

**EXAMINING THE ROLES OF GRASSROOTS MOBILIZATION  
AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN STRENGTHENING LOCAL  
GOVERNANCE IN KAWASOTI MUNICIPALITY, NEPAL**

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**LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION**

This is to certify that Mr. Pradeep Sedhai has successfully completed his dissertation titled "**Examining the Roles of Grassroots Mobilization and Civic Engagement in Strengthening Local Governance in Kawasoti Municipality, Nepal.**" under my supervision. This dissertation has been prepared as a partial requirement for the completion of the Master of Arts in Sociology degree. I hereby recommend it for final approval and acceptance.

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**LETTER OF APPROVAL**

The following evaluation committee has reviewed and approved Mr. Pradeep Sedhai's dissertation, "**Examining the Roles of Grassroots Mobilization and Civic Engagement in Strengthening Local Governance in Kawasoti Municipality, Nepal,**" which he submitted as a requirement for the Master of Arts in Sociology degree.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CBOs	:	Community Based Organizations
CDP	:	Community Development Program
CE	:	Civic Engagement
GM	:	Grassroots Mobilization
INGO	:	International Non-Governmental Organization
LG	:	Local Government
LGCDP	:	Community Development Program
NGO	:	Non-Governmental Organization

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction of the Study

Beginning in the 1990s and growing around the 21st century, a new way to study societies has emerged. The contributions of many thinkers and communities are considered important subjects for development. This emerging concept has sparked major debates supporting the idea of a new perspective: that every community has a positive driving force to grow and make great progress through people's participation and mobilization (Acharya, p. 3, 2018). This idea about societies has progressed and developed over the past three decades, with the rise of theoretical models that study the dynamics of development. These models primarily focus on the idea that human societies' development comes from dynamic and interconnected relationships at various levels of organization that impact each other in different and multiple ways (Olaleye, p. 17, 2019). Thus, civic engagement and public participation methods are considered impactful systems that help increase public participation and enhance the capacity of societies. Therefore, society and its members have significant power to change and develop societies through active participation and loyal engagement. Grassroots mobilization is a grassroots level of movement that plays an active role in organizing people at the local community to create change through community-led work and activism (Qin, 2023). It focuses on bottom-up participation of local people at the local level to work and advocate on societal issues and address specific causes (Mitlin, 2008, p. 545).

Grassroots mobilization works as collective action of community members, where people are organized for a specific good reason and work in teams to eradicate causes of various societal problems and issues. It organically emerges within communities, driven by common concerns or goals. Grassroots mobilization begins with community members working together to identify common problems, such as lack of infrastructure, unavailability of access to essential basic services, or any kind of community issues (Acharya, 2018). Grassroots mobilization in Kawasoti municipality has various forms, including community organizing, advocacy and campaigns, mutual aid and support groups, and protests and demonstrations. But it is impossible to explore all types of

mobilization in a single research because of various reasons. That is why I will focus on particular important mobilizations. So, grassroots mobilization in Kawasoti municipality focusing on local government service delivery can be understood through community organizing, advocacy and campaigns, and protests and demonstrations. For example, about 2 years ago in Ward No. 5, local people organized together to improve the poor condition of education in public schools. They worked to get good teachers and fix school buildings. When their effort was not enough, they organized peaceful protests demanding better education services. Because of this effort, the municipality was compelled to provide support to schools and fulfill the demands of the locals.

This is one simple example that shows how people's actions can make changes in the service delivery of local governments. Similarly, the Nawajyoti Youth Club in Ward No. 4, Hasaura, is an example that brings change in the community through games, fostering leadership, and channeling youths. Other examples are Tol Bikas Samiti, Aama Samuhas, and local community groups collaborate with INGOs, NGOs, and government agencies to improve services and raise awareness among community members through grassroots mobilization which creates positive changes local community development. Civic engagement in Kawasoti includes activities such as voting and election participation, public discussion, citizen journalism, participation in local governance bodies, volunteering, and social media activism. These activities are responsible for various changes and the betterment of societies. This engagement helps local people to put forth their ideas and address common problems (Lichterman & Eliasoph, 2014). But because of limited resources and time, this research will examine civic engagement with major activities and also show the relationship between grassroots mobilization and civic engagement and their contribution to community development through active engagement in local governance. The research will be carried out by examining only three tools of civic engagement: the role of public consultation and hearings, volunteering, and social media use.

Kawasoti has witnessed this engagement on a daily basis, and I'm also a resident of Kawasoti and have seen various kinds of engagement. Just like other local governments, people in Kawasoti engage themselves in many meetings and discussions, putting forth their ideas and criticizing their leaders if they are wrong. But this engagement seems like a daily part of life and is not judged by perfect theoretical

bases and perspectives of the power of agency to struggle with structure. These activities are taken for granted, but in my opinion, this kind of participation and engagement are not just simple things but are the basis for the idea that participation is good for democracy, society, and nations. Even small things can bring great change, just like the butterfly effect, and it will be an example for others (Nabatchi & Amsler, 2014). So this research will study Kawasoti municipality and local people and wish to uncover their role in government and try to understand political power and relationships at the bottom level.

Additionally, in Kawasoti, social media activism serves as an important instrument for helping engagement, sharing information, organizing events, discussing issues, and enhancing awareness and collaboration in the community. People, especially youth, nowadays express open thoughts about projects and policies and ask for transparency and accountability, which creates positive changes at their local level. This research will try to find out how effective social media activism is. Does it really make changes? Are these voices heard every time? Therefore, understanding local needs and promoting improvements to local government are made possible by grassroots mobilizations and civic participation. This study will look into these social activities to determine their function, influence, and difficulties in order to better understand how citizens interact with local government. Additionally, it will highlight both the positive and negative aspects of these projects and offer useful recommendations that contribute to a better society.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

In recent times, we clearly see that the number of people participating has increased, and they are actively engaging in the local governance system, which is a good thing for the development of the nation (Acharya, 2016). With the help of public support, the political party was able to overthrow the autocratic Rana regime from power in 1951, and Nepal has experienced democracy in governance modality. But the transformative period didn't pass the democratic exam, and power shifted toward the hands of the monarchy. In that era, power was entirely controlled by the king and his supporters, and there was no good space for people to participate in the local governance system. The king and his selected people dominated the power, and local autonomy and civic participation were ignored by them. There was minimal space for participation in

decision-making processes for citizen (Bhusal & Acharya, 2024). In 1990, Nepal's political environment changed, and political parties, with the help of local people, succeeded in establishing multiparty democracy, where the constitution still recognized the monarchy. However, this period was not like the previous one. The emergence of local bodies seemed like a game-changing transformation in Nepal. Local institutions like Village Development Committees (VDCs) and District Development Committees (DDCs) were established for the egalitarian development of societies. Organizations like civil society and active grassroots movements helped to change the political viewpoint and played a great role in ensuring accountability and transparency at the local level. However, problems like corruption, power mongering of leaders, and inefficiency in resources created obstacles to this change (Acharya, Dhungana, & Guragain, 2022).

In 2008, with the help of the people's movement II, Nepalese citizens succeeded in abolishing the kingship system (which had ruled for 240 years), creating a transformative nation where Nepal became a Federal Democratic Republic in 2063 BS. The newly drafted Constitution introduced a three-tier government system, and Nepal was divided into seven political provinces to increase regional equality and better development. This revolutionary paradigm shift from a unitary government to a federal government system aimed to solve the old governance problems that the country had faced for a long period (Local Government in Nepal, 2022).

The new constitution decentralized power and aimed to enhance local governance by creating municipalities, villages, and wards and giving them administrative power too. This transformation has created great opportunities for local people to participate more and take ownership in community development (Pandeya, 2015; Acharya, 2016; Bhusal, 2023). Federalism in Nepal was introduced for the decentralization of power, inclusiveness, and equality in every aspect of the nation. So, it can empower local communities, promote balanced and sustainable socio-economic development across the nation (Han, Aryal, & Hwang, 2024). Good and inclusive development can create better societies and give hope to its citizens. Moreover, federalism is supposed to be a tool to correct societal problems, make balanced development, and improve relationships with ethnic and indigenous local communities. It is also expected to promote unity, eradicate disparities among people, and create a good society where

everyone can benefit from it (Bhusal,2023). But instead of making governance more inclusive, accountable, and prosperous, it has faced challenges too. Despite having great potential to increase participation, issues such as political bias, resource allocation, and the exclusion of marginalized people, including gender discrimination, also create problems in participation. However, these challenges can be eradicated through collective action. For this, social networking between people is very important. Mutual trust, helping each other, and believing in common objectives and group efforts can help eradicate these obstacles (Putnam, 2000).

Furthermore, civic engagement and mobilization enhance transparency and help local governments address common challenges effectively. Together, this collective action builds trust and social bonding, through which people can address problems easily. Group efforts can suggest or pressure local governance to become more people-oriented, accountable, and transparent. That is why participation is a great tool to make better societies and eradicate common problems. With the joint effort of people and governance, any society can become better.

This research aims to find out the importance of public movements and their effect on local governance. By exploring all the impacts and challenges, this research will try to provide knowledge about the importance of civic participation and recommendations for policymakers and representatives in Kawasoti Municipality. Although Kawasoti has experienced many of these movements and engagements on various issues such as development issues, environmental issues, and service delivery issues, none of these movements have been theorized or researched. So, this research aims to fill that gap by researching mobilization and engagement and their relation to governance. Additionally, this research examines how movements emerged, their effects on society, both positive and negative, and their roles in shaping the community and local governance from a sociological perspective.

## **Research Questions**

- 1) How grassroots mobilization and civic engagement impact on the service delivery system in Kawasoti municipality?
- 2) How this mobilization and engagement helps in policy formulation in municipality?
- 3) What are the challenges of grassroots mobilization and civic engagement in Kawasoti Municipality?

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

This research study focuses on the following objectives:

- 1) To findout the impact of GM and CE on services delivery and their role in policy making process.
- 2) To identify challenges facing grassroots mobilization and civic engagement in Kawasoti Municipality, Nepal.

### **1.4 Rationale of the study**

Grassroots mobilization and civic engagement is the collective work of people in the community to make their locality better and eradicate common problems they have. So, it is important to have active and responsible citizens for the progress of society. This kind of practice gives local people strength to participate in the local governance process and makes them more accountable and responsive. Although it has positive aspects, it also has obstacles within. So, this research is trying to uncover the condition of participation in the real world by studying in Kawasoti Municipality, and it also researches its impact on societies. So, this research is based on understanding mobilization and engagement and their relation to local governance. Additionally, this research is important to understand the reality of how movements emerged, their effects on society both positive and negative and their roles in shaping the community and local governance from a sociological perspective.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Theoretical Review

Active citizen participation in government and their role in societal development is an important governance aspect of democratic rules. So, the local is an important role player in this situation, and it is responsible to provide good services and address the problems and issues that people have in society (Lane, 2005). After introducing reforming law of Local Self Government Act in 1999 and Local Government Operation Act in 2017, Nepal has given priority to local governance for betterment of public life. These policy greatly helps local government and encourage community for active participation in local governance process, and community has power to influence in decision-making process also.

Grassroots mobilization means public effort in communities to raised their voices and concern through public space that they made by themselves (Flores & Samuel, 2019). In grassroots mobilization, people discuss and manage meeting, protest and do demonstration, they do social media campaigns which have goal to change social, political, and economic of their societies. Similarly, civic engagement means active participation of individuals through voting, asking question, attain meeting and discussion and volunteer if needed (Alexandar et al., 2012). So, this two system of participation collectively work for making more inclusive society, enhanced democratic governance, and also helps to empower citizens to make change in society and make good community (Cornwall, 2008).

The concept of participation of public in governance process is not new one. When we read the history about ancient regime like Greece and Rome, they practices this kind of participation in the borders concept of democracy. These societies have assemblies, councils and election system where they practice grassroots participation and civic engagement (Van, Hegyesi, & Eschweiler, 2010). Similarly, work of philosopher like, Rousseau and Locke discuss about the citizen participation is key for good government in their work. Alexis de Tocqueville give similar idea like other philosopher that public participation is basic thing for make good government institution accountable and reliable (Tocqueville, 2000). However, modern concepts of engagement and public

mobilization flourished during Enlightenment period where thinker argue that citizens have power or need to have power to impact their roles in political system which govern the societies.

So, grassroots mobilization is collective action conducted by local communities member in bottom-up level which core essence is create positive social changes, while civic engagement primarily give focus on individual roles and their participation through volunteering, advocacy and raises issues in needed time. Together, these system helps in social change, create better societies, and reduce the disparities within community (Acharya 2016). When we talk about the context of Nepal, this practices helps to make people powerful to talk about community betterment and make government more responsive and accountable. There are many example that found in societies like, youth engagement, various movements to seek justice, health and environment campaigns which impact positive in a societies, and also helps government to develop their locality. This practice greatly helps people to express their voices and addressed problems and also increase the sense of ownership and responsibility in citizen (Esteves, 2011). Through this participation, people can also create impact on policies and decision that later impact their lives directly and make more sustainable and equitable development.

So, good grassroots and civic engagement hold great place in democratic societies. It just not only empower people and locality but also make strong governance system where government become more responsible and accountable towards the needs of people (Steinberg, 1992). However, although it have various good importance for citizen participation in local governance, it also have challenges along with in it. Problems like elite capturing, political biasness, division within people, marginalized weak sections of community like women, indigenous dalit and voiceless people will be overlooked. Addition to this, lack of resources, education, poverty also impact as challenges as well as political domination of strong man, fear of threats also discourages people to take part in participation (Parvin, 2020). However, this challenge is not possible to solve. Joint effort from all of the stakeholder of societies need to deal with this challenge, for this they need to focus on every member of societies, need to increase inclusive environment and create sustainable institution for supporting civic participation. By solving this obstacles, we can create more equitable communities

where all voices should be prioritized and include every individual as possible (Lytime, Nielsen, & Agen, 2016).

## **2.2 Empirical Literature**

The role of local governance is important for good public participation which creates societies more inclusive and equitable. Various empirical research on participation shows that grassroots mobilization and civic engagement led by people have the power to create change and make locality better. When examining the history, these movements are emerged to tackle various social and political challenges, such as the civic rights movement around the world. These movements and participation impact various social and institutional reforms (Van et al., 2010). When we took experience of the Western world, this grassroots participation helps to address the problems like inequality and make a better system of service delivery through participation of citizens (Cornwall, 2008). Jacobson and Korolczuk's (2000) work shows that grassroots mobilization and civic engagement have worked as great tools to shape political and social change. Their research highlights the importance of local governance and if people participate to make better societies, it helps to reduce gender and other discrimination in societies. Research in Africa highlighted that these community-based efforts have a positive impact on local development and fighting with societal challenges and make government accountable (Abiona & Bello, 2013).

In the context of Asia, particularly studies of countries like Bangladesh and India show that participatory governance helps to improve the service delivery system and create good social inclusion in the community (Dewan, Buisson, & Mukherji, 2014; Blair, 2018). Furthermore, other studies also provide similar results that participation creates people more aware about their role and makes them active citizens through a sense of ownership in government process (Nikku & Rafique, 2013). Similarly, research by Menon and Hartz-Karp (2019) and Swapam (2010) point out that community-based organizations (CBOs) and people participation is crucial to address social problems and makes societies better. These thoughtful studies examine the dimensions of grassroots participation and engagement, assess their impact, point out the reasons for participation and their effect on local governance. In overall, they pointed out people participation has collective concern and effort, which core values is to change societies in a positive direction. Grassroots movements and civic engagement stand up for

collective will of people to change and eradicate local problems. Grassroots movements always emerge from communities and are driven by the people for collective good.

Flores and Samuel (2019) explained the dynamics of movement and highlighted the role of collective action, social networks, and resource management. They emphasize participation is a symbol of community power and also the collective work of people willing for social transformation. Putnam (2000) highlights major factors that affect participation. He points out the importance of social capital, trust, education, income level, and networks within people are major components for civic participation and engagement.

Pandeya, in his work “Grassroots Mobilization and Local Governance”, emphasizes that grassroots mobilization and engagement is an important factor for improving local governance. He pointed out community-driven movements have power to create responsible and good governance (Pandeya, 2019). By examining the relationship between democracy and development, he highlights that this practice of participation helps to empower people, put their voice and opinion, and directly create influence in decision-making process of local governance. So, this movement plays a role to make good governance, and making transparent and accountable government system. Similarly, research shows that active citizen participation can help to improve governance and make better service delivery system in communities (Cornwall, 2008).

In the context of Nepal, decentralization helps to empower local people. Research by Guragain (2024) emphasizes that decentralization helps to foster grassroots mobilization which helps to build good governance. His study in different municipalities highlights the positive impact of community participation to create responsible governance. Similarly, Adhikari (2023) points out positive relation between civic participation and improved public service delivery system. Through this mechanism of participation, it empowers people to engage in policy-making process which helps to allocate resources equally and develop properly. From the experience of various movements in Nepal, it shows that community-led movements are successful in many cases to create change in socio-economic and environmental aspects of people (Adhikari, 2023). Other successful grassroots campaigns such as forest preservation, health improvement movement and other so on movements show that people have

power to make better community if they collectively work on similar issues (Ojha et al., 2016).

Similarly, Dahal (2021) points out that local women groups are successful in addressing the gender inequality problems and help for good community development and social change. Additionally, research by Acharya (2016), in local level found that active community members can solve problems and input great help in decision-making process through strong sense of ownership. They also can assist to make development sustainable in their locality. Furthermore, in their study on Does Participant Make a Difference? Han et al. (2024) highlight the role of public participation is helpful for creating public trust and accountability in local governments. They argue that this kind of participation creates transparency and helps to increase people participation in governance process. Their findings emphasize that participating in election and giving vote is not just important but meaningful relationship between people and local government is the key for good democracy. Active participation and responsive government are crucial for development of societies (Michener, 2019).

So, these participation and mobilization are important factors for better government. Strong relationship between people and government is key for real democracy. If people are active and engaged and local government is responsible for citizen, then only societies can make progress. Despite this positive power of grassroots mobilization and civic engagement, there are challenges and barriers still exist that create difficulty in community on various occasions. In her work, *The Participatory Paradox*, Parvin (2020) highlighted the challenge of participation. She said, participation is good but sometimes it neglects real sense of inclusiveness and sidelines people who are already marginalized in societies. Similarly, Johansen and Chandler (2015) also provide similar view that social and political challenges such as elite capture and exclusion of poor people are serious issues which need to focus.

Acharya further highlights, socio-economic and political factors are real hindrances for good grassroots movement. He further added the significant importance of resource management and need to include all people in community for real developments. In the context of Kawasoti Municipality, it has experienced various movements which help to make a better municipality. Projects like Community Development Program (CDP) and Local Governance and Community Development Program (LGCDDP) have empowered

local people for development and fulfillment of their common need. Various public-led movements, engagement, and activism show that people in Kawasoti are aware about their role and responsibility. Aama Samuha, Tol Bikas Samiti, youth clubs, and NGO/INGO are doing great in Kawasoti but their work is not assessed in good research way. So this research work is trying to fulfill this gap.

Existing literature highlights the importance of grassroots mobilization and civic engagement but they examine it in broader national and regional level. But there are very few research conducted in local level. Furthermore, all previous studies have majorly focused on theoretical level but there is no deep analysis on real-world implication in local level. So, overall, this research is trying to fill this gap as well as it is trying to explore challenges, positive outcomes, and how it emerges, how it works and how it is able to sustain and create good impact on societies. So, this research in Kawasoti is trying to understand participation, role of collectiveness and people power to change their society.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study used explanatory and descriptive methods to understand the role of Grassroots mobilization and civic engagement and their relationship with local governance in Kawasoti Municipality, Nepal. The descriptive method helps explain the current situation of participation and discuss how individuals involved in it, who take initiatives, how they organized, and what will be the reason for people participated in mobilization and engagement. So, it will describe activities and highlight the major factors. The explanatory method helps to explore more other factors, such as cause, challenge of community participation, and roles of its members. By using both methods, study provides clear picture of this initiations and also discuss about its challenges and importance. In addition, qualitative data helps to provide detail and deeper understanding of participation and its affect in local governance in Kawasoti Municipality.

#### **3.2 Nature and Sources of Data**

This study used qualitative data to find out the importance of grassroots mobilization and civic engagement in Kawasoti Municipality. Primary data are collected by taking interviews and doing focus groups discussion with local people, leaders, and government representatives to gain their experience, role, and challenges they faced during the movement. In addition, secondary data was gathered from different sources and documents like records, minutes, reports, and policy paper. Similarly, published materials such as books, articles, and news reports on movements help to understand more about the research subject. These secondary data help to support primary data and help to make perspectives on grassroots mobilization and civic engagement in local governance in Kawasoti Municipality.

#### **3.3 Justification of Selecting Research Site**

The Kawasoti Municipality is the headquarters and administrative city of Nawalpur District in Nepal, which was newly formed in 2071 by including 17 wards. Kawasoti is located connecting with Mahendra Highway. It lies in between two big cities of Nepal

that are Bharatpur in the west and Butwal in 85 km east. The municipality is beautiful, which is surrounded by Narayani River and Mahabharat range. It is one of the green cities in Nepal, which 60 percent of land is covered by forest. Kawasoti is also rich in cultural diversity with ethnic communities like Tharu, Magar, Gurung, and Bhote. So, Kawasoti is an ideal place for studying mobilization and engagement because of its diverse community and growing as urban area. The municipality has problems related to drinking water facility, infrastructure development, and service delivery. So, it is suitable for research how community address this problem, how they participated to create impact on this challenge. However, Kawasoti has experienced many movements for demanding better services and development, but it was not well researched or analyzed. So, this research can contribute to find out this area and also trying to find out relationship of participation and local governance. So, this study aims to contribute to understand the civic engagement and mobilization and their effects on communities and local governance mechanism in Nepal.

### **3.4 Universe and Sample Size**

The universe for this research includes local people, leaders, government workers, and other people who had involved in grassroots mobilization and civic engagement in Kawasoti Municipality. This research selected 30 respondents for its sample size. This sample size is systematically ideal for understanding their experience and perspective about civic participation and its impact on local governance. From 30 respondents, this study gathered data and explored the issues. 30 people is a justifiable number for qualitative research because from them we can get different experiences and their perspective in deeper level. If respondents are more than this, there is a chance of data saturation because most of them will have common experience because they have experience of participation in movement. Moreover, common theme and information came out after researching 12 to 15 respondents and data will be saturated in time of 30.

### **3.5 Sampling Method**

This study used random sampling and purposive sampling methods for getting data from respondents. Random sampling method helps to gather a diverse range of opinions from general people from Kawasoti, which creates less bias in research. This method

ensures the study to research based on general people's perceptions about participation and local governance. On the other side, purposive method focuses to gather perception of individuals who have involvement and have experienced about civic engagement and grassroots mobilization. So, the sample included community members, leaders, government workers, and active members of civic organizations through whom research gets in-depth insights about civic participation, challenges, and their impact on local government.

### **3.6 Data Collection Technique**

#### **In-depth Interviews**

In-depth interviews are important tools for getting individuals' opinions and experiences related to grassroots mobilization and civic engagement. The interviews used open-ended questions so that the conversation was more discussion-based, which provided deeper knowledge about grassroots mobilization and civic engagement and its impact on local governance from respondents. The research also used semi-structured interviews that help to achieve needed information from participants. Furthermore, interviews were conducted in a comfortable, confidential, and well-informed way that helps respondents to express their opinions without feeling any hesitation.

#### **Focus Group**

The next method used in this research is focus group discussions. Through this research, group discussions help gather opinions of people, and they actively exchange their ideas and perspectives. This method encourages respondents for collective discussion, put forward their perspective, and discuss about challenges that they face in the locality. Discussion helps to uncover the reality from participation and also helps to understand the real experience of local people. In this process, participants exchange their own perspectives and help bring out new ideas too. Group discussion was conducted with Aama Samuha, college students who provided insightful thoughts which helped to make this research possible.

## **Observation**

Observation is considered as one of the great methods for doing qualitative research. This research also used observation methods to collect data about grassroots mobilization and civic engagement within Kawasoti Municipality. Due to resource limitations, observation was conducted within ten days. This time frame is sufficient to understand the current situation of mobilization and engagement in Kawasoti Municipality through respondents' opinions. Observation was done by attending community meetings and governance meetings as well as assessing the impact of previous movements they had done in Kawasoti Municipality.

### **3.7 Data Analysis and Interpretation Procedure**

This study used qualitative data analysis methods where it used narrative description method and thematic analysis methods. By taking the people's experience and ideas, data was presented which highlights the impact of grassroots mobilization and civic engagement on local governance in Kawasoti Municipality. This method helps to provide clear understanding of how participation impacts local governance in Kawasoti. Narrative description is used to present people's experience and ideas in a clear way, which helps to understand participation and its effect in governance through their experiences. Thematic analysis, on the other hand, is used to identify themes that people experienced in common and discuss by relating it with research objectives. By using both methods, this research discussed about grassroots mobilization and civic engagement and their roles for making local community better.

### **3.8 Research Ethics**

This research has followed all the ethical considerations. Respondents' personal information and details are kept in privacy. And also, they were fully informed, and research was conducted by taking their consent. Research also followed the proper ethical guidelines of Tribhuvan University as well. Additionally, as I belong to Kawasoti Municipality and live there, maybe my beliefs and background influenced the research. But I would like to ensure that this research was truly conducted on the basis of incorporating researcher ethics, and I would like to make sure that my biasness and prejudices have no place in it.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

This chapter discusses the findings of research that is found in this research about examining the roles of GM and CE in local governance in Kawasoti Municipality, Nepal. The findings are based on qualitative research methods. This chapter tries to show how GM and CE are important things that influence local government service delivery. Also, it will try to highlight their roles in making policy and helping people to participate in local government processes, as well as to know how these issues affect governance. This section will discuss a detailed analysis of how participation impacts society by examining both the positive sides and the barriers that it faced during this process. In this chapter, I will present the major findings, themes, and their implications, and discuss their uses and their good and challenging aspects as well.

#### **4.1 Impact of Grassroots Mobilization and civic engagement on access to public services**

Local governments are lower-level government bodies that are elected by the people. In democratic countries like Nepal, local governments are considered powerful bodies. Local governments are responsible for formulating plans and making policies for the development of the community. So, the local government is responsible for good work, and it will only work when the government collaborates well with community members. A two-way relationship between the people and the government is an important factor for better development. Development is always for the good of the people, and people should be at the core of development. When the receiver and planner of development work together, it creates great effort and helps with the sustainability of development through a sense of ownership. The analysis of service delivery in Kawasoti Municipality highlights the importance of GM and CE in the process of public service delivery.

It is believed that joint efforts and organized local people have the capacity to address problems in service delivery. With the help of joint efforts, people can make better public service delivery in government. Active engagement can only make the government more responsible and accountable. To get improved and better education, healthcare, and infrastructure, people need to actively input their energy and assist the

government. So, in this research, I will examine the roles of people's participation through civic engagement and grassroots mobilization, and study their impact and their positive and negative effects on the local service delivery system. I will also examine the public relationship and their effort in local government and its impact and effect on three major elements: education, healthcare, and infrastructure.

#### **4.1.1 Education**

Education becomes a great tool for the betterment of people's lives. Educated people are the major force to make better societies and nations. Education is an important aspect of people's lives that can greatly impact individuals' lives. So, getting a better education is a right for everyone. And it's the government's responsibility to provide good education and build a good environment for education for its people. So education is considered a basic human right and a primary service that each government needs to make available to their citizens. And it is also the responsibility of citizens to make their government accountable for providing this right and to work collaboratively to make the education system better. In the education participation campaign led by parents and local community members, they have successfully addressed problems related to schools in their locality. In an interview with a local resident of ward number 16, Thani Ram Mahato (43) told a story about how they organized to make better facilities in their public school. By pointing to the nearby school, he shared the story that:

“This school was in poor condition a few years back and didn't have enough rooms, desks, and chairs that forced students to sit on the floor and ground. Then we organized a movement and went as a delegation to the municipality and loudly presented our voices about the problems to the mayor because they promised to build it many times, but they lied every time. But this time we seriously warned them and, as a result, the municipality allocated a budget that helped to make this school better now.”

While I recorded his statement, his teenage daughter was attentively listening to us and nodding her head every time her father spoke, indicating that she supported her father's words. It shows that collective mobilization and action can make the government responsible for its duty, which can bring great change in society. Another respondent shared her opinion that GM and CE are fruitful when they conduct civic mobilization

in a serious way. Shova Silwal (35) expressed her experience about their collective action of mobilization that solved the problems in education that their school had in her locality. She said:

“I don’t know much about politics, but when we all collectively work for the betterment of our village, I think it is possible. We organized a campaign to the municipality office asking them to help in making a better school and pressuring them to hire new teachers and include computer subjects in all classes. We faced various hardships at first, but finally, the municipality was ready to listen to our demands. From this movement, I know the idea of unity has power.” This shows that when people organize for the common good, it can create good changes and positively impact the locality.”

Similarly, a member of the local youth club expressed similar responses that organized action by people can hugely impact the service delivery system of local governance and help make them more responsible. He said:

“We organized a campaign and arranged a joint meeting with the mayor, civil societies, and educated people in our municipality and talked to them about the scholarship program for underprivileged and marginalized children. Before our effort lots of children were behind the race of education and deprived from good education which impact their future. They all agreed to do this, and as a result, many students had the opportunity to get a good education.”

In this research, an interview with the mayor also highlighted the importance of people’s engagement and their participation in making the government more responsible. He expressed that public engagement helps to know the real-life problems of people and helps with collaboration with local people. While talking about the role of citizens in the government process, he said:

“Many times, we are not able to see what the real needs of people are, and we overlook them unknowingly. But this kind of mobilization and their opinions help to know better about the real problems of society and make better interaction and collaboration with the public about the service delivery mechanism. It is always good to work with people as it creates good trust between the government and the public. People mobilize for a good cause, and they are conscious of their locality.

From their suggestions and help, now the municipality works on better education and health facilities, this is good for everyone."

This indicates that for making good education and health services engagement, and mobilization are good for raising issues and making the government responsible. According to the census data of 2078, Nepal, has a 76.30% literacy rate. Local government can play a creative role in improving education, which is the driving force of development. But this is only possible through collaboration with local people, who can create better learning opportunities. And also, it is the duty of the people to talk collectively about these problems. Kawasoti has witnessed this mobilization many times. A community leader explained how local efforts through participation help to make better education in their locality. He said:

"Our joint effort created many changes in our local community public school that faced challenges in the past. Now, with our collaborative action to provide better facilities, hire new teachers on time, and provide needed educational resources to students, we have created a positive impact on education. Now, public schools are able to compete with private schools. If you check our overall education results in our municipality, public schools now secure good positions."

Similar to his remarks, female participation was also mentioned:

"Collective mobilization and active engagement in government create good change in the education sector. Our collective efforts now help to make a better education system. And create the better reading environment for children who are our future of the society. Whenever, we face problems in school, we immediately organize a meeting and ask for support from the government. Because it is the future of our children and also the future of our municipality."

Grassroots mobilization has played a great role in improving the quality of education. However, it is not challenge-free, and some respondents explain different perspectives that the government is still not serious about making a better education system. Still, many schools face challenges regarding the lack of resources and other problems. A principal of Saraswati Higher Secondary School, ward no. 4, shared the political hardships they faced in school and the idea of how they solved problems by engaging the public.

“When I came to the government school as a principal, most of the teacher appointments were done by political favoritism, which impacted selecting good candidates, and capable individuals were deprived of meritocracy. I arranged a meeting with parents, local leaders, and the ward president with the help of my colleague. We all agreed to choose candidates by proper selection methods, not by political appointment. But later on, during the selection time, local leaders started to pressure me to appoint their political party candidate, and similar calls came from different people too. Then I asked for serious help from parents and prepared to talk about this. With the help of local people, we complained about this and made a fair selection process, and only then did the local government support us.”

But he paradoxically mentioned that the situation has not changed completely and needs serious work. However, he agreed that group mobilization of people can help solve problems. This perspective shows that barriers are there in society, but collective collaboration can mitigate these problems too. Respondents shared that group efforts have great potential to change the situation in local governance and improve the service delivery mechanism in society. There may be some challenges and obstacles, but in a broader sense, public collaboration and people engagement in local processes can impact governance and good service delivery.

#### **4.1.2 Health**

GM and CE have shown significant changes in public health services. Delivering public services to citizens is the primary duty of L.G. But in many cases, the local government overlooked their duty because of various reasons. In this process, help from the public is crucial, and questioning the government helps to improve public services in the locality. Research in Kawasoti shows that grassroots mobilization and civic engagement had helped to improve the condition of health services. Through these public movements, they raised voices for better healthcare facilities, services, and accessibility to people. Many respondents from the research expressed similar opinions that local movement and mobilization help to improve health services. Respondents said that,

“Before the local health post was not good, and people needed to go far or to private hospitals for healthcare. We need to go Chitwan or Butwal for treatment,

we organized meeting many times but there are no improvements and responsible peoples are always make fake promises. But we keep continue talking about it and we warn leader that it will be our political agenda and we going to vote them who solve this problem. We try very hardly and incorporate every possible things and raised voice in every possible platform organized meeting and run movement then only it become possible and now better services than before. So this the change of collective action and efforts of our local people."

This problems shows that Kawasoti has problems in past. Similar responses also came from other respondents that before Kawasoti and near Kawasoti, there were lots of health service problems, no good management, no good health workers, and even problems of medicine shortages. More dangerously, Kawasoti didn't have any hospital with facilities for the treatment of snake bites. So, snake bite deaths were serious problems in Kawasoti and nearby municipalities. Then the public gathered and went as a delegation to the municipality and voiced their concerns to the central government through their MP, demanding equipment and facilities to solve the problems. After many attempts and efforts, the city finally managed to address those problems. One local leader, who is now the ward president in Ward No.4, remembered it like this,

"We organized a delegation and warned the municipality and MP to put efforts into building a better hospital. That is very difficult time and people are facing serious health issues and we don't have even a basic medicine in our health post and snake bite treatment was not available and our two children died because of snake bite within one month also villager are afraid of that problems in that situation we organized meeting and warn him We will boycott elections, and people wouldn't vote. Only then he takes the issue seriously. The people were very supportive of that movement and spoke up clearly, which helped in many ways."

Similarly, other respondents shared similar experiences that GM and CE help to get better health services at the local level. One respondent who worked in a local health post shared his ideas on how discussion with local people helped to improve conditions in the health sector and provide good facilities, fulfilling the needs and managing all health instruments and medicine in their health post. He explained how they first asked people to organize a meeting to discuss the problems and then organized a movement to ask for help from the local government. Finally, the LG assisted by providing health

instruments, which totally benefited and helped to get basic health services nearby their locality, without the need to go far from the village or to an expensive hospital. Similarly, one elderly respondent (age: 71) shared a similar experience that,

"Now we have good health facilities in our locality. We are doing lots work and input our efforts to make this possible. You don't believe son first they didn't listen our voices and authority always overlooked our issues but we fight for last and then only they are agreeing for making improve health post and even still there are some issues that need to be focus on. But overall improvement in health service facilities helps them not to go to other places for treatment."

So people have the power to change structures through their will and collective agencies. Mobilizing people for a good cause and questioning the power and authorities always help in making a better locality. Kawasoti experienced this kind of change through their collective work. Respondents shared the idea that community participation helps to bring change in everything, but specifically in health, they are satisfied that there is a lot of change compared to previous times. Some respondents also share that there are still many flaws and needs for improvement, but the achievements they have today are somehow good, but more engagement and change are still needed to focus on.

#### **4.1.3 Infrastructure and Public Work**

In Kawasoti Municipality, grassroots mobilization (GM) and civic engagement (CE) have a positive impact on accessing good service delivery mostly. Through my infrastructure and public research in the municipality, I got positive responses from people that GM and CE have the potential to make a better locality, but there are also some obstacles that need to be dealt with first to make better societies. Khemu Bashyal (50), a schoolteacher from Ward No. 4, shared his experience about the impact of collective effort that helped develop good road facilities in their community. He said,

“For many years we were deprived of good road facilities, and the ward and municipality neglected this reality. During rainfall, it became worse and even hard to walk. We were all frustrated by this, and then we organized meetings and posted complaint letters. Two months later, the municipality listened to our voices, and

finally, they allocated a budget to pave the road. Now the road is in better condition than before.” (Interview)

His words show the positive result, where collective efforts help make better infrastructure and solve long-time road safety issues. Similarly, a 34-year-old local shopkeeper shared her observation that public engagement helps make quality projects and solve problems related to time delays. In her opinion, most of the projects in her locality are delayed, not completed in a good way within the fixed time, and some are poorly constructed, so they are in bad condition. When people see the condition and practice of that kind of development in their locality, they acknowledge their responsibility and organize and agree to supervise development activities, which helps to improve the quality of work, especially road projects. (Interview, Kartik 7, 2081) In another interview, a local farmer shared the importance of local people’s participation in building a better irrigation system. He said,

“Our village was having problems with water shortages. And we don’t have good irrigation facility and we can’t do anything because river is far from village and there will be need huge budget which farmer cant able to afford. So we depended on rainfall water for our agricultural crops, producing only one seasonal crop. Through our farmer meetings, we shared our sadness with the mayor. She listened to us and funded the bore well, which now helps us with irrigation and growing vegetables.” (Interview, Kartik 2081)

These responses tell us that community people have the power to influence local governance and manage essential infrastructure to support and solve the problems related to their daily social life. (Group discussion, Kartik 8, 2081)

Furthermore, while I conducted a focus group discussion at the time when ‘Nari Shakti Aama Samuna’ organized their regular monthly meeting, active member Sita Gaire emphasized the importance of transparency and accountability in public work and projects. In her belief, the locality doesn’t care about this aspect of governance. And past experiences of the municipality show that there are problems of corruption and time delays. So they are tired of these things, and her community people finally decided to raise their voices about these problems. Through their collective action and group,

they put forward their issues to the municipal officials, which brought about good change, and she remembered their effort like this:

“Before we were aware of our strength, there were many cases of corruption in our village. Even in a small community work or project, powerful people did corruption. But now, time has changed, and we conduct regular meetings and ask questions to local officials about projects and their progress. Now, this has reduced corruption and time delays in many projects.”

Her voice clearly reflects how regular engagement of local residents helps to improve the quality of public work and minimizes the problems of corruption and other issues.

Other importance of mobilization and participation is that it helps get better services like water supply and addresses issues and challenges through community participation. Other respondents also highlighted the idea and expressed similar concepts that engagement in the village helps to improve the situation in many areas. Similarly, another member of Aama Samuha, Sumitra Magar(38), explained,

“Months ago, we had to walk miles to get water in our household. After cooperating with the community and government, now we have a community water tank in our village. For this, we gave physical and economic support to the government. Now the ward office takes its responsibility, but before that, we villagers were truly responsible for this facility because we put lots of effort into it. So in my opinion, this kind of improvement was made possible only by the collective action of local community people, and we are the backbone of local development.”

Despite these positive improvements, some obstacles remain in society, particularly marginalized people facing challenges. Subash Sunar (34), a Dalit leader, expressed his frustration with the situation where one particular group of people is excluded from infrastructure development at the local level most of the time. He furiously expressed, “Our community is often Ignored in development activities and discussions. Leaders many times tell lies and do not care about equality, so most of the time we have to fight harder to be heard in these processes compared to other people.” (Interview, 2081)

Other respondents expressed similar concerns related to these issues and the ongoing power struggle between people for equity in accessing opportunities in development in the locality, which is very important to focus on for the betterment of society as a whole.

Similarly, other problems like political favoritism, project capture by elite people, and limitations of resources are other problems found in Kawasoti, which affect the service delivery in the municipality. Nishan Gurung (34), a young resident, talked about the issues of political favoritism and elite capture in development projects. He said,

“Some projects like road and water supply are planned to benefit people of certain political affiliations and make happy their voter community, rather than studying the real needs of the community. Some projects are planned to make happy the local leader, and project tenders are also given to their related people, which creates unfairness in projects. This also causes project delays and the use of low-level materials for getting a profit, which is unfair and unethical and makes other people helpless.” (Observation, Kartik 2081)

Similar to him, a few other respondents also raised voices about this concern regarding political favoritism and unfairness. In an interview, municipal official Lila Raj Poudel initially refused this idea, but my observation in different wards showed relatable situations to Nishan Gurung’s insights. Similarly, resource limitations are another major concern seen in Kawasoti, and in an interview with the ward president of Ward 4, Narayan Pd- Lohani made a strong confirmation that the government has limited budget and technical expertise. He said,

“We want to support all community needs and solve problems. People now are very much engaged and demand rightful projects, but our resources are limited, and we are not able to solve all problems and prioritize the necessities. This causes bias in some people sometimes, but we are trying to improve from time to time. So this is the common problem of all three layer government that they should allocate good budget mainly that focus on productive development of people.”

In conclusion, GM and CE have led to significant improvement in Kawasoti Municipality, particularly in infrastructure development, and made good benefits to the local government. But political hurdles like political favoritism and resource limitations must be addressed with better plans and policies.

## **4.2 Accountability and Transparency in local Service Provision**

Accountability and transparency are essential principles that are often heard and are considered the foundation of effective service delivery and good government. These concepts need to be well placed in local government so that their actions and plans are open for discussion and answerable to the local public. Accountability and transparency ensure that public officials providing clear and understandable information and Justify their plans and decisions while allocating and using public resources. These both principles work together to bridge trust, reduce corruption and make better services delivery that helps to fulfill the need of local people. The integration of grassroots mobilization (GM) and Civic Engagement (CE) into local government has significantly improved both accountability and transparency in Kawasoti Municipality. Respondents in through this research Shared the opinions that incensement in participation of people in governance's processes helps to make better and clear communication and reduce the gap between local government and citizens. Local government regularly. Organized public meeting where people can ask question and voice their issues about better public services.

Goma Karki, a local resident, emphasized the importance of these public Meetings and said, "The government now share all information about budgets, projects and decisions we can ask question to local official and now we feel this process make more good and we feel more informed than before." (Interview 2081)

This process now makes local people to understand everything about decisions, fund and plan of projects in their locality, especially infrastructure and basic services delivery. Similarly, other respondents acknowledge that role of community-based committee's groups helps to increase accountability. These committees and groups build by local people; actively monitor the local project and their work. According to one respondent, "The monitoring committee's watch the work is done properly and not and ensure funds are used responsible way. If there is work delay or any problems, we now have committee to address and question those issues." (Focus group Discussion, 2081) This local mechanism holds government to remain accountable to the public and foster the condition of transparency.

The role of GM and CE is crucial for the betterment of community was emphasized many respondents. Khemu Bashyal, a teacher, who said,

” when peoples in own locality engaged they are rightfully stand on common good and they are selflessly engaged for making better locality which good, right? With throwing this serious question he further added opinions that active engagement is better weapons for tackling with societal problems and need. People participation helps to make locality better that is the experience of respondents in this research and they and they can change the society and eradicated problems. Collective action not just makes authority accountable only it also helps to solve many problems and open possibilities for further discussion.

One respondents share how their collective participation helps to protect their tradition. She told that, in the recent time of road construction project, in our village we forced local government to change plans to save old ‘padhero’ and ‘chautari” because we have emotion connectedness.” Such direct involvement not only increased Accountability but also show that public needs should be prioritized in service provision.

Moreover, some respondents noted that increased access to information and the involvement of community has helpful to have equitable chances of services to all people. Now people are know about budget and plans and they are also capable to raised Voices which helps to reduce the corruption and increased the environment of equality. One respondent shared the idea,

“Before, there was lack of information how budget distribute, now we have all detailed so, we can discuss about priority, importance and accountability. So, nowadays at least government officials call for discussion on any project so now we feel this is good change. However, engagement and mobilization is satisfied in somehow but there are also ongoing challenges where still we are excluded from some discussion.”

Similarly, other respondents also pointed their concerns. Shankhar Pokhrel, a youth leader, pointed out that political interference cause obstacles in many projects.

“Now we have better accountability and transparency than before, but still political pressure, biasness and revenge still influence decision-making. Sometimes local

government made decision for political gain rather than community profits. There were no formal organized meeting and various decisions are finalized within close room." (Interview, 2081)

These opinions show that public engagement in many cases helps to keep local government transparent and accountable but some Challenge are still need to focus on. In Conclusion, the integration of GM and CE has created positive changes in local service delivery in Kawasoti. Public participation, meeting, monitoring voices raised for Common betterment have increased citizen roles and empowered them to make local government answerable but still challenges like political biasness and interfere should to focused and need to make improving good governance.

#### **4.2.1 Equity and Inclusiveness in Service Distribution**

The concept of equity means all people having fairness in opportunities and has equal right in resources and policy while inclusiveness stands for nobody left behind in decision whether they are socio-economically different or marginalized. Equity and inclusive in service Distribution are important for achieving fair and good governance, regardless of people whit out biasing people gender, ethnicity for their Socio-economic status, or geographic location.

In local governance these principle helps to reduces all inequality and reach public services to all Sections of society. In the context of Kawasoti municipality put efforts to promote equitable and inclusive service delivery that will benefits everyone in society. Respondents shared their Valuable perspectives on how this Concept helps to increase better public service distribution particularly in the area of education health and infrastructure. They expressed current level of inclusiveness and point out that active involvement of citizens in local government has contributed for equitable distribution of Services and resources. Mukti Magar a community leader from rural areas said,

“In past all the development activity is run in Bazar side of Municipality. People and government officials think Kawasoti means Bazar area only and they less focus on area which is far from Bazar. But now people are continuous and started asking question to authority because of various meeting and discussion we conducted in our locality.”

Similarly, Prashant Chapagain a youth leader and activist shared, through grassroots mobilization the level of engagement of People has increased. Now people are more actively involved in local planning discussion which create balance in society otherwise Strong people capture the services. So their opinion voices Clear shows the image that how GM and CE empower people and helps to balance power between privileged and undervalued groups.

Addition to, this research show that the increased women participation which create inclusive society and much better than previous in the history of Kawasoti. Sita Gaire told a story. How they organized women groups to solve their problems. She explained, " Before women voices are ignored but now we are actively participating in local meeting and demand to rightful services that helps poor women. She also added,

"Womens are pillar of society, but they are not given much focuses in past time and we are compelled to bounded in household work and need to spend all time as a caretaker of home and children. So, we women gather in one meeting and ask to mayor to allocate budget for women who involved in agriculture. Then only they prioritize us and give us subsidy for seeds, fertilizer and provide program for training." (Interview 2081)

Other respondents also validate this change that women voices are more heard than before because of active participation of women in government process. This highlights the impact of public engagement helps to preserve their rights and make represented Women in governance. Similarly, GM and CE have also empowered marginalized people to challenge societal inequalities. Kumar B.K, a teacher explained,

"In the past marginalized people, especially Dalit, women and indigenous peoples are excluded from decision-making process and they are pushing behind development. But now, we are aware of our right and responsibility and people are become more aware and started to participant strongly in governance process through mobilization and collective advocacy, we can now able to Secure better access in government Services." (Interview Kartik 5, 2081)

Furthermore, Ratna Choudary, a leader from an indigenous Community, express similar remarks that, " mobilization and active people engagement force to authority to listen the voices from the bottom and need to prioritized the demand of marginalized."

But she addresses the underlying challenges also and added that fight is not over because in many cases their voices are unheard and overlooked.

However, significant challenges remain and some respondents are sharing mixed ideas that full equity and inclusiveness. Systematic biasness are still there to create challenges in progress, Subash Sunar noted that, “yes, there has been lots of Change and improvement happened but still deeply rooted social prejudices still impact on this process. For example, Dalit and marginalized groups sometime face discrimination still when accessing public services.” His observation shows that there are some barriers that excluded to achieve of equity and inclusiveness society which need to deal in collective way.

Similar to Subash other respondents and my own observation highlight the challenge that poor community especially Tharu, Dalit and ‘sukumbasi’ (landless) are Seems lacking behind to proper development. The condition of road, sanitization, and Water supply are not good as Market area where rich people are lived. This condition shows that there are still challenges to make services more equitable and inclusive to all. Despite these Obstacles, grassroots mobilization and CE has helps to solve community problem. Shova silwal, a local leader shared, “We organized meetings and ask for good infrastructure, like roads and bridges. The municipality agrees and now we are experience improvements.” (Focus group Discussion) Her experiences show that power of Collective action to deal with local obstacles.

In conclusion, while Kawasoti municipality has made good progress in equity and inclusiveness in service distribution through the helps of GM and CE but still Challenges like social discrimination, geographic disparities and gaps Should be need to address to enhance the life of its residents.

#### **4.3 Impact of Grassroots Mobilization and Civic Engagement on Local Policy Outcome**

Grassroots mobilization and civic engagement in Kawasoti Municipality have played a great role in local governance and bringing positive changes in policy across various sectors of society. The active participation of the community people helps to formulate new policies, change old ones, and show the increase in the influence of people in governance. Through collective action and engagement, people not only change policy

but also empower the future of their municipality. The interplay between GM and CE helps to create a more responsible governance system where the needs of local people are addressed, making people more trusting and increasing the level of participation. So, this section shows how grassroots engagement contributes to policy shifts in the short term and how it impacts the community in the long term.

#### **4.3.1 Policy Change**

GM and CE in Kawasoti Municipality have witnessed many examples that change the policy of local government and enhance the trust of the government in people and also help fulfill the needs of the community. These changes are possible because of active participation from local people and make sure that policy will benefit the common good and challenge many obstacles.

Through interviews and group discussions with the general public, community leaders, activists, and public officials, I found there are many examples where mobilization and public engagement have helped to change policy on many occasions meaningfully, that positively serve the needs of its residents.

One of the most significant changes shown in Kawasoti is the decentralization of decision-making power. Historically, decisions at the local level were made at the municipal level, and many communities were deprived of these rights. Although the constitution and the Local Government Operation Act, 2074 gave people the right to participate, in practical terms, many people and rural areas were marginalized and left behind in this process. However, after years of active participation, the community is now successful in creating ward-level community committees, *tol bikash samiti*, and other social forums which help local people put their voices directly in policy making. Santa Bd. Ranabhat(49), a member of the ward community committee of Ward No. 4, explained,

“Before, we were not included in the policy-making process in our ward and we did not know how resources were distributed. We are not having education of this process and we most of the local people believes that this is the only work of politician and educated people but we now aware that every policy have direct impact on our family and society lives. Now, we can discuss directly with the

municipality how to fulfill the needs in our area and we are now part of decision and policy making.” (Interview, Kartik 5, 2081)

This change has shown that the government is now becoming more democratic and decisions and policies are made by the community in bottom-up concepts. Additionally, grassroots policy efforts have an impact on social services and service delivery, particularly in healthcare and education. Respondents explained that healthcare services in many wards and remote areas were not in good condition before, and educational institutions were underfunded and hard to access for all people equally.

Mina Kumari Tharu (40), a nurse in a government hospital in Kawasoti, said,

“For years we were deprived of good healthcare in our locality. We don’t have even a good primary health care center in our locality. We have one health post in nearby ward but they are always having problems of medicine shortage and some time they even don’t have health worker too. Through our collective efforts, the municipality now established a new health center and maintained the condition of the old one which made a big difference in our lives.”

As a result of these community-led efforts, a new policy was made to build a health care center and improve its condition, benefiting people by providing good health facilities in their locality. This policy change is important to provide equal access to healthcare for all people. Similarly, a policy on education aimed at providing education to top students who are deprived of it due to socio-economic conditions.

The scholarship policy introduced by the municipality by the demand of the people also played a great role in educational betterment. In an interview with the former deputy mayor of Kawasoti, Prem Shankar Mardaniya said,

“We initiated this scholarship policy in Kawasoti. In a general municipal meeting, young people raised their voices for this issue, saying that everyone should have the right to study even if they belong to weak economic families. This is very positive, as education should be provided equally to all people. Then we supported their voices for the betterment of the future generation of our municipality by introducing policy for it. Now it still provides great scholarship opportunities to

students who do not have good financial conditions at home. It makes us happy that it works very well.” (Interview, Kartik 6, 2081)

Furthermore, GM and CE have also created a positive impact on environmental issues and put pressure on adopting sustainable policies. Respondents from the environmental advocacy group highlighted that waste management and water conservation were major concerning topics in the municipality. Aashish Poudel (29), a youth environmental activist, shared,

“We have seen that waste material polluted water sources. Then we thought we needed to do something about it, so we formed a group on Facebook and asked other people and students to join us for this work. Afterward, we gathered local support too and we cleaned that area. It’s a big achievement for us, and now the municipality has also adopted waste management techniques.” (Group discussion, Kartik 2081)

My observation also justifies his point that the municipality has now installed dustbins and warning boards near the water sources. So, these grassroots actions in the municipality help to develop new policies and programs for solving the problems of waste management. As a result of these efforts, people help to make clean and good streets and societies, and also increase awareness about the importance of the environment and the positive impact of collective work.

Similarly, policies related to gender equality, Dalit, and indigenous communities’ issues are other major areas where GM and CE have created significant positive change. Women’s groups organized movements and put their voices in the municipality and advocated tirelessly for equal rights and representation, also witnessing policy improvement and change in Kawasoti. Pramila Bujhel (56), a local women leader, said about their struggle and dedication like this,

“We put in many efforts for equal rights and representation. But many times our voices were ignored and the government overlooked our issues and did not consider us important. But we never stepped back and continuously voiced our concerns. Then only did they listen to us, and now policies related to women have come to the surface of discussion. Now the municipality has made many policies for women. For example, the municipality gives special support to poor single

women who are engaged in farming. The municipality also distributed goats to poor women to uplift their economic life as well as special scholarships to girls and other health and education-related women. Now our effort helps to impact positively, and as well as now the municipality gives us equal opportunities in decision-making roles too.” (Interview 5, Kartik 2081)

This experience shows that strong civic mobilization and engagement can have a great impact on policy in society and help make society a better place to live.

Similarly, Dalit leader Kumar Sunar (37) told the story of the success of campaigns demanding discrimination-free societies and getting equal access to government resources. He noted,

“We now have a voice in the local planning process. Before, we were ignored and not invited to discussions and meetings, and all the policy and budget allocations favored upper-caste people, and the Dalit community was less prioritized. Still all challenges are not solving and we have equal access in every time and we need to face some obstacles But even though through our strong participation, mobilization, and engagement, we have now make our place somehow in community discussions, which was unimaginable before.”

Furthermore, indigenous groups also had similar experiences before but now they are all actively engaged in the governance process. They organized meetings and movements by demanding recognition of their culture and rights. A respondent from the indigenous Tharu community shared her point of view like this,

“Now slowly our voices are starting to be heard and given importance in local policy, and now our culture is considered a pride of the municipality. They made policy to improve our home stay program, which has now become an attraction for tourism. These collective efforts show that collective power has a great impact on making good policy and equity, and ensure that every community is important for making good governance that helps to make the municipality better and developed.

So this is the better thing to consider because the improvement in the life of local people is directly connected to the policy of the government and it makes better local governance. Respondents also highlighted the impact of GM and CE on the creation of

policies that support youth development and engagement. Shankar Pokhrel(32), a local youth leader, said,

“Now the municipality has started to listen to our youth voices because of our strong participation in local-level governance practice. The government has become more responsible and listens to us and has started to provide us with various training like plumbing, carpentry, and agricultural training and also provides educational and sports facilities to youth, which is good work that was previously overlooked. This is great because youth are the driving forces of society.” (Group discussion, Kartik 8, 2081)

This shows that the municipality has become more accountable to youth by adopting youth-oriented policies that give young people skills and a platform for growing careers, which is good for the overall development of the municipality.

So research shows that active engagement and people mobilizing for a good cause bring lots of change at the policy level and make the local government vibrant and supportive in various sectors. But people also share the thought that in practical terms, some policies are not workable and just seem to be on paper and in agreements. Some respondents share their opinion that the municipal office only makes agreements at various levels but in practice, they are not serious.

Surya Kanta Silwal (50), a local leader, shared his experience about how the local government makes policy but does not work in practical terms and does not always fulfill their promises like this,

“I will tell you about the reality of our municipality that many policies are made and changed based on the demands of people, which is good, but at the implementation level, they are not serious in many cases and when we ask them why the policy is not practically applied and the municipality work based on policy, they just reply that we don’t have resources and say we will do it next time. But they don’t do anything and forget to fulfill their promises. This is how they break the trust of local people many times and people do not have good trust and belief in their political representatives and the work of local governance many times.”

In my next interview, I asked related issues to a government official and he accepted this and said,

“Yes, sometimes we are not able to fulfill all the needs not because we are not interested or we don’t want to make our municipality better, but we are limited by budget and resources and we need to manage all the needs and care to satisfy all people. So some policies and programs are taking a long time, but it is not 100 percent true that we ignore people’s trust and needs, but we are trying our best.”  
(Interview 7, 20091)

This situation shows that overall, Kawasoti has many examples where GM and CE help to change policy and make better the lives of people living in the municipality, but at the same time, it has some drawbacks and limitations that need to be solved to make more vibrant and accountable governance.

#### **4.3.2 Community Empowerment**

Grassroots mobilization and civic engagement have greatly empowered communities in Kawasoti Municipality. Through societal collaboration, participation, and providing a sense of ownership in the government process to the local people, it has developed a positive impact on the locality. This empowerment is visible in social cohesion, political participation, and economic advancement, and respondents from diverse backgrounds highlighted this change creating a great impact on the municipality that helps increase empowerment in the community.

Radha Bashyal (42), a member of the Women’s Rights and Empowerment Organization, expressed, “Our collective work has created the path for more women to participate in governance decisions. Now we feel that collective action has great power and it helps us to be heard in this system.” (Interview, 2081)

Her words clearly show that gender equity policies are encouraged to make women more represented and make it possible for more women to take part in the decision-making process and get their rights and recognition in the governance process. Similarly, engagement and mobilization help to represent and empower the marginalized through various policies and programs. Subash Sunar, a student, shared

that various municipal quotas and targeted skill development programs have empowered marginalized groups. He said,

“For years, our community has faced suppression and we have been overlooked by the government, but now our joint efforts and policies have given us a platform in local decision-making and made our lives better.” People’s direct engagement helps to make a place in government, which is the strength of participation and makes the government create policies to empower citizens through various programs.

This similar sentiment about active engagement and participation really helps to address the problems of everyone in society, and every group of people can get good responses and rights in the governance process, which helps to empower them. The next respondent, Prashant Chapagain (30), a youth leader, shared his opinion like this, “Grassroots actions inspired each group of society and empowered them to make good governance, and if we talk specifically about the youth generation, it helps them to step forward as active members of society for better change in the municipality.” He also added, “Now youth voices have power and we have become stakeholders in community planning and governance.”

Another major change created by these efforts is economic empowerment. GM and CE help change policy, and make municipal leaders more responsible and work for local people’s needs. So, these efforts of people hugely impact their economic changes.

Sagar Choudary (32), a fish farm owner and also the owner of a home stay business, explained how the municipality’s financial support program has created a great change in his life, “I’m thankful for the municipality program that provides loans to farmers like me who don’t have collateral to put in. With municipal support, I’ve been able to start my business and now I can support my family and children.”

Similarly, Sita Tharu (43), a laborious woman farmer, shared her idea by showing her vegetable farming. The agricultural subsidies policy really empowered her and other neighbors in the locality,

“I don’t know much about these policies, but one of my neighbors informed me and encouraged me to go to the municipal office to seek help. Then I went there

and asked for help they provided to farmers, and with the municipality's support, I engaged in agriculture business for income and everything went well. Now I can manage my home, and it has made a better impact on our lives.” (Interview, 2081)

Social cohesion and making active, responsible, and critical citizens is another major achievement of GM and CE programs. Active engagement and mobilization for the common good bring close and diverse groups together to solve common challenges that happen in their municipality. Deepak Kafle (31), a local journalist, explained,

“It is a good change that comes from active participation, is the collaboration of people on various issues such as infrastructure development, waste management, and decision-making processes has united us and helped to build trust, mutual respect, and strong social bonding among community people. So it helps us to solve many problems together and make a better locality and relationship between people.”

Similar to this concept, Sagar Upreti (32), a local resident, pointed out that this engagement program, efforts, and campaigns through GM and CE have improved community awareness and helped them know their potential and become critical and accountable citizens. “People in society now have become cleverer and aware of rights and responsibilities, which is a good thing and helps to make better societies. It makes people more responsible and dutiful citizens, which is better for the democratic growth of society. We all know that active citizens create an active and accountable government.” He said.

Through these responses, it is evident that GM and CE have empowered communities in various ways. Unity among people, better livelihoods due to many programs, increased economic opportunities, and marginalized women and youth have a platform to share their problems and increase their participation. In conclusion, it shows that in Kawasoti, these participation mechanisms create a good impact and empower various groups of society and make them good and responsible citizens able to change their lives in many ways. Although some challenges still exist in society, which we will discuss later in the next sections.

#### **4.4 Role of Social Media in Facilitating Grassroots Mobilization and Civic Engagement**

The emerging trends of using social media and ICT in many sectors have created a great impact and change in different sectors. Social media has become an integral part of societal life and serves greatly in GM and CE in Kawasoti Municipality. In this research, many respondents expressed their idea that social media has provided them with a great platform to organize, mobilize, and reach many people. They also highlighted that social media use makes it easier to organize people, transmit ideas easily, and express ideas. Respondents also admitted that social media has become a great tool that helps to ask questions to authorities and share ideas and information related to local governance, and it enhances the communication system and makes a virtual platform for social gathering.

It has become a major weapon now to challenge problems. Platforms like Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, WhatsApp, and Twitter have helped people share ideas and information and unite for good change in societies. So, this section focuses on how technology enhances the modern way of people participation through communication, increased awareness, and youth engagement through it, with insight from respondents' research.

##### **4.4.1 Communication Enhancement**

Social media has created a revolution in local life in different ways. The trend of using social media for various purposes is seen worldwide, and similarly, it is also emerging in Kawasoti. Like other trends, using social media helps people to communicate and creates a direct and great channel to connect local people, grassroots organizations, and local authorities. In contrast to traditional mechanisms of communication and participation, social media like Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp now make communities solve societal problems and challenges more quickly and collaboratively.

Respondents argue in the majority that social media helps to create a bridge between different stakeholders in societies and fulfill the gap in communication. It also helps to connect grassroots groups and local authorities more easily. Pramila Bhujel (56), a women group leader, explained,

“Social media makes life easier now. We can tag, SMS, or call representatives about many societal issues. This saves our time and makes our life easy without needing to go from home to home to call people or wait for an appointment. “It is a great tool that assists us in sharing our problems really quick with people and local government. We can express our feelings through social media in an effective way, and now I feel people are starting to understand our issues in a good way.”

Similarly, Shova Silwal, a local shop owner, shared her experience about using social media like WhatsApp and Messenger, which notify her about upcoming meetings and topics of issues that need to be discussed in meetings, making a great change in participation. Furthermore, respondents, especially from marginalized groups, find social media to be a great platform. Ratna Tharu (46), an indigenous activist, said, “still some people have problem how to use social media that is one part of local people life but those who have digital knowledge they are actively engage in governance and it make easy to share information and talk about real issues of society and raise voice and ask questions to the authority if needed.”

Likewise, other respondents also highlight that social media use and campaigns have given a great platform to speak and share their problems and issues in strong voices. Subash Sunar, a Dalit youth, expressed that,

“Now we can share our experience of injustices and problems and get attention and action or support from responsible officials. Before, we couldn’t prove the evidence of injustices that we faced because there were lies and oppressors playing the blaming game against us.” (Interview, 2001) Similar responses came out of research and discussions with other respondents that social media helps to record or show live streams of real problems through devices that help to keep accountability and transparency. Now responsible officials are more aware of their duty and don’t underestimate people. Authority is careful, and it creates less corruption because of spreading news or being recorded with devices. So, it creates a kind of fear environment to ask for bribes and to do corruption easily.”

This platform truly serves to make great communication among people. Especially young people embrace these tools to engage in decision-making. College student Shova Dumre shared that they use Facebook and make groups to share information in her

locality to do community work, such as cleanup and awareness programs. She said that social media is a great thing that creates communication and added a good way to reach youth people and share pictures and videos, which attract other youth too. Pitamber Pokhrel, a teacher, added a similar viewpoint that social media helps the local government to use various safety programs and helps the locality in difficult situations. So, it is a great tool to spread information very quickly, and further, he mentioned that during emergencies like floods, landslides, or earthquakes, social media helps people communicate quickly. Social media is really a good thing that changes people's lives very much. In difficult situations during various disasters, it helps the government to know about the condition of their citizens and also get information from citizens to help and ask for help quickly." He added.

The research also finds that social media helps in communication and shows that social communications and engagement are enhanced, but at the same time, it has its own challenges. Santosh Silwal (26), a science school teacher in a community school, shared a viewpoint that not all people have access to the internet and smart phones, and even if they have, some people don't know how to use them properly. He added,

"All people don't have equal access to digital tools because some people can't afford these tools and some are unaware of how to use them, so this problem creates a unique exclusion of people in participation. And create new kind of disparity in societies and those people who don't have this opportunity in many cases they are deprived from much information because in this digital age local government put many informations in digital platform and social media where some people are excluded from it. So this problem should be solved first if participation needs to be more inclusive." (Interview)

At the same time, other respondents also warned that social media and digital engagement are not possible for every member of society. Especially old people and poor people are deprived of this facility. A 66-year-old retired army man echoed these problems in his voice like this,

"We old people don't know how to use this "machine." I even tried to use it by taking help from my grandchildren, but I can't progress. So this makes it difficult for us to participate in meetings and discussions. In older days, there was a person

in the job to give information to people by going from home to home, but now many notices come on social platforms which make us unreachable because we can't access the information. This shows how technology creates disparities even though it has benefits also.”

Similarly, respondents have also addressed the problem that social media cannot replace the traditional methods of face-to-face engagement, where we can observe the real emotions of people, and also sometimes it spreads false information and makes people non-responsible in many cases. A 43-year-old local resident responded to this,

“Of course, it is a great tool and there is no need to reject it, but it is good when we use it wisely. Otherwise, it becomes a tool to disrespect others, avoid other opinions, and comment to threaten and dominate opponents' voices, and many times by spreading false information. There are many cases we experience that youth are fighting each other in many cases and they are reaching to the personal level and talk about unnecessary things and even they are not afraid to step back to assassinate the character of opponent.”

Therefore, the research helps to find out that social media is a great tool for a quick and good platform for communication and engagement, but at the same time, they point out serious issues of digital dividedness which need to be addressed first.

#### **4.4.2 Youth Engagements and Awareness Campaigns**

We all are witnessing that growth social connection dramatically changes in this period of social media's boom. It creates a great impact on societal life, and it has also played a great role in making young people more aware, expressive, and engaged in civic matters in Kawasoti Municipality. Digital tools like Facebook, TikTok, and Twitter have provided good spaces to engage in discussion, raise voices on concerning topics, and ask for action on various problems. These different digital platforms not only increase awareness but also help to improve the role of young people in the governance process.

In Kawasoti, many young people are now using social media to share the problems they see in their communities with other members and inform responsible people. Sagar

Upreti (32), a college student, shared his experience of how he and his friends recorded a video of the poor condition of roads in their locality and posted it online.

“When we uploaded about the bad conditions of the road and sarcastically wrote that our village is developing very nicely, it went viral in our village. The ward president responded that he would manage it quickly. The action was taken immediately, and within a week, the road was maintained nicely. I think this is the power of social media and it create the most efficient and fast route to share our problems and asks to make really quick action from authority.”

Similarly, young activists say that social media is a great tool for solving local problems related to different sectors, such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure. Shankar Pokhrel (34), a youth leader, shared his experience of how they managed the shortage of teachers in a public school, “We posted pictures and videos of empty classrooms and shared them on Face book. Within a week, the school hired two new teachers.” He said it shows that social platforms have great power to solve problems, where one post in the media helps to solve long-time problems within days. This kind of direct action encouraged other young people to speak against the problems in their community.

Similarly, social media has now become a major platform for channeling youth for the betterment of society. Deepak Kaflee, a youth resident of Kawasoti, told the reality of the online platform that helped increase youth participation greatly in a few years. He said,

“Before, there was very little participation in society. Especially young people had less interest in this kind of engagement. Now social media has given them a great platform for engagement, and now they are actively questioning Authority and energetically engaging in local work. Similarly, now it also makes it easy to connect with our friends for community work. With the help of this media, we can reach more people and make them aware of our program and ask them to participate actively in many societal works like awareness campaigns, pollution management, and plantation.”

His experience shows that good engagement helps to make a better locality, and social media helps greatly in this work. Kawasoti Municipality has now experienced a paradigm shift with the increased engagement of youth with the help of social media.

They are now using it to ask questions to the government, provide constructive criticism for the work of the local government, and support to solve the many problems faced by the locality.

Bidur Raut, a young college student, explained their collective action for making the government accountable and transparent. They raised questions about the budget, project's updates, and the responsibility of the government. "We ask open questions and show pictures of real challenges in our society. We regularly ask about the budget and demand equal distribution and tell them to prioritize the real needs of people rather than just making their voters happy." He also added that social media really helps to make the government more responsive and creates an environment of fear to take bribes or do corruption. Also, it helps to ask questions and make the government accountable. This kind of change shows that digital advocacy in engagement creates a good impact in society and makes leaders and government officials more responsible and accountable.

Similarly, one respondent shared her experience of how she raised issues for her community and the challenges she faced and the good changes at the same time. And said,

"We don't have good roads and drainage in our community, but all the budget was allocated to paving the road of the ward president. Then I wrote a status on Facebook directly mentioning the name of the president about the misuse of the budget through power and not caring about other people's problems. His supporters and those who were going to benefit from the budget wrote bad comments and threatened me as well. But I got support from other members of society, especially young people supported me. Then the president realized his mistake and promised to reallocate the budget again and called us to take part in the discussion and agreed to prioritize the real needs of society."

She also mentioned some people still hate her, but she doesn't care about others. She only focuses on the truth and positive change in her locality. This shows that agency has the power to make changes if they use their power rightly. Other respondents also expressed similar experiences that social media has played a good role in making youth engage more by organizing and channeling their voices and opinions. But some

respondents also highlight the challenges of social media that impact young people's understanding of reality, and they are sometimes influenced by wrong information and prejudices of hate and intolerance. A local teacher in Ward No. 7 warned about hate and misinformation problems that social media spread by bad people in society. She said,

“Not everything on social media is true. Young people rush to share everything and, without fact-checking, they share and comment. This creates problems and tension in society. Some people intentionally spoil the youth's minds for their political and other gains, which is very bad and may cause polarization and hatred in the locality. Also, young people have hot blood, which is good, but in many cases, political parties use them to abuse opposition and support everything, even the bad work and opinions of their leaders. They are also used as a '*cyber army*' to attack opposition.”

However, she supports the idea that social media plays a great role in spreading awareness and creating a great platform to engage actively in the government process, but it is also important to focus on its dark side too.

On the other hand, respondents are pointing out social media as a great tool to spread awareness programs in society. By using social media, people can talk about problems and also the solutions to problems. It also becomes an important tool to tackle dangerous situations such as disasters and other emergencies. So it can help to spread information, news, and awareness and good information to people. One respondent from the municipal office said,

“Social media really helps us to do different work in the municipality. It also helps to share valuable information of the municipality with the local people. It helps to make better and equal societies by posting educational videos about gender and caste equality and also helps to share positive information as well. It makes it easier to support people through their needs and their posts on social media.”

Overall, social media has made a great impact in Kawasoti. It especially helps young people to engage and get space to engage in governance. It is also a useful tool for spreading information and awareness to people by saving resources and time. It also helps to increase the participation of people through social media. They can ask

questions, criticize government incompetency, and also help in creating positive engagement by suggesting constructive ideas for the locality and providing them with suggestions about solutions. So overall, it helps in the level of participation, which creates vibrant and accountable local government. However, some flaws of misinformation, digital division, and youth mind manipulation through false news and prejudices need to be solved in the municipality.

#### **4.5 Challenges and Barriers to Civic Participation and Mobilization in Local Governance**

Despite the good impact and efforts of civic participation and mobilization to strengthen local governance in Kawasoti Municipality, various challenges and problems are always there, which create obstacles and barriers to full participation.

Many challenges related to socio-cultural issues and political problems create economic and political tension in the full participation of local people. These challenges mainly affect marginalized people and, in some cases, make this community more vulnerable. It creates inequality, limits their growth, causes unequal distribution of service delivery, and adversely affects their ability to contribute to the local government decision-making process. In this section, the research will discuss the challenges and barriers and try to create an open floor for discussion on this topic to make better, more inclusive societies where all people can benefit from the government.

##### **4.5.1 Economic Barriers**

Economic challenges are a major issue in developing countries like Nepal. Economic barriers show that they affect civic engagement and grassroots mobilization in local governance. In this research, many respondents shared the viewpoint that income differences and levels of education directly impact people's participation in the decision-making process, and in many cases, it makes the marginalized more marginalized, and they are ignored in the governance process. Most of the respondents highlight that poverty is a common problem in the municipality. Santa Ranabhat (49), a daily wage laborer, said,

“We are struggling for one day's meal and managing to collect fees for our children, so we need to go to daily work. Attending these political meetings does

not come to our mind. We need to work every day; otherwise, we don't have food in the house. So, people like me do not participate in these meetings, and people do not invite us.”

This is a major challenge in the municipality, and similar responses came from other respondents, especially from farmers and daily wage laborers. Bishnu Mahato, a single mother, explained that she needs to work every day for her children, so she doesn't have time to participate in government meetings. Similarly, economic differences between rich and poor play a critical role in this discussion, and poor people's voices are neglected many times. Man Bahadur B.K(43), a small farmer, shared his observation and experience like this,

“Municipal officials only listen to wealthy people, and they ignore poor people in many cases. Poor people's voices are ignored, and sometimes they don't even try to listen.”

Similarly, Netra Bahadur Thanet (45) said,

“We participate in meetings actively, but our voices are not taken seriously. A few months ago, we demanded drinking water supply in our Sukumbasi (landless) area. They said yes, but they haven't allocated the budget yet. So we need to depend on only one tap, which makes our life difficult, but they don't address this problem. So my neighbors feel that attending meetings is just time-consuming and a waste of time and energy.”

This experience of injustice plays a bigger role in unequal development in the municipality. Furthermore, the level of education is a major instrument for class mobility, and a lack of education creates poverty in many cases. Shila Silwal (40), a farmer shared,

“Because of my family's condition, I never got the chance to go to school, so now I don't understand the rules and ward policy of the government. In meetings, I don't know what to say, so whenever I attend meetings, I just listen to others and come back home.”

This perspective is similar to the idea of the ward president of Ward No. 4. He said,

“At the local level, we need to address societal needs rather than individual needs, so it is hard to talk and discuss single to single. In this case, educated and powerful people’s voices are loud, and they overshadow other people. So, it’s my responsibility to understand the needs of marginalized people, so I’m trying to go home to home to understand the problems of people.”

But this is not the case in every ward, and even in that ward, he was not able to fully justify his stance because of many reasons. Respondents shared the challenge of money and cost in participation. Attending municipality meetings or engaging in activism requires transportation costs, time, and in many development projects, people need to collect money. Prasant Chapagain, a youth leader, shared the harsh reality of the village that “if the meeting is far from home, people are not able to manage even transportation costs, and time is secondary.” He added a serious but heart-touching story of how the “Sukumbasi” area in his ward was unable to collect the beneficiary cost of 20%, so they refused to take the budget for road development. Still, that area is in bad condition, and the municipality refused other development projects using this excuse.

Respondents also highlighted that wealthy people help leaders in election times to win, so leaders only listen to the people who financially support them during election time. Policies and service delivery only benefit rich people most of the time because of political favor. Pushpa Lal Mahato (30), a community resident, said,

“Local representatives only listen to those who help them financially during election times. So, if you don’t have money and you didn’t support them in the election, then your issues and suggestions are not given importance.”

This economic difference shows that money is important, and there is exclusion because of economic class and status. Overall, economic challenges really affect civic engagement and make it difficult for people who don’t have a strong economic background. So, the local government should address these problems and need to formulate policies and projects that help to enhance the economic needs of people and minimize wealth differences among people.

#### 4.5.2 Political Barriers

Political barriers are another major challenge faced by CE and GM in local governance. Respondents mentioned issues of political influences, political affiliation, elite capture, and exclusion of the voiceless by political power in inclusive participation. Nepal has witnessed political dominance in local governance. Independent people who don't have membership in any political parties shared that their voices are not taken seriously and that political party candidates dictate decisions in many cases. Nabin Bagbel (32), a local shopkeeper, shared his experience:

“Only the political members have power in decision-making. If you don't belong to any party, your voice is usually ignored by responsible officials, and leaders only listen to the ideas of their political comrades and voters because they only give importance to his or her political interests.”

Similarly, Bhagwati Tiwari, a school teacher, added that party cadres control the municipality and decisions, and there is no space for other opponents. If you are independent, you can't express your views and opinions in many cases.

“...Political dividends seem to be a major concerning issue by many respondents. In political dividends: party leaders and elected representatives provide profit to their loyal supporters to make them vote banks.”

This kind of activity raises questions about the participation of true local engagement in the government process. There are many examples of political power capturing the budget and investing it for their cadres and their own benefit sometimes. Binod Raut, a community member, shared a very interesting and shocking experience,

“.....you can see for yourself if you think my words are lying. There is a road you can see in my neighbour's connection with this way. There is a pitch road where all roads are gravel only, but the road is well pitched, which has no starting point and no ending points. It is almost 150 meters in length, which makes no sense to make, but that road is pitched because it is attached to one of the leader's house. So, that road was made just for him.”

This story shows that powerful leaders can misuse the budget of the ward and municipality because of their links and power. Similarly, his friend who is near him added another same-like story, exactly opposite of that road, there is another road where policy and budget have changed to increase the length of the road just to cover the land of one of the leaders. He shared his frustration,

“Initially, that road budget and plan were fixed, but later it was changed and added a few meters to cover the land of that neta! Not only that, the ward pitched the road to please him, and it only covered his land and didn’t even connect to the next chowk. Doesn’t it sound funny?” He laughed and added, “Nepal Ma yestai hunchha Sir (it happens in Nepal, Sir).”

To fact-check that, I went there myself and found that exactly similar condition of the road that they expressed. These practices create frustration in youth and make them less interested in participation. This personal gain system impacts the essence of collective good and creates frustration in people who are deprived of equal rights and opportunities. In the village, people will less or generally not understand the word elite capture, but there are lots of cases found in the municipality where respondents responded that elite capture is another major issue in participation. Wealthy and strong men are in dominating positions and influence all the policy decisions and projects by their influence, and they don’t care about local people’s ideas and opinions.

Arjun Kharel, a young resident, said, “A few powerful people control all the government mechanisms, and some youth blindly following leaders support them for different political gains. They support them instead of questioning. When we try to talk to them about this and oppose their domination, they try to make it personal and try to threaten us.” He shared his experience that once he raised a question about the unequal distribution of the budget and one political leader pointed at him and said, “padera alik pagal bhayechha means (education has made him mad).”

Other youth respondents also expressed similar remarks that there is a strong influence of politics where different opinions are not easily welcomed. The next respondent, a Dalit rights advocate, pointed out that the government at the local level in many cases favors the elite and strong people, which sideline the needs of marginalized communities many times. The system of not giving priority to marginalized people

alienates them from government participation. Political leaders often ignore female issues as well as ignore disadvantaged groups. One respondent shared,

“When we raise problems related to women and Dalits, they cleverly ignore the issues and pretend there is no such thing as discrimination. They blame us for playing the political card.”

This systematic exclusion of marginalized communities creates great problems, including alienation and lack of participation. Respondents also highlighted that party rivalries are another factor that creates a negative impact on civic engagement and makes it difficult to participate. A retired government officer shared that,

“People have divisions because of political affiliation, and many good works are not conducted because of the lack of political party cooperation.”

This makes local governance a battleground for ideological conflicts, which negatively impacts collective action for good work. Similarly, political pressure and dirty tricks create challenges in local governance. Many good works are not able to be performed because of political pressure. Respondents shared the experience that if they don't support a certain party and leader, they don't get support back. Nepotism, favoritism, and economic consequences hugely impact the local governance process. A young respondent shared,

“Leaders always favour the party candidate or relative in municipal jobs or even in scholarship or training programs. They prioritize their family relatives or party cadres and ignore capable people who really have potential.”

Additionally, respondents emphasized that many people avoid participating and talking about societal issues due to political pressure. There are several cases where local people face violence and social or economic consequences, like this, One respondent shared his experience,

“I spoke up about illegal activities such as smuggling of trees and river materials, in which a local leader was involved. After I talked about this issue in a village meeting, he sent his supporters to assault me. The case went to court, and he was getting legal punishment, but despite this, I still have feelings about what happened

to me, and I am tense about other consequences that may come to my family. People in the community are afraid to speak out because of job security, personal safety, and other support.”

Overall, political barriers discourage people from participating actively in governance. To eradicate these problems and make better governance, local government officials need to avoid all kinds of nepotism and favoritism, be accountable and transparent, and treat everyone equally.

#### **4.5.3 Socio-cultural Barriers**

Socio-cultural barriers pose serious challenges in civil participation and grassroots mobilization in local governance. Respondents highlight issues such as social disputes, gender inequality, casteism, and ethnic exclusion as major challenges that prevent people from unifying on common issues, resulting in an unequal governance system.

Gender inequality is a serious problem in civic participation, with women being marginalized. This marginalization is caused not only by community members but also by their own male family members. Even when women attend meetings, their voices are often ignored.

Laxmi B.K(52), a Dalit woman, explained,

“Even in this modernized time, we are still not given the right to participate in public meetings. Men easily dismiss us. We women are not allowed to speak up at home or in any social meeting. If we dare to speak about any issues, men frequently counter our words or simply ignore us.”

This kind of exclusion shows that women are not considered capable agents of change, and further patriarchy makes it more challenging and difficult for them. Similarly, a school teacher added that many female members of society are not allowed by their husbands to participate in civic activities. They are expected to stay at home and take care of the children and the household. This mindset is supported by outdated thinking and levels of education. This results in a low number of women participating in government processes, a serious issue that needs to be addressed.

Another socio-cultural barrier is caste-based discrimination, which is deeply rooted in the mindset of societies. Dalit respondents expressed that they are often overlooked and excluded from governance decisions and policy-making. A 47-year-old Dalit activist said,

“In many local organizations and places, Dalit people are often excluded from the decision-making process and are rarely given leadership positions. This pattern of domination is seen not only in religious positions but also in other areas, where Dalit people are discouraged from participating and attending meetings, making it seem like our opinions don’t matter.”

This systematic exclusion keeps marginalized people away from local governance, and Dalit youth are often discouraged and disrespected. Respondents shared many experiences of discrimination faced in their locality. Dalit youth are not welcomed and are shown uncomfortable behavior in societal spaces dominated by higher caste people. This shows the practical mechanism of society and how it still runs, forcing people to face discrimination based on their caste or ethnicity. However, government officials deny these claims, stating that they are working towards equalizing opportunities for everyone. One official said,

“These issues are from the past. We don’t have casteism anymore, and people are doing great. The policy and law have become strong, and the municipality takes immediate action if any case of discrimination is registered.”

But respondents do not fully agree with his statement. They believe that discrimination has reduced from the past but still needs to be eradicated completely. It is the government’s duty to create an equitable environment for all kinds of people and to enforce strong laws and policies to eradicate systematic discrimination. A 37-year-old woman respondent said furiously,

“It is the nature of society that upper-caste people usually don’t accept that society is still unfair and discriminatory because they benefit structurally from it. It is the duty of the municipality and the government to create good laws and an education system that fosters better societies.”

Ethnic discrimination is another major problem affecting civic participation in Kawasoti. Indigenous and minority people need to struggle more to address their problems and voice their concerns. An indigenous rights advocate, Sagar Tharu(36), pointed out,

“Policies are often made by dominant groups, and they don’t invite indigenous people for discussion. The constitution and government have policies to seek everyone’s opinion, especially minority and women’s voices, but we are often not invited to discussions. More often than not, they don’t even consider it necessary to include us in discussions about our culture, traditions, and land issues.”

Respondents also shared that community perspectives are major forces for creating a good governance system. The ideas of every person and community need to be heard, and that is the responsibility of a good government. The municipality needs to focus on this. When it comes to the case of indigenous people, they are quite simple and usually don’t understand the mechanisms, so more focus and good collaboration are needed. They are not just members of society but also represent the identity of the society and are attractions for tourism as well. A 55-year-old respondent said,

“Indigenous people are a great source of attraction and the true protectors of tradition and society’s reflection. For the betterment and tourism profit, the municipality should address their desires and needs. They should also preserve their culture and tradition for the beauty of the locality. But we don’t know why the government is less concerned about this.”

These problems seem more concerning because, unlike other people, indigenous people are less aware of systematic dealings. They do not react easily, so this community needs protection, and their participation in governance should be prioritized to protect our social and cultural beauty. Furthermore, other problems like social stigma, social consequences, and social disputes between people turning into long-term enmity are also social barriers that respondents highlighted. However, gender, caste, and ethnicity are the major problems most respondents emphasized, creating hindrances in civic engagement and democratic participation. These issues have a huge impact and need to be addressed for the betterment of society as a whole.

## **4.6 Sustainability and Future Directions of GM and CE**

GM and CE are the latest ideas that work in a participatory approach. These types of people engagement help to foster local governance work. Civic engagement and strong participation help to create good governance and make good societies. For the overall development of a nation, a strong local government is very important. Strong people participation and engagement help create good inclusive localities. Participation helps create just societies, improves local areas, and increases the sense of ownership, which helps achieve sustainable development.

However, GM and CE have both pros and cons, which need to be understood and addressed to make society equal for everyone. Support from local government and other institutions also needs to be addressed to ensure sustainability. To sustain GM and CE, various aspects need attention. First, focus on long-term strategies that enhance participation, resource management, and adaptation to new technology and trends. A key concern of respondents was the need for reliable funding and institutional support. Many movements are short-term achievements, but they need support from local governments and both local and international bodies for sustainability. Collaboration with other social organizations, INGOs, and NGOs is essential. It is also necessary to adapt to new trends and changes in social life. Incorporating technology support and attracting new visions from young people, ensuring their inclusion in the mainstream, are important for sustainability. Institutional support is needed, focusing on marginalized and disadvantaged groups in society. For better future directions, Kawasoti Municipality needs sustainable resources and should prioritize young and marginalized people, incorporating new technology and digital tools to enhance their participation and engagement.

### **4.6.1 Resource Mobilization and Institutional Support**

For good and effective results in civic participation, sustainability in grassroots mobilization, and active engagement in better local government, resource mobilization and strong institutional support are needed. Many engagements face problems due to a lack of resources, financial support, and institutional backing.

Respondents highlight the need for external support for participation, where resources and technical assistance are crucial. They also help foster participation by solving the

financial scarcity of local activism. Many respondents pointed out this problem, sharing experiences that campaigns and mobilizations face major financial management issues, with most funding coming from their contributions and tiny local donations. But it is not enough; local people usually don't have money. One respondent shared this problem, saying,

“...people can just give time but they cannot pay money every time, which creates problems in organizing meetings and managing even small expenses.”

Similarly, another respondent who is a community political leader added, These kinds of movements are good for the village, but we don't have resources for organizing meetings, travel expenses, printing pamphlets, and we can't even provide tea and biscuits. So, people who don't have money are unwilling to join meetings. These financial problems cause obstacles to good mobilization in the community. Respondents shared that they are unable to manage meetings and necessary instruments. Beyond finances, respondents also highlight the need for logistical support to be addressed. One respondent said,

“We manage meetings, but we face a lack of meeting spaces and training programs. It is the government's responsibility to manage these things for the betterment of their own municipality, but they are less focused on it.”

Similarly, a schoolteacher from the municipality supported the idea, saying, It's the municipality's job and responsibility to support participation in the locality and to make good plans and policies for fostering this culture for the betterment of the whole society. In fact, they promise these things in meetings, but in practical implementation, they forget it and make decisions themselves. But government officials have a different perspective on this. In an interview, a governance official explained,

“We are aware that this is our responsibility, but there are many movements and delegations every day, and many problems that people ask for help with. We want to help, but it is not possible at a practical level because of the municipality's capacity and lack of a good budget. So, we prioritize problems and solve them first, and in this process, it seems we overlook some problems, so we need more budget from the center too.”

However, institutional support from the local government is essential for good governance. One leader of a civic activist shared, they are aware of our role and are doing our responsibility, but the government is the one not caring and supporting this process. The municipality does not always back us up because they think our movement is against them and we are trying to make them fail, but this is not the reality. Another respondent echoed similar sentiments,

“If the local government supports us and listens to our agenda, it will be helpful for everyone, but they are unwilling to support us in many cases.”

She also pointed out that without institutional support; participation will not be impactful, which is not good for democratic practices. Similarly, respondents expressed that NGOs and INGOs are important organizations responsible for good participation. Respondents shared that these organizations provide certain help and basic training in the short term but need to support in the long term and provide moral and other support for participation. Local resident Hari Poudel (39) said,

“Joint collaboration between public government and other social institutions is important, and in many places, different organizations are doing good, but they complete their projects fast and with limited budgets. So, there are problems with sustainability. For a better future, there should be long-term coordination between participation and these non-profit organizations.”

Another respondent highlighted similar opinion; Youth are a major force for community betterment. They should be channeled, and their ideas should be listened to and incorporated into every process. Respondents also emphasized that knowledge and leadership transfer and creation are key for better participation sustainability. Santosh Adhikari (32), a youth leader, explained,

“Most of the campaigns are driven by a few committed leaders, and if they are not engaged, the movement cannot continue. So, training new leaders and transferring knowledge is essential.”

In summary, respondents highlighted that for better and sustainable participation and mobilization, resource management support from the government and other

organizations such as NGOs and INGOs, as well as youth mobilization, are crucial. If given priority, these can help build good and better local governance in Kawasoti.

#### **4.6.2 Emerging Trends**

“Moving reality is the only reality of society.” This sociological line suggests that society is not static; it has a dynamic nature that changes constantly. Over time, society adapts to new changes and has the nature to wait for the next changes. Similarly, the practice of GM and CE are changing over time with the help of technology and shifting political agendas. Respondents highlight many trends that help change the nature and future of these practices in Kawasoti Municipality.

Respondents primarily pointed out the influence of digital media that has significantly changed the old participation model. Social media, specifically messaging tools and online platforms, have increased engagement in this generation. Before this technological advancement, social participation was very low, and campaigns were not recognized by local people. Now, it helps local people not only connect but also spread their message to everyone and seek help from others. Prasant Chapagain (31) explained,

“Technology really helps us, and it is experienced in society that it increases participation. In the past, it was hard to Gather people because we had to go door-to-door. Now we work on this new platform, and it has become less time-consuming. We can now gather people and support very fast using this technology. It helps us find new ways to organize movements and take creative ideas from all over the world, which helps us mobilize people and receive support from other members of the municipality.”

Another key development is the increase in youth participation, a major achievement of this technological advancement. A youth leader compared the past and present, saying,

“I remember there was little participation of youth in movements. People considered politics to have no future and often didn’t like to engage in politics. They saw participation as part of political activism and the duty of political leaders in villages. But nowadays, youth are engaged in this activism through the creative use of online platforms and have become major forces for these movements.”

Another young respondent shared a similar sentiment, “Yes, we are now given priority, and we actively participate in common issues like waste management, awareness campaigns, and environmental issues. Young people have started to voice their concerns strongly for accountability and transparency too.” He also added that this is a new change and senior leaders should take notice.

Another trend developed by GM and CE is the decentralization of power, with the community now becoming powerful stakeholders in Kawasoti Municipality. Government and political leaders sometimes try to avoid acknowledging the power of people and try to overlook it, but the public is now more aware of their power. Ratna Bashyal, a ward representative, explained,

“Times have changed. Previously, most decisions were made by officials. Now, community engagement has changed these practices, and their voices matter.” Similarly, a 35-year-old respondent said, “Now, people have become powerful in many cases, and their voices are listened to, which was not common decades ago.”

The change in the status of “women leadership” is another new pattern of major change experienced by Kawasoti Municipality. The increasing number of women participating shows a gender-neutral change in Kawasoti, which is new for the municipality. Bina Karki (51), a women’s rights activist, explained,

“Women are now not only confined to their roles in the kitchen but are also participating in discussions and helping to create women-based policies to empower them.”

Similarly, Ratna Mahatto (46) highlighted,

“Policies such as training programs for women or providing them loans and other support help empower them socially and economically, building more confidence among women in Kawasoti Municipality. But it is not enough, so for a good future, the municipality needs to bring other policies and programs to make society more inclusive and better.”

Additionally, there is growing awareness among people about the Constitution and public rights because of education. People now talk about their constitutional rights and

ask about the responsibilities that local governance should focus on. Deepak Kafle, a school teacher, noted,

“Now people are educated, especially youth, who talk about rights written in the Constitution, which pressurizes local officials to listen and address these concerns.”

Similarly, leadership programs based on marginalized communities or other training programs about legal and constitutional rights make people more confident and active in participation. Now, they are well aware that the government is for them, not the other way around.

In summary, respondents shared that GM and CE have changed rapidly over time. Technological advancement, women and youth engagement, decentralization of power, and education are shaping new forces of civic participation. Although these changes create an impact, they also have flaws that need to be addressed. Both sides of these trends need to be considered to make them effective. While society becomes more vibrant and progressive, biases, technological disparities, and other challenges also arise with these changes, so more focus is needed on addressing these issues as well.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS**

This part of the research will discuss the findings and highlight the importance of grassroots mobilization and civic engagement in the context of Kawasoti Municipality. It also gives suggestions based on challenges and overall presents the findings obtained from the search on the municipality. This section discusses major findings, challenges, and their implications for the future.

#### **5.1 Key Findings**

The research shows that GM and CE are now good tools for shaping local governance in the municipality. This kind of participation clearly shows that people have power if they work collectively, which can greatly impact the transformation of society. Participation is key for today's societies, and this research proves that strong engagement really changes the way of service delivery and results in many policy changes. However, challenges are also present that impact effectiveness in many ways. This section discusses the key findings as well as views on how the realities that respondents experience and participation really work on the ground.

A major finding is that CE and GM have improved service delivery in Kawasoti Municipality through the active engagement of people and campaigns. Delegating, engaging, and questioning through meetings and active participation in different social platforms really helps to address problems and improve the practice of service delivery, which in turn helps people and brings about policy changes in local government. Service delivery like education, health, and infrastructure has improved when people engage in them for change. Other services like waste management and the environment have also become good topics for local authorities to manage. Similarly, policies for marginalized groups like women and Dalits have made progress through this participation, and policies have changed many times in a good way. People are now becoming part of governance, and policies are discussed by local people, which are a good sign for the decentralization of power, fostering the real meaning of democracy where bottom-up approaches really work.

Another significant part of this research is that CE and GM help to increase public participation. Research and respondents' opinions clearly support that CE and GM are now great tools for discussions and engaging people in issues. Women, farmers, indigenous people, Dalits, youth, and other marginalized groups are now part of governance because of this change. Their voices matter, and decisions and policies are made with their support or for their betterment. This change clearly shows that civic engagement and mobilization provide a great platform to change societies, eradicate inequality, and ensure everyone's life and voice matter.

Similarly, empowering people is another great change caused by civic mobilization. People from different social and economic groups, as well as gender and age groups, are now becoming part of the governance process. Through active participation and organized efforts from collective actions, people can address their problems and solutions, making the government responsible. Youth engagement is another game-changer in this process, where youth are now active members in such participation. Similarly, women's and youth voices, Dalits, and marginalized groups are becoming empowered to show their position in the governance system. This has a huge impact on making the government accountable and responsible and becoming less autocratic in many examples. Policy and decision-making are now part of public decisions, whereas in the past, government officials did not consider this a public subject and made policy and decisions by themselves.

Social media and digital tools play crucial roles in communication and have become major supporters of citizens' participation. Respondents highlighted that social media is now a useful tool to address the government instantly, raise awareness about issues and problems, and organize people quickly and efficiently. The use of social media makes participation easier, faster, and more effective. Fake information, character assassination, and abuse by commenting badly are problems, and some people don't have access to technology due to economic conditions. However, overall, social media provides a great platform for communication and engaging more people. Social media also helps reduce corruption and bad behavior, as these might go viral, so officials care about doing good work and avoiding corruption. Overall, these tools not only help increase transparency and make local governance more organized but also help make the government vibrant, accountable, and transparent.

In summary, GM and CE have a great positive impact on governance, but they also have negative sides such as social, cultural, and political backlashes, which will be discussed in a later part. Additionally, caste, gender, and ethnicity, as noted by respondents, and power control also become great challenges for public participation and good local governance in Kawasoti, which need to be addressed smartly and nicely. This will help foster more participation and equitable and developed societies in the future.

## **5.2 Barriers and Challenges**

We talked about the positive side of the research on how GM and CE help to make better local governance in Kawasoti Municipality in the previous section. Now, this section will discuss the challenges and barriers of GM and CE in the municipality faced by the people. There are many concerning challenges that were found in the research process of GM and CE, which helps foster a good governance system, but problems like economic barriers create great obstacles in the municipality. Lower-income people who do daily wage work for survival and struggle to make ends meet are deprived of taking part in participation. People highlight that they don't have freedom from daily survival, so it is hard for them to engage in any kind of meeting and discussion. For them, activism becomes a subject of luxury because of their economic status. They have to work at any cost because they are forced by economic disadvantage, and if they get a chance to attend a meeting, they have no idea of what to say. Even if they talk, elites and government officials don't think it's necessary to listen.

Civic participation and decision-making spaces are mainly dominated by privileged educated groups, creating an environment where the opinions and problems of disadvantaged groups are overlooked. This negatively impacts active civic engagement and participation. People with lower incomes also have fewer opportunities in education, which regenerates the cycle of poverty. This cycle causes problems where uneducated people hesitate to take part in local governance discussions and hardly speak up in public meetings.

Similarly, political barriers are other major challenges that affect good participation and engagement in the locality. Political party leaders and local government officials capture the public space, where people who don't have political connections and

networks are forced to be sidelined in the government process. Political games and profits are not everyone's concern. Political favoritism and the concept of creating a voter bank create major challenges in local government, where even public-elected officials only focus on their home areas or people who give them more votes. In many cases, decisions and policies are made for political gain, not to meet the actual needs of local people. Elite capture is another major problem highlighted by local people in Kawasoti. Elite people are central to governance decisions, where marginalized people are excluded from this process on many occasions. Sidelining people from different groups and forming political groupings to suppress the voices of opponents creates challenges for marginalized people, whose real needs and voices are ignored and not cared for in many instances. This problem causes a weak environment for participation, and people start to lose interest in engaging in governance processes.

Another major problem of CE and GM is socio-cultural barriers that make people engagement difficult. Social barriers like gender inequality, casteism, ethnic discrimination, and social disputes between people create great problems for good local governance. Dalit people, ethnic and indigenous people, and gender-based discrimination are major hurdles for equality in society. Indigenous people like Tharu, Bhote, and Darai communities have very low participation in Kawasoti for policy and decision-making. Other ethnic groups that engage in participation face being overshadowed and excluded. When talking about marginalization, Dalits and women are primarily left out of this process. Dalit and women's voices are often overlooked or not taken seriously. Such discrimination, exclusion, and problems of dehumanizing people create injustice and make unequal societies. In addition, social disputes based on caste, ethnicity, gender, and politics are also seen in a few cases. People who share different ideologies and belong to different political parties cause disputes in many subjects, such as policy-making and budget allocations. This creates a negative impact on solidarity and unity among local people, affecting the development of societies and reducing participation, leading to fragmentation in societies. So, challenging factors along with good impacts are the nature of civic participation in Kawasoti, where good things should be promoted and problems should be eliminated.

In summary, GM and CE are successful in many cases, but they also have problems. They significantly help progress in the municipality, but challenges still exist that need

to be addressed by joint efforts of the public, government, and other organizations. Caste-based discrimination, gender inequality, elite capture, sidelining of marginalized groups, and economic and political disparities need to be solved. Only then will it create a better local government where all people have the opportunity to live happily and feel the development equally.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 6.1 Summary

This Study researched out about the role study of Gm and CE Kawasoti Municipality. It in local governance explored How these bottom up participation influence and make change in different sector of government work like Service delivery and making a policies. It also Studied about how this mobilized what are positive side of Participation organized Haw major changes it brings as. well it trying to unmask the negative Challenge that it faces in local governance. By analyzing the roles of people, community based organization, youth, women and marginalized group it trying to find out it success and change and adapt from so many different barriers and challenges that seems in this processes.

Finding shows that active participation is driving force for good service delivery and policy development. By public participation local people are benefitted from infrastructure, education and enhance Health facility. As well as it helps to increase the voices and contribution of people in decision making and process and also making government accountable and transparent are achievement that are possible thing that will found on joint efforts of people in this research. women, youth marginalized are now getting the platform than before which make municipality More inclusive. women group, Dalit and indigenous organizations are able to talk about their problems and their active role helps to make Society move equitable, inclusive and also helps to get economic benefit from good policy too. Which is good for people in Kawasoti. The study also revealed that it empowers local people, help to make strong network, addressed the real issues and it also helps to increase the youth engagement in community decision. Use of technology seems real game Changer for creating platform for digital discussion, Communication to authority. It also shows that it creates more democratic environment in governance where it helps to perform in team and make collective work effort between local people and governant officials.

However, although it is more Successful in many ways but seem several challenges are can't be overlooked. Study also helps to put out the Challenge that it has in real world in to the Surface. Income disparities, lack of education, limited engagement of poor

community as well there seems as economical challenge where elite capturing sidelining and overlooking marginalized, political party influence, political minorities are exclude by favoritism are major concerning for political Barriers Gender discrimination, caste based exclusion, ethnic biases are the major socio -cultural Challenges that also find out in research where respondents expressed in this study.Limilated resources, political tension, weak support from governance and institution are other problems that need to solve are found in this research.

This Research Result is that found a mixed review that civic participation is good for good democracy and overall development of societies. But there are many challenges also seems in Kawasoti at Should need to be address for make good locality. The finding of this research that for good local governance in Kawasoti it need focus on public and government Collaboration between major things and issues as well institutional support, Resources managent Collaboration to eradicated All kind of inequality adaption to technology and need to put forward youth, women, indigenous and marginalized people is most importance to make governance more efficient, transparent and accountable in Kawasoti municipality.

## **6.2 Conclusion and Recommendation**

Study Significantly show that how importance of Role that Gm and CE played in fostering good governance in Kawasoti municipality. Community participation and engagement play major, votes to improve the quality of mechanism also it helps to better Service delivery and make good mechanism to make Policy. Development become more vibrant, transparent and it helps to real problems in locality. By the helps of people participation local government now become more Responsible and accountable It also helps to make local government to work efficiently in the area they overlooked first. This mechanism helps to give platform to talk and put voices to women, youth, Dalit and other marginalized community. Similarly, with helps of social media and community collaboration make environment to come front to youth people. In many cases it become great tool provide platform for discussed and solving real life problems in Community. GM and CE also helps to empowering common people by helping to know their real potentially and providing right they get from constitution. Although it is not challenge free. Issues of political, economic and socio-cultural related Barriers create hurdles in Kawasoti but if it managed effectively than it will be good

for local development. Similarly, Caste based discrimination, sidelining marginalized and indigenous women discrimination Not heard youth voices, elite Capture of political power Influence and favoritism all are also be major Challenge in Municipality which need to be addressed practically.

To overcome these problems institution Support is very much need and important. Local government can play role of provider for platform to discussed and motivate the people to come front. Governance should help to guide in this process by providing economic opportunities to disadvantaged people such as employment, providing good Creation education give Chance of income through good economy programme youth and women give major focused on. Marginalized people through various program also helps in this case. Making zero tolerance policy for any discrimination and need to listen Every voices for making strong policy and local government should work on to make good for collaboration between people and governant. This basic need of democracy where government should treat everyone equally and, there should not be any discrimination in locality based on political, Social and economic any problem Should be addressed by collaboration with people and discussion in societies. Community-led policy and decision for good democratic governance, creating equal opportunity to opinion and Committed to put to effort in eradicated Challenges and making accountability and maintaining transparency are major things to focus for Recommendations as a researcher that I found while researching in Kawasoti. So this are the major area that Kawasoti municipality need to care on for making equitable and more Responsible municipality, which is good for people who live there in my opinions.

### **6.3 Future Research Directions**

This research was conducted with limited budget and resources. So, it cannot able to cover all the things that related to GM and CE and their roles in governance. So, there are multiple possibility to find different perspective and way to conducted research. There are many other possible areas that I found When I doing research their and that will help to make wider ideas related to participation. One of the major important area is to study the time pattern of change that happen over a time. Societies are changing according to the time because of advancement in technology and other political and social landscape. In this scenario research on how participation process change over the

time and how it adapts with this new change and maintain its essence is will be better field for Research.

My study time and next year will be experienced change so it will be the great area to research on comparative study about past and present which helps to know about the nature of participation in that change in future. Another area will be to study about the impact of digital engagement in local governance. Technology make great advancement with latest development of Artificial intelligence. And research can be conducted on how it Play role in local people life by this technology also about it advantages or its tension that be a good area for research.

Additionally, comparative Studies across worldwide trends and within Nepal with by conducting comparative research with other municipality will helps to find best practices and Challenges in public participating in Boarder perspective. This will help to understand how local governance and grassroots efforts work together and it helps to do what is good and work for every municipality to learn a good lesson for effective practices. This are some major area also need to focus on to find out about participation and it's important and challenge to know in kawawoti municipality which will provide comprehensive idea that will help to use in boarder area.

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## **Annex-1 : Research Questions**

1. What is your level of involvement in community activities within Kawasoti Municipality?
2. Have you participated in any grassroots mobilization initiatives aimed at improving local governance?
3. How do you perceive the current level of civic engagement among residents in Kawasoti Municipality?
4. What are the main challenges you encounter when trying to engage with local governance processes?
5. Do you believe grassroots mobilization can effectively influence decision-making in local governance?
6. What motivates you to participate in civic engagement activities within your community?
7. How do you rate the transparency of local governance practices in Kawasoti Municipality?
8. Have you witnessed any successful examples of grassroots mobilization leading to positive changes in local governance?
9. What barriers do you think prevent more active participation in local governance initiatives?
10. How do you think grassroots mobilization can be further promoted and supported in Kawasoti Municipality?
11. Have you ever been involved in organizing or participating in a community-led project or campaign aimed at improving local services?
12. What role do you believe community organizations play in enhancing local governance?
13. How effective do you consider the communication channels between citizens and local government authorities in Kawasoti Municipality?
14. Have you encountered any instances of citizen-led advocacy efforts influencing policy decisions at the local level?
15. What measures do you think could enhance citizen participation in local governance processes?
16. How do you perceive the accountability of local government officials to the community they serve?

17. Have you attended any community meetings or forums organized by local government authorities?
18. What areas of local governance do you think require the most improvement in Kawasoti Municipality?
19. How satisfied are you with the responsiveness of local government institutions to community needs and concerns?
20. In your opinion, what are the key factors contributing to successful grassroots mobilization efforts for enhancing local governance in Kawasoti Municipality?

## Annex 2 : Photo from Research Area



Interview with local farmer



Condition of Road in Ward No. 2



Madhyabindu Hospital Before



Madhyabindu Hospital After Construction



Gate of Amaltara Homestay own by Local People



Incompleted Road



Nagarpalika Office



Interview with Local Family