



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations



COUNTRY GENDER ASSESSMENT

OF AGRICULTURE AND
THE RURAL SECTOR IN

NEPAL

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The Assessment was conducted under the overall supervision of Somsak Pipoppinyo, FAO Representative Nepal, and the technical supervision of Clara Mi Young Park, Regional Gender Social and Rural Development Officer for Asia-Pacific, and Arjun Thapa, Programme Officer and Gender Focal Point FAO Nepal.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADS	Agriculture Development Strategy
CAESC	Community Agriculture Extension Service Centre
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CFUG	Community Forest Users Group
CGA	Country Gender Assessment
CPF	Country Programming Framework
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CTEVT	Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
DoA	Department of Agriculture
DoLS	Department of Livestock Services
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	gross domestic product
GEED	Gender Equity and Environment Division
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
GESI	gender equality and social inclusion
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GNI	Gross national income
GRB	gender-responsive budget
HDI	Human Development Index
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IWMI	International Water Management Institute
LDC	least developed country
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoAD	Ministry of Agricultural Development
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFALD	Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development
MoFSC	Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation
MoHP	Ministry of Health and Population
MoLD	Ministry of Livestock Development
MoWCSW	Ministry of Women Children and Social Welfare
MoUD	Ministry of Urban Development
NDHS	Nepal Demographic Health Survey
NLSS	Nepal Living Standard Survey
NPC	National Planning Commission
PDNA	Post-Disaster Needs Assessment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
USAID	United States Assistance for International Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VDC	Village Development Committee
WCO	World Customs Organization
WFP	World Food Programme
WFDD	Women Farmer Development Division
WFWP	Women for Water Partners

Executive summary

The Country Gender Assessment (CGA or Assessment) for agriculture and rural development in Nepal was undertaken in 2017 primarily to inform the gender-sensitive country-level planning and programming of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and to contribute to the implementation of FAO's Policy on Gender Equality at the country level. The CGA explores existing gender relations and inequalities in various agricultural subsectors, their causes, and their impacts on the social and economic development of agriculture and the rural economy. The CGA also provides analysis of crucial policies, strategies, plans and programmes, and highlights key elements for the promotion of gender equality in agriculture and rural development, and for strengthening rural women's social and economic empowerment.

In Nepal, agriculture contributes one-third of the gross domestic product (GDP) and about three-quarters of the population work in the sector. The role of women in the sector is crucial given that over 80 percent of women are employed in agriculture. Yet, the conditions of employment for the majority of rural women are perilous, since they mainly work as subsistence agricultural producers. Shifts in the traditional division of labour are noted, with many women taking up additional responsibilities such as ploughing and marketing, due to job-related out-migration of rural men. The shortage of labour has also caused the abandonment of rural agricultural land, contributing to a decline in agricultural production. Yet, women's ownership of land is increasing: female-headed households accounted for about one-fifth of total agricultural landholders in 2011, which represents a rise of 10 percent compared to 2001. This is an important development, as land-ownership rights remain a major constraint for most women.

As per census data, wages in agriculture as well as in non-agriculture sectors have increased more than fourfold over the period 1995-2011 (CBS, 2014c). However, studies have shown a persistent gender-biased wage gap throughout the country that is especially visible in agriculture: women receive

wages about 25 percent lower than men, despite legal provisions for equal pay between the sexes.

The entrepreneurial potential of women still remains largely untapped. Evidence shows that in Nepal, farms managed by women produce less value per hectare than those managed by men, suggesting the existence of gender inequalities, particularly in accessing, adopting and using technologies. Women and men agricultural producers have often very distinct sets of agricultural knowledge, skills and criteria for choosing crop varieties and performing activities, such as selecting seed, cultivating, harvesting and processing crops. Rural women are constrained by their weak decision-making and bargaining power, triple-work burden (productive, reproductive and community work), limited knowledge about market demand and supply, as well as restricted opportunities for setting-up micro-enterprises and agriculture businesses.

The Assessment highlights gender-biased gaps at policy and legislative levels. For example, at the constitutional level, access to land for agricultural purpose is considered a farmers' fundamental right; however, women's ownership of land is still constrained. Overall, gender equality often only exists in laws and policies, and is not adequately implemented on the ground for the benefit of rural women. Findings of the Assessment indicate that government policy is limited to meeting targets of women's participation in programmes and projects rather than addressing the root causes of gender inequalities in agriculture and the wider rural economy. The Assessment recommends addressing gaps in policy, legislation and implementation through a set of measures, including lobbying for a greater allocation of direct gender-responsive budgeting, concrete recognition of rural women's contribution to the agricultural sector, addressing root causes of employment inequalities and disparities in rural women's access to and control over resources, the enhancement of women's roles in decision-making positions and their competitiveness in a business environment, as well as for the supply and availability of gender-sensitive agriculture-related technologies, research, education and extension services.

1

INTRODUCTION



1.1 Background and rationale

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) here recognize the importance of gender equality, both as a human right, and for the achievement of its mandate to eradicate hunger and poverty worldwide by raising levels of nutrition, increasing agricultural productivity, managing natural resources and improving the lives of rural populations.

The FAO's Policy on Gender Equality identifies gender mainstreaming and women-targeted interventions as a twofold strategy for the advancement of gender equality in the agricultural and rural sector. In this regard, the policy sets out a number of minimum standards for gender mainstreaming. These include a requirement to undertake a Country Gender Assessment (CGA or Assessment) in order to inform FAO's country-level planning and programming, especially the formulation and revision of the Country Programming Framework (CPF), as well as any other FAO interventions at the country level in line with the Government of Nepal's development priorities and FAO's mandate.

Against this backdrop, the objective of the Assessment is to analyse the agricultural and rural sector of Nepal from a gender perspective at the macro (policy), meso (institutional) and micro (community and household) levels in order to identify gender-based gaps and inequalities in access to critical productive resources, assets, services and opportunities.

In particular, the Assessment identifies the needs and constraints of both women and men in selected areas of FAO's competence. The Assessment also provides recommendations and guidance to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in future programming and projects, and identifies possible partners for gender-related activities in Nepal.

Overall, the Assessment aims to be a tool for FAO Nepal, the Government of Nepal, and other development partners to better mainstream gender equality and enhance the promotion of empowerment of rural women in future projects and programmes by providing background information and baseline data on gender roles, and the status of rural women in the agriculture and rural sector.

1.2 Methodology

Primarily guided by the objectives of the Assessment, a desk review of available secondary information on the status of gender equality in Nepal was carried out with a focus on the agriculture and rural sector. The CGA explores existing gender relations and inequalities in various agricultural subsectors, as well as their causes and their impacts on socio-economic rural development. Secondary data was reviewed to understand the socio-economic, demographic and political situation of rural women as compared to men. A review of pertinent literature on the existing policies and legal frameworks, legislation and national machinery, and analysis in relation to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) recommendations for gender equality and women's empowerment were also undertaken. In addition, relevant documents from FAO, the Government of Nepal and other national and international agencies were reviewed. Primary information and quantitative data were also collected through key informant interviews with six government and one FAO staff at the field level in Kavre. There were two focus group discussions with male and female farmers' groups (six male and six female) of the Shatrujit Management Agriculture Cooperatives and local stakeholders such as vegetable traders, members of dairy cooperatives and district agriculture office staff.

1.3 History of FAO in Nepal

FAO has been a longstanding partner of the Government of Nepal on agriculture and food security issues. After becoming a member of FAO in 1951, Nepal welcomed an FAO representative office in 1977 in Kathmandu. Since then, FAO has been supporting activities related to poverty reduction, rural employment generation, and food and nutrition security, among other activities through more than 400 projects. The current CPF outlines the Government of Nepal medium-term priorities for technical assistance by FAO for the period 2013-2017. FAO's strength lies in providing technical assistance and sharing best practices in agriculture and food security issues based on its worldwide experience. The formulation process of the new CPF (2018-2022) started in 2017 and will benefit from the insights made in this Assessment.



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1.4 Organization of the Assessment

The Assessment is organized taking into account FAO's guidelines to prepare a CGA of agriculture and the rural economy. Following this introductory section, the second section presents a brief profile of the country with information on Nepal's socio-economic situation, agriculture and rural development, and human development and gender. The third section delves into policies, legislative and institutional frameworks for gender equality and women's

empowerment in agriculture and rural development. The fourth section provides an overview of gender inequalities in agriculture and the rural sector. This section also touches upon agriculture cooperatives, rural finance and extension services, exploring the gender gaps in the current system. The fifth and final section consists of a summary of major findings and recommendations for government policy and FAO actions with a view to strengthening attention to gender equality in the future strategy and partnership in Nepal.



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NEPAL COUNTRY CONTEXT



2.1 National social and economic situation

Nepal is a multi-ethnic Himalayan country located in South Asia. It is classified as a least developed country (LDC) by the United Nations Committee for Development Policy and has been a member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) since its creation in 1985. Geographically, Nepal can be divided into three regions: plain land (*Terai*), hills, and mountains. In altitude, the mountainous regions range from 4 877 metres to 8 848 metres above sea level, account for about 35 percent of the total land area and are home to around 7 percent of the total population. The hill regions, which range from 610 metres to 4 876 metres above sea level, are densely populated, and account for 43 percent of the total population and 42 percent of the total land area. The *Terai*, the flat river plain of the Ganges alluvial soil, occupied about 23 percent of the total land area of the country, and accounts for 50 percent of the total population (CBS, 2014b). Nepal's agricultural land occupies 28.7 percent of the total land of the country in 2015, consisting of arable land (14.7 percent), permanent pastures (12.5 percent) (CIA, 2018) and permanent cropland (1.5 percent), while forest covered 25.4 percent (World Bank, 2017).

Currently, Nepal is a federal parliamentary republic composed of seven provinces. Although there have been several years of political instability in the country, Nepal has made great strides in socio-economic development over the last two decades. During this period, primary school enrolment has increased significantly and the maternal mortality rate has declined drastically due to the commitment of the Government to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Nepal's Human Development Index (HDI) value increased from 0.446 in 2000 to 0.558 in 2015 as a result of the improvement in life expectancy at birth, increasing years of schooling and growth in Nepal's gross national income (GNI) per capita at 2011 purchasing power parity standing at USD 2 337 in 2015 (UNDP, 2016). Nepal's HDI value for 2015 puts the country in the medium human development category, positioning it 144th out of 188 countries and territories worldwide.

Nevertheless, Nepal still lags behind many countries in South Asia because of slow progress in key areas such as life expectancy, health, education and living standards. In 2015, the HDI score for women stood at 0.538, as against 0.582 for men, resulting in a Gender Development Index (GDI)¹ value of 0.925 (UNDP, 2015). This difference has categorized the country into 'medium to low equality' in HDI achievements. Likewise, the Nepal Gender Inequality Index (GII)² was at 0.497 in 2015, placing the country 115th out of 159 countries (UNDP, 2016). However, the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)³ in Nepal has shown progress going from 0.391 in 2001 to 0.563 in 2011 (CBS, 2014c), mainly thanks to political change and strengthened policy attention to social inclusion. The country still ranks low on international governance indicators such as Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index 2017 with a score of 31 on a scale from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean) (Transparency International, 2017), placing the country 122nd out of 180 countries. This has been a major area of concern for most of Nepal's development partners.

The economy has been affected by many factors in recent years, not least the devastating earthquake of 25 April 2015, which killed nearly 9 000 people and caused huge disruptions to trade. Consequently, the country registered a budget deficit of -2.5 percent of the GDP, and weak economic growth (GDP of 0.4 percent) in 2016 (CIA, 2018). Current growth levels are highly dependent on remittances. Remittances have become one of the foremost sources of income in Nepal. The percentage of households receiving some sort of remittance increased from 23 percent in 1995/96 to nearly 56 percent in 2010/11 and remittances accounted for 17 percent of all household income at the national level according to the Nepal Living Standards Survey 2010/11 (CBS, 2011). Remittances received by Nepalese households accounted for as much as 31.3 percent of GDP in 2016 (World Bank, 2017).

¹ The GDI measures gender gaps in human development achievements.

² The GII is an inequality index that shows the loss in potential human development due to disparity in achievements in empowerment and economic status between men and women.

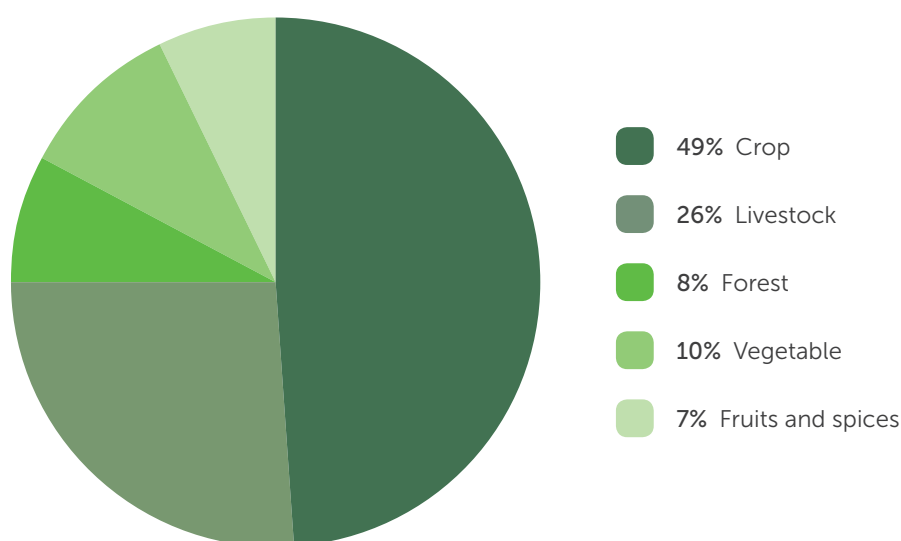
³ The GEM seeks to measure relative female representation in economic and political power.

Based on the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), 26.6 percent of the population in Nepal, equivalent to almost 7.5 million people, lived in multidimensional poverty in 2014 (UNDP, 2016). Among the multidimensionally poor in Nepal, slightly more than one-third (9.3 percent of the total population) suffers from severe multidimensional poverty. In addition, 14.4 percent of the population's lives are at risk of falling into multidimensional poverty (UNDP, 2016). The MPI shows that one-quarter of the population in Nepal faces overlapping deprivations in health, education and/or living conditions at the same time. The percentage of multidimensionally poor population is close to that of the population living below the national income poverty line (25.2 percent) (UNDP, 2016). Due to the nation's political instability and slow economic growth, significant challenges remain to graduate Nepal from the LDC category by 2030 (NPC, 2013a).

2.2 Agriculture and rural development

The agriculture sector contributed one-third (32.1 percent) of Nepal's total GDP in 2014/15, despite agriculture's growth decline to 0.8 percent in 2014/15, from an average of 2.9 percent over the last decade (MoF, 2016). Of the total agricultural GDP, the crop sector takes up almost half, while livestock accounts for one-quarter, followed by vegetables (10 percent), forestry (8 percent), and fruits and spices such as ginger and cardamom (7 percent) in 2015 (Figure 1). Integrated crop and livestock subsistence farming systems along with the predominance of smallholder farmers (with less than 0.5 hectares of land holdings)⁴ are the main features of agriculture in Nepal. Two-thirds of the population still depends on agriculture as their main occupation. Of the total number of households (5.42 million) in the Population Census of 2011, 71 percent legally own agriculture holdings with livestock and poultry (CBS, 2014d).

Figure 1: Contribution of agricultural sub-sectors to total agricultural GDP, 2015 (in percentage)



Source: Karki, 2015.

⁴ According to the 2011 National Sample Census of Agriculture, the total agriculture holdings area stands at 2 525 639 hectares in 2011 which, however, has shrunk by 128 400 hectares from 2001 (CBS, 2014c). On the other hand, the total number of agriculture holders has increased by 4 670 000 over the same period of time, resulting in a man-land ratio of 10.5 in 2011 against 8.7 in 2001 (CBS, 2014c). The average agricultural land area in the country is 0.7 hectare comprising an average of 3.2 parcels. The holding size is smaller in urban (0.5 hectare) than rural areas (0.7 hectare).

The distribution of agricultural land is uneven as the majority of small farmers operate only 18 percent of the total agricultural land with an average holding size of less than 0.5 hectare, less than the average national land holding size (0.7 hectare) (CBS, 2014d). On the other hand, 22 percent of the land is operated by large farms with more than 2 hectares. The remaining 60 percent of land is owned or operated by medium-sized farms with an average agricultural land between 0.5 and 2 hectares (CBS, 2014d). The fragmentation of land is higher in rural as compared to urban areas, suggesting there may be challenges in the use of modern technologies. Irrigated land accounts for about 53 percent of the total agricultural land area in the country (CBS, 2011).

Farming

In recent years, there has been a gradual shift from subsistence cereal farming to an intensive vegetable-based farming system to meet the increased demand for diverse food. According to the 2016 Economic Survey, most of the cereal crop productivity, except maize and buckwheat, declined in 2015/16 as compared to previous years (MoF, 2017). The low wheat and barley productivity can be attributed to the late onset of monsoon for rice plantation, and disruptions in the supply of fertilizers and fuel for irrigation due to obstructions on the border related to political protests. However, maize, the second most important food grain after rice, has shown better performance due to expansion of growing areas and more rainfall.

In general, potato is considered a profitable crop (with a benefit-cost ratio of 2.24) due to its high market price (Dhital, 2017). Women, in particular, are attracted to cultivation of potato due to its short production cycle and immediate earning potential. Fruits crops, especially banana, have expanded and are being commercially farmed, particularly in western Nepal. Growing bananas is attractive for smallholder farmers thanks to support from various government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) focusing on poverty alleviation and women's entrepreneurship development programmes⁵ (MoF, 2016). Likewise, tea and coffee have received popular markets in recent years but performance has not yet been satisfactory (MoF, 2016).

Livestock

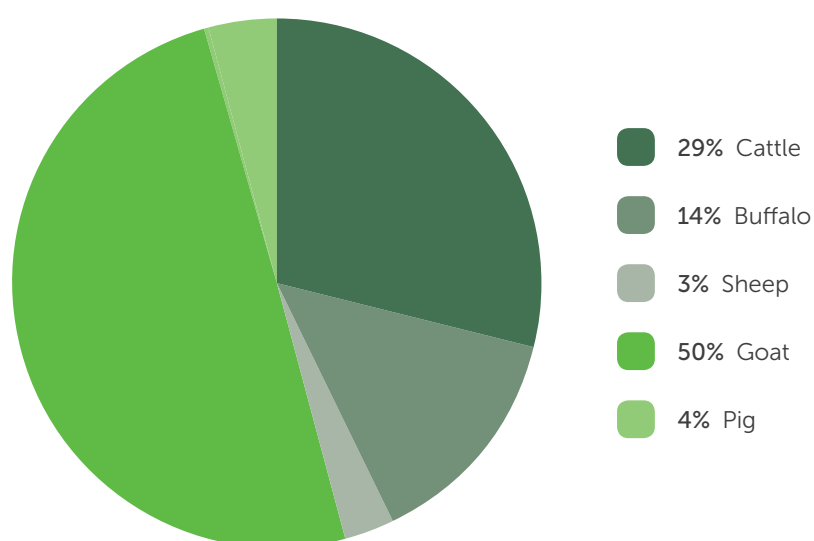
Livestock is an integral part of the Nepalese farming system. In most cases, livestock is kept as an asset as well as for manure and draft purposes. In rural areas, biogas can be generated from dung, so that livestock also serves as a source of energy for lighting as well as cooking purposes. According to the 2011 Census of Agriculture cow and buffalo dung serve as cooking fuel and biogas for more than 15 percent of total rural households (CBS, 2014d).

As per the 2011 Census of Agriculture, the total livestock headcount (small and large) is 22.4 million (not including mules), of which goats account for half of the total population (Figure 2) (CBS, 2014d). The population of large livestock, such as cattle, buffalo and yaks (chauris), has decreased when compared to the previous agricultural census (2001). However, a significant increase in the number of goats (up by 59 percent), pigs (up by 30 percent), and sheep (up by 29 percent) has been reported (CBS, 2013). Likewise, the total number of poultry and ducks went up by 49 and 9 percent, respectively. This trend can be attributed to programmes of various institutions, including the District Office of Livestock Services (DoLS), that promote women's empowerment.

An increment of about 0.35 per capita kg of goat meat and 1.93 per capita kg of other animal meat has been officially recorded in 2011 in comparison with 2001 (CBS, 2014c). In the case of milk, over the same period of time there was a reduction in milk production of almost 9 per capita kg. The slight increment in meat production could be due to the implementation of meat-oriented livestock credit programmes in 2010/11. However, the poor performance of livestock in milk production is attributed to various factors related to breed, feed and management. Protein from livestock sources in the diet was as low as 15.92 percent (compared to the recommended 30 percent) in 2012/13 (CBS, 2014d), but demand is increasing by 8-10 percent annually (MoAD, 2014a). Rising incomes are a source of the increasing livestock imports (ADS, 2014). The introduction of milk-oriented livestock credit programmes in 2014/15 has showed an ascending trend in milk and meat production in recent years.

⁵ Based on the case study conducted by the author in UNDP's UNDAF-2 Evaluation, conducted in August 2016 at Sunhara Agriculture Cooperative Ltd. Pavera VDC, 2 Kailali. See also Case study of Helvitas to support the statement "Up-Scaling Banana farming through private sector" found at <https://radiokarnaliaawaj.com/getMP3File.php?docid=5>

Figure 2: Contribution by types of livestock to the total livestock population (in percentage)



Source: Karki, 2015.

Fisheries and aquaculture

In Nepal, the interest in and practice of aquaculture has grown since the early 1980s. Over the years, pond aquaculture has developed as the most viable and popular production system and contributed to 0.5 percent of the total agricultural GDP in 2013/14 (MoAD, 2014b). The majority of aquaculture production takes place in the *Terai* plains, which are home to 94 percent of the fish ponds. The integrated aquaculture system, combining a poly-culture of carp in ponds with livestock (pigs, ducks, etc.) and horticulture (bananas) was introduced several years ago, but the technique has not been successfully expanded due to management complexities and health-related risks (hygiene and diseases). However, Pant *et al.* (2009) report that a range of benefits including increased household income, food and nutrition security, along with women's empowerment, has been achieved through community fish production development and marketing cooperatives that are exclusively owned and managed by women thanks to integrated agriculture-aquaculture.

The Nepal Three-Year Interim Plan (2011–2013) stressed the importance of the fish supply for its high protein value. Looking at it from a food security and

source of income aspect, aquaculture programmes could be a livelihood opportunity for the rural poor (Pant *et al.*, 2009). Since the last census in 2001, the number of ponds has increased by 26 percent from 2010/11 and further increased by 54 percent in 2013/14. This growth resulted in a 141 percent increase in fish production in metric tonnes over the same period of time (MoAD, 2014b).

Despite the fact that agriculture is playing a significant role in rural livelihoods, Nepal's economy and agricultural trade has been in deficit. The growth of imports has outpaced exports and the agricultural trade deficit has increased over the years from USD 124 million in 1995 to USD 373 million in 2009 (MoAD, 2014a). Agricultural trade is dominated by the export of lentils, tea, cardamom, and medicinal and aromatic plants, while imports mainly consist of fruits, cereals, vegetables, beans (mostly peas), dairy products, animal meat, and raw materials for processing (oilseeds) and manufacturing (fibres for carpets, garments and textiles). However, the Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS) has foreseen good potential in vegetables, fruits, beverages, dairy and meat for import substitution through sufficient production.

2.3 Human development

2.3.1 Demography and population dynamics

In 2016, Nepal had a population of 28.9 million with an annual population growth rate of 1.1 percent as compared to 2.4 percent in 1990 (World Bank, 2017). This decrease in growth rate is attributed to both a decline in fertility and the emigration of youth. The annual population growth rates in 2011 varied significantly between urban (3.38 percent) and rural areas (0.98 percent). As per the 2011 National Population and Housing Census, the number of households stood at 5.4 million with an average household size of 4.88 in 2011 as compared to 5.44 in 2001 at the national level (CBS, 2012). The rural population accounted for 83 percent of the total population in 2011, a 3 percentage point decrease from the 2001 census (CBS, 2012).

The 2008 Nepal Labour Force Survey (NLFS II) indicates a significant increase of 29 percent in the total number of households registered in 2008 compared to a decade earlier. However, during the same period the population aged 0-14 years decreased from 41.3 to 38.7 percent, along with decreases in the age dependency and sex ratios (CBS, 2009).

With a national sex ratio of 94.1 women for every 100 men in 2011, Nepal has the lowest total sex ratio among SAARC countries (CBS, 2016). The 2011 National Population and Housing Census reported a high sex ratio differential (between 103 and 105 boys per 100 girls) in early age (below 15 years), which is most likely due to the preference for sons, indicating the prevalence of discriminatory attitudes against women and girls in the society (CBS, 2014b).

Migration plays a major socio-economic and demographic role in Nepal. Since the insurgency period (1996-2006), youth migration surged as young people sought employment opportunities abroad. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), 7.2 percent of the total population was absentee population in the 2011 National Population and Housing Census in comparison with 3.3 percent in 2001 (CBS, 2014c). Although the male migrant population was recorded to be considerably higher than the female one in the 2011 National Population and Housing Census, the share of female migrants of the total migrant population grew from 10.9 percent in 2001 to 12.4 percent in 2011 (CBS, 2014c). Female migrants contributed to 11 percent of remittance to GDP in 2001 (latest year available) (CBS, 2014c). Geographically, more than 90 percent of the migration is from rural areas, mainly the *Terai* and hill regions of Nepal.

Table 1: Sex ratio, rural and urban population, and annual population growth rate

Census	Sex Ratio (women/men)			Population (percentage)		Annual population growth rate (percentage)
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	
2001	98.8	106.4	99.8	86.1	13.9	2.25
2011	92.3	104.0	94.1	82.9	17.1	1.35

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), 2014b

Although India has historically been the primary destination for both women and men who migrate, in recent years, migration to Arab nations, Europe and other countries has increased significantly. The lack of well-paying employment opportunities in Nepal, and more lucrative labour markets abroad have pushed youth to look for opportunities overseas. With the surge of male migration, there has been an increase in the proportion of female-headed households in Nepal, rising from 11 percent in 2001 to 26 percent in 2011 according to the 2011/12 agricultural census (CBS, 2013). The increasing number of female-headed households coupled with high participation of women in the agriculture labour force could be amongst the causes of the so-called phenomenon of 'feminization of agriculture'. Nevertheless, additional research is needed in order to substantiate this assumption.

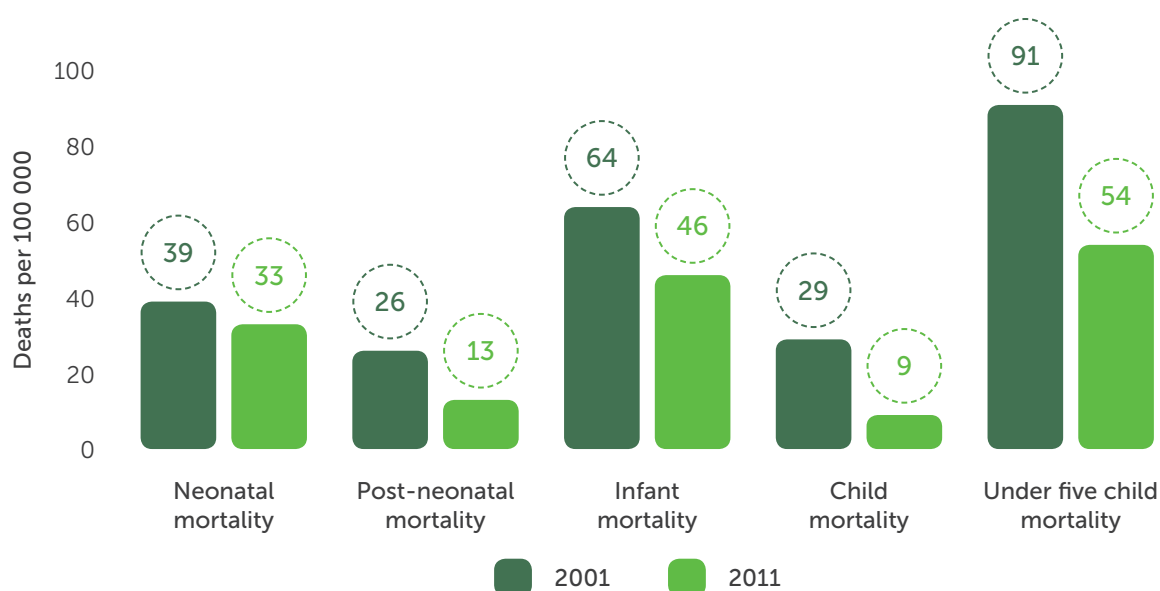
2.3.2 Health

In Nepal, access to health services remains a challenge particularly in rural and remote parts of the country. This is basically due to poor infrastructure, lack of sufficient and qualified medical workers, and socio-cultural barriers. However, in recent years, significant progress has been made in the health sector, particularly in terms of access to health care,

contributing to decreased gender disparities (ADB, 2010). Women's life expectancy had increased to 71.4 years in 2015, which is slightly higher than men's (68.3 years) (World Bank, 2017). The total fertility rate (total births per woman) has declined from 4 in 2000 to 2.2 in 2015 (World Bank, 2017). In urban areas, it is less than 2 children (1.54), which is below the fertility replacement level, whereas it is 3.08 in rural areas (CBS, 2014b). In 2011, the maternal mortality rate, though still high (281 deaths per 100 000 live births), was half of what it was two decades ago (543 deaths per 100 000 live births) (MoHP, 2012). Figure 3 illustrates the significant improvement in childhood mortality between 2001 and 2011.

Though the Nepal 2011 Demographic and Health Survey revealed no significant difference in childhood mortality between boys and girls, a distinct disparity was reported between populations in rural and urban areas (MoHP, 2012). According to this survey, infant mortality in rural areas was 55 against 38 in urban areas per 1 000 live births in 2011 (MoHP, 2012). This difference between rural and urban areas is also prevalent in neonatal, post-neonatal, child and under-five mortality rates.

Figure 3: Rates of childhood mortality per 1 000 live births



Notes: Neonatal mortality: the probability of dying within the first month of life; Post-neonatal mortality: the difference between infant and neonatal mortality; Infant mortality: the probability of dying between birth and the first birthday; Child mortality: the probability of dying between exact ages one and five; Under-five mortality: the probability of dying between birth and fifth birthday

Source: MoHP, 2012

Over the period 2006–2011, there has been a significant improvement in women’s health status. According to the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), 58 percent of women received antenatal care from a skilled provider in 2011 as compared to 44 percent in 2006 (MoHP, 2012). Similarly, institutional (hospital) delivery has also increased from 18 percent in 2006 to 35 percent in 2011 (MoHP, 2012). The improvement can be attributed to the government’s priority on meeting the MDG targets through the endorsement of the Safe Motherhood Programme and Policy on Skilled Birth Attendants. The health sector of Nepal has been effective in mobilizing female workers and volunteers at the community and district levels. Nevertheless, birth registration, which is compulsory, is still quite low for boys, at 42 percent, and even lower for girls, at 40 percent (CBS, 2014c). (CBS, 2014c).

Overall, the nutritional status⁶ of children under five years old in Nepal has improved over the last decade. The proportion of stunted children declined from

50.5 percent in 2001 to 40.5 percent in 2011 (see Table 2). A similar pattern was found in underweight children, the proportion of which dropped by 20.5 percentage points, from 48.3 to 28.8 percent, over the same period of time. However, malnutrition rates vary significantly between urban and rural areas. The nutritional status of rural children remains lower over time as compared to that of urban children. Likewise, prevalence of anaemia among children is reported higher in rural (27.9 percent) than in urban areas (22.9 percent), with rural girls aged 23 months and under at highest risk of developing anaemia (MoHP, 2012). It was reported that the situation was more severe in the mid and far-western regions of Nepal. According to the Nepal Living Standard Survey (NLSS) 2010/11, the stunting rate for girls (43 percent) was higher by 2.9 percent than that rate for boys (40.1 percent) in 2011 (CBS, 2011), indicating gender disparities in nutritional terms between girls and boys.

Table 2: Nutrition status of children under-five years old in rural and urban areas (in percentage)

	2001			2011		
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
Wasting	9.7	8.2	9.6	11.2	8.2	10.9
Underweight	49.4	33.0	48.3	30.0	16.5	28.8
Stunting	51.5	36.7	50.5	41.8	26.7	40.5

Source: MoHP, 2012, cited from CBS 2014c

⁶ Child growth is internationally recognized as an important indicator of nutritional status and health in populations. WHO defines stunting as low height for age, and wasting as low weight for age, whilst underweight is a composite indicator that can reflect ‘wasting’ or ‘stunting’, or both and may be difficult to interpret (available at <http://www.who.int/nutgrowthdb/about/introduction/en/index2.html>).

Nationwide, the prevalence of contraceptive use among married women age 15-49 years was 49.7 percent in 2011 against the target of 67 percent to be met by 2015 (MoHP, 2012). Although Nepal's Constitution guarantees women the right to reproductive health, women and girls suffer from issues such as uterine prolapse and *chaupadi* (a social tradition of isolating women during menstruation) in rural and remote areas of Nepal. They lack knowledge of menstrual hygiene and face restricted feeding practices during menstruation and post-pregnancy, mainly due to socio-cultural taboos. Studies have shown that women's empowerment is positively associated with women's access to and use of reproductive health services (MoHP, 2012).

2.3.3 Education and literacy

In line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the Government of Nepal has placed an emphasis on educating every child and has enacted legislation accordingly.⁷ As a result, the country has made significant progress in improving literacy rates over the last decade. As per data from CBS (2014a), the overall literacy rate has increased for both men and women. However, there are gender gaps. The male literacy rate (76 percent) remained much higher than the female literacy rate (58 percent) in 2011, and sex ratios for high school enrolment of 0.91 and tertiary level of 0.71 reflect that education has not yet reached gender parity. The 2011 NLSS reveals a significant growth in girl enrolment rates over the years, narrowing gender gaps over the last ten years (CBS, 2011). However, the national net attendance rate for girls at grade 5 (secondary school) is still low at 15.7 percent against the 100 percent target set for 2015.

Though significant improvements in enrolment of girls in higher education are reported, there is an increase in dropout rates due to marriage and pregnancy. The national youth literacy rate (15-24 years old) was 88.6 percent in 2013 with little difference between this rate and that of women aged 15-24 years old (82.7 percent). There is a notable gap between youth literacy levels in urban and rural areas, particularly among female youth. In urban areas, 96.3 percent of men and 91 percent of women

are literate, while in the rural areas, the rates are 91.9 percent and 76.2 percent respectively in 2011 (NPC, 2013b). In the 15-49-year age group, more than 40 percent of women versus only 14 percent of men have never been to school in 2011 (NPC, 2013b).

2.3.4 Employment

Stark gender disparities can be noticed in the economic sector as well. According to the 2008 NLFS II, the agricultural sector employed nearly three-quarters of all workers in the country (73.9 percent) (CBS, 2009). Agriculture employs a very significant share of the total of women employed, with 84 percent of women employed in the agricultural sector compared to 62 percent of men employed in the same sector. The majority of the work force in agriculture was employed as subsistence producers (70 percent) with gendered differences: 78 percent of women and 60 percent of men worked as subsistence producers. In rural areas, elementary occupations as well as crafts and related trades were sources of employment for both men and women. However, rural men were up to twice more likely to be employed in these non-agriculture related occupations than rural women (CBS, 2009).

Despite the decrease in the proportion of children (aged 5 to 14 years) engaged in economic activity (child labour force participation rate) in rural areas from 43.3 to 36.7 percent between 1998/99 and 2008, the overall incidence of child labour⁸ in 2008 was still high with 11.1 percent of boys and 15.5 percent of girls aged 5-9 years already economically active (CBS, 2009). These ratios were higher for children aged 10-14 years, with 47.1 percent for boys and 58.6 percent for girls. Most child labour was found in agriculture, where the vast majority of children (78 percent of the total number of children aged 5 to 14 years currently employed) reportedly worked as subsistence farmers in 2008 (CBS, 2009). Although the proportion of children (aged 10 to 14 years) engaged in agriculture-related work has reduced significantly over time, the proportion of girls in agricultural occupations has increased from 63 percent in 2001 to 69 percent in 2011, which was about 15 percentage points higher than that of boys in 2011 (CBS, 2014c).

⁷ For example the Government of Nepal has drafted a bill for the Revision and Integration of the Act on Children which addresses children's right to have education in their mother tongue at the elementary level, free education up to the secondary level, as well as access to free text books and educational materials.

⁸ The ILO defines 'child labour' as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. ILO, 2012 (available at <http://www.ilo.org/ipecc/facts/lang--en/index.htm>).

In 2011, about 77 percent of economically active girls and women (aged 10 and above) as compared to 55 percent of economically active boys and men in the same age group were engaged in agriculture, including forestry and fisheries (CBS, 2014c). Agricultural employment figures from 2001 and 2011 show a shift of women into the agriculture labour force that could be correlated with higher male migration rates, indicating an increasing ‘feminization’ of agriculture (CBS, 2014c).⁹ In 2011, the involvement of men and women in non-agriculture sectors such as the service sector was found to be higher by 3-4 percentage points compared to 2001, while it decreased in the industry and construction sectors (Figure 4).

However, men’s involvement in the service sector was 12.2 percentage points higher than women’s in 2011 (CBS, 2014c). Within the service sector, the proportion of female workers has increased, as women have started to work in places such as companies and hotels, as well as in houses as domestic labour and in educational sub-sectors. Such increases are due to Nepal’s thriving tourism industry and export business, along with better-organized ways for companies to hire human resources.

The majority of both economically active men (57 percent) and women (79 percent) are self-employed, including family labourers (CBS, 2014c). This indicates that there are still employment opportunities in the formal economy, particularly for women. The limited labour opportunities in the agricultural sector have forced many women to seek employment opportunities in other sectors (for example in construction) in Nepal or abroad. Female migration for employment abroad has increased thirtyfold, from 0.19 percent in 2006/07 to 5.96 percent in 2012 (UN Women et al., 2016a). As per the Population Monograph of Nepal, wages in agriculture as well as in non-agriculture sectors have increased more than fourfold from 1995/96 to 2010/2011 (CBS, 2014c). However, despite legal provisions for equal wages between men and women, discrimination remains in terms of cash or in kind remuneration. In 2010//11, male wage earners (cash and in kind) received on average NPR 50 and NPR 90 per day more than female wage earners in agriculture and non-agriculture sectors, respectively (CBS, 2014c). The wage gap is higher in rural areas, where women’s wages normally are lower by 25 to 50 percent than those of men (UNESCO, 2015). Unemployment and under-employment of the economically active

Figure 4: Percentage of economically active population by sex and sector



Source: CBS, 2014c

⁹ According to the 2008 labour force survey, there were fewer men (4.7 million) in the Nepali rural labour force than women (5.6 million) (CBS, 2009). It is reported that the majority of the rural “missing men” are in the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) and Malaysia for work (ILO, 2017).



population (57 percent of the total population) is another challenge in the country, with about 30 percent of the economically active population either unemployed or underemployed.

2.3.5 Women's decision-making power, voice and political representation

The Election Act (2007) of Nepal stipulated a 33 percent quota of women's representation in the Constituent Assembly (CA). As a result, the proportion of women increased up to 32.5 percent in the first CA (CARE, 2015). Although this declined to 29.5 percent in the second CA, it is still the highest percentage among South Asian nations. However, as political transition continues in Nepal, the subsequent changing of governments has presented a range of challenges when it comes to ensuring the participation of women in grassroots-level politics as few local elections have been held over the past two decades.

The first local-level elections took place in 1997 following the advent of democracy in 1990. Although the Local Governance Act introduced in 1997 mandated only one woman to represent the ward, Village Development Committee (VDC) and district-level Committees and Councils, it brought more than 39 000 women into local political bodies in 1997 (Bhadra *et al.*, 2007). These women were grassroots-level committee members responsible for mobilizing VDC funding. They promoted citizenship certificates, and the registration of births, deaths and marriages in their local areas. Women, as representatives, were also active in mediation of gender and social disputes related to domestic violence against women, polygamy and witchcraft, and in campaigns against alcoholism, drugs and child trafficking (World Bank *et al.*, 2009). However, due to the political instability, local-level elections did not take place in 2002. On the ground, the political turmoil not only prevented the target populations

from actively engaging in local decision-making processes to address gender inequalities prevalent in society, but also excluded disadvantaged and marginalized groups of women from participating.

Nepal promulgated a new constitution on 20 September 2015 through CA Article 18 (2, 3 and 38) (UN Women *et al.*, 2016b). This new constitution not only guarantees equal rights to women and non-discrimination in application of laws, but also reinforces positive discrimination policies for women in all sectors including governmental structures and the political domain. Nepal sets aside 33 percent of parliamentary seats for women through legislation as envisaged under Article 84 (8) (Adhikari, 2017). The constitution also ensures women's participation in village assemblies (IFES, 2016).

Despite laws and policies, significant inequalities remain in relation to recognition of citizenship, specifically women's ability to pass citizenship on to their children whose fathers are unknown, absent or deceased (UN Women *et al.*, 2016b).

Nepalese women in general and rural women in particular are vulnerable to gender-based violence in both the domestic and public sphere, including exposure to wife battering, physical and sexual violence, sexual exploitation and harmful practices such as child or forced marriages (UN Women, 2017). Rural women (22 percent) are slightly more likely to experience gender-based violence compared to urban women (19 percent) according to Nepal 2011 Demographic and Health Survey (MoHP, 2012).¹⁰ A Domestic Violence and Punishment Act was passed in 2009, but it is rarely enforced or acknowledged.

2.3.6 Basic infrastructure and sanitation

Rural infrastructure investments providing basic services such as electricity, safe drinking water, sanitation and roads for transportation have the potential to benefit women through provision of new livelihood options. Infrastructure improvements also reduce time, energy, and opportunity costs of rural women's domestic and reproductive responsibilities through increased access to health, education, rural advisory services, diversified labour markets and market centres (ADB, 2010).

In 2004, the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation National Policy and sectoral strategic Action Plan set out to achieve full water supply and sanitation coverage by 2017. In 2016, the national proportion of households using safe drinking water sources was reported to be 85 percent. However, access to piped water, considered the safest source, only reached 44.5 percent of households. This percentage was even lower in rural areas at 41 percent.¹¹ Rural households are also more likely to be without access to toilet facilities (37.1 percent) than urban households (6 percent).¹²

Whilst in 2016 the total length of road reached 27 990 km, only 59 km of roads were connected to rail networks. In 2014, only two-thirds of the total households had been connected with electricity. Access to electricity for urban households stood at 97 percent against 71 percent for rural households (MoF, 2016).

¹⁰ According to a study conducted in Nepal, literacy status, access to healthcare, wife-husband age difference, and husband's alcohol consumption are significantly associated with women's experience of sexual coercion in their married life (Adhikary and Tamang, 2010).

¹¹ Under the Rural Water Scheme, government capital investment is up to 90 percent of the project cost for water users group. The national sanitation coverage has more than doubled from 30 to 62 percent between 2000 and 2011, and reached 80 percent in 2015/16. However, the annual sanitation coverage growth rate in urban and rural areas was only about 1 and 2.7 percent respectively. As a result the sanitation coverage in urban areas increased only by 11 percentage points (from 80 to 91 percent) whereas the coverage in rural area rose more than double (from 25 to 55 percent) over the period 2001-2011 (WFP, 2015; MoF, 2016; and NPC, 2013b).

¹² National sanitation is not adequate in schools, and only 80 percent of community schools have toilets, with only 65 percent having separate toilets for girls and boys (CBS, 2014a).

3

POLICY, LEGISLATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT



Nepal has been party to various international treaties and agreements aimed at strengthening the status of women in society, and has adopted a number of policies and plans of action in this connection. Particularly with the advent of democracy, Nepal has amended a number of discriminatory legal acts and enacted gender parity laws. However, challenges and obstacles remain in putting these laws into practice. Numerous civil society organizations have recognized that, owing to the prevalence of patriarchal mind-sets in Nepali society, efforts to advance gender equality are often limited to policy papers. In addition, large numbers of women and girls, particularly in rural areas, remain unaware of the laws that exist to protect their rights. Nepal also suffers from several capacity constraints. It is recognized that the national women's machinery¹³ needs to be strengthened (UN Women, 2014a).

3.1 Gender in agriculture and rural development policies and strategies

Mainstreaming gender concerns in national agriculture and rural development policies, strategies, plans and programmes is vital not only for achieving gender equality but also for the societal development of rural Nepal. Recognizing this fact, the Government of Nepal has promoted gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) as an important mechanism to enhance the contribution of agriculture to poverty and vulnerability reduction initiatives. This is increasingly making its way into policies and strategies at the national level taking up the CEDAW recommendations (CEDAW, 2011). MoAD has also adopted GESI approaches to reduce gender, ethnic and caste-related disparities in agriculture.

Agriculture Development Strategy (2015-2035)

The MoAD has recently approved the ADS, a 20-year strategy, for the overall advancement of agriculture-related sectors. The ADS is an overarching policy adopted by the Government to achieve food sufficiency, sustainability, competitiveness, and inclusion. It has given emphasis to the integration of GESI throughout the ADS design process. The strategy envisages addressing the food and nutrition security of the most disadvantaged rural populations, including lactating and pregnant women, indigenous and excluded communities, and people in disadvantaged regions (NPC, 2015a). One of the expected outputs

of the ADS is the establishment of a comprehensive set of mechanisms at the policy, planning and implementation levels to ensure gender equity, and social and geographical inclusion through capacity development of pertinent institutions at the central and local levels.

Although GESI is recognized as cross-cutting in the ADS, GESI provisions are more explicitly integrated into the 'Governance' pillar of the ADS. The ADS has a 10-year Plan of Action, which includes the development of a GESI strategy in agriculture. The ADS recognizes female farmers' as independent farmers and ensures adequate budget provision for carrying out activities towards women's empowerment, including women's access to and control over productive resources, and women's leadership to empower rural women. The ADS establishes a target of 50 percent of farmland to be owned by women only or through joint ownership to be reached by 2035, from 10 percent in 2010. It recommends equal wages for women in agriculture, encourages quantitative and qualitative participation of male and female farmers in agriculture development programmes, and GESI-friendly expansion of agriculture research and extension programmes. GESI also ensures access of all marginalized groups to resources essential for agriculture development such as land and capital. The ADS recommends the development of a GESI mechanism to implement the ADS through the GESI lens.

GESI Strategy Framework (2016) (UN Women, 2016)

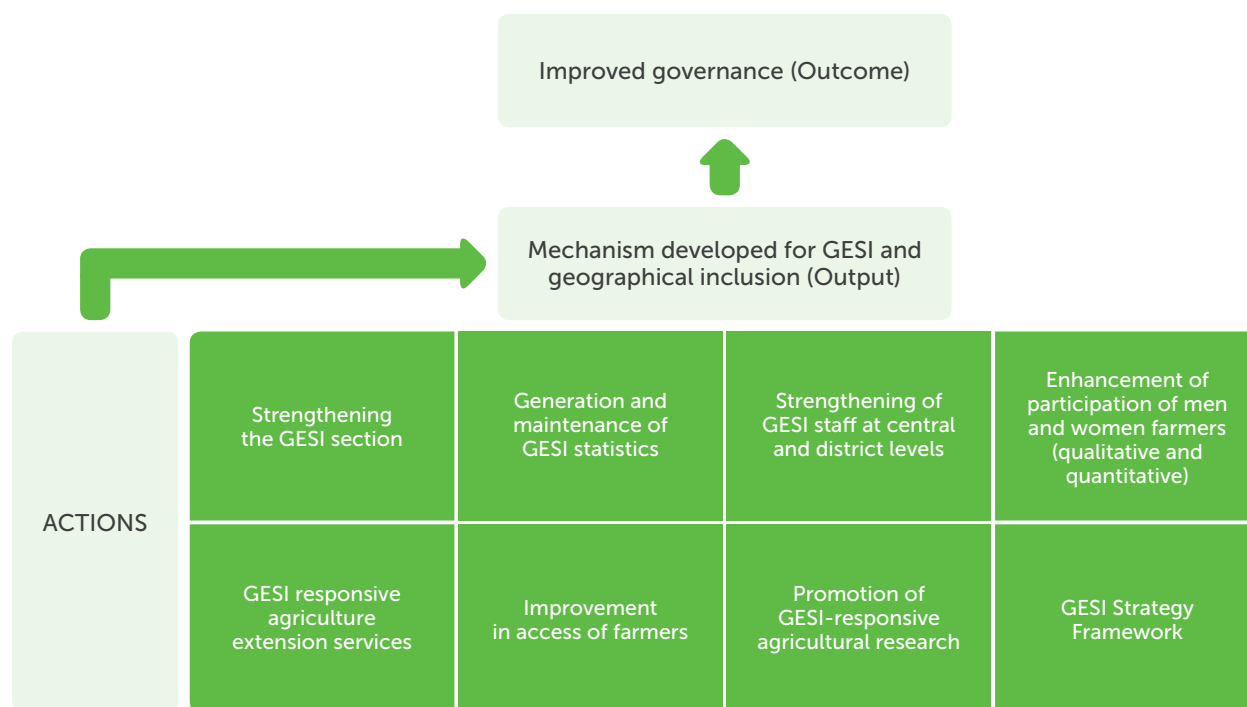
The MoAD has given the leadership to UN Women to prepare the GESI Strategy Framework for the ADS to address gender inequalities in agriculture. The GESI Strategy Framework is one of eight actions that the ADS has envisaged (Figure 5) and should be an overarching strategy that is needed to operationalize GESI in agriculture. The GESI Strategy Framework promotes capacity building of the GESI target groups for their meaningful participation in decision-making processes, and advocates the removal of the institutional and structural barriers to GESI in agriculture development. It guides the implementation of the ADS, and ensures the institutionalization of a GESI-sensitive approach in all components of the ADS. The GESI Strategy Framework will serve as a tool to monitor the GESI-specific interventions of the ADS in agriculture.

¹³ Refers to government institutional structures for promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment such as Ministry of Women Children and Social Welfare (MoWCSW), National Women Commission (NWC), etc.

The Government of Nepal has launched various policies, strategies, plans and programmes aimed at mainstreaming gender in agriculture. In addition to the ADS and National Agriculture Policy 2004, a number of

policies have been devised in recent years. Table 3 summarizes the main gender highlights in major agriculture and rural development-related policies and strategies.

Figure 5: Conceptual framework for GESI mechanism in the Agriculture Development Strategy



Source: Based on MoAD, 2014a

Table 3: Gender references in agriculture and rural development-related policies and strategies

Title	Gender highlights
Agriculture Development Strategy (2015-2035), MoAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses food and nutrition security of the most disadvantaged rural populations, including pregnant and lactating women; Contains a 10-year Plan of Action, which includes the development of a GESI strategy in agriculture.
Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Strategy Framework (2016), MoAD and UN Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An overarching strategy to operationalize GESI in agriculture; Promotes capacity building of the GESI target groups for their meaningful participation in decision-making processes.
National Seed Vision (2013-2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports equal rights and access to information, skills and services on seed use irrespective of gender, caste and ethnicity across geographical regions.

Title	Gender highlights
National Agriculture Policy (2004), MoAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages 50 percent participation of women in every possible agricultural activities for gender equality; • Conducts mobile training programmes to reach villages and homesteads to ensure women's participation and access to information; • Identifies and classifies small farmers with fewer resources and land to provide possible facilities; • Provision of particular programmes to targeted groups/resources for poor land holders (less than 4 ha), and deprived groups (<i>Dalit</i> and <i>Janajati</i>) in development of commercial and competitive agricultural systems; • Enhances management capacity of women in women's cooperatives and women in farmers' groups.
Agribusiness Promotion Policy (2007), MoAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures special programmes for the poor, women and <i>Dalits</i> for establishing agricultural entrepreneurs.
Agro-biodiversity Policy (2007) (first revision, 2014), MoAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizes special programmes for the poor, women and <i>Dalits</i> for the establishment and development of agro-enterprises; • Explores, promotes and utilizes indigenous knowledge in agriculture by including women, indigenous people and the poor; • Implements sustainable agro-biodiversity promotion and income-generation programmes.
Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (2006), MoAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commits to achieve 50/50 women-men participation in all administrative mechanisms including MoAD divisions, programmes, committees and boards; • Commits to increase women's skills in commercial agriculture, women's economic empowerment, and institutionalization of gender issues at all levels focusing on women's participation in commercial agriculture.
Agriculture Mechanization Promotion Policy (2014), MoAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims to attract youth and women producers in mechanized agriculture and increase their productivity; • Identifies and promotes adoption of women and environment-friendly technologies and machines to reduce the drudgery of women's work through agricultural mechanization.
Irrigation Policy (2014) and Water Induced Disaster Management Policy (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasizes 33 percent of disadvantaged people engaged in water users associations; • Encourages participation of backward and disadvantaged groups in users group for management.
Climate Change Policy (2011) (Mainlay <i>et al.</i> , 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures the participation of poor people, <i>Dalits</i>, marginalized indigenous communities, women, children and youth in the implementation of climate adaptation and climate change-related programmes; • Provides capacity building for local bodies and ensures the implementation of local-level activities.

Source: MoAD, 2015; and MoAD, 2016

Nepal has taken responsibility for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and set targets and strategies to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. However, programmes and strategies need reviewing, refining and reorientation in the context of SDG 5 on gender equality. As the SDGs recognize gender inequality as one of the major impediments for economic prosperity, peace, harmony, social integration and sustainable development, the Government aims to address it not only as a stand-alone goal, but also by mainstreaming it in all other SDGs with specific inclusive indicators and targets with resources. The Government has planned for gender disaggregation of all targets and indicators to ensure that no one is left behind. The Government also recognizes the importance of transparency and good governance at all levels, which includes ensuring farmers' access to justice and security; and the need for formulation of pro-poor and gender-sensitive policies in agriculture (NPC, 2015a).

3.2 Gender concerns in national plans and programmes

Nepal's policy on women in its development endeavour was initiated in its first Five-Year Plan (1956-1961) with a 'welfare approach' that focused on women's reproductive role. When the United Nations named the period 1975-1985 as the Decade of Women, which coincided with Nepal's sixth Five-Year Plan (1980-1985), there was a shift to an 'efficiency approach', which recognized the productive role of women for the first time in Nepal's development plans. The seventh Five-Year Plan (1985-1990) combined an equal participatory approach with efficiency approach. However, more concerns were raised after the restoration of democracy in 1990 (FAO, 2005), and it was decided to mainstream women's development in the eighth Five-Year Plan (1992-1997). A paradigm shift occurred from Women in Development (WID) to Gender and Development (GAD) in Nepal's development policy during the ninth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002), which has overtaken subsequent periodic plans in realization of the need to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment (Bhadra *et al.*, 2007). Some highlights are included in Table 4.

In line with national periodic plans and priorities, the Government of Nepal has also formulated a long-term plan for agriculture development with gender as one of the major focuses.

Agriculture Perspective Plan (1995-2015)

The Agriculture Perspective Plan aimed at accelerating agriculture growth by improving the living conditions of women as one of the three dominant objectives in addition to eliminating poverty and enhancing the natural environment. However, the plan lacked effective gender mainstreaming mechanisms and gender relations from the onset. In addition, there was no mention of the importance of gender sensitivity in the implementing machinery, rules and regulations (FAO, 2010b). Basically, the plan viewed target groups as beneficiaries and the focus was on addressing only their practical needs. The Agriculture Perspective Plan focused on women but in a very limited way. As a result, it could not improve the income of women and smallholder farmers (UN Women, 2016).

3.3 International commitments and legal provisions relevant for gender equality promotion

Nepal is signatory to several treaties and international human rights instruments supporting women's rights and equality, including:

- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) ratified in 1991.
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) ratified on 14 May 1991.
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) acceded on 14 May 1991.
- Nepal supported the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), 1995.
- The MDGs set out targets for gender equality, women's empowerment, poverty reduction, universal primary education, and maternal health in 2000 (NPC, 2013b).
- The Optional Protocol to the CEDAW was ratified in 2007.
- The ILO Convention 169 ratified in 2007 marked a significant development in land reform, land ownership and natural resource management, and committed the country to the rights of indigenous peoples (ADB, 2012).
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, specifically Women and Children acceded in 2008.

Table 4: National periodic plans for gender integration in agriculture

Plans	Integration of gender in agriculture
Fifth plan (1975-1980)	Women's development activities were included in the education, health, employment, agriculture, cooperatives, law and forest sectors.
Sixth plan (1980-1985)	Appreciation of women farmers' contribution to agricultural programmes.
Seventh plan (1985-1990)	Women's participation was enhanced with adopting the policy of fixed quotas, such as a target of 10 percent of women participating in training programmes.
Eighth plan (1992-1997)	A provision for enhancing women's access to agricultural inputs. Institutionalization of women's contribution to agricultural activities and ensuring women's participation at the policy level.
Ninth plan (1997-2002)	Three strategic approaches were emphasized: women's empowerment, gender equality and gender mainstreaming in all development activities in agriculture.
Tenth plan (2002-2007)	Emphasis on mainstreaming gender in agriculture extension services and working towards women's capacity development and professional enhancement.
Eleventh plan (2007-2010)	Issued joint land ownership certificates (name of both husband and wife). Provision of 20 percent discount on the registration charge whenever land is purchased in the name of a female member of the household.
Twelfth plan (2010-2013)	Emphasis on development and use of small and appropriate agricultural tools that reduce women's workload, save labour and add value. Strengthened the role of women for sustainable peace and development by building their capacity in social, economic and political areas.
Thirteenth plan (2013-2016)	Organized women into groups in order to enhance their access to agricultural land, technologies and tools. Promoted alternative energy technology to reduce women's workload in firewood collection.
Fourteenth plan approach paper (2016-2019)	Provision of access to subsidized loans and credit for entrepreneurship development or starting business through self-employment; expansion of labour and time saving technology for women. Ensuring quality promotion and market access for products produced by women's groups.

Source: National Planning Commission (NPC) from planning periods 1975-2016



- Subsequent to ICPD 1994, ICPD+10 and ICPD Beyond 2014 (Programme of Action), Nepal made gender-sensitive health policies and programmes for sustainable development (ICPD, 2013).
- The United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 established legal standards to ensure the meaningful participation of women in the peace process.
- The SDGs were adopted on 25 September 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Nepal initiated the implementation of the set targets for the achievements of the SDGs (NPC, 2015a).

In accordance with the above commitments, Nepal's constitutions of 1990, 2007 and 2015 have all made legal arrangements to implement international treaties. Nepal's constitution (Government of Nepal, 2015) affirms to abide by CEDAW's recommendations,

the Beijing Platform for Action and the SDGs. In the case of agriculture, for the first time the constitution upholds the rights of farmers to access land for agricultural purposes, and to select and preserve traditionally adopted endemic seeds and agricultural species. The new constitution promotes state policies for agricultural lands reforms and discourages absentee land ownership, however, women's ownership of land is still constrained (UN Women, 2015). The absence of supporting legislation and the prevalence of traditional practices restrict women's rights which are upheld in the new constitution. Looking at the current scenario, the new constitution requires strategies that would help its implementation and complement the efforts to achieving the SDGs.

Furthermore, despite the gendered bias in regard to the recognition of citizenship, the new constitution underpins a progressive foundation for a gender-equitable society (see Table 5).

Table 5: Provisions of gender equality in the 2015 constitution

The transfer of citizenship to children from single mothers and the right to security as a single mother.
Acquire citizenship certificates with gender identifiable by the name of his/her mother or father.
The right to special opportunities in the spheres of education, health, employment and social security by dint of positive discrimination.
The right of women to participate in all state structures and bodies on the basis of the principle of proportional inclusion.
The right to equal wages.
Special provisions to be taken under law for the protection, empowerment or advancement of women and also sexual and gender minorities.
Equal rights of both spouses in property and family affairs.
Adopt a policy for economic valuation of the work and contribution of women in regard to child care and care for the family.
Adopt the policy of representation of 33 percent women in different government and political realms. This includes the Federal Parliament, National Assembly, Provincial Assembly, District Coordination Committee, Municipal Assembly, Village Assembly and Ward Committee.
Make it mandatory that either the Speaker or the Deputy Speaker of both the House of Representatives and the Provincial Assembly, and Chairperson or Vice Chairperson of the National Assembly are women at any given time.

Source: Government of Nepal, 2015 and UN Women, 2015

Nepal has put in place several legal frameworks to lessen gender inequalities. Some key legal provisions aimed at the promoting gender equality include:

- Establishment of state entities to oversee gender issues such as The Ministry of Women Children and Social Welfare (MoWCSW) in 1995, the Women and Children Directorate in 1996, and the National Women Commission (NWC) in 2002;
- Enactment of Self-Governance Act in 1999 to ensure women's representation in local governance;
- Nepal's Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP) in 2003, aimed at giving equal attention to civil, political, cultural, economic and social rights to women in the country;
- Gender Equality Act 2006, and subsequent amendment of 56 discriminatory laws against women;
- Amendment of Civil Service Act 1993 in 2007 to promote gender and social inclusion;
- Reservation of 20 percent of places for women in the Nepalese Army in 2011, and Nepalese police and armed police in 2007;
- The Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act 2007;
- The National Women's Commission Act 2007;
- The Election Act (2007) provided substantive quota for women (33 percent) to be represented in CA. As a result, in 2010, almost one-third of the members of the CA were women, and a record number of *Dalits* and other marginalized groups were elected;

- The adoption of the Gender-Responsive Budget (GRB) to ensure adequate allocation of resources for gender equality and women's empowerment in 2007 and 2008;
- The Domestic Violence (Crime and Punishment) Act 2009;
- National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in 2011. Nepal became the first country in Asia to ensure that women's and girls' rights are protected in the Comprehensive Peace Accord (UN Women *et al.*, 2016b);
- Five-year National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Empowerment and Ending Gender-Based Violence (2013-2017);
- Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Protection) Act (2014);
- National Action Plan on Foreign Employment 2015;
- Witchcraft-related Accusation (Crime and Punishment) Act (2015);
- Amendment of some Nepal Acts relating to Gender Equality and Ending Gender Violence, which amended the 32 discriminatory acts including the Domestic Violence (Crime and Punishment Act) in 2015.

3.4 Institutional framework for gender equality and women's empowerment

The implementation of gender-responsive policies and programmes require gender-responsive institutional structures and national mechanisms that ensure not only interventions but also ascertain regular monitoring of implementation of legal and policy measures. The constitution of such machinery requires adequate women's representation, gender-responsive regulations, and procedural guidelines, including participatory monitoring. The Government of Nepal has created a range of institutional mechanisms and structures over the years to address gender and social inclusion issues from the central (national) to the district and VDC levels.

In recent years, the government, civil society organizations, and various bilateral and multi-lateral development partners have put great effort into promoting gender equality – especially women's rights – and upholding the various international

commitments including the SDGs (NPC, 2015a). These efforts were supported through the new constitution of 2015 that guarantees women's representation in an unprecedented manner via various government structures and at the leadership level. The Local Body Election Act has made it mandatory to have a woman either in the post of chair or vice-chair of the village councils, municipalities and district coordination committees. The Act states that half of each four-member ward committee should be women. At the national level, MoWCSW is the key ministry for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. Since the establishment of this ministry in 1995, the Department of Women Development (DWD), under the MoWCSW, has extended its services to all 75 districts with the support of Women and Children Officers (WCO) of the MoWCSW staff, who are the key gender focal points in the districts (SAHAVAGI, 2016; ADB, 2010; ADB, 2012; and UN Women, 2014a). Likewise, GESI Units and a Coordination Committee have been formed in the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), Ministry of Agricultural Development (MoAD), Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD).

The Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers (OPMCM) has a Gender Unit for the coordination, facilitation and monitoring of gender-based violence campaigns, and for running hotline services to address sexual and gender-based violence in the post-earthquake context (NPC, 2015c). Additionally, an inter-ministerial Gender-Responsive Budget Committee (GRBC) was established by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) with the mandate to design a methodology to monitor sectoral budget allocations and public expenditures from a gender perspective. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) has established the Directorate of Women and Children Service (DWCS) at Police Headquarters with dedicated service centres for women and children in all districts of Nepal to provide counselling and solve disputes of victims of domestic violence and trafficking.

The National Planning Commission (NPC), which is headed by the Prime Minister, has a Social Development Division (SDD) responsible for addressing women's empowerment issues. The NWC was established as a statutory independent constitutional body in 2002 to monitor women's rights including progress on the obligations under CEDAW. Likewise, the National Human Rights Commission has statutory

mechanisms to address all possible violations of women's rights. In January 2016, after the devastating earthquake in 2015, the Government established the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), which appointed a woman to the NRA Advisory Council. Subsequently, the MoF requested all sectorial ministries to follow the GRB principles in their reconstruction plans, as in the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) (UN Women *et al.*, 2016b).

At the district level, the Gender Mainstreaming Coordination Committee (GMCC), under the WCO/MoWCSW and with representation from line agencies, is tasked with monitoring and coordinating district-level gender work. Similarly, the District Development Committee, under the MoFALD, has a social committee with a social development officer responsible for children and gender-related tasks at the district level as member-secretary, and representation in GMCC. In addition, district-level NGOs, federations, associations of women and excluded groups are responsible for programme planning on gender and inclusion-related issues, auditing all programmes and coordinating gender equality and social inclusion-related activities at the district level.

At the VDC/municipality level, although there is no institutional mechanism with specific responsibility for GESI, the village and ward citizens' forums established by the VDC Grant Operation Manual and GESI strategy of MoFALD create spaces for all citizens, including women, to discuss, negotiate, prioritize and coordinate development efforts, especially the allocation of block grants with 10 percent of total budget exclusively for women, ensuring that they are both inclusive and equitable. The related financial regulation stipulates 30 percent mandatory representation of women in users' committees.

Ministry of Agricultural Development (MoAD)

The highest level of the national machinery in Nepal for the advancement of women and gender equality in agriculture and rural development is the MoAD. The recognition of the importance of establishing a gender-balancing programme within the ministry was initiated in 1993 with the establishment of the Women's Farmer Development Division (WFDD). Ever since, the MoAD has been integrating women

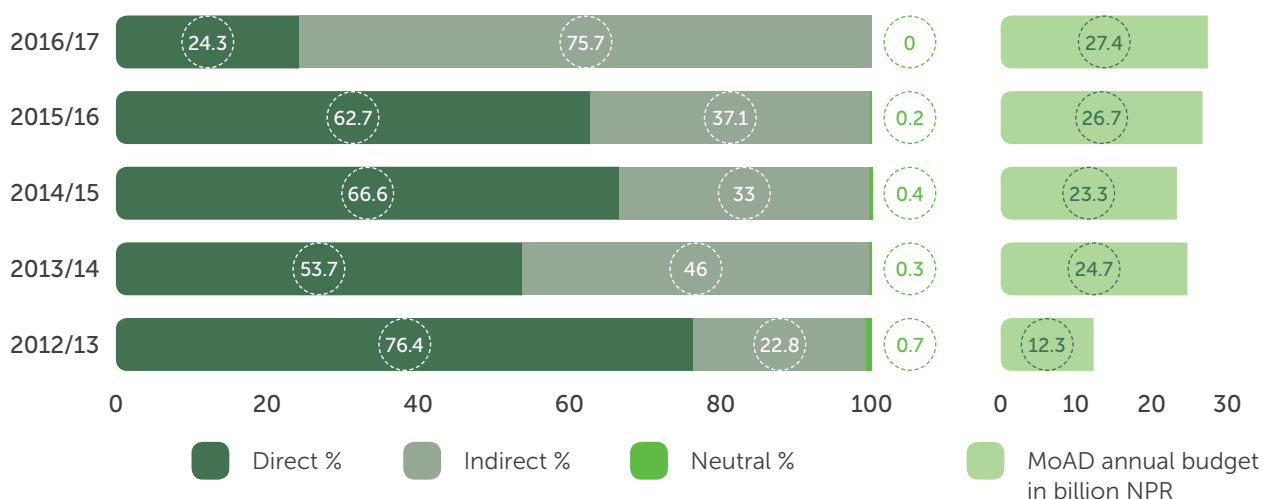
into its training programmes. Following a review of the impact made by WFDD and also with the aim of institutionalizing women's active participation in all agricultural subsectors, the MoAD established the Gender Equity and Environmental Division (GEED) in 2004. In 2012, the GEED was replaced by the GESI Section to ensure the participation of disadvantaged and marginal groups and support their livelihood (ADB, 2012). The GESI Section acts as a focal point for the management of GESI-related information and documentation of databases from five regions, and has been responsible for the implementation of the GESI-responsive budget through various programmes and projects. As well as vertical coordination within the MoAD, the GESI Section coordinates horizontally with other line ministries and development agencies. However, the GESI Section has limited authority and an inadequate mandate, further compounded by limited human resources with only two staff members. These are some of the challenges being faced by the mechanism developed for GESI and geographical inclusion. In 2014, the MoAD established the GRBC, comprised of five members, which is chaired by the Joint Secretary of Planning for the promotion of gender equality (MoAD, 2017b). This committee is supposed to harmonize relations with districts and regional and central departments in order to implement GESI policies, plans and programmes. However, the GRBC is not functioning as expected because of the resource constraints and lack of gender auditing. Nevertheless, the GESI Focal Person is optimistic about the effective implementation of GESI strategy of the ADS if there is adequate support in terms of human resources, logistics and authority.¹⁴

MoAD's gender-responsive budget

In 2008, the MoAD was given a GRB to ensure that adequate resources were allocated to execute national priority projects successfully, particularly those related to gender equality and women's empowerment. However, this GRB only tells how much money is spent on gender concerns but is unable to show precisely how much money has been spent on reducing inequalities (SAHAVAGI, 2016). Of the total national budget (NPR 1048.9 billion), only 2.4 percent (equivalent to NPR 27 billion) was allocated to MoAD in 2016/17 (MoF, 2016). Figure 6 illustrates the gradual increase of MoAD

¹⁴ Based on interview with GESI section Chief Focal Person, Ms. Bidya Pandey on 14 May 2017.

Figure 6: Allocation of agriculture sector budget in response to gender in MoAD



Source: MoF, 2016; MoAD, 2017a

total budget allocated to gender as illustrated by the decreasing percentage of neutral budget over time. It is encouraging to see that 100 percent of MoAD's budget was gender-responsive in 2016/2017.¹⁵ Nevertheless, more than three-quarters of the budget is indirectly gender responsive. With slightly more than 75 percent of the budget being indirectly gender responsive, gender-responsive programmes are limited to less than 50 percent of total programmes. As a result, a significant amount of the budget is not allocated for the benefit of women. Further, there are no clear sub-indicators for putting score or weight against each indicator of the GRB.¹⁶ The relevance of indicators and scores for both the crop and livestock sectors to address gender, social and geographical issues has yet to be analysed.

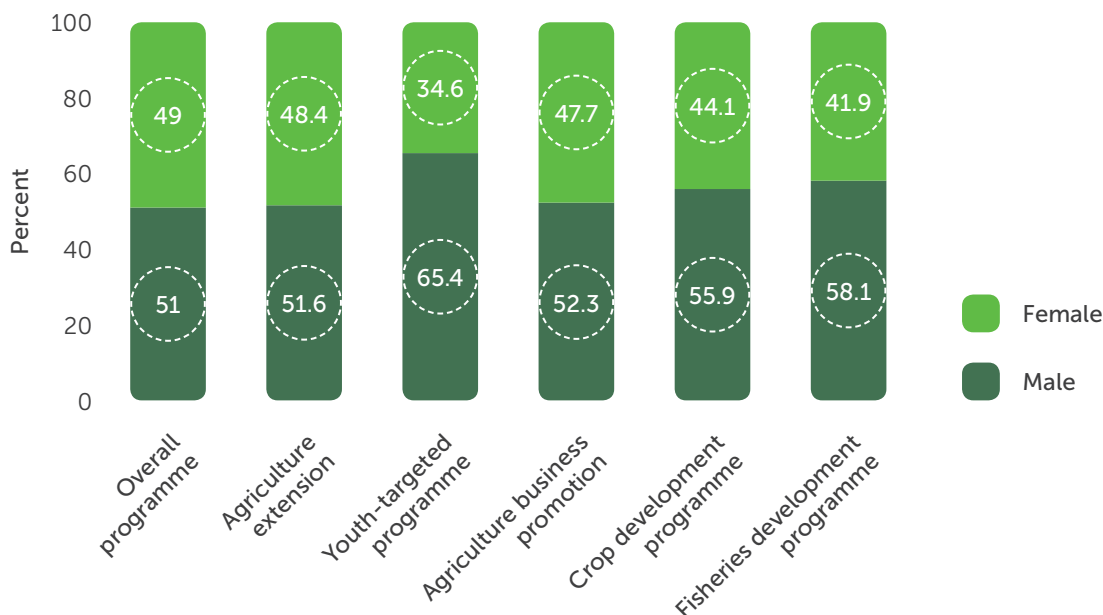
The MoAD has made efforts in implementing various programmes for women including indigenous and smallholders, such as contract farming, cultivation in leased land, group farming, off-season (vegetables and crops) production, value-chain management, export marketing through agricultural cooperatives, and improved seed production. Various agriculture development programmes in districts with women's participation are illustrated in Figure 7.

Women's participation is more than 40 percent in all district-level agriculture development programmes, except in youth-targeted programmes (34.6 percent), as shown in Figure 7. The MoAD has also implemented a number of projects at the district level (Figure 8). All nine projects show significant participation of women except the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience, which has only 13.4 percent of women's participation. The programmes and projects implemented by the MoAD show encouraging results in terms of women's participation, however, women's involvement is limited to programme participation, which may not induce a change in their livelihood. This has been well noticed during the 2016 World Food Day, where only 16.6 percent of the awarded farmers were women (MoAD, 2016). This gives the impression that women were not as competent as men when it came to agriculture and livestock performance. It also shows that the participation of women claimed by the Government in various programmes was not meaningful or effective enough. Therefore, the MoAD should make a concerted effort to close gender gaps by conducting assessments regarding the impact of the programmes.

¹⁵ MoAD (2017b) highlighted five qualitative indicators for GRB namely, i) increased in capacity building of women, ii) participation of women in planning and implementation of programmes, iii) proportion of benefits shared to women, iv) support to income generation and employment to women and, v) time saving and reducing drudgery. Programmes scoring 50 points or more are classified as directly responsive to women. Those scoring between 20 and 50 points are classified as indirectly responsive while those scoring less than 20 points are classified as neutral.

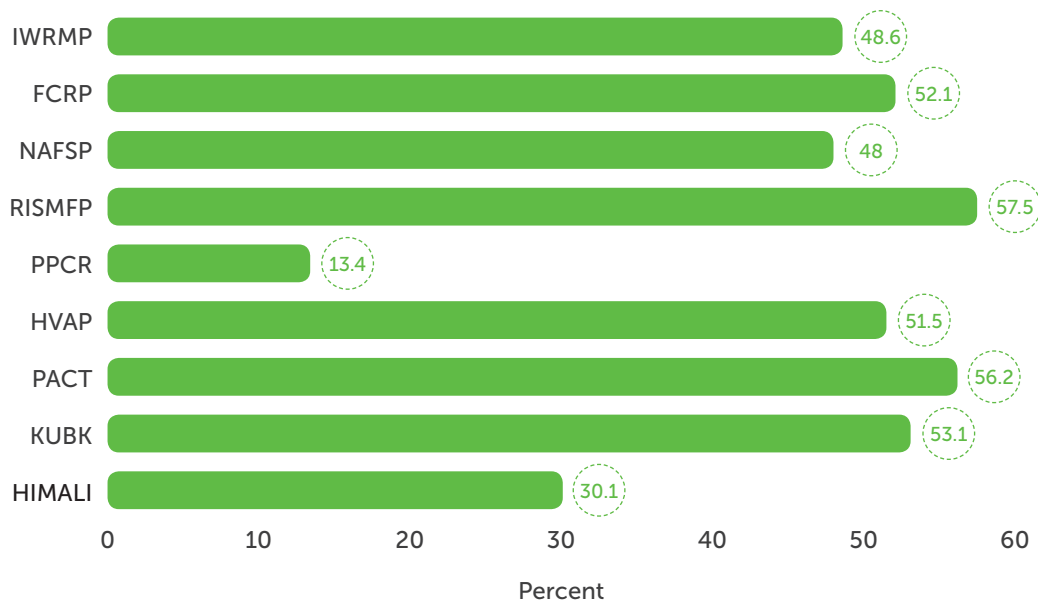
¹⁶ As per USAID (2012), the score is allocated to four indicators: 1) participation and decision making (30); 2) capacity building (30); 3) support to income generation and employment generation(30); and 4) time saving (10) in agriculture (crop and fisheries) while the score is different for the livestock sector. However, the problem here is not having sub-indicators for each indicator to allocate the score properly.

Figure 7: Share of men and women in agriculture development programmes at the district level (in percentage)



Source: MoAD, 2015 and MoAD, 2016

Figure 8: Share of women in various agricultural projects (in percentage)



IWRMP: Irrigation and Water Resources Management Project
 FCRP: Forest Cover Restoration Project
 NAFSP: Nepal Agriculture and Food Security Project
 RISMFP: Raising Incomes of Small and Medium Farmers Project
 PPCR: Pilot Program for Climate Resilience
 HVAP: High Value Agriculture Project
 PACT: Project for Agriculture Commercialization and Trade
 KUBK: Kisankalagi Unnat Biu-Bijan Karyakaram
 HIMALI: High Mountain Agribusiness and Livelihood Improvement

Source: MoAD, 2015 and MoAD, 2016



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Ministry of Livestock Development (MoLD)

The MoLD was established as an independent ministry from the MoAD in December 2015 to achieve food and nutrition security through sustainable livestock production for higher economic growth (MoLD, 2016). One of the objectives of the MoLD is to encourage women and young people's self-employment in the livestock and poultry sectors, and to create employment opportunities through their involvement in production, processing and marketing procedures in order to support the national economy. The newly formed ministry includes a GESI section under the

planning, monitoring and evaluation division.

The GESI focal person is responsible for programme review, disaggregated GESI data, and also represents the MoLD in inter-ministerial coordination committee meetings. The MoLD suffers from similar challenges as the MoAD, particularly at the policy level due to inadequate human resources and gender-responsive programmes, as well as at the implementation level. In particular women's involvement in agribusinesses and technologies is still weak as reported by the planning head of the MoLD.¹⁷

¹⁷ Based on interview with GESI section Chief Focal Person, Ms. Bidya Pandey on 14 May 2017.

4

ASSESSMENT OF GENDER INEQUALITIES IN AGRICULTURE AND THE RURAL SECTOR



In the subsistence crop and livestock integrated farming system of Nepal, there exists socially defined gender roles and responsibilities resulting in a distinct division of labour in farm and non-farm activities. The following sub-sections briefly examine these persisting gender disparities in terms of access to and control over resources, workload and wages in agriculture.

According to the 2011 National Demographic Health Survey (NDHS) more than three-quarters (76.4 percent) of women (aged 15-49 years) who are engaged in agricultural work are not paid, as compared to 15.9 percent of women engaged in non-agricultural work (MoHP, 2012). Respectively 10.4 and 7.3 percent of women employed in agricultural work received in-kind only payment and cash and in-kind payments in 2011. The difference between agricultural and non-agricultural work is highest for women in terms of cash only payment (5.9 percent versus 80 percent). Of all women employed in agricultural work in Nepal, more than eight out of ten (82.8 percent) are employed by family members, while only 14.6 and 2.6 percent are employed by non-family members and self-employed in agriculture, respectively. Women engaged in seasonal work in agriculture (47.4 percent) is also significantly higher than in other sectors (8.6 percent) (MoHP, 2012).

4.1 Food security and nutrition

Without rapid progress to reduce and eliminate hunger and malnutrition by 2030, the full range of the SDGs cannot be achieved (FAO, 2015a). Therefore, food security and hunger eradication are the top priorities on the international agenda today (NPC, 2015a). In Nepal food insecurity remains a fundamental challenge. Nearly half the districts in Nepal (42 out of 75) are classified as food insecure in terms of food grains (MoAD, 2014a). The far-western and mid-western rural regions struggle with chronic food deficits, mainly due to poverty, high market prices, low agricultural production, lack of basic infrastructure, and climate change (USAID, 2015). In regions facing these issues, gender gaps have been recognized as a key concern given the vital role of female smallholders in household and community

food and nutrition security. They play a crucial role throughout their involvement in food systems, from production on the family plot to food preparation and distribution within households. Despite this, women's roles are generally undervalued and constrained by their limited access to resources, services and labour market opportunities. In terms of nutrition, 18 percent of women in Nepal were malnourished (body mass index¹⁸ below 18.5) and 35 percent were anaemic (low level of haemoglobin in the blood) in 2011 (MoHP, 2012). The prevalence of anaemia is higher for rural women than urban women (36.2 percent as compared to 27.6 percent) and highest in *Terai* regions (42 percent versus 26.9 percent in mountain and hill) (MoHP, 2012). In recent years, great progress has been made in meeting the targets of the MDGs. This is thanks to the implementation of the Multi-sector Nutritional Plan (2013-17) by the NPC and because the CEDAW recommendations were followed (CEDAW, 2011). However, in 2011, 40.5 percent of children under five years old remained stunted, 28.8 percent were underweight, 10.9 percent were wasted, and 46 percent were anaemic (CBS, 2011; MoHP, 2012). There are considerable differences in the nutritional status of children by sex ethnicity and ecological zone. Stunting, for example, is slightly higher among girls (43 percent) than boys (40.1 percent) and is more pronounced in the mountains (56 percent) compared with the hills (42.3 percent) and the *Terai* regions (38.6 percent). Likewise, there are variations in socio-economic levels. Prevalence of stunting is highest among Dalits and socially excluded groups in the hills and *Terai* (USAID 2015, and MoHP 2012).

Studies have shown that health and nutrition status improved with the educational status of mothers. It is also reported that geographic and socio-cultural factors including gender have great influence on the status of health and nutrition. This co-relation can be explained by women's multiple roles, which influence the amount of time they have to take care of themselves and young children. In addition, gender biases and discrimination exist in socio-cultural practices such as women eating last or eating only leftovers, and being discouraged from consuming dairy products during menstruation or green vegetables while breast-feeding (ADB and FAO, 2013; FAO, 2010b; USAID, 2015; Chhetri, 2016).

¹⁸ The body mass index is expressed as the ratio of weight in kilograms to the square of height in meters. A body mass index below 18.5 indicates thinness or acute undernutrition (MoHP, 2012).

Nepal's new constitution has provisions that guarantee non-discrimination in the application of general laws on various grounds (NPC, 2015c), in line with the CEDAW recommendations recommendation to address harmful practices that discriminate against women and girls (CEDAW, 2011). Yet, it does not define gender discrimination to encompass both direct and indirect discrimination that occurs in the public and private spheres (UN Women, 2015). Out-migration of men, along with negative impacts of climate change on food production, have further made rural, socially excluded and resource-poor women more vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity. Therefore, an integrated approach that includes pro-poor investment in sustainable agriculture and rural development including social security measures, maternal education and awareness of optimal nutrition practices along with men's participation are recommended by many development stakeholders. This would help to improve food security and nutrition among women and children, as well as help to improve the overall socio-economic conditions of all household members.

4.2 Crop production and post-harvest

Gender differentiation in division of labour, workload and wages

Past studies of Poudyal L.N. *et al.* (2009) and FAO (2010b) have revealed that irrespective of regions, women are involved more in crop production and post-harvesting activities than men. While men generally perform tasks that require heavy

physical labour such as ploughing, women are more commonly involved in tasks such as weeding, harvesting, threshing and milling (FAO, 2005). However, of late, such patterns of the division of labour are changing. In rural areas, due to migration and long-term absence of men from agricultural fields, women have now also taken up responsibilities traditionally performed by men, such as ploughing. Consequently, it has not only increased the workload of women but it also caused poor agricultural performance due to labour scarcity as well as lack of access to credit for agriculture inputs. The heavy burden of unpaid household responsibilities borne by women often leads to 'time poverty' (FAO, 2015b). There is concrete evidence that feminization of agriculture has impacts in both the social and economic spheres. In the social sphere, it is creating social injustice to women due to family stress, family breakdown and children growing up with single mothers or other female relatives. Economically, there is under-utilization of the agriculture sector due to lack of available labour and input, which leads to abandonment of productive land, and results in food insecurity and nutrition scarcity as well as chronic malnutrition of both mothers and children (Tamang *et al.*, 2014; Bhadra, 2007). Table 6 shows that, employed women spent on average, 10 hours more working each week than men when taking into account non-economic work. In particular, women in Nepal spent nearly six times more hours (23.3 hours versus 4.3 hours) than men in non-economic (household) work. However, there is no significant disparity between women living in rural and urban areas.

Table 6: Average weekly hours spent on economic and non-economic work of employed persons aged 15 years and above, by sex, 2012-2013

Type of work	Nepal			Urban		Rural	
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Men	Women
Economic work	41.2	32.1	36.4	45.5	31.1	40.3	32.3
Non-economic work	4.3	23.3	14.4	3.9	22.6	4.3	23.4
Both types of work	45.5	55.4	50.8	49.4	53.7	44.6	55.7

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), 2014b

The shortage of labourers in agricultural activities, mostly in rural areas, has led to the abandonment of rural agricultural land across the country (CBS, 2013 cited by Tamang *et al.*, 2014) and women focusing on high value but less labour-intensive crops such as vegetable production. A study carried out by Tamang *et al.* (2014) in Kavre and Lamjung reported that 25-30 percent of agricultural lands have been abandoned (left uncultivated) over the period 1994-2014 in these two districts due to women's time poverty and heavy work burdens.

Although there is no national-level information available regarding men and women's involvement in specific crop production and processing activities, a study carried out in Luhu village on the outskirts of Kathmandu reveals that women do double the work of men when it comes to producing major cereal crops and vegetables, and post-harvesting (Joshi 2000, cited from Baral, 2016). A similar pattern was found in a study carried out in Nepal by FAO (2010b). The study reported that women share more than 50 percent of work, from planting to maturity of crops including post-harvest activities. Studies cited above showed that whilst women are mostly responsible for food preservation and processing, men are responsible for crop selling in the markets. Women were mainly involved in cleaning of storerooms and storing of agri-products in bags in order to preserve food crops properly for longer periods. This indicates that women are key contributors to family food and economic security.

Irrespective of region, the working pattern of men and women varies with seasons. In general, both men and women farmers are busy during peak seasons, especially during planting and harvesting times. In peak seasons, labour is either exchanged or hired or both when family labour is insufficient. However, in exchanging labour, a day of a woman's labour is not considered equivalent to a day of a man's labour. This is almost double, i.e. two women for one man day, as reported by female members of the Shatruijit Management Agriculture Cooperative in Kavre.¹⁹ The difference is explained by work efficiency, presuming women are less efficient than men in crop production activities. As a consequence, gender disparities are translated into wage disparities.

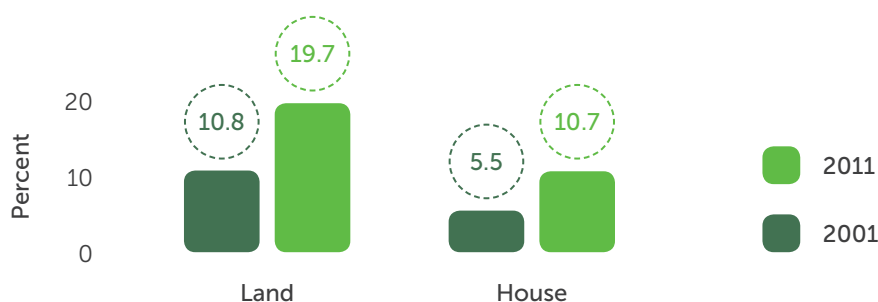
Past studies (FAO, 2010b; Baral, 2016) have revealed the existence of gender wage discrimination throughout the country, even for people carrying out the same activity. Women undertaking agricultural labour received wages 26 percent lower than men in 2011 despite equal workload according to a study from SAHAVAGI (2016), although provision of no discrimination with regard to remuneration has been made by the Government of Nepal (NPC, 2015c).

Access to and control over resources

National statistics collected in 2014 by CBS show that the average area of land owned by women is almost half (0.4 hectare) that of men (0.7 hectare) (CBS, 2014c). Female-headed households accounted for 19.7 percent of the total agriculture landholders in 2011, a rise from 10.8 percent in 2001 (SAHAVAGI, 2016). Nevertheless the vast majority of female-headed households did not own land and houses in 2011 (Figure 9). Despite the new constitution ensuring equal property rights without gender discrimination, ownership rights over land remain a major constraint for the majority of women (UN Women, 2015). This limits their access to credit, renting of tools, and technology and purchasing of crucial inputs for crop production such as fertilizers, and high-yielding, drought- and heat-tolerant seed varieties, which ultimately results in low production performance. The situation is more alarming in rural areas due to the limited subsidy given by the government to support small-scale farmers, particularly women, poor and disadvantaged groups. Similarly, there exists an undervaluation of the importance of women's skills, knowledge and labour contributions in crop production resources such as water management (IWMI, 2006). For example, the Rural Village Water Resource Management Project had fewer active women and disadvantaged groups in water users committees. Consequently, this limits women's participation in decision-making when it comes to high-value crops (cash crops) and major cereal crops (rice and wheat), as these products require more inputs including irrigation. Weak women's participation and leadership at the institutional and policy levels limit women's decision-making and contribute to lower gender-responsive resource allocation.

¹⁹ Based on the focus group discussion carried out by the researcher in March 2007 for this study.

Figure 9: Land and house owned by female-headed households (in percentage)



Source: CBS, 2011 and SAHAVAGI, 2016

4.3 Livestock production and management

As in crop production, Nepalese women play a major role in the management and care of farm animals, carrying out around 70 percent of the work related to livestock rearing. But there exists a labour gender division in livestock production and management. According to an assessment carried out by Poudyal L. *et al.* (2009), women are responsible for 70–90 percent of livestock-related work such as forage collection, cleaning the gutters and sheds,

and feeding animals; whereas milking animals is mainly performed by both women and men, and the selling of milk to generate cash income is considered to be the men's domain (Table 7). It clearly shows that women's involvement is very high in non-cash activities and men's participation is high in direct cash-generating activities. Studies have also reported that women's involvement in livestock management was higher as compared to men's, as the former are mostly involved in tedious tasks such as forage collection and grass cutting (Karki *et al.*, 2014; Baral, 2016).

Table 7: Distribution of roles and responsibilities in major livestock activities (in percentage)

Activities	Women	Men	Both women and men
Cleaning the gutters and sheds	80	5	15
Feeding animals	70	7	23
Forage collection	92	0	8
Milking animals	42	4	44
Selling milk*	19	46	31

Source: Poudyal L *et al.*, 2009

* Note, 4 percent of milk selling is done by children

Poudyal *et al* (2009) reported that women's participation was around 25 percent in the production of larger animals such as cattle and buffaloes, which are considered to be the most important enterprises in the society, whereas their participation was very high (up to 70 percent) in the production of small ruminants like goats (FAO, 2015b). The Community Livestock Development Project (CLDP) reported that women were marginalized due to access to credit and newer technologies, which limited them to traditional goat rearing instead of investing in value-added and higher income-generation activities such as dairy or meat processing, and improved dairy animal farming and forage production (ADB, 2010; Poudyal *et al*, 2009). Research carried out on gender and livestock management by Gurung *et al.* (2005) in three regions of Nepal reported that rich and resourceful farmers raise large livestock species, whereas poorer and disadvantage ethnic groups tend to raise small species such as goats, pigs and poultry. A similar trend was reported by the MoAD (2016) from the Eastern Region districts livestock database (Table 8).

Table 8 reveals that around 73 percent of women participated in pig rearing programmes in Sunsari district, whereas in the case of larger ruminants such as cattle and buffalo, women's participation is

significantly lower than men's. Women's involvement in the livestock trade, investment and spending of household income from livestock marketing is still limited (Gurung *et al.*, 2005). Despite the overwhelming role of women in livestock production, the agricultural plans do not address gender constraints satisfactorily in this sub-sector (Paudel *et al*, 2009). Nevertheless, in recent years, efforts have been undertaken in engendering livestock projects as well through GRBs by the Government.

4.4 Aquaculture

In rural Nepal, aquaculture provides a source of nutritious food and income for women who manage their household but lack opportunities to improve their livelihoods. Recognizing aquaculture as a means of fighting malnutrition and poverty, both the public and private sectors have been actively involved in promoting small-scale aquaculture among women through leasing water bodies collectively. With the support of the Government, women's contribution to total fish production from aquaculture practices was recorded at 60.7 percent in 2014/15. In addition, women's production through capture was recorded at 32.6 percent, indicating significant support in national economy.

Table 8: Participation of men and women in the livestock Pocket Package Programme in the Eastern region districts, 2013-2014

Pocket Package Programme	District	Participation			Women's participation in percentage
		Total	Men	Women	
Cattle	Ilam	505	398	107	21.2
Cattle	Morang	701	382	319	45.5
Buffalo	Siraha	200	145	55	27.5
Buffalo	Saptari	300	210	90	30.0
Pig	Sunsari	500	136	364	72.8

Source: MoAD, 2015

The declining availability of natural uncultured native fish species among traditional fishing communities such as Tharu, Darai Bote and Gurung has negative implications, not only for food and nutrition security, but also for traditional fishing communities' cultural and social values (Pant *et al.*, 2009). However, aquaculture practice requires significant resources, including land and access to information, water, credit, fingerling transportation and skill development. (Farquhar, *et al.*, 2017; and Farquhar, *et al.*, 2018). This represents a major constraint for Nepalese women due to the lack of ownership rights over land, which limits access to credit for production. An integrated agriculture-aquaculture research project entitled Women in Aquaculture in Nepal, implemented jointly by the Institute of Agriculture and Animal Science, Rampur, Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) and Rural Integrated Development Society (RIDS) in two districts of Nepal between 2000-2007, revealed that women organizing themselves in cooperatives were able to be involved directly as primary decision-makers (nearly 20 percent) and indirectly, that is jointly with men, (40 percent) in household decision-making that contributed significantly to their empowerment (Pant *et al.*, 2009; Pant *et al.*, 2013). This affirmed a key role of cooperatives in empowering rural women through the development of aquaculture enterprises (FAO, 2013). Therefore, recommendations were made for organizing women into groups and linking them with microfinance institutions as necessary for empowering women in aquaculture.

4.5 Forest and natural resource management

Relatively speaking, gender mainstreaming in the forestry sector in Nepal can be considered as setting a good example for the region. The Government has created a complementary national legal framework to protect women's rights and promote gender equality in the forestry sector. Ever since community forestry emerged, there has been gradual progress towards recognizing gender equity through laws, policies and strategies. Although community and leasehold forestry have come a long way in improving gender equity in their management systems, gender gaps are still present in the forestry profession. The current composition of female staff within the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MoFSC) is as little as 4 percent, which is very low in

comparison to the government's pledge of at least a 33 percent quota. Despite the fact that the number of female members in community forest users groups (CFUGs) executive committees has gradually increased to 31 percent, it has not yet reached the government's target of 50 percent (FAO, 2015c). According to the database (FAO, 2015c), women in CFUGs represent only about 5.5 percent of the total CFUGs members (19 361). This shows the existence of gender disparities at the local level as well. Knowledge, skills and practices of both men and women contribute to the conservation, management and improvement of natural resources. However, gender equality issues in utilization and management, along with different priorities based on the gender division of labour in natural resource management, dishearteningly cut across in benefiting men and women differently. This is because women have limited awareness and capacity to claim their rights and ensure that they are treated equitably (WWF, 2013).

4.6 Agricultural technology and agribusiness

A wide range of technologies, such as machines and tools, as well as improved plant varieties and animal breeds, fertilizers, pest control measures, and innovative management techniques are crucial for maintaining and improving agricultural productivity and reducing drudgery in farming. However, in most cases, new technologies have been introduced taking only men into account. Gender bias and patriarchal attitudes in institutions often reproduce assumptions that only men are farmers and that only men can cope with new technology. As a consequence, knowledge, technology and training related to agriculture are generally less available to female farmers (FAO, 2010a).

Although a number of women-friendly agricultural machinery and technologies, such as small tractors (two wheels), hand machines, mini-tillers, pedal or electric millet threshers, coffee pulpers, and potato grading machines were introduced to reduce the drudgery of many women involved in farming; many were not adopted (Kattel, 2016). Evidence reported by Baral *et al.* (2016) shows that, despite subsidy provisions from the Government for agricultural machinery, the high costs associated with the technology, and poor information and dissemination

strategies at the local level as well as the national level caused problems in adoption.²⁰ Moreover, in many cases, the benefits of such technologies were not backed by evidence-based research and tested at farm level with women. All this negatively affects agricultural production. Studies (FAO, 2010b; Tamang *et al.*, 2014; Kattel, 2016) show that in Nepal farms managed by women produce less value per hectare than those managed by men. This reflects gender inequalities particularly in accessing, adopting and using technologies. In general, female and male farmers often have distinct sets of agricultural knowledge, skills and criteria for choosing crop varieties and performing activities such as selecting seed, cultivating, harvesting and processing that need to be taken into account. Studies reported that gender-responsive research on drudgery-reducing and time-saving technology, along with gender friendly-extension services, are still inadequate in Nepal. One of the major factors is inadequate knowledge on gender analysis along with resource limitations as reported by Dr. Y. N. Ghimire of the National Agriculture Research Council, Socio-Economic Division.

Various studies revealed that self-employment in small-scale businesses or micro-enterprises following a value-chain approach could be an important strategy for income generation, especially for improving women's livelihoods and reducing rural poverty (Kattel, 2016). In recent years, the value-chain approach has progressively been integrated into pro-poor development programmes by a number of governmental institutions and NGOs specifically with the aim of empowering women through developing and managing their own income-generating activities. However, the major focus has been on technology and production with minimal emphasis on linking production and technology transfer with access to markets and basic infrastructure.²¹ In addition, in rural areas, micro-enterprises and cooperatives are spread out and lack a common platform. There is still the absence of any integrated strategy that includes information, communication, education, entrepreneurship development, and training services and facilities (ADB, 2012). Women entrepreneurs

often face additional challenges compared to men, such as less opportunity to access financial services, and lack of confidence, bargaining power and knowledge about market demand and supply due to poor literacy and limited mobility. Women are often discouraged from participating in micro-enterprises and agricultural businesses and, as a result, the entrepreneurial potential of women still remains largely untapped.

Recently, efforts have been made by the government and international development organizations to increase women's involvement in various agricultural value-chain programmes. These endeavours include the Farmer Field Schools offering training in, for example, manure management, compost-making, vegetable production and organic pest control, and using public radio and mobile phones to transmit information about current market prices. In addition, the government has provisions of loans up to NPR 500 000 per year through the Women Entrepreneurship Development Fund (WEDF) with a low interest rate (6 percent) (NIC, 2016) and also offers support for skill training to encourage women in their entrepreneurial development.

Nonetheless, women's inadequate decision-making power, limited mobility and heavy work burden limit their time availability to go to agricultural centres and markets. In such circumstances, access to opportunities is also gendered as women cannot transition from production to marketing, and they remain limited to their role as producers, while men are generally engaged in marketing. So far, most of value-chain development efforts have focused on economic aspects, overlooking the social dimension and gender perspective (ICIMOD, 2009).

Though, there has been progress in promoting women's representation in groups through various government plans and programmes in view of the CEDAW recommendations, how meaningful women's representation is largely depends on the level of influence of their position in the group. In this regard, gender analysis to better understand the enabling and constraining factors is necessary to promote women in agribusinesses.

²⁰ Reported by Shatrujit Management Agriculture Cooperative members in focus group discussions made in March 2017.

²¹ Similar problems were reported by Shatrujit Management Agriculture Cooperative members.

4.7 Agriculture extension services

Agricultural extension as an engine of pro-poor economic growth started in Nepal in 1952. However, most of these extension delivery models were top-down in nature and could not meet the needs of farmers (Suvedi *et al.*, 2012). After the promulgation of the Local Self-Governance Act 1999, Nepal devolved its agriculture extension services to the district level through the Department of Agriculture (DOA) and the Department of Livestock Services (DoLS). The Nepal Agricultural Extension Strategy (NAES), developed in 2007, emphasized efficient and effective services to agricultural producers as envisioned by the Agriculture Perspective Plan (1995–2015) (FAO, 2010d). Instead of just meeting targets and numbers, the current ADS seeks a gender-responsive, result-oriented decentralized extension education and research system, responsive to farmers and agro-enterprises, through establishing Community Agricultural Extension Service Centres (CAESC) (MoAD, 2014a).

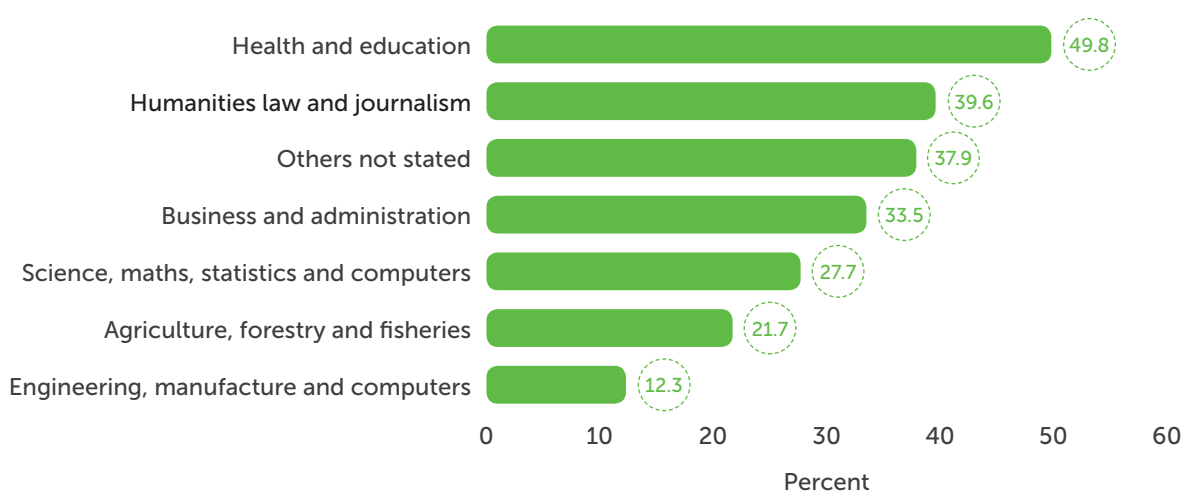
Despite this, there is inadequate supply of extension services staff, with one staff expected to oversee an average of 3 000 people and one center covering an average of 1 500 households. Although the Agricultural and Forestry University, including the Tribhuvan University (TU) and Purbanchal University (PU), offer tertiary-level courses and the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) provides technician-level training on agriculture,

agricultural extension services as such are still weak. In comparison to other major fields of study, women's enrolment in agricultural disciplines is comparatively low (21.7 percent) (Figure 10), resulting in fewer women in agriculture-related jobs. For example, only about 11 percent of the staff in public agricultural services are women (MoAD, 2017a). Inadequate gender-sensitive extension services, due to limited women extension workers, hamper the effective delivery of agriculture services to rural women farmers in Nepal.

According to the PDNA report of NPC, only 31 percent of female farmers received extension services in comparison to 69 percent of male farmers in 2015 (NPC, 2015b). The number of female professionals in agriculture and natural resource management is very low, both in the government and private sector, which means that there are very few professional women who can help ensure provision of gender-responsive information and services to rural female farmers (NPC, 2015b).

As most front-line extension workers are men, extension messages and information, including agriculture inputs and technology, do not reach out to women living in remote areas. This leads to poor performance in crop and livestock productivity. In addition, extension services lag behind in assisting farmers in marketing their farm products (Suvedi *et al.*, 2012).

Figure 10: Representation of women in different fields of study (in percentage)



Source: Source: CBS, 2012

On the one hand, technologies are not gender-friendly and, on the other hand, women are not often viewed as farmers, and, therefore, they are rarely approached and consulted by agricultural extension service providers (UN Women, 2016), resulting in low adoption of such technologies in rural areas. Socio-cultural aspects also play an important role in the adoption of technology. For example, in the *Terai* region and among some specific groups such as the Muslim community, women in general do not meet outsiders, especially men. This is also prevalent among women in rural areas. Under such circumstances, inadequate numbers of female extension workers could be one of the obstructing factors when it comes to the transfer of knowledge and technology (FAO, 2010a).

4.8 Rural finance

In most developing countries, there is a wide gap in the supply of financial services to the rural poor. In Nepal, only 20 percent of the population access credit from formal banking and financial institutions (CBS, 2011; Duwal, 2013). In this context, rural financing services are of the utmost importance, particularly for poor households trying to improve their livelihood status. But the problem is that most financial institutions are concentrated in urban areas creating an acute access gap to banking and financial services in more remote areas, mainly in the far-western and mid-western regions of Nepal (World Bank, 2014). In addition, the money borrowing patterns between men and women vary sharply. According to the World Bank, women are less likely than men to have obtained a loan from a formal financial institution, although women were slightly more likely than men to have taken out a loan from

a private lender (19.6 percent of women versus 18.9 percent of men) (World Bank, 2014). As land is the most important source of collateral, access to formal credit for the rural poor is very limited. According to ADB about 71.6 percent of smallholders are dependent on informal sources of credit, such as private money lenders and relatives, for loans (ADB, 2012). Such informal credit borrowing channels are common in both rural and urban areas. According to Nepal Living Standards Survey 2010/11, a large portion of the population (69 percent and 49 percent of rural and urban households respectively) borrows credit from informal channels (CBS, 2011). Table 9 shows that more than half (52.6 percent) of rural households with loans borrowed from relatives followed by bank/financial institutes (17.2 percent) and money lenders (16.5 percent). There are problems associated with accessing credit via more official channels. In hilly and mountainous rural areas, the population is scattered and connected by poor infrastructure. This creates additional challenges for micro-finance institutions to serve in rural and remote areas, resulting in higher transaction costs. Meanwhile, borrowers from cooperatives or rural (Grameen) banks have to spend a long time in regular group meetings, which increase their opportunity costs. Therefore, in order to minimize opportunity costs, they prefer individual lending (Duwal, 2013). In order to get credit, households often use land, housing and property (gold, silver and other valuables) as collateral. However, more recently, a few formal institutions have come up with more women-friendly schemes, such as hiring female agents who operate branchless banking in remote areas, in order to improve women's access to financial services. However the impact of such initiatives has yet to be assessed.

Table 9: Distribution of rural and urban household loans borrowed by source (in percentage)

Source of borrowing credit	Urban	Rural
Bank/financial institutions	35.9	17.2
Relatives	42.4	52.6
Money lenders	7.1	16.5
NGO/Relief agencies	3.9	4.2
Cooperatives	6.0	4.9
Others	4.7	4.6

Source: CBS, 2011

According to NLSS 2010/11, around 82 percent of rural households and 70 percent of urban households do not use any collateral to borrow credit (CBS, 2011). Loans without collaterals from the informal sector have no fixed rates and are often considered high risk, meaning high interest rates are charged. Over 65 percent of rural and urban households use their credit for personal purposes (household consumption and other personal use) while less than 25 percent of rural households use their credit for farming and business purposes.

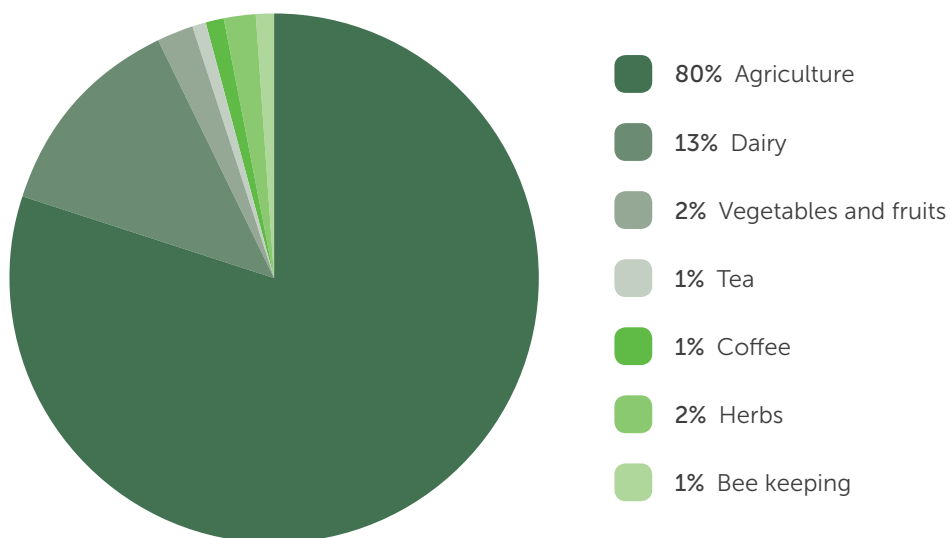
4.9 Agricultural cooperatives

Since 1992, when cooperatives were established in Nepal, until the recently promulgated constitution, cooperatives have been given greater importance as one of the three pillars for national development. The ADS has emphasized the promotion of farmers' and women's organizations and cooperatives as being fundamental to achieving economies of scale in technology dissemination, marketing, finance and logistics (MoAD, 2014a). In addition to playing a significant role in sustaining the country's economic growth, cooperatives provide opportunities for poor farmers to boost their incomes through access to

finance. Cooperatives work as platforms for farmers to acquire necessary knowledge and skills for increasing the agricultural production and reducing rural poverty. Of the total 33 599 cooperatives, agriculture and agro-products-related cooperatives account for 37 percent (12 440) (Department of Cooperatives, 2016). Figure 11 shows that high-value agro-products, such as tea, coffee, herbs, etc. account for significantly low numbers of cooperatives (1 percent or less) as compared to agriculture (80 percent) and the dairy sector (13 percent).

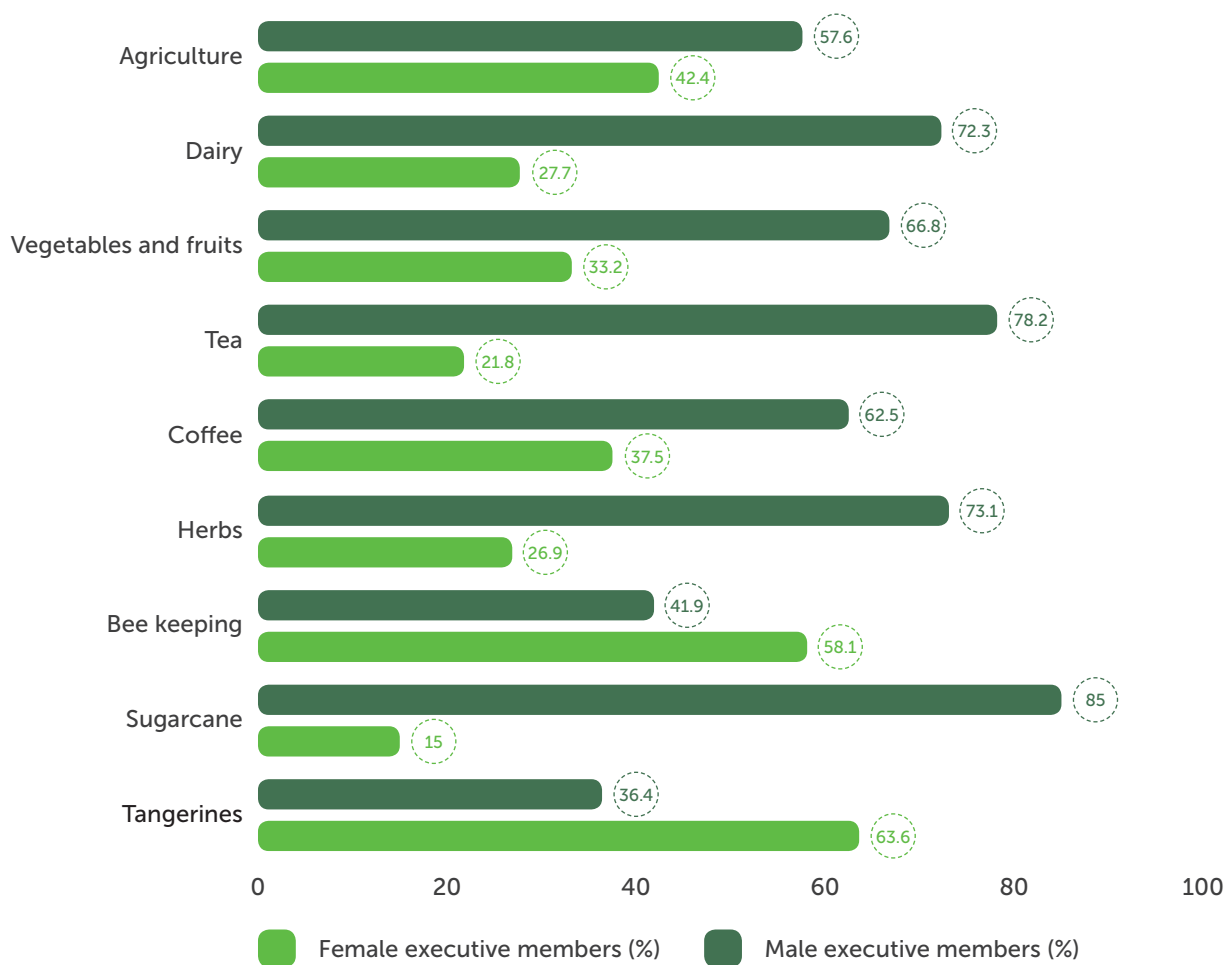
When the leadership of agriculture cooperatives is analysed from a gender point of view, except for bee keeping and tangerine cooperatives, the number of female executive members is significantly lower than that of male executive members (Figure 12). The highest gap between men and women can be observed in sugarcane cooperatives (70 percentage points of difference) followed by dairy (44.6 percentage points of difference). This can be validated by a field observation of Shatruijit Management Agriculture Cooperative in Kavre district conducted in May 2017, where men were found in a higher proportion (7 out of 11) in leadership positions.

Figure 11: Agricultural cooperative institutions by agricultural products (in percentage)



Source: Department of Cooperatives, 2016

Figure 12: Male and female executive members of agricultural cooperative institutions, 2016 (in percentage)



Source: Department of Cooperatives, 2016

Apart from providing saving opportunities and credit to poor farmers, cooperatives also offer the chance of employment to their members. However, except in the case of tangerine cooperatives, in all other types of agro-based cooperatives, women get fewer employment opportunities. Figures from the Department of Cooperatives show that of the total 7 783 employees, women received almost 20 percent

fewer opportunities of employment than men (Table 10). Nevertheless, according to the 2015/16 Economic Survey, a total of 4 011 cooperatives were fully run by women groups by the end of fiscal year 2014/15 (MoF, 2016), indicating that agriculture cooperatives could be a vital tool for enhancing the socio-economic as well as the political status of women and disadvantaged groups in rural Nepal.

Table 10: Direct employment received by men and women in agricultural cooperatives

Cooperatives	Men	Women	Total
Agriculture	3 045	2 599	5 644
Dairy	1 287	378	1 665
Vegetables and fruits	73	56	129
Tea	103	46	149
Coffee	43	34	77
Herbs	38	32	70
Bee keeping	24	23	47
Sugarcane	1	0	1
Tangerines	0	1	1
Total	4 614	3 169	7 783

Source: Department of Cooperatives, 2016

4.10 Rural infrastructure

Geographic location is also a key determinant of exclusion and disempowerment across all sectors. The World Bank suggests that social and economic empowerment of women can be achieved through improving infrastructure which provides access to drinking water, irrigation, energy, tourism and trade (World Bank, 2009). Evidence compiled by various international organizations suggest that rural roads increase the productivity and income for men and

women farmers by improving communications, reducing travel time and increasing access to markets (ADB, 2012; World Bank, 2009). Improved infrastructure also provides access to other services. In the context of Nepal, rural households have little or no access to primary health care, education, safe drinking water and sanitation or other basic services. For example, 38 percent of *Janajatis* in the hill regions have no access to a health post within an hour's walk. The shortest life expectancy (44 years) is found in the mountain district of

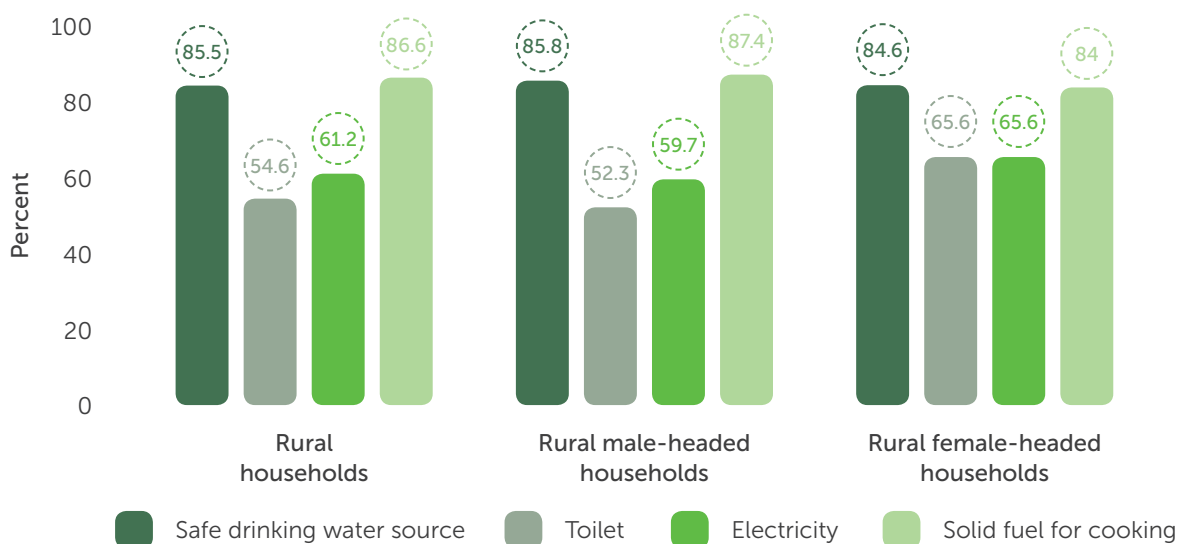
Mugu, compared to 74 years of life expectancy in Kathmandu (ADB, 2012). This is in large part due to lack of health facilities nearby. In rural areas, households are scattered so that only 32 percent can reach the nearest agriculture centre and 28 percent can reach the nearest bank within a 30-minute walk (ADB, 2012). Despite all efforts, 45.4 percent of rural households did not have toilets and 14.5 percent did not have access to safe drinking water in 2011 (CBS, 2014d) (Figure 13). Hill *Dalits* have the lowest access to improved drinking water (70 percent) compared to the national averages (82 percent) (ADB, 2012).

In line with the CEDAW concluding observation on the access to safe energy for cooking fuel,²² the Government of Nepal has implemented the National Rural Renewable Energy Programme since 2012. This was done with a view to reducing the dependency on traditional energy by integrating alternative energy for the socio-economic improvement of rural communities. Evidence shows that access to electricity, biogas and improved cooking stoves saves rural women’s time in collecting firewood, giving them more time to become involved in other activities including income

generation and social activities (World Bank 2009). However, the proportion of rural households using solid fuel (cow dung, firewood and biomass) for cooking²³ did not decrease between 2001 (84.5 percent) and 2011 (86.6 percent) (CBS, 2014d). From a gender perspective, improved access to toilets, and coverage of electricity were observed in female-headed households as compared to male-headed households in rural areas in 2011, as shown in Figure 13. Also, more female-headed households in rural areas had connections to an electricity supply when compared to male-headed households in 2011. Significant achievement has been made in the proportion of solar energy users, as coverage reached up to 9.2 percent in rural households in 2011 (CBS, 2014d).

Likewise, television coverage of rural households almost doubled from 16.4 percent in 2001 to 31.3 percent in 2011, and about 61.2 percent of rural households used mobile phones in 2011 (CBS, 2014d). It is worth mentioning that mobile phones also offer a great opportunity for women and men, especially in remote areas, to access information relevant for their livelihood (CBS, 2011c).

Figure 13: Share of rural households’ access to basic facilities by sex of head of household, 2011 (in percentage)



Source: CBS, 2014d

²² CEDAW concluding observation 2011 paragraph 38 (c): “Ensure equal access of women to resources [...] by facilitating women’s access to safe drinking water and fuel” (CEDAW, 2011).

²³ The use of solid fuel produces indoor pollution and leads to health problems such as respiratory diseases of household members, in particular women and children (CBS, 2014c).



Though inadequate rural infrastructure affects all, there is a wide gap in the way in which it affects women and men's access to health care, nutrition, education and participation in decision-making. *Dalit* families living in rural areas are the most disadvantaged and many are unable to send their children to school because of the geographical location or financial constraints. In addition, they suffer disproportionately from the effects of malnutrition, infant mortality and child marriage

(Navsarjan Trust, FEDO and the International Dalit Solidarity Network, 2013). Overall, women and remote communities in rural areas are the most affected by the lack of essential infrastructure and facilities. It has hampered development and employment opportunities and, therefore, efforts need to be made for rural infrastructure development with the aim of extricating rural women and marginalized groups from drudgery and providing more opportunities for income generation.

4.11 Climate change and disaster risk management

Climate change is already having tremendous social, economic and environmental consequences in Nepal. Its effects are being felt in the form of floods, droughts and devastation to the landscape among others. Climate change impacts men and women differently. Women are more adversely affected by climate change and disasters because it magnifies pre-existing gender inequalities. This was shown when earthquakes hit Nepal in April and May 2015. According to the PDNA report of NPC, of the total 498 852 houses that were damaged, about 26 percent were female-headed, and 41 percent belonged to *Dalits* and indigenous communities (NPC, 2015b; SAHAVAGI, 2016). Women and girls sustained higher levels of deaths (55 percent) in comparison to men and boys (45 percent). In rural areas, many energy efficient and alternative energy installations (improved cooking stoves, biogas) were damaged and the government water supply system was disrupted. This exacerbated women's and girls' workloads, as they had to collect water from a farther distance (NPC, 2015b) and gather firewood from forests. This extra burden limits their ability to challenge the status quo, further entrenching their roles and responsibilities. The disaster exposed pre-earthquake inequalities prevalent in the society based on gender, age, caste, ethnicity and marital status with additional risk (NPC, 2015c). For example, in the Sindhupalchowk district, it was reported that

the destruction of toilet compounds had not only a serious impact on personal and menstrual hygiene of women and adolescent girls but also heightened the risk of sexual and gender-based violence against them. Gender inequality, manifested in limited access to resources and information, and exclusion from the decision-making process, limits women's capacity to cope with the changing environment (Mainlay *et al.*, 2012; WWF, 2013). In Nepal, where women rely more on natural resources and agriculture, women and girls are among the most affected by climate change (UN Women, 2014b).

The common effects of global climate change experienced by Nepal in recent years include uneven distribution of monsoonal rainfall, and increasing incidences of flash floods and droughts. Consequently, the adaptive capacity of semi-subsistence crop-livestock-based rural livelihoods in the country is believed to be waning. An assessment carried out on the 2011 Climate Change Policy, National Adaptation Programme of Action and Local Adaptation Plan for Action by the International Institute for Economic Development in 2012 (Mainlay *et al.*, 2012) revealed that, in spite of an understanding of the relationship between gender, poverty and vulnerability in relation to climate change, there has been insufficient focus on the incorporation of gender analyses into the development and implementation of climate change laws and legislation.

5

CONCLUSION



For decades Nepalese women have been confronting poverty, socio-economic discrimination and disadvantages in society. Unpaid family labour and care work constrain women considerably when it comes to taking advantage of income-generating activities.

Employment inequalities, including the gendered division of labour, rural women's triple-work burden and gender wage gap, represent additional obstacles for rural women's social and economic advancement. This can be illustrated by women's higher involvement in non-cash productive activities and men's higher participation in direct cash-generating activities. Contrary to legal frameworks, gender-based wage discrimination is still prevalent, as men receive higher wages than women for the same types of work. There is an increasing dominance of women in agriculture due to increasing male out-migration, especially in rural areas. This forces women to take on increased workloads at home and in agriculture, and limits them from participating in alternative income-generating activities. Existing disparities in access to and control over resources is also affecting women negatively, as they lack unhindered access to land, credit, and the ability to purchase crucial inputs for agricultural production. In addition, although the government has subsidized credit on agricultural technologies/instruments in order to reduce women's workload, the high costs associated with technology, and limited knowledge and information about their application have caused many constraints in adoption.

Despite the Government's provisions, gender equality is often limited to laws and policies. Though there is a quota provision of 33 percent for women in institutions and decision-making processes, women's representation has remained low, revealing an acute gender imbalance and under-representation in agriculture. Even given the strategic importance of the GESI component, gender equality has received little attention by the concerned institutions. In the same way, attention has yet to be paid to the incorporation of a gender analysis component into the policy and laws pertaining to climate change.

5.1 Major findings

The major findings of the CGA on the magnitude and growth of the problem, and the level of national and international commitment are outlined below:

1. Gaps in policy, legislation and implementation:

- Although the new constitution guarantees the right to land access for agricultural purpose as a farmer's fundamental right, women's absolute ownership over land is still constrained, which hinders them from using land as collateral to acquire credit for agriculture or business purposes;
- Gender equality is often limited to laws and policies, and is not translated into reality for women. The new constitution is still unclear regarding the absolute recognition of women's ability to pass citizenship on to their children;
- The GESI has been given little attention by the concerned line institutions, as it is looked after by only a few people in the related ministries and divisions, suggesting unavailability of proper and sufficient human resources and discharging authorities;
- Despite the significant contribution of agriculture to the national GDP, the allocation of the national budget to this sector is comparatively lower than to the health and education sectors. Moreover, allocation of only one-quarter of the national agricultural budget is specifically assigned for gender equality issues. This indicates gaps at the policy and implementation levels on gender equity issues;
- Indicators developed for GRB are without any guidelines or basis to score/weightage against the indicators. As a result the relevance of indicators is questionable and needs to be reviewed, particularly in relation to GESI and the geographical context;
- The government's policy is limited to meeting targets of women's and excluded groups' participation in various programmes and projects rather than addressing gender inequality for women's livelihood and empowerment at the policy and strategic level;

- Although the government has subsidized credit on agricultural machinery to make it accessible to women and reduce their workload, the high costs associated with the use of new technologies combined with a poor information and dissemination strategy at national and local levels cause severe limitations in implementation;
 - In spite of the relationship between gender inequalities, poverty, vulnerability and climate change, there has been little focus on the incorporation of a gender analysis component into the policy and laws pertaining to climate change.
- 2. Non-recognition of women's contribution to the agricultural sector (women's invisibility):**
- Despite women's significant contribution to agriculture, rural women have not been recognized as agricultural producers with valuable skills, knowledge and contributions to the sector;
 - Over three-quarters of women are engaged in agriculture, but their actual share of contribution to the sector, as part of the labour force, paid or unpaid, has not been adequately recognized nor quantified in terms of the economic contribution to rural development at large.
- 3. Inequalities in employment, including in division of labour, workload and wages:**
- Women's involvement is very high in non-cash related production activities, whereas men's participation is very high in direct cash-generating activities such as crop production and livestock sales into the market;
 - Both cash and in-kind wage discrimination persist. Men receive higher wages than women in agriculture as well as in non-agriculture sectors. Women agricultural workers receive wages that are about 25 percent lower than their male counterparts;
 - In recent years, women have tended to shoulder the more tedious workloads, both at home and in agriculture mainly due to male out-migration causing fewer opportunities for on- and off-farm income generation;
- In comparison to other fields of study, the enrolment of women students into studies of agriculture, forestry and related sectors is comparatively low (21.7 percent), which may explain fewer women in agriculture (11 percent) and forestry (4 percent) higher-level professions;
 - Women remain limited as producers due to the lack of access to finance, market facilities and limited bargaining power associated with poor literacy and limited mobility. This is compounded by the burdens of domestic, care and farm work, meaning women have been unable to transit into more profitable occupations and entrepreneurship;
 - Value-chain development efforts mostly focus on economic aspects and have overlooked social and gender dimensions.
- 4. Disparities in access to and control over resources:**
- Women have limited intra-household decision-making power, particularly regarding livestock trade, agricultural investments and household income expenditure;
 - Women have virtually no control over income earned from cereal and cash crop production. Similarly, women's decision-making participation in value chains is insignificant;
 - Lack of unhindered access to land limits women in accessing credit and purchase of crucial inputs for agriculture production.
- 5. Existence of cultural gender bias:**
- Women tend to often participate in training for activities such as group formation, and livestock distribution. Whereas, animal breeding and improved forage production are considered to be jobs for men;
 - Women are discouraged from consuming dairy products during their menstruation period and are prohibited from eating green vegetables while breast-feeding, which often leads to malnutrition and poor health status for women and infants;
 - Prevailing socio-cultural practices in sharing food within society and households, such as women eating last or eating left overs, cause poor health and affect the nutrition status of women;

- About 18 percent of women have a low body mass index and 35 percent are anaemic, figures that are even higher in the case of rural women. As a result, chronic malnutrition among women and girls continues to be a long-standing challenge.
- 6. Gender inequalities in decision-making/ leadership positions:**
- Women in leadership positions, whether it is in farmers' organizations cooperatives, networks or in local governance, remain low due to their limited access to knowledge and information compounded with patriarchal narrative prevalent in institutions;
 - Women occupy only 4 percent of positions within planning and decision-making domain, reflecting an acute gender imbalance and under-representation in forestry.
- 7. Poor agriculture education, research, technology and extension services:**
- Poor agriculture education leads to limited applied learning skills, particularly regarding aspects of social and gender development, which has caused poor knowledge among agriculture professionals on gender;
 - As there is limited evidence-based gender-responsive research in the agricultural sector, few new technologies are being developed to meet women's needs, meaning they are forced to continue with time-consuming methods of work and production.
 - Because most of the front-line extension workers are men, 69 percent of male farmers receive extension services compared with only 31 percent of female farmers. This limited presence of women professionals in agriculture means they miss out not only on extension services but also the chance to gain new knowledge about agriculture inputs, market and technology.
- 8. Disparities in access to basic services for the rural poor and women:**
- In line with the CEDAW recommendations and the MDGs, Nepal has made significant progress in rural infrastructure development as compared to the previous decade. However, rural people in general and disadvantaged groups (*Dalits* and *Janjatis*) in remote hills and mountainous regions in particular are still far behind in terms of access to safe drinking water, sanitation, health and education facilities. Eighty percent of rural women remain dependent on traditional sources of energy (firewood, cow dung and biomass) for cooking, which are considered unsafe as they contribute to household air pollution.
- 9. Access to finance:**
- Most financial institutions are concentrated in urban areas creating an acute access gap to banking and financial services for people living in remote areas, especially rural women due to their limited mobility;
 - A majority of rural households (69 percent) access credit from informal sources. Women, due to collateral constraints, are less likely than men to obtain a loan from formal financial institutions.
- 10. Vulnerability to climate change:**
- Women have fewer productive resources than men (land, capital, credit, water, technology, etc.) and most often bear the burden of securing shelter, food, water and fuel, which increases their vulnerability and constrains their capacity to cope with an increasingly stressed environment;
 - Drying up of water sources, disruptions in the supply of water, damage to energy supplying technology and stations, and destruction of toilet facilities caused by natural disasters, not only increased the time spent collecting water, firewood and fodder, but also heightened the risk of sexual and gender-related violence.

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 Recommendations for the Government of Nepal

Based on the findings of this Assessment, below are listed recommendations for the enhancement of gender equality at the macro, meso and micro levels²⁴ for the Government of Nepal.

Macro-level recommendations

- Revise existing sectorial and thematic policies through GESI analysis;
- Stimulate the creation of new policies and the revision of existing ones, and create strategies and plans to uphold equal rights of women and men to ownership of and control over land as well as other productive resources based on up-to-date baselines and corresponding indicators;
- Implement a comprehensive monitoring framework on gender equality and rural women's empowerment in agriculture that will cover all its key economic, social and political aspects;
- Promote policy research and analysis on gender equality and rural women's empowerment in the agricultural sector to inform policies and strategic planning;
- Ensure active participation of rural women as well as women-led civil society organizations and cooperatives at all levels, including in the formulation of agriculture and rural development-related policies, strategies and plans.

Meso-level recommendations

- Ensure that a government agency fully takes charge over gender equality and women's empowerment issues, including coordination of those issues across the governmental system vertically and horizontally. Establish a structure of Gender Focal Points in all agriculture-line ministries as well as all other relevant ministries and institutions;

- Provide for an adequate representation of women from diverse backgrounds at the decision-making level by supporting programmes that aim to integrate women in executive positions in accordance with obligatory national provisions;
- Ensure sound policy implementation with adequate, gender-responsive budgetary allocations. This should be especially so within the MoAD and ADS frame of operations so to reach the benchmark of at least 65 percent of its annual budget to support the implementation of the GESI-responsive policy, plans and programmes;
- Support implementing the GESI strategy of the ADS by strengthening the GESI operational section with proper authority, human capital and adequate financial resources. Establish a structure of Gender Focal Points at the district level with GESI responsibilities in its terms of reference;
- Strengthen monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation, including through a regular tracking of expenses on gender-responsive budgeting and audit them in order to understand the empowerment and changes in women's status. Periodically review the process, criteria and weightage of indicators of gender-responsive budgets to make them more effective and relevant from a gender, social and geographical perspective;
- Systematically assess the changes in women's livelihoods introduced by agriculture programmes and projects by conducting GESI perspective analyses, documenting good practices and disseminating them for wider application;
- Incorporate GESI sensitization components into annual agriculture and livestock programmes to help with staff training, and enforce performance-based rewards, recognition and promotion for their GESI-friendly services aimed at increasing the capacities of extension staff members;

²⁴ Macro-level refers to the overall national policy environment, meso-level refers to the institutional context in the country and micro-level relates to community and household, which is the realm of the primary beneficiaries.

- In coordination with the Institute of Agriculture and Forestry and CTEVT, stimulate the update of agriculture and natural resource management education and training curricula with current and emerging gender and social issues;
- Encourage rural finance institutions, such as micro-finance and development banks, to develop special promotional packages that include group collateral, business literacy, tablet banking, insurance schemes, and assurance of markets for agriculture products with low premiums against loans for a wider practice in remote areas.
- Develop schemes with the provision of government matching grant support to utilize the remittance money in agribusiness, agro-enterprise and agro-tourism to generate more employment for rural women and men;
- Equip CAESCs by establishing an information desk and FM radio to enable access to information related to various legal and normative provisions such as tax rebates, subsidies, entrepreneurship skills and training along with access to loans to support women and poor and marginal farmers.

Micro-level recommendations

- Strengthen rural women's political, social and economic visibility and importance by identifying rural women leaders and champions in different agriculture sub-sectors across the country and ensure their integration into the vertical decision-making processes up to the policy and legislative level;
- Bolster the importance of women's groups and networks at the local level, including through initiatives such as Farmer Field Schools, and provision of leadership and advocacy training;
- Promote decent work, and full and productive employment of rural women, particularly those living in remote areas and from different ethnic backgrounds, including in agricultural value chains;
- Increase rural women's employability and competitiveness through technical and vocational education and training, on-job training, access to markets and seed funds, as well as the adoption of new technologies combined with support systems such as quality child care and maternity leave;
- Provide opportunities to poor landless women and marginal populations for group farming by leasing public land;
- Allocate a higher budget for food and nutrition programmes, particularly in rural and remote areas where the incidence of malnutrition among children and women is high;
- Coordinate with line ministries of cooperatives and cottage industries to support rural women and marginal farmers' access to easy loans without collateral for agriculture production and agribusiness;

5.2.2 Recommendations for FAO

Based on the findings of this Assessment, listed below are recommendations for FAO in its effort to support the Government of Nepal for the enhancement of gender equality at all levels.

Macro-level recommendations

- Lobby with the Government (MoF and MoAD) for an increase of the gender-earmarked annual budget allocation to the MoAD direct responsive category;
- Coordinate with United Nations agencies, development partners and civil society organizations to jointly advocate with concerned ministries, constitutional authorities, and political parties for the enforcement of government policies on women's land rights and pertinent legal reforms;
- Develop and implement livelihood strategies and create protection measures through a community-led, bottom-up approach.

Meso-level recommendations

- Strengthen the capacity of the Central Bureau of Statistics for designing agriculture and rural development-related surveys and censuses from a gender, social and geographical inclusion perspective to bridge the data gap and collect missing information relevant for gender equality in agriculture, including on unpaid and care work;
- Coordinate with the Central Bureau of Statistics for updating the disaggregation by age and sex of the national database on remittance flows along with the use of remittances by sector;

- Advocate for the introduction of rural women's easier access to hired labour and time-saving technologies along with easier access to subsidies and grants. Provide information and training to build the capacity of rural women to adopt to new technologies;
- Support the government in leasing abandoned private and public land as an alternative option for poor women and marginal groups to increase their livelihoods;
- Build up capacity and sensitize the government, particularly agriculture line ministries, on gender issues and integration of gender-responsiveness in their respective areas of work;
- Develop partnerships with the National Agriculture Research Council and Agriculture and Forestry University to help promote evidence-based gender-responsive agriculture research;
- Advocate with development partners, the government and the private sector for investment in rural infrastructure through basket funding mechanisms in order to avoid duplication and poor quality work. The funding mechanisms should be accompanied by the participation of local stakeholders with effective awareness-raising tools disseminated in local languages.

Micro-level recommendations

- Map links between agriculture and other sectors such as tourism and cottage industry, which have potential to generate gainful employment opportunities for rural women;
- Support development partners creating a basket fund that will provide scholarships, training, internships, tutorial classes and research grants for rural women and girls to prepare a critical mass of competent women professionals in the agricultural sector and rural economy;
- Strengthen civil society organizations and the media to raise awareness of gender discriminatory practices in the agricultural sector and in the rural economy;
- Assist developing and applying an integrated social empowerment plan for food and nutrition security in rural areas, comprising of elements such as maternal education and awareness-raising on optimal nutrition practices;
- Coordinate with WFP to integrate "cash for aquaculture" in FAO's programmes for the improvement of nutrition, livelihoods and health in traditional fishing communities, especially those of children and mothers;
- Identify and promote women farmers who are involved in agri-value chains for enterprise development by linking them with rural finance organizations and cooperatives;
- Identify, promote and provide guidance on climate-smart agriculture technologies to agricultural producers, especially poor and marginal rural women.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1: Development partners and international and civil society organizations working to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in agriculture and the rural sector

I. Development partners and international organizations

Asian Development Bank (ADB)

Nepal was a founding member of ADB in 1966. Over the years, ADB has provided assistance in several sectors, including agriculture and natural resources, transport, information and communication technology, energy, water and sanitation, urban development, education, finance, and governance. ADB has consistently promoted gender equality and social inclusion in development, and is putting more effort into building institutional capacity at all levels, including local governments, climate change mitigation measures and environmental safeguards. Under the Country Partnership Strategy for 2013–2017, ADB continued to help the Government of Nepal deliver on its national and international commitments to GESI with the objective to increase focus on promoting women and excluded groups to upgrade them from subsistence agriculture. This includes increased access of women and excluded groups to irrigation facilities; increased participation and representation of women and poor and excluded groups in users committees; and enhanced GESI capacity in respective sector agencies (ADB, 2012).

Australian Aid, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)

Australia has a long history of supporting Nepal's human and economic development, including through micro-enterprise programmes to help lift people, especially women, out of poverty. Micro-enterprise development has been a key initiative of Australia's aid programme to Nepal since 1998. The programme trains poor and the ultra-poor people to become entrepreneurs and assists them in establishing and developing their own businesses. The programme also provides business development services and access to markets, finance and technologies. In 2014–2015, the Micro-Enterprise Development Programme enabled 27 464 beneficiaries, 62 percent of whom were poor

women, to increase their income. Since 1998, the programme has created more than 70 800 micro-entrepreneurs, and through the micro-enterprises created more than 86 000 jobs.

CARE Nepal

CARE has been working in Nepal since 1978. Its initial focus was on addressing the basic needs of poor and vulnerable communities through infrastructure development, agriculture extension activities and natural resource management. This focus changed in the 1990s with the introduction of a more diversified portfolio and a community-based 'human infrastructure development' approach. Since 2000, CARE Nepal has been working in partnership with local NGOs, networks, federations and community groups to address the underlying causes of poverty, conflict and vulnerability through promotion of gender and social inclusion, a rights-based approach and social mobilization. In 2013, CARE Nepal implemented 19 community development projects in 48 districts in partnership with over 50 NGOs and hundreds of community groups. CARE has identified three core themes for its current programmes: empowering women; securing livelihoods and effectively managing natural resources; and addressing equity and social justice.

Department For International Development (DFID)

DFID works closely with the Government of Nepal to provide finance and technical expertise to reduce poverty, provide services to the poor, and encourage economic development. DFID has a strong theory of change that underpins its work on gender equality and social inclusion. This is used in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of DFID programmes. The DFID Nepal Operational Plan committed up to GBP 413 million in aid to Nepal during 2011–2016, with specific targets for girls and women, including a goal to improve the livelihoods of 313 500 women through forestry programmes. In Nepal, DFID's interventions seek to increase gender sensitivity and effectiveness in disaster risk reduction

(DRR) programming through the full and balanced participation of women, men, girls and boys. DFID ensures at least 50 percent of employment in forest-based enterprise goes to women; and provides specific support to at least 25 000 women-headed households (which are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts).

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

GIZ has been active in Nepal since 1975. The priority areas of Nepalese-German cooperation are sustainable economic development and trade; renewable energies and energy efficiency; and health. Promoting gender equality has been a fundamental principle of German development policy for many years. GIZ offers support to carry out gender-sensitive studies and analyses, and to enhance the partner capacity to monitor and evaluate gender-differentiated effects of rural development policies, programmes or projects. GIZ's services span a wide range of activity areas, from economic development and employment promotion, through governance and democracy, health and basic education to environmental protection, resource conservation, agriculture, fishing and nutrition. Government advisory services are a high priority area of GIZ's work. GIZ works nationwide, however, focus has been given to Far and Mid-Western Development Regions of Nepal.

European Union

The European Union (EU) established political and economic relations with Nepal in 1973. The EU is committed to supporting Nepal in its pursuit of democracy and development. Currently, the EU's cooperation with Nepal supports more than 90 projects across the country. Education, rural development, democratic governance and post-earthquake reconstruction are the main fields of engagement in which EU will invest EUR 360 million during the period from 2014 to 2020. This will support Nepal's vision to transform into a more prosperous, democratic country with better opportunities for all.

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation's development goal in Nepal is to ensure all women and men, especially those who are economically poor and

socially marginalized, have dignified lives. HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation's operation is sensitive and conscious in its effort to promote and ensure gender equality and social inclusion. It monitors programmes, investments and benefit flows assessed by the socio-economic and cultural cohort. One of the core thematic areas of HELVETAS is food security and nutrition. In Nepal, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation implements initiatives to increase agricultural productivity, facilitating access to land, inputs, knowledge, technology, financial services and markets in the hills and the *Terai*. It promotes climate-smart agricultural practices based on locally available resources for sustainable production of cereals, legumes, vegetables and high-value cash crops with the support of pluralistic agricultural extension services. The reduction and redistribution of unpaid care work of women farmers to engage more in agricultural initiatives will further contribute to the success of HELVETAS' programme on food security and nutrition.

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)

ICIMOD is a regional knowledge development and learning centre working in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region in the area of sustainable mountain development. ICIMOD works with and through its partners in its eight regional member countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan. The organization's 25 years of experience has revealed that globalization, climate change and human-led factors, including unsustainable tourism, are having an increasing influence on the stability of the fragile Hindu Kush-Himalayan mountain ecosystems, which provide vital livelihood resources to mountain people. ICIMOD strengthens networking among regional and global centres of excellence as a regional hub. Overall, ICIMOD is working to develop an economically and environmentally sound mountain ecosystem to improve the living standards of mountain populations, and to sustain vital ecosystem services for populations living downstream now and in the future. ICIMOD focuses on four thematic areas: livelihoods, ecosystem services, water and air, and geospatial solutions, while also integrating cross-cutting topics such as gender, governance, poverty, economic analysis and private-sector engagement.

International Development Enterprises (IDE Nepal)

IDE has worked in Nepal since 1992. From irrigation and good-quality seeds to rural collection centres where farmers can sell their produce, IDE provides simple innovations that help rural communities get out of poverty and adapt to climate change.

By focusing on women as customers and entrepreneurs, IDE strengthens their participation in rural value chains and increases their access to technology, know-how, finance and markets.

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

Nepal became a member of IFAD in 1978 and was among the first countries to benefit from the fund. The main strategic thrusts of the IFAD financed projects in Nepal are poverty alleviation and improvement of household food and income security of the rural poor, especially rural women, the landless, indigenous groups and small and marginal farmers from the disadvantaged areas of the country. Since 1978, IFAD has provided a total of USD 115 million in loans for 12 projects and has provided technical assistance. IFAD's strategy in Nepal is based on its Country Strategic Opportunities Programme for 2013-2018, which supports the development policies and programmes of the Government of Nepal and other partners, especially in relation to peace-building, reconciliation, reconstruction and economic recovery. IFAD's investments reinforce these efforts by addressing the issues of poverty, inequality and social marginalization that have been at the heart of conflict in the country. In particular, IFAD continues to direct its resources towards the hill and mountain areas, where poverty levels are high and access to infrastructure, services and markets remains limited.

Oxfam

Oxfam has been supporting the people of Nepal for more than 30 years with the vision of creating a just society without poverty; a society in which all women and men live a life of dignity, enjoy their rights and assume their responsibilities as active citizens of Nepal. Through its Sustainable Development Program, Earthquake Response Program and Media, Advocacy and Campaign, Oxfam in Nepal aims to provide people with livelihood opportunities, ensuring that development-related activities are demand driven and sustainable and that the most vulnerable are empowered to claim their rights. In order to alleviate poverty, OXFAM helps rural communities with developing livelihood programs,

mainstreaming gender, preparing for disaster and creating awareness on hygiene and sanitation. Oxfam works in 25 districts in Nepal.

UN Women

The UN Women Nepal Country Office was established in April 2012, and received full Delegation of Authority in July 2013. Grounded in the vision of equality, enshrined in the United Nations Charter, UN Women, among other issues, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; empowerment of women; achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action, and peace and security. UN Women provides substantive support to United Nations bodies on all aspects of gender equality issues. Guided by CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and the SDGs, UN Women in Nepal focuses on the following key areas: violence against women; peace and security; leadership and participation; economic empowerment; and national planning and budget. The UN Women Country Office in Nepal provides technical assistance on gender by coordinating the UN Gender Theme Group. In addition, it leads in the realm of implementing the UN Country Team Gender Scorecard. UN Women continues to play a pivotal role in the Peace Support Working Group as well. In addition, UN Women envisages the establishment of a macro-level gender coordination body led by the Government of Nepal, co-convened by the United Nations Resident Coordinator and the United Nations.

USAID

USAID Nepal's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (2014-2019) recognizes GESI as integral to achieving its governance, economic growth and human capital goals. As outlined in USAID's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy, USAID seeks to integrate GESI into all projects to: 1) Ensure projects do not exacerbate or perpetuate gender and other social disparities; 2) Reduce disparities where possible; and 3) Empower women, girls, and members of traditionally disadvantaged groups. USAID projects regularly undergo rigorous GESI analysis and compliance evaluation. Additionally, all performance management plans include GESI action plans, GESI-sensitive indicators, and GESI-disaggregated data. As a member of Nepal's National Social Inclusion Action Group, USAID shares GESI approaches with in-country partners. As a focus country for the U.S. Feed the Future Initiative, Nepal

continues to receive USAID support for scaling up programmes that sustainably increase agricultural productivity and facilitate access to markets.

For example, 30 percent of the total beneficiary households reached by USAID's Knowledge-Based Integrated Sustainable Agriculture and Nutrition Project (KISAN) are woman-led households involved in commercial farming. USAID's Knowledge-Based Integrated Sustainable Agriculture and Nutrition Project works to increase female farmers' access to village and community funds and trains women and marginalized people on literacy, numeracy and entrepreneurship. USAID also supports improved nutrition by increasing the production and consumption of nutritious food products, and improving hygiene and access to safe water. USAID supported over 85 000 smallholder farmers in 26 remote, conflict-affected districts to adopt improved farming techniques. USAID's work has increased the incomes of 430 000 rural farmers (54 percent women) by over 50 percent.

World Bank

The World Bank Group fielded its first economic mission to Nepal in 1963 to assess the country's development prospects and challenges. Since 1969, the World Bank has provided Nepal USD 3 billion in credits and USD 1.2 billion in grants. The World Bank Group is providing long-term support through the Country Partnership Strategy covering fiscal years 2014-2018. In 2016, the World Bank Group began implementing its new Gender Equality Strategy 2016-2023, following consultations with more than 1 000 stakeholders in 22 countries. The new strategy focuses on tangible interventions by removing barriers to women's ownership of and control over physical and financial assets (land, housing, technology, finance), increasing women's access to finance and markets, helping clients improve work opportunities and conditions for female employees, supporting training for women entrepreneurs, and improving corporate governance, including the appointment of women to clients' boards (World Bank, 2015). Currently the World Bank Group supports 23 projects worth USD 1.86 billion.

World Food Programme (WFP)

WFP's Country Programme supports the Government of Nepal in building livelihoods for the country's most vulnerable people. The Country Programme also supports the Government of Nepal in enhancing the food and nutrition security of vulnerable

communities and increasing resilience to disasters. The Country Programme covers four areas, one of which is livelihood creation to provide seasonal employment and livelihood training, the restoration and repair of rural roads and trails, and irrigation channels and other community assets.

II. Civil society organizations

Centre for Environmental and Agricultural Policy Research Extension and Development (CEAPRED) Nepal

Established in April 1991, CEAPRED is a leading national developmental NGO in Nepal and works in the agricultural sector. Since its establishment, CEAPRED has consciously and consistently focused on sustainable poverty reduction and enhancement of food security and livelihoods of the poor, disadvantaged and deprived families, including small and marginal farmers of rural Nepal. CEAPRED's approach to poverty reduction consists of promoting new and better economic and livelihood opportunities at the local level, and linking these opportunities to the markets. Over the past two and half decades of its operation, CEAPRED has implemented 70 development projects, most of which are concerned with income and employment generation through commercial high-value agriculture and agro-enterprise promotion. CEAPRED has directly worked with around 170 295 families in 60 districts of Nepal. It has offices in 22 districts managed by more than 305 full-time staff.

Development Project Service Center (DEPROSC)

DEPROSC was established in Nepal in 1993. DEPROSC's main aim is the reduction of poverty through an integrated approach in thematic areas of economic promotion and social development. DEPROSC has served around 250 000 families of different ethnicities in 54 districts of the country. DEPROSC works closely with grassroots groups and organizations, mostly in rural Nepal. Over the last 24 years, DEPROSC has successfully implemented 78 development projects and 40 research projects in diverse disciplines including food security and sustainable livelihoods, microfinance, education and empowerment, disaster and humanitarian assistance, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), rural community assets creation/rehabilitation, and natural resource management. DEPROSC in Nepal has greatly contributed in the microfinance sector's development of the country by providing

direct lending services and promoting microfinance/cooperatives in the hills region through Laghubitta Bikash Bank (Microfinance Bank) and NADEP Microfinance Financial Institution. DEPROSC-Nepal is committed to enhancing the participation of rural people in general and in particular the poorest of the poor, children, women and marginalized ethnic groups.

FORWARD Nepal

FORWARD Nepal is a registered non-profit service-oriented national NGO. Established in 1997, with a mission to help disadvantaged groups and the rural poor, FORWARD Nepal aims to reduce poverty among marginalized communities through integrated and sustainable development interventions such as improving food and nutrition security, household incomes and resource conservation. The organization implements its programme both at national and local levels. FORWARD Nepal implements projects that integrate social mobilization, agriculture, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture, farm forestry, biodiversity conservation and value-chain and market development among vulnerable groups such as poor households, women, *Dalits*, *Janajatis* and children. Over the past 20 years, it has implemented 84 projects in 55 districts supporting 400 000 direct beneficiaries. FORWARD Nepal is an implementing partner of the Rural Women Economic Empowerment project (RWEE),

a United Nations Joint Programme in Sindhuli, Sarlahi and Rautahat districts of Nepal.

Support Activities for Poor Producers in Nepal (SAPPROS Nepal)

SAPPROS Nepal is a national-level non-profit NGO that was established in August 1991. It is one of the best-known NGOs in Nepal, and over the last 25 years has worked in 50 districts of the country. The main objective of SAPPROS is to implement poverty reduction programmes in Nepal. SAPPROS's philosophy is that by building people's organizations and mobilizing local resources, and through participatory planning and process facilitation, people can be lifted from poverty. SAPPROS has been able to reach over 394 984 households through activities ranging from literacy drives and provision of drinking water, to overall community development. It has promoted different types of self-help groups, user groups, local NGOs, and saving and credit cooperatives. SAPPROS has gained experience on the projects with the assistance of various development donors. SAPPROS has made significant achievements in community development, credit access, micro-irrigation, access improvement, institution building at the local level, human resource development, income generation, school rehabilitation, health and sanitation, etc. over the past 25 years.



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Sabitri B.K., 45 year-old Dalit woman from Jaisidada demonstrating her success

Annex 2: Case study: A success story of women's empowerment in Syangja

"We are no more dependent on our husbands to meet daily household expenses, rather we are in position to provide pocket money to them" says Sabitri B.K. who is a *Dalit* woman (so-called lower caste in Hindu culture). Highlighting positive aspects of the Jaisidada Women's Community Farmers Group, she explains that *Dalit* women are playing an active role in the group. Sabitri is a remarkable example of how the process of women's empowerment boosts the Dalit community.

The Jaisidada Women's Community Farmers Group was established as part of a year-long FAO telefood project called "Community-based off-season vegetable production in Syangja, Nepal", which was successfully completed in July 2016. The project supported smallholder farmers in producing safe and quality products, especially off-season (autumn, winter and spring) vegetables such as cauliflower, cabbage, radish, peas, broccoli and carrot. There was also a drive to improve maize seed production in the summer season with attention paid to minimizing the use of harmful chemicals to protect the agro-ecosystem and environment.

Year-round vegetable cultivation applying integrated pest management technology was introduced in the Jaisidada Women's Community Group, which consists of one member from each of the 32 village households. Spread over an area of ten hectares, the project allows the community to produce fresh and healthy vegetables, and improve maize seed production for the members.

After training, the Jaisidada Women's Community Farmers Group adopted new methods of composting and integrated pest management technology, rain-water harvesting and collection in small plastic ponds, and learned how to construct plastic tunnels for off-season vegetable production.

Birendra Bahadur Hamal, an agro-expert and the former Syangja District Agriculture Development Officer explained, "Farmers have learned to prepare and use homemade organic liquid pesticides, popularly known as *Jholmal* which they apply in their farm. As a result, the use of chemical pesticides has been reduced."



Vegetable farming tunnels in Jaisidada

The Jaisidada Women's Community Farmers Group is now using fertilizers that are prepared basically using cow dung and urine, waste straw and other dairy wastes. This is because more farmers are aware of hazards caused by mishandling and mismanagement of chemicals for human beings, domestic animals and the environment.

The Telefood project supported the farmers' group to construct 40 plastic tunnels and 32 plastic ponds so that at least each household has one plastic tunnel and one plastic pond. Farmers are also now equipped with an electronic weighing machine and electric maize thresher. Furthermore, a community building with rooms for meeting and storage of seeds, fertilizers and agro-products was constructed with support from the project.

In addition to the off-season vegetables previously mentioned, the Jaisidada Women's Community Farmers Group is also cultivating summer vegetables in plastic tunnels including leafy vegetables and tomatoes, and outside cultivating cucumber, gourds (sponge, snake, bitter and bottle), chili, eggplant, okra and pumpkin.

The Jaisidada Women's Community Farmers Group produced about 57 600 kg of winter vegetables. After selling 62 percent of their production (about 35.8 metric tons), they earned NPR 1 432 000, the equivalent of USD 13 718 (approximately USD 428 per household). The rest of the production of winter vegetables was used for domestic consumption.

According to Kalpana Poudel, a 38-year-old female farmer, the members of the group produced 39 metric tonnes of summer vegetables worth approximately NPR 1 506 560 (equivalent to USD 14 432 and USD 451 per household). They also earned NPR 712 620 (USD 6 660) from the production and sale of 10 metric tonnes of improved maize seed.

With collective efforts for marketing through the Agriculture Cooperative Society, the members of the Jaisidada Women's Community Farmers Group are receiving a daily income from selling their fresh vegetable products in the market. The empowered women of Jaisidada are also providing technical support to 29 other women's group in the Aarukharka Village District Committee to adopt community-based off-season vegetable farming in their respective villages.

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