



Climate Adaptation and Resilience
(CARE) for South Asia Project

**Gender Inclusive Climate Resilient
Agriculture in Nepal: A Review of
Policies and Practices**
2023

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List of Acronyms

ADS	Agriculture Development Strategy
CCAFS	Climate Change Agriculture and Food Security
CSA	Climate-smart Agriculture
FO	Farmer Organization
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FNSPA	Food and Nutrition Security Plan of Action
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GRB	Gender-responsive Budget
GoN	Government of Nepal
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
MoAD	Ministry of Agriculture Development
NAPA	National Adaptation Program of Action
NARC	National Agriculture and Research Council
NGCCFP	National Gender Climate Change Focal Points
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WEDO	Women's Environment and Development Organization

Executive Summary

The Government of Nepal acknowledges the significant impact of climate change on the country's economy, natural resources, and communities. The implications of climate variability on the Nepali economy include low agricultural production, infrastructure damage, and increased energy imports during the dry season, to name just a few potential outcomes.

Nepal's Climate and Development Report 2022 states that climate variability has been one of the major drivers of food insecurity, inequality and poverty across the country. Floods and landslides have been the most frequent hazards over the past four decades, and these events are expected to intensify as climate change increases. The most vulnerable and marginalized communities, including indigenous people—the majority of whom live in the most extreme environments, susceptible to climate impacts—lack access to social protection programs. These communities, including women and indigenous people, are thus disproportionately affected by the climate crisis.

This study was undertaken primarily to review and assess key documents such as policies, plans, and strategies related to agriculture and climate change through a gender lens, in order to promote gender equality in climate-resilient agriculture in Nepal. The review assessed 22 policy documents pertaining to agriculture and climate change using gender inclusion criteria previously used by the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) and others (WEDO 2016; Aura et al. 2017; Paudyal et al. 2019).

The study notes that the GoN has demonstrated a strong commitment to climate change adaptation and mitigation and acknowledged women's roles therein. For instance, the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Strategy and Action Plan (2020-2030) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) 2020 have emphasized equal representation of women at all stages, from local to international levels, including in the climate-related negotiation processes.

Most agricultural policies have identified challenges to agriculture and food security due to the impacts of climate change. However, they are silent on the gender-differentiated impact of climate change and associated adaptation provisions.

For example, while Agriculture Policy 2004, Agribusiness Promotion Policy 2063, Agriculture Mechanization Promotion Policy 2014, and National Agro Biodiversity Policy 2014 have recognized women's contribution to agriculture and aim to enhance the livelihood of women farmers, they remain silent on gender-differentiated impacts of climate change and gender-sensitive measures for climate change adaptation.

The assessment shows a gap in terms of equal representation of women across various governance levels, despite provisions for mandatory representation of women in policies. Gender mandates are not effectively linked with the overall performance of the concerned officials, even though there is a GESI section under the Planning and Development Cooperation Coordination Division at MoALD.

Also, there is no instituted coordination mechanism between MoWCSC, MoALD, and the focal Ministry for climate change/ environment (MoFE at present) at the federal level, and Ministries and departments with similar responsibilities at the province and local levels.

Moreover, the limited representation of women in planning, budget formulation, and design of projects and programs, as well as women's inadequate access to resources and opportunities and the lack of detailed action plans, budget allocation and tracking and monitoring mechanisms to ensure inclusive adaptation outcomes, remain some of the major gaps.

The study recommends addressing the gaps at two levels: policy development and institutional. At the policy level, the following recommendations are suggested; 1) Agriculture policy measures must target empowering women by enhancing their access to resources, information and technology, and capacity-building opportunities. 2) Policies like Agriculture Mechanization Promotion Policy, Agriculture Policy, Agribusiness Promotion Policy, National Agroforestry Policy, and National Agro Biodiversity Policy need to consider policy provisions based on outcomes of gender-differentiated impact of climate change analysis, for the design of gender-inclusive strategy and action plans with budget allocations.

It is critical to ensure women's participation at all levels of policy processes to increase their chance of influencing policy decisions, as well as to incorporate inclusive policies and practices, by introducing relevant mandatory provisions. Similarly, at the institutional level, the following recommendations are suggested.

- 1) MoALD, MoFE and MoF have to pay immediate and particular attention to gender-responsive budgeting and must be backed by periodic reviews of sectoral spending vis-à-vis allocation, to monitor whether the allocated budget is producing its intended gender-inclusive outputs and outcomes.
- 2) Support in ensuring gender-inclusive monitoring, evaluation, and learning system to facilitate periodic progress reviews and assess the impact of policies on gender equality indicators pertaining to the agriculture sector.
- 3) Immediate need to build federal, provincial, and local capacity on gender mainstreaming in climate-resilient agriculture.
- 4) Equally important is supporting investment in women-friendly, cost-effective climate-smart tools and machines, and to link these with the government and non-governmental climate-smart agriculture projects with subsidy and tax exemption strategies.
- 5) Immediate support is required to strengthen women's networks and enhance their linkages with extension services, targeting women-led cooperatives.

1 | INTRODUCTION

*Nepali woman wearing smile
with fresh harvest*

Photo by Teo Tarras / Shutterstock.com



1.1 Background

Nepal is susceptible to extreme and slow-onset climate-related hazards, as well as natural disasters and climate change. The region is vulnerable to climate change because of its mountainous topography and ecosystems, variable monsoon-driven hydrology, unplanned settlements, and a lack of resilient infrastructure (WB 2022).

While the country experiences huge loss of life and property annually due to climate-induced disasters like floods, landslides, windstorms, and wildfires, the adverse consequences of climate change have been experienced across all sectors (GoN 2019). Despite its richness in geographic, environmental, and socio-cultural diversity, Nepal remains an economically poor country where poverty, food insecurity, and malnutrition have persisted for long (NPC 2018). For example, 4.6 million people are still food insecure (MoH Nepal, New ERA, and CFC 2017), and patriarchy has led to deep-rooted discrimination against women and girls across the nation.

Over 80 percent of women are employed in agriculture, contributing over 60 percent to the agricultural economy, compared to 56.3 percent of men who contribute 39.5 percent (FAO 2019). Women living in remote areas and mountains and practicing subsistence agriculture face increased risks of climate change (ICIMOD 2021; Paudel Zhang and Yan 2020).

This problem is further compounded by the COVID-19 crisis, as it contributed to reduced incomes of female-headed households and those from rural areas were found to be more food insecure (MoALD, WFP and Australian Aid 2020). For instance, the prolonged lockdown also weakened the linkages between women farmers in rural areas and those in peri-urban and urban markets, affecting their incomes. Such rural-urban linkages and networks led by women traders are often missed during crises, and are overlooked by formal government support (FAO 2020).

Gender inequality has been the major cause of women's increased vulnerability to climate change and the disproportionate impact of climate change further amplifies gender inequality (Ampaire 2019; CBI 2021). Because of such disparities, women's resilience and adaptive abilities as individuals and members of communities are severely affected and existing inequalities are likely to be heightened at the time of a climate disaster (ICIMOD 2021).

Women and men perceive the impacts of climate change differently and respond to them and adapt differently, based on their defined roles and responsibilities. The way women and men are affected by climate change and their capacities to recover are shaped by social conditioning and socioeconomic factors (IPCC 2019).

For example, variability in water availability due to climate change has negatively affected women's livelihoods. The hardening of agricultural soils and the emergence of new pests and crop diseases are increasing women's workloads, forcing them to spend long hours tilling the land and weeding fields (Gurung and Bisht 2014).

The intersections between climate change, gender, and adaptation take place at multiple scales—household, national, and international—and adaptive capacities are shaped through power and knowledge (ibid). Thus, gender-responsive policies and action plans supported by institutional capacity-strengthening mechanisms and budgets are the keys to gender equality.

A lack of gender-responsive policies, strategies, and action plans may further reinforce existing gender inequalities that have created disparities in access and control over resources, services, information, training and decision-making. Gender-specific measures are key to increase women's access to benefits, build their resilience and, help achieve Sustainable Development Goals (ADB 2020). For example, working for SDG 2, 5, and 13 (Zero Hunger, Gender Equality, and Climate Action, respectively) requires a holistic approach towards building the adaptive capacity and resilience of a climate-vulnerable population, including women, by supporting them through gender-responsive policies and practices.

To fully integrate the gender agenda in climate-resilient agriculture, it is vital to effectively implement gender-responsive policies, strategies, and action plans, in order to harmonize gender mainstreaming across governance levels, supported by operational coordination mechanisms and budget. The gender mainstreaming process enables countries to increase their ambitions on climate action by ensuring that the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are as effective and just as feasible, by considering social factors (UNFCCC 2021).

This acknowledgment has resonated in Nepal's increasing recognition of gender equality and women's empowerment as crucial to climate change and agriculture. Following the promulgation of the new constitution in 2015, Nepal has been revisiting several policies. In 2019, Nepal endorsed the Climate Change Policy 2019 and submitted NDC 2020 in line with the new federal governance structure.

In addition, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Strategy and Action Plan in Climate Change (2020- 2030) and the Disaster Risk Reduction Strategic Action Plan (2018-2030) have highlighted the implementation of a gender-sensitive approach, and call for the integration of gender, age, disability, and cultural perspectives in all policies. Despite the formulation of various policy documents and having specific gender-related strategies, implementation remains a challenge, however. Nepal requires further efforts to meet the sectoral targets set under the Paris Agreement for 2030.

Closing gender gaps in agriculture in the context of climate change through investment in climate-resilient agriculture will not just open a window of opportunity for women's empowerment and resilience, it will forward the larger goals of equality and sustainability. Climate-resilient agriculture is defined as the ability of an agricultural system to maintain viability in the face of climate variability and extremes (Eeswaran et al. 2021; Huyer et al. 2021).

Climate-resilient agriculture has been interchangeably used with climate-smart agriculture (CSA) in this study primarily because in the South Asian context, the CSA approach has emerged as a paradigm for adapting agriculture to the changing climate. CSA is an approach that aims to sustainably increase productivity while helping farmers adapt their farming systems to climate change and manage climate risks more effectively. It promotes three objectives: sustainably increasing productivity, building the resilience of farming systems, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions (World Bank, FAO, IFAD 2015; Campbell et al. 2016).

CSA has the potential to bridge the gender gap by providing a range of benefits for women. For CSA to be gender-responsive, differences in priorities and the abilities of women and men to adopt new practices need to be considered (Huyer et al. 2021). If women are able to access CSA technologies and climate-related information, they are more likely to adopt and implement CSA practices and technologies as men (Gumucio et al. 2020; *ibid*).

Gender-responsive policies and practices are, therefore, integral to effective adaptation strategies, and effective approaches are needed to ensure that gender equality and women's concerns in CSA are addressed.

This study is an initiative of the Climate Adaptation and Resilience (CARE) for South Asia project supported by the World Bank. The overall objective of the project is to contribute to an enabling environment for climate-resilient policies and investments in agriculture, transport, water, planning, and finance sectors in South Asia. Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) and the Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) are jointly implementing the project. The project has three key components—agriculture, water, resilient transport infrastructure—as well as two cross-cutting themes—policy, planning and finance, and gender mainstreaming.

1.2 Scope and objectives

The geographical scope of the study is at the federal level. The study has reviewed and assessed both national level key policy documents related to climate change and agriculture. Knowledge generated by this study holds significance for policymakers and practitioners in developing gender-responsive policies, strategies and programs/projects in the future.

Specific gender gaps identified by the study and the suggested recommendations offer a window of opportunity not only to sectoral line ministries and departments like: Planning and Development Cooperation Coordination Division (PDCCD), Agricultural Development Division (ADD) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD), Climate Change Management Division (CCMD) of Ministry of Forests and Environment and Ministry of Women Children and Senior Citizens (MoWCSC), development partners, practitioners and CBOs, towards effective implementation of the policies, strategies and action plans with due consideration to inclusivity.

The findings also present an opportunity for convening a national policy dialogue to further discuss and identify action areas for meeting Nepal's commitments to NDC, translating national climate change gender action plan commitments into sectoral strategies and investment plans, and addressing climate impacts with a gender-informed approach.

This study is guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To review agricultural and climate change policies, plans, and strategies through a gender lens
2. To assess gaps with respect to the inclusion of gender considerations in agriculture and climate change-related policies and practices
3. To provide recommendations for promoting gender equality with regard to future policies, plans, and strategies

1.3 Methodology

The study is based on a review of the literature and primary data. The data collection was undertaken through key informant interviews (KIIs) and stakeholder consultations to gain a deeper insight into policy and institutional gaps and implementation challenges. KIIs and stakeholder consultations were undertaken during the 2nd and 3rd quarters of 2021. All the consultations were carried out at the national level.

The review and assessment adopted a four-step methodology. The first step involved accessing key sectoral documents, such as policies, strategies, frameworks, etc. The second step involved a content analysis to understand how gender considerations have been integrated into the texts of policy documents.

In the third step, documents under the review were assessed and analyzed against the gender inclusion criteria previously used by the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) and others (WEDO 2016; Aura et al. 2017; Paudyal et al. 2019). The criteria were adapted and refined accordingly to suit the country context for this assessment.

The fourth step entailed verification of the facts with the relevant key informants through consultations and dialogues. Before finalization, the draft report was reviewed by UNFCCC National Gender and Climate Change Focal Person (NGCCFP), and the key findings were presented in a stakeholder consultation workshop, in order to receive feedback. All inputs were incorporated.

The gender inclusion criteria used for assessing the policy documents are as follows:

1. Reference to gender and/or women in agricultural and climate change policy documents

This criterion includes the context for the reference to gender and/or women and the way the reference is made in policy documents. For example, are they being referred to as direct beneficiaries and stakeholders, as agents of change, or only as vulnerable groups.

2. Recognition of gender-differentiated impacts of climate change in agriculture

This criterion suggests how women's roles in agriculture are being identified in the policy document and whether it highlights the specific impacts of climate change on female and male farmers. For instance, whether the policy has considered the uneven impact of climate change on men and women because of their traditional gender roles, and their differentiated access to and control over productive resources.

3. Policy provision for climate change adaptation in agriculture

This criterion represents the extent to which gender-sensitive provisions in climate adaptation are mentioned in the policy. This basically focuses not only on recognized gender-differentiated impacts of climate change in agriculture, but also on specified necessary measures for adaptation with proper plans for, and allocation of, resources based on women's vulnerability and adaptive capacity.

4. Provision of women's participation and engagement in planning, budgeting, and monitoring

This criterion facilitates the assessment of whether any policy provisions are suggested to ensure equal representation and participation of women, as key stakeholders in policy planning, budget formulation, design of program and project activities, implementation, and monitoring.

1.4 Limitation

Given the structure and scope of the project, the study is confined to the review and assessment of national-level policies through a gender lens to understand the policy and institutional gaps and challenges that hinder the achievement of gender equality in climate-resilient agriculture.

The study was limited to the extent of availability of information, based on secondary data, especially federal policy documents and other relevant literature focused on climate change in relation to agriculture. Due to COVID-19-related restrictions, most of the key informants' interviews were undertaken virtually, with key experts from government and non-government institutions.



2

GENDER - DIFFERENTIATED IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN AGRICULTURE

*Farming and caring roles go
hand in hand*

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Gender-specific vulnerability to the effects of climate change is the result of the gendered nature of the majority of systemic disparities in established social structures (Agarwal 2001). Women are more dependent on natural resources in Nepali society, where gender inequality has been ingrained for a long time due to established gender roles; women traditionally managing households and secure a livelihood through agro-pastoralism (Buchy and Subba 2003; Bennett 2008; Rai et al. 2021).

The consequences of existing gender inequalities in agriculture may further be widened by the impact of climate change. For instance, reduced availability of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs), such as fuelwood, grass, and medicinal plants, have resulted in lower incomes for Nepali women involved in collecting and selling these products (ibid). Women's potential, in terms of switching to alternative livelihood options, is curtailed due to their limited education and knowledge as well as restricted mobility.

Studies have shown that women and men have different abilities to adapt to climate change due to existing gender inequalities (ibid). For example, in the Kailali district of Nepal, adaptation practices of male and female households have varied: more men tended to have access to irrigation and used more pesticides and fertilizer, while women relied more on practices such as weeding (Huyer et al. 2021).

Stemming from these types of differences, women and men in different social groups will have different needs and priorities for training, technology, and resources, based on the division of labor. Men and women have distinct sets of knowledge, priorities, and criteria for choosing crop varieties and cultivation, harvesting, and post-harvest activities.

For example, women are deemed more responsible for their family's health, nutrition, and food security and therefore prefer to cultivate many food crops to meet their family needs. While for men, the main criteria for selecting crops is short rotation with high commercial value (FAO and UNDP 2021).

Women's vulnerability and gender inequality determine the differentiated risks and impacts of climate change on women and men (Nonoguchi 2012; Pradhan et al. 2019; Rai et al. 2021). In Nepal, women are vulnerable due to lack of education and exposure, limited access to market, credit and land rights, socio-politically constrained control over natural resources, and limited roles in decision-making over resource management (ibid). The following section highlights some key factors, identified during the stakeholders' consultation, that reinforce women's vulnerability and gender inequality vis-à-vis climate-induced disasters.

2.1 Access to and control of assets and services

About three-quarters of the Nepali population work in the agriculture sector, which contributes to one-third of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). Women's contribution to the sector is crucial as about 80 percent of them are engaged in agriculture and allied activities. However, women still have limited access to productive assets and services, such as, land, water, seeds, training, extension, credit, and the market. Roughly 19.7 percent of women own five percent of the total land in Nepal, and only 10 percent of arable land is either solely or jointly owned by women (FAO 2019).

Farmers with access to land, water, fertilizers, extension services, financial resources, technology and other inputs, including the knowledge of sustainable agriculture practices, are more likely to adapt to the impact of climate change. Although efforts have been made to enhance the adaptive capacity of farmers through the introduction of new technology, women's specific needs and concerns are yet to be addressed.

Access to technology and information is gendered in Nepal. Since technology promotion has generally tended to favor male-dominated cash crops, women's access to women-friendly technology must be enhanced in order to improve women's agricultural productivity. To achieve this, introduction of appropriate technology must be backed by women's access to credit/subsidies and training to adopt and use them.

2.2 Decision-making and representation

Despite provisions promoting women's participation in various structures, women are not adequately represented to participate in the decision-making process. Regarding political representation, although women make up over 30 percent of the elected positions across the three levels of government, their representation in leading positions is insufficient.

Men largely have control over cropping choices, since decisions related to cropping are also influenced by access to productive and financial resources. Lack of access to and control over agricultural services and technology and limited influence over adaptation decisions may further increase women's workloads and widen gender inequality (MoFE 2021). For instance, when men decide to plant more buckwheat in response to climate disruptions, because of the labor-intensive nature of the crop, women had to work much more than men to produce it, thereby compromising on their time available for other activities (Sellers 2016).

2.3 Societal norms and gendered division of labor

The data on female labor force participation show that more women are involved in crop production and post-harvest-related activities than men, yet women receive about 25 percent lower wages than men; despite the legal provision of equal pay (FAO 2019). Nepal has a comparatively higher female labor force participation rate of 85.4 percent in South Asia, mainly due to high male out-migration and/or delayed retirement of older women. In Nepal, women's work in agriculture is mostly informal, insecure, or low-paid (World Bank 2019).

Climate change has an intense impact on women's health, livelihoods and gender roles. For example, an increase in temperature and CO₂ lead to an increase in the population of pests and the severity of diseases in the presence of host plants (Malla 2008). New diseases are emerging in crops with the arrival of new insects (NPC 2016). These changes have increased the time and workload of women farmers as they are involved in weeding, seed collection, grading, storage and other post-harvest activities.

As livestock has also been decreasing due to the scarcity of fodder, water and labor, livelihoods related to animal husbandry have been decreasing. As a result, the availability of dung for biogas and manure is affected, thereby reinforcing men's and women farmers' dependence on chemical fertilizers. In recent years, there has been an increase in loans taken by resource-poor farmers (including women) due to decreased agricultural production associated with climate change. All these have immense implications for women's physical and mental well-being (UNDP 2020, ICIMOD, UNEP and UN Women 2021). Shrinking employment opportunities in the agriculture sector have forced men and women to seek opportunities in other sectors, such as, construction in Nepal and/or abroad.

3

GENDER CONSIDERATIONS IN CLIMATE CHANGE AND AGRICULTURAL POLICIES

Winnowing in action

Photo by Dhwoj Gurung / Shutterstock.com



¹ CCDRMA PFA: Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management in Agriculture Priority Framework for Action

² NARC: National Agriculture Research Council

³ ADS: Agriculture Development Strategy

Figure 1: Timeline of Climate Change and DRR Policy Formulation in Nepal

3.1 Climate Change and DRR Policies, Plans, and Strategies

A total of 22 national policy-related documents, 10 related to climate change and 12 from the agriculture sector, were reviewed. These policies, plans and strategies were assessed and analyzed using the gender inclusion criteria explained under the methodology section. Altogether, 8 climate change policy documents and 2 DRR related documents were reviewed. The timeline of climate change policy formulation in Nepal and the summary of the findings of the assessment are presented in Figure 1 and Table 1, respectively.

3.1.1 Climate-resilient Planning: a Tool for Long-term Climate Adaptation 2011

National Planning Commission (NPC) prepared this document to mainstream climate-risk management in long-term plans and policies, and, in particular, to integrate climate risks and risk reduction efforts into periodic development plans.

It has envisioned integrating current and future vulnerabilities into the planning process, enhancing climate knowledge at the implementation level, and identifying areas for inter-sectoral cooperation and synergy building. However, the document has not met any gender inclusion criteria (Table 1) and can be considered a gender-blind climate-resilience planning tool. Gender considerations are completely ignored and gender issue is just loosely mentioned under cross-cutting issues and implementation.

The document has mentioned nothing about gender-specific approaches, actions, monitoring and the provision of women's participation and access to financial resources and opportunities. It is also silent on how the synergy between resilient plans and programs could be built with Climate Change Policy 2019, Agriculture Development Strategy (2015 -2035) and NDC 2020.

3.1.2 Climate Change Financing Framework (CCFF) 2017

CCFF 2017 has aimed to achieve improved capability in the governance of CC finance, to generate more reliable information about sectoral climate impact and the way it affects poverty, gender and equitable development, in order to have informed decisions in climate finance.

CCF has encouraged the ministries to prepare the CBC guideline based on their sectoral priorities. With this, the Ministry of Agriculture has already prepared the CBC guideline where women are included as beneficiaries. Tagging of climate-relevant programs during planning has been a good strategy to sensitize planning officers on climate change issues. However, there is an issue in scaling up to other sectors and across sub-national levels. Additionally, as the screening of beneficiaries is subjective, the question remains if women will get benefits from the specified climate objective (MoALD 2018).

Roadmaps for reforms in CCFF 2017 are described with descriptions of proposed reforms needed to integrate CC in planning and budgeting; towards the effective and efficient climate financing required for sustained climate action to reduce climate risks and vulnerability.

The Framework has identified the challenges to integrate gender budget within climate budget. It has accordingly considered the capacity-building of planning officers, climate focal persons and gender focal persons of the sector ministries on using CBC in the ministries before planning and linking the gender budget, to witness the effectiveness of climate-related investment with reference to its contribution to vulnerable groups.

Linking gender with the climate budget is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the climate budget in supporting the vulnerable community from a gender perspective. Gender-focal persons provide support in screening proposed development programs for gender responsiveness, but the climate-focal persons have not been engaged in facilitating tagging of climate-relevant programs. The ministries have made no effort to address this gap, even though they are aware that both kinds of coding has been introduced.

3.1.3 National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy (NDRRP) 2018

The NDRRP aims to have representation and meaningful participation of women, children, senior citizens, people with disabilities, and people from economically and socially marginalized communities at all steps and in all structures of disaster risk reduction. The policy envisages gender-inclusive physical infrastructures and public services.

The NDRRP also aims to establish inclusive monitoring mechanisms at federal, provincial, and local levels, for effective monitoring and evaluation of the activities related to disaster risk reduction and management. It also shows strong commitment to promote the insurance of crops, livestock, and businesses for risk sharing of vulnerable communities and soft loans from banks and financial institutions.

NDRRP has discussed the differentiated vulnerability and women's and minority groups' needs and priorities and their meaningful participation and representation across disaster risk reductions structures in partnership with relevant stakeholders for the implementation of Disaster Risk Reduction Strategic Action Plan (2018-2030).

3.1.4 Disaster Risk Reduction Strategic Action Plan (2018-2030)

This Plan has emphasized the need for sex, age, and disability disaggregated indicators. It intends to mainstream climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in the overall development process. It encourages empowerment and inclusive, accessible, and non-discriminatory participation, paying special attention to people disproportionately affected by disasters.

It has acknowledged the issue of gender-based violence (GBV) during disasters and has committed to preparing guidelines for the security of vulnerable groups and the prevention of GBV during emergencies.

Additionally, the Plan aims to promote women and youth leadership and stresses capacity-building through training programs and the development of curricula related to disaster risk reduction for Dalits, women, children, elderly persons, disabled people, vulnerable communities, and all concerned stakeholders.

The Disaster Risk Reduction Strategic Action Plan (2018-2030) meets all the gender inclusion criteria and is aligned with Climate Change Policy 2019, Agriculture Development Strategy (2015-2035) and NDC 2020.

3.1.5 Climate Change Policy 2019

The Climate Change Policy 2019 has identified eight thematic focus areas, including four cross-cutting sectors. Gender equality and social inclusion (GESI), Livelihood, and Governance are considered cross-cutting sectors, with a focus on climate-resilient livelihood programs targeting communities that are at risk in terms of the adverse impacts of climate change. Furthermore, as a cross-cutting sector, GESI is listed under inter-thematic areas, focusing on climate-resilient livelihood programs targeting communities at risk in terms of the adverse impacts of climate change.

This Policy has mentioned the mainstreaming of GESI into climate change mitigation and adaptation programs. For instance, the policy recognizes the disproportionate impact of climate change on women and other disadvantaged groups. The measures proposed to address GESI issues include the development of sector-specific climate change strategies addressing the needs and priorities of women and marginalized groups.

The policy focuses on research for technology development to promote climate-compatible traditional and nature-based technologies; encouraging youth researchers; and mobilizing private sectors and bilateral cooperation to invest in climate-smart technology development. Also, limited access of women to productive resources, such as land, credit and extension services, are underlined by the policy.

The policy has given due consideration to equitable access of information access for women, ethnic and other minority groups, and has acknowledged the specific adaptation needs of women and minority groups with proposed agriculture-based adaptation programs within the budget. The provision for a climate budget code within sectoral plans and allocation of specific budgets targeting women and disadvantaged groups for adaptation has been stated (Pradhan et al. 2021).

The policy lacks provisions related to women-friendly tools/technology development, information dissemination, capacity-building, disaggregated data, and active targeting of women or gender impact assessment. Moreover, it does not recognize the specificities of mountains, which have ecosystems which are different from those of other areas. The neglect of mountain issues raises questions regarding the relevance and applicability of the approach outlined in the strategy for the mountain context (ibid).

The Policy suggests revising the Gender Mainstreaming in Climate Change Action Plan and other relevant instruments as directed by the Climate Change Policy 2019. It also highlights the formulation and implementation of a long-term strategy concerning climate change. Yet, the effective implementation of the provision made by climate change policy requires the sectoral commitment and internalization of climate change and gender concerns at different levels. A functioning cross-sectoral coordination mechanism at all levels, including an effective monitoring system for gender inclusion, is critical.

3.1.6 Local Adaptation Plan of Action (LAPA) Framework 2019

The LAPA Framework 2019 facilitates mainstreaming climate change in the local planning process, based on context-specific vulnerability and adaptation needs. It includes the analysis of community and household-level vulnerabilities and prioritization of options that increase the adaptive capacity of communities and households and minimize the risk of climate change.

The framework plans to make the local government responsible for managing necessary knowledge, skill, technology, and resources for resilient livelihoods, by ensuring the participation of vulnerable groups, including women, in vulnerability assessments and prioritization of adaptation options. It provides a list of potential adaptation activities and practices in ten different sectors, including agriculture and food security.

The LAPA 2019 has clarified the roles of different levels of government to implement adaptation plans. For example, local governments are assigned to enhance the adaptive capacity of households, individuals, and communities by building climate resilience, and by including a climate-friendly development approach in local development plans and budgets.

The framework has considered GESI as one of the working approaches. It has a separate section highlighting how gender equality can be integrated throughout with gender-specific provisions outlined in relation to adaptation in different sectors.

Despite the progressive indicators, LAPA 2019 has not discussed how structural inequalities across a diverse geography and social groups will be addressed in the local climate adaptation process. Furthermore, it states that the federal and provincial governments need to provide enabling policy and institutional environments, and provide budget and technical support to the local governments (MoFE 2019).

During KILs, it was suggested that it would be challenging to measure the gender-sensitive indicators in the absence of systematic information and disaggregated database of all local-level climate change relevant interventions. The framework also lacks provisions for investment in capacity-building and empowerment of women to work effectively on climate change adaptation at local levels (Pradhan et al. 2021).

3.1.7 Second Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) 2020

The NDC (2020) has aimed to ensure the increased access of women, indigenous people, smallholder farmers, and marginalized groups to climate-smart agricultural technologies. It has shown commitment to establishing institutional mechanisms and structures with adequate provision of budget, specific programs, and human resources to ensure equal and meaningful participation for women. It envisages ensuring equitable sharing of benefits among women from sustainable forest management and watershed and biodiversity conservation.

Further, it has envisioned that by 2030 all the 753 local governments will prepare and implement climate-resilient and gender-responsive adaptation plans. These plans are expected to address climate change vulnerability and risks and prioritize adaptation measures focusing on women, the differently-abled, children, senior citizens, youth, indigenous people, economically deprived communities, and people residing in climate-vulnerable geographical areas.

The NDC makes a strong commitment to developing the GESI and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (ICIMOD, UNEP and UN Women 2021). KIs suggest that the roadmap should include how the key sector stakeholders will be engaged in the implementation process, and how synergy will be built on national priorities on gender equality. Also, it would be crucial to develop gender-responsive indicators for tracking the achievement of gender-related targets.

3.1.8 Gender and Social Inclusion in Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2020 –2030)

This Strategy was formulated as one of the first policy documents addressing gender and social inclusion in climate change. It aims to increase the access of women and climate-vulnerable people to resources and climate change adaptation decision-making processes at all levels.

The strategy has recognized the existing inequalities and barriers for women and has encouraged breaking stereotypes and discriminatory practices across all sectors. Efforts are made to establish gender assessment as an essential step in the adaptation planning process through the implementation of the action plan considering gender-specific sectoral adaptation needs, including agriculture.

The strategy has highlighted the gap in sex-disaggregated data and emphasized gender-responsive research and knowledge generation and dissemination, underscoring the urgency of gender-responsive planning and budgeting and equitable distribution of climate funding to achieve inclusive adaptation outcomes.

Stakeholder consultations suggested that the strategy needs to be integrated into the sectoral plan and budget for its effectiveness. The actual implementation of the strategy and action plan requires gender-specific adaptation commitments across all sectors at all levels. At the same time, sensitization and capacity building of concerned officials at different levels on climate change and gender-inclusive adaptation planning and implementation is crucial.

3.1.9 National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2021-2050

The NAP has followed the sectoral approach adopted by the Climate Change Policy 2019, and considered GESI, livelihood, and governance as cross-cutting areas. It has been stated that women, marginalized groups, and the food production system are more vulnerable to current and projected climate hazards.

Under the Gender Equality, Social Inclusion, Livelihoods, and Good Governance thematic sector, NAP has distinctly identified gender-differentiated risks and vulnerabilities and has indicated the need for capacity-building activities to reduce the climate vulnerability of women and marginalized groups. Integration of gender considerations in monitoring and evaluation is also highlighted as an opportunity to ensure that the resources for, and benefits from, adaptation actions are equitable.

NAP (2021- 2050) contains a priority adaptation program on “gender equality and social inclusion, livelihoods and governance,” which aims to address the increased vulnerability of women and other marginalized groups to climate change through capacity-building and specific actions for improving livelihoods.

Rolling out of GESI and climate change strategy and implementation of the action plan; integrating GESI and CC strategy and action plan into the province and local governments; and, helping local governments champion GESI and climate change agenda are classified under short-term, mid-term and long-term plans, respectively.

3.1.10 Local Disaster Risk Reduction Strategic Action Plan Guideline 2021

With a view to integrating climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction (DRR) and building disaster and climate resilience at the local level, the GoN has prepared the Local Disaster Risk Reduction Strategic Action Plan Guideline (2021). It has encouraged the consideration of gender and social inclusion, including women, people living with disability, and vulnerable and marginalized social groups while developing activities, outcomes, and indicators related to DRR.

The document aims to develop standard operating procedures related to early warning systems with particular attention to the needs of women, the elderly, people with disability, and other vulnerable groups. Aspects related to awareness-raising and capacity-building of women in disaster management have been included within it. It has not only considered potential violence against women (VAW) during disasters, but also envisaged preparing guidelines to control GBV during emergencies. Additionally, it has mentioned resilience-building through the livelihood enhancement of women and vulnerable groups.

Table 1: Assessment of Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Policies, Strategies and Frameworks Using Gender Inclusion Criteria

Policies, Strategies, and Guidelines Analyzed	Reference to Gender or Women	Recognition of Gender-Differentiated Impacts of Climate Change on Agriculture	Mention of Gender-Sensitive Provision Measures for Climate Change Adaptation	Provision of women's participation and engagement in planning, budgeting and monitoring
Climate Change Policy 2019	Has prioritized gender mainstreaming in climate change and recognizes women and disadvantaged groups' contributions to agriculture and sector-related livelihoods	Considers the gender-differentiated impact of climate change, highlighting the disproportionate impact of climate change on women and other disadvantaged groups	Has included gender-specific adaptation options. Emphasis has been on promoting resilient livelihoods through increased access to resources, services, and information	Encourages sectors to mainstream gender equality in sectoral policy-making, and climate change mitigation and adaptation programs. Included climate budget code (CBC) within sectoral plans
Climate Resilient Planning 2011	Gender considerations and women's concerns are mentioned sporadically	Neither acknowledges women's roles in agriculture nor the impacts of climate change	Does not mention any word on gender-specific adaptation measures	Nothing has been mentioned
Climate Change Financing Framework	Refers to gender inclusion and acknowledges the challenges to integrating gender budget within the climate budget as well as into sectoral planning, and implementation of specific adaptation options	Recognizes the absence of information on how climate change will impact different sectors and how will it affect GoN's efforts in meeting the SDGs, including gender and equitable development	Encourages gender consideration in climate financing and assessing resources available to address climate change mitigation and adaptation during the medium- and long-term planning processes	Recognizes the need for capacity building of planning officers, climate focal persons, and gender focal persons of the sector ministries on using CBC in the ministries before planning and linking with gender budget

Policies, Strategies, and Guidelines Analyzed	Reference to Gender or Women	Recognition of Gender-Differentiated Impacts of Climate Change on Agriculture	Mention of Gender-Sensitive Provision Measures for Climate Change Adaptation	Provision of women's participation and engagement in planning, budgeting and monitoring
LAPA Framework 2019	Has considered gender mainstreaming in the climate change adaptation process	Has recognized women as vulnerable groups and their dependence on local resources	Mentioned women's and other vulnerable groups' participation in vulnerability assessments and prioritization of adaptation options	Participation and engagement of marginalized groups and women in planning, budgeting and monitoring have been proposed
Second Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), 2020	Aims to prepare climate-resilient and gender-responsive adaptation plans across all local-level governments	Has mentioned the impact of climate change on women and marginalized livelihoods	Highlights the need for increased access of women and smallholder farmers to CSA technologies and equitable carbon and non-carbon benefits	Promotes leadership and negotiation capacity of women, participation in decision-making, and benefit-sharing. Has encouraged to develop specific programs with dedicated resources (human and financial) to ensure the full participation of women
National Adaptation Plan 2021-2050	Refers to gender consideration explicitly under the cross-cutting area	Mentioned women's major risks and vulnerabilities as well as the impact of climate change	Suggests a priority adaptation program on gender equality and social inclusion to address vulnerabilities of women and other marginalized groups	Mentions about the need for gender-sensitive budgets, women's engagement and participation in planning and monitoring
Gender and Social Inclusion in Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2020	Gender consideration has been well articulated and harmonized with agriculture, climate change, and gender mainstreaming policies	The impact of climate change on agriculture and food security, including related sub-sectors being identified for women and other marginalized groups	Strategies and action plans are suggested to promote CSA, considering the gender-specific adaptation needs across all aspects of agriculture and related sub-sectors	Has emphasized gender equality at all levels and encouraged to break the stereotype and discriminatory practices, with clear monitoring indicators

Policies, Strategies, and Guidelines Analyzed	Reference to Gender or Women	Recognition of Gender-Differentiated Impacts of Climate Change on Agriculture	Mention of Gender-Sensitive Provision Measures for Climate Change Adaptation	Provision of women's participation and engagement in planning, budgeting and monitoring
National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2018	Considers gender inclusion in all aspects and steps of disaster management	Considers different needs of women and other minority groups and their vulnerability	Aims involvement and partnership of all stakeholders and prioritizes gender and social issues	Mentions about ensuring women's access, representation, and meaningful participation, at all steps and structures of disaster risk reduction. Encourages to allocate a certain percentage of the budget for DRRM in the annual budgets of federal, provincial, and local governments
Disaster Risk Reduction Strategic Action Plan (2018-2030)	Mentions about implementing gender-sensitive and inclusive approaches in all the processes of Disaster Risk Management	Considers the gender-differentiated vulnerability to disaster	Intends to mainstream climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in the overall development process	Aims to promote the leadership of women and youth and strengthen risk information sharing with women. Intends to follow GRB while preparing programs and budgets and allocating adequate budgets across all levels of the government
Local Disaster Risk Reduction Action Plan Guideline 2021	Explicitly refers to gender and social inclusion aspects	Considers the impact of climate change and disasters on women	Suggests including gender inclusion in activity outcomes and indicators of DRR	Reservation for women's representation in the task force for action plan preparation. Suggest allocating budget from the annual budget of local government

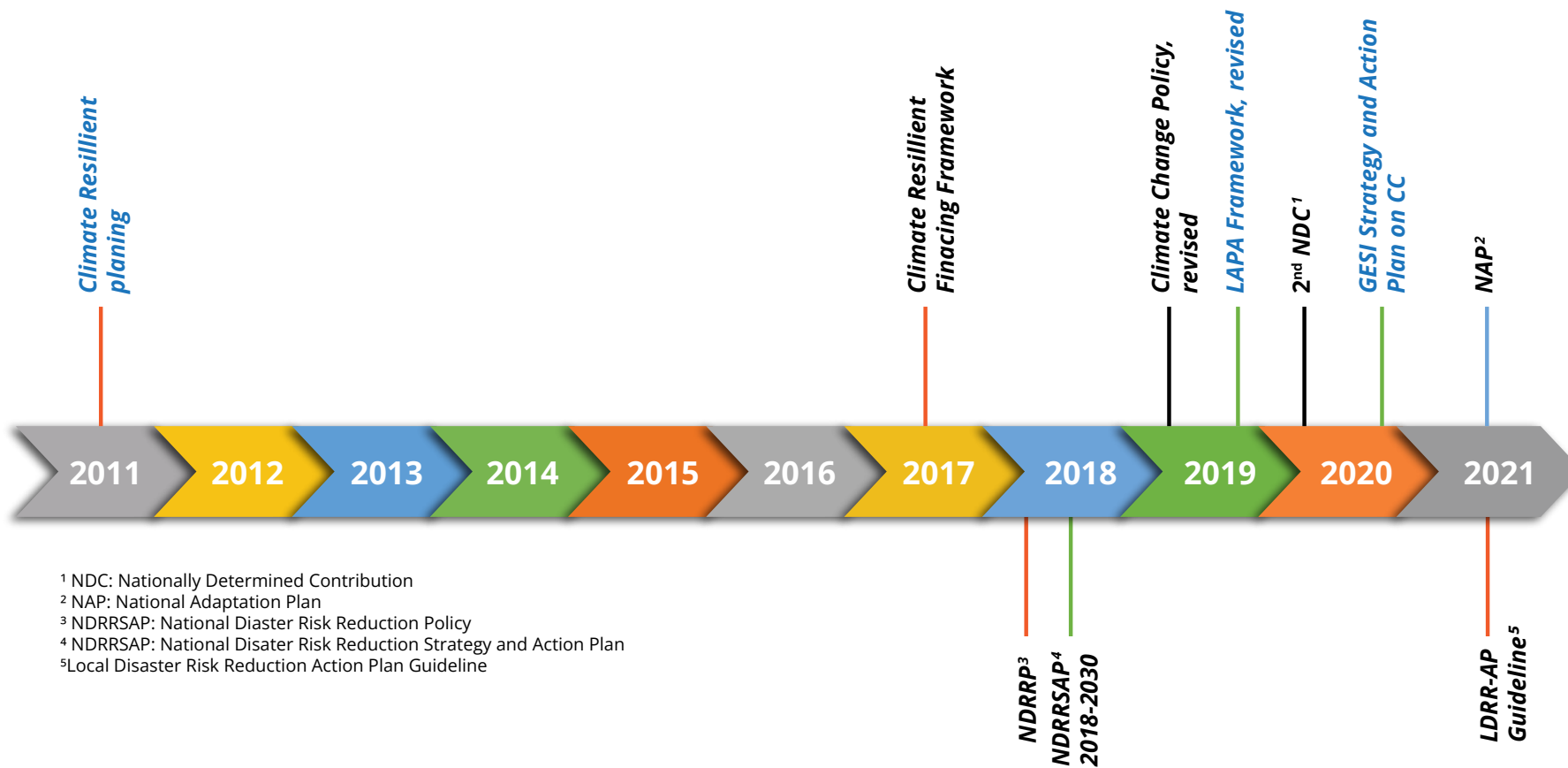


Figure 2: Timeline of Agricultural Policies in Nepal

3.2 Agricultural Policies, Plans, and Strategies

A total of 12 agricultural policy documents, including plans, strategies and frameworks, were reviewed. The timeline of agricultural policy formulation in Nepal and the summary of the findings of the assessment are presented in figure 2 and table 2, respectively. The review findings are presented below.

3.2.1 National Agriculture Policy 2004

The policy has acknowledged gender-differentiated roles in agriculture, though it has not captured the issue of climate change as the policy was formulated before the initiation of climate change-related policy formulation in the country. It encourages gender equality and inclusion in all possible activities of agriculture, and also recognizes the need to enhance women's roles in the management of cooperatives and farmers' groups for gender equality.

Though the policy provides explicit provisions to promote women's participation, it fails to address specific social barriers that inhibit female involvement. This dated policy requires an update to address the emerging needs of agriculture and food security, in order to address SDG 2030 and other national climate change and gender-related policies and priorities such as Gender and Social Inclusion in Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2020 –2030), National Adaptation Plan 2021 and Second Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), 2020.

3.2.2 Gender Mainstreaming Strategy 2006

The strategy recognizes gender-differentiated roles and women's contribution to agriculture, and aims to enhance the livelihood of woman farmers. The emphasis of the document has been on capacity-building, income generation, and commercialization of agriculture.

The strategy calls for gender equality (50% women's participation) in all interventions, institutions, and organizations related to agriculture and encourages local governments in prioritizing women farmers' livelihoods in local planning and budgeting. Aiming to institutionalize the gender focal persons (GFP), the terms of references (ToRs) were developed for the GFP, stating their specific responsibilities. The strategy needs to be updated to align with recent strategic documents such as: NDC 2020 and Gender and Social Inclusion in Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2020 –2030), etc.

3.2.3 Agribusiness Promotion Policy 2006

Though the policy has stated that women and marginalized groups will be encouraged to establish and run enterprises through targeted programs, it has failed to recognize the associated challenges, such as: access to inputs, credit, market information system, and exposure and mobility of women.

The policy has neither considered the impact of climate change nor gender-differentiated roles in agriculture. It also remains silent about promoting gender-friendly infrastructures such as local collection centers, road networks, and local markets like haat bazaars. While revising, it is critical to realign this policy with sectoral plans and provisions mentioned in Gender and Social Inclusion in Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2020 –2030), NAP 2021 and NDC, 2020.

3.2.4 Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management in Agriculture: Priority Framework for Action (CCADRMA-PFA) (2011–2020)

The framework has considered gender dimensions in the agriculture sector by recognizing women's needs with regard to access to and control over resources, food security, capacity development, and policy advocacy. The framework aims to promote local farmer organizations and community-based institutions, and their access to information related to risks and vulnerabilities.

Though the framework mentions that integration and mainstreaming of gender priorities in all the activities is the key for successful implementation of the priority framework for action, it fails to provide identification of key areas of focus and their corresponding activities and indicators for monitoring, as it has detailed for other five priority areas.

The activities highlighted under priority areas related to gender are: development of information centers for documentation of gender-sensitive local knowledge, risks and vulnerabilities at rural municipality and district level; strengthening the Gender Equity and Climate Change Division and Agribusiness and Statistics Division with additional trained staff in MoALD; setting up a secretariat/focal unit to oversee CCA and DRM activities.

There is no regular budgeting provision mentioned for CCA and DRM-related activities, but the institutional arrangement and coordination mechanism for gender mainstreaming has been explained. During stakeholder consultations, it appeared that this framework needs an update, aligning gender considerations and priorities with sectoral priorities as stated in NDC 2021.

3.2.5 National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC) Vision (2011-2030)

NARC vision recognizes that women's contribution is higher than men's in the production, storage, processing, and marketing of crops, livestock, and fisheries, as well as in the collection, use, and management of natural resources. Women are mentioned under the category of vulnerable and food-insecure groups, and men's and women's roles and priorities in agriculture have been distinctly mentioned.

The vision has encouraged the development and dissemination of women-friendly technology aiming to increase food security, income, and employment opportunities for women and other marginalized groups. An emphasis is placed on ensuring that gender concerns are appropriately considered in agricultural research, identifying gender issues and socio-economic aspects as two of the major research areas.

The NARC vision has underlined the need for gender-sensitive research and development, dissemination of agricultural technologies to improve agricultural productivity, and building capacity of women farmers and equity in access to resources and services, but it has not specified women's participation in planning, budgeting, and monitoring processes.

3.2.6 National Seed Vision (2013-2025)

The National Seed Vision aims to promote inclusive development that ensures the active participation of women and disadvantaged groups. To fully benefit from the seed value chain, the vision recommends a combination of measures including promoting gender equality in collaboration with private and civil society organizations, minimizing entry barriers, and improving income for women.

However, women are not regarded as key stakeholders, and gender and social differences are not being acknowledged in various stages of agriculture value chains; such as access of women to knowledge, skill, and technology related to post-harvesting, processing, storage and value addition.

Despite encouraging the participation of women in producers' groups and labor organizations and aiming to minimize entry barriers for women in seed value chains and increase their income, the policy fails to provide a clear plan for corresponding activities and monitoring indicators.

Likewise, gaps and suggested interventions identified along the value chain for the development of seed sector have overlooked women's and other marginalized groups' needs, priorities and engagement. The policy is silent on promoting women-specific measures to increase their access and affordability to improved seed varieties that suit the climate condition, despite mentioning that implementation of the Vision will lead to food security, employment generation, biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation, besides gender equity and social inclusion.

3.2.7 Irrigation Policy (revised) 2013

The policy envisages promoting gender equality by ending existing gender disparity in the irrigation sector, through targeted women's empowerment programs, and by ensuring 33 percent of women's representation in irrigation user committees.

The policy has recognized the impact of climate change on agriculture, but has not considered gender-differentiated impact. It lacks gender-specific provisions for climate change adaptation. Though the policy has mentioned subsidized targeted irrigation programs for women and other marginalized groups, year-round irrigation facility is available to less than 25 percent of the arable land, and irrigation technologies are not designed to address women's needs. Technologies are not affordable for women farmers, and smallholders and women have limited access to extension services.

3.2.8 Agriculture Mechanization Promotion Policy 2014

The policy has identified women's drudgery and workload in agriculture and suggested ways to reduce it; by encouraging the identification and promotion of women-friendly, energy-efficient equipment so that women's productivity will be increased. The policy has not taken into consideration women's risk and vulnerabilities in the context of climate change, and hence has not identified gender-specific adaptation options and how mechanization of agriculture would help reduce women's workload.

However, while it has prioritized the promotion of women-friendly equipment and tools, KILs revealed that most of the designs are neither women-friendly nor affordable. Due to male dominance in technology, the practical needs of women are overlooked while designing various tools and techniques. At the same time, women are not provided necessary technical knowledge and skill for operating the available machinery. Without gender-friendly mechanization, it will be challenging to reduce the increased workload and drudgery of women, and to ultimately shift the trend from subsistence-level to commercial production.

Provisions for Agriculture Mechanization Directorate Committee and Agriculture Mechanization Technical Committee are also outlined, but the strategy has remained silent about institutional mechanisms to ensure women's representation in these structures. The document states that the resources for implementation would be allocated through the annual budget from the central government, augmented by resources from donor agencies and development partners; but nothing has been indicated as to how women will be engaged in planning, budgeting, and monitoring processes.

Our KILs suggested that MoALD needs to take a proactive approach in revising this policy, considering women's and marginalized groups' needs and priorities in the context of emerging climate change scenarios and adaptation needs.

3.2.9 National Agro Biodiversity Policy 2006 (revised 2014)

The policy has captured both mitigation and adaptation aspects of climate change. It has considered the equitable distribution of agricultural resources and the promotion of indigenous knowledge and skills of farmers. It states that the sustainable use of agro-biodiversity will be facilitated in cooperation with women, indigenous, and other disadvantaged groups to support production growth and income generation.

The gender-differentiated roles and contributions of women in agriculture and the impact of climate change on agriculture have been acknowledged. However, it has not identified the specific adaptation needs of women farmers in the process of identification, conservation, promotion, and sustainable use of agro-biodiversity. There is no provision mentioned for women's engagement in planning, budgeting and monitoring; only gender equity in resource distribution is mentioned.

3.2.10 Food and Nutrition Security Plan of Action (FNSPA) 2016

FNSPA (2016) encourages the promotion of CSA, climate-resistant varieties of crops, increased access of women to productive resources, GESI-responsive agriculture extension services, and mainstreaming of GESI in agricultural research and technology.

It aims to ensure that the rights to food are mainstreamed and all forms of discrimination are minimized. The FNSPA has recognized discriminatory customary practices related to food and nutrition of women and girls, and analyzed household food consumption behavior. It has highlighted the need for budget estimation for gender and social inclusion. Further, it emphasizes institution-building and system development to ensure women's adequate representation in development processes.

The document has not acknowledged the gender-differentiated impact of climate change, and has not suggested adaptive measures. Though budget estimation for gender and social inclusion activities is highlighted, provision for women's representation and engagement in planning, budgeting, and monitoring at any level has not been taken into consideration.

3.2.11 National Agroforestry Policy, 2019

The policy aims to arrange appropriate subsidies to organize youth, women farmers, Dalits, and small landholders from the degraded forests and agroforestry areas, and barren and semi-barren arable lands. However, it has neither considered the gender-differentiated impact of climate change nor made any provisions for mandatory representation of women in the Agroforestry Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee.

Agroforestry has been identified as one of the strategic dimensions of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), as it has the potential to contribute to both adaptation and mitigation efforts. Since women and vulnerable groups often have access to marginal land, agroforestry can be a suitable land management option for them. However, the policy has neither discussed women's roles, needs, and gender-sensitive adaptation and resilience-building initiatives nor any risks and vulnerabilities of marginalized groups.

Also, it has not provided any provision for women's participation in planning, budgeting, and monitoring. Channeling livelihood promotion and income generation activities through agroforestry initiatives could help reduce gender inequalities in terms of access to natural resources. Although the policy has not specifically factored in these aspects, it has envisioned building the adaptive capacity of female farmers through agroforestry practices.

3.2.12 Agriculture Development Strategy (2015-2035)

The ADS (2015 -2035) has presented a 20-year roadmap, with an expectation to guide the overall advancement of the agriculture sector and related sub-sectors. The strategy highlights gender equality in all sub-sectors of agriculture and food security. It envisages addressing the food and nutrition security of the most disadvantaged rural population, including lactating and pregnant women, indigenous people, and those from remote regions.

One of the expected outputs of the ADS is the establishment of a comprehensive set of mechanisms at policy, planning, and implementation levels, to ensure gender equity and social and geographical inclusion through the capacity development of pertinent institutions at central and local levels. It has recognized the impact of climate change on agriculture and encourages the resilience of farmers by supporting the adoption of stress-tolerant crops and animal species. It has also envisaged budget allocation for gender inclusion.

Despite having progressive provisions on agriculture, gender, and climate change, the strategy has overlooked concerns and challenges faced by the vulnerable—including women and other marginalized groups—due to the impact of climate change. It also lacks specific provisions for resilience-building.

The ADS is the most coherent document in terms of recognizing the negative impacts of climate change on agriculture productivity and the need for introducing appropriate adaptation mechanisms, including CSA. It also encourages financial allocation for gender and inclusion actions as well as ensuring women's participation in planning, implementation, and monitoring processes. However, the strategy is silent on the differentiated effect of climate change on women farmers; and therefore, lacks gender-specific measures to respond to such impacts (Paudyal et al. 2019).

Table 2: Assessment of Agriculture of Policies, Strategies and Frameworks Using Gender Inclusion Criteria

Policies, Strategies, and Guidelines Analyzed	Reference to Gender or Women	Recognition of Gender Differentiated Impacts of Climate Change on Agriculture	Mention of Gender-sensitive Provision Measures for Climate Change Adaptation	Provision of Women's Participation and Engagement in Planning, Budgeting, and Monitoring
Agriculture Policy, 2004	Women's roles in agriculture and farming-related livelihoods have been acknowledged	Has not considered the impact of climate change on agriculture, nor has considered the gender-differentiated impact	No gender-specific adaptation options are suggested, but has encouraged the access of women to productive agricultural resources	Encourages gender equality and inclusion in all possible fields of agriculture operation, but has not specified any provisions for women's participation in planning, budgeting, and monitoring
Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (2006), MoAD	Has recognized the gender-differentiated roles and women's contribution to agriculture, aims to enhance the livelihood of women farmers	Does not recognize the gender-differentiated impact of climate change	Emphasis has been on capacity building, institutional arrangement, income generation, and commercialization of agriculture	Aims to achieve gender equality (50% women participation) across all interventions, institutions, and organizations related to agriculture. Encourages local governments to prioritize women farmers' livelihoods in local planning and budgeting
Agribusiness Promotion Policy, 2063	Mentions gender inclusion sporadically	Has not recognized the impact of climate change	Has encouraged women to establish agri-enterprises	Has not highlighted the participation of women in the agri-business promotion process, nor has mentioned about their engagement in planning, budgeting, and monitoring

Policies, Strategies, and Guidelines Analyzed	Reference to Gender or Women	Recognition of Gender Differentiated Impacts of Climate Change on Agriculture	Mention of Gender-sensitive Provision Measures for Climate Change Adaptation	Provision of Women's Participation and Engagement in Planning, Budgeting, and Monitoring
Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management in Agriculture: Priority Framework for Action (2011-2020)	Has identified gender equity as a cross-cutting priority and clearly referred to women's and marginalized groups' vulnerabilities in the context of livelihoods related to farming	Has considered women's limited access to land and property, and the fact that they are the hardest hit by climate extremes and other risks	Encourages efforts towards innovative and gender-sensitive agriculture technology for climate adaptation as well as capacity building of the officers at relevant departments	No regular budgeting provision is mentioned for CCA and DRM-related activities, though institutional arrangement and coordination mechanisms for gender mainstreaming and women's participation in planning and monitoring are suggested
National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC) Vision (2011-2030)	Has recognized the gender-differentiated-roles in agriculture	Recognizes the impact of climate change on agriculture, including provisions for climate change adaptation in agriculture and provisions for women	Underlines the need for gender-sensitive research, development, and dissemination of agricultural technologies to improve agricultural productivity	Highlights capacity building of women farmers and promotion of equal access to resources, information, technology, skills, and services, but hasn't specified any financial provisions
Irrigation Policy (revised) 2013	Highlights gender inclusion and ending gender inequality in irrigation	Has recognized the impact of climate change on agriculture, but not considered the gender-differentiated impact	No gender-specific provisions for climate change adaptation	Has encouraged to promote women's representation in user committees, but has not specified financial provisions on gender-specific activities

Policies, Strategies, and Guidelines Analyzed	Reference to Gender or Women	Recognition of Gender Differentiated Impacts of Climate Change on Agriculture	Mention of Gender-sensitive Provision Measures for Climate Change Adaptation	Provision of Women's Participation and Engagement in Planning, Budgeting, and Monitoring
National Seed Vision (2013-2025)	Has aimed to contribute to gender equality and social inclusion. Mentioned the promotion of inclusive and equitable development by ensuring women's participation	Has recognized the gender-differentiated roles in agriculture and the impact of climate change on agriculture and food security, but has not identified the gender-differentiated impact of climate change on agriculture	Includes the policy provisions for women in agriculture and aims to promote value chains with a focus on poor, women and disadvantaged communities	Has not stated about promoting women-specific measures to increase their access and affordability to improved seed varieties that suit the climate condition, as well as nothing mentioned on budgeting and monitoring
Agriculture Mechanization Promotion Policy 2014	Identified women's drudgery and workload in agriculture and suggested ways to reduce it	Has not considered the gender-differentiated impact of climate change	Has not identified gender-specific adaptation options, but aims to reduce the workload and drudgery of women and increase their productive time through the mechanization of agriculture	Agriculture Mechanization Directorate Committee and Agriculture Mechanization Technical Committee have been identified, but women's representation is not ensured. States that the resources for implementation would be allocated through the annual budget of the central government but no clarity on how women will be engaged in planning, budgeting, and monitoring processes
National Agro Biodiversity Policy 2006 (revised 2014)	Has recognized women's roles and contributions to agriculture	Has not considered the gender-differentiated impact of climate change, though has recognized the impact of climate change on agriculture	Has not identified the specific adaptation needs of women farmers in the process of identification, conservation, promotion, and sustainable use of agro-biodiversity	No provision for mandatory reservation and women's engagement in planning, budgeting and monitoring. Equitable distribution of agricultural resources has been mentioned but does not include the financial provision for gender-specific activities

Policies, Strategies, and Guidelines Analyzed	Reference to Gender or Women	Recognition of Gender Differentiated Impacts of Climate Change on Agriculture	Mention of Gender-sensitive Provision Measures for Climate Change Adaptation	Provision of Women's Participation and Engagement in Planning, Budgeting, and Monitoring
Food and Nutrition Security Plan of Action 2016	Has highlighted the issue of access to and control of women and girls to food and nutrition	Has identified the impact of climate change, but not specified how it has affected food security at local level and the effects on women and other vulnerable groups	No gender-specific climate adaptation measures are suggested	Has recognized the discriminatory practices related to food and nutrition of women and girls. Provision for women's participation in planning, budgeting, and monitoring has not been stated, though has the budget estimation for gender and social inclusion activities
National Agroforestry Policy 2019	Has considered the increased work burden of rural women and recognized women's roles in agriculture and forestry	Has not identified any specific impacts of climate change on women and other vulnerable groups	Does not include gender-specific climate adaptation options, except for a few capacity-building support	No specific provisions for financial resources nor for women's participation in planning and monitoring
Agriculture Development Strategy (2015-2035)	Has highlighted gender equality in all sub-sectors of agriculture and food security	Has recognized the impact of climate change on agriculture only, but not with a gender analysis that explains impacts on women's and men's livelihoods	Mentions of the increasing resilience of farmers to climate, but no specific provision for women's resilience building are identified	Aims to increase inclusive participation and accountability in planning, implementation, and monitoring processes Has Indicated budget allocations for gender and inclusion

4 | GOOD PRACTICES

Walking downhill with shared responsibilities

Photo by The World Traveller / Shutterstock.com



The following section describes gender-sensitive CSA practices in some recently completed and/or ongoing projects in Nepal. The key criteria used while selecting the projects and programs for consideration were; 1) projects that are being or have been successfully implemented with gender-sensitive activities; 2) projects that have the potential for scaling up and/or replication. Gender-sensitive programs and projects are referred to as such initiatives that aim to ensure that women and men are included and have their voices heard and their opinions valued (UNDP 2015).

Donor-funded projects such as Adaptation for Smallholders in Hilly Areas (ASHA), Agriculture and Food Security Project (AFSP), Integrating Agriculture into National Adaptation Planning (NAP-Ag) Program, **Jalabayu Maitri Krishi Pariyojana (Climate-friendly Agriculture Project), Scaling-Up Climate Smart Agriculture in Nepal (CSA) and Prime Minister Agriculture Modernization Program (PMAMP)** place significant emphasis on developing gender-sensitive approaches, monitoring indicators and appointment of social and gender experts to implement action plans and understand the impact on women and marginalized groups.

For example, from the very beginning of the **ASHA project**, efforts were made to ensure the integration of GESI; by developing various guidelines, manuals, strategies, procedures, and information and communication materials. The project gave special attention to GESI to ensure an average of 50 percent representation of Dalits, ethnic groups, and minorities, and at least 33 percent participation of women. The project also seeks to reduce climate change vulnerability and build the resilience of highly vulnerable households defined under the LAPA.



Figure 3: Women and girls from marginalized groups at Farmer Field School

Similarly, **AFSP** introduced agriculture tools and equipment such as corn shellers, seed grading machines, processing mills, and improved cooking stoves, which has reduced women's workloads (Figure 3).

The project reached out the targeted women and vulnerable communities and successfully conducted 6,580 field trials, reaching about 90 percent of the participants through the Farmer Field School. All members of the Village Model Farm (VMF) groups were women, and pregnant women and mothers of children under two years of age made up the majority of the group. Over the tenure of the project, 30 improved technology packages were released to project area producers, including 22 crop and 8 livestock packages.

NAP-Ag contributed to building skills in gender and social inclusion as part of service delivery under the Agricultural Development Strategy 2015 -2030. It also enhanced the capacity for gender mainstreaming through technical training workshops, piloted analytical methods for collecting and using sex-disaggregated data, and delivered training on vulnerability assessments and adaptation planning.

As a part of the reflection, the project team and implementing agencies recommended that in order to achieve the goal of climate-resilient agriculture, interventions should have a clear plan for ensuring gender equity and sustainability aspects considering the local context. One of the reasons why the project is regarded as successful is because of its potential for replication with co-benefit outcomes.

Jalabayu Maitri Krishi Pariyojana (Climate-friendly Agriculture Project) ensured meaningful representation and participation of women, poor and disadvantaged people, their access to livelihood resources, and their rights to raise voices throughout the project cycle. With the support from the project, *Majhthana* village in the Gandaki province has now turned into a climate-smart village. With strong support from local stakeholders of *Majhthana* village, farmers' cooperatives, the local citizen's forum, and the Agriculture Service Centre, women's groups adopted a number of CSA practices and technologies to cope with the challenges of climate change.

The Scaling-Up CSA in Nepal project adopted a gender-sensitive approach to include gender and social inclusion challenges from the beginning. Women-friendly tools such as the hand-held corn sheller, finger millet thresher, and jab planter were introduced to reduce women's drudgery. The project also ensured the representation and participation of diverse stakeholders, including women, poor and marginalized groups, climate-vulnerable farmers, etc, which helped while considering their voices and priorities.



Figure 4: Women engaged in seed production and collection activities

The Prime Minister Agriculture Modernization Project (**PMAMP**) project is the largest one being implemented by the MoALD, with a 10-year duration. Starting in 2017, it has the vision of "Development of the sustainable and self-reliant agriculture sector through the transformation of subsistence agriculture to modernized and commercial one".

With financial support from the government budget, the project aims to enhance effective service delivery and generate employment opportunities through the promotion of profitable agriculture.

It is envisioned that PMAMP will help implement the Agriculture Development Strategy 2015-2035 and meet the target of setting up inclusive mechanisms for policy planning and implementation, in order to ensure gender equity and social and geographical inclusion, through building institutional capacity at central and local levels.

The project partnered with Hairiyali Community Seed Company (HCSC) and International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) to offer women-only training on seed production efficiency and profitability, and to improve their entrepreneurship skills by creating market linkages (Fig 4).

A flagship project of this scale presents a good opportunity to contribute towards women's empowerment. Although the four main objectives of the project do not specifically refer to any gender issue, it is expected that the periodic reviews would flag this gap, eventually leading to gender inclusion therein.

In summary, these programs and projects have certain elements in common that qualify them as gender-sensitive projects. For example, the abovementioned projects' components have built linkages to GESI as a cross-cutting thematic area and adopted a strategy of ensuring women's participation in the user committees (UC), with at least one woman in each UC in the decision-making role at the local level, along with representatives from other ethnic groups.

Moreover, they focus on building the adaptive capacity of smallholders, and vulnerable communities, including women and marginalized groups, through grant disbursements, and on improving climate-centric knowledge dissemination and capacity development.

Some of these projects and programs showed a strong commitment to social inclusion and women's empowerment by promoting women-friendly technologies such as micro solar systems, biogas plants, improved water mills, and cookstoves. In many ways, these projects and programs are helping translate Agricultural Development Strategy 2015 -2030 into actions, which in itself is an example of good practice. Gender-inclusive CSA practices derived from the a forementioned projects are summarized below.

Non-government organizations, development partners and donors have made contributions in ensuring GESI policies within institutions and programs/projects, through the introduction of the mandatory provisions for gender analysis, and gender action plan (GAP). For example, the Green Climate Fund (GCF) requires a detailed gender assessment with GAP and gender budget for all proposals seeking support from the Fund. They also have a strong mechanism to monitor gender-specific activities, in line with their gender strategy and environment and social safeguards policy framework.

Mandating the adoption of GESI approach with a strong monitoring and evaluation system and ensuring that gender-sensitive indicators are in place within donor and government-funded agriculture and climate changes projects and programs, will support achieving gender equality and social inclusion outcomes in the long term.

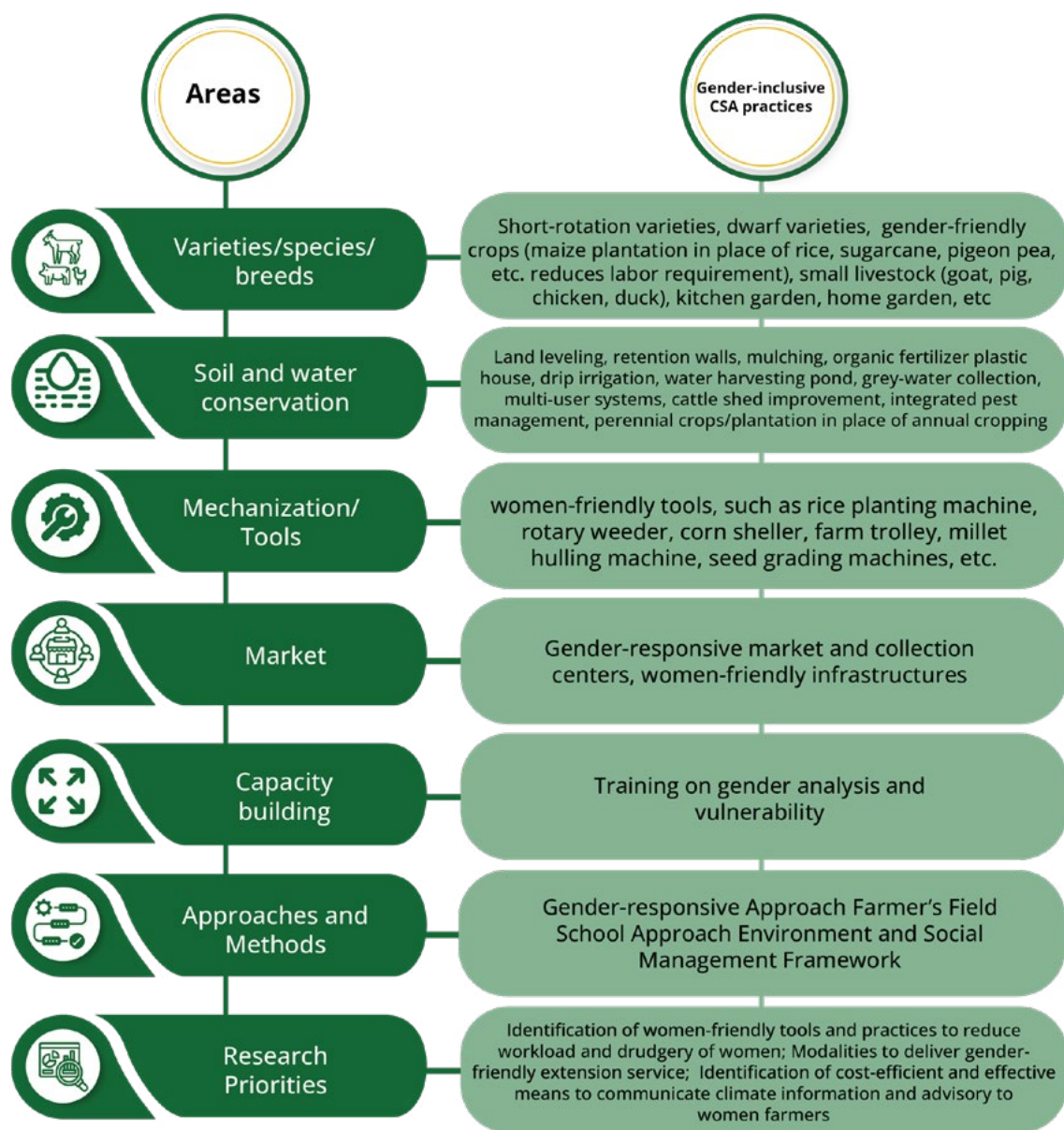


Figure 5: Summary of the gender-inclusive CSA practices in projects



5 INSTITUTIONAL AND COORDINATION MECHANISM FOR GENDER INCLUSION

Securing firewood for cooking

Photo by pixabay.com

The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD) is responsible for overseeing agriculture-related affairs at the federal level. The Planning and Development Cooperation Coordination Division (PDCCD) of the MoALD has the mandate to institutionalize gender mainstreaming into programs implemented under the ministry and concerned agencies. The Ministry of Women Children and Senior Citizens (MoWCSC) is the apex agency responsible for overseeing gender mainstreaming.

The GoN has the institutional arrangement of nominating GESI focal persons at the ministry and department levels. At the MoALD, the Human Resource and GESI section under the PDCCD acts as the focal point for gender mainstreaming and is responsible for the implementation of GRB, inclusive policies, and standards through various programs and projects.

Gender mandates are not effectively linked with the overall performance of the concerned officials, and gender auditing is not deemed mandatory. Also, there is a lack of mechanisms and capacity within the MoWCSC to coordinate and monitor the gender outcomes of line ministries.

Currently, the MoALD staff composition includes about 13% junior level and 9% senior female staff. Likewise, in the MoFE, there is approximately 25% of female staff, including one heading a technical unit. The Department of Agriculture (DoA) and the Department of Livestock Services (DoLS) are mandated to support the transformation of agriculture through robust extension services and capacity-building. These two agencies implement their programs through District Agriculture Development Offices (DADOs) and District Livestock Service Offices (DLSOs) across all districts of Nepal.

Nepal Agriculture Research Council (NARC) is responsible for conducting agricultural research. The Council also prioritizes studies and research to be conducted and provides client research and consultancy services. The responsibility of the NARC also covers coordination, monitoring, and evaluation of agricultural research activities, including documentation and dissemination of research activities and outcomes. The mandate of the National Agricultural Environment Research Center (NAERC) under NARC is to act as a key player in collaborative research in partnership with provincial and local governments, NGOs, INGOs, and other stakeholders on environment-related issues in the agriculture sector. However, due to lack of a clear gender mandate, gender-responsive tools and the technical capacity of researchers, gender and climate change issues have not been effectively captured in agricultural research.

The National Farmers' Commission (NFC) has been formed as per the Executive Order 2016 of the GoN, as envisioned by the Agriculture Development Strategy (2015-2035). The vision of the NFC is to assure social justice for the peasants by protecting and promoting their rights and welfare, and transforming agriculture into a dignified profession. The Commission is mandated to analyze policy gaps regarding peasants' rights and provide recommendations for improvement.

The Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture and Cooperatives (MoLMAC) is responsible for overseeing agriculture at the provincial level. Municipalities and Rural Municipalities with agriculture, livestock, and cooperatives offices are responsible for overseeing agriculture-related affairs at the local level. There are provincial agriculture research directorates under NARC with the mandate to streamline and oversee multidisciplinary research activities.

5.1. Gender-responsive budgeting and financial provision

Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) was officially introduced by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2007-08 as a tool to support gender mainstreaming and empowerment through planning processes, and to ensure that the needs and interests of women, men, and children are effectively addressed in the annual budget.

Based on gender responsiveness, the national budget is classified every year as directly gender-responsive, indirectly gender-responsive, and neutral. As per the MoF GRB Manual (2012), the budget is classified based on the composite score of gender-responsiveness indicators.

Since 2012/2013, the government has adopted a climate change budget code to facilitate the tracking of climate expenditures of concerned ministries. The total national budget is classified as highly relevant, relevant, and neutral, based on relativity to climate change.

The GoN's efforts to have the GRB adopted by all sectoral ministries and departments over the past decade are laudable. The upward trend in the budget directly benefits women—from NRs. 19.09 Billion (approximately USD 154 million) in 2008-2009 to NRs. 562 billion (approximately USD 4.5 billion) in 2020-2021—presents an optimistic outlook. Over these periods, the share of the budget directly benefiting women in the total budget increased from 11.3 percent to 38.18 percent. An almost four-fold increase in the budget directly benefiting women implies a growing acceptance of the significance of resource mobilization for gender inclusion in development endeavors.

Among the ministries, the MoALD budget has one of the highest shares of the climate-related budget. The agriculture sector developed its climate change budget code guideline in 2018. In recent years, approximately half of the allocated budget of the MoALD is being categorized as climate-relevant. An increasing trend in climate-relevant budgets and a decrease in climate-neutral budgets indicates that climate change-specific programs/activities are being increased.

However, these two budget codes have not been aligned, and the GRB system has yet to provide gender-inclusive benefits. The lack of integration between these two budget codes provides a solid opportunity to integrate and align these budget codes and processes. This would support the government in ensuring the inclusion of gender perspectives in climate plans, and sufficient funding for gender-related activities in climate actions.

5.2 Climate change budget code

In its climate change budget code (CCBC) guideline, the MoALD has developed seven sub-sectoral criteria, namely, sustainable land management; sustainable water management; food security and promotion of agro-biodiversity; livestock development; low-carbon agricultural production; disaster preparedness for extreme events; and, policy, knowledge, extension, research, and development support. The parameter to fix the level of relevance includes a gender-specific question.

There have been numerous projects addressing climate change. However, there are gaps in gender co-targets within many of such projects. For instance, from 2013 to 2016, while more than half of the adaptation projects in Nepal reported having gender equality objectives and despite the majority of donor adaptation projects reporting gender co-targets, 61 percent of adaptation finance did not address gender equality; indicating that many large adaptation projects lacked gender equality focus in practice.

A majority of the policy documents lack action plans and allocation of budget to ensure effective implementation of provisions made by the policies, towards gender inclusion. GRB and CCBC are yet to be fully adopted at provincial and local levels, mainly due to limited understanding and technical capacity. Ad hoc budgeting and prioritizing are still practiced at provincial and local levels; no efforts are made to evaluate the effectiveness of the climate change budget.

There are challenges to the implementation of a gender-responsive budget at the local level, due to the knowledge gap among policy-makers and decision-makers. This has a direct impact on integrating gender perspectives into planning and budgeting, and, ultimately, on transferring gender-responsive technologies and approaches (CDKN 2021). Most policy documents lack action plans and provisions for budget allocation for effective implementation.

Although the share of the directly gender-responsive budget is increasing over the years, the institutionalization of GRB, backed by a periodic review of sectoral spending to monitor whether intended outputs are being produced—vis-à-vis allocation—remains to be carried out. Equally important is institutionalizing GRB at the provincial level, to ensure the availability of sex-disaggregated data for assessing impacts.

Despite some encouraging achievements in policy, planning, and budgeting, there are very few impact-level achievements in terms of changing women's livelihoods, as well as ensuring their meaningful participation in climate-centric agriculture programs (FAO 2019).

6 | CONCLUSION

Farmers in the Phewa Lake

Photo by stock.adobe.com



This section presents the conclusion of the review and analysis, followed by specific policy- and institutional-level recommendations in the succeeding section. Likewise, conclusions related to policy and implementation levels are presented below, with respective sub-sections.

6.1 Policy planning and development

Although a majority of reviewed agricultural policy documents have tried to promote gender inclusion in climate change by acknowledging gender dimensions in the sector and recognizing women's vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, most have overlooked existing socio-structural inequalities and barriers without prioritizing any key provisions, activities and indicators to promote gender equality. For example, Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management in Agriculture: Priority Framework for Action (2011 -2020) has highlighted the significance of mainstreaming gender priorities in all activities as the key to successful implementation, but fails to provide the identification of priority areas of focus and their corresponding activities and indicators for monitoring.

Women are considered a homogenous group, and intersectionality among women has not been appropriately recognized by agricultural policies. The policy provisions are merely based on generalized assumptions about women and are not backed by gender analysis and sex-disaggregated data or any gender analytics. The existing gender inequalities resulting from discriminatory social practices and unequal power relations among other social groups have neither been recognized nor adequately addressed. For example, Agriculture Policy 2004, Agribusiness Promotion Policy 2063, Agriculture Mechanization Promotion Policy 2014, National Agro Biodiversity Policy 2014, and National Seed Vision Strategy (2013 -2025) remain silent on specific provisions to support women's empowerment and to build their resilience.

There is also an absence of systematic documentation on how climate-smart agricultural practices, technology, and innovations have benefited women and other marginalized groups. This is primarily due to the lack of comprehensive disaggregated data by age, sex, disability, class, and ethnicity, in relation to climate vulnerability and risks.

However, it is also noted that the texts of what are relatively the latest policies tend to give greater attention to gender concerns. This might have something to do with the increased overall attention to gender issues in recent years, and subsequent pressure on national policy-crafting mechanisms.

For instance, the Climate Change Policy 2019, NDC 2020, and National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2021 have considered the impacts of climate change on women and other vulnerable groups with gender-specific adaptation provisions. Both policies have underscored promoting climate-resilient livelihoods through increased access to resources, information, and technology. These policies have encouraged sectors to mainstream gender equality in sectoral policy-making, in order to practice gender-sensitive budgets in climate adaptation planning and implementation at all levels.

Agriculture Development Strategy (2015-2035) and NARC Vision (2011-2030) have provided provisions for climate change adaptation. These documents are progressive and include explicit provisions related to promoting CSA technologies and practices: such as developing climate-resilient crop and livestock varieties, sustainable soil and water management, and on-farm agro-biodiversity management.

DRR policies have also demonstrated a certain level of sensitivity and awareness toward intersectional disparities. Despite DRR policy documents featuring gender considerations, the focus has been on response rather than preparedness and resilience-building of female farmers of different geographic and cultural contexts. Information about early warning systems, for instance, frequently lack gender inclusivity despite the fact that women and men access, process, interpret, and respond to signals differently.

Gender data bias is a major challenge in disaster risk management and climate change sub-sectors, as the loss and damage of assets and property caused by disasters are often registered in the name of a male member of the family because of patriarchal ownership practices. In most cases, women are not officially listed as farmers, as they do not have legal ownership of land, and are not counted as household heads.

6.2 Institution and implementation

The GESI Strategy and Action Plan in Climate Change (2020-2030) has explicitly mentioned and laid out various strategies, provisions, and action plans considering intersectionality, and has promoted gender-specific adaptation options for agriculture. However, gender mandates are not effectively linked with the overall performance of concerned officials, even though the GESI section under the Planning and Development Cooperation Coordination Division (PDCCD) at MoALD acts as the focal point for gender mainstreaming, and is responsible for the implementation of gender-responsive policies and standards through various programs and projects.

In order to effectively monitor GESI integration, the agriculture sector released two GESI progress reports consequently for FY 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. After this, no such report has been released. Likewise, the Ministry of Women Children, and Senior Citizens (MoWCSC) has no proper mechanism and capacity for coordination and monitoring gender outcomes of sectoral implementation plans. At the federal level, there is currently no established mechanism for coordination between MoWCSC, MoALD, and the focal Ministry for climate change and environment (MoFE), as well as ministries and departments at the provincial and local levels with similar responsibilities.

Women's limited representation as key stakeholders throughout the planning processes, budget formulation, design of programs and projects, monitoring mechanisms as well as lack of detailed action plans to ensure inclusive adaptation outcomes, remain additional challenges. Despite having a provision for the mandatory representation of women, there is very limited chance of getting them involved in and/or influencing policy-level decisions, as only a handful of women professionals occupy senior-level government positions.

Women are still facing various challenges in terms of formal representation and are being excluded from extension services. Constraints, such as gendered decision-making in households and communities, the responsibility of care work, limited access to information and extension services, economic dependence on men, and restricted mobility have also hampered women's equitable access to benefits arising out of CSA programs and projects. Having made commitments to international treaties and frameworks, Nepal needs to shift focus urgently toward the effective implementation of policy provisions to ensure that targets of inclusion are met by 2030.

7 | RECOMMENDATIONS

Fuelwood collection from the community forest

Photo by pixabay.com



Recommendations based on the findings of this study are expected to help support the inclusion of gender considerations in the design and delivery of future policies and programs. The following specific recommendations related to policy development, institutional, and delivery aspects have been suggested to minimize the gaps identified by the review.

7.1 Policy planning and development

- A proactive approach is required to amend policies, such as: Agriculture Mechanization Promotion Policy, Agriculture Policy, Agribusiness Promotion Policy, National Agroforestry Policy and National Agro Biodiversity Policy. It must be ensured that they are backed by social and gender analysis to practically promote women's empowerment, through livelihood options associated with climate-resilient agriculture. Climate change issues faced by communities in the agriculture sector have to be explained through a gender and intersectionality lens. Aspects such as ethnicity, class, caste, geographical location, disability, age, and sexual orientation should be taken into consideration.
- There is an urgent need to develop and implement sector-specific GESI policies and strategies that must follow an integrated approach to achieve the common goal: of building the resilience of women and other marginalized groups to the impacts of climate change. Both horizontal sectoral integration among key sectors and vertical inter-governmental integration among federal, provincial, and local governments are necessary.
- Promote gender-sensitive policy measures toward empowering women by enhancing their access to resources, information and technology, and capacity-building opportunities. This is a crucial prerequisite for the larger goal: of ultimately building women's and other marginalized groups' adaptive capacity. The portrayal of women and marginalized people, including ethnic minorities, should be reframed; instead of showing them as vulnerable groups in current agriculture and climate change discourses, they should be positioned as key stakeholders and agents of change.
- Immediate attention is needed to ensure women's participation at all levels of policy processes; to increase their chance of influencing policy decisions, as well as the implementation of inclusive policies and practices through the introduction of relevant mandatory provisions. At a minimum, women's equal representation is to be ensured in stakeholder consultations, agenda-setting, problem identification, agenda adoption, plan formulation, and drafting and review committees.
- An impact evaluation is needed for the National Seed Vision (2013-2025), Agriculture Development Strategy (2015-2035), and Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management in Agriculture: Priority Framework for Action (2011-2020), in order to understand the prevailing challenges and gaps in food security, employment generation, and climate change adaptation in relation to GESI. This is critical.
- Policies and strategies related to disasters and agriculture need to include provisions for recovery and building resilience against a potential situation caused by any COVID-19-type crisis.

7.2 Institution and implementation

- Immediate attention is required for further investments in collaborative research and dissemination of findings on gender equality and social inclusion, in relation to climate resilience. Specific areas of research could be gender-differentiated impacts of climate change on agriculture; climate-smart innovations that reduce women's workloads; agricultural mechanization and its impacts on women and other marginalized groups; beneficial entrepreneurship options for women; and women's access to services, plus credits for building resilience.
- There is an urgent need to dedicate funds to build capacity at federal, provincial, as well as local levels, on the concept and process of gender mainstreaming into climate-resilient agriculture. This will help ensure that the stakeholders are conversant with the concepts, tools, and methods supporting gender equality. Capacity-building of all stakeholders on gender mainstreaming is an integral part of inclusive policymaking and effective implementation.
- The Planning and Development Cooperation Coordination Division of MoALD needs to invest immediately in ensuring coordination among GFPs of the Climate Change Management Division of MoFE, MoF and MoWCSC, at the federal level; and with District Agriculture Development Offices and MoLMAC at the provincial level, as well as in periodic gender auditing of the sectoral programs.
- Immediate support is required for a gender-inclusive monitoring, evaluation, and learning system, to facilitate a periodic review of progress and to assess the impact of policies on gender equality indicators pertaining to the agriculture sector. Such a system would also facilitate the timely revision of policies, in order to introduce more inclusive measures.
- MoALD, MoFE, and MoF need to pay immediate attention to institutionalizing GRB, which is backed by periodic reviews of sectoral spending vis-à-vis allocation; to monitor whether the budget allocated is producing its intended gender-inclusive outputs. The alignment of GRB and climate change budget code should be supported, in order to monitor progress in inclusive climate adaptation planning and implementation in the agriculture sector.
- Support the application of GRB at provincial and local levels to minimize ad hoc budgeting and planning practices. Without the proper application of GRB, it would be difficult to establish how climate investment directly benefits women in terms of capacity and productivity, as well as in building resilience.
- Promote a gender-sensitive approach while developing and promoting technology and tools, to ensure that they are effective in reducing the workload and drudgery and increasing the efficiency and productivity of women. These women's empowerment-related issues must be included during the revision of the Agriculture Mechanization Promotion Policy 2014.
- Immediate need for building and strengthening women's networks to enhance their linkages with extension services targeting women-led cooperatives. Investments must be targeted for designing climate-smart tools and machines that are women-friendly and cost-effective. Further, if linked with the government and non-governmental CSA programs and projects, these technologies could be marketed with subsidy and tax exemption strategies.
- Ensure a proactive approach to engage the National Farmers' Commission, INGOs/NGOs, CBOs, private sector, farmers' federations, and networks working on women's rights and gender equality throughout the course of developing and implementing CSA initiatives. Utilizing the findings, recommendations, learning, and reflections generated from the latest research studies, these entities could jointly develop concepts and proposals for larger future projects to benefit a wider population.

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