

# REPORT ON THE STATE OF WOMEN IN URBAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEPAL

## 1. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY.

### 1.1 Socio-Economic Profile

Nepal is a small country, which occupies a geographical area of 141,181 square kilometers sandwiched between two Asian giant's China and India. The country is divided administratively into 5 development regions and 75 districts. Municipality is the lowest local level administration unit in each district. The number of Village Development Committee (VDC) and Municipalities are 3,995 and 58 respectively. Ecologically it is divided into three ecological regions i.e. Mountain, Hill and Terai.

The country has varieties of topography, which is reflected in the diversity of weather and climate. There are sixty to eighty percent of annual rainfalls during the monsoon season (June to September).

#### Population:

At present the total population of the country has been projected to 21.1 million and females constitute 10.53 million in 1996 with an annual growth rate of 2.1 percent. (Children & Women of Nepal: A Situation Analysis, 1996, UNICEF/Nepal, p. 55)

**Table 1: Population of Country**

Population		Level of Urbanization as % of Total Population	GNP per Capita \$
Male	Female		
9220974	9270123	10.9	210

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) 1991

The population density of Nepal in 1996 is estimated to be 143.5 persons per square kilometers. The population density is highest in the southern Terai region and lowest in the mountainous region in the north.

In total there are 58 Municipalities in Nepal. In 1996, 10.9 % of total population is estimated to be urban. The average annual growth rate in Nepal between 1980 and 1993 was 7.7, the highest in South Asia. Rapid population growth is the primary reason for rapidly increasing population in urban areas.

The population census for the five largest cities of Nepal available from 1971 to 1991 is presented in the following table.

**Table 2: Population of Five Largest Cities**

Year	Kathmandu	Lalitpur	Birgunj	Bharatpur	Pokhara
1971	150,402	59,049	12,999	6,942	20,611
1981	235,160	79,875	43,642	27,602	46,642
1991	421,258	115,865	69,005	54,670	95,286

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS)

The table shows that Kathmandu Metropolitan, Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan, Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan, Birgunj Sub-Metropolitan and Bharatpur municipalities are the five largest cities of Nepal according to the population size respectively.

### **Language and Religion:**

Nepali is the Official Language. Classification of language, by mother tongue shows the Nepali speakers were 50.3 percent of the total population in 1991. Maithali, Bhojpuri, Tharu, Tamang and Newari are about 11.8 percent, 7.5 percent, 5.4 percent, 4.9 percent and 3.7 percent respectively.

The religion is very important aspect of life in Nepal. Nepal is the only Hindu State in the World. The majority of the population is Hindu, which are about 86.5 percent. The second largest religious group is Buddhist, which is 7.8 percent (1991). There is intermingling of Hindu and Buddhist belief. Hindu worship in Buddhist temple and Buddhist in Hindu temple, which shows a tolerance and respect for each other's faith, so religious conflict hardly exists.

### **Education:**

National statistics shows that women's literacy rate is 30 percent while 66 percent to male and the national literacy rate is projected as 40 percent. The enrollment of women in higher education is only 24.95 percent. Women's involvement in technical and vocational education is also lower than men. The literacy rate of women varies in rural and urban areas of Nepal. The rural literacy rate of females is 36.5 percent while 61.5 percent in urban area of Nepal.

The following table presents clearly the level of education (both public and private sector).

**Table 3: Education and Literacy Rates**

	Literacy Rates (percentage of Total Population)		Level Of Education Enrollment Levels									
	Female	Male	Non Formal Education		Primary		Lower Secondary		Upper Secondary		Tertiary	
			Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Urban	61.5	NA	4.3%	NA	159312 (44.85%)	195929 (55.15%)	58784 (43.09%)	77635 (56.91%)	30112 (42.67%)	40461 (57.33%)	NA	NA
Rural	36.5	NA	4.2 %	NA	1242032 (40.16%)	1850334 (59.84%)	242023 (36.95%)	143060 (63.05%)	88990 (34.32%)	170270 (65.68%)	NA	NA
Total	30.0%	66.0% (1998)										

NA – Not Available

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) 1996, 1998

## Health:

Because of women's lower status Vis a Vis man, life expectancy for women is 53.5 as against 55.0 for men and Nepal is one of the countries of the world where life expectancy for women is lower than that of men. Infant mortality for females is 101 as against 94 for males; maternal mortality rate stands at 515 out of 100,000 live births; and 70 - 80 percent women are anemic. One fifth of women get married in the early age of 15-19. As a result of their premature pregnancy the pre-mature deaths of women have been occurring in a very high rate. The following table gives a clear situation of infant mortality and mother mortality in the rural and urban areas of Nepal.

**Table 4: Mortality and Fertility Rate**

Area	Infant Mortality	Under 5 Mortality	Maternal Mortality	No. of children per women(Total Fertility)
Urban	60.4	93.6		
Rural	100.2	147.0		
		Total	515/100,00(1991)	5.1 (1991)

Source: Nepal Fertility Family Planning and Health Survey (NFFPHS) 1993

Various types of health programs are being conducted for the benefit of women. Most of the programs are on reproductive health and family planning measures because this is one of the major areas for women. It is time to acknowledge that woman's overall health (beyond reproduction) has to be taken care of, for example breast cancer, anemia, pelvic cancer and malnutrition are some major diseases and conditions faced by women.

## Economy:

Agriculture is the major sector for employment in Nepal that comprised 81 percent of overall workers in 1991. Agriculture provided 23.8 percent of the total employment in urban areas and 85.4 percent in rural areas. Dependence on agriculture for employment is slowly declining with a correlative increase of employment in services and manufacturing.

Due to a shortage of productive agriculture land rural families are sustained through farm labor, principally porting and laboring. Off farm opportunities are not always available, so the family members are forced to migrate in search of work elsewhere in Nepal or in India.

Unemployment in Nepal has increased since 1981. The lack of job opportunities in the non-agricultural sector and the declining percentage of workers involved in agriculture have contributed to the growth of unemployment. An absence of female household employment programs has aggravated the problems of female unemployment in Nepal in recent years. It is estimated that the magnitude of unemployment is 6 percent at the national level. The problems of under employment are however more serious than that of unemployment. Present estimates of under employment range from 45 to 65 percent. A survey conducted by the National Planning Commission in 1977 estimated that the magnitude of women employment for the population over 10 years was 41.2 percent in the rural areas and 25 percent in urban areas. Under employment

rates are higher for females than for males in both rural and urban areas of all regions.

Women's average work burden has increased slightly over the past 12 years from 10.8 hours per day in 1981 to 10.9 hours per day in 1995. Men's average work burden presently is 7.8 hours a day, 3.1 hours less than that of women. Women's participation in the informal sector has increased significantly in both urban and rural areas - for example vending, petty trade liquor making and vegetable selling are some of the more common employment ventures of women.

**Table 5: Labor Force**

Area	Labor Force	Percentage of women in labor force	Share of income of women
Urban	58.5	51.9	NA
Rural	74.2	73.9	NA

Source: Nepal Labor Force Survey (NLFS) 1998/99

The basic causes of poverty are the dependence of the increasing population on limited resources and the low rate of economic growth. In this perspective the eighth plan of the nation focused on the programs that create productive aspects and additional employment opportunities in order to alleviate poverty, together with extension of social services such as health, education, vocational training and drinking water supply and with effective management and protection of natural resources. The programs are targeted to the population living below the poverty line.

The value of Gross Domestic Product at current price (1995/96) is estimated to be RS. 2,49,896 million which has recorded an increase of 13.81 percent as compared to the estimate of the previous year. The contribution of the agriculture sector to the total GDP contributes 40.22 percent and that of non-agriculture sector 59.78 percent during this year.

### **National Infrastructure:**

Nepal is in a landlocked situation and the predominance of rugged mountainous areas have made the development of transportation and communication extremely difficult. Despite these difficulties some breakthrough have been made in the development of infrastructure. Even today a large part of the country remains inaccessible by modern transportation and communication.

The available transportation network of the country is mainly concentrated in the Terai and the hills. Mountain areas are accessible only on foot or in a few areas by air.

The improvement of air transportation and the construction of airfield have been given emphasis in national development plans. The establishment of about 42 airfields throughout the country has been significant for national integration development and the promotion of tourism. Among 75 districts of the country, 40 are accessible by air.

Nepal has to depend on the seaports of other countries for ocean shipment of materials necessary to support its economic and development activities.

## 1.2 Politics and Governance:

Nepal is unique among the nations of the region, having been never colonized and had a relatively cohesive national identity since the late 1700 A.D. One of the strengths of the country is its stability and its strong sense of ownership, which has enabled it to hold a precarious balance between two powerful neighbors. For nearly a century from 1846 till 1950 the country was deliberately isolated from the rest of the world and power was centralized in the office of Rana Prime Minister and the Rana family. In 1950 the popular revolution brought down the Rana regime.

The popular movement of 1990 eventually put an end to the three decade long palace-led Monarchic Panchayat polity in Nepal. This has led to the promulgation of a democratic constitution in 1991 which once again helped to reinstate the Multi-Party Parliamentary System in Nepal. However, for a brief period of 18 months during 1960-61, Nepal experienced Parliamentary Democracy, but it had to face an abrupt end because of the royal take-over motivated with political ambition only and thus dissolved the democratically elected Nepali Congress Government.

Nepal has so far undergone 3 Parliamentary and 2 local bodies' elections under the new democratic constitution of 1991. Unlike the previous system the new constitution has made the Prime Minister, elected through the popular vote, the actual head of Government and the King the Constitutional Monarch only.

The current system has adopted the previous nature of unitary structure for the governance of the country but the constitution has shown a strong commitment towards the process of decentralization of authority and responsibilities at the grassroots level and thereby creates local Self-Governments. With the promulgation of the Local Self Government Act –1999, the status of decentralization process in Nepal moved a step forward from decentralization to actual devolution of power to the local governing units, thereby helping to consolidate democracy even at the grassroots level.

Like other countries the civil administration in Nepal is accepted as a vital mechanism to implement overall governmental programs, policies, decision and law of the nation. The post –1990 phase has also incorporated the Public Service Commission (PSC) as a separate and independent constitutional entity. The main function of the PSC is to assist the government in appointing competent officials in the governmental administrative system. For this it has to fulfill all the necessary processes by observing democratic norms while selecting and recommending required manpower. In this context it provides the eligible citizens a sense of right to equality and access to the public positions on the merit basis in a transparent manner.

The PSC, according to its main function and program use, has to make regular and open advertisements to fill the vacancies for the governmental administrative offices. The vacancies are advertised both at local and central levels but most of the selection criteria and processes are fixed and controlled by the central body.

Despite the adoption of selection on merit basis the PSC however, has to give priorities to the women, backward communities and the people from remote

areas. This policy has been adopted to bring those groups of people who have marginal access in the administrative job, into the bureaucratic mainstream.

In the previous system political parties were not legally allowed so people were not in a position to oppose any issue relating to public concern and were thus organized with opposition deliberately curbed. Fundamental rights however were guaranteed and adult franchise with secret balloting was accepted. But participation in the electoral process as a contesting candidate was regulated through five different class organizations from where one who seeks candidacy in the election should obtain membership from any of those organizations. But after the dawn of democracy of 1990 the formation of political parties are allowed. The successive elections whether parliamentary or local bodies thereafter were conducted on the party based manner.

In the parliamentary elections of 1999 a total of 40 political parties participated with the due recognition of the Election Commission. In the first general elections conducted immediately after the restoration of democracy in 1991 some 44 political parties were in the electoral fray. This number was, however, reduced to 24 during the mid-term poll of 1994 for some unknown reasons.

Right to expression as a cardinal principle of democracy is a constitutionally significant provision for the citizens of Nepal and guaranteed as a major fundamental right. This led the people to have a freedom to oppose the government and even its policies and decisions. After the promulgation of the constitution of 1991 the press and media is exercising enough freedom and thus helping the people to enjoy their right of expression. It is also playing an instrumental role in preserving the right to information of the people through its functions in this regard.

The present democratic constitution of Nepal possesses all the features of the developed democracies. Elections in Nepal are held on the regular time bound basis on party based manner. Independents, however are also allowed to contest the elections but without any fixed regular symbol as the registered political parties do have. The term of office of any elections conducted whether for the parliamentary or local bodies is fixed for 5 years. The constitution has clearly spelt out this and made elections as a mandatory provision that has to be carried out after the completion of the term in normal conditions and this has been regularly followed in Nepal. Similarly the constitution is based on the 'one man one vote' system with secret balloting provision for the electoral purposes. For guaranteeing the free fair and impartial election, voter's identity cards have gradually been introduced in Nepal. The Election Commission has invited neutral and independent observers, from national and foreign groups, to observe the elections wherever they like to do so. Participation of the people in the voting process is voluntary, not mandatory.

The electoral system in Nepal has no term limits to any elected officials and no restriction has been made to any normal person in the normal conditions. But there is an age limit at minimum to contest the elections of both at national and local levels, with the candidate having completed 25 years to contest elections.

Due to the patriarchal structure the society gives priority to the male child because he will earn the livelihood for the family and he will be responsible to

take care of parents at the old age. So his participation in decision making in the family affairs are felt necessary whereas the girl child is trained to carry out household jobs. The task of boys and girls are quite determined in Nepalese society. The boys have their father's works and seldom participate in the household tasks.

Confidence and self-esteem are not cultivated during the socialization of girl children. Gentleness, sacrifice, unassertiveness and often-feminine qualities are encouraged in girl children. Decision making, ability of expression, opinion formation and assertion of their needs and interests are mostly discouraged. The girls are confined to the inside world of the home and lack access to the outside world of information, knowledge and resources.

A recent assessment of the major changes in women's lives in Nepal over the past decade has shown that despite higher rates of attainment of literacy, social mobility and awareness, women still remain confined to the roles prescribed by the traditions of Nepali society.

Considering the poor situation of women in Nepal and the significance of the recommendations made by the Beijing Plus Five the government felt necessary to take initiatives to streamline the women population in the area of development by improving their overall situation.

Eventually, the Government has taken some positive steps for implementing the National plan of Action, prepared by the Ministry of Women and Social Welfare.

- To increase the literacy rate and to empower the educational status of women.
- To conduct informal literacy program for women in backward communities.
- To promote the advancement of women and to strengthen their role in the development process through gender focused, post graduate education and extension and through gender analysis and field based research.
- To encourage academically deserving and economically underprivileged young women to pursue their studies.

### **1.3 Participation and Representation of Women in Politics**

The voter's list updated by the Election Commission (EC) right before the last Parliamentary Election (1999) of all the 205 seats of the House of Representatives (the Lower House of Parliament) enumerated a total of 13518839 voters in the country. Women voters constitute almost half i.e. 49.26 percent. The female population in Nepal constitutes a little more than the male population but fewer women voters are registered than the number of male voters (50.74 percent). Probably this had happened because of the level of awareness on the significance of exercising political rights i.e. to franchise and the level of interest in politics of the country and women also lack leisure time from the household jobs to think about exercising political rights.



**Table 6: Voters in Different Election**

Number of Votes National Parliament		Number of Votes State/Provincial Parliament		Votes Cast for Urban Local Government Councils	
Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
66,59,035	68,59,804	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	8,23,185	8,47,303

Source: Election Commission (EC) 1999

In the last parliamentary elections an aggregate figure of 65.79 percent of the total voters franchised in the general elections. The EC has not been able to develop any effective mechanism to classify male and female votes distinctly. As such classified data doesn't exist in the EC itself, this leads one to realize that there is a remote chance to find out any analysis on this issue.

A total of 107 women candidates contested in the last parliamentary elections that include both types of women candidates who are contesting independently and on party-tickets. They managed to secure only 5.2 percent of votes out of the total valid votes recorded in the elections. Among the 107 women candidates, only 12 (5.85 percent) emerged victories. Presently there are 9 women Member of Parliament (MPs) in the National Assembly (the Upper House of Parliament), which constitutes 15 percent of the total 60 MPs.

**Table 7: Representatives at Different Level of Governance**

Year	National Parliament		Urban Local Government Councils			
	Upper House Representatives	Lower House Representatives	Representatives			
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
1999	9 (15%)	51	12 (5.85%)	193	806	3340

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), Election Commission (EC) (Note: Only Applicable Figures and Entity are Shown)

The women voters in the urban areas of Nepal i.e. of 58 Municipalities constitute 49.28 percent (823185) out of the total voters in the local elections of 1996.

In the political history of the country Mrs. Dwarika Devi Thakurani was appointed as the first woman minister in the 1960 Nepali Congress Government. After the 1995 parliamentary elections the coalition government led by the Nepali Congress had for the first time appointed Ms. Shailaja Acharya as the Deputy Prime Minister of the country. This is the highest post in which a woman has been appointed in the democratic Nepal. The second parliament has witnessed the appointment of the women Member of Parliament (MP), Mrs. Leela Shrestha Subba representing the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist – Leninist) as the Deputy Speaker of the parliament. This is also followed in the third parliament in which the Nepal Congress MP Mrs. Chitra Lekha Yadav is appointed in the same post of Deputy Speaker.

Even in this democratic era the number of women ministers could not exceed beyond 2 at a time in the 34 members cabinet, which constitutes only 5.88 percent of the total.

**Table 8: Number of Women in Federal Cabinet/Executive Branch**

Year	Number and Percentage of Women in Federal Cabinet/Executive Branch	
	Number	Percentage
1991	7	3.41
1995	7	3.41
1999	12	5.85

Source: Beijing Plus Five (BP5) Country Report 2000 (Note: Only applicable Entities are shown)

In the civil service the women staff are appointed even to special class but in a very negligible number. By the year 2000 there are only 2 ladies who happened to be fortunate to be appointed in special class. This amounted to only 2.35 percent of the total special class appointees. Among the first class civil servants women constitute 4.10 percent, 3.16 percent of second class and 5.24 percent of the third class women officers in the country.

**Table 9: Female Civil Servants at Different Level**

Female Civil Servants	June (1999)	February (2000)
Special Class	3 (3.52%)	2 (2.35%)
First Class	32 (5.05%)	26 (4.10%)
Second Class	133 (4.89%)	86 (3.16%)
Third Class	392 (5.28%)	389 (5.24%)
Non Gazetted	7000 (7.96%)	7210 (8.20%)
Total	7560 (7.66%)	7713 (7.81%)

Source: Beijing plus Five Country Report, April 2000.

## 2. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN URBAN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

### 2.1 Women's Participation in urban local government

In the local bodies elections political parties are allowed to contest through involving its candidates with their support. The members of Urban Local Governments i.e. of the Municipalities, Sub-Metropolis and Metropolis are all elected on a Ward level election systems but the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are directly elected through the votes of overall voters of the concerned Municipal areas. In the elections of urban Local Governments the Local Bodies Act has made the provision to allow the contesting candidates to have open support of the political parties they belong or they like. This type of provision is not only made to urban Local Governments but to rural Local Governments also.

In the history of the country's electoral system the Nepalese women are considered fortunate to exercise and contest the right to franchise gained in the very first ever elections conducted in 1955. When the Kathmandu City Municipal Board elections were held, one of the elected members was a woman. Thereinafter the women citizens of Nepal had uninterruptedly been exercising their right to franchise and contest in the various electoral frays. This has been enacted in all the consecutive constitutions promulgated after the 1950 Anti Rana Revolution. Despite facing various discriminations in the field of socio-

economic and cultural opportunities the Nepalese women are considered privileged because of their equal political rights. No law has ever deprived them on the basis of sex to contest or to franchise in elections held in Nepal.

Realizing the necessity of women's participation in the decision making process, especially in the local bodies the government has initiated legal provision which clearly spelt a minimum of 20 percent of seats to women in the elected body. This provision of 20 percent seats to women also applies to the municipalities including VDCs and DDCs.

In Nepal no law and no article of the constitution in any way discriminates women from men in any formal or governmental organizations. However, social discrimination is a different matter in this regard. Rather the government is initiating new provisions to promote women's participation in educational opportunities, governmental jobs and political fields. In this context the government created additional legal provisions, which provides the women more opportunities to participate in the urban local bodies, i.e. in the municipal board. As for example, the Local Bodies Act has clearly spelt out as a minimum that of the five ward committee members of each ward of the municipality should be a woman.

In addition to this there is a legal provision to nominate six members from among the social workers, disadvantaged, deprived and scheduled caste and aboriginal group of population for the municipal council. But one among them should be a woman considering the above provisions. It can be said that there are no constraints, whether formal or informal, which intend to prevent the women to voice their opinion, concerns about the policies adopted or formulated by the municipality. Rather the municipalities develop programs and implement projects to increase women participation in conducting activities and decision making process.

For the promotion of women's participation in the decision making at the urban local bodies the Municipality Association of Nepal (MUAN), a non-governmental federation of urban local bodies, has showed its commitment to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Woman (CEDAW). In this context, MUAN conducted a six-day Orientation Program for the Women representatives (both elected and nominated) on the "Role of Women People's Representative in Ward and Municipality and their Leadership Development" from 29<sup>th</sup> November 1999 to 19<sup>th</sup> February 2000 in all the 58 municipalities of Nepal.

## **2.2 Gender Sensitization of Urban Local Government**

### **Situation of Women in Nepal:**

The majority of the family situation in Nepal is mostly guided by the patriarchal culture. The chastity of woman is the prime issue of concern to all. Because the Hindu scriptures laid emphasis on the virginity. This led the society to impose maximum restriction on the freedom of women and their liberty that is greatly curtailed from childhood. In most cases, in the rural area marriages of the girl child take place at the very early age of 12-14. The reason behind this is that the parent will secure a place in heaven if they marry their girl child at this early age. This eventually led to the girl child facing early marriage and the hazard of motherhood.

In Nepal, gender sensitization has been a priority at programs level. The ninth five-year plan has given high priority to decrease the gender gap by addressing the policy issues. The long-term policy is to create a well-balanced society in which both male and female work together in the development of the country. Major thrusts of the plan are:

- To mainstream gender issues in the development.
- To abolish gender discrimination
- To empower women

Some of the specific direction included in the ninth five-year plan.

Since the declaration of International Women's Year 1975, Nepal has been making significant changes in policies and programs to improve the situation of women in the country. Several approaches were devised at the international level in order to put women on an equal footing with man. Nepal has sought to blend its policies and programs towards women with these approaches. The approaches are as following:

#### **Welfare Approach:**

A welfare approach was initiated between 1950-1970. It was introduced through maternal and child health, good house keeping and good parenting in order to improve the conditions of their lives. Women are passive beneficiaries to this approach.

#### **Equity Approach:**

During 1975-1985 some major research work on women was carried out. First research on the status of women was done in Nepal. This kind of study shed light on the low state of women not only in social but also in political and economic sectors in comparison to men. Thus this approach demanded review of legal provision.

#### **Anti Poverty Approach:**

The Anti Poverty Approach aimed at alleviating poverty by increasing the production capability of women will improve the condition of women. There were however various projects on agriculture and income generating activities etc. It did not pay any attention towards the workload of the women while their male partners of the family enjoyed their effort. This approach only increased workload on women.

#### **Efficiency Approach:**

Women contribute about 27 percent in Nepalese GDP out of 63 percent of total active population contributing regular GDP generation. Women were recognized as important actors in the country's economy and in the 1980's the efficiency approach was introduced to improve the efficiency of women to mobilize the available resources. Attention was given to improve the skills and abilities of the female work force but still the government lacks the perspective to analyze the condition of women.

### **Empowerment Approach:**

Recently a needs based approach for women's empowerment has been introduced. In this approach participatory value has been taken into consideration to make woman capable. Programs are designed for active participation of women and their empowerment. Thus women are not just passive beneficiaries but their involvement in decision making with confidence can be done only after their capability building. The leadership-training program became a key activity. In order to make women capable of various programs which are designed for active participation and empowerment of women, i.e. decision making, confidence building and leadership development training programs etc.

Gender policies and programs have evolved with international changes in approaches to women development. These efforts passed through models like Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD) and Gender and Development (GAD). Initiation of the WID treated women as a simple beneficiary group. Later women were included as a part of development and this model was called Women and Development (WAD). It was realized that these models did not change the status of women. Therefore the Gender and Development model (GAD) was introduced, in which the status of men and women were not treated as an isolated body any more.

Gender sensitization has been given priority at program level in Nepal. The government document clearly shows a positive turn around in mainstreaming gender issues as a result of the major programs. However a clear policy has to be formulated to move women forward to reach up to management and policy-making levels which is still lacking. There are some window decorations policies that have been initiated by the government like 20 percent female representation at local level committees and 5 percent representation in parliamentary party Candidacy. The reality shows that it is still difficult for women to rise up to the cabinet level even after the five years of commitment to the Beijing Declaration and ten years of the restoration of Multi-Party Democracy in Nepal.

## **3. WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN URBAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

### **3.1 Legal and Political Initiatives**

The constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1991 is considered a democratic framework, which provides a basis for safeguarding equal rights. It has incorporated the provision for insuring equality to women in the field of property, wages, disability and non-exploitation. However, there exists a state of non-compliance in the civil code and other laws to the basic level of the Constitution. The provision of 20 percent representation of women in local self-government is a very positive step in this regard.

After the Beijing Conference the Government of Nepal achieved milestones towards implementation of Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA). In this connection several provisions relating to mainstreaming the Nepalese women in the national life were incorporated in the political and administrative sectors. Those are:

The Local Self-Governance Act of 1999 has made provision for the reservation of one seat for woman in the District Development Councils. Similarly, this is more clearly mentioned in the grassroots level of local bodies as it has been made mandatory to reserve 20 percent seats for women representation at the ward level of VDC and Municipality. As a result of this provision some 40,000 women have been catapulted into local governance.

To facilitate women's participation in the Civil Service too the government, in the First Amendment Act of 1998, has made a special provision that provides more facility for women to join the government job than the men. The new provision has increased the upper age limit i.e. 40 for women to enter the civil service whereas for the men it is just 35 only. The probation period of the government job for a man is one year whereas for a woman it is made six months. In addition to this, female civil servants have the facility to be eligible for promotion one year ahead of the scheduled provision for promotion.

In collaboration with the Social Welfare Council, the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare have initiated coaching classes for women candidates appearing in the Public Service Commission Examination for any post in the civil service. This effort has been started to alter the current imbalance seen in the civil service where out of 98681 civil servants, women officials constitute 7713 only (7.81percent).

To speed up the pace of women empowerment in Nepal the government has designated the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare as a focal point to implement the BPGA in Nepal. This is made especially to express governmental commitment in the field of women empowerment in Nepal.

Currently in Nepal the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) is engaged in developing a database on the issue of gender. The 2001 Census on Housing and Population will also be considered a positive step on the part of government in this regard. Through this the government has decided to include household engagement of the women population as a part of their contribution in making livelihood.

The Administration Reform Commission Amendment of the Civil Service Act outlines privileges provided for women's entry and the provisional period is an effort towards integrating gender concerns in the civil service.

Similarly, the Local Governance Act is a new strategy to involve more local people in the process of development. The reality is still that women rarely participate in the field of community related development work. The government bodies, whether at the central or local level, are still "Male-dominated". Considering this aberration the government has enacted the Local Self-Governance Act in such a way that it should provide opportunities for the participation of women in the national life. In this context the provision of 20 percent seat reservation for women in local governance is seen as a factor to motivate them to participate. Despite creating such provision, women's participation in the District Development Council and Village Development Committees has still felt token. Women's participation in local governance both in quantitative and qualitative terms needs to be advanced for the reduction of gender disparity in the governmental apparatus.

However, strategies are needed on political know how and the skills women need to fight against the present situation.

The government has not paid adequate attention to improving the educational status to empower women, though some major policy efforts has been made

such as Incentive Programs (scholarship, uniforms, nutrition and free textbooks). Similarly, Feeder Hostel Programs for secondary level girls, Upgrading Scholarships for campus level girls, Female Teacher Recruitment for primary level schools and non-formal education for girls and women has also been initiated.

### 3.2 Training and Support Mechanism for Women in Urban Local Government.

The NGO started to furnish with their activities after the restoration of democracy in 1990. According to the list NGO published by the Social Welfare Council, there are 4175 NGOs of women service working in a different sector. The highest number (242) of women service NGO are registered in Kathmandu District. According to the list 6 districts of Nepal do not have NGOs registered. The following table clearly shows the engaged sectors.

**Table 10: Number of NGOs and Involved Sectors**

Sectors	Number of NGOs
Child Welfare	202
Health Services	199
Handicapped and Disabled Services	125
Women Services	841
Moral Development	210
Environmental Protection	574
Education Development	82
AIDS and Drug Abuse Control	36
Youth Activities	1906
Total	4175

Source: Social Welfare Council

Didi Bahini, an NGO of women service has published a directory of working women's NGOs in Nepal. The directory consists of 71 NGOs initiated and managed by women. Most NGOs are working in the field of Education and Training (45), Women and Economy (34) and Women and Health (26) and few other sectors. Training on leadership and management were found limited in number. The present situation of ULG demands more capability building of human resources for women, especially to be elected and nominated at local level.

In order to create district sustainable equal and democratic associations a federation called the Association of District Development Committees/ Nepal (ADDC/N) was formed. Similarly, for the urban local governments the Municipality Association of Nepal (MUAN), (the umbrella organizations of all 58 municipalities) was established. This covers some three million (more than 15 percent of the total population) people of the kingdom of Nepal. MUAN always supports the urban local governments in the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration. MUAN has organized six-day orientation programs for the women representatives (elected and nominated) on "Role of Woman People's Representation in Ward and Municipality and their Leadership

Development” from 29<sup>th</sup> November 1999 to 19<sup>th</sup> February 2000 in their respective municipalities.

Similarly, Urban Development Training Center (UDTC), Pokhara also conducted training program on leadership development and the role of urban women representatives in municipal development for the woman representatives (elected and nominated) of Urban Local Government. Similarly, Urban Development through Local Effort project (UDLE, GTZ) has also provided on the job training to municipal staff and the elected representatives of the municipalities through mobile support services in each municipality. Short courses are conducted at the selected training centers for the representatives of different Municipalities while long term training courses are conducted at the national training institutions.

The Municipality Association of Nepal (MUAN) has also been conducting long term training programs for Municipal Technicians on Urban Planning, Financial Management and Community Development with the help of Urban Development through Local Effort (UDLE / GTZ). Hardly any special measure has been taken by the government, political parties, women’s group, non governmental organization or other civil societies to train and support women elected representatives of the urban local governments.

However, a number of governmental and non-governmental organizations are involved to providing various types of vocational training for women and men. The Women Development Division of the Ministry of Local Development in the government sector and various non governmental organizations are involved in training sectors but there is hardly any organization or institutions that provide any training and support mechanism for women representatives in urban local governments of Nepal. The initiation taken by MUAN is worth appreciable. Similarly, other organization and institution should come forward to provide training on leadership and capability building and support mechanism for the women representatives in ULG. The present study tries to show its importance as felt by the women representatives of ULG as they have made requests for the orientation program about the Role of Women Representatives in ward and municipality.

#### **4. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EXPERIENCE OF WOMEN IN URBAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT.**

##### **Objectives:**

The objectives of the study on “State of Women in Urban Local Government” is to analyze the women’s representation in policy making forums, authorities and civic organizations for the good governance and the reforms of the state of women in Nepal particularly at local level. The study focuses on women’s involvement in the decision and policymaking process as well as changes in the political and economic situation of women in Nepal. The study concentrates on the development approaches and strategies to increase the participation and representation of women in urban local government including the transformative role of women and their present urban issues and constraints in Urban Local Government of Nepal.



### **Methodology:**

The present study has been based on secondary and primary data. Secondary data has been based on the available information from different organizations, institutions, Non Government Organizations (NGOs) and International Non Government Organizations (INGOs). The main Institutions are Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Social Welfare Council, Department of Central Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Education, the Election Commission, United Nation Development Program (UNDP) and United Nation International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) etc. The problem with the information available with different institutions is that it is scattered. The main sources of information are the Population Census 1991 and the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS).

The following methods have been carried out to interview 20 women working in Urban Local Governments. At first, the Urban Local Governments of five municipalities were purposely selected on the basis of population size, socio-cultural pattern and geographical set up. They are Kathmandu Metropolitan-capital city of Nepal, Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan city of Kathmandu Valley, Birgunj Sub-Metropolitan – city of Terai region, Bharatpur Municipality- inner hill city of the Central Region and Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan - hill city of Mid Western Region of Nepal.

There are no elected women Mayors and Deputy Mayors in any Urban Local Government of Nepal. The provision of 20 percent representation of Women in Urban Local Government has given an opportunity to Nepalese Women to be elected as ward member at the local level. The nominated women representatives also are in Urban Local Government. The elected and nominated women representatives of local Government were selected for the interview and they were identified with consultation of leaders, seniors and community people of the concerned municipalities. Two of them are appointed members as chief of social welfare department and a Community mobilization coordinator was also identified for the interview.

Twenty women from five Urban Local Governments have been interviewed. Fourteen of them are elected members, four nominated members and 2 appointed. Almost all the women representatives joined local Urban Government since 1993 and the two appointed representatives are Ms Hari Devi Ranjitkar who joined the service in 1996 and Ms. Shriju Pradhan in 1998 in Kathmandu Urban Local Government. The name and address of the respondents are given in 5.2 list of individual.

Concerning political affiliations, excluding the two appointed women, all of the women representatives of ward level were affiliated with various political parties. Nine of them are affiliated with Communist Party – United Marxist and Leninist (UML), seven with Nepali Congress and two from Communist Party – Marxist and Leninist (ML).

Only two women representatives have stated their previous participation in Urban Local Government. Ms Sukmaya Gurung from Pokhara ULG was woman advisor and Ms Shanti Kandel from Bharatpur ULG was a nominated member of their concerned ULG.

The study shows that most of the women representatives have been inspired to the political arena by their close relatives. The close relatives are husband, brother, uncle, father and brother in law etc. respectively. Some of them are inspired by the community and concerned party-men also. Most of the relatives

of respondents are found to be active members of the political parties one of them is Member of Parliament also but few from Government high officials. It shows an indication of change in social attitude and behavior of the people. There is no doubt that it is a positive step towards advancement of the Nepalese women.

**Table 11: Age group of women representatives**

Age Group	0-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	60+
Number		6			
Percentage	5.00	30.00	5.00	5.00	.00

Table 11 shows clear picture of age groups of women representatives. The women representatives selected for the interview falls more under the age groups of 31-50.

**Table 12: Level of Education**

	Primary	Lower Secondary	Higher Secondary	Higher
Number	2	3	8	7
Percentage	10.00	15.00	40.00	35.00

Table 12 shows the level of education of women representatives. The educational background is low among most of the woman representatives of ULG excluding Kathmandu Urban Local Government. Most of the respondents are under secondary level only.

**Table 13: Marital Status**

	Married	Unmarried	Separated	Widow
Number	16	3		1
Percentage	80.00	15.00	00.00	5.00

Table 13 shows the marital status of women representatives. The numbers of children are 2-3 in majority with women representatives. Some have other dependent family members also living together.

At present five women representatives are still working in various sector i.e. agriculture, poultry farm, small retail shops and other organizations to support their family while some of them are working voluntarily in day care center of old people, school, health and in Non Government Organizations.

The respondents decided to enter ULG to perform the following activities:

- To fight for women's rights who are quite backward.
- To advance women including themselves and raise the level of awareness including veiled women of Terai region.
- To raise the status of women.
- To facilitate local women to improve their quality of life and make them aware of their rights.
- To motivate and mobilize the local people for active participation in development.
- To change traditional attitudes and behaviors and raise women's role in decision making process.

- To convey and communicate grassroots level women's voice to ULG and to justify the women without differentiating between rich and poor.
- To prove women's competency.
- To serve the ward people.
- To establish social welfare department in Kathmandu ULG and encourage the local bodies to generate community based projects.

In brief, the statements are made to make the women aware of their rights and duties through changing their traditional attitudes and building their capabilities to improve the state of women.

More than half of the women representatives do not feel any kind of discrimination and difficulty any more. It indicates their self-confidence. The study clearly shows that self-confidence is found more among the women with high education. It shows the importance of education to women. Mrs. Sukmaya Gurung, ward member of Pokhara ULG, has stated that her illiteracy is a main barrier, otherwise she can do more for the people. Similarly Miss Sushma Shakya, one of the woman representatives of Lalitpur ULG, also expressed her view that she faced difficulty not being a woman but being a candidate of different party (UML). Besides this, those who felt difficulties and discriminations being a woman have expressed their feelings that there is no equal treatment to women as men. The power concentration on ward chairman (men) has showed some kind of distrust on women representatives and the local people are used to expressing their problems in front of men rather than women. The double burden of home and office as well as social obligations etc. is the main problems for women. The above expressions indicate inferiority feelings of women due to lack of education, political know how, self-confidence and competence.

More than half of the respondents do not feel difficulties and discrimination from their colleagues, subordinates and seniors of urban local government and 75 percent of the respondents do not have any problems from their families and local communities too. Less than half of the respondents expressed their difficulties and discrimination being a woman from their colleagues, subordinates and seniors of Urban Local Government. Their feelings and expression presents a real picture of the state of women in Nepal. One of the respondents had expressed her bitter experience of an incident during a solid waste management program of her concerned area that she had to suffer much to implement it. There was no cooperation from male colleagues and seniors of Urban Local Government but eventually she managed to complete it and afterward the community people appreciated it. She says boldly it was not being of woman but being a representative of different party United Marxist and Leninist (UML) in urban local government.

All the respondents as the leaders have already organized various development activities and programs to improve the state of women in their concerned municipalities. The development activities and programs are in the following sectors: -

**Education:**

- Adult education
- Traffic control
- Child education to the poor
- Security for girls under the age of 16.
- Legal education.

**Culture:**

- Nepal Bhansa- Protection of Newari Language and Culture.
- Collection of traditional clay pots.

**Health and Sanitation :**

- Establishment of health center.
- Dental camps.
- Health awareness campaign
- Health programs (cancer, vitamin A, Polio, chlorine, HIV-AIDS, First Aid health etc).
- Construction of public toilet.
- Environment and sanitation.
- Solid waste management.
- Compost fertilizer production and markets
- Skill and Income generation :
- Leadership development.
- Gender issues.
- Doll making and artificial flower making.
- Plastic bag making.
- Weaving, knitting and tailoring.
- Beautician and lady parlor.
- Dalmoth, Bhujia production (small scale).
- Saving and small credit programs.
- Gender sensitization :
- Gender issues.
- Various programs in mother groups.
- Encouragement, motivation and inspiration to women.
- The prevention of Girl trafficking and rehabilitation.
- Budget allocation for women

**Miscellaneous :**

- Old people day care center.
- Childcare Center
- Help in legal advice and justice.
- Child labor.

The study shows that the results of more involvement of women representatives in promoting women's participation and representation in Urban Local Governments are (a) Solid waste management and sanitation, (b) Mobilization for women participation, (c) Budget allocation, project planning and evaluation, (d) Awareness on women's legal right and duties, (e) Gender sensitization, and (f) Encouragement and motivation for their participation.

Three quarters of the respondents feel proud enough to be able to initiate the development work in which they have participated. They also express their satisfaction in their contribution to development work of their concerned cities are as following:

- Solid waste management and sanitation.
- Adult education including disadvantaged group of women.
- Micro credit program.
- Out of school programs for street children.

- Child labor and rag pickers
- 10 percent of total budget has been started to allocate from 1996/97 for women development.
- Week long traffic program.
- Education program to traditional women in Terai having "Purdah" system and to helpless orphans.
- Leadership development and management.
- Infrastructure development and environment improvement.
- Anti girl-trafficking awareness.
- Saving and credit program for income generation.
- Establishment of old age day care center.

The above programs are running in various municipalities and the local women are getting benefit from these programs. Still there is more that has to be done in quality and quantity to improve the state of women.

Two respondents do not see any change in the present situation of Urban Local Government (ULG). The political system is not favorable to launch programs successfully at local level and no functional change has been seen. The operational condition is deteriorating day by day due to political misunderstandings.

Eventually the municipality has been empowered after the promulgation of the Local Government Act of 1999. The increased authority to local bodies has raised the confidence of the local people on them. Therefore, more partners whether national or international are willing to cooperate with Local Government to work for local development. It is a positive step towards local development.

### **Current Tradition**

The study reveals that the feelings and experience of women representatives as expressed by them indicates a real state of women in Urban Local Government. The majority of the community people prefer to deal (their business) with male representatives rather female representatives. Similarly the male colleagues of Urban Local Government also have less confidence in them. The main reason behind this is traditional attitudes, behaviors and ways of thinking that women are inferior to men in many aspects. In addition, the women representatives have to digest various uncivilized and impolite words due to being a woman. The men hardly believe in the competence and capability of women. This may be because of the partiality which has been existing between boy and girl from the very childhood in Nepalese society. Women are a minority in number in all organizations, institutions, His Majesty's Government's Offices, Urban Local Government bodies and Village Development Committees etc. In fact, it is natural that the inner strength and confidence generated from the majority is something which women are lacking.

It is true the number of women is very nominal in political arena. That is why one of the women representatives has the bitter experience of having to live separately from her parents in law due to her involvement in politics. Her father in law was totally against her candidacy in the election for the post of women representative. In general people's opinion are that women are supposed be inside the house not outside.

### **Decision Making**

In general women's consent is not regarded as important in the local government environment. Most of the women representative stated that they are hardly consulted on any subject matter before the decision making of ULGs. An incident stated by a woman representative of Birgunj Sub-Metropolis clearly shows that she was not even consulted on the issues of toilet and stand after constructions, which she came to know about only after the decision was made by the municipal board. Her opinion was not considered important.

It is a common phenomenon that the women are overlooked in decision-making and they have to accept the decisions made by men whether they agree to this or not. Hence, women's view and opinions are not always considered. The above statements indicate the state of women in decision making of Urban Local Government. One of the nominated woman representatives expressed her feeling in such a way that she feels inferior even to an elected women representative. She is fully authorized to take decisions in theory but in practice this hardly works. It is really frustrating to her and indicates that less preference is given to women in the decision making process of ULG.

### **Barriers**

The women representatives have pointed out various barriers that restrict them from entering the Urban Local Government. The main barriers are illiteracy, traditional attitudes and behaviors, discrimination on gender and economic dependency. It is already mentioned that women are less preferred in political arena by the family as well as the society. As well, there are other barriers, such as lack of competence, capability, self confidence, dedication and determination in general. It is universal that the above mentioned factors are quite essential to improve the state of women. Beside this, shyness, ignorance, domestic burdens and family restrictions etc. including the prevailing negative attitude and behavior of women themselves, are being felt as barriers in the advancement of women. A limited quota of seats in the election of women is one of the barriers to women because men felt obliged to fill women candidacy for those seats only but not beyond that.

### **Favorable Circumstances**

The study sheds light on education, legal awareness, economic empowerment through skill oriented plans and programs for creating a favorable condition and circumstances to women's participation in Urban Local Government. The study has shown importance of orientation program on "Roles of Woman Representative in Urban Local Government". Gender discrimination need to be minimized to improve the state of women. No doubt it will take time but continuous efforts and initiative certainly will bring a positive change with women's self-confidence and capacity building to bring favorable circumstances. It has been stated that increased quota of seats (50 percent seats for member and 20 percent seats for chairman at ward level) party tickets for the women seats of Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Ward Chairman and the opportunity of competition for the decision making position are necessary. Family support, including changes in women's attitudes, is also necessary to create favorable circumstances. To advance the state of women it is imperative to provide equal

opportunities for women without differentiating them in the field of economic, social, educational and political aspects.

### **Empowerment**

Appropriate job opportunities are required for women's economic empowerment. Workshops, seminars, training programs and exposure visits within and outside the country need to be organized to raise the level of awareness. A healthy political atmosphere with social change as well in the traditional way of thinking and behavior for the empowerment of women are felt essential to create favorable circumstances for their participation in Urban Local Governments. It is natural men and women are physically different and their issues also differ. Similarly, urban issues and problems of women also differ to men in many aspects of life. Keeping these factors in mind the women representatives have focussed on women's issues i.e. adult literacy, social and economic empowerment, level of awareness, safe motherhood & child care, low levels of income, opportunities for jobs, dependency on men, girl trafficking etc. The study shows that an increased number of women in ULG directly affects local level women. The women representatives understand their problems very easily and it is more convenient to them to express their issues and problems in front of the women representatives than the men representatives. A majority of women makes it easier to create a women's pressure group that helps them to have a strong voice. Certainly a strong voice makes a difference in gender issues i.e. to initiate female based programs and promote women's active participation in development activities. Beside this, it supports and encourages more women groups to be unified and advance together. As a matter of fact, women in decision making position brings more women concerned policies, rules and regulations in the ULG. It helps to promote women's participation in the political arena and develop the leadership and management capability of women.

### **Roles of Women Representatives**

All but one of the women representatives saw themselves as a woman leader. The roles of women representatives are seen as promoting female participation in political arena at all levels (i.e. national, regional, district and Village Development Committee (VDC) level), and building leadership and management capacity to maximize women's participation in development activities. The level of women's awareness, know how and legal education needs to be raised for women's advancement to help them solve their problems. As a leader, their roles are to mobilize local women to come forward in every aspect of life. They want to play active roles to improve the state of women in economic, social and political sector, and motivate them to stand for women's high level politics.

### **Approach and Working Style**

All but two of the women in this study state that their approach to their work is quite different to men. Their working style and approaches are quite different in the following aspects: Women representatives focus on women's issues and problems and their working style is more organized and planned, and their dealings are free and frank without corruption. Priority has been given to health,

sanitation, income generation activities and awareness. It is also stated that women are more dedicated and serious, and motivate their subordinates as well as local communities in development activities, particularly women's groups. Minimum women's fund has been utilized for maximum benefit and the solution to problems is kept in mind. Exposure visits inside the country are regarded as quite essential, to raise the level of awareness.

### **People's Perception**

Ninety percent of the respondents feel there has been some change in people's perception for the betterment of women in Urban Local Government within a 10 year time span. People think women representatives work sincerely but their level of education needs to be raised. Women's participation and capability to work in ULG has been recognized as important. It is perceived that women's participation in the decision making process and their involvement at advisory level is essential. It has been realized that the presence of women representatives makes local women more comfortable when expressing their problems and issues. Women can also do something for the development and their participation in development activities is a positive sign in improving the state of women. However the change is very slow as there are more areas to be improved in peoples' perception.

### **Future Plan**

The future plans of the women representatives are concerned with environment problems – clean surroundings of their concerned localities and recycling of solid waste. Similarly, storage of unused water from stone taps during the night time that has to be used for minimizing the local supply of drinking water problem to some extent in Kathmandu valley. To raise the level of economic, social and political state of women, special attention will be given in future i.e. legal awareness and capacity building including global gender issues are given importance. There is a need of well planned income generation activities for the economic empowerment of women. This has to be followed by the development of revolving funds for small scale saving and credit programs. They have suggested launching beauty parlor programs as one of the means of income generation to women. The formation of dedicated and committed core women groups for women's participation in development activities. As a community development programs child-care centers and programs for single, elderly people, widows and destitute women will be launched later on.

### **Suggestion**

In general women's issues and problems all over the world are similar. This study reveals various suggestions made by the women representatives that women's problems and issues need to be identified through community participation. A clear-cut job assignment and responsiveness has been pointed to women representatives that they should be supported to fulfill their responsibilities in a well-organized way. Women's achievement and success are to be recognized and appreciated for their encouragement and advancement. Opportunities for women need to be provided to judge their capabilities and competence for their advancement. Income generation programs and activities are recommended for women's economic improvement as well as equal



treatment for women from socio-economic and political points of view are important too to improve the status of women. For the gender development there is a great need of improved traditional attitude and behavior. The women representatives emphasized that there is a need for a legal provision that should provide opportunity for women to contest Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Ward Chairman positions (Note: This shows that the women representatives who made such demands are not aware about the legal provision which in no way hindered the women candidacy to contest for any post).

They also demanded a 50-60 percent of seat reservation in the ward committee and current provision for nominating woman should be made double at ward level. Reservation of seats for women of disadvantageous groups is necessary for their political empowerment and to maximize women's participation in Urban Local Government. To empower women more in decision making, a policy has been proposed to increase women seats at national level in the coming elections. The center should allocate a budget for women's development while allocating a decentralised budget for the district level that will help to utilise the proposed objective of women development program. The women representatives even asked for national level workshop/ seminars/ meetings, observation trips within and outside the country for the sharing of ideas and experience which will help them to increase their political know how.

#### **Findings of the Study:**

- Most of the women representatives were found inspired to be in ULG (Politics) by their close relatives affiliated with political parties.
- The main reason behind women entering Urban Local Government is to raise the state of women through women's mobilization and participation in development activities.
- The response of the women representatives indicates that there are no clear-cut roles and responsibilities of women representatives in Urban Local Government.
- The majority of women representatives do not feel any kind of discrimination and problems of being a woman in ULG, which indicates positive sign of women development. Whereas some of the women representatives feel difficulties and problem of being a woman, the reason behind this is low educational background, low level of political know how, awareness and confidence.
- The experience of the respondents indicates lack of coordination between different political parties, which creates disturbances in development activities of Urban Local Government.
- The importance has been given on education, experience, legal awareness, economic empowerment and change in traditional attitude and behaviors to create favorable circumstances for the maximum women's participation in ULG.
- The constraints and barriers which restrict women to enter in ULG are traditional conservative attitude & behaviors, economic dependency, gender discrimination, less preference in political arena, lack of competence & capability, lack of self confidence and determination. Moreover, this is as well

constrained by the limited quota of political seats for women, low level of education, legal awareness and economic empowerment.

- The increased number of women participation in ULG brings better understanding of women's impact on urban issues and problems. If participation of women increased in decision making process it will bring more women concerned policy, rules and regulation and helps to make a strong voice against gender discrimination which is quite essential for the upliftment of the women as a whole.
- Most of the women representatives of ULG motivate and facilitate the local women to empower them in political, social and economic sector by organizing various programs on education, culture, health & sanitation, income generation skills and gender sensitization etc. Still more needs to be done to improve the quality and quantity.
- The main urban issues of women differ to men in many aspects. The identified women's issues are adult education, economic and social empowerment, awareness level, health and sanitation, dependency on male, girl trafficking and low level of income etc. The initiative has been taken for the solution of the problems but there is great need for effort and dedication among the women in practice, which is lagging behind.
- The responsibility of women leaders is to promote female participation in politics at all level and develop leadership and management to improve the state of women in Nepalese society which is currently far behind.
- To promote women's representation and participation in ULG various activities have been carried on by the women leaders i.e. solid waste management & sanitation, women's mobilization, legal right and duties, gender sensitization, motivation and encouragement etc. Still it is too little for fulfilling the real need.
- Within 10 years of time peoples' perception of women in ULG have changed for the betterment. While this change is very slow, it is a positive step towards the development of women. The people perceive that women's participation is necessary in development work, decision making processes, solution of local women issues and problems and participation in advisory level, etc. The peoples' perception has been changed in thinking only but in practice it has to be changed a lot.
- Most of the respondents feel proud to be able to conduct various women's development activities like saving and credit programs, establishment of old age day care center, and anti-girl trafficking programs etc. which are really appreciated.
- Some changes have occurred in the operation and functions of Urban Local Government but more has to be done to improve the smooth operation and management of the ULG. The political system is less favorable to launching development programs successfully in ULG.
- Most of the women's approach and working styles are quite different to men. It is natural women are more centered in women's issues and problems. Women's participation in development activities i.e. income generation programs, solution of women's issues, corruption free, clear dealings and dedication to improving the state of women are being initiated. The approach

is good but there is a lack of political know how, sound knowledge and working skills and techniques need to be improved among the women.

- A future plan for ULGs by women representatives has to be devised with various activities. This includes environmental protection, recycling of solid waste, storage of stone tap water unused during the night time, establishment of child care centers, organized women core groups (dedicated and committed), income generating activities i.e. beauty parlors and small credit programs. Programs need to be organized on legal awareness and capacity building of local women. The demand of today has to be identified and planned with the people's participation according to the local need. This has to be accomplished not only in theory but also in practice.
- There is urgent need for markets for the products of income generating activities to empower women. Economic empowerment is the spinal cord to improve the women's state.
- New policies need to be formulated in favor of women's development.

## **5. ANNOTATED LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS**

### **Annotated List of Organization**

#### **I. Local Development Training Academy (LDTA)**

Dr. Yagyga Prasad Adhikari

Executive Director

P.O.Box 11980, Jawalakhel Lalitpur, Nepal

Tel: (977-1) 522004/521051

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Email: ldta@mail.com.np, rasu@ldta.col.com.np

#### **II. Urban Development Training Center (UDTC)**

Mr. K. P. Sharma

Coordinator, LOGOTRI and Principal, UDTC

Pokhara, Nepal.

Tel: (977-61) 20146

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Email: logotri@mos.com.np

#### **III. Women Development Training Center (WDTC)**

Mr. Ganesh Chandra Adhikari

Principal, WDTC

Lalitpur, Nepal

Tel: (977-1) 521581

**IV. Women Development Training Center (WDTC)**

Surkhet, Middle West Region, Nepal

Tel: (977-83) 20280

**V. Rural Development Training Center**

Mr. Keshav Prasad Sharma

Principal, Jhapa, Eastern Development Region, Nepal

Tel: (977-23) 20078

**VI. Rural Development Training Center (RDTC)**

Mr. Dhunu Rana

Principal (RDTC)

Janakpur, Central Development Region, Nepal

Tel: (977-41) 20183/84044

**VII. Rural Development Training Center (RDTC)**

Mr Madhusudan Upadhya

Principal, RDTC

Nepalgunj, Middle West Development Region, Nepal

Tel: (977-81)20275

**VIII. Nepal Administrative Staff College**

Dr. Madan Krishna Manadhar

Director, Center for Local Governance

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**5.2 List of Individuals**

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**2. Mrs. Hari Devi Ranjitkar**

Chief, Social Welfare Department, Appointed  
Kathmandu Metropolitan

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**3. Miss Laxmi Heera Maharjan**

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**4. Mrs. Ratna Devi Kasa**

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**5. Mrs. Rajya Rajvant (Pradhan)**

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**6. Miss Shriju Pradhan**

Community Mobilization Coordinator, Appointed  
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**7. Mrs. Nirmala Bhandari**

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Email: brjsubme@atcnet.com.np

**8. Mrs. Prema Kumari Paudel**

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Tel: (Off) 977-51-28002/22010  
(Res) 977-51-27257

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**9. Mrs. Sheela Amatya**

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**10. Mrs. Sandhya Bhatta**

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**13. Mrs. Savitri Kandel**

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**14. Mrs. Savitri Bastola**

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**15. Mrs. Durga Pradhan**

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**16. Miss Sushma Shakya**

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**17. Mrs. Shanti Shrestha**

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**18. Mrs. Sharda Paudel**

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**19. Mrs. Sukmaya Gurung**

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**20. Mrs. Uma Koirala**

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## 6. RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER ACTION

The sustainable human development paradigm demands the process of mainstreaming the gender equity programs. It requires bringing women to an equal footing with men without any discrimination. Economic empowerment is a most important factor for women development. It has to be addressed from all directions not only from economic perspectives but from other points of view also. Gender issues can not be considered in isolation i.e. access to education, low self-esteem & confidence, low capability, low-income etc. should be in consideration. Self-confidence and self-esteem among women is an important factor to improve the state of women. Besides this the following factors need to be considered seriously and should be carried out to improve the state of women.

### Recommendations:

- ☞ A demand-driven integrated women focused approach side by side with the human development and capacity building programs in local bodies and NGOs need to be implemented.
- ☞ Enhance the role of women in ULG with improved people's participation.
- ☞ Strengthen central and local bodies of ULG for the improved planning, management and efficient human resource development at local level.
- ☞ Improve the circumstances for better performance of local authorities as well as elected and nominated women representatives at local level.
- ☞ At least 20percent (minimum) of executive position should be given to women.
- ☞ Twenty five percent quota for women representation at the parliament, which should be guaranteed by the constitution.
- ☞ Role of political parties should also be focused to advocate women's participation for the advancement in present institutional network.
- ☞ Women's quantitative and qualitative participation in Local Governance needs to be advanced for reducing the gender disparity in governance.
- ☞ Government has to pay adequate attention to improve the educational package to empower women and it should be decentralized at local level according to the local need.
- ☞ Policies for women's equal participation in education and training at local level should be formulated which is still lacking.
- ☞ Gender sensitization has been made a priority but there is lack of clear policy for women. Because of this the participation of women up to management and policy making level is lacking.
- ☞ Provide leadership and management training programs to raise their capability for developing leadership qualities.
- ☞ A woman's commission at national level representation by all parties including Non Governmental Organization (NGO) and Government Organization (GO) is essential.
- ☞ Conduct research on gender disaggregated information to influence the policymakers for formulating the policies and legislation relating to women.
- ☞ Create a favorable environment for the capacity building of woman for the access to opportunities in every sector.
- ☞ Encourage Community resource mobilization in order to bring sustainable gender equity programs.



## ACRONYMS

<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
<b>BPFA</b>	Beijing Platform For Action
<b>BP5</b>	Beijing Plus Five
<b>CBS</b>	Central Bureau of Statistics
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>DDC</b>	District Development Committee
<b>EC</b>	Election Commission
<b>GAD</b>	Gender and Development
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GNP</b>	Gross National Product
<b>GO</b>	Governmental Organization
<b>GTZ</b>	Genesehaft for Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Development Assistance)
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immune Deficiency virus
<b>HMG/N</b>	His Majesty's Government of Nepal
<b>INGO</b>	International Non Governmental Organization
<b>LDTA</b>	Local Development Training Academy.
<b>MUAN</b>	Municipality Association of Nepal
<b>NA</b>	Not Available
<b>NFFPHS</b>	Nepal Fertility Family Planning and Health Survey
<b>NGO</b>	Non Governmental Organization
<b>NLFS</b>	Nepal Labour Force Survey
<b>NPA</b>	National Plan of Action
<b>NPC</b>	National Planning Commission
<b>NTV</b>	Nepal Television
<b>PSC</b>	Public Service Commission
<b>RDTC</b>	Rural Development Training Center
<b>SAARC</b>	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
<b>SCF</b>	Save the Children Fund
<b>SWC</b>	Social Welfare Council
<b>UDLE</b>	Urban Development through Local Effort
<b>UDTC</b>	Urban Development Training Center
<b>ULG</b>	Urban Local Government
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nation Development Program
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>VDC</b>	Village Development Committee
<b>WID</b>	Women in Development