

# Gender review of national energy policies and programmes in Nepal

Improving gender-inclusive access to clean and renewable energy in Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka



Japan  
Fund for  
Poverty  
Reduction



**ENERGIA**  
INTERNATIONAL NETWORK ON  
GENDER AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY



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## Preface

*Improving gender-inclusive access to clean and renewable energy in Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka* is an Asian Development Bank (ADB) supported project (JFPR Grant-9158 REG), being implemented by the ETC Foundation, Netherlands, in association with Centre for Rural Technology (CRT/N) (Nepal country partner). The project aims to increase rural poor women's access to affordable and reliable clean energy sources and technologies in selected project sites in Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

This report presents a gender review of the energy sector policies and programmes in Nepal, which was undertaken as part of the project. It assesses the gender inclusiveness of the energy sector at three levels: policy, programmes and organisations. In Nepal, energy access interventions and women's empowerment are both understood as crucial to poverty reduction, but the linkages between gender and energy need to be recognized and addressed further. Increasing the visibility of these linkages and addressing these through related policies and programmes can have far-reaching implications for economic development, as well as women's equality and empowerment.

The gender review in Nepal was led by Indira Shakya, Soma Dutta and Subarna Kapali. The report was reviewed by Sheila Oparaocha and Govind Kelkar. The team would like to acknowledge the support received from the Asian Development Bank; the Nepal Resident Mission, especially Ms Suman Subba; Nepal Electricity Authority; the Alternate Energy Promotion Centre; the National Association of Community Electricity Users Nepal; and other organizations and individuals consulted.

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## Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AEPC	Alternate Energy Promotion Centre
BESP	Biomass Energy Support Programme
CA	Constituency Assembly
CBRE	Community Based Rural Electrification
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CO	Community Organization
CRED	Community Rural Electrification Department
CREE	Community Rural Electrification Entities
CREF	Central Renewable Energy Fund
CREP	Community Rural Electrification Programme
CRT/N	Centre for Rural Technology, Nepal
DAGs	Disadvantaged Groups
DDC	District Development Committee
DEEU/S	District Energy Environment Unit/Sections
DFID	Department for International Development
DMC	Developing Member Countries
DRILP	Decentralized Rural Infrastructure and Livelihood Project
EDF	Enterprise Development Fund
EUCs	Electricity Users Committees
ESAP	Energy Sector Assistance Programme
GESI	Gender Equity and Social Inclusion
GEWNet	Gender Energy and Water Network
GMCC	Gender Mainstreaming Coordination Committee
HDI	Human Development Index
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
JFPR	Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction
LGCDP	Local Governance and Community Development Programme
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MMHP	Mini Micro Hydro Power
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MOHP	Ministry of Health and Population
MoLD	Ministry of Local Development
MoSTE	Ministry of Science Technology and Environment
MW	Mega Watt
MWCSW	Ministry of Women Children & Social Welfare

NACEUN	National Association of Community Electricity Users Nepal
NDHS	Nepal Demographic and Health Survey
NEA	Nepal Electricity Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NLSS	Nepal Living Standards Survey
NLSS	Nepal Living Standards Survey
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NPC	National Planning Commission
NRREP	National Rural and Renewable Energy Programme
PAF	Poverty Alleviation Fund
PPMS	Project Performance and Monitoring System
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
REDP	Rural Energy Development Programme
RERL	Renewable Energy for Rural Livelihood
RETs	Renewable Energy Technologies
RSCs	Regional Service Centres
SWM	Solar/ Wind Hybrid Power Mini-grid
SARD	South Asia Department (ADB)
SNV	Netherlands Development Agency
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
CPS	Country Partnership Strategy
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
VDC	Village Development Committee
WB	World Bank
WDO	Women Development Officer

## Executive Summary

*Improving Gender-Inclusive Access to Clean and Renewable Energy in Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka* is an Asian Development Bank (ADB) supported project (JFPR Grant-9158 REG). The project aims to increase rural poor women's access to affordable and reliable clean energy sources and technologies in selected project sites in Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

This is a report on a gender review of the energy sector policies and programmes in Nepal, which was undertaken as part of the project. The report reviews the energy sector policies of Nepal from a gender perspective and identifies good practices in incorporating pro-poor and gender-related considerations in energy sector policies, laws and regulations. Based on these, it provides recommendations for how energy programmes can mainstream gender more effectively and support economic development that promotes women's equality and empowerment. The review was carried out through desk studies, and discussions with representatives of stakeholders in the energy sector.

### National gender, development and energy scenario

- Nepal has made a number of formal commitments towards gender equality, and efforts have been made to mainstream gender in national planning processes, incorporate gender issues in development programmes, and adopt gender responsive budgeting. Gender analysis and audits have been carried out for programmes in some Ministries, and women's participation made mandatory in local development planning. In the Ministry of Finance, a gender responsive budget committee is looking into gender issues in development programmes, budgets and implementation. While a legal, political and institutional framework for gender equality is in place, implementation is often weak due to lack of financial and human resources, and even where there are designated gender focal points within government entities, there is often no institutionalized linkage between their gender mandate and the main work of the concerned organization.
- Progress has been made in some areas, but gender inequalities are still prevalent. Nepalese women have fewer economic assets, less access to finance, higher rates of illiteracy, and little knowledge of their legal rights. They are generally bound to their responsibilities at home and have fewer opportunities than men for earning income and participating in decision making and governance.. Approximately, 40 percent of Nepalese women are economically active, mostly employed in the agriculture sector; few have skilled manual jobs, and women are less likely than men to be engaged in professional, technical, and managerial fields. There are also sharp differences in women's status depending on their class, caste, ethnicity, religion and age.
- Nepal's average annual per capita electricity consumption is about 130 kWh – one of the lowest in South Asia. For the country as a whole, firewood is the predominant energy carrier, accounting for more than 75 percent of consumption, and in rural Nepal, more than 92 percent of total cooking energy consumed is traditional biomass, of which fuelwood constitutes 75 percent. Renewable energy is being promoted by the government, and 12 percent of the population has access to electricity through renewable energy sources.
- In rural Nepal, women play a significant role in the biomass energy systems, fetching fuel for household use and micro-enterprises. The substantial amount of time and effort spent in fuel collection leads to missed opportunities for employment, education and self-improvement, while their health suffers from the smoke from burning biomass as a cooking fuel. Their ownership of renewable energy technologies is lower than men's, as they lack financial resources, information and training, and they are poorly represented in decision making at all levels in the energy sector.

## Gender gaps and opportunities in national energy sector policies and programmes

A number of Nepal's policies and strategies have referred to the importance of meeting the energy needs of the rural population, and promoting the participation of local communities and institutions in decision making, including the Tenth Five Year Plan and the Three-Year Interim Plan (2008–2010), without acknowledging women's central role in rural energy. The Subsidy Policy for Renewal Energy 2013 proposed concrete measures to address income and location based exclusion issues, but gender equality has not been addressed substantively in the policy framework.

The 2006 Rural Energy Policy was progressive in recognizing that "rural energy is directly linked to activities traditionally carried out by women. Nevertheless it has not recognized and addressed the barriers faced by women with regard to rural energy technology projects, including difficulties accessing benefits generated from the projects, getting employment, or influencing decisions made by users' committees and construction companies.

The National Rural Renewable Energy Programme (NRREP) managed by AEPC, a 5-year programme that started in 2012, is an integrated version of different smaller programmes or projects. The NRREP programme mandates that *specific affirmative action will be planned, implemented and monitored across all component activities, aiming to empower women and marginalized groups through enhancement of their technical capabilities and assisting them to take up ownership of technologies*. A number of development programmes in Nepal, such as the Biogas Support programme (BSP), the Rural Energy Development Programme (REDP), and the ADB-supported Decentralized Rural Infrastructure and Livelihood Project (DRILP) provide good practices that can be learned and integrated into programme planning.

## Recommendations: Strategies to benefit and empower women and reduce gender inequalities in the energy sector

In order for women to participate in and benefit from energy sector interventions in a meaningful manner, the following recommendations are made:

### ❖ *Mainstream gender in energy sector policies*

Align energy sector objectives and strategies with national development priorities and goals that prioritize empowering women, and reducing inequalities between men and women. The Rural Energy Policy, for example, could be strengthened by a clear articulation of gender issues and identification of women as a separate target group in the objectives; identification of concrete measures for enhancing access to clean energy technologies for women; enhancement of women's access to credit; and gender sensitive monitoring indicators in measuring energy access.

### ❖ *Integrate gender in all aspects of energy programmes*

In the 2012 National Rural Renewable Energy Programme, gender equity and social inclusion are integrated in all programme elements - the development objective, the immediate objectives, outputs, activities, indicators and targets, as well as in monitoring. The programme has embarked upon a systematic gender mainstreaming process, with each of the programme sub-components developing a gender action plans.

### ❖ *Ensure participation of women in energy plans, programmes and decision making*

The decentralized governance system of Nepal provides a framework for making development interventions responsive to local issues, needs and options. For example, the Ministry of Local

Development (MoLD) established a programme providing production credit for rural women programme, using field-based women development officers, and requiring that user groups must have at least 30 percent women members. Provisions like these can be used by the energy sector to ensure grassroots representation, including women, in policies, decision making, planning and disbursement of state allocations through public consultations, with stipulated women's participation.

- ❖ *Involve women in technical aspects of energy projects, and encourage women's participation in energy infrastructure management.*

Lessons on this can be learned from the Biogas Support Programme, which has provided training for women users on technology management, as well as training of women masons on technical, business and leadership skills, enabling them to become supervisors or owners of biogas system construction companies. The programme selects NGO partners based on their experience in working with women and disadvantaged communities, partners with women led micro financing organizations.

- ❖ *Strengthen the capacity of women to use energy for livelihood enhancement and income generation.*

Access to electricity and improved fuels and energy technologies supports women's economic development through employment generation, increased income through new enterprises, and enhanced productivity. The National Rural Renewable Energy Programme offers a good opportunity to integrate alternative energy with socioeconomic development of women and men in rural communities, as it aims to support use of energy for productive purposes.

### Recommendations for integration of gender into ADB's energy sector work in Nepal

- All ADB supported energy sector projects must adopt ADB project guidelines that require gender based targets, outcomes, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks, ensuring that gender considerations are integrated into the complete process and that project implementers take responsibility for gender inclusive energy sector development.
- Support national government through building institutional capacities at the national and provincial levels in integrating gender aspects in energy planning processes by providing technical advice and gender expertise to relevant government institutions during the preparation of operational plans, programmes and budgets. Develop user-friendly manuals, guidelines, tools and training materials for gender sensitive planning, budgeting and programming. Implement gender training programs for relevant decision making and technical practitioners. Improve the quality, collection, analysis and management of gender disaggregated data in national and provincial energy initiatives for effective tracking of gender targets and results.
- Support the national government in undertaking pilots and scaling up projects that build the capacity of women to utilize energy services, including electricity, for income generation and livelihood strengthening. The ongoing JFPR Grant is a step in this direction, and the lessons from this need to be integrated into other energy sector projects and programmes.
- In all ADB energy sector projects, track to what extent women and disadvantaged groups are able to access electrification inputs. This can ensure equitable economic benefits from such projects and maximize the effectiveness of investments. (Projects also need to track other non-monetary benefits that energy services offer such as improved security, improved safety for children, more time available, and improved health.)

Specifically for ADB, a good opportunity lies in the upcoming Project 45126-003: Rural Electrification through Renewable Energy. This proposed project aims to set up credit and y windows for mini-micro hydropower (MMH) and solar home systems under the Central Renewable Energy Fund(CREF). Expected outputs include; mini-micro hydropower projects developed in selected rural communities; installation of solar and solar/ wind hybrid power mini-grids (SWM); enhanced capacity of AEPC and selected stakeholders for project implementation and promotion of productive energy use activities; and a detailed Renewable Energy Development Roadmap. Nepal has a culture of women's self-help groups, especially in rural areas. The increasing number of cooperatives has helped to mitigate some barriers faced by women, the poor, dalits and other excluded groups in accessing markets, financial services and information, and in encouraging shared resources and collective bargaining. The cooperative movement has received encouraging support from the government, including in the Interim Constitution. The CREF can explore promoting these as non-banking financial institutions (NBFIs) to extend micro credit for technologies such as improved cookstoves and biogas plants, among others.

The national scenario also provides two specific opportunities for engendering national energy sector policies. First, the Water and Energy Commission Secretariat is in the process of formulating an energy strategy and it is yet to be seen how well it captures gender and social issues. With the government emphasizing the use of gender responsive budgets, as well as application of the gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) strategy for all local government bodies, there are greater chances of gender equity being addressed in this energy strategy not only at the organization level but also at the policy and project levels.

In addition, the National Rural Renewable Energy Programme offers a good opportunity to integrate alternative energy with socioeconomic development of women and men in rural communities. It has a strong poverty reduction focus, with an emphasis on effectively reaching out to the poorest and most remote parts of the country. It envisages applying demand led approaches, actively involving beneficiaries in decision making, and supporting the use of energy for productive purposes that will lead to increased incomes and employment in rural areas. It has also mainstreamed Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) into the programme at all levels.

## Background and introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

The *Improving gender-inclusive access to clean and renewable energy in Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka* is Asian Development Bank (ADB) supported project (JFPR<sup>1</sup> Grant-9158 REG). The project aims to increase rural poor women's access to affordable and reliable clean energy sources and technologies in selected project sites in Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The project has three interrelated components:

2. Component A: Gender review of the energy sector. This component documents good practice in incorporating pro-poor and gender-related aspects in energy sector policies, laws and regulations in ADB's South Asian Regional Department (SARD) developing member countries (DMCs).
3. Component B: Interventions on energy-based livelihoods for women. Interventions supporting gender-inclusive access to renewable energy and energy-based livelihoods will be implemented.
4. Component C: Monitoring processes and impacts. A Project Performance and Monitoring System (PPMS) has been designed and used for tracking and documenting social and gender-related processes and impacts of interventions.

In each of the three countries, the JFPR grant Components A and C are implemented by ENERGIA/ ETC Foundation<sup>2</sup>, in collaboration with national NGOs, while Component B activities are implemented by the national Implementing Agency<sup>3</sup>. In Nepal, Centre for Rural Technology (CRT/N) is implementing project activities.

**This is a report of the gender review of the energy sector policies and programmes in Nepal.**

This report is organized in four chapters. The Introduction chapter presents the background, rationale, methodology and scope of the gender review. This is followed, in chapter 2, by an overview of national level gender and development issues and key indicators on women's development. Chapter 3 presents the findings of the gender review in terms of an assessment of key energy sector policies, programmes and institutions. Chapter 4 identifies specific opportunities for gender mainstreaming and makes recommendations for the energy sector as a whole as well as for ADB specifically.

### 1.2 Rationale for the study

In Nepal, especially rural Nepal, women play a significant role in energy systems, as part of their subsistence and productive tasks, including fetching fuel, fodder and water for homes and engaging in micro-enterprises. With climate change and concomitant natural resource degradation, the burden of depleting energy sources falls disproportionately on women. Implications are far-ranging, starting from the inordinate amount of time and effort spent in fuel collection and resultant missed opportunities for employment, education and self-improvement; indoor air pollution caused by smoke from burning biomass as a cooking fuel; and unhealthy work places. Their vulnerability increases from

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<sup>1</sup> Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction

<sup>2</sup> The International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy (ENERGIA) is an international network working in the area of gender and sustainable energy. It is hosted by the ETC Foundation, Netherlands.

<sup>3</sup> The implementing agencies for Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka are Nepal Electricity Authority, Department of Renewable Energy, Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Ceylon Electricity Board respectively.

the fact that even though the legal framework supports gender equality, in practice women lack awareness of their rights, have less access to productivity-enhancing resources, e.g. credit facilities, information and training, as compared to men; and are poorly represented in decision making at all levels in the energy sector.

Lack of access to modern energy sources is both the result and a cause of poverty. The disadvantaged communities including women have less access to electricity and clean cooking fuels: mostly they are geographically dispersed, far from urban areas, and cannot be easily connected to existing electricity grids or distribution networks for modern fuels like LPG. The access issue is compounded by the fact that rural populations, typically based on agriculture, have limited disposable income to finance the initial costs of grid connection, wiring and the monthly payments of energy bills. The result is that resource-constrained utilities find the costs of extending grids prohibitive, and investments unattractive and risky. The lack of access to energy services (that can potentially fuel growth), in turn, makes it difficult for the poor to pull themselves out of poverty and the cycle perpetuates. Without access to the services that modern energy enables, poor people remain trapped in low-productivity subsistence tasks. This inability to improve livelihoods and living standards results in poor people remaining unable to afford improved energy technologies and other critical assets and inputs that could enhance their incomes and welfare.

Modern energy including electricity brings about economic development through employment generation; reduced expenditure on fuels such as kerosene and diesel; increased income through new enterprises and enhanced productivity of the poor; and access to education and information. Household access to electricity for basic purposes such as lighting, for productive purposes (enterprises, irrigation and income generation activities), and for human development (education and health facilities) all contribute to economic development and poverty reduction.

Energy interventions and women's empowerment are both recognized as crucial to poverty reduction. These elements have been independently recognized, but the case for gender and energy nexus in poverty reduction is relatively less developed. Increasing the visibility of this intersection to a level that can influence sector policies will have far-reaching implications for poverty reduction. In the energy sector, the rationale for looking at gender issues lies in the fact that women and men often use, are affected by and benefit from energy services differently. The needs and interests of the poor, and of women in particular, vary according to their differing roles, customs, and lifestyles. Women's differential ability to benefit from energy services increases from the fact that even though the legal framework supports gender equality, in practice women lack awareness of their rights, have less access to productivity-enhancing resources, e.g. credit facilities, energy infrastructure and technology, information and training, as compared to men; and are poorly represented in decision making at all levels in the energy sector. Hence, the same energy service may affect men and women differently, with different social or economic outcomes. The bulk of household chores in developing countries lies with women and thus household electrification can potentially impact women by reducing drudgery, providing safety, more illumination, and comfort, extended time for activities, entertainment and options for income generation at home.

The report reviews energy sector policies of Nepal from a gender lens and documents good practices in incorporating pro-poor and gender-related aspects in energy sector policies, laws and regulations. Based on these, it provides recommendations for how energy programmes can mainstream gender more effectively and ensure economic development for women's equality and empowerment.

### 1.3 Methodology and scope

The gender review includes the following elements:

- Mapping of gender and energy poverty issues that affect men and women, in terms of access to and control over services, resources, and decision-making processes.
- Analysis of national development plans and energy sector policies in terms of how they focus on increasing access to energy for the poor, vulnerable and socially excluded groups, specifically women.
- A review of select energy programmes in terms of their gender responsiveness, identifying good practices and lessons learned.
- Existing institutional arrangements within the energy sector and the extent to which they encourage gender equality goals and institutional capacities to implement gender-mainstreaming strategies

The study was conducted through:

- Review of documents including (listed in Annex 1) national development plans, energy sector policies, documents related to major energy programmes; Acts and regulations related to electricity and renewable energy and documents of EUCs who are responsible for manage respective community rural electrification systems.
- Interaction with concerned personnel in energy sector at different levels: decision makers, implementers, community based institutes. Persons interviewed are listed as Annex 2.
- Present the findings of the study through a national knowledge sharing workshop, and incorporate the inputs and suggestions received

Nepal is a highly diverse country and the issue of social exclusion/ discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or religion or an overlapping combination of these, are as important as gender. Social exclusion is a phenomenon that prevents individuals or groups from full participation in social, economic and political life and from asserting their rights. It is dynamic, and driven by unequal power relationships interacting across four dimensions – economic, social, political and cultural – and at different levels including individual, household, group, community, country and global levels (SNV, 2012). Social inclusion was included as one of the four pillars of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), which is also Nepal’s Tenth Plan (NPC, 2002). Social inclusion is the removal of institutional barriers and the enhancement of incentives to increase the access of diverse individuals and groups to development opportunities. This review specifically focuses on gender issues, and not with social inclusion issues.

## 2. Country context: An overview of gender, development and energy sectors in Nepal

The 2009 ODI report (ODI, 2009) summarizes the gender situation in Nepal as follows:

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Although practices of gender discrimination are multiple and well-known in Nepal, the significant findings from this study was the recognition by most women and also significant number of men of the problems stemming from unequal power relations between men and women, boys and girls. Existing gender differences were not seen as natural and acceptable, but rather important to address in order to tackle household and community poverty.

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As country, Nepal has made formal commitments towards gender equality. This has been emphasized by the various development partners as well. ADB, in its Country Partnership Strategy (2010-12), recognizes the need to ‘address gender, ethnic, and caste discrimination through policy reform, targeted investments, and the mainstreaming of equal opportunity measures in key sector investments,’ and aims to guide and ensure that in all ADB operations and sectoral assistance, gender and social-inclusion concerns are adequately addressed (ADB 2009).

While progress has been made in some areas, inequalities prevail; Nepalese women have less economic assets, higher rates of illiteracy, little knowledge of their legal rights, and are bound to their responsibilities at home. At the same time, there are sharp differences in women’s status depending on class, caste, ethnicity, religion and age. Women’s work is given little status while the ability of men to earn money brings respect, and their traditional role of provider gives them higher economic and social status. In most households, women’s decision-making role and control over resources is negligible. Issues concerning property, marriage, expenditure and education are men’s business and women can exert little or no influence on decisions and outcomes (Helvetas Nepal undated).

### 2.1 Framework for women’s rights and gender equality in Nepal

#### Legislative framework and processes supporting gender equality

Nepal’s Constitution does not permit discrimination on the basis of sex and advocates legal provisions to protect and advance the interests of women (cffna 2007)<sup>4</sup>. However, many of the prevailing laws continue to discriminate against women in areas of citizenship, property, education, employment, health, sexual offences, marriage and family relations, court proceedings and identity (DFID Nepal and World Bank Nepal 2006, p. 42).

Over the years, Nepal has made a number of international commitments and promulgated national laws towards non-discrimination, gender equality, and social justice. It signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1991. In 2004, a National Plan of Action was introduced to implement the CEDAW obligations. CEDAW requires Nepal to change about 85 laws and 137 legal provisions that are discriminatory, a task which remains to be done (DFID Nepal and World Bank Nepal 2006). Other international agreements include the outcome of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and ICPD+10, and the 2000 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which set out targets for poverty reduction,

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<sup>4</sup>This has been summarized from the several agendas of the constitution. The different statements in favour of women are compiled in Annex 3.

universal primary education, gender equality and women's empowerment, and maternal health. The United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 establishes legal standards to ensure the meaningful participation of women in peace processes.

In recent years, the national government has instituted several measures in this direction. In 2006, the citizenship act was amended allowing women to pass on their citizenship to their children. The Interim Constitution of 2007 specifically includes women's rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women as a responsibility of the State (NPC, 2007, p. 102): all groups are to be proportionately represented in the state structure and the right to education in one's mother tongue. It makes special provisions based on positive discrimination to various groups including women in all areas including political representation. The Interim Parliament (2006-2008) passed a bill to ensure at least 33 percent women's representation in all state machinery. The Constituent Assembly Member Election Act allocates seats to women, Dalits, Madhesi and the differently-abled, among others, for the 240 electoral seats under the electoral system. An action plan was prepared for registration of birth, death, marriage, divorce, and migration to promote more inclusive planning and to facilitate the acquisition of legal identity by all citizens. The Three-Year Interim Plan, adopted in November 2007, refers to gender equality issues in two chapters: "Women empowerment and gender equality" and "Inclusive development". Most recently, the 2010 Three Year Plan Approach Paper (2010/11 - 2012/13), prepared by the Government of Nepal (GoN) makes a commitment that "Inclusive and equitable development strategy will be adopted to uplift the living standard of the excluded groups, Dalit, Madhesi, Adivasi/Janajati, women, people with disability and living in remote geographical areas and poor people of the various regions of the country from the prevailing discriminatory practices in the society (NPC, 2013).

There have been several efforts to mainstream gender in the national planning processes. The Ministry of Local Development (MoLD) was the first to incorporate gender issues in development programmes in early 1980s. Its achievements include the institution of Production Credit for Rural Women Programme, field-based Women Development Officers (WDOs), a requirement that User Groups must have at least 30 percent women members (DFID Nepal and World bank Nepal 2006, p. 52-53). Gender analysis and audit have been carried out for some line ministries' programmes. In the planning and execution of local development, women's participation has been made mandatory. In the Ministry of Finance (MoF), a gender responsive budget committee is functioning to look into gender issues in development programmes, budgeting and their implementation (NPC 2007, p. 101).

### Institutional set up for gender equality and women's empowerment

The GoN has created various institutional mechanisms and structures to address gender and social inclusion issues, from the central to district and VDC levels.

#### Central level

- The National Planning Commission (NPC) has a Social Development Division with responsibility to address women's empowerment issues.
- The Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MWCSW) is the nodal agency for gender equality issues and has been implementing women-focused programmes targeted at reaching disadvantaged and marginalised groups such as children, senior citizens and people with disabilities.
- Gender Focal Points (GFPs) are appointed in the NPC and all Ministries and departments.

#### District level

- Women's Development Officers (WDOs) are appointed in each district under the Department of Women's Development/MWCSW head the Women's Development Office.

- DDCs have a social committee with a Social Development Officer, who is also designated as the Gender Focal Person for the DDC as a whole.
- A Gender Mainstreaming Coordination Committee (GMCC), under the WDO and with representation of line agencies, is tasked with monitoring and coordinating district-level gender work.
- The Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Implementation Committee, formed by the GESI Strategy of LGCDP/MLD (with the LDO as chair, WDO as vice-chair, the SDO as member-secretary, and with representation of the GMCC, Dalit and Janajati Coordination Committees and district-level NGOs/ federations/associations of women and the excluded) is responsible for informing programme planning on gender- and inclusion-related issues, auditing all programmes and coordinating GESI-related activities in the district.

## 2.2 Progress and gaps in key gender indicators

Nepal's Gender Inequality Index (GII)<sup>6</sup> value of 0.479 puts it at number 98 out of 1495 (NORAD, 2015). While the legal, political and institutional framework for gender equality is relatively sound, implementation is lacking (ADB 2010a, UNDP, 2009). The MWCSW lacks financial and human resources to carry out its responsibilities effectively. The Gender focal points in ministries and departments have been unable to deliver effectively for multiple reasons, including their lack of authority and the absence of any institutionalised linkage between their gender mandate and the main work of the Ministries, as well as lack of resources for gender-related work. MWCSW has not been successful in considering the priorities and needs of women from traditionally excluded castes and ethnic groups (DFID Nepal and World Bank Nepal 2006). Clearly, in spite of the multiplicity of institutions working on gender issues, the kind of structural change implied by the term 'gender mainstreaming' has not occurred in Nepal (DFID Nepal and World Bank Nepal 2006)<sup>6</sup>. And this is reflected in the statistics as shown in the sections below.

### Literacy and education

There is a substantial literacy gap between men and women in Nepal. While the overall literacy rate in Nepal (for population aged 5 years and above) increased from 54.1 percent in 2001 to 65.9 percent in 2011, there is a wide gap between male (72 percent) and female (45 percent) literacy rates. The Report on the Nepal Labour Force Survey, 2008 points out that females are comparatively more disadvantaged than their male counterparts in terms of access to education: school attendance rates for boys in 2010/2011 was 69.6 percent as compared to 32.9 (CBS, 2011). A positive trend however is that the literacy rates of young women (urban females 15-24 year olds) has been on the rise and increased from 79.0 percent in 2001 to 91.1 percent in 2011 (NPC, 2013).

Media exposure (radio, television and newspapers) in Nepal is higher among men than women. Seven percent of women and 20 percent of men are exposed to all three media at least once a week. Forty-

<sup>5</sup> The GII reflects gender-based inequalities in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and economic activity. The GII can be interpreted as the loss in human development owing to inequality between female and male achievements in the three GII dimensions.

<sup>6</sup>Gender mainstreaming can be defined as "the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated." (ESCAP 1997)

four percent of women and 59 percent of men listen to the radio at least once a week, and 47 percent of women and 55 percent of men watch television at least once a week (MOHP, 2012).

## Health

Access to health services in Nepal continues to be restricted by poor infrastructure, lack of sufficient and qualified staff and socio-cultural barriers. Women in rural and remote areas suffer from reproductive health issues, respiratory illnesses and HIV/AIDS. Factors that contribute to lower health outcomes for women and girls include their low status, patrilineal inheritance, low education levels, and female shame about the body and reproductive functions.

However, significant progress has been made in the health sector over the years, which has improved access to health care and decreased gender disparities. Women's life expectancy has increased to 65.7 years and is now slightly higher than the 61.9 years for men. The maternal mortality rate is high in comparison to many developed countries, but it has almost halved from 539 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1996 to 281 deaths per 100,000 in 2006. Access to maternal health care has increased, but it varies among groups of women (ADB 2010a).

## Women in decision making and governance

Women's participation in governance remains limited except at the grassroots level. The Local Self Governance Act (1999) of Nepal has a provision to ensure a reserved seat for women in each ward of the Village Development Committee (VDC). In the 1999 local election, with the support of this reservation, around 40,000 women were elected.

The representation at higher levels continues to remain low. In the Central Executive Committees of the parties, women membership was less than 10 percent (DFID Nepal and World Bank Nepal 2006, p. 30). Between 1990 and 2002, ten different governments were formed, three out of which had no women. In the other governments only 1-2 women parliament members were appointed as ministers (in the Parliamentary secretariat). The Unified Communist Party of Nepal (UCPN) (Maoist) party set an example for women's participation with 40 percent of women members of their share in the Interim Parliament. The three governments formed after the Constituent Assembly elections failed to achieve the 33 percent figure and only 13 percent of ministers in the three successive governments were women (Chautari 2011). Currently, 24.5 percent of serving ministers are women<sup>7</sup> and the political parties are largely run by men. In the judiciary, in the courts, women judges account for 2.29<sup>8</sup> percent, whereas the Supreme Court has only one woman and 17 men justices<sup>9</sup>. Until 10 August 2010, women composed only 12.97 per cent of the civil service, with two women serving in the post of Secretary<sup>10</sup>. There are no women in either the National Planning Commission or the Election Commission. Similarly, there is negligible representation of women in the security forces, such as the Nepal Police and Army of Nepal.

## Asset ownership and access to finance

In traditional Nepalese communities, land is inherited from the father to the son. In 2011, 19.71 percent of households reported the ownership of land, house, or both in the name of a female member of the household (CBS, 2011). In urban areas, 26.77 percent of the households show female-ownership of fixed assets, while the percentage stands at 18.02 in rural areas. The UNDP Human

<sup>7</sup><http://www.opmcm.gov.np/np/council/>

<sup>8</sup> Judicial Council Secretariat 2009

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.supremecourt.gov.np/>

<sup>10</sup> Civil Service Personnel Records, 2011

Development Report (UNDP, 2010) showed that on asset ownership by women, Nepal had a score of 1 on a scale of 0 to 1 (0 = full and 1 = impossible) in terms of women's access to land, and 0.7 in terms of women's access to loans (0 = full and 1 = impossible), both lowest in the South Asia region.

In 2009, women's access to institutional credit from banks and financial institutions in 2004 was only 1.7 percent, negligible as compared to men (NNBN, 2009). Further, the lack of property titles for women and the rural poor prevents them from meeting collateral requirements and accessing larger loans. Poor women and excluded groups also have limited mobility and less access to information about the availability of financial services. Women often have less self-confidence, and can be intimidated by officials when starting a business. Currently, the Nepali micro-finance system is estimated to reach 37 percent of its potential market, but is highly focused around accessible areas. Rural banks and development programmes are offering microfinance services to more than 1.6 million rural individuals (Ghimire et al, 2008), representing 8 percent of the population and approximately 26 percent of the people living below the poverty line. As such, more than 70 percent of smallholders remain dependent on informal sources such as private moneylenders and relatives for loans.

### Women in workforce

Approximately, 40 percent of Nepalese women are economically active. Most of these women are employed in the agriculture sector, a few have skilled manual jobs, and women are less likely than men to be engaged in the professional, technical, and managerial fields. Across sectors, the highest participation of women is in Health sector at 28.54 percent, and the lowest in Forestry at 3.25 percent (MoHP, 2012).

In general, if households can afford it, women are confined to non-market (unpaid) work in the care economy and family enterprises: they are responsible for food processing, cleaning and storing of farm products, kitchen gardening and cooking food for home and for shops run by male family members. When they do work for pay, women are confined to less productive jobs. Of those in employment, a much higher proportion of women than men are to be found working in the informal sector at the lower skill levels. The National Labour Force Survey 1998 (CBS, 2009) shows that:

- 72 percent of women are working in agriculture versus 48 percent of men and this pattern holds across all ethnic/caste groups.
- The proportion of men currently employed in the formal non-agricultural or "modern" occupational sector is much higher (21 percent than that of women (6 percent).
- Women continue to be confined primarily to unpaid family labour. Nearly 60 percent of currently employed women fall in this category, compared to 21 percent of men.
- Due in part to their lower education levels, women earn less than men. Women's daily wages in the agricultural sector are NRs. 47 per day compared to the average male wage rate of NRs. 63; women's daily wages in then on-skilled, non-agricultural sector are NRs. 54 compared to NRs. 104 for men; and for skilled non-agricultural labour women get an average of NRs. 126 compared to NRs. 315 for men.
- 77.5 percent of females and 66.0 percent of males have main jobs in the non-agricultural informal sector. In absolute numbers, women have about 984 thousand jobs outside agriculture, but 763 thousand of these are in the informal sector.

### Trafficking

Trafficking of children and women in Nepal is a pressing issue. Nepal is a source country for women and children trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation and other exploitative purposes including domestic servitude, begging, criminal activities, forced marriages, debt release, garment and carpet

factory work, and organ transplants. Unsafe foreign labour migration has resulted in exploitation and trafficking. Nepal has, over the years, ratified a number of international conventions and treaties related to trafficking. It has also instituted tools such as the National Plan of Action against Trafficking in Children and Women for Sexual and Labour Exploitation (1999); the Ten-Year National Plan of Action for Children (2004/05–2014/15) and the National Master Plan on Child Labour (2004–2014). Unfortunately, the problem persists. Reliable and authentic data is scarce as there is no institutionalized system for generating data on trafficking. Data is often speculative, but estimates range between 5,000 and 7,000 girls and women being trafficked to India every year.

## Women's workload

An IFAD study undertaken in 1999 (Azad,1999),found that women in the hill districts of Nepal have heavy workloads and a high level of physical vulnerability, but with class/caste differences. Women were found to work around 16 hours a day, compared with the 9 to 10 hours by men. Many women were hungry as well as overworked – often at the same time. Apart from culturally based division of labour, women's workloads are increased by three factors:

**Geographic and infrastructure factors:** These include difficult terrain and land being scattered or on terraces; poor communication and access to basic services such as roads, markets and water supplies. Collecting fuel wood, water and fodder becomes more tiring and time consuming in the mountainous areas, and difficulties are compounded by large family sizes (80 percent have 4–9 members).Geographic location is also a strong exclusionary factor: only 32 percent of Nepalese households can reach the basic service centres within 30 minutes; only 28 percent can reach the nearest bank (ADB, DFID and World Bank 2012). The Government lacks resources to deliver services or offer effective outreach to the remotest communities. As a result, people lack information about risks and legal rights, as well as skills to develop access to markets, improve income and manage risks. Women's access to technologies, skills and marketing know-how remains low, and most technologies introduced in the sector are not women-friendly.

**Out-migration of males:** Male migration to India or the plains, either to operate small microenterprises or for wage labour, has made women de facto heads of families in the hills of Nepal. For poorer (lower-caste) households, migration becomes a survival strategy. For those who are better off (upper-caste such as the Brahmin or Chetri), remittances from the migrant member provide capital for the purchasing of more land or other assets. The IFAD study (ibid) undertaken in three villages in Kavre Palanchok District found that *male migration doubled women's physical work burden and also increased women's community activities*, especially where there were no sons. Women heads of farm households have a particularly hard time when male labour is not available for tasks like ploughing, which is taboo for women. Remittances from absent husbands may be intermittent, and there is a high rate of desertion of women by migrant husbands, leaving the women and their dependents particularly vulnerable.

**New activities promoted under development projects:** Project-supported promotion of livestock activities and forest management has also increased women's workloads. In the case of livestock, the amount of extra work involved was, in fact, a consideration in the women's selection of activities. Women preferred larger animals such as buffaloes, but, in practice, selected goats, as they involved less work. In forest management, it was found that women were doing the pruning and thinning of trees and were also involved in the raising of fodder species, because men were often absent.

The ramifications of workload increase for women are many: use of short-cut approaches to food preparation or preparing meals only once a day; daughters having to leave school to help their mothers; changes in division of labour, with the men who have not migrated occasionally helping with

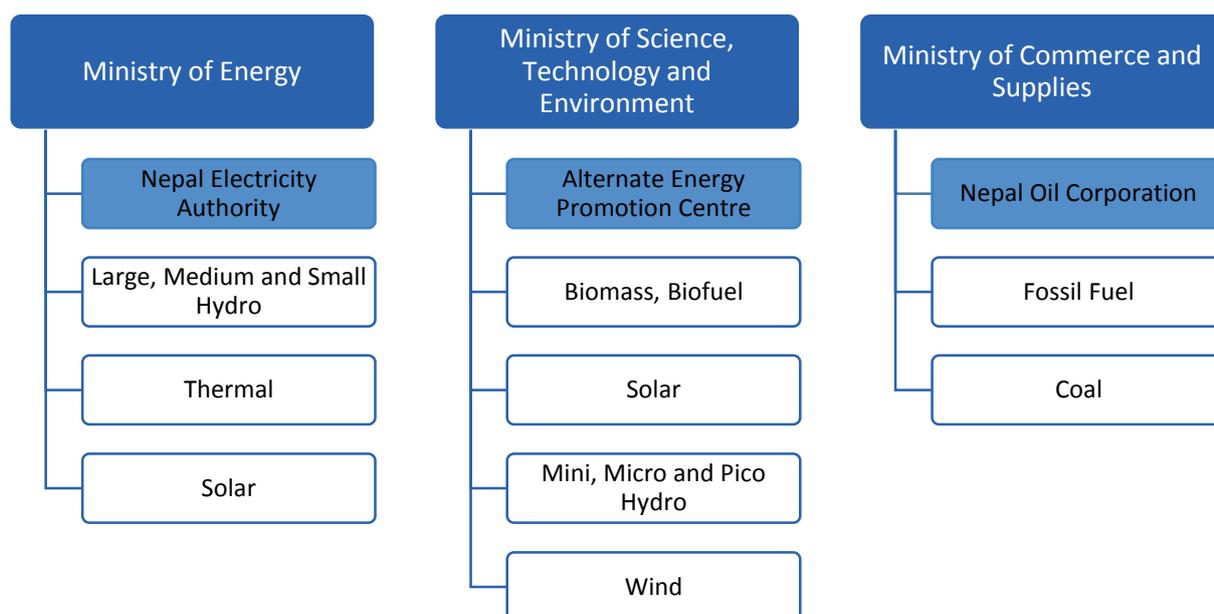
fetching water, taking care of smaller children and occasional cooking (but not cleaning); women having little or no leisure; and reduction in women's mobility outside village.

### 2.3 An overview of the energy sector in Nepal

The responsibility for the energy sector in Nepal is shared by three ministries: Ministry of Energy (electricity based on large scale hydro, thermal and solar); Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (renewable energy); and Ministry of Commerce and Supplies (fossil fuels). The nodal agency for renewable energy is the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC), set up in 1996. AEPC has been actively promoting the use of renewable energy technologies through implementation of a number of programmes and has attracted support from bilateral and multilateral Development Partners, including but not limited to ADB, Danida, DFID, the EU, KfW, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, SNV, UNDP and the World Bank.

In 2011, a number of Development Partners and the Government of Nepal (GoN) jointly agreed to support the National Rural and Renewable Energy Programme (NRREP), as a single programme modality under which the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC)/GoN commits to include all future renewable energy programmes and projects.

**Figure 1: Institutional setup of the energy sector in Nepal**

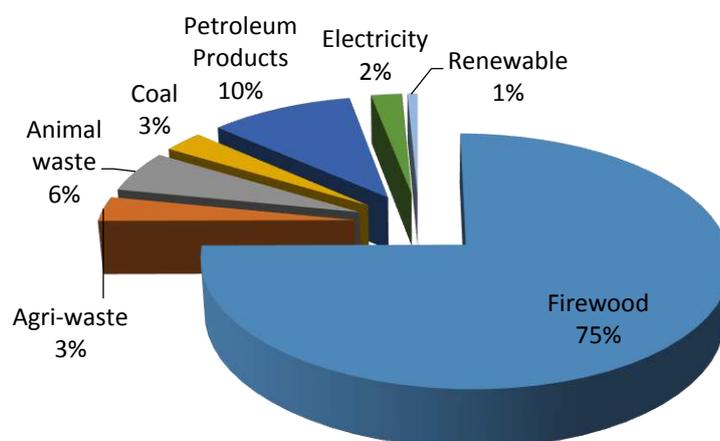


Nepal's average annual per capita electricity consumption is about 130 kWh – one of the lowest consumption in South Asia<sup>11</sup>. Despite its vast hydropower potential, Nepal's economic and social development is being hampered by its inadequate energy supply. Grid electricity is generally only available in urban areas and some 63 percent of the population do not have access to it (World Bank, 2012). In 2009, electricity accounted for only 0.1 percent of energy consumed in rural areas and only 48.5 percent of Nepalese living in rural areas had access to electricity, compared to 92.1 percent living in urban areas (CBS, 2009). Shortages and unavailability of electricity for social uses such as drinking

<sup>11</sup> [http://weccs-need.gov.np/article-energy\\_situation\\_nepal](http://weccs-need.gov.np/article-energy_situation_nepal)

water, lighting for education, media for information, and refrigeration for health clinics; as well as for productive uses such as water pumping for irrigation, agro-processing, and income-generating applications, is an obstacle to meeting the related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

According to the 2011 census, the population of Nepal was 26,494,504 (CBS, 2011). Of this 81.80 percent lives in rural areas, where the energy consumption pattern is dominated by traditional biomass fuels such as fuel wood, agricultural residues and animal waste. For the country as a whole, firewood is the predominant energy carrier, accounting for more than 75 percent of consumption, and biomass, including animal and agro-wastes accounts for 83.70 percent (MoF, 2012). In rural Nepal, more than 92 percent of total cooking energy consumed comes from traditional biomass of which fuel wood constitutes 75.1 percent (CBS, 2009).



As many as 68.4 percent of Nepalese households use fuelwood as the primary cooking fuel, a trend which has not seen a significant change over the years, while the proportion of households using LPG has actually declined (see Table). The burden of this dependence on fuelwood falls heavily on women. Surveys show an average of 3-4 hours per day spent by women in fuel wood collection; health costs of the traditional fuel cycle include respiratory and eye diseases from indoor air pollution, and backaches and prolapsed uterus from load carrying. Deforestation remains a serious local problem in many mountain and hill areas and only 29 percent of the country remains forested, compared to 37 percent in 1990. This receding forest area has only increased the distance and time required for fuelwood collection which is largely the responsibility of women. The annual death toll caused by IAP in Nepal is around 7,500 (WHO, 2007), this could very much be reduced with intervention of ICS (improved cookstoves). Significant reduction in the IAP level (65.73 percent for particulate matter and 62.34 percent for carbon monoxide) has been recorded after ICS installation alone.

**Table 1. Use of fuelwood and LPG as primary fuel**

	1990	2000	2005	2010
Percentage of people using wood as their main fuel	75	67.74	69.1	68.4
Percentage of people using LPG as their main fuel	n/a	7.67	8.2	2.3

Source: a GoN and UNDP, 2011

Renewable energy has been promoted by the government, and till date, around 12 percent population has access to electricity through renewable energy sources: 23 MW of electricity has been generated from micro hydro schemes, 12 MW from solar PV systems, and less than 20 KW from wind energy. More than 1.5 million households have benefited from renewable energy sources for cooking, lighting and other end uses (MoSTE, 2013). The gender perspectives in the RETs sector differ from technology to technology. In community based micro hydro systems, the involvement of women at the decision

making level has been growing (Samuhik Abhiyan, 2011). Similar developments are seen in biogas and improved cook stoves as well (personal communication, National Biogas Promotion Association (for biogas) and Centre for Rural technology and Practical Action Nepal (improved cookstoves).

However, women's ownership of the different technologies continues to remain low. According to a 2011 study (Veepramshree Energy Pvt Ltd 2011) undertaken in Ilam district, women's ownership of renewable energy systems is 20 percent for improved cookstoves; 33 percent for biogas plants, 15 percent for solar home systems and 4 percent for improved water mills.

## 2.4 Gender and energy in national development plans and policies

Nepal's five year plans developed by GoN have adopted different policies on promoting women's rights since they were introduced 30 years ago. But it was only with the Tenth Plan (2003-8) that a mainstreaming strategy and gender was included in the chapter on public administration. Several concrete measures were taken in the Tenth Plan; the process and outcomes of the 2001 census were "engendered" (NORAD, 2010). Nepal is among the leading nations in South Asia with respect to application of gender responsive budgeting (GRB). In the last two years, GON has included GRB in the regular budgeting procedures.

The **10th Five Year Plan (2002 – 2007)** made it a priority to 'enhance the welfare of vulnerable, disadvantaged and exploited groups, the Dalits and indigenous scheduled caste groups' and also 'for mainstreaming, empowering and bringing about gender equality' (NPC, 2002). It launched 'targeted programmes' to help social groups that were falling behind. In spite of their emphasis on women's empowerment, none of the Five Year Plans (except the Three Year Interim Plan and the Three Year Plan), ever linked energy policy with gender and inclusion. Gender and inclusion and renewable energy were presented in isolation in the five year plans.

The **Three Year Interim Plan (2007 – 2010)**, approved in 2007, dwelt extensively on social exclusion and was focused on 'inclusive development'. It identified as its long term vision "contributing to the broader national goal of achieving social inclusion and gender mainstreaming through increased participation of population of all class, caste and gender in the development, promotion and utilisation of alternative energy sources" (NPC, 2010) and has a separate section on social inclusion and gender mainstreaming. The Plan envisions a fundamental change in the goals of development from *growth first* then *distribution* to *growth with justice*, which is reflected in its rights-based approach to development. This is reinforced by 33 percent women's representation, a proportional representation of Janajati, Dalits Madhesi and Muslim population in the CA (Constituent Assembly)/Parliament, and strengthened NGO involvement. The Three Year Plan also identified that alternative energy will contribute to employment generation and inclusive development but its objectives, policies, working policies and programmes have not specified how inclusion will be addressed. In its long term vision it has directed that "Alternative energy promotion contributing to rural development, enhancing rural economy and quality of rural life, increasing the employment opportunities and contributing to the sustainability of environment"(SNV, 2012).

The subsequent Three Year Plan (2010-2013) further emphasized that for peace building it was essential to address disparities in terms of caste, ethnicity, gender or region. It also identified that alternative energy will contribute to employment generation and inclusive development (NPC, 2010) but its objectives, working policies and programme have not specified how inclusion will be addressed.

More recently, the Approach Paper to Three Year Plan 2013/2014-2015/2016 (NPC, 2013), focuses on activities for economic and social transformation putting necessary regulations, laws, regulations in place; identify necessary activities, ensure participation of gender and the socially excluded in different government system. The paper also speaks on securing and reserving their rights. The paper emphasizes on increasing investments to support development by promoting inclusion of excluded

communities, region and gender in all structure, sector and processes of the nation; skill and capacity development. The paper also speaks explicitly of 33 percent representation in the governance system and 25 percent gender responsive budget allocation.

To summarize, while Nepal has made a number of commitments on gender equality, both through international conventions as well as through its national policies and plans, inequalities prevail, in terms of women's access to resources, their involvement in formal labour force, and their role in decision making. The national planning documents subscribe to gender equality, however they fall short in terms of concrete plans and strategies to include the excluded, including women, especially those living in remote, rural areas.

### 3. Findings: Gender in energy sector policies, programmes and projects

#### 3.1 Gender in energy sector policies

In Nepal, rural electrification became a priority sub-sector from the Tenth Plan (2002-2007) onwards, which set concrete goals for rural electrification: 55 percent of all households were to have electricity by the completion of the plan. However, targets were not achieved, largely due to prevailing political unrest, and a lack of coordinated implementation. Policy documents governing the energy sector include the Hydropower Development Policy (2001), the National Water Resources Strategy (2002), the Tenth Five-Year Plan (2002-2007), the Three-Year Interim Plan (2008-2010), the National Water Plan (2005), the Rural Energy Policy (2006), the Subsidy Policy for Renewal Energy (2013) and Subsidy Delivery Mechanism Policy (2013). All these policies and strategies emphasize the importance of meeting the energy needs of the people and promoting local community participation.

A review of the energy sector policies indicates that some efforts have been made to address income and location based exclusion issues in the recent subsidy related policies but gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) has not been addressed substantively in the policy framework. None of the Five Year Plans however (except the Three Year Interim Plan and the Three Year Plan) linked energy policy with gender and inclusion. Women's role in rural energy was not recognized by the policies and hence gender and inclusion and renewable energy were presented in isolation in the five year plans. This section presents a gender review of key energy sector policies in the country.

#### Rural energy policy 2006

In 2006, the Government of Nepal (GoN) endorsed the national Rural Energy Policy (REP) 2006 which opened the door for effective promotion of rural (renewable) energy resources (MoSTE, 2006). The overall goal of this policy is to 'contribute to rural poverty reduction and environmental conservation by ensuring access to clean, reliable and appropriate energy in the rural areas'. The strength of the policy lies in its focus on rural areas, conserving environment, community management, productive end-uses, employment creation and community management of projects. The latter provision brings the projects nearer to the people and hence provides a possible space for addressing gender and inclusion aspects.

This is a policy that is progressive in recognizing that "the rural energy is directly linked to activities traditionally carried out by the women, programmes of rural energy technology will be implemented considering it as an integral part of the women's enabling activities." However, while the background discussion of the policy document mentions the impact of poor environment on the health of women and children, no link is made between renewable energy and the benefits that would accrue to women, poor and the excluded. The definitions do not have explanation about gender or inclusion even though the Tenth Five Year Plan had identified social inclusion as one of its four pillars.

There seems to be an implicit assumption in the provisions of the policy that all people will benefit equally from the interventions. It has not recognized and addressed any of the barriers of women, poor and the excluded e.g. the difficulties to get employment or access credit for productive end-use, their inability to pay, or their limited capacity to influence decisions made by users' committees and construction companies or other issues in accessing benefits generated from the RETs project.

The policy states that communities must be encouraged to manage rural energy projects, with representation of women, low caste (dalits), marginalized (janjatis), disadvantaged (utpidit) and backward groups. It however does not identify measures to do so, especially to counterbalance the 'political-business-local elites' nexus which tend to influence a project to come into an area and frame rules that the excluded continue to remain so and that the benefits are enjoyed by a few.

The policy refers to building capacity of local bodies and increasing human resource, but there are no directives on the kind of skills development and awareness raising that must be implemented and no provisions to strengthen the voice and capacities of women, poor and the excluded are identified.

In 2009-10, the Gender, Energy and Water Network (GEWNet) managed by Centre for Rural Technology, Nepal (CRT/N) together with Indoor Air Pollution and Health Forum (IAPH Forum) managed by Practical Action Nepal undertook a review of the national energy policies and recommended the following to be considered whenever the policy is revised (CRT/N and Practical Action, 2010):

#### **Clear articulation of gender issues**

- Identify women as a separate target group in the objectives instead of an overall mention of social justice as is mentioned in the current policy
- Identify concrete measures for enhancing access to clean energy technologies for women and the marginalised groups. Presently, the issues are identified, but no concrete measures suggested

#### **Gender disaggregated energy needs**

- Highlight gender differences in energy needs, and address issues of physical accessibility to energy, problems of affordability, and need for information to understand and use energy technologies by men and women
- Recognize women's involvement and their right to appropriate remuneration as per government norms in energy projects and programmes. Presently, women are involved mainly for their labour input or as beneficiaries

#### **Necessary enabling mechanisms**

- Enhance women's access to credit and thereby, their capability to influence decisions and include women and marginalised groups effectively at all levels of the project cycle explicitly
- Promote measures for increasing women's access and control over resources through information availability, soft loans and other incentives; co-ordinate with women based organizations for involving women in these programmes.

#### **Gender sensitive planning and monitoring**

- Include in monitoring indicators that explicitly recognize gendered and social implications of energy technologies. At the same time, measure and track the quality of women's participation

### **Renewable energy subsidy policy and rural energy subsidy delivery mechanism, 2013**

The GoN has been supporting promotion of renewable energy technologies since past two decades. A subsidy policy was developed in 2009, however this had limited recognition about other kinds of exclusion, apart from income exclusion. The document identified GoN's long term goals on rural electrification and energy but the policy was not synchronised with the national and international policy commitments of GoN for gender mainstreaming and social inclusion. A blanket amount for the subsidy was provisioned which did not recognize barriers to access such as higher transportation costs in remote sites, affordability of poor households, women headed households and households with disabled persons (SNV 2012).

Over the years, it was felt necessary to make adjustments in the existing subsidy policy for increasing energy access in remote parts and to the poorest and socially disadvantaged people, and to encourage private sector investment to focus on better quality and service delivery in rural areas. In 2013, the Renewable Energy Subsidy Policy, 2013 was formulated (MoSTE, 2013). The subsidy policy of 2013

recognizes and addresses income related barriers and aims to enable low-income and remote rural households to use renewable energy technologies and attract private sector entrepreneurs. The Subsidy policy provisions for around 40 percent of the total cost to be covered by subsidy, 40 percent by soft loan from financial institutions and the rest (20 percent) by the community or households in kind and cash.

The policy has specific subsidies targeted to women and the socially excluded groups:

- Additional subsidy of Rs. 2,500 per household will be provided to households with single woman, backward, disaster victim, conflict affected, poor and endangered ethnic group as identified by the Government of Nepal.
- For solar thermal technologies for rural areas, additional Rs. 20,000 will be provided if at least 50 percent of the target groups are single women, backward, disaster victim, conflict victim, endangered ethnic group.
- For biogas and metallic cookstoves, additional subsidy of up to NPR 4000 and 1000 is offered to single women, backward, disaster victims, and endangered poor households, ethnic groups.

The Rural Energy Subsidy Delivery Mechanism 2013 recognized geographical exclusion issues and provisioned for a higher financial support for feasibility studies to remote districts. Table 2 presents the subsidy provisions under the “Renewable Energy Subsidy Policy, 2013”. In addition, it recognizes the governance structure for the disbursement: representation of GESI Unit in the internal technical review committee as well in the local bodies formed such as user committees, Economic Development Committee. This policy has specific categorization criteria for identifying single women, poor, ethnic groups and aged. For example, single women identification is through an identity card provided by District Development committees (DDC) on recommendation from the Village Development Committees (VDC). The poor will be identified as per recognition by Ministry of Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation which is also responsible for administering the Poverty Alleviation Fund (Government of Nepal, 2013a).

**Table 1: Subsidy as per “Renewable Energy Subsidy Policy, 2013”**

Technology	Subsidy	Remarks
Mud-brick ICS	No direct Subsidy	Encouraging local bodies for financial support for STG*
Metallic ICS (2-pot hole)	Up to Rs. 3,000	Not more than 50% of total cost
Metallic ICS (3-pot hole)	Up to Rs. 4,000	Not more than 50% of total cost
Additional subsidy for STG*	Rs.1,000	For both two pot hole & three pot hole types
Institutional Metallic ICS	Up to Rs. 20,000	Not more than 50% of total cost
Metallic Rocket Stove (1- or 2-pot hole)	Up to Rs. 2,000	Not more than 50% of the total cost

*Note: \*STG (special target group) includes single women, backward community, calamity-affected, poor, disadvantaged community; conflict affected & endangered ethnic groups. Source: “Renewable Energy Subsidy Policy, 2013”*

The GESI approach includes subsidies to ensure access for those most vulnerable, including women-headed households, such as an additional 10 percent subsidy on solar installation, subsidies of NPR 2,500 for household wiring under community electrification and NPR 2,500 for solar lighting as well as funds (NPR 10,000) for income-generating groups to help women start small enterprises. The NORAD evaluation team’s field visits in Babiya Chaur Micro Hydro Project (NPR) showed women were the main beneficiaries of income generation, with very low levels of default in paying the monthly

electricity tariff reported (NORAD 2015). As such, these measures have led to an improvement in women's involvement in MHPs and PEU, from planning to implementation, and provided a platform for women from different ethnic groups to come together and work together. There are criticisms however that women's participation has not always been meaningful.

For the women who have accessed and are using renewable energy technologies, the benefits are many: solar water pump saves time for women, who earlier had to walk for up to three hours to fetch water and reduces health hazards. Similarly, solar lights have provided women (and youth) with more time to be involved in productive activities; children have more time to study at night. Households that regularly use improved cookstoves (ICSs) had fewer cases of health-related problems like lung infections, eye irritations, etc. Moreover, time spent collecting firewood has reduced. However, the NORAD evaluation showed that the main beneficiaries of ICSs appear to be the more educated women who are able to understand the long-term positive health benefits, and that several households with ICSs had reverted back to traditional cooking stoves in a few months (*ibid*).

## 3.2 Gender in selected energy sector programmes

### Energy Sector Assistance Programme ( ESAP, 1997-2007)

ESAP was one of the first RET-focused programme in Nepal supported by Denmark and Norway. The overall goal of ESAP II is to improve the living conditions of the rural population by enhancing their access and affordability to rural energy solutions that are efficient, environment-friendly and those that address social justice. ESAP promoted various forms of clean energy to rural areas and in doing so, improved livelihoods for women and girls by reducing their workload, reduced indoor smoke, improved indoor lighting, provided renewable-based electricity for radios and TV. However, apart from these benefits that women enjoyed as a result of using RETs, the programme did not proactively look for women's participation and the documents did not integrate gender equality and there was no reference to gender specific data, analysis and statistics.

The ICS programme within ESAP stands out as a "project for women" since household cooking is a task largely done by female family members. It improved health conditions (respiratory hazards) for children and women, saved fuelwood and reduced deforestation and carbon dioxide emissions. This programme is the least costly, the users have to do the work on materials and installing the stove themselves, and the input needed is not subsidized (NORAD, 2010). At the installation end the programme targeted on enhancing the female installers/fabricators with trainings enabling an income generation opportunity.

### Community Rural Electrification Programme (CREP)

In Nepal, the rural electrification model is focused on generation, transmission and distribution of power in populated areas and is less focused on supply of electricity to rural populations in remote areas where load is scarcely located. To address this problem, the concept of community based rural electrification (CBRE) came into picture. The Community Rural Electrification Programme (CREP) was launched in 2003/04 to increase the grid-connected electrification rate in areas without access to electricity.

In this model, Community Rural Electrification Entities (CREE), or EUCs (electricity User cooperatives) own, operate and manage the programme. They buy electricity in bulk from the NEA at a reduced price and sell it to consumers. The CREE has some flexibility in setting the tariffs but is not allowed to charge higher prices than the regular NEA consumer tariffs. The consumers have a sense of ownership as the project cost is financed together by the government and the community. The financial viability of a CREE depends upon the number of customers and especially the number (or existence) of small

industries and small enterprises, which increase the load factor and also pay a higher tariff for consumption.

The programme is governed by the Nepal Electricity Authority Community Electricity Distribution Byelaws 2060 programme, which does not have any reference to women or gender (NEA, 2003). However, under the Social Welfare Act 2060 (2003) (Social Welfare Council 1992) under which these bodies are registered, provides space for undertaking special social welfare activities “to serve interest and render welfare to the children, old age, helpless or disabled people and To foster participation in development and to promote and protect the welfare, rights and interest of the women”. In practice however, no such activities are implemented.

The EUCs are registered as companies and governed by a management board, the size of which is not regulated however, gender and social inclusion is mandatory. Of the 10 EUCs included in the present JFPR Grant, most have at least 9 members (not exceeding 11) in the Board. Of these at least two are female members but they do not have positions in the key posts. A common feature in all their regulations is that they will focus on “gender empowerment, informal adult literacy and awareness creation” (Regulations of the different User Committees). In practice however, no activities in this regard are taking place.

### National Rural Renewable Energy Programme (NRREP)

The AEPC is currently executing a framework programme called National Rural & Renewable Energy Programme (NRREP) with support from external development partners. This 5-year programme that started from July 2012 is an integrated version of different smaller programmes or projects. NRREP is being funded by the governments of Nepal, Denmark, Norway, Germany (KfW) and the United Kingdom (DFID) and UNDP, SNV and GIZ are providing technical assistance. NRREP has an initially committed budget of around US\$ 164 million for different technology-linked components (community electrification, biomass, biogas and solar energy) as well as other support components on business development and productive end-use, institutional development, subsidy and credit financing. The targets include 475,000 ICS, 130,000 domestic biogas plants, 7,500 solar cooker/dryer, 600,000 Solar Home Systems and community electrification for 150,000 households through generation of 25 MW from micro hydropower plants (SNV, 2013).

The development objective of NRREP is

“To improve the living standard of rural women and men, increase employment of women and men as well as productivity, reduce dependency on traditional energy and attain sustainable development through integrating the alternative energy with the *socioeconomic activities of women and men in rural communities*”.

The NRREP programme document mandates GESI (Gender Equality and Social Inclusion) mainstreaming, stating that specific affirmative action will be planned, implemented and monitored across all Component activities, aiming to empower women and marginalized groups through enhancement of their technical capabilities and assisting them to take up ownership of technologies. The principal objective NRREP has been framed to improve the living standard

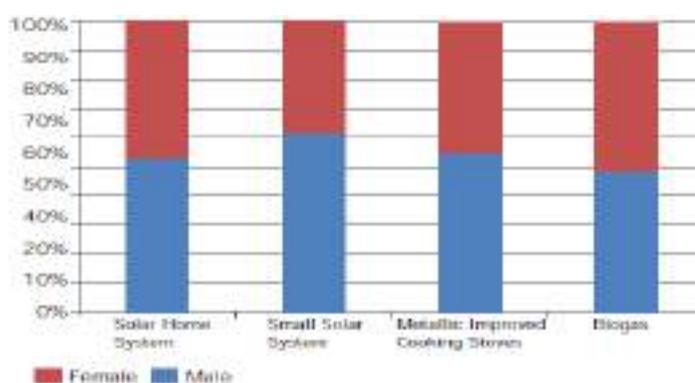


Figure 18 : Gender Ownership of RETs Installed (2012-2013).

Source: AEPC, 2012-2013

of rural women and men, increase employment of women and men as well as productivity, reduce dependency on traditional energy and attain sustainable development through integrating the alternative energy with the socioeconomic activities of women and men in rural communities.

In NRREP, GESI is integrated in all programme elements, starting with the development objective, the immediate objectives, in outputs and activities, in indicators and targets as well as in monitoring. The programme level measures for GESI include:

- A clear articulation of commitment to gender and social inclusion issues by including it in the development objective (see text in italics above)
- Inclusion of GESI in the immediate objectives two of the three Components (Technical Support and Business Development for Renewable Energy and Productive Energy Use Components). The Central renewable energy fund Component description is silent on GESI.
- The immediate objective of the Technical Support Component; envisaged to accelerate renewable energy service delivery with better quality, comprising various technologies, to remote rural households, enterprises and communities, to benefit men and women from all social groups, leading to more equitable economic growth. It mandates that ...“in community electrification projects, more women and socially disadvantaged groups must be included in decision-making and leadership. This is envisaged achieved by 55% quota requirements (30% women and 25% from deprived groups) on governing bodies such as user committees. In solar energy component, the development and promotion of solar pumps has been prioritised as a product with potential to ease the burden of women and girls.
- The immediate objective of the Business Development for Renewable Energy and Productive Energy Use Component is to contribute to an increase in income and employment generation potential for micro, small and medium sized enterprises in rural areas, particularly for men and women belonging to socially and economically disadvantaged groups.
- Enabling measures and institutional mechanisms for consideration of gender issues within implementing the programme

Existing institutional mechanisms to incorporate GESI in NRREP include:

- Representative from women’s organization and socially excluded to be included in NRREP Coordination Committee
- Agreed gender balance in the Coordination Committee and within the advisory group
- Appointment of a programme manager dedicated to GESI (among 9 programme managers)
- Plans to include in the Functional Analysis
- Development and implementation of GESI mainstreaming plan (e.g. developing policies, plans and strategies in support of women having access to, and control of, RE programmes)
- Development and application of a GESI Toolbox, with the AEPC/NRREP staff trained on its use for implementing GESI activities
- Capacity Building of AEPC/NRREP staff on GESI issues through workshops, GESI sensitisation training, orientation for district energy and environment units, etc
- Advocacy targeting policy makers for creation of conducive policy and legal environment for GESI Delivery of GESI-responsive messages while promoting renewable energy through jingles and TV commercials.
- Develop and implement a results based monitoring system (integrating GESI agenda).

- Maintain disaggregated information by gender and ethnicity for individual and community managed decentralised and distributed systems
- Coordination and networking with rights –based organisations
- A Public Disclosure System for transparency and accountability
- Develop relevant internal organizational mechanism for AEPC including systems that are essential for AEPC to become more effective and efficient

A recent NORAD evaluation (NORAD 2015) showed that the gender mainstreaming process in NRREP has had a positive impact on national and sub-national processes. At national level, it is coordinating with other government institutions such as MoFALD with which it is seeking to establish a memorandum of understanding to inform and empower vulnerable citizens with regard to access to renewable sustainable energy. At district level, it is working with the District Development Committee (DDC) and other rights-holder organisations to promote GESI in the energy sector.

### 3.3 Good practices in integrating gender in energy service provision

A number of good practices in integrating gender in energy service provision are available. Even though some of these are from sub-sectors ADB is not currently engaged in Nepal, the gender strategies and good practices are relevant.

#### Biogas Support Programme, Nepal

Launched in 1992, the Biogas Support Programme (BSP) Nepal has disseminated over 250,000 biogas plants in Nepal. Being used for cooking and lighting (in select areas), the technology has benefitted more than 260,889 households, reducing the workload of women and girls by about 3 hours per day. This saved time is used for education, income generation activities and the much sought leisure time.

Over the years the project has adopted various measures to mainstream gender equity and social inclusion targeting poorer section of the population, including the following:

- Collaborating with right partners: NGO partner selection based on past experiences of working with women and disadvantaged communities
- Capacity building: Focused trainings for women as users of technology, enabling them to undertake repair and maintenance activities; capacity development of staff and partners on gender mainstreaming and social inclusion
- Empowering women: Training on leadership and skill up gradation for women enabling them to become supervisors/ owners of construction companies; to represent in the Board of Biogas Construction Companies; putting in place safety/security provisions for female staff, code of conduct
- Enable access and increase affordability: Work closely with micro financing organizations especially women led/focused Credit Groups
- Engaging with the private sector: Construction companies (special training for women; inclusion of women as Board members, safety for female staff, code of conduct); Fabrication Units (provide information on user's needs for modifying appliances to make them user friendly); MFIs (coordinate with women- operated MFIs , provide seed money for loans, house to house repayment collection).
- Tracking Changes: Gender and poverty sensitive project monitoring

## Achievements

- Women own 23 percent of biogas plants installed
- Loan provision encouraged through women's savings and credit groups, 36% women cooperatives mobilized for providing biogas 'credit plus' services
- Women own 11 construction companies (out of 107)
- 8 women masons and 44 supervisors part of the work force
- Collaboration with 92 micro financing institutes operated by females (total MFIs in the sector 267)

## Renewable Energy for Rural Livelihood (RERL)

The Renewable Energy for Rural Livelihood (RERL) is implemented from 1 April 2011, as a follow up project of the Rural Energy Development Programme (REDP), with its primary focus on enhancing rural livelihoods through energy services. RERL is a joint project of Government of Nepal, UNDP and the World Bank. The objective of the programme is to increase equitable access to energy services expanded for the poor women and socially excluded groups.

REDP, initiated in 1996, stresses community mobilization, bottom-up participatory planning and decentralized decision-making. Productive income generating activities are promoted as end uses of the energy supplied, and skill-training is provided to promote enterprises. The strategy links rural energy activities to other sectors, including increasing family income through agricultural training; improving educational status through awareness programmes; promoting women's empowerment through increased participation, literacy classes, and savings and credit schemes; and improving health through access to clean energy (e.g., improved cooking stoves), construction of latrines, and electrification of health posts.

The programme has initiated several measures to promote women's involvement and enhance their income levels, which are as follows:

- Women have been identified as one of the vulnerable groups, and their empowerment highlighted as one of the six basic principles of REDP community mobilization process.
- At the community level, REDP's operational modality requires one man and one woman from each household to participate in programme activities such as formation of COs (Community Organizations) and FGs (Functional Groups)<sup>12</sup>, training, implementation and benefit sharing.
- In programme communities, separate male and female COs are formed, which meet on a weekly basis and are provided targeted capacity building inputs.
- The women in community organizations have a distinct voice in local affairs and their capability for independent and collective action has increased. Some of the micro hydro schemes in the remote districts in far-western Nepal (where women have the lowest social status) are chaired by women.

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<sup>12</sup>**Community Organization (CO)**, are organizations of people living in close proximity and willing to work together for the micro hydro project. Members constitute at least one male and one female member from each beneficiary household.

**Functional Group (FG)** is a higher level community organization, set up to manage the micro hydro systems and is responsible for decisions about electricity distribution, electricity tariff, employee management, operation and maintenance of the schemes.

- The programme provides loans to men and women to set up enterprises, through an Enterprise Development Fund (EDF), and from weekly savings of Community Organizations. Each household is encouraged to start at least one enterprise (energy or non-energy).
- Potential entrepreneurs, men and women, are provided information, enterprise development training and exposure visits, and are linked with city-based markets.

With the above inputs, women's involvement in small scale and cottage enterprises has increased. The number of such enterprises increased from 400 in 1996 to 700 in 2005.

Assessments of REDP found that the project was effective in alleviating women's drudgery and building their self-confidence and management capacity (Dutta, Singh and Thakali 2007; Winrock international Nepal, cited in Norad 2010).

### Improved Cookstove Programme

Within AEPC's renewable energy programme, Biomass Energy Support Programme (BESP) is the component that focuses on improved stoves. BSEP undertakes mass dissemination of improved cook stoves in Mid-hills, High Hills and Terai Plains along with other biomass technologies. Cooking being woman's responsibility, with direct implications on her time and health the programme initiated several activities targeting women. These activities include:

- Capacity building: Promoting women as social mobilizers and stove installers
- Marking quorums for participation: The programme requires 90 percent participation of women
- Quality control: Quality assurance of the technology forms the core of service delivery of both the hardware and the software elements of the programme.
- Technology development: Ensuring that energy needs for all geographical zones, specific applications and for income generation activities are addressed by the technology choices offered
- Increase affordability: Provision of subsidies for selected stoves (metallic stoves and gasifiers)

#### Achievements:

- Reduced drudgery of women with less time spent on collecting firewood, cooking and washing dishes
- Improved health of women due to reduced exposure to smoke
- Increased participation by men in kitchen work because of clean environment
- Local government organizations have partnered in the programme in declaring smoke free villages which enables even the poorest sector of the population to gain access to the technology.
- Women in large numbers are working as promoters in stove dissemination

### Decentralized Rural Infrastructure and Livelihood Project (DRILP): Loan 2092

The ADB project Decentralized Rural Infrastructure and Livelihood Project (DRILP) (ADB 2010b) was designed to reduce rural poverty in 18 conflict-affected, remote hill and mountain districts to increase access to economic opportunities and social services. The primary focus of the project is to enhance the social and financial capital of the poor, dalits, ethnic minorities and women. Project activities included training of social mobilizers and communities to identify subprojects, conduct social surveys; forming groups and building their capacity on technical and managerial aspects of infrastructure development, construction of and rehabilitation of roads and trails.

The project proactively reached out to women through:

- requiring building groups to comprise at least 40 percent women members;
- increasing women's access to employment and financial capital through women-only saving groups;
- reserving 40 percent unskilled labor employment for women;
- providing gender sensitization training to all members and leadership training for women;
- allocation of decision making positions for women in subproject coordination committees, district road coordination committees, and village works and road coordination committees (VWRCCs); and
- ensuring that at least 50 percent nongovernment organization (NGO) field staff are women.

## Results

- The project enhanced employment and income opportunities for women as women were given construction work with equal pay and increased access to markets.
- Empowered as a group, women took collective action against domestic violence and other social ills. Women mostly spent their income on health, education, or buying assets which made them more capable and less vulnerable.
- Women represent 37 percent and disadvantaged groups 45.5 percent of the 17,333 building group members (in 956 groups) with 35 percent women and 36 percent DAGs in key positions.
- At baseline, women made only 5.45 percent of leadership key positions, but now one in two leadership positions is held by a woman in every group.
- Women represent 41.56 percent of the 435 savings and credit groups formed and performing well with savings totalling NRs4.5 million.
- Women-only savings groups and women's income-earning opportunities have provided women control over their income which has increased their confidence to participate in local community organizations and be more active in decision making.

## 3.4 Institutional assessment of key energy sector organizations

In Nepal's energy sector, institutional arrangements are vertically aligned according to subsectors, such as electricity, renewable energy and forestry. The ministries are responsible for grid extension, tariff setting, and energy distribution, while local agencies such as the DDCs, VDCs, NGOs, and community groups are working to extend energy services to rural communities. In addition, a number of multilateral and bilateral agencies are working in the sector.

### Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (MoSTE)

Set up in 1996, MoSTE is responsible for the development and promotion of RETs in the country. Its vision is to establish science, technology and environment as key pillars for achieving sustainable and broad based economic growth contributing to employment generation and poverty reduction. It moves ahead with a mission to create policy environment and institutional strength for promoting scientific research, innovation and capacity building to achieve sustainable practices and technologies, to minimize risks on life support systems, thus contributing to sustainable development. Both the

mission and vision are silent on gender and social inclusion aspects. Even though government has been pushing for social inclusion in all development sectors, MoSTE does not have gender mainstreaming policy and social inclusion agenda. However, it does emphasize the development and expansion of technologies that alleviate women's drudgery, minimize and time of women in household chores and enhance employment opportunities. It considers women as important beneficiaries and considering women's participation in the development of science and technology.

### Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA)

The Nepal Electricity Authority was created in 1985 under the Nepal Electricity Authority Act 1984, through the merger of the Department of Electricity of Ministry of Water Resources, Nepal Electricity Corporation and related Development Boards. The primary objective of NEA is to generate, transmit and distribute adequate, reliable and affordable power by planning, constructing, operating and maintaining all generation, transmission and distribution facilities in Nepal's power system both interconnected and isolated.

NEA is guided by the Hydro power development policy 2001, the Electricity Act 1992, the Water Resources Act 1992 and the Electricity Regulation 1993, all of which are silent on gender issues.

As far as the governance structure is concerned, at the highest decision making level, the eight member Board of Directors comprises of men only, this is also true at the operational level, General Managers and Deputy Managing Directors; however, there is a woman each amongst 27 directors and 11 Department Chiefs (NEA, 2012).

The NEA Staff Regulation 2005 instituted special provisions for women: in recruitment, 35 percent of the 45 percent seats are reserved the poor and socially excluded for female candidates; the eligible age for female applicants was raised to 40 years as compared to 35 for male counterpart for open competition for 8th level and above posts; the probation period is 6 months for female staff against a year for male counterparts. The Ministry also allows for maternity leave of 60 days (including pre-natal leave) and if necessary no-pay leave for a period of 6 months.

It has been mandated that all projects will undergo systematic environmental as well as social impact assessment, including establishment of a socioeconomic and cultural baseline conditions of the project area, identification of beneficial and adverse social impacts of the project, and mitigation measures for the adverse social impacts; and a social monitoring plan including organizational and institutional requirements. The Operational Manual for Environmental Social Impact Assessment specifies that "Particularly vulnerable groups, such as women and children who will be affected by project implementation, should also be specially accounted for to ensure their participation as project beneficiaries" and that "it is very important to obtain the views of women because of their various social and economic roles. Special efforts need to be made to identify the best means of obtaining their views" (NEA, 2009).

### Alternate Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC)

The AEPC is a Government institution, currently under Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology. It functions independently, and has an eleven member board with representatives from government sector, industry sector and non-governmental organizations. Its vision is to see "the institution recognized as a regional/international example of promoting large-scale use of renewable energy sustainable and a national focal point for resource mobilization". The mission is to make renewable energy mainstream resource through increased access, knowledge and adaptability contributing for the improved living conditions of people in Nepal. Objectives include popularizing and promoting the use of alternative/renewable energy technology; to raise the living standard of the rural people; to protect the environment and to develop the commercially viable alternative energy

industries in the country. As in the case of MoSTE, the objectives, mission and vision are silent on issues of gender and social inclusion.

At a programme level, gender and social inclusion have been well recognized within AEPC. In 2007, AEPC staff participated in a regional training programme on mainstreaming gender in energy projects, organized by ENERGIA, the international network on gender and sustainable energy. In 2008 when it commissioned Gender Energy and Water Network (GEWNet), Centre for Rural Technology (CRT), Nepal to develop a strategy on gender and social inclusion was prepared for AEPC. The paper acknowledges that AEPC has made notable achievements in technology development, installations and rural coverage, but still needs more attention to social and gender aspects. The strategy recommends development of a Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy as a first step to address these issues at organizational as well as at programme/project level (GEWNET 2008).

## AEPC GESI mainstreaming strategy

([http://www.aepc.gov.np/?option=nrrep&page=subtechsupport&mid=5&sub\\_id=44](http://www.aepc.gov.np/?option=nrrep&page=subtechsupport&mid=5&sub_id=44))

- Decentralized RET services through DDC, VDC, municipality and local service providers
- Capacity building of local bodies, regional and local stakeholders and right holder's organizations to make them accountable
- Positive discrimination in selecting Banks/MFIs/ cooperatives to flow credit facilities ensuring credit access/facility to the target groups
- Adoption of social mobilization process which will address targeted groups' needs and demands as well as support for the meaningful participation
- Promotion of technology end use for employment and income generation of targeted groups.
- Promote GESI responsive RET policy, strategy, periodic plan, rules and regulations and program and budget
- Institutionalize GESI disaggregated (quantitative and qualitative) database system, regular monitoring mechanism/reporting, review/evaluation
- Establish monitoring framework to manage disaggregated database at all level
- Strengthening of AEPC as GESI responsive institution
- Promotion of RET through different modes and means to extend access to rural women and men, and women and men from poor and DAG groups
- Collaborate for Research and development (R&D) to design and promote gender friendly RET
- Establishment of knowledge management system for GESI responsive RET knowledge

AEPC adopted the strategy developed in 2008 for the organization, and further drafted a gendered strategy for the micro-hydro component. Subsequently, annual work plans have included gender-sensitive activities and also initiated a database using disaggregated data related to ownership of systems and participation in trainings.

In 2013, ENERGIA, the International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy started supporting AEPC in gender mainstreaming within the NRREP through engagement with and capacity building of AEPC staff on the approach, developing component-wise gender action plans and periodic tracking

These interventions have had multiple impacts at several levels:

- **Policy Level:** The Rural Energy Policy is presently being revised. The Ministry of Environment has intervened in the policy formulation with interjections for inclusion of a “gendered agenda” in the policy in line with the recommendations from the “Advocacy and Policy Gap Analysis-Rural Energy Policy 2006”.
- **Implementation:** The organization made it mandatory to include a gender expert in all its studies related to different technical, economic and social aspects of the technologies it is responsible for. Further NRREP, the national renewable energy programme has a strong gender focus, with a development objective f to promote renewable energy access and employment opportunities for rural men and women living in poor and remote areas of Nepal.

To summarize, while both electricity sector and renewable energy organizations recognize the importance of gender issues, it is AEPC and the renewable energy sector that has taken this mandate forward and is actively exploring ways and means to incorporate a meaningful role for women in its strategies and programming. Table 2 presents the staff composition within AEPC which indicates the adoption of 33 percent women in the staffing and a concerted move to include marginalised groups as well.

**Table 2: Distribution of staff by ethnicity group**

Gender and Ethnic Groups	Percent
Women	33%
Janajatis	27%
Madhesi	22%
Dalit	9%
Disabled	5%
Backward	4%

Source: AEPC, 2013 Identification of Gender and Social Inclusion Gaps at Policy and Institutional Level.

## 4. Opportunities and recommendations

### 4.1 Lessons and opportunities for gender sensitive energy service provision

Experience in Nepal and elsewhere shows that women, the poor and excluded face multiple exclusions, many of which cannot be tackled solely through sector-based interventions, as the causes are rooted in deep societal structures. For this reason, even among energy sector interventions, social mobilization and facilitation processes need to go beyond increasing access to assets and services and focus on empowerment as well. At the same time however, increased formal representation of women or the excluded does not automatically lead to their increased voice and role in decision making. For real change, capacity building and advocacy for shifts in discriminatory practices are necessary, and need to be directed not only at the excluded but at all levels of decision making, planning and *all* members of the group/user committee. Also necessary for any effective change of the formal structures, such as user groups, is political and power-focused analysis to understand how these structures interact with informal structures and systems.

Some of the good practices visible in gender responsive energy sector interventions are as follows:

- **Social mobilization combined with information dissemination and community education** has proved effective in building the voice of the excluded and poor and their capacity to influence decisions. Where communities have been mobilized to reflect on the social norms that perpetuate un-touch ability, gender-based discrimination or violence against women, there has been an increase in access to services and greater involvement in community-level planning for these groups.
- **Setting quotas for women and excluded groups in user groups/committees**, along with creating training opportunities, has ensured their representation and participation in development activities, and strengthened their access to resources and benefits. Still, further efforts are needed to reach socially excluded groups and women of these groups in particular and promote their representation in key decision-making positions in executive bodies and their ability to influence decisions.
- **Internal monitoring systems** to track resource allocation effects on women, the poor and excluded, have been successfully employed by a number of programmes. This has positively evolved the way in which these institutions allocate and deliver services, and enabled programmes to identify the causes of changes in livelihood and social-inclusion outcomes. The Livelihood Forestry Programme<sup>13</sup> (through its livelihood and social-inclusion monitoring) uses the three domains of change to track change in voice, influence and agency, and whether the poor and excluded have been able to change policies and institutions in their favour.
- **Social-accountability mechanisms like social audits** have provided increasing opportunities for civil society, including community groups, to press for greater accountability and responsiveness from service providers. These have become accepted tools and processes, but still need to be implemented more effectively, with meaningful participation of women, with proportionate representation, the poor and excluded, and with follow-up actions that demonstrate the value in participation.

Interaction with stakeholders within AEPC, ESAP and other RET programmes suggests that there is a growing realization that not all women and men enjoy benefit equally from projects, mainly due to

<sup>13</sup>Discussion with Meena Kuwar, present Chief of Rupantar Nepal, former staff of LFP which has been dissolved since 2 years back.

the deep-rooted socio-cultural traditions and values and that inclusive development in Nepal can only be achieved through a concerted effort targeting women and socially excluded groups.

The current process of political transition provides an opportunity for greater inclusion and equitable development. The Interim Constitution and the Three-Year Interim Plan reflect commitments towards gender equality and for the country's development partners, including DFID, WB and ADB, mainstreaming gender equality and inclusion in their overall work is mandated by global and national agency directives.

## 4.2 Recommendations: Strategies to benefit and empower women and reduce gender inequalities in the energy sector

In order for women to participate in and benefit from energy sector interventions in a meaningful manner, the following recommendations are made:

### ***Mainstream gender in energy sector policies***

Align energy sector objectives and strategies with national development priorities and goals that prioritize empowering women, and reducing inequalities between men and women. The Rural Energy Policy, for example, could be strengthened by a clear articulation of gender issues and identification of women as a separate target group in the objectives; identification of concrete measures for enhancing access to clean energy technologies for women; enhancement of women's access to credit; and gender sensitive monitoring indicators in measuring energy access.

### ***Integrate gender in all aspects of energy programmes***

In the 2012 National Rural Renewable Energy Programme, gender equity and social inclusion are integrated in all programme elements - the development objective, the immediate objectives, outputs, activities, indicators and targets, as well as in monitoring. The programme has embarked upon a systematic gender mainstreaming process, with each of the programme sub-components developing a gender action plans.

### ***Ensure participation of women in energy plans, programmes and decision making***

The decentralized governance system of Nepal provides a framework for making development interventions responsive to local issues, needs and options. For example, the Ministry of Local Development (MoLD) established a programme providing production credit for rural women programme, using field-based women development officers, and requiring that user groups must have at least 30 percent women members. Provisions like these can be used by the energy sector to ensure grassroots representation, including women, in policies, decision making, planning and disbursement of state allocations through public consultations, with stipulated women's participation.

### ***Involve women in technical aspects of energy projects, and encourage women's participation in energy infrastructure management.***

Lessons on this can be learned from the Biogas Support Programme, which has provided training for women users on technology management, as well as training of women masons on technical, business and leadership skills, enabling them to become supervisors or owners of biogas system construction companies. The programme selects NGO partners based on their experience in working with women and disadvantaged communities, partners with women led micro financing organizations.

### ***Strengthen the capacity of women to use energy for livelihood enhancement and income generation.***

Access to electricity and improved fuels and energy technologies supports women's economic development through employment generation, increased income through new enterprises, and

enhanced productivity. The National Rural Renewable Energy Programme offers a good opportunity to integrate alternative energy with socioeconomic development of women and men in rural communities, as it aims to support use of energy for productive purposes.

### 4.3 Recommendations for integration of gender into ADB's energy sector work in Nepal

ADB, in its Country Partnership Strategy (2010-12), recognizes the need to 'address gender, ethnic, and caste discrimination through policy reform, targeted investments, and the mainstreaming of equal opportunity measures in key sector investments,' and aims to guide and ensure that in all ADB operations and sectoral assistance, gender and social-inclusion concerns are adequately addressed.

In the power sector, ADB has been the leading development partner, and its assistance in the past focused on generation, transmission, distribution, rural electrification, and mini-hydropower projects. To help the GON achieve its power sector goals, ADB's assistance is currently built on four pillars: broad-based and inclusive economic growth, inclusive social development, governance and capacity building, and climate change adaptation and environmental sustainability.

In the coming years ADB will be supporting Nepal in both the conventional and renewable energy sector. Of the 128 projects 15 are in the energy sector with financial support amounting to nearly 20 percent (Tornieri, 2012). The support will also focus on mainstreaming crosscutting themes such as gender, governance, regional cooperation and integration, environmental sustainability, and private sector development. Categorically these projects either fall under the effective gender mainstreaming or those that deliver some gender benefits. In recent years the gender mainstreaming approach has been adopted as integral as well as an add-on component in the energy projects. The earlier approach is visible in the electricity expansion/extension projects. Opportunities for gender mainstreaming are thereby seen in the renewable energy projects as well in the conventional energy programmes.

As of now, the Energy Access and Efficiency Improvement Project (Phase 2) is the only energy sector project that has a gender component, being implemented with support from the JFPR Grant 9158 REG. It is expected that this TA Project will yield lessons that can pave the way for gender mainstreaming for ADB's energy sector projects in Sri Lanka. Inclusion of gender into project portfolios, capacity building of energy sector institutions, financing of special components and creating opportunities to address women's needs is crucial. The following recommendations are made to further strengthen this.

- All ADB supported energy sector projects must adopt ADB project guidelines that require gender based targets, outcomes, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks, ensuring that gender considerations are integrated into the complete process and that project implementers take responsibility for gender inclusive energy sector development.
- Support national government through building institutional capacities at the national and provincial levels in integrating gender aspects in energy planning processes by providing technical advice and gender expertise to relevant government institutions during the preparation of operational plans, programmes and budgets. Develop user-friendly manuals, guidelines, tools and training materials for gender sensitive planning, budgeting and programming. Implement gender training programs for relevant decision making and technical practitioners. Improve the quality, collection, analysis and management of gender disaggregated data in national and provincial energy initiatives for effective tracking of gender targets and results.
- Support the national government in undertaking pilots and scaling up projects that build the capacity of women to utilize energy services, including electricity, for income generation and

livelihood strengthening. The ongoing JFPR Grant is a step in this direction, and the lessons from this need to be integrated into other energy sector projects and programmes.

- In all ADB energy sector projects, track to what extent women and disadvantaged groups are able to access electrification inputs. This can ensure equitable economic benefits from such projects and maximize the effectiveness of investments. (Projects also need to track other non-monetary benefits that energy services offer such as improved security, improved safety for children, more time available, and improved health.)

Specifically for ADB, a good opportunity lies in the upcoming Project 45126-003: Rural Electrification through Renewable Energy<sup>14</sup>. The proposed Project aims to set up credit and subsidy windows for mini-micro hydropower (MMH) and solar home systems under the Central Renewable Energy Fund (CREF). Outputs include mini-micro hydropower projects developed in selected rural communities; solar and solar/ wind hybrid power mini-grid (SWM) developed in selected rural communities; enhanced capacity of AEPC and selected stakeholders for project implementation, and promotion of productive energy use activities; and a detailed RE Development Roadmap. The project has been classified as EGM<sup>15</sup> and is in line with the ADB Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) for Nepal and the Regional Cooperation Partnership Strategy (2011-2015) which focuses on: i) improving access to electricity in rural areas; (ii) clean power development; (iii) strengthening sector governance; and (iv) promoting private sector participation. More specifically, Nepal has a culture of women's self-help groups, especially in rural areas. The increasing number of cooperatives has helped to mitigate some barriers faced by women, the poor, Dalits and other excluded groups in accessing markets, financial services and information, and in encouraging shared resources and collective bargaining. The cooperative movement has received encouraging support from the government and in the Interim Constitution. The CREF can explore promoting these as non-banking financial institutions (NBFIs) to extend micro credit for RETs like ICSs and biogas plants, among others. This would offer at least two major advantages: extending the programme reach into remote, poorer areas, which typically do not have the penetration of BFIs and secondly, the women's self-help groups can be a vehicle to women's empowerment.

The national scenario provides two specific opportunities for engendering the national energy sector policies. First, the Water and Energy Commission Secretariat is in the process of formulating an energy strategy and it is yet to be seen how well it captures gender and social issues. With the government emphasizing on the use of gender responsive budget as well as the gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) strategy from all local government bodies, there are higher chances of gender equity and social inclusion being addressed not only at the organization level but also at the policy and project level related with electricity as well.

In addition, the National Rural Renewable Energy Programme is a good opportunity to integrate alternative energy with socioeconomic development of women and men in rural communities. It has a strong Poverty Reduction Focus whereby the emphasis is on effectively reaching out to the more remote and poorest part of the country, it envisages to apply demand led approaches actively involving beneficiaries in decision making, and support use of energy for productive purposes leading to income and employment increase in rural areas, and it has mainstreamed Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) into the programme at all levels.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.adb.org/projects/45126-003/details>

<sup>15</sup> ADB follows a 4-tier gender categorization system to assess the extent to which projects integrate gender issues. The four categories are: Category I: gender equity as a theme (GEN); Category II: effective gender mainstreaming (EGM); Category III: some gender elements (SGE); and Category IV: no gender elements (NGE)

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## Annex 2. Persons met

ADB:	Jaya Sharma, GESI Consultant (staff)
AEPC:	Madhusudan Adhikari, Rudra Khanal, Nigma Tamrakar
NEA:	Abhishek Adhikari, Engineer
NECAUN:	Dillip Ghimire, Manager
Ministry of Environment Science and Technology:	Arjun Thapa (Joint Secretary, Vinod Gautam, Program Officer)
Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare:	Dinesh Hari Adhikari

### Focus Group Discussions Held with EUC (Electricity Users Cooperative) members

• Darabardevisthan Samudaik Vidhyut Upabhokta Samiti	Gulmi
• Digo Bikash Samudaik Vidhyut Upabhokta Samiti	Kavre
• Jaya Ma Vidhyut Upabhokta Samiti	Parsa
• Samudaik Vidhyut Upabhokta Samiti Dubekol	Khotang
• Thoksila Krishi Gramin Vidhyut Sahakari Sanstha Ltd	Udayapur
• Ghoda Ghodi Samudaik Vidhyut Upabhokta Samiti	Kailali
• Baccha Deurali Samudaik Vidhyut Upbhokta Samiti	Parbat
• Damsing Dada Samudaik Vidhyut Upabhokta Samiti	Palpa
• Birta Deurali Samudaik Vidhyut Upabhokta Samiti	Kavre
• Sonari Bagauda samudaik Vidhyut Upabhokta Samiti	Banke

### Interaction with Financing Institutes

- Maheshi Chaudhari, Senior Field Assistant, Sahakari Bitiya Bikas Sanstha, Binauna, Banke
- Liladhar Wali, Assistant, Mahila Upkar Manch, Baijapur, Banke
- Durga Prasad Pant, Treasurer, Shree Nabjyoti Bhudeshya Sahakari, Birta Deurali, Kavre
- Shanti Majjhi, Scretary, Srijanshhel Mahila Samuha, Birta Deurali, Kavre
- Prem Raj Joshi Assistant Manager, Nab jeevan Sahakari Sanstha, Draha 5, Kailali
- Gajbir Lama, Secretary, Madan Bachat Tatha Reen, Madan Kundari, Kavre

### Interaction with IGA/Entreprises

- Lil Bahadur BK, Sheller Mill, Mill, Banke
- Pema Lama abd Thuli Lama, Pema Kiran Pasal, Madan Kundari, Kabrel
- Lalita Lama, Deepshikha Laghu Udhyog, Madan Kundari, Kabre
- Jaman Singh, Jaman Singh Kutani PisaniMill, Madan Kundari, Kabre
- Mohan Jagmer, Mohan Jagmer Kaath Udhyog, Furniture, Madan Kundari, Kabre

Jilla Dorje Lama, Subham Carpet Udhyog, Carpet, Madan Kundari, Kabre

## Annex 3.

### Interim constitution of Nepal 2063 (2007) – Affirmative statements (women)

#### **PART 2 - CITIZENSHIP**

##### 8. Citizenship at the Commencement of the Constitution:

-6 A woman of foreign nationality who has a matrimonial relationship with a Nepalese citizen may acquire naturalized citizenship, if she desires to do so, pursuant to the laws in force.

-7 Notwithstanding anything contained elsewhere in this Article in the case of a person born to the women citizen of Nepal married to a foreigner, if such a person is born in Nepal and has been residing permanently in Nepal who has not acquired citizenship of the foreign country by virtue of the citizenship of his/her father he/she may acquire the naturalized citizenship of Nepal pursuant to the laws in force.

#### **PART 3 - FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS**

##### 13. Right to Equality:

-1 All citizens shall be equal before the law. No person shall be denied the equal protection of the laws.

-2 No discrimination shall be made against any citizen in the application of general laws on grounds of religion, race, sex, caste, tribe, origin, language or ideological conviction or any of these.

-3 The State shall not discriminate among citizens on grounds of religion, race, caste, tribe, sex, origin, language or ideological conviction or any of these.

Provided that nothing shall be deemed to prevent the making of special provisions by law for the protection, empowerment or advancement of the interests of women, Dalit, indigenous ethnic tribes, Madeshi, or peasants, labourers or those who belong to a class which is economically, socially or culturally backward and children, the aged, disabled and those who are physically or mentally incapacitated.

-4 No discrimination in regard to remuneration and social security shall be made between men and women for the same work.

##### 18. Right regarding Employment and Social Security:

-2 Women, labourers, the aged, disabled as well as incapacitated and helpless citizens shall have the right to social security as provided for in the law.

##### 20. Right of Woman:

-1 No one shall be discriminated in any form merely for being a woman.

-2 Every woman shall have the right to reproductive health and other reproductive matters.

-3 No physical, mental or any other form of violence shall be inflicted to any woman, and such an act shall be punishable by law.

-4 Son and daughter shall have equal rights to their ancestral property.

21. Right to Social Justice: (1) Women, Dalit, indigenous tribes, Madheshi community, oppressed group, the poor peasant and labourers, who are economically, socially or educationally backward,

shall have the right to participate in the state mechanism on the basis of proportional inclusive principles.

#### **PART 4: RESPONSIBILITIES, DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES OF THE STATE**

##### 33. Responsibilities of the State:

-d To carry out an inclusive, democratic and progressive restructuring of the State by eliminating its existing form of centralized and unitary structure in order to address the problems related to women, Dalits, indigenous tribes, Madhesis, oppressed and minority community and other disadvantaged groups, by eliminating class, caste, language, sex, culture, religion and regional discriminations. (e) To formulate a minimum common programme for socioeconomic transformation to eliminate all forms of feudalism and implement it gradually.

##### 35. State Policies:

-8 The State shall pursue a policy of encouraging maximum participation of women in national development by making special provisions for their education, health and employment.

-9 The state shall pursue a policy of making special provisions of social security for the protection and welfare of single women, orphans, children, helpless, the aged, disabled, incapacitated persons and the disguising tribes.

-10 The State shall pursue a policy of making special provision based on positive discrimination to the minorities, landless, squatters, bonded labourers, disabled, backward communities and sections, and the victims of conflict, including women, Dalits, indigenous tribes, Madhesis and Muslims.

-11 The State shall pursue a policy to make legal provision to provide allowance to the aged, incapacitated women and the unemployed.

#### **PART 6 LEGISLATURE-PARLIAMENT**

##### 45. Constitution of Legislature-Parliament:

-1 There shall be a unicameral Legislature-Parliament in Nepal which shall consist of the following 330 members:

-a 209 members of the seven political parties and other parties who are elected members of the House of Representatives and National Assembly existing immediate before the commencement of this Constitution,

**Explanation:** The phrase "Seven Political Parties" means Nepali Congress, NCP(UML), Nepali Congress (Democratic), Janamorcha Nepal, Nepal Sadbhawana (Anadidevi), Nepal Majdur Kisan Party and Samyukta Bam Morcha (United Left Front), which maintained political understanding on Kartik 22, 2063 (November 8, 2006),

-b 73 members from and on behalf of NCP(Maoist) ,

-c 48 members from among the Samyukta Bam Morcha, people based and professional organizations, class organizations and professional bodies, oppressed tribe, backward region, indigenous tribe, women and various political personalities nominated through understanding.

#### **PART 7 CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY**

##### 63. Formation of the Constituent Assembly:

-4 The principle of inclusiveness shall be taken into consideration while selecting the candidates by the political parties pursuant to sub-clause (a) of clause (3) above, and while making the list of the candidates pursuant to sub-clause (b) above, the political parties shall have to ensure proportional

representation of women, Dalit, oppressed tribes/indigenous tribes, backwards, Madhesi and other groups, in accordance as provided for in the law.

Notwithstanding anything contained in this clause, in case of women there should be at least one third of total representation obtained by adding the number of candidature pursuant to sub-clause (a) of clause (3) to the proportional representation pursuant to sub-clause (b) of clause(3).

## **PART 15 NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

131. National Human Rights Commission:

-1 There shall be a National Human Rights Commission in Nepal consisting of the following Chairperson and the members:

-a One person from amongst the retired Chief Justices or Judges of the Supreme Court who have made an outstanding contribution for the protection and promotion of human rights, or a person who hold a high reputation and has rendered outstanding contribution being actively involved in the field of protection and promotion of human rights or social work. - Chairperson

-b Four persons from amongst the persons who have provided outstanding contribution, being actively involved in the field of protection and promotion of human rights or social work - Members

-2 In the appointment of Chairperson and the members in the National Human Rights Commission shall maintain representation from all fields including the woman.

142. Registration Required for Securing Recognition for the Purpose of Contesting Elections as a Political Party:

-b the constitution or the rules of the political party must provide for election of office bearers of the parity in all levels at least once in every five years, (c) in the executive committee of all levels, there should be the provision for the inclusiveness of members from neglected and suppressed regions including the Women and Dalits,

## **PART 19 EMERGENCY POWER**

154. Formation of Commissions: The Government of Nepal may form necessary commissions to safeguard and promote the rights and interests of different sectors of the country including women, Daltis, indigenous ethnic groups, Madhesi, disabled, labourers or farmers. The provisions for the formation, functions, duties and powers of such commissions shall be as determined by the law.









