
Gender Assessment

FP107: Supporting climate resilience and transformational change in the agriculture sector in Bhutan

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Gender Assessment, Action Plan and Budget

Supporting Climate Resilience and Transformational Change in the Agriculture Sector in Bhutan

I. Introduction

This gender assessment aims to provide an overview of the gender situation in Bhutan, with a specific focus on supporting climate resilience and transformational change in the agriculture sector, identifying gender issues that are relevant to the project, and examining potential gender mainstreaming opportunities at the policy and project level. The assessment is based on available data from studies conducted by the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB), UN agencies, and multilateral development banks; and includes:

- Undertaking a desk review on gender studies conducted for Bhutan
- Conducting stakeholder consultations and engaging potential female beneficiaries of the project and incorporating feedback into the design of the proposed project
- Incorporating information and lessons learned from past studies and assessments on gender in Bhutan; and
- Integrating gender considerations in the project indicators, targets and activities, identifying women as leaders and decision-makers.

II. Gender and Climate Change Related Risks in Bhutan

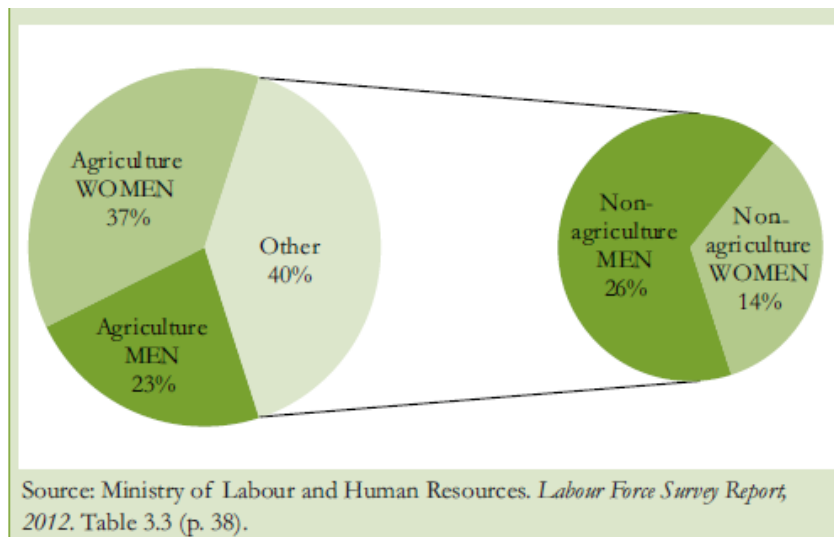
The RGoB recognizes climate change as one of the priorities for addressing sustainable and equitable socioeconomic growth, preservation and promotion of culture and environmental development through good governance. The 11th Five Year Plan (2013-2018) places climate change and gender as cross-sectoral issues, mainstreaming for achieving self-reliance and inclusive green socioeconomic development. Owing to diverse geographical features and unique geological complexities, Bhutan is extremely vulnerable to climate change-induced disasters such as Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF), erratic and extreme rainfall pattern inducing flash floods and, landslides, seasonal droughts, wind and hailstorms affecting property and lives of the people. For example, in 2016, Bhutan experienced excessive rainfall in the southern parts of the country resulting significant damages to the road and urban infrastructures incurring significant losses to public finance and people's livelihoods. These climate-induced disasters have significant negative social and environmental impacts on the lives and livelihoods of the people of Bhutan, particularly, the poor and other vulnerable local communities.

Climate change and its impacts are not gender neutral. Due to gender differentiated roles in the society and traditional and culture-induced marginalization, women are amongst those, who are likely to face the heaviest burdens from these changes and benefits less from policies, programmes and projects that address their issues. Women must be recognized as critical actors in climate change adaptation processes, with their knowledge, needs and priorities informing the design, implementation and monitoring of the climate change and natural resources projects.

The agriculture sector is especially vulnerable to climate change. Longer drought periods are causing acute shortages of water critical for crops and resulting in crop loss, and more intense monsoon seasons

are damaging crops and the infrastructure needed for market access by farmers. In Bhutan, more women are engaged in agriculture than men – a trend that is growing as men are increasingly leaving farms in search of off-farm work and often referred to as *feminization of agriculture sector*. As women’s role in agriculture grows, the necessity and urgency of ensuring that climate change responses are gender-sensitive also grows.

Percentage of Women Engaged in Agriculture in Bhutan



III. Existing Gender Inequality in Bhutan

While significant progress has been toward gender equality in Bhutan, several challenges remain.

The Gender Inequality Index (GII) reflects gender-based inequalities in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and, economic activity. Reproductive health is measured by maternal mortality and adolescent birth rates; empowerment is measured by the share of parliamentary positions held by women and attainment in secondary and higher education by each gender, and economic activity is measured by the labor market participation of women and men. The GI can be interpreted as the loss of human development due to inequality between women and men achievements in the three dimensions.

Bhutan has a GI value of 0.457, ranking 97 out of 155 countries in the 2014 index. In Bhutan, 8% of parliamentary positions are held by women and 34% of adult women have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 34.5 percent of men counterparts. For every, 100, 000 live births, 120 women die from pregnancy-related causes; and the adolescent birth rate was 40.9 births per 1,000 women of aged 15-19 years. Women participation in the labor market is 67 percent compared to 77 percent for men.

Bhutan’s GI for 2014 relative to selected countries and groups

	GII value	GII rank	Maternal mortality ratio	Adolescent birth rate	Female position in parliament (%)	Population with at least secondary education (%)		Labor force participation rate (%)	
						Women	Men	Women	Men
Bhutan	0.457	97	120	40.9	8.3	34.0	34.5	66.7	77.2
Nepal	0.489	108	190	73.7	29.5	17.7	38.2	79.9	87.1

South Asia	0.536	-	183	38.7	17.5	29.1	54.6	29.8	80.3
Medium HDI	0.506	-	168	43.3	18.8	34.8	55.3	37.5	79.8

**Maternal mortality rate is expressed in the number of deaths per 100, 000 live births and an adolescent birth rate is expressed in the number of births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 years.

The Gender Development Index (GDI) based on the sex-disaggregated Human Development Index (HDI) defines as a ratio of female to male HDI. The Gender Development Index measures gender inequalities in three basic dimensions of human development: health (measured by women and men’s life expectancy at birth); education (measured by expected years of schooling for children and mean years for men and women aged 25 years and older); and command over economic resources (measured by estimated Gross National Income (GNI) per capita for women and men). Amongst 161 countries, the 2014 women HDI value for Bhutan was 0.572 in contrast to 0.638 for men resulting in a GDI value of 0.897¹.

Bhutan’s GDI value and its components relative to selected countries and groups

	Life expectancy at birth		Expected years of schooling		Mean years of schooling		GNI per capita		HDI value		F-M ratio
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	GDI value
Bhutan	69.7	69.2	12.8	12.6	2.0	4.1	5,733	8,418	0.572	0.638	0.897
Nepal	71.1	68.2	12.5	12.2	2.3	4.5	1,956	2,690	0.521	0.574	0.908
South Asia	69.9	67.1	10.8	11.3	3.7	6.9	2,198	8,827	0.525	0.655	0.801
Medium HDI	70.6	66.8	11.5	11.8	4.9	7.3	3,333	9,257	0.574	0.667	0.861

The Bhutan Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors summarizes the key points pertaining to gender equality and women’s position in Bhutan. Related to the critical sector of agriculture, the report highlights that female farmers face additional challenges in increasing agricultural productivity and related earnings. This is in part due to limited education and knowledge about alternatives, the heavy workload related to agriculture work and limited decision-making power. The ratio of women to men in tertiary education, women’s executive role in the local Governance, girls’ unemployment and framing gender sensitive policy are some of the key constraints and challenges. Amongst the rural men and women, differences arise in productive, family health, and socio-political roles, access to and control of land and natural resources and benefits and women’s participation and decision-making at various levels.

Bhutan Key Facts: Women and Agriculture

- The population consists to 49% of women and to 51% of men; 62% of the women work in agriculture
- The division of labor by gender is not rigidly fixed, as men and women can take over each other’s tasks, with few exceptions, and this may vary by ethnicity;
- 70% of the land is owned by women;
- The majority of the population follows matrilineal heritage giving women an advantage in ownership of land and livestock;
- Women considerably contribute to house-hold income through farm and non-farm activities;
- Women interact closely with the natural resource environment as users of wild plants and forest products;
- As managers of home gardens, women are both managers of bio-diversity as well as providers of variety to family meals;
- Based on the assumption of a gender-equitable social system, gender-segregated data are not readily available.²

¹ Bhutan Human Development Report 2015, UNDP

² Fact Sheet Bhutan. Women in Agriculture, Environment, and Rural Production. FAO.

According to the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women: Bhutan (2009)³, Bhutan’s level of urbanization is low and poverty disproportionately affects women to men, in large part due to difficulties of access due to the topography of Bhutan. Many households lack access to town services being several hours walk from the nearest road head, and compounded by weak transportation structure.⁴ Accelerated growth since the 1960s has occurred in Bhutan as it opened to the wider world and planned development commenced. With development in the infrastructure, hydropower, agricultural, manufacturing, communications and retail industries, Bhutan is in a significantly different place to that of only decades prior. While many positive steps have occurred in poverty reduction and gender parity, new challenges are present. Poverty levels remain high, especially in rural areas, resulting in increased rural-urban migration and therefore impacting the capacity of urban settlements to provide basic services. In rural areas, migration affects the availability of people for the labor force in agricultural activities. This is felt particularly by women who have been less likely to migrate and now predominate in the rural and agricultural labor force.⁵

In the context of agriculture and rural livelihoods, the report denotes that:

- Of the population that is rural, most households depend at least in part on crop, livestock, and forest products for subsistence and income;
- Challenges in the agriculture sector include low productivity, low technology, inaccessible markets, and labor shortages;
- The Eleventh Five Year Plan continues efforts of the Tenth Five-Year Plan to shift from subsistence to commercial production;
- Available data provides little insight into the functioning of rural households, particularly from a gender perspective;
- Women predominate in the rural and agricultural labor force;
- With the addition of household and community requirements, the work burdens of rural women are particularly heavy;
- The common assumption that inheritance practices benefit women needs validation;
- Limited information is available about women’s access to other production resources (labor, extension, and finance);
- Cooperatives, farmers’ groups, and other self-help groups provide means to increase women’s options;
- Domestic violence is more prevalent in rural areas and affects women’s economic activities as well as their quality of life;
- Efforts to bring extension services closer to local communities have benefitted both women and men; and
- The National Plan of Action for Gender aims to increase the number of women extension workers and the participation of women farmers in training.⁶

A key challenge in quantifying the differing needs of women is in part due to the minimal data and the fast changing social and economic situation in the country. This is recognized by both the RGoB and by

³ Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women: Bhutan 2009 (CEDAW/C/BTN/CO/7)

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Bhutan Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors (ADB, 2014)

⁶ Bhutan Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors (ADB, 2014)

non-governmental organizations (NGOs).⁷ The following sub-sections explore areas of gender labor roles in agriculture, access to resources, education, health, political participation and gender-based violence in greater detail, informed by focal area-specific studies and consultations conducted with communities during development of the proposal.

Gender Division of Labor in Agriculture

Women in the agriculture sector manage households and pursue multiple livelihood strategies, with activities including: producing agricultural crops, tending animals, processing and preparing food, working for wages in agricultural or other rural enterprises, collecting fuel and water, engaging in trade and marketing, caring for family members and maintaining their homes. Many of these activities are unpaid, yet integral to the wellbeing of rural households.⁸

Based on community consultations conducted during development of the proposed GCF project, the division of tasks between men and women vary by crops and the nature of activities. Although, both men and women cultivate agricultural crops, 72 percent of women cultivate and market vegetables while 97 percent men plough fields and, 83 percent men cultivate and market cardamom. And women market cereals, vegetables, fruits, livestock products (milk, cheese and butter), and homemade products. Generally, women’s role is limited to agricultural activities near the household, while men may seek off-farm non-agricultural work. This is consistent with existing time use survey information:

Table 2. Agricultural production and marketing activities by gender

Production and marketing activity	Men	Women	Both
Land preparation(n=100)	38	19	43
Ploughing (n=97)	96.9	0	3.1
Cultivate cereals (n=61)	6.6	19.7	73.8
Paddy seedling transplant(n=10)	20	60	20
Weeding(n=29)	3.4	34.5	62.1
Cultivate fruits (n=14)	28.6	7.1	64.3
Cultivate vegetables(n=101)	1	72.3	26.7
Kitchen gardening(n=101)	1	80.2	18.8
Cultivate cardamom(n=20)	60	5	35
Harvest cereals(n=43)	4.7	7	88.4
Market cereals(n=6)	16.7	50	33.3
Market vegetables(n=90)	23.3	46.7	30
Market cardamom(n=23)	82.6	4.3	13
Market fruits(n=13)	30.8	30.8	38.5
Market livestock products(n=28)	3.6	89.3	7.1
Market processed home-made products(n=9)	0	77.8	22.2

With the additional household and community requirements, rural women bear heavy workload burdens. A shortage of labor was one of the major constraints reported by farmers.⁹ Labor shortages were most acute for smaller farmers seeking to commercialize and particularly felt by female-headed households. Further, the labor time that women (with or without spouses) can allocate to work in the fields is restricted by the competing demands of household and community responsibilities, and the overall work burden they carry. A strict gender division of tasks in agriculture was not evident. Some tasks may be allocated by gender, while others may be performed by both men and women. In addition,

⁷ Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women: Bhutan 2009 (CEDAW/C/BTN/CO/7)

⁸ Fact Sheet Bhutan. Women in Agriculture, Environment, and Rural Production. FAO

⁹ Bhutan Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors (ADB, 2014)

men and women to a large extent take over from each other.¹⁰ Common labor performed by women includes collection of firewood, crop cultivation, vegetable gardening, yak herding, traditional weaving using vegetal dyes and other handicraft. In addition, women are tasked with activities related to housekeeping, agriculture, animal husbandry and cottage industry, and play an important role equal to men in rural economics. Men, on the other hand are largely engaged with preparing land (e.g. plowing), construction, trading and other business or manual activity. Gender division of labor in livestock management is mixed with women tending to smaller stock, particularly poultry, while men tend to focus on grazing for larger animals.¹¹

Regarding water collection, 45 percent of women collect drinking water while 65 percent men source irrigation water, 63 percent and 41 per cent men collect fuel wood and fodder, respectively and 45 per cent grazes cattle. Women were overwhelmingly engaged in food preparation (89 percent) and cooking, family health and childcare (77 percent), household work and family health and hygiene (83 percent).

Regarding natural resource management, women have traditionally provided much of the labor. Seed management, crop cultivation, and farmer-to-farmer exchanges ensure women play a pivotal and leading role in the field and in their communities. With emerging environmental problems however, the ill-effects of forest degradation have resulted in longer work hours for rural women both in the fields and in secondary household tasks such as travelling farther for fuelwood.

Women bear substantial responsibilities for many aspects of production and domestic marketing and export agricultural goods. However, women's access to agricultural marketing services, including finance is, constrained by social and traditional factors. This, in turn, hampers their capability and efficiency in the agricultural development.¹²

Access to resources

While land inheritance is perceived to favor women in Bhutan, legal control and decision-making related to use of land is unclear¹³. The language about ownership used in both the Inheritance Act, 1980 and the Land Act of Bhutan, 2007 suggest that the land is regarded as a family asset rather than an individual¹⁴. Based on consultations conducted during design of the GCF proposal, benefits accrued from land seem to be equally shared between men and women. Men have better access to and control of forest products, agricultural machinery, Renewable Natural Resources (RNR) training and extension services. Both men and women have equal access to and control of credits, labor, health and education services. Regarding livestock benefits, women had better access to and control. The benefits accrued from agriculture and, forestry activities were equally shared between men and women, while benefits from an off-farm contract, business and farm labor accrued more to men.

Limited access to finance has been identified as an issue in several studies of agriculture and cottage and small industry. Rural areas are particularly underserved by the formal banking systems, where banks are few, access is difficult, and products are not well-adapted to small savers and borrowers. Cooperatives, farmers' groups, and other self-help groups provide means to increase women's options. These groups provide a means for delivering and receiving inputs and for enhancing productivity, outputs, and income. Registration under the Cooperatives Act, 2001 (as amended in 2009) provides such groups with a juridical personality and thus certain protections, as well as the ability to apply for

¹⁰ Fact Sheet Bhutan. Women in Agriculture, Environment, and Rural Production. FAO.

¹¹ Fact Sheet Bhutan. Women in Agriculture, Environment, and Rural Production. FAO.

¹² Bhutan Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors (ADB, 2014)

¹³ Bhutan Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors (ADB, 2014)

¹⁴ Bhutan Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors (ADB, 2014)

loans and access services.¹⁵

Regarding ownership and inheritance, women and men have equal legal status. In conjunction, women also hold equal rights to receive family benefits, bank loans, mortgages, and other forms of financial credits.

Women and Inheritance in Bhutan

With respect to inheritance, the traditional practice of the matrilineal family system in western and central Bhutan allows land to be inherited through the daughter, while in the south the system is usually patrilineal. While the matrilineal inheritance patterns in western and central Bhutan imply more social freedom for women and the recognition of women’s economic contribution, they also present women with responsibilities to care for their parents, resulting in their limited economic and social choices (Draft National Plan of Action for Gender 2006.) Property rights are also guaranteed in the Draft Constitution. The Constitution also guarantees the rights to culture and religion. Traditional culture and social norms in Bhutan do not restrict women’s participation in socioeconomic development. The laws do not restrict equal opportunities of participation in sports and cultural activities.¹⁶

Based on the Gross National Happiness concept, the *Bhutan 2020: A Vision for Peace, Prosperity and Happiness* report outlines a “vision of development that emphasizes the ability of all to realize their potential; equitable sharing of the benefits of development; and opportunities for all to share in decisions that affect their lives, livelihoods, and families. This vision cannot be attained without ensuring that women have equitable access to self-realization, development benefits, and participation in decision-making”.¹⁷ Decisions are largely made jointly by women and men and in multiple areas such as spending of money earned from kitchen gardening and farm labor. Women are free and able to independently make decisions.¹⁸

Education

Although remarkable progress has been made to bridge gender gaps in education (gender parity index 1.02)¹⁹ indicating no significant gender inequality, significant differences still remain in the literacy gap between men and women.

Literacy Rate by Area and Gender²⁰

Area	Overall Literacy Rate			Youth Literacy Rate			Adult Literacy Rate		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Urban	86.7	72.0	79.2	95.4	88.7	91.6	84.1	65.3	74.5
Rural	65.0	47.1	55.9	88.2	78.7	83.4	58.0	36.6	46.9
Total	71.6	54.7	63.0	90.4	82.2	86.1	66.0	45.2	55.3

**Health and Education (6 years and above)²¹

Bhutan has been closing the gender gap in school enrolment figures in the recent years, though girls continue to have a slightly lower ratio than boys. Access to primary education has grown rapidly over the recent years. Progress has been made towards gender parity at primary and secondary levels, but

¹⁵ Bhutan Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors (ADB, 2014)

¹⁶ Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women: Bhutan 2009 (CEDAW/C/BTN/CO/7)

¹⁷ Bhutan Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors (ADB, 2014)

¹⁸ Fact Sheet Bhutan. Women in Agriculture, Environment, and Rural Production. FAO

¹⁹ 11th Five Year Plan, Main Document Volume 1, Gross National Happiness Commission

²⁰ Bhutan Living Standards Survey (National Statistics Bureau and ADB, 2012)

²¹ <http://www.nsb.gov.bt/publication/files/pub7ps7846bs.pdf>

attainment of gender parity at the tertiary education levels remains a challenge. The transition of females from primary to secondary to tertiary levels and greater female enrolment into technical, professional and vocational institutions need to be further promoted. The RGoB has been emphasizing the necessity of basic primary education and the need for both male and female teachers at schools.²²

Limitations to gender parity and fewer females in schools are attributed to:

- Non-availability of secondary schools within a short walking distance;
- Non-availability of female caretakers at the boarding facilities;
- Traditional belief and attitude that boys need education more than girls; and
- Teenage pregnancy and early marriage.

In order to address this disparity, focused educational programmes (i.e. alternative schooling, out-of-school programmes, incentivized programmes) have been developed, however despite these efforts, enrolment levels between rural and urban areas, and those in different income groups still exists.²³ The literacy rate of rural women, however, has increased with the introduction of non-formal education. UNDP continues to be a key development partner of the RGoB in gender mainstreaming promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment in policies, programmes and projects.

An important consideration is the wide literacy gap between youth and adults (see above table). As men are increasingly leaving the agriculture sector in pursuit of off-farm employment, so too are youth – labor in the agriculture are therefore increasingly female and older. This education gap was further reflected in consultations conducted during the design of the proposed project. When asked about needs, 53% women expressed the need for improved education and skills development. Education is a driving force towards gender equality – empowering women to make rational social, economic and political decisions.

Health

Women’s life expectancy at birth (66.2) is higher than that of men (66). The RGoB has undertaken several measures to enhance women’s health status. Emphasis has been placed on the quality and coverage of health services. Health care services in Bhutan are based on integrated primary health care and referral curative systems. With the overall goal to reduce maternal/neonatal mortality/morbidity during pregnancy, and childbirth, a plan of action for safe motherhood programme has been prepared. The Royal Government of Bhutan has also taken steps to bring legal reforms in the health sector, especially in reproductive health.²⁴

Despite this, provision of health services is not in itself enough to improve the health of women. As per the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women: Bhutan 2009 “women are married at a relatively young age, and there is a tendency to bear children soon after marriage, women tend to remain silent even within the family on their health problems, especially in reproductive health, and the lack of gender disaggregated data and research on women’s health affects quality of health programmes. Factors contributing to the high mortality of women include the risks of childbirth and women’s limited access to knowledge, food, and care. Early marriage and pregnancy, low literacy, and inadequate family planning services also undermine the health status of women. Access to health care in general, and maternal health care in particular, can be difficult for rural women, given that as child bearers they are more prone to health risks than men. Royal

²² *Ibid*

²³ *Ibid*

²⁴ *Ibid*

Government of Bhutan strategies to decentralize the health system have been implemented to mitigate this significant obstacle”.²⁵

The health sector has targeted rural women for the delivery of social services, including health, education, drinking water and sanitation. Also in the health sector, initiatives are being taken towards safe motherhood, reproductive health, and the services of female community health volunteers. The character of the Bhutanese economy poses a formidable challenge for integrating the rural economy with the national economy – the lack of adequately developed infrastructure and general inaccessibility hinders the implementation of development activities. Scattered settlements, especially in the hilly areas, further complicate the delivery of public services. Due to limited mobility, economic opportunities are more limited for women than men. Also in terms of social development, rural areas are lagging behind.

Political participation

Decision-making on political activities at the *Gewog* and *Dzongkhag* are inclined toward men than women, as men dominate participation. In general, women are poorly represented in decision-making at *Gewog*, *Dzongkhag* and national levels (e.g. only 14 percent of female representatives from 2008-2013 and 7 per cent in the current Parliament (2013-2018))²⁶.

This is consistent with community consultations conducted during development of the proposed project, where only 26 percent of women participated in local meetings. The overall low participation is believed to be linked to the wide gender gap arising in education.

The RGoB seeks to address issues of inequality through a) the implementation of poverty reduction measures, b) public awareness campaigns, and c) institutional measures for an effective enforcement of the legal provisions that are in place.

Political Participation

Women have equal rights and are increasingly seeing opportunities to represent the Royal Government of Bhutan at the international level, and participate in the work of international organizations on an equal level. Bhutanese women have led and participated in many Royal Government of Bhutan delegations to international conferences. Two women were appointed in 2003 as Secretaries to the Royal Government of Bhutan – as Foreign Secretary and Finance Secretary respectively. The Foreign Secretary has since been appointed as the Chairperson of the Anti Corruption Commission. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there is a higher women’s representation in grades 4-8 [36 per cent] and grades 9-13 [39 per cent] than at lower grades 14-17 [7 per cent].²⁷

The 10th FYP Guidelines in line with the decentralization policy to include grassroots in all levels of planning development activities encouraging women’s involvement in planning and implementing community development projects.

Gender-based Violence

Domestic violence exists in Bhutan and affects rural women’s economic activities as well as their quality of life. A recent national survey found that 26 per cent of rural women aged 15 to 49 had experienced domestic violence at some point in their lives. Of great concern is the extent to which domestic violence

²⁵ Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women: Bhutan 2009 (CEDAW/C/BTN/CO/7)

²⁶ *Improving Women’s Participation in Local Governance*, Institute for GNH Studies, Royal University of Bhutan.

²⁷ Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women: Bhutan 2009 (CEDAW/C/BTN/CO/7)

was condoned by women, including younger women, educated women, and women in all regions. Among rural women aged 15–49, 72 percent believe that a man is justified in beating his wife or partner for any one of these reasons: neglect of children, going out without telling him, arguing with him, refusing sex, or burning food. This level of tolerance of domestic violence suggests a lack of exposure to contrary views from political leaders, educational institutions, or other members of the community. During the period of the National Plan of Action for Gender (2008-2013), violence against women was the area of action that received the most attention and follow-up. This included the enactment of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act, 2013.²⁸

IV. Legal and Administrative Framework Protecting Women and Protecting Gender Equality

The RGoB is committed to mainstreaming gender equality and women’s empowerment. The RGoB considers women in development an integral part of the 10th Five Year Plan (2009-2013) by ensuring equal opportunities to men and women. UNDP supported the ‘National Action Plan for Gender (NAPG) 2008-2013 to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment. The action plan identified seven critical areas; good governance, economic empowerment, combating violence against women, education and training, health, prejudices and stereotypes and, aging mental health and disabilities. The action plan progressed in terms of conducting studies identifying challenges and gaps, sensitization on gender equality and women’s empowerment and, creating an enabling legal environment by enacting Domestic Violence Prevention Act in 2013. The 10th FYP progressed with increased data and statistics on gender, collaboration with the Civil Society Organization (CSO) working on the issues of women, mainstreaming gender in national policy and implementation and, promoting awareness on gender equality through media discourses. The formulation of the NPAG was led by the GNH Commission and the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC), in consultation with government gender focal points and other stakeholders. The NPAG identified seven critical areas for action and provided a background analysis and a results-based action plan for each one:

- Good governance;
- Employment;
- Education and training;
- Health;
- Aging, mental health, and disabilities;
- Violence against women; and
- Prejudices and stereotypes.

It is recognized that institutional structures are required in order to promote and implement action of gender equality issues. Summarizing key points from the 11th FYP, the GNH Commission, the National Commission of Women and Children, and Local Governments acknowledge the following key elements:

- The responsibility of all ministries and agencies to address gender equality had been recognized;
- The National Commission of Women and Children has a strategic policy and advisory role in support of gender equality;
- The network of gender focal points is a key mechanism for increasing attention to gender equality issues; and

²⁸ Bhutan Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors (ADB, 2014)

- Local governments also have an important role in addressing gender equality issues.²⁹

During the 11th FYP, a gender quality diagnostic study of the selected sectors; education, urban, environment, energy, transport, agriculture, labor and employment including private sectors are planned. Gender enabling environment through an enactment of Gender Equality Law, implementation of Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting strategy, gender mainstreaming across sectors and effective implementation of gender policy and laws will be monitored. In addition, the Eleventh Five-Year Plan targets a more gender friendly environment for women’s participation. Under the governance pillar of the gross national happiness framework, four performance indicators related to the environment for women’s participation are specified:

- Draft legislation to ensure quota for women in elected offices including the Parliament and local government bodies - draft legislation and present to the Parliament.
- Ratio of females to males in tertiary education – ensure at least 90% female to male ratio in tertiary education.
- Female youth unemployment - reduce female unemployment from 7.2% to less than 5%.
- Agencies with gender sensitive policies and/or gender mainstreaming strategies - at least 20 agencies implementing gender sensitive policies and/or gender mainstreaming strategies. (Gross National Happiness Commission, 2013. Eleventh Five-Year Plan, 2013–2018, pp. 76–77).³⁰

UNDP assisted the RGoB in mainstreaming gender in development policy, programmes and plans since 2005 and has recently worked with the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) and Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women (RENEW). NCWC coordinates, monitors and reports on international conventions e.g. CEDAW and women and children’s rights to the Government to inform policy and legislations and RENEW seeks to prevent violence against women by counselling, advice and economic empowerment of women.

In collaboration with UN Women, UNDP addresses gender-mainstreaming issues through Gender Responsive Governance Programme, Women in Politics and, Gender Responsive Budgeting Programme in partnership with NCWC, Department of Local Governance and Ministry of Finance. Under governance, significant progress was achieved in identifying factors and challenges inhibiting women’s participation in governance, creating awareness on politics, and building capacity for aspiring women leaders. Under education, provision of scholarship for girls from disadvantaged families, girls-friendly school infrastructures and, boarder facility and, Early Childhood Care and Development Centre and extended classrooms were created.

The National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) 2006 revised in 2012 prioritises 8 urgent and immediate adaptation needs. Amongst others are Disaster Risk Reduction and Management- planning disaster management interventions and providing emergency medical services to vulnerable communities. In 2012, Bhutan launched its Carbon Neutral Strategy as a follow-up to the carbon neutral commitment pledged by the Government during the Copenhagen UNFCCC-COP15 Meeting in 2009. With the support of UNDP-Low Emission Capacity Building Programme, the Government is undertaking the design of NAMAs, LEDS and MRV across a number of key sectors; transport, waste, housing and, industry. To mainstream gender equality into the design process, a rapid gender capacity needs assessment was developed and implemented in 2013. Its recommendations are expected to

²⁹ Bhutan Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors (ADB, 2014)

³⁰ Bhutan Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors (ADB, 2014)

enable effective integration of gender equality into Bhutan’s national strategies and the implementation of NAMAs and LEDs.

Bhutan signed the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on July 17, 1980 and ratified it on August 31, 1981.³¹ This led to the establishment of National Women’s Association of Bhutan (NWAB) with the mandate on addressing issues related to women and monitoring and reporting mechanisms. In order to further strengthen the national institutions, NCWC was instituted in 2004. This was followed by the institutionalization of several non-governmental organisations like RENEW and Tarayana Foundation.

Bhutan also ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1990 and presented its initial report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child on 5th June 2001.³² In the past five years, as a reaffirmation of its commitment to protection of its citizens’ rights, and in particular women’s and children’s rights, Bhutan has signed and ratified several international and regional conventions and treaties, including the: SAARC Convention on Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution 2002; SAARC Convention on Regional Arrangement for the Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia 2002; SAARC Code for Protection of Breast Feeding and Young Child Nutrition 2004; and the two Optional Protocols to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict and sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography 2005.³³ The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan makes a strong statement on the equal rights of all citizens, regardless of sex, and the Principles of State Policy include a commitment to the creation of a state free of discrimination, and to take measures to eliminate discrimination against and exploitation of women.³⁴

The Labor and Employment Act 2007 protects women's social safety in the workplace against work and sex-related abuse and gender discrimination with respect to salary.

Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms for Women. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan guarantees basic human rights and fundamental freedoms to every citizen. The Constitution also provides for effective remedy and enforcement of these rights. The Supreme Court is empowered, under its extraordinary jurisdiction, to protect fundamental rights by issuing various forms of writs. Promotion and protection of human rights is also one of the directive principles of state policy.

National Commission for Women and Children. The National Commission for Women and Children established through a special government order in 2004 is the national mechanism for coordinating and monitoring activities related to women and child rights, and reporting to treaty bodies. The Commission has a cross-sectoral and mixed representation of eleven members from the government, law enforcement, judiciary, social sector, civil society, including the media and the business sector.

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan is the supreme law that charges gender equality as “fundamental rights of all Bhutanese citizens to be treated equal and effective protection under the law and shall not be discriminated against on the ground of race, sex, language, religion, politics or another status”.

Major sources of state policy promoting attention to equality of citizenship rights and enjoyment of life by all citizens.

³¹ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Seventh Periodic Report of States Parties: Bhutan. 2007

³² Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Seventh Periodic Report of States Parties: Bhutan. 2007

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Bhutan Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors (ADB, 2014)

Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan

Fundamental rights (Article 7):

15. All persons are equal before the law and are entitled to equal and effective protection of the law and shall not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, sex, language, religion, politics or other status.

Fundamental duties (Article 8):

5. A person shall not tolerate or participate in acts of injury, torture or killing of another person, terrorism, abuse of women, children or any other person and shall take necessary steps to prevent such acts.

Principles of State Policy (Article 9):

3. The State shall endeavour to create a civil society free of oppression, discrimination and violence, based on the rule of law, protection of human rights and dignity, and to ensure the fundamental rights and freedoms of the people.

17. The State shall endeavour to take appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination and exploitation against women including trafficking; prostitution, abuse, violence, harassment and intimidation at work in both public and private spheres.

Bhutan 2020: A Vision for Peace, Prosperity and Happiness

The main development objectives include three that are particularly relevant:

- Human development: To maximize the happiness of all Bhutanese and to enable them to achieve their full and innate potential as human beings.
- Balanced and equitable development: To ensure that the benefits of development are shared equitably between different income groups and regions and in ways that promote social harmony, stability and unity and contribute to the development of a just and compassionate society.
- Governance: To further develop our institutions, human resources and system of governance in ways that enable us to enlarge opportunities for people at all levels to participate more fully and effectively in decisions that have a bearing on their lives and livelihoods and the future of their families, communities and the nation.

Sources: Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan. 2008; and Planning Commission.

1999. Bhutan 2020: A Vision for Peace, Prosperity and Happiness. Part 2, pp. 12–15.³⁵

V. Gender Analysis and Recommendations

The gender analysis undertaken at the onset and design of this project acts as an entry point for gender mainstreaming throughout implementation. The gender analysis, through stakeholder engagement and consultation enabled:

- Engagement, development and input into the design of the project and the approach moving forward;
- Demonstration of the need for gender-disaggregated data and indicators to establish a baseline in which to measure improvements and identify areas of focus; and
- Establishment of recommendations to incorporate into the Gender Action Plan.
- This participatory, bottom-up approach was well-received by beneficiaries and stakeholders, as it allowed the identification and prioritization of tailor-made interventions, enabling the project to address issues over a wide range of environmental gradients and agronomic and cultural setting.

The project is designed in line with national policies and programmes related to empowerment of women, and implementation will ensure a consultative process that is sensitive to their particular challenges. Addressing gender dimensions within the project design and implementation, this proposal works to identify and integrate interventions to provide gender responsive and transformative results. As women are key players in supporting climate resilience and transformational change in the agriculture sector.

³⁵ Bhutan Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors (ADB, 2014)

UNDP in partnership with the RGoB will continue to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment in the policy, programmes and project's design and implementation. Specifically, the project design will integrate the below:

- Growing role of women in agriculture, ensuring participation of women in community consultations to ensure adequate response to expressed needs and challenges
- Tailor capacity building needs to women and girls in ensuring equal participation and decision-making from local governance to national level (e.g. entrepreneurial/business skills as expressed during consultations);
- Ensure project supports are directed to women and men's practical and strategic needs and priorities that would bring transformational change in the gender relations and shift more powers to women;
- Ensure access to information on markets, pricing policy and climate through innovative information communication mechanisms to reach women;
- To reduce negative impacts on women (e.g. workload, health), through project intervention on promotion and training on energy and labor saving technologies;
- Conduct qualitative assessments on the gender-specific benefits from the project interventions and incorporate in the mid-term report, and terminal evaluation;
- Ensure that good practices and lessons learnt from promoting gender equality in climate change adaptation evidenced through the project are shared effectively amongst stakeholders and inform policy/decisions at national and sub-national levels.
- Identification of gaps in gender equality through the use of sex-disaggregated surveys enabling monitoring and analysis of project benefits to women
- Advocacy and awareness is adjusted to most effectively reflect gender-specific differences. Strategies used in the project are then tailored, taking into account such differences;
- Inclusion of a Gender Specialist position / provision of advice within the project to implement gender related activities.

During project implementation, qualitative assessments will be conducted on the gender-specific benefits that can be directly associated to the project. This will be incorporated in the annual Project Implementation Report, Mid-Term Report, and Terminal Evaluation. Indicators to quantify the achievement of project objectives in relation to gender equality will include men and women who had access to affordable solutions, number of men and women employed from the jobs created by the project, training opportunities, knowledge management and information dissemination.