

Leave no one behind

Nepal Civil Society Perspectives on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

CSOs' Voluntary National Review 2020



Nepal SDGs Forum

(National Secretariat: NGO Federation of Nepal)



July 2020

Nepal Civil Society Perspectives on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: CSOs' Voluntary National Review 2020



**Nepal SDGs Forum
(Secretariat: NGO Federation of Nepal)**

Published by: NGO Federation of Nepal (on behalf of Nepal SDGs Forum)

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Publication Year: July 2020

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Acknowledgements

This report has been possible because of the coming together and collective efforts of Nepali CSOs, NGOs, CSO networks and federations. Organized under Nepal SDGs Forum for the cause of accelerating achievements of the SDGs, the CSOs have shared their brief reports, analyses and recommendations to be included in this report. While some of the CSOs have been directly engaged as conveners, co-conveners, major groups and thematic contributors in Nepal SDGs Forum, there are others which have readily participated in the discussions and dialogues. As the list of contributors is quite long, they have been listed in the annex of this publication. Thanks also go to the organizations and individuals that have provided information and inputs through online forms.

Many international non-government organisations (INGOs) and development partners working in Nepal have happily accepted to support to this process and contribute to achieve 2030 agendas as advisors. Especially, my sincere thanks go to IM Swedish in the VNR 2020 Report, Open Society Foundations / Alliance for Social Dialogue, Water Aid Nepal, Welthungerhilfe (WHH) Nepal, World Vision International (WVIN) Nepal, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Nepal, Action for Sustainable Development (A4SD), Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) and Asia Development Alliance (ADA) for their contributions to bring the report in this form.

A team at NGO Federation of Nepal was dedicated to this report. Mr Arjun Bhattarai, Deputy Secretary General, coordinated and led the team. Similarly, Mr Ram Prasad Subedi, Secretary General and Mr Dillu Prasad Ghimire, Secretary, supported in various ways. Mr BB Thapa, Executive Director of NFN facilitated the entire process while Mr Hum Bhandari, Programme Manager of NFN had a key role in drafting the report.

I would like to thank Dr. Netra Timsina, Dr. Sarbaraj Khadka and Dr. Padma Prasad Khatiwada for their valuable inputs and comments in framing the report.

My sincere thanks go to the convenors, co-conveners, thematic writers, all members of Nepal SDGs Forum and everyone mentioned here as well as many others who could not be mentioned here but have made direct or indirect contributions in this endeavour.

Jit Ram Lama
President
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Abbreviations

AATWIN	Alliance Against Trafficking in Women and Children in Nepal
ACORAB	Association of Community Radio Broadcasters
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AYON	Association of Youth Organizations in Nepal
BBC	Beyond Beijing Committee
BDS	Blue Diamond Society
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CCBC	Climate Change Budget Code
CCC	Climate Change Council
CCFF	Climate Change Financing Framework
CCMD	Climate Change Management Division
CDKN	Climate and Development Knowledge Network
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIAA	Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease (identified in 2019)
CRPT	Climate Resilient Planning Tool
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCC	District Coordination Committee
DHM	Department of Hydrology and Meteorology
DNA	Designated National Authority
DNF	Dalit NGO Federation
DRRM	Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
DWSSM	Department of Water Supply and Sanitation Management
ECED	Early Childhood Education and Development
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPA	Environment Protection Act
FECONFUN	Federation of Community Forest Users, Nepal
FEDWASUN	Federation of Drinking Water and Sanitation Users Nepal
FNCCI	Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GIS	Geographical Information System
GLAAS	Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water
GoN	Government of Nepal

HKH	Hindu-Kush Himalaya
HLPF	High Level Political Forum
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
IDPs	International Development Partners
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
INGOs	International Non-Government Organizations,
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
LAPA	Local Adaptation Plan of Action
LCEDS	Low Carbon Economic Development Strategy
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer
KIRDARC	Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Center
LLDC	Landlocked Least Developed Country
MCCICC	Multi-Stakeholders Climate Change Initiatives Coordination Committee
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MIS	Management Information System
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOFE	Ministry of Forest and Environment
MOHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MOWS	Ministry of Water Supply and Sewerage
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
MUAN	Municipality Association of Nepal
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NARMIN	National Association of Rural Municipalities in Nepal
NCE	National Campaign for Education
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NDHS	Nepal Demographic and Health Survey
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NPC	National Planning Commission
OAGN	Office of the Auditor General Nepal
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PLWD	People Living with Disability
RDN	Rastriya Dalit Network
RECPHEC	Resource Centre for Primary Health Care
RRN	Rural Reconstruction Nepal

RTI	Right to Information
RTFN	National Network on Right to Food, Nepal
SAAPE	South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOGI	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound
SSDP	School Sector Development Plan
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDROP	UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WVI	World Vision International
WHH	Welthungerhilfe
WSSCC	Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council
WUSCs	Water Users and Sanitation Committees

Highlights of This Report

The annual Voluntary National Review (VNR) process comprises the mechanism through which progress against the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is measured at both national and international levels. This review is aimed to track progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda, including the SDGs and their targets. With a particular focus on the poorest, most vulnerable and marginalized groups, the VNRs are expected to contribute to effectively enhance concrete and tangible steps to ensure that the 2030 Agenda are realised.

VNR process includes reviews of the implementation mechanisms and frameworks, effectiveness of implementation, analysis of trends and gaps, challenges and difficulties, lessons learned and good practices.

As one of the major stakeholders of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, CSOs of Nepal took opportunity first to provide feedback and recommendations on 10 July 2020 to the Government of Nepal on VNR 2020 of the SDGs. After submission of the precise recommendations, Nepali CSOs have come up with this comprehensive report. This is also the continuity of Nepali CSOs' initiatives to realizing the 2030 Agenda and push for 'leaving no one behind'.

While initiating the VNR recommendations earlier and now the comprehensive report, Nepali CSOs have considered 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Goals as transformative roadmap for peace, prosperity, people, planet and partnership. Nepali CSOs believe and highly stress that SDGs need to be achieved by leaving no one behind. While advancing proactive actions and initiatives, CSOs reiterate for their participation to build awareness, localize, support in implementation and monitoring the implementation process. Good governance, transparency and accountability, effectiveness, data revolution and participation of all stakeholders are the key to inclusive and transformative development.

Led by NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN), Nepali CSOs organized under Nepal SDGs Forum have produced this report through a rigorous process. This report is a culmination of multiple ways of engagement of CSOs in Nepal. The NGOs/CSOs working on various sectors and aspects that relate to SDGs have been engaged in this process. Many organisations held consultations and reviews at national, provincial and local levels while focusing on the themes and Goals of their expertise and focus, in order to consult, generate ideas and inputs. NGO Federation of Nepal mobilized district, province and central level CSOs, networks and federations which have been organized under Nepal SDGs Forum. At the central level, a national civil society conference was organised, there were several rounds of discussions and consultations in coordination and facilitation of government agencies particularly National Planning Commission, UN agencies, parliamentarians, INGOs, media persons, academia, and researchers. Deliberations, ideas and views expressed in this course have been well-considered while writing

this report. Secondary data and information were accessed and analysed. In addition, expert consultations and contributions brought this report in this shape.

Unavailability of data for many SDG indicators has however made it difficult to estimate more precisely the progress and trend. Looking into progress across various social groups and geographies was another challenge due to lack of disaggregated data.

Institutions, policy, frameworks and localization

National Planning Commission (NPC) is the government focal agency for 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The SDGs Steering Committee headed by the Prime Minister is an apex body. The SDGs Coordination and Implementation Committee is headed by the NPC Vice Chairman. Within NPC, chaired by members of NPC, there are nine SDGs Implementation and Monitoring Thematic Committees on Economic Development; Industrial Development; Urban Development; Social Development; Employment Management; Agriculture Climate and Environment; Physical Infrastructure; Energy Development; and Peace, Justice, and Inclusive Institutions. These nine committees focus on economic development; industrial development; urban development; social development; employment management; agriculture climate and environment; physical infrastructure; energy development; peace, justice, and inclusive institutions.

While the House of Representatives comprises the Development and Technology Committee, the National Assembly comprises the Sustainable Development and Good Governance Committee. The SDGs among others are supposed to be their working areas.

Other government agencies have also initiated setting up their mechanisms in order to harmonize with and streamline the SDGs. Most of the provincial governments have set up a planning commission or policy and planning commissions that coordinate SDGs.

Constitution of Nepal 2015, federal democratic system of governance, vision of an egalitarian society, objective of achieving sustainable economic development, socialism oriented economic principles, equality through equitable distribution of gains, constitutionally provisioned comprehensive list of fundamental rights, and policy of community development through enhancement of local public participation are major enabling policy aspects. Although capacity and governance remain challenges, local governments in Nepal have quite promising prospects.

The NPC at the national level and policy and planning commissions at the provincial levels have been integrating SDGs in their policies and plans of the government. The NPC claims to have integrated and aligned SDGs in the Fifteenth Plan. Nevertheless, coherence, harmonization and alignment of the sector-wide plans across ministries at all levels of the government still remain a challenge as few tangible results are seen

till date. Integrating SDGs in local governments' periodic plans, policies, programmes and budgets is crucial in order to realize the SDGs but remains as an uphill task and sometimes ignored. Capable and resourceful provinces and local governments would be primary agents in making the people realize change at the local level.

Leaving no one behind

The most important concern for Nepali CSOs seems how the principle of 'leaving no one behind' will be realized and if the government's efforts are adequate. Leaving no one behind largely depends on initiatives and effectiveness on generating and management of disaggregated data. Ironically, the data are scattered across ministries, departments and line agencies. Availability of real time and disaggregated data should be prioritized, as this could have a very good impact on distribution of resources, setting of targets and reaching the poorest of the poor and marginalized communities.

Economic growth should benefit all leading to reduction of inequality, poverty, deprivation, and marginalization. In many cases these problems are caused by structural issues and deeply rooted system. For these reasons, structural transformation or uprooting deeply rooted systems are necessary, while promoting fair redistribution of wealth and meaningful inclusion. While there are many deprived and marginalized social groups to attend, resources are inadequately allocated. More serious is the implementation and management capacity of the government agencies, especially at the subnational level. Children, youth, women, LGBTIQ, older people, Dalit, Madhesi, Muslim, farmers, workers, indigenous groups, people with disabilities, poor and other forms and dimensions of marginalization, deprivations and exclusions are interrelated and intersecting across the Goals.

Adequate consideration of these groups across the Goals and targets based on the robust management of data is not only crucial but also a complex aspect. Baseline and progress data is unavailable for many SDG indicators. Lack of data has made it impossible to track progress, to monitor inclusive growth and improvement and make sure that no one is left behind. Lack of disaggregated data has affected transparency, accountability and just distribution of resources and focus. In addition, progress cannot be ascertained in lack of data. The data revolution as part of the SDGs seems to have been ignored; undermining the participatory approaches and innovative solutions.

Government should establish robust knowledge hub, database system on the SDGs from local, to provincial and central levels. Disaggregated, reliable and updated data should be publicly available in an integrated and open data standard so as to monitor the progress and achievements and develop plans. Up to date data need to be publicly available in an open data format so that it can be utilized by the public, CSOs, private companies, cooperatives and other sectors alike for critical analyses, identification of gaps, and innovative solutions. Upcoming census can be an opportunity to collect necessary disaggregated data.

Available data show that some of the SDG targets, such as poverty reduction, child health, maternal mortality, primary education, representation of women in parliament and all levels of government, basic water supply coverage, access to electricity, and GDP per capita growth seem achievable. However, they are not disaggregated by gender, social groups, geographic region, etc., to make sure that achievements are encompassing, inclusive and enjoyed universally. Moreover, based on the preliminary data and situation, most of the SDG targets and indicators seem unachievable if the current trend goes on.

Covid-19 Pandemic and the SDGs

Outbreak of coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has now emerged not only an obstacle to achieving the SDGs but also a global humanitarian crisis. This is a major setback, likely of undoing the development gains, and recovery from it may take years. Analyses and predications made in this context show that post-Covid-19 world many never be like before and a paradigm shift is awaiting us. Come what may, we must aim to recover better and build back better. For this, we may have to readjust our policies, frameworks and plans—this applies to SDGs too.

The pandemic has given rise to a new set of problems and challenges which have been the new priorities. Efforts and resources are being diverted to the emergency needs. Economy, jobs and delivery of basic services have been badly affected. This disruption has hit hard the poverty reduction, food and nutrition, health and education, among others. The world is going ever more digital; but digital divide can worsen the inequality. On the other hand, hesitations are observed on globalization and development partnership. Anti-globalization trends, incoming migrant workers and youth unemployment affect Nepal.

Lockdowns and restrictions in transportation and travel in the context of Covid-19 have disrupted and constrained the production, supply and value chains. Agriculture-based and other local productions, sales and employment generated in this way have been badly affected. In the current fiscal year, economic growth is expected to get limited to 2.3 percent. In this context, higher investment has been necessary for protection of vulnerable populations. In other words, the gains from the efforts in the past, including the MDGs, will be hard to sustain.

New strategies, adjustments and resources will be necessary to adapt and manage these unforeseen problems. With impact and needs assessment of Covid-19 crisis, specific policies and implementation measures should be in place. Necessary revision of the SDGs roadmap and sectoral plan must be made as soon as possible to minimize the impacts at present and in future. Urgent measures are necessary to protect public health, and seriously consider the risks and damages caused by health problems other than Covid-19 such as the alarmingly increasing maternal mortality. The world will need quite some time to recover the damage. But, by focusing on the SDGs and taking a human rights approach, we will be able to recover better and build back better.

Major Gaps and Challenges to Realizing the SDGs



Gaps and Challenges	Recommendations
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are specific pockets of poverty and hunger consistently prevailing now for decades. Economic inequality is extreme and growing, including geographical disparities. The richest 10% of Nepal's population own more than 26 times the wealth of the poorest 40% people. 2. The target of implementing appropriate protection systems and measures for all and achieving substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable people is also unlikely as planned unless additional effective measures are implemented. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage small and medium enterprises and generate more employment opportunities. Introduce programmes to protect the livelihood of small landholder farmers, landless agricultural workers, slum dwellers, daily wage labourers, and other poor and vulnerable groups, including returnee migrant workers. 2. The poverty and hunger related policies, plans and programmes must focus both the geographical as well as social pockets that mainly lie in mountains and hills of Karnali and Sudur Pashchim Pradesh and rural areas of Pradesh 2, and among Dalit communities. 3. Pro-poor and inclusive macro-economic policies need to be adopted to ensure that no one is left behind. Macroeconomic policies need to be revisited in order to make them coherent with the financing needs of the SDGs.



Gaps and Challenges	Recommendations
<p>3. Data show that the food security situation of Nepal has improved; however, about 4.6 million people are still found food-insecure, 10 percent households are severely food-insecure, 20 percent are mildly food-insecure and 22 percent are moderately food-insecure (NDHS 2017). Likewise, reducing child undernourishment, and stunting among children under five years remain challenging which is likely to be aggravated further by Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>4. It is more challenging to ensure access of small farmers and the most vulnerable to government services and facilities, including advanced seeds, fertilizers and suitable agricultural instruments, government grants, insurance and financial incentives.</p> <p>5. The targets of reducing stunting to 15%, malnutrition to 4% and underweight to 9% by 2030 may not be achieved if concerted efforts are not put in place as soon as possible.</p>	<p>4. Formulate necessary food and nutrition security strategies with adequate implementation and monitoring measures, including regulations and implementation guidelines for right to food and food sovereignty act, in order to defeat poverty and hunger, ensure food and nutrition security, and full enjoyment of right to food and food sovereignty.</p> <p>5. Implement specific targeted plans and programmes, for instance, feeding the most affected and vulnerable people including children, pregnant women, lactating mothers, people living with HIV/AIDS, chronically sick and older people.</p> <p>6. Regulate and manage both domestic as well as cross-border markets for quality food products and affordable/ reasonable prices of food items.</p> <p>7. Preserve and promote useful indigenous knowledge and skills of farmers, and plant seeds and animal breeds while increasing access to and promoting agriculture technology, inputs and irrigation.</p>



Gaps and Challenges	Recommendations
<p>6. Expanding universal quality health coverage and services for all groups including poor, marginalized and deprived people, addressing the growing threat of non-communicable diseases, sustaining the achievement made so far and accelerating the progress in slow-progressing areas are challenging. The COVID-19 pandemic will put the health systems in further stress.</p>	<p>8. In the context of Covid-19, take urgent measures to protect public health, seriously consider the risks and damages caused by health problems other than Covid-19 such as the alarmingly increasing maternal mortality.</p> <p>9. Take all necessary measures to sustain and build on the gains of the MDGs, including on maternal health.</p>



Gaps and Challenges	Recommendations
<p>7. Ensuring sustainable funding for SDG 4, achieving complete enrolment of out of school children, reducing dropout rate and maintaining gender parity at all levels of education are the major challenges seen. Similarly, investment and efforts are inadequate to increase the access of technical, vocational and higher education to needy people, produce qualified, competent and employment oriented human resources, manage qualified and well trained teachers at all levels, mainstream vocational and technical education in the overall education system, reduce the disparity between private and public education, and to stop brain drain from the country.</p> <p>8. Public schools lack capable and trained teachers, infrastructure, teaching and learning materials, monitoring and weak governance.</p>	<p>10. Provide free, inclusive, equitable and quality education and learning opportunities as guaranteed by the Constitution and ensure necessary legislations at local, province and federal levels. Local governments need to be equipped with implementable policies, resources and capacities to manage the schools. Socially, economically and physically disadvantaged children must be covered by launching focused programmes.</p> <p>11. Establish suitable mechanism for participation of youth in policy and implementation, provide opportunity to them for technical and vocational education, sexual and reproductive health rights and services to them, and their mobilization is crucial to achieve many SDGs.</p> <p>12. Promote inclusive life-long learning to refresh, capacitate and mobilize youth and adult population.</p> <p>13. Take all necessary measures to recover from the loss caused by Covid-19 and build on the gains in the past.</p>



Gaps and Challenges	Recommendations
<p>9. Gross inequalities exist in access to paid employment, and significant gaps between men and women in the labour market. Sexual violence and exploitation, the unequal division of unpaid care and domestic work, and discrimination in public decision making remain huge barriers. Climate change and disasters continue to have a disproportionate effect on women and children.</p>	<p>14. There need to be targeted and focused programmes with higher budgetary allocation in order to address the intersectional marginalization and discrimination faced by women, to increase their public roles, economic opportunities and dignified situation in the society.</p> <p>15. Recognize unpaid care work as part of the economic activities, integrating it to the national economy to end gender discrimination. Gender responsive budgeting needs to be institutionalized down to the local level.</p> <p>16. Likewise, establish women and children focused institutional arrangements at subnational levels.</p>



Gaps and Challenges	Recommendations
<p>10. Main challenges remain to practically ensure improved and equitable access and use of safe and sustainable drinking water and sanitation services, manage sustained financial resources for the availability and sustainable management of water, sanitation and hygiene, complete ongoing projects on time considering wide gap between demand and supply of quality drinking water and sanitation, repair and maintain completed projects, increase the coverage of quality services, enhance the quality of drinking water and sanitation and control waterborne diseases.</p>	<p>17. Increase access to clean, safe and piped drinking water, waste management, improve sanitation and hygiene particularly at schools and health facilities.</p> <p>18. Formulate and enforce master plan and operational manual on total sanitation with adequate consideration of the SDG 6, and integrate it in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sectoral plan.</p>
<p>11. Ensuring access to reliable energy supply, as enabler for development and poverty alleviation, is necessary while covering all the remote parts of the country. Increased investment and subsidies on green energy are required.</p>	<p>19. Increase investment in hydropower development and other renewable energy to ensure energy security, and make energy available and affordable to rural areas and poor people.</p> <p>20. Facilitate shift to green transport, and adopt climate-friendly policies, tools and technologies.</p>



Gaps and Challenges	Recommendations
<p>12. Developing the importance of saving and saving capability in citizens, converting import-oriented economy into productive economy, ensuring maximum return on savings and investment, keeping inflation within to end gender discrimination. Gender responsive budgeting needs to be institutionalized down to the local level.</p> <p>13. Issuance of new labour, social security and employment laws, prioritizing technical education and skill training, legal provision of minimum wage, loan facilities for returnee migrant workers, implementing child labour prevention master plan and expanding the employment information centre to local level are to be taken into account.</p>	<p>21. Learning from the disasters and shocks created by Covid-19, diversification of trade, investment, financing and alternatives must be in place.</p> <p>22. Encourage small and medium enterprises and generate more employment opportunities. Introduce programmes to protect the livelihood of small landholder farmers, landless agricultural workers, slum dwellers, daily wage labourers, and other poor and vulnerable groups, including returnee migrant workers.</p> <p>23. Take all necessary measures to recover gains from socio-economic development endeavours in the past.</p> <p>24. Introduce concrete programmes in order to create inclusive space where everyone can participate in economic activities and get employed/ self-employed.</p>



Gaps and Challenges	Recommendations
<p>14. Main challenges are seen in creating an investment friendly environment attracting domestic and foreign investment in the industry of comparative advantage and competitive potential and analysing the challenges and opportunities created by economic liberalization, globalization and multilateral / bilateral trade agreements and setting priorities and requirements in the areas of trade and investment.</p>	<p>25. Multi-hazard disasters in the past must be considered while formulating development policies and plans. Government should increase investment and planning in construction of disaster resilient infrastructure for agriculture, service delivery and economic activities.</p> <p>26. Invest more on infrastructure to improve public service delivery and also to boost economy hit hard by Covid-19.</p> <p>27. Private sector awareness and engagement in achieving SDGs is necessary and for this guidelines and policies need to be formulated and implemented.</p>



Gaps and Challenges	Recommendations
<p>15. Inequality manifests in many forms and has far-reaching implications; from a lack of protection for the collective lands of indigenous and peasant communities, to fiscal policies that incentivize and share the benefits of exploitation of natural resources unequally.</p> <p>16. Skewed patterns of land ownership have also been compounded by a deeply discriminatory and strictly hierarchical society that has excluded women, ethnic minorities, and Dalits. In this way, land inequality also mirrors and exacerbates other divisions in Nepal. Approximately 80 percent of Nepal's indigenous population are marginal landowners, meaning they have less than 1 acre of land holding. Landlessness is as high as 44 percent among Dalits in the Tarai, and 22 percent among Dalits in hills. Despite the fact that women in Nepal work hard and long hours on agricultural land, they own very little of it. 81 percent of women are landless, and overall women own just five percent of land in Nepal.</p>	<p>28 Give utmost importance in ending all forms of intersectional discrimination, violence, exclusion, exploitation and inequality of women, children, Dalits, indigenous peoples, marginalized groups, LGBTIQ, poorest of the poor, older people, people living with HIV AIDS, people with disabilities, people living in remote rural areas and other vulnerable groups. Consider the special needs of these groups.</p> <p>29. Undertake public awareness programmes and community mobilization about the special needs of older people and their integration in family and society, provide them psychosocial support, and give special preferences and privileges in public services.</p> <p>30. Prioritize investment in public sectors like education, health, employment and livelihoods and social protection.</p> <p>31. Create enabling environment for identity, education, decent employment and dignified life of sexual and gender minorities, and people with disabilities.</p> <p>32. The effect of Covid-19 and lockdown has caused long term adverse effects on children and ultimately the future of the nation. So, protect children's physical and psychosocial health, address their learning needs and find ways to recover the loss.</p>



Gaps and Challenges	Recommendations
<p>17. Nepal is one of the least urbanized countries of Asia, however its spatial, demographic and economic transition point towards inevitable future urbanization and its management is the major issue. Urbanization is haphazard and agricultural land is being misused by fragmentation and for settlements.</p> <p>18. Sustainability and resilience has been overshadowed and underinvested.</p>	<p>33. Growth of settlements and cities need to be planned rather than spontaneous, with interventions of the government.</p> <p>34. Proper settlement and resettlement planning must be followed by the government as per the land use policy. Unregulated growth of settlements and urban centres must be stopped.</p>
<p>19. Natural disasters are acting as a major challenge for the production and distribution. Quality assurance with productivity, agriculture and forestry production with a business model and implementation of sustainable approach for industry and businesses are also major challenges.</p>	<p>35. Risk-sensitive land use should be adopted, low-risk zones should be prioritized for future urban developments and extensions, building codes and guidelines should be developed and made mandatory, disaster-resilient infrastructure should be focused and made mandatory, promote disaster resilient communities should be emphasized and for this capacity building of local governments is essential and mobilisation of CSOs will contribute to this.</p>



Gaps and Challenges	Recommendations
<p>20. The implementation of policies related to combating climate change from the perspective of justice is too weak in general. Subnational levels of government have not yet been able to adapt and internalize the policies with operational modalities.</p> <p>21. Current Covid-19 pandemic is certain to bring a huge shock to the Nepali economy, and additional burden on natural resources, biodiversity and environmental sustainability.</p>	<p>36. The government should manage for proper collection and processing of individual, industrial and agricultural waste through appropriate economic and innovative technological measures in cities and settlements. Also, research and technological advancement and utilization should be increased for sustainable productivity, consumption; and monitoring and control for sustainability and quality are equally important.</p> <p>37. Impacts of climate change must not be underestimated; so, mitigation and adaptation measures must be considered timely. Climate change as well as disaster risk management should be integrated at all levels by strengthening capacity of the local level actors.</p>
<p>22. Main issue seen in this sector is to protect, promote, and make environmentally friendly and sustainable use of natural resources available in the country, in consonance with national interest and adopting the concept of intergenerational equity, and make equitable distribution of resources, according to priority and preferential right to the local communities.</p>	<p>38. Ensure conservation, sustainable use and fair distribution of natural resources and biodiversity while utilizing them for income and livelihood of the people, especially indigenous groups.</p> <p>39. Implement the national policies and plans including the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) towards mitigation and adaptation of climate change impacts. Focus addressing the fast receding Himalayan glaciers and snow sheets, and preserve biodiversity in the mountains of Nepal. The gradual desertification happening in Nepal must be stopped.</p>

Gaps and Challenges	Recommendations
<p>23. Governance remains one of the serious challenges which has overarching effect in implementation of all other goals. Cases of corruption and bribery are rife and government processes often become controversial and lack transparency and accountability. This has been compounded by the weak oversight bodies.</p> <p>24. Institutional arrangements and localization for implementation of SDGs are getting late. The priorities of local governments are not necessarily guided by the SDGs.</p> <p>25. There are no systematic efforts to enhance institutional as well as human resource capacity at sub-national levels for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs. Lack of capacity building programmes, knowledge and expertise to the staff in implementing agencies has hindered localization and integration of the SDGs in policies, programmes and budget at all levels. Inadequate staff and frequent turnover of the staff at province and the local level have added to this challenge.</p> <p>26. Different government ministries, departments and institutions seem to lack harmony and coordination. Non-government organizations, cooperatives, private sector, and academia are working and attempting to contribute but have not been properly coordinated and harmonized by the government. There is lack of vertical and horizontal coordination and monitoring mechanism as well as operational guidelines.</p> <p>27. Despite the progressive and accommodating space in the constitution for civil society and CSOs, absence of up to date CSO laws has constrained more meaningful participation and contribution of CSOs. There are concerns about the Government's intention to control civic space and press freedom.</p>	<p>40. Community-based forest management is considered exemplary in Nepal and so need to be further promoted.</p> <p>41. Create a collaborative and harmonious environment between the government and civil society including the community organizations to work together to achieve the SDGs. Multi-stakeholder monitoring, review and coordination mechanisms should be in place at all levels of the government.</p> <p>42. Build CSO-friendly policies and create enabling environment, mobilize them and utilize their strengths and expertise in order to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs.</p> <p>43. Achieve efficiency and effectiveness by making an optimum utilization of resources and technology, including e-governance.</p> <p>44. Develop objective, evidence based and transparent mechanism to prioritize and select projects from the local level through province to the central level in alignment with the SDGs and national priorities.</p> <p>45. Develop guidelines and frameworks, enhance capacity and support subnational governments in planning, resource allocation, implementation and monitoring of the SDGs. Also build awareness, involve and mobilize other stakeholders including the local communities for transparency, accountability, ownership, sustainability and effectiveness</p> <p>46. Take urgent measures in order to improve governance, transparency, accountability and effectiveness of the implementing agencies and empower the oversight bodies at all levels: federal, province and local. As current electoral contests are largely becoming expensive and most likely to increase policy corruption, it needs urgent reform.</p>



Gaps and Challenges	Recommendations
<p>28. Main challenge is seen as lack of institutional clarity, roles and responsibilities among governmental agencies engaged in the 2030 Agenda, lack of adequate institutional arrangements and human resources, lack of coordination with strategic allocation of resource, poor productive capacity of private sectors.</p> <p>29. Current context shows deficit financing in many essential public sectors and SDGs. Remittance is expected to shrink, development cooperation does not seem encouraging, and domestic resource mobilization is not optimized.</p>	<p>47. Promoting the rule of law, justice and human rights based approach to SDGs are key to addressing the basic needs and vulnerabilities as well as leaving no one behind.</p> <p>48. Introduce rules, regulations and programmes and implement them in order to safeguard the fundamental rights of the people, as enshrined in the constitution of Nepal and/or enacted into relevant laws.</p> <p>49. Create and strengthen forums and systems for learning and sharing of lessons, best practices, innovative solutions, constructive feedback and insights. Put emphasis on SDG 16 as a critical enabler and accelerator as it cuts across many themes and the SDGs.</p>
	<p>50. Generate and invest more resources dedicated to the SDGs.</p> <p>51. Nepal needs to strongly negotiate and lobby with international community for privileges and preferential treatments in trade, technology transfer, foreign direct investment, debt cancellation and development cooperation in accordance with the various international agreements and declarations in this regard.</p> <p>52. Increased level of international development cooperation and partnership, resource generation, technology transfer, as well as expanding diplomatic capabilities capable of protecting and promoting national interests are necessary in the changing global circumstances. While prioritizing the national interests, an enabling environment should be created for inflow of foreign aid and partnership with CSOs.</p>

The Context

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a culmination of decades of development agenda and efforts at the international level. It is worth recalling Brundtland Commission's report, 1987 (our common future), for it established the idea of sustainable development with its popular definition that "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"² The Earth Summit (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development -UNCED) held in June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil is significant not only for a comprehensive plan of action to build a global partnership for sustainable development, including Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21, but also for the three major conventions namely The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, The Convention on Biological Diversity, and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. Another subsequent event was the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000, which adopted Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with overarching goals of reducing extreme poverty by 2015. In the meantime, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012 and its outcome document "The Future We Want" paved way for conception of Sustainable Development Goals after a series of negotiations at different levels. The SDGs are also for the continuity of the unmet agenda of the MDGs as well as expansion of MDGs to accommodate other development issues facing the world today. The UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York in September 2015 adopted Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 SDGs. And the same came into effect from 1st of January 2016. This is what the world at the moment is engaged to achieve by 2030 .

Universally agreed by the heads of states and governments of the world in 2015 for transforming the world, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, SDGs and targets are integral and indivisible. These are global in nature and universally applicable, considering different national realities, circumstances, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities . The SDGs targets are defined as aspirational and global, with each national government setting its own national targets guided by the global level of ambition. Thus, it is up to each of the national governments to decide and incorporate these aspirational global targets into national planning processes, policies and strategies (UN, 2015).

Major Features

The SDGs are transformational and comprehensive in the sense that these are very much encompassing the wellbeing of all living beings and environmental components of the earth. So, the five Ps that are the core of the SDGs are focus on People to end poverty and hunger in all forms and ensure dignity and equality; Planet to protect our planet's natural resources and climate for future generations; Partnership to implement the agenda through a solid global partnership, Prosperity to ensure prosperous and fulfilling lives in harmony with nature and; Peace to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

It is said that six grand transformations underpinned by the principles of leaving no one behind are necessary in order to achieve the SDGs: (1) education, gender and equality; (2) health, well-being and demography; (3) energy decarbonisation and sustainable industry; (4) sustainable food, land, water and oceans; (5) sustainable cities and communities; and (6) digital revolution for sustainable development.

Achieving these transformational goals also require major systemic changes on capital, skill and knowledge; long term investments; complementarity of multi-stakeholder partnership; and a set of complementary tools that include taxation, pricing, political institutions, civil society, and economic, social and political instruments. The major stakeholders for this are governments, private sector (business) and civil society.

SDGs are the transformative roadmap for peace, prosperity, people and planet which need commitment and partnership not only at the international but also at the national and subnational level. The 17 SDGs are integrated, indivisible and interlinked; a number of agenda overlap and need synergies or integrated approaches. In addition to this, economic, social and environment considerations in development and eradication of poverty are the overarching goals.

The 2030 Agenda incorporates follow-up and review mechanisms at the national, regional and global levels. At the global level, the high level political forum (HLPF), under the auspices of Economic and Social Council, carries out regularly annual national voluntary reviews (VNRs) with participation of member countries along with stakeholders such as civil society and the private sector.

Civil Society as Stakeholders

Effective implementation of SDGs and achieving results require a good preparation and collaboration of different actors and stakeholders. Awareness, mobilization of the actors and their resources, participation and ownership create synergy. Streamlining all the efforts from national to local levels require localization and integration into development plans along with robust monitoring, evaluation and feedback. This type of arrangement is believed to support the promotion of ownership of the goals and accountability of all actors for sustainable development, as the state alone cannot materialize the SDGs. This is particularly important for a culturally, economically and geographically diverse and developing country like Nepal and to include different social groups in economic, social and political processes and development.

Better enabling environment, recognition and role of CSOs is expected in federal democracy. Yet, CSOs are faced with hurdles; it has been difficult for them to secure recognition and resources. On the whole, it is challenging for the local NGOs and CSOs to be able to remain vibrant. Regardless of these facts, efforts of NGOs in community development cannot be denied because their contribution is essential for inclusive and accountable development outcomes.

The contributions CSOs/NGOs have made in developing political awareness, social transformation, service delivery and economic development, particularly during the decade-long Maoist insurgency and the People's Movement in 2006 are remarkable. When public trust on the political parties was weak, the then king was moving ahead with his autocratic regime and the Maoist insurgency was at the peak, Nepalese CSOs, led by NGO Federation of Nepal, supported the political parties to lead the decisive political movement in 2006 for federal democracy in Nepal.

Engagement and contribution of CSOs for achievement of MDGs and now for SDGs has continued. For this, Nepalese CSOs have come together to form "Nepal SDGs Forum", a common platform to build coordinated civil society efforts to contribute to accelerating the SDGs.

Nepal SDGs Forum

Nepal SDGs Forum was established in 2016 as a common platform of thematic federations and networks, CSOs, I/NGOs, private sector, cooperatives, media, UN agencies, bilateral and multilateral development partners and major groups and stakeholders which aspire to contribute to achieving SDGs. Nepal SDGs Forum is the only civil society platform recognized by the National Steering Committee, Thematic Committees as well as Nepal Government's institutional mechanisms set up for implementation of SDGs. Now, more than 50 federations and alliances and over 500 organizations from across the country are the members of this Forum. This Forum comprises organizations which have taken their specific responsibilities as Conveners, Co-Conveners, and Major Groups. In addition to the designated Conveners and Co-conveners for each goals, Nepal SDGs Forum has formed the civil society Major Groups as well as cross-cutting or thematic areas that include: Youths, Women, People with Disabilities, Senior Citizens, Children, Dalit, Indigenous Communities, LGBTIQ, Farmers, Development Partners, Cooperatives, Media, Trade Unions, Private Sectors, Science and Technology. As an open forum, Nepal SDGs Forum welcomes everyone interested in SDGs to join this forum.

Nepal SDGs Forum aims to accelerate, localize and contribute to achieving SDGs while guided by the principles of 'leaving on one behind', shared and sustained prosperity, and increased role and participation of civil society. It works in close coordination with National Planning Commission (NPC) and other state and non-state actors. By working under this Forum, various stakeholders aim to coordinate, collaborate and build synergy in influencing and impacting sustainable development. Although different organizations have their own priorities and actions, they come together under this Forum so as to impact and influence policy, coherence, harmonization as well as to create a common understanding and voice at the national and international level. Not only national civil society organisations (CSOs), many INGOs, development partners and UN agencies have been supporting Nepal SDGs Forum and some are already in the advisory status of this forum.

NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN) facilitates in the functioning of Nepal SDGs Forum at central and province levels. Its secretariat is located at NFN at Buddhanagar, Kathmandu.

The theme of this year's VNR is "Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development ". In the VNR 2020, Nepal is taking part for the second time, after its first participation in 2017. Nepalese civil societies aim to contribute to the VNR or recommend Nepal Government the perspectives, concerns and demands for incorporating in the VNR 2020. Nepalese civil societies also take this opportunity to make an annual review of the SDGs from civil society perspectives.

This report is a continuity of civil societies' or CSOs' demonstration of their perspectives, contributions, analyses, recommendations and demands on development agendas including the MDGs.

Objectives, Methods, Scope and Limitations of the Report

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has envisaged a high-level political forum for regular voluntary reviews of the implementation of the SDGs. The Agenda encourages the UN member states to conduct an inclusive review process of the SDGs by drawing on contributions from various stakeholders including civil society. Such a review process is to include civil society participation while creating a platform for participation so that collective efforts can be made and the resources can be mobilized towards achieving the SDGs. The 2030 Agenda is "an Agenda of the people, by the people and for the people" . Accordingly, Nepalese civil society has a sense of ownership and has always engaged and contributed to achievement of national and internationally envisaged development agenda.

Nepali civil society and CSOs organized under Nepal SDGs Forum have proactively come up with their perspectives and reviews of the SDGs. Amidst the mayhem created by Covid-19 pandemic, Nepalese CSOs submitted to NPC a brief analysis and recommendation for accelerating the SDGs. This report is a more detailed review and analysis of the SDGs from multiple perspectives.

Precisely, with this report, civil society and CSOs in Nepal aim to:

- i. Build common understanding and awareness on SDGs while developing civil society perspectives;
- ii. Analyse the mechanism, progress, trend and gaps on implementation of SDGs; and
- iii. Make recommendations, complement the government's review and promote the environment for areas of implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

This report is a culmination of multiple ways of engagement of CSOs in Nepal. Having aligned their programmes with SDGs, they have been working to build awareness and localize the SDGs, hold the government agencies accountable for meeting the indicators by leaving no one behind and also contributing to focused goals. Many organisations held consultations and reviews at national, provincial and local levels while focusing on the themes and goals of their expertise and focus, in order to consult, generate ideas and inputs for voluntary national review (VNR) of the SDGs. Among them, it is worth mentioning the district, province and central level meetings and consultations held by Beyond Beijing Committee and Youth Advocacy Forum.

NGO Federation of Nepal mobilized district, province and central level CSOs, networks and federations which have been organized under Nepal SDGs Forum. At the central level, a national civil society conference was organised, there were several rounds of discussions and consultations in coordination and facilitation of government agencies particularly National Planning Commission, UN agencies, parliamentarians, INGOs, media persons, academia, and researchers. Deliberations, ideas and views expressed in this course have been well-considered while writing this report. Apart from this, conveners, co-conveners, major groups and thematic contributors have provided focused inputs and analyses in order to be incorporated in this report. An online form was also designed and disseminated for collection of ideas and inputs for VNR. In addition, several experts have contributed to this report by research, review and analyses. Available secondary data were accessed and analysed.

This publication has been guided by the underlying ideas that 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Goals are the transformative roadmap for peace, prosperity, people, planet and partnership; that the 17 SDGs are integrated, indivisible and interlinked; that the people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnerships are the five inseparable pillars of the SDGs; that the SDGs need to be achieved within the stipulated time frame in the inclusive way and leaving no one behind; that participation of civil society and people's organizations at grassroots is essential to achieve the SDGs; that good governance, transparency and accountability, effectiveness, data revolution and participation of all stakeholders is the key to inclusive and transformative development; and that civil society, NGOs/CSOs and all the groups and sections of the society continue to contribute to socio-economic transformation of the country and accelerating SDGs. This publication is expected to be a guiding document for civil society, CSOs, Government of Nepal, development partners and other stakeholders and they would seriously consider the perspectives of the civil society organizations. Unavailability of data for many SDG indicators has however made it difficult to estimate the progress and trend. Looking into progress across various social groups and geographies was

another challenge due to lack of disaggregated data. For these reasons, in many cases, the observations seem subjective and qualitative.

Institutional Arrangements

The Government of Nepal has set up several institutional mechanisms for the implementation of 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The National Planning Commission (NPC) is the focal government institution. The SDGs Steering Committee headed by the Prime Minister is an apex body which also consists of civil society represented by NGO Federation of Nepal along with representatives of the cooperative and private sector. The SDGs Coordination and Implementation Committee is headed by the NPC Vice Chairman. Within the NPC, chaired by members of NPC, there are nine SDGs Implementation and Monitoring Thematic Committees on Economic Development; Industrial Development; Urban Development; Social Development; Employment Management; Agriculture Climate and Environment; Physical Infrastructure; Energy Development; and Peace, Justice, and Inclusive Institutions. These committees are also inclusive to some extent. However, the effectiveness of these committees and mechanisms would be clear in the days to come.

These nine committees focus on Economic Development; Industrial Development; Urban Development; Social Development; Employment Management; Agriculture Climate and Environment; Physical Infrastructure; Energy Development; Peace, Justice, and Inclusive Institutions. The membership of the coordination and working committees is broadly representative of the public and private sectors, as well as civil society and development partners.

While the House of Representatives comprises the Development and Technology Committee, the National Assembly comprises the Sustainable Development and Good Governance Committee. The SDGs among others are supposed to be their working areas.

Other government agencies have also initiated setting up their mechanisms in order to harmonize with and streamline the SDGs. The provincial governments have set up a planning commission or policy and planning commission chaired by the chief ministers, except for Sudur Paschim Province which has not yet provisioned a separate body to lead the policy and planning on SDGs. In this situation, it would be too much to expect the institutional arrangement for SDGs at the local government level.

A UNESCAP case study has observed Nepal's situation as follows: "As the country implements a new federal structure of governance, the task of concurrently mainstreaming the SDGs across the breadth and depth of government planning and budgeting systems is a formidable challenge. The country has developed mechanisms at the centre of government, but the ongoing restructuring of the federal system of governance, down to the seven provinces, and seven-hundred forty-four urban and rural municipalities, is a challenge that has yet to be met. And this will be compounded by technical shortcomings, including database computing limitations and a lack of disaggregated data. Nepal's leaders also have to deal with financial limitations at a time when they are attempting to sustain job creation, improve social services, and reduce disaster-related risks as they are committing significant resources towards the goals."

Policy Environment and Frameworks

As enshrined in the Constitution of Nepal 2015, policies of the state have explicitly guided Nepal towards sustainable development. Federal democratic system of governance, vision of an egalitarian society, objective of achieving sustainable economic development, socialism oriented economic principles, equality through equitable distribution of gains, and policy of community development through enhancement of local public participation encompass the SDGs. Likewise, emphasis on promoting and mobilizing the creativity of local communities in social, cultural and service-oriented works, on sustainable socio-economic development, and innovation and technology while promoting sustainable use of natural resources pave way for the SDGs. In addition to this, the Constitution has comprehensively granted thirty-one fundamental rights implementation of which can bring prosperity, justice, dignity and equality in the society.

Adoption of a federal democratic system of governance has decentralized power and resources to the grassroots level, availing opportunity to community level leaders to transform society. People have a 'government at their doorsteps'. Although capacity and governance remain challenges, local governments in Nepal have quite promising prospects and so is the expectation of the people. Failure of the local governments may risk systemic failure, too. Efficiency, effectiveness, good governance and harmonization among all tiers of government become essential for Nepal to succeed in Development.

Almost one-third of the implementation period of SDGs has elapsed. In this period, a number of initiatives have been made by the Government towards preparation and implementation of SDGs. The most notable efforts have been in the areas of raising awareness, establishing high level institutional mechanisms for strategic steering, guidance, coordination and monitoring, nationalizing goals, targets and indicators,

strengthening systems and integrating SDGs into national level plans and budgets. These efforts are led by National Planning Commission (NPC), national focal organization for SDGs, for policy design, multi-sectoral coordination, planning and monitoring. NPC has come up with policy, research and documents required to trigger implementation.

The present political environment has been assumed to be an ideal for the socio-economic transformation of the country and as a matter of fact the public expectation is quite high. A decade-long conflict and local bodies without elected representatives had hindered development but now is the time to accelerate the pace of social development and economic prosperity.

Government of Nepal is moving ahead with the national aspiration of 'Prosperous Nepal, happy Nepali'. Fifteenth Five-year Plan (2019/20-2024/25), which integrates SDGs, has been formulated and is under implementation. Peace and stable government are the great hope. In addition to achieving the SDGs by 2030, Nepal is marching ahead with several aims and aspirations: graduation from LDC status by 2022, emerging as a middle-income country by 2030, and becoming an inclusive, egalitarian and socialism based independent and prosperous economy.

More recently, Nepal has been the chair of the Committee on Economic and Financial Affairs, one of the six committees in the General Assembly of the United Nations. Consisting of representatives from all the 193 member nations, the committee is responsible for financing, resource mobilization, globalization, climate change, etc. This is expected to be a good opportunity for pushing the agenda of the LDCs and LLDCs which is in the benefit of countries like Nepal.

Integration and Localization of SDGs

The NPC at the national level and policy and planning commissions at the provincial levels have been integrating SDGs in their policies and plans of the government. The NPC claims to have integrated and aligned SDGs in the Fifteenth Plan. Gandaki Province, ahead of other provinces, has published its baseline report on SDGs. Nevertheless, coherence, harmonization and alignment of the sector-wide plans across ministries at all levels of the government still remain a challenge as few tangible results are seen till date. Integrating SDGs in local governments' periodic plans, policies, programmes and budgets is crucial in order to realize the SDGs but remains as an uphill task and sometimes ignored.

Along with the periodic plan, Government's programmes and budget are said to have been coded with the purpose of aligning them with SDGs. Mid Term Expenditure

Framework, also has been practiced to track allocation of resources, map the allocation of budget for programmes that contribute to specific SDGs and indicators, and track progress. Provided that these mechanisms are strongly implemented, changes are inevitable .

In terms of political environment, leaving behind the prolonged political transitions and instability, local, provincial and federal level elections have led the country towards institutionalizing the federal system as well as implementing the Constitution of Nepal 2015. As the historic milestones in Nepal, the new constitution and federal system are associated with the aspiration and will of the Nepalese people. In the same direction, formulation of policies and institution building remained as the focus. Capable and resourceful provinces and local governments are the primary agents in making the people realize change at the local level. However, bringing about the change seems too cumbersome.

Leaving No One Behind

The UN General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda as a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. All the people are to be freed from the “tyranny of poverty and want”. As it requires collective actions, all the countries and stakeholders pledged in the resolution that “no one will be left behind”. The 2030 Agenda mentions that the Goals and targets will meet for “all nations and peoples and for all segments of society” and “reach the furthest behind first”. To make sure that no one is left behind, “Quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data will be needed to help with the measurement of progress and to ensure that no one is left behind. Such data is key to decision making.”

Leaving no one behind largely depends on initiatives and effectiveness on generating and management of disaggregated data. Ironically, the data we have are scattered across ministries, departments and line agencies. Availability of real time and disaggregated data should be the goal, as this could have a huge impact on distribution of resources, setting of targets and reaching the poorest of the poor and marginalized communities. Only disaggregated data that is also publicly available will help us realize our dream of inclusive development. Anyone can benefit from data and information if they are readily accessible. All the tiers of government can be made mutually accountable while non-state actors can use open data to hold public organizations accountable. Making the data open and accessible will be costly at the start, but the final benefits will far outweigh the costs .

Economic growth should benefit all leading to reduction of inequality, poverty, deprivation, and marginalization. In many cases these problems are caused by structural issues and deeply rooted system. For these reasons, structural transformation or transformation of deeply rooted systems are necessary, while keeping distribution of wealth and meaningful inclusion.

In the context of Nepal, overall and holistic progress and growth would not be enough and acceptable if the spirit of 'leave no one behind' is to be realized. The marginalized, disadvantaged and vulnerable people and communities must be acknowledged to make sure that these groups are included across all the applicable Goals and indicators. For instance, when it comes to focusing and furthest behind, Dalits and the people under extreme poverty must be considered for all the relevant targets. Children, women, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants needs to be considered as target populations and it is essential to make sure that they benefit from the interventions.

Children

Background

Child population below 18 constitutes 41.8% with 50.7% of boys and 49.3% of girls in Nepal. 37.4% children aged 5-17 are being involved in child labour . In fiscal year 2018/19, a total of 3,422 children (1051 boys and 2,371 girls) were recorded as missing and only 2,540 children (boys 825 and girls 1715) were found . There are 533 child care homes in 46 districts which are providing protection support to 15,045 children (boys 7,412 and girls 7,633) .

Article 39 of the Constitution of Nepal has clearly mentioned about the fundamental rights of child. Other fundamental rights closely associated with children are right to equality, right against exploitation, right relating to education, right to health, and right to social security Nepal government has endorsed various national laws and policies including Children Act, 2018; Juvenile Justice Operation 2076 BS; National Children's Policy, 2012; School as Zones of Peace Guideline and Directorate 2011; Child Friendly Local Governance 2011; Civil and Criminal Code 2074 BS; Free and Compulsory Education Act 2075 BS; Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act. Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 2000 and Regulation, 2005.

Children and SDGs

Ten SDGs (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 16 & 17) are directly relevant to children's issues. Significant gaps exist in terms of SDG indicators and situation of children. The family

poverty directly affects the children's nutrition as the poor families cannot provide nutritious food to the children. Children from such families are deprived of basic and/or quality education. Nepal Government's day meal programme in 43 districts has reached 2,229,324 children in the fiscal year 2019/20 .

Regarding child health, only 68% children have received full vaccination. Neonatal mortality rate is 20 children (per 1000 live births) and child mortality under age 5 years is 32 children (per 1000 live birth) . Likewise, 68.6% children who enrolled in grade 1 have early childhood development (ECD) experience. The net enrolment in grade 1- 8 is 93.4%, basic education completed rate is 72.7% and out of school children (age 5 -12 years) are 6.7%. Nepal government has managed special education to children with disability therefore 33 special school, 23 integrated school, 380 resources class were managed in fiscal year 2019/20 . But there is still challenge to children with disability to access education due to unavailability of disabled friendly infrastructures. There are practices of corporal punishment in many schools. Socio-culturally, due to patriarchal and cultural values, girls are facing gender-based discrimination, violence and sexual abuse. Trafficking of children, especially of girls, is serious.

In addition to this, Nepal lags behind on birth registration as only 58.1% have birth registration. Children, especially affected and infected by HIV and AIDS and those who lost both of their parents, cannot get the birth registration and so are unable to benefit from the social protection schemes. Besides this, children from LGBTI, Dalit and marginalized communities are facing inequality with stigma and discrimination; and are unable to utilize their fundamental rights.

Challenges

- Child health and education related activities are in progressive trend. But, child protection issues like child marriage, sexual abuse, harassment, inequality still remain as challenges to achieve the SDG targets.
- Children who are growing up at child care homes are deprived of birth registration and citizenship certificate. After issuing a recommendation letter for the admission at the childcare homes, there seems feeble connectivity in-between government and child. Besides this, LGBTI and children affected by HIV/AIDS are neglected in society; and do not have access to education, health and social protection schemes.
- There are three layers of governments in new political structure but child protection implementation mechanisms continue with old acts, policy and procedures.
- Comprehensive data are lacking which makes it impossible to measure the SDG progress in terms of children.
- Previously, there were child rights officers at district level. But, in new political

restructure, there is no provision of child protection unit at local and provincial levels to ensure the rights of the child. Absence of responsible institutional arrangement creates problem in protecting the child and provide legal treatment timely.

Recommendations

- ‘Leave no one behind’ is SDGs main theme; therefore, children from minorities and excluded groups need to be addressed i.e. children infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, LGBTI children, children with disability, migrant labourers’ children and children who are growing up at child care homes.
- For addressing children’s issues, Nepal Government needs to give priority to develop and endorse the Children Regulation according to Children Act 2018, need to develop the long term action plan of children, and must establish the child protection unit at local and provincial levels to ensure the rights of the child.
- During emergency and disasters, children are most vulnerable; therefore, comprehensive child protection mechanism must be in place.
- For achieving the SDG targets, it is necessary to localize the SDGs through local planning process and integrate the children’s issues in the particular areas and context.
- Data management system needs to be created for validity and high quality on data about child rights.

Disability

Disability has been a part of mainstream human rights. The UN General Assembly adopted Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol in 2007. Nepal subsequently became the 86th country to ratify the convention and 53rd country to sign its optional protocol. Nepal ratified the convention on 3 January 2008 and subsequently was endorsed by the constituent assembly as well. These have been the major milestones towards addressing the issues of the people with disabilities.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) had little space to disability and so this issue was largely underestimated in the international development agenda. However, SDGs have been a bit more comprehensive and inclusive to incorporate disability, for SDGs are supported by an underlying principle of leaving no one behind.

Many Goals and indicators are directly and indirectly associated with people with disability, and their growth, education, access, employment and dignity. Identity, data, addressing the special needs and their inclusion in all the aspects of the SDGs is essential if ‘leaving no one behind’ is to be realized in the true sense.

Disability and SDG 4, inclusive and equitable quality education for all, includes the people with disabilities for their access to quality education, training, and lifelong learning. The Goal also includes affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education for all. The indicators of the Goals encompass equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities. Another indicator of this Goal is to build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

SDG 8, productive employment and decent work for all, includes people with disabilities as well for their economic growth, full employment, equal pay and includes them in the economic growth.

SDG 10, reducing inequality, is close to the disability issues. Social, economic and political inclusion of the people with disabilities, who are often at the bottom 40 percent of the population, are parts of this goal.

SDG 11, inclusive, safe and resilient infrastructure has close affinity with disability as safe and accessible human settlements, public transport, public spaces, and infrastructure are essential for PWD.

SDG 17, partnership. Improving the lives of the PWD requires that adequate investments are made, resources are allocated, disability-friendly technology is developed and shared, disability data is available, and stakeholders build partnerships to act for the PWD.

Disability as a cross-cutting issue is associated with many other goals and is encompassed by the principle of 'leave no one behind'. Within disability, there are other many intersectional marginalization and vulnerability such as women, children, older people, and disadvantaged social groups. SDGs are expected to address the multifarious discrimination and marginalization PWDs suffer.

Gaps and Challenges

One of the most serious challenges is the inclusion or consideration of the PWDs in the interventions and results on SDGs. Lack of coordination and understanding, among the implementing agencies, on disability issues as well as the economic and social exclusion of the PWDs continue.

The institutional capacity of the organizations operated by the people with disabilities is limited, they are not adequately prioritised by the government, three tiers of government lack institutional arrangements to deliver services and social protection to these vulnerable groups. Localization and integration of SDGs and imbedding the needs and priorities of the disabled in the programmes and budget of the governments remain inadequate. The disabled people, especially from remote areas, poor families, and marginalized social groups have been particularly excluded and left to suffer. Health, education, economic security, care and support to the people with disability is severely limited in these social strata and areas.

Recommendations

Harmonization and integration of disability agenda in SDGs requires a harmonization, coherence and integration of disability issues across the Goals and indicators. Following suggestions need to be considered by the stakeholders:

- i. All the disaster preparedness, response and recovery actions should be done in a disability-friendly and inclusive way. At the times of crises such coronavirus pandemic at present, the relief and response including the education to the children with disabilities need to be specially tailored to make them accessible.
- ii Integration of SDGs in subnational plans and budget and consideration of disability thereupon is essential to inclusively meet the SDGs. Data collection and management is essential in order to observe the situation of PWDs and make interventions accordingly.
- iii. Housing, transport, information systems, education, etc. must be accessible to PWDs. Government should develop policies and requirements that are applicable to both public and private sectors so that health and other public services prioritize the PWDs.
- iv In design and implementation of policies and programmes on disability, government, development partners and other stakeholders should utilize and involve the organizations of the people with disability and utilize their strengths, resources and expertise.

Dalits

Denial of access to public places: According to Nepal Social Inclusion Survey (NSIS), 2013 conducted by Tribhuvan University, Department of Sociology/Anthropology, 60.7% Hill Dalit and 11.7% Madhesi Dalit have experienced denial in entry into temples during last five years. Likewise, 84.5% Hill Dalit and 65.4% Madhesi Dalit were not allowed to enter into private houses.

Socio-economic and political situation of Dalit: Landlessness: among Dalits is extreme – 36.7% among the hill population and 41.4% among Madhesi Dalit, and those that do hold land have very small landholdings. Landlessness made Dalits economically vulnerable and dependent on landlords. Landlessness is also one of the root causes of the exploitative Haliya, Balighare/Khalo, Charuwa and Haruwa system.

Poverty: In Nepal approximately 42% of Dalits fall below the poverty line, which is 17% point higher than that of the national average (25.2%). An average per capita consumption in Nepal is 34,187, yet Madhesi Dalits consumption per capita is 23,106, followed by Hill Dalit 25,298 per annum.

Education: Dalits' literacy rate (6 years and above) is 52.4% compared to the national average of 65.9% and 34.5% for Tarai/Madhesi Dalit. Literacy rates of Dalit women are 45.5%, but from Musahar and Dom community it is only 17.4% and 17.9%. Only 24.7% of Dalit complete 8th grade whilst the national average is 41.7%, and just 1.6% and 0.8 % Dalit pass SLC and Bachelor degree respectively .

Political participation: There are only 6.5% of Dalit representatives at the parliament, less than half of what it should be - 13.8%. At the all 7 province levels, only 33 seats out of 550 are held by Dalit representatives (5.6%). The federal cabinet has only 1 Dalit representative out of 22 (4%). Although at the local level 6567 out of 6742 Dalit women are elected by local level election.

Human Development Index: The 2014 Nepal National Human Development Report found wide variations in HDI values across population groups, although the trends are towards less inequality. The Newar people have the highest HDI value, 0.565, followed by the Brahman-Chhetris (0.538), Janajatis (0.482), Dalits (0.434) and Muslims (0.422)

Recommendations

- i. Establish an equitable approach to implementing all goals and targets, placing foremost the needs of the poorest, most excluded and vulnerable people.
- ii. Ensure basic rights of education, health, water and sanitation and other will be equitable and close the gap between Dalit and non-Dalit communities.
- iii. Recognize that extreme poverty and inequality is the key hindrance to economic growth as well as poverty eradication of Dalits and Nepal as a whole.
- iv. Realize caste based discrimination and untouchability as a one of the key obstacles for equitable development of Dalits.
- v. Express strong commitment and determinations by developing special plans, policies and programme allocating adequate budget for Dalits that no one will be left behind.
- vi. Initiate adequate affirmative policies and implement universal appropriate social protection measures to Dalits.
- vii. Secure equal access to basic services, the right to own land and property and financial services including equitable access to universal health care, access to safe, effective and affordable essential medicines and vaccines as well as right to water, its availability and sustainable use of water and sanitation.
- viii. End discrimination against the children of those excluded on the basis of caste in schools and higher education institutions.
- ix. Protect women and girls of the marginalized groups as they are the most vulnerable by enforcing strict laws to end violence and impunity.
- x. Ensure the availability of high-quality, timely and disaggregated data to ensure monitoring of progress for marginalized groups and people in vulnerable situations.
- xi. Promote access to justice, rule of law, proper adjudication against the case of caste based discrimination and untouchability and end caste, work and descent-based discrimination by 2030.
- xii. Create Dalit-friendly SDG platform to assess achievements and produce a yearly status report against goals and targets set by the government.
- xiii. Mobilize federal and provincial parliamentarians as well as elected representatives focusing on Dalit community for understanding, realizing and actualizing dignity and rights of Dalits.

Farmers

Introduction

The farmers as one of the Major Groups were created in 1992 during the UN Earth Summit aiming to provide an inclusive space for all farmers and peasants from around the world. They work together for coordinated positions, issuing statements and participating in UN processes related to sustainable development. Thus, the Farmers Major Group is committed to be a focal point for requests to attend official events and to ensure the presence of their constituents at these events. The focus of Farmers Major Group is to promote and prioritize participation of peasants, farmers, pastoralists and fishermen that are from the Global South and Least Developed Countries. This is a great recognition to the farmers and peasants as they are the ones who produce the food, fibre and other agricultural products that the world consumes. Farmers and peasants, thus make significant economic, social and cultural contributions at the local, regional and global levels.

All nine Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS) including the Farmers were integral part to the development and adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015. Since the adoption of SDGs, MGoS have been actively working worldwide towards its implementation, through projects, initiatives, advocacy, knowledge-sharing, and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda. The MGoS often work in partnership and collaboration with other stakeholders, including governments.

The MGoS are also active in the annual follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda at HLPF. The MGoS, including the Farmers, are allowed to attend all official meetings of the HLPF, have access to all official information and documents, intervene in official meetings, submit documents and present written and oral contributions and recommendations, and organize side events and round tables, among others. Thus, the Farmers Major Group, like other Major Groups, may intervene at the national and regional SDG processes in favour of their rational engagement at policy making, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Situation analysis and gaps

In accordance with Economic Survey 2019/20 of Nepal, the contribution of agriculture, fishery and forestry to GDP is expected to be 27.7% in the fiscal year 2019/20 which was 26.9% in the last fiscal year. Likewise, 60.4% of the population depends on agriculture (Fifteenth Plan). The contribution of the agricultural sector to the economic growth was 21.2 in the fiscal year 2018/2019 which is expected to increase to 32.7 in the fiscal year 2019/20. Although generally in a decreasing trend, agriculture has still

a significant contribution for Nepal's economy and employment. Since the majority of the economically active population is involved in agriculture, the farmers' lives, work and issues must be at the core of the SDGs.

Agriculture and farmers are at the heart of many SDGs as poverty, food and nutrition insecurity affect many other aspects of social and economic lives of the majority of the population in Nepal. Unless the farmers who make the rural poor population come out of poverty, meeting the SDGs on poverty reduction, zero hunger, education, health, gender equality, WASH, and environment factors cannot be ensured. Farmers are not only the contributors to food systems meeting SDG2 but also the agents of change for achieving national prosperity through increased agricultural production. SDG 2, target 2.3, "By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment" makes clear that increasing the productivity and income of the farmers is essential.

In Nepal, agriculture grown by the farmers and the peasants is the major source of food and nutrition and employment opportunities, which helps to ensure food security and nutrition.

Poor rural people, most of whom are farmers, make up most of the poor segment of the population. Uplifting the farmers from poverty primarily contributes to achieving the SDG1. Securing tenure right to land, especially to farmers, is necessary. Farmers also would need innovative knowledge and skills, and numeracy to update and upgrade themselves. The seed banks and breeding centres should be in the longer term interest and control of the farmers. Indigenous skills, knowledge and seeds need to be under their control but need improvements for increasing productivity and production. Children of the rural farmers are deprived of quality education and good health services, as these facilities are either unavailable or poor in catering services, resulting in their backwardness in social, economic and political lives. As more women are dependent on agriculture than males and much less women have access to and control over productive resources, uplifting women farmers not only contributes to poverty reduction but also improves gender equality (SDG5). Provided that rural farmers, especially women, are supported for agro-enterprises and innovative ways of farming with market linkage and infrastructure, economic empowerment is possible leading to the structural transformation of economic and social lives of the farmers and the poor.

At the current context of Covid-19, when people who went away for foreign employment are coming back home and local unemployment is increasing dramatically, agriculture and farming can be a driver of economy and employment in the rural areas if planned interventions aiming to absorb the returnee migrants are implemented. It is necessary to make farming a sector that can absorb unemployed youths, and contribute to achieving decent work and economic growth (SDG8).

Farmers and peasant communities are also the largest section of the society to suffer from harmful practices, social evils, discriminatory practices, lack of awareness, stigma, and deprivation of public services. For these reasons, social awareness and educational initiatives should be implemented by putting farmers at the core.

The impacts of climate change resulting in erratic weather patterns including drought, flood, storms, unavailability of water for irrigation as well as depletion of ground water, natural resources and biodiversity have made the farmers more vulnerable to different types of risks and disasters. So, the approaches and successful actions on SDG 13 and SDG 15 are closely related to the security of decent work, stable income, and wellbeing of the farmers.

Under SDG2, volume of production per labour unit by classes of farming / pastoral/ forestry enterprise size, and average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status are the indicators of this target but the baseline data and target are not available yet; therefore, what programmes are going to contribute to this and if they are sufficient cannot be ascertained.

All in all, overcoming rural disparities, ending poverty and hunger, boosting economy and employment are directly related to agriculture and farmers' community.

Some of the problems the agriculture sector of the country vis-a-vis the farmers is facing are as follows:

- Land fragmentation that hinders farmers to grow crops with efficiency.
- Inadequate irrigation facility, so the farmers have to depend on often unpredictable precipitation.
- Inadequate commercialization and modernization of agriculture sector has forced farmers to continue following the traditional farming systems which are mostly labour intensive, low yielding and thus have subsistence in nature. The food thus produced is hardly sufficient to meet the needs of the family alone, forget about selling.

- Lack of financial resources and/or credit/grant and insurance facilities in order to invest in agricultural development by the farmers and the peasants.
- In absence of knowledge and skills for other crop varieties and livestock breeds, the farmers have no option but to continue growing the low yielding food crops as their dominant practice for years.
- Due to lack of modern inputs and technology, the land as well as the labour productivity is quite low compared to other countries of the world.
- Lack of agro-ecological region based research and innovation.
- Lack of advanced agricultural technology including terrain suitable mechanization.
- Perpetual poverty and hunger are chronically impacting the farmers, barring them to increased investment in the agriculture sector.
- Whatever policies and plans are there for promoting agriculture and farmers' wellbeing, they are either poorly implemented or deferred.
- Climate change is posing continuous threat to the farmers and the whole agriculture sector in all the countries of the world, but its first disproportionate impacts are faced by the farmers of the LDCs and small island states, including Nepal.
- Until recently, the huge outmigration from the rural areas has left the agriculture sector with labour crunch, leaving significant parcels of land as fallows.
- Due to lack of effective implementation of land use policy, the agricultural land is being used for non-productive activities including settlement development. Moreover, different activities have prompted land degradation and soil erosion thus reducing land productivity.
- Loss of native varieties and agro-biodiversity promoting farmers' dependence on transnational corporations for seeds, breeds and technology.
- Inadequate support and service delivery mechanism and weak agricultural governance including agricultural research has opened up a level playing ground for the market actors that ignore the needs of the farmers and maximize their own profit and comfort.

Recommendations

- Create enabling environment (policy, regulation, programme, etc.) in order to make Nepal a self-sufficient country in food. Support the food growers in whatever way possible to increase productivity and production.
- Attract and motivate returnee migrant workers in agriculture by offering suitable package of practice, technology and resources.

- Extend financial supports to the farmers to help them modernize, mechanize and diversify agriculture and increase the productivity and production.
- Increase access to grants, credit and insurance to farmers to avail necessary financial resources and minimize the risks, vulnerability and shocks.
- Increase access of farmers to markets and marketing channels, and ensure higher market value to their produce.
- Regulate cross border markets in favour of farmers and peasants of the country.
- Make agricultural technology, improved seeds and agricultural inputs affordable to small and medium landholder farmers. Design and implement focused programmes to increase better access to market, value chains and financing.
- Provide land and other protection measures to landless agricultural workers.
- Invest more and introduce programmes to cover more small farmers for bringing them out of poverty trap.
- Engage farmers as well as other major groups in all steps of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels of SDGs operation.
- Make agricultural loans more accessible to small farmers and small landholders.
- Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted the production and supply system of agricultural products, affecting the income and livelihood of the farmers. So, support the farmers with relief packages to help them recover from the shock.
- Farmers should be considered in social security schemes.
- Make action plans to include farmers in SDG indicators such as including farmers in technical and vocational training in SDG4.4. Disaggregated data is necessary to facilitate monitoring and to make sure that farmers also are in the mainstream of change and development.
- Extreme poverty, hunger, malnutrition and illiteracy are predominantly related to rural and farming communities and thus any SDG interventions related to these Goals must be associated to the advantage and welfare of farmers.
- Resolve the gaps and challenges mentioned above in favour of the farmers and the agriculture sector.
- Create enabling environment and immediately implement the UN Declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas (UNDROP). We strongly believe that the effective implementation of this declaration will contribute to Nepal's efforts to eradicate poverty, hunger and achieving our SDGs.

Gender and Marginalization

The Constitution of Nepal has defined marginalized as, “Communities that are made politically, economically and socially backward, are unable to enjoy services and facilities because of discrimination and oppression and of geographical remoteness or deprived thereof and are in lower status than the human development standards mentioned in Federal law, and includes highly marginalized groups and groups on the verge of extinction”. In Nepal, women, Dalit, indigenous peoples, freed bonded labourers, sexual and gender minorities, persons with disability, Muslim and religious minorities and Madhesi, Tharus are regarded as minority and marginalized groups.

There are a number of provisions that reflect the current situation and the ways to address it at the policy level:

- i. The interim and subsequent final constitutions signed in 2007 and 2015 respectively brought about greater inclusion of marginalized groups, including women. Since then, women’s rights on paper have progressed enormously in the country, mandating greater political, civil society and economic participation of women. Also, the quota and the serving by the Constitutional bodies is ensured.
- ii. Constitution of Nepal comprises of an inclusion commission in Part 27 of Other Commissions: National Women Commission, National Dalit Commission, National Inclusive Commission, National Aborigines Commission, Madhesi Commission, Tharu Commission and Muslim Commission.
- iii. Civil Society Organizations have been working on these cross-cutting issues as well with active advocacy to ensure public accountability in liaison with national and international actors like; government, UN agencies, stakeholders and constituencies.

Gaps and challenges

Despite policy provisions and government efforts, weak implementation continues. Discrimination faced by Nepali women goes beyond the gender binary and patriarchal structure, but is coupled further. The affirmative actions are good but do not reach the entire marginalized population.

The functioning of the different commissions is still not executed fully due to the vacuum of the commissioners’ appointments and inadequate human resource. Hence, the overall scenario looks pretty dismal though such commissions were envisioned as instruments of uprooting structural discrimination prevailing in Nepal for ages.

The achievement of gender equality and empowering women requires social re-architecture along with economic interventions. Eliminating violence against girls and women which some reports put it as high as a quarter of their total population (Ministry of Health, 2011), raising women's participation in the public decision making places like the parliament and the corporate offices which currently stands at less than one third would be a difficult task.

Women face double and triple marginalization based on various factors. Only 40% of all Nepali girls are educated beyond primary level but among Dalits that percentage is limited to just 11.8%. Dalit women also frequently experience violence; and how issues and beliefs reinforced by religion, surrounding hierarchy and caste, perpetuate violence against Dalit women. Approximately, 86% of single women (CBS 2011) are illiterate and face marginalization to be part of any formal economy.

Recommendations

- i. Blanket programmes designed for minorities and marginalized groups should be substituted with the specific ones targeting specific groups, their needs and structural inequalities.
- ii. Designated commissions should be fully functional with human and financial resources.
- iii. The GoN should ensure the full and comprehensive implementation of the Labour Act and the Social Security Act to protect rights of diverse groups and women and the marginalized ones.
- iv. Along with creating enabling environment, policies and provisions beyond the quota system should be also encouraged to include a wider population.

LGBTIQ/Sexual and Gender Minorities

Nepal has made a milestone in the LGBTI movement. Finally, Nepal is the only country in the Asian region to provide legislative protection to the LGBTI people against discrimination, providing constitutional guarantees for LGBTI Rights. Nevertheless, political advances have not necessarily translated into the daily lives of LGBT individuals who may experience discrimination and violence in all aspects of their lives – in employment, family, healthcare and education. The government bureaucracy may not be interested or may not have the capacity to implement policies and laws that can benefit LGBT people. Furthermore, Nepali society is divided and diverse, as is the LGBT community. Intersectional marginalization increases, with different castes, ethnicities and social classes, differences between urban and rural locations and the diversity of the LGBT community according to gender, sexual orientation, age, class, ethnicity and other factors.

LGBTIQ community and their organizations have made the LGBT movement to gain visibility, and this was shown with the nomination of Asia's first openly gay parliamentarian Sunil Babu Pant who served as a Member of Parliament (MP) from 2008 to 2012. The Supreme Court ruling of 2007 is the most prominent LGBT political victory to date in Nepal. In 2007, four LGBT NGOs were successful in a petition against the government in Sunil Babu Pant and Others Vs Government of Nepal and Others, resulting in the verdict calling on the government to scrap laws that discriminate on the basis of SOGI, to recognize a third gender category and to establish a committee to explore the legalization of same-sex marriage.

However, of these three areas, the only one with some implementation was the third gender category. Little progress has been seen on the rest. Although more than 60 prominent LGBT leaders contested in the second Constituent Assembly elections in November 2013, none were elected by vote, or nominated under the proportional representation system. There continues to be a high level of visible and public advocacy around policy and legislative reforms to ensure LGBT rights, and LGBT issues are prominently featured in mainstream media. Nevertheless, most LGBT people are generally compelled to hide their sexual orientation or gender identity and are frequently subject to human rights violations, stigma, and discrimination. Despite the notable advances on paper, the actual lives of the vast majority of LGBT people in Nepal is still challenging due to widespread poverty, inflexible social norms, and an insensitive legal framework and bureaucracy.

However, this sector has achieved contributed towards achievement of the sustainable development goals and targets mainly on LGBTIQ. To quote some of them, the Constitution of Nepal addresses LGBTIQ issue as right to citizenship, right to equality, and right to social justice. Nepal supports independent expert on SOGI at Human Rights Council. Legal gender recognition is ensured as "other" category in citizenship and passport. Nepal supported renewal mandate of independent expert on SOGI at human rights council. Nepal became the second Asian country for UN LGBTI core group member to mainstream LGBTIQ inclusion throughout UN mechanism and process. We have a landmark Supreme Court decisions on citizenship (2017), marriage equality (2013), social justice (2007), spouse visa for LGBTI (2016). HIV and AIDS prevention programmes have been massively implemented and the National HIV and AIDS Strategy 2016-2021 is focused on gay man, MSM and transgender people. Representation from LGBTIQ as political party members is another achievement. Major political parties include LGBTIQ issue in their political manifesto. Furthermore, awareness and sensitization among public sector has been increased. Bhumika Shrestha, one of the pioneer activists, has been able to stand among 100 influential

women to address gender equality. Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens is organizing awareness raising programme on LGBTIQ proactively. Finally, forthcoming census is expected to include other gender and sexual minorities community.

Gaps and Challenges

Despite above achievements as an outcome of the long struggle in Nepal, some gaps in achieving the goals and targets are crucial to learn and translate into immediate action. Although the constitution addresses the rights of LGBTIQ, these rights are not reflected as fundamental rights and enacted as laws. The Supreme Court decisions on LGBTIQ rights are not fully implemented in practice. State definition of minorities does not include LGBTIQ people. Policy makers, government agencies are not aware on LGBTIQ need and issues. Participation of LGBTIQ community in public sector is inadequate.

Recommendations

- i. Easy access and none discrimination in every public sector, such as, health services, school enrolment and continuity should be LGBTIQ friendly for the people of this sector.
- ii. School teaching curriculums, teachers 'training manuals and similar awareness raising materials must be reviewed and developed keeping in mind the issues and sensitivity of LGBTIQ.
- iii. Transgender people who change their citizenship ID must be allowed to amend their education certificate accordingly and continue their education further with new ID document.
- iv. Amendment of definition of "Minorities" is necessary ensuring opportunity for LGBTIQ to participate in state structure and employment. Citizenship bill should not mention "need of medical proof" to access citizenship cards for gender minorities' people.
- v. Existing laws for equal employment for LGBTIQ people is a must ensuring provision of quota, reservation for this community as other minorities through assessment to find out all discriminatory laws and provisions against LGBTIQ people and address the gaps through laws and policies. This is to further ensure developing law and policy as per Supreme Court decision and constitution.
- vi. All gender toilets within disabled friendly toilets is to be ensured for easy access of toilets for trans and gender diverse people. We do not want separate toilets. We need all gender toilets within disabled friendly public toilets.
- vii. Specific mechanism is needed to address violence against LGBTIQ people. Amendment of rape law to address rape against transgender people.
- viii. Government scheme should address LGBTIQ issue in annual plans and budget on employment, education, health, violence.

Migrant/Workers

Nepal's migration situation is dominated by migration of Nepalis for foreign employment. The 2011 census on population and housing showed that almost 50 per cent of Nepal's households had a member who was either working overseas or had returned. While this labour migration has a significant positive effect on Nepal's economy, it also has a series of socio-economic impacts on the welfare of Nepali nationals and their communities. Exploitation of migrant workers is rife and aspiring labour migrants too often find themselves in a situation of irregular migration or trafficking.

Nepal's environmental vulnerability also has an impact on the scale of internal and international migration. Climate change, environmental degradation, natural and man-made disasters cause displacement and dislocation from the land, meaning that many Nepalis migrate to ensure a sustainable livelihood.

Nepal's open border with its close neighbour India is another defining and unique characteristic in Nepal's migration context. Although the lack of data on this issue is of concern, it is recognized that there are frequent and extensive cross-border movements, which have significant impacts for Nepal, both positive and potentially negative. The 2011 census data shows that nearly two-fifths (37.2%) of the Nepali absentees are in India, however such data has its limitations in the case of an open border where crossing can be short-term or seasonable and will be undocumented. There are also no records kept on how many Nepalis work in India or where they are.

Given the temporary nature of labour migration with a disproportionate share of employment contract duration of two years, both repeat and return migration feature prominently in Nepal's migration profile. In 2017/18 and 2018/19, 258,598 and 272,616 migrant workers renewed their labour approvals. On the other hand, as per the Nepal Labour Force Survey 2017/18, an analysis of the profile of recent returnee migrant workers in Nepal shows that 42.8 per cent are employed, 13.4 per cent are unemployed and 43.8 per cent are out of the labour force. A key priority of the Government is to ensure that both the social and financial remittances gained abroad are mobilized productively in Nepal and help advance the country development priorities.

Assessment of Gaps and Challenges

Traditionally, Nepali migrant workers sought employment mainly in India, however from the mid-1980s, Nepalis started also to migrate to the Gulf States and Malaysia for work which resulted in an increase in migrant workers as well as in a proliferation of labour recruitment agencies and brokers. The decentralization of passport issuance in Nepal also facilitated the migration of many unskilled and semi-skilled Nepalis.

During past two decades, Nepal has also witnessed an increase in the number of Nepali women who are seeking work abroad and being gradually recognized as important economic actors. The risk of exploitation and abuse of women migrant workers is high, particularly in largely unregulated sectors such as domestic work and the Government has put in place a series of measures seeking to protect women migrants. To date, these measures have met with limited success and there is still evidence that many women migrants are in situations of risk.

The process for Nepalis to migrate for employment is complex and can be time-consuming, which has spurred the increase of recruitment agencies. It also means that many migrant workers use irregular channels to access foreign employment, not going through the process of obtaining a labour permit.

Despite the number of laws, policies and directives aimed at regulating foreign employment, and seeking to minimise the risk of exploitation and protect the rights of migrant workers, labour migration from Nepal is still fraught with inherent risk. There are numerous instances of exploitation and abuse of migrant workers as well as concern that the Government's capacity to implement the laws needs to be further strengthened.

The Government has sought to reflect increased protections for Nepali labour migrants into bilateral agreements with countries of destination. It has taken several practical measures also to support migrant worker, such as establishing a call centre which is able to provide prompt assistance to migrant workers in Nepal or in destination countries. The GoN has also made legislative changes designed to offer protections, including in the regulation of recruiting companies as well as instituting a "free visa free ticket" scheme whereby employers are to bear the visa and air travel expenses for workers going for employment in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain and Malaysia. While there are labour laws and standards in place in countries of destination, their full implementation is needed. Further, undocumented workers are usually highly vulnerable, with few safeguards or the ability to enforce their rights.

Recommendations

- i. Government should ratify the long awaited UN Convention on the Rights of the Migrant Workers and Members of their Families 1990.
- ii. There is a need for the collection of quality migration data and a wider dissemination of evidence and facts about migration. Good migration governance and practice requires a stronger evidence base on migration through the collection and dissemination of detailed migration data disaggregated by age, sex, country of origin, country of previous residence, country of citizenship, education, occupation, employment status, qualifications and skills level. A periodic survey will assist with the lack of reliable and updated statistical data on both internal and international stocks and outflows and inflows of migrants as well as address the scarcity of scientific evidence on migration drivers, trends and practices and on their impact on society at large.
- iii. The Foreign Employment Policy 2012 should be revised and strongly grounded on reality to guide a clear and time-consistent stance and direction on labour migration.
- iv. The Policy should be better harmonized with sectoral policies (including agriculture, industrial, foreign investment, skills, employment, education and health policies) and other broader national policies such as the Periodic Plans. It should also reflect the spirit of global commitments such as the GCM and SDGs.
- v. The Policy should provide avenues for different types of bilateral cooperation in addition to MOUs and BLAs such as government to government agreements, sector-specific agreements, skills partnerships and social security agreements.
- vi. A high-level coordination committee including relevant stakeholders of domestic as well as foreign employment needs to be set up to identify areas of complementarities and collaboration.
- vii. Considering the multiplicity of government and non-government stakeholders involved in migration governance, there is a need to take a systems approach to assess and assign the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders to achieve the goals envisioned by the Policy.
- viii. Foreign employment information management system (FEIMS) Needs to be upgraded to address the standardization of the occupation and skills category in line with international classifications and practice, to incorporate municipality-based information of migrant workers, and to enable employers to access the system which would improve recordkeeping and ease the process of verification of job demand.

- ix. Migration to India needs to be better understood including volume, employment characteristics, remittance behaviour, common vulnerabilities faced by migrant workers by facilitating recordkeeping of India bound migrant workers at the local level.
- x. The Government should work towards maintaining reliable data on cases and victims of human trafficking as well as those of traffickers disguised under the facade of labour migration. The Government can consider adopting an integrated service delivery mechanism to provide all labour migration-related services including creating individual profiles of migrant workers or FEIMS, opening bank accounts, depositing insurance fees and contributing to the Welfare Fund, under one roof.
- xi. Sustained efforts are to be sorted out to provide orientation and capacity building of local governments to carry out foreign employment-related functions including those mandated by LGOA need to be prioritized. Provincial and federal governments could coordinate regular forums to showcase good practices and share learnings in migration governance at the local level.
- xii. Regular inter-agency meetings representing MOLESS, MOFA and MOLJPA should be conducted to assess the overall implementation of the bilateral agreements, the timeliness of Joint Committee meetings for all BLAs/MOUs and the identification of potential destination countries for bilateral labour cooperation, among others. A manual that covers the full cycle of the MOU/BLA including the required preparations, drafting, negotiations and implementation needs to be prepared along with specific responsibilities of the concerned agency to institutionalize and standardize the process.

Senior Citizens

Constitution of Nepal in its Article 41 has incorporated rights of senior citizens as one of the fundamental rights and has mentioned that “The senior citizens shall have the right to special protection and social security from the State.” Basic laws including Senior Citizens Act 2006 have been enforced. The world population is ageing rapidly as a result of improved health and increasing life expectancy. People aged 60 and older make up 12.3 per cent of the global population, and by 2050, that number is expected to rise to almost 22 per cent. Population Census of Nepal 2011 showed senior citizens being 8.13% of Nepal’s total population. As the proportion of aging population continues to increase, senior citizens’ issues have been more important than ever. In implementing the SDGs, it is essential to consider the senior citizens to make sure that they are included or are not left behind. Across the SDGs and their indicators, older

people have their stake. Human rights, health, and protection of older people are an integral part.

Gaps and Challenges

Rapid change in society, economy and culture, migrations, and family disintegration has impacted older people. These dynamics have made older people much more vulnerable. For these reasons, older people need special measures for their physical and mental health, care, social protection and social safety nets. Rather than making the older people live in seclusion and isolation, preference should be given to integrate them in the family.

Many SDGs and their indicators have incorporated older people. Poverty, hunger, health, public services and infrastructure closely relate with older people. Older people covered by social protection floors/systems (Target 1.3), addressing the nutritional needs of older persons (Target 2.2), providing access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems with special attention to the needs of older persons (Target 11.2), and access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces (Target 11.7) are some instances in the SDGs where older persons have been mentioned. Making sure that no one is left behind should consider older people across the Goals.

Older people have suffered “multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination”. Documents of Ageing Nepal show that 146 older people suffered abuse while 116 deceased after abuse and neglect in Nepal in 2019. Only during the lockdown due to coronavirus pandemic, from March to May 2020, 52 older people were recorded to have suffered abuse and neglect. Older people depending on others for their daily life and economy, living alone, suffering from chronic disease, mentally ill and unable perform any duties are more likely to face abuse.

Recommendations

Special needs and considerations of the older people need to be considered across SDGs. A few ideas that must be considered are listed here:

- i. Build awareness of everyone concerned and develop awareness about balanced diet for older people;
- ii. Create environment so that local levels can influence and support families for cooling and service balanced diet necessary for older people;
- iii. Make vitamins and nutrients to older people through local health facilities;
- iv. Support build parks, entertainment centres, meeting venues, gymnasium, etc. for older people and support them live physically and socially active lives; and

- v. Give special preferences and privileges to older people in public transport, health services, and make the physical infrastructures accessible to older people.
- vi. Policies and obligatory laws need to be formulated for the protection and care of the older persons.
- vii. Awareness building on the issues of older people and their abuse focusing the families, society, media personnel, and law enforcement agencies is necessary.
- viii. Improved and special provisions in health care systems are required for older persons. Dedicated hospitals, wards, care homes, shelter houses, clubs, etc. are necessary to physically, socially and psychosocially protect older people.
- ix. Support build parks, entertainment centres, meeting venues, gymnasium, etc. for older people and support them live physically and socially active lives;
- x. Data and information is required in order to design the focused programmes and also to monitor the situation of older people.
- xi. Build awareness about balanced diet for older people and other special needs;
- xii. Create environment such that local levels can influence and support families to prepare and serve balanced diet necessary for older people;
- xiii. Make vitamins and nutrients available to older people through local health facilities;
- xiv. Give special preferences and privileges to older people in public transport, health services, and make the physical infrastructures accessible to older people;
- xv. Implementation of strategies and actions for older people as mentioned in Fifteen Periodic Plan of Nepal is important. Specific activities should be designed and implemented at the national, subnational and community level.

Youth

Being the agents of transformation, youth are major drivers for political, social, economic and cultural development as well as innovation in the world. None of countries in the globe has ever developed without meaningful engagement and contribution of young people in the development processes.

There are about 1.2 billion youth aged 15-24 years in the world, and around 26 percent in South Asia . Despite tremendous contribution of youth, they witness various challenges enjoying the fundamental human rights and freedom. Half of the 1.3 billion multidimensionally poor people are children under age 18 . Youth unemployment remains the global challenge. According to International Labour Organization (ILO), more than 64 million young people are unemployed in the world. The challenges of

securing and retaining decent work are even more serious and complex for vulnerable and marginalized youth including young women, those living in humanitarian settings, youth with disabilities, migrant youth, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth. Furthermore, literacy has been the dominant factor for empowerment and attaining quality life of young people. A report published by UNICEF in 2018 mentions that around 115 million young people are still illiterate, living mostly in the developing countries. Besides, young people experience various challenges, including hunger, diseases, gender discrimination, inequality, exclusion, caste-based discrimination, among others.

Youth, representing around 40.35 percent (CBS, 2011) in Nepal, have played very significant role for strengthening the democratic institutions and practices. Critics claim that none of the democratic movements in Nepal could have been successful without participation and contribution of young people in the forefront. Apart from the contribution in the political development, more importantly, youth have endeavoured for social, economic and cultural transformation. Over the past two decades, Nepalese economy is significantly contributed by remittance sent by young migrant workers abroad.

Lack of access to meaningful participation in decision making process of state apparatus remains a serious challenge for all Nepali youths, particularly from marginalized and vulnerable sections. Owing to lack of adequate policies and mechanisms within the government institutions, marginalized and vulnerable young people (Dalit, persons with disabilities, LGBTIQ, Madhesi, indigenous, Muslim, etc.) have been deprived of the right to participation in the decision making process. As a result, marginalized and vulnerable people are left behind structurally. While literacy rate of youth aged 15-24 has increased to 92 percent (Fifteenth Plan), the learning outcomes gained by them in school and university are not satisfactory. Moreover, the education gained by them is more general (theoretical) rather than practical including technical and vocational skills relevant for jobs in national and international markets. Among youth, the marginalized and vulnerable youth are faced with serious challenges. For example, female youth have high possibility of dropouts from school due to various reasons including child marriage, gender discrimination and poverty. Similarly, youth from Dalit, persons with disabilities, LGBTIQ have also high chances leaving the school and university without completing their study on account of discrimination and exclusion including economic and social. Migrated young people face challenges before, during and after the cycle of migration processes. In the country of the origin (Nepal), youth are exploited by the manpower and agents and in the country of the destination by the employers not paying the agreed salary and creating other hurdles. Majority of young

people are deprived of adequate health information and facilities, living with diseases and dying untimely.

With a view to addressing the issues faced by young people, the Government of Nepal has established Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) and National Youth Council (NYC). Besides, National Youth Policy and Youth Vision 2025 have been endorsed, prioritizing the youth issues. Despite the policy measures and institutional mechanisms, the government has allocated very nominal budget to MoYS and NYC. Due to budget constraints, the programmes of MoYS and NYC have been significantly low. Furthermore, there are some line ministries, which have youth focal points. However, their budget and programmes are not focused to enhancing the living standards of young people. Coordination and collaboration among the line ministries remain serious challenges in Nepal.

Gaps and challenges

The government efforts that include provisions of social security and protection are very nominal in addressing poverty, inequality and exclusion and have not been sufficient for the marginalized groups including people with disabilities and Raute. Although GoN has some programmes regarding sexual and reproductive health rights, several marginalized and vulnerable young people are deprived of information and services with regards to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Many young people have very limited information and knowledge about lifelong learning and are not getting the benefit of this provision. Young people have enthusiasm to be active citizens. However, due to limited public opportunities and spaces, they have not been able to utilize their full potential. Limited opportunities for technical and vocational education have obliged them to enrol for general education.

Despite various rules and regulations against gender-based violence and harassment, its implementation is very poor in the society. The discrimination and inequality are rooted based on class, gender, physical and mental status, geography, sex, among others and still practiced in the communities. Youth have very limited opportunities in the decision-making and governance processes that have curtailed the possibility to use the potentials of young people in those processes. Young volunteers have very significant roles to contribute to achieving the SDGs in the community. However, their roles and functions have not been recognized and accredited as expected and enabling environment is not enough. Weak governance, low investment for youth development, and limited capacity do not facilitate youth from meeting their potentials and aspirations.

Recommendations

- i. The government should allocate adequate resources to empower the young people, ensuring good governance and decentralized structures at all levels.
- ii. The government should endorse the integrated comprehensive social security and protection provisions and systems for youths from all marginalized and vulnerable communities.
- iii. The government should provide and adopt specific measures to provide the Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRHR) services and facilities to all young people, especially targeting people with disabilities and LGBTIQ.
- iv. The government should adopt policy and programmes to integrate lifelong learning in the school curriculum and community levels and ensure effective delivery.
- v. The government should adopt proper policies and programmes with adequate resources to promote the technical and vocational education for all young people.
- vi. The government should adopt policy and programmes to integrate lifelong learning in the school curriculum and community levels and ensure effective delivery.
- vii. The government should create an enabling environment for young people for active citizenship initiatives at all civic and public affairs.
- viii. The government should develop special policy and program and mobilize youth as beneficiaries, as volunteers and as leaders to eliminate the inequality, untouchability, harmful practices and discrimination in Nepal.
- ix. The government should create conducive environment to increase meaningful participation of young people, particularly from marginalized and vulnerable sections, in governance and inclusive development process at all levels.
- x. The government should recognize the contribution of volunteers and provide enabling environments to promote youth volunteers, as volunteerism is more than a means of implementation for the SDGs. For many young people, it is the crucial step in becoming more active citizens and taking a more active role in the decisions that affect their lives.

Common Challenges to Leaving No One Behind

Lack of baseline and disaggregated data: Baseline data is unavailable for many SDG indicators. Lack of data has made it impossible to track progress, to monitor inclusive growth and improvement and make sure that no one is left behind. Lack of disaggregated data has affected transparency, accountability and just distribution of resources and focus. In addition, progress cannot be ascertained in lack of data. Data is not disaggregated and is scattered. The data revolution as part of the SDGs seems to have been ignored; undermining the participatory approaches and innovative solutions.

Targets and achievements: Available Government data show that some of the SDG targets, such as poverty reduction, child health, maternal mortality, primary education, representation of women in parliament and all levels of government, basic water supply coverage, access to electricity, and GDP per capita growth seem achievable. However, they are not disaggregated by gender, social groups, geographic region, etc., to make sure that achievements are encompassing, inclusive and enjoyed universally. Moreover, based on the preliminary data and situation predictions, most of the SDGs targets and indicators seem unachievable if the current trend goes on.

People's empowerment: Quality, inclusion and equality aspects on social, economic and political empowerment lag behind. In education, for instance, creativity, skills, employability and other important qualities are lacking.

Recommendations

- i. Promote human economy and recognize unpaid care work: Women's economic empowerment could reduce poverty for everyone. In order to achieve it, we need a human economy that works for women and men alike, and for everyone. Unpaid care work prevents women and girls from participating in economic, political, and social activities, including opportunities for education, employment, and entrepreneurship. We need to first fix the current broken economic model which is undermining gender equality and causing extreme economic inequality.
- ii. Implement specific targeted plans and programmes, for instance, feeding the most affected and vulnerable people including children, pregnant women, lactating mothers, people living with HIV/AIDS, chronically sick and older people. Similarly, the poverty and hunger related policies, plans and programmes must focus both the geographical as well as social pockets that mainly lie in mountains and hills of Karnali and Sudur Pashchim Pradesh and rural areas of Pradesh 2, and among Dalit communities.

- iii. Government should establish a robust knowledge hub, database system on the SDGs from local, to provincial and central levels. Disaggregated, reliable and updated data should be publicly available in an integrated and open data standard so as to monitor the progress and achievements and develop plans. Up to date data needs to be publicly available in an open data format so that it can be utilized by the public, CSOs, private companies, cooperatives and other sectors alike for critical analyses, identification of gaps, and innovative solutions. Take the opportunity of the upcoming census to collect necessary disaggregated data.
- iv. Give utmost importance in ending all forms of intersectional discrimination, violence, exclusion, exploitation and inequality of women, children, Dalits, indigenous peoples, marginalized groups, LGBTIQ, poorest of the poor, older people, people living with HIV AIDS, people with disabilities, people living in remote rural areas and other vulnerable groups. Consider the special needs of these groups.
- v. Undertake public awareness programmes and community mobilization about the special needs of older people and their integration in family and society, provide them psychosocial support, and give special preferences and privileges in public services.
- vi. Create an enabling environment for identity, education, decent employment and dignified life of sexual and gender minorities, and people with disabilities.
- vii. There need to be targeted and focused programmes with higher budgetary allocation in order to address the intersectional marginalization and discrimination faced by women. Recognize unpaid care work as part of the economic activities, integrating it to the national economy to end gender discrimination. Gender responsive budgeting needs to be institutionalized down to the local level.
- viii. Establish suitable mechanisms for participation of youth in policy and implementation, provide opportunity to them for technical and vocational education, sexual and reproductive health rights and services to them, and their mobilization is crucial to achieve many SDGs.

From VNR 2017 to VNR 2020

Nepal produced its preliminary report on the SDGs in 2015, becoming the first country in the world to do so. Nepal participated in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) of its commitments and implementation of the SDGs in 2017, at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development, under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in New York. This was Nepal's first VNR of the SDGs.

In Nepal's VNR 2017, Nepal did not have any substantial progress as such to demonstrate since the SDG implementation had just started. But, Nepal took this opportunity to show to the international community the enabling environment it had created, status of some SDGs that basically built on the MDGs, and the institutional mechanisms it had set up to gear up for the SDGs. In other words, the VNR 2017 was Nepal's showcase of its preparatory works and commitments to accelerate and meet the SDGs.

In VNR 2017, Nepal Government acknowledged mainstreaming the SDGs agenda into the provincial and local level planning and budgeting, capacity development, making existing data generation system robust and databases in line with SDGs requirement, data disaggregation, job creation, tackling nutrition deficiency and natural disasters, and strengthening governance at all levels as major challenges and issues. In 2020, while almost one-third of the SDG period is about to elapse, most of the problems remain unresolved yet. Instead, some of the problems such as job creation have exacerbated as a result of Covid-19 pandemic. In VNR 2020, Nepal should be able to demonstrate the success and lessons in overcoming the challenges and of progress made.

VNR 2017 expected the administrative set up of 7 Provinces to be established by 2018. However, even at the half of 2020, Farwestern Province has fallen behind on this. District Coordination Committees were envisaged for coordination and monitoring of a district but they have not been empowered and are often ignored by local governments; in this situation their role as monitoring bodies for SDGs remains distant. Other monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and their effectiveness is difficult to ascertain in lack of information. Transparency and proper information disclosure mechanisms of the institutional frameworks for monitoring are necessary in order to promote transparency and accountability. Moreover, partnership with private sector, cooperatives and civil society has been envisaged but it is difficult to locate tangible efforts and subsequent outcomes.

The VNR 2017, in the way forward, included strengthening partnership among three levels of government, macroeconomic policy reform, resource mobilization for financing the SDGs, SDG prioritization and implementation sequencing, alignment of sectoral plans and periodic plans with the SDGs, strengthening data generation for monitoring progress, and civil service and governance reform. On these aspects, although policy aspects seem satisfactory, implementation needs to be expedited.

Covid-19 Pandemic and the SDGs

Global coronavirus pandemic as Covid-19 was never expected and such a scale of damage to society and economy is going to have lasting effects. This global health crisis is going to affect implementation of most of the SDGs and their indicators, mainly SDG1, SDG2, SDG3, SDG4, SDG5, SDG8, SDG9, SDG10, SDG16.2 and SDG17.

The pandemic has given rise to a new set of problems and challenges which has been the priority. Efforts and resources are being diverted to the emergency needs. Close down of factories and enterprises will shrink the economy and cut down jobs. During and post-Covid's new normal will cause disruption and a paradigm shift in economic patterns which can possibly lead to many layoffs, and confusions before new opportunities and patterns emerge. Highly contagious nature of Covid-19 has hindered and overshadowed other numerous diseases that can take many lives. Poverty reduction, health and education are hit hard. The world is going ever more digital; but digital divide can worsen the inequality. The new working environment, pattern and increased use of information technology will disproportionately benefit and result in increased inequality. In the same way, domestic violence against women is increasing, maternal and child health are at increased risk, psychosocial health has become a big public health concern. When larger gatherings including visits to religious places and prayers are controlled, social gatherings are unlikely and people are forced to isolate, these are likely to badly affect psychosocial and spiritual wellbeing.

Covid-19 and the subsequent environment can be a driver of conflict, political instability and public anger against the state and establishment. Public perception that Government's Covid-response is ineffective, lacks transparency and accountability can lead to unrest and instability. In response to and steering away from the coronavirus pandemic, "Authorities need to be open and transparent in their decision-making and willing to listen to and respond to criticism" . Anti-globalization trends, incoming migrant workers and youth unemployment will be hard for Nepal to manage.

In the pretext of Covid-19 response, it has been observed that authorities in many countries have restricted human rights, media freedom, civil society and have taken this opportunity to turn autocratic. It is possible that Covid-19 context will encourage authorities to restrict and exacerbate the justice and governance environment, closely related to SDG 16.

Lockdowns and restrictions in transportation and travel in the context of Covid-19 have disrupted and constrained the production, supply and value chains. Agriculture based

and other local productions, sales and employment generated in this way have been hit hard. In the current fiscal year, economic growth is expected to get limited to 2.3 percent. When the Government revenues shrink and the investment is to be diverted to Covid-19 response, the Government will have to cut down the investment on social sectors and development works. This can push more people to poverty, hunger and malnutrition. Public health and education are highly likely to deteriorate. Other social dimensions will be hampered and the progress on SDGs will slow down. In this case, higher investment has been necessary for protection of vulnerable populations. In other words, the gains from the efforts in the past, including the MDGs, will be hard to sustain.

Covid-19 crisis has placed even more importance on the right to life, right to health and access to health care, and freedom of movement . In other words, SDG3 is going to be affected a lot. There is a mounting pressure on the government to guarantee basic health, economic and social lives.

The Goals and indicators that are associated with access to health care, leaving no one behind, participation, migrant workers, food, sanitation and hygiene, informal workers and wage labourers, among others are going to be affected.

The target of building resilience of the poor and the vulnerable people to economic, social and environmental shocks, disasters, and climate-related extreme events, which is already at the crossroads seems further jeopardized by the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to respond to the COVID-19 related health crisis, government's regular development as well as disaster response funds are likely to be diverted for coping with the crisis. Therefore, due to unavailability of adequate financial resources to respond to the disasters related to natural calamities including climate change, the estimated results are unlikely to be achieved. Moreover, the ODA receivable under the climate change adaptation and mitigation agreements (e.g., Paris Agreements) is likely to get diverted to address the COVID-19 crisis within the donor countries than being channelled to the developing aid recipient countries of the south including Nepal. It will have a resource crunch in aid dependent countries like Nepal.

Recommendations

All the efforts must be guided by the idea that we will build back better by learning from this unprecedented and unexpected crisis:

- i. Covid-19 pandemic has widely impacted almost all the social and economic sectors of the country. Therefore, to understand concisely the level and severity

of impacts in specific sectors and the needs therein, the government should undertake an impact and needs assessment of the Covid-19 crisis. Government needs immediate contingent plans and policies to readjust/address the Covid-19 crisis or context

- ii. Based on the impact and needs assessment of Covid-19 crisis, specific policies and implementation measures including a quick socio-economic recovery plan responding to the impacts of Covid-19 crisis should be in place. Such a plan must be put urgently in place to minimize the potential impacts on the attainment of the SDGs as envisaged. In responding to the problems as a result of this crisis, necessary revision of the SDGs roadmap and sectoral plan must be made as soon as possible to minimize the impacts at present and in future.
- iii. Learning from the disasters and shocks created by Covid-19, diversification of trade, investment, financing and alternatives must be in place.
- iv. In the context of Covid-19, urgent measures are necessary to protect public health, seriously consider the risks and damages caused by health problems other than Covid-19 such as the alarmingly increasing maternal mortality.
- v. The government of Nepal should negotiate with the United Nations (UN) and the World Health Organization (WHO) to operationalize fair and equitable benefit sharing, by all the nations of the world including the LDCs, arising from the sharing of COVID-19 digital sequence information and samples as recognized by the Convention on Biological Diversity (which has 196 Parties) and its Nagoya Protocol (which has 123 Parties). "A Coordinated Global Research Roadmap: 2019 Novel Coronavirus" agrees that "virus materials, clinical samples and associated data should be rapidly shared for immediate public health purposes and that fair and equitable access to any medical products or innovations that are developed using the materials must be part of such sharing."
- vi. The effect of Covid-19 and lockdown has caused long term adverse effects on children and ultimately the future of the nation. So, stakeholders need to protect children's physical and psychosocial health, address their learning needs and find ways to recover the loss. Likewise, establish women and children focused institutional arrangements at subnational levels.
- vii. Covid-19 pandemic was unforeseen and has caused a huge damage and undone some progress achieved. The world will need quite some time to recover the damage. But, by focusing on the SDGs and taking a human rights approach, we will be able to recover better and build back better.

Review of Implementation and Progress

SDG1: No Poverty

Globally, the number of people living in extreme poverty, on the basis of US\$ 1.9 per day per capita income, declined from 36 per cent (1.9 billion people) in 1990 to 10 per cent in 2015. It accounts for about 734 million people globally . People living in conditions of extreme poverty have to struggle very hard to fulfil their most basic needs of food, health, education, water and sanitation facilities, among others. Owing to the COVID-19 crisis as well as the fossil fuel price drop, the cumulative disproportionate impacts will be on the poor as they lose employment and remittances, on one hand, and have to face the rising prices on the other. Due to COVID-19 crisis, the global extreme poverty rate could rise by 0.3 to 0.7 percentage points, in 2020 (ibid). COVID-19 has also heavily disrupted the health care services and education systems which also impact the poor the most.

Nepal has SDG plan to reduce extreme monetary poverty to less than five percent and raise per capita income to US\$ 2,500 by 2030 . Similarly, the multidimensional poverty index (MPI) is targeted to be reduced to less than seven percent by 2030. To address poverty faster at the given income growth on average, the consumption share of bottom 20 percent households is targeted to increase to 12 percent in 2030 from 7.6 percent in 2015. Similarly, social protection expenditure is targeted to reach 15 percent of the federal budget in 2030, which is around 5.58% in this fiscal year . Different policies, strategies, plans and programme instruments are in place to address the situation of poverty in Nepal.

Assessment of Progress and Challenges

One of the latest research findings estimated that the COVID-19 pandemic could push between 80 and 395 million additional people into extreme poverty globally, people living under \$1.90 per day, with about 10% contraction in global income or consumption due to the impacts of COVID-19 . So, the number of people living under extreme poverty globally may come across 814 to 1,129 million heads. The research also forecasts that the COVID-19 impacts may pose a real challenge to SDG 1, ending poverty by 2030. According to the estimates of a 10 percent contraction under the US\$1.9/day poverty line, between 80 and 85 percent of those newly entering into poverty would be located either in Sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia (ibid).

Nepal ranked 103rd out of 162 countries on the basis of SDGs' global index ranks as determined by its performance. The top ranked country is Denmark whereas the Central African Republic is at the bottom. Similarly, in 2019 Nepal moved up two spots

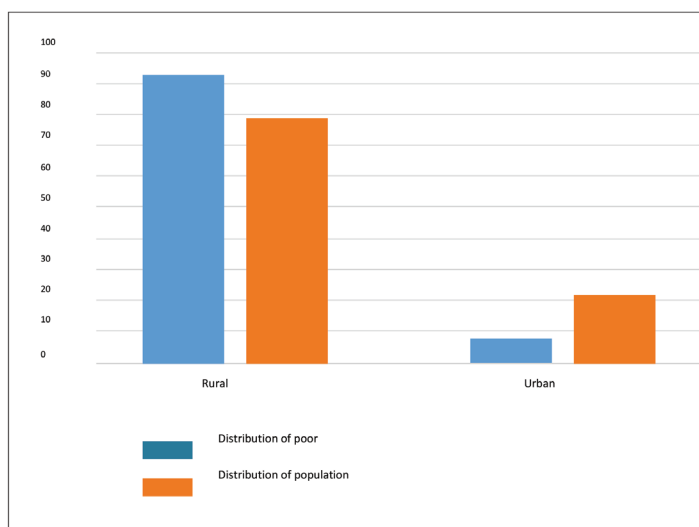
to rank 147th out of 189 countries on the 2019 Human Development Index . The index rose from 0.380 to 0.579, an increase of 52.6 percent . Meaning, people have started living longer, are more educated and have greater incomes. The improvement looks huge in terms of percentage, but Nepal's Human Development Index at 0.579 indicates only a slight improvement. When the value is discounted for inequality, the index falls to 0.430, a loss of 25.8 percent due to inequality in the distribution of the human development index dimension indices.

Like other countries of the world, Nepal, being a poverty trodden landlocked least developed country, has put a lot more emphasis to reduce the number of poor people, hence had introduced ambitious policies, plans and programmes, more focused during MDGs implementation (2000-2015). Based on the poverty line of \$1.25 per capita, the incidence of poverty in Nepal has fallen gradually from 68.0% in 1996 to 53.1% in 2004 and 24.8% in 2011 . Despite the remarkable decline in overall monetary poverty level, the incidence of poverty in rural Nepal is still higher than urban Nepal, even though rural poverty is declining at a faster pace than urban poverty. For example, the urban poverty rate fell from 21.6% in 1996 to 10.0% in 2004, but it again rose to 15.5% in 2011. On the other hand, rural poverty has declined continuously from 43.3% to 35.0% and to 27.4% between 1996, 2004 and 2011 (ibid).

Furthermore, Nepal has made substantial progress in reducing poverty in the recent years; the national monetary poverty line has stood at 18.7 percent in 2019 compared to 23.7 percent in 2015 . And the per capita income has risen from US\$ 766 in 2015 to 1,034 in 2018 . Having said this, still above 5.2 million people are living under extreme poverty. Also, at US\$ 1.9 per day (PPP) benchmark for extreme poverty which was 36 percent in 2015, estimated to be at 28.5 percent in 2019 (ibid). According to the US\$ 1.9 per day per capita benchmark, nearly eight million Nepali citizens are at extreme poverty or below the line of poverty. The multidimensional poverty that stood at 28.6 percent in 2015, was estimated to be reduced to 22.73 percent in 2019 .

The incidence of income poverty in children, Dalits, people with disabilities, women, etc. is high and quite varied. There are rampant pockets of poverty and hard to reach people, living mainly in remote rural areas. Similarly, the monetary poverty has been predominantly rural in Nepal. For example, in 2010, the rural monetary poverty rate was 27.4 percent compared to the urban poverty rate of 15.5 percent .

Figure 1: Distribution of poverty in rural and urban areas



Source: Government of Nepal/National Planning Commission, 2018

On MPI, the rural and urban poverty levels are also quite varied. Based on the population headcount, the rural multidimensional poverty rate was 78.5 percent (MPI 0.147) against the urban poverty rate of 21.5 percent (MPI 0.013) in 2014 (MPI, 2014). There is also a wide provincial disparity in poverty incidence, with the Karnali, Sudur Pashchim and Province 2 being poorer compared to rest of the other Provinces. The monetary poverty incidence by province had ranged from 16.7% (lowest) in Province 1 to 45.6% (highest) in Sudur Pashchim Province in 2018 (GoN/NPC, 2018).

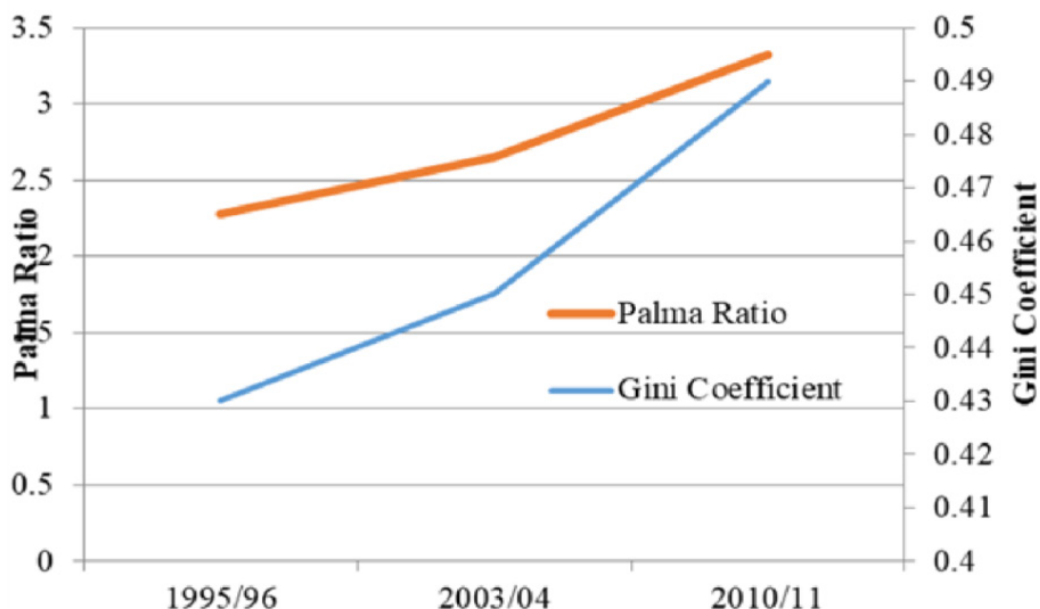
Table 1: Monetary poverty by Province

Provinces	Poverty headcount rate (%)
Province 1	16.7
Province 2	26.7
Bagmati Province	20.6
Gandaki Province	21.0
Province 5	25.3
Karnali Province	38.6
Sudur Pashchim Province	45.6

Source: Government of Nepal/National Planning Commission, 2018

According to a report by Oxfam International and HAMI⁴³ the economic inequality is extreme and growing in Nepal. Nepal had 0.49 income Gini coefficient in 2010/11, which was one of the highest in the world. The Gini coefficient improved further in 2019 and it came at 0.31. The findings in the same report suggested that the level of income disparity had increased considerably from 1995/96 to 2010/11. The Palma ratio also revealed the similar trend. According to this comparison, the income of the richest 10% of Nepalese was more than three times that of the poorest 40% (ibid).

Figure 2: Nepal's Gini coefficient and Palma ratio, 1995/96 to 2010/11



Source: Cited in Fighting Inequality in Nepal: the road to prosperity, 2019.

The report argues that, in 2015/16, after five years of 2010/11, only the richest fifth of Nepal's population saw their income share increased, and the income share of others decreased.

There are also significant geographical deviations in income. As per the comparison made between 1995/96 and 2010/11, the average income of people in urban areas was found to be consistently more than double that of rural people. Similarly, people living in the Mountain and Tarai regions had lower average per capita incomes than the people living in the hilly region. Obviously, these low-income areas have higher poverty levels, poor infrastructures and services.

While assessing the SDG 1's target-wise achievements, the target of eradicating extreme monetary poverty for all people by 2030 measured on US\$ 1.25 per capita per day seems in track, in general, but on the scale of US\$ 1.90 per capita per day, there are chances of it not being materialized. Similarly, even though the reported current per capita income is US\$ 1,034, the target of US\$ 2,500 by 2030 seems difficult to be met because of the current COVID-19 crisis and its uncertain future scenario that may have in the overall economic sector of the country. Distribution of wealth is also quite disproportionate in Nepal. It reveals that the richest 10% of Nepal's population own more than 26 times the wealth of the poorest 40% people (ibid).

Nearly two-third of the population derives the basic livelihoods from land based agriculture and interrelated occupations. Distribution of land resources among the population is also skewed. The rich seven percent households own around 31% of the agricultural land, while the bottom 20 percent occupy about 3 percent. About five percent of households do not possess any land but they work in other people's land on a contractual basis . Only about 19.7 percent women in Nepal possessed land ownership certificates as of 2017, while about 41.4 percent of Tarai Dalit and 36.7 percent of Hill Dalit were reported landless . According to the SDG targets of the government of Nepal, households having property/tangible assets in women's names is expected to reach 40% of the total by 2030 (as of 2015 report, only 19.7% women have land in their names). Also it is stated in the plan document that the share of bottom quintile in national consumption is expected to reach 12 percent by 2030 from that of 7.6 percent in 2015. To achieve the said targets, the government must act in the direction of creating an enabling policy environment as well as facilitating the same in implementation. Specifically targeted policies and programmes to ensure equal rights of poor and vulnerable groups of people to economic resources including land resources is of utmost importance in order to achieve the envisaged targets.

The target of reducing, at least by half, the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions as nationally defined is estimated to have a mixed result. The MPI based on headcount ratio is unlikely to be achieved. Furthermore, it may pass through difficult times while making an assessment due to lack of disaggregated quality data. The structural causes of poverty including systemic inequality, deep rooted discrimination and marginalization, there are slim chances that women and children of the Dalit and other less privileged communities will have equal share to the opulence enjoyed by men from so called 'higher caste' communities. So, even if other people may get lifted above the nationally defined poverty line, the children and women may not get equal opportunity unless targeted policies and programmes are implemented in this regard.

The target of implementing appropriate protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable people is also unlikely to be achieved as planned unless additional effective measures are implemented. For example, the current budgetary allocation of about 4.8 percent of the total budget for social security allowance needs to be increased significantly to achieve the target of 15 percent budgetary allocation and achieve the targeted population coverage of 80 percent by 2030.

Recommendations

- i. Undertake COVID-19 impact and needs assessment in the livelihoods and the state of poverty in different ecological regions of the country and prepare livelihoods and poverty response plans under COVID-19 crisis. While developing such interventions, special attention should be given to those who are going to be disproportionately impacted by the crisis, mainly the poor, job and income losers (e.g., workers), and those subjected to rising prices of basic livelihood commodities.
- ii. Under the SDGs roadmap, the government of Nepal seems committed to end poverty in all its forms and dimensions. Thus, a multidimensional concept of poverty reduction is embedded in the SDGs plans. The MPI is considered a better measure compared to the GDP measurement. Because MPI takes into account the dimensions of education, health and livelihoods, we urge the state to continue using the MPI while formulating plans and measuring the achievements. We believe that poverty is more than the lack of income or resources. People also experience poverty if they are deprived of basic services such as education, healthcare, security, and are socially discriminated against and excluded from the decision making process, among others.
- iii. Address all forms of discriminations and deprivations and create just societies. Unless the underlying causes of poverty are eliminated, the recreation and perpetuation of poverty will continue irrespective of any other efforts.
- iv. The recent data shows that more than 8.1 million Nepalese are living in poverty. Due to the fabric of socio-politico-economic construct of Nepalese society, women and girls are more vulnerable to poverty. Likewise, more than 35 percent of Nepal's children under five years are stunted, and 10 percent suffer wasting due to acute malnutrition. Therefore, concerted efforts to tackle inequality and pursue policies that benefit the poorest and most marginalized Nepalese must be in place. Otherwise, we may be quite good portraying average progress on the data but will continue to exclude the excluded even further.

- v. Advocate and lobby the UN and other development partners for meaningful partnership to address the additional problems of poverty due to COVID-19, and meeting the 0.7% of GNI (for LDCs it is 0.15-0.20%) amount committed by the developed and rich countries to the developing countries. Substantial amount of thus acquired aid must be used to address poverty and hunger.
- vi. Nepal needs to strongly negotiate with the international community for privileges and preferential treatments in trade, technology transfer, foreign direct investment, debt cancellation and development cooperation in accordance with the various international agreements and declarations including the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) in this regard.
- vii. Focus formulating and implementing policies, programmes and projects that are most needed to reduce inequality in our societies and communities, and combat the COVID-19 crisis. According to empirical studies, unequal societies are more prone to the negative impacts of COVID-19 pandemic. Abject poverty and hunger are the creation of worst forms of inequalities that need to be eradicated and levelled off.
- viii. Nepal needs to adhere to the international commitments and work hard to strengthen global partnership for effective implementation of democracy, good governance and the rule of law towards creating an enabling environment at the national level for inclusive economic growth ensuring socio-economic prosperity, environmental protection, climate justice and the eradication of poverty and hunger, and achieving overall sustainable development.
- ix. In the context of Nepal, the conditions of poverty and hunger are more and more experienced by poor, women/girls, Dalit, people with disability, sexual minorities, older people, children, jobless people, small and medium size farmers, landless agricultural workers, seasonal/daily wage workers and other minority indigenous groups of people (e.g., Raute, Kusbadiya, Chidimar, Sonaha, etc.). The situation gets worse in remote rural areas that are deprived of basic livelihoods related infrastructures. Therefore, always use human rights based approach (HRBA) for addressing the underlying causes of poverty and hunger. The HRBA is of utmost importance to address inequality and other forms of social injustices.
- x. Pro-poor and inclusive macro-economic policies need to be adopted to ensure that no one is left behind. Macroeconomic policies need to be revisited in order to make them coherent with the financing needs of the country to implement SDGs.
- xi. Introduce concrete programmes in order to create an inclusive space where everyone can participate in economic activities and get self/employed thereby helping themselves to reduce poverty and hunger.

SDG 2: Zero Hunger

According to FAO et al. (2019), more than 821 million people in the world were chronically food insecure and hence facing hunger, underscoring the huge challenge for achieving the Zero Hunger target by 2030. Hunger is rising in almost all sub-regions of Africa, Asia and, to a lesser extent, in Latin America. Having said this, the South Asia region has made remarkable progress in the last decade in terms of reducing hunger, but the prevalence of undernourishment in this sub-region is still the highest in Asia. The undernourishment rate in the South Asia region was 21.5% in 2005 that came down to 14.7% in 2018, which is, though, not satisfactory. As stated by FAO et al. (2019) about two billion people in the world experience moderate to severe food insecurity. This situation of lack of regular access to nutritious and sufficient food puts the people at greater risk of malnutrition and results in poor health. In general, the prevalence of undernourishment rate is slightly higher among women than men (FAO et al., 2019). Of the 821 million people that are chronically food insecure, 135 million are suffering from acute hunger as a result of human-instigated conflicts, climate change and the economic downturns (ibid). The COVID-19 pandemic is feared to double this number, putting an additional 130 million people at risk of suffering acute hunger by the end of 2020, according to the World Food Programme. The 2030 agenda for sustainable development, and specifically the SDG2 is supposed to fight against hunger and end it by 2030.

The government of Nepal has been implementing the 20 year long agricultural development strategy (ADS, 2015 to 2035), 10 year long zero hunger challenge national action plan (2016-2025), national health sector strategy implementation plan (2016-2021), and several policies, laws, plans and programmes towards achieving the SDG2. One of the recent developments in this direction is the enactment of right to food and food sovereignty act in 2018. Right to food and food sovereignty is constitutionally guaranteed as the fundamental right.

After nearly four and half years of implementation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development in Nepal, the progress towards achieving the set targets is mixed, particularly under SDG2, and given the recent pandemic of coronavirus. Prolonged lockdown and strict restrictions on mobility and transport to mitigate spreading of COVID-19 pandemic, food crisis seems looming followed by the health crisis. Even though Nepal has made encouraging progress in reducing the incidence of poverty to 18.7 percent and significant decrease in prevalence of underweight, stunting and wasting among children under five years of age (NPC, 2020, short communication by GoN to HLPF), the future scenario looks more challenging.

Assessment of Progress and Challenges

As per the 2019 Global Hunger Index (GHI), 9.5 percent of Nepal's population was undernourished. Nepal stood at a rank of 73 out of 117 qualifying countries in the GHI scale by scoring 20.8 points. This indicates that Nepal falls into the category of serious hunger status on GHI severity scale. However, this score is lower than it has been in 2000, when the GHI score of Nepal on hunger was 36.8 (alarming status), 31.3 (serious) in 2005 and 24.5 (serious) in 2010. Nepal is feared to face a severe problem of hunger as a result of COVID-19 health crisis impacts, hence the GHI may be reversed in 2020 and for a few more years in future.

It is to emphasise that, as per the latest available information, only 48.2 percent of the households are food secure (NPC/GOV, 2020). According to the 2016 Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS, 2016), the food security situation of Nepal has improved, however, still 4.6 million people were found food-insecure, and 10 percent households were severely food-insecure, 20 percent were mildly food-insecure and 22 percent were food-insecure.

Among all the seven provinces of the country, the prevalence of food insecurity was found to be 28 percent, the highest, in Karnali Province. This combined moderate and severe levels as defined and measured with the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES). However, existing disparities across different ecological zones were found quite large. For example, about 60% of the households in the mountainous districts were food insecure compared to 16 percent households in the hill districts of Karnali Pradesh (ibid). Similarly, compared to other social groups, nearly 56% of all women and 76% of Dalit women were found experiencing food insecurity. So, in Nepal, women in general, and Dalit women, in particular are very much vulnerable to food insecurity.

There has been good progress in reducing child undernourishment rates, but still the prevalence of stunting among children under five years of age has remained at 36 percent, 27 percent had suffered under weight and 10 percent had suffered from wasting as a result of acute malnutrition in 2016, which is a worrisome situation. Moreover, about 53 percent of children under five and 69 percent of children aged 6-23 months are suffering from anaemia. Likewise, 44 percent of adolescent girls, 46 percent of pregnant women and 41 percent of women of reproductive age are suffering from anaemia. Similarly, pregnant and lactating women (PLW) also suffered from malnutrition, as well as micronutrient deficiencies. Approximately 1.4 million PLW were found malnourished according to the WFP report in 2016.

Under the above scenario, which is likely to be aggravated further by disasters such as COVID-19 pandemic, achieving the SDG2 looks like a difficult task if suitable measures (policy, plan, programmes and mechanisms) are not effectively activated and followed in a timely manner by all the stakeholders, in general, and by the state, in particular. So, the targets of reducing stunting to 15%, malnutrition to 4% and underweight to 9% by 2030 may not be achieved if concerted efforts are not put in place as soon as possible.

Recommendations

- Implement suitable food and nutrition security policies, plans and programmes based on the findings of impact assessment of COVID-19 crisis to resume local food supply chains (production, processing, marketing, consumption, etc.), at least in the short run.
- Implement specific targeted plans and programmes for the vulnerable people, e.g., feeding the most affected people including children who are deprived of supplemented nutritious school meals and vitamin supplements during coronavirus lockdown, people with disability, daily wage earners, returnee migrant workers, lactating and pregnant mothers, chronically sick and old age people. Similarly, the poverty and hunger related policies, plans and programmes must focus both the geographical as well as social pockets that mainly lie in mountains and hills of Karnali and Sudur Pashchim Pradesh and rural areas of Pradesh 2, and among Dalit communities.
- Develop and implement an effective and sustainable agricultural development plan, including revising the ADS Vis a Vis COVID-19 crisis as appropriate, to attain self-sufficiency in basic food items within five years' time. Agriculture is still one of the major contributors of the national economy, contributing 27.6% of the GDP by engaging 60.4% people, so it needs to be fully developed and made sustainable in the long run. Nepal's agriculture should be able to produce adequate food for its inhabitants, supplying along with required nutrients.
- Encourage small and medium-enterprises and generate more employment opportunities. Introduce programmes to protect the livelihood of small landholder farmers, landless agricultural workers, slum dwellers, daily wage labourers, and other poor and vulnerable groups, including returnee migrant workers.
- Increase budgetary allocation for agriculture. The current level of budgetary allocation (i.e., 4.7% of 2020/021 FY total budget, both agriculture and irrigation

combined¹⁾ for agricultural development is argued to be quite inadequate to respond to the urgent agricultural development needs of the country and achieving national food security even during normal periods. In 2015, round the year irrigated land in total arable land was just 25.2%² and the SDG plan is to increase it to 80% by 2030. The current trend of budgetary allocation for irrigation, which is NRs. 27.97 billion (1.9% of the total budget) in 2020/21 FY will not be enough to meet the target. So, the total budget for agriculture and irrigation needs to be increased to the level of about 10%, with concrete result oriented allocation plans; also taking into consideration the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic and the need to focus on food security and nutrition.

- Establish functional coordination and monitoring mechanisms with different levels of governments and other stakeholders (both vertical and horizontal), supporting to align the SDGs plans at sub-national development plans, and providing adequate awareness and capacity enhancement activities (planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting, etc.) for sub-national level actors in order to effective localization of SDGs, in general, and SDG2, in particular.
- Ensure implementation of right to food and food sovereignty act, to promote availability, accessibility, quality and sustainability of food materials, by formulating regulations and guidelines, and establishing the implementation mechanisms at all levels of governance.
- Complete the targets and indicators framework matrix prepared by the government of Nepal, of the SDGs and ensure securing required disaggregated quality data and information for effective planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs.
- Regulate and manage both domestic as well as cross-border markets for quality food products, inputs and affordable/reasonable prices of food items.
- Generate employment opportunities in agriculture as well as other sectors of economy to engage the youth returnee migrant workers and other youths for them to have gainful employment and thus guaranteeing economic access to food.

1 Kantipur, *Nepali National Daily*, 29 May 2020 and https://mof.gov.np/uploads/document/file/%E0%A4%AC%E0%A4%9C%E0%A5%87%E0%A4%9F_%E0%A4%B5%E0%A4%95%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%A4%E0%A4%B5%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%AF_%E0%A5%A8%E0%A5%A6%E0%A5%AD%E0%A5%AD_website.pdf

2 Government of Nepal, *Ministry of Agricultural Development, 2017. Agricultural Development Strategy, 2015-2035.*

- Ensure means of implementation for the implementation of SDG2. For full and timely achieving SDG2 targets, we need adequate financial resources (both domestic and international), technology development and transfer, capacity building, inclusive and equitable globalization and trade, regional integration, as well as the creation of a national enabling environment.
- Formulate and implement a comprehensive Agriculture Development Act aligning with the constitution of Nepal and the right to food and food sovereignty act. Revise and upgrade existing laws that are not confirming with the current socio-political and development context.
- A strong accountability framework must be established at local, national, regional and global levels, including accountability for non-state actors. The 2030 Agenda commits governments to establishing a “robust, voluntary, effective, participatory, transparent and integrated follow-up and review frame-work” and sets out important principles to guide the review process at all levels, including gender sensitivity and respect for human rights.
- The SDGs are universal and indivisible and all goals must be implemented for all people in all communities and countries.
- Advocate and lobby for a profound change of the global food and agriculture system which is needed if we are to nourish the more than 820 million people who are hungry and the additional two billion people the world will have by 2050. It is quite imperative to increase agricultural productivity and establish sustainable food production systems (both global and local levels) to help alleviate the dangers of hunger from the world.
- Arrange to provide pension or livelihood support package for the farmers, insurance for covering disaster damage of crops and livestock produce, minimum support price and buy back guarantee of the agricultural products in excess of the family consumption.
- Preserve and promote useful indigenous knowledge and skills of farmers, and plant seeds and animal breeds. Increase access of farmers to these resources including promoting agriculture technology, inputs and irrigation facilities.
- In order to reduce food insecurity situation in Nepal, plan interventions focusing on improving women’s education and wealth, especially among Dalit and those residing in the provinces of Karnali and Sudur Pashchim.

- Impacts of climate change in agriculture must not be underestimated, so mitigation and adaptation measures including conserving agricultural biodiversity must be considered timely and acted accordingly. Climate change as well as disaster risk management should be integrated at all levels by strengthening capacity of the sub-national level stakeholders.

SDG3: Good Health and Well-being

Nepal has made mixed progress in developing the health sector despite several constraints. Nepal's life expectancy at birth was 61.85 years in 2000 (beginning year of MDGs) which improved to 70.17 years in 2020³, and it seems to be improving year after year. Even though there are several private health service providers mainly concentrated in urban centres, the poor people have limited access to such facilities as they charge exorbitant fees. Therefore, the government health facilities are the only option to cater health services in most parts of the country. Most of these health facilities are poorly staffed and have poor infrastructure and medical amenities including laboratories. People's health has been of major concern during COVID-19 pandemic, and the same health facilities that were under served have also to shoulder the burden of COVID-19 induced health crisis.

Under SDG3, there are 13 targets and 53 indicators that Nepal has identified. The main targets include, by 2030, reducing the maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births; ending preventable deaths of new-borns and children under 5 years of age, aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births; ending the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combating hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases; reducing by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promoting mental health and well-being; ensuring 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 and achieving universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.

3 <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/NPL/nepal/life-expectancy>, accessed on 21 Jun 2020

Assessment of progress and challenges

Some major progress Nepal has made in improving the health of the people are mentioned in this section. The life expectancy has improved to above 70 years, maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births has come down to 239, and child mortality rate under five years per 1,000 live births has reduced to 39⁴.

The following are some of the major challenges and gaps in translating the constitutional provisions of fundamental health rights:

Financial resources gap: The health sector has received a maximum of 4.5% of the total national budget this fiscal year (2019/2020) but for the coming fiscal year the government has increased the health budget by 31.86% (from NRs. 68.78 billion in 2019/20 to NRs. 90.69 billion in 2020/21), including to address the Corona Pandemic. It forms only 6.15% of the total national budget which is still far below the country's requirement.

Human resources gap: Although Nepal has increased its capacity to produce necessary human resources on health, the present capacity just meets less than 40% of the WHO recommended requirements. It reveals that there is acute shortage of health related human power (doctors, nurses, paramedic, ANMs, specialists), in general and, in remote rural areas, in particular.

Infrastructure gap: As per the government policy Rural Municipalities have Health Post, Urban Municipalities have been equipped with Health Centre and Hospital, Districts have District Hospitals followed by Regional and Central for secondary and tertiary care. But these are all poorly managed with lack of necessary human resources, hospital beds, equipment and medicine.

Coordination/governance gap: Nepal has three tiers of government- Rural/Urban Municipality, Provincial Government and Federal Government. The lack of coordination, human and financial resources within these Local, Provincial and Central Governments could not exercise their role and responsibilities to meet the national target.

Gap in rural vs urban areas: Most of the health institutions are located in urban areas depriving of basic health services to the people in remote rural areas. This has further increased the gap between rural and urban areas.

4 Government of Nepal, National Planning Commission, 2076. 15th Plan, https://npc.gov.np/images/category/15th_Plan_Final1.pdf

Gap in regulating private health institutions: The Private Health Institutions are governed by their own guidelines. This has created disparity in quality of services and accompanying costs. The irrational practice has further increased the medical cost. There is no effective regulatory mechanism of the government to regulate the operations of the private health institutions in favour of the poor and vulnerable people. The major gaps indicated above are also a major challenge in meeting the SDG targets. Besides, the pandemic of Corona has given an added burden to health services of the country. These kinds of emerging challenges have to be met at any cost. Change of lifestyle has resulted in the higher rate of non-communicable diseases including mental diseases and deaths caused by road accidents. The breakdown of basic health services because of the Corona pandemic is instigating new health threats in Nepal. The available statistic shows that more than 600 people killed themselves by committing suicide and more than 300 women died of pregnancy related complications as they failed to obtain medical facilities due to lockdown in the months of April and May 2020. In addition, thousands of children were deprived of immunization and vitamin supplements as well as supplemental school meals.

To quote some of the opportunities to overcome these challenges, Nepal has so far developed necessary Policies and Indicators in the health sector. The Fifteenth Five Year Plan clearly demonstrates the road map for the next five years. The Corona pandemic has been successful in bringing the attention of the State and Non-state sector including bilateral and multilateral agencies towards the need of robust health services everywhere. Each country is obliged to submit a VNR (Voluntary National Review) Report to the UN. This has exerted indirect pressure to the government for timely action. Civil societies have taken responsibility to partner with the government and also to pressurize the state. Nepal is the country of medicinal herbs. It has to be properly managed for preventive and curative measures.

Recommendations

We believe that “Health” is not only a medical issue but also a socio-political issue. The root causes of ill health are very much interconnected with the system of patriarchy, religious fundamentalism, poverty, exploitation and gender and caste/ ethnicity based discrimination. Hence, in order to promote “Universal Health Coverage” a reality addressing Sustainable Development Goal, it is recommended that:

- i. Eliminate patriarchy, eradicate poverty, religious fundamentalism, discrimination, exploitation and marginalization.
- ii. Allocate adequate financial resources (at least 10% of the total national budget) for the development of the health sector in the country.

- iii. Create an enabling environment for developing and employing trained quality human resources at all levels of health operations.
- iv. All bi-lateral and multilateral agencies including WHO be accountable to Sustainable Development Goals.
- v. The global trend of promoting privatization of health care which is supplemented by Insurance Scheme has to be seriously reviewed and regulated in favour of the poor and vulnerable people. Otherwise, this will only help in commercialization of health services and further exploitation of already discriminated poor and marginalized people.
- vi. The irrational use of Digital Technology by the private sector to generate unethical income needs to be controlled with strong regulation and monitoring.
- vii. The political commitment from national and international agencies and governments to prioritize universal health in their national plan and policies.
- viii. Governments to ensure that every individual has access to quality health services.
- ix. The governments prioritize policies to increase the affordability and accessibility of medicines at reasonable cost.
- x. International donor communities must meet their ODA commitment to provide financial resources to the LDCs which is 0.15-0.20% of the GNI, and a reasonable portion of thus received resources to be used in strengthening the health sector of the recipient countries.
- xi. The government addresses every individual's right to access clean drinking water and proper sanitation.
- xii. Unless we address the issue of mental health, disability, the health of Senior Citizen, Universal Health Coverage will be far from reality. Hence, we urge the State to address these issues in equal footing.
- xiii. All civil society should collectively work in strengthening State Health Services.
- xiv. Ensure the health related fundamental right of the as guaranteed by article 35 of the constitution and implement the right related to health act by formulating necessary regulations and guidelines.
- xv. Develop capacity of sub-national governments in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public health related programmes and projects.
- xvi. Expanding quality health coverage and services for health across all groups including poor, marginalized and deprived people, address the growing threat of non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer and diabetics including mental health, tackle antimicrobial resistance and determinants of health such as income, education, drinking water, sanitation, access to energy, employment, gender and air pollution, sustain the achievement so far made and accelerate the progress in slow-progressing areas, integrate

the SDG 3 into other goals and follow transdisciplinary approach to overcome the interconnected challenges. The current COVID 19 pandemic indicates that communicable diseases in future will put the health systems in further stress and that must be considered to address the issues in priority basis.

SDG4: Quality Education

Introduction

The Constitution of Nepal has identified education as a fundamental right to every citizen. It has provisioned the right of access to free and compulsory education up to basic level and free education up to secondary level. In line with the spirit of the Constitution, recently, Free and Compulsory Education Act 2018 has been formulated. However, the federal education act which was supposed to be prepared to implement the educational provision is in the process of preparation at the federal level. Nepal has a commitment to fulfil SDG4 and to deliver those commitments, the government has prepared a School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) as a sector plan. In addition, the government this year has formulated National Education Policy to guide the education sector in the federal Nepal. As per the Constitution, education related rights and responsibilities are given to the local governments and they are also in the process of formulating local education laws and policies.

Assessment of Progresses and Challenges

Nepal has achieved remarkable progress on promoting equitable access to education. Net Enrolment Rate (NER) at primary level education is closer to the target (98.5) but it is still far (92.7%⁵) to reach the target at basic level in 2019. However, the gender parity in school is to be achieved (0.9999 or 1). There is growing concern of retention of students in schools; about one million children are enrolled in grade one but only one-third of them reach grade ten⁶. Further, the primary education completion rate is 90.7%⁷ and the proportion of children enrolled in grade one who reach grade eight is 81.5% in 2019⁸. Similarly, the literacy rate for above six years of age is 87%, for age 15-24 years it is 92%, and that for above fifteen years of age is 75%. This shows that although the campaign to wipe out adult illiteracy from the country is decades-long, it has not been succeeded yet.^[9]

5 Center For Education and Human Resource Development (2019)

6 Draft report of High Level Commission on Education, Nepal, 2019

7 <http://sdg.npc.gov.np/data/?request&secid=19,subsecid=72,indid=263,subindid=1599>

8 <http://sdg.npc.gov.np/data/?request&secid=19,subsecid=72,indid=263,subindid=1599>

9 Annual Report of National Planning Commission, Nepal

Quality education as an elusive concept has become another key concern in education. The average learning achievement score for grade V English was 57, Nepali 66, and maths 55 in 2019. However, the Education Review Office (2019) highlights that 32% of primary level children are unable to read and write numbers and cannot do simple operations, 40% of them are unable to calculate maths problems independently, and only 28% of the children have sufficient knowledge and skills in maths. Thus, the overwhelming majority (72%) of primary level children are unable to achieve the mathematical knowledge and skills as aimed by the curriculum. Similarly, 20% of primary level children are unable to understand the language, 35% of them have minimum understanding, and 45% of them can sufficiently understand Nepali language and have sufficient language skills. The facts demonstrate that the quality in terms of children's achievement seems unsatisfactory. Thus, providing quality education to all is a central challenge in Nepal.¹⁰

The data shows that a large number of children do not still have access to formal education or complete the cycle of a particular level of education. Adults who are still illiterate are from the marginalized and deprived communities including Dalits, Janajatis, and religious minorities. Flash report 2018 of MoEST shows that out of 893,138 children that are enrolled in ECED/PPCs, 2,983 (0.34%) of them have been identified as children with disabilities and they are facing different types of discrimination on the basis of disability from their parents, friends and teachers. National Campaign for Education (NCE) Nepal notes that only 12 percent of children of the poorest quintile are developmentally on track in literacy and numeracy compared with 65 percent from the richest quintile¹¹. The gender inequality, socio-cultural stereotypes, language, child labour, poverty, geographical locations, health and nutrition, caste/ethnicity and disability are assumed as the barriers to promoting equity in education¹². Education Review Office (2019) has identified that poverty and multiple forms of violence (social, physical, and emotional) are the key causes of hindering quality education particularly in public schools of Nepal. There are other several associated factors that have been hindering the equitable and inclusive quality education for all such as health and nutrition of mothers¹³. The problems are more severe in marginalized and deprived communities such as Dalits, Janajatis, and others who are under poverty.

The budget allocation for the education sector is not harmonized as per the commitment of the government to allocate 20% of the national budget and 6% of GDP.

10 *National Human Right Commission of Nepal, Annual Report 2018/2019 available at: https://www.nhrcnepal.org/nhrc_new/doc/newsletter/Annual_Report_2076_English_min.pdf*

11 *VNR Report, National Campaign for Education, 2019*

12 *Consolidated Equity Strategies, Department of Education, Nepal*

13 *https://www.researchgate.net/publication/252059240_What_is_the_relationship_between_child_nutrition_and_school_outcomes*

The current fiscal year's (2019/20) budget for education is 10.8% and 11.6% for the coming fiscal year (2020/21). Hence, the budget for the education sector is inadequate to address the gap in access, equity and quality in education. There are also problems of weaker governance, budget leakage, misuse and freezing of the allocated fund. In addition, many challenges persist for young women and adolescent girls in terms of access, participation and completion of quality education. Among the socio-cultural, economic and other factors preventing adolescent girls and young women from accessing education are child marriage and early pregnancy, gender-based violence and lack of knowledge or provision of proper hygiene facilities.

NCE Nepal's research conducted in 2018 found out that public schools lack 76,708 teachers. Also, there is a problem of proportional deployment of teachers in schools. As a result, public schools' quality is deteriorating day by day. On the other hand, private schools are attracting the students from even marginalized communities. There are some policies and guidelines to regulate private actors of education. However, the private actors publicly deny complying with the rules and regulations made by the government, hence privatization is growing and has challenged the constitutional notion of free and compulsory education. After federalization in Nepal, education up to the secondary level is the responsibility of the local governments and it is essential to localize SDG4 and SSDP by the local governments to enhance their ownership and accountability. However, many representatives of the local government as well as the provincial government are not sensitized and aware about these global and national goals, targets and indicators. Looking into the overall indicator of SSDP, some of the targets such as Gross Enrolment Rate, Net Enrolment Rate, Gender Parity Index, Percentage of female teachers etc. seems progressive one but it is not equal in all geographical areas and communities. Research by NCE Nepal (2018) indicates high variance of these targets from one province to another such as, the GER of 2017 in ECED for girls in Gandaki Province is 96.8 % whereas it is only 61.6 % in Province no. 2 and 64.1% in Karnali Province. The case is similar for other indicators too.

Education system has suffered from weak governance (CIAA, 2018). Moreover, the localization of SDG 4 and SSDP is absolutely essential as the constitution has devolved the responsibility of school education to local governments. The provincial and local education actors including the policy makers and implementers have not yet been well-empowered and educated on SDG 4 agendas which might slow down the pace of meaningful localization/harmonization and meaningful implementation.

Recommendations

- i. SDG 4 is to be visualized in a holistic way rather than simply a goal as many targets of other SDGs are linked with this target including the promotion of human capabilities and well-being.
- ii. The National Education Act is yet to be prepared at the federal level. As a result, most of the local governments are waiting for this. So, promulgation of this Act is very urgent to smoothen the education sector from local to federal level.
- iii. Government should increase the investment in education especially in the basic and secondary education as per the commitment at the national and international forums; allocate at least 20% budget to education from national budget and 6% from GDP.
- iv. Attention should be given to provide free and compulsory education to all ensuring quality learning in the initiation of local governments formulating policies for checking the covert collection of fees by the schools.
- v. It needs to promote inter-governmental and inter-ministerial collaboration and collective effort for ensuring equitable and inclusive quality education (SDG4) as there exists interconnectedness of it with other SDGs.
- vi. It is better to intervene for reducing poverty with opportunities of income generating activities at hand particularly targeting marginalized and deprived communities in order to unleash children from domestic work burdens and hence accessing school education with sufficient learning materials.
- vii. It is essential to launch programmes to reduce different forms of violence (social, emotional, physical) against children so as to create conducive learning environments for them in schools, at homes, and in communities.
- viii. The situation of disadvantaged children needs to be identified, with the help of disaggregated data, for effective programmes and plans for addressing their learning needs.
- ix. Special focus should be given to promote mother tongue based education overcoming the challenges of lack of resources and disempowerment of stakeholders.
- x. Post-COVID-19 educational situation seems to be more vulnerable due to economic decline and pervasive unemployment. Considering the situation, financing in the education sector should be significantly increased for meeting the educational needs of the children particularly from underprivileged groups, to address the possible digital divide in the context of virtual and online mode of teaching and learning.
- xi. It is essential to build stronger ties with the CSOs and other education actors in order to generate positive outcomes.

SDG5: Gender Equality

Introduction

Constitution of Nepal has acknowledged role of the state for achieving equality and inclusivity in its preamble “Ending all forms of discrimination and oppression by eliminating discrimination based on class, caste, region, language, religion and gender and all forms of caste-based untouchability”. Over 200 Acts including 6 related to fundamental rights of citizens enshrined in the constitution have been promulgated. Besides, many policies, strategies and plans of actions have been developed. National Planning Commission (NPC) has acknowledged that “Nepal is marred by gender, social and geographical exclusion and inequality.....so needs to better target the delivery of development to the hardest to reach segments of society, those who have been excluded from development and those who have been overlooked”¹⁴. It has developed 151 additional indicators (for 85 gender-specific indicators of SDGs) while finalizing the SDGs implementation status and roadmap (2016-2030) in 2018.¹⁵ But the government missed setting indicators for 5.c1 “system to track and make a public allocation for gender equality” which is one of the indicators of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC), for which government is accountable.

Hitherto the government missed developing an overarching national binding policy document to compel to work towards gender equality mandatory. First, five-years is almost gone, a comprehensive programme to build sufficient awareness and action in developing a gender-responsive SDGs oriented programme is yet to take place. Concrete concerted efforts in transforming traditional patriarchal mind-set and behaviours are yet to take place. Former system of Women Children Office, at the district level as a nodal line agency in mainstreaming gender and mobilizing women inclusively has been abolished and a better system has not been in place yet. There is no formal mechanism to ensure the females as a major group to participate formally in the implementation of SDGs at micro and meso levels as a system.

In the fiscal front, the percentage of directly responsive Gender Responsive Budget (GRB) has now reached 38.17 in FY 2019/2020.¹⁶ The Fifteenth Five Year Plan 2019/20- 2023/24 has envisaged to achieve Gender Development Index (GDI) from

14 NPC, (2015). *Sustainable Development Goals, 2016-2030, National (Preliminary) Report*. Kathmandu: NPC.

15 NPC, (2018). *Sustainable Development Goals Status and Road Maps, 2016-2030*. Kathmandu: National Planning Commission.

16 *Beyond Beijing Committee Nepal, (2019). Beijing +25 National Review National Parallel Report 2019*. Kathmandu: BBCN.

0.897 to 0.963¹⁷ and to implement GRB system in local and provincial level. Because of lack of a tracking system and sufficient knowledge and commitment, the GRB system at all levels is yet to be implemented.

Gender-disaggregated data is one of the prerequisites for gender-responsive SDGs implementation, adhering to the principle of “leaving no woman and girl behind”. The CBS should take Population and Housing Census in 2020-2021¹⁸ as an opportunity to collect gender data required for the SDGs, including data for 5.4.1 (time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location), to track SDG indicator to make every Nepali woman and girl counted (MEWGC-Nepal).¹⁹ The CBS has developed National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) 2018, but gender statistics is not mentioned specifically and also did not include gender statistics in its biennial statistical pocket book for public information and action.²⁰ Moreover, the government has entrusted the task of collecting social group and gender data to the Tribhuvan University’s Central Department of Anthropology under the project SOSIN supported by USAID/Nepal ²¹ instead of shouldering this responsibility by the CBS.

Assessment of Progresses and Challenges

Nepal has data for only 6 out of 14 indicators on SDG 5²². Two of the indicators which have data and have achieved progress is worthy to state here with pride”.²³

17 https://www.npc.gov.np/images/category/15th_Plan_Final1.pdf

18 <https://cbs.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Statistical-Bulletin-Vol.-121-122.pdf>

19 <https://data.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Nepal-brief.pdf>

20 <https://cbs.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Statistical-Pocket-Book-of-Nepal-2018.pdf>

21 *A Study on the State of Social Inclusion in Nepal (SOSIN)*

22 as cited in the <https://data.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Nepal-brief.pdf>

23 *Progress assessment of SDGs implementation and VNR Process. (Power Point presentation by Kartika Yadav, Planning Officer, National Planning Commission.*

Table 2: Progress of SDG5 indicators

	Indicators	2015	2019	
		Baseline	Target	Progress
5.5	Women's participation and decision making			
5.5.1	The proportion of seats held by women			
	National parliament (%)	-	33	33.5
	Provincial parliament/ Assembly (%)		33	34.5
	Local government bodies (%)		40.5	41
5.5.2	The proportion of women in managerial positions			
	Women in decision making in private sector (%)	25.0	30.3	29.6
	Women's participation in Cooperative sector (%)	50.0	50.0	51.0
	Women in public service decision making positions (% of total employees)	11.0	17.0	23.0
	Ratio of women to men in professional and technical workers (%)	24.0	28.0	25.0

Besides these quantitative targets, many strategies and plans of action have been developed to contribute to other indicators of Goal 5. Some disadvantaged group focused socio-economic empowerment programmes have been implemented. Attempts made in these areas have enabled Nepal to increase its Gender Gap rank from 110 with 0.661 score in 2016²⁴ to 101 position with score 0.680 in 2020.²⁵ Similarly, Nepal is successful in getting into rank 103 (of 162 countries) with 63.9 score in SDG index and has acknowledged that Nepal is improving moderately.²⁶

24 *Beyond Beijing Committee Nepal (2017). Country Report Status of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. and Sustainable Development Goals in Nepal: Women CSOs Perspectives. Kathmandu: BBC*

25 http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf

26 https://s3.amazonaws.com/sustainabledevelopment.report/2019/2019_sustainable_development_report.pdf

As Nepal has data for only 37% of all gender-related global SDG indicators²⁷, the Equal Measures 2030 's ²⁸ data is stated here to give a glimpse of the progress made in gender equality across the Goals. Nepal's performance in the SDG gender index score of the EM2030²⁹ has been presented in the table below. Nepal is successful in getting into rank 102 out of 129 countries with score 52.6.

Table 3: SDG gender index score of the EM2030

Goals	Score
1	60.9
2	83.5
3	63.8
4	47.4
5	46.5
6	69.6
7	66.6
8	41.5
9	28.5
10	55.9
11	34.3
13	76.0
16	53.3
17	32.9

Assessment of Gaps and Challenges

Insufficient awareness and action: SDG5 is possible to achieve by mainstreaming it in all other SDGs and by implementing them gender-responsively by all actors. But this awareness leading to action is yet to cultivate sufficiently.

Lack of inclusive formal mechanism: The state, which is responsible for creating an environment for cultivating such awareness has yet to establish a mechanism in all

²⁷ as cited in the <https://data.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Nepal-brief.pdf>

²⁸ <https://www.equalmeasures2030.org/>

²⁹ <https://data.em2030.org/2019-sdg-gender-index/explore-the-2019-index-data/>

spheres of government ensuring the participation of women and girls from marginalized groups and from participating throughout the processes.

Lack of overarching national GESI policy: To achieve gender equality there are over 85 global gender equality related indicators including 14 specific ones of Goal 5. Apart from these, there are 151 national indicators including 22 SDG5-specific indicators of gender equality. No comprehensive policy is in place yet.

Lack of an effective financing system for GESI related SDGs: Adequate and effective financing on GESI is essential to achieve its related targets across the SDG framework. There is no mandatory system to make national resource allocations on GESI and track systematically while providing policy feedback for more effective and efficient public finance management. The government has claimed that SDGs are mainstreamed into periodic plans and an annual programme. But it allocated only 0.34 percent budget for Goal5 in the Annual Plan and Budget of 2016/2017 and allocation of Rs. 1 billion and 14 hundred million rupees for the MOWCSC's activities in the recent budget speech which is a manifestation of inadequate financing.

Other challenges include building awareness on GESI, disaggregated data, absence of public expenditure tracking surveys

Recommendations

- i. Enhance knowledge, attitude and practices sufficiently on the 2030 Agenda's principle of "Leaving no one behind" and reaching the "furthest behind first" along with mainstreaming GESI and GESI responsive SDGs implementation amongst all Major Groups and Stakeholders and actors/ agencies to achieve progress on SDGs effectively, efficiently and equitably.
- ii. Listen to the political slogan of CSOs, "Nothing for us, without us" and create mechanisms/ platforms to ensure inclusive participation.
- iii. Enact Gender Equality Act to create legal compliance to work towards achieving equality and to enable the MoWCSC to function fully and legally as the facilitating ministry for this purpose.
- iv. Set a comprehensive system for Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys to track the proportion of the national budget that is invested in gender equality (Goal 5) and report on goal 5c1 indicator. Make allocation of funds for GESI mandatory at all spheres of government and ensure effective implementation of GRB at all levels.
- v. Ensure proportionate and inclusive participation of women in all machinery and mechanisms including Covid-19 mechanisms to promote gender roles responsively.

SDG6: Clean Water and Sanitation

Introduction

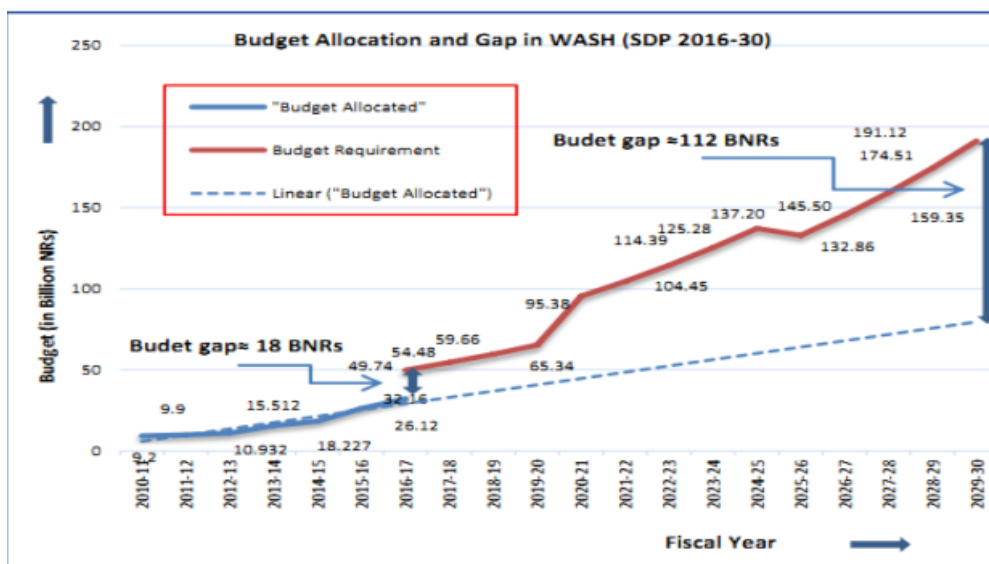
Nepal declared Open Defecation Free (ODF) country in September 2019, making a departure for total sanitation intervention and commitment from all partners and government and moving on to achieve universal target of clean drinking water and sanitation. The overall aim of the SDG6 is to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. Nepal WASH Sector Development Plan (2016-2030) has explicitly categorized WASH service levels that largely align with SDG6 target and indicators. The evolving country scenario thus envisions the responsive WASH sector to ensure adequacy, quality, safety, equity, inclusion, gender sensitivity, accessibility, acceptability and sustainability along with a globally acclaimed notion of 'reaching the unreached' and 'leaving no one behind'. Both the governmental and non-governmental organizations are striving for this cause through proper policy measures, effective advocacy, leverage of cross-sector resources and evidence-based interventions.

The Constitution of Nepal, WASH sector policies, Fifteenth Plan and WASH programmes/projects have provided enabling space to promote WASH sector activities in line with SDG 6.

Nepal WASH Sector Development Plan, Total Sanitation Guidelines 2015 and Institutional and Regulatory Framework for Faecal Sludge Management in Urban Areas of Nepal 2018 are key WASH sector operational and guiding documents for achievements of SDG 6. Against the SDG 6, the Fifteenth Plan has set a target of 100% coverage in basic water supply and sanitation, 40% coverage of medium and higher levels of water supply and 20% coverage of sewerage with treatment facilities. So far, the goal of basic sanitation has been achieved. The coverage of basic water supply and, medium and higher level of water supply remains about 90% and 21%, respectively while coverage of waste water treatment is 1.35% only. The ongoing initiative of the government and stakeholders for the formulation of Palika (Municipality/Rural Municipality) level WASH Plan is an important step for evidence-based WASH intervention that is believed to build local ownership and leadership, identify and reach the unreached, pave a firm path to achieve the SDG6 and ultimately establish constitutionally enshrined provision of drinking water and sanitation as the fundamental right of the citizen of Nepal.

Assessment of gaps and challenges

In spite of the state's firm commitment on SDG 6, the linkage of SDG 6 is weak in the periodic plan, SDG roadmap of NPC, annual development plan of government agencies working for WASH and local level periodic plan and WASH plan in terms of program activities, investment and output. The government's efforts for identifying and reaching the unreached population (around 10%) for water supply is still visibly feeble. The annual development budget allocated for the WASH sector is not sufficient to meet the target and indicators under SDG 6. Importantly, the local governments have not fully internalized and owned the spirit of SDG in WASH, they have given less priority on WASH over other infra-structure projects. It is important to carry-out needs assessment, costing and financing strategy for water and sanitation sectors' intervention for 2016-2030. In the last five years there has been an increase of 1.8-fold budget in WASH. Urban sanitation budget was increased by 84% in 2019 against allocation of 2016. Urban sanitation budget was increased by 33% in 2019 compared to 2018. Despite the priorities, there is a huge financing gap to meet the SDG 6 by 2030. Nepal WASH Sector Development Plan has estimated a gap of 112 billion of Nepalese rupees (Figure 3).



The enabling WASH sector policies, state's concern and growing contribution of development partners including I/NGOs, UN Agencies, ADB, WB, JICA and WSSCC are major opportunities for synergistic efforts. Similarly, engagement of Local and Provincial Governments in matters of SDG 6 will be supportive to scale up nationwide. The cross-sector policies, legislations and programmes (e.g. WASH in School Guidelines, Environment Friendly Local Governance, etc.) are equally supportive to

leverage resources from cross-sector agencies. The NGOs, CSOs and media are also strongly advocating the issues of equity, inclusion, quality and sustainability in WASH that indeed to underpin efforts towards the SDG 6. As the utility operators, the huge institutional strength of some 42,000 Water User and Sanitation Committees (WUSCs) have been effectively facilitated to ensure users' significant contribution in water supply projects. This contribution ranges from 20% to 50% of the total project cost on co-financing with the government. Importantly, growing functional engagement of NARMIN and MUAN will form a robust foundation to unify efforts of Local Government in WASH promotion. The possibilities of new avenues for private sector collaboration and investment especially in urban sanitation (FSM and Solid Waste Management) is likely to contribute to leverage the private sector's resources and promote a self-sustaining mechanism of investment. Similarly, existing linkage and alignment of WASH data and information with national MIS systems/initiatives like NMIP, MICS, NDHS and JSR and global avenues such as GLAAS and JMP will be supportive to monitor sector performance and track the data with SDG 6 and global reporting framework. On top of that, the constitutional recognition of WASH has made state, stakeholders and end users accountable to invest and act for attaining equitable and sustainable WASH--the basis of the SDG 6.

Despite such opportunities, challenges remain in attainment of universal coverage of medium and higher-level safe water supply, in accelerating expansion of safely managed sanitation, poor operation and maintenance and functionality of facilities and sustainability of hygiene behaviours including proper hand washing with soap. These are critical areas that are likely to hinder both total sanitation and SDG 6. Of some 42,000 water supply schemes, around 35% are non-functional while the government claims that basic water supply coverage stands at 90%.

ODF slippage (non-use of toilets) is common even in some of the ODF declared communities. Similarly, the issues of *Escherichia Coli* (E Coli) and Arsenic contamination of water are still glaring. It has thus hampered the journey towards total sanitation and attainment of the SDG 6. The state of faecal sludge management and sewerage with treatment facilities are a matter of critical concern. Also, solid waste management, menstrual hygiene as well as gender friendly and disabled-friendly facilities in households, schools and health facilities, in both rural and urban context, appear to be challenges.

Recommendations

The Governments of Nepal, development Partners (DPs) and INGOs must:

- i. Commit, invest and implement WASH activities and bridge the economic and geographic divides, contributing to ensure human rights to safe water, sanitation and hygiene;
- ii. Improve access to basic water, sanitation and hygiene services, as a key building block for a more sustainable and prosperous future for everyone;
- iii. Strengthen partnerships with the WASH stakeholders towards the collection, analysis and use of disaggregated data and routinely measuring progress towards equitable access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene, in homes, schools and healthcare centres;
- iv. Establish SDG 6 dedicated unit at the operational government entity of the WASH sector (i.e. DWSSM) under facilitation of the WASH sector ministry (i.e. MoWS) for facilitating policy discourse, cross-sector collaboration and database management.
- v. Maximize the cross-sector collaboration and engagement of the private sector for leveraging resources, synergizing the efforts and fulfilling resource gap by strengthening and redefining the functional role of WASH Coordination Committees.
- vi. Ensure allocation of the government's annual WASH sector budget aiming to meet the national target on WASH in line with the indicators of SDG6.
- vii. Capacitate provincial and local government and ensure their institutional capacity and commitments to prioritize SDG6.
- viii. Integrate indicators of the SDG6 in GIS based WASH sector operational plan, promote WASH project banks through WASH planning and establish effective and accountable sector governance mechanism in local level WASH interventions with proper consideration of SMART WASH, reaching the unreached and accountability of all service providers.
- ix. Establish a dedicated fund and mechanism for benchmarking, service level improvement, sustainable infrastructure and rehabilitation of the functionality and sustainability of WASH facilities in water supply schemes, schools and health facilities considering impacts of climate change and disaster as well as quality and safety of WASH services and facilities.
- x. Strengthen sector monitoring mechanism and sector database management considering SDG 6 indicators and engage CSOs and media for independent and quality monitoring and auditing (including public, GESI, LGBTIQ and disability) by ensuring ownership and community participation.

SDG7: Affordable and Clean Energy

Introduction

SDG 7 aims to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. It covers the areas of access to energy, increase the share of renewable energy, increase energy efficiency, expand infrastructure and upgrade technology. Targets include ensuring access to electricity for 99 per cent of households. Reduction to 30 per cent – from nearly 75 per cent now – of households who resort to solid fuel as their primary source for cooking; limiting use of liquid petroleum gas (LPG) to less than 40 per cent of households. Developing installed capacity of 15,000 MW of hydropower, increasing per capita electricity to 1,500 kWh, and decreasing the commercial energy use per unit of GDP from 3.20 tonnes of oil equivalent (ToE) per million Rs in 2015 to 3.14 ToE/million Rs in 2030.

Assessment of Progress and Challenges

One of the targets under this goal aims to increase per capita electricity consumption in Nepal. Progress on Electricity consumption was 245 KWh per capita in 2019 where the target was 230 KWh per capital (NEA, 2019). This shows the target met in this case.

Table 4: Progress on clean energy

Targets and Indicators	2015		2019
	Baseline	Target	Achievement
Proportion of population with access to electricity	74	80.7	88
Per capita energy (final) consumption (in gigajoules)	16	18.1	20
Households using solid fuel as primary source of energy for cooking (per cent)	74.7	65	68.56
People using liquid petroleum gas (LPG) for cooking and heating (per cent)	18	23.6	26.6
Electricity consumption (kWh per capita)	80	230	245
Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption	11.9	22.1	7
Installed capacity of hydropower (MW)	782	2301	1250

Source: NEA, 2019

Table 5: Measuring progress

SN	Activities	Unit	Achievement
1	People use traditional energy for cooking food	per cent	74
2	Electricity Production (Installed capacity)	MW	1,020
3	Access family to electricity	per cent	90.7
4	Per capita electricity use	KW/h	198
5	Population under access to electricity grid	per cent	70
6	Electricity production from Renewable Energy	MW	55
7	Benefitted from RE (household)	No	36,0000
8	Access per cent to Renewable Energy (RE)	per cent	18
9	RE provided employment	no	30,000
10	Of total, per cent of energy supply from RE	per cent	3.2
11	Total share in global warming from Nepal (GHG)	per cent	0.027

Source: NPC, 2019

Recommendations

- i. Implementation of existing master plans and strategies which has already committed to make energy access and efficiency is highly recommended.
- ii. Integration of SDG implementation status in the main reporting system, such as NDAC, MDAC is the major step to see the progress.

SDG8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

Introduction

Inclusive growth indicates both the pace and distribution of economic growth. Goal 8 in this context aims to put forward to ensure the increment in labour productivity mitigation of unemployment. The targets and indicators stress for increasing employment opportunities, particularly for young people, reducing informal employment and the gender pay gap and promoting safe and secure working environments to create decent work for all. The goal further focuses to sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances, achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation.

Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person was 1.6 with the target to reach 3.8 and progressed just to 1.7. Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment was dropped to impressive 36.5 from 70 which was targeted to 54. Youth underemployment rate was 35.8 per cent and the progressed was made till 21.4 per cent while the target was to reach 28.9 per cent. Tourism direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP and in growth rate reached merely 2.7 from 2.6 while the target was 4. Tourist arrival increased from 0.8 million to 1.2 million, something below targeted 1.6 million. Annual number of jobs in tourism industries has dropped from 90 thousand to 45 thousand while target was 332.7 thousand. Life insurance coverage soared from 5 per cent in 2015 to 25 per cent in 2019 surpassing the 2019 target of 10.3 per cent.

Assessment of Progresses and Challenges

In the years after 2016, GDP per capita growth (World Bank) seems in the right track. Developing the importance of saving and saving capability in citizens, converting import-oriented economy into productive economy, ensuring maximum return on savings and investment, keeping inflation within desired limits and adopting the latest tools related to saving operations, attracting and expanding, transmitting income into productive investment and consumption are the major priorities to be undertaken. Issuance of new labour, social security and employment laws, prioritizing technical education and skill training, legal provision of minimum wage, loan facilities for educational and foreign returned unemployed youths, implementing child labour prevention master plan and expanding the employment information centre to local level are to be taken into account.

Annual average economic growth rate of Nepal is 6.8 per cent. Employment participation rate (15 years above) is 38.5 per cent and unemployment rate is 11.4 per cent. Participation of formal sector in employment is 36.5 per cent. For gross domestic product, the contribution of service sector is 57.8 per cent, industry sector contributes 15.2 per cent and agriculture has contribution of 27 per cent. About 0.5 million more human resource enter the labour market every year. Average labour productivity in is NRs. 184,000.³⁰

As the country is moving towards policy stability, most of the national pride projects and largescale programmes and projects under construction are expected to be completed with significant improvement in development and project governance during the planning period. In addition, the transformational programmes / projects identified by the plan are expected to be effectively implemented, with significant increase in energy production and increase in consumption and utilization of electric energy in the overall

30 Approach paper of 15th Plan, 2019

sector of the economy. The aforementioned efforts are expected to accelerate economic growth by increasing productivity and productivity of agriculture, industry and service sectors.

Table 6: Progresses on economic growth

Indicators	Base year 2015	Target 2019	Progress 2019
Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person	1.6	3.8	1.7
Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment	70	54	36.5
Youth underemployment rate (per cent)	35.8	28.9	21.4
Tourism direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP and in growth rate	2.6	4	2.7
Tourist arrival (million)	0.8	1.6	1.2
Annual number of jobs in tourism industries ('000)	90	332.7	45
Life insurance coverage (per cent)	5	10.3	25

Source: NPC, 2019

Recommendations

- i. The government needs to focus on developing the importance of saving and saving capability in citizens, converting import oriented economy into productive economy, ensuring maximum return on savings and investment, keeping inflation within desired limits.
- ii. Issuance of new labour, social security and employment laws, prioritizing technical education and skill training, legal provision of minimum wage, loan facilities for educational and foreign returned unemployed youths, implementing child labour prevention master plan and expanding the employment information centre to local level are major areas of priority seen.
- iii. Productive use of additional labour force in addition to high growth and sustainable natural resources including water resources, land, forest heritage, minerals should be mobilized.
- iv. It is essential to increase the ability to save by increasing employment and income generation opportunities.
- v. Encouragement and attraction to save households, private sector and cooperatives and community organizations is required.

- vi. The saving of personal, institutional and foreign employment should be mobilized through the development of financial system and regulation of the informal sector.
- vii. Intergovernmental coordination in savings promotion and mobilization and cooperation in the private, cooperative and community sectors is another necessary step ahead.

SDG9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

Introduction

SDG 9 aims to increase road density to implement sustainable approach in industrial sectors and address extensive aspects of infrastructure building. This Goal is important for the countries like Nepal that faces severe infrastructure deficit. SDG 9 is consisted of 5 targets with the aims to develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable and enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors.

The available government data shows that the contribution of the industry to the gross domestic product is 15.2 per cent while productive industry to contribution of gross domestic product has increased to 5.4 per cent. The number of industries and industrial investment has increased significantly. In recent years, investment has increased due to increase in power supply and increased investor confidence. 6,979 Km of national and regional highways have been paved till the FY 074/75. There are 46,558 industries till FY 74/75 and average growth rate of industries is 14.6 per cent. Total number of constructions are 27,772 with the growth rate of 11.7 per cent.

By FY 2017/18, the length of the strategic road is 13,448 km of which, 6979 km is black top, 2277 km is gravel and 4192 km is the soil road³¹. The strategic road accounts for about 19 percent of the total road length of the country and the remaining 81 percent is under the local road network. Based on the survey data of 2075, the condition of strategic roads is 43 percent good, 42 percent average and 15 percent bad.

31 *Approach paper of 15th plan, NPC 2019*

Table 7: Progress on industry and infrastructure

Targets and Indicators	2015	Target 2019	Progress 2019
Road density (km/sq. km)	0.55	1.3	0.59
Industry's share in GDP (per cent)	15	17.7	14.6
Manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment	6.6	8.3	15.1
Research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP	0.3	0.62	0.3
Proportion of population covered by a mobile network, by technology	94.5	96	137.17

Source: NPC, 2019

Road density was 0.55km/sq.km in baseline year which was increased to 0.59km/sq.km far below the targeted 1.3 km/sq.km. Unimpressive drop in industry's share in GDP reached 14.6 per cent in 2019 as compared to 15 per cent in baseline year despite the targeted 17.7per cent. Manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment increased from 6.6 to 15.1 surpassing the target of 8.3. R&D expenditure as a proportion of GDP made no change from the baseline value 0.3 though the target was of 0.62. Proportion of population covered by a mobile network, by technology excessively surpassed the target of 96 by reaching 94.6 of year 2015 to 137.17 of 2019.

Assessment of Progress and Challenges

The targets for road density and share of industry in GDP are behind the target. However, Manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment is much ahead of the target--15.1% against the target of 8.3% for 2019 (SDG9).Main challenges are seen in creating an investment friendly environment attracting domestic and foreign investment in the industry of comparative advantage and competitive potential and analysing the challenges and opportunities created by economic liberalization, globalization and multilateral trade agreements and setting priorities and requirements in the areas of trade and investment.

Recommendations

The government must encourage small and medium enterprises and generate more employment opportunities. Introduce programmes to protect the livelihood of small landholder farmers, landless agricultural workers, slum dwellers, daily wage labourers, and other poor and vulnerable groups, including returnee migrant workers. Some more specific recommendations are as follows:

- i. Priority for creating an investment friendly environment attracting domestic and foreign investment in the industry of comparative advantage and competitive potential.
- ii. Analysing the challenges and opportunities created by economic liberalization, globalization and multilateral trade agreements and setting priorities and requirements in the areas of trade and investment.
- iii. Maintaining balance in technology, cost and quality of road infrastructure due to limited investment challenging geo-geographical situation, building road infrastructure that will be complemented by three tier governments, enhancing institutional capacity, build balanced, safe, sustainable, environmentally friendly and quality road infrastructure.
- iv. Ensuring the availability of technical human resource needed for reconstruction, to rehabilitation after reconstruction programme for earthquake victims to improve the livelihoods and local level for disaster management.
- v. Promotional capacity development, financial access and promotional for the development and expansion of the industry (NPC, 2019)
- vi. Development of a road network with modern infrastructure including high-capacity highway, underground route, fare-duct, to maintain regional balance.
- vii. Reduction in potential impact or loss of damage caused by natural disasters and climate adversities.

SDG10: Reduced Inequality

Introduction

Nepal does very poorly in Reducing Inequality Index (CRI) 2018, which ranks countries on their policies to tackle inequality. Nepal ranks 138th out of 157 countries. Income disparities and unequal access to assets are driving greater inequality in Nepal, and gender inequality is compounded by economic inequality.

Reducing inequalities and ensuring no one is left behind are integral to achieving the SDGs. Inequality in Nepali society is a persistent concern. Despite some positive signs towards reducing poverty in some dimensions, such as the percentage of people living in absolute poverty, income inequality is persistently increasing.

Widening gap between rich and poor in Nepal: Economic inequality is extreme and growing in Nepal as the trend in income and wealth shows a clear story about the gap between the rich and the poor in Nepal. In 2010/11, Nepal had 49.42 Gini coefficient, and the level of income disparity had increased considerably in the preceding fifteen years. The Palma ratio, which compares the income share of the top 10% and the

bottom 40%, shows a similar trend. Today, the income of the richest 10% of Nepalis is more than three times that of the poorest 40% (NLSS, 1995, 2010).

Between 2005/2006 and 2010/11, the income share of only the richest fifth of Nepal's population increased. *The income share decreased for everyone else.* This is hardly surprising when we consider the scale of the wage divide between top earners and the rest. In Nepal, top bank executives earn more than 100 times the salary of an average worker³².

There are also significant geographical divides in income. Between 1995/96 and 2010/11 the average income in urban areas was consistently more than double of rural areas, and the Mountain and Tarai regions have lower average per capita incomes than Hills region. These low-income areas have higher poverty levels, less infrastructure and services, and are home to more ethnic minorities. They are places where economic and horizontal inequalities combine to hold poor and marginalized groups further back³³. Inequality of wealth is also substantial in Nepal as a handful of people capture the majority of the wealth of the country. The richest 10% of Nepal's population have more than 26 times the wealth of the poorest 40%. The scale of wealth inequality becomes even more extreme when we look at the very richest individuals. Land is considered to be an important wealth of Nepali people. However, land inequality is the oldest and most fundamental type of wealth inequality; mostly Dalit and indigenous people historically were not entitled to land and they are poor for generations. More than 66% of the population depends on land for their livelihood in Nepal, yet land is concentrated in the hands of a rich minority³⁴. The wealthiest 7% of households own around 31% of agricultural land. More than half of Nepali farmers own less than 0.5 hectares of land, and 29% of the population do not own any land at all (CBS, 2019).

In Nepal, 81% women are landless, but still they work long hours on agricultural land. While 44% Dalits in the Tarai are landless, minority groups are also less likely to own land. Nepal's attempts at land reform are not adequate while distributive justice of the country's most significant asset is extremely important to reduce inequality. Economic inequality in turn affects life chances. A poor child in Nepal is nearly three times more likely to die before they are five years old than a rich child. Half of the poorest women in Nepal have no education at all, compared with one in a hundred of the richest men³⁵.

32 HAMI and Oxfam. (2019). *Fighting Inequality in Nepal: The Road to Prosperity*. Kathmandu, Nepal.

33 HAMI and Oxfam. (2019). *Fighting Inequality in Nepal: The Road to Prosperity*. Kathmandu, Nepal.

34 NPC. (2015). *Post Disaster Need Assessment*, Government of Nepal.

35 HAMI and Oxfam. (2019). *Fighting Inequality in Nepal: The Road to Prosperity*. Kathmandu, Nepal.

Gender inequality: The briefing note for countries in Human Development Report 2019 maintains that ‘policies matter for inequalities. And inequalities matter for policies.’ This is as true as it can get. The Human Development Report 2019 has yet again revealed that the country has a deep chasm to fill when it comes to levelling the playing field for females. With a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.476, Nepal ranks 115th out of 162 countries. Although Nepal has made progress in other areas such as life expectancy, literacy rate and so on, there is still a long way to go before it attains gender equality.

Gender inequality compounds the impact of representation of women in decision making positions. Number of women holding decision making positions/institutions is very small, affecting women’s access to justice. Progressive laws that are favourable to women are also often poorly implemented or ignored in practice. For example, there are indications that tax exemptions to incentivize land ownership among women are being abused by male relatives buying land in their name. Illegal and harmful practices are also still common in some areas of Nepal, and put the lives of women and girls at risk. Chhaupadi, for example, sees girls confined to cow sheds or separate thatched houses during menstruation. Despite a ban by the Supreme Court, this practice continues in several parts of the country and dozens of women and girls die every year.

Economic inequality matters a lot. A rich woman is four times more likely to have gone to school than a poor woman, while a rich man is fifty times more likely to have gone to school. In Nepal, patriarchal norms are deep-rooted and reinforced by laws and institutions that are skewed against women and girls. Early marriage still exists despite strong evidence that it damages life chances. There is also evidence of caste-based discrimination that has doubled the impact to women. A fundamental shift is needed to improve the economic, political and social status of women, or another generation of women and girls are destined to remain poor³⁶.

This is not to say that no action has been taken as yet. On the legislative front, the constitution guarantees 33 percent seats to women to enhance their participation in political life and policymaking. This applies to the government at the federal, provincial and local levels. These are affirmative changes bound to have solid effects in the long run. But much more change is desired to happen sooner. Patronising women and their success is still as common as it was a few decades ago. What’s more, policymakers often turn a deaf ear to women’s plight.

36 HAMI and Oxfam. (2019). *Fighting Inequality in Nepal: The Road to Prosperity*. Kathmandu, Nepal.

Driving factors of inequality: There are two fundamental driving factors of inequality that must be taken into account. First, Nepal's economic system is based on neo-liberal policies. The structural adjustment programmes of the IMF and World Bank in the 1980s had replaced state investment in public sectors by a market-oriented economic policy regime. Such market centered reform fuelled inequality by concentrating wealth and power in the hands of the few. Neoliberal policies have also driven cuts to public spending and increased privatization in Nepal. Thirty state-owned enterprises have been privatized since 1992, and despite many of them being profitable when sold, today only 11 are still in operation, and just five of those are in profit³⁷. Privatization has also aggravated unemployment in Nepal, due to the haphazard way in which thousands of people instantly lost their jobs. Public services like health and education have also seen increased privatization and commercialization in Nepal. Such reforms have created a two-tier system, where the rich pay for and support private services, while public sector services are starved of funding and political support. Yet these public services are the only option for those with low incomes. Privatization fuels inequality, and poor women and girls, along with minorities, pay the highest price.

Second, the cycle of elite capture is a significant driver of inequality. When money and power are concentrated into the hands of the few, these elites can exercise excessive influence that undermines institutions and skews policy making in their favour. There is no natural incentive for the richest companies and individuals to support higher taxes and greater transparency, for example. Between 1990 and 2008, Nepal was the sixth top exporter of illicit financial flows among least developed countries. This resulted in losses of \$9.1bn, which is nearly eight times the amount Nepal received in official development assistance (ODA) in that period³⁸.

There has been a significant accumulation of trade-based wealth, as cartelling has thrived in the absence of sufficient regulation, and as the nexus between political elites and unethical businesses has been facilitated by a highly corrupt bureaucratic apparatus³⁹. Economic and power inequality is a fertile breeding ground for corruption, which further compounds inequality of power. Corruption is one of the serious issues in Nepal as in 2017 it ranked 122 of 180 countries on the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). Increasingly, trends are being seen that political

37 Khatiwada, P. (2013). *South Asia Poverty Report: Country Report*, South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication, Kathmandu, Nepal.

38 UNDP. (2011). *Illicit Financial Flows from the Least Developed Countries 1990-2008*. New York: UNDP.

39 HAMI and Oxfam. (2019). *Fighting Inequality in Nepal: The Road to Prosperity*. Kathmandu, Nepal.

candidates at all levels are selected on the basis of their wealth⁴⁰ and there has been a failure to crack down on illegal wealth. Deliberate and concerted action is needed to counteract political capture in Nepal, so that the needs of the many are prioritized over the interests of a powerful few.

Disaster: a cross cutting issue: Disasters that hit the poor and minorities the hardest. Nepal is also one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, ranking 11th in the world in terms of earthquake risk, and 20th in terms of disasters. Between 2011 and 2015, more than 12,000 people were reported dead and a further 26,453 injured as a result of natural disasters. The estimated economic loss to Nepal in this period was \$ 7.8bn⁴¹. Such disasters exacerbate and compound existing inequalities and vulnerabilities: the poorest people are more likely to suffer death, injury and damage to property, as they live in more hazard-exposed areas and are less able to invest in risk-reduction measures. Women and children are 14 times more likely to die than men during a disaster; and in the aftermath, women are more likely to become victims of domestic and sexual violence and less likely to receive help⁴². Minorities face the same challenges: for example, there is evidence that Dalits were wilfully neglected by relief workers distributing emergency supplies during the April 2015 earthquake⁴³. By contrast, there are reports that members of higher castes with political connections use their influence to get limited resources for themselves.

COVID-19 has deepened existing inequalities, hitting the poorest and most vulnerable communities the hardest. It has put a pressure on economic inequalities and fragile social safety nets that leave vulnerable communities to bear the brunt of the crisis. At the same time, social, political and economic inequalities have amplified the impacts of the pandemic. On the economic front, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly increased the rate of unemployment and dramatically slashed workers' incomes, particularly in the tourism and service sectors in Nepal.

Across every sphere, from health to economy, and security to social protection, the negative impacts of COVID-19 have exacerbated situation of women, girls and sexual minorities simply by virtue of their sexual orientation, Dalits and other marginalized groups by virtue of caste discrimination and migrants and informal sector workers, and peasants by virtue of class oppression. Senior citizens, people with disabilities and children are particularly at risk of being left behind.

40 Kathmandu Post. (2017) <http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/2017/11/14>.

41 NPC. (2015). *Post Disaster Need Assessment, Government of Nepal*.

42 UNDP. (2013). *Gender and Climate Change: Asia and the Pacific, Policy Brief*.

43 Amnesty International. (2015). *Nepal, Earthquake Recovery Must Safeguard Human Rights*.

Tackling inequality through policy reform: Nepal Government recently came up with new narratives about inequality through the policies and programmes of 2020/21 saying that equality for all is not realized only through economic growth, there must be distributional justice in place through public sectors. However, the narrative is yet to be translated into actions. There are a number of policy issues that exacerbate inequality. *The fiscal system* is one of the most important tools for any government to tackle inequality. Progressive taxation and proper enforcement can redistribute resources and raise money to invest in inequality-busting services. However, Nepal's tax system is characterized by low tax rates and tariffs, alongside significant tax exemptions and regressive taxes. The upper income tax rates for individuals, the corporate sector, and banking and financial institutions are low, at 15%, 25% and 30%, respectively. There are also exemptions and concessions for some industries; for example, the 2018 budget gave special industries, including manufacturing, forestry and mineral extraction, a 15% applicable tax rate rather than the full 25%⁴⁴.

Tariff rates are also low, which were reduced further as part of fulfilling the membership conditions of the WTO when Nepal joined in 2004. These factors limit the tax contribution of top earners and profitable companies, and reduce the country's ability to tackle inequality. Despite efforts to expand the tax base, there are also gaps in tax collection, and Nepal's tax-to GDP ratio is still below the 20% ratio recommended by the UN as a minimum level to meet development goals. Evading taxes by big firms are rampant in Nepal. A study found that as many as 385 firms were engaged in producing counterfeit VAT bills in order to evade taxes during the same period; the majority being the big corporate houses of Nepal⁴⁵.

Therefore, progressive tax system needs to be considered as one of the policy areas that must be strictly implemented to generate revenue. While the proportion of direct taxes has risen, indirect taxes still account for more than two-thirds (68.4%) of Nepal's total tax revenue. Indirect tax is a regressive tax which places a disproportionate burden on the poorest in society. While some essential commodities and services have been exempted, there is evidence that poor households are still paying a significant amount in indirect taxes⁴⁶. Nepal is also missing the opportunity to implement taxes that could increase revenue and make the tax system more progressive, such as property and wealth taxes. Nepal did have a wealth tax in the early 1990s, but this was abolished

44 HAMI and Oxfam. (2019). *Fighting Inequality in Nepal: The Road to Prosperity*. Kathmandu, Nepal.

45 U. Pyakurel, B.K. Kushiyait and I. Adhikari. (2013). *Taxation and Democracy in Nepal: Taxing Land, Labour and 51 Capital for Achieving Rights for Everyone*. London: Overseas Development Institute (ODI)/Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium.

46 MoF. (2016). *Economic Survey: Fiscal Year 2016/17 (Nepal)*. Ministry of Finance.

after years of opposition from industry and business, underlining how political capture can stand in the way of progressive reform⁴⁷.

Spending on public services and other social programmes is a key tool for any government in tackling both poverty and inequality. According to a recent study carried out by HAMI and Oxfam 2019, there has been some considerable success, with spending as a share of GDP increasing from 17.4% in 2001/02 to 31.7% in 2016/17. However, there is evidence that some sectors crucial to tackling poverty and inequality remain underfunded. Health spending fell from 7.8% of total spending in 2011/12, to just 4.7% in 2016/17, and education spending dropped from 18.3% to 11.4% in the same period. There is strong evidence that free public health and education systems play an important role in reducing economic inequality. Education also boosts life chances, future wages, and combats gender inequality by giving women and girls more control over their lives. While Nepal has seen significant progress in educational attainment, there is more to do. Access to education is limited by geographical constraints, poor infrastructure, social and cultural norms, and a lack of the well-trained teachers who are necessary to ensure quality education.

Poor children are also excluded due to the persistence of out-of-pocket payments. Despite the policy of free primary education, families pay more than one-third of the primary education costs, due to informal fees and charges for learning materials and uniform. Girls and those living in rural areas are most likely to miss out on a quality education in Nepal. The literacy rate is 20% lower among girls than boys, and this is greater in rural areas. Girls are also more likely to be put to work, or to be married off young; this creates a vicious cycle, as girls with higher levels of education are significantly less likely to marry under the age of 18. The gender gap in school enrolment is widest in the poorest and second-poorest wealth quintiles, and is non-existent in the richest quintile, showing that gender inequalities are more pronounced for those of lower economic status.

The Government of Nepal has committed to universal health coverage; however today more than one-third of the population has no easy access to healthcare. Too many health facilities in Nepal lack sufficient free medicines, and there is a substantial shortage of trained staff. There is just one doctor for every 1,734 people in Nepal and the government estimates that they need more than 11,000 more health workers to meet the needs of the whole population⁴⁸. Moreover, COVID-19 pandemic has negatively

47 HAMI and Oxfam. (2019). *Fighting Inequality in Nepal: The Road to Prosperity*. Kathmandu, Nepal.

48 HAMI and Oxfam. (2019). *Fighting Inequality in Nepal: The Road to Prosperity*. Kathmandu, Nepal.

impacted already poor health services leading to the worst form. Poor communities, minorities, and those living in more remote areas of the country are more likely to be excluded or unable to access services. Pregnant women are disproportionately affected as unsafe deliveries have happened and many mothers and children have died. Even before COVID-19, only 30% of the poorest women used to give birth in a health facility, compared to 90% of the richest women⁴⁹. Given these significant challenges, it is important that the government should invest in health on an urgent priority basis.

This means scaling up free public health and education systems that can meet the rights of every Nepali and fight inequality. Public services are vital for the poorest – less than 2% of the poorest mothers give birth in a private hospital, compared with 21% of the richest mothers⁵⁰. However, there are worrying signs of increased commercialization and privatization of health and education services, and there are concerns that the private health system remains unaccountable during pandemic. Such trends are likely to perpetuate inequality and pricing the poorest out of life-saving and life-changing services.

Work and wages are the main way for the majority of people to make a living, provide for their basic needs, and improve their future life chances. Therefore, tackling inequality requires interventions to ensure sufficient safe work and decent wages for everyone. More than 500,000 people enter the labour force each year in Nepal, but employment opportunities are limited and 80% of these people leave to seek employment abroad. For those who stay, too many face insecure jobs and underemployment: 31.8% of Nepali labourers work less than 40 hours per week, and for a growing percentage this is not by choice⁵¹. Particularly the young people are struggling to find work: 15–24 year-olds are more than twice as likely to be unemployed than adults. Wages have increased in recent years; however, they remain low for the average worker, and women continue to earn significantly less than their male counterparts. Establishing and strengthening minimum wages can play a significant role in reducing inequality. However, 96% of workers are employed in the informal sector⁵², where minimum wages and other provisions, such as the social security fund, are less likely to be honoured and harder to enforce. Moreover, the COVID- 19 has almost destroyed the employment sectors as millions of domestic and migrant workers lost their jobs and put them and their families into risk of poverty and inequality.

49 DHS Survey. (2016). Table. <https://dhsprogram.com/publications/publication-FR336-DHS-Final-Reports.cfm>

50 DHS Survey. (2016). Table. <https://dhsprogram.com/publications/publication-FR336-DHS-Final-Reports.cfm>

51 HAMI and Oxfam. (2019). *Fighting Inequality in Nepal: The Road to Prosperity*. Kathmandu, Nepal.

52 S. Haque. (2017). *Pathways to Prosperity and Inclusive Job Creation in Nepal*. London: Overseas Development Institute.

Recommendations (Policy demands)

Based on the evidence mentioned above, there are a number of steps that the government could take immediately to tackle inequality and put Nepal on track for a more prosperous future for all citizens. To demonstrate commitment to tackling inequality, the government should:

- i. Reform the tax system by implementing more progressive taxation, reducing exemptions, and ensuring transparency and enforcement that stops tax avoidance, evasion and illicit flows;
- ii. Implement minimum wages and protections for all workers, including the in the informal sector;
- iii. Prioritize and implement progressive land reform, to achieve a more equitable distribution of land in favour of the landless and poor farmers;
- iv. Commit to collecting data and publicly reporting on economic and horizontal inequalities, and to making policy decisions on the impact of reducing these inequalities;
- v. Prioritize investment in public sectors like education, health, employment and livelihoods and social protection;
- vi. Take action to end the exploitation of women, children, Dalit and minorities in all for

SDG11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

Introduction

SDG 11, *Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*, comprises indicators that include access to housing and basic services, transport systems, urbanization, cultural and natural heritage, economic losses caused by disasters, and universal access to public spaces. The target aims to make at least 50% of the urban road to be safe from global standard. The proposed specific targets for 2030 include doubling the proportion of households living in safe houses to 60%; substantially reducing air pollution, preventing the deaths and injuries due to disaster; repairing and reconstructing by 2020, all cultural heritages destroyed by earthquake; and increasing the budget allocation to the protection of cultural heritage from about 1% in 2015 to 2% by 2030⁵³. Government's efforts to meet some of the targets were satisfactory as the households living in safe houses reached 40% against the 2019 target of 37.8%. Against the target of 23 planned new cities; 27 have been established by 2019⁵⁴. However, many of the targets under SDG-11 are lagging behind due to policy inconsistency, particularly the unplanned urbanization that puts the urban residents, especially the working class, in health, environmental and livelihoods risks.

53 NPC. (2017). *Sustainable Development Goals: Baseline Report (Draft)*, Government of Nepal.

54 HLPF. (2020). *Sustainable Development Goals: Knowledge Platform*.

Only 30% of the houses where people are living are considered to be safe. There is huge demand for construction of safe houses in urban areas. But housing facilities are inadequate and proper housing is getting unaffordable. About 7% of the households are living as squatters; nearly 46.7% of the households have five and more persons within one house; cities are unplanned and public transport is not very safe⁵⁵. The currently planned number of satellite cities is 10 which have not started construction yet. The 2030 target is to construct 60 satellite cities.

As per the constitutional guarantee of the citizens' right to adequate housing, it is a must to provide all the citizens a safe and affordable housing by effectively implementing the National Housing Policy-2011. The 2030 target is to reduce the number of households residing with more than five persons to 20% from 47% in 2015⁵⁶.

From an almost non-existent situation of safe roads, the target is to make at least 50% of the highways safe from global standards. Currently, very limited roads and public vehicles are considered safe as per international criteria. Only 45% of municipalities have sewerage services⁵⁷. Lots of cultural and religious sites have been either dilapidated, damaged or ignored. Rural areas have inferior quality houses as compared to urban areas where most of the poor people reside.

This report will assess the current context of urbanization in Nepal and issues to be addressed corresponding to the SDG- 11 and include CSO's call for actions.

Trends of urban growth in Nepal: Nepal's demographic transformation is characterized by fast-growing population density in major cities, along the main highways, and close to the border with India. While overall population growth has slowed since 2001, urban population growth has kept its pace at 3.4% per year from 2001 to 2011. Kathmandu Metropolitan City—the only urban centre in Nepal with a population above 1 million—is growing at 4.0% per year, medium cities (100,000– 300,000) at 3.5%, and small cities (50,000–100,000) at 3.6%. Pokhara in the Central Hills is the largest and fastest-growing medium city, with growth above 5% per year. Three medium cities have also sustained population growth in excess of 4% per year: Bharatpur (148,000) in the Central Tarai, Butwal (120,000) in the Western Tarai, and Dhangadhi (104,000) in the Far Western Tarai. A number of small urban growth centres are emerging along the main highways of the country and close to the border with India⁵⁸.

55 NPC. (2017). *Sustainable Development Goals: Baseline Report (Draft)*, Government of Nepal.

56 NPC. (2017). *Sustainable Development Goals: Baseline Report (Draft)*, Government of Nepal.

57 NPC. (2017). *Sustainable Development Goals: Baseline Report (Draft)*, Government of Nepal.

58 CBS. (2001). *Population Census*, Centre Bureau of Statistics, Government of Nepal.

CBS. (2012). *Population Monograph*, Centre Bureau of Statistics, Government of Nepal.

The conversion of rural space into urban space is an important contributor to urban growth. The urban population growth rate from 1991 to 2001 almost doubled from 3.6% to 6.5%⁵⁹. While a number of emerging towns with urban like characteristics continue to grow, many urban settlements contain large areas of land with rural characteristics. The disconnection between urban geography and the politico-administrative definition of urban areas is the result of Nepal's legal definition⁶⁰ of urban settlements overemphasizing the role of population size, while assigning little weight to other urban criteria, such as essential facilities, infrastructure and services.

The merging and re-merging of the Municipalities and VDCs caused rural VDCs to be converted into Municipalities. Moreover, the economic incentives brought about by the construction of new roads and highways in different geographic regions of Nepal have resulted in the increased number of towns and market centres in the country⁶¹. Nepal's urban population has increased to 17% in 2011 from 13.9% of 2001. Urban population became 38.2 in 2016 and 59.9% in 2019⁶². The conversion of some rural areas into urban areas as municipalities were made in the absence of basic services, amenities and opportunities that are commonly anticipated in urban areas.

The rapid increase in the number of economically active population in rural areas, their improved literacy status and rising aspiration for employment in the non-agricultural sector has increased the rate of rural to urban migration in Nepal. The government has carried out urban development through new towns, smart city, satellite city and mega city development under the Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD), Department of Urban Development and Building Construction (DUDBC). Recently, the government of Nepal is executing planned intervention in the Tarai towns of Nepal, particularly in the growing potential towns of Tarai-Madhesh Region. Main objective of developing new towns in Tarai-Madhesh Region is to contribute balanced urban development and develop liveable cities in Tarai-Madhes area of Nepal so that stagnant areas would be economically active and connected to the newly developed towns of the Tarai-Madhes region (DUDBC, 2018 and MoF, 2016).

59 MoUD. (2017). *National Urban Development Strategy 2017*, Government of Nepal, Ministry of Urban Development.

60 An area having a population of 300,000 and an annual income of Rs. 400 million can be declared a metropolitan city. Similarly, a sub-metropolitan city should have 100,000 people and Rs. 100 million annual incomes. Similarly, in Terai region, municipalities can be created if they have 20,000 people and Rs. 5 million annual incomes. In the hills and mountains, a village having 10,000 people and a Rs. 500,000 annual incomes are needed to be declared a municipality.

61 <https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/TUJ/article/view/25346/21219>

62 NPC. (2019). *Fifteenth Five Year Plan (2019-2023)*, Government of Nepal. (<https://cbs.gov.np/province-statistics/> accessed at 9 April 2020.)

Usual expansion of urban areas due to increased population growth and newly established planned cities put high pressure on the limited resources available in cities. Scarcity of water, lack of basic amenities including management of garbage are the major problems faced by most of the urban areas in Nepal.

Issues to be addressed: This review reveals a number of issues in achieving SDG11 in Nepal. While a number of policies, acts and other legal instruments of urban development are in place, their implementations are observed to be too weak. Particularly, participation of poor and vulnerable groups appeared to be less effective as they are the most vulnerable groups to be considered while developing and implementing the urban development plan and development of human settlement. Urban development continues to be haphazard, unplanned and the monitoring and capacity development aspects of the government authorities seems to be too weak.

Unplanned urban growth led to a loss of open spaces that adversely impacted the urban environment. The proportion of open space in major municipalities shows a bleak picture with only 0.48% in Kathmandu and 0.06% in Lalitpur⁶³. The trend of rapid depletion of open spaces in urban areas is continued with urban expansion in marginal lands such as steep slopes, flood plains and other hazardous areas that will result into increased vulnerability of the people. Failure to formulate sustainable urban development strategies and implement effectively could create severe socio-environmental consequences, including stagnant economic productivity, poor infrastructures, low quality of life, and rise in urban divide.

Despite the policies and acts on urban resilience and DRR in place, the majority of the local government bodies lack post disaster preparedness plans, such as reconstruction and debris management, which is critical for speedy recovery to the society from a disaster. DRM framework lags the linkage with other sectors and the relationship between mapping, planning, land use and building code is not established prominently. There is no national seismic standard for lifeline facilities such as bridges, water supply etc.⁶⁴.

Poverty in urban areas is on the rise. Based on the data of CBS (2012), the percent of people below the poverty line in the urban areas of Nepal increased from 9.55 in 2004/05 to 15.46 in 2010/11. There are enormous differences between urban areas – Pokhara has only 1.3% below poverty line while in Gulariya it is 50%⁶⁵.

⁶³ MoUD, 2017- NUDS

⁶⁴ MoUD, 2017- NUDS

⁶⁵ MoUD, 2017-NUDS

The rise of poverty in urban areas is an indicator of decrease in resiliency of urban population to disasters. A survey in Ratnanagar Municipality in Chitwan elucidated that while 27% are below poverty level; nearly 41 percent of the population are vulnerable and can easily be pushed into poverty⁶⁶. This shows low level of resiliency in the majority of the population with weak economic status, primarily the urban poor in many urban areas in Nepal. From the perspective of holistic urban management, this may be a major hindrance in the future that needs urgent attention from the government.

Not only have increasing areas of fertile farmland been converted to residential and other urban land uses, the huge increase in price of land due to increasing demand for land for development, combined with a supply of financial capital from remittances and transfers of savings from less secure rural areas, has resulted in consolidation of the urban lands with a few real states' hands. In the context of weak governance structures, speculative activity and poorly controlled development has become rife, with various negative consequences.

The institutional arrangements for implementing urban development plans are not well coordinated as the institutional arrangements are fragmented. While city planning and infrastructure development are supported by one institution, city governance and administration come under another. Often, there is temporary coordination in place at the project level. There seems to be inadequate legal basis to manage and govern large urban regions such as clustered city regions and urban industrial corridors comprising several local municipalities. Town Development Acts seem to be inadequate to deal with the emerging issues of urban development particularly to address the rights of urban poor and slums, and resilient livelihoods and environment (both cultural and natural environments). From 2014 onwards, the Government of Nepal kept declaring new programmes on the development of cities; for example, megacities, satellite cities, smart cities, new town developments, corridor cities etc., but their implementation seems to be too weak. Many of the projects developed by the government as part of the smart city seem to be not as fully matching the concept of smart city (for example constructing multi-story buildings in open space available in the core of the densely populated cities etc.)⁶⁷.

⁶⁶ MoUD, 2017-NUDS

⁶⁷ <http://english.lokaantar.com/articles/making-nepali-cities-smart/>

In some cities where ethnic groups⁶⁸ are predominant, resistance is coming in against the centrally planned infrastructure development activities. Undermining local history, culture, environment and livelihoods may lead to the displacement of local people. This seems to be a contradiction between what the major policy document on urban development⁶⁹ stipulates about the protection of the history and culture of urban places. Although policy documents stipulate that many of the ancient cities will be protected and developed as cultural cities, there are a number of protests happening across ancient cities against the development projects that undermine the culture and history of the people and importance of the places.

Recommendations

- i. Drawing on the lessons learnt from the implementation of the policies and programmes in the context of state restructuring, the urbanization policy needs to be rethought in a new light.
- ii. Inclusive process of policy making and city planning through local governments, resolving the inter-departmental competition over mandates and resources, and engaging communities both in planning and implementation process is extremely important to build resilient and safer cities for all.
- iii. A multi-hazard approach that deals with different types of disasters through physical, social, economic and institutional perspectives needs to be pursued.
- iv. The growth of settlements in the new cities is generally spontaneous, and there is very little planned intervention on the part of the government.
- v. Cities will continue to grow in the future. If rational planning and development strategies are not formulated and implemented effectively, their growth will create severe consequences. Basic infrastructures (drainage, water, road, solid waste management, etc.) must be developed and provided to the people.
- vi. For an inclusive and equitable urban development in Nepal, all levels of governments including Municipal government should properly account for the urban poverty particularly focusing on the landless, slums dwellers, informal sector workers, women, people with disabilities, senior citizens and youth in order to enhance disaster resilience. This needs to be further explored in order to develop methods and processes for tomorrow's cities to be developed.

68 <https://kathmandupost.com/visual-stories/2018/12/20/khokana-bungmati-locals-protest-against-governments-move-to-demolish-historical-settlements>

69 MoUD, 2017-NUDS

SDG12: Responsible Consumption and Production

Introduction

The SDG 12 aims to ensure that current material needs do not lead to the over extraction of resources or to the degradation of environmental resources, and include policies that improve resource efficiency, reduce waste and mainstream sustainability practices across all sectors of the economy. The targets of the SDG 12 are to implement the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources , halve per capita global food waste and reduce food losses , achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, reduce waste generation, encourage companies to adopt sustainable practices , promote public procurement practices that are sustainable and ensure that people have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development.

Assessment of Progress and Challenges

Natural disaster is acting as a major challenge for the production, for example, floods across the country in 2008 affected over 6 million people (30% of the population) and crop production the following winter declined by over 15 percent due to drought⁷⁰. Quality assurance with productivity, agriculture and forestry production with business modules and implementation of sustainable approaches for industry and businesses are also major challenges.

Despite having tremendous water resources and huge potential of generating hydropower, in Nepal, only ten percent of such resources have been used. Looking at the low productivity in agriculture there is possibility of making the twice land productivity just beside expanding the cultivated land. Agriculture contributes to about one third of Nepal's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employs about two-thirds of the population directly or indirectly. Agriculture being highly vulnerable to climate change, experiences far-reaching impacts with implications on Sustainable Development Goal. Agricultural productivity of Nepal on fiscal year was 2.97 metric ton/hector. Against the climate change there have been 217 local level of execution of programmes and plans. Five per cent of total energy consumption is found to be covered by the renewable energy sources. On average 16.8 thousand metric ton of cereals were targeted to be shipped on which 18.4 metric ton has been shipped. Salts were targeted to be 94 thousand quintals of which 84 thousand is shipped.

⁷⁰ MOALD (2018), *SDG Localization through Integration of Climate Change in Agricultural Planning and Budgeting at the National and Sub-national Levels*

National Food Security Reserve had targeted to store 25 metric ton of food for the last two years, of which 15 thousand metric tons has been reached.⁷¹ Rice production in Nepal is 3.5 million metric tons. Of worlds total wheat production, Nepal shares 0.24 per cent, 0.2 per cent of maize and 0.7 per cent of potato.⁷²

Table 8: Responsible consumption

Targets and Indicators	2015	Target 2019	Progress 2019
Soil organic matter (per cent)	1	1.8	1.96
Consumption of Wood (per capita cubic meter)	0.11	0.09	0.658
Use of plastics (per capita in gram per day)	2.7	2	2
Re-cycling of plastics in manufacturing industries (per cent of industries)	24.5	42	25

As deduced from table 18, year 2019 target of reaching soil organic matter to 1.8 per cent was surpassed with 1.96 per cent from 1 per cent in baseline year 2015. Also, the consumption of wood is dropped from 0.11/ m³ to 0.658/m³, though the target was to reach below 0.09/m³. Use of plastic is dropped from 2.7 gm/day to 2.0 gm/day which was exact target for 2019. Re-cycling of plastics in manufacturing industries increased slightly from 24.5 per cent to 25 per cent, far behind the targeted 42 per cent.

To sum up, natural disaster is acting as a major challenge for the production, for example, floods across the country in 2008 affected over 6 million people (30per cent of the population) and crop production the following winter declined by over 15per cent due to drought ⁷³

Recommendations

- i. The government should manage for proper collection and processing of individual, industrial and agricultural waste through appropriate economic and technological measures in cities and settlements.
- ii. Quality assurance is need for productivity, agriculture and forestry production with business module and implementation of sustainable approach for industry and businesses are also major challenges.

⁷¹ Approach paper of 15th plan, NPC 2019

⁷² Annual Report 2072/73, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development

⁷³ MOALD (2018),SDG Localization through Integration of Climate Change in Agricultural Planning and Budgeting at the National and Sub-national Levels

- iii. Priority should be given for rapid growth of the irrigation, proper geo utilization, land unification, advanced seeds, independency in cereals, fish and cattle, Agricultural researches and technology development and advancement can increase the sustainable productivity and consumption.
- iv. Climate change can be optimally addressed through the national system following a whole-of-government and society approach, rather than through isolated projects. Such integrated climate responsive governance at the national and sub-national levels allows climate actions to sustain longer and leads to more effective and synergistic solutions.
- v. Combined approaches are specifically important for the agricultural sector, because results of agriculture and nature resources depend on the performance of many other sectors, such as water, forestry, environment and disaster reduction. They can also support in overcoming a compartmentalization of challenges that are interconnected and drift toward narrow technological solutions, thereby ensuring higher levels of resource efficiency. In this way building resilience of agriculture through climate actions will contribute to achieve the SDGs and meet the national commitments under NDC.

SDG13: Climate Action

Introduction

Nepal is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change. This vulnerability can not only be attributed to its fragile geography but also to its poor socioeconomic condition, low adaptive capacity and lack of climate resilient infrastructure. According to a recent analysis⁷⁴ conducted by the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology, Nepal annual maximum temperature trend is significantly positive (0.056°C/yr)⁷⁵. The economic impact assessment of climate change in key sectors in Nepal study⁷⁶ was conducted in 2013; which shows that economic costs of climate change in Nepal for these three sectors could be equivalent to 2-3% of the GDP/year based on the 2013 price by the mid-century⁷⁷. The Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) Assessment Report⁷⁸ published by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) predicts significant warming over the HKH region in the future⁷⁹.

74 https://www.dhm.gov.np/uploads/climatic/467608975Observed%20Climate%20Trend%20Analysis%20Report_2017_Final.pdf

75 DHM. (2017). *Observed Climate Trend Analysis of Nepal (1971 - 2014)*. Retrieved from https://www.dhm.gov.np/uploads/climatic/467608975Observed Climate Trend Analysis Report_2017_Final.pdf

76 https://cdkn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/EIA-summary_sharing_final-low-resolution.pdf

77 CDKN. (2013). *PROJECT: Assessing the economic impacts of climate change in Nepal*. Retrieved April 3, 2019, from https://cdkn.org/project/economic-impact-assessment-of-climate-change-in-nepal/?loclang=en_gb

78 <https://lib.icimod.org/record/34450>

79 Mishra, A., Appadurai, A. N., Choudhury, D., Regmi, B. R., Kelkar, U., Alam, M., ... Sharma, U. (2019).

To address the impacts of climate change, Nepal has taken forward various policies and programmes and established needed institutions: National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA), 2010, National Climate Change Policy, 2011 (revised in 2019), National Framework for Local Adaptation Plan for Action (LAPA), 2011, Climate Resilient Planning Tool, 2011, The Climate Change Budget Code, 2012, Climate Change Financing Framework (CCFF) (2017), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), 2016, among others. Besides this, various reports were also prepared by Nepal such as the National Communications (NC) Reports and climate change was also incorporated in other sectoral policies taken forward by different ministries and other Government agencies. The Climate Change Council, as envisioned by NAPA, was formed in 2010. The Ministry of Environment (currently the Ministry of Forest and Environment) was declared as the designated national authority, which paved the way to establish a dedicated institution to coordinate the issues of climate change. Under the Ministry, Climate Change Management Division (CCMD) was established which is responsible for initiating and coordinating climate related initiatives and interventions at the national level. A multi-stakeholder Climate Change Initiative Coordination Committee (MCCICC) was also formed to engage multiple stakeholders and right holders in climate change related policy- and decision-making processes. These policies, programmes and institutions have paved the way for effective climate action in Nepal and have contributed to climate change adaptation and mitigation in Nepal.

The GoN has initiated the National Adaptation Plan Formulation Process which is being taken forward considering the guidance provided by National Climate Change Policy, 2019. The NDC of Nepal is also being updated and expected to be submitted to the UNFCCC secretariat by the end of December 2020. The Environment Protection Act, 1996 has also been updated and climate change has been included in the updated Act. The National Environment Policy-2019 has been endorsed and the National Framework for LAPA has been updated. The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Act, the DRRM Policy and DRRM Strategic Action Plan have been approved and are on their way to being implemented.

Assessment of Gaps and Challenges

In the last decade a number of climate change policy initiatives have been taken forward by different government ministries. However, these policies have not been implemented. If implemented at all, they lack coordination among all concerned stakeholders but only in project mode; making them largely ineffective.

A civil society assessment report⁸⁰ published in 2018, raised a critical question to the GoN for moving in the opposite direction from what the GoN has set the target in its climate policies and programmes⁸¹. Since the country adopted federalism, the Constitution has given mandate to all three tiers of the government: federal, provincial and local. In this regard, although the federal government has recently updated few of the above mentioned policies, they are yet to be implemented. Some provincial and local governments have started discussion about addressing climate change, but there is a lack of policy initiatives and programmes being taken forward by the provincial governments. The limited actions taken at the subnational level are only being done in project mode, lacking the focus on sustainability, thereby raising questions on long-term effectiveness of policies and programmes to address climate change.

A review paper⁸² published by Clean Energy Nepal in 2019 has shown that there is slow progress in implementation of NDC of Nepal but there are already various policies in different sectors which prioritized climate mitigation and adaptation in different sectors⁸³. The meeting of Multi-Stakeholders Climate Change Initiatives Coordination Committee (MCCICC) was very rarely held. Various sectoral policies that have been envisioned by the Climate Change Policy (2011) have not been materialized, including the Low Carbon Economic Development Strategy (LCEDS), which draft was prepared in 2015. No proper attention and resources have been given to scientific research to better understand climate change impacts and adaptation strategies. Even though awareness and capacity building has taken place in the last decade, a survey⁸⁴ commissioned by the Central Bureau of Statistics shows that significant efforts are still needed to raise awareness among the general public to further strengthen the capacity of multiple stakeholders⁸⁵. The provincial and local government officials lack knowledge on climate science and related policies. In this context, it is unclear how the provincial governments will take the climate change agenda forward. However, it is a great

80 <http://www.cansouthasia.net/wp-content/uploads/N-CANSA-State-of-Climate-Action-in-Nepal-FINAL-7-October-2018.pdf>

81 N-CANSA. (2018). *State of Climate Action in Nepal: Nepal-CANSA Annual Snapshot 2018*, (September). Retrieved from <http://www.cansouthasia.net/wp-content/uploads/N-CANSA-State-of-Climate-Action-in-Nepal-FINAL-7-October-2018.pdf>

82 <http://www.cen.org.np/uploaded/NDC%20Review%20Final%20publication.pdf>

83 Sharma, S. (2019). *Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) implementation in Nepal: Re*trieved from [http://www.cen.org.np/uploaded/NDC Review Final publication.pdf](http://www.cen.org.np/uploaded/NDC%20Review%20Final%20publication.pdf)

84 http://old.cbs.gov.np/image/data/2017/National%20Climate%20Change%20Impact%20Survey%202016%20Report_final.pdf

85 (CBS). (2016). *National Climate Change Impact Survey 2016 A Statistical Report Government of Nepal National Planning Commission Secretariat Central Bureau of Statistics. Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS)*. Retrieved from [http://cbs.gov.np/image/data/2017/National Climate Change Impact Survey 2016 Report_final.pdf](http://cbs.gov.np/image/data/2017/National%20Climate%20Change%20Impact%20Survey%202016%20Report_final.pdf)

opportunity to safeguard the vulnerable communities and natural system by aligning development interventions in a climate friendly manner.

The action that provincial governments will take to address climate change will determine how national policies and programmes will materialize at subnational-levels. It will also be of crucial importance as it will pave the way for local governments to take initiatives and actions at the grassroots level. However, the current problem is that they lack adequate capacity, technical and financial resources including human resources, dedicated institutions and coordination mechanisms at these sub-national levels. The other problem is that CSO representatives also lack adequate knowledge on climate change and lack advocacy skills with regard to climate change. The youth, who can also be the driving force for the necessary actions, also lack adequate capacity especially at the provincial level which also allows the government to be apathetic about the issue.

Recommendations

- i. The GoN has formulated the needed policies at the national level; updated existing policies considering the federalism and is formulating and updating some of its plans which is an appreciable move. There is a big gap between the target set and progress made in the policies in different sectors, so, without any delay, the climate change policy, 2019 and other sectoral policies should be implemented in an effective and harmonized way.
- ii. There is a lack of coherence and synergy among the sectoral policies including lack of coordination among sectoral ministries in the regime of climate change; to address this, a national level stocktaking is recommended and the available coordination mechanisms among the ministries should be deployed, while also engaging other stakeholders. There must be an effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism in place and multiple stakeholders must be engaged in the process.
- iii. Although mainstreaming of climate change is being taken forward; climate change, being a crosscutting problem and having implications with all the SDGs, needs further prioritization in periodic planning, annual planning and budgeting of all tiers of the Government. The provincial and local government capacity on climate change should be strengthened and they should be provided with technical and financial resources to formulate and implement the needed policies, programmes and projects at the provincial and local level
- iv. Frameworks developed earlier such as Environment Friendly Local Governance (EFLG) Framework, Local Disaster Risk Management Plan (LDRMP) including others need to be implemented effectively. The Low Carbon Economic

Development Strategy (LCEDS) must be finalized considering the federal context and be implemented effectively.

- v. Increase investment in hydropower development and other renewable energy to ensure energy security and also increase investment on scientific researches by mobilizing academia and think tanks to generate scientific information and continuously update policies and programmes as guided by scientific facts and figures.
- vi. Promotion of renewable energy and hydroelectricity should be prioritized in the transportation sector to shift to green transport and to minimize the GHG emission from the transport sector. Climate friendly tools and technologies must be adopted in the agriculture sector and climate resilient crops should be extensively promoted in the vulnerable agricultural lands.
- vii. The people that are already experiencing severe impact of climate change ought to be at the core priority of the climate change related projects and programmes at the local level.
- viii. The GoN should strongly advocate for providing support from the developed countries and donors focusing on climate finance, technology and capacity building in SDG13 including other SDGs, without which there will be significant resource gaps in achieving the SDGs.
- ix. Establishment of an autonomous agency is recommended which might be deployed to conduct scientific research on the environment and climate change sector and to regulate and enforce the available legal policies in the environment and climate change regime. This will also contribute to maintaining coherence and synergy among sectorial policies and programmes.

SDG15: Life on Land

The Sustainable Development Goal 13 aims to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. Targets for the Goal 13 mostly covers the area of resilience and adaptive capacity, awareness raising and institutional capacity, implementation of global commitment, and planning for the better future. Targets for 2030 include halving the existing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emission levels including from transport, industrial, and commercial sectors. Consumption of ozone-depleting substances is targeted to reduce to one-third of the existing level. Climate change adaptation plans are proposed for 120 village councils and 750 communities. The number of climate-smart villages is set to reach 170 from zero to 500 units from zero in 2015. This part of report examines the progress of the milestone provided for the year 2019.

Assessment of Progress and Challenges

The progress assessment of SDG 13 has been carried out based on three different bases. These include i) progress review of recently completed 14th periodic development plan focusing on the zero hunger related activities, ii) assessment based on the resource allocation and resource requirement for SDG 13 and II) indicator-wise progress status based on the recently available data of available indicators of SDG 13.

Progress review of recently completed 14th periodic development plan focusing on the Take urgent action to combat change and its impact. To implement the climate action of goal 13, the government already adopted some policies and programme in Nepal which is mentioned in approach paper of 15th Plan. Such as, it is realized that Nepal is not the part of climate change because total GHG emission about 0.027 per cent from Nepal. Similarly, Climate change policy 2011, National Adaptation Programme 2011 and National Adaptation Plan 2012 are formulated and brought in the practice during 14th Plan period.

Target for 13.1.3. 1 aims to indicate the per cent of GHG emission from transport sector. Target was to reduce emission of transport sector from 12.per cent to 10.4 per cent for the year 2019. But no data available. Similarly, Target for 13.1.3. 2 aims to indicate the per cent of GHG emission from industrial sector. Target was to reduce from 12 to 10.4 per cent for the year 2019. But no data available. Target for 13.1.3. 1 aims to indicate the per cent of GHG emission from commercial sector. Target was to reduce industrial sector GHG emission from 5per cent to 4.3 per cent for the year 2019. But no data available. Target for 13.1.3. 4 aims to indicate the per cent of GHG (CH₄) emission from agriculture sector. Target was 662.5 Gg for the year 2019. But no data available. Target for 13.1.3. 5 aims to indicate the per cent of GHG emission (N₂O) from agriculture sector. Target was 34.5 Gg for the year 2019. But no data available. Target for 13.1.3. 6 aims to indicate the per cent of GHG emission (CO₂) from agriculture sector. Target was 10.4 per cent for the year 2019. But no data available. Target for 13.1.3. 7 aims to indicate the per cent of GHG emission from industrial sector (cement and lime). Target was 547.7Gg for the year 2019. But no data available. Target for 13.1.3. 8 aims to indicate the per cent of GHG emission from energy (industrial, energy and others) sector. Target was 6.897.8 Gg for the year 2019. But no data available. During the data collection, it is mentioned that the given unit or per cent quantity can only generate through further research.

Target 13.2.1.1- According to MoFE, Climate Change Section, there 68 LAPA prepared against the target 36 by 2017. Hence the target was met in this case. The target was estimated by expert during Roadmap preparation by NPC. Target 13.2.1.2 for the

year 2019 was 231 community level plan preparation, the progress in 2019 was 217. Community level adaptation plan preparation works are on track. In this case also base year data was estimated by expert as well. Regarding the Target 13.2.1.3, progress on LAPA implementation found good. All 68 LAPA were implemented as per 2017 report of MoFE. Target for the year 2019 was implementation of 15 LAPA. The target was met in this case as well. Targets 13.2.1.4 is related to climate smart village development. It was reported 42 Climate smart villages were established against the target of 45 for 2109. In this case, the progress has been rated as on track. Target 13.2.1.5 – Target was 133 climate smart farming operation. But there is no data available on climate smart farming.

Table 9: Climate action

Targets and Indicators	2015	2	019
	Baseline	Target	Progress
13.2.1.1. Local adaptation plan preparation (number of village councils)	4	36	68
13.2.1.2. Community level adaptation plan	31	231	217
13.3.2.2. Number of trained persons (local planners) in climate change adaptation	791	1380	1296

Source: appendix Goal 13

Recommendations

- i. Ensure conservation, sustainable use and fair distribution of natural resources and biodiversity while utilizing them for income and livelihood of the people, especially indigenous groups.
- ii. Community-based forest management is considered exemplary in Nepal and so need to be further promoted.
- iii. Main issue seen in this sector is to protect, promote, and make environmentally friendly and sustainable use of, natural resources available in the country, in consonance with national interest and adopting the concept of intergenerational equity, and make equitable distribution of fruits, according to priority and preferential right to the local communities.
- iv. Ensure conservation, sustainable use and fair distribution of natural resources and biodiversity while utilizing them for income and livelihood of the people, especially indigenous groups.
- v. Partnership among the government, cooperatives, private sector and development partners must be done so that resource requirement and budget allocation can be matched. One of the agenda of NDAC and MDAC should be SDG progress assessment.

SDG16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions

Introduction

Nepal has completed its complex and protracted political transition to democracy with the peace accord signed in April 2006, a new constitution was adopted in 2015 which transformed Nepal into a federal democratic republic. For the first time in decades, Nepal has a stable government. It boasts a thumping two third majority too. With that kind of strength, it could do anything.

Both the Constitution and the Criminal Penal Code 2017 protect women and children, particularly minorities. The Domestic Violence (Crime and Punishment) Act, 2006 is considered moderate to address the cases of domestic violence, violence against women (VAW) and GBV. The government has made several arrangements to provide services for those seeking remedies. Some of them are National Women's Commission and Women and Children Service Centres in Nepal Police. Similarly, local governments are entitled to provide remedies to the victims of domestic violence, VAW and GBV.

Realizing the fact that the anti-trafficking programmes were surfaced in the previous development periodic plans of Nepal, the subsequent periodic plans, especially the 15th and the 16th have explicitly addressed the need of prevention and combating the trafficking in persons, especially women and children (NHRC, 2018). The Government's institutional mechanisms to regulate the foreign employment through i) Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security (MoLESS), ii) Foreign Employment Promotion Board (FEPB), iii) Department of Foreign Employment (DoFE), iv) Foreign Employment Tribunal (FET) and v) Labour Attaché appointed in the destination countries are the major attempts to control trafficking.

On this backdrop, good governance has now become a buzzword in the political economy. Good governance contributes to accelerating the overall governance and financial disciplines. Now effective delivery of social and public services has become crucial. This brief report relating to SDG-16, makes an observation of governance and institutions in Nepal.

The Government of Nepal has adopted a number of laws, policies and institutional arrangements to curb corruption aiming to promote good governance in Nepal. Despite the legal and institutional arrangements, the level of corruption has not been reduced as expected. The annual reports published by the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) and supreme audit body like Office of the Auditor General Nepal (OAGN) show that the volume of corruption and financial irregularities have been rising.

The CIAA's study on Corruption at the Local Level unveiled by the CIAA showed that more than 50% of the survey respondents said that corruption at the local level either remained as it was in the past or is thriving. Recent reports on the status of corruption and complaints received by the CIAA suggest that corruption is thriving at the local level. 27.3% respondents said that corruption at the local level increased after the local election. Also, 28% respondents said that corruption continued to exist as in the past.

However, Nepal has improved in CPI by 11 ranks and stood 113th out of 180 countries with 34 score. In 2019, Nepal got 124th rank with 31 score in 2018, but it is still under the red zone of corruption benchmarking.

Also, the Rule of Law Index 2020 said Nepal's rule of law index remains static in 2020. Out of 128 countries Nepal is placed in 61st rank with a score 0.53 out of 1. Nepal scored first place among six countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) in the South Asia region and second out of 19 low income countries. – World Justice Programme.

The transition from a unitary to a federal system of governance remains challenging with several laws yet to be formulated and enacted, institutional arrangements at all government levels yet to be finalized, and policies and guidelines yet to be prepared. Substantial overlaps, duplications, and ambiguities among government tiers remain.

Most sector ministries and departments at the federal level have been downsized or restructured as several functions have been devolved to 7 provinces and 753 local councils. Executing and implementing agencies of several government agencies have been changed, and regional and district offices previously under federal sector ministries have been closed or downsized. This has disrupted service delivery as the province governments are only newly established and local governments do not have adequate institutional capacity to undertake all the assigned functions. The functioning of the provincial and local governments has also been affected by the lack of human resources and low capacity of several staff members.

Similarly, financial laws and regulations to instil fiscal discipline are not fully complied with and are poorly enforced. The annual reports of the OAGN in the last few fiscal years have reported widespread financial irregularities and indiscipline, such as high variances (up to 21 times) and bunching of capital expenditure at the end of the fiscal year, which increases the risk of poor service delivery, financial mismanagement, and poor-quality infrastructure. Likewise, the civic space has been disrupted through bureaucratic or enactment of various laws and policies. Some examples are as follows:

Civic Space

The Government has submitted two important amendment bills i.e. Corruption Prevention bill and CIAA Bill at the Parliament without proper public consultation. On 18 June 2019, after the grand protest of Kathmandu Valley's citizens against the government's Guthi Bill, Minister for Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation Ministry was compelled to withdraw the bill.

The Media Council Bill, 2019 was introduced in May 2019 aiming to curtail freedom of speech against the right guaranteed by the constitution. The bill was kept secret for months. Likewise, the Government silently pushed the IT Management Bill through parliament with sweeping powers to authorities to block social media platforms if they do not register in Nepal. Both the bills have created extreme controversy. It can be understood why the government took this step to move forward with the bill without discussing its provisions with the concerned stakeholders.

In February 2019, two transitional justice commissions namely 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and Commission for Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons (CIEDP) tenure was expiring, there was some hope of momentum out of the repeated assurances of the political parties as well as the government of Nepal. These commissions during the 4 years of their tenure had failed to conclude their job for the lack of credibility, resources and necessary laws. The commissioners were not given further extension, ostensibly making way for the restructuring of the commissions. However, the government advocated this initiative from New York to Davos to Geneva.

Nepalese constitution and prevailing laws guarantee freedom of speech and press. But the government has been alleged of trying to threaten journalists and also restrict media freedom and media organizations. The Criminal and Civil Codes and the Privacy Act has criminalized normal media activity i.e. reporting on public figures has been significantly increased in self-censorship among the right activists including the media.

Likewise, the journalists continued to receive vague threats from officials in response to their investigative reporting on corruption. In June 2019, a Ward Chairperson of Birgunj attacked RTI campaigner Piraj Yadav for requesting road construction costs under RTI provisions. Also, in June 2019, a satirist was put in custody for defamation under the Electronic Transactions Act 2017 after he made a satire of a Nepali film on social media. After widespread public protest, he was released in 9 days and he was acquitted of all charges in court.

The Government has issued an amended Online Media Operation Directive which requires all locally operating online news including Opinion Websites to be registered with the government. These directives give authority to concerned governments to block websites based on content if it lacks an authoritative source, creates misconception or negatively affects international relationships. The human rights organization reported that there are more than 100 cases filed in court, mostly related to the Electronic Transaction Act.

It is also to be noted that the Social Welfare Council Nepal has drafted and passed a 'I/CSO Coordination Policy for the 3 tiers of government'. As per the policy, the roles of federal, provincial and local governments have been defined in the areas of project design and implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Similarly, a local CSO or ICSO will have to go to the provincial government at first in the design phase and coordinate with the concerned provincial ministry to determine thematic areas of the project and its location. Then they should approach the local government, where the project has been planned for implementation. After reaching out to the local government, the concerned CSO or ICSO will have to work with the local government to identify the needs at the local level and sign a pre-consent agreement with the local body. The concerned CSO or ICSO should then approach the council at the centre with a project proposal in the prescribed format.

The Federal Government has also issued a guideline to restrict the Province and Local Councils not to sign any deals without Federal consent. Constitution's Article 59 has clearly said that dealing with the foreign aid is the federal government's task. The Government has indicated to shut down Social Welfare Council (SWC) and bring all SWC's activities of CSO/ICSOs under Registrar Office as provisioned in CSO operation, regulation, monitoring and management bill' prepared by the MoHA.

Also, the Government registered 'Nepal Special Service Bill, 2076' at the National Assembly on 15 December 2019 which will enable the government intelligence agency's authorities to access and collect all information relating to 'suspects' including conversations through the electronic medium. This bill was prepared by the Prime Minister's Office. This bill says it is necessary to control acts of 'secession, espionage, sabotage and subversion' and 'protect national sovereignty, national integrity and communal harmony'. Clause 10, states that audio or audio-visual conversation at the individual or institutional level that are suspicious can be kept under surveillance, monitoring or intercepted. Despite criticism over attempts to shrink civic space and media and individual freedom, the present government has drafted the 'Nepal

Special Service Bill' allowing intelligence agencies to access and collect information from citizens, raising concerns among rights defenders and civil society members. The Government has been repeatedly criticized by the national and international CSOs for trying to curb dissent opinion through laws and policies. CSOs are observing that sudden increase in procedural hurdles has made things even more difficult in the renewal process, CSOs are imposed tax, local authorities are imposing arbitrary restrictions, like getting projects approvals and recommendations from all the wards and municipalities where they work. CSOs are facing additional and unnecessary hurdles in registration and renewals.

Human Rights Watch has asked the Nepal government not to undermine the fundamental rights of citizens to organize and stop treating activists, including critics, as threats. This is not the first time that human rights organizations have raised concerns about growing threats to civil liberties in Nepal. Earlier, New Zealand based Human Rights Measurement Initiative said 'Nepal's Empowerment Score of 5.6 based on a detailed survey of human rights experts, tells us that many people in Nepal are not enjoying their civil rights and political freedoms'. The empowerment category in the report includes right to assembly and association, right to opinion and expression, and the right to participate in government.

It is also to be noted that in October 2019 that Cabinet rejected a draft bill prepared by the Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens which is the designated agency to draft policies, laws, standards and regulations for CSOs. Instead, the Cabinet authorized the Home Ministry to draft laws on 'Social Organizations Registration Bill'. The MoHA draft bill has been kept in secrecy. In 2018, the government brought the 'National Integrity Policy 2018' which raised controversy for aiming tighter controls over CSO space. The proposed policy had provisions requiring INGOs to take approval from the Finance Ministry for their annual programmes, including funding.

The Government and its agencies are aiming to scrutinize non-profits' funding. SWC, as a part of its anti-money laundering measures, is developing new indicators to monitor the flow of funds to NGOs.

Amidst challenges and opportunities, Nepalese CSOs and media have been putting their efforts to keep intact civic and media space through various civic/media campaigns to make the government accountable towards constitutional fundamental rights.

When it comes to effective, accountable and transparent institutions in the context of Covid-19, it would be necessary to take into account the indicators, for effectiveness,

that include ability to produce intended results, such as being able to prevent spread of Covid-19 by measures including lockdown; number of deaths in comparison to affected population; economy and livelihood goes on while being able to control the pandemic. Measures of accountability would be quality of work and interventions; willingness to take responsibility of the outcomes. Likewise, transparency would be indicated, among others, if the process of decision making is public; data are made available to the public; resources spent and results are public; and any information of public interest but not yet public is available on request.

Recommendations

- i. Take urgent measures in order to improve governance, transparency, accountability and effectiveness of the implementing agencies and empower the oversight bodies at all levels: federal, province and local. As current electoral contests are largely becoming expensive and most likely to increase policy corruption, it needs urgent reform.
- ii. Introduce rules, regulations and programmes and implement them in order to safeguard the fundamental rights of the people, as enshrined in the constitution of Nepal and/or enacted into relevant laws.
- iii. Create and strengthen forums and systems for learning and sharing of lessons, best practices, innovative solutions, constructive feedback and insights. Put emphasis on Goal 16 as a critical enabler and accelerator as it cuts across many themes and the SDGs.
- iv. All sectors need primarily to significantly reduce all forms of violence, and work with governments and communities to end conflict and insecurity.
- v. Promoting the rule of law and human rights are key to this process, as is reducing the flow of illicit arms and strengthening the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance.

SDG 17: Partnerships to Action the Goal

The concept of partnership is not a new issue. However, meaningful partnership was the issue discussed in the international fora since long. This has been somehow rigorously addressed by the SDGs under Goal 17. The SDG 17 was conceptualized as enhanced international cooperation is needed to ensure that sufficient means of implementation exist to provide countries the opportunity to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals⁸⁶. This goal by provisioning 19 targets and 25 indicators is oriented on bolstering the means of implementation and reinvigoration of the global partnership for sustainable development. Major focus of these targets are to strengthen domestic resource mobilization, implement official development assistance, implement investment promotion regimes, respect each country's policy space and leadership and build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development.

Assessment of Progress and Challenges

Main challenge is seen as lack of institutional clarity, roles and responsibilities among governmental agencies engaged in the 2030 Agenda, lack of adequate institutional arrangements and human resources, lack of coordination with strategic allocation of resources, poor productive capacity of private sectors. Priority is to be given for expanding diplomatic capabilities capable of protecting and promoting national interests in the changing environment of the world.

Significant changes have occurred in the political and economic environment of the world. Asia continent is the centre of economic development of the world while neighbouring Allied nations are developing as two of the world's largest economies. In order to achieve the basic objective of national interest, Nepal has been giving special emphasis to external economic relations. Nepal's economic diplomacy is primarily focused on driving international economic relations in the prosperity and development of the country. The international economic relations of Nepal will have to be purposefully mobilized towards upgrading from less developed countries to developing countries, achieving sustainable development goals and national thinking, within the framework of international relations guided by the constitution. There is a need to exchange experiences internationally for environment protection, climate change and peacebuilding.

⁸⁶ United Nations: Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, Report of the Secretary-General

Table 10: Indicators and progress on SDG17

Targets and Indicators		2015	2019	Progress	Data source for Progress
17.1.1	Total government revenue as a proportion of GDP, by source	19.1	22	23.98	MOF (2019) Economic Survey, Ministry of Finance, GoN, Kathmandu
17.1.2	Proportion of domestic budget funded by domestic taxes	76	77.1	73.9	MOF (2019) Budget Speech 2019/20, Ministry of Finance, GoN, Kathmandu

Source: Appendix Goal 17

In accordance with table 18, total government revenue as a proportion of GDP was 19.1 in baseline year 2015 which was targeted to reach 22 in year 2019 impressively it was exceeded to 23.98 in targeted year, however, proportion of domestic budget funded by domestic taxes was 76 in baseline year and it dropped to 73.9 despite having the target to reach 77.1.

Recommendations

- i. Generate and invest more resources dedicated to the SDGs.
- ii. Nepal needs to strongly negotiate with the international community for privileges and preferential treatments in trade, technology transfer, foreign direct investment, debt cancellation and development cooperation in accordance with the various international agreements and declaration in this regard.
- iii. Achieve efficiency and effectiveness by making an optimum utilization of resources and technology, including e-governance.
- iv. Pro-poor and inclusive macro-economic policies need to be adopted to ensure that no one is left behind. Macroeconomic policies need to be revisited in order to make them coherent with the financing needs of the SDGs.
- v. Develop an objective, evidence based and transparent mechanism to prioritize and select projects from the local level through province to the central level in alignment with the SDGs and national priorities.
- vi. Although the government has policy provisions in relation to planning and implementation of the SDGs, the implementation aspects at subnational levels lag behind. So, we reiterate for the strengthened, effective and accelerated mechanism for implementation and localization of the SDGs.

- vii. Develop guidelines and frameworks, enhance capacity and support subnational governments in planning, resource allocation, implementation and monitoring of the SDGs. Also build awareness, involve and mobilize other stakeholders including the local communities for transparency, accountability, ownership, sustainability and effectiveness.

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