

GENDER

JUST CLIMATE SOLUTIONS:

a discussion paper



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SUMMARY

‘Gender just climate solutions’ is a widely used terminology in the development and climate change discourse. However, it calls for further discussion and development, as there seems to be a lack of common understanding on what makes climate solutions gender just. This discussion paper is an attempt in this direction. It has attempted to do so by mapping out some essential principles based on learnings and experiences of practitioners and reviewing existing literature.

1. Executes gendered assessments

Climate change impacts are not gender neutral. Girls and women have different needs and challenges in facing an uncertain climate future compared to boys and men. Therefore, any situation assessment conducted for climate solutions must include a strong gender analysis to understand the differential impacts of the climate crisis on boys, girls, men, and women.

2. Addresses women’s climate vulnerabilities

While a climate solution may solve a grave issue, a gender just climate solution ensures that it addresses girls’ and women’s specific vulnerabilities and needs.

3. Ensures women’s participation and leadership in decision-making

Gender just climate solutions should be guided by the conviction that women are not just victims of climate change, but they are active agents in climate solutions. Therefore, women’s meaningful participation and their roles as decision-makers are key elements of gender just climate solutions.

4. Promotes information dissemination to women

Women must be informed of a climate situation. They should also know that climate solutions are possible and are happening. They should be informed why and how they should be a part of the solutions; and how they will benefit. Additionally, knowledge of existing budgets, plans and projects can also empower women to advocate and pressurize the local government and authorities for its implementation.

5. Enforces gender responsive budgeting

Budget allocations for implementing climate solution must show clear budget earmarked for girls, women, and gender related actions.

6. Assures equitable benefit sharing

Women and girls must receive equal and equitable benefits of a climate action, whether it be monetary or intangible benefits.

7. Applies gender sensitive climate actions

A gender just climate solution ensures that it addresses structural barriers, provides equal opportunity for women to access and benefit from the proposed solutions and does not reinforce existing gender stereotypes, gender-based discrimination and inequalities.

8. Promotes accountability towards girls and women

A gender just climate solution must devise accountability mechanisms to safeguard rights of girls and women through transparent information sharing, ensuring appropriate allocation of gendered budget and its utilisation, guaranteeing equitable benefit sharing to women and monitoring any adverse impact of climate solution on children, especially girls.

9. Promotes transformation through positive change in gender power relationships and local gender roles

A gender just climate solution allows women their democratic rights and their self-determination. Additionally, a gender just climate solution empowers women to alter power relations and gender roles in their communities.



INTRODUCTION

Climate change impact is not gender neutral. Women are more vulnerable to climate change due to a combination of socio-economic factors and their dependence on natural resources (Prakriti Resources Center, 2018). Women's vulnerability to climate change has been attributed to disadvantages and discriminations that arise from gendered norms and gendered divisions of labour and not just from poverty (Ogra & Badola, 2015; Alston, 2014). For instance, during floods, women are disproportionately harmed because survival skills such as swimming are mostly known by men and boys (Ahmed & Fajber, 2009) and because women often stay behind with children and elderly in the midst of incoming disasters as caretakers. They also often get hurt trying to save children and belongings or stay at home instead of going to disaster shelters because of restricted mobility allowed by society (Sultana, 2014). Moreover, women's livelihoods are reliant on the environment which makes them particularly susceptible to changes in climate (Tanjeela & Rutherford, 2018) and causes threats to their livelihood assets (Ogra & Badola, 2015; Tanjeela & Rutherford, 2018). For instance, women are usually responsible to manage water (Denton, 2002; Ahmed & Fajber, 2009; Sultana, 2014; Tanjeela & Rutherford, 2018) and energy sources (Tanjeela & Rutherford, 2018). Thus, gender and climate change are interlinked.

Furthermore, social norms and power relations within a community, especially in a patriarchal set up, create situations where girls and women are unable to adequately adapt or mitigate to climate change. For instance, women's lack of access to resources (Bee, 2013; Denton, 2002), such as access to water for irrigation, credit or credit extension opportunities, which are tied to land ownership and are also inaccessible, becomes structural barriers to soundly adapt to climate change (Ahmed & Fajber, 2009). Lack of decision-making powers (Bee, 2013), such as lack of women's voices in disaster management committees, causes discriminations during disaster relief (Ahmed & Fajber, 2009; Sultana, 2014; Tanjeela & Rutherford, 2018) and lack of access to information, such as early warning system for floods (Ahmed & Fajber, 2009), increases women's vulnerability during climate disasters.

'Gender just climate solutions' has become a buzzword in the field of development. The term has been used by different government organizations as well as I/NGOs. However, what does this term entail? There needs to be a common understanding among actors and stakeholders who use them. This will lead to less misunderstanding and confusion among individuals and institutions who use the term, resulting in smoother collaborations. Furthermore, a common understanding of gender just climate solutions and its essential principles will establish a standard measure which can be used to

ensure that a climate intervention is indeed gender just. Similarly, it can be used to build an accountability system to hold the government and its development partners accountable for the country's national and international commitments on climate change and gender equality.

Gender just climate solution is, therefore, vital in today's climate reality. Evolving from the narrative of women as vulnerable victims, gender just climate solutions ensure an environment that promotes women-led, women-owned, and women-devised solutions for women-identified problems. Gender just climate solutions allow women to be active agents in their communities where they can use their democratic rights to undertake interventions that increase their climate adaptability and empower them socially as well as economically.

SOME KEY TERMS USED IN THIS PAPER

Gender: In the context of the development field in Nepal, gender is usually synonymous with 'women' which is a very limiting definition. Gender refers to socially constructed norms, expectations and beliefs about the roles, relations, values attributed to boys/men and girls/women. It impacts division of power and value between male, female, and gender minorities. In the context of Nepal, it is important to view gender through intersectional lenses. Centuries of structural oppression and systematic discriminations of minorities in Nepal has created a system which is favourable to certain populations while being unfavourable to others. Hence, people from different castes, ethnicities, religions, economic groups, abilities, and minority gender identities all have very different experiences and opportunities in life. In each of the categories, a patriarchal set-up makes girls and women further vulnerable due to their low status in society and limited rights or ownership of assets. Therefore, when we talk about gender justice, we need to further contemplate which ethnic and economic backgrounds individuals belong to. This publication has attempted to emphasise the importance of understanding gender and intersectional perspective to devise gender just climate solutions.

Gender justice: Gender justice can have numerous meanings in terms of climate change. Discussions of gender justice has background in political philosophical discussions of human agency, autonomy, rights, capabilities, and political science discussions involving democratization, citizenship and constitutionalism and discussions in the field of law judicial law and access to justice (Goetz, 2007). Women and gender minorities are impacted disproportionately by climate change. Therefore, justice would entail that financing climate action have a gendered lens to it (Richards, 2018). However, this publication understands gender justice as equal opportunity for both men and women to access information, make decision and access finances/social security scheme set up for climate adaptation and mitigation that addresses structural barriers and power relations within a community.

Climate solutions: Climate solutions are actions to address impacts of climate change. These actions or interventions may be mitigative or adaptative in nature. This publication has used the term 'climate solutions' to mean any intervention that aims at mitigation of and adaptation to climate change directly or indirectly.

LIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The concept of gender justice in climate solutions is extremely broad and complex. Recognizing that there is a lot of discourse to be had on the topic of gender justice at international and national levels, this paper limits its explorations and discussions on gender just climate solutions at the community level.

The topic of climate solutions is similarly broad and complex. There are many technological, economic and social factors that are involved in the success of a climate solution. However, this publication will assume that a climate solution is a given and will limit its discussions on the gender justice aspect.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS RESEARCH

The objective of this paper is to map the key principles a climate solution must have to be objectively called a 'gender just climate solution.' This paper focuses on climate actions being undertaken at the community level in Nepal. The findings of this paper is expected to be useful for government agencies, development partners, women and environmental organizations, academics, and other stakeholders to work in the intersection of women rights and gender justice, particularly in designing and implementing gender just climate solutions in their programs and projects. This paper also aims to build a common understanding of the term 'gender just climate solutions.'

METHODOLOGY

This discussion paper has used qualitative methodology. A review of relevant literature was followed by data collection through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with women's groups, women's organizations, gender focal persons of development projects, and gender experts. Women's groups are grassroots level organizations that are working on environment and climate change issues. Women's organizations are nongovernmental organizations that work with women's community level groups to conduct programs that aid women and environmental causes. Gender focal persons of development projects are individuals who are responsible for integrating gender aspects in development projects. Gender experts are individuals who have had experience in the field of applying gender and intersectionality perspectives in development programs in Nepal and are currently working on climate change causes. (Refer to the Annex for individuals consulted for this paper)

Representatives of women's organizations, gender focal persons of development projects, and gender experts were interviewed for the purpose of this discussion paper. The interviews were about an hour long each and were recorded for the purpose of data analysis. Twenty-nine members of women's groups participated in two sessions of focus groups discussions (FGD) which were about an hour and a half long each. The members of women's groups were from different areas of Nepal and consisted of women and men. The first FGD allowed the participants to discuss the concept of 'gender just climate solutions' (GJCS) while the second FGD provided participants with a hypothetical scenario where they could explore the opportunities of GJCS. Prakriti Resources Centre (PRC) and Tewa in partnership with Both Ends and Global Alliance for Green and Gender Actions (GAGGA) have been working to empower and capacitate women groups on gender just climate solutions since 2018. Learnings from this project has also provided inputs for this document.

Data analysis was done through thematic network analysis. After the interviews were transcribed, a framework was developed for dissecting each text into text segments. Then, the themes were abstracted from the codes.

The initial findings of the research were shared with women and gender constituencies in a consultation meeting. Their feedbacks were also incorporated in this paper. The discussion paper also underwent two rounds of peer-review processes with gender experts.

CURRENT UNDERSTANDING ON 'GENDER JUST CLIMATE SOLUTIONS'

A review of existing academic literature and I/NGO documents was conducted with the objective of understanding the concept and elements of gender just climate solutions. Six sources were used for the literature review (See Annex).

In the past decades, there has been a rise in the literature available on gender and climate change. There are numerous documents produced by academics, I/NGOs and governments on the topics of climate change and gender equality, gender mainstreaming, gender-sensitiveness and gender-responsiveness. However, this literature review is specifically limited to literature that use the term 'gender just'. This literature review has also removed sources that use the term 'gender just' without clarifying what it implies. Key findings of the review have been summarised below.

1. Participation

Women's participation is a must for gender just climate solutions. According to GAGGA (Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action), women and local communities must be involved as key actors in both design and implementation of climate change projects (GAGGA, 2022). Similarly, Bhattarai (2020) concludes her research on gender and forestry in Nepal by stating that it is not just the number of women participants that should be taken into account but also the quality of their participation to ensure their influence in decisions and practices.

2. Decision-making

Bhattarai also states that gender dimension and dynamics should be considered during decision-making. Similarly, GAGGA states in its 'Gender Just Climate Solution' document that decision-making should be centred around women's leadership (GAGGA, 2022). One major criteria to be nominated for the Women and Gender Constituency's Gender Just Climate Solutions Award is that an intervention must ensure decisionmaking by local women, men, women's groups, and communities (Barre, et al., 2022). Additionally, both men and women must be involved in decision-making processes (Terry, 2009). A woman should have a seat but not solely for the purpose of warming it. The woman in the decision-making position should be able to speak up and defend her decisions (IASS Postdam, 2022).



3. Benefit sharing

The question of who gets benefits from climate solutions seems to be a significant factor in gender just climate solutions (GAGGA, 2022). Women and Gender Constituency sets 'equal access to benefits for women, men and youth' as one of the criterias of gender just climate solution (Barre, et al., 2022). However, it is not only the benefits but also costs that must be distributed fairly between men and women (Terry, 2009). Similarly, IASS Postdam (2022) state that there must be a reflection on how burden, benefits, access to resources, opportunities and support is allocated among individuals. These reflections must be considered when assessing benefits for humans as well as for ecological well-being.

4. Inclusion and decentralization

A gender just climate solution must be inclusive (GAGGA, 2022) and it must consider intersectional perspectives (IASS Postdam, 2022). Furthermore, climate solutions should be locally led and/or locally driven (Barre, et al., 2022).

5. Gendered approaches

A gender just climate solution must address structural inequalities in society (IASS, 2022) and take local gender relations into account (Terry, 2009). They must utilize a gender responsive approach (IASS Postdam, 2022).

6. Gender equality and women's rights

A gender just climate solution should foster gender equality (GAGGA, 2022). It should advocate for an environment where women and girls can truly enjoy their rights in which structural and discriminatory norms are not a barrier in their ability to contribute and enjoy life (IASS Postdam, 2022). A gender just climate solution should promote women's democratic rights (IASS Postdam, 2022; Terry, 2009). Similarly, for gender just climate solutions, men and women have the same opportunity to compete, access and have power over resources (Daniel, 2022).

7. Transformation and women's capacity building

A gender just climate solution must have a gender transformative approach. These approaches must dig deeper on how behaviours can transform, what the roots of the problems are and have an inclusive governance to ask those questions in terms of equity (IASS Postdam, 2022). In addition to a transformation to gender norms and roles, gender just climate solutions should also strengthen women's skill sets, they should amplify women's resilience, recognize women's specialized knowledge (GAGGA, 2022) and should lead to empowerment of women (GAGGA, 2022). Furthermore, there is a need to move beyond the narrative of women as vulnerable victims and focus on women as powerful agents of change (IASS Postdam, 2022).

Despite a recent rise in the usage of the term 'gender justice climate solutions' in the field of development, this literature review reveals that there is no universal definition of the term. Some definitions are narrow while others are broader with considerations on intersectionality. However, three main principles for gender just climate solutions abstracted from this literature review are that women must be perceived as active players in climate solutions. There must also be equal opportunities to participate, voice and access resources and solutions. Gender just climate solutions must not just address structural barriers but also stop reinforcement of gender stereotypes.

PRINCIPLES OF GENDER JUST CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

Gender just climate solutions is a multi-faceted terminology and often perceived differently by different entities. Thus, it is not easy to have a common and acceptable definition of the term. However, there are some principles that climate actions must contain for it to be objectively known as a 'gender-just climate solution.' Solutions addressing climate specific vulnerabilities is a necessary condition; however, it may not be sufficient to be a gender just climate solution.

1. Executes gender assessment

Conducting assessment studies which include gender analysis before designing a climate solution is a prerequisite for gender just climate solutions. Gender assessments must aim to understand and discover specific vulnerabilities, climate needs, challenges, and opportunities of girls, boys, men, and women. Gender perspectives must be integrated into other assessments, such as situation assessments, needs assessments, feasibility assessments, and vulnerability and risk assessments. Women must be consulted in these studies to understand what their specific needs are and discover their challenges and hindrances. Furthermore, it is equally important that these studies are not a means to an end. The uptake of results and recommendations of these studies to design the projects is as important as conducting them.

Multiple women's organizations interviewed for this paper find that if there exists any budget earmarked for women, it tends to be used up in capacity building trainings for stereotypically female activities, such as sewing and knitting. The women's organizations say that women are capable of more: that they are also interested in learning new technological climate solutions, such as learning mechanics and repairing of electronic cooking systems such as the induction cookers. A need assessment study prior to project design would perhaps shed light on what other skills women require or are interested in. Similar to this analysis by women's organizations, a study on effectiveness of gender responsive budgeting initiatives in Nepal finds the projects conducted without women's need assessments are not efficient and may not be beneficial for women. Implementation of programs without proper need analysis will "definitely" encourage a system of ad hoc implementation (p. 223). According to this research, only gender development projects based on gender need analysis can be termed as qualitative and efficient (Rajkarnikar, 2019).



2. Addresses women's climate needs

A climate solution might be considered gender just if it recognizes women's concerns and addresses them. A gender just climate solution must enhance women's climate resilience. As established earlier, climate change impact is gendered. A climate solution might address a climate crisis. However, it is important to explore whose crisis the climate solution is addressing. It is also important here to consider the intersectionality of women in this area. Women's vulnerabilities tend to differ depending on their status, conditions, positions, occupations, geography of residence, among other things. For instance, climate vulnerabilities of a farmer woman who lives on a riverbank and is heavily dependent on natural resources might be different from that of an urban woman who is employed in the formal economy like a bank. Thus, when we say that climate solutions must address women's vulnerabilities, we need to be careful in creating gender just climate solutions that differentiates women's vulnerabilities through an intersectional lens.

The following case extracted from a research paper on a Community Forest Users' Group (CFUG) illustrates how women's needs might easily be overlooked in a climate solution.

In a CFUG study, (Bhattarai, 2020) it was found that the forestry planning used a timber-focused forest management approach. The local men and the officials of the Department of Forest preferred this method which prioritized timber trees while eliminating smaller shrubs. As a result, the supply of timber increased at the cost of other products such as grasses and fodder, firewood, medicinal herbs, and trees required for purposes other than timber. However, there was hardly any consideration made for promoting the growth of other species. This method of timber-focused forestry did not consider women's usage and dependency on forest resources. As a result, over the decade, women's time and effort in collecting products from alternative sources have increased. (Bhattarai, 2020)

Thus, the forestry planning method which is preferred by men and has been known locally as the 'scientific' forest management contributed to a reduction of products that women need for their everyday livelihood. The scientific forestry planning can be seen as a gender insensitive climate solution that does not address women's requirements.

3. Ensures women's participation and leadership in decision-making

According to women's groups, women's organizations, and gender experts consulted, it is essential that women's participation is not taken at face value. Their experience tells us that tokenistic participation is widespread in Nepal. Their claim is well known among development practitioners and is supported by existing literature. Tokenistic participation means that even when women are present in different committees, meetings, and programs, they are not able to raise their voices and influence discussion. Women's participation and leadership is also often gatekept. Thus, the individuals we consulted for this publication have emphasised women's active and meaningful participation for a gender just climate solution.

According to UNDP and UN Women, 'meaningful' women's participation does not only involve women being present; instead, it also involves the convergence of several elements and it manifests when women from diverse backgrounds have the ability to enter; are present; possess self-efficacy; deploy their agency; and exert influence over processes (UNDP & UN Women, 2022). Thus, a gender just climate solution must not only ensure women's participation but also make sure that women from diverse backgrounds are able to actively engage in discussions, have their suggestions heard and exert influence in decision-making processes.

According to the GESI policy, projects conducted through the local government and community groups require 33% to 50% of the participants to be women. However, women's participation may just be an add-on instead of being a deliberate and integrated approach. For a gender just climate solution, it is important that the participation of women is not tokenised by the number of women present. Women must be able to put their points forward and demonstrate leadership in influencing discussions and decisions. The design and logistics should also reflect a consideration for local gender norms.

Focus group discussions with women's groups highlighted women's leadership in natural resources management. Many groups stated that they had experienced that women's leadership leads to a better management of resources, such as community forests and riverbanks. The women expressed that men tend to be more technocratic and economy-oriented which do not always yield positive results for the community and the ecology. Meanwhile, women have experienced that women's leadership tend to produce a more sustainable environment which is also beneficial for the community.

This observation is also supported by existing literature. For instance, (Leone, 2019) it has been found that when women are in decision-making positions in community forestry groups, there tends to be a more sustainable protection and mangement of forest resources. Thus, Leone (2019) advocates for women in decision-making roles in natural resource management. A REDD+ document for Nepal states that women's inclusion enhances the improvement of forest conditions and curbs illicit grazing and felling of trees. Similarly, (Thapa, Prasai , & Pahadi, 2020) another study also supports the argument that female-headed CFUGs are better in forest management in terms of all aspects of good governance: transparency, accountability and participation.

4. Promotes information dissemination to women

In conversation with women's groups, we find that they emphasize the need for easy access to relevant information for local women stakeholders. Women who live at the community level must have information about any project and policies that directly engages them or affects them. They need to know how the project or policies might be beneficial to them. The women's groups question how they are supposed to participate in and benefit from a climate solution project if they do not know these programs are taking place. Women also emphasize that local women must have information on why it is important for them to participate in these projects, what are the benefits to them, their communities, and their local biosphere. There have been experiences where projects require women's involvement and participation. However,



the organizers find that women are not interested, even when the projects might be beneficial to them. Our women's groups believe that this is simply because they do not know about these projects. Thus, before implementation of projects, local women must be notified. Furthermore, this information must be easily understandable by women. The information must use simple, local language and avoid use of technical jargons. This is also applicable for information on government policies, plans and budgets available for communities and groups for climate actions.

When women and women's groups are knowledgeable on existing plans and budgets, they are able to advocate and pressurize the local government and authorities for its implementation. This was also illustrated during the focus group discussions with women's groups when multiple women's groups stated that they must frequently prompt or even inform their local authorities about new and relevant plans and budgets. While the women's groups were expressing their frustrations at the lack of knowledge and actions from their local authorities, this also demonstrates that information dissemination to local women stakeholders is effective in encouraging bottom-up advocacy. Knowledge about their rights also empowers women in demanding accountability from their local authorities "to ensure that gender policies are not simply reduced to empty declarations of principles or tools for technical analysis or filed away in the offices of bureaucrats" (Terry, 2009).

An interaction program organized by Prakriti Resources Centre for women's groups focused on municipal plans and budgets. As a result of this intervention, several women's groups prepared and submitted proposals to their municipalities. A women's cooperative, Saraswoti Nari Chetana Saving and Credit Cooperative Limited, approached Bethanchowk Rural Municipality and were successful in receiving NPR 1,200,000 (approximately US Dollar 12,000) from the municipality. Other women groups are similarly reaching out to their respective municipalities and accessing budgets for the implementation of climate solutions.

5. Enforces gender responsive budgeting

The women's groups, women's organizations, and gender experts we consulted for this paper have raised the issue of budget. Gender budgeting is a process that entails maintaining a gender perspective at various stages like program formulation, assessment of needs of target groups, allocation of resources, implementation of programs, impact assessment, etc. A gender responsive budget is the culmination of this process (Downes, von Trapp, & Nicol, 2017). Gender responsive budget is not a separate budget for women but an allocation of budgetary resources with gender intelligence to translate policy commitments into gender-specific goals (Sodani & Sharma, 2008). Budget earmarked explicitly to support gender and/or women's engagement/ empowerment issues would allow climate solutions to allocate and implement resources in a way that is more inclusive. It ensures that climate solutions address gender issues.

Gender budgeting has been in practice in the Government of Nepal's budgetary system since 2007/08. This practice can be replicated in climate financing domestically and internationally. Experiences of gender experts reveal that gender specific activities are not implemented when budget allocation is not enough. A gender responsive budget strives for budget allocations that provides for mainstreaming gender concerns by investing in girls and women through appropriate allocation of resources for implementation of gender just climate solutions.

6. Assures equitable benefits sharing

For a climate solution to be considered gender just, women, especially poor and marginalized women, should have equitable benefits. Benefits in terms of economic benefits as well as in terms of intangible benefits, such as increase in climate adaptability, capacity building and empowerment. Women's organizations have highlighted the importance of economic benefits for women, as they state it is very difficult to advance in any way without the power of money behind them. However, fair and equitable benefits sharing is a complex concept to define, even more so in a vertically and horizontally divided societies like in Nepal. The concept of 'fair and equitable benefits sharing' is a subject of much research and international debates. According to UNFPA, gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness, strategies and measures must often be available to compensate for women's historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level playing field (UNFPA, 2005). Equity leads to equality. Thus, gender equity is a complex issue to address.

In the context of REDD+ in Nepal, an equitable benefit sharing mechanism should confirm that the transfer of benefits and costs is inclusive and fair among stakeholders involved by REDD+ program. In Kayarkhola watershed in Chitwan, from 2009–2013, the project tested options for governance and financial transparency of community-based REDD+ initiatives. It trained local communities and provided them incentives to conserve and enhance local forests by establishing a community-managed Forest Carbon Trust Fund (FCTF). This community-based model allowed for REDD+ benefits to reach the poorest and most disadvantaged communities and was one of the world's first carbon offset projects to involve local communities in monitoring carbon in their forests.

The equitable benefits sharing mechanism was designed in the following manner:

The distribution of the funds received was based on the FCTF criteria (operation guidelines), which were: i) quantity of forest carbon saved above the baseline; ii) the number of households of indigenous peoples and Dalits; iii) the ratio of men to women; and iv) the number of poor households within the project area. The more of these criterias the community meets, the greater its chances of qualifying for payments. There were also guidelines on how communities could spend the payment: at least 40 percent of the payment should go towards conservation/project management; at least 15 percent towards activities related to women's empowerment and needs; at least 20 percent towards meeting the needs of the poorest in the community. (Dhungana, Poudel, & Bhandari, 2018).



Similar to REDD+ projects, climate solutions should define their target population and how they aim to define fair and equitable benefits in areas of concern.

7. Applies that climate actions are gender sensitive

In a patriarchal society like Nepal, gender norms and gender roles might make women's participation in climate solution projects difficult. This is despite of existing gender responsive formal laws and policies which aim to ease women's participation. For instance, if training projects are located far from their village areas, women might find it difficult to reach it due to gender norms which prevent women from participating in public domains. Similarly, women are prescribed the roles of caretakers for children and elderly. If training programs are scheduled when women are busy preparing their children for school or they need to pick up children from school, women might find it difficult to attend. Similarly, if women need to juggle between childcare during the training programs and active participation, they may not be able to do either. Perhaps a gender just climate solution would design their programs around these gender norms. For instance, a training program could be scheduled in a space which is accessible for women at a time when children are at a school with a childcare option available. Similarly, a technology heavy climate solution might be considered as men's domain. A gender just climate solution should address this preconception. Similarly, contents and language of training programs should be created in a way that is approachable for women.

A women's organization has been consulted for this paper, Women Network for Energy and Environment (WoNEE), which works with alternative cooking solutions. The traditional method of cooking with firewood is detrimental to women's health. It is also time and labour intensive. Additionally, increasing effects of climate change has led to a growing insecurity with forest resources such as firewood. Electric cooking such as induction cooker solves these problems for women. However, provision of induction cookers may be futile if women do not know how to use the electric cooker or they cannot be repaired when broken.

WoNEE is working to train women on maintaining and repairing induction cookers. While maintenance and technology may be considered a male domain, the women's organization has made the process friendlier for women. The women have an online network where they are connected with an expert. In this online network, women are able to ask questions about their devices, upload pictures and get recommendations on how to fix their devices. WoNEE's representative states that this can create an avenue for alternative income generation for women. Due to increased demands, they have also added trainings on repairing and maintenance of more time-saving kitchen devices. On top of an additional source of income, women have learnt that they have potential for technical fields as well. According WoNEE's organization, women's training need not always be limited to stereotypically female vocations such as sewing and knitting. Thus, climate solutions need to be accessible and approachable for women.

Furthermore, a climate solution should be especially considerate about the possible adverse impacts it can have on women in particular and communities in general. Climate solutions which are technically sound in addressing climate vulnerabilities may not be appropriate in a community's social context. Some climate solution may foster and perpetuate gender-based discrimination and inequality instead of reducing them. These solutions are not gender just and hence, should not be promoted. Such solutions can only be considered with appropriate redressal measures. Thus, gender just climate solutions must be sensitive towards prevailing gender norms and gender roles and especially cautious that these solutions do not foster gender-based inequalities and discrimination.

8. Promotes accountability towards women and the most marginalized

Gender just climate solutions should be accountable towards women and the most marginalized section of communities. Development projects often tend to be more accountable to their funding agencies and to their government counterparts than the community they are working in. As a result, the communities lack ownership of the project interventions which often results in unsustainability of the project.

Transparency and responsiveness are key in building accountability. Climate solutions must disseminate project information, including financial information, to women stakeholders. Monitoring and redressal mechanism should be put in place to identify any potential harmful impact of these solutions to women and communities to ensure course corrections.

Gender just climate solutions must devise the accountability mechanism to safeguard the rights of women stakeholders through a transparent sharing of information, appropriate allocation of gendered budget and its proper utilisation, and guaranteeing equitable benefit sharing for women.

9. Promotes transformation through positive change in gender power relationships and local gender roles

Gender just climate solutions should foster women's democratic rights and women's empowerment in their communities. The gender just climate solutions should be women-identified, women-led, women-devised, and women-owned. The issues and concerns addressed by the climate solutions should be identified by women. Gender just climate solutions should be able to create an environment where women's issues are addressed seriously and their concerns are not trivialized. The gender just climate solutions should also be devised by women. There are many cases where climate interventions are prescribed from an individual or an institution outside of the community. A gender just climate solution should be able to create an environment where women's knowledge, their indigenous knowledge and their solutions to climate problems are taken up, and the solutions are led and owned by local women. Thus, a gender just climate solution should foster women's self-determinism. Furthermore, a gender just climate solution in the context of Nepal where society is highly patriarchal should be able to address the unequal power relations in communities.



Sahayatra Nepal in Ilam, which is supported by PRC and Tewa, have experienced that their participation in climate actions have resulted in alterations of power relations with themselves as a women's group and the local government. In the past, when the women's group was beginning their work, a local government official expressed his lack of confidence in the women's group by stating that if the women's group were able to accomplish anything, he would "cut his own ears off."

The women's group has been working steadily with themes related to wetland conservation, reforestation and drinking water. Women's groups believe that local women should have leadership in wetland conservation because they have actual skin on the game which leads to sustainable wetlands. But the local government's lack of trust and confidence in women-led environmental conservation projects had proved to be detrimental.

But the group has progressively gained recognition as well as respect in the local community and also from the local government. They are now frequently invited to different events organized by the local government. The local government has also recently invited the women's group before the fiscal year to consult with them on the topics of budget on environment and disaster management and environment and women. The local government has also granted a certain budget specifically for the women's group. This is significant shift in addressing the power relations and enhancing the status of women in the community.

CONCLUSION

What makes a climate solution gender just? The paper attempts to capture the essence of gender just climate solution by mapping out its key principles.

A gender just climate solution recognizes that girls, boys, women, and men have differential needs and therefore experience climate change and its impacts differently. Any situation assessments conducted for climate solution must consider a strong gender analysis to understand the different vulnerabilities and challenges of girls, boys, women and men faced by the climate crisis. A gender just climate solution recognizes the importance of and creates a space for women to participate and lead meaningfully. Timely information sharing about climate policies, available budget provisions and social security schemes and packages with the community including women helps in informed decision-making and devising of local gender just climate solutions with women as knowledge partners. Further, a gender just climate solution leads to an equitable benefit sharing mechanism that ensures that women are receiving equitable tangible and non-tangible benefits. Establishing a monitoring and accountability mechanism at the beginning of any intervention is key to ensure an equitable benefit sharing mechanism and a gender just climate solution that also provides scope for course correction in case of any harmful impact of the intervention on community, especially girls and women. Additionally, a gender just climate solution should address the gender norms and break the cycle of unequal power relation to maximize women's participation and leadership in mitigation and adaptation of climate change.

Thus, a climate solution is gender just only when it embraces the concept of gender equality and intersectionality completely and provides equitable platforms for meaningful representation and engagement of women and marginalised section of community by assessing and addressing their specific needs.

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ANNEX

Annex I: Individuals consulted (representatives of women's organizations, gender experts and gender focal persons of development projects)

- * Anuja Shrestha, TEWA
- * Indira Shakya, Centre for Rural Technology
- * Kala Timalima, Women Network for Energy and Environment (WoNEE)
- * Kanti Rajbhandari, Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resource Management Association (HIMAWANTI)
- * Roshana Gautam, Nepal Climate Change Support Programme II (NCCSP II)
- * Sangita Budhathoki, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO)
- * Urmila Shrestha, TEWA

Annex II: Participants of Focus Group Discussion

S.N.	Participant	Organization
1	Hem Kumari siwa	Sahayatra Nepal (Main Women's Group), Ilam
2	Luna Khatiwada	Ilam Municipality(Multistakeholder) ,Ilam
3	Indira Tikhatri	Sahayatra Nepal, Ilam
4	Pramila Rimal Bhattarai	Krishi Mahila Samuha ,Ilma
5	Sabita Pandey	Journalist ,Ilam
6	Saraswati Nepal	Pragatisheel Women's MultiPurpose Agriculture Group,Kageshwori, Manahora
7	Draupata Karki	Saraswoti Nari Chetana Saving and Credit Cooperatives
8	Nirmaya Rai	Bethanchowk, Kavre
9	Indir Kumari Bhattarai	Anjelia Mahila Krishi Sahakari Sanstha Ltd.,Ilam , Suryodaya Nagarपालिका-1
10	Gandhari Mishra	Pragatisil Mahila Krishi Samuha ,Jhapa, Arjundhara Napa
11	Sita Gurung	Mahila Jana Chetana Kendra, Jhapa, Mechinagar Nagarपालिका
12	Rashmi Moktan	Bhaduwar Mahila Krishak Samuha, Dhading , Jwalamukhi Gaunपालिका
13	Tara Devi Rana Magar	Janakalyan Samudayik Bikash Krishi Samuha, Dhading ,Jwalamukhi Gapa
14	Juna Rana	Tewa Mentor,Dhading , Jwalamukhi Gapa
15	Geeta Dangol Uma Silwal	Women Empowerment Center, Kathmandu, Kritipur Napa We Nepal, Kathmandu MahaNagar
17	Nirmala Gupta	Tewa Mentor , Dang , Tulshipur Napa
18	Srijana Reshmi	Janjagaran Mahila Sangh Bardiya, Gulariya Nagarपालिका
19	Goma Poudel	Janjagaran Mahila Sangh Bardiya, Badaiyatal Gaunपालिका
20	Birendra Thapaliya	Bagmati Sarsafai Aviyan
21	Pratibha Bhattarai	Milijuli Mahila Samuha

S.N.	Participant	Organization
22	Anjana Acharya	Shrijanshil Mahila Samaj
23	Susma Regmi	Shrijanshil Mahila Samaj
24	Hima Bhandari	Srijanshil Mahila Samaj
25	Krishna Gopal Lausalay	NNC7R
26	Hari Neupane	Radio ABC
27	Sujan K.C.	Mahila Jagaran Samuha
28	Samjhana Khatioda	Mahila Sarokar
29	Bimala Shrestha	Mahila Jagaran Samuha
30	Pragya Sherchan	PRC
31	Prabin Man Singh	PRC
32	Preema Ranjitkar	Researcher

Annex III: Participants of Consultation Meeting with Women and Gender Constituency

S.N.	Participant	Organization
1	Hon. Saloni Pradhan Singh	National Planning Commission
2	Deepa Oli	Ministry of Forests and Environment
3	Chhing Lamu Sherpa	Tewa
4	Urmila Shrestha	Tewa
5	Laxmi Neupane	Jumla
6	Shristi Adhikari	She Changes Climate
7	Geeta Dangol	Women Empowerment Centre
8	Muna Pokharel	Tewa
9	Indira Shreesh	INWOLAG
10	Kala Timalisina	WoNEE
11	Geeta Pandey	KIRDARC
12	Sonam Shrestha	CEN
13	Laxmi Shova Shakya	Tewa
14	Preema Ranjitkar	Researcher
15	Prabin Man Singh	PRC
16	Suchana Baniya	DidiBahini
17	Anuja Shrestha	Tewa
18	Sangita Premy	Tewa
19	Pragya Sherchan	PRC

Annex IV: Individuals consulted for peer review

- * Ruchi Chaudhary, Climate Action Network South Asia
- * Deepa Oli, Ministry of Forests and Environment



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