

# Gender dynamics of WASH under political restructuring in Nepal: *the need to move beyond 'engineering fixes'*

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# Background

Until 1970s:  
Little to no “outsider” interventions in rural WASH in Nepal

1980s

After UN International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade: Bilateral and multilateral donors start implementing WASH schemes in rural areas

1990s

Increase in private sector and NGO *facilitated* community-managed WASH projects

Supply led:  
infrastructure  
focused projects

Demand led: focus  
on community  
managed and  
financed projects

# Supply to demand-led approaches: system functionality a major driver for change

Less than 26% of water supply systems are fully functional among 40,000 rural water systems

## Often Cited Reasons behind Poor Functionality

### Social

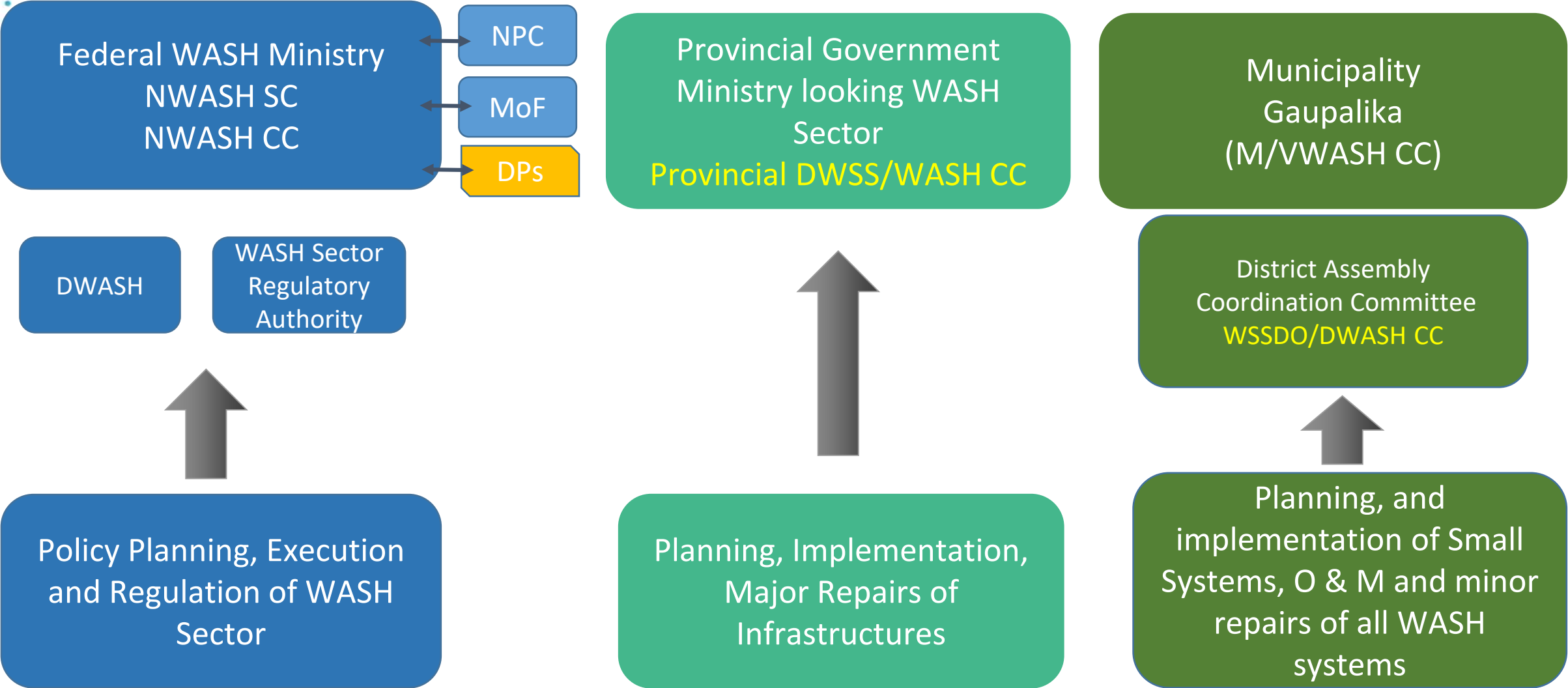
- User Committee:
  - Poor ownership and management of schemes
  - Lack of adequate O&M budgets
  - Inequity in access to WASH services!

### Technical

- Poor quality of construction
- Tools and spare materials not available reliably
- Lack of skilled workers

A **key goal** of the Nepal WASH Sectoral Development Plan (SDP) 2016-2030

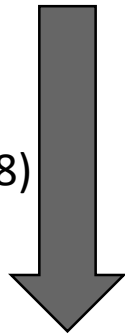
# Complex federal WASH working modality



## Nepal 2018/19 WASH Budget: NPR 35.6 billion (3%)

- Federal Budget: NPR 29.5 (83%) billion
- Provincial Budget: NPR 5.8 billion (16%)
- Local Budget: 0.31 billion (1%)

(WaterAid, 2018)



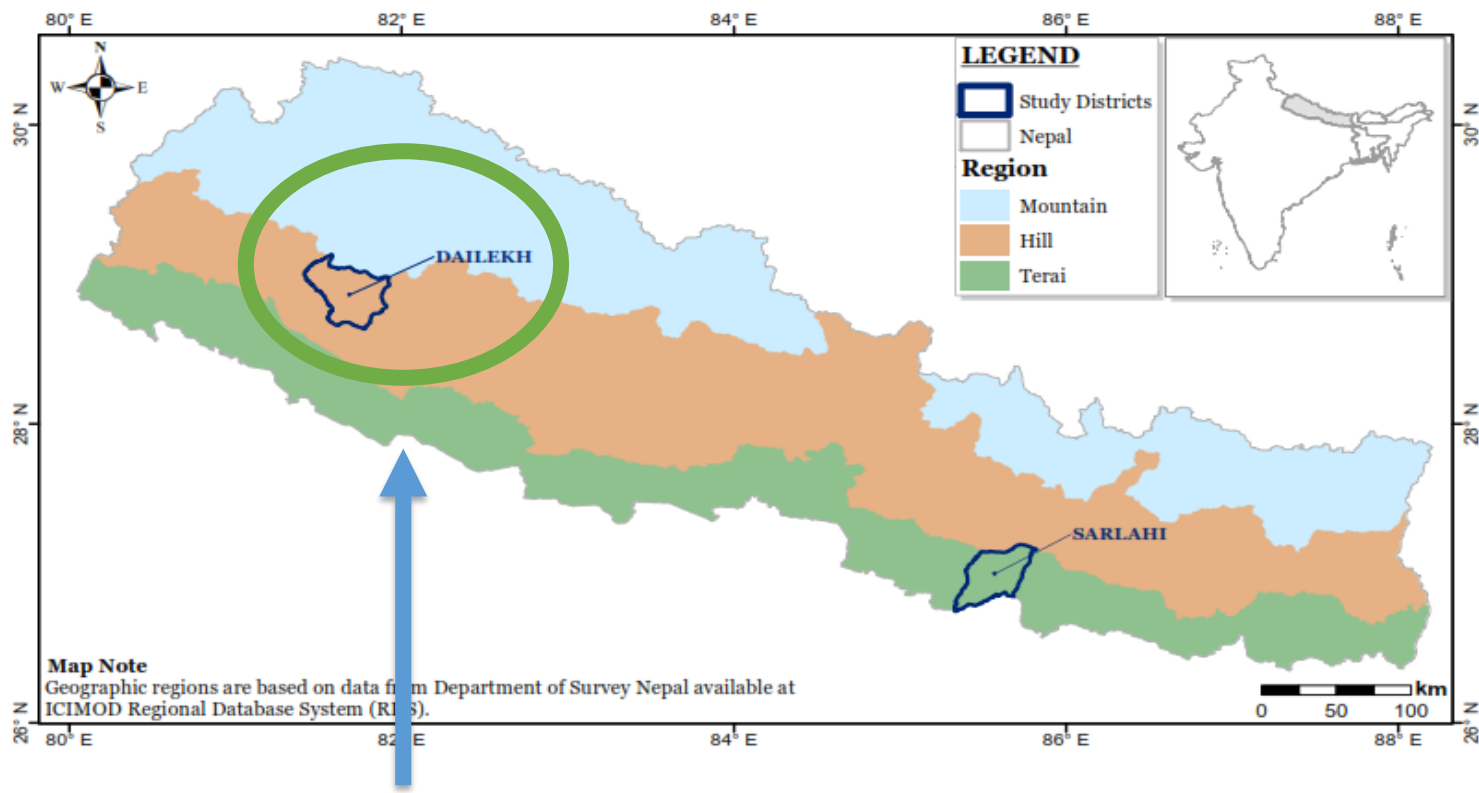
Focus on renovation,  
rehabilitation, improvement and  
expansion of existing system

Limited financial and technical  
support to Water User Committee  
(WUC) and WASH Coordination  
Committee (WASHCC)

GESI, a requirement in WUC and  
WASHCC- 33% women quota  
tokenistic

# DFAT - Water for Women funded research

## “A gender perspectives to understand and enhance water system functionality: A case of Nepal”

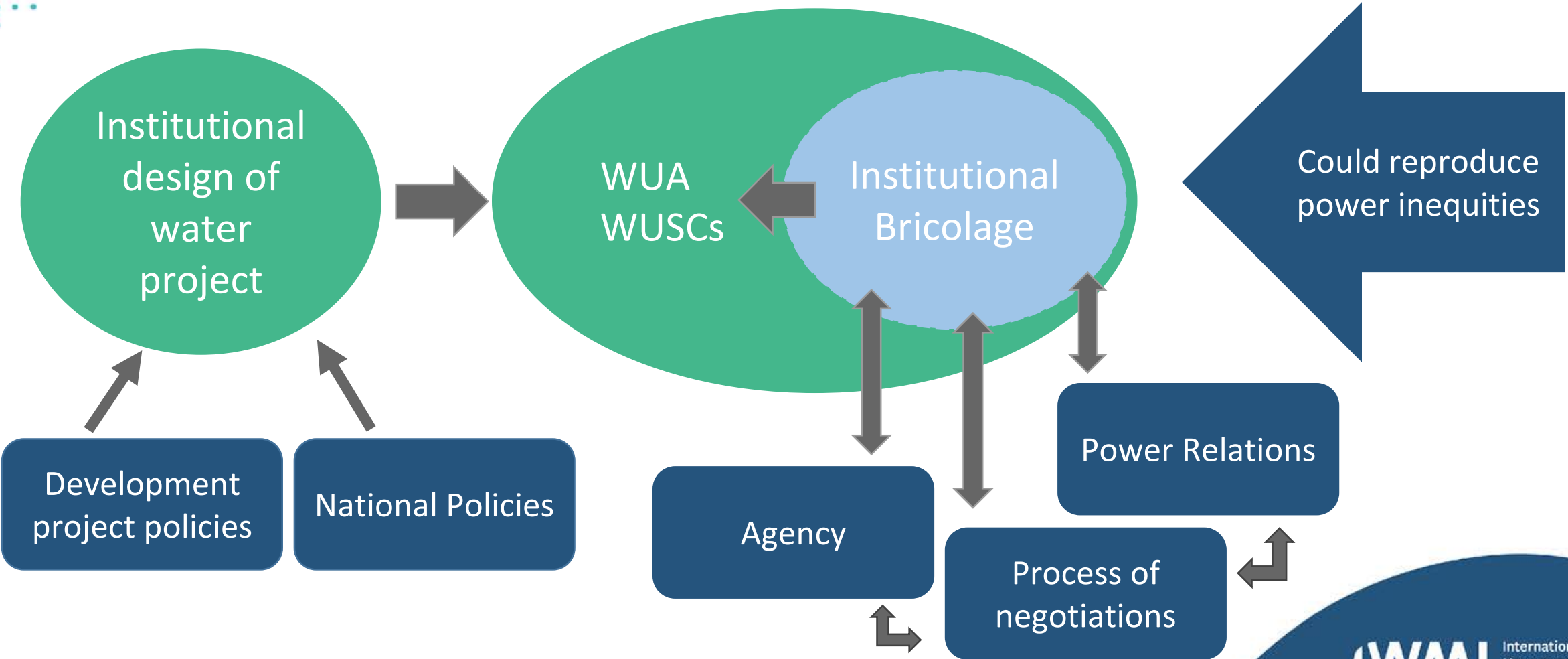


To understand how intersectional inequities shape power relations in the functionality and sustainability of WASH infrastructure and services

Ward 8, Guras Municipality

# Institutional bricolage and institutional designs:

Functionality and Sustainability of water services



Adapted from (Haapala et.al, 2016)



Research Tools (Mixed Method)	Participants
Ethnographic Study, Participatory Rural Appraisal	Water User Groups, Guras Ward 8 officials
Formal and informal Interviews	Ward Chair, Rural Municipality(RM) Chair, RM Deputy Chair, Water Project personnel, Water Users
Household Survey	Dailekh District Households



# On Water User Committees (WUC)



**Out of 7 Water User Committees,  
only 1 functional**

**A Case of Dalit Village with 80 households**

- Challenges in water tariff collection
- WUC leadership often dictated by political parties
- Minimal participation of women
- Discrimination within historically marginally groups

## Other Key Observations

- **Multiple Community Groups not just WUC** - Single women from migrant and women headed households face more challenges:
  - Decisions regarding participation in WUC, maintenance, tariff payment made predominantly by men
  - Among women, position in family a determinant of water decisions
- **Not all water projects responsive to community demand, women often not consulted**
- **Willingness to privately invest in water when community systems don't function**

# Conclusion



- Powerful local government: policy formulation and accountability to address exclusion issues including WASH. So, need to consider **capacity development of local government in inclusive WASH system**
- With the effectiveness of WUCs questioned, **new models of managing community water systems** are called for
- Political transformation, an avenue for action research on inclusive WASH system at all level of governments, particularly local governments

Thank you





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