

Representation of Women, Youth and Marginalized Communities in First Past the Post Elections

A Study Report of Karnali Province



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TOWARDS PROSPEROUS KARNALI

Ojashwi Paudel

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Birendranagar-08, Surkhet, Karnali Province Nepal

Tel.: (+977)-083521564

E-mail: info@hriti.org

Website: www.hriti.org

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Ojashwi Paudel

Hriti Foundation

Table of contents

Contents	Page No.
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1. Background	1
1.2. Situation Analysis	3
1.3. Objectives of the Study	4
1.4. Rationale of the Study	4
1.5. Research Methodology	5
1.6. Limitation of the Study	5
Chapter 2: Literature Review	6
Chapter 3: Election and Representation	13
3.1. Candidacy for a Member of the House of Representatives from Karnali Province	13
3.2. Candidacy for a Member of Karnali Provincial Assembly	20
3.3. Candidacy for Mayor and Chairperson for the Local Levels of Karnali Province	26
3.4. Candidacy for Deputy Mayors and Vice-Chairperson for the Local Levels of Karnali province	31
Chapter 4: Conclusion and Recommendation	36
4.1. Conclusion	36
4.2. Recommendation	38
References	41

Abbreviations

B.S.	Bikram Sambat
FPTP	First past the post
HoR	House of Representatives
PA	Provincial Assembly
PR	Proportional Representation

Chapter-1

Introduction

1.1. Background:

With the promulgation of the new constitution in 2072, Nepal moved to a federal democratic system and the agenda of inclusivity was further strengthened. Women confined to home affairs have started to appear in leadership roles, while the attraction of youth and women in politics is ever-increasing. To maintain good governance and build a prosperous Nepal, the active participation of women, youth and marginalized communities in political roles is important. Youth participation in politics and governance system helps to establish new thinking and energy, while women's participation helps to make the governance system more inclusive and stronger¹.

Recent reforms have granted special rights to women in Nepal, moving the country into the front of women's leadership in South Asia. Notably, Nepal has seen a woman serve as its second president, another as the Chief Justice, and another as Speaker of the Assembly as well. Moreover, in Karnali, women have been elected to both the positions of Speaker and Deputy Speaker for the second tenure of the Karnali Provincial Assembly. However, progress has not been uniform; in the elections held in 2048, 2051 and 2056, women's candidacy was limited to 6 percent for the member of House of Representatives. After the implementation of the principle of proportional inclusivity, two elections for the Constituent

1 Upreti, B. R., Adhikari, D. P., Shivakoti, S., & Kolas, A. (2018). *Nepalko Rajnitima Mahila: dwanda byabasthapan dekhni sambidhan karyanwayan samma*. Kathmandu:

Assembly and two elections of the House of Representatives and the Provincial Assembly have been held. In the elections of the Constituent Assembly 2064 and 2070 and the House of Representatives 2074 and 2079, women's direct candidacy did not even reach 11 percent².

When the participation of women and marginalized communities in politics is ensured, it not only brings inclusiveness in the government system, but also restricts the creation of discriminatory laws, and leads to the formation of a just society. Political participation plays an important role in making rules and laws for equal distribution of a country's resources and means. The participation of all people helps in making fair laws that facilitates democracy and sustainable development. Moreover, the access and participation of young women and marginalized communities in elections empowers these communities and enables them to make decisions.

The election system adopted in Nepal is a mixed type - first-past-the-post election system, proportional election system and nomination system³; among these, the first-past-the-post and proportional election system are most prevalent. The former is also known as the direct election system as it determines the winner based on the candidate with the highest number of votes. Meanwhile, only the party that gets at least 3 percent of the total valid votes casted on the proportional side in the House of Representatives can elect a representative on the proportional side, which is considered as a threshold. Similarly, on the direct side of the provincial assembly, the voters of that province vote for a political party, considering one

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Women's candidacy in Direct Elections of Nepal 2080, Democracy Resource Center

3

Constitution of Nepal, 2072

province as a constituency. Based on the votes received by the political party on the proportional side, the representatives are chosen according to the order of priority from the closed list of candidates submitted to the commission. The political party representing the proportional side in the provincial assembly must get at least 1.5 percent of the votes cast on the proportional side in that provincial assembly.

Since the transition to federalism in Nepal all three levels of government have been elected twice. This research has been done to illustrate the extent to which the constitutional system of inclusion in Karnali province has been practically implemented in the general elections in Nepal, the extent to which young women and marginalized communities are involved in participation.

1.2. Situation Analysis

Ensuring the representation of every Nepali citizen in the country's policy making indispensable for the creation and implementation of universally accessible policies. After the transformation of Nepal from a unitary system of government to a federal system of government, there has been an opportunity to ensure the participation of women and marginalized communities in the policy-making process at all levels of government. Even though the interim constitution of Nepal has ensured 33 percent participation of women in every sector, a third of women have yet to participate in the council of ministers. The situation of Dalit and other marginalized communities is also the same. This research depicts the reality of youth and marginalized communities' participation in policy making through elections in Karnali. While women, youth and

marginalized communities have been given priority at other times, they are often excluded during the electoral process, which is a crucial means of shaping policy makers. Even in the FPTP election in Nepal, there is a notable lack of women and young candidates, further adding to the issue of underrepresentation.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

- To illustrate the participation of youth, women, and marginalized communities in policy making in Karnali province through general elections.
- Analyzing the status of implementation of the policy of equality and the policy of positive discrimination adopted in Nepal.

1.4. Rationale of the Study

In the current society, youths, and women themselves have been advocating for their participation at all levels of the state mechanism. As a result, 33 percent female representation has been ensured in the recent Constituent Assembly elections, and the involvement of young people has also increased. However, it is still difficult for female politicians to be heard or respected, largely due to patriarchal structures within political parties. Furthermore, although inclusive participation has been emphasized in implementing the PR in the election system, marginalized communities continue to be ignored in the direct election.

This research depicts the reality of the participation of the youth and marginalized communities in policymaking through FPTP elections in Karnali. An attempt has been made to evaluate the participation of backwards citizens in government operations. It will help stakeholders, and policy makers in developing concrete action plans to involve youth,

women, and marginalized communities in policy making. It will also help planners, policymakers, NGOs/INGOs, and other organizations to understand the situation of youth and women in politics and formulate and implement policies and plans based on their participation. The findings and suggestions for further study will be useful for those interested in studying the participation of youth and women in governance.

1.5. Research Methodology

This research has been done to cover the issue of inclusion in the Federal Parliament and Karnali Provincial Assembly from Karnali Province. Therefore, it is focused on the candidacy of women, youth and different ethnic groups under the FPTP election system of the HoR and the Provincial Assembly. In this research, data has been collected and analyzed through secondary sources. Data has been taken from the website of the Election Commission, other websites, and statistics mentioned in the book related to parliamentary affairs. The federal, provincial, and local candidates have been tabulated and explained in the pie chart according to age, ethnicity and gender.

1.6. Limitation of the Study

- In this research, only the candidates registered to represent Karnali Province in the House of Representatives, Provincial Assembly, and local level, as well as the details and statistics of the elected people's representatives have been analyzed.
- Only secondary data are used in this research.
- Only the details published by the Election Commission on its official website have been used in this study.
- Candidates below 40 years of age are considered as youth candidates during the analysis in the research paper.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1. International Practices

If we look at international practices, women leaders have provided excellent leadership to their countries. Women of the new generation such as Argentina's Isabella Perol, India's Indira Gandhi, Britain's Margaret Thatcher, Israel's Golda Mayer, Sri Lanka's Chandrika Kumaratunga, Pakistan's Benjer Bhutto, India's Sonia Gandhi, America's Hillary Clinton, and Myanmar's Aung Sang Suu Kyi, are still dominant in world history. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, who was elected prime minister in Sri Lanka five decades ago, is considered as the world's first female prime minister. Her daughter Chandrika Kumara Tunga also became the first female president of Sri Lanka in the 1990s. Besides Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in South Asia also have elected female prime ministers decades ago. Indira Gandhi, who became the Prime Minister of India in the 1960s, is one of the most powerful leaders in the world at that time. Benazir Bhutto, who became the Prime Minister of Pakistan in the late 1980s, is taken as the first female Prime Minister of a country with a majority Muslim population.

Many studies are found in the international media about the struggle for power between Khaleda Zia, who became the Prime Minister of Bangladesh in the 1990s, and her rival, the current Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina. In countries where prominent leaders not only steer the nation effectively but also gain global attention for their strong leadership, the

presence of women in the parliament is very low. Surprisingly, countries such as Nepal and Afghanistan, where women have not been able to get the role of the executive head of the country so far, are surpassing them. This is supported by data from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) 2018 report on ‘Women’s representation in Parliament’ which forms the part of the Human Development Index. The report includes the ‘representation of women in parliament’ as a measure of ‘gender inequality index’. Based on the previous year’s data, the report states that the representation of women in Nepal’s parliament is 29.6 percent while 27.4 percent of parliamentarians in Afghanistan are women. Additionally, it reports there is also reservation for women.

Similarly, it is mentioned in the report that Bangladesh has 20.3% representation of women in the parliament, followed by Pakistan at 20%, India at 11.6%, Bhutan at 8.3%, and Maldives 5.9%. In her book ‘Substantive Representation of Women in Asian Parliament’, Ashiyana Adhikari wrote that women are available less in public life compared to their male counterparts. She mentioned that it is not easy for women to make time for politics.

The data of the “Inter-Parliamentary Union⁴” says that 61.03 percent of women are in the House of Rwanda, and more than 53 percent are in the house of Cuba and Bolivia.

After the re-election of Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, New Zealand’s parliament became one of the most diverse in the world, representing

⁴ The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is a common organization of the world’s parliaments, founded in 1889.

not only more women, but also people of different color and members of minority communities. 2018 was titled the “Year of the Woman” in Mexico and the country achieved gender parity in parliament after more than 3000 women participated in the election. Since then, the country has had more than 48 percent of female parliamentarians. Sweden describes itself as the world’s first feminist government and considers gender equality the basis of the country’s values and overall decision-making. Currently, 46 percent of women are in Sweden’s parliament.

However, even in a developed country like Canada, women were deprived of voting in elections and holding any government positions until 1930. It seems that only after the British Privy Council decided that women can be appointed to the Senate like men, women finally were able to exercise their political rights.

2.2. Practices in Nepal

Looking at the history; we can see that women in Nepal have played a significant role in leadership and even in the unification of the country. For example, Rajendra Rajya Laxmi, the wife of Pratap Singh Shah, played a crucial role in advancing the second phase of unification in Nepal. Therefore, she is often seen as a strong administrator who furthered the unification campaign of Prithvi Narayan Shah. Perhaps she was the most powerful woman in Nepali history and the country’s first heroine.

Kamala Kunwar (wife of Balbhadra Kunwar) participated in the Anglo-Nepal War of 1814-16. Another prominent figure is Yogmaya Neupane, who led the way for social and political participation of women , from

demanding for women's rights and direct inclusion with the ruling class to organizing movements against divisive practices. Nepali women have continuously fought against oppression and discrimination. Yogmaya and others raised their voices for voiceless groups like women, Dalits, and marginalized communities, even though they were under the rule of Rana dynasty in the country. With changes in governance, Nepali women's awareness, education, and economic prosperity has been improving.

In 2063 BS, there were 12 female members in the legislative parliament of Nepal. In the 2064 BS Constituent Assembly elections, out of 601 members, 197 (34%) women were elected. However, this number decreased to 176 (29%) in 2070 BS. Despite this, as per the UN Women report 2017, Nepal ranked first in South Asia for female representation in the parliament. The federal system introduced in 2072 BS, along with the constitution, mandated that at least 33% of seats in the federal parliament, provincial assemblies, and local governments are to be reserved for women.

After the 2074 elections, there is 33% female participation in both the federal and provincial parliaments and 41% at the local level. In the context of local governments, each ward must have at least two female members, and there must be one female candidate for the position of mayor and deputy mayor according to the constitutional provision and the legal framework, which has increased the number of women. The election-related laws have led to significant female participation in policymaking and leadership roles at the local level, which is a positive indicator of the state's commitment to proportional representation and

positive discrimination policies.

Nepal has made better progress relating to Sustainable Development Goal 5.5.1. Nepal has achieved the target of 33% representation set for 2019 (until the end of 2076 Poush) in both houses of parliament, obtaining 33.53% representation. Despite this progress, the situation of minimum female representation mandated by the constitution does not seem to improve. This is because the right to determine whether to send a man or a woman through proportional representation electoral systems lies within the political parties. Even if one political party exceeds the minimum required representation set by law for women in both the provincial assemblies and the federal parliament, it does not guarantee increased representation for women.

Nepal has expressed its commitment in ensuring women's participation in policy formulation and decision-making processes at all levels of the state by signing and ratifying various international agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) 1979, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995, and the Sustainable Development Goals 2015, among others.

Article 7 of Part 2 of the CEDAW ensures women's rights to participate in government policy formulation, implementation, and public activities. Similarly, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action identifies women as one of the twelve critical areas of concern in "Power Structures and Decision-Making," emphasizing the need for women's inclusion in decision-making processes and public life. These documents, currently

in implementation, ensure women's participation in policy formulation and decision-making processes and their impact at the international level.

In the local and general elections of 2079 in Nepal, there was a significant increase in youth participation. Many youths were elected, and there are currently 63 Members of Parliament under the age of 45. This increase is noteworthy compared to the elections of 2074, where 45 youth MPs were elected out of 275 total representatives⁵. This increase can have a significant impact on Nepal's political landscape, reflecting the growing influence of youth.

Several factors, including increased political awareness among youth, the rise of social media for political awareness, and the desire of youth to contribute to significant changes, have contributed to the increased youth participation in politics. Young voters have signaled their enthusiasm by launching campaigns like "No, not again" against established political leaders, indicating their eagerness to influence the country's political development. Elections have also paved the way for prominent youth leaders in Nepal's political arena.

In the elections of the House of Representatives (the first-past-the-post election system), Dalit, indigenous, and women candidates fail to win, then the current parliament appears less inclusive than the previous one. Out of 275 members in the House, only 35 are indigenous, 8 are women, and only 1 is Dalit. The one Dalit candidate was elected after the 2008 elections, resulting in the lowest representation of Dalits in Parliament compared to other groups. However, parties have been

5

https://data.ipu.org/node/120/data-on-youth?chamber_id=13473

ensuring proportional representation in Parliament under the proportional representation system.

According to the 2011 National Census, 13.8% of the seats were reserved for marginalized communities and 15 Dalit members should have been elected. This would mean there would be a total of 16 Dalit representatives (or 5.8%) out of 275 members in Parliament. However, in the 2074 elections, three Dalit representatives were elected to Parliament under the direct election system, but only one Dalit got elected.

Although the constitution ensures proportional representation of all ethnic groups in governmental authorities including the Parliament, marginalized groups such as women, Dalits, do not have proportional representation in Parliament based on census data. The Khas/Arya group will hold 31.20%, Indigenous Janajati will have 28.70%, Madhesis 15.30%, Dalits 13.80%, Tharus 6.60%, and Muslims 4.40%. However, this arrangement is limited within the system.

In the 2074 direct elections, only 7 women were elected to Parliament, but presently their number has reached 8. Under the FPTP election system, the number of MPs elected from Janajati communities was 33 in 2074, and now it has reached 35. Under the proportional representation system, indigenous peoples secured 31 out of 110 seats (or 28.7%) in 2074, but now there are only 66 (or 24%) MPs in the current federal parliament⁶.

6
inclusive

<https://kathmandupost.com/national/2022/11/30/new-house-of-representatives-to-be-less-inclusive>

Chapter-3

Election and Representation

3.1. Candidacy for Member of House of Representatives from Karnali Province

For the members of House of Representatives, among the total of 275 MPs elected in the first past the post elections, 165 are elected from single-member constituencies and the other 110 members are elected from a single nationwide constituency through proportional representation from the list of political parties. In the House of Representatives Election, 2079 from Karnali Province, the details of the candidates from each party in terms of gender, age and ethnicity are as follows:⁷

3.1.1. Status of Candidacy from Karnali Province in House of Representative in terms of Gender:

Political Party	Male	Female	Others	Total
Nepali Congress	4	0	0	4
CPN UML	12	0	0	12
Maoist Central	4	1	0	5
Rastriya Swatantra Party	6	0	0	6
Rastriya Prajatantra Party	11	1	0	12
Independent	13	0	0	13
Others	20	2	0	22
Total	70	4	0	74

Source: Election Commission, Nepal

If we look at the candidacy for the member of the House of Representatives in first-past-the-post election of 2079, out of the total 74 candidates, 70

7 Election Commission, Nepal (2024)

are male and only 4 are female. Nepali Congress and CPN (UML) have not filed their candidacy for any seat, while one from Maoist Centre, one from Rastriya Swatantra Party and two from other parties have filed their candidacies.⁸ Nepal's main parties, which make inclusivity the main agenda, do not field women in a single seat, which can be seen as ignoring the objective of engaging women in policy making.

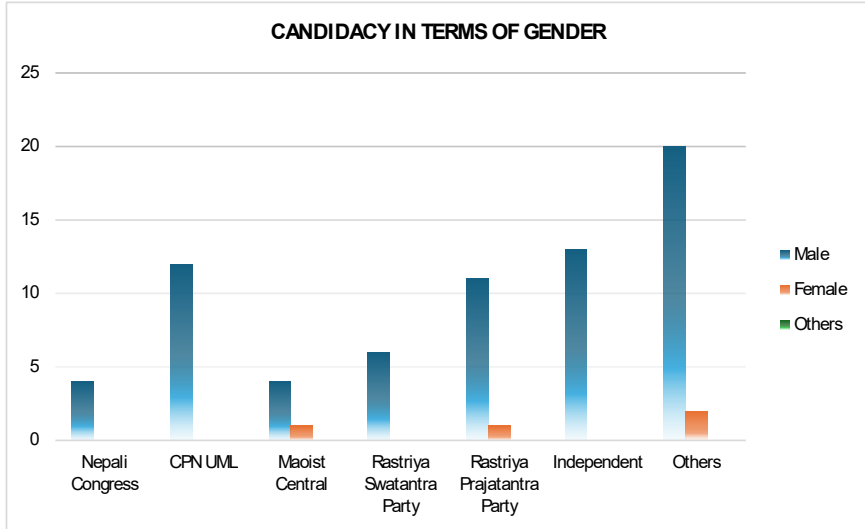


Figure 1: Status of party wise candidacy from Karnali province in House of representative in terms of gender

In the picture presented, the candidacy for the member of the House of Representatives in FPTP election 2079 has been depicted from a gender point of view. Of the total candidates in the HoR, 94.6% are male candidates and only 5.4% are female candidates. Although the Constitution of Nepal itself makes it mandatory to have one-third women parliamentarian in the federal and provincial parliaments⁹, the candidacy for direct elections is

8 <https://election.gov.np/np>

9 Article 84 sub-section 8 of the Constitution of Nepal 2072

only 5 percent. Hence, the policy of equality can only be seen as a policy of reservation. The demography of Karnali province holds the population of women to be about 5 percent more than that of men, but political parties do not give priority to women while contesting elections.

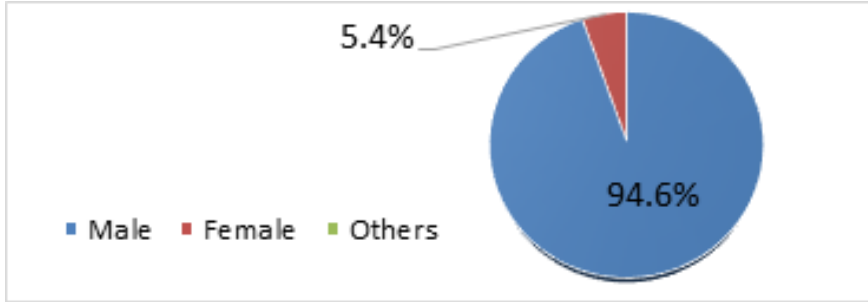


Figure 2: Status of total candidacy from Karnali province in House of representative in terms of gender

Having only 5 per cent candidates in a province with about 52 per cent women can be seen as ignoring the spirit of the constitution by political parties.

3.1.2. Candidacy from Karnali Province in House of Representative from the Perspective of Age

Political Party	Age Group (years)			Total
	Below 40	41 to 60	61 and above	
Nepali Congress	0	2	2	4
CPN UML	0	10	2	12
Maoist Central	1	4	0	5
Rastriya Swatantra Party	3	3	0	6
Rastriya Prajatantra Party	3	6	3	12
Independent	3	7	3	13
Others	5	11	6	22
Total	15	43	16	74

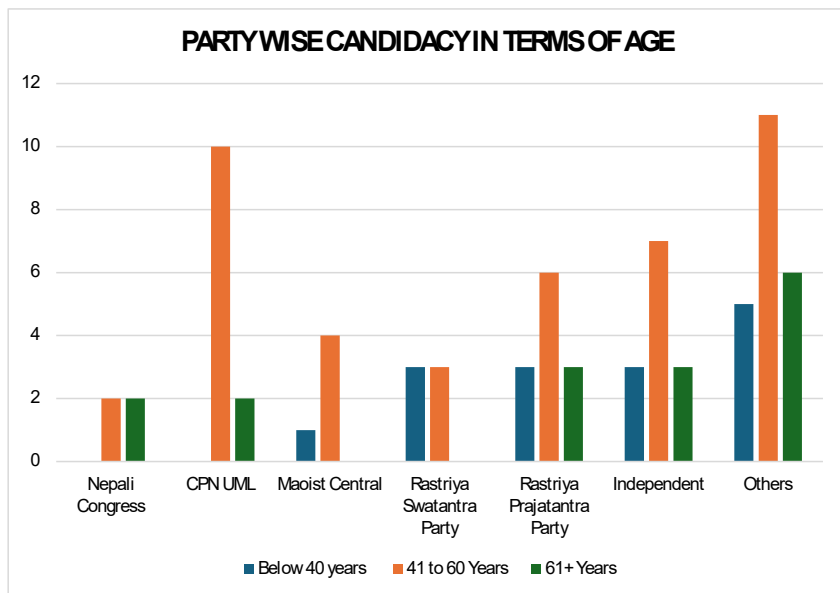


Figure 3: Status of candidacy from Karnali province in House of representative in terms of gender

If we look at the candidacy for the member of the House of Representatives in FPTP election 2079 from the age point of view, there was not a single candidate from the Nepali Congress and CPN-UML among the candidates under the age group of 40 years, while one from the CPN (Maoist Central), three from the Rastriya Swatantra Party, three from the Rastriya Prajatantra Party, a total of 15 candidates, including three independents and five from other parties, have filed their candidacies. Similarly, in the age group of 41 to 60, 2 candidates from Nepali Congress, 4 from CPN (Maoist Central), 10 from CPNUML, 3 from Rastriya swatantra Party, 6 from Rastriya Prajatantra Party, 7 from Independent and 11 from other parties have filed their candidacies.

Similarly, in the age group of above 61, no candidate has been registered from the CpN (Maoist Central) and the Rastriya swatantra Party, while two candidates from the Nepali Congress, two from the CPN-UML, three from the Rastriya Prajatantra Party, three from the Independent and six from other parties have filed their candidacies.

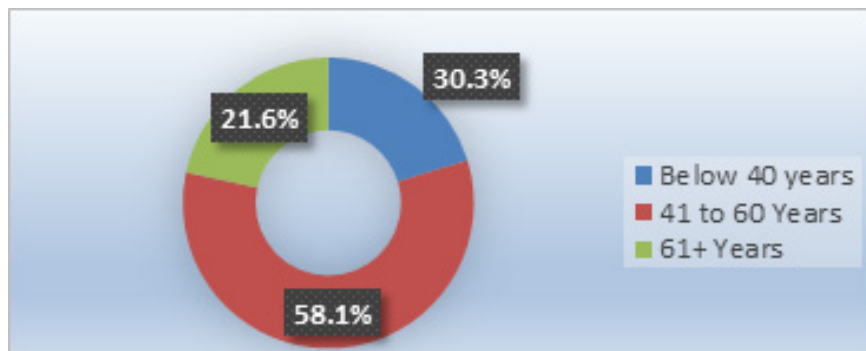


Figure 4: Status of total candidacy from Karnali province in HoR in terms of age

In the picture mentioned, the candidacy for the member of the House of Representatives in FPTP election 2079 has been presented from the point of view of age. 20.3% are the candidates under 40 years of age, 58.1% are between 41 and 60 years and 21.6% are above 61 years of age. In this manner, the same person will contest elections repeatedly, limiting the opportunities for youth involvement.

This discourages the youth from politics. It then, becomes necessary to increase youth participation in the direct election system to instill hope among all that the youth can give a new direction to the Nepali political system and meet the needs of the Nepali people.

3.1.3. Status of Candidacy from Karnali Province in House of Representative in terms of Ethnicity:

Political Parties	Ethnicity				
	Khas/Arya	Janajati	Dalit	Muslim	Total
Nepali Congress	4	0	0	0	4
CPN UML	12	0	0	0	12
Maoist Central	4	1	0	0	5
Rastriya Swatantra Party	4	0	1	1	6
Rastriya Prajatantra Party	11	1	0	0	12
Independent	12	0	1	0	13
Others	12	4	2	0	22
Total	63	6	4	1	74

If we look at the candidacy for the members in the House of Representatives in FPTP election 2079, out of the total 74 candidates, 63 are Khas Arya, out of which four are from Nepali Congress, 12 from CPN-UML, four from Maoist Central, four from Rastriya Swatantra Party, 11 from Rastriya Prajatantra Party. As many as 12 independent candidates and 16 candidates from other parties have filed their candidacies.

A total of six candidates had filed their nominations from the Janajati, including one from the Maoist Centre, one from the Rastriya Prajatantra Party and four from other parties. Similarly, in the Dalit community, there were only four candidates including one from the Rastriya Swatantra Party, one from the Independent and two from other parties. One candidate from the Rastriya Swatantra Party was registered from the Muslim community and no candidate from the other party.

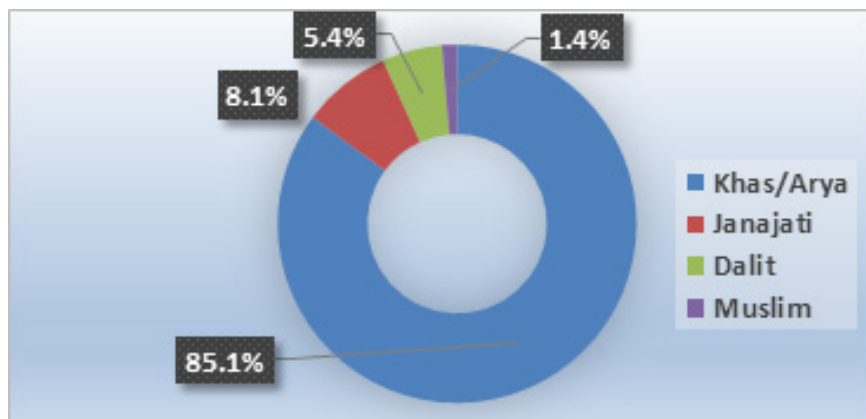


Figure 5: Status of candidacy from Karnali province in HoR in terms of ethnicity

From the ethnic point of view, 85.1% of Khas Aryans, 8.1% of Janajatis, 5.4% of Dalits and 1.4% of Muslims are candidates. According to statistics, the candidacy of Dalits and Janajatis, who are marginalized and backward communities in Nepali society, is very low in the FPTP election system.

3.2. Candidacy for Member of Karnali Provincial Assembly

As there is a constitutional provision that there will be a total of 40 members, 24 members from the First past the post system and 16 members from the proportional representation system, the candidates for the First past the post system in the Karnali Provincial Assembly have been studied and explained in detail below from the perspective of gender, age and ethnicity.

3.2.1. Candidacy for the Member of Karnali Provincial Assembly in terms of Gender

Political Party	Male	Female	Others	Total
Nepali Congress	12	0	0	12
CPN UML	24	0	0	24
Maoist Central	10	0	0	10
Rastriya Swatantra Party	-	-	-	-
Rastriya Prajatantra Party	23	0	0	23
Independent	15	0	0	15
Others	29	3	0	32
Total	113	3	0	116

If we look at the candidacy for the member of the Karnali Provincial Assembly election 2079 BS in terms of gender, out of the total 116 candidates, 113 are male and only three of them are female. Nepali Congress, CPN-UML and CpN (Maoist Central) did not file any women in direct elections. The Rastriya Swatantra Party did not take part in the provincial elections while other parties had three women candidates.

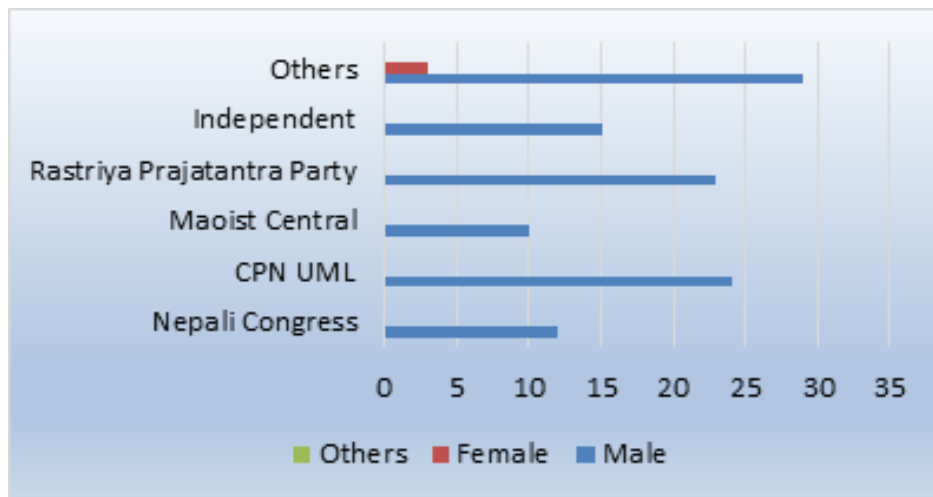


Figure 6: Party wise Candidacy for the member of Karnali Provincial Assembly in terms of Gender

Candidacy filed for the member of Karnali Provincial Assembly in FPTP election 2079, Of the total candidates, 97.4% were male candidates and only 2.6% were female candidates. According to the above data, even at the provincial level, the parties have not given priority to making women candidates in FPTP elections.

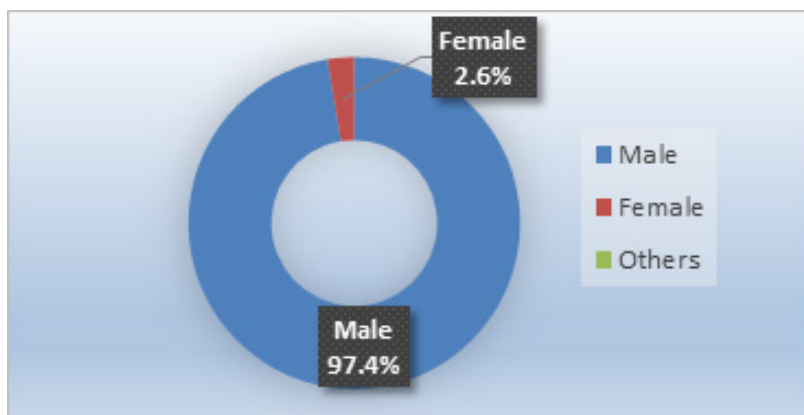


Figure 7: Party wise Candidacy for the member of Karnali Provincial Assembly in terms of Gender

Women's participation in elections needs to be significantly promoted in order to make women's voice strong and meaningful in policy making. While studying the context of Karnali, there are women politicians who can lead political parties, governments and parliament, but they have been deprived of opportunities due to various reasons. It is very necessary to bring all-round development of youth and women and bring their capabilities into the mainstream of policy-making and national development.

3.2.2 Candidacy for the Member of Karnali Provincial Assembly in terms of Age

Political Party	Age Group Years			Total
	Below 40 Years	41 to 60 Years	61+ Years	
Nepali Congress	1	8	3	12
CPN UML	2	18	4	24
Maoist Central	0	10	0	10
Rastriya Swatantra Party	-	-	-	-
Rastriya Prajatantra Party	6	12	5	23
Independent	3	7	5	15
Others	7	19	6	32
Total	19	74	23	116

If we look at the candidacy for the member in the Karnali Provincial Assembly in election 2079, there was not a single candidate under the age of 40 from the Maoist Central, one from the Nepali Congress, two from the CPN-UML, six from the Rastriya Prajatantra Party, a total of 19 candidates including three independents and seven from other parties had filed their candidacies. Similarly, in the age group of 41 to 60, eight candidates from Nepali Congress, 10 from Maoist Central, 18 from CPN-

UML, 12 from Rastriya Prajatantra Party, 7 independents and 19 from other parties had filed their candidacies. Similarly, in the age group of above 61, no candidacy has been registered from the Maoist Center, three from the Nepali Congress, four from the CPN-UML, five from the Rastriya Prajatantra Party, five from the Independent and six from other parties. The Rastriya Swatantra Party did not take part in the provincial elections.

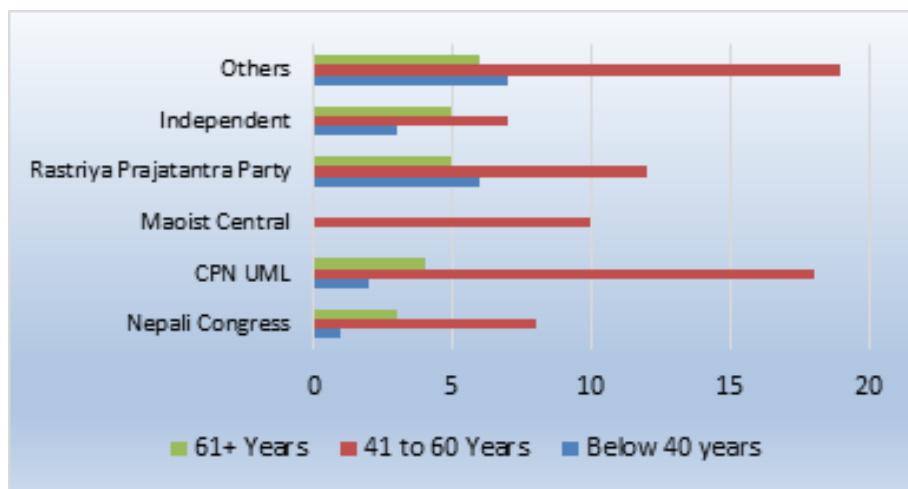


Figure 8: Candidacy for the member of Karnali Provincial Assembly in terms of age

Of the total candidates, 16.4% are in the under 40 age group, 63.8% in the age group of 41 to 60 years, and 19.8% above 61 years of age. In order to make the political system representative, everyone in the society should be involved in the process of running the state. When the youth are deprived or excluded from the political process, the decisions that are available to the mainstream people of the country are reduced and their voices are not heard. It is also necessary to encourage the youth in the general elections for effective intervention of the youth in politics.

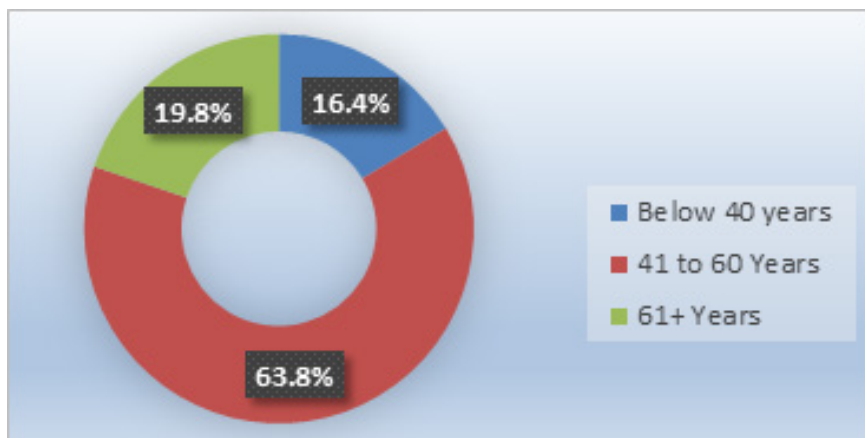


Figure 9: Candidacy for the member of Karnali Provincial Assembly in terms of age

3.2.3. Candidacy for the Member of Karnali Provincial Assembly in terms of Ethnicity

Political Parties	Ethnicity				
	Khas/Arya	Janajati	Dalit	Muslim	Total
Nepali Congress	11	1	0	0	12
CPN UML	21	2	1	0	24
Maoist Central	8	0	1	0	9
Rastriya Swatantra Party	-	-	-	-	-
Rastriya Prajatantra Party	19	2	2	0	23
Independent	14	0	1	1	16
Others	25	4	3	0	32
Total	98	9	8	1	116

Out of the total 116 candidates, 98 are khas aarya candidates out of which 11 are from Nepali Congress, 21 from CPN-UML, 8 from Maoist Central, and 8 from Rastriya Prajatantra Party. A total of 19 candidates, 14 independents and 25 other parties had filed their candidacies. Out of the nine candidates from the janajati community, one from the Nepali Congress, two from the CPN-UML, two from the Rastriya Prajatantra Party

and three from other parties have registered their candidacies. Similarly, there was no candidacy from the Nepali Congress representing the Dalit community, one from the CPN-UML, one from the Maoist Central, two from the Rastriya Prajatantra Party, one from the Independent and three from other parties, which is 8 candidacies in total. One independent candidate from the Muslim community filed their candidacy and no candidate from any other party.

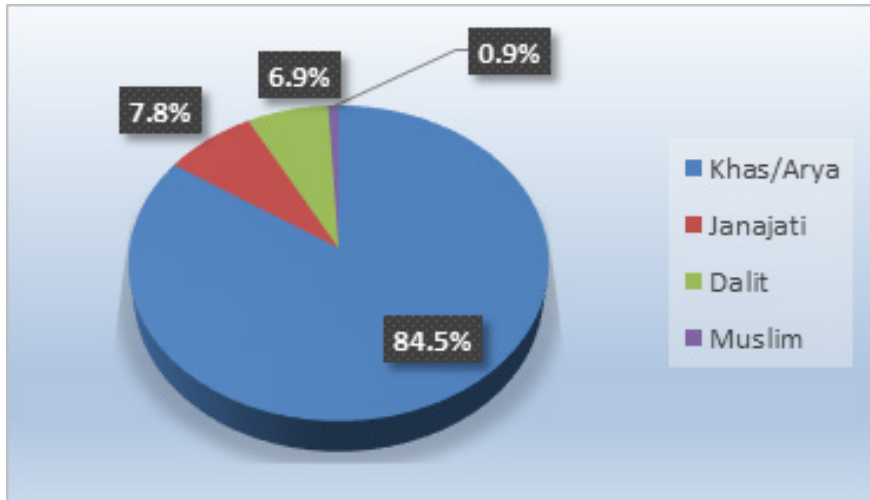


Figure 10: Candidacy for the member of Karnali Provincial Assembly in terms of Ethnicity

In the picture presented, the candidacy for the member of the Karnali Provincial Assembly in FPTP election 2079 has been mentioned in the ethnic point of view, which includes 84.5% Khas Arya, 7.8% tribal, 6.9% Dalit, and 0.9% Muslim.

3.3. Candidacy for Mayor and Chairperson for the Local Levels of Karnali Province

3.3.1. Candidacy for Mayor and Chairperson for the Local Levels of Karnali Province in terms of Gender

Political Party	Male	Female	Others	Total
Nepali Congress	60	4	0	64
CPN UML	63	4	0	67
Maoist Central	52	1	0	53
Rastriya Swatantra Party	-	-	-	-
Rastriya Prajatantra Party	49	2	0	51
Independent	53	1	0	54
Others	95	5	0	100
Total	372	17	0	389

If we look at the candidacy for the post of mayor and chairperson of the local level in the local level elections 2079 of Karnali from the gender point of view, then out of the total 389 candidates, 372 are male and only 17 are female. A total of 17 candidates including four from The Nepali Congress, four from the CPN-UML, one from the Maoist Centre, one from the Independent and five from other parties have filed their candidacies. The Rastriya Swatantra Party was not involved in this election

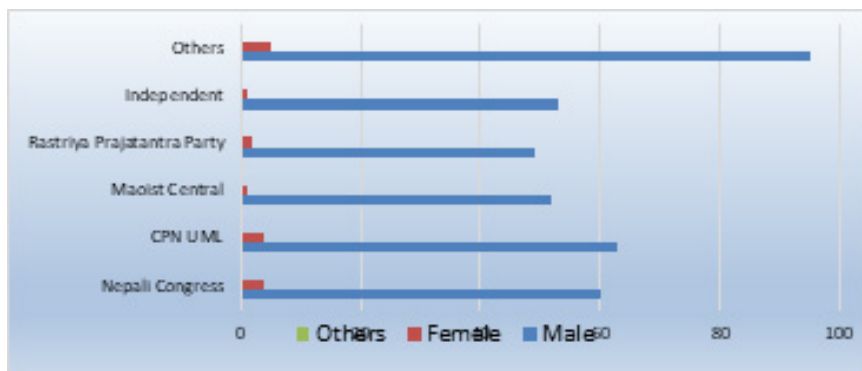


Figure 11: Party wise Candidacy for mayor and chairperson for the local levels of Karnali province in terms of Gender

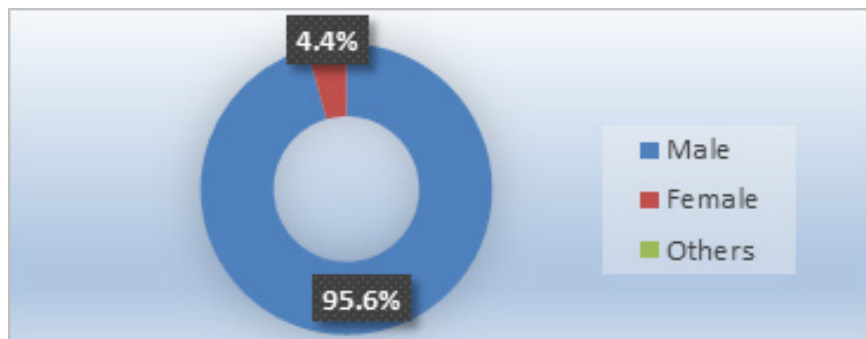


Figure 12: Total Candidacy for mayor and chairperson for the local levels of Karnali province in terms of Gender

In the local level elections 2079, 95.6% of the candidates for the post of chiefs and chairpersons of the local levels are male and only 4.4% are female. However, there are negligible number of female candidates in these posts of executive role and head of the local level.

There is a mandatory law requiring at least one woman to be the Mayor/ deputy mayor or chairperson/ Vicechairperson of the local level and according to this law, there is no candidate for the post of chairperson. In recent times, there is no female candidate for both the post of chief and deputy mayor as the culture of alliance of different parties is developing in the elections.

3.3.2. Candidacy for Mayor and Chairperson for the Local Levels of Karnali Province in terms of Age

Political Party	Age Group Years			Total
	Below 40 Years	41 to 60 Years	61+ Years	
Nepali Congress	20	40	4	64
CPN UML	16	47	4	67
Maoist Central	17	33	3	53
Rastriya Swatantra Party	-	-	-	-
Rastriya Prajatantra Party	16	25	10	51
Independent	25	24	5	54
Others	37	53	10	100
Total	131	222	36	389

In the local level elections 2079, if we look at the candidacy for the post of mayor and chairperson of the local level in Karnali Province in terms of age, out of the candidates under the age group of 40 years, 17 are from the Maoist Center, 20 from the Nepali Congress, 16 from the CPN-UML, 16 from the Rastriya Prajatantra Party and 25 independent and 37 from other parties, have filed their candidacies in a total of 131 candidates.

Similarly, in the age group of 41 to 60, 40 candidates from Nepali Congress, 33 from Maoist Center, 47 from CPN-UML, 25 from Rastriya Prajatantra Party, 26 from independents and 36 from other parties had filed their candidacies. Similarly, in the age group of above 61, 36 candidates including 3 from Maoist Center, 4 from Nepali Congress, 4 from CPN-UML, 10 from Rastriya Prajatantra Party, 5 from Independent and 10 from other parties have filed their candidacies.

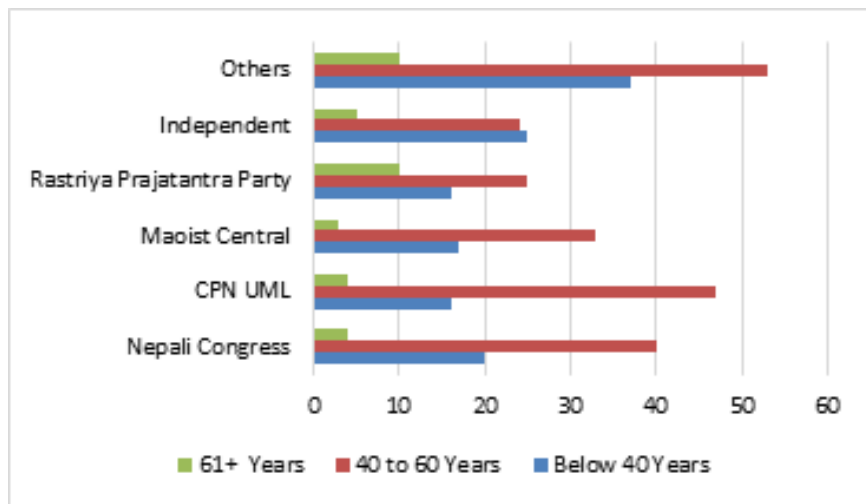


Figure 13: Candidacy for mayor and chairperson for the local levels of Karnali province in terms of Age

In the local level election 2079 of Karnali, 33.7% of the candidates in the age group of 40 years, 57.1% of those aged between 41 and 60 and 9.3% of those above 61 years of age were registered.

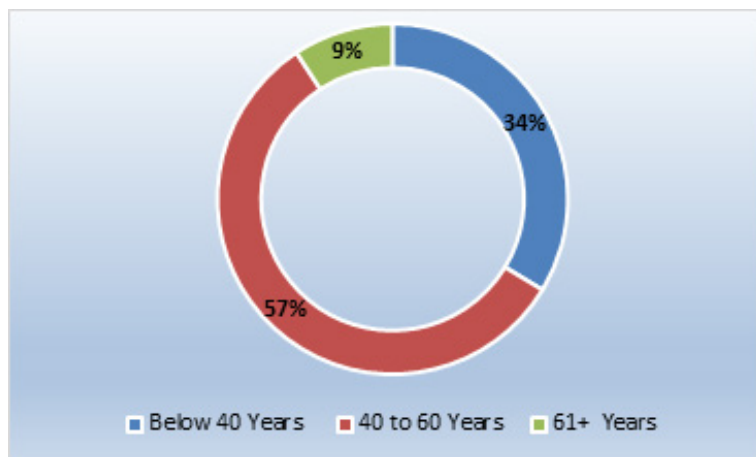


Figure 14: Candidacy for mayor and chairperson for the local levels of Karnali province in terms of Age

3.3.3. Candidacy for Mayor and Chairperson for the Local Levels of Karnali Province in terms of Ethnicity

Political Parties	Ethnicity				
	Khas/Arya	Janajati	Dalit	Muslim	Total
Nepali Congress	58	4	0	0	62
CPN UML	62	4	4	0	70
Maoist Central	48	3	3	0	54
Rastriya Swatantra Party	-	-	-	-	-
Rastriya Prajatantra Party	46	3	3	0	52
Independent	44	2	6	0	52
Others	80	8	11	0	99
Total	338	24	27	0	389

If we look at the candidacy for the post of Mayor and chairperson of the local level in the local level election 207 of Karnali, out of the total 389 candidates, 338 are Khas Arya, out of which 58 are from Nepali Congress, 62 from CPN-UML, 48 from Maoist Center, 46 from Rastriya Prajatantra Party, 44 independents and 80 candidates of other parties had filed their candidacies. Of the 24 candidates representing the janajati community, four are from the Nepali Congress, four from the CPN-UML, three from the NC-Maoist Centre, three from the Rastriya Prajatantra Party, two independents and eight from other parties.

Similarly, there were no candidates from the Nepali Congress representing the Dalit community in the local level, four from the CPN-UML, three from the CPN (Maoist Central), and three from the Rastriya Prajatantra Party, six from the Independent and 11 from other parties were candidates. Also, there seems to be no candidate from the Muslim community.

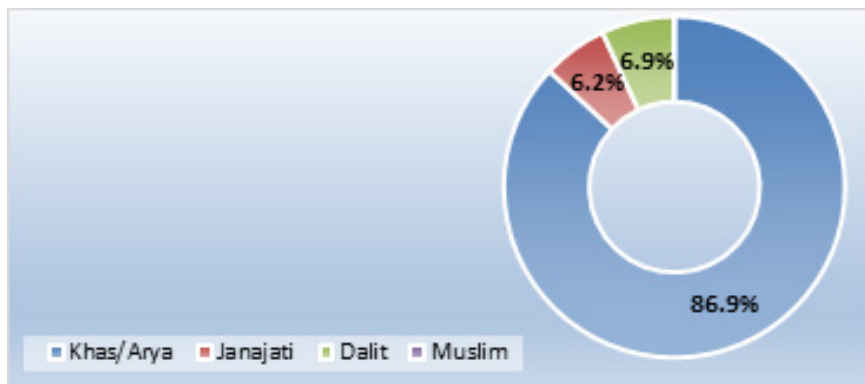


Figure 15: Candidacy for mayor and chairperson for the local levels of Karnali province in terms of Ethnicity

The above picture presents the candidacy for the post of mayor and chairperson of the local level in the local level election 2079 of Karnali from the point of view of ethnicity. Of the total candidates, 86.9% are from Khas Arya, 6.2% from Janajati and 6.9% from Dalit community.

3.4. Candidacy for Deputy Mayors and Vice-Chairperson for the Local Levels of Karnali province

3.4.1. Candidacy for Deputy Mayors and Vice-Chairperson for the Local Levels of Karnali province in terms of Gender

Political Party	Male	Female	Others	Total
Nepali Congress	7	49	0	56
CPN UML	18	54	0	72
Maoist Central	15	36	0	51
Rastriya Swatantra Party	-	-	-	-
Rastriya Prajatantra Party	8	40	0	48
Independent	24	18	0	42
Others	23	77	0	80
Total	95	254	0	349

In the local level elections 2079, 95 male and 254 female candidates out of the total 349 candidates have been nominated for the post of deputy mayor and vice-chairperson of the local levels of Karnali Province. A total of 254 female candidates including 49 from Nepali Congress, 54 from CPN-UML, 36 from Maoist Centre, 40 from Rastriya Prajatantra Party, 18 from independents and 57 from other parties have filed their candidacies. Rastriya Swatantra Party did not participate in the local level elections.

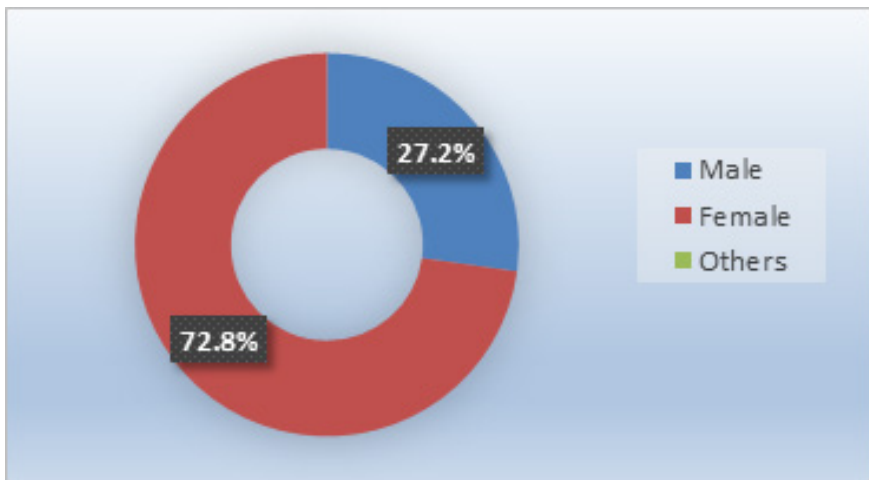


Figure 16: Candidacy for deputy mayors and vice-chairpersons for the local levels of Karnali province in terms of gender.

The local level elections 2079, 72.8% of women and 27.2% of men had filed their candidacies for the post of deputy mayor and vice-chairperson of the local levels. Most of the parties had fielded women candidates for the posts of deputy mayor and vice-president, while in some local levels, there were men candidates for the post due to alliance in the election.

3.4.2. Candidacy for Deputy Mayors and Vice-Chairperson for the Local Levels of Karnali province in terms of Age

Political Party	Age Group Years			
	Below 40 Years	41 to 60 Years	61+ Years	Total
Nepali Congress	35	20	1	56
CPN UML	33	37	2	72
Maoist Central	33	17	1	51
Rastriya Swatantra Party	-	-	-	-
Rastriya Prajatantra Party	23	22	3	48
Independent	20	16	6	42
Others	50	28	2	80
Total	194	140	15	349

If we look at the candidacy for the post of deputy mayor and vice-chairman of the local level in Karnali Province in the local level elections 2079, out of 194 candidates under the age group of 40 years, 33 candidates from the Maoist Central, 35 from the Nepali Congress, 33 from the CPN-UML, 23 from the Rastriya Prajatantra Party, 20 independents and 50 from other parties, have filed their candidacies.

Similarly, in the age group of 41 to 60, 20 candidates from Nepali Congress, 17 from Maoist Centre, 37 from CPN-UML, 22 from Rastriya Prajatantra Party, 16 from independents and 25 from other parties had filed their candidacies. Similarly, in the age group of above 61, one candidate from the CPN (Maoist Central), one from the Nepali Congress, two from the CPN-UML, three from the Rastriya Prajatantra Party, six independents and two from other parties had filed their candidacies.

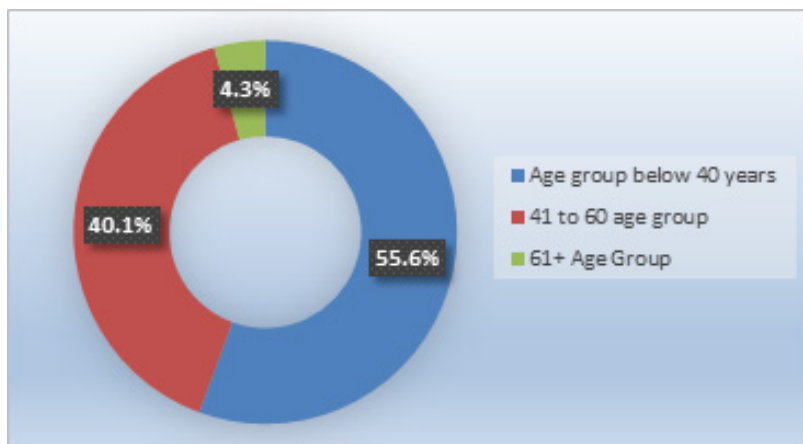


Figure 17: Candidacy for deputy mayors and vice-chairperson for the local levels of Karnali province in terms of age

In the local level elections 2079, 55.6% of the candidate age group of below 40 years, 40.1% of the candidates in the age group of 41 to 60 years and 4.3% of the candidates above 61 years of age filed their candidacies.

3.4.3. Candidacy for Deputy Mayors and Vice-Chairperson for the Local Levels of Karnali province in terms of Ethnicity

Political Party	Ethnicity				Total
	Khas/Arya	Janajati	Dalit	Muslim	
Nepali Congress	48	5	4	0	57
CPN UML	65	3	2	0	70
Maoist Central	42	5	4	0	51
Rastriya Swatantra Party	0	0	0	0	0
Rastriya Prajatantra Party	42	3	3	0	48
Independent	33	2	8	0	43
Others	63	10	7	0	80
Total	293	28	28	0	349

If we look at the candidacy for the post of deputy mayor and vice-chairman of the local levels of Karnali Province in the local level elections 2079, out of the total 349 candidates, 293 are Khas Arya, out of which 48 are

from Nepali Congress, 65 from CPN-UML, 42 from Maoist Center, 42 from Rastriya Prajatantra Party. As many as 33 independent candidates and 63 candidates from other parties have filed their candidacies. Of the 28 candidates of Janajati community, five are from the Nepali Congress, three from the CPN-UML, five from the Maoist Centre, three from the Rastriya Prajatantra Party, two independents and 10 from other parties. Similarly, among the Dalit community, four are from the Nepali Congress, two from the CPN-UML, four from the Maoist Centre, three from the Rastriya Prajatantra Party, eight from independents and seven from other parties. There was no candidate from the Muslim community for this post.

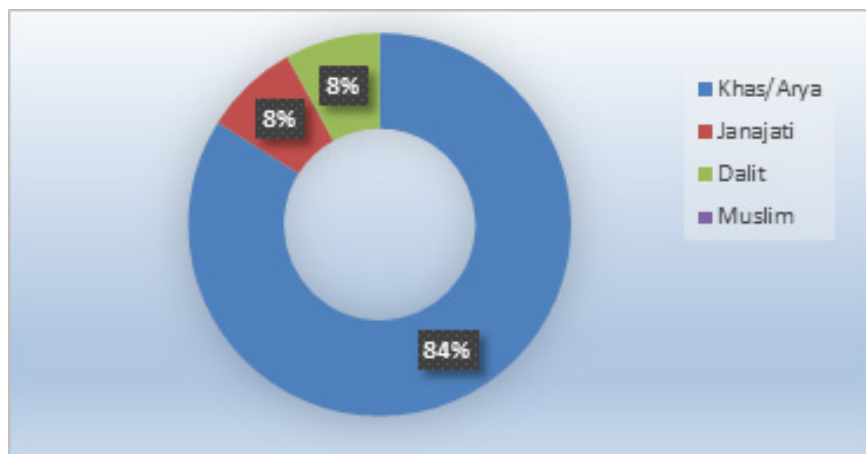


Figure 18: Candidacy for deputy mayors and vice-chairpersons for the local levels of Karnali province in terms of Ethnicity

According to the candidacy for the post of deputy mayor and vice-chairperson of the local levels of Karnali Province in the local level elections 2079, 84 percent of the total candidates are Khas Arya, 8 percent from the Janajatis, 8 percent from the Dalit and no candidacy from Muslim communities.

Chapter-4

Conclusion and Recommendation

4.1. Conclusion

Participation of all sectors and parties, as well as representation of all ethnicities, religions, ages, and genders is crucial and complex in elections. Participation in elections increases ownership for those involved, while low participation implies negativity towards the current situation. Only because of the legal provisions, representation of women and marginalized groups varies at different levels in elected positions. Legal provisions play a significant role in increasing the mentionable increase in the representation of women and Dalit women elected at the local level. Although some of the facts mentioned in this study show that the number of elected women in Nepal's elections has decreased numerically, Nepal is making good progress compared to the international situation. Based on the meaning, spirit and provisions of Nepal's Constitution and federal and Provincial Assembly Member Election Act, it is not seen that inclusiveness and participation in the first past the post election purpose is fully followed by the political parties.

The major findings of this study are as follows:

1. Nepal's main parties, which make inclusivity the main agenda, do not field women in a single seat, which can be seen as ignoring the issue of a lack of engagement of women in policy making.
2. Of the total candidates in the House of Representatives, 94.6% were male and only 5.4% were female candidates.

3. In the House of Representatives, 20.3% of the candidates under the age group of 40 years, 58.1% of the candidates between the ages of 41 and 60 and 21.6% of the candidates above 61 years of age were from Karnali Province. There were 85.1% Khas Aryas, 8.1% Janajatis, 5.4% Dalits and 1.4% Muslims candidates from Karnali Province for HoR.
4. Of the total candidates for the election held for the member of Karnali Provincial Assembly, 97.4% were male candidates and only 2.6% were female candidates, 16.4% were in the age group of 40 years, 63.8% in the age group of 41 to 60 years and 19.8% above 61 years of age, 84.5% were Khas Aryans, 7.8% Janajatis, 6.9% Dalits and 0.9% Muslims.
5. In the local level election 2079 of Karnali, the candidacy for the post of Mayor and Chairperson, 95.6% were male and only 4.4% were female; 33.7% of the candidates in the age group of 40 years, 57.1% of those in the age group of 41 to 60 and 9.3% of those above 61 years of age were registered; 86.9% of the total candidates are Khas Aryans, 6.2% are from the tribal and 6.9% from the Dalit community.
6. In the local level elections 2079, 72.8% of female and 27.2% of male had filed their candidacies for the post of deputy mayor and vice-chairperson of the local levels of Karnali Province; 55.6% of the candidates in the age group of 40 years, 40.1% of the candidates in the age group of 41 to 60 years and 4.3% of the candidates above 61 years of age; 84% of the Khas Arya, 8% from the janajatis, 8% from the Dalit and no candidacy was filed from Muslim communities.

4.2. Recommendations:

The society, the state and the individuals themselves should work to increase the representation of women, youth and marginalized communities in direct elections. Policy makers from political parties should contest in view of inclusivity. Increasing the representation of women, youth and marginalized communities in direct elections will contribute to the meaningful participation of these communities in policy making.

1. Political parties should increase the number of youths, women and inclusive groups in committees at different levels of the party and also as general members by increasing political awareness among them.
2. Due to social discrimination, women and people from inclusive groups have still not been able to come into the mainstream of the state and just the concept of youth cannot do anything, their efficiency does not work; this is the main reason of low participation of such communities in policy making. For meaningful participation in various organs of the government, it is necessary to increase their participation by developing the capacity of youths, women and inclusive groups.
3. As the number of candidates in the elections of women and inclusive groups has decreased drastically, leadership development and opportunities should be created from the local level to increase their involvement.
4. Social organizations can run programs in collaboration with the

Government of Nepal, Election Commission, and development partners to increase the activity of umbrella organizations of different groups in the election process from registration of voter list to declaration of election results.

5. While broadcasting content or programs that provide election and voter education, it should be published/broadcast in a way that benefits women and inclusive groups as much as possible. Local language and audio-visual material should be published and broadcast in such a way that it is easier for the target class to understand the election process and legal system.
6. In the absence of a legal obligation to adopt the principle of inclusivity towards the first-past-the-post electoral system in accordance with the current electoral system, political parties have paid little attention to the representation of women in nominating candidates. In the first-past-the-post electoral system, at least one-third of women and inclusive groups must contest.
7. It is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy of positive discrimination and reservation in government and public services and focus on groups and inclusive groups within women and significantly increase the participation of women in participation, representation and nomination within and outside the country in accordance with international commitments, constitutions and laws.
8. According to the constitutional provision, although the number of women's representatives is good, the gender balance has not been balanced and women's empowerment has been weakened due to lack of meaningful and leadership roles. For this, at least one-third

of the municipalities should select candidates so that women can get the main role. Women who have played competent, leadership roles in the deputy mayor or vicepresident in the previous term should be nominated for the post of chief and chairperson this time. The party should provide special concessions to women candidates. As in the past, where there is defeat, the method of raising women candidates should be improved.

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About Hriti Foundation

Hriti Foundation is a policy think tank based in Karnali Province. Along with policy research, policy action, and policy recommendation, it organizes a policy festival named Karnali Utsav, Kuda Karnalika to help promote the idea of a prosperous Karnali.

Hriti Foundation envisions a society where individual rights and economic freedom are cherished and protected. The mission statement of Hriti Foundation is to promote individual and economic rights and advance liberal principles as the foundation of public policies through research, training, advocacy, and dialogue.

The foundation has conducted research on diverse policy issues. Hriti always keeps eyeing the government policies and their deliverables. Hriti tracks the parliamentary actions of both the parliament and the parliamentarians to make the public representatives more accountable. Moreover, Hriti carried out research relating to the budget. It also supports the governments i.e. province and local to create a larger impact of their policies. For that Hriti Foundation has been organizing policy discussions, workshops, and conclaves. Hence, Hriti provides policy recommendations to the governments, particularly to the Karnali province government based on the policy research.



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