

**Received:** 10 April, 2024  
**Accepted:** 17 November, 2024

**The Third Pole: Journal of Geography**  
**Vol. 24: 11-24, 2024**  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.3126/ttp.v24i1.73324>

**Department of Geography Education,**  
**Central Department of Education, T.U., Kathmandu, Nepal**

## **Gender Dynamics and Women's Decision-Making Power in Local Governance: A Study of Development in Surkhet**

**Bhupendra Bahadur Shahi**

Lecturer, Mid-West University

**Email:** shahibhupendra45@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

*This paper explores the gender dynamics in local governance, particularly focusing on women's development decision-making for sustainable development, equal representation, and creativity, reducing conflicts and improving decision-making process for both women and society. However, a lack of effective women's involvement in local government decision-making is hindering the attainment of democracy and equal representation for all citizens. This paper has utilized a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative data sources by using both primary and secondary data. In Nepal, the federal Constitution 2015 has significantly enhanced women's political participation, highlighting their crucial role in political, socio-economic, and developmental activities for improving the quality of life. However, women's participation in planning, implementation, and evaluation process is still in the infancy stage. The lack of education, political commitment, existing social structure, and judicial systems are the primary reasons for the inability to enhance their political rights. The paper proposes the implementation of policy advocacy and awareness programs aimed at enhancing women's involvement in decision-making processes, especially marginalized women in rural municipalities of Surkhet.*

**Keywords:** Gender-dynamics, women, development, decision-making, power, local governance

### **Introduction**

Naturally the term 'woman' stands on the meaning to represent the biological aspect on the basis of sex. However, in this study we are concerned with the gender biased and level of participation of women in decision making and development activities. In rural communities of Surkhet, participation of marginalized women in policy formulation of local bodies (Rural Municipalities and Municipalities) has been minimal. There was not proper participation of marginalized women in projects of GOs, NGOs and CBOs

in community level in Nepal. Only some of the elite, rich and accessible women have been involved in different committees of development activities. However, the Nepal government allocated budget through the sentiment of decentralized development policy. Gender-based differences are very common among all ethnic groups however; the degree of disparity varies (HDR, 1998).

Gender based exclusions are in terms of education, health, social, economic and political opportunities. This is particularly the case for rural women. In the context of Nepal, after the establishment of democracy in 2007 BS and particularly since the planned development in 2013 BS, the development planners and programmers were directly or indirectly directed towards the socio-economic betterment of people. Almost for a century or hundred years from 1846 AD until 1950 AD, the country Nepal and general people had mostly been kept in absence in any contact to the other countries of the world. The sole power of the country was limited in the hands of Rana rulers and after democracy 2007 BS, Nepal started structural development planning like 3 year plans or 5 year plans. But only from sixth, seventh and Eighth plan included women participation in development and increased access over resources. The issue of minimizing the gap between male and female has been given to priority by the 9<sup>th</sup> five year plan to respect policy gap for balanced participation of the men and women for reducing gender inequality, increasing level of empowerment in the socio-cultural aspects and for country development (NPC, 2010).

Before 1999, development activities were implemented through central department. All activities- making policies, planning, implementing and monitoring were under central department on the basis of urban areas practice. Policy makers made plan, and policies by focusing on urban areas issues and demands rather than rural issues which resulted in government not getting expected results (NDF, 2010). In such policies of development, some urban areas women could be aware about their rights but rural areas women were mostly remained unaware about their rights and access. In 1999 AD, central government has brought new thinking for equal balance development of power distribution from the centre to local people in local level planning by creating new policy named Local Self-Governments Policy 1999 AD (Khanal, R. 2003).

With the promulgation of the Local Self Government Act –2055; the status of decentralization process in the country Nepal has moved forward from decentralization to actual devolution of power balance in the local level governing system (2067) in the spirit of what was already provisioned in Local Self Government Regulation-2056.

The participation of rural women in local development process is essential. Reviewing the related literatures shows that women around the world have triple responsibilities of production, reproduction and management of a range of activities at the community based activities. However in the context of women status of the worldwide especially eastern countries like Nepal in development activities has not been satisfactorily provisioned as per our policy because of the adverse impact of our patriarchal society which did not give allow to women to participate in the development field.

The influence of government development policy, education and cultural values on rural women was investigated in this study. The results suggest that most women in rural areas have been illiterate. The system of government controlled by men, has given more emphasis to the birth of sons rather than daughters as sons are believed to be better able to earn for the sustained livelihood to the family and care for their parents in old age. Consequently, son's are often privileged in family decision-making, while the daughters are trained to conduct households activities. The functional duties of sons and daughters have already set in the stereotype society; they lack initiatives, innovations and self-reliance. Women in rural areas are often isolated, confined and marginalized through the non-interactive government policies on rural areas (Aryal, 2065).

Gender dynamics in the development process has been the focus of intensive debates by most international forums in the past years. Among forums that have recognized the plight of Third World's women's participation in the development process are the 1995 Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women held in Kenya, the 1995, The Beijing Declaration, and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (2000). According to the philosophy of these forums, each member state should promote women's economic independence. Gender equality is considered a critical element in achieving Decent Work for All Women and Men, in order to effect social and institutional change that leads to sustainable development with equity and growth (Adams, M.N.&Kruppenbach,S.E. 1987) . Although such declarations have been able to increase an awareness and understanding of the problems faced by women and their needs, as such they have not yet resulted insignificant development priorities for rural women.

## **Methods and Materials**

This study is carried out to fulfill the objective objective of assessing the level of women participation in local governance decision making and rural development activities in Surkhet of Karnali Province.

This paper has utilized the mixed-method (QUAL-QUAN) utilizing exploratory sequential design with a qualitative data followed by quantitative phase. Thus, this research paper has employed mixed research design. Researcher has used both primary and secondary data. According to the 2021 Census of Nepal (CBS), the total population of these four Rural Municipalities in Surkhet districts is 215,386 with 21,386 females. However, the primary data were collected by interview and observation techniques using census method of 73 elected women representatives out of total 21386 female of four (Baraha, Chingad, Chaukune and Simta) Rural Municipalities of Surkhet and for secondary data, researcher reviewed the related books, journals, newspapers and particularly, it has adapted descriptive research method to analyze the data.

After establishment of federal democracy and promulgation of the federal constitution 2015 (2072 BS), the government realized women participation in development was very essential for getting success and sustainability. Thus, the government has constitutionally provisioned the Women Commission as an independent constitutional body for promoting inclusion to them in development process. The constitution has guaranteed 50 percent participation in socio-political aspects and 33 percent special reservation in service sector of all positions in all bodies owned by the state. However, it was found no proper implementation of policies and plans related to women participation in socio-political field in practices. Women participation in the field of development activities has been a common issue in developing countries like Nepal because in the context of women status of the world especially in eastern countries like Nepal was not satisfactorily provisioned as per the state policy due to the adverse impact of traditional beliefs in patriarchal society and its miss-conception about women participation in development field. Women participation is essential to make the development balanced and sustainable. Many of the studies have been done in different dimensions about the women and women participation. However, the issue of rural women participation in decision making process in rural development activities in the study area is relevant and new to know the level of actual participation in policy formulation in local bodies both in Rural Municipalities and Municipalities, the study area of Surkhet of Karnali Province.

## **Results and Discussion**

Surkhet district is one of the developed and centre of the Karnali province and situated in the mid-west part of Nepal almost 600m far from Kathmandu. It covers 2451 square km, of the 34 square km. is urban area and 2417 square km. comes under in rural area. According to the changed federal structure of the country, there are altogether 9 local political units or bodies: four rural municipalities and five municipalities in the district.

The four rural municipalities were taken as the study area for grabbing the information of participation level of rural women in rural context. Longitudinal and latitudinal location of the district lies in 28°36'North 81°38' East 28.6° North and 81.633° East. It is at 665 meter above from the sea level; Tatapani of Panchpuri Municipality is the lowest (198m) and Matela Guranse of Chingad municipality is the highest (2367m) places from the sea level in the district. Kakrebihar, Bulbule, Deutibajai Temple are the most popular religious and touristic sites of Surkhet District. According to the census 2021, total population of Surkhet is 415126 where 215386 are females and 199740 are males. Thus women constitute more than half of the total population. The rate of annual population change is 1.6 %.( CBS, 2021).

**Table 1: Demographic Situation of the Study Area**

S.N	Population Census	2001	2011	2021
	Description			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>288527</b>	<b>360104</b>	<b>415126</b>
1.	Male	142817	177612	199740
2.	Female	145710	182492	215386
4.	Population Density per sq.km.	118	145.6	169.4
5.	Literacy rate %	62.48	68	73.1
6.	Total Households	45047	59428	97822
7.	Average HH size	5.34	6	4.3

*Source: Census 2001, 2011 and 2021.*

### **State of female representation in local governance in Surkhet**

Women's representation in governance in Surkhet and other places has traditionally been low due to socio-cultural traditions that value male leadership. Cultural attitudes toward women's roles, reinforced by traditional beliefs and restricted educational opportunities, have resulted in minimal female engagement in public life. Recent policy developments, such as Nepal's 2015 constitution guaranteeing female representation, have resulted in modest advances, although historical underrepresentation persists in local attitudes and behaviors (Bhadra & Thapa, 2020).

Female representation in Surkhet's municipal government has increased due to legal mandates, but actual influence remains limited. While women hold various roles, they frequently have limited authority and decision-making power (Sijapati, 2021). Statistics suggest that women's responsibilities are mostly symbolic, with few holding high decision-making positions (Nepal Governance Report, 2022).

### **Education level of women in Surkhet**

Education is the means of awareness for the people. Without education it is difficult to improve the level of women’s participation in decision making process. The given table shows the level of education of the respondents in the study area.

**Table 2:** Educational Status in the Study Area

<b>Level</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Literate	41	56.17
SEE to +2	26	35.62
+2 above	6	8.21
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100</b>

*Sources: Field Survey, 2024*

The study found that 56.17 percent women representatives were literate while as 35.62 percent had completed basic education, and only 8.21 percent were (above the level of +2 or university level). The data on the education of level of women representatives was found satisfactory in the study area.

### **Marital status of women representatives**

Most of the women representatives at the local level were found to be married. The trend of the leadership development appeared to be associated with status, with most representatives maturing in their leaderships roles after marriage.

**Table 3:** Marital Status age wide distribution of the Respondents

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>No. of the Respondents</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>SN</b>	<b>Year Group</b>	<b>Number of Respondent</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Married	72	98.63	1	20-30 Years	5	6.85
Unmarried	1	1.37	2	30-40 Years	57	78.10
Total	73	100	3	40-50 Years	11	15.05
Total	73	100				

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

The data indicates that the trend of women participation as representative in the local bodies in the Surkhet shows that have 98.63 percent were married and only the 1.37 percent were unmarried. This suggests, there was not satisfactory participation of unmarried women or girl in the local political opportunities. Them majority of the women representatives were aged between 30 to 40 years with only few 6.85 percent participation belonging to the 20 to 30 years age group.

### **Power structures in decision making process**

In Surkhet, formal power structures have rules that promote women's involvement, yet informal institutions dominated by male leadership affect decision-making. According to studies, gender norms in rural Nepal continue to favor men as major decision-makers, with informal networks frequently marginalizing women (Bhattarai, 2019). This dichotomy inhibits women's formal power and reduces their influence in critical policy decisions (Sharma & Dahal, 2020).

### **Access to resources and information of women**

Women in Surkhet confront severe challenges to obtaining services and information, limiting their ability to make educated decisions (Bhattarai, 2019). Restricted access is frequently the result of cultural biases and limited mobility, with information exchanged mostly within male-dominated groups (Acharya, 2013). Resource imbalance reflects broader issues of economic disparities and gender discrimination in resource distribution (Paudel, 2018).

### **Nature of women's influence on development decisions**

Women's impact in development decisions frequently focuses on welfare and social issues, rather than economic or infrastructure development. According to studies, female legislators in Surkhet prioritize healthcare, education, and social welfare, whereas economic decisions are still dominated by men (Bhadra and Thapa, 2020). This disparity may be caused by persistent gender norms that impact perceptions of women's areas of expertise (Sijapati, 2021).

### **Level of women representation on local governance decision making**

On the provision of Federal constitution, there was the balanced participation and opportunity of being as a representative of the local bodies but it was not seen in the decision making and different development activities in the study area.

**Table 4:** Level of Women Participation on the basis of Caste

<b>Cast</b>	<b>Baraha</b>	<b>Chingad</b>	<b>Chaukune</b>	<b>Simta</b>	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Dalit Women</b>	10	7	11	10	38	52.07
<b>Ethnic Women</b>	8	3	4	2	17	23.28
<b>Others Women</b>	3	3	5	7	18	24.65
<b>Total</b>			<b>73</b>	<b>100</b>		

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

On the basis of inclusive policy after federal structure in Nepal, the level of participation of Dalit and ethnic group women has found to be increased. The data depicts the clear information where 52.07 percent of Dalit and 23.28 percent Ethnic women got the opportunities to participate in the mainstream of the politics and development activities. However, in the case of Chaukune rural municipality, the post of deputy mayor is occupied by the male because of the effect of party collation election system.

### **Level of women involvement in different development activities**

Changed political structure of Nepal has given more opportunities to women for participating in different development activities in local level. They were found actively involving in the issue of untouchability cases, women leadership development, women friendly law or issue related to advocacy, skill-based program related to capacity enhancement of women and others in the study area.

**Table 5:** Level of Women Involvement in Different Development Activities

<b>Name of Local Bodies</b>									
<b>SN.</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Participation level</b>	<b>Baraha</b>	<b>Chingad</b>	<b>Chaukune</b>	<b>Simta</b>	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	
1	Awareness about untouchability	Active	6	8	8	7	29	39.73	
		Passive	15	5	12	12	44	60.27	
							<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100</b>
2	Women Leadership Development	Active	4	4	6	4	18	24.66	
		Passive	17	9	14	15	55	75.34	
							<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100</b>
3	Women friendly law/ advocacy	Active	11	7	11	8	39	53.42	
		Passive	10	6	9	11	34	46.58	
							<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100</b>
4	Skill-based program for capacity enhancement to women	Active	7	5	6	10	28	38.36	
		Passive	14	8	14	9	45	61.64	
							<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100</b>
5	Others related to handling chairmanship	Getting chance	2	1	1	4	8	10.96	
		Not getting chance	19	12	19	15	65	89.04	
							<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Only the 39.73 percent respondents participated in programs related to untouchability and awareness, 24.66 percent in leadership development program for women, 53.42 percent in women friendly legal activities, 38.36 percent in the skilled based capacity empowerment activities. Only 10.96 percent respondents reported actively participating in and conducting different development activities in the study area. However, the majority (89.04%) of respondents did not have the opportunities to as chairman in the absence of the ward chairman or rural municipality chairman.

Skill-based programs like making Sweater and Dhanka Topi and plumber training were given high emphasis in all four rural municipalities for women. However, the level of active involvement of the women representatives in various development activities was poor in the study area because of the dominance of male members and a lack of awareness about their rights and the implementation procedure.

### **Participation in planning, budget and implementation**

In the context of Nepal, most of the plan and policies were formulated by the active participation of male from centre level. However, after the implementation structure of federalism in Nepal, the situation has changed due to various laws and policies. This study, aims to analyze the level of active involvement and dominance of women in local planning formulation process women have equal opportunities as men.

**Table 6:** Level of Women Participation on Planning Formulation, Domination on Budget, and Implementation

SN.	Activities	Yes/NO	Number	Percent
1	Participation on Planning Formulation	Yes	34	46.57
		No	39	53.43
		<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100</b>
2	Participation in Domination on Budget Allocation	Yes	11	15.07
		No	62	84.93
		<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100</b>
3	Participation on Plan and Program Implementation	Yes	13	17.81
		No	60	82.19
		<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

The data shows that 53.43 percent out of total representatives of women could not actively participate in the plan and policy formulation stage. 84.93 percent couldn't put the domination on budget allocation in the project of their interests and 82.19 percent

respondents couldn't take the active participation in the field of local plan and programs implementation. It shows the serious condition of women participation that there has high dominance of male members in the field of development activities on the issue of women participation in local bodies of Surkhet. Thus, different barriers and limitations have been the major problems of being low participation of women in Surkhet.

### **Barriers for participation on decision-making**

Challenges include entrenched patriarchy, a lack of support systems, and biases that limit women's authority even when they hold positions of power. Women leaders frequently bear a combined load of domestic obligations and governance responsibilities, and limits their ability to fully participate in governance roles (Acharya, 2013). Furthermore, cultural prejudices continue to influence their roles, relegating them to ceremonial rather than strategic positions within government systems (Paudel, 2018).

### **Socio-cultural and institutional barriers**

In Surkhet, women are subject to sociocultural restrictions that limit their participation in public life. Significant obstacles include cultural pressure to prioritize household duties, traditional gender roles, and a lack of family support (Acharya, 2013). Furthermore, by upholding male-centric decision-making processes, institutional hurdles within governance structures deter female engagement (Paudel, 2018).

### **Political, structural, and economic barriers**

In Nepal, long-standing gender biases claim that disadvantaged women are frequently reflected in political structures. Research indicates that female agency is restricted by political party dynamics, hierarchical structures, and a lack of support for women in politics (Bhattarai, 2019). In addition, Surkhet's governance structure frequently lacks the networks and mentorship that women need to advance politically (Sharma & Dahal, 2020). Thus, the women's ability to participate fully in governance is hampered by economic hurdles, such as restricted career prospects and financial reliance on male family members (Bhadra & Thapa, 2020). According to research, women's agency is restricted by financial insecurity, which makes it harder for them to compete for important positions or have an impact on decisions (Acharya, 2013).

### **Enablers of women's decision-making power**

Several factors contribute to enhancing women's decision-making power. These enablers are shaped by a combination of cultural, social, economic, and political dynamics that influence women's agency in both the household and broader community contexts.

While Surkhet, are of, the rural district has historically characterized by patriarchal norms, there are key elements contributing to the increasing empowerment of women and their ability to make decisions.

### **Policy support, legal frameworks and training for capacity building**

A supportive policy framework is offered by Nepal's legal reforms, including the constitutional mandate for women's representation (Nepal Governance Report, 2022). Although there are still implementation problems in some areas, these policies make it easier for women to enter positions of government (Sijapati, 2021). Similarly in the capacity building process, the programs for education and training have been successful in boosting women's self-esteem and ability to rule (Paudel, 2018). Women can participate in decision-making processes more successfully when community programs, non-governmental organizations, and local government initiatives prioritize capacity-building and leadership (Bhadra & Thapa, 2020).

### **Level of women representation in the implementation process of local judicial system**

Women in developed countries have been in the forefront of governance and have been involved in policy making for a certain period of time. On the contrary, women in developing countries are less involved in governance and mostly kept as housewives, especially the poor. The fact is women have as much potential to be leaders as men but are still not widely accepted. Therefore, developing societies should be more open and give more support for women leaders and after the changed situation in Nepal, the power of implementing the related Truth and Reconciliation cases in local judicial system is given to the representatives of women under the chairmanship of deputy chairman of rural municipality and municipality.

**Table 7:** Level of Women Participation in the Implementation Phase of Local Judicial System

<b>Name of Local Bodies</b>										
<b>S N</b>	<b>Case Registered and Handled</b>	<b>Level of Satisfaction on Verdict</b>	<b>Baraha</b>		<b>Chingad</b>		<b>Chaukune</b>		<b>Simta</b>	
1	Both Cases of Truth and Reconciliation Cases	Satisfied	33	94.29	17	92.44	33	97.05	85	97.7
		Unsatisfied	2	5.71	1	5.56	1	2.95	2	2.3
	<b>Total</b>		<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

It was found more satisfactory result in the level of women participation on implementation phase of judicial system in local rural municipalities of Surkhet in Karnali province. The data clearly shows 92.44 to 97.7 percent cases of local conflict were handled or solved successfully and 2.33 to 7.66 percent cases were also solved properly. However, the conflict parties were not been satisfied by the decision given for them. The meeting and activities of local judicial body in Rural Municipalities were found running smoothly in accordance with the rights provisioned by the state law and policies.

### **Impact of women's decision-making on community development**

In Surkhet, the influence of women's decision-making on community development is unsatisfactory because gender inequality has long existed in Surkhet, as it does in many rural areas of Nepal, but in recent decades, the value of women's involvement in local government, community decision-making, and development initiatives has come to light. The speed, inclusiveness, and sustainability of community development are all directly influenced by women's participation in decision-making in variously.

### **Influence on socio-economic development initiatives and resource allocation**

Initiatives in the areas of healthcare, sanitation, and education have been benefited from women's participation in government. Projects headed by women are more receptive to the welfare requirements of the community (Bhattarai, 2019). In Surkhet, female legislators have been instrumental in tackling social challenges and expanding access to essential services (Nepal Governance Report, 2022).

Despite the fact that women are still underrepresented in economic decision-making, their participation has brought about a gender-sensitive approach to resource allocation. Research shows that when women participate in community projects, resources are allocated more fairly, which benefits larger societal groups (Sharma & Dahal, 2020).

### **Policy strategies for enhancing women's decision-making power and cultural-institutional changes**

Policymakers should increase their support for gender equality in governance in order to improve the representation of women in Surkhet. To guarantee meaningful female involvement, recommendations include strengthening enforcement mechanisms and extending legal mandates for female representation in important decision-making organizations (Bhadra & Thapa, 2020). Similarly, the programs for cultural awareness that try to change conventional thinking and eliminate institutional biases are crucial including local communities in conversations about gender equity can encourage female leadership and assist change cultural perspectives (Sijapati, 2021). This strategy

can foster a more encouraging atmosphere for women in governance when paired with mentorship and training initiatives.

Policies that give women's rights and gender equality, top priority have been adopted as a result of women's representation. Policies addressing child marriage, domestic abuse, and women's health have advanced in Surkhet thanks to local administration and increased female participation (Paudel, 2018). These gender-sensitive results promote long-term female involvement and a more inclusive development approach. However, these strategies are found to be insufficient in the case of Surkhet for enhancing equal representation on women's decision-making power and cultural-institutional change.

## **Conclusion**

The study aimed to find out the level of women's development and decision-making power by examining the participation of elected woman representatives in local governance and development. The study found that the level of participation and decision-making power of women representatives in various development activities within the study area is very low. The women representatives faced challenges in exercising their power as provisioned by the state law and policies due to the significant dominance of men in these sectors. However, the changed political landscape including constitutional provision to reserve seats for federal parliament, provincial local levels has assemblies and led to increase political participation of women in Nepal. At present, the most effective way to encourage women to get involved in politics is through engagement in and political parties and advocacy groups focused on women's political rights. These organizations should prioritize promoting women's participation not only but also in politics in decision and policy setting processes at all levels. If implemented effectively and timely, this approach will significantly increase the number of women actively engaged in politics and development at the local level in Surkhet, Karnali Province.

## **References**

- Acharya, M. (2013). *Gender and governance in Nepal: Policy and practices*. Kathmandu: Nepal Center for Social Studies.
- Adams, M. N., & Kruppenbach, S. E. (1987). Gender and access in the African school. *International Review of Education*, 33(4), 437–454.
- Asian Development Bank. (2003). *Asian development outlook 2003*. Oxford University Press.
- Aryal, B. (2008). *Cultural and human factors in rural development*. Dikshant Prakashan.

- Bhadra, C., & Thapa, S. (2020). Gender equality and women's empowerment in Nepal's governance systems. *Journal of Nepali Studies*, 18(3), 45–62.
- Bhattarai, R. (2019). Socio-political structures and gendered power dynamics in local governance. *Nepali Journal of Political Science*, 12(2), 78–91.
- Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). (2001). *Population census 2001: National report*. Central Bureau of Statistics.
- Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). (2011). *Population census 2011: National report*. Central Bureau of Statistics.
- Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). (2021). *Population census 2021: National report*. Central Bureau of Statistics.
- Human Development Report (HDR). (1998). *Human development report 1998*. United Nations Development Program.
- Khanal, R. (2003). *Local self-government in Nepal: A study of democracy at the grass-roots (1990–2000)* [Doctoral dissertation, Tribhuvan University].
- National Planning Commission (NPC). (2010). *Directives for formulation of periodic district development plan*. National Planning Commission.
- Nepal Government Ministry of Local Development. (1999). *Local self-government act 2055*. Nepal Government Ministry of Local Development.
- Nepal Governance Report. (2022). *State of governance in Nepal*. Kathmandu: Governance Research and Development Institute.
- Paudel, B. (2018). Women's participation in local governance in Nepal: Barriers and enablers. *International Journal of Governance Studies*, 15(1), 25–38.
- Sharma, R., & Dahal, M. (2020). Women's decision-making power and socio-economic impact in Nepali communities. *Development and Society Journal*, 14(4), 59–72.
- Sijapati, B. (2021). Women's political representation and influence in Nepal. *Asian Governance Review*, 19(1), 33–49.
- State Restructuring Commission. (2016). *State restructuring commission report 2073*. Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration.