cultivation remains central to the livelihoods, culture, and food security of the Chepang community in Raksirang. However, most Khoriya land is classified as forest land, leaving cultivators without formal ownership or tenure security. To address this issue, the following actions are recommended:

Action 1: Conduct a comprehensive data and mapping of Khoriya cultivators, including household-level data on land use, dependency, and tenure status.

Action 2: Facilitate dialogue among Chepang communities, local governments, and relevant government agencies to explore pathways for recognizing and securing land rights based on the evidence. CSRC and its partners should support this process through evidence-based advocacy and documentation.

2. Reforming the Mate Land Tenure System in Sanni Triveni and Chaukune

The Mate system remains a prevalent land tenure arrangement in Sanni Triveni and Chaukune, particularly among Dalit households. While it provides access to land, concerns exist regarding tenure insecurity and unequal benefit-sharing arrangements.

Action 1: Undertake a detailed study of the Mate system across all wards, documenting its prevalence, socio-economic impacts, benefits, and potential forms of exploitation.

Action 2: Engage local governments and community stakeholders in developing policy and programmatic responses that make the Mate system more equitable, transparent, and farmer-friendly.

3. Enhancing Land Tenure Security for Landless Dalits and Other Landless Households

Secure land tenure is essential for reducing poverty, promoting social inclusion, and strengthening livelihoods among landless populations.

Action 1: Regularize informal settlements on Ailani and other public lands through participatory mapping and tenure formalization processes.

Action 2: Support the implementation of constitutional provisions related to land rights, including clear legal definitions of “landless Dalit” and transparent mechanisms and timelines for land allocation.

Action 3: Ensure mandatory inclusion of Dalit households in all state-led land allocation and redistribution programs.

Action 4: Promote joint land ownership by ensuring that land allocated to beneficiary households is registered in the names of both spouses, thereby strengthening women's land rights.

Action 5: Establish Land Coordination Committees at municipal and ward levels to identify eligible households, facilitate land allocation processes, and monitor fairness and transparency.

Action 6 for Community Groups: Prepare context mapping with community and ward-wise reports on the land tenure/ownership status of landless Dalits, landless households, and abyabasthit (informal settler) households. The reports should identify their level of land insecurity, assess their livelihood conditions, and propose alternative solutions and recommendations for improving their land tenure situation.

4. Promoting Agroecology

Without secure land ownership, livelihood security and food security remain uncertain. Therefore, understanding the linkages between land tenure security, climate change, and rural livelihoods is essential for achieving sustainable food security.

Action 1: Implement integrated rural livelihood programs that combine secure land tenure, climate-resilient agricultural practices for long-term food security.

Action 2: Strengthen collaboration between CSRC partners and local governments to support community-based livelihood initiatives that directly link land rights interventions with sustainable agricultural production and food security.

5.3 At the End,

The evidence from Chaukune, Raksirang, and Sanni-Triveni, supported by municipal and national data, demonstrates that Nepal's agrarian crisis is fundamentally a crisis of unequal land distribution, insecure tenure, weak governance, and structural exclusion. Although agriculture remains the backbone of rural livelihoods nationally, marginalized groups such as Dalits and Chepang communities continue to survive through insecure and informal systems such as Khoriya cultivation and mate farming, while productive land ownership remains concentrated among dominant groups.

The findings clearly show that land reform policies and rural development programs have failed to address the structural realities of caste hierarchy, class inequality, Indigenous dispossession, ecological marginalization, and debt-driven land loss. Political commitments have largely remained rhetorical, and legal provisions have stayed on paper or have been implemented in extractive rather than inclusive ways. Instead, formal systems, including land administration, banking institutions, and forest governance, often reproduce insecurity and exclusion. At the same time, agrarian transitions characterized by migration, declining traditional farming systems, hybrid agriculture, and growing market dependency are occurring without adequate social protection or equitable redistribution.

ANNEX 1

Action plan

Action Plan for Enhancing Access to and Ownership of Land

1. Sahayogi Hat Haruko Samuha (SAHAS) Nepal

SN	Activities	Timeline	Target/Quantity	Location	Remarks
1	Promote collective cultivation of indigenous crops on privately owned abandoned/fallow land	June/July 2026)	At least 3 sites	Barekot Rural Municipality Wards 1–3	
2	Promote leasehold farming on available land	December 2026/January 2027	At least 5 sites	Barekot Rural Municipality Wards 1–3	
3	Identify vacant cultivable government land and coordinate with relevant authorities to improve farmers' access to land	May/June 2026	As identified within the project area	Within the project area	
4	Conduct discussion with the Rural Municipality on the concept and feasibility of establishing a Land Bank	May/June 2026	1 consultation meeting	Rural Municipality	
5	Coordinate with the Forest Office and Local Government to promote grass and fruit cultivation in degraded forest areas	December 2026/January 2027)	As feasible within identified areas	Within the project area	

2. Sahakarmi Samaj

SN	Activities	Target	Deadline
1	Conduct a discussion with field staff on issues related to land and community/national forests during the monthly meeting	23 staff	11th May, 2026
2	Facilitate regular discussions on land and forest issues within community groups.	71 groups	Regular process

SN	Activities	Target	Deadline
3	Conduct a discussion with field staff on issues related to land and community/national forests during the monthly meeting	23 staff	11th May, 2026
4	Facilitate regular discussions on land and forest issues within community groups.	71 groups	Regular process
5	Identify and list out the community forest and land to prepare action plans with groups	4 community landscape and 2 community managed land	May 3rd week
6	Coordinate and discuss with the rural municipality and forest office regarding the use and management of land and community forests	3 rural municipalities and 2 district office	15th June
7	Identify the land suitable for collective farming and discuss about its utilization with the concerned community group	2 community groups	4th week of June
8	Coordinate with concerned stakeholders regarding the deteriorating condition of community forests and hold discussions with community groups.	2 division forest office, 3 RM representative and concerned community forest representatives	July, 2026
9	Meetings with Community Groups (CGs), non-Dalit communities, and local government representatives regarding the use and conservation of national forests.	4 community landscape and 2 community managed land	August, 2026
10	Coordinate with the local government regarding the common use of the part of community forest using as mela (mela is the part of community forest using for personal use of cutting grass and firewood by the person who have power in the society) accessible to everyone, and discuss this within the Community groups	3 rural municipalities	September, 2026
11	Coordinate with the local government to strengthen the legal framework of the Maate system	3 rural municipalities	October, 2026
12	Coordination with local government to prepare working procedure for contract farming and utilization of barren land	3 rural municipalities	September, 2026

SN	Activities	Target	Deadline
11	Case story and success story collection on Maate system	4 case stories and 2 success stories	December, 2026

3. Nepal Little Flower Society

SN	Activities	Timeline	Target/Quantity	Location	Remarks
1	Coordination meetings with Ward Offices and Rural Municipalities on Khorhiya land issues	June, September and December 2026	3 times	Ward Offices and Rural Municipality	
2	Campaign on registration of vital events required for Khorhiya land ownership process	Sep 2026	1 time	Ward Offices	
3	Training on Khorhiya land ownership process and Indigenous Peoples' rights	Sep 2026	1 time	Field Office, Damrang	
4	Issue-based coordination meetings with NECHAS	June, September and December 2026	2 time	Manahari and Chitwan	

4. Caritas

SN	Activities	Timeline	Target/Quantity	Location	Remarks
1	Land allocation initiative as per LIRC	June-September	1 time	Working areas	as per government guideline and notice
2	Conduct discussion at Ward level on Land Use Policy	June-Dec, 2026	1 time		S M, ATA ,DPO
3	Identification of different categories of unused and underutilized land	June-Dec, 2026	1 time		S M, ATA ,DPO

SN	Activities	Timeline	Target/Quantity	Location	Remarks
4	Promote discussion among groups to increase access to abandoned and unused land	June-Dec, 2026	1 time		S M, ATA ,DPO

5. Dignity Initiative

SN	Activities	Timeline	Process	Location	Remarks
1	Knowledge sharing and orientation on land rights among SEED team members	By the end of May 2026	During the visit of the FA + DI team to Dolpa and while developing the SEED team's action plan, team members who participated in the Land Rights Training	SEED Office Hall, Tripurakot	
2	Additional orientation program to strengthen SEED team's understanding of land rights and resource access	29–30 June 2026	During the SEED team's quarterly review and planning meeting, a resource person from one of the relevant stakeholder institutions	SEED Office Hall, Tripurakot	
3	Conduct detailed discussions with all 49 Social Unity Groups to identify potential areas for improving access to resources	By July 2026	Detailed consultations will be conducted with members of all Social Unity Groups to identify possible locations for improving access to land and natural resources. discussions during regular group meeting days.	49 Social Unity Groups	Community Facilitators, Agro-ecological Agriculture Technicians, and SEED project staff will be mobilized as required. Priority will be given to conducting

SN	Activities	Timeline	Target/Quantity	Location	Remarks
4	Formation of sub-committees and coordination with relevant stakeholders for approvals and documentation	August–September 2026	Social Unity Groups will delegate responsibilities and form sub-committees.	Relevant government and community institutions	Sub-committees will coordinate with relevant authorities, including Ward Offices, Rural Municipalities, Community Forest User Groups, Buffer Zone Forest Committees, District Forest Offices, and National Park authorities, to obtain necessary recommendations, permissions, and required documents
5	Preparatory work at selected sites to improve access to resources	November–December 2026	Based on the locations selected by Social Unity Groups, preparatory activities will be carried out, including land boundary identification, digging pits for plantation, application of manure, removal of weeds, management of water sources, fencing, and other site preparation activities.	Selected sites identified for improving access to resources	These activities will be led by group members with support from SEED project staff.
6	Plantation of trees and plants at selected sites	January–February 2027	Tree and plant plantation activities will be conducted at selected sites	Selected sites identified for improving access to resources	Active participation of Social Unity Group members with technical and facilitation support from SEED project staff.

6. ODA Foundation
Program : Our Land, Our Rights

SN	Activities	Duration	Responsible Person
1	Team Meeting and Planning	May1-May 15	PC
2	Identification of major land-related issues in Mahabai by mobilizing Community Volunteers(CV) and Social Mobilizers(SM) through household survey	May 16- July 15	CV and SM
3	Coordinate with Local Government in identifying the barren land, uncultivated land	July 16- Aug 15	FP and PC
4	Data filtration by the core team	Aug 16-Aug 31	All team
5	Community Group Discussions, Knowledge sharing programs and campaign	Sept 1- Oct 30	SM
6	Coordination with the Local Partners(Cren Nepal ,Eco-Himal)	Nov 1- Nov 15	PC
7	Communication and Discussion with Jilla Napi Karyalaya and Jilla Ban Karyalaya	Nov 16- Nov 30	FP and PC
8	Team Meeting and Further Planning	Dec 1- Dec 4	PC
9	Coordination and Reconciliation of the community members with excess land and no land/less land	Dec 5- Dec 15	PC and SM
10	Community group farming start up	Dec 16- Dec 31	SM

7. Feminist Dalit Organisation (FEDO)

S.N.	Activity	Timeline	Location	Description / Implementation Approach
1	Knowledge sharing and orientation on land rights for Hamro Netritwa project team	May 5, 2026	Dalit Women Association Field Office, Chaukune, Surkhet	Team members who participated in the Land Rights Training Netritwa project team. The orientation will focus on how communities can improve their access to land after receiving land rights training.
2	Assessment of landless squatters and landless Dalit households' registration status and support for excluded households	8–20 June 2026	All 10 Wards of Chaukune Rural Municipality	Identify whether landless squatters and landless Dalit households have completed the required registration process in each ward. Households who have been excluded or missed from the registration process will be supported and encouraged to submit their land registration forms through the respective Ward Offices.
3	Community consultation to identify potential unused land and forest resources for improving access to land	May–June 2026	Within the working areas of 67 groups	Conduct discussions with communities to identify potential barren/fallow land, unused land, and forest areas that could support improved access to land and livelihood opportunities. Potential sites will be selected through discussions with community groups. Dalit group agricultural facilitators, nursery facilitators, volunteers, social mobilizers, agricultural technicians, and agriculture technical officers will be mobilized. Discussions will be prioritized during regular group meetings.

S.N.	Activity	Timeline	Location	Description / Implementation Approach
4	Coordination and dialogue with forest authorities, relevant stakeholders, and local government for access to land/resources	By July 2026	Relevant government offices and project areas	Conduct consultations with forest-related stakeholders, concerned individuals, and local government representatives. Community members will discuss land access issues and form committees/sub-committees to facilitate coordination and follow-up. Representatives from groups and Dalit Women Association project staff will engage with Forest Offices and Local Government institutions.
5	Formation of community committees and coordination with relevant institutions	Jul 2026	Concerned offices and project areas	Sub-committee members representing community groups, along with Dalit Women Association project staff, will visit relevant institutions, including Forest Offices and Local Government bodies, to conduct discussions, obtain necessary recommendations, and coordinate the process for improving access to resources.
6	Preparatory work at selected sites for improving access to resources	August–September 2026	Selected locations identified by community groups	Carry out preparatory activities at selected sites, including land boundary identification, management of land and water resources, fencing, and other required arrangements. These activities will be implemented through the leadership of group members with participation and support from project staff.

S.N.	Activity	Timeline	Location	Description / Implementation Approach
7	Plantation of crops and trees at selected sites	October–November 2026	Selected locations identified for improving resource access	Conduct plantation of different crops, trees, and plants through the active participation of group members with support from project staff.
8	Interaction and discussion for development of local guidelines on Mate (land leasing/land use arrangement)	First week of November 2026	Chaukune Rural Municipality Ward Office Shared Hall	Organize an interaction among Mate (land provider and land user) representatives, Rural Municipality Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Land Section Chief, and other relevant stakeholders to discuss and develop a local procedure/guideline for implementing Mate practices.

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Checklist/Format Used for the Study

A. Interview (Individual)

I) Partners staff

1. Who are the landless people, and where do they reside?
2. How many communities are landless? Are they Dalits or from other castes?
3. How long have they been residing there?
4. What are their main sources of livelihood?
5. What types of land tenure exist in the area?
6. What is the situation regarding sharecropping and fallow land?
7. Who are the sharecroppers, and who is leaving land fallow?
8. Which form of land tenure is most common — sharecropping, informal tenancy, leasehold, or others?

II) Land Section focal person

1. Who are the landless people, and where do they reside?
2. How many communities are landless? Are they Dalits or from other castes?
3. How long have they been residing there?
4. Have all landless individuals, including landless Dalits, filled out the forms, or are some still left out?
5. What are the major challenges in identifying landless and squatter populations?
6. On what type of land are the landless people residing, and for how long? For example, forest land, Gaucharan, etc.
7. What types of land exist in the area, and who holds these different tenures?
8. Who is leaving land fallow, and who is providing land for sharecropping, lease, or tenancy?

III) Landless and Farmers

1. Introduction, caste, land category and community represented?
2. Who are the landless people, and where do they reside?
3. How many households are landless in your community or Ward? Are they Dalits or from other castes?
4. How long have you/they been residing there? what are their livelihood?
5. Have all landless individuals, including landless Dalits, filled out the forms in your community or Ward, or are some still left out?
6. What are the major challenges in identifying landless and squatter populations?
7. On what type of land are the landless people residing, and for how long? For example, forest land, Gaucharan, etc.
8. What types of land exist in the area, and who holds these different tenures?
9. Who is leaving land fallow, and who is providing land for sharecropping, lease, or tenancy?
10. Which form of land tenure is most common, sharecropping, informal tenancy, leasehold, or others?

IV) Ward Chairs

1. Who are the landless people, and where do they reside?
2. How many communities are landless in your Ward? Are they Dalits or from other castes?
3. How long have they been residing there?
4. Do you have data from the LIRC? Could you share the total numbers of different applications?

5. Have all landless individuals, including landless Dalits, filled out the forms in your Ward, or are some still left out?
6. What are the major challenges in identifying landless and squatter populations?
7. On what type of land are the landless people residing, and for how long? For example, forest land, Gaucharan, etc.
8. Do you have detailed land records of the Ward? If yes, could you please provide them?
9. What types of land exist in the area, and who holds these different tenures?

V) Chair/Vice-chair

1. What are the main land-related problems in this municipality, and what impacts have they caused?
2. What efforts have been made to address these issues? (e.g., surveys, law formulation, barren land use)
3. Which land problems can the municipality resolve on its own, and which cannot? What measures are being taken for issues beyond its capacity?
4. What needs to happen for the municipality to fully address land issues?
5. How many communities are landless? Are they Dalits or from other castes?
6. Who are the sharecroppers, and who is leaving land fallow?
7. How effective are land-related policies and laws? What improvements are needed?
8. What structural changes or initiatives exist or are needed to ensure equal access to land for women, youth, and landless people?

A.Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

(A) Structured FGDs

A.1 Discussion with Landless and Marginalized Groups

Participants:

Include 10-12 people from landless and marginalized communities, ensuring diversity in gender, age (elderly, youth, adolescents), disability, caste/ethnicity, occupation, small farmers, guthi (trust) or tenant farmers, sharecroppers, disaster-affected, and other minority groups facing injustice.

Key Questions:

1. How many households are there in this ward/community? Among them:
 - How many families produce enough food from their land to sell surplus?
 - How many families produce just enough for their own consumption?
 - How many families cannot produce enough even for their own consumption?
 - How many families are landless, tenant/sharecropping, or working on others' land?
2. What are the common practices around land leasing, sharecropping, or renting? What are the advantages and disadvantages of these practices?
3. What land-related challenges exist in your community? (e.g., landlessness, guthi, tenancy, informal settlements, barren land, etc.)
4. Which families are landless, and which families hold significant land?
5. How has land use changed in your community? What practices should continue, and which need reform?
6. For what purposes is land currently being used? (e.g., farming, housing, plotting, forests, barren land)
7. Are you affiliated with any local organizations or groups? If yes, what activities do they conduct, and how have these influenced your life?

8. What natural resources exist in your community (forests, rivers, ponds, etc.)? Who has access, and who benefits from them?
9. In your view, what is the current state of land justice or injustice in the community? What unfair practices or experiences occur, and how have people raised their voices on these issues?
10. Have any local government laws, rules, or procedures impacted your land rights positively or negatively?
11. What measures should be taken to improve land rights in the community?

A.2 FGDs with Women Farmers

Participants:

Include 10–12 women representing different classes, professions, castes, ages, and abilities (e.g., adolescent girls, young women, elderly women, women with disabilities, single women, farmer women, laborers, teachers, entrepreneurs, ward members, and landless women).

Key Questions:

1. Begin with women over 60: How was the community when you were younger? Consider housing, farming, education, health, children, and gender roles. What was good, and what were the challenges?
2. What are the main challenges women face today in household, community, or workplace? How are these being addressed, and what advocacy or voices have emerged?
3. Do you have citizenship certificates? Who has legal rights over household property, including land?
4. What is women's role in agriculture (farming, market management, production distribution)? How has this changed over time?
5. What programs or policies are needed to encourage women's land ownership?

A.3 FGD with Youth

Participants:

Include 10–12 young people (aged 16–35) from diverse social groups, caste/ethnic backgrounds, professions, and educational levels (including school dropouts, higher education students, and persons with disabilities).

Key Questions:

1. What opportunities and challenges exist for youth in your community? What are the root causes?
2. How do you view youth migration for foreign employment? Is it an opportunity or a necessity? How does it affect youth, families, and communities? How has it changed land use and agricultural practices?
3. How interested are youth in agriculture? Has this interest increased or decreased, and why?
4. How does lack of land ownership affect youth employment opportunities?
5. What is the status of barren land in your community? How can it be made productive?
6. What programs are needed to increase youth access to land and ownership?
7. What initiatives could increase youth participation in agriculture?

A. Community Level FGDs

B.1 FGD with landless or landless dalits

1. Introduction, caste, land category and community represented?
2. Who are the landless people, and where do they reside?
3. How many households are landless in your community or Ward? Are they Dalits or from other castes?
4. How long have you/they been residing there? what are their livelihood?
5. Have all landless individuals, including landless Dalits, filled out the forms in your community or Ward, or are some still left out?
6. What are the major challenges in identifying landless and squatter populations?
7. On what type of land are the landless people residing, and for how long? For example, forest land, Gaucharan, etc.
8. What types of land exist in the area, and who holds these different tenures?
9. Who is leaving land fallow, and who is providing land for sharecropping, lease, or tenancy?
10. Which form of land tenure is most common — sharecropping, informal tenancy, leasehold, or others?

B.2 Community level FGD with sharecroppers/smallholders/fallow

1. Introduction: caste, class, types of land cultivation, duration of lease or contract, and types of land.
2. What types of land exist in the area, and who holds these different forms of tenure?
3. Who is leaving land fallow, and who is providing land for sharecropping, leasing, or tenancy?
4. Who are the sharecroppers or tenants?
5. Which form of land tenure is most common — sharecropping, informal tenancy, leasehold, or others?
6. What is the current situation regarding sharecropping and fallow land?
7. What is the production-sharing ratio in sharecropping? Is it profitable or not?
8. What motivates people to engage in sharecropping?
9. What are the potential areas for improvement in sharecropping, leasing, or tenancy systems?
10. What kinds of support does the Municipality provide for sharecropping or farming?

B. Community Observation

Observe the field like structure/ communities - take note on the observation of community houses, use of land, informal interaction with community or community leaders etc.

Case Study / Individual Interviews

Person with land ownership: How has land ownership enabled progress?

Person without land ownership: What challenges have you faced due to lack of land?

Person who was landless but later acquired land: Compare experiences before and after land acquisition.

Land Fallow

