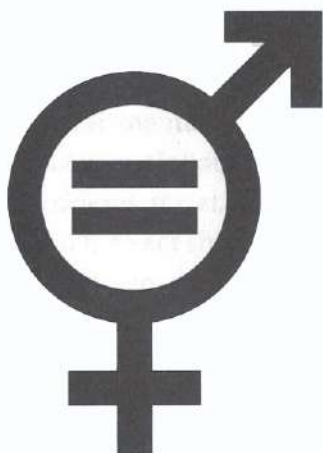


National Gender Equality Policy, 2077



Government of Nepal
Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizen
Singhadurbar, Kathmandu

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1. Background

The Constitution of Nepal, promulgated in 2015, has laid a foundation for establishment of a non-discriminatory, prosperous and just society in compliance with the proportional inclusive and participatory principle. The Constitution has provided that no discrimination shall be made, on the ground of sex, in regard to allowances and social security for similar works and that woman shall have equal lineage right without gender discrimination and every child shall have equal right without gender discrimination on paternal property. Article 38 of the Constitution guarantees under women's right that no physical, mental, sexual, and psychological or other any type of violent act or exploitation shall be inflicted against women on the ground of religious, social, cultural traditions, practices or on any other grounds. Such an act shall be punishable by law and the victim shall have the right to compensation. Likewise, Article 252 of the Constitution of Nepal provided for formation of National Women's Commission as a constitutional body. Nepal has ratified the Convention for Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979 in 1991; its Optional Protocol, 1999 in 2007; Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (ILO 100) in 1976 and Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (ILO 111) in 1974 and Nepal has expressed international commitment towards gender equality.

The Fifteenth Periodic Plan is in implementation with the visions, amongst others, of building a gender equal nation and institutionalising gender responsive system of governance. Efforts in the past for gender equality have resulted in positive changes in women's education, health, ownership in property and labour participation. Women's political and economic roles have become effective. However, violence, discrimination, inequality, evil and socially

harmful practices against women, children, and sexual minorities still in prevalence. In line with the federal structure and new system of governance, the functions being carried out by the Government of Nepal for women empowerment have been transferred to provincial and local levels. Indicators have been developed for achieving Goal No. 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (gender equality and empowerment) and it is in implementation.

Therefore, overall national policy is required for establishment of a prosperous and just society through gender friendly plan, policy and programmes, annual budget and service delivery in order to institutionalise gender responsive governance system at all levels: the state by strengthening coordination and cooperation among federal, provincial and local levels to achieve sustainable development goals and substantive gender equality by institutionalising achievements made in the sector of gender equality.

2. Present Status

Women comprise 51.5% of the total population in Nepal. Nepal was ranked 142nd position with value 0.602 in Human Development Index. According to the National Human Development Report, 2020 Nepal's Gender Development Index and Gender Empowerment measure value are 0.886 and 0.62 respectively and Gender Inequality Index value is 0.476. According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2020 prepared by the World Economic Forum, Nepal ranks with the value 0.680, 101st position out of 153 countries and the second position in the South Asia. As mentioned in the Fifteenth Periodic Plan, female literacy is 57.7% whereas women's labour participation rate is 26.3%. According to the National Human Development Report 2020, current maternal mortality rate is 239 per 100,000 live births. According to the Census 2011, the sex ratio is 106.4. The birth rate is 111.8 in the urban areas and 105.6 in the rural areas.

There have been considerable improvement in women

participation and representation at different structures and bodies in the State. According to the National Human Development Report, 2020, women participation in the political sector, provincial, and local level election, is 41% at the Local Level, 34.4% at the Provincial Assembly, 32.7% at the House of Representatives and 37.7% at the National Assembly. Likewise, provisions of reservations have been made for women in the civil service and different governmental and public services. Consequently, women's participation in the civil service has increased to 26.17% and to 47% in the health service. Women participation amongst the directors of cooperatives is 40% and number of women members is about 51%. According to the Sustainable Development Goals National Review Report, women's ownership of house and land is 33.93%.

The gender responsive budget is in the increasing trend in the government budget system. In the FY 020/21, gender responsive budget holds 38.16% of Nepal's total annual budget.

Policy and legal provisions and programmes conducted for economic and social transformation of women have increased women representation, participation as well as access to available means and resources. In addition, it has improved livelihood, entrepreneurship and employment as well.

3. Problems

Domestic violence, human trafficking and transportation, trafficking and transportation in the name of foreign employment and gender based violence against women, adolescents and girl child are major problems in this sector. Social harmful practices in the name of religion and customs like witchcraft, *Chhaupadi*, child marriage, polygamy, dowry and *Tilak* have been inflicting physical and mental violence against women, adolescents and girls. Prevalence of physical and mental violence against gender and sexual minorities, gender stereotyping roles due to social values and norms, social relations

and mindset, less participation of men in women's development, lack of financial empowerment of women, not recognising household chores of women as financial contribution, discrimination between men and women in labour market, less participation of women in decision making level in all sectors, lack of disaggregated data on gender and sexual minorities are some of the problems prevalent in this sector.

4. Challenges

Changing social structure and mindset, increasing decisive role of women leaders, gender mainstreaming in the state's public policy, increasing access to justice by eliminating gender violence, eliminating harmful customs and traditions, internalisation and institutionalisation of gender issues at federal, provincial and local level, balancing women's natural, professional and social role, benefitting particular target groups, social transformation including gender equality by eliminating all kinds of discriminations against women and adolescents through development of gender responsive governance are the challenges in this sector.

5. Need and Justification for Policy

It is necessary to establish a just society for effective implementation of fundamental rights and state restructuring and distribution of state powers as provided for in the Constitution of Nepal, for achieving goals and objectives of the current Fifteenth Plan, for maintaining equality by providing equal access and opportunities through elimination of social harmful practices, customs and discrimination prevalent in the society for achieving sustainable development goals. National Gender Equality Policy is required in order to fulfil the international commitments made by Nepal and by maintaining gender equality.

This Policy shall guide as a principal policy to institutionalise

gender responsive system of governance right from the local level by continuing the achievements of the country towards the journey of gender equality. This Policy shall coordinate to bring harmony in gender friendly policies, plans and programmes by developing gendersensitive behaviour in public sector, private sector, cooperative sector, non-government sector and community organisations. This Policy shall also assist in achieving common national aspiration of "Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali".

6. Long Term Vision

Building a nation with gender equality.

7. Mission

Maintaining gender equality through economic and social transformation by ensuring substantive and meaningful participation of women in all sectors.

8. Goal

Maintaining *de jure* and *de facto* equality between women, men, gender and sexual minorities along with women's economic, social and political empowerment.

9. Objectives

- (a) Making policy and structural provisions for socio-economic development of women, adolescents and children.
- (b) Establishing a society based on equality and gender values and norms by eliminating gender discrimination, violence and exploitation.
- (c) Adhering to gender responsive governance system.
- (d) Empowering women economically.

10. Strategy

- (a) To make the existing and the new laws to be drafted gender friendly and continue formulating and implementing the policy of positive discrimination. (Objective 1)
- (b) To eliminate gender based discriminatory violence by changing social values and norms through preventive, curative and regulatory measures. (Objective 2)
- (c) To develop gender responsive governance system at three levels of government by means of legal provisions, institutional reforms and capacity enhancement. (Objective 3)
- (d) To assess contribution of women in the economy by increasing their participation in the labour market through change in the tradition of division of labour based on gender. (Objective 4)
- (e) To empower women economically by means of an integrated programme of self-employment, employment and entrepreneurship. (Objective 4)
- (f) To make women self-reliant through economic empowerment so that women can have equal access to and control over means and resources and meaningful participation in decision making process. (Objective 4)

11. Policy and Working Policy

Strategy 1: To make the existing law and the new law to be drafted gender friendly and continue policy formulating and implementing the policy of positive discrimination.

Policy and Working Policy

- (a) Nepal laws shall be revised as per requirement in order to maintain gender equality.

- (b) Institutional strengthening, social awakening and awareness campaigns shall be conducted for effective implementation of fundamental rights related to women, adolescents and girl children enshrined in the Constitution and related laws.
- (c) Prevailing laws made for establishing the constitutional right of proportional representation and equal opportunity in all sectors of the state shall be implemented. At the same time, legal reform shall be continued.
- (d) Discriminated people shall be given special protection through different programmes.
- (e) Capacity of women shall be enhanced in order to make their participation meaningful and programmes of positive discrimination shall be implemented effectively.
- (f) Policy and legal provisions shall be made for proportional participation in order to enhance women's participation at leadership level in all sectors.
- (g) Gender friendly study materials and teaching system shall be developed in order to build gender friendly approach in the society and symbols, figures, cartoons depicting gender equality shall be incorporated in the school curriculum.
- (h) Gender friendly standards for public and private physical infrastructure shall be formulated and implemented.
- (i) Campaigns shall be conducted against harmful and evil social practices which are caused to devalue women's dignity.
- (j) Programmes that encourage decent behaviour and language towards women in family, society and workplace shall be conducted. Elected women representative at local level, school and parents, community reform committee,

local organisations, mothers' group, children club, children networks and adolescent groups among others shall be made active in such programmes.

- (k) Promotional activities such as production and distribution of publicity materials related to gender role transformation, mobilisation of community-based organisations, groups, associations and conferring awards to organisations, groups, family and persons carrying out exemplary works shall be conducted.
- (l) Programmes that encourage gender equality and decent behaviour towards women, adolescents and children shall be conducted through means of communication and arrangements shall be made for production and transmission of audio-visual materials.
- (m) Participation of men shall be enhanced in the campaigns of gender equality and women development.

Strategy 2: To eliminate violence based on gender discrimination by changing social values and norms through preventive, reformatory and regulatory measures.

Policy and Working Policy

- (a) Violence against women, adolescents and children shall be addressed by bringing changes in social norms and values through preventive, remedial and regulatory provisions.
- (b) An action plan shall be formulated and executed for eliminating gender based violence.
- (c) Prevailing legal provisions against discrimination and sexual harassment against women, adolescents and girl child at workplace and public places shall be disseminated.
- (d) Capacity enhancement and refreshment trainings on gender issues shall be conducted for officials in judicial and quasi-judicial bodies related to administration of justice.

senior citizens shall be provided with additional means and resources and the investigation process will be further strengthened.

- (f) Zero tolerance policy against women violence shall be strictly implemented and provisions for penalty and reward shall be made to make the concerned officials responsible in this work.
- (g) Standards for safety, protection, and rehabilitation of victims/affected persons of violence, women, children who have been trafficked or transported and gender and sexual minorities shall be set and Short-term Service Centre and Long-term Rehabilitation Centre will be operated.
- (h) Survivors/persons affected by violence shall be provided with psycho-social counselling, legal service, and medical service and shall be reunited with family and community. Similarly, livelihood programmes shall be conducted for such survivors and affected persons.
- (i) Help lines related to women and children shall be established and extended for obtaining information on violence against women and its management.
- (j) Monitoring and surveillance against gender violence shall be made effective in cooperation with community, civil society, non-government organisations and surveillance groups.
- (k) Social awareness campaigns shall be conducted for the elimination of gender-based violence. Social organisations, civil society and non-governmental organisation shall be mobilised actively for this mission.
- (l) Increasing incidents of cyber crimes shall be controlled by making the women, adolescents and girl children well informed and aware about such incidents.

- (m) Trainings and income generating programmes shall be conducted for economic empowerment of women affected by violence and those who have been exposed to risk in the course of employment in foreign labour market. These activities will be done in collaboration with non-government organisations as per the requirement.
- (n) Promotional activities related to dignified menstruation shall be mainstreamed with local level at the forefront in the programmes of three levels of the State for elimination of the gender based discrimination and violence such as treating menstruation as a ground for untouchability and the practice of *Chhaupadi* and social awareness campaigns shall be conducted with active engagement of community-based organisations, including child club/network, youth club, adolescent group, mothers' group.
- (o) Arrangement shall be made to conduct discussion and interaction programmes on scientific aspects of menstruation in the extra-curricular activities of schools. Parents shall also be made to participate in such programmes.
- (p) Implementation and regulation of laws shall be made effective in order to eliminate social evils related to marital practices like child marriage, polygamy, dowry and *Tilak*.
- (q) Zero tolerance legal provision against witchcraft shall be implemented and awareness raising programmes shall be conducted.
- (r) Awareness campaigns shall be conducted to bring change in social mind-set and behaviour towards gender and sexual minorities. Trainings and capacity enhancement programmes shall be conducted for self-reliance and self-employment of such persons as well as regulatory measures shall also be taken.

Strategy 3: To develop gender responsive governance system at three levels of government by means of legal provisions, institutional reforms and capacity enhancement.

Policy and Working Policy

- (a) Gender responsive policy, plan and law shall be formulated and implemented at federal, provincial and local level.
- (b) Capacity enhancement programmes for concerned governance level shall be conducted for implementing gender equality policy at federal, provincial and local level.
- (c) Orientation programmes shall be conducted on gender sensitivity, gender transformation and process of gender responsive budget for officials and stakeholders involved in enacting and implementing laws at federal, provincial and local level.
- (d) Issues of gender equality and women's empowerment shall be included in all sectorial public policies and implemented.
- (e) Gender responsive budget system shall be institutionalised at all levels of governance in the State.
- (f) Gender auditing shall be initiated in order to analyse issues of women's empowerment in public policy making process, implementation and distribution of benefit; women's participation in budget and programme formulating, and allocation of gender responsive budget and implementation.
- (g) Gender focal persons at public authorities shall be trained to make their role effective in sectorial policy making and in monitoring of policy implementation.
- (h) Work place code of conduct, complaint and grievance hearing mechanism shall be established for public and private sector on gender equality at workplace.
- (i) Gender disaggregated data collection and analysis in the

national census and survey shall be made fact based so that progress of periodic plans and sustainable development goals may also be analysed.

- (j) Gender information management system including disaggregated data shall be developed and extended to federal, provincial and local levels. Such system shall be developed and updated and provision shall be made for easy access by all stakeholders to gender information.
- (k) Provisions of gender equality and proportional inclusion shall be implemented in appointments in public sector.
- (l) Policy of positive discrimination shall be implemented for women in public and private sector and private sector shall be encouraged to make women friendly service delivery and even for children, gender and sexual minorities.
- (m) Special provisions shall be made to achieve equal opportunities, access to and benefits for women who are marginalised, in minority and people with disability and those having suffered from multiple discrimination.
- (n) Open discussions and interaction on gender equality and gender friendly behaviour shall be conducted and male activists, women, adolescents and advocates for gender and sexual minorities shall be mobilised in these activities.

Strategy 4: To assess contribution of women in the economy by increasing their participation in the labour market through change in the tradition of division of labour based on gender.

Policy and Working Policy

- (a) Financial aspect of household chores and family care shall be assessed and its contribution in the economy shall be calculated.
- (b) Programmes shall be conducted to promote equal role of men and women in household chores, family care and parental roles.

- (c) Promotional programmes oriented to employment shall be conducted for women in the formal sector and to use technology for reducing household and family care work burden.
- (d) Promotional programmes shall be conducted to increase roles of men in family chores for maintaining balance between family and professional life of women.
- (e) Special programmes shall be conducted to reduce gender gap in technical education.
- (f) Programmes on awareness oriented information dissemination, discourse, social campaigns through school education and means of communication shall be encouraged in order to establish the culture of dignity of labour.

Strategy 5: To empower women economically through integrated programme of self-employment, employment and entrepreneurship.

Policy and Working Policy

- (a) Access of women to property shall be increased, their meaningful participation in decision making shall be increased and process of registering property in the name of women shall be further simplified.
- (b) Financial activities of women shall be increased by conducting skill development programmes related to commercial agriculture, marketing and entrepreneurship based on agriculture and industry.
- (c) Women's access, opportunities and benefits in financial activities such as agriculture, animal husbandry, cooperatives, community forest, and environment protection shall be ensured through local level.

- (d) Provisions shall be made for collection, storage and quality control of goods produced by women entrepreneurs and integrated marketing of such production shall be emphasized by establishing "one local level, one sales centre" as well as a national level sales centre in the Capital.
- (e) Investment promoted by women shall be included, with special concession, in the projects conducted in public private partnership.
- (f) Special protective and livelihood programmes shall be conducted for indigent and marginalised women.
- (g) Information required for operating trade-business and industry shall be disseminated as well as coordination and facilitation shall be made to obtain grants, concessions and benefits.

Strategy 6: To make women self-reliant through economic empowerment so that women can have equal access to, control over means and resources and meaningful participation in decision making process.

Policy and Working Policy:

- (a) Women's participation shall be increased in domestic capital market, business and employment in non-agricultural sector and in overall economic sector.
- (b) Women Entrepreneurship Training Centre shall be established and integrated programme shall be conducted.
- (c) Provision shall be made to provide concessions, benefits and facilities in registration of, loan for, and insurance of, industry and business promoted by women.
- (d) Women Entrepreneurship Facilitation Centre shall be established and operated at each local level for providing information and necessary technical assistance regarding entrepreneurship to women.

- (e) Easy provision for information dissemination shall be made in order to reduce professional and social risk in economic activities of women.
- (f) Breastfeeding room and day care centre shall be operated at workplace.
- (g) Space shall be made available to women entrepreneurs for operating industries in industrial area, special economic zone and industrial village established and operating at federal, provincial and local levels.

12. Organisational Structure

- (a) In order to coordinate with and facilitate local levels and provincial governments for implementation of this policy effectively, for monitoring of the policy implementation and mainstreaming and policy facilitation including timely reforms in policy, there shall be a Gender Equality National Coordination Council under the convenorship of Minister for Women, Children and Senior Citizen comprising of Social Development Ministers of Provincial Governments; member of the National Planning Commission dealing with the social sector; Secretary of the Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizen; members of Provincial Planning Commission dealing with social development as the members and a joint-secretary at the Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizen as the member secretary.
- (b) The National Coordination Council may invite, as deemed necessary, other officials and subject expert to meeting of the Council.
- (c) The National Coordination Council may, as deemed necessary, constitute other committee, sub-committee for executing its functions.
- (d) For policy coordination and monitoring at the provincial level, a Provincial Level Gender Policy Coordination and

Monitoring Committee shall be constituted under the convenorship of Social Development Minister comprising of member of provincial Planning Commission and subject experts, as deemed necessary, as members and Head of Social Development Division of Social Development Ministry as member secretary.

- (e) A Policy Implementation and Coordination Committee shall be constituted under convenorship of Mayor or Chairperson of the local level comprising of one female member at the executive, subject experts, as deemed necessary, as members and head of the Women and Children Division as member-secretary.
- (f) Committees at the provincial and the local level shall coordinate and take necessary initiative to make gender friendly laws, policies, plans, programmes for policy implementation and for enhancing capacity of women's leadership and women's participation.

13. Legal Provision

Legal provisions shall be made, as deemed necessary for implementation of this Policy and directives and procedures, as required, shall be formulated and implemented. The Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens shall play role of coordination and facilitation in order to execute this Policy effectively.

14. Monitoring and Evaluation

- (a) An integrated electronic gender information systems shall be developed that depicts gender index required for monitoring of the Policy implementation and timely reform in the Policy. A system shall be developed where federal, provincial and local levels shall regularly make entry of necessary information after categorisation into this information system.

- (b) All ministries and authorities shall review the implementation status of the National Gender Equality Policy as well while reviewing the implementation of sectorial policies and programmes so that the problems shall be identified and resolved.
- (c) Provisions shall be made to review gender responsive budget and implementation of gender equality policy at meetings of National Development Action Committee.
- (d) The Policy shall be reviewed in five years.

15. Plan for Reduction of Possible Risks

1. Since the nature and form of this Policy is extensive and subject matter is of common interest, the following risks are speculated:
 - (a) There may be diverse understanding about gender equality.
 - (b) Knowledge, capable and skilled human resource, means and resources required for implementation of gender equality policy may be limited.
 - (c) Since gender is a cross cutting issue, problems may arise in coordination and cooperation.
 - (d) Dilemma and duplication may arise in the roles to be played by different authorities of the state.
2. Measures of Risk Reduction
 - (a) Policy implementation action plan shall be prepared and implemented clearly stating role and responsibility of the federal, provincial and local levels. Plan for monitoring and assessment of the implementation of the Policy shall be formulated and implemented.

- (b) Focal point shall be established at federal, provincial and local levels as a coordination mechanism and their capacity shall be enhanced. Efficient human resource on gender issues shall be mobilised.
- (c) The Policy shall be studied and analysed by forming a think tank on gender equality comprising of experts, academicians, and professionals.



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