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Gender Audit of Nepal's School Sector Reform Programme

Commissioned by DFID and Royal Norwegian Embassy as part of the mid-term review of the School Sector Reform Programme.

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January 2012

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Executive Summary

A gender audit was carried out to assess the extent to which the education system in Nepal is making progress on gender equality. The three main objectives were to; review key gender issues in schools, assess the School Sector Reform Programme (SSRP) and related plans and processes, and analyse institutional gender issues affecting the education system. This report contains the findings of the audit, which will feed into the medium-term review of the SSRP. The audit design was aimed at ensuring the validity of data and rigour in analysis. The consultants collected and analysed primary and secondary data from relevant sources at the national, district and school levels. Approximately 80 stakeholders were interviewed and many documents and study reports were analysed.

The findings show that there are many positive things to report. The national average Gender Parity Index (GPI) looks encouraging, although it needs to be interpreted with caution. Other quantitative indicators, such as repetition rates and retention data, also show positive trends from a gender point of view. The textbooks used in Nepal's schools are on the whole free from gender bias and avoid gender stereotypes. The expanded girls' scholarship scheme and the construction of more school toilets are both progressing well.

The challenges have been huge and many problems remain, some of which are highlighted in this report. Girl students are not a vulnerable or disadvantaged group; rather they are 50 per cent of the school age population with gendered rights, needs and interests: this is sometimes forgotten. With a gender perspective, the important questions now are: How can Nepal's education sector and its institutions at various levels now build on its successes to date and transform Nepal's schools into places of equal opportunities and outcomes for girl and boy students? How can the nation's schools be transformed into places where girls as well as boys learn to the best of their ability, are inspired and empowered?

With these questions in mind, the report contains realistic recommendations. Some concern minor, one-off activities that would have a disproportionately large impact in relation to the resources required and would be easy to implement. Others necessitate reviving and implementing long-standing prior commitments that have not yet been fulfilled; the implementation of affirmative action policies on recruiting female teachers is a case in point. Fully implementing this and other government commitments on gender equality in education will necessitate profound and

widespread changes in attitudes and behaviour among stakeholders in the education sector.

These are the overall priority recommendations arising from the audit, which have been divided into those that could and should be addressed in the short term and those that will take longer:

Priority recommendations to the Ministry of Education and Department of Education for the short term

Supporting and protecting girls in school

- In view of the findings of a recent review (Educational Resource and Development Centre, 2011), consider increasing the amount of the girls' scholarship bursaries to better reflect the actual direct cost of sending a girl to school.
- Consider the recommendations of the Him Rights' study on gender-based violence and sexual harassment in and around schools, with a view to developing and implementing relevant policies.

Improving women's participation in the sector

- Disseminate to District Education Offices and School Management Committees the mandatory provisions and affirmative action policies regarding female teachers. Otherwise take all necessary actions to ensure that these policies are implemented without unnecessary delay. This is critical for the creation of girl-friendly schools and ultimately, greater participation by women in the teaching profession will help to make the sector more gender sensitive.
- Increase the mandatory provision of women members on SMCS to two, as soon as possible.

Planning

- In MOE planning processes, the SSRP, the Gender and Vulnerable Communities Action Framework and Plan and the SIPGEGE (2007) need to be brought into alignment. Use the SIPGEGE (2007) as the overarching framework and incorporate its commitments into the SSRP.
- Include explicit gender-disaggregation in all objectives, targets, indicators and activities in forthcoming SSRP documents (gender mainstreaming) and clearly designate responsibilities for monitoring their attainment.

- Retain the SSRP commitment to providing separate girls' and boys' toilets in schools by making them a mandatory element in PMECs and supporting schools to achieve the full set of PMECs.
- Consider expanding the toilet construction programme in order to increase the rate of provision.
- The Gender Responsive Budgetting (GRB) tool is about to be modified. Whatever changes are decided for the GRB, the relevant officials need to be trained in its use.

Strengthening existing structures

- Strengthen Gender Focal Points (GFPs) at national and district levels by directing more resources to these roles and providing capacity development. Put in place strong institutional links between district GFPs and the newly formed Gender Equity Networks (GENs).
- At the same time, support the district GENs with resources and capacity development.
- If not already done, appoint a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion officer within the DOE.

Priority recommendations to the Ministry of Education and Department of Education for the medium term

Supporting girls in school

Consider changing the coverage of the girls' scholarship scheme, in line with the options set out in a recent review of the scheme (ERDCN, 2011).

Collecting and using information

- Improve the collection and management of quantitative and qualitative information under the SSRP to enhance programme effectiveness in relation to gender issues. In particular, more information is needed on the gender dimensions of quality in education and on cross-cutting variations among different areas and among different disadvantaged groups, especially Dalits and ethnic minorities.
- Institutionalise a system for disseminating and publicising innovations and good practice at local level; this would be a very cost-effective way of supporting such activities nationally.

Improving capacity and accountability

- Plan and deliver a systematic and well-targeted programme of gender sensitisation capacity development for key officials in MOE/DOE.
- Linked to the above, strengthen accountability mechanisms regarding the achievement of gender-related objectives, for instance through including criteria related to promoting gender equality in job descriptions and performance reviews.
- Design and roll out gender sensitisation and capacity development workshops for teachers, Head Teachers and SMCs to raise awareness of gender bias in schools and help them to plan how to address it.

Improving women's participation in the sector

- Increase the mandatory provision of women members on SMCs to 50 per cent in order to achieve a 'critical mass' and provide support, such as training, to enable them to take an active role.
- Develop and implement policies aimed at supporting women teachers, such as setting up mentoring schemes and women teachers' professional development groups.

Planning

Incorporate guidelines on gender equality issues, such as simplified GRB tools, into the next update of the SIP guidelines (assuming it is too late to do so in the version planned for roll-out in early 2012).

Priority recommendations for pooled donors

Actively encourage MOE/DOE to implement genuine gender mainstreaming at all stages of education planning and implementation. Use SIPGEGE (2007) as the framework and reference point.

Co-ordinate donor efforts on gender and education issues better, in order to avoid duplication of donor efforts. This might be done by creating a GFP role among interested donors and delegating an agency representative to take on this role. The donor GFP would maintain an overview of relevant efforts and liaise with the new role of gender specialist within the MOE.

It is hoped that Ministry of Education officials and donors alike will find these recommendations useful in their efforts to maintain and accelerate Nepal's progress

towards gender equality in education, especially schools. More detailed recommendations are given in the final sections of Chapters 3-5 and in Chapter 6.

List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASIP	Annual Strategic Implementation Plan
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BPEP-II	Basic and Primary Education Programme (Phase II)
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
DEO	District Education Office
DFID	Department for International Development
DOE	Department of Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ERCC	Educational Research and Consultancy Centre
ERDCN	Educational Resource and Development Centre Nepal
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GON	Government of Nepal
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GRB	Gender-responsive budgeting
GSEAU	Gender and Social Exclusion Assessment Update (Volume II)
GVCF	Gender and Vulnerable Communities Framework
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NCED	National Centre for Educational Development
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
NFE	Non-formal Education

NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NFE	Non-formal Education
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development
NPC	National Planning Commission
PIP	Programme Implementation Plan
PMECs	Priority Minimum Enabling Conditions
RP	Resource Person
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SIPGEGE	Strategic Implementation Plan for Gender Equality in Girls' Education
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SMC	School Management Committee
SSRP	School Sector Reform Programme
TEVT	Technical Education and Vocational Training
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United National Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VDC	Village Development Committee

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

This report contains the findings of a gender audit of Nepal's School Sector Reform Programme (SSRP) and related institutional issues pertaining to the education system in Nepal. It is conceived as part of the Mid-Term Review of the SSRP, and was commissioned by DFID and The Royal Norwegian Embassy on behalf of the pooled donors supporting the programme. The recommendations in this report are intended to assist the Ministry of Education (MOE) to build on and enhance its considerable accomplishments in promoting gender equality in education.

The SSRP is a follow up to the Education For All programme 2004-2009 and represents a continuation of the objectives of certain other preceding programmes, such as the Secondary Education Support Programme. It is confronted by several major challenges, not least of which is the structural reform of the educational system. This entails moving away from the old structure of primary (Grades 1-5), lower secondary (Grades 6-8), secondary (Grades 9-10) and upper secondary (Grades 11-12) to a new structure of basic education (Grades 1-8) and secondary education (Grades 9-12). The SSRP is a very significant programme for Nepal. Its budget for 2011/2012 was 51.93 billion NPR, which makes up 81.24% of the country's total education sector budget. It consists of five components; Early Childhood Education and Development, Basic and Secondary Education, Literacy and Lifelong Learning and Technical Education and Vocational Training, and also includes several elements relating to implementation.

Policy background

Although there has been significant progress towards gender equality in recent years, women and girls in Nepal suffer discrimination in economic, political and social spheres. A report published by the UNFPA documents the following areas of gender discrimination:

- Male-female disparities in access to health and education
- Limited access to fixed assets, property, and credit for women, compared to men
- Wage structures discriminate against women and women do not enjoy the same access to earned income as men do.
- The continuation of some harmful traditional practices affecting women

- Legal discrimination against women
- Women's low participation in political and administrative decision-making bodies

In response, GON has made many commitments to promoting gender equality. The gender equality objectives, actions and outcomes of the SSRP need to be assessed in the light of these commitments and related MOE initiatives. As the authors of the BPEP-II Gender Audit (2002) point out, non-discrimination on the basis of sex is encoded in Nepal's constitution, and the GON subscribes to a range of relevant international declarations such as "Education for All" agreed at Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. The SSRP's special programmes and incentives to support girls' education, notably the hostel programme and scholarship programmes, are continuations of programmes that have been running for several years. The Education For All (EFA) National Plan of Action 2001-2015 includes the following targets:

- Increasing girls' Net Enrolment Rate (NER) to 96% by 2009
- Ensuring that 50% of teachers are female by 2009
- Achievement of EFA Goal 5; Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
- Ensuring primary education for all girls by 2015
- Achieving 66% and 75% female literacy rate by 2009 and 2015 respectively

Following a comprehensive gender audit of the Basic and Primary Education Programme Phase II (BPEP-II) programme in 2002, the then Ministry of Education and Sport (MOES) developed a Strategic Implementation Plan for Gender Equality in Girls' Education (SIPGE), covering the period 2005-2015. The SIPGE is an impressive and ambitious document, and is described in the foreword as an overarching document to achieve EFA Goal Number Five. Gender equality is defined in this plan as a matter of equal opportunity with no discrimination, equal treatment, equal support and cooperation, equal investment and equal achievement. Sixteen 'major strategies and programmes' are set out, all of which are directly relevant to the SSRP; see Box 1.

- Coordination and collaboration
- Gender Equality Information system for access and retention
- Encouragement and support
- Improvement in physical environment of school
- Improvement in teaching and learning methods
- Parental empowerment
- Special programme
- Gender mainstreaming in education
- Community mobilisation
- Increasing number of female teachers
- Strengthening Capacity and Career Development
- Providing counselling services
- Participation of girls
- Advocacy
- Monitoring
- Financial management/arrangements

Box 1: Major strategies and programmes of SIPGEGE (2007)

Some of the items in Box 1 are cross-cutting institutional strategies, such as monitoring, while others are specific commitments and targets regarding aspects of school provision. As the SIPGEGE is still current, it provides a useful framework against which to analyse the SSRP. On the other hand, there appears to be no MOE/DOE provision for monitoring progress against SIPGEGE. Officials in monitoring and evaluation units in both the MOE and DOE maintain that it does not fall within their area of responsibility and that their current workload is such that they could not take on such a role. This is a major institutional weakness with regard to gender equality efforts.

2 Scope and methodology

2.1 Terms of reference

The full terms of reference for this Gender Audit are contained in Appendix 1. They are very comprehensive, so in view of the limited time available for the audit it was agreed at initial informal briefings with the commissioning clients to focus on basic education and institutional factors within the education sector and pertaining to the donors themselves. During these initial discussions the quality of education emerged as a priority area for the audit. The extent to which schooling education inspires and empowers girl students, rather than merely reproducing gender inequalities from wider society, is an important gender dimension of educational quality.

2.2 Design and methods

The Gender Audit consultants used mixed methods to achieve the objectives laid out in the Terms of Reference. This involved collection and analysis of primary as well as secondary data from relevant sources at the national, district and school levels. The audit design was aimed at ensuring the validity of data and rigour in analysis.

Sampling

At the outset, a list of key MOE officers was drawn up, following initial consultation with DPs. 'Snowball technique' was then used, with early interviews generating further recommendations as to who should be involved in the audit. The consultants were also able to consult a wider group of DPs at the JCM which took place 11th - 13th December, 2011. For field visits, purposive sampling was used. The sampling requirements were to identify districts with primary GPIs of less than 1.0 from different ecological zones which were reasonably accessible from Kathmandu. Districts with primary GPIs of less than 1.0 were chosen because it was thought they would assist consultants to understand the challenges involved in promoting gender equality in basic education. It was decided to visit at least one SSRP pilot district. The accessibility criterion was necessary due to the very limited time available for the field visits. After applying these requirements, three districts were selected:

Districts selected for field visits			
District	Ecological Zone	Primary GPI less than 1.0?	SSRP Pilot District?
Lalitpur	Kathmandu Valley	Yes	No
Kaski	Hill	Yes	No
Kapilvastu	Terai	Yes	Yes

There were three main sources of data; semi structured interviews and focus group discussion, document analysis and observation:

Interviews and focus groups

Semi structured interviews were conducted at national and district levels; see Appendix 2 for a list. Separate checklists were developed for interviews with different types of stakeholder. Altogether the consultants spoke to about 80 individuals, most individually and some in small groups. They included stakeholders of different types in the government education system at national, district and school levels, stakeholders from MOF, NPC and MOWSCW, gender specialists and consultants working on education, and representatives of several international NGOs working in the education sector. Unfortunately it was not possible to talk to any school students, because most of the schools visited turned out to be closed after examinations. In addition, a focus group discussion was planned and held with Gender Focal Points in MOE/DOE.

Analysis of documents

Quantitative information was analysed, including the Draft Flash Report I 2011, the Status Report 2011, as well as data in related documents such as and the Annual Strategic Implementation Plan 2011-2012. During field visits, efforts were also made to obtain relevant data at the local level which were then analysed for gender gaps in relation to various indicators. To complement the quantitative data and permit analysis of the trends and processes that underlie gendered education outcomes to date, qualitative data was gathered to provide insights into implementation and outcomes, concerning aspects such as: institutional factors, the girl-friendliness of schools, the gender sensitivity of curricula and learning materials, and the gender sensitivity of teachers. This was done through interviews and through analysing study reports, periodic/progress reports and guidelines that relate to the implementation of the SSRP to date; see Appendix 3 for a list. As specified in the

TOR, the BPEP-II Gender Audit (2002), Strategic Implementation Plan for Gender Equality in Girls' Education (2007) and reports analysing Gender Responsive Budgeting Analysis were also reviewed in order to assess the extent to which they are reflected in SSRP strategies and current institutional arrangements.

Observation

Several schools were visited, and three lessons were observed in a school in Kaski district. There was also an unexpected opportunity to observe two teacher professional development sessions and interact with the participants, who were teachers and NFE facilitators.

2.3 Brief conceptual note

It may be helpful to make a few brief comments at the outset on how gender issues have been conceptualised throughout this audit. A gender perspective is concerned with policies and practices that adversely affect boys as well as those that have a negative impact on girls. In broad terms, a 'gender issue' is any issue that affects males and females differently. A gender issue may impact disproportionately on females or on males. In practice in Nepal, gender imbalances have historically been heavily in favour of males, so gender issues that affect girls and women negatively are the main focus of this report.

Nepal is a multi-ethnic and multilingual country with many ethnic and caste groups. In general Dalits (who represent 13 per cent of the population), ethnic minorities and Madhesis (people inhabiting the Terai) are identified as disadvantaged groups in Nepal (SSRP:16). Tackling social exclusion based on caste and ethnicity is generally regarded as a political and development priority. Other factors that shape educational disadvantage include language (according to the Gender and Vulnerable Communities Framework 92 different languages have been recorded among the Nepalese population), geographical location, low income and disability. Girls and women comprise about 50 per cent of any disadvantaged group and they usually suffer from various types of gender discrimination on top of the disadvantages involved in other dimensions of their intersectional identities. Both men and women from excluded groups lack a voice in political and social institutions, and do not have equal opportunities with their counterparts in other groups. That said, it should not always be assumed that women in dominant social groups enjoy higher status and conditions as women. For instance, women in the most privileged Hindu castes generally enjoy less personal freedom than their counterparts in Tibeto-Burmese ethnic minorities (Rothchild, 2006). When reading this report, the often complex

intersectional nature of gendered social disadvantage in Nepal needs to be borne in mind, although an analysis of patterns of exclusion and inequality fall outside the remit of this audit.

Gender sensitivity and gender empowerment

For the purpose of this audit, the concept of 'gender sensitivity' is conceived as having three dimensions: women's representation; the incorporation of gender concerns in planning, programmes and implementation mechanisms; and the actions and attitudes of decision-makers (Acharya et al., 2007). Gender empowerment, which is an important concept in relation to the quality of education, is seen as a dynamic process that enhances women's ability to bring about change; it involves making institutions and decision-making processes more inclusive of women.

2.4 Enabling factors and constraints

The audit consultants were greatly assisted in their enquiries by certain senior MOE/DOE officials. In general, stakeholders of all backgrounds were helpful. There were also certain constraints that hampered the consultants. Chief among these was the unavailability of certain key documents. Despite the Nepalese consultants' best efforts, several could only be obtained through unofficial channels and arrived rather late in the audit process. The consultants' joint efficiency during field visits in Kapilvastu and Kaski districts was hampered by the lack of funding for an interpreter to work with the international consultant. However, this report shows that these constraints were not insuperable.

3 Overview of Gender Issues in the Education Sector

3.1 Introduction

This chapter contains a condensed summary of the main gender issues in Nepal's schools today. The focus is on basic education, and to a lesser extent secondary education.¹ The overall goal of basic education under the SSRP is to 'ensure equitable access to quality education through a rights-based approach and establishment of a child friendly learning environment in schools' (ASIP 2011-2012). Brief comments on non-formal education (NFE) and Technical Education and Vocational Training (TEVT) are also included.

The first part of the chapter looks at progress regarding some of the most important quantitative indicators with a gender perspective; Section 3.2 concerns enrolment, Section 3.3 repetition and retention and Section 3.4 looks at learning achievements. The focus then shifts to a gender analysis of educational quality. The BPEP-II Gender Audit (2002:81) identified the perceived poor quality of schooling and poverty as the two most important barriers to parents sending their daughters to primary school. The expanded girls' scholarship scheme is a major initiative for addressing the first of these barriers. Meanwhile, the poor quality of education available in community schools (as government schools are known in Nepal) continues to be a concern to several of the stakeholders interviewed during the audit. The ASIP 2011-2012 mentions widespread problems of poor reading skills, outdated teaching methods and limited use of child-centred pedagogy (21). Such poor quality education is likely to deter parents of girls from sending them to school more than it deters boys' parents, because of the perceived lower value of girls' education² and the fact that girl children's domestic and childcare work are seen as vital contributors to the livelihood security of poor households. In other words, educational quality is often a gender-intensified issue.

There is another important gender dimension to educational quality. As with schools in any country, Nepal's schools are gendered institutions that reflect and reproduce gender relations from wider society (Rothchild, 2006:15). At the same time, people and practices in schools can have an enormous impact in terms of reducing gender

¹ In the reformed school system, Grades 1-8 constitute basic education while secondary education comprises Grades 9-12.

² For instance, the DEO in Kapilvastu reports that many parents in the district question the value of a school education for their children, especially daughters.

inequalities. This means it is important to consider the extent to which school experiences are empowering for girls.

According to the SSRP Status Report 2011, the four basic aspects of educational quality are; teaching, textbooks and instructional materials, the learning environment and school management. Section 3.5 contains a brief review of gender aspects of teaching in schools. Section 3.6 looks at textbooks and instructional materials and also includes a comment about school curricula. Section 3.7 covers gender dimensions of the learning environment in schools. Institutional issues concerning school management are dealt with in Chapter 5, so they are not covered here. Section 3.8 contains an overview of key gender issues affecting NFE and TEVT. The chapter ends with broad conclusions and recommendations (Section 3.9).

3.2 Enrolment Indicators

Indicator (national)	2010-11 (MOE, 2011a)			2010-11 (MOE, 2011a)		
	% of Girls	% of Boys	GPI	% of Girls	% of Boys	GPI
NIR in Grade 1	88.4	89.5	0.98	90.2	91.2	0.99
NER (Primary)	93.6	95.3	1.02	94.5	95.6	0.99
GER (Primary)	144.8	134.5	1.07	141.2	131	1.08
NER (Basic)	85.1	86.8	0.98	86.1	87	0.99
GER (Basic)	128.7	120.3	1.06	128.6	119.1	1.07
NER (Lower secondary)	68.5	70	0.98	69.5	70.5	0.99
GER (Lower secondary)	97	92.1	1.05	104.1	96	1.08

Table 1: Key gender-disaggregated enrolment indicators for 2010-2012

Table 1 contains key gender-disaggregated enrolment indicators for 2010-2012. For both the years for which data is provided, there are significant differences between GPIs for gross and net enrolment rates at primary, basic and lower secondary levels. Given that repetition rates for girl and boy students seem to be very similar (see Section 3.3 below), this suggests that a large number of over-age girls entered the system in these years, but it is not possible to say for certain what has driven that.

The Draft Flash Report 2011-2012 gives the Gender Parity Index (GPI) in NER as 0.99 for all levels except higher secondary (1.03) and notes that this is a significant improvement in gendered access since the previous school year. In this particular

school year, girls constituted almost 50.4% of total school enrolments and close to 50 per cent at all levels of the school system. This is a continuation of a recent positive trend. For instance, since 2005, the gender gap in primary school enrolment has decreased from a 6.7 per cent gap in favour of boys in 2005 to a 1.1 per cent gap in favour of boys in 2011. For lower secondary level, the scale of the decrease has been very similar, from 6.7 per cent in 2005 to 1 per cent in 2011, although the enrolment numbers are smaller. This trend of a narrowing gender gap has been accompanied by a marked increase in NER over the same period for students of both sexes for both primary and lower secondary levels, although there are still many out-of-school children³. In summary, the overall picture for gendered enrolment trends in Nepal is very positive. However there are some complicating factors which mean that the national average GPI needs to be interpreted with care:

First, institutional schools (as private schools are known in Nepal) are very popular. A look at the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination results for 2010 is enough to explain why; while almost 86 per cent of institutional school students passed the SLC, only 46.7 per cent of community schools students did so (Nepal Education in Figures at a Glance, 2011). In general there is a strong cultural norm of 'son preference' in Nepal that influences parental choices for their children's education. Parental preference for sending sons to institutional schools is one example of this general pattern. Son preference in education is linked to the practice of girls marrying young and moving to the husband's household, so that investing in daughters' education is not seen as worthwhile as investing in sons' education. Table 2 contains data on the proportions of girls and boys enrolled in community and institutional schools.

Types of schools	Primary (1-5)			Lower Secondary (6-8)			Basic (1-8)		
	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total
All types of Community	87.9	84.0	86.0	87.4	83.2	85.3	87.7	83.8	85.8
Institutional	12.1	16.0	14.0	12.6	16.8	14.7	12.3	16.2	14.2

Table 2: Gender-disaggregated shares of enrolments by types of schools and levels (MOE, 2011a)

The data in Table 2 shows that, across all levels nationally, just over 12 per cent of school-going girls are enrolled in institutional schools, compared with around 16 per

³ These figures are taken from an analysis of Consolidated Report 2010 and Flash I report (2011) by Finnish Cooperation.

cent of boys. The proportions are much higher in the Kathmandu Valley, where 65 per cent of girls enrolled at primary school and 71 per cent of boys enrolled at primary school are attending institutional schools (MOE, 2011a).⁴ UNICEF has noted the preponderance of boys in institutional schools as a matter of concern (UNICEF Education Programme, 2011). GON encouragement and support to institutional schools has gender equity implications, given that girls constitute less than 50 per cent of their students.

Because of these issues, the GPI is not a straightforward indicator of gender parity in educational opportunities. Moreover, although the EMIS figures are meant to cover institutional as well as community schools, not all institutional schools supply enrolment figures for EMIS (stakeholder interview). Given the preponderance of boys in institutional schools, this distorts the GPI for all types of schools.

Variations in the GPI

Many factors influence gendered access to schooling, including rural/urban location, development/ecological region, caste and ethnicity (Acharya et al., 2007). For instance, the national average GPI obscures variations among different geographical areas: see Table 3.

Dev Region	Total		Basic		Secondary	
	Girl %	Total	Girl %	Total	Girl %	Total
Total	50.1	7782219	50.2	6651883	49.3	1130336
East	51.3	1635674	51.0	1384185	52.8	251489
Cent	49.3	2524146	49.3	2179122	49.2	345024
KV	49.0	524538	48.7	413718	50.1	110820
West	50.5	1518671	50.4	1264337	51.0	254334
MW	50.0	1229030	50.8	1068035	44.9	160995
FW	49.7	874698	50.4	756204	44.7	118494

Table 3: GPI in NER for basic and secondary levels, by development region

There are also marked differences in GPIs among Nepal's many ethnic minorities. The picture in this regard is very mixed, and it is beyond the scope of this report to

⁴ For instance, in rural parts of Lalitpur district, parents prefer to send their sons to private schools, which affect the gendered enrolment figures in the district's government schools.

investigate these variations in detail. The main points of interest are contained in Box 2: see Appendix 4 for more information on gendered enrolment within individual Janajati groups. The precise causal factors that underlie these gendered patterns and trends are context-specific and cry out for in-depth investigation.

Dalit students

- The latest enrolment figures for Dalit students show near gender parity in basic education grades overall (Draft Flash I Report, 2011-2012: 22).
- From Grades 9-12 there is a widening gender gap in favour of boys, with an overall gender gap at secondary level of 5.5 per cent in favour of boys. The GPI for Dalit students at this level is 0.90 (GPI derived from data in Draft Flash I Report, 2011-2012: 44).

Janajati students

- For Janajati groups overall, the enrolment figures show gender gaps in favour of girls from primary to lower secondary levels, with a marked gap at lower secondary level (GPI 1.08).
- Enrolment figures for most endangered and extremely disadvantaged Janajati groups show gender gaps in favour of girls at primary level and lower secondary levels. In Grades 9-10 there is a gender gap in favour of girls in half of these groups and a gender gap in favour of boys in the other half. At Grades 11-12, though, most of these groups (16 out of 22) show a gender gap in favour of boys.
- In certain of these groups gender gaps are reversed as children proceed through the system, for instance in the case of Dhanuks, where there is a gender gap in favour of girls at primary level, changing to a gap in favour of boys at lower secondary level.
- In these groups, large numbers of children of both sexes do not graduate to secondary levels. In fact, in some of these Janajati groups no children of either sex are reported as being enrolled in secondary school.

Box 2: variations in GPI among specific social groups (Draft Flash Report I 2011-2012)

School students with disabilities: gender gap in enrolment

The enrolment figures for children with disabilities in basic education reveal an overall gender disparity of 6 per cent in favour of boys (Draft Flash Report I, 2011-2012). This represents a big improvement over the gender gap of 10 per cent recorded for 2006, but it is still a cause for concern⁵. The gender gap in enrolment of children with disabilities was mentioned in the BPEP-II Gender Audit. In particular, the audit team noted 'the lack of attention to the education of handicapped girls' (2002:8).

Many stakeholders acknowledged the significant progress that has been made in improving the national average GPI. In view of this, they advise that the best way to continue making progress is to concentrate now on disadvantaged groups and areas where the GPI is lower than the national average. According to the GSEAU (2010) the EMIS needs to further disaggregate quantitative information and collect qualitative information regarding intersections among gender and other forms of discrimination that pattern access. It is understood that some quantitative information of this type is available already but is not included in the Flash reporting system (stakeholder interview in DOE).

3.3 Repetition and retention in school

The repetition of grades and graduation rates are indicators of educational quality and children's attendance. School drop-out rates, meanwhile, 'reflect the inability of the education system to retain children's interest or counteract other social and economic pressures that may push them out of school' (Subrahmanian, 2002:21) Box 3 contains related data from the Draft Flash I Report 2011-2012:

⁵ These figures are taken from an analysis of Consolidated Report 2010 Flash I report (2011) by Finnish Cooperation and an analysis of the Draft Flash I Report 2011-2012.

- Total repetition rates across Grades 1-5 are very similar for girls and boys (11.4 per cent for girls and 11.5 for boys). For several years there has been a trend of falling Grade 1 and Grade 5 repetition and drop-out rates (SSRP Status Report 2011).
- Promotion rates for Grades 6-8 are almost identical for boys and girls (88.0 per cent for girls and 88.1 per cent for boys). Since 2007, girls have had a slightly better promotion rate than boys.
- The gendered survival rates to Grade 5 are 81.7% for boys and 84.3% for girls.
- The graduation rate at basic level (grades 1-8) is 58.8% with 60.2% for girls and 57.7% for boys

Box 3: Gender-disaggregated indicators on repetition and retention in schools

The figures in Box 3 indicate that girls are doing slightly better than boys in the basic education system. However, the likely distorting effect of son preference in the matter of private schooling, for which complete data is not available, should be borne in mind when they are interpreted. It may be that some boys are being withdrawn from community schools in order to attend institutional schools. It is also likely that some boys are dropping out of school in order to take up paid work. Also, during field visits in Kapilvastu District, teachers in one school reported that girls, in particular, are commonly promoted even if they fail examinations, in order to prevent them from becoming discouraged and dropping out.⁶ This indicates a preoccupation with promotion rather than genuine assessments of student learning. It should be stressed that these comments came from staff in a single school. However, if such liberal attitudes to girls' promotion are widespread they will mask poor learning achievements for girls. On the whole though, with a gender perspective these figures are encouraging.

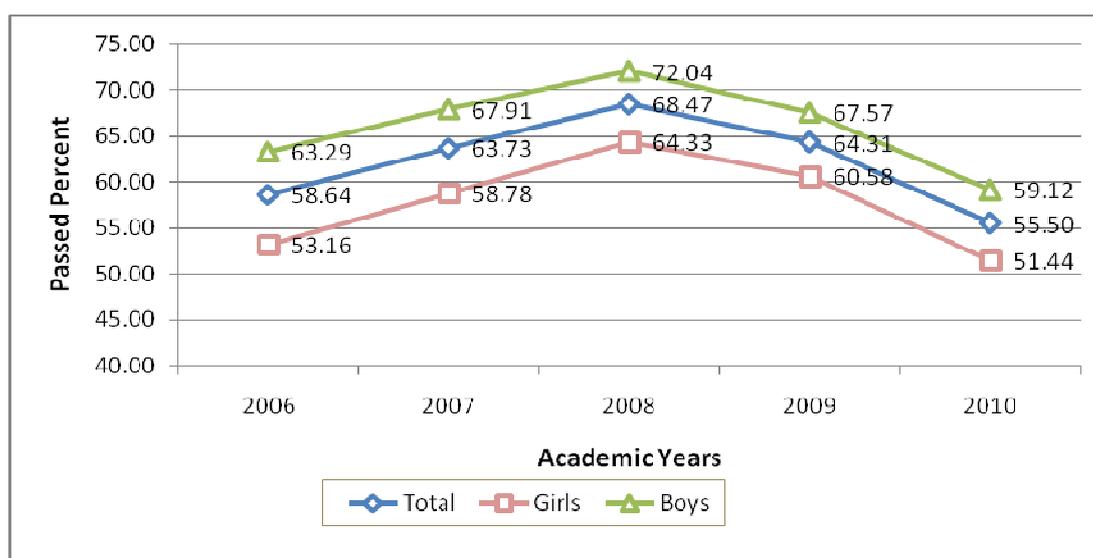
3.4 Learning achievements

Learning achievements at Grades 5 and 8 are not gender-disaggregated in the ASIP 2011-2012. The only data that could be obtained on this (DOE, 2008) is at national level only and shows little difference in girls' and boys' scores. According to this data, boys do slightly better in Mathematics, while girls do slightly better in English and Nepal and girls' and boys' average scores were the same for both Science and Environment and Social Studies. The ASIP (2011-2012) contains commitments to support teachers in raising students' learning achievements in Grades 5 and 8, for instance through the Teacher Professional Development Module. The targets are very ambitious, and they will require rapid and substantial gains in the quality of education. Addressing any gender-specific factors that depress learning achievements for either girls or boys would help in their attainment. There is a pressing need for disaggregated information on learning achievements to be made available, so that any differences related to gender, ethnic and social group or region can be identified.

Although this chapter is mainly concerned with basic education, the SLC pass results for community schools cannot go unremarked. In 2010 there was a gender gap in the pass rate of almost 7 per cent in favour of boys, and the graph below shows that overall pass rates have been declining steeply over the last few years (Ministry of

⁶ This is an area where girls' early marriage is a common cause of girls dropping out of school, and staff seem to see liberal promotion policies as one way of counteracting this pressure on girls.

Education, 2011a). In private schools the pass rates for both girls and boys was much higher, but even so there was still a gender gap of 4 per cent in favour of boys. Although the gender gap in pass rates has recently reduced, in a context of decline for both girls and boys this is not a positive development. The disappointing disparity between girls' and boys' SLC pass rates is a serious cause for concern. As girls and boys perform equally well overall in Grade 8 examinations (DOE, 2008), it suggests that things go badly wrong for girl students in the intervening Grades.



The absence of aggregated data on school attendance is a related problem. Field visits in two very different districts revealed marked gender differences in attendance in some cases (based on school stakeholder interviews, examination of class registers and class observations)⁷. While these findings cannot be extrapolated to other districts and schools, they are supported by stakeholder interviews, and at the very least they indicate the possibility that girls' poor attendance may undermine learning achievements for girls at higher Grades, offering a partial explanation for the gender gap in SLC pass rates. It is understood that many grass-roots campaigning activities are under way to improve girls' school attendance, but the scale and impact of such initiatives is not known.

Stakeholder interviews also indicate that girls' household responsibilities impact negatively on their learning achievements. Even when girls are in school, they are said to be often fatigued. Such problems are best addressed through awareness-raising in communities. Remedial teaching would be another way of addressing girls'

⁷ For instance, examination of the Grade 5 class register in one Kapilvastu school showed that 17 per cent of Grade 5 students had been absent from school for 10 days or more in September 2011. Most of the absent students were reported to be from Dalit households and 64 per cent of these non-attending students were girls.

poor learning achievements arising from these household pressures. Currently though, remedial work for students who have fallen behind, either integrated into normal lessons or in the form of special interventions, is not common practice in Nepalese community schools. It is not clear that teachers have the necessary skills to undertake such remedial work. In the case of remedial work during normal lessons, other factors, such as poor classroom facilities, large class sizes and a lack of suitable teaching and learning materials, also represent serious challenges.

3.5 Teachers and teaching

Teachers and their interactions with students are among the most important aspects of schooling experiences because they help to shape students' gendered performance and expectations. In this section, the low proportion of teachers who are women is discussed. This is then followed by a review of gender issues concerning teacher-student interactions.

Low representation of women in teaching profession

According to the Draft Flash Report for 2011-2012, in community schools women comprise 37.5% of teachers at primary level, 20.1% at lower secondary level and 13.9% at secondary level.⁸ Moreover, there are still thousands of community schools without a single female teacher.⁹ The proportion of teachers who are women is much higher in the Kathmandu Valley than in other development regions, and double the proportion in the Far West development region (MOE, 2011a). In addition, significant within-district disparities exist: women teachers tend to be clustered in urban areas.¹⁰ Many previous reviews have highlighted the low proportions of women teachers as a serious gender problem affecting the sector. Women's participation in the education sector as teachers, as well as in other paid and voluntary positions, is an equal opportunities issue. The institutional processes underlying their low participation are discussed in Chapter 5. In this section though, the focus is on the role of female teachers in creating girl-friendly schools, in other words transforming schools into places of positive and empowering learning

⁸ The proportions of female teachers in all types of schools (that is, both schools run by government and private schools) are somewhat better: 42.2% at primary level, although only 27.1% at lower secondary level and 17.6% at secondary level.

⁹ For instance, in Kapilvastu, DEO officials reported that about 36% of the 411 schools in the district lack female teachers employed on government contracts, although they may have some women teachers employed directly by communities, and this is also a problem in Lalitpur district in the Kathmandu Valley.

¹⁰ For instance, according to DEO officials in Kaski, the vast majority of female teachers in the district are working in Pokhara schools rather than in rural areas.

experiences for girl students. The authors of the SIPGEGE (2007) point out that several studies have shown improved enrolment and retention rates for girls in schools with female teachers. The specific factors involved are listed in Box 4.

- Girl students find it easier to talk to female teachers about their problems (SIPGEGE, 2007:31).
- The presence of female teachers helps to create an atmosphere of security (SIPGEGE, 2007:31).
- Female teachers are more effective than their male colleagues in boosting enrolment and attendance, because they are more active than male teachers in visiting children's homes (CERID, 2009).
- At higher grades, female teachers can give support and counselling to girl students on sensitive gender issues such as menstruation, gender-based bullying and sexual harassment (stakeholder interviews).
- Female teachers act as positive role models for girl students, thus helping to raise their career aspirations (Rothchild, 2006).

Box 4: Why female teachers are important to girl-friendly schools

Increasing the proportion of female teachers at all levels is a powerful strategy for promoting gender equality in Nepal's schools and related policy provisions have been in place for some time (Chapter 5).

Teacher-student classroom interactions

There is evidence (e.g. Rothchild, 2006) that teachers in some schools tend to favour boys in their classroom interactions by paying them more attention than girls. This is supported by a very small number of lesson observations undertaken by the audit consultants during field visits, during which interactions between the teacher and the students were methodically documented and analysed. The findings of these observations were quite striking. For instance, the teachers observed asked boys to answer questions more often than they asked girls, and checked boys' work more often than they checked girls' work; see Appendix 5.

On the other hand, corporal punishment by teachers is reported to be a gender issue that negatively affects boys, because they are much more likely than girls to be punished in this way. It is understood that policies have already been developed to end corporal punishment in schools, but in practice it is likely to persist for some time.

3.6 Textbooks, instructional materials and the curricula

As part of this audit, consultants reviewed a sample of school textbooks to analyse how gender roles and relations are depicted. Our review found that on the whole males and females are represented in a balanced manner and most of the textbooks reviewed are free from harmful gender stereotypes. On the other hand, a few textbooks still feature stereotypical presentations of men and women's roles. More detailed findings are contained in Appendix 6. Our findings are broadly in line with previous reports which applaud the progress that has been made in incorporating gender sensitivity and banishing negative gender stereotypes from textbooks in Nepalese schools (e.g. UNFPA, 2007). This is a real achievement, especially given the apparent lack of specific training in how to develop gender-sensitive textbooks.

Other than textbooks, few learning materials have been sighted during this audit. However, classroom visual aids on display in the DOE indicate that progress could be made in the design of posters so that they inspire and empower girls as well as boys. For instance, posters showing important Nepalese figures in various fields and periods of history hardly feature women at all. It could be argued that such imbalances merely reflect historical reality. However efforts could be made to research and celebrate important Nepalese women, in order to provide positive role models for girl students. This point has already been made (Education Sector Advisory Team, 2004).

School curricula

According to a recent report (GESAU, 2010), the curricula still need strengthening to promote gender quality and social inclusion. A major curriculum development and integration initiative is underway as part of the SSRP (ASIP 2011-2012:25). A gender analysis of school curricula commissioned by the DOE's Curriculum Development Centre several years ago (Ghimire-Niraula, 2004) contains a comprehensive list of recommendations: Appendix 7 contains selected recommendations from that study, which remain valid today as guidelines for curriculum developers. They cover generic issues such as eliminating masculine bias and the use of gender-disaggregated and gender-sensitive language.

3.7 The learning environment

This section concentrates on certain gender-specific dimensions of the physical and social learning environment in schools. These are gender-intensified issues, because of the generally lower demand for girls' education. Although there is

evidence of gender parity in enrolment, a range of household and community factors combine to keep enrolled girls away from school on any particular day. They include mothers' reliance on daughters to help with childcare, household tasks and religious and cultural observances, as well as girls' early marriage in some parts of the country. Improving school environments can help to counteract such forces by increasing the value that girls and their parents set on schooling.

Poor sanitary facilities in schools

The lack of separate girls' and boys' toilets and school water supplies is especially damaging for girls in higher grades, and also affects female teachers. Menstruating girls and women badly need such facilities, and their absence affects girls' school attendance and learning achievements. This is because girls may stay away from school altogether during their periods or leave during the day in order to change and wash. Some schools in Kapilvastu are reported to provide sanitary towels to girls (stakeholder interviews); this is an interesting example of good practice. The provision of separate toilets for male and female students under the SSRP is a visible achievement in several of the schools visited in the course of this audit. However, although rapid progress is being made, there is still a long way to go before all schools are covered.¹¹

Classroom seating arrangements

Classroom observations carried out as part of this audit showed that, in every classroom visited, girls were seated in the back rows of the classroom. The extent of this practice in Nepal cannot be gauged from a small number of observations. Neither is it clear whether the practice arises from girls' inclination literally to 'take a back seat', traditional cultural practices or some other factor. Whatever the reasons, having girls seated at the back of a classroom reinforces the idea that their needs are less important than boys'. Dark and noisy classrooms with very high teacher student ratios are common in Nepal's schools. In such conditions, the practice of girls sitting at the back is also likely to interfere with girls' learning achievements.

Gender-based bullying and sexual harassment

According to a senior DOE official, teasing and bullying of girl students by fellow students and outsiders is likely to be a hidden problem in Nepal's schools (stakeholder interview). It is reported that in some schools without a compound wall or fence, outsiders are able to enter the school compound and harass girl students.

¹¹ In Kapilvastu, for instance, only 100 out of the district's 411 schools have separate girls' and boys' toilets yet.

This means that the physical protection of school compounds is a gender issue. At the time of writing, the organisation Him Rights is investigating gender-based violence and harassment affecting girls and young women; Box 5 contains the most relevant initial findings. Once available, the complete study findings should be very valuable in helping education managers improve the quality of girls' school experiences and outcomes.

Him Rights' study focusses on seven Terai districts; Bara, Parsa, Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Kailali and Kanchanpur. The research targeted both school going and out of school girls aged 13 to 19 years. The research explored sexual violence against girls in the home, community and on the way to school/work. These are the initial findings that are most relevant to this gender audit:

- Some of the girls interviewed reported cases of gender-based harassment in schools, such 'teasing' and undue physical contact by boy students and male teachers.
- Girl students tend not to report such incidents because they fear their own reputations will suffer, and because they do not know who they should talk to within the school.
- There are no mechanisms for dealing with such incidents in schools.

Box 5: Main initial findings of Him Rights study on gender-based violence

3.8 NFE and TEVT

NFE

Women comprise the majority of illiterate adults, and female illiteracy rates tend to be especially high in marginalised and excluded groups. Women, therefore, are the primary target group of NFE interventions.¹² The women's literacy program aims to make women students functionally literate, raise their awareness level and enhance their income-generating skills. Thus, with a gender perspective NFE is a very significant element of Nepal's education sector. As part of this audit, textbooks used in the Basic Literacy and Women's Literacy programme were analysed. They were

¹² Post literacy (known as Women's Education) and Income generation is totally focused on women. A total of 12,000 NFE facilitators are conducting 36,000 literacy classes which comprises mostly women. Similarly 68,770 participants of skill development training (post literacy program) and 22,950 members of income generation group are totally represented by women.

found to be gender-sensitive and free from gender bias (Appendix 8). Certain institutional constraints on the effectiveness of NFE in Nepal are raised in Chapter Five and are covered in more detail in Appendix 8.

Technical and vocational training

The GON has introduced a policy to expand technical and vocational training. The Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) is responsible for policy formulation, coordination and program implementation. CTEVT is currently offering technical education through trade schools, and annex programs through secondary schools. Increasing numbers of privately managed technical and vocational training centres are also operating. A recent study shows the number of females in vocational and livelihood courses increasing from 24.8 % in 2008 to 39.5% in 2010 (CTEVT Research and Information Division, 2011). This is a rapid positive trend and one that indicates women's rising interest in entering the job market. However the proportion of female students on these courses is still small compared to male students. As for students graduating from Diploma courses, the GPI is 1.12. The gendered distribution of students on individual courses conforms very strongly to occupational gender stereotypes. For instance, 100 per cent of Nursing Diploma students are women, while conversely 100 per cent of Mechanical Engineering Diploma students are men. Occupational choice in Nepal is closely bound up with intersectional gendered identities. With a gender equity perspective, it is important to plan future TEVT in such a way that it enables both male and female students from all social backgrounds to move away from gender-biased provision and structures. Appendix 9 contains gender-disaggregated data on graduates of vocational and livelihood training provided by various agencies, as well as gender-disaggregated data on Diploma students.

Female trainees are mainly confined to gender stereotypical areas such as agriculture, food processing and making garments. For example: in the 52 types of skills training provided by CTEVT constituted/affiliated technical schools in 2010, 70 per cent of female participants were confined to training in skills such as agriculture, bee keeping, hand embroidery, horticulture and food production. The remainder were thinly distributed over other types of training. Women are less likely than men to participate in the more expensive training courses. For example, in the training courses provided by the Nepal Academy of Tourism and Hotel Management in 2010, of the 1847 trainees, only 316 were female. Of these, only 32 were enrolled in courses which cost 10,000 NPR or more, compared to 327 males. The rest of the females were enrolled on courses costing 7,000 NPR or less.

Recently, the CTEVT has started to keep gender disaggregated data on participants in training programs, which is a positive development. It is understood that no study on the gendered impact of training programmes on employment and earnings has yet been carried out.

3.9 Chapter conclusions and recommendations

Across Nepal as a whole gender parity in school enrolment has been achieved and girls' promotion, drop-out and survival rates in basic education compare well with those of boys. This represents substantial gains in recent years. There is a need for Grade 5 and 8 pass rates to be gender-disaggregated in SSRP reports so that any gender disparities can be tackled in the course of improving overall pass rates at these levels.

Table 4 provides an overview of critical gender aspects of quality education in Nepal's schools: issues relating to school management are dealt with in Chapter 5.¹³

Dimension of educational quality	Critical aspects with gender perspective
Physical school environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Separate toilets and washing facilities ▪ Fenced compound ▪ Classroom seating arrangements: do girls always sit at the back?
School planning & management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strength of women's voices on School Management Committee/Parent Teachers' Associations ▪ Gender sensitivity and capacity of DEO officials
Learning environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proportion of women teachers ▪ Gender sensitivity of teacher-student interactions in and outside classrooms ▪ Use of corporal punishment
Curricula	<p>For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is gender-specific language used? ▪ Presence or absence of gender bias, e.g. gender balance in characters depicted
Teaching and learning materials, inc. textbooks	<p>Presence or absence of gender bias e.g. gender stereotypes, gender balance in characters, etc.</p>
School social environment	<p>Sexual harassment and gender-based bullying and violence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are there school-level mechanisms to deal with incidents? ▪ Is there a code of conduct for students and teachers that covers these matters?

¹³ There is a dearth of information covering some quality aspects of basic and secondary education in Nepal, to complement the EMIS data. A report compiled for UNESCO in Nepal (Parajuli and Acharya, 2006) sets out several suggested indicators for measuring the gender equality aspects of Nepal's schools. As well as the usual quantitative indicators, they include measures of teachers' attitudes and gender-based discrimination, based on a ratings scale.

Household factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parent's expectations of sons and daughters regarding paid employment, domestic and childcare responsibilities, and religious and cultural observances: effects on attendance and opportunity to learn ▪ Presence or absence of policies on remedial teaching to counteract effects of poor attendance
Social factors	<p>Social norms and expectations re. gendered roles and behaviour, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Son preference ▪ Expectations of girls' early marriage ▪ Attitudes to sexual harassment ▪ Expectations re. employment

Table 4: Critical gender aspects of quality education

Chapter recommendations

The analysis in this chapter gives rise to several recommendations:¹⁴

The gender gap in the enrolment of students with disabilities needs to be investigated and steps taken to reduce it, for instance through information and community mobilization campaigns. It is an issue that could usefully be addressed by the new district-level Gender Equity Networks (Chapter 6).

There is a pressing need for disaggregated information on learning achievements to be made available, so that any differences related to gender, ethnic and social group or region can be identified. As well as finely disaggregated quantitative information, qualitative information is also needed, in order to throw light on the precise causal factors that underlie gendered patterns and trends in specific Janajati groups.

A longitudinal qualitative study following a sample of male and female students between Grades 8 and the SLC examination could be very illuminating in regard to the causes of the gender gap in SLC pass rates.

Increasing the proportion of teachers who are women is a major priority and is discussed further in Chapter 6.

The practice of girls sitting at the back of the classroom should be addressed. Teachers, Head Teachers and School Management Committees (SMCs) need to be made aware of how this practice, as well as teachers' behaviour, affects girls' and boys', and they need to be supported in the creation of more gender-sensitive learning environments. The related issues of teacher training and professional development are also mentioned in Chapter 5.

¹⁴ Providing separate toilets for girls and boys as well as water for washing is already an important area of activity in SSRP (Chapter 5).

The use of corporal punishment is likely to persist in schools for some time, despite its official banning. This could be monitored through a qualitative study involving students.

Nepal's school textbooks are a success story in terms of avoiding gender bias. Officers in the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) are to be congratulated for their efforts over the years in this regard. The observed gender bias in school visual aids mentioned in this chapter can be addressed by gender sensitivity training for materials developers.

Another possibility, one which would require very little in the way of resources, would be to adapt the generic recommendations of the curriculum review carried out in 2004 (Ghimire-Niraula, 2004) into simple guidelines for all officials concerned with materials development. These same recommendations would be a useful reference point for further SSRP initiatives on reforming the curriculum.

The report of the Him Rights study on gender-based violence and sexual harassment is likely to contain recommendations relevant to schools. MOE/DOE officials need to be made aware of the findings, which could be used to help in the formulation of appropriate policies for dissemination to DEOs and schools.

4 Gender Analysis of School Sector Reform Programme plans

4.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the SSRP and related plans and reports with a gender perspective. Section 4.2 contains remarks about how gender issues are incorporated and addressed in such documents. Section 4.3 is concerned with the implementation of two SSRP activities related to gender objectives; the girls' scholarship scheme and the provision of separate toilets for girls. The next section (4.4) contains comments on monitoring and reporting. Section 4.5 looks at Gender Responsive Budgeting, a tool applied to MOE and other line ministry budgets in Nepal, and the chapter ends with conclusions and recommendations (4.6).

4.2 Treatment of gender issues in SSRP-related plans and reports

This section contains a gender analysis of the SSRP plan document and other related planning documents, in particular the Annual Strategic Implementation Plan (ASIP) 2011-2012 and the SSRP Status Report 2011. The authors of the SSRP plan document comment that 'key policy goals and values, such as the right to education, gender parity, inclusion and equity have guided the preparation process and have been integrated as strategic interventions in the Plan', and a Gender and Social Inclusion thematic group was involved in the Plan's development. Be that as it may, commitments to gender parity and equity do not come across as strongly as they could do in the planning documents reviewed. There is no evidence of alignment with the commitments of the SIPGEGE (2007), a plan which is intended to run until 2015. One concern is that the Equity and Social Inclusion commitments in basic and secondary education appear to be confined to addressing problems relating to teachers. There are also certain other problems with the way gender issues are articulated in the plans reviewed, which are summarised here:

Lack of gender-disaggregation

Many objectives and indicators are not gender-disaggregated. For instance, in Table 1.1 of the SSRP, none of the key SSR indicators tabled (e.g. Grade 1 enrolment, NER, Teachers' Qualifications, Repetition and Survival Rates) are disaggregated by gender. In addition, standards for School Management and Operation do not include gender benchmarks. For instance, the standards relating to teachers make no

mention of gender-sensitivity training. Nor do standards for curricula mention gender-sensitivity or removing gender stereotypes.

Use of gender-neutral language

In both the Nepali and English versions of the SSRP plan document, goals, objectives and activities are expressed using gender-neutral language, e.g. 'children' or students rather than 'girls and boys' or 'male and female students'. Using gender specific language serves to remind stakeholders that the needs and interests of participants in the system differ to some extent, according to gender. Gender-neutral language, on the other hand, serves to obscure the gendered specificities of the plan. A reliance on gender neutral language can easily result in gender specific issues being overlooked (BPEP-II Gender Audit, 2002:56).

A related problem is that some programme components which do, in fact, promote gender equality in education are not always articulated as such in SSRP documents. The result is that the gender dimensions of some important strategies and activities are invisible. For instance, the expansion of NFE tackles gender inequalities in adult literacy because most NFE students are women, yet this is obscured by the gender-neutral language used in the plan.

Internal consistencies in treatment of key gender-related activities

The SSRP's two main strategic interventions for improving girls' access to basic education and creating girl-friendly school environments are the girls' scholarship scheme and the provision of separate toilets for girls. These are both very positive initiatives. A third important commitment under the SSRP is to increase female participation as teachers in secondary education (23). They all feature rather low in the hierarchy of the SSRP plan document. In addition, there appear to be some logical inconsistencies in the way they are incorporated into the document. The combined effect is that they are not given the prominence they deserve.

Gender and Vulnerable Communities Framework

The Gender and Vulnerable Communities Action Plan (n.d.), which relates to the Gender and Vulnerable Communities Framework (GVCF), has been produced as part of the SSRP planning process. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has recommended that it be integrated across the SSRP. The full Action Plan has not been sighted, despite efforts to obtain it. The short version of the Action Plan has been reviewed for this audit. At times it seems at times to articulate a basic misconception relating to gender issues. Women and girls are described at one point

in the plan as a 'vulnerable community' alongside ethnic minorities, Dalits and Janajati groups, rather than 50 per cent of Nepal's overall population and disadvantaged groups alike. Not all indicators are gender-disaggregated. It is possible that the approach of combining gender with social exclusion, which is currently favoured by the World Bank and the ADB, is contributing to confusion. Also, the absence of formal links between the GVCF and the SIPGEGE (2007) exacerbates inconsistency and incoherence in gender-related planning.

Certain planning documents related to SSRP, notably the School Improvement Plan (SIP) guidelines, have not been sighted during this audit, despite repeated efforts to obtain them. The SIP guidelines are currently under review and according to MOE/DOE stakeholders an updated version will soon be available. Potentially the SIP guidelines could be very useful vehicles for disseminating policies related to gender equality at school level, which is critical in view of SMCs' planning responsibilities. The guidelines are also reported to have been recently 'updated by category' (Gender and Vulnerable Communities Action Plan).

School Minimum Enabling Conditions

At the JCM (2011) the DOE set out several Priority Minimum Enabling Conditions (PMECs) for schools, one of which relates to the provision of separate toilets for girls. It is understood that the DOE is proposing to allow SMCs to implement a sub-set of these PMECS in accordance with their own analysis of school needs. There is a risk that this proposal might lead to the provision of separate girls' toilets being de-prioritised for some schools.

This survey of SSRP and related plans has highlighted several ways in which gender issues and objectives could be more clearly integrated. One of the generic weaknesses of gender mainstreaming as a strategy is that it is difficult to monitor unless the gender dimensions of objectives, activities, indicators and targets are spelled out clearly in plans, even at the highest level. If this is not done, plans and their implementation easily become 'gender-blind'. Potentially, the SSRP is a good vehicle for the implementation of SIPGEGE (2007) policy commitments. However, the fact that gender dimensions have not been systematically and explicitly integrated into the SSRP plan represents a missed opportunity for articulating and implementing the SIPGEGE (2007). In addition, the lack of an explicit connection between these two important plans and the more recent introduction of the Gender and Vulnerable Communities Plan suggests a lack of planning coherence.

MOE planners recognise that there is a need to align the various frameworks relating to the SSRP in order to make planning more coherent (JCM, 2011) and recommendations are made at the end of the chapter to aid in this process. .

It has been argued that the SSRP plan is a very high-level document and that it would be inappropriate to set out gender-specific objectives or gender-disaggregated targets at this level (stakeholder interview). However in the current situation, while senior planners and managers may understand that objectives, targets and indicators are gender disaggregated, to many stakeholders they appear to be gender-neutral. This lack of an explicit gender perspective in the plan makes it difficult to evaluate progress on gender equality in two ways. First, it enables commitments on gender equality to 'evaporate' (Moser, 2005). Second, it obscures important progress and good practice. The problem of failing to mention interventions addressing gender and social exclusion, which as a consequence are not systematically monitored or disseminated, has also been commented on elsewhere (GSEAU, 2010:16).

The next section looks at the actual implementation of two specific areas of activity.

4.3 Specific gender-related activities under the SSRP

The implementation of the girls' scholarship scheme and school toilet construction are briefly reviewed here, starting with the scholarship scheme. The girls' scholarship scheme is probably the most significant affirmative action to be undertaken so far in relation to improving school access for girls in Nepal. While such schemes have been an MOE policy tool for several years, its expansion to include all girls of basic education age, which took effect in 2011-2012, represents a bold step change as well as a huge implementation challenge. In 2011-2012, bursaries were planned for 2,330,680 girls (in Grades 1-8) and the scholarship programme budget of 142,236,000 NPR accounts for 11.5 per cent of the SSRP budget (ASIP 2011-2012). In previous years, in other words before the programme was expanded to cover all girls, there have been shortfalls in actual distribution of bursaries compared with budget allocations.

Girls' scholarship programme

A recent study of the operation and impact of the girls' scholarship scheme in 14 schools from 7 diverse districts found that the scholarships make a positive contribution to supporting girls in their studies (ERDCN, 2011: ix). According to the researchers;

The girl students and the parents expressed that the girls' scholarship had supported [them] to continue their study (84.5% girls and 78.6% parents), to be regular in the class (63.3% girls and 52.9% parents), to do better in examination (58.5% girls and 52.9% parents) and to enhance their motivation in learning (52.2% girls and 58.6% parents).

These findings, which are based on the views of the primary stakeholders of the girls' scholarship scheme, speak for themselves. In addition, before the girls' scholarship programme was expanded in 2011-2012, girls who received scholarships were less likely to drop out of school than those who did not (ERDCN, 2011). The girls' scholarship programme is one of the success stories of the SSRP.

On the other hand, some Head Teachers and SMC members argue that initiatives such as Welcome to School campaigns, school meal programmes and Food For Education, which has operated in some parts of the Terai, may have been more important than scholarships in boosting girls' enrolment.¹⁵ Moreover, the ERDCN study (2011) and other recent reports have identified some problems with the budget and implementation of the programme. Based on interviews and focus group discussions, the ERDCN study also makes suggestions for alternative ways of supporting girl students. The main findings of the study are as follows:

- Only 8.5 per cent of parents and 8.2 per cent of girl students interviewed by ERDCN think the bursaries should be available to all girls (2011); rather the consensus is that they should target girls from poor households. Accordingly, the ERDCN recommends that the scholarships should target districts and VDCs with the lowest human development indicators and low participation of girls in education. The researchers also put forward another option, namely maintaining the present coverage of girls and at the same time expanding the scheme to include boys.
- The value of the individual bursaries is far less than the direct costs of sending a girl to school (stakeholder interviews and Thapa et al., 2009). The official scholarship amount is 400 NPR, but the ERDCN researchers found that in practice the amounts received ranged from 50 NPR to 500 NPR (2011). The ERDCN has recommended that the value of the bursaries be increased to at least 1000 or 1500 NPR per year (2011:xi). Stakeholders

¹⁵ Unfortunately it has not been possible for the audit consultants to study these other initiatives due to lack of information.

interviewed in Kapilvastu for the audit suggested that 2,000 NPR would be needed to cover the actual annual costs of sending a girl to school.

- The majority of girl students interviewed by ERDCN (60.7 per cent) said they would prefer to receive support in the form of school stationery and uniforms rather than cash (ERDCN, 2011).
- Failure to communicate information about scholarships to parents has been reported (GESAU, 2010; ERDCN, 2011). There are also problems with the way scholarship bursaries are distributed, in particular uncertainty and delays in disbursement to students.¹⁶
- In many cases the number of bursaries required by individual schools has been higher than the budget allocation, due to underestimates of student enrolments. Head Teachers commonly respond by spreading the cash among a larger number of girls, which lessens the beneficial impact on individual girls' schooling and often underlies the variability in the size of bursaries.
- Some schools are reported to have misused funds by exaggerating the numbers of eligible students (GESAU, 2010).

The problems of underestimation and misdirection have been recognised for several years (e.g. UNFPA, 2007:44). The implementation shortcomings highlighted in the ERDCN review (2011) are acknowledged in the ASIP 2011-2012 (22) and guidelines are said to be under preparation in DOE, in accordance with the findings.

Toilet construction

The SSRP (79) states that;

Each school must have at least two separate toilets - one for girls and one for boys. In a Foundation School (1-3 grades) there must be at least 2 toilets, one for girls and one for boys. In a primary school (1-5 grades), there must be at least 3 toilets of which at least one must be allocated for girls. The SMC may decide use of the remaining toilet. Similarly, in an

¹⁶ During field visits undertaken for the gender audit, one Head Teacher reported that he diverts the bursaries to pay for food for girl students, rather than distributing it directly to students and parents to spend according to their own priorities. This is not in keeping with the intentions of the programme and the Head Teacher would appear to be exceeding his authority by taking this action. It is not clear how widespread such practices might be practices may be at school level.

Upper Primary School (1-8 grades) there must be at least 5 toilets of which at least two must be allocated for the girls. These toilets must also have adequate water supply including provision of detergent for cleaning. Each school must have its own source of potable water. .

The SSRP provisions relating to separate girls' toilets and school water supplies are critical to the creation of girl-friendly schools. A total of 5,500 new toilets were built in 2010-2011, achieving planning targets (SSRP Status Report 2011.)¹⁷ In 2011-2012, an additional 3,000 toilets are planned (ASIP 2011-2012). This activity benefits boys as well as girls. It can be regarded as a relatively 'quick win' in terms of promoting gender equality, because construction activities are generally easier to implement than changes in attitudes and behaviour related to deep-seated social and cultural gender norms. On the other hand, it is clear that at the current rate of progress it will be some time before all of Nepal's community schools are covered, and that this will not happen during the lifetime of the SSRP.

4.4 Information management

Documentary and interview evidence points to some generic shortcomings in the way information is processed and managed within the sector. This is a multi-dimensional, generic issue touching on monitoring and evaluation and the dissemination of policies. It has a negative effect on the achievement of gender-related objectives, as well as on SSRP activities more generally.

One problem relating to data collection is that NER figures may not be altogether reliable, due to pressures on schools and district level education managers, a desire to secure resources and, in some quarters at lower levels of the system, cynicism towards the data collection process (Caddell, 2005). Some DEOs complain that they cannot verify school-level EMIS data supplied to them (Status Report 2011).

During interviews some stakeholders outside the government education sector argued that, once collected and aggregated, EMIS data could be analysed, disseminated and generally used more effectively. In particular, there is a demand for EMIS data to be further disaggregated to enable specific and detailed investigation of variations due to the cross-cutting effects of gender, caste and ethnic minority disadvantage.

More generally, several external stakeholders also complained of inadequate reporting against SSRP objectives. As mentioned in the Introduction, the audit

¹⁷ In Kapilvastu district, the audit consultants observed that toilet construction programme is well underway. Approximately 36 per cent of schools in the district now have separate toilets for girls.

consultants themselves sometimes had great difficulty obtaining key documents or verifying important information relating to the SSRP. These experiences indicate a problem with how information is managed and shared within the MOE/DOE.

Information flow between districts and the DOE leaves room for improvement in both directions. Some district education stakeholders say they lack guidance from the central administration on how to make progress on gender issues, and several seemed unaware of key MOE policies on gender issues, in particular affirmative action on female teachers.¹⁸ At the same time, much valuable good practice at the grass-roots, for instance in community mobilisation, is going largely unreported in the SSRP monitoring system. The Status Report 2011 contains several tantalisingly brief examples of good practice at district and school levels, such as the organisation of a story reading competition in by the Dolakha DEO 'for motivating women and children in education' (85). DEO, SMC and community efforts are all critical to the achievement of SSP gender-related objectives; innovative and successful initiatives in this area need to be duly reported and disseminated.

4.5 Gender Responsive Budgeting

The Ministry of Finance (MOF) adopted a form of gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) in the fiscal year 2007-2008, following a gender audit (UNFPA, 2007). The aim is to ensure that resources are made available to support gender equality and women's empowerment ((MOE, UNESCO and UNICEF, 2010). This demonstrates the commitment of the GON to promoting gender equality. A GRB Committee is formally located in the MOF, and comprises representatives from other ministries as well as UN Women. A gender specialist is supported by UN Women to act as technical advisor to the Committee.

There have been two recent reports on the use of GRB in Nepal, the first a joint publication by MOE, UNESCO and UNICEF (2010) and the second a report commissioned by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2011). On the face of it, this duplication suggests a lack of coordination among donors and UN agencies. On the positive side though, both of these reports are comprehensive and detailed and each contains useful recommendations. A Nepalese gender specialist has been funded by UN Women to review the appropriateness of the GRB indicators currently in use, in

¹⁸ For instance, while DOE officials say letters containing terms of reference have been sent to district-level GFPs, the current Kapilvastu GFP says she has not seen any terms of reference.

relation to the education sector as well as other sectors. At the time of writing she is reported to be close to submitting her recommendations.

The consultants have not attempted to duplicate the work carried out for the recent reviews; that would be inappropriate as well as outside the scope of the audit. Instead, in this section the main problems affecting the use of GRB are highlighted and core recommendations are set out. The analysis is based both on the two existing reviews and on interviews with stakeholders in the MOE, MOF and National Planning Commission (NPC). For more detailed information, the reader is referred to the reviews themselves.

Conceptual shortcomings

The three GRB categories

The following classification is made for each intervention/ programme in the national budget (Red Book)

1. Programmes and activities directly supportive of women (50 points or above)
2. Programmes and activities indirectly supportive of women (20-49 points)
3. Neutral on gender equality (below 20 points)

The five indicators

To guide officials in the assessment, a set of indicators have been developed. For each a maximum of 20 points can be awarded depending on the degree to which:

1. Activities contribute to capacity enhancement of women
2. Women are involved in planning and implementation
3. Women's share of benefit distribution
4. Activities contribute to women's employment and income generation
5. Activities reduce women's work load and improve quality of their time use

The sum of scores across the five indicators determines whether an intervention/programme falls into category 1, 2 or 3.

Source: GoN (2006); National Planning Commission

Box 6: The GRB methodology (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011)

Box 6 contains a list of GRB categories and indicators. Several authoritative commentators, including the Ministry of Women, Communities and Social Welfare, have described the three-way categorisation of 'directly gender responsive, indirectly gender responsive and gender neutral' as 'unclear and somewhat arbitrary' (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011). In addition, they have pointed out that this categorisation differs from gender concepts in common use around the world, in particular the concepts of 'gender equity' and 'gender equality' (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011). These generic problems give rise to understandable confusion among officials who are tasked with applying GRB. Even stakeholders within the NPC and MOF find GRB difficult to use.

The form of GRB currently in used in Nepal also suffers from particular shortcomings in relation to the education sector. For instance, the fourth and fifth indicators shown in Box 6 are not appropriate to the education sector. Also, the indicators do not accommodate the many institutional aspects of promoting gender equality in the education system, such as ensuring that teachers' behaviour and school learning materials are free from gender bias.

Implementation of GRB

According to some MOE stakeholders, the GRB is used throughout the ASIP process in an iterative manner, at least at the national level. However, there is conflicting evidence on this point, and other stakeholders say that GRB tends to be used only after budgets are allocated at national level, in other words as a monitoring tool rather than a planning tool. A related problem is the fact that few SSRP objectives, targets and activities are disaggregated by gender, as already mentioned. One of the consequences is that, according to a senior MOE stakeholder, only officials with an intimate knowledge of SSRP activities on the ground can hope to apply the GRB tool with any accuracy. Officials are said to base their GRB categorisation of expenditure on 'targets and tentative informed guesses about benefits women may derive from particular programmes' (MOE, UNESCO and UNICEF, 2010).

GRB capacity and training

Most stakeholders involved in GRB take the view that there is low capacity for applying it, in NPC and MOF as well as within MOE. This is due to the conceptual problems mentioned above. A recent training course on the GRB held in MOF reportedly left participants no wiser about how to use it than they were before the course (stakeholder interview).

Despite these various shortcomings, at least one senior official in the MOE finds that GRB is a useful planning tool (stakeholder interview). Based on their in-depth analyses, between them the two reviews make several useful recommendations regarding both modifying the GRB tool and improving its implementation. Of these, some suggested priorities are highlighted in the next section (4.6).

4.6 Chapter recommendations

Planning

This chapter has concentrated on how gender equality can be better addressed in plans and other documents relating to the SSRP, and in its implementation. Several recommendations can be made:

Integrating SIPGEGE's priority commitments into the SSRP, and aligning these two documents with the Gender and Vulnerable Communities Action Plan should be part of a more general process of bringing individual strategies and plans into alignment with each other. While it is understood that the SSRP is a programme with a limited budget and so cannot be expected to carry all the commitments in the SIPGEGE (2007), the SIPGEGE can still serve as an overarching framework. More specifically, SSRP planning documents should incorporate SIPGEGE commitments, particularly regarding priority issues such as the recruitment of female teachers. As well as improving planning coherence and continuity, such moves could help to raise awareness of gender issues among MOE/DOE stakeholders and the pooled donors alike.

The priority MECs should not be further reduced to a selected sub-set depending on SMC choice, but maintained as an integral package. Schools' effort to deliver against the PMECs needs to be fully supported in order to bring all schools up to a minimum standard.

If possible, the new version of the SIP guidelines need to reviewed in order to make sure that they do not represent a missed opportunity for promoting gender equality. Whether or not this is possible, gender sensitisation and capacity development needs to be provided to district level education officials, Head Teachers and SMC Chairs and members.

The girls' scholarship programme and the provision of separate school toilets for male and female students are notable SSRP accomplishments. In broad terms, both the scholarship scheme and the toilet construction activity are progressing well. The main weakness of the girls' scholarship programme is the small value of the bursaries. Its expansion to cover all girls is a recent innovation, so it needs a bedding-down period in its current form before its impact can be properly investigated or further changes to its coverage among girls considered. As with any type of affirmative action, the perceived unfairness of discriminating against boys from poor households might lead to a future backlash against it in some quarters. The MOE

will need to bear this in mind when communicating to the public about the programme.

The SSRP commitment to providing separate girls' and boys' toilets in every school is unequivocal and it is hoped it will remain so, despite the considerable challenges involved. Because of the large numbers of schools that remain with inadequate toilet provision, consideration should be given to speeding up the rate of provision by setting higher annual targets for toilet construction and providing commensurate resources.

Improvements in how information is used and managed under the SSRP could greatly enhance programme effectiveness in relation to gender issues. With regard to the further disaggregation of EMIS data, it may not be possible to accommodate all stakeholder demands into the current reporting system. At least though, the potential for EMIS data to be utilised better, in order to facilitate planning and targeting, could be examined further. Box 7 contains two minor practical examples of what could be done to make better use of the gender-related information that already exists.

Box 7: Practical suggestions for disseminating gender-related information

- Hire a communications specialist to write up several of the most inspiring grass-roots initiatives to date in relation to improving gender equality in schooling. Disseminate the stories in a brochure across Nepal's 75 districts and produce an accompanying press release. This could encourage other schools and communities to take similar action.
- Compile an electronic database containing study reports on gender issues, including the various reports cited here. Put them on a page of the MOE\DOE Intranet and the MOE\DOE's public access website. This would help to build raise awareness, improve transparency and disseminate information on progress and challenges.

Turning now to GRB, the combined recommendations of the two recent reviews are very useful, and it is hoped that they are taken into account if the GRB Committee decides to modify the indicators. Based on stakeholder interviews and a meta-analysis of the two reviews, the audit consultants recommend that the following should be regarded as priorities for the way forward:

- Modify the GRB indicators to better suit the education sector, for instance by omitting inappropriate indicators and adding new indicators that reflect the institutional dimensions of promoting gender equity
- Fully integrate GRB in the MOE's planning and budgeting processes. This will necessitate the full gender-disaggregation of SSRP planning.
- Provide capacity development in how to use the GRB, however it is modified, targeting key MOE planning officials
- Consider integrating a simplified form of GRB into SIP guidelines and train SMCs how to use it

5 Gender analysis of institutional factors

5.1 Introduction

What are the main gender issues relating to Nepal's education institutions and their procedures, whether formal or informal? This is an important question, because organisations such as the MOE, DOE, DEOs, schools and SMCs are by no means gender-neutral. Rather, they reflect and reproduce gender relations in wider society and in this way shape gendered educational expectations and outcomes for female and male students. Because of their influence they can help to change existing norms and reduce gender inequalities. Moving towards more equitable gender relations among the staff and volunteers in education institutions is a valuable strategy for tackling gender inequalities affecting students.

The chapter begins with an overview of the disproportionately low participation of women in a variety of roles within the sector (Section 5.2). The focus then shifts to female teachers already in service, and some of the forms of discrimination that affects their professional development and promotion prospects (Section 5.3). In Section 5.4, gender sensitivity and gender mainstreaming capacity at various levels in the education system is discussed. The next section (Section 5.5) looks at units, organisations and functions tasked with promoting gender equality in the sector, namely the Gender Equity and Development Section, Gender Focal Points and Gender Equity Networks. In the final section broad conclusions are made and recommendations set out.

5.2 Low involvement of women across the sector

As noted in Chapter 3, women are under-represented as teachers, especially at secondary level. Also, few Head Teachers, trainers and Resource Persons, managers, technical officers, administrators and community representatives on SMCs are women. This is a long-standing problem that has been remarked on in many previous reports and evaluations. It can be argued that, because girl and boy school students interact directly with teachers and Head Teachers and these interactions shape their own aspirations and expectations, the shortage of women in these roles is a particular problem, so the institutional factors that underlie women's low representation in the teaching profession are analysed first.

Low numbers of female teachers

The proportions of female and male teachers at different levels of the school system have already been mentioned (Chapter 3). Although women are under-represented

even at primary level, and are very much in the minority at secondary level, the current figures represent a significant increase in recent years. The overall proportions are only part of the story. Female teachers are reported to be disproportionately represented among relief (rahat) teachers, who are only given temporary contracts, and among teachers appointed directly by the community and paid with community resources. These types of teacher receive lower salaries and other employment benefits than teachers in approved positions. Not all MOE reports disaggregate teacher data according to contract types, which sometimes makes it hard to monitor gendered patterns and trends in the teaching profession.

Affirmative action: policies and implementation

The Education Regulation 2002 stipulates minimum proportions of female teachers in schools of various sizes, and since the 1990s there has been a mandatory requirement for at least one female teacher in every school. Increasing the proportion of female teachers is identified as a 'major strategy' in the SIPGE (2007:31), and under this heading several district and school level affirmative actions are listed. Stakeholder interviews within the MOE confirmed that various affirmative action measures are in place, such as: a quota for the recruitment of female teachers, the relaxation of qualification requirements to enable women would-be teachers to join the profession at the secondary level, and differences in the probation period and age bar for male and female teachers that make it easier for women to obtain teaching posts. In addition, guidelines are in place regarding the transfer of female staff, stating that they should not be transferred to remote districts and that arrangements should be made to post married women teachers close to their spouses. At the time of writing, necessary regulatory changes linked to the new Education Act are said to be delaying further affirmative action in the matters of female teachers' qualifications and appointments.

The Education For All (EFA) National Plan of Action 2001-2015 included the target that 50 per cent teachers in 2009 would be women. More recently, the Gender and Vulnerable Communities Action Plan has set targets for increasing the proportion of teachers at various levels who are women, for instance from 35 per cent to 50 per cent at primary level and 13 per cent to 25 per cent at secondary level, by 2014. It also stipulates affirmative action to increase the proportion of female teachers from

disadvantaged groups. The same plan sets a target for increasing the proportion of female head teachers in secondary education to 10 per cent.¹⁹

Against this positive backdrop, the consensus among stakeholders outside the government system is that affirmative action policies are not being systematically implemented. During field visits, some district-level education officials reported that it is hard to find women with required academic qualifications for secondary posts. Given the historical discrimination against Nepalese women in the matter of education opportunities, this is plausible. However, several other factors combine to keep women out of teaching jobs, in particular: lack of awareness, persistent discriminatory attitudes linked to perceptions that female teachers' gendered household and community roles interfere with their professional performance, and the workings of local politics.

For instance, during stakeholder interviews in district education offices and schools, it became clear that some interviewees did not see female teacher recruitment as a priority²⁰ and did not know about related affirmative action policies. In other cases, discriminatory attitudes likely to impede the appointment of female teachers were frankly expressed.²¹ A recent study found that female teachers are, in fact, likely to absent themselves from school due to their domestic responsibilities and their gendered roles in relation to Nepal's many religious and cultural festivals (Thapa et al., 2009). These gendered responsibilities may well play a part in shaping attitudes towards appointing women in teaching roles. On the other hand, it is apparently common for male teachers in rural areas to absent themselves from schools in order to drink alcohol (Thapa et al., 2009), yet this form of gender-specific behaviour does not seem to affect the employment and promotion prospects of male teachers in general. According to various reports (e.g. Thapa et al., 2009) party political patronage also results in male candidates being favoured over women for appointment and promotion, because on the whole men are more active in local party politics than women.

¹⁹ The current proportion is not included in this plan.

²⁰ One SMC Chair in Kaski district said: "We are only concerned with the children's results. It is no concern to us whether a man or woman teaches them."

²¹ For instance a Head Teacher explained that, although he used to favour female candidates for teaching posts, he now prefers to appoint men because women's domestic responsibilities prevents them from taking part in extra-curricular activities such as school outings.

To summarise, cultural norms, gender stereotypes, women's domestic work burdens and local politics all combine to affect women's prospects of being appointed as teachers.

Senior administrators and managers

Any visitor to the MOE and DOE can see for themselves the extreme gender imbalance in senior posts and even among support staff. Yet that is dwarfed by the fact that, at the time of writing, there is only one female DEO among 75. Table 5 shows the proportions of men and women at various levels of the education administration.

Table 5: Proportions of men and women at various levels of education administration. (Source: Administration division MOE, December 2012.)

Staff Structure in MoE				
Position	Female	Male	Total	% of women
Class I Gazetted Officers	-	5	5	0.00%
Class II Gazetted Officers	2	14	16	12.50%
Class III Gazetted Officers	7	26	33	21.21%
Non- Gazetted staff	13	36	49	26.53%
Support Staff	4	16	20	20.00%
Total	26	97	123	21.1%
Staff structure in DoE				
Position	Female	Male	Total	% of women
Class I Gazetted Officers	-	4	4	0.0%
Class II Gazetted Officers	3	7	10	30.0%
Class III Gazetted Officers	3	21	24	12.5%
Non- Gazetted staff	5	19	24	20.8%
Support Staff	0	14	14	0.0%
Total	11	65	76	14.5%
Proportion of women and men in senior posts				
Position	Female	Male	Total	% of women
Section Chief in MoE	1	11	12	8.3%
Section Chief in DoE	3	9	12	25%

Regional director	3	2	5	60.0%
District Education Officer	1	74	75	1.3%

In contrast, there are two areas of education in Nepal where women are over-represented, namely ECD and NFE facilitators. The women who comprise the vast majority of ECD facilitators are very poorly paid, although at the time of writing a decision has been made to increase their wages. Their low pay results in high turnover, creating serious inefficiencies as trained facilitators leave the system and their jobs are filled by untrained replacements. This is described as an 'evergreen common issue' in all districts (SSRP Status Report, 2011). Similarly, NFE facilitators, all of whom are now reported to be women, are also facing unfairness in relation to their terms of employment. In particular, they are poorly paid, employed for only nine months in a year; suffer from job insecurity because their contracts are short-term, and on top of all this face routine late payments of salary from their employers, VDCs. Information concerning critical institutional constraints that impedes the effectiveness of NFE provision is provided in Appendix 8.

School Management Committee members

School Management Committees (SMCs) play a critical role in school governance since the decentralisation of the education sector. There is a mandatory provision that each SMC should have at least one woman member. However these women are often only token members, with little or no voice in decision-making (GSEAU, 2010). Moreover, there are very few women Chairs of SMCs²². Within schools, there seems to be a lack of concern about women's low participation on SMCs (Thapa et al., 2009). The lack of women in these school governance bodies is a serious gender issue in view of SMCs' planning and implementation responsibilities. The male domination of these committees is likely to have a knock-on effect for gender equality in other aspects of schools, such as teacher appointments. The BPEP Gender Audit (2002:53) recommended that numbers of women on SMCs be increased to two in the first instance and to one third of total members within five years.

Increasing the proportion of women in various roles in the education sector would promote gender equality in its own right. It would also be an important strategy for improving girls' education experiences and outcomes, provided that the proportion of women in official positions was large enough to act as a 'critical mass' for bringing

²² For instance only 6 per cent of SMCS in Kapilvastu are chaired by women.

about change in the sector. Yet, despite the range of affirmative action policies in place, it is by no means clear whether or to what extent they are being implemented on the ground.

5.3 Gender discrimination in teachers' promotion and professional development

The proportions of male and female teachers who are trained are broadly similar at primary level; 79.9 per cent of women primary teachers are trained, compared with 81.4 per cent of male primary teachers (MOE, 2011a). At the lower secondary level, a higher proportion of female teachers than male teachers are trained (67.5 per cent compared with 64.7 per cent). Once in service though, women teachers are discriminated against in the matter of professional development opportunities. The evidence suggests that there are three reasons for this. First, as with appointments, male teachers have better access to such opportunities because they are more likely to be involved in local politics than their female counterparts (Thapa et al., 2009). Also, DEOs control the allocation of training places for teachers and in some cases they have demonstrated a bias in favour of men teachers (Thapa et al., 2009). Male teachers often have better access to information and greater personal mobility than their female counterparts and these affect access to training opportunities (GSEAU, 2010). Finally, according to the SSRP Status Report 2011, many districts have complained of lack of provision for basic and refresher training for *rahat* (temporary) teachers, the majority of whom are women. The same Status Report contains commitments to improve the professionalisation of teachers, for instance by instituting more stringent qualification bars, but there is no mention about the gender implications of this move.

There is also evidence of discrimination against female teachers during performance evaluations carried out by SMCs, who in general tend to be biased in favour of male teachers (Thapa et al., 2009). This has an impact on female teachers' promotion prospects. More generally, it seems that a masculine culture prevails in schools, one that judges women's behaviour harshly. For instance, Thapa et al. (2009) comment that Head Teachers habitually complain about women teachers talking together and knitting during their breaks at work. On the face of it, these seem harmless activities. Finally in this section, during field visits some female teachers reported being excluded from consultations on school improvement planning (SIPs); although certain of their male counterparts had been invited to take part.

The male domination of the SMCs plays a part in these forms of discrimination against serving women teachers. During a focus group discussion with MOE/DOE GFPs, improving women's participation in school governance emerged as a priority for tackling gender inequalities in schools.

5.4 Gender sensitivity and mainstreaming capacity

To be effective, gender mainstreaming and related monitoring relies on high levels of awareness and professional capacity on the part of government stakeholders, as well as accountability mechanisms for individual staff and their institutions. During stakeholder interviews within the MOE and DOE, certain government stakeholders demonstrated awareness, capacity and commitment in relation to gender equality and it is fair to say that others did not. In addition, a review of MOE/DOE planning documents suggests that there may be persisting misconceptions regarding gender issues in the sector (Chapter 4). The main problem is that some officials seem to regard girls and women as members of a special vulnerable or disadvantaged group, rather than as 50 per cent of the school age population with gendered rights, needs and interests. 'Gender' is also seen in some quarters as a synonym for 'girls and women'. This could have profound implications on how gender issues are dealt with in policies and in practice. By their own accounts, only a few of the officials interviewed had taken part in substantial gender-sensitisation or training.

While awareness-raising and capacity development would help to promote gender equality in MOE activities, they are not sufficient in themselves. Capacity development needs to be accompanied by robust accountability mechanisms, which could be achieved by the systematic incorporation of gender objectives into job descriptions and performance evaluations.²³ This would be in line with SIPGEGE commitments on performance evaluations (2007:28). There would, however, still be the problem of frequent redeployment of senior personnel within the education bureaucracy, reportedly driven by political parties. This undermines accountability mechanisms and acts to shorten the institutional memory on relevant commitments and strategies.²⁴

This discussion of gender mainstreaming has so far focussed on the central education administration. At lower levels of the system, the DEOs and the SMCs are

²³ While some senior officials' job descriptions are said to include such objectives already, it does not seem to be the rule.

²⁴ The audit consultants themselves frequently encountered this as a problem; a common response to our questions was 'I've only been in this post a few months, so the person you really need to talk to is my predecessor.'

the main agents for implementing the SSRP. As for Resource Persons, their current capacity for pursuing gender-related objectives is very limited because of the large numbers of schools each has to cover and their onerous data collection role. In some districts NGOs have run gender sensitisation programmes for government education stakeholders. The general tendency for SMCs to display masculine bias has already been noted.

Turning now to gender sensitisation among teachers, the audit consultants have concentrated on teacher professional development rather than pre-service teacher training. However, a very brief outline of the gender-related content of teacher training courses at different levels is contained in Appendix 10.

As for teachers' professional development, the SIPGEGE (2007) contains several detailed commitments relating to gender sensitisation. However the audit consultants have not found any evidence that gender issues are as yet systematically included in teachers' professional development. During school visits, teachers complained that trainers tend to use outdated approaches and methods rather than child-centred pedagogy. A positive development in this area is the new Gender Awareness module for master trainers involved in the Teachers' Professional Development module, which has been produced by the National Centre for Educational Development (NCED). It is currently being piloted and 1,000 copies have been distributed; see Box 8. This is an encouraging example of good practice. As yet though, the resource has only had a limited distribution and the content is abstract in nature, rather than aiming to help teachers to overcome gender bias in their interactions with students.

Box 8: Gender Awareness resource for Teachers' Professional Development module

In 2010, the NCED, with the help of Gender Focal Points and others, produced a teacher training resource on gender awareness, for use during the one month of training that Nepal's teachers are meant to receive every five years. It covers various aspects of gender issues and women's empowerment, including gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budgeting. It also analyses gender issues in the education sector and champions the girls' scholarship scheme, as well as providing information on Nepalese women's social, economic, political and legal status and international commitments on gender equality. At the time of writing, one thousand copies of the booklet have been distributed to Master Trainers. Many more need to be distributed in order to reach all of Nepal's teachers. After piloting the NCED plans to revise this resource; at that stage they would welcome an input from a gender specialist.

The BPEP 2002:53 recommended gender sensitivity training at district, school and village levels. Without the various enabling factors discussed above, namely gender sensitisation, capacity development and accountability mechanisms, gender mainstreaming is likely to fail as a strategy in the Nepalese education sector.

5.5 Gender-dedicated units, roles and structures

The existence of the Gender Equity Development Section (GEDS), Gender Focal Points (GFPs) and Gender Equity Networks (GENs) at different levels of the education system demonstrate the considerable efforts that have been made in the past to promote gender equality. The SIPGE (2007) mentions the establishment of an MOE Gender Action Committee, but this seems to be either disbanded or inactive at the time of writing. Some of the existing gender-related organisations and roles are hampered by weaknesses.

Gender Equity Development Section

The Gender Equity Development Section (GEDS) produces an annual magazine and has developed a counselling package to help teachers to support adolescent girl students. The section has also been involved in designing parents' awareness-raising on gender issues in education. However most of the section's work is taken up with administering 18 different scholarship schemes, including several that are not directly related to gender equality, such as scholarships for conflict affected students and the children of parents who have been officially designated as 'martyrs'. That leaves the handful of officers in this section very little time to take forward advocacy

or capacity development on gender equality, despite the Head of Section's interest in this type of activity (stakeholder interview). In terms of DOE's institutional structure, it is situated too low in the hierarchy to have much influence, and there have been no systematic capacity development opportunities for officers in the section.²⁵

Gender Focal Points

Every department and DEO is meant to have an officer who is tasked with the GFP role in addition to their core duties. The establishment of Gender Focal Points (GFPs) in the central administration and across all Nepal's 75 education districts represents a notable achievement by those responsible, and the GFPs who were interviewed during this audit seemed both interested in and committed to their roles. However several serious problems prevent GFPs from being effective;

No GFP appointed or junior officials appointed

In practice, GFPs have not been appointed in all districts.²⁶ According to an official in the DOE, schools are supposed to have a designated GFP once a district level Gender Equity Network has been set up, but this rarely happens in practice. In the MOE and DOE, in some cases relatively junior female officials have been given the GFP role in their department, which is likely to detract from their potential influence with colleagues.

Lack of resources

District-level GFPs have been allocated miniscule annual budgets of 6,000NPR. One district GFP complained that this was not enough to cover the expenses of providing drinks and snacks for even one meeting of district stakeholders. She said an annual budget of 40-50,000 NPR would be required in order to enable her to organise two or three such meetings during the year, and other stakeholders agreed later that this was a reasonable estimate. In addition to a budget for meetings, some GFPs requested better working conditions and equipment, notably desks and computers, to support them in their GFP role.

²⁵ That said, the Head has a Masters degree in gender studies and happens to have taken part in national level gender training.

²⁶ A perception that GFPs must be female seems to contribute to this. For instance, one District Education Officer interviewed gave the lack of female officials in his office as a reason for not appointing a GFP.

Lack of clarity about their role and responsibilities

All the GFPs interviewed complained that their responsibilities in the role had not been explained to them. For instance, they had no terms of reference as GFPs and had received no guidance from managers on how to fulfil the role.

Lack of capacity

While some of the GFPs interviewed said they had taken part in gender training, others said they had not been offered any such opportunities.²⁷ Moreover, such training as had been provided tended to be theoretical in nature rather than enhancing GFPs' ability to take action on gender equality in their own area of work.

Poor coordination between GFPs and Gender Equity Networks

In some cases at least there are no institutional connections between the district GFPs and the district Gender Equity Networks. This is a missed opportunity for alliances and synergies.

Marginalisation from planning

GFPs in both the central administration and at district level reported that they are not generally consulted during routine planning procedures, except on occasion for form's sake. The Head of GEDS is only involved in DOE's planning to the extent that she is required to prepare a plan for her own section.

Lack of continuity and disruption

The frequent redeployments that characterise human resources management in the MOE and DOE undermine the potential effectiveness of GFPs²⁸. When post-holders who have also been designated GFPs are moved on to another post, there is often a time lag before a new GFP is designated.

What is the future for the GFP role? The GFP system as currently practised is, at best, ineffective. At worst, it is actually counter-productive, because it allows senior officials to evade responsibility for considering and taking action on gender issues themselves.²⁹ According to the GESAU (2010: ii) 'there is an institutional failure to

²⁷ When asked what action she would like to take as a GFP, assuming her resources were increased, one GFP replied that she had no idea, because she did not have any relevant training and so felt unable to prioritise or plan in the role.

²⁸ For example, the consultants heard that a GFP in the central administration had been engaged in drafting terms of reference for the GFP role, but her redeployment had prevented her from completing the task.

²⁹ 'You need to speak to the GFP, not to me' was a common reaction when audit consultants tried to arrange interviews with department heads.

link the GFPs to the functions of the Ministry/Department'. Because of these shortcomings, some commentators have called for the GFP system to be abolished. GFPs themselves, however, reject this as a solution (focus group discussion). They would prefer to be strengthened in their role through clearer remits, more resources and capacity development. They argue that if the GFP system is scrapped, gender issues will soon be forgotten within the administration.

Gender Equity Networks

A Gender Equity Network (GEN) is in place at national level, with the overall aims of building the collective effort for gender equality in education and ensuring quality education for all children without discrimination (stakeholder interview). Its role involves:

- Undertaking policy advocacy
- Conducting analysis, orientation and discussion on girls' education,
- Monitoring and providing guidance to district networks
- Conducting capacity building for female teachers and SMC/PTA members
- Co-ordinating the efforts of governmental and non-governmental agencies in order to avoid duplication

The national GEN is chaired by the Director General of the DOE and has about 70 members and a nine-person executive committee. It is meant to meet quarterly, with an annual review meeting.

Recently, there has been a move to establish GENs at district-level too. These are said to include stakeholders from Professional Teachers' Associations, District Development Committees, District Women and Children Offices, NGOs, child clubs, Muslim and Dalit communities and female MPs are generally invited. There is a mandatory provision that 50 per cent of District GENs should be women and girls but it is not clear whether this is implemented or not. See Box 9 for information on the District GEN activities.

In 2010, the NCED, with the help of Gender Focal Points and others, produced a teacher training resource on gender awareness, for use during the one month of training that Nepal's teachers are meant to receive every five years. It covers various aspects of gender issues and women's empowerment, including gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budgeting. It also analyses gender issues in the education sector and champions the girls' scholarship scheme, as well as providing information on Nepalese women's social, economic, political and legal status and international commitments on gender equality. At the time of writing, one thousand copies of the booklet have been distributed to Master Trainers. Many more need to be distributed in order to reach all of Nepal's teachers. After piloting the NCED plans to revise this resource; at that stage they would welcome an input from a gender specialist.

Box 9: District Gender Equity Network activities

Guidelines for establishing District GENs were sent to all 75 districts in 2010; some of the districts already have functional networks and orientation has been provided to their members. It is reported that involving female MPs has paid off as some have been able to facilitate funding for local girls' education initiatives. There are some important challenges though, notably low capacity for addressing gender issues among many members and the generic problem of the frequent redeployment of district officials. Despite these difficulties, the creation of GENs at district level is in itself an important move forward, although the audit consultants have not been able to obtain any specific information on how well the district GENs are functioning.

5.6 Chapter conclusions and recommendations

The overall pattern emerging from this chapter is of progressive policies that have not yet been fully disseminated or implemented. The analysis leads to several broad conclusions and recommendations. First, women need to constitute a critical mass within the education sector in order to bring about real change; such a critical mass is sometimes quantified as one third of posts, or more, in an organisation. However that should be seen as an interim target only, with the eventual aim of increasing the proportion of women in key education roles to around 50 per cent, in keeping with women's share of the general population.

In the short-term, teachers and SMCs should be the priorities for affirmative action policies. Current mandatory provisions and affirmative action policies regarding teachers need to be fully disseminated to district and school levels and they need to

be fully implemented without further delay. Regarding women's representation on SMCs, the recommendations of the BPEP-II Gender Audit (2002) concerning female representation on SMCs should be pursued. That is, the numbers should be increased to two in the short-term and to one third of total SMC members within five years. In the medium term, policies aimed at supporting women teachers, such as setting up mentoring schemes and women teachers' professional development groups, should also be considered.

Other changes that could support efforts to increase the numbers of women teachers include the routine disaggregation of teacher data by contract types as well as gender, to more clearly reveal gender disparities and trends.

A systematic gender capacity development programme, strategically targetting key officials and bodies, would strengthen gender awareness and mainstreaming capacity in the system. Because of their planning and implementation responsibilities, it should include senior officials within the MOE/DOE, district level officials and SMC Chairs and members.³⁰ Progress on gender issues needs to be an integral element of job descriptions and performance evaluations of MOE/DOE officials, in order to strengthen accountability.

The NCED's Gender Awareness module for Master Trainers is an excellent starting point for helping teachers to become more gender-sensitive in their interactions with students. Before the module is finalised after piloting, it is recommended that a Nepalese gender and education specialist works with NCED staff to incorporate content relating to day-to-day teaching practice. Funding should then be provided to cover printing and distribution to all of Nepal's teacher trainers. This would build on what has already been achieved, and it would represent an effective use of resources.

Despite the problems with the GFP role, it is strongly recommended that GFPs be retained rather than abolished, but with enhanced resources, clear terms of reference and capacity development. Institutional mechanisms need to be put in place to enable GFPs and GENs to work together.

The new district GENs could play a valuable role in addressing constraints on girls' attendance and learning achievements arising from household and community constraints (Chapter 3). It is recommended that their activities are monitored to see

³⁰ Resource Persons are less of a priority, because their very demanding data collection and administrative responsibilities leaves them no time to pursue gender objectives (Educational Research and Consultancy Centre, 2011).

where resources and capacity development are most needed, and that the ability of district GFPs to liaise with and support the GENs is enhanced.

A decision has been made to appoint a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion officer within the DOE, to assist officials in mapping, consolidating and moving forward on gender issues. The decision is greatly to be welcomed, although at the time of writing it is understood that an appointment has not yet been made. It is hoped that the development of a job description/terms of reference for the role and its location within the organisational structure of the DOE will enable the appointee to take forward some of the recommendations in this chapter.

6 Overall conclusions and recommendations

This report is based on the findings of a systematic review of the SSRP plan and related plans, gender issues in Nepal's basic and secondary schools today and institutional factors in the education sector that affect the attainment of gender-related objectives in schools. The methodology has been robust and systematic and the coverage as wide as could be, given the limited amount of time available.

There are many positive things to report. First, the national average GPI looks encouraging, although it obscures variations and is subject to distortion and so needs to be interpreted with caution. The GPI represents substantial gains in enrolment in recent years. As well as the GPI, other quantitative indicators such as repetition rates and retention data show positive trends from a gender point of view. The textbooks used in Nepal's schools are on the whole free from gender bias and avoid negative gender stereotypes. The expanded girls' scholarship scheme and the construction of more school toilets are both progressing well. A recent study shows that the scholarships make a real impact. The toilets are a 'quick win' that benefit all students in the schools where they are built. At the grass-roots, there is innovative and inspiring good practice in evidence, which encourages parents to send their daughters to school and support them in their learning. All these accomplishments need to be emphasised, disseminated and celebrated.

The challenges have been huge and many problems remain. How can Nepal's education sector and its institutions at various levels now build on its successes to date and transform Nepal's schools into places of equal opportunities and outcomes for girl and boy students? How can the nation's schools be transformed into places where girls as well as boys learn to the best of their ability, are inspired and empowered? This review has highlighted the main problem areas today and offered suggestions as to how they could be addressed. Some of these recommendations

concern minor, one-off activities that should be relatively easy to implement. Their impact would be disproportionately large in relation to the resources required. Others will necessitate profound and widespread changes in attitudes and behaviour and so they are much more challenging. Often the strategies proposed here are by no means new, but have appeared over and over again in preceding plans and reports; the implementation of affirmative action on female teachers is a case in point.

Chapters 3-6 each contain suggestions and recommendations. Here are the priority strategies and activities proposed, with an indication of the appropriate time-frame. Most of these recommendations are intended for government education stakeholders, but several are directed at the pooled donors, with the intention of helping the donors to improve their support to MOE/DOE:

Priority recommendations to the Ministry of Education and Department of Education for the short term

Supporting and protecting girls in school

- In view of the findings of a recent review (Educational Resource and Development Centre, 2011), consider increasing the amount of the girls' scholarship bursaries to better reflect the actual direct cost of sending a girl to school.
- Consider the recommendations of the Him Rights' study on gender-based violence and sexual harassment in and around schools, with a view to developing and implementing relevant policies.

Improving women's participation in the sector

- Disseminate to District Education Offices and School Management Committees the mandatory provisions and affirmative action policies regarding female teachers. Otherwise take all necessary actions to ensure that these policies are implemented without unnecessary delay. This is critical for the creation of girl-friendly schools and ultimately, greater participation by women in the teaching profession will help to make the sector more gender sensitive.
- Increase the mandatory provision of women members on SMCS to two as soon as possible.

Planning

- In MOE planning processes, the SSRP, the Gender and Vulnerable Communities Action Framework and Plan and the SIPGEGE (2007) need to be brought into alignment. Use the SIPGEGE (2007) as the overarching framework and incorporate its commitments into the SSRP.
- Include explicit gender-disaggregation in all objectives, targets, indicators and activities in forthcoming SSRP documents (gender mainstreaming) and clearly designate responsibilities for monitoring their attainment.
- Retain the SSRP commitment to providing separate girls' and boys' toilets in schools by making them a mandatory element in PMECs and supporting schools to achieve the full set of PMCs.
- Consider expanding the toilet construction programme in order to increase the rate of provision.
- The Gender Responsive Budgetting (GRB) tool is about to be modified. Whatever changes are decided for the GRB, the relevant officials need to be trained in its use.

Strengthening existing structures

- Strengthen Gender Focal Points (GFPs) at national and district levels by directing more resources to these roles and providing capacity development. Put in place strong institutional links between district GFPs and the newly formed Gender Equity Networks (GENs).
- At the same time, support the district GENs with resources and capacity development.
- If not already done, appoint a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion officer within the DOE.

Priority recommendations to the Ministry of Education and Department of Education for the medium term

Supporting girls in school

Consider changing the coverage of the girls' scholarship scheme, taking into account the options set out in a recent review of the scheme (ERDCN, 2011).

Collecting and using information

- Improve the collection and management of quantitative and qualitative information under the SSRP to enhance programme effectiveness in relation to gender issues. In particular, more information is needed on the gender dimensions of quality in education and on cross-cutting variations among different areas and among different disadvantaged groups, especially Dalits and ethnic minorities.
- Institutionalise a system for disseminating and publicising innovations and good practice at local level; this would be a very cost-effective way of supporting such activities nationally.

Improving capacity and accountability

- Plan and deliver a systematic and well-targetted programme of gender sensitisation capacity development for key officials in MOE/DOE.
- Linked to the above, strengthen accountability mechanisms regarding the achievement of gender-related objectives, for instance through including criteria related to promoting gender equality in job descriptions and performance reviews.
- Design and roll out gender sensitisation and capacity development workshops for teachers, Head Teachers and SMCs to raise awareness of gender bias in schools and help them to plan how to address it.

Improving women's participation in the sector

- Increase the mandatory provision of women members on SMCs to 50 per cent in order to achieve a 'critical mass' and provide support to women SMC members, such as training, to enable them to take an active role.
- Develop and implement policies aimed at supporting women teachers, such as setting up mentoring schemes and women teachers' professional development groups.

Planning

Incorporate guidelines on gender equality issues, such as simplified GRB tools, into the next update of the SIP guidelines (assuming it is too late to do so in the version planned for roll-out in early 2012).

Priority recommendations for pooled donors

- Actively encourage MOE/DOE to implement genuine gender mainstreaming at all stages of education planning and implementation. Use SIPGEGE (2007) as the framework and reference point.
- Co-ordinate donor efforts on gender and education issues better, in order to avoid duplication of donor efforts. This might be done by creating a GFP role among interested donors and delegating an agency representative to take on this role. The donor GFP would maintain an overview of relevant efforts and liaise with the new role of gender specialist within the MOE.

The consultants offer this review in the hope that its findings and recommendations will prove well-founded, insightful and useful, and that accordingly they will receive due and fair consideration by all parties concerned in the mid-term review of the SSRP.

Appendix 1 Terms of reference for the gender audit

Background

The Ministry of Education (MOE)/Government of Nepal (GON) have been implementing the School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) since FY 2009/10 with support from 9 pooling donors through a Joint Financing Arrangement (JFA) and non-pooling donors. The SSRP supports all six of the Education for All (EFA) goals. The SSRP is a nationally designed sector programme. It articulates the need for adopting a more holistic approach to the school sector, introducing eight years of basic education (grades 1-8) and four years of secondary education (grades 9-12) to the school sector³¹. Social inclusion is high on the government's reform agenda. The budget of SSRP presents a scenario with the budget envelope of US\$5,680 million. Out of which 34% is envisaged from development partners/donors.³²

Despite the country's substantial progress in the provision of school education services towards achieving the EFA and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) related to access and gender parity, significant challenges remain. In terms of access, nearly 6 per cent of primary-school aged children do not participate in schooling according to MOE³³. At the lower secondary level, the Net Enrolment Rate is still at 69.3 per cent. In terms of quality, internal efficiencies are low at the primary level with nearly 22 per cent of students repeating at Grade 1, and 8 per cent dropping out. Furthermore, student learning assessments show very poor levels of learning. These challenges underline the need for identifying affordable strategies for the simultaneous improvement of both the quality and relevance of education while continuing the efforts to improve access for all and promoting regular attendance of both girls and boys.

Nepal has made great progress in closing the gender gap in education. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) for primary education was at 1.02 and at 0.99 for lower secondary education grades in 2010/11. This is significant, taking into consideration that in 2000 the GPI for primary education was 0.78. Strategies such as girls' scholarship programme, female teacher policy, school feeding, and provision of water and hygiene facilities have largely contributed to this situation. However, parity in national

³¹ Previously, the education system consisted of 5 years of primary education, 3 years of lower secondary education, 2 years of secondary education and 2 years of higher secondary education. Currently, the previous system and the new system are mixed at the field level.

³² In ASIP/AWPB 2011/12 the share is 25%

³³ The 2010 NLSS found that as much as 22% of the children of school age do not attend school; many of these may have enrolled without further regular attendance

figures masks disparities within the country. For example, some districts in the remote Far West mountain region have only 50 girls per 100 boys in grade 8. Many more girls tend to be out of schools than boys at adolescence; 27.3 per cent of 10 to 19 year old girls in Nepal are not in school, versus 15.9 per cent of boys of the same age range³⁴.

In addition, there is a critical need to look beyond improving gender parity in access, but to cast light on the process and outcomes of education. Gender sensitiveness is an essential component of quality education. Indeed, enrolling girls is an important starting point, but there is a need to go beyond this discourse; girls need to be attending and learning through an empowering process. They need to complete at least eight years of basic education, and come out of the system with the necessary skills, competencies and attitudes to participate in the society as equal citizens. Both girls and boys need to be educated through a system that will equip them with skills that will improve future gender equality in the society.

Nepal's commitment to gender equality in and through the education sector is mainly outlined in its "Education for All National Plan of Action (2001-2015)", as well as in its "Strategic Implementation Plan for Gender Equality in Girls' Education (2007)". To assess the strengths and weaknesses in achieving these commitments, and to assess if past findings and recommendations from various gender audits/review are adequately reflected in current education strategies, a Gender Audit will take place as part of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the SSRP. The MTR is planned to be undertaken during October/ November 2011 and February 2012 (background studies commencing in September 2011, and the MTR itself taking place in February 2012). The results of the Gender Audit will feed in to the MTR, and seeks to identify actions and strategies to improve the gender sensitivity of the education system in Nepal.

Objectives of the Gender Audit:

The main objective of the Gender Audit is to assess the gender responsiveness of the education system in Nepal, focusing on the different education sub-sectors (ECD, basic education, secondary education, TEVT, adult literacy). The specific objectives of the Gender Audit are:

- To analyse strategies within the SSRP and its implementation from a gender perspective, to examine the strengths and weaknesses for narrowing existing inequalities, in terms of access, quality (retention) and outcome

³⁴ Nepal Central Bureau of Statistics (2009) Nepal Labor Force Survey (NLFS) 2008

- To review the findings and recommendations from past Gender Audit (2002), “Strategic Implementation Plan for Gender Equality in Girls’ Education (2007)”, and Gender Responsive Budgeting Analysis (2010) and examine to what extent they are reflected in the strategies as well as in the education system itself (organisational systems, procedures and processes). Analyse capacities and gaps at different levels why some recommendations are not reflected (if any)
- To suggest possible actions (improvements to existing strategies or complementary strategies) to ensure a better gender responsiveness of SSRP and the education system

The findings and recommendations of this Study will feed into the MTR of the SSRP. The ToR of the MTR is annexed.

Scope of Work

The audit will assess the gender responsiveness of the SSRP and the education system in terms of:

- Integration of women’s and men’s concerns throughout the education/development process (gender mainstreaming);
- Specific activities aimed at empowering girls and women
- Male/female employment across different levels of education by gender
- Gender differentials in incentives and barriers across different levels of employment/education

In other words, education (and SSRP implementation) inputs, processes, outputs and impacts should be analysed in terms of gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women.

The scope of the work will be grosso modo as follows. However, the consultant (s) is expected to identify and propose other necessary analysis (if any), taking into account the objectives of the Audit.

Sector and SSRP strategies and implementation progress

Analyse education statistics with a gender perspective (for access to education, intersecting inequalities with geographical, socio-economic factors as well as age will be considered)

Analyse SSRP's strategies and its implementation from a gender perspective (access to education, process of education, outcomes of education).

Review if the actions and activities enshrined in "A Strategic Implementation Plan for Gender Equality in Girls' Education (2007)" are reflected in the SSRP, ASIP and the related planning tools and implementation strategies

Institutional systems and processes

Organisational structure and culture are keys to the design and delivery of gender-sensitive programmes and projects, therefore it is important to examine if the existing systems and processes are adequate in this regard³⁵.

- Analyse the institutional systems if they support the implementation of the strategies so as to reach the objectives
- Assess if adequate systems are in place to monitor and evaluate gender mainstreaming processes and outcomes

The findings should also highlight the key recommendations of the GRB study, whether the MoE has put into place institutional/political support to improve the gender responsiveness of the budget.

Specific and realistic recommendations should be made on how to improve the gender responsiveness of the education system. Recommendations will not only be for the Government and civil society members/organisations but also encompass those for the Development Partners' group.

Methodology

The Gender Audit will consist of:

- A literature review (main background documents stated at the end of the document)
- An analysis of various statistics related to education and gender
- Development of detailed methodology
- Field research (interview with key people, stakeholder consultations, observations, collection of quantitative and qualitative data as necessary)
- Data/information processing

³⁵ Moser C. (2005), An Introduction to Gender Audit Methodology: Its design and implementation in DfiD Malawi, Overseas Development Institute

- Report drafting
- Presentation of key results
- Finalisation of report

The report will be discussed with the Development Partners and the MoE, as well as the MTR team of consultants. The consultant is responsible for making appointments and organizing his/her own domestic travel. A field visit should be undertaken for a maximum period 7 days to familiarise with and assess the field activities. The visit should be coordinated with and preferably be done jointly with the MTR team.

Work condition

The assignment will be undertaken by a team of two consultants. The costs of the consultancy will be borne by Norway and DFID. The consultants will report to the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Nepal and DFID, but will work in close coordination with the MTR team, and the MoE/DoE colleagues and the DPs. The consultant will submit a proposed work plan and budget for the work. The International consultant is also required to submit an example of a gender audit conducted.

Profile and qualifications

The assignment will be carried out by a team of an international consultant (team leader) and national consultant. The consultants should have the following profile:

- Social Scientist with at least 8 years of experience in gender and education development (policy and/or research)
- Experience in carrying out at least one Gender Audit
- Proven ability to carry out qualitative research and quantitative analysis
- Knowledge of the Nepali education system a strong asset
- Excellent English language writing skills

The International Consultant (Team Leader) will be contracted by DFID through the HDRC Framework. The National Consultant will be contracted by the Norwegian Embassy.

Timing and Deliverables

The Gender Audit will take place between November 2011 and February 2012. The exact timing will be defined taking into account the consultant(s)' proposal, discussions between the MoE/DPs as well as the MTR consultants' team. A

maximum of 30 working days for each consultant is estimated. The deliverables and tentative timeline are as follows:

Deliverables	Suggested deadline
Detailed outline and methodology of the Gender Audit	Mid-November 2011
Draft information collection tools	End-November 2011
Summary of initial findings (PowerPoint or Word)	Early January 2011
Final report and a PowerPoint summarising the key findings	Early February 2011
Presentation of key findings and recommendations	

Background Documents

- School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP).
- Joint Financing Arrangement (JFA)
- A Strategic Implementation Plan for Gender Equality in Girls' Education (2007)
- A Study on Gender Responsive Budgeting (2010)
- Measuring Gender Equality in Education in Nepal (2006)
- A Gender Audit of the Basic and Primary Education Programme – II (2002)
- A Study Report on the Effectiveness of the Scholarship Program in Ensuring Access and Equity in School Level Education in Nepal (2011)
- VCDF updating of the SSRP (2011)
- Gender Equality in Education by R Subrahmanian at IDS in Sussex

Appendix 2 List of stakeholders interviewed

Name	Designation/Organization
Mr. Lava Deo Awasthi	Joint Secretary, Higher Education and Educational Administration Division, MoE
Mr. Janardan Nepal	Joint Secretary, Planning Division
Mr. Hari Lamsal	Under Secretary, Program Section , MoE
Ms. Rama	Gender Focal Point, Programme Section MoE
Mr. Narayan Shrestha	Under Secretary, Foreign Aid Coordination Division
Mr. Divakar Dhungel	Joint Secretary, Monitoring Section , MoE
Mr.Raj Nath Pandey	Official, Monitoring Section, MoE
Mr. Rudra Bhandary	Official, Monitoring Section, MoE
Mr. Subhash Chandra Rai	Official, General Administration Deivision, MoE
Mr. Mahashram Sharma	Director General, DoE
Mr. Shankar Thapa	Under Secretary, Research & Education Management System, DoE
Mr. Jaya Lamsal	Under Secretary, Inclusive Education Section, DoE
Ms. Rajya Laxmi Nakarmi	Deputy Director, School Management Section , DoE
Ms. Divya Dawadi	Under Secretary, Gender Equity Section , DoE
Mr. Dinesh Shrestha	Deputy Director, Curriculum Development Centre
Ms. Sarala Poudyal	Gender Focal Point, Curriculum Development Centre
Ms. Kamla Pandye	Curriculum Development Centre
Mr Dambar D. Angdembe	Science expert, Curriculum Development Centre
Mr. Dik Bahadur Rai	Social Studies/Local Curriculum expert, Curriculum Development Centre
Mr. Diwakar Chapagain	Mother tongue and Nepali expert, Curriculum Development Centre
Mr. Prasad Gautame	Head of National Centre for Education Development
Ms. Suman Bajracharya	Gender Focal Person , National Centre for Education Development

Ms. Jayanti Satyal	Higher Secondary Education, DoE
Ms Kamla KC	Gender Focal Person, Food for Education
Mr. Gopal Bhattarai	Planning Officer, Non Formal Education
Mr. Bishnu P. Mishra	Programme Officer, Non Formal Education
Mr. Jaya Bahadur Tanden	Member Secretary, CTEVT
Mr. Devi Sharma	Under Secretary, Budget division, Ministry of Finance
Ms. Anupa Sigdel	Section Officer, Budget division, Ministry of Finance
Mr. Shivaraj Chaulagain	Under Secretary, National Planning Commission/Member of GRBC
Mr. Gaja Bahadur Rana	Under Secretary< Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare
Ms. Anjana Shakya	Himrights, Kathmandu
Ms. Jyotsna Tamang	Himrights, Kathmandu
Ms Bandita Sijapati	Gender and Social Inclusion specialist, World Bank
Ms. Suman Tuladhar	UNICEF, Kathmandu
Ms. Aye Kibeski	UNICEF, Kathmandu
Mr. Prem Aryal	Plan Nepal, Education Working Group coordinator.
Dr. Sushan Acharya	Education expert, Reader, Tribhuvan University
Ms. Jaya Sharma	Gender & Social Development consultant, NRM, ADB
Ms Gwyneth Salisbury	VSO education volunteer, Rupandehi District
Mr. Jogendra Bidukchhe	Former Head Teacher
Lalitpur District	
Ms. Shova Adhikari	Under Secretary, District Education Office(DEO)
Ms. Devi Pariyar	Section Officer, DEO
Mr. Indra Maharjan	Engineer, DEO
Mr. Krishna Kumar Maharjan	Account assistant, DEO
Mr. Dwarika Pokhrel	Undersecretary, DEO
Mr. Sheskanta Poudel	Program assistant, DEO

Mr. Harihar Dhital	Section Officer, DEO
Ms. Shanti Khadgi	Facilitator, Khumbeshwar Community Learning Centre,
Mr. Bhagya ram Maharjan	Facilitator, Pragatishal Community Learning Centre
Kapilvastu District	
Mr. Surya Bharat	Under Secretary, planning section DEO
Mr. Khim Bahadur GC	Section officer, Programme Officer DEO
Mr. Mitra Gautam	School Supervisor
Mr. Ramesh Pandey	Resource Person
Mr. Kanak Man Shrestha	Head Teacher, Shree Kanak Muni Secondary School
Name not obtained	Chairperson, SMC, Shree Kanak Muni Secondary School
Mr. Damodar Parajuli	Teacher, Shree Kanak Muni Secondary School
Ms. Sharada Sharma	Teacher, Shree Kanak Muni Secondary School
Ms. Seema Pandey	Teacher, Shree Kanak Muni Secondary School
Ms. Maya Khanal	Teacher, Shree Kanak Muni Secondary School
Ms. Chandramaya Bhusal	Teacher, Shree Kanak Muni Secondary School
Mr. Ishwor P. Gupta	Resource Person
Kaski district	
Mr. Hem Acharya	Program Officer, Kaski District
Ms. Bimala Sharma	GFP/ School Supervisor
Mr. Thakur P. Subedi	Resource Person
Mr. Lek Nath	Resource Person
Mr. Bhim Raj Poudyal	Resource Person
Mr. Loknath Acharya	School Supervisor
Mr. Motila Chapagain	School Supervisor
Mr. Buddhi Sagar Ghimore	School Supervisor
Mr. Narendra K. Shrestha	SMC Chair, Bal Mandir Secondary School
Mr. Man B. Bishwkarma	PTA Chair, Bal Mandir Secondary School

Mr. Sushil Basnet	Head Teacher, Bal Mandir Secondary School
Mr. Binod Raj Subedi	Head Teacher , Gyanodaya Secondary School

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Appendix 4 Data on enrolment for individual Janajati groups

Primary Level							
Janajati ethnic group	Girls	Boys	Total	Janajati ethnic group	Girls	Boys	Total
Bankaria	445	1	446	Majhi	8,712	8,151	16,863
Baramu	1,173	1,159	2,332	Meche	262	233	495
Bote	1,016	975	1,991	Mushibadiya	34	29	63
Chepang	6,478	6,749	13,227	Raji	53	64	117
Danuwar	4,870	4,574	9,444	Raute	169	62	231
Dhanuk	4,872	4,329	9,201	Satar	5,011	4,758	9,769
Hayu	411	407	818	Singsa	280	247	527
Jhagad	3,934	3,715	7,649	Siyar	82	107	189
Kisan	471	531	1,002	Surel	502	11	513
Kusunda	568	240	808	Thami	2,913	2,724	5,637
Lopcha	175	167	342	Thunam	82	68	150
Lower secondary level							
Janajati ethnic group	Girls	Boys	Total	Janajati ethnic group	Girls	Boys	Total
Bankaria	1	0	1	Majhi	2,637	2,414	5,030
Baramu	529	471	987	Meche	138	125	263
Bote	327	350	675	Mushibadiya	8	12	20
Chepang	921	872	1,793	Raji	27	28	55
Danuwar	2,306	1,905	4,211	Raute	9	9	18
Dhanuk	1,128	1,235	2,360	Satar	1,651	1,812	3,462
Hayu	128	118	246	Singsa	81	80	161
Jhagad	1,318	1,045	2,363	Siyar	20	14	34
Kisan	63	55	118	Surel	4	9	13

Kusunda	11	4	15	Thami	955	829	1,784
Lopcha	104	88	192	Thunam	12	19	31
Lower secondary level							
Janajati ethnic group	Girls	Boys	Total	Janajati ethnic group	Girls	Boys	Total
Bankaria	0	0	0	Majhi	808	818	1626
Baramu	149	180	329	Meche	77	63	140
Bote	137	127	264	Mushibadiya	6	5	11
Chepang	208	215	423	Raji	10	8	18
Danuwar	1011	929	1940	Raute	5	3	8
Dhanuk	453	492	945	Satar	422	450	872
Hayu	41	35	76	Singsa	84	68	152
Jhagad	457	397	854	Siyar	16	13	29
Kisan	10	16	26	Surel	1	4	5
Kusunda	0	0	0	Thami	296	240	536
Lopcha	47	18	65	Thunam	0	0	0

Table 6: gender-disaggregated data on school enrolment for individual Janajati groups

Appendix 5 Main findings from gender analysis of teacher-student classroom interactions

These remarks are based on three lesson observations in one Kaski District school.

Grade 6 Science lesson

Number of students: 11 boys and 8 girls. Male teacher. Sitting arrangement: Two to three students were seated in the four rows on either side of the classroom. One side was full of boys. On the other side, two boys were seated in the first row while the remaining three rows were occupied by girls.

Teacher-student Interactions

Two boys were asked to come in front to demonstrate how a thin rubber can make louder sound. No girls were invited to come to the front. Although the teacher did not target any specific children with questions, it was usually boys who answered those questions that required individual response. Three questions were answered by three boys, and the teacher did not try to encourage participation of girl students. However, when one of the girls yawned the teacher asked her a question as a form of punishment. She could not answer the question and another boy volunteered the answer.

Grade 3, Nepali

Female teacher. In this primary level class, there were 13 boys and 5 girls. Girls were seated in the back rows. The teacher did not demonstrate any gender bias in her interactions with students. She called pairs of boys and girls to the front to read aloud, for instance.

Grade 10, Science

Male teacher. In this class there were fifteen boys and four girls. The boys in the class were quite loud and insistent in their attempts to attract the teacher's attention. When a question was asked to the class at large, they shouted louder than the girls and it was usually a boy who the teacher accepted the answer from. One of the four girls did persistently raise her voice in an attempt to be noticed by the teacher, but her efforts were unsuccessful. On three occasions the teacher directly asked a question of an individual student, inviting them to stand. On two of these occasions he asked a boy. Once he asked a girl, but she shook her head shyly, refusing to answer.

The teacher moved to the rows where the boys were seated much more often than he moved to the girls' rows. He checked boys' calculation more often than he checked girls' calculations, because several boys shouted at him to come and check their work, while only one of the girls did so. On one occasion she persistently called him to check her work ('Sir! Sir!') but he ignored her.

This was a young teacher with a benevolent manner towards the students, who had just completed his Masters degree in Education. Although he did sometimes try to involve girl students, most of them were reluctant. The gender imbalance in the interactions seemed to arise partly from a combination of a few dominant boys' behaviour and the reluctance of the girls to speak up.

Appendix 6: Findings of school textbooks review

These are the findings of a brief review of a sample of school textbooks, looking at how they characterise Nepalese gender roles and relations. Books were chosen from a range of Grades and subjects. The selected books were; *Mathematics* (Grade Four), *Nepali* (Grade One), *My Social Studies and Creative Art* (Grade Four), *Science, Health and Physical Education* (Grade Three), and *Population and Environment Education* (Grade Six). All of these books were revised in 2008/9, taking into consideration inputs and suggestions from various stakeholders including teachers. The criteria used in the review, and the findings, are as follows:

Does the content stimulate boys and girls equally?

Examples were related to boys as well as girls, for instance both girls and boys are shown playing sports, participating in community work etc. Health and sanitation-related knowledge was also illustrated with stories and examples featuring men, women, boys and girls changing their sanitation habits and living healthy lives.

Are male and female characters depicted in a balanced way?

Both males and females take lead roles in stories and are shown taking part in various school activities and community organisations, such as village committees and community forest users groups. Most of the school children shown in *My Social Studies and Creative Art* (Grade Four) were girls. In *Mathematics* (Grade Four), girls as well as boys are depicted in each of the pictorial examples.

Are depictions of males and females gender-stereotypical?

Depictions of masculine and feminine roles, activities and life situations are stereotypical. For instance, in the Grade 3 *Science, Health and Education* book, only women and girls are shown washing clothes (see pages 72, 82 and 132). . Similarly, the Grade 6 *Population and Environment Education* book showed only women and never men fetching water (pages 16 and 35) and taking children to a health post (pages 27 & 64). In contrast, a picture showing increasing family income shows money changing hands between two men, although in the same book both males and females are shown doing agricultural work.

In general, this necessarily brief review supports other studies arguing that males and females are generally represented in a balanced manner in Nepal's school textbooks, which are also to a great extent free from harmful gender stereotypes. However, a small number of textbooks currently used in schools do still feature stereotypical presentations of men and women's roles.

Appendix 7: Key recommendations on curricula (from Ghimire-Niraula, 2004)

These general recommendations have been taken from 'Content Analysis of School Curricula From Gender Perspective', conducted for The Curriculum Development Centre by P. Ghimire-Niraula, Tribhuvan University (2004). They can be used as guidelines to aid curriculum developers involved in SSRP today.

Use of gender disaggregated words

For gender equity, use of gender-disaggregated words, e.g., girls and boys, male and female teachers and male and female intellectuals should be mentioned.

Use of gender sensitive language

The language used in the curricula should also be very much sensitive to preserve every individual's identity irrespective of their class, caste, ethnicity and gender.

Gender sensitivity among all levels of educational personnel

This is recommended to bring gender sensitivity in every level of educational planning and programming process.

Institutionalization of the process of gender review

The prepared curriculum should be reviewed from gender lens before sending them to the final users. This process needs to be institutionalized so that every curriculum revision or development would go through gender review. In Nepali, English, Mathematics and Social Studies special attention should be given to the following aspects:

- i. Use of both female and male names while addressing any female or male personalities, e.g. head teacher, principal, chief guest, minister, and so on.
- ii. Family letter should not be addressed to male-to-male such as: father writing letter to son only or a boy writing letter to his male friend only rather it should be:
 - Father/mother writing letter to daughter/son or vice versa,
 - Sister/brother writing letter to sister/brother or vice versa,
 - Daughter/son writing letter to mother/father or vice versa.in order to reflect changing social realities.

- iii. Central figure in biographies and essays should not be only male or only female. It should be both. Some contemporary male or female personalities can also be taken as examples.
- iv. Greed, pride, honesty, cleverness, kindness are all human characters, which should not be biased with male or female.
- v. Women's contribution in literature, science and technology, history, social services and politics should be given recognition according to their importance or value in the society.
- vi. In mathematics, male or female names mentioned in the exercises, illustrations and examples should be proportionately equal.
- vii. While explaining the roles of any social institutions or highlighting about social problems, e.g. violence, theft, drug uses, pollution, waste, etc. any particular sex cannot be blamed.

Removal of andocentric biases or male perspective from the curriculum

Removal of andocentric biases is necessary to develop curriculum and textbooks according to changing socio-economic realities and work pattern inside and outside the household. Therefore, in every issue the central figures should be both men and women and their contributions, e.g. show the contribution of men, women and children in farm and non-farm production, and show women/ men's participation in planning and decision-making processes in the household, community and local government bodies.

Gender roles within the HH across different class, caste, ethnicity and geography.

It should also be highlighted how gender roles are changing according to changing economic needs, migration and occupational pattern especially in Social Studies and in Population and Environmental Education.

Appendix 8: NFE provision and institutional constraints

The Non-formal Education Centre (NFEC) is primarily responsible for addressing the learning needs of the socially and economically marginalized population who never enrolled in school or those who dropped out of schools. Non-formal Education (NFE) was previously understood as a literacy program but now is recognised as an integral part of the education system. At present, NFE programmes focus on: i) basic literacy, particularly targeting women and other disadvantaged groups; ii) post literacy that gives continuity to the education of targeted groups; iii) open and alternative education that link targeted groups to formal education; iv) skill training and income generation programs; and vi) establishment of community learning centres.

Comments on institutional constraints

- 1) *Absence of a separate institutional structure within the education system:* NFEC, an apex agency that oversees the non-formal education activities, does not have a designated structure at the regional or district levels. The central level staff, who are primarily responsible for providing technical support to the NFE program such as capacity development of facilitators, production of training manual and text books of NFE programs, are not supported by a formal establishment of their own at the local level. The District Non-formal Education Committee is chaired by the Local Development Officer (LDO) with its secretariat based in the DEO. However, as the DEO has a high workload in the formal education sector, non-formal education is generally accorded less priority.
- 2) *Institutional capacity does not match the fast growth of NFE activities:* A non-officer level staff member has been designated as the NFE focal person in DEOs. Apart from their responsibilities in the formal education, the job descriptions of DEO staff also includes supervision and monitoring of NFE. However, DEO's institutional capacity has not been upgraded to match the continuous growth in NFE activities. Another capacity constraint is that Literacy Campaigns are implemented through the Village Development Committees (VDCs) which do not have required technical human resources and the experience of managing and overseeing education programs.
- 3) *The absence of a comprehensive information system, so vital for planning, coordination and monitoring, hinders the formulation of an effective, practical and need based plan for NFE.* Decisions regarding the

distribution/implementation of NFE programs are generally based on sporadic and incomplete information and the availability of financial resources. Thus, the absence of need based planning limits NFE's effectiveness particularly its contribution to the education sector and its empowerment process which aims to enable participants to make informed decisions and to improve their quality of life through better knowledge and skills.

- 4) *Lack of coordination among different bodies:* In addition to the Government program, many of the 30 members of the Association of International NGOs, are also involved in NFE provision. They have their own systems and modalities which vary across programs and service providers.
- 5) *Monitoring:* There is a lack of systematic compilation and analysis of the information collected by different bodies involved in NFE. In the GON system, quantitative tools are used to collect information on the number of enrolled learners and graduates of specific programs, but qualitative analysis is generally lacking.

A brief analysis of textbooks for Basic Literacy and Women's Literacy programmes

Basic Literacy Course Book (Naya Goreto or New Path)

This is a 150 hours course of three months which is conducted 2 hours a day for six days a week. The book has adopted the 'Key Word Approach' teaching methodology including issues related to daily life of adult women and men. Though the course does not include any lesson on gender equality and women's rights, presentation of pictorial and written messages as well as examples and stories are done in a gender sensitivity way.

Women's Literacy Hand Book

The Handbook gives emphasis to a "slow but steady" learning process to cover the book over a six month course (300 hrs, 2 hrs per day). Along with listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, the curriculum is designed to enhance participants' knowledge in areas such as family life, gender equality, political awareness, health, sanitation, nutrition, environment, income generation opportunities and the socio-cultural environment. The core group who wrote this book was supported by a technical group including gender, legal and health experts. All pictorial and written messages in the book are free from gender bias and include basic knowledge of social, economic and political issues that are pertinent to everyday life.

Women Literacy Course Book Part I & II (Naya Gaun Besi - New Village Life)

This two-part course book was prepared by a group of experts through extensive consultation with other experts, relevant stakeholders and target groups at the local level. Its contents are pertinent to socio-economic and political issues at the local level and are free from gender bias.

Appendix 9: Gender-disaggregated data on TEVT

Agencies	2008		2009		2010	
	Females	Total	Females	Total	Females	Total
Government Agencies	3992 (33%)	12074	7105 (41%)	17262	15424 (47.6%)	32403
Bilateral and multilateral Agencies	231 (58%)	398	10209 (57%)	17900	8502 (44.9%)	18922
Private Sectors	3298 (18.5%)	17811	3339 (18.1%)	18433	3186 (18.5%)	17145
Total	7521 (24.8%)	30283	20653 (38.5%)	53595	27112 (39.5%)	68470

Table7 Proportion of graduates of vocational and livelihood training who are female (From A profile of national Vocational Training Providers 2011, CTEVT Research and Information Division).

Programme	% Total Enrolment 2000/03 to 2009/12		% Total Output 2000/03 to 2007/10	
	M	F	M	F
Total	48	52	47	53
Engineering	85	15	94	6
Dip. in Civil Engineering	77	23	95	5
Dip. in Computer Engineering	90	10	91	9
Dip. in Electrical Engineering	94	6	95	5
Dip. in Electronics Engineering	98	2	100	0
Dip. in Mechanical Engineering	100	0	100	0
Dip. in Survey Engineering	92	8	94	6
Health	35	65	33	67
PCL Nursing	0	100	0	100
General Medicine (HA)	79	21	82	18
Dip. in Pharmacy	64	36	69	31
Medical Lab Technician	50	50	79	21
Ophthalmic Science	61	39	63	37

Dental Hygiene	29	71	29	71
Radiography	58	42	0	0
Homeopathy	25	75	0	0
Agriculture	74	26	84	16
I.sc. in Agriculture	74	26	85	15
Dip. in Food Technology	77	23	82	18
Information Technology	73	27	0	0
Information Technology	73	27	0	0
Forestry	83	17	0	0
Dip. in Forestry	83	17	0	0

Table 8: CTEVT Diploma Programs, Enrolment and Output by Gender (Table 5.3 MOE 2011a)

Appendix 10: Overview of subjects related to gender equality pre-service teacher training curricula

A. Grades XI & XII, Faculty of Education

Grade 11		
Course	Purpose of the course	Gender related chapter
Introduction to education	The course is designed to impart basic understanding of education, general views, functions, curriculum, educational administration, modern trends in education as well as provide guidance and counselling to students.	Unit VII (Modern Trends/Approaches in Education, 10 teaching hours), includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> lifelong education social justice in education inclusive education child rights
Instructional Pedagogy	This course is designed to impart basic understanding and teaching competencies on instructional planning, management and teaching skills. It has also topics related to pedagogy such as extracurricular activities and materials development.	Unit 3 (Instructional Management, 7 teaching hours includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancing classroom climate (developing children's confidence and self-esteem, Developing an incorporative classroom and Developing through quality circle Time Organizing the Classroom environment (Learning environment, use of space, Resources and Time Inclusiveness in the classroom
Grade XII		
Child Development and Learning	This course has two major parts. The first part deals with the nature of human growth and development focusing on principles and process of child development. The second part is about the nature and process of learning. It is expected that this course will help in enhancing understanding level of children and in designing effective learning processes for the teaching profession.	Unit II (Nature of Human Growth and Development, 10 Teaching hrs); one of the six chapters is on: principles/characteristics of development (Individual differences in development & social expectations for every developmental period). Unit IV (Early Childhood, 20 hrs). Contains two chapters on; i) socialization and ii) family relationship Unit-V (Late childhood, 20 Hrs). Contains chapters on social behaviour and family relationships

The Entrance Examination Guide Book 2009 for primary level teachers (prepared by the Educational Human Resource Development Centre, MOE) also includes a chapter on child rights and gender equality. However, the coverage of the chapter is

mostly confined to theoretical knowledge on the status of women rather than providing knowledge based skills to teachers to be gender sensitive in the classroom and in the teaching/learning process.

B. Overview of subjects related to gender issues in B.A. (Education) and M. Ed courses

Bachelor of Education

The core course includes social philosophy in relation to school system with the aims to develop student's understanding on concept of teaching and learning, and assess different aspects of social policy in Education.³⁶ Though the curriculum provide some knowledge on social aspects and inclusion, the coverage on gender differences in teaching learning process and how a student will acquire gender expertise to make the class room free from gender bias is not clear.

Educational Psychology, comprising 150 periods, is another compulsory course for the second year. The first part of the course is related to the developmental psychology focusing on the human growth, and human development while the second part deals with nature, principles and theories of learning, life skill approach to learning and educational guidance and counselling.

Though this course aims to make student familiar with educational psychology in teaching and develop an in depth understanding on human growth and development,³⁷ these issues are incorporated with a gender neutral approach. The course does not include material related to the difference between girl and boy's social interactions and learning environments.

Masters in Education

Gender and inclusion related subjects are unevenly included in various specialised curriculum of the Master level. Some curriculum such as 'Education Planning and Management' and 'Health Education' include a subject on " Social Justice" with the aim to enhance knowledge of students in promoting social justice through affirmative action and contribution of social justice for social development and empowerment.

³⁶ Philosophical and Sociological Foundation Education Unit III , IV & V (a total of 50 hrs)

³⁷ Out of the four units of the first part, Unit II (Human Growth and Development) and Unit IV (Stages of Human Development) comprising of total 41 hours, include development psychology, different stage of development (child hood, puberty) and related physical and social changes. This also explains the characteristic and social change as their effect, interrelationship among growth, maturation and learning

The Curriculum of Education Planning and Management includes the issue of social and gender justice in other subjects as well.³⁸ The curriculum for Population Education, Nepali, English, Curriculum and Evaluation do not include any subject on social justice and inclusion. Even the subject on 'Human Sexuality and Reproductive Health' appears gender neutral as it covers only biological aspects of sexuality and health, ignoring social aspects.

The Bachelor and Master level curriculums have been revised recently (in the period 2009 to 2011). Recently added subjects and topics, such as human rights education or social justice, have the potential to address key gender issues and could have a positive impact in the long term.

³⁸ Foundation of Education: Unit 10 (with 25 periods), Education and Social Justice, include chapters on women's right, marginalised and disadvantage population and approach to promote social justice in the society.
Educational Psychology :Unit 1 (with 8 period) Stage and Factor influencing Human Development include a chapter on "major factor influencing human development - sex related factor"
Subject :Theory and Practice of Non formal Education: Unit VIII (20 periods) Adult literacy include a chapter on Gender Justice

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