

# GENDER POLICY REVIEW REPORT

## Enhancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment BHUTAN



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## ACRONYMS

CEDAW	Convention on All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSI	Cottage and Small Industries
EFYP	Eleventh Five Year Plan
GFP	Gender Focal Points
GNHC	Gross National Happiness Commission
NAPG	National Action Plan on Gender
NCWC	National Committee for Women and Children
PFA	Platform for Action
RCSC	Royal Civil Service Commission
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy review was commissioned by the National Committee for Women and Children and supported with the assistance from the United Nations Development Programme in Bhutan. Stakeholder interviews with relevant government and CSO personnel were held in October 2015. The review looks at government policy review process, including the protocol for policy formulation and the implementation mechanisms and guidelines. It briefly analyses gender mainstreaming in policy in Bhutan and then moves to individual policies.

The specific detailed policy reviewed in this report includes Employment (2013), Economic Development (2010) and Cottage, Small and Medium Industries (2012), Education (2014) and Youth (2011). In each of these areas the international standard setting documents that are used to measure gender mainstreaming of issues include the Beijing Platform for Action from 1995, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979, signed by Bhutan in 1980), and the Sustainable Development Goals which were agreed in September 2015. Each of these documents references the issues in these key policy areas, with the exception of youth. As such the separate sections of each of these documents are analysed against the policies themselves. Other policies are often referred to, as in many cases there is a significant cross-over of policy on gender. As gender is a cross cutting issue, this is not surprising, and is important, however, there is currently no one single document which brings together all the gender issues in policy into a comprehensive and articulated framework. This is an issue which is echoed throughout the document. In areas where the policy could be refined and expanded further case studies are provided from other countries, in addition to reference to other key resources for policy formulation such as the Bhutan Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors (2013).

In contrast to other policies reviewed; the Youth Policy (2011) mainstreams gender issues well.

It was found through the study, that many policies lacked reference to key gender issues, although they may be present in other policies and/or Acts (which are not a part of the purview of this study), and that in many cases they were missing from policy altogether. In many of these cases the previous National Action Plan for Gender (NAPG) 2008-2013 did articulate these issues, and outlined them in a clear framework with outcomes, outputs and activities.

The past NAPG provided a solid basis for key policy issues in many of the areas studied in this review, and it is strongly advocated by this review that a second NAPG be developed, with an assessment of the current outputs and activities, and an expansion into additional areas which are flagged throughout this report.

The report finishes with an outline of a case for dual strategy on gender which advocates for a stand-alone National Gender Action Plan as well as more gender mainstreaming in all policy. It substantiates this position through looking at the new substantive studies and legislation on gender issues, CEDAW Recommendations, the previous National Action Plan on Gender, recommendations from Beijing + 20 (in 2015), the new Sustainable Development Goals, the current policy framework, and the acknowledgement and agreement and support from stakeholders on the need for a document to provide an overall framework and repository of references to gender policy references in Bhutan.

The annexes of this report also contains a table with a summary of all policy and references to gender, followed by a listing of full gender references in policy of the Kingdom of Bhutan, and a separate annex with gender references in the 5 Year Plan 2013-2018. Finally the Sustainable Development Goals are listed with relevant gender targets. These all provide key references for this policy review.

## 1. SPECIFIC CONTEXT OF THIS STUDY

This review will contribute to increasing gender equality in Bhutan, in particular as far as governance and decision-making, education and employment are concerned.

The review examines how Bhutanese policies have an impact on women's participation in socio-economic development. It will begin with looking at how policy is made in Bhutan, and the context of gender policy as it currently stands in Bhutan. This includes a review of gender issues in all current and draft policy, as well as an in depth review of the Economic Development Policy 2010, National Education Policy, National Youth Policy 2011 and the National Employment Policy.

The review will also include examples from other countries of relevance. The methodology and approach for the review is based on the principles enshrined in three international documents of the United Nations which Bhutan has committed to. These include the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Sustainable Development Goals.

### 1.1 BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

The Beijing Platform for Action was agreed by governments of the world in 1995 at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China. The Mission Statement claims that it aims at "removing all the obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making". The document includes 12 critical areas of concern, each with its own strategic objectives and actions. The critical areas of concern are: women and poverty; education and training of women; women and health; violence against women; women in armed conflict; women and the economy; women in power and decision-making; institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; human rights of women; Women in the media; women and the environment; and the girl-child. Of specific reference to national policy in relation to gender is the objective on institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women. Within this critical area of concern is the strategic objective to integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects (H 2). The actions to be taken by governments in this respect are to<sup>1</sup>:

- (a) Seek to ensure that before policy decisions are taken, an analysis of their impact on women and men, respectively, is carried out;*
- (b) Regularly review national policies, programmes and projects, as well as their implementation, evaluating the impact of employment and income policies in order to guarantee that women are direct beneficiaries of development and that their full contribution to development, both remunerated and unremunerated, is considered in economic policy and planning;*
- (c) Promote national strategies and aims on equality between women and men in order to eliminate obstacles to the exercise of women's rights and eradicate all forms of discrimination against women;*
- (d) Work with members of legislative bodies, as appropriate, to promote a gender perspective in all legislation and policies;*
- (e) Give all ministries the mandate to review policies and programmes from a gender perspective and in the light of the Platform for Action; locate the responsibility for the implementation of that mandate at the highest possible level; establish and/or strengthen an inter-ministerial coordination structure to carry out this mandate, to monitor progress and to network with relevant machineries.*

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<sup>1</sup> Section 204

By national machinery<sup>2</sup>:

- (a) Facilitate the formulation and implementation of government policies on equality between women and men, develop appropriate strategies and methodologies, and promote coordination and cooperation within the central Government in order to ensure mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all policy-making processes;
- (b) Promote and establish cooperative relationships with relevant branches of government, centres for women's studies and research, academic and educational institutions, the private sector, the media, non-governmental organizations, especially women's organizations, and all other actors of civil society;
- (c) Undertake activities focusing on legal reform with regard, inter alia, to the family, conditions of employment, social security, income tax, equal opportunity in education, positive measures to promote the advancement of women, and the perception of attitudes and a culture favourable to equality, as well as promote a gender perspective in legal policy and programming reforms;
- (d) Promote the increased participation of women as both active agents and beneficiaries of the development process, which would result in an improvement in the quality of life for all;
- (e) Establish direct links with national, regional and international bodies dealing with the advancement of women;
- (f) Provide training and advisory assistance to government agencies in order to integrate a gender perspective in their policies and programmes.

In respect to these actions, this review addresses section 204 (b) to regularly review national policies, programmes and projects. The national machinery in Bhutan which addresses the needs and concerns for women is the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC). The vision of the NCWC is "A happy nation where children, women & men live in harmony with equality and respect in all spheres of life." The mission is "To protect and promote the rights of women through gender-responsive interventions", and the objective of the organisation is to review, reform, initiate and support policies, plans, projects and activities from a gender equality perspective. As such, the functions of NCWC amongst others are to:

- Review and formulate gender responsive and child sensitive policies
- Advocate for gender equality and child sensitive Legislations, Policies and Plans
- Create awareness, and sensitization for all stakeholders
- Coordinate and Partner with stakeholders on issues pertaining to women and children
- Coordinate the preparation and submission of reports at the national, regional and international levels (i.e. CEDAW)

## **1.2 Convention on All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is an international treaty adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly. Bhutan ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on 31 August 1981.

The concluding comments from the CEDAW Committee states (Paragraph 18):

*The Committee requests that the State party implement, as a matter of urgency, sustained policies aimed at the promotion of women's full, active and equal participation in decision-making in all areas of public and political life. In particular, the Committee encourages the State party to review criteria required for certain positions when such requirements turn into obstacles or barriers to women's access to decision-making.*

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<sup>2</sup> Section 205

*Policies:*

*The National Commission for Women and Children are now a part of the policy review protocol, which enables review of policies from a gender perspective. Therefore, while no particular policy has been initiated, there are opportunities to engender other policies of the Royal Government thus creating an enabling environment for women.*

This review takes place in the context of the implementation of this section of the CEDAW Concluding comments, thus both fulfilling the review of policies from a gender perspective, as well as suggesting areas to engender policies to create an enabling environment for women.

### **1.3 Sustainable Development Goals**

In September 2015 countries of the world adopted a set of goals to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda. Each goal has specific targets to be achieved over the next 15 years and require national reporting to the United Nations. There are 17 goals in total and goal 5 focuses exclusively on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. It includes 9 actions as listed below.

- 5.1 End all forms of **discrimination** against all women and girls everywhere*
- 5.2 Eliminate all forms of **violence** against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation*
- 5.3 Eliminate all **harmful practices**, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation*
- 5.4 Recognize and value **unpaid care and domestic** work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate*
- 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for **leadership** at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life*
- 5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and **reproductive health and reproductive rights** as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences*
- 5.7 Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to **economic resources**, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of **property, financial services, inheritance** and natural resources, in accordance with national laws*
- 5.8 Enhance the use of **enabling technology**, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women*
- 5.9 Adopt and strengthen sound policies and **enforceable legislation** for the promotion of **gender equality** and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels*

These new international gender goals provide a clear framework for national policy addressing the needs of women and girls to the year 2015 and as such should be reflected in new and emerging policies to ensure international standards are met. In addition many of the other goals include gender specific targets (included in Annex 4). These will be referred to throughout the policy review, along with the Articles included in CEDAW, and the critical areas of concern from the Beijing Platform for Action.

## **2) POLICY MAKING PROCESS IN BHUTAN**

### **2.1 PROTOCOL FOR POLICY FORMULATION**

The Royal Government of Bhutan has set a Protocol for Policy Formulation. This document addresses mainstreaming gender throughout the policy formulation process stating:

*The formulation of any policy will begin with the preparation of a Concept Note of maximum 3 pages by the proponent Sector, which is submitted to the GNHC for endorsement. The Concept Note should clearly state the following:*

*Identify opportunities and alternatives to integrate GNH principles and crosscutting issues such as environment, poverty, climate change, gender, etc. within the policy.*

*The Draft Policy shall be made available for comments on a public domain (web -based or other means) and shared with relevant Research Institutes and key stakeholders for mainstreaming cross-cutting issues such as gender, environment, poverty, climate change, etc.*

*The revised Draft Policy shall be subjected to the Gross National Happiness (GNH) Policy Screening Tool by the Proponent Sector and the GNHCS (as two separate exercises).*

*v. The Gender Focal Point of the proponent sector, environment representatives and other external key stakeholders shall be involved in the screening exercise.*

*Format for Policy Protocol Report*

*c. Mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues (as appropriate)*

*i. Gender:*

- *Specific gender inequalities existing;*
- *Causes of such inequalities and opportunities to address them;*
- *Are there any targeted specific initiatives proposed?*
- *Challenges & constraints for attaining gender equality.*

This document provides a clear framework for addressing gender in policy formulation, fulfilling the CEDAW Concluding Comments requirement. However, in practice it does not appear that the process has been undertaken in a rigorous manner as many of the policies developed in the past several years either do not address gender adequately or in many cases address gender at all.

### **2.2 IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS AND GUIDELINES**

The mechanism developed for the implementation of the protocol includes a Mainstreaming Reference Group which has its secretariat based in the Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC) and the members are from different government offices. The TOR for the committee includes the integration of gender, environment, climate change, disaster management and poverty (GECDP) into national policies, plans and programmes through sensitization and capacity building. Two GECDP mainstreaming Guidelines at the sectoral and local government levels were developed to support mainstreaming efforts in the 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan (2013-2018). A network of Gender Focal Points across relevant sectors is responsible for identifying gender issues and addressing the gaps.

In 2015 the Department of Local Governance, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, produced a publication: *Mainstreaming Gender, Environment, Climate-Change, Disaster and Poverty into the Development Policies,*



*Plans and Programmes in Bhutan Experiences, challenges and lessons.* This publication interestingly does not include an approach to gender analysis to guide the process of gender mainstreaming with a technical approach, rather talking in general terms. There is a need for a more specific technical set of guidelines for gender.

The GNHC has developed a basic set of guidelines to mainstream gender into policy, however this is very brief, in addition the NCWC has developed a Gender Mainstreaming Guideline which includes sections on legislation and policies, as well as programmes and projects, however it is not clear how this has been implemented.

In terms of personnel to conduct the mainstreaming process, it is noted that the NCWC developed a Terms of Reference for the Gender Focal Points (GFPs) in 2008 the Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC) endorsed including the TOR of GFPs into their regular responsibilities. However GFPs are not gender specialists per se, and in many cases they do not have formal training or expertise in the sector. It was reported in interviews with both Gender Focal Points and other government staff that often these personnel are also junior. The National Action Plan for Gender 2013-2018 also confirms this finding, stating that GFPs themselves recognise their own limited skills in gender analysis to conduct the TOR. Although trainings have been held, many of these people have moved onto other roles, and others require more training and capacity building. A simple one off training is not adequate to conduct this role.

#### **Case study: Vietnam's National Machinery for Women and gender mainstreaming in legislation**

The Viet Nam model of national women's machinery is a useful example of gender architecture to assist gender mainstreaming in policy. Viet Nam has a National Committee for the Advancement of Women, which is responsible for the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2011-2020 with a secretariat based in the Gender Equality Department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The Committee has a representative from each Ministry in the country and this person is always the Vice Director of the Ministry, ensuring the senior status of the personnel. Each Vice Director chairs a Committee for the Advancement of Women (CAW) within each Ministry which develops its own Ministerial Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality. In addition each province in the country also has a CAW and a Provincial Plan of Action on Gender equality to address local gender issues. At the level of the National Assembly there is a Committee for Social Affairs which has the mandate to mainstream gender into policy, and they work closely with the Women's Caucus of the National Assembly. In addition, each year the Committee of Social Affairs chooses three pieces of draft legislation from which to develop a detailed gender analysis. For these pieces of legislation UN Women provided a national and an international Gender Expert to work with the Committee to address the gender specific issues and entry points.

### **2.3 NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON GENDER (2008-2013)**

Previously a National Action Plan for Gender (NAPG) 2008-2013 outlined an overall Strategy for Gender Mainstreaming. This 171 page document provided an excellent outline for how to mainstream gender in the 7 critical areas of good governance; economic development (focusing on employment), education and training; health; aging, mental health and disabilities; violence against women; and prejudices and stereotypes. The Plan of Action for each of these areas identified outcomes, outputs and activities as well as indicators and targets. These action plans covered many of the areas of the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW Articles and the Millennium Development Goals, and each were referenced in the document. This NAPG provided an excellent guideline for policy interventions in each of these critical areas. While an NAPG was not developed for this current Five Year Plan (2013-2018), many of the concerns, targets and indicators remain relevant.

## 2.4 ELEVENTH FIVE-YEAR PLAN 2013-2018

The Eleventh Five Year Plan: Self Reliance and Inclusive Green Socio-Economic Development 2013-2018 addresses gender as a cross cutting issue as well as providing some stand-alone gender sections in various segments of the main document. In the second chapter which deals with the current situation the document sets out the approach for the Government of Bhutan during this period for women's empowerment and gender equality. It states:

*The platform for planning and programming in the Eleventh Plan is provided by the findings and recommendations of the review of the NPAG and the Gender Equality Diagnostic Study of Selected Sectors (GEDSS) namely Education, Urban Development, Environment, Energy, Private Sector, Transport, Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods, and Work and Unemployment. Other strategies in the Eleventh Plan would include: creating a gender responsive legal environment through development of a Gender Equality Law including special temporary measures such as quotas to enhance women's participation in governance; implementation of the Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting Strategy; strengthening gender mainstreaming initiatives/capacity at all levels including the private sector; collecting and using sex-disaggregated data; awareness programs at all levels; enhancing women's participation in employment and economic activities; and effective monitoring and implementation of current laws, rules and regulations, policies, plans and programs.*

Interestingly this 5 Year Plan states that a strategy to create a gender responsive legal environment would be through the development of a Gender Equality Law which would include temporary special measures, a gender budgeting process, gender mainstreaming initiatives and capacity, sex disaggregated data collection and effective monitoring and implementation of current laws, regulations and policies. As such, this policy review should aim to provide guidance on where current policy is lacking a gender analysis and targets and suggest these areas to be covered in the proposed Gender Law.

### Recommendations

Drawing from regional and international case studies and success (including the Vietnamese case above) to strengthen the process for implementation of gender mainstreaming in policy the following recommendations are made:

- Ensure that each Ministry identifies a senior personnel to adopt the Gender Focal Point role and mandate annual training to ensure capacity building with changes in personnel;
- Ensure Gender Focal Points have their role of mainstreaming gender in their Terms of Reference and that this is followed in their appraisal process with the allocation of 5-10% of their time for this task; and
- Revise the GNHC guidelines for gender mainstreaming in policy to provide a higher degree of assistance and direction in how to mainstream gender in policy.

### 3) ANALYSIS OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN POLICY IN BHUTAN

This review is limited to looking at policy, as such it cannot cover the gamut of legislation including Decrees and Acts, however it makes reference to the Domestic Violence Prevention Act of 2013, as this is the only Act that addresses gender issues exclusively. It is also important to look at the two highest levels of policy in the country- the Constitution and the Eleventh Five Year Plan: Self Reliance and Inclusive Green Socio-Economic Development 2013-2018. Annex 1 includes a summary list of all the gender issues raised in current and draft policy in Bhutan. Annex 2 contains a full listing of all the gender text of the policy documents, excluding the Domestic Violence Act (as the whole Act is on gender), and the 5 Year Plan, as the gender references in this document takes a full annex (3) of its own.

**Overall the policy in Bhutan has minimal reference to gender issues with the exception of the policies on Population and Youth.** Policies with some significant references include Cottage, Small and Medium Industries and Agricultural Marketing. Most of the other policies have major omissions on gender in their key areas. Ten of the 35 policies have no mention of gender issues at all, including some core areas where gender issues exist including Access and Benefit Sharing, Renewable Energy and Forests.

The focus of the gender issues addressed in policies focus generally on issues of discrimination and sexual harassment, domestic violence, health, education, unemployment, child care, women in enterprise, and physical infrastructure (toilets and hostels). These are traditional areas where gender issues are considered in policy, and there is a high level of cross over in these areas between policies. The Beijing Platform for Action is not mentioned or referenced in any policy and critical areas of concern which are not mentioned, but are relevant in Bhutan, include the environment, women in power and decision-making and institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women. In addition the key area of climate change is not addressed in policy at all.

One reference is made to CEDAW in the Draft Social Protection Policy and it is also referenced in the Eleventh Five Year Plan. The only special temporary measures which are suggested are in the area of the agricultural marketing policy to optimise women's participation in agricultural marketing and credit facilities, and in the Eleventh Five Year Plan which addresses quotas to enhance women's participation in governance.

In regard to the key targets of SDG 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls there is inadequate consideration of recognizing and valuing unpaid care and domestic work; ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life; reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, financial services, and natural resources; enhancing the use of enabling technology; and adopting enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

#### **4) DETAILED GENDER ANALYSIS OF POLICY IN EMPLOYMENT, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, COTTAGE, SMALL AND MEDIUM INDUSTRIES, EDUCATION AND YOUTH.**

Five pieces of national policy will be examined in this review, in addition to references made to other national policy (see annexes) and the National Plan of Action for Gender (NAPG) 2008-2013. The reason for the inclusion of references to other policies is that there is presently a lot of overlap on issues of gender between policies and some areas that are relevant to some policies are actually contained not in those policies, but in others. This is not surprising given that gender is a cross cutting issue, however the lack of a comprehensive collection of these issues in one area is. It means that the issues relevant to, for example, employment, may be contained in the Business Infrastructure Policy or the draft National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Development, yet not addressed in the Employment Policy itself. This is understandable when the other policies have been passed since the original policy, but the need to bring all references together is essential, especially when the said policies will be reviewed.

The NAPG is also a key document referred to as many of the gaps in the current policy were previously addressed in the NAPG, and as such fulfilled the Beijing Platform for Action (PFA), CEDAW and SDG targets. However with the end of the NAPG there is currently no policy mechanism that addresses these issues. The recommendations and conclusions of this report are based on the practicalities of how to address the lack of effective gender mainstreaming in the national policies of employment, economic development, cottage, small and medium industries and education in Bhutan at present. As there is little opportunity to add these issues until the policy is revised, it is suggested that a new NAPG is developed to cover these gaps. When policy is reviewed it is suggested that the areas set out below from the Beijing PFA, CEDAW and the SDGs are addressed in these policies. In many cases this could involve the continuation or modification of the old outcomes, outputs and activities and indicators from the previous plan, as well as the addition of new ones to cover the areas previously not covered.

The basic analysis is that the policies of employment, economic development, cottage, small and medium industries and education currently have not mainstreamed gender adequately, but that the Youth Policy illustrates an example of where gender has been mainstreamed well, and also stands as a good practice globally in this sector.

##### **4. a) EMPLOYMENT**

In evaluating the current policy on education in Bhutanese policy the text below uses the framework of the Beijing Platform for Action Critical Area F on the economy; CEDAW Article 11 in employment and Sustainable Development Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

The National Employment Policy of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2013 does not mainstream gender, but addresses it as a separate section under equal employment opportunities which includes:

- *Targeted employment and self-employment programmes shall be developed for unemployed women, physically challenged and vulnerable groups in dzongkhags which are identified to have higher unemployment. A study shall be conducted to assess and map their needs to enable targeted policy formulation for them.*
- *Gender friendly working conditions/environment shall be promoted at workplaces through day care centres, crèches and other child care facilities at or near workplaces to encourage greater workforce participation of women with children.*

- *Women Self Help Groups shall be promoted and further supported by the Royal Government to ensure better access to credit, infrastructure and skills for female entrepreneurs.*

## **Beijing Platform for Action**

Critical Area F Women and the Economy: Inequality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources

### Targets

*F.1. Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources*

The employment policy looks at this issue in respect to employment for unemployed women and access to credit but it does not consider the wider issues of resources or working conditions other than access to child care and creches. The NAPG includes an activity to conduct a study on the factors influencing unemployment of women and men and also looks appropriate working conditions in terms of sexual harassment, the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees (although no gender specific issues addressed), and references the Labour and Employment Act<sup>3</sup> which addresses non-discrimination to gender, flexi-time (breastfeeding), harassment, maternity and paternity leave and the right to equal pay for equal work. In addition it addresses the complaints board for employment related issues and women's involvement in the informal sector.

The Constitution addresses the elimination of discrimination and exploitation against women including trafficking, prostitution, abuse, violence, harassment and intimidation at work in both public and private spheres.

National Occupational Health and Safety Policy (draft) addresses specific protection such as pregnant workers, and the potentially exploited, including female workers and informal workers and the issue of sexual harassment. The National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Development (draft) looks into issues of maternity, child care and breastfeeding.

*F.2. Facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade*

In terms of women's equal access to employment the only reference to this is not in the Employment Policy but in the draft National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Development states: "eliminate all forms of gender discrimination in every sphere with equality of gender participation of policy formulation and implementation in employment". The NAPG also includes an output to develop an enabling and supportive environment for women's employment.

*F.3. Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women*

The Employment Policy addresses this issue for unemployed women with targeted employment and self – employment programmes, and better access to credit and infrastructure and skills for women entrepreneurs. The Agricultural and Marketing Policy (2013) addresses women's access to agricultural marketing services and addresses special programmes to optimise women's participation in agricultural marketing and credit facilities. The Food and Nutrition Security Policy (2014) identifies microcredit programs directed at women and improving sustainable access to micro credit to small-holders.

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<sup>3</sup> Note that this is only a policy review, not a legislative review, hence all the legislation and associated Acts are not addressed in this paper.

In addition business services are a focus for the NAPG with an output focused on the increased involvement of women in all aspects of the renewable natural resources sector as well as developing capacity and technical skills for women's participation in the private sector.

*F.4. Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks*

This is addressed in the Employment Policy from the perspective of women entrepreneurs through women's self help groups. The draft National Population Policy (2013) addresses promoting entrepreneurial and employment opportunities for women; the Business Infrastructure Policy identifies providing greater opportunities for women in the rural areas/small towns/villages with a percentage of zones for women; and the Food and Nutrition Policy (2014) addresses implementing microcredit projects for women and sustainable access to micro credit.

Broader issues of capacity building for women in the private sector are addressed in more detail in the NAPG. The activities in the economic development section of the NAPG include: raising awareness of the private sector on gender issues; develop gender sensitive private sector and SME policies, guidelines, regulations and legislation; establish self-help groups and cooperatives; a study on the nature and extent of women's involvement in the informal sector; provision of training on leadership for women entrepreneurs; an identification of new opportunities available in the market; trainings on business management and technical skills for women in rural and urban areas; and micro finance specially for rural women.

*F.5. Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination*

Not addressed in the Employment Policy however the Constitution refers to equality before the law with no discrimination based on gender and the 2011 Draft National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Development refers to the equality of gender participation of policy formulation and implementation in education, training, employment, healthcare, recreation and shelter. Labour and Employment Act addresses non-discrimination to gender.

*F.6. Promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men*

The Employment Policy states "Gender friendly working conditions/environment shall be promoted at workplaces through day care centres, crèches and other child care facilities at or near workplaces to encourage greater workforce participation of women with children". The Business Infrastructure Policy also addresses the provision of equal opportunities to participate in economic development through the inclusion of facilities like crèches and day care centres. The draft National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Development acknowledges working women without extended family support and integrating early child care development intervention for pregnant mothers and children from birth to two years of age. Other issues are addressed as above on maternity. In addition the NAPG includes an activity for the media to encourage men to share in household responsibilities and to conduct a study on the division of labour (productive and reproductive).

**CEDAW: Article 11**

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

*(a) The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings;*

This issue is not currently addressed in Bhutanese policy.

*(b) The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment;*

These issues are currently not addressed in Bhutanese policy, but addressed in some aspects of the Labour and Employment Act.

*(c) The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training;*

This is not addressed in the Employment Policy but the NAPG 2008-2013 identifies “female access to vocational training institutes (VTIs) increased and skills expanded beyond traditionally male dominated areas”. The Labour and Employment Act addresses non-discrimination to gender.

*(d) The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work;*

Equal pay is addressed not in policy but in the Labour and Employment Act which states the right to equal pay for equal work. There is also the general statement in the Constitution around equality before the law with no discrimination based on sex, and the reference in the draft National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Development which references equality of gender participation of policy formulation and implementation, education, training and employment.

*(e) The right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave;*

The Draft Social Protection Policy states it will not discriminate on gender and will promote gender equity issues.

*(g) The right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the function of reproduction.*

This is not addressed in the Employment Policy but the National Occupational Health and Safety Policy (draft) states that it is gender friendly and references specific women as vulnerable. It states: “Vulnerable groups include those requiring specific protection such as pregnant workers, and the potentially exploited, including female workers and informal workers”. In The Civil Service Act of Bhutan, 2010, provides for safe and healthy working conditions to perform duties and equal opportunities for employment in the civil service.

*2. In order to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, States Parties shall take appropriate measures:*

*(a) To prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status;*

*(b) To introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances;*

*(c) To encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities;*

*(d) To provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them.*

Maternity issues are not addressed in the Employment Policy however there is the reference to day care facilities. As stated above the National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Development 2011 (draft) addresses these issues as well as the National Occupational Health and Safety Policy (draft) which addresses the protection of pregnant workers, and the Labour and Employment Act.

## **SDG Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**

*8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value*

These issues are not addressed in the Employment Policy however equal pay for equal work is in the Labour and Employment Act. This should however be stated clearly in policy.

The youth aspect of employment is addressed in the Youth Policy (2011) which addresses young women disadvantaged from unemployment.

The NPAG addresses ageing mental health and disabilities as one of its seven areas of focus although it does not address employment issues but rather health education, rehabilitation and social protection. As such this is an area that needs to be addressed by policy in Bhutan.

*8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment*

The labour rights issue is addressed in the Employment Policy where it states: “All employees shall be informed and made aware of their rights. Advocacy to increase awareness on labour rights shall also be strengthened”. The safety issue is addressed thus: “There shall be better enforcement and monitoring of labour regulations to ensure safe, non-discriminatory and better working conditions for all employees” and “Work-safety insurance shall be provided for all employees and more so for occupations which are deemed to be hazardous and accident-prone, to ensure that compensation for workers is safeguarded. ” The issue of migrant workers and precarious employment is not addressed in the Employment Policy, nor are they mentioned in relation to gender in other policies, this is an area that needs to be stated in policy in Bhutan during revisions.

## **Conclusions**

The Employment Policy does not mainstream gender issues adequately, limiting itself to the issues of unemployed women, gender friendly working conditions (which are not articulated beyond creches and child care facilities), and assistance to women entrepreneurs.

Many of the issues on gender and employment as advocated by the international standards of the Beijing PFA, CEDAW and the new SDGs are contained in aspects of the Constitution in a general sense, as well as in other policies. Some of the most important principles are contained in the Labour and Employment Act which addresses non-discrimination to gender, flexi-time, harassment, maternity and paternity leave and the right to equal pay for equal work, however to fulfill international obligations this needs to be enshrined in policy.

The Eleventh Five Year Plan addresses “women’s lower participation in regular paid employment (6.1 percent as compared to 17.8 percent for men) and substantial engagement in agricultural occupations (38.2 percent against 23.7 percent for men) and the fact that 73 percent of our employed women are in the agricultural sector warrants further assessment and special interventions on skills development and other economic empowerment measures. Progress has been forged in the area of providing social safety for women in the workplace through the enactment of the Labour and Employment Act 2007, although enforcement may need to be strengthened in the Eleventh Plan.” These issues illustrate that more policy interventions are needed to address women’s roles in the informal and agricultural sectors to address the low rate of women in regular paid employment. There is also a need to further address workplace issues for women which are not addressed clearly in the EFYP.

An excellent Gender Equality Diagnostic was conducted by Cornell University of Bhutan’s work and unemployment sector in 2014 and the recommendations from this document form an excellent basis for any revisions to the Employment Policy. Instead of repeating all the issues therein, this is included at the end of this section.



There are additional areas for women's employment raised in the Beijing PFA, CEDAW and the SDGs which are currently not addressed adequately in any of the policies which includes access to information and technology, occupational segregation in the labour force, selection criteria in the processes of employment, issues of retirement, employment opportunities and discrimination for women with disabilities and issues for migrant women workers. There is a need to articulate sexual harassment clearly in the employment policy as well as the principle of equal pay for equal work.

In respect to employment, the Concluding Comments from the 2009 CEDAW Report states:

*The Committee recommends that the State party take effective measures to ensure access to remedial mechanisms, including access to justice, for women victims of sexual harassment. The Committee also recommends that the fundamental rights of all migrant workers, including women, be taken into consideration, including their right to basic health care.*

In addressing this issue the CEDAW Committee recommends:

*The creation of adequate job opportunities with decent pay for rural women, as well as the provision of a broad range of support services for women in the informal sector and the creation of access to market facilities. The Committee also calls upon the State party to provide social benefits to home-workers and to provide in its next periodic report sex-disaggregated data on poverty.*

In addition, a major issue which is not addressed in the Beijing PFA, CEDAW and the SDGs is the area of unpaid work, and for this reason the case studies in this section deal with this issue, as it is a key area that other countries in the region are currently addressing and is an emerging issue for the future.

#### **SHORT TERM AND LONG TERM ACTION PLAN**

The Employment Policy itself is limited to three very specific areas without a general reference to overall gender principles. It is suggested that a clause be added, in line with the Labour and Employment Act, but reaching further and encompassing a clear articulation of the issues as addressed in the Beijing PFA, CEDAW and SDGs

As there are several Acts and various policies which address employment issues for women, yet these are not addressed directly in the Employment Policy, there is a need to at least make references to these other gender policy issues in any review of the Employment Policy (long term), as well as the compilation into one national document for ease of reference between policies (short term).

In the medium term it is considered that a new NAPG continue to track the issues as outlined in the Economic Development Section of the previous NAPG, especially in areas where the targets have not yet been met. Developing a new NAPG would create a comprehensive framework to show how the employment issues are relevant across additional policies such as the National Human Resource Development Policy, National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Development, Cottage, Small and Medium Industries, National Occupational Health and Safety, Agricultural Marketing, Social Protection, Business Infrastructure and Vocational Education and Training. All these policies relate to employment issues for women and to ensure all issues related to women's employment are compiled in one place and cross referenced in a framework is needed.

## **CASE STUDIES: Unpaid work by women**

### **Calculating women's contribution to GDP through unpaid work: an example from South Korea**

South Korea used three valuation methods to measure housework performed by fulltime housewives. Calculations based on the results estimated that women's unpaid work amounted to between 13-23 per cent of GDP in 1999.

South Korea developed policy recommendations based on these results including (a) the need for insurance for full time housewives, (b) family friendly policies in the areas of family support, childcare, after-school care and equality of opportunity at work and (c) sharing of conjugal assets in cases of marital divorce.

### **Capturing unremunerated work: the case of India**

India was one of the first countries to carry out a time-use survey to capture the contribution of women to the economy through unremunerated work. Influenced by the CEDAW and Beijing pronouncements in 1995, India undertook a survey to quantify unpaid work as an important step towards ensuring consideration of unpaid workers in the formulation of policies on development and welfare. The findings showed that Indian women, rural and urban, although performing fewer hours on Systems of National Accounts (SNA) activities, perform greater numbers of hours on extended SNA activities such as housework. The share of women in the total work, both paid and unpaid, came to 55 per cent of total work hours performed by all persons.

Some critical policy issues that emerged from the results included:

- The total GDP of the country was largely underestimated because it did not include the goods and services for self-consumption, mostly produced by women;
- The division of the total labour force in a household into paid and unpaid workers generates a hierarchy that reflects the lower status of women both in the household and the labour market;
- Capturing statistics related to unpaid work would enable realistic planning for employment and skills training.
- These statistics also enable the realistic mapping of labour intensive and recurring activities mostly done by women and the identification of strategies to alleviate women's time burdens: water supply schemes, ensuring the availability of fodder and fuel and the setting up of childcare facilities.

Source: United Nations (2003). Integrating Unpaid Work into National Policies. New York: ESCAP and UNDP. pp.

**CASE STUDY: Gender Mainstreaming in the European Employment Strategy (EES)**

The European Employment strategy has adopted a dual approach of gender mainstreaming and specific measures. Since the beginning of the Strategy, Member States have made considerable efforts to strengthen gender equality policy in the employment field. These efforts include actions to increase the employment rate of women, to decrease women's unemployment rate, to tackle the segregation of the labour market and to close the gender pay gap.

A central role is given to policies of reconciliation between work and family life for both women and men, especially through the provision of services for children and other dependants. Also important is the reintegration of women returning to the labour market after an absence. Moreover, there has been a reinforced commitment to integrate the gender equality objective in all employment policies. It is important to mention that the guidelines on strengthening equal opportunities policies for women and men did not only address Member States, but also aimed at involving social partners to reduce the gender gaps.

Source: ILO (no date). Policy Brief 11: Guidelines on Gender in Employment Policies—Labour Market Institutions and Policies. p. 5.

The analysis and recommendations for the employment sector contained in the Cornell University study of Bhutan Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors, ADB 2014 also stand as key guidance for the sector (as overleaf).

## APPENDIX A. Tip Sheet on Integrating Gender Perspectives in Analysis and Planning in the Sector

STEP 1: What are the positive outcomes for women or gender equality that could be achieved through gender mainstreaming?	STEP 2: What are some of the questions we should ask to better understand gender equality issues and women's needs in these areas?	STEP 3: What steps or strategies could be considered or adapted to move forward in these areas?
<p>Policy, planning, and decision making in the sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Increased awareness among decision makers of gender disparities in the labor market</li> <li>→ More detailed data and research to clarify issues and inform human resource development strategies for equitable outcomes</li> <li>→ More consistent attention to gender equality issues in analyses, strategies, and legislation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do labor market surveys provide the sex-disaggregated data required to assess and compare labor market experience of women and men (both youth and adults)?</li> <li>• Do planners and decision makers have the knowledge and skills to assess gender equality issues in the labor market?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocate resources and expertise to ensuring that the labor market data available to planners is sufficient to assess whether opportunities and outcomes are equitable for women and men and to identify issues to be addressed.</li> <li>• Identify gaps in knowledge about the labor market experience of women as compared to men (both youth and adults), and allocate resources and expertise for studies and research to bridge these gaps.</li> <li>• Establish links between government officials and gender equality advocates (academics, research institutes, and nongovernment organizations).</li> </ul>
<p>Employment services for jobseekers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Equitable access by women to employment services</li> <li>→ Shorter duration of unemployment for women jobseekers</li> <li>→ More women find jobs that make full use of their skills and knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there data to assess whether there is equal access and benefit by young women and men to employment services? What do users of services think about the services received (and how does the feedback of young women and men compare)?</li> <li>• Are officials and service providers aware of commitments to equal employment opportunities, and is this reflected in the services provided?</li> <li>• Have outreach efforts to employers been made to promote equitable consideration of women candidates and to ensure employers are aware of the supply of women graduates across professional fields?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that data on services provided is consistently collected by sex, and that follow-up studies on graduates also disaggregate data, to allow better identification of issues to be addressed.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for employment services officials to increase their awareness of gaps in equal opportunities and biases against women in the labor market, and to identify ways they can contribute to strengthening equal opportunities in implementing their mandates.</li> <li>• Engage sector and industry associations as partners in promotion of equitable employment practices for women and men and better knowledge of related legislation.</li> </ul>
<p>Technical and vocational training for youth provided in technical training institutes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Increased access by female youth to training in occupations that are in demand and well-paid</li> <li>→ Increased numbers of girls with technical and vocational skills in the labor force</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are girls and young women encouraged to consider the full range of technical and vocational options on offer (and not only training for skills generally considered "suitable" for women)?</li> <li>• Comparing courses in which girls predominate with those of boys, are both in equal demand in the labor market and likely to have similar levels of pay?</li> <li>• Are private sector training providers made aware of commitments to equal employment opportunities for women and the responsibilities they have to reflect that commitment in the training they provide?</li> <li>• What are the post-training job placement rates of girls compared to boys? How effective have post-training placement services been in assisting girls to find employment?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake outreach in schools to increase awareness among students of labor market realities, including skills in demand and average wages in skilled work, and encourage both girls and boys to widen their perspectives on options for girls.</li> <li>• Set targets and devise implementation strategies to increase the number of girls in market-relevant training.</li> <li>• Undertake outreach to employers in support of consideration of girls with training in "nontraditional" skills.</li> <li>• Explore the potential for mentorship programs to increase awareness of women's participation in "nontraditional" areas and to provide support for new entrants.</li> </ul>

#### **4 b) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY OF THE KINGDOM OF BHUTAN, 2010 and COTTAGE, SMALL AND MEDIUM INDUSTRIES POLICY OF THE KINGDOM OF BHUTAN, 2012**

The current Economic Development Policy of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2010 references issues related to cottage and small industries as one of its key references to gender (see below). As such, the Cottage, Small and Medium Industries Policy 2012 is considered in the analysis with the Economic and Development Policy using the framework of the Beijing Platform for Action (Critical Area A on poverty and F on Women and the Economy); CEDAW (Article 11) and the Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all).

The Economic Development Policy of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2010, references only one gender specific section as identified below:

*7.3.2 The Royal Government shall promote CSI to generate employment, support equitable distribution of income and bring about balanced regional development. The CSI Policy shall be developed within two years of the establishment of the Department of CSI. Special focus on women's enterprises shall be given within the CSI industries development framework.*

This illustrates that most areas of the economic development policy do not adequately mainstream gender issues. There is a need to address issues specific to women's needs as they are often not able to access economic development on an equitable basis to men, and should not only be relegated to only that of cottage and small industries.

The Cottage, Small and Medium Industries (CSMI) Policy of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2012 has three references to gender issues as identified below.

- *Promote women entrepreneurship in CSMI to maximise the economic contribution of both genders.*
- *Implement effective Micro Finance Institutions (MFI), especially economic development, gender equality and poverty reduction.*
- *Match labour market demand with the supply of human capital, with an emphasis on gender equality.*

#### **Beijing Platform For Action**

As economic development addresses both the critical areas of women and poverty, as well as women and the Economy (Inequality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources), both these areas are covered below, albeit in the case of the latter the employment issues are omitted as they are addressed in the employment policy analysis above).

#### **Critical Area A— Women and Poverty: Persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women**

##### **Targets:**

*A.1 Review, adopt and maintain macroeconomic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty*

Not addressed in National Economic Development Policy although the Business Infrastructure Policy states women are provided with equal opportunities to participate in economic development though the inclusion of facilities like crèches and day-care services. The Employment Policy directly addresses issues for unemployed women, however macroeconomic issues address many other issues which impact heavily on women that are discussed in other sections as outlined below.

*A.2: Revise laws and administrative practices to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources*

This is addressed in national policy with respect to credit as an economic resource (addressed below). Economic resources not addressed include land, inheritance, technology, information, economic networks, advisory services and markets. Access to these key resources may inhibit women being able to take advantage of new economic opportunities.

*A.3: Provide women with access to savings and credit mechanisms and institutions*

This is addressed in the Economic Development Policy as referenced to the CSMI and within the CSMI Policy as promoting women entrepreneurship to maximise the economic contribution of both genders, and to implement effective Micro Finance Institutions (MFI), especially economic development, gender equality and poverty reduction. Many other policies also refer to credit, SME/CSMI and women's entrepreneurship such as Food and Nutrition Security, Business Infrastructure, Agricultural Marketing and the National Population Policy.

The NAPG addresses female productive labour force participation increased and women's participation in the private sector as outcomes. This includes the output on capacity and technical skills developed for women's participation in the private sector and the output to develop gender sensitive private sector and Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) policies, guidelines, rules and regulations, and legislation.

*A.4. Develop gender-based methodologies and conduct research to address the feminization of poverty*

Not addressed in national policy

The areas above are not addressed adequately by the National Economic Development Policy of Bhutan 2010 but the National Plan of Action for Gender (NPAG) 2008-2010 includes references to several of these areas through the outcomes of female productive labour force participation increased, unemployment amongst women reduced, especially in urban areas; rural poverty reduced; and women's participation in the private sector increased. The outputs include: an enabling and supportive environment for women's employment increased; increased involvement of women in all aspects of the RNR sector; capacity and technical skills developed for women's participation in the private sector and a specific study on influencing unemployment among women and men. However a stronger focus on the analysis and strategies that affect women in poverty, and how women are impacted by wider fiscal economic development policies such as the monetary regime and central bank policy, exchange rate policy, fiscal and public sector restructuring.

**Critical Area F—Women and the Economy: Inequality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources**

*Targets:*

*F.1 Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources*

See employment policy above for first part of the target. In regard to control over economic resources, the Economic Development Policy states "The Royal Government shall support equitable distribution of income" however it is not explained how this will be done. Wider economic resources than income are not discussed such as gender equitable distribution of land or other financial assets.

## *F.2. Facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade*

The Economic Development Policy, Cottage, Small and Medium Industries and the NAPG only address the issue of equal access to resources, markets and trade through women's participation rates in the private sector and CSMI/SMEs and their associations. Training and capacity building is addressed in these documents, but the strategies are only addressed specifically in the NAPG which includes the output of an enabling environment for women's employment which addresses provision of women's business advocacy workshops at grassroots level through regional offices. This training was not limited to "educated" women and included basic and comprehensive entrepreneurship courses and other business management programmes through the Entrepreneurship Promotion Centre.

*F.3. Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women*

*F.4. Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks*

*F.5. Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination*

*F.6. Promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men*

See employment section above for each of these issues.

### **CEDAW: Article 13**

*States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:*

*(a) The right to family benefits;*

*(b) The right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit;*

These issues are not addressed directly in the Economic Development Policy or the NAPG other than the issue of financial credit which is generally covered by the policy areas as addressed above. The issues of financial credit are addressed earlier in this section.

### **Sustainable Development Goals**

As economic development is such a critical area for national development, there are aspects of economic development in several of the SDG Goals including 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere; Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; and Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries. As such, the section below includes those targets which relate specifically to economic development and gender.

#### **Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere**

*1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions*

The issue of poverty for women is not addressed in the Economic Development or CSMI policies, however the section on employment addresses the issues of unemployment for women as does the draft National Social Protection policy.

The NAPG includes an outcome on reducing women's unemployment and another on rural poverty, with baselines and targets for the increase in percentages of households in poverty from 38% to 20% however this data is not segregated for female headed households.

*1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms*

*of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance*

The Economic Development and CSMI policies address issues related to microfinance and financial services. As addressed in other places in this review, national policies do not currently address other forms of economic resources including access and ownership of land and other property, inheritance natural resources and appropriate new technologies.

*1.b Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions*

Again, as addressed above, the issues of gender sensitive pro poor policies are not addressed in the Economic Development or CSMI policies other than access to credit, CSMI, women entrepreneurs and matching labour market demand with the supply of human capital in respect to gender equality. Vocational training and further credit initiatives are addressed in the policies for Agricultural Marketing, National Population, National Employment, National Education, Business Infrastructure, Food and Nutrition Security and the national Health Policy addresses health infrastructure being gender sensitive. The old NAGP also has an extensive outline of training for women in the private sector, entrepreneurs and addressing unemployed women. What is missing to meet this target however is a comprehensive analysis of how poverty is feminized through women's lower access to resources wider than credit.

#### **Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**

*5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate*

This is not addressed in the Economic Development Policy. See response as per employment policy section for how day care and creches is addressed in other policies for Bhutan, and the case studies in the employment section on unpaid work.

*5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life*

This is not addressed in the Economic Development Policy however aspects of women's economic leadership are addressed through CSMI Policy through increasing the role of women entrepreneurs, and through the SMEs and entrepreneurship in the draft national Population Policy and the Food and Nutrition Policy. The NAPG lists a specific activity to provide leadership training for women entrepreneurs.

*5.a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws*

The Economic Development Policy only considers financial services, as do other Bhutanese policy documents. At present the issues of women's access to ownership of land, other forms of property, inheritance and natural resources are not specifically mentioned, other than broad statements which claim there will be no discrimination in any areas on the basis of gender (Constitution).

#### **Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries**

*10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status*

This issue is not addressed in the Economic Development or CSMI Policy, however Bhutanese policy includes a general statement in the Constitution around equality before the law with no discrimination based on sex, and



the draft National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Development references equality of gender participation of policy formulation and implementation, education, training and employment.

The NAPG has an outcome to increase women's representation and participation in public decision making and women's participation in the private sector increased however targets are not mentioned.

*10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard*

This is not addressed in the Economic Development of CSMI Policy however there is the general statement in the Constitution around equality before the law with no discrimination based on sex, and the reference in the draft National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Development which references equality of gender participation of policy formulation and implementation, education, training, employment, health care recreation and shelter.

*10.4 Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality*

Gender equity in fiscal and wage policies are not currently addressed in Bhutanese policy. The draft Social Protection Policy (2013) refers to social protection interventions not discriminating against any citizen based on gender.

## **Conclusions**

The Current Economic Development Policy does not mainstream gender issues adequately, restricting itself to a reference to cottage and small industries and women entrepreneurs. Although these areas of SME/CSMI, credit projects and women entrepreneurs are essential, many poor women cannot access even these services. The Eleventh Five Year Plan states under the section on inclusive social development:

*While at the national level our poverty and social indicators have improved significantly, disparities exist among Dzongkhags, Gewogs, gender and area of residence. To ensure regional balance and equity, inclusive social development has been identified as one of the thrust areas).*

As such issues of poverty and economic development for women need to encompass a wider macro-economic analysis. The aspects of the Economic Development Policy includes high quality green services, agro and forest based production, energy, natural resources, transportation, trade, tourism, mining and quarrying, education, health, ICT, agriculture and biodiversity, financial services, water based industries, foreign exchange and waste management Services. All these areas have critical gender issues embedded within them, for example women are the main users of energy and water at the household level and they also are the key household members to deal with waste management, health and education. Men and women also have different needs and patterns of usage of transport and natural resources and separate roles in agro and forest production and tourism.

## **SHORT TERM AND LONG TERM ACTION PLAN**

If revisions are made to the Economic Development Policy of Bhutan in the short term, then the areas beyond those of CSMI, credit and entrepreneurship for women need to be addressed. This could be done with reference to the issues outlined above in respect to the Beijing PFA, CEDAW and the SDGs. However in the long term there is a need to look much more deeply at the wider macro-economic issues impacting on Bhutan and this requires a cross sectoral analysis of the major economic sectors of the country with a focus on heavily neglected areas of hard infrastructure such as transport, energy, water, sanitation and waste. The areas of natural resources, agro forestry, agriculture and mining need to look at the gender specific needs, roles and concerns of the whole

population, and addressing issues of management and ICT across all these areas have very specific gender gaps. For the economic development of the full population, addressing these areas is necessary if economic growth is to be maximised.

Rwanda represents a country that has undergone a heavy review of its national development in the context of a green and sustainable development approach. The national women's machinery has developed a national policy which considers gender in many of the hard infrastructure areas that enables an economic growth that is green, sustainable and gender inclusive. A case study for the indicators in this policy is provided to illustrate how the issues described above can be incorporated into national policy in the areas addressed by the Economic Development Policy of Bhutan.

A final case study is provided which outlines key economic issues for gender and as such illustrates an excellent guideline for incorporating the issues above into a future review of the National Economic Development Policy.

In addition, to further develop some of the focus of women entrepreneurs, credit facilities as addressed by the CSMI policy, some case studies are provided on credit and banking facilities in Eastern Europe.

### **CASE STUDY: Eastern European credit and banking facilities**

The Albanian Savings and Credit Union (ASC Union) is a voluntary union of individual Savings and Credit Associations (ASCs), which are village financial institutions that are created and managed by their members and managed by a Board of Directors. The Union provides financial services to rural clients often excluded from the conventional financial institutions especially women who often face specific barriers in obtaining loans. Funding is provided for agriculture mechanization; access to delivery for clients to sell their agricultural and livestock products; and other services such as remittances from abroad, utility payments, and other types of loans. 72 per cent of SCA Union clients are reached through service points in locations where there are no other banking services.

In Azerbaijan, Parabank, an established commercial bank, scaled down in order to also reach low income clients, particularly targeting women. This microfinance program began with the provision of unsecured loans for cattle breeding in rural villages. The bank now supports all businesses from micro to large enterprises, and it has made a shift from lending not only to individuals but also to collective groups for women's business associations. Parabank also includes a youth outreach component, providing savings accounts for youth and children in order to encourage a savings culture from a young age 8.

Source: Adapted from United Nations (2012). Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment on the Road to Sustainable Development: Good Practices from the UNECE Region. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, pp. 14-18.

### **CASE STUDY: Republic of Rwanda National Gender Policy 2010**

- To ensure equal participation of women and men in policy design, planning, implementation and evaluation of public development programmes;
- To facilitate gender budgeting processes at central and decentralized levels;
- To ensure efficient public administration and transparency mechanisms are in place and gender sensitive;
- To facilitate and support women's and men's participation in environmental protection and management;
- To adopt affirmative actions to increase the number of women in import-export trade, banking and insurance and in decision making of the private sector in general;
- To sensitize women to the current opportunities in business and to occupy key positions;
- To facilitate access to safe and clean water for households in both rural and urban areas to reduce the burden of obtaining household water on women;
- To enhance women's and men's partnership in the water and sanitation management system;
- To sensitize the populations on the increase of men's participation in firewood collection and other sources of domestic energy management;
- To ensure that women and men are involved in the development of renewable sources of energy.
- To ensure that rural households are trained in the use of energy saving stoves and are facilitated in accessing them;
- To ensure that the number of households dependent on firewood and charcoal is reduced;
- To ensure that feeder roads status is improved to facilitate the users (who are mostly women) in accessing basic services;
- To adopt a state-supported programme of cheap and gender sensitive transport; and
- To ensure that multipurpose public amenities with toilets for women and men are constructed at strategic points along main highways.

## **CASE STUDY: A Checklist for Gender in Economic Issues**

### **Economic Policies that influence the demand side**

- Macroeconomic policies • Financial policies • Trade and regional integration

#### **Questions:**

- Have the proposed macroeconomic policies taken into consideration the potential gender-differentiated direct and indirect impacts on women, men, boys and girls?
- If not, what are the critical issues that need to be taken into account to ensure that both the female and male population would benefit from such macroeconomic policies? Is there a risk that the proposed policy measures could result in further enforcing existing gender gaps in the economy and labour market?
- How are the current tax systems structured – could the proposed tax system discriminate against and/or have negative impacts on women, as consumers and workers?
- Have the public expenditures been allocated, taking into consideration the potential different impacts on women and men, girls, and boys?

### **Investment policies and investment climate, including infrastructure**

- Does the government provide for public investments in infrastructure development (roads, irrigation, reforestation, development of community centres and schools, etc.)? If so, is labour intensity considered in the choice of technologies used?
- For community-based public works, have equal voice and the specific needs of women and men taken into account when planning on the type of public infrastructures and their location?
- Are women as equally informed as men about the wage-employment opportunities provided under public works programmes?
- Is there consideration of distance to the living location to the work sites?
- Does the programme provide for maternity protection and equal wage for work of equal value?
- Does the project provide for breastfeeding facilities for working mothers and crèches for working mothers/fathers with young children?
- Are women equally trained in skills' upgrading– in particular to become leaders and contractors?
- Where a Public Employment Programme is considered, is supporting social services (such as child and elderly care) considered as part of the programme design?

### **Sectoral policies: industries, services, agriculture, environmental industries and services enhancing employment intensity of growth**

- How are the current economic structures and labour market structures? Are there sectors which are male- or female-dominated?
- Where employment growth is expected, are economic sectors be more likely to employ women or men?
- If women are more highly unemployed and under-employed, could the development of social sectors be considered as part of sectoral development strategies?

### **Labour mobility and migration**

- Do policy measures take into account the specific vulnerability of girls and women in migration?
- Does the policy ensure that both women and men have equal access to migration facilitation services (pre-departure training and awareness-raising on key labour rights, etc.)?
- Do the policy and legislation provide for equality of treatment in occupation and employment between nationals and immigrant labour, in law and practice, in receiving countries?
- Does the policy provide for measures for cultural, social and economic integration of migrant workers in the receiving/destination countries?
- Does the policy provide for social and economic reintegration of returning migrant workers, both women and men equally in the sending countries?

Source: Naoko Otake (2014). Resource guide on Gender issues in employment and labour market policies: Working towards women's economic empowerment and gender equality. Geneva: ILO. pp. 86-87.

#### 4 c) EDUCATION

In evaluating the current policy on education in Bhutanese policy the text below uses the framework of the Beijing Platform for Action Critical Area B on Education; CEDAW Article 10 in education and the Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education. The relevant policies in Bhutan that are used include the Tertiary Education Policy 2010, Human Resource Development Policy 2010, National Education Policy 2014. There is also a Vocational Education and Training Policy and a National Policy on Special Education Needs, however neither of these documents have any references to gender, and they will be converted from policies to implementation guidelines. As such, this review provides separate comments on how gender can be addressed in these implementation guidelines, and for the current National Education Policy as separate documents.

In addition to these Bhutanese policies, reference is also tracked against the critical area of education included in the National Action Plan on Gender 2008-2013, as this illustrates how this document addressed many of these core areas and provided an excellent guideline to policy development.

##### **Beijing Platform for Action Critical Area B on Education**

This critical area addresses the following six strategic objectives:

###### *B.1. Ensure equal access to education.*

The Tertiary Education Policy 2010 states it is “A policy that ensures equality of opportunity such that admission to any office or appointment in the university and the admission of students to the university shall be on merit and irrespective of religion, origin, sex, sexual orientation, or race”, however there is no statement that addresses this issue in school education.

The NAPG 2008-2013 identifies “gender gap closed in basic education”, and “increased financial access to primary and secondary education for girls and boys from economically disadvantaged families” as outcomes

###### *B.2. Eradicate illiteracy among women.*

Not addressed in current Bhutanese policy

The NAPG 2008-2013 identifies “female adult literacy increased, especially in rural areas” as an outcome

###### *B.3. Improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education.*

Not addressed in Bhutanese policy

The NAPG 2008-2013 identifies “female access in vocational training increased” as an outcome

###### *B.4. Develop non-discriminatory education and training.*

Not addressed in current Bhutanese policy

The NAPG 2008-2013 identifies “education and training made more gender sensitive” as an outcome

###### *B.5. Allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of educational reforms.*

Not addressed in current Bhutanese policy

The NAPG 2008-2013 identifies “review policies from a gender perspective at all levels of education and training” as an activity.

###### *B.6. Promote lifelong education and training for girls and women.*

Not addressed in current Bhutanese policy

The NAPG 2008-2013 identifies “female access to vocational training institutes (VTIs) increased and skills expanded beyond traditionally male dominated areas” as an output and “establish new non formal education centres” as an activity.

## **CEDAW**

The key references in CEDAW which refer to education are included in Article 10: *States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:*

*(a) The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training;*

Not addressed in current Bhutanese policy

The NAPG 2008-2013 identifies “improve and expand youth guidance and career counselling, especially for girls” as an activity and “female access in vocational training increased”, “female access at tertiary level increased”, “female access at higher secondary increased” and “gender gap closed in basic education”, are all listed as outcomes.

*(b) Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality;*

Not addressed in current Bhutanese policy.

Not addressed in NAPG, however temporary special measures to bring female participation and outcomes up to the level of boys is addressed (e.g. separate toilet and hostel facilities).

*(c) The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods;*

This is not addressed in current Bhutanese policy

The NAPG 2008-2013 identifies “gender roles and stereotypes removed from classrooms, in curricula and textbooks for all levels of education and training” in activities.

*(d) The same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants;*

This is not addressed in current Bhutanese policy

The NAPG 2008-2013 identifies “provide financial support to boys and girls from economically disadvantaged families, enabling them to attend primary, secondary school” as an output.

*(e) The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women;*

The Human Resource Development Policy 2010 states in (10.3) “The existing technical training institutes shall introduce new courses that have market demand as well as are attractive enough for the students. A few institutes shall also offer short-term, preservice courses conducive to employment. Some of the courses shall be targeted at the specific needs of women students”. Although this does not directly address the same opportunities, it does address the needs of women students. Depending on how this is interpreted, it could be seen as discriminatory through CEDAW by differentiating the needs of women and men in the workforce, or it could provide special

temporary measures to address women's need to accelerate their progress in areas where they are under-represented.

The NAPG 2008-2013 identifies "female access to vocational training institutes (VTIs) increased and skills expanded beyond traditionally male dominated areas" and "female adult literacy increased, especially in rural areas" as an outcome as outputs and "establish new non formal education centres" as an activity.

*(f) The reduction of female student drop-out rates and the organization of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely;*

This is not addressed in Bhutanese policy, yet the introduction of the pilot project on the provision of sanitary napkins to girls has proven to be an effective strategy to increase girls retention rates and could be considered for future policy in this area.

The NAPG 2008-2013 identifies areas including financial support for economically disadvantaged girls, provision of provision of boarding facilities and an activity to "carry out a study to analyse the reasons for girl's lower performance as well as the reasons for girls' drop out at higher level..."

*(g) The same opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education;*

This is not addressed in current Bhutanese policy

The NAPG 2008-2013 does not address this.

*(h) Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning.*

This is not addressed in current Bhutanese policy.

The NAPG 2008-2013 does not address this.

## **Sustainable Development Goals**

SDG 4 is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, and the targets which address gender include those below:

*By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes*

The Constitution of Bhutan states that education is free.

The NAPG 2008-2013 identifies "provide financial support to boys and girls from economically disadvantaged families, enabling them to attend primary, secondary school" as an output. In addition another output addresses increased physical access, and another a safe environment. A feeding programme and sex segregated boarding facilities are included in the indicators.

*By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education*

Not addressed in current National Education Policy, but in National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Development 2011 draft.

Not addressed by the NAPG.

*By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university*

Tertiary Education Policy 2010 states: Establishing a University (f) “A policy that ensures equality of opportunity such that admission to any office or appointment in the university and the admission of students to the university shall be on merit and irrespective of sex or sexual orientation”.

The NAPG 2008-2013 identifies “female access to vocational training institutes (VTIs) increased and skills expanded beyond traditionally male dominated areas” and “female access at tertiary level increased” as outputs and “establish new non formal education centres” as an activity.

*By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations*

Not addressed in current Bhutanese policy, but the Constitution states: “that technical and professional education is made generally available and that higher education is equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.”

The NAPG 2008-2013 identifies “gender gap closed in basic education” as an outcome. Vocational training is mentioned as per other references above, and in terms of vulnerable, the economically disadvantaged are mentioned but there is no reference to indigenous peoples. The Aging, Mental Health and Disabilities section of the NAPG (i.e. not the education section) addresses activities on gender and disabilities in school such as “integrate disability issues into the teacher training curriculum” and “increase number of and upgrade inclusive schools and institutes to cater to the needs of girls and boys with disabilities”.

*By 2030, ensure that all youth and at least [x] per cent of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy*

Not addressed in current Bhutanese policy.

The NAPG 2008-2013 identifies “female adult literacy increased, especially in rural areas” as an outcome.

*By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development*

This issue is addressed by the National Education Policy 2014 “To prepare our young men and women with the right values and skills, usefulness and gracefulness, to meet the ever-growing needs of a developing country against the backdrop of a fast globalizing world”, and “Towards this, the NEP calls for the enhancement of learning through provision of adequate and appropriate support to learners and teachers, including a gender responsive and conducive learning environment, delivery of a relevant curriculum, resulting in citizens with knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable their positive participation in society”.

The NAPG does not address this.

*Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all*

This issue is addressed by the Tertiary Education Policy 2010 which states (84b) “The physical infrastructure facilities include spacious buildings, catering to the various needs of the staff and students, and adequate hostel facilities for boys and girls, and housing for the teaching and administrative staff”; and the National Education Policy 2014 “8.9 In recognition of the specific needs of boys and girls, gender responsive infrastructure and curriculum shall be provided” and 11.10 “Schools shall have adequate number of toilet facilities for teachers and students that are clean and separate for girls/ladies and boys/men”.



The NAPG 2008-2013 identifies two outputs “ safe environment created for both formal and informal boarding students” and “increased access to girl friendly facilities” as well as activities which include “appoint female staff to supervise girls’ hostel/dormitory facilities”, “construct adequate facilities in existing schools for female staff” and “construct boarding facilities for informal boarders at the primary level”.

## Conclusions

Of the 20 targets and indicators used to measure gender equity in education on the international standards of the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW and the Sustainable Development Goals, only 5 of the 20 were met by current Bhutanese policy. However 15 were met by the Results Based NAPG 2008-2013. This illustrates that the previous NAPG was three times more effective in meeting international gender standards in education as is reflected in current policy. The absence of having a current NAPG leaves the policy context at an inadequate level. To ensure revisions to the education policy are brought in line with international standards it is suggested that a modified version of the Education Action Plan of the NAPG be used as a guidance for the Bhutanese context, with the addition of the 5 areas currently omitted which include statements of equality of purpose, access and content in family planning as well as equal access in sports and physical education.

An excellent Gender Equality Diagnostic was conducted by Cornell University of Bhutan’s education sector in 2014 and the recommendations from this document form an excellent basis for any revisions to the Education Policy. Instead of repeating all the issues therein, this is included at the end of this section.

In respect to education the Concluding Comments from the 2009 CEDAW Report states:

*The Committee urges the State party to adopt and implement targeted measures to ensure equal access for girls and women to all levels of education. More specifically, the Committee recommends that the State party examine the possibility of providing incentives to girls and their families to encourage them to remain in schools. The State party should take all necessary steps to increase the number of qualified teachers, adequate educational infrastructure, including in rural and remote areas, as well as adequate transportation. The Committee also urges the State party to take measures, including the development of non-formal education, to address girls’ and women’s illiteracy, including through the continuation and increase of programmes for adult education. In addition, the Committee urges the State party to take the necessary steps to encourage pregnant girls and married girls to continue their education.*

*It further recommends that family planning and reproductive health education be widely promoted, including in remote areas, and targeted at girls and boys, with special attention being paid to the prevention of early pregnancies and the control of sexually transmitted diseases.*

*The Committee urges the State party to strengthen its efforts to eradicate domestic child labour abuse, and ensure that children, in particular girls, have access to education, health care and social protection, as well as enjoy the protection of the minimum labour standards elaborated by the International Labour Organization. Further, the Committee recommends that the State party engage in a public outreach campaign to inform the population about the need to ensure that the rights of all children are respected, including access to education and medical care.*

In line with the CEDAW recommendation above it is imperative, that in addition to the issues outlined from the Beijing PFA, CEDAW Convention and the SDGs, special attention is paid to retaining girls in schools, adequate infrastructure and transportation to schools with qualified teachers. The areas of non-formal education and adult literacy need to be strengthened significantly for women, especially those who are illiterate. Information on family planning and sexual and reproductive rights, pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases needs to be

incorporated into schooling to decrease school drop out rates, increase health and knowledge, and encourage pregnant and married women to continue their education.

### **SHORT TERM AND LONG TERM ACTION PLAN**

In the short term it is important that the issues in the Cornell University Gender Equality Diagnostic as they relate to education are translated into policy. These should be combined with the outcomes, outputs and activities in the previous NAPG to bring together a more comprehensive framework for addressing gender issues in education for Bhutan.

In the medium term, these issues and recommendations need to be cross referenced against other policies as referenced in this review, with a strengthening in all the areas as identified above according to the Beijing PFA, the CEDAW Convention and the CEDAW Concluding Comments, and the new targets in the SDG on education. When these have all been coalesced they need to be sorted into a new NAPG and referenced in revisions in the Education Policy and its relevant acts and guidance notes.

In considering the long term action plan for revisions of the Education Policy, the case study for this section features an example from Papua New Guinea which reviewed their education policy for gender and identified an allocation of duties for actors in education regarding gender issues.

## **CASE STUDY: Allocation of duties for actors in education regarding gender issues in Papua New Guinea**

### **Those responsible for Staff Professional Development and In-service have the responsibility to**

- provide leadership in the system-wide implementation of the Gender Equity in Education Policy and gender equity in general.
- provide appropriate professional development at all levels about the Gender Equity in Education Policy.
- ensure that the Gender Equity in Education Policy is reflected in all National Department of Education (NDoE) documentation, structure and plans.
- facilitate the monitoring, review and reporting of the implementation of the Gender Equity in Education Policy.
- support all institutions responsible for teacher education in Papua New Guinea to ensure that the principles of gender equity inform all pre-service and in service teacher training.
- encourage and support balanced enrolments of female and male students at all levels of education.
- respond to schools needs for system-level programs and initiatives which contribute to and support teachers in implementing gender equity strategies.
- work collaboratively with schools to set targets at the provincial level for changes based on gender equity principles and values that improve outcomes for female as well as male students.
- collaborate and negotiate with donor agencies and financial supporters so that education facilities take into account the Gender Equity in Education Policy in providing infrastructure and related support, including students and teacher boarding accommodation.
- collect and collate sex disaggregated data to assist with planning for educational improvement.

### **Those involved in Curriculum Development have the responsibility to**

- develop and provide curriculum that is gender inclusive in content, language, and recommended teaching methodologies and assessment instruments.
- develop and provide curriculum which in content, methodology and language meets the education needs and entitlements of girls as well as boys, and which recognises the contributions of women, as well as that of men, in the development of society.
- provide curriculum materials which do not include stereotypes, change information about women in lessons and place appropriate role models in as teachers.
- develop and provide curriculum which challenge unfair cultural practices for girls and women, and for boys and men.
- develop and provide curriculum that take into account changing family roles, for example there are more women in the paid workforce and, in some cases, they are the head of the household.
- develop and provide curriculum which provide opportunities for students to learn about positive relationships and to develop attitudes and behaviours in the school community such as social responsibility, empathy, sensitivity and equal and non-violent relationships.
- develop and provide curriculum in teachers' training colleges and tertiary institutes that are gender inclusive and reflect values, principles, aims and objectives of the Gender Equity in Education Policy.

### **The school level Principals have the responsibility to**

- provide leadership in the school community in identifying community and school factors where gender equity and equality need to be addressed and promoted.
- plan and manage, with the school community, improvements to the range and quality of teaching and learning programs for students to ensure that the gender equity policy and gender inclusive curriculum and practices are implemented.
- assist teachers to identify and access professional development activities and resources that will improve gender equity in all areas of schooling.

- collect and disaggregate data on a range of gender issues.
- maintain learning environments that are safe and free from all forms of violence and sexual harassment.
- encourage participation and decision making by women in the community on school committees and boards to ensure equity and equality of participation.

**School staff have the responsibility to**

- ensure that the Gender Equity in Education Policy and principles are reflected in all school documentation and plans for the future.
- ensure that all members of the schools community are informed of the Gender Equity in Education Policy and have access to professional development on issues of gender equity and the gender inclusive curriculum and are involved in the process of its implementation.
- plan, implement and monitor strategies based on the Gender Equity in Education Policy through school-based policy, procedures, program and practices.
- contribute to data collection relating to implementation of the Gender Equity in Education Policy.

Source: Papua New Guinea Department of Education (2009 reprinted). Gender equity in Education Policy: Guidelines for Implementation, pp.8-12.

The analysis and recommendations for the education sector contained in the Cornell University study of Bhutan Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors, ADB 2014 also stand as key guidance for the sector (as overleaf).

**APPENDIX A. Tip Sheet on Integrating Gender Perspectives in Analysis and Planning in the Sector**

STEP 1: What are the positive outcomes for women or gender equality that could be achieved through gender mainstreaming?	STEP 2: What are some of the questions we should ask to better understand gender equality issues and women's needs in these areas?	STEP 3: What steps or strategies could be considered or adapted to move forward in these areas?
<p>Policy, planning, and decision making in the education sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Increased awareness among decision makers of gender issues and gaps at all levels of education</li> <li>→ More detailed data and research to clarify issues and inform strategies to ensure gender equity in learning environments and education outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do education data and information systems provide the sex-disaggregated data required to assess and compare performance and outcomes for girls and boys (including competencies achieved, subjects studied, performance in key subject areas, etc.) as well as sex-disaggregated data on enrollment, drop-out, and completion?</li> <li>• Do planners and decision makers have the knowledge and skills to assess gender equality issues in education (not only about access, but also about performance, curriculum, teaching practices, and the messages the education system gives to both girls and boys)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocate resources and expertise to ensuring that the education data available to planners is sufficient to fully monitor and compare the experience of girls and boys.</li> <li>• Identify gaps in knowledge about the educational experience of girls compared to boys, and allocate resources and expertise for studies and research to bridge these gaps.</li> <li>• Establish links between government education planners and managers and advocates of gender equality in education (academics, research institutes, and nongovernment organizations).</li> </ul>
<p>Management tools for monitoring educational quality and standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Better information for policy makers and school officials on gender equality in education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do any of the management tools in use or under development provide any feedback on issues, problems, or achievements in different schools or districts with respect to the performance of girls compared to boys?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider whether any current management tools can incorporate elements to provide feedback on problems and performance on gender equality concerns.</li> <li>• Use this information to identify strategies that work in Bhutan to increase the performance and confidence of girls.</li> </ul>
<p>Curricula and teaching materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Stronger contribution of the education system to positive attitudes to girls and women and to gender equality in society</li> <li>→ Better knowledge among both girls and boys of women's rights as citizens, workers, and family members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do school textbooks and other learning materials reflect positive attitudes toward girls and women and their capacities?</li> <li>• Does the curriculum include learning objectives and modules on equal rights of women and men in schools, the family, the market, politics, etc.?</li> <li>• Do those responsible for curriculum review and design have the skills and experience to identify gender bias in existing materials, and to develop curriculum that promotes equitable opportunities and relations between women and men?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise curriculum and teaching materials to eliminate gender stereotypes, provide positive female role models, and incorporate positive messages on equal relations between girls and boys and men and women.</li> <li>• Develop teaching materials suitable for different levels that engage both girls and boys in challenging sociocultural stereotypes about girls and boys, and women and men.</li> <li>• Develop curriculum modules on human rights and gender equality and their link to objectives for gross national happiness.</li> </ul>
<p>Strategies for child-friendly schools and teaching practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Schools that are girl friendly and support girls in developing their potential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have teaching practices related to gender been studied as part of strategies for child-friendly schools?</li> <li>• Are teachers aware of the ways in which their own behavior can reinforce stereotypes and inequality (e.g., a tendency to assign tasks such as fetching water and classroom cleaning to girls)?</li> <li>• Are teachers aware of how their actions can influence the confidence and ambitions of girls (e.g., negatively, by not calling on them, disparaging their capacities, channeling them away from science subjects, etc.)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage teachers to discuss and assess their own attitudes about male and female roles and capacities, and how this could influence their behavior and that of their students.</li> <li>• Develop guidance materials for teachers (male and female) on ways in which they can support girls and promote gender equality in teaching practices and classroom management.</li> <li>• Seek ways to increase the children's exposure to women in a range of professional and leadership roles, as a means of counterbalancing narrower visions of potential choices and capacities of girls.</li> </ul>

#### 4 d) NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY, 2011

Addressing a gendered analysis of the National Youth Policy is different to other national policy documents from the Kingdom of Bhutan already considered in this review. In contrast to the other national policies reviewed in Bhutan, the National Youth Policy integrates gender issues in a more comprehensive manner throughout the document. In addition, as the other areas had clear links to the Beijing PFA, CEDAW and the SDGs, youth issues are not addressed as a section in the Beijing PFA (although critical area L focusses on the girl child), CEDAW Articles or the Sustainable Development Goals. As such, for this policy a more detailed analysis was done of each of these international standard setting documents. In this case, each reference to youth issues was extracted, as per below and these are used to assess the Bhutanese policy in respect of gender (although in the case of the MDGs they are not gender specific in the first instance).

##### **Beijing Platform for Action**

##### **Critical Area of Concern A: Women and Poverty**

*Strategic objective A.1. Review, adopt and maintain macroeconomic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty*

*Actions to be taken*

*60. By national and international non-governmental organizations and women's groups:*

*(a) Mobilize all parties involved in the development process, including academic institutions, non-governmental organizations and grass-roots and women's groups, to improve the effectiveness of anti-poverty programmes directed towards the poorest and most disadvantaged groups of women, such as rural and indigenous women, female heads of household, **young women** and older women, refugees and migrant women and women with disabilities, recognizing that social development is primarily the responsibility of Governments;*

The Youth Policy references unemployment issues for youth and that all young people, irrespective of their gender, have the right to a "secure future through relevant education, training and employment".

*63. By commercial banks, specialized financial institutions and the private sector in examining their policies:*

*(b) Open special windows for lending to women, including **young women**, who lack access to traditional sources of collateral;*

This area is not addressed by the Youth Policy.

##### **Strategic objective B: Education and Training of Women**

*B.1. Ensure equal access to education*

*Actions to be taken*

*80. By Governments:*

*(e) Provide - in collaboration with parents, non-governmental organizations, including youth organizations, communities and the private sector - **young women** with academic and technical training, career planning, leadership and social skills and work experience to prepare them to participate fully in society;*

The Youth Policy states: "While there have been extensive resources provided to deliver basic education, there are still issues in relation to provision, access and quality of education across the country particularly for young women. These issues include literacy levels (lower for women especially in rural areas), access to higher secondary school and tertiary education (lower rates of access for young women), costs of education and the delivery of life-skills and livelihood skills within the curriculum." It addresses the critical issue of formal education (school and tertiary) specifying access to higher education especially for young women. The Youth Policy also states that all young people, irrespective of their gender, have the right to a "secure future through relevant education and training".

*(g) Promote an educational setting that eliminates all barriers that impeded the schooling of **pregnant adolescents and young mothers**, including, as appropriate, affordable and physically accessible childcare facilities and parental education to encourage those who are responsible for the care of their children and siblings during their school years, to return to or continue with and complete schooling*

This issue is not addressed in the Youth Policy.

*Strategic objective B.3. Improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education*

*Actions to be taken*

*82. By Governments, in cooperation with employers, workers and trade unions, international and non-governmental organizations, including women's and youth organizations, and educational institutions:*

*(a) Develop and implement education, training and retraining policies for women, **especially young women** and women re-entering the labour market, to provide skills to meet the needs of a changing socio-economic context for improving their employment opportunities*

As stated above, the Youth Policy addresses the critical issue of formal education (school and tertiary) specifying access to higher education especially for young women. The Youth Policy also states that all young people, irrespective of their gender, have the right to a "secure future through relevant education and training".

*(s) Remove all barriers to access to formal education for **pregnant adolescents and young mothers**, and support the provision of child care and other support services where necessary.*

This issue is not addressed in the Youth Policy.

### **Strategic objective C: Women and Health**

*C.2. Strengthen preventive programmes that promote women's health*

*Actions to be taken*

*107. By Governments, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, the mass media, the private sector and relevant international organizations, including United Nations bodies, as appropriate:*

*(a) Adopt specific preventive measures to protect women, **youth** and children from any abuse - sexual abuse, exploitation, trafficking and violence, for example - including the formulation and enforcement of laws, and provide legal protection and medical and other assistance.*

The issue is addressed in the Youth Policy which addresses violence including physical, mental, sexual, bullying and domestic violence. It also states that all young people irrespective of their gender have a right to enjoy protection from all forms of abuse, violence, exploitation and degradation.

*Strategic objective C.3. Undertake gender-sensitive initiatives that address sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health issues*

*Actions to be taken*

*108. By Governments, international bodies including relevant United Nations organizations, bilateral and multilateral donors and non-governmental organizations:*

*(b) Review and amend laws and combat practices, as appropriate, that may contribute to women's susceptibility to HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases, including enacting legislation against those socio-cultural practices that contribute to it, and implement legislation, policies and practices to protect women, **adolescents and young girls** from discrimination related to HIV/AIDS*

This issue is addressed in the Youth Policy which states that youth are most at risk of HIV and reproductive health issues with young women being the most disadvantaged. It also recognises that since Bhutan has a relatively one approach to sex, premarital sex is not taboo in many rural communities, with an early onset of sexual activity (especially in rural areas) occurring for women boys and girls, increasing their risk of sexually transmitted diseases.

111. By Governments, the United Nations and its specialized agencies, international financial institutions, bilateral donors and the private sector, as appropriate:

(b) Provide appropriate material, financial and logistical assistance to youth non-governmental organizations in order to strengthen them to address **youth** concerns in the area of health, including sexual and reproductive health;  
As above

### **Strategic objective D: Violence Against Women**

*D.1. Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women*

*Actions to be taken*

126. By Governments, employers, trade unions, community and youth organizations and non-governmental organizations, as appropriate:

(c) Develop counselling, healing and support programmes for girls, **adolescents and young women** who have been or are involved in abusive relationships, particularly those who live in homes or institutions where abuse occurs;

(d) Take special measures to eliminate violence against women, particularly those in vulnerable situations, such as **young women**, refugee, displaced and internally displaced women, women with disabilities and women migrant workers, including enforcing any existing legislation and developing, as appropriate, new legislation for women migrant workers in both sending and receiving countries.

This issue is addressed in the Youth Policy as it addresses domestic violence within the category of violence which is seen as a critical issue of youth. It states that all young people irrespective of their gender have a right to enjoy protection from all forms of abuse, violence, exploitation and degradation. It also states that the government has a profound duty to support the psychological, religious, moral, cultural, emotional and physical wellbeing of young men and women.

*Strategic objective D.3. Eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking*

*Actions to be taken*

130. By Governments of countries of origin, transit and destination, regional and international organizations, as appropriate:

(e) Develop educational and training programmes and policies and consider enacting legislation aimed at preventing sex tourism and trafficking, giving special emphasis to the protection of **young women** and children.

As stated above, the Youth Policy articulates that all young people irrespective of their gender have a right to enjoy protection from all forms of abuse, violence, exploitation and degradation. However trafficking and sex tourism are not addressed specifically.

### **Strategic objective E: Women and Armed Conflict**

*E.4. Promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace* *Actions to be taken*

146. By Governments, international and regional intergovernmental institutions and non-governmental organizations:

(a) Promote peaceful conflict resolution and peace, reconciliation and tolerance through education, training, community actions and youth exchange programmes, in particular for **young women**;

(c) Develop and disseminate research on the physical, psychological, economic and social effects of armed conflicts on women, particularly **young women** and girls, with a view to developing policies and programmes to address the consequences of conflicts;

*Strategic objective E.5. Provide protection, assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women*

*Actions to be taken*



147. *By Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other institutions involved in providing protection, assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Food Programme, as appropriate:*

*(j) Promote the self-reliant capacities of refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women and provide programmes for women, particularly **young women**, in leadership and decision-making within refugee and returnee communities;*

As Bhutan is not a country involved in armed conflict, this critical area of concern is less relevant to Bhutan. However the Youth Policy states “In equal measure, young women and men have a responsibility to contribute positively to building a peaceful, prosperous and caring society that is guided by the philosophy of Gross National Happiness. It further states that this should be achieved by young people through various means, one being through building and encouraging gender equality.

### **Strategic objective F: Women and the Economy**

F.2. Facilitate women’s equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade

*Actions to be taken*

167. *By Governments, central banks and national development banks, and private banking institutions, as appropriate:*

*(c) Structure services to reach rural and urban women involved in micro, small and medium-scale enterprises, with special attention to **young women**, low-income women, those belonging to ethnic and racial minorities, and indigenous women who lack access to capital and assets; and expand women’s access to financial markets by identifying and encouraging financial supervisory and regulatory reforms that support financial institutions’ direct and indirect efforts to better meet the credit and other financial needs of the micro, small and medium-scale enterprises of women*

This issue is not addressed in the Youth Policy.

*Strategic objective F.4. Strengthen women’s economic capacity and commercial networks*

*Actions to be taken*

175. *By Governments: (d) Support programmes that enhance the self-reliance of special groups of women, such as **young women**, women with disabilities, elderly women and women belonging to racial and ethnic minorities*

This issue is not addressed in the Youth Policy.

176. *By financial intermediaries, national training institutes, credit unions, non-governmental organizations, women’s associations, professional organizations and the private sector, as appropriate:*

*(a) Provide, at the national, regional and international levels, training in a variety of business-related and financial management and technical skills to enable women, especially **young women**, to participate in economic policy-making at those levels*

This issue is identified in the Youth Policy which addresses facilitating young women’s access to decision making processes, professional positions and economic opportunities.

### **Strategic objective G: Women in Power and Decision Making**

G.1. Take measures to ensure women’s equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making

192. *By Governments, national bodies, the private sector, political parties, trade unions, employers’ organizations, research and academic institutions, subregional and regional bodies and non-governmental and international organizations:*

*(f) Restructure recruitment and career-development programmes to ensure that all women, especially **young women**, have equal access to managerial, entrepreneurial, technical and leadership training, including on-the-job training.*

As above, the Youth Policy addresses facilitating young women's access to decision making processes, professional positions and economic opportunities.

### **Strategic objective J: Women and the Media**

*J.2. Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media*

*245. By the media, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, in collaboration, as appropriate, with national machinery for the advancement of women:*

*(b) Produce and/or disseminate media materials on women leaders, inter alia, as leaders who bring to their positions of leadership many different life experiences, including but not limited to their experiences in balancing work and family responsibilities, as mothers, as professionals, as managers and as entrepreneurs, to provide role models, particularly to **young women**;*

This issue is not addressed in the Youth Policy

### **Critical Area of Concern L The girl-child - Persistent discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl child**

*L.1. Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child*

*L.2. Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls*

*L.3. Promote and protect the rights of the girl child and increase awareness of her needs and potential*

*L.4. Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training*

*L.5. Eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition*

*L.6. Eliminate the economic exploitation of child labour and protect young girls at work*

*L.7. Eradicate violence against the girl child*

*L.8. Promote the girl child's awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life*

*L.9. Strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl child*

As the Youth Policy identifies youth as 13-24, this section will not be analysed, as the issues for the girl child are separate to those of young women.

### **Sustainable Development Goals**

Although there is no SDG on youth, youth issues are scattered through the SDGs, in particular: Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all; Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; and Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. None of these targets for youth are gender specific however they are referenced below to see how the issues line up against the national policy.

#### **Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**

*4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of **youth** and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship*

As stated above, The Youth Policy states: "While there have been extensive resources provided to deliver basic education, there are still issues in relation to provision, access and quality of education across the country particularly for young women. These issues include literacy levels (lower for women especially in rural areas), access to higher secondary school and tertiary education (lower rates of access for young women), costs of education and the delivery of life-skills and livelihood skills within the curriculum." It addresses the critical issue of formal education (school and tertiary) specifying access to higher education especially for young women. The Youth Policy also states that all young people, irrespective of their gender, have the right to a "secure future through relevant education and training".

4.5 4.6 By 2030, ensure that all **youth** and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

The Youth Policy considers literacy levels for women as a critical issue.

**Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**

8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for **young people** and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value

8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of **youth** not in employment, education or training

This issue is addressed in the Youth Policy which addresses facilitating young women's access to decision making processes, professional positions and economic opportunities, however it does not extend to the issues of equal pay and decent work, nor does it consider decreasing youth unemployment which is considered in the policies of National Population, Social Protection and Employment.

**Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts**

13.b Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on **women, youth** and local and marginalized communities

The Youth Policy does not address issues of climate change for youth.

**Conclusions**

The major international standard setting documents used to measure Bhutanese policy alignment with international gender standards do not address youth issues as a separate section. As such, the standards used to measure the Youth Policy have delved down to a lower level of specificity in these international document, from general and over all targets, to very specific targets. Even so, the Bhutanese Policy has measured up well against these indicators. There are several areas that have not been addressed by the current policy and the major issue that stands out in this regard is the issue of high unemployment rates for women,. The policy does have a general statement which addresses facilitating young women's access to professional positions and economic opportunities, as well as the right to a secure suture through relevant education, training and employment, however given this is a large problem in Bhutan, when the policy is revised this issue should be considered in more detail. Other areas that were not included relate to teenage pregnancy (although access to reproductive health issues was mentioned); trafficking in women; the impact of media on young women and stereotyped images contained therein; and young women's capacity to engage in climate change planning and management.

## **5. Case for dual strategy: Stand-alone Gender National Action Plan and gender mainstreaming in all policies.**

Currently there is an uneven mainstreaming of gender issues in national policy in Bhutan. Much of this is vague and has no accountability, monitoring or reporting systems. There is also no key national document that brings together the key aims and objectives of national development in Bhutan for women's advancement and gender equality. When the National Action Plan on Gender was active, this provided an excellent framework for addressing many of the issues identified in the international standards for gender policy and focus for national machineries (Beijing PFA, CEDAW and SDGs). As a Gender Law has been identified in the Eleventh Five Year Plan (EFYP) this would be the vehicle to address the issues for gender in a comprehensive manner. However since the prescribed temporary special measure of the quota for women's participation of governance (also identified in the EFYP) was not passed when it was proposed to the Cabinet, it may be a more strategic approach to develop another National Action Plan which does not require passage through Cabinet. Either way, at present, there is no comprehensive vehicle for addressing gender issues. There is a need to increase the gender sensitisation of policy, as well as bringing all references to gender in policy together in one place, with the additional commitments as required by international standards.

### **5.1 Increased substantive studies and legislation on gender issues**

There is an increasing amount of data and analysis from recent publications and reports: Gender statistics Bhutan 2010; Bhutan Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors (2013); and the Bhutan Gender Policy Note (2014) all of which identify clear gender issues in Bhutan. In addition there has been a focus of work and study in the area of women in government through the Review of Legislation from the Perspective of Enhancing Gender Equality in Elected Office in Bhutan (2014); Study of Gender Stereotypes and Women's Political Participation (Women in Governance) 2008; and Bhutan's National Plan of Action to Promote Gender equality in Elected Office (2014); and a draft Desk Review of Women's Participation in Civil Service and Private Sector in Bhutan with a focus on conditions favouring or constraining the participation. All these documents were developed under the National Committee for Women and Children.

The NCWC has also been dedicated to addressing the issues of child care and protection and the provision of domestic violence with the development of the Child Care and Protection Act of Bhutan (2011) with the associated Child Care and Protection Rules and Regulations 2014; and the Domestic Violence Protection Act 2013. Thus NCWC has been active on key national gender areas of governance, childcare and domestic violence, yet there is no national framework which positions these issues in the wider framework of gender issues in the country's development. The need for an overarching and comprehensive national strategy, plan, law or policy is needed to address this.

### **5.2 CEDAW Recommendations**

The CEDAW Committee Concluding Observations for Bhutan in 2009 stated:

*12. The Committee calls on the State party to consider enacting appropriate national legislation, containing a prohibition of discrimination against women, both direct and indirect, in line with articles 1 and 2 (b) of the Convention, as well as the principle of formal and substantive equality between men and women, in accordance with article 2, subparagraph (a), of the Convention. The Committee further calls on the State party explicitly to provide in its Constitution or other appropriate legislation that the provisions of international human rights agreements, in particular the Convention, are directly applicable at the domestic level and prevail over conflicting legislation.*

A National Action Plan Gender (NAPG) could address this CEDAW recommendation by containing a prohibition of discrimination against women, both direct and indirect, in line with articles 1 and 2. Such a NAPG could also address all the other CEDAW recommendations provided in the concluding comments as outlined in the previous sections.

### **5.3 Previous National Action Plan**

The presence of the National Action Plan for Gender 2008-2013 illustrates a solid document meeting most of the international commitments to gender equality and women's advancement. It is not apparent that an adequate review of the National Plan and its effectiveness was undertaken. To have taken the decision to mainstream gender throughout the national policy may have been a premature decision, given that the current mechanism for mainstreaming gender into policy lacks resources in finances and skilled personnel, and a rigorous procedure to address this.

The National Action Plan 2008-2013 is an excellent document which outlines an overall strategy for gender mainstreaming has a results based matrix which outlines outcomes, outputs and activities with indicators, baselines, targets and assumptions and risks. Government Ministries and departments also have identified roles in this document which creates a much higher level of commitment and a clear reporting mechanism against targets. Replicating this NAPG process for the current and future Five Year Plans would be an appropriate way to address the current dearth of gender issues reflected in policy.

### **5.4 Beijing + 20**

The recent Summary Report of Secretary-General on the 20-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (E/CN.6/2015/3) states:

*National action plans and policies for gender equality, as well as strategies for gender mainstreaming play an important role and should be prioritized (p.35).*

Most countries of the world either have a national Gender/women's policy or plan, in addition to a process of mainstreaming gender throughout their policy process. This dual strategy is a common approach and Bhutan is out of step with this national trend by not having a national strategy, policy or plan to deal with gender issues.

### **5.5 Sustainable Development Goals**

The new development of the global Sustainable Development Goals puts forward a new international framework for measuring gender equality, requiring countries to report on these indicators. This includes a specially dedicated goal to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (Goal 5), as well as gender specific or sex disaggregated targets in many of the other goals. It is recommended that a national gender policy/strategy for Bhutan addresses the key 7 targets of SDG 5, in addition to identifying the national machinery and gender focal point structure for Bhutanese ministries and organisations to address the mainstreaming of the gender and sex specific targets in the other goals indicators.

### **5.6 Current Policy Framework**

As many policies have agreed in the past few years, there is marginal ability to be able to revise these policies for more significant gender input at this stage. To attempt to integrate gender into each policy as it stands would be a major undertaking and highly unlikely that it would be successful.

### **5.7 Agreement and support from stakeholders**

It was agreed by the Committee for Women, Youth and Children from the National Assembly, relevant government agencies and CSO (Tarayana) agreed during consultations that the chances of having gender issues integrated into already existing policy through a review process was slim and that addressing the areas that are not included in current policy would best be served by a gender policy. It was noted in most occasions that more policy was not advantageous, and that there was a need to ensure that the policies do not conflict. As such, with a guarantee that the Gender Policy reference other existing policy, this approach was seen as sound. It was also perceived as important to have all references to gender in other policy in one area to ensure that gender issues are compiled in one national document.

## CONCLUSIONS

This review has looked at several key policies which have been developed in the Kingdom of Bhutan, namely the Employment Policy (2013), Economic Development Policy (2010), Cottage, Small and Medium Industries Policy (2012), Education Policy (2014) and the Youth Policy (2011).

Bhutan has developed a policy making approach which advocates for gender to be mainstreamed through each policy through a guideline and a Mainstreaming Reference Group which also looks at other cross cutting issues. The responsibility for reviewing policy from the gender perspective lies with this Group which is housed within the Gross National Happiness Commission, in addition to the Gender Focal Points in each ministry. Although in theory this process seems adequate on many levels, it is not implemented with the adequate expertise to allow substantive gender issues to be identified and addressed in the policies discussed in this review, with the exception of the Youth Policy. To address the implementation of gender mainstreaming in a consistent and rigorous manner it is essential that the Gender Focal Points have the adequate substantive knowledge to address gender policy reviews. In addition the Mainstreaming Reference Group needs to ensure it also has the necessary skills and that the proposed process is followed. An additional more detailed guideline may be useful for this process, as well as additional training for GFPs being essential for this process to be functional.

In each of the policy areas reviewed, a methodology was used which identified international standard setting documents on gender to measure the aforesaid policy which included the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Sustainable Development Goals. What was found in all cases (with the exception of the Youth Policy) is that gender issues were not addressed adequately.

In a process which pulled all references to gender from all policy developed for the Kingdom of Bhutan, it was found that there are many areas where the issues overlap. This in and of itself is not a problem, indeed it is necessary as gender is a cross cutting issue, however, often the necessary gender issues relevant to one policy were not found in that policy, but in others, or indeed throughout Acts (which are not a part of this review). As such the policy implementation of issues such as sexual harassment is not addressed in the Employment Policy, making this a key omission.

In the short term, what is needed for gender to be addressed in a relevant manner in all policy, is for a document to be developed which brings together a framework to address gender issues which contains some of the higher level commitments and principles as enshrined in the key international gender documents such as CEDAW, the BPFA and the new SDGs. This is timely as the new SDGs have just been developed. Once this has been done in the short term, a more medium term approach would be to then add all the gender references as they currently stand in policies, allowing for cross referencing and standardization.

Throughout the policy analysis, issues were measured not just against the relevant policies, but also against the previous National Action Plan on Gender 2008-2013. What was found was that the issues, commitments and targets (stated as outcomes, outputs and activities) of the previous NAPG met considerably more of the international standards than any of the policy documents. This illustrates the value of a document such as the NAPG, which can provide a framework for national gender commitments as discussed above as such an important document to guide policy. If such a new document were to exist, it would enable Gender Focal Points to have a key tool to reference for policy development, amendments and review. As such a medium term plan is to create a new NAPG which uses the information from this policy review.

This policy review has also noted that although many of the areas of the NAPG have been well articulated with specific targets, there are several areas that are missing, that have been identified through the review against the Beijing PFA, CEDAW and the SDGs. As such, it is suggested that any review of the NAPG encompasses the omissions addressed in the concluding sections of the analysis of each policy, in addition to wider issues noted in resources such as the Bhutan Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors, and the many new reports and research studies which have been developed in additional areas such as governance and domestic violence.

If a new NAPG is developed, this will not take the place of national policy, and it is imperative that all new national policy, and all revisions to current policy go through a more rigorous gender analysis. This needs to be developed through national capacity which requires additional development.

Although there are many references to gender in the Eleventh Five Year Plan, again these issues are not addressed in a comprehensive manner, nor do they cover many of the issues as outlined in the Beijing PFA, CEDAW or the SDGs. As such, the long term plan advocated to address gender mainstreaming in policy for Bhutan from this review is to strengthen national gender capacity in policy review, develop a new National Action for Gender which becomes immediately active and also covers the period of the next Twelfth Five Year Plan, and for that comprehensive framework document to guide mainstreaming gender into the next five year plan, the development of new policy and revisions and amendments of new policies as they arise.



**ANNEX 1: Current national policy references to gender issues**

DATE	POLICY	Gender references
2007	Labour and Employment Act	Sexual harassment sections 16-20
2008	The Constitution	Equality before the law: no discrimination based on sex. Reasonable to incitement of an offence on the grounds of sex. Abuse of women. Elimination of discrimination and exploitation against women including trafficking, prostitution, abuse, violence, harassment and intimidation at work in both public and private spheres.
2009	National Forest Policy	Nil
2010	Economic Development Policy	7.3.2 Special focus on women's enterprises within the industries development framework
2010	Tertiary Education Policy	Physical infrastructure—students and teachers Unemployment rates for men and women Equal opportunity in admissions for staff and students in university
2010	National Human Resource Development Policy	Some courses target specific needs of women students
2010	National Foreign Direct Investment Policy	Nil
2011	National Youth Policy	Gender is well mainstreamed throughout this policy with many references.  Young women disadvantaged from unemployment, low income, physical and sexual abuse, substance abuse, crime and violence and health issues including HIV/AIDS and reproductive health.  Rationale= young men and women to achieve full potential Priority target groups include monks and nuns, domestic workers, girls in drayangs, uneducated young women Respect for culture, traditions, religions and ethnic backgrounds without discrimination based on sex  No discrimination based on sex  Provision, access and quality of education for young women: literacy, higher secondary and tertiary education
2011	Renewable National Resources Resource Policy	Participation, empowerment and responsiveness for research and decision making and inclusion of needs and priorities for especially for women and disadvantaged groups.
2011	National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Development (draft).	Acknowledgement of working women without extended family support. Integrate ECCD interventions for pregnant mothers and children birth to two years of age.

		<p>Maternity leave during childbirth, paid minimum wages as per the national labour law, creches and nursing intervals in work places for women.</p> <p>NCWC to ensure the protection of all children and mothers</p> <p>Premarital sex</p> <p>Violence including physical, mental , sexual, bullying and domestic violence</p> <p>Family value system ensures equality, respect and sharing responsibility between sexes</p> <p>Limited female participation in decision making at higher civic level</p> <p>Eliminate all forms of gender discrimination in every sphere</p> <p>Equality of gender participation of policy formulation and implementation, education, training, employment, healthcare, recreation and shelter</p> <p>Support for psychological, religious, moral, cultural, emotional and physical wellbeing of young men and women.</p>
2011	Mineral development Policy (Draft)	Nil
2011	Renewable Energy Policy	Nil
2011	Subsidized timber and non-wood forest produce allotment Policy	Nil
2012	Cottage, Small and Medium Industry Policy	<p>Promote women entrepreneurship in CSMI to maximise the economic contribution of both genders.</p> <p>Implement effective Micro Finance Institutions (MFI), especially economic development, gender equality and poverty reduction.</p> <p>Match labour market demand with the supply of human capital, with an emphasis on gender equality.</p>
2012	National Occupational Health and Safety Policy (draft)	<p>Reference to policy being gender sensitive.</p> <p>Vulnerable groups include those requiring specific protection such as pregnant workers, and the potentially exploited, including female workers and informal workers.</p> <p>Sexual harassment</p>
2012	Thromde Finance Policy	Nil
2012	Licensing Policy	Nil
2013-2018	Eleventh 5 year Plan: Self Reliance and Inclusive Green Socio-Economic Development 2013-2018	See separate annex

2013-2018	National Policy and Strategic Framework to Reduce Harmful Use of Alcohol	Teenage pregnancy
2013	National Population Policy Draft	<p>Sex disaggregated life expectancy  Separate section for HIV AIDS ad STIs  Sex disaggregated information for differently abled people  Gender parity index at primary and secondary levels  Skewed gender parity at tertiary levels</p> <p>Declining trend in population growth rate and TFR may be linked to rapid progress in education and particularly in the participation of girls in education, increased control of reproductive lives, maternal and child health improves, and fertility and mortality.</p> <p>Higher female adult literacy rate  Lower technical and vocational education level for girls  Low female participation in governance  High female unemployment rate  Increasing violence against women</p> <p>Mainstream gender issues into policies; strengthen information, education and communication, and advocacy on gender; enhance involvement and participation of women in the decision-making process; strengthen sectoral approaches adopt special temporary measures; and promote entrepreneurial and employment opportunities for women.</p>
2013	Agricultural Marketing Policy (draft)	<p>Gender imbalances addressed as a cross cutting issue for agricultural marketing.  Interestingly the policy refers to the Gender Policy yet there is no gender policy.</p> <p>Separate section on gender and youth addresses gender inequality as a policy issue for agricultural marketing stating women’s responsibilities for production, domestic marketing and export of agricultural goods, yet women's access to agricultural marketing services and finance is constrained by social and traditional factors.</p> <p>Policy objective to mainstream gender and youth involvement in all agricultural marketing activities and to develop special programmes for women’s empowerment to optimise their participation in agricultural marketing and credit facilities through projects/programmes for both women and youths will be established and implemented.</p>
2013	National Social Protection Policy (draft)	<p>Reference to CEDAW  Reference to female unemployment.</p>

		Social protection interventions shall not discriminate against any citizen based on gender. Programs will promote equality of opportunity based on gender.
2013	National Employment Policy	Gender not mainstreamed, but addressed as a separate section which addresses: targeted employment and self-employment programmes developed for unemployed women; gender friendly working conditions/environment shall be promoted at workplaces through day care centres, crèches and other child care facilities; and women self-help groups promoted to ensure better access to credit, infrastructure and skills for female entrepreneurs.
2013	Domestic Violence prevention Act	The Act deals with defining domestic violence the implementing authorities, complaints, protection officers and service providers, conduct of trials, interim protection and protection orders and offence and penalties.
2014	National Education Policy	Gender responsive and conducive learning environment. Mission to prepare young men and women with the right values and skills to meet needs of a fast globalizing world Goal: boys and girls achieve equivalent levels of learning outcomes Gender responsive infrastructure and curriculum Early childhood care and development encouraged either through government initiative or private home based parenting education and interventions encouraged Home and centre-based childcare encouraged and regulated for the benefit of working parents and to create employment opportunities for women. Sex separated toilet facilities for teachers and students Gender sensitive curriculum
2014	National Competition Policy	Nil
2014	Telecommunications and Broadband Policy	Nil
2014	Business Infrastructure Policy	Gender perspective addressed as a strategic policy consideration. Women are provided with equal opportunities to participate in economic development though the inclusion of facilities like crèches and day-care services. To provide greater opportunities for women in the rural areas/small towns/villages, a percentage of zone facilities will be for women.
2014	Food and Nutrition Security Policy	Female and fetal malnutrition and low birth weights. General statement of programs to be gender sensitive. Higher anemia in women and girls Implement microcredit programs directed at women and youth to enhance incomes

		Improve sustainable access to micro-credit to small-holders, in particular women and youth Maternal, infant and young child feeding practices
No date	National Health Policy	General gender statement Health infrastructure gender sensitive Mother and child health
No date	Access and Benefit Sharing Policy	Nil
No date	Media Policy	Empower women, through access to timely and accurate information.
No date	Social Media Policy	Mention of gender as cross cutting issue.
No date	National Film Policy	Ensure that women included in suitable professional roles
No date	Vocational Education and Training Policy	Nil
No date	National Policy on Special Educational Needs	Nil

## **ANNEX 2: FULL TEXT OF ALL GENDER REFERENCES IN BHUTANESE POLICY**

### **THE CONSTITUTION OF THE KINGDOM OF BHUTAN, 2008**

#### Article 7: Fundamental Rights

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

22. Notwithstanding the rights conferred by this Constitution, nothing in this Article shall prevent the State from subjecting reasonable restriction by law, when it concerns:

(d) Incitement to an offence on the grounds of race, sex, language, religion or region;

#### Article 8: Fundamental Duties

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

#### Article 9: Principles of State Policy

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

#### Article 15: Political Parties

4. A political party shall be registered by the Election

Commission on its satisfying the qualifications and requirements set out hereinafter, that:

(b) Its membership is not based on region, sex, language, religion or social origin

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY OF THE KINGDOM OF BHUTAN, 2010**

#### Industry

7.3.2 The Royal Government shall promote CSI to generate employment, support equitable distribution of income and bring about balanced regional development. The CSI Policy shall be developed within two years of the establishment of the Department of CSI. Special focus on women's enterprises shall be given within the CSI industries development framework.

### **NATIONAL HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT POLICY OF THE KINGDOM OF BHUTAN, 2010**

#### Technical and Vocational Education and Training

10.3 The existing TTIs shall introduce new courses that have market demand as well as are attractive enough for the students. A few institutes shall also offer short-term, preservice courses conducive to employment. Some of the courses shall be targeted at the specific needs of women students. The Institutes shall be encouraged and empowered to be more entrepreneurial and innovative.

## **NATIONAL POLICY ON EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT draft (2011).**

The country's rapid socio-economic transformation has put a strain on the traditional childrearing practices which was based on extended family support system. There is also an increase in mothers working outside the home.

2.2. The time from conception to birth is important because of the vitally important role the environment of the mother's womb plays in establishing the first phase of the child's development. The environment provided in the mother's womb shapes the formation of the foetus and how it starts shaping itself.

Ministry of Health shall:

7.2.2. Integrate ECCD interventions for pregnant mothers and children birth to two years of age in the health programmes and services

The Ministry of Labour and Human Resources shall:

5.7.1 Work to ensure that all working women have entitlement to full maternity leave during childbirth.

7.4.2. Ensure that women workers at the lower rungs of employment are paid minimum wages as per the national labour law.

7.4.3. Encourage organizations and agencies to provide facilities such as crèches and nursing intervals in work places for women working away from home in both urban and rural areas

7.7. National Commission for Women and Children

The National Commission for Women and Children and the Women and Child Protection Unit, RBP shall:

7.7.1. Ensure the protection of all children and mothers to ensure that children grow up free from all forms of abuse, exploitation and neglect.

7.7.2. Initiate policy advocacy on the care and protection of children at the national level.

## **NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY, 2011**

Vision & Prayer...Generations of Bhutanese young men and women, boys and girls, sons and daughters, nurtured with love and care, the benign image of the useful and the graceful, the living, flowing breath of the ideal of Gross National Happiness, at peace with themselves, at peace with the society.

### Rationale

Recent statistics indicate that they are most at risk from major socio-economic challenges including unemployment, low income, physical and sexual abuse, substance abuse, crime and violence and a wide range of health issues, significantly HIV/AIDS and reproductive health with young women being most disadvantaged.

The rationale of the development of the National Youth Policy is thus, to provide a broad framework for youth engagement that endeavors to ensure that all young men and women are provided with support and meaningful opportunities to reach their full potential as they actively participate in society.

### Definition of youth and priority target groups

Like any age group within the society, this wide age group of 13-24 years also consists of subgroups with diverse experiences, needs and risks depending on age, gender, geographical location, region, culture, marital status, education, socio-economic background and work status.

### Priority Target groups

- Young monks/nuns
- Domestic workers
- Girls working in Drayangs
- Uneducated young women in urban and rural areas

#### Preservation and promotion of culture

##### Respect for Culture, Belief systems and Ethical Values

The Policy promotes respect for culture & traditions, religious and ethnic backgrounds of the people and conforms to universally recognised human rights without discrimination based on gender, race/origin, age, ethnicity, creed, sexual identity, political affiliation or social status

#### Promotion of Good Governance Gender Inclusive

The Policy notes that any discrimination on grounds of sex violates the basic rights of the individual concerned and it, therefore, stands for the elimination of all forms of gender discrimination.

#### Vision

Generations of Bhutanese young men and women, boys and girls, sons and daughters, nurtured with love and care, the benign image of the useful and the graceful, the living, flowing breath of the ideal of Gross National Happiness, at peace with themselves, at peace with the society.

#### Education

While there have been extensive resources provided to deliver basic education, there are still issues in relation to provision, access and quality of education across the country particularly for young women. These issues include literacy levels (lower for women especially in rural areas), access to higher secondary school and tertiary education (lower rates of access for young women), costs of education and the delivery of life-skills and livelihood skills within the curriculum.

#### Critical Issues: Formal Education (school and tertiary)

- Access to higher education especially for young women
- Literacy levels for women

#### Health and Well Being

In comparison to other Asian countries, the Bhutanese society has a relatively open approach to sex and sexuality with less stringent practices and views about sexuality for both men and women. Premarital sex is not taboo in many rural communities<sup>2</sup> with an early onset of sexual activity (especially in rural areas) occurring for some boys and girls increasing their risk of sexually transmitted diseases.

#### Critical Issues

Violence including physical, mental, sexual, bullying and domestic violence

#### Social Environment

##### Critical Issues

- Gender Concerns

#### Policy Statements



20. To promote a family value system that nurtures a closer bond between men and women, and ensures equality, mutual respect and sharing of responsibility between the sexes.

#### Governance and Youth

##### Critical Issues

- Limited female participation in decision making processes particularly at the higher civic level

##### Policy Statements

28. To eliminate all forms of gender discrimination in every sphere

29. To facilitate young women's access to decision-making processes, professional positions and economic opportunities

##### Youth Rights and Responsibilities

All Bhutanese young men and women enjoy the citizenship rights, responsibilities and obligations as outlined in the Constitution.

Further, this National Youth Policy advocates that all young people irrespective of their gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, geographic location or disability have the right and an opportunity to:

- Enjoy their youth;
- Contribute to Policy and programme formulation and implementation, regarding youth development;
- Enjoy protection from all forms of abuse, violence, exploitation and degradation and
- A secure future through relevant education, training, employment, healthcare, recreation and shelter.

In equal measure, young men and women have a responsibility to contribute positively to building a peaceful, prosperous and caring society that is guided by the philosophy of Gross National Happiness [GNH]. This should be achieved by young people through: -

- Building and encouraging gender equality;

The Government, Society and individuals from all walks of life have a profound duty towards ensuring the success that is envisioned for youth development in this policy and towards this end all Bhutanese must;

- Support the psychological, religious, moral, cultural, emotional and physical wellbeing of young men and women;
- Encourage the active participation of young men and women to look into their issues and concerns both at the community and national level.

## **TERTIARY EDUCATION POLICY OR THE KINGDOM OF BHUTAN, 2010**

### Facilities

84b The physical infrastructure facilities include spacious buildings, catering to the various needs of the staff and students, and adequate hostel facilities for boys and girls, and housing for the teaching and administrative staff.

### Employment Potential and Prospects

1. Currently, the unemployment rate is 4.0 percent; (Labour Force Survey Report 2009) which includes 2.6 percent male and 5.4 percent female.

### Establishing a University

f) A policy that ensures equality of opportunity such that admission to any office or appointment in the university and the admission of students to the university shall be on merit and irrespective of religion, origin, sex, sexual orientation, or race.

### **RENEWABLE NATIONAL RESOURCES RESEARCH POLICY OF BHUTAN, 2011**

Guiding principles- taken from GNH pillar 3: Good Governance

3.3.7 Participation, empowerment and responsiveness to needs: ensure local communities, especially women and disadvantaged groups participate in RNR research and play an active decision-making role and RNR research incorporates their needs and priorities.

### **NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY Draft (2012)**

This policy is gender-sensitive, respects the rights of the people, and upholds the principles of prevention of accidents and ill health.

Vulnerable groups include those requiring specific protection such as the young, disabled, low paid, shift workers, pregnant workers, and the potentially exploited, including female workers and informal workers.

Bhutan is committed toward providing a safe and healthy working environment, safe work methods, safe plant and equipment, safe and competent co-workers, safe substances and materials in the work place. It is also committed to freedom from all forms of forced labour, harassment, (including sexual harassment), and violence towards workers, as well as freedom from work related hazards for those not at work.

### **COTTAGE, SMALL AND MEDIUM INDUSTRY, 2012**

6.6.4. Promote women entrepreneurship in CSMI to maximise the economic contribution of both genders.

6.3.3. Implement effective Micro Finance Institutions (MFI), consistent with the RGoB's Financial Inclusion Policy, especially with a focus on economic development, gender equality and poverty reduction in the rural areas.

The growth of the knowledge economy and rapid developments in consumer preferences, product life cycles, etc. place a premium on the development of a deep and diverse talent pool, combined with a capacity to match labour market demand with the supply of human capital, with an emphasis on gender equality.

### **AGRICULTURAL MARKETING POLICY OF BHUTAN, (draft) 2013**

Challenges Facing Agricultural Marketing

xiii) Cross cutting issues: including the back and forth effects of health, food security and nutrition, environmental degradation, gender imbalances on agricultural marketing.

Policy Goal 4: Maximum synergies and minimum adverse effects from exogenous factors marketing of agricultural products.

The main cross-cutting issues are: Direct Foreign Investment (FDI), Gender and Youth, and Environment. These issues already have specific policies in place, including Gender Policy - [Year]<sup>4</sup>; Youth Policy - [Year]; and National

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<sup>4</sup> There is no Gender Policy

Environment Policy - [Year]. Notwithstanding these existing policy frameworks, agricultural marketing activities have implications for and are in turn affected by the cross-cutting issues. Hence, it is necessary for the Agricultural Marketing Policy to take cognizance of these issues.

#### Policy Intervention Area 4.2 Gender and Youth

##### Policy Issues

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

##### Policy Objective

Mainstream gender and youth involvement in all agricultural marketing activities

##### Policy Statements

(i) The Government, in collaboration with other key stakeholders, will develop special programmes for women and youths empowerment to optimise their participation in agricultural marketing.

(ii) Women and youth -focused agricultural marketing co-operatives, associations and groups will be supported, promoted and facilitated, including access to credit facilities.

(iii) Agricultural marketing related projects/programmes for both women and youths will be established and implemented.

#### **NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT POLICY 2013**

##### Equal employment opportunities

5.1 Targeted employment and self-employment programmes shall be developed for unemployed women, physically challenged and vulnerable groups in *dzongkhags* which are identified to have higher unemployment. A study shall be conducted to assess and map their needs to enable targeted policy formulation for them.

5.2 Gender friendly working conditions/environment shall be promoted at workplaces through day care centres, crèches and other child care facilities at or near workplaces to encourage greater workforce participation of women with children.

5.3 Women Self Help Groups shall be promoted and further supported by the Royal Government to ensure better access to credit, infrastructure and skills for female entrepreneurs.

#### **NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION ACT 2013**

The Act deals with defining domestic violence the implementing authorities, complaints, protection officers and service providers, conduct of trials, interim protection and protection orders and offence and penalties.

#### **NATIONAL POPULATION POLICY, draft, 2013<sup>5</sup>**

##### Population Scenario of Bhutan and Future Trends

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<sup>5</sup> Note the section on HIV AIDS and sexual health has not been included.

Overall life expectancy at birth in the country had increased from 47.5 years in 1984 to 66.3 years in 2005 and is projected to reach 75 years for male and 78.3 years for females by 2050.

#### HIV AIDS and STIs

The latest epidemic updates report 2011 of the NACP reveals that there are 270 reported cases of confirmed HIV infection, out of which 135 are females and 135 males.

#### Differently Abled People

The Population and Housing Census of Bhutan (PHCB) 2005 revealed that 3.4 percent (21,894 persons) of the country's total population are differently-abled, among which 45.7 percent were females and 54.3 percent were males.

#### Access to basic and Quality Education

The gender parity index at primary and secondary levels is 1, indicating that there is parity in education at those levels. However, the skewed gender parity at tertiary levels is cause for concern.

Although inconclusive with the limited studies in hand, the declining trend in population growth rate and TFR in Bhutan may in fact be attributed to rapid progress in education and particularly in the participation of girls in education.

Policy Statement 2.1.7: Provide gender responsive quality education to produce GNH graduates with the right skills, life skills, attitude and ethics.

#### Demographic Change and Gender

Gender disparities and the extent of gender equality in the country directly influence the timing and shape of demographic change. As differences between males and females lessen and women are able to control their reproductive lives, maternal and child health improves, and fertility and mortality tend to decline. Consequently, population growth slows as women have more access to knowledge on reproductive health and effective ways of controlling the timing and number of childbirths. This translates into enabling women to broaden their horizons and participate in the public sphere. As such, gender equality programmes are vital in shaping the demographic profile.

Currently, the female adult literacy rate of 38.7% stands much lower than the male adult literacy rate of 65%. There is gender parity till the secondary level in terms of enrolment in schools but there is a gap at the higher education levels with the ratio of 67 girls for every 100 boys. Likewise, in the technical and vocational education level there are only 49 girls for every 100 boys (Annual Education Statistics, 2011).

There is very low female participation in governance and decision-making roles with women making up only 13.9% of the parliament. Similarly, the female labour force participation is low at 67.4% compared to that of men at 72.3%. The female unemployment rate (4.5%) and female youth unemployment rate (10.9%) is higher than the male unemployment rate (1.8%) and male youth unemployment rate (6.8%) (LFS, 2011). Studies also indicate that violence against women is high and on the rise. According to figures that Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women (RENEW) compiled, between 2008 and 2011, more than 1,200 people came seeking its help from violence. Of that, 49 percent, the highest, was lodged for physical abuse followed by 30 percent with denial of resources, opportunities and services and 11 percent of extra marital affairs.

Policy Objective: Strengthen gender equality, equity and empowerment of women.

Policy statement 5.1: Mainstream gender issues into all development policies, plans and programmes.

Policy statement 5.2: Strengthen information, education and communication, and advocacy on gender.  
Policy statement 5.3: Enhance involvement and participation of women in the decision-making process.  
Policy statement 5.4: Strengthen institutional and organizational coordination in cross-sectoral approaches to gender issues and adopt special temporary measures where necessary.  
Policy statement 5.5: Promote entrepreneurial skills and employment opportunities for women.

#### Demographic Change and Youth

The projection figures show that since 2005, the life expectancy would increase for both males and females by ten and thirteen years respectively by 2050. For example, a girl born in 2020 and 2050 can expect to live six and thirteen years longer than a girl born in 2005.

#### **NATIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICY FOR WORKERS IN BHUTAN draft (2013).**

Bhutan has ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

... However, female unemployment (2.2 percent) is only slightly higher than male unemployment (1.9 percent), marking a big improvement from 2009 when unemployment for females was twice as high (5.3 percent) as male unemployment (2.6).

5.3 Inclusiveness: Social protection interventions shall be implemented in a manner that addresses social as well as economic issues and does not discriminate against any citizen based on gender, religion, or ethnicity.

Equity is achieved through safety net programs that protect citizens from falling into poverty and through policies and programs that promote equality of opportunity, so that every individual has the same chance to improve his or her situation without discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, or religion.

#### **NATIONAL POLICY AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK TO REDUCE HARMFUL USE OF ALCOHOL (2013-2018)**

Teenage pregnancy, many of them unwanted and occurring predominantly among rural women accounts for 11 percent of all births in Bhutan [35]. A report showed that 58% of high school students (15-20 yrs) were sexually active in 2000 (26).

#### 3.5.2 Area 2: Health Service response

b) Support initiatives for early identification of problem drinkers (including pregnant women and women of child bearing age) and provide brief interventions to address hazardous and harmful drinking at primary health care settings

#### **NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2014**

##### Quality of Education

3.4 Towards this, the NEP calls for the enhancement of learning through provision of adequate and appropriate support to learners and teachers, including a gender responsive and conducive learning environment, delivery of a relevant curriculum, resulting in citizens with knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable their positive participation in society.

##### Mission

5.4 To prepare our young men and women with the right values and skills, usefulness and gracefulness, to meet the ever-growing needs of a developing country against the backdrop of a fast globalizing world;

## Goals of the National Education Policy

6.3 Both boys and girls achieve equivalent levels of learning outcomes;

## Access and Sustainability of Education

8.9 In recognition of the specific needs of boys and girls, gender responsive infrastructure and curriculum shall be provided;

## Early Childhood Development

10.1 Early childhood care and development interventions for children from 0-8 years of age shall be encouraged either through government initiative or private participation to prepare children to learn, be happy and healthy. The provision of quality early childhood care and development services for children aged 0-8 years is to ensure that all children, including children with special needs, develop to their full potential through strong foundations for lifelong development and learning.

10.2 Home based parenting education and interventions shall be encouraged through media and existing services such as health outreach services, non-formal education programmes and community based ECCD centres to cater to children aged 0-2 years to promote sound parenting and childcare practices and to strengthen provisions of health, hygiene and nutrition. Home as well as centre-based childcare shall be encouraged and regulated in the urban areas for the benefit of working parents and to create employment opportunities for women.

10.3 Early learning opportunities for children aged 3-5 years shall be facilitated through opportunities for early stimulation and education in private, work place and community based ECCD centres and also home based care as per need and viability. For those not reached by the centre based programmes, home based early childhood care and education and home visits by early childhood workers shall be encouraged.

10.4 Interventions shall be instituted in primary schools to improve teaching learning practices, particularly for children aged 6-8 years i.e. in classes PP-II to help children maintain and increase the gains they made through ECCD services, enhance the readiness of schools for children and for smooth transition from ECCD to schools.

10.5 The establishment of public, private, community and work place based ECCD centres to provide quality early childhood services shall be promoted and facilitated.

10.6 The 'Guidelines for ECCD Centres' shall be used as the guiding document to ensure minimum standards in all ECCD centres and programmes.

10.7 The Ministry of Education shall ensure the licensing of the establishment of ECCD centres and their regulation for quality of the services provided.

10.8 Development of ECCD shall be guided by the ECCD Policy Guidelines of the Ministry of Education.

## Our Seats of Learning: Schools and Infrastructure

11.10 Schools shall have adequate number of toilet facilities for teachers and students that are clean and separate for girls/ladies and boys/men.

## The Soul of the System: The Curriculum

21.12.6 Be gender sensitive and cater to a wide range of student learning needs including special educational needs;

## **BUSINESS INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY (2014)**

6. Strategic policy considerations

## Gender Perspective

### 6.6 Gender perspective

In line with the comprehensive strategy of gender mainstreaming and to ensure that women are provided with equal opportunities to participate in the economic development, a gender perspective in the planning and implementation of the business infrastructure programme shall be adopted. This shall be done through the inclusion of facilities like crèches and day-care services within the Business areas.

To provide greater opportunities for women in the rural areas/small towns/villages, the strategy shall set aside a percentage of zone facilities developed in these areas, especially for women. The Authority shall, during the review of the proposal, specify the area and manner of allocation of space for women entrepreneurs in a specific Business area. Alternatively, the Authority shall issue a guideline for allocation of certain percentage of developed space to women entrepreneurs in all Business areas.

### **NATIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY 2014**

Adult malnutrition results in lower productivity on farms and in the labor market. In women, it also results in fetal malnutrition and low birth weights. Fetal and infant under-nutrition leads to lower cognitive development and schooling performance. For school-age children, nutritional deficiencies are responsible in part for poor school enrollment, early dropout, and poor classroom performance with consequent losses in productivity during adulthood (ACC/SCN 1999).”

Food and nutrition security programs must be gender sensitive and socially inclusive of the interest of poor and vulnerable communities and individuals.

Anemia is still a major public health problem with over 80% of 6-36 months children anemic, over 50% in women and adolescent girls, and over 28% in men (*National Anemia Survey 2002*).

2.2.1 Implement microcredit programs directed at women and youth to enhance incomes

2.3.3 Improve sustainable access to micro-credit to small-holders, in particular women and youth

Infant and Young child feeding practices are not optimal among the mothers and caregivers which leads to malnutrition, and contributes to the growing Non Communicable Diseases in the later part of their life. There are a lot of cultural and traditional barriers which need to be addressed so as to promote optimal breastfeeding.

*Objective 3.2: Promote appropriate Maternal, Infant and Young child feeding practices*

3.2.1 Encourage early initiation of breastfeeding

3.2.2 Encourage exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life of the child

3.2.3 Promote continued breastfeeding for two years or beyond along with adequate and appropriate complementary feeding beginning after 6 months

3.2.4 Promote mother friendly work places in public and private sectors to ensure adequate breastfeeding

### **NATIONAL HEALTH POLICY (no date)**

This policy is gender-sensitive, respects the rights of the people, seeks informed consent and maintains confidentiality in relation to medical decision-making and information sharing.

5.14. All health infrastructures shall be of sustainable design and user-friendly thereby integrating disability, women, child and elderly friendly and other necessary features.

### 11.3 Maternal and Child Health

- a. Comprehensive quality maternal and child health care services shall be provided not limiting to family planning and promotion of institutional delivery.
- b. Free and equitable access to safe, quality and cost effective vaccines for all children and pregnant women to protect against vaccines-preventable diseases shall be provided.
- c. The introduction of new vaccines shall be done only after assessing the disease burden, public health impact, cost effectiveness of the vaccine, affordability and sustainability.
- d. Healthy child growth and development shall be promoted through advocating breast-feeding, appropriate nutrition, and Integrated Management of Neonatal and childhood diseases.

14.9. Inter and intra sectoral collaboration and coordination shall be emphasized to support gender responsive plans and programs.

### **MEDIA POLICY (no date)**

- 1.9.4 Promote social cohesion and empower women, through access to timely and accurate information.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY (no date)**

Cross Cutting Issues. Agencies should address cross-cutting issues such as gender, poverty, disaster management, climate change and environment.

### **NATIONAL FILM POLICY (no date)**

The film industry shall ensure that women and ethnic minorities are included in suitable professional roles



### **ANNEX 3: GENDER REFERENCES IN THE ELEVENTH 5 YEAR PLAN: SELF RELIANCE AND INCLUSIVE GREEN AND SOCIO- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (2013-2018)**

The empowerment of women, gender equality and the promotion of civil societies has also been an integral part of our efforts to promote good governance through initiatives such as the National Plan of Action for Gender (NPAG), 2008-2013; the Domestic Violence Prevention Act 2013; building capacities for women leaders; the Civil Society Organizations Act, 2007; and the establishment of the Civil Society Organizations Authority in 2009. (p. 8).

Under the pillar Promotion of Good Governance there are six NKRA's covering Improved Public Service Delivery; Democracy and Governance Strengthened; Gender Friendly Environment for Women's Participation; Corruption Reduced; Safe Society; and Needs of Vulnerable Group Addressed. The KPIs include drafting legislation to ensure quota for women in elected offices; reducing female unemployment... (p. 14).

The key findings of 2010 GNH Survey ... were as follows: Men were happier than women on average. (p. 34)

promotion of female participation in governance... but youth and female unemployment rates remain comparatively high.... (p. 37).

Overall life expectancy at birth increased from 47.5 years in 1984 to 66.3 years in 2005 and is projected to reach 75 years for male and 78.3 years for females by 2050. (p. 54).

Some of the MDGs falling behind are chronic malnutrition among children below the age of 5, ratio of female to male in tertiary institutions, maternal mortality rate, under five mortality rate, infant mortality rate, number of HIV cases detected and the growing youth unemployment. (p. 59-60).

Other initiatives towards conservation of natural environment include: ...establishment of a core group for Mainstreaming Gender, Environment, Climate, Disaster Risk Reduction and Poverty (GECDP) to assist sectors in mainstreaming these elements in their policies, plans, and programmes; (p. 65).

The second Parliamentary elections were successfully held in 2013... No women were elected though six had registered. Of the five eminent members nominated by His Majesty the King, two were women. (p. 66).

The local government elections were held in 2011. From the total of 2,185 candidates 1,104 representatives were elected at various levels. Of the 165 female candidates 76 were elected to office... Currently, there are 24,275 civil servants, of which 67 percent are male and 33 percent female. (p. 67).

#### **2.5.5 Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality**

The ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1981 saw the establishment of the National Women's Association of Bhutan (NWAB) with the mandate of addressing the issues related to our women and reporting and monitoring on the progress. In order to further strengthen the national machinery for women, the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) was instituted in 2004. Several non-governmental organizations working on women's issues such as Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women (RENEW) and Tarayana Foundation have also been established.

Women issues in the Tenth Plan were mainly approached in line with the National Plan of Action for Gender (NPAG), 2008-2013. The seven critical areas identified in the NPAG namely: good governance; economic empowerment; violence against women; education and training; health; prejudices and stereotypes; and ageing mental health and disabilities; provided the platform for addressing gender related issues. The NPAG witnessed progress in terms of conducting researches and studies identifying challenges and gaps, creating awareness and

sensitization on gender equality and women's empowerment and creating an enabling policy environment through enactment of issue-specific laws such as the Domestic Violence Prevention Act 2013. The Tenth Plan, also witnessed increased data and statistical evidences; increased collaboration with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working on the issues of women and an increase in the gender discourse movement, evident through the media discussions (mainstream and social) and comparatively higher levels of incorporation of gender into mainstream sector policies and issues with the implementation of the Government's Policy Protocol.

Under the area of good governance significant achievements were made in terms of conducting surveys and studies to identify factors and challenges influencing the participation of our women in governance, creating awareness on their political participation, building capacities for women leaders and providing a platform for networking amongst the women leaders and aspiring leaders. Provision of support services like scholarships for girls from disadvantaged families, establishing girl-friendly infrastructure in the schools, improving boarder facilities and creating an enabling environment were major achievements under the area of education. Establishment of Early Childhood, Care and Development Centres (ECCD) and extended classrooms helped in increasing girls' participation in schools. The literacy rate of women increased in the plan period due to the expansion of non-formal education, where over 70 percent of the participants were women, and continuing education programmes.

The critical area of women's economic empowerment witnessed increased participation of women in economic activities through the provision of various support like capacity building, entrepreneurial skills development, business management programmes and formation of farmers groups, cooperatives and self-help groups and the provision of micro credit. However, women's lower participation in regular paid employment (6.1 percent as compared to 17.8 percent for men) and substantial engagement in agricultural occupations (38.2 percent against 23.7 percent for men) and the fact that 73 percent of our employed women are in the agricultural sector warrants further assessment and special interventions on skills development and other economic empowerment measures. Progress has been forged in the area of providing social safety for women in the workplace through the enactment of the Labour and Employment Act 2007, although enforcement may need to be strengthened in the Eleventh Plan.

Creating awareness among the health personnel and the general public on gender related aspects of health, HIV and AIDS, teenage pregnancy, adolescent health amongst others have seen good progress over the last five years. Further, significant achievements were made to eliminate violence against women (VAW) through awareness and sensitization programs, provision of counseling and legal services and establishment of shelter services for the victims of VAW. The expansion of women and child protection units in 4 police stations, up gradation of complaints and response mechanism and establishment of women friendly judicial procedures were additional achievements.

The platform for planning and programming in the Eleventh Plan is provided by the findings and recommendations of the review of the NPAG and the Gender Equality Diagnostic Study of Selected Sectors (GEDSS) namely Education, Urban Development, Environment, Energy, Private Sector, Transport, Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods, and Work and Unemployment. Other strategies in the Eleventh Plan would include: creating a gender responsive legal environment through development of a Gender Equality Law including special temporary measures such as quotas to enhance women's participation in governance; implementation of the Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting Strategy; strengthening gender mainstreaming initiatives/capacity at all levels including the private sector; collecting and using sex-disaggregated data; awareness programs at all levels; enhancing women's participation in employment and economic activities; and effective monitoring and implementation of current laws, rules and regulations, policies, plans and programs. (p.71-73).

Civil Society organisations

CSOs are in key areas of education, health, women, children, culture, environmental protection, and private sector development... RENEW (Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women) is dedicated to empowerment of women and girls in Bhutan, especially the victims and survivors of domestic violence...

#### Mainstreaming of Cross-Cutting Issues

The growing environmental, social and economic issues like environmental degradation, over utilization of natural resources, climate change, issues of poverty, gender, differently-abled, unemployment and income, food and nutrition, health and sanitation and changing nature of natural disasters pose serious threats to our hard earned developmental and economic gains and momentum and to our goal of sustainable development.

#### Chapter 4: Eleventh Plan

While our poverty and social indicators report significant progress, disparities exist within regions, area of residence and gender. (p. 111).

MDG Plus achieved indicators are for the health and education sectors...In the education sector, the main focus will be to ensure gender parity at tertiary levels, as Bhutan has already achieved the target for gender parity at primary and secondary school levels. The target set is at least 90 percent from the current 71 percent female to male in tertiary education. (p. 114).

Percentage of regular paid employee increased... Further, females under this category are much lower at 6.1 percent as compared to males (17.8 percent). The target is to increase the proportion of regular paid employees to about 40 percent. This is an ambitious target but needs to be pursued to ensure income, social security and gender equality. (p. 115).

Good Governance: The key result areas under this pillar are improved public service delivery, democracy and governance strengthened, gender friendly environment for women's participation, corruption reduced, safe society and the needs of vulnerable groups addressed. (p. 120).

The KPIs for NKRA 13 – Gender Friendly Environment for Women's Participation: Draft legislation to ensure quota for women in elected offices including the parliament and local government bodies – the target is to draft legislation and present it to the Parliament; Ratio of female to male in tertiary education increased –The target is to increase ratio of females to males in tertiary education from 71 percent to at least 90 percent by 2017-18; youth unemployment reduced – the target is to ensure full female youth employment of 97.5 percent or reduce female unemployment from 7.2 percent to less than 2.5 percent; and Agencies with gender sensitive policies/gender mainstreaming strategies increased – the target is to ensure that at least 20 percent of the agencies implement gender sensitive policies and adopt gender mainstreaming strategies. (p. 121).

The KPIs for NKRA 15 – Safe Society – are as follows: Nationwide reported crime (annually) by category, age group and gender reduced – currently crime reported is 7 per 1,000 population, the target is to bring it down to 5 per 1,000 population. (p. 122).

Inclusive Social Development: While at the national level our poverty and social indicators have improved significantly, disparities exist among *Dzongkhags*, *Gewogs*, gender and area of residence. To ensure regional balance and equity, inclusive social development has been identified as one of the thrust areas. (p. 123).

#### Chapter 5: Central Plans

In terms of gender, literacy is higher among males at 72 percent as compared to 55 percent for females. However, the Gender Parity Index is calculated at 1.02, indicating that on the whole there is no significant gender inequality

in the Bhutanese education system. Both boys and girls have equal opportunities in terms of access, quality of learning process, equality of outcomes and external results.

Further, while national statistics indicate good progress in overall enrollment rates, the Bhutan Multiple Indicator Survey 2010 indicates that some disparities in achievements exist between urban and rural areas, *Dzongkhags* and genders. According to the Survey, the adjusted Net Primary Attendance Ratio (NAR) for 2010 indicates that Punakha, Chukha, Mongar, Lhuentse, Wangdue and Gasa are the six *Dzongkhags* that have the lowest adjusted NAR, significantly below the national average of 91.9 percent. Similarly, the Gender Parity Index (GPI) reveals that Pemagatshel, Trongsa, Haa, Punakha and Mongar have a variance in their GPI scores by more than 0.03 from 1.0, indicating that some inequity exist in terms of gender participation. In all of these five *Dzongkhags*, the participation level of girls in primary education significantly exceeds that of boys. However, these ratios change in favor of male children as students move to higher classes mainly due to higher drop-out rates among female students. (p. 139).

Key programmes: Addressing gender gaps at higher secondary level through provision of gender responsive facilities such as hostels and hostel toilets for girls' toilets and housing for female teachers; (p. 148).

Health: Maternal and Child Health- Tremendous progress has been made in the field of mother and child health. However, performance on certain indicators such as MMR, compared to other countries in the region and the low allocations relative to health spending is still a cause of concern. Nearly two-fifth of deliveries are still attended by medically untrained personnel increasing the risk of maternal and neonatal death. Infant death and especially neonatal death are among the highest death occurring within the health facilities. There is a need to invest heavily in this area.

Nutrition: In addition, anemia prevalence in women and children are quite alarming with 54.8 percent and 80.6 percent respectively.

Employment: In terms of gender, the percentage of females employed are higher in agriculture, wholesale and retail trade, and hotels and restaurants sectors. (p. 164).

Even among the employed many are still vulnerable and lack income and social security as 40 percent of those employed are agriculture family workers. Women are particularly vulnerable as they comprise 27.6 percent in this category. (p.165)

Renewable Natural Resource: Labor shortage including increasing feminization of the agricultural labour force is becoming one of the leading constraints in agriculture production. According to agriculture statistics 2011, available farm labour constitutes only 26 percent. Rural female population is more by 3.7 percent overall. In the age group of 15-64 which is also an active population group, female population is higher by 7.5 percent, and this is likely to increase. This gender imbalance in agriculture workforce will also have significant impact on agriculture. (p. 173).

Human Settlement and Housing Sector: The various articles of the Constitution, in particular Article 7 and 9, protect the rights of an individual, women and children and mandates the State to take appropriate measures to eliminate all form of discrimination and exploitation.

Domestic laws such as Child Adoption Act 2012, Child Care and Protection Act of Bhutan 2011, Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Substance Abuse Act 2005 and Rape Act 1996 have been enacted to protect the rights and welfare of individuals. At the international level, Bhutan is a signatory to the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (p. 223).

The prevalence of disability was higher among the poor, in rural areas, those with mothers of low level education or mothers with no education, and in the age group 2-5 years. Disability was insensitive to gender. (p. 225).

Senior citizens – Baseline Survey for the Royal Senior Citizens 2013 estimates that there are 101,563 senior citizen (55 years and above), of which 62 percent were males and 38 percent were females. 53.9 percent lived in urban areas. (p.226).

Domestic violence – Records with RENEW indicate that cases of domestic violence are on the rise with a total of 1,141 cases reported till now in the country. In the last three to four years about 300-400 cases are reported annually. (228).

Good Governance: The Eleventh Plan will continue to place emphasis on further strengthening governance by strengthening democracy, improving public service delivery, promoting gender equality, curbing corruption and enhancing safety. (243).

Gender equality - The Constitution guarantees equality for all its citizens including women. Furthermore, it contains special provisions to eliminate all forms of discrimination and exploitation<sup>65</sup> against women including trafficking, prostitution, abuse, violence, harassment, intimidation, degrading treatment and economic exploitation. In the area of inheritance, traditional customs favour women who have greater access to land and ownership. Although female literacy rate has improved from less than 40 percent in 2010 to 55 percent<sup>68</sup> in 2012, it remains low compared to the male literacy rate of 72 percent. The national Gender Parity Index (GPI) is reported at 1.0267. This indicates that on the whole, the correct proportions of females in relation to males are enrolled in the education system and there is no gender inequality in the Bhutanese education system. Female civil servants account for 32 percent<sup>68</sup> of the total civil servants. In absolute terms, the number of female civil servants increased from 2,180 in 1996 to 7,926 in 2012. (p. 244).

Key challenges: Gender – Female participation in elected offices, ratio of female to male in tertiary education, female youth unemployment and gender sensitive policies and working environment are some of the challenges in ensuring gender equality. (P. 245).

Strategies: Education, awareness and capacity building will be one of the key strategies to enhance political participation, particularly the youth and women; and A legislation to ensure quota for women in elected offices including the parliament and local government bodies will be drafted and presented to the Parliament. (p. 246).

## **ANNEX 4: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS WITH RELEVANT GENDER TARGETS**

### **Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere**

- 1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions
- 1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance
- 1.b Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions

### **Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture**

- 2.2 By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons

### **GOAL 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**

- 3.1 By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births
- 3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes

### **Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**

- 4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes
- 4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education
- 4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university
- 4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations
- 4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and at least [x] per cent of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy
- 4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development
- 4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

### **Goal 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls**

- 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere

- 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- 5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation
- 5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
- 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
- 5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences
- 5.a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws
- 5.b Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women
- 5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

**Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all**

- 6.2 By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations

**Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**

- 8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
- 8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment

**Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries**

- 10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status
- 10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard
- 10.4 Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality

**Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**

- 11.2 By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons

**Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts**

- 13.b Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities