



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2023-2024

Women and Children Division  
Secretariat to the National Commission for Women and Children  
Ministry of Education and Skills Development  
Royal Government of Bhutan



@ International Women's day, March 8, 2024





## About this Report

This report is an annual publication of the National Commission for Women and Children. This report describes the functions and performance during 2023-2024. It is a testament to our commitment to achieving gender equality, child protection, and well-being in the country. Moreover, it also reflects the commitments of the critical stakeholders who are engaged with NCWC in promoting the rights of women and children in the country.

The NCWC, as the gender and child machinery, has navigated through rapidly evolving concerns on women and children in the country. Despite the challenges, the Commission remained resilient and focused by spearheading gender mainstreaming, child protection, and wellbeing initiatives. The Commission has continued to invest in programmatic interventions and implementation of policies and plans, research, and development to address the emerging needs of women and children in the country, guided by factual evidence. Hence, this report provides explicit performances and interventions implemented by NCWC to address challenges and obstacles faced in achieving gender equality and child wellbeing.

The report contains a comprehensive overview of strategic initiatives, key milestones, NCWC's progress, and the core Women and Children Division's programs in service to women and children in 2023-2024 divided under four major outcomes. Some of the key highlights are the presentation of the Royal Government's 10th Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) periodic report on the status of gender equality in the country to the United Nations CEDAW Committee, the presentation of the combined 6th and 7th periodic report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on 14th and 15 May 2024, South Asian Regional Children's Conference, capacities building program for GCFPs, incorporation of LGBT concerns into gender policy and capacity building of key stakeholders on child-related issues.

## Table of Contents

<i>Foreword</i> .....	4
<i>THE YEAR THAT WAS: THE SITUATION OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN 2023-2024</i> .....	5
<i>PART I: Overview</i> .....	25
<i>Women and Children Division Profile</i> .....	25
<i>Key Mandates</i> .....	26
<i>Overall Functions</i> .....	26
<i>Key Legislations under the responsibility of National Commission for Women and Children</i> .....	27
<i>Governance Body</i> .....	27
<i>Commission Members</i> .....	28
<i>Gender and Child Focal Points</i> .....	29
<i>Gender Expert Group</i> .....	29
<i>Dzongkhag/Thromde Women and Children Committee (D/TWCC)</i> .....	30
<i>National Commission for Women and Children Secretariat</i> .....	31
<i>Organogram</i> .....	31
<i>PART II: Annual Performance Statement of the Commission (Financial Year July 2023-2024)</i> .....	32
• <i>Outcome I: Enhanced legislative, policy, and institutional frameworks effectively implement acts, rules, and regulations, ensuring better governance and compliance</i> .....	32
• <i>Outcome II: Strengthened capacity, advocacy and sensitization effort lead to increased awareness, skills and engagement for sustainable development and social change</i> .....	37
• <i>Outcome III: Enhanced network, coordination, and collaboration among key stakeholders to drive effective gender mainstreaming and improve child protection and well-being initiatives</i> .....	64
• <i>Outcome IV: Improved reporting, monitoring, and data driven knowledge creation to enhance informed decision making and interventions for the well-being of women and children</i> .....	69
<i>Challenges</i> .....	73
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	74
<i>References</i> .....	75



## Outcome and Program Structure

### Outcome 1

Legislative, policy and institutional frameworks effectively implement acts, rules, and regulations, ensuring better governance and compliance

#### *Programs*

1. Review of policies and plans from gender perspective
  - National Gender Equality Policy
  - Review of Education Policy
  - Review of Bhutan Civil Service Rules and Regulations 2023
2. Mainstreaming gender and child protection concerns into policies and plans  
(Integration of Gender and Child Activities under 13th FYP)
3. Sensitization to Dzongkhag/Thromde Women and Children Committee
4. Establishment and transfer of Women and Children Protection Services

### Outcome 2

#### *Programs*

1. Capacity, advocacy, and sensitization efforts lead to increased awareness, skills, and engagement for sustainable development and social change
  - Training of trainers on Dekyid Thuendrel-Positive Parenting toolkit
  - Formation of community-based child protection Committee
  - Formation of school-based child protection committees Dekyid Thendrel session to the parents and the children
2. Regional Children's Consultation Pre-Session
3. A Multi Sectoral Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) campaign to address Violence against Children (EVAC Campaign)
4. Promoting the Presence and Leadership of Women within Public Institutions at the National and Local Levels

5. Training on Early Identification and Safe Referral (EISR) to the Teachers and Health Workers Six Dzongkhags
6. Children Consultation on the Regional Action Plan for the Child Rights Institutions in South Asia
7. Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) programme
8. RESPECT Training
9. Protection and Care for Women and Children
10. Training to RBP personnels
11. Gender Mainstreaming Training to RENEW Staff
12. Training on understanding basic gender concepts and gender mainstreaming tools
13. Assessment of Gender Equality in Public Administration (GEPA)
14. Orientation program- JSW students
15. Sensitization to Members of Parliament

## Outcome 3

### *Programs*

Network, coordination, and collaboration among key stakeholders to drive effective gender mainstreaming and improve child protection and well-being initiatives

1. Celebration of International Women's Day 2024
2. Coordination meeting with the facilitators of Dekyid Thuendrel
3. Annual Gender and Child Focal Point Meeting
4. Asian Women Parliamentary Caucus

## Outcome 4

### *Programs*

Reporting, monitoring, and data-driven knowledge creation enhance informed decision-making and interventions for the well-being of women and children

1. Presentation of Bhutan's 10th CEDAW Periodic Report during the 86th Session
2. Presentation of Bhutan's 6th and 7th CRC Report
3. National Review Report to the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and Adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)
4. Presentation of Response to Six Recommendations Received from Women, Youth, and Children Committee



## Foreword

The National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) is pleased to present its Annual Report for the fiscal year 2023-2024. This report reflects on a year of significant progress in advancing women and children's rights in Bhutan. It highlights the dedication and collaborative spirit of all stakeholders who have contributed to this progress.

As the Competent Authority for the Domestic Violence Prevention Act 2013, Child Care and Protection Act 2011, and Child Adoption Act 2012, the NCWC has been instrumental in addressing emerging challenges faced by women and children. We have undertaken various programs and projects, while also actively mainstreaming gender and child-related concerns into national policies and legislation. Furthermore, the NCWC has prioritized in-depth research, knowledge management, and capacity building to ensure evidence-based decision-making and a continuous improvement approach.

The success of our work is a testament to the strong partnerships and unwavering support we receive from all stakeholders. We express our sincere gratitude for their continued collaboration in our shared mission to enhance gender equality, child protection, and well-being in Bhutan.

We look forward to continued collaboration in the years to come as we strive to create a more equitable and just society for all women and children in Bhutan.



Kesang Deki  
Chairperson  
National Commission for Women and Children

## THE YEAR THAT WAS: THE SITUATION OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN (2023-2024)

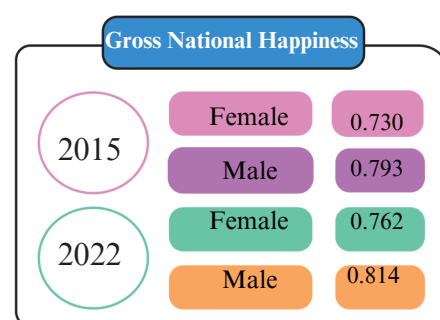
The situation of women and children in Bhutan has made significant progress in the health and education domain. However, Bhutan is progressing in the areas of social inclusion, political and economic participation with a broad outlook of Gender Equality and inclusivity for a harmonious society. The following infographic delineates gender data disaggregation, entailing various facets of gender representation. The data set depicts women and children's global indices, Happiness Index, Labour Market, Education, Governance, Violence against Women and Girls' data, Child Marriage and activities & programs initiated to enhance, empower, strengthen, educate, train, maintain gender equality and child protection & well-being in the country.

As per the 2023 report by the National Statistics Bureau, females constitute 47.92% of Bhutan's total population, amounting to 369,184 individuals out of the overall 770,276. Meanwhile, males make up 52.07% of the population. This gender distribution highlights the nearly equal yet slightly male-dominant demographic structure in the country.

Numbers			Percentage (%)	
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
401,092	369,184	770,276	52.07	47.92
Source: Bhutan at a glance 2023, National Statistics Bureau				

Furthermore, the well-being and welfare of both males and females are also determined by the Gross National Happiness (GNH) Index. The 2015 GNH Index shows that males (0.793) are relatively happier compared to their female (0.730) counterparts. The 2022 GNH report indicates a lower GNH Index of 0.762 for females compared to 0.814 for males. However, the rate of increase in the female GNH Index in 2022 is promising, indicating significant improvement in social, economic, and cultural factors.

The well-being and welfare of both males and females are also determined by the Gross National Happiness Index. The 2015 GNH index shows that male (0.793) counterparts are relatively happier to female (0.730)



Gender Equality in the labour market scenario showed a higher unemployment rate among girls/women calls for improving education for girls and expanding opportunities for life-long learning. In 2024, Bhutan's overall unemployment rate was 3.7%, with 4.5% of women unemployed compared to 3.1% of men. Women's participation in regular paid employment is significantly lower at 26.2%, while men's is 41.7%. Additionally, a higher percentage of women (51.8%) are engaged in the agricultural sector compared to men (34.7%). Moreover, the youth unemployment rate is 15.9%, comprising 13.5% females and 18.3% males. Similarly, the total labour force participation rate for male is 84.6% and 72.4% for females which is lesser than the male labour force participation rate. The total labour force participation is 6.5%.

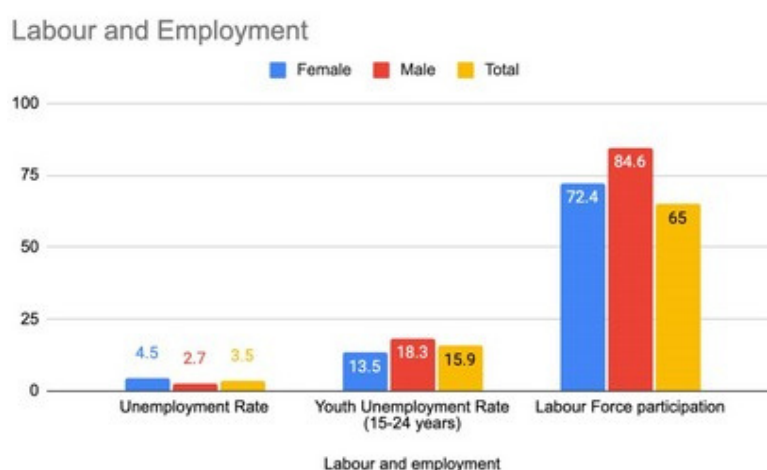


Education Statistics	Female	Male	Total
Net Enrollment Ratio (ECCD)	37.95	37.38	37.66
Net Enrollment Ratio (PP-VI)	96.29	92.31	94.27
Net Enrollment Rate in secondary (VII-XII)	75.27	62.69	68.90
Gross Enrollment Rate (ECCD)	54.17	54.76	54.47
Gross Enrollment Rate (Tertiary within Bhutan)	15.59	16.33	15.96
Gross Enrollment Rate (Tertiary within Bhutan and outside Bhutan)	18.28	18.44	18.36
Dropout Rate (primary)	1.10	2.90	3.20
General Literacy Rate in 2022	63.9	77.6	70.6
Technical Training Institutes	33.77	66.23	
Institute of Zorig Chusum	49.18	50.81	
GPI (tertiary level within and outside Bhutan)			0.99
GPI (tertiary level within Bhutan)			0.95

On the other hand, Bhutan has made notable advancements in girls' educational participation rates and the gender equality situation in education has improved drastically when compared to the situation over the last decade. In 2023, girls represented 51.32% of total enrolment in formal education, 60.1% in TVET courses, and 48.77% in tertiary education. The Net Enrolment Rate (NER) for girls was 37.95% in ECCD, 96.29% in primary education (PP- VI), 96.32% in basic education (PP- X), and 75.27% in secondary education (VII-XII). The Gross Enrollment Ratio for girls in tertiary education was 15.59% in Bhutan and 18.28% when including both domestic and international enrolment.

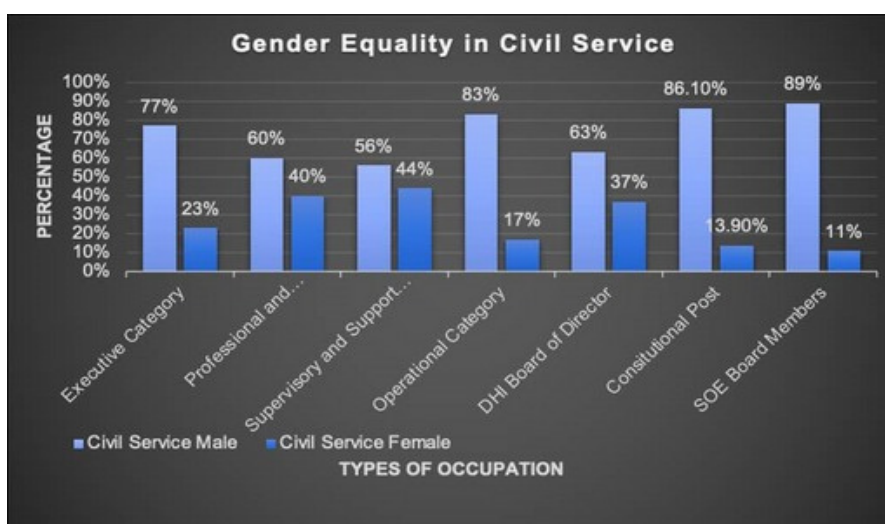
As of 2023, the Gender Parity Index (GPI) for technical and vocational education is 0.51, indicating that male trainees dominate enrolment, with 66.23% males compared to 33.77% females. In the two Institutes of Zorig Chusum, males accounted for 50.81% and females for 49.18%. Additionally, there has been a slight decline in female enrolment in tertiary education. The Gender Parity trend for Bhutanese students studying both domestically and abroad is similar, with GPI values of 0.99 and 0.95, respectively.

In the 2021 local government elections, women made up only 12.10% of the elected candidates, despite a notable 200% increase in the number of female gups (village leaders) elected. However, men continued to dominate the local governance landscape, holding 87.90% of the seats.



Similarly, in 2023, gender disparity persisted at the national level. In the National Assembly elections, only 4.30% of the elected candidates were women, leaving 95.70% of the seats occupied by men. In the National Council, women fared slightly better, securing 12% of the seats, but men still held the vast majority, with 87% representation. These figures highlight the significant gender gap in political representation in Bhutan, despite some progress in electing female leaders.

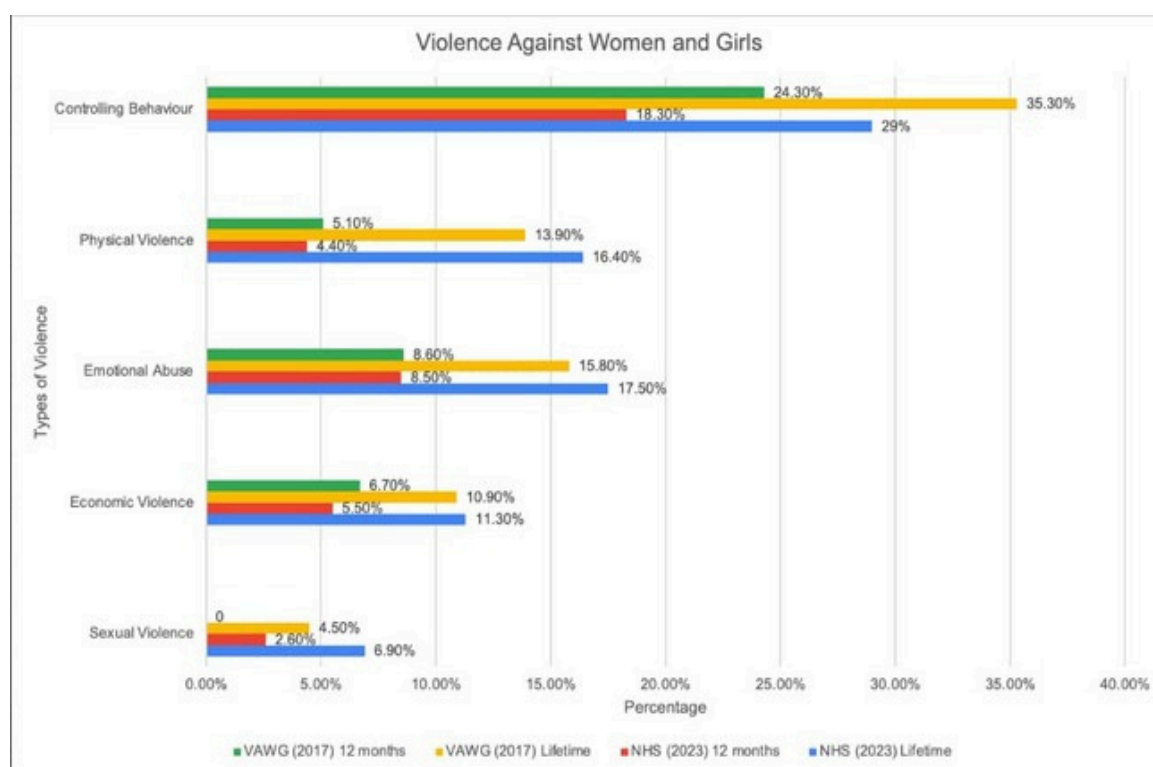
Moreover, Gender parity in Public Administration showed 40.03% women of the total civil servants in 2023. However, closer disaggregation reveals significant gaps in leadership and decision-making roles, where women represent only 23% at the executive level, including specialists. Moreover, the gender parity in professional and management roles remains at 60:40, with 60% male civil servants and 40% female civil servants. Similarly, men dominate with 56% and 83% in the supervisory and operational categories, respectively, compared to 44% females and 17% females at the supervisory and operational levels. In the corporate sector, females represent 37% of the DHI Board of Directors, compared to 63% males. Similarly, only 13.90% of constitutional posts are held by females, while 86.10% are held by males.



Violence against women and girls remains a serious issue. As per the nationwide study conducted by NCWC in 2017, more than two in every five women (44.6%) experienced one or more forms of partner violence in their lifetime, whether physical, sexual, psychological, or economic. Almost one in three (30.0%) experienced any of these types of violence in the last 12 months.



The study also revealed that the proportion of ever-partnered women who reported experiencing physical violence by an intimate partner was 13.9%, while 5.1% experienced it in the last 12 months. Moreover, the prevalence of sexual violence among ever-partnered women during their lifetime was 4.5%, and in the last 12 months, it was 2.3%. Similarly, controlling behaviour is common, with a third (35.3%) of women in Bhutan having experienced one or more forms of controlling behaviour during their lifetime, and 24.3% reported experiencing such behaviour in the last 12 months. Economic violence is also prevalent, with 10.9% of ever-partnered women experiencing at least one form of economic violence in their lifetime, and 6.7% experienced it in the last 12 months. Other forms of violence are also common, with 15.8% reporting emotional abuse in their lifetime, while 8.6% reported experiencing emotional abuse in the past 12 months. In 2017, 53.4% agreed that a man is justified in hitting his wife for one or more reasons.



Conversely, the National Health Survey 2023 revealed that 16.4% of women reported experiencing physical violence in their lifetime, with 4.4% experiencing it in the past year. Furthermore, the lifetime prevalence of sexual violence was 6.9%, while 2.6% reported it in the last 12 months. In the event of combined prevalence of physical or sexual violence and emotional violence, 24.9% reported experiencing it during their lifetime which showed decreased trend with 10.8% experiencing it in the last 12 months. In terms of emotional violence, 17.5% experienced it over their lifetime, and 8.5% did so in the last 12 months. Additionally, 29% of women reported experiencing controlling behaviour in their lifetime, with 18.3% reporting it in the past year. Moreover, 11.3% experienced economic violence over their lifetime, and 5.5% experienced it in the last 12 months. In total, 39.7% of women experienced at least one form of violence in their lifetime, while 23.6% faced it in the past year. Lastly, 43.9% believe it is justified for a husband to hit his wife for one or more reasons.

These statistics illustrate the ongoing challenges Bhutan faces in achieving gender equality, particularly in political participation, public administration, and the fight against gender-based violence. Despite progress in education and some improvements in social well-being, it requires multi sectoral effort to work towards eliminating gender disparities and ensuring the safety and rights of women and children.

Domestic Violence & Child Abuse Cases (2021 - 2023)						
Total No. of Victims by Age and Gender						
Sl. No.	Year	Below 17 Years		Above 18 Years		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	
1	2021	0	2	43	212	257
2	2022	7	9	88	470	574
3	2023	3	6	77	321	407
Total		10	17	208	1003	1238

The domestic violence and child abuse cases reported in 2021 to 2023 is concerning as per the data projected above. The number of Child Abuse (below 17 years) cases reported is figuratively lower than the domestic violence cases reported over the three years. The cases reported for child abuse has increased in 2022 to 9 cases from 2 child abuse case in 2021.

The cases reported for domestic violence remains higher than the child abuse cases. Domestic violence cases reported for females are higher at 212 cases than the 43 cases for male. While the cases reported for domestic violence have doubled in 2022 with 470 and 88 cases for female and male respectively. While the child abuse case in 2023 dropped for both male and female below 17 years but the cases reported are double for female.

The cases reported have doubled for both male and female in 2022 and slightly decreased in 2023. While the cases reported for female are higher in both child abuse and domestic violence case. The total cases reported for domestic violence is threefold higher than the total cases reported for male.



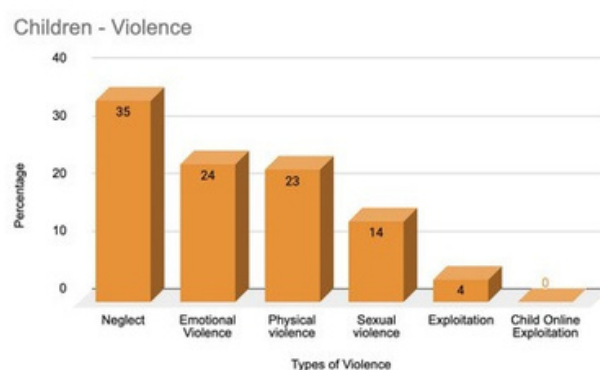
Total No. of Perpetrators by Age and Gender						
Sl. No.	Year	Below 17 Years		Above 18 Years		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	
1	2021	3	0	446	56	505
2	2022	3	0	689	93	785
3	2023	1	0	516	58	575
Total		7	0	1651	207	1865

The above table shows the perpetrator data disaggregation by gender and age group from 2021 to 2023. The child abuse perpetrated by male below 17 years are minimal with stiff downturn in 2023.

The domestic violence perpetrated by male in 2022 has increased to 689 from 446 in 2021. While the female perpetrators were comparatively lower than male perpetrators with 207 perpetrators across three years.

## CHILDREN AT A GLANCE

The situation of children in Bhutan has seen significant developments, particularly in addressing violence and child marriage. However, challenges remain, especially in ensuring the well-being and protection of children across the country.



Between 2018 and June 2022, administrative records from the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC), RENEW, and Nazhoen Lamtoen revealed that 35% of reported cases involved child neglect. Neglect, where children do not receive adequate care and support, hinders their growth and development. Other forms of violence were also common during this period: 23% of cases involved physical violence, 24% emotional violence, and 14% sexual violence. In addition, 4% of the cases were related to child exploitation, indicating a significant issue in ensuring the safety and well-being of Bhutanese children.

Child marriage remains another area of concern, although significant progress has been made. Between 2012 and 2017, Bhutan saw a noticeable decline in child marriage rates, from 8.7% in 2012 to 5.5% in 2017. Despite improvements, child marriage still disproportionately affects females and rural areas. In 2017, 8.4% of females were married before 18, compared to 1.8% of males. Rural areas had a higher prevalence, with 7.1% of child marriages compared to 2.9% in urban regions. Among the regions, the Eastern part of Bhutan exhibited the highest child marriage rates, although improvements were noted nationwide. The figures demonstrate progress in reducing child marriage but also highlight the need for continued efforts, particularly in addressing the gender and regional disparities.

Particulars		2012		2017		Child Marriage Rate	
		People married before 18	Total population b/w 20-24yrs	People married before 18	Total population b/w 20-24yrs	2012	2017
Gender	Male	849	26255	458	24908	3.2	1.8
	Female	4109	30982	2584	30584	13.3	8.4
Area	Urban	1183	20511	626	21506	5.8	2.9
	Rural	3775	36726	2416	33987	10.3	7.1
Region	Eastern	1386	13737	937	13779	10.1	6.8
	Western	2243	28899	1225	28871	7.8	4.2
	Central	1329	14601	880	12843	9.1	6.9
Total		4958	57237	3042	55493	8.7	5.5

*Note: The estimate is based on the Bhutan Living Standard Survey where the study participants were asked to report their age at first marriage*

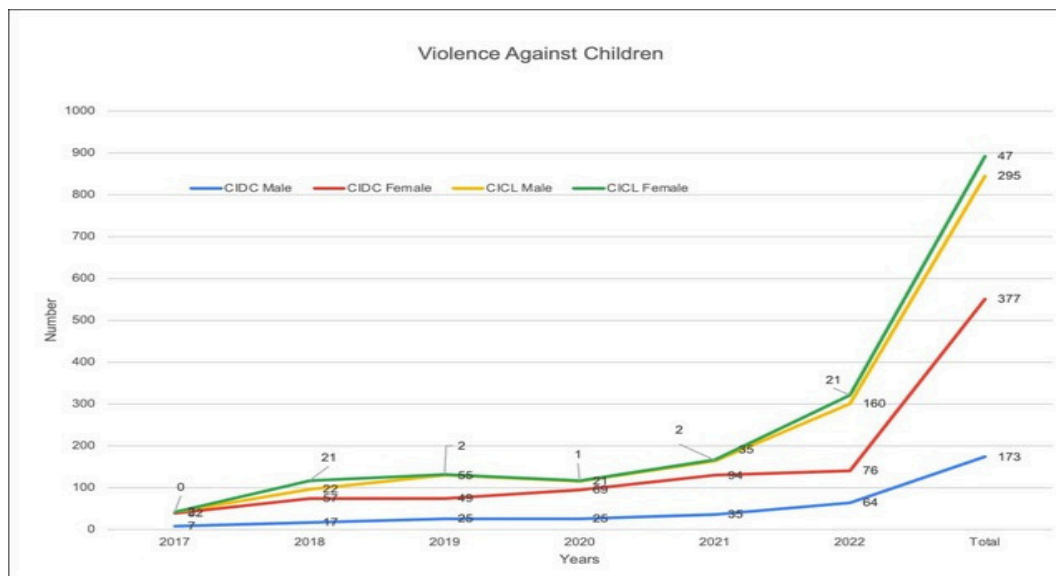
Furthermore, the administrative data of cases handled at NCWC's Protection Service in 2022 shows high rate of cases of Children in Difficult Circumstances. In 2022, NCWC protection services handled 140 cases of children in difficult circumstances. The number of cases decreased slightly in the first half of 2023, with 19 cases reported by June. Cases of children in conflict with the law were also prevalent, with 181 reported in 2022 and 119 by mid-2023. Additionally, NCWC handled 118 cases of gender-based violence and women in difficult circumstances in 2022, with 16 cases reported in 2023. In total, NCWC protection services dealt with 439 cases in 2022, which saw a decrease to 154 in 2023.

Case Category	Year	
	2022	2023 (Jan 14th-June)
CIDC	140	19
CICL	181	119
GBV & WIDC	118	16
Total	439	154

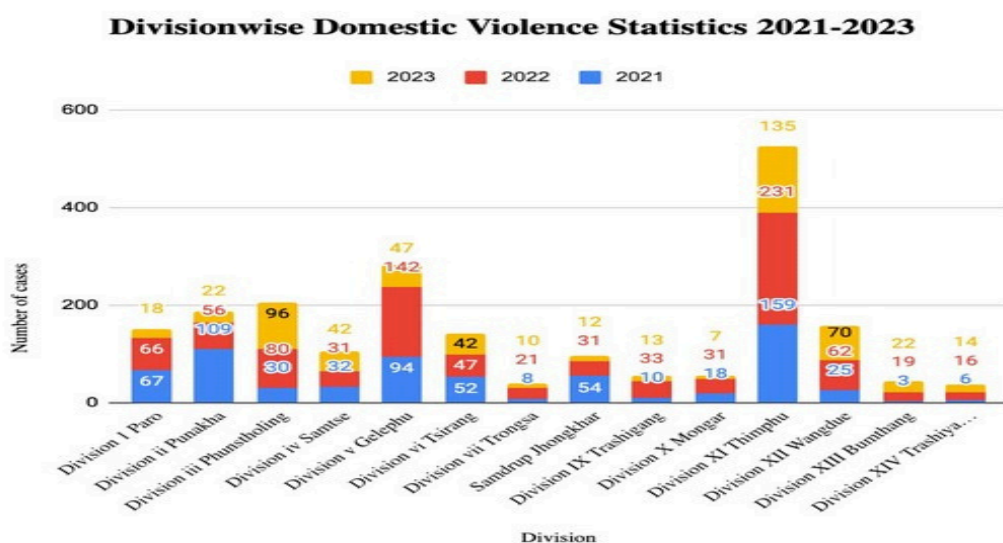
While looking at the trend of the CIDC and CICL over the period of the past six years, it showed a significant increase in Violence Against Children situation in the country. According to the NCWC's administrative data, for children in difficult circumstances (CIDC), cases rose steadily, with females consistently accounting for higher numbers than males. By 2022, there were 64 male and 76 female CIDC cases. Similarly, cases of children in conflict with the law (CICL) increased sharply, especially among males. In 2022, 160 male CICL cases were reported, compared to just 21 for females. Over the six-year period from 2017 to 2022, a total of 550 CIDC cases and 342 CICL cases were recorded, underscoring the need for continued focus on child protection and justice reform.

Year	CIDC		CICL	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
2017	7	32	2	0
2018	17	57	22	21
2019	25	49	55	2
2020	25	69	21	1

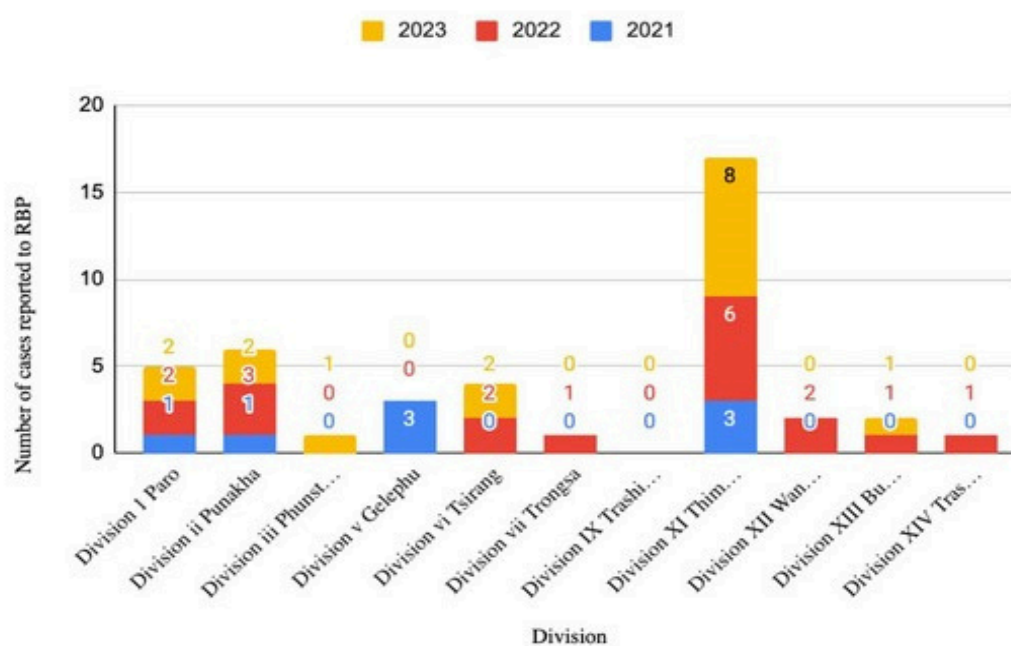
Also, CICL cases saw a sharp rise, particularly for males, with 160 male cases reported in 2022 compared to just 21 female cases. Overall, 550 CIDC cases and 342 CICL cases were recorded over the six-year period.



The following chart shows division-wise domestic violence statistics across three years 2021 (blue), 2022 (red), and 2023 (yellow) as per the record of Royal Bhutan Police. Most divisions show a reduction in domestic violence cases from 2022 to 2023, as indicated by the smaller yellow segments in 2023 compared to red in 2022. Division XI reported the highest number of domestic violence cases in 2022, with 231 cases (red), followed by Division X with 159 cases. Division III also had a large number of cases (142 in 2022).



### Division wise Child Abuse Statistics 2021-2023

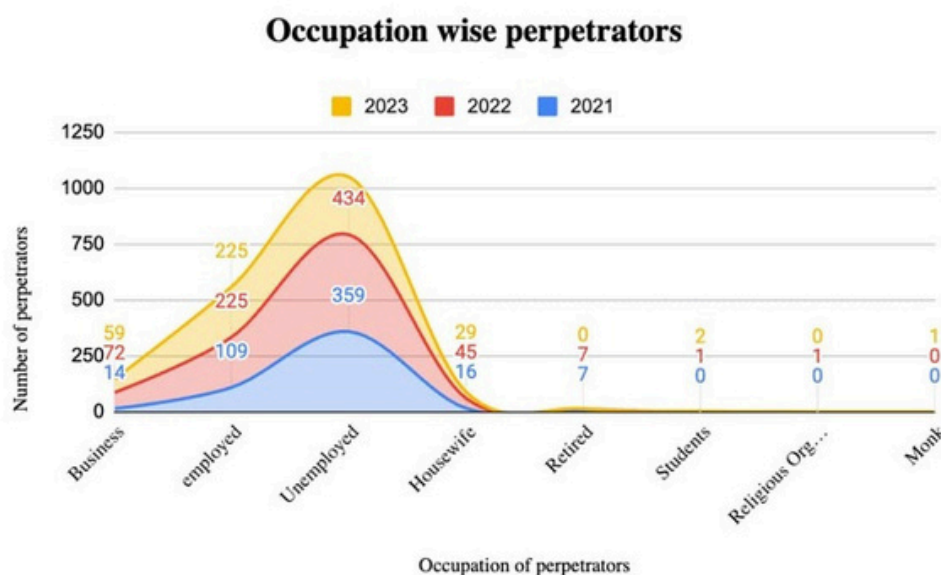


The chart presents division-wise child abuse statistics from 2021 to 2023, showing the number of cases reported to the Royal Bhutan Police (RBP) across different divisions.

The number of reported child abuse cases appears low across most divisions, with the highest numbers in Division XI, which stands out significantly. The year 2023 (yellow bars) shows an increase in cases in certain divisions, but many divisions have reported no cases in certain years. Division XI Thimphu has the highest concentration of child abuse cases, particularly in 2023 with 8 cases reported, which is an increase from 6 in 2022 and 3 in 2021. Division V and Division XIV have consistently reported either zero or very few cases across the three years, suggesting lower incidents or underreporting in these areas.



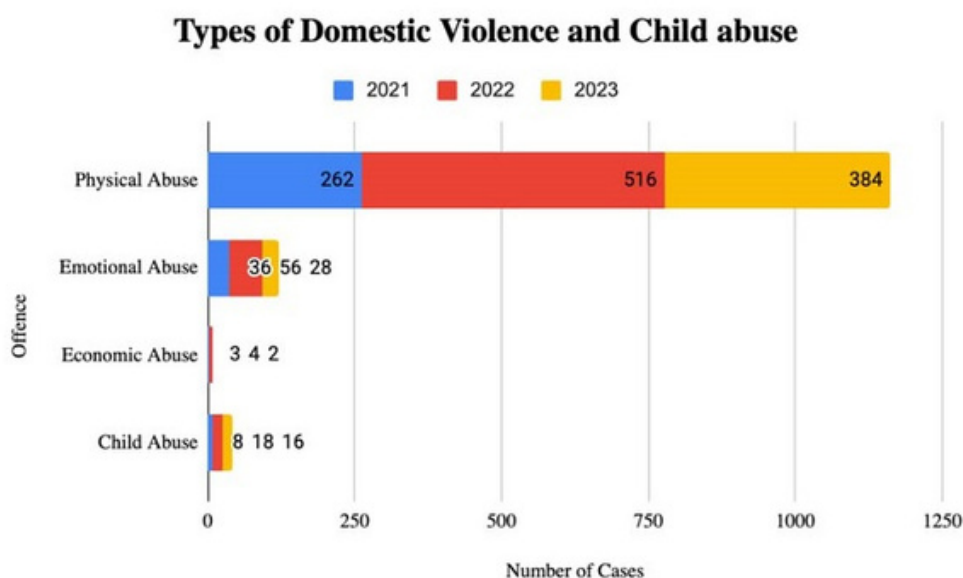
Division I (Paro), Division II (Punakha), and Division III show slight increases in child abuse cases in 2023, with either 1 or 2 additional cases compared to previous years. Likewise, Division VII, Division IX, and Division XIII have reported no child abuse cases for some of the years, which could indicate either low incidence or underreporting.



The chart depicts the occupation-wise distribution of perpetrators from 2021 to 2023, showcasing the number of perpetrators in various occupational categories over these three years. The highest number of perpetrators comes from the unemployed category, with significant peaks in all three years, 2022 had the highest number with 434 perpetrators, 2023 followed closely with 359 perpetrators and 2021 had a lower number of 225 perpetrators. The consistent peak in the unemployed group suggests a correlation between unemployment and perpetration of offenses, indicating potential socioeconomic factors influencing criminal behavior.

The employed category also sees a notable number of perpetrators, but it is significantly lower than the unemployed. This group consistently accounts for a smaller, yet significant portion of total perpetrators each year.

Business and housewife categories have lower numbers compared to the unemployed and employed groups. The number of perpetrators fluctuates but remains low, with 59 in 2023, 72 in 2022, and 14 in 2021. Retired, students, religious organizations, and monks have very low or negligible representation as perpetrators across all three years.



The chart illustrates the number of cases reported for different types of domestic violence and child abuse from 2021 to 2023. Physical abuse remains the most prevalent form of violence, with the number of cases peaking in 2022. Although there is a decline in 2023, it remains high compared to 2021. Emotional abuse saw an increase in 2022, but the number of cases dropped in 2023, even lower than in 2021.

Economic abuse is reported far less frequently than other forms of abuse, with the number of cases staying very low across all three years with 3 cases in 2021, 4 cases in 2022 and 2 cases in 2023. In addition, Child abuse cases increased significantly from 2021 to 2022 but saw a slight drop in 2023 with 8 in 2021, 18 cases in 2022 and 16 cases in 2023 respectively. Despite the decrease, the numbers remain higher than in 2021, highlighting an area requiring continued attention.

In addition, Child abuse cases increased significantly from 2021 to 2022 but saw a slight drop in 2023 with 8 in 2021, 18 cases in 2022 and 16 cases in 2023 respectively. Despite the decrease, the numbers remain higher than in 2021, highlighting an area requiring continued attention.

<b>Total No. of Victims of Domestic Violence and Child Abuse cases by Age and Gender</b>						
<b>Sl.no</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Below 17 Years</b>		<b>Above 18 Years</b>		<b>Total</b>
		<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	
1	2021	0	2	43	212	257
2	2022	7	9	88	470	574
3	2023	3	6	77	321	407
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>1003</b>	<b>1238</b>

The domestic violence and child abuse cases reported in 2021 to 2023 is concerning as per the data projected above. The number of Child Abuse (below 17 years) cases reported is figuratively lower than the domestic violence cases reported over the three years. The cases reported for child abuse has increased in 2022 to 9 cases from 2 child abuse case in 2021. The cases reported for domestic violence remains higher than the child abuse cases. Domestic violence cases reported for females are higher at 212 cases than the 43 cases for male. While the cases reported for domestic violence have doubled in 2022 with 470 and 88 cases for female and male respectively. While the child abuse case in 2023 dropped for both male and female below 17 years but the cases reported are double for female.

The cases reported have doubled for both male and female in 2022 and slightly decreased in 2023. While the cases reported for female are higher in both child abuse and domestic violence case. The total cases reported for domestic violence is threefold higher than the total cases reported for male.

Total No. of Perpetrators by Age and Gender						
Sl. No.	Year	Below 17 Years		Above 18 Years		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	
1	2021	3	0	446	56	505
2	2022	3	0	689	93	785
3	2023	1	0	516	58	575
Total		7	0	1651	207	1865

The above table shows the perpetrator data disaggregation by gender and age group from 2021 to 2023. The child abuse perpetrated by males below 17 years is minimal with the stiff downturn in 2023. The domestic violence perpetrated by males in 2022 has increased to 689 from 446 in 2021. While the female perpetrators were comparatively lower than male perpetrators, the trend shows increased female perpetrators in 2022 with 93 perpetrators in 2022 and a total of 207 across three years.

**Table of Programmes and participants number**

Sl. No.	Program Title	No. of participants		
		Male	Female	Total
1	Sensitization program on Women and Children's Rights for MPs	49	11	60
2	Sensitization to Dzongkhag/Thromde Women and Children Committee	52	18	70
3	Orientation on gender equality and child being and protection to JSW School Students	2	7	9
4	Training on Understanding basic gender concepts and gender mainstreaming tools	27	41	68
5	Deykid Thuendrel toolkit-TOT	96	61	157
6	Deykid Thuendrel session Participants-Parents	1,026	1,087	2,113
7	Deykid Thuendrel session Participants-Parents	658	1,162	1,820
8	Multi-Sectoral Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) campaign to address VAC (EVAC Campaign)	-	-	200,000
9	Promoting the Presence and Leadership of Women within Public Institutions at the National and Local levels	5	20	25

Sl. No.	Program Title	No. of participants		
		Male	Female	Total
10	Training on Identification and Safe Referral (EISR) to the Teachers and Health Workers in Six Dzongkhags	105	151	256
11	Children's Consultation on the Regional Action Plan for the Child Rights Institutions in South Asia	28	32	50
12	RESPECT Training	40	32	72
13	Training on Protection and Care for Women and Children	20	14	34
14	Training on Gender Based Violence Response and Prevention to RBP personnels	53	44	97
15	Gender Mainstreaming Training to RENEW Staff	-	-	27
16	Annual Gender and Child Focal Points Meeting	32	22	54
Grand Total:		2,193	2,702	204,912



## PART I: OVERVIEW

### Women and Children Division Profile

The National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) was established in 2004 as the national machinery to spearhead the promotion and protection of the rights of women and children in the country. In 2008, the commission became fully autonomous under the Royal Government of Bhutan. During the reform in 2022, the commission was placed under the social cluster. The Secretariat to NCWC was subsumed under the Department of Education Programmes, Ministry of Education and Skills Development as Women and Children Division (WCD). As a Competent Authority to Domestic Violence Prevention Act (DVPA) 2013, Child Care and Protection Act (CCPA) 2011 and Child Adoption Act (CAA) 2012, the WCD serves as a nodal agency responsible for gender equality, Child Rights Protection and well-being in the country.

### Vision

- A happy nation where children, women & men live in harmony with equality and respect in all spheres of life.

### Mission

- To protect and promote the rights of women through gender-responsive interventions.
- To preserve and promote the rights of children through child-responsive interventions.

### Objectives

- To review, reform, initiate, and support policies, plans, projects, and activities from a gender equality perspective.
- To review, reform, initiate, and support policies, strategies, projects, and activities from children's sensitive perspective

## Key Mandates

Following are the key mandates of NCWC:

- Strengthen legal, policy, regulatory and monitoring frameworks to protect and promote gender equality, child protection and well-being in the country.
- Mainstream gender in social, economic and political domains including, addressing child protection concerns, gender equality concerns.
- Enhance capacity building, coordination, research and knowledge management to improve gender equality and child protection system.

## Overall Functions

WCD is responsible for the following key functions:

- Review and formulate gender-responsive and child sensitive policies.
- Advocate for gender equality and child-sensitive Legislation, Policies, and Plans.
- Create awareness and sensitization for all stakeholders.
- Coordinate and Partner with stakeholders on issues pertaining to women and children.
- Coordinate the preparation and submission of reports at the national, regional and international levels (CRC, CEDAW, UPR, SAARC Conventions, etc).
- Monitor and Evaluate all activities pertaining to issues related to women and children.
- Mobilise Resources for NCWC, collaborating partners and relevant implementing NGOs.
- Develop, propose, and support Gender Responsive and Children sensitive programs and activities and build and strengthen the capacities of Gender Focal Points.

- Mobilise Resources for NCWC, collaborating partners and relevant implementing NGOs.
- Develop, propose, and support Gender Responsive and Children sensitive programs and activities and build and strengthen the capacities of Gender Focal Points.

## **Key legislations and regulations under the responsibility of National Commission for Women and Children**

- Domestic Violence Prevention Act 2013
- Child Care and Protection Act 2011
- Child Adoption Act 2012
- Domestic Violence Prevention Rules and Regulations
- Child Care and Protection Rules and Regulations

## **Governance Body**

Commission members appointed by the Cabinet govern the NCWC. The Lhengye Zhungtshog approved the reconstitution of the NCWC on September 27, 2024, via Cabinet Order No. C-3/152/2023/1803. Dasho Kesang Deki, Secretary of the Cabinet Secretariat, is the Chairperson of the Commission, and Dasho Tshewang Chopel Dorji, Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (Social Cluster), is the Vice Chairperson.

## Commission Members



Kesang Deki  
Secretary Cabinet  
Secretariat Chair,  
NCWC



Tshewang Chopel Dorji,  
Secretary, MoESD Vice  
Chair, NCWC



Dorji Wangmo  
Member of the Parliament  
Chairperson  
Women, Children and Youth  
Committee



Pema Choden, Secretary,  
Ministry of Foreign  
Affairs and External Trade



Col. Passang Dorji  
Deputy Chief of Police  
Royal Bhutan Police



Pelden Wangmo, Judge  
Family and Child Bench  
Royal Court of Justice



Tshering Dolkar  
Executive Director  
RENEW



Peldon Tshering Board  
Member  
The PEMA Secretariat



Tashi Namgyal  
Director, DEP  
Member Secretary to  
NCWC

## Gender and Child Focal Points

The NCWC works through a network of Gender and Child Focal Points (GCFPs). GCFPs are responsible for mainstreaming gender and children perspectives in their agencies/organisations, including Local Government (LG), at organisational, policy, and operational levels. Since its establishment in 2005, the GCFP network has contributed to NCWC's efforts to mainstream gender, enhance awareness of gender issues, and initiate activities that can mitigate gender inequalities. They are crucial in promoting gender equality and mainstreaming gender to ensure gender-responsive plans and policies. Currently, the GCFP network extends to central agencies, dzongkhags, civil society organisations, and private sectors.

## Gender Expert Group

Gender Expert Group (GEG) was formed in 2017 as a functional and effective national-level human resource pool on gender issues. GEG is responsible for bridging the gap between the high turnover rates of GFPs and the systematic limitations in gender-related capacities. GEG comprises committed, interested, and mid/senior-level government and private sector officials. The GEG, as a group or as individuals, with gender equality as the primary objective provides technical backstopping to the NCWC and supports in mainstreaming laws and policies through review or formulating, mainstreaming plans during formulation or reviews and ensuring laws, policies, and plans are implemented and monitored.

## **Dzongkhag/Thromde Women and Children Committee (D/TWCC)**

The Cabinet approved the formation of Dzongkhag/Thromde Women and Children Committee (D/TWCC) during the 162nd meeting held on June 19, 2024 as per Rule 25 of the CCPA 2011. D/TWCC functions as a facilitating body to implement provisions of the Acts effectively. D/TWCC was formed in 20 Dzongkhags and four Thromdes.

### **Members of the Committee**

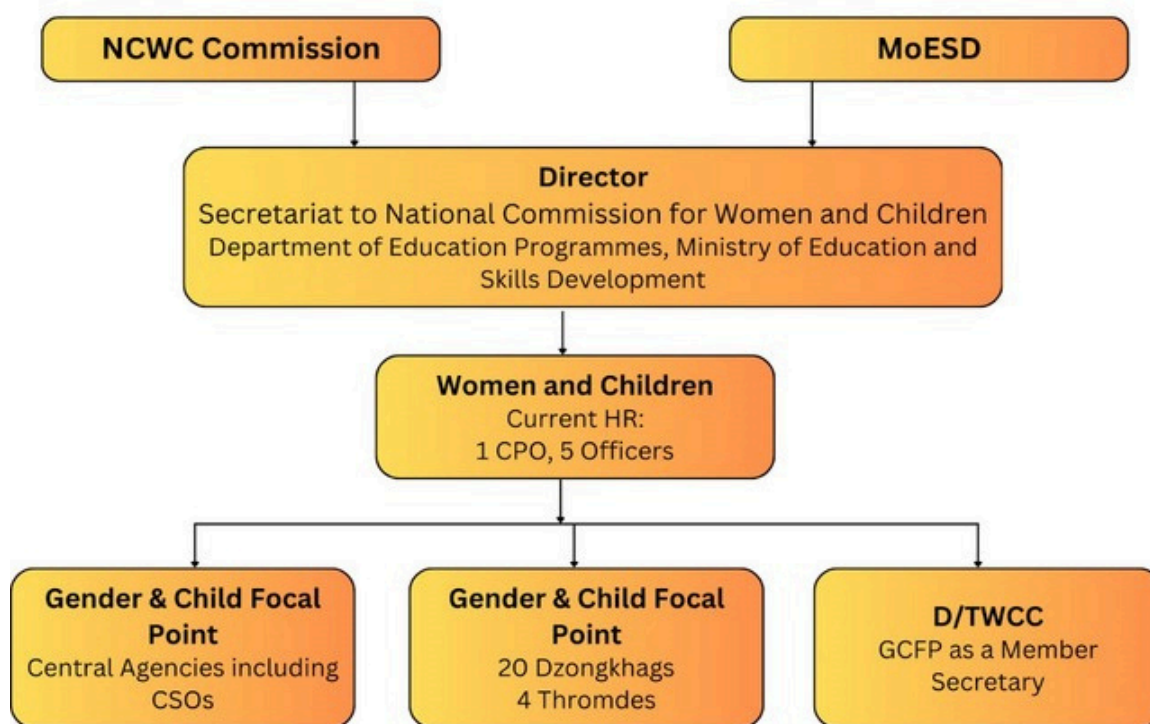
1. Dzongdag/Thromde Executive Secretary (Chairperson)
2. SP/OC, Royal Bhutan Police (Member)
3. Concerned Gup/Throme Thuemi (Member)
4. Dzongkhag/ Thromde Public Health Officer (Member)
5. CMO, Dzongkhag Hospital (Member)
6. Chief Dzongkhag Education Officer, Chief Thromde Education Officer, MoESD (Member)
7. One relevant representative from CSO/private at the discretion of the chairperson (Member)
8. Gender and child focal point (Member secretary to the committee)



## National Commission for Women and Children Secretariat

The Women and Children Division looks after the programmatic aspects of the National Commission for Women and Children from a gender equality and children's perspective. The secretariat coordinates and monitors activities related to women's empowerment and children's wellbeing and safety. The secretariat is also responsible for preparing and submitting periodic reports to international treaty bodies to which the Royal Government of Bhutan is a signatory, like CEDAW, CRC, and other conventions related to women and children. WCD is also responsible for the implementation of policies and plans from gender and children's wellbeing and safety lens. The secretariat works closely with all relevant stakeholders to ensure gender mainstreaming and child wellbeing and safety in their plans, policies, and programs.

### Organogram



## **PART II: Annual Performance Statement of the Commission (Financial Year July 2023 - June 2024)**

### **Overview**

In line with the commission's mandates to promote the rights of women and children in the country, the division has continuously strived to ensure timely programmatic interventions, coordination, and regulations. Hence, some of the significant accomplishments of WCD are highlighted as follows:

### **Outcome I: Enhanced legislative, policy, and institutional frameworks effectively implement acts, rules, and regulations, ensuring better governance and compliance**

#### **Purpose**

To establish and strengthen legal, policies and institutions to promote and protect rights of women and children in the country

#### **Key Activities**

1. Establishment and transfer of Women and Children Protection Services
2. Sensitization to Dzongkhag/Thromde Women and Children Committee
3. Mainstreaming gender and child protection concerns into policies and plans  
Integration of Gender and Child Activities under the 13th FYP
4. Review of Policies and Plans from Gender and Child Perspective (Bhutan Civil Service Rules 2023, National gender Equality Policy (NGEP), National Education policy)

## Summary and Key Achievements

In the past financial year, the Commission's contribution towards strengthening legal and policy frameworks included:

### 1. Establishment and transfer of Women and Children Protection Services

The Protection Services was established under the NCWC to cater to the needs of women and children in difficult circumstances and children in conflict with law. The protection and legal services include toll-free helpline 1098, Mobile apps, home visits, counselling services, and individualised services as per the needs of service seekers, case management throughout 24/7, and served as a frontliner in Gender Based Violence and children related cases till June 2023. On June 14, 2023, the Protection Services were officially transferred to The PEMA Secretariat, in the presence of representatives from the NCWC Secretariat, the Commission, and the Ministry of Education and Skills Development.



## 2. Sensitization to Dzongkhag/Thromde Women and Children Committee

The Women and Children Division, Secretariat to the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC), with support from Save the Children International conducted a two-day sensitization program to the Dzongdags, Thrompons, Executive Secretaries and Gender and Child Focal Points to enhance awareness and understanding of the issues surrounding the protection and rights of women and children, relevant laws and policies and also update on the Dzongkhag/Thromde Women and Children Committee. The program also focused on building the capacity of the new Dzongdas regarding women and children's issues in the country. The program was graced by the Hon'ble Chair to NCWC, Dasho Kesang Deki, Cabinet Secretary.



### **3. Mainstreaming gender and child protection concerns into policies and plans**

#### **Integration of Gender and Child Activities under 13th FYP**

The women and children's key indicators are incorporated under the 13th FYP. The broad activities include strengthening legal, regulatory, and monitoring frameworks to protect and promote gender equality, child protection and well-being, mainstreaming gender in social, economic and political areas, and enhancing the capacity, coordination, and knowledge management to improve gender equality and child protection system.

#### **4. Review of Policies and Plans from Gender and Child Perspective**

##### **a. Revised Bhutan Civil Service Rules and Regulations 2023**

The NCWC submitted a review of the revised Bhutan Civil Service Rules (BCSR) 2023 from a gender perspective to ensure a gender-sensitive working environment in the public service. The proposal includes provisions of Temporary Special Measures to maintain gender balance in the Human Resource Committee and panel members, prerequisites to ensure a safe and secure working environment, enhancement of equal opportunities to working parents by supporting working mothers, increasing paternity leave to 30 days, and enhancement of gender-responsive plans and policies, and data collection in public service.

##### **b. National Gender Equality Policy 2023**

The NCWC, in collaboration with the cabinet reviewed the National Gender Equality Policy (NGEP) from the LBGT perspective mainly to foster inclusivity and a diverse spectrum of gender identities in society. The initiative was carried out to ensure gender-sensitive services, specifically in health and education. The LBGT's concerns are integrated into the social, economic, and political domains of the NGEP. The review was carried out in alignment with national laws and legislation to ensure everyone enjoys the same rights and opportunities in all spheres of life.



### **c. National Education Policy**

Toward fulfilling His Majesty's vision for the transformation of the education systems, the NCWC reviewed the National Education Policy from the children's perspective. The revision aims to provide an inclusive and holistic education to all children where the educational environment is child-friendly, promoting a safe, supportive, participatory, and nurturing atmosphere conducive to learning. Children are the main backbone of the nation. Hence, the National Education Policy ensures that the education system is inclusive and every child has access to quality education.



## **Outcome II: Strengthened capacity, advocacy, and sensitization efforts lead to increased awareness, skills, and engagement for sustainable development and social change**

### **Purpose**

To improve the understanding, knowledge and effectiveness of individuals and organizations involved in promoting gender equality and child protection

### **Key Programmes and Activities**

1. Empowering Communities to Address Violence against Children
  - Training of trainers on Dekyid Thuendrel-Positive Parenting Toolkit
  - Formation of community-based child protection committees
  - Formation of school-based child protection committees
  - Dekyid Thuendrel session to the parents and the children
2. Regional Children's Consultation Pre-Session
3. A Multi Sectoral Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) campaign to address Violence against Children (EVAC Campaign)
4. Promoting the Presence and Leadership of Women within Public Institutions at the National and Local Levels
5. Training on Early Identification and Safe Referral (EISR) to the Teachers and Health Workers in Six Dzongkhags
6. Children Consultation on the Regional Action Plan for the Child Rights Institutions in South Asia
7. Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) programme
8. RESPECT Training
8. Protection and Care for Women and Children
9. Training to RBP personnels
10. Gender Mainstreaming Training to RENEW Staff
11. Training on understanding basic gender concepts and gender mainstreaming tools
12. Assessment of Gender Equality in Public Administration (GEPA)
13. Orientation program- JSW students

## Summary and Key Achievements

### ***Concluding Observations on the tenth periodic report of Bhutan, No.36***

*36. The Committee recommends that the State party comprehensively address all barriers to the equal and inclusive representation of women in political and public life, including by promoting equal sharing of care and domestic responsibilities between women and men and by conducting awareness-raising on the equal capacity of women in all their diversity to take leadership roles, on their human right to equal representation in decision-making systems and on the equal representation of women as a requirement for achieving political stability and sustainable development in the State party. The Committee also recommends that the State party:*

*(b) Address the dropout rate for girls, in particular those in transition from primary to secondary education, including by sensitizing parents, teachers and religious and community leaders, as well as the general public, on the importance of the access of girls to education at all levels as a basis for their empowerment;*

*(c) Adopt targeted measures to strengthen the access of women and girls to vocational training and promote their participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, including by raising awareness at an early age that they are fields for which girls are equally as qualified as boys and by fostering an enabling environment;*

### ***Concluding observations on the tenth periodic report of Bhutan, No. 44(b, c)***

*(b) Address dropout of girls, in particular in transition from primary to secondary education, including by sensitizing parents, teachers, religious and community leaders as well as the general public on the importance of girl's access to education at all levels as a basis for their empowerment;*

*(c) Adopt targeted measures to strengthen women's and girls' access to vocational training and promote their participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), including by raising awareness at an early age that STEM is a field for which girls are equally qualified as boys and by fostering an enabling environment;*

## **1. Empowering Communities to Address Violence Against Children in Bhutan**

### **1.1 Develop and contextualize Dekyid Thuendrel-Positive parenting sessions and related TLM)**

The Dekyid Thuendrel-Positive Parenting program involved the development and contextualization of its sessions and related teaching and learning materials (TLM) to fit the cultural and social contexts of Bhutanese communities, particularly in the pilot districts. A five-day workshop, held from July 18th to July 22nd, 2022, engaged 16 members of the Core Working Group (CWG) in adapting the PwV toolkit. During the workshop, participants reviewed the parenting, children's, and adult-child interaction sessions, ensuring that each was tailored to meet the specific needs of Bhutanese families.

Field visits to the pilot districts were also conducted to observe community dynamics, gather feedback, and refine the toolkit based on local parenting practices and cultural norms. The sessions and materials were adjusted to reflect these findings, making them culturally relevant and easily applicable. The field visits helped strengthen community engagement and ensured that the PwV approach would be effective and well-received in its implementation.

### **1.2 Pilot test Dekyid Thuendrel-PwV sessions and TLM, make amendments if necessary**

The pilot testing of the Parenting without Violence (PwV) Toolkit, a key element of the "Empowering Communities to Address Violence Against Children" project, was conducted from August 17th to 21st, 2022. The pilot was timed to coincide with the mid-term school break, allowing uninterrupted participation from both children and parents without affecting the children's academic curriculum. With support from the Ministry of Education and Thimphu Thromde, the pilot test involved 13 parents, 9 children aged 10-17, and 11 children aged 6-9. Participants engaged in 9-10 interconnected sessions over five days, with a maximum of four hours per day.

The sessions were facilitated by members of the Core Working Group, who had been trained in the PwV Common Approach Toolkit and played a central role in its contextualization for Bhutanese communities.

The pilot test provided valuable insights, leading to discussions that addressed identified gaps and practical challenges. These discussions culminated in the finalization of the toolkit. Notable challenges emerged, particularly with the younger age group (6-9 years), where comprehension of certain concepts was limited. Recommendations included reducing the number of sessions for younger children and revising session content to ensure age-appropriate examples. Visual aids, such as diagrams and pictures, were also suggested to enhance engagement. For the 10-17 age group, feedback indicated that clearer objectives were needed for some activities, and additional multimedia resources, such as YouTube videos, were used to explain complex concepts like the UNCRC. Additionally, the test revealed a gender disparity among participating parents, with only female caregivers attending, reflecting broader societal norms that often associate parenting responsibilities with mothers.

### **1.3 Finalize and endorse the training package and teaching learning materials**

Following the formative study and pilot testing conducted in July 2022, the "Parenting without Violence" (PwV) Toolkit and supporting materials were further contextualised for greater practicality. Organised by Save the Children, the revisions were based on feedback from trainers and observations during the pilot test. Key updates included renaming the toolkit to "Dekyid Thuendrel – Parenting without Violence", simplifying complex topics like the UNCRC using videos and animations, and incorporating more stories that involve fathers to promote shared parenting. Additional content was added on LGBTQI+ awareness, school bullying, and local referral pathways for sensitive issues like abuse and cyberbullying. To further support trainers, presentations were developed, and a consent form was introduced to ensure voluntary participation from both adults and children.

These adjustments ensure that the toolkit is not only culturally relevant but also addresses the practical needs of participants, enhancing its effectiveness in the Bhutanese context.

#### **1.4 Dekyid Thuendrel-Positive Parenting**

A three year project “Empowering Communities to Prevent violence against Children” was launched in 2022 with technical and financial support from Save the Children International. As a component of this initiative, a pilot project “Dekyid Thendral-Positive Parenting” has been rolled out across 15 schools in Thimphu Thromde, six schools under Thimphu Dzongkhags, 12 schools in Dagana and Seven schools in Zhemgang Dzongkhags. Similarly, three core areas under Thimphu Thromde and three gewogs, 10 gewogs in Dagana and four Gewogs in Zhemgang have also been involved in the programme.

Through this programme, the anticipated outcomes include increased understanding of positive parenting among parents and caregivers, increased resilience and confidence for boys and girls to express themselves safely, and the prevention of violence in homes, schools, and communities through enhanced access to community-based child protection mechanisms and services.

## Testimonials from students/children

- *Dekyid thuendrel sessions are really helpful and it has improved the interaction between me and my parents.*
- *My parents have changed a lot and I also help my mother. Before that i didn't do even a single work but since the Dekyid Thuendrel has started, I have improved a lot.*
- *The Dekyid Thuendrel program has benefited me and I think other children should also attend this program.*
- *In the first two sessions, my mother has learned to understand me and take my opinion.*
- *I learnt to respect families and elders and to communicate with them.*

## Testimonials from parents

- *I am very happy to get an opportunity to be part of Dekyid Thuendrel. It taught us how to communicate and respect our children, and inform the parents on any safety issues/concerns.*
- *Before attending this program, I did not care much for my children, having attended this program I have learned a lot about managing/care for my children. I gained a lot of knowledge and experience on how to care and communicate with my children.*

Further initiatives under the project include orienting key stakeholders such as the Dzongda, Dzongkhags officials, sector heads, local leaders, and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) on the provisions of the Child Care and Protection Act of Bhutan (CCPA), Internal Child Safeguarding Framework, Child Protection, gender-based issues, and related policies and laws. These efforts collectively reflect a comprehensive approach to empowering communities and safeguarding the well-being of our children.

## Number of children and parents participants in Dekyid Thuendrel Session

Dzongkhags/ Thromde	Children			Parents			Status
	Boys	Girls	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Zhemgang Dzongkhag	121	136	257	66	145	211	Completed*
Thimphu Thromde	391	422	813	253	395	648	Completed*
Dagana Dzongkhag	367	358	725	258	397	655	Completed*
Thimphu Dzongkhag	147	171	318	81	225	306	Completed
Total	1026	1087	2113	658	1162	1820	

### 1.5 Formation of School and community based Child Protection committee in the piloted schools and Communities

All the piloted schools and communities established School-based and Community-based Child Protection Committees (SCPCs and CPCCs) to ensure standardized and comprehensive child care and protection services. These committees will serve as critical mechanisms for addressing violence, improving disciplinary measures, and safeguarding children both at school and in the community.

The committees for both the school and community based child protection communities have been thoroughly briefed on the SoP and shared for both the school and community based child protection communities.



## Dekyid Thuendrel piloted schools and formation of School Based Child Protection Committees

Slno	Thimphu Thromde	Dagana Dzongkhag	Zhemgang Dzongkhag	Thimphu Dzongkhag
1	Babesa HSS	Daga HSS	Goshing PS	Kuzhugchen MSS
2	Babesa PS	Daleythang LSS	Tingtibi PS	Khasadrapchu MSS
3	Chang Rigphel PS	Drujeynag CS	Yebilaptsa CS	Wangbama CS
4	Jigme Losel PS	Gaserling HSS	Pangbang PS	Bjemina PS
5	Jungshina PS	Karmaling PS	Gomphu PS	Tshaluna PS
6	Kuenselphodrang PS	Lhaling	Zhemgang PS	
7	Loselling MSS	Namchella LSS	Tsaidang PS	
8	Lungtenphu MSS	Nimtola PS		
9	Lungtenzampa MSS	Pangserpo PS		
10	Motithang HSS	Phekoma PS		
11	Rinchen Kuenphen PS	Phumsumgang PS		
12	Taba LSS	Tsangkhag MSS		
13	Yangchenphug HSS			
14	Ziloen Namgyelling LSS			
15	Zilukha MSS			

## Community Based Child Protection Committees

Sno	Thimphu Thromde	Dagana Dzongkhag	Dzongkhag	Thimphu Dzongkhag
1	North-Taba Dechencholing Jungzhina- Kawajangsa	Karmaling Gewog	Trong Gewog	Kawang Gewog
2	South: Changbangdu- Olakha, Babesa- Simtokha	Dorona Gewog	Ngangla Gewog	Mewang Gewog
3	Core: Norzin, Motithang, Changangkha	Gesarling Gewog	Goshing Gewog	Genekha Gewog
4		Tseza Gewog	Nangkor Gewog	
5		Largyab Gewog		
6		khebisa Gewog		
7		Kana Gewog		
8		Drujeygang Gewog		
9		Tsangkha Gewog		
10		Trashiding Gewog		

## 1.6 Training of Trainers- Dekyid Thuendrel-Safe Parenting

The Training of Trainers (TOT) is a vital component of the "Dekyid Thuendrel – Parenting without Violence" project. Following the formation of child protection committees at both school and community levels, participants were trained to promote collaboration and collective discussions between schools and communities. The interactive sessions promoted networking among key stakeholders, ensuring consistent delivery of sessions to children and parents. So far the following number of facilitators had been trained in the piloted schools and communities under three Dzongkhags.



### Total number of Facilitators trained

Dzongkhag/Thromde	Male	Female	Total
Thimphu Thromde & Dagana Dzongkhag	62	47	109
Thimphu Dzongkhag	16	8	24
Zhemgang Dzongkhag	18	6	24
Total:	96	61	157

## 1.7 Awareness/Sensitization program

As part of our comprehensive child protection and prevention initiative, videos covering crucial topics like responding to violence, preventing abuse, and staying safe online were developed. With rising child-related abuse cases and ongoing school breaks, spreading this awareness widely was essential. It not only educates the community but also aligns with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Hence, these videos were aired on BBS TV and radio, targeting children during their winter breaks for maximum impact

### ***The list of videos that were aired on the national TV-BBS***

1. Preventing and Responding to Exploitation of Children
2. Parenting and responding to child abuse
3. Online safety of children
4. Learning to stay safe online
5. Preventing and responding to cyber-bullying
6. Harmonious family
7. Harmful effects of Alcohol

### ***The list of voice over that were aired on the national radio-BBS radio***

1. Preventing and Responding to Exploitation of Children
2. Parenting and responding to child abuse
3. Online safety of children
4. Learning to stay safe online
5. Preventing and responding to cyber-bullying

## 2. Regional Children's Consultation

The NCWC in collaboration with South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children Regional Secretariat jointly conducted Regional Children's Consultation on Ending Violence Against Children with Special Focus on Ending Child Labour in South Asia and the role of Children and Young People from 27 to 28, February, 2024. The Consultation was held with an overall objective to

contribute to the realisation of the right of the child to be heard at the regional level. On 10th February, 2024, a pre-session for the Regional Children Consultation was conducted by regional experts to give the skills and knowledge on discussing diverse challenges and issues, including disparities in education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, climate change, child labour and instances of violence and abuses that continue to impact their lives. Access to clean water and sanitation, as well as the prevalence of child marriages, add layers of complexity to the issues faced by our youngest citizens in South Asia.

Children also discussed necessary actions and responsible stakeholders such as Government interventions, NGOs, community leaders, and the private sector to strengthen laws and policies through robust implementation and monitoring in addressing issues, advocacy, community engagement and addressing the issues faced by children through collective commitment and collaborative action for a brighter and more secure future for our children.

### ***Concluding observations on the tenth periodic report of Bhutan, CO no. 44 (f)***

*(f) Adopt an action plan to prevent and address gender based violence against girls online and provide comprehensive and systemic capacity-building to teachers, pupils and parents on prevention and defence strategies to strengthen the resilience of girls against such violence.*

### 3. Multi Sectoral Social and Behaviour Change(SBC) campaign to address Violence against Children(EVAC Campaign)



The National Commission for Women and Children in partnership with 22 agencies including central government agencies, monastic institutions, civil society organizations, Local Governments, the media, development partners and other stakeholders, launched the End Violence

Against Children (EVAC) campaign in July 2022 in Thimphu, Samtse, and Trashigang districts with support of UNICEF. It was complemented by a nationwide online campaign through print, broadcast and social media. More than 250,000 people were sensitised on preventing violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect through “our Child; our Wealth” campaign, The End to Violence Against Children (EVAC) campaign.



The campaign was conducted with an objective to address barriers preventing children and young people from availing child protection services and raise awareness on the prevalence of violence against children, strengthen systems for meaningful community engagement through improved organisational capacity and platforms including digital platforms, and support improved multi sectoral collaborations and partnership in implementing programmes and plans that complements one another to contribute to shared national goals and aspirations.



The EVAC Campaign reached more than 200,000 people in 3 districts, about 50,000 community members were trained and mobilised through collective efforts and action including the SBC campaign launch, involving stakeholder consultations, development of communication materials, and nationwide dissemination through media channels, Community engagement followed in three districts, led by Tarayana, RENEW and Nazhoen Lamoten.



Other organisations play a huge role in the success of the EVAC campaign through engagement and mobilising school teachers, scouts, and youth volunteers, involving sports bodies connected with youth and the public and religious organisations played a huge role in community engagement. Rigorous advocacy and awareness efforts leverage mainstream media, disabled people's organisations, and social media platforms.

Being a Buddhist country,  
the Bhutanese people are driven by the principles of  
compassion.  
Hence, we should promote human values of compassion  
and kindness to address  
violence against children and mental wellbeing.

- Monk, Trashigang Rabdey



The EVAC Campaign successfully influenced government agencies, local governments, religious organisations, sports bodies, education, media, and NGOs.



#### 4. Promoting the Presence and Leadership of Women Within Public Institutions at the National and Local Levels



As part of implementing the project “Building capacities for promoting the presence and leadership of women within public institutions at national and local levels,” the NCWC, with support from UNDP Bhutan conducted a four-day workshop from 17 to 20 October 2023 in Paro. The workshop aimed to guide public servants in enhancing women’s leadership within public institutions. 25 (20 female and 5 Male) government officials in senior decision-making and mid-level positions across different agencies at the national level and representatives from local government attended the workshop. The event contributed to developing a gender action plan that targets gaps identified in the national review and promotes gender equality and women’s career progression toward leadership positions in the public sector at the national and local levels.

#### 5. Training on Early Identification and Safe Referral (EISR) to the Teachers and Health Workers in Six Dzongkhags

The Women and Children Division, with support from UNICEF, conducted two day training on Early Identification and Safe Referral (EISR) to 256 (151F) teachers and health workers of six Dzongkhags.

The training was aimed to equip the participants on the child protection system in Bhutan and how to respond and safely refer to service providers for timely and appropriate support and necessary interventions.



## Testimonials



I would like to thank NCWC for providing such an opportunity. Our protection issues are arising nowadays. In this regard, for the benefit of all the children and youths, NCWC has taken this initiative in providing us some knowledge regarding helping children and mechanisms to help those who are being abused. In this two day program, I learned about the types of abuses, signs and symptoms that our children encounter and experience violence at home. Again, I also knew about how we are going to respond at the national, community, at the family and at the societal level. As a service provider, it is crucial for us to intervene and support our children who experience violence. With such training, it enhances our knowledge to help our youth, and help our students in providing timely intervention. - School Counsellor

My name is Kaka Tshering. I work as a Village Health Worker in Mochu Village. The two day training sessions have been significant in understanding child protection aspects and mechanisms to help our children in difficult circumstances and in conflict with law.. I have also learned about child protection issues and types of abuse. Moreover, I have also understood how to CARE for and SUPPORT our children in the community. - Kaka Tshering, Village Health Worker, Mochu, Sombaykha



## 6. Children Consultation on the Regional Action Plan for the Child Rights Institutions in South Asia

The NCWC led the Child's Consultation on the Regional Action Plan for Child Rights Institutions in South Asia on 22nd September 2023 in Thimphu. More than 50 participants attended the consultation, including students and young volunteers (32 Females, 18 Males) from local schools and civil society organisations (Scouts, Druk Adolescents Initiative on Sexual Awareness Network (DAISAN), Youth-Volunteers in Action and Youth Advisory Board). The children participants reviewed four priorities: promoting culture, cooperation, and continuous learning between child rights institutions, knowledge management, collaboration, shared issues and challenges, opportunities, and joint advocacy on child rights in the region under the Joint Regional Action Plan. The consultation provided a platform for children and young people to exercise their right to freely express their views and exercise their right to be heard.



***Concluding observations on the tenth periodic report of Bhutan, CO 44 (a)***

*44. Recalling its general recommendation No. 36 (2017) on the right of girls and women to education, the Committee recommends that the State Party promote the access of girls to education at all levels and:*

*(a) Provide comprehensive and age-appropriate sexuality education in all schools and at all levels of education;*

**7. Comprehensive Sexuality Education programme**

Comprehensive Sexuality Education was introduced in 2022 through a pilot program in 3 schools. The piloting of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) was found to be impactful and has now been scaled up to 194 other schools in 2023. Recognising the importance of CSE as a critical part of young people's education in equipping them with the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions related to their health and well-being, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, the MoESD institutionalised CSE in schools by integrating CSE concepts in the national school curriculum across all grades from pre- primary till class XII in seven subjects (English, Dzongkha, Science, Biology, Social studies, Value, Health & Physical Education). To ensure CSE was delivered according to international standards, nationwide CSE training for teachers was initiated in 2023, reaching nearly one-third (200) of schools in Bhutan. Many of the core qualities of CSE, such as a gender equality and human rights-based approach, contribute to the prevention of GBV and the promotion of a gender- equal society.

***Concluding observations on the tenth periodic report of Bhutan, CO 30***

*(h) Carry out awareness-raising for the general public, in cooperation with different media, and include, in the school curriculum at all levels,*



## 8. RESPECT Training

To advance guidance on understanding and stopping of violence against women, a three-day program on RESPECT package implementation among various stakeholders was organised jointly by NCWC and UNFPA. A total of 72 participants, with 55.5% males and 44.4% females, actively engaged in a comprehensive three-day training programme. The participants represented various roles, including Gender and Child Focal Points, Dzongkhag Tshogdu Chairperson, Officer Commanding, Case Managers, Protection Officers, and officials from RENEW and Nazhoen Lamtoen. The training, conducted in two batches, took place in Paro and Bumthang. The Sarpang Dzongkhag and Gelephu Thromde have successfully replicated the RESPECT Women Framework through the “Women and Children Care Initiative” programme. The initiative included an action plan with commitment on transforming attitudes, beliefs, and norms, aligning with the concept and principle covered in RESPECT training.



## 9. Training on Protection and Care for Women and Children



To enhance the capacity of GCFPs and relevant stakeholders to effectively and timely provide services and assistance to women and children needing care and protection, 34 (20 Males and 14 Females) participant in two

batches attended a two-week training in Japan in 2023. The training in Japan was demonstrated through lectures, experience-sharing sessions, and on-site visits exhibiting exposure to good practices and organisational structures. It was aimed to help understand various support approaches and challenges in working with survivors of gender-based violence and challenges related to child protection, including children in conflict with the law.

The training is also aligned to contribute to advancing Sustainable Development Goals 5, 10, and 16, fostering gender equality, promoting peaceful societies, and strengthening inclusive institutions. It was committed to equipping participants with the skills and knowledge, ensuring the delivery of effective and responsive services, and ensuring that the skills and knowledge acquired through training are translated into tangible benefits, creating positive impacts for individuals and communities. Following the successful completion of training in Japan, participants outlined action plans. They presented their commitment to ensure that the practical application of knowledge gained during the training is translated into impactful initiatives and enhanced efforts in addressing violence against women and children.



## 10. Training on Gender- Based Violence Response and Prevention to RBP personnels

The NCWC facilitated the training on Gender-Based Violence Response and Prevention to Non-commissioned Royal Bhutan Police Personnel. RENEW developed the program modules based on the Standard Operating Procedure to deal with Gender Based Violence developed by the NCWC. The capacity building program was conducted in January 2024 for 97 (53 males and 44 females) RBP personnel. The program intends to strengthen the response mechanisms system and quality of services for survivors of Gender Based Violence through specialised service providers. Three batches of GBV training are rolled out to RBP personnel to build the skills and knowledge of the Police, a key specialised GBV service provider, to enhance their service delivery through a survivor-centred approach (including skills on a rights-based approach, gender non-binary counselling, confidential file management).





## 11. Gender Mainstreaming Training to RENEW Staff

The NCWC facilitated a Gender Mainstreaming training from 3rd – 4th August 2023 for 27 RENEW staff. The program's overall goal was to enhance institutional delivery through capacity building and strengthening processes by building the capacities of their staff. The training program provided hands-on experiences and practices to mainstream gender into their plans and programs.



## 12. Training on understanding basic gender concepts and gender mainstreaming tools

A 4 day Gender Mainstreaming training was conducted for gender and child focal points from central agencies, CSOs, Dzongkhags and Thromdes.



68 (27 males and 41 females) officials participated in the training program conducted from 15 to 18 August 2024. The participants were trained on basic gender concepts, gender related legislations, gender responsive project cycle management, gender indicators and gender responsive planning and budgeting and advocating for gender equality. During the training evaluation, 67.8% responded that the training on gender analysis and tools is very relevant to their work, while 30.5% of total participants responded that the training on gender analysis and tools is relevant to their work.

# Testimonials

*The training on Gender, conducted from 15th to 18th August 2024 at Namsecholing Resort, Paro, was attended by selected ECCD (Early Childhood Care and Development) teachers, principals from the Western Region, and Gender and Child Focal Points (GCFPs) from all 20 Dzongkhags. The focus of the training was on gender terminologies and the planning cycle for gender mainstreaming.*



Ugyen Lhendup  
Gender and Child Focal Point

*As the GCFP for Zhemgang Dzongkhag for the past year, I greatly benefited from this timely session, especially as we are at the start of the 13th Five-Year Plan. The National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) has stressed the importance of incorporating gender mainstreaming into the plans and programs of Local Governments (LGs), in alignment with the LG Acts. These acts mandate LGs to allocate sufficient budgets and take ownership of gender-related issues. Despite the growing recognition among LG leaders of the importance of addressing gender equality, it is unfortunate that action plans to tackle issues related to the welfare of women and children are often absent from LG plans. The training provided us with valuable insights on how to mainstream gender into respective plans and programs, advocate for gender mainstreaming and how to engage local leaders and central agencies to secure both financial and policy support.*

*The planning cycle for gender mainstreaming—a key component of the training—offers a structured approach to ensuring gender-related issues are systematically addressed. However, to enhance its effectiveness in resolving gender issues, the following steps are recommended:*



- *Strengthening Stakeholder Engagement:* Regular and continuous engagement with LG leaders and relevant stakeholders is crucial. By fostering a shared understanding of gender issues and their long-term impact on community well-being, LGs can be more motivated to prioritize gender-responsive planning.
- *Developing Comprehensive Action Plans:* The planning circle should lead to the development of clear, measurable, and actionable gender-responsive plans. These should be aligned with the broader goals of the 13th Five-Year Plan and backed by the necessary budget provisions to ensure implementation.
- *Capacity Building for Implementation:* While understanding gender concepts is important, it's equally crucial to build the capacity of LG officials to implement these plans effectively. This includes offering training on gender budgeting, monitoring, and evaluation to ensure sustainability.
- *Institutionalising Gender in LG Plans:* Gender mainstreaming should not be treated as an isolated activity but should be institutionalized within LG planning processes. This can be achieved by establishing gender focal desks within LG offices to oversee the implementation of gender-related plans and policies.
- *Monitoring and Accountability:* A robust monitoring mechanism is essential to track progress and ensure accountability. Regular reviews of LG plans with a focus on gender outcomes can help identify gaps and adjust strategies accordingly.

The training has been immensely helpful in equipping us with the tools and techniques necessary to push for gender-sensitive planning within our Dzongkhag. By applying these strategies, I am confident we can make significant progress toward achieving gender equality and enhancing the welfare of women and children within our local communities.

“Outstanding! looking forward to attending such programs again and practise what we learnt in our daily activities”

Ugyen Lhendup, Gender and Child Focal Point, Zhemgang Dzongkhag.

### 13. Gender Equality in Public Administration (GEPA) Assessment and report.

An assessment of Gender Equality in Public Administration (GEPA) was carried out as part of the project Building Capacities for Promoting the Presence and Leadership of Women within Public Institutions at the national and Local levels. The assessment delved into an in-depth review and analysis of the profile of gender-based participation and representation in public administration in Bhutan. The Study intended to inform the development of training modules on gender equality in public administration and support an evidenced-based decision while formulating the action plan. A plan of action was developed with the aim to increase gender parity in public administration.

The report, titled "Gender Equality in Public Administration in Bhutan," provides an in-depth review of measures aimed at promoting women's presence and leadership in Bhutan's public administration. Jointly conducted by the NCWC, UNDP, and UNDESA, the report assesses gender-based participation and representation in Bhutan's civil service. It highlights existing gaps, such as low female representation in decision-making roles, societal norms, and gender-neutral policies that fail to address women's specific needs. The report also provides recommendations, including enhancing institutional frameworks, implementing temporary special measures, and increasing awareness of gender equality. The findings aim to guide interventions that promote gender parity and empower women in public administration.





#### 14. Orientation program- JSW students

NCWC conducted a half day orientation program to the Human Dignity Clinic students of Jigme Singye Wangchuck School of Law. The aim of the orientation was to offer comprehensive insight into the critical issues surrounding children and women in the country. This includes providing an understanding of the current situation and context, as well as the challenges faced by these vulnerable groups.



A total of 9 students (two male and seven female) including one faculty attended the orientation program.

#### 15. Sensitization Program on Women's and Children's Rights for Members of the Parliament

A high-level sensitization program was conducted from April 29 to May 2, 2024, in Haa intended to raise awareness and facilitate meaningful dialogue among parliamentarians. The first two days were dedicated to engaging Honourable Members of Parliament from the National Assembly, from April 29-30, 2024, while the subsequent two days, from May 1-2, 2024, saw participation from the National Council. Throughout these sessions, parliamentarians actively participated in insightful discussions aimed at tackling the diverse challenges faced by women and children in our society.

The program began with in-depth discussions on gender and child protection concepts, aiming to enhance participants' comprehension of these critical issues. Through interactive group discussions and presentations, parliamentarians explored the complexities surrounding gender-based violence and child protection, advocating for substantive policy interventions.



Emphasising key focus areas such as promoting the rights of women and girls, increasing awareness of relevant legislation and policies, and understanding the institutional framework of the Women and Children Division, the program facilitated knowledge exchange and idea sharing. Ultimately, it empowered parliamentarians to become advocates for the rights and welfare of women and children in their legislative efforts. The program was dedicated to building momentum in creating an inclusive society through legislative efforts and practices. The high level sensitization workshop was supported by Save the Children and UNICEF Bhutan.

The program was attended by 29 (1 female MP and 28 Male) Members of Parliament and 3 committee Secretaries (3 Female) from National Assembly and 21 (3 Females including 2 eminent members) National Council members with 7 research officers (4 female and 3 male).

## **Outcome III: Enhanced network, coordination, and collaboration among key stakeholders to drive effective gender mainstreaming and improve child protection and well-being initiatives**

### **Purpose**

To enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of all projects, plans and programs by fostering sense of ownership and commitment among key stakeholders

### **Key Programmes and Activities**

1. Celebration of International Women's Day 2024
2. Coordination meeting with the facilitators of Dekyid Thuendrel
3. Annual Gender and Child Focal Point Meeting
4. Asian Women Parliamentarian Caucus

## **Summary and Key Achievements**

### **1. Celebration of International Women's Day 2024**



The International Women's Day 2024 was celebrated at the Gyelpozhing College of Information Technology with the theme, "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress". The event was jointly organised by the National Commission for Women and Children and RENEW with the support from UNFPA, UNDP, JICA, IPPF and BEST Project.

The celebration was illuminated by the gracious presence of Her Majesty Gyalyum Azhi Sangay Choden Wangchuck, Royal Patron of RENEW and Goodwill Ambassador of UNFPA highlighting the importance of Women empowerment in her Royal Address.



To mark the day, the Secretariat to NCWC also organised Roundtable discussion among women leaders from various sectors including public, private, international organisations, civil society organisations and media houses in the country. The discussion delved into matters concerning; Legislation and Policy change, Challenges and barriers to achieving gender equality, Capacity building and training for aspiring women candidates, Awareness & advocacy on women leadership and women in politics to general public, Community engagement and support to enhance women leadership, and Economic stability & security of women. As part of the roundtable discussion, a set of actionable strategies were identified to increase the number of women in decision making and also to strengthen the existing mechanism to enhance women's participation in politics and public administration.



## 2. Coordination meeting with the facilitators of Dekyid Thuendrel



On September 23, 2023, a day consultation meeting was held in Thimphu with 17 facilitators of Dekyid Thuendrel, parents and children participating in the program. The meeting aimed to reflect on the progress of the project and gather feedback from

facilitators about their experiences in conducting Dekyid Thuendrel sessions. The key objectives were to provide a platform for sharing insights, collect feedback on challenges and successes, identify best practices, and strengthen collaboration among stakeholders.

Some of the key challenges identified during the meeting include time management, space constraints, budget delays, and low parent participation in some schools. However, there were several good practices, such as high participation in most schools, effective communication, and improved parent-child relationships. The way forward focused on solutions to improve the program, such as addressing budgetary issues, retaining trained facilitators, possibilities of increasing the refreshment budget, and translating the presentation of the parents' session in Dzongkha.

## 3. Annual Gender and Child Focal Points Meeting

The Women and Children Division, in collaboration with JICA, organised a three-day Gender and Child Focal Points meeting in Phuentsholing from 29th to 31st January 2024. The primary focus of the meeting was to review the progress made in implementing the action plan developed subsequent to the training in Japan in 2023. The meeting aimed to facilitate the sharing of insights and strategies to enhance the overall effectiveness of the outlined activities, and address challenges collaboratively. In addition to progress review, the meeting also included disseminating the current

situation of women and children and training sessions tailored for recently appointed GCFPs on basic concepts related to gender and integration of gender mainstreaming. Furthermore, the meeting provided efforts for discussion in the 13th Five Year Plan, specifically emphasising incorporation of gender perspectives and activities into sectoral plans. The collaborative efforts were directed towards collectively advancing the promotion and protection of the rights of women and children. 28 participants actively engaged in the meeting, with representation from JICA and NCWC.

In 2024, the annual gender and child focal meeting was held from 12th to 14th August 2024 in Paro. 54 participants (22 Female and 32 Male) attended the annual meeting to discuss emerging gaps and challenges pertaining to women and children in the country. During the meeting, participants were oriented on the situation of women and children in the country and roles each gender and child focal points play in tackling the emerging issues related to women and children.

#### **4. Asian Women Parliamentarian Caucus**

The National Commission for Women and Children in partnership with Regional Programme Political Dialogue Asia, Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung, convened Annual Asian Women Parliamentarian Caucus in Thimphu from May 13th - 14th 2024, on the theme "Promoting Gender Equality and Climate Change Mitigation in Asian Parliaments." The initiative aimed to bridge the gender gap and mitigate climate change impacts through exchange of knowledge and dialogue among the participants.

Speaker of the Parliament of Bhutan and the Director of the Regional Political Dialogue Asia. The meeting fostered a safe and collaborative environment for discussion among parliamentarians to enhance women's participation in political processes, followed by exchange of best practices and challenges in their respective countries.



The session highlighted intersection of gender and the climate crisis in participating nations, which remained a central topic throughout the two days of the caucus. Active networking further promoted more extensive engagements among women parliamentarians to address pressing issues of gender gap and climate change risk through sharing of experiences, setting policy priorities, and coordination to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The participating members include fourteen women parliamentarians from twelve Asian countries, including both present and former women parliamentarians of Bhutan, along with representatives from relevant Civil Society Organizations of Bhutan.



## **Outcome IV: Improved reporting, monitoring, and data-driven knowledge creation, enhance informed decision-making and interventions for the well-being of women and children**

### **Purpose**

To systematically assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of programs and initiatives that address the needs and challenges faced by women and children

### **Key Programmes and Activities**

1. Presentation of Bhutan's 10th CEDAW Periodic Report during the 86th Session
2. Presentation of Bhutan's 8th and 9th Combined CRC Report
3. National Review Report to the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Fourth World
4. Conference on Women and Adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (1995).
5. Presentation of Response to six recommendations received from Women, Youth and Children Committee

### **Summary and Key Achievements**

#### **1. Presentation of Bhutan's 10th Periodic Report to the CEDAW Committee during the 86th Session**



As the nodal government agency leading gender equality initiatives, the NCWC coordinated the presentation of the 10th Periodic Report to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) during the 86th Session of the CEDAW Committee.

The NCWC Chairperson, Dasho Kesang Deki, Cabinet Secretary, led the RGoB delegation. The delegation attended the constructive dialogue with the Committee on 10th October 2023. The RGoB, received a list of Concluding Observations and a

record of proceedings following the dialogue for implementation. The NCWC has conducted stakeholder mapping in adherence to the CEDAW concluding observations (annexure 1).

## 2. Presentation of Bhutan's 6th and 7th Periodic Report to the UN CRC Committee

A multi-sectoral delegation comprised of representatives from the Secretariat to National Commission for Women and Children, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, National Council, the PEMA, Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade & the Permanent Mission of Bhutan to UN in Geneva presented the Bhutan's 6th and 7th Combined Periodic Report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) to the 96th session of the Committee on the Rights of Children and its initial reports on the two Optional Protocols to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and on the involvement of children in armed conflict. The session was held on May 14th and 15th, 2024 at the United Nations in Geneva.



Bhutan ratified the CRC, without any reservation, on May 23, 1990 and the two Optional Protocols on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict on

October 26, 2009 and December 9, 2009 respectively. In her opening remarks, the Hon'ble Minister Lyonpo Yeezang De Thapa emphasized the importance placed on the Convention and the two Optional Protocols by Bhutan as a responsible member of the international community, and highlighted the progress and developments made in their implementation.

## **5. National Review Report to the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and Adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)**

Bhutan submitted its 30+ Beijing Report in June 2024. The National Review was undertaken in line with Resolution E/RES/2022/5 of the United Nations Economic and Social Council titled the 'Thirtieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women'. The resolution calls upon states to undertake comprehensive national-level reviews of the progress made and challenges encountered in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. The national review outlines the progress and the challenges faced during the implementation.

The National Review is aligned and builds synergies with the work of the 2030 Agenda, further strengthening gender-responsive mechanisms and interventions.

## **6. Presentation of Response to six recommendations received from Women, Youth and Children Committee**

The Women and Children Division presented a response to six recommendations provided by the Women, Youth and Children Committee, National Assembly. The recommendations, which focus on enhancing policies and programs aimed at improving the well-being and rights of women, youth, and children, were reviewed and addressed in the presentation. Each response highlighted the steps taken by the division to align with the recommendations, outlining specific actions, policy adjustments, and ongoing initiatives. Six recommendations on establishing a strong and effective legal and policy (coordination) framework, promoting multi-sectoral coordination mechanism to understand issues of gender and child and promote cooperation and ownership, requirement of more awareness programs, and capacity building initiatives and mainstreaming gender and issues in sectoral policies and plans were issued in 2020.



## 7. Technical Expertise support to implementing partners

- COP28 Gender responsive Just Transitions and Climate Action Partnership document reviewed
- Trafficking in Person Report reviewed and updated
- Standard Operating Procedures “Go to Person” led by Royal Civil Service Commission reviewed
- Dorjilung Hypower gender Assessment report reviewed
- LIFE-AR capacity assessment tool reviewed
- SDG4 Mid Term Review Quality Education reviewed
- SKPA and Health Equity matters on GBV reviewed
- Professional Development framework reviewed
- National Data Governance framework reviewed

## Challenges

1. Streamlining of the National Commission for Women and Children as a Women and Children Division, and as a Secretariat under the Ministry of Education and Skills Development. The Civil Service reform has helped reduce administrative cost, however, the oversight functions and mandates of the commission as an autonomous agency has been compromised to overseeing the education domain. While NCWC as a national nodal agency for overseeing cross-cutting issues mandates to be an independent national machinery.
2. Lack of financial and human resources: The NCWC is mandated to address men, women, other gender, and children's well-being. The Commission still faces financial and human resource challenges in delivering the outputs.
3. Lack of coordination among key stakeholders: The Commission is mandated to work on cross-cutting themes of gender and child, which requires cooperation and commitment of critical stakeholders, including government, non-government, and private sector. Given the human resource constraint and competing priorities within each of the agencies, it becomes difficult to ensure regular coordination among key stakeholders.
4. Lack of awareness among key stakeholders: The Commission still needs to work on the adequate capacity of key stakeholders. Despite the efforts made by the government and stakeholders, the issues concerning gender equality and child well-being and safety evolve with time and with changes in socio-cultural aspects. Hence, any critical stakeholders involved in promoting the rights of women and children require time-to-time skills and knowledge development to deal with emerging issues.
5. The commission works through a network of gender and child-focal points (GCFP) to ensure that agencies implement gender and child-sensitive interventions in their plans and programs. However, the high turnover rate of gender and child focal points remains a considerable challenge in institutionalising gender and child-responsive initiatives.

## Conclusion

The report highlights the overview and core mandates of the NCWC as gender machinery responsible for the integration of Gender and child concerns into policies, plans, legislations, and programs in aspiration to achieve gender equality and children's well-being in the country.

The Commission focused on the incorporation of gender and child concerns into the 13th Five-Year Plan, reviewing policy instruments such as NGEP, education policy, research and assessments on emerging issues on women and children, and capacity-building programs of key stakeholders and reporting to the national and international bodies on gender equality and child wellbeing. Some of the key features include reporting of the 10th CEDAW periodic report, South Asian Regional Child Conference, capacity building programs to gender and child focal points, implementation of the Parenting Without Violence project and Dekyid Thuendrel projects, capacity building programs for key stakeholders, including Royal Bhutan Police and RENEW.

However, the Commission is constrained by financial and human resource limitations in attaining our vision. The high turnover rate of the Gender and Child focal points in agencies remains a challenge. In addition, addressing gender and child issues requires multi stakeholder coordination and cooperation, including government, non-government, and private sectors. However, the lack of coordination may result in duplication of efforts and an inability to cover those deeply in need. Furthermore, the lack of awareness of gender and child-related issues remains a considerable challenge. All critical stakeholders involved in promoting the rights of women and children require upgrading and relearning to deal with emerging gender and child issues.

## References

Ministry of Education and Skills Development. (2023). Annual Education Statistics. Retrieved from To enhance the capacity of GCFPs and relevant stakeholders to effectively and timely provide services and assistance to women and children needing care and protection, 34 (20 Males and 14 Females).participant in two 2024/08/AES-2023.pdf

Ministry of Health. (2024). National Health Survey 2024.

National Statistics Bureau. (2024). Labor Force Survey 2024. retrieved from www.nsb.gov.bt

United Nations Concluding Observation of 10th Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Periodic report of Royal Government of Bhutan. Retrieved from To enhance the capacity of GCFPs and relevant stakeholders to effectively and timely provide services and assistance to women and children needing care and protection, 34 (20 Males and 14 Females).participant in two gen/n23/354/13/pdf/n2335413.pdf

United Nations Concluding Observation of 6th and 7th Convention of Rights of Child (CRC)Periodic Report of Royal Government of Bhutan . Retrieved from To enhance the capacity of GCFPs and relevant stakeholders to effectively and timely provide services and assistance to women and children needing care and protection, 34 (20 Males and 14 Females).participant in two



Women and Children Division  
Secretariat to the National Commission for Women and Children  
Ministry of Education and Skills Development  
Royal Government of Bhutan