

# Gender and Social Inclusion in Local Water Planning: Lessons from Water Use Master Plan Practices in Nepal



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**Cover Photo :** Achham district, Mastabandhali VDC, women attending a community meeting.

# Gender and Social Inclusion in Local Water Planning: Lessons from Water Use Master Plan Practices in Nepal

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# Foreword

The water resources and freshwater ecosystems in the transboundary river basins of the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) are a source of survival and other livelihoods opportunities for people. Though the region is known for a physical abundance of water, the reality is that most communities in the basin still live in a state of water poverty. They face serious challenges of water scarcity and water-induced disasters caused by both climatic factors and human impacts. Competition for access to and control of water increases the likelihood of water conflicts in the region. Existing water inequities are further aggravated by persisting disparities in gender, class, caste, location and power politics.

Since its establishment in 1983, ICIMOD has dedicated considerable effort to improving the lives of women and men of the region. Achieving gender equality in HKH is one of ICIMOD's key goals in the countries of the HKH that also suffer from increased water scarcity and water induced disaster.

In water scarce situations and water-induced disasters, gender sensitive water planning at local level is crucial. One local planning practice in Nepal is preparation of water use master plans (WUMP) for the village development committee. ICIMOD's Koshi Basin Programme in partnership with HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Nepal has been piloting the WUMPs in the mountains, hills and floodplains of the Koshi basin in Nepal since 2013 to increase the participation and role of women and marginalized groups in local water planning and decision making.

The initiative supports the Government of Nepal's greater national goal of developing progressive steps towards a participatory and inclusive sustainable development practices in integrated water resource management. There are already inspiring examples in some districts where local development budgets are setting aside funds to invest in WUMPs.

ICIMOD and HELVETAS have conducted this study of local water planning in Nepal at a time when the country is restructuring towards a federal system, and WUMP practices could provide avenues to craft new water policies and guidelines in a more gender equitable and socially inclusive manner. With Nepal as a model for such an initiative, ICIMOD aims to study and understand local planning in other countries in the HKH as well.

**David J Molden, PhD**  
Director General  
ICIMOD

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# Acronyms and Abbreviations

CBO	Community Based Organization
CDR	Central Development Region
DDC	District Development Committee
DOLIDAR	Department of Infrastructure Development and Agriculture Road
DOHS	Department of Health Service
DWASHCC	District Water Sanitation and Hygiene Coordination Committee
DWSS	Department of Water Supply and Sewerage
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FWDR	Far Western Development Region
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GoN	Government of Nepal
GRB	Gender responsive budget
GRBC	Gender responsive budget committee
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
IDRC	International Development Research Center
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management
LDO	Local Development Officer
MoE	Ministry of Energy
MoFALD	Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development
MPPW	Ministry of Physical Planning and Works
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MWDR	Mid-West Development Region
NEWAH	Nepal Water for Health
NRCS	Nepal Red Cross Society
ODF	Open Defecation Free
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RVWRMP	Rural Village Water Resources Management Programme
RWSSFDB	Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Fund Development Board
SRWSP	Self Reliant Drinking Water Support Programme
VWASHCC	Village Water Sanitation & Hygiene Coordination Committee
VDC	Village Development Committee
WARMP	Water Resource Management Programme
WASH	Water Sanitation & Hygiene
WCF	Ward Citizen Forum
WRMC	Water Resource Management Committee
WRMSC	Water Resource Management Sub-Committee
WUMP	Water Use Master Plan

# Terminology

**Gender** – refers to qualities or characteristics that society ascribes to each sex. Perceptions of gender are deeply rooted, vary widely both within and between cultures, and change over time. But in all cultures, gender determines power and resources for women and men.

**Gender equality** – implies that women and men have equal value and should be accorded equal treatment, opportunities and benefits. (ICIMOD, 2013)

**Gender equity** – is appropriate and fair allocation of human, material and financial resources for women and men in a given context to fulfill their needs.

**Gender transformative change** – means changing the gender norms that shape current unequal relations and practices, and replacing these with more equitable relationships between men and women.

**Social inclusion** – refers to the removal of institutional barriers and the enhancement of incentives to increase access by diverse individuals and groups to development opportunities. This requires changes in policies, rules, and social practices and shifts in people's perspectives and behaviour toward excluded groups. (ADB, 2010)

**Disadvantaged/excluded groups** – (in Nepal) refer to women, Dalit, indigenous nationalities (Janajatis), Madhesi, Muslim, persons with disabilities, elderly people and people living in remote areas who have been systematically excluded over a long time due to economic, caste, ethnic, gender, disability, and geographic reasons and include sexual and gender minorities. (ADB, 2010)

**GESI analysis** – refers to the systematic examination of the multiple roles, relationships, social institutions, agency and processes between and among women and men in different cultures and societies, focusing on imbalances of power, wealth, workloads, ownership and access to resources. (ICIMOD, 2013)

# Glossary

**Chhaupadi** – is a Hindu social tradition practised in western Nepal. Under this tradition, a woman is considered impure during menstruation and prohibited from taking part in normal activities. She has to live in a shed and is barred from consuming milk, yoghurt, butter, meat, and other nutritious foods. An adolescent girl who gets her first menstrual period has to observe Chhaupadi for ten to eleven days; thereafter, the duration is between four and seven days each month.

**Pandhera** – is a point in a village where people collect water, mainly drinking water. It serves as a venue where women can gather and communicate with each other at least once a day while queuing up for water.

# Executive Summary

Problems arising from water scarcity and water-induced disasters are increasing due to factors induced by climatic variability as well as anthropogenic changes. In such a situation, power inherent to social hierarchy has become a means of controlling water resources and securing access. Moreover, in many cases the increased competition for water has led some to achieve individual water goals at the cost of collective goals, creating social conflict and chaos and further increasing gender inequity in water. Water related decisions are important not only to ensure access to water, but also to gain and expand the power base that is built through accessing water. Water decisions are gendered and often in the hands of some powerful men in most societies. Access to water is often a challenge for women and marginalized members of society. Given the changing demographics of Nepal, with increased long-term male migration for remittance-based foreign employment, the overall responsibilities, including water works, have fallen on women's shoulders. Gender concerns in water sector development have hence become more important than ever.

Water budgeting and planning is an important tool to manage scarce water resources and water-induced disaster. However, the planning process does not necessarily generate equity and justice until and unless the process is transparent and includes the concerns and needs of different stakeholders following the principles and ethics of gender equity and good governance. At the national level, National Water Plan 2002 and National Water Strategies 2005 provide vision on the water sector. Under the current system, local water planning at the village level is the responsibility of the village development committee (VDC). To make this planning process participatory and inclusive, development agencies promoted practices such as Water Use Master Plan and Water Parliament in Nepal. The Water Use Master Plan (WUMP) has been implemented since 1999. This paper examines the process of WUMP formulation and plan documents to understand how far WUMP practices have promoted gender and social inclusiveness and which areas need improvement in terms of integrating gender and social inclusion issues more effectively.

This study was carried out in 2014-2016 with an intensive review of 12 WUMPs formulated in different parts of the country, followed by field studies in 5 VDCs and districts where WUMP have been implemented. In addition, field studies took place in Sindhuli and Sindhupalchowk districts, where WUMP activities are being carried out under the HELVETAS/ICIMOD programme (2014-2016). WUMP activities promoted by HELVETAS have followed a 17-step participatory approach including consultation with community members from wards and VDCs to prioritise water needs as well as water programmes. The findings of this study show that the WUMP process has promoted gender inclusiveness. Women said they had opportunities to enhance their capacity, confidence and courage. VDCs that have formulated WUMP have so far been able to mobilize funds for implementing programmes listed under the WUMP. They have also updated many old WUMPs. In the absence of the WUMP process, a handful of influential village elite often made water plans for the VDC. According to community members, WUMP has prevented the politically powerful from influencing the prioritization of water programmes. The positive impact of WUMP on gender and inclusiveness calls for national-level efforts to upscale the approach. The Ministry of Local and Federal Affairs and the Ministry of Water Supply and Sanitation have realized the significance of the approach and promulgated the National Guideline on Preparation of WUMP, 2016. However, other water sectors such as irrigation, hydropower, and environment have not recognized the approach, and nor have the National Water Plan 2002 and National Water Strategy 2005. At the time of federal restructuring the state, reflection on WUMP practices from the GESI perspective could provide avenues for crafting new water policies and guidelines in a more gender and social inclusive manner.

Secondly, the study has identified areas where the current WUMP implementation procedures can effectively respond to gender and inclusion issues. For instance, the current process adopts affirmative action to ensure participation of women and marginalized community members in committees responsible for assessing water resources and water needs and prioritizing water programmes. However, as social and gender hierarchy in society determines people's ability to express themselves, not all the members in the forum could voice their concerns equally. Capacity development is crucial in such a scenario. Capacity development training includes one session on gender, however this is not enough, rather gender should also be integrated with other sessions on the WUMP implementation

steps. The training thus develops skills for integrating gender and social inclusion issues in the entire process. Annual gender disaggregated data collected by WUMP implementers include data on gender role and gendered occupation, but such data are not reflected adequately, in need prioritisation and in WUMP implementation plan. The study has also identified GESI gaps in formats used for WUMP formulation and recommended a solution.

WUMP has been conceptualized as a chair that brings stability in water management. The four legs of the chair are: water use for irrigation, drinking water sanitation, environment and ecology, and other uses such as hydropower. The back of the chair is conceptualized as support activities for successful WUMP. Support activities identified during the stakeholders' consultation were internal resource mobilization, technical support to the community, capacity building activities, and gender and social inclusion. Thus, GESI has been placed under support activities. This study argues that visualizing GESI in such a manner limits the possibility of achieving gender and social inclusiveness in the WUMP process. This study concludes that gender inequity and social exclusion is the context in which struggle for water access and control takes place. Therefore, rather than relegating GESI to the status of 'support activities' in the WUMP process, GESI should be conceptualized as the vision and context and represented as the base of the chair to allow effective integration of GESI in the WUMP process.

# Introduction

Water is an important resource and has multiple uses in the livelihoods of rural communities of Nepal. The system of water flow and recharge in Nepal are complex owing to its geography, and this has led to increasing competition for water and conflict over water rights (Pradhan, 2003; Benda Beckman et al, 2000). With increased population and in-migration into the settlements of Nepal, water is becoming a scarce resource day by day. Issues of access to water are contentious, and communities often quarrel over water rights because of growing demand for water for domestic, agricultural and other uses such as hydropower. Communities face water scarcity as water sources are disappearing due to factors induced by climatic as well as anthropogenic changes. Variability in precipitation and temperature has led to acute water insecurity (Shrestha et al, 2016). Consequently, incidences of water conflicts emerging from water rights issues are increasing (Upreti, 2007: 20). In such a situation, power inherent to social hierarchy has become a means for controlling water resources and securing water access. In many cases, the increased competition for water has led some to achieve individual water goals at the cost of collective goals, creating chaos in society and further increasing gender inequity in water (Udas et. al., 2014). Water related decisions are important not only for ensuring access to water, but also to gain and expand the power base that is built through accessing water. Water decisions are gendered and often are in the hands of some powerful men in the society (Meizen-dick and Zwartveen, 1998), making access to water is often a challenge for women and marginalized members of society. Many studies have strongly emphasized the need for a participatory process in water management to enable all stakeholders to get involved in water decisions and achieve higher equity and equality in water access and control (Priscoli, 2004; Chambers, 2007). However, participatory approach is not a straightforward solution. Gender hierarchy in a society critically determines the extent to which one can voice his/her concerns compared to others (Cleaver, 1999). Hence it is important to analyse the water planning process from a gender perspective to ensure gender equity and social justice in water access and management.

Planned development in Nepal began in 1956 AD. Water related plans were included in the document with national goals on particular chapter on water sectors. The National Water Plan of Nepal was formulated only in 2005 AD with the plan to achieve short, medium and long-term targets. Water programmes funded by government budget are decided on demand from the Village and District Development Council and municipalities as per the Local Self-Governance Act 2055 B.S. (1999 AD). However, ensuring the involvement of all community members in demanding water programmes remained a challenge. Since water related infrastructure brings power, often such planning was in the hands of local elite and political parties. To bring equity and justice in local water planning, about 114 village level water plans known as Water Use Master Plan (WUMP) have been prepared since the late eighties with the objective to facilitate equitable water access, use and management. This initiative is promoted by development agencies like HELVETAS and implemented together with the Government of Nepal. Similar other initiatives include Local Water Parliament<sup>1</sup> promoted by Nepal Water Partnership/Jal Vikas Sanstha. In several instances, local water planning has facilitated multiple water uses and promoted efficient use of limited water resources and helped achieve equity (Basnet and van Koppen, 2011; van Koppen et al, 2014:55). Promoters of WUMP claim that it is an inclusive and participatory approach that has been replicated in many villages not only in Nepal, but also in other countries such as Pakistan and Ethiopia (Merz and Pokharel, 2015). However, there is a lack of in-depth studies that evaluate the success and limitations of WUMP from the perspective of gender and social inclusiveness and equity. This study intends to fill the knowledge gap on the results of WUMP practices by addressing gender and equity issues in WUMP's framework, formulation and implementation. Filling these knowledge gaps is important at a time when Nepal is in the process of becoming a federal state. Practices related to WUMP in Nepal from the last 25 years could provide lessons on gender sensitive and socially inclusive water planning at all levels – federal, provincial and local.

This study represents a collaborative effort of ICIMOD and HELVETAS that began in 2014. This working paper highlights the major findings from an analysis of the local water planning process. The analysis focused on how inclusive the process is in terms of ensuring the access for women and marginalized groups to water, and which areas need improvement so as to make the process more inclusive. Using the example of WUMP, the paper identifies the areas to be considered for participatory water management.

<sup>1</sup> <http://jvs-nwp.org.np/admin/local-water-parliament-lwp-ilam>

## Gender and (in) Equity Issues in Local Water Management

Nepal is a multilingual and multicultural country comprising 125 caste and ethnic groups who speak 123 languages (CBS, 2012). Gender, caste, ethnicity, religion and geographical location strongly determine the level of wellbeing and access to resources among Nepali citizens. Patriarchy entrenched in Nepali society and statutory practice has further widened the gap (Tamang, 2000). Although there are some progressive policy measures, patriarchal norms are embedded in birth and death rituals and property inheritance, resulting in a lower level of wellbeing among women. Gender-based differences are manifested in unequal property ownership, poor access to education, health and other basic facilities such as water. Although maternal mortality rates have improved and Nepal has achieved most of the Millennium Development Goals (GoN, 2013), the increasing rate of suicide among women still indicates the vulnerability of women (Pradhan et al, 2011). Similarly, although there is improvement in access to safe drinking water, the pipe water system that has been installed is found to be not functioning in many cases (DWSS, 2011). These inequalities come into play while decisions on access to and control of water are made.

Persistent gender inequality is a major obstacle in achieving sustainable development goals in the country, as it leads to disempowerment and livelihood insecurities. Therefore, both government and non-government organizations working in the country have promoted Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) approaches to achieve equality among citizens. For instance, efforts have been made to increase the participation of women and excluded groups in the decision-making process and forums so that the marginalized community members can shape the rules in their favour. The interim Constitution (2007) and the new Constitution of Nepal (2015) have made efforts to achieve equitable representation of women and disadvantaged communities. However achieving gender equality through participation and representation is not a straight-forward process. Inherent power relations shape the process of negotiation while planning and setting development priorities (Agarwal, 2010).

Local water management in rural Nepal is going through unprecedented transformation as increased out-migration of men has drastically changed the demographics of the villages over the last ten years (CBS, 2014). There are more women in the villages than men and so women's role and participation in local water management and governance (whether formal and informal) is continuously redefined in the changing scenario (Meinzen-Dick and Zwarteveen, 1998; Udas and Zwarteveen, 2005). To ensure greater participation of women, the Nepal government has introduced social inclusion provisions in the interim and the new Constitution. These provisions guarantee proportional representation of women, poor and disadvantaged groups in local level committees. Despite these progressive measures, women and people from marginalized communities have minimal access to and control over water resources. In this context, it is very important to strengthen local water planning practices by placing gender and social inclusion at the centre.

## Research Problem

Although some positive steps have been made in an effort to meet national goals for achieving gender equality and social inclusion, achieving gender equality – through affirmative action or the welfare approach – is not a straight-forward process. The quota policy to ensure minimum participation of women in the committees helps ensure representation of women, but considering the persistent gender hierarchy, representation alone may not guarantee that women will voice their needs and concerns as openly and frequently as men (Kabeer, 1994; Sen, 1995). Earlier studies on gender and participation shows that many women could not express themselves as they felt inhibited in expressing their views in front of village elders (Meinzen-Dick and Zwarteveen, 1998; Regmi, 2000).

Implementation of gender related policies is equally challenging in practice. The implementers' own perception on gender interface with gender policy, without a guarantee that it will be harmonised with the policy – this means their perceptions and policy goals may not match. A study on the implementation of quota policy for women's representation in irrigation and drinking water indicates that implementers tend to manipulate the narrative according to their gendered perceptions (Udas, 2014). Policy goal has been achieved where the implementers have perceived the need for gender transformative change. In other cases, token participation of women has been achieved.

Considering the complexity of addressing and implementing gender and inclusion perspective in policies and programmes, it is important to examine current water practices at the local level and identify gender gaps. This

could contribute new knowledge on gender, water and equity. This study looks at local water planning known as Water Use Master Plan of VDC for this purpose.

## Research Objective and Question

**Objective:** To identify the strengths and limitations of existing local water planning process in terms of integrating gender and social inclusion in Nepal so as to contribute to the knowledge on achieving gender and social inclusion in water planning in Nepal.

**Question:** How can the local water management and planning policies and practices, specific to Water Use Master Plan in Nepal, be responsive to gender and social inclusion issues?

## Research Methodology

The research inquiry takes place at three levels: i) policy analysis to understand political will, priority and provisions to ensure the rights of women, poor and disadvantaged groups in water resources management; ii) the extent and quality of participation of women, poor and disadvantaged groups in the development and implementation of WUMP; and iii) results emanating from WUMP implementation from a GESI perspective. Content analysis is the method used for analysis of policy, WUMP preparation guidelines and WUMP documents. Annex 1 provides list of documents reviewed. The field study adopts a participatory approach to understand participation and influence in decision making. The study used both quantitative and qualitative evidences to corroborate its findings.

The primary sources of data are collected from ICIMOD, HELVETAS, the Government of Nepal (GoN), and sample districts and villages that have implemented WUMP. In addition, the study team conducted observations of WUMP activities currently being carried out under the collaborative project of ICIMOD and HELVETAS in three districts of the Koshi Basin.

The mode of inquiry in the field was qualitative in nature and information was gathered using focus group discussions (FGDs) and interactive formal and informal meetings with primary stakeholders, i.e., VDC representatives, WUMP members, community members and staff of support organizations such as HELVETAS. It also involved careful observation of how meaningfully diverse groups (particularly women and representatives of disadvantaged groups) participated in interactive group sessions at the central, district and local levels. Factual examinations relating to internalization of the WUMP by key stakeholders in the VDCs where WUMPs have been developed and implemented were based on individual interviews with key stakeholders. A total of 261 stakeholders were consulted through 28 interviews, 16 mixed (comprising women and men participants) FGDs, and 4 women only FGDs during the period of 2014 to 2015. These stakeholders comprised project staff, DWASH/WWASHCC members, and Water User Committee/Group members. Out of the total 261 stakeholders consulted, 98 were women.

Purposive sampling is the technique applied in the selection of WUMPs, districts and VDCs for a detailed study. For WUMP selection, the study considered the record of HELVETAS on WUMP as the universe. The data on 114 WUMPs were developed across the country over the last one and a half decades (1999 to 2014). The time period of WUMP formulation from 1999 to 2014 was segregated into three clusters (Table 1). As there were only a few WUMPs in the earlier period, the first cluster encompasses a more expansive timeframe.

Of the total 114 WUMPs, 12 WUMPs from different time periods, development regions and different implementing programmes were selected for content analysis from the GESI perspective. Further, for an in-depth analysis, 5 WUMP documents were selected through a purposive sampling to study the process and results at the field level. The five districts (Parbat, Doti, Achham, Bajhang, Sindhupalchowk) meet all the selection criteria: represent all five development regions, all clusters of time period, three WUMP programmes<sup>2</sup> through which WUMPs were developed/implemented, proximity of locations to optimize interaction time and reduce travel time, and availability of support system such as the presence of HELVETAS office/staff. The Village Development Committees (VDCs) were selected based on the demographic composition (presence of socially excluded groups in VDC), availability of stakeholders to be consulted, status of WUMP implementation, and accessibility and proximity of VDCs to optimize interaction time and reduce travel time (Table 2, Figure 1).

<sup>2</sup> These WUMPs were developed with the support of Water Resources Management Programme (WARMP)/HELVETAS, BEWGAH project funded by the International Development Research Center (IDRC), and the Rural Village Water Resources Management Project (RVWRMP).

Table 1: Number of WUMPs in each of time period from 1999 to 2014

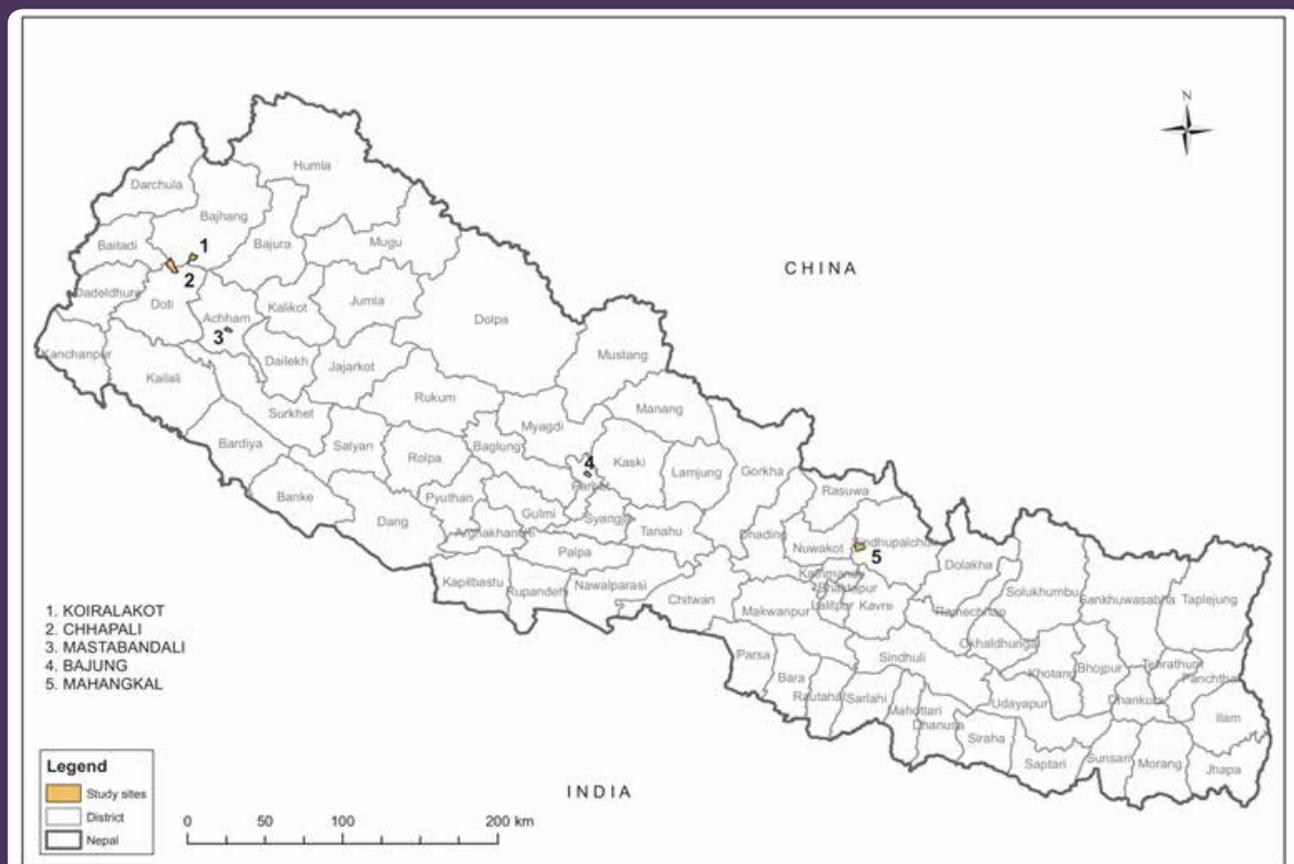
Cluster	WUMP guideline preparation period	No. of WUMPs per cluster	No. of WUMPs for content analysis	No. of WUMPs for field study
Cluster 1: 1999-2006 (7 years)	No guideline (1999-2000)	26	2	1
	New guideline prepared in 2001			
Cluster 2: 2007-2010 (4 years)	Revised guideline in 2007	56	4	2
Cluster 3: 2011-2014 (4 years)	Revised guideline in 2012	32	6	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>114</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>

Table 2: WUMPs selected for in-depth analysis by time cluster, district, region and programme

Cluster	Region	District	HDI range, 2011	Selected VDCs	Prepared by
Cluster 1 (1999-2006)	WDR	Parbat	.500-.549	Bajung	WARMP
Cluster 2 (2007-2009)	FWDR	Doti	.400-.449	Chhapali	RVWRMP
	FWDR	Bajhang	<.400	Koiralakot	RVWRMP
Cluster 3 (2011-2014)	FWDR	Achham	<.400	Mastabandali	WARMP
	CDR	Sindhupalchowk	.450-.499	Mahankal	IDRC

Source: GON and UNDP, 2014

Figure 1: Study villages



Beside these five VDCs where WUMPs have been implemented, the study team visited three VDCs from two districts (Sindhupalchowk and Sindhuli), where the WUMP preparation process was going on under the joint initiative of ICIMOD/HELVETAS, to understand the process, opportunities and challenges associated with gender inclusion.

## **Organization of the Report**

This report contains four chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 provides a review of water plans and policies in Nepal from a GESI perspective. Chapter 3 analyses the implementation of local water plans through a case study of the Water Use Master Plan. Chapter 4 offers a conclusion that highlights two facets of WUMP in Nepal – gender and social responsiveness of current practices related to WUMP, and the areas where current practices can effectively address GESI concerns.

## **Strength and Limitation of the Study**

This study is one of the comprehensive study on GESI and WUMP practice in Nepal. It includes content analysis of WUMP preparation guidelines, WUMP documents as well as field study in WUMP villages interacting with women and other stakeholders. However, there are some limitations- selection of village for detailed study is guided by the proximity of the village from nearest road head, excluding inquiry in remote villages. The political unrest such as strike also disrupted mobility of the researchers to study site. When the study was carried out, the National WUMP Preparation Guideline was in draft stage. At the time of publication of this study, the Guideline has been promulgated and it has addressed some of the findings of this study.

# GESI and Water Planning in Nepal

*Although the Water Resources Act and Regulation is silent on GESI issues, sectoral water policies have provisions to ensure participation of women and marginalized community members in decision making forums. Further the WUMP preparation guidelines have operationalized the efforts to address gender and social inclusion issues at the community level, promoting participation of women and excluded groups in water resources assessment, needs identification and programme prioritization.*

## GESI in Water Related Policies

The need to address gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) in water sector development has been widely recognized. Accordingly, efforts have been made to tailor water related policies towards addressing GESI issues. Although the Water Resources Act 1992 and Regulation 1993, Environment Protection Act 1997 and Regulation 1997 are silent on gender issues, some of the sectoral policies such as irrigation, drinking water and sanitation have explicitly recognized the lack of women's participation in decision making forums and adopted quota policy to overcome the barriers to women's participation in formal decision making bodies. Irrigation Regulation 1999, amended in 2003, mandates minimum 33 percent participation of women and representation of marginalized communities in the local water management committee. The National Water Supply and Sanitation Policy 2003 and Rural Water Supply and Sanitation National Action Plan 2003 call for 30 percent women's participation in users' committee (Udas, 2012). The National Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan 2011 has recognised gender and equity concerns to a greater degree. The WASH Sector Development Plan (2016-2030) includes an Equity and Inclusion Framework. The recent policy documents, such as the National Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan (NSHMP) 2011, which was prepared through an extensive consultation process<sup>3</sup> involving a wide range of stakeholders at central, district and community level, is GESI responsive in its provisions and practice. The Master Plan has expressed its commitment to GESI through GESI responsive objectives: i) to help ensure equity, inclusion and sustainability through participatory planning process; and ii) to develop a mechanism for ensuring access of poor, disadvantaged, and other socially excluded groups to toilets and other hygiene behaviour. It acknowledges GESI as integral to achieving universal Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) coverage. This is corroborated by one of its statements:

*"Ultra poor and disadvantaged groups need special consideration for their access to hygiene and sanitation promotion. Provision of financial support is crucial especially to ensure the access of socially disadvantaged communities to sanitation facilities."*

Source: The National Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan 2011

One of the principles on which the Master Plan is built on is: *"treating sanitation as a public good which needs special consideration of the poor."* The Master Plan takes a rights-based approach in planning, formulating and implementing WASH interventions. Gender and social inclusion concerns have been voiced explicitly during the formation of WASH structures and implementation of WASH programmes. The guiding principle on Sanitation Facilities in Institutions specifically provides for *"Child, Gender and Differently-abled friendly water, toilet and hand washing with soap station/facilities including menstrual hygiene facilities"* in all public institutions. Capacity development of women, poor and disadvantaged groups for technical and managerial roles in water management is vital to the sustainability of water and sanitation initiatives. Inclusive stakeholders (forest user groups, mother groups, child clubs and other community level groups) are identified and included in its capacity development initiatives. Provision has been made to ensure a fair gender balance in all the capacity building trainings and workshops. Similarly, GESI is also included as one of the operational strategies. Provisions have been made to ensure that women constitute at least one-third of the members of the steering committees or coordination committees at all levels. The NSHMP requires that a GESI sensitive approach be used while developing advocacy

<sup>3</sup> The central level stakeholders consulted were MPPW, MoFALD MOE, DWSS, DOLIDAR, DOHS, RWSSFDB, UNICEF, WHO, UN-HABITAT, NEWAH, NRCS and Water Aid Nepal and members of DWSSCC, district level relevant government line agencies, NGOs, and selected VDCs, communities, child clubs, School Management Committees (SMCs), Parent Teachers Associations (PTAs), Mothers' Groups, FUGs, Water Users and Sanitation Users Committees (WUSCs), at district and local level (GON, 2010)

and information, education and communication materials. The master plan has explicitly stated that all programmes are to be designed and developed to address gender needs and that women's participation is to be ensured throughout programme implementation. For sector dialogue and coordination in the WASH sector, the government has formed Sector Stakeholder Groups in seven thematic areas. One of them is the GESI thematic group.

Moreover, the Local Self Governance Act (LSGA) 1999, crucial for local governance and the functioning of Village Development Committee (VDC), emphasized the participation of people from various social strata, especially the historically marginalized communities and women. Within this national policy framework, Village Development Committees are responsible for local water planning and obliged to ensure effective and equitable participation of community members including women and disadvantaged community members in its activities and programmes including local water planning. The LSGA has adopted participatory approach and is a positive landmark in mainstreaming GESI in local governance processes. The LSGA lays greater emphasis on transparency, public accountability and participation, stressing that local development plan should be formulated through a needs-based and participatory approach. Its commitment to participation and inclusion is stated right at the outset in its preamble: "...institutionalize the process of development by enhancing the participation of all the people including the ethnic communities, indigenous people and down-trodden as well as socially and economically backward groups in bringing out social equality in mobilizing and allocating means for the development of their own region and in the balanced and equal distribution of the fruits of development...".

In addition, Nepal has taken progressive steps towards gender audit and budgeting. A Gender Responsive Budgeting Committee (GRBC) has been instituted under the Ministry of Finance. A new classification of budget was introduced in principle for all ministries and the budget has to be scored as per the indicators developed by GRBC, in which different aspects of gender sensitivity (participation, capacity building, benefit sharing, increased access to employment and income earning opportunities and it should be reduction in women's time use) have each been allocated 20 potential marks. Programmes scoring 50 percent or more are classified as being directly supportive of women; those scoring 20 to 50 percent as indirectly supportive; and those scoring less than 20 percent as neutral (Ministry of Education et al, 2010).

Some provisions adopted in Local Self-Governance Act leans towards the welfare approach, which limits transformational change. Moreover, functions, duties and power of local government relating to drinking water, soil erosion and river control and forest and environment protection are defined in gender neutral terms, which limit the possibility of local bodies like VDC to function in a gender neutral way.

## Local Water Planning in Nepal

The history of village level water planning, popularly known as Water Use Master Plan (WUMP) in Nepal, dates back to 1998 when the first WUMP was prepared in Bajung Village Development Committee (VDC) of Parbat district under the Water Resources Management Project (WARMP) of the Nepal government, supported by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation in Nepal. WUMP is a VDC level water plan; the VDC owns the plan and is responsible for implementing it. Generally WUMP is prepared for a period of five years. The underlying objective of promoting the practice of WUMP formulation is to prepare a holistic water plan at the local level and promote sustainable water resource use and management. It aimed to prevent conflicts emerging from competition over scarce water resources, enhance coordination among different stakeholders and promote participatory planning (Bhatta and Bhatta, 2011). WUMP practices also aim to enhance individuals' access to water as well as the sustainability of resources based on the concept of water recharge, retention and reuse, also known as 3R.

From 1999 to 2006, 26 WUMPs were prepared in several districts of western Nepal, i.e. Syangja, Parbat, Gulmi, and Kaski. From 2007 to 2015 the WUMP was further replicated by WARMP and the Rural Village Water Resource Management Project (RVWRMP) in coordination with HELVETAS and funded by the Finish government in mid and far western regions of Nepal. In 2012, the WUMP approach for local water use planning was adopted in the projects funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) through HELVETAS.<sup>4</sup> Since 2014, under the joint initiative of ICIMOD/HELVETAS–Nepal, WUMPs are being developed as part of an action research project under the Koshi Basin Programme in 12 VDCs of Sindhupalchowk, Sindhuli and Saptari districts of Nepal.

<sup>4</sup> This approach was replicated in Pakistan in 2013 by HELVETAS integrating the 3R principle of water management in the WUMP formulation and implementation.

The WUMP prepared so far are framed under three WUMP preparation guidelines of 2001, 2007 and 2012. With a significant number of WUMPs guiding local-level water resource planning, the Ministry of Water Supply and Sanitation and the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development, Government of Nepal (GoN), recognized the need to develop a national WUMP guideline. The Guideline on the Water Use Master Plan (WUMP) (2073 BS) 2016 has been formulated.<sup>5</sup> As per the record of HELVETAS since 1999 to 2014, 114 WUMPs have been prepared across the country (Figure 2).

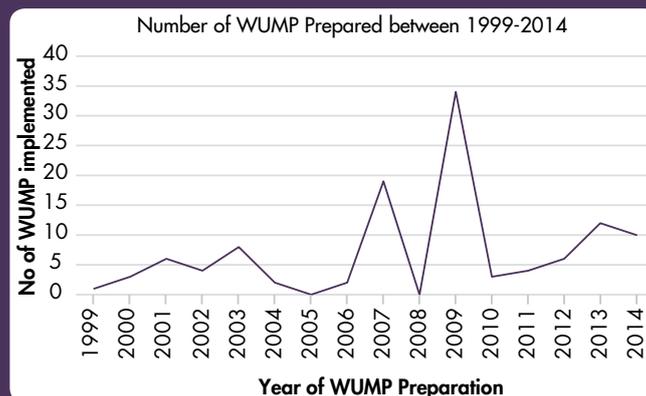
### WUMP concept and philosophy

The philosophy behind WUMP is that water budgeting in a village is key to fostering 'equitable, efficient and sustainable utilization of water for improved rural livelihoods based on coordinated effort of different stakeholders, strengthened local institutional capacity, participatory assessment, prioritization and planning at local level'. It envisions rural communities becoming free of water conflicts through participatory planning and decision making (HELVETAS, 2012).

The practice of WUMP is based on the principle and philosophy of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). Dublin Statement 1992 mentions that the IWRM principle pays special attention to women as they 'play a central role in the provision, management and safeguarding of water'. The IWRM Chair model was conceptualized for the preparation of water use master plan, in which the four legs of the chair represented four important uses of water i) water supply and sanitation, ii) irrigation and drainage iii) environment and ecology and iv) use of water for energy and others (Figure 3).

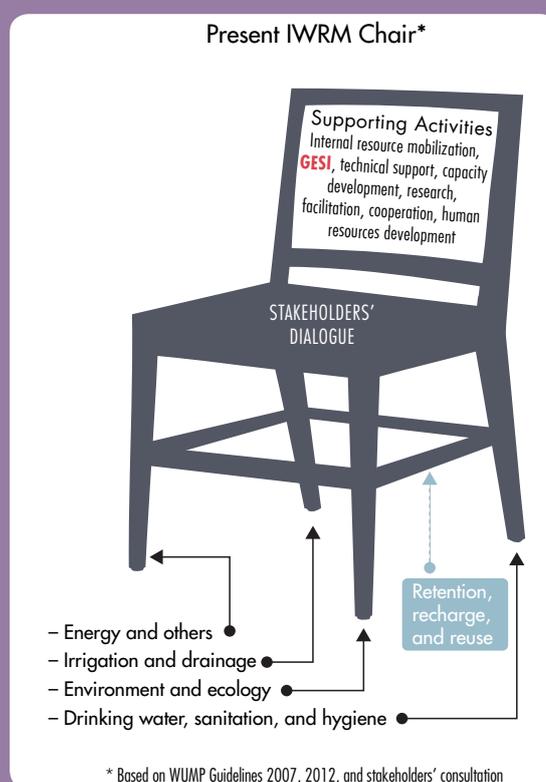
The back of the chair was envisaged as supporting activities in the WUMP process. Based on consultation with stakeholders involved in WUMP implementation, gender and social inclusion was identified as one of the supporting activities, including internal resources mobilization, facilitation and coordination with other support agencies, technical and financial support. Apart from technical investigation of potential and existing water resources and the functional status of water systems, the WUMP process entails collecting detailed socioeconomic baseline information (demography, health/hygiene, education, wealth, opportunities, human resources, services) during the preparation process. In this way WUMP allows for easy updating of the water resource inventory, infrastructure, potentials, and facilities and helps ensure the access of various communities in the VDC to water resources. Thus, GESI is conceptualized as supporting activities, through which it aims to achieve gender inclusive outcomes (Box 1).

Figure 2: WUMPs prepared between 1999 to 2014



Source: HELVETAS–Nepal, 2015

Figure 3: Conceptualisation of WUMP based on WUMP preparation guidelines



<sup>5</sup> For further details, visit: <http://www.seiu.gov.np/index.php/documents>

## WUMP process and institutional arrangement

WUMP conceptualizes local governments as the main stakeholders and owners of the WUMP. The Local Self-Governance Act 1999 and regulation provide a legal framework for WUMP preparation and implementation at local level. Under this framework, the Village Development Committee (VDC) or municipality is responsible for coordinating local development planning and effective implementation of development activities. The WUMP implementation process consists of seventeen steps and involves mainly four types of stakeholders:

**Community** – Community members participate in the WUMP process, plan water use and manage water projects. The Water Resources Management Committee at the VDC level and the Water Resources Management Sub Committee at the ward level represent community stakeholders. Since 2009, Ward Citizen Forums were formed across the country under the social mobilization and community development component of the Local Governance Community Development Programme (LGCDP), a joint multi donor funded project implemented by the Ministry of Local Development in 75 districts of Nepal. The Ward Citizen Forums later replaced the water resources committees. The formation of the Ward Citizen Forum is guided by the vision of the Interim Constitution 2006/07 on participatory and inclusive development.

**Local authorities** – The VDC takes the lead role in the WUMP process. It endorses and maintains ownership over the plan and is responsible for its implementation. The upcoming WUMP guidelines of the Ministry of Water Supply and Sanitation visualize WUMP as a VDC initiative.

**Local service providers** – These could be NGOs/CBOs or government authorities that support the community in facilitating the planning process, social and technical assessments and capacity building.

**Resource organisations** – Organisation that support the Village Development Committee in the preparation and implementation of WUMP. These organizations include the projects, donors or sector agencies.

WUMP is formulated in 17 steps that are broadly classified into 5 phases: preparatory phase, capacity building phase, assessment phase, planning phase, and implementation phase. Box 2 illustrates the WUMP steps in 2016 National WUMP Preparation Guidelines. Box 3 illustrates WUMP preparation steps as per Guideline of 2012. These steps have now been slightly revised to suit the changing social context in which local communities are organized. Bhatta and Subedi (2015) argue that during the five steps phase, WUMP facilitates the Multiple Use System (MUS) that has positive gender impact.

The **preparatory phase** starts with the selection of the VDC in case a development agency is engaged in facilitating the WUMP process. VDC is selected in coordination with the District WASH Coordination Committee (DWASHCC), which is a district level body comprising key line agencies, media representatives, civil society organizations, and members of political parties. DWASHCC is chaired by the Local Development Officer (LDO). The rationale for involving the DWASHCC in the initial stage is to promote coordination and cooperation between key stakeholders, which is essential for effective WUMP formulation and implementation. Once the VDC is selected, an MoU is signed between the VDC and support organization for WUMP preparation. The national WUMP preparation guideline 2016 states that the VDC shall make decisions regarding WUMP preparation and that the MoU is required for the purpose. At the VDC level, the Village WASH coordination Committee takes the lead.

The **capacity building phase** involves engagement with the community through formation of a Water Resource Management Committee (WRMC) at the VDC level and a subcommittee (WRMSC) at the ward level, which is now

## Box 1: Expected GESI related outcomes of WUMP

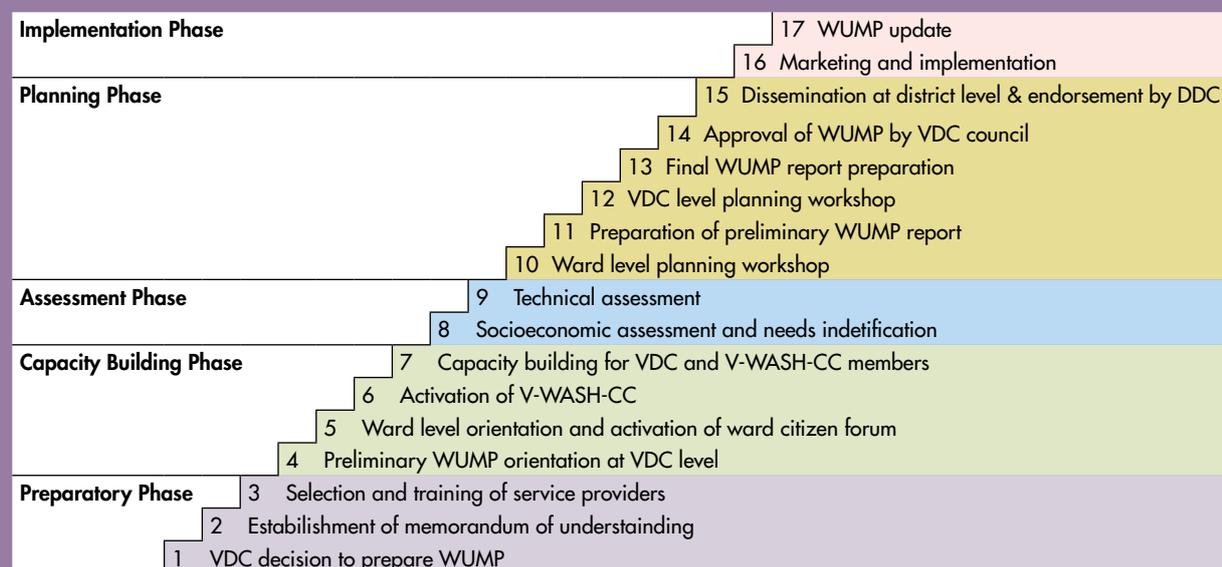
Disadvantaged groups participate on equal terms in the planning, negotiation and decision making related to water resources in a community. The basic needs of all members of a community, including the poor and disadvantaged groups, are considered.

Women's role as "water managers" is properly taken into account, since in many cases women traditionally take care of water issues and carry corresponding responsibilities. The WUMP process encourages and enables women to participate in meetings/workshops and be represented in committees, where they actively take part in decision making. Thus it empowers them and contributes to improving their position within the community.

Source: HELVETAS, 2012

represented by the Ward Citizen Forum. In this phase, capacity building training to WRMC/SC or WCF is organized followed by a coordination workshop to inform sector agencies about the preparation of the WUMP and to get information about their programme.

### Box 2: WUMP steps in WUMP preparation guidelines 2016



Source: Bhatta and Subedi, 2015; Acharya, 2015

### Box 3: Seventeen steps of WUMP process in WUMP Preparation Guidelines 2012

1. Village Development Committee (VDC) selection
2. Memorandum of Understanding with Village Development Committee
3. Selection of service providers (facilitator), training and mobilization
4. Water Resources Management sub-committees/W-WASH-CC formation (WRMSC)
5. Water Resources Management main committee (V-WASH-CC) formation
6. Capacity building training to main committee
7. Pre WUMP workshop at district level
8. Social assessment & need identification
9. Technical assessment
10. WUMP planning workshop (Ward level)
11. WUMP planning workshop (VDC level)
12. WUMP final report preparation
13. Endorsement of WUMP by VDC council
14. Post WUMP workshop at district level and endorsement by DDC
15. Implementation of different projects
16. WUMP realization and marketing
17. WUMP follow-up

The **assessment phase** includes both socioeconomic data collection using various Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools and simultaneously a technical assessment to determine discharge of water sources, their potential use and pre-feasibility of water projects. Assessment of the inventory of existing water schemes is also carried out.

The **planning phase** is crucial. Planning workshops both at ward and village levels are organized to identify water related issues, prioritize them and finalize the Plan. The Plan is then endorsed by the VDC council followed by the DDC.

The **implementation phase** includes marketing WUMP activities to raise funds for implementation of WUMP activities. WUMP activities are not limited to the funding of the Nepal government. The VDC, as a local government authority, could mobilize funds from outside sources as well. Throughout the process the VDC shares the cost of WUMP preparation, and the VWASHCC are responsible for finalizing the planning process by prioritizing and selecting the proposals submitted by ward committees/ward citizen forums. This phase also includes updating the plan.

## GESI in WUMP Preparation Guidelines

WUMP guidelines 2073 BS (2016 AD) formulated by the Ministry of Water Supply and Sanitation and the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development recently represent a positive step towards upscaling more than a decade and a half of learning on local level water planning. It does include gestures toward improved gender and social inclusion that link the vision and objective of WUMP preparation to discourses on social justice and equitable access to water for all. There is emphasis on participatory and transparent planning with meaningful participation of key stakeholders at local and district levels. Ownership of WUMP processes by local bodies is endorsed. The guidelines stipulate for gender sensitive indicators in designing water plans, including the need for a gender-balanced decision-making team. However the outcome of the guidelines is yet to be seen.

The earlier WUMPs were prepared as per the WUMP preparation guidelines of 2001 and 2007, which were prepared by WARMP and RVWRMP respectively, and guideline 2012, which is a revised version of the 2007 guideline. For the purpose of this study, to understand GESI integration in the WUMP already prepared, the content analysis of the guiding document focused on the previous three guidelines to analyse the implementation process at the VDC level. The three guidelines show positive efforts towards incorporating the voices of women and marginalized communities in village level water plans. Participatory and inclusive process was articulated and emphasized right from the beginning since 2001 and social mobilization and rapport building have been used as strategic tools to motivate women and disadvantaged groups to participate in the WUMP process (Table 4).

### Guideline 2001

The first guideline (2001) emphasized the adoption of a participatory consultation process starting at the ward level during WUMP preparation (HELVETAS, 2001). The Water Resource Management Sub-Committee (WRMSC), which was provisioned to facilitate ward level consultation for project prioritization, provides opportunities for women and men of the community (particularly for those who are unable to attend VDC level meetings) to participate in the project identification and prioritization process. The guideline makes explicit the roles and responsibilities of the Social Assessment Team, which, among others, include ensuring community participation in the social resource mapping process. Preparation of a Social Resource Map using PRA tools is an empowering process for women and men in the community, as it allows them to use their own volition in mapping available and potential resources in the VDC. The guideline has underscored the need to ensure the participation of women and men in the community by stating that the social mapping process should commence in the presence of representatives of households of the settlement – “...social mapping process to be started when all women and men of the settlements are present...” Another positive aspect is that it provides guidelines on the collection of information on women’s household and community role and decision-making practices (whether women have full or partial say on HH decision). The guideline also requires facilitators to include their observations and impressions about gender relations in the community. These provisions can help provide a picture of gender roles, relations and power dynamics, which can inform gender issues during the WUMP preparation process. Moreover, the guide for WUMP report outline specifically provides for the inclusion of a section on analysis of women’s role in water management. While these are positive steps towards GESI responsiveness, the guideline is silent on collection of disaggregated data,

hence the effort is inadequate for ensuring gender sensitive planning and design. There is a provision for holding coordination workshops prior to and after the formulation of WUMP that can provide a forum for stakeholders to come together for intensive consultation at the VDC level. Similarly, the provision of seasonal calendars was made to gain an insight on community people's work engagement schedule for the year, but a point of concern is that the format of seasonal calendars is not presented in a gender disaggregated form despite laying emphasis on maximum presence of women during its preparation. Thus, women's as well as men's work engagement schedule is assumed to be similar, which, in reality, is different given the distinct work patterns based on their gender roles. With regard to project prioritization, out of nine identified diverse criteria that should be taken into account while prioritizing the projects, two are GESI responsive i.e. contributing to the well being of disadvantaged and poor members of the community; and contributing to benefit women and children. While this is a positive aspect, the guideline is silent on the scale of importance allotted to each criterion. It also does not make any provision for the documentation of projects that are prioritized or selected under GESI criteria, thus making it difficult to monitor how these criteria were used in project prioritization. Overall, this guideline has made some positive efforts to mainstream GESI in the WUMP formulation process but GESI does not occupy a central position in the guideline.

## Guideline 2007

The guideline has described WUMP document as *"a pre-feasibility level basic document for overall water use and sanitation planning and identifying communities' priority needs classified by various use categories such as drinking water supply, irrigation, micro-hydro power production, multiple use of water, etc."* The guideline mentions that WUMP is envisaged to be a commonly accepted plan for utilization and conservation of water resources in a VDC as it is prepared by the communities and thus reflects local demand and need; however, it does not specify whom the vision is for. Hence gender remains isolated from the overall objective of WUMP (HELVETAS and RVWRMP, 2007; Box 4).

### Box 4: Objectives of 2007 WUMP preparation guidelines that need gender integration

- Inventory of water resources and other relevant local resources and the existing water related infrastructure/ facilities
- Identification and prioritization of potential activities in water sector
- Promoting sustainable investment in water sector
- Promoting conservation of water resources and environmental sanitation

The guideline has specifically mentioned the use of gender balanced community mobilizers to ensure women and men are duly approached during social mobilization. Participatory process has been emphasized right from the pre-planning phase. The guideline requires representation of each household during WRMSC formation. Gender responsiveness is reflected through a specific provision requiring at least 50 percent representation of women, proportional representation of Dalits in the WRMSC, and the representation of one male and one women member of each WRMSC in the Water Resources Management Committee (WRMC) at the VDC level. These provisions were commendable improvements on the 2001 guideline. The responsibility for ensuring participation from each household and proportional representation of women and disadvantaged communities in the planning workshop is placed on the Support Organisation and Community Facilitator. Inclusion of the GESI component in the capacity building training of WRMC/WRMSC is another positive step adopted by the guideline. However, the concern here is limited space/time accorded to GESI in the training curriculum. One session (two hours) of GESI orientation is often found to be delinked from the remaining sessions, thus limiting the possibilities for blending gender concerns in each and every step of the WUMP process.

## Guideline 2012

The objective of the Guideline 2012 (HELVETAS, 2012) and GESI related provisions are similar to that of the 2007 Guideline but there are some visible changes (Box 5). However none of the changes reflects GESI dimensions.

Some major GESI related shortcomings in the guideline are:

- The guideline is not clear on whether the WUMP preparation process will include capacity building training, which also includes GESI capacity building of Ward Citizen Forum members.
- Some data collection formats in the guideline only take a halfway approach to encompassing GESI sensitivity,

e.g., while households are disaggregated by caste and ethnicity, the format does not tell us whether these households are male or women headed. Likewise, while the education status has been disaggregated by gender, further disaggregation by caste and ethnicity is missing; although data disaggregation on population goes a step further by including the number of Dalits in addition to gender, it does not include other caste/ethnicities. The formats for data collection on occupation and human resources have been designed with the notion of obtaining the number of people/human resources disaggregated by their occupation and skill, but without further disaggregation from a GESI perspective.

- On the positive side, the guideline has initiated the documentation of households that are denied access to water services or receive service of the poorest level. The guideline also defined four levels of water services, namely good, medium, poor, and very poor. Formats have been developed to document the number of households under each service level. While this helped in identifying the number of households with very poor service, the format does not incorporate provisions to disaggregate the households from the gender perspective. Thus, there is no way to identify the gender of those who belong to the households that fall under the very poor service level category.

### Box 5: Visible changes in the 2012 guidelines

- Articulation about the 3R opportunities (retention, recharge and reuse of water) and the technical assessment approach to be followed.
- Broadened the scope of the pre-planning phase by including steps 6 and 7 on capacity building and formation of WRMSC.
- While the facilitator's role has been extended in the revised guideline, the consultant's role has been limited to finalization of the WUMP report.
- One major area of concern in the revised guideline is that it has limited the scope of the capacity building training in comparison to the previous guideline. While the scope of the training in the 2007 guideline encompassed both the subcommittee (WRMSC) and the main committee (WRMC), this has been limited to just the main committee in the revised guideline.

Table 3: GESI response in WUMP preparation guideline 2001, 2007, and 2012

WUMP Guideline 2001	WUMP Guideline 2007	WUMP Guideline 2012	Overall scenario
<b>Goal/objectives and analysis</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Absence of GESI articulation in WUMP objectives</li> <li>Provision made for analysis of women's role in household and community and decision making practices</li> <li>No mention of GESI sensitivity and capacity of key actors</li> <li>No specific definition of disadvantaged/excluded groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Absence of GESI articulation in WUMP objectives</li> <li>Analysis of women's role in household and community is not provisioned but guidance for including "gender sensitive, inclusive, pro-poor and socially accepted development priorities of the communities.."</li> <li>No specific definition of disadvantaged/excluded groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Absence of GESI articulation in WUMP objectives</li> <li>Analysis of women's role in household and community role is not provisioned</li> <li>No specific definition of disadvantaged/excluded groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blind spot of all the guidelines is that they do not articulate GESI objectives of WUMP and have not defined disadvantaged groups in order to ensure specific targeted interventions.</li> </ul>
<b>Gender disaggregated data</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The formats were not designed for comprehensive GESI disaggregated data.</li> <li>Seasonal calendar is not presented in a gender-disaggregated form.</li> <li>Defined four levels of water services and provisioned for hardship mapping, however, no disaggregation by gender and socioeconomic status of HHs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formats have been revised for more expansive GESI disaggregated data.</li> <li>Format of seasonal calendar is presented in a gender-disaggregated form.</li> <li>Defined four levels of water services and provisioned for hardship mapping, however, no disaggregation by gender and socioeconomic status of HHs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formats have been revised for more expansive GESI disaggregated data.</li> <li>Format of seasonal calendar is presented in a gender-disaggregated form.</li> <li>Defined four levels of water services and provisioned for hardship mapping, however, no disaggregation by gender and socioeconomic status of HHs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data collection formats revised in 2007 have more detailed disaggregated data collection options.</li> <li>However, format for one of the important data of WUMP, i.e., households with different levels of water services, is not provisioned for disaggregation into social and economic groups.</li> </ul>

WUMP Guideline 2001	WUMP Guideline 2007	WUMP Guideline 2012	Overall scenario
<b>Participation in WUMP formulation</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on a participatory process</li> <li>• Expressed need for inclusive committees</li> <li>• Provision made for social resource mapping in a participatory manner</li> <li>• Social assessment team made responsible for ensuring a participatory process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on participatory process</li> <li>• 50% women, and proportional representation of Dalits and Janajatis in the WRMSC, one male &amp; one women representation in WRMC</li> <li>• Provision made for social resource mapping in a participatory manner</li> <li>• Social mobiliser and community facilitator responsible for ensuring a participatory process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on a participatory process</li> <li>• Provision made for social resource mapping in a participatory manner</li> <li>• Social mobiliser and community facilitators responsible for ensuring a participatory process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All the guidelines have emphasized a participatory process. The 2007 guideline has put more effort by specifying the percentage of male and women representation in various structure.</li> <li>• Social team, social mobiliser and community facilitator are made responsible for ensuring a participatory process, which is a good strategy.</li> </ul>
<b>GESI in project prioritization</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two of the nine criteria to be taken into account for project prioritization are related to GESI</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No specific criteria described for project prioritization or selection</li> <li>• Priority is given to scarcity of water (water hardship).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No specific criteria described for project prioritization or selection</li> <li>• Priority is given to scarcity of water (water hardship).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While the 2001 guideline has indicated GESI responsiveness in two of the nine criteria, later the guideline does not articulate any GESI specific criteria for project selection except for giving priority to hardship related to water services.</li> </ul>
<b>Equitable provisions</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring equitable provisions for women, poor and disadvantaged group is not described.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring equitable provisions for women, poor and disadvantaged group is not described.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring equitable provisions for women, poor and disadvantaged group is not described.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equitable or subsidy provision for poor households in relation to contraction expenses or community contribution has not been outlined in any of the guidelines.</li> </ul>
<b>Analysis of water disputes</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of community need is articulated but water dispute is not specifically mentioned.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of community need is articulated but water dispute is not specifically mentioned.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of community need is articulated but water dispute is not specifically mentioned.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of community need is articulated but water dispute is not specifically mentioned.</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

Although the umbrella act and regulation on water have not addressed gender issues, the sector policy documents on irrigation and drinking water explicitly recognise the lack of women’s participation in decision-making forums like users committees. Moreover, the Local Self-Governance Act that guides the functioning of Village Development Committees emphasizes participation of people of various social strata, especially the historically communities and women. Within this national policy framework, Village Development Committees are obliged to ensure effective and equitable participation of community members including women and disadvantaged community members in its activities and programmes including local water planning.

Further, WUMP promotes a participatory and inclusive water budgeting and planning process at the local level so as to enhance everyone’s access to water. WUMP preparation guidelines have included provisions accordingly. WUMP preparation guidelines have operationalized the thrust to address gender and exclusion issues through encouraging participation and capacity building of community members. The 2007 guideline specifically requires 50% representation of women and proportional representation of other disadvantaged groups in the WRMC, and gender balance in the recruitment of community mobilizers to ensure that they can approach both women and men. GESI related provisions in the 2012 guideline remained similar to its predecessor but capacity building interventions are limited to the VDC level only.

The 2001 guideline specifically required a section on women's role in water management and the 2007 guideline stated that the WUMP content needs to include "...gender sensitive, inclusive, pro-poor and socially accepted development priorities of the communities". However, such provisions are missing in the 2012 guideline. The 2007 and 2012 guidelines do not necessitate the collection of information on women's role in the household and community and decision-making practices, which was required by the 2001 guideline. Of the nine criteria to be taken into account for project selection, two were related to GESI in 2001, while no specific GESI criteria except for hardship mapping is articulated in the later guidelines. Thus in some ways, gender specificities have been watered down over time in the newer guidelines. To improve the guidelines, they need to clearly incorporate a GESI perspective in the objective of WUMP. The current objective is rather an operational objective. Articulating an ambition in the form of a specific gender and poverty objective will help the WUMP formulation team understand what to look into and what to report against.

# GESI in WUMP Implementation and Its Outcomes

*GESI integration in policy and guidelines is the first genuine effort towards addressing GESI concerns in any programme. To make this effort fruitful, it is important to translate the GESI clause of GESI preparation guidelines into practice.*

*This chapter analyses the GESI implementation process and suggests areas of improvement for integrating GESI more effectively in the WUMP process.*

## Implementing Agencies

Local authorities i.e., VDC and local service provider or supporting organization are two important partners of WUMP implementing agencies for WUMP preparation.

### Local government authority

VDC selection for WUMP preparation is done in coordination with the DWASHCC, chaired by the Local Development Officer (LDO). Apparently, the idea behind involving DWASHCC in the initial stage is to promote coordination and cooperation. However, more than 50% of the members of the DWASHCC that the study team interacted with were unaware of WUMP. This was largely due to the structure of the DWASHCC. As the DWASHCC is constituted of institutional members, individuals representing their organizations in the DWASHCC meetings change regularly. As a result the organizational memory of what transpired in DWASHCC meetings is rather weak. The members who participate in the DWASHCC meetings are mainly concerned with the current agenda and decisions associated with that agenda. Low institutional memory has thus weakened the ownership of WUMP by organizations represented in DWASHCC.

DWASHCC considers the following criteria while selecting VDCs – the level of scarcity of drinking water and irrigation facilities/infrastructure and presence of socially excluded group(s), VDC's commitment to cost sharing, VDC's commitment to declare Open Defecation Free (ODF) zone following Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan within a specified time period, less number of supporting agencies working in the VDC at the time of selection. After the MOU is signed between the VDC and WUMP implementing agency, WUMP preparation starts in close coordination with the concerned VDC, which plays the lead role in steering the preparation and implementation of WUMP.

The Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD), the key government executing agency for WUMP projects, has formulated a GESI Policy (2011 AD) to make local government responsive to GESI issues. This policy provides guidance for integrating and monitoring GESI responsive plan and activities at all levels of local government units – VDC, municipality and DDC. The policy requires the Integrated Planning Committee of the VDC to ensure GESI responsive planning and implementation. The VDCs make an effort to ensure that the disbursement of targeted funds of the block grant is GESI responsive. Block Grant Guidelines of 2067 BS (2010 AD) require 35% of the state budget to be allocated to women, children, and other disadvantaged groups in the district development committees (DDCs), municipalities, and VDCs.

### Support organizations

Supporting organizations are involved in facilitating the process of social mobilization and WUMP formulation. In most cases they include local NGOs/CBOs that are accountable to the implementing agency. Often the writing of the WUMP is the responsibility of the consulting firm or individual equipped with technical knowledge on water assessment as well as on consolidating information and priorities from the Ward and VDC level. Though the Terms of Reference of WUMP facilitator/writer do not include specific requirements in relation to GESI expertise/

experience, all the representatives and staff of supporting organizations that the study team interacted with in Sindhupalchowk, Sindhuli and Achham districts were found to be informed and aware about GESI issues. Facilitator and technicians working on WUMPs are provided with training, which also includes a session on GESI. GESI is incorporated in the respective organizations' policies and capacity building, and this is a significant positive aspect with respect to integrating gender that the support organizations bring in. However, a review of WUMP documents (to be discussed in the following section) found a lack of uniformity in the incorporation of GESI concerns across WUMP documents, suggesting that GESI issues have been internalized to varying degrees by social and technical staff at the field, consultant, and WUMP writers. For instance, WUMPs in Mahankal and Ichowk VDCs of Sindhupalchowk district lack a section on GESI analysis. The facilitators and field staff members were unable to explain the reasons for this omission because they were not sure if this section was needed in the WUMP.

*"We had collected information and sent it to the consultant along with other information. We were surprised to see the lack of GESI analysis in the document when it finally came to us but we thought this may not be necessary in a WUMP document."*

– Members of the social study team, Mahankal VDC.

Responses from field staff on GESI integration in the far western region indicated the need for gender sensitization and capacity building on linkages (Box 6). They expressed lack of understanding on how GESI can be integrated into ongoing WUMP activities.

The staff said they need updated and follow-up trainings on GESI. For instance, the field supervisor of Achham district said:

*"Identifying and addressing GESI issue requires specific skills. Our understanding of the issue is not enough by itself. To bring change, other stakeholders also need to be sensitized on this issue. Updated and follow-up trainings are necessary to improve our skill."*

Interviews with social mobilizers show that they follow the instruction to be GESI sensitive to the extent possible in each step of the process. But in many instances, they lack practical knowledge to deal with the issue. This calls for a review of the content of capacity building training. Although the training has a module on gender and social inclusion, it is not integrated with other sessions that deal with all seventeen steps of the WUMP process. Hence, although the participants internalize the concept of gender after the training, they have limited skills for putting the concept into practice during WUMP implementation.

Field staff also felt there is a lack of structural coherence in the data collection, analysis and WUMP document write-up processes. Despite being separate and specific activities, these activities together make significant contributions in producing the WUMP as a whole. However, isolated efforts impede alignment and uniform understanding; format developers, data collectors, decision makers in project selection (VWASHCC), analysts and WUMP document writers operate independently with minimal coordination.

## GESI in Plan Document

The way WUMP documents integrate GESI issues reflect its perspective on gender as well as shapes GESI integration during the implementation of prioritized activities later. The study team carried out content analysis of 12 WUMPs (Table 4) selected to ensure fair representation of the time of implementation, development/ecological region

### Box 6: Field staff's opinions on GESI and WUMP, the Far Western Region

*"WUMP is more of a technical document informed by available and potential water resources and the technical feasibility of their uses, so there is not much room in the WUMP process to address GESI issues"*

*"We are responsible for ensuring representation of Dalits, Janajatis and (33%) women in all the meetings and committees. Given that drinking water and sanitation projects are prioritized and selected on the basis of hardship level of WASH service, GESI will also be automatically integrated. There is no need to address the hardship of men and women separately."*

*"With limited time (3 months) at hand for the technical study of water resources, social resources mapping in all the wards, data collection at the household level, facilitating ward and VDC level planning meetings, we don't have much time to look into the GESI aspect."*

and various programmes supporting their formulation. The main objectives were to see whether the WUMPs' goal/objectives were GESI responsive; whether or not they incorporated the GESI perspective; the extent and appropriateness of disaggregated data and how these data were used in the WUMP process; to examine how the participation of women and disadvantaged groups was ensured and documented; to review the modus operandi and criteria applied to mainstream GESI during the prioritization of projects; to assess whether equity provisions were applied while determining communities' contribution and in the distribution of resources; to examine the social, political and personal disputes affecting water resources management; and to analyse the probable cause and impact of such disputes (particularly in relation to the most affected persons/groups) and the plan to address this.

**Table 4: List of WUMPs selected for content analysis**

Formulation period	Region	District	Selected VDCs	Prepared by
Cluster 1: 1999-2006	WDR	Parbat	Bajung	WARMP
	FWDR	Doti	Ghanteswar	WARMP
Cluster 2: 2007-2009	MWDR	Humla	Rudhikot	RVWRMP
	FWDR	Bajura	Bichhiya	RVWRMP
	FWDR	Doti	Chhapali	RVWRMP
	MWDR	Bajhang	Koiralakot	RVWRMP
Cluster 3: 2011-2014	FWDR	Achham	Mastabandali	WARMP
	MWDR	Dailekh	Nepa	WARMP
	CDR	Sindhupalchowk	Mahankal	IDRC
	CDR	Sindhupalchowk	Ichowk	IDRC
	MWDR	Mugu	Srinagar	WARMP
	MWDR	Achham	Sera	WARMP

### Goal/objective in WUMP documents

The WUMP of Bajung VDC (Parbat district) dates back to 1998/99. It was prepared as a pilot project following the recommendation of the external evaluation team of Self Reliant Drinking Water Supply Project (SRWSP), HELVETAS to promote WARMP as an interdependent extension of SRWSP. Thus, this effort was initiated even before the formulation of the 2001 guideline. Two objectives of the Bajung WUMP do invoke GESI responsiveness, which is reflected in the wording: *"to facilitate the community in planning the projects related to water, based on approach of public participation, including women and non-privileged group; and to facilitate the delegation of water resource management at the lowest appropriate level (water user committee) in accordance with national legislation."*

It is apparent that the deep knowledge accumulated by HELVETAS in the course of its long engagement in water resource management is the primary reason for the significant space accorded to the participation of women and disadvantaged groups in WARM. The Bajung WUMP, though it does not include GESI analysis in its content, has made provisions for the inclusion of GESI in its capacity development package for key stakeholders, indicating that some effort was made to promote a GESI sensitive approach among key stakeholders involved in WARM.

Of all the WUMPs reviewed, only one, Ghanteswar (2003), has articulated GESI in its objectives as: "Confidence of women and Dalit in decision making is enhanced and they are benefitted from the outcome. [sic]" Another noteworthy GESI responsive insertion in this WUMP is that it specifically mentions that the WUMP is built on the principle of creating an equitable forum and promoting the participation of women and Dalits.

### Use and analysis of gender disaggregated data

Of the total WUMPs reviewed, only three, i.e., Koiralakot, Bichhiya and Chhapali VDC had relatively well-disaggregated data, which were supported by RVWRMP and based on the 2007 guideline. Analysis of gender role in household, community and agricultural work is included in the WUMP formulated in 2003 as directed by the 2001 preparation guideline. Close scrutiny of the 12 WUMPs shows that an attempt on GESI analysis has been made in 10 documents. However, some WUMPs, formulated in 2014 (Mahankal and Ichowk), do not include a GESI analysis section in the document. The documents do not clearly spell out whether GESI analysis was conducted

during the social assessment of the VDC. One striking similarity across all WUMP documents is the high degree of consistency in the findings of the GESI analysis. *Illiteracy, poor health, poverty, tradition and patriarchal norms are identified as barriers for women across all caste and ethnic groups, and as the underlying cause impeding their participation in development work.* Though there is no denying that these factors are common denominators that undermine women's participation, the WUMP documents fall short of analysing structural inequities specific to geographic, social, cultural and economic conditions, such as: gender based violence; *Chhaupadi* (a social practice among Hindus in western Nepal, where a woman is prohibited from participating in normal activities during menstruation and kept in isolation); lack of land ownership; the practice of untouchability and their consequences on water resource management. Moreover while the WUMPs identify the number of households with the poorest water services, identification of disadvantaged groups in the VDC in terms of social, economic, geographical and other specific conditions has not been done. Most significantly, although WUMPs are guided by data collection formats provided in the WUMP guidelines, it is apparent that the nature of analysis, presentation and use of these data depends on the persons involved in WUMP formulation.

All WUMP documents provide the percentage of HHs in each ward by the current status of drinking water and toilet facilities. Water services in the household have been categorized into different levels: SL4 (very poor), SL3 (poor), SL2 (medium) and SL1 (good). Level of service is described in terms of hardship (water fetching time, quality, reliability of source). The major concern is that this categorization is convenient and simplistic and does not bring in the gender dimension; for example, the data collector may put a household in the SL4 category without gender analysis to identify the reasons for their plight. Further, this aspect is not linked with project prioritization. For example, of the SL4 households how many socially deprived category based on gender and social exclusion parameters will benefit from the planned project?

## Participation

All the WUMPs have stated they adopt a participatory approach. Social resource mappings and formation of WRMSCs at the ward level are strategies to enhance participation. Planning workshops at ward/sub-committee level also provide opportunities for participation at the community level. Further, encouraging participation of women and disadvantaged groups during resource mapping and formation of sub committees is also articulated. However, it is not clear how the participation of women and disadvantaged groups will be ensured in these events and committees. Though women's role in managing drinking water, sanitation and irrigation is identified as an important one, the WUMP documents do not make explicit how WUMPs will ensure that women are involved in managing water resources at the ward and VDC level.

None of the WUMPs contains provisions for ensuring:

- 75% HH representation with 50% women and proportional representation of different castes, ethnicities and women-headed HHs in community meetings and proportional representation of women and disadvantaged groups in membership and key positions of committees.
- community meetings do not take place if there is low representation of women and disadvantaged groups
- committees be revised/reformulated to make it more inclusive

Barring a few VDCs i.e., Koiralakot, Bichhiya, and Chhapali, none of the WUMPs provide a disaggregated list of participants in meetings/events. Likewise, the name list of the WRMSCs, VWASHCC and VDC advisory committees are included in the annex of the WUMP document but they are not gender disaggregated.

The WUMP documents do not mention if any measures were taken to provide ample opportunities for women and disadvantaged groups to express their views, negotiate their needs and influence decisions, nor any indicators to show the level of participation by these groups.

Moreover, there are some missing links in efforts made to consider gender disaggregated data and its application in design. Seasonal calendars are presented in 11 of the WUMP documents (except in Bajung WUMP) and activities in the calendars have been disaggregated by gender. However, the WUMP documents have not clearly mentioned how the seasonal calendars have informed the planning process taking into consideration the facts that inhibit women's participation. Rather, as the WUMP of Srinagar VDC, Mugu district suggests, the seasonal calendar has not been made with the aim of planning WUMP activities around women's schedules (Box 7).

## Box 7: Missing link between gendered role and possibilities to participate in WUMP activities

*The seasonal calendar of Srinagar VDC indicates that women are fully busy (100 percent) in the month of Shrawan (June/July) and mostly busy (75 percent) in the month of Bhadra (July/August) whereas men are busy only 50 percent of the time, or totally free in these months. Surprisingly planned activities have been scheduled for these two months on the seasonal calendar when women have little chance to participate.*

WUMP of Srinagar VDC, Mugu district 2071/72 BS (2014/15AD), p. 8

## Project prioritization

Project prioritization is done at two levels – the ward and VDC level. The Ward Level Planning Workshop includes proposals demanded by the community. This is presented in the WUMPs as a ‘wish list’ of the community. However, the VDC Level Planning Workshop prioritizes projects on the basis of technical and financial feasibility. Therefore, a large number of projects included in the ‘wish list’ of the community are not selected at this level.

Almost none of the WUMPs formulated prior to 2011 include any specific criteria related to GESI for project selection. One exception is the WUMP of Ghanteswar,

which specifically mentions it will give priority to projects that “...contribute to the livelihood of the community and maximum benefit to women and Dalit.” WUMPs formulated after 2011 include “social inclusion, social discrimination and economically poor” as one of the eight selection criteria. This criterion is not explained in detail in any of the WUMPs. Also, gender can be completely overlooked or ignored if only “social inclusion” is considered, as is most often the case, since gender gets subsumed under “social”. Ambiguity in the project selection criteria can give rise to open interpretations by stakeholders involved, and in the process, this is likely to undermine the necessity of making WUMPs fully GESI responsive.

## Equitable provisions

All WUMP documents, from 1998 to 2014, have not addressed how the concerns of the poorest of the poor should be addressed in relation to communities’ contribution for the implementation of projects and the distribution of resources. The WUMPs do not elucidate whether disability, age, social and economic status (single woman, poverty) have been considered while determining community’s contribution for selected projects. Similarly, though projects like irrigation, micro hydro, water mill and Multiple Use System are included in the WUMPs, they are not linked with the equitable distribution of benefit that may ensure and its impact on poverty reduction. One of the issues of inequity in the water sector is unequal benefit sharing in water systems like irrigation, drinking water and water mill, especially on labour contribution from users (Udas and Zwartveen, 2005). WUMP documents have not mentioned poverty reduction and equity as the objective of the WUMP. The objective rather focuses on specific working objectives such as assessing water sources and prioritizing proposed activities.

## Water disputes

WUMP documents have provided for local committees to resolve disputes on their own, but there are no guidelines on the process. This is indeed a large gap given the issues of rising water scarcity and water quality. Water scarcity, deteriorating water quality and the linkages between water and food security are important issues in view of the gender differences in the access to and control over water resources. In the absence of guidelines on resolving water disputes, it is likely that voices of the local elite might dominate the needs of the poor and women.

To conclude, WUMPs formulated between 1999-2006 are built on the principle of creating an equitable forum and promoting women’s participation, and WUMPs prepared in 2007-2009 have incorporated the Dublin and IWRM principles. Act and policies of the GoN related to water resources are taken as guiding documents for the WUMP; however, none of the WUMPs refer to national and sectoral GESI frameworks. Like the WUMP preparation guidelines, WUMP objectives have not addressed GESI. Among the 12 WUMPs reviewed, 9 include a GESI analysis section in the document. Although gender issues identified and presented in the section are common barriers to women’s participation, the WUMP documents do not include analysis of specific geographic, social, cultural and economic issues (such as gender-based violence, *Chhaupadi*, lack of land ownership, the practice of untouchability) of the VDCs. Although guided by data collection formats provided in the WUMP guidelines, the analysis, presentation and use of these data depends on the attitude and gender sensitivity of persons involved. Comparatively, WUMPs of Cluster 2 (3 out of 4 WUMPs reviewed) have presented a higher degree of data disaggregation. Table 5 summarizes the findings.

Table 5: Summary of GESI response in WUMP documents over the time from 1998 to 2014

Cluster 1 (1998-2006)	Cluster 2 (2007-2010)	Cluster 3 (2010-2014)	Overall Scenario	
<b>GESI in Goal/objective and analysis of WUMP</b>				
Does WUMP recognize the Dublin Principles and the Nepal government's policies on gender and social inclusion?				
Dublin Principles is not mentioned. WUMP is built on WARMP's principle of creating an equitable forum and promoting women's participation.	Dublin & IWRM principles are mentioned. Acts and policies related to water are taken as guiding documents but GESI related policies of GoN are not mentioned.	Same as Cluster 2		
Does WUMP express gender equality and social inclusion in its objective?				
The objective of enhancing the confidence of women and Dalits in decision making is included and women's prime role in water management is articulated.	GESI is not included in the objective of any of the WUMPs.	Same as Cluster 2	Although the significance of women's role in water management is articulated, GESI objectives are not expressed. GESI analysis is inadequate and appears superficial with the same findings in all the documents. They do not include analysis of specific geographic, social, cultural and economic issues of the VDCs.	
Does WUMP recognize women as one of the important actors for sustainable use of water resource?				
Women's role in sanitation, irrigation is taken as a very important factor.	Significance of women's role in water management is articulated.	Same as Cluster 2		
Is there a section on GESI analysis in the WUMP and what are key GESI issues identified?				
Of the two WUMPs, one includes gender analysis. Illiteracy, tradition and patriarchal norms are identified as barriers for women's participation in development work. Analysis of gender role in agriculture and household work has been conducted. Seasonal calendar is prepared but data is not GESI disaggregated.	GESI analysis is presented. Lack of education, poor health, poverty, and patriarchal structure are identified as barriers for women/ disadvantaged groups. No analysis of specific gender and social issue (chhaupadi, untouchability) Seasonal calendar prepared in all WUMPs, but data not gender disaggregated.	Of the 6 WUMPs, only 4 have included a GESI analysis section. Findings of GESI analysis are similar in all the WUMPs. Seasonal calendar prepared, but data not gender disaggregated.		
Does WUMP define priority needs for empowering women and other disadvantaged groups?				
Priority needs for empowering women and other disadvantaged groups are not articulated in all WUMPs.	Same as Cluster 1	Same as Cluster 2		
<i>Disaggregation and use of socio-economic data (Does WUMP include data disaggregated by gender, caste/ ethnicity, poverty, disability?)</i>				
Socio-economic disaggregated data are collected to a limited extent only.	The extent of disaggregated data available is higher in this cluster. However, there is no uniformity even within this cluster.	Socio-economic data presented in this period is limited than in previous cluster.	Extent of disaggregated data available is higher in cluster 2. Level of analysis of data depends on the person writing the WUMP.	
<b>Participation in WUMP formulation process</b>				
Were workshops held during the WUMP formulation process at different levels (village level, VDC level)?				
Ward or subcommittee level workshop (one day) for project prioritization and VDC level planning workshop (3 days) for selection of projects	Same as Cluster 1	Same as Cluster 2	A participatory process is emphasized in all the WUMPs. Participation requirements are more profound in the WUMPs of Cluster 2.	
Is there involvement of women and disadvantaged groups in prioritization of projects?				
Presence of women and disadvantaged groups during these workshop is mentioned but does not explain the quantitative (how many) and qualitative (how) aspects of participation.	Involvement of women and disadvantaged groups was articulated with participants' data. But it is not clear how (they) participated	Same as Cluster 2		

<b>Do the plans have participants' lists and WRMC disaggregated by gender, caste &amp; ethnicity?</b>			
Disaggregated data of people present in the workshops are not available. Names of the committee members are provided but not in a disaggregated form.	Disaggregated list of participants and committee members is presented.	Of 6 WUMPs, gender of participants and membership is not disaggregated in 3 WUMPs though it is presented in the Annex.	
<b>GESI in project prioritization Does the project selection criteria include GESI consideration and % of projects/ budget allocation for GESI?</b>			
Indication of GESI sensitive criteria, e.g. i) Projects that contribute to the living standard of the community ii) Projects that provide maximum benefit to women and Dalit groups iii) Based on community's "felt need" but it does not specifically articulate the felt need of women and disadvantaged groups	No specific criteria for prioritization and selection of projects targeted at women and disadvantaged groups but some indication that the general public's needs shall be recognized, such as: "project contributing to upliftment of living standard of community people".	One of the criteria of project selection is related to GESI. But it is not clearly articulated. The number of projects selected under such criteria is not mentioned	GESI related criteria are not clear for project prioritization and selection. Mostly, emphasis is laid on hardship related to water availability in drinking water project selection.
<b>Equitable provisions</b>			
<b>Is an equity provision included while defining community contribution?</b>			Equitable provision for economically and socially/ physically disadvantaged is not articulated while defining community contribution. Also, WUMPs do not clearly articulate how the selected projects are going to contribute to poverty reduction
None	None	None	
<b>Were disability, age, economic situation, and social status considered while allocating contribution?</b>			
None	None	None	
<b>Did sanitation programmes identify the economic burden of the poor households?</b>			
None	None	None	
<b>Has the monetary value of water been considered and have interventions been designed to translate water into money?</b>			
Some of the projects (micro hydro, water mill, irrigation) are related to enterprise and economy but there is no mention of whether these projects were planned to translate water into money.	Same as Cluster 1	Same as Cluster 2	
<b>Analysis of water disputes Does the WUMP identify social/political/personal conflict over the water source?</b>			
Consultation on water dispute is conducted. If any future disputes are foreseen, provision is made for addressing such disputes by the community.	Same as Cluster 1	Same as Cluster 2	Analysis of water dispute has been presented in all the WUMPs.

## Level of Ownership by Local Authority

GESI responsiveness in WUMP implementation is contingent on the priority and commitment accorded to GESI by the implementing agency. As the VDC is mandated with the task of formulating, implementing and marketing the WUMP, the VDC's ownership is critical for its successful implementation. Ownership of WUMPs across VDCs varies, and hence the status of WUMP implementation differs from one VDC to another. This is largely contingent on the level of interaction of VDC secretaries and VWASHCC members with the donor/ programme supporting WUMP formulation and implementation; the level of sensitization and proactive attitude of the VDC secretaries and VWASHCC members on GESI issues and the ongoing practices adopted by their respective offices; the frequency of transfers of VDC secretaries involved in the WUMP formulation and implementation; and availability of VDC secretaries in their designated VDC offices and where they are stationed.

In all the VDCs that the study team visited, field staff faced difficulties in coordinating with the VDC and ensuring the full involvement of VDC as VDC secretaries were either absent or being transferred to another location. Box 8 provides the mixed responses from VDCs on WUMP ownership and integration in the VDC plans.

Ownership of WUMP by the VDC is affected by structural challenges (such as absence of elected local representatives, frequent transfer of VDC secretaries, lack of proper office space in the VDC, appointment of

## Box 8: WUMP ownership and its integration in VDC plans

In Mahankal VDC of Sindhupalchowk, WUMP preparation was completed in 2014. Since then not a single project identified in the WUMP document has been funded by the VDC budget. On the contrary, other water resources projects, which were not included in the WUMP document, were funded by the VDC. However, Mahankal VDC was able to acquire NPR 27 million from the central government in May 2014. The decision to implement WUMP priorities enabled the VDC to receive the first installment of NPR 0.8 million. Work was in progress to implement the first priority of drinking water project.

The Secretary of Koiralakot VDC, Bajhang district was of the opinion that the estimated budgets of WUMP projects were very high and beyond the VDC's budgetary capacity, and therefore the VDC could not consider them for funding. This indicates that funding requests for WUMPs should not be limited to the VDC and efforts should be made to solicit external funding for WUMP implementation.

The Secretary of Chhapali VDC, Achham first heard of WUMP in detail while interacting with the study team. He had been transferred to the VDC recently and had little chance to interact with the programme (RVWRMP) staff.

The Secretary of Bajung VDC and former VDC chairperson/vice chairperson were fully committed to the implementation of their WUMP. "We have realized that having a proper plan is like completing half of the work. Now we need to complete the other half of getting financial support and implementing the projects. We are also trying to improve by overcoming the shortcomings and weaknesses that were apparent in our first WUMP. Meaningful participation of women in the planning and implementation processes of WUMP is one of the areas identified for improvement," said the secretary of Bajung VDC.

The secretary of Mastabandali VDC, Achham is aware of WUMP and its significance, but he regrets not being able to contribute much for its implementation. The VDC office of Mastabandhali was destroyed during the Maoist insurgency and has not been rebuilt till now so he is stationed in the neighboring VDC. Mastabandhali has now been merged with other VDCs to form a new municipality. Now the challenge is internalization of WUMP by the office bearers and key stakeholders of the newly formed municipality.

VDC secretary in multiple VDCs, continued absence of VDC secretary in the designated VDC, etc.), which can be resolved through policy reforms and robust compliance mechanisms. A positive feature of ongoing interventions is that sensitization and building the capacity of VWASHCC, including the VDC secretary, is happening on a regular basis in all the VDCs.

In addition, the project mode of WUMP implementation has limitations in that it has made the community dependent on the project instead of motivating them to market the WUMP. Both WARMP and RVWRMP supported the preparation of WUMP and the implementation of majority of the schemes of WUMP in project mode. In many instances, VDC based stakeholders described WUMPs as plans driven by HELVETAS or RVWRMP and expected activities included in the WUMP documents to be implemented by these agencies. Cultivating dependency leads to disempowerment rather than empowering communities. Learning from the past, the 'Building Effective Water Governance in Asian Highlands' project of HELVETAS deviated from this approach and supported VDCs to develop Water Use Master Plan but did not provide fund for implementation, and rather advocated for the marketing of WUMP.

## Achieving Effective Participation

Public hearings, public audits, and participatory monitoring are carried out in different stages of implementation to achieve good governance. The programmes applied a proactive and responsive approach to accommodate the needs of women, poor, and socially disadvantaged groups, and built disabled and child friendly WASH infrastructure whenever it was required in the communities. Further, for each scheme taken up for implementation, a User Committee (UC) is formed and registered. The registration of UC requires at least 33% representation of women in the committee and at least one woman in one of the vital posts (chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary or treasurer). WARMP and RVWRMP ensure that each of the households in the catchment area of the scheme is represented by at least one woman and one man at the community-level meeting to form the users' committee. The time and venue of the meeting are decided taking into consideration the constraints faced by and the concerns

of women and poorer households. Special attention is paid to ensure that all disadvantaged groups and remote clusters are informed about the meeting time and venue. If women's presence is less than 50%, meetings are postponed until a more suitable time. This applies to public hearings and public audits as well.

Once the users' committee is formed, members are provided orientation and trainings on GESI, financial and store management, procurement, operation and maintenance and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). Acknowledging that women and Dalit groups need special provisions because of their low education and exposure levels, RVWRMP augmented the regular capacity development training with additional training specifically targeting excluded groups. Local facilitators, particularly women, are used as far as possible. A checklist to ensure the use of GESI and human rights based approach in each step of WUMP formulation and schemes implementation has also been developed by RVWRMP.

These approaches and strategies have provided women and disadvantaged groups a reasonably fair opportunity to be involved in the implementation of water resources schemes. But women are still not visible in key decision-making positions in the committees. Based on information obtained from FGD, men comprise over 80 percent of the leadership positions while only a few women occupy the post of the chairperson. Persons who represented women and Dalit groups were often passive members indicating unequal power relations based on gender and caste. Except in cases where implementing agencies took specific initiatives to motivate and build the capacity of each member of the committee to actively participate in the meetings, the participation of women and people from marginalized groups is largely limited to signing or putting their thumbprint on the meeting minutes. "What do I know about the process? I sign on the register whenever it is needed" – was a common response of women members of user committees in several VDCs.

The difference in the level of participation of women and men is the result of gender hierarchy perpetuating from difference in assets ownership and gendered norms and values. Out of the 42 women and 13 men consulted in Sindhupalchowk and Sindhuli districts in ongoing WUMP activities, only 3 women possessed land ownership certificate while 10 men possessed land ownership certificate. The three men who did not have land ownership said they will have the land in their name in due course as their property is still owned by their father. Responding to questions about livestock owned by women in the same villages, an elderly man remarked sarcastically, "Yes, of course, all the livestock are owned by women. They are the ones who are responsible for collecting fodder and cleaning the shed." Women's involvement is considered important in labour work but not in decision making. "If you have any scheme for our village, just contact me, I will bring women to the committee and make them work for it," an influential male member said. Women are generally seen as a commodity and men as their protectors.

Likewise, the VDC's own effort to promote GESI responsiveness in projects is limited to ensuring minimum requirement on participation of women and disadvantaged groups in the committees. Although the GESI policy of MoFALD applies to Integrated Planning Committees (IPCs) and monitoring and evaluation sub-committees of VDCs to ensure gender responsiveness in planning, implementation and monitoring of projects, the policy is far from finding a firm foothold in the VDCs' working procedure as it has not been internalized by the VDC secretaries and stakeholders represented in these committees. Moreover, the monitoring and evaluation committees are mostly non-functional in the VDCs.

## Equity Concerns

For people living below poverty line, affordability of services is a big concern, as they have to part with scarce financial resources to meet their share of contribution for water supply or to build a toilet. Field staff of WARMP and RVWRMP do acknowledge that special measures are required such as cash discount or equivalent in-kind contribution to promote equity. However, such measures, which are largely determined by the approval of the community at large and formalized by an agreement with the VDC, are not usually based on the affordability of needy families. For instance, promotion of ODF in the country through construction of private toilet and promotion of private tap connection (one house one tap) – both bracket the differential ability of people to construct a private toilet or connect a private tap. In contrast, the WARMP and RVWRMP approach focuses on multiple and productive uses of water resources to enhance food security and livelihood. It also lays emphasis on the integration of income-generating activities into water projects in line with increasing demand for such activities. WUMP, as a local government level planning tool, has the potential to scale up this concept though integrating gender in

its programme still has challenges. It cannot be denied it is still a gender sensitive approach compared to the approaches that bracket differential ability of people to afford water infrastructure and voice their concerns equally.

## Capacity Development Intervention

Though there are positive features of WUMP practices, integrating gender through enhancing the capacity of marginalized community members remains a challenge. The WUMP initiative envisages developing the capacity of targeted stakeholders both in the WUMP formulation and implementation processes. However, target groups have changed over the years. At the outset, when elected representatives existed in local bodies, capacity development of the members of the VDC and Ward Committee was accorded priority. In the post 2002 period, following the termination of the tenure of the elected representatives, capacity development initiatives mainly targeted members of the WRMC at the VDC level and WRMSC at the ward level. Currently, after the advent of the National Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan 2011, the focus of capacity building trainings has shifted to the members of the VWASHCC.

At the initial phase of WUMP formulation, field officials (from RVWRMP and partner organizations of WARMP) go through a four-day orientation session on the essence of IWRM and WUMP formulation. A brief introduction on GESI (a session of two hours) is included in the orientation curriculum. The officials who participate in the orientation session provide three days' training to VWASHCC members. This training is generally provided to 30 participants (including nine coordinators of WCF, nine Women Health Volunteers - one from each ward, VDC level political party representatives, teachers, and representatives from networks of women, Dalits and indigenous nationalities). Besides ensuring 33 percent women's participation, the training has tried to be inclusive by ensuring participation of other excluded groups such as Dalits and indigenous nationalities.

Two major scenarios emanate from the current training initiative. One, capacity development to promote rapport building and to solicit cooperation from key stakeholders for the WUMP preparation process has been achieved to a large extent. Participants such as teachers, political party representatives and some WCF coordinators are actively involved in the WUMP process in locating water sources, gathering people in ward meetings, and also in planning schemes of their respective wards in the WUMP. The participants of capacity building training stated that a strong effort was put in to ensure wide participation of the community people in the planning workshop both in terms of numbers and diversity. Second, the current capacity building initiative is not designed to develop the capacity of participants to carry their work in a GESI responsive manner. GESI session is limited to an hour in the three days' training. Not integrating GESI in other sessions limits the possibility of enhancing participants' capacity to address gender throughout the WUMP process.

Although enhancing stakeholders' capacity is included in the WUMP preparation guideline, the objective and specific results of capacity development training are not clearly stated. In addition, the training curriculum and timing uses a blanket approach that does not address the different levels of capacity of participants. Some participants such as women community health volunteers and WCF coordinators, and representatives of women, Dalits and Janajatis were mostly unaware of the WUMP processes due to their lower ability to comprehend the training course and delivery methods compared to other community-based leaders such as teachers, head teachers and local politicians. The study team came across a significant number of participants, especially women, who were unable to articulate what the training was about and what they had learned.

This indicates that in the absence of tailor-made training courses that are aligned with the trainees' level of understanding, the training will mainly benefit those participants who are educated, have more exposure and hold a higher post or status in the community. However, participants appreciated the two days confidence building training for women and Dalit groups (by RVWRMP) as it has enhanced their confidence.

## Monitoring the WUMP Process

WUMP activities are monitored (in the case of WARM & RVWRMP) by a team comprising officials from the implementing agencies and local government bodies (VDC/DDC). At least one monitoring visit is carried out both during WUMP formulation and implementation stages. Key monitoring indicators are used to verify standards and compliance requisites which, among others, include indicators on the following parameters: i) adherence

to technical specifications; ii) proper maintenance and presentation of up-to-date inventory data; iii) progress of achievements against planned targets; iv) compliance with procedure and timeframe; and v) compliance in terms of representation of women and disadvantaged groups in community meetings and committees in line with requirements.

Though monitoring is focused on efficiency, which is about getting the job done on time and within the budget limit, special attention is paid to whether there is proportional participation/representation (as applicable) of women and disadvantaged groups in all stages of WUMP formulation and implementation, but this is mainly limited to checking the quantitative aspect of participation. On the positive side, some interviews and group discussions are also conducted to assess meaningful participation of women and disadvantaged groups, and findings of these assessments have sometimes been used to modify/refine planning and implementation approaches and procedures.

The WUMP outcome is also monitored through periodic follow-up studies during the post formulation period (6–7 years after formulation). This follow-up study is mainly limited to the assessment of achievement against planned targets and the efforts of the VDC/WASHCC to market WUMP. Monitoring from a GESI perspective, particularly in terms of examining the changes in access to and control over water resources and the extent of capacity development of women and disadvantaged groups, is limited. In short, the monitoring takes a functional approach, i.e. looking at the efficiency aspect and not much at the structural aspect, i.e. changes and transformations.

## GESI Achievements at Different Time Periods

The WUMPs implemented in three different time periods indicate different priorities and achievements (Table 6).

### Period 1999-2006

Table 6: **GESI achievements at different time periods**

Period	Gender and social inclusion efforts and achievement
1999-2006	Women representation was not mandatory; however women ward member was presented by default in ward level discussion; prominent division of gender roles prohibited women leadership in the committees.
2007-2010	Intensive gender disaggregated data collection, but not enough clarity on how to make use of the data; mandatory 33% representation of excluded groups is achieved; despite increased participation of women and other excluded castes and ethnicities, decision making was still dominated by men.
2011-2014	Inclusion of women and marginalized caste and ethnic groups has been considered more seriously in all stages of the WUMP process; however, limited time is devoted to social mobilization to address the different abilities of excluded groups.

Of the total of 26 WUMPs prepared by WARMP in this period, we selected Bajung VDC for a field study. The WUMP of Bajung VDC was formulated in 1998/99 prior to the formulation of the WUMP preparation guideline. The WUMP processes and measures were developed through consultation with key stakeholders primarily involving the VDC chairperson and members and the supporting agency (WARMP/HELVETAS). Due to the presence of elected representatives in this period, the VDC took full ownership of the WUMP and took the lead during WUMP formulation. The availability of elected representatives, who are accountable to the people they represent, was an enabling factor that assured VDC ownership of the WUMP. The ownership of WUMP by the VDC elected members was exemplified by the then VDC chairperson who had this to say: *“Our drinking water system, built during 1985, was mostly out of order and*

Photo 1: **Non-functional water points used for tying goats after 14 years of WUMP formulation in Bajung that lead to updating WUMP in 2014**



*we did not have a proper plan for rehabilitating the old system and exploring new ones. So the WUMP initiative was an eye opening effort for all of us. All of us, including ward committees, were fully involved in this process."* After 14 years of WUMP formulation, the VDC is prepared to update the WUMP.

The need for a gender-sensitive approach was felt by relevant stakeholders and gender sensitization training was organized by the WARMP on the demand of VDC members. Women's representation was not mandatory in all committees at that time. Although women members of ward committee were involved in ward level consultation and project prioritization, women's involvement in project selection and plan formulation at the VDC level was nominal. Though some efforts were made to place women in some of the sub committees, the key actor involved during WUMP formulation acknowledged that women's presence in the sub-committee was symbolic as men are supposed to take charge of formal meetings according to the dominant social structure and norms. Men's voices were hence louder and much more influential than women's.

The status of Dalits and poor communities of remote wards were also considered during the WUMP formulation. While selecting projects, priority was given to communities with a high density of Dalits and poor people. Despite this effort, the WUMP was unable to address the problem of the poorest communities as the cost of projects targeting such communities were comparatively much higher due to difficult geographical terrain, scattered settlement and remoteness. In general, all stakeholders consulted acknowledged that communities (such as ward No. 9) with a higher density of disadvantaged and marginalized groups lag behind others in terms of availability of water services.

WUMP implementation (mostly drinking water projects, 23 out of 26 drinking water projects, in the WUMP document, were implemented) resulted in the formation of several WASH User Committees in the VDC. These committees are functional and committee members have gained respect as 'water managers' in the communities. The members of the Drinking Water User Committees said they have gained knowledge, experience and exposure in the water resource management sector and the capacity to demand and negotiate with any agencies at the district and central level. However women in this period were only indirectly involved in water management bodies due to gender stereotypes, and all the committee members were men.

The social reluctance to accept women in leadership positions has gradually changed over time. The current VDC secretary says, *"In the past many people refused to work under the leadership of a woman but the times have changed for the better. Now women are being nominated as chairpersons of the committees."*

Stakeholders involved in WUMP preparation in 1998/99 think that recent changes in the socio-political environment have been more conducive to the inclusion of women and other disadvantaged groups in decision making structures at the local as well as national level. However transformative change in GESI is yet to find a firm foothold as gender hierarchy continues to play a role in local decision making. This is illustrated by a case from ward No. 9 of Bajung VDC described below (Box 9).

It is apparent that the priority accorded to hardship related to water availability by WUMP is generally assumed to be the means of promoting equality. But hardship has different impacts on women and men across different socioeconomic groups. The WUMP process of Cluster 1 period had not analysed the hardship from a gender perspective so as to address the specific needs of women and men.

### **Box 9: Persistent gender hierarchy undermines women's leadership**

It has been three years since Sita Hamal was nominated for the post of the chairperson of Nunthala Drinking Water Committee of ward No. 9 in Bajung. She had willingly assumed this position when her father-in-law, the former chairperson of the committee, became unable to actively fulfill his responsibility due to deteriorating health. However, her father-in-law's influence and hold on the committee has not yet diminished a bit. The committee members still prefer to consult with him on important matters rather than the sitting chairperson. Even after assuming important positions, women remain powerless in committees. Ms Hamal aptly summed up this situation: *"These days women's presence is sought in every committee and in key posts as well, but, in reality, people don't want to listen to us. I wonder how women will be able to lead a committee and gain the respect of people unless we have a conducive environment for working independently."*

## Period 2007 to 2010

A total of 56 WUMPs were formulated in this period by WARMP and RVWRMP. A field study was conducted in two WUMP VDCs – Chhapali and Koiralakot of the Far West region. The WUMPs prepared in this period followed the Revised Guideline for WUMP Preparation, 2007 and social and technical data were collected in line with the format provided in the guideline.

Inclusive representation during social resource mapping, consultation meetings and prioritization workshops have been taken up more seriously as all field level staff members were oriented to ensure this actually happens in practice. These efforts have definitely drawn the attention of women and disadvantaged groups to social issues, especially in relation to water resources.

Data collected in the WUMPs formulated in this period had been disaggregated to a higher degree, which was a better effort compared to WUMPs of the previous cluster. However, staff members were not clear on how these data were used while formulating the plan. In their opinion, prioritization was mostly based on hardship related to water/sanitation situation of the community; however data on hardship level were not gender disaggregated. RVWRMP staff in the Far West region said, *“Data on hardship level of each household were collected, but it was not disaggregated by gender, caste and ethnicity during analysis. Maybe we should think about this.”* This has limited the integration of gender issues in the plan, though there is positive attitude towards integrating gender.

In addition, this period achieved quantitative representation of women to some extent, though with limited change in their gender roles at home. The facilitator of Koiralakot VDC said, *“The gender role has undergone some change in the society but women’s workload remains the same. Currently, very few women are in a position to attend an interaction session from start to finish. They either come late or leave early due to their household responsibility.”*

This was also evident during the interaction held by the study team in the VDCs of the far western districts (Bajhang). Mostly men were present in the meeting while women were busy in the paddy field. Men, who participated in the discussions, nonchalantly justified the situation by saying: *“How can a woman be free at this time of year? They are busy in the field.”* This comment may sound innocuous but it is indicative of a gross lack of sensitivity to women’s predicament and continuation of traditional gender roles where women work and men make decisions. Effective participation of women demands a change in the traditional gender division of labour.

Water Resource Management Committees (WRMCs) were formed at the VDC level and sub committees were formed at the ward level (sometimes clustering 2–3 wards in one sub-committee). One third representation of women and proportional representation of disadvantaged groups in these committees was ensured by facilitators even though they had to spend more time or hold several interactions with the community to form an inclusive committee. Efforts were made to achieve 50 percent women representation in the committees and in key posts. Where this was not possible, at least 33 percent in the committees’ membership and one of the key posts was ensured for women, as guided by national policies. *User committees are registered and permitted to open an account by the DDC and district line agencies only if minimum representation of women in the committee is fulfilled.*

Though the programme has adopted the practice of holding separate discussions (for e.g., Chhapali VDC) with women groups to understand their priorities and needs, decisions are usually influenced by men. As men’s voice and influence is much stronger than women’s in the committees, men’s priorities take precedence over those of women’s. For example: *Though women in Chhapali VDC demanded a water mill as their top priority, not a single watermill was selected in the WUMP during the VDC level selection process.*

WUMPs formulated in this period were more process oriented. All the processes mentioned in the guideline were followed and efforts to bring women and disadvantaged groups in WRMCs were also accelerated. In some cases (Chhapali VDC, Doti) where only Bramhin/Chhetri women were able to participate, field staff organized several meetings to bring women from Dalit groups in the consultation meeting. This initiative, to an appreciable extent, was successful in quantitative terms. However, as qualitative and meaningful participation of women and other disadvantaged groups is still a long way off, little success has been achieved in terms of GESI transformation.

## Period 2011-2014

Out of the 36 WUMPs prepared during this period, 2 WUMPs (Mastabandhali, Achham and Mahankal, Sindhupalchowk) were selected for field study. The WUMP preparation guideline was revised again by the WARMP in 2012. While most of the provisions and directives on the WUMP process remained the same, this revision focused on 3R (retention, recharge and reuse of water) opportunities in IWRM. The Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan (2011) provided for the V-WASH-CC to take the lead in water/sanitation activities in the VDC, and the WRMC's role thus shifted to the V-WASH-CC. Similarly, the Ward Citizen Forums (WCF), the local governance units at the ward level, were directed to hold ward level consultation and planning processes. Thus, in the changed context, the WRMSC's role is now assumed by the WCF. (Box 10 provides the details of V-WASH-CC and WCF in the changing context.)

Although there are provisions for making local level structures (V-WASH-CC and WCF) inclusive, translating such provisions into practice remains a challenge. As WUMP processes are facilitated and led by these structures, agencies supporting the formulation and implementation of WUMPs do focus on reformulating these structures to make local bodies more inclusive with proportional representation of women and disadvantaged groups.

Other processes of WUMP have remained the same and more or less similar to processes applied during the formulation of WUMPs in Cluster 2. Data collection formats, data analysis and interpretation procedure and presentation in the WUMP document do not show any significant changes. Field activities such as social resource mapping, data collection, and facilitation of ward level project prioritization are the responsibility of the technical and social team while a consultant (in the case of WARMP) and the district officer (in the case of RVWRMP) are present during project selection at the VDC level. The consultant and the district officer are responsible for preparing the WUMP document in their respective programmes. They are the key actors for incorporating GESI in the entire process. This will largely depend on: i) how they perceive the importance of GESI incorporation during WUMP formulation; ii) how they sensitize WCF and V-WASH-CC during facilitation; and iii) how they demand and analyse GESI sensitive data.

Major changes observed over the years in relation to adoption of GESI responsive processes in WUMP formulation are increased focus on and efforts at ensuring inclusive representation in meetings and committees. GESI analysis is not conducted as part of the WUMP process. A brief analysis of gender roles at the household and community level was included in the WUMPs during the period of Cluster 2 (2007-2010). However, this was not given continuity while updating these WUMPs or formulating new ones in Cluster 3. Given that the WUMP document, including the section on the GESI, is written by a consultant or relevant official of the RVWRMP, GESI integration in the WUMP document largely depends on the writer's knowledge base, perception of GESI and commitment to gender transformative change. To address this concern, RVWRMP officials responsible for writing the WUMP document have consulted with or sought contribution from the GESI expert and/or GESI focal person in their organization.

Though participatory planning process is emphasized, important elements of participatory process, such as power imbalances in communities and intra household abilities and constraints to participate, are not considered in the

## Box 10: Inclusiveness in community organizations

### VDC Level Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Coordination Committee (V-WASH-CC)

The VDC is the smallest unit for the planning and programming of water/sanitation at the local level. The V-WASH-CC is responsible for the overall planning, implementation, monitoring and supervision of water, sanitation and hygiene related promotional activities. In the absence of elected chairperson, the VDC secretary chairs the V-WASH-CC while the Health Facility In Charge is the member secretary. Other members of the coordination committee include representatives of health facilities, NGOs, CBOs, FUGs, development partners, WASH Users' Committee, Tole development organizations, child clubs, FCHVs, headmasters/principals, SMC/PTA, women groups, micro credit organizations, local networks, etc. The size of the respective committees is endorsed by the VDC in coordination with D-WASH-CC. To a certain extent, it is inclusive and representative.

### Ward Citizen Forum (WCF)

To enhance the access to general citizens in the local planning, monitoring and evaluation processes, an inclusive structure known as the Ward Citizen Forum (WCF) is formed at the ward level. The WCF has 25 members comprising representatives of local community structures including women, Dalits, Janajatis and other disadvantaged groups. A minimum of 33 percent women's representation is ensured in the forum. The WCF is responsible for facilitating a participatory planning process at the ward level.

WUMP formulation processes. Similarly, providing opportunity to influence decisions, flexibility in terms of timing of meetings, that suits disadvantaged groups and follow-up support are missing in all the WUMPs formulated in different time clusters.

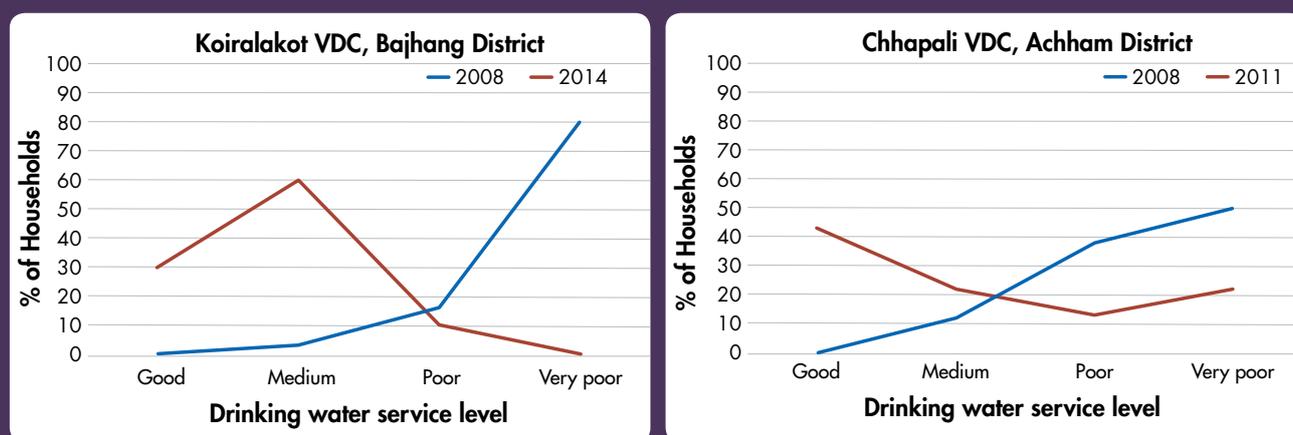
## GESI Outcome of WUMP Practices

WUMP is implemented in 17 steps using a participatory approach to reach the communities at ward level, including women and members of marginalized groups. This has had positive impact to a large extent. Data shows the WUMP process has contributed in improving water services, empowering women, enhancing their agency and improving the health and sanitation status of women and marginalized caste and ethnic groups.

### Improved water services

Given that the implementing agencies (WARMP/RVWRMP) have taken an approach to cover the entire VDC through their WASH interventions, field study indicates that even the most scattered and remote settlements have improved access to water services and toilet facilities. Comparative data presented in the updated WUMPs shows increased number of households with better water services in the post WUMP implementation period. In Koiralakot VDC, Bajhang district and Chhapali VDC, Accham district, there is distinct improvement in drinking water service level. Service level is categorized as SL4 (very poor), SL3 (poor), SL2 (medium) and SL1 (good). Level of service is described in terms of hardship (water fetching time, quality, reliability of source).

Figure 4: Status of increased service level in Koiralakot and Chhapali VDC between 2008 and 2014, RVWRMP



Source: Study by HELVETAS SWISS Intercooperation and Rural Village Water Resources Management Project

During the six years period, all HHs of Koiralakot in the SL4 have been upgraded to higher levels. While 60 percent and 30 percent of HHs now occupy their places in the SL2 and SL1 categories, 10 percent of the HHs are still in the SL3 category. Similarly, in Chhapali VDC 43 percent of the HHs reached SL1, which was 0 percent in 2008, and HHs belonging to SL4 came down to 22 percent from 50 percent in 2008. This indicates a positive trend in the implementation of WUMP projects in terms improvement in the service level.

An area of concern is that only 10 percent of HHs of Koiralakot were able to move from SL4 (very poor) to SL3 (poor) and 22 percent of HHs of Chhapali are still in the SL4 category. However, the lower number of households in SL1 in Koiralakot as compared to Chhapali in 2014 does raise concerns regarding gender and inclusion issues. Thus, it is necessary to examine the gender and caste/ethnicity makeup of these HHs and to find out the reasons for the state of poor service.

Although certain areas need improvement to become more gender and socially inclusive, women in VDCs where WUMP had been prepared and implemented said that their water-related drudgery has been drastically reduced (photo 2)

## Improvement in health and hygiene

WUMP interventions on WASH have generated positive results on health and sanitation in the VDCs. Awareness raising and sensitization of community has played a critical role in bringing behavioural changes in sanitation practices. However, people living in the most remote areas of these VDCs are sometimes marginalized and among the last recipients of the benefits. As the health post chief in Chhapali VDC, Doti district said: *“During my two-year tenure, I have observed some remarkable changes in health and hygiene situation in the VDC. Patients coming to the health post to treat communicable diseases have decreased significantly. However, there is not much change in the Dalit settlement of ward number 6, which is the poorest and most remote settlement of the VDC.”* This indicates that despite positive results emanating from WASH interventions, the most disadvantaged groups can still be bypassed in the absence specific targeted approaches.



Photo 2: A woman at Koiralakot VDC, Bajhang: **“Now we don’t have to spend hours on fetching water.”**

## Community ownership of WASH interventions

WASH interventions have managed to solicit a high degree of community ownership, which has been instrumental in enhancing functional efficiency and sustainability. Drinking water user committees of most of the schemes are functional. In most cases, committee members are vibrantly involved in mobilizing the repair and maintenance fund, and collectively discuss and make decisions on various operational and repair/maintenance issues.

## Inclusive representation in committees and addressing gender need

Mandatory provisions have increased the representation of women and disadvantaged groups in WASH related committees. Although there is still a long way to go towards achieving meaningful participation, the significant increase in their representation in WASH related committees has provided women opportunities to become water managers and decision makers in the days to come. The case of Bajung VDC, where WUMP was formulated in 1998/99, illustrates that capacity development is only possible when people are provided the opportunity for self-development. A case from Saptari in Box 11 illustrates how women have utilised the space provided for their participation to voice their concerns.

## Improvement in women’s status

The opportunities to take leadership and participate in forums to discuss water plans have increased women’s agency. As part of the action research, women participants at the VDC level Planning workshop in Saptari district organized in 2016 expressed their increased confidence. They also said that the workshop had improved their understanding of the importance of WUMP. Stakeholders, including women from Doti and Parnat districts, reported that women’s status has improved due to their presence in water schemes construction committees. The women in leadership positions are able to interact and negotiate with local government agencies. Even the district’s sectoral committees on water resources management invite them to district-level consultation meetings. Although it is difficult to measure the extent to which WUMP interventions have improved their abilities, stakeholders appreciate the contribution of WUMP interventions in empowering and improving women’s status.

## Self-realization and identity among women

Membership in user committees has been a profound experience for many women. While obtaining citizenship certificate had never mattered to them in the past, the membership in user committees necessitated a citizenship certificate. Key post holders such as the chairperson and treasurer feel empowered when they sign cheques and visit banks, VDCs and other government offices. This experience has instilled self-confidence in women and enabled them to work outside their homes.

## Box 11: Women's empowerment through participation: A case of Lohazara VDC, Saptari

A three-day planning workshop on WUMP was held in Lohazara VDC in Saptari, a district in the Terai region of Nepal. Majority of people in the VDC belong to Madhesi caste groups. Traditionally, women are responsible for household chores and keep their heads covered with a dupatta to show respect to elders and male members of the family. The implementing agencies, in partnership with the local organization, facilitated the planning workshop, and achieved 40 percent of women's participation in the event. Some of these women had walked 2–3 km to attend the workshop.

On the first day women silently listened to the discussion. As the event progressed and the event organizers facilitated the discussion, the women seemed to realize the importance of voicing their concerns while prioritising activities. From the second day they began to participate actively and raised their concerns. A clear difference between the concerns of women and men was that women talked about reviving a traditional pond to wash their clothes and dishes, and voiced the need for groundwater pump for domestic use, whereas men laid more emphasis on infrastructure and larger projects, indicating that women's and men's priorities are different.

In addition, the women members of the Water Resource Management Committee (VWRMC) spoke to the ex-chairperson of the VDC about possible water schemes and raised the concerns of Dalits in the VDC.



Photo 3: VDC level planning workshop and dialogue between the ex-chairperson of Lohajara VDC and Jitani Devi, member, VWRMC

Majority of the women expressed willingness to participate in community decision making processes as it provided them opportunities to evade the traditional subordinated status. This can be capitalized on to advance social mobilization of women for community development. The user committee can serve as a forum for other women-led community development activities.

### Addressing gender-based discrimination

*Chhaupadi* has been a widespread form of gender-based discrimination in the Mid and Far Western hill region. *Chhaupadi* Directives 2064 B.S. (2007), in line with the verdict of the Supreme Court, came into action in 2007 in order to prevent this form of discrimination. Agencies implementing drinking water schemes made a lot of effort to end this practice. *Chhaupadi* related orientation and sensitization was included in all community meetings and orientations in collaboration with the District Women and Children Office. The facilitator/social mobilizers engaged in household data collection were asked to sensitize members of each household on the ill effects of the *Chhaupadi* practice. Community people estimated that this discriminatory practice has decreased by over 90 percent compared to the scenario a decade back. (Based on estimation made by women and men of the community and V-WASH-CC members during interaction with the study team in Bajhang, Doti and Achham districts).

### Change in gender role

As a water point is available close by, fetching water has become a common task not only for women but also for men, who are moving away from the traditional notion of water fetching as a feminine activity. Availability of water

service closer to the house has brought about a drastic change in the culture of *pandhera* visits. A community member in Mahankal VDC, Sindhupalchowk said: *"A man going to the pandhera to fetch water used to be taken as a symbol of weakness, as the task was associated with women. This situation has changed drastically with water points coming closer to home."* In addition, women's representation in the various committees in the WUMP process has empowered them, and affirmative action taken by the programme to ensure women's representation in the committee has opened up space to raise their concerns. Despite these positive changes, many women are unable to participate in community work due to time constraints imposed by their gender roles. Though gender roles are slowly being confronted, gendered status quo persists in rural communities. For example, men fetching water is not due to change in their mindset but due to convenience and easy access. Thus, change in this gender role is not leading to change in the position or status of women

## Political influence

In four out of the five selected VDCs where WUMPs were implemented, VDC secretaries reported that WUMP have helped them to stop unwarranted political influence of local political parties on programme prioritization. They have resisted *"khalti ko yojana"* (plans doled out of pockets) of political parties by sticking to the WUMP projects. This has paved the way for the implementation of projects emanating from participatory planning processes. This has to some extent protected the priorities of poor and disadvantaged people. In this way, WUMPs can be viewed as a practical tool that enables local institutions to operate in a decentralized environment at the VDC level

## Struggle in Achieving Gender and Social Inclusion

Attitude and mindset of stakeholders have a direct impact on GESI responsiveness in WUMP processes. GESI responsiveness is understood as *"representation of women from different caste and ethnicities in the WUMP processes, particularly their presence in committees"*. Thus, the process itself was perceived as the result rather than a means to achieve gender equity in water planning and implementation. This notion is an obstacle in promoting the voice and influence of these groups. According to one of the local leader, men are granting women a favour by fulfilling the mandatory provision of at least 33% women representation in the committees. Such an attitude obstructs the transformation of women's and men's roles and power relations.

Being inclusive was mostly synonymous with ensuring representation of communities included in the national list of excluded groups (such as women, Dalit, Janajati). However respondents said, *"Usually the same set of faces represents women, Janajatis and Dalits in meetings and trainings, especially if they are organized or facilitated by local government agencies."* Chairperson of the women's network or women cooperative, and leaders of Dalits and Janajatis are easy to reach and have regular contact with the offices. Letters are issued in their names from the VDCs for representation in events. Some of these individuals have moved higher up in the power structure in their community.

Although the participatory planning process has been able to involve women and, to some extent, people from the poor and disadvantaged communities, their influence in the planning process is not significant. WRMSC or WCF members who attended the ward level workshop for project prioritization reported that they were not informed about how many projects were prioritized from their ward and sent to the VDC to be included in the WUMP. This is due to the fact that meetings are usually long (lasting all day) whereas women had to return home to carry out their household responsibilities. In the case of poor women and men, missing out on their daily work to attend meetings further exacerbates their hardship given their precarious economic condition. In such a situation, even if they are present in meetings, they are unlikely to be in a position to exercise voice and influence in decision making as their minds are preoccupied with livelihood concerns and family responsibilities.

Further, as men were intimately involved in community decision making, they automatically inherit the image and the prerogative of 'decision making' and 'influencing decision making' at the larger community level. In such a patriarchal socio-cultural environment, it is difficult for women to make themselves heard. Though the number of women in user committees and in vital posts of the committees (chair, vice-chair, treasure, secretary) have, to some extent, increased due to inclusive policies, very few of these women have been able to carry out their role efficiently. For example, in Mastabandali VDC of Achham, a woman chairperson said that she was about to resign from the post as people had not cooperated in raising the maintenance fund (NPR 1500 per household), which was decided



Photo 4: **Women have to attend meetings with their children (photos from Achham and Sindhupalchowk)**

by the committees after discussion with the users. Other stakeholders (VWASHCC members) were of the opinion that such non-cooperation has been instigated by the man who had also contested for the post of chairperson.

Women have to regularly put up with lack of cooperation from male members, unwarranted interference of family members (husband or father-in-law) and protective attitude and behaviour of public offices. The influence of men due to their ownership of and control over financial resources was evident in ward no. 1 of Mahankal VDC of Sindhupalchowk district, where the male chairperson ensured uninterrupted implementation of the drinking water project through his personal funds when disbursement of the approved funds by the VDC was delayed. Though this was repaid later on, the chairperson's influence over the committee was further reinforced. Due to inequality in access to fixed assets, women lack the capacity to contribute in the same way.

There are differential values attached to gender roles. Despite women's significant role in farming and water management, women do not assume the role of farm managers and decision makers. *"Even though we work longer hours in the field, and have to worry all the time about how to grow green vegetables in the dry season, men think they are the farmers and we are not,"* said a woman in Duwachaur VDC, Sinchpalchowk. Additionally, women are fully occupied with household and farm activities, and this leaves them little time to attend public and committee meetings. One of the respondents said, *"You can see women in the public meetings only if they have someone back home to take care of domestic work in their absence."* This statement was supported by other women as well. This also applies to male wageworkers.

At the local level, a handful of influential men associated with leading political parties assume the leadership roles and influence decision making. *"Even to become chairperson of a resourceful community forest user group, one needs be backed up by an influential political party. Politics is played and captured by the same set of people for decades. The only difference is that their political allegiance changes when political equation changes. We are used to seeing the same faces representing the political parties since 1990,"* one of the participants in Sindhupalchowk said during the interaction. Local political leaders play a critical role in community structures and the water user groups are no exception. Representation of women, Dalits and the poor in political leadership is low.

An area where women have begun to assume leadership positions is the local cooperatives. Women who lead cooperatives are recognized and respected in their communities because they are the managers of sizable funds accumulated in cooperatives. The same set of women is also represented in VDC level women's network (networks formed to utilize the targeted fund of local government's block grant) such as the network against gender-based violence, district network of women, etc. Networks of indigenous nationalities and Dalits also exist at the local level. However, they are still institutionally weak and mainly guided by the political leadership of their respective communities.

In Palchowk VDC (Sindhupalchowk district), where the majority of population belongs to the Tamang ethnic group, the major problems identified by women were illiteracy, unavailability of information on public event/meetings, and language barrier as many women do not understand and speak Nepali. *"I could not understand half of the things discussed in the meetings,"* said a Tamang women health volunteer of ward number 9 of Palchowk VDC.

The trend of inviting women from various ethnic groups in meetings is increasing, but meetings are conducted without taking into consideration participants' constraints. Gender role in domestic work has remained the same across all caste/ethnic groups in both the project districts. *"Women are willing and ready to take part in community work, but the problem is that men are not willing and ready to share domestic work when women are not home,"* said a women representative in the network against gender-based violence in Bhimeshwar VDC.

Prevailing discriminatory practices pose a hurdle in gender integration. Untouchability is still widely practiced by non-Dalits and even within different Dalit groups. Most people see the inclusion of Dalits in committees as a step for fulfilling a mandatory requirement rather than a prerequisite for broad-based inclusive development. A member of the VWASHCC in Koiralakot VDC, Bajhang epitomizes the entrenched belief among many non-Dalits in the far western region: *"We no longer have to deal with issues of untouchability in drinking water schemes. We now have our own taps and they (Dalits) have their own."* This indicates that the strategy taken by the VWASHCC focused more on managing the conflict rather than on making meaningful contribution towards ushering transformative changes. A young girl from the Dalit community in Dubachaur VDC said that she has faced discrimination by non-Dalits many times. *"Even if we touch a stone in the public tap, they (non-Dalits) wash the stone with water. This is a very humiliating experience."*

## Conclusion

Content analysis of WUMP documents and field research on the achievement of WUMP practices on GESI during implementation has revealed some shortcomings as well as challenges in addressing gender and inclusion issues. Though the participatory and inclusive approach has opened up space for socially excluded groups to be part of the planning process, achieving GESI more effectively would require integrating it in all seventeen steps of WUMP implementation. There is a need to rephrase the objective of WUMP in the plan document to incorporate a vision on achieving gender and social inclusion in water sector development. Further integrating concerns related to gender and social inclusion in all the sessions of capacity building training provided to service provider, social mobiliser and local stakeholders will increase participants' capacity to mainstream gender in WUMP implementation steps. Also collection of gender disaggregated data and its analysis needs to inform programme prioritisation and planning. Analysis of women's workload needs to inform WUMP implementation plan.

The participatory and inclusive approach of WUMP has helped make the water planning process somewhat inclusive. In the absence of such an approach, local water planning was controlled by political elites. Affirmative action adopted by WUMP to ensure participation of women and excluded groups has increased the confidence of women and socially excluded community members to a large extent.

However, integrating GESI in the WUMP process remains a challenge because of the socio-cultural barriers faced by women and the marginalized population. To bring gender transformative change, it is important to be sensitive to this reality and take these barriers into consideration. Ensuring active participation of women and marginalized community members in the WUMP process calls for gender transformative changes, which will only come about when all community members revisit existing gender roles, both men and women share domestic responsibilities, and the elites are willing to share resources with the poor.

# Conclusion

## WUMP for Inclusive Sustainable Water Sector Development

Considering the daily conflicts over water, collective water planning is important for achieving water equity in access to and control over water resources. Water sector management faces many challenges triggered by climatic variability and anthropogenic activities. This has not only caused water scarcity, but also increased water-induced disasters. Managing water scarcity and water-induced disasters simultaneously requires collective planning (Pennan et al, 2016). Although periodic development planning in Nepal started in 1958, systematic water sector planning was only achieved many decades later with the formulation of the National Water Plan 2005. Considering the importance of local water planning, initiatives such as the Water Use Master Plan and Local Water Parliament are being carried out at the local level. In this context, it is important to pay attention to gender and social inclusion issues in local water planning. Nepal's demography has changed rapidly over the last decade with increased male migration for foreign employment. Long-term absence of men has increased the role of women in all spheres. Moreover, gender inequities are entrenched in Nepali society.

This study concludes that current local water planning practices in Nepal represent an effort towards inclusive water sector development. WUMP is here envisaged as a participatory, inclusive and holistic plan of a VDC for effective and sustainable use of water resources. The seventeen steps of WUMP implementation provides community members opportunities to assess available water resources and negotiate on prioritizing water infrastructure to meet their water needs. Inquiry made at the intra-household level on the impact of WUMP indicates that water services have improved in the villages where the WUMP is in place. The VDC where the WUMP was formulated more than ten years ago had realized the need to assess current resources and needs and update the water plan. Women respondents said the WUMP process had helped bring a water system close to their homes and reduced their drudgery. As the WUMP process purposively encouraged women's participation in various stages, it increased their confidence and capacity to articulate their needs and negotiate. Considering these positive results of WUMP, scaling up WUMP with lessons learned from past experience could lead to gender inclusive water sector development. The effort of Ministry of Local Development and Ministry of Water Supply and Sanitation on formulating WUMP preparation guidelines, 2016 is a novel effort on providing national level guiding document. However the effort has not been taken forward equally by other water sectors such as irrigation, energy and environment.

In the absence of WUMP practice, local water management could be in the hands of the local elite. WUMP has provided community members the opportunity to debate and discuss available water resources and their use, which itself is a novel effort towards inclusive water sector development. Earlier studies on top-down water planning and programme development indicated a mismatch between community needs and sustainable resource management (Chamber et al 1989).

Based on the principle of integrated water resources management, WUMP focuses on water for drinking water and sanitation, irrigation, environment and other uses, in accordance with the provisions on water sector development in the National Water Plan 2005. However, WUMP has not been owned by national water policies yet. Both the Water Resources Strategy 2002 and National Water Plan 2005 are silent on local water planning practices. The Water Resources Act 1992 and Regulation 1993 do mandate a district-level coordination committee and formation of water users' organization but does not mention the need for local water planning.

The Local Self Governance Act and Regulation 1999 delegate the responsibility of village development to local authorities such as village and district development committees. Accordingly, WUMP has been formed and owned by the VDC. Under the VDC's mandate, gender and social inclusion is guided by national policy on participatory and gender inclusive development in accordance with the Interim Constitution and national gender guidelines. It is mandatory for the VDC to ensure 33 percent women representation and allocate budget for activities for women and children.

Considering more than a decade of experience on WUMP guided by national gender policy, scaling up WUMP in national water plans and policies would be a step towards inclusive water sector development. This is an opportunity at this juncture of time when state restructuring to federal states is taking place.

## Recommendation on Integrating GESI in Local Water Planning

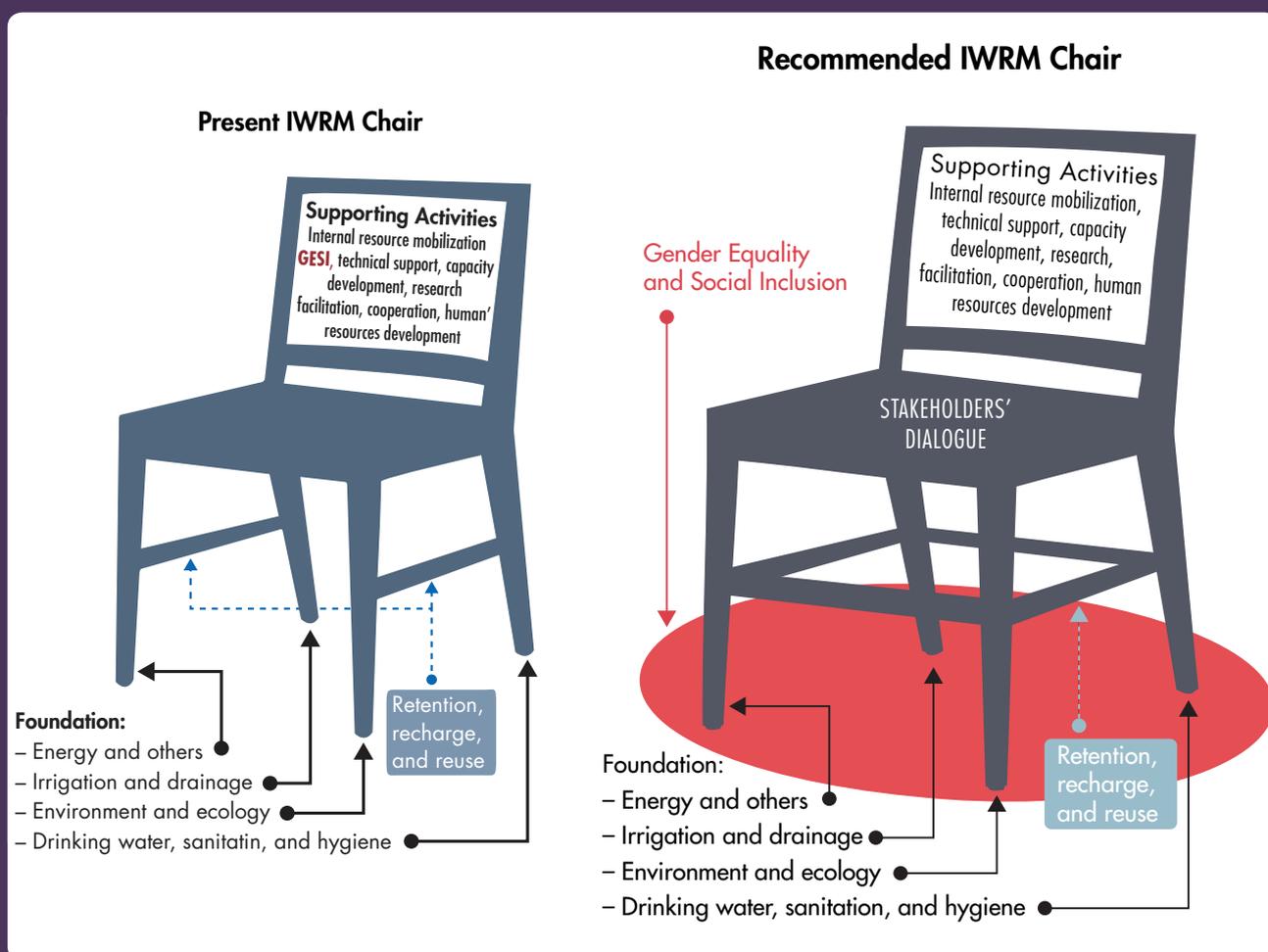
Though WUMP implemented by the government of Nepal in project mode with support from donor agencies such as HELVETAS, Government of Finland or IDRC aimed to be inclusive, there are challenges on integrating gender and social inclusion effectively. This is because addressing gender and inclusion issue is not a straightforward process. It entails questioning existing power relations and creating tensions. This study has identified a number of areas that need to be addressed to make existing WUMP practices GESI sensitive and responsive.

### (Re)conceptualization of GESI in WUMP Guidelines

The IWRM chair that conceptualizes water planning for WUMP preparation has four legs represented by drinking water sanitation, irrigation, environment, and other uses of water. The back of the chair, which symbolizes support, represents various activities including integration of gender and social inclusion. Hence GESI efforts are seen as supporting activities.

This conceptualization has limited gender integration for transformative change. As GESI efforts are seen as supporting activities, they are simply equated with representation of women and marginalized caste and ethnic groups in various committees. This does not take into account the different experiences and needs of women. In fact, gender disparities and social exclusion form the context within which WUMPs are implemented. Incorporating GESI issues in all the steps of WUMP preparation is possible only when GESI is conceptualized as the context and vision of WUMP, as the recommended IWRM chair does below.

To reconceptualize the status of GESI in the WUMP process, the title and vision of the guidelines could be rephrased to include gender and social inclusion, for example, Guidelines for Gender Inclusive WUMP. The document needs to provide conceptual clarity on gender inequity and exclusion and specify which groups are disadvantaged.



## Revisiting capacity building training

Under the WUMP implementation process, building the capacity of stakeholders including facilitators, key community representatives and technicians is considered an important step of water planning. Stakeholders are provided four days' capacity building training with 16 sessions. Only 1 of the 16 sessions is on gender. This is not enough to link GESI concerns with other sessions. GESI session should be extended to at least a day long session and cover how gender is to be addressed in each step of the WUMP process. Alternatively, all other sessions should devote enough time to gender integration and social inclusion issues in all 17 steps of WUMP process. This would help address the shortcomings in integrating gender and inclusion issues in the entire process of WUMP.

At the same time, the curriculum and pedagogy of the capacity building training needs to address participants' need, capability, geographical location, language and cultural barriers. Ample time should be allocated according to the specific needs of diverse groups. There should be plans for post training assessment and follow-up sessions. Currently the training adopts a blanket approach.

## GESI in WUMP document: Revision of formats

A review of WUMP documents found that the views and perceptions of the individual preparing the document shapes the way gender is addressed in WUMP. Some guidelines on how to interpret the categories in the checklist would help ensure consistency. Annex 2 includes GESI checklist for the 17-step planning process; Annex 3 suggests revision of formats of WUMP document; and Annex 4 provides samples of gender and social disaggregated data to be included in WUMP as reference.

## Time spent on social mobilization

WUMP preparation guidelines 2007 mentioned that social mobilization and rapport building takes at least four to six months and sometimes more than a year. However, none of the programmes implementing WUMP was found to have spent even the minimum amount of time. The time spent was always less than four months. Information provided by field staff, VWASHCC and community members suggests that at least nine months is required for WUMP formulation. The time spent of social mobilization has significant contribution in disseminating information to women and excluded community members, which play key role on empowering them to address their need and actively participate in WUMP process.

Participatory tools (such as ward level planning workshop and social resource mapping) need to be flexible in terms of the number of events, venue, language used, etc. Where necessary, separate sessions for men and women and for specific disadvantaged/excluded groups are required to fully understand their specific needs, and to create an enabling environment for consensus building among diverse groups in the targeted communities. This approach will also be beneficial in terms of managing disputes and conflicts that may arise in the future. The short time spent is due to lack of fund. However, as WUMP is a VDC-owned programme, this component can be owned by the VDC combined with other VDC level activities to ensure that sufficient time is spent on social mobilisation to reach various gender groups.

## GESI in WUMP objective

The stated objective of WUMP focused on operational aspects rather than on providing a vision for gender and socially inclusive water planning. The main objective of WUMP should be formulated from a gender and social inclusion perspective to shape the vision of the VDC on gender inclusive water sector development. Without this, gender integration will remain rather ad-hoc. The objective could be revised as: Meeting the basic water needs of every individual in the village through inclusive water planning and consensus among villagers to achieve gender equity and justice.

## Gender disaggregated data

Gender disaggregated data is the first and foremost tool for gender analysis and gender planning. Gender disaggregated data has been collected to a large extent in current WUMPs; however the WUMP documents contain limited analysis of these data, and thus they are not adequately fed into gender analysis of water needs and

programme priorities. Analysing gender disaggregated data on the division of workload as well as annual seasonal occupation and using such analysis to shape the WUMP implementation plan will help women to participate more effectively.

### **Meaningful (active and decision-making) participation**

Achieving meaningful participation of women and marginalized community members is difficult, as it involves confronting dominant gender norms and practices. The study concludes that facilitation from external agencies, in this case support organization, can help break social barriers to a large extent, and this demands sensitizing staff members on gender and enhancing their capacity. Including gender responsive budget in WUMP formulation is essential; it serves as a planning tool to examine revenues, expenditures, and deficit from a GESI perspective. GRB tools such as *gender-disaggregated beneficiary assessment* can assess budgetary allocations of WUMP and reveal the need for budgetary re-allocations for water services for the most disadvantaged groups of the VDC.

In addition, documenting and sharing experiences of incorporating GESI issues is essential for drawing lessons on what works and what does not work in different situations. The achievements of GESI interventions are described only in terms of the number of women and disadvantaged groups present at trainings and meetings or in committees. There is a need to document the processes that lead to the meaningful participation of these groups in the events and how this participation actually improved their lives, and then share these lessons with other VDCs. As WUMPs are being prepared in various parts of the country, documentation of good practices and constraints faced at different levels while incorporating GESI will be a knowledge base for agencies and staff working in the water sector for scaling up the WUMP effort as well as to achieve meaningful participation.

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# Annex 2: GESI Checklist for the 17 Steps of the Planning Process

Steps	Assessment from GESI perspective	GESI Checklist
1. VDC selection	Scarcity of drinking water and irrigation facilities/infrastructure along with presence of socially excluded group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use updated district level data for VDC selection</li> </ul>
2. Memorandum of understanding with Village Development Committee	Signing a memorandum is evidence of VDC's ownership of the process. MoU articulates reshuffling/formation of WCF and VWASHCC to ensure gender balance representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the roles and responsibility of both parties (VDC/SO) been defined in the formulation and implementation of GESI responsive WUMP?</li> <li>• Has an accountability framework been included in MoU?</li> </ul>
3. Selection of service providers (facilitator), training and mobilization	Selection criteria, selection of organization with GESI sensitivity and thematic experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure service provider:</li> <li>• Has inclusive membership/ staff.</li> <li>• Practice GESI approach in the organization (have GESI policy or strategy)</li> <li>• Have capacity and expertise to carry out the process in a GESI responsive way</li> </ul>
4. Water Resources Management Sub-committees/Ward WASH-CC formation	As WCF has taken up role of Ward WASH CC, there is no need to form a committee. At the field level, SOs are putting an effort to reshuffle the WCF to make it more inclusive. MoFALD's policy for WCF to be led by a male and women candidate each alternative year has provided an opportunity for women to play an active role in WCF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do WCFs have inclusive representation?</li> <li>• Are they having regular consultation/meeting?</li> <li>• Are adequate numbers of member present in the meeting?</li> <li>• Do all the members have opportunities to express their views or negotiate their priority?</li> </ul>
5. Water Resources Management main-committee (V-WASH-CC) formation	V WASH CCs are formed in line with the regulation of NSHMP (2011). As this is a broad based committee, with no limitation in the number of membership, there is an opportunity to increase participation of women, poor and disadvantaged group in this committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are women, poor and disadvantaged represented adequately? (For eg: 50% women members and proportional representation of Dalit and other excluded groups)</li> <li>• Is each ward represented in V-WASH-CC?</li> <li>• Are consultation/meetings held regularly?</li> <li>• Are adequate number of member present in the meetings?</li> <li>• Do all the members have opportunity to express their views or negotiate their priority?</li> </ul>
6. Capacity Building Training to main committee	CBT to main committee provides limited opportunity for GESI Capacity building of trainees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do CBTs ensure inclusive participation?</li> <li>• Does CBT course include adequate session (at least one day) for GESI capacity development?</li> <li>• Are CBT sessions tailored to the need of participants?</li> <li>• Has a separate confidence building session been planned for women, poor and disadvantaged groups?</li> <li>• Has post training assessment been planned?</li> <li>• If yes, does this assessment show satisfactory level of capacity development of all participants?</li> </ul>
7. Pre WUMP workshop at district level	The provision for pre WUMP workshop at the district level can be a forum to express GESI commitment in WUMP formulation and implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are all district level stakeholders informed about GESI objective of WUMP formulation?</li> <li>• Did all stakeholders make commitment for coordination and cooperation?</li> </ul>
8. Social assessment & need identification	In-depth GESI analysis and specific need identification of women, poor and disadvantaged should be inbuilt in this stage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were social/resource mapping and needs identification exercises done separately with women and men's groups?</li> <li>• Did women and DAGs actively participate &amp; express their opinions in the community mapping?</li> <li>• Are the data collected in disaggregated form?</li> </ul>
9. Technical assessment	Technical need assessment team should be aware of gender and social needs and issues of the VDC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the technical team pay attention to specific needs of women and other disadvantaged groups such as: children, persons with disability, remote communities etc</li> <li>• Has there been enough interaction between the social and technical team?</li> </ul>

Steps	Assessment from GESI perspective	GESI Checklist
10. WUMP Planning Workshop (Ward level)	This is a very important stage, where the need of the community is prioritized. One day workshop may not be adequate. Separate workshops for women and disadvantaged groups (in terms of language, remoteness) need to be organized in order to capture their need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were representatives from all the HHs present in the workshop?</li> <li>• Were there 50 % women and proportional representation of other disadvantaged groups?</li> <li>• Were there any confidence building workshops targeting women and disadvantaged groups to encourage them to contribute to ward-wise plan and prioritization?</li> <li>• Were separate workshops organized for women and disadvantaged group to prioritize their needs?</li> <li>• Were the demand or project proposals submitted from women and other disadvantaged groups identified and documented?</li> </ul>
11. WUMP Planning Workshop (VDC level)	This is the project selection time. A large number of proposals sent from all wards are screened at this stage. A mechanism to ensure that demands from women and disadvantaged groups are included in the selection process needs to be incorporated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are all the wards represented in the workshop?</li> <li>• Was there 50% women and proportional representation of disadvantaged group?</li> <li>• Are adequate opportunities provided to ward representatives to negotiate for their priority?</li> <li>• Did the workshop identify priorities of disadvantaged groups and deprived communities?</li> <li>• Percentage of projects demanded by women and other disadvantaged groups was selected.</li> <li>• Percentage of projects directly benefiting to poor and deprived community selected</li> <li>• Did the workshop pay attention to poor communities while defining the expected contributions, both cash and in-kind?</li> </ul>
12. WUMP final report preparation	Once the WUMP is formulated, the WUPM document will be with VDC for implementation. Thus it is important that this document should articulate GESI commitment in a firm way WUMP document writers are/from different agencies/persons than those involved in the social mapping, need identification and planning workshop. Thus, it is important that the WUMP writer communicate with front line actors who were involved in the process. This will help the writer to understand GESI issues and present it appropriately in the WUMP document.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the WUMP report express GESI objective clearly</li> <li>• Does the WUMP writer have GESI sensitivity/expertise?</li> <li>• Did WUMP writer communicate with social/technical team to understand GESI situation</li> <li>• Has the WUMP writer been oriented to analyse and present the data in a disaggregated manner</li> <li>• Did the WUMP writer ensure not to use gender biased terminology</li> </ul>
13. Endorsement of WUMP by VDC council	This is VDC's ownership process. Thus VDC need to make commitment to follow GESI policy of MoFALD during implementation of WUMP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the VDC committed towards implementation and marketing of WUMP?</li> <li>• Is the VWASH CC aware about GESI policy?</li> <li>• Are the members committed to follow GESI policy during WUMP implementation?</li> </ul>
14. Post WUMP workshop at district level/ endorsement by DDC	This is DDC's ownership process. Thus the DDC needs to make commitment to follow the GESI mainstreaming strategy of MoFALD during the implementation of WUMP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the DDC committed to supporting the implementation and marketing of WUMP?</li> <li>• Is the D WASH CC aware of MOFALD's GESI policy?</li> <li>• Are the members committed to following GESI policy during the implementation of WUMP</li> </ul>
15. Implementation of different projects	WUMP will be implemented by different organizations. Thus it is the VDC's or DDC's responsibility to ensure GESI responsive implementation process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are all beneficiaries of the scheme represented in the user committee (UC)?</li> <li>• Has the implementing agency encouraged women, disadvantaged groups to come forward to be potential WC member?</li> <li>• Is 50% women representation and at least one key position ensured in user committees?</li> <li>• Is capacity building of women in key positions accorded priority?</li> <li>• Are focused trainings and support provided to women members?</li> <li>• Did the implementing agency pay attention to the poor while defining the community contributions, both cash and in-kind?</li> <li>• Was access to technical and financial information made available through hoarding boards/public audits gender sensitive?</li> </ul>
16. WUMP realization and marketing	Priority should be given to GESI related projects during realization and marketing of WUMP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have projects with strong GESI link been given priority while marketing WUMP?</li> </ul>
17. WUMP follow-up	WUMP follow-up needs to adopt GESI sensitive monitoring and evaluation criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did women and disadvantaged groups participate in WUMP updating?</li> <li>• Did the follow-up include assessment of the change in the situation of women and disadvantaged groups?</li> <li>• Did the follow-up take into account how many projects demanded by women and disadvantaged groups were implemented?</li> </ul>

# Annex 3: Suggestion for Revision of Formats of WUMP Formulation Guideline

Format included in Annex of WUMP formulation guideline	Suggestion to addition/revision
Annex 1 MoU with VDC & DDC	VDC and DDC will follow the GESI strategy of MoFALD to ensure GESI responsive planning and monitoring
Annex 2 ToR for WUMP facilitator (social, technical and WUMP writer)	Roles & responsibility: Carry out roles and responsibility in a GESI responsive manner. Time input: In line with revised timeframe Qualification/experience: Familiar with GESI issues, ability to conduct GESI analysis
Annex 3 Schedule for facilitator's training	At least one day training session on GESI Session I - Overall orientation on GESI issues Session II - Specific GESI concerns of IWRM Session III - Mainstreaming GESI in WUMP in line with guideline Session IV- Specific measures to be taken for GESI sensitive data collection, ensure quantitative and qualitative participation, facilitation of voice and influence of women and disadvantaged
Annex 4 WUMP orientation schedule	Introduction of WUMP: Explain why WUMP should be a GESI responsive plan and what needs to be done for this.
Annex 5 Ward level orientation schedule	Introduction of WUMP: Explain why WUMP should be a GESI responsive plan and what needs to be done for this.
Annex 6 Schedule for CBT for VWASH CC	Session I - Overall orientation on GESI issues Session II - Specific GESI concerns of IWRM Session III - Mainstreaming GESI in WUMP in line with guideline Session IV - As members of V WASH CC, their role and responsibility to ensure GESI responsiveness in WUMP formulation and implementation
Annex 7 Social assessment format	
SA 01 HH survey	Specify if this is a women-headed HH. Specify if there are PDW in the HH.
SA 12 Socioeconomic information	Migration data – disaggregate by sex
SA 14 Needs identification for water resource development	Specify, HHs benefiting from existing service level (for e.g., how many of SL 4 Dalit HH will benefit from the scheme?)
Annex 8 Planning format	
PL 01 Ward level Planning format	Specify, HHs benefiting from existing service level (for e.g., how many of SL 4 Dalit HH will benefit from the scheme?) Specify, how women will benefited from the project
PL 02 to PL 06 VDC level Planning format	Specify, HHs benefiting from existing service level (for e.g., how many of SL 4 Dalit HH will benefit from the scheme?) Specify, how women will benefit from the project
PL 09 Name of VWASH CC	To be recorded disaggregated by sex, caste/ethnicity, age, PWD
Annex 9 Schedule for ward level planning workshop	Explanation of GESI responsive prioritization criteria Prioritization of the schemes according to the four legs of WARM Chair and GESI criteria
Annex 10 Schedule for VDC level planning workshop	Explanation of GESI responsive selection criteria Selection of the schemes and GESI criteria
Annex 11 ToC of WUMP report	Include, GESI situation analysis of VDC Include, Strategy to mainstream GESI in WUMP formulation and implementation

# Annex 4: Samples of Disaggregated Social Data to be Included in WUMP Document

Type of data	Disaggregation
Population	By sex, caste/ethnicity, age, PWD
Household	By poverty level and caste/ethnicity, women headed HH
Education	Literacy – by sex and caste/ethnicity, Other education level - by sex and caste/ethnicity,
Occupation	By sex and caste/ethnicity
Skilled human resource	By sex and caste/ethnicity
Service level of HHs	By ward and caste/ethnicity, women headed, child or elderly headed, presence of PDW
Committee member	By sex, caste/ethnicity, age, PWD
Participation in meetings/consultation	By sex, caste/ethnicity, age, PWD





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