

Country Population ¹	29,164,578 (2021)
GDP Per Capita ²	USD 1,324 (2023)
Palma Ratio (before tax) ^{3, 4}	2.2 (2022)
UNDP Gender Inequality Index Value ⁵	0.495 (2022)
UNDP Gender Inequality Rank ⁶	126th (2022)
GOVERNMENT BUDGET EXPENDITURE:	
Military Expenditure ⁷	USD 418.90 million (2023)
Health Expenditure ⁸	about USD 772 million (2023/24)
Education Expenditure ⁹	USD 1.6 billion (2022/23)
Total External Debt ¹⁰	USD 9.9 billion (2023)



Overview of the Systemic Barriers to Development Justice^{11, 12}

Nepal is a land-locked country in between two powerful neighbours: China to the north and India to the east, south and west. Its diverse geography is abundant with natural resources that are threatened by climate change and the country's foray at neoliberal economic development. Nepal is among countries that are most vulnerable to climate change. Additional dam infrastructures for energy exports to India and China further threaten the country's environment as well as communities.

The 2021 National Census states that out of the total population of Nepal, 2.2 per cent are persons with disabilities. However, experts suggest that this figure could be higher as the country still used a medical model of data collection in the previous census. Persons with disabilities in the country are among the most marginalised and excluded groups despite Nepal being a signatory of various conventions and treaties such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

(CEDAW). Previous studies also confirm that more than half of women with disabilities in Nepal (58 per cent) experience different forms of violence in public and private spaces.¹³

Women, especially those living with disabilities, are also the worst impacted by climate change and neoliberal policies in the country, while patriarchal values continue to reinforce women's lack of political and socioeconomic power. The garments sector has attracted Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) and facilitated the country to become one of the cheapest sources of labour, mostly by women, for ready-made garments to be exported to Europe, Canada, Australia and India. The privatisation of services such as health have made it difficult for women with disabilities to access these services.

The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are opportunities to uphold women's human rights. However, inadequate financing for the SDGs as well as corruption and the lack of accountability among authorities are threatening the realisation of Development Justice.

¹ Government of Nepal: National Statistics Office. (2021). *National Population and Housing Census 2021 Results: Population Size*. <https://censusnepal.cbs.gov.np/results>

² World Bank. (n.d.). *GDP per capita (current US\$) - Nepal*. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=NP>

³ World Inequality Database. (2024). *Income inequality: Palma ratio (before tax)*. Our World in Data. <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/palma-ratio-s90s40-ratio?tab=chart®ion=Asia&country=-NPL>

⁴ The Palma ratio is a measure of inequality that divides the share received by the richest 10% by the share of the poorest 40%. Higher values indicate higher inequality.

⁵ UNDP. (n.d.). *Table 5: Gender Inequality Index*. UNDP Human Development Reports. <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/documentation-and-downloads>

⁶ UNDP. (n.d.). *Table 5: Gender Inequality Index*. UNDP Human Development Reports. <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/documentation-and-downloads>

⁷ SIPRI. (n.d.). *Nepal Military Expenditure*. Trading Economics. <https://tradingeconomics.com/nepal/military-expenditure>

⁸ Government of Nepal: Investment Board of Nepal. (2024). *Health*. <https://ibn.gov.np/uploads/documents/summaryhealthpdf-3646-667-1720777583.pdf>

⁹ Gupta, A. (2022, June 1). *Key highlights of Budget 2022-23*. Nepal Economic Forum. <https://nepaleconomicforum.org/key-highlights-of-budget-2022-23/>

¹⁰ CEIC Data. (2024). *Nepal External Debt*. <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/nepal/external-debt>

¹¹ This briefer summarises findings and analysis from the Peoples' Development Justice Report by Access Planet Organization (2024) as part of the 2022-2023 SDG Review and Monitoring Work done with the Feminist Development Justice (FDJ) programme of the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD).

¹² Access Planet Organization. (2024). *A Report on National Monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals and Development Justice in Nepal* [Publication forthcoming in 2024]. APWLD.

¹³ Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action (CREA). (2012). *Count me IN!: Research report on violence against disabled, lesbian, and sex-working women in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal*. *Reproductive Health Matters*, 20(40), 198-206. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0968-8080\(12\)40651-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0968-8080(12)40651-6)

Architecture for SDG Implementation

The National Planning Commission (NPC) is a lead agency for SDGs implementation in Nepal. NPC has set up the National SDG platform to enable tracking of Nepal's progress towards achieving the SDGs and other national development plans. Four high level committees have been created to facilitate the implementation of the SDGs:

- Parliamentarian Committee to monitor and guide on SDG & governance;
- SDG Steering Committee chaired by the Prime Minister;
- SDG Coordination Committee chaired by the Vice Chairperson of the NPC; and
- Eight SDG thematic committees, each headed by an NPC Member.

Civil society has initiated the Nepal SDGs Forum, founded in 2016, to engage Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in

capacity development and monitoring of the implementation of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. Its membership is composed of 44 networks and more than 500 CSOs. The current secretariat is headed by the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), Federation of Nepal. Although CSOs are engaged in the SDGs process, there are concerns about the lack of access to the focal ministries and the NPC by marginalised groups such as Dalit, people with disabilities and CSOs working at the community level.

The NPC also has no specific constituency that addresses women with disability issues. This is the case even though the thematic committee on 'Gender and Climate Change' was specifically established to address intersecting identities of gender and climate issues. On the other hand, the CSOs working with people with disabilities are engaged in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) processes through the NGO Federation.

Women's Priorities: Findings on Selected Targets and/or Indicators

Goal 5: Gender Equality

Women, especially those living with disabilities, face intersectional marginalisation of gender, disability, caste, class, ethnicity and geography which exclude them from meaningful participation in socio-economic activities and decision-making. In 2021, only 23.8 per cent of households were listed under women's names.¹⁴

Access and control of land and resources is even more difficult for women with disabilities. In order to secure women's land and property rights in Nepal, the government has included a 25 per cent to 50 per cent tax exemption on registration when land is owned by a woman and persons with disabilities; a 35 per cent tax exemption for single women as stated in the Financial Bill 2072 by the Ministry of Finance.¹⁵ Additionally, for joint registration of land in the names of husbands and wives, the fee is Rs. 100 (or less than USD 1).¹⁶ In the case of women with disabilities, due to intersectional marginalisation, prevailing laws and practices require guardianship to own land, and access and control over land ownership are very limited for women with disabilities.

Nepal also fell short of achieving the target of 50 per cent women representatives at the local level.¹⁷

Women make up 53.91 per cent of the country's population, have only 33.09 per cent representation in federal parliament and 36.36 per cent in Provincial Assemblies. The political representation of women with disabilities is almost nil.¹⁸

Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

There are no clear provisions on employment and self-employment for women with disabilities in the country. Women with disabilities are facing challenges in self-employment/employment opportunities due to the lack of accessibility to vocational, technical and capacity-building training opportunities demanded by the current job market. There is a significant opportunity gap for employment because jobs are not specifically targeted for persons with disabilities. Further, women with disabilities have limited access to information on opportunities for employment. It is more difficult for them to acquire employment prospects due to a lack of requirements and accessibility.

Women with disabilities endure multiple forms of discrimination and marginalisation based on their disability, gender, caste, ethnicity, and other factors. In addition to that, accessing public jobs is not easy for women with disabilities. More than 70 per cent of the

¹⁴ Radio Nepal. (2023, March 23). *Women's access to family property increases 1.1 percent: National Census, 2078*. Online Radio Nepal. <https://onlineradionepal.gov.np/en/2023/03/24/349865.html>

¹⁵ IOM Nepal. (2016, June 18). *Securing Women's Land and Property Rights in Nepal*. IOM. <https://www.iom.int/news/securing-womens-land-and-property-rights-nepal>

¹⁶ IOM Nepal. (2016, June 18). *Securing Women's Land and Property Rights in Nepal*. IOM. <https://www.iom.int/news/securing-womens-land-and-property-rights-nepal>

¹⁷ Khatiwada, N. (2022, August 13). *Voices grow for fair representation of women as major elections near*. The Kathmandu Post. <https://kathmandupost.com/politics/2022/08/13/voices-grow-for-fair-representation-of-women-as-major-elections-near#:~:text=The%20country%20fell%20short%20of%20achieving%20the>

¹⁸ Adhikari, A. (2022, December 25). *Women representation still remains bare minimum*. The Rising Nepal. <https://risingnepaldaily.com/news/20498#:~:text=However>

participants of the SDG monitoring¹⁹ of Access Planet Organization stated that their workplace has not been accessible at all.

Recently, to address and facilitate employment, the Prime Minister Employment Programme was launched and included a provision to include persons with disabilities. However, due to a lack of special measures made to consider them as primary stakeholders and lack of provision to provide competitive skill development programmes, relatively less number of the women with disabilities are benefitting from this scheme. Even many of the women with disabilities are uninformed about this scheme. Among the participants of this study, more than 70 per cent of unemployed women said they were not informed about this scheme.²⁰

Goal 13: Climate Action²¹

The impacts of the climate crisis in Nepal are also worsening. These include droughts during winter and heavy monsoon floods which have caused lower agricultural productivity, road damage and high energy imports. Women, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities especially girls and women with disabilities, and other marginalised communities are disproportionately affected. These vulnerable communities often live in the most extreme environments that are subject to climate impacts and lack social protection programmes. Instead of providing safety nets, the government resorts to violent measures in attempts to remove vulnerable communities from extreme environments. For example, in 2023, the Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) bulldozed around 136 homes of the more than 3,400 families of informal settlers living along the banks of the Bagmati River.²²

Despite having policies to mitigate and adapt to climate change such as the 2019 National Climate Change Policy, the 2022 Solid Waste Management Policy, the 2022 Forest Regulation, and the 2022 Land Use Regulation, implementation and enforcement still vary in stages, and are more or less inadequate especially to women with disabilities. Oftentimes, girls and women with disabilities are not able to participate in policy-formulation processes. In such cases, despite its bottom-up approach, the country's Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) policies and mechanisms still lack sensitivity to disability issues.

Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Nepal ranks 110th out of 180 countries in the 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index. The lack of accountability and high levels of corruption in the political, bureaucratic and corporate sectors have resulted in the lack of public trust in these institutions. While the country initiated 36 national targets in Goal 16, the realities of women with disabilities are not presented in the national data and reports. They are not included in the decision-making level and do not have access to public information.

Women with disabilities also continue to have limited access to the labour market. Participants from the focused group discussions conducted in the SDG monitoring phase shared the various barriers and obstacles they faced in terms of getting decent jobs. For instance, they mentioned lack of information, stereotypical thinking and attitudes regarding the disabilities, biases in the hiring process and lack of accessible facilities in public places and workplaces.

Demands and Recommendations

On capacity building

1. Strengthen the role of CSOs including the women-led Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) to work progressively on the SDGs. The government should build an enabling environment for women-led OPDs at all levels by ensuring appropriate policies, laws and access to resources and including them in the national SDGs monitoring mechanism;
2. Women with disabilities should be fully equipped with employment skills in order to create an enabling environment where they can live dignified lives with economic opportunities;

3. Strengthen coordination and synergistic relationship between inter-government agencies to empower women with disabilities with capacity-building training, access to learning platforms for vocation and technical skills and empower them to raise their voices for job opportunities;

On private sector accountability

4. The government should enact laws and policies that ensure employers, in both the private and public sectors, are more sensitised about disabilities and held accountable for achieving the commitments

¹⁹ Access Planet Organization (APO) was a part of the SDG Monitoring Batch 2023-2024 supported by APWLD. It carried out research on National Monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals and Development Justice in Nepal in 2023. The data has been extracted in this briefer from the monitoring report.

²⁰ Access Planet Organization. (2024). *A Report on National Monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals and Development Justice in Nepal* [Publication forthcoming in 2024]. APWLD.

²¹ Access Planet Organization. (2024). *A Report on National Monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals and Development Justice in Nepal* [Publication forthcoming in 2024]. APWLD.

²² Thapaliya, N. (2023, July 14). *Bulldozing not the solution*. The Kathmandu Post. <https://kathmandupost.com/columns/2023/07/13/bulldozing-not-the-solution>

made under Goal 8 on decent employment for all, including women with disabilities;

5. The government should also enact policies and laws that will regulate and ensure labour rights of women with disabilities are upheld and respected;

On raising awareness, campaign and networking

6. Coalition and networking amongst the diverse stakeholders should be built for amplifying voices in joint advocacy to ensure employment opportunities for women with disabilities with explicit provisions on employment and self-employment, and affirmative actions for women with disabilities;

7. Raising awareness of labour rights and women's human rights among all communities at all levels focusing on women with disabilities. Adequate orientation, support and awareness raising should be provided to local governments and provincial governments; and

8. Organise awareness and social sensitisation campaigns in society to promote a positive attitude towards girls and women with disabilities.



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