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BEYOND BEIJING COMMITTEE (BBC)

NGO Parallel Report 2024

on

*the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform
for Action: Beijing+30 National Review*



Publisher

Beyond Beijing Committee (BBC)

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First and foremost, we thank our esteemed partners: UN Women, Right Here Right Now (RHRN), Asian-Pacific Resource & Research Centre for Women (ARROW), Save the Children International, ActionAid International Nepal, IM Swedish Development Partner, and dZi Foundation. Your collaboration and commitment were crucial in ensuring the smooth execution of this event and in advancing the mission of gender equality and women's empowerment.

We were honoured by the presence of distinguished guests, including Hon'ble Minister Mr. Nawal Kishor Sah from the Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Welfare (MoWCSC), Hon'ble Minister Ms. Bidhya Bhattarai from the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST), Hon'ble Mr. Kiran Kumar Sah, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Women and Social Affairs, and Ms. Krishna Kumari Waiba, Chairperson of BBC your leadership, dedication and contribution reinforced the importance of our shared efforts to advocate for the rights of women and girls in Nepal.

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Special recognition goes to B+30 review Steering Committee, Editorial Team, Writers, Session's Chairs, Volunteer Coordinator, Volunteers and the entire BBC Network Members, whose dedication was key to organising the National Validation Workshop, Parallel Sessions, and in compiling comprehensive recommendations. Your hard work and commitment ensured the success of this event.

Finally, we thank the Master of Ceremony, Media Coordinator, Media Personnel, Note-Takers, Photographers, and Videographers who documented this event, helping to amplify its reach and impact.

As we move forward with the Kathmandu Declaration and the next steps to advance the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, we are inspired by the collective commitment of all involved. Together, we will continue to strive toward a future where gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are achieved at every level of society.

With sincere gratitude,

Beyond Beijing Committee (BBC)

Foreword



The Beyond Beijing Committee (BBC) stands at a pivotal moment in its journey to advance gender equality and women's human rights. Reflecting on nearly three decades of dedication to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), we celebrate significant progress while recognising the ongoing challenges. The "B+30 National Review" is a transformative milestone, encapsulating decades of advocacy, research, and amplifying the collective voices of women across Nepal. This event underscores the urgent need to scale up our efforts to realise the vision set forth at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

This report captures the invaluable contributions of experts and activists from all provinces of Nepal. Their diverse insights have not only enriched the review process but also ensured inclusivity and comprehensive representation. The scholarly papers submitted on the 12 critical areas identified in the BPfA—including Women and Poverty, Education and Training of Women, Women and Health, Violence Against Women, Women and Armed Conflict, Women and the Economy, Women in Power and Decision-Making, Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women, Human Rights of Women, Women and the Media, Women and the Environment, and The Girl Child—provide detailed feminist analyses, shaping a path for future actions. In addition, the report addresses two emerging critical issues: Women and Climate Change and Older Women, highlighting areas that demand focused attention to ensure sustained progress.

As we assess achievements and lessons learned, this report serves as both a powerful advocacy tool and a guiding document for advancing gender equality in Nepal. It elevates the voices of marginalised women, ensuring their experiences are acknowledged and their needs addressed. This work's effectiveness lies in its potential to shape policy formulation and implementation by placing feminist perspectives at the forefront of national planning and decision-making processes. Complementing this report, BBC has also released "The Kathmandu Declaration" as an advocacy tool reaffirming our commitment to addressing these challenges and envisioning a future where women and girls are free from poverty, violence, and discrimination.

The "Beijing +30: National Review Report" is more than a retrospective on progress; it is a blueprint for action. By bridging grassroots experiences with national and international advocacy, we aim to secure a future where no one is left behind. Let us continue building on the momentum generated by this review to ensure the full realisation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and other international commitments to gender equality.

Looking ahead to the 30th anniversary of the BPfA in 2025, this report not only reflects our collective achievements but also strengthens our resolve to pursue transformative change. Together, let us continue challenging the status quo, advocating for policy reforms, and working toward a Nepal where every woman and girl can live with dignity, equality, and freedom.

Finally, my whole-hearted thank to support honorable member of parliament and immediate Chairperson Ms. Sushila Shrestha, BBC, Executive Advisor and Former Chairperson Ms. Shanta Laxmi Shrestha, BBC, Advisor and Founder Ms. Anjana Shakya, BBC, Ms. Indira Thapa and Ms. Anju Shrestha, IM Sweden, Ms. Sunita Gurung, Save the Children, Ms. Sujita Mathema and Ms. Renu Shrestha, ActionAid, Mr. Rakesh Karn, dZi Foundation, Ms. Roshna Khadka, Mr. Rajendra Maharjan, RHRN, Ms. Sivananthi Senthe Thanenthiran, ARROW, Ms. Rachana Bhattarai, UN Women, Ms. Bharati Silwal Giri, Editor and Advisor for BBC, Vice Chairperson, BBC, Dr. Laxmi Tamang your hard work and invaluable contribution, Special Coordination Logistic Management Dr. Jagjit Kour, Treasurer, BBC, Ms. Shweta Karn, Ms. Elina Rai, Dr. Sharmila Shrestha and Entire BBC Provincial and Central Team, Designing support Mr. Shesharaj Gautam (Touch Creation), Printing support Bharat & Shikhar Shrestha, Kanchan Printing Press and Master of Ceremony, Media Coordinator, Media Personnel, Volunteer Coordinator, Note-Takers, Photographers, and Videographers who documented this event, helping to amplify its reach and impact.



Krishna Kumari Waiba

Chairperson

Beyond Beijing Committee (BBC)

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AHTB	:	Anti-Human Trafficking Bureau
AI	:	Amnesty International
BBC	:	Beyond Beijing Committee
BPfA	:	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
CBS	:	Central Bureau of Statistic
CEDAW	:	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFLG	:	Child Friendly Local Governance
CIEDP	:	Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons
COPOMIS	:	Cooperative and Poverty related Management Information System
CPA	:	Comprehensive Peace Accord
CPN-MC	:	Communist Party of Nepal–Maoist Centre (CPN-MC)
CPN–UML	:	Communist Party of Nepal–Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN–UML)
CRC	:	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	:	Civil Society Organisation
CSE	:	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
CSW	:	Commission on the Status of Women
DRCN	:	Democracy Resource Centre, Nepal
ECN	:	Election Commission Nepal
GEDSI	:	Gender Equality Disability and Social Inclusion
GE	:	Gender Equality
GESI	:	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GBV	:	Gender Based Violence
GoN	:	Government of Nepal
GPI	:	Gender Parity Index
GRB	:	Gender Responsive Budget
GRID	:	Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development
HTPs	:	Harmful Traditional Practices
HIV	:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICIMOD	:	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
ICRC	:	International Committee of the Red Cross
ILO	:	International Labour Organisation
LG	:	Local Government
MICS	:	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MIPAA	:	Madrid International Plan of Action on Aging

MoEST	:	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MOWCSC	:	Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens
MPI	:	Multidimensional Poverty Index
NAP	:	National Adaptation Plan
NAP II	:	National Action Plan II
NC	:	Nepali Congress (NC)
NDHS	:	Nepal Demographic and Health Survey
NDC	:	Nationally Determined Contribution
NHRC	:	National Human Right Commission
NLSS	:	National Living Standard Survey
NPC	:	National Planning Commission
NSA	:	National System of Accounting
NWC	:	National Women Commission
OAA	:	Old Age Allowance
OCMC	:	One-Stop Crisis Management Centres
OP	:	Older People
OW	:	Older Women
PLGSP	:	Provincial and Local Governance Support Programme
RPP	:	Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP)
RSP	:	Rastriya Swatantra Party
SCA	:	Senior Citizen Act
SDG	:	Sustainable Development Goal
SRHR	:	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
TRC	:	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UDHR	:	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	:	United Nations
UNDP	:	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	:	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	:	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	:	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSCR	:	United Nation Security Council Resolutions
UPR	:	Universal Periodic Review
VAWG	:	Violence against Women and Girls
WPS	:	Women Peace Security
WRO	:	Women Right Organisation

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Commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA)

Kathmandu Declaration

“Advocating For Gender-Responsive Pact for the Future!”

Adopted by the National Review of Beijing+30 organised by Beyond Beijing Committee

16 August 2024

Recalling the 12 critical areas of concern related to women's rights, equality, peace, and development addressed in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the historic United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995,

Acknowledging the Nepal Government's commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and its emphasis on gender mainstreaming since 1996, we recognize the progress made toward gender equality and stress the need to take further steps to ensure its full and accelerated implementation,

Welcoming the progressive provisions enshrined in the Constitution of Nepal and the progress made so far towards gender equality and women's empowerment,

Emphasising the need for the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Sustainable Development Goals, to achieve gender equality and mutually reinforce efforts towards the empowerment of girls and women,

Recognising the principle of “Women’s Rights are Human Rights” incorporated in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the UN Second World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna Austria in 1993,

Reflecting on the recommendations from provincial-level consultations and reviewing the achievements and challenges of the 30 years since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, we, the representatives of the women’s rights and human rights movements from all seven provinces, gathered at the National Women’s Conference organised by the national women’s network organisation led by women for women, Beyond Beijing Committee (BBC), with the slogan '**Advocating for a Gender-Responsive Pact for the Future,**' hereby adopt the 17-point The Kathmandu Declaration.

We call upon the Heads of State, Federal Government leaders, Provincial Governments, and Local Governments, as well as the United Nations federal system, Multinational



and bilateral organisations, international non-governmental organisations, non-governmental organisations, and civil society, including the private sector and academia to demonstrate their commitment to implementing the Kathmandu Declaration by advocating for a gender-responsive future.

1. Address the urgent need for institutionalising a gender-responsive governance system to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment as outlined in the National Gender Equality Policy 2020:
 - (i) Accelerate and embed gender mainstreaming across all levels of government,
 - (ii) Develop gender-sensitive indicators, and
 - (iii) Monitor and evaluate progress on gender equality annually.
2. Formulate a comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation in alignment with the definitions provided by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the recommendations from the CEDAW Committee to the Government of Nepal for ending all forms of discrimination against girls and women; amend the contradictory provisions in Article 11, Subsections 3, 5, and 7 of the Constitution to affirm women’s equal and fundamental human rights as citizens of Nepal; and take immediate action to establish women's rights to citizenship without compromise.
3. Make economic services accessible to enhance women’s economic independence by improving access to opportunities and skill development; ensure employment through implementing gender-responsive budgeting and strategic employment plans; tackle unpaid work burdens by fostering a supportive environment; and maximise impact by strengthening implementation through coordinated efforts and regular evaluations.
4. Invest in gender- and disability-friendly infrastructure in schools; enhance transportation services for girls in remote areas; address barriers related to harmful social and cultural practices through targeted awareness campaigns; enforce and monitor laws against child marriage rigorously; increase scholarships and vocational training for vulnerable girls; improve the quality of education by integrating gender-sensitive teaching methods, comprehensive sexuality education, and globally competitive curricula; and undertake substantial revisions to textbooks, optimise quality human resource management, and ensure effective implementation of these initiatives.
5. Ensure the strict and effective implementation of the Right to Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Act 2018, provision for the deployment of skilled



health personnel (midwives) in remote and rural areas to guarantee access to high-quality safe motherhood and reproductive health services, repeal legal provisions that criminalize abortion, ensure comprehensive sexuality education is effectively provided to reduce risky sexual and reproductive health behaviours among adolescents, intensify awareness-raising efforts, and create an environment that supports the exercise of constitutional rights related to safe motherhood and reproductive health, ultimately contributing to the development of a well-informed and healthy youth population.

6. Develop an integrated gender equality law to combat all forms of Discrimination and Violence Against Women, Girls, the Older Women, Dalits, Indigenous Peoples, Muslims, Persons with Disabilities, and Gender and Sexual Minorities; ensure the implementation of the National Civil Code to secure citizens' inherent rights and eradicate harmful traditional practices; enforce strict monitoring of legal implementation by civil society, ensure compliance with the law, and undertake effective punitive actions against human trafficking and smuggling while guaranteeing safe migration; localise the supplementary Palermo Protocol on preventing, suppressing, and punishing trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and amend the Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act, 2007, and the Foreign Employment Act, 2007, to align with the Palermo Protocol.
7. Give special attention to conflict-related sexual violence crimes in peacekeeping efforts in addressing the challenges faced by women affected by armed conflict; and ensure the effective implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and the Second National Action Plan for Resolution 1820.
8. Direct government and private sector attention to expand social security schemes, considering the informal sector's significant 43 percent contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), where most participants are women; adopt the purple economy to recognise women's unpaid labour and caregiving roles in maintaining a productive economy; and implement expansive monetary and financial policies to mitigate the negative impacts of economic downturns, inflation, unemployment, and COVID-19.
9. Amend the contradictory provisions in Articles 70, 84, and 176 of the Constitution to ensure proportional representation of women in elections, addressing the inclusive proportional participation outlined in Article 38, particularly in decision-making processes at all levels; formulate policies and strategic programmes to achieve 50:50 participation of women in political,



economic, and public life by 2030; and invest in all areas of empowerment, leadership development, and capacity building for girls and women, addressing the diversity among women.

10. Establish and operationalise strong, capable, empowered, and resource-equipped institutional mechanisms to ensure the advancement and progress of all women, addressing diversity and discrimination, and safeguarding women's human rights; strengthen existing institutional mechanisms such as the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens, the National Women Commission, and various commissions, including transitional justice mechanisms; ensure the fair distribution of budgets; eliminate patriarchal values and the structural discrimination they drive; and establish bodies or offices at all levels and sectors to overcome the current challenges between federal, provincial, and local levels.
11. Accelerate positive and effective actions to achieve substantive gender equality by 2030, including addressing citizenship, property rights, and proportional representation as guaranteed by the Constitution; protect the fundamental rights of marginalised women, particularly those affected by conflict and disasters; ensure the rights of these groups; and implement provisions for creating separate electoral constituencies for women.
12. Promote gender equality in the communication sector by eliminating harmful stereotypes and practices, taking proactive steps to remove gender bias, combating misogyny and sexism, holding media accountable by developing and implementing comprehensive communication guidelines, providing gender awareness training to create a mandatory gender-friendly media environment, ensuring proportional representation and promotion of women, increasing their presence in decision-making roles, strictly enforcing the Sexual Harassment Act in workplaces, establishing gender-friendly infrastructure in all media organisations, and formulating and enforcing laws against online gender-based violence to ensure a safe and inclusive environment for female journalists.
13. Invest in green jobs for women in the care sector, develop monitoring, evaluation, and data collection plans to assess the status of unpaid domestic labour, and empower women economically, ensure access to the REDD+ fund to reduce deforestation and degradation, formulate and implement the Wetlands Conservation Act to improve livelihoods and create jobs, address gender roles and violence in natural resource management by establishing gender-based violence prevention mechanisms with training, mainstream gender in climate



and disaster management, and implement gender-responsive budgeting in environmental sectors.

14. Establish local and provincial child rights committees to ensure the rights of girls, raise community awareness, engage parents and men in the fight against gender discrimination, ensure the availability and access to adolescent-friendly health services and gender-sensitive education, enhance teachers' capacities on gender issues, develop inclusive policies for marginalized and disabled girls, secure sufficient budgets for child mental health, expedite the passing of online safety laws, and improve technology access for girls in challenging and economically vulnerable communities to fulfil responsibilities.
15. Adopt a climate justice approach at all levels of government and among stakeholders to prevent the increasingly complex gendered impacts of climate change on women, indigenous communities, Dalits, and marginalised groups, arising not only from climate risks but also from existing unequal socio-economic conditions in society.
16. Recognize and evaluate the significant contributions of older women through both paid and unpaid work in every sector of family, community, society, and the economy at all levels of government, ensure their participation in decision-making processes by adhering to the constitutional principles of proportional and inclusive representation, and develop and implement senior women-responsive policies, plans, and programs to end the dual discrimination (based on gender and age) faced by elderly women.
17. Enact the Gender Equality Act, conduct a comprehensive survey that is objective, quantitative, descriptive, qualitative, and statistical to assess the achievements and progress of the Beijing Platform for Action, allocate budgets and develop action plans, and formulate and implement a renewed strategic plan to complete the remaining tasks set by the Platform for Action.



1. Introduction

The global review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) at the sixty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in March 2020, held in the context of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, culminated in the adoption of a Political Declaration. This declaration expressed concern that, despite 25 years of BPfA implementation, significant levels of inequality persist worldwide, compounded by multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, vulnerability and marginalisation. Acknowledging that progress has not slower than anticipated, with major gaps such as structural barriers, discriminatory practices, and the feminisation of poverty still prevalent, the declaration called for an accelerated implementation of the BPfA.

The political declaration adopted at the 64th session of the CSW, marking the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, emphasised the importance of women’s economic empowerment. It called for “enhancing women’s full access to and equal opportunities in the labour market and decent work, taking effective action against discrimination and abuse in the workplace, promoting equal pay for work of equal value, providing social security, supporting the transition from informal to formal work in all sectors, promoting women’s access to credit and entrepreneurship as well as financial inclusion and financial literacy for women and girls, and enhancing cooperation with all relevant stakeholders.”

The COVID-19 pandemic has reversed many of the hard-earned gains on gender equality, entrenching deeper gender disparities. What began as a health crisis swiftly evolved into a financial and humanitarian crisis of unprecedented scale. According to the IMF, the global economy was expected to contract by 8 percent, surpassing even the Great Depression of 1930 and the 2008 global financial crisis. On an individual level, people lost their jobs and livelihoods, exacerbating the economic downturn. In Nepal, the economic growth was projected to rise by only 0.6 percent in 2021, largely due to the severe impact on the tourism industry.

Women were disproportionately affected, particularly those working in the informal sector. Their unpaid household burden increased as lockdowns forced families to remain indoors, and domestic violence surged with no relief in sight. Many service providers were forced to shut down shelter homes and counselling services, lacking the capacity to address the dual crisis of gender-based violence and pandemic. Access to justice was similarly hindered, as courts deprioritised domestic violence cases-classifying them as individual criminal matters-and Judicial Committees at the local levels ceased operations.



This situation was further aggravated by law enforcement’s focus on enforcing lockdowns, leaving victims and survivors of violence with little to no recourse.

The 71st session of the Committee on the Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), held from 22 October to 9 November 2018, reviewed Nepal’s Sixth Periodic Country Report and expressed concern over the deep-rooted stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes that continue to discriminate against women. These discriminatory practices are embedded in the State party’s social, cultural, religious, economic, and political institutions and structures, including the media. The Committee has requested the government to provide information on specific measures being taken to eradicate stereotypes that perpetuate discrimination, such as son preference and restrictions on lactating mothers- up to two years- from seeking foreign employment. It also urged the government to outline steps taken to develop policies and programmes targeting both men and women, aimed at eliminating stereotypes related to traditional roles in the family, workplace and society at large.

Thirty years on, the 12 critical areas of concern from the BPfA remain a key reference point for measuring progress on gender equality. The Beijing+30 National Review, conducted by the Beyond Beijing Committee (BBC) identified two emerging issues– women and climate change, and older women– while reviewing the present status, key achievements, gaps, and challenges across all the BPfA 12 critical areas. The review also made recommendations for accelerating progress towards gender equality. The Beijing+30 National Review Report is structured around six thematic clusters, connecting the dots with CEDAW and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), mindful of the six years remaining to meet the 2030 Agenda deadline:

1. **Poverty Eradication, Social Protection and Public Services:** This cluster addresses BPfA critical areas of concern A: Women and Poverty (aligned with SDG 1- No Poverty; B. Education and Training of Women (SDG 4-Quality Education); C: Women and Health (SDG 3- Health and Well-Being); F: Women and the Economy (SDG 5- Gender Equality, and SDG 8- Decent Work and Inclusive Growth) and; L: The Girl Child (SDG 5- Gender Equality).
2. **Freedom from Violence, Abuse and Exploitation:** This integrates BPfA critical action area D: Violence against Women, in alignment with SDG 5- Gender Equality, and SDG 16-Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.
3. **Peaceful and Inclusive Societies:** Covering BPfA critical area of concern E: Women and Armed Conflict, this cluster aligns with SDG 16-Peace, Justice



and Strong Institutions, and includes emerging issues such as cybersecurity and climate security. It also covers I: Human Rights of Women, aligned with SDG 10- Reduced Inequalities.

4. **Participation, Accountability and Gender-Responsive Institutions:** This addresses BPfA critical areas of concern G: Women in Power and Decision-Making, and H: Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women, and corresponds with SDG 5- Gender Equality, SDG 16– Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, and SDG 17– Partnerships for the Goals.
5. **Gender and the Environment:** This cluster examines BPfA critical area of concern K: Women and the Environment, in alignment with environment related SDGs 11 through 15.
6. **Freedom of Expression, Equal Access to Information, and Participation of Women in Media:** This addresses BPfA critical areas of concern J: Women and the Media with SDG 5 – Gender Equality, and SDG 16– Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, particularly target 16.10, which promotes public access to information.

The Beijing+30 National Women’s Conference was held on 16 August 2024 to validate the Beijing+ 30 National Review. The conference unanimously passed a 17-point the Kathmandu Declaration.

2. Background

The BPfA, adopted in 1995, identified 12 critical areas of concern to tackle the key challenges faced by women globally and promote gender equality. These areas include Women's Poverty, Education and Training, Health, Violence, Armed Conflict, Economy, Decision-making, Institutional Mechanisms, Human Rights, Media, Environment, and The Girl Child. Over the last three decades, countries around the world, including Nepal, have made commitments to implementing policies and programmes addressing these areas and improve the status of women and girls. As Nepal marks the 30th anniversary of the BPfA, it becomes crucial to evaluate the nation’s progress, examine existing gaps, and propose strategies for the future.

This document compiles articles from women scholars and activists across Nepal, each focusing on the 12 critical areas, along with two emerging issues—Women and Climate Change, and Older and Women. Each section offers a detailed analysis of the current



landscape, spotlighting key national policies, social and economic dynamics, and their effects on women and marginalised communities.

The overview section highlights key indicators of progress on gender-specific target indicators aligned with CEDAW and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in relation to the 12 critical areas of concern in the BPfA. Each critical area of concern includes an Achievements section, which showcases advancements such as improved access to education, healthcare improvements, increased political representation for women, and legal reforms addressing gender-based violence. However, the Gaps section reveals areas where progress has lagged, including persistent economic inequality, underrepresentation of women in leadership roles, and challenges with the effective implementation of legal protections.

The Challenges section explores systemic barriers like entrenched patriarchy, limited resources, and external factors such as conflict and environmental crises. Emerging issues like climate change and the unique difficulties faced by older women further compound these challenges.

Finally, Recommendations section provide actionable steps for advancing gender equality, emphasising improved policy implementation, equitable resource distribution, stronger institutional frameworks, and the adoption intersectional approaches that account for the diverse experiences of women. This document aims to inform policymakers, stakeholders, and advocates about the current state of gender equality in Nepal, shaping strategies to close gaps and accelerate progress toward achieving the goals of the BPfA.

As Maya Angelou once said, *“We may encounter many defeats, but we must not be defeated.”* This document embodies that spirit by acknowledging progress while addressing the obstacles that remain in the pursuit of true gender equality.

2.1 Overview: Key Facts and Figures on Progress in Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment

Nepal has made significant strides in socio-economic development, reflecting an overall improvement in gender equality. This progress is evidenced by Nepal's advancement from a "High" to a "Medium" category in the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI). The SIGI assesses five dimensions of discriminatory social institutions that impact women's lives across critical socio-economic areas: discriminatory family codes, restricted physical integrity, son preference, restricted access to resources and assets, and limited civil liberties



2.2 Critical Areas of Concerns-Achievements, Gaps, Challenges, and Recommendations

Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI)		
Indicators	2019 ^a	2023 ^b
SIGI Score	36	31
SIGI Classification	Medium	Medium
Source: ^a OECD (2019). <i>SIGI 2019 Global Report: Transforming Challenges into Opportunities, Social Institutions and Gender Index</i> , OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/bc56d212-en . ^b OECD (2023). <i>SIGI 2023 Global Report: Gender Equality in Times of Crisis, Social Institutions and Gender Index</i> , OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/4607b7c7-en .		

1. Women and Poverty

Relevant CEDAW Article: Article 13. Women have a right to family benefits, bank loans, mortgages, and other forms of financial credit.

Relevant SDGs: Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.

Indicators	Description of SDG Indicator	2019	2022
1.2.1	Proportion of population living below the national poverty line ¹	16.7	20.3
1.2.2	Multidimensional Poverty ¹	30.1	17.4
1.4.1.2	Households covered by formal financial services (percent of total) ¹	61.9	61.9
5.4.1.1	Ratio of women to men participation in labour force ¹	0.61	0.61
5.5.2.2	Women's participation in cooperative sector (percent) ¹	51	53
5.a1.2	Women's ownership of agricultural land ¹	33.9	34.4
Total unemployment rate (female to male ratio) ²		0.72	13.1

Source:

- Government of Nepal. (2024). *Voluntary National Review of Sustainable Development Goals*. National Planning Commission. Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Government of Nepal, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens. (2024). *Gender equality in Nepal: Facts and figures*. Singha Durbar, Kathmandu.



2. Education and Training of Women

Relevant CEDAW Article: Article 10. Women and girls should receive career and vocational guidance and have access to educational opportunities on par with men or boys.

Relevant SDGs: Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. **Goal 2.** End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.

Indicators		2019	2022
4.3.1.1	The ratio of girls’ enrolment in technical and vocational education ¹	0.66	0.75
4.3.1.2	Ratio of girls’ enrolment in tertiary education (graduate level) ¹	0.91	0.94
4.5.1.2	Gender Parity Index (GPI) (secondary school) ¹	1	1
4.1.14	Ratio of girls (to boys) enrolled in grade one who reach grade eight ¹	1.01	0.94
4.6.1.2	Literacy rate of 15-24 years old (women) (%) ¹	90.5	92.8

Source:

- 1 Government of Nepal. (2024). *Voluntary National Review of Sustainable Development Goals*. National Planning Commission. Kathmandu, Nepal.

3. Women and Health

Relevant CEDAW Article: Article 12. Women have the right to family planning services.

Relevant SDGs: Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. **Goal 2.** End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.

Indicators		2019	2022
3.2.2	Neonatal mortality rate, (per 1,000 live births) ¹	16	21
3.2.1	Under-five mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) ¹	28	33
3.1.1	Maternal mortality ratio (deaths per 100,000 live births) ¹	239	151
	*Healthy life expectancy (rank) ²	124	93
	*Healthy life expectancy (score) ²	1.026	1.024

Source:

- 1 Government of Nepal. (2024). *Voluntary National Review of Sustainable Development Goals*. National Planning Commission. Kathmandu, Nepal.
- 2 World Economic Forum (2024). *Global Gender Gap 2024: Insight Report*. Geneva, Switzerland.



4. Violence Against Women

Relevant CEDAW Article: Article 5. Modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with goals to eliminate prejudices, customary discrimination and all other discriminatory practices. **Article 6.** Governments shall take all measures to stop the trafficking and exploitation of women for prostitution.

Relevant SDGs:

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Indicators		2019	2022
5.2.2.1	Women aged 15-49 years who experience Physical / sexual violence (percent) ¹	11.2	12.2
5.2.2.2	Women and Girls Trafficking (number) ¹	946	200
5.1.1.1	Wage equality for similar work (ratio of women's wage to that of men) ¹	0.66	0.66
5.4.1.2	Average hours spent in domestic work by women ¹	6	10
16.2.3	Proportion of young women and men aged 18-29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18 ¹	5.8	4
	*Total VAWG cases reported to Nepal Police (#) ²	19,462	17,000
	*Safe Shelter initiated by Government (# of the district) ²	46	21
	*Hospital-based One-Stop-Crisis-Management-Centre (# district) ²	44	94
	*Women and Children Service Centre, Nepal Police ²	240	233

Source:

1 Government of Nepal. (2024). *Voluntary National Review of Sustainable Development Goals*. National Planning Commission. Kathmandu, Nepal.

2 Nepal Police. (2024). *Women, children and senior citizen service directorate*. Government of Nepal, Kathmandu, Nepal.



5. Women and Armed Conflict

General Recommendation 30. Women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations.

Relevant SDGs: Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Indicators		2019	2022
16.2.3	Proportion of young women and men aged 18-29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18 ¹	5.8	4
16.7.2.1	Proportions of decision-making positions held by women in public institutions ¹	13.9	13.9
16.2.2.1	Children trafficking to abroad per annum (reported number ¹)	23	23
Local Peace Committees in all districts		-	-
Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Commission of Investigation of Enforced Disappeared Persons		Commissioners Vacant	Commissioners Vacant ²

Source:

- 1 Government of Nepal. National Planning Commission. (2024). *Voluntary National Review of Sustainable Development Goals*. Kathmandu, Nepal.
- 2 Commission of Investigation of Enforced Disappeared Person (2024). *Commission Members*. <http://ciedp.gov.np/en/commission-officials/>; Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2024). *Members*. <https://trc.gov.np/en/members>.

6. Women and the Economy

Relevant CEDAW Article: Article 14. Governments should undertake the elimination of discrimination against women in rural areas so that they may participate in and benefit from rural development. **Article 11.** Women have equal rights to work with men, which includes pay, promotions, training, health and safety.

Relevant SDGs: Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. **Goal 9.** Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, and foster innovation. **Goal 10.** Reduce income inequality within and among countries. **Goal 12.** Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Indicators		2018	2022
10.2.1.2	Economic Empowerment Index ¹	0.45	0.51
10.1.1.2	Income inequality (measured by the Gini coefficient) ¹	0.32	0.31
8.5.2.1	Unemployment rate (percent) ¹	11.4	11.4
	*Economic Participation and opportunity (rank) ²	110	137
	*Economic Participation and opportunity (score) ²	0.608	0.475
	*Households having property/tangible assets in women's name (percent of total) ²	19.7	23.8

Source:

- 1 Government of Nepal. (2024). *Voluntary National Review of Sustainable Development Goals*. National Planning Commission, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- 2 World Economic Forum (2024). *Global Gender Gap 2024: Insight Report*. Geneva, Switzerland.



7. Women in Power and Decision-making

Relevant CEDAW Article: Article 16. Women have the same rights as their husbands in marriage, childcare and family life. **Article 7.** The rights of women to vote, to participate in forming and implementing government policies and to join public and political organisations. **Article 9.** Equal rights with men to keep and change their nationality and to grant their nationality to their children.

Relevant SDGs: Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.

Indicators		2019	2022
5.5.1	The proportion of seats held by women		
5.5.1.1	(a) National parliament (%) ¹	33.5	33.6
5.5.1.2	(b) Provincial parliament (%) ¹	34.4	34.5
	(c) Local government bodies (%) ¹	40.8	40.9
5.5.2.1	Women's participation in decision-making level in the private sector (percent) ¹	29.6	29.6
5.5.2.3	Women in civil service decision making positions (percent of total employees) ¹	13.6	13.6
5.5.2.4	Ratio of women to men in professional and technical workers (percent) ¹	25	25

Source:

- Government of Nepal. (2024). *Voluntary National Review of Sustainable Development Goals*. National Planning Commission, Kathmandu, Nepal.

8. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

Relevant CEDAW Article: Article 10. Women are to be equal before the law.

Relevant SDGs: Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.

Indicators	2019	2022
17.8.1: Proportion of individuals using the Internet ¹	65.9	69.2
National Women Commission	Constitutional Commission	Constitutional Commission
Provincial level	Women and Children Section under 7 Provincial Government Social Development Ministry	Women and Children Section under 7 Provincial Government Social Development Ministry
District level	None	None
Local level	Women and Children Section under 753 local government units	Women and Children Section under 753 local government units

Source:

- Government of Nepal. (2024). *Voluntary National Review of Sustainable Development Goals*. National Planning Commission, Kathmandu, Nepal.



9. Human Rights of Women

Relevant CEDAW Article: Article 3. Governments shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that women can enjoy basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. **Article 4.** Governments can adopt temporary special measures to accelerate equality for women, i.e., affirmative action. **Article 2.** Governments shall take concrete steps to eliminate discrimination against women.

Relevant SDGs: Goal 5: Gender Equality

Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities

Indicators		2019	2022
5.1.1.1	Wage equality for similar work (ratio of women’s wage to that of men) ¹	0.66	0.66
5.6.1.1	Awareness about reproductive rights among girls and women (percent)- Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care. ¹	57.5	62.6
	Women’s right to confer nationality to their children by decent ²	Yes	Yes
	Reproductive Health Right law ³	Yes	Yes

Source:

- 1 Government of Nepal. (2024). *Voluntary National Review of Sustainable Development Goals*. National Planning Commission, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- 2 Government of Nepal. (2015). *The Constitution of Nepal*. Kathmandu, Nepal.
- 3 Government of Nepal. (2018). *Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Rights Act 2018*. Kathmandu, Nepal.

10. Women and the Media

Relevant CEDAW Article: Article 5. Governments shall take appropriate measures to eliminate sexist stereotyping.

Relevant SDGs: Goal 5: Gender Equality

Indicators		2019	2022
5.b1	Use of Internet by women aged 15-24 years (percent) ¹	34.97	76.50
	Editor in Chief ²	0.2	2.4
	Executive Editor ²	0.3	4.3
	Editor ²	8.1	11.1



Source:

- Government of Nepal. (2024). *Voluntary National Review of Sustainable Development Goals*. National Planning Commission, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Media Advocacy Group. (2023). *A study on the status of Nepali women journalists covering foreign affairs*. Kathmandu, Nepal.

11. Women and the Environment

General Recommendation 37. Gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change.

Relevant SDGs: **Goal 6.** Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. **Goal 7.** Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all. **Goal 11.** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. **Goal 13.** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. **Goal 14.** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. **Goal 15.** Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and the loss of halt biodiversity.

Indicators		2019	2022
6.1.1	Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services) ¹	25	25.8
7.1.1	Proportion of population with access to electricity ¹	89.9	95
	Women Involvement in Community Forest User's Group ²	50	NA
	Gender Priority in Disaster Risk Reduction ²	Yes	Yes

Source:

- Government of Nepal. (2024). *Voluntary National Review of Sustainable Development Goals*. National Planning Commission, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Ministry of Forests and Environment. (2019). *National Forest Policy*. Government of Nepal, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Post-Disaster Need Assessment*. https://npc.gov.np/images/category/PDNA_Volume_A.pdf



12. The Girl Child

Relevant CEDAW Article: Article 10. Reduction of female student drop-out rates and the organisation of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely.

Article 12. Eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care.

Relevant SDGs: Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. **Goal 3.** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. **Goal 6.** Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

<i>Indicators</i>		<i>2019</i>	<i>2024</i>
4.1.1.5	Ratio of girls (to boys) enrolled in grade one who reach grade twelve	1.05	0.99
4.3.1.2	<i>Ratio of girl's enrolment in tertiary education (graduate level)</i>	0.9	0.94
4.6.1.2	Literacy rate of 15-24 years old (women) (percent)	87.4	92.5
	The legal age of marriage for girls/boys ²	20	20
	Definition of children by age ²	18	18

Source:

- 1 Government of Nepal. (2024). *Voluntary National Review of Sustainable Development Goals*. National Planning Commission, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- 2 Government of Nepal. (2017). National Penal (Code) Act, 2017.
- 3 Government of Nepal. (2018). Children's Act, 2018.



2.2.1 Women and Poverty

Present Status

The 2021 census shows that women constitute 51.1 percent of the population.¹ Between 2015 and 2019, Nepal successfully reduced poverty (SDG-1) by 1.1 percent each year. However, only modest progress has been observed in the indicators related to hunger, nutrition and food security.² This suggests the persistent challenges in reducing multi-dimensional poverty significantly.

Notably, 28 percent of the rural population experience multidimensional poverty, compared to 12.3 percent in urban areas.³ Also, Nepal Living Standards Survey IV reports that 20.3 percent of the population in Nepal lives below the new poverty line.⁴ It also reports that the incidence of poverty is higher in rural areas (24.7 percent) than in urban areas (18.3 percent).⁵

The government of Nepal’s 15th Plan (2019/20-2023/24) aims to achieve an average economic growth of 9.6 percent per annum and reduce poverty rate to 9.5 percent from the current 18.7 percent.⁶ The target is to reduce multi-dimensional poverty to 6 percent by 2030.

To address existing inequalities and discrimination, particularly among women, the Government implemented a National Employment Policy, 2015 that encourages productive employment to alleviating poverty and promoting sustainable economic growth.⁷

The Labour Act, 2017 has also reinforced equal rights for women concerning wages and social security benefits.⁸ As a result, the labour force participation rate among women increased to 28.7 percent in 2023, up from 28.4 percent in 2022, 28.5 percent in 2021, 28.1

1 Central Bureau of Statistics, Nepal. (2021.). *Population results*. <https://censusnepal.cbs.gov.np/results/population>

2 Global Hunger Index. (2020). *Case study: Nepal*. <https://www.globalhungerindex.org/case-studies/2020-nepal.html>

3 Ministry of Finance, Nepal. (2023). *Economic survey 2022/23* (Publication No. 1710323031). <https://mof.gov.np>

4 Ministry of Finance, Nepal. (2023). *Poverty line classification for 2022-23* (Publication No. 1710323031). An individual in Nepal is classified as poor if their annual per capita total consumption expenditure is less than NPR 72,908.

5 National Statistics Office. (2024). *Nepal living standards survey 2022-2023* (Publication No. 1707800524_89). <https://giwms.gov.np>

6 National Planning Commission. (2020). *National review of sustainable development goals* (Publication No. 26541VNR_2020_Nepal_Report). <https://un.org>

7 National Employment Policy. (2015). Government of Nepal, Ministry of Labour and Employment, p. 10

8 Government of Nepal. (2017). *Labour Act 2017*. Kathmandu, Nepal.



percent in 2020, and 28.4 percent in 2019.⁹ Women’s participation in civil service stands at 26.58 percent.¹⁰ The Gender Development Index, which measures gender equity across various dimensions, is currently at 0.69. Nepal ranks 98th in economic participation and opportunities.¹¹ In 2022, the perceived disadvantage of gender in workplace interaction was 3 percent, lowered from 6.5 percent in 2020.¹²

As per the 2021 census female-headed household is 31.5 percent. This is an increase of 1.1 percent in 2021 from 2011.¹³ Ownership of house for women is 2.3 percent, land ownership is 9.7 percent, and ownership of both is 11.8 percent. Altogether 23.8 percent ownership on assets. There has been an increase of asset ownership by 1.1 percent from 2011. This increase can also be attributed to the tax exemption of 25 percent when registering land in women’s names. However, in rural districts like Kalikot (1.9 percent), Bajura (2.2 percent), and Humla (2.2 percent) reported the lowest proportions of land housing ownership by women.¹⁴

The Industrial Enterprises Act, 2020 provisions 35 percent exemption in the registration fee if an industry is registered only in the name of woman. Such women-run industry also receives 20 percent fee exemption for registering industrial property such as patent, design and trademark. Women own 45 percent of the small cottage industry.¹⁵ In 2021-22, concessional loans at 5 percent were offered to micro and medium enterprises, including women returning from foreign employment.¹⁶ However, women-led businesses were twice as likely to be rejected for loans.¹⁷

The Industrial Policy, 2011 has specified special provisions for women entrepreneurs. A notable provision is an exemption of 40 percent in income tax to be levied in the

9 World Bank. (n.d.). Labor force participation rate, female (% of female population ages 15+) (modelled ILO estimate) – Nepal. [https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS?locations=NP&most_recent_year_desc=false] (https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS?locations=NP&most_recent_year_desc=false)

10 Vaidya, S. (2023). Women in Data: Nepal. Nepal Outlook.

11 Joshi, S D. (2022). Global Gender Gap Index 2022 – Assessing Nepal’s Progress. The Economic Forum. <https://nepaleconomicforum.org/global-gender-gap-index-2022-assessing-nepals-progress/>

12 A Survey of the Nepali People in 2022 National Brief. (2022) School of Arts, Kathmandu University, Interdisciplinary Analysts and The Asia Foundation. School of Arts, Kathmandu University.

13 Government of Nepal, Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, National Statistics Office. (2024). *National population and housing census 2021: Housing and household dynamics in Nepal*. Thapathali, Kathmandu.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 Nepal’s Position: Women, Business and Law, 2023, Nepal’s Position: Women, Business, and Law 2023–Nepal Economic Forum

17 Ibid.



year when an industry provides 50 percent of such direct employment to native women, persons belonging to the Dalit community or persons with disability.¹⁸

Forty-two percent Dalit live below the poverty line.¹⁹ There is no recent data on the women’s level of poverty. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected female workers in Nepal, according to the International Labour Organisation, between 1.6 and 2 million female workers faced job losses or reduced working hours, resulting in decreased income. A study conducted by the Asia Foundation in 2021 found that 37 percent of companies, imposed wage cuts on their female employees, with 58 percent of these companies implementing a 50 percent reduction in salaries and 5 percent enforcing 100 percent wage decreases.²⁰

Key Achievements

The Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives, and Poverty Alleviation launched the Cooperative and Poverty related Management Information System (COPOMIS) to streamline the reporting and regulation of cooperatives through a digital interface.²¹ The government of Nepal declared Fiscal Year 2024/25 as the 'Year for Investment in Women,' including the programmes such as 'Yuwa Mahila Rastriya Mahila' (Youth Women, National Women) and 'Prime Minister's Daughter Programme.'

Similarly, the government of Nepal allocated NPR 100 million to support women entrepreneurs in FY 2024/25.²² The poverty rate in Nepal has decreased to 20.3 percent in 2023, down from 25.2 percent in 2011, due to joint efforts by the government and the private sector.²³ In 2023, the Government of Nepal, in collaboration with the European Union and the United Nations, launched the “Empowered Women, Prosperous Nepal”

18 This is applicable for a manufacturing industry and information technology industry providing direct employment to one thousand two hundred or more Nepali citizens. See Industrial Policy, 2011 for details.

19 International Dalit Solidarity Network. (n.d.). *Nepal: UN poverty expert says caste discrimination is the single most important factor explaining why Dalits are disproportionately affected by poverty*. <https://idsn.org/nepal-un-poverty-expert-says-caste-discrimination-is-the-single-most-important-factor-explaining-why-dalits-are-disproportionately-affected-by-poverty/>

20 Joshi, S D. (2022). Global Gender Gap Index 2022 – Assessing Nepal’s Progress. Nepal Economic Forum. <https://nepaleconomicforum.org/global-gender-gap-index-2022-assessing-nepals-progress/>.

21 COPOMIS - Login (mocpa.gov.np)

22 Budget Speech for FY 2024/25, 1686554933_1685371031_Budget_Speech_2080-81_Final.pdf (mof.gov.np)

23 Nepal Living Standards Survey IV 2022-23. (2024) National Statistics Office, Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers. Thapathali, Kathmandu.



a four-year initiative aimed at promoting gender equality and reducing poverty among women and girls in Nepal.²⁴

Gaps

- Despite efforts, only 71.4 percent of CEDAW commitments are realised, leaving 23.8 percent unaddressed.²⁵ Critical areas, like CEDAW Article 11, highlight persistent gaps, especially in ensuring safe and fair foreign employment opportunities for women in Nepal.
- Nepal faces a staggering financial gap to achieve the SDGs by 2030. With an annual requirement of NPR 2,025 billion (USD 18 billion),²⁶ current allocations stand at a mere NPR 400 million (USD 3.76 million), jeopardising timely progress and limiting advancements in essential technology and capacity-building.²⁷
- The absence of ratification for the Domestic Workers Convention continues to hinder protections and rights for countless women in this sector.
- A point of concern is that 74.6 percent of women still lack ownership of any assets, limiting their economic security and independence.²⁸
- Significant gaps persist in women’s access to education, empowerment training, and leadership opportunities, creating barriers that impede their personal growth and professional advancement.

Challenges

- New restrictions require women seeking foreign employment to obtain permission from a guardian or spouse, infringing upon their autonomy and right to economic independence.²⁹
- Women under 24 and lactating mothers with a child under two are banned from

24 Empowered Women, Prosperous Nepal, Empowered women, prosperous Nepal | United Nations in Nepal.

25 A Study Report on the Implementation Status of Concluding Observations of United Nations Committee on the Elimination of discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) on the Sixth Periodic Report of Nepal, June 2021, Final-Book-with-cover.pdf (nwc.gov.np)

26 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (n.d.). *Needs assessment, costing and financing strategy for Sustainable Development Goals in Nepal*. <https://www.undp.org/nepal/publications/needs-assessment-costing-and-financing-strategy-sustainable-development-goals-nepal>

27 Nepal Economic Forum. (n.d.). *Navigating the road to 2030*. <https://nepaleconomicforum.org/navigating-the-road-to-2030/>

28 A Study Report on the Implementation Status of Concluding Observations of United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) on the Sixth Periodic Report of Nepal June 2021. 2021. National Women Commission

29 Mapping Progress on Women’s Rights in Nepal. 2020, <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20ESEAsia/Docs/Publications/2020/03/np-Mapping-progress-on-womens-rights.pdf>



overseas domestic work, restricting their right to choose employment and gain financial security.

- Strict conditions, including bilateral agreements and stringent worker protections in destination countries, severely limit employment options for women. Only a few countries meet these criteria, further narrowing their opportunities.
- Women unable to meet legal requirements for foreign employment often resort to irregular channels, exposing them to heightened risks of trafficking and exploitation. Without legal work permits, they remain invisible to the state and are ineligible for compensation if harmed abroad.
- Despite the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68) highlighting the need to address women's poverty, many countries struggle to convert these recommendations into action, hindered by limited resources, weak coordination, and inadequate accountability mechanisms.
- Translating SDG targets to local contexts is essential for inclusive and sustainable development, yet poor governance and coordination across government levels impede progress.
- The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism faces setbacks due to political instability, limited infrastructure, and a lack of prioritisation in human rights monitoring.
- Early marriage curtails young women's educational opportunities and restricts their personal freedom, hindering their overall development.
- Women in informal employment are at risk due to the lack of social security and support, leaving them unprotected and economically vulnerable.

Emerging Challenges

- With 28 percent of rural populations facing multidimensional poverty, rural areas bear an acute burden of economic deprivation, impacting women's and families' overall well-being.³⁰
- Persistent economic and legal discrimination against women limits their ability to advance and exercise autonomy, reinforcing gender inequalities.
- Climate-related disasters increase caregiving burdens on women, reducing their opportunities for income-generating work and limiting economic independence.
- Limited access to essential resources like food, water, and fuel places women at a

30 Kapali, D. (2023). Poverty in Nepal and Multidimensionality. The Farsight. <https://farsightnepal.com/news/163>

disadvantage, intensifying agricultural challenges and increasing workloads, which often force young girls to leave school to support their families.³¹

- Social and cultural norms favouring male ownership restrict female-headed households’ access to resources, limiting women’s ability to secure assets for their families.
- Patriarchal inheritance practices disadvantage women, as many women hesitate to claim ancestral property rights, often deferring to male relatives.
- Women are frequently relegated to low-paying, insecure jobs in sectors like agriculture, domestic work, and tea plantations, lacking social security and benefits, which keeps them vulnerable and economically dependent.
- As youth increasingly turn to foreign employment, women face heightened risks of exploitation and human trafficking, with limited protections in place.
- Development programmes face obstacles such as inadequate budget allocations implementation, limited accessibility, bureaucratic barriers, and lack of awareness among intended beneficiaries, reducing their effectiveness and reach.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Nepal has achieved progress on legal aspects of gender equality, but considerable hurdles remain in translating these laws into tangible advancement for women. Rising poverty rates among women, along with limited access to resources, highlight the need for strategic solutions. To meet the promises of the BPfA, Nepal must improve policy execution and resource allocation, ensuring that women's rights result in actual empowerment and poverty alleviation of women. On-going efforts are required to ensure long-term growth and for overcoming the disparities that women confront in the labour sector.

Recommendations

- Promote free higher education for women.
- Ensure that economic services and support systems are accessible to women.

31 UN Women. (2022). *Explainer: How gender inequality and climate change are interconnected*. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/explainer/2022/02/explainer-how-gender-inequality-and-climate-change-are-interconnected> HIDR Nepal & Action Aid Nepal. (2022). *Nepalmaa Parishramik Binako Herchahamulak (Awaitanik) Karyako Aarthik Mulyankan*.



- Undertake training programmes that empower women with skills necessary for economic participation, such as financial literacy and collateral-free loans for entrepreneurship.
- Create mechanisms to regularly assess the effectiveness of implemented initiatives and adjust as necessary to enhance impact.
- Implement the gender-responsive budget (GRB) methodology for fair distribution of resources to reduce gender disparities and promote sustainable, inclusive development for all.
- Promote coordinated efforts between government bodies and civil society for the effective implementation of the programme.
- Create a supportive environment to tackle the inequality of unpaid work by reducing the burden on women. Increase economic independence of women via improved access and skills to economic opportunities while ensuring effective enforcement of inheritance rights.
- Design and implement Employment Guarantee Schemes in the fast-growing construction and energy sectors to secure reliable income sources for women and expand social protection initiatives, while establishing bilateral agreements with destination countries to ensure basic rights such as fair wages and leave.

2.2.2 Education and Training of Women

Present Status

As part of its obligations under the Beijing Platform for Action, Nepal has been attempting to enhance women's access to education and training. The overarching concept emerging from the last round of conversations is, "Unlocking Women's Potential through Equal Access to Education." In pursuit of the achievement of SDGs by 2030, Nepal implements the SDG 4 Nepal National Framework: Education 2030. The country has constitutional commitments to inclusive education, guaranteeing compulsory and free education for all, emphasising a discrimination-free, inclusive system. The ongoing education programme, School Education Sector Plan (SESP) 2022/23-2031/32 acknowledges achievements in gender parity but emphasises the need to address dropout rates for girls and marginalised groups, advocating for inclusive and gender-responsive pedagogies.³²

32 Ministry of Education, Nepal. (2022). *School education sector plan for the Nepal school education sector plan 2022/23-2031/32* (Publication No. 1668690227_1997409338). <https://moest.gov.np>



There is a 14.2 percent gender disparity in literacy rates between men and women with women holding approximately 69.4 percent and men 83.6 percent.³³ Net school enrolment increased to 96.1 percent by 2022. There are still a few notable gaps, though. Girls' regular attendance at school and completion of their education are frequently impeded by factors such as 'having to walk long distances to schools,'³⁴ inadequate facilities such as such as safe drinking water, sufficient classrooms, and educational supplies, and lack of transportation.³⁵ Due to early marriage, household responsibilities, and financial difficulties, 10 percent of girls drop out before completing secondary education³⁶ . Owing to these obstacles, dropout rates are notably higher in rural areas (15 percent) and mountainous regions (30 percent), compared to urban areas (10 percent).³⁷ Around 15 percent of girls in rural areas are not enrolled in secondary education, compared to 10 percent in cities.³⁸ Unsanitary conditions, particularly during menstruation, affect girls' attendance in about 25 percent of rural schools.³⁹ Hilly and mountainous regions face even higher dropout rates due to challenging travel conditions and inadequate infrastructure.⁴⁰ Moreover, 32.8 percent of girls are affected by early marriage, which reduces their chances of completing their education.⁴¹

Families in regions with lower incomes prioritise boys' education before girls.⁴² Around 10 percent of girls from low-income households are bogged down with household chores denying them the opportunity to attend with school. Some communities have traditional beliefs that place a low value on girls' education, which encourages early marriage and reduces support for girls' education.⁴³ Girls from underprivileged homes find it more difficult to acquire school education due to socioeconomic reasons that intensify gender

33 Central Bureau of Statistics, Nepal. (2021). *Census 2021*. <https://cbs.gov.np>

34 UNICEF. (2022). Education in emergencies: What works. <https://www.unicef.org/reports/education-emergencies-what-works>

35 Inadequate facilities, such as safe drinking water, sufficient classrooms, and educational supplies, along with a lack of transportation, significantly impact students' access to education (World Bank, 2023).

36 Nepal Ministry of Education. (2021). School education sector plan for the Nepal School Education Sector Plan 2022/23-2031/32. <https://moest.gov.np>

37 UNICEF. (2022). Education in emergencies: What works. <https://www.unicef.org/reports/education-emergencies-what-works>

38 World Bank. (2023). Education overview. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/overview>

39 United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). (2022). Unsanitary conditions, particularly during menstruation, affect girls' attendance in about 25 percent of rural schools.

40 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2022); Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST, 2021).

41 CBS & NPC, (2020). *Nepal Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019*. Kathmandu, 2020

42 World Bank. (2023). *Education overview*. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/overview>

43 Nepal Ministry of Education. (2021). *School education sector plan for the Nepal School Education Sector Plan 2022/23-2031/32*. <https://moest.gov.np>



inequality.⁴⁴ Only 54 percent of women complete secondary education compared to 64 percent of men, with early marriage and childbearing being primary factors.⁴⁵ Furthermore, only 10 percent of schools in Nepal have accessible resources and infrastructure, especially toilets and ramps, for students with disabilities.⁴⁶ Consequently, full participation of students with disabilities is largely impeded due to the existing school infrastructure.⁴⁷ This situation can be ascribed to as systematic non-preparedness towards addressing the educational rights of the children with disabilities.

Key Achievements

Nepal has achieved significant strides in girls' education, with near gender parity in elementary school enrolment as evidenced by a Gender Parity Index (GPI) of 0.99,⁴⁸ marking a near-equal presence of boys and girls in primary education. The Nepali government's allocation of NPR 15 billion for the fiscal year 2023/2024 highlights its dedication to improving girls' education, especially targeting increased access and quality in rural areas. NPR 5 billion has been earmarked for scholarships and financial support initiatives to encourage higher enrolment and retention rates for girls, addressing economic barriers to education.

With NPR 3 billion allocated to prevent child marriage and aid pregnant girls and young mothers in completing their education, Nepal is actively working to remove social obstacles hindering girls' educational journeys. Moreover, an investment of NPR 7 billion is dedicated to building and renovating school facilities, incorporating gender-sensitive amenities that make schools safer and more inclusive for girls.⁴⁹

44 UNFPA. (2023). *Child marriage in Nepal*. <https://nepal.unfpa.org/en/publications/fact-sheet-child-marriage-nepal>.

45 Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. (2021). *Education sector analysis report*. https://moest.gov.np/post/1_62b72fdbef9e6

46 UNICEF. (2022). *Education in emergencies: What works*. <https://www.unicef.org/reports/education-emergencies-what-works>

47 World Bank. (2023). *Education overview*. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/overview>

48 UNICEF. (2022). *Education in Nepal: Key facts and figures*. https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Nepal_factsheet_Mar_2023.pdf.

49 Ministry of Finance. (2023). *Budget speech for fiscal year 2023/2024*. https://www.mof.gov.np/uploads/document/file/1688901593_TC%20-%20EDIT%20-%20FY2023_24%20Budget%20Speech_R2.pdf



Gaps

- Women's literacy rates range from around 60 percent in rural to 85 percent in cities. Compared to 75 percent of women in cities, only 50 percent of girls in remote areas complete their secondary school education.⁵⁰
- According to the World Bank (2023), only 30 percent of women from excluded regions (mountain regions) have access to programmes for vocational training.
- Fifteen percent of girls and 10 percent of boys leave secondary school before graduation.⁵¹
- Women make up around 47 percent of students in higher education, but their percent decreases to 30 percent in technical and vocational sectors.⁵²
- Despite legal obligations, only 40 percent of schools have gender-sensitive policies in place.⁵³

Challenges

- Despite some progress, entrenched discrimination based on caste, ethnicity, and gender continues to oppress women and girls, curtailing their freedom, blocking access to opportunities, and reinforcing early marriage and restrictive gender roles in certain communities.
- Inability to own property, deprivation, and opportunity expense of sending girls to labour rather than school.
- Lack of necessary educational facilities and topographical difficulties.
- Deficits in the application of policies and the mismatch between national and local practices.
- Insecure travel conditions as girls have to walk long distances to schools and inadequate medical care.
- Inadequate community and family support.

50 Nepal Ministry of Education. (2023). *School education sector plan for the Nepal School Education Sector Plan 2022/23-2031/32*. <https://moest.gov.np>

51 Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. (2022). *School education sector plan 2022/23-2031/32*. https://moest.gov.np/post/1_6376313344e1f

52 Central Bureau of Statistics. (2023a). *Educational attainment and gender parity in Nepal*. <https://mowcsc.gov.np/downloadfiles/Gender-Equality-Report-1715242038.pdf>

53 UN Women. (2022). *Gender equality and women's empowerment in Nepal: Progress and challenges*. <https://un.info.np/Net/NeoDocs/View/1216>.



Emerging Challenges

- Women, especially in rural areas, have restricted access to the internet and digital tools, limiting their educational and economic opportunities in an increasingly digital world.
- Climate-related disasters worsen poverty and divert resources, displacing communities and making it harder for families to prioritise girls' education.
- Uncertain funding for educational initiatives, economic downturns, and unemployment reduces families' ability to support girls' schooling, particularly in low-income households.
- Conflict and frequent policy changes disrupt school safety and accessibility, while political instability interrupts crucial educational programmes and planning.
- Women's participation in the informal sector and rural-to-urban migration strain educational resources in urban areas and hinder regular attendance in training programmes.
- During crises, limited health infrastructure, remote learning challenges, and school closures (e.g., due to pandemics) hinder access to regular education for women and girls.
- Economic hardship impacts nearly all women, even those from wealthier backgrounds, creating barriers to accessing effective education and training.
- Security threats pose significant challenges for women's and training, impacting their ability to participate freely and confidently.
- In addition to paid work, many women and girls shoulder extensive household and caregiving duties, limiting their time and energy for education.
- Domestic violence and social discrimination, coupled with limited access to essential support services, hinder women's ability to pursue education and personal development.
- Physical distances and lack of accessible infrastructure restrict educational opportunities for women and girls with disabilities.
- Childbirth and caregiving obligations frequently disrupt women's educational journeys, creating gaps in learning and skills development.
- Entrenched patriarchal beliefs continue to limit women's and girls' educational and economic opportunities, reinforcing traditional roles and limiting autonomy.



Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Nepal has progressed in closing the gender gap and boosting school attendance. Nevertheless, issues including socio-cultural beliefs regarding girls' education, child marriage that if girls are married off before puberty the parents will be guaranteed a berth in heaven, early marriage, financial limitations, and poor infrastructure pose challenges for girls' and women's education. Disparities that persist are highlighted by problems including the gender literacy gap, and subpar infrastructure in rural regions. Complexity is compounded by newly emerging issues including the digital divide, climate change, and health concerns. A holistic approach is needed to address these problems, including enhanced digital literacy, better infrastructure, and efficient policy execution. To overcome these obstacles and achieve gender equality in education, cooperation between local communities, civil society, and government agencies is crucial. Moreover, the government and civil society must work together to achieve gender equality in education in Nepal.

Recommendations

- Undertake a comprehensive accessibility audit of schools to plan for preparing schools disability friendly.
- Invest in the construction and renovation of rural schools, paying particular attention to gender-specific toilets and infrastructure that allow for people with disabilities.
- Encourage the development of transportation plans to help girls in faraway regions have better access to schools.
- Launch campaigns against social norms and gender roles that restrict women's access to education and training, particularly in the low-income families and different caste/ethnic groups in the community.
- Execute the laws, policies, and rules against child marriage, mid-day meals, and scholarships, including medical education and STEM, to encourage more women to make forays into non-traditional sectors.
- Boost scholarships and other forms of assistance for girls from low-income households and broaden women's vocational training programmes with an emphasis on disadvantaged girls and women.
- Raise the quality of education by funding gender-sensitive teaching methods for teachers, updating the curriculum to reflect the demands of the market, and including Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE). Moreover, education needs to be applicable as a life skill that can bring a change in the lives of women.



- Focus on the inclusion of marginalised communities in the education and training of women. Strictly implement inclusion policy in the education and training of women.
- Develop a strategy for programmes sustainability with specific indicators.
- Carry out extensive awareness campaigns to encourage girls' education and question cultural norms in the community, all the while highlighting women's education and breaking down gender stereotypes.
- Develop mentorship programmes to assist women and girls in advancing their education and professions, as well as initiatives to offer training and educational materials in underprivileged communities.
- Monitor and track the progress of the implementation of women's education and training programmes in Nepal.
- Advocate for starting the change from home and family.

2.2.3 Women and Health

Present Status

Nepal has made significant strides in improving women's health over the past five years. Key indicators show improvements in maternal health, access to contraception, and health awareness among women. For instance, the maternal mortality rate has decreased from 239 per 100,000 live births in 2016⁵⁴ to 151 in 2021.⁵⁵ Despite these improvements, disparities and anaemia remain, particularly in rural areas where access to high quality healthcare services is limited.⁵⁶ Adolescent sexual and reproductive health services have expanded, yet age-appropriate and gender sensitive comprehensive sexual education is still lacking to ensure that meaningful sexual and reproductive health education is part of the mandatory school curriculum at all levels of education, and train teachers to deliver those curricula. The prevalence of gynaecological problems like cervical cancer, pelvic organ prolapses, obstetric fistula, infertility remains a concern⁵⁷, and access to safe abortion services, while legal, is inconsistent.

54 Ministry of Health, Nepal, New ERA, & ICF. (2017). *Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2016*. Ministry of Health, Nepal.

55 Ministry of Health and Population [Nepal], & National Statistics Office. (2022). *National Population and Housing Census 2021: Nepal Maternal Mortality Study 2021*. Kathmandu: Ministry of Health and Population; National Statistics Office.

56 Ministry of Health and Population [Nepal], New ERA, & ICF. (2023). *Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2022*. Ministry of Health and Population [Nepal].

57 Department of Health Services. (2024). *Annual Health Report Fiscal Year 2022/23*. Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal, Nepal.



Key Achievements

Over the past five years, the government has adopted several key regulations, guidelines, and strategies to ensure that quality sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn and adolescent health (SRMNAH) services are accessible, affordable, and available to all people especially targeting the unreached population. The historic achievement of the women's rights movement is the Right to Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Act 2018, along with its 2020 regulations, which uphold and commit to fulfilling women's rights to safe motherhood and reproductive health services, ensuring their safety, quality, and accessibility.⁵⁸ Additionally, the Public Health Service Act 2018 and its regulation 2020 recognise safe motherhood and newborn health services as fundamental components of basic health services.⁵⁹ Besides, Interim Guidelines for Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, and Child Health Service in the context of the COVID-19 Pandemic, 2020; Adolescent Friendly Information Corners Model Operational Procedures, 2020; Safe Abortion Service Programme Management Guideline, 2021; Adolescent Friendly Health Service Operationalisation Guideline, 2022; Disability Friendly Reproductive Health and Safe Motherhood Service Guideline, 2022; ANC to PNC Continuum of Care Guideline, 2023 and Health Sector Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy 2023. The Curriculum Development Centre of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology has integrated Comprehensive Sexual Education (CSE) in the national curriculum for Grades 6-10. The introduction of free maternity services in public hospitals has increased the institutional delivery from 64 percent in 2016⁶⁰ to 79 percent in 2022.⁶¹ This increase could be attributed to the Maternity Incentive and Free Delivery Care Programme (Aama Surakshya Programme) that provides free delivery care to all women at the point of use; a cash payment to contribute towards offsetting the transport costs of reaching a health facility; an additional cash payment on completing four antenatal care visits; and free care for newborns.^{62,63}

58 Government of Nepal. (2018). *Right to Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Act, 2018*. Nepal.

59 Government of Nepal. (2018). *Public Health Service Act, 2018*. Nepal.

60 Ministry of Health, Nepal, New ERA, & ICF. (2017). *Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2016*. Ministry of Health, Nepal.

61 Ministry of Health and Population [Nepal], New ERA, & ICF. (2023). *Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2022*. Ministry of Health and Population [Nepal].

62 Family Welfare Division. (2019). *Nepal Safe Motherhood and Newborn Health Road Map 2030*. Department of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal.

63 Nepal Health Sector Support Programme. (2020). *Review of the Maternity Incentive and Free Delivery Care Programme (The Aama Surakshya Programme) in Nepal*. Ministry of Health and Population.



Since 2006, the Ministry of Health and Population has trained more than 11,014 skilled birth attendants (SBAs) and expanded safe delivery services in rural areas.⁶⁴ However, challenge remain in delivering high-quality maternal and newborn health services, particularly in rural areas due to low skill retention and significant gaps in the knowledge, skills and practices of trained SBAs with very little difference from untrained SBAs.^{65,66} This issue is exacerbated by the reliance on Auxiliary Nurse-Midwives (ANMs) with 18 months of training,⁶⁷ who are primarily responsible for providing essential SRMNAH services in rural Nepal, but are not are trained to perform the full range of sexual and reproductive health-care services. To address this gap, the government has initiated the production of a new cadre of Professional Midwife, aiming to produce around 6,500 by 2030⁶⁸ as a crucial human resource for safe motherhood, providing services and leadership in midwifery.⁶⁹ Currently, there are 91 licensed professional midwives in the country⁷⁰ with 355 midwifery students enrolled in eight educational institutions.⁷¹ Midwives are human rights defenders and public health heroes, ensuring that women have healthy pregnancies, safe childbirth, and essential newborn care, which are among the most basic human rights.⁷² Evidence shows that investment in midwifery education and services yields over 50 positive outcomes for maternal and newborn health, with the triple impact of improving health, promoting gender equality and supporting economic growth.^{73,74}

Since most health problems in the community are related to women and children, the

- 64 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. (2023). *Seventh periodic report submitted by Nepal under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2022*. <https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2095255/N2323006.pdf>.
- 65 Rajbhandari, R., et al. (2014). *Assessing the quality of skilled birth attendants in rural Nepal*. Government of Nepal, Ministry of Health, Department of Health Services, National Health Training Center, and Nick Simons Institute.
- 66 Family Welfare Division. (2019). *Nepal Safe Motherhood and Newborn Health Road Map 2030*. Department of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal.
- 67 Government of Nepal. (2006). *National policy on skilled birth attendants: Supplementary to Safe Motherhood Policy 1998*. Ministry of Health and Population, Department of Health Services, Family Health Division.
- 68 Ministry of Health and Population. (2021). *National Human Resources for Health (HRH) Strategy 2021-2030, Nepal*. Government of Nepal.
- 69 Government of Nepal. (2006). *National policy on skilled birth attendants: Supplementary to Safe Motherhood Policy 1998*. Ministry of Health and Population, Department of Health Services, Family Health Division.
- 70 Nepal Nursing Council. (2024). *Registration Status: Current Registration Up to 03 July 2024*. <https://nnc.org.np>.
- 71 Midwifery Society of Nepal. 2024. *Record of Intake and Passed out Midwifery Students in eight different academic institutions of Nepal*.
- 72 UNFPA. (2019). *Midwives-Defenders of Humans Rights*. <https://www.unfpa.org/press/midwives-defenders-human-rights>.
- 73 WHO. (2019). *Strengthening quality midwifery education for Universal Health Coverage 2030: framework for action*. <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/324738/9789241515849-eng.pdf>.
- 74 WHO (2021). *Global strategic directions for nursing and midwifery 2021-2025*. Geneva. <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/344562/9789240033863-eng.pdf?sequence=1>



preventive and promotive actions taken by the Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHV) programme, initiated in 1988, have been effective and influential. As local community members, these volunteers play a crucial role in basic healthcare services. Currently, approximately 50,665 FCHVs are actively contributing at the community level.⁷⁵ At the community, they were the first responders on the ground, going door-to-door during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁷⁶ The airlifting programme, launched in 2019 under the President Woman's Upliftment Programme, targets saving the lives of remote hill and mountainous women facing life-threatening conditions during pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum. Over the past five years, the initiative has saved 701 low-income, rural pregnant and postpartum women and their babies by providing helicopter-lifted access to essential healthcare services, addressing the severe lack of resources and facilities in distant health facilities.⁷⁷

The WHO ANC guidelines recommend eight antenatal care (ANC) visits during each pregnancy, a standard adopted by the Government of Nepal in 2019. While 80 percent of women had at least four ANC visits for their most recent live birth or stillbirth, only six percent had eight or more visits.⁷⁸ Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (CEONC) sites have been expanded and strengthened in 76 districts.⁷⁹ Additionally, efforts to address common gynaecological problems, such as screening programmes for cervical cancer and training for the management of uterine prolapse, have been implemented. HIV prevention and management programmes have been scaled up, leading to better control of the spread of STIs.⁸⁰

Gaps

- The government continues to use the MDG-related definition of skilled birth attendants (SBAs) instead of the updated SDG definition.^{81,82}

75 Department of Health Services. (2024). *Annual Health Report Fiscal Year 2022/23*. Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal, Nepal.

76 Parajuli, S. B. et al. (2020). *Role of female community health volunteers for prevention and control of COVID-19 in Nepal*. Journal of Karnali Academy of Health Sciences, 3(1).

77 MoWSCS. (2024). *Details of the air rescue procedures for pregnant and post-partum women in remote areas, 2077, from the date of Shravan 1, 2080 to the date of June 31, 2081*. <https://mowcsc.gov.np/progress/5/93724446>

78 Ministry of Health and Population [Nepal], New ERA, & ICF. (2023). *Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2022*. Ministry of Health and Population [Nepal].

79 Department of Health Services. (2024). *Annual Health Report Fiscal Year 2022/23*. Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal, Nepal.

80 Ibid.

81 World Health Organisation. (2018). *Definition of skilled health personnel providing care during childbirth: the 2018 joint statement by WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, ICM, ICN, FIGO and IPA*. Department of Reproductive Health and Research, World Health Organisation, Switzerland.

82 Family Welfare Division. (2020). *Strategy for Skilled Health Personnel and Skilled Birth Attendants 2020-2025*. Department of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal.



- Despite midwives’ ability to meet about 90 percent of essential SRMNAH health intervention needs⁸³ the national healthcare delivery system lacks midwifery workforce deployment.⁸⁴
- Rural and remote health facilities suffer from a shortage of competent maternal and newborn health professionals^{85,86} and the government of Nepal rely on ANMs to deliver SRMNAH services, who are trained to perform the full range of sexual and reproductive health-care services which is a critical component of ensuring availability of comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care.⁸⁷
- Owing to gender discrimination and inequality, targeting only women for healthcare delivery and awareness without addressing the underlying structural and cultural issues that disempower women and girls is insufficient.^{88,89} For example, the exploitation of FCHVs and the reluctance to recruit midwives in the health sector reflect a lack of gender sensitivity. Even with the expansion of CEONC sites to all districts, many women in rural and poor settings still deliver without competent healthcare professionals.^{90,91,92,93} For instance, in rural areas, one-fifth of women give birth in unhygienic conditions without the assistance of skilled providers.⁹⁴

83 UNFPA. (2021). *The State of the World’s Midwifery 2021*. <https://www.unfpa.org/sowmy>

84 Family Welfare Division. (2019). *Nepal Safe Motherhood and Newborn Health Road Map 2030*. Department of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal.

85 Ibid.

86 BBC. (2024). *Thirtieth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA 1995): Review of the Implementation of the BPfA in Nepal: Civil Society Provincial Consultation Report*.

87 United Nations Economic and Social Council. (2016). Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General comment No. 22 (2016) on the right to sexual and reproductive health (article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights). https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E/C.12/GC/22&Lang=en.

88 World Health Organisation. (2019). *Delivered by women, led by men: a gender and equity analysis of the global health and social workforce*. World Health Organisation. <https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/311322>. License: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO

89 Ministry of Health and Population (2023). *Health Sector Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy*. Government of Nepal.

90 Ministry of Health and Population [Nepal], New ERA, & ICF. (2023). *Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2022*. Ministry of Health and Population [Nepal].

91 Nepali Times. (2022, April 4). *Born by the roadside in Nepal*. <https://nepalitimes.com/here-now/born-by-the-roadside-in-nepal>.

92 The Himalayan Times. (2023, December 6). *Bajura mothers delivering babies on remote roads due to lack of access to maternal health services*. <https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/bajura-mothers-delivering-babies-on-remote-roads-due-to-lack-of-access-to-maternal-health-services>.

93 Rising Nepal. (2023, July 13). *Baby delivered in the middle of Dadeldhura Jungle*. <https://risingnepaldaily.com/news/29365>.

94 Ministry of Health and Population [Nepal], New ERA, & ICF. (2023). *Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2022*. Ministry of Health and Population [Nepal].



- Comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education modules are absent from school curricula.⁹⁵
- Gynaecological problems such as cervical cancer, pelvic organ prolapse, and obstetric fistula are prevalent and often inadequately addressed.
- Infertility prevention and management services are underdeveloped, leading to unmet needs in reproductive health.⁹⁶

Challenges

- A shortage of competent and skilled providers for maternal and newborn health, especially in remote villages where complications in pregnancy are very often dangerous due to lack of access to quality antenatal care and birth facilities.⁹⁷
- The SDG target to reduce maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 by 2030^{98,99} as maternal mortality ratios has remained stagnant,^{100,101} with two women dying every day¹⁰² in Nepal. Approximately 56 percent of maternal deaths occur in health facilities, 26 percent at home, and 17 percent on the way to health facilities.¹⁰³ The leading cause of maternal death attributed to non-obstetric complications or indirect maternal deaths (32 percent) followed by obstetric haemorrhage (26 percent), hypertensive disorders (12 percent), and abortive outcomes (5 percent).¹⁰⁴

95 UNFPA. 2023. *Nepal's Journey in Fulfilling the ICPD Commitments: The Roadmap towards ICPD30*. https://nepal.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/20231116_information_booklet_final_2.pdf

96 The Kathmandu Post. (2022, August 6). *Mind the legal gap*. <https://kathmandupost.com/columns/2022/08/06/mind-the-legal-gap>

97 BBC. (2024). *Thirtieth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA 1995): Review of the Implementation of the BPfA in Nepal: Civil Society Provincial Consultation Report*.

98 WHO. 2015. *Strategies toward ending preventable maternal mortality (EPMM)*. Geneva.

99 National Planning Commission. 2017. *Nepal's Sustainable Development Goals Status and Roadmap: 2016-2030*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Government of Nepal.

100 Family Welfare Division. (2019). *Nepal Safe Motherhood and Newborn Health Road Map 2030*. Department of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal.

101 Ministry of Health, Nepal; New ERA; and ICF. 2017. *Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2016*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Ministry of Health, Nepal.

102 Ministry of Health and Population [Nepal], & National Statistics Office. (2022). *National Population and Housing Census 2021: Nepal Maternal Mortality Study 2021*. Kathmandu: Ministry of Health and Population; National Statistics Office.

103 Ministry of Health and Population [Nepal], & National Statistics Office. (2022). *National Population and Housing Census 2021: Nepal Maternal Mortality Study 2021*. Kathmandu: Ministry of Health and Population; National Statistics Office.

104 Ibid.



- Nepal has the third-highest prevalence of child marriage in Asia, with 41 percent of women aged 20 to 24 married before they turn 18,¹⁰⁵ contributing to high maternal deaths among young mothers.¹⁰⁶ For example, a higher proportion of deaths (39 percent) to women of reproductive age in their twenties as compared to older women.¹⁰⁷
- Harmful social norms persist such as sex selective abortion, son preference, dowry and sexual violence.^{108,109,110,111}
- Implementation of the Right to Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Act and Regulation along with comprehensive health policies is hindered by inadequate funding, infrastructure, and competent healthcare professionals, particularly in rural and remote areas.
- Despite recommendations from the CEDAW and CRC Committees “to incorporate age-appropriate and gender-sensitive comprehensive sexuality education curricula, adopt a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health policy”^{112,113}, and the CEDAW Committee¹¹⁴ and the 37th session of the Universal Periodic Review¹¹⁵ “to fully

- 105 UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office. (2023). *Policy Brief Nepal: Digital Ecosystem Analysis on Child Marriage in Nepal*. https://asiapacific.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/child_marriage_policy_brief_nepal_1.pdf
- 106 Girls Not Bride. (2019). *Child Marriage and Maternal Deaths*. https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/documents/644/CM_and_maternal_health_ENG_updated_version.pdf.
- 107 Ministry of Health and Population [Nepal], & National Statistics Office. (2022). *National Population and Housing Census 2021: Nepal Maternal Mortality Study 2021*. Kathmandu: Ministry of Health and Population; National Statistics Office.
- 108 Sharma. S. (2023). *Sex-selective abortions rampant, resulting in decreasing number of baby girls*. <https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/feature-news-sex-selective-abortions-rampant-resulting-in-decreasing-number-of-baby-girls>.
- 109 Regmi K, et al. (2024). *Attitudes and Practices Toward Sex-Selective Abortion in an Urban District of Nepal: Findings From a Cross-Sectional Study*. *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Health*.36(1):51-58. doi:10.1177/1010539523121805.
- 110 Dulal, T. D. (2024). *Situation of Gender-Biased Sex Selection in Nepal*. *Patan Gyansagar*, 6(1), 135–146. <https://doi.org/10.3126/pg.v6i1.67643>
- 111 BBC. (2024). *Thirtieth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA 1995): Review of the Implementation of the BPfA in Nepal: Civil Society Provincial Consultation Report*.
- 112 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. (2018). *Concluding observations on the combined sixth periodic report of Nepal (CEDAW/C/NPL/CO/6, para. 39(a))*.
- 113 Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2016). *Concluding observations on the combined third to fifth periodic reports of Nepal (CRC/C/NPL/CO/3-5, para. 54)*.
- 114 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. (2018). *Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Nepal (CEDAW/C/NPL/CO/4-5, para. 39(b))*.
- 115 Human Rights Council. (2021). *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Nepal (A/HRC/WG.6/37/L.7, rec. 6.135)*.



decriminalise abortion in all cases”, the government has not taken adequate measures. Restrictive abortion provisions remain in the National Criminal Code and the Right to Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Act, leading to the prosecution of women and girls for undertaking abortions.¹¹⁶ Amending the law on abortion is crucial, as conflicting time limits in the two Acts have caused confusion and denied women their right to abortion. The Country Penal Code 2017 permits abortion up to 18 weeks of gestation, whereas the Right to Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health (RSMRH) Act allows it up to 28 weeks. Additionally, while the Penal Code permits abortion at any gestation if the woman's life is at risk or in cases of foetal anomalies, the RSMRH Act restricts this to 28 weeks, further complicating access to safe abortion.

- Policy and decision-makers show apathy and resistance to adopting the CRC and CEDAW committees' specific recommendations towards comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and abortion.
- The unpaid labour of Nepal's Female Community Health Volunteers, with no fair compensation, starkly exposes the government's patriarchal mindset, which devalues women's work both in households and the community, undermining their right to decent work.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed how public health crises, climate change, and entrenched gender inequality are deeply interconnected, exacerbating existing disparities.

Emerging Challenges

- The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing health disparities and strained the healthcare system, affecting women's health disproportionately.¹¹⁷
- Climate change poses new health risks, particularly for women in rural areas who rely on agriculture and are more vulnerable to environmental changes.^{118,119} For

116 CREHPA & UNFPA. (2020). *Legal landscape: Gender-biased Sex Selection in Nepal: Policy Brief*. Kathmandu. https://crehpa.org.np/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Policy-Brief-on-GBSS_Legal-Landscape_English.pdf

117 MoHP, UKAID, UNFPA & CRHEPA. (2020). *Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Functionality and Utilisation of RMNCAH Services by Clients in Public Sector Health Facilities of Nepal*. https://crehpa.org.np/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Assessment-of-the-Impact-of-COVID-19-Pandemic-on-Functionality-and-Utilisation-of-RMNCAH-Services-by-Clients-in-Public-Sector-Health-Facilities-of-Nepal_Dec-2020.pdf.

118 BBC. (2024). *Thirtieth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA 1995): Review of the Implementation of the BPfA in Nepal: Civil Society Provincial Consultation Report*.

119 MoHP (2022). *Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment of Climate Sensitive Diseases and Health Risks in Nepal*. Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal, Kathmandu, Nepal.



example, shifting rainfall and increased evaporation rates lead to water insecurity, forcing women to travel long distances, exposing them to adverse reproductive health outcomes, while inadequate water and sanitation create unsafe conditions, particularly during reproductive periods.¹²⁰ Rising rates of non-communicable diseases among women, such as diabetes, hypertension, cervical cancer and mental health problems require targeted health interventions.

- Increasing urbanisation and lifestyle changes are contributing to new health challenges, including mental health issues among women and adolescents.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Nepal has made healthy strides in reducing maternal mortality rates, improving institutional delivery and producing skilled birth attendants. Integrating human-rights-based and gender-transformative approaches is essential for addressing social exclusion and inequalities in women's and young people's health. Nepal has also come up with critical legislation ensuring women's reproductive rights, but legislative amendments, comprehensive sexual and reproductive education programmes, and community engagement are necessary to overcome cultural barriers and ensure equitable access to sexual and reproductive health services. Additionally, addressing the impacts of climate change on health is crucial for sustainable development.

Recommendations

- Strictly implement human-rights-based and gender-transformative approaches to address social exclusion and inequality, in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Right to Health,¹²¹ Constitution of Nepal,¹²² Public Health Service Act (2018), and Right to Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Act (2018), to enhance health outcomes for women, young people, adolescents, at-risk communities, and Persons with Disabilities by ensuring equitable access to healthcare, upholding their rights, and removing systemic barriers, in accordance with the fundamental human rights principles related to health. Amend the Right to Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Act, 2018, and Section 189 of the National Criminal Code,

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ OHCHR & WHO (2008). *Fact Sheet No. 31, The Right to Health*. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/Factsheet31.pdf>

¹²² Government of Nepal. (2015). *The Constitution of Nepal*. Kathmandu.



2017 to harmonise different time limit provisions for performing abortions and to decriminalise abortion and align them with international human rights standards.

- Develop and make mandatory comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education programmes across all school grades.
- Accelerate the training and deployment of skilled SRMNAH human resources, such as midwives, particularly in rural and remote areas.¹²³
- Implement community engagement and awareness programmes to challenge and change harmful cultural and social norms.¹²⁴
- Ensure continuity and stability in health programmes by minimising political disruptions and fostering collaboration across government agencies.¹²⁵
- Integrate climate change adaptation and non-communicable disease prevention into health policies.
- Expand services for infertility prevention and management to meet the reproductive health needs of all women.

2.2.4 Violence Against Women

Present Status

Violence against women is pervasive in Nepal, affecting one in five women throughout their lives.¹²⁶ It is one of the most pervasive forms of violence, which violates women's fundamental human rights and limits women's substantive participation in private, public, and institutional spaces and settings.

Violence against women is deeply rooted as result of unequal power-relations in Nepali society. It is a tool of patriarchy to control women to maintain their subordination in both the private and public sphere. Violence against women is a disturbingly common occurrence that is deeply rooted in the mindset and patriarchal attitudes that exist throughout the country.¹²⁷

123 BBC. (2024). *Thirtieth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA 1995): Review of the Implementation of the BPfA in Nepal: Civil Society Provincial Consultation Report*. Kathmandu.

124 Ibid.

125 Ibid.

126 Nepal Ministry of Health and Population. (2022). *Nepal demographic and health survey 2022*. <https://www.dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR202/FR202.pdf>

127 United Nations Human Rights Council. (2019). *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences*. <https://www.undocs.org/A/HRC/74/198>



According to National Demography and Health Survey (NDHS) 2022, 23 percent of women between the ages of 15–49 have experienced physical violence since age 15, and 8 percent have ever experienced sexual violence. The percent of women who experienced physical violence in last twelve months increased from 9 percent in 2011 and 2016 to 11 percent in 2022.¹²⁸ Women are increasingly being killed in Nepal. For example, over the last three years, 332 women have been killed by family members, including their spouses.¹²⁹ Thirty-one girls and women were killed after rape in the last two years (2022-2023).¹³⁰

GBV increased considerably during COVID-19 pandemic in Nepal, when protection measures to respond to GBV and other crimes were suspended; there was an unprecedented surge in GBV incidents, thus aggravating the vulnerabilities of survivors. During the national wide lockdown of two months period (24 March to 23 May 2020), the National Women’s Commission documented a total 604 cases of violence, of which 77 percent were domestic violence, related cases and 23 percent were other forms of violence against women.¹³¹ The intimate partner violence is the most prominent in Nepal.¹³² The Nepal Police recorded 14,232 cases of domestic violence against women in the FY 2020/21, 17,000 cases in 2021/22 and 16,517 cases in 2022/23.¹³³ Similarly, in FY 2021/22, One-Stop Crisis Management Centre (OCMC),¹³⁴ registered 11,046 GBV cases.¹³⁵

In Nepal, 1.9 million people are at risk of human trafficking in Nepal.¹³⁶ It is estimated that 7,000-12,000 Nepali children are trafficked every year.¹³⁷ Nine out of ten police reports of human trafficking concern women.¹³⁸ The Trafficking in Persons Nepal Report 2024

128 Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP). (2022). *Nepal demographic and health survey 2022*. Kathmandu, Nepal: MoHP. <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR403/FR403.pdf>

129 Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC). (2022). *Human rights yearbook 2022*. INSEC.
Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC). (2023). *Human rights yearbook 2023*. INSEC.
Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC). (2024). *Human rights yearbook 2024*. INSEC.

130 Ibid

131 National Women's Commission (NWC). (2020). *First lockdown report (Chaitra, 2076-Baisakha 2077)*. https://www.nwc.gov.np/Publication_file/5edca7c05d490_First_Lockdown_Report_%28_Chaitra,_2076-Baisakha_2077%29.pdf

132 National Women's Commission (NWC). (2022). *First lockdown report (Chaitra, 2076-Baisakha 2077)*. https://www.nwc.gov.np/Publication_file/5edca7c05d490_First_Lockdown_Report_%28_Chaitra,_2076-Baisakha_2077%29.pdf

133 Nepal Police. (2022). *Annual fact sheet on gender-based violence FY 2020/21 & FY 2021/22*. Kathmandu, Nepal.

134 Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens. (2021). *OCMC: Comprehensive health and treatment services for survivors of gender-based violence*. Kathmandu, Nepal.

135 Government of Nepal. (2022). *Nepal's seventh periodic report on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*. https://www.nwc.gov.np/Publication_file/5f5ed4c0c41d4_Nepal%27s_7th_Periodic_Report_on_CEDAW.pdf

136 National Human Rights Commission, *Annual report 2022*. Kathmandu, Nepal. <https://nhrc.gov.np>.

137 Ibid

138 Nepal Police, *Anti-Human Trafficking Bureau*. <https://www.nepalpolice.gov.np>.



brought out by the US Department of State, pegs Nepal as Tier 2 state. This means, that although Nepal is making significant efforts to curb trafficking, the Government of Nepal does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking.

Despite significant advancements in legislative and policy frameworks, harmful traditional practices (HTPs) persist in the country, disproportionately affecting women and girls, particularly those from marginalised groups, who face intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination. HTPs are greatly impacting women from diverse groups pushing them at risk of violence, poorer physical and psychological health, and undermining their rights, freedom and equal opportunities.

Again, despite criminalisation of Chhaupadi (menstrual seclusion) in section 168 (3) of the Penal Code in 2017 and destroying 8, 550 ‘Chhau goths’ (Menstrual seclusion huts) in two months,¹³⁹ the practice of menstrual seclusion is common in Nepal. In the survey sampling conducted among 14–19-year-old girls in two local levels of Dailekh district, 77 percent still actively practice Chhaupadi.¹⁴⁰

The 2015 Constitution article 39 (5) explicitly prohibits child marriage and the Nepal Government has endorsed a National Strategy to end child marriage in Nepal by 2030, yet Nepal has the second highest rate of child marriage in South Asia.¹⁴¹ According to the national census of Nepal, 2021, 22.3 percent of children get married for the first time between ages of 15 and 17 and 0.3 percent of children who had their first marriage are under age of 10. Similarly, 7 percent get married for the first time at age of 10-14 years.¹⁴² HTPs such as caste-based discrimination, menstrual restrictions including Chhaupadi, child marriage, dowry, and allegations of witchcraft and persecution, son preference, gender-based sex selection (GBSS), bonded labour, femicide are still practiced in Nepal.¹⁴³ In 2021, there were 112 baby boys born for every 100 baby girls, up from 107 baby boys born for every 100 girls in 2011.¹⁴⁴

139 Government of Nepal, *Seventh periodic report of Nepal on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*. Kathmandu, Nepal. <https://www.nwc.gov.np>.

140 Wagner, A., & Juma, F. (2019). What’s missing in MHM? Moving beyond hygiene in menstrual hygiene management. *Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters*, 27(1), 1-3. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26410397.2019.1684231>.

141 Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), & National Planning Commission (NPC). (2020). *Multiple indicators survey*

142 B360 Nepal. (2023). *National census 2078: Male and female birth ratio widening*. <https://www.b360nepal.com/detail/743/national-census-2078-male-and-female-birth-ratio-widening>

143 UN Women. (2020). *Gender equality update 25: Covid-19 and harmful practices in Nepal*. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/12/gender-equality-update-25-covid-19-and-harmful-practices-in-nepal>

144 Government of Nepal, National Statistics Office. (2021). *Census 2021: National Report*. National Statistics Office.



Many women and newborns experience mistreatment during childbirth in health facilities.¹⁴⁵ For example, 70 percent of the women in Pokhara-Kaski district have reported disrespect and abuse. This is not only a violation of human rights, but it discourages pregnant women from seeking healthcare that could save their lives.¹⁴⁶ Women from various marginalised groups such as Dalit, Madhesi, Indigenous communities, religious minorities, Gender and Sexual Minorities, women from geographically disadvantaged locations, women with disabilities, women working in entertainment sectors, displaced women, sex workers and economically weak are more vulnerable to multiple and intersecting forms of violence owing to underlying structural and cultural factors. It has been reported that many transgender people have been experiencing discrimination and violence due to traditional rigid gender roles, stereotypes and socio-cultural norms and lack of proper legal gender recognition.¹⁴⁷

Table 1: Crime data against Women and Children in last five years in Nepal

Fiscal Year	Types of Violence						
	Rape	Attempted Rape	Abortion	Polygamy	Child Marriage	Domestic Violence	Witchcraft
2018/19	230	786	27	1001	86	14774	46
2019/20	144	687	29	734	64	11738	34
2020/21	532	735	27	852	84	14232	61
2021/22	380	655	37	809	52	17000	49
2022/23	387	518	32	723	52	16519	43

Source: Women, Children and Senior Citizens Directorate, Nepal Police, 2080

Key Achievements

Nepal has achieved a significant milestone by ratifying seven out of nine key international human rights treaties. This includes the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) with its Optional Protocol, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) along with its Optional Protocol and the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OP-CRC-AC), the Convention on the Elimination of All

145 Gurung, R., Moinuddin, M., Sunny, A. K., et al. (2022). Mistreatment during childbirth and postnatal period reported by women in Nepal—a multicentric prevalence study. *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth*, 22, 319. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-022-04639-6>

146 Thapaliya, R., Paudel, K., & Shrestha, S. (2021). Disrespect and abuse during facility-based childbirth in Pokhara metropolitan city. *JGMC Gandaki Medical College-Nepal*, 14, 39–44.

147 Mitini Nepal, & Blue Diamond Society. (2023). *7th Periodic Shadow Report on CEDAW focusing on LGBTQ women in Nepal*.



Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the Convention Against Torture (CAT), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). This demonstrates Nepal's strong commitment to upholding and advancing human rights for all its citizens.

The Constitution of Nepal provides a clear and comprehensive framework to end all forms of discrimination and inequality, which is strongly anchored in internationally recognised normative human rights framework. Article 38 of the Constitution strictly prohibits violence against women, or any kind of oppression based on religious, social and cultural tradition, practices and on any other grounds.

Over the past five years, Nepal has undertaken substantive legal reforms to harmonise its national legal system with the new constitutional provisions and international commitments. The National Criminal Code, Section 229 (2) was amended in 2022, which increased the statute of limitations in incestual rape cases from 1 year to 3 years in case the survivor is a person with disabilities, minor (after their attainment of 18 years of age), woman above the age of 70 years, and 2 years, in the case of adult women.¹⁴⁸

To control VAW and improve access to justice for VAW victims/survivors, there are several laws and policies in place, including the Legal Aid Act, 1997; National Civil Code, 2017, National Panel Code, 2017, Domestic Violence (Offense and Punishment) Act, 2009; Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act; 2007; Witchcraft Related Accusation (Crime and Punishment) Act, 2015, Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention) Act, 2015, and Crime Victim Protection Act, 2018. In 2021, the GoN formulated the National Gender Equality Policy, 2021 to guide the institutionalisation of gender-responsive governance through legislative and developmental systems to achieve gender equality in all spheres.

The Nepal government has established the GBV Elimination Fund in 115 local levels out of 753.¹⁴⁹ 94 OCMCs have been established in hospitals in all the 77 districts¹⁵⁰ to help such as protection, treatment, mental and psycho-social counselling, legal aid, safe-homes, rehabilitation and other services to GBV survivors. Nepal Police established 232 Women, Children, and Senior Citizen Service Centres.¹⁵¹ The Supreme Court of Nepal has also established Victim Relief Fund in June 2020, and it has also been established in every district court of Nepal. The government has established 21 safe houses, 10 rehabilitation

¹⁴⁸ Nepal. (2022). *Bill to amend some acts against sexual violence*

¹⁴⁹ The Himalayan Times. (2024, October 27). *GBV prevention fund established in only 115 local levels*. <https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/gbv-prevention-fund-established-in-only-115-local-levels>

¹⁵⁰ Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP). (2023). *Progress of health and population sector, national joint annual review report* (p. 64). Government of Nepal.

¹⁵¹ Ibid



centres for victims of human trafficking and two long-term rehabilitation centres.¹⁵² NWC is operating a national-level 24-hour toll-free helpline (no.1145) for GBV survivors to provide support for shelter, psychosocial counselling, child support and legal aid, among other services.¹⁵³

The Palermo Protocol (Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons—Especially Women and Children supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime), was ratified by the government on 16 June 2020.

Gaps

- While the Constitution of Nepal guarantees fundamental rights against discrimination, entrenched cultural norms and unequal power dynamics perpetuate gender stereotypes and discriminatory practices, leaving women disproportionately vulnerable to various forms of violence.
- Insufficient budgetary allocations hinder the effective implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs aimed at eliminating VAW at local, provincial, and federal levels.
- Despite constitutional guarantees recognising the rights of GBV survivors, no legislation has been enacted to integrate essential services for survivors, operationalisations of GBV funds, safe houses, and social rehabilitation, thereby limiting accountability across Federal, Provincial, and Local governments.¹⁵⁴
- The absence of gender-disaggregated data impedes the formulation and reformation of policies and programmes to address the intersectional and multifaceted violence experienced by women from diverse backgrounds.
- There are only 21 safe houses in Nepal, which are insufficient for the needs of GBV victims.¹⁵⁵ Additionally, these facilities are not disability-friendly¹⁵⁶ and are not accessible and inclusive to LBTQIA+ people. They also fail to provide necessary social rehabilitation and family reintegration services.

152 Ibid

153 National Women’s Commission (NWC). (2022). National-level 24-hour toll-free helpline for GBV survivors.

154 Civil society submission for "List of Issues" on 7th periodic report of Nepal, 2024

155 UN Women. (2023). *The state of women’s shelters in Nepal: Needs assessment and recommendations*.

156 The study by NFD in 2020 found that 67% of women with disabilities were victims of violence, but the rate of complaints was only 16 %. <https://www.khulamancha.com/english/news/8769>



- Nepal lacks comprehensive laws to address cyber crime,¹⁵⁷ and existing legal provisions for GBV do not adequately cover technology-facilitated forms of violence, both direct and indirect.

Challenges

- The most prevalent and persistent challenge is the societal values and norms governed by the patriarchal mind-set that can be directly/and sometimes indirectly seen in every sector at all levels of policy and decision making, law enforcement and other programme implementation. This mindset leads to denial in registering the VAW/GBV cases by the police and local authorities, delay/denial in providing compensation to the victims of VAW/GBV cases, delay in investigation of cases and low conviction rates leading to a state of impunity.
- Violence against women is still underreported, due to fear of retaliation and stigmatisation, the lack of trust in law enforcement agencies, impunity and the low quality of existing services and protection mechanisms for victims of violence. According to NDHS-2022, 72 percent of women aged 15–49 who have ever experienced physical or sexual violence do not seek help to stop the violence.¹⁵⁸
- There are still challenges in translating formal equality into substantive equality for women and girls in Nepal.
- Although there are many funds as mentioned in the section on Progress, there are many overlaps between them leading to confusion in operationalisation of those funds¹⁵⁹
- Nepal lacks the laws, strategies and action plans including the capacities of the government to address women's intersectional issues of historically marginalised and excluded women's groups. They continue to face multiple forms of discrimination and violence and are at the risk of being left further behind.

157 Out of 4686 victims of cybercrime 2531 are girls and women, Annual Fact Sheet on GBV, July/Aug 2021 to Jun/July 2022, Nepal Police. https://www.nepalpolice.gov.np/media/filer_public/bc/d0/bcd064f5-284a-492a-b424-def0a6800de2/fy-2078-79-annual-infographics-en.pdf

158 Ministry of Health and Population, Nepal. (2022). Nepal demographic and health survey 2022

159 HIDR Nepal & FWLD. (2021, August). *Nepal's gender-based violence and gender equality-related funds: The path to effective implementation. A study on the operational modality of various funds within federal governance* (p.16).https://un.org.np/sites/default/files/doc_publication/2021-11/GBV%20GE%20Fund%20study%20design-Final%20for%20web%20page.pdf



- Although the government has ratified the Palermo Protocol various national laws related to anti-trafficking including Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act (HTTCA) 2007 has not been amended including the definition of trafficking in line with the Palermo Protocol.
- Additionally, the inconsistencies between the HTTCA and Foreign Employment Act (FEA) especially regarding punishment, has encouraged traffickers to operate in the guise of overseas employment agents as the FEA does not address the issues of trafficking and the term of punishment is lesser in the FEA than the HTTCA.

Emerging Challenges

- Cases of online abuse against women and girls have spiked in recent years. According to police data, in the fiscal year, 2021/22, 2,389 cases of VAWG were reported, the cases jumped to whopping 4,590 in FY, 2022/23.¹⁶⁰
- There is no law on mental health to date. According to NDHS, 22 percent of the women aged 15 to 49 years were found to be suffering from anxiety.¹⁶¹
- Women's political participation has increased over the last decade, but violence against women in politics is seen as a major issue of concern in Nepal. According to report on, “Violence against Women in Politics in Nepal: The experience of locally elected representatives”, conducted by UN women in 2021, out of the 648 local elected women representatives (LEWRs) surveyed across seven provinces, 44 percent of deputy level LEWRs report experiencing some form of VAW in politics.¹⁶²

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Nepal’s commitment to international normative frameworks is manifest in its legislation of many laws and policies to end VAW. However, gaps in implementation, monitoring and evaluation including inadequate budget allocation and overlaps in GBV funds are persistent

160 Nepal Police. (2023). *Annual report on violence against women and girls (VAWG)* for fiscal years 2021/22 and 2022/23. <https://risingnepaldaily.com/news/35623>

161 Ministry of Health and Population, Nepal. (2022). *Nepal demographic and health survey 2022*

162 UN Women. (2021). *Violence against women in politics in Nepal: The experience of locally elected representatives* [Report]. <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/01/violence-against-women-in-politics-in-nepal>



challenges that translates into inaction. Also, impunity against VAW deter many VAW victims/survivors in accessing justice. Anomalies in prevalent laws perpetuate VAW, while Nepal is yet to domesticate the Palermo Protocol, which is ratified four years ago.

Recommendations

- Enact a comprehensive anti-discrimination and ending VAW laws to end all forms of discrimination against women, girls, Dalits, indigenous, ethnic and religious minority women including those living with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ people and to end all forms of violence against women as per the definition provided by CEDAW and the recommendations of the Committee.
- Strengthen the implementation of laws and policies by allocating adequate budget with regular survivor-centred monitoring and reporting mechanisms to detect, prevent and guarantee full and comprehensive investigations into cases of violence against women.
- Increase investment in gender transformative programmes that empower women economically, socially, and politically.
- Strengthen the capacity of the MoWCSC, NWC and other law enforcement agencies to deliver VAW related services from a human rights-based approach, that empowers VAW victims/survivors as well as to access justice.
- Ensure effective implementation of zero tolerance policy against VAW in all structures from the local to the federal levels.
- Create a supportive environment for survivors through ensuring access to free legal aid, psychosocial counselling, safe shelters, and livelihood support for survivors, and other empowerment initiatives to report incidents of discrimination and violence without fear of reprisal in collaboration with civil society organisations.
- Address the strategic and immediate needs of women with disabilities, Muslims, Madhesi, Gender and Sexual Minorities, HIV affected, single women, trafficked women, survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, women working in entertainment sectors, sex workers and economically poor and other marginalised groups of women to transform their current living conditions in line with human rights standards.
- Amend and align relevant laws particularly HTTCA and FEA as per the provisions of the Palermo Protocol.
- Enact a law on Mental Health that is backed with sufficient resources-both financially and technically.



2.2.5 Women and Armed Conflict

Present Status

The 10 - year armed conflict in Nepal, known as the People’s Civil War (1996-2006) waged by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). A Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in 2006, paving the way to abolishing the monarchy and establishing a democratic socialist federal republic¹⁶³ on 28 May 2008. More than 17,000 died and thousands were displaced during the 10-year armed conflict.¹⁶⁴ Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) was committed by both parties involved in the armed conflict.¹⁶⁵ Of the nearly 63,718 cases registered with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), only 314 cases are regarding sexual violence. However, this number cannot be taken as accurate data as owing to socio-cultural norms of stigmatising victims of rape and sexual violence, survivors are hesitant to disclose their status and fear reprisals. These women continue to struggle with social stigma, economic challenges, and limited access to justice and essential support services like healthcare, counselling, and economic opportunities, exacerbating their suffering.

The traumatic experiences of the conflict era have left lasting physical and psychological scars, further compounded by social stigma and economic challenges.¹⁶⁶ Addressing the issue of CRSV women survivors in Nepal is essential for their healing and reintegration, as well as for broader peace building, justice, and gender equality goals.

Key Achievements

The government of Nepal endorsed the Nepal's National Action Plan (NAPII) on the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and 1820 on 22 September 2022. It focuses on ensuring the rights and well-being of women affected by conflict and promoting their participation in decision-making processes.¹⁶⁷ The NAP II sets quantitative targets to measure progress in addressing their needs. These efforts collectively aim to ensure

163 Jha, P. (2014). *Battles of the New Republic: A Contemporary History of Nepal*. Hurst & Company.

164 International Committee of the Red Cross. (2011). Nepal: The search for missing persons. <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/documents/feature/2011/nepal-feature-2011-09-12.htm>.

165 Global Survivors Fund. (2022). *Country sheet: Nepal* [Report]. https://www.globalsurvivorsfund.org/fileadmin/uploads/gsf/Documents/Resources/Global_Reparation_Studies/GSF_Country_Sheet_Nepal_EN_June2022_WEB.pdf

166 Dahal, D. R. (2011). Impact of Armed Conflict on Women in Nepal. In *Nepal Transition to Peace: A Decade of the Comprehensive Peace Accord* (pp. 135-149). South Asia Forum for Human Rights

167 Government of Nepal. (2020). National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2011/12-2015/16). Ministry of Foreign Affairs. https://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/Nepal_NAP.pdf



their full recovery and integration into society, emphasising the need for comprehensive support systems, effective policy implementation, and societal acceptance.

Positive changes include the involvement of women in terms of participation in all sectors, along with increased representation in governance roles. However, there are still gaps in addressing conflict-related sexual violence and meeting the specific needs of survivors.

Gaps

Significant gaps remain in policy implementation and access to essential reparations support services, such as healthcare, counselling, and economic opportunities. Studies and reports underscore both the progress made, and the substantial work still required to improve the status of women who survived the armed conflict. For example, the UNDP (2014) report highlights significant gaps in armed conflict survivors' access to essential services.

- Despite data collection efforts, proper disaggregated data remains unavailable. The definitions of different categories of conflict victims remain ambiguous, limiting focused interventions.
- Limited data availability for combat casualties, missing family members, and current status within the state.
- Implementation of NAPII on UNSCR 1325 and 1820, is sluggish due to insufficient funding and supervision. The government is still in the process of establishing the structural arrangements required under NAPII which is delaying its implementation.
- Many support programmes are underfunded or rely heavily on international aid, leading to sustainability issues. Though the NAP II mentions that local governments are to allocate the budget from their annual budget for its implementation, funding gaps by many local governments is still a prominent issue.
- Many perpetrators remain unpunished, contributing to a culture of impunity.¹⁶⁸
- The Interim Relief Programme did not adequately address women's right to effective remedy. Only ex-gratia payments have been provided, excluding CRSV survivors.

168 Human Rights Watch. (2020). *No law, no justice, no state: Victims of the culture of impunity in post-conflict Nepal* [Report]. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/11/20/no-law-no-justice-no-state-victims/culture-impunity-post-conflict-nepal>



Challenges

- The implementation of NAP II faces challenges, as the roadmap’s direction seems unclear to local-level stakeholders. This lack of clarity raises concerns about addressing needs of conflict-affected women, due to significant gaps in the identification mechanism, which complicates the support and reintegration. Delays in amending the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) bill are obstructing the transitional justice process, slowing the legal reforms. Moreover, the absence of comprehensive support systems and immediate government responses further impede the recovery and reintegration of conflict victims.
- There is a lack of authentic national-level data on conflict victims and conflict affected women and girls, with discrepancies among government, national, and international organisations.
- Despite data collection efforts, sex and gender disaggregated data remains unavailable, and ambiguous definitions of conflict victim categories limit focused interventions. Additionally, there is limited data on combat casualties, missing family members, and their current status.
- Many women and girls affected by conflict do not have access to adequate psychosocial support, as mental health services are inadequate and stigmatised.
- Political instability and lack of consensus on ways to address transitional justice and conflict victim and affected women impede the effective implementation of plans and policies addressing women, peace, and security especially, NAP II.
- The transitional justice mechanisms TRC and the CIEDP. Another challenge associated with the transitional justice mechanism is the TRC bill, which is yet to be passed although a consensus on the Bill has been arrived at by the three major parties of Nepali Congress, UML and Maoists.¹⁶⁹ They have agreed that 'child army' will not be mentioned in the revised bill, and the provision will be made to require the consent of the victim in cases of human rights violations.¹⁷⁰ Human rights activists have opposed this, and the Human Rights Commission has observed that since all killings are a serious violation of human rights, distinctions in criminalising only some killings is not legal.¹⁷¹
- The CEDAW Committee had already expressed concern on cases of sexual violence, including rape allegedly committed by both security forces and Maoist combatants during the conflict were not being investigated and perpetrators nor brought to justice, the lack of women’s participation in peace and reconstruction process after

169 Major Party Consensus on Transitional Justice Bill, Kantipur, August 10, 2024.

170 Ibid

171 Ibid



reviewing Nepal’s 4th and 5th periodic country report in 2011.¹⁷² After reviewing the Seventh Periodic Country Report, the CEDAW Committee on 26 February 2024, it has again raised the issue of women’s participation in the implementation of NAP II, the time frame, benchmarks, dedicated budget and regular monitoring mechanisms.

- Women who were combatants or associated with the conflict face social stigma, hampering their reintegration into communities.¹⁷³
- Government scholarships are limited to only three children per conflict-affected family, and bureaucratic delays prohibits timely access.¹⁷⁴
- Sufficient research on the impact of conflict and its aftermath on conflict affected women is yet to be undertaken. After nearly two years of NAP11’s implementation, government stakeholders, especially local level officials remain oblivious of the necessity of addressing issues of conflict affected women. Rather, the Conflict Victim Women National Network (CVWNN), a non-governmental organisation established by the conflict affected women survivors is working for protecting the rights of conflict-affected women by providing: (i) space for discourse in peace-building and transitional justice; (ii) health services to victims/survivors of CRSV by maintaining their confidentiality; and (iii) skill development.¹⁷⁵
- The wife of the disappeared husband during the conflict face challenges in claiming property rights and in accessing services and social security allowance like other single women from the government as there is no proof of demise of their husbands and the civil law provisions in Nepal primarily address situations involving deceased individuals, without accounting for those who have disappeared¹⁷⁶. According to Nepali inheritance law, ancestral property cannot be transferred to other family members without proof of the owner’s death.¹⁷⁷

172 1325 Peace Support Working Group, Nepal. (n.d.). *Background note*.

173 Thapa, D. (n.d.). *The advancement of women in post-conflict Nepal*. <https://dkiapcss.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/17-Thapa-The-advancement-of-women-in-post-conflict-Nepal.pdf>

174 The Kathmandu Post. (2020, January 28). Children of conflict victims deprived of scholarship provided by the state. <https://kathmandupost.com/2/2020/01/28/children-of-conflict-victims-deprived-of-scholarship-provided-by-the-state>

175 Conflict Victim Women National Network. (n.d.). <https://cvwnnepal.org/>

176 International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ). (2013). *Beyond Relief: Addressing the Rights and Needs of Nepal’s Wives of the Disappeared*. <https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-Briefing-Nepal-WivesofDisappeared-2013.pdf>

177 Government of Nepal. (2017). National Civil Code, Chapter on Inheritance, Sections 1 and 2 <https://www.moljpa.gov.np/en/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Civil-code.pdf>



Emerging Challenges

- Women and girls who are victims of conflict are underrepresented in decision-making processes linked to peace building and conflict resolution, restricting their ability to influence policies that impact them. Additionally, their views and voices are often overlooked and not prioritised in the pursuit of justice.
- Educational disruption caused by the conflict has had long-term consequences for conflict affected women impacting on their capabilities to advance in life with confidence and self-esteem.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Nepal's National Action Plan II (NAP II) on UNSCR 1325 and 1820, endorsed in September 2022, marked significant progress in promoting the rights and participation of women affected by conflict. It set quantitative targets to ensure their recovery and integration into society. Positive developments include increased women's involvement in governance and decision-making. However, challenges persist, such as gaps in policy implementation, inadequate support services, and the slow pace of transitional justice reforms. Emerging issues include the underrepresentation of women in peacebuilding, educational disruption, and social stigma against female combatants, which continue to hinder the full realisation of NAP II's goals.

Given the profound challenges faced by women survivors of Nepal's armed conflict, it is crucial to turn the commitments into concrete actions. These women have suffered greatly and continue to struggle with the aftermath of violence, displacement, and social stigmatisation.

Action must be taken immediately. It is necessary to create mechanisms for prompt and fair redress for survivors, improve access to justice through reforms, and gather precise, disaggregated data for focused actions. Programmes for relief and reparation programmes must be inclusive, especially for those who have experienced sexual violence.



Recommendations

- Develop and maintain accurate and gender disaggregated data on conflict-affected women and girls by developing a robust data collection system that maintains the privacy and confidentiality of conflict affected women especially CRSV. This will facilitate the development and effective implementation of interventions in areas of education, health, psychosocial counselling and skill development.
- Design the confidentiality code and Standard of Procedure for conflict victim women data collection by following the MURAD Code, International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict (2017) and other such international standards.
- Establish and reinforce mechanisms for prompt hearings, investigations, and actions on CRSV cases.
- Promote awareness campaigns about gender sensitive laws and issues, especially focusing on the conflict victim women’s issues.
- Design effective legal aid and legal support programmes for conflict victim women.
- Ensure that justice and reparation programmes are adequate, prompt, and effective in addressing the urgent needs of survivors, including those of rape and sexual violence, to prevent irreparable harm.
- Amend the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act and other relevant laws to align with international standards and integrate a gender perspective, while ensuring the TRC and other relevant bodies operate with independence, impartiality, and adequate resources. Impunity for grave violations of human rights such as Crime Against Humanity and War Crimes shall be ended.
- Prioritise conflict victims, including conflict-affected women and girls, in employment, business, and income-generating activities based on their capacity, skills, and qualifications, while also providing timely and non-discriminatory educational support to children affected by conflict. Promote quota system for conflict victim women and their children in educational and employment sectors.
- Ensure meaningful participation of women and girls in decision-making processes related to peace building and conflict resolution by amending laws to support their greater involvement in leadership roles and decision-making.
- Implement comprehensive economic empowerment programmes for women and girls affected by conflict, including skills-based training, capacity-building for



income generation, and prioritisation of marginalised groups to enhance their opportunities.

- Develop qualitative indicators for measuring substantial benefits and empowerment of conflict -affected women in the implementation of NAP II as quantitative indicators will not be able to capture the changes in their lives.
- Conduct research and documentation on the impact of armed conflict on those directly affected.

2.2.6 Women and the Economy

Present Status

Since 1995, women’s participation in the labour force has increased significantly at 28.7 percent, while among males, it is 53.9 percent.¹⁷⁸ Various factors such as development and educational attainment have contributed to women’s increased economic activity.¹⁷⁹ The other drivers of women’s economic increased participation can also be attributed to the increase in literacy rates. Literacy rate of women has increased from 44.5 percent in 2011 to 59.4 percent in 2021. Furthermore, the growth of the service sector such as hospitality, tourism, healthcare, education and information technology has provided employment opportunities for females in Nepal.¹⁸⁰ According to the 2021 Census, the service sector has become the second largest employer with 309, 944 females earning an income from this sector. However, it must be noted that this sector, which is not protected by legislation or safety net was the hardest hit during 2020/21 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Eighty-three percent of women who lost their jobs were women daily wage-workers, women working in the entertainment sector, brick kilns or those who operated their own businesses.¹⁸¹ Over, 80 percent of the women are still concentrated in the agriculture.¹⁸²

178 World Bank. (n.d.). *Nepal | World Bank Gender Data Portal*. <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/country/nepal>

179 ADB. (2021). *Women’s economic empowerment: Insights from Nepal*. <https://www.adb.org/publications/womens-economic-empowerment-insights-nepal>

180 Khadka, B. (2023, March 29). *Women’s economic participation in Nepal: Insights from Nepal’s 2021 Census*.

181 Research Institute, CARE Nepal, Save the Children, & Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens. (2020). *Rapid gender analysis report on COVID-19, Nepal*. Supported by UN Women and funded by UK Aid through DFID.

182 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). (2019). *Country gender assessment of agriculture and the rural sector in Nepal*. Kathmandu.



Key Achievements

The 2001 Census on Housing and Population for the first-time recognised women's household production undertaken for the market by adopting the 1993 Systems of National Accounts under the category of, "extended economic activities" and has been continued in the subsequent Census. The National Planning Commission in its 15th Five Year Plan (2020/21–2022/24) has targeted, “Valuating women’s household labour and family care activities for counting its contribution to the National Income” by 2024.

Thirty existing social protection programmes are implementing 76 schemes across several different ministries for the elderly, children, pregnant women, new-born mothers, single women, people living with disabilities, unemployed, vulnerable groups, including health insurance for the poor and active labour employment schemes.¹⁸³ Thirty-two percent of males and 33.7 percent females have access to at least one social protection in the form of cash or in-kind benefit in Nepal.¹⁸⁴

The Labour Act 2017 guarantees equal wage for work done of equal value, 60 days paid maternity leave, 15 days paid paternity leave and ante-natal delivery leave at least two weeks before probable delivery. It also has provisions for affirmative actions in recruitment and trainings for women and excluded groups to ensure diversity and enforcement of the law on sexual harassment (SH) in the workplace.

The National Employment Policy 2015 builds on the on the Labour and Employment Policy 2005 by drawing on the lessons learned and includes youths, poor and disabled persons besides the original target group of the 2005 Labour and Employment policy such as women, Indigenous nationalities, Dalits, Madhesis and other marginalised communities/regions to reflect the need of addressing gender inequality and exclusion. It considers the Industrial Policy, Agriculture Policy, National Youth Policy, Information and Technology Policy, Labour Act, Trade Union Act and other policy-level issues related to employment. It focuses on the agriculture, construction, tourism, information and technology and water resources and energy sectors.

183 International Labour Organization (ILO). (2023). *Extending social protection for all in Nepal: An analysis of protection gaps, executive summary*.

184 Ibid



The Sexual Harassment (Control) at Work-Place Act, 2015 defines what constitutes sexual harassment in the workplace to create a conducive working environment. It provides for the establishment of two grievances handling mechanisms- one internal to be managed by the employer/manager and another external to be handled by the Chief District Officer of the concerned district.

As more women become educated, they are entering into technical professions usually reserved for men, such as pilots, lawyers (12 percent),¹⁸⁵ doctors (35.9 percent),¹⁸⁶ engineers (13 percent)¹⁸⁷ and judges (11 percent)¹⁸⁸ leading to a slight decline in occupational sex segregation. Their forays into these professions act as role models for the young generations to follow not only in terms of earning a substantial income but also in encouraging them in taking up non-traditional jobs.

Women with different educational backgrounds are also migrating for overseas employment. Those having completed secondary level of education are found to be going to the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries and Malaysia earning on average NPR 30,000 per month, while those having completed higher secondary education go to South Korea and Japan earning on an average NPR 100,000 per month.¹⁸⁹ These earnings play a crucial role in meeting household needs, repaying loans, and funding their children’s education, thereby transforming their families' economic landscapes and fostering greater financial independence.¹⁹⁰

Gaps

- In Nepal there are 142 castes speaking 124 languages. Lack of gender disaggregated data across castes, class, age, geographical location and religion makes it difficult to contextualise issues and come up with relevant policies and interventions.
- There is still a literacy gap of 14.2 percent between women (59.4 percent) and men

¹⁸⁵ DLA Piper LLP (US). (2023). *International training of women lawyers in Nepal*.

¹⁸⁶ Nepal Medical Council. (n.d.). *Statistics on medical practitioners in Nepal*. <http://www.nmc.gov.np/>

¹⁸⁷ Lama, N. (2023, October 5). *Women engineers in the renewable energy sector of Nepal*. Urja Khabar. <https://www.urjakhabar.com/en/news/0510985032>

¹⁸⁸ Norwegian Embassy in Nepal. (n.d.). *Access to justice: Women's representation in the judiciary*. <https://www.norway.no/en/nepal/norway-nepal2/news/access-to-justice-womens-rep/#:~:At%20present%2C%20approximately%20there%20are,18%20judges%20in%20District%20Court>.

¹⁸⁹ UN Women. (2023). *Women migrant workers from Nepal: Key statistics*.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid



(83.6 percent).¹⁹¹ Consequently, occupational segregation of what is considered ‘women’s work’ is still the norm as they are mainly concentrated in low-skilled, menial, and repetitive jobs and in the lower levels of the industrial sector.¹⁹²

- Although Nepal has good labour policies, in the absence of subsidies from the government, employers in the private are reluctant to employ pregnant women as they see the provisions on maternal leave as an added burden eating away their profits.
- The Sexual Harrasment Act is yet to be implemented as there is no regulatory body to oversee the implementation. As such it does not cover the informal sector where most women are concentrated.
- In 2018, Nepal had one of the highest proportions of informal employment in the world with over 90 percent of jobs in the informal sector. Two-thirds of the 2.64 million employed females are in the informal sector and most of them are adolescent girls aged between 15-24.¹⁹³ There are approximately 1.4 million home-based workers (HBWs) in Nepal-nearly all women-producing goods for export. The informal sector is not protected by legislation or safety nets which is a hindrance to decent work. The CEDAW Committee (CC) after reviewing Nepal’s seventh periodic report on 26 February 2024 inquired of the government regarding the measures taken to raise the awareness among women employed in the formal and informal sectors, particularly among HBWs and micro-small and medium-sized enterprises on their right to social protection.
- In the same manner the CC has also enquired of the government on measures taken to address: (i) the low representation of women in the workforce in formal employment and leadership positions, (ii) high rates of unemployment among women, (iii) occupational segregation in the labour market; (iv) complaint mechanisms and reparation provided for in the Anti- SH Act; (v) adequate human, technical and financial resources for inspection and enforcement of labour law standards and monitor, report and impose fines for discriminatory practices against women in the work-place in both the domestic and informal sector; and, (vi) ratification of the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No.156), the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (N0. 183), the Homework Convention, 1996, (No. 177) and the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190).

191 Central Bureau of Statistics, Nepal. (2021). National Census 2021. <https://cbs.gov.np/>

192 ADB. (1999). *Country briefing paper: Nepal*.

193 Central Bureau of Statistics. (2018). *Report on the Labour Force Survey 2017/18*. Government of Nepal



Challenges

- Ninety-five percent of women workers in Nepal are engaged in informal employment,¹⁹⁴ which is not protected by legislation or safety nets. This increases their vulnerability to economic shocks and are more likely to slip under poverty levels.
- Actual data on women’s contribution to the economy is not visible as their work carried out in production of food for household consumption, maintenance of the family through care work which is so vital for human welfare and well-being and subsistence agriculture does not figure in the gross domestic product (GDP). This devaluation of their work and exclusion from system of national accounts has gone unrecognised and unpaid which makes women poorer than men in old age
- Religious dictates and cultural values of ‘filial piety’ and ‘obedience’ as prescribed by the Manu Smriti remains the guiding ethic for women to look after their children, the elderly and sick in the family, that places severe constraints on their time to engage in work outside of the home, leading to unequal labour force participation of women.
- The Co-operative Act 2017 prescribes maximum lending interest rates for financial co-operatives for those operating within the Metropolitan area, sub-metropolitan area, Municipality and Village Municipalities. Accordingly, they shall levy 10 percent, 7 percent, 5 percent and zero percent interest rates, respectively. This is not observed and high interest rates of Micro Financial Institutions and Cooperatives at 18 percent deter women engaged in micro-enterprise in accessing finance which limits the scope, quality and production of their products.
- Women entrepreneurs are not aware of the provisions of the Industrial Enterprise Act and Policy, which calls for the establishment of a separate unit for women entrepreneurs with a dedicated programme for their development. It also has provisions for establishing two Boards – one on National Micro Entrepreneurship, Cottage and Small Industries and another on Cottage and Small Industries. Although priority is to be given to women when setting up their industries in Industrial Estates, they are hesitant to do so as the Estates are outside of their home location owing to socio-cultural norms of woman’s family obligations.

194 Khanal, R. (2024, April 15). *Women in informal economy*. Nepal Economic Forum. <https://nepaleconomicforum.org/women-in-informal-economy/#:~:text=A%20significant%20portion%2C%2090.5%20percent,are%20engaged%20in%20informal%20employment>



Emerging Challenges

- Re-integration of returnee women migrant workers is an important and emerging policy agenda. This was particularly acute in the wake of mass return of migrant workers owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. Compared to the returnee men migrants, the situation is more challenging for returnee women migrants as their primary role in taking care of household responsibilities and caregiver, combined with lack of decent work, lack of knowledge and access to support services and facilities such as employment programmes and concessional loans are some of the cultural and structural barriers for engaging themselves in gainful employment and income generating activities.¹⁹⁵
- Over 80 percent of women are engaged throughout the agriculture cycle¹⁹⁶ and are yet to be recognised as farmers.¹⁹⁷ They perform all the tedious and unmechanised agricultural tasks such as weeding, sowing and in recent years have taken to ploughing owing to out-migration of men. Despite this, women lack access to women-friendly tools and equipment for drudgery reduction in agricultural operations as most of the agricultural tools and equipment are either too heavy or tool tall to be operated by women as they are designed for men.¹⁹⁸
- The 67th session of CSW in 2023 noted that there is slow progress vis-a-vis gender equality and technology and innovation. Although Nepal is adapting to the digital revolution at a fast pace, the digital gender divide in Nepal is wide. Accessibility, affordability, topography, digital literacy and languages¹⁹⁹ are some of the formidable barriers that contribute to the digital gender gap. As of January 2024, while 87.7 percent of Nepal's internet users engaged with social media, only 43.6 percent were female.²⁰⁰ While accurate figures on women entrepreneurs are not available, according to the Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Association of Nepal (FWAN), there were 5,000 businesses operated by women entrepreneurs providing 50,000 jobs before the pandemic,²⁰¹ and around 15 percent of women-run enterprises have collapsed since the

195 Women Migrant Workers from Nepal- Key Statistics, UN Women, 2023

196 Country gender assessment of agriculture and the rural sector in Nepal. Kathmandu, FAO 2019

197 Ibid

198 Silawal-Giri, B., Basnyat, K., Gautam, P., Nepal Gender Country Profile, European Delegation to Nepal, July 2021

199 Central Bureau of Statistics. (2021). *National Population and Housing Census 2021 (Volume 1)*. <https://cbs.gov.np>

200 Data portal. (2024). *Digital 2024: Nepal*. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2024-nepal>.

201 Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Association of Nepal (FWAN). (n.d.). *Impact of COVID-19 on women entrepreneurs in Nepal*. <https://tkpo.st/3GCotDW>



pandemic.²⁰² In spite of favourable monetary policies, commercial banks and Insurance companies do not design their loan products targeting women micro-entrepreneurs as they do not see micro-enterprise as a lucrative investment.²⁰³ Impediments in access to finance, limited collateral, and low digital literacy are significant barriers faced by women entrepreneurs.

- Nepal will be graduating to Middle Income Country (MIC) status by 2026 from a Least Developed Country (LDC) status. The report entitled, “Nepal Human Development Report 2020: Beyond LDC Graduation: Productive Transformation and Prosperity” points out that significant gender disparities exist by location and social groups making it impossible to achieve SDG 5 by 2030. Nepal will also lose preferential market access and see increased competition in international markets after the graduation. This would disproportionately impact export-oriented small and medium enterprises and the jobs they create. By its own admission, the LDC Smooth Graduation Strategy developed by the National Planning Commission projects that an estimated 11, 395 out of 265, 000 employed in export-based industries, especially garment and carpet industries will lose jobs in the process of graduation to MIC status. 70 percent of women are engaged in these industries who will make up the larger percent of those being forced out of employment widening the gender and poverty and gender and inequality gap.²⁰⁴

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Women’s participation in the labour force has increased over the years together with their educational attainment. As a result, more women are entering the professional service. However, the occupational segregated market means that most women are still concentrated in the informal and agriculture sectors that are not protected by legislation or safety nets. They were the first to be impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic with loss of livelihoods.

202 Karki, S, Prioritising Digital Literacy for Women Entrepreneurs, Business Age, November 17, 2022.

203 Silawal-Giri, B., Basnyat, K., Gautam, P., Feasibility Study on Financial Inclusion of Conflict-Affected Single Women at the Local Level in Nepal, UN Women, 25 November 2021 (unpublished)

204 Silawal-Giri, B., Basnyat, K., Gautam, P., Feasibility Study on Financial Inclusion of Conflict-Affected Single Women at the Local Level in Nepal, UN Women, 25 November 2021 (unpublished).



According to the traditional gender division of labour, women perform household tasks that is essential for human welfare and human well-being on a daily basis. Although the National Statistics Office recognises some goods produced for market consumption by the women it does not recognise unpaid work carried out for household consumption as an occupational group. This has hampered national level analysis as unpaid work of women has been subsidising the government’s health care costs and provisioning of household goods and services especially during financial and humanitarian crisis increasing their workload, stress levels and imposing a time-tax on women. It not only severely delimits their opportunities in becoming actively involved in the labour force, gainful employment, leadership and decision-making roles in the public sphere, it also limits their potential to develop their skills and knowledge and undertake educational activities to advance in life, determine their choices and influence the direction of change to transform gender inequities and inequalities.

The productive economy, which only accounts for paid market activity as measured by GDP is incomplete as it does not account for two-thirds of the economy upheld by unpaid household and care work – purple economy. The purple economy refers to an economic order organised around the sustainability of caring labour through a redistributive internalisation of the costs of care. This also means that the social protection floor must be expanded to include the informal sector and the unpaid work and care economy sector so that women do not have to rely on the charity of other members of the family to lead a dignified life.

Recommendations

- Adopt the Purple Economy approach by making it a priority objective of macroeconomic measurements and policy for: (i) reducing and redistributing unpaid work by investing in structures (laws, policies, institutions and norms) and infrastructure; and (ii) recognising and respecting unpaid work by evaluating unpaid work using Time-Use Survey methods.
- Support the transition of informal sector to the formal economy by investing in social care infrastructure (child care services, early childhood development and home-based health care) through a CARE Law to create twice as many jobs, at the same level of expenditures on physical infrastructure such as bridges, roads, telecommunications systems and transportation improvements to reduce women’s time spent in marketing goods and in provisioning for households, and improve women's ability to access services and labour markets, thus closing gender employment gaps.



- Nepal's graduation to MIC must ensure that it does not lose out on its comparative advantage of carpet and tourism industries to compete in the global and regional markets by investing in enhancing human capital through skills training and upgrading, gender-sensitive transportation facilities, on-site care facilities and security and mechanisms to deal with work-place harassment, violence and abuse of authority so that those who have been left behind so far are not left far behind.
- Adopt anti-austerity approach as macro-economic policies that emphasise exclusively on growth or reducing inflation to reduce public spending, have in-built deflationary biases that produce gendered outcomes impacting low-income group disproportionately, especially women because it precipitates both direct and indirect forms of violence against women, girls and non-binary people by increasing their unpaid work in times of financial crisis.
- Create job and entrepreneurial opportunities by implementing the Industrial Enterprise Act 2016 together with the 2017 Labour Act, which provides additional benefits and tax exemptions to female entrepreneurs.
- Promote Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs) for decreasing the unemployment rate and improving employment rates through skills training and worker-employer matching. Extend coverage of ALMP beyond exclusive focus on the unemployed to also include the non-participant working age population for balanced and inclusive growth.
- Use gender budgeting tools to analyse how government's budget allocations and expenditures are promoting gender equality as per Nepal's expressed commitment towards international declarations and Conventions to promote a more gender-equitable fiscal policy not only in terms of allocations through various sources (revenues, loans, aid) and spending but also taxation to pool societal resources and redistribute them to achieve gender equality and social inclusion.
- Undertake a gender equality and social inclusion analysis of the impact of Nepal's graduation to MIC from LDC status to address the negative impacts of global market competition and job losses of women.
- Undertake awareness programmes on social protection schemes for both formal and informal sectors and expand the coverage of social protection floor to the informal



sector to ensure their participation in social security schemes thereby enhancing their resilience to economic and humanitarian crisis situations.

- Promote financial literacy of micro-entrepreneurs as per the 2020 Financial Literacy Framework. Raising awareness on various Acts and Policies regarding labour, micro-enterprise, provisions of various types of loans such as concessional loans and deprived sector lending, which consists of microcredit loans extended to self-employed individuals and micro-entrepreneurs from these categories of people to uplift their socio-economic status would greatly benefit micro-entrepreneurs to take advantage of available resources and resources for their economic empowerment through Nepal Rasta Bank's financial inclusion policies, which is a powerful tool for inclusive growth.
- Design and implement digital literacy skills programmes for women especially micro-entrepreneurs and those living in the rural areas for honing their digital literacy skills on the safe use of internet, social media, e-mails, on-line payment and how to distinguish between information, disinformation and misinformation, raising awareness about cybercrime policies and different forms of cybercrimes and how to handle such crimes. By building their capacities to navigate, understand, and use digital technologies effectively will substantially contribute in managing and expanding their business more efficiently.

2.2.7 Women in Power and Decision-Making

Present Status

The value of the women's participation in power and decision-making represents half of the population and allow them space to act as change agents. Nepal is slowly moving toward right direction of attaining society with gender justice. However, the patriarchal norms and values act as structural and cultural barriers to women's meaningful participation in decision-making. In these circumstances, gender equality and social inclusion as the core issues of the social transformation, feminising the politics and state mechanisms are the some of the ways to achieve the goal of gender justice. For the cause, transforming the mindset of policy-makers for redistribution of power, that is accumulated within a single gender and community, should at the heart of the interventions for bringing about change.



Nepal has made significant strides in women’s participation and representation in decision-making positions over the past eight years. Women have attained four of the highest offices within the state mechanism, including President, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and, more recently, Chief Secretary. The number of women in elected institutions has also been on the rise, primarily due to affirmative actions adopted in the Constitution and Local Election Act, 2017. These laws have spread a positive message to the new generation that women can hold any position within the state mechanism.

Political Parties as Vehicle of Democracy

Elected representatives in a democracy serve as vital change agents, upholding the constitution and legal provisions. They are responsible for legislating laws that address social, economic, political, and legal issues. In Nepal, major political parties embrace socialist policies and perspectives, with a core commitment to achieving gender equality. As mandated by the Law to Register Political Parties (2017), the executive committee at every level of a political party must include at least one-third women members.²⁰⁵ While all parties have complied with this requirement for registration (see Table 2), major political parties still lack women in key leadership positions, such as Chairperson and Secretary-General. The only exception is the Bibeksheel Sajha Party, where both the Chairperson and Secretary-General roles are currently held by women.

Table 2: Women participation in decision-making position of major political parties of Nepal

Party	Nepali Congress		CPN-Unified Marxist Leninist		Maoist Centre	
	Total	Women (No./ Percent)	Total	Women (No./ Percent)	Total	Women (No./ Percent)
Central level	13	1 (8)	19	2 (11)	22	1 (5)
Provincial Level	63 (7*9)	9 (14)	35 (7*5)	7 (20)	63 (7*9)	8 (13)
District Level	616 (77*8)	24 (4)	385 (77*5)	80 (21)	NA	NA

Source: Democracy Resource Center, Nepal (2023)²⁰⁶ and Respective party office (2024)

205 Government of Nepal. (2017). *Rajnitik Dal Dartaa Sambandhit Ain, 2074* (AD 2017). Article 15-4.

206 Democracy Resource Centre, Nepal (DRCN). (2023). Kathmandu.



Constitutionally, the central committee is the apex decision-making body. However, in practice, a small team of portfolio holders make decisions, where only nominal number of women are present. For example, among the national parties, Nepali Congress (NC) has one woman out of 13 members, Communist Party of Nepal–Maoist Centre (CPN-MC) has one woman out of 22 members (DRCN, 2023), and Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP)²⁰⁷ has one woman out of 15 members. Communist Party of Nepal–Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN–UML) and Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP)²⁰⁸ each have two women, out of 19 and 17 members respectively. Being almost alone in the decision-making process, their voice would be low and very hard to make it heard. Similarly, women's representation at the provincial and district levels is also not better than the federal level. Among the occupied positions, woman hold the least influential among the lists.

Women in State Mechanisms

The state's elected bodies are directly linked the people. The number of women elected in different levels and positions have been drastically increased in comparison with the past. Mandatory legal provision to include women in those position has played significant role. Historical evidence shows that significant milestones are achieved when women across political ideologies and social movements unite. For instance, in 1952, a joint effort by women resulted in four women being included in the Advisory Council (Singh, 1994). Similar incidents have occurred after restoration of multiparty system in 1990, while having the 11th amendment of the New Civil Act-2020 and establishment of the National Women Commission in 2002. It has happened even more visibly onward 2005, specially during the constitution drafting in 2009-15.

After promulgation of the constitution in 2015, election of all levels has been happened twice in 2017 and 2022. In average, women have been elected 41.1 and 40.9 percent respectively, out of the total elected position of 36,105. Nevertheless, mostly they have occupied the subordinated position instead of decision making.

207 Democracy Resource Centre, Nepal (DRCN). (2023). *Constitutional roles and women's representation in political parties in Nepal*. Kathmandu. <https://rspnepal.org/executive-members>.

208 Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP). (n.d.). *Central committee*. <https://rpp.org.np/leadership/central-committee>



Constitutionally, one position, either Speaker or Deputy Speaker, is mandatory for a woman in Federal Parliament and Provincial Assembly. Enforcing this provision, women are often allocated subordinate positions in the federal parliament and provincial assemblies as Deputy Speakers, except in Karnali Province, where a woman has been elected as Speaker in 2023.

Table 3: Representation of women in elected bodies in 2017 and 2022

Elected Institutions	Total	Women (No./Percent)		Men (No./Percent)	
		2017	2022	2017	2022
House of Representatives	275	90 (33)	91 (33)	185 (67)	184 (67)
National Assembly	59	22 (37)	22 (37)	37 (63)	37 (63)
Provincial Assembly	550	189 (34)	200 (36)	361 (66)	350 (64)
Municipality Chief	753	18 (2)	25 (3)	735 (98)	728 (97)
Municipality Deputy chief	753	714 (95)	567 (75)	39 (5)	186 (25)
Ward chair	6,743	62 (0.9)	69 (1)	6,681 (99)	6,674 (99)
Ward Member	26,972	13,575 (50)	13,804 (51)	13,222 (49)	13,044 (48)
Grand Total	36,105	15,384	14,778	22,047	21,203
Percent	100	42.6	40.9	61.1	58.7

Source: Election Commission 2017/2022

The constitutional mandate requires that the provincial assembly and federal parliament have no less than one-third women participants.²⁰⁹ This requirement has been met at both levels. However, the number of women elected through the First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) system decreased to 14 in 2022, compared to 17 in 2017 in provincial assembly. Nonetheless, the number of women in the House of Representatives increased to 9 in 2022 from 6 in 2017²¹⁰, though this change is not significant.

The Local Election Act 2017 mandates that each ward must have two women, including one Dalit, out of four members. Additionally, any political party fielding candidates

209 Article 91-2, 92-2 & 182-2, Constitution of Nepal, 2015

210 Election Commission of Nepal. 2017 and 2022. Election Result Books 2017/2022. Election Commission of Nepal, Kathmandu.



for both the chief and deputy chief positions in a municipality must ensure that one of these candidates is a woman²¹¹. To meet this legal requirement, every political party has nominated women for the deputy chief position. Women in first position as chief of the municipality and ward chair is negligible. However, in the second election in 2022, under the name of coalition, both positions as mayor and deputy mayor were occupied by male from two different parties. As result, 163 municipalities out of 753 are occupied by male in both positions.

Women in the Council of Ministers are still also negligible. Though the constitution aspires to include women in every state mechanism proportionately²¹², women have never reached even one-third of executive power at the federal level. Currently, out of 22 cabinet ministers, only two are women. The situation is worse in provincial governments. Out of seven provinces, only a woman became the chief minister for 70 days in 2021.²¹³ Rest of the provincial government have only one woman. That is also often as the role of state minister, who does not have the right to be part of decision making. This is due to the absence of mandatory legal provision to include women in the Council of Ministers.

Bureaucracy is another institution involved in decision-making and leading the enforcement of cabinet decisions and constitution. Women's participation has reached 28 percent out of 85,520 staffs.²¹⁴ Among them, positions in special and first class have been progressing, which includes leading positions such as secretary of ministries, directors of departments, and chief administrators at the district level. However, that number is far behind in compared to proportionate of total staffs.

Security forces are another important area while taking about power. Women in security forces, such as the Nepal police, Armed Police Force, and Nepal Army, are also increasing because of 20 percent of the total seats allocated for open competition for women.²¹⁵ At present 9.17 and 11.6 percent of women are working in Arm Police Force and Nepal

211 Government of Nepal. (2017). *Local Election Act, 2017*, Article 17.

212 Government of Nepal. (2015). *Constitution of Nepal*, Article 38-4

213 Wikipedia contributors. (n.d.). *Chief Minister of Bagmati Province*. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. October 28, 2024, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chief_Minister_of_Bagmati_Province

214 Government of Nepal, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens. (2023). *Gender Equality Report*. <https://mowesc.gov.np/downloadfiles/Gender-Equality-Report-1715242038.pdf>

Ekantipur. (2024, August 12). 24 thousand women employees in civil service. <https://ekantipur.com/en/feature/2024/08/12/24-thousand-women-employees-in-civil-service-20-08.html>

215 Government of Nepal. (2015). *Armed police force regulation, 2015* (Article 9-3).



Police respectively.²¹⁶ Women were promoted up to the second position of the forces as Additional Inspector of General Police (AIGP) in both institutes and first-time woman led Central Investigation Burrow (CIB) of police as well in 2023. In Nepal army higher position occupied by women in brigadier general.²¹⁷ As the position to lead Nepal army is in second position in UN mission as peacekeeping and first biggest position as of women participation which is 648 out of 5,916 is total number currently in mission.²¹⁸

Constitutional bodies play a crucial role in overseeing government activities, monitoring policies, and making recommendations. Out of 13 constitutional commissions²¹⁹, only the National Women Commission has a woman chair. The rest of the 12 national commissions have one woman out of five members each, despite the fundamental right clearly stating the need for proportionate representation in all state mechanisms (Article 38-4).²²⁰

Among civic society organisations, a woman contested for the chair of the Federation of Nepal Journalists in the last election and has declared her candidacy again for the upcoming election. For the first time in history, currently woman has been elected as General Secretary of the Nepal Bar Association. However, in most other institutions, women are rarely encouraged to run for vital posts. Regarding the women's work, although the constitution mandates equal pay for equal work (Article 18-3), this principle is not upheld in private firms and the informal sector, where most women are employed. Many women workers do not even receive state-declared minimum wages.

As a social construct, there are vast diversities among women. Women from disadvantaged castes, classes, rural, and marginalised communities still experience relatively higher levels of gender disparities, particularly limited access to education, information, knowledge, skills, and resources such as land and property ownership, which are significantly linked with power.

Key Achievements

The fundamental characteristic of the Nepali women's movement is their collective effort to transform the political system. Once changes are made, they must continue to

216 Nepal Government. (2023). Annual progress report [Rastriya Kitabkhana (Prahari)]. Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration, Kathmandu.

217 Nepal Army. (n.d.). *Women in the army*. https://www.nepalarmy.mil.np/page/women_in_army

218 Nepal Army. (n.d.). *Nepal Army in UN operations*. https://www.nepalarmy.mil.np/page/na_in_un

219 Government of Nepal. (2015). Constitution of Nepal: Articles 21-27. <https://www.nepalconstitution.org/>

220 Nepal Govt. (2015). Constitution of Nepal. Government of Nepal, Kathmandu.



advocate with their male counterparts to secure their rights. An important consideration for Nepali women is that whenever they have come together beyond ideological barriers for a common cause, they have achieved significant progress. When they are divided along political lines, they struggle to implement politically achieved rights. Some key achievements related to decision-making, and power include:

- Women holding topmost positions, setting an example of breaking the gender glass ceiling, which helps build confidence and change the gender mindset about public positions.
- Legal achievements for Nepali women include mandatory lower ceilings of political participation and opportunities through reservation policies in various areas.
- The constitution guarantees equal rights to lineage, inheritance of property, proportional participation based on inclusiveness, maternity protection and reproductive health, protection against violence, and special rights to education, health, employment, and social security for women.
- The right to abortion and reproductive health is part of the "my body, my right" politics, a fundamental achievement from a feminist perspective.
- Harmful practices such as Chhaupadi, witchcraft accusations, dowry, child marriage, polygamy, and untouchability are criminalised. Incidents can be reported to authorities with demands for punishment and compensation for victims.
- Following IPU recommendations, parliamentary regulations have established, "Women Coordination Committee" to enable women member of parliaments (MPs) to unite across parties and advocate for common causes, enhancing their collective impact on gender issues.
- The percent of women household heads has increased to 31.6, and ownership of land and houses is 23.8 percent. The literacy rate for women is 69.4 percent. All these indicators positively impact decision-making capacity.
- Nepal is a signatory to CEDAW, fundamental workers' rights conventions of the ILO, major human rights conventions of the UN, SDGs and the BPfA.
- Women's participation in non-traditional sectors including politics, profession and employment is leading to change social dimension.



Gaps

- The constitution states that the State shall make legal provisions for implementing fundamental rights within three years of its commencement (Article 47). However, dozens of laws still need to be amended to enforce women's rights properly, which the state and political forces have not prioritised.
- Gender-based violence is an issue linked to power and participation. Violence against women in politics deters many women from joining politics. Politics is considered a male domain, and even though men may enter politics through family connections, for women this is viewed negatively.²²¹ Character assassination is another tool used against women in politics in relation to expectation of sexual favours which seriously damages their reputation and reduces public support for them.²²² Patriarchy views power as competency, efficiency, and eligibility associated with males, while women and gender minorities are marginalised. This issue reflects how state mechanisms, including political parties, perceive the feminisation of politics.
- Although women's numerical participation in decision-making body is significantly increasing, because of decisions are made by favourable small group, they do not have proportionate opportunities to exercise equal power and influence decisions.
- Women are often provided a one-time opportunity to be part of authority, which would mostly learning period. After their tenure, they lack social capital particularly networks among them to stay in touch and use their experiences. There is a serious gap in the space to continue their involvement and build further capacity for result-oriented action.
- Lack of sufficient and reliable database is deeper and wider gaps to launch sound campaign and make the voice for dignity and parity heard.

Challenges

- The aspiration for the inclusion of diversities has not been well respected, rather distorted voices are slowly being raised.

221 Silawal-Giri, B., Basnyat, K., Gautam, P., Nepal Gender Country Profile, European Delegation to Nepal, July 2021

222 UN Women and Centre for Social Research, Regional Study on Violence against Women in Politics, 2010



- Instead of inefficiency and feudal stigma in leadership, proportional representation is falsely blamed for unstable government. Now the leaders in ruling position are trying to challenge the policy and practice of social inclusion, especially in political institution.
- Most of the feminist elements have been included as provision of constitution, although the foundation of equality in citizenship provision has not accepted women as sovereign entity. Misunderstand and repelling the feminist perspective by leadership in rank and file is creating big barrier to make structural change in mind and mechanisms. It creates lacking proper understanding of gender needs, access, control over resources, and the importance of listening to the concerned groups before making decisions. It is major challenges of movement to achieve society with parity.
- Resource allocation to narrow down the gap is insufficient. Co-ordination to create the cooperation solidarity, collaborative effort and collective action among ministries and concerned networks are very weak or non-existent. As result, the possible opportunity to have better synergetic outcome is being lost.
- Participation is often measured quantitatively, but empowerment expects in qualitative performance. Even the non-governmental sector are investing resource in non-political sector and expecting result in politics is self-contradictory.
- The security sector is a masculine sector as it values attributes of physical strength.²²³ Such a predominant attitude views women as being physically weak and thus unfit for police or army²²⁴ and they are typically recruited in traditional gender roles of care-work such as nurses and doctors.
- A bigger challenge facing women in power and decision-making is conservative explanation of legal provisions that defeats the very purpose of reserved position for women in elections, ignoring the constitutional provision of progressive implementation of the articles. As result of misusing loophole in the Local Elections Act Article 17. 4, significantly decreased women in elected position.

223 Khadka, M., & Sunam, R., Work-Force Diversity and Reservation Policy in Nepal: A Strategic Approach to Strengthening Women's Voice and Visibility in Formal Employment Sector, ILO

224 Ibid



- Quota reservation can provide opportunity, but to make it use of changing status of women, hard work in coordinated way is necessary as value added. The people in position are not very clear on it.

Conclusion and Recommendations

- Awareness campaigns up to grassroots about fundamental rights and other legal provisions related with equality and dignity should be heart of the actions for parity. For the cause, the value of feminising the politics should be injected in mind and heart of the power posed team.
- Fully enforce fundamental rights, which supposed to be make/amend within three years of promulgation of constitution in 2015, should consider as priority agenda of the government and parliament.
- Guarantee women's spaces in every mechanism, including power positions as prescribed by the Constitution article 38-4 as proportionally based on the principle of inclusion.
- Ensure women's continued participation in political activities to enhance leadership quality in all state machineries, including party structures. Power positions should be gender balanced. Mentorship should be promoted at every level, sector, gender, and community to broaden understanding of issues, roles, and responsibilities.
- Establish mechanisms at every level with fully capacitated human resources to address GBV in power and decision-making to enforce the Anti-Sexual Harassment in the Work-Place Act.
- Conduct regular gender audits of cultural changes, budgeting, and activities, including systematic research, to produce relevant and reliable data-based on women in power and decision-making for monitoring progress and development of strategic interventions to promote gender balance in decision -making in every level and sector.
- Manage institutional memory and capacity with set targets in all state mechanisms to expand and strengthen outcomes and produce time-bound tangible impacts in society.



- Adopt political party reforms focusing on transparency, accountability, and effective governance practices for fulfilling affirmative actions, pertaining to women’s proportional participation and representation in all structures of the party apparatus.
- Allocate and invest enough resources to the area by government and non-governmental organisation as well, where the outcome is expected to bring. For example, if the most of the outcome expected from politics, they also should include in the process of making agenda and recommendation.
- Finally, achieving the gender balanced and just society, Co-operational solidarity, Collaborative effort and Collective action is essential. For the cause, to create the result-oriented intervention, should strengthen wider network, effecting campaign and lobbying based on common agenda, regardless of any diversity.

2.2.8 Institutional Mechanism for the Advancement of Women

Present Status

Nepal has made significant strides in establishing institutional mechanisms to address the critical needs of women and girls across federal, provincial, and local levels. In response to the 4th World Conference in Beijing in 1995, the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens (MoWCSC) was founded in 1996. This Ministry is tasked with formulating, implementing, monitoring, and ensuring accountability for policies that advance the rights of women and girls, people with disabilities, senior citizens, and sexual and gender minorities, in alignment with Nepal's international commitments to CEDAW, CERD, BPfA, and SDG 5. Additionally, MoWCSC plays a key role in mainstreaming Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI). However, despite these responsibilities, the MoWCSC remains limited by insufficient financial and human resources, hindering its capacity to effectively influence government initiatives for gender justice and fully achieve the goals of the BPfA.

The National Women Commission (NWC), established as a statutory body in 2002 and elevated to an autonomous constitutional body in 2015, is dedicated to advancing the rights of women and girls and promoting gender equality. The NWC plays a critical role



in advocating for legislative and policy reforms and supporting programmes aligned with Nepal's commitments to CEDAW.

The National Gender Equality (GE) Policy 2021 was established to address deep-rooted inequalities stemming from patriarchal norms affecting women, girls, sexual and gender minorities, and marginalised communities. It outlines four core objectives: (i) establish policy and structural mechanisms to promote the social advancement of women, adolescents, and children; (ii) eliminate discrimination and gender-based violence (GBV); (iii) implement gender-responsive governance; and (iv) achieve economic empowerment for women. The Policy prioritises economic, social, and political empowerment of women and aims to secure both de jure and de facto equality across genders. To ensure effective implementation, a Five-Year National Plan of Action was endorsed by the Council of Ministers in December 2023.

The National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace, and Security II (September 2022 – September 2025) was endorsed by the government on 22 September 2022. Monitoring of NAP I revealed gaps, particularly in sectoral ministries' integration of NAP into their plans and programmes. The collection and documentation of data on conflict-affected women and the underlying causes of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV), as well as addressing survivors' specific needs, were also unmet. NAP II addresses these shortcomings by prioritising victims and survivors of CRSV, providing them access to the same relief measures available to other conflict-affected groups. As with NAP I, NAP II will be implemented by a High-Level Steering Committee, with engagement at the sub-national level from district committees, civil society organisations (CSOs), and development partners.

An institutional mechanism to combat human trafficking operates at multiple levels, including the House of Representatives, various ministries, and the National Committee for Controlling Human Trafficking under the Government of Nepal. The Anti-Human Trafficking Bureau (AHTB), directed by the Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) of the Nepal Police, is a specialised unit addressing human trafficking and illegal transportation both domestically, regionally, and across borders.²²⁵ Additionally, One-stop Crisis

225 Bureau, A. H. (2024). Anti-Human Trafficking Bureau, Police Office. <https://ahtb.nepalpolice.gov.np/>



Management Centres (OCMCs) under the Ministry of Health and Population provide comprehensive services to all GBV survivors, especially women and children. These services encompass medical, legal, mental health support, security, shelter, rehabilitation, and initiatives for awareness and empowerment.

A Steering Committee led by the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens (MoWCSC), including representatives from all ministries and disability advocates, has been established to implement the Act related to the rights of Persons with Disabilities. This Committee is tasked with coordinating, monitoring, and promoting activities that ensure rights, access to services, and protections for Persons with Disabilities. The Act also mandates the creation of Provincial-level committees and coordination committees at the local level. Furthermore, Chapter 4 of the Act Relating to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2017²²⁶ permits the appointment of a protection officer within local governments.

The Department of Social Development and the Women Development Unit are essential institutional mechanisms for coordinating, facilitating, and promoting Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) within local government. GEDSI mainstreaming is mandated by the Local Government Operational Act, 2017. Additionally, the Government of Nepal established the National Child Rights Council (NCRC) under Section 59 of the Children’s Act, 2018, transforming the former Central Child Welfare Board (originally formed under the Children’s Act, 1992). The Council is chaired by the Minister of MoWCSC.²²⁷

Key Achievements

The Government of Nepal is implementing National Gender Equality Policy 2021 (GESI) through its all ministries and departments at the federal level, including at the provincial and municipal levels. The Provincial and Governance Support Programme (PLGSP) serves as the government mechanism to coordinate policy support, institution development, and capacity building on GESI issues at the provincial and local levels of

²²⁶ Government of Nepal. (2017). *The Act Relating to Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, 2074.

²²⁷ National Information Tabloid, Vol 1, No 4, Dec 2020, National Child Rights Council.



government.²²⁸ There is a provision for a Gender Focal Person in Federal ministries and Gender Experts at provincial level under PLGSP.

The Government of Nepal has established a provision of designated legal persons/advisers in district courts and municipal level Justice Committee as per section 47 (1) of Local Government Operation Act 2017, judicial committees have the authority to settle disputes related to certain types of disputes, and to refer others to either the district court for formal adjudication or to community mediation centres for reconciliation, provide free legal support to victims of GBV, including rape and human trafficking. Additionally, a provision has been introduced for sign language interpreters in district police offices.

As a part of the implementation of the National GE Policy 2021, the Government of Nepal introduced the GESI Strategy (2021-2023), GESI Audit Guideline (2021), and Gender-Responsive Budget (GRB) Guideline 2021. Additionally, the National Children Policy, 2024 has introduced the provision of the National Non-Directive Committee led by MoWCSC to ensure effective implementation at the province and local levels through coordination, facilitation, monitoring, and mainstreaming of the policy. The National Coordination Committee was established based on the National Strategy to End Child Marriage, 2024 and the National Policy related to Persons with Disabilities 2024. Procedure for Updating Data and Records, and Collecting and Updating Statistics on Women, Children, Senior Citizens, and Persons with Disability, 2021.²²⁹

Targeted interventions through the GESI Audit, GRB, GESI Strategy are being applied to mainstream and institutionalise GESI in the plans and policies of provincial and local governments through PLGSP. GESI checklists ensure the participation of women and excluded communities in programme cycle management and capacity building initiatives.²³⁰

The Ministry of Health and Population established 93 OCMCs in 77 districts based on Operational Guideline of OCMC 2020-2021. However, the capacity of OCMCs is limited

228 PLGSP. (2024, July 30). PLGSP Provincial And Local Governance Support Programme. Administration, Government of Nepal Ministry of Federal Affairs and General: <https://plgsp.gov.np/index.php/about>

229 Procedure for Updating Data and Records, and Collecting and Updating Statistics on Women, Children, Senior Citizens, and Persons with Disability, 2021

230 PLGSP. (2022-23). *Annual Progress Report*. Government of Nepal, MoFAaGA, PLGSP, (Page 59-60).



to providing services due to insufficient human and other resources. Likewise, NCRC is facilitating to protect (rescue, protection, management and unaccompanied) of girls and boys through various activities such as Centre for Children At-Risk (104), Child Helpline 1,098 including coordination and collaboration activities, information management and reporting.

The National Policy on Persons with Disabilities, 2024, in Clause No. 12, defines the institutional mechanism at the federal level as a national directive committee led by the Minister of MoWCSC, a provincial committee led by the concerned minister, and a coordination committee led by the Deputy Mayor/Vice Chairperson of the local government (LG). The federal-level committee is responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of the policy through monitoring, coordination, and facilitation. Similarly, the provincial committee is responsible for designing programmes and implementing them in the field. LGs are responsible for mainstreaming disability rights into their laws, policies, programmes, and action plans. The Act of 2017 ensures the participation of Persons with Disabilities in decision-making structures. However, the participation of women with disabilities is seen as an ornament, and government programmes are guided by a welfare approach, which contradicts the Constitution of Nepal, the Disability Act of 2017, and its National Policy 2024.

Gaps

- Diversity among women's participation has not been adequately addressed within all government institutional mechanisms and structures.
- The capacity of OCMCs is insufficient, with limited human and other resources to function properly.
- Care and support mechanisms for senior citizens, including psychosocial and well-being services, are lacking at the local level.
- Government policy ensures childcare centres for working women in offices. However, such policy is not properly followed in practice, becoming a barrier for women's career development and professional work.
- Lack of awareness and legal challenges in women's citizenship rights limit their ability to obtain vital documents (birth, marriage, divorce, death, and migration certificates), which are related to their citizenship rights.



- There is an almost complete absence of women in disaster management committees, including disaster search and rescue teams, the National Council for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM). There is 1 female member out of 7 in the Prime Minister-led DRRM. Similarly, there are 3 female Chief District Officers out of 77 in District Disaster Management Committees.²³¹
- The dismantling of District Women and Children Development Offices and their reduction to Women Development Officers under the Social Development Department has created a significant gap in addressing the issues of women, children, senior citizens, and people with disabilities in the field.
- The limited expertise and authority of gender focal persons in government institutions restricting their effectiveness and influence within their respective ministries and departments.
- Implementing the GRB approach in practice is a significant challenge. The nominal resource allocation includes a small budget of Rs. 994 lakhs for NWC to raise issues, monitor government performance, and make recommendations to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Similarly, NPR 178.43 million for MoWCSC. This ministry has a crucial role in working toward gender justice and empowerment of women and girls, coordinating and reinforcing across all ministries to mainstream the essence of national gender equality policy into practice. Its clear under 0.03 percent budget allocation for gender equality SDG indicators.²³²
- The absence of a women's caucus in parliament weakens the collective voice of women parliamentarians, reducing their ability to unite and exert pressure on their colleagues to be more responsive to inclusive gender equality in their policy work.
- The polarisation of the women's rights movement based on identity and political party affiliations weakens the collective voice and undermines the essence of the Constitution of Nepal.
- The political will and alliance-building culture in the nomination of candidates at all levels of elections, and in the formation of federal and provincial governments, is limiting women's meaningful participation in government institutions.

231 Wikipedia contributors. (n.d.). District administration in Nepal. In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopaedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/District_administration_in_Nepal

232 FY 2079/80 budget speech, Ministry of Finance, Government of Nepal, 2079 (annex 9, page 26) www.mof.gov.np



- The dominance of patriarchal stereotypes, social norms, and values is rampant in society. Very few people are truly gender-responsive or view issues from a women's perspective, as advocated by the BPfA. Most political leaders, government officials, and even civil society remain entrenched in these traditional norms and values.

Challenges

- Unstable government, and poor governance practices are making the government unaccountable to citizens, resulting in low ownership at the provincial and local levels. An unstable government led to less accountable to citizens, resulting in low ownership at the provincial and local levels. For example, In the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, there have been four prime ministers in the last five years (15-Feb 2018 to Aug 2024), with one person serving as prime minister two times.²³³ This practice has led to weak ownership and accountability toward previous decisions and constitutional provisions. The federal government failed to fulfil constitutional provision such as 33 percent representation of women in the cabinet at the federal and provincial levels, 50/50 gender balance in key positions of local government, and has experienced frequent changes of prime ministers and cabinet ministers including provincial governments. As a result, weak implementation of their own commitments into practice.
- Persistent gender stereotypes, discrimination, weak enforcement mechanisms, and a lack of accountability hinder the fulfilment of national and international commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Weak implementation of evidence-based recommendations made by National Commissions (e.g. NWC) and CSOs/WROs and excluded communities. Such as in 2022, only one out of ten recommendations were implemented.²³⁴
- Insufficient involvement of critical CSOs/WROs and marginalised communities in the development or amendment of national policies and plans.

233 Jagran Josh. (2024, August 10). *Prime ministers of Nepal*. <https://www.jagranjosh.com/general-knowledge/prime-ministers-of-nepal-1626097279-1>

234 National Women Commission (2022). *Annual Report 2022*, p.146. https://nwc.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Inner_NWC_Annual_Book_Ashoj_2079_CTP_Done.pdf



- Lack of data analysis through a GESI and disability lens in policy decisions, resource allocation and implementation of recommendations.
- Insufficient inter-agency coordination and limited capacity and accountability of institutions in implementing existing policies and recommendations.
- The increasing trend of focusing on caste/ethnicity-based identities and party-based rather than issue-based concerns is weakening the women's rights movement, as clearly reflected in political parties and civil society. This trend is diminishing the strength of people's voices for the cause.

Emerging Challenges

- Fragmented efforts lead to ineffective utilisation of available resources due to improper planning.
- Gender focal persons are usually appointed at the low levels and lack authority, capacity and resources to mainstream gender, which has the effect of just ‘adding’ and ‘stirring’ gender issues as an afterthought diminishing the importance of gender mainstreaming.
- Although GRB is gaining strength over the years in Nepal, weak institutional mechanisms with limited budgets, such as MoWCSC whose budget for this fiscal year is 0.01 percent makes it challenging to implement laws, monitor and co-ordinate gender issues at all levels of the government.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Nepal has demonstrated a strong commitment to the BPfA by implementing policies and initiatives aimed at advancing gender equality and empowering women and girls. The government introduces various laws, acts, policies, and programmes to meet its national and international commitments to gender justice. It has established various institutional mechanisms at the federal, provincial, and local levels to effectively implement these commitments.

However, the domination of patriarchal stereotypes, social norms, and values restricts the achievement of the goal of gender justice, leading to an unstable government and weak



accountability towards its citizens. For instance, diversity among women has not been adequately addressed within all government institutional mechanisms and structures, the implementation of the GRB guideline is weak, and recommendations from the NWC and CSOs on women's rights are not effectively implemented.

Recommendations

- Enforce the provisions of Constitution's Article 38 that calls for proportional inclusion²³⁵ representation of women (51.1 percent out of total population)²³⁶ in all state bodies at all three levels of government, civil service, political appointment such as Commissions and Ambassadorship including by amending conflicting articles in the Constitution (articles 82,70, 176 that deals with women's political representation making mandatory of 50/50 gender (inclusive) representative in all institutions including election.
- Ensure that federal, provincial, and local governments achieve an inclusive gender balance, especially in key positions such as President and Vice President, Speaker and Deputy Speaker, Mayor and Deputy Mayor, Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, etc.
- Ensure that all political parties adhere to the essence of Article 38 (4) of the Constitution of Nepal 2015, both in the registration of political parties and in the nomination of candidates for all levels of elections. Additionally, the National Election Commission should take necessary actions to enforce these requirements.
- Amend the article on citizenship in the constitution to address gender discrimination and ensure that women are recognised as independent citizens of the country, equal to men.
- Strengthen the financial, human resources, and overall capacity of MoWCSC to make it a strong entity among ministries and ensure that its voice is heard
- Strengthen the capacities of NWC with commensurate resources both financially and technically to enable it to act as a critical intermediary between government and civil society to dismantle patriarchy and gender stereotypes and advance gender equality to meet the stated objectives of BPfA, SDGs and CEDAW.

235 Constitution of Nepal 2015, Clause 38

236 National Population and Housing Census 2021, National Statistic Office, Nepal



- Incorporate GRB in the Public Financial Management System to improve effectiveness and efficiency in gender-responsive budget allocation and expenditures in line with international commitments on gender equality and for enhancing accountability and transparency in public fund use in order to ensure economic delivery of public services especially to the women who are disadvantaged and discriminated in terms of socio-economic standing, those living with disabilities, older women and sexual and gender minorities so that they are not left behind
- Establish an autonomous National Commission for Persons with Disabilities, ensuring proportional representation of women with disabilities and adequate budget allocation.
- Establish an autonomous National Commission of Older Persons specially to address the socio-economic status of older women including medical and mental issues as women are living longer than men.
- Regulate and enhance the safety of foreign employment for all Nepali workers through bilateral agreements with respective destination countries, while ensuring that women's mobility and livelihood rights are not restricted. Additionally, hold manpower companies and the embassies of Nepal in the respective countries accountable.
- Establish specific mechanism to address sexual abuse and exploitation in all institutional mechanism in all level and sectors.
- Strengthen National Information Commission information dissemination mechanism to reach all necessary information to people benefitting government services
- Make physical infrastructure more inclusive and disability-friendly, as many government buildings are not accessible to individuals with disabilities, hindering their participation in important discussions and access to services
- Define an institutional mechanism to provide in-depth training for elected government representatives, like that provided to government officials, to make them efficient in delivering services to the public according to their roles and responsibilities
- Strengthen the offices of gender focal points in all the 754 local bodies including in the seven provinces for effective mainstreaming of gender issues.
- Enlist meaningful participation of qualified experts from critical civil society groups (CSOs/WROs) at different levels in situation an analysis, policy and programme development, and monitoring/evaluation.
- Establish comprehensive monitoring and accountability mechanisms to ensure that constitutional provisions and gender-related policies are implemented effectively at all levels of government.



- Evaluate the effectiveness of current structures and institutions through research and systematise data collection to enhance functionality.
- Conduct research to identify ways in which people's representatives can work more effectively and investigate why the current structures are not functioning as intended.

2.2.9 Human Rights of Women

Present Status

Nepal is a state party to Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol. Apart from this, Nepal is also state party with other international human rights instruments. They include International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). They are committed to guarantee women's human rights for gender equality and women's empowerment. These international commitments have been domesticated through legislation of corresponding Acts. Most importantly, the 2015 Constitution embraces the principles of non-discrimination and gender equality.

Although some rights were guaranteed to women in 1975 during the International's Women's Year, it was the Constitution of 2007 (Interim Constitution) and 2015 (Constitution of Nepal) that granted various rights to the women. Those rights include equal citizenship by the mother to transfer her citizenship to her children, property rights, rights against torture, legal rights etc.²³⁷

Women's population in Nepal occupies 51.1 percent according to the 2021 census. However, the birth ration is at 95.6 percent. Gender inequality in Nepal remains high, as indicated by its Global Gender Gap Index score of 0.664, ranking it 117th out of 146 countries in 2024.²³⁸

Nepal ranks 54th in the world in terms of women participation with 33.5 percent women in House of Representatives and 37.3 percent in National Assembly.²³⁹ Similarly, Nepal

237 Singh RK & Jha, J.(2024). *Hindu jurisprudence as the basis and source of Nepalese family laws: An Investigation*. Journal of Family Law and Culture, 2(2): 145-168.

238 World Economic Forum (2024). The Global Gender Gap: Insight Report. <https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-gender-gap-report-2024>

239 Inter-Parliamentary Union. (n.d.). *Women in national parliaments*. <https://www.ipu.org/>



ranks 20th in the world with 41.2 percent representation of women at the local level.²⁴⁰ In 2022, the number of women in the civil service has increased to 26.6 percent.²⁴¹ A reservation of 33 percent seats in the civil service has been provisioned for women in order to make the Nepalese workforce more inclusive.²⁴² Women's labour force participation is only 28.7 percent, compared to 53.9 percent for men.²⁴³ Likewise, 49.9 percent of women and 58.6 percent of men in Nepal have bank accounts as of 2021.²⁴⁴ Men are overrepresented in high-income economic professions such as managers or technicians. Women are concentrated in primary occupations and jobs related to agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Only 34.4 percent of women have share on agricultural land.²⁴⁵ Likewise, 11 percent of women have effective control over their wealth.²⁴⁶

Crimes against women, including domestic violence, rape and others, increased from 15,559 in 2017/18 to 21,311 in 2021/22.²⁴⁷ The number of domestic violence victims increased from 12,225 in 2017/18 to 17,000 in 2021/22. In the same period, official complaints about rapes increased from 1,480 to 2,380.²⁴⁸ The number of incidents that go unreported and obscured to the police may be higher. Women have not been able to come out of the vicious cycle of violence due to evil practices based on social and cultural norms. Women have been victims of alleged witchcraft, violence, discrimination during menstruation, mental and physical torture due to dowry, child marriage and other evil practices. Further, 5903 women were victims of these cases as of 2023.²⁴⁹ Despite the strong laws against domestic violence, Chhaupadi, child marriage, caste discrimination, such cases have not yet been reduced.

Chhaupadi, the taboo ritual of keeping women to menstrual period huts, was outlawed

240 UN Women. (n.d.). *Women's participation in decision-making*. <http://www.unwomen.org>

241 Nepal Outlook (2024). Nepal Outlook | Believe in Data. <https://nepaloutlook.com/>

242 MoWCSC (2024). Gender equality in Nepal: Facts and figures. Government of Nepal. <https://mowcsc.gov.np/downloadfiles/Gender-Equality-Report-1715242038.pdf>

243 Data Catalog. (2023). *Women labor force participation in Nepal 2023: An exploration of the role of social norms*. <https://datacatalog.worldbank.org/search/dataset/0066098/Nepal>

244 Human Rights Watch. (2023). *Nepal's historic achievement on marriage equality*. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/05/25/nepals-historic-achievement-marriage-equality>.

245 Government of Nepal. (2023). *National sample census of agriculture, Nepal, 2021/22*.

246 Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). (2019). *Nepal Labour Force Survey 2017/18*. Kathmandu: Government of Nepal.

247 CBS (2022). *Statistical Year Book of Nepal 2022*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Central Bureau of Statistics.

248 Nepal Police Headquarters. (2022). *Crime Investigation Department, Records and Analysis Section: Report 2017/18-2021/22*. Kathmandu: Nepal Police..

249 INSEC (2023). Nepal Human Rights Year Book, 2023



in 2005 by the Supreme Court and passed order to form the guidelines. However, this practice persists in different forms and is still prevalent in Sudurpaschim and Karnali provinces of western Nepal. In the last 10 years, 14 women have lost their lives due to smoke inhalation, cold and snake bite in the huts.²⁵⁰

Another serious crime against women is associated with the dowry system. The incidents of dowry deaths have increased over the years. In 2023, 109 cases of dowry deaths were reported. There has been no reduction in the incidents of accused so-called witch.²⁵¹

Key Achievements

To improve the free legal aid system, the Ministry of Law, Justice, and Parliamentary Affairs has introduced a comprehensive policy aimed at reforming its delivery.²⁵² Additionally, the Office of the Attorney General has launched the, “Government Advocate in the Community” programme to increase access to justice for excluded populations in local communities.²⁵³ The judiciary has established several outreach mechanisms to enhance access to justice for women and marginalised communities.²⁵⁴ These include an integrated legal aid policy, pro-bono guidelines, provisions for court-appointed lawyers, and collaboration with commissions like the National Women Commission and Dalit Commission, as well as NGOs, all working together to strengthen access to justice.

The judiciary has set landmark decisions in numerous cases of women’s human rights violations, reinforcing the protection and promotion of gender equality grounded in human rights principles.²⁵⁵ The Supreme Court of Nepal's landmark decision rejected the amended National Code provisions allowing a husband to re-marry if his wife was incurably ill, ruling that such laws were inconsistent with gender justice and human rights, and directed the government to align the provisions with the Interim Constitution and CEDAW.

250 INSEC. (2024). *Chapter 5.7 Sudurpashchim*. https://inseconline.org/np/wpcontent/uploads/2024/02/Chapter_5.7_Sudurpashchim_Page%20309-340.pdf

251 INSEC (2024). Nepal Human Rights Year Book 2023.

252 MoLIA(2021). Unified Legal Aid Policy, 2020. <https://www.moljpa.gov.np/wpcontent/uploads/2020/01>

253 Office of the Attorney General. (2023). Attorney General Annual Report FY 2022/23. Office of the Attorney General, Nepal. https://ag.gov.np/storage/postFile/Annual%20Report%2007980_1706021784.pdf

254 CEDAW Seventh Periodic Report, Nepal 2023, para. 24.

255 National Judicial Academy, Nepal/UN Women. (2021). Compendium of landmark judgements of the supreme court of Nepal on gender justice and equality. Nepal. <https://njanepal.org.np/public/reports/21040752654-landmark-decision-english.pdf>



In 2015, according to Human Rights Watch, Nepal ranked within the 10 countries in the world to protect the rights of sexual minorities in the constitution. Some provisions were made in accordance with the Supreme Court's order on 28 June 2023, including marriage in the same gender and legal registration of marriage. The Article 18 (1) of the Constitution asserts that "No citizen shall be deprived of the equal protection of the laws," and Article 18 (2) prohibits discrimination based on various grounds, including sex. In response to a case advocating for marital equality, the Supreme Court issued an interim order on 28 June 2023, to register same-sex marriages.

The Constitution of Nepal prohibits discrimination based on gender, ethnic origin, colour, political belief or religious or sexual orientation. Further, Article 18 guarantees the right to social justice and proportional representation of women. Sub-section (1) of this Article provides that "all citizens shall be equal before the law" and "no one shall be deprived of the equal protection of the laws." Similarly, Article 38 of the Constitution guarantees the equal rights of women.

The Constitution provides for 33 percent participation of women in every organ of the state, 40 percent participation of women at the local level, provision of women and Dalit women members, provision of different genders or communities in key political positions. Likewise, women's ministry, women's commission, ministerial departments, emergency one stop crisis management centre in District hospitals, women children and senior citizens unit under Nepal Police which is in 77 districts are provisioned.²⁵⁶

To increase the number of female teachers, arrangements to provide allowance and residential teacher training to girls in remote areas who have passed Class 8 and SEE (formerly SLC), as well as to enroll at least one female teacher in primary schools have been made.²⁵⁷

Gaps

There is still a significant lack of awareness about women's human rights and Nepal's

256 MoWCSC (2024). Gender Equality in Nepal: Facts and Figures. Government of Nepal. <https://mowcsc.gov.np/downloadfiles/Gender-Equality-Report-1715242038.pdf>

257 Flash I Report (2022/23) media_file-17-1330449615.pdf (cehrd.gov.np)



national and international commitments among both the public and civil servants or service providers.

- There are still the cases of persistent violations of reproductive rights, such as forced sterilisations, restrictions on abortion and lack of access to family planning services.
- The CEDAW Committee Concluding Observations on the sixth periodic report of Nepal recommendations have not been fully implemented.²⁵⁸
- Although a Gender-Responsive Budget Committee has been established in the Ministry of Finance, the use of GRB methodology is yet to be adopted by the Federal Ministries, particularly MoWCSC, NHRC, NWC or civil society organisations working on women’s rights.²⁵⁹
- The provision of “equal rights” in the Constitution of Nepal is yet to be understood in Nepal. Sub-section (2) has guaranteed that there shall not be discrimination on women. However, the reality is far from the realisation. While the constitution ensures proportional inclusion of women in state bodies, there lacks efforts in capacitating them for their meaningful and impactful role-taking.

Challenges

- Despite the constitutional guarantees for women and girls, they continue to face multiple challenges due to deeply rooted patriarchal mindsets ingrained in societal norms and values. These challenges are further compounded by discriminatory family laws imposed by the state in the 1830s, based on the Hindu religion and philosophy.^{260, 261, 262}
- Cultural and social norms based on patriarchal values have continued to perpetuate harmful traditional practices against girls and women. For example, even after,

258 National Women Commission (2021). A Study on the Implementation Status of Concluding Observations of United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) on the Sixth Periodic Report of Nepal June 2021. <https://nwc.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Final-Book-with-cover.pdf>

259 FWLD (2024). Civil Society’s Submission for “List of Issues on 7th Periodic Report of Nepal. Submitted to 89th Pre-sessional Working Group of CEDAW Committee. Forum for Women, Law and Development. Nepal.

260 FWLD (2006). An update of discriminatory laws in Nepal and their impact on women: A review of the current situation and proposals for change. Forum for Women, Law and Development, Nepal.

261 FWLD (2009). A study on discriminatory laws against women, Dalit, ethnic community, religious minorities and persons with disabilities. Forum for Women, Law and Development. Nepal.

262 Siddiqui, SA. (2023). Manusmriti’s family system and family disputes in Nepal (Nepali). family publication. Nepal.



nearly 17 years of the release of the 2007 Directive on the Elimination of Chhaupadi Misconduct, it has not been effectively implemented.

- A lackluster performance of judicial committee at municipal level, and non-functional GBV Elimination fund at local level, accompanied by confusions among the three tiers of government are hindering efforts in providing recovery and rehabilitation of GBV survivors.
- With the plan to relocate Nepal to a developing country in 2026, it seems that it will lag in terms of social security and inclusion and by the time the provisions of the law are implemented, the difficulties can be seen. The social protection floor too faces the significant challenges. This is particularly seen in women working in the informal sector. These women are generally excluded from formal legislation and safety nets. This undermines their resilience, leaving them vulnerable during disasters and humanitarian crisis. This was clearly highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, lack of sexual education hinders awareness and understanding of crucial sexual health matters.

Conclusion and Recommendations

- Prioritise implementing the CEDAW Committee’s recommendations by amending discriminatory laws, enacting non-discriminatory legislation, and ratifying or acceding to relevant international conventions.²⁶³
- Ensure the effective implementation of existing laws on women’s rights and gender equality across federal, provincial, and local levels. For that, institutions should be strengthened, and monitoring mechanisms within those institutions should be effective and investments should be ensured.
- Repeal all remaining constitutional and legal provisions that discriminate against women and girls, particularly in matters of nationality.
- In the 2021 census, a total of 2,928 people, 0.01 percent of the total population, answered "other" to the gender question. To accurately capture the sexual and gender

263 National Women Commission (2021). A Study on the Implementation Status of Concluding Observations of United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) on the Sixth Periodic Report of Nepal June 2021. <https://nwc.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Final-Book-with-cover.pdf>



minority population in future censuses, it is essential to enhance the questionnaire by including more inclusive and detailed options for general identification. Additionally, training enumerators on the importance of this topic and how to sensitively address it is crucial. These will help ensure, the data more accurately reflects the true size and diversity of the population, allowing for better informed policies and services.

- Amend and implement laws to align with the provisions and spirit of the Constitution, particularly focusing on the Citizenship Act, property rights, and fully proportional representation. Additionally, prioritise reforms in education, health, and capacity-building investments to ensure equitable access and opportunities for all citizens.
- Ensure that inclusiveness within women, as defined by the Convention on Disability and the Convention against Discrimination, is fully integrated into the legislative process. The state should take responsibility for protecting and supporting Dalits, disabled women, gender and sexual minority women, Madhesis, single women, tribal communities, Tharus, Muslims, the poor, rural populations, and religious minorities, ensuring their rights and representation in all aspects of governance and society.
- Address the issue of citizenship with particular attention to the needs of children of single women and gender minorities, as the lack of citizenship deprives individuals of essential state services, licenses, bank accounts, higher education, property rights, and voting rights. Ensuring their right to citizenship is crucial for their full participation in society.
- Establish special provisions to ensure that women can fully enjoy their basic human rights and freedoms, with a particular focus on securing justice for victims of armed conflict and addressing the needs of those affected by disasters. These measures are essential to protect and empower women in vulnerable situations.
- To accelerate the achievement of women's equality, the government should implement special provisions, such as positive distinctions by directly reserving constituencies for women voters. This approach will help ensure greater representation and participation of women in the political process.
- Promote social and cultural transformation through collective engagement of both women and men to eradicate prejudice, traditional discrimination, and other forms of



discrimination. This collaborative effort is essential for achieving true gender equality and societal change.

- Empowerment programmes to support leadership, social cohesions and financial independence and access to information technology should be promoted.
- Establish Fast Track Court for cases of violence against women rights and conducting regular hearing for timely and efficient decisions.

2.2.10. Women and Media

Present Status

The media industry in Nepal is predominantly male-dominated, with men occupying most top management positions, as well as roles as editors and owners of media houses. Currently, there are 7,853 registered newspapers, 1,186 radio stations, 243 television channels, and 4,061 online media outlets in Nepal.²⁶⁴ Among the 13,077 members of the Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ), only 2,408 are female journalists, resulting in just 25% of journalists and 6% of editors being women in Nepali newsrooms.²⁶⁵ Following the restoration of democracy in 1990, Nepal implemented three key national policies: the Press Policy, 1990, the National Media Policy, 1992, and the Long-term Media Policy, 2002. While these policies addressed overall media development strategies, they lacked specific provisions for advancing women within the industry. These earlier policies have since been replaced by the Mass Communication Policy, 2016.

The Mass Communication Policy, 2016, enacted on 22 July 2016, envisions the development of an inclusive and equitable information society by fostering a free and participatory media landscape.²⁶⁶ This policy promotes freedom of communication media, classifies media based on investment, adopts a clean feed policy, and establishes that online media will be classified and treated equally to other news media.

²⁶⁴ Department of Information and Broadcasting, Kathmandu, Nepal

²⁶⁵ Nepal News. (2022, December 8). *Women journalists-friendly policies emphasised*. <https://nepalnews.com/s/nation/women-journalist-friendly-policies-emphasised>

²⁶⁶ Dahal, T., & Sigdel, S. (2016). *The state of media freedom*. National Mass Communication Policy 2016, Freedom Forum. https://ifex.org/images/nepal/2017/01/23/nepal_national_mass_communications_policy_freedom_forum.pdf



Key Achievements

Of the 25 percent of women journalists in the media, very few holds decision-making roles; 41.5 percent are news presenters, 29.3 percent are correspondents, and only 2.9 percent are bureau chiefs.²⁶⁷ Despite the small percentage of women in journalism, their numbers have grown significantly over the years. The BPfA has highlighted critical areas of concern in media, prompting women in the industry to organise for their rights and enhance their skills. In 1996, a group of women journalists formed *Sancharika Samuha* to advocate for their rights. A decade later, another group came together to establish the ‘Working Women Journalists organisation’.

The National Mass Communication Policy, 2016, addresses gender-specific challenges by including provisions that ensure women's participation in all bodies formed under it.²⁶⁸ These bodies include the Public Service Broadcasting, Media Council, National Mass Communication Authority, National Mass Communication Training Academy, National Mass Communication Museum, and Advertisement Board. A primary objective of the policy is to increase women's participation in mass media and strengthen the skills of women journalists. Additionally, the policy aims to eradicate all forms of discrimination and exploitation in society by advocating for principles of proportional inclusion and participation.

The Mass Media Policy, 2017, aims to increase women's involvement in the mass media and enhance their professional capabilities. Additionally, the policy seeks to eradicate all forms of discrimination and exploitation by implementing inclusive and participatory principles that effectively leverage ICT.²⁶⁹ The Information Technology (IT) Bill, 2017, addresses a wide range of issues, including e-commerce, tech innovation, cybersecurity, and cyberbullying.²⁷⁰ However, human rights activists, civil society organisations, and journalists have raised concerns that the Act may curtail online freedom of expression, breach data privacy, and increase surveillance on citizens.

267 Sancharika Samuha. (2016). *Research on professional journalists in Nepal*. https://www.sancharika.org/portal/html/images/item_images/files/All_Sancharika_English_Survey_book_2016.

268 Koirala, S. (2022). *Gender equality in new media Nepal*. <https://mediapolicy.org.np/2022/05/media-policy-reviews-recommendations/3312/>

269 Government of Nepal. (2017). *The Mass Media Policy, 2017*. Kathmandu, Nepal.

270 The state of media freedom in Nepal. Published by international Press Institute on Dec. 7, 2021. <https://ipi.media/the-state-of-media-freedom-in-nepal/>



The Advertisement Act, 2019, ensures sensitivity in addressing women's issues and mandates the participation of at least one woman on the Advertisement Board.²⁷¹ Meanwhile, the government has registered the Media Council Bill, 2024, in Parliament to replace the Press Council Bill while retaining some controversial provisions regarding press freedom and credible journalism.²⁷²

The Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens of Nepal has introduced four major strategies under the "National Implementation Plan for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion" to mainstream gender in the media.²⁷³ These strategies emphasise the importance of gender sensitivity, portray positive images of women, increase women's involvement in decision-making within the media, and develop alternative media structures. To combat cybercrimes, the Directives for the Management of Social Media Use were enacted on November 9, 2023.²⁷⁴ These directives require social media platforms, such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, and YouTube, to register with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology and maintain a point of contact in Nepal.

The Council of Ministers approved the National Cyber Security Policy, 2023, on August 8, 2023.²⁷⁵ This policy outlines goals, objectives, strategies, and action plans related to cyber security, with a long-term vision centered on creating a resilient cyberspace. It aims to establish legal and institutional frameworks to ensure a secure online environment, mitigate cyber-attack risks, and safeguard critical national infrastructure. The policy details nine specific strategies and associated action plans. Additionally, Nepal has adopted the Gender-Based Violence Prevention (Second Amendment) Fund Operations Regulations, 2019.

271 Kathmandu Post. (2024, April 28). *Government retains disputed provisions in new media council bill*. <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2024/04/28/government-retains-disputed-provisions-in-new-media-council-bill>

272 Freedom Forum. (n.d.). *Amend media council bill*. <https://freedomforum.org.np/amend-media-council-bill/>

273 Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration. (2021). *Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy, 2021-2023*. Provincial and Local Governance Support Programme (PLGSP). https://api.giwms.gov.np/storage/22/posts/1663070704_52.pdf

274 Government of Nepal. (2023). *CoM Decision, 09 November 2023 (23 Kartik 2080)*. https://api.giwms.gov.np/storage/22/posts/1699611205_83.pdf

275 Government of Nepal. (2023). *CoM Decision, 8 August 2023 (23 Shrawan 2080)*. https://api.giwms.gov.np/storage/22/posts/1691576888_29.pdf



Gaps

- Most media organisations lack gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) policy and for a few media organisation that have made the policies there is a gap in implementation.
- Although there has been considerable discussion regarding the integration of gender mainstreaming into policies, there has been minimal progress in the realm of media specific policies. There exists a scarcity of policies that are explicitly designed for the media sector and that demonstrate a robust commitment to achieving gender equality.
- Though the proportion of women in professional roles has steadily increased in recent years, most of the mainstream media coverage still portray men as authorities in the domains of business, politics, and economics. Stories about catastrophes, natural disasters, or domestic abuse are more likely to feature women in the media than ones showcasing their skills or competence.²⁷⁶
- Most mainstream media do not prioritise women's issues as news. Normally, women journalists are assigned to report on women's issues, which are considered as soft issues and when the women beat reporters do report on women and their programmes, they hardly get space in their media, leading to an underreporting on gender issues.
- Moreover, women journalists often lack women's perspective in reported news or articles. Being women is not enough to recognise women's issue and portray them as they required.

Challenges

- Women media persons are not provided opportunities for working on what is considered as hard-core issues such as business, politics, and economics. This gender bias impedes women media persons from delivering their best even in sports, and entertainment beats.²⁷⁷ The underrepresentation of women in media poses a fundamental challenge in accepting women as capable leaders and role models. This perpetuates the patriarchal system and overlooks the valuable perspectives and insights that women can bring to the media reporting and news production processes.

²⁷⁶ Media coverage of women and women's issues. <https://mediasmarts.ca/digital-media-literacy/media-issues/gender-representation/women-and-girls/media-coverage-women-and-womens-issues>

²⁷⁷ 'Just the Women' An evaluation of 11 British national newspapers' over a two week period in September 2012. A joint report by: Eaves, End Violence Against Women Coalition published in November 2012



- Media mostly portray women as vulnerable, helpless and objects and hardly feature women as change agents, achievers, successful politicians or strong leaders. Even reports of sporting expertise which appeared during the Olympics made frequent reference to a sportswoman’s marital status, romantic life and looks rather than focusing on her sporting victories.²⁷⁸ This trend signifies the increasing trend of excessive objectification of women’s body in media that is tantamount to reducing them as market commodities. The objectification also applies to women news readers, talk-show’s hosts; they need to look good and young on screen while such criteria does not apply to men counterparts.
- Media organisations lack sexual harassment policy or proper mechanisms for filing complaints. Even when such mechanisms are in place, women find it challenging to report cases of harassment due to concerns about the impact on their image and career.
- The advent of the social media has provided the platform to discuss the issues and challenges of women through blogs, chats, on-line campaign, on-line discussion forums, and on-line communities, which is mostly not disseminated or taken up by mainstream media. However, there has been a steady rise in the number of ‘cybercrime’ complaints lodged at the Cyber Bureau. According to Nepal Police. There were 2,389 women and 142 girls who were allegedly victims of cybercrimes in Nepal based on complaints made in 2021/22.²⁷⁹
- Women have reported receiving insulting and threatening posts when covering stories critical of patriarchy, religious doctrine and inequality.²⁸⁰ Such as the case of a female journalist who was physically attacked in the western district of Rukum in 2009 as her article condemned the actions of a political party.²⁸¹ In another case, journalist Uma Singh, who worked for a local radio station in Janakpur in Western Nepal, was killed when she wrote articles critical of the dowry system.²⁸²

278 End Violence Against Women Coalition. (2012). *Just the Women*. <https://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Just-the-Women-Nov-2012.pdf>

279 Nepal Police. (2022). Annual Infographics 2078-79. https://www.nepalpolice.gov.np/media/filer_public/bc/d0/bcd064f5-284a-492a-b424-def0a6800de2/fy-2078-79-annual-infographics-en.pdf

280 <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/14648849231183815?icid=int.sj-full-text.similar-articles.8>

281 Relief Web (2024). Nepal: Woman journalist attacked as Maoists promote suspects in reporter's murder. <https://reliefweb.int/report/nepal/nepal-woman-journalist-attacked-maoists-promote-suspects-reporters-murder>

282 Frontline Club. (n.d.). Uma Singh hacked to death in Nepal. https://www.frontlineclub.com/uma_singh_hacked_to_death_in_nepal/



Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

There is a clear intersection between women’s empowerment and media development. The increase in women representation in media, rise of media, advancements in technology and the emergence of social media globally have created multiple avenues for women to access to gender-related information and knowledge. The representation of women in media is increasing in newsroom, administrative roles, and management positions worldwide, however they are still in a minority as the media sector is male dominated.

Recommendations

- Formulate guidelines for the media sector for deconstructing and eliminating gender stereotypes to deal with misogyny, sexism and calling out hate against women including gender-biased words, phrases, idioms that denigrate women and their dignity.
- Provide regular gender orientations and gender trainings to reporters, subeditors, news editors and programme production teams including the owners and executive board members for promoting gender-sensitive reporting, positive portrayal of women in media and build feminist perspective in content.
- Adopt the principle of proportional representation of women as provisioned for in the 2015 Constitution in recruitment and promotion of women in media.
- Increase women’s representation in decision making positions, editor desks in media to promote gender-sensitive reporting practices across media platforms.
- Provide mentorship and capacity enhancement opportunities for budding women journalists from diverse backgrounds to promote gender equality and social inclusion.
- Make compulsory the implementation of Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act (Prevention) 2014 across all media organisations and at all levels with commensurate fines for failing to meet the obligations in securing a safe working environment for women journalists.
- Ensure gender-friendly and disabled-friendly infrastructure such as ramps, separate toilets, lactation rooms to retain women in media.
- Legislate an Act to deal with on-line gender violence to discourage on-line sexual harassment and bullying.



2.2.11 Women and Environment

Present Status

Nepal contributes only 0.06 percent to the world's total global greenhouse gas emissions.²⁸³ However, Nepal is highly vulnerable to climate change due to the country's fragile topography, climate-sensitive and subsistence livelihoods of the people, and their low adaptive capacity.²⁸⁴

Environmental degradation, resource depletion, and pollution impact ecosystems and communities, affecting Nepal's GDP.²⁸⁵ Rural and low-income women, responsible for managing household resources and agriculture, are particularly affected by climate changes. They are often excluded from development and decision-making. Women, indigenous people, and other marginalised groups are often excluded from mainstream development. They suffer from cumulative and cascading impacts of climate change and disasters.²⁸⁶ Women's health is threatened by environmental hazards, especially in urban and low-income settings. Climate variability drives food insecurity and poverty, exacerbating inequities across the country. Marginalised communities, including women and Indigenous peoples, are disproportionately affected, often living in extreme environments with limited social protection.

Key Achievements

Nepal has endorsed the Gender Equality Policy 2017, focusing on women's economic empowerment, social participation, and eliminating gender-based violence. Notable policies include the National Climate Change Policy 2019 that aims to contribute to socio-economic prosperity by building climate resilient society; the National Forest Policy 2019 that mandates that 50 percent of the executive committee members in Community Forestry User Groups (CFUGs) must be women. The Ministry of Forest and Environment

283 Save the Children. (2021). *Impacts of Climate Change and Environmental Degradation on Children and Youth in Nepal: CDCC Climate Crisis Summary Report*. <https://savethechildren.net>

284 Ministry of Forests and Environment, Nepal. (2021). *Nepal's Long-term Strategy for Net-zero Emissions*. <https://mofe.gov.np/nepal-lts-document-uploaded-in-unfccc1653986846pdf-0523-253-1657876086.pdf>

285 World Bank Group. (2022). *Country Climate and Development Report: Nepal*. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nepal/publication/country-climate-and-development-report>

286 Ibid



(MoFE) has developed a GESI Strategy and Action Plan (2020-2030), which complement its GESI and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2020- 2030). Adopting a sectoral approach. It aims to enhance access of women and vulnerable communities to climate change adaptation and mitigation decision-making processes and resources and build their capacities by focusing on GESI budgets and monitoring and evaluation.²⁸⁷ Both the strategies and action plans base their actions on the CBD and its Gender Action Plan and the UNFCCC including its Lima Work Programme on Gender and Gender Action Plan.²⁸⁸

The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2021 supports women’s leadership in climate action. The Disaster Risk Management Act 2017 and National Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2018 enhance women's roles in disaster management. The National Adaptation Plan Process (2018) includes gender-transformative pathways for resource access. The Second National Communication Report (2014) is gender-specific, emphasising gender in climate planning. Nevertheless, the Nationally Determined Contribution (2016) is gender blind. As a state party to the UNFCCC, Nepal submitted its 2nd National Determined Contributions (NDCs)²⁸⁹ The report on 8 December 2020, which has been hailed as gender responsive. It identifies GESI a cross-cutting issue based on the principles of equity by ensuring equal access to women, children, youth, indigenous peoples and marginalised groups through participation, decision-making and benefit-sharing from NDC implementation. It has fulfilled its commitment to formulate the GESI and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. It commits to prepare and implement a strategy and action plan on gender-responsive climate-smart technologies and practices by 2025. By 2030, it commits that all 753 local governments will prepare and implement climate-resilient and gender-responsive adaptation plans.

Local governments are crucial in implementing the Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development (GRID) approach. Women also lead over 30,000 forest users’ groups, managing community forests and promoting sustainability. International initiatives

287 Silawal-Giri, B., Gender Equality for A Sustainable Tomorrow: Climate Perspective, Paper presented on the occasion of the International Women’s Day organised by National Planning Commission, 6 March, 2020

288 Ibid

289 Prior to the Paris Agreement in 2015, each signatory country was invited to outline its actions to address climate change mitigation or the reduction of GHG emissions and adaptation measures in the country context they intended to take.



reinforce gender inclusion in environmental policies. The National Ramsar Strategy and Action Plan (2018-2024) support gender and social inclusion in wetlands conservation. Likewise, Nepal ratified the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015.

One of the working policies of the Fifteenth Plan (2020/21–2023/24) is as follows “a long-term strategic plan will be formulated for the implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change and the nationally determined contribution roadmap will be modified and implemented as needed.”

Gaps

Women are underrepresented in key decision-making roles in Nepal, 34.1 percent in federal parliament, 33.5 percent in house of representative and 37.3 percent in national assembly, 3.3 percent. Mayor and President in local governments²⁹⁰ and nearly 28 percent in civil service.²⁹¹ They also face limited involvement in environmental policy and management roles, reducing their ability to manage climate impacts.²⁹² Climate change exacerbates this exclusion,²⁹³ lack access to critical resources, training, and support necessary for effective environmental management. The Nationally Determined Contribution (2016) is gender-blind, while the National Adaptation Plan Process (2018) includes gender-transformative pathways for resource access. The Second National Communication Report (2014) is gender-specific, emphasizing gender in climate planning. Many environmental policies in Nepal, like the Environment Protection Regulation (2020), are gender-blind, with limited female representation.

Challenges

- Many environmental policies in Nepal are gender blind. The Environment Protection Regulations (2020) ensures limited female representation. The Environment Protection Act (2019) and the National Environment Policy (2019) prioritise women but lack clarity.

290 Election Commission of Nepal. (2022). *Gender and representation in local governance*. <https://www.election.gov.np>

291 Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens, Government of Nepal. (2024). *Gender representation in civil service*. <https://mowesc.gov.np>

292 Leduc, B. (2009). Gender and climate change: The impact of climate change on women's rights and their role in climate change adaptation.

293 Djoudi, H., & Brockhaus, M. (2011). Exclusion in the context of climate change: The role of gender in environmental policy and management. *Climate Policy*, 11(3), 703-718.



- There is insufficient data on gender-specific impacts of environmental changes, which hinders the development of targeted solutions. Similarly, MOFE allocates 7 percent of its annual budget for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) at the national level. However, there is no provision for GESI budgeting at the provincial and local levels, and their budget details are unknown.²⁹⁴
- Climate-related factors like temperature changes, precipitation variability, and biodiversity loss significantly impact women, who often depend on natural resources and lack productive assets. Their traditional roles of gathering food, water, and fuel have become more burdensome due to resource scarcity from climate change. This increases difficulties in accessing clean water and fuel and heightens risks of child marriage and intimate partner violence.²⁹⁵
- Women questioning gender roles and challenging stereotypes by getting involved in environmental activism also tend to face strong social backlash in Nepal.²⁹⁶
- When wetlands are converted to dry land, they emit large quantities of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases accelerating the adverse impacts of climate change. The relationship between climate change and the wise use of wetlands are yet to be acknowledged by policymakers and planners, which is evident in the failure to incorporate the issue of wetlands in the Forest Act, in spite of the fact that there are many wetlands in community managed forests in Nepal.²⁹⁷

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The intersection of gender and environmental issues highlights the need for more inclusive and gender-responsive approaches to sustainability. Women play a vital role in managing natural resources and advocating for sustainable practices. However, their contributions are often undervalued, and they face significant challenges due to environmental degradation

294 On the realities of gender inclusion in climate change policies in Nepal, 2021, Full article: On the realities of gender inclusion in climate change policies in Nepal (tandfonline.com)

295 Nepal's Climate-Gender Nexus, 2024, Nepal's climate-gender nexus (kathmandupost.com)

296 Women environmental human rights defenders in Nepal and the Philippines, 2022, Women environmental human rights defenders in Nepal and the Philippines: unpacking the (mal)development–disaster risk relationship through lived experiences (sei.org)

297 Silawal-Giri, B., Policy Brief for Mainstreaming GESI in Wetlands Sector, Hariyo Ban Programme and Pipal Programme, WWF, Kathmandu, Nepal, July 2017



and climate change. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive and inclusive policies that consider gender-specific impacts and promote women’s involvement in decision-making processes.

Recommendations

- Nepal must implement systemic reforms such as securing legal rights for women in property and finance, improving healthcare access, and increasing labour opportunities.
- Key actions include creating policies to prevent violence against women and ensure their participation in environmental decision-making, fostering cross-sector partnerships, supporting women’s organisations, and protecting women environmental human rights defenders.
- Empowering women for disaster preparedness and ensuring accountability for gender-based violence are crucial.
- Strengthening gender integration in climate actions and promoting women’s leadership are also essential. These steps will enhance gender equity and climate resilience in Nepal.
- Invest in generating green jobs such as high-quality care workforce prioritising women as climate change will require increased health care, exposing frontline and vulnerable communities to heightened need for public provision of care.
- Initiate the valuation of women’s unpaid domestic and care work to strengthen women’s roles as active economic agents.
- Enact a separate law on Wetlands to enable wetlands dependent people access REDD+ funds, increase their livelihoods assets, food security and diversified employment opportunities.
- Establish GBV mechanisms that are accompanied by trainings on GBV to target attitudinal and behavioural change for reversing gender roles and responsibilities and addressing VAW in the NRM sector.
- Roll out iterative capacity development interventions for mainstreaming gender in natural resources management, environment and climate change issues including in disaster risk reduction.
- Adopt the GRB methodology across all interventions and institutions related to the environment and forest sectors.



2.2.12 The Girl Child

Present Status

A complex interaction of cultural, economic, and social influences forms the girl child's existence in Nepal. In a country known for its rich cultural legacy and magnificent scenery, girls frequently confront significant challenges from an early age. Despite Nepal's strides towards modernisation and prosperity, many girls continue to face challenges that prevent them from reaching their full potential. From limited access to school and healthcare to the persistent threat of child marriage and gender-based violence, the realities of girl children in Nepal demonstrate perseverance in the face of hardship.

Traditional gender roles and deeply ingrained cultural standards continue to shape girls' lives in many parts of Nepal, particularly in rural and marginalised communities. These norms frequently disadvantage girls, prioritising boys' education and opportunities ahead of their female counterparts. As a result, many girls are denied the opportunity to pursue their educational and career aspirations, limiting their future chances and perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality.

According to the Centre for Education and Human Resource Development Flash Report 'T' 2022, the net enrolment rate for girls in Basic Level education is 95.5 percent, which represents a substantial improvement. The Nepal Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2019 indicates that dropout rates are primarily due to child or early marriage, household responsibilities, and inadequate sanitary facilities in schools. The Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) 2022 reports that 31 percent of children under the age of five are stunted. Limited access to knowledge and healthcare services, particularly in remote regions, exacerbates these challenges. Child marriage remains a critical issue, with 40.7 percent of girls married before the age of 18, according to 2022 NDHS data. GBV is widespread. 23 percent of women in Nepal aged 15–49 had experienced physical violence since age 15, and 8 percent have experienced sexual violence.²⁹⁸ In 2023, cybercrime affected 176 children (51 boys and 125 girls).²⁹⁹

298 Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). (2023). *National Population and Housing Census 2021*. https://censusnepal.cbs.gov.np/results/files/result-folder/National%20Report_English.pdf

299 Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). (2020). *Nepal Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019: Survey Findings Report*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Central Bureau of Statistics and UNICEF Nepal. <https://www.unicef.org/nepal/media/11081/file/Nepal%20MICS%202019%20Final%20Report.pdf>



Key Achievements

Nepal ratified the Convention on Children (CRC) on 14 September 1990 and its Optional Protocol (OP) on 8 September 2000. It ratified the OP to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography in 2006 and the OP to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict in 2007. Between 2018-2023, some legal and policy reforms were undertaken to address the current situation of children’s welfare such as the National Children's Policy 2023, National Education Policy 2019, National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage 2023, Child Friendly Local Governance (CFLG) Implementation Guideline 2021, CFLG Declaration Procedure 2022.

Other significant policy efforts implemented over the last five years include the Compulsory and Free Education Act 2018, the National Master Plan on Child Labour 2018, Safe Maternity and Reproductive Health Rights Act 2018, and the National Strategy on Gender Biased Sex Selection 2022. Similarly, provincial and local governments have been initiating and implementing various policies, plans and programmes to protect and promote the rights of children with a particular emphasis on girl child.

Nepal's commitment to improving girls’ sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) through progressive laws, effective strategies, and international collaboration has set a commendable example, globally. Nepal has significantly increased the availability of adolescent-friendly health services throughout the country. According to the report, the usage of the modern contraceptives among adolescents and young women, has increased significantly, from 15 percent in 2016 to 24 percent in 2022.³⁰⁰

The integration of Child Sexual Education (CSE) into the national curriculum has provided girls with knowledge about their sexual and reproductive health rights, resulting in improved health outcomes. While challenges continue, the country's achievements demonstrate a solid foundation upon which further advancements can be built. With continued efforts and sustained support, Nepal is well on its way to ensuring that all girls can fully exercise their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

In addition, to the policy accomplishments already mentioned above, the following are some of the most significant progresses made during this time frame (2018–2023).

300 Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). (2020). *Nepal Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019: Survey Findings Report*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Central Bureau of Statistics and UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/nepal/media/11081/file/Nepal%20MICS%202019%20Final%20Report.pdf>



- Total 19,904 school-based child clubs are currently operating nationwide, guaranteeing the meaningful participation of girls.³⁰¹
- A total of 23 Municipalities have been declared as Child Friendly Local Governance by mid-July 2023, ensuring plans, programmes, and budgets to protect child rights with a focus on girls. The practice of compulsory participation of children (girls and boys both) in the local level planning process is progressing.
- Regulation related to Children, 2022 mandates the establishment, registration, renewal, and cancellation of Child Clubs or organisations at the local level including ensuring child participation in decision-making processes of the School Management Committee and the Local Child Rights Committee (with at least one girl and one boy representative).
- The *"Mukhya Mantri Beti Padhaun, Beti Bachaun"* ("Chief Minister Educate Daughters, Save the Daughters") programme is being implemented in Madhesh Pradesh as part of policy and programme with a separate budget. Its objective is to end the social discrimination between sons and daughters by conveying the message of educating daughters for establishing discrimination free social justice and empowerment of girls.
- The Compulsory and Free Education Act, 2018, Comprehensive School Safety Implementation Procedure 2018, and the National Dignified Menstrual Policy 2018 have been issued and are being implemented.
- To address and promote mental health issues of children, the Kanti Children's Hospital and Mental Hospital have established Nepal's first Child and Adolescent Mental Health Units.
- Strengthening of National Adolescent Girls Networks and National Adolescent Boys Network for gender equality and boys' engagement on the issues pertaining to girls' protection.
- Operation of Child Helpline Nepal 1,098 services across all seven provinces to address the issues of children.
- Birth registration rate of children under five years was 58.1 percent (boys 59.2 percent and girls 57 percent); whereas, the birth registration has increased to 74 percent (boys 74.1 percent and girls 73.9 percent)³⁰² as per the CBS report.

301 Centre for Education and Human Resource Development. (2023). *Flash I Report 2023*. https://cehrd.gov.np/file_data/mediacenter_files/media_file-17-428622471.pdf

302 National Statistics Office. (2021). *National Population and Housing Census*. https://censusnepal.cbs.gov.np/results/files/result-folder/National%20Report_English.pdf



Gaps

- The state's commitments to child rights through the constitution, laws, policies, and ratification of the CRC and its related OPs, have not been effectively implemented to ensure the realisation of the rights of children, including girls.
- According to the 2023 National CRC report, by the fiscal year 2021/2022, only 40 percent of the local bodies had established mechanisms as mandated by the Act Relating to Children 2018. for the protection, promotion, and management of children in need of special protection.
- There is a lack of effective collaboration and coordination among the relevant government agencies and CSOs in terms of child rights and protection.
- While school enrolment rates for girls have improved, quality education remains a challenge.
- There is a lack of laws, policies, programmes, and required budget to address on-line child protection issues, leading to an increase in sexual abuse and exploitation, self-initiated child marriages, and sex tourism.
- Lack of meaningful and constructive collaboration and coordination among the government, civil society organisations, and the private sector to address issues affecting the rights of the girl child.
- There is no comprehensive data bank and monitoring mechanism on protection of girl children.
- Government initiatives, non-governmental organisation programmes, and international support are all focused at improving education, health, and protection for girl children in Nepal ignoring the need to engage them in developing their professional capacities in non-traditional sectors and economic empowerment.

Challenges

Despite the government's efforts to safeguard the girl children and promote gender equality, enforcement of laws and policies face challenges. Economic prospects for girls and young women are limited, resulting in economic dependence and vulnerability. Deep-rooted patriarchal norms and gender discrimination further impact the status of girls, limiting their opportunities and fair treatment in society. Some of the challenges can be identified as follows:

- Poverty leading to unsafe migration, child marriage, and trafficking.



- Despite having multiple policies to address the girl child issues, effective implementation and co-ordination remain a challenge.
- Family breakdowns caused by foreign employment can have significant mental and social consequences on both girls and boys.
- Insufficient budget allocation for initiatives supporting girls' well-being and development.
- Men, women, and children are subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking. Labour traffickers exploit Nepali men, women, and children in Nepal, India, the Middle East, and Southeast and East Asia in construction, factories, mines, domestic work, begging, and the adult entertainment industry.
- In rural Nepal, there is a lack of knowledge and awareness campaign about adolescent girls' rights, particularly about sex education.
- Gender-biased sex selection is still a common trend. In 2021, there were 112 baby boys born for every 100 baby girls, up from 107 baby boys born for every 100 girls in 2011.³⁰³
- Reaching underserved children, especially girls, through programmes and interventions.
- Children, especially girls from marginalised and vulnerable communities, as well as LGBTIQ+ children face critical challenges, including stigma, discrimination, and lack of adequate support services.

Emerging Challenges

- The COVID-19 related economic and social upheavals have exacerbated pre-existing disparities, resulting in an increase in child marriage that are self-initiated, a rise in school drop-out rates, and a decline in children's mental health problems.
- Girls' well-being, particularly their access to safe living conditions, education, and nutrition, is being impacted by the on-going climate crisis.
- Increasing instances of cybercrime is posing significant risks to girls on-line, and inappropriate use of social media is leading to online sexual exploitation of girls.
- Limited access to technology and the internet among marginalised communities hindering girls' ability to benefit from online learning and digital resources. According to the monthly tracking poll conducted nationwide by UNICEF Nepal and Sharecast Initiative in end May 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, only about 12 percent of

303 National Statistics Office. (2021). *National Population and Housing Census*. May 2023. https://censusnepal.cbs.gov.np/results/files/result-folder/National%20Report_English.pdf



Nepali children were taking classes online, or through radio/tv exposing the digital divide. Up to a third of children in higher income households were using distance learning tools, while only 5 percent in poorer families were doing so.

Recommendations

- Establish mechanisms such as Local and Provincial Child Rights Committees and ensure the fulfilment of positions specified in relevant laws and policies to effectively realise and uphold the rights of girls.
- Increase community awareness by engaging parents to fight against gender discrimination and engage boys and men to change structural inequalities including harmful traditional practices.
- Improve and expand access to comprehensive health services, including mental health support, reproductive health education, and healthcare infrastructure in remote areas and update age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health education in schools.
- Provide regular trainings to teachers on gender issues including safety and security to eliminate discriminatory behaviours towards girl students and to secure a safe learning environment for them.
- Undertake regular reviews of school curriculum from a gender perspective to develop gender-sensitive curricula and pedagogical teaching materials to address emerging challenges in the best interests of children, particularly, girls.
- Formulate and implement more inclusive policies and practices to support girls with disabilities and those from marginalised communities focusing on underserved and hard to reach children.
- Formulate policies and programmes with adequate budget allocation for child and adolescent mental health.
- Expedite the passage of the proposed bill on information technology and cyber security for on-line safety especially of girls.
- Bridge the digital divide by enhancing access to technology and internet, resources, particularly for girls in challenging geographical settings and economically vulnerable communities.



2.3 Emerging Issues

Beyond Beijing Committee in addition to reviewing the 12 critical areas of concern, acknowledges the shifting global landscape and the need to address emerging issues that have a direct impact on women’s rights and gender equality. Among these emerging issues, the rights of older women and the gendered impacts of climate change have gained prominence. Older women, often facing age-related discrimination compounded by gender biases, require targeted interventions to safeguard their well-being and dignity. Meanwhile, climate change disproportionately affects women, particularly in developing countries, exacerbating vulnerabilities related to livelihood, health, and security. Addressing these two critical issues is essential for ensuring comprehensive and inclusive gender-responsive policies.

2.3.1 Older Women

Present Status

Thirty years ago in 1995, the Beijing Declaration recognised age discrimination and ageism but did not have a specific BPfA critical area of concern for Older Women (OW).³⁰⁴ In Nepal, older persons (OPs) are called Senior Citizens (Senior Citizen Act 2006). It means a citizen of Nepal having completed the age of Sixty years. They constitute 10.21 percent (2.97 million) of the total population.³⁰⁵ Compared to the previous census of 2011 this is an increase of 38.2 percent.³⁰⁶ Of the total OPs, 10.29 (over 1.5 million) are OW.

Studies conducted by civil society organisations (CSOs), scholars and students show that most of the OP live in rural areas; engage in agriculture and informal work and are living in poverty³⁰⁷. The majority of OW are illiterate, lack access to education and training and because of doing unpaid work in the house throughout their lives owing to the gender division of labour are not economically sound. They also have lesser access to health services and other opportunities. Additionally, they are vulnerable to neglect, abuse and violence, though they are contributing to family and communities by doing paid and unpaid work in informal sectors.

304 UN Women. (2014). *Beijing declaration and platform of action*. <https://www.icsspe.org/system/files/Beijing%20Declaration%20and%20Platform%20for%20Action.pdf>

305 Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). (2021). *National Population and Housing Census 2021*. https://censusnepal.cbs.gov.np/results/files/result-folder/National%20Report_English.pdf

306 Chalise, H.M. (2023). *Aging Trend and Situation in Nepal*. *Advances in Aging Research*, 12(3). Central Department of Population Studies, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal.

307 Indira, S. & Dahal, B.P. (2007). *Elderly People in Nepal*. https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/documents/review_map/Nepal.pdf



OW, particularly in lower and middle-income families are the hidden workforce. They are central to achieving sustainable development, yet their challenges, opportunities and diversity are often overlooked in discussions about women, gender, human rights, and, to some degree, older persons.

Thus, it is urgent to review the BPfA from the perspective of older women too to make their status known thereby addressing their issues and concerns from the human rights perspective though an international legally binding instrument addressing older people is yet to be adopted.

Key Achievements

The GON is committed to the United Nations Principles for Older Persons 1991, such as independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity,³⁰⁸ outcomes of the United Nations open-ended Working Group on Ageing (UN OEWSGA) sessions concerning the need for an international framework of the human rights of older persons,³⁰⁹ the Madrid International Plan of Action on Aging (MIPAA), 2002 which recognises OPs as contributors to the development of their societies, and which commits governments to include ageing in all social and economic development policies, including poverty reduction programmes.³¹⁰ Nepal has made some progress in formulating policies on OPs, particularly after the introduction of the Constitution 2015. These include:

OW and Poverty: According to Article 41 of the Constitution, the GoN enacted the Social Security Act, in 2018. Accordingly, OPs 68 and above are provided Old Age Allowance (OAA) NPR 4000 per month. Of the total 34, 83, 227 OAA receiving OPs in the Fiscal Year 2021/22 total 3,483,227 are OW.³¹¹ The OW from the Dalit community, residents of remote districts (Jumla, Humla, Dolpa, Mugu and Kalilot) and single women receive the OAA from the age of 60.

OW and Education: According to Article 31 of the Constitution, every citizen shall have the right to access basic education. According to the constitution, the government has made a provision of establishing day care centres in each ward of a municipality in the Senior Citizen Regulation (SCR), where local OPs gather in a place and engage in

308 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/united-nations-principles-older-persons>

309 <https://social.un.org/ageing-working-group/>

310 <https://www.helpage.org/what-we-do/society-for-all-ages/society-for-all-ages-campaigns/the-madrid-plan-mipaa/>

311 <https://www.ilo.org/publications/extending-social-protection-all-nepal-analysis-protection-gaps>



different activities including training. Gerontology has been introduced as an optional subject in classes 9, 10, 11, and 12 in schools and Master’s level in the Universities.

OW and Health: The National Health Insurance Programme has been rolled out to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in all 77 districts under the Health Insurance Act 2017. The government is providing free insurance to 70 plus OP and 98 types of medicine free of cost to all citizens. Additionally, the Ministry of Health and Population has established the Deprived Citizens Medical Treatment Fund to provide free treatment up to NPR 100,000 to patients of serious medical conditions such as cancer, Parkinson’s, Alzheimer’s, in government-designated hospitals. Moreover, free treatment to OP of 75 and above suffering from heart and kidney diseases. The Right to Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Act, 2018 has been enacted to ensure the right to obtain education, counselling and services relating to sexual and reproductive health (Article 3) to every woman.³¹²

Violence against OW: To address VAW of all ages, many acts have been enacted such as the Crime Victim Protection Act, of 2018 and the Witchcraft-related Accusation (Crime and Punishment) Act, of 2015. The government also established OCMCs, the Women and Children Service Directorate in Police and the NWC helpline to combat VAW. However, no national system has been established to address VAW against OW. The OCMCs have established a system of collection and reporting GBV cases, age-wise. As per the recent report, there were 462 OW cases reported by June 2024.³¹³ A GBV fund has also been established. Similarly, the Senior Citizen Act (SCA) has also outlined the punishments for perpetrators of elder abuse.

OW and Economy: The amended SCA 2022 entrusted the establishment of Care Centres for the OP by the local government. It has been mentioned that the Centres can organise economic activities and training for OP for their economic empowerment.

OW in Power and Decision-Making: Though the Constitution 2015 enshrined the principle of proportional inclusion in article 38 (4) on women’s rights, data on OW is not available in this area.

OW and Human Rights: For the protection and promotion of the rights and interests

312 Nepal Law Commission. (2018). *The right to safe motherhood & reproductive health act*. <https://www.lawcommission.gov.np/en/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/The-Right-to-Safe-Motherhood-and-Reproductive-Health-Act-2075-2018.pdf>

313 Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP). (2024). *Monthly OCMC Recording and Reporting System, June 2024*.



of women and to effectively mainstream their issues the NWC³¹⁴ along with other commissions (Dalit, Tharu, Muslim, Indigenous, etc) has been established. The NWC’s Helpline service 1145 is available, but no data is maintained specific to OW.

Gaps

- OW in Nepal are made invisible by excluding them in the national survey system for example National Demographic Health Survey (NDHS) and discounting their economic contributions in the System of National Accounts (SNA) due to the patriarchal and feudal mindset. Many important studies/surveys such as the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), National Demographic Health Survey (NDHS) and National Living Standard Survey (NLSS) do not collect data sufficiently on 60+ women (Senior Citizens Act 2063). Thus, there is a paucity of data on OW.
- Similarly, there are several policies and programmes for women³¹⁵ as stated in the publication of the report entitled, ‘A Progressive Journey to Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, Achievements of Nepal, but they have hardly addressed the age and gender-specific issues of OW.
- Despite OW being a crucial workforce of the family, communities and the country, they are overlooked, forgotten, unheard, and left behind by not collecting age and gender disaggregated data across different thematic areas and not ensuring their participation inclusively in the development, implementation and monitoring of relevant policies and strategies. As M, Claudia, an independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons has stated in her report, ageism and sexism have a unique and aggravating effect on discrimination and inequality of older women,³¹⁶ in Nepal too both play significant roles in making older women invisible.
- Gaps in OW’s health are evidenced by the NHIP’s population coverage. It is currently low at 23 percent, with notable variations among different Provinces.³¹⁷ Menopausal and post-menopausal health care needs are missing in existing sexual and reproductive health services. OW’s gynaecological problems like UTI, Urinary incontinence,

314 Nepal Law Commission. (2017). National commission act. <https://lawcommission.gov.np/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/National-Women-Commission-Act-2074-2017.pdf>

315 Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens (MoWCSC). (2022). *National Demographic Health Survey and National Living Standard Survey: A Review of Data Collection on Senior Women in Nepal*.

316 United Nations. (2021). *Report of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons: Ageism and sexism*. <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n21/193/82/pdf/n2119382.pdf?OpenElement>

317 Ayer, R., Tiwari, S., Jnawali, S.P., & Dael, R.V. (May 2024). *A Study of Nepal National Health Insurance Programme*. Asian Development Bank. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/965996/study-nepal-national-health-insurance-programme.pdf>



uterine prolapse, cervical cancer, breast cancer, menopause-related problems, apart from common geriatric problems are not addressed sufficiently.

- A major gap in violence against OW is the unavailability of national data on violence and abuse of OW. This is due to prevailing practices of collecting data on women of reproductive age (15-49). Another major gap is the lack of data on OW in power and decision-making as their participation was not made mandatory in line with the Article 38 (4) principle of proportional participation of women though women's representation increased in the state mechanisms.

Challenges

- The Social Security Allowance (SSA) amount of NPR 4000 per month is not a livable amount for OW. Similarly, OPs from the mountain and hilly regions have to walk for hours or many days to reach the bank to receive their SSA.¹⁰ No specific economic empowerment programme exists for OW who are capable and willing to engage in income-generating activities.
- Owing to the socio-cultural tradition of not educating daughters, the majority of the OW are not formally educated. This presents a structural challenge as even if OW want to pursue education and capacity and skill-building training it is frowned upon due to their advancing age and the ageist attitude that this is not necessary for OW. Limited lifelong learning opportunities, financial illiteracy and lack of new technologies and skills have put them in a more disadvantaged position and situation in this digital era.
- Major challenges in OPs and health are: (a) Majority of OPs are unaware of the health services they are entitled to; (b) lack of geriatric health care providers, medicines and equipment in health posts and hospitals; (c) due to youth migration, there is no one to accompany them to the health care medical facilities and hospital; (d) protracted process for obtaining free health services mentioned in Free Health Insurance Programme; (e) absence of opportunities to participate in meetings while planning health infrastructure in their local community; (f) maltreatment meted out to them by the youths and health workers in hospitals and health posts; and, (g) their low educational level makes them dependent on their spouses or other members of the family, which makes them more vulnerable to neglect, abuse and mental problems.³¹⁸ Besides this, the health problems of OW are taken as normal signs of the ageing process and ignored.

318 Ageing Nepal. (2023). *Consultations on barriers and possible solutions to access right to health for older persons in Nepal 2023*.



- There are no affirmative action policies and mandatory provisions for older women’s participation in the decision-making process. Stakeholders, government and even family members hardly consult with them while making decisions and formulating policies and programmes for them. As a result, those decisions do not explicitly improve the lives of OW. Governments hardly nominate OW in different nominee positions in different commissions, committees, constitutional bodies and Ambassadors, posing challenges for them to be included in power and decision-making.
- Only a few non-government organisations are working on OP’s rights such as the National Senior Citizen Federation (NASCIF), Ageing Nepal, NEPAN, NAHUDA etc. No national NGO or network is working specifically on OW rights. Thus, their voices for rights are still feeble and not paid heed to creating a critical mass for raising the voices of OPs is a great challenge.
- The Senior Citizen Act and its regulations are yet to be enforced fully in a gender and age-responsive manner. Committees for the Senior Citizens at the central and local levels are yet to be formed as per the amended SCA and SCR. A major challenge in developing institutional mechanisms for OW is the lack of concept on one hand, and the non-representation of OW in existing institutional mechanisms, on the other.
- The lack of an international HR instrument is one of the biggest gaps resulting in fewer policies and programmes for the OP at the national and international level. Despite the existence of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), OPs are not recognised explicitly under the international human rights laws that legally oblige governments to realise the rights of all older people.³¹⁹ Furthermore, there is no explicit goal for OP in the SDG except for a target 2.2. On hunger and nutrition, SDG11 targets 11.2 and 11.7 on sustainable cities and subsumed under those goals. Consequently, Nepal’s SDGs status and roadmap are silent on OP issues except under social protection floor target 1.3 for providing social security to OP and 11.2 and 11.7 for providing transport there is no National OP Commission.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Empirical observation and studies show that OW are crucial contributors in every aspect of family, community and country. They are excluded from decision-making, consultations and capacity-building initiatives and face double discrimination and the disadvantages

319 INPEA, IFA, ILC-US, IAGG, IAHS, HAI, GAA, Age UK & AARP. (n.d.). *Strengthening older people’s rights: towards a UN convention*. <https://social.un.org/ageing-working-group/documents/Coalition%20to%20Strengthen%20the%20Rights%20of%20Older%20People.pdf>



of gender and age, though they are a *critical support to their families, communities and country's economy* through their paid and unpaid work. Nevertheless, their contributions are not acknowledged, and adequate attempts have not been made to change the prevailing perspective that they are a burden to their families, societies and the public purse.

Recommendations

- Prioritise older persons, particularly OW, to make their situation visible and to further the paradigm shift from viewing older persons as beneficiaries of social welfare to viewing them as rights holders and crucial contributors to the county.
- Eliminate discrimination against women throughout the life course, taking an intersectoral approach to effectively address unique forms of discrimination and inequality due to ageism and sexism.
- Ensure the systematic, meaningful and effective participation of OW proportionately and inclusively in developing and implementing policy, plan, and programmes at all levels and in all sectors of development to combat gendered ageism. Because they are the best advocates for their needs, concerns and rights.
- Recognise and increase awareness about OW's contributions by collecting disaggregate data by age, gender and other variables to capture the lived realities of older women and to inform evidence-based policies and measures across thematic areas without excluding no one in any sector.
- Provide lifelong learning opportunities with a specific focus on digital skills, and financial and legal literacy to be informed of their rights, and entitlements and for healthy ageing. Access to education, training and lifelong learning is a precondition for active ageing and healthy living.
- Design targeted programmes to empower OW and implement them in an age-friendly environment.
- Undertake gender-responsive social security schemes to keep older women out of poverty by introducing adequate contribution credits to compensate for periods of unpaid care work.
- Ensure accessible and affordable quality health care, including mental health, sexual and reproductive health, menopausal and post-menopausal symptoms and preventive care, especially for marginalised groups of older women
- Enact the OW-responsive gender equality Act and enforce to achieve substantive equality of all aged women.



2.3.2 Women and Climate Change

Present Status

Nepal's average annual maximum temperature is rising by 0.04°C, and the minimum by 0.01°C.³²⁰ In Nepal, over the last five years, climate induced disasters such as flood (50.2 percent), landslides (43.3 percent) and inundation (36.2 percent), soil erosion (31 percent) affected households, damaging physical infrastructure. Impact of heavy rain (30.9 percent), avalanche (13.7 percent), windstorm (11.7 percent), fire in settlement (10.5 percent), thunderstorm (10.2 percent) was moderate.³²¹ Climate change will have greater negative effects on women because of their limited, or often lack of, rights, assets, resources and power, which results in their exclusion from decision-making processes that affect their lives.³²² In recent decades, climate change has compounded the multilayered challenges associated with rapid population growth, fast-paced urbanisation, increasing migration, and economic development in Nepal.³²³ Indigenous women, Dalit women, women with disabilities, and LGBTIQ+ people, older women face compounded risks due to intersecting forms of discrimination, including sexism, racism, and economic marginalisation.

Climate Change Impacts on Women

Gender inequality and climate change in Nepal: Patriarchy favours men, irrespective of caste, class, ethnicity, and religion, making them the centre of power and reducing women to a subordinate position.³²⁴ Women, particularly those from poor and historically marginalised caste/ethnic groups, are hit hardest by the effects of climate change.³²⁵ Over 80 percent of women work in agriculture, contributing over 60 percent to the agricultural economy, compared to 56.3 percent of men who contribute 39.5 percent.³²⁶ Women in

320 Piya, S., Shrestha, A., & Pandey, S. (2019). Climate change impacts on temperature in Nepal: Trends and implications. *Journal of Climate Change Research*, 12(2), 45-58.

321 National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA). (2022). *National Climate Change Survey, 2022*.

322 Resurrection, B. P., et al. (2019). "Gender and Climate Change." In *Gender and Climate Change: The Need for Gender-Responsive Climate Policies*, Global Environment Facility.

323 Government of Nepal. (2021). *State of gender equality and climate change in Nepal*

324 Dajjuvai, A. (2020). Gender inequality and climate change in Nepal: Patriarchy favours men, irrespective of caste, class, ethnicity, and religion, making them the centre of power and reducing women to a subordinate position

325 Gurung, C., & Bisht, S. (2014). Women, particularly those from poor and historically marginalised caste/ethnic groups, are hit hardest by the effects of climate change.

326 Food and Agriculture Organization. (2019). The role of women in agriculture in Nepal: A contribution to the agricultural economy. <https://www.fao.org>



remote and mountainous areas engaged in subsistence farming are especially vulnerable to climate change risks.³²⁷ Although caste-based discrimination has been outlawed in Nepal, one's status in the caste hierarchy still determines one's experiences and life chances. In 2019/20, 49 cases of caste-based discrimination were registered at the National Human Rights Commission. During the first Covid-19 lockdown, 753 cases, including 34 Dalit murders, were reported, with most victims being women and children.³²⁸

Nepal faces significant climate risks. Rising temperatures can cause floods or droughts, leading to water shortages for drinking and sanitation in upland areas. Twenty percent of water sources have vanished, and the flow has decreased in 50 percent of the remaining ones. 20 to 25 percent of water sources in the Karnali and Mid-Karnali Watersheds have dried up. Women are more vulnerable to these changes due to their traditional roles in the household and agriculture, which are time-consuming, they may be exposed to greater risks of sexual violence whilst in public and/or isolated spaces and this can also lead to greater tensions within the home as they have less time to complete other household responsibilities.³²⁹

The UNDP study in 2019 found that poor and highly marginalised women and men living in geographically remote and disaster-prone areas, benefit the least from development and climate change-related resources and opportunities. The SNV study showed that disabled Tarai Dalit women (Dom) had almost no access to water or sanitation facilities and resources. Natural disasters such as floods and landslides lead to displacement. As of December 2021, 8,400 people in Nepal were internally displaced. Annual mon soon floods and landslides, along with the country's high earthquake risk, drive this displacement. The 2015 Gorkha earthquake alone caused about 2.6 million displacements, while disasters triggered 32,500 new displacements in 2021.

Nepal is highly vulnerable to climate change impacts and recent studies by the Asian Development Bank suggested Nepal faces losing 2.2 percent of annual GDP due to climate change by 2050. Nepal ratified the Paris Climate Agreement and its Second Nationally Determined Communication (NDC) in 2020. Nepal's Second National Communication to

327 International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). (2021). The impact of climate change on women in mountainous regions. <https://www.icimod.org>

328 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2023). Report on the impact of COVID-19 lockdown on marginalized communities in Nepal <https://www.undp.org>

329 Gevers, A. (2020). *Gender-based vulnerabilities and risks associated with climate change*



the UNFCCC (2014) (NC2) identifies the country’s energy, agriculture, water resources, forestry and biodiversity and health sectors as the most at risk to climate change.³³⁰

Key Achievements

The Constitution of Nepal 2015 guarantees the rights to dignity (Article 16), a clean environment (Article 30), health (Article 35), and food (Article 36) supporting the implementation of climate activities across various sectors. Nepal’s international commitments, including the SDGs and UN Resolution 70/1 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, emphasise gender equality and climate change. The WASH Sector Development Plan (2016-2030) mandates 50 percent women's representation in executive bodies, with key leadership roles reserved for women. The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act (2017) classifies climate change-related disasters as natural disasters. The Local Government Operation Act (2017) recognises local climate adaptation needs and calls for meaningful participation of both women and men. The Climate Change Financing Framework (2017) stresses the importance of evaluating the climate budget from a gender perspective. The National REDD+ Strategy (2018) emphasises equitable access to resources, decision-making, and benefits, particularly for women and marginalised groups. The Disaster Risk Reduction National Strategic Plan of Action (2018-2030) strongly recommends the meaningful participation of all genders in disaster risk management.

The new GESI Strategy and Action Plan (2020-2030) acknowledges the growing incidences of sexual harassment and sexual violence in the forest and environment sectors. It calls for formulation of GESI policies for transforming discriminatory social norms through an intersectional lens for enhancing their access to natural resources and equitable benefit sharing. Similarly, Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) 2020 contribution to developing a GESI and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2021-2050 is committed to gender equality, social inclusion, livelihood, and governance (GESILG) and adopted a dual approach by mainstreaming GESI considerations into policies and programmes, while also targeting excluded and vulnerable groups. The 16th Periodic Plan focuses on building infrastructure that is environmentally friendly, sustainable, and profitable. The plan also emphasises the importance of good governance, achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and supporting a green economy.

330 World Bank. (n.d.). *Nepal: Climate knowledge portal*. Climate Change Knowledge Portal. <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/nepal>



Women leaders play major roles in emergency responses to disaster, developing gender-responsive climate solutions and building alternatives for just transitions. They are leading adaptation interventions, responding to natural disasters and building long-term capacity to face climate shocks and enhance community resilience and sustainability. Women are also at the forefront of mitigation efforts, through their leadership and participation in the just energy transition, championing community-driven, decentralised, and renewable energy solutions to address the triple threat of gender inequality, climate change and energy poverty.³³¹

Nepal is a signatory to international conventions such as (CEDAW) and the Paris Agreement. These agreements, emphasise gender equality and women's empowerment in climate action to shape national laws, policies and programmes. Nepal is committed to acting on climate change in line with the Paris Agreement, despite the country's negligible emissions. It is because efforts to limit global average temperature rise to 1.5°C would result in significantly lower risks for Nepal when compared to 2°C or higher. Similarly, CEDAW General Recommendation 37 on gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change, impacts of climate change are not gender-neutral as women and girls, particularly those living with disabilities face a heightened risk of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation during and following disasters. It therefore, calls on state parties to provide equitable opportunities to women and girls to participate in decision-making in DRR and climate change efforts.

Gaps

In Nepal, the Gender Gap Index score fell from 0.692 in 2022 to 0.659 in 2023, dropping its rank from 96th to 116th. Economic participation and opportunity saw a significant decrease, from a score of 0.641 to 0.476, plummeting Nepal's rank from 98th to 136th. (The Kathmandu Post 2023)

- Scarcity of data on the intersection of climate change and VAWG. Comprehensive research is needed to understand the specific vulnerabilities and needs of women in the context of climate change.
- Insufficient integration of gender perspectives in local climate programmes.
- Limited funding for women's rights affecting the implementation of adaptive and preventive measures for supporting grassroots efforts and ensuring the sustainability of interventions.

331 UNFCCC Climate Champions. (n.d.). *Celebrating women's leadership in climate action on International Women's Day*. <https://climatechampions.unfccc.int/>



Challenges

- Climate change increases women's workload, leading to time poverty and limiting their ability to participate in economic activities, education, and community decision-making processes.
- During natural disasters, the risk of GBV, including sexual violence and exploitation, increases. Displacement and the breakdown of social structures exacerbate these vulnerabilities.
- Women have less access to and control over resources and land, making them more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and economic instability. Economic dependence on male family members further limits their ability to adapt to changing environmental conditions.

Emerging Challenges

- According to the Global Risk Index 2021, Nepal ranks in the 10th position in terms of climate induced fatalities. Every year, climate change has triggered internal displacement or forced mass migration in Nepal. The Displacement Tracking Matrix reported that, due to extreme weather events, an estimated 13,352 displaced population were recorded in Nepal by the end of July 2020.³³²
- About 90 percent of crop loss in Nepal can be attributed to weather or meteorological events, increased temperature, and climatic hazards such as erratic rainfall, droughts, and floods triggered by them (VRA/MoFE, 2021). Climate change induces about 10 percent to 30 percent losses in the production of crops, livestock, and fisheries combined. The decline in yield and production results in poor availability and access to food, which leads to food insecurity and poverty.³³³
- Climate change exacerbates health issues in Nepal. In Nepal, rising temperature, erratic rainfall, and climate extremes such as heatwave, cold waves, storms, and heavy precipitation have a direct impact on the seasonal and temporal trends of VBDs, WBDs, respiratory diseases, cardiovascular diseases, foodborne diseases, nutrition-related diseases, injuries, and mental illnesses.³³⁴

332 Green Minds Centre Nepal. (n.d.). *Climate change and internal displacement in Nepal*. <https://gmcnepal.org/blogs/climate-change-and-internal-displacement-in-nepal>

333 International Monetary Fund. (n.d.). Food security and climate impacts in Nepal. <https://www.imf.org>

334 Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP). (2022). *Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment Report*. <https://mohp.gov.np/uploads/Resources/V%20%20A%20Assessment%20Report-MoHP-2022.pdf>



Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Women in Nepal are at the frontline of climate change impacts, facing increased workloads, economic instability, and heightened risks of GBV. While there have been significant policy advancements, gaps in data, resource allocation, and sectoral integration hinder effective responses. Empowering women and integrating gender perspectives into climate policies and programmes is crucial for building resilience and achieving sustainable development.

Recommendations

- Create an enabling policy environment by reviewing existing policies and develop gender-responsive policies to eliminate VAWG and other vulnerabilities along socio-economic dimensions in the context of climate change.
- Promote cross-sectoral partnerships by fostering collaborations to address the intersectional impacts of climate change on women belonging to Indigenous groups, Dalit community, marginalised and vulnerable women especially living in the mountain areas to address their vulnerabilities and loss of livelihoods.
- Increase investment by allocating more funding to women’s rights organisations working on climate change for flexible and adaptive approaches to offset the gender unequal impacts and increasing deprivation that is leading to forced and unsafe migration.
- Involve women in disaster preparedness and climate change policies and plans by enhancing their capacities through trainings in the form of first responders particularly for disaster preparedness would save lives and assets on the ground.
- Amplify women’s voice by coordinating and collaborating with women’s rights organisations, to provide them a platform to share their experiences, viewpoints and ideas in policy-making spaces.
- Enhance Data Collection by developing robust data methodology for collection and analysis of gender disaggregated data on the impacts of climate change and VAWG to inform effective policy formulation and implementation of interventions.



Appendices

Appendix-I

Beijing+30 Review Steering Committee

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Anjana Shakya, Chairperson Himalayan Human Rights Monitors (HIMRIGHTS) | Department, Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC); Coordinator, Human Rights Treaty Monitoring Coordination Centre (HRTMCC) |
| 2. Benu Maya Gurung, Executive Director, Alliance Against Trafficking in Women and Children in Nepal | |
| 3. Bhawana Bhatta, Vice President, NGO Federation of Nepal | 17. Sandhya Shrestha, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Specialist |
| 4. Gita Bidari, GESI Advisor, Plan International Nepal | 18. Sarita Shrestha, Executive Director, Asmita Woman Publishing House, Media and Resource Centre |
| 5. Hira Dahal, Executive Director, Chhori | 19. Shanta Laxmi Shrestha, WEB |
| 6. Hon'ble Sushila Shrestha, Swapna Vaatika | 20. Sharmila Shrestha, Advocate, Executive Director, Justice for All |
| 7. Kamala Biswokarma, Chairperson, Jagaran Media Centre | 21. Shova Sunuwar, General Secretary, National Indigenous Women's Federation (NIWF) |
| 8. Laxmi Ghalan, Founder President, Mitini Nepal | 22. Sony Piya, CWIN Nepal |
| 9. Laxmi Karki, Executive Member, Rural Reconstruction Nepal | 23. Srijana Poudel, President, Women Awareness Centre Nepal (WACN) |
| 10. Meena Bista, Vice President, Jagaran Nepal | 24. Srijana Shrestha, Chairperson, Conflict Victims' Women National Network (CVWN) |
| 11. Pampha Pariyaar, General Secretary, ADWAN Nepal | 25. Dr. Sujata Tamang, Researcher, Forest Action Nepal |
| 12. Rasmila Prajapati, Executive Director, Women Empowerment Nepal (WEN) | 26. Sunita Gurung, GESI and Disability Advisor, Save the Children Nepal |
| 13. Renu Shrestha, Program Development Manager, Women's Right, ActionAid International | 27. Sunita Mainali, Executive Director, Women Rehabilitation Centre Nepal (WOREC) |
| 14. Ritu Thapa, Treasurer, Indigenous Women Legal Awareness Group (INWOLAG) | 28. Tika Dahal, Chairperson, Nepal Disabled Women Association (NDWA) |
| 15. Roshana Khadka, Chairperson, Support Nepal | 29. Urmila Shrestha, Executive Director, Tewa |
| 16. Samjha Shrestha, Manager, Human Rights Campaign and Advocacy | |

Appendix-II

Beijing+30 National Validation Workshop and Parallel Session Participants

1. Women and Poverty



- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Anita Shrestha, Chhori | 11. Meena Poudel, NDWA |
| 2. Asha Shrestha | 12. Numan Thamsuhang, Kantipur Daily |
| 3. Babita Shrestha, CDO | 13. Pratima Singtan, Chhori |
| 4. Bhawana Khanal, LD Wala | 14. Puja Pahadi, DDS |
| 5. Pushpa Thapa, Chhori | 15. Ragini Chaudhary |
| 6. Dipa Majhi, Chhori | 16. Rekha Jha, BBC Province Committee |
| 7. Dwarika, NFWF | 17. Sanjita Singh |
| 8. Fatema Banu, Chhori | 18. Sulekha Kumari Shah, Chhori |
| 9. Hamata Sunar Chhori | |
| 10. Kalpana Sunar, ADWN | |

2. Education and Training of Women



- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Alisha Dahal, YUWA | 11. Indra Bahadur Shrestha, FEDUC |
| 2. Ambeepa Ansari, NMWWS | 12. Kafina Prajapati, WEN |
| 3. Anjila Shrestha, Koshi Health and Science Campus | 13. Lina Gurung, Kathmandu University |
| 4. Anju Shrestha, IM Swedish | 14. Nanu Thami |
| 5. Bina Khadka, WDS Dadeldhura | 15. Rita Rai |
| 6. Bishnu Devi Rawal, NFN | 16. Samjhana Pokhrel, J.Nepal |
| 7. Chitra Paneru, Edjus Nepal | 17. Tara Sampang Rai, Kudikilol Nepal |
| 8. Ganga Devkota, NDWA | 18. Uma Buddhathoki, Kriyashil |
| 9. Geeta Neupane, WFN | |
| 10. Indira Ghale, Change Action Nepal | |

3. Women and Health



- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Dipa Sinal | 9. Prasansa Budha, MIDSON |
| 2. Dolma Tamang, SPCSN | 10. Pratima Shaina, CIN |
| 3. Indra maya Gurung, MANK | 11. Prem Khadka, Gender Studies, Tribhuvan University |
| 4. Jyoti Bhetwal, Midwifery Society of Nepal (MIDSON) | 12. Sabita Neupane, Institute of Medicine (IOM) |
| 5. Kamal Tara Bajracharya, FHI360 | 13. Sancha Maya Shyanbho, MANK |
| 6. Lokendra Singh, Student | 14. Soma Niraula, IOM |
| 7. Nani Maiya Kaway, Paropakar Maternity and Women's Hospital | 15. Stuti Bhattarai, NAHUDA SEWA |
| 8. Niran Shrestha, Patan Academy of Health Sciences | 16. Usha Buda, NSK |

4. Violence against Women



1. Anjana Gahatraj, Utprerit Mahila
2. Anjana Sharma, SOSEC Nepal
3. Babu Ram Paudel, Pro Public
4. Kalpana Rai
5. Kumari Waiba, BBC
6. Maimoona Siddiqui, Fatima Foundation
7. Nirmala Kafle
8. Sapana Maharjan, Saathi
9. Sapana Sunar Khatri, ADWAN
10. Sharmila Chaudhary, USAID
11. Shashi Ghalan, Tearfund UK
12. Sunita Chand, BBC Provincial Committee
13. Tika Dahal, NDWA
14. Umesh Lama, CWIN /BBC Youth

5. Women and Armed Conflict



1. Bimala Das, ADWAN
2. Dikshya Adhikari, CVWN
3. Draupati Rokaya, NMBS
4. Gita Kumari Yogi, NWCSC
5. Isha Regmi, NAIHS
6. Jyoti Ranjit, NMBS
7. Lila Sharma, WSI Nepal
8. Manju Tandon NAIHS
9. Nirmal Dhungana, WHR, TU
10. Pabitra Karki, CVWN
11. Rajamati Sharma, NAIHS
12. Rubi Shrestha, NAIHS
13. Shova Hade Joshi, NAIHS
14. Srijana Shrestha, CVWN
15. Tulashi Awasthi, HCCS

6. Women and Economy



1. Amrita Adhikari, NAMUNA
2. Asmita Biswokarma, Chhori
3. Bindu Pariyar, ADWAN
4. Bindu Thapa Pariyar, ADWAN
5. Bishwa Ratna Pun, SHRISTI
6. Chadani Pun, SHRISTI
7. Chandani Puri, SHRISTI
8. Ganesha Bista, SHRISTI
9. Merina Shah, IGFF/TEWA
10. Parbati Lamichhane, SDSC
11. Prabha Pariyar, CDWN
12. Pratiksha Tamang, Chhori
13. Renu Shrestha, ActionAid International Nepal
14. Sabitra Parajuli, Chhori
15. Sahizi Shrestha
16. Sandhya Khadka, Chhori
17. Sanjamaya Tamang, SF
18. Shanti Lama, WACN
19. Shanti Lama Waiba, WACN
20. Sita Poudyal, Child Society Nepal
21. Srijana Khatiwada, Chhori

7. Women in Power and Decision-Making



- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Ambika Rai | 14. Rachana Sunam, Ward Committee |
| 2. Anita Paudel | 15. Rajendra Maharjan, RHRN Nepal |
| 3. Anula Maharjan, Newa Misha Dabu | 16. Rojina Ghimire, MMIHS |
| 4. Arati Sharma, World Vision Int. Nepal | 17. Samjhana Devkota, WCRC |
| 5. Balmaya Shrestha, Fimi | 18. Shobha Maya B.K, Karuna Foundation Nepal |
| 6. Bijula Rayamajhi, BBC Province Committee | 19. Shramina Shrestha, Newa Misha Dabu |
| 7. Bindra Maharjan, SSAN | 20. Srijana Bhetwal, WPDR |
| 8. Kabita Ojha, MMIHS | 21. Sudesha Rimal, Lumbini Medical College |
| 9. Lalita Sah, FNJ | 22. Sushila Shrestha, Jagaran Nepal |
| 10. Laxmi Bohora, BBC Provincial Committee | 23. Susmita Ghimire, MMIHS |
| 11. Malati Maskey, WHDRRP | 24. Tara Bhandari, Biswa Nepal |
| 12. Meena Bista, Jagaran Nepal | 25. Tejmaya Rai, SWO |
| 13. Priskila Tamang, DWO | |

8. Institutional Mechanism for the Advancement of Women



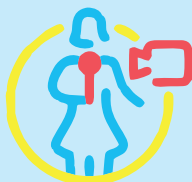
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|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. Anjana KC, CIL-Pokhara | 9. Radha Gyawali, NANODA |
| 2. Bandana Gurung, DWEC-Kaski | 10. Ranjita Pariyar, Ward.19 Office, Kathmandu Metropolitan City |
| 3. Buddhikala Khanal, WSPG | 11. Rekha Aryal, CWDC |
| 4. Devki Parajuli, NDWA | 12. Sarita Kumari Dahal, LOOM |
| 5. Gita Mali, INSEC | 13. Shanti Karki |
| 6. Kalika Pathak, M.V.C | 14. Subhadra Shrestha Pradhan, NAIHS |
| 7. Karuna Maharjan, AATWIN | |
| 8. Nanda Tamrakar, NFN Lalitpur | |

9. Human Rights of Women



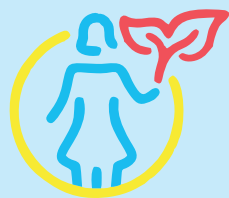
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| 1. Aava Chhetri, JMS | 10. Mon Kumari Rai, INWOLAG |
| 2. Ambika Shrestha Paswan, AMDC | 11. Neha Sharma, NFN |
| 3. Amrita Khanal, P.K | 12. Nirmala Limbu, IEEDEC |
| 4. Bhawana Rai JMS | 13. Radha Mahat, SWSF |
| 5. Dr Sharmila Shrestha, BBC | 14. Reeya Agrawal, ActionAid International Nepal |
| 6. Gita Adhikari, NTV | 15. Supriya Joshi, USI |
| 7. Kamana Neupane, P.K | 16. Swastika B.K, Padma Kanya Campus |
| 8. Khagendra Awasthi, NPDS | 17. Yasuda Baral, Samaj Bikash |
| 9. Mamita Adhikari, P.K. Campus | |

10. Women and the Media



1. Durga Karki, Sancharika
2. Madhav Prasad Ghimire, RASS
3. Minakshi Neupane, Tilottama TV
4. Najmul Khan, Muldhoor
5. Nanihira Dangol
6. Neraj Prajapati, WEN
7. Neena Khadgi, Muldhar
8. Niru Bhatta, Padma Kanya Campus
9. Rabina Khadgi, WEN
10. Rejina Shrestha, WEN
11. Rekha Sharma, Padma Kanya Campus
12. Renu Kamal Shahi, BBC
13. Sabina Praja, Nayapati.com
14. Sajana Tamang, Sancharika
15. Sapana Thapa, Loom
16. Saraswoti Tamang
17. Sarita Rai, Muldhoor
18. Shanta Bhandari, Asmita
19. Shova D. Manandhar
20. Srijana Adhikari

11. Women and the Environment



1. Amita Awale, Shamvana Nepal
2. Anjana Ghataraj, UMPS
3. Arzoo Rana Thapa, IMWOLAG
4. Aastha Subedi, YUWA
5. Bindu Budhathoki, Gender Studies Department, Tribhuvan University
6. Bindu Sharma,
7. Bishal Poudel, SIDDHI Nepal
8. Chetana Sharma, WECAN
9. Eami Pradhan, HR
10. Ganesh Khatiwada, NCCs
11. Isha Thapa, INWOLAG
12. Kamala Bishwokarma, JMC
13. Kamala Oli
14. Madina Poudel, RRN
15. Mimaush Neupane, LCIC
16. Nilam Rijal, CWDC
17. Parbati Kriyashi
18. Prakriti Shiwakoti, Soma Studio
19. Ranjana Pokhrel
20. Rosy Shrestha, Sambhawana Nepal
21. Sangeeta Lama, SANKALP Nepal
22. Sushila Maharjan, Sambhawana Nepal
23. Sushmita Ghimire, CHDS Nepal
24. Yogita Shrestha, WEN

12. The Girl Child



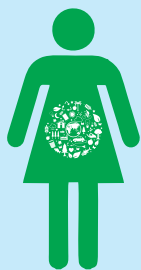
1. Amrit Shakya, CWIN Nepal
2. Arjun K. Shrestha, MIDSON
3. Bimala Tiwari, CWIN Nepal
4. Chandra Prakash Budha, CWIN Nepal
5. Dhruba Gautam, CWIN Nepal
6. Kusum Gurung, CWIN Nepal
7. Madhav Jha, CWIN Nepal
8. Nirijana Bhatta, CWIN Nepal
9. Prakriti Joshi, CWIN Nepal
10. Pooja Shrestha, CWIN Nepal
11. Prajina Puri, Chhori
12. Pramila Manandhar, CWIN Nepal
13. Pratibha Chaudhary, NAIHS GBV
14. Ramita Chapagain, CWIN Nepal
15. Sagar Bhandari, Child helpline
16. Salina Baidya, CWIN Nepal
17. Samjhana Tamang, Nepal Institute of health science
18. Silviya Pradhan, Kist Medical College

Emerging Issue- Older Women



- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Binita Shrestha, CDO | Kanya Campus |
| 2. Bishnu Bahadur Nepali | 12. Prakash Gautam, Ageing Nepal |
| 3. Gayatri Pudasaini, Ward Member, Kathmandu Metropolitan City | 13. Prof. Radha Sharma, |
| 4. Indira Thapa, IM Swedish | 14. Radha Chaudhary, NFDN |
| 5. Kalpana Basnet, MSN | 15. Rajan KC, JMMS |
| 6. Kamala Maharjan, Ward Member, Ward No. 17, Kathmandu Metropolitan City | 16. Rakesh Chhetri, Ageing Nepal |
| 7. Kanita Das, Ward Member, Ward No. 17, Kathmandu Metropolitan City | 17. Rateepakwan Suwal, National Academy of Medical Sciences, Bir Hospital |
| 8. Kasturi Shrestha, Newa Mitra Daboo | 18. Reeta Deuba - Padma Kanya Campus |
| 9. Manita Khadka, Padma Kanya Campus | 19. Rina Shrestha - Padma Kanya Campus |
| 10. Mina Rai, Seto Guras | 20. Samjhana Malla, KIRDAK |
| 11. Ojashwee Dhakal, Padma | 21. Shanta Poudel |
| | Janajyoti, Mahila Samaj |
| | 22. Tulasha Lata Amatya, CAC Nepal |
| | 23. Umesh Nagarkoti, LAC Nepal |

Emerging Issue-Women and Climate Change



- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Anjana KC, CIL- Pokhara | 14. Pro. Goma Devi Niraula, MIDSON |
| 2. Bandana Gurung, DWEC | 15. Roshani Adhikari, K.M.S. |
| 3. Bhumika Acharya, WHR | 16. Samjhana Pokharel, Jagaran Nepal |
| 4. Bimala Devi Gayak, SUS | 17. Sarita Adhikari, Kriyashil Mahila Samaj |
| 5. Deepak Acharya, ACORAB/ CIN | 18. Savanta Thapa, WEWID |
| 6. Devi Khadka, Pariwartanshil Nepal | 19. Sharana Sherpa, CIPRED |
| 7. Gopi Maya Tamang | 20. Shree K. Paudel, CWDC |
| 8. Indira Shrestha, INWOLAG | 21. Sona Lal Chaudhary, Freelance Trainer |
| 9. Indu Tharu, NIWF | 22. Sulochana Thapa, Kriyashil Mahila Samaj |
| 10. Kamala Subedi, CWDC | 23. Vijaya Laxmi Shah, WEN |
| 11. Kumari Thani | |
| 12. Mina Kumari, Mission Sanshar Nepal | |
| 13. Pragya Niraula, INSEC | |



Appendix-III

Chairperson's Name and Organisation of the Provincial Committees

1. Sita Paudel, Chairperson, Child Society Nepal, Provincial Committee, BBC, Chairperson, Koshi Province, Biratnagar
2. Anju Kumari Purbey, Chairperson, Batabaran tatha Krishi Samudayik Bikash Kendra, Provincial Committee, BBC, Chairperson, Madhesh Province, Janakpur
3. Hira Dahal, Executive Director, Chhori Nepal, Provincial Committee, BBC, Chairperson, Bagmati Province, Kathmandu
4. Usha Baruwat, President, Nari Sewa Kendra, Provincial Committee, BBC, Chairperson, Gandaki Province, Pokhara
5. Prisma Singh Tharu, President, Tharu Mahila Utthan Kendra, Provincial Committee, BBC, Chairperson, Lumbini Province, Bardiya
6. Madhurani Dhakal, Managing Director, Women's Association for Marginalized Women (WAM), Provincial Committee, BBC, Chairperson, Karnali Province, Surkhet
7. Bindu Sharma, Member, Center for Human Rights Education and Access to Justice (ED-JUS), Provincial Committee, BBC, Chairperson, Sudurpaschim Province, Dhangadi



Appendix-IV

List of Chairs, Facilitators, Authors/Presenters, Translators, Note Takers, and Volunteers

Women and Poverty

Chair/Facilitator: Ms. Sita Ghimire

Author/Presenter/Translator: Ms. Bhawana Khanal

Note taker: Ms. Laxmi Karki

Volunteer: Ms. Menuka Thapa

Education and Training of Women

Chair: Dr. Usha Jha, Former Member, National Planning Commission

Facilitator: Ms. Sharmila Shrestha

Author/Presenter/Translator: Dr. Lina Gurung

Note taker: Ms. Ayushka Shrestha

Volunteer: Ms. Swastika Sanjel

Women and Health

Chair: Dr. Binjwala Shrestha

Facilitator: Ms. Pampha Pariyaar

Author/Presenter/Translator: Dr. Laxmi Tamang

Note taker: Ms. Elawati KC

Volunteer: Ms. Roshan Shrestha

Violence Against Women

Chair: Ms. Durga Sob

Facilitator: Ms. Seema Khan

Author/Presenter/Translator: Ms. Sanjita Timsina

Note taker: Ms. Sabina

Volunteer: Ms. Sanjita Bajracharya

Women and Armed Conflict

Chair: Ms. Anjana Shakya

Facilitator: Ms. Benu Maya Gurung

Author/Presenter: Ms. Srijana Shrestha

Translator: Ms. Samjha Shrestha

Note taker: Ms. Bimala Kumari Das

Volunteer: Ms. Priya Lamichhane

Women and the Economy

Chair: Prof. Dr. Kushum Shakya (Dean)

Facilitator: Ms. Rita Kumari Sah

Author/Presenter: Ms. Bharati Silwal Giri

Translator: Ms. Sanjita Timsina

Note taker: Dr. Priti Kumari Mandal

Volunteer: Ms. Rabina Shakya

Women in Power and Decision-Making

Chair: Hon'ble Ms. Sushila Shrestha

Facilitator: Ms. Miana Bista

Author/Presenter: Dr. Binda Pandey

Translator: Ms. Sarita Shrestha

Note taker: Ms. Shodashi Rayamajhi

Volunteer: Ms. Bhawani Aryal

Institutional Mechanism for the Advancement of Women

Chair: Ms. Saru Joshi Shrestha

Facilitator: Ms. Samjha Shrestha

Author/Presenter/Translator: Ms. Sandhya Shrestha

Note taker: Ms. Karuna Maharjan

Volunteer: Mr. Niraj Neupane

Human Rights of Women

Chair: Ms. Roshana Khadka

Facilitator: Ms. Usha Malla

Author/Presenter/Translator: Ms. Bhawana Bhatta

Note taker: Ms. Neha Sharma

Volunteer: Ms. Emma Dhangu Maharjan

Women and Media

Chair: Ms. Sangita Lama

Facilitator: Ms. Sarita Shrestha

Author/Presenter: Ms. Rashmila Prajapati

Translator: Ms. Sajana Tamang

Note taker: Ms. Rejina Shrestha Joshi

Volunteer: Ms. Ruchi Jha



Women and the Environment

Chair: Ms. Sarmila Karki

Facilitator: Dr. Jagjit Kour

Author/Presenter: Ms. Ritu Thapa

Translator: Ms. Bina Devi Rai

Note taker: Ms. Anima Shrestha

Volunteer: Ms. Prinsha Bhattarai

The Girl Child

Chair: Ms. Kalyani Shah

Facilitator: Ms. Anjana Lama

Author/Presenter: Ms. Bhagwati Shrestha

Translator: Ms. Samjha Shrestha

Note taker: Ms. Prakriti Joshi

Volunteer: Ms. Lalita Paudel Chhetri

Emerging Issue-Older Women

Chair/Facilitator: Ms. Tulasha Lata Amatya

Author/Presenter: Ms. Shanta Laxmi Shrestha

Translator: Ms. Sanju Thapa Magar

Note taker: Ms. Rakshha Chhetri

Volunteer: Mr. Gagan Pyakurel

Emerging Issue-Women and Climate Change

Chair: Dr. Pasang Dolma Sherpa

Facilitator: Ms. Srijana Paudyal

Author/Presenter: Ms. Ritu Thapa/Ms. Chanda Thapa

Note taker: Ms. Prapojita Pathak

Volunteer: Ms. Swornima Khatri

Appendix-V

Editorial Team List

1. Ms. Bharati Silwal Giri
2. Dr. Laxmi Tamang, Vice Chairperson, BBC
3. Dr. Preeti Kumari Mandal
4. Ms. Sanjita Timsina
5. Ms. Bina Devi Rai
6. Ms. Shodashi Rayamajhi
7. Ms. Rozy Pun

Appendix-VI

Report Compilation Team

Dr. Laxmi Tamang, Vice Chairperson, BBC

Dr. Priti Kumari Mandal

Ms. Sanjita Timsina

Ms. Shweta Karna, Advocacy and Campaign Coordinator, BBC

Appendix-VII

Glimpses of Beijing+30 National Women’s Conference



Hon'ble Minister, Mr. Nawal Kishor Sah, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizen



Honoring Ms. Chandani Joshi, Gender Right and Policy Specialist and representative of senior citizen women: A Warm Embrace of Solidarity and Respect



Hon'ble Minister, Mr. Nawal Kishor Sah, MOWCSC, Hon'ble Minister, Ms. Bidhya Bhattarai, MoEST, Hon'ble Mr. Kiran Kumar Sah, Chairperson, Parliamentary Committee on Women and Social Affair and Ms. Krishna Kumari Waiba, Chairperson, BBC.



Ms. Bandana Rana, CEDAW Committee member and participant of the 4th World Conference on Women in 1995, receives a token of appreciation from the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens (MoWCSC)



Ms. Patricia Fernandez, Country Representative, UN Women, receives a token of appreciation from the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens (MoWCSC).



Registration



Inaugural session in progress at the National Women's Conference 2024, with participants attentively listening to speakers addressing key issues on gender equality and women's rights in Nepal.



The girl child of Validation Workshop



Group Photos of Validation Workshop



Group Photos of Validation Workshop



Group Photos of Validation Workshop



Group Photos of Validation Workshop



Group Photos of Validation Workshop



Validation Workshop Group photo



Group Photos of Validation Workshop



Group Photos of Validation Workshop



Authors of 12 critical areas of BPfA and Emerging Issues



Hon'ble Sushila Shrestha raising issues on Women in power and decision-making during Validation Workshop



Group Photos of Validation Workshop



Group discussion during a validation workshop, with participants seated around a table, engaged in active dialogue and note-taking.



Press meet- group photo with attendees gathered in a conference room. A collaborative gathering of diverse professionals



BBC Executive Board, Staff members and other Guests



Guest and Participants



Editorial Team



Group photo of participants from the National Women's Conference 2024, bringing together hundreds of women leaders, activists, and advocates committed to gender equality and social justice in Nepal.

Beyond Beijing Committee (BBC) is a feminist human rights National Network organisation established after the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Currently, it has over 230+ women-led NGO member organisations in all seven provinces and it has a provincial committee in each province.

BBC is an organisation with **Special Consultative Status in the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**. It has been advocating, monitoring, reporting and working continuously on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) since 1995 immediately after the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing. BBC aims to work towards the civil, political, economic and social empowerment of women, girls, persons with disabilities, sexual and gender minorities, and marginalised communities in all their diversities intersectional to achieve substantive gender equality and human rights for all people. It advocates for SRHR, gender transformative financing, development effectiveness, effective development cooperation, and the rightful space and place of women, youth and women CSOs in decision-making. It enhances CSOs' leadership capacity in the implementation, monitoring and reporting of CEDAW, ICPD, UPR and the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Voluntary Local and National Reviews. To complement the GON's report, it has published a VNR report from Women CSOs'/ Women Major Group's perspective in 2017 and 2020. This year too it has submitted a Gender Equality Snapshot report for the 2024 VNR.

BBC is a founder of the Nepal SDGs Forum (CSOs Forum), and the Convener of Women and Girls' constituency and gender justice theme. It is also a founder and secretariat of the Women Major Group for Sustainable Development in Nepal (WMG-SDN) and a member of the **Leave No One Behind (LNOB)** Nepal coalition. BBC functions as the secretariat of Nepal's Human Rights Treaty Monitoring Coordination Committee's (HRTMCC) CEDAW Committee of CSOs and Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management Partners' Alliance (MHMPA) Nepal.

Organised by:



BEYOND BEIJING COMMITTEE (BBC)

Kathmandu Metropolitan City-10, Shwet Binayak Marg,
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