

Guideline and Policy Review Workshop on GESI Budgeting and Auditing in the Local Governments of Nepal

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Report

**Organized By
Municipal Association of Nepal (MuAN)**

**Supported By
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1. Background

According to the Government of Nepal, one of its responsibilities is to ensure the realization of gender equity in every sector of life. However, in reality female population continue to suffer from significant economic and other social deprivations as compared to the male population. Apart from the proposed inclusion of at least 33% women in all state mechanisms (as also specifically stated for the LG's in the LSGA 1999) and the abolition of all forms of legal discrimination, it also stresses for the necessity "to adopt a gender perspective in overall economic environment, development progress, budget and policy formulation." The first relevant initiative for Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) was introduced by the Ministry of Finance during the preparation of the national budget for the FY 2007/08. As a result, a gender responsive categorization for programme budgets was developed. Likewise a Gender Responsive Budget Committee has been formed with the objective to capacitate the sector ministries in GRB and monitor their performance. On the local level, the few initiatives for the introduction of Gender Budgeting remain fragmented and fairly limited in their scope.

Although, the MLD has produced GRB Guideline for all the Local Governments (which are currently under revision), there is very limited awareness about its existence. The revised draft of the municipal guideline will be prepared soon and subsequently disseminated during the orientations. Furthermore, based on its gender and social inclusion policy paper, the Local Government and Community Development Programme (LGCDP) is currently developing a gender and social inclusion implementation strategy for the local governments of Nepal, in which GRB will represent as one component.

In the past, MuAN, as the representative organization of entire municipalities, had conducted several activities on women participation and their roles and rights in the Local governments. Similarly, with financial assistance from (FES), MuAN organized a Guideline and Policy Review Workshop on Gender and Social Inclusive (GESI) Budgeting and Auditing in the Local Governments of Nepal on 4 Shrawan 2068 i.e. July 20, 2011 at Hotel Greenwich Village amid high officials from Ministry of Local Development (MoLD); Ministry of Finance; development partners like GIZ, PPPUE/UNDP, UN-WOMEN; close partners like Association of DDCs in Nepal (ADDCN), National Association of VDCs in Nepal (NAVIN) and Kathmandu Metropolitan City Office; representatives from different NGOs; focal persons from various municipalities; secretariat members, staff members and members of Women Department of MuAN and so on (*see Annex 2 for detail*).

2. Structure of the Programme

The workshop was divided into five sessions namely introductory, thematic session I and II, group work session, presentation and closing session. Ms. Sara Neupane, Programme Officer of MuAN initiated the workshop by requesting Mr. Dormani Paudel, President of

MuAN to chair the event and other special guests to take their respective seats. All the participants introduced themselves and the organizations they belonged to. This was followed by the introductory session.

2.1 Introductory Session

2.1.1 Welcome and Objective

Mr. Kalanidhi Devkota, Executive Secretary of MuAN formally welcomed all the participants and highlighted on the objectives of the workshop which are as follows:

- To review the Guideline on Gender and Social Inclusive Budgeting and Auditing in the Local Governments of Nepal prepared by MoLD
- To formulate according recommendations and incorporate them in the final guideline

Mr. Devkota also emphasized on the importance of Gender and Social Inclusive Budgeting and Auditing in the context of local governments. He explained that the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) of 10th five year plan had focused separate programmes and budgeting for mainstreaming the poorest of the poor and marginalized groups, which could not be materialized due to the lack of proper planning. He added that gender as well as social inclusion responsive budgeting and programming need to be introduced right from the planning phase.



He further explained how women's work is devalued in a country like Nepal. The budget of Nepal has never been gender sensitive. Hence while preparing budget, it is necessary to take such matters into consideration. He even assured that MuAN could advocate for the effective implementation of guideline once it is approved.

2.1.2 Short Speeches

- ***Sudha Neupane, Under Secretary of Gender and Social Inclusive Unit of MoLD***

Ms. Neupane said that MoLD had first developed Gender and Social Inclusive Budgeting and Auditing Guideline for District Development Committees (DDCs) only. However, a common guideline would be sufficient for DDCs, VDCs as well as municipalities as per the consensus.

- ***Ganesh Rai, Executive Officer of KMC***



Mr. Rai said that the workshop was very much relevant as that was the time of preparing budget and programmes nationwide. He further said that that in our context there were enormous inequalities which made it challenging to eliminate all forms of discrimination. Hence, it is necessary to develop equitable program for all, he added. He also informed that a separate women department was going to be established by KMC for addressing gender responsive program.

- ***Kedar Neupane, Joint Secretary of MoLD***



Mr. Neupane pointed out that the workshop was very much relevant in this peak time of national budgeting. According to him, as this is a new approach all local authorities will give more attention regarding GRB. He also mentioned that the cooperation between government, NGOs, civil society and local bodies is very much essential in designing and executing gender responsive and socially inclusive programs and policies.

- ***Reshmi Raj Pandey, Chief of Municipal Management Section & Joint Secretary of MoLD***

Mr. Pandey explained the importance of the terms gender, social inclusion, budgeting and auditing, local governments, guidelines and policy review. He also clarified that it is not a separate program for socially discriminated group and women but the budget as such is prepared for the benefit of all. According to him, indicators to identify and mainstream the poorest of poor should be developed and implemented. There already exists a provision to allocate a minimum of 35% of the total budget for women and children in all local authorities. Hence, he further added that we have already started a social revolution however; we need to be focused on other isolated groups and to measure who are the excluded one, we must have mechanism of outcome based monitoring.

- ***Gore Bahadur Khapangi, Ex Minister of Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MoWCSW)***

Firstly, Mr. Khapangi shared his experience and challenges of being minister for women, children and social welfare. He stated that it is necessary to include the indigenous nationalities among the targeted groups together with the other disadvantaged and marginalized groups while designing and implementing programs. He further highlighted on the importance of including the term “social inclusion” with the term “gender”.



- ***Mr. Dormani Paudel, President of MuAN***



Mr. Paudel, President of MuAN said that democratic character and habits as well as committed leadership are what is needed for the implementation of such programmes. He further said that increasing focus on infrastructural development and weakening attention towards software part of development which is more important for human development was being overlooked.

He explained how GESI as a separate approach being focused on human based development, would help to eliminate all forms of discrimination. He mentioned that activities that aid for women’s overall development and welfare were not included in the national programmes. Thus, there is a need for developing budget and programmes especially for female and all socially excluded groups. Women and the marginalized groups if provided opportunities can lead the nation, he added. However, local authorities have a very important role to play in designing as well as ensuring the proper implementation of gender and social inclusive budgeting and auditing, he concluded.

2.2 Thematic Session I

2.2.1 Introductory Speech by FES



Dr. Dev Raj Dahal, Head of FES Nepal gave a brief introduction of FES which is currently working around 100 countries across the world. It is a non-profit making, political public-interest institution committed to the principles and basic values of social democracy in its educational and policy-orientated work. FES Nepal currently works in the sector of democratization , media, conflict resolution, good governance and gender, according to him.

He said that the issues of gender and social inclusion are being more challenging in the context of Nepal. He explained the importance of including civil society during the formulation of policies as civil society is a good forum for the development of women and marginalized groups of the society. Women were considered as recipients earlier however this scenario is changing with time, he said. Resources are not possible to explore only from state but needed to explore from all sides including civil societies. The regulation of resources and budget that we have, depends upon the interest of political ideology rather than universal ideology. He further said that it is equally important to create awareness on social justice, equality and gender responsive and social inclusive consciousness through civic education to facilitate structural changes. In addition, he pointed out that political participation needed to be gender friendly and transformational. In a nutshell, gender budgeting and auditing is one of the tools for incorporating budget for gender and socially discriminated group, he concluded.

2.2.2 Presentation on Gender Responsive Budgeting: Theoretical Issues and Practical Application in Nepal



Dr. Chandra Bhadra, Professor of Gender Studies in Tribhuvan University made a comprehensive presentation on Gender Responsive Budgeting: Theoretical Issues and Practical Application in Nepal (*see Annex 3 for detail*). She clarified that she would focus only on gender but not social inclusion. According to her, gender responsive budgeting is not a separate budget for women but it can address problems and challenges related to women.

However, it is bringing gender sensitivity and becoming gender responsive in the overall budgetary policy and the process such as revenue generation, taxation, budget allocation and the budget output. As per the presentation, gender responsive budgeting combines technical knowledge for equitable decision making with advocacy and organizing of women's groups at the grassroots level. She also highlighted that gender responsive budgeting is an attempt to recognize women's contribution to the society and economy with their unpaid labor in the "care economy." In a patriarchal society like ours, the status of men and women is undoubtedly unequal. Hence gender responsive budgeting is something that will unquestionably benefit women as it can address problems and inequalities confronted by women and the disadvantaged groups, she added.

2.2.3 Questions and Recommendations from Participants

After the presentation the floor was open for discussion and clarification. The session was very interactive and participative between the participants and presenters. Mainly, the questions and answers were focused on why gender responsive and socially inclusive budgeting and auditing is important in the local governments of Nepal.

- **Hem Raj Lamichhane, ADDCN**

Women development concept was initiated by 90s as a WAD, WID, and GAD. However in Nepalese context, there is still male dominating mentality which causes discrimination. Male and female are only different biologically, but women are discriminated by our male dominated society. Thus, we need to lessen the gap between male and female.

- **Meen Bishwakarma, Nepali Congress**

Single women marriage and inter-caste marriage system was promoted by the government with the provision of Rs. 50,000 as an incentive few years back. This is a positive development however why this is taken as a criticized action?

- **Vidya Neupane, Member of Women Department of MuAN**

National budget for female is still small when compared to the previous ones. Hence we should focus on allocating more for women and marginalized groups.

- **Juneli Shrestha, Member of Women Department of MuAN**

We still have defect in our perception towards female. Thus first of all we need to improve our perception and attitude. It is necessary to include men along with women during the period of programming and budgeting.

- **Dr. Chandeswor Saha, OBF**

Discrimination among poor and rich women still exists in the context of Nepal. The need of poor women are far different from those of well off. Hence, it is necessary to address issues of poor women separately in the budget itself.

2.2.4 Clarification

Dr. Bhadra in response to some queries clarified that it is always the male members or men who make decisions for women in a patriarchal society like ours. For example, the provision of giving incentive to men marrying single women was the decision of the men in policy making level. She reiterated that men without any doubt should participate in the issues of women but at the same time they should let women take decisions for their rights.

2.3 Thematic Session II

2.3.1 Presentation on Gender and Social Inclusive Budgeting and Auditing Guideline for the Local Governments of Nepal

Through the presentation, Ms. Nirmala Thapa of MoLD clarified that MoLD has developed a uniform guideline of GESI for all local bodies i.e. municipalities, VDCs and DDCs. She informed that the guideline needs to be institutionalized at all three local governments. . Since GESI is a cross cutting issue, MLD has already incorporated at least 35% of the total budget for this sector. MLD has focused on social mobilization at all existing 75 districts, 3915 VDCs and 58 municipalities. The GESI guideline is under construction, however the implementation part is still challenging. Hence, capacity development unit under MoLD needs to be established for capacitating local authorities about the newly formed guideline.



Mr. Bhimsen Chaudhary of Ganeshman Pratisthan and consultant for preparing the GESI guideline presented on the four indicators of the guideline i.e. Gender and Social Inclusive Development in the Policy of Local Governments; Gender and Social Inclusion Responsive Programmes; Internal Structure and Human Resources, Enhancement of Relations and Commitment from Nepal Government and the sub indicators (*see Annex 3 for detail*).

2.3.2 Questions and Recommendation from Participants

After the presentation, the floor was open for discussion and clarification. Some of the important issues that came up during the discussion are as follows:

- **Mr. Narayan Bahadur Thapa, MoLD**

Due to the effect of global pressurization, inclusion was beginning from the past decade; however we still have resource constraints. So, within these limited resources it is difficult to achieve all sorts of indicators. Citizen rights depend upon how far they secure their commodity rights. So, it is difficult to enhance their level only from participation. Therefore, the indicators designed here are overambitious which will be difficult to comply with.

- **Jamuna Bhujel, Janakpur Municipality**

There should be indicators related to single women as well.

- **Prativa Neupane, PPPUE/UNDP**

First, we have to explore whether the indicators developed herewith are possible to comply or not. Second, status of Women's enrollment in Users' group/ Committee should be incorporated as indicators.

- **Mani Ram Mahat, UDLE**

Indicators must be made achievable rather than just for getting numbers. Reward and punishment system should be introduced.

- **Mr. Dormani Paudel, President of MuAN**

How far these designed indicators are possible for all contexts? For eg. In case of Humla and Kathmandu separate indicators should be developed considering the local context.

- **Ms. Shyama Regmi, Member of Women Department of MuAN**

Legal unit should be incorporated in the indicators.

- **Nigma Tamrakar, Consultant, Ministry of Finance**

There is a need to incorporate pro poor gender indicators. We have national regulation as well as international commitments regarding the matter of gender and social inclusion. So, this forum will be the best one for its localization. Part I will have GESI budgeting and planning and Part II will have GESI auditing and implementation.

2.3.3 Clarification

Mr. Chaudhary said that all the comments and suggestions provided by the participants would be incorporated in the final version of the guideline.

2.3 Group Work Session

Group sessions were conducted to review the draft gender responsive and socially inclusive indicators developed for the evaluation of gender sensitivity and social inclusiveness of local government bodies in Nepal. The participants were divided into four groups and were given four topics to deal with which are as follows:

Group I: Gender and Social Inclusive Development in the Policy of Local Governments

Group II: Gender and Social Inclusion Responsive Programmes

Group III: Internal Structure

Group IV: Human Resources, Enhancement of Relations and Commitment from Nepal Government

Group I



Parshuram Upadhyay
Bhagirathi Pandey
Nilima Shrestha
Dr. Chandeshwor Saha
Sarita Maharjan
Bijaya Rajbaidya

Group II



Gore Bahadur Khapangi
Dr. Chandra Bhadra
Gajendra Thakur
Juneli Shrestha
Shyama Regmi
Jamuna Bhujel

Group III



Tek Kumar Regmi
Nigma Tamrakar
Pratima Neupane
Nirmala Parajuli
Gyanisobha Maharjan
Urmila Khadka

Group IV



Ambika Dhaubadel
Keshav Silwal
Ritu Shrestha
Chandramaya Maharjan
Bir Bahadur Mahato
Rukmani Gyawali

2.4 Presentation Session

Group I: Gender and Social Inclusive Development in the Policy of Local Governments

Mr. Chandeshwor Saha from OBF presented on behalf of Group I. The major comments provided are as follows:

- The term “gender” should be replaced by the term “gender inclusive”
- Have the existing policies and regulations related to gender been internalized or not? *(to be added in 1.1)*
- Objective should be replaced by plan and programme *(in B of 1.1)*
- Whether the job description of Gender Focal Person is clear or not *(in D of 1.1)*
- Municipalities, VDCs to be added *(in A of 1.2)*



- Addition of representative and section chief *(in B of 1.2)*
- There should be settlement, ward and *ilaka* *(in B of 1.4)*
- Flexibility in working hours and positive discriminatory policy in promotion *(to be added in 1.5)*
- There should be policy regarding use of words related to social harassment and gender discrimination in the working space *(to be added in 1.5)*
- Is there a policy to encourage/uplift women, men and children of backward and marginalized group? *(to be added in 1.5)*

Group II: Gender and Social Inclusion Responsive Programmes

Ms. Shyama Regmi, member of MuAN's women department and Mr. Gajendra Thakur of OBF presented on behalf of Group II. Some major points that came from Group II are as follows:

- Gender and sexual minorities, backward class, single women, differently able and marginalized group of people who have not benefitted from the state *(to be added in A of 2.1)*
- Is there a provision of discussing problems with the above mentioned group/ community prior planning programmes? *(to be added in B of 2.1)*
- Treatment of kidney and stone, heart diseases and programmes against drug abuse *(to be added in A of 2.2)*
- Inform people about the legal service regarding violence against women such as witch craft, dowry, polygamy etc. *(to be added in C of 2.2)*
- Was there 33 percent participation of women while developing and implementing plans/programmes? *(to be added as E in 2.4)*
- Was the participation of identified group/community ensured developing and implementing plans/programmes? *(to be added as F in 2.5)*
- Are there policies to monitor the effect of gender equality, women empowerment and social inclusive development in the local level? *(to be revised in C of 2.5)*



Group III: Internal Structure

Ms. Nigma Tamrakar, UN WOMEN and Ministry of Finance presented on behalf of Group III. Some major points that came from the discussion are mentioned below:

- There should be at least 33 percent proportional representation of women in local level (*in A of 3.1*)
- Finance and account management should be different topics (*in 3.2*)
- Regarding transparency, women's agenda should be added in minimum conditions (*in A of 3.4*)
- Regarding information management, women's agenda should be made clear in the minimum conditions
- Sex disaggregated data should be made (*in C of 3.5*)



To be added

- Questions and participation regarding decision making process
- Networking of like minded organizations
- Working procedure, with user groups, women's participation and leadership in user groups
- Women's participation in planning
- Formation and active role of GESI committee (women, indigenous, *janajati*, *dalit*, oppressed group)
- GESI desk/focal person in all local levels i.e. municipalities, DDCs and VDCs
- GESI (friendly environment), infrastructure

Group IV: Human Resources, Enhancement of Relations and Commitment from Nepal Government

Ms. Ambika Dhaubadel of Bhaktapur Municipality made presentation from Group IV.

- For the new 41 municipalities, human resource are to be managed after the first council
- There should not be same indicators for big, small/inaccessible and new municipalities. For big municipalities, the indicators can be kept as it is, for small/inaccessible there should be provision of focal person and for the new 41, there should be minimum infrastructures
- Urban development technicians in municipalities (*in B of 4.3*)



2.5 Closing Session

The workshop turned out to be very interactive as participants could directly interact with the officials from MoLD. Ms. Nirmala Thapa of MoLD thanked MuAN for taking the lead role in sharing the guideline with relevant stakeholders and partners. She explained that MuAN along with ADDCN and NAVIN being the three local government associations would definitely have a very vital role in the implementation of the GESI guideline. Likewise, Ms. Sudha Neupane of MoLD also showed her gratitude towards MuAN and all the staff members for making the workshop possible. She also thanked FES for providing financial and technical assistance to MuAN for organizing the workshop. Both of them assured that the GESI unit of MoLD would undoubtedly consider all the issues raised and recommendations provided by the participants to make the final guideline more effective and scientific.



Lastly, Mr. Devkota, Executive Secretary of MuAN thanked all the participants for their active participation and input in the programme as well as the resource persons for all their effort in making the workshop fruitful. He also expressed his sincere gratitude towards the FES team for their financial and technical assistance. He said that new municipalities need to be oriented regarding GESI approach and associated indicators. With this note he closed the programme expressing MuAN's commitment to organize such workshops in the days to come for follow up.

