



DEPARTMENT OF
**ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL AFFAIRS**



Gender Equality in Public Administration in Bhutan

An in-depth Review of Measures for Promoting the Presence
and Leadership of Women and Gender Equality in Public
Administration in Bhutan

2023

This report is a joint initiative of National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) with funding from Government from Italy.



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Economic and
Social Affairs



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Administration in Bhutan”**

**Commissioned by the United Nations Department of Economic
and Social Affairs and the United Nations Development
Programme Bhutan in collaboration with the National
Commission for Women and Children**

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ACRONYM

BCSR	: Bhutan Civil Service Rules and Regulations
BCSE	: Bhutan Civil Service Examination
BDPA	: Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
CEDAW	: Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
CSAB	: Civil Service Act of Bhutan
DA	: Daily Allowance
DEP	: Department of Education Programme
DT	: Dzongkhag Tshogdu
ECA	: Economic Commission for Africa
ES	: Executive Specialist
ESC	: Executive and Specialist Category
ESCAP	: Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
EX-M	: Executive Management
FGD	: Focus Group Discussion
FYP	: Five-Year Plan
GEBCS	: Gender Equality in Bhutanese Civil Service
GEG	: Gender Experts Group
GEPA	: Gender Equality in Public Administration
GFP	: Gender Focal Point
GNH	: Gross National Happiness
GoTech	: The Government Technology Agency
GPMS	: Government Performance Management System
GT	: Gewog Tshogde
HR	: Human Resource
HRC	: Human Resource Committee/Council
HRD	: Human Resource Development
INGO	: International Non-Governmental Organisation
KPI	: Key Performance Indicators
LG	: Local Government
LGKRA	: Local Government Key Result Areas
MoESD	: Ministry of Education and Skills Development
MoF	: Ministry of Finance
MoG	: Major Occupational Group
MoHA	: Ministry of Home Affairs

MolCE	: Ministry of Industries, Commerce and Employment
NCWC	: National Commission of Women and Children
NGEP	: National Gender Equality Policy
NKRA	: National Key Results Area
NPAGE	: National Plan of Action for Gender Equality
NSB	: National Statistics Bureau (Bhutan)
OC	: Operational Category
ODE	: Organisational Development Exercise
PCS	: Performance Culture Survey
PMC	: Professional and Management Category
RAA	: Royal Audit Authority
RCSC	: Royal Civil Service Commission
RGoB	: Royal Government of Bhutan
RNR	: Renewable Natural Resources
SDG	: Sustainable Development Goals
SMI	: Sr. Manager's Interview
SSC	: Supervisory and Support Category
TT	: Thromde Tshogde
UN	: United Nations
UNCT	: United Nations Country Team
UNDESA	: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
WCD	: Women and Children Division

GLOSSARY

Constitution	: Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2008
Dzongdag	: District Administrator or Chief Executive Officer of a Dzongkhag
Dzongkha	: National language of Bhutan
Dzongkhag	: District and a geographical territory where local government at the district level is instituted
Dzongkhag Tshogdu	: District Council of the Local Government at the district level
Gewog	: County and local territory within each Dzongkhag/district where local government at the grassroots level is instituted.
Government	: Government of Bhutan, unless described otherwise to make other references.
Gewog Tshogde	: Local Government Council at the Gewog level.
Lhengye Zhungtshog	: Cabinet/Council of Cabinet Ministers
National Council	: Upper House of the Parliament of Bhutan
RCSC	: Royal Civil Service Commission of Bhutan
Royal Government	: Royal Government of Bhutan.
Thromde	: Dzongkhag/District Municipality Office
Thromde Tshogde	: Municipal Council.
UNDP-OECD Framework	: UNDP-OECD Framework for Assessing Gender Equality and Women's Leadership in Public Life

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This in-depth review aims to support the Government of Bhutan's initiatives in promoting gender equality and women's leadership in public administration. The review assessed gender equality in public administration in 2022-2023 including an analysis of the profile of gender-based participation and representation in public administration to guide the development of interventions to promote women's presence and leadership in public administration.

The review was carried out under the coordination of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bhutan Country Office and the Royal Government of Bhutan, led by the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) in the context of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs' (UN DESA) project 'Building capacities for promoting the presence and leadership of women within public institutions at the national and local levels'.

The review gathered data using the UNDP-OECD analytical framework and an addendum provided by UN DESA, stemming from a global analysis of existing laws, organizational policies and good practices that have proved effective in enhancing women's access to decision-making roles in public administration. The data was collected using desk reviews, senior management interviews (SMIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) both at the national and subnational levels on gender equality policies and processes in the civil service; legal measures; and gender equality human resource (HR) functions within the civil service, encompassing recruitment, career advancement, remuneration, work-life balance, and institutional culture. The roster of interviewees at both central and local levels is presented as Annex 7.

As of 31 December 2022, there were 30,194 civil servants, including 4,853 on contract. Among them, 12,076 (40 per cent) were women and 18,118 (60 per cent) were men. Although there has been gradual increase in the proportion of female civil servants from 36.75 per cent in 2018 to 40.0 per cent in 2022, the representation of women at decision-making levels remains low at 20.4 per cent¹. The highest number of female civil servants is observed in the support service category constituting 44 per cent of the civil servants within that category, followed by the professional and management category with 40 per cent. They are also predominantly found in education and training services, comprising 4,364 individuals, which is 14.45 per cent of the total civil servants followed by administrative and support services and medical and health services.

Based on the January 2023 statistics from the Royal Civil Service Commission, the number of civil servants at the central and local levels is 12,915 (45 per cent) and 15,638 (55 per cent) respectively, out of a total of 28,553 civil servants². The proportion of women at the central and local levels was 16 per cent and 14 per cent respectively.

¹ For the purpose of this study, women in decision-making position includes those in P1 managerial position and above.

² The decrease in total number of civil servants is partly attributed to high attrition witnessed in 2023

NCWC is the national lead agency for promoting gender equality, and the network of gender focal points (GFP) across ministries and agencies at national and subnational levels serves as the operational arm of the commission. The National Gender Equality Policy 2020 provides policy directives for overall gender equality work in the country. The Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC) and its Secretariat established by the Constitution is the country's central personnel agency responsible for managing the public service.

The review revealed that Bhutanese public administration operates within a general legal and policy framework provided by the Civil Service Act of Bhutan, and Bhutan Civil Service Rules and Regulation. These are merit-based providing equal opportunities for all eligible Bhutanese without discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, language, religion, and other status. Likewise, all civil servants are provided with the same work-life balance facilities, and provisions like the annual and medical leave. There are also flexible working arrangements for parents with small children although there is no uniform application across the public service. Through the review, it was also found that men continue to dominate decision-making and leadership positions, including roles on important committees (human resource committees for example) within the Bhutanese civil service. Women's representation in these committees, particularly at the subnational level, is minimal, resulting in their limited influence over decisions made by committees.

Findings from the review suggested that while there is no explicit discrimination/bias against female civil servants, there are several factors that constrain women's participation in leadership and decision-making positions in public administration:

- Men continue to dominate civil service workplaces, increasing the likelihood of reinforcing patriarchal values and stereotypes, and influencing key workplace decisions. It was also found that women are less likely to be confident and participate meaningfully in decision-making processes.
- The Bhutanese policies, rules and regulations are mostly gender neutral (except provisions on parental leave and flexible working arrangements) and do not identify specific needs of female civil servants. This coupled with limited awareness on gender equality can cause implementation gaps that often affect women adversely.
- Social and cultural norms and practices around traditional gendered roles, women's leadership capabilities and gendered occupational segregation are prevalent. This obstacle hampers women's career advancement limits their access to capacity-building opportunities and restricts their recruitment into certain job categories. There was also a perception that women should be primarily recruited for specific roles such as teaching, which appeared to impact decisions related to recruitment, selection, and transfer.
- Lack of gender-responsive facilities and infrastructure are found to be one of the factors deterring women from entering the civil service, and women are often discouraged from applying for jobs in remote communities due to the difficulty posed by rugged terrain and lack of appropriate infrastructure and facilities to meet their needs.

- Limited in-service mentorship on career progression appears to leave women with a lack of required skills and strategies to be on the same competitive edge with men.
- There is limited awareness on gender equality, national policy, and commitment towards promoting gender equality, as well as responsibilities of line ministries and agencies on gender mainstreaming. FDG participants also raised the need for targeted gender trainings particularly for male civil servants both at the national and subnational levels.

The review recommends the development of a comprehensive action plan to assist the government to integrate gender equality principles, policies, regulations, and mechanisms to promote gender parity and equality in public administration; address discriminatory institutional practices and norms, and develop mechanisms for implementation, monitoring, and sustainability of gender equality results both at the national and subnational levels. The action plan needs to include specific targets on women's leadership roles at the national level with relevant indicators and practical actions across different thematic areas.

Recommendations to improve women's presence and leadership in the civil service include:

- Enhance institutional and policy frameworks for gender equality including strengthening the provision of technical assistance to the Royal Civil Service Commission and line ministries and agencies.
- Enhance the institutional capacity and functional autonomy of the national gender machinery to ensure effective discharge of its functions including implementation of related legal and policy provisions.
- Review the appointment and terms of reference of network of gender focal persons, both at national and subnational levels
- Strengthen accountability on gender mainstreaming including gender responsive human resource auditing.
- Strengthen human resource policies and practices including the revision of Bhutan Civil Services Rules and Regulations to strengthen provisions related to the recruitment and selection of civil servants.
- Develop and implement temporary special measures and gender parity systems in the process of appointments, including accelerated recruitment of women in senior positions level, equal representation in decision-making bodies, and measures to eliminate structural inequalities and occupational segregation at national and sub-national level.
- Enhance awareness and capacities on gender equality in the public sector through periodic executive development programmes for female and male civil servants, among others.
- Strengthen the collection, management, and use of gender-disaggregated data by agencies and positions at the national and subnational levels including gender-

disaggregated data of HR/recruitment process.

- Conduct periodic monitoring and evaluations on the implementation of measures aimed at advancing gender equality in public institutions.



Gender focal persons, Human Resource Officers and managers from the ministries and agencies, and officials from the Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC) and National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) attended a capacity building workshop on “Promoting gender equality in public administration”

1. Introduction

1.1 Study Background

Gender equality in public administration benefits the society by harnessing the full potential of both women and men to achieve national development goals and objectives. At the same time, a large gender gap in public administration could have detrimental effects on the nation's development. This imbalance may hinder the sustainability and responsiveness of the development approach and process, failing to address the holistic needs of all individuals, regardless of gender.

Several international ratifications entail the signatory countries to enforce gender equality or women's participation in public administration³. In this context, this 'in-depth review'⁴ was conducted as part of UN DESA's project on '*Building capacities for promoting the presence and leadership of women within public institutions at the national and local levels*'⁵, implemented in partnership with UNDP, UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), United Nations Country Teams (UNCT) in respective countries and UN Women. The review was implemented under the coordination of UNDP-Bhutan country office and the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) Secretariat. The findings of this review were incorporated into the project's training modules on gender equality in public administration and guided the development of an action plan on the promotion of women's career progression to higher leadership positions in the public sector at the national and subnational levels in Bhutan.

The review, as an output of the project, will also contribute to the implementation of other international agreements and instruments such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA 1995), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW 1979) and other regional and national ratifications that uphold the need to enhance equal participation of women and men in public life, decision-making and policy development. The review contributed to the project's objective of stimulating knowledge transfer and cross-fertilization through enhanced sensitisation and awareness on the importance of prioritizing gender equality within and across different levels of public administration.

³For reference to specific contents of international ratifications, see Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1979; Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) 1995; 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 2015; Our Common Agenda 2021.

⁴As this report is referred to. Hereafter, the report will be interchangeably referred to in short as the 'review'.

⁵Hereafter referred to the report in short as the 'project'.

1.2 Design and Methodology

This review was conducted within the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB)'s overall policy guidelines, legal frameworks and implementation strategies related to gender mainstreaming and gender equality approaches across the public sectors.

The data collection utilized the UNDP-OECD analytical framework⁶ and an addendum provided by UN DESA⁷. The objective was to gather data to build a framework that assesses and discusses the integration of a gender dimension into public policies, management and governance processes within a country's public administration. The data was collected using three key tools - Desk Review, Senior Management Interviews (SMIs), and Focus-Group Discussions (FGDs)⁸ within selected public institutions, both at the national and subnational levels. A desk review of relevant policies, legislation and strategies was carried out to understand the gender equality landscape in public administration. This involved quantitative analysis including the collection of sex-disaggregated data, building upon official statistics. The objective was to examine distribution of civil servants to determine placements and positions of women and men within Government ministries and other public agencies at both the national and subnational levels. The list of documents reviewed is provided as Annex 8.

SMIs and FGDs were conducted at both the national and subnational levels employing purposive sampling for convenience to ensure representative data. For SMIs, officials holding positions of Executives and Division Chiefs were selected, given their representation of senior roles with decision-making responsibilities. FGD participants, on the other hand, comprised civil servants at the mid-level and those involved in support or operational functions. A set of guiding questions was employed for both SMIs and FGDs. These questions focused on various aspects, including gender equality policies and process, recruitment practices, career stream, remuneration, work-life balance, institutional culture, and other relevant factors affecting women's career development in public administration⁹. At the central level, eight SMIs were conducted involving representatives from eight agencies, comprising five women and three men. At the local level, seven SMIs were conducted across five agencies, involving three women and four men. In total, fifteen SMIs were conducted spanning thirteen agencies, with the participation of eight women and seven men (**Table 1**).

⁶ The UNDP-OECD framework for assessing gender equality and women's leadership in public life, which provides general guidance to collect data on mechanisms for gender mainstreaming and the machinery for advancement of women at central and subnational levels of government.

⁷ As a result of the [Global Review of Existing Legislations and Organizational Policies and Good Practices for Promoting Women's Access to Leadership Positions in Public Administration](#).

⁸ These key methods were adopted based on the requirements specified in the review ToR.

⁹ The questionnaire provided by UNDP/UN DESA was customised to fit the Bhutan's public administration context.

To examine gender-differentiated perspectives among various stakeholders, FGDs were structured to include at least one group composed entirely of men, another entirely of women and a third mixed-gender cohort. A total of twenty-three officials, consisting of twelve women and eleven men, participated in the five FGDs (**Table 2**). At the central level, eight officials including five women participated in the two FGDs. Similarly, fifteen officials including seven women participated in the three FGDs conducted at the local level.

Transparency and openness were upheld throughout the interviews and FGDs, while concurrently ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of discussions that could potentially have personal implications for both interviewees and FGD participants.

2. National Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Context

2.1 National Gender Machinery

The National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) is the **national lead agency on gender equality and mainstreaming**. It was established in 2004 with the primary role to “promote and protect the rights of women and children in the country”¹⁰. The Commission was elevated to a fully autonomous agency under the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) in 2008. The key focus of the Commission’s functions is to **promote gender equality** and establish a sustainable and comprehensive system to protect and promote the rights of women and children in the country. The Commission supports relevant agencies through capacity building; provides technical support, develops policies, rules, guidelines, and standards; carries out research/ assessments, surveys, and monitors the implementation of gender related interventions by the respective agencies. The Commission members consist of high-level officials from relevant government and non-government agencies, endorsed by the Cabinet. The recently instituted eight-member **NCWC headed by the Cabinet Secretary** consists of senior officials from relevant agencies, with five women, including the Chairperson.

The Commission is supported by a **permanent secretariat** that provides administrative and operational support in achieving the Commission’s vision of creating a harmonious society of equality and respect in all spheres of life for women and men¹¹. Following the enactment of the Civil Service Reform Act of Bhutan (CSRAB) 2022, which reorganized civil service agencies, the previously independent Secretariat of NCWC has been restructured and incorporated as the **Women and Children Division** of the Department of Education Programmes under the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MOESD).

The network of **Gender Focal Points (GFP)**, nominated in relevant agencies at both the national and local levels¹² serve as the operational arms of NCWC to

¹⁰ <http://www.education.gov.bt/dys/?p=3903>

¹¹ <http://www.education.gov.bt/dys/?p=3903>

¹² At the local level, GFPs are also the focal points of children, so they are referred to as the Gender and Child Focal Points (GCFP).

mainstream gender perspectives in their respective sectoral plans. The GFPs Terms of Reference (ToR) define their primary responsibility to mainstream gender interventions in plans and policies of their respective ministries and agencies and create awareness on gender equality within their agencies (Annex 5). Currently there are sixteen GFPs (eleven women and five men) in various agencies at the central level¹³. At the local level, there is a GFP in all twenty districts (twenty GFPs - four women and sixteen men) and four municipal offices (four GFPs – three women and one man).

Besides the GFPs' network, the NCWC Secretariat also engages a **Gender Expert Group (GEG)**, comprising individual experts from different government and non-government agencies to provide technical support to NCWC and the GFPs. GEG members are not staff of the NCWC, and they meet periodically based on need. The Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) also play an important role in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in the country. They work in close collaboration with the NCWC to **create advocacy on women's leadership**, prevention of gender-based violence and empowerment of women¹⁴.



As of 2023, there are 11,371 female civil servants in Bhutan and 43% of them are in education and training category.

¹³ Ministry of Health; Ministry of Education and Skills Development; Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport; Cabinet; Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock; Ministry of Home Affairs; Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources; Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment; Department of Immigration; Centre for Bhutan and GNH Studies; National Statistics Bureau; National Assembly Secretariat; RCSC; Office of the Attorney General; National Land Commission; Royal Audit Authority.

¹⁴ https://www.ncwc.gov.bt/partner_organization

2.2 Legal and Policy Framework on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

The National Gender Equality Policy (NGEP) provides an overall policy framework to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. The Policy is aligned to the international and regional agreements that Bhutan has ratified, such as CEDAW and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and upholds the values of Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the UN charter. The Policy explores the **political, economic, and social** dimensions of gender equality and strives to address the **gender stereotypical mindsets and practices** across these dimensions. It sets out specific **policy directives for improving women's representation** in decision-making positions across all sectors and at all levels which includes creating enabling environments; building a **network of women and aspiring women leaders**; exploring and adopting affirmative actions; and improving data and research and advocacy and awareness to address stereotypical mindsets and attitudes around women's leadership capabilities.



In public administration, only 23% of women are in the executive and specialist position.

The National Plan of Action for Gender Equality (NPAGE) serves as the primary mechanism to operationalize the NGEP. Its implementation aligns with the Five-Year Plan (FYP) period of the country to ensure that the proposed actions are synchronized with the development objectives and activities outlined in the FYP. The last NPAGE spanned from 2019 to 2023 and was implemented corresponding to the 12th FYP, National Key Results Area 10, “Gender Equality” in particular. At the local level, the objectives of the NPAGE are translated through the 10th (out of 11) Local Government Key Result Areas (LGKRA), emphasizing the - *promotion of gender equality and empowerment of girls and women*. The interventions of the

NPAGE is categorized into ten critical area of action¹⁵. Good governance is one of critical areas and focuses on improving **women's representation in decision-making** across all sectors. NPAGE sets specific targets for women's leadership and aims to increase the representation of women in the civil service to 40 per cent and to 20 per cent in executive positions by 2023. In line with the objectives of NGEF, the Plan of action prioritizes five strategic areas for intervention: strengthening conducive work environments; creating a network of women leaders and aspiring leaders; and adopting and implementing **temporary special measures**.

At the public administration level, a *Gender Equality Strategy – Enhancing women's leadership in the Bhutanese Civil Service 2018-2023* (GESBCS) is being implemented by the RCSC. The strategy is in line with NPAGE and includes five major strategies, (i) achieving a supportive and an enabling environment; (ii) stepping up capacities and aspirations; (iii) balancing decision-making; (iv) gender mainstreaming in human resource (HR) plans and policies; and, (v) conducting monitoring and evaluation to achieve the target of increased women's representation at the executive level to 15 per cent by 2023 (*detailed activities attached as Annex 6 - Activities under Strategies of GESBCS*).

2.3 Coordination, Implementation and Accountability on Gender Equality Results

The NGEF and NPAGE are either implemented through integration in plans of respective line ministries and agencies or taken by the NCWC (and relevant CSOs) as targeted intervention/flagship projects.

The **GFPs¹⁶ play a key role in taking forward the gender equality commitments through mainstreaming within their sector**, however, the review found that the **majority of these focal points do not hold senior positions and have limited capacity on gender which may significantly limit their effectiveness**. As such, their functions are limited to supporting activities initiated by the NCWC and not necessarily engaging in formulation of their respective sectoral plans, policies, and programmes. Furthermore, the FGD and SMI highlighted that the **GFPs are employees of respective line ministries and agencies and therefore directly accountable to them**, and not to NCWC. The review also found that there is a lack of uniformity in the identification and appointment of GFPs. With no specific criteria, the appointment of GFPs was left to the discretion of heads of the respective agencies at the central level. At the local level, legal officers are designated as GFPs based on the executive directive from the RCSC in 2018. However, since most

¹⁵ Good Governance; Health; Aging, Mental Health and Disability; Gender-based Violence; Gender prejudices and stereotypes; Economic development; Education; Media and Sports; Environment; and Climate change.

¹⁶ GFPs designated by respective agencies and local government to oversee gender related interventions within their sectors based on formal communication from the NCWC. They are designated from various relevant officials such as the planning, legal, HR etc.

of the district legal officers left their services as they were recruited on contract, the district administration offices that did not have a full-time legal officer were allowed to appoint any other official as a GFP.

Similarly, SMI with the NCWC revealed that **limited budget and proper coordination and lack of ownership and support from line ministries and agencies** impeded the effective discharge of GFP functions. The interview raised concerns over the NCWC's limited autonomy and capacity because of civil service reform¹⁷. This has further resulted in NCWC having limited authority to ensure accountability on respective ministries and agencies. Therefore, there is **absence of accountability mechanisms for gender equality within public administration at the RCSC level resulting in limited implementation of the NPAGE and GESBCS**.

3. Gender Equality in Public Administration

3.1 Bhutan Civil Service Agencies and Structure

Bhutan is a **unitary state** with no separation between regional and federal government¹⁸. The country is divided into 20 *Dzongkhags* (districts), four *Thromdes* (municipalities) and 205 *Gewogs* (smaller administrative blocks). They are the subnational or local level territories that deliver local public services. An administrative apparatus consisting of civil servants appointed through a centralized civil service system supports public services at both the central and local levels.

The Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC) and its Secretariat established by the Constitution¹⁹ is the country's central personnel agency. ***The Civil Service Act of Bhutan (CSAB) 2010***²⁰ governs the human resource management in the entire civil service, including at the subnational or local levels. Under this Act, a civil servant is "a person registered with the RCSC, and civil service agencies are public institutions that have civil servants to support their functions". As of 2022, there are 68 civil service agencies in total²¹ (Annex 1).

The Bhutan Civil Service Rules and Regulations (BCSR) 2018 determines the civil service structure based on CSAB. According to the BCSR, civil servants are grouped into four broad categories with several position levels within each category: Executive and Specialist Category (ESC)²² with three position levels; Professional and Management

¹⁷ The NCWC Secretariat was reduced to a division under the Ministry of Education and Skills Development following the civil service reform in 2022-2023.

¹⁸ According to the definition as per the UNDP-OECD Framework: A country that has a constitutionally delineated division of political authority between one central and several regional or state autonomous governments.

¹⁹ Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan, Article 26, Pg. 51-53.

²⁰ https://www.rcsc.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2014/government_rules/CS_ACT2010.pdf

²¹ At the time of conducting this study. At the time of conducting this review, the number of civil service agencies could change in line with the change in government policies, civil service transformation and Organisational Development exercise from time to time.

²² Further categorised as Executive Management (EX) and Executive Specialist (ES).

Category (PMC) with five position levels; Supervisory and Support Category (SSC) with nine position levels and Operational Category (OC) with four position levels (Figure 1).

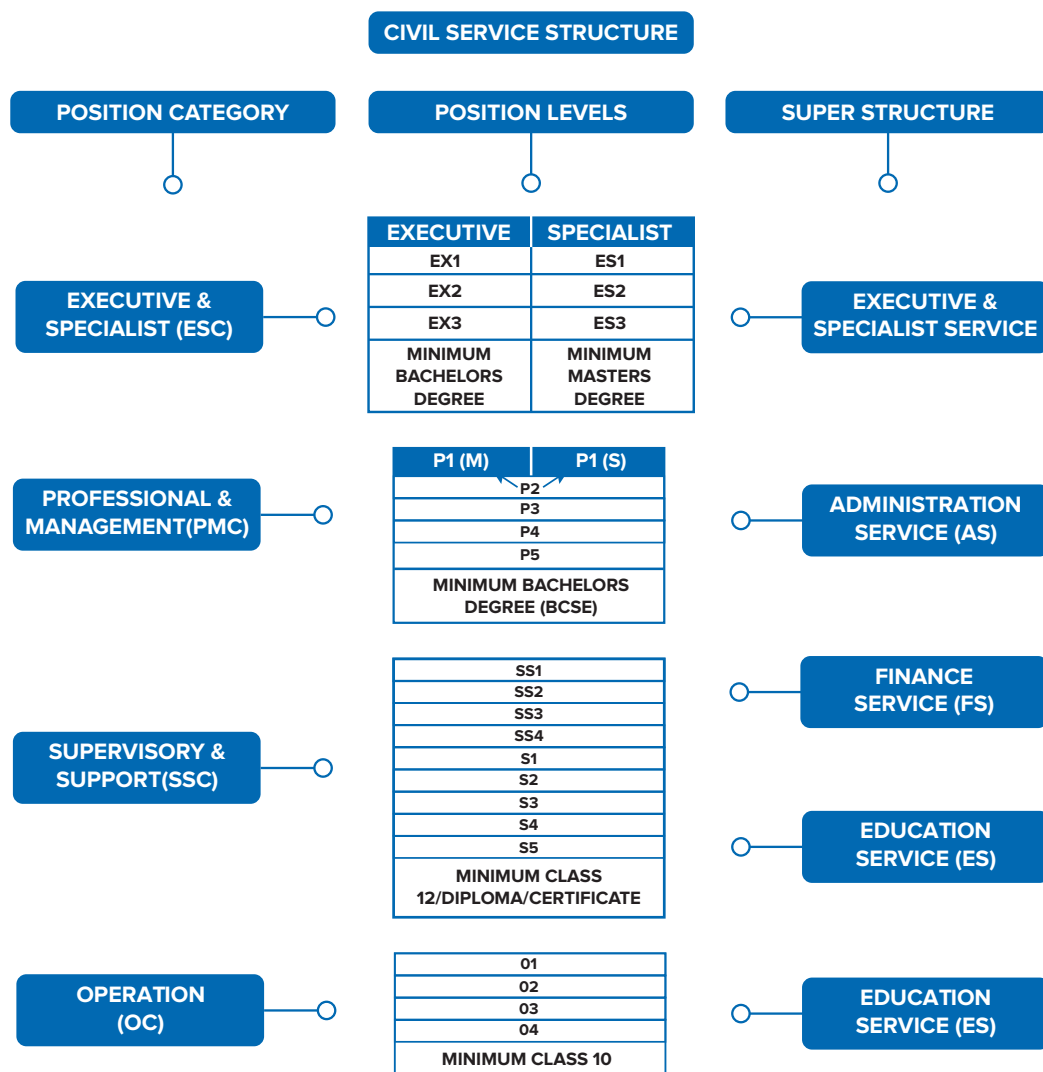


Figure 1: Bhutan's civil service position categories, hierarchy and super structure

The career progression within specific position categories and transitions between these categories is examined in section 3.3.3.

The Bhutanese Civil Service is categorised into nineteen major occupational groups (MoG)²³ and 93 sub-groups. Depending on the nature of functions across the Government agencies, the Executive Services Group has twenty-three positions, with the entry level grade at Executive-III²⁴. Eighteen other occupational groups are

²³ <https://www.rcsc.gov.bt/en/job-description/>

²⁴ <https://www.rcsc.gov.bt/en/executive-services-group-2/> & <https://www.rcsc.gov.bt/wp->

further broken down into several sub-groups with a varying number of positions under each sub-group²⁵.

3.2 Gender-based Participation in the Civil Service

3.2.1 Civil Servants at the National Level

All quantitative data related to civil service statistics in this review relies on the Civil Service Statistics (CSS) 2022²⁶, the most recent civil service data accessible during the review process. As of 31 December 2022, the CSS, reported a total of 30,194 civil servants (including 4,853 on contract), comprising 3.96 per cent of the country's total population, with a civil servants-to-population ratio of 1:25. Over the past decade, there has been a steady growth in the size of the civil service, showing a 24 per cent increase in 2022 compared to 2012. However, the size of civil service in 2022 experienced a decline of over 3 per cent compared to the figures recorded in 2021.

Out of the total civil servants, **40 per cent (12,076) are women** and 60 per cent (18,118) are men. The number and proportion of civil servants in different categories were given in **Table 1**.

The number of women civil servants in all position levels across all the four position categories, except in the S-5 level, was lower than that of men (**Table 4**). However, the concentration of women civil servants in PMC and SSC establishes a necessary reservoir for fostering women's leadership.

The P1 and executive positions are further categorised into management and specialist positions. Those in management positions are entrusted with decision-making functions, which are considered for senior leadership or decision-making positions. As per this definition, **there were 100 (20.4 per cent) women civil servants** in the leadership and decision-making positions, compared to 349 (79.6 per cent) men (**Table 5**). The increase in overall civil servants in the last decade correlates to an increase in the number of women in different position levels, including the leadership and executive positions. Therefore, although the number of women in the civil service is lower than men, statistics show that the gender parity has been growing over the years. Both the increase in the total number and the concentration of women in the PMC show good prospects for an increase in the number of women at the decision-making level with necessary interventions.

[content/uploads/2014/job_description/Executive%20Services%20Group/Executive%20Service%20Group.pdf](#)

²⁵ RCSC, Position Directory 2018. <https://www.rcsc.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/PositionDirectoryNew.pdf>
<https://www.rcsc.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/PositionDirectoryNew.pdf>

²⁶ This is the latest civil service data available, and all quantitative data related to civil servants for this review is based on this report.

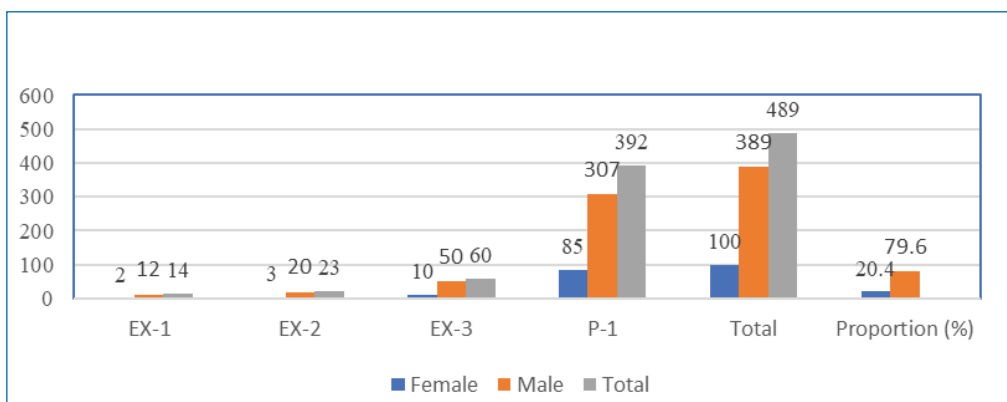


Figure II: Number and percentage of female civil servants in decision-making positions (compiled based on CSS 2022)

Amongst the 19 MoG, **Education and Training Services** had the highest number of Civil Servants (10,180, 33.72 per cent), followed by the **Administration and Support Services** (5,238, 17.35 per cent) and Medical and Health Services (3,843, 12.73 per cent). **The Arts, Culture & Literacy Services and Foreign Services** had the lowest number of civil servants (74, 0.25 per cent) (*Table 6*)

Table 7 shows the number of women and men with different education qualifications. Except for class XII, the percentage of women civil servants within **different education qualifications is lower than that of men**. The Bhutanese civil service requires a bachelor's degree for entry to PMC, which is the eligible category for leadership positions. Advanced qualifications such as postgraduate degrees and PhD are not considered as perquisites for advancing to higher positions, therefore, these qualifications do not carry additional merit during promotions to higher positions. The proportion of women with the required minimum education for PMC (bachelor's degree) is almost equal to that of men. The SMI participants acknowledged the growing trend of women performing better in the university education, with an increasing number of women outperforming men.

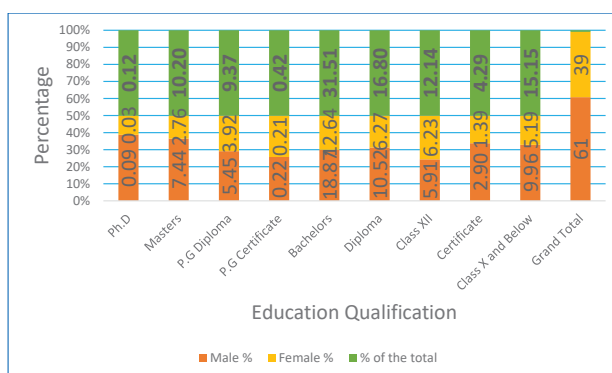


Figure III: Percentage of civil servants by type of education qualification and sex; Compiled based on statistics from CSS 2022).

3.2.2 Distribution of Female Civil Servants in the Agencies at the Central and Local levels

Out of the total of 18,686 (61.89 per cent) civil servants in the district and municipal administration offices (**Table 8**), 55 (19.64 per cent) are in ESC positions, including the 13 in the four municipal administration offices. Among the district administration offices, Thimphu has the highest number of ESC positions (5), followed by Samtse and Punakha (4 each), and Trashigang, Trashi Yangtse, Paro and Bumthang (3 each). Districts with the fewest ESC positions (1 each) are Samdrup Jongkhar, Pema Gatshel, Dagana, Lhuntse, Trongsa, Haa and Gasa. Likewise, Thimphu municipal administration office tops the ESC positions (10), followed by Phuentsholing (2) and Gelephu and Samdrup Jongkhar (1 each). Out of the total of 11,135 PMC (75.50 per cent) positions in the district and municipal administrations, 9,504 are in the district administration offices, and 1,631 are in the municipal administration offices. The highest number of PMC positions among the district administration offices is in Samtse (925), followed by Trashigang (852) and Chukha (705). Gasa has the lowest number of PMC positions (110). In the municipal administration offices, Thimphu has the highest number of PMC positions (1,077) and Samdrup Jongkhar has the lowest (128). The proportion of civil servants in the district and municipal offices at SSC and OC categories are 49.78 per cent and 47.55 per cent respectively. Overall, the civil servants by location remained constant (60 per cent on an average) for the last 5 years (2018 to 2022). Including the 89 staff outside Bhutan, the total number of civil servants at the central agencies is 11,508.

According to the information received from the Royal Civil Service Commission in January 2023, there are 12,915 (45 percent) and 15,638 (55 percent) civil servants at the central and local levels respectively, out of the total 28,553 civil servants.²⁷ The proportion of women at the central and local levels is 16 and 14 per cent respectively.

3.3 Human Resource Management

3.3.1 Legal Framework

In line with the Constitution and the CSAB, the BCSR provide implementation guidelines for the recruitment; selection; appointment; remuneration and allowance; career development and training; and promotion, placement, and transfer of civil servants. The BCSR and human resource management in the civil service aim to promote a 'neutral' civil service administered 'with justice that recognises and rewards only those who are truly deserving'.

As guiding rules, the BCSR prohibits nepotism, discrimination, favoritism, or patronage in the civil service. They also prohibit displaying disfavor towards anyone based on personal relationships, gender, appearance, region, ethnicity and family background, economic status, health, physical condition, and religion.

²⁷ The total number of civil servants declined from 30,194 in December 2022, which is attributed to attrition in 2023.

Engaging in **sexual harassment** in the form of ‘unwelcome verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature that affects working conditions or creates a hostile work environment’ is **not allowed**, including the use of ‘**words and gestures** that may be sexually offensive or suggest sexual interest’.

At the same time, a civil servant is **given the opportunity** and access to the RCSC to openly communicate and share **feedback against unprofessional and morally unacceptable actions** of superiors, colleagues, and subordinates. A civil servant can report breaches or alleged breaches in the civil service system to the appropriate authority without fear of victimization or discrimination²⁸.

The human resource functions and implementation procedures in the civil service-guided by the BCSR -are examined in the following sections:

3.3.2 Selection, Recruitment, and Placement

The **selection, recruitment and appointment policies** are **merit based** providing equal opportunity to all eligible Bhutanese without discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, language, religion, and other status. The aim is to select the most qualified and capable candidates with the right attitude for the right job to ensure professionalism in the civil service.

Civil service recruitments are made at the entry levels of PMC (P5), SSC (S5) and OC (O5). The selection, recruitment and appointment at the PMC entry level is done by the RCSC based on the procedures set in the BCSR, including the **open competitive** Bhutan Civil Service Examination (BCSE)²⁹ designed to select ‘the most competent university graduates with right attitude’ to get ‘the best and the brightest’ (BCSR, Chapter 7). The (working) agencies have the delegated authority to select and recruit at the SSC and OC entry level positions, in line with the **eligibility criteria** set under the BCSR.

An **annual recruitment plan** is then formulated based on the FYP staffing plan determined by the RCSC in consultation with respective agencies. Accordingly, the recruitment of personnel is carried out by agencies within the staffing plan and in adherence with established rules. All recruitments at agency level are approved by the HRCs.

Recruitment at the executive level is determined through the **civil service Position Directory** and RCSC selects and **recruits staff based on the available vacancies**. The recruitments at the entry level of executive management positions (Ex-III) are made from P-1 management positions through open competition. The ‘**secondary criteria**’ (BCSR, Section 26.4.3.2-b-iii) for shortlisting executives include preference for **female candidates**.

²⁸ Article 26 of the Constitution provides that all civil servants have recourse to justice (submit an appeal/petition) through the Administrative Tribunal established as per section 16 of Article 21 of the Constitution.

²⁹ BCSR Chapter 7 sets the eligibility criteria and procedures for examination.

The review found that **women are underrepresented in important decision-making bodies such as the HRC, recruitment and selection committees**. This coupled with a **low level of awareness on gender equality** among those at decision-making level and **the prevalence of stereotypes around occupational segregation and traditional gender norms** particularly at the subnational level **provided less opportunity for affirmative/intentional efforts** to encourage women applicants.

The SMI and FGD participants revealed that recruitment policies and rules are **gender neutral** and **lack explicit provisions for gender responsive** actions or minimum targets for women's representation. This as noted by the respondents, restricts the implementation of gender responsive interventions to **create a level playing field for female applicants** particularly in areas where women are underrepresented.

The nature of jobs and duty stations in certain positions at the subnational level and the **lack of gender-responsive facilities and infrastructure** are also pointed out to be factors deterring women from entering the civil service. They added that women are often discouraged to apply for jobs in remote communities due to the **difficulty posed by rugged terrain and lack of appropriate infrastructure and facilities** to meet women's needs. For instance, the job of a renewable natural resources (RNR) extension agent demands performing duties beyond normal working hours (i.e., 9am-5pm). This poses challenges for female civil servants due to long travel, lack of conducive facilities, safety concerns and their childcare burden³⁰.

3.3.3 Career Stream

Progression to different positions within a category is achieved through **regular promotions**. Within the PMC, a civil servant can receive regular promotions up to **P-2 level**, and the promotion to P1 can be either for specialist (P1-S) or management positions (P1-M). RCSC makes the selection to P1 or executive management positions (P1-M/EX-M entry position) through open competition and progression to P1-S. **ES entry positions** are based on the fulfillment of **relevant specialist promotion criteria**. Similarly, within SSC, a civil servant can progress to Senior Supervisor (SS) level SS-1 irrespective of the entry level as long as all promotion criteria are met. Positions at the OC category can also progress up to O1 level based on the fulfillment of the prescribed promotion criteria. In-service SSC and OC civil servants can move to a higher-level category (PMC) if selected through the BCSE. Line ministries and agencies have the authority to promote their staff (including those in SSC and OC) up to the PMC level of P-2, through procedures outlined in the BCSR. The delegation of promotion-authority is provided as Annex 2.

Promotions can be through **open competition**, within the broad-banded positions (positions within the same position category), promotion to specialist position; or **fast-track** promotion and **meritorious** promotion. **Regular promotions** of civil servants are based on a **positive performance assessment** conducted

³⁰ Experience of a female official reported during a FGD at the subnational level.

against established criteria. **Promotions through open competition** are mostly determined by the availability of vacant posts. In addition to the minimum required education, a **positive performance assessment** and the potential of a civil servant demonstrated through the **open competitive selection** are the basis for promotion. Factors considered in the performance assessment include relevant training, skills, and competency; past and present performance reflected in the performance appraisal; relevant experience with “clean” service record; suitability to perform duties and responsibilities of the vacant position; potential to shoulder higher responsibilities; not being in the negative list of RAA; absence of pending investigation/administrative action/court case; service in a rural area; and seniority. For **meritorious promotion**, the candidates require a performance rating of, “**outstanding**” for three consecutive years.

Promotion requirements and the performance evaluation system are consistently applied to women and men at both the national and subnational levels. However, the review found that **no specific measures** are being undertaken by the respective agencies to address challenges faced by female civil servants. One such challenge that hinders women from pursuing career advancement opportunities was found to be their **disproportionate burden of childcare and domestic responsibilities**. The review also revealed that there is **uneven level of awareness and capacity on gender** across different sectors and at the national and subnational levels. This according to the FGD participants led to **uneven interpretation and application of rules, often disadvantaging women**. For example, performance rating rules mandate a minimum rating of “good” for those on maternity leave; yet in practice, the majority receives a “good” rating. This creates a disadvantage for women seeking promotion to positions that require **a rating of “very good” and above**, as the year of maternity leave may coincide with the three years in which the promotion is processed. Such rules also put women at a disadvantage for **meritorious promotion at lower positions**.

3.3.4 Remuneration, Allowances, and Benefits

Remuneration, allowances, benefits, and other entitlements of civil servants are provided equally to both men and women within civil service agencies at the central and local levels. Guided by the principle of ‘**equal pay for work of equal value**’, pay and allowances are fixed based on the position level across all positions and occupational categories at national and subnational levels.

An independent Pay Commission³¹ instituted by the Government from time to time determines the remuneration structure for each position level, which is implemented upon approval by the council of Ministers subject to such conditions and modifications as may be made by the Parliament. Besides the monthly salary, other remunerations, and entitlements include **salary and house rent allowances** which are also fixed based on daily subsistence.

³¹ Article 30 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan.

The only conditions that could cause differences in the civil service remuneration and allowances between women and men appear **to be in relation to career advancement, transfers, and duty travel opportunities. Disproportionate childcare burdens** and household responsibilities of women and lack of gender-responsive **infrastructure and facilities** may limit access to these opportunities and the related benefits.

3.3.5 Work-life Balance

As mandated by CSAB and BCSR, all civil servants are granted casual, earned, bereavement, maternity, paternity, and medical leaves to promote work-life balance³². However, a civil servant on leave is regarded as on duty at any time of day and is obliged to adhere to the call of duty from the relevant authority as per the exigencies of service. The details of leave entitlements for civil servants are provided in *Annex 3. Flexible working provisions* are also provided for **working parents with small children** although they are **not applied uniformly** across different sectors and at the national and subnational levels. The participants of FGD and SMI reported that decisions related to such provisions are taken in the **senior management meetings of the respective agencies**. They expressed the need to extend flexible working arrangements to fathers as well as increase **paternity leave** from the current 10 working days. Provisions for **‘work-from-home’**, for working parents was also raised as a viable alternative option.

3.3.6 Institutional culture/workplace Environment Disparity in workplace composition

Both the statistics and assessment of current situations (through SMIs and FGDs) **revealed that men outnumber women in the civil service workplaces in general and in the decision-making sphere, in particular**. Women participating in SMI and FGD concurred that the gender **imbalance in the workplace favours men** and provides them with a conducive environment to **wield influence over decisions**. Female participants highlighted that **in male-dominated groups**, one or two **women** representatives often lack the **confidence to voice their opinions**, feeling less influential, overpowered, insecure and unsupported which leads to their **hesitancy** in actively participating in decision-making processes. It was also reported that the **sex of their supervisor** and **head of agency** plays an important role in ensuring a conducive work culture for women. The respondents were of the view that women **lack trust and confidence** in situations where their supervisors are men with limited awareness on gender equality, including differentiated needs/priorities. They feel that a female supervisor would understand women’s needs better and recognize their capabilities.

The SMI and FGD participants as well as participants of the national capacity building workshop raised the need for **adoption and implementation of appropriate affirmative actions** to improve women’s representation particularly at the decision-making level.

³² Chapter 10, Bhutan Civil Service Rules and Regulations 2018

Women's Underrepresentation in Human Resource Committees

The HRC is the **highest decision-making body for all human resource** related actions in **each agency** and plays an important role in ensuring fairness, equality, and transparency in human resource decisions. It also functions as a disciplinary committee of the respective agencies. However, the composition of HRC members is predetermined with a set of eligibility criteria in BCSR (Annex 4). Especially at the local level, **there is a limited number of eligible women**, hence most do not have women representatives. While there is a provision to include 'relevant officials' as members there is no specific mention of female representatives. The current practice indicates that 'relevant officials' typically pertains to representatives from specific sectors, without a necessary emphasis on women. The discussion with participants of FGD at the local level revealed that the **absence of women representatives in the HRC** has a direct impact on women's contribution in agency decision-making processes. Participants underscored the **need to review the existing rules to** allow more women in such key decision-making committees.

Application of Human Resources Rules that are Gender Neutral

The Bhutanese human resources rules and regulations are largely **gender neutral** and based on principles of equal opportunity, fairness and meritocracy, and all human resources functions were reported to be handled within this framework. While the female participants of FDGs agreed that the civil service rules and policies are not discriminatory or partial, they are not responsive to the differentiated needs of men and women which may lead to **implicit biases**. There was a consensus among the respondents that the **application of these rules disadvantage women, creating gaps and barriers for them. Uneven levels of awareness and capacities on gender among HR officials** and managers across different sectors and at the national and subnational levels surfaced as a key challenge in implementing **gender responsive actions** during the national capacity building and validation workshop. There were signs of intentional efforts made in some agencies to address issues faced by women within the existing rules while others viewed applying flexible interpretation as going beyond the rules.

Gender Stereotypes and Prejudices based on Socio-Cultural Norms and Practices drive the Workplace Culture

Gender stereotypes and prejudices continue to remain at play in deciding the roles that are **appropriate for men and women**, particularly at the subnational level. The existence of **social norms and attitudes around traditional gendered roles**, even among women civil servants (SMIs and FDGs), **reinforces the belief that men are better leaders**. Participants of FGD referred to a widespread belief that **certain jobs which require long travels and physical strength are not meant for women**. A perceived need for women to be recruited in certain types of jobs like **teaching** was referred to by some participants of SMI and FGD, which seemed to influence their decisions related to recruitment, selection, and transfer.

Limited Awareness and Capacity on Gender Equality, and Mechanisms to Prevent Sexual Harassment at the Workplace

The national review participants raised concerns about the **limited awareness of the national policy on gender equality, the commitment of the government to promote gender equality and the mandates of line ministries and agencies regarding gender mainstreaming**. Respondents revealed that initiatives to raise awareness on gender policies are also **minimal** and are usually organized by agencies like the NCWC and relevant CSOs. There was a consensus among the review participants on the need to further raise awareness on **gender equality in public administration** and for male leaders and civil servants, in particular, to **foster alliances** and identify gender champions among men.

Discussions with SMI and FGD participants revealed that despite the existence of mechanisms to address sexual harassment within the framework of BCSR and internal mechanisms to address gender issues at the workplace, **such incidents are seldom reported**, primarily due to lack of **clarity** regarding the **types and nature** of sexual harassment and awareness of the **existence** of such mechanisms. The **prevalence of a culture of tolerance for such incidents**, lack of **confidence** especially among the low-ranking civil servants in reporting due to possible **retaliation** in case they fail to provide adequate evidence, and the **lengthy reporting procedure** were referred to by the review participants as possible reasons for not reporting incidents of sexual harassment and exploitation.

3.3.7 Capacity Building Trainings and Leadership Mentoring Programmes

The BCSR (Chapter 12, Section 12.4.7) mandates agencies to provide appropriate training programmes, including coaching to staff, to develop the competency required for effective performance and career progression. Accordingly, the RCSC, in collaboration with the **Parent Agency**, provides in-service trainings on a **needs-based approach**. Within the HRD needs of the agencies identified through the five-year and annual HRD plan, training areas are identified based on the **periodic competency framework** and HRD need assessments carried out by the agencies and approved by RCSC. As such, required HRD interventions are provided by respective agencies periodically, based on the availability of funds.

In-service capacity building and leadership training programmes for the **executives and specialists** are also implemented periodically by the RCSC to enhance the required leadership competencies and ensure smooth succession and leadership transition for high-level positions. The RCSC identifies and provides the **mandatory targeted leadership training** on agency expertise as well as leadership competencies to leadership position holders. Trainees receive direct nominations or are selected on a competitive basis through a merit-based selection system.



Out of 2,394 civil servants in the technical category, there is only 2.38% of women in the architectural, engineering, and land services group.

Both SMIs and FGDs at the national and local levels revealed that the authority to design training programmes and select participants remains solely with the RCSC. Targeted leadership training programmes for **female executives and managers** were initiated by the RCSC under the *Gender Equality Strategy in the Bhutanese civil service* programme. However, the participants of SMI and capacity building workshops underscored the need for similar programmes to be offered on a regular basis. Capacities on **ICT tools and application; coaching and mentorship, especially for women in senior and leadership positions; women's empowerment and leadership training for women eligible to access senior and leadership positions**, and capacity building programmes targeting female civil servants and leaders at subnational levels were other capacity needs identified. The participants of female FGD also raised the need to have **gender equality perspectives integrated in the leadership training programmes** and **institutionalized gender capacity building programmes particularly for senior male officers and leaders to enhance their understanding of specific challenges and issues faced by women**. This, according to them, will shift their mindset around women's capabilities and help to create a gender friendly and conducive work environment. The need for increased awareness among civil servants about the RCSC's Civil Service Desk³³ was also raised by the capacity building workshop participants.

³³ The RCSC's Civil Service Desk is established under the civil servants' Wellbeing initiative to provide counselling and mentoring on conflict, discrimination, sexual harassment and violence at workplace.

3.4. Evidence-based Analysis, Data Management and Monitoring

The RCSC is responsible for the collection and management of statistics on civil servants both at the national and subnational levels while HR divisions of the agencies are entrusted with the responsibility to collect and maintain the records of existing staff of their respective agencies. Updated civil service-related information is made publicly available through the annual civil service statistics. The civil service data is disaggregated by position levels, sex, age and national and subnational level, however, the sex-disaggregated data by ministries and agencies, at national and subnational level, are not available. **The national review also found that there is no disaggregated data (by age, sex and disability, etc.) on training completed, on promotions and other HR related issues in the civil service statistics.** In addition, the review pointed out the lack of regular gender-based analysis in the civil service, including of the barriers faced by female civil servants except for a study on factors constraining women's participation in civil service commissioned by the NCWC in 2014.

At the national level, information on the overall status on gender equality is compiled by the NCWC on an annual basis. The NCWC relies on administrative data of agencies and annual statistical reports published by the NSB, where disaggregated data is often not available for certain sectors and agencies.

The NCWC has developed a gender indicator handbook, comprising relevant indicators across various thematic areas to support agencies to collect information on indicators relevant to their respective sectors. However, **the agencies lack awareness of the indicator handbook as well as capacity to integrate the indicators within their agency research.**

The participants of FGD highlighted the **need to disseminate** the gender indicator handbook and **build capacities of agencies on sex-disaggregated data collection, management and use. The participants reiterated the need to strengthen the coordination between** the RCSC, NCWC and line ministries and agencies. This would entail the NCWC working together with agencies at the national and subnational levels to collect accurate and updated gender-disaggregated data to monitor gender equality results. Additionally, the participants recommended that the **NCWC collect consolidated** information on key **gender indicators** and **disseminate information** across ministries and agencies.

The review also found that existing HR audits conducted by the RCSC to enhance HR standards and practices across agencies at the national and subnational levels do not take into account gender issues. The SMI and FGD participants are of the view that **mainstreaming a gender perspective into HR audits** will enhance **accountability on gender equality** within the public administration.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

The civil service statistics reveal a growing trend towards gender parity in the civil service over the years. However, women's representation at the decision-making level was **20 per cent in 2022** which is far below international standards. Women's representation also varies across different sectors and position categories with a majority in the education and training services, followed by administrative and support services. Bhutan has made significant strides in terms of enhancing **women's entry into traditionally male-dominated** ministries with secretaries of the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Cabinet, and Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment being women. Likewise, there are more women in the SSC and PMC. The clustering of women in the PMC suggests a favourable opportunity for women civil servants to advance into higher positions **provided there are targeted efforts** to address barriers faced by women, including progressive steps to address women's disproportionate burden of childcare responsibilities and perceptions around women's leadership capabilities.

There are multiple strategies and interventions taken by the NCWC and line ministries and agencies to improve **women's presence and leadership** in the public administration which attest to the government's commitment to advancing gender equality. Nevertheless, the review found that there are gaps and challenges to enhancing women's presence and leadership in the civil service.

- Men continue to dominate civil service workplaces, increasing the likelihood of reinforcing patriarchal values and stereotypes, and influencing key workplace decisions. It was also found that women are less likely to be confident and participate meaningfully in decision-making processes. Therefore, temporary special measures (including quotas) must be explored and implemented to increase women's presence and representation.
- While the civil service rules and policies are non-discriminatory and provide equal opportunities for men and women, they fail to take into consideration the specific needs of women. The application of these rules and policies in the current context where there are existing gender gaps and limited understanding on gender, are found to disadvantage women. In this respect, the review strongly indicates a need to re-examine the existing rules to incorporate gender perspective (specific needs of men and women) and enhance awareness of policy makers, HR managers and other officials.
- Social and cultural norms, attitudes, and practices around the perceived traditional gendered roles are prevalent particularly at the subnational level. As such, women continue to shoulder a disproportionate burden of childcare and household responsibilities. Efforts are needed to create enabling conditions to reduce their responsibilities and maintain proper work-life balance.
- Lack of gender-responsive facilities and infrastructure is found to be one of the factors deterring women from entering the civil service, and women are often

discouraged from applying for jobs in remote communities due to the difficulty posed by rugged terrain and lack of appropriate infrastructure and facilities to meet their needs.

- There is limited capacity and understanding of gender equality within the civil service which demands concerted capacity building efforts to create a uniform understanding of gender equality within the framework of CEDAW, the national gender equality policy and the global GEPA framework.

- There is limited in-service mentorship on career progression to equip women leaders and potential leaders with required skills and strategies.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings from the review, it is recommended that a well-resourced and comprehensive national action plan to promote women's presence and leadership in the Bhutanese civil service be developed and implemented. Within the overall framework of the national gender equality policy, the action plan should encompass actions to address challenges and gaps identified by the review. The action plan should be at a macro-level targeting the entire civil service and be developed and periodically reviewed in a collaborative manner- including with representation from the subnational level. Following are key recommended actions to be considered while formulating the national action plan:

4.2.1 Institutional and Policy Framework for Gender Equality in Public Administration:

4.2.1.a. Strengthen the institutional capacity of NCWC to effectively discharge its functions (as national gender machinery). The functional autonomy of NCWC will also play a crucial role in carrying out its monitoring and coordination role both at the national and subnational levels.

4.2.1.b) Revisit and strengthen the network of gender focal persons- both at the national and subnational levels, including their terms of reference and capacities to ensure that they are well capacitated to mainstream gender in their respective plans, policies, and interventions. It is also recommended that the gender focal persons' terms of reference be integrated in their individual workplans. Efforts should be made to enhance the awareness of the heads of representative agencies of their role. The institution of a gender committee or more than one focal point in each agency (as in the cases of Philippines, Cambodia and Thailand) could be explored to strengthen gender capacity and ownership of the sectors.

4.2.1.c) Improve the coordination between the NCWC and RCSC to create a clear understanding of the NCWC's role in promoting gender equality in public administration. The institutional capacity of the RCSC should also be built to advance gender equality, identify gender differentiated needs and challenges, and implement interventions to address these challenges.

4.2.2 Accountability Mechanisms and Gaps in Monitoring Gender Equality Policies:

4.2.2.a) Review the existing HR auditing framework, processes and standards to identify entry points for integrating gender perspectives to strengthen accountability on gender equality. Simultaneously build capacities of HR auditors on gender equality and GEPA to enable application of gender perspectives during audit.

4.2.2.b) The RCSC and NCWC should explore opportunities to integrate gender targets as an integral part of performance evaluation of agencies. The responsibility for enhancing gender equality should not rest with the NCWC or gender focal points, but be part of the RCSC's and the respective agencies', both at national and subnational levels.

4.2.2.c) Develop and implement a monitoring framework to ensure coordinated and regular monitoring of gender equality results by the NCWC in collaboration with RCSC (with regard to GEPA). This could also include regular meetings/consultation among the gender focal persons, HR officials, NCWC and RCSC to update on the progress, discuss issues and opportunities.

4.2.3 Human Resource Policies and Practices

4.2.3.a) Revise the BCSR to strengthen provisions related to recruitment and selection, composition in decision-making committees like HRC, provisions on parental leave, capacity building and career advancement.

4.2.3. b) Develop and implement temporary special measures and gender parity systems in the process of appointments, including accelerated recruitment of women in senior positions level, equal representation in decision-making bodies including HRC, and measures to eliminate structural inequalities and occupational segregation at national and sub-national level

4.2.3.c) Strengthen policies and mechanisms to prevent, mitigate and respond to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment at workplace, and disseminate information on these policies and mechanisms across civil servants at all levels. Capacity building of HR managers and relevant officials on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse will also be important.

4.2.3.d) Collaborate with training institutes such as Royal Institute of Management to integrate sexual exploitation and harassment modules in pre-service and in-service training programmes will be an effective and sustainable option. Additionally, introduction of online courses should also be explored as an alternate option.

4.2.3.e) Explore flexible working and "work from home" options for working parents with small children, children with disabilities and older dependents.

4.2.3.f) Strengthen gender-responsive policies, infrastructure and facilities to create a conducive environment for women's participation in the civil service, such as workplace childcare centres. Flexible arrangements or safety measures where

possible particularly at the subnational level must be explored and instituted particularly for assignments requiring long distance travel and off-hour duty.

4.2.3.g) Develop and implement measures to address barriers faced by working parents, particularly women, to avail training and career advancement opportunities, for example making arrangements for childcare.

4.2.3.h) Enhance capacities on gender mainstreaming across the civil service through targeted capacity building programmes to create uniform understanding on gender equality and gender-responsive human resource management. Gender perspective building sessions/modules should be integrated in the leadership training programmes. Further, institutionalize gender capacity building programmes particularly for senior male officers and leaders to enhance their understanding on specific challenges and issues faced by women. This will have a positive impact in shifting their mindset around women's capabilities and support the creation of a gender friendly and conducive work environment.

4.2.3.i) Carry out consciousness-raising and diversity training, including interpersonal skills and team building, to promote tolerance, understanding and awareness creation on differences at workplaces and valuing them in the process of HR functions.

4.2.4.j) Develop and implement targeted capacity building and women's empowerment programmes for women leaders and potential leaders. Mentoring and coaching of potential women leaders must be instituted to prepare them for leadership positions.

4.2.5.k) Put in place mechanisms to ensure the collection of information and reporting of gender pay gaps within the civil service periodically. Knowledge on "gender pay gaps" for HR managers and officers, gender focal persons and senior management should also be enhanced through regional and global exchange programmes amongst others.

4.2.4. Evidence and data-based analysis, commitments, and resources

4.2.4.a) Strengthen the existing civil service database to include gender-disaggregated information at all levels, across positions and by all sectors. The database should also include gender-disaggregated information on training and career advancement interventions, reports on grievances, sexual exploitation and abuses, and other relevant indicators.

4.2.4.b) Strengthen capacities of the NCWC, RCSC and relevant agencies on gender-disaggregated data collection, management and use.

4.2.5.c) Update the NCWC's gender indicator handbook and make it available across sectors within civil service at both national and subnational levels. Capacities of relevant officials to use the handbook should also be strengthened.

4.2.6.d) The NCWC in partnership with RCSC should maintain comprehensive information on GEPA and conduct thematic analysis on key issues on a regular basis.

4.2.4.e) Build Information, Communication and Technology knowledge and technical capacities of female civil servants.

4.2.5 Address Underlying Social and Cultural norms, Practices, and Attitudes Around Traditional Gendered Roles and Women's Leadership Capabilities

4.2.5.a) Carry out continuous awareness and sensitization programmes on gender equality, and women's leadership roles with the objective to enhance understanding on gender equality, demystify attitudes around women's leadership capabilities and address gendered occupational segregation. Collaboration with the media to portray role models and success stories of women leaders will support a shift in mindset around women's leadership capabilities.

The action plan should be made available to all relevant agencies for implementation. The NCWC in collaboration with RCSC and with support from development partners should conduct capacity building for relevant officials to implement the plan. The NCWC should also spearhead the review of the action plan periodically to monitor its progress.



The workshop on “Promoting gender equality in public administration” aims to promote women’s presence and leadership in Bhutan’s civil service.

5. Tables

Table 1: Percentage of civil servants by position category and gender

Position Category	Number and % out of total civil servants	Number and % of women civil servants (in each position category)	% of women civil servants out of total civil servants	% of women civil servants out of total women civil servants
ESC	280 (1%)	56 (20%)	0.2%	0.5%
PMC	14,749 (49%)	5,953 (40%)	19.7%	49%
SSC	12,793 (42%)	5,661 (44%)	18.7%	47%
OC	2,372 (8%)	406 (17%)	1.3%	3%
Total	30,194	12,076	40%	100

Table 2: Number of SMI participants at the central and local levels
(Compiled by the national consultant)

	No. of Agencies	Women	Men
Central level	8	5	3
Local Level	5	3	4
Total	11	8	7

Table 3: Number of FGDs and participants at the central and local level
(Compiled by the national consultant)

	No. of FGDs	Female	Male	Female + Male
Central level	2	5	3	8
Local level	3	7	8	15
Total FGDs at the central and local levels	5	12	11	23

Table 4: Civil Servants by Position and Sex

Position category and position levels	Female	Male	Total
Executive and Specialists	56	224	280
EX1	4	14	18
EX2	3	20	23
EX3	10	50	60
ES1	5	14	19
ES2	4	21	25
ES3	30	103	133

NA		2	2
Professional & Management	5,953	8,796	14,749
P1	539	1,021	1,560
P2	1,068	1,995	3,063
P3	1,107	2,009	3,116
P4	1,200	1,704	2,904
P5	2,039	2,067	4,106
Supervisory & Support	5,661	7,132	12,793
SS1	70	85	155
SS2	148	530	678
SS3	304	649	953
SS4	776	1,221	1,997
S1	1,039	1,460	2,499
S2	1,222	1,426	2,648
S3	647	777	1,424
S4	234	260	494
S5	1,221	724	1,945
Operational Staff	406	1,966	2,372
O1	182	718	900
O2	141	360	501
O3	11	90	101
O4	72	798	870
Grand Total	12,076	18,118	30,194

Source: CSS 2022 (Table 22)

Table 5: Number and percentage of female civil servants in decision-making positions

Position level	Female	Male	Total
EX-1	2	12	14
EX-2	3	20	23
EX-3	10	50	60
P-1	85	307	392
Total	100	389	489
Proportion (%)	20.4	79.6	

Source: Follow-up consultation with RCSC (in Capacity building training workshop in Paro)

Table 6: Percentage of civil servants by major occupational group and sex

Major Occupational Group (MoG)	Total	Male	% male (of total civil servants)	Female	% female (of total civil servants)
Education & Training Services	10,180	5,816	19.26%	4,364	14.45%
Administration & Support Services	5,238	2,998	9.93%	2,240	7.42%
Medical and Health Services	3,843	2,027	6.71%	1,816	6.01%
Architectural, Engineering & Land Services	2,653	1,900	6.29%	753	2.49%
Finance & Audit Services	1,391	847	2.81%	544	1.80%
Forestry and Environment Protection Services	1,377	1,153	3.82%	224	0.74%
Agriculture & Livestock Services	1,190	904	2.99%	286	0.95%
Laboratory & Technical Services	1,000	472	1.56%	528	1.75%
Legal, Judiciary and Legislative Services	513	262	0.87%	251	0.83%
Human Resource Services	510	312	1.03%	198	0.66%
Sports & Youth Services	459	291	0.96%	168	0.56%
Library, Archives & Museum Services	362	97	0.32%	265	0.88%
Transportation & Aviation Services	318	240	0.79%	78	0.26%
Planning and Research Services	303	207	0.69%	96	0.32%
Information & Communication Technology Services	299	176	0.58%	123	0.41%
Executive and Specialist Services	280	224	0.74%	56	0.19%
Trade, Industry & Tourism Services	130	82	0.27%	48	0.16%
Foreign Services	74	48	0.16%	26	0.09%
Arts, Culture & Literary Services	74	62	0.21%	12	0.04%
Grand Total	30,194	18,118	60.01%	12,076	39.99%

Source: CSS 2022

Table 7: Distribution of civil servants by education qualification and sex

Educational Qualification	Male	Female	Total	% of the total
Ph.D	24	7	31	0.12%
Masters	1,885	699	2,584	10.20%
P.G Diploma	1,382	993	2,375	9.37%
P.G Certificate	55	52	107	0.42%
Bachelors	4,783	3,203	7,986	31.51%
Diploma	2,667	1,590	4,257	16.80%
Class XII	1,498	1,579	3,077	12.14%
Certificate	734	352	1,086	4.29%
Class X and Below	2,523	1,315	3,838	15.15%
Grand Total	15,551	9,790	25,341	100.00%

Source: CCS 2022

Table 8: Number of Civil Servants by District, including Municipal Office Staff

Location	ESC	PMC	SSC	OC	Total
Thimphu	200	3,937	3,142	830	8,109
Chukha	6			148	2,176
Sarpang	10	1,090	932	137	2,047
Trashigang	3	904	996	133	1,832
Mongar	8			122	1,747
Samtse	4	894	802	88	1,694
Paro	9	820	797	108	1,603
Samdrupjongkhar	2	954	648	104	1,480
Wangdue Phodrang	5	743	743	63	1,080
Punakha	4	688	686	62	1,020
Bumthang	10	612	400	110	1,005
Zhemgang	1	511	443	87	
Pema Gatshel	1	389	496	87	979
Dagana	1	443	448	62	
Tsirang	2	458	348	56	869
Trashiyangtse	4	443	355	59	855
Trongsa	1	408	334	46	803
Lhuentse	1	400	314	50	764
Haa	1	307	280	45	638
Gasa	1	314	250	37	610
Outside Bhutan	6	266	201	23	505
		114	151	2	289
		54	27		89
Total	280	14,749	12,793	2,372	30,194

Source: CSS 2022

Table 9: Number of Civil Servants under Dzongkhag/Thromde Administration by Position Type

Dzongkhag/Thromde	ESC	PMC	SSC	OC	Total
Dzongkhag	42	9,504	5,917	1,015	16,478
Trashigang	3	852	596	107	1,558
Samtse	4	925	481	74	1,484
Chukha	2	708	393	65	1,168
Mongar	2	689	375	65	1,131
Paro	3	635	317	58	1,013
Wangdue	2	593	356	56	1,007
Samdrup Jongkhar	1	493	361	55	910
Punakha	4	484	302	50	840
Sarpang	2	516	275	33	826
Pema Gatshel	1	452	299	57	809
Zhemgang		419	302	62	783
Dagana	1	434	294	50	779
Tsirang	2	393	275	50	720
Trashi Yangtse	3	394	248	42	687
Lhuntse	1	313	230	41	585
Trongsa	1	295	210	37	543
Bumthang	3	310	191	31	535
Haa	1	253	155	30	439
Thimphu	5	236	162	32	435
Gasa	1	110	95	20	226
Thromde	13	1,631	451	113	2,208
Thimphu	10	1,077	243	55	1,385
Phuentsholing	2	237	84	21	344
Gelephu	1	189	68	21	279
Samdrup Jongkhar		128	56	16	200
Grand Total	55	11,135	6,368	1,128	18,686

Source: CSS 2022

Table 10: Distribution of Civil Servants under Dzongkhag/Thromde Administrations by Position Levels

Position category and level	Dzongkhag/ Thromde Administrations	Total civil servants in the position	% of total civil servants in the position
ESC	55	280	19.64%
EX1	0	18	0.00%
EX2	8	23	34.78%
EX3	10	60	16.67%
ES1	4	19	21.05%
ES2	1	25	4.00%
ES3	32	133	24.06%
No level (eminent members)	0	2	0.00%
PMC	11,135	14,749	75.50%
P1	1,038	1,560	66.54%
P2	2,331	3,063	76.10%
P3	2,221	3,116	71.28%
P4	1,952	2,904	67.22%
P5	3,593	4,106	87.51%
SSC	6,368	12,793	49.78%
SS1	42	155	27.10%
SS2	239	678	35.25%
SS3	388	953	40.71%
SS4	851	1,997	42.61%
S1	1,034	2,499	41.38%
S2	1,453	2,648	54.87%
S3	505	1,424	35.46%
S4	251	494	50.81%
S5	1,605	1,945	82.52%
OC	1,128	2,372	47.55%
O1	298	900	33.11%
O2	299	501	59.68%
O3	50	101	49.50%
O4	481	870	55.29%
Grand Total	18,686	30,194	61.89%

Source: CSS 2022

Table 11: Count and Percentage of Civil Servants at Central and Local Levels

Location	ESC	PMC	SSC	OC	Total	Remarks
Central agencies	219	3,560	6,398	1,242	11,419	
Outside Bhutan	6	54	27	2	89	
Total at the central level	225	3,614	6,425	1,244	11,508	38.11%
Dzongkhags	42	9,504	5,917	1,015	16,478	
Thromde	13	1,631	451	113	2,208	Including staff of central agencies' field offices in the Dzongkhags
Total at the local level	55	11,135	6,368	1,128	18,686	61.89%
Total at the national level	280	14,749	12,793	2,372	30,194	

6. Annexes

Annex 1: List of civil service agencies in Bhutan

Sl. No.	Agency	Sl. No.	Agency
1	His Majesty's Secretariat		Autonomous Agency
2	Secretariat of His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo	21	Dratshang Lhentshog
	Legislative	22	Centre for Bhutan Studies and GNH Research
3	National Assembly Secretariat	23	Royal Institute of Management
4	National Council Secretariat	24	Dratshang Lhentshog
5	Bhutan National Legal Institute	25	National Statistics Bureau
	Constitutional Bodies	26	National Environment Commission
6	Royal Civil Service Commission	27	Bhutan Narcotic Control Authority
7	Royal Audit Authority	28	Bhutan Standards Bureau
8	Anti-Corruption Commission	29	Drug Regulatory Authority
	Ministry	30	Bhutan Information Communications & Media Authority
9	Ministry of Education and Skills Development	31	National Land Commission
10	Ministry of Health	32	Cabinet Secretariat
11	Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources	33	Government Technology Agency
12	Ministry of Finance	34	Dzongkha Development Commission
13	Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport	35	Cabinet Secretariat
14	Ministry of Home Affairs	36	Government Technology Agency
15	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock	37	Dzongkha Development Commission
16	Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment	35	Construction Development Board
17	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	36	Bhutan Council for School Examination and Assessment
		37	Bhutan Civil Aviation Authority
18	National Center for Hydrology and Meteorology (NCHM)	38	National Commission for Women & Children
19	Office of the Attorney General	39	Bhutan Olympic Committee
20	Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Referral Hospital (JDWNRH)	40	Bhutan Medical Health Council

41	Royal Privy Council	55	Wangdue Dzongkhag
42	Media Council	56	Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag
43	National Film Commission	57	Punakha Dzongkhag
44	Bhutan Health Trust Fund	58	Sarpang Dzongkhag
	Thromde	59	Pema Gatsel Dzongkhag
45	Thimphu Thromde	60	Zhemgang Dzongkhag
46	Phuentsholing Thromde	61	Dagana Dzongkhag
47	Samdrup Jongkhar Thromde	62	Tsirang Dzongkhag
48	Gelephu Thromde	63	Trashigang Dzongkhag
	Dzongkhag	64	Lhuntse Dzongkhag
49	Trashigang Dzongkhag	65	Trongsa Dzongkhag
50	Samtse Dzongkhag	66	Bumthang Dzongkhag
51	Chukha Dzongkhag	67	Haa Dzongkhag
52	Gasa Dzongkhag		
53	Mongar Dzongkhag	68	Thimphu Dzongkhag
54	Paro Dzongkhag		

Source: Compiled based on BCSS 2022

Annex 2: Delegation of authority for promotion between RCSC and agencies

Note: C=Constitutional Office; M=Ministry; A=Autonomous Agency; D=Dzongkhag and Thromde; and NA=Not Applicable

Position Category	Promotion to Position Level	Authority for Promotion				
		Through Open Competition	Within broad-banded positions	Specialists Promotion	Meritorious Promotion	Fast-track Promotion
Executive	EX1	NA	NA	NA	RCSC	RCSC
	EX2	NA	NA	NA	RCSC	RCSC
	EX3	RCSC/C	NA	NA	NA	NA
Specialist	ES1	NA	NA	RCSC	NA	NA
	ES2-ES3	NA	NA	RCSC/C	NA	NA
PMC	P1 Managerial	M/A/C	NA	NA	NA	NA
	P1 Specialist	NA	NA	M/A/C	NA	NA
	P5 – P2	M/A/C/D	M/A/C/D	NA	RCSC	RCSC
SSC	S5 – SS1	M/A/C/D	M/A/C/D	NA	RCSC	RCSC
OC	O4 – O1	M/A/C/D	M/A/C/D	NA	RCSC	RCSC

(Source: BSCR 2018)

Annex 3: Civil Servants Leave Entitlements

Sl. No.	Leave Type	Entitlement	Conditions	Other criteria
1	Casual leave	10 working days in a financial year.	Unused Casual Leave shall be carried forward and credited to the earned leave at the end of the financial year.	Accumulation limited to a maximum of 90 days and eligibility for encashment in accordance with rules.
2	Earned leave	with gross pay at the rate of 2.5 days for every completed month of service (except during probation).	“Government holidays and weekly off-days (Saturdays and Sundays) within the period of the earned leave not counted in the calculation of leave availed.”	“Accumulation considered for a maximum period of 90 days. Accrual during training period exceeding one month not considered” (i.e. not applicable).
3	Bereavement leave	21 days per incidence from the day of the incident	Includes weekends	
4	Maternity leave	- Uniform 6 months for all births (twins, caesarean and premature births). 1-month maximum on miscarriage with production of a medical certificate. 3 months for demise of child during birth or within three months from birth.	- Permissible for a legally adopted new-born baby until the baby is six months old. - Includes 21 days of bereavement leave, whichever is higher. 21 days bereavement leave granted in the event of a child demise, applicable three months after birth.	- Commence from the date of delivery and can be combined with other leaves. - Government holidays and weekly off-days (Saturdays and Sundays) within the period of the maternity leave counted in the calculation of maternity leave. - Extend lunchtime to 2 hours (from 12 noon to 2 pm) for mother with babies up to 24 months. - Agency to facilitate other suitable flexi arrangements for a breastfeeding mother when the regular working hours are not followed.

5	Paternity leave	- Uniform 10 working days for all births from date of delivery. - Extraordinary 6 months or remaining period of maternity leave in case of demise of the mother during delivery or within six months from birth, until the child is six months old.	Eligible for a legally adopted newborn baby.	
6	Medical leave	Up to one month on certification by a medical doctor.	On certification by medical boards for leave beyond one month, or for a second-time occurrence.	- Up to 36 months in total, after which staff shall retire under Early Retirement Scheme with post-service benefits. - Medical Leave availed for 30 days or more at a time will be counted as part of 36 months.
8	Medical escort leave	Maximum period of one month	Sanctioned by only HRC of the agency (not by individual supervisors).	Agency HRC can grant an extension based on the medical report without exceeding 30 days inclusive of weekends and public holidays.
9	Study leave	Actual duration of the long-term training (LTT).		

10	Extraordinary leave	• Leave more than 3 months for a maximum of 24 months in the entire service.	• Includes weekends and government holidays. • Minimum service requirement of five years, including probation period. • Other conditions set in BCSR.	• Not eligible when serving administrative penalty. • Not considered active service for HR actions; service not protected after 6 months. • Leave duration excluded from calculation of years accrued from calculation of retirement benefits.
11	Preparatory leave	• 5 working days on transfer to duty station of 10 kms and more, and prior to LTT departure. • One month prior to superannuation date.	• Conditions set in BCSR	• Other criteria set in BCSR.

Source: Compiled based on BCSR 2018.

Annex 4: Composition of HRC at various levels and functions

Agency	HRC Composition
Ministry	a) Chairperson – Secretary; b) Members: (i) All Directors/Director Generals; (ii) A Specialist*; (iii) Chief Planning Officer; (iv) Senior-most Legal Officer; (v) Other relevant officers determined by the Chairperson of HRC; and, (vi) Senior-most HRO as the Member-Secretary.
Constitutional offices	a) Chairperson: Head of the Constitutional Office. b) Members: (i) Director (s); (ii) All Division Chiefs/Service heads; (iii) Other relevant officials determined by the Chairperson of the HRC; (iv) Senior-most HRO as Member-Secretary; However, the Head of the Constitutional Office may delegate Chairpersonship to a Commissioner/Director/Dy. Auditor General.
Autonomous Agencies	a) Chairperson: Head of the Agency/Executive Secretary for Thromdes. b) Members: (i) All Division Chiefs/Service Heads; (ii) A specialist, if the agency has one; (iii) Other relevant officials as determined by the Chairperson of the HRC; (iv) HRO as the Member-Secretary.
Dzongkhag	a) Chairperson: Dzongdag. b) Members: (i) Dzongrab; (ii) Senior most Planning Officer; (iii) Senior most Legal Officer; (iv) Relevant Sector Heads as determined by the Chairperson of the HRC, and, (v) Senior most HRO as Member Secretary.

**In Agencies which have only two specialists, the Chairperson of the HRC shall decide on the representative and where there are more than two specialists, they shall nominate amongst themselves a representative. Agencies which do not meet the composition requirement specified shall form HRC/Selection Committee with the existing staff with prior approval from the RCSC.*

Functions:

i. General

- a) Formulate/review HR matters.
- b) Review appeals on HR actions.
- c) Review appeals on performance appraisal.
- d) Review and adjudicate disciplinary cases.
- e) Form Selection Committee for the recruitment and long-term training and delegate the responsibility of short listing and conducting selection interviews/exams.
- f) Review and endorse the results of the Selection Committee for the recruitment and long- term training interview.
- g) HRC may act as Disciplinary Committee or form an independent Disciplinary Committee.
- h) HRC may delegate HR functions to the HR Division/Services for Operational Category and GSP/ESP, except administrative disciplinary cases.
- i) Appellate for moderation exercise.

ii. Specific

- a) HR planning, review and recommend-
 - (i) Structure, staffing pattern & strength.
 - (ii) HRD Plans.
- b) Recruitment, Selection & Appointment.
- c) Recruit, select and appoint qualified and suitable candidates as per the provisions of the BCSR.
- d) Promotion –
 - (i) Review and approve promotions within the broad- banded positions.
 - (ii) Review and recommend meritorious, fast-track and Specialist promotions.
 - (iii) Review applications and shortlist eligible candidates for promotions against post vacancies.
 - (iv) Conduct selection interview and approve or recommend as per delegation of authority.
- e) Transfer –
 - (i) Review and approve intra-Agency transfer that does not involve change of Position Title or MOG within the Super Structure.
 - (ii) Review and recommend intra/inter-Agency transfer involving change of Position Title or MOG or SG within the Super Structure.
- f) Induction/mentoring programmes for candidates newly joining the Agency.

- g) Training –
 - (i) HRC is the highest approving authority for training within the Agency as per the BCSR.
 - (ii) All ex-country travel shall be approved by the HRC.
- h) Leave - HRC as per the delegation of authorities shall approve/recommend the following:
 - (i) Extraordinary Leave;
 - (ii) Medical Leave beyond one month; and,
 - (iii) Study leave.
- i) Early Retirement Scheme (ERS) - Review and approve/recommend civil servant opting for ERS.

Annex 5: Terms of Reference (ToR) of GFPs

Terms of Reference for Gender Focal Points

1. Purpose

Gender Focal Points (GFPs) are the vehicle through which the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) and other organizations will mainstream gender in their sector, in response to its commitment as per the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan.

2. Objectives

The GFP will be responsible for mainstreaming gender in her/his/agencies/organizations including Local Government (LG) at organizational, policy and operations levels. In this way policies and programs will be gender-informed and their potential to benefit women and men, girls and boys of Bhutan will be enhanced.

3. Responsibilities and outputs

- a) Conduct gender sensitization/gender capacity building training/workshops in your agencies/organizations including LG at least three times in one development plan (5 Years);
- b) Develop and maintain a knowledge database on gender and gender issues, relevant laws and policies, impacts and strategies on sectors serviced by your agencies/organization including LG, and raise awareness amongst staff through:
 - i) the Agency/Organization's newsletter where applicable;
 - ii) the Agency/Organization's website;
 - iii) Any other means of advocacy where applicable.
- c) Participate in meetings, workshops and discussions with other GFPs on a regular basis;

- d) Advice, support and advocate for gender mainstreaming efforts in the Agency/ Organizations;
- e) Provide secretariat support to the Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GRPB) Committee which is established in the sector;
- f) Propose gender items on agenda of Agency/Organization's meeting at least once a year;
- g) Encourage and monitor the use of specific measures and tools for mainstreaming gender among sectors of your Agency/Organization;
- h) Encourage and make sure that gender is mainstreamed in all plans, policies and programs of the agency/organization.
- i) Input sectoral information into the Gender Equality Monitoring System (GEMS) regularly or on the biannual basis.
- j) Support, advocate, mainstream and implement gender/child protection and wellbeing aspects and gaps into legislation, policies, plans and programs, projects and activities".
- k) Explore the potential inclusion and integration of gender mainstreaming initiatives in their/other sectoral/dzongkhag programs.

4. Linkages with other Gender Focal Points

NCWC will coordinate the networking and dissemination of information among GFPs.

5. Adjournment

- i. Any GFP on transfer/retirement shall do proper handover to the succeeding GFP. In case of GFPs at district level, the handing taking could be done to the new/existing Legal Officers.
- ii. A formal letter from the Head of the organization/Dzongkhag to be sent to the NCWC.
- iii. All the data and information related to gender and children shall be handed over to the next GFP.
- iv. The adjourning GFP shall orient the new GFP on the Gender Equality Monitoring System (GEMS), and if required, shall seek Technical Assistance from the NCWC.

- v. The GFP shall inform the NCWC Secretariat accordingly on the new appointment via womendivision@ncwc.gov.bt or childrendivision@ncwc.gov.bt

Annex 6: Activities under Strategies of GEBCS

No.	Strategy	Activities
1	<i>Achieving a supportive and enabling environment.</i>	1.1 Strengthen efforts to enhance work-life balance through effective management of maternity and paternity leaves, flexi time conditions and other affirmative actions such as allowing women civil servants to take their children to workplaces/ workshops/trainings.
		1.2 Strengthen childcare services at the workplaces through the establishment of more creches, spaces and trained caregivers.
		1.3 Improve implementation of mechanism to report sexual harassment at the workplace and institutionalization of 'internal framework to address gender issues at the workplace' as required by NCWC.
		1.4 Organise biannual knowledge sharing and learning forums among female civil servants at the mid and senior levels to encourage confidence building among female civil servants and to address issues faced by them.
		1.5 Organise consistent gender awareness programs at all levels – senior, middle and support categories – of the civil service in the respective ministries and agencies through GFPs.
2	<i>Stepping up capacities and aspirations</i>	1.1 Include gender curricula in civil service training institutes, including women's leadership programmes.
		1.2 Promote female role models in the civil service by encouraging women to aspire to leadership roles and change the mindsets of the general public on the elimination of negative socio-cultural perceptions that hamper women's development.
		1.3 Strengthen mandatory mentoring of mid-level female officers to support their professional development in areas such as public speaking, communication skills, leadership skills, confidence building, and other areas of need.

3	<i>Balancing decision making</i>	1.1 Strengthen gender representation in all the civil service committees for gender balance in decision-making.
		1.2 Carry out gender equality and gender mainstreaming sensitisation, and introduce leadership performance measures for all executives, managers and supervisors to strengthen their responsibility in bringing about transformational change through gender equality in their agencies.
4	<i>Gender mainstreaming in HR Plans and Policies</i>	1.1 Adopt gender equity measures to close gender gaps by taking targeted actions such as placement of female executives in preferred locations or positions where gender gap exists and introduce incentives for female candidates such as quotas (for technical professions) and other affirmative actions like noting “only females are encouraged to apply” in the management level vacancies.
		1.2 Conduct an assessment/evaluation to measure progress in the achievement of 12 FYP’s Agency Key Result Area (AKRA) on promotion of gender equality in the civil service and associated Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
		1.3 Require organizations to develop and publish individual action plans with gender equality targets and monitor and evaluate to gauge progress.
		1.4 Conduct research on specific HR related themes and ensure the collection, use and analysis of sex-disaggregated data in order to enable evidence-based decision-making.
		1.5 Develop HR plans and budgets from a gender perspective and selections/recruitments, transfers, promotions, trainings, etc. shall consider gender equality outcomes and practices.
5	<i>Monitoring and Evaluation</i>	1.1 Require civil service organisations, through the GFPs, to evaluate their gender action plans through the Gender Equality Monitoring System (GEMS) ¹ to review their progress on gender equality interventions and make changes for further improvements.
		1.2 Require civil service agencies to monitor the progress of actions in their Annual Performance Agreements (APA) and align them with the Government Performance Monitoring System (GPMS).

Annex 7: List of interviewees at central and local levels

I. Interviews at the central level

Sl. No.	Date	Agency	Gender		Designation
			Female	Male	
1	13/02/2023	Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC)	1		Commissioner
2	13/02/2023	Ministry of Finance (MoF)	1		Chief Programme Officer
3	14/02/2023	Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD)		1	Director General
4	14/02/2023	Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment (MoICE)	1		Director General
5	15/02/2023	Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA)	1		Chief HR Officer
6	16/02/2023	Secretariat for the National Commission of Women and Children (NCWC)	1		Programme Analyst
7	21/8/2023	Government Technology Agency (GovTech)		1	Chief ICT Officer
8	22/8/2023	Department of Local Governance and Disaster Management (DLGDM)		1	Director
Total Females/Males			5	3	
Total interviewees			8		

II. Interviews at the local level

Sl. No.	Date	Dzongkhag		Gender		Designation
				Female	Male	
1	10/03/2023	Haa			1	Dzongdag
2				1		Legal Officer
3	13/03/2023	Tsirang		1		Sr. Planning Officer
4	14/03/2023	Gelephu Thromde			1	HRO
5	15/03/2023	Sarpang			1	Adminisrative Assistant
6	17/03/2023	Samdrup Jongkhar		1		Dzongkdag
7					1	HR Officer
	Total Females/Males			3	4	
	Total interviewees			7		
	Grand Total - Females/Males			8	5	
	Grand Total Interviewees			13		

LIST OF FGD PARTICIPANTS AT THE CENTRAL AND LOCAL LEVEL

I. List of FGD participants at the central level

Sl. No.	Date	Agency	Gender		Designation
			Female	Male	
First Group:					
1	17/02/2023	Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD)	1		HR Officer
2		Cabinet	1		Dy. Chief HR Officer
3		Ministry of Finance (MoF)		1	Information focal point, Directorate of Services
4		National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) Secretariat		1	Legal Officer
	Total females/males		2	2	
	Total participants		4		
Second Group:					
1	17/02/2023	Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD)		1	HR Assistant
2		Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment (MoICE)	1		Admin Assistant
3		Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA)	1		HR
4		Cabinet	1		Sr. Administrative Assistant
	Total females/males		3	1	
	Total participants		4		
	Grand Total females/males		5	3	
	Grand total participants		8		

II. FGD participants at the local level

Sl. No.	Date	Dzongkhag	Gender		Designation	Remarks
			Female	Male		
1	10/03/2023	Haa		1	Chief District Engineer	Designed as all males for the Dzongkhag
2				1	Chief District Education Officer	
3				1	Assistant District Livestock Officer (Officiating DLO)	
4				1	District Planning Officer	
5				1	Human Resource Officer	
6				1	District Architect	
	Total - Haa		0	6		
7	15/03/2023	Sarpang		1	Civil Registration and Census Officer	Mix of males and females
8				1	DT Secretary	
9			1		M&E Officer	
10			1		Assistant District Health Officer	
	Total - Sarpang		2	2		
11	17/03/2023	Samdrup Jongkhar	1		Development Regulatory Officer	Designed as all females for the Dzongkhag
12			1		Admin Assistant	
13			1		Livestock Production Supervisor - I	
14			1		DT Secretary	
15			1		Land Record Assistant-I	
	Total – Samdrup Jongkhar		5	0		
	Total females/males		7	8		
	Total participants		15			
Grand total females/males			12	11		
Grand total FGD participants			23			

Annex 8: References

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