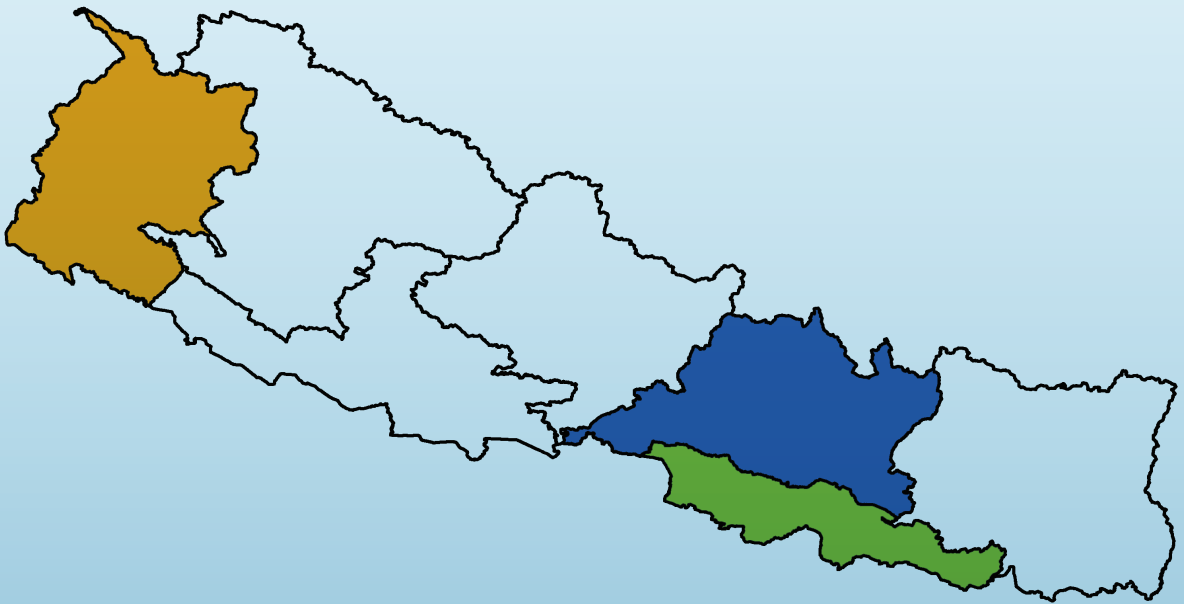# LOCAL GOVERNANCE, GENDER RESPONSIVE AND SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE PUBLIC FINANCE MANAGEMENT: KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES

Mapping Individual and Institutional Capacities of Local Government Functionaries in Gender Responsive and Social Inclusion Planning and Budgeting in three Provinces of Nepal

NEPAL ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF COLLEGE

LOCAL GOVERNANCE, GENDER RESPONSIVE AND SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE PUBLIC FINANCE MANAGEMENT: KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES

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DECLARATION

Local Governance, Gender Responsive and Socially Inclusive Public Finance Management: Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices is the first survey carried out to map Gender Equality and Social Inclusion and Gender Responsive Budgeting knowledge, attitude, and practices of local governance institutions and functionaries. The survey is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Finance, Nepal Administrative Staff College, and UN Women and supported by the Embassy of Finland but does not reflect the official position of collaborating organizations.

DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE SURVEY IS AVAILABLE FROM

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RECOMMENDED CITATION

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The Constitution of Nepal defines Nepal as an inclusive state where the rights of women, disadvantaged, and marginalized communities are safeguarded through state policies and practices. In order to make Nepal an inclusive state, there should be provisions to ensure equal access to the public resources and opportunities, the Government of Nepal is committed to make it happen. At the time Nepal is embarking towards institutionalization of the federal form of governing system, where the state authorities including political, administrative, and financial authorities, are shared among the federal units, developing a common understanding among the state agencies on aspects of inclusive state is essential.

The Ministry of Finance adheres to the principles of the Constitution and ensures the commitments to make the budget allocation gender and social inclusion friendly. It is practicing gender responsive budgeting codes and procedures to ensure that the budget adequately addresses the concerns of women and excluded communities. Gender responsive budgeting is not only the technical issue but it is more about knowing the social dynamics and addressing them. The Ministry is committed to make further improvements in the system and encourage the provincial and local governments to adhere with the constitutional spirit and provisions.

In a federal form of governance, the role of province and local governments is equally important to achieving the constitutional goals. The local governments, being the frontline state agencies, have important roles to promote social inclusions through gender-responsive budget appropriation. For making the gender responsive budget robust and need-based and developing institutional capacity of the local governments, it is apparent to assess the knowledge of elected representatives and civil staff at the local governments and consequently develop institutional and professional capacity.

In this regard, the Ministry expresses its gratitude to Nepal Administrative Staff College for conducting a study on 'Local Governance, Gender Responsive and Socially Inclusive Public Financial Management: Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices'. The survey captures the knowledge, attitude, and practices of elected representatives and civil staff at the local levels. The survey has adopted scientific methods and is comprehensive in the coverage. The findings of the study are valuable and will provide a baseline to strengthen the inclusive budget making practices in Nepal. The Ministry is thankful to UN Women for partnering with the Ministry and Nepal Administrative Staff College for carrying out this noble study.

I assure that the Ministry will take benefit of the survey and will be happy to support follow-up studies in future.

Madhu Kumar Marasini
Secretary, Ministry of Finance

Nepal Administrative Staff College

"... devoted to making differences positively."

PREFACE

The Government of Nepal has taken several initiatives for making governance inclusive in the last decade. One such step has been to make public finance gender sensitive. The government has prepared legal arrangements, guidelines, and procedures to ensure gender responsive budgeting. In the erstwhile system, budget making was managed by the central government, but the 2015 Constitution devolved the public financial management authorities among the federal units including provincial and local constituent governments. With the extension in public financial management activities, the sub-national governments are processing toward institutionalizing the constitutional mandates of managing state affairs including economic affairs.

This study comes at an appropriate time - during the strengthening of the foundation of the new governance system, as it maps the knowledge, attitude, and practices of local government officials (both elected and civil officials) on the broader issues of gender equality and social inclusion and Gender Responsive Public Financial Management (GRPFM). The study adopts scientific methods of sample selection, instrument design, and data collection and therefore, the findings are considered to be reliable and reflective of the state of GRPFM at the local levels. The survey findings will serve as a baseline for all levels of government to strengthen the GRPFM.

NASC will take further initiatives towards communicating the survey results to policymakers, bureaucrats, elected representatives, and other policy actors. We will further work to prepare policy briefs and communication materials and use survey findings in capacity building programs. In addition, we plan to continue such studies in the future to regularly document the progress in GRPFM and scale up the survey coverage to all provinces and at the national level.

I thank the Technical Team members and other NASC staff for their efforts and overall leadership in carrying out this survey. I acknowledge the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration for their constant support and willingness to benefit from the survey results. I am sure that the findings will provide policy inputs for improving gender responsive budgeting.

I am also thankful to UN Women Nepal for extending support towards this study. This type of collaboration will add value in improving Nepal's public sector governance. NASC is interested in taking its partnership with UN Women to a new level in the coming days.

Lastly, we welcome comments and suggestions for improving the overall aspects of the study for the future.

Dr Rajan Khanal
Executive Director

PREFACE

The Government of Nepal has demonstrated a strong commitment to advancing Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) principles in public policies and budgets. The Constitution of Nepal 2015 provisioned three tiers of government: federal, provincial, and local. Local and provincial governments hold a variety of political, fiscal, as well as administrative powers, while there are also concurrent powers with the federal government. Similarly, the Local Government Operation Act 2017, has further explained the functions, roles, and responsibilities of the Local government unit (LGUs) in line with the distinctive functions roles and responsibilities specified in the Constitution of Nepal including the development and implementation of gender-responsive plans and budget.

Furthermore, the 15th plan mandates all three tiers of governance to establish gender-responsive budgeting systems and practices to ensure an inclusive planning and budgeting process. Given the crucial roles and responsibilities of each government unit to mainstream GESI principles into the governance system, it is therefore important to assess their knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) with regard to GESI and inclusive planning and budgeting. The current survey provides a thorough assessment of the KAP of LGUs. The report will be an important starting point toward enabling accountable systems at the LG level and help plan effective strategies to overcome barriers to the effective implementation of the GESI mandates.

The report is timely. With Nepal's transition to a federal structure, there is a critical need to strengthen the governance capacities of officials at the sub-national level on GESI and gender-responsive and socially inclusive public finance management. We are hopeful that this report will serve as a useful reference document for the government, development partners, and UN agencies to develop tailored capacity enhancement opportunities at the sub-national level.

We hope the report will be instrumental to identify the challenges and gaps with regard to mainstreaming GESI at the subnational level. We trust that the report will feed into the government's efforts of centre-staging the GESI mandates.

I wish to thank Rajan Khanal, Executive Director, NASC for his commitment to the gender equality agenda. Special thanks to Trilochan Pokharel and his team, as well as Swapna Bist Joshi and Achala Dahal for their concerted efforts in developing this report and the Embassy of Finland for their support and contribution.

Navanita Sinha
Head of Office a.i.
UN Women Nepal

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- This report presents the findings of the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion and Gender Responsive Budget survey conducted among elected and administrative officials of the local level.

- This survey was conducted among elected representatives and chief administrative officers of sampled local governments from Madhesh, Bagmati, and Sudurpashchim provinces. Its objective was to map knowledge, attitude, and practices on the issues of gender equality and social inclusion, and gender responsive public financial management, including gender responsive budgeting.

- The survey covered 1043 respondents—chiefs/deputy chiefs of local governments, ward chairpersons, women and Dalit representatives, and chief administrative officers.

- Through the 2015 Constitution, Nepal adopted a federal governance system with constitutionally assigned responsibilities among the three tiers of government: federal, provincial, and local. Local governments have received a number of constitutional mandates on social, political, economic, and development activities, and are mainly responsible for delivering basic services and acting as frontline state agencies including promotion of socially inclusive governance systems.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

With the promulgation of the Constitution of Nepal in 2015, Nepal adopted a three-tier governance system: federal, provincial, and local. The Constitution assigns state power to the three orders of governments with defined autonomy to exercise constitutional rights. Local governments (LGs) have constitutional authority to make laws, formulate policies, develop plans, collect revenue, and allocate budgets. The Constitution enumerates a number of functions to LGs, such as economic and social development; physical infrastructure; forest, environment, and disaster management; institutional development; and social inclusion. The LG, being the lowest tier in the governance structure, is instrumental in maintaining aggregate fiscal discipline; ensuring participative or need-based planning and allocative efficiency; and effective, equitable, and efficient delivery of services. The elected

representatives at the LG level are key functionaries in this process. Following the election in 2017, local governments have been exercising authority and discharging their constitutional mandates as elaborated in the Local Government Operation Act 2017.

1.1.1 Gender responsive and socially inclusive governance in Nepal

The Constitution of Nepal has laid the groundwork for building a non-discriminatory, prosperous, and just society in line with the principles of proportional inclusion and participation in public affairs. The preamble to the Constitution clearly enshrines a commitment to end all forms of oppression and discrimination—class, ethnic, regional, linguistic, religious, and gender. Article 38 of the Constitution stipulates exclusive 'rights of women', under which women are entitled to equal rights and special opportunities on the basis of the principle of proportional inclusion and positive discrimination. The same article criminalizes violence against women and protects the right to compensation. The right to equality makes special provisions by law for the protection, empowerment, and development of citizens, including socially or culturally backward women, Dalits[1], indigenous[2] and minorities[3], Madhesis[4], Tharus[5], Muslims, oppressed class, Pichhada[6] class, minorities, the marginalized, children, senior citizens, gender and sexual minorities, persons with disabilities, and economically deprived Khas Arya.[7] (Article 18).

1.1.2 Elected representatives and efficient public finance management systems

Individual and institutional capacity is an important determinant in the effective functioning of the governance system, including public financial management. Proper understanding of (i) the public finance management (PFM) systems; (ii) policy priorities; and (iii) the gender equality and socially inclusion (GESI) mandates are crucial factors that enable equitable distribution of resources, and accountable and efficient PFM systems at the LG level.

1.1.3 Local governance and GESI mandate

The GESI provisions are laid out in the Local Government Operation Act, 2017 (Box 1), the 15th plan, and national GESI Policy. The 15th plan (2019/20-2023/24), a consolidated planning document to deliver constitutional and political commitments, has underscored the importance of GRB. The plan emphasizes to institutionalize GRB by establishing a prudent GRB system at all levels of the governments. The National GESI Policy also commits for the same. These are important instruments for elected representatives and civil staff to ensure that the GESI mandates are integrated in their policies, process, and practices. Despite strong policy mandates, these principles have remained unfulfilled mostly due to knowledge and capacity gaps. To this end, a thorough assessment of the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of LG functionaries can be beneficial for two reasons: one, it will be an important starting point towards enabling accountable systems at the LG level and, two, it will help plan effective strategies to overcome barriers to the effective implementation of the GESI mandates.

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[1] Dalit are communities that, by virtue of atrocities of caste-based discrimination and untouchability, are deprived of human dignity and social justice.
[2] Indigenous are groups that have distinct ethnic, religious, or linguistic characteristics.
[3] Minorities are ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups whose population is less than the percentage specified by the Federal law.
[4] Madhesi are communities that live in the southern part of Nepal.
[5] Tharu are indigenous communities that live in the southern part of Nepal.
[6] Pichhada are communities that are backward in social, economic, educational, political, and religious fields, and deprived of human dignity and
   social justice.
[7] Khas Arya are people that belong to the Kshetri, Brahmin, Thakuri, Sanyasi (Dashnami) communities in Nepal.

> **Box 1 GESI provisions in the Local Government Operation Act, 2017**
>
> - Act effectively to develop an inclusive and just society, and deliver efficient and quality services by ensuring peoples' participation, accountability, and transparency.
>
> - GESI-related provisions are included to guide the functions, duties, and rights of village and urban municipalities.
>
> - One of the functions of the ward committees is to collate, maintain, and update socially disaggregated data for backward women, children, Dalits, people with disabilities, elderly citizens, minorities, and marginalized communities, and work on their social and economic upliftment.
>
> - Arrangements have been made to promote GESI mandates in local-level planning and implementation processes by ensuring the participation of women and marginalized communities (WMC). WMC are encouraged to select plans that will directly benefit women, children, and backward areas and communities.
>
> - In developing and implementing local plans, emphasis has to be given to good governance that ensures the GESI mandate. These elements have to be considered when developing and allocating resources for local plans.

1.1.4 The survey rationale and objective

Despite a strong GESI and Gender Responsive Public Finance Management (GRPFM), including Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB), mandate at the LG level, not much evidence exists on the status and challenges in their implementation. The perspectives of policymakers and the executive is particularly essential in this regard since they are primarily responsible for the implementation of constitutional and legal mandates. This survey, which is the first of its kind, was planned with the objective of unravelling these issues and challenges. The data generated through the survey has generated baseline for a thorough analysis, and the key findings will assist in developing pointed recommendations aimed towards the effective roll out and institutionalisation of the GESI and GRPFM systems. The key objectives of the survey were to map baseline information related to GESI and GRPFM knowledge, attitudes, and practices from the perspectives of the policymakers (elected representatives and chief administrative officers). The Government of Nepal has conducted in 2019 'Federalism Capacity Needs Assessment (FCNA)' to map the institutional capacity gaps for implementing the federalism in Nepal. The study broadly assesses the institutional arrangements regarding the implementation of constitutional mandates including gender equality. However, it did not explicitly mention on the dimension of the GESI-GRB. This survey adds value on that study by providing a detailed assessment of knowledge, attitudes, and practices of local government executives.

To be specific, the survey was designed with the objective of exploring the following among the local government executives:

- GESI knowledge and attitudes;
- GESI and GRPFM processes and practices;

- Local governance institutions and GESI and GRPFM capacities;
- Strategies to promote GESI responsive programs and service delivery; and
- GESI and GRPFM implementation challenges.

The survey findings are expected to guide evidence-based strategies and interventions to strengthen individual and institutional GESI and GRPFM capacities at the LG level.

Box 2 The Local Governance System in Nepal

Local governments are divided into four categories:

(i) Metropolitan (6)

(ii) Sub-Metropolitan (11)

(iii) Urban Municipalities (276); and

(iv) Rural Municipalities (460).

The local governments are assigned 22 exclusive and 15 concurrent functions, mainly related to basic services, development, economy, and governance.

Constitutional Provisions

Art 56(2)	The Federation, Province and Local levels shall exercise the power of State of Nepal pursuant to this Constitution and law.
Art 214	Executive power of local government is on the village or municipal executives.
Art 221	Legislative power of local government is on the village or municipal assembly.
Art 57 (4, 5), 226	The village or municipal assembly has the power to make law on the functions assigned in Schedule 8 and Schedule 9.
Art 215 (4)	The village municipal executive is comprised of the chairperson and vice chairperson, the village municipality's ward chairpersons as well as four women members elected among the village municipal assembly.
Art 216 (4)	The municipal executive includes the mayor and deputy mayor, ward chairpersons as well as five women members elected among the municipal Assembly. Similarly, two dalit or minority community members in village executive and three members in municipal executive are being elected by the respective assembly members
Schedule 8	22 list of exclusive functions assigned to local government including management of local services, local development projects and programs, basic and secondary education, basic health and sanitation, and local economic development.
Schedule 9	15 list of concurrent functions between federal, province and local governments.

Source: Constitution of Nepal, 2015

1.2 Survey Methodology and Process

1.2.1 Selection of sample provinces and LG units

From the seven provinces of Nepal, Madhesh, Bagmati, and Sudurpashchim provinces were purposively selected considering their socio-economic, political, and geographical diversity. Madhesh comprises of eight districts in the southern plains. It is predominantly populated by the Madheshi community, which has its own language, culture, and social values. Bagmati has 13 districts, including the federal capital, Kathmandu. Compared to other provinces, it has better socio-economic and development indicators. Sudurpashchim encompasses nine districts in Nepal's far west, and has unique socio-economic and cultural practices. It ranks the lowest among the provinces in socio-economic and development indicators (see Section 2.1 for a few comparatives).

The key respondents were LG level elected representatives and, therefore, the results of the 2017 election were used as the sampling frame for their identification (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Distribution of elected representatives at the local level in the sampled provinces

Province	LG		Chief/Deputy		Ward		WR		B/DR		EM		Total
	UM	RM	M/DM	C/VC	UM	RM	UM	RM	UM	RM	UM	RM	
Madhesh	77	61	154	122	903	375	385	244	231	122	1713	823	2536
Bagmati	40	79	80	158	569	542	200	316	120	158	998	1134	2132
Sudurpaschim	34	54	68	108	371	373	170	216	102	108	713	805	1518
Total	**151**	**194**	**302**	**388**	**1843**	**1290**	**755**	**776**	**453**	**388**	**3424**	**2762**	**6186**

Note: LG= Local Government, UM= Urban Municipality; RM= Rural Municipality; M/DM= Mayor/Deputy Mayor; C/VC=Chairperson/Vice Chairperson; WR=Women Representative; B/DR=Backward/Dalit Representation; EM= Executive Member

1.2.2 Determining sample size

The sample size needed for this survey was calculated in three stages. In stage one, the sample size was statistically fixed at 1079 respondents with a ± three percentage margin of error, based on the assumption that 50 percent of elected representatives had some level of GESI-GRPFM knowledge and the same percentage had none; to meet the minimum requirement, 15 percent was over sampled. In the second stage, the ratio was calculated to ensure that the sample was proportionally representative of all categories of the study population. This proportion was derived by dividing the sample size by the number of executive members, and the required number of LG and executive members were determined for each sample province (Table 1.2).

Table 1.2 Distribution of elected representatives and sample size

Province	LG		Chief/Deputy		Ward		WR		B/DR		Grand Total
	UM	RM	M/DM	C/VC	UM	RM	UM	RM	UM	RM	
Madhesh	77	61	154	122	903	375	385	244	231	122	2536
Bagmati	40	79	80	158	569	542	200	316	120	158	2143
Sudurpashchim	34	54	68	108	371	373	170	216	102	108	1516
Total	151	194	302	388	1843	1290	755	776	453	388	6195
Proportional representation (upper limit)			53	68	322	225	132	135	79	68	1081

*Note 1: Ratio=0.17443 (1079/6186); Total LG=345 (151+194); Sampled LG= 60 (345*0.17443); Urban Municipality=26 (151/345*60); Rural Municipality=34 (60-26); Note 2: Total sample of elected representative becomes 1081 due to calculation adjustment; Note 3: *Ward representation (UM)= 321.4673 (1843*0.17443); Ward representation (RM)= 225.0097 (1290*0.17443); Women representation (UM)= 131.6917 (755*0.17443); Women representation (RM)= 135.3546 (776*0.17443); Backward/Dalit Representation (UM)= 79.0150 (453*0.17443); Backward/Dalit Representation (RM)= 67.6773 (388*0.17443); total executive member representation (UM)= 597.235 (3424*0.17443); total executive member representation (RM)= 481.765 (2762*0.17443); Note4: UM= Urban Municipality; RM= Rural Municipality; M/DM= Mayor/ Deputy Mayor; C/VC=Chairperson/Vice Chairperson; WR=Women Representative; B/DR=Backward/Dalit Representation*

Based on the sample proportion, 61 LGs were selected to ensure the proportional representation of elected representatives. The selected LGs were then proportionally divided into 26 urban and 34 rural municipalities across all three sample provinces (Table 1.3).

Table 1.3 Distribution of selected urban and rural municipalities

Province	Proportion		Sample	
	Urban	Rural	Urban Municipality	Rural Municipality
Madhesh	0.5099338	0.3144330	13	10
Bagmati Province	0.2649007	0.4072165	7	13
Sudurpashchim	0.2251656	0.2783505	6	12
Total	1.0000000	1.0000000	26	34

*Note: *The proportion of urban and rural municipalities was obtained by dividing the selected urban/rural municipalities with the total urban/rural municipalities in Madhesh, Bagmati, and Sudurpacchim.*

Once the exact numbers of rural and urban municipalities were determined, their names were randomly selected (Appendix 1). Elected representatives were grouped as per designations into mayors/deputy mayors, chairs/vice-chairs, ward chairs, women representatives, and backward/Dalit representatives. The mayors/deputy mayors, chairs/vice-chairs, and chief administrative officers were chosen by default from each sample urban and rural municipality. All ward chairs from each rural and urban municipality, women executive members, and backward/Dalit representatives were also selected by default. In addition, all chief administrative officers (CAOs) of the selected LGs were included in the sample. In this way, the total sample was finally fixed at 1140. The overall response rate for the survey was 91.52 percent, which was much higher than the acceptable or desired response rate. As it was a census of members of LG Executive, no replacement plan was prepared for absentees.

Table 1.4 Province-wise distribution of samples by designation

Province	Sample LGs		Executive Members								CAO	Total Sample
	UM	RM	M/DM	C/VC	WC (UM)	WC (RM)	WR (UM)	WR (RM)	B/DR (UM)	B/DR (RM)		
Madhesh	13	10	26	20	164	71	67	43	40	21	24	478
Bagmati	7	13	14	26	85	92	35	55	21	28	21	379
Sudurpaschim	6	12	12	24	72	63	30	38	18	19	15	285
Total	26	35	52	68	321	225	132	135	79	68	60	1140

Note: UM= Urban Municipality; RM= Rural Municipality; M/DM= Mayor/Deputy Mayor; C/VC=Chairperson/Vice Chairperson; WC=Ward Chair; WR=Women Representative; B/DR=Backward/Dalit Representation; CAO= Chief Administrative Officer

1.2.3 Questionnaire design, software, and quality control

The survey questionnaire was prepared and finalised through an iterative process. The first draft was completed in a two-day design workshop of the quality circle team of the Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC)[8]. Based on the workshop discussion and recommendations, the drafts were prepared and then circulated to external experts for feedback and suggestions. Once all inputs were incorporated, the questionnaire was finalised and translated into Nepali (Appendix 2). The final questionnaire was converted into Computer Assisted Personal Interviews in the Android version of the *KoboCollect* data collect software. To ensure data quality, several rounds of quality checks and pre-defined rules were set in the application. The electronic data collection was supervised by the NASC survey team, which worked closely with the software developer and enumerators. A field operation manual was also prepared to guide the enumerators and ensure quality of data.

Enumerators

A team of 15 enumerators (nine women and six men) were recruited through a competitive selection process. Conscious effort was taken to ensure a balanced and diverse field team. A five-day training was organized for the enumerators, who were also sensitised on GESI issues. In addition, the workshop included practice sessions on the use of the software and quality checks.Questionnaire pre-test and field work

Questionnaire pre-test and field work

A day-long pre-test of the survey was carried out in Kathmandu Valley's Kirtipur and Chandragiri municipalities. Its objective was to provide the enumerators a hands-on experience and to acquaint them to field conditions. A debriefing session immediately followed the pre-test. Then, the trained enumerators were deployed to the sample LGs. From 10 March to 12 April 2021, they visited 61 LGs and conduced face-to-face interviews with 1043 respondents (Figure 1).

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[8] The quality circle team of NASC was composed of gender experts, local governance experts, and survey method experts.

Figure 1.1 Numbers of selected LGs and respondents

Figure 1.1 Numbers of selected LGs and respondents
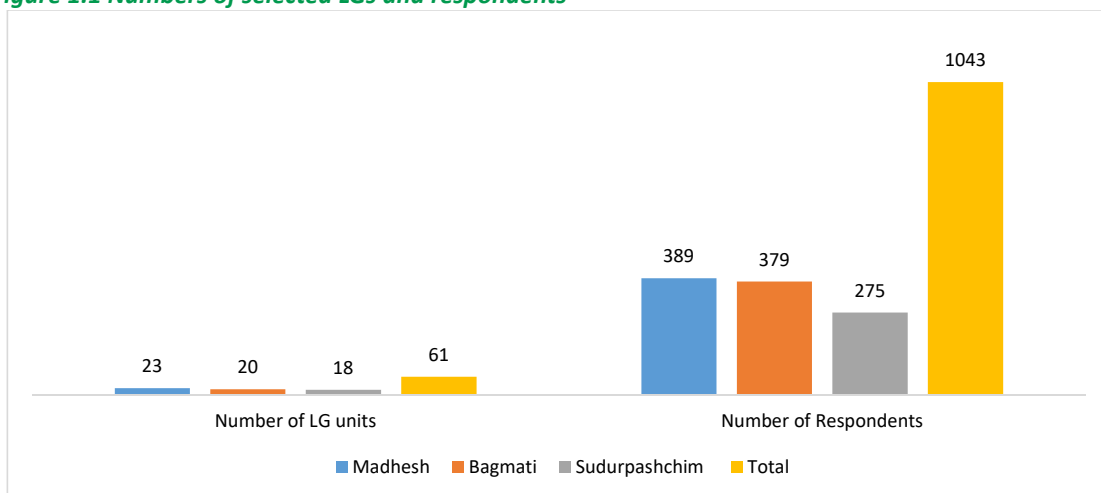
Data cleaning, processing, and report writing

Data cleaning and processing commenced immediately after the field work. As data was received on a real-time basis, it was simultaneously analysed for consistency and errors. When the field work ended, all electronic data files were transferred to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software for cleaning and editing. Then, the data was cleaned, organised, and systematically analysed, and findings were documented in a structured analytical report.

2 CHAPTER

DEMOGRAPHICS AND RESPONDENT PROFILE

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Of the total 1043 respondents, the highest (37.3%) were surveyed in Madhesh, followed by 36.3 percent in Bagmati, and 26.4 percent in Sudurpashchim. The sample was made representative of gender, caste, ethnicity, and location. Women comprised 30 percent of the cumulative sample size, with the highest number surveyed in Madhesh.

- Two-thirds of the respondents were from the 40-59 age group and a quarter from the 24-39 age category, while slightly over one-tenths were from the 60 and above age group.

- Forty-five percent respondents reported having completed secondary school, followed by basic education (21%); only one percent was illiterate.

- Over half of the respondents were from the Brahmin/Chettri caste group, three-tenths were Janjati, and a quarter were from the Terai caste/ethnic group. Women respondents were mainly Brahmin/Chettri (30%), Dalit (27%), Terai caste/ethic group (21%), and Janjati (21%).

- Half of the respondents were ward chairpersons, of which women comprised a miniscule 1.5 percent. One-third of respondents were women and Dalit executive committee members, one-tenth were LG chiefs/deputy chiefs, and six percent were chief administrative officers. As high as 79 percent women respondents were in the category of women and Dalit executive members, followed by 18 percent females who were deputy chiefs.

2.1 INTRODUCTION OF THE PROVINCES

Of the three provinces selected for the survey, Bagmati—with an area of 20,300 km2, 1125 wards, and 119 LGs—is the largest, followed by Sudurpashchim, which has an area of 19,539 km2, 734 wards and 88 LGs. Madhesh is the smallest in area (9661 km2) but has the highest number of wards (1266) and LGs (136).

2.1.1 Population, gender indicators, and human development

The preliminary report of the 2021 census shows that Sudurpashchim has a population of 2,711,270, of which 52.49 percent are women. According to the 2020 Nepal Human Development Report (HDR), this province falls short (0.547) of the national average (0.587) in the Human Development Index (HDI), while in the Gender Development Index (GDI), it exceeds the national average—0.903 and 0.886 respectively. The preliminary report of the 2021 census reports that Bagmati has the second largest population (6,084,042), of which a little over half are women. The HDR 2020 reports that Bagmati has the highest HDI (0.661) and GDI (0.929), surpassing the national average. The densely populated Madhesh is the largest in terms of population (6,123,288), with women comprising 49.75 percent of the total, according to the preliminary report of the 2021 census. The province has recorded the lowest HDI (0.51), and GDI (0.786) (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1 Human Development and Gender Development Index of sampled provinces, 2020
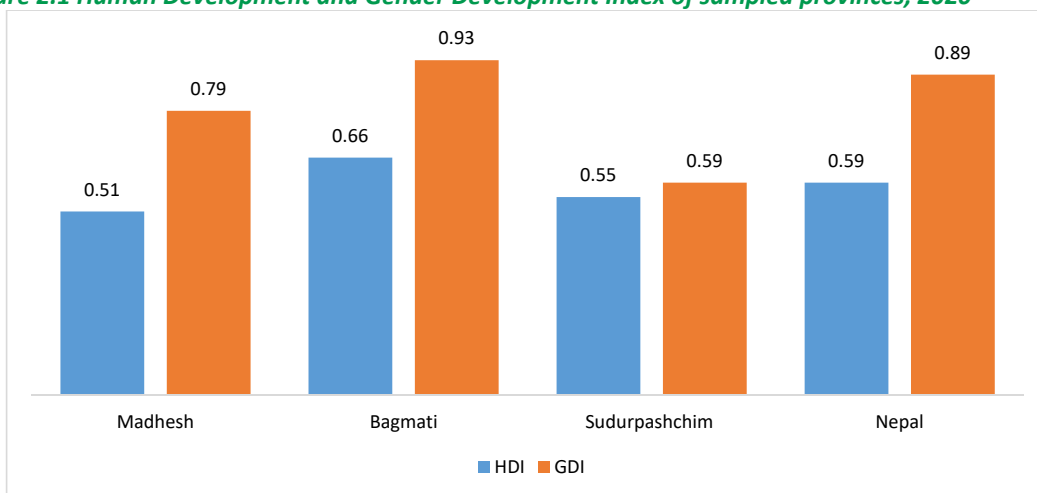
Source: NPC & UNDP (2020)[9]

2.1.2 Provincial level government expenditure

A comparison of the provincial level government expenditure for fiscal years 2017/18-2019/20 shows variation in the expenditure pattern between the provinces over the fiscal years. Madhesh had a steady decline in expenditure ratio, while Bagmati and Sudurpashchim have made progress in 2018/19, but a decline in 2019/20 (Figure 2.2). In terms of absolute figure of expenditure, Bagmati has the largest share, whereas the Sudurpashchim stands at the bottom. Data implies that the provincial governments have to make efforts to expand their expenditure capacity by improving public financial management systems.

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[9] National Planning Commission (NPC) & United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). 2020. Nepal Human Development Report 2020. Kathmandu: NPC and UNDP.
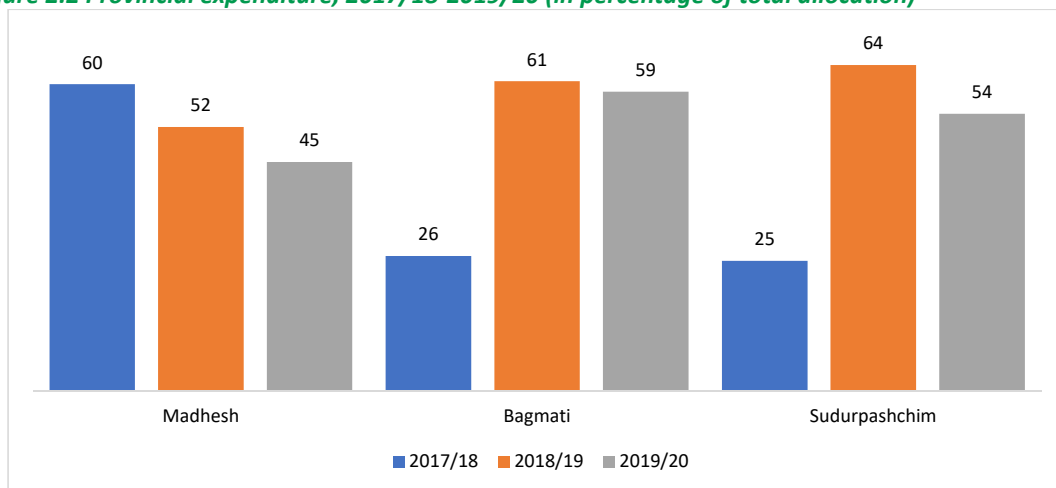
Source: FCGO (2021)[10]

2.1.3 Respondent demographics

A conscious effort was taken to ensure equal and equitable distribution of respondents across all three provinces (Figure 2.3). Of the total 1043 respondents, the highest were surveyed in Madhesh (37.3%), Bagmati (36.3%), and Sudurpashchim (26.4%) (Figure 2.3a).

Figure 2.3a Distribution of respondent by province (N=1043, %)
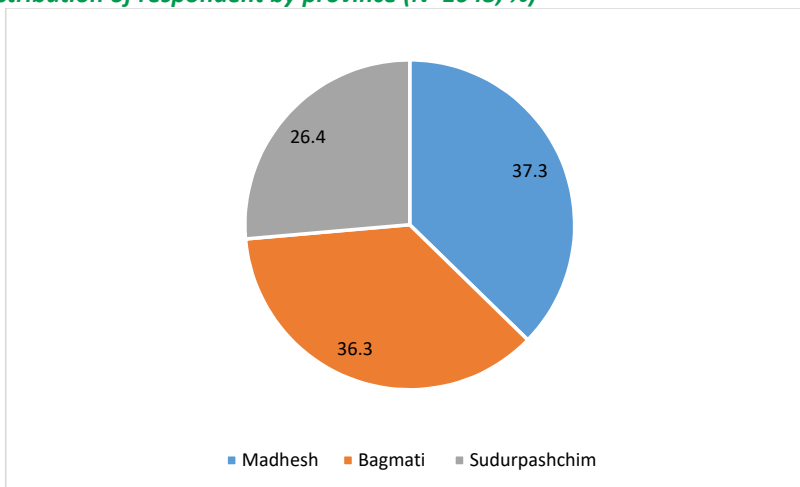
The samples represented gender, caste, ethnicity, and location (rural and urban municipalities). Women comprised 30 percent of the cumulative sample size, with the highest number surveyed in Madhesh. Slightly more than half of the respondents represented urban municipalities, while 48 percent were from rural municipalities. The highest number of rural respondents were surveyed in Bagmati (43%) followed by Sudurpashchim (32%) (Figure 2.3b).

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[10] Financial Comptroller General Office (FCGO). 2021. Consolidated Financial Statement: Fiscal Year 2019/20. Kathmandu: FCGO.

Figure 2.3b Distribution of respondent by sex and urban-rural municipalities (N=1043, %)
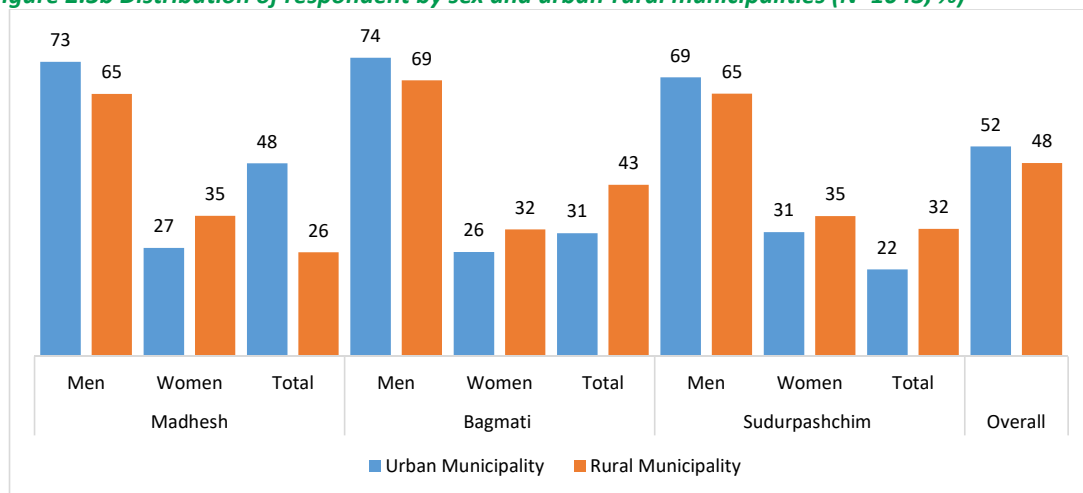
2.1.4 Age profile

Two-thirds of the respondents were from the 40-59 age group and a quarter from the 24-39 age category, while slightly over one-tenths were from the 60 and above age group. Political representation was highest in the 40-59 age group, which can be considered an active age for political participation. The respondent age profile was comparable between the men and women respondents with no stark variations. It should be noted that despite an overall 30 percent representation of women respondents in the total sample, the gender gap drastically narrowed down in the 24-39 age group with close to 50 percent representation, with women exceeding men in Bagmati and Sudurpashchim (Figure 2.4), indicating increasing representation of women political representatives in those provinces. This indicates a strategic shift in local governance demographics as a response to the legal arrangements to ensure women's representation in local politics.

Figure 2.4 Sex disaggregated age profile of the respondents (N=1043, %)
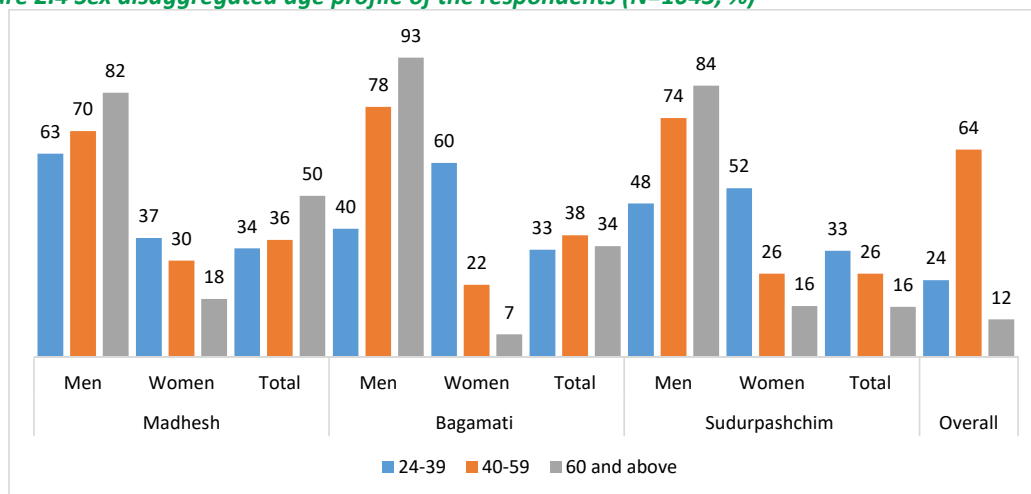
2.1.5 Education profile

Forty-five percent respondents reported having completed secondary school. This was followed by 21 percent who had basic education; only one percent was illiterate. Sudurpashchim had 5 percent of the illiterate respondents. Eighteen percent reported having completed higher studies, with the largest concentration being in Bagmati (Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5 Distribution of respondents by education and province (N=1043, %)
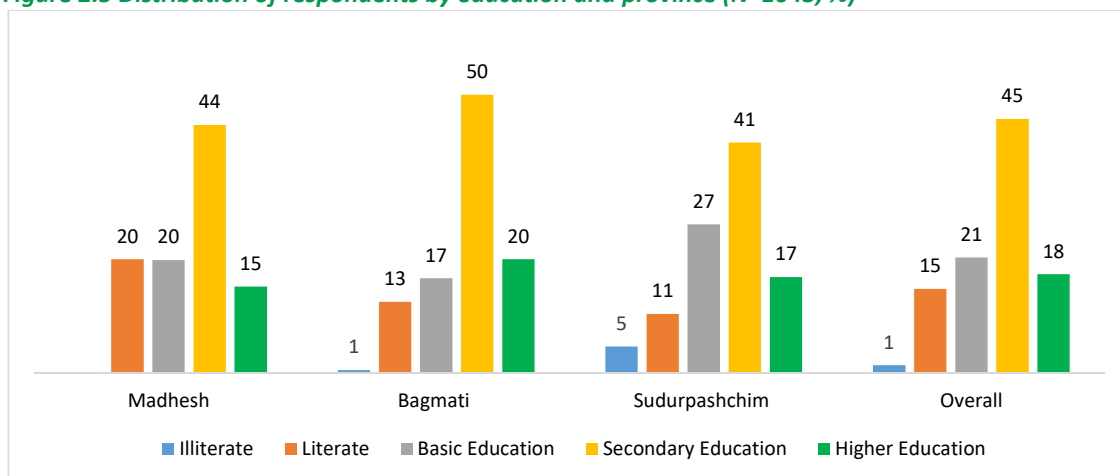
2.1.6 Caste and ethnic composition

Over half of the respondents were from the Brahmin/Chettri caste group, three-tenths were Janjati, and a quarter were from the Terai caste/ethnic group[11] (Table 2.1, Figure 2.6 and 2.7). The proportional share of Dalit respondents was highest in Madhesh. Women respondents were mainly Brahmin/Chettri (30%), Dalit (27%), Terai caste/ethnic group (21%), and Janjati (21%).

Table 2.1 Distribution of respondents by caste/ethnic profile and province (N=1043)

Caste/Ethnic group	Province			Total	
	Madhesh	Bagmati	Sudurpashchim	N	%
Brahmin/Chettri	7.2	36.1	69.5	356	34.1
Janjati	8.2	49.6	2.2	226	21.7
Terai caste	59.9	4.2	7.3	269	25.8
Dalit	18.5	10.0	19.3	163	15.6
Others	6.2	0.0	1.8	29	2.8
N	389	379	275	1043	100

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[11] The Terai caste/ethnic group is a broad category that includes all caste/ethnic groups originated in the Terai excluding the Dalit. This group has een created for making an easy comparison. There are different ways of making caste/ethnic groups.

Figure 2.6 Caste/ethnic profile of the respondents (N=1043, %)

Brahmin/Chettri ■ Janjati ■ Tarai Caste ■ Dalit ■ Others
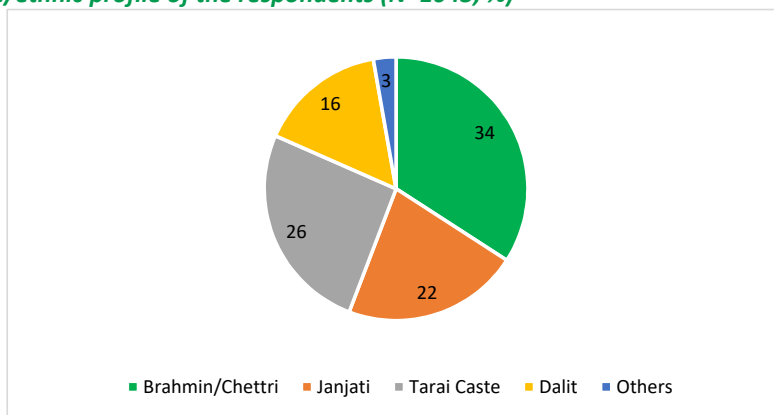
Figure 2.7 Caste profile women respondents (N=316, %)

Brahmin/Chettri ■ Janjati ■ Tarai Caste ■ Dalit ■ Others
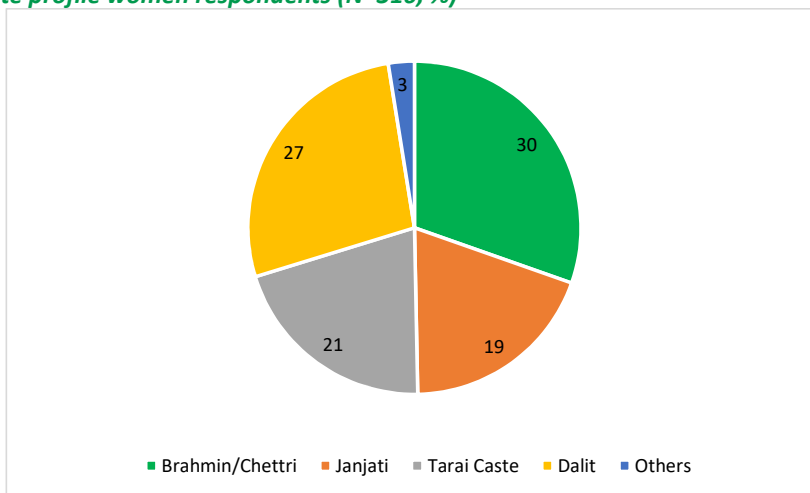
2.1.7 Designation of the respondents

Half of the respondents were ward chairpersons and, among them, only a miniscule 1.5 percent were women. One-third of the respondents were women and Dalit executive committee members, one-tenth were LG chiefs/deputy chiefs[12], and six percent were chief administrative officers (Figure 2.8). The survey found a sharp contrast between the designation profiles of the men and women respondents (as reflected in figures 2.9 and 2.10). As high as 79 percent of the women respondents were in the category of women and Dalit executive members, followed by 18 percent who were deputy chiefs. Surprisingly, only a woman respondent held the position of chief administrative officer among the sample LGs.

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[12] The LG chiefs/deputy chiefs is a common noun used to denote the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Urban Municipalities and Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of Rural Municipalities.

Figure 2.8 Respondents' designation by province (N=1043, %)

Legend:
- LG chief/deputy chief (blue)
- Ward Chairperson (orange)
- Women and Dalit Executive Committee Members (grey)
- Chief Administrative Officer (yellow)

Province	LG chief/deputy chief	Ward Chairperson	Women and Dalit Executive Committee Members	Chief Administrative Officer
Madhesh	11	49	35	5
Bagmati	10	55	30	5
Sudurpashchim	11	46	36	7
Total	10	50	34	6
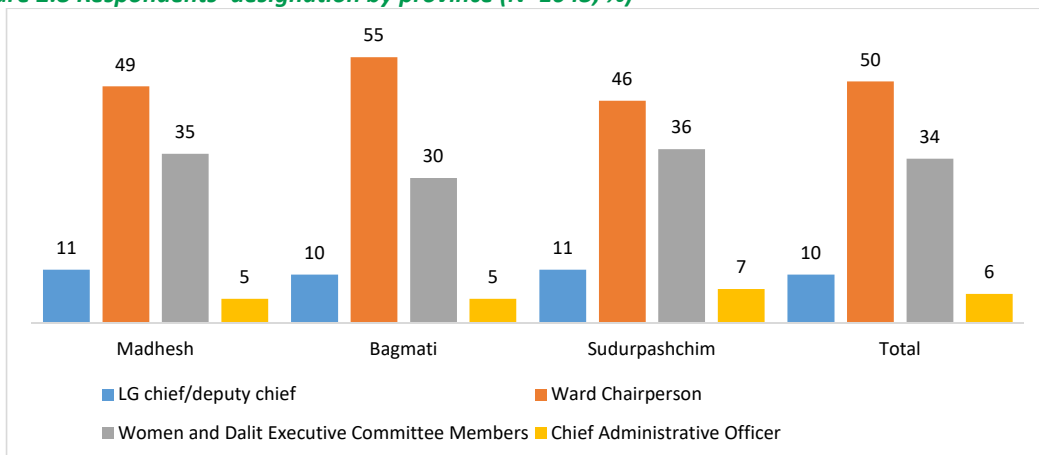
Figure 2.9 Designation men respondents (N=727, %)

- LG chief/deputy chief — 7
- Ward Chairperson — 71
- Women and Dalit Executive Committee Members — 14
- Chief Administrative Officer — 8
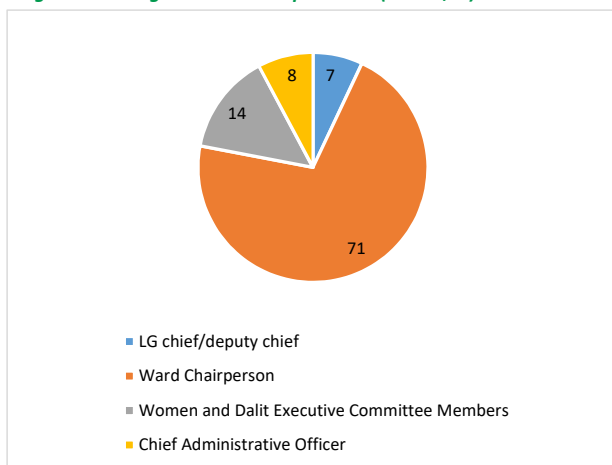
Figure 2.10 Designation women respondents (N=316, %)

- LG chief/deputy chief — 18
- Ward Chairperson — 3
- Women and Dalit Executive Committee Members — 79
- Chief Administrative Officer — 0.3
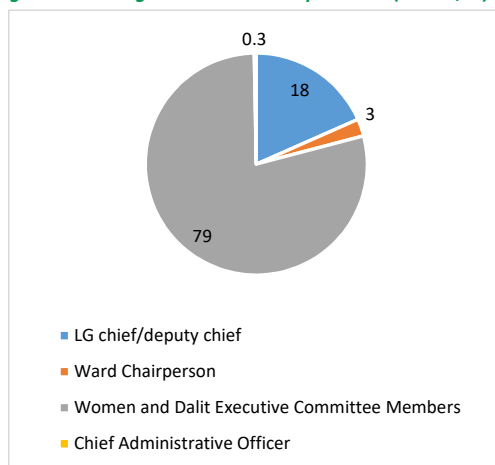
Box 3 Local Governance - Role and responsibilities in public finance management

The Local Government Operation Act (LGOA), 2017, delineates the legal provisions for the operations of the local governments in Nepal with the following roles and responsibilities.

Mayor/Chairperson acts as the executive and political leader of the LG with responsibility of providing overall leadership in administrative, financial, legislative, planning, and development activities. Specifically, as the coordinator of Resource Estimation and Budget Ceiling Determination Committee the Mayor/Chairperson is responsible for estimating the overall income (internal income, funds received from revenue sharing, grants, loans, and other income) and determining the budget ceiling.

Deputy Mayor/ Deputy Chairperson is the head of budget and program formulation committee, and therefore play a crucial role in preparing proposal of policies and programs for the upcoming fiscal year. In addition, deputy acts as a coordinator in two major committees namely, local revenue advisory committee and local judicial committee.

Executive Council Members have a crucial role in legislation, planning, budgeting, and deliberation. Being the members of thematic committee, executive council and assembly, they have instrumental roles in ensuring effective, efficient, and accountable public financial management system.

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) acts as the Secretary of the Assembly and Executive with the responsibility to serve as the administrative head in the LG. CAO enforces the decision of the Assembly and Executive, formulates, monitors and evaluates annual programme and budget, and carries out audit of financial transaction.

Source: Local Government Operation Act, 2017

GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, AND PRACTICES

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Fifty-nine percent of respondents were of the view that gender role differences are discussed sometimes at the household level. Sixty-eight percent respondents agreed that gender role discussions take place sometimes in the community.

- Twelve percent of the respondents said that gender discrimination is practiced sometimes at the household level. Sixty-four percent respondents were of the opinion that gender discrimination practices are propagated primarily by women themselves, followed by social values (63%) and men (56%).

- Seventy-two percent respondents agreed that there is an unequal distribution of care work in the community at large. The province wise sex disaggregated data indicate that more women (22%) respondents believe that unequal sharing of unpaid care work exists to a 'large extent' as compared to the men respondents (14%).

- Seventy-two percent respondents agreed that there is no gender-based barriers or disadvantages in access to basic healthcare facilities and services in their province. Sixty-two percent respondents believed that household poverty is the primary reason for gender disparities in seeking healthcare services.

- Seventy percent of respondents in Bagmati believed that there are no gender barriers to education in their LG. In the other two provinces, an equal number of respondents (41%) agreed that there are barriers to some extent and that there are no such gaps. More women respondents (8% in Sudurpashchim, 4% in Bagmati, and 7% in Madhesh), compared to their men counterparts, believed that gender biases in education persists to a large extent.

- A majority of respondents (48%) were of the view that gender barriers to employment/ economic opportunities only exist to a 'lesser extent'. Sex disaggregated respondent opinions indicated that more women respondents (27%), compared to their men counterparts (8%), believed that these constraints are deeply entrenched.

- Almost 60 percent respondents believed that there are no wage gaps. There were differences in women and men respondents' perceptions related to gender wage gap differences, with more women respondents who agreed that it exists.

- Almost 62 percent respondents agreed that women face some form of discrimination or disadvantage with regards to control over ownership of land and household assets. More women respondents (17%), compared to their men counterparts (9%), believed that this disadvantage or gap exists to a large extent.

- Fifty-three percent respondents believed that there are no gender gaps in household level decision-making in their province.

- A high proportion of respondents highlighted traditional practices and norms (91%) as the primary reason for the inequitable participation in decision-making.

- An overwhelming proportion (71%) of respondents agreed that women members and those from marginalized groups have ability to lead local government committees.

- Almost half of the respondents strongly disagreed that there are equal opportunities exist for women and marginalized community in leadership roles in governance.

- Sixty-five percent respondents agreed that gender discrimination practices had decreased to a large extent in their LGs. A significantly high number of respondents were of the opinion that improved public awareness (92%) on GESI issues was one of the most important factors in fostering positive changes at the LG level.

- Almost 54 percent respondents across social castes and ethnicities agreed that social exclusion practices had decreased to a large extent in their LGs. Seventy–one percent of the Terai caste respondents were of the opinion that exclusionary practices had decreased substantially over the past five years.

- Eighty–four percent respondents identified increased advocacy and awareness as the most important strategy, and 55 percent believed that women empowerment is important for promoting gender equality in the LG.

GESI knowledge and attitudes refer to the understanding and views held by individuals regarding the roles men and women play in the society. These attitudes are shaped through cultural beliefs, societal practices, and life experiences, and are deeply entrenched and reflected in gender equality or discriminatory practices within the household, community, the work space, and in the government policies. For this study, 28 questions were administered to assess individual knowledge and beliefs on GESI perceptions, attitudes, and practices at the household, community, and LG levels. This section delves into insights related to gender gaps in access to basic services and control over resources. Additionally, it reflects on the factors that shape gender inequality and gender discrimination practices.

3.1 GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND INFLUENCING FACTORS

3.1.1 The household

The household is the first unit in shaping gender equality or discriminatory practices. With regards to the practices of gender role discussions at the households, over half (59%) of the respondents reported having sometimes conversations, while one-tenth reported to have never discussed on GESI issues. Compared to other provinces, gender role discussions were more common among women respondents (44%) in Sudurpashchim (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Frequency of gender role discussions in the household (N=1043, %)
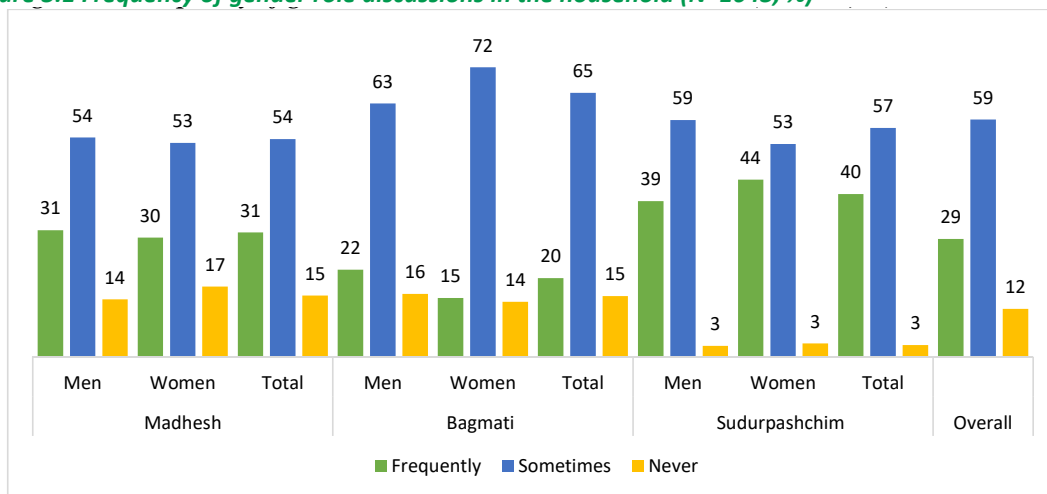
3.1.2 Household level gender discrimination

On the subject of gender discriminatory practices, an overwhelming number of respondents (87%) stated that discriminatory practices are not followed at the household level. Twelve percent of the respondents, on the other hand, expressed the opposite opinion (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2 Frequency of gender discrimination in the household (N=1043, %)

Chart legend: ■ Frequently ■ Sometimes ■ Never

Groups: Madhesh (Men, Women, Total), Bagmati (Men, Women, Total), Sudurpashchim (Men, Women, Total), Overall

Madhesh – Men: Sometimes 9, Never 91; Women: Frequently 4, Sometimes 12, Never 83; Total: Sometimes 10, Never 89

Bagmati – Men: Sometimes 8, Never 92; Women: Sometimes 23, Never 77; Total: Sometimes 12, Never 88

Sudurpashchim – Men: Frequently 1, Sometimes 16, Never 83; Women: Frequently 1, Sometimes 13, Never 86; Total: Frequently 1, Sometimes 15, Never 84

Overall: Frequently 1, Sometimes 12, Never 87

3.1.3 Factors that shape and influence gender discrimination

All respondents agreed that gender discriminatory practices are a result of a combination of factors. Sixty-four percent respondents were of the opinion that gender discrimination practices are propagated primarily by women themselves, followed by social values (63%), and men (56 %). These three, in combination with other variables, were identified as the most important influencing factors. Only 22 percent respondents agreed that government/state institutions and government policies, or political parties (16%) are responsible for gender discrimination (Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3 Factors that influence and shape gender discrimination (N=1043, %)

Factor	%
Women themselves	64
Social values and culture	63
Men	56
Family members	26
Government/state institutions	22
Educational system	18
Political parties/leadership	16
Relatives	11
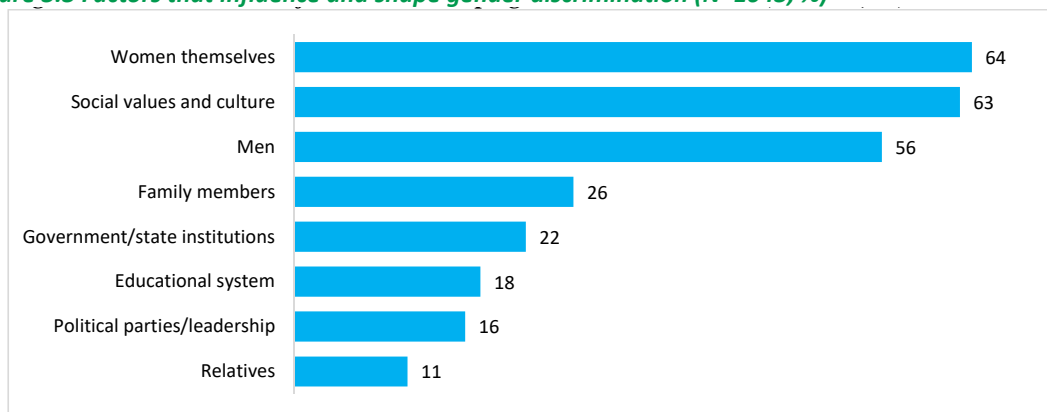
3.2 THE COMMUNITY

Household attitudes go on to impact community perceptions and practices. It explicates that GESI responsive service provisions at the LG level are influenced by household attitudes and community traditions. Sixty-eight percent respondents agreed that gender role discussions take place sometimes in the community, though not often. There was a perceptible gender divide amongst the respondents

with respect to the frequency of such discussions at the community level—fewer women respondents (22%) in all three provinces felt that gender roles are not discussed regularly; in contrast, their men counterparts (27%) believed that such discussions are quite common (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4 Frequency of gender role discussions in the community (N=1043, %)
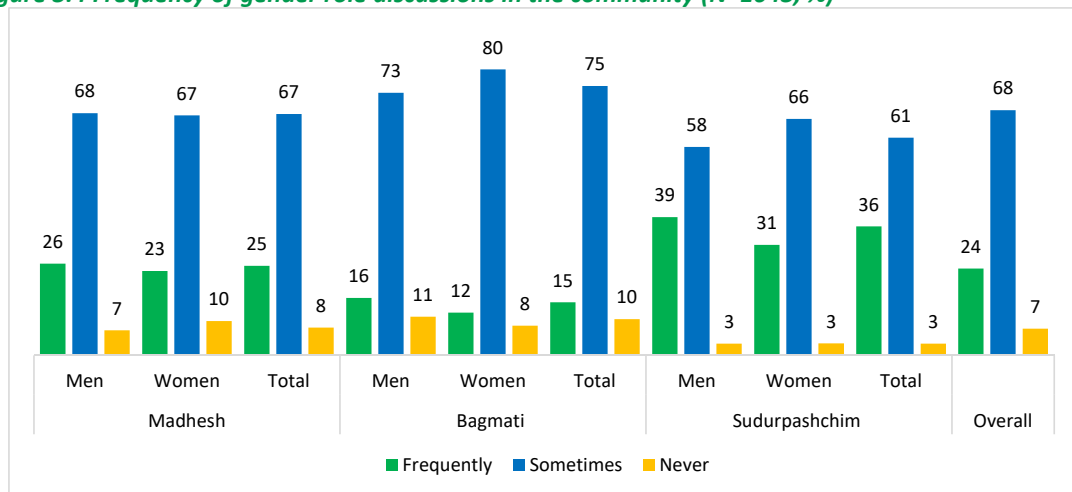
3.2.1 Care work distribution

Gender roles whether productive, reproductive, or community related create an unequal distribution of unpaid care work. It also impacts economic opportunities and paid work for women. Research studies indicate that an unequal share of care workload is one of the key barriers to women's participation in the workforce, the others being unavailability of employment opportunities and lack of quality public services[13]. Data also suggest that women share disproportionate unpaid care work burden—88 percent compared to 39 percent for men (NFLS III, 2019). In this survey, 72 percent respondents agreed that there is an unequal distribution of care work in the community at large. According to the province-wise sex disaggregated data, more women (22%) respondents believed that unequal sharing of unpaid care work exists to a large extent; this viewpoint was held by only 14% of the male respondents. The study also noted that 17-32 percent respondents did not agree that unequal care work distribution exists in the community (Figure 3.5).

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[13] Ghosh, A., Singh, A., Chigateri, S., Chopra, D., & Müller, C. (2017). A Trapeze act: Balancing unpaid care work and paid work by women in Nepal Institute of Development Studies.

Figure 3.5 Distribution of care work in the community (N=1043, %)

Yes to a large extent | Yes to a lesser extent | Not at all
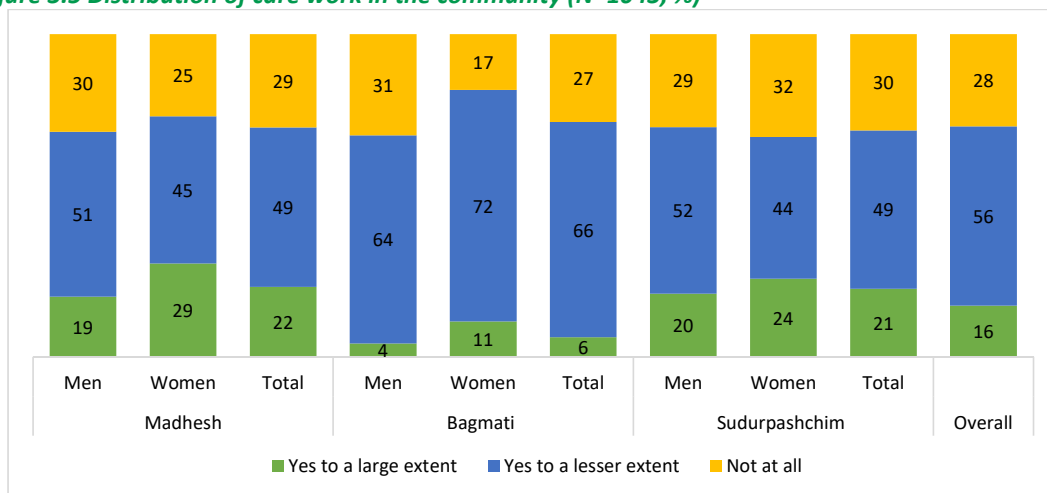
3.2.2 Reasons for unequal care work distribution

Respondents agreed that the unequal sharing of household care work is a combination of various factors. The primary reason, as identified by a large majority (93%) of the respondents, was traditions and age-old practices. Disparities in education levels (45%), and societal perceptions and stereotypes, such as women being home makers (41%) and men bread winners (39%), were other crucial determinants that resulted in the unequal sharing of unpaid care work (Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6 Reasons for unequal care work distribution in the community (N=744, %)

Long practiced tradition	93
Women are less educated	45
Women are perceived best fit for household work	41
Men are perceived best fit for outdoor income generating activities	39
Socially not acceptable for men doing household work	21
Perceived that women cannot do outdoor work	13
DK/CS	5
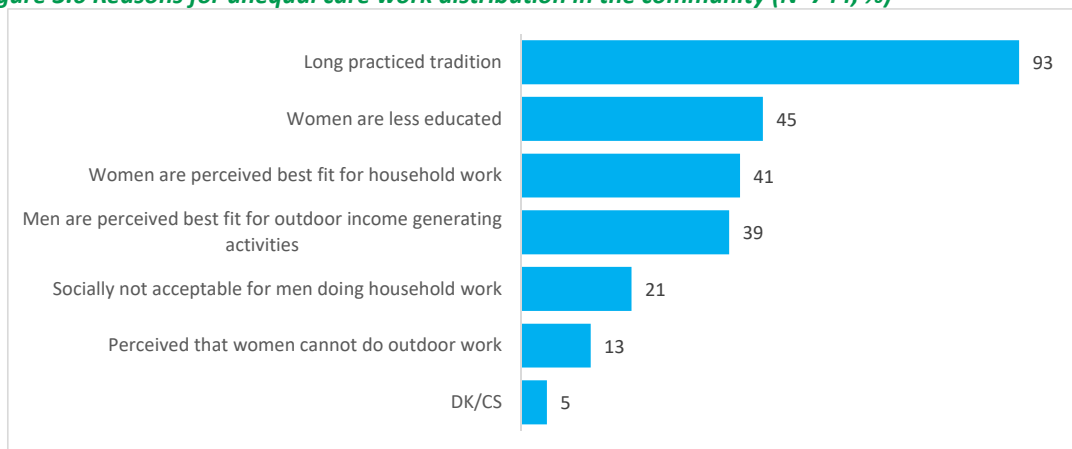
Sample includes only those who considered there is unequal care work distribution.

3.3. GENDER BIAS IN ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES

Women and girls face numerous barriers when accessing basic services, whether they are social (healthcare and education) or economic (livelihood opportunities and employment). A multitude of reasons exacerbate gender-based disadvantages in these sectors, resulting in a disproportionate impact on equitable service delivery. At the LG level, understanding these barriers and biases is key to evidence-based planning and GESI responsive programme implementation. Purposive and GESI-targeted planning help in addressing the issues that impact access to quality services. It also accounts for the diverse needs of other disadvantaged, vulnerable, and marginalized groups towards inclusive access to services and service delivery at the LG level.

3.3.1 Access to healthcare

Though 72 percent respondents agreed that access to basic healthcare facilities and services in their jurisdictions have not been hampered by gender-based barriers or disadvantages, an evident difference existed in the perceptions of women respondents, who strongly believed that barriers exist to a large extent (Figure 3.7).

Figure 3.7 Gender barriers in access to healthcare services (N=1043, %)
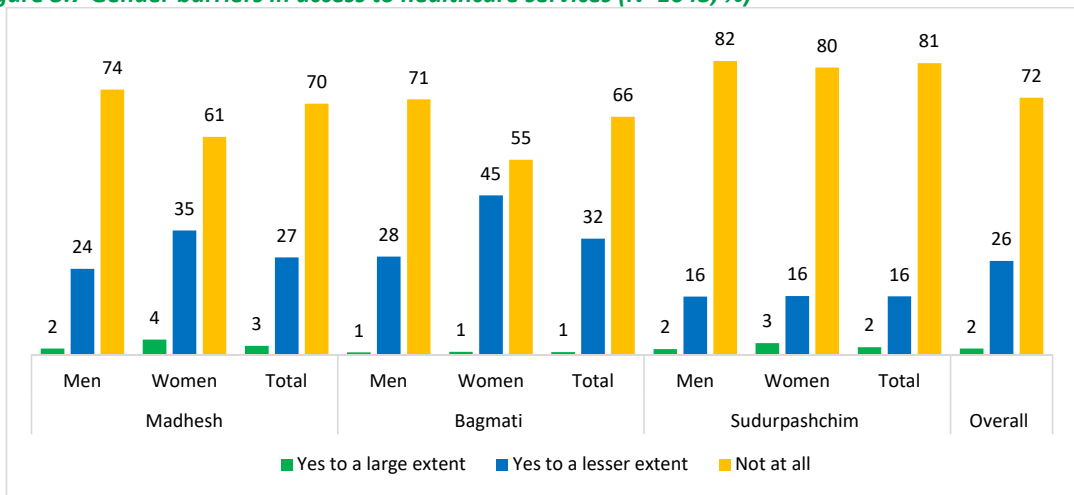
A range of factors lead to gender gaps in access to health services. The primary reason, according to well over half (62%) of the respondents, was household poverty. Other factors, such as low family priority (38%) and own low priority (57%) towards health needs, and household care work (42%) were other crucial determinants impacting women's access to healthcare. Interestingly, supply-side issues—such as distance to healthcare facilities, attitudes of health professionals, and lack of information—were not perceived as reasons for low access. The data suggests that low access concerns are specific to demand-side issues, wherein cultural determinants and household care work responsibilities adversely impact the health seeking behaviours of women and girls (Figure 3.8).

Figure 3.8 Reasons related to gender-based barriers in access to healthcare (N=293, %)

Reason	%
Household poverty	62
Less care about their own health	57
Higher household workload restricts	42
Family gives less priority	38
Less access to health information	32
Use of household medicine	26
Health facilities are far away	23
Gender insensitive health facilities	4
Gender insensitive health professionals	2
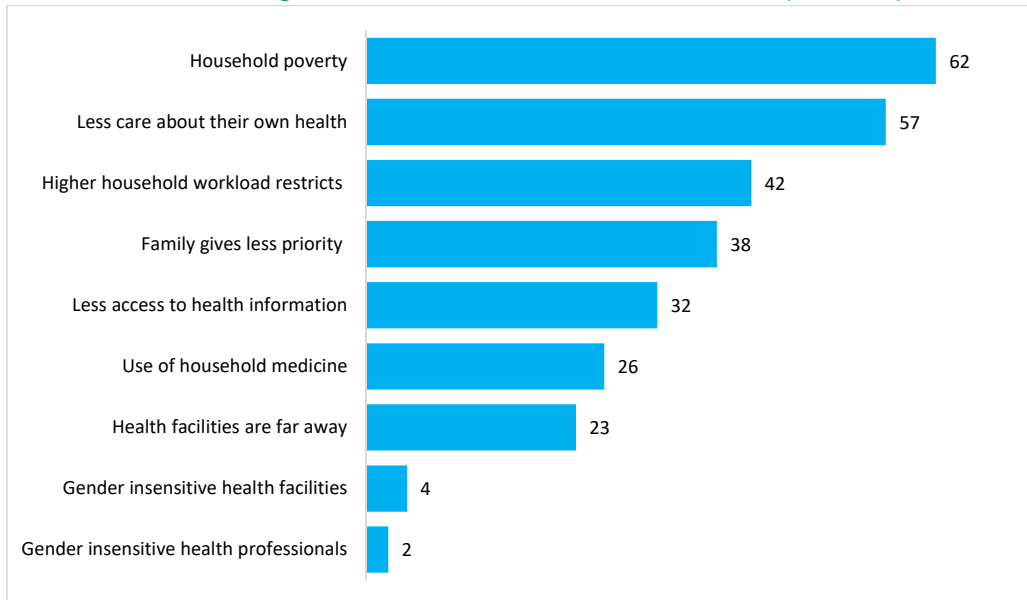
*Sample includes only those who consider there is gender-based barriers to access to health services.

3.3.2 Access to education

A large majority (70%) of the respondents in Bagmati believed that there are no gender barriers to education in their LGs. In the other two provinces, 41 percent respondents agreed that barriers exist to some extent, while an equal percentage felt that there are no such gaps. Only 10 percent respondents were of the view that gender gaps exist to a large extent. Compared to their men counterparts, more women respondents (8% in Sudurpashchim, 4% in Bagmati, and 7% in Madhesh) believed that gender biases in education persist to a large extent (Figure 3.9).

Figure 3.9 Gender barriers in access to education services (N=1043, %)

	Madhesh			Bagmati			Sudurpashchim			Overall
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	
Yes to a large extent	5	7	5	0	4	1	2	8	4	3
Yes to a lesser extent	39	44	41	24	41	29	39	44	41	36
Not at all	56	49	54	75	55	70	59	48	56	60
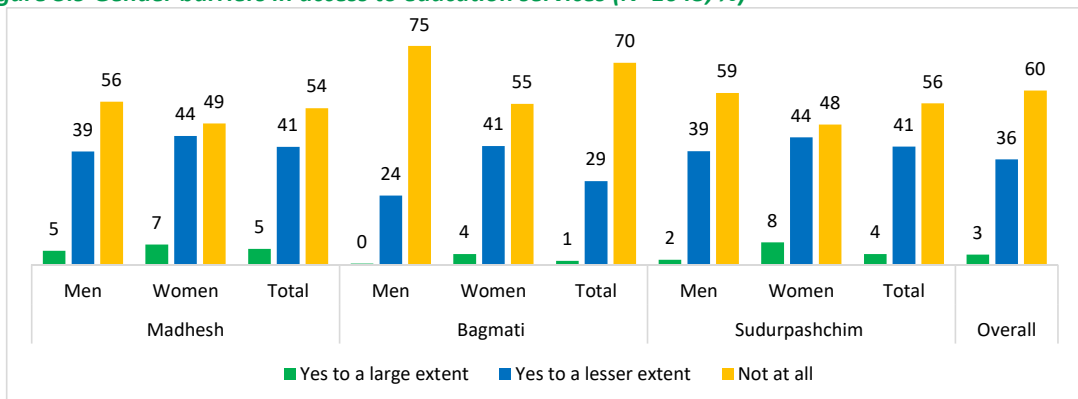
With regards to the reasons for gender biases in access to education, household poverty (75%) stood out as the most prominent cause. Marriage (60%), low priority towards girls' education (60%), and household workloads (49%) were the other important factors identified by the respondents. As in the case of health, supply-side constraints (distance, infrastructure facilities, and service providers) were not important determinants or influencing factors (Figure 3.10).

Figure 3.10 Reasons related to gender-based barriers in access to education (N=415, %)
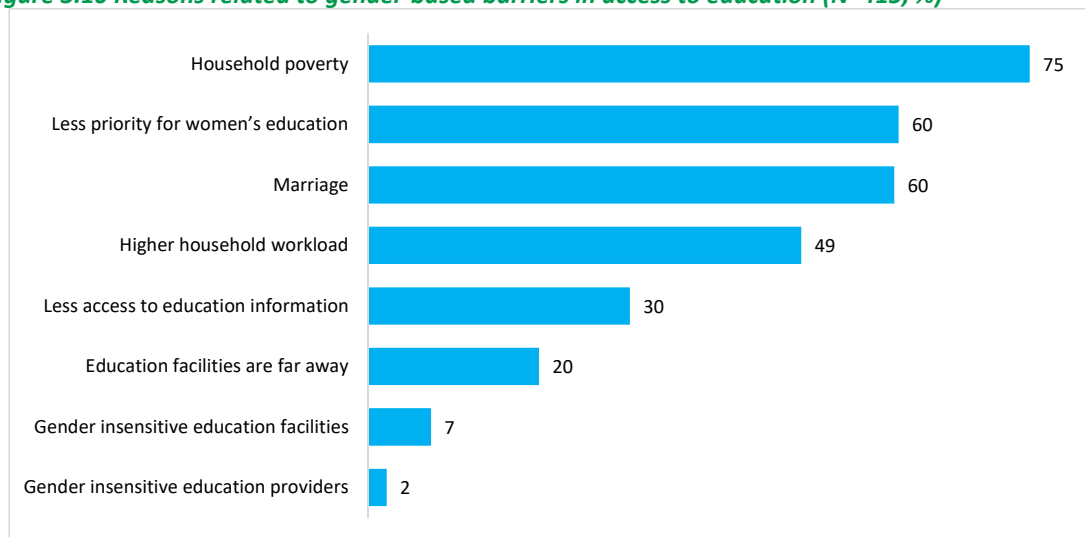
*Sample includes only those who consider there is gender-based barriers to access to education.

3.3.3 Access to employment

There are a number of reasons behind the disproportionate participation of women in the workforce. These include gender gaps in education and skilling opportunities, mobility issues, unpaid care work, and contracting labour markets. At the aggregate level, a large proportion of respondents (48%) were of the view that gender barriers to employment/economic opportunities only exist to a lesser extent. But sex disaggregated respondent opinions indicated that more women respondents (27%), compared to men (8%), believed that these constraints are deeply entrenched (Figure 3.11).

Figure 3.11 Gender barriers in access to employment (N=1043, %)
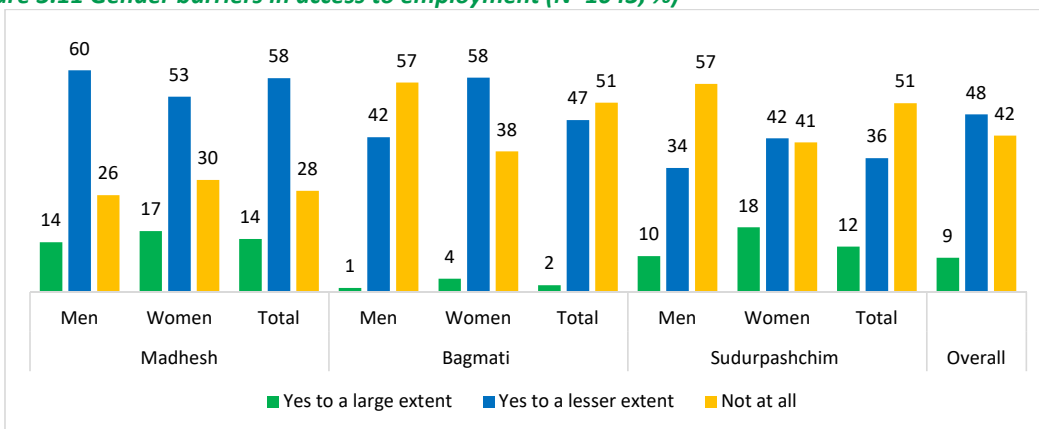
With regards to the reasons for gender gaps in access to employment, 78 percent respondents believed that low education/capacity or skills lead to women being at a disadvantage. Reproductive roles (68%) and household chores (47%) were also perceived as other crucial factors that limit women's access to economic opportunities (Figure 3.12).

Figure 3.12 Reasons for gender gaps in employment and economic opportunities (N=600, %)
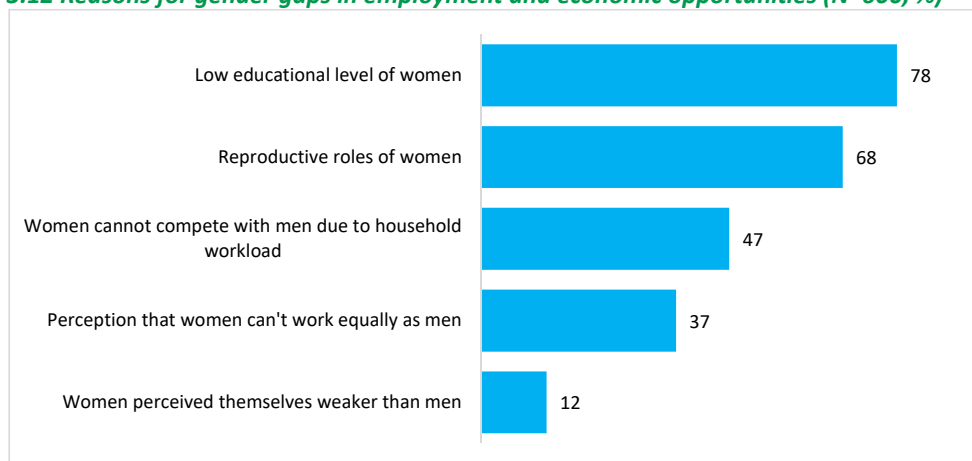
Sample includes only those who consider there is gender-based barriers to access to employment.

3.3.4 Wage parity and gender discrimination

Unequal distribution of household care work, low human capital, and gender disparities in access to employment opportunities bring about occupational segregation for the female workforce in the informal sector. Consequently, this may result in wage disparities, exploitative work conditions, and low access to the social protection provisions. Almost 60 percent respondents in this survey believed that wage gaps do not exist. However, there were differences in the perceptions of women and men respondents, with more women agreeing on the existence of wage gaps. Two primary reasons were

identified for wage-related disparities: a) traditional practices that undervalue women's contributions, and b) the belief that women work less than men (Figure 3.13).

Figure 3.13 Gender wage gap (N=1043, %)
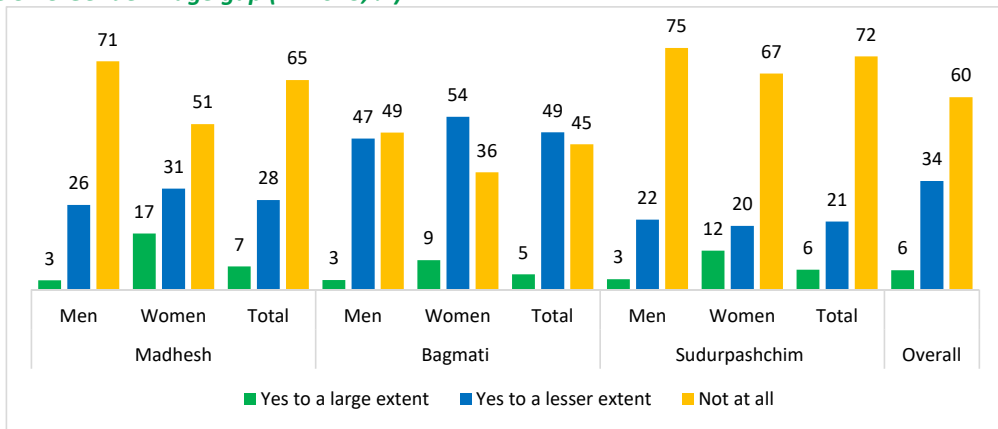
3.4 DECISION-MAKING, OWNERSHIP, AND CONTROL OVER RESOURCES

Women face discrimination in access, ownership, and control over resources. This limits their productive potential and undermines their agency. Despite legislative reforms and affirmative policy measures, patriarchal practices, mindsets, and cultural norms continue to impact effective implementation. Women also experience disadvantages in decision-making at the household, community, and local government level. The disadvantages women face in ownership and decision-making was also evident in the survey data.

3.4.1 Land ownership

Almost 62 percent respondents agreed that women face some form of discrimination or disadvantage with regards to control over ownership of land and household assets. More women respondents (17%), compared to their men counterparts (9%), believed that this disadvantage or gap exists to a large extent (Figure 3.14).

Figure 3.14 Gender gaps in ownership of land and household assets (N=1043, %)
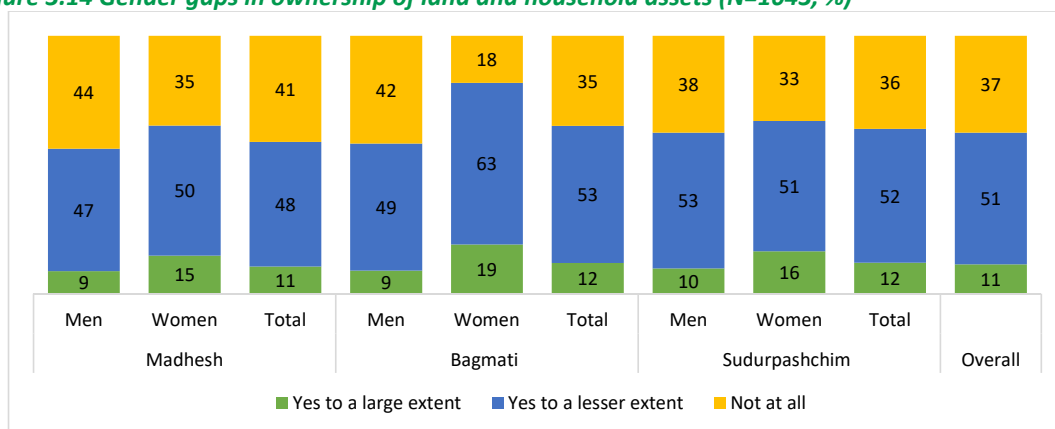
A majority (88%) of respondents agreed that patriarchal norms are the definitive reason for gender gaps in land and assets ownership. Over half (51%) also identified low trust in women in handling property as another crucial factor. Low education levels (36%) and women not seeking entitlements (29%) were other factors that resulted in gender inequality in land ownership (Figure 3.15).

Figure 3.15 Reasons for gender gaps in asset ownership (N=651, %)
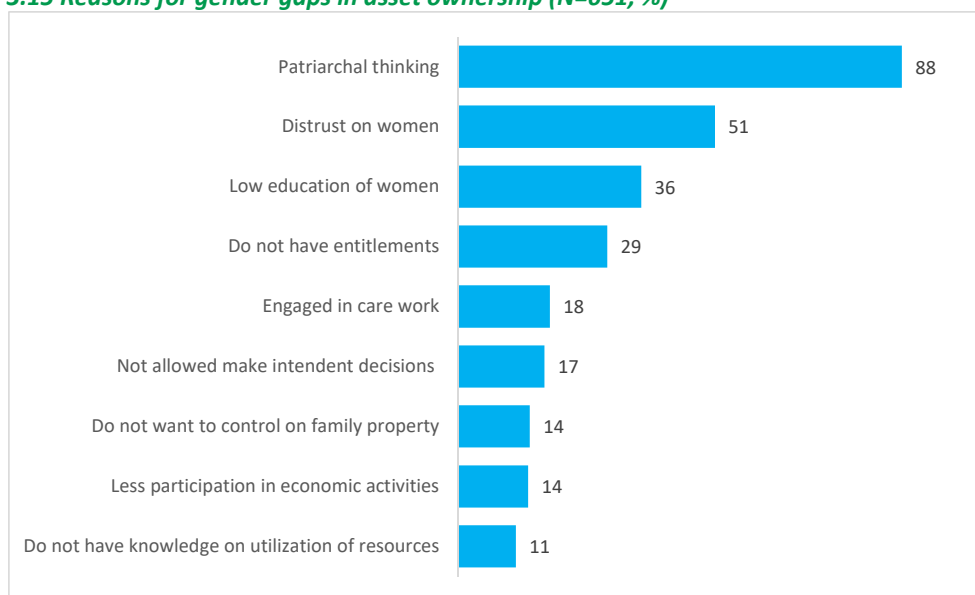
Sample includes only those who consider there is gender-based barriers in ownership of land and assets.

3.4.2 Participation in decision-making

Gender-based inequalities at home and low economic independence relegate women to disadvantaged positions in important household level decision-making. Over half (53%) of the respondents believed that gender gaps do not exist in household level decision-making in their jurisdictions, and that women participate equally in the process (Figure 3.16).

Figure 3.16 Gender gaps in decision-making (N=1043, %)
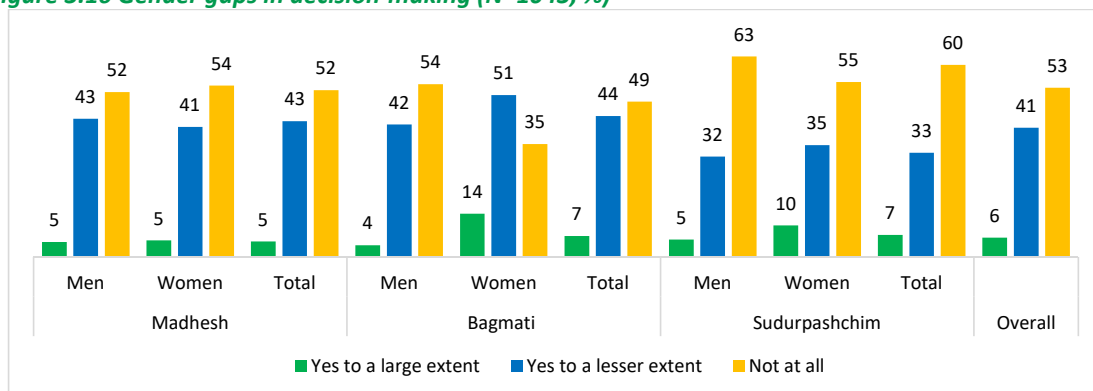
However, a perceptible gender difference was noticed in opinions with regards to the disadvantages that exist. A high proportion (91%) of respondents highlighted traditional practices and norms as the primary reason for inequitable participation in decision-making. The other identified factors were: family perceptions regarding women's ability to take decisions (their voices not being heard - 46%); low levels of education that may impede decision-making capabilities (39%); and trust deficits (women perceived as being incapable of decision-making - 29 %) (Figure 3.17).

Figure 3.17 Reasons for low participation of women in decision making (N=487, %)

Sample includes only those who consider that women have low level of participation in decision-making.

3.5 GESI RESPONSIVE PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

3.5.1 Participation and leadership

An overwhelming proportion (71%) of respondents agreed that women members, and those from marginalized groups have ability to lead local governance committees. Based on the level of governance, there was a slight variation in the proportion of respondents that strongly agreed, with the highest number of respondents agreeing on the ability to lead at the ward and local user committees, and then gradually declining for leadership in national level governance (Figure 3.18).

Figure 3.18 Women and marginalized community members' ability for leadership roles (N=1043, %)

Category	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree
Lead the local user committee	71	27	
Lead the school management committee	71	28	
Lead the ward committee	72	27	
Lead the LG	71	28	
Lead provincial government	70	28	
Lead national government	69	29	

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree
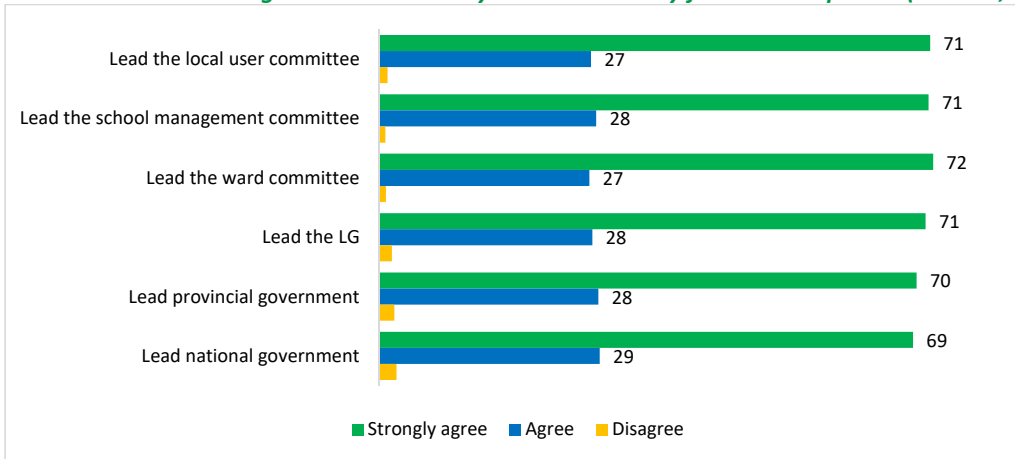
The caste stratified profile on the responses of those who strongly agreed on the ability to lead crucial governance structures is highlighted in Figure 3.19. A majority of Brahmin/Chettri, Terai, and Dalit respondents strongly agreed that women and marginalized community members have the ability to lead at every level of governance and in decision making committees. In comparison, slightly fewer Janjati respondents agreed strongly when it came to the ability to leadership roles (Figure 3.19).

Figure 3.19 Caste disaggregated profiles on women and marginalized community members' ability for leadership roles (N=1043, %)

Category	Brahmin/Chettrai	Janjati	Terai Caste	Dalit	Others
Lead national government	70	58	73	71	90
Lead provincial government	71	58	74	71	90
Lead the LG	72	60	76	72	93
Lead the ward committee	71	61	77	76	93
Lead the school management committee	70	61	77	74	93
Lead the local user committee	71	60	75	78	90

■ Brahmin/Chettrai ■ Janjati ■ Terai Caste ■ Dalit ■ Others
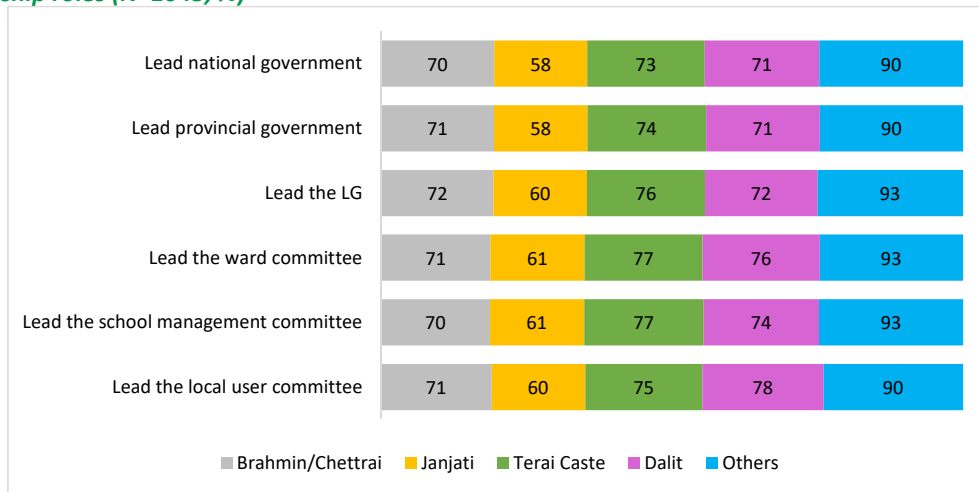
3.5.2 Leadership roles and equal opportunities for women and marginalized community

Almost half of the respondents strongly disagreed that equal opportunities exist for women and marginalized community in leadership roles in governance. This indicates that despite affirmative actions related to increasing women and marginalized community's participation in committees and decision-making structures, gaps continue to endure in equitable representation (Figure 3.20).

Figure 3.20 Equal opportunities for women and marginalized community members for leadership roles (N=1043, %)
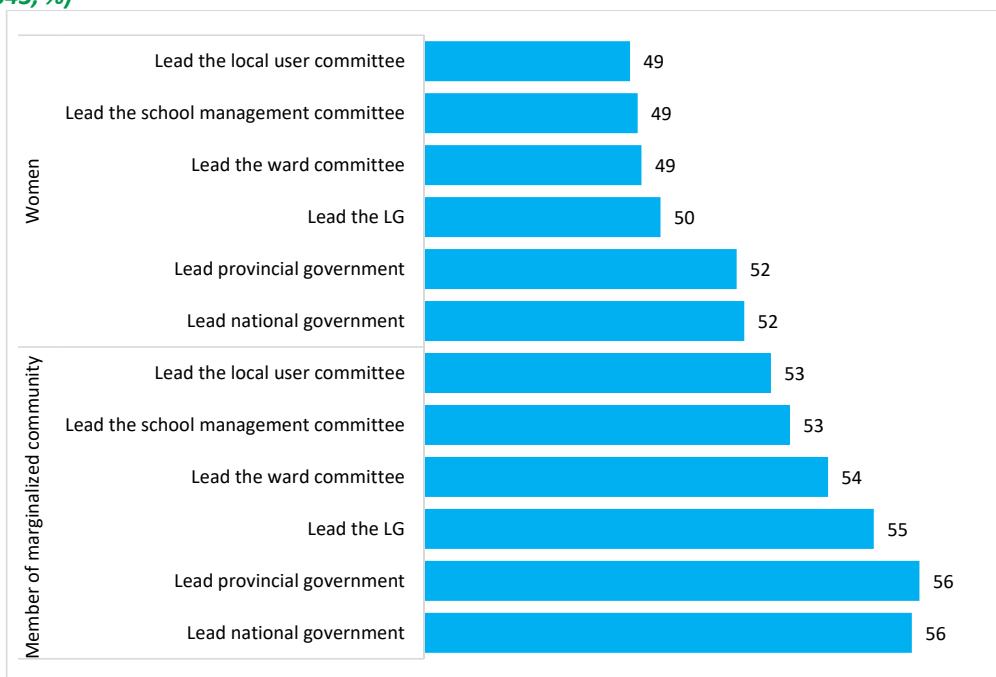
3.6   CHANGE IN GESI STATUS, DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES, AND ATTITUDES

3.6.1 Status of gender equality

Sixty-five percent respondents agreed that gender discrimination practices have decreased to a large extent in their local governments. However, more women respondents believed that it has decreased only to a lesser extent—32 percent women compared to 27 percent men in Sudurpashchim, and 55 percent women compared to 40 percent men in Bagmati. Only a few (2%) respondents were of the opinion that discriminatory practices are still rampant and have further deteriorated in their LGs (Figure 3.21).

Figure 3.21 Status of gender discrimination in the local government jurisdiction (N=1043, %)

Legend: ■ Decreased to a large extent ■ Decreased to a lesser extent ■ Same as previous ■ Further deteriorated
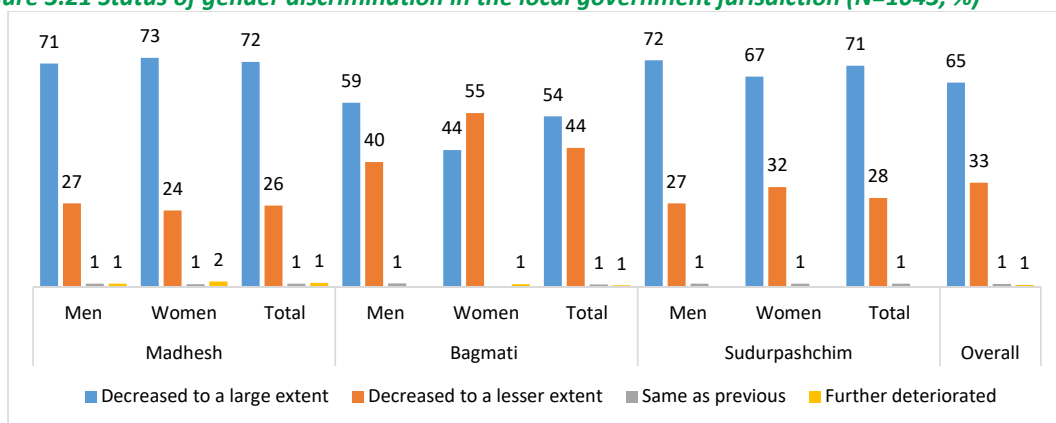
3.6.2 Reasons for decrease in discriminatory attitudes and practices

Several factors combined create favourable conditions to foster and promote GESI principles. A significantly high number (92%) of respondents were of the opinion that improved public awareness on GESI issues was one of the most important factors in fostering positive changes at the LG level. Women empowerment (63%), improvements in girls' education (61%), and favourable government policies (54%) were also perceived to be crucial in promoting the GESI mandate, resulting in a significant decline in discriminatory practices (Figure 3.22).

Figure 3.22 Reasons for decrease in discriminatory attitudes and practices (N=272, %)

	%
Improvement in public awareness	92
Women empowerment	63
Improved education status of women/girls	61
Government has made favourable policies and programs	54
Role of political parties	38
Increased employment of women	29
Civil society organizations have played positive roles	27
Increasing access of media	17
Family/community has made favourable environment	12
Fewer reported cases of domestic violence	10

*Sample includes only those who consider there is decrease in discriminatory attitudes and practices.

3.6.3 Status of social inclusion

Almost 54 percent respondents across social castes and ethnicities agreed that social exclusion practices had decreased to a large extent in their jurisdictions. Seventy-one percent of the Terai caste respondents believed that exclusionary practices had gone down substantially over the past

five years, whereas 50 percent Brahmin/Chettri, Janjati, and Dalit respondents still thought that it had declined only to some extent. Less than one percent respondents (mostly Brahmin/Chettri and Janjati) felt that inequality issues had further deteriorated in the last five years (Figure 3.23).

Figure 3.23 Status of social exclusion practices in the LG in the past five years by caste/ethnicity (N=1043, %)
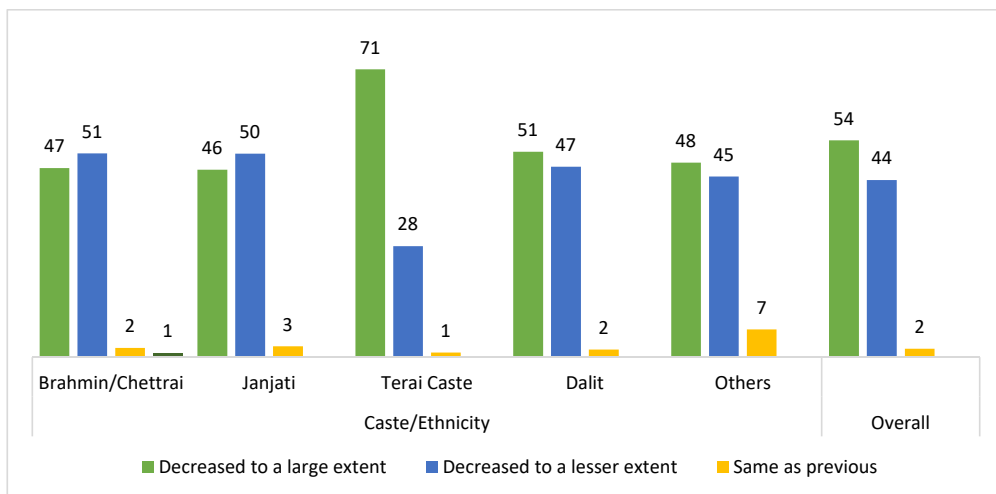
3.6.4 Recommendations on strategies to promote GESI practices

A majority (84%) of the respondents identified increased advocacy and awareness as the most important strategy, and 55 percent believed that women empowerment is crucial for promoting gender equality at the local level. Interestingly, 42 percent respondents also identified the importance of engaging with men in the community to promote GESI practices. Increased gender budgets (47%), GESI sensitive curriculums (37%), and changing social norms (39%) were identified as other areas that needed focused attention (Figure 3.24).

Figure 3.24 Recommendations to promote GESI principles (N=1043, %)
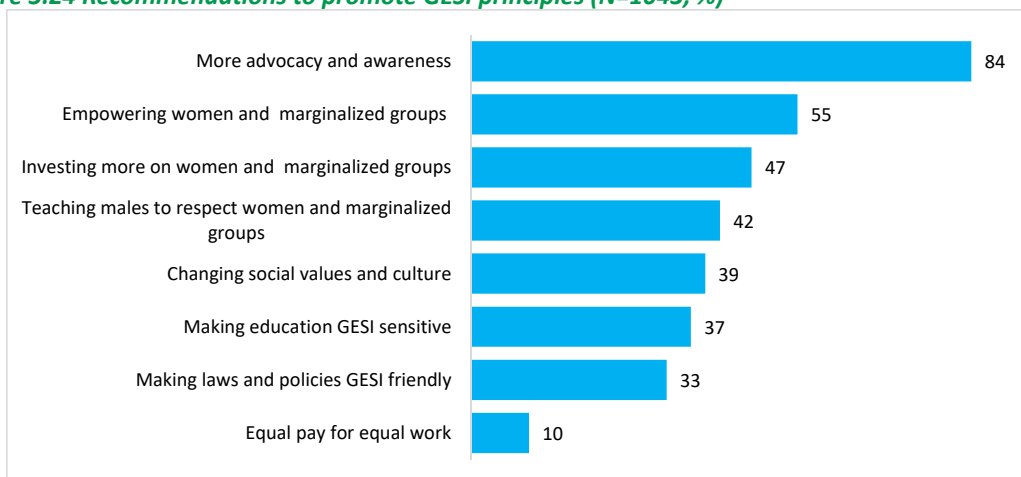
3.7 GESI KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE, AND PRACTICES - KEY FINDINGS

Gender differences in perception and responses

Women respondents notably agreed more on the existence of gender gaps in access to services, control over assets, and in decision making. This indicates that women, probably due to personal experiences, understand the related barriers, biases, and disadvantages better than men.

Demand-side issues are entrenched in cultural norms and patriarchal practices

With regards to gender gaps in access to basic services (social and economic) and control over financial assets, most respondents identified demand-side barriers, which are entrenched in patriarchal practices and societal norms, as the factors that lead to disadvantages for women and girls in all aspects of life.

Links between education levels and gender role attitudes

A cross-sectional review of survey data on the practices of gender role discussions and education levels of respondents indicated some form of correlation between the education levels and perceptions of the respondents. Respondents with higher education more frequently discussed gender roles in the household, community, and LGs. The prevalence of such discussions decreased with the decrease in the education levels of respondents, except for gender role discussions at LG offices, where the highest proportion of illiterate respondents reported frequent discussions (Figure 3.25).

Figure 3.25 Relationship between education level and frequency of discussion on the gender roles (N=1043, %)
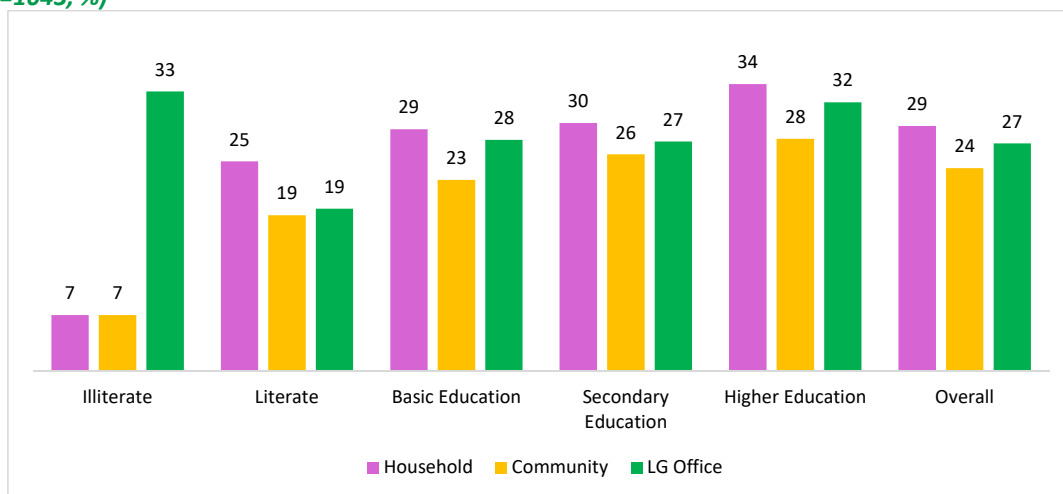
Access to services, ownership, and decision-making – the rural and urban bias

A cross-sectional review to understand rural-urban differences in respondent perceptions towards gender gaps in access to basic services, ownership, and decision-making indicated that a high percentage of rural respondents agreed that gaps exist in access to health (30%), education (41%),

and asset ownership (65%). On the other hand, a high number of urban respondents identified gender gaps specific to employment opportunities (60%), decision- making (48%), and wages (41%) (Figure 3.26).

Figure 3.26 Gender gaps in access and control over– rural vs urban (N=1043, %)
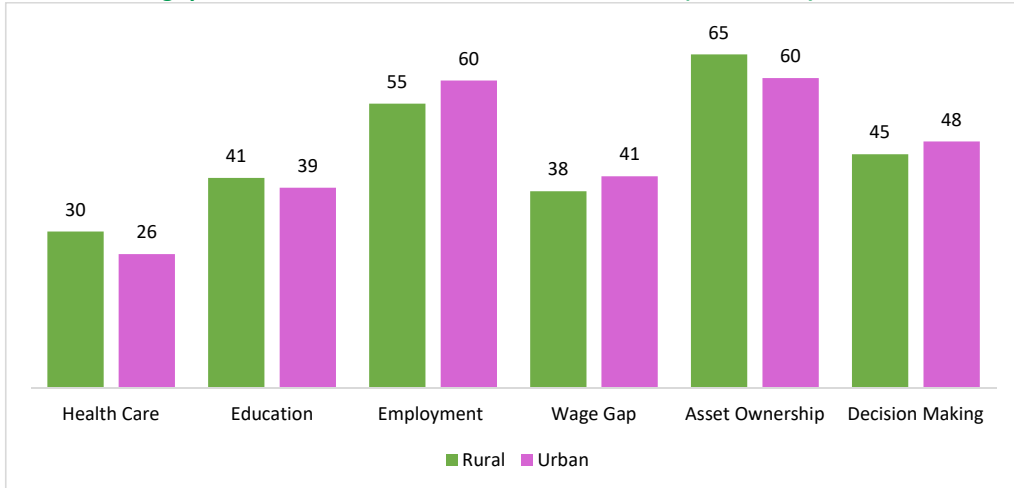
GESI RESPONSIVE PUBLIC FINANCE MANAGEMENT PROCESSES AND PRACTICES

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Fifty-five percent respondents each in Sudurpaschim and Bagmati agreed that community consultations are need-based and organized as and when needed. Around 30 percent respondents in Madhesh stated that these meetings are held once or twice a year.

- Forty-eight percent respondents agreed that women and marginalized community (WMC) suggestions are taken into account to a large extent to influence development projects. Thirty-four percentage of women respondents agreed and only 30 percent of women and Dalit executive committee members believed that WMC suggestions influence the design of development projects in their LGs.

- Two in three respondents (66%) claimed that their LGs maintain socio-demographic and economic data that is disaggregated by sex, caste/ethnicity, and economic status, whereas one in four (25%) disagreed on its availability. Almost nine percent respondents were unaware of such data.

- One in three respondents (34%) informed that national policies and priorities have an effect on budgets. Twelve percent believed that past practices are followed, and five percent were of the view that mayors/deputies influence the process to a large extent.

- Almost three in five respondents (59%) asserted that women, children, and marginalized community issues are regularly analysed in the budget-planning phase. Thirty–three percent believed that it is practiced sometimes, three percent respondents agreed that it is rare, and four percent agreed that it never happened.

- Half of the respondents (51%) agreed that WMC priorities are 'always' discussed in the budget prioritisation process. Comparatively lesser number of women respondents (46%) agreed that such priorities are discussed.

- Thirty percent of respondents agreed that ex-post gender impact assessments of sector allocations are carried out, but fewer women respondents (18%) agreed that such assessments are performed to a large extent.

- Sixty-four percent respondents believed that public disclosure of GESI allocations (gender budgets) is a regular feature. Twenty-four percent of respondents believed that budget information is disclosed occasionally, and six percent were of the opinion that such information is disclosed only when asked for.

- Around 30 to 50 percent of respondents reported low awareness or understanding of PFM processes. Sixty-one percent of respondents indicated that GESI priorities had not been realised or reflected in the LG budget of the past two years. Fifty percent respondents were of the opinion that the LG budgets in the past two years had made a visible positive impact on WMC issues, but four percent believed that there had been no impact.

The Constitution of Nepal 2015 and the Local Government Operation Act 2017 require the local government units to discuss, develop, and implement local level plans and budgets. The 15th five-year plan (2019/20-2023/24) mandates all three tiers of governance to establish gender responsive budgeting systems and practices to ensure an inclusive planning and budgeting process. This section explores the perceptions of the respondents towards GESI responsive public finance management practices.

4.1 GESI RESPONSIVE PLANNING

4.1.1 Participative planning and consultations with diverse groups

Community consultations are key to participatory and inclusive planning at the sub-national level. This study found that such consultations are organised in all three provinces. As for the frequency of these meetings, 55 percent respondents each in Sudurpaschim and Bagmati stated that community consultations are need-based and organized as and when needed. Around 30 percent respondents in Madhesh, such meetings are held once or twice a year (Figure 4.1)

Figure 4.1 Frequency of ward level meetings (N=1043, %)

Legend: Once in a year | Twice in a year | Quarterly | Once in month | As and when needed
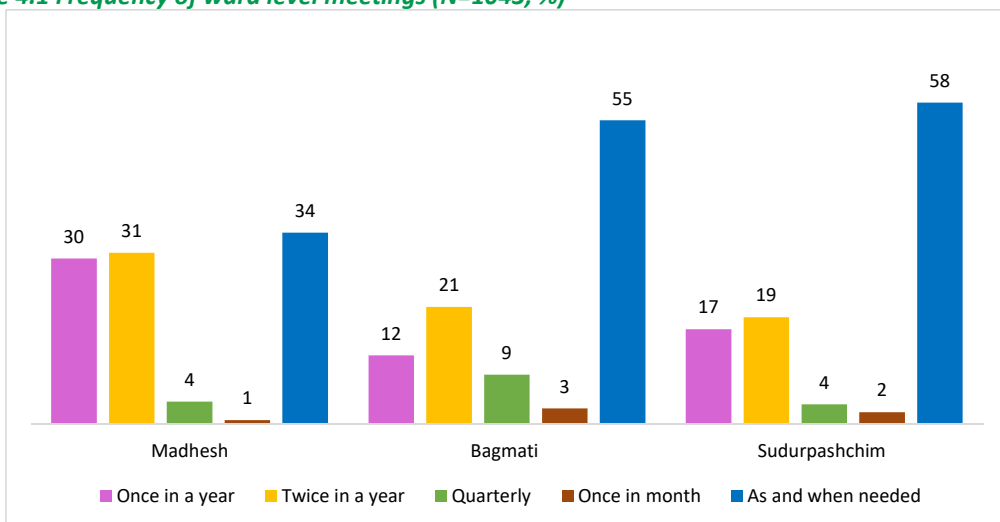
Relating to the involvement of women and marginalized communities (WMC) in these consultations, 64 percent respondents agreed that there is significant participation from diverse groups, with Sudurpaschim stating the highest level of participation (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2 Percentage of respondents agreeing participation of WMG in ward level meetings by sex (N=1043, %)
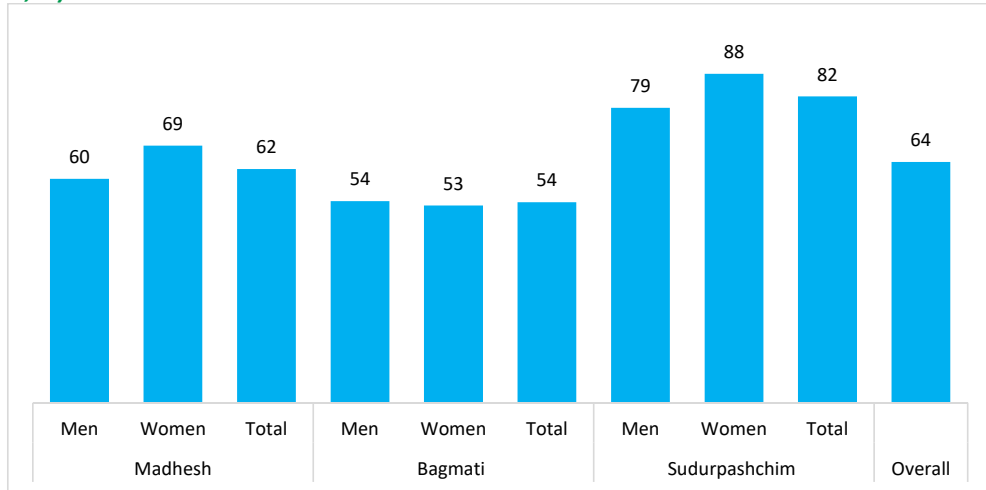
4.1.2 Voice and agency of WMC representatives

The respondents were asked if suggestions from WMC members are respected and taken into account during the decision-planning process. A majority of the respondents (64%) felt that WMC opinions are highly respected. However, perceptions differed according to gender—the number of men respondents (68%) who believed that WMC voices are highly respected was considerably higher than that of their women counterparts (49%). A similar pattern emerged when data was compared against respondents' positions. An overwhelming majority of ward chairpersons (74%) and LG chiefs/ deputies (72%) claimed that the opinions of WMC are highly respected. In comparison, only 38 percent chief administrative officers and 50 percent women and Dalit executive committee members agreed on the same (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Respecting opinions of WMC (N=1043, %)

	Highly respected	Respected to some extent	Respected to lesser extent
Madhesh			
Men	75	19	3
Women	53	30	12
Total	69	22	6
Bagmati			
Men	75	22	2
Women	55	35	9
Total	69	25	4
Sudurpashchim			
Men	53	45	1
Women	41	51	5
Total	49	47	3
Position			
Chief/deputy chief	72	21	6
WC	74	23	2
WDECM	50	39	8
CAO	38	55	5
Overall	64	30	4

4.1.3 Influence of WMC voices on development project designs

Less than half (48%) of the respondents agreed that WMC suggestions are taken into account to a large extent when influencing development projects. An equal number of respondents were also of the opinion that WMC voices are only heard but not accounted for during planning. Based on disaggregated data, a fewer percentage (34%) of women respondents agreed, and only 30 percent of women and Dalit executive committee members believed that WMC suggestions influence the design of development projects in their LGs. Though WMC representatives are provided the opportunity to participate in and voice their concerns and opinions, very rarely do their suggestions influence project design (Figure 4.3)

Figure 4.3 Influence of WMC voices on development project designs (N=1043, %)
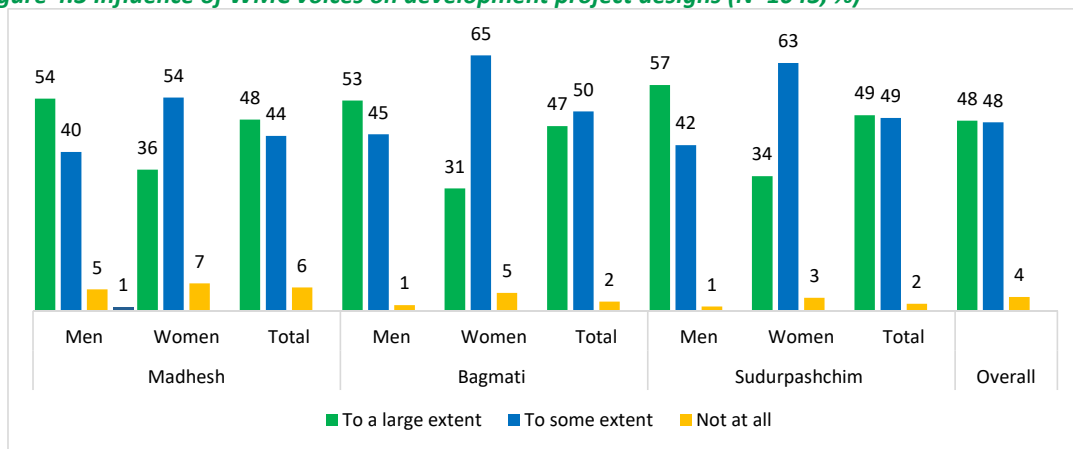
4.1.4 Availability and use of GESI disaggregated data in planning

GESI disaggregated data is essential for evidence-based planning. Two in three respondents (66%) claimed that their local governments maintain socio-demographic and economic data (disaggregated by sex, caste/ethnicity, and economic status), whereas one in four (25 %) disagreed on the availability of such data. On the other hand, almost one-tenth of the respondents were unaware about the existence of such information (Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4 Availability of GESI disaggregated data at the LGs (N=1043, %)
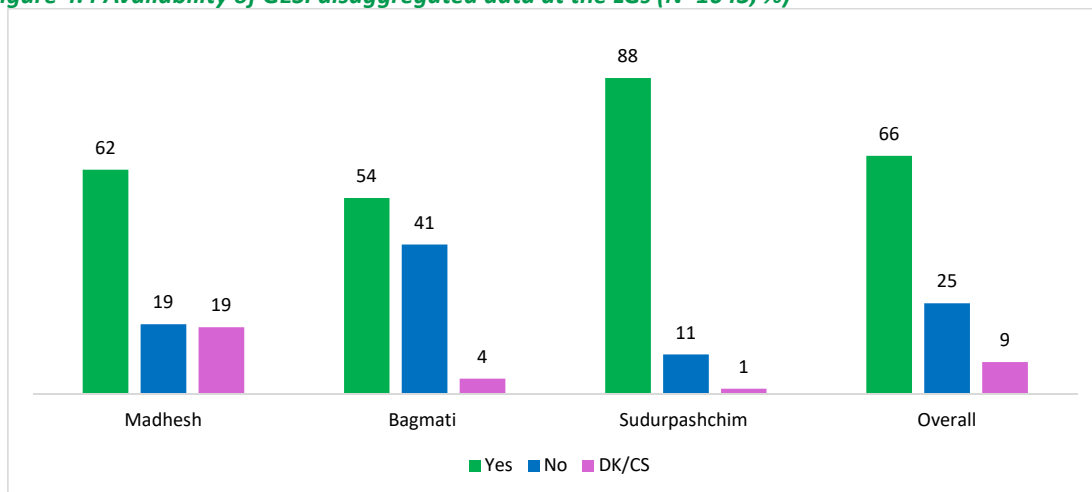
As to the usage of the data for sector analysis and purposive planning, only 40 percent respondents reported that their local governments always consider GESI disaggregated data in planning. Almost 35 percent believed that this data is rarely used, 14 percent denied usage, and 11 percent were unaware (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5 Usage of GESI disaggregated data in planning (N=1043, %)

Figure 4.5 Usage of GESI disaggregated data in planning (N=1043, %)
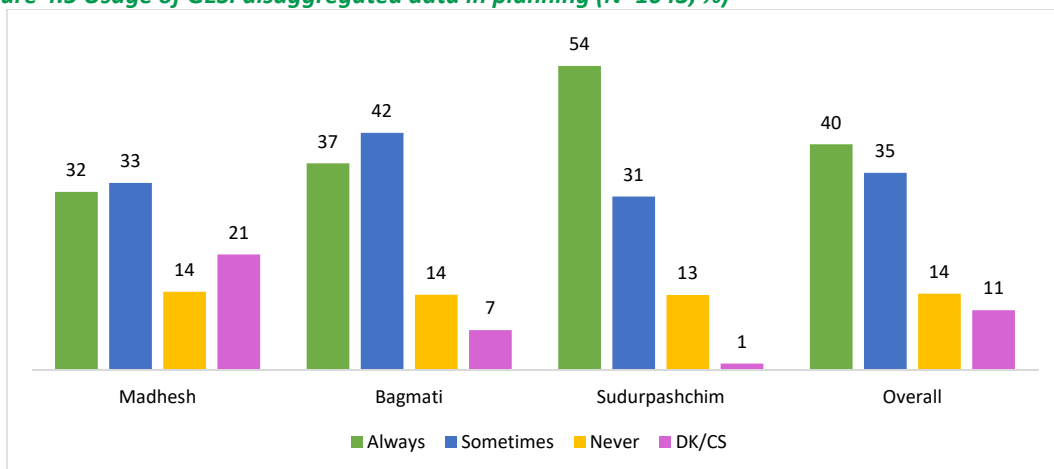
4.2 GESI CONSIDERATIONS IN BUDGETING

4.2.1 Process of determining budget priorities

The study found that budget priorities in the local governments are finalized through internal discussions (according to 77% of the respondents), and through meetings and consultations in the wards and communities (as stated by 74% respondents). At the aggregate level, one in three respondents (34%) informed that budget priorities are guided by national policies and priorities. Slightly over one-tenth respondents believed that past practices are followed, and a few (5%) were of the view that chiefs/deputies influence the process (Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6 Ways of determining budget priorities at LG (N=1043, %)
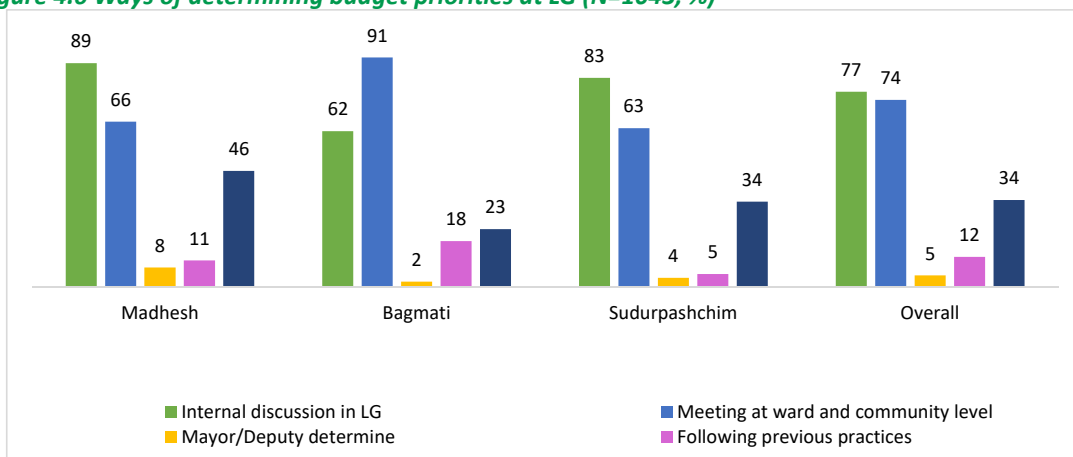
4.2.2 Consideration of situational analysis in allocations

Almost three in five respondents (59%) asserted that analysis of issues concerning women, children, and marginalized communities are regularly practiced in the budget-planning phase. One-third believed that it is implemented sometimes, and less than five percent felt that it is rare or never takes place. The responses, when disaggregated, showed that fewer women (30% in Madhesh, 54% in Bagmati, and 64% in Sudurpaschim) compared to men agreed that situational analysis is indeed practiced. Likewise, only 46 percent executive committee members representing women and Dalit groups and 57 percent of executive heads agreed that it is actually carried out during the budget planning phase (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Practice of analysing issues of women, children, and marginalized communities' issues (N=1043, %)

	Always conducted	Sometimes conducted	Rarely conducted	Never conducted	DK/CS
Madhesh					
Men	55	35	4	5	1
Women	30	50	6	3	10
Total	48	39	4	5	4
Bagmati					
Men	66	29	3	1	
Women	54	36	3	4	4
Total	62	31	3	2	1
Sudurpashchim					
Men	71	22	2	5	1
Women	64	30	2	4	-
Total	68	25	2	5	-
Position					
Chief/deputy chief	75	19	2	4	-
WC	65	28	3	4	1
WDECM	46	41	4	3	5
CAO	47	45	5	3	-
Overall	59	33	3	4	2

4.2.3 WMC priority discussions during budget finalization

Half of the respondents (51%) agreed that WMC priorities are always discussed in the budget prioritisation process. Breaking the data down according to sex, comparatively lesser number of women respondents (46%) agreed that such priorities are debated. Additionally, fewer women and Dalit executive committee members (40%) were of the opinion that WMC priorities guide budget finalisation discussions (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3 WMC priority discussions during budget finalization (N=1043, %)

	Always	Sometimes	Never
Madhesh			
Men	48	45	7
Women	33	56	8
Total	43	48	7
Bagmati			
Men	52	44	3
Women	43	50	5
Total	49	46	4
Sudurpashchim			
Men	65	32	2
Women	62	35	3
Total	64	33	3
Position			
Chief/deputy chief	74	23	2
WC	53	42	5
WDECM	40	52	6
CAO	50	45	2
Overall	51	43	5

4.3 EX-POST BUDGET IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

At the aggregate level, only 30 percent respondents agreed that ex-post gender impact assessments of sector allocations are implemented in the LGs. Most respondents (57%) believed that it is conducted to a much lesser extent. One-tenth of respondents completely disagreed, and less than five percent were not aware of such practices. When disaggregated according to sex, fewer women (18%) agreed that such assessments are performed to a large extent (Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.7 Ex-post gender impact assessment of budget allocations (N=1043, %)
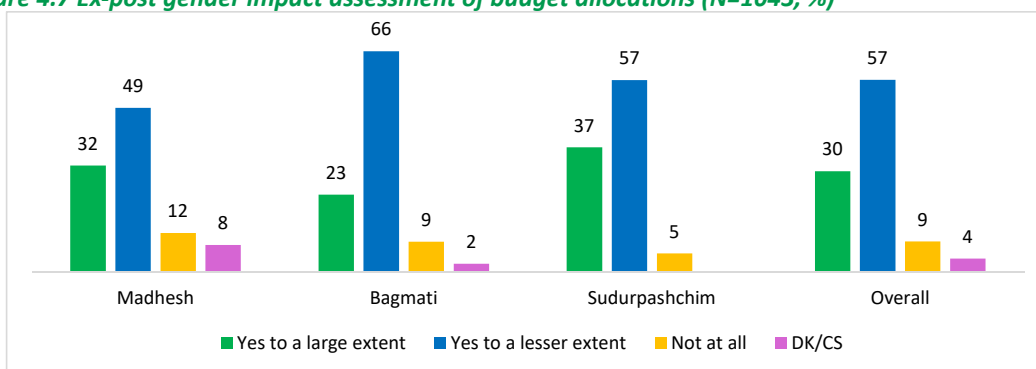
4.4 BUDGET TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Well over half (64%) of the respondents believed that public disclosure of GESI allocations (gender budgets) is a regular feature. According to 24 percent respondents, budget information is occasionally made known, and six percent were of the opinion that such information is disclosed only when asked (Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8 Public disclosure of GESI allocations, implementation progress, and spending (N=1043, %)
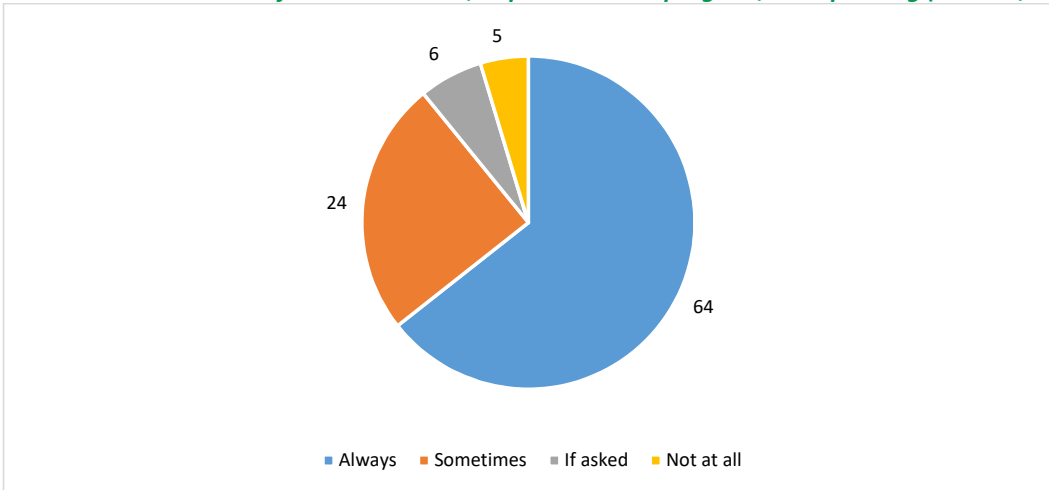
In connection with disclosures, 59 percent respondents asserted that local governments regularly share such information. Twenty-eight percent respondents believed that such information is sometimes published in the public domain, and nearly 10 percent were of the opinion that it is shared only when asked. Higher percentage of LG executive heads (76%) agreed that public disclosure of GESI budgets and implementation progress is shared regularly (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 Practices of sharing progress of budget implementation at ward/community meetings (N=1043, %)

	Always updated in meeting	Sometimes update	If asked	Not at all	DK/CS
Madhesh					
Men	58	31	7	4	1
Women	34	40	10	6	10
Total	51	33	8	4	3
Bagmati					
Men	60	28	10	2	1
Women	45	40	11	2	2
Total	56	31	10	2	1
Sudurpashchim					
Men	78	16	4	1	1
Women	70	19	9	2	-
Total	76	17	5	1	1
Position					
Chief/deputy chief	76	19	3		2
WC	66	24	7	2	1
WDECM	44	38	11	4	3
CAO	57	29	9	3	2
Overall	59	28	8	3	2

4.5 GESI RESPONSIVE PUBLIC FINANCE MANAGEMENT (PFM) PROCESSES AND PRACTICES – KEY FINDINGS

Higher number of women respondents reported limited understanding of the LG planning and budgeting process

Several respondents (30% to 50%) reported low awareness or understanding of PFM processes. A disaggregated profile of respondents highlighted a high percentage of women respondents—64 percent in Sudurpashchim, 53 percent in Bagmati, and 43 percent in Madhesh—reported less understanding of the LG planning and budgeting systems (Figure 4.9).

Figure 4.9 Low level of understanding of LG planning and budgeting process (N=378, %)
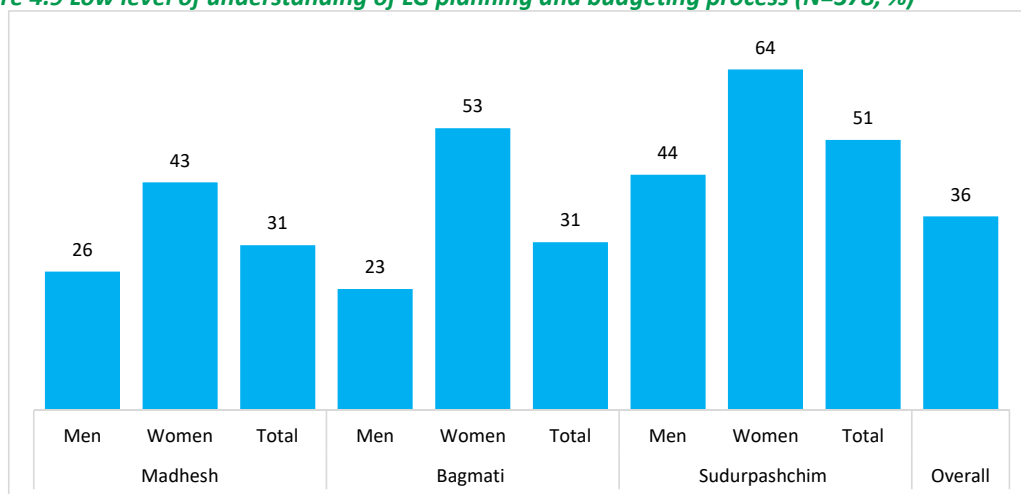
*Sample includes only those who stated low level of understanding of PFM process.

Inadequate understanding of GESI responsive planning and budgeting approaches

A large proportion of respondents (80%) believed that they did not have adequate knowledge of the gender responsive public finance management. Nearly half of the respondents (49%) reported to have only a basic understanding, while only three percent believed that they had expert knowledge of gender responsive budgets or gender responsive public finance management (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5 Knowledge on GRPFM/GRB (N=1043, %)

	Basic knowledge	Working knowledge	Adequate knowledge	Expert knowledge	Not at all	DK/CS
Madhesh						
Men	43	13	12	8	23	1
Women	36	9	3	1	43	9
Total	41	12	10	6	29	3
Bagmati						
Men	56	20	14	2	7	1
Women	48	14	13	1	20	5
Total	54	18	14	2	11	2
Sudurpashchim						
Men	54	6	28	1	11	0
Women	49	9	15	0	26	0
Total	52	7	24	1	16	0
Overall	49	13	15	3	19	2

Insufficient realisation of GESI priorities in budgetary allocations

Six-tenth of the respondents indicated that GESI priorities were not realised or reflected in the LG budgets of the past two years. Furthermore, a high proportion (68%) of women respondents agreed that GESI priorities are less reflected or addressed in the budgets (Figure 4.10).

Figure: 4.10 Insufficient realisation of GESI priorities in budgetary allocations (N=1043, %)

Legend: Yes to a large extent, Yes to a lesser extent, Not at all, DK/CS

Province	Yes to a large extent	Yes to a lesser extent	Not at all	DK/CS
Madhesh	36	53	6	4
Bagmati	29	68	1	1
Sudurpashchim	35	63	3	
Overall	33	61	3	2
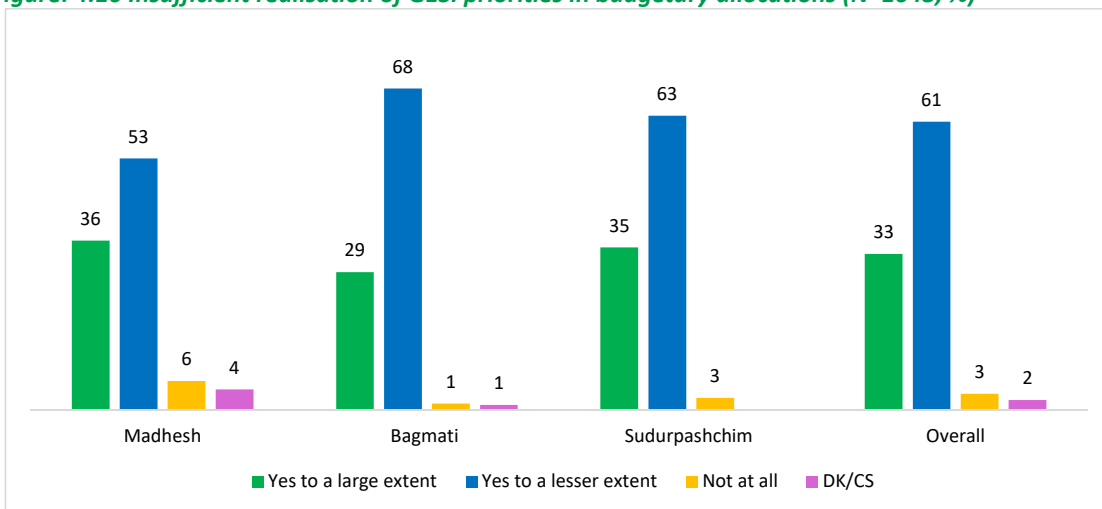
Province and gender differences in perceptions related to budgetary impact on GESI issues

At the aggregate level, 50 percent respondents were of the opinion that the LG budgets in the past two years had made a visible positive impact on WMC issues. On the other hand, four percent believed that there was no impact. Bagmati reported the lowest number of respondents (21% women and 34% men) who agreed that there has been a visible change in GESI status. The responses when disaggregated highlighted that fewer women respondents in all three provinces (58% in Sudurpashchim, 53% in Madhesh, and 21 % in Bagmati) agreed that budgets have brought perceptible changes (Figure 4.11).

Figure 4.11 Impact of budget on WMC issues (N=1043, %)

Legend: Visible positive impact, Somewhat positive impact, Not at all

	Visible positive impact	Somewhat positive impact	Not at all
Madhesh - Men	64	28	6
Madhesh - Women	53	31	10
Madhesh - Total	61	29	7
Bagmati - Men	34	64	2
Bagmati - Women	21	75	3
Bagmati - Total	30	68	2
Sudurpashchim - Men	73	25	2
Sudurpashchim - Women	58	40	2
Sudurpashchim - Total	68	30	2
Overall	52	43	4
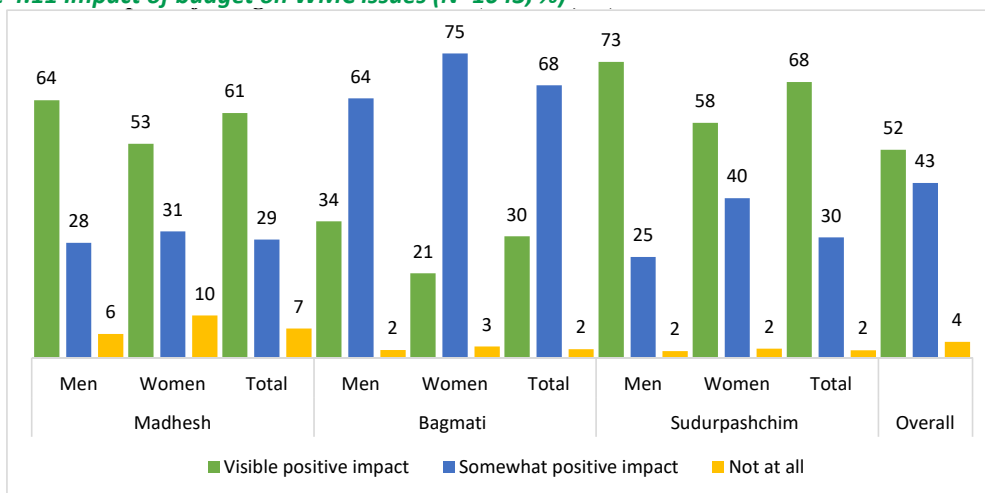
LOCAL GOVERNANCE INSTITUTIONS AND GESI-GRPFM CAPACITIES

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Eighty-two percent respondents in Sudurpashchim, 77 percent in Bagmati, and 58 percent in Madhesh, mentioned that their LGs provide ample opportunities to all functionaries to participate in GESI and GRPFM trainings.

- Seventy-four percent of respondents, with the highest in Bagmati (83%), agreed that they had participated in local planning trainings. The majority of those that had received trainings were LG chiefs/deputies (86%), ward chairpersons (80%), and chief administrative officers (78%). Only 62 percent of women and Dalit executive committee members reported to have participated in such programs.

- Seventy-two percent of respondents had participated in LG level budgeting training programs. More men respondents (74%) had the opportunity to take part in the LG budget process training programs, and only 63 percent of women and Dalit executive committee members were trained on the subject matter.

- Almost three in five respondents agreed that the trainings they received were 'largely useful', while one in every four found them 'less useful'. Only 64 percent women and Dalit executive committee members agreed on the usefulness of such programs, compared to 92 percent chief administrative officers, 80 percent LG chiefs/deputies, and 76 percent ward chairpersons.

- Almost 50 percent respondents reported that GESI related guidelines did not exist in their LGs. Thirty–nine percent agreed that there were clear GESI guidelines in their LGs, with the highest numbers reported from Sudurpaschim (61 %).

Individual and institutional capacities in GESI issues and gender responsive public finance management (GRPFM) are essential for the success of GESI responsive initiatives at the local level. This section explores respondents' perceptions on individual knowledge, skills, and capacities related to GESI and GRPFM. In this regard, the study sought to understand capacity-building initiatives at the local government level, and to assess the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of local governance functionaries. The questions also explored the practical application of skills in the discharge of

individual responsibilities. In addition, this section examines organisational level policies, strategies, and procedures that ensure a strong GESI mandate is established and effectively implemented.

5.1 CAPACITY BUILDING ON GESI-GRPFM

5.1.1 GESI capacity building opportunities

A majority of the respondents in each province (82% in Sudurpashchim, 77% in Bagmati, and 58% in Madhesh) mentioned that their local governments provide ample opportunities to all functionaries to participate in GESI and GRPFM trainings (Figure 5.1a).

Figure 5.1a GESI capacity building opportunities (N=1043, %)
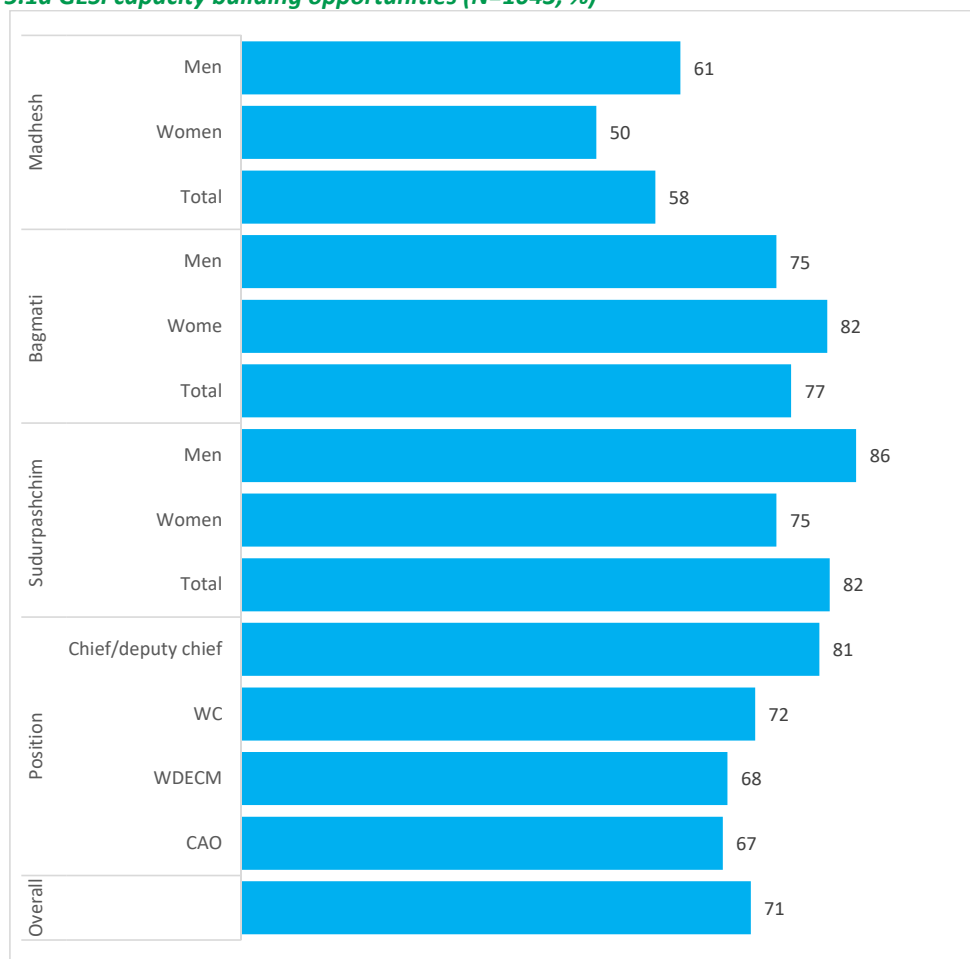
*Only respondents saying 'yes' are included in the figure.

Among the elected representatives, such trainings were prioritised more for women (94%) and those from marginalized communities (75%). Only 30 percent respondents agreed that deputies were given priority, while 10 percent stated that chiefs were prioritised. When it came to training opportunities,

more trainings were organised for council members than for civil staff, GESI focal persons (8%), chief administrative officers (4%), and planning officers (3%) (Figure 5.1b)

Figure 5.1b Participation in GESI capacity building trainings (N=742, %)

Category	Value
Women representatives	94
Representatives from marginalized communities	75
Male representatives	57
Deputy mayor/vice chairperson	30
Mayor/chairperson	10
GESI focal person	8
Chief Administrative Officer	4
Planning officer	3
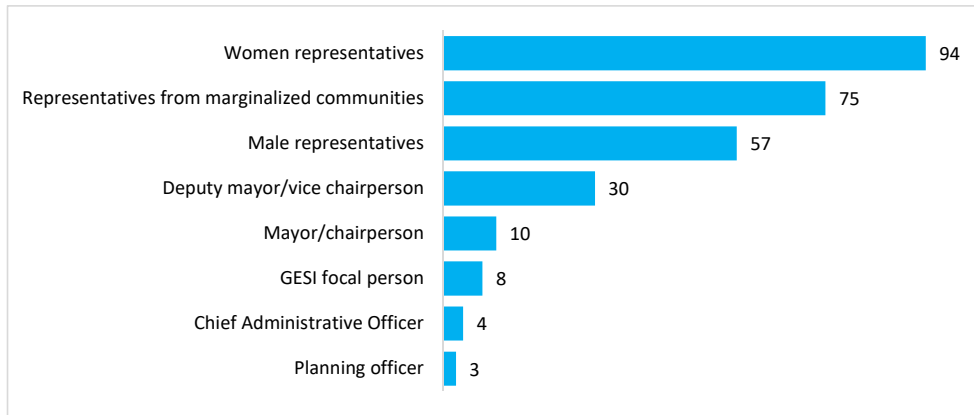
5.1.2 Training structure and curriculum

As stated by the respondents, the trainings largely covered subjects related to gender equality (91%), gender-based discrimination (82%), domestic violence (73%), and social inclusion (59%). The other covered topics were gender mainstreaming (34%), legal mandates (25%), gender-friendly work environment (22%), and gender analysis (16%) (Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2 Training structure and curriculum (N=551, %)

Category	Value
Gender equality	91
Gender discrimination	82
Domestic violence	73
Social inclusion	59
Making GESI friendly policies and laws	34
Gender mainstreaming	34
Legal Arrangements	25
Gender friendly work environment	22
Gender analysis/ gender audit	16
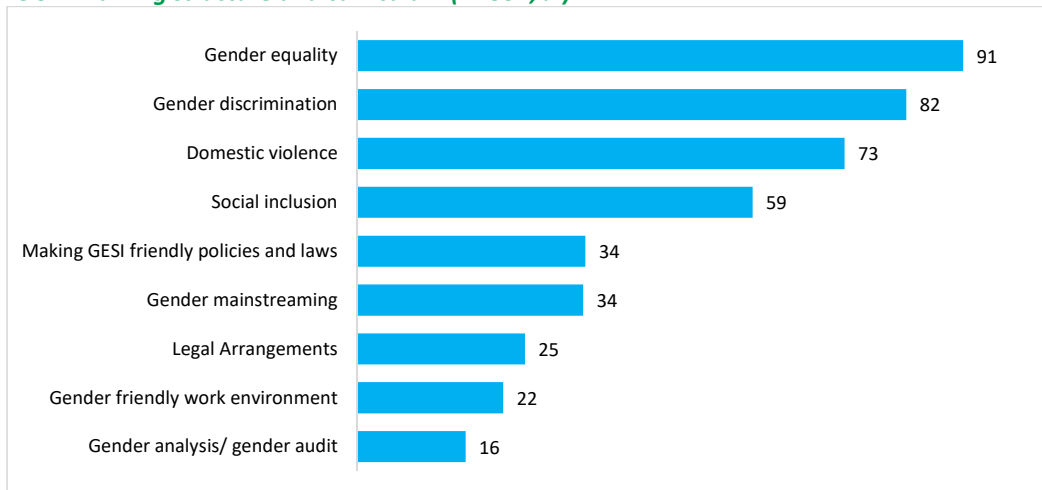
Sample includes only those who have participated in training.

5.1.3 Trainings in local planning and budgeting

At the aggregate level, 74 percent respondents, with the highest in Bagmati (83%), stated that they had participated in local planning trainings. According to position, a majority of officials that received training were local government chiefs/deputies (86%), ward chairpersons (80%), and CAOs (78%). Only 62 percent of women and Dalit executive committee members reported participating in such programs. A majority of the respondents that had received local planning training (94% in Sudurpashchim, 89% in Bagmati, and 80% in Madhesh) agreed that GESI and GRB issues were incorporated in the training programs (Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3 Participation on local planning training (N=1043, %)
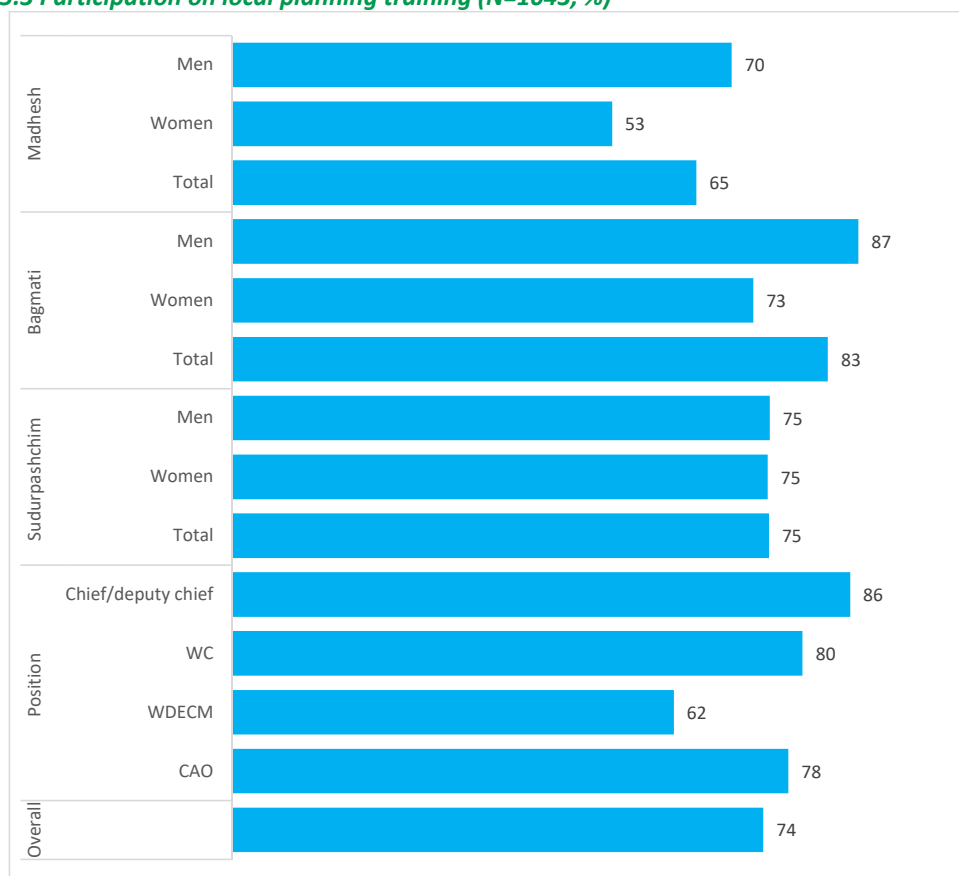
Only respondents saying 'yes' are included in the figure.

Compared to participation on the local planning training, slightly fewer (72%) respondents had participated in local level budgeting training programmes. In all three provinces, more men respondents (74%) had the opportunity to take part in such initiatives, while only 63 percent of women and Dalit executive committee members had been trained on the subject. Eighty-nine percent respondents (97% in Sudurpaschim, 89% in Bagmati, and 82% in Madhesh) agreed that local government budget trainings also cover GESI issues (Figure 5.4)

Figure. 5.4 Participation in local budgeting training (N=1043, %)
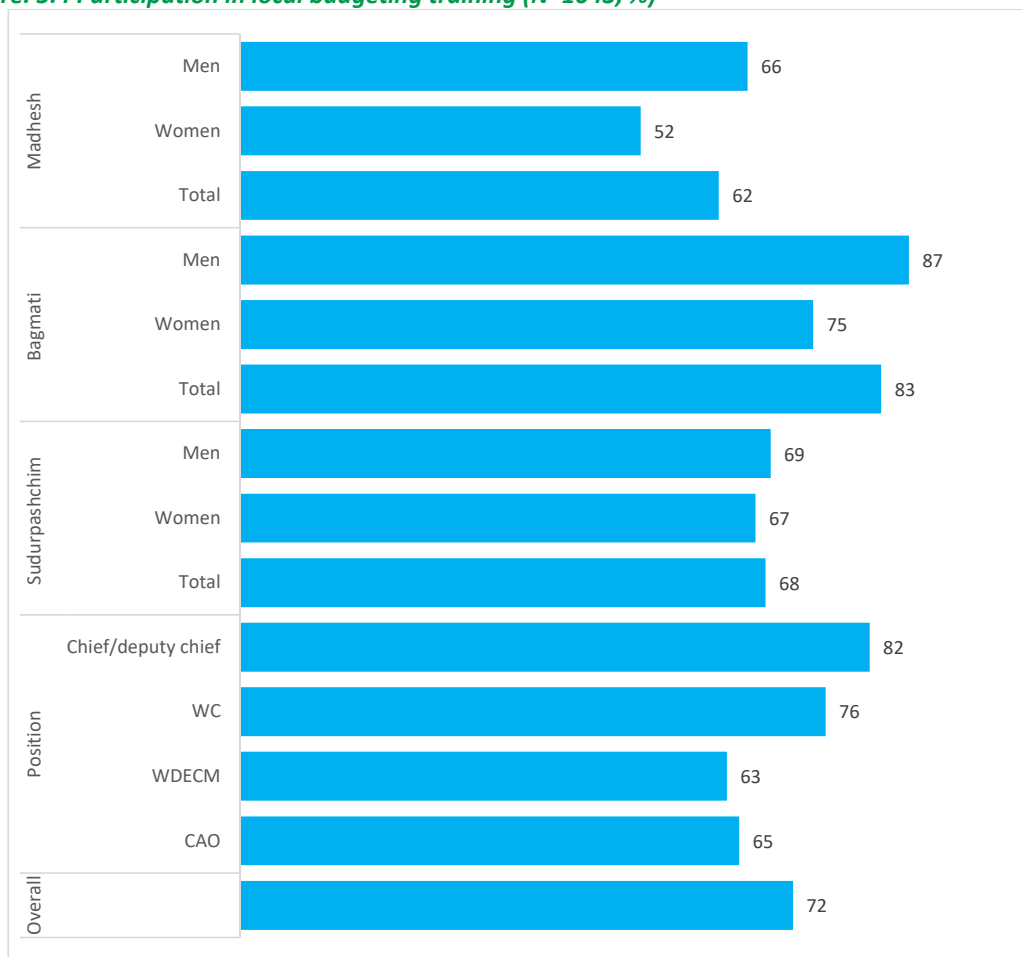
Only respondents saying 'yes' are included in the figure.

5.1.4 GRPFM capacity building initiatives

A majority (72%) of the respondents revealed that they had not received GRPFM capacity building training in the past three years. Most of these respondents were in Madhesh (85%), followed by Bagmati (73%), and then Sudurpashchim (54%). The profiles, when disaggregated, showed that 80 percent women and Dalit executive council members had not received such training. They were followed by chief administrative officers (74%) and ward chairpersons (70%). Furthermore, less than half of the local government chiefs and deputies (46%) had participated in GRPFM training programmes. This study also noted that a high percent of women respondents (74%) had not participated in such initiatives (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5 Did not receive GRPFM training (N=753, %)
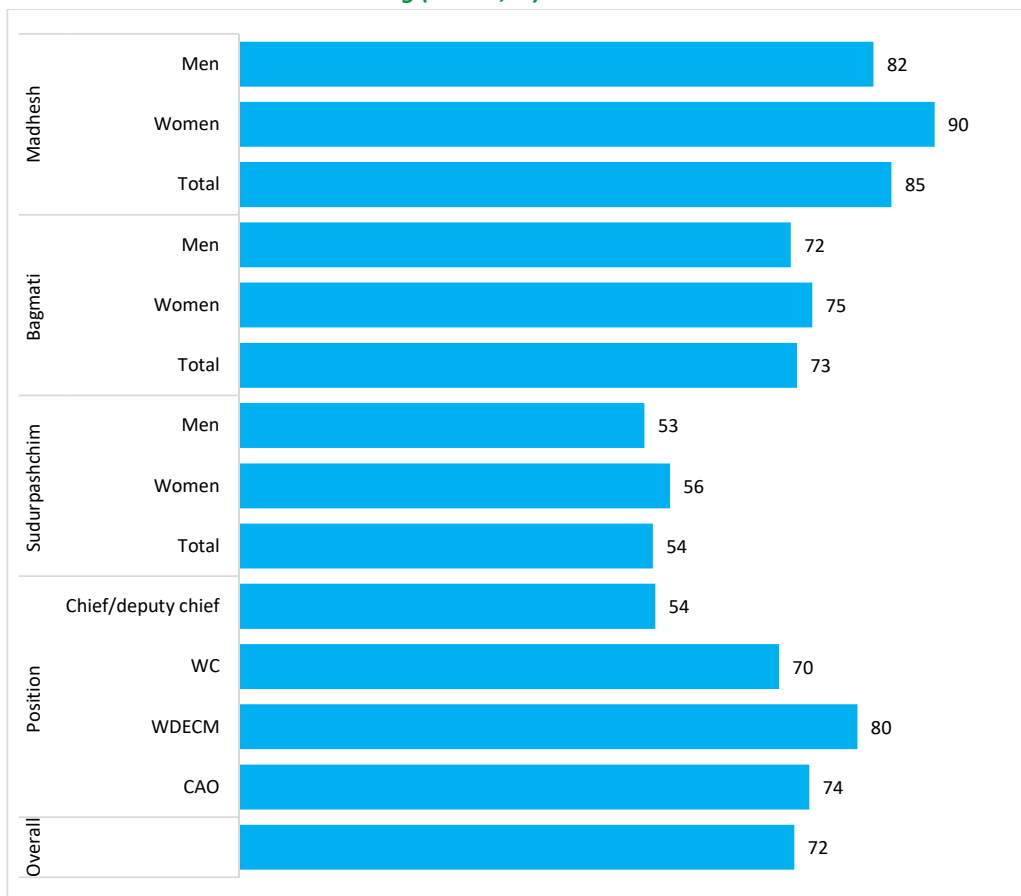
*Sample includes only those who did not participate in the GRPFM training.

5.1.5 GRPFM training content

Of those that had attended GRPFM training programmes, 98 percent shared that it had two main components: analysis of the socio-economic status of women and marginalized communities (WMC), and GESI responsive program design. Other prominent topics were budget allocation processes/ methods (95%) and impact analysis of budgets (93%). According to the respondents, practical training methods specific to analysing expenditures on GESI lines (88%) was given comparatively lesser priority (Figure 5.6).

Figure 5.6 GRPFM training content – popular topics covered (N=1043, %)

Figure 5.6 GRPFM training content – popular topics covered (N=1043, %)
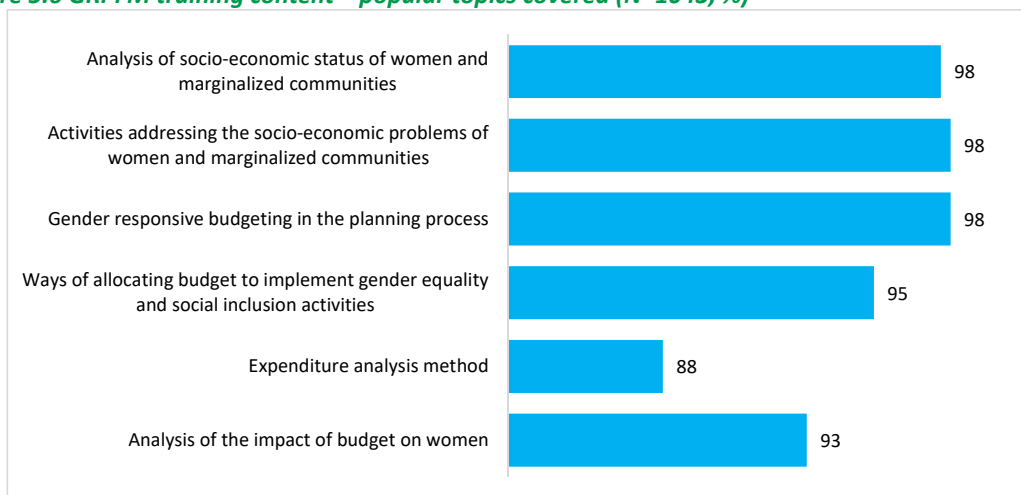
5.1.6 Perceptions on the usefulness of GESI trainings

Almost three in five respondents agreed that the trainings they received were largely useful, while it was considered less so by one in every four respondents. Only 64 percent women and Dalit executive committee members agreed on the usefulness of such programmes, compared to 92 percent chief administrative officers, 80 percent local government chiefs/deputies, and 76 percent ward chairpersons (Figure 5.7).

Figure 5.7 Perceptions on the usefulness of GESI trainings (N=1043, %)

Legend: ■ Yes, to a larger extent ■ Yes, to a some extent

Data from chart:

		Yes, to a larger extent	Yes, to a some extent
Madhesh	Men	88	12
Madhesh	Women	100	
Madhesh	Total	91	9
Bagmati	Men	94	6
Bagmati	Women	86	14
Bagmati	Total	92	8
Sudurpashchim	Men	55	44
Sudurpashchim	Women	48	53
Sudurpashchim	Total	52	47
Position	Chief/deputy chief	80	20
Position	WC	76	24
Position	WDECM	64	34
Position	CAO	92	8
Overall		74	25

5.1.7 GESI related policy instruments

Almost half of the respondents reported that GESI-related guidelines did not exist in their local governments. On the other hand, 39 percent agreed that there are clear GESI guidelines in their local governments, with the highest numbers reported from Sudurpaschim (61%). Eighteen percent respondents, however, were completely unaware of such guidelines (Figure 5.8).

Figure 5.8 Availability of GESI guidelines (N=1043, %)
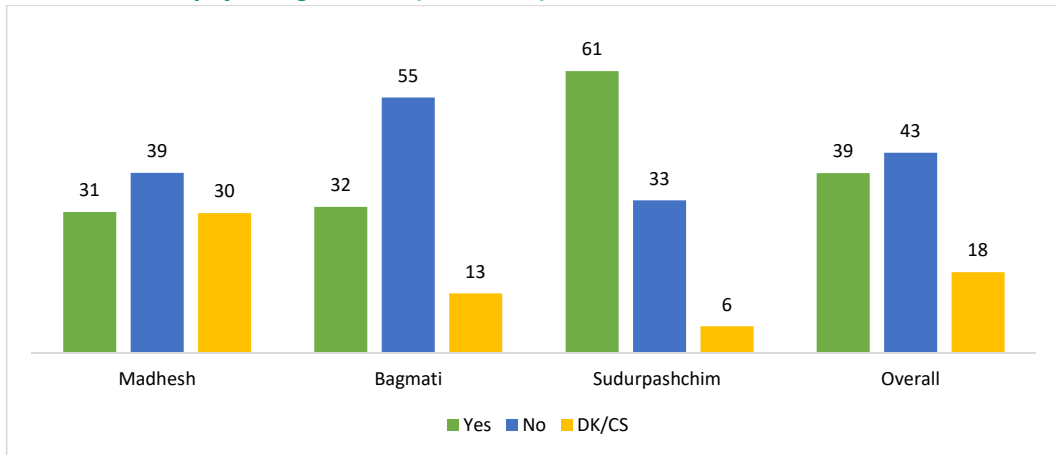
5.1.8 Perceived capacity gaps

Most respondents agreed that civil staff, due to knowledge and capacity gaps, lacked basic competencies related to preparing need-based plans and budgets (77%), carrying out gender analysis (73%), and implementing budgets (67%). Respondents also identified gaps in trainings on policy implementation (53%), monitoring and evaluation (50%), and law-making (41%) (Figure 5.9). To strengthen individual and institutional GESI and GRPFM competencies, the identified capacity gaps should be addressed through focused and tailor-made training programmes.

Figure 5.9 Identified capacity gap area (N=1043, %)
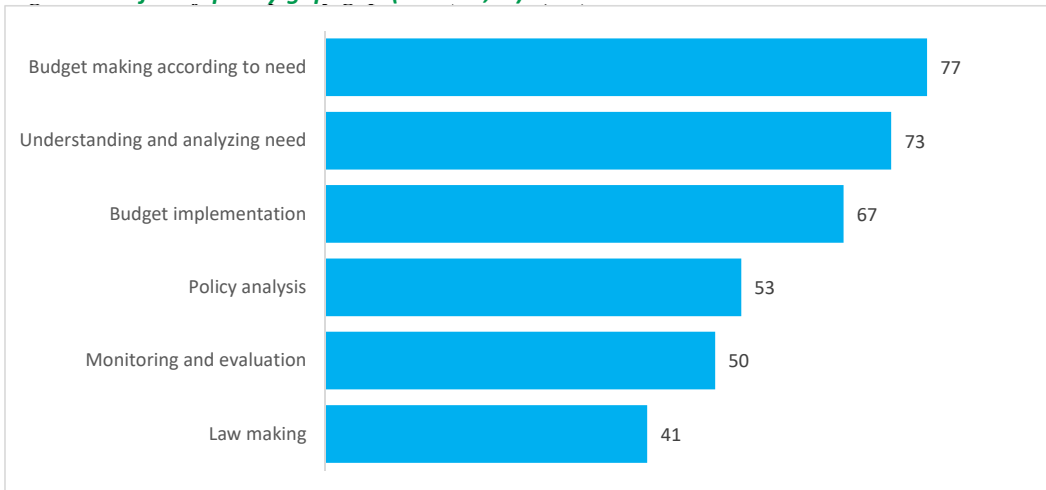
5.2 LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND GESI CAPACITIES – KEY FINDINGS

Frequent and regular GESI capacity-building programs

Most participants agreed that GESI capacity programmes are organised frequently at the local government level.

Difference in participation opportunities

The study found that policymakers are provided more capacity-building opportunities compared to the executive, who are responsible for implementing the programmes. More men respondents reported receiving training opportunities compared to their women counterparts. Additionally, variations according to positions was apparent in capacity-building opportunities, with women and Dalit executive members reporting lower participation compared to LG chiefs.

GESI-inclusive local planning and budgeting trainings

Respondents that participated in LG level planning and budgeting trainings mentioned that GESI issues are adequately integrated in the programs.

Fewer opportunities for GRPFM-focused capacity-building program

More than 70 percent respondents agreed that they had not participated in GRPFM trainings as the trainings are not frequently organised at the LG level. In addition, those who participated believed that the curriculum requires a thorough assessment to ensure that all crucial components are covered adequately.

Low awareness regarding GESI guidelines

The study found that the availability of GESI-specific guidelines at the local level is unclear.

Capacity development gaps

The primary identified capacity development gaps at the local level were need-based planning, GESI analysis, and GESI budget implementation.

STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE GESI RESPONSIVE POLICIES AND SERVICE DELIVERY

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The majority of respondents agreed that there was no 'specific' policy at the LG level to encourage or favour gender participation in development programs and benefits. A high percentage of women respondents in Madhesh (30 %) were ignorant of such a policy.

- A high percentage of respondents (37%) reported the existence of gender policies and 34 percent affirmed that exclusive policies exist for marginalized groups. An equal proportion of respondents (7% each) were not aware of such policies at the LG level.

- More than 90 percent respondents agreed that several initiatives—such as scholarships for girls and marginalized students, and awareness raising and gender-friendly infrastructure facilities—are in place to ensure inclusive education benefits at the LG level.

- Ninety-eight percent respondents agreed that public awareness campaigns on health services for women and marginalized communities are regularly carried out at the LG level.

- Ninety-five percent respondents agreed that GESI inclusive employment opportunities and skill training for women and marginalized groups was the primary strategy at the LG level.

- A majority of respondents (86%) reported agriculture and allied sectors as the top priority for employment and income generation among women and marginalized communities; this was followed by livestock management (56%) and promotion of small businesses (47%).

- Almost 50 percent respondents agreed that an array of GESI specific initiatives are in place at the LG level to encourage and promote asset ownership. Eight percent respondents were not aware of any tax rebate policy for women-owned enterprises.

- Around half of the respondents agreed that gender analysis is performed every year in their respective LGs. There was a perceptible gender gap in respondent opinion related to the frequency of gender analysis with a higher number of men respondents in Madhesh (58%) and Bagmati (42%) reporting it as an annual affair.

- A high number of respondents from Sudurpashchim (78% men and 80% women) agreed that GESI audits of annual budgets are done at the LG level. A large number of women respondents (36% from Madhesh and 25% from Bagmati) were unaware or unsure of such audits.

- Seventy-five percent men and 74 percent women respondents from Sudurpashchim informed that budget allocations for programs that directly benefit WMC have increased in their LGs compared to previous years. Sixty-nine percent men and 48 percent women respondents in Madhesh agreed that allocations have increased compared to 65 percent men and 53 percent women in Bagmati.

- Thirty–one percent respondents in Sudurpashchim, 23 percent in Madhesh, and 11 percent in Bagmati stated that interactive programs to understand citizen perceptions regarding service delivery are organised frequently in their LGs.

The key tenet of decentralised governance is to facilitate participatory, needs-based bottom-up planning processes and practices. A set of questions were administered to explore GESI-GRPFM-related strategies adopted at the local government level that promote inclusive and equitable access to development programmes. The questions were specific to policy priorities and GRPFM-related planning, budgeting, and auditing practices.

6.1 STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE GESI RESPONSIVE POLICIES

6.1.1 Strategies that promote inclusive access to development benefits

The majority of the respondents agreed on the absence of specific policies at the local level to encourage or favour gender participation in development programmes and benefits. A high percentage of women respondents in Madhesh (30%) were ignorant of such policies. With 57 percent men and 56 percent women, Sudurpashchim had the highest number of respondents who agreed that exclusive policies do exist. On the other hand, 70 percent women and 65 percent men respondents in Bagmati reported that their local governments did not have such policies (Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1 Specific policies to promote women's access to development benefits (N=1043, %)
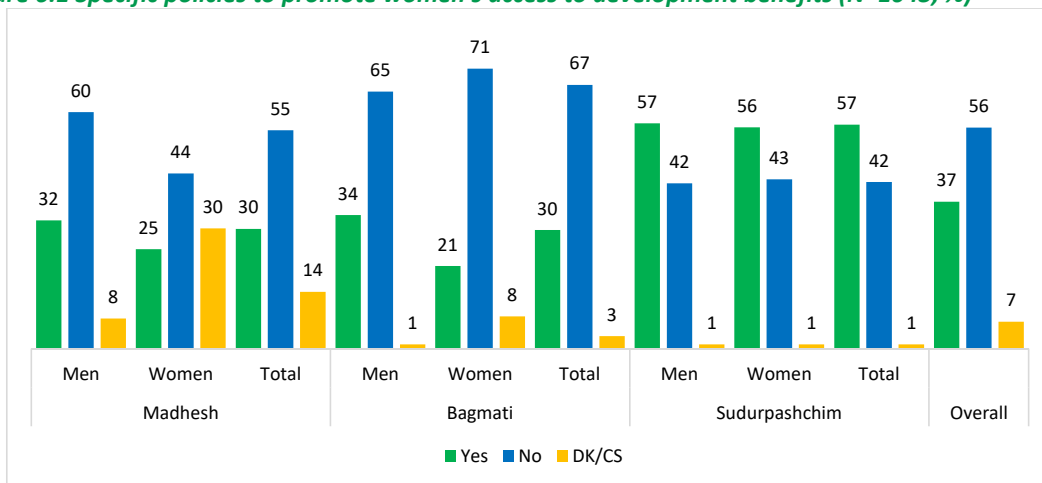
6.1.2 Specific policies targeted towards women and marginalized groups

With regards to policies related to women and marginalized communities (WMC), slightly less than four-tenth respondents reported the existence of gender policies, and 34 percent affirmed the presence of exclusive policies for marginalized groups. However, an equal proportion of respondents (7% each) were not aware of such policies at the local level (Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2 WMC specific policies (N=1043, %)
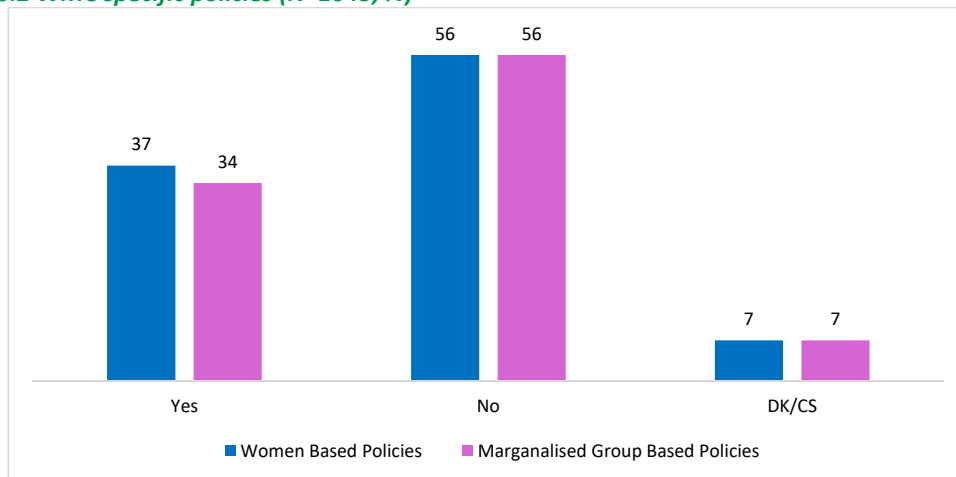
6.1.3 Strategies to promote GESI inclusive approaches in education

A high percentage (over 90%) of respondents agreed that several initiatives—such as scholarships for girls and marginalized students, and awareness raising and gender-friendly infrastructure facilities—are in place to ensure inclusive education benefits at the local level. Only 37 percent respondents reported the provision of in-kind support (food, employment, etc.) to families for sending girls to school (Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.3 Strategies to promote inclusive approaches in education (N=1043, %)

Strategy	%
Scholarship for girls and marginalized community	93
Public awareness for promoting school enrolment of girls and children from marginalized communities	95
In kind support to family for sending girls to school	37
Gender friendly school facilities (toilet, sanitary pad, counseling services)	96
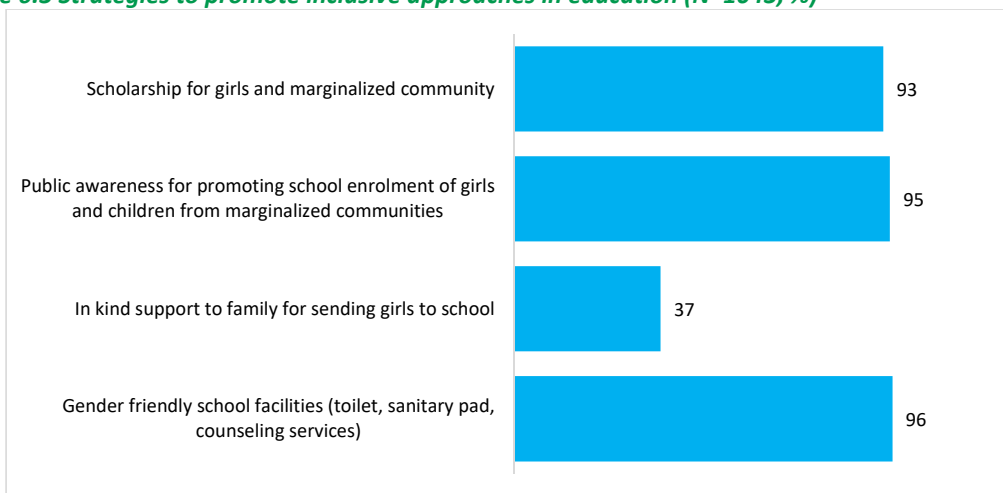
6.1.4 Strategies to promote GESI inclusive approaches in access to health services

A significant number (98%) of respondents agreed that public awareness campaigns regarding health services for women and marginalized communities are regularly carried out at the local level. Similarly, a large percentage (94%) agreed that local governments have invested in nutrition promotion activities and functional birthing centres in local health facilities. Only 10 percent respondents reported the unavailability of free basic health services for women and marginalized communities (Figure 6.4).

Figure 6.4 Strategies to promote GESI responsive health services (N=1043, %)

Strategy	%
Free basic health services to women and marginalized communities	90
Nutrition promotion activities	94
Public awareness campaign	98
Postnatal and newborn care services	94
Establishing birthing centre at local health facilities	94
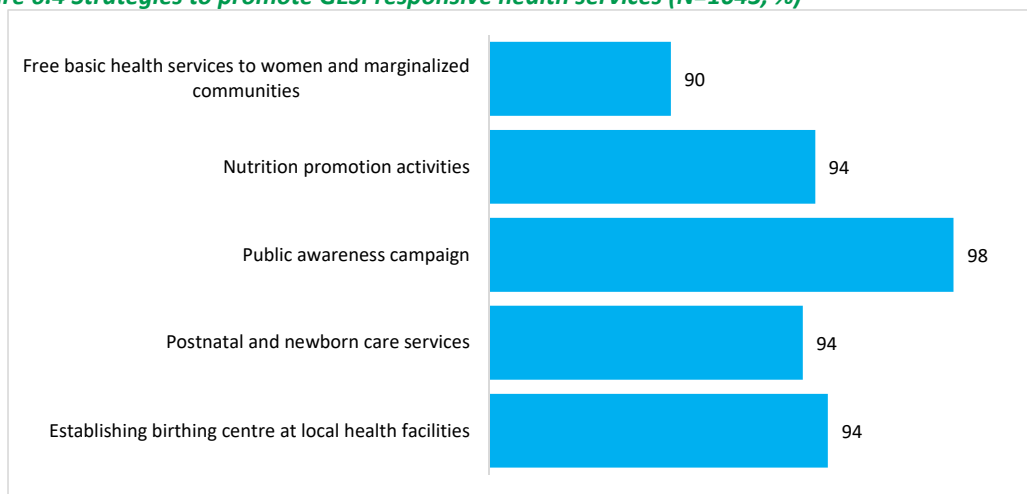
6.1.5 Strategies to promote GESI inclusive approaches in employment

Of the several strategies to encourage GESI inclusive employment opportunities, skill training for women and marginalized groups received the highest response, with 95 percent respondents agreeing that it is the primary strategy at the local level. A little less than half (48%) agreed on the existence

of a dedicated employment policy that prioritizes women/marginalized candidates in LG-funded development projects, and nearly four-tenth respondents affirmed the presence of a reservation policy to promote women and marginalized communities in LG employment. Only 38 percent agreed that easy access to loans or start-up capital is available for women entrepreneurs or those from marginalized groups (Figure 6.5).

Figure 6.5 Employment promotion strategies for women and marginalized communities (N=1043, %)
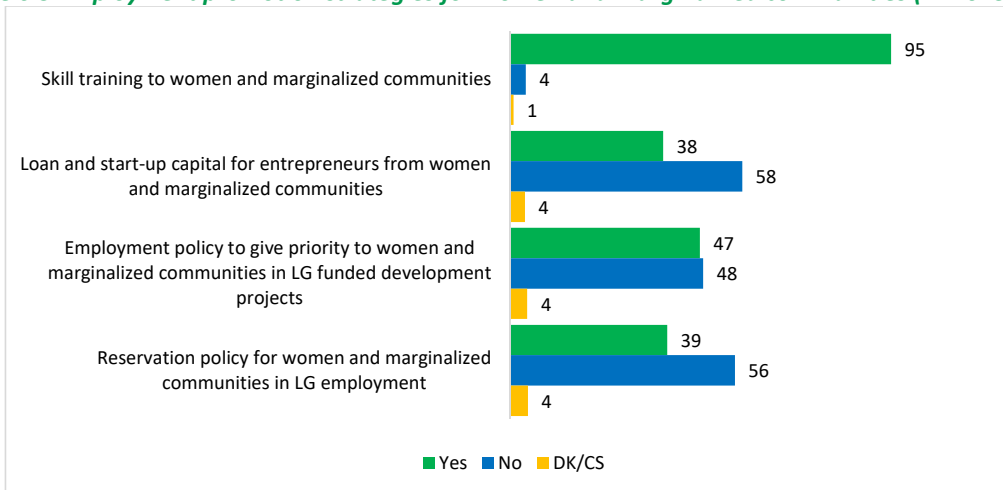
6.1.6 Priority sectors to promote GESI approaches in access to economic opportunities

Regarding priority areas to promote employment and income generation opportunities for women and marginalized groups, a large majority (86%) reported agriculture and allied sectors as the top preference, followed by livestock management (56%), and promotion of small businesses (47%). On the bottom end, with only five percent respondents reporting it as an important sector for employment, was the tourism and homestay industry (Figure: 6.6).

Figure 6.6 Priority areas to promote economic opportunities (N=1043, %)
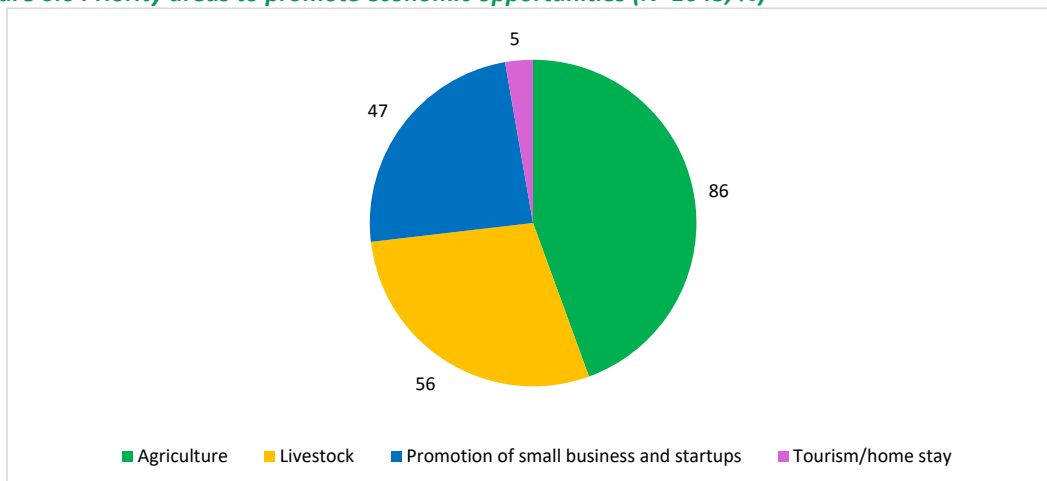
6.1.7 Strategies to promote GESI approaches in services and asset ownership

Almost half of the respondents agreed that an array of GESI-specific initiatives is in place at the LG level to encourage and promote asset ownership. A few respondents were unaware of the affirmative taxation policies at the LG level. Slightly less than 10 percent respondents were not aware of any type of tax rebate policy for women-owned enterprises, five percent respondents reported ignorance related to rebate policies on services provided by the LG, and four percent did not know of any discounts on property tax (Figure 6.7).

Figure 6.7 Affirmative policies to promote access in services and asset ownership (N=1043, %)
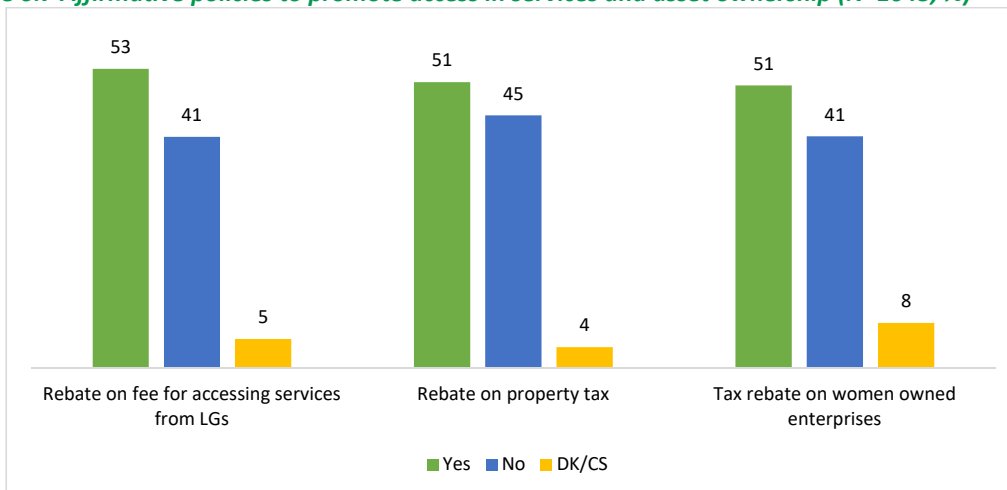
6.1.8 Capacity building in leadership

Leadership trainings are integral to promote and strengthen GESI participation and decision- making at each governance tier. Most respondents agreed that such trainings are frequently provided in their LGs. This, however, was not the case in Madhesh, where only 52 percent women and 63 percent men respondents agreed that such trainings are planned regularly. Furthermore, 20 percent women and six percent men respondents in Madhesh were unaware of such programmes at the local level (Figure 6.8).

Figure 6.8 Leadership and management skill trainings (N=1043, %)

Madhesh
- Men — Yes: 63, No: 31, DK/CS: 6
- Women — Yes: 52, No: 28, DK/CS: 20
- Total — Yes: 60, No: 30, DK/CS: 10

Bagmati
- Men — Yes: 78, No: 20, DK/CS: 1
- Women — Yes: 74, No: 25, DK/CS: 1
- Total — Yes: 77, No: 22, DK/CS: 1

Sudurpashchim
- Men — Yes: 75, No: 25
- Women — Yes: 80, No: 18, DK/CS: 2
- Total — Yes: 77, No: 23, DK/CS: 1

Overall — Yes: 70, No: 25, DK/CS: 5

Legend: ■ Yes ■ No ■ DK/CS
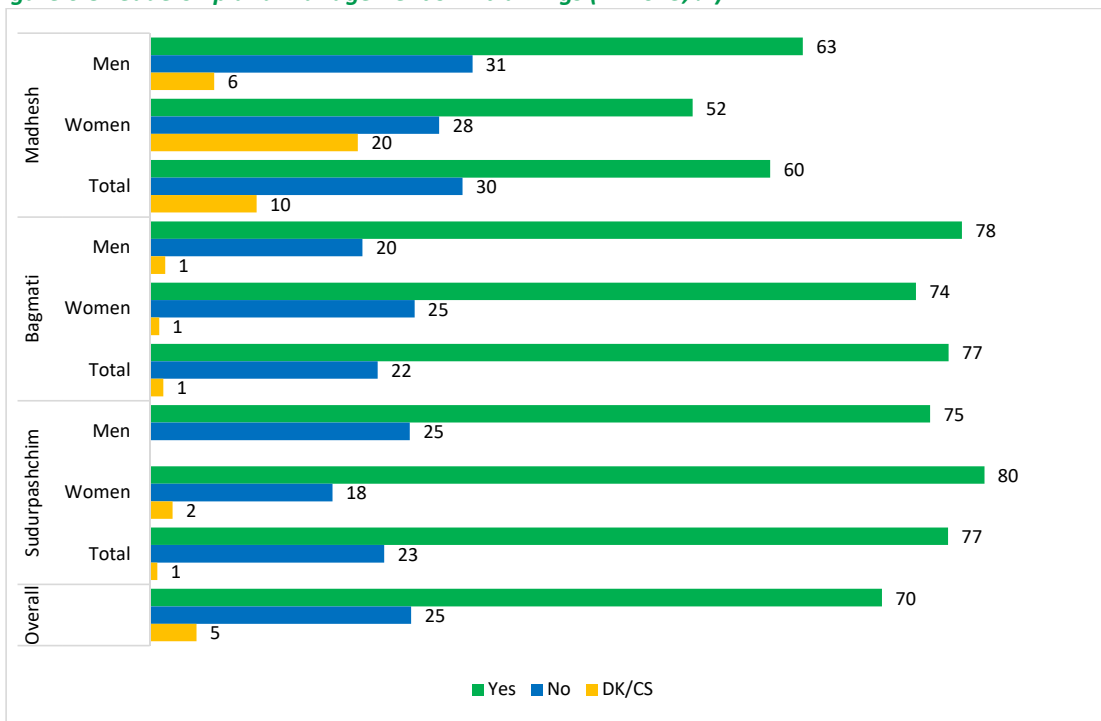
6.2 PLANNING, BUDGETING, SERVICE DELIVERY AND AUDIT PROCESS

For local levels, a decentralised governance process ensures a bottom-up and participatory planning and budgeting system, while also establishing efficient service delivery. Elected representatives have a crucial role in establishing and upholding GESI-led public financial management processes, transparency, and accountability. This section explores the perceptions, practices, and trends in the GESI mainstreamed planning and budgeting process.

6.2.1 GESI planning process

Equitable representation of WMC in planning, discussing, and decision-making is important to ensure gender mainstreamed and socially inclusive local plans. In this regard, most respondents agreed on the inclusivity of the planning process. There was a marked difference in the responses according to sex in Madhesh, with 88 percent men compared to 70 percent women agreeing on equitable representation in planning discussions. A caste-based profile of respondents showed that eight percent Terai caste, seven percent Dalit, five percent Brahmin/Chettri, and two percent Janjati respondents did not agree that the planning process is inclusive. Furthermore, 10 percent Dalit and six percent Janjati respondents were not aware of the planning process (Figure 6.9).

Figure 6.9 WMC participation in the local planning process – gender and caste-based profile (N=1043, %)
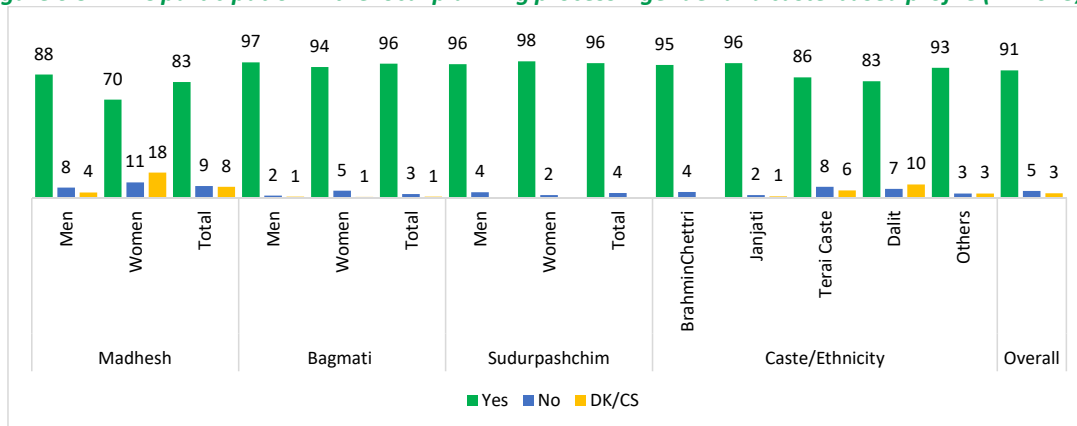
6.2.2 GESI analysis of plans and programmes at the LG level

Gender analysis is key to identifying gender-based gaps in local level plans, programmes, and service delivery. It is also a tool to revisit and revise plans and to ensure equitable and socially inclusive access to development benefits. Around half of the respondents agreed that gender analysis is performed annually in their respective LGs, while 10 percent respondents held that their local governments never conduct such analyses. There was a perceptible gender gap in opinion, with a higher number of men in Madhesh (58%) and Bagmati (42%) reporting it as an annual activity. Nearly a quarter (24% in Madhesh, 24% in Bagmati) of women respondents were unaware of gender analysis taking place. In contrast, all respondents in Sudurpaschim were aware of gender analysis, with no comparable gender difference in opinion regarding the frequency of the activity (Figure 6.10).

Figure 6.10 Frequency of gender analysis in local planning process (N=1043, %)
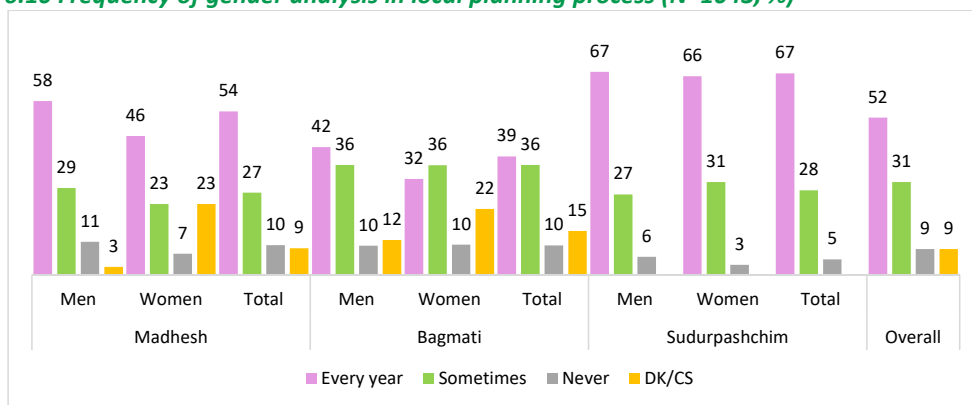
6.3 LG BUDGETING PRACTICES AND PRIORITIES

This section documents the trend analysis based on respondents' opinions on the budgeting process and GESI-based priorities at the LG level. It covers gender and social audits, increased budgeting for pro-women and pro-poor household targeted initiatives, financing capacity-building programmes, and community interaction on service quality.

6.3.1 GESI-based expenditure audits

Gender and social inclusion audits of annual budgets highlight key trends in expenditure priorities. They also display benefits from poverty, gender, and social inclusion perspectives. A significant number of respondents from Sudurpaschim (78 % men, 80% women) agreed that GESI audits of annual budgets are done at the LG level. In contrast, a noticeable proportion of women respondents (36% from Madhesh, 25% from Bagmati) were unaware or unsure of such audits taking place (Figure 6.11).

Figure 6.11 GESI based expenditure audits (N=1043, %)
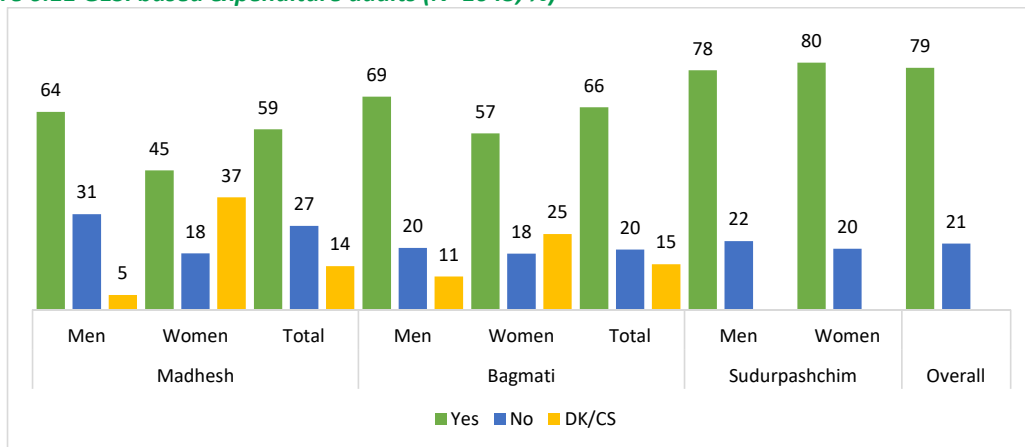
6.3.2 Budgeting for women and girls

A majority (75% men, 74% women) of respondents from Sudurpaschim stated that budgets for programmes that directly benefit WMC have increased in their LGs compared to previous years. In Madhesh, 69 percent men and 48 percent women respondents agreed that allocations have gone up; in Bagmati, this figure was 65 percent for men and 53 percent for women. Madhesh and Bagmati had a noticeable gender gap in perceptions towards progress in budget allocations for gender targeted programmes. Additionally, the percentage of women respondents that were unaware of gender-targeted outlays was higher than that of men in all three provinces (Figure 6.12).

Figure 6.12 Increase in budget allocations for gender targeted programmes compared to previous year (N=1043, %)
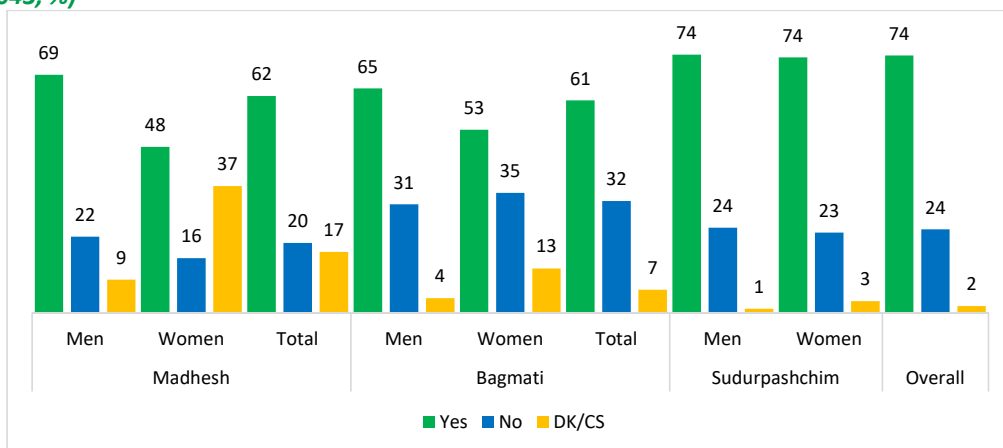
6.3.3 Increased allocations for pro-poor programmes and activities

A majority of respondents across all three provinces agreed that budget allocations have increased for pro-poor activities in their LGs as compared to the previous year. The highest proportion was from Sudurpaschim. The study reported showed that as many as 32 percent of women respondents from Madhesh were unaware of such a trend in allocations (Figure 6.13).

Figure 6.13 Increase in budget allocations for pro-poor programmes compared to previous year (N=1043, %)
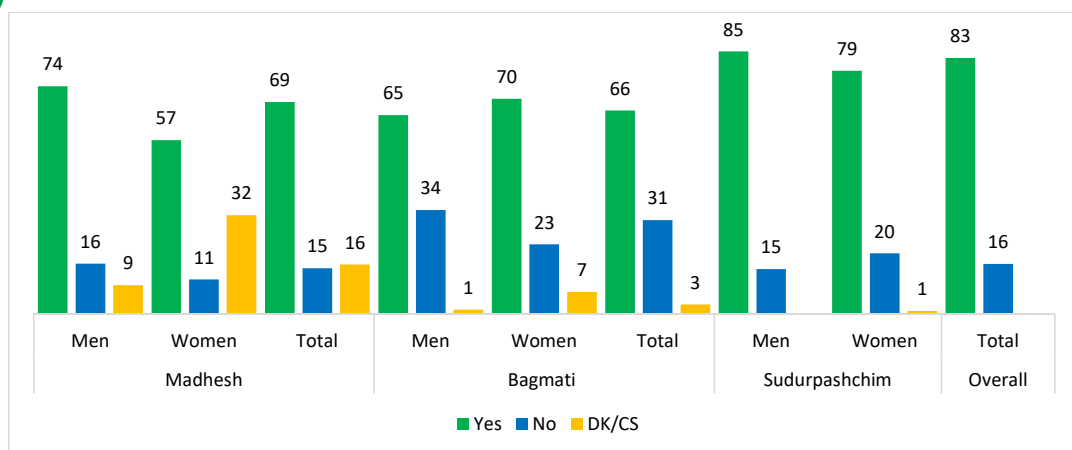
6.3.4 Budget allocations for committee strengthening

Adequate resource allocations for committees that are working for social inclusion are important for the efficient functioning and strengthening of the institutions. Strong committees ensure high levels of accountability and robust GRFFM systems at the local level. A majority (81%) of the respondents from Sudurpaschim agreed that their LGs provide adequate resources to each committee. Sixty-

five percent respondents from Madhesh and slightly over half (59%) from Bagmati agreed that they have adequate funding for committee strengthening. With regards to the caste-based profile of respondents, 42 percent Janjati, 25 percent Dalit, and 23 percent Brahmin/Chettri respondents believed that the resources are insufficient (Figure 6.14).

Figure 6.14 Allocations for functioning of committees – province and caste-based responses (N=1043, %)
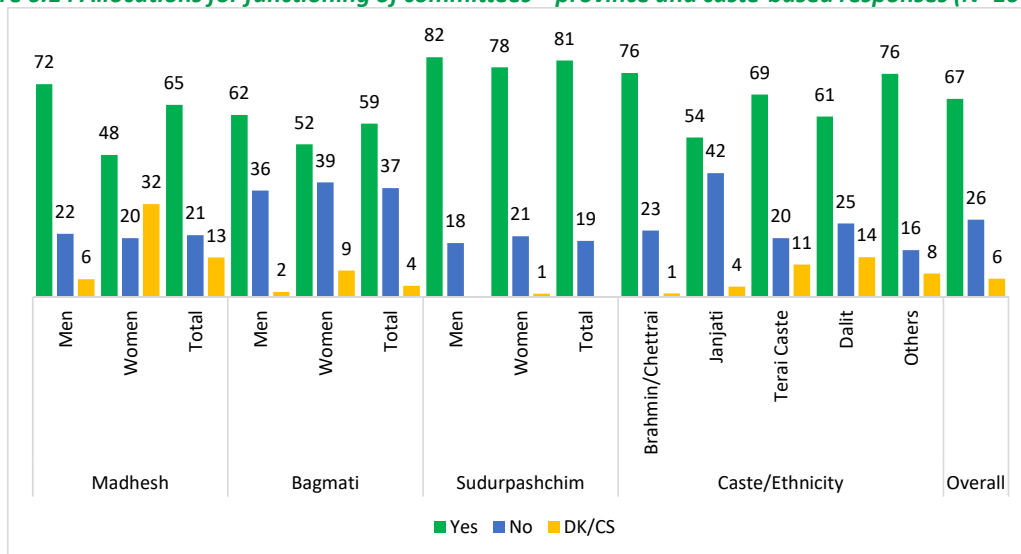
6.3.5 Citizen feedback on service delivery

Citizen feedback on service delivery is necessary to discover the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of implementing development programs. It is the responsibility of local government institutions to ensure that quality services are delivered on time and without discrimination. With regards to the frequency of interactive programs, most respondents agreed that such activities are planned sometimes. Thirty-one percent respondents in Sudurpashchim, 23 percent in Madhesh, and 11 percent in Bagmati stated that such activities are organised frequently in their LGs. In most of the LGs, citizen feedback mechanism on service delivery were not frequent or irregular (Figure 6.15), indicating a potential disconnection in engaging citizens in designing of efficient and effective service delivery.

Figure 6.15 Frequency of citizen feedback on service delivery (N=1043, %)
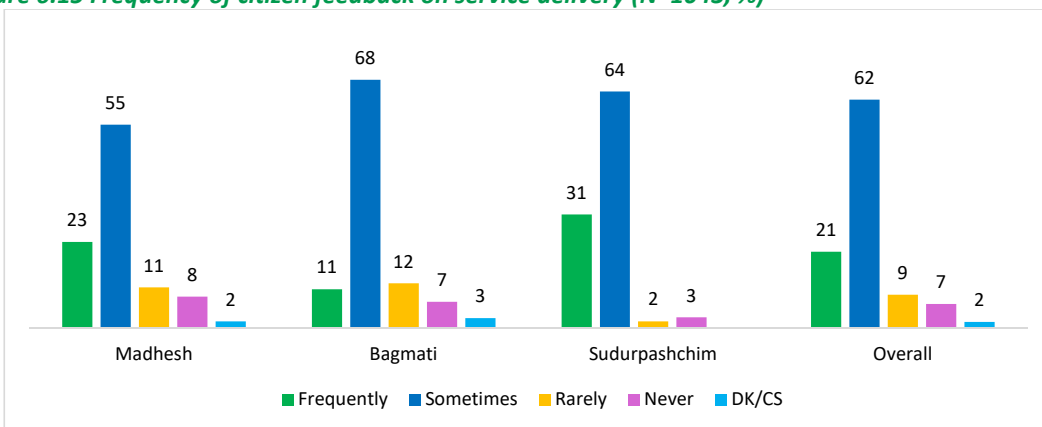
6.3.6 Recommendations on GESI priority areas

Respondents' recommendations showed education, health, agriculture and livestock, and skill-based trainings as the top priority spending areas for LGs to promote GESI responsive development. The promotion of women-led businesses was also accorded high priority by 48 percent respondents in Sudurpaschim and Bagmati, and 45 percent in Madhesh. The respondents also gave significant importance to the creation of mass consciousness on GESI issues (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1 Priority areas for increased allocations (N=1043, %)

	Education	Health	Agriculture and livestock	Small business and start-ups	Employment	Tourism/ homestay	Leadership development	Skill-based training	GESI friendly public infrastructures	Awareness
Madhesh										
Men	84	64	59	46	50	1	42	81	22	68
Women	89	70	56	42	51	2	38	78	16	66
Total	86	66	58	45	50	1	41	80	20	68
Bagmati										
Men	59	42	58	51	47	7	47	72	28	46
Women	68	52	68	40	45	2	44	72	19	49
Total	61	45	61	47	46	6	46	72	25	47
Sudurpaschim										
Men	58	54	75	46	29	4	28	82	13	61
Women	71	63	80	51	32	3	32	77	10	58
Total	63	57	77	48	30	4	29	80	12	60
Overall	71	56	64	47	44	3	40	77	20	58

6.4 STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE GESI RESPONSIVE POLICIES AND SERVICE DELIVERY – KEY FINDINGS

Province-based differences in affirmative responses – equitable strategies and access to programs

The provinces differed on the issue of agreement on equitable strategies in health, education, employment, and asset ownership. This indicates that GESI sector strategies are not evenly distributed in the LGs. Such claims are gender bias as men claimed to have better performance of the local governments against the women counterparts.

Absence of a specific GESI strategy

Most respondents agreed on the absence of a specific GESI strategy that guides inclusive planning and budgeting at the LG level. Relatively, more women and Dalit members were unaware of such guidelines.

Equitable opportunities for WMC members in the LG planning process

Most respondents agreed on equitable representation of WMC in planning, discussing, and decision-making during the preparation of local plans, lower proportion of women, Dalits and members from marginalized community tend to claim so.

Increase in budget allocations for gender and pro-poor programs in the LGs

Although, most of respondents agreed that budget allocations have increased for pro-poor activities in their LGs as compared to the previous year, lower proportion of women and Dalits agreed for the same.

Irregular service delivery feedback

Citizen feedback systems to assess quality of service delivery are not institutionalised and, therefore, irregular.

Consistent choice in priority areas for increased allocations

Disaggregated data showed that all three provinces highlighted the similar priorities (education, skill-based training, agriculture, and health) for increased allocations in the coming years.

GESI-GRPFM IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Seventy–eight percent respondents in Sudurpashchim, followed by Madhesh (68%) and Bagmati (59%), agreed that members of executive lack basic understanding of GESI issues.

- Seventy-five percent respondents in Sudurpashchim, followed by 61 percent in Madhesh and 57 percent in Bagmati, agreed that creating public awareness on GESI issues is difficult. Every three in four respondents were of the view that traditional values and patriarchal systems are the root causes that shape biased attitudes.

- Almost half of the respondents agreed that limitations in collecting GESI-specific data constrains inclusive planning and effective monitoring. Around 51 percent highlighted inadequate budgetary allocations as a primary issue in the efficient and effective delivery of GESI services.

- In Madhesh, 60 percent respondents each agreed that data collection and insufficient allocations is a challenge; this was followed by Sudurpashchim where 49 percent respondents agreed about data constraints, and 59 percent that believed that GESI budgets are inadequate.

- Fifty percent respondents in Sudurpaschim, 45 percent in Madhesh, and 33 percent in Bagmati agreed that lack of GESI-related understanding impacts the executive's ability to deliver effectively. The frequent transfers of staff were attributed as the primary concern with 72 percent respondents in Madhesh, followed by 55 percent in Sudurpashchim and 45 percent in Bagmati that identified it as a major problem.

- The respondents identified knowledge constraints (62%), insufficient budget allocations (60%), and capacity limitations (41%) as the key challenges in their LGs. Other issues of concern were related to GESI sensitive behaviour (30%) and unclear policy frameworks (18%).

Local government functionaries, elected representatives (members of executive), and civil staff are responsible for the successful implementation of GESI-GRB strategies. These officials face several challenges that include, but are not limited to, individual and societal norms, practices, and attitudes; knowledge and capacity gaps; and institutional barriers that may impede their capacities to effectively implement these provisions. This section explores respondents' perceptions of the concerns, issues, and challenges that impact service delivery and the overall implementation of GESI and GRB mandates at the local level.

7.1 GESI-GRPFM CHALLENGES

7.1.1 Knowledge and attitudes of policymakers

Council members have a crucial role in planning, budgeting, and approving GESI-connected activities. However, data pointed towards perceptible attitude and knowledge related gaps among council members. A majority (78%) of respondents in Sudurpaschim, along with significant numbers in Madhesh (68%) and Bagmati (59%), agreed that members of executive lack basic understanding of GESI issues (Figure 7.1a).

Figure 7.1a Challenge in making council member understand about GESI/GRB importance (N=1043, %)
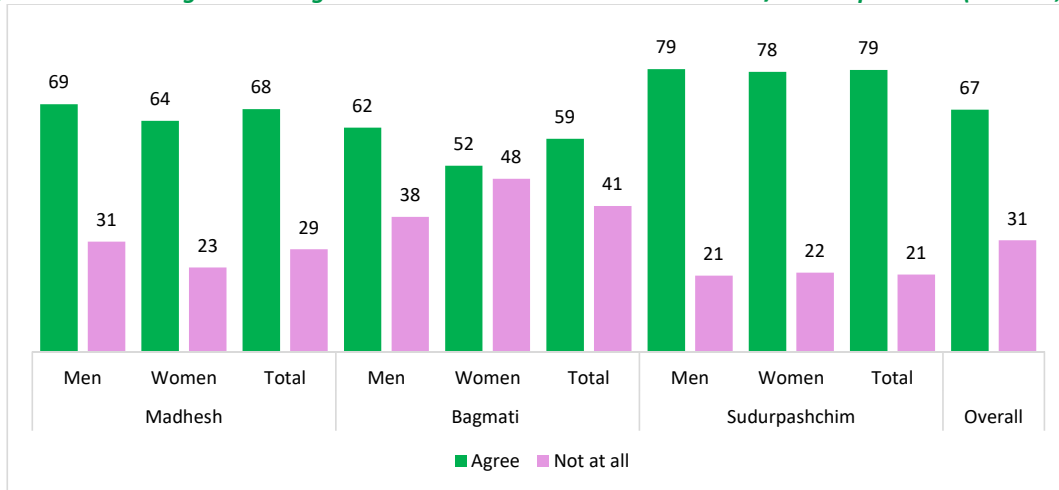
Respondents saying 'to a large extent' and 'to a lesser extent' are merged as 'agree'.

The knowledge gap was proportional to the difficulty in getting consensus or approval from the members of executive for GESI-related activities. In Sudurpashchim, 60 percent respondents felt that approval of members of executive is difficult; they were followed closely by respondents in Madhesh (57%) and Bagmati (25%). The data also suggested gender differences in perceptions, with more women agreeing that GESI knowledge gaps are an issue (Figure 7.1b).

Figure 7.1b Challenges in getting consensus about GESI issues among council members (N=1043, %)
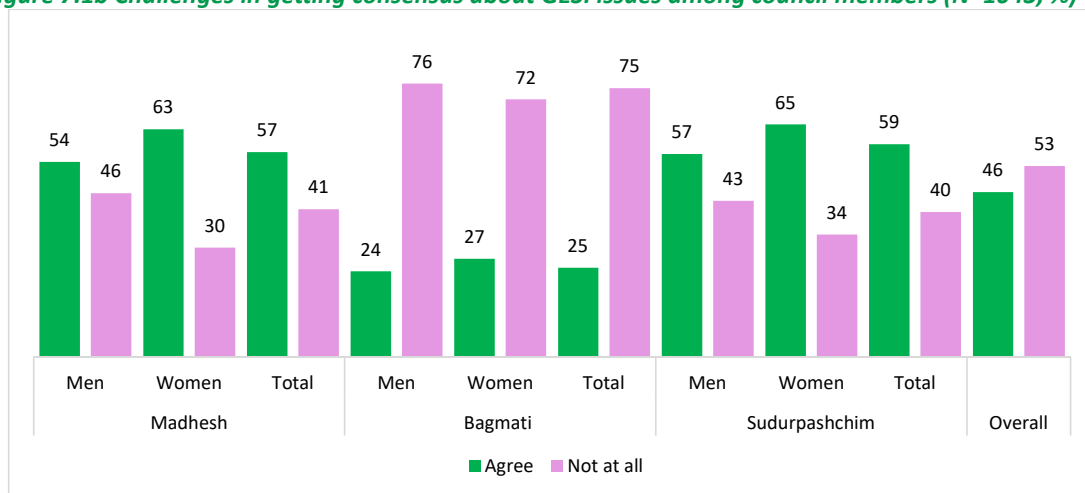
Respondents saying 'to a large extent' and 'to a lesser extent' are merged as 'agree'.

7.1.2 Challenges faced by the LGs

A province-wise comparison highlighted the disparities in perceptions related to challenges faced by the LGs. The issues that concerned civil staff were connected to knowledge and competency deficits at the individual level, and the practice of frequent transfers at the institutional level.

When aggregated, the primary challenge, according to 58 percent respondents, was the constant transfers of staff, followed closely by GESI capacity (46%) and knowledge gaps (42%). Half of the respondents in Sudurpaschim, slightly less than half (45%) in Madhesh, and 33 percent in Bagmati agreed that the lack of GESI-related understanding impacts the executive's ability to deliver effectively. A similar pattern emerged for GESI-GRB-related capacities or competencies of civil staff in the three provinces. At the institutional level, the frequent transfers of staff were attributed the primary concern for 72 percent respondents in Madhesh, followed by 55 percent in Sudurpaschim, and 45 percent in Bagmati (Figure 7.2).

Figure 7.2 Challenges faced by the LGs (N=1043, %)

Knowledge gap — Madhesh: Agree 45, Not at all 52; Bagmati: Agree 33, Not at all 66; Sudurpashchim: Agree 50, Not at all 49; Overall: Agree 42, Not at all 56

Frequent transfer — Madhesh: Agree 72, Not at all 26; Bagmati: Agree 45, Not at all 54; Sudurpashchim: Agree 55, Not at all 45; Overall: Agree 58, Not at all 41

Competency of civil staff — Madhesh: Agree 49, Not at all 48; Bagmati: Agree 35, Not at all 65; Sudurpashchim: Agree 56, Not at all 44; Overall: Agree 46, Not at all 53

■ Agree   ■ Not at all

Respondents saying 'to a large extent' and 'to a lesser extent' are merged as 'agree'.

7.1.3 Societal norms, attitudes, and practices

Overall, 64 percent respondents agreed that they had faced challenges in creating GESI- related public awareness. Seventy-five percent respondents in Sudurpaschim, followed by 61 percent in Madhesh, and 57 percent in Bagmati accepted that creating public awareness on GESI issues is a difficult undertaking (Figure 7.3a).

Figure 7.3a Challenges in creating public awareness about GESI (N=1043, %)

Madhesh — Men: Agree 61, Not at all 39; Women: Agree 63, Not at all 31; Total: Agree 62, Not at all 37

Bagmati — Men: Agree 57, Not at all 43; Women: Agree 57, Not at all 43; Total: Agree 57, Not at all 43

Sudurpashchim — Men: Agree 76, Not at all 24; Women: Agree 74, Not at all 26; Total: Agree 75, Not at all 25

Overall: Agree 64, Not at all 36

■ Agree   ■ Not at all
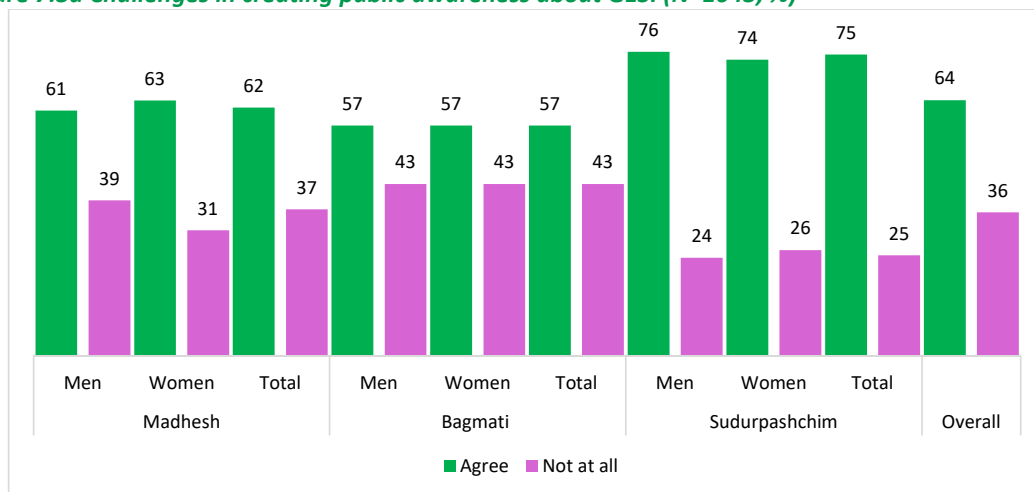
Respondents saying 'to a large extent' and 'to a lesser extent' are merged as 'agree'.

Three in four respondents believed that traditional values and patriarchal systems are the root causes behind biased attitudes. A significant number (89%) of respondents in Sudurpaschim, 77 percent in Madhesh, and 62 percent in Bagmati had faced societal challenges that had impacted the effective roll out of the GESI-GRB strategy (Figure 7.3b).

Figure 7.3b Challenges related to social norms and attitudes (N=1043, %)
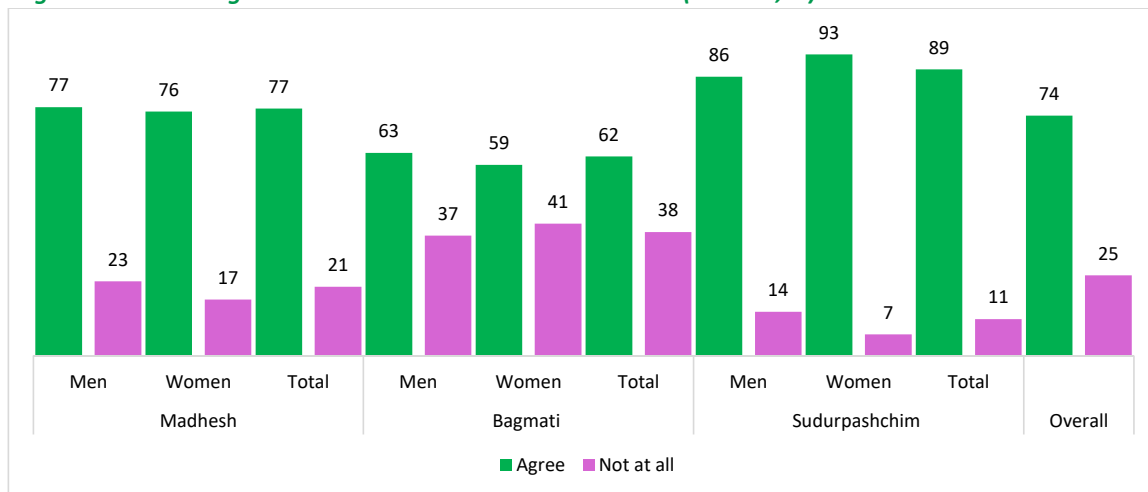
Respondents saying 'to a large extent' and 'to a lesser extent' are merged as 'agree'.

7.1.4 Disaggregated data and budget limitations

At the aggregate level, almost half of the respondents agreed that inclusive planning and effective monitoring is impacted by limitations in collecting GESI-specific data. Around 51 percent highlighted inadequate budgetary allocations as a primary constraint in the efficient and effective delivery of GESI services. In Madhesh, three in five respondents agreed that data collection and insufficient allocation remains a challenge. This was followed by Sudurpashchim where almost half (49%) of the respondents agreed that data constraint is a major issue, while 59 percent believed that GESI budgets are inadequate. Disaggregated according to sex, 65 percent women and 57 percent men in Sudurpashchim, and almost a similar percentage (67% women, 57% men) in Madhesh, agreed that budgetary limitations adversely impact GESI activities (Figure 7.4).

Figure 7.4 Challenges in generating data and allocating budget (N=1043, %)
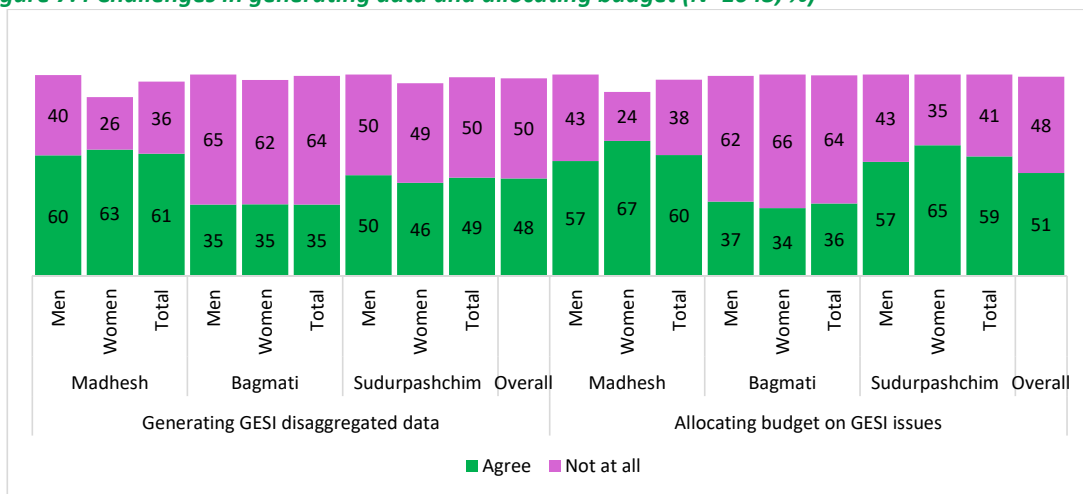
Respondents saying 'to a large extent' and 'to a lesser extent' are merged as 'agree'.

The respondents identified knowledge constraints (62%), insufficient budget allocations (60%), and capacity limitations (41%) as the key challenges in their LGs. Other issues of concern were related to GESI sensitive behaviour (30%) and unclear policy frameworks (18%) (Table 7.1).

7.2 GESI IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES - KEY FINDINGS

Competency of policymakers

A major challenge in all three provinces is the knowledge and competency limitations of elected representatives (members of executive). This, even more so than a lack of commitment, impacts the effective participation of policymakers in the GESI mandate (Table 7.1).

Table 7.1 Barriers to achieving GESI-GRB goals (N=1043, %)

	Inadequate knowledge about GESI-GRB	Low competency of elected representatives	Low commitment of council members	Low competency of civil staff	Unclear policy framework	Insufficient budget	Inculcating GESI-sensitive behaviour
Madhesh							
Men	66	49	22	19	23	50	41
Women	64	52	23	11	15	47	45
Total	66	50	22	17	21	49	42
Bagmati							
Men	51	24	17	8	20	62	40
Women	70	20	19	6	21	57	28
Total	57	23	18	7	20	61	36
Sudurpashchim							
Men	58	50	20	20	12	73	7
Women	71	58	27	16	13	80	1
Total	62	53	23	19	12	75	5
Overall	62	41	21	14	18	60	30

Institutional constraints and work culture

At the institutional level, the frequent transfer of civil servants impacts the effective implementation of the GESI-GRB mandate in local governments (Figure 7.2). Another factor that influences the participation of marginalized community members and women in decision-making is the unfavourable attitude at the workplace. Almost 60 percent respondents agreed that non-conducive work environments (GESI-unfriendly workplace and culture) adversely affect inclusive participation and decision-making (Figure 7.5).

Figure 7.5 Perceptions related to GESI unfriendly workplace and culture (N=1043, %)
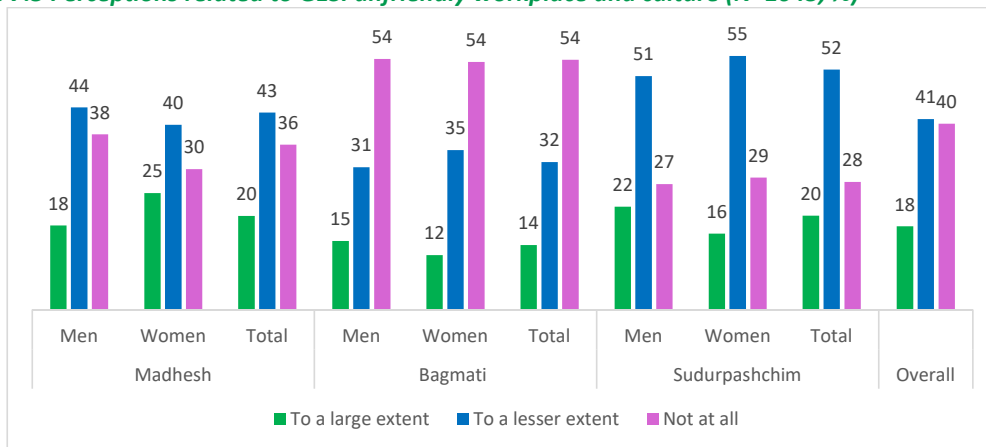
Inadequate resource allocation and GESI-related data constraints

A high percentage of respondents agreed that under funding of GESI activities and non-availability of data are issues of primary concern (Figure 7.4).

Limited competency of the civil staff, GESI-insensitive behaviour, and unclear policy mandates

Inculcating GESI-sensitive behaviour, such as the use of GESI-friendly language, in civil staff is viewed as the biggest challenge in the local governments. Other obstacles to the achievement of GESI-GRB goals are the limited competency of civil staff, and ambiguity among staff regarding GESI policy mandates (Table 7.1).

ANNEX 1: LIST OF SAMPLED LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Madhesh Province		Bagmati Province		Sudurpashchim Province	
1	Kanchanrup Municipality, Saptari	1	Ichchakamana Rural Municipality, Chitwan	1	Kamalbazar Municipality, Achham
2	Bodebarsain Municipality, Saptari	2	Kalika Municipality, Chitwan	2	Bannigadhi Jayagarh Rural Municipality, Achham
3	Saptakoshi Municipality, Saptari	3	Khairhani Municipality, Chitwan	3	Turmakhand Rural Municipality, Achham
4	Chhinnamasta Rural Municipality, Saptari	4	Tarkeshwar Municipality, Kathmandu	4	Badimalika Municipality, Bajura
5	Balan-Vihul Rural Municipality, Saptari	5	Jiri Municipality, Dolakha	5	Bungal Municipality, Bajhang
6	Kalyanpur Municipality, Siraha	6	Melung Rural Municipality, Dolakha	6	Talkot Rural Municipality, Bajhang
7	Dhangadhimai Municipality, Siraha	7	Manthali Municipality, Ramechhap	7	Bedkot Municipality, Kanchanpur
8	Arnama Rural Municipality, Siraha	8	Lalitpur Metropolitan city, Lalitpur	8	Beldandi Rural Municipality, Kanchanpur
9	Ganeshman-Charnath Municipality, Dhanusha	9	Sunkoshi Rural Municipality, Sindhuli	9	Bardagoria Rural Municipality, Kailali
10	Dhanushadham Municipality, Dhanusha	10	Tinpatan Rural Municipality, Sindhuli	10	Lamkichuha Municipality, Kailali
11	Hanspur Municipality, Dhanusha	11	Gangajmuna Rural Municipality, Dhading	11	Ajayameru Rural Municipality, Dadeldhura
12	Janakandini Rural Municipality, Dhanusha	12	Outstanding Rural Municipality, Makwanpur	12	Alital Rural Municipality, Dadeldhura
13	Laxminiya Rural Municipality, Dhanusha	13	Bhimfedi Rural Municipality, Makwanpur	13	Dipayal Silgadhi Municipality, Doti
14	Nijgadh Municipality, Bara	14	Myang Rural Municipality, Nuwakot	14	KI Singh Rural Municipality, Doti
15	Karaiyamai Rural Municipality, Bara	15	Shivpuri Rural Municipality, Nuwakot	15	Dilasani Rural Municipality, Baitadi
16	Paroha Municipality, Rautahat	16	Tadi Rural Municipality, Nuwakot	16	Marma Rural Municipality, Darchula
17	Vrindavan Municipality, Rautahat	17	Roshi Rural Municipality, Kavrepalanchok	17	Lekam Rural Municipality, Darchula
18	Durga Bhagwati Rural Municipality, Rautahat	18	Bhumlu Rural Municipality, Kavrepalanchok	18	Naugad Rural Municipality, Darchula
19	Bardibas Municipality, Mahottari	19	Temal Rural Municipality, Kavrepalanchok		
20	Lalbandi Municipality, Sarlahi	20	Banepa Municipality, Kavrepalanchok		
21	Kaudena Rural Municipality, Sarlahi				
22	Parsa Rural Municipality, Sarlahi				
23	Vishnu Rural Municipality, Sarlahi				

ANNEX 2: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Section 1: Identification information

101   Province
102   District
103   Rural municipality
104   Urban municipality
105   Respondent position
106   Sex of respondent
107   Age
108   Educational Status (Degree completed)

Section 2: Knowledge, attitude and practice

201   How often is there discussion about differences in roles between women and men in your household?

202   How often is there any discussion about differences in roles between women and men in your community?

203   How often is there discussion about differences in roles between women and men in your LG office?

204   How often is there any discrimination between women and men in your household?

205   Do you think that there is an unequal distribution of household workload (women taking more household work), in your community?

206   If yes, what may be reasons for such differences? (Select all that apply)

207   Do you think that women are more disadvantaged than men in accessing health facilities in this community?

208   If yes, what are the reasons for women being more disadvantaged in accessing health facilities? (Select all that apply)

209   Do you think that women are more disadvantaged than men in accessing education in this community?

210   If yes, what are the reasons for women being more disadvantaged in accessing education? (Select all that apply)

211   Do you think that women are more disadvantaged than men in accessing employment opportunities in this community?

212   If yes, what are the reasons for women being more disadvantaged in accessing employment opportunities? (Select all that apply)

213   Do you think that women receive less pay than men for the same type of work in this LG?

214   If yes, what are the reasons for women getting less pay? (Select all that apply)

215   Do you think that women have less control than men in the household properties (land, house,

money, livestock etc) in this LG?

216 If yes, what are the reasons for women having less control over household properties? (Select all that apply)

217 Do you think that women have less participation in household decision-making than men in this LG?

218 If yes, what are the reasons for women having less participation in household decision-making in this area? (Select all that apply)

219 In your opinion, to what extent do you agree that women and members of marginalized communities do the following?
- Lead the local user committee
- Lead the school management committee
- Lead the ward committee
- Lead the LG
- Lead provincial government
- Lead national government

220 In your opinion, to what extent do you agree that there is equal opportunity for women as compared to men, to do the following?
- Lead the local user committee
- Lead the school management committee
- Lead the ward committee
- Lead the LG
- Lead provincial government
- Lead national government

221 In your opinion, to what extent do you agree that there is equal opportunity for members of marginalized communities to do the following?
- Lead the local user committee
- Lead the school management committee
- Lead the ward committee
- Lead the LG
- Lead provincial government
- Lead national government

222 In your opinion, who/what is (are) responsible for gender discrimination? (Select all that apply)

223 In your opinion, who/what is (are) responsible for social exclusion of marginalized groups? (Select all that apply)

224 Compared to the past five years, how do you see the status of gender discrimination in this LG?

225 If gender discrimination has decreased in this LG, what could be the reasons? [Select all that apply]

226 If gender discrimination has not decreased in this LG, what could be the reasons? [Select all that apply]

227 Compared to the past five years, how do you see the status of social exclusion in this LG?

228 In your opinion, to reduce gender discrimination and social exclusion, what interventions are needed in this LG? (Select all that apply)

Section 3: Capacity building

301 Does this LG provide opportunities to elected representatives and civil staff to participate in training related to GESI and GRB?

302 If yes, who are usually given opportunities to participate in those kinds of training? (Select any three that apply based on priority)

303 Have you ever participated in any GESI related capacity building training since you resumed office (or in the past three years)?

304 If yes, how many times have you participated in the capacity building training?

305 What were the major GESI related issues discussed in the training? (Select all that apply)

306 Have you participated in the GRB related capacity building training since you resumed office (or in the past three years)?

307 If yes, how many times have you participated in the GRB related capacity building training?

308 What were the major GRB related issues discussed in the capacity building training? (Select all that apply)
   • Analysis of socio-economic situation of women and marginalized communities
   • Activities to address socio-economic problems of women and marginalized communities
   • GRB in planning process
   • Methods for budget allocation to implement the GESI related activities
   • Expenditure analysis
   • Impact analysis of budget on women

309 Do you find the training was useful in enhancing knowledge, skills and attitude regarding GESI and GRB? (Only to those who have received GESI or GRB training)

310 Have you received training related to local planning?

311 If yes, had local planning training included GESI and GRB issues?

312 Have you ever received training related to LG budgeting?

313 If yes, had budgeting training included GESI and GRB issues?

314 In your opinion, in this LG where do you think is the major capacity gap for elected representatives and civil staff to ensure GESI and GRB? (Select all that apply)

315 In the next five years, what changes, do you think, will happen in the following aspects of women and marginalized groups?
   • Education condition

- Health condition
- Freedom of mobility
- Access and control over resources
- Employment opportunity in private sector
- Employment opportunity in public sector
- GESI friendly behaviour
- Participation in local planning and development activities
- Participation in local political activities

Section 4: Practices of GESI-GRB in public financial management

401 To what extent are you aware of how plans and budgets to be made at LG level?

402 Do you have knowledge about gender responsive budgeting?

403 If yes, I will read out some statements about GRB. Please respond them as correct or incorrect.
- GRB is practice of 50:50 budget allocation for male and female
- GRB is a separate system to regular budgetary process
- GRB is a separate program for gender equality
- GRB is a budget that is formulated analysing the needs of both male and female

404 During the budget planning phase, does this LG have a practice of conducting analysis related to women, children and marginalized communities' issues?

405 Does this LG have socio-demographic and economic data that is disaggregated by gender, caste/ethnicity and economic status?

406 Does this LG use sex and caste disaggregated data while making plans, programs and budget?

407 Are the priorities of women and marginalized communities discussed during the time of budget preparation in this LG?

408 In your understanding, how are budget priorities determined in this LG? (Select all that apply)

409 How often community level planning/discussion meetings are organized in this LG?

410 To what extent the women and marginalized groups participate at ward/community level planning meetings?

411 In those meetings, how much respect/attention is paid to opinion of women and marginalized communities?

412 At ward level/community meeting, do you also share the progress of budget implementation for women and marginalized communities?

413 Does this LG make public disclosure of gender budget allocation at ward/community level?

414 In this LG, if there are any GESI issues identified but not addressed in the previous year budget, do you consider to include them in the new budget?

415 In your understanding, to what extent does this LG consider the issue of women and marginalized communities while designing a development project?

416 Has this LG prepared GESI guidelines?

417 If yes, while making a budget at your LG, to what extent do you consider the GESI guidelines?

418 Do you think that there is a practice of assessing the socio-economic impact of GESI activities before final budget allocation?

419 Do you think there is a practice of assessing the socio-economic impact of budget allocation on GESI activities after final budget allocation?

420 In your understanding, to what extent do this LG budget of the past two years reflects GESI priorities?

421 In your understanding, to what extent do these LG budgets of the past two years have made impact on women and marginalized communities?

Section 5: Level of deliberation on local executive and assembly on GESI- GRB

501 How often does the LG Executive Council meeting take place in a month?

502 How often do you participate in the Executive Council/Assembly meeting? (Not to ask to Mayor/Chairperson)

503 What do you usually do in those meetings? (Not to ask to Mayor/Chairperson)

504 If you do not speak or talk rarely, what are the reasons? (Not to ask to Mayor/Chairperson) (Select that all apply)

505 To what extent do you (the Mayor/Chairperson) encourage Council/Assembly members representing women and marginalized communities to express their opinion in the meeting? (For mayor/chairperson say 'you,' for others say 'mayor/chairperson.')

506 How often GESI issues are given priority in the meeting of the Council/Assembly?

507 In general, who raises GESI related issues in the meeting of the Council/Assembly?

- Mayor/Chairperson
- Deputy Mayor/Vice-Chairperson
- Female/Dalit/indigenous group council/assembly member
- Member other than the women and marginalized group

508 In general, what issues of GESI are discussed in the Executive /Assembly? (Select all that apply)

509 Is GRB given priority in the agenda of Executive /Assembly?

510 If yes, how often are the following issues of GRB discussed in the Executive /Assembly?

- Socio-economic situation of women and marginalized communities
- Activities to address the socio-economic problems of women and marginalized communities
- Budget allocation to implement the activities related women and marginalized communities
- Expenditure analysis

- Impact of the activities and expenditure

511 If there are disagreements in budget allocation for women and marginalized communities, how are they settled in the Executive /Assembly? (Select all that apply)

512 In your experience, how comfortable do women and marginalized community members feel to express their opinion in the Council/Assembly meeting?

513 If you do not feel fully comfortable (b, c in 513), why do you feel so? (Select all that apply) (Do not read aloud)

514 I will read out some statements about GRB implementation in the LG budget. Kindly express to what extent you agree with them.
- There is adequate priority given to GESI issues in local government budget discussion.
- Women members play influential roles in the budget making process.
- Council members have clear understanding about the importance of GRB in addressing gender inequality.
- Council members have a strong commitment in addressing gender inequality through GRB

Section 6: Issues and challenges for ensuring GESI-GRB

601 Being an elected representative or civil staff, to what extent do you face a challenge on the following in relation to implementing GESI - GRB activities at your LG?
- Making council member understand about GESI and GRB importance
- Making civil staff understand about GESI and GRB importance
- Creating public awareness about GESI
- Getting consensus about GESI issues among council members
- Allocating budget on GESI
- Address GESI issues due to frequent transfer of CAO
- Developing competency of civil officials to implement GRB
- Generating GESI disaggregated data
- Addressing GESI issues due to traditional social and cultural values
- Making GESI friendly laws and policies
- Creating GESI friendly work environment

602 In this LG, to what extent gender issues get priority while allocating budget?

603 If it gets less or no priority, what may be the reasons for it? (Select all that apply)

604 In your opinion, what could be the major challenge(s) in ensuring GESI and GRB at this LG? (Select all that apply)

Section 7: Strategies adopted to ensure GESI-GRB

701 Does your LG have any specific policy that favours women to maximize their participation in development programs and its benefits?

702 Does your LG have any specific policy that favours marginalized communities to maximize their participation in development programs and its benefits?

703 Does this LG have following initiatives to promote access to education to women and marginalized communities?

- Scholarship for girls and marginalized community
- Public awareness for promoting school enrolment of girls and children from marginalized communities
- In kind support to family for sending girls to school
- Gender friendly school facilities (toilet, sanitary pad, counselling services)

704 Does this LG have following initiatives to promote employment and income generation activities for women and marginalized communities?

- Skill training to women and marginalized communities
- Loan and start-up capital for entrepreneurs from women and marginalized communities.
- Employment policy to give priority to women and marginalized communities in LG funded development projects
- Reservation policy for women and marginalized communities in LG employment

705 What are the priority areas for this LG to promote employment and income generating activities for women and marginalized communities? (Select all that apply)

706 Does this LG have the following initiatives to promote ownership of resources (services, land, house, business etc) of women?

- Rebate on fee for accessing services from LGs
- Rebate on property tax
- Tax rebate on women owned enterprises

707 Does this LG have the following initiatives to promote access in health services for women and marginalized communities?

- Free basic health services to women and marginalized communities.
- Nutrition promotion activities
- Public awareness campaign
- Postnatal and new-born care services
- Establishing birthing centre at local health facilities

708 Did this LG organize leadership and managerial skill training for women and marginalized communities in the past one year?

709 If yes, what was your role in the training program? (Select all that apply)

710 In your opinion, where should be the funding priority of this LG for promoting GESI in the next fiscal year? (Select all that apply)

711 Has your LG increased budget allocation for programs that directly benefit women and marginalized communities compared to previous year?

712 Has your LG increased budget allocation for programs that indirectly benefit women and marginalized communities compared to previous year?

713 Does this LG allocate budget for capacity building and operation of gender-mainstreaming committee, Dalit coordination committee, and Janajati coordination committee?

714 In the local planning process, does your LG ensure the presence of appropriate numbers of women and marginalized communities?

715 How often does your LG organize interaction programs with local communities/civil society to seek feedback on service delivery?

716 Did this LG increase budget allocation in activities targeting poor households compared to previous year?

717 Does your LG conduct analysis (audit) of the annual budget from GESI perspective?

718 How often does this LG conduct analysis of plans and programs from GESI perspective?