WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

A STUDY OF WOMEN MEMBERS FROM BHARATPUR METROPOLITAN CITY OF CHITWAN DISTRICT

A Dissertation Submitted to

Tribhuvan University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,

Thakur Ram Multiple Campus, Department of Political Science

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Master of Arts

In

Political Science

Submitted by:

MAHENDRA PRASAD ADHIKARI

TU Regd. No: 11221-8

February 2023

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This is to certify that the thesis submitted by Mahendra Prasad Adhikari entitled *"WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A STUDY OF WOMEN MEMBERS FROM BHARATPUR METROPOLITAN CITY OF CHITWAN DISTRICT"* has been prepared under my supervision and guidance.

Therefore, I recommend this thesis for final approval and acceptance.

Date: 05 Feb, 2023

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Birendra Prasad Shah

Thesis Supervisor

Department of Political Science

Thakur Ram Multiple Campus

Birgunj, Nepal

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LETTER OF APPROVAL

The thesis entitled **"*WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A STUDY OF WOMEN MEMBERS FROM BHARATPUR METROPOLITAN CITY OF CHITWAN DISTRICT*"** prepared by Mahendra Prasad Adhikari in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's Degree in Political Science have accepted.

Evaluation Committee:

Birendra Prasad Shah   …………………
(Thesis Supervisor)

Tika Ram Rijal   …………………
(External Examiner)

Birendra Prasad Shah   ………………
(Head of Department)
Date: 20 Feb, 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.D.   : A.D. stands for the Latin phrase Anno Domini

CA   : Constituent Assembly

CBS   : Centre Bureau of Statistics

CEDAW   : Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CPN -UML   : Communist party of Nepal United Marxist Leninist's

FNCCI   : Federation of Nepal Chambers of Commerce and Industries

I.A.   : Intermediate of Arts

ICCPR   : international convention on civil and political rights

IPU   : Inter-Parliamentary Union

K.P.   : Khadga Prasad

MC   : Maoist Centre

NC   : Nepali Congress party 's

NCP   : Nepal Communist Party

NGO   : National governmental organization

RPP   : Rastriya Prajatantra Party

SLC   : School leaving certificate

SS   : Sanghiya Samajwad

UN   : United Nation

USA   : United Stated of America

VGF   : Vulnerable Groups Feeding

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Politics is very important for many parties of human life. Mostly it is imperative for the existence of statehood and the way in which people interact-how they make decisions and settle disputes. Because people live groups in groups, there is a need to make decisions-about how power or available resources to the group are to be shared out for example or how conflicts which arise within the group are to be solved. The study of politics is the study of the how such decisions are made. It may also be the study of how such decisions should be made. Thus, we can define politics in two ways; first politics can be considered as the study of power and secondly as the study of the conflict's resolutions (Bentley, Robson, grant, & Robberts., 1995). To put in other words a modern philosopher, Michael Oakeshott, who was attracted by the original Greek roots of the word *politiki*, meaning the affairs of the state, defined politics as a merely organization of the running of the state (McNaughton, 2001). Politics relates the power struggle of the state. It is thus, concerned with power and the way in which power is distributed among the society (or groups). While power is mostly obviously held by the government and its agents (Bentley et al., 1995).

The term *'political participation'* refers to those voluntary activities by which member of a society share in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly, in the formation of public policy. These activities are like casting vote, seeking information, holding discussion, attending meeting, making financial contribution to political parties, staging strikes and demonstration. However, the most active forms of political participation are formal enrolment in a party, conversing and registering votes, speech-writing and speech-making, working in campaigns and competing for public and party offers (Johari T.C; 1989: p-301).

Democracy and participation both are interrelated with each other. Democracy is a situation in which everyone has to right to self-determination to choose their representative in the state mechanism process. Democracy is the least criticized and most popular political system of the world. It preserves the people's right to take part in

the governing body of the state. Literally participation is known as the involvement of the people in the political process or system. The term political participation devotes to those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly, in the formation of public policy (Johari; 1989:301)

The struggle of women for equality and political participation goes back more than a century, during these periods of political instability. Nepali women's engagement in social, economic, and political freedoms have not been properly documented. In line with this observation, referring to Thapa (2012), he argues that the history of women's struggle for their freedoms is not well documented in Nepal because men were the writers of history. Thapa (2012) argues that many women such as Ambalika Devi, Lok Priya Devi, Chandrakala Devi, Mangala Devi, and Divya Koirala among many others, have contributed to Nepali literature, art, and politics but very few have been included in the narratives of official records (Thapa, 2012).

The People's Democratic Movement, also known as or *Jana Andolan I* (1990) restored democracy and overthrew 39 years of the "party-less Panchayat system" (Srivastava & Sharma, 2010). This Movement, an alliance of the banned political parties who were against the Panchayat regime, led to street protests and violence between February and April of 1990 where the riot police attempted and failed to control the masses (Thapa, 1999). Wide sections of Nepali society students and teachers, academicians, journalists, intellectuals, farmers, business persons, actors, poets and even bureaucrats participated in the People's Movement with women playing a central role among these groups. Consequently, the King was required to compromise. Finally, he declared the restoration of multiparty democracy (which was snatched by his father in 1961) with a constitutional monarchy. Women had played a crucial role in the protests and demonstrations; several women even became martyrs. Ms. Sahana Pradhan had represented women on the team of negotiators from the side of Democratic Movement, to pressure the King to restore multi-party democracy. They convinced the King to renounce his powers, vesting the sovereignty in the people. He also formed an interim government in which Ms. Pradhan became a senior member of the 7-member cabinet (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2005).

Aristotle, one of the greatest ancient Greek political thinkers, had rightly called human beings as the "Political animal" or the "zoom politician". The modern political scientists

also believe that active, enlightened and equal participation of the citizens, both women and men, in the political and decision-making process at all levels, is the important pre-condition for success of a democratic politic system. Today, political participation is spoken of by democratically oriented politicians and political scientists as the nothing short of "cure-all" panacea (something that will solve all the problems of a particular situation) for all the ailments and problems of a political system *(Manandhar, and Bhattachan:2001; 53)*

In politics participation should be broadly understood as the active involvement of people in the decision -making process in so for as it affects them. In another word the term" political participation" refers to those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly, in the formation of public policy -Sill & Johari: 1972; 30)

Women's equal participation in politics and decision-making processes is critical for creating gender sensitive policies and for promoting sustainable development. Unfortunately, women are not well represented in local governments around the world and they face a number of barriers that range from cultural exclusion to the resistance of key political institutions and machineries to creating gender balanced local administrations. For instance, in communities where women's roles as politicians and decision-makers are not well accepted, women face strong cultural barriers entering local governments. Furthermore, women in local governments may have to overcome institutional barriers. In many cases, male-dominated political parties are not willing to involve women in their local branches and, subsequently, in local politics. According to the UN- Habitat, most local governments are inherently patriarchal institutions. Their structures and procedures are designed for and by men and they do not take into account women's multiple responsibilities in their homes and communities, or differences of communications and decision-making styles existing between men and women (Khosla. and Barth, 2008).

Women population makes up half of the national population of Nepal. Women have been playing important roles in the economic, social, political and other spheres of national development. However, the state has not been able to do proper evaluation and recognition of their contributions. There are many difficulties in implementation of national and international declarations and policies made for the women's advancement

and development. Consequently, women's significant participation in education, health, social, economic and political areas is lacking. On the other hand, women increased political participation and access to meaningful positions can play a significant role for overall women empowerment.

Despite comprising more than 50 percent of the world's population, women continue to lack access to political leadership opportunities and resources at all levels of government. Women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy, but a necessary pre-condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Governance structures which do not result in the equal participation of men and women, or their equal enjoyment of benefits from state interventions are by definition neither inclusive nor democratic. In 2007, recognizing that over the last century women's gains in the political arena have been slow and inadequate, five international organizations came together to make women's political participation their collective priority and devise a strategy that would scale-up each of the organization's efforts to foster gender equality in politics:

While Nepal also has a constitution that guarantees formal equality for women, the government is currently initiating new policies to promote women's opportunities in education, employment and political decision-making in order to overcome some of the inequities that continue for women in this country. As part of this, Local Government legislation requires that a minimum of 20 percent of all elected positions be reserved for women. As well, there are legal provisions to reserve 6 seats on local authorities for members representing social workers, disadvantages, deprived caste and aboriginal groups. The municipalities also develop programmes to increase women's participation in their decision-making processes and other activities. Special provisions have also been implemented to enable more women to be employed in the civil service and the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare has a role in training women to take on these jobs.

Participation is another central concept of democracy from a women's perspective; it implies that democracy cannot be narrowed down either in the electoral legitimacy system or to legal and theoretical equality between men and women on their right to vote and to be candidates in elections. The ancient of women's representation and actual participation in the overall political structures and processes or decision making at the

4

policy level gives a more democracy means not only freedom of expression and the rights to form organizations but also the right to actively participate in the decision-making process. *(Shrestha &Hachhethes: 2002; -5).*

The striving towards inclusive politics to counterbalance established systems of power came as a direct result of three grassroots movements in Nepal – the Maoist, the Janajati4 and the Madhesi movements. As a fundamental declaration of intent, inclusion became state policy in the Interim Constitution 2007. The government then proposed "to enable Madhesi, Dalits, indigenous ethnic groups, women, laborer's, farmers, the physically impaired, disadvantaged classes and disadvantaged regions to participate in all organs of the State on the basis of proportional inclusion" (Constitution of Nepal 2072).

Women's participation in the various levels of decision making and politics is an essential prerequisite for the establishment of equality, development and peace. Women constitute more than 50% of the total population of Nepal but their participation in the various levels of decision making is negligible. There is no exaggeration to say that the political space all over the world is monopolized by men. In many counties women\have played a very important role in the independence movements for democracy but their participation in the various spheres of public life has continued to remain minimal in comparison to their male counterparts.

1.2 Statement of Problem

While it is clear that there are some women in political leadership positions today, it is not known how and why some women have been able to break through some of the barriers in Nepal's political environment. The need of women's representation in politics and various state organs has been realized even since 1956 A.D. However, the issues of women's participation, empowerment and inclusion have been prioritized only after the people's movement-I of 1990 A.D. The people's movement-II of 2006 A.D. has more strongly highlighted the issues of women's participation, empowerment and inclusion in politics and government mechanisms.

Political participation is a means of gaining access to the power structure where decisions for resource allocation and other issues of community concerns are made.

Women's participation, necessary element of empowerment which is considered essential for two main reasons. Firstly, it indicates the status of women in society. Secondly, it is a means to enable women to improve their status and make meaningful contributions of national development.

Almost all the political parties have now been convinced for at least 33% women's representation in their various levels. Similarly, women politicians have addressed the demand of proportionate representation. But, the political parties of Nepal have yet to proceed with clear agenda for women's meaningful participation in politics. In the above context, there is lack of detailed study and research from the various agencies (parties, government, research/educational institution etc.) on women's participation in the political parties and issues thereof. This study, therefore, is focused on enhancing women's political participation. If we study the trends and parches regarding women's political participation and their status the following problems arises:

a. There is very little political consciousness among women in Nepali society.

b. The women are lagging far behind in politics than their male counterparts.

c. Political parties are not serious enough to formulate and implement to foster more women participation in politics.

1.3 Research Questions

What are the problems of participation of women in local politics?
What are the influencing factors of women's success in political position?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study were to the assess increase of women in local level politics along with the increment of woman's participation and the status of women's participation, in the local level government in Chitwan. The specific objectives were as follows.

i. To find out problems of participation of women in Local level government.
ii. To identify the specific factors those, facilitate the success of women in attaining political positions.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Since very few systematic studies regarding involvement, participation and role of women in constituent assembly have been conducted, it is hoped that the proposed study would prove to be a great asset in the problem of study about the vivid aspects of women's participation, their empowerment, and role to be played in formation of the new democratic constitution. It is very much relevant to all those who have committed themselves for women empowerment. The political leader, planners and the activists would also get valuable information from this. This study would also work, as catalyst to the feminist activist. Since this suggests for the solution of women's problems, it would also help in developing awareness and consciousness among the women in Nepal.

1.6 Organization of the Study

The research report consists of six chapter organization of this chapter with summery is discussed below:

CHAPTER-I: INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction of the study. It includes background of the study, statement of problem, research questions and objectives of the study, significance of the study, and organization of the thesis.

CHAPTER-II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents systematic review of the related literature. It describes theoretical literature review, women's participation in politics, empirical literature review, Study of Women Members from Bharatpur Metropolitan City of Chitwan District.

CHAPTER -III: RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter discusses the research design of the study. It elaborates the rationale for the selection of the study site, research design, nature and sources of data, study population and sample design, data collection tools (e.g. interview and questionnaire) and methods, data presentation and analysis, limitation of the study.

CHAPTER-IV: DESCRIPTION OF LIBRARY SOFTWARE

This chapter covers short description of caste / ethnicity, age, education, family, sources of income, marital status, religion, which is pointed from constitution of Nepal.

CHAPTER -V: WOMEN AND POLITICS

It describes the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews of elected women member. The chapter cover the political participation of the women members, (reasons of the women participation in politics, types of seats by the women participants, reasons for women participation in politics), social and cultural issues for women in Nepal.

Similarly, Women and electoral process, Nepal, behavioral pattern (male and female members), barriers for women representatives, hindrances to women participation in local government, way forward for women empowerment for vibrant political participation are included in this chapter.

CHAPTER-VI: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION &RECOMMENDATIONS:

In this chapter the researcher discusses the problems faced political party and system, summary: research methods and objectives, major finding, conclusions, recommendations

CHAPTER - II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Literature Review

The patriarchal system rooted in every society has marginalized and disfranchised women from social, economic and political affairs for a prolonged period. Because of that, women hold the subordinate position in the society. Rooke (1972) and Bari (2005) argued that though women constituted almost half of every community, their participations, especially in politics, remain insignificant. Women in Nepal have been marginalized, and politics has been out of their reach. There has been strong perception embedded in the culture of the society to discourage women from political participation.

Labani et al. (2009) on the other hand see women`s political participation from a liberal principle perspective and argue that as citizens in a democratic system, women must be influential political actors. It is a fundamental democratic principle that each adult must be recognized as a citizen and should be able to take part fully in decision-making (Labani et al.,2009). Though some like Tronvoll (2010) and Gudina (2011) are cynical of it, the EPRDF government claims that it is committed to the democratization process in the country. If that is the case, the participation of women in politics is expected to be progressing as democracy sees women as responsible individuals, capable of taking decisions for themselves and the society.

Instrumental perspective on women participation advocates for women's greater involvement in politics by the fact that males and females are different. Because of historical, social, cultural, and economic conditions and other factors, men and women have different interests, priorities, and needs. Therefore, it is assumed that woman's voice is vital for democracy to embrace the plurality of needs and interests of the whole society (Bari, 2005).

Nepal is a country that has been under the traditional patriarchal system. Hence the political participation of women is vital to protect and defend their rights and interests especially at local level. Local governments are critical levels of government whereby the policies and programs are expected to be implemented on the ground.

Women`s participation at this level can help them to make sure that public policy and decisions makings and implementations are integrated with their issues and interests. The involvement of women in decision-making at the local level helps the sustainability of their economic and social empowerment (Husain and Siddiqi cited in Pandey, 2008).

Kabeer also came up with three levels of empowerment with different structural changes at each level. "Empowerment at immediate level occurs by the change of individuals and groups, in their sense of selfhood and identity, in how they perceive their interests and in their capacity to act" (Kabeer, 2001). At the intermediate level, it occurs in the rules and relationships, which prevail in the personal, social, economic, and political spheres of life. These are policies and regulations used by the government to empower women. Moreover, at a deeper level, it occurs in the hidden structures, which shape the distribution of resources and power in a society and reproduce it over time. Meaningful and sustainable processes of empowerment should occur both at individual and structural levels. The institution of rights within the legal framework of society should be able to bring real impact on the range of possibilities available to all individuals in that society (Kabeer, 2001).

Chambers (1983) proposed an alternative approach for community development. For him, rural development is a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor rural women, to gain far themselves and their children more of what they want a need. It involves helping the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas to demand and control more benefits of development (Chambers, 1983 p.147). Chambers findings show that past development became failure due centralized planning, top-down modality and urban centric program.

Dahal (1996) has written about local self – governance and people while assuring the challenges of good governance. He states "Discriminatory codes of society that put unemployed, disabled, poor and women to inferior status also seat barrier to participations".

Therefore, the electoral system, party system, quota system, and the membership of the political party profoundly affect it. However, the result also indicates the importance of individual attributes for political participation. Finally, the study concludes that though there are things yet to improve, women in the local governments are becoming visible in the political arena.

Some scholars argue that women are less politically knowledgeable, less effective and less likely to engage in political discourse. Others claim the level of experience of women representatives and their institutional positions also make a difference to their impact on policy development. Many studies point out that the rules and the norms of legislative institutions may lead male and female legislators to conform to masculine practices in ways that undermine their capacity to integrate women's concerns and perspectives into public policy-making contends that the deep-rooted culture of masculinity in political institutions, gender biased policies and personnel comprise the most difficult constraints in effective women's representation.

2.2 Women's Participation in Politics

Political participation in fact matters the life of every individual human being both men and women. Recognizing the essence of the political participation for every individual human being the United Nation (UN) exerted its human rights core instruments and recognized it as a fundamental political right.

According UN publications (1990.para. 147) the right to participation is the right of individuals, groups and peoples to seek decisions collectively and to choose their own representatives' organizations, and have freedom of democratic action, free from interference. It is a core element of a democratic system based on consent of the people, and more importantly it enables the individuals to fulfill their obligations toward their society in holding discussions and exchange of opinions to determine the responsiveness of the development process to the needs and particularly interests of all segments of the society (Abdi, 2007). The important of the right of the participation as a means for the individual to involve in the political affairs and decision-making process of his/her society is recognized and protected in article 25 of the international convention on civil and political rights (ICCPR).

In excising the right to participation, the men and women shall have an equal opportunity in involvement in the political system in many forms from voting in elections, holding a position as a legislator, ministry, and judge or to be a head of the state. To put in other words the women and men in exercising their rights to participation is entitled to exert influence in the decision-making process through public debate, and dialogue with the representatives they elected or through their capacity to

organize themselves; or exercise public power by holding public office at different levels of administrations- local, regional national and international (Abdi, 2007). The realization of the effective participation in both women and men in the political and decision-making process in an equal manner is the obligation of the state.

Schwartz's (1992) theory defines ten universal values humans need to thrive. These are power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity and security. Each of these values expresses a distinct goal. Schwartz further specifies the structure of the relationships among these values; for example, the goal of openness to change is related to self-direction and stimulation.

This encourages independence of thought, feeling and receptiveness to change. The author claims that these qualities contradict the conservative values of conformity, tradition and security. The conservative values call for submissiveness, self-restriction, preserving traditions and maintaining stability. In contrast, transcendence values include universalism and benevolence. These convicts with self-enhancement values. Meanwhile, McCrae and Costa (1996) define personal traits as 'dimensions of individual differences in tendencies to show consistent patterns of thought, feelings, and action'.

In differentiating values from traits, Roccas et. Al. (2002) maintains that traits are enduring dispositions, while values are enduring goals. Traits describe what people are like, while values refer to what people consider important. Thus, values serve as guiding principles in people's lives (Schwartz, 1992). The issue of how personal values and traits influence a woman's choice to engage in politics, and subsequently influence her political style, has not been researched in Tanzania. While this study cannot claim to fill this gap, the life experiences of the 20 women in this study include what they perceive to be the personal values and traits that they bring to politics. The personal experiences described here provide some insight into the way in which the individuals in this study have been products of their larger context, and show how their individual traits have helped each individual to overcome the multitude of barriers she encountered in becoming a politician.

There are few studies in the Tanzanian context that have examined the power of parents in influencing the career choices of their children generally, and their daughters in

particular. Most studies rely on generalizations of the socialization process leading to gender-prescribed roles. Peterson and Runyan (1993) argued that the socialization process defines the level of political engagement for women and men. The agents of socialization include the family, schools, religious institutions and the state apparatus and the media. The authors further assert that sociocultural factors contribute to the structural obstacles by which institutions and practices sustain the gender hierarchy by generating conformity and compliance. This focus does not engage with processes of resistance to gender stereotypes.

A study conducted by Lavine (1982) administered a multiple regression analysis and indicated that girls' perceptions of higher maternal power are significantly related to a preference for a less feminine stereotyped career. Further, the same study revealed that the presence of a career mother in a family was not related to girls' future career choices. As will be discussed in the findings chapter, the current study's respondents held different views about their parents' influence on their own political ambitions.

Gender was clearly identified as only one of several overlapping identity in need of affirmative action. It was immediately obvious that intersectionality had to be acknowledged and counteracted in various ways through a set of quotas. Power imbalances exist no doubt not only between men and women but also between women and women, and men and men, on the basis of class, religion and geographical origin, as well as caste or ethnicity. Unsurprisingly in Nepal's Legislature Parliament, women's intersectionality results in temporary alliances across party lines voiced in the Women's Caucus – an institution internally criticized for mainstreaming feminism and simultaneously results in disunity among women's voices when conforming to and influencing party lines.

Most of the literature on women's participation in political leadership has revolved around the barriers or limiting factors that hinder many women from accessing political spaces. There is a paucity of information on the factors that have enabled some women to break through the multitude of barriers that women face throughout their life cycle. Nevertheless, throughout the political history of the world there have been powerful women who have occupied various political spaces. For example, as far back as the seventeenth century, the Kahina a queen of a powerful Berber tribe of Djeraous in what

is now Algeria is believed to have provided both the spiritual and military leadership that prevented Arab expansion into her country (Becker, 2015).

However, Goetz's (2003) study cautioned that educational attainment does not automatically result in increased numbers of women in formal politics, and referenced the USA, where gender parity in education has been attained, yet a gender gap persists in political participation. Alternatively, countries such as Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania, as well as a few Asian countries, have managed to reduce the gender gap in political participation despite a remaining gender gap in educational attainment.

In linking education and political consciousness in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (2005) states: Every human being no matter how ignorant or submerged in a culture of silence he/she may be is capable of looking critically of the worlds in a dialogical encounter with others if provided with proper tool for such an encounter. The 'awakening of critical consciousness' leads to the expression of real discontent precisely because the discontents are real components of real situations. Although Freire was writing for the oppressed masses generally, with a focus on the Brazilian context, his key message on education for liberation is relevant to all oppressive systems, including the patriarchal system. In summary, socio-cultural factors shape and influence the nature and level of women's political participation. Such norms influence the design of political rules, laws, processes and institutions. Such institutions include the type of electoral regime, as well as the type and practices of political parties.

Women's political participation is best understood move in office, indeed, more broadly than numbers of women's organizations as women may express their political interests through participation in a wide variety of political and civic associations.

Simultaneously, activities for this grassroots level are the crucial subject that needs attention because the women who are involved in politics themselves are not aware about human rights, good governance and peace-building issues. So, it is natural for the local level women to be more victimized. (Jagaran Nepal: *2007; 4*)

The position of women in the three major political parties (and this is true of smaller parties, too is weak. Even the general provision that there should be 10 percent women's representation at each level of the party structure (as mandated by the constitution of given parties) was not found to be fully observed, except in the composition of the

Nepali Congress party's (NC) central committee and the communist party of Nepal United Marxist Leninist's (CPN -UML) village committees. Women's representation at different levels of party committees generally stands at only 5 to 10 percent. *(Shrestha & Hachhethu; 2002;24)*

Expanding on the role of education in political participation, Burns *et al.* (1997) identifies several factors that motivate women and men to participate in politics, including a childhood socialization in politics, educational levels, participation in high school clubs, employment in jobs providing political connections and opportunities, participation in non-political organizations, participation in religious organizations, available time, family income, own income, and experiences of gender based discrimination.

The study concluded that women had a higher endowment than men in some factors positively related to political participation, such as participation in high school clubs and religious associations, as well as the experience of gender-based discrimination.

However, women's endowments in these participatory skills were outstripped by that of men. Men's advantages in political participation were linked to their stronger access to two key factors: education and the types of jobs that provide the resources and contacts needed for political participation.

Women in the 2017-2018 provincial election, The provincial elections of 2017-18 saw participation of women candidates in almost all of the major political parties, underscoring this as a historic moment in terms of gender inclusion (see table 4). This was the first provincial and local election after the promulgation of the Constitution in 2015 under the federal republican system. Women achieved their quota of 40.4 per cent mandated by the Nepal Election Commission, including the higher posts of mayor and deputy mayor, in which parties were required to include at least one, woman candidate in either of the posts. However, the candidacy and the elected representatives of men outnumbered women candidates.

Table no 1: Table showing the elected women representatives in local elections in different province

Provinces	Political parties	Elected Male representatives in local elections	Elected Female representatives in local election
Province 1	Nepali Congress (NC)	1204	794
	Unified Markist Leninist (UML)	1894	1370
	Maoist Centre (MC)	317	189
	Sanghiya Samajwad (SS)	79	61
	Others	111	68
Province 2	Nepali Congress (NC)	1042	689
	Unified Markist Leninist (UML)	711	538
	Maoisst Centre (MC)	665	463
	Sanghiya Samajwad (SS)	610	445
	Others	857	585
Province 3	Nepali Congress (NC)	1093	673
	Unified Markist Leninist (UML)	1749	1278
	Maoisst Centre (MC)	522	349
	Sanghiya Samajwad (SS)	104	58
	Others	0	0
Province 4	Nepali Congress (NC)	1053	711
	Unified Markist Leninist (UML)	950	702
	Maoisst Centre (MC)	208	143
	Sanghiya Samajwad (SS)	0	0
	Others	104	61
Province 5	Nepali Congress (NC)	948	659
	Unified Markist Leninist (UML)	1133	810
	Maoisst Centre (MC)	868	367

	Sanghiya Samajwad (SS)	139	105
	Others	257	170
Province 6	Nepali Congress (NC)	643	401
	Unified Markist Leninist (UML)	862	554
	Maoisst Centre (MC)	669	469
	Sanghiya Samajwad (SS)	0	0
	Others	76	44
Province 7	Nepali Congress (NC)	943	624
	Unified Markist Leninist (UML)	943	692
	Maoisst Centre (MC)	313	221
	Sanghiya Samajwad (SS)	0	0
	Others	64	41

Source: (NEC, 2017)

Though a woman representative has been able to retain the position of President (1), 17 in the House of Representatives, 6 in the Provincial Assembly and 21 in National Assembly, the ratio of male and female elected representatives still shows a huge percentage gap difference of 91.86%:8.13% (See table 2). This shows that power structures and hierarchy still prevail in Nepali politics.

Table no 2: Elected candidates in House of Representatives (Pratinidhi Sabha) and Provincial Assembly (Pradesh Sabha) of 2017 based on the gender

Gender	Elected House of Representatives	Elected Representatives in Provincial Assembly	Elected Representatives in National Assembly	President	Vice-President	Total	Percentage
Male	313	159	35	0	1	508	91.86
Female	17	6	21	1	0	45	8.13
Grand Total	330	165	56	1	1	553	100

Source: (NEC, 2017)

Political parties are the major gatekeepers in determining which candidates will be put up for election. They play a critical role in enabling or blocking women's participation in decision-making processes by using existing internal leadership structures that determine who lead the parties and who makes decisions about the nomination processes of electoral candidates. Various studies on internal party democracy in Nepal have concluded that most political parties are male dominated and decision-making processes are hierarchal, and that women play a minimal role in these decisions which affects the nomination of candidates.

2.3 Empirical Literature Review

According to the census of 2011, the population of Nepal is 48.5 per cent male and 51.8 per cent female; the total population of women is 7,996,422 (MoPE, 2017). After the successful completion of local, provincial, and federal elections in 2017, Nepal not only installed a Federal State but also took steps towards gender and social inclusion in the government, ending the age old exclusionary processes. In recent years, the share of women in wage employment in the nonagricultural sector has improved to 44.8 per cent in 2013 from 18.9 per cent in 1990. Similarly, the proportion of seats held by women in the National Parliament increased from 3.4 per cent in 1990 to 32.8 per cent in the last Constituent Assembly (ADB, 2017). Women are also taking steps toward leadership in the private sector (Federation of Nepal Chambers of Commerce and Industries), universities, public limited companies and networks such as the Federation of Users Committees, and the like.

Women's minimal participation in the Parliament is on persistent issue in government. According to Khakurel et al, 2011, only 27 out of 197 women had previous parliamentary experience, and for other 170 women representatives, it was a completely new experience. Similarly, it was also mentioned that 17.9 per cent of women CA members had no formal education and could hardly read and write (Kanel, 2014). Hence, majority of parliamentarian women have problems understanding complex, legal issues and therefore experience great difficult to engage meaningfully in political debate. Further, some women having political positions belonged to higher class and castes or were close relatives of male politicians and were largely subordinate to the male leaders (Kanel, 2014). Even with the provision of 33 per cent participation of women in the CA, in some cases, the influence of women in the decision-making and

constitution-building processes has been found to be limited. Men often do not acknowledge their participation in debates and discussions on general subjects (Rai, 2015). Hence, access of poor and marginalized women from the remote rural areas in the political position is still a challenge, and the social norms of patriarchy persist in political interactions.

During the Panchayat era, only three seats were reserved for women; after the Jana Andolan I of 1990, the quota for women in Parliament was raised to 5%. Women were severely underrepresented in the cabinet and women politicians did not exceed 6% at any time until 2007 (Lotter, 2017). Though democracy was restored, and the country moved towards a more inclusive State after 1990, "women were denied the right to pass their citizenship to their children" (Haug, Aasland, & Dahal, 2009). For the Constitution of 2015, amendments in the Nepal Citizenship Act, 2006 were suggested where one of the key points stated, "A person shall have the right to acquire a citizenship certificate through the name of either parent and shall be allowed to choose among the permanent address of the father or the mother" after which a child can now acquire citizenship in the name of the mother as well (FWLD, 2016). However, Pant, 2014 has stated that a special provision has been made to ensure children can acquire their citizenship from the name of mother instead of father for the children born out of rape or if fathers are not known. (Rai, 2015).

A study conducted by Kandusi and Waiganjo (2015) examined how socio-cultural factors affect women's participation among the Maasai communities in Tanzania. The results indicate that a belief in male dominance has made it difficult for both women and men to accept women as political leaders. It has also tended to create the perception that women are not capable of assuming formal political leadership positions. When women internalize these attitudes, they tend not to see that taking a leadership position has benefits, even when they are in leadership roles. Thus, by implication, the features that determine the careers women choose are largely influenced by their parents and surrounding communities. However, while the social construction of gender is learned, it can also be deconstructed. Various studies show that undergoing formal education has the potential to deconstruct gender roles and provide an enabling environment for women to participate in politics.

Globally, there has been some progress in terms of women's participation in politics; however, this progress has been slow. In August 2015, only 22% of all national parliamentarians were female an unimpressive increase from 11.3% in 1995. Worldwide, Rwanda had the highest number of women parliamentarians, having won 63.8% of seats in the lower house (Inter-Parliamentary Union [IPU], 2015). Globally, by August 2015, only 11 women were serving heads of state and 13 were heads of government (IPU, 2015); by January 2015, only 17% of government ministers were women, most of who were overseeing social sectors. In 37 states, women accounted for fewer than 10% of parliamentarians in single or lower houses, and in six chambers there were no women at all (IPU, 2015).

Table no: 3 Distributions of the Women Leaders Elected in the Local Elections From 2054 to 2079

Position	2054		2074		2079	
	Male	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
Mayor	1	0	0	1	0	1
UP Mayor	1	0	0	1	1	0
Chairman	14	0	29	0	29	0
Sadasya	42	0	57	1	58	0
Women Sadasya	0	14	0	29	0	29
Dalit Sadasya	0	0	0	29	0	29

Source: Election Commission of Nepal 2079

Regarding the table 3, it shows that the participation of women members in local level government has been increasing gradually. Though, it seems to do more changes in the

society and policy level reformation. This table 3 depicts that Bharatpur Metropolitan City's women members are Dalit community, Brahmin/Chhetri and Janajati. Women from different community, especially from marginalized community are highly politically empowered in Bharatpur Chitwan.

According to the census of 2011, the population of Nepal is 48.5 per cent male and 51.8 percent female; the total population of women is 7,996,422 (MoPE, 2017). After the successful completion of local, provincial, and federal elections in 2017, Nepal not only installed a Federal State but also took steps towards gender and social inclusion in the government, ending the age- old exclusionary processes. In recent years, the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector has improved to 44.8 percent in 2013 from 18.9 percent in 1990. Similarly, the proportion of seats held by women in the National Parliament increased from 3.4 percent in 1990 to 32.8 per cent in the last Constituent Assembly (ADB, 2017). Women are also taking steps toward leadership in the private sector FNCCI (Federation of Nepal Chambers of Commerce and Industries), universities, public limited companies and networks such as the Federation of Users Committees, and the like.

Shvedova (2005) and Sabbagh (2005) demonstrated that custom and tradition had been an obstacle for women political participation. For instance, Sabbagh (2005) argues that "social norms and attitudes that eulogized women's role in the private sphere while creating barriers to their participation in the public one remain a substantial obstacle in the Arab world". The custom and traditions of the society in Ethiopia also do not encourage women to participate in the public sphere openly. Religious norms support these custom and traditions to put pressure on women's participation. However, the more women are educated they develop the capacity to stand for themselves. There is a close association between educational attainment and political participation (Berinsky and Lenz, 2010).

The last decade has witnessed a rising concern with enhancing the representation and participation of women in politics at every level from the local to the national. The reason for this is the obvious democratic deficit encountered in even the more advanced democracies, where the representation of women in national assembly's has increased only marginally from 9 per cent in 1995 to 16 per cent in 2004 a rate of just 0.5 percent per year considerably lower than the `critical mass' of 30 per cent envisaged at Beijing.

However, in case of Nepal apart from the progressive 33% women quota for the CA/parliament, the governments' performance has been less than satisfactory in living up to its obligations. In addition, the primary actors in both the political arena and administration continue to be dominated by the established male elites. Particularly the withholding of local elections has prevented the target populations to actively engage in local and central decision making by and for women.

Women`s level of empowerment also affects women's participation. Kabeer (2010) has shown that the empowerment is all about the capacity to make choices. If women cannot make strategic choices by themselves, they cannot be able to decide to participate in politics. Strategic choices constitute the base for other choices like joining political parties and running for elections. Marital status has also its influence on women's political participation, especially at local level. Family background is also essential for the participation of women. Women who came from educated and well-to-do families may have the motivation and the capacity to participate in politics. Marriage is also another variable. Traditionally married women have more responsibilities than single women. These responsibilities may put pressures on their participation.

CHAPTER - III

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Rationale for the Selection of the Study Site

The study area is the density of different migrants' people from various parts of the country. So, people are easier to participate in social activities and they try to serve in local area through their political participation and activities. Women are highly educated in this area and they are very much empowered in different levels of social activities.

It is important for the research to be able to explain the importance of the research are conducting by providing valid arguments. Rationale for the study needs to be specific and ideally. The research needs to contribute to the elimination of a gap in the literature. Elimination of gap in existing pool of literature is one of the compulsory requirements for your study. The research can be conducted to solve a specific problem of women participation in politics.

3.2 Research Design

Descriptive research design is a scientific method which involves observing and describing the behavior of a subject without influencing it in any way. Descriptive science is a category of science that involves descriptive research; that is, observing, recording, describing, and classifying phenomena. This was descriptive research that explored the factors that facilitate women's access to political positions and participation in local level governance. This study was based on a life history approach that collected primary information from the elected women who told the story of their journey to political participation.

3.3 Nature and Sources of Data

The nature of the study was more qualitative. This approach enabled the research team to contextualize the participants' real lived experiences and interpretations in the wider social, economic and political reality. Qualitative data were described under the respective themes in paragraphs and few quantitative data were shown in Table with

simple statistical percentage methods Thus, the study identified the social reality created by our participants through the meanings and contexts that are jointly created in social institutions and reflected back in the subjectivity of participants in concrete situations. Primary data was collected from all elected women representatives at all tiers of governance using quantitative and qualitative methods.

The sources of primary data were the sample respondents. Primary data was collected though the administrations of questionnaires and direct interview with respondents of the study; the researcher himself administered the questionnaires. The sources of secondary data published annual report of the different organizations and CBS reports etc. is taken as basis source of secondary data. Similarly, related books, magazine, journals, articles, reports, bulletin newspaper, related websites and unpublished thesis of different person etc. as well as source of secondary data. Previous related studies to be subject were collected as the source of information.

3.4 Study Population and Sample Design

There are two hundred women currently involving at local level politics in major three political parties in Bharatpur Metropolitan City. To select the study population, I took the list of the women who are actively participating in three major political parties in Bharatpur Metropolitan City, Chitwan.

I took the interview among the women who are recently elected in the local level election in Bharatpur Metropolitan City,Bagmati Province ,Nepal. Total 59 women members were elected in the election 2079 BS. I took   fifty nine   women leader in local level government in Chitwan who were elected in different positions in their political parties. All the elected women members were taken as respondents for this study.

3.5 Data Collection Tools and Methods

Data collection technique for the study was based on both secondary and primary sources. The primary source was used a life history approach that was supplemented by documentation. We used a semi-structured interview guide, which allow our respondents to engage in an in-depth narration of their lived experiences. The role of the researchers was to listen, record and probe further into areas that needed

clarification or where more information was required. The life narratives were preceded by some closed-ended questions that probed into the pre-determined background factors that are historically assumed to be main enablers or to leadership.

Questionnaire was designed to obtain individual information. The individual schedule was included age, sex, marital status, education and occupation of the study population. Individuals' questionnaire was provided detail study of elected women leaders from local ward level. In-depth interviews with a number of females elected members were conducted. Each question was broad and open-ended to encourage interviewees to articulate their ideas in their own words in order to gain their insights. Structured observation was applied while doing the interview or when there was meeting held by women local representative. The duration of each interview was approximately one hour. The interview was recorded or noted and took place in the interviewee's house or at offices.

3.6 Data Presentation and Analysis

The data analysis and interpretation were involved a process of summarizing and translating into English the field notes, before reaching conclusions, data was cross-checked in different ways such as tabulation of frequency of events, sorting, and categorizing. The analytical procedures we used textual interpretations and descriptions of the real-life experiences of the respondents. During the data collection process, the interviews were conducted in filled notes or recorded with the permission of the respondents.

Before the analysis, the recordings were transcribed by experienced transcribers under the guidance of the research team. In addition; the transcripts were translated into English by the researcher himself. The data was sorted into themes and systematically analyzed to identify issues emerging from the discussion and to interpret meanings under thematic areas. The edited data was then presented by using presentation style such as table and graphical notation. The descriptive analysis tools such as frequencies and percentage were applied to analyze the data.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

This study was analyzed the status of women's participation in local level politics. The records obtained from the inventory forms and questionnaires. Only women political leaders were taken for the study. The major political parties including Nepali Congress, CPN UML, and Maoist Centre women leaders in different local positions were taken as respondents for the study. In-depth interview was held during the research time. So, this study was limited within Bharatpur Metropolitan City of Chitwan District, Bagmati Province Nepal therefore the findings may not be generalized for all over the nation.

CHAPTER - IV

WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The current chapter examines the social and political backgrounds of the 61 women leader members in Bharatpur Metropolitan City Chitwan who were interviewed; considering their age, marital status, education, and political background of their family members. The respondents were from Brahmin/Chhetri, Janajati and Dalits women.

4.1 Caste/Ethnicity

Nepal is a multi-ethnic country where there are different cast/ethnic groups. Each caste and ethnic group have its own language, culture and tradition. The total number of castes identified in the census of 2011 was 125. Chhetri is the largest caste in terms of number (%) as has been the case in all censuses, followed by Hill Brahmin, Magar etc.

Table 4: Distribution of the Respondents by Caste/Ethnicity

Caste/Ethnicity	No. of Respondents	Percent
Janajati	10	17
Dalit	29	49
Brahmin/Chhetri	20	34
Total	**59**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 4 shows that in the study area the respondents are belonged to Brahmin and Chhetri, Janajati and Dalits castes. Thus, the study area is multi ethnic world comprising prominently different social groups. This information gives us Dalit women were more elected from the legal provision of inclusion and twenty Brahmin/Chhetri women were elected. This is high numbers from free competition so it prevails the caste factor consider the women political participation.

4.2 Age

Age is a key contributing factor to political activity. The life-cycle interpretation of political participation asserts that younger citizens are usually politically inactive due to other commitments like school, work or social lives, and crowd out political interests. The age of the population of female participants in this study supports this statement.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by Age Groups

Age Group	No. of Respondents	Percent
26-35	8	13.5
36-45	23	39.0
46-55	17	29.0
56-65	11	18.5
Total	**59**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey, 2022

As shown in the table 5 , that out of the respondent women, 13.5% women involved of age of 26-35 age group 39   % women are of 36-55 age group, 29 % are of 46-55 age group and eleven of the respondents are found 56 years above age group. This shows more 36-45 women are involved in study may result good retention of the members in the society.

4.3 Education

Education is an essential component of political participation because it helps to enhance participation to a lesser or greater degree by developing important skills such as reasoning and communication skills, helpful for public debate and to interact in a political organizational setting efficiently and confidently. Education additionally influences political participation as it provides information about government and politics. The educational level of women is an important indication for understanding their present status.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents by Level of Education

Educational Level	No. of Respondents	Percent
Secondary	4	7.0
SLC: School leaving certificate	14	24.0
IA: Intermediate of Arts / Bachelor	41	69.0
Total	**59**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The table 6 shows that 4 (7%) respondents have studied up to secondary level, 14 (24%) up to SLC level, 41(69%) up to Intermediate level and Bachelor's level. This indicates that the highest percent of the respondents similarly, few of the women were service holders, especially in local schools; hospitals, etc. and majority were house wives.

Likewise, local people participants emphasized the importance of education in politics. A local level participant replied: A certain level of education is necessary in politics. Without education, it is hard to understand the rules and regulations (Interview).

Another respondent stated: Education is a major factor. I have seen that women or men who do not have proper education cannot participate fruitfully in discussion and other programmes. So, some political education is a must not only to join politics, but women also need to be educated for their self-reliance and participate in all spheres of public life so that they can have a strong opinion or decision (Interview).

Women are still at disadvantage in this sector. Some are with no education. Not even a quarter of adult women have reached Bachelor level. As evident from the table, male-female disparities in education increase steadily from the primary to higher levels. The research questions dug upon respondents' perceptions about the benefits of education.

4.4 Family

Family is a basic social unit and the most significant agent of socialization. An individual's families determine his/her status in the society. Further the size and nature of family also influences the income, expenditure and the standard of living of an individual. For women the movement from her natal family to her husband's family

after marriage involves a series of adjustments on her part. Consequently, it can affect women's social interaction, behavior, participation and empowerment.

Table 7: Distribution of the Respondents by Family Types

Types of Family	No. of Respondents	Percent
Joint	26	44.0
Nuclear	33	56.0
Total	59	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The respondents were mainly from two types of families: nuclear and joint, 44% were from joint families and 56% were from nuclear family. Here, the nuclear family involved the parents and their children which means only two generation of people living together and sharing the kitchen. Joint families were considered to be those having parents, children and at least one additional member. This type of family could have people of more than two generation sharing a single kitchen. Joint family was less common in the place. All the women involved in the study were married with at least a child. But some of them were living with husband and his family.

4.5 Sources of Income

Occupation is a major indicator of a person's financial status. It is claimed that higher female participation in the labor force increase opportunities for women to get nominated for electoral office and being elected as representatives. Additionally, employment gives women the required finance necessary to run for a political office independent of financial support from relatives and donors.

Table 8: Distribution of the Respondents by Sources of Income

Sources	No. of Respondents	Percent
Farmer	22	37.0
Self -employed	18	30.5

Service holder	4	7.0
Petty Business	5	8.5
Others	10	17.0
Total	**59**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 8 shows that all federal and local level participants were engaged in paid work before being elected. Data shows that all female were involved in the formal job sector before being elected. Additionally, they have found that before entering local government, a majority of the participants were engaged in paid work, mostly in small businesses or in professional work.

In spite of vast progress in the social position of women, their poor status in family and society still are continued to exist even now. This is due to the strong patriarchal structure of the society. This poor socio-economic status of the women might not only affect the social synchronization but also social interests in various dimensions as well. Increasing occupational sectors indicates that females are more likely to come out from their traditional family household work and want to engage themselves in other work like agriculture, industrial, transport & communication and business in order to generate their income along with their family responsibilities. Their economic freedom helps them understand about their social, political, economic rights.

All the participants admitted the necessity of finance. According to a participant: *It costs lots of money to be a candidate and fundraising is a difficult job for women if they do not have personal wealth.* The Party expects every candidate to collect a certain amount of money. So it gives additional advantages if you have financial solvency (Interview). A participant remarked: *I think finance is necessary. Lack of resources hinders women's participation in politics, especially in small parties* (Interview). A senior participant commented: I do think women have greater difficulty fundraising than men. They often do not have the contacts in business or the trade union sector to get donations (Interview).

4.6 Marital Status

It is traditionally assumed that the influence of marriage has an adverse effect on women's political participation as household obligations, including child-care, and usual sex roles discourage women from getting involved in politics .Besides, women in traditional family structures would be secluded from political organizations in one way or another owing to their lack of access to resources like time, finance, contacts, channels of communication, and the general expertise that are effective for participation. However, family arrangements differ across societies and cultures (Desposato &Norrander, 2005).

Table 9: Distribution of the Respondents by Martial Status

Status	No. of Respondents	Percent
Married	40	68.0
Unmarried	19	32.0
Total	59	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2022

In the case of local level political participation of women, 40 members are married. The study found that of the local participants, twenty-one women were unmarried. Like level, participants are in different forms of marital relationships. But 32 percent members of them were unmarried due to job, education, and separation of family, Maoist conflict, facilities at Chitwan Bharatpur.

4.7 Religion

In sociological words religion is the belief in the supernatural powers which decrease the instability of spirit, it's a spiritual belief. It provides better inspiration to the people. It unites social system. In every society, it provides better inspiration to the people. It unites social system.

Table 10: Distribution of the Respondents by Religion

Religion	No. of Respondents	Percent
Hindu	41	69.0
Buddhist	13	22.0
Christianity	5	9.0
Total	**59**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Regarding the table 10, it shows that 41 members were Hindus. The study found that of the local participants, thirteen members were Buddhist, out of 59 respondents, Brahmin/Chhetri follow Hinduism and other 13 Janjati women follow Buddhism and 5 were Christianity followers. The study area was comprised of mixed community so that this picture of society proves that Nepal is a multi-religious country.

CHAPTER - V

WOMEN AND POLITICS

In Nepal, women comprise nearly half of the total population. But the status of women is much lower than that of men in every field of life. Women are here identified with domestic life while politics is viewed as a male dominated public activity that is typically masculine in nature. If local government is to meet the needs of both women and men, it must build on the experiences of both men and women through an equal representation at all levels and in all fields of decision making, covering the wide range of responsibilities of local government. Nepal has long history of women's operation, inequality and patriarchy. Nepal has enforced the law for better governance and fair representation of gender in the Local government. The study was intended to find out interlink among gender issues in local government and the performance of the women representatives of the local government.

5.1 Political Participation of the Women Members

Political participation requires knowledge and interest in politics, participation in political activities and perception of political competence and efficacy. It is important to know the political backgrounds of the women representatives such as reasons for joining politics, sources of participation, previous experience in politics, position in the political parties, and family members' involvement in politics.

5.1.1 Reasons of the Women Participation in Politics

Participants were asked about their motivation for becoming a political candidate. The main reason given by the elected women representatives in our country was involvement with student politics and/or community activism for the betterment of the society in general.

Table 11: Distribution of the Respondents by Reasons for Entering Politics

Reasons	No. of Respondents	Percent
Involved with student politics, community works and had political discussions at family since childhood	13	22.0
Involved with student politics and union movements	20	34.0
Involved with social justice issues	15	25.5
Worked for unions, used to work for many politicians in campaign	11	18.5
Total	**59**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The table 11 shows that at the local level in Bharatpur, fifteen women became involved in politics as a result of being upset with their social activities, and another fifteen were engaged social justice in community activities. Others inspired the political unions of eleven women participants (Table 11).

5.1.2 Type of Seats by the Women Participants

While in Nepal women stand against men in the same types of seats, the reserved seat system in Nepal means that women have a choice whether to run against men for general positions or seek office in reserved seats. Only thirty-six women participants won in a direct election. The rest of women respondents are in the local level politics by contesting in the reserved seats for women. As the general seats in local and national governments in Nepal are very competitive, women find it difficult to win. So, they prefer to contest in the reserved seats. The reserve seat selection at the parliament is made after the national election when the majority parties call for applications from interested female candidates to contest for the reserved seats. After the initial selection, candidates face an interview board to justify why the party should nominate her, description of her contribution to party politics, the way she intends to manage her constituency and so on.

5.1.3 Reasons for Women Participation in Politics

In recent times, there has been a common realization that a well-built and Successful local government is one of the elemental preconditions for ensuring good governance. It is commonly agreed by every conscious people that an effective local government is the strong foundation on which the success of any democratic nation rests. In Nepal, women are identified with domestic activities while politics is viewed as a male dominated public activity, which is actually masculine in nature. However, women have been more politically stable in the last two decades.

The government of Nepal has amended its laws for fair representation of gender in the local government to ensure good governance. Notwithstanding the fact that constitutional support and legislative measures are necessary for bringing out social change, this however, cannot be achieved single handedly. Conscientious effort is needed to strengthen and consolidated women of Nepal for significant empowerment. The question is whether an intervention like the constitutional amendment is able to ensure women's empowerment or whether the patriarchal structures, manifested in the household and the state, will continue to. Through women constitutes half of the total population of Nepal, their participation in both electoral and representative politics are insignificant.

Nepal government has signed the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which guarantees political and civil rights for women. These guarantees have led to national policies and programs being established which aim to work for change in women's lives. The local government of Nepal is required to consult and to ensure participation although this is not always gender specific.

5.2 Social and Cultural Issues for Women in Nepal

Women are underrepresented in local government in Nepal. However, recent years have witnessed an increasing awareness of women's productive roles, mobility, and their contribution to development. Ever since the first world conference on Women in Mexico 1975, gender issues have increasingly become a predominant theme of the worldwide development discourse.

A. Family

The life of women in Nepal is therefore dominated by this social system. Such a system upholds a rigid division of labor that controls women's mobility, roles and responsibility, and sexuality. Traditionally, a woman in Nepal derives her status from her family. Her role includes the maintenance of her family as a social institution and as an economic entity. Most importantly, through child bearing and child rearing, she ensures the existence of succeeding generations. Increasingly, however, women's roles, responsibility and mobility are changing due to persistent poverty and the gradual erosion of the familial umbrella of support.

B. Patriarchy

The traditional patriarchal society of Nepal is based on class and gender divisions. Class mobility allows movement between rich and poor, but the division of social space and the difference in behavioral norms between men and women are rigidly maintained. *The family, which constitutes the basic unit of social control, sets the norm for male and female roles. Within this system, the father or in his absence, the next male kin are the head of the household.* As a result, both decision making powers and economic control are vested in hands of men. Furthermore, the family operates through a clearly defined to inherit their father's property in favor of brothers or in the event of inheriting property, pass control to their husbands or sons. In both cases, the man gives protection to the woman in return for control over her property, thus directly reinforcing a patriarchal tradition.

C. Gender discrimination

The participants have identified family responsibility as the major impediment to political participation of women in Nepal, as women, particularly with young children; suffer due to lack of time to spend in politics. Furthermore, lack of support from husbands or partners and other family members, lack of time to balance between family and politics, and extensive travelling that are closely related to family responsibilities; hinder the participation of women in politics. According to one participant:

The balance of work and family commitment is difficult; many women see the juggle of having a family and entering local government as too complex and give up the idea

of entering politics. One participant also talked about the demands of maintaining a work/family balance: *Politics is a continuous job; you have to make time for the people important in your life.* I do not have any child. However, I try to manage time for my partner. Many families end with divorce because of lack of time for family (Interview).

Likewise, another participant stated: *Women have the primary responsibility to look after children and seniors in the family.* Therefore, women who have young children without family support find it difficult to travel and stay long hours. I am lucky that my children are grown up and married. However, my parents are old enough, and I am the prime caregiver. When I am away, I depend on other people to look after them (Interview).

Similarly, a participant said: If the family or partner does not provide support that is quite a big challenge for women. In general, a woman in politics has no children or adult children. Otherwise, *women have children from their first marriage. It is seen that partners or husbands of women are criticized negatively from people*; that puts pressure on relationships. A successful woman needs to find a partner who is happy to do all house issues.

Another participant noted the lack of childcare facilities: Women, especially young women do not join politics due to lack of support from family and lack of adequate childcare facilities. *I had a nanny at home, childcare facilities and a supportive mother. Many women lack access to these facilities.* Lack of childcare facilities is a big issue for women that keep them outside the job market and politics (Interview).

The prime role of women as mothers and caregivers keeps them mostly busy, which makes it difficult if not impossible to join politics unless they have support from the family and state institutions like childcare. The dropout rate of girls is much higher than boys from the secondary level onwards. Parents are reluctant to send daughters to school because they fear for the daughter's safety, as chastity and the reputation of unmarried girls are crucial factors that determine her value in the eyes of her potential husband and in laws. Girls are viewed as potential mothers and homemakers; thus, priority is given to their training in domestic chores rather than to their right to an education.

5.3 Women and Electoral Process

Although Nepali women do not hold key positions during the electoral process, they render significant contributions during election campaigns by taking part in organizing public meetings, processions, and rallies. Women leaders and party workers engage in the task of mobilizing and canvassing votes, particularly women, for their party candidates. By making special arrangements such as separate election booths for women and female presiding as polling officers and turn out rate of women votes has increased. During the general elections of 2047 local level elections in 2074 the level of enthusiasm among women to exercise their voting rights was very encouraging. Because of the special arrangements and security measures taken by the Government, there were few disturbances and the presence of women in polling centers was significant.

5.3.1 Nepal: Legal Rights and Political Participation of Women

The constitution of Nepal grants equal rights to women and men in all spheres of public life article. However, due to a variety of cultural factors as well as the misinterpretation of religion, woman's human rights are often violated. Various laws have been enacted and amended to protect women's right. The constitution of Nepal adopted in 2072. The fundamental principles of state policy are articulated   and in the chapter on Local Government a clear vision of Local Governance is to be found. The state will encourage local government institutions composed of representatives of the areas concerned and, in such institutions, special

The Constitution of Nepal 2072 guarantees certain rights and privileges to women for their fundamental rights. The clauses on women's rights and their basic freedom were ensured in the Constitution. Not with standing all barriers and patriarchy, women have become more politically visible in the last two decades; a quota has ensured women's presence in the local government and national Parliament. Among women politicians, the older group entered politics through social work, while some along them and the new generation of women have emerged from student politics. Despite many odds, statistics and analyses reveal a slowly growing trend towards women's political participation.

However, they face an ominous challenge. There has also been a growing influence of money in Nepal politics, particularly in electoral politics and in guarding/promoting spheres of influence. This acts as a further constraint on women's political participation since fewer women have access to financial resources.

5.3.2 Women in Political Party Position

Party affiliation depends on membership drives and on the organizational and electoral needs of each party. The actual number of women members in different political parties, however, cannot be determined, since gender-specific records are not maintained. Nevertheless, a slow trend towards women's greater participation has emerged over the decade as party workers, women render valuable contributions in the mobilization of voters, especially among other women. Although there are only a few women in leadership positions, their numbers have increased over the last two decades. There is limited female involvement in party hierarchical statures.

However, women do not occupy the top leadership positions in each of the two largest parties in Nepal Communist Party (NCP) under the leadership of K.P Sharma Oli and Puspa Kamal Dahal and Nepali Congress led by Sher Bahadur Deuwa. They became leaders during crisis periods and have been successful as driving forces and unifying factors of their respective parties. Significantly, neither of them inherited the mantle of leadership generate their own dynamics and momentum to lead their parties through difficult times.

Nevertheless, their close and inner circle of advisors mostly consists of men. In occupying the role of a leader in public life, they have perhaps contributed to liberalizing values in a predominantly Hindu culture where traditionally men had exclusive prerogative in politics. They played a crucial role toward democratization and brought about a certain degree of continuity into the political process. They have a strong potential to be positive role models for women of all ages in Nepal, provided they demonstrate a commitment to gender equity by involving more women in their parties and in government. The election manifestos and constitutions of different political party's revel that there is little emphasis on gender equality in party platforms.

The research complements the constitution of Nepal by developing a vision for local governance. Four fundamental vision statements arise out of the analysis and findings of the research work. These are:

• Local government is an integral part of a comprehensive national governance vision of partnership between Central government and Local government.
• The inclusion of all social groups is a fundamental necessity for autonomous local government.
• Self-governance is possible and is a desirable outcome of democratic institution building.
• The individual Nepali is capable and resilient, despite adversities and is deserving of trust and management of public goods and services.

In Nepal, women have been excluded from areas of decision-making process. Their potential remains overlooked or unrecognized. Their contributions in the society are often unnoticed. Women's equal participation in political area plays a vital role in the general process of the advancement of women. It is not only a claim for justice or democracy but can also be seen as an essential condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's issues at all levels of decision-making, the goal of gender equality, and development cannot be achieved.

5.3.3 Participation of Women Members in Various Activities in Local Level

The participation of women members in various development activities are given below:

(a) Infrastructural development, constructions of road, bridges culvert etc.

(b) Relief and rehabilitation.

(c) Health and environment improvement,

(d) Women and child development, public health

(e) Social justice, decision making in village court, arbitration and

(f) Communication with public and private sectors etc.

5.4 Behavioral Pattern

5.4.1 Behavioral Pattern: Male Members

The traditional patriarchal society of Nepal is based on class and gender divisions. Within this system, the father, or in his absence, the next male kin is the head of the household. As a result, both decision making powers and economic control are vested in hands of men. As a result, both decision making powers and economic control are vested in hands of men. Most women are not used to being active and participating in the public sphere, and lack of confidence which is of course important for the work in party. The interviewers also mentioned that many villagers, both men and women; think it is difficult to accept a woman as a representative as this is not the traditional role of a woman. Behavior of the male counterpart as revealed by the thirty-six women representative which is presented as follows:

Table 12: Distribution of the Respondents by Behavior of Male Members

Category	No. of Respondents	Percent
Not Fair	10	17.0
Fair	15	25.5
Satisfactory	18	30.5
Good	16	27.0
Total	59	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Women representatives who had given their opinion regarding the attitude and behaviors of the male counterparts towards the women representatives are being stated here. 10 women members about 17.0% informed that their behaviors towards women were "not fair". 15 women 25.5% informed "fair", 18 women 30.5% had told "satisfactory, and rest of them 16 women (27.0%) had mentioned, "good". However, these women members often encountered discrimination from the male members.

The male dominated and male-biased environment within political institutions in the local government deters women participation. The fact that there are few women on decision-making bodies means that these women have to work within their limitation of acceptance by the male dominated society. Sometime they are ignored and ill-treated by their male colleagues. Most of the men believe that women should not run for general seats, they also denigrate the value of the reserved seats.

Lack of cooperation by men in the local level politics is a significant barrier to women's effectiveness in decision-making. As a result, women cannot give attention to their genuine issues. Their behaviors to women were manifested in many ways, for example by showing lack of respect and honor, ill manner, laughter etc. Some women also reported that the chairman and male members had been unhappy when they had demanded fund for development projects. On the other hand, in most cases the elected women members are systematically discriminated by male, verbally abused, always assigned to specific development committee and excluded from arbitration committee, etc. Most of the female members noted that in general they have a confrontational relationship with their respective Chairman and male members. They hardly get support, sympathy and or cooperation from their male counterparts and the Chairman.

5.4.2 Women Member's Experiences of Participation

Most of the female members have been elected for the first time acknowledged that the training is important and necessity for them. The training has developed their understanding of the role and function of politics, and improved basic managerial skills. The following table shows the experience of participation scenario of women in the local government elections.

Table 13: Women Members' Experience in Local Level Election

Category	No. of Respondents	Percent
First time participated in politics	44	74.5
Previously participated in politics	15	25.5
Total	**59**	**100.0**

 Source: Field Survey, 2022

Analysis of the findings shows that 44 women (74.5%) members have participated in first time in local level election and rests of the 15 women (25.5%) were re-elected in local level election. The study had found that number of women contesting in general seats is poor and the number is low. How the communities had viewed these women representatives has affected those women who have created greater social legitimacy for women.

5.4.3 Barriers for Women Representatives

Politics has long been dominated and controlled by men in both Australia and Bangladesh; men formulated the rules of the political game, and men defined the standards for evaluation. The legacy of this male-dominated model has resulted in lower interest and involvement of women in politics. It is essential to ensure that commitment to equality is reflected in laws and policies of the government to achieve gender parity in politics (Shvedova, 2005). The local leader said the masculine nature of politics, lack of party support, limited access to political networks, and lack of mentoring and training systems for women and especially for young women is identified as the main political hindrances to women.

While such behavior is, to some extent, part and parcel of the rough and tumble nature of political life in Nepal, it can easily slip into a condescending and misogynist tone (or can readily be interpreted as such) when it takes place between politicians of the opposite sex. Another participant commented: Sometimes the attitudes of male politician's act as barriers. There is still sexism in political parties. That is why women are few in the Political parties (Interview). One other participant said: There are some blokes who make sexist comments on women. The attitudes of some men hamper women's participation in politics. You need to be very tough and confident to be there (Interview).

Following graph shows the main barriers for the women representative in discharging their duties while in office.

Table 14: Distribution of the Respondents by the Barriers in Politics

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percent
Lack of education	19	32.0
Patriarchy	15	25.5
Lack of awareness about women's right	25	42.5
Total	59	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The table 14 shows that 19 women (32.0%) had said that lack of education is the major barriers for a smaller number of participation of women in politics. Education is the strongest factor influencing women's control of their own destiny. Women are furthermore poor in a scene because of lower educational achievements and the prevalence of social norms that severely restrict their freedom of movement in the public place. Therefore, they do not show interest in participating in local government activities.

15 women (25.5%) reported that patriarchy system of Nepal was one of the major factors. Patriarchy as a system, an ideology and practice impact in different ways on the lives of women wherever they are. Patriarchal attitudes become so embedded that they are taken as normal. Even where there is supposed equality, these attitudes tend to prevail in the society. The patriarchal society enforces rules and laws in such way that affect the self-confidence of women, limit their access on resources and information and thus keep them in a lower status compared to men. Although women have equal political rights to participate as voters and representatives, in reality they can be actively discouraged to do so.

5.4.4 Removal of Barriers

Women representative are of the opinion that there are many barriers for the women to effectively participate and function properly in the activities of the local government. Following table gives an impression of the views expressed by them to alleviate the barriers:

Table 15: Distribution of the Respondents by Removal of Barriers

Category	No. of Respondents	Percent
Remove quota system	5	8.5
Specific duties to be given	15	25.0
Free from political influence	5	8.5
Active participation	14	24.0
Equal distribution of work	20	34.0
Total	**59**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey, 2022

In reply to the question "*what is your opinion regarding the removal of barriers of the women representatives.*" Among 59 women member's 5 women (8.5%) member was in favor of Government removal of the quota system. It is mentionable that the implementation of quota system in Nepal has been regarded as a historical step, not only to increase the number of women in formal politics but also when it comes to political empowerment for women in the region. However, no doubt, as a step of women empowerment, the elected reserved seats for women helps to promote participation and women access to the decision-making process numerically, though not practically much ensured.

That is why these women do not agree fully on quota system. 15 women (25.0) reported that specific duties to be given to women members so that women member can meaningfully participate in all type of functions. Roles and responsibilities of the women members should be clearly defined in the manuals and ordinance of local go politics.

5.4.5 Problems Faced by the Women

All the participants mentioned the intimidating nature of politics as a serious impediment to the participation of women in politics. A Ward member also made a similar observation: Politics is an area of confrontation, and it is an aggressive place. Women do not like aggressiveness and avoid it. A Party interviewee listed the "brutal" nature of politics alongside factors identified earlier in this chapter as collectively

making politics a "man's game." According to her: *Politics is still a man's game and quite hard for women.* Politics is time-consuming, brutal, demanding, needs sacrificing the family life that many women cannot afford (Interview).

Nine of the local government participants also recognized the aggressive nature of politics as a deterrent to the political participation of women. One member said: Women have the overall attitude that politics is a men's game. Politics is very antagonistic to what women are afraid of. Because it is so competitive and combative, it does not suit a lot of women (Interview).

The following table 16 shows the problems which are mainly faced by the women members in the Local level politics.

Table 16: Distribution of the Respondents by Various Problems

Problems	No. of Respondents	Percent
Family issue	36	61.0
Health	12	20.5
(judgment)	2	3.5
Dowry	3	5.0
Others	6	10.0
Total	**59**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey, 2022

From the table 16, it was observed that women representatives are facing many problems and have been doing their active roles through barriers. They are committed to do so though many obstacles are there which they faced everywhere. Having a tough situation, women representatives are really gaining lots of experience. Counseling and providing motivational support were the prime role for women in the health and environmental activities. A large proportion (20.0%) of the women leaders were involved in setting up and building awareness for health. Environmental activities for the safety of the environment, plantation and awareness creation about the danger of arsenic contaminated water were also reported as a very important work for them.

Besides these, other activities that the members were involved into prevent violence against women, arbitration. Only 3 women members (5.0%) were trying to boosting up awareness through meeting, conducting case or informing police. Most of them reported they were being involved in mobilizing financial assistance for the vulnerable women. The women members prefer to settle disputes related to marriage, divorce, polygamy and dowry. The general perception is that women members are more likely to relate to the difficulties faced by women in their locality.

5.4.6 Difficulties Created by the Male Counterparts

A local women politician stated: Politics is full of conflict and unfair competition. Men do not leave space for women; women have to fight to secure their place. The political environment, the image of political leaders, rampant corruption all discourage women to get involved here (Interview).

Table 17: Facing Difficulties by the Male Counterparts

Difficulties Responses	No. of Respondents	Percent
In some cases,	26	44.0
More	4	7.0
Never	23	39.0
Frequently	6	10.0
Total	**59**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey, 2022

At the local level the nomination procedure gave rise to allegations of manipulation by the social elite as well as by the civil administration. The local women members obviously did not have the same weight and social status as the male members as they were not directly elected. The study found that nominated women came from the rural elite and that they were quite inactive in their role as members. The most important factor in being nominated was their kinship or social status.

26 women (44.0%) elected members have faced difficulties in some cases by their male counterparts. 4 women 7.0 had been faced a lot of difficulties as the male counterparts did not want them to stand for election. 23 women (39.0%) expressed with simplicity

that they never got any problems during the election period. 6 women (10.0%) frequently had faced problem by their male counterparts as the males always the critics of their roles. Few women representatives mentioned that they had been facing different types of problem.

5.4.7 Initiatives Taken by the Women Members for Local People

On the issue to raise participation of women in local politics, women had expressed with dissatisfaction that they had not been able to do anything as per their abilities and they have not participated in the meetings in Local level politics. (table 18).

Table 18: Distribution of the Respondents by Initiatives Taken

Initiatives Taken	No. of Respondents	Percent
To raise political empowerment	9	15.0
To aware on women rights	10	17.0
To increase women education	15	25.5
To safe womanhood	10	17.0
To generate decision making policy	15	25.5
Total	**59**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey, 2022

How to increase participation of women in local politics, 9 women (15%) had expressed with sorrow that they had not been able to do anything as per their abilities and they had not participated in the meetings in Local Government. They told that sometimes they had been able to do the development work for the local roads, culverts, bridges and distributing VGF (Vulnerable Groups Feeding) cards.

To improve female education, 15 persons (25.5%) were involved in education committee run by the community. 10 persons (17.0%) were committed to safe women hood and 15 persons (25.5%) were involved in decision making policy. It was quite clear that there was a discrepancy between what they had done and both their knowledge about local problems and what they wanted to do about these problems.

The respondents had reported that they had helped to improve the situation for divorced women and widows, provided necessary assistance, safe drinking water facilities to the primary school and water and sanitation facilities, awareness against the practice of dowry and early marriage etc.

5.4.8 Quota System for Participation of Women

It was clear that their new role through reserved seat had changed a majority of the women's social status both in their family and in the village. They could talk publicly, people listened to them. Quota system is essential for ensuring participation of women representatives at local governance. It is reported by the 17 women (29.0%) that quota is necessary for women political empowerment. The table 16 shows the responses for essentiality of the quota system.

Table 19: Distribution of the Respondents by the Essential of Quota System

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percent
Political empowerment	17	29.0
Increase number of participants	13	22.0
Develop women's situation	21	36.0
Step towards mainstream Politics	8	13.0
Total	**59**	**100.0**

Sources: Field Survey, 2022

As shown in the table 19, it shows that 13 people (22%) said that increasing number of participants in local level has been significantly improving. This system can develop women's situation in formal politics, said 21 women (36%). Through this system keeping step towards the mainstream of politics is increasing, reported by 8 women members (13%).

Respondents replied: *Here it is mentionable and is widely reported that the women quotas are not met or that even where they are met, women representative are perceived as appointees representing political interest groups and often adopt a passive role.* The quotas tend to act as a ceiling on women's representation, rather than a minimum and may thus have a negative impact on women's representation in the long run. Therefore,

it has been considerable debate in the women's participation issue, and most of the women had opposed the quota system (Interview).

5.4.9 Women's Capacity to Perform in Local Level Politics

The relation between the system of reserved seats in Local Government and women's capacity to act seems to be dependent on a lot of factors. One of these things is the gendered norms and the practice of *Hindu Religion*. Thus, the elected women members of each Local Government in general seat or in reserved seats both they do not have much history of formal involvement in activities pertaining to the public domain. Women lack political experience become uncertain in public life.

In local level, politics are considered to be a 'male' thing and not for women. In the villages people have problems accepting that a woman can be a representative. The gendered norms also have an influence on women's abilities to act in Local Government as some elected male members do not want to accept and cooperate with women.

The election-system, with expensive election campaigns, also makes women dependent on support from their families. This may also restrict the elected women's ability to make their own decisions in Local Government. Even though the size of the ward is bigger (which make it more time consuming and more expensive than an election in the general seats) the competition is not equal to the general seats.

Many of the women I talked said that it was easier to be elected from the reserved seats than from the general seats since they do not have to compete with the men. When it comes to the authority and resources of Local Government this seems to have an impact on the ability for *both* the members in the general seats (often men) and the members in the reserved seats.

The central government control has consequences for what type of project they can develop and all the members are dependent on their relation to the chairman. But when it comes to the lack of resources women seem to be more vulnerable than the male members. The problem is that the chairman and the male members, compared to most of the women, have an income of their own and access to the family's income. They can also fulfill their commitments to their voters more easily than the women members even if the funds of the union are small and then become influential in society.

5.5 Hindrances to Women Participation in Local Government

- **Patriarchal Values and Norms**

The main reason for law political participation of women in politics is the patriarchal structure society. According to our traditions and culture the participation of women in politics and the public eye is against the generally accepted role of women. The patriarchal values have subjected and distempered women.

- **Lack of Family Support**

Family support can either prevent or promote women from participating in politics. Women who come from families with a story political history will often be encouraged to continue the work of past relatives. Women generally need to receive permission from their husband's or fathers order to embark on a political career. Without this permission and support it would be very difficult for women to become successful politicians. This is not only because of the financial help but also for moral encouragement.

- **Wrong Social and Cultural Views**

It is generally expected by majority of people, both male and female, that the women's role is in the home. Women are considered stupid and ignorant when it comes to mattes of any real importance. When they are constantly being told that they are not intelligent enough to participate in politics it is not wonder that they do not believe in themselves. Women are encouraged to believe that politics is too much complicated for them to understand and so it is best left to men. They should stay at home, cooking and cleaning and heaving children. Women who do have a slight inclination to achieve something in life might be encouraged to be a nurse, midwife or school teacher as these are jobs in their league.

- **Lack of Education and Awareness**

  We have already seen that the literacy rate of women is considerably lower than that of men. Boys are encouraged to attend schools whereas girls are of more use in the home. This denial of a basic education means that the majority of women realize that they are not receiving their full rights. It is difficult to teach them when they cannot read and difficult for them to stand up for themselves when they cannot write.

- **Economics Dependency**

  As already mentioned, funds are required in order to embark upon a political career. The majority of women are financially dependent. They do not have the freedom to make their own decisions and do as they want. A woman who wants to become involved in politics but has no funds must have the support of her family.

Other Obstacles are:

- Low level of literacy and political awareness among women.

- Lack of confident, competent and credible women who can act as the role models for other women at all levels of society.

- Growing criminalization, corruption and lumpenization of polities, thereby making it increasingly difficult for the women to increasingly difficult to participate actively in the politics.(JagaranNepal:2007)

Weak civil society and isolationist as well as divisive tendencies among the women groups and other alternate groups have provided a care balance freedom to unprincipled and amoral people to misuse the political power.

WAY FORWARD FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT FOR VIBRANT POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

1. To change socio-economic and political attitudes and social structures and engage the social institutions to transform the factors which hinder women's political participation

2. Women have to gain political exposures prior to their recruitment into politics; this will enable them to play their roles more effectively and efficiently. And it will also enhance their knowledge on how to write good political manifestos, how to conduct successful political campaigns and the right methods or approaches to use to use in public address or rally, how to manage their time in order to balance between the multiple tasks of reproductive and productive roles.

3. Need for social transformations in order to sensitize the public about the women's inclusion in politics

4. Women must join and actively participate in the existing community organizations in order to show their capabilities to the community and at the same time must form special organizations which raise their awareness, and work as lobbying forces that promotes their equal rights in both civil and political domains.

5. The formations of women's linkages and co operations are vital to overcome such barriers in concerted efforts.

6. The government and community should recognize women's role in the society in as far as governance and state building is concerned

7. Tribalism can only be reduced through media, and awareness programme addressing its bad impact on community development and the women's political participations.

8. For better future political environment Children should be socialized in a manner which enhances them to conceptualize the roles of gender in development, interactions between genders, culture, and environment to build a community not based on tribal linage.

CHAPTER - VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary

6.1.1 Research Methods and Objectives

The title of the study was Women Participation in Local government: A study of women members fromBharatpur Metropolitan City of Chitwan District. The main objectives of the study were to the assess increase of women in local level politics along with the increment of women's participation and the status of women's participation in the local election at Chitwan.

The sources of primary data were the sample respondents. Primary data was collected though the administrations of questionnaires and direct interview with respondents of the study; the researcher himself administered the questionnaires. In Bharatpur Metropolitan City, All the women fifty-nine women leader who were elected in local election 2079 from the three major political parties in Bharatpur Metropolitan City, Chitwan were selected for the interview. All the elected women members from three major political parties were taken as respondents for this study. The data was sorted into themes and systematically analyzed to identify issues emerging from the discussion and to interpret meanings under thematic areas. The edited data was then presented by using presentation style such as table and graphical notation. The descriptive analysis tools such as frequencies and percentage were applied to analyze the data.

6.1.2 Major Findings

Fifteen women became involved in politics as a result of being upset with their social activities, and another fifteen were engaged social justice in community activities. The balance of work and family commitment is difficult; many women see the juggle of having a family and entering local government as too complex and give up the idea of entering politics

10 women members about 17.0% informed that their behaviors towards women were "not fair". 15 women 25.5% informed "fair", 18 women 30.5 % had told "satisfactory,

and rest of them 16 women (27.0%) had mentioned, "good". However, these women members often encountered discrimination from the male members.

 When asked whether *"Spending huge amount of money in the election is the barrier for the participation in politics for women, what is your opinion regarding this issue"*, 15 women (25.5 %) reported that patriarchy system of Nepal was one of the major factors. Patriarchy as a system, an ideology and practice impacts in different ways on the lives of women wherever they are. Patriarchal attitudes become so embedded that they are taken as normal. Even where there is supposed equality, these attitudes tend to prevail in the society. *Education is the strongest factor influencing women's control of their own destiny.* 15 women (24.5%) reported that patriarchy system of Nepal was one of the major factors. Patriarchy as a system, an ideology and practice impacts in different ways on the lives of women wherever they are. Patriarchal attitudes become so embedded that they are taken as normal.

As elected members in Local level politics their social empowerment had increased. 13 people (21.3%) said that increasing number of participants in local level has been significantly improving. This system can develop women's situation in formal politics, said 13 women (21.5%). Through this system keeping step towards the mainstream of politics is increasing, reported by 8 women members (13%).

The study examined to measure gender equality is political leadership, job, education and control over one's own body. It claims that poorer people in low-income societies prioritize fulfilling subsistence and survival needs rather than higher aspirations such as equal rights.Women in Nepal are a victim of patriarchy. The participants at the local government identified several barriers to their way of participation in the electoral politics that are commonly associated with patriarchal societies.

Domestic and reproductive roles of women; lack of access to the job market, property and finance; violence, harassment and insecurity; the aggressive nature of politics; lack of support by the political parties; lack of affirmative strategies for women; the process of socialization of girls and boys; treatment of media towards women, all are direct or indirect outcomes of the male-dominated social and political system. All female participants recognized patriarchy as one of the prime factors for low participation of

women in politics. However, it can be said that it is a complex issue as it can be traced back to a number of institutional, historical, socio-economic as well as cultural factors.

It can be surmised from this that woman in our country are facing the traditional societal barrier of male-domination that shapes and restricts their political participation. On the other hand, it is also important to consider the countervailing view that, instead of gender division being the result of tradition persisting despite modernization, modernization itself promotes gender inequalities through the espousal of certain masculinized ideals such as domination over nature and over one's peers (the pressure on women politicians to adopt masculinized traits is perhaps one example of this).

It is also evident that patriarchy influences women in each country in different ways specifically, societal restrictions characteristic of developing countries in the case of Nepal. It is found that domestic responsibility is the major hindrance to political participation of women. Women, especially with young children, juggle to balance their time. Additionally, if she is a working lady, she has to perform three jobs: family responsibilities, job and politics. Therefore, family support, especially from partner or husband, is a must. Attitude change is necessary in this regard.

6.2 Conclusion

In Nepal, social customs strengthen traditional family values and patriarchal norms of male ascendancy, strictly discouraging divorce, abortion and homosexuality and support negative attitudes against an independent economic role for women outside of the home. The legal framework incorporating property, marital, and citizenship rights for women reflects these traditional norms. Developing societies emphasize childbearing and child rearing as the central goal of any woman, the most crucial function in her life, and the utmost source of contentment and status. On the other hand, post-industrial societies place less emphasis on religion, traditional family values and authority and rising demands for participation in decision-making in economic and political life.

Political parties have a major role in ensuring gender equality in politics. All participants except representatives expressed their dissatisfaction regarding the role of their party towards women. In Nepal, the NC, NCP, and RPP are reluctant to nominate

women candidates to the general seats. The most difficult challenge for women is to get nomination from the male-dominated political parties. In both countries, women, in general, lack financial resources. It is easier for men to acquire funds because of their personal networks and inheritance law (for countries like Nepal). The political parties can play a vital role in recruiting more women by encouraging, supporting, training and mentoring women. Additionally, the government can declare special laws to ensure that 33% of candidates are women in the parliamentary and local government election.

Women usually lack financial resources that are essential in politics. Local government representatives in rural area receive some token money to bear their travel costs that are not sufficient in many cases. In Bangladesh, the government has recently raised the facilities for local government representatives. However, there is not satisfactory for members of the small pour as haves and local government. So, the government needs to provide financial support like establishing a common fund to assist female candidates to meet the costs of campaigning.

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ANNEX - I

WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

SEMI-STRUCTURE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

(All information from the survey will be confidential and will be used only in this research purpose)

1. *What is your name please?*

2. *What is your educational qualification? Please specify:*

   (a) Primary　　　*(b) Below secondary*　　　*(c) SLC*

   (d) HSC　　　*(e) Bachelor*　　　*(f) Masters(g) Others*

3. *What is your Past occupation?*

   (a) Farmer　　　*(b) Service holder*　　　*(c) Self employed*

   (d) Teacher　　　*(e) Business*　　　*(f) Others*

4. *Is this the first time that you have participated in local level election?*

   (a) First time participated in LG politics (b) Previously participated in LG politics

5. *Spending huge amount of money in the election would be the barrier to participate in politics for women, what is your opinion regarding this issue?*

   (a) Spending money is essential　　　*(b) Spending money is not essential*

6. *What is your opinion regarding the removal of barriers?*

   (a) Remove quota system

   (b) Specific duties to be given to Women members

   (c) Free from political influence

   (d) Active participation as an elected representative

   (e) Equal distribution of work

7. *What are the responsibilities of a women member in local government?*

   (a) Attending meeting　　　*(b) Decision making*

   (c) Participation in development of own area

8. *What are your responsibilities as a member?*

   (a) Attending meeting　　　*(b) Take part in decision making*

   (c) Participation in development of own area (no provision)

9. *Are you the Unit head/Chairperson of a committee? If yes, please specify.*

   (a) Yes　　　*(b) No*

10. *Which type of problems actually faces the people of your union?*

    (a) Family oriented issue (b) Health(c) Dowry(d) Divorce   (e) others

11. *Do you think that you are privileged to get extra benefits as a woman from government for women development?*

   (a)Yes   *(b) No*

12. *If government gives extra priority to you, what initiative you will take for the women?*

   (a) To raise political empowerment(b) To aware on women right

   (c) To increase women education (d) To safe womanhood

   (e) To generate decision making policy

13. *General seats and reserved seat, what is the difference between them?*

14. *"Quota system is essential for participation of women" Give some reasons if your answer is positive.*

(a) Quota is essential for women political empowerment(b) Increase number of participations

(c) Develop women situation (d) Step towards the mainstream of politics

15. *Have you got any government place to carry out your jobs?*

   (a)Yes   *(b) No*

16. *Did you fulfill your electoral manifesto given to the people?*

   (a) No   *(b) Yes(c)   A few*   *(d)   Most of all*

18. *Women will be aware more for participating in the local election, what is your opinion?*

   (a) Yes   *(b) No*

19. *What are the main barriers for non-participation of women representatives in local government?*

   (a) Lack of education(b) Patriarchy(c) Lack of awareness about women's right

20. *After getting your nomination have you faced any problems or difficulties by the male counterparts?*

   (a) In some case   (b) A lot   *(c) Never*   *(d) Frequently*

21. *In decision making, do your male counterparts estimate you like a human being or only as women? Or underestimate as women?*

   (a) Yes   *(b) No*

22. *For the development of your locality can you take initiative whether it is necessary?*

   (a) Not very much(b) Sometimes   *(c) Not really*

23. *Can you signify any of these jobs that make you satisfied as well as your community?*

   (a) Violence against women   *(b) Distribution of relief*

(c) Development of women   (d) Road construction

(e) Educational activities   (f) Child and women health care

(g) Dowry   (h) Acid victim(i) Child marriage(j) Girl's education

24. Before your participation was there any male members standing in the position of any Union or political parties?

(a)Yes   (b) No

25. You are an honorable woman member now. Would you please brief about your experience as a woman?

26. After getting nomination is there any help have you got during your election period from your family?

(a) Fully   (b) Partially

27. To be educated as a politician did you receive any multi chance from your family? What is your opinion?

28. What was your inspiration to become a people's representative?

(a) Family members   (b) Childhood dream(c) Not specific

29. As a women candidate have you faced any difficulties before election?

(a) Yes   (b) Sometime   (c) Partially   (d) Not at all.

30. At present what is the situation of a women in politics?

(a) Good   (b) Better than before   (c) Improving

31. What general acceptance are you getting as women representatives?

(a) Sometimes are getting (b) Sometimes are ignored.

32. Is there any difference between male or female representatives?

(a)Yes   (b) No

33. As a woman have you felt that male counterpart is non cooperative?

(a)Yes   (b) No (c) Sometimes

34. Are women representatives ignored by their male counterparts in decision making? If 'yes', why?

(a) All the time   (b) Sometimes

35. Are women potential/ skilled like men?

(a) Yes   (b) Not all the time

36. Did your family members help you when you participate in the election?

(a) Sometimes(b) All the time(c) Sometimes helpful

37. Women participation are upgrading nowadays, what is your opinion?

....

38. What is your role for the development of your locality?

....

39. What is your advice for the women who will be participating in the next election?

....

40. The new political parties are taking about including women and playing number games of how many women they have in their parties. Do you think that they are genuinely interested to include women for the sake of giving importance to women or are they seeking women voters?

....

41. How do you view feminism and its application Nepal? Prompts: Women who are much more confident and vocal are referred to as feminist. I have seen women some women bureaucrats who did not want to be associated with word feminist.

42. What are the challenges that hinder women's political participation and representation at the local governance and decision-making level? Are they any different from the challenges women face at the national level?

....

43. What are the good practices that help advance women's political participation and representation at the local level? What is the role of political parties in supporting women's engagement in local politics?

ENDING QUESTIONS

Do you want to add anything to this interview? Do you want to be anonymous?

....

ANNEX II

Interview Schedule

1. Why did you join politics?

Prompts: Was it your own interest? Did the people encourage you to join politics?

2. *How has democratic transition made an impact on women's status and roles?*

3. *I am sure there are women and girls in your constituency. How is the situation of women in the villages?*

    Prompts: What were their views? Did the women feel that democracy has been helpful?

4. *Do the existing patriarchal socio-cultural norms, especially, negative gender stereotypes about women hinder women's participation in the public decision-making forums in general and politics in particular?*

    Prompts: Phrases such as men are nine times superior to women and use of word more

5. *What was the most difficult experience that you had in the process of decision-making?*

6. *How do you perceive your male colleagues personally and professionally?*

7. *I am sure four of you adapted in a male dominated work environment. How did four of you adapt in male dominated work environment?*

8. *Do they accept you as a woman and treat you as a woman?*

9. *How different are they are in terms of respecting women from 2063 to 2074?*

10. *In your view, how different are women and men politicians?*

11. *When it comes to honesty and ethics, how different are men and women?*

    Prompts: What about ethics in finance, when it comes to using state fund? How is the ethics exercised in handling public money?

12. You said that sometimes you use men to convince men. I understand that you all discussed and amended rape issue under penal code and amended marriage act. These issues are about man –woman relationship. During these discussions, what kind of lobbying skills did you all use to convince men?

13. Did you all have to lobby for the domestic violence prevention bill? How was the process of discussion?

14. You talked about difficulties but what is the most difficult challenge for a woman politician?

15. What kind of support system must be in place to make your work easier as a politician, wife and mother?

16. How do you balance between professional and family time?

17. How is the voice of women political candidates- four of you, party workers, supporters and financiers within your party?

    Prompts: For example, how is the voice of women in party's general assembly or executive meetings? Do women have adequate voice with the party?

18. Do you think that in the long run, there is a need for a law to protect children and women?

19. How do you perceive quota mechanism to include a critical mass of capable women in the parliament so that it contributes to a balanced decision-making in the parliament?

20. How is the woman's level and quality of participation in your meeting?

    Prompts: Are they still shy of public speaking like before? What kind of issues do they raise in the meetings? If they fail to express themselves in public space, how do you get to listen to them?

21. Do you think that in the next elections the rural women will be sensitive enough to vote for women based on their present experience of their comfort with women politicians?

    Prompts: Do you think it needs an amendment to be equal and fair?