

# Asian Breeze

No. **88**  
August  
2020

KITAKYUSHU FORUM ON ASIAN WOMEN (KFAW) Semiannual Publication



Hiraodai Karst Plateau, Kitakyushu City

**WOMEN TODAY**.....pp. 1-2

## **Gender and Climate Change in Bhutan with a Focus on Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) Priority Area: Agriculture**

Kunzang Lhamu

Director of the national Commission for Women and Children, Royal Government of Bhutan

**CURRENT ISSUES SERIES**.....p. 3

## **Climate Crisis and Gender (Part 1)**

Kazuo Matsushita, Professor Emeritus of Kyoto University

**FEATURES**.....pp. 4-8

COVID-19 and the Impact on Women

Gender Mainstreaming Policies for Government Officers 2019 [Course B] (Winter 2020)

Report from KFAW 30th Foreign Correspondent



Read Asian Breeze online :



# Gender and Climate Change in Bhutan with a Focus on Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) Priority Area: Agriculture

The extent to which people are affected by climate change has much to do with their socio-economic status, gender, power dynamics, and access to and control over assets and resources. Despite recognition globally on the differential impacts, experiences, and skills men and women bring to environmental and climate related efforts, women still have lesser economic, political, and legal clout and are less able to cope with the changing climate. As such, drawing from women's experience, knowledge as well as skills and enhancing empowerment efforts would result in more effective climate change responses.

In December 2015, the Paris Agreement to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was adopted, which was a major breakthrough for gender equality in the context of climate change. The Paris Agreement mandates gender responsive adaptation actions and capacity building activities, and Article 4, paragraph 2 requires each party/country to prepare, communicate, and maintain successive nationally determined contributions (NDCs) that it intends to achieve.

Bhutan is a small landlocked Himalayan country situated between China to its North and India to its west, south, and east. The country has committed 51.44% of its total land area as protected areas and connecting biological corridors. The Constitution mandates that at least 60% of the country be maintained under forest cover at all times; the current forest coverage is indeed 70.46%. Bhutan is a net sink of greenhouse gases (GHGs) because of its large forest cover, low levels of industrial activity, and almost all its electricity generated by hydropower. This extensive coverage contributes to the fact that Bhutan is carbon neutral, with negative net GHG emission. The country's goal is to stay carbon neutral far into the future, as is also reflected in its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of 2015.

However, there has been a 33% rise in GHG emissions between 2000-2015<sup>1</sup>, and sectors such as

industry, agriculture, transport, and waste are largely responsible. The climate change effects include extreme spells of hot or cold weather, melting of glaciers, increased flooding including Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs), landslides, and wildfires.

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan enacted in 2008 provides the overall legal framework for women's empowerment. It also recognizes ratified international treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as deemed law of the Kingdom. The philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH) is integral to Bhutan's growth process and it strives to create an environment wherein every man, woman, and child is included and benefits from development and growth.

Notwithstanding the strong and favorable legal and policy framework, the journey for gender equality and women's empowerment in Bhutan has not been an easy one. While considered as a country where women enjoy relative freedom and equality in many spheres of life, the Bhutanese woman is not without her share of problems. The status of women in Bhutan is influenced by socio-cultural perceptions that generally hold women as less confident, capable, and strong, and thus more vulnerable than men. This has influenced women's access to land ownership, education (particularly beyond secondary level), lower rates of employment and gender payment gaps, low representation in public decision-making, and higher rates of gender-based violence and violence against women. A greater challenge is presented as gender gaps in Bhutan that are to do with more subdued and indirect forms of gender bias.

The country has initiated mainstreaming gender into climate sectors in order to enable gender-responsive climate actions. It is recognized that the impacts of climate change are experienced by the poorest and most vulnerable sections of the population, and in general women bear the brunt due to existing gender disparities and socio-cultural norms. An analysis of one of the

<sup>1</sup> Royal Government of Bhutan, 2020, Third GHG Inventory, National Environment Commission (NEC).



Director of the National Commission for Women and Children, Royal Government of Bhutan

**Kunzang Lhamu**

NDC priority sectors, agriculture, is outlined below to better understand climate change and its impact on gender dynamics.

### Agriculture, Gender, and Climate Change

More than 60% of Bhutan's population resides in rural areas and are engaged in crop and livestock production and forest use. The agricultural sector emitted 32.4% of total GHG emissions in 2015 and is itself extremely vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Loss of agro-biodiversity and of agricultural land, increase in human-wildlife conflicts, and farm labor shortages are major challenges faced. The feminization of agriculture is taking place due to male out-migration. According to the Population and Housing Census of Bhutan 2017, 60% of employed women were engaged in agriculture as compared to 34% of men. Our recent study with UNDP<sup>2</sup> shows that female tasks include the collection of drinking water and household care while males are responsible for the irrigation water, off-farm employment, decision making, and attending meetings. Both males and females are engaged in agriculture-related cottage and small industries. Women in Bhutan perform 71% of the unpaid household and care work<sup>3</sup>, and because of the distinct gender roles, women are more vulnerable and less informed on climate change. More males than females are aware of, participated in, and have access to information, training, and inputs on climate-smart and climate-resilient agriculture (CSA/CRA). There is need to strengthen the voice and participation in decision-making roles of women in agriculture-related climate change actions and to integrate gender issues more strongly into agricultural policies, plans, and programs.

Gender-responsive, climate-smart and resilient agriculture must be promoted through enhancing women's access to and control over productive resources such as land, agro-biodiversity, livestock, labor, and

2 Royal Government of Bhutan, Gender and Climate Change in Bhutan, National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) and UNDP, 2020.

3 Royal Government of Bhutan, Accounting for Unpaid Care Work in Bhutan, NCWC and ADB, 2019.

### Profile

Obtained a Master in Public Policy from the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKYSPP), National University of Singapore.

Started career in 1994 at the Gross National Happiness Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan. Field of experience includes: socio-economic development planning and policy formulation; research and evaluation; population, environmental, and poverty analysis; gender analysis and mainstreaming; and promoting and protecting the rights of women and children. Currently serves as the Board Director of Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women (RENEW, a CSO in Bhutan); Board Director of the International Organization for Collaborative Outcome Management (IOCOM); Governing Board Member for the South Asian Initiative for Ending Violence Against Children (SAIVAC); and Chairperson of the Gender Expert Group in Bhutan.

extension services. Furthermore, it is critical to provide women with access to sustainable technologies, inputs, credit and financial services for CSA/CRA, and access to agro-meteorological and climate information. Gender-responsive initiatives need to be implemented through the promotion of awareness and the equal participation of women in CSA/CRA activities. Their full involvement in the development and implementation of agricultural GHG mitigation and adaptation activities is imperative.

While gender-responsive climate actions are a recent initiative for Bhutan, with an approved gender-mainstreamed Climate Change Policy 2019 and efforts underway for a gender-responsive Climate Promise Work plan (NDC 2), the prospects are bright.



A woman in Samtse District fetching drinking water from a distant source

## Climate Crisis and Gender (Part 1)



Professor Emeritus, Kyoto University

**Kazuo Matsushita**

### Profile

Professor Emeritus of Kyoto University, Senior Fellow of the Institute of Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Chairman of the Japan Society for GNH Studies. Before holding these positions, worked at several institutions including the Ministry of Environment of Japan, the Environment Directorate of the OECD, United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), and as Professor of Global Environmental Policy at the Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies of Kyoto University. Major research areas are sustainability studies as well as climate change policies and global environmental policies from the viewpoint of environmental governance.

### 1. Vision of the world as envisioned by the Paris Agreement and the SDGs

*“We are the first generation to be affected by climate change and the last to be able to deal with it.”*

*(Ban Ki-moon, former UN Secretary-General)*

Climate change is advancing rapidly, and the effects such as temperature rise, frequent extreme weather events such as typhoons and heavy rains, and sea level rise are accelerating and becoming apparent all over the world.

The Paris Agreement, adopted in December 2015, sets ambitious long-term goals for global climate change mitigation, builds a framework that calls for developed countries to take the lead, and simultaneously includes the participation of all developing countries.

The Paris Agreement aims to keep the average temperature rise in the world well below 2°C compared to before the Industrial Revolution, and even to pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5°C. For this reason, in the latter half of this century, we have to attain the goal of “Net Zero Emission,” which offsets the world’s anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions with anthropogenic absorption. This is a goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from human activities to virtually zero, which requires a drastic economic and social shift to a non-fossil fuel civilization. The Paris Agreement marks the beginning of the end of the civilization dependent on fossil fuel.

On the other hand, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in September 2015 consist of 17 goals, 169 targets, and 230 indicators that demand an integrated response to the following three aspects: economic development, social inclusion, and environmental protection. Setting a core concept of “leaving no one behind,” it calls for ending poverty, fighting inequality, and addressing environmental issues such as climate change.

A new vision for the SDGs and the Paris Agreement is to put an end to poverty, sustain the use of natural resources within a sustainable range, and improve the environment while advancing social infrastructure that respects basic human rights and within the boundaries of the Earth system. It is a society in which all people on earth are able to sustainably improve their well-being in a sphere that is safe and socially fair from the viewpoint of basic human rights.

### 2. Climate crisis and human rights: gender equality as the basis of measures against climate change

*“Climate change is a human rights issue, and human rights and gender equality are the cornerstones of climate change measures.”*

*(Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland; former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights)*

Climate change is a human rights issue because it damages the livelihoods and health of people all over the world. It also forces them to lose their homes in the face of droughts and floods. The biggest victims of climate change are not those in developed countries that created its main cause. Rather, they are the people living in developing and in the least developed countries, especially women.

Climate change has a major impact on people who depend on natural resources and who lack the capacity to cope with natural disasters such as typhoons, droughts, and floods. The impact of climate change is greater for people living in poverty, of whom the majority are women. Moreover, only a few women are leaders in policymaking at the national level. This unequal participation in decision-making processes further exacerbates gender inequality and hinders women’s contribution to climate-related planning, policymaking, and implementation.

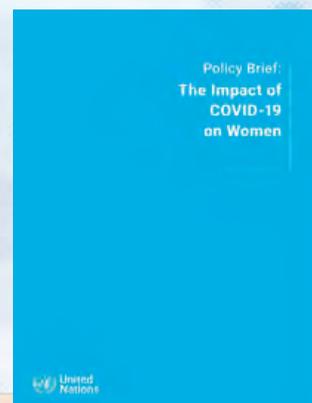
Still, women can play an important role in responding to climate change. In fact, they are the actors of sustainable resource management in the home and community. Meaningful participation of women in policymaking enables better response to the needs of civil society, strengthens cross-party and ethnic cooperation, and brings sustainable peace. Conversely, policies and projects implemented without women’s meaningful participation can increase inequality and reduce effectiveness.

The concept of gender was included for the first time in the preamble of the Paris Agreement. The Gender Action Plan (GAP) adopted by the 23rd Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP23) in 2017 emphasized the need for gender mainstreaming in climate action. It calls for greater representation of women in ministers, governments, and national delegations at the international fora. It is hoped that the means for mainstreaming gender (finance, technology development and transfer, capacity building) will be strengthened and steadily implemented.

# COVID-19 and the Impact on Women

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the outbreak of COVID-19 to be a pandemic. Accordingly, measures are being taken in each country in order to respond to the pandemic in their own context. KFAW's website introduces some of such gender-focused COVID-19 response initiatives implemented across the world.

Among them is the United Nations Policy Brief announced on April 9, 2020. Quoted below is an excerpt from its introduction, which demonstrates the stance of the United Nations on the impact of COVID-19 on women as well as the priorities for response measures.



The year 2020, marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, was intended to be ground-breaking for gender equality. Instead, with the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic even the limited gains made in the past decades are at risk of being rolled back. The pandemic is deepening pre-existing inequalities, exposing vulnerabilities in social, political and economic systems which are in turn amplifying the impacts of the pandemic.

Across every sphere, from health to the economy, security to social protection, the impacts of COVID-19 are exacerbated for women and girls simply by virtue of their sex:

- > Compounded **economic** impacts are felt especially by women and girls who are generally earning less, saving less, and holding insecure jobs or living close to poverty.
- > While early reports reveal more men are dying as a result of COVID-19, the **health** of women generally is adversely impacted through the reallocation of resources and priorities, including sexual and reproductive health services.
- > **Unpaid care work** has increased, with children out-of-school, heightened care needs of older persons and overwhelmed health services.
- > As the COVID-19 pandemic deepens economic and social stress coupled with restricted movement and social isolation measures, **gender-based violence** is increasing exponentially. Many women are being forced to 'lockdown' at home with their abusers at the same time that services to support survivors are being disrupted or made inaccessible.
- > All of these impacts are further amplified in contexts of fragility, conflict, and emergencies where social cohesion is already undermined and institutional capacity and services are limited.

This policy brief focuses on each of these issues in turn, exploring how women and girls' lives are changing in the face of COVID19, and outlining suggested priority measures to accompany both the immediate response and longer-term recovery efforts.

COVID-19 is not only a challenge for global health systems, but also a test of our human spirit. Recovery must lead to a more equal world that is more resilient to future crises. Fiscal stimulus packages and emergency measures to address public health gaps have been put in place in many countries to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19. It is crucial that all national responses place women and girls - their inclusion, representation, rights, social and economic outcomes, equality and protection - at their centre if they are to have the necessary impacts. This is not just about rectifying long-standing inequalities but also about building a more just and resilient world. It is in the interests of not only women and girls but also boys and men. Women will be the hardest hit by this pandemic but they will also be the backbone of recovery in communities. Every policy response that recognizes this will be the more impactful for it.

To achieve this, the policy brief emphasizes three cross-cutting priorities:

- 1) **Ensure women's equal representation in all COVID-19 response planning and decision making. [...]**
- 2) **Drive transformative change for equality by addressing the care economy, paid and unpaid. [...]**
- 3) **Target women and girls in all efforts to address the socio-economic impact of COVID 19. [...]**

Quoted from "The Impact of COVID-19 on Women." United Nations. Policy Brief. April 9, 2020. [https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/policy\\_brief\\_on\\_covid\\_impact\\_on\\_women\\_9\\_april\\_2020.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/policy_brief_on_covid_impact_on_women_9_april_2020.pdf)

# Gender Mainstreaming Policies for Government Officers 2019 [Course B] (Winter 2020)



KFAW offers a training program on “Gender Mainstreaming Policies for Government Officers” for administrative officials from developing countries twice a year, under a contract with the Japan International Cooperation Agency’s Kyushu Center (JICA Kyushu).

Since 2019-2020, this training has been carried out as a paired training with representatives from national machineries in each country (i.e., ministries, agencies, and organizations promoting gender equality) and administrative officers from other governmental agencies. The second training in 2019-2020 was held from January 16 to February 12, 2020, with nine participants from five countries and regions: Chile, Egypt, Palestine, Fiji, and the Maldives.

The training itself consists of a broad curriculum that includes lectures, field visits, workshops, and presentations. The content of the lectures covers a wide range of topics, including education, law, disasters, agriculture, budgeting, and media. The objective of the program is to promote gender mainstreaming in a cross-sectoral way by taking ample time for discussion issues and challenges faced in order to allow participants to gain an understanding of in other countries and learn from each other’s ideas and opinions.

During the training period, the participants learned a strategic method for problem solving called the Project Cycle Management (PCM) and applied it to create action plans to be undertaken after returning home. On the final day of the training program, the participants presented their action plans and received feedback from experts. The plans included unique initiatives ranging from budgeting and infrastructure to a project to build a safe shelter for women

in a senior care facility. The presentation session contributed to broadening the perspective of the participants as well as of the KFAW staff.

At the end of the training program, one of the participants from Fiji commented that gender perspectives are not something special that should be considered on its own, but rather, they must be taken into account in all major projects and be considered continuously in all project stages of planning, implementation, and assessment. This comment indicates the potential of the paired training as an effective means of promoting gender mainstreaming in a broad range of fields.

KFAW will continue to address gender issues in partnership with participants of the JICA training program.



# KFAW International Understanding Seminar

## Open Communication: Beyond Nations and Gender

Government officials from around the world who were in Japan for the JICA gender training program were invited to take part in a seminar where they could talk freely with local residents about the issue of gender and an ideal livable society for all.

**Date & Time:** February 9, 2020 13:00-16:00

**Venue:** Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center MOVE, 5F Large Seminar Room

**Program:** [Part 1] · Presentations on gender and the SDGs by students from the University of Kitakyushu  
· Relay talk by government officials introducing themselves and their countries

[Part 2] World Café (30 minutes x 2 rounds)

Topics ① Familiar episodes related to gender

② What constitutes a gender-equal society for all

**Panelists:** Participants etc. of the JICA training on Gender Mainstreaming Policies for Government Officers 2019 [Course B] (10 participants from 5 countries)

**Participants:** 82 (including 25 men)



Following presentations on gender issues in different countries by two groups of students from the University of Kitakyushu and government officials, all participants were divided into groups where they exchanged ideas and opinions freely with the government officials in a “world café” format. The first round of discussion was held on the topic of “familiar episodes related to gender.” The discussion generated common remarks among multiple countries such as “stereotypes that women should take care of housework and children,” the “larger proportion of men in managerial positions,” and “pressure on women in their early twenties to marry.”



During the second round, the participants discussed what constitutes a gender-equal society for all. Some commented on the need for a “society that recognizes individual lifestyles, perspectives, and mindsets rather than a simple framework for men, women, and others” and “education that creates a society where roles are not determined based on physical gender differences and where social gender bias is not imprinted from early childhood.” In addition, some memorable, down to earth opinions were raised, which included a remark on the “importance of developing a legal approach, such as recommendations associated with the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).”

KFAW hopes that this workshop has provided participants with a better understanding of the SDGs as well as the current challenges facing gender equality around the world. KFAW will continue with our initiatives to achieve Goal 5 of the SDGs.

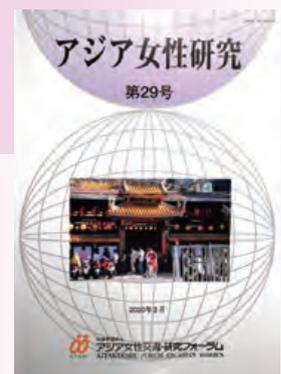
## Publication of *Ajia Jyosei Kenkyu* (Studies on Asian Women), Volume 29

*Ajia Jyosei Kenkyu* is a journal containing studies and research on gender issues in Japan and Asia conducted by visiting researchers from an international perspective. Volume 29 contains the following 3 articles:

1. “Increasing representation of women in local councils: a comparative study between four Asian cities” explores measures to increase the number of local female legislators in Japan through questionnaires and interviews with female city councilors and their supporters in the four cities of Taipei, New Taipei, Fukuoka, and Kitakyushu. Drawing from the introduction of an electoral quota system in Taipei and New Taipei, where the ratio of female members is high, the study investigates and analyzes the differences in the proportion of female legislators in local elections in these four cities.

2. “Study on promoting career development for women: through interview surveys in Fukuoka and Kagoshima Prefectures” conducted interviews with 14 female workers residing in the cities of Fukuoka, Kitakyushu, and Kagoshima. An analysis using the TEM (Trajectory Equifinality Model) reveals how these women build their careers that is more closely matched to their intentions by making active choice on their workplaces or positions, while taking into account challenges such as career changes, demotion, and barriers to promotion.

3. “Support and legal systems for mother and child victims of domestic violence in Japan and Singapore” focuses on support provided to children who have hitherto been positioned as incidental to their mothers that suffer from domestic abuse and thus whose human rights have not been respected. This study illustrates how such support is currently made available in Japan and Singapore. Through the examination of Singapore’s efforts to position children as targets for protection, the study seeks suggestions for how to support victims of domestic violence in Japan.



KFAW also publishes detailed research reports for each study. Please inquire if you are interested.



## The Burden of Water

Disha Arora (India)

An award-winning feminist documentary filmmaker and development communications specialist. Committed to challenging social systems and ideologies which promote gender-based discrimination. Produces films that highlight the impact of social structures on women's rights and tells stories of women who are re-writing the social narratives to fully realize their human rights and build a just and peaceful world.



India, where 600 million are affected by water scarcity every year<sup>1</sup>, is also a country deeply divided on the basis of Caste (a Hindu system of social segregation). Despite the "Right to Equality" enshrined in the Indian Constitution, Caste has a considerable role to play in determining an individual's access to social and economic opportunities. The Caste structure, a 3000-year old system, even controls which community would have easier access to artificial and natural resources until this day. Especially for the marginalized *Dalit* (so-called "untouchable") women living in India, water is a massive burden they bear every day.

In the country where systems are already skewed on the basis of gender, the Caste structure has a considerable impact on the socio-economic status of an Indian woman and thrives on Brahminical patriarchy (*Brahmins* are the so-called "upper" Caste community). The manifestation of this form of patriarchy ranges from casual casteism and sexism to unequal access to healthcare, water, education, and legal systems to brutal killings, rapes, and complete dehumanization of *Dalit* women.

### Water vs. Caste Hierarchy

The majority of *Dalit* families live in rural India. They live in areas that are often furthest from the center of the village where the water source is located. Their so-called "untouchability" makes them ineligible to live in the prominent areas of the village, which are culturally reserved for "upper" Caste families. With only 27% of *Dalit* households with a water source (not necessarily fit for drinking) within their premises, tens of thousands of *Dalit* women start their day early in the morning, travel kilometers, stand in queues for hours to fetch water for their families. They repeat the same ritual in the evening. Given how



48.4% of *Dalit* villages are denied access to a water source (UN High Commission for Human Rights)

1 National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog), 2019. "Composite Water Management Index." June 10, 2020. <https://niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2019-08/CWMI-2.0-latest.pdf>

patriarchy has assigned gender roles, the responsibility of collecting, using, and saving water falls on women and girls. Predictably, they suffer from regular backache, joint pain, and muscle problems. Even their sleep cycles are severely affected. However, they are usually not even aware of the cause of these health issues.

Additionally, even today, the practice of untouchability continues unchecked. There are multiple cases of *Dalit* women facing violence when they tried accessing water from a public source because they were considered "impure" by the so-called "upper" Caste women and men.

### Water Scarcity and *Dalit* Women

Climate change would not just manifest in the form of natural disasters. It would also widen the current gender-based inequalities. A report released by the central government in 2019 outlines that less rainfall and groundwater depletion



India is ranked 5th in the Global Climate Risk Index (2019)

led to water shortage in 17% of cities and towns across India. The growing water scarcity due to climate change would make the situation even worse for the *Dalit* community, especially the women. Caste and gender hierarchies make *Dalit* women the most vulnerable group in the climate change pecking order. For instance, the water riots in Bundelkhand (a drought-prone region in northern India) forced a *Dalit* woman to file a police complaint because *Dalit* women were beaten up for using government handpumps.

### Solutions with Gendered and Caste-based Perspectives

Water is a precious commodity and will be even more valuable as the world struggles to cope with climate change. Given this situation, it is essential to take into account that any particular social issue affects marginalized communities in more than one way. As governments and international organizations design solutions, they must integrate the gender and Caste-based experiences of *Dalit* women and involve them in every level of decision-making.

## The 30th KFAW Foreign Correspondent

In 1991, the Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women (KFAW) established a foreign correspondent system to broadly network with people overseas, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. The complete profiles of the past and current correspondents are available on our website: <http://www.kfaw.or.jp/en/correspondents/index.html>.

