NEED AND CAPACITY OF ELECTED WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NEPAL

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Abstract

The article is based on the local elections in 2017 which is a historic milestone for the country. Local elections were held after almost two decades. They became a key vessel for acting upon the Constitutional obligation toward gender and social inclusion in the government and ending the political impasse that beset the country for many years. The article focuses on two objectives: first to identify the priorities of local elected women's needs on capacity and skills and to identify the interventions that could be designed to help support the elected women in the different local governments of Jhapa and Lalitpur Districts. The paper is based on descriptive and analytical types of research design as well as nature of data both primary and secondary sources. It has used both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and deductive and inductive approaches to the analysis of the data. Information is gathered and assessed on the basis of capacity and skills of elected women. The data are analysed using the Excel spread program on the computer and are calculated in frequency distribution and percentage. Data are carefully analysed and interpreted for generalization. Gender inclusion in local government is gradually increasing in development sector of local areas. The findings and analysis of the study are largely indicative given that the study sample is limited but more so because the present situation on the ground is dynamic. Yet, it cannot be denied that there is palpable excitement and optimism amongst elected women representatives to be active participants in Nepal's evolving governance structures. Tempering the optimism with a realistic assessment of the challenges and work on hand is needed. Building capacities and a supportive environment for women's leadership in local governance in the context of federalism in Nepal is needed.

Keywords : Gender, local government, needs, capability and skill development.

Introduction

Gender inclusion and female empowerment are universally recognized as core development objectives fundamental for the realization of human rights, and key to effective sustainable development in local development side United States Agency for International Development (USAID, 2010). Gender inclusive is a major socio-economic issue in Nepal, where female population is approximately 51 per cent in accordance with the Centre Bureau of Statistics (CBS, 2011) which shows 67.5 percent illiterate and 43.4 per cent absolute poor. Its large section female population (86 per cent) lives in rural areas where agriculture and small cottage industries are their major economic occupation with

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62 per cent female for livelihood income, food and employment. This demographic picture shows a marginal, unable and poor female population. Gender inclusion is mainly the distribution of opportunities, resources and choices for male and females so that they can have equal power to shape their own lives and contribute to the Nation (USAID, 2010). This is explained as a critical state of gender exclusiveness in Nepalese development paradigm.

Hence, there is large policy literature on development. Nepal Constitution 1990 and Interim Constitution Nepal 2007 have considered this approach as an important issue for overall development and poverty eradication. Fundamental rights and women's rights have been mentioned. Its example is 33 per cent reservation for female. In addition, the government of Nepal has already signed international charters related to gender inclusiveness that is addressed in all sectors. Its reflection can be found in National Development Plans (Eighth Plan (1992-97), Ninth Plan (1997-02), Tenth Plan (2002-07) and Interim Three Years Plan (2007-10).

Gender inclusiveness, in accordance with Interim Plan (2007-10) is a socio-economic approach, a tool to eradicate social discrimination and gap between classes, castes and regions by creating an environment for equal access and opportunity for female, particularly marginal and backward. In order to empower marginal and backward female, the government of Nepal has initiated two types of programs such as a target-based program and a development program. So far concerning development programs, the local government (LG) program is of gender inclusiveness program. Nepal has entered a new journey as a federal state after the successful completion of local, provincial, and federal elections in 2017. Local elections after almost half a decade are a historic milestone for the country (HMG 2072). It is also a strong step towards gender inclusion in the government and ending the political settlement that beset the country for many years. The observable and tangible representation of women in social and individual life is an accepted indicator of inclusive and equitable social and gender development. However, this social and political space is often hugely contested from a gender perspective, and women tend to be hugely excluded from wielding any influence in such spaces (Sijapati, 2077).

The recent local elections 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 (HMG 2072). Of these 35,041 elected representatives, 14,352 or 40.96% were women (HMG 2072). The seac complishment sare not stand alon eefforts, it is a continuum in the long history of political struggle and engagement by women's rights/human rights activists in the pasttoen sure the representation of women and marginalized communities/groups in the political structure of Nepal (Sijapati & Subedi 2077).

Gender mainstreaming is a perspective, and process of assessing the implication for men and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and

experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres so that women and men benefit equally inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality In another definition of gender Mainstreaming "It is Institutionalization of gender concerns within the organization itself: relating to taking account of gender equality in administrative, financial. Staffing, and other organizational procedures, thus contributing to a long-term transformative process for the organization in terms of attitudes, 'culture', goals and procedures; gender empowerment: women's participation in decision-making processes, as well as having their voices heard and the power to put issues on the agenda (Moser & Moser, 2005).

Component of gender mainstreaming policy
- A dual strategy of mainstreaming gender combined with targeted actions for gender equality.
- Gender analysis
- A combined approach to responsibility, where all staff share responsibility, but are supported by gender specialists
- Gender training
- Support for women's decision-making and empowerment, monitoring and evaluation of gender inclusion.

Three additional components, working with other organizations, budgets, and knowledge resources, are shared by a smaller number of institutions. The contrast very few assessments have addressed the operational and programming implementation of gender mainstreaming. The outcomes and was the impact of implementation in terms of gender equality still largely unknown. Thus the next decade calls for a twofold strategy: implementation of gender mainstreaming (with far greater transparency in terms of documentation) and the development of a more robust evaluation of output and outcomes processes. So while progress has been made, the next decade will provide the real test of gender mainstreaming in practice (Moser & Moser, 2005).

Gender mainstreaming was established as a major global strategy for the promotion of gender equality in the Beijing Platform for Action from the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. The United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNECOSOC) agreed on conclusions (1997/2) and established some important overall principles for gender mainstreaming. A letter from the Secretary-General to heads of all United Nations entities (13 October 1997) provided further concrete directives. The General Assembly, a twenty-third special session follows up on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (Angela & King, 2002). Local and regional governments have a long track record of working internationally for gender equality, with a particular focus on increasing the representation of locally elected women and promoting the participation of all women in local decision-making (Anne, 2015)The International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) adopted the Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government, the foundational document of international principles and commitments with regard to the action of local and regional governments in the field of women's rights (IULA, 1998).

Finally, gender equality must start somewhere, and greater female representation in public life seems like a good place for that start. Critics of Nepali female representatives' meaningful participation should recognize that gender equality requires upending millennia of patriarchy and other factors that have kept Nepali women out of participation in public life. It takes time. It willtaketimefor Nepali female inclusion to learn how to use the political power. Nepal's recent locale lection shave electe dare cord number of Nepali women into publi coffice. Nepal's transition to federalism ensures that local and regional political represent at ion will be much more meaning ful

than has been in the past. Transition to federalism also providesaregimechangeakinto, as Beer(2009) says, "new ways of doing politics." This requires learning how to adapt and make one's participation more meaningful. In Nepal's changing federalism contexts, this applies equally to Nepali male representatives.

Objectives

This article attempted to:
- To identify the priorities of l o c a l elected women's capacity, skills and needs.
- To identify t h e interventions that could be designed to help support the elected women.

Methods

The article focused on the Need and Capacity of elected women in different policies and programmes on the local level governments. In the context of gender inclusion in local government, the level of participation of local elected person has gender inclusion in the level of the decision-making process (empowerment, education, leadership development training skill development training and other social activities) and the situation of special allocation of fund for women and development of the local government of local elected leader through the ward level. First of all, the researcher visited and collected related to need and capacity of elected women in the local governments. The required data are also allocated to the triangulation method (qualitative and quantitative) and the nature of data both types primary and secondary. Data triangulation was knowledge, practice and role of decision-making in local government. Qualitative information data collections were the local people which are directly involving the local government meeting and council meeting. The data are collected through qualitative and quantitative approaches (Mix method) from pre-determined. A descriptive qualitative study was used to explore the situation of gender equality and inclusion in local government.

Results

The local government bureaucracy is also in need of sensitization to women's problems and issues linked to gender bias in local development planning. The panel responsible for formulating the training agenda should include elected women representatives besides local development personnel. Systematic awareness-building and training are needed for enhancing rural, deprived and backward women's capacity to take up their new responsibilities as local legislators and decision-makers under the locally elected government of Nepal. The training of women local government elected members should

be based on their own local experiences and elicit their involvement in preparing a framework that will enable them to analyze and understand their roles and responsibilities in accordance with the local government act and Nepalese Constitutional Amendment 2072.

Women Candidates at the National Level

As the table shows, the number of women candidates for the national elections of Nepal was low in comparison to men candidates. The number of women candidates was increasing gradually. However, in term of percentage, women's candidacy has not increased significantly. There were 80 women candidates in the HoR election in 1991. In contrast, there were 1265 men candidates. The ratio between women and men candidates in the election was 1:16. It was a huge gap in gender-wise candidacy.

Table 1: Gender-wise elections of Nepal candidates for general

Gender	Election 1991		Election 1994		Election 1999		Election 2008		Election 2013	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	1265	94.05	1356	94.04	2095	93.61	3577	90.65	5458	89.09
Female	80	5.95	86	5.96	143	6.39	369	9.35	667	10.89
Third Sex	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.02
Total	1345	100.00	1442	100.00	2238	100.00	3946	100.00	6126	100.00
Gender Wise Elected Candidates of national elections of Nepal in FPTP electoral system										
Male	198	96.59	198	96.59	193	94.15	210	87.50	230	95.83
Female	7	3.41	7	3.41	12	5.85	30	12.50	10	4.17
Total	205	100.00	205	100.00	205	100.00	240	100.00	240	100.00

Source: Election Commission 1992, 2051 B.S., 2056 B.S., 2065 B.S. & 2070 B.S.

In the Constitutional Assembly Election of 2013, 667 women fielded their candidacy. It shows the increasing level of women's involvement in electoral politics. But, the percentage of women could not exceed 11 of the total candidates. In the election, the ratio between women and men candidates was reduced point to 1:10. However, a visible gap exists. A few women candidates could win in the national elections. Only 7 women were elected in both HoR elections in 1991 and 1994 out of 205 seats. The success percent of women candidates was 8.75 percent in 1991 and 8.14 percent in 1994. Similarly, 12 women candidates won the HoR election in 1999; the success of women candidates was 8.39 percent in the election. Likewise, 30 women candidates won the CA election in 2008 out of 240 seats. The success of women candidates was 8.13 percent. Only 10 women candidates won the CA election in 2013 and the percent of the success of women candidates was 1.50.

In total, 73.1 percent of local government personnel said that they have formulated skill development plans; 94.9 percent said that they have formulated the income generation plan; 73.4 percent said they have formulated empowerment and leadership plans; 48.4 percent said that they have developed the plan of gender awareness and violence and 3.8 percent said that that they have developed the plan to save cyber-crime. However, the

highest percent of local government personnel (94.9%) said that they have formulated an income generation plan and the lowest percent said that they have a plan to save cyber-crime.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents' Formulated Plan After They Elected for Local Government

Types of Training	District		Municipality or Rural Municipality			Sex of the Respondents		Total (%)
	Lalit pur	Jhap a	Metro	M	RM	Male	Fem ale	
Skill development	31.7	41.3	13.1	50.3	9.6	43.3	29.8	73.1
Income generation	53.5	41.3	34.3	51.0	9.6	57.4	37.5	94.9
Leadership development	46.5	26.9	29.2	39.4	4.8	44.9	28.5	73.4
Gender awareness and violence relative	36.5	11.9	29.8	18.6	0.0	31.4	17.0	48.4
Prevent Cybercrime plan	3.8	0.0	3.5	0.3	0.0	2.9	1.0	3.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	228	130	134	170	54	219	139	358

  Sources: Field Survey, 2076.

Note: Income generation—women's group formation, saving money, barrow loan green vegetable farming, fish cow goat farming, a small shop.

Skill development—plumbing, driving, crystal making, beauty pallor, leadership, carpenter

In the district, 31.7 percent of local government personnel of Lalitpur and 41.3 percent of local government personnel of Jhapa district formulated the skill development plan. Same way, 53.5 percent respondents in Lalitpur district and 41.3 percent of local government personnel of Jhapa district formulated the income generation plan, 46.5 percent of local government personnel of Lalitpur district and 26.9 percent of local government personnel of Jhapa district formulated the empowerment and In leadership In plans, 36.5 percent local government personnel of Lalitpur district and 11.9 percent local government personnel of Jhapa district formulated the developing the plans of gender awareness and violence, 3.8 percent local government personnel of Lalitpur district developed the plan to save cyber- crime. However, the highest percent of local government personnel in both districts (53.5% and 41.3%) respondents and the lowest percent of Lalitpur district developed the plan to safe cyber-crime.

As local election areas, 13.1 percent local government personnel of metropolitan city, 50.3 percent of municipality and 9.6 percent local government personnel of rural municipality said that they have formulated the skill development plan, 34.3 percent local government personnel of municipality and 9.6 percent local government personnel of rural municipality said that they have formulated the income generation plan, 29.2 percent local government personnel of metropolitan city, 39.4 percent local government personnel

of municipality and 4.8 percent local government personnel of rural municipality said that they have formulated the empowerment and leadership plan, 29.8 percent local government personnel of metropolitan city, 18.6 percent local government personnel of municipality said that they have developed the plan of gender awareness and violence and 3.5 percent local government personnel of metropolitan city, 0.3 percent local government personnel of municipality said that they have developed the plan to save of cyber-crime. However, the highest percent of local government personnel in all three local election areas said that they have formulated the income generation plan and program activities after they are elected local government personnel. On average 31.3 program activities are formulated about skill development plans, 35.3 plans are formulated related to income generation plans, 31.4 plans are related to empowerment and leadership plans, 21 plans are related to gender awareness and violence and 2 plans are related to saving a cyber-crime. However, the highest numbers of plans are related to income generation and the lowest is to save cyber-crime.

Respondents' Participation in Planning of Different Program Activities

The local government is to become aware of their needs and change their behavior, bringing about a change in their knowledge, attitude, skills and abilities. The different extension agents involved in improving the rural conditions helps to build a good rapport amongst the local government. The elected members are good environment building helps in easing the process of programme implementation. The local elected members diagnose their gender problems and decide which needs an immediate solution. Motivate the clients to mentally accept the change being introduced and develop complete procedures and train elected women as well as villagers. Help to develop leadership among various sectors of the rural community and keep social mobilizers and members constantly informed about the problems at the local level to offer solutions based on further development work in specific and target areas concerned. The local government works with local women involving their participation in anchoring community development covering several activities all social activities, cyber-crime, skill development and other allied activities.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents' Participation for Planning of Different Program Activities by Different Characteristics.

Types of Participation	District		Municipality or Rural Municipality			Sex of the Respondents		Total (%)
	Lalitpur	Jhapa	Metro	M	R.M	Male	Female	
Only ward representatives	6.4	0.0	4.5	1.9	0.0	3.5	2.9	6.4
Only municipality authorities and ward representatives	17.6	13.8	11.5	18.9	1.0	20.2	11.2	31.4
Local government representatives and all social actives	31.7	27.6	20.5	30.1	8.7	35.6	23.7	59.3
Others	2.9	0.0	2.6	0.3	0.0	1.6	1.3	2.9
N	228	130	134	170	54	219	139	358

Sources: Field Survey, 2076.

Note: These types of responses are collected from the open-ended question and at the time of data editing all responses are recorded.

Others include (provincial government representatives, parliament members, academicians and members of trade unions).

While analyzing the involvement of the local government's authorities in the planning of different programs by districts and election areas, 6.4 percent of respondents said that only ward representatives are involved in the planning of program activities, 31.4 percent of respondents said that only municipality authorities and ward representatives are involved, 59.3 percent respondents said that the local government representatives and all social activist are involved and 2.9 percent respondents said that the other is involved in the planning of program activities. However, the highest percent (59.3%) of respondents said that the local government representatives and all social activists are involved in the planning of program activities and the Lowest (6.4%) percent of respondents said that the only ward representatives are involved in the planning of program activities.

In the district, 6.4 percent of respondents said that only ward representatives are involved in the planning of different program activities, 17.6 percent respondents of in Lalitpur district and 13.8 percent respondents of Jhapa district said that the municipality authorities and ward representatives are involved, 31.7 percent respondents of Lalitpur district and 27.6 percent respondents of Jhapa district said that the local government representatives and all social activist are involved and 2.9 percent respondents of Lalitpur district said that the others personnel are involved in the planning of the different program activities. However, 100 percent of respondents said that the ward representatives, municipality and social activists are involved in the planning of program activities. In election areas, 4.5 percent of respondents of a metropolitan city, 1.9 percent of respondents of the municipality said that the only ward representative is involved in the planning of program activities, 11.5 percent of respondents of a metropolitan city, 18.9 percent of respondents of the municipality and 1 percent respondents of rural municipality said that the only municipality authorities and ward representatives are involved, 20.5 percent respondents of a metropolitan city, 30.1 percent respondents of the municipality and 8.7 percent respondents of rural municipality said that the local government representatives and all social activist are involved, 2.6 percent respondents of a metropolitan city, 0.3 percent respondents of the municipality said that the others are involved in the planning of program activities. However, 100 percent of respondents of all three metropolitan city, municipalities and rural municipalities said that the ward, municipality and social activist are involved in the planning of program activities. As sex, 3.5 percent male and 2.9 percent female said that the only ward representatives are involved in program activities. Same way, 20.2 percent male and 11.2 percent female said that only municipality authorities and ward representatives are involved, 35.6 percent respondents of male and 23.7 percent female said that the local government representatives and all social activities are involved and 1.6 percent male and 1.3 percent female said that the others are involved in the planning of program activities. However, 100 percent male and female said that the

ward representatives, municipality and social activists are involved in the planning of program activities.

Allocated Budget on Women-Related Areas

A truly gender-sensitive and inclusive budget should be seeking to address the marginalization of target groups by focusing both on increasing incomes and improving access to resources and services. The most obvious outcome of gender budget initiatives is improving women's economic equality. However, gender budgets are not simply about equality for women. Gender budgets can also improve the effectiveness, efficiency, accountability, and transparency of government budgets. Gender budgets can also reveal budgetary priorities and discrepancies between what a government says it is doing and the actual impact of its policies. Total 228 respondents in Lalitpur district, 87.8 percent respondents have knowledge on allocation of budget on women's area and only 12.3 percent respondents do not have knowledge. In 130 total respondents in Jhapa district, hundred percent respondents have knowledge about budget allocation in women-related areas. This data clearly shows that Jhapa's elected local level members have more active and awareness about the women-related budget than the Lalitpur district elected local members. In election areas, in total 134 respondents in Lalitpur metropolitan city. Among them, 93.3 percent of respondents have knowledge of the allocation of budget in women's related areas and only 7.6 percent of respondents have no knowledge about the allocation of budget women related areas, Similarly, 88.8 percent of respondents of Municipality and 100 percent of respondents of rural municipality respondents knowledge about the allocation of budget on women related areas.

Allocating the Gender Friendly Budget by Different Sectors in Local Government

Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) is a strategy that promotes the goal of gender equity by allocating specific budgets for both women and men beneficiaries in projects/programmes. The purpose of GRB is to promote accountability and transparency in fiscal planning; increase gender responsive participation in the budget process, and advance the gender equity agenda. Having gender equity in developmental or service delivery programmes requires intentional measures to incorporate a gender perspective in planning and budgeting frameworks and concrete investment in addressing gender gaps. In GRB, we do not create separate budgets for women or increase spending on women-focused intervention/activities. Rather, GRB seeks to ensure that the collection and allocation of resources are carried out in ways that are effective and contribute to advancing gender equity. It should be based on an in-depth analysis that identifies effective interventions that advance women's rights.

While analyzing by districts, 60 percent of respondents of Lalitpur district and 39.4 percent respondents of Jhapa district said that the gender-friendly budget is allocated for women's capacity building, the same way, 36.7 percent of respondents of Lalitpur district and 39.1 percent of respondents of Jhapa district said that the budget is allocated for benefits women's targeted programs, 52.4 percent respondents of Lalitpur district and 39.4 percent respondents of Jhapa district said that allocated the same budget for employment

and income generation of women, 28.8 percent respondents of Lalitpur district and 39.1 percent respondents of Jhapa district said that the same budget used in decrease women's workload and improve the quality of women's work.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents Reported by the Allocating the Gender Friendly Budget by Different Sectors in Local Government

Women related areas	District		Local Level			Sex		Total
	Lalitpur	Jhapa	Metro	M	R.M	Male	Female	(%)
Capacity development of women	60.0	39.4	37.3	45.8	16.4	60.9	38.5	99.4
Women's targeted programs	36.7	39.1	36.1	30.6	9.1	46.1	29.7	75.8
Employment in the income generated and	52.4	39.4	29.7	45.8	16.4	56.7	35.2	91.8
To decrease women's workload and improve quality of women's work	28.8	39.1	28.5	30.3	9.1	41.8	26.1	67.9
N	228	130	134	170	54	219	139	358

Sources: Field Survey, 2076.

However, the highest percent of Lalitpur district (60%) and Jhapa district (39.4%) said that the gender-friendly budget is used for women's capacity-building program activities and the lowest percent of both districts said that the gender-friendly budget is allocated for decreasing women's workload and improve the quality of women's work.

Conclusion

Women were tentative in their engagement as they were yet in the process of understanding their role as elected representatives as well as the official procedures to be followed in the conduct of their duties. They understand, however, that they must interfacewiththecommunityandthatpeoplenowapproachthemforadviceandactiononcertainis suesasan elected representative. A policy framework/blueprint for intervention would be able to identify the various dimensions that require attention by various actors/stakeholders and resources available and make for a collective agenda. Strengthening the capacity and responsibility: in all participants (local authorities, political parties, public institutions, NGOs, development agencies, media and others) it is necessary to systematically approach raising awareness and learning about aspects of gender excluded. Some of the inclusive participants certainly know certain aspects of inclusion from gender perspective. However, the majority still cannot understand "the complete picture". This can be achieved through sufficient skill development training and income-generating activities or modules within other specific training, which will include facts about the different positions of men and women in different areas (political and economic participation, education, social and cultural participation, power relations. The implementation of training for the introduction of the principle of gender inclusion in the work of local self-governance, and for this purpose, specific tools for gender mainstreaming should be developed, in the context of the local level. Sensitizing media

workers, producers, editors and journalists from the local media for integrating a gender perspective and the removal of the language of sexual harassment, discriminatory and chauvinistic language and reporting, as well as the avoidance of negative gender stereotypes, is the way the media's involvement in the promotion of awareness of the importance of gender issues. Civil society organizations should be encouraged to expand the focus of action to protect the rights of women in other aspects of gender inequality, and cooperation between women's organizations and other civil society organizations should be developed to integrate gender perspectives in the work of organizations dealing with other vulnerable groups or individuals and their empowerment.

Women must be able to redefine their situation and, in doing so, help transform the situation for the better at the family level for both men and women and, ideally, facilitate intergenerational change. This transformation at the micro-level becomes the bedrock for gender equality in the larger society so putting resources and time into this process should be seen no less than an investment for national development.

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