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# Gender Brief 2021 - WFP Nepal

March 2022

## Gender context in Nepal

The Constitution of Nepal 2015 commits to “ending discriminations relating to class, caste, indigenous ethnicity, region, language, religion and gender”. Women’s representation in the Federal Parliament stands at 33.5 percent and 41 percent at the local level. However, major challenges remain, demonstrated by Nepal ranking 106 out of 156 countries in the 2021 Gender Inequality Index. The ratio of employed women to men stands at 59 women to 100 men<sup>1</sup>. Nepal’s patriarchal society and gendered social norms traditionally increase the burden on women and girls. These were further heightened by the pandemic which increased the burden of unpaid care and domestic work on women. Social norms and practices often influence women’s decision-making power abilities at

the household and community level. Women’s participation in economic life is still characterized by non-productive, non-paid, and hazardous agricultural employment and is limited by the lack of access to land and limited education. Women belonging to other marginalized groups such as Dalits, Indigenous Peoples, and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) also face major hurdles in accessing social services due to a lack of legal identity e.g., citizenship card, disability card, as well as a lack of awareness of their rights and entitlements through Government social protection schemes<sup>2</sup>.

1. Gender Equality in Numbers: Progress and Challenges in Achieving Gender Equality in Nepal, UN Women  
2. A study on Access of Indigenous Peoples with Disabilities to Food in Nepal, WFP Nepal, 2021

## WFP's contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment

WFP recognizes gender inequality and associated power imbalances as a root cause of food insecurity and aims to address structural gender-based inequality and unequal power relations. WFP Nepal has mainstreamed gender disaggregated data and gender-based analysis to inform the design of programmes and help ensure that women, men, girls, and boys participate equitably and benefit from the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of programmes. WFP Nepal has been advocating equal sharing of intra-household responsibilities through nutrition and gender sensitization and social and behaviour change interventions, with the overall goal of promoting proper utilization of food at the household level and enhancing gender equality and the empowerment of women.



*Photo 1: Health and Security Officer checking body temperature at construction site under Post Earthquake Recovery/ PURNIMA project, Photo by Suraj Kandel.*

WFP has made deliberate efforts to place assistance directly into the hands of women as a first step in increasing women's access to resources and equal power-sharing, measured by participation in decision-making by women and men at household and community levels.

Seeking to create a positive enabling environment for WFP's twin-track approach of gender mainstreaming and targeted gender actions, WFP strengthened the capacity of our own employees, government counterparts, and cooperating partners to integrate gender-specific actions into WFP supported programme interventions. Additionally, WFP has paid special attention to mitigating and preventing gender-based violence by sensitizing and guiding our employees, cooperating partners, and service providers on WFP's Gender Policy, and Protection and Accountability Policy;

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) related zero-tolerance policy and reporting mechanism, Community Feedback Mechanism (CFM); tracking, monitoring and reporting of GBV and PSEA cases regularly; and systematically integrating the consideration of people's multiple, intersecting and context-specific needs in design, monitoring and evaluation tools.

## Gender in Emergency Response, Health and Nutrition programmes

WFP mostly targets vulnerable and marginalized groups including single women, Persons with Disabilities and excluded groups for food and nutrition assistance. A total of 57 percent of recipients of unconditional cash assistance were women; and 66.6 percent of beneficiaries of the Nutrition Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programme (BSFP) were women and girls, in the context of deep-rooted gender and caste-based discrimination and social exclusion in rural areas of Madhesh, Karnali and Sudurpaschim provinces. According to the 2021 post-distribution monitoring conducted for the prevention of malnutrition activities, 83 percent of recipients reported that women made decisions on the utilization of Super Cereal in the household, while 32 percent reported that decisions were made by women jointly with their mothers-in-law; 27 percent reported that male members made the decisions, and 4 percent reported fathers-in-law made the decisions.



*Photo 2: A mother (Maternal Child Health and Nutrition/ MCHN beneficiary) cuddles her baby at Jumla district. Photo by Sangam Silpakar .*

WFP championed a gender-sensitive approach to encourage adolescent girls to remain in school during their menstruation through increased awareness and community-based advocacy on menstrual hygiene and practices, even during school closures due to COVID-19. Additionally, WFP engaged men and other household members (other than mothers) in nutrition and health

messaging to increase knowledge and participation in the health, nutrition, and food security of their families under the Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition programme .

More than 33,000 pregnant and lactating women (PLWs) and caretakers were reached in 2021. The positive outcomes in dietary indicators in the year can be partially attributed to Social Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) delivered to both men and women. Furthermore, WFP supported 29,954 pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and children aged 0-23 months, thereby ensuring the availability of specialized nutritious food.

## Gender results through livelihood support and resilience building in climate change programmes

In 2021, over 43 percent of beneficiaries under various Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) activities were women, undertaking non-traditional gender roles i.e., leading and managing local infrastructure work, and 49 percent of agribusiness/rural enterprise owners were also women. Similarly, 45 percent of participants in climate change adaptation-related capacity building training sessions were women. WFP implemented targeted interventions that contributed to women's economic empowerment through income opportunities and diversified livelihoods with women-led/owned rural enterprises. WFP implemented two projects exclusively focusing on the economic empowerment of rural

women including leadership development in the value-chains - UN Joint Programme on Rural Women Economic Empowerment (RWEE) and WFP-UN Women joint project: Leveraging Women's Leadership and Empowerment in Value Chain for Resilient Livelihoods. The focus of both projects is on rural women's economic empowerment where the rural women have been linked to agricultural value chains and markets by strengthening their technical and leadership capacity. The women-friendly and drudgery reduction community assets were created i.e., drinking water supply system and multi-use water systems, a post-harvest storage facility for potato, fruits, cereals, and medical herbs and non-timber forest products, fuel-efficient stoves, reclamation of rural/agricultural roads; solar-powered community service centres owned by women's groups/cooperatives, and multi-purpose community nurseries and community seed banks. Women had a strong decision-making role in the management of FFA schemes with their participation at 55.5 percent in User Committees and women constituted 48 percent of leadership positions in User Committees.

WFP also supported the revival of 850 women-led rural enterprises which had shut down due to the secondary impacts of COVID-19. Under policy support initiative to the local government for promoting climate resilience local development, , the Local Adaptation Plan of Action (LAPA) was developed for seven local governments, incorporating gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) focused activities with allocated budget.

## Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Results at a glance



**2,210** Women farmers accessed to stable and localized **agricultural markets** for their **surplus produces** through HGSF.



**4,555** farmers (78% women) accessed the **crop and livestock insurance**.



**4,125** people (57% women) **started/expanded** 220 different **agroforestry enterprises**.



**299** women-led enterprises **created/expanded** in 2021



**81,446** beneficiaries of FFA programmes, **49.2 percent** were **women**.



**29,954** pregnant and lactating women and children aged **06-23 months** received specialized nutritious food in food-insecure districts.



**305** HHs established **solar dryer-based food processing** enterprises which are exclusively **owned and operated by women**.

## Women's participation in supply chain emergency preparedness and response actions

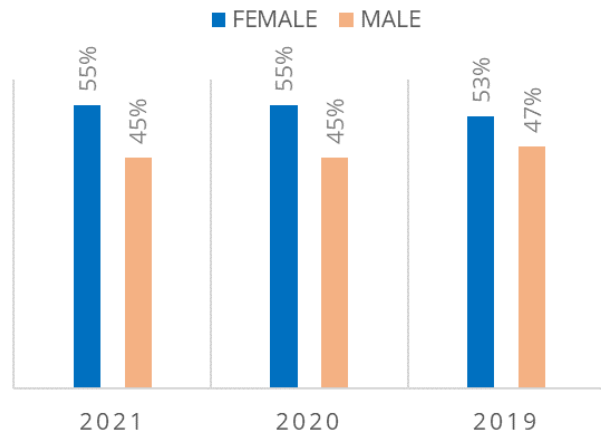
Emergency preparedness and response has been an area traditionally dominated by men in Nepal. To address this imbalance, WFP Nepal encourages the participation of women in emergency logistics training, in close coordination with security agencies. As a result, there was a rise of women participants from 9 percent in 2019 to 19 percent in 2021. For the first time, a practical emergency logistics training dedicated to women security personnel from Nepal Army, Nepal Police, and Armed Police Force was also organized for 19 women during International Women's Day in 2021 to inspire the challenging of gender stereotypes when choosing a profession.



Photo 3: Women participants during Practical Emergency Logistics Training at Humanitarian Staging Area in Kathmandu.

This initiative aims to inspire and encourage all WFP staff to support women's leadership and empowerment .

### Yearly increment in women's participation



Gender Data in 2021

BENEFICIARIES	FEMALE	MALE
1,245,570	55%	45%

Cover Photo Page 1: Women participating in FFA activity under COVID-19 Livelihoods and Economic Recovery Project.

## Gender in workforce and organizational culture

Efforts continue towards achieving gender parity in staffing of the WFP country office. As of March 2022, 35 percent of the total staff were female. WFP has launched an Empowering Women Series, where women speakers from other UN agencies and beyond share their stories of success and struggles.

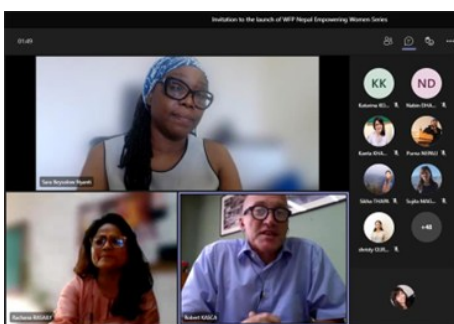


Photo 4: UN Resident Coordinator Ms. Sara Beysolow Nyanti launched Empowering Women Series, October 2021.