



Woman Participation on local level government in Kathmandu Valley

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Abstract

Every gender, caste, and class should have higher socioeconomic standards for a sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development goals requires equal political engagement at all levels of government. International normative frameworks uphold women's rights to equal political participation at all levels of government. In order to provide a more complete picture of women's political participation, this paper presents a local level data-based analysis of women's representation in local government in Kathmandu Valley (i.e. Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and Lalitpur Districts) in local elections 2074 B.S. (2017 A.D.) and 2079 B.S. (2022 A.D.). These women were chief and deputy chief of Metropolitan cities, Municipalities, District coordination committees, and Rural Municipal. These elected political positions serve as the narrative for the less well-known but crucial local level of government's ability to make decisions. The purpose of the study was to examine the situation of female electoral participation in local government. A descriptive examination of the secondary data revealed that there were no female chiefs in local level government in the capital city zone. There was a decline in female leadership among deputy chiefs, and there was very little female involvement in ward leadership. The study brought up several crucial issues regarding why female leaders couldn't win elective positions. It will be the subject of additional research.

Key Words: Local government, Decision-Making, Woman Political Participation

I. Introduction

Politics is a tool for distributing power. Politics can be characterized in two ways: first, as the study of power; and second, as the study of

conflict resolution (Bentley, Dobson, Grant, & Roberts, 1995). Politics can also be characterized as the simple arrangement of state administration (Naughton, 2001). Politics describes the state's quest for power. Therefore, it is concerned with power and how it is dispersed in society (or groups). It is important for everyone, men and women alike, to participate in politics. When the United Nations (UN) applied its core human rights provisions and recognized the importance of political engagement for each and every individual human being, it designated it as a fundamental political right (Sahu & Yadav, 2018). The language of SDG goal 5.5, "promote women's full and effective engagement and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life," makes explicit the significance of equitable political participation at all levels of government (United Nations General Assembly, 2015).

The majority of municipal governments are essentially patriarchal institutions, according to UN-Habitat. The fact that women have many duties in their families and communities, as well as the disparities in communication and decision-making styles between men and women, is not considered by their structures and procedures, which were created for and by men (Khosla & Barth, 2008). There are three reasons why there aren't many women running for office at the local government level: 1) The desire of women to run for office, 2) the selection procedure used by political parties to select candidates, and 3) public awareness of the significance of women in local politics. By Akirav in 2021 (Akirav, 2021).

There are four personal variables that can encourage women to enter politics and heighten their political ambition: mentoring, information, networking, and training (Akirav, 2021). Women's engagement, whether or not in financial, social, or



political roles, has remained vital even in this postmodern generation. Therefore, it is imperative to close the gender gap in education, political engagement, and employment opportunities—not just because doing so is just and fair, but also because doing so will have positive effects on a variety of societal outcomes (Duflo, 2012). Talking about political participation, Patrick J. Conge noticed that Political participation may be defined as individual or collective action at the national or local level that supports or opposes state structures, authorities, and /or decisions regarding allocation of Public good (Conge, 1988).

Many researchers, including Randall (1987), explore various barriers that prevent women from participating in politics, such as a lack of time due to domestic responsibilities, a lack of socialization for politics, a lower level of social capital and asset base than men as a result of discrimination in schools and the workplace, a lack of representation in jobs that are favorable to political careers, marginalization within male-dominated parties, and an inability to override male authority (Randall, 1987). A significant correlation between female education and political participation in Nepal's local government, both on an individual and societal level, has been discovered. It was discovered that for many women, access to school and a lack of high-quality education still pose obstacles. This demonstrates how education underprepared women are for leadership. Gender stereotypes were one of the major obstacles for women in leadership, according to (Kiamba, 2008). In Nepal's local government, it was discovered that there was a strong correlation between female education and political participation at both the individual and societal levels. Access to political power and the decision-making process is regarded as a barometer of the status of women in society as a whole (Shrestha, 2001).

Dr. Tapan Kumar Sahu and Kusum Yadav's study recommended that the government, civil society, and women activists endeavor to increase community understanding of the importance of women's participation in politics and governance. The government should start initiatives that promote women's political x Initiatives, and the males need to recognize the need for political power among women and alter how they view women. The study also advised more research in the following areas: an analysis of civil society organizations' contributions to the advancement of women's political involvement and human rights; a study that could assess the policy gaps concerning gender equity in governance and politics for women

empowerment and other study could be conducted in the field concerning implication of culture on women's political participation and decision making (Sahu & Yadav, 2018). The majority of studies on gender representation at the local level in the US (Adams & Schreiber, 2011; Holman, 2014) and European nations (Sundström & Stockemer, 2015; Hernández-Nicolás, Martín-Ugedo, & Mínguez-Vera, 2018) concentrate on descriptive and substantive representation in municipalities.

Nepali women have established themselves as essential players of socio-political transformation despite difficult circumstances throughout the country's political history, as was mentioned before in the article (Upreti B. R., 2009; Pandey, 2019). These favourable election conditions were one of the main elements that made sure that women participated more actively and significantly in politics. We discovered that women have succeeded in increasing their participation in political roles despite the many obstacles they confront in the political and electoral processes. What has been accomplished thus far, nevertheless, is insufficient, and sustained concerted activity among all parties is crucial (Upreti, Upreti, & Ghale, 2020) The new constitution of 2015 guaranteed women hitherto inconceivable representation of 33% of all seats in the Constituent Assembly with the implementation of affirmative action in 2007 (Lotter, 2017).

Women have not been able to improve their political representation at various levels, positions of power, and decision-making despite constitutional provisions on women's representation, extensive engagement in the 1990 movement for democracy, and improved knowledge. This study was created and outlined some significant barriers to women participating in politics. In this sense, ideological, political, social, and economic variables are all crucial (Sapkota, 2018).

Despite the supportive legal and policy frameworks, there are still not enough women in executive, judicial, and administrative positions (Upreti, Adhikari, Shivakoti, & Kolas, 2018). The key difficulties faced by Nepal's 190 locally elected women representatives were identified by an exploratory study on the needs and capacity of women representatives by the Asia Foundation. When asked about some of the difficulties they encountered after winning office, 53% of the questioned MPs mentioned concerns with time management, 9% mentioned financial issues, 6% mentioned caste- and gender-based discrimination, and 3% mentioned transportation issues (The Asia Foundation, 2018)



The three levels of government are different, independent, and connected, according to Nepal 2072's constitution. Local governments are far more in touch with the populace. To share power among the governments, Nepal is currently organized into 77 districts, 7 Provinces, and 753 local government units. According to the population census of 2021, Nepal has a total population of 2,91,92,480. They have a male population of 14291311 (48.96%) and a female population of 14901169 (51.04%), which equals a 95.91 gender ratio (CBS, 2021).

A major turning point for the nation was the local elections in 2074 B.S., which were held after almost 20 years. It is also a strong step towards gender and social inclusion in the government and ending the political impasse that beset the country for many years. The local elections 2074 B.S. were held in three phases: May, June, and September 2017. A total of 35,041 local representatives were elected across 753 local units: 6 metropolises, 11 sub metropolises, 276 municipalities, and 460 rural municipalities (Election Commission, 2017). Of these 35,041 elected representatives, 14,352 or 40.96% were women (Election Commission, 2017).

In the Local level Election of 2079 B.S., out of 55699 candidates, 14402 female members were chosen. One province had 2455 female candidates elected out of 8196 female candidates, Madhesh Pradesh had 2770 female candidates elected out of 15780 female candidates, Bagmati province had 2347 female candidates elected out of

8344 female candidates, Gandaki province had 1622 female candidates elected out of 4649 female candidates, and Lumbini province had 2124 female candidates elected out of 8767 female candidates. Similar results were achieved in Sudur Paschim Pradesh, where 1560 female candidates were chosen from 5085 female candidates, and Karnali Province, where 1524 female candidates were chosen from 4878 female candidates. 123 local levels had dalit women members who were unfilled, and one local level had a woman member. As stated by (Election commission, 2022). In three municipalities, women were elected as chief and deputy chief. In the election of 2079, 25 chief and 554 deputy chiefs were chosen (Election commission Nepal, 2022a).

This study attempts to investigate the role of women in local administration among the districts of Kathmandu, Lalitpur, and Bhaktapur. Nepal's capital is divided into three districts. More easily accessible here than in other places are facilities for education, health, technology, and other things.

II. Observation and Discussion

The chairperson and vice chairperson of rural municipalities, as well as elected mayors and deputy mayors of metropolitan towns and municipalities, were all profiled in this study using secondary data sources. The following table shows the representation of women in local government leadership.

Table no. 1: Number of Elected women in Kathmandu District

Municipalities	Local Election 2074 B.S. (2017A.D.)			Location Election 2079 B.S. (2012A.D.)			Total wards
	Chief	Deputy Chief	Ward Chairperson	Chief	Deputy Chief	Ward Chairperson	
Kathmandu Metropolitan		1	1		1		32
Kageshwori		1			1		9
Kirtipur		1			1	1	10
Gokarneshwor		1			1		9
Chandragiri		1			1		15
Tokha		1			-	1	11
Tarakeshwor		1	1		1		11
Dakshankali		1			1		9
Nagarjun		1			1		10
Budhanilkantha		1			1	1	13
Shankharapur		1			1		9
Total		11	2		10	3	138

Source : (Photo Nepal, 2020 ; Election Commission Nepal, 2022b)



In neither the municipal elections held in Kathmandu districts in 2017 A.D. nor in 2022 AD, according to the table above, was there a female mayor. In the municipal elections of 2017 A.D., female candidates won the position of deputy mayor with 100%, however in Tokha Municipality, there was a loss of one deputy mayor, decreased the percentage of female candidates to 90.9% in the

local election 2022 A.D.. In the local election of 2017, two ward chairs were chosen from Tarakeshwor Municipality and Kathmandu Metropolitan City. By the local election in 2022, it has increased by one, and there are currently three female ward chairpersons in the Kathmandu district. They are in the municipalities of Kirtipur, Tokha, and Budhanilkantha.

Table no. 2: Number of Elected women in Bhaktapur District

Municipalities	Local Election 2074 B.S. (2017A.D.)			Location Election 2079 B.S. (2012A.D.)			Total wards
	Chief	Deputy Chief	Ward Chairperson	Chief	Deputy Chief	Ward Chairperson	
Chagunarayan		1					9
Bhaktapur		1			1		10
MadhyapurThimi		1					9
Suryabinayak		1			1		10
Total		4			2		38

Source:(Photo Nepal, 2020 ; Election Commission Nepal, 2022b)

The data about female leadership in local government in the Bhaktapur District is shown in the table above. In the local election of 2017 A.D., neither Bhaktapur nor Kathmandu had a female mayor, and the local election of 2022 A.D. had a similar outcome. In the local level election of 2022 AD, the deputy mayor of Bhaktapur was

unfortunately reduced by two. By the local level election in 2017 A.D., there were female deputy mayors in all four municipalities in Bhaktapur. However, in the municipal election of 2022 A.D., MadhyapurThimi and Chagunarayan lost the race for the female deputy mayor. In none of the elections, female ward chairs were chosen.

Table no. 3: Number of Elected women in Lalitpur District

Municipalities	Local Election 2074 B.S. (2017A.D.)			Location Election 2079 B.S. (2012A.D.)			Total wards
	Chief	Deputy Chief	Ward Chairperson	Chief	Deputy Chief	Ward Chairperson	
Lalitpur Metropolitan		1	1		1		32
Godawari Municipality		1			1		9
Mahalaxmi Municipality		1			1		10
Kongyosom Rural Municipality		1			-		9
Bagmati Rural Municipality		1			-		15
Mahankal Rural Municipality		1			1		11
Total		6			4		138

Source:(Photo Nepal, 2020 ; Election Commission Nepal, 2022b)

The table shows that the Lalitpur district is made up of one Metropolitan city, two Municipalities, and three Rural Municipalities. In both elections, no woman was elected mayor of the Lalitpur Metropolitan City, chairman of two

municipalities, or rural municipality chair. In both elections, there were no female ward chairpersons running for office. In Lalitpur district, the number of female deputy chiefs has reduced by two or to only



four from all six local governance positions being filled by women.

Table no. 4: Women Participation in District Co-ordination committee

District	Local Election 2074 B.S. (2017A.D.)		Location Election 2079 B.S. (2012A.D.)	
	Chief	Deputy Chief	Chief	Deputy Chief
Kathmandu	-	1	-	1
Bhaktapur	-	1	-	1
Lalitpur	-	-	-	-
Total		2		2

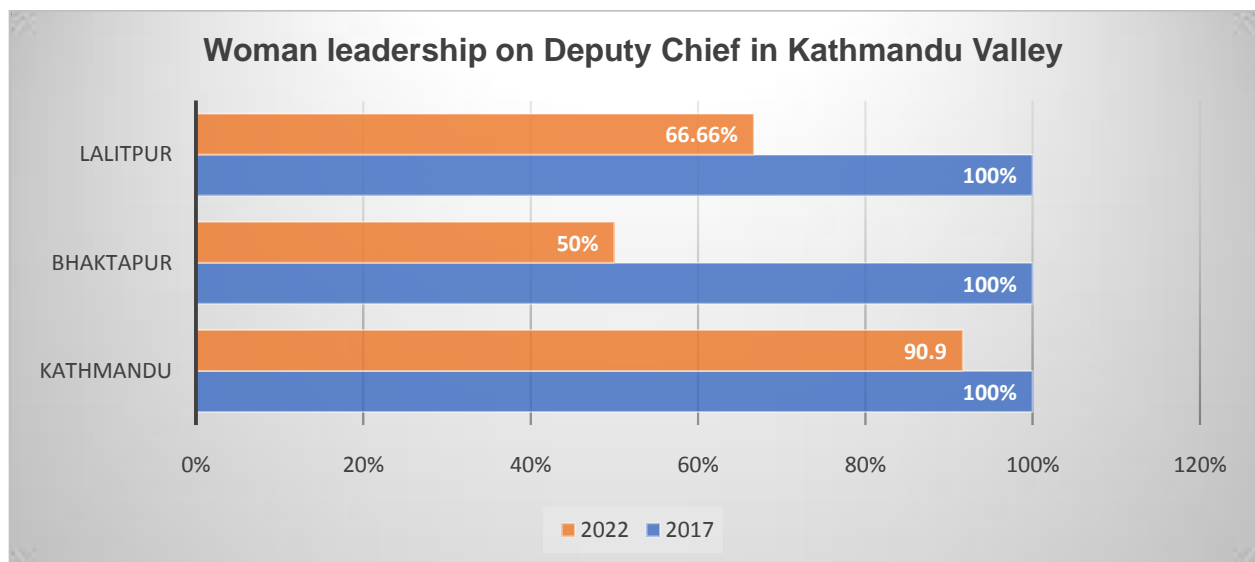
Source:(Photo Nepal, 2020 ; Election Commission Nepal, 2022b)

In Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and Lalitpur, no female district coordination committee chiefs were chosen in either election, according to the above data. In both local elections, no female deputy chief was chosen in Lalitpur. Both the elections in 2017

AD and 2022 AD produced female deputy chiefs for the Kathmandu District Coordination Committee and Bhaktapur District Coordination Committee, respectively.

Woman leadership on Deputy Chief in Kathmandu Valley

Figure 1: Woman leadership on Deputy Chief in Kathmandu Valley



Source:(Photo Nepal, 2020 ; Election Commission Nepal, 2022b)

The participation of women in electoral positions is depicted in the above bar graph. Female leadership among deputy chiefs was observed to be declining. The decline in women's election participation may be greatly impacted by political alliances. National parties did not put out any candidates for the top position. Females themselves

find it hard to think that female leadership, etc., might be to blame for losing positions in elections. The number of female deputy mayor positions has reduced by 9 percent in the Kathmandu district, by 33.33 percent in Lalitpur, but by 50 percent in Bhaktapur.



Trends of woman participation

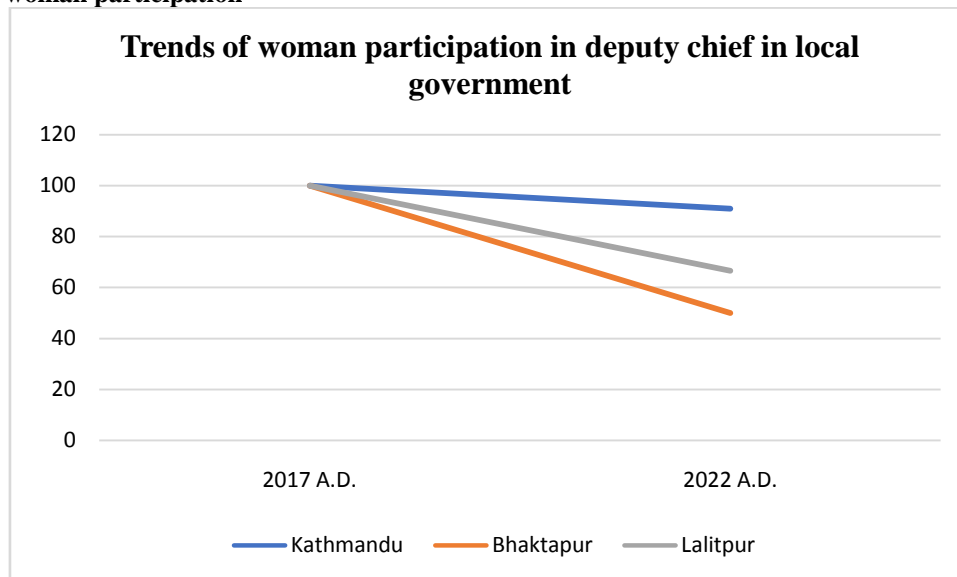


Figure 1: Trends of woman participation in Kathmandu Valley

In 2022 AD, there is a decline in the participation of women in leadership. These lines were created using information about the deputy chiefs elected in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and Lalitpur Municipalities. Compared to Lalitpur and Kathmandu, the line from Bhaktapur is further downward. It demonstrates that Bhaktapur, rather than Lalitpur or Kathmandu, has the lowest degree of female voting participation in local government.

III. Conclusion

Through legislation, women were given more clout in politics. Today, women make up almost one-third of the legislature and parliament. It was accomplished by requiring women to have political representation in the Constituent Assembly and afterwards the Parliament. Women's participation in decision-making is still significantly underrepresented. Since more than ten years ago, Nepal, a young democracy and the youngest federal democratic republic, has been undergoing a protracted political change. After the federal system, the first local election was held in 2017 AD, and the second one was held in 2022 AD.

Following the establishment of Nepal's federal system, the first local election after the woman's movement and constitutional provision seemed preferable to the second one in terms of the representation of women in local government. Women hold comparatively few leadership positions in the the capital city area of Nepal: Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur. 18 municipalities, including 2 metropolises, have no female mayors. There are

no female chairpersons of three rural municipalities. In all three districts, there is no female chief of the district coordination committee.

After the municipal elections in 2017 AD, there were seventeen female deputy mayors in the study region, a reduction of three since then. From the local election in 2017 A.D. to the local election in 2022 A.D., there were three female vice chairs in three rural municipalities. There is currently only one female vice chairperson elected. As a result, we can draw the conclusion that fewer women are participating in municipal government. Therefore, additional research will be conducted to examine the reasons for the poor involvement in local government, which is the people's courtyard government.

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