

# Comparison of Political Inclusion in Nepal between the Elections of 2017 and 2022

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## ABSTRACT

*Political inclusion refers to political participation, representing voice and agency, and indicating whether a person's voice can be heard while trying to access services. It serves as a means of ensuring full political participation and representation for all based on equal rights. The objective of this study is to compare political inclusion in Nepal between the elections of 2017 and 2022. Secondary data has been analyzed using textual analysis, averages, percentages, and numbers. The Constitution of Nepal grants equal rights to all citizens and provides a special quota for women and other social groups to ensure equal participation. It is observed that these constitutional provisions have been fully implemented in practice when it comes to women. However, women have been allocated only the mandatory seats. Similarly, it is also noted that there is little difference in the political representation of various social groups between the two elections. In national and provincial assemblies, councils of ministries, and the central committees of national political parties, the Khash/Aarya community has a stronger presence compared to other communities, followed by women, then Janajati, and then Terai/Madhese and Dalits. However, it should be noted that there is a majority of Terai/Madhese representation in the central committees of the PSPN and JP, as well as in the council of ministries of Madhes Province.*

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**Keywords:** Political-inclusion, constitution-rights, presence, social-groups, descriptive-method.

## Introduction

Inclusion is a broad term encompassing a culture in which people work collaboratively, feel comfortable and confident in being themselves, and work in a way that suits their individual needs, all while ensuring that everyone maintains their self-esteem (Hodkinson, 2011). There are various dimensions and indicators used to measure inclusion, and their applicability depends on the specific circumstances. Inclusion can be widely categorized into different groups like political, social, economic, cultural,

geographical, educational, linguistic, gender, ethnic and so on. Donlevy (2007) used ten dimensions in his research to assess how inclusive a society is, and these were cultural, social, political, legal, economic, ethnic, educational, administrative, psychological, geographical, and philosophical inclusion, and Burchardt, Le Grand, and Piachaud (2002) had identified four dimensions to measure social exclusion/inclusion and they were consumption, production, political engagement and social interaction. This implies that political inclusion is a component of social inclusion (Vogt et al., 2015). The four dimensions—representation in governing parties, participation in the council of ministers, participation in the national bureaucracy, and voice and agency—have been used by Das et al. (2014) to assess political inclusion in the context of Nepal.

Among these inclusions, political inclusion is essential for equality, which indicates the level of political presence at different levels of government bodies and power structures (Haug, Aasland, & Dahal, 2011), and ensures equal political presence for all based on their rights (Nielsen, 2006). It can be enhanced through measures such as equal voting rights and advisory councils for diverse immigrant communities (UNESCO, 2023). It is closely linked to voice and agency, and symbolizes the extent to which people's voices can be heard when accessing services (Das et al., 2014). This form of inclusion can be assessed by examining the structures of central political party committees, the Council of Ministers, and the national bureaucracy.

Political changes in Europe and America in the late eighteenth century reformed the political foundations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the twentieth century, most of the world's countries have become politically independent, bringing many political systems closer to democratic ideals. Similarly, changes in all areas of the world in the last four decades have linked the institutions of the political system with the ideals of democracy (Marochi, 2011). However, contemporary political institutions and their activities only partially embody these ideals. Likewise, the rule of law and civil control governments are still ineffective in many countries around the world (Moises, 2016). Inclusion can serve as a validation of the processes of suppression and domination experienced by marginalized and vulnerable groups (Hodkinson, 2011). Similarly, political inclusion emphasizes that every citizen should have equal rights and opportunities to work in various positions in government bodies regardless of class, age, sex, ability, group, culture and ethnic or religious background (IDEA, 2013).

However, these arguments contradict involuntary exclusion. Political inclusion, serves as a means to eliminate the obstacles preventing marginalized groups from full participation in social and political institutions (Atkinson & Marlier, 2010). It creates diverse opportunities for engagement in multi-dimensional and cooperative processes, nurtures various capacities among marginalized groups, and fosters collective solidarity while adhering to established standards. According to Sen (2000), social exclusion

represents a deprivation that weakens human life by denying political freedom and civil rights. In fact, political exclusion can be a more profound form of poverty in human life than economic deprivation (Munn, 2020). The assurance of political inclusion not only encourages individuals to become active in various domains but also enhances their decision-making capabilities, leading to improved life outcomes. Furthermore, political inclusion has a direct and positive impact on the development, expansion, sustainability, and deepening of democratic processes. It imparts knowledge to individuals, enabling them to embrace democratic norms and values in their lives (Das et al., 2014).

Nepal is a country of unity in diversity. It is a country full of ethnic, cultural, geographical, linguistic, and religious diversity (Shneiderman, 2013). It is known as a distinct identity due to its diversity (Bhandari, 2016). However, in the context of Nepal, politics has directly influenced other dimensions of the individual or the nation (Das et al., 2014). This means that all other multi-dimensional processes related to exclusion/inclusion have political implications (Haug et al., 2011). That is why Nepali often seek to gain political access or position. As a result political conflicts are taking place in the country from time to time and these conflicts have led to change in the government, political system, constitution and other laws (Paudel, 2020).

As a political result, the first law of Nepal was the Civil Code of 1854. This law bound different groups of Nepali under one legal system. However, it was criticized for creating a law based on Hindu values and the caste system, and the law can be seen to provide discriminatory privileges and obligations to each caste and sub-caste (Sha, 2023). In Nepal, there were numerous social classes, and at the time, they also behaved differently based on this law (Kafle, 2010). They were subjected to harsh legal penalties for minor errors and were also regarded as impure. For instance, if a lower-caste man married a higher-caste woman, he would have faced a fourteen-year jail sentence (Thapa, 2010). If it is true, it can be said that this law did not specifically help to reduce the oppression of Dalits and women. The Constitution of Nepal (1990) established Nepal as a more inclusive state. The constitution was an achievement of the people's movement against the panchayat regime. It described the country as a multi-ethnic, multilingual, and democratic nation (Upadhyaya, 2011). Similarly, it has been mentioned that all citizens are equal regardless of religion, caste, gender, or ideology. However, it unknowingly preserved traditional practices (Hut, 1991). The constitution softly supported caste and ethnicity-based civil society organizations.

In Nepal, the process of creating constitutions and laws is not an issue, but their implementation poses the most significant challenge. Without proper implementation of the laws, the body's requirements have no meaning in real life of the people (Nchofoung, Asongu, Tchamyoun, & Edoh, 2021). This implies that there is no shortage of laws being enacted. Because not only the current Constitution but also the Civil

Rights Act of 1955 have prohibited various forms of discrimination, including political, religious, and gender-based (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2023). Various movements, including political ones, have secured comprehensive political rights for the people as fundamental rights (Paudel, 2020). To ensure these rights, all laws, rules, and acts were revised following the people's movement of 2006. The current constitution embraces inclusive measures, granting full political rights not only to the elite but also to deprived, marginalized, and oppressed groups (Dahal, 2017). Nevertheless, these forms of discrimination persist in Nepalese society. This situation prompts the question: What is the status of political inclusion in Nepal? Furthermore, some political parties disagree with specific provisions of the Constitution and laws. Why are they doing so? This leads to the next question: Has the Constitution been effectively implemented in practice in line with its values and norms? This constitutes the central question of the study.

Now, the study's objective can be formulated based on these identified research gaps. The primary objective of the study is to compare political inclusion in Nepal between the 2017 and 2022 elections. Additionally, the overarching aim of this study is to analyze political inclusiveness in key institutions, namely the National Assembly, the House of Representatives, the Council of Ministers, and the Central Committee of national parties. This means that the study seeks to assess political inclusion between the two elections in accordance with the values and norms outlined in the Constitution of Nepal 2072, using the dimensions mentioned above.

The hope is that the study's findings will enlighten policymakers and politicians about the effectiveness of the current Constitution in promoting political inclusion. Furthermore, it aims to shed light on the position of marginalized and oppressed social groups in terms of political inclusion and the political rights enshrined for them in the constitution. As a result, this study is expected to contribute to an increase in political participation.

## **Methodology**

This study is based on a literature review and survey research design. The survey design is particularly valuable for collecting extensive data, offering robust statistical power to validate the study, and enabling the systematic collection of data (Gothberg, 1990). It involves the processes of data collection, organization, and dissemination (Singh, 1998). This design guides the researcher in the selection, reading, and summarization of information (Chu, 2015). This study adheres to all the principles and values inherent in this design.

This research is based on secondary data gathered from various sources to assess political inclusion. The main sources of data are the Election Commission, House of Representatives, National Assembly, Office of the Council of Ministers, and central offices

of seven national parties. Other essential data is sourced from the current Constitution of Nepal, books, articles, and reports from both physical libraries and e-libraries. The primary objective of the study is to compare political inclusion between the 2017 and 2022 elections. For this comparison, the 2017 political inclusion data is sourced from Paudel's (2020) study, while the 2022 political inclusion data is obtained from the aforementioned sources. This study incorporated both qualitative and quantitative data. The current Constitution of Nepal is selected by the purposive sampling technique. To ensure the reliability and validity of the study, a large sample size and random sampling techniques have been used. The study site is Nepal for the study. The collected data are analyzed descriptively. Averages and percentages are computed to draw conclusions and findings. Ethical considerations are rigorously adopted throughout the study.

### **Result and Discussion**

The results and discussion are drawn based on political inclusion between the elections of 2017 and 2022 as defined by the Constitution of Nepal 2015. In Nepal, political presence has a decisive influence on all other multi-dimensional processes related to inclusion. It is considered an essential dimension because the denial of basic political freedom and civil rights directly impoverishes the lives of the people. In this study, representation in the Council of Ministers (CoM), representation in the House of Representatives (HoR), representation in the National Assembly (NA), representation in the Provincial Assembly (PA), and representation in the central committees of national political parties are used to measure political inclusion.

The inclusive characteristics of Nepal are stated in Article 3 of the Preliminary Part of the Constitution of Nepal 2072. According to this article, Nepal has multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious, and multi-cultural features. This Part additionally states that Nepal is a geographically diversified country with shared goals that is bound together by ties of allegiance to independence, territorial integrity, the interests of the nation, and prosperity. Additionally, this Constitution explicitly declares that Nepal is an independent, indivisible, sovereign, secular, inclusive, democratic, socialism-oriented, federal democratic republic state in clause (1) of Article 4 of the same Part (Nepal Law Commission, 2072). The Constitution's inclusive spirit has been praised by Nepal's Fifteenth Periodic Plan (NPC, 2019).

Nepal is a country that has a multi-party democracy with a federal structure. In 2008 B.S., the country was proclaimed a Federal Democratic Republic by the Constituent Assembly (CA). In 2015 B.S., the CA also declared a three-tier system of government that included the national, provincial, and local levels (Acharya, 2018). As a result, it is known as the Parliamentary System. The President, the Prime Minister, the Council of Ministers, Constitutional Bodies, and the Bureaucracy, which consists of

numerous personnel services established to carry out executive responsibilities, are all members of the executive branch of government (Paudel, 2020). The president doesn't carry out routine executive duties. The highest executive body having the power to issue instructions for direction, control, and governance is the Council of Ministers in Nepal (Asia Foundation, 2012).

Nepal comprises 125 castes, all of which demand quotas for political participation. However, the Election Commission has categorized them into five ethnic groups: Khash/Aarya, Janajati, Madhesi, Dalit, and one gender group: male and female. Among these, four ethnic groups, except Khash/Aarya, and one gender group, have been allocated special quotas as defined by the constitution. Therefore, in this study, only these ethnic and gender groups have been included.

### **Inclusion in Council of Ministers**

Clusters 1 through 10 of Article 76 of the Nepalese Constitution describe how the Council of Ministers (COM) is formed. The President can appoint the Prime Minister to the leader of a parliamentary party that has a majority in the House of Representatives (HoR). The Council of Ministers is constituted under his or her chairpersonship in accordance with Article 76(1). Similarly, Cluster (9) of the same article mandates that the President appoint the ministers as members of the federal parliament's council of ministers as per the recommendation of the Prime Minister. There are no more than twenty-five ministers, including the Prime Minister, in accordance with the inclusive principle (Nepal Law Commission, 2072).

State and provincial elections were last conducted on November 20, 2022. After this election, the Council of Ministers (Government) was formed on December 26, 2022, in accordance with the constitution's provisions. As of April 17, 2023, Nepal's Council of Ministers comprises 23 members, including one Prime Minister, two Deputy Prime Ministers, 17 Ministers, and two State Ministers, with no Assistant Ministers. An inclusive analysis reveals that 65.21 percent of the ministers come from the Khash/Aarya group, 30.43 percent from the Janajati group, 17.39 percent are women (Brahman/Chhetri 4.34 percent, Janajati 8.69 percent, and Dalit 4.34 percent), and 13.04 percent hail from the Terai groups with Brahman/Cheetri (Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, 2023) (Prime Minister and Council of Minister, 2023). This political inclusion can be compared with the immediate past Council of Ministers (government) elected from the election of 2017. In that government, there were 23 ministers, including the Prime Minister, with 52.17 percent from the Khash/Aarya group, 21.74 percent from the Janajati group, 13.04 percent women, 8.70 percent from the Terai groups, and 4.35 percent from the Dalit group in the council of ministers (Paudel, 2020).

These data indicate that when comparing the two Councils of Ministers formed from election of 2017 and 2022, the presence of the Khash/Aarya group in the COM has decreased in comparison to other social groups. This suggests that other social groups, such as tribes, women, Terai/Madhese, Dalits, etc., have made efforts to increase their representation in Nepal's COM. Additionally, it can be observed that there is no equal representation of different social groups in Nepal's COM as per their population ratio.

### **Inclusion in National Assembly**

The Upper House of Representatives is another name for the National Assembly (NA). The NA is governed under Article 86 of the Nepali Constitution. Clause (2)'s sub-clause (a) stipulates that the NA must have fifty-nine members. They must include at least three women, one Dalit, one person with a disability, and one person from a marginalized group. Similarly, sub-clause (b) of the same clause stipulates that three members, selected by the President on the advice of the Government of Nepal, shall include at least one woman for each state with an electoral college. As a result, out of the 59 members of the NA, at least 22 women must be chosen, with 21 coming from the Electoral College of Provinces (with a minimum of three from each province) and one coming from the President's nomination (Nepal Law Commission, 2072).

The composition of the NA can be analyzed as follows: Among the 59 members, 59.32 percent are from the Mountain/Hill Khash/Aarya group (male 30.51 percent and female 28.81 percent), 35.59 percent are women (Mountain/Hill Khash/Aarya 28.81 percent, Mountain/Hill Janajati 3.39 percent, and Terai 3.39 percent), 16.59 percent are Dalits (Mountain/Hill 13.56 percent and Terai 3.39 percent), 13.56 percent are Janajatis (Mountain/Hill 11.86 percent and Terai 1.69 percent), and 11.86 percent are from the Terai (Female 3.39 percent, Dalit 3.39 percent, Janajati 1.69 percent, and Khash/Aarya 3.39 percent) in the National Assembly of Nepal (National Assembly of Nepal, 2023). If we look at these figures of the election of 2017, the women constituted 31.88 percent of the NA. Similarly, Dalits accounted for 11.86 percent, and the representation of the disability/minority group was the same as that of Dalits in the NA of Nepal (Paudel, 2020).

These statistics, comparing the two national assemblies (before and after the 2069 elections), indicate that the presence of the Khash/Aarya social group in the national assembly has increased compared to other social groups. This suggests that other social groups, such as Tribes, Women, Terai/Madhese, Dalits, etc., have made efforts to increase their presence in Nepal's NA but have not been entirely successful. Additionally, it can be observed that there is no equal representation of different social groups in the NA of Nepal in proportion to their population ratios.

### Inclusion in House of Representative

Nepal is divided into seven provinces and 165 election constituencies for federal elections to the House of Representatives (HoR), conducted under the first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system as specified in Article 84 of the Constitution of Nepal. Article 84 mandates that political parties ensure proportional representation (PR) for women, Dalits, Indigenous peoples, Khas-Arya, Madhesi, Tharu, Muslims, and backward regions. Additionally, persons with disabilities should be provided a designated quota when filing their candidacy under the PR system for both HoR and Provincial Assembly (PA) elections (Nepal Law Commission, 2072). Nepal conducted its first national and province-level legislative elections in 2017 AD, and its second in 2022 AD. These elections allocated 60 percent or 495 seats (165 for the HoR and 330 for the PA) using the FPTP electoral system and 40 percent or 330 seats (110 for the HoR and 220 for the PA) using the PR electoral system. In total, there are 275 seats in the HoR and 550 in the PA (Nepal Law Commission, 2023).

Clause (8) of Article 84 stipulates that, regardless of other provisions in this Part, at least one-third of the total number of members elected from each political party in the Federal Parliament must be women. Subsequently, according to sub-clause (a) of clause (1) and sub-clause (a) of clause (2) of Article 86, every political party is obligated to ensure that one-third of its members are women. However, if they are not elected as such, the political party must appoint women to account for one-third of its members in the Federal Parliament, as outlined in sub-clause (b) of clause (1) (Nepal Law Commission, 2072).

**Table 1 :**

*Composition of House of Representatives by the FPTP Electoral System.*

Provinces	In 2017 Election			In 2022 Election		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Koshi	26 (15.76)	2 (1.21)	28 (16.97)	26 (15.76)	2 (1.21)	28 (16.97)
Madhesh	32 (19.39)	0 (0.00)	32 (19.39)	30 (18.18)	2 (1.21)	32 (19.39)
Bagmati	32 (19.39)	1 (0.61)	33 (20.00)	31 (18.79)	2 (1.21)	33 (20.00)
Gandki	17 (10.30)	1 (0.61)	18 (10.91)	17 (10.30)	1(0.61)	18 (10.91)
Lumbini	24 (14.55)	2 (1.21)	26 (15.76)	25 (15.15)	1 (0.61)	26 (15.76)
Karnali	12 (7.27)	0 (0.00)	12 (7.27)	12 (7.27)	0 (0.00)	12 (7.27)
S. Pashchim	15 (9.09)	1 (0.61)	16 (9.70)	15 (9.09)	1 (0.61)	16 (9.70)
Total	158 (95.76)	7 (4.24)	165 (100)	156 (94.55)	9 (5.45)	165 (100)

*Source: The House of Representative, Nepal – 2023.*



The First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) electoral system elects 165 members for the House of Representatives (HoR). Among them, female participation was 4.24 percent in the 2017 election and increased to 5.45 percent in the 2022 election. Consequently, the House of Representatives in Nepal is predominantly male-dominated. Notably, women's participation in the House of Representatives from the Karnali province is nonexistent.

It is essential to emphasize that political parties must adhere to constitutional norms within the FPTP electoral system. However, the Proportional Representation (PR) system also plays a crucial role in ensuring political inclusion. Therefore, it appears that political parties are more inclined to follow provisions related to political inclusion through the PR system.

The role of a parliamentarian encompasses constructing and implementing rules, forming a government, and critically analyzing government functions. However, in the context of Nepal, people view Members of Parliament as developers of the entire country, which elevates their status in society. Nevertheless, it remains true that political participation by women, Janajatis, Dalits, people with disabilities, and minorities is lacking. Hence, the Constitution of Nepal 2072 includes provisions stipulating that 110 members for the HoR and 220 members for the Provincial Assembly (PA) should be selected through the PR system to enhance the political participation of these marginalized groups."

**Table 2 :**

*Political Access of Social Groups in House of Representative of Nepal.*

Groups	FPTP						PR					
	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
Brahman/ Chhetri	88	53.3	4	2.4	92	55.8	10	9.1	22	20.0	32	29.1
Janajati	35	21.2	2	1.2	37	22.4	5	4.5	24	21.8	29	26.4
Madhesi	31	18.8	3	1.8	34	20.6	5	4.5	18	16.4	23	20.9
Dalit	2	1.2	0	0.0	2	1.2	10	9.1	16	14.5	26	23.6
Total	156	94.5	9	5.5	165	100	30	27.3	80	72.7	110	100

*Source: The House of Representative and Election Commission Nepal- 2023.*

It can be observed that Khash/Aarya individuals have been selected through the FPTP and PR systems at rates of 55.8 percent and 29.1 percent, respectively, which are higher than those of other social groups. Similarly, in the 2022 election, 72.7 percent of women were elected through the PR system, compared to 76.36 percent in the 2017 election.

The total number of members in the House of Representatives is 275, with 32.36 percent of them being women in the 2022 election. However, in the HoR election of 2017, this figure was slightly higher at 33.09 percent. According to this data, the group with the least political representation is the Dalit community, comprising only 10.18 percent of Nepal's HoR.

### Inclusion in Provincial Assembly

The presence in Provincial Assembly (PA) of women and different social groups-Khash/Aarya, Janajati, Madhesi, Dalit, and others show the political inclusion of Nepal. The constitution of Nepal has said that women must be at least one-third of the total members elected for Federal Parliament. It means 33.33 percent of the women must be elected as a member of provincial parliament.

**Table 3 :**

*Political Access of Social Groups in Provincial Assembly of Nepal.*

Election System/ Social groups		Khash/ Aarya	Aadiwasi /Janajati	Terai /Madhesi	Dalit /Alpsankhyak	Total
FPTP	Male	143 (43.3)	69 (20.9)	79 (23.9)	25 (7.6)	316 (95.8)
	Female	5 (1.5)	5 (1.5)	3 (0.9)	1 (0.3)	14 (4.2)
	Total	148 (44.80)	74 (22.4)	82 (24.8)	16 (7.9)	330 (100)
PR	Male	13 (5.9)	9 (4.1)	8 (3.6)	5 (2.3)	35 (15.9)
	Female	62 (28.2)	62 (28.2)	40 (18.2)	21 (9.5)	185 (84.1)
	Total	75 (34.1)	71 (32.3)	48 (21.8)	16 (11.8)	220 (100)
G Total	Male	156 (28.4)	78 (14.2)	87 (15.8)	30 (5.5)	351 (63.8)
	Female	67 (12.2)	67 (12.2)	43 (7.8)	22 (4.0)	199 (36.2)
	Total	223 (40.5)	145 (26.4)	130 (23.6)	52 (9.5)	550 (100)

*Source: The House of Representative and Election Commission Nepal- 2023.*

*Note: Values within the parentheses represent percentages.*

Two electoral systems have been employed to elect members of the Provincial Assemblies (PAs) across the seven provinces: the first being the First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) system and the second, the Proportional Representation (PR) system (Paudel, 2020). In the 2022 election, it is observed that individuals from the Khash/Aarya community were selected through the FPTP and PR systems at rates of 44.8 percent and 34.1 percent, respectively, which are higher than those of other social groups. In contrast, 84.1 percent of women were elected through the PR system, while only 4.2 percent were elected through the FPTP system. When comparing these figures with the 2017 election results for the seven Provincial Assemblies, we can see that 80.45 percent of women were elected through the PR system, while 5.45 percent were elected through the FPTP system.

### Inclusion in Political Parties

A general election was held in Nepal on November 20, 2022, to elect the 275 members of the House of Representatives. The election consisted of two ballots. The first ballot was for the election of 165 members using the FPTP electoral system. Similarly, the second ballot was for the election of 110 members through the PR electoral system, where the constituency was nationwide for party-list proportional representation. To attain the status of a national party, a political party must secure at least one seat in the FPTP electoral system and garner at least 3 percent of the votes in the proportional system (The Kathmandu Post, 2023).

The role of political parties is crucial in implementing an inclusive system; therefore, it is imperative for political parties themselves to be inclusive. The inclusiveness of political parties can be assessed by examining the representation of different social groups in their central committees. Nepal boasts a considerable number of political parties. However, since the 2022 election, seven political parties have earned recognition as national parties. These parties are the Nepali Congress Party (NCP), the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist–Leninist) (CPN- UML), the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) (CPN- MC), the Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP), Rashtriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), the People's Socialist Party, Nepal (PSPN), and the Janukti Party (JP). Only these seven national political parties have been considered in this study. The inclusiveness of these parties is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4 :**

*Inclusiveness in Political Parties (In %)*

Communities	NCP	CPN (UML)	CPN (MC)	RSP	RPP	PSPN	JP
Brahman/Chhetri	54.4	60.1	55.6	62.5	62.4	19.1	14.3
Janajati	22.2	21.3	22.8	25.0	27.7	17.1	14.3
Dalit	8.2	6.6	10.7	5.0	2.0	6.4	57.1
Terai/Madhesi	15.2	12.0	10.9	7.5	7.9	57.4	14.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Male	65.4	66.4	74.2	70.2	91.8	90.4	85.7
Female	34.6	33.6	25.8	29.8	8.2	9.6	14.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Source: Websites of NCP, CPN (UML), CPN (MC), RSP, RPP, PSPN, and JP.*

Table 4 reveals that the central committees of the major five parties (NCP, CPN (UML), CPN (MC), RSP, and RPP) exhibit a significant presence of the Khash/Aarya social group. For instance, the NCP Central Committee, consisting of 158 members, comprises 54.4 percent Khash/Aarya, 22.2 percent Tribal, 8.2 percent Dalit, and 15.2 percent Terai/Madhesi (Nepali Congress, 2023).

Similarly, the CPN (UML) Central Committee, with 333 members, has 60.1 percent Khash/Aarya, 21.3 percent Tribal, 6.6 percent Dalit, and 12.0 percent Terai/Madhesi (CPN (UML), 2023). Meanwhile, the CPN (MC) Central Committee, consisting of 196 members, comprises 55.6 percent Khash/Aarya, 22.8 percent Tribal, 10.7 percent Dalit, and 10.9 percent Terai/Madhesi (CPN (MC), 2023). The RSP Central Committee, comprising 39 members, exhibits 62.5 percent Khash/Aarya, 25.0 percent Tribal, 5.0 percent Dalit, and 7.5 percent Terai/Madhesi (RSP, 2023). There are 271 Central Committee members of the RPP (RPP, 2023), consists of 62.4 percent Khash/Aarya, 27.7 percent Aadiwasi/Janajati, 2.0 percent Dalit, and 7.9 percent Terai/Madhesi (Ekantipur, 2023; Global Television, 2023; Himal Khabar, 2023; Nepal Press, 2023).

The PSPN Central Committee, with 466 members, reflects 19.1 percent Khash/Aarya, 17.1 percent Adivasi/Janajati, 6.4 percent Dalit, and 57.4 percent Terai/Madhesi (PSPN, 2023). The JP Central Committee, comprising 55 members, consists of 14.3 percent Khash/Aarya, 14.3 percent Tribal, 57.1 percent Dalit, and 14.3 percent Terai/Madhesi (JP, 2023). When it comes to gender representation, the Central Committees of NCP, CPN (UML), CPN (MC), RSP, RPP, PSPN, and JP include 34.6 percent, 33.6 percent, 25.8 percent, 29.8 percent, 8.2 percent, 9.6 percent, and 14.3 percent women, respectively.

This data underscores the male dominance in the central committees of political parties, with Khash/Aarya dominance in the major five parties. Furthermore, there is a notable Terai/Madhesi presence in the central committees of PSPN and JP. The NCP and CPN (UML) Central Committees have over 33 percent women's representation, whereas this is not the case for other parties. Notably, the newly emerging Rastriya Swatantra Party includes the lowest number of women (only 8.2 percent) in its central committee compared to others. Similarly, the Janamat Party also has a relatively low representation of women at 14.3 percent in its central committee.

### **Conclusions**

The Constitution of Nepal 2015 enshrines the right to equal representation for everyone. Furthermore, the constitution provides special quotas for various groups, including Women, Dalits, Janajatis, Terai/Madhesi, Minorities, and people with disabilities, in the National Assembly (NA), House of Representatives (HoR), Provincial Assembly (PA), District Assembly (DA), and local governments. While it's evident that these provisions have been implemented in practice, it's important to note that these groups have been allocated only the mandatory seats. Notably, the Khash/Aarya social group holds a majority of seats in the Council of Ministers compared to other social groups, followed by Janajatis, women, Terai/Madheshi, and the Dalit social group. Based on the data from these two elections, it can be concluded that the Khash/Aarya

social group has dominated the Council of Ministers in Nepal. A similar situation is also observed in the National Assembly (NA), House of Representatives (HoR), Provincial Assembly (PA), and central committees of national political parties in Nepal. It's evident that various social groups, except Khash/Arya, have been represented by political parties primarily for the sake of constitutional compliance. Even within the women's quota, the participation of women from the Khash/Aarya group is high. Another important observation is that the majority social group tends to dominate in the distribution of election tickets and central committees of political parties. This trend is particularly noticeable in the Provincial Assembly of the Madhesh province and central committees of Madhesh-related political parties. Furthermore, the central committees of all political parties are predominantly male-dominated. Similarly, there is a majority of the Khash/Aarya social group in the five major political parties, while the central committees of the PSPN and JP are dominated by Terai/Madheshi representation. The highest participation of women is observed in the Central Committees of the NCP and the CPN (UML) compared to other parties.

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