

ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN

Study of the Determinants of Voter's Choice and Women's Participation in Elective Offices in the Kingdom of Bhutan

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United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
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Women's Participation in Elective Offices in the
Kingdom of Bhutan**

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Election Commission of Bhutan
P.O. Box No. 2008
Olakha, Thimphu
Bhutan

E-mail: cec@election-bhutan.org.bt
Visit us at: www.election-bhutan.org.bt
Telephone: (00975) 2 334 851/2
Fax: (00975) 2 334763

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ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN

FOREWARD

The possibility of the inclusiveness of all the population it represents in the elective offices is at the very heart of democracy. For instance, in any elections, it cannot consider fully complete, until the full participation of women is ensured. This concern over women's participation was expressed and recognized by the Forum of Election Management Bodies of South Asia (FEMBoSA) in its 4th Meeting held in Thimphu in October 2013, wherein it was resolved that the member EMBs will individually undertake a detailed and scientific study of the Determinants of Voter's Choice and Women's Participation in Elective Offices in their respective countries.

To this effect, one of our core aims is to improve women's access to and participation in elective offices and build appropriate ways and means to facilitate more women in the political arena. Our efforts in this regard are underpinned by the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data on the subject. This report therefore contributes to the ongoing discussion about how to achieve full participation of women in elective offices. The final report assembles the views and experiences of general voters, contested and elected candidates, women in the civil servants, students, etc. drawn from all the 20 Dzongkhags in the country gathered through Field Questionnaire Survey (FQS), Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Social Media Survey (SoMS).

The report highlights some of the ways in which mainstreaming a gender perspective in elections, such as through detailed strategy of political party for the fully inclusiveness of women and more importantly facilitating and educating women and women's political ambition and interest in politics for now and in future.

Therefore, the inclusion of women in political decision making is not just about women's right to equality and participation in the elective offices; it is also about using women's recourses and potential to determine political and development priorities that benefits societies and the country at large. On other hand, it is not just a matter of right but getting it right.

We sincerely thank all those who were involved, particularly, the general voters for their time to take part in this research study –whose views have shaped the findings of this report. We hope that readers may find this study both informative and provocative, and that it provides inspiration for efforts to strengthen gender equality for elective offices in Bhutan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dasho Kunzang Wangdi', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dasho Kunzang Wangdi

Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The final report on the research study related to Voter's Choice and Women's Participation in Elective Offices is a product of a collective effort involving number of individuals and relevant agencies who played various roles in the whole implementation process. The Election Commission of Bhutan is indebted and wishes to express our heartfelt gratitude for the sincere support and dedication in helping to shape the present study, in particular the help of the following individuals, organizations and agencies were greatly acknowledged:

- i. DIPD and UN Women Office for their financial support.
- ii. The National Statistical Bureau (NSB) for the clearance on accepting the designed for the conduct of survey and also their technical support.
- iii. Agencies such as NCWC, RENEW, IMS, NSB, etc. for their constructive suggestions and feedbacks on the survey questionnaire.
- iv. The Ministry of Labour and Human Resources for the support rendered for the graduate students as enumerators.
- v. Dzongkhags and Gewog Administrations, and *Chiwog Tshogpas* for their cooperation and supports rendered particularly in the field.
- vi. Officials from the ECB Head Office, 20 Dzongkhags election staff and enumerators, who were instrumental and tirelessly involved in the data collection.
- vii. Finally, we thank the hundreds of general voters who kindly gave of their time to complete the survey and without whom this report would not have been possible.

The final report was compiled and written by Mr. Kibu Zangpo, Mr. Namgay Tshering, Mr. Tshewang Penjor, and Mr. Tshering Dorji under the overall coordination and directly guided by Election Commissioner, Aum Deki Pema.

The contributions made by the participants of the representatives from the different Election Management Bodies and the various national and international stakeholders during the two-day Consultation Meeting held from 14th-15th of October 2014 at Paro were highly regarded.

Special thanks are also due to the people worked behind the scenes. Many colleagues at the ECB offered their views and provided support during the data collection and report writing such as outstanding data entry, designing and

maintaining the database of results. Several others were involved in providing editorial and graphic designing support, whose efforts are acknowledge and highly appreciated.

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Dasho Kunzang Wangdi

Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

CEB	Children Ever Born
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FQS	Field Questionnaire Survey
NA	National Assembly of Bhutan
NC	National Council of Bhutan
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SoMS	Social Media Survey
VC	Voter's Choice
WPEO	Women Participation in Elective Offices

GLOSSARY OF BHUTANESE TERMS

<i>Chiwog</i>	Village
Dzongkhag	District
<i>Demkhong</i>	Constituency
<i>Gewog</i>	County
<i>Gup</i>	Elected County Head
<i>Mangmi</i>	Elected Deputy County Head
<i>Thromde</i>	Municipality/Town/City
<i>Tshogpa</i>	Elected Representative of a <i>Chiwog</i>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Bhutan, as elsewhere in any developing and nurturing democracy, the number of women contesting elections and being elected are low in comparison to men and the issues of inadequate representation of women in the elective offices are raised more often. The number of women being nominated and elected to the National Assembly, the National Council and the Local Governments in Bhutan are less than 8 percent. Though the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan and the electoral laws provide equal civil and political rights to all Bhutanese women to take part in all aspects of electoral and political processes, the number of women coming forward to contest elections has not been very encouraging.

Out of the 25 members in the National Council in 2008, only 4 of them were women and of the 67 candidates who contested the National Council Elections in 2013, 5 were women with none of them being elected.

In 2008, of the total of 94 candidates nominated by the 2 political parties for the General Elections, only 8 women out of the 10 nominated were elected. In 2013, of the total 94 candidates nominated in the General Elections, including the by-election to Nanong_Shumar National Assembly *Demkhong* in Pema Gatsel Dzongkhag, only 11 women contested the elections.

The number of women in the elective offices in Bhutan at present verily indicates the low level of uptake and engagement of women in politics which is of concern to many of the stakeholders of the Bhutanese democracy.

Even in the local governments the picture is no different. Bhutanese women's participation in elective offices in the Local Governments is presently deemed as being inadequate for which a number of reasons and measures to address them have been advocated by numerous individuals, interest groups, and also by the current elected national government.

In the Dzongkhag *Thromde Tshogde* elections, out of the total of 34 candidates nominated for the post of *Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa* in the 4 Dzongkhag *Thromdes* 7 of them were female candidates, while only one female candidate was nominated out of the total of 10 candidates for the post of *Thrompon* in the elections.

With regards to the first ever Local Government Elections conducted in 2011 under the Democratic Constitutional Monarchy in Bhutan, only a single woman was ever elected for the post of *Gup* and 12 of them for the post of *Mangmi* in all of 205 *Gewogs*.

A glance at the number of women nominated and elected for the post of *Gewog Tshogpa* and *Dzongkhag Thromde Thuemi* to the *Dzongkhag Tshogdu* in the Local Government Elections 2011, it is clear that women are underrepresented as candidates. Thus, the numbers clearly demonstrate the need to target the under-representation of women in various elective offices in Bhutan. For instance, 159 of them were women out of the total of 1,443 candidates nominated for the post of *Gewog Tshogpa*, and only 3 candidates were nominated for the post of *Dzongkhag Thromde Thuemi* to *Dzongkhag Tshogdu*.

The under-representation of the Bhutanese women in all aspects of the Bhutanese political process has been a subject of focus for discussions on women's equality and empowerment, while there were attempts made to intervene by a number of stakeholders and interest groups.

At times, the Election Commission of Bhutan has been subjected to undue criticisms for not doing enough to address the issue of the Bhutanese women's low political participation. Therefore, it was in view of these considerations that the ECB undertook a scientific study to understand the determinants of voter's choice and how best to facilitate women's participation in elective offices.

Summary of All Key Findings from the Study

The study was conducted to seek understanding of the factors that determine women's political and electoral participation as equal part and constituent of the Bhutanese electoral democracy and population. The hope is to seek appropriate remedies and interventions that can be undertaken as policy changes and decisions, short and long terms actions and others measures to bring about a more balanced representation of the Bhutanese women in all aspects of Bhutanese democracy, particularly in elective offices and in decision making institutions and forums.

It has been often advocated that when women are engaged in all aspects of political life, including as Members of Parliament, the needs and issues that concern women at large can be effectively addressed in policies and decisions.

The Bhutanese women have traditionally been underrepresented in decision making and political structures, which have contributed to their low representation in modern Bhutanese political institutions and elective offices. Their under-representation in political institutions and elective offices has been largely determined by various social, economic, political and cultural factors, with each factor influencing to what level the Bhutanese women have been engaged and promoted, or rather hindered in political and electoral participation in democratic Bhutan.

As such, the summary of the findings of the study is presented as given hereunder.

Chapter 2: Of the total respondents 53.2% were male and 46.8% female. The data reveals that the level of education in urban areas is still higher than in rural areas. On the other hand, women generally have low level of education as compared to men in Bhutan. With regard to regional variation, the eastern region has the highest voter population, followed by central region, and yet a rather small proportion were in the western region.

Chapter 3: On an average, civic and voter education programme, media and the Common Forums and Public Debates are the three most effective sources of information. In general, it is observed that the Common Forums and Public Debates are the two most important campaign forums or platforms attended or observed by the general voters. Majority of voters also found the organization of the Common Forums for election campaigns to be most effective means of campaigning. The least effective means of campaigning was either through campaign rallies or campaigning through posters, banners and leaflets.

Meanwhile, the majority of voters who voted both in the 2011 Local Government Elections and 2013 Parliamentary Elections fall in the age category of 25-34 years.

Of the different factors involved in motivating the voters to vote in the elections, many of the female respondents, 59% said that they were either influenced or inspired by their family members and friends.

In terms of making decision in regard to elections, majority of the voters have a high degree of control over the decision as to whom to vote in an elections.

Chapter 4: In terms of perceptions, majority of the respondents believed both men and women make good leaders while a significant 30.8% believe that men are better leaders and 5.9% believe that women make good leaders. The survey found that women in general are considered less capable and inferior in terms of decision making including low representation in elections as compared to that of men.

The difficulty in balancing family and public life, less political skills, women's primary roles as mothers and housewives including gender stereotypes and other limiting factors were seen as an obstacle that restricts women's participation in electoral processes.

Gender stereotypes restrict women's participation in the electoral processes as evidenced by the finding that majority of the respondents feel that women are best suited to be teachers and very few see women suited for elective and top positions in governance. However, the majority of respondents – both men and women – feel that there should be more women represented in elective offices.

It is evident from the data that not many Bhutanese people are interested or are willing to step forward to contest an election. The largest proportion of Bhutanese voters indicated ‘no interest at all’ to run as candidate in future elections. However, the data indicated that as compared to females, many more males are willing, have the interest and are preparing to run in future elections. It is found that fewer women, compared to men, express interest in participating in elections as candidates.

“*Chogdrup*” or competence of a candidate is the main factor that influences majority of the voter’s decision. The voters are also more likely to support a candidate who is highly qualified and who/which is willing to work for the larger interest of the people and the country.

There is a direct relationship between the level of education and the perception related to women leadership, as well as in the level of education in rural and urban areas i.e. prejudices and stereotypes are found deeply rooted in the rural areas where the majority voters are with lower level of education and the prevailing perception is that women are less capable than men for leadership positions and matters involving public decision-making and political activities.

When asked if there are any perceived obstacles preventing women from being able to put themselves forward as candidates in running for elections, the majority of voters said family responsibilities, lack of self-confidence and fears of incompetence in decision making were the highest quoted perceived obstacles in women standing as candidates.

Chapter 5: Most participants claimed that the national policies and legislations are gender neutral and provides opportunities to both men and women to equally participate in electoral process. This perception is also supported by the survey findings, where more than 84% of the respondents stated that policies and laws consider both men and women as equals.

As regards to voter education, more than 73.5% said that they have attended and found the education programme very effective. It enabled them to understand more about the democratic process and the electoral system. On the other hand, slightly more than 26% said that they have not attended any of the educational programmes.

In terms of the effectiveness and coverage of the voter education programme, the majority (over 59%) of them said that it was informative and adequate. Moreover, the majority of the participants (86.5%) suggested and recommended that the civic and voter education programme plays a critical role in information dissemination and should be conducted on continuous basis to enable more voters to further their understanding of the democratic process, political parties and candidates, and to be able to meaningfully participate in the electoral process.

In terms of coverage of voter education including disseminating knowledge on the need of gender equality in elective offices, 70.4% of respondents said that the education programme provides and informs them on the need to have equal representation of both men and women in elective offices.

Regarding the voter information through media, the majority (85%) of the voters said that they were able to gather necessary campaign information including the media advertisement on political parties and candidates and other related voter's information on elections through media. Accordingly, to all female respondents television (47.8%) and social media (46.9%) are the two most effective sources of information that provides information on political parties and candidates and other information related to elections. Among the male respondents, majority (87.8%) of them said that they gather information through mobile and about 64% of them through newspapers. Overall, 55.8 % said that the election advertising boards provides information related to elections and also helps them in identifying the contesting political parties and candidates. About 55.3% said that the radio is effective in information dissemination. Therefore, the majority (77.7%) of the respondents said that both male and female candidates have equal access to media election campaigns.

As regards to the change/reform to the current practices, as many as 45.9% of the total voters feel that there should be some reforms or changes to the present practices or systems to enable more women to step forward to actively participate in the electoral process and contest elections. As per the data, more than half (50.8%) of the voters indicated 'educating women' as the best reform to enhance their participation in the electoral process, followed by the introduction of quota system and reserved seats for women for effectively increasing the number of women's representation in Parliament and the local governments. While 12.3% of the respondents feel that having simpler and straight forward electoral process and requirements will enhance women's political participation.

Way Forward: The lack of women's participation in elective offices means that women have a lesser say in determining national priorities and shaping national agendas, as well as those that related to the local governments as the direct and immediate institutions of decision-making. In many ways, this study attests to the fact that gender equality in politics remains an ideal, not a reality. To participate in the elective offices, women continue to face difficulties, perhaps none greater than in changing the political structures that were developed by, and remain dominated by, men. For instance, not all registered political parties promote gender equality or uphold their manifesto pledges in practices and few women hold to top decision-making positions in their ranks.

Yet this study finds that the support of the political parties is one of the most important factors in introducing and enacting gender-related legislation.

Respondents identify several structural changes that could help to promote women's success to and full participation in elective offices. These include strengthening existing gender-equal participations, modifying processes and facilities to make more family-friendly because the findings from the study indicated that majority of the women respondents have difficulty balancing their family and political obligations.

Conducting more research and trainings, and educating women as to make more sensitive to the need of more women are indicated as the best reform to enhance their participation in the electoral process.

Real change requires political will and partnership. Women and men must acknowledge that the equal participation of women in electoral process in the country not only benefits society, but is required in legitimize democracies.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1. Background

The Constitution of Bhutan guarantees equal civil and political rights to all Bhutanese citizens on a non-discriminatory basis in exercising their right to political participation, except for members of the Royal Family and the Religious Personalities who are required to remain above politics. This freedom of political participation is therefore undeniably guaranteed to all Bhutanese women, which is the fundamental basis on which all Bhutanese women can participate in all aspects of electoral and political processes.

In any election to Parliament and the Local Governments, a Bhutanese woman has equal opportunity to stand as a candidate and be elected. It must be noted that although Electoral Laws do not discriminate between men and women in political participation, yet the outcome of the process is that women's participation as candidates have been limited and the number of women being nominated and elected are low and of concern.

This concern over women's political participation was shared and expressed by the members of the Forum of Election Management Bodies of South Asia (FEMBoSA) as being verily evident in the South Asia region, home to one-sixth of the world's population, in the Forum's 4th Meeting held in Thimphu in October 2013, wherein it was resolved that the member EMBs will individually undertake a detailed and scientific study of the determinants of voter's choice and explore appropriate ways to facilitate women's political participation in the respective countries.

Therefore, this study was conducted not only with statistical and empirical analysis, but also the qualitative inputs, to provide empirical data to understand clearly the reasons for inadequacies in women's political participation, and to seek and bring new insights on factors that determine voter's choice and women's participation in elective offices

2. Justification for Research Study

The level of women's participation in Bhutan in the two Parliamentary Elections in 2008 and 2013 and in the Local Government Elections in 2011 as voters is impressive. However, their participation as candidates reflected in the number of women candidates elected to the two Houses of Parliament and in the Local Governments are worryingly low, requiring attention and remedy. Reasons such as Bhutanese social matrix, history, culture and tradition, inequalities brought about by modern development efforts and practices, weak

political engagement of women since the period of transition to democracy, and absence of specific laws to mainstream women's representation in political institutions and forums have been espoused.

Bhutanese women's political participation is presently deemed as being inadequate for which a number of reasons and measures to address them have been advocated by numerous individuals, political parties, interest groups, and also by the current elected government. This seems to indicate that while rights are assured, the level of uptake and engagement is low and of considerable concern even if such inadequacies have not been deliberately intended or devised to favour men over women in the political arena.

While this concern over inequalities and inadequacies of Bhutanese women's political participation may be put down to being a manifestation of the young and inexperienced Bhutanese democracy, it cannot be ignored that it is glaringly accentuated even in many of the world's advanced democracies. Women are underrepresented in decision-making in general and more specifically in political decision-making, whether in political parties, in Parliament or in the local decision-making institutions and forums. This calls not only into question the measures and mechanisms adopted, but also the decisions and policies which failed to take into account their specific problems and views.

3. The Problem Statement

While a majority of the registered voters and voters actually turning up to vote in the Bhutanese elections are women, nomination of women to stand as candidates and being elected to the National Assembly, the National Council and the Local Governments are low as compared to men. At present only 8.3% of the total number of seats in Parliament is represented by women, which is a decrease of 5.5% compared to 13.8% in 2008. Therefore, elected political offices seem to be an exclusively male prerogative.

In recognizing their importance, most studies in many countries have put emphasis on the factors that do not predispose women to exercise political responsibilities. Based on current trend of women's political participation, Bhutanese democracy has also outwardly struggled to incorporate the core idea of political equality between women and men.

Globally, in 2005, women held barely 16% of parliamentary seats around the world, besides endeavouring to promote the participation of women into the political life for several years. As noted in the Millennium Development Goals, women's equal participation with men in power and decision-making is part of their fundamental right to participate in political life, and at the core of gender equality and women's empowerment. Women have to be actively participating in determining development agendas.

Generally, women who want to enter politics find that political, public, cultural and social environments are often unfriendly or even unsympathetic to them. Even a quick glance at the current composition of political decision-makers world-over provides evidence that women still face numerous daunting, social and economic obstacles in articulating and shaping their own interests.

As resolved in the 4th Meeting of FEMBoSA, the Election Commission of Bhutan had thus undertaken and coordinated this study to understand the determinants of voter's choice and more importantly to explore appropriate ways in facilitating women's participation in elective offices by effectively identifying the factors and the common problems contributing to the under-representation of women in political decision making.

4. Objectives of the Research

In view of the considerations stated above, the Election Commission of Bhutan had undertaken this research study comprehensively to understand the determinants of voter's choice, with more focus on women's participation in elective offices. The present study seeks to identify the possible impacts of various factors that hinder women's participation in the political field. The study is to provide empirical and reliable data to better understand the issues of the low number of women as candidates in election and holders of elective offices in Bhutan and throw light on relevant and appropriate affirmative actions that can be taken up by the ECB, as well as by other relevant entities to ensure more fuller participation and better representation of women, as this is at the very core of a vibrant democracy.

Therefore, the overall objective of the study was to study the factors influencing voter's choice and identify the barriers to women's equal and meaningful participation in the decision-making process and the reasons for inadequacies in Bhutanese women's political participation. In line with this overall objective, the following specific research objectives were identified:

- i. Assess and study the determinants of voter's choice;
- ii. Identify the factors affecting women's participation in elections and the reasons why more women are not coming forward or being nominated to contest as candidates in elections;
- iii. Study what inhibits women from contesting and winning seats;
- iv. Assess if and why women voters may not be supporting female candidates;
- v. Assess the reasons why less number of women are nominated, elected and less favoured as compared to men

- vi. Identify the support needed to facilitate women's participation in elections in areas such as legislation, policy, training and education;
- vii. Assess the adequacy of the work environment, institutional and legal framework affecting women's active participation and representation; and
- viii. To develop strategies and procedures based on findings to facilitate and overcome the identified constraints and bottlenecks.

5. Literature Review

A thorough review of available reports, articles, official and policy documents, national statistics, news coverage and other related literature was undertaken to understand and assess voter's choice, gender gaps and barriers that fostered inequality and low number of women's participation in elective offices. In addition, reference was also made to various international and regional treaties/conventions and reports for a global perspectives on women's roles in politics, gender equality in Parliament, and the success of measures such as educating women and quota system, aimed at increasing women's representation in Parliament and other decision-making forums.

Moreover, the Election Observation Reports of the National Election Observers and the reports of the Returning Officers, who were deployed for conduct of elections, were thoroughly reviewed and assessed to identify any issues noted with regard to women's political participation. The reports submitted by the National Election Observers mainly highlighted the entire processes of electoral activities that include activities such as the conduct of *Zomdus* and Common Forums (for election campaigns) in which participation from general voters are required, the nomination procedures and the other aspects of elections that required potential contribution as voters and candidates.

The reports of the conduct of trainings and education and awareness programmes were reviewed, particularly in terms of access to voter information. Issues and recommendations from this exercise was mainly focused on specific observation reports such as the attendance by women voters in various electoral gatherings, their decisions to go to the polling stations to vote or the challenges faced by women voters, as well as the sources of and access to information during conduct of election campaigns.

Further reviews on the recommendations made during Learning from Experience Programme of the Second Parliamentary Elections, in which the participants also highlighted the need and importance of women's full participation in all aspects of electoral and political processes were considered.

Similar to the review of Election Observation Reports, further evaluations were carried out to study the various reports and findings of studies/researches undertaken by agencies such as the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC), the Bhutan Network for Empowering Women (BNEW), the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy (BCMD), and the UNICEF Country Office in Bhutan.

The Reports of studies undertaken by the Institute of Management Studies for the NCWC, and the outputs of KCD Productions, as well as related media reports, were consulted and reviewed and findings were consolidated to focus on key issues and recommendations.

Therefore, adequate literature reviews of the core debates and key issues were conducted in order to situate the study of gender inequality in politics in Bhutan. Accordingly, relevant findings were used and considered as inputs for the Field Questionnaire Survey. The findings of the literature review, therefore, provided the initial framework for the conduct of the (1) nation-wide quantitative data collection; (2) Focus Group Discussions for the detailed observation with in-depth interviews; and (3) Social Media Survey for qualitative inputs from the social users.

6. Research Methodology

This research study focused on two main issues:

- i. Determinant of voter's choice – understanding how and why men and women vote; and
- ii. Why more women do not participate in elections as a Candidate.

For this reason, this document provides information only on the main issues of voters electoral engagement and their perceptions regarding their electoral engagement; the evaluation of the reasons and barriers for a more active participation and representation of women in politics; some evaluations about the expectations of the voters to eventually enhance women's participation in politics; an evaluation on the factors which effect women's participation and their engagement in the communities and some demographic data such as the cross cutting level of education and the dynamics of economic status and ages with the public engagement of women.

This section outlines the methodology used for the sampling design, collection of the data, data-entry and management, and the method of analysis.

The three core components of this study are:

- i. Field Questionnaire Survey (FQS);
- ii. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs); and

iii. Social Media Survey (SoMS).

These components are supported through two complementary activities (i) Literature Review; and (ii) Consultative Meeting where the South Asia regional context is explored and also relevant stakeholders in Bhutan were invited to the presentation on the Bhutan study.

6.1. Field Questionnaire Survey (FQS)

A FQS was undertaken to elicit voters' views and reasons for their decisions at the time of polls (without obviously desecrating the sanctity of the Secret Ballot), as well as suggestions that they may have for future elections. This part of study was led by a core group of ECB officials from the head office and undertaken by the election staffs in the 20 Dzongkhags and trained enumerators. The actual interviews for the FQS were conducted in the month of July 2014. The data are weighted for statistical accuracy of a final sample that is representative of the general registered voters above 18 years in the country. The margin of sampling error for the complete set of weighted data is ± 2.3 percent of the FQS results based on the total sample at 95% confidence level. The details on the sample, design, execution and analysis of the FQS are as discussed hereunder.

6.2. Sample Size

The FQS was carried out with a nationally representative sample of 1,600 general voters. Of these, 1,546 individuals were successfully interviewed, covering all 20 Dzongkhags and 47 National Assembly *Demkhongs* inclusively. Therefore, the study population consists of general voters above 18 years of age.

6.3. Sampling Design

The FQS is a nationally representative survey as all voters residing in urban and rural areas of all 20 Dzongkhags were taken as the reference population. There were 381,790 registered voters who were 18 years and above in the 2013 Parliamentary Elections. A two-stage sampling technique was applied, namely: (i) Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) to select the *Chiwogs*; and (ii) Simple Random Sampling (SRS) to select the households (voters).

Using PPS, 160 *Chiwogs* and towns were selected and with each *Chiwog*/town, 10 households were selected using the SRS sampling technique. All eligible voters in the selected households were interviewed. The sample for the FQS was designed to provide estimates for a large number of indicators related to voter's choice and women's participation in elective offices in the country.

6.4. Survey Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire was developed by the Election Commission of Bhutan and shared with the National Statistical Bureau (NSB), National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC), Respect Educate Nurture and Empower Women (RENEW), the UNDP and the Institute of Management for Studies (IMS) for their comments, which were duly incorporated. The questions were prepared as a bond booklet to ensure safety and compactness. The survey design was closely reviewed and approved by the NSB.

6.5. Training of Enumerators and Supervisors

A team of researchers was assigned for administration of the fieldwork. A total of 7 officials from the ECB head office were assigned as the regional coordinators, the 50 Dzongkhag election staff and 33 university graduates, recruited through ministry of labour and human resources, were the enumerators. A total of 90 enumerators were trained for the actual conduct of interviews in the field. From amongst these enumerators, the 20 Dzongkhag electoral officials were appointed and trained to be supervisors (team leaders) in their respective FQS areas to make sure that the interviews were conducted properly and that all sections of the questionnaire were completed without any information being missed.

During the trainings conducted the 20 Dzongkhags were grouped into the four regions of the country. Enumerators were briefed on the objectives of the study and the collection of data through FQS. Additional notes including clarifying doubts on the definitions of technical terms in the local dialects and interpretations of the questions to be asked were also carried out. The detailed sessions on various sections of the survey questionnaire held amongst the surveyors included hands-on-session. All the enumerators were required to ensure privacy of the respondents and to inform the respondents that the information collected will be confidential and will not be used for any other purposes other than for the present study.

6.6. Data Processing and Methods of Statistical Analysis

The questionnaire booklets received were manually checked to ensure that none were missing and that the field operations had been carried out in an appropriate manner. All information collected were then entered using CSPro 5.0 application. Appropriate checks such as acceptable-values, range-checks, automatic-skip patterns etc. were built into the entry program to ensure data quality. The data entered in the CSPro 5.0 was then imported into the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0 application for further analysis. Appropriate statistical weight was used in the analysis of estimate for the whole voter population.

7. Focus Group Discussions

The FGDs were undertaken in all 20 Dzongkhags with targeted groups, which included (i) the contested and elected women member of the local governments; (ii) the general voters, students of schools and colleges; and (iii) the professional women civil servants. Such close-up interactions were undertaken to discuss and probe various aspects of voter's choice and participation of women in elections to provide qualitative inputs into the study.

Issues and recommendations highlighted in the various reports and studies carried out by agencies engaged in empowering women and the issues picked out in the FQS were used for discussions with the participants. Throughout the study, the FGDs maintained high level of personal courtesy, openness and frankness to encourage free discussion; proper briefing on the purpose of the sessions and the discussions thereof to instill confidence; sought verbal consents; and provided opportunities for questions so that it became a truly two-way process.

The FGDs were undertaken in all 20 Dzongkhags from the last week of August, 2014 through to the first week of September 2014, covering a total of 821 participants with an average time of one and half hour per FGD session. There were 134 males and 687 females participants.

8. Social Media Survey (SoMS)

Considering the growing popularity and influence of the use of social media and social networking sites (SNS), opinions and views were sought from the users of social media and SNS. Providing a platform for discussion on such ubiquitous technology had helped the study garner views and opinions from the sections of population who were, possibly and otherwise, not covered in the FQS or the FGDs.

The SoMS was conducted through platforms such as Facebook and Twitter championed by popular and respected national personalities and the ECB website through text messages, using Google forms, from 17th of July through 4th of September 2014 among a total respondent of 648, of which 641 respondents rendered complete answers.

9. FEMBoSA Peer Consultation Meeting/Workshop

As the Chair EMB of the FEMBoSA and in view of the said Resolution, a Peer Consultation Meeting/Workshop with researchers from member EMBs were held in October 14 and 15, 2014 in Bhutan to share the outcomes and the trends of individual country studies, to give suggestions and feedbacks of the respective studies undertaken and developed an overall South Asian Perspective.

10. Facilitation Teams and Capacity Building

The officials of the ECB in the Head Office and the Dzongkhag Election Offices were fully involved in the study. Expertise, especially for the quantitative aspects, was consulted from the National Statistical Bureau (NSB).

11. Funding

The Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD), the UN Women Office and the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) provided the financial assistance to undertake this research study.

12. Limitations

The design of the study had the following limitations: firstly, the use of purposive and targeted groups in the cases of the FGDs and the SoMS limit the generalization of the findings to more diverse voter population of the country; and secondly, utilization of only targeted groups in the FGDs and only those people who are accessible to internet in the SoMS may have created selection biases to some extent. However, the findings of the FGDs and the SoMS were used in further exploring the results of the FQS and the way forward.

Chapter 2

DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

This chapter looks at the demographic and economic characteristics of the respondents in the survey and includes features such as the place of residence, sex, age, marital status, children, education, occupation, income, region and economic status of members of the sampled household.

1. Place of Residence

Place of Residence	Sex	
	Male	Female
Urban	45.9	54.1
Rural	53.4	46.6

The Table 2.1 shows the sample of male and female respondents which is relatively proportionate and representative of the national voter population. Of the total respondents, males in urban areas constitute 46% and females, 54.1%. Almost 53.4% of male resided in rural areas, while the percentage of women dwelling in rural areas is 46.6%.

2. Age Distribution

Age Group	Frequency	Percent
18-24	49,951	13.1
25-34	84,919	22.2
35-44	78,036	20.4
45-54	71,403	18.7
55-64	56,994	14.9
65-74	31,267	8.2
75 above	9,219	2.4
Total	381,790	100.0

The distribution of age group of the respondents is shown in Table 2.2.

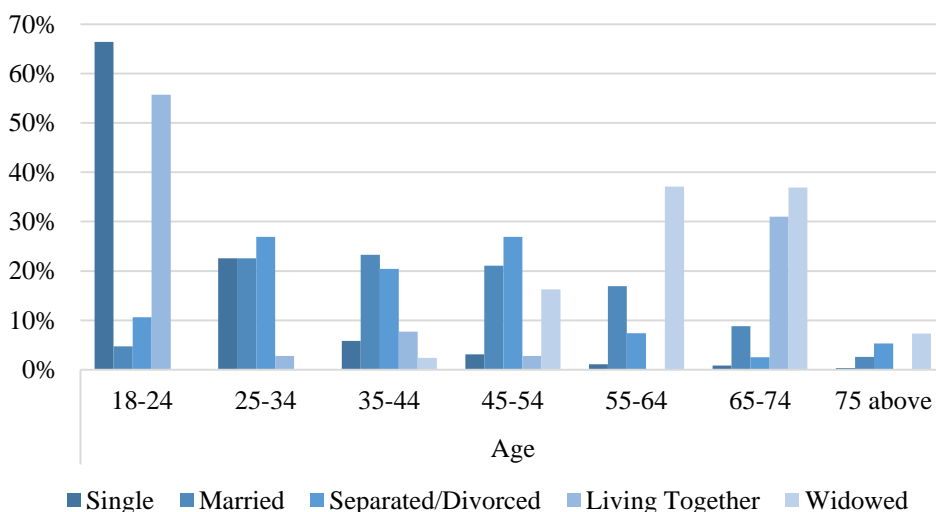
The mean age of the sample is 43.04 years with majority of the respondents in the age category of 25-34 and 35-44 years.

About 18.7% of the respondents were in the age category 45-54, while 15% in 55-64 years. The least respondents of two percent were those who are 75 years and above.

3. Marital Status by Age

About 66.4% of the total population who said single is between the age ranges (18-24). About 55.7% who said as living together are also in the age range of (18-24) years. However, there is rise in the percentage of becoming apparently married (22.6%) and (22.3%) between the age range of 24-34 years and 35-44 years respectively. It is noteworthy to note that almost 27% within the age range (25-34) years and (45-54) years have the highest experience of being separated/divorced.

Figure 2.1: Marital Status



4. Number of Children and Age

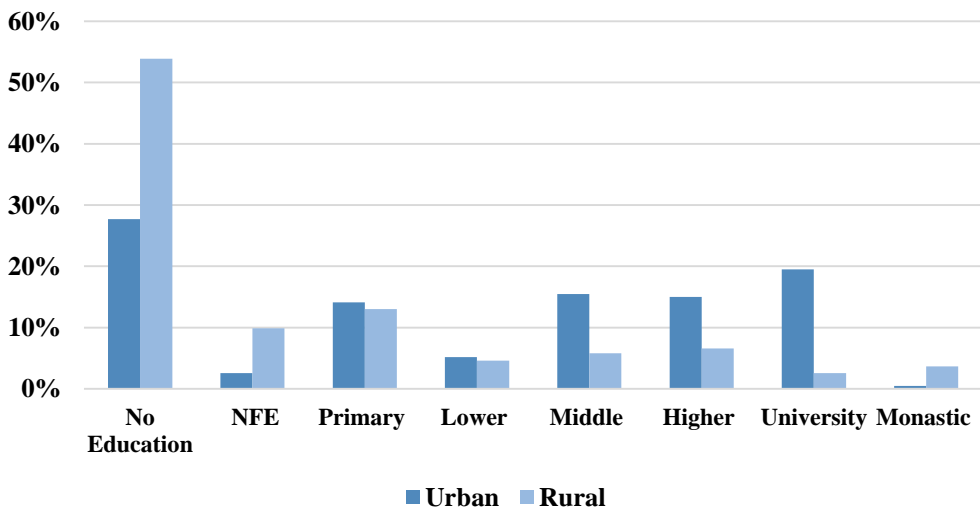
The Table 2.3 reveals that 59% of those aged 18-24 years have no children born. Therefore, marriage taking place at early ages in Bhutan seems to have been reduced, in general, and/or the age of giving birth to the first-child birth has increased in Bhutan. For instance, the age category 25-34 consists of the maximum (42.5%) of having 1-2 children, indicating the majority of the people in this age group conceived their first child. After this age group, most of the people (31.6%) in age class 35-44 years are more likely to have 3-4 children. About 28% in 45-54 years age group have 5 children or more. Similarly, 32% in 55-64 years of age group have 4 or more children respectively.

Age Group	Number of Children			
	0	1-2	3-4	5 or more
18-24	58.8	9.7	2.1	0.7
25-34	22.4	42.5	21.3	2.0
35-44	7.2	18.9	31.6	15.5
45-54	4.4	11.3	24.5	28.2
55-64	2.0	9.8	12.9	32.1
65-74	3.8	5.4	6.1	17.1
75 & above	1.3	2.4	1.5	4.4

5. Distribution of Education and Place of Residence

There are substantial differences in literacy rate between the urban and rural areas. General literacy is estimated at 79% in the urban areas and at 56% in the rural areas (Bhutan Living Standards Survey 2012 Report). The data in this present study reveals that the level of education in urban areas is still higher than rural areas. The percentage of people with middle secondary, higher secondary and college/university who are living in urban areas are higher than in rural areas. Conversely, number of people with no education, NFE and monastic education are higher in rural than in urban areas. Therefore, the literacy in rural areas is lower than the literacy in urban areas, and their participation in tertiary education is particularly low. Their lack of education renders them less likely to contest and win elections as they are perceived as being less capable of functioning efficiently.

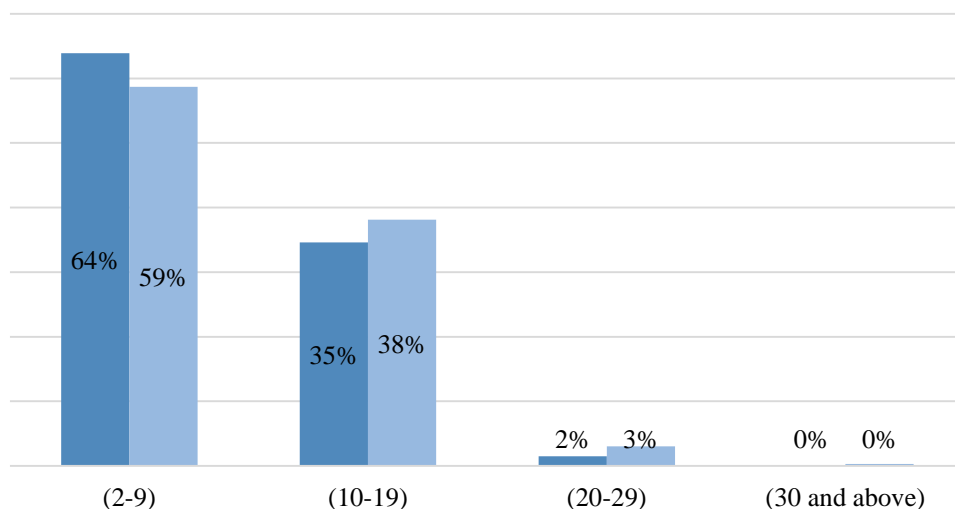
Figure 2.2: Distribution of Level of Education



6. Distribution of Family Size and Place of Residence

Figure 2.3 shows that the highest percentage (64%) of small family size (2-9) distribution is in the urban areas. The difference in family size between urban and rural areas is very apparent with large families of 20-29 and 30 and more members being in the rural areas than in the urban areas.

Figure 2.3: Distribution of Family Size



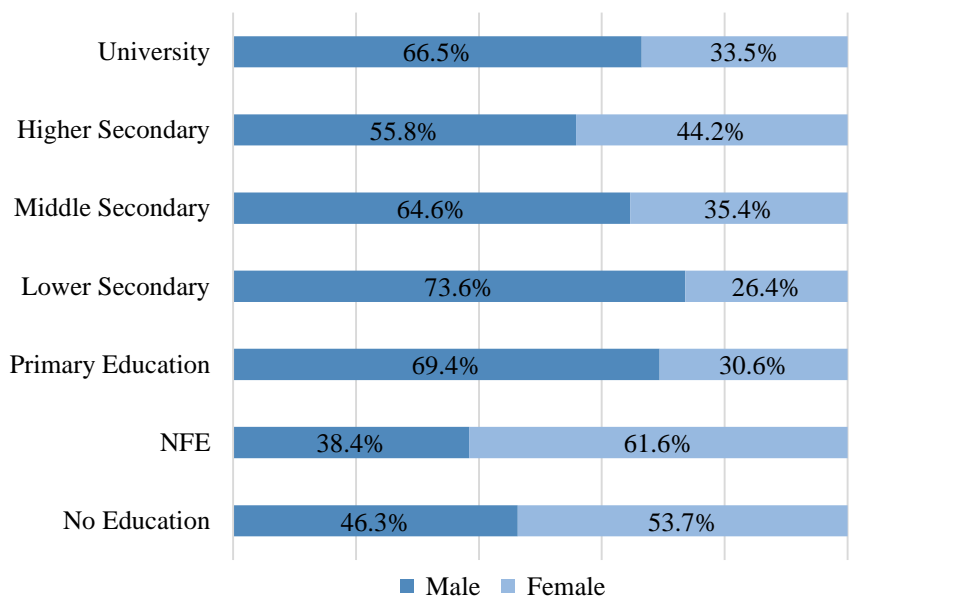
7. Levels of Educational Attainment

Women generally have low level of education as compared to men in Bhutan. There are substantial differences in level of educational attainment between the genders (BLSS 2012). It is very difficult for women to articulate to argue and to press for their concerns without the skills, confidence and exposure provide by education. Education has led many women in many societies to join political parties or participation in political activities. Education is the most important channel or factor for encouraging women to come forwards into the political arena (Rawya Shawa, Member of the former Palestinian Legislative Council).

Low level of educational attainment of women is a hurdle to their political participation. The findings in Figure 2.4 indicate that most of the female respondents had no education or had at the most non formal education, 53.7% and 61.6% respectively, while high proportions of male voter respondent (64.6%) had middle secondary and females had only 35.4%. The male having higher secondary level of education is about 56% and women having higher secondary schooling is 44%. Only 33.5% of the total female voter population reported having tertiary or college education, representing very low

educational attainment of college/university schooling by women voters in the country, as compared to men voters at 66.5%.

Figure 2.4: Distribution of Level of Education



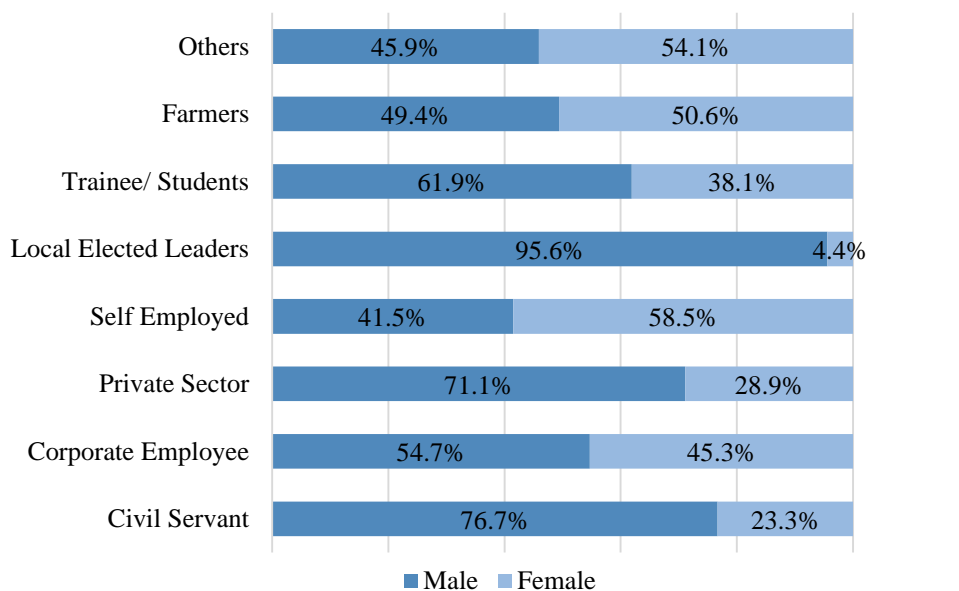
8. Current Occupational Background

One of the widely accepted indicators of women's status is their involvement in the economic sector, providing direct access and control over financial resources, enabling them to function in the nondomestic sphere and in this way having access to the world outside the home.

The study finds that women are not well represented in the civil service, particularly at the upper levels with the most influence on decisions about policy. The data reveals that only 23% of women voters accounted for all civil servant, while 76.6% are male indicating that women at the top decision making level is significantly very low.

These observations suggest that the public—including adults and the upcoming generations—have limited exposure to women in modern leadership roles. A challenge in Bhutan will be to reach a level of representation by women that can shift public expectations. For instance, 95.6% of male and only 4.4% of female constitutes the local government elected leaders. This is followed by private/corporation at 71% of male and 29% female. Further, the survey indicated that majority of trainee/student are male (70%) and female (38%). It is not surprising therefore that 50.6% of female voters are farmer and 49.4% are male voters.

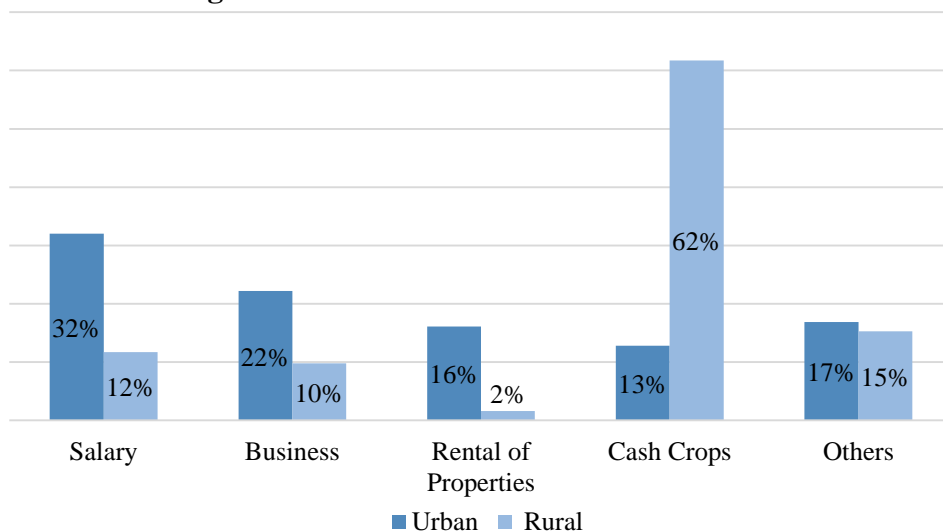
Figure 2.5: Distribution of Current Occupation



9. Source of Income and Livelihood

About 61.7% of Bhutan’s population is rural and most rural households depend at least in part on cash crop for subsistence and income. Notably, 32% of the urban respondents’ main source of income is from their salary with only 11.7% in the rural areas. About 22.8% derive income from business in urban areas and 9.8% in rural, followed by rental properties at 16% in the urban areas and a mere 1.6% for those in the rural places.

Figure 2.6: Distribution of Source of Income

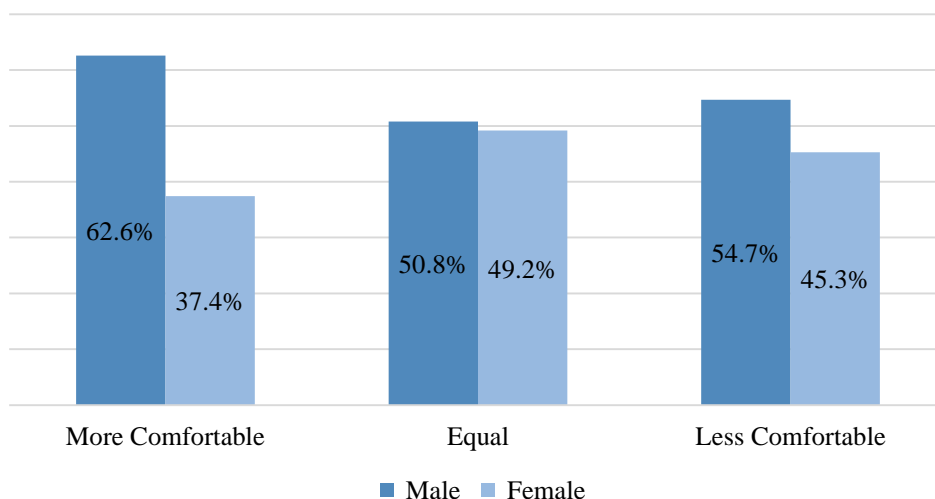


10. Wealth Status

The wealth status of the respondents is presented in Figure 2.7. In the “equal” wealth status which means a comfortable living, almost equal number of men (51%) and (49%) of women have reported this situation. Nearly, 55% of male voters and more than 45% of female fall under the less comfortable category of wealth status according to their own assessment.

However, amongst those who said they are “more comfortable” in terms of the wealth status, only 37.4% are female voters, while 62% are male voters.

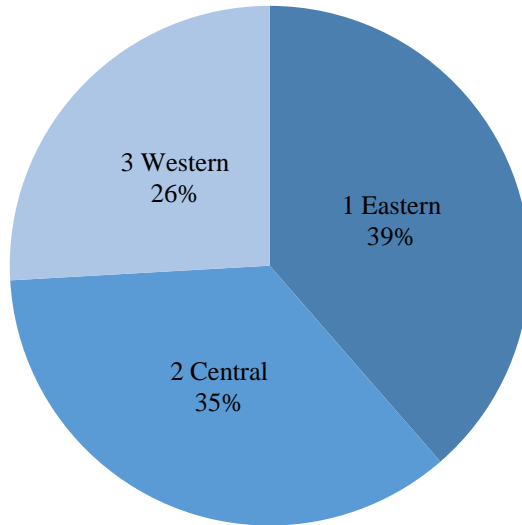
Figure 2.7: Economic Status



11. Distribution of Region

The 20 Dzongkhags of the country are grouped into three major regions i.e. the eastern region, central region and western region. With respect to regional variation, the Figure 2.8 presents that the eastern region has the highest voter population of 38.6%, the central region consists of 35.5%, yet a rather small proportion were in the western region (26%).

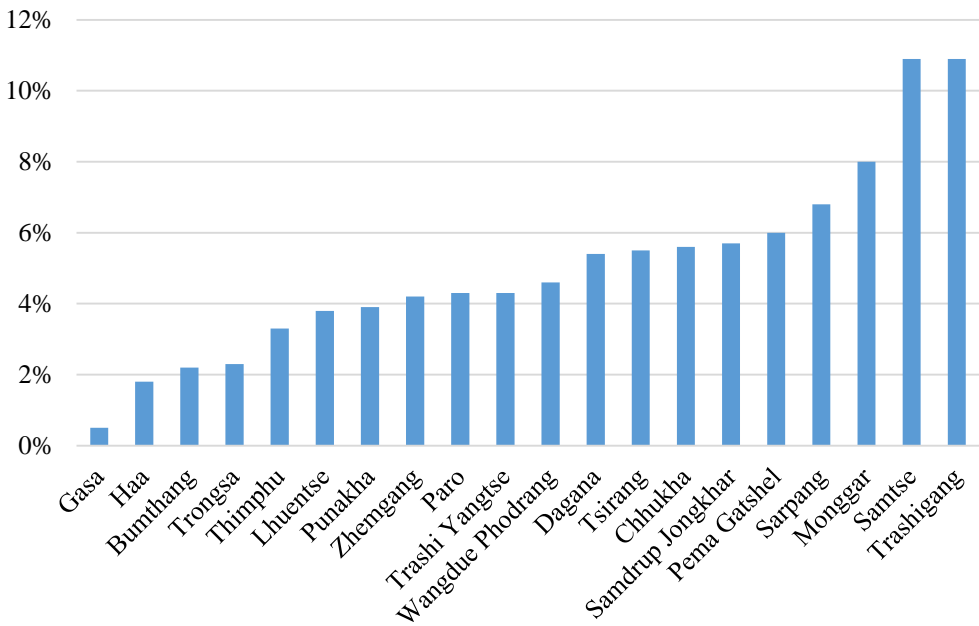
Figure 2.8: Distribution of Region



12. Distribution of 20 Dzongkhags

The Dzongkhag-wise total voters are presented in Figure 2.9. The highest number of voters is 11% from Samtse and Trashigang Dzongkhags respectively, followed by 8% of Monggar Dzongkhag.

Figure 2.9: Percent Distribution of Registered Voters in 20 Dzongkhags



The least number amongst all is from Gasa Dzongkhag which has only 0.5% of the total voters in the country. Gasa is situated in the extreme northwest of the country. The Dzongkhag has one of the largest geographical areas of the country, but has the smallest population.

Chapter 3

DETERMINANTS OF VOTER'S CHOICE

Regular, free and fair elections are the main instrument for ensuring political representation in existing representative democratic systems. Elections provide citizens with the opportunity to influence the governance by the direct choice of candidates and political parties through the secret ballot.

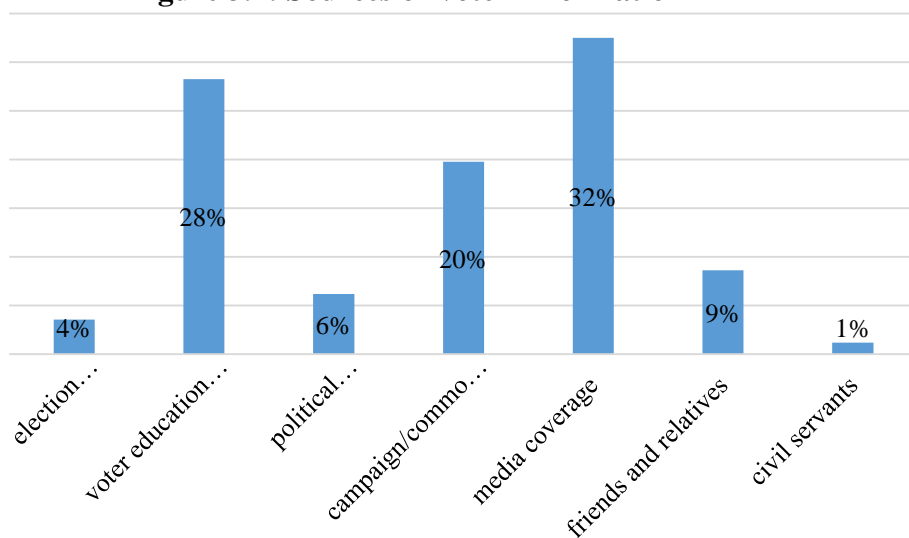
The success of Candidates and Political Parties at elections depends on the decision of the voters. Thus chapter discusses, based on the findings of the study, the factors that determine how voters make their choices and decisions in elections and what are the sources of information on which they base their decisions as to whom to vote for at the polls? How effective are the various means of information dissemination currently on practice? It seeks to discuss the degree of control over the decisions regarding their choices for whom to vote during elections and the factors they consider important while electing a candidate or a political party to an elective office.

Assessing, possessing and processing politically-relevant information is a central feature of how voters base their preferences.

1. Voter Information Sources

Citizens need reliable information to exercise their right and power to vote effectively. Thus, the provision of credible information has the potential to ensure politicians and/or elected representatives to be more accountable to the voters. This is particularly relevant since voters will require to gain confidence and trust in the candidates and the political parties running for elective offices in the future. Being able to provide the information readily will eventually help voters to make their decisions. Accordingly, the Figure 3.1 indicates that majority of respondent assess to media coverage (32.5%), followed by voter education and awareness programme (28.2%), Common forum (19.8%).

Figure 3.1: Sources of Voter Information



2. Sources of Information by Region

In terms of available sources of information in the Regions, as shown in Table 3.1, on an average for all the regions, the civic and voter education programme, the media coverage of electoral events and the conduct of election campaigns (popularly through Common Forums) are the three most effective sources of information.

The majority of the voters in the east, i.e. 33.5%, indicated voter education and awareness as the popular and effective source of information, for the central and western regions, media is the source found to be most effective as stated by 35% and 36.1 % of the respective respondents.

With the respondents of the SoMS, most of the respondents (68%) find that the media coverage (TV/Radio/Social Media) of electoral events as the most effective source of information, which can be explained by the fact that majority of respondents of the SoMS are educated to be social media literate and based in urban areas.

Sources of Information	Region		
	Eastern	Central	Western
Election Advertising Board	3.1	3.7	4.0
Voter Education Awareness	33.5	31.3	16.2
Political Party/ Candidate	7.4	3.9	7.6
Campaign/ Common Forums	18.7	18.0	23.7
Media Coverage	27.8	35.0	36.1
Friends and Relatives	8.6	7.5	10.1
Civil Servants	1.0	0.6	2.3

The findings of the FQS is being supported by the FGD that the Election Advertising Boards with the various election information dissemination and election campaign advertisement posters are found to be effective in helping voters get to know more about elections, the political parties and the candidates.

As a core mandate, the Election Commission of Bhutan conducts civic education and electoral education and trainings to disseminate electoral information and knowledge which are found to be effective. The suggestion is that such efforts shall have to be made on a continuous basis and to mandatorily require all eligible voters to attend.

3. Election Campaigns of Political Parties and Candidates

Election campaigns involve intense exchange of political information. Political parties and candidates have powerful incentives to inform voters about their positions, promises and strategies. Campaigns attempts to create a certain image of a political party and candidate such that it is found as a desirable choice by the general voters also in comparison to the opponents. For voters, campaigns are opportunities to gather politically relevant information that can help them make informed choices.

Many of the urban voters said they have observed and listened to the campaign meetings of the political parties or the candidates viewed the social media campaigns, the Common Forum and the Public Debates aired on television by the Bhutan Broadcasting service (BBS). A majority of voters (33%) in the urban areas said that they have observed the broadcast of Public Debates on television, followed by the door-to-door campaigns (21.5%) and the broadcast of the Common Forum (20.6%). Only about 12.5% of the total respondents claim to have participated in or attended the social media campaign and campaign rallies or meetings.

For the rural voters, majority (60.9%) of the respondents have effectively participated in the Common Forums followed by Public Debates (17.5%), and

door-to-door campaigns (11.5%). Similar to urban voters, even in rural areas not many voters attended the campaign rallies (4%) nor accessed to social media campaigns (6.2%).

In general, it can be noted that the Common Forums and Public Debates are the two most important campaign forums or platforms attended or observed by the general voters.

All of the selected places which falls under town are considered urban, while other places are taken as rural, based on the Delimitation Commission’s Final Delimitation Order for Local Government *Demkhongs*.

Table 3.2: Election Campaigns of Parties and Candidates (Percent)		
Election Campaigns of Parties and Candidates	Residence	
	Urban	Rural
Common Forum	20.6	60.9
TV Public Debate	33.0	17.5
Campaign Rallies	12.5	4.0
Door-to-Door Campaign	21.5	11.5
Social Media Campaign	12.4	6.2

Most of the respondents of the SoMS also said that the Public Debates (57%) and Common Forums (20%) are the most effective means of election campaigning.

In the FGDs, the participants acknowledged the need for and importance of the electoral information and knowledge to help them make better electoral decisions as can be related with their decisions to vote for political parties and candidates in elections. Electoral information and knowledge are that information on political parties and candidates, as well as the information on systems and processes employed for the conduct of elections.

Election campaigns of the political parties and the candidates are the primary means of information dissemination, which include the Common Forums, the Public Debates, the door-to-door election campaigns, and the media advertisements of election campaigns.

The majority of rural based voters preferred election campaigns conducted through Common Forums and the door-to-door visits which are generally and mostly conducted in the respective constituencies with immediate attendance and participation of the voters. However, most believe that door-to-door visits must be regulated and controlled, including the party workers and supporters made not to conduct election campaigns, to reduce incidences of electoral complaints and disputes.

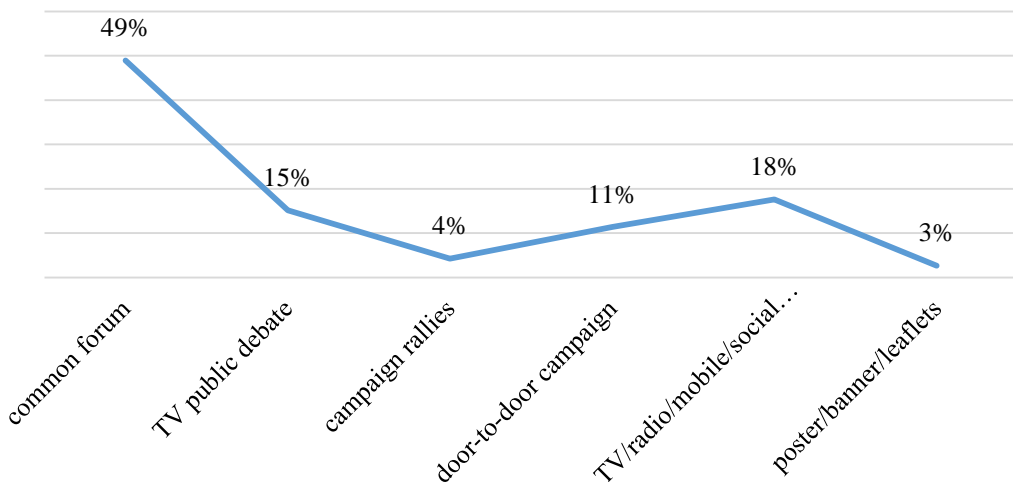
Moreover, the findings from the Learning from Experience (LEP) and other public forums indicated that door-to-door campaign is difficult to monitor. The door-to-door election campaign is, therefore, recommended to be done away with and in lieu conduct Common Forum at the *Chiwog* level. In addition, it was suggested for more number of Election Observers to be appointed to monitor the conduct of door-to-door election campaign.

4. Effectiveness of Election Campaigns

In general, the election campaigns are considered as an important means in creating and spreading information related to the candidates and the political parties to persuade and help voters make their decisions. Effective and timely conduct of election campaigns increases the likelihood of electoral success. The effectiveness of elections campaigns is therefore necessary to form opinions or to remind voters about their preferences, especially when voters are already predisposed. Not only do campaigns affect how people vote, but they can also affect the reasons people choose to vote in a certain way. If campaigns are able to focus on issues or details that can significantly relate to the voters, or if they can control the agenda set for the elections, they are more likely to change the minds of the voters.

Overall, the Figure 3.2 indicates that majority of respondents said the conduct of Common Forum (49%) is more effective, followed by media (17.6%), TV public debate (15.1%) and the least effectiveness is through poster/banner/leaflets at 3%.

Figure 3.2: Effectiveness of Voter Information



For the Region-wise as illustrated in Table 3.3, the majority of voters in all three regions of east, west and central found the organization of the Common Forums for election campaigns to be most effective means of campaigning.

The second most effective means of campaigning is through TV, radio, mobile and social media followed by Public Debates aired on BBS constituting about 15% of the total respondents each in eastern and central region and 16% in western region.

The least effective means of campaigning in all the regions was either through campaign rallies or campaigning through posters, banners and leaflets.

Table 3.3: Effectiveness of Election Campaigns (Percent)

Effectiveness of Election Campaigns	Region		
	Eastern	Central	Western
Common Forums	48.5	51.2	46.5
TV Public Debate	14.8	14.8	16.1
Campaign Rallies	5.6	0.9	6.8
Door-to-Door Campaign	10.4	12.8	11.1
TV/ Radio/ Mobile/ Social media	17.3	18.0	17.5
Poster/ Banner/ Leaflets	3.4	2.4	2.0

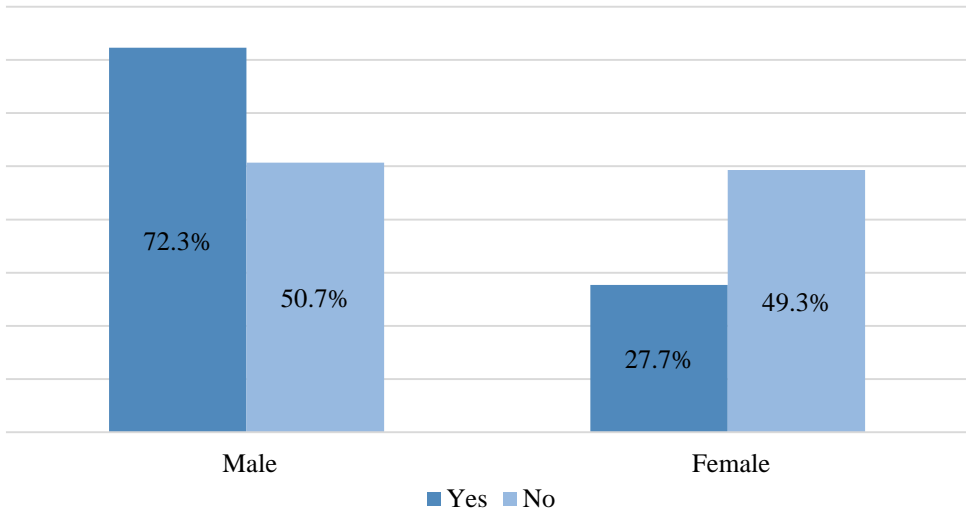
5. Participated as Candidate in Election

The political environment may have changed with the start of process of democratization in the country, but the gender gap in political ambition is prominent, and is just as large as it was in the past although the rate of change is speeding up. This is so given the total of 31 women were elected to office from the year 1953 until 2007 and in the period of 2007 (8) to 2013, 12 women have been elected to the Parliament and 113 women were elected to the Local Government Bodies under the Constitution.

As highlighted in Figure 3.3, more than 72% of the respondents said ran for elective offices were male and only 27.7% were female. It is evident from the data that not many women are interested or are willing to step forward to contest an election.

The statistical analysis using chi-square test revealed that there is a significant gender gap at $p < 0.05$ with (chi-square value: 7740.067) for both comparisons, indicating women are statistically less likely than men to participate as candidates in elections.

Figure 3.3: Participated as Candidate in Elections



6. Voted in 2011 Local Government Elections

The age fact in determining the interest of voters to participate either as a voter or as a candidate to an election was studied. The findings are that it is to be considered as one important factor, as the majority (23.1%) of voters who voted in the 2011 Local Government (LG) election fall in the age category of 25-34 years and 35-44 years (22.4%), while 75 years and above had the least proportion (2.1%).

The majority of the respondents, about 53.5% of those who didn't vote in the 2011 LG elections are in the age category of 18-25 years and also there are as many as 16.9% of the total respondents falling in the age category of 25-34 years who didn't vote. It is therefore, apparent from the facts that not many young voters are voting in the elections to the Local Governments.

However, the students and those people working away from the place of where their *Mitsi* have been registered with the Civil Registry are provided the postal ballot facilities.

Table 3.4: Voted in 2011 LG Elections (Percent)			
Age Groups	Voted in 2011 LG Elections		
	Yes	No	Can't Remember
18-24	7.2	53.3	26.5
25-34	23.1	16.9	16.7
35-44	22.4	6.4	20.5
45-54	20.5	5.5	21.1
55-64	15.8	10.2	0.0
65-74	8.9	3.6	4.6
75 above	2.1	4.1	10.6

7. Voted in 2013 Parliamentary Elections

The majority of the respondents (23.1%) who voted in the 2013 Parliamentary Election were in the age category of 25-34 years followed by 21.6% in the age category of 35-44 years.

The percentage of voters who did not vote is higher (39.7%) in the age range of 18-24 years.

Table 3.5 Voted in 2013 Parliamentary Elections (Percent)			
Age Groups	Voted in 2013 Parliamentary Elections		
	Yes	No	Can't Remember
18-24	10.4	39.7	28.1
25-34	23.1	14.6	10.3
35-44	21.6	9.8	0.0
45-54	19.4	12.1	0.0
55-64	15.3	9.8	34.8
65-74	8.1	8.4	16.5
75 above	2.1	5.5	10.3

An overall majority of the participants of the FGDs said that they voted in all of the past elections to Parliament and the Local Governments, except for a very few of them.

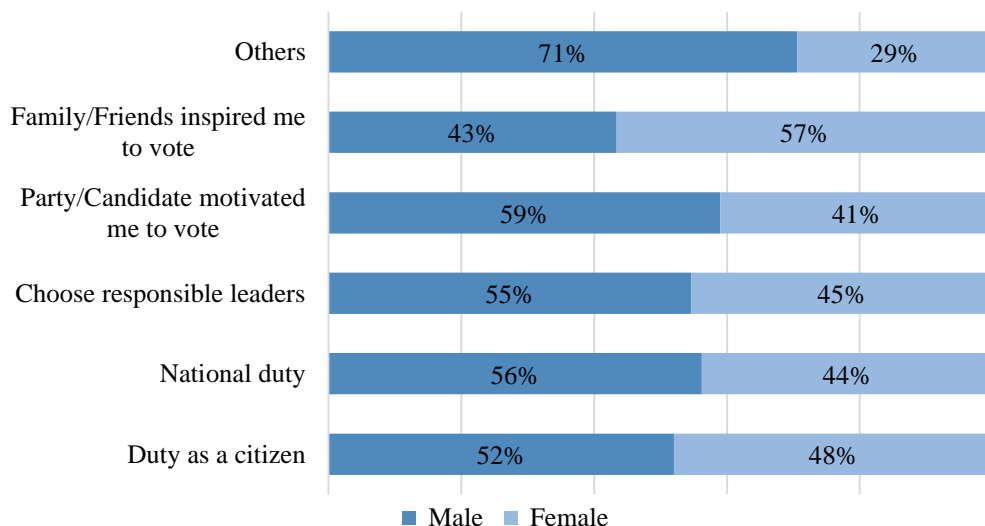
8. Motivation to Vote

Of the different factors involved in motivating the voters to vote in the elections, many of the female respondents, 56.6%, said that they were either influenced or inspired by their family members and friends.

The female respondents also believe that it is their national duty (48%) and duty as citizens to participate in the electoral process. For some (45%), their motivation to vote in elections was to choose capable and responsible leaders. For 41%, the political party or the candidate motivated them to vote in elections.

For the male voters, majority of them feel that it is important to vote to ensure a better future for their children and to ensure continued peace and stability in the country (70%). The political parties and candidates (59%) also to larger extent motivated the male voters to vote in elections. The male respondents also said that it's their national duty (56.2%) and duty as Bhutanese citizens (52%) to vote to choose right and capable leadership (54.6%). Although, there are statistically no significant differences, not many of the male voters were motivated or inspired to vote by their family members or friends compared to female voters, constituting about 43.4%.

Figure 3.4: Motivation to Vote



9. Reasons for Not Voting

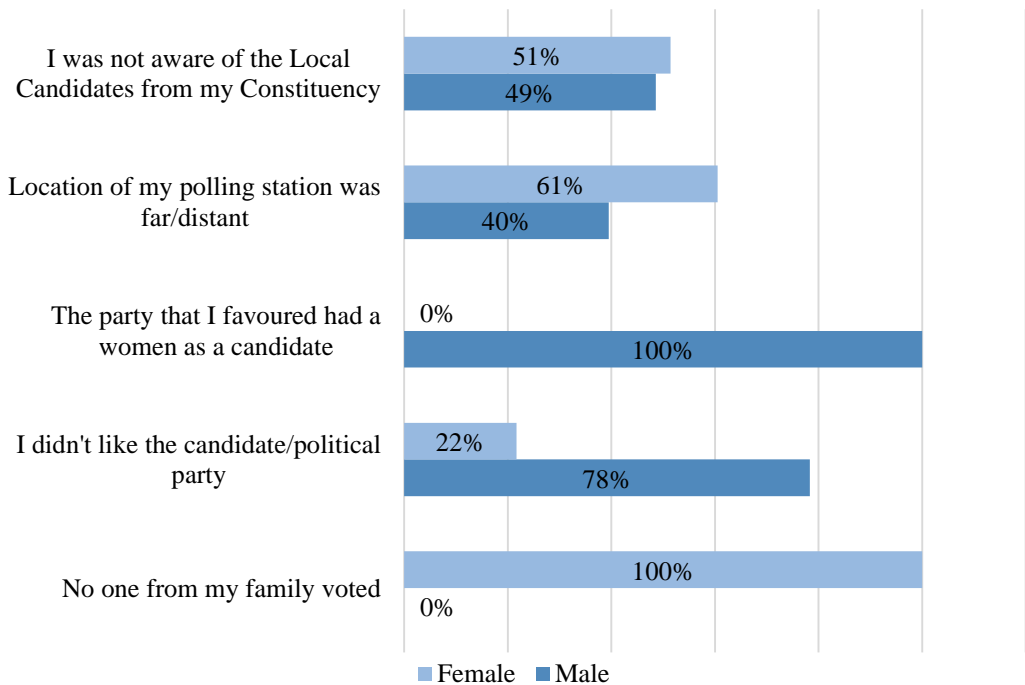
When asked as to why they didn't vote in the elections, about 60.5% female and 39.5% of male respondents said the locations of polling stations were not easily accessible. Further indicating that location of polling station is one of the main reasons for not higher voter turnout by women. A fairly large number

of male respondents (78.3%) and only 21.7% of females stated that they did not vote due to the fact that they did not like the candidates and/or the political parties.

While it is clear from the responses that men are more likely (51.4%) to be aware of the local candidates of their constituencies as compared to female voters (48.6%), the percentage of male to female voters is not widely divergent in this regard.

However, the gender difference comes out more strongly when, where and if the voters have not voted either due to ‘no one from the family voted’ and ‘the party that they favored had woman as candidate’. As shown in Figure 3.5, 100% of all female respondents claimed to have not voted because ‘no one voted from my family’ and 100% for men claimed to have “not voted because the candidate was a woman.”

Figure 3.5: Reasons for Not Voting



10. Choice of Political Party

The Study found that the most important factor in their choice of a political party was the quality of candidates with 37% of respondents strongly believing in it, followed by 32% of the respondents indicating party leadership as another important factor. About 27% of the total respondents seem to have voted based on election campaign manifestos, while 3 percent of the total voters chose a political party based on sentimental and affinity grounds.

Choice of Political Party	Frequency	Percent
Manifesto	104,150	27.3
Party Leadership	125,400	32.8
Candidates	141,737	37.1
Sentimental affinity	10,503	2.8
Total	381,790	100

While party loyalty, political ideologies, and specific policy issues and agendas are important to voters, popularity of the candidates in relation to which political party they belonged have been a crucial deciding factor for voters.

11. Choice of Candidate

The study found that voters voted based on the candidate or likeability. Candidate's image is a composite of the family values, experiences, leadership traits and specific qualities of candidates running for elective offices. Voting also depends on how much information is available to them about a given candidate.

Choice of Candidate	Frequency	Percent
Personality	51,978	13.6
Better representation	238,141	62.4
Better condition for constituency	89,067	23.3
Gender/Religion	2,605	0.7
Total	381,790	100

The findings from the study also indicates that majority, 62.4% of the respondents said that their choice of a candidate is one who is trustworthy, reliable and who can better represent the constituency in Parliament or in Local Governments. About 23.3% said that their choice of a candidate is based on the electoral campaign promises (for better conditions in constituency) and 13.6% voters said that the personality of the candidate is an important factor to consider in deciding who to vote for.

The gender and religion of a candidate seems not much of an issue or influential in influencing voters with only 0.7% of the total voters indicating as one important factor in choosing a candidate.

Given their experience of having voted in the past elections, the majority of the FGD participants said that they want political parties and candidates who are capable and competent to represent them and form a responsible government that will best serve the interest of the people and the country.

In voting for political parties in the Primary Round of Elections to the National Assembly, voters generally based their decisions on the leadership and the qualities and competencies of the candidates, while the election manifestoes and campaigns also helped in making decisions. The participants in the FGD believed that the political parties, however, made false and/or unrealistic election campaign statements and promises simply to woo voters, and did not contest the elections on real and doable agendas.

As for the candidates in any election, the important considerations are educational qualifications, experiences, capabilities and competencies, along with other important, but intangible, qualities such as attitude, ethics and integrity, credibility, etc.

12. Voter's Choice by Sex

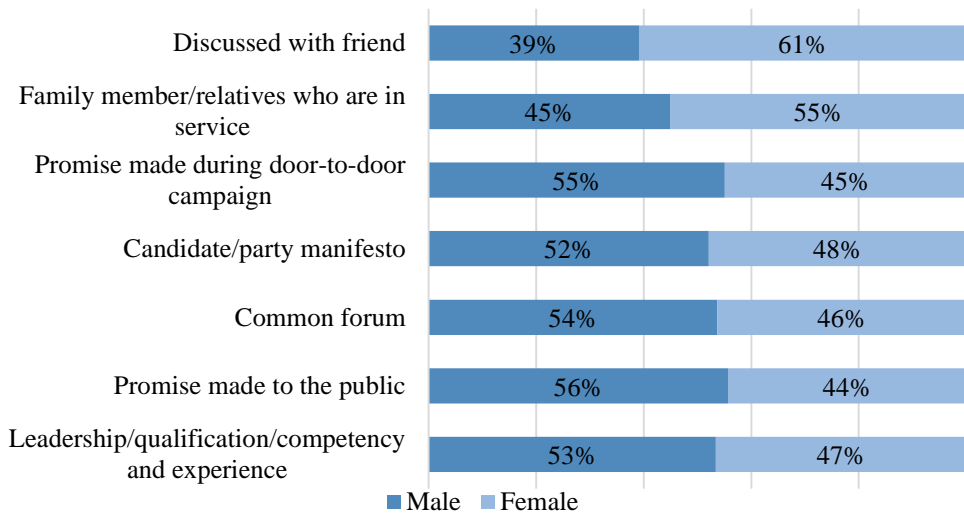
In terms of how choices are made, a higher rate of females (60.9%) said that they discussed with friends to decide to whom to vote for. While the electoral promises of a candidate or a political party played a crucial role in influencing the male voters (55.7%), lesser number of female voters (44.3%) were convinced by the promises, representing the least proportion of the total female voters. The door-to-door campaigns were also found effective in garnering votes from the male voters.

Of the voters who voted based on the advices of the family members and relatives who are in the civil service, the female voters (55.1%) represent the larger portion than male voters (44.9%). It is important to note that there is statistically no gender-based significant influence by relatives or civil service in terms of making choices for whom to vote.

About 53.7% of male and 46.3% female respondents decided based on the information they gathered through Common Forum, while 53.4% of male and 46.6% of female respondents decided based on leadership, qualification, competency and experience of the candidates.

Overall, a statistical relationship was established for all comparisons at $p < 0.05$ with (chi-square value: 877.259), indicating that women were statistically more likely than men to discuss with friends and family members of their choice for whom to cast vote.

Figure 3.6: Voter’s Choice (Decision to Vote)



13. Influence of Decision

The ability to decide independently is an important dimension in determining the freeness and fairness of elections. In terms of making decision in elections, the majority (58.5%) stated having a “very high degree” of control over their decisions and with 34.7% of the voters indicating having a “high degree” of control. It is an indication that the voter’s participation in the decision making and voting process and the ability to make an independent and informed choice in Bhutan are high.

Decision to Vote	Frequency	Percent
Very high degree	223,194	58.5
High degree	132,421	34.7
Small degree	17,574	4.6
Not at all	8,601	2.3
Total	381,790	100

This further demonstrates that the registered voters are able to maintain the Secrecy of Ballot in being able to maintain their control over whom to vote for despite how they may have been influenced. It also indicated that the voters have complete trust and faith in all aspects of the electoral processes to conduct free and fair elections.

Chapter 4

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIVE OFFICES

The number of women contesting in elections and being elected is low in comparison to men, and raises the issue of inadequate representation of women in the elective offices, though the legal framework guarantees equal civil and political rights to every person on a non-discriminatory basis. The number of women being nominated and elected to the National Assembly, the National Council and the Local Governments in Bhutan is less than 8% and, in fact, there was a decrease in percentage of women representatives elected to Parliament in 2013 as compared to 2008.

It is generally accepted that representation of women in elective offices is required to more accurately reflect the composition of the Bhutanese society and to ensure that women have a say, influence and participate substantively in decision making. Although women have always played an important leadership role in the Bhutanese traditional society, however in recent past, representation in the higher elective and won elective positions have remained considerably low than that of men.

The international community has made a number of commitments to rectify the under-representation of women in the elective offices. For example, the equal participation of women and men in public life is one of the cornerstones of the 1979 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Inequality between men and women in positions of power and decision-making was one of the twelve key areas identified in the landmark 1995 Beijing Platform for Action.

Women around the world in every socio-political system find themselves underrepresented and far removed from decision-making. Such exclusion of women from decision-making bodies limits the possibilities for entrenching the principles of democracy in a society, hindering economic development and discouraging the attainment of gender equality. The decision-making process does not always balance the interests of the male and female populations. As noted in the Millennium Development Goals, women's equal participation with men in power and decision making is part of their fundamental right to participate in political life, and at the core of gender equality and women's empowerment. Women have to be active participants in determining the development agenda.

Women who want to enter politics find that the political, public, cultural and social environment is often unfriendly or even too argumentative for them. Women's participation in politics is often explained with reference to various

political factors like level of socio-economic development, geography, cultural background and education. Even a quick glance at the current composition of political decision makers in any region provides evidence that women still face numerous obstacles in articulating and shaping their own interests. What are the obstacles women faces in entering politics? How can women better cope with these hindrances? In light of the importance of women’s presence in politics, it is critical to understand why so few women hold public offices. It is in this context that this chapter aims to identify and test the factors that determine women’s participation in formal political life, specifically their representation in Parliament and the Local Governments. While there are a range of political factors that are typically viewed as key obstacles or barriers to women’s entry into politics, this chapter will focus on beliefs in women leadership, socio-economic factors, political party behavior, socio-cultural and political beliefs and norms as found by this study.

Furthermore, this section examines the beliefs and trust in women and their leadership; women and men’s perceptions of women as candidates and women as decision-makers; perspectives of women’s right to run in elections; women’s roles and priorities within political party structures; and their effectiveness and interest in politics. Specifically, appropriate strategies towards increasing the effectiveness and accessibility of women’s participation in the political field will be explored. At present the women’s participation in the elective offices in Bhutan is relatively low. Therefore, the overall objective of this chapter is to study and validate the significant disparities between men and women in the elective offices.

1. Beliefs Related to Leadership

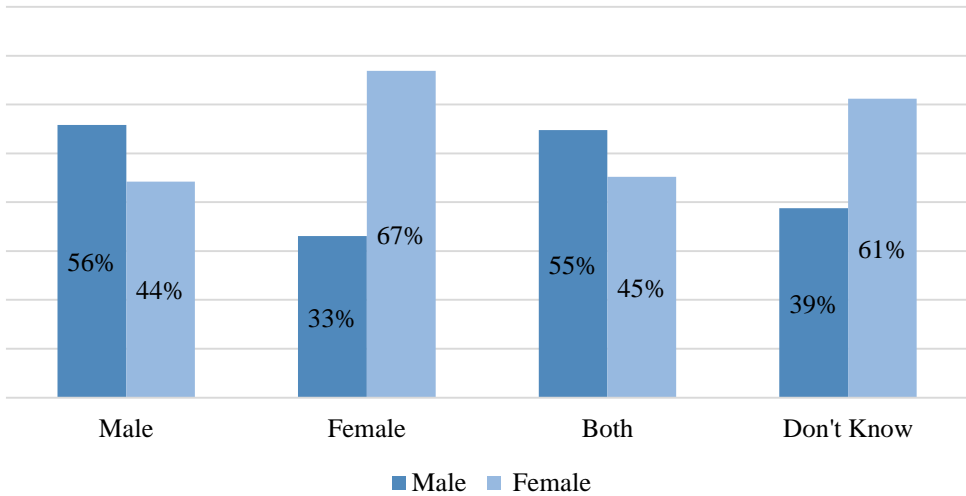
Besides sweeping strides in educational attainment and workforce participation, relatively few women have made to the highest levels of political leadership, resulting in scarcity of women at the top levels.

As indicated in Table 4.1, 30.8% of the respondents believe that men are better leaders and have the necessary qualities, with a mere 5.9% saying women make good leaders, while the majority, 59.1%, of the respondents are of the view that both male and female make equally good leaders

Table 4.1: Belief in Better Leader		
Better Leader	Frequency	Percent
Male	117,587	30.8
Female	22,422	5.9
Both	225,806	59.1
Don't Know	15,975	4.2
Total	381,790	100

From the Figure 4.1, 55.8% of male respondents think that men can be a better leader, while 66.9% of female respondents believe that women can become a better leader. Overall, the finding reveals that 54.5% of all men and 45.2% of women say both sexes make equally good leaders. The sex of the leader is not much of a contention among the respondents.

Figure 4.1: Belief on a Better Leader



2. More Capable (Male/Female)

The survey also asked respondents to assess whether men or women are more capable. As highlighted in the Table 4.2, only 4.8% consider women to be more capable than men, whereas 35.8% consider men to be more capable. However, more than half (55.7%) of respondent says that both women and men are equally capable.

More capable	Frequency	Percent
Male	136,537	35.8
Female	18,245	4.8
Both	212,783	55.7
Don't Know	14,225	3.7
Total	381,790	100

Disaggregating the data further in terms of gender wise respondents, as shown in Table 4.3, male respondents think that men are more capable (56.7%), while (58.6%) of female believe that women are more capable and competent. Evidence from the present study indicates that women are more likely to support women candidates in an election.

Table 4.3: More Capable (Percent)		
More capable	Sex	
	Male	Female
Male	56.7	43.3
Female	41.4	58.6
Both	52.9	47.1
Don't Know	39.6	60.4
Total	53.2	46.8

More than half (52.9%) of all men and 47.1% of women responded both sexes to be equally capable.

From the SoMS, with 82% of the respondents being university graduates, over 70% of the respondents believe that both men and women can equally make better leaders, as well as capable of becoming leaders. However, the trend indicates that men (18% of the respondents) are better leaders compared to women (3 percent), as well as that men (22%) are more capable of becoming leaders than women (4 percent).

In the FGDs, the majority believed and expressed that men are better leaders and more apt to become leaders as compared to women, attributing various reasons. The belief that men are better leaders than women has been largely promulgated and inculcated owing to men having been always in leadership positions in the past, with very few or no women having ever been leaders. However, with more educated and qualified women coming up through the leadership ranks women can equally become leaders.

3. *Ke-Rab-Gu* Belief

The social and cultural preference for men over women continues to prevail and pose barriers to greater political participation of women with 48.3% of the total respondents still believing that a woman is behind a man by nine lives (*ke-rub-gu*). However, there is 37.3% indicating otherwise and 14.4% not knowing about the existence of the belief (*ke-rub-gu*). Therefore, it may be concluded that in general, women are still considered less capable and inferior to men. But this trend appears to be changing.

Table 4.4: <i>Ke-Rab-Gu</i>		
Agree	Frequency	Percent
Yes	184,527	48.3
No	142,365	37.3
Don't Know	54,897	14.4
Total	381,790	100

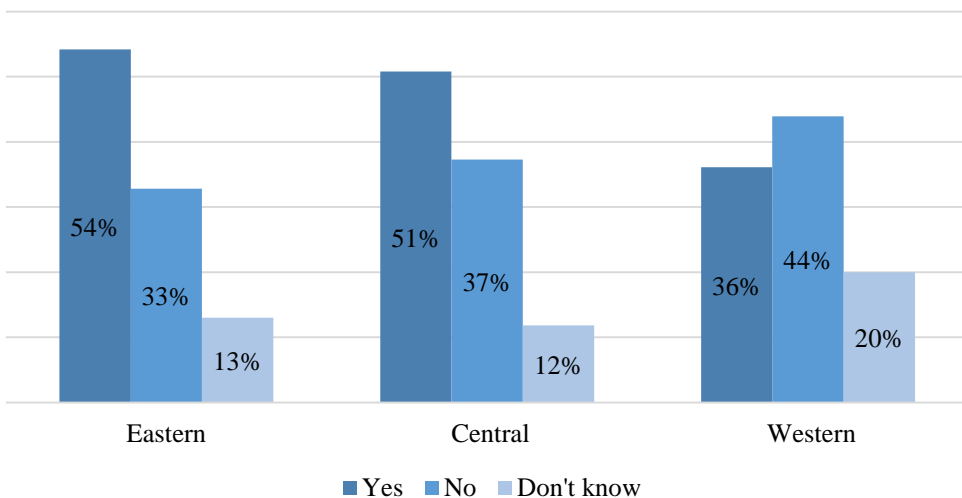
The widespread perception of belief in *ke-rub-gu* is deeply rooted in Bhutanese culture and continues to exist especially with the rural population in the region. However, findings from the study indicated that with education and other gender awareness programme the perception or attitude towards women is changing, and are hopeful that women will be able to stand on equal level footing with men in years to come.

By region, as shown in Figure 4.2, at least half of the respondents from eastern region (54.2%) and central region (50.8%) have strong belief on the *ke-Rub-Gu*.

However, in the western region only 36.1% have such belief, while 44% do not believe in it indicating that majority in the western region considers women to be equally proficient and at par with men.

The statistical analysis in Figure 2 also denotes that there is a significant association for all three regions at $p < 0.05$ and (chi-square value: 9170.629), further indicating that majority of voters under the regions of eastern and western strongly believe in the existing of *ke-rab-gu* as compared to the voters residing in western region.

Figure 4.2: Belief in *Ke-Rub-Gu*

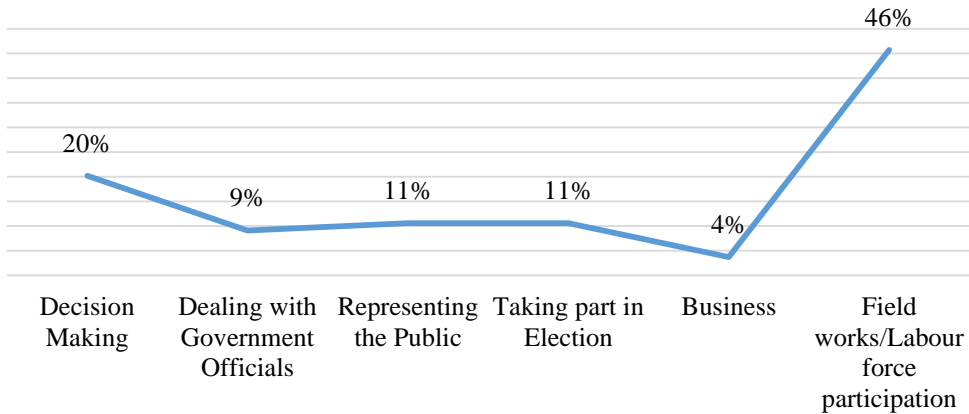


4. Women Inferior to Men

Being predominantly a Buddhist society, there was a strong presence of age old cultural and traditional values embedded in the fabric of Bhutanese society. Although the origins of such values are undocumented, the study suggested a varying degree of cultural biases with regard to gender that led to women being considered inferior to men. The survey found that 45.7% of the total

respondents considers women inferior to men in the labour force participation, 20.2% says that women are inferior to men in decision making and 10.6% believing women to be inferior in representing the public and taking part in election, followed by nine percent of the respondents considering women inferior to men in dealing with government officials.

Figure 4.3: Women Inferior to Men



On the regional basis, more than half of the women in the eastern region accept the dominance of men and consider themselves as subordinate to men in representing the public (53.1%) and dealing with government officials (43%). About 35.7% in the west indicates women as inferior to men in doing business. Overwhelmingly, the field works/labour force participation dependence on men is comparatively very high (42.3%) in the central region, indicating more women being economically dependent on men. Alternatively, this may hamper their ability to develop and control sufficient resource base, which is a critical factor influencing entry into political participation.

Table 4.5: Women Inferior to Men (Percent)

Woman Inferior to Men	Region		
	Eastern	Central	Western
Decision Making	30.9	34.4	34.7
Dealing with Govt. Officials	43.0	32.1	24.9
Representing the Public	53.1	19.0	27.9
Taking part in Election	38.9	29.1	32.0
Business	33.6	30.6	35.7
Field Works/Labour Force Participation	38.2	42.3	19.5

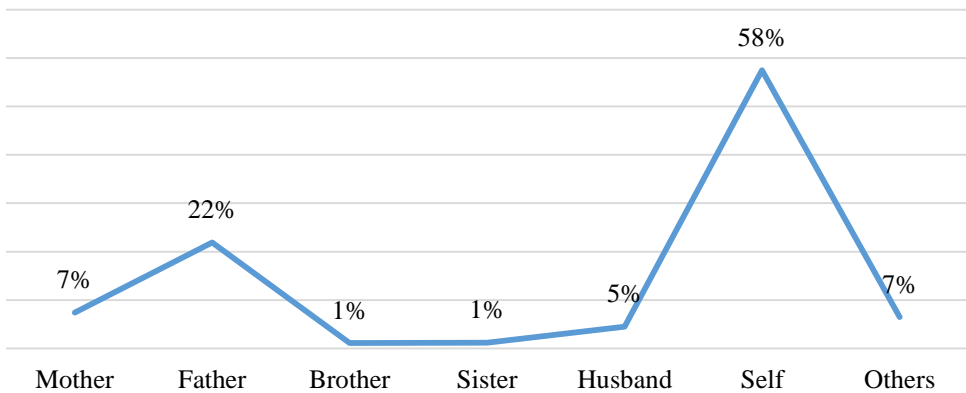
From the FGDs, the belief systems and traditions are seen to have promulgated and dictated social and cultural norms by which the Bhutanese women’s social status and political participation have been undermined. Such belief systems

and traditions, as well as the social and cultural norms, have generally postulated women to be inferior compared to men in many aspects, both tangible and intangible, and such beliefs have also influenced and defined their gender roles and status, with women being assigned stereotypical roles such as taking care of the family and doing household works.

5. Dominance in Decision-making

In regard to decision making process, there is no strong domination of female or male in the family. While voting in elections, most of them (57.5%) said that they made their own decision except in one or two cases where the decisions are made by the father (21.9%) as the head of the family and in some cases decided by the mother (7.4%).

Figure 4.4: Dominance in Decision Making



The majority of the women in the FGDs said that they also make decisions, depending on what needs deciding or to be done, with the majority of the decisions made based on discussion and arriving at a consensus. However, women’s decisions were said to be mostly related to and confined within the household and to family and household matters, while the men make decisions that relate to financial and public matters, except in the case of the educated, qualified and independent women who also make decisions that relate to financial and public matters.

In line with the findings from the field survey as well as the FGDs, 38% of the respondents of the social media survey said they make their own decisions while it is also been observed that 27% of the respondents said their father is the most dominant member in the family in terms of decision-making related to election.

6. Women's Involvement in Elections

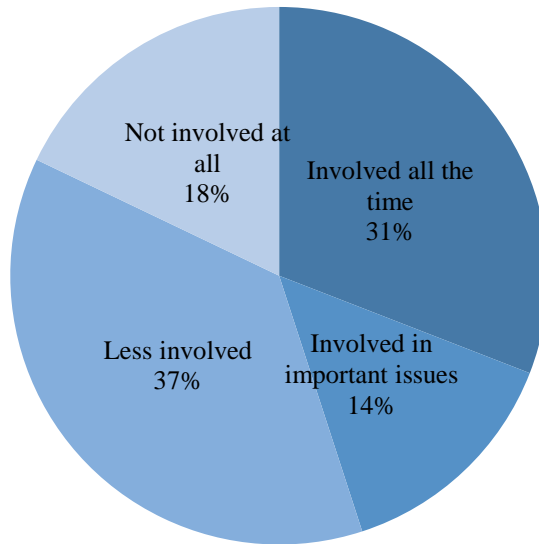
Political participation matters a great deal for women as a group and as individuals. The most important factor in political involvement is to have greater influence on decision-making process to address the needs and concerns of women. Participation also builds social trust, and provides a form of democratic apprenticeship; it offers broader perspectives on women leadership and roles in the society, including their lack of socialization for politics, and their under-representation in the political careers.

Women's lack of political association limits women's involvement in politics. In connection to this, the majority (37%) of the respondent says that women are less involved in politics or in political arena with only 31% saying involved at all times. Only 14% of the total respondents feel that women are actively involved in or play a vital role on important issues.

In the FGDs, the need for women to be involved in all aspects of elections, in particular as candidates in elections, was widely acknowledged. The present engagement and involvement of the Bhutanese women in elections have been largely focused on their participation as voters, with only a handful of women having ever come forward to stand as candidates in elections. The general impression is that women will need to be more involved in elections and politics to enhance and ensure their greater representation and involvement in decision making institutions and positions starting from the local to the national levels.

Findings from the SoMS point out that involvement of women in activities related to elections is comparatively less (49% - less involved) which further supports the findings of the field survey.

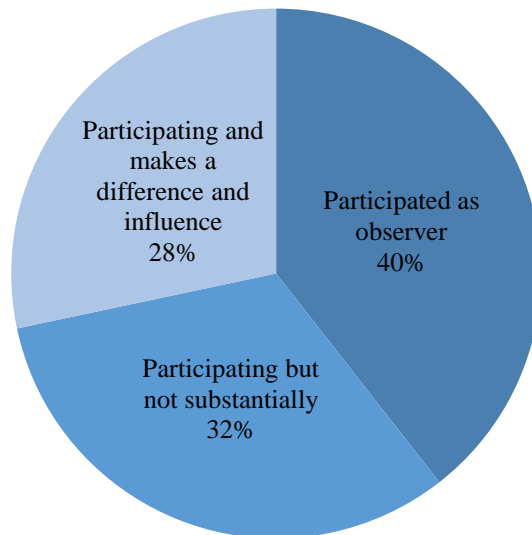
Figure 4.5: Women's Involvement in Elections



7. Level of Involvement

The highest proportion of respondents, about 39.4% says that women only participate as an observer, and 32.2% thinks that women do participate but are not substantially involved in the electoral process or in politics. About 28.3% believe that women participate or are actively involved in politics or decision making processes.

Figure 4.6: How are Women Involved in Elections



8. Reasons for Less Involvement

The difficulty in balancing family and public life, less political skills, women's primary roles as mothers and housewives including gender stereotypes and other limiting factors were seen as an obstacle that restricts women's participation in electoral processes as frequently cited all over the world. The issue of time is clearly linked to family duties, which remain an accepted or imposed priority for many women, taking precedence over responsibilities to the polity or towards themselves.

Overall, 45.1% respondents identified domestic responsibilities as most important deterrent to women's participation in electoral process. This supports conventional thinking that women find it more difficult to balance their family responsibilities with political lives, and that they may embark on a political career only at a later stage in their lives. Women's educational attainments also have a statistically significant impact on women's involvement in the election (29%), followed by socio-cultural discrimination (14.6%).

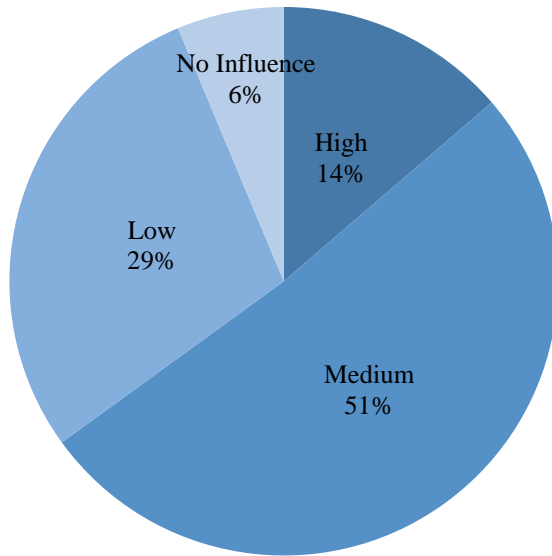
In the FGDs, factors such as socio-cultural discriminations and the associated gender biases, family and household responsibilities, and access to socio-economic opportunities are attributed to women's low level of participation and/or involvement in elections, particularly as candidates. In terms of socio-economic opportunities, the most pertinent one is women's access to education which impacted on attributes of competence and experience.

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Socio-Cultural Discrimination	20,662	14.6
Long Distance to Walk	16,079	11.3
Family Responsibilities	63,886	45.1
Less Competence/Men are more Experienced	41,134	29
Total	141,762	100

9. Influence of Women in Decision-making

From the Figure 4.7, it clearly implies that women's involvement in decision making is not very substantial with only 14% of them agreeing that women are highly involved or have influence in decision making. Majority of the respondents (51%) believe that women's participation or their influence in decision making is medium. While 29% think that women's involvement or participation is very minimal. Only six percent of them said that women will not be able to make any difference in the decision making processes.

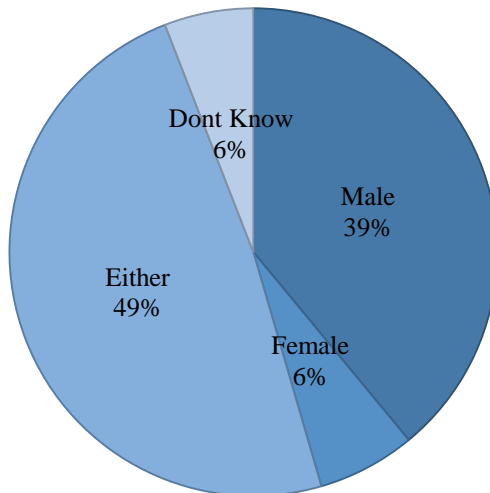
Figure 4.7: Influence of Women in Decision Making



10. Importance of High Positions in Decision-making (Male/Female/Either)

Generally, 39% of the voter population said that it is important to have men in high position for decision making with only 6.5% stating “women”. About 48.6% agreed on either, while 5.9% of the respondents were not sure.

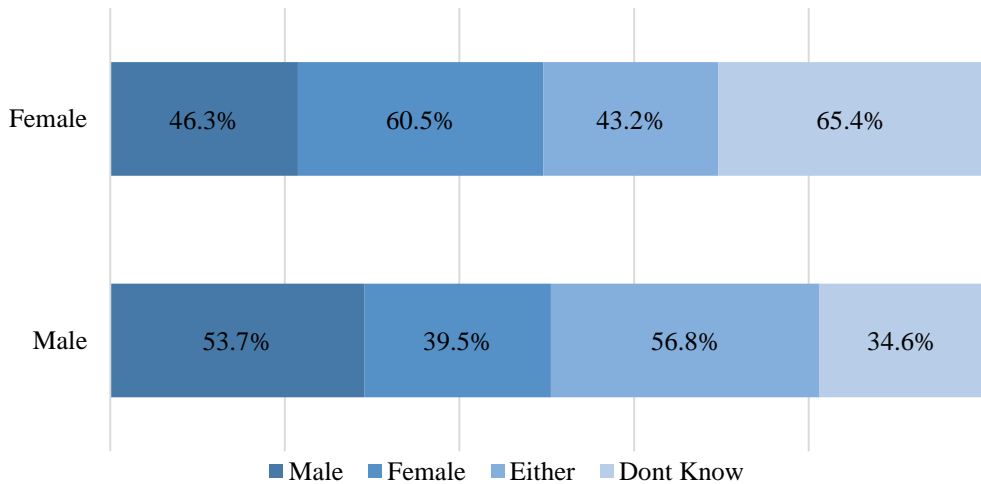
Figure 4.8: Importance of Gender in High Decision-making Positions



Significantly, 60.5% of women believe that women’s representation at higher positions in decision making are equally important to address the need and

issues of women, while only 39.3% of men support women at higher position. The majority of men (53.7%) still believe men to be more competent and capable in decision makings at higher position levels.

Figure 4.9: Positions in High Decision-making Process by Gender



Of the 641 respondents who completed the questionnaire for SoMS, 70% said both men and women can take up important decision making positions while 19% preferred male and only 8% supported female.

11. Likelihood to Represent in Elective Offices

Majority of the respondents said that both men and women are equally important and there should be equal representation in elective offices.

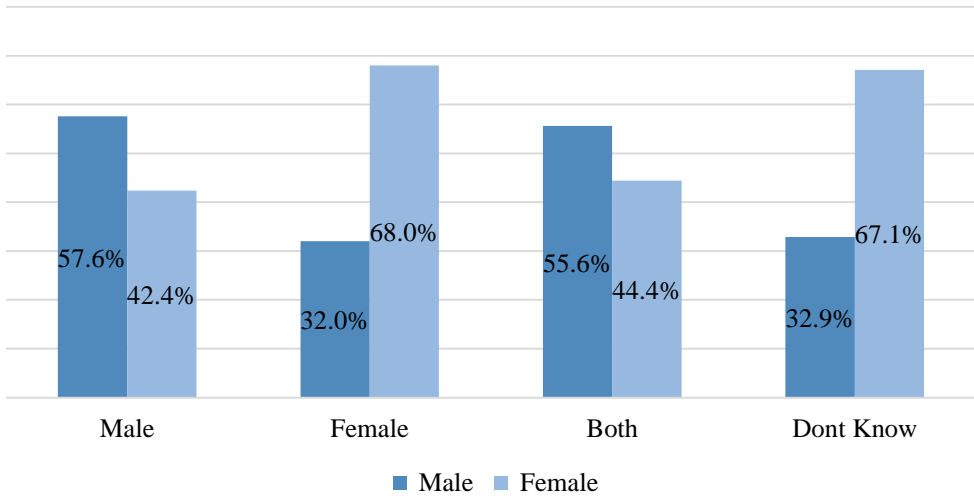
About 27.1% of them preferred male while only seven percent preferred female candidate to represent them in the elective offices.

Like to Represent	Frequency	Percent
Male	103,431	27.1
Female	27,283	7.1
Both	229,611	60.1
Don't Know	21,465	5.6
Total	381,790	100

In particular, one sex may prefer candidates of the other sex or have no preference. However, the data reveals that 57.6% of men and 42.4% of women favour men in elective offices, while 32.0% of men and 68.0% of women prefer women candidates. It shows that most voters have a gender preference –

necessarily of their own sex. It may be noted that the findings of this survey indicates very consistent preferences and support of the male for men and female for women. The gender preference in elective offices however, is not much of an issue to 32.9% of male respondents and 67.1% of female respondents.

Figure 4.10: Likelihood to Represent in Elective Offices



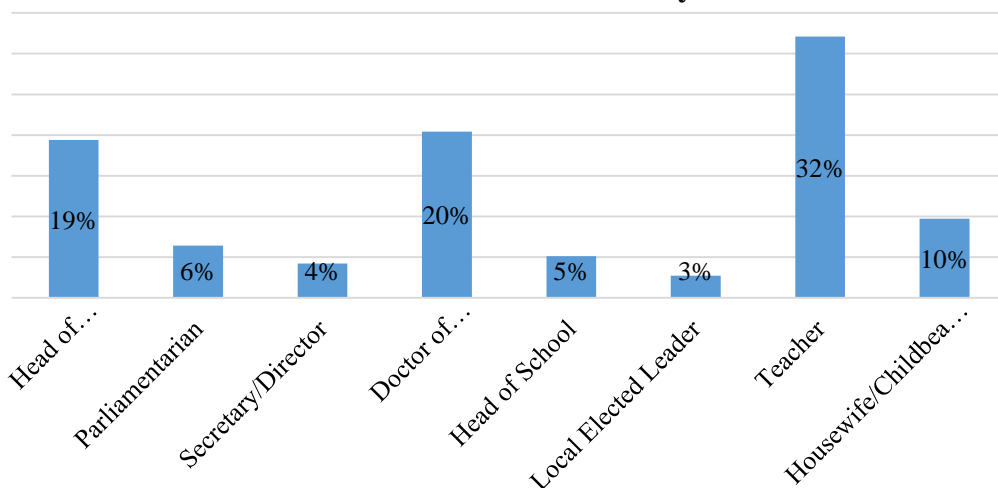
12. Position Suitable for Women in Bhutan

The Figure 4.11 shows the percentage of positions that best suit women in Bhutan. The majority (32.1%) of the respondents feel that women are best suited to be teachers, 20.4% feel doctors and engineers as best position for women followed by Ministerial position (19.4%) and housewife/child bearer (9.7%).

Only about six percent and three percent of the respondents feel that women can best represent as parliamentarian and local elected leaders respectively, while only 4.2% feels women can fill the leading positions of secretary/director.

Practically both male and female respondents have very similar responses to the preferences for the assigned position for women as the head of school (5.1%).

Figure 4.11: Positions Most Suitable and Applicable for Women in Bhutanese Society



In the FGDs, there were various reasons opined as to why women are best suited to be teachers. Some of the reasons are as follows:

- i. Women are gentle and caring as individuals and as mothers
- ii. Women know and understand the needs of children, therefore, the needs of students.
- iii. Women teachers have supposedly performed better than men teachers.
- iv. Teaching job does not require and entail travels, unlike other jobs.

Majority of the respondents of the SoMS (53% of the respondents) said that the most suitable position for women in Bhutanese society is teacher. Moreover, about 41% of the respondents considered Head of school as the most suitable position for women, owing to the multiple reasons stated in the FGDs.

The finding of teachers as being seen as the most appropriate role indicates that stereotyping is a major obstacle.

13. Likelihood of Being Involved in Politics in Future

In terms of participating in electoral process or contesting the future elections, majority (78.5%) of them said that they are interested as voters, while only 7.6% of the respondents showed interest to run or contest the future elections.

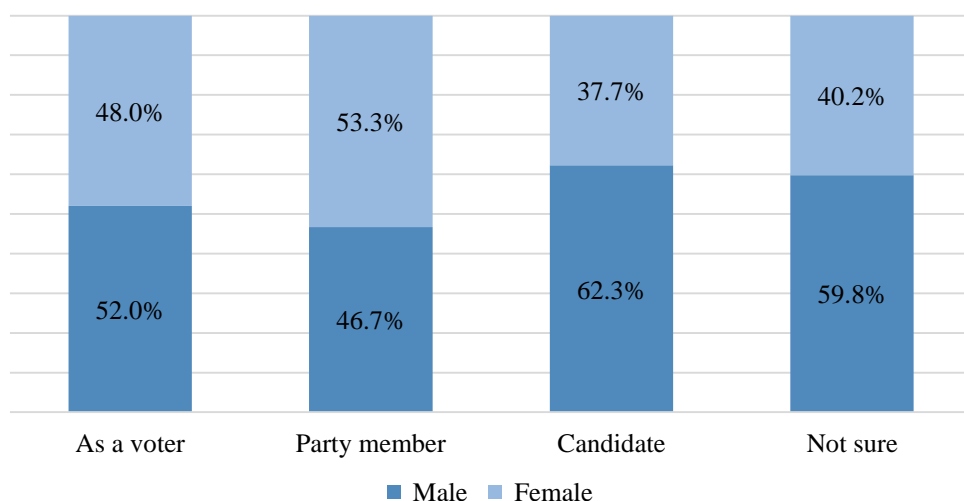
About 5.4% of the respondents said that they are willing to join and support different political parties as party member.

Table 4.8: Like to be Involved in Politics in Future		
Like to Involve	Frequency	Percent
As a voter	299,668	78.5
Party member	20,632	5.4
Candidate	29,022	7.6
Not sure	32,468	8.5
Total	381,790	100

The Figure 4.12 represents the percentage of likelihood of being involved in politics by men and women. About 62.3% of all male are likelihood to be as candidate and only 37.7% of women respondent, while 53.3% of male as party members and 46.7% of female voters.

For all categories, women are statistically less likely than man at $p < 0.05$ with (chi-square value: 2811.845) to be involved in politics in future.

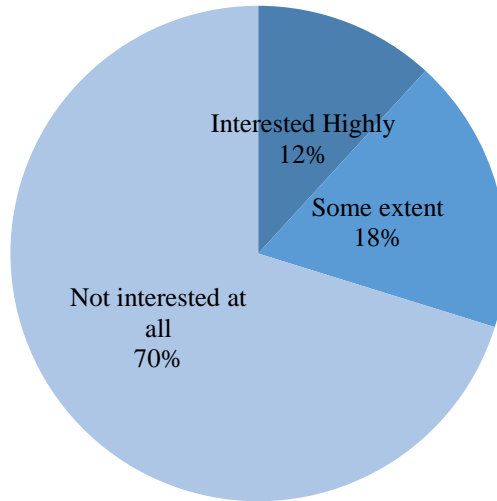
Figure 4.12: Likelihood of Being Involved in the Political Process in Future



14. Interest as a Candidate in Future

The Figure 4.13 represents the percentage of male and female interest to stand as a candidate in future. The largest proportions of Bhutanese voters indicated ‘not interested at all’ to become candidates in future election (70.2%), while ‘interested highly’ had the lowest proportion (11.8%) and people who indicated to ‘some extent’ to be candidate in future election is 18%.

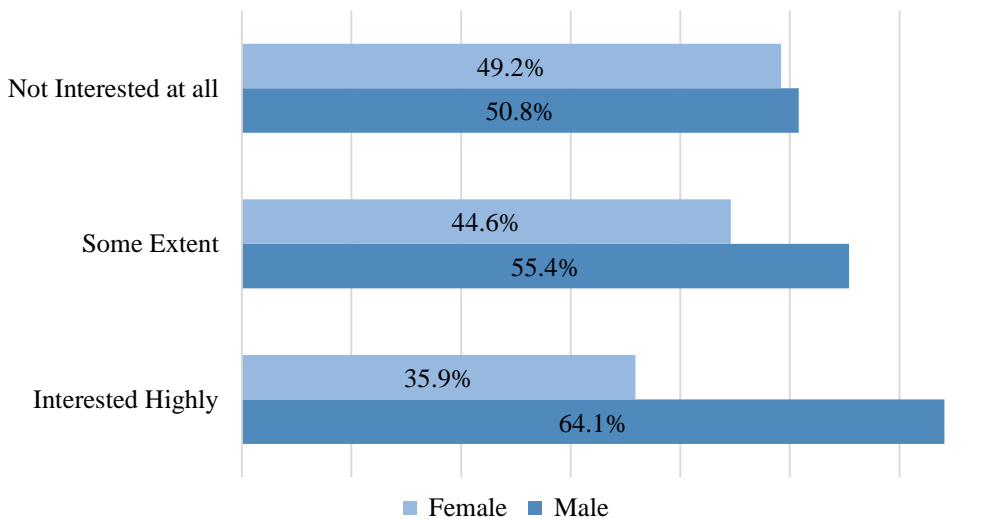
Figure 4.13: Interested to Stand as a Candidate in Future Elections



Disaggregating this data further, it is found that a higher proportion of males (64.1%) than females (35.9%) as a candidate in future elections corroborated the males interested over females to participate in the elective offices.

For highly interested category, women are statistically less likely than man (at $p < 0.05$) to be candidates in future elections.

Figure 4.14: Interest as a Candidate in Future



15. Interest as a Candidate in Future by Education

An educational level between men and women is often cited as a significant reason for gender differences in participation in elections. Education also may have deterring effects for men and women. Some researchers noted a stronger influence of education on the participation rates for women. While others pointed out that women are often less likely to participate in election than men with similar education levels. Thus, education may interact with gender, with a stronger pattern found among women rather than men.

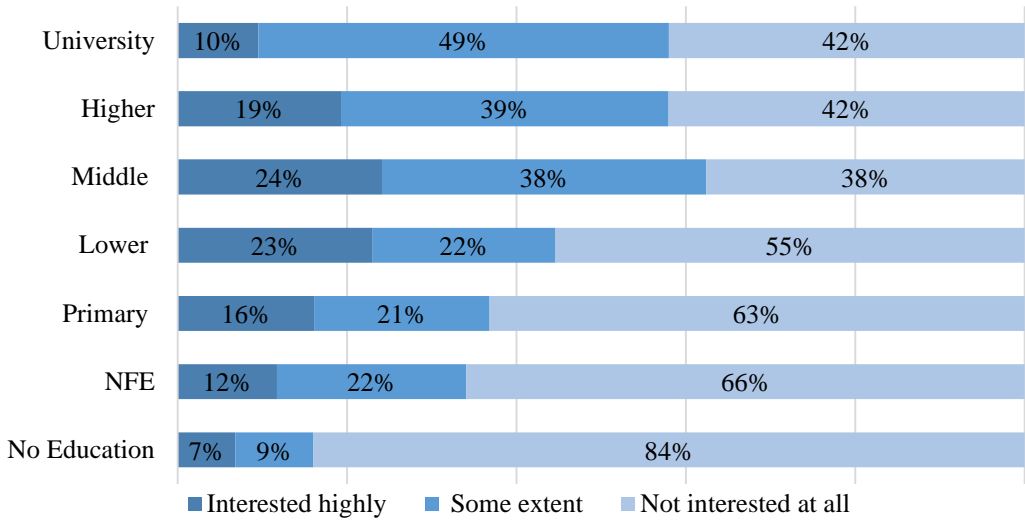
In Bhutan, there continues to be large differences in educational rates for men and women, and with larger number of women being in the lowest levels of education is found to be the reason for low participation of women in the elective offices. Education is one of the strongest individual-level determinants of participation of women in the political activity. Attainment of higher education makes a big difference as compared with no or low schooling.

The data also reveals that those with higher level of education (24.1%) are highly interested to contest as Candidates than those with lower education level (6.8%).

As presented in Figure 4.15, about 84% of respondents with low education say that they are not interested at all to stand as Candidate compared to 42% of the respondents with higher or university qualification.

In addition, it was found that statistically there is a significant association between the education and interest as candidate (chi-square: 54708.257 at $p < 0.000$). From the statistical analysis it has been observed that there is a positive significant relationship between the percentage of highly educated voters and their interest as candidate in election at 0.05 significant levels. This means that increasing the percentage of highly educated voters will likely increases the participants of individuals voter. Conversely, the interest as candidate in future politics will decrease whenever the percentage of highly educated voters decreases.

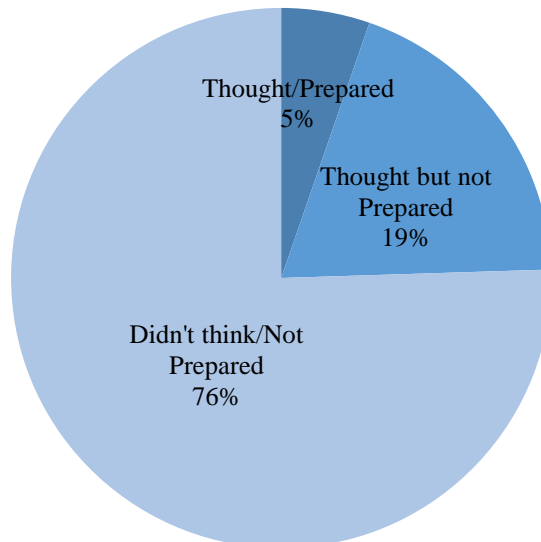
Figure 4.15: Interest as Candidate in Future



16. Preparation as a Candidate in Future

In regard to preparation or doing necessary groundwork to contest the future elections, ‘didn’t think/not prepared’ group had the highest proportion (75.5%), which very much relates to the data of ‘not interested at all’ group (70.2%) as reflected in Figure 4.16. Whereas, “thought but not prepared” constitutes about 19% and ‘thought/prepared’ groups had the lowest proportions of five percent. The data indicates that not many are prepared and interested to contest future election as candidates.

Figure 4.16: Preparation as a Candidate in Future

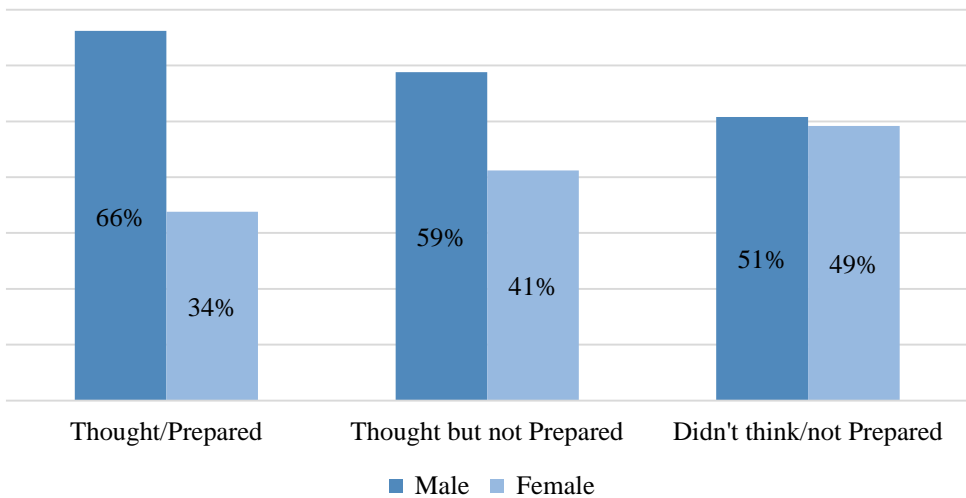


17. Preparation as a Candidate in Future by Sex

Further details on preparation in terms of considering standing as a candidate in future election, as in Figure 4.17 below, show more men (66%) twice as much as women (33.8%) reported ‘thought/prepared’ to run as Candidate in future elections. Women are less likely (41.2%) than men (58.8%) and reported to have thought about it but not prepared. The magnitude of gender gap in political interest is very high because many women remain relative to men unlikely to participate in future elections as candidates.

Meanwhile, the analysis by chi-square statistical test revealed that for all categories in Figure 17, women are statistically less likely than men (at $p < 0.05$) to have prepared/thought as candidates in future elections.

Figure 4.17: Preparation as a Candidate in Future

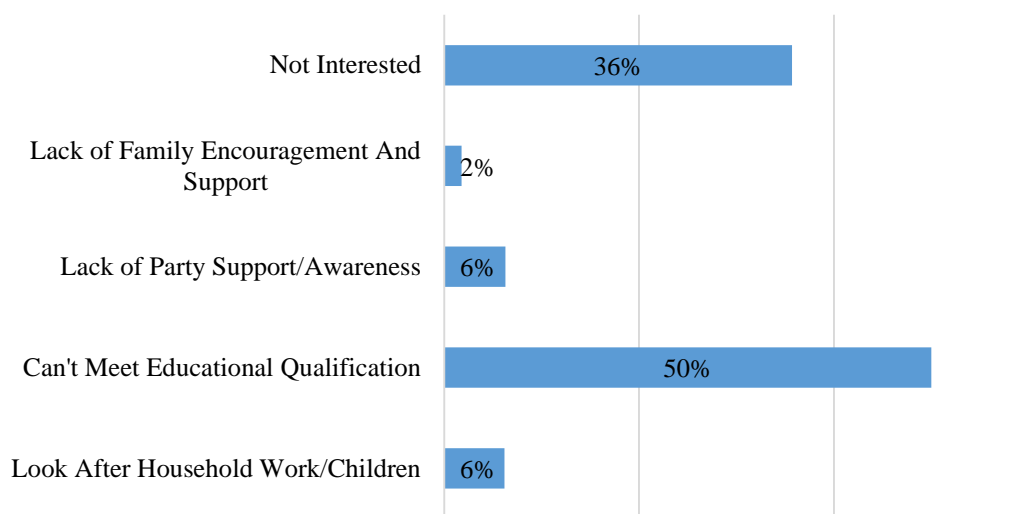


18. Why No Interest as Candidate in Future

Notably, about 50% of the respondents said that they are less qualified or lack educational qualification to contest the elections, while some of them (35.7%) said they have less or no interest in politics.

Women are also less likely to participate because some of the respondents (6.2%) feel that the household and child-rearing responsibility tend to disproportionately fall to women. Despite women’s substantial movement into high-level positions in the professional arena, women and men in Bhutan continued to conform to traditional gender roles at home.

Figure 4.18: Why no Interest as Candidate in Future



Most of the women participants of the FGDs said that they are not interested to stand as candidates in elections now or in the near future since they have other priorities to take care of and the need of the hour for herself and her family was to be economically and socially stable. They are more willing to support other interested women to stand as candidates in elections and ensure their successful electoral and political participation. However, the elected women candidates will need to demonstrate and prove capabilities and competencies to function as elected representatives and leaders since they do not want women to be in Parliament and the Local Governments simply to enhance women's representation.

Most of the women civil servants in the FGDs do not want to take the risks of becoming economically and financially unstable by leaving their salaried jobs to stand as candidates in elections, the outcomes of which are uncertain given that women's electoral prospects are low due to lack or low level of support and confidence.

19. More Female Candidates in Future

Given the traditional stereotypes that is believed to have restricted women participation in electoral process as candidates; it is interesting to note that the majority (54.2%) of the respondents thinks that there will be more female candidates stepping forward to contest future elections.

About 31.9 % of the respondents to some extent feel that there will be more women candidates, while 13.8% have no idea or not very sure as to whether or are not there will be more women participation.

Table 4.9: Do you think there will be more female candidates to participate in future elections?

More Female Candidates in Future	Frequency	Percent
Yes	206,994	54.2
Some extent	121,980	31.9
Don't Know	52,816	13.8
Total	381,790	100

At the same time, it would not be correct to assume that this uncertainty is linked to a lack of interest by women in politics – more research is needed to understand the source and rationale behind this uncertainty.

In the FGDs, the expectation expressed was is that there will be more women coming forward to stand as candidates in elections in the future since there are more females availing education, as well as have enhanced access to socio-economic opportunities.

Similarly most of the respondents (85%) of the SoMS (who are mostly the educated) said that there will be more female candidates in the future elections, which indicates that we may expect to see increase in number of women participating in election in future but more so that there may be more support for women in elective offices and better success at elections.

20. More Women MPs in Parliament

The majority of respondents – both men and women – feel that there should be more women representation in the elective offices.

About 71.1% said that they are likely to support women candidate to enhance more women representation in the parliament, while 9.6% of the respondents feel that it is not necessary to have more or equal women representation in the elective offices. On the other hand, 19.2% of the total voters are not very certain or sure of having more women representation in the elective offices which may either indicate that many people are not really aware of equal rights or they harbor deep seated prejudices.

Table 4.10: Should there be more elected women representatives (MPs) in future elections?

More Women MPs in Parliament	Frequency	Percent
Yes	271,872	71.2
No	36,801	9.6
Don't Know	73,117	19.2
Total	381,790	100

21. Vote for Female Candidates in Future

With regard to people's willingness to vote for women candidates, the majority of the voters (43.5%) indicated that they are very likely to vote for female candidates. About 35.9% said that the gender of a Candidate is not the subject of contention. However, 11.2% of the respondents indicated that they will not vote for female candidate and 9.3% are not sure to vote for women candidates.

Table 4.11: As a voter, how likely is it that you will vote for a female candidate in future elections?

Vote for Female Candidate in Future	Frequency	Percent
Not going to vote	42,774	11.2
Will vote	166,222	43.5
Sex doesn't matter	137,125	35.9
Not sure	35,669	9.3
Total	381,790	100

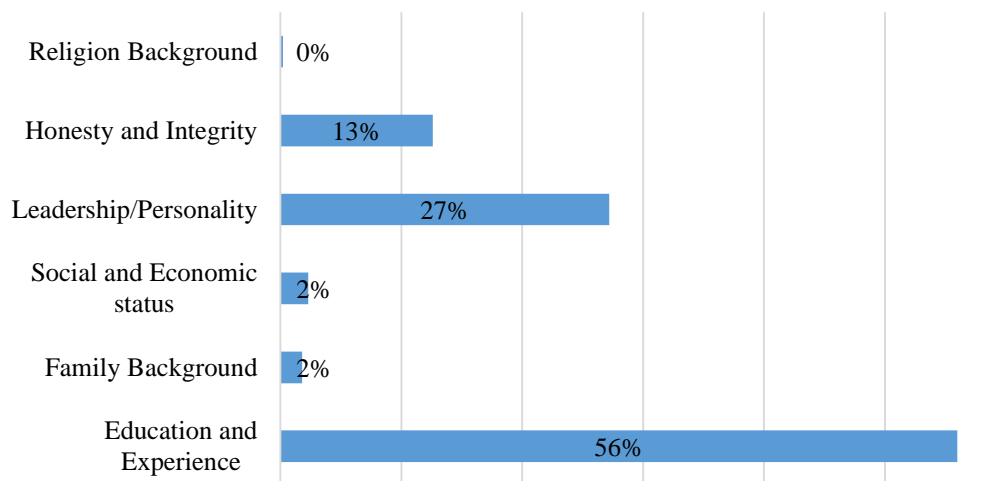
Even most of the men participants of the FGDs expressed the view that there needs to be more women coming forward to stand as candidates in elections to be supported in the elective offices. In general, an overall majority of the participants are willing to support women candidates in elections, but the women candidates will need to demonstrate and prove capabilities and competencies to function as elected representatives and leaders since they would not want women to be in Parliament and the local governments simply to enhance women's representation but rather to contribute to national development.

22. Qualities Taken into Consideration in Voting for Woman

The extent of support that a woman candidate receives from voters will depend on the capability and competency, her campaign programme, the opponent, the composition of qualification and experience, honesty and integrity. Women are slightly more likely to vote for women candidates, but they make their decisions based on a wide variety of factors.

To determine what qualities the public most values in voting for women—the survey first asked respondents to choose any of the following six important and positive traits assessed in the survey. Of a total respondent, 56% indicated that women should be highly qualified with necessary experiences, followed by 27.2% saying women should possess leadership skills and qualities and about 12.6% indicated honesty/integrity as a very important or indispensable quality to elect women. Religion and family background of the candidates are not considered important while electing a woman candidate.

Figure 4.19: Qualities to Base Decision to Vote for Woman Candidates



In the FGDs, it has been expressed that candidates in elections should be capable and competent in terms of educational qualifications; be social with good communication and organizational skills; past experiences; attitude; ethics and integrity.

Most of the women candidates were believed to be not capable and competent as the men candidates in the past elections, except for a few of them. In the last parliamentary elections, the majority of the women candidates were said to be young and inexperienced, even if they met the requirements to stand as candidates. Generally, the opinion is that there are too few women coming forward to stand as candidates in elections.

23. Important Considerations

Political empowerment refers to the equitable representation of women in decision-making structures, both formal and informal, and their voice in the formulation of policies affecting the societies. Women are poorly represented in the lower levels of government as well as in the upper echelons of decision-making. The absence of women from the structures of governance inevitably means that national, regional and local priorities—i.e. how resources are allocated—are typically defined without meaningful input from women, whose life experience gives them a different awareness of the community's needs, concerns and interests from that of men. There must be at least a critical mass of women represented who are learning the rules, using the rules and changing the rules of the decision-making game, and thus having an impact on discourse and decisions at all levels, from the family, to the nation.

It is clear that the Bhutan has a long way to go to achieve equality and that this work will require concentrated efforts on many fronts. Lack of confidence and trust in women's leaders is one of the main considerations for women's under-representation in formal political institutions, whether in Parliament, Ministries or political parties. With confidence and determination on women's capability and leaders can reach the highest levels in the political process.

Therefore, to understand the priorities and important considerations of women, educational attainment is, without doubt, the most fundamental prerequisite for empowering women in all spheres of society. Education level has greater influence on interest, trust and confidence of women in elections. The largest proportion who considered women less capable than man is 53.3% with having no or low education category, while those with university schooling is 1.1%. Noticeably, 51.1% of all the voters with no educational background said they lack confidence and trust as compared to people with higher or university schooling (4.1%). Hence, people with low education background tend to believe men as superior and are better leaders than women. Only those people with higher or university schooling considers women as equally capable and same potential as men.

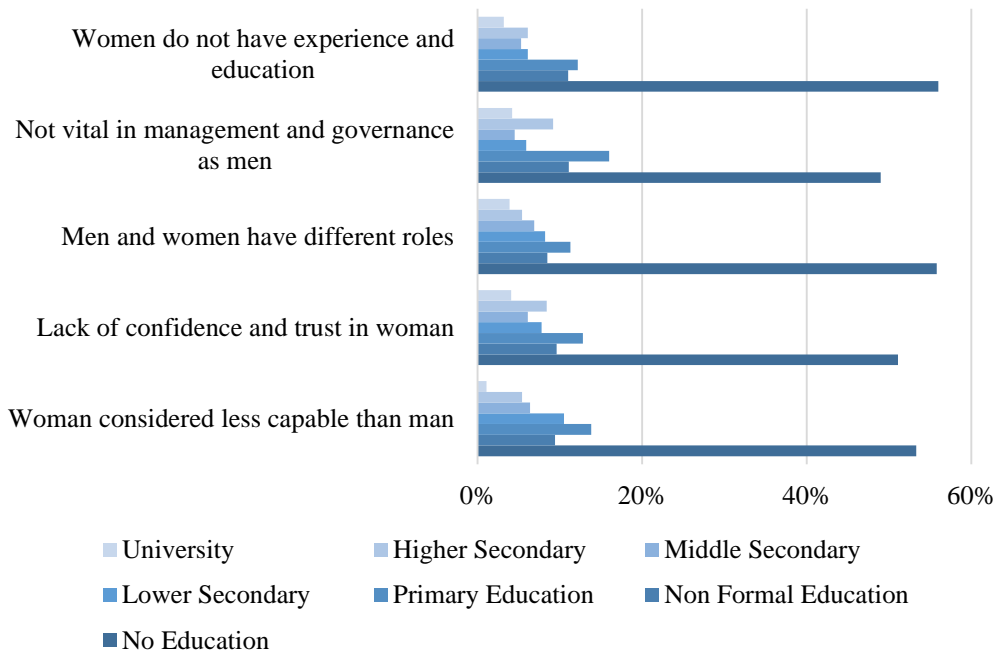
Subsequently, some 49% with no educational background said that women are not vital in management and governance as men and 56% said women do not have experience and lacks education to perform equally and at par with men.

Turning to these important aspects of consideration, women are significantly less likely than men to be in the elective offices for those people with low education. Women, therefore, have significantly more negative feelings than men toward the various aspects of considerations by people in rural or people with less education. Overwhelmingly, highly educated people have more trust and confidence on women to be an elected leader.

Moreover, for all categories in Figure 4.20, which indicate percentage of respondents by education who views each consideration so negatively that it serves as a deterrent for women to participate in the elective offices establishes a significant association at $p < 0.05$. Therefore, people with no or low education has stronger negative feelings than men towards the various aspects such as education and experience, roles in leadership, confidence and trust, and capability of women as leader.

The participants of the FGDs viewed that women lack confidence and sureness in their own selves to come forward and take active part in the politics to stand as candidates and as elected representatives and leaders, leaving the space to be occupied largely by the men.

Figure 4.20: Perceptions and Views Related to Women



24. Obstacle to Women Taking Part in Elections

When asked if there are any perceived obstacles preventing women from being able to put themselves forward as candidates in running elections, the majority of voters (47.8%) responded “yes”, whereas (37.8%) said “No”, showing greater existence of obstacles to women participation or being elected. About 14.4% of respondents said that they are not very sure about the barriers or obstacles that restricts women’s participation in electoral process as candidates.

Table 4.12: Obstacle for Woman taking part in Election		
Obstacle for Woman	Frequency	Percent
Yes	182,592	47.8
No	144,166	37.8
Don't Know	55,032	14.4
Total	381,790	100

25. Views on Obstacle to Women's Participation in Elections

Why are there not many women representation in the nation's top political or public offices? As indicated in the previous section, many lots perceive women to be less capable or lack necessary qualification. Voters are not ready to elect more female to the elective offices. Majority of the respondents feel that women lack confidence and leadership skills needed for high office. The social barriers and cultural biases are still at play when voting for Candidates. Many voters preferred male Candidates over female. They feel that women lack necessary political skills to step forward and contest the elections. Women are still considered less capable to men and this obviously discouraged even those interested women Candidates from stepping forward at risk to their economic status which would affect their families.

The emphasis placed on women's responsibilities in the domestic sphere is reinforced by the prevailing cultural attitude regarding the roles of women in society, which was the most significant factor perceived to deter women from entering politics. Therefore, on the question of whether women's family responsibilities prevent them from having political careers, the majority of respondents (36%) strongly supported the statement.

This was closely followed by lack of self-confidence and fears of incompetence in decision making (18.6%). These norms infiltrate politics where women are not generally viewed as being competent political players or capable leaders. This in turn reinforces the idea that politics should remain in the hands of men. On the other hand, more than 15% said that lack of educational qualification and experience in representative function as a third major obstacle for female politicians.

Furthermore, the data indicates that the deeply rooted cultural attitudes regarding the roles of women leave them totally un-empowered politically. Not surprisingly, 10.3% of the total population said that prevailing cultural attitude regarding the roles of women is considered as one of the important deterrent factors.

It is particularly notable that the main obstacles listed were lack of support from male politicians and from the political parties. This finding correlates

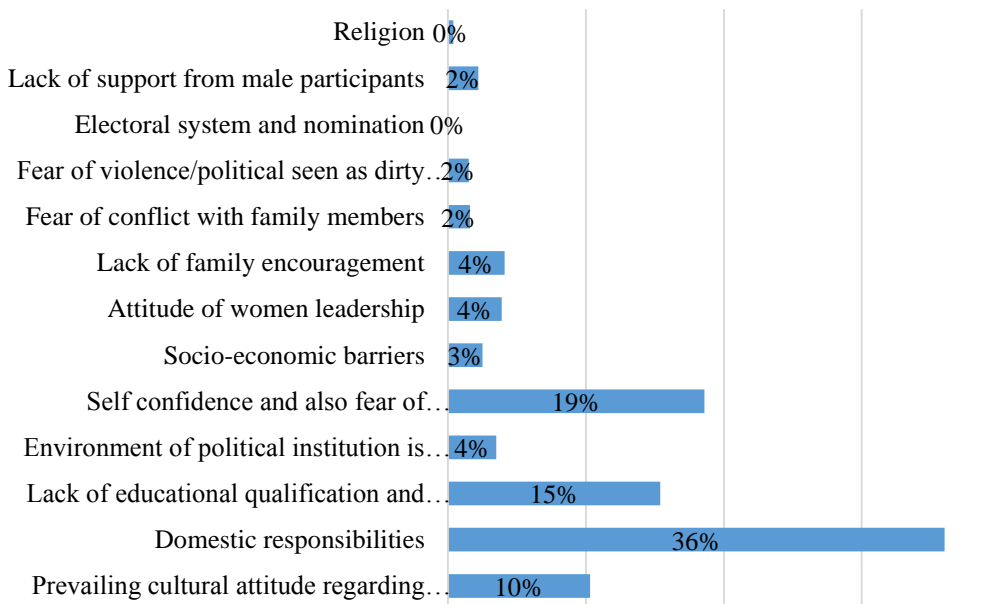
with many global studies on women and politics, which indicated that the parties are the main gateway which can alternatively support or restrict women’s increased engagement in political and public life.

Respondents also identified the attitude of women’s leadership; environment of political institution as not gender friendly, economic barriers, lack of support and encouragement from family and a lack of experience with representative functions as potential deterrents for women entering into politics.

The lack of support to women and the women candidates in elections in particular is one of the obstacles hindering women’s political and electoral participation as have been expressed during the FGDs. While the lack of support from male voters is said to be expected, some female voters themselves also agree that they do not support women candidates in elections, with some even suggest that jealousy and fear (of other women becoming important) as determining factors.

The SoMS found out that self-confidence and fear of incompetence in decision making (44%), cultural stereotype in the society (42%) and Domestic responsibilities (42%) as the major obstacles to women’s participation in elections in Bhutan.

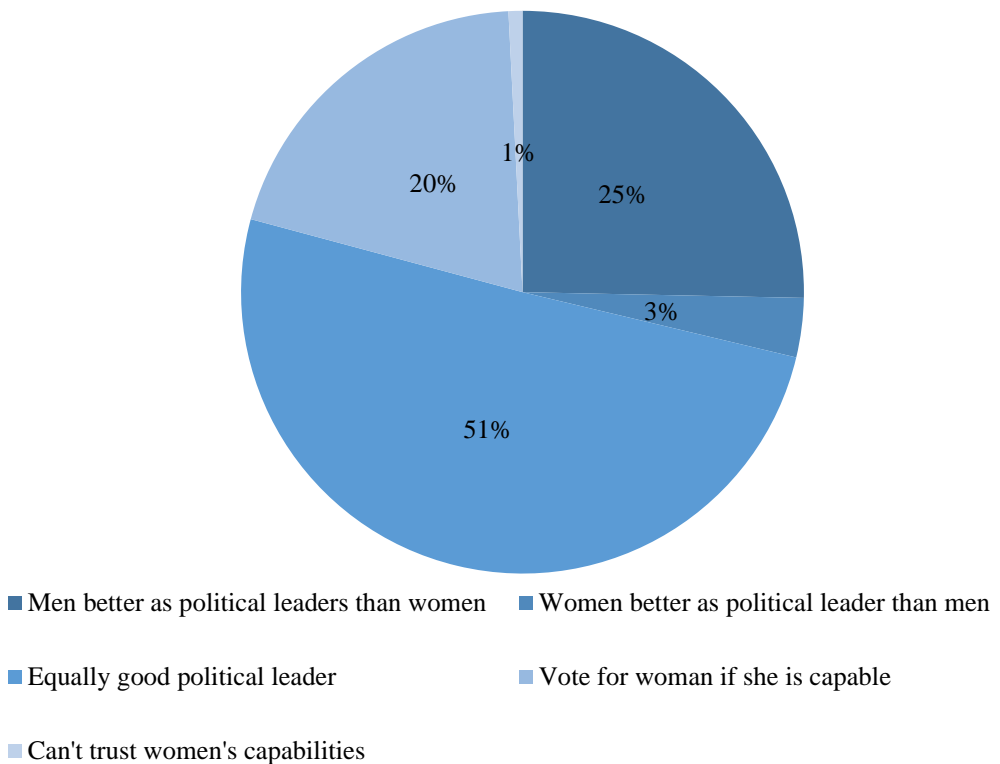
Figure 4.21: Views on Obstacle to Woman's Participation in Election



26. Men and Women as Political Leaders

Attitudes about men and women as political leaders vary in tandem with the public's attitudes about traditional gender roles. Patriarchal prejudices and stereotypes result in the perception that women are less capable than men (25.3%), especially in matters involving public decision-making and political activities. Only about 3.4% view that women make better political leaders than men. Results show that 20% of the population would vote for woman if she is capable and competent. The majority of voters (50.4%) feel that both women and men can equally be good leaders given their potential and capability.

Figure 4.22: Statements Closest to Opinions about Men and Women as Political Leaders



Chapter 5

OVERALL VIEWS ON ELECTORAL PROCESS

A socially inclusive society is regarded as a fundamental principle of democratic governance enabling women to have a voice in making decisions that affect their lives. This relates to an increasingly popular argument that women have unrestricted equal citizenship and that political participation is a human right. Promoting women's political leadership and gender equality is a development issue, a human rights issue and also a moral obligation. More inclusive parliaments have the capacity to strengthen civic engagement and democratic participation among its citizens. When majority of women cannot participate fully, it limits the opportunity to optimize and maximize the influence and benefits from political and economic decisions.

Women in Bhutan have had limited political involvement in terms of representation in the elective offices. Women's participation at all levels of elective offices is less than that of men. Many say that woman's participation lack behind in any election and say it's due to insufficient inbuilt mechanism in the election system and process. So what are the measures needed to be incorporated in the electoral process to encourage and bring in more women's participation in the elective offices.

The unequal rate of representation in legislative bodies in Bhutan signifies that women's representation, rather than being a consequence of democratization, is more a reflection of a status quo. Much of the research on political factors shaping women's political participation and representation has focused on voting and electoral systems. One of the most important steps in this respect was to recognize the right to vote and to be elected at a rather early stage. Furthermore, the term electoral process in this survey particularly relates to the nomination process and filing of the documents, the magnitude and adequateness of the conduct of voter education and information disseminations, media coverage on elections including media advertisement of the political parties and candidates, conduct of functional literary test (FLT) for Local Government candidates and, location of polling stations, etc. While electoral systems alone do not determine the level of representation of women, it has been however, stated that having more conducive or enabling political environment or electoral system, would further help in enhancing more women participation in the electoral process

This chapter also provides a general historical analysis of women's participation and how women fared in politics and governance, primarily focusing on the Second Parliamentary Elections in 2013. Also given that the

adoption of the quota system or reserved seat can be a solution to women’s under-representation in politics, an examination to see if such a system would be effective or be applicable to Bhutanese democratization is crucial. Future, this chapter explores to see if educating women and creating a more enabling environment for women would help in increasing more women’s representation in politics.

1. Equal Rights

During the in-depth interview with the general voters of the 20 Dzongkhags, most participants claimed that the national policies and legislations are gender neutral and provides opportunities to both men and women to equally participate in electoral process. This perception is also supported by the survey findings, where more than 84% of the respondents stated that policies and laws consider both men and women as equals, while only nine percent of the respondents stated having no equal rights, and seven percent stated having no idea about the rights. It was a general consensus among the participants that a country’s constitutional and legal framework guarantees equal civil and political rights to every person on a non-discriminatory basis.

In the FGDs, in terms for legal framework and socio-political environment, the majority of the participants generally view that there are equal rights and opportunities to both men and women to participate in all aspects of politics and elections.

Equal Rights	Frequency	Percent
Yes	321,124	84.1
No	33,093	8.7
Don't Know	27,573	7.2
Total	381,790	100

2. Difficulties in the Nomination Process

Of the total survey respondents, 53.6% said that they have not seen or heard or experienced any difficulties against nomination process for women candidates in Bhutan. More than 30% of them do not have the knowledge or idea and only 16.2% have stated there were difficulties faced by women in nomination process.

Table 5.2: Difficulties on Nomination Process for Women Candidates

Difficulties on nomination	Frequency	Percent
Yes	61,981	16.2
No	204,706	53.6
Don't Know	115,102	30.1
Total	381,790	100

There is every chance that voters who have never experienced nor stood to contest as candidates for any election must have also responded thoughtlessly that there are no obstacles for women candidates related to nomination in Bhutan, deliberately, aggravating the discomfort and suffering of others. It is the uncultured mentality of people that takes delight in the pain and agony of others. If they themselves do not like to be hurt, what rights have they to inflict pain on others? Therefore, the readers as well as more research in future to be conducted to understand more to address on this issue.

3. Main Difficulties in the Nomination Process for Women Candidates

In terms of the procedures involved in nomination of women candidates, the majority of respondents (31.8%) believe traveling long distances to obtain the various documents and clearances was difficult for women as compared to men. About 8% of the total respondents found the nomination forms to be difficult and about 2.5% and 2.1% said that getting the Affidavit documents and the Letter of Attestation from the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) were difficult.

In the FGDs, the participants acknowledged that the seeking nominations to stand as candidates in elections, in terms of securing the required nomination documents, there were not much of difficulty faced, even by the women candidates, except in cases where the women candidates had to walk long distances to the offices to get the documents in time for their nominations.

Table 5.3: Main Difficulties in the Nomination Process for Women Candidates

Three main difficulties	Frequency	Percent
Nomination form	4,920	8
Affidavit	1,553	2.5
Asset declaration	602	1
Tax clearance certificate	576	0.9
Audit clearance certificate	197	0.3
Security clearance certificate	752	1.2
Attestation by RUB	1,279	2.1
Declaration (not member of political party)	266	0.4
Distance to travel	19,666	31.8
Security problem	1,155	1.9
Others	30,916	50
Total	61,882	100

It was said that the issue is not in getting various nomination documents ready and in time for filing of nominations to contest elections, but that women are generally not supported in expressing their interest to stand as candidates in elections and to seek nominations to contest elections.

4. Satisfaction in Getting Nomination Documents

With regard to obtaining the various documents and clearance for nomination process, 60 percent are either satisfied or very satisfied while 31 percent stated as neutral indicating that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Only a minor proportion of the respondents (8%) were not dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Table 5.4: Satisfaction in Getting Nomination Documents

Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
Very satisfied	63,851	16.7
Satisfied	167,517	43.9
Neutral	119,408	31.3
Dissatisfied	22,287	5.8
Very dissatisfied	8,727	2.3
Total	381,790	100

Most of the elected women representatives and former candidates expressed satisfaction that they have had the opportunity to stand as candidates in the past elections because they have had the good fortune of being supported by their families and the communities.

5. Attended Voter Education

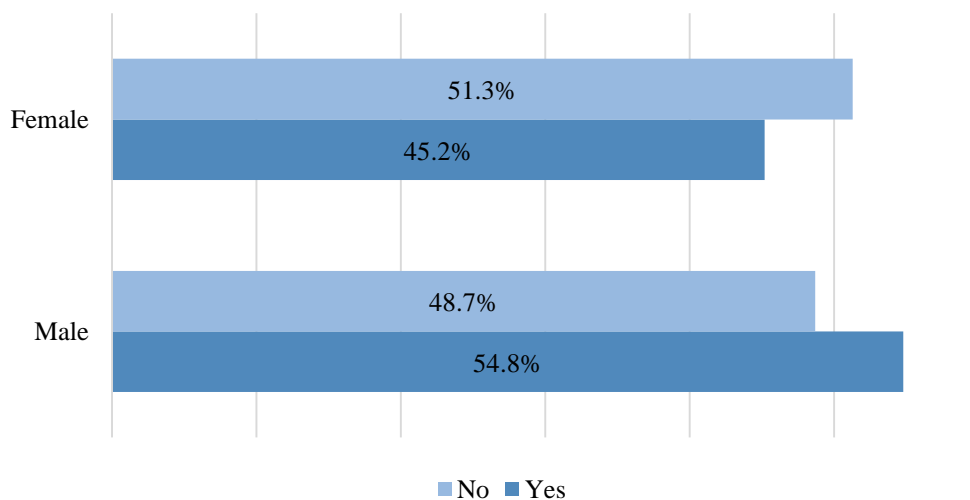
Elections are the starting point of a healthy democratic system, but without an informed electorate the probable for democratic transformation is limited. In order to participate effectively in elections, citizens need information on registration, election campaign, polling processes, as well as on the records and platforms of candidates and parties.

Generally, in order to determine the accessibility of voters to the voter education and awareness conducted by the Election Commission, the respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they have attended and participated in the education programme. Three out of every four respondents claim to have attended vote education and found the education programme very effective. It enabled them to understand more about the democratic process and the electoral system.

Attended	Frequency	Percent
Yes	280,494	73.5
No	101,296	26.5
Total	381,790	100

The percentage of men and women who attended the voter education and awareness programme also varied in number. More men (54.8%) are found to be more aware and regularly participating in the voter education than women (45.2 %).

Figure 5.1: Attended Voter Education

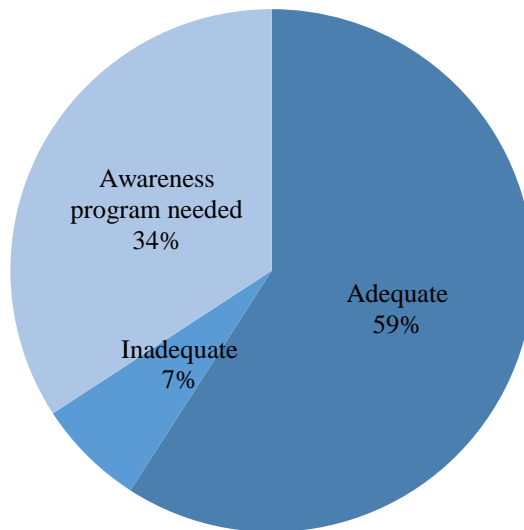


In the FGDs, most of the participants who are based in rural areas and are engaged in farming activities said that they attended the voter education and information dissemination programmes conducted, whereas those voters who mostly reside and are not engaged in farming activities said that they did not attend most or any of the voter education and information dissemination programmes. However, in either case, most of the attendees of the voter education and information dissemination programmes were only one or two members of households.

6. Conduct of Voter Education

In terms of the effectiveness and coverage of the voter education programme, the majority (over 59%) of them said that it was informative and adequate. However, seven percent of the respondents feel that the voter education coverage was not very adequate while, 34% of the total voters suggested conducting more awareness programme and on continuous basis.

Figure 5.2: Conduct of Voter Education



The participants of the FGDs expressed the hope and suggested that civic and voter education and information dissemination efforts have to be continually made to educate and inform all voters to enable them to make the best decisions during elections.

7. Voter Education as a Continuous Process

The majority of the participants (86.5%) said that the civic and voter education programme plays a critical role in information dissemination and should be conducted on continuous basis to enable more voters to further their

understanding on the democratic process, political parties and candidates and to be able to meaningfully participate in the electoral process.

Table 5.6: Voter Education as a Continuous Process		
Voter Education as a Continuous Process	Frequency	Percent
Yes	330,284	86.5
No	14,844	3.9
Don't know	36,662	9.6
Total	381,790	100

About 3.9% of the total voters however, feel that the education programme as being conducted on continues basis is not required, 9.6 % of them claim to have not attended the education programme nor have an idea on the education programme being conducted.

8. Voter Education and Gender

It seems that many voters in rural, both men and women, cannot readily access the available information due to low levels of literacy and inadequate availability of substantive information. To ensure that the civic and voter education encompasses disseminating knowledge on the need of gender equality in elective offices, to know their voting rights and understand the voting process, and to access relevant information to enable reasonable representation of women, voter education programmes should be tailor-made to such needs of voters before conduct of elections.

In terms of coverage of voter education including disseminating knowledge on the need of gender equality in elective offices, 70.4% of respondents said that the education programme provides and very well informs them on the need of having equal representation of both men and women in elective offices. While, 20.3 percent said that they are not very sure about the educational programme and about 9.3% said that the gender equality information was not very substantial and adequate.

Table 5.7: Voter Education and Gender		
Voter Education and Gender	Frequency	Percent
Yes	268,970	70.4
No	35,446	9.3
Don't know	77,374	20.3
Total	381,790	100

9. Voter Information on Media

The levels of people's exposure to the media in related to elections have increased significantly and the media has always played an important role in strengthening the associational life of voters and enabling them to make a better informed choice.

The majority (85%) of the voters said that they were able to gather necessary campaign information including the media advertisement on political parties and candidates and other related voter's information on election through media while about 10 percent received from other source. Only about five percent of the respondents didn't know about the source of information.

Voter Information on Media	Frequency	Percent
Yes	324,128	84.9
No	37,454	9.8
Don't know	20,209	5.3
Total	381,790	100

10. Accessible to Media Related to Voter Education

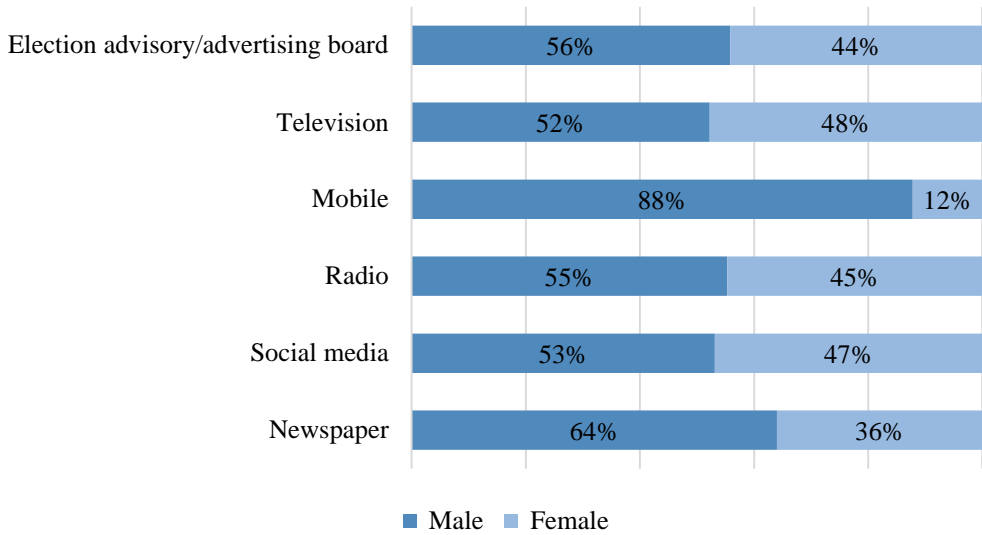
The media plays an important role in shaping the opinions of the general voters as well plays a key role in creating an enabling environment or helps in encouraging interested women to step forward and contest the election. It is also essential to ensure that gender equality advocates have a clearer picture of what impact media has on women in elections and its accessibility. The data suggests that there is little difference between how men and women use and are accessible to media related to voter education.

According to all female respondents as shown in Figure 5.3, television (47.8%) and social media (46.9%) are the two most effective source of information that provides information about the political parties and candidates and other information related to election.

Among the male respondents, majority (87.8%) of them said that they gather information through mobile and about 64% through newspapers.

More than half (55.8 %) said that the election advertising board provides much information related to elections and also helps them in identifying the contesting political parties and candidates to an election. Similarly, more than half (55.3%) said that the radio is effective in information dissemination.

Figure 5.3: Access to Media Based on Voter Education



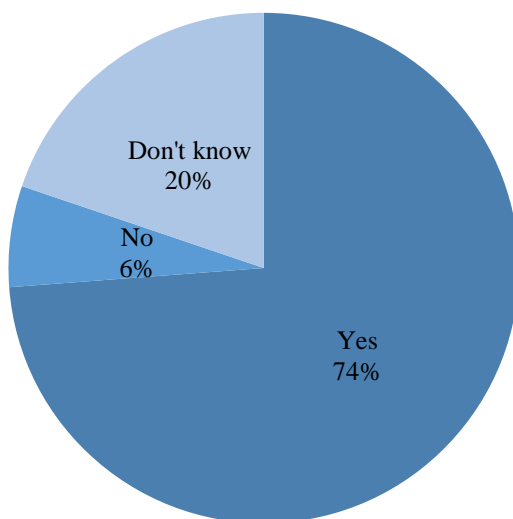
11. Fairness of Media on Election Coverage

The media, and particularly newspapers and television, play a crucial role in shaping voters interest and attitudes about an election. The way the media portray women, how they deal with issues of special concern to women, and whether they convey effectual voter education messages can have a major impact on women’s participation in an election.

As shown in Figure 5.4, most of the participants (74%) said that the media is fair and neutral in its dissemination of information, reporting and coverage of the elections, while only 20% said they are not sure about the fairness of the media coverage.

About six percent of all said that media is not fair in its information dissemination of the election campaigns, reporting and providing media coverage related to elections.

Figure 5.4: Fairness of Media on Election Coverage

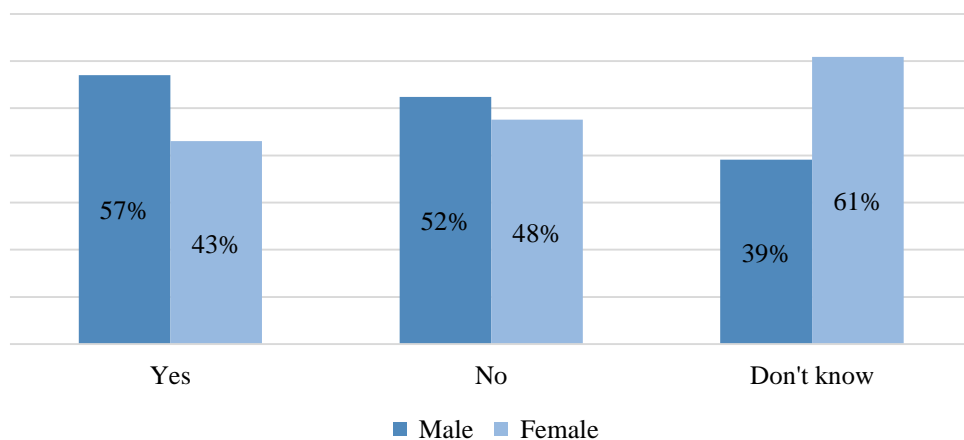


12. Equal Access to Media by Male and Female Candidates Related to Campaigns

As shown in Figure 5.5, the majority (57%) of the male respondents and (43%) of female candidates said that they have equal access to media election campaigns, while (52.4%) of the male and (47.6%) of female respondents are of the view that there is no equal access to media by candidates related to campaigns including space and time in media and coverage on election campaigns.

More than (39%) of the male and (61%) of the female respondents indicated not having knowledge about the accessibility to media by the Candidates.

Figure 5.5: Equal Access to Media



In the FGDs, it was said that in case of the urban voters, electoral information and knowledge are relatively low owing to their living and working in places of residences which are generally away from their places of electoral registration, with majority of voters living in rural Bhutan where the political parties and candidates mostly focus their efforts in election campaigns. The primary source of electoral information and knowledge for urban voters is media which include the media’s coverage of electoral events and election campaigns as news and current affairs reporting, as paid broadcasting and as civic responsibility, and the media advertisements of election campaigns.

Media such as TV and newspapers are generally preferred by urban voters, while the rural voters prefer radio which is affordable to most and easily accessible.

Accessing electoral information and knowledge through social media is more of an urban occurrence where the access to the Internet is easy.

13. Reform or Change to Current Practices to Enhance More Women

The slow increase in women’s access to parliament in recent decades demonstrates that women face persistent challenges to their political participation. Given the uneven access by women to parliament and local government, and to compensate for the obstacles they face, special measures such as reform or change to the current practices to provide a fast track for women to access parliament and local government is deemed necessary.

Table 5.9: Reform or Change to Current Practices

Reform or Change to Current Practices	Frequency	Percent
Yes	175,094	45.9
No	119,205	31.2
Don't Know	87,491	22.9
Total	381,790	100

It is also observed that many women have not been able to actively participate in many of the discussion forums, campaign meetings or in politics due to one or the many other reasons as been highlighted in many common forums in and around the country.

As many as 45.9% of the total voters feel that there should be some reform or change to the present practices or systems to enable more interested women to step forward to actively participates in the electoral process and contest the elections.

Practically 31.2% of them seem to be happy or ok with the present practices, while 22.9 % indicated as not knowing about the practices and systems that are in place.

14. Most Appropriate to Reform or Change

Several respondents recommended working more concertedly with political parties to sensitize them about the role they play in promoting women's participation in politics, such as educating women, adopting voluntary party quotas, or placing women in winnable positions on party lists. Others noted that parties need to do more to recruit women into their ranks and support them throughout the election campaigns including providing incentives to attract women to the party such as providing relevant positions in the event of not being elected or, providing access to networks, training and skills development for women candidates to stand for election

The female participants in general are of the view that the media plays a crucial role in shaping voter interest and attitudes about an election. The way the media portray women, how they deal with issues of special concern to women, and whether they convey effectual voter education messages can have a major impact on women's participation in an election. Many feels that the media should provide or focus on gender-sensitive coverage of elections, avoiding negative stereotypes and presenting positive images of women as leaders; and should focus attention on issues of special concern to women in news programming.

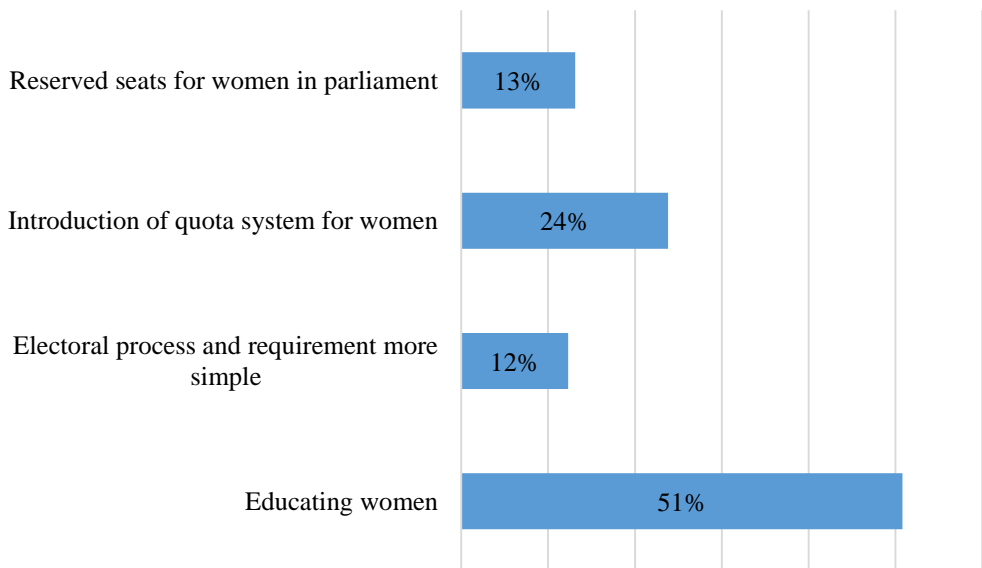
Some expressed that women should be encouraged to participate in the political activities while few others suggested creating enabling political environment or introducing quota system or reserved seats for women to enhance women participation.

As a onetime measure to enhance women's political participation, some are also of the view that the competent women civil servants be allowed to seek nominations and contest elections and be allowed to return to their jobs in the event of not being elected.

As per the data, more than half (50.8%) of the voters indicated 'educating women' as the best reform to enhance their participation in the electoral process, followed by the introduction of quota system (party based) for women (23.8%) and the reserved seats (would require constitutional amendment) for women (13.1%) for effectively increasing the number of women representation in parliament and local governments. About 12.3% feel that having simpler and straight forward electoral process and requirements will enable more women participation.

In the FGDs, the participants expressed the view that quota and/or reserved representation should not be simply implemented to enhance women's representation, but should be done so to ensure that there are capable and competent women being represented until such time that women are better able come forward to stand as candidates in elections and be elected on their own merits. The fear is that quota and/or reserved representation otherwise would acknowledge and bring to fore the Bhutanese women's inequality in electoral and political arenas.

Figure 5.6: Most Appropriate to Reform or Change



Chapter 6

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS

The study clearly points out that there is under-representation of the Bhutanese women in all aspects of the Bhutanese democracy and electoral processes for which appropriate measures must be taken by all concerned stakeholders to ensure and bring about an increased representation and participation of the Bhutanese women in decision making process and system, right from the grass root through to the national level.

In undertaking this study on the determinants of voter's choice and exploring ways to facilitate the Bhutanese women in elective posts, the ECB, as the most direct and relevant stakeholder, has become acutely aware of the shortcomings in the Bhutanese women's participation in the electoral and political processes as candidates. However, the ECB also acknowledges that their participation as voters has always been and will be representative of their demographic makeup of the Bhutanese population.

The findings of the study suggest that efforts must be put in to bring about an increased representation of the Bhutanese women in elective positions, but these efforts should be directed towards taking care of the social, cultural, and economic obstacles that are basics and have hindered the women thus far in many aspects, before a lasting and impressionable participation by the Bhutanese women can be achieved.

1. Observations on Women's Participation in Bhutanese Politics

The study concludes that for democracy to function, every demographic group should be properly represented. Despite the fact that women constitute not less than 50% of the Bhutanese population with only 8.3% of elected women in Parliament, it purely reflects under-representation of women in the high decision-making bodies in Bhutan. The under-representation of women in the elective offices eventually indicates that there are many factors/obstacles to be considered and be addressed by the policy makers and the relevant agencies.

It is asserted that the fundamental reason for women's under-representation is that they do not step forward to stand as candidates and run for elective offices. There is a substantial gender gap in political interest and men often tend to have more interest than women. The quantitative and qualitative data collected through FQS, FGDs and SoMS indicates that the gender gap in political interest has been persistent and unchanging since the conduct of First Parliamentary Elections in 2008.

The study has identified the following factors that continue to hinder women's full participation in electoral politics.

- i. There is an aggravated perception of bias against women to actively involve and engage in the electoral arena.
- ii. Women are much less likely than men to think they are equally qualified to participate for the elective offices.
- iii. Women are less likely to receive support and encouragement from the political parties and their families to stand as candidates and contest in elections.
- iv. Women are substantively more likely than men to perceive the electoral environment as highly competitive and biased against them.
- v. Women are more likely to react negatively than men to many aspects of electoral campaigns and politics can be construed to be 'dirty' and 'corrupt'.
- vi. Women candidates are less competitive, less confident, and more risk averse than men candidates.
- vii. Women are still responsible for the majority of domestic responsibilities (double-triple burden).
- viii. Women's position in the Bhutanese society have been largely constrained by factors of social, cultural and economic natures.

2. Obstacles to Equal Representation

The Bhutanese women enjoy relatively greater freedom at the household level. There is no strong domination of men in decision making related to household works. Moreover, at the national level, both the politics and the legal instruments are all gender neutral. Nevertheless, the following considerations are found important from the study.

One of the biggest challenges presented in this study was the presence of strong cultural beliefs that men are more capable and better political leaders as compared to women. These are cleverly entrenched in age-old traditional practices which ascribe men higher status in the society than women, particularly in the rural area.

Many participants in the FGDs expressed that because of more care and protection provided by the family and the society at large to a woman, it limits her participation in the affairs such as involvement in political activities and to influence decision making outside the house. All these practices have contributed negative implications on the growth and well-being of Bhutanese

women such as accepting men to hold higher position than women, men to be seen as being superior to women, and having higher trust and belief in men's leadership as compared to women's, even if women possess similar qualities and traits to be leaders (owing to better access to education and other socio-economic opportunities).

The findings from the FQS and the SoMS strongly indicate that women's physiological differences, which are considered disadvantageous, have ascribed women's inferiority as can be related to fieldworks and labour force participation.

The study concludes that the level of educational attainment is considered as one of the major factors that has determined Bhutanese women's political participation and public engagement.

The study also indicates that economic dependency as one of the factors consequential in considering women to be inferior to men.

3. Scope for Women's Participation in Elections and Politics

The findings from the FQS, the FGDs and the SoMS all exposed a profound gender gap in interest in seeking elective offices. Women of all professions, political inclinations, ages, and education levels are less likely than their male counterparts to express interest in participating in elections as candidates and contest for elective positions.

The study indicates that there is virtually no change in the gender gap in politics. The lack of progress in closing the gender gap is evidence that there is disparity in interest for future candidacy.

Notably, the low representation of women in Parliament in 2013 compared to 2008, however, is not an indication that there is no interest in entering the electoral arena at some point in the future.

Further, when a larger proportion of voters (more than 70%) indicated 'no interest at all' to stand as candidates in future elections, the study concludes that it cannot truly be a legitimate claim that the entire population of citizens do not have interests to seek opportunities to partake in politics and elections. Moreover, when more than 79% of voters reveal that they 'didn't think/have not prepared' to partake in politics and elections, it is indicative there still needs to be some level of political maturity attained before the majority of the population willingly partakes in politics and elections.

Women are less likely than men to run for elective offices for a number of reasons. The findings from the study conclude that some of the barriers to women's political participation are related to broad social phenomena which do not lend themselves to solutions by institutional or legal reforms, including reforms in the electoral system. For example, women continue to hold a

disproportionate share of household and family responsibilities and, on average, have lower incomes than men.

In addition, they may have been considered to view politics as an unsuitable or undesirable profession. The present study, particularly the finding from the FGDs suggest that these challenges are even greater for women because female are more than twice as likely as men to believe they are not qualified to participate in elections as candidates, even when men and women possess comparable qualifications. They, thus, have fewer opportunities to develop high-profile professional reputations that are much sought after by the political parties to field strong political candidates.

The study concludes that the ways of working in political parties and other political institutions may discourage women from seeking political offices through discriminatory attitudes and practices, and the lack of attention to mechanisms that could support and strike a balance between family and work responsibilities. It has also been concluded that women may be reluctant to participate in the elective offices because of the adversarial and combative nature of the works as elective representatives in having to perform to match voters' expectations.

4. Gender Gap in Elective Offices

The gender gap in political ambitions is driven by low level of women's political recruitment and low self-assessments for political qualifications. In addition, women perceive that the electoral environment is biased against them, which likely explains their aversion to participate willingly in politics and elections.

The study reveals and supports the fact that women remain the primary caretakers of the homes, and having to take care of children (as is expected of women) adds a high degree of complexity to the decision to participate in the elective offices – a complexity that most men do not face.

Women's full inclusion in electoral politics depends on closing the gender gap in political ambitions. The survey data further expands the understanding of the factors that play into the decisions to run for elections, indicating that women remain at a disadvantage on numerous dimensions. The findings presented in this report shed important lights on how women and men experience politics very differently. The offices to which potential candidates are recruited, their perceptions about critical character traits, such as confidence, competitiveness, level of educational qualifications, and their perceptions of the electoral environment and the manner in which women are treated in it, all work to women's detriment.

In addition, gender gaps in political recruitment and perceptions of qualifications continue to hinder women's interest in participating for elective offices just as much now as was in the first Parliamentary Elections in 2008.

Given the persistent gender gap in political aspirations, the present study concludes that Bhutan is a long way away from a political reality in which women and men are equally likely to aspire to attain high-level elective offices.

5. Suggested Recommendations

In concluding the study, the following are presented for consideration by the concerned stakeholders, not least the Election Commission of Bhutan which might have to take up some suggested recommendations as early as in 2016 when the next Local Government Elections are scheduled to be held – enabling and empowering women through grass root participation will ultimately ensure the Bhutanese women's wholesome participation in all aspects of the Bhutanese democracy.

5.1. Bridging Gender Gap in Elective Offices

A substantial barrier to entering politics for many potential women candidates is the perception of a biased and competitive electoral atmosphere. Yet many of these perceptions are not consistent with the reality that women are just as likely as men to succeed in the electoral arena. Spreading the word about women's electoral success can work to change the potential candidates' perceptions of a biased electoral arena – perceptions that may be driven by exposure to a handful of very high profile, but unrepresentative, candidates.

Women view their involvement in political activities much more negatively than men do. For these matters, the registered political parties, the ECB, and the stakeholders such as NCWC, RENEW, NGOs, women's empowerment organizations and groups, etc. would be well-served to work with the female candidates to determine the best ways to minimize the personal trade-offs involved in seeking elective offices.

Training programmes and technical assistance cannot be underestimated in closing the gender gap. These resources can also go a long way in combating women's tendency to identify them as unqualified to participate in politics, despite equal or superior resumes and accomplishments when compared to men who opt to participate.

Gender differences in running for elected offices are well in place by the time women and men begin their professional careers. The present study reveals that the gender gap in potential candidates' political interest is just as glaring as in 2008.

The concerns about democratic legitimacy and political accountability necessitate that we continue to examine and work to restructure gender disparities in the elective offices. Indeed, many barriers to women's participation for elective offices can be overcome only with major cultural and political changes. But in the meantime, the results suggest that educating female candidates and disseminating information about the electoral environment and women's successes can help narrow the gender gap and increase women's numeric representation. Therefore, the challenges in front of us are to continue to raise awareness and education about the barriers women face, and to continue to advocate for a more inclusive electoral process, but without creating division of gender biasness by forwarding the interest of women at the cost of men. Therefore, the study recommends the strengthening of relevant institutions with full participation of women and men as equal partners, building a democratization process which is very vibrant and inclusive.

It is recommended that voter education and information dissemination on women's participation should be undertaken by the ECB, the registered political parties, and other relevant stakeholders to make aware of the importance of participation and electing more women, and also to enable them to carry out their electoral responsibilities in a conscious rather than passive manner, particularly for the voters who are illiterate and based in rural areas.

Education and awareness together with conducive environment are necessary to enable and enhance access to economic opportunities, participate in and be represented in government and gain political influence. Education and awareness have become potent driving forces of the development process which represent yet another dimension in which the knowledge gap and societal stereotypes can be minimized to cultivate and promote a society free of cultural biases and discrimination. Taking these into consideration, educating women is found as a key to political empowerment. Thus, it is not adequate to have gender neutral laws and policies on paper but they need to be translated to gender sensitive programmes and action plans. Gender mainstreaming is crucial to attain gender parity at all levels and in all fields of political involvements. The key to addressing gender issue has been identified as capacity building to ensure that the importance of equality and rights are realized, understood and exercised in a positive manner and in the right context.

5.2. Encouraging Selection of Women Candidates

The five registered political parties have a critical role in determining the political and electoral prospects for women aspiring to elective offices, since they control decisions as to who is nominated as candidates to stand in elections, as well as provide support for the nominated women candidates to

conduct election campaigns and other related and associated tasks. Further, the two political parties that are represented in Parliament can also determine the extent to which the issues and needs of the Bhutanese women become part of political debates and are considered in the works of the legislature.

As indicated in the study, women may be less likely than men to see themselves as potential candidates. As a result, if the political parties adopt gender-neutral practices in nominating candidates, the consequence would be a pool of candidates biased towards men. The role of political parties in promoting and supporting women to run for nominations has been repeatedly identified as the most important factor in increasing the representation of women in the elective offices.

When more women candidates are nominated to run for elective offices, more women are likely to be elected. One of the persistent arguments has been that there have not been many women candidates nominated to be supported in elections.

5.3. Enhancing Voter Education and Awareness Programmes

Voter education has been identified as a critical factor in enhancing women's participation in elections, particularly where women have not conventionally played an active role in the electoral process.

The findings from the study indicated that there is a general lack of realization and awareness on the importance of women's participation in the elective offices. Despite the existence of adequate policies and plans on the conduct of any voter education and awareness programmes, election campaigns and media coverage, the study recommends:

- i. Advocacy, education and awareness-raising at all levels, including political and administrative institutions and schools, on gender equality and equity, gender issues and concerns.
- ii. Voter education should include publicity encouraging people to vote, with campaigns targeted specifically at women as well as at men and women together.
- iii. The education programme should take into account the illiteracy rates of the voters and emphasis should be placed on the right of women to be elected.
- iv. Non-Governmental groups can often make a valuable contribution by helping to develop gender-sensitive voter education messages. This involves promoting a positive image of women as leaders and politicians in order to encourage women's participation in the political process and challenge the traditional view of a society dominated by male leaders.

- v. The Election Commission of Bhutan in collaboration with the NCWC and other relevant stakeholders should continue in disseminating the information and the ongoing civic education and awareness programme, extending even up to the community level and remote places, possibly mainstreaming on women voters.
- vi. Efforts to mainstream civic education in school curriculum should be made and pursued so that civic learning and democratic participation are ingrained and promoted through school education system. Immediate focus must be to review the adequacy and efficacy of current Civics and/or Civic Education Curriculum, and then work to revise the Civics and/or Civic Education Curriculum.

5.4. Implementing Gender Responsive Policies and Legislations

Although national policies and legislations are gender neutral, however, in practice women are often marginalized in elections as a result of gender biases, social norms, economic and political factors which must be appropriately addressed through formulation of gender responsive policies and programmes.

The study recommends to review current implementation related to domestic responsibilities to ensure the recognition of balanced work with family life, which should not be considered exclusively a woman's issue.

5.5. Negating Perceptions of Old-age Traditions

The presence of strong, age old cultural and traditional values, embedded in the fabric of Bhutanese society, has given rise to cultural biases at varying degree. They have created and sustained discriminatory practices and norms. A change in cultural attitude and perception is required for which the study recommends:

- i. Sensitize the general population on the existing cultural and traditional perceptions on gender roles and invisible discrimination through media, e.g. awareness building seminars and programmes on women role models.
- ii. Initiate awareness building seminars to change the existing cultural and traditional perceptions on gender roles and to encourage equal participation in politics both at the national and local levels.
- iii. Incorporation of responsible and societal value based educational programmes in the curriculums in schools, NFE centers and vocational institutes to promote growth of democratically responsible female leaders.

5.6. Supporting Women in Elective Offices

There is a need to encourage and increase the participation by women in all levels of elected posts. Without their active participation, issues, concerns and the priorities of the entire population cannot be addressed. The following recommendations are proposed to strengthen and cultivate women's political participation:

- i. Policy makers and stakeholders should reduce the existing visible gender gaps in order to have more women taking part in the elections and thereby enable more women's representatives in the decision making bodies.
- ii. Implement additional support measures in education and training by designing special programmes and promoting leadership skills for women.
- iii. Promote and encourage women to take up leadership positions such as *Gups*, *Mangmis* and *Tshogpas*, and also promote active participation in *Zomdus*.
- iv. Initiate discussion forums for women to share information and knowledge.
- v. Sensitize the general population on existing cultural and traditional perceptions on gender roles and invisible discrimination through media (e.g. programmes on women role models) and awareness building seminars.
- vi. Develop support mechanisms to encourage and increase participation of women in decision making positions through leadership programmes to enhance and encourage women to take up elected positions.
- vii. Carry out an in-depth study on the existing gender gaps and low participation of women at decision making positions after the conduct of every local and parliamentary election in the country.
- viii. Promote establishment of social and professional associations for networking and to provide forum for exchange of experiences and skills.

6. Key Considerations and Recommendations for Enhanced Bhutanese Women's Political and Electoral Participation

The following are some key considerations and recommendations that will have to be addressed and taken up to allow for more women to come forward to actively engage in politics and elections by the stakeholders (comprising of

the Government, the registered political parties, the media, the civil society organizations, the Election Commission of Bhutan and the voters of Bhutan):

- i. There is an acute need for all stakeholders of the Bhutanese electoral and political processes to acknowledge the issues of women's participation in elective offices and to take appropriate measures to address them.
- ii. Factors of social, economic and cultural natures need to be tackled through multi-sectoral approach, involving more than the stakeholders in electoral and political processes, to minimize their supposed negative impacts on the Bhutanese women's social, economic, cultural and political statuses.
- iii. Socio-cultural belief systems and traditions that supposedly undermine the Bhutanese women's social and cultural statuses need to be tackled through concerted education and information dissemination efforts.
- iv. Efforts must be made to inform, educate and sensitize voters through civic and voter education to encourage and support women's participation in politics and elections, including dissipating the notion and image that politics is dirty and to be engaged in by men only.
- v. There needs to be systemic changes to educate, and change the mindset of the Bhutanese people through the education system to encourage and foster greater acceptance of women's equal social, economic and political statuses.
- vi. Socio-economic situations and conditions need to be tackled through integration of their issues and needs in development plans and programmes through the grass-root to the national levels.
- vii. Political indifferences and inequalities will and can only be addressed having taken care of social, economic and cultural factors that undermine the Bhutanese women's position in the Bhutanese society.
- viii. Major mindset changes should be brought about to view and to acknowledge the Bhutanese women's equal political rights as being important, including changing the negative portrayal of women's roles and statuses in conventional and popular media.
- ix. Civic and voter education and information dissemination will have to be undertaken on a continuous basis, with specifics and through targeted approach, to ensure that not only the Bhutanese women are well informed but also the Bhutanese men are also sensitized to

support the Bhutanese women's political and electoral aspirations and participation.

- x. All Bhutanese women who have political and electoral aspirations should be supported through incentives (including livelihood options) for which there needs to be appropriate and adequate institutional and systems arrangements, including financial and economic incentives, to support women's active participation in elections as candidates.
- xi. The interested women candidates should be encouraged to stand as candidates in elections through guidance, mentoring, and trainings for competency and skills development to enable them to contest in elections on equal terms as the men candidates.
- xii. In order to do so, the relevant institutions and authorities will need to be more sensitive to the issues of the Bhutanese women's political and electoral participation.
- xiii. The ECB and the relevant stakeholders will need to be more than adequately strengthened and developed to support and undertake activities to enhance the Bhutanese women's political and electoral participation in proactive manner rather than take a quick-fix approach.
- xiv. Aspects of electoral processes like the conduct of Functional Literacy and Possession of Skill Test for Local Government Elections will have to be made more accessible by having the Test Centers located closer to women, preferably in the *Gewog* centers.
- xv. Quota or any form of reserved representation should not be viewed as the ultimate solution to achieve enhanced political participation and representation. It will be better to directly deal with core issues relating to social, cultural and economic factors that ultimately affront the Bhutanese women's political participation and status.

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF CHARACTERISTIC BACKGROUND

A1. 20 Dzongkhags

Dzongkhag	Number	Percent (%)
Bumthang	8,540	2.2
Chhukha	21,317	5.6
Dagana	20,728	5.4
Gasa	1,842	0.5
Haa	6,895	1.8
Lhuentse	14,389	3.8
Monggar	30,392	8
Paro	16,393	4.3
Pema Gatshel	23,048	6
Punakha	14,716	3.9
Samdrup Jongkhar	21,896	5.7
Samtse	41,769	10.9
Sarpang	26,022	6.8
Thimphu	12,453	3.3
Trashigang	41,510	10.9
Trashi Yangtse	16,304	4.3
Trongsa	8,829	2.3
Tsirang	20,863	5.5
Wangdue Phodrang	17,751	4.6
Zhemgang	16,133	4.2
Total	381,790	100

B1. Sex

Sex	Number	Percent (%)
Male	203,074	53.2
Female	178,716	46.8
Total	381,790	100

B2. Age Group

Age Group	Number	Percent (%)
18-24	49,951	13.1
25-34	84,919	22.2
35-44	78,036	20.4
45-54	71,403	18.7
55-64	56,994	14.9
65-74	31,267	8.2
75 and above	9,219	2.4
Total	381,790	100

B3. Marital Status

Marital Status	Number	Percent (%)
Single	50,739	13.3
Married	314,096	82.3
Separated/Divorced	8,812	2.3
Living Together	716	0.2
Widowed	7,427	1.9
Total	381,790	100

B4. How many Children do you have?

No. of Children	Number	Percent (%)
1-2 Children	96,998	25.4
3-4 Children	129,494	33.9
5 or More	92,057	24.1
None	63,240	16.6
Total	381,790	100

B5. How long have you lived here?

Years	Number	Percent (%)
01-09 Years	26,034	6.8
10-19 Years	48,022	12.6
20-29 Years	85,805	22.5
30-39 Years	68,973	18.1
40-49 Years	59,493	15.6
50-59 Years	49,085	12.9
60-69 Years	31,598	8.3
70 and above	12,780	3.3
Total	381,790	100

B6. Number of family members

Family Members	Number	Percent (%)
2-9 Members	224,599	58.8
10-19 Members	144,986	38
20-29 Members	11,104	2.9
30 and above	1,101	0.3
Total	381,790	100

B7. Highest level of education completed

Education Level	Number	Percent (%)
No Education	202,553	53.1
NFE	37,007	9.7
Primary Education	49,685	13
Lower Secondary	17,546	4.6
Middle Secondary	23,288	6.1
Higher Secondary	26,060	6.8
University	11,954	3.1
Monastic Education	13,698	3.6
Total	381,790	100

B8. What is your current occupation?

Current Occupation	Number	Percent (%)
Civil Servant	13,505	3.5
Armed Force	3,519	0.9
Corporate Employee	2,147	0.6
Private Sector	9,183	2.4
Self Employed	18,918	5
Local Elected Leader	16,021	4.2
Trainee/Student	18,172	4.8
Farmer	285,367	74.7
Others	14,958	3.9
Total	381,790	100

B9. What was your previous occupation?

Previous Occupation	Number	Percent (%)
Civil Servant	15,698	4.1
Armed Force	17,435	4.6
Corporate Employee	3,285	0.9
Private Sector	6,693	1.8
Self Employed	13,505	3.5
Local Elected Leader	5,135	1.3
Trainee/Student	35,829	9.4
Farmer	265,651	69.6
Others	18,560	4.9
Total	381,790	100

B10. Monthly approximate income (in Nu.)

Approx. Income (Nu.)	Number	Percent (%)
< 3,000	166,965	44.2
3,000-4,999	59,467	15.7
5,000-9,999	85,737	22.7
10,000-14,999	30,883	8.2
15,000-19999	13,729	3.6
20,000-24,999	10,348	2.7
25,000-29,999	3,951	1
>30,000	6,551	1.7
Total	377,631	100

B11. Main source of income

Income Source	Number	Percent (%)
Salary	46,604	12.4
Business	38,273	10.2
Dividend/Interest	710	0.2
Rental of Properties	6,912	1.8
Cash Crops	226,585	60.1
Others	57,687	15.3
Total	376,771	100

B12. How do you consider your economic status as compared to your neighbour?

Economic Status	Number	Percent (%)
More Comfortable	56,656	14.8
Equal	263,135	68.9
Less Comfortable	62,000	16.2
Total	381,790	100

B13. What is your religion?

Religion	Number	Percent (%)
Buddhism	306658	80.3
Hinduism	72961	19.1
Christianity	2171	0.6
Total	381790	100

Section C: Determination of Voter's Choice

C1. Which of the following do you think provides voters with most information and is the most effective source of information?

Information Source	Number	Percent (%)
Election Advertising Board	13,519	3.5
Voter Education Awareness	107,845	28.2
Political Party/Candidate	23,628	6.2
Campaign/Common Forum	75,407	19.8
Media Coverage	123,998	32.5
Friends And Relatives	32,864	8.6
Civil Servants	4,528	1.2
Total	381,790	100

C2. Did you personally attend any of the following election campaign of the political parties and the candidates?

Election Campaign	Number	Percent (%)
Common Forum	223,828	59.6
TV Public Debate	67,471	18
Campaign Rallies	15,869	4.2
Door-To-Door Campaign	44,246	11.8
Social Media Campaign	23,842	6.4
Total	375,256	100

C3. In your opinion, which of the following means of election campaigns was found effective?

Election Campaign	Number	Percent (%)
Common Forum	186,892	49
TV Public Debate	57,670	15.1
Campaign Rallies	16,261	4.3
Door-To-Door Campaign	43,501	11.4
TV/Radio/Mobile/Social Media	67,257	17.6
Poster/Banner/Leaflets	10,209	2.7
Total	381,790	100

C4. Have you ever run as a candidate in an election?

Response	Number	Percent (%)
Yes	44,584	11.7
No	337,206	88.3
Total	381,790	100

C10. What was the most important factor in your choice of a political party?

Factor	Number	Percent (%)
Manifesto	104,150	27.3
Party Leadership	125,400	32.8
Candidates	141,737	37.1
Sentimental Affinity	10,503	2.8
Total	381,790	100

C11. What was the most important factor in your choice of candidate?

Factor	Number	Percent (%)
Personality	51,978	13.6
Better Representation	238,141	62.4
Better Condition For Constituency	89,067	23.3
Gender/Religion	2,605	0.7
Total	381,790	100

C12. To what degree do you have control over decisions regarding your choice for whom to cast your vote during an election?

	Number	Percent (%)
Very High Degree	223,194	58.5
High Degree	132,421	34.7
Small Degree	17,574	4.6
Not At All	8,601	2.3
Total	381,790	100

C13. How did you decide for whom to vote?

	Number	Percent (%)
Leadership/Qualification/Co mpetency and Experience	240,458	63
Promise Made To The Public	52,971	13.9
Common Forum	16,714	4.4
Candidate/Party Manifesto	50,373	13.2
Promise Made During Door-To-Door Campaign	5,939	1.6
Family Member/Relatives Who Are In Service	9,902	2.6
Discussed With Friend	5,433	1.4
Total	381,790	100

Section D: Women's Participation in Elective Offices in Bhutan

D1. Who do you believe is a better leader?

	Number	Percent (%)
Male	117,587	30.8
Female	22,422	5.9
Both	225,806	59.1
Don't Know	15,975	4.2
Total	381,790	100

D2. Who do you consider to be more capable?

	Number	Percent (%)
Male	136,537	35.8
Female	18,245	4.8
Both	212,783	55.7
Don't Know	14,225	3.7
Total	381,790	100

D3. Do you believe or not that a woman is behind a man by nine lives (*Ke-Rab Gu*)?

	Number	Percent (%)
Yes	184,527	48.3
No	142,365	37.3
Don't Know	54,897	14.4
Total	381,790	100

D4. Have you ever experienced or witnessed women being inferior to men in:

	Number	Percent (%)
Decision Making	77,244	20.2
Dealing With Govt Officials	34,881	9.1
Representing The Public	40,426	10.6
Taking Part In Election	40,485	10.6
Business	14,315	3.7
Field Works/Labour Force Participation	174,439	45.7
Total	381,790	100

D5. In general, who is the more dominant member in your family in terms of decision-making related to elections?

	Number	Percent (%)
Mother	28,129	7.4
Father	83,426	21.9
Brother	4,029	1.1
Sister	4,674	1.2
Husband	17,298	4.5
Self	219,578	57.5
Others	24,656	6.5
Total	381,790	100

D6. Are women involved in the activities related to elections such as awareness and campaign in your community?

	Number	Percent (%)
Involved All The Time	117,816	30.9
Involved In Important Issues	53,853	14.1
Less Involved	141,762	37.1
Not Involved At All	68,359	17.9
Total	381,790	100

D7. If involved, how are they involved?

	Number	Percent (%)
Participated As Observer	67,813	39.4
Participating But Not Substantially	55,460	32.2
Participating And Makes A Difference And Influence	48,762	28.3
Total	172,035	100

D8. If less involved, this is because of:

	Number	Percent (%)
Socio-Cultural Discrimination	20,662	14.6
Long Distance To Walk	16,079	11.3
Family Responsibilities	63,886	45.1
Less Competence/Men Are More Experience	41,134	29
Total	141,762	100

D9. How much influence do you feel, women have in community level decision-making processes?

	Number	Percent (%)
High	52,418	13.7
Medium	195,698	51.3
Low	109,571	28.7
No Influence	24,103	6.3
Total	381,790	100

D10. Who do you think it is important to have in high decision-making level positions?

	Number	Percent (%)
Male	148,803	39
Female	25,004	6.5
Either	185,623	48.6
Don't Know	22,361	5.9
Total	381,790	100

D11. Who would you like to represent you in an elected office?

	Number	Percent (%)
Male	103,431	27.1
Female	27,283	7.1
Both	229,611	60.1
Don't Know	21,465	5.6
Total	381,790	100

D12. Which of the following positions do you think are suitable and applicable for women in Bhutanese society?

Positions	Number	Percent (%)
Head Of Govt./Ministerial Position	74,013	19.4
Parliamentarian	24,262	6.4
Secretary/Director	16,067	4.2
Doctor Of Hospital/Engineer	78,012	20.4
Head Of School	19,602	5.1
Local Elected Leader	10,351	2.7
Teacher	122,451	32.1
Housewife/Child bearer	37,031	9.7
Total	381,790	100

D13. How you would like to be involved in the political process in future?

	Number	Percent (%)
As a Voter	299,668	78.5
Party Member	20,632	5.4
Candidate	29,022	7.6
Not Sure	32,468	8.5
Total	381,790	100

D14. Would you be interested to stand as a candidate in future elections?

	Number	Percent (%)
Interested Highly	44,987	11.8
Some Extent	68,741	18
Not Interested At All	268,062	70.2
Total	381,790	100

D15. Are you working or doing anything to participate as a candidate in future elections?

	Number	Percent (%)
Thought/Prepared	20,139	5.3
Thought But Not Prepared	73,422	19.2
Didn't Think/Not Prepared	288,229	75.5
Total	381,790	100

D16. Why are you not interested to participate in elections as candidate?

	Number	Percent (%)
Look After Household Work/Children	21,641	6.2
Can't Meet Educational Qualification	173,069	50
Lack of Party Support/Awareness	21,715	6.3
Lack of Family Encouragement And Support	6,293	1.8
Not Interested	123,562	35.7
Total	346,280	100

D17. In your opinion, do you think there will be more female candidates to participate in future elections?

	Number	Percent (%)
Yes	206,994	54.2
Some Extent	121,980	31.9
Don't Know	52,816	13.8
Total	381,790	100

D18. Should there be more elected women representatives (MPs) in Parliament?

	Number	Percent (%)
Yes	271,872	71.2
No	36,801	9.6
Don't Know	73,117	19.2
Total	381,790	100

D19. As a voter, how likely is it that you will vote for a female candidate in future elections?

	Number	Percent (%)
Not Going To Vote	42,774	11.2
Will Vote	166,222	43.5
Sex Doesn't Matter	137,125	35.9
Not Sure	35,669	9.3
Total	381,790	100

D20. On what qualities would you base your decision to vote for a woman candidate?

	Number	Percent (%)
Education And Experience	213,708	56
Family Background	6,956	1.8
Social And Economic Status	8,726	2.3
Leadership/Personality	103,891	27.2
Honesty And Integrity	47,932	12.6
Religion Background	576	0.2
Total	381,790	100

D21. In your opinion, which of the following considerations do you think is important?

	Number	Percent (%)
Woman Considered Less Capable Than Man	103,365	27.1
Lack of Confidence And Trust In Woman	129,641	34
Man And Women Have Different Roles	62,268	16.3
Not Vital In Management And Governance As Men	29,814	7.8
Women Do Not Have Experience And Education	56,701	14.9
Total	381,790	100

D22. Do you think there are any obstacles to women participating as candidate in elections?

	Number	Percent (%)
Yes	182,592	47.8
No	144,166	37.8
Don't Know	55,032	14.4
Total	381,790	100

D23. What do you think are the obstacles to women’s participating as candidate in elections in Bhutan?

	Number	Percent (%)
Prevailing Cultural Attitude Regarding The Roles of Women	18,770	10.3
Domestic Responsibilities	65,941	36
Lack of Educational Qualification And Experience In Representative Function	28,163	15.4
Environment of Political Institution Is Not Gender Friendly	6,348	3.5
Self Confidence And Also Fear of Incompetence In Decision Making	34,071	18.6
Socio-Economic Barriers	4,513	2.5
Attitude of Women Leadership	7,171	3.9
Lack of Family Encouragement	7,486	4.1
Fear of Conflict With Family Members	2,889	1.6
Fear of Violence/Political Seen As Dirty or Corrupt	2,681	1.5
Electoral System And Nomination	86	0
Lack of Support From Male Participants	4,045	2.2
Religion	807	0.4
Total	182,971	100

D24. Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion about men and women as political leaders?

	Number	Percent (%)
Men Better As Political Leaders Than Women	96,533	25.3
Women Better As Political Leader Than Men	13,091	3.4
Equally Good Political Leader	192,611	50.4
Vote For Woman If She Is Capable	76,518	20
Can't Trust Women's Capabilities	3,037	0.8
Total	381,790	100

D25. Do you think social issues are important?

	Number	Percent (%)
Yes	289,013	75.7
No	41,995	11
Don't Know	50,782	13.3
Total	381,790	100

D26. In your opinion, who do you think is more aware and recognizes the importance of social issues?

	Number	Percent (%)
Male	107,966	28.3
Female	34,742	9.1
Both	239,081	62.6
Total	381,790	100

Section E: Overall Views on Electoral Process

E1. Do you think men and women have equal rights under the laws in Bhutan?

	Number	Percent (%)
Yes	321,124	84.1
No	33,093	8.7
Don't Know	27,573	7.2
Total	381,790	100

E2. Do nomination and other electoral processes pose difficulties for women candidates?

	Number	Percent (%)
Yes	61,981	16.2
No	204,706	53.6
Don't Know	115,102	30.1
Total	381,790	100

E4. In general, how satisfied are you with process of getting the various documents and clearances for your nomination?

	Number	Percent (%)
Very Satisfied	63,851	16.7
Satisfied	167,517	43.9
Neutral	119,408	31.3
Dissatisfied	22,287	5.8
Very Dissatisfied	8,727	2.3
Total	381,790	100

E5. Did you personally attend any of the voter information and education programmes conducted by the Election Commission and the Dzongkhag Election Office?

	Number	Percent (%)
Yes	280,494	73.5
No	101,296	26.5
Total	381,790	100

E6. How do you think of the conduct of voter education and information dissemination so far?

	Number	Percent (%)
Adequate	165,690	59.1
Inadequate	18,923	6.7
Awareness Program Needed	95,881	34.2
Total	280,494	100

E7. Do you think civic and voter education on continued basis will be effective in preparing voters to participate meaningfully in elections?

	Number	Percent (%)
Yes	330,284	86.5
No	14,844	3.9
Don't Know	36,662	9.6
Total	381,790	100

E8. Do you think civic and voter education encompasses disseminating knowledge on the need of gender equality in elected offices – reasonable representation of women in such offices?

	Number	Percent (%)
Yes	268,970	70.4
No	35,446	9.3
Don't Know	77,374	20.3
Total	381,790	100

E9. What is your experience of the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM)?

	Number	Percent (%)
Very User-Friendly	331,511	86.8
Not User-Friendly	11,696	3.1
Neutral	30,079	7.9
Nervous To Use	8,503	2.2
Total	381,790	100

E10. Did you see/hear of voter information and education programs on media?

	Number	Percent (%)
Yes	324,128	84.9
No	37,454	9.8
Don't Know	20,209	5.3
Total	381,790	100

E11. In your opinion, which mass-media is accessible on the voter education and information dissemination coverage?

	Number	Percent (%)
Newspaper	19,147	5.9
Social Media	18,188	5.6
Radio	105,946	32.7
Mobile	1,659	0.5
Television	155,524	48
Election Advisory/Advertising Board	23,663	7.3
Total	324,128	100

E12. Do you think the media is fair and neutral in its dissemination of information, reporting and coverage of the election?

	Number	Percent (%)
Yes	281,688	73.8
No	24,593	6.4
Don't Know	75,509	19.8
Total	381,790	100

E13. Do you think that male and female candidates have equal access to media election campaigns?

	Number	Percent (%)
Yes	296,511	77.7
No	17,796	4.7
Don't Know	67,483	17.7
Total	381,790	100

E14. Do you think there is a need for reform/change in the current practices or for new reforms to enhance women’s representation in elected offices?

	Number	Percent (%)
Yes	175,094	45.9
No	119,205	31.2
Don't Know	87,491	22.9
Total	381,790	100

E15. If yes, from the following, in your opinion which one would be the most appropriate?

	Number	Percent (%)
Educating Women	88,911	50.8
Electoral Process And Requirement More Simple	21,597	12.3
Introduction Of Quota System For Women	41,620	23.8
Reserved Seats For Women In Parliament	22,967	13.1
Total	175,094	100

F1. Opinions on the Determinants of Voter's Choice

Common forums and public debates are very advantageous to the political party, candidates and voters	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	176,933	46.3
Agree	171,848	45
Neutral	26,238	6.9
Disagree	5,221	1.4
Strongly Disagree	1,551	0.4
Total	381,790	100

Civic and voter education played a critical role for awareness of political party and candidates	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	138,851	36.4
Agree	209,485	54.9
Neutral	28,164	7.4
Disagree	4,727	1.2
Strongly Disagree	562	0.1
Total	381,790	100

Media played a fair role in dissemination of adequate information about parties, policies, candidates and the election process helping to make informed choices	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	117,642	30.8
Agree	199,144	52.2
Neutral	56,686	14.8
Disagree	6,974	1.8
Strongly Disagree	1,344	0.4
Total	381,790	100

The engagement by political parties and candidates during election campaign and non-election period is an important medium	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	67,350	17.6
Agree	171,227	44.8
Neutral	99,372	26
Disagree	31,641	8.3
Strongly Disagree	12,200	3.2
Total	381,790	100

The elected candidate had always been a strong and positive leader in the country/community	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	77,609	20.3
Agree	151,991	39.8
Neutral	94,174	24.7
Disagree	49,424	12.9
Strongly Disagree	8,592	2.3
Total	381,790	100

I thought about the candidate's past work on development issues	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	77,932	20.4
Agree	190,933	50
Neutral	79,766	20.9
Disagree	26,235	6.9
Strongly Disagree	6,924	1.8
Total	381,790	100

I tried to assess whether or not the candidate would be accessible to me and my family	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	43,356	11.4
Agree	118,426	31
Neutral	98,921	25.9
Disagree	98,391	25.8
Strongly Disagree	22,696	5.9
Total	381,790	100

I considered the history of the candidate on corrupt or illegal activities	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	97,994	25.7
Agree	130,929	34.3
Neutral	73,269	19.2
Disagree	61,196	16
Strongly Disagree	18,402	4.8
Total	381,790	100

I decided based on the realistic/practicality of candidate and party manifestos	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	90,433	23.7
Agree	207,991	54.5
Neutral	61,164	16
Disagree	17,775	4.7
Strongly Disagree	4,426	1.2
Total	381,790	100

I decided to vote based on the qualification, competency, experience and leadership	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	192,306	50.4
Agree	157,936	41.4
Neutral	22,392	5.9
Disagree	7,520	2
Strongly Disagree	1,635	0.4
Total	381,790	100

Door-to-door campaign provided ample opportunity to meet candidate and know about his/ her commitments/promises made	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	72,312	18.9
Agree	167,765	43.9
Neutral	71,172	18.6
Disagree	53,979	14.1
Strongly Disagree	16,561	4.3
Total	381,790	100

I discussed my vote with my family members/ relative in the public service	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	39,582	10.4
Agree	85,914	22.5
Neutral	36,023	9.4
Disagree	152,841	40
Strongly Disagree	67,430	17.7
Total	381,790	100

I discussed my vote with my friends and followed their advice	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	15,176	4
Agree	36,287	9.5
Neutral	31,789	8.3
Disagree	188,228	49.3
Strongly Disagree	110,311	28.9
Total	381,790	100

My family had always voted for that party/ candidate because of his/her family history and standing in the locality	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	21,728	5.7
Agree	55,181	14.5
Neutral	53,924	14.1
Disagree	182,672	47.8
Strongly Disagree	68,285	17.9
Total	381,790	100

F2. Opinions on Women’s Participation in Elective Offices

Male candidates are preferred over female candidates	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	72,960	19.1
Agree	110,993	29.1
Neutral	77,724	20.4
Disagree	95,504	25
Strongly Disagree	24,609	6.4
Total	381,790	100

I am not ready to elect women as fewer women are literate than men in the country	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	19,145	5
Agree	75,382	19.7
Neutral	73,659	19.3
Disagree	173,971	45.6
Strongly Disagree	39,633	10.4
Total	381,790	100

There has not been a real effort to attract a wider spectrum of women into politics	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	29,557	7.7
Agree	125,932	33
Neutral	118,610	31.1
Disagree	95,145	24.9
Strongly Disagree	12,546	3.3
Total	381,790	100

Many women lack qualification and relevant skills necessary to perform well in politics	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	37,065	9.7
Agree	124,816	32.7
Neutral	55,476	14.5
Disagree	138,225	36.2
Strongly Disagree	26,208	6.9
Total	381,790	100

A woman would not be able to handle national issues such as law and order, combat corruption, improve the economic situation of the country, etc.	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	24,505	6.4
Agree	79,114	20.7
Neutral	50,776	13.3
Disagree	187,094	49
Strongly Disagree	40,300	10.6
Total	381,790	100

Women are less likely to bring anything new to politics/ decision making process as compared to men	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	24,345	6.4
Agree	89,380	23.4
Neutral	59,658	15.6
Disagree	173,619	45.5
Strongly Disagree	34,788	9.1
Total	381,790	100

Politics is a masculine activity and involves violence	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	17,766	4.7
Agree	66,284	17.4
Neutral	67,283	17.6
Disagree	159,321	41.7
Strongly Disagree	71,136	18.6
Total	381,790	100

Fewer role-models for women in high positions to inspire	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	83,280	21.8
Agree	191,026	50
Neutral	50,958	13.3
Disagree	49,688	13
Strongly Disagree	6,837	1.8
Total	381,790	100

The need to possess a formal university has restricted many women's candidates from elections	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	27,941	7.3
Agree	102,863	26.9
Neutral	88,234	23.1
Disagree	134,052	35.1
Strongly Disagree	28,699	7.5
Total	381,790	100

Women lack support from political party	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	27,003	7.1
Agree	82,911	21.7
Neutral	81,430	21.3
Disagree	160,349	42
Strongly Disagree	30,098	7.9
Total	381,790	100

Women's participation in local politics is affected by the salary and incentives they get	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	20,299	5.3
Agree	52,162	13.7
Neutral	64,147	16.8
Disagree	191,818	50.2
Strongly Disagree	53,364	14
Total	381,790	100

Women in power would not be able to obtain international aid for the country	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	16,576	4.3
Agree	58,368	15.3
Neutral	65,500	17.2
Disagree	181,465	47.5
Strongly Disagree	59,881	15.7
Total	381,790	100

A woman would not have sufficient time to deal with legislative issues because of family responsibilities	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	26,006	6.8
Agree	115,029	30.1
Neutral	56,448	14.8
Disagree	142,888	37.4
Strongly Disagree	41,419	10.8
Total	381,790	100

The prevailing traditional beliefs discourage voting for women	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	33,744	8.8
Agree	90,883	23.8
Neutral	77,931	20.4
Disagree	142,362	37.3
Strongly Disagree	36,870	9.7
Total	381,790	100

F3. Civic Education and Training

Civic and voter education should be provided on continuous basis	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	172,148	45.1
Agree	174,290	45.7
Neutral	22,997	6
Disagree	10,607	2.8
Strongly Disagree	1,749	0.5
Total	381,790	100

Civic and voter education and training and information dissemination should be taken to most of the rural communities and voters	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	190,175	49.8
Agree	163,408	42.8
Neutral	20,778	5.4
Disagree	5,712	1.5
Strongly Disagree	1,717	0.4
Total	381,790	100

Gender sensitization programme and more awareness campaign should be conducted for women voters	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	102,577	26.9
Agree	189,319	49.6
Neutral	57,086	15
Disagree	28,322	7.4
Strongly Disagree	4,487	1.2
Total	381,790	100

There should be adequate information on women candidates' qualifications and platforms, and disseminated further in advance of elections so voters can make informed choices	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	81,500	21.3
Agree	214,610	56.2
Neutral	63,285	16.6
Disagree	18,069	4.7
Strongly Disagree	4,326	1.1
Total	381,790	100

Political leadership trainings to be arranged for interested women to encourage joining politics	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	117,612	30.8
Agree	197,364	51.7
Neutral	40,329	10.6
Disagree	22,971	6
Strongly Disagree	3,513	0.9
Total	381,790	100

Increase awareness of the roles and responsibilities of women as elected members	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	93,079	24.4
Agree	218,875	57.3
Neutral	43,077	11.3
Disagree	23,817	6.2
Strongly Disagree	2,942	0.8
Total	381,790	100

F4. Opinions on Existing Rules and Regulations

Common Forums played critical role in enabling more voters to understand about political parties and candidates	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	158,145	41.4
Agree	197,956	51.8
Neutral	22,806	6
Disagree	2,399	0.6
Strongly Disagree	484	0.1
Total	381,790	100

Need specific laws or policies for political and economic empowerment of women	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	47,770	12.5
Agree	152,801	40
Neutral	77,673	20.3
Disagree	84,633	22.2
Strongly Disagree	18,912	5
Total	381,790	100

Need testing centres in every <i>Gewog</i> to take Functional Literacy Test	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	146,186	38.3
Agree	163,992	43
Neutral	46,960	12.3
Disagree	19,851	5.2
Strongly Disagree	4,801	1.3
Total	381,790	100

Obtaining various documents and clearances for nomination process is not easy for a woman	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	18,187	4.8
Agree	63,337	16.6
Neutral	115,235	30.2
Disagree	151,735	39.7
Strongly Disagree	33,296	8.7
Total	381,790	100

Obtaining various documents and clearances for nomination process is not easy for a man	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	17,219	4.5
Agree	49,175	12.9
Neutral	112,091	29.4
Disagree	165,758	43.4
Strongly Disagree	37,546	9.8
Total	381,790	100

Party <i>Godenpas</i> and <i>Leyjapas</i> are the cause of communal discord during elections	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	99,746	26.1
Agree	120,870	31.7
Neutral	80,295	21
Disagree	67,240	17.6
Strongly Disagree	13,639	3.6
Total	381,790	100

Political parties and candidates should be restricted from making unrealistic electoral promises	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	172,913	45.3
Agree	130,891	34.3
Neutral	47,826	12.5
Disagree	21,126	5.5
Strongly Disagree	9,034	2.4
Total	381,790	100

Door-to-door campaign provided ample opportunities for the candidates or party workers to move freely	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	58,874	15.4
Agree	193,043	50.6
Neutral	69,749	18.3
Disagree	47,317	12.4
Strongly Disagree	12,807	3.4
Total	381,790	100

Quota system is necessary to improve representation of women in Parliament	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	56,005	14.7
Agree	121,926	31.9
Neutral	109,527	28.7
Disagree	73,814	19.3
Strongly Disagree	20,518	5.4
Total	381,790	100

F5. Opinions on What Makes a Good Political Leader

Inclusive decision makers	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	183,064	47.9
Agree	166,614	43.6
Neutral	20,026	5.2
Disagree	10,581	2.8
Strongly Disagree	1,505	0.4
Total	381,790	100

Approachable and involved in community activities	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	182,407	47.8
Agree	177,109	46.4
Neutral	16,257	4.3
Disagree	4,576	1.2
Strongly Disagree	1,441	0.4
Total	381,790	100

Good communicator/ listener	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	188,322	49.3
Agree	171,133	44.8
Neutral	17,776	4.7
Disagree	3,118	0.8
Strongly Disagree	1,441	0.4
Total	381,790	100

Honest/ truthful and committed	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	224,768	58.9
Agree	141,339	37
Neutral	10,050	2.6
Disagree	4,258	1.1
Strongly Disagree	1,374	0.4
Total	381,790	100

More action than words	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	206,047	54
Agree	127,946	33.5
Neutral	27,479	7.2
Disagree	16,414	4.3
Strongly Disagree	3,904	1
Total	381,790	100

Strong focus on education/ health and family	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	156,169	40.9
Agree	169,107	44.3
Neutral	40,757	10.7
Disagree	13,111	3.4
Strongly Disagree	2,646	0.7
Total	381,790	100

Well educated/ wise/ good manager/ experience	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	222,858	58.4
Agree	141,176	37
Neutral	14,459	3.8
Disagree	2,433	0.6
Strongly Disagree	864	0.2
Total	381,790	100

Considerate/ concerned/ care for people and resources	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	184,637	48.4
Agree	166,681	43.7
Neutral	23,125	6.1
Disagree	6,217	1.6
Strongly Disagree	1,131	0.3
Total	381,790	100

Family with good reputation	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	59,093	15.5
Agree	94,099	24.6
Neutral	68,664	18
Disagree	109,771	28.8
Strongly Disagree	50,163	13.1
Total	381,790	100

Understand/ respect and preserve culture and traditional values	Number	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	189,737	49.7
Agree	164,460	43.1
Neutral	18,615	4.9
Disagree	5,661	1.5
Strongly Disagree	3,317	0.9
Total	381,790	100

SEX DISAGGREGATED DATA TABLES

Section A: Distribution of Voters

Place of Residence	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Urban	45.9%	54.1%	100%
Rural	53.4%	46.6%	100%
X² = 261.764*		Sig = 0.001	

Section B: Demographic and Economic

Age Group	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
18-24	53.2%	46.8%	100%
25-34	50.3%	49.7%	100%
35-44	51.2%	48.8%	100%
45-54	54.0%	46.0%	100%
55-64	54.6%	45.4%	100%
65-74	58.8%	41.2%	100%
75 and above	62.0%	38.0%	100%

Marital Status	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Single	57.2%	42.8%	100%
Married	53.5%	46.5%	100%
Separated/divorced	43.5%	56.5%	100%
Living together	54.1%	45.9%	100%
Widowed	22.8%	77.2%	100%

Highest level of education completed	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
No Education	46.3%	53.7%	100%
NFE	38.4%	61.6%	100%
Primary Education	69.4%	30.6%	100%
Lower Secondary	55.7%	44.3%	100%
Middle Secondary	64.6%	35.4%	100%
Higher Secondary	55.8%	44.2%	100%
University	66.5%	33.5%	100%
Monastic Education	96.6%	3.4%	100%
$X^2 = 24843.678^*$		$p = 0.000$	

Previous Occupation?	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Civil Servant	67.2%	32.8%	100%
Armed force	96.9%	3.1%	100%
Corporate employee	80.4%	19.6%	100%
Private sector	82.0%	18.0%	100%
Self employed	55.2%	44.8%	100%
Local elected leader	89.7%	10.3%	100%
Trainee/student	54.7%	45.3%	100%
Farmer	47.3%	52.7%	100%
Others	54.9%	45.1%	100%

Monthly Approx. Income (in Nu.):	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
< 3000	45.9%	54.1%	100%
3000-4999	53.6%	46.4%	100%
5000-9999	62.2%	37.8%	100%
10000-14999	59.8%	40.2%	100%
15000-19999	63.3%	36.7%	100%
20000-24999	58.8%	41.2%	100%
25000-29999	36.5%	63.5%	100%
>30000	62.6%	37.4%	100%

Main source of income:	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Salary	75.2%	24.8%	100%
Business	45.5%	54.5%	100%
Dividend/interest	71.1%	28.9%	100%
Dental of properties	41.3%	58.7%	100%
Cash crops	50.1%	49.9%	100%
Others	53.5%	46.5%	100%

How do you consider your economic status as compared to your neighbour?	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
More comfortable	62.6%	37.4%	100%
Equal	50.8%	49.2%	100%
Less comfortable	54.7%	45.3%	100%

What is your religion?	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Buddhism	51.0%	49.0%	100%
Hinduism	62.0%	38.0%	100%
Christianity	62.5%	37.5%	100%

Section C: Determinants of Voter's Choice

C1. Which of the following do you think provides voters with most information and is the most effective source of information?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Election Advertising Board	67.6%	32.4%	100%
Voter Education Awareness	54.6%	45.4%	100%
Political Party/Candidate	59.9%	40.1%	100%
Campaign/Common Forums	47.1%	52.9%	100%
Media Coverage	52.1%	47.9%	100%
Friends and Relatives	54.7%	45.3%	100%
Civil Servants	62.7%	37.3%	100%
$X^2=3023.653^*$		$p=0.000$	

C2. Did you personally attend any of the following election campaign of the political parties and the candidates?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Common Forums	51.7%	48.3%	100%
TV Public Debates	56.7%	43.3%	100%
Campaign Rallies	61.1%	38.9%	100%
Door-to-Door Campaign	51.0%	49.0%	100%
Social Media Campaign	55.5%	44.5%	100%
$X^2=1057.557^*$		$p=0.000$	

C3. In your opinion, which of the following means of election campaigns was found effective?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Common forum	51.9%	48.1%	100%
TV public debate	51.0%	49.0%	100%
Campaign rallies	70.2%	29.8%	100%
Door-to-door campaign	53.2%	46.8%	100%
TV/radio/mobile/social media	53.7%	46.3%	100%
Poster/banner/leaflets	59.3%	40.7%	100%
$X^2=2278.761^*$		$p=0.05$	

C4. Have you ever run as a candidate in an election?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	72.30%	27.70%	100.00%
No	50.70%	49.30%	100.00%
	$X^2=7440.067^*$		$p = 0.001$

C5. Did you vote in the 2011 Local Government elections?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	53.60%	46.40%	100.00%
No	53.20%	46.80%	100.00%
Can't remember	27.50%	72.50%	100.00%

C6. Did you vote in the 2013 Parliamentary elections?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	53.90%	46.10%	100.00%
No	48.20%	51.80%	100.00%
Can't remember	11.00%	89.00%	100.00%

C7. List at least one campaign promise that you consider important.

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Security and sovereignty/ good governance	45.90%	54.10%	100.00%
Empowering women	42.00%	58.00%	100.00%
Rural development	53.40%	46.60%	100.00%
Root out corruption	55.60%	44.40%	100.00%
Independent media	24.70%	75.30%	100.00%
Disaster management	0.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Economic development	43.10%	56.90%	100.00%
Human development	54.10%	45.90%	100.00%
Traditional values	42.10%	57.90%	100.00%
Revise pay and allowance	65.20%	34.80%	100.00%
Gewog development grant	44.50%	55.50%	100.00%
Helicopter/power tiller	57.30%	42.70%	100.00%

C8. What motivated you to vote in the elections?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Duty as a citizen	52.00%	48.00%	100.00%
National duty	56.20%	43.80%	100.00%
Choose responsible leaders	54.60%	45.40%	100.00%
Party/candidate motivated me to vote	59.00%	41.00%	100.00%
Family/friends inspired me to vote	43.40%	56.60%	100.00%
Others	70.60%	29.40%	100.00%
$X^2=1019.963^*$		$p = 0.000$	

C9. The reason for not voting:

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Name not reflected on voter list	50.00%	50.00%	100.00%
Didn't have VPIC	45.80%	54.20%	100.00%
No one from my family voted	0.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Didn't like candidate/political party	78.30%	21.70%	100.00%
Party I favoured have a woman candidate	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Polling station far	39.50%	60.50%	100.00%
Not aware of the candidate from constituency	48.60%	51.40%	100.00%
	$X^2=1775.618^*$		$p = 0.000$

C10. What was the most important factor in your choice of a political party?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Manifesto	52.50%	47.50%	100.00%
Party leadership	56.50%	43.50%	100.00%
Candidates	50.90%	49.10%	100.00%
Sentimental affinity	52.00%	48.00%	100.00%
	$X^2=893.032^*$		$p = 0.000$

C11. What was the most important factor in your choice of candidate?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Personality	49.60%	50.40%	100.00%
Better representation	54.40%	45.60%	100.00%
Better condition for constituency	52.20%	47.80%	100.00%
Gender/religion	44.10%	55.90%	100.00%
	$X^2=540.418^*$		$p = 0.000$

C12. To what degree do you have control over decisions regarding your choice for whom to cast your vote during an election?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Very high degree	53.40%	46.60%	100.00%
High degree	51.90%	48.10%	100.00%
Small degree	61.90%	38.10%	100.00%
Not at all	50.10%	49.90%	100.00%
	$X^2=652.996^*$		$p = 0.000$

C13. How did you decide for whom to vote?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Leadership/qualification/competency and experience	53.40%	46.60%	100%
Promise made to the public	55.70%	44.30%	100%
Common forum	53.70%	46.30%	100%
Candidate/party manifesto	52.10%	47.90%	100%
Promise made during door-to-door campaign	55.10%	44.90%	100%
Family member/relatives who are in service	44.90%	55.10%	100%
Discussed with friend	39.10%	60.90%	100%
	$X^2=877.259^*$		$p = 0.000$

Section D: Women's Participation in Elective offices in Bhutan

D1. Who do you believe is a better leader?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Male	55.80%	44.20%	100.00%
Female	33.10%	66.90%	100.00%
Both	54.80%	45.20%	100.00%
Don't know	38.80%	61.20%	100.00%
$X^2=5514.945^*$			$p = 0.000$

D2. Who do you consider to be more capable?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Male	56.70%	43.30%	100.00%
Female	41.40%	58.60%	100.00%
Both	52.90%	47.10%	100.00%
Don't know	39.60%	60.40%	100.00%
$X^2=2751.194^*$			$p = 0.000$

D3. Do you believe or not that a woman is behind a man by nine lives (*Kerab Gu*)?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	48.00%	52.00%	100.00%
No	60.40%	39.60%	100.00%
Don't know	51.80%	48.20%	100.00%
$X^2=4988.237^*$			$p = 0.000$

D4. Have you ever experienced or witnessed women being inferior to men in:

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Decision making	60.60%	39.40%	100.00%
Dealing with govt. officials	58.40%	41.60%	100.00%
Representing the public	48.10%	51.90%	100.00%
Taking part in election	50.70%	49.30%	100.00%
Business	45.70%	54.30%	100.00%
Field works/labour force participation	51.20%	48.80%	100.00%
	$X^2=3196.605^*$		$p = 0.000$

D5. In general, who is the more dominant member in your family in terms of decision-making related to elections?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Mother	43.30%	56.70%	100.00%
Father	59.70%	40.30%	100.00%
Brother	57.10%	42.90%	100.00%
Sister	23.70%	76.30%	100.00%
Husband	9.10%	90.90%	100.00%
Self	56.10%	43.90%	100.00%
Others	53.00%	47.00%	100.00%
	$X^2=18423.396^*$		$p = 0.000$

D6. Are women involved in the activities related to elections such as awareness and campaign in your community?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Involved all the time	52.20%	47.80%	100.00%
Involved in important issues	51.60%	48.40%	100.00%
Less involved	56.30%	43.70%	100.00%
Not involved at all	49.70%	50.30%	100.00%
	$X^2=978.982^*$		$p = 0.000$

D7. If involved, how are they involved?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Participated as observer	52.40%	47.60%	100.00%
Participating but not substantially	49.20%	50.80%	100.00%
Participating and makes a difference and influence	54.70%	45.30%	100.00%
	$X^2=316.099^*$		$p = 0.000$

D8. If less involved, this is because of:

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Socio-cultural discrimination	56.30%	43.70%	100.00%
Long distance to walk	55.60%	44.40%	100.00%
Family responsibilities	56.70%	43.30%	100.00%
Less competence/men are more experience	56.00%	44.00%	100.00%
	$X^2=8.328^*$		$p = 0.000$

D9. How much influence do you feel, women have in community level decision-making processes?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
High	48.60%	51.40%	100.00%
Medium	54.60%	45.40%	100.00%
Low	53.70%	46.30%	100.00%
No influence	48.80%	51.20%	100.00%
	$X^2=801.508^*$		$p = 0.000$

D10. Who do you think it is important to have in high decision-making level positions?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Male	53.70%	46.30%	100.00%
Female	39.50%	60.50%	100.00%
Either	56.80%	43.20%	100.00%
Don't know	34.60%	65.40%	100.00%
$X^2=5974.877^*$			$p = 0.000$

D11. Who would you like to represent you in an elected office?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Male	57.60%	42.40%	100.00%
Female	32.00%	68.00%	100.00%
Both	55.60%	44.40%	100.00%
Don't know	32.90%	67.10%	100.00%
$X^2=9843.618^*$			$p = 0.000$

D12. Which of the following positions do you think are suitable and applicable for women in Bhutanese society?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Head of Govt./ministerial position	48.60%	51.40%	100.00%
Parliamentarian	54.70%	45.30%	100.00%
Secretary/director	56.60%	43.40%	100.00%
Doctor of hospital/engineer	59.60%	40.40%	100.00%
Head of school	52.60%	47.40%	100.00%
Local elected leader	42.70%	57.30%	100.00%
Teacher	54.40%	45.60%	100.00%
Housewife/child bearer	45.80%	54.20%	100.00%

D13. How you would like to be involved in the political process in future?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
As a voter	52.00%	48.00%	100.00%
Party member	46.70%	53.30%	100.00%
Candidate	62.30%	37.70%	100.00%
Not sure	59.80%	40.20%	100.00%
	$X^2=2057.738^*$		$p = 0.000$

D14. Would you be interested to stand as a candidate in future elections?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Interested highly	64.10%	35.90%	100.00%
Some extent	55.40%	44.60%	100.00%
Not interested at all	50.80%	49.20%	100.00%
	$X^2=2919.718^*$		$p = 0.000$

D15. Are you working or doing anything to participate as a candidate in future elections?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Thought/prepared	66.20%	33.80%	100.00%
Thought but not prepared	58.80%	41.20%	100.00%
Didn't think/not prepared	50.80%	49.20%	100.00%
	$X^2=2956.495^*$		$p = 0.000$

D16. Why are you not interested to participate in elections as candidate?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Look after HH work/children	45.20%	54.80%	100.00%
Can't meet educational qualification	53.50%	46.50%	100.00%
Lack of party support/awareness	53.10%	46.90%	100.00%
Lack of family encouragement and support	59.10%	40.90%	100.00%
Not interested	51.30%	48.70%	100.00%
	$X^2=698.368^*$		$p = 0.000$

D17. In your opinion, do you think there will be more female candidates to participate in future elections?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	51.90%	48.10%	100.00%
Some extent	59.20%	40.80%	100.00%
Don't know	44.50%	55.50%	100.00%
	$X^2=3529.085^*$		$p = 0.000$

D18. Should there be more elected women representatives (MPs) in Parliament?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	52.20%	47.80%	100.00%
No	65.20%	34.80%	100.00%
Don't know	50.90%	49.10%	100.00%
	$X^2=2386.606^*$		$p = 0.000$

D19. As a voter, how likely is it that you will vote for a female candidate in future elections?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Not going to vote	50.00%	50.00%	100.00%
Will vote	47.70%	52.30%	100.00%
Sex doesn't matter	60.70%	39.30%	100.00%
Not sure	53.90%	46.10%	100.00%
	$X^2=5307.143^*$		$p = 0.000$

D20. On what qualities would you base your decision to vote for a woman candidate?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Education and experience	54.30%	45.70%	100.00%
Family background	32.70%	67.30%	100.00%
Social and economic status	61.80%	38.20%	100.00%
Leadership/personality	54.30%	45.70%	100.00%
Honesty and integrity	46.60%	53.40%	100.00%
Religion background	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%
	$X^2=2938.779^*$		$p = 0.000$

D21. In your opinion, which of the following considerations do you think is important?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Woman considered less capable than man	54.30%	45.70%	100.00%
Lack of confidence and trust in woman	53.80%	46.20%	100.00%
Man and women have different roles	49.00%	51.00%	100.00%
Not vital in management and governance as men	56.70%	43.30%	100.00%
Women do not have experience and education	52.50%	47.50%	100.00%
	$X^2=667.280^*$		$p = 0.000$

D22. Do you think there are any obstacles to women participating as candidate in elections?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	53.80%	46.20%	100.00%
No	53.20%	46.80%	100.00%
Don't know	51.20%	48.80%	100.00%

D23. What do you think are the obstacles to women's participating as candidate in elections in Bhutan?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Prevailing cultural attitude regarding the roles of women	57.9%	42.1%	100%
Domestic responsibilities	46.2%	53.8%	100%
Lack of educational qualification and experience in representative function	54.0%	46.0%	100%
Environment of political institution is not gender friendly	38.3%	61.7%	100%
Self-confidence and also fear of incompetence in decision making	59.2%	40.8%	100%
Socio-economic barriers	65.7%	34.3%	100%
Attitude of women leadership	58.4%	41.6%	100%
Lack of family encouragement	68.8%	31.2%	100%
Fear of conflict with family members	79.1%	20.9%	100%
Fear of violence/political seen as dirty or corrupt	58.7%	41.3%	100%
Electoral system and nomination	100.0%	0.0%	100%
Lack of support from male participants	76.9%	23.1%	100%
Religion	27.5%	72.5%	100%
$X^2=5597.490^*$		$p = 0.000$	

D24. Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion about men and women as political leaders?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Men better as political leaders than women	52.40%	47.60%	100.00%
Women better as political leader than men	42.70%	57.30%	100.00%
Equally good political leader	54.70%	45.30%	100.00%
Vote for woman if she is capable	52.30%	47.70%	100.00%
Can't trust women's capabilities	46.30%	53.70%	100.00%
$X^2=875.742^*$		$p = 0.000$	

D25. Do you think social issues are important?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	53.50%	46.50%	100.00%
No	61.60%	38.40%	100.00%
Don't know	44.50%	55.50%	100.00%
$X^2=2746.597^*$		$p = 0.000$	

D26. In your opinion, who do you think is more aware and recognizes the importance of social issues?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Male	51.50%	48.50%	100.00%
Female	53.50%	46.50%	100.00%
Both	53.90%	46.10%	100.00%

Section E: Overall Views on Electoral Process

E1. Do you think men and women have equal rights under the laws in Bhutan?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	53.70%	46.30%	100.00%
No	66.40%	33.60%	100.00%
Don't know	31.30%	68.70%	100.00%
$X^2=7644.598^*$			$p = 0.000$

E2. Do nomination and other electoral processes pose difficulties for women candidates?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	52.80%	47.20%	100.00%
No	56.30%	43.70%	100.00%
Don't know	47.90%	52.10%	100.00%
$X^2=2059.798^*$			$p = 0.000$

E3. If yes, what are three main difficulties women candidates face in such processes?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Nomination form	61.80%	38.20%	100.00%
Affidavit	53.80%	46.20%	100.00%
Asset declaration	0.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Tax clearance certificate	19.10%	80.90%	100.00%
Audit clearance certificate	56.10%	43.90%	100.00%
Security clearance certificate	29.50%	70.50%	100.00%
Attestation by RUB	8.40%	91.60%	100.00%
Declaration(not member of political party)	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Distance to travel	52.90%	47.10%	100.00%
Security problem	54.80%	45.20%	100.00%
Others	56.30%	43.70%	100.00%

E4. In general, how satisfied are you with process of getting the various documents and clearances for your nomination?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Very satisfied	59.90%	40.10%	100.00%
Satisfied	55.50%	44.50%	100.00%
Neutral	47.70%	52.30%	100.00%
Dissatisfied	45.70%	54.30%	100.00%
Very dissatisfied	54.30%	45.70%	100.00%

E5. Did you personally attend any of the voter information and education programmes conducted by the Election Commission and the Dzongkhag Election Office?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	54.80%	45.20%	100.00%
No	48.70%	51.30%	100.00%
$X^2=1102.323^*$			$p = 0.000$

E6. How do you think of the conduct of voter education and information dissemination so far?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Adequate	52.70%	47.30%	100.00%
Inadequate	50.20%	49.80%	100.00%
Awareness program needed	59.30%	40.70%	100.00%

E7. Do you think civic and voter education on continued basis will be effective in preparing voters to participate meaningfully in elections?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	53.60%	46.40%	100.00%
No	65.50%	34.50%	100.00%
Don't know	44.60%	55.40%	100.00%

E8. Do you think civic and voter education encompasses disseminating knowledge on the need of gender equality in elected offices – reasonable representation of women in such offices?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	54.40%	45.60%	100.00%
No	60.90%	39.10%	100.00%
Don't know	45.50%	54.50%	100.00%

E9. What is your experience of the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM)?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Very user-friendly	53.40%	46.60%	100.00%
Not user-friendly	53.60%	46.40%	100.00%
Neutral	50.50%	49.50%	100.00%
Nervous to use	55.80%	44.20%	100.00%

E10. Did you see/hear of voter information and education programs on media?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	54.40%	45.60%	100.00%
No	47.90%	52.10%	100.00%
Don't know	43.10%	56.90%	100.00%
$X^2=1436.764^*$			$p = 0.000$

E11. In your opinion, which mass-media is accessible on the voter education and information dissemination coverage?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Newspaper	64.00%	36.00%	100.00%
Social media	53.10%	46.90%	100.00%
Radio	55.30%	44.70%	100.00%
Mobile	87.80%	12.20%	100.00%
Television	52.20%	47.80%	100.00%
Election advisory/advertising board	55.80%	44.20%	100.00%
	$X^2=1820.619^*$		$p = 0.000$

E12. Do you think the media is fair and neutral in its dissemination of information, reporting and coverage of the election?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	57.00%	43.00%	100.00%
No	52.40%	47.60%	100.00%
Don't know	39.10%	60.90%	100.00%
	$X^2=7712.190^*$		$p = 0.000$

E13. Do you think that male and female candidates have equal access to media election campaigns?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	56.00%	44.00%	100.00%
No	50.40%	49.60%	100.00%
Don't know	41.50%	58.50%	100.00%
	$X^2=4683.531^*$		$p = 0.000$

E14. Do you think there is a need for reform/change in the current practices or for new reforms to enhance women’s representation in elected offices?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	52.90%	47.10%	100.00%
No	61.30%	38.70%	100.00%
Don't know	42.80%	57.20%	100.00%
$X^2=6904.586^*$			$p = 0.000$

E15. If yes, from the following, in your opinion which one would be the most appropriate?

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Educating women	53.90%	46.10%	100.00%
Electoral process and requirement more simple	47.70%	52.30%	100.00%
Introduction of quota system for women	55.10%	44.90%	100.00%
Reserved seats for women in parliament	49.60%	50.40%	100.00%
$X^2=447.158^*$			$p = 0.000$

F1. Opinions on the Determinants of Voter's Choice

Common forums and public debates are very advantageous to the political party, candidates and voters	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	56.10%	43.90%	100.00%
Agree	49.70%	50.30%	100.00%
Neutral	49.80%	50.20%	100.00%
Disagree	84.40%	15.60%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	67.10%	32.90%	100.00%

Civic and voter education played a critical role for awareness of political party and candidates.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	58.20%	41.80%	100.00%
Agree	51.60%	48.40%	100.00%
Neutral	39.50%	60.50%	100.00%
Disagree	51.70%	48.30%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%

Media played a fair role in dissemination of adequate information about parties, policies, candidates and the election process helping to make informed choices.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	55.30%	44.70%	100.00%
Agree	55.20%	44.80%	100.00%
Neutral	39.80%	60.20%	100.00%
Disagree	69.40%	30.60%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	56.60%	43.40%	100.00%

The engagement by political parties and candidates during election campaign and non-election period is an important medium.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
	Strongly agree	58.20%	
Agree	50.60%	49.40%	100.00%
Neutral	51.50%	48.50%	100.00%
Disagree	62.80%	37.20%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	50.50%	49.50%	100.00%

The elected candidate had always been a strong and positive leader in the country/community.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
	Strongly agree	54.50%	
Agree	52.20%	47.80%	100.00%
Neutral	52.40%	47.60%	100.00%
Disagree	54.60%	45.40%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	60.50%	39.50%	100.00%

I thought about the candidate's past work on development issues.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
	Strongly agree	56.00%	
Agree	52.00%	48.00%	100.00%
Neutral	52.90%	47.10%	100.00%
Disagree	53.60%	46.40%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	56.50%	43.50%	100.00%

I tried to assess whether or not the candidate would be accessible to me and my family.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
	Strongly agree	50.10%	
Agree	53.20%	46.80%	100.00%
Neutral	55.10%	44.90%	100.00%
Disagree	51.50%	48.50%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	58.10%	41.90%	100.00%

I considered the history of the candidate on corrupt or illegal activities.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	52.10%	47.90%	100.00%
Agree	53.60%	46.40%	100.00%
Neutral	49.40%	50.60%	100.00%
Disagree	58.90%	41.10%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	51.80%	48.20%	100.00%

I decided based on the realistic/practicality of candidate and party manifestos.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	55.10%	44.90%	100.00%
Agree	54.20%	45.80%	100.00%
Neutral	47.20%	52.80%	100.00%
Disagree	54.20%	45.80%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	47.80%	52.20%	100.00%

I decided to vote based on the qualification, competency, experience and leadership.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	57.80%	42.20%	100.00%
Agree	47.50%	52.50%	100.00%
Neutral	54.70%	45.30%	100.00%
Disagree	54.70%	45.30%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	30.10%	69.90%	100.00%

Door-to-door campaign provided ample opportunity to meet candidate and know about his/ her commitments/promises made.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	56.60%	43.40%	100.00%
Agree	52.10%	47.90%	100.00%
Neutral	49.00%	51.00%	100.00%
Disagree	54.30%	45.70%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	63.60%	36.40%	100.00%
$X^2=1651.110^*$			$Sig = 0.000$

F2. Opinions on Women's Participation in Elective Offices

Male candidates are preferred over female candidates.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	48.80%	51.20%	100.00%
Agree	50.00%	50.00%	100.00%
Neutral	50.50%	49.50%	100.00%
Disagree	62.00%	38.00%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	55.00%	45.00%	100.00%
$X^2=4240.329^*$			$Sig = 0.000$

I am not ready to elect women as fewer women are literate than men in the country.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	45.10%	54.90%	100.00%
Agree	47.30%	52.70%	100.00%
Neutral	51.10%	48.90%	100.00%
Disagree	58.10%	41.90%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	50.60%	49.40%	100.00%
$X^2=3509.005^*$			$Sig = 0.000$

There has not been a real effort to attract a wider spectrum of women into politics.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	44.20%	55.80%	100.00%
Agree	51.20%	48.80%	100.00%
Neutral	50.40%	49.60%	100.00%
Disagree	60.00%	40.00%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	68.90%	31.10%	100.00%
$X^2=4572.944^*$			<i>Sig = 0.000</i>

Many women lack qualification and relevant skills necessary to perform well in politics.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	50.20%	49.80%	100.00%
Agree	50.50%	49.50%	100.00%
Neutral	51.90%	48.10%	100.00%
Disagree	57.20%	42.80%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	51.60%	48.40%	100.00%
$X^2=1452.703^*$			<i>Sig = 0.000</i>

A woman would not be able to handle national issues such as law and order, combat corruption, improve the economic situation of the country, etc.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	49.90%	50.10%	100.00%
Agree	47.50%	52.50%	100.00%
Neutral	49.40%	50.60%	100.00%
Disagree	56.20%	43.80%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	57.00%	43.00%	100.00%
$X^2=2368.661^*$			<i>Sig = 0.000</i>

Women are less likely to bring anything new to politics/ decision making process as compared to men.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	47.50%	52.50%	100.00%
Agree	53.20%	46.80%	100.00%
Neutral	43.20%	56.80%	100.00%
Disagree	57.60%	42.40%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	52.40%	47.60%	100.00%
$X^2=4068.505^*$			<i>Sig = 0.000</i>

Politics is a masculine activity and involves violence.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	47.50%	52.50%	100.00%
Agree	51.00%	49.00%	100.00%
Neutral	44.70%	55.30%	100.00%
Disagree	56.20%	43.80%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	58.00%	42.00%	100.00%
$X^2=3559.541^*$			<i>Sig = 0.000</i>

Fewer role-models for women in high positions to inspire.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	47.60%	52.40%	100.00%
Agree	54.20%	45.80%	100.00%
Neutral	48.00%	52.00%	100.00%
Disagree	63.90%	36.10%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	53.40%	46.60%	100.00%
$X^2=3983.899^*$			<i>Sig = 0.000</i>

The need to possess a formal university has restricted many women's candidates from elections.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	51.20%	48.80%	100.00%
Agree	53.80%	46.20%	100.00%
Neutral	50.00%	50.00%	100.00%
Disagree	55.10%	44.90%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	54.20%	45.80%	100.00%
$X^2=633.903^*$			<i>Sig = 0.000</i>

Women lack support from political party.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	56.10%	43.90%	100.00%
Agree	52.50%	47.50%	100.00%
Neutral	51.00%	49.00%	100.00%
Disagree	53.50%	46.50%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	56.60%	43.40%	100.00%
$X^2=408.685^*$			<i>Sig = 0.000</i>

Women's participation in local politics is affected by the salary and incentives they get.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	51.50%	48.50%	100.00%
Agree	56.90%	43.10%	100.00%
Neutral	42.70%	57.30%	100.00%
Disagree	53.90%	46.10%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	60.10%	39.90%	100.00%
$X^2=4182.304^*$			<i>Sig = 0.000</i>

Women in power would not be able to obtain international aid for the country.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	52.90%	47.10%	100.00%
Agree	55.40%	44.60%	100.00%
Neutral	47.00%	53.00%	100.00%
Disagree	54.50%	45.50%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	53.70%	46.30%	100.00%
$X^2=1247.079^*$			$Sig = 0.000$

A woman would not have sufficient time to deal with legislative issues because of family responsibilities.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	54.80%	45.20%	100.00%
Agree	53.30%	46.70%	100.00%
Neutral	48.10%	51.90%	100.00%
Disagree	55.20%	44.80%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	51.80%	48.20%	100.00%
$X^2=887.067^*$			$Sig = 0.000$

The prevailing traditional beliefs discourage voting for women.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	51.70%	48.30%	100.00%
Agree	52.80%	47.20%	100.00%
Neutral	47.00%	53.00%	100.00%
Disagree	57.00%	43.00%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	53.90%	46.10%	100.00%
$X^2=2095.364^*$			$Sig = 0.000$

F3. Civic Education and Training

Civic and voter education should be provided on continuous basis.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	52.70%	47.30%	100.00%
Agree	52.40%	47.60%	100.00%
Neutral	57.80%	42.20%	100.00%
Disagree	59.30%	40.70%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	83.50%	16.50%	100.00%
$X^2=1061.524^*$			<i>Sig = 0.000</i>

Civic and voter education and training and information dissemination should be taken to most of the rural communities and voters.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	53.00%	47.00%	100.00%
Agree	54.30%	45.70%	100.00%
Neutral	40.10%	59.90%	100.00%
Disagree	67.20%	32.80%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	82.10%	17.90%	100.00%
$X^2=2530.765^*$			<i>Sig = 0.000</i>

Gender sensitization program and more awareness campaign should be conducted for women voters.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	51.70%	48.30%	100.00%
Agree	53.40%	46.60%	100.00%
Neutral	46.90%	53.10%	100.00%
Disagree	66.40%	33.60%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	72.30%	27.70%	100.00%
$X^2=3629.219^*$			<i>Sig = 0.000</i>

There should be adequate information on women candidates' qualifications and platforms, and disseminated further in advance of elections so voters can make informed choices.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
	Strongly agree	53.90%	
Agree	53.60%	46.40%	100.00%
Neutral	48.20%	51.80%	100.00%
Disagree	60.10%	39.90%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	65.70%	34.30%	100.00%
$X^2=1267.413^*$		<i>Sig = 0.000</i>	

Political leadership trainings to be arranged for interested women to encourage joining politics.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
	Strongly agree	48.40%	
Agree	56.20%	43.80%	100.00%
Neutral	47.70%	52.30%	100.00%
Disagree	58.10%	41.90%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	73.90%	26.10%	100.00%
$X^2=3088.158^*$		<i>Sig = 0.000</i>	

Increase awareness of the roles and responsibilities of women as elected members.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
	Strongly agree	50.30%	
Agree	53.30%	46.70%	100.00%
Neutral	55.60%	44.40%	100.00%
Disagree	57.10%	42.90%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	69.20%	30.80%	100.00%
$X^2=873.436^*$		<i>Sig = 0.000</i>	

F4. Opinions on existing Rules and Regulations

Common Forums played critical role in enabling more voters to understand about political parties and candidates.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	52.00%	48.00%	100.00%
Agree	54.90%	45.10%	100.00%
Neutral	44.80%	55.20%	100.00%
Disagree	63.80%	36.20%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	82.20%	17.80%	100.00%

Need specific laws or policies for political and economic empowerment of women.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	53.00%	47.00%	100.00%
Agree	51.40%	48.60%	100.00%
Neutral	44.80%	55.20%	100.00%
Disagree	62.30%	37.70%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	61.20%	38.80%	100.00%

Need testing centers in every <i>Gewog</i> to take Functional Literacy Test.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	53.40%	46.60%	100.00%
Agree	52.10%	47.90%	100.00%
Neutral	53.40%	46.60%	100.00%
Disagree	56.00%	44.00%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	69.10%	30.90%	100.00%

Obtaining various documents and clearances for nomination process is not easy for a woman.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	49.40%	50.60%	100.00%
Agree	55.60%	44.40%	100.00%
Neutral	44.70%	55.30%	100.00%
Disagree	55.70%	44.30%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	68.80%	31.20%	100.00%

Obtaining various documents and clearances for nomination process is not easy for a man.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	54.80%	45.20%	100.00%
Agree	62.50%	37.50%	100.00%
Neutral	43.00%	57.00%	100.00%
Disagree	54.60%	45.40%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	64.70%	35.30%	100.00%

Party <i>Godenpas</i> and <i>Leyjapas</i> are the cause of communal discord during elections.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	50.20%	49.80%	100.00%
Agree	55.80%	44.20%	100.00%
Neutral	51.10%	48.90%	100.00%
Disagree	54.60%	45.40%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	57.80%	42.20%	100.00%
$X^2=993.482^*$		<i>Sig = 0.000</i>	

Political parties and candidates should be restricted from making unrealistic electoral promises.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	53.70%	46.30%	100.00%
Agree	53.20%	46.80%	100.00%
Neutral	50.00%	50.00%	100.00%
Disagree	49.40%	50.60%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	67.80%	32.20%	100.00%
$X^2=1108.174^*$			<i>Sig = 0.000</i>

Door-to-door campaign provided ample opportunities for the candidates or party workers to move freely.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	57.70%	42.30%	100.00%
Agree	54.30%	45.70%	100.00%
Neutral	45.20%	54.80%	100.00%
Disagree	54.20%	45.80%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	56.30%	43.70%	100.00%
$X^2=2441.288^*$			<i>Sig = 0.000</i>

Quota system is necessary to improve representation of women in Parliament.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	49.30%	50.70%	100.00%
Agree	51.80%	48.20%	100.00%
Neutral	50.10%	49.90%	100.00%
Disagree	58.00%	42.00%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	70.90%	29.10%	100.00%

F5. Opinions on what makes a good political leader

Inclusive decision makers.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	55.80%	44.20%	100.00%
Agree	49.70%	50.30%	100.00%
Neutral	59.10%	40.90%	100.00%
Disagree	51.10%	48.90%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	61.70%	38.30%	100.00%

Approachable and involved in community activities.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	54.20%	45.80%	100.00%
Agree	52.00%	48.00%	100.00%
Neutral	58.00%	42.00%	100.00%
Disagree	41.30%	58.70%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	60.00%	40.00%	100.00%

Good communicator/ listener.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	55.50%	44.50%	100.00%
Agree	51.40%	48.60%	100.00%
Neutral	44.80%	55.20%	100.00%
Disagree	47.50%	52.50%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	80.00%	20.00%	100.00%

Honest/ truthful and committed.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	53.90%	46.10%	100.00%
Agree	52.20%	47.80%	100.00%
Neutral	46.40%	53.60%	100.00%
Disagree	61.40%	38.60%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	62.90%	37.10%	100.00%

More action than words.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	55.90%	44.10%	100.00%
Agree	48.00%	52.00%	100.00%
Neutral	50.90%	49.10%	100.00%
Disagree	61.60%	38.40%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	60.60%	39.40%	100.00%

Strong focus on education/ health and family.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	53.40%	46.60%	100.00%
Agree	53.10%	46.90%	100.00%
Neutral	47.30%	52.70%	100.00%
Disagree	67.30%	32.70%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	62.70%	37.30%	100.00%

Well educated/ wise/ good manager/ experience.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	54.10%	45.90%	100.00%
Agree	52.30%	47.70%	100.00%
Neutral	48.60%	51.40%	100.00%
Disagree	43.90%	56.10%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	66.70%	33.30%	100.00%

Considerate/ concerned/ care for people and resources.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	55.30%	44.70%	100.00%
Agree	51.90%	48.10%	100.00%
Neutral	49.90%	50.10%	100.00%
Disagree	40.10%	59.90%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	50.90%	49.10%	100.00%

Family with good reputation.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	50.60%	49.40%	100.00%
Agree	53.40%	46.60%	100.00%
Neutral	58.10%	41.90%	100.00%
Disagree	50.20%	49.80%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	55.70%	44.30%	100.00%

Understand/ respect and preserve culture and traditional values.	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	53.30%	46.70%	100.00%
Agree	52.30%	47.70%	100.00%
Neutral	57.80%	42.20%	100.00%
Disagree	64.50%	35.50%	100.00%
Strongly disagree	47.10%	52.90%	100.00%

AGE DISAGGREGATED DATA TABLES

A1: Dzongkhag-wise Distribution

Dzongkhag	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Bumthang	18.70%	23.70%	16.30%	18.70%	16.30%	3.70%	2.50%	100%
Chhukha	21.70%	25.80%	20.30%	15.50%	14.30%	2.50%	0.00%	100%
Dagana	21.30%	19.30%	22.60%	13.10%	16.90%	6.80%	0.00%	100%
Gasa	8.80%	33.10%	20.10%	14.50%	12.00%	6.30%	5.20%	100%
Haa	12.50%	27.50%	20.00%	8.70%	20.00%	5.00%	6.30%	100%
Lhuentse	6.20%	17.50%	21.30%	21.30%	23.70%	6.20%	3.80%	100%
Monggar	11.40%	16.50%	22.50%	21.40%	19.30%	8.90%	0.00%	100%
Paro	20.30%	28.10%	16.90%	15.30%	9.10%	6.60%	3.80%	100%
Pema Gatshel	20.00%	10.00%	22.50%	18.70%	15.00%	10.00%	3.70%	100%
Punakha	16.50%	23.10%	17.90%	14.20%	15.40%	9.20%	3.80%	100%
Samdrup Jongkhar	0.00%	24.10%	13.70%	22.60%	15.60%	18.20%	5.90%	100%
Samtse	18.80%	23.70%	21.30%	17.50%	12.50%	3.70%	2.50%	100%
Sarpang	8.90%	21.00%	15.30%	24.40%	18.00%	9.40%	3.00%	100%
Thimphu	12.50%	29.00%	21.70%	11.50%	12.60%	10.10%	2.50%	100%
Trashigang	6.20%	26.20%	23.80%	22.50%	13.80%	6.20%	1.30%	100%
Trashigang Yangtse	9.00%	28.30%	21.80%	18.80%	12.80%	7.90%	1.40%	100%
Trongsa	18.70%	22.50%	18.70%	15.00%	13.80%	7.50%	3.70%	100%
Tsirang	11.40%	14.30%	28.50%	19.60%	9.30%	14.20%	2.80%	100%

Wangdue Phodrang	8.70%	26.30%	12.50%	22.50%	15.00%	13.80%	1.30%	100%
Zhemgang	13.70%	22.50%	22.50%	16.30%	15.00%	6.20%	3.80%	100%

A2: Place of Residence

Place of Residence	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Urban	24.30%	31.30%	18.10%	8.70%	9.40%	6.70%	1.60%	100%
Rural	12.70%	21.90%	20.50%	19.00%	15.10%	8.20%	2.40%	100%

Section B: Demographic and Economic

B3. Marital Status:

Marital Status	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Single	66.40%	22.60%	5.80%	3.10%	1.10%	0.80%	0.30%	100%
Married	4.70%	22.60%	23.30%	21.10%	16.90%	8.80%	2.60%	100%
Separated/Divorced	10.60%	26.90%	20.40%	26.90%	7.40%	2.50%	5.30%	100%
Living Together	55.70%	2.80%	7.70%	2.80%	0.00%	31.00%	0.00%	100%
Widowed	0.00%	0.00%	2.40%	16.30%	37.10%	36.90%	7.30%	100%

B4. How many children do you have?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
1-2 Children	9.70%	42.50%	18.90%	11.30%	9.80%	5.40%	2.40%	100%
3-4 Children	2.10%	21.30%	31.60%	24.50%	12.90%	6.10%	1.50%	100%
5 or More	0.70%	2.00%	15.50%	28.20%	32.10%	17.10%	4.40%	100%
None	58.80%	22.40%	7.20%	4.40%	2.00%	3.80%	1.30%	100%

B5. How long have you lived here?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
1-9 Years	16.70%	31.30%	24.00%	17.00%	8.90%	2.10%	0.00%	100%
10-19 Years	31.90%	23.30%	18.10%	13.20%	9.00%	3.40%	1.10%	100%
20-29 Years	35.30%	42.30%	8.00%	6.50%	3.20%	4.00%	0.80%	100%
30-39 Years	0.00%	42.50%	44.10%	4.80%	4.30%	3.10%	1.20%	100%
40-49 Years	0.00%	0.00%	43.40%	45.60%	4.10%	4.10%	2.80%	100%
50-59 Years	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50.20%	45.90%	3.10%	0.80%	100%
60-69 Years	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	62.30%	36.30%	1.40%	100%
70 and above	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	63.30%	36.70%	100%

B6. Number of family members:

Family Size	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
2-9 Members	16.50%	23.90%	19.90%	18.40%	12.50%	6.90%	2.00%	100%
10-19 Members	7.20%	19.70%	22.00%	19.30%	19.00%	10.10%	2.70%	100%
20-29 Members	21.20%	22.80%	10.70%	16.60%	9.70%	11.40%	7.70%	100%
30 and above	0.00%	16.70%	24.20%	29.50%	29.50%	0.00%	0.00%	100%

B7. Highest level of education completed:

Level of Education	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
No Education	4.00%	15.60%	20.80%	23.70%	20.20%	12.30%	3.50%	100%
NFE	10.20%	35.00%	22.50%	17.30%	11.70%	1.90%	1.40%	100%
Primary Education	13.80%	25.80%	25.40%	14.50%	12.40%	5.90%	2.20%	100%
Lower Secondary	17.10%	35.70%	26.60%	11.70%	7.80%	1.00%	0.00%	100%
Middle Secondary	55.90%	20.70%	11.40%	6.00%	3.80%	2.20%	0.00%	100%
Higher Secondary	46.70%	25.50%	13.30%	5.50%	7.00%	1.10%	0.80%	100%
University	21.90%	54.70%	9.70%	9.80%	2.40%	1.50%	0.00%	100%
Monastic Education	3.10%	24.60%	22.30%	27.30%	9.30%	11.30%	2.10%	100%

B8. What is your current occupation?

Current Occupation	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Parliamentarian	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Civil Servant	11.60%	45.20%	18.80%	14.30%	7.60%	1.20%	1.40%	100%
Armed Force	8.20%	36.40%	22.70%	16.40%	16.30%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Corporate Employee	32.10%	59.70%	0.00%	7.30%	0.90%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Private Sector	20.60%	41.50%	17.70%	11.50%	8.70%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Self Employed	18.30%	29.50%	29.30%	12.10%	6.80%	3.90%	0.00%	100%
Local Elected Leader	0.70%	34.40%	38.40%	16.10%	10.50%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Trainee/Student	89.30%	10.70%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Farmer	8.10%	19.70%	20.20%	20.80%	17.40%	10.70%	3.20%	100%

B9. What was your previous occupation?

Previous Occupation	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Civil Servant	7.10%	27.20%	19.20%	14.90%	20.70%	2.70%	8.20%	100%
Armed Force	2.80%	10.90%	16.00%	21.40%	25.40%	20.00%	3.50%	100%
Corporate Employee	20.20%	35.10%	13.50%	6.20%	16.00%	8.80%	0.00%	100%
Private Sector	9.30%	42.20%	18.70%	17.30%	12.50%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Self Employed	11.30%	23.30%	36.80%	21.80%	6.70%	0.10%	0.00%	100%
Local Elected Leader	0.00%	14.10%	14.70%	23.10%	29.00%	19.10%	0.00%	100%
Trainee/Student	64.00%	31.40%	4.50%	0.10%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Farmer	7.50%	21.00%	21.40%	21.80%	16.10%	9.50%	2.80%	100%
Others	15.20%	21.50%	33.70%	10.20%	15.10%	4.30%	0.00%	100%

B10. Monthly approximate income (in Nu.):

Monthly Income (Nu.)	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
< 3000	13.70%	19.70%	16.40%	19.50%	16.70%	10.70%	3.40%	100%
3000-4999	10.70%	18.10%	27.50%	16.80%	15.90%	8.20%	2.90%	100%
5000-9999	11.80%	28.00%	20.20%	19.50%	12.90%	5.90%	1.70%	100%
10000-14999	14.10%	25.10%	28.60%	19.60%	9.30%	2.50%	0.80%	100%
15000-19999	16.30%	27.60%	27.30%	11.80%	15.30%	1.60%	0.00%	100%
20000-24999	6.90%	29.60%	14.00%	21.60%	20.20%	7.70%	0.00%	100%
25000-29999	0.00%	21.70%	34.40%	18.80%	14.70%	5.20%	5.20%	100%
>30000	4.80%	24.50%	19.50%	19.30%	12.30%	19.60%	0.00%	100%

B11. Main source of income:

Income Source	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Salary	10.30%	38.60%	27.40%	15.10%	8.00%	0.00%	0.60%	100%
Business	17.70%	26.60%	20.70%	15.60%	14.70%	3.80%	0.90%	100%
Dividend/Interest	0.00%	28.90%	45.80%	0.00%	25.40%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Rental Of Properties	7.80%	5.20%	24.70%	16.50%	17.00%	20.70%	8.10%	100%
Cash Crops	10.90%	19.10%	19.10%	20.00%	16.70%	10.90%	3.30%	100%
Others	19.10%	20.20%	20.10%	19.40%	14.20%	5.90%	1.00%	100%

B12. How do you consider your economic status as compared to your neighbour?

Economic Status	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
More Comfortable	10.50%	22.10%	22.40%	21.40%	16.30%	5.20%	2.10%	100%
Equal	13.90%	22.80%	21.20%	18.20%	14.30%	7.00%	2.70%	100%
Less Comfortable	12.00%	19.90%	15.40%	18.60%	16.40%	16.10%	1.70%	100%

13. What is your religion?

Religion	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Buddhism	12.10%	22.30%	20.80%	18.70%	15.00%	8.60%	2.40%	100%
Hinduism	17.10%	21.40%	18.60%	18.50%	15.20%	6.70%	2.40%	100%
Christianity	12.30%	37.60%	24.60%	25.50%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%

Section C: Determination of Voter's Choice

C1. Which of the following do you think provides voters with most information and is the most effective source of information?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Election Advertising Board	19.00%	26.60%	20.60%	15.20%	13.00%	1.60%	3.90%	100%
Voter Education Awareness	10.30%	21.50%	22.10%	19.00%	15.80%	9.60%	1.60%	100%
Political Party/Candidate	12.40%	33.80%	17.40%	16.60%	12.60%	6.30%	0.90%	100%
Campaign/Common Forum	10.30%	23.20%	17.80%	21.50%	16.50%	8.20%	2.50%	100%
Media Coverage	16.30%	20.20%	22.40%	18.20%	13.80%	6.90%	2.40%	100%
Friends And Relatives	15.60%	18.80%	16.50%	14.90%	14.40%	13.70%	6.10%	100%
Civil Servants	5.90%	31.50%	15.50%	28.00%	19.10%	0.00%	0.00%	100%

C2. Did you personally attend any of the following election campaign of the political parties and the candidates?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Common Forum	7.80%	22.20%	20.10%	21.70%	17.30%	8.80%	2.10%	100%
TV Public Debate	23.30%	25.50%	22.30%	10.90%	9.90%	6.00%	2.00%	100%
Campaign Rallies	14.90%	17.70%	22.30%	28.20%	11.90%	5.10%	0.00%	100%
Door-To-Door Campaign	18.50%	18.00%	18.30%	14.40%	15.20%	10.40%	5.20%	100%
Social Media Campaign	19.10%	26.30%	21.40%	16.60%	7.80%	5.60%	3.10%	100%

C3. In your opinion, which of the following means of election campaigns was found effective?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Common Forum	8.90%	22.70%	18.30%	21.80%	18.20%	8.10%	2.00%	100%
TV Public Debate	22.80%	21.90%	17.60%	15.30%	13.30%	8.80%	0.40%	100%
Campaign Rallies	15.40%	24.30%	27.00%	20.10%	9.40%	3.80%	0.00%	100%
Door-To-Door Campaign	14.20%	21.10%	20.70%	14.00%	13.50%	11.20%	5.30%	100%
TV/Radio/Mobile/Social Media	14.90%	21.20%	28.30%	13.60%	10.80%	6.80%	4.40%	100%
Poster/Banner/Leaflets	14.00%	23.90%	11.60%	32.20%	7.30%	10.20%	0.80%	100%

C4. Have you ever run as a candidate in an election?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Yes	7.90%	21.20%	26.30%	19.40%	13.30%	9.80%	2.00%	100%
No	13.80%	22.40%	19.70%	18.60%	15.10%	8.00%	2.50%	100%

C5. Did you vote in the 2011 Local Government elections?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Yes	7.20%	23.10%	22.40%	20.50%	15.80%	8.90%	2.10%	100%
No	53.30%	16.90%	6.40%	5.50%	10.20%	3.60%	4.10%	100%
Can't Remember	26.50%	16.70%	20.50%	21.10%	0.00%	4.60%	10.60%	100%

C6. Did you vote in the 2013 Parliamentary elections?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Yes	10.40%	23.10%	21.60%	19.40%	15.30%	8.10%	2.10%	100%
No	39.70%	14.60%	9.80%	12.10%	9.80%	8.40%	5.50%	100%
Can't Remember	28.10%	10.30%	0.00%	0.00%	34.80%	16.50%	10.30%	100%

C7. List at least one campaign promise that you consider important.

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Security And Sovereignty/Good Governance	13.10%	22.40%	21.40%	6.70%	36.40%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Empowering Women	43.50%	18.70%	11.20%	9.70%	17.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Rural Development	9.90%	20.60%	22.50%	21.40%	14.90%	8.40%	2.40%	100%
Root Out Corruption	25.20%	18.00%	23.90%	13.90%	0.00%	0.00%	19.00%	100%
Independent Media	24.70%	35.30%	0.00%	26.00%	14.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Disaster Management	0.00%	100%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Economic Development	10.20%	24.10%	25.60%	17.80%	12.10%	7.40%	2.90%	100%
Human Development	20.80%	29.00%	17.90%	17.50%	8.40%	5.90%	0.50%	100%
Traditional Values	32.70%	32.70%	11.80%	5.70%	17.20%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Revise Pay And Allowance	11.60%	53.90%	18.20%	8.70%	7.60%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Gewog Development Grant	11.00%	32.20%	14.90%	8.40%	15.90%	17.70%	0.00%	100%
Helicopter/Power Tiller	9.20%	23.70%	20.60%	15.70%	21.10%	8.10%	1.60%	100%

C8. What motivated you to vote in the elections?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Duty as a citizen	9.20%	26.60%	20.40%	16.50%	16.00%	7.50%	3.80%	100%
National Duty	10.00%	19.40%	22.30%	22.70%	17.20%	6.00%	2.40%	100%
Choose Responsible Leaders	11.10%	22.20%	22.10%	19.10%	15.40%	8.80%	1.30%	100%
Party/Candidate Motivated Me to Vote	6.90%	22.90%	27.90%	20.30%	13.70%	7.40%	0.80%	100%
Family/Friends Inspired me to Vote	5.70%	20.30%	19.20%	35.00%	1.60%	16.80%	1.60%	100%
Others	36.80%	13.30%	7.10%	31.50%	11.30%	0.00%	0.00%	100%

C9. The reason for not voting:

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Name Not Reflected on Voter List	43.60%	0.00%	5.40%	17.80%	13.10%	12.50%	7.60%	100%
Didn't Have VPIC	70.20%	6.40%	4.30%	7.40%	0.00%	6.80%	4.80%	100%
No One From My Family	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Didn't Like Candidate/Political Party	0.00%	45.90%	11.10%	0.00%	11.10%	0.00%	31.90%	100%
Party I Favoured Have a woman Candidate	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Polling Station Far	18.70%	29.00%	13.60%	7.40%	13.30%	15.00%	3.00%	100%
Not Aware of The Candidate From Constituency	34.50%	21.20%	0.00%	0.00%	21.50%	0.00%	22.80%	100%

C10. What was the most important factor in your choice of a political party?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Manifesto	17.20%	22.70%	16.70%	19.70%	13.20%	9.10%	1.40%	100%
Party Leadership	13.40%	17.70%	22.40%	19.10%	16.70%	7.40%	3.20%	100%
Candidates	10.10%	24.50%	22.20%	17.90%	14.90%	8.10%	2.30%	100%
Sentimental Affinity	8.30%	41.40%	10.80%	14.70%	10.90%	10.00%	3.90%	100%

C11. What was the most important factor in your choice of candidate?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Personality	17.10%	24.30%	14.40%	18.80%	15.40%	6.80%	3.30%	100%
Better Representation	13.10%	21.30%	22.90%	18.20%	14.60%	7.70%	2.30%	100%
Better Condition For Constituency	11.10%	23.30%	17.40%	19.80%	15.60%	10.70%	2.20%	100%
Gender/Religion	0.00%	35.20%	17.90%	28.10%	18.80%	0.00%	0.00%	100%

C12. To what degree do you have control over decisions regarding your choice for whom to cast your vote during an election?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Very High Degree	12.40%	23.10%	20.70%	18.70%	14.90%	8.00%	2.20%	100%
High Degree	14.80%	21.10%	20.10%	18.80%	15.00%	7.90%	2.30%	100%
Small Degree	12.10%	9.30%	24.10%	19.90%	16.40%	10.70%	7.50%	100%
Not At All	7.20%	42.90%	9.90%	15.70%	12.60%	11.80%	0.00%	100%

C13. How did you decide for whom to vote?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Leadership/Qualification/Competency And Experience	14.50%	20.10%	21.20%	18.40%	16.40%	7.00%	2.40%	100%
Promise Made To The Public Common Forum	13.60%	26.30%	16.20%	17.80%	14.40%	10.30%	1.40%	100%
Candidate/Party Manifesto	8.20%	25.20%	20.60%	20.60%	15.40%	9.00%	1.00%	100%
Promise Made During Door-To-Door Campaign	4.40%	39.30%	19.20%	12.40%	6.20%	12.00%	6.50%	100%
Family Member/Relatives Who Are In Service	11.30%	17.50%	18.40%	28.30%	8.60%	12.30%	3.70%	100%
Discussed With Friend	9.90%	18.40%	38.30%	9.60%	0.00%	12.30%	11.50%	100%

Section D: Women's Participation in Elective offices in Bhutan

D1. Who do you believe is a better leader?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Male	11.20%	25.00%	19.90%	17.40%	15.20%	8.80%	2.60%	100%
Female	14.70%	20.20%	18.40%	14.40%	17.40%	13.30%	1.60%	100%
Both	14.10%	21.50%	21.20%	19.10%	14.40%	7.40%	2.30%	100%
Don't Know	10.00%	15.70%	17.40%	28.20%	16.90%	7.60%	4.10%	100%

D2. Who do you consider to be more capable?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Male	12.90%	22.80%	21.20%	17.70%	14.60%	8.30%	2.40%	100%
Female	15.10%	18.60%	19.60%	16.80%	17.10%	11.80%	1.00%	100%
Both	13.20%	22.30%	20.20%	19.20%	14.80%	7.70%	2.60%	100%
Don't Know	10.20%	20.40%	17.70%	23.00%	17.30%	9.90%	1.50%	100%

D3. Do you believe or not that a woman is behind a man by nine lives (*Ke-rab Gu*)?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Yes	10.20%	21.00%	20.80%	19.90%	14.60%	10.40%	3.10%	100%
No	13.00%	24.20%	20.70%	17.30%	16.70%	6.30%	1.80%	100%
Don't Know	23.10%	21.20%	18.50%	18.50%	11.30%	5.90%	1.50%	100%

D4. Have you ever experienced or witnessed women being inferior to men in:

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Decision Making	13.00%	23.30%	24.10%	16.50%	12.50%	8.40%	2.20%	100%
Dealing With Govt Officials	12.40%	26.20%	18.50%	15.00%	15.60%	10.60%	1.80%	100%
Representing The Public	14.70%	23.20%	20.40%	21.00%	15.10%	3.50%	2.00%	100%
Taking Part In Election	20.40%	24.20%	17.80%	19.40%	10.60%	5.80%	1.80%	100%
Business	8.50%	19.10%	4.00%	29.40%	24.30%	13.30%	1.30%	100%
Field Works/Labour Force Participation	11.50%	20.60%	21.20%	18.80%	16.10%	8.90%	3.00%	100%

D5. In general, who is the more dominant member in your family in terms of decision-making related to elections?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Mother	15.40%	30.60%	16.00%	10.90%	14.80%	10.10%	2.20%	100%
Father	25.80%	27.40%	15.40%	15.50%	9.90%	4.00%	2.00%	100%
Brother	5.10%	32.60%	6.50%	43.80%	11.50%	0.50%	0.00%	100%
Sister	15.10%	19.50%	34.50%	14.10%	12.90%	0.00%	3.90%	100%
Husband	1.50%	28.30%	29.60%	22.50%	16.10%	2.00%	0.00%	100%
Self	9.20%	19.30%	22.30%	19.80%	16.00%	10.40%	3.00%	100%
Others	10.80%	16.10%	19.20%	23.10%	22.20%	7.80%	0.80%	100%

D6. Are women involved in the activities related to elections such as awareness and campaign in your community?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Involved All The Time	9.60%	21.70%	22.10%	19.10%	17.30%	7.40%	2.80%	100%
Involved In Important Issues	16.20%	26.70%	15.90%	16.00%	11.80%	10.50%	2.90%	100%
Less Involved	16.10%	24.00%	21.80%	16.70%	12.70%	6.40%	2.30%	100%
Not Involved At All	10.20%	16.00%	18.30%	24.50%	18.00%	11.50%	1.60%	100%

D7. If involved, how are they involved?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Participated As Observer	7.60%	24.90%	20.90%	18.00%	16.30%	9.10%	3.30%	100%
Participating But not Substantially	14.10%	21.80%	17.70%	21.60%	13.30%	8.60%	2.90%	100%
Participating And Makes A Difference And Influence	14.30%	23.10%	21.80%	14.70%	17.00%	7.10%	2.10%	100%

D8. If less involved, this is because of:

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Socio-Cultural Discrimination	22.10%	23.60%	15.70%	9.60%	16.00%	11.20%	1.90%	100%
Long Distance To Walk	20.30%	20.80%	15.50%	16.30%	15.40%	6.90%	4.70%	100%
Family Responsibilities	15.10%	23.80%	23.30%	16.60%	12.30%	6.20%	2.80%	100%
Less Competence/Men Are More Experience	12.50%	25.90%	25.00%	21.10%	10.50%	4.10%	0.80%	100%

D9. How much influence do you feel, women have in community level decision-making processes?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
High	14.20%	18.20%	18.80%	21.00%	15.30%	9.90%	2.60%	100%
Medium	15.60%	23.60%	20.50%	15.30%	15.00%	7.40%	2.70%	100%
Low	9.80%	22.10%	21.80%	22.00%	14.10%	8.50%	1.60%	100%
No Influence	4.80%	20.80%	16.90%	26.40%	17.60%	9.90%	3.60%	100%

D10. Who do you think it is important to have in high decision-making level positions?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Male	13.40%	23.90%	21.30%	18.20%	12.80%	7.60%	2.80%	100%
Female	8.00%	23.70%	17.10%	17.80%	20.90%	9.10%	3.40%	100%
Either	13.40%	21.10%	20.20%	19.10%	15.60%	8.50%	2.10%	100%
Don't Know	14.10%	18.90%	20.50%	19.90%	16.70%	9.00%	0.90%	100%

D11. Who would you like to represent you in an elected office?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Male	12.10%	22.80%	18.90%	18.80%	15.20%	8.50%	3.70%	100%
Female	12.30%	25.50%	18.40%	18.80%	18.10%	5.60%	1.20%	100%
Both	14.10%	22.20%	21.60%	17.50%	14.30%	8.20%	2.10%	100%
Don't Know	7.40%	16.60%	18.20%	31.40%	15.70%	9.50%	1.20%	100%

D12. Which of the following positions do you think are suitable and applicable for women in Bhutanese society?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Head Of Govt/Ministerial Position	9.80%	24.70%	20.10%	17.30%	19.30%	8.00%	0.80%	100%
Parliamentarian	23.30%	18.50%	17.50%	15.10%	15.10%	7.70%	2.90%	100%
Secretary/Director	14.00%	21.00%	14.20%	22.50%	17.30%	6.50%	4.60%	100%
Doctor Of Hospital/Engineer	12.80%	22.30%	19.50%	21.10%	14.60%	8.00%	1.70%	100%
Head Of School	11.60%	18.40%	25.00%	16.90%	22.60%	5.30%	0.20%	100%
Local Elected Leader	15.40%	25.50%	25.40%	18.10%	7.80%	7.80%	0.00%	100%
Teacher	14.90%	22.80%	22.80%	16.90%	11.70%	7.90%	3.00%	100%
Housewife/Child bearer	7.50%	19.50%	16.10%	24.10%	14.10%	12.70%	5.90%	100%

D13. How you would like to be involved in the political process in future?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
As A Voter	10.40%	20.30%	20.60%	20.60%	17.20%	8.90%	2.00%	100%
Party Member	22.90%	36.70%	18.80%	10.80%	3.80%	3.40%	3.50%	100%
Candidate	26.40%	30.40%	20.90%	13.70%	4.10%	3.50%	1.00%	100%
Not Sure	19.30%	23.90%	19.80%	10.30%	11.00%	9.20%	6.50%	100%

D14. Would you be interested to stand as a candidate in future elections?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Interested Highly	23.80%	26.70%	21.90%	11.50%	8.90%	5.30%	1.90%	100%
Some Extent	24.70%	28.30%	22.80%	12.80%	9.40%	1.40%	0.60%	100%
Not Interested At All	8.30%	19.90%	19.60%	21.40%	17.40%	10.40%	3.00%	100%

D15. Are you working or doing anything to participate as a candidate in future elections?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Prepared	22.80%	26.80%	28.00%	13.10%	4.50%	2.90%	1.90%	100%
Thought But Not Prepared	25.90%	30.50%	21.10%	10.00%	9.00%	2.80%	0.70%	100%
Didn't Think/Not Prepared	9.10%	19.80%	19.70%	21.30%	17.20%	9.90%	2.90%	100%

D16. Why are you not interested to participate in elections as candidate?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Look After Household Work/Children	17.40%	26.50%	21.30%	14.00%	7.40%	8.90%	4.40%	100%
Can't Meet Educational Qualification	11.50%	21.50%	21.80%	21.90%	15.20%	6.70%	1.40%	100%
Lack of Party Support/Awareness	14.30%	32.30%	14.90%	14.80%	10.00%	11.50%	2.20%	100%
Lack of Family Encouragement And Support	45.20%	26.10%	17.00%	4.30%	7.50%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Not Interested	8.50%	17.80%	17.80%	19.60%	19.80%	12.30%	4.10%	100%

D17. In your opinion, do you think there will be more female candidates to participate in future elections?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Yes	13.90%	21.50%	22.60%	18.10%	14.40%	7.30%	2.30%	100%
Some Extent	13.10%	25.30%	18.90%	17.40%	14.80%	8.90%	1.50%	100%
Don't Know	9.90%	18.10%	15.70%	24.20%	17.30%	10.10%	4.70%	100%

D18. Should there be more elected women representatives (MPs) in Parliament?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Yes	12.90%	24.40%	21.10%	17.80%	14.20%	7.40%	2.30%	100%
No	13.70%	21.60%	19.20%	16.60%	16.00%	9.30%	3.50%	100%
Don't Know	13.50%	14.60%	18.70%	23.10%	17.20%	10.60%	2.30%	100%

D19. As a voter, how likely is it that you will vote for a female candidate in future elections?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Not Going To Vote	6.10%	23.00%	18.70%	17.40%	17.90%	11.30%	5.50%	100%
Will Vote	12.50%	22.40%	20.70%	19.60%	13.60%	8.70%	2.60%	100%
Sex Doesn't Matter	16.00%	23.40%	19.30%	16.10%	17.50%	6.50%	1.20%	100%
Not Sure	13.00%	15.90%	25.90%	26.00%	7.80%	8.80%	2.50%	100%

D20. On what qualities would you base your decision to vote for a woman candidate?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Education And Experience	14.80%	20.20%	22.30%	18.10%	15.00%	7.40%	2.40%	100%
Family Background	10.00%	21.20%	9.30%	16.90%	10.70%	22.60%	9.40%	100%
Social And Economic Status	10.10%	14.00%	20.40%	21.50%	19.00%	15.00%	0.00%	100%
Leadership/Personality	11.50%	23.50%	19.30%	20.30%	14.70%	8.80%	1.90%	100%
Honesty And Integrity	10.30%	30.80%	16.50%	17.50%	15.30%	6.60%	3.00%	100%
Religion Background	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	0.00%	50.00%	0.00%	100%

D21. In your opinion, which of the following considerations do you think is important?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Woman Considered Less Capable Than Man	12.90%	21.20%	19.10%	19.70%	13.50%	9.30%	4.20%	100%
Lack Of Confidence And Trust In Woman	14.60%	23.70%	22.10%	17.00%	14.40%	6.00%	2.10%	100%
Man And Women Have Different Roles	12.30%	18.10%	17.40%	23.10%	15.10%	13.00%	1.00%	100%
Not Vital In Management And Governance As Men	15.40%	21.50%	25.40%	15.20%	18.70%	3.10%	0.70%	100%
Women Do Not Have Experience and Education	9.60%	25.70%	19.60%	17.80%	16.50%	8.50%	2.40%	100%

D22. Do you think there are any obstacles to women participating as candidate in elections?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Yes	11.90%	22.40%	22.00%	18.40%	16.00%	7.40%	1.80%	100%
No	16.30%	21.20%	20.20%	17.90%	13.30%	7.70%	3.20%	100%
Don't Know	8.50%	24.50%	15.70%	21.70%	15.60%	11.90%	2.10%	100%

D23. What do you think are the obstacles to women's participating as candidate in elections in Bhutan?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Prevailing Cultural Attitude Regarding The Roles of Women	10.30%	28.60%	18.30%	11.30%	9.10%	15.00%	7.30%	100%
Domestic Responsibilities	14.70%	22.90%	19.20%	21.30%	14.60%	5.50%	1.80%	100%
Lack of Educational Qualification And Experience In Representative Function	8.80%	20.20%	23.10%	17.90%	19.10%	8.60%	2.30%	100%
Environment of Political Institution Is Not Gender Friendly	18.40%	7.00%	13.90%	18.80%	26.20%	15.70%	0.00%	100%
Self Confidence And Also Fear of Incompetence In Decision Making	6.30%	24.20%	27.80%	17.20%	15.10%	9.40%	0.00%	100%
Socio-Economic Barriers	0.00%	7.20%	17.30%	30.00%	45.50%	0.00%	0.00%	100%

Attitude of Women Leadership	17.20%	21.00%	32.20%	8.30%	15.50%	5.70%	0.00%	100%
Lack of Family Encouragement	9.20%	25.00%	26.80%	27.40%	7.70%	1.40%	2.50%	100%
Fear of Conflict With Family Members	7.10%	41.10%	17.90%	28.00%	6.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Fear of Violence/Political Seen As Dirty or Corrupt	10.70%	27.10%	35.50%	7.20%	19.50%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Electoral System And Nomination	0.00%	0.00%	100%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Lack of Support From Male Participants	37.70%	9.60%	15.40%	3.90%	33.40%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Religion	25.40%	0.00%	0.00%	27.50%	47.10%	0.00%	0.00%	100%

D24. Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion about men and women as political leaders?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Men Better As Political Leaders Than Women	10.20%	18.40%	22.60%	20.70%	16.10%	9.20%	2.80%	100%
Women Better As Political Leader Than Men	19.20%	13.10%	12.20%	21.90%	23.90%	8.30%	1.30%	100%
Equally Good Political Leader	13.20%	22.70%	20.20%	18.60%	14.10%	8.70%	2.60%	100%
Vote For Woman If She Is Capable	15.70%	26.90%	20.20%	16.50%	13.90%	5.30%	1.60%	100%
Can't Trust Women's Capabilities	6.50%	35.50%	6.60%	6.10%	20.60%	18.60%	6.10%	100%

D25. Do you think social issues are important?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Yes	13.10%	22.50%	21.10%	18.00%	14.60%	7.90%	2.70%	100%
No	16.60%	20.80%	21.50%	17.30%	15.20%	7.50%	1.20%	100%
Don't Know	10.00%	22.20%	15.80%	23.80%	16.30%	10.30%	1.60%	100%

D26. In your opinion, who do you think is more aware and recognizes the importance of social issues?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Male	11.40%	22.80%	20.70%	19.50%	13.20%	9.00%	3.40%	100%
Female	11.30%	21.50%	22.80%	20.00%	20.30%	2.70%	1.40%	100%
Both	14.10%	22.10%	20.00%	18.10%	14.90%	8.60%	2.10%	100%

Section E: Overall Views on Electoral Process

E1. Do you think men and women have equal rights under the laws in Bhutan?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Yes	13.40%	22.50%	21.00%	17.40%	14.90%	8.30%	2.50%	100%
No	12.90%	21.80%	17.30%	29.90%	12.00%	4.30%	1.70%	100%
Don't Know	9.20%	20.20%	17.60%	20.30%	18.40%	12.00%	2.30%	100%

E2. Do nomination and other electoral processes pose difficulties for women candidates?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Yes	11.80%	25.20%	22.60%	17.80%	14.70%	7.50%	0.50%	100%
No	13.60%	20.80%	21.50%	18.30%	15.30%	7.60%	2.80%	100%
Don't Know	12.80%	23.10%	17.50%	20.00%	14.40%	9.50%	2.70%	100%

E3. If yes, what are three main difficulties women candidates face in such processes?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Nomination form	14.90%	19.50%	53.70%	3.90%	8.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Affidavit	47.10%	17.60%	17.60%	0.00%	17.60%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Asset Declaration	0.00%	18.30%	0.00%	51.20%	30.60%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Tax Clearance Certificate	0.00%	14.90%	0.00%	19.10%	66.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Audit Clearance Certificate	43.90%	0.00%	56.10%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Security Clearance Certificate	41.00%	0.00%	0.00%	29.50%	29.50%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Attestation By RUB	17.40%	40.80%	40.30%	1.60%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Declaration(Not Member of Political Party)	0.00%	100%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Distance To Travel	3.00%	22.30%	22.80%	23.20%	18.90%	9.90%	0.00%	100%
Security Problem	45.20%	54.80%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Others	13.40%	27.10%	19.30%	18.10%	11.10%	10.10%	0.90%	100%
Others	19.30%	58.30%	0.00%	8.30%	7.60%	6.50%	0.00%	100%

E4. In general, how satisfied are you with process of getting the various documents and clearances for your nomination?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Very Satisfied	12.40%	20.70%	22.30%	19.60%	15.90%	7.60%	1.50%	100%
Satisfied	14.90%	21.50%	22.60%	16.30%	15.90%	7.20%	1.70%	100%
Neutral	11.30%	22.70%	17.40%	21.40%	13.50%	9.40%	4.20%	100%
Dissatisfied	14.40%	25.50%	19.60%	16.70%	14.80%	8.70%	0.40%	100%
Very Dissatisfied	4.30%	34.10%	9.60%	25.70%	8.90%	13.80%	3.70%	100%

E5. Did you personally attend any of the voter information and education programmes conducted by the Election Commission and the Dzongkhag Election Office?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Yes	9.50%	22.80%	21.10%	21.20%	15.30%	7.90%	2.00%	100%
No	22.90%	20.60%	18.50%	11.70%	13.90%	8.90%	3.50%	100%

E6. How do you think of the conduct of voter education and information dissemination so far?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Adequate	9.10%	22.30%	22.20%	20.20%	16.00%	7.90%	2.20%	100%
Inadequate	6.60%	18.00%	14.50%	23.40%	22.30%	15.30%	0.00%	100%
Awareness Program Needed	11.00%	24.70%	20.50%	22.50%	12.70%	6.60%	2.00%	100%

E7. Do you think civic and voter education on continued basis will be effective in preparing voters to participate meaningfully in elections?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Yes	12.30%	23.40%	20.60%	18.70%	14.80%	8.00%	2.30%	100%
No	26.10%	12.90%	28.80%	9.00%	18.40%	1.90%	2.80%	100%
Don't Know	15.10%	15.80%	15.60%	22.90%	14.40%	12.60%	3.60%	100%

E8. Do you think civic and voter education encompasses disseminating knowledge on the need of gender equality in elected offices – reasonable representation of women in such offices?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Yes	12.00%	23.50%	21.90%	17.60%	15.70%	6.60%	2.60%	100%
No	16.70%	20.60%	13.30%	20.60%	14.10%	13.80%	0.90%	100%
Don't Know	15.00%	18.50%	18.50%	21.80%	12.50%	11.20%	2.50%	100%

E9. What is your experience of the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM)?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Very User-Friendly	10.90%	23.30%	21.50%	19.60%	14.80%	7.80%	2.10%	100%
Not User-Friendly	24.40%	18.30%	13.40%	8.30%	16.70%	12.40%	6.50%	100%
Neutral	30.70%	14.20%	16.20%	10.90%	17.20%	7.10%	3.80%	100%
Nervous To Use	21.50%	14.30%	5.50%	25.40%	8.50%	20.40%	4.40%	100%

E10. Did you see/hear of voter information and education programs on media?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Yes	13.90%	23.20%	21.30%	18.00%	14.60%	7.20%	1.80%	100%
No	7.50%	20.20%	15.60%	21.20%	18.30%	10.20%	7.00%	100%
Don't Know	10.10%	10.80%	15.60%	25.80%	14.10%	20.30%	3.30%	100%

E11. In your opinion, which mass-media is accessible on the voter education and information dissemination coverage?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Newspaper	26.40%	15.40%	17.60%	22.20%	12.00%	5.40%	1.00%	100%
Social Media	19.10%	29.10%	13.90%	12.90%	21.60%	3.30%	0.00%	100%
Radio	11.70%	25.00%	23.50%	14.80%	14.00%	8.50%	2.50%	100%
Mobile	31.50%	25.40%	12.20%	13.60%	17.40%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Television	13.80%	21.10%	21.90%	18.70%	14.90%	7.60%	2.00%	100%
Election Advisory/Advertising Board	9.60%	30.20%	16.60%	27.90%	11.60%	4.10%	0.00%	100%

E12. Do you think the media is fair and neutral in its dissemination of information, reporting and coverage of the election?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Yes	13.50%	22.90%	21.10%	18.40%	14.30%	7.50%	2.30%	100%
No	13.70%	25.40%	21.70%	16.80%	18.30%	3.10%	1.10%	100%
Don't Know	11.30%	18.90%	17.60%	20.50%	16.10%	12.30%	3.40%	100%

E13. Do you think that male and female candidates have equal access to media election campaigns?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Yes	13.30%	22.40%	21.10%	18.20%	14.90%	7.70%	2.50%	100%
No	19.90%	26.00%	18.20%	17.20%	12.80%	5.70%	0.10%	100%
Don't Know	10.20%	20.60%	18.30%	21.40%	15.60%	11.20%	2.80%	100%

E14. Do you think there is a need for reform/change in the current practices or for new reforms to enhance women's representation in elected offices?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Yes	14.80%	24.30%	18.90%	16.50%	16.80%	6.90%	1.90%	100%
No	11.00%	21.40%	24.30%	18.40%	15.10%	7.40%	2.30%	100%
Don't Know	12.60%	19.30%	18.30%	23.40%	10.90%	11.90%	3.60%	100%

E15. If yes, from the following, in your opinion which one would be the most appropriate?

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Educating Women	14.10%	23.50%	17.60%	20.00%	16.00%	6.90%	2.00%	100%
Electoral Process And Requirement More Simple	13.10%	25.80%	20.10%	14.10%	17.10%	6.60%	3.20%	100%
Introduction of Quota System For Women	18.80%	23.50%	19.00%	13.70%	16.50%	6.30%	2.10%	100%
Reserved Seats For Women In Parliament	11.40%	27.20%	22.40%	10.60%	20.50%	7.90%	0.00%	100%

F1. Opinions on the Determinants of Voter's Choice

Common forums and public debates are very advantageous to the political party, candidates and voters	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly Agree	12.30%	21.70%	21.40%	20.80%	15.20%	6.80%	1.90%	100%
Agree	13.60%	23.90%	18.90%	17.20%	14.90%	8.90%	2.60%	100%
Neutral	12.20%	16.80%	23.00%	14.50%	13.20%	15.20%	5.20%	100%
Disagree	21.20%	17.60%	31.40%	14.40%	15.50%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Strongly Disagree	33.70%	14.30%	0.00%	33.50%	18.60%	0.00%	0.00%	100%

Civic and voter education played a critical role for awareness of political party and candidates.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly Agree	11.20%	20.50%	18.90%	21.50%	18.10%	8.30%	1.50%	100%
Agree	14.00%	23.90%	22.60%	17.20%	11.90%	7.70%	2.70%	100%
Neutral	16.50%	16.80%	12.70%	17.80%	21.50%	10.40%	4.40%	100%
Disagree	9.00%	28.40%	17.10%	10.50%	14.80%	14.10%	6.10%	100%
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	48.80%	0.00%	0.00%	51.20%	0.00%	0.00%	100%

Media played a fair role in dissemination of adequate information about parties, policies, candidates and the election process helping to make informed choices.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	11.80%	22.50%	19.80%	18.50%	15.50%	9.80%	2.20%	100%
Agree	14.30%	23.10%	21.20%	17.80%	13.70%	7.20%	2.80%	100%
Neutral	11.30%	16.30%	19.60%	23.40%	18.30%	9.60%	1.50%	100%
Disagree	18.60%	36.40%	18.90%	4.50%	16.20%	1.20%	4.20%	100%
Strongly disagree	0.00%	55.00%	0.00%	38.60%	6.40%	0.00%	0.00%	100%

The engagement by political parties and candidates during election campaign and non-election period is an important medium.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 and above	Total
Strongly agree	13.30%	22.40%	20.70%	17.50%	15.00%	8.70%	2.30%	100%
Agree	13.90%	22.00%	21.20%	20.10%	13.50%	7.30%	2.00%	100%
Neutral	12.10%	25.20%	19.00%	17.50%	14.00%	8.80%	3.40%	100%
Disagree	11.40%	18.00%	19.50%	18.00%	21.50%	9.70%	2.00%	100%
Strongly disagree	12.80%	11.60%	22.20%	18.00%	24.50%	8.70%	2.10%	100%

The elected candidate had always been a strong and positive leader in the country/community.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	10.00%	24.20%	19.80%	19.90%	13.70%	8.90%	3.50%	100%
Agree	13.80%	22.90%	22.20%	17.30%	14.50%	7.40%	1.90%	100%
Neutral	14.10%	21.60%	18.80%	19.40%	14.40%	8.50%	3.10%	100%
Disagree	15.10%	19.60%	18.50%	19.70%	18.00%	8.10%	1.10%	100%
Strongly disagree	4.20%	15.10%	24.60%	19.30%	22.50%	13.30%	1.00%	100%

I thought about the candidate's past work on development issues.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	11.20%	24.20%	17.80%	22.70%	16.40%	6.10%	1.70%	100%
Agree	14.70%	22.50%	20.30%	18.60%	12.90%	7.90%	3.10%	100%
Neutral	11.70%	17.20%	24.80%	14.60%	18.00%	11.40%	2.30%	100%
Disagree	12.00%	31.20%	17.60%	18.50%	12.80%	7.10%	0.70%	100%
Strongly disagree	10.50%	16.90%	13.60%	23.50%	27.90%	7.70%	0.00%	100%

I tried to assess whether or not the candidate would be accessible to me and my family.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	12.50%	23.90%	23.90%	17.10%	12.30%	7.40%	3.00%	100%
Agree	12.90%	23.60%	22.30%	18.60%	11.90%	8.00%	2.70%	100%
Neutral	12.30%	21.70%	17.80%	19.20%	18.30%	8.00%	2.60%	100%
Disagree	14.00%	20.60%	20.60%	19.20%	14.80%	8.90%	1.80%	100%
Strongly disagree	14.50%	21.60%	14.70%	18.10%	21.70%	8.10%	1.20%	100%

I considered the history of the candidate on corrupt or illegal activities.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	12.50%	24.50%	19.20%	21.00%	15.60%	4.90%	2.30%	100%
Agree	13.50%	22.20%	22.30%	18.80%	12.50%	9.00%	1.70%	100%
Neutral	15.70%	21.10%	23.50%	12.50%	14.70%	9.90%	2.60%	100%
Disagree	11.70%	22.10%	15.60%	20.00%	17.10%	9.00%	4.50%	100%
Strongly disagree	7.90%	15.50%	17.60%	26.30%	22.40%	10.10%	0.00%	100%

I decided based on the realistic/practicality of candidate and party manifestos.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	11.60%	21.70%	19.80%	21.00%	15.70%	8.00%	2.20%	100%
Agree	13.60%	24.00%	21.10%	17.70%	13.10%	7.40%	3.10%	100%
Neutral	12.30%	16.70%	19.90%	21.30%	18.60%	10.20%	1.10%	100%
Disagree	16.70%	24.30%	20.50%	13.10%	16.80%	8.60%	0.00%	100%
Strongly disagree	17.40%	20.10%	12.00%	7.30%	23.70%	19.60%	0.00%	100%

I decided to vote based on the qualification, competency, experience and leadership.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	13.30%	22.20%	19.90%	20.80%	12.90%	8.40%	2.40%	100%
Agree	13.80%	21.80%	21.70%	17.20%	16.30%	6.70%	2.60%	100%
Neutral	8.20%	19.70%	19.00%	16.30%	21.70%	13.30%	1.70%	100%
Disagree	8.80%	39.10%	18.20%	3.80%	10.50%	17.20%	2.40%	100%
Strongly disagree	0.00%	19.90%	0.00%	17.60%	50.00%	12.50%	0.00%	100%

Door-to-door campaign provided ample opportunity to meet candidate and know about his/ her commitments/promises made.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	10.40%	27.60%	14.50%	21.40%	14.90%	8.10%	3.00%	100%
Agree	15.00%	19.50%	23.30%	19.10%	12.90%	7.50%	2.70%	100%
Neutral	13.40%	19.00%	20.60%	16.90%	17.90%	10.50%	1.70%	100%
Disagree	11.50%	28.30%	20.50%	15.10%	14.90%	7.90%	1.80%	100%
Strongly disagree	8.60%	21.10%	16.10%	22.70%	22.60%	7.10%	2.00%	100%

I discussed my vote with my family members/ relative in the public service.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	10.10%	25.00%	17.70%	20.80%	13.50%	9.30%	3.60%	100%
Agree	10.80%	23.70%	24.40%	17.80%	10.20%	10.00%	3.10%	100%
Neutral	16.30%	17.90%	12.20%	25.50%	15.20%	8.60%	4.30%	100%
Disagree	14.80%	20.40%	20.90%	18.80%	16.30%	7.30%	1.60%	100%
Strongly disagree	12.30%	25.20%	20.50%	14.70%	18.60%	7.10%	1.70%	100%

I discussed my vote with my friends and followed their advice.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	6.60%	22.40%	23.90%	25.20%	12.30%	9.50%	0.00%	100%
Agree	12.30%	15.30%	22.80%	16.70%	17.70%	8.60%	6.70%	100%
Neutral	17.60%	24.80%	14.10%	16.30%	15.20%	10.00%	2.00%	100%
Disagree	13.80%	20.90%	21.00%	20.50%	14.30%	7.90%	1.70%	100%
Strongly disagree	11.70%	26.10%	20.10%	16.10%	15.40%	7.80%	2.70%	100%

My family had always voted for that party/ candidate because of his/her family history and standing in the locality.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	10.20%	18.80%	18.00%	28.90%	10.70%	8.20%	5.10%	100%
Agree	16.20%	21.10%	19.60%	22.30%	10.90%	6.70%	3.10%	100%
Neutral	9.90%	21.90%	20.30%	17.00%	13.00%	14.10%	3.80%	100%
Disagree	14.40%	21.90%	21.50%	18.00%	15.60%	6.70%	1.90%	100%
Strongly disagree	10.50%	25.50%	19.10%	15.80%	19.10%	8.80%	1.20%	100%

F2. Opinions on Women's Participation in Elective Offices

Male candidates are preferred over female candidates.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	12.20%	21.90%	15.60%	25.20%	15.40%	7.10%	2.60%	100%
Agree	13.60%	26.00%	20.60%	16.50%	12.20%	8.10%	3.00%	100%
Neutral	9.70%	20.20%	25.10%	18.70%	13.80%	10.40%	2.10%	100%
Disagree	16.20%	20.50%	21.50%	16.00%	15.50%	7.90%	2.40%	100%
Strongly disagree	11.90%	19.70%	15.10%	19.90%	27.20%	5.90%	0.30%	100%

I am not ready to elect women as fewer women are literate than men in the country.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	13.20%	18.60%	16.70%	22.80%	14.70%	12.50%	1.50%	100%
Agree	14.20%	21.70%	21.00%	20.40%	10.50%	8.10%	4.10%	100%
Neutral	12.70%	22.50%	21.20%	18.70%	15.60%	6.50%	2.80%	100%
Disagree	13.00%	22.50%	20.30%	18.00%	16.00%	8.30%	1.80%	100%
Strongly disagree	11.90%	23.40%	20.40%	16.60%	17.40%	8.70%	1.70%	100%

There has not been a real effort to attract a wider spectrum of women into politics.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	10.10%	20.60%	13.50%	23.20%	17.60%	13.30%	1.80%	100%
Agree	13.00%	19.50%	19.70%	21.50%	15.90%	7.40%	2.90%	100%
Neutral	13.10%	22.60%	21.90%	17.00%	14.30%	9.20%	1.80%	100%
Disagree	13.70%	25.20%	22.60%	16.10%	14.30%	5.60%	2.40%	100%
Strongly disagree	15.40%	27.90%	13.90%	14.90%	9.10%	15.00%	3.80%	100%

Many women lack qualification and relevant skills necessary to perform well in politics.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	9.00%	23.40%	15.00%	24.50%	17.20%	7.90%	3.10%	100%
Agree	13.70%	22.10%	19.40%	20.00%	13.70%	7.80%	3.20%	100%
Neutral	11.70%	17.60%	25.50%	14.80%	16.30%	11.10%	3.00%	100%
Disagree	13.20%	24.40%	21.20%	17.70%	15.00%	6.70%	1.80%	100%
Strongly disagree	17.90%	19.90%	18.40%	17.70%	14.10%	12.00%	0.00%	100%

A woman would not be able to handle national issues such as law and order, combat corruption, improve the economic situation of the country, etc.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	8.90%	14.60%	13.40%	27.50%	16.20%	16.20%	3.20%	100%
Agree	11.50%	19.50%	20.00%	25.40%	13.50%	7.60%	2.50%	100%
Neutral	9.80%	26.60%	19.80%	16.50%	14.70%	10.10%	2.50%	100%
Disagree	14.20%	23.30%	21.80%	17.10%	14.40%	6.60%	2.50%	100%
Strongly disagree	17.60%	21.80%	20.30%	10.20%	19.60%	9.30%	1.20%	100%

Women are less likely to bring anything new to politics/ decision making process as compared to men.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	9.70%	19.70%	9.00%	30.20%	18.60%	9.60%	3.30%	100%
Agree	10.10%	20.40%	23.10%	23.00%	12.30%	8.50%	2.50%	100%
Neutral	15.40%	22.50%	21.90%	14.20%	15.30%	7.40%	3.10%	100%
Disagree	14.00%	22.80%	20.00%	17.50%	15.40%	8.30%	2.10%	100%
Strongly disagree	14.70%	25.50%	21.20%	13.30%	16.30%	7.10%	1.90%	100%

Politics is a masculine activity and involves violence.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	12.50%	25.60%	13.70%	16.20%	13.80%	14.70%	3.40%	100%
Agree	14.60%	24.10%	21.70%	17.80%	11.20%	8.40%	2.10%	100%
Neutral	12.10%	19.20%	18.80%	21.10%	17.70%	6.90%	4.20%	100%
Disagree	13.40%	22.00%	20.80%	19.20%	14.80%	8.00%	1.70%	100%
Strongly disagree	12.10%	23.00%	21.70%	16.80%	16.30%	7.80%	2.40%	100%

Fewer role-models for women in high positions to inspire.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	10.90%	22.20%	14.70%	23.30%	15.80%	11.30%	1.80%	100%
Agree	12.60%	22.30%	21.70%	19.50%	14.00%	7.20%	2.60%	100%
Neutral	11.30%	20.80%	21.90%	15.70%	16.80%	10.40%	3.00%	100%
Disagree	20.10%	24.30%	24.10%	10.90%	13.20%	5.20%	2.20%	100%
Strongly disagree	16.00%	16.10%	17.40%	18.60%	28.80%	3.00%	0.00%	100%

The need to possess a formal university has restricted many women's candidates from elections.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	12.50%	23.10%	12.80%	24.80%	12.90%	10.40%	3.70%	100%
Agree	13.10%	21.00%	23.00%	17.00%	13.50%	10.10%	2.30%	100%
Neutral	13.60%	19.40%	18.90%	18.10%	17.80%	7.80%	4.30%	100%
Disagree	14.20%	25.60%	21.70%	18.90%	12.70%	5.70%	1.20%	100%
Strongly disagree	6.90%	18.90%	17.30%	19.60%	24.00%	12.00%	1.20%	100%

Women lack support from political party.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	12.40%	25.90%	10.20%	24.60%	14.30%	10.50%	2.20%	100%
Agree	10.20%	24.60%	20.30%	20.50%	15.40%	7.90%	1.10%	100%
Neutral	11.50%	20.40%	18.50%	19.70%	17.10%	9.20%	3.60%	100%
Disagree	15.40%	20.50%	24.10%	16.70%	13.60%	7.00%	2.60%	100%
Strongly disagree	13.80%	26.80%	15.60%	16.20%	15.30%	10.60%	1.70%	100%

Women's participation in local politics is affected by the salary and incentives they get.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	10.40%	21.30%	21.00%	20.00%	14.30%	13.00%	0.00%	100%
Agree	10.90%	23.40%	21.60%	17.50%	13.10%	10.20%	3.30%	100%
Neutral	13.10%	16.20%	19.80%	17.70%	18.60%	11.50%	3.30%	100%
Disagree	14.60%	22.70%	20.70%	19.20%	13.90%	6.50%	2.40%	100%
Strongly disagree	10.90%	27.20%	18.90%	18.90%	16.10%	6.50%	1.50%	100%

Women in power would not be able to obtain international aid for the country.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	8.80%	27.80%	12.80%	26.30%	18.70%	5.70%	0.00%	100%
Agree	9.80%	23.40%	21.20%	23.90%	11.10%	6.30%	4.20%	100%
Neutral	13.60%	18.70%	21.40%	19.20%	13.10%	11.40%	2.60%	100%
Disagree	13.80%	21.90%	20.90%	17.10%	15.80%	8.00%	2.50%	100%
Strongly disagree	14.90%	24.40%	19.40%	15.80%	16.80%	7.80%	1.00%	100%

A woman would not have sufficient time to deal with legislative issues because of family responsibilities.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	13.60%	19.80%	9.70%	28.80%	16.70%	9.70%	1.70%	100%
Agree	11.50%	22.60%	23.20%	17.00%	14.30%	8.00%	3.40%	100%
Neutral	16.70%	19.70%	15.30%	21.30%	16.50%	8.00%	2.70%	100%
Disagree	12.60%	23.50%	22.10%	18.70%	13.60%	7.50%	1.90%	100%
Strongly disagree	13.90%	21.80%	20.80%	13.50%	17.90%	10.30%	1.80%	100%

The prevailing traditional beliefs discourage voting for women.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	9.50%	23.80%	11.10%	24.40%	16.50%	12.20%	2.50%	100%
Agree	11.20%	22.00%	21.70%	19.20%	15.30%	7.40%	3.20%	100%
Neutral	12.60%	21.60%	21.10%	19.30%	14.10%	7.70%	3.70%	100%
Disagree	16.20%	22.90%	20.00%	17.30%	14.50%	7.40%	1.70%	100%
Strongly disagree	10.00%	20.30%	26.20%	16.20%	16.30%	10.50%	0.50%	100%

F3. Civic Education and Training

Civic and voter education should be provided on continuous basis.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	12.30%	22.40%	17.90%	21.30%	16.00%	8.00%	2.10%	100%
Agree	12.60%	23.10%	21.60%	16.90%	14.20%	8.80%	2.80%	100%
Neutral	21.00%	15.50%	25.30%	19.40%	13.40%	4.50%	0.80%	100%
Disagree	15.10%	21.90%	35.50%	7.00%	7.60%	10.10%	2.70%	100%
Strongly disagree	16.50%	16.50%	0.00%	0.00%	48.50%	0.00%	18.60%	100%

Civic and voter education and training and information dissemination should be taken to most of the rural communities and voters.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	12.50%	21.90%	21.20%	19.50%	14.90%	7.50%	2.50%	100%
Agree	13.50%	23.20%	20.20%	17.70%	14.90%	8.30%	2.20%	100%
Neutral	9.40%	24.80%	18.50%	20.10%	8.80%	14.10%	4.20%	100%
Disagree	25.70%	4.80%	12.60%	20.50%	27.30%	9.10%	0.00%	100%
Strongly disagree	39.50%	0.00%	12.90%	0.00%	47.60%	0.00%	0.00%	100%

Gender sensitization programme and more awareness campaign should be conducted for women voters.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	13.10%	22.90%	18.10%	21.50%	16.60%	6.00%	1.70%	100%
Agree	12.40%	23.20%	22.60%	18.50%	13.70%	6.70%	2.90%	100%
Neutral	13.90%	22.20%	16.40%	16.30%	13.90%	14.80%	2.60%	100%
Disagree	18.10%	14.90%	20.50%	16.50%	15.60%	12.60%	1.80%	100%
Strongly disagree	0.00%	14.40%	34.30%	9.90%	34.90%	6.50%	0.00%	100%

There should be adequate information on women candidates' qualifications and platforms, and disseminated further in advance of elections so voters can make informed choices.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	12.10%	21.80%	18.40%	21.70%	16.20%	8.70%	1.10%	100%
Agree	12.10%	23.80%	21.90%	17.90%	14.30%	7.00%	3.10%	100%
Neutral	15.80%	17.90%	19.10%	17.80%	16.30%	10.40%	2.70%	100%
Disagree	19.70%	21.10%	16.50%	21.30%	8.70%	12.70%	0.00%	100%
Strongly disagree	13.00%	21.30%	23.60%	5.10%	28.70%	8.30%	0.00%	100%

Political leadership trainings to be arranged for interested women to encourage joining politics.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	13.00%	21.20%	18.40%	21.40%	17.00%	7.40%	1.80%	100%
Agree	11.90%	23.60%	21.50%	18.40%	14.30%	7.60%	2.80%	100%
Neutral	19.70%	16.50%	25.40%	16.40%	9.50%	8.40%	4.00%	100%
Disagree	13.30%	25.80%	15.30%	12.70%	15.60%	17.20%	0.00%	100%
Strongly disagree	8.20%	23.70%	6.30%	14.50%	39.10%	8.20%	0.00%	100%

Increase awareness of the roles and responsibilities of women as elected members.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	12.30%	23.10%	16.00%	21.10%	18.70%	7.30%	1.40%	100%
Agree	12.90%	22.60%	22.60%	17.90%	13.80%	7.30%	2.90%	100%
Neutral	13.80%	19.10%	19.90%	19.20%	14.00%	10.90%	3.10%	100%
Disagree	15.50%	22.70%	17.40%	17.60%	10.90%	14.70%	1.20%	100%
Strongly disagree	20.10%	10.60%	27.10%	7.50%	27.10%	7.50%	0.00%	100%

F4. Opinions on Existing Rules and Regulations

Common Forums played critical role in enabling more voters to understand about political parties and candidates.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	11.30%	21.60%	19.60%	22.00%	15.90%	8.20%	1.50%	100%
Agree	14.60%	22.70%	21.80%	16.70%	13.70%	7.50%	3.10%	100%
Neutral	12.30%	22.20%	12.00%	16.20%	18.70%	15.50%	3.20%	100%
Disagree	19.40%	20.00%	40.10%	0.00%	20.40%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Strongly disagree	0.00%	64.40%	17.80%	0.00%	17.80%	0.00%	0.00%	100%

Need specific laws or policies for political and economic empowerment of women.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	12.50%	23.90%	15.30%	24.30%	16.20%	6.40%	1.30%	100%
Agree	13.20%	21.40%	21.80%	18.50%	14.60%	7.50%	3.00%	100%
Neutral	13.20%	21.00%	19.00%	19.40%	14.80%	9.70%	3.00%	100%
Disagree	14.70%	23.40%	21.20%	14.70%	16.00%	8.00%	2.10%	100%
Strongly disagree	6.00%	24.40%	24.80%	21.80%	9.80%	13.20%	0.00%	100%

Need testing centres in every Gewog to take Functional Literacy Test.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	11.50%	21.50%	23.30%	18.40%	15.50%	7.90%	1.90%	100%
Agree	15.40%	23.10%	16.40%	20.50%	13.80%	8.20%	2.50%	100%
Neutral	7.20%	21.50%	22.30%	17.30%	16.60%	11.50%	3.60%	100%
Disagree	20.50%	23.10%	25.90%	11.80%	12.30%	3.00%	3.40%	100%
Strongly disagree	6.80%	19.70%	31.20%	9.20%	28.00%	5.00%	0.00%	100%

Obtaining various documents and clearances for nomination process is not easy for a woman.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	12.10%	39.10%	7.90%	13.70%	19.10%	8.00%	0.00%	100%
Agree	15.00%	21.70%	21.60%	20.80%	13.60%	5.80%	1.40%	100%
Neutral	10.60%	20.00%	19.40%	19.00%	17.50%	9.20%	4.30%	100%
Disagree	14.90%	22.80%	22.20%	17.20%	13.20%	8.10%	1.60%	100%
Strongly disagree	10.20%	19.20%	20.70%	23.50%	14.20%	9.50%	2.80%	100%

Obtaining various documents and clearances for nomination process is not easy for a man.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	7.90%	34.60%	12.20%	11.20%	24.20%	8.90%	1.10%	100%
Agree	12.70%	22.90%	19.20%	20.80%	15.50%	7.50%	1.50%	100%
Neutral	11.80%	20.20%	21.00%	18.40%	15.20%	9.30%	4.00%	100%
Disagree	14.50%	22.90%	21.90%	18.10%	14.20%	7.00%	1.50%	100%
Strongly disagree	13.80%	18.90%	17.70%	23.00%	12.50%	10.80%	3.40%	100%

Party Godenpas and Leyjapas are the cause of communal discord during elections.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	9.90%	20.90%	20.00%	20.70%	16.90%	10.20%	1.40%	100%
Agree	12.50%	25.30%	22.30%	18.70%	12.60%	6.80%	2.00%	100%
Neutral	15.30%	18.70%	19.90%	19.40%	16.00%	8.00%	2.70%	100%
Disagree	17.20%	23.20%	18.70%	14.50%	14.10%	8.20%	4.10%	100%
Strongly disagree	8.90%	21.60%	18.70%	21.00%	18.80%	7.20%	3.80%	100%

Political parties and candidates should be restricted from making unrealistic electoral promises.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	13.30%	23.30%	19.90%	18.50%	14.30%	8.20%	2.60%	100%
Agree	12.70%	20.70%	21.80%	20.10%	14.30%	7.90%	2.50%	100%
Neutral	9.50%	23.10%	22.40%	17.10%	19.40%	7.00%	1.50%	100%
Disagree	22.90%	16.90%	16.70%	18.70%	12.20%	11.20%	1.40%	100%
Strongly disagree	12.20%	30.40%	10.90%	12.30%	17.50%	11.00%	5.80%	100%

Door-to-door campaign provided ample opportunities for the candidates or party workers to move freely.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	11.30%	26.20%	15.20%	19.50%	17.30%	7.90%	2.70%	100%
Agree	15.20%	20.80%	22.30%	18.80%	13.10%	6.80%	3.00%	100%
Neutral	10.70%	18.30%	22.50%	20.80%	16.80%	9.70%	1.20%	100%
Disagree	11.80%	28.10%	18.00%	14.20%	15.20%	11.50%	1.20%	100%
Strongly disagree	6.60%	25.80%	14.10%	19.70%	20.60%	10.00%	3.20%	100%

Quota system is necessary to improve representation of women in Parliament.	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	12.60%	21.70%	17.40%	15.00%	18.20%	11.40%	3.70%	100%
Agree	12.40%	23.90%	22.00%	20.00%	12.40%	7.30%	2.10%	100%
Neutral	11.70%	20.30%	21.00%	20.00%	16.30%	7.50%	3.20%	100%
Disagree	16.40%	23.00%	18.00%	18.10%	14.90%	8.30%	1.20%	100%
Strongly disagree	14.10%	21.60%	25.70%	16.30%	13.60%	8.20%	0.50%	100%

F5. Opinions on what makes a good political leader

Inclusive decision makers	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	13.80%	21.60%	20.60%	20.40%	13.40%	7.40%	2.80%	100%
Agree	11.60%	22.60%	22.10%	17.60%	14.60%	8.90%	2.40%	100%
Neutral	13.20%	28.70%	10.50%	11.40%	22.60%	13.10%	0.40%	100%
Disagree	26.00%	16.10%	11.60%	20.00%	25.30%	1.00%	0.00%	100%
Strongly disagree	0.00%	17.70%	5.70%	19.10%	57.40%	0.00%	0.00%	100%

Approachable and involved in community activities	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	13.50%	23.10%	18.70%	21.10%	14.10%	7.00%	2.50%	100%
Agree	12.80%	20.30%	22.30%	16.70%	16.00%	9.20%	2.60%	100%
Neutral	9.70%	35.80%	18.40%	13.40%	8.50%	12.90%	1.10%	100%
Disagree	16.00%	20.40%	30.90%	17.90%	14.80%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Strongly disagree	20.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	60.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%

Good communicator/listener	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	13.50%	20.70%	19.40%	20.20%	15.30%	8.40%	2.60%	100%
Agree	13.60%	23.90%	21.70%	17.40%	13.80%	7.40%	2.30%	100%
Neutral	2.70%	25.60%	23.00%	18.50%	14.20%	13.80%	2.20%	100%
Disagree	28.90%	17.90%	12.50%	0.00%	27.80%	12.80%	0.00%	100%
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	80.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%

Honest/ truthful and committed	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	12.50%	22.50%	20.60%	19.90%	14.20%	8.10%	2.30%	100%
Agree	14.00%	21.80%	20.40%	17.90%	14.60%	8.50%	2.80%	100%
Neutral	17.30%	26.10%	19.80%	8.00%	19.50%	9.20%	0.00%	100%
Disagree	9.10%	18.60%	23.90%	12.00%	32.20%	4.30%	0.00%	100%
Strongly disagree	0.00%	16.20%	0.00%	0.00%	83.80%	0.00%	0.00%	100%

More action than words	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	11.20%	23.50%	20.80%	19.50%	14.80%	8.20%	2.00%	100%
Agree	16.10%	20.90%	21.00%	16.50%	14.30%	7.90%	3.20%	100%
Neutral	14.10%	18.10%	23.00%	22.00%	13.70%	6.60%	2.40%	100%
Disagree	9.90%	28.60%	10.00%	21.60%	15.70%	13.10%	1.10%	100%
Strongly disagree	18.50%	0.00%	12.60%	12.60%	49.00%	7.40%	0.00%	100%

Strong focus on education/ health and family	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	11.90%	21.60%	21.40%	19.90%	15.30%	6.90%	2.90%	100%
Agree	13.60%	24.60%	19.30%	17.50%	14.00%	8.40%	2.60%	100%
Neutral	13.20%	15.70%	24.90%	18.60%	16.30%	10.90%	0.50%	100%
Disagree	18.20%	22.90%	10.30%	23.00%	12.90%	11.50%	1.20%	100%
Strongly disagree	19.70%	10.40%	18.60%	0.00%	40.40%	10.90%	0.00%	100%

Well educated/ wise/ good manager/ experience	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	12.20%	21.70%	20.50%	18.80%	14.90%	9.50%	2.30%	100%
Agree	14.00%	23.50%	20.10%	18.90%	14.80%	5.90%	2.80%	100%
Neutral	12.00%	19.40%	26.20%	15.60%	14.30%	12.40%	0.00%	100%
Disagree	47.80%	22.50%	8.40%	21.30%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%	0.00%	0.00%	100%

Considerate/ concerned/ care for people and resources	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	10.50%	21.80%	20.20%	19.50%	15.50%	9.90%	2.70%	100%
Agree	16.00%	23.30%	20.20%	17.50%	13.80%	6.70%	2.50%	100%
Neutral	10.80%	16.30%	25.10%	22.00%	18.70%	6.60%	0.40%	100%
Disagree	24.30%	29.90%	16.80%	17.80%	5.20%	6.00%	0.00%	100%
Strongly disagree	0.00%	23.50%	25.50%	0.00%	51.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%

Family with good reputation	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	11.10%	20.90%	19.70%	20.40%	13.80%	11.70%	2.40%	100%
Agree	16.50%	21.50%	24.70%	16.30%	12.20%	5.60%	3.20%	100%
Neutral	13.00%	22.00%	20.10%	14.40%	16.80%	11.50%	2.20%	100%
Disagree	13.90%	23.80%	19.30%	19.80%	15.70%	5.50%	2.00%	100%
Strongly disagree	7.20%	21.90%	16.30%	24.80%	17.20%	10.30%	2.20%	100%

Understand/ respect and preserve culture and traditional values	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & above	Total
Strongly agree	12.10%	22.40%	20.20%	19.90%	14.80%	8.10%	2.60%	100%
Agree	14.80%	22.30%	21.10%	16.20%	14.70%	8.50%	2.40%	100%
Neutral	9.00%	17.00%	16.90%	28.50%	17.80%	8.30%	2.50%	100%
Disagree	15.90%	38.40%	19.60%	19.50%	4.70%	1.90%	0.00%	100%
Strongly disagree	0.00%	14.20%	21.80%	17.40%	38.00%	8.70%	0.00%	100%

SOCIAL MEDIA SURVEY

Summary

Start date: 17th of July 2014

End date: 4th of Sept 2014

Social Media Platforms

- a. Google forms
- b. Facebook
- c. Twitter
- d. ECB website
- e. SMS
- f. Emails

Total No. of Respondents: 648

Incomplete Data: 7

Total Complete Respondents: 641

1. Which Dzongkhag are you from?

Dzongkhag	No. of Respondents	Percent
Bumthang	26	4
Chukha	28	4
Dagana	7	1
Gasa	3	0
Haa	27	4
Lhuentse	24	4
Mongar	32	5
Paro	50	8
Pema Gatshel	45	7
Punakha	25	4
Sarpang	30	5
Samdrup Jongkhar	26	4
Samtse	37	6
Trongsa	13	2
Thimphu	79	12
Trashigang	80	12
Tashi Yangtse	19	3
Tsirang	26	4
Wangdue	42	6
Zhemgang	22	3
Total	641	

2. Sex of Respondent

Sex	No. of Respondents	Percent
Male	388	60
Female	255	39

3. Educational Qualification

Education	No. of Respondents	Percent
No Education	1	0
Non-Formal Education	1	0
Primary Education	1	0
Lower Secondary	0	0
Middle Secondary	12	2
Higher Secondary	98	15
University	526	81
Monastic Education	2	0

4. What is your Religion?

Religion	No. of Respondents	Percent
Buddhism	575	89
Hinduism	56	9
Christianity	3	0
Other	7	1

5. Which of the following do you think is the most effective source of information?

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Election Advertising Board	9	1
Voter Education and Awareness programme	100	15
Political party/candidates/party members	15	2
Campaign/Common Forum	44	7
Media Coverage (TV/Radio/Social Media)	442	68
Friends and relatives	19	3
Civil Servants	11	2

6. In your opinion, which of the following means of election campaigns was found effective?

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Common Forum	127	20
TV Public Debates	368	57
Campaign Rallies	33	5
Door to Door Campaigns	34	5
Media Advertisements	69	11
Posters/Banners/Leaflets	7	1

7. What was the most important factor in your choice of a political party?

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Election Manifesto	149	23
Party Leadership	163	25
Candidates	314	48
Sentimental Affinity	12	2

8. What was the most important factor in your choice of candidate?

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Personality and Charisma	86	13
Better Representation of the electorate in Parliament	430	66
Get better conditions for constituency/ election campaigns	120	19
Gender/religion	0	0

9. Who do you believe is a better leader?

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Male	116	18
Female	20	3
Both	484	75
Don't Know	22	3

10. Who do you consider to be more capable?

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Male	145	22
Female	23	4
Both	453	70
Don't Know	20	3

11. Who is the more dominant member in your family in terms of decision-making related to election?

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Father	173	27
Mother	88	14
Brother	10	2
Sister	4	1
Self	249	38
Other	103	16

12. Are women involved in the activities related to elections in your community?

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Involved all the time	166	26
Involved in important issues only	120	19
Less involved	315	49
Not involved at all	37	6

13. How much influence do you feel women have in community level decision-making process?

	No. of Respondents	Percent
0	29	4
1	137	21
2	282	44
3	123	19
4	72	11

14. Who do you think should be placed in high decision-making positions?

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Male	123	19
Female	51	8
Either	455	70
Don't Know	13	2

15. Which of the following positions do you think are suitable and applicable for women in Bhutanese Society?

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Head of Government/Ministerial Position	260	40
Parliamentarian	246	38
Secretary/Director	227	35
Doctor/Engineer	238	37
Head of School	266	41
Local Elected Leader	153	24
Teacher	345	53
Home Maker	176	27

16. In your opinion, do you think there will be more female candidates in future elections?

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Yes	551	85
No	87	13

17. Should there be more women MPs in the Parliament?

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Yes	576	89
No	61	9

18. As a voter, how likely is it that you will vote for a female candidate in future elections?

	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	30	5
2	88	14
3	261	40
4	263	41

19. What do you think are the obstacles to women's participation in election in Bhutan?

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Cultural Stereotype in the society	271	42
Domestic Responsibilities	274	42
Lack of educational qualification among women	134	21
Environment of political institutions is not gender friendly	106	16
Self-confidence and fear of incompetence in decision-making	287	44
Socio-economic barriers	85	13
Attitudes on Women Leadership	198	31
Lack of family encouragement and support	174	27
Fear of conflicts with family members	70	11
Fear of defamation in the political scene	87	13
Electoral system and nomination processes	26	4
Lack of support from male politicians	140	22
Religion	13	2
Other	27	4

20. Do you think men and women have equal rights under the laws in Bhutan?

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Yes	522	81
No	81	13
Don't Know	36	6

21. Do nomination and other electoral processes pose difficulties for women candidates?

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Yes	194	30
No	289	45
Don't Know	150	23

22. Do you think there is a need for reform/change in the current practices to enhance women's representation in elected offices?

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Yes	400	62
No	155	24
Don't Know	76	12

23. If you think there is need for reform, in your opinion which one of the following would be the most appropriate?

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Educating women	319	49
Making Electoral Processes and requirements more easier and simple	79	12
Introduction of Quota System for women candidature by political parties	63	10
Reserved Seats for Women in the Parliament	106	16

24. Male candidates are preferred over female candidates [Opinion on Women's Participation in Elective Offices]

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Strongly agree	175	27
Agree	226	35
Neutral	118	18
Disagree	89	14
Strongly Disagree	40	6

25. I am not ready to elect women as fewer women are literate than men in Bhutan [Opinion on Women's Participation in Elective Offices]

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Strongly agree	20	3
Agree	62	10
Neutral	126	19
Disagree	248	38
Strongly Disagree	192	30

26. There has NOT been a real effort to attract a wider spectrum of women into politics [Opinion on Women's Participation in Elective Offices]

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Strongly agree	121	19
Agree	233	36
Neutral	166	26
Disagree	85	13
Strongly Disagree	43	7

27. Women would not be able to handle national issues [Opinion on Women's Participation in Elective Offices]

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Strongly agree	28	4
Agree	63	10
Neutral	98	15
Disagree	237	37
Strongly Disagree	222	34

28. Women are less likely to bring anything new to politics/ decision making process as compare to men. [Opinion on Women's Participation in Elective Offices]

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Strongly agree	30	5
Agree	63	10
Neutral	104	16
Disagree	225	35
Strongly Disagree	226	35

29. Politics is a masculine activity and involves violence [Opinion on Women's Participation in Elective Offices]

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Strongly agree	29	4
Agree	42	6
Neutral	106	16
Disagree	186	29
Strongly Disagree	285	44

30. Fewer role-model for women in high positions to inspire [Opinion on Women's Participation in Elective Offices]

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Strongly agree	143	22
Agree	285	44
Neutral	124	19
Disagree	70	11
Strongly Disagree	26	4

31. The need to possess a formal university has restricted many women [Opinion on Women's Participation in Elective Offices]

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Strongly agree	30	5
Agree	103	16
Neutral	193	30
Disagree	210	32
Strongly Disagree	112	17

32. Women lack support from Political party [Opinion on Women's Participation in Elective Offices]

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Strongly agree	59	9
Agree	172	27
Neutral	198	31
Disagree	153	24
Strongly Disagree	66	10

33. **Women's participation in local politics is affected by the salary and incentives they get [Opinion on Women's Participation in Elective Offices]**

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Strongly agree	25	4
Agree	63	10
Neutral	193	30
Disagree	222	34
Strongly Disagree	145	22

34. **Women in power would not be able to obtain international aid for country [Opinion on Women's Participation in Elective Offices]**

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Strongly agree	15	2
Agree	36	6
Neutral	102	16
Disagree	229	35
Strongly Disagree	266	41

35. **A woman would not have sufficient time to deal with legislative issues because of family obligations [Opinion on Women's Participation in Elective Offices]**

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Strongly agree	27	4
Agree	96	15
Neutral	154	24
Disagree	240	37
Strongly Disagree	131	20

**36. The prevailing traditional beliefs discourage voting for women
[Opinion on Women's Participation in Elective Offices]**

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Strongly agree	81	13
Agree	163	25
Neutral	155	24
Disagree	153	24
Strongly Disagree	96	15

SURVEY ORGANIZATION

Overall Management	Aum Deki Pema Election Commissioner
Survey Preparation and Field Operation	Kibu Zangpo, ECB Team Leader Chimmi Yuden, ECB Study Coordinator Yanglay Dorji, ECB Accounts
Technical Advisor	Cheku Dorji, Tashi Namgay & Tandin Dorji, NSB
Focus Group Discussion	Sonam Tobgyal & Kinley, ECB Team Leaders Tshering Dorji & Tshewang Penjor, ECB Minutes Keepers Tsheten Dorji & Gyeltshen, ECB Recorders
Social Media Survey	Namgay Tshering, ECB Coordinator

1. Election Officials from the 20 Dzongkhags

Dzongkhag	Name	Designation
Chhukha	Damchoe Lhamo	Dz. ERO
	Dawa	Dz. EO
Haa	Passang	Dz. ERO
	Rinchen Zangmo	SA
Paro	Chimi Dorji	Dz. EO
	Ugyen Tshomo	Dz. ERO
Samtse	Pema	Dz. EO
	Kinga	Assistant Dz. EO
Thimphu	Choni Dorji	Dz. EO
	Yonten Yangden	SA
Dagana	Rigzin Lhendup	Dz. EO
	Kezang Choden	SA
	Dorji Phuntsho	DA
	Kinga Lhendup	DA
Gasa	Sri Narayan Gazmer	Dz. EO
	Karma Tshering	Officiating Dz. EO
	Sonam Youden	SA
Sarpang	Kinley Dorji	Dz. EO
	Naizang	Dz. ERO
Punakha	Tenzin	Dz. EO
	Nima Tshering	SA
Tsirang	Kezang Tshomo	Dz. EO
	Karma Sonam	Dz. ERO
Wangdue Phodrang	Dorji Wangdi	Dz. ERO
	Kunzang Namgay	SA
	Kharka	Dzongkhag Staff
	Chimi Om	SA
Bumthang	Thinley Zangpo	Dz. EO
	Wangdi Gyeltshen	SA
Trongsa	Nidup	Officiating Dz. EO
	Tashi Wangdi	SA
Zhemgang	Tashi Choden	Dz. ERO
	Tshering Dendup	SA
Lhuentse	Kencho Wangdi	Dz. ERO
	Shacha Wangmo	SA
Monggar	Sangay Dorji	Dz. EO
	Pema	Dz. ERO

Pema Gatshel	Tsheltrim Zangpo	Dz. EO
	Sangay Lhendup	Adz. EO
	Sonam Thinlay	Assistant Dz. EO
	Tshewang Lhamo	SA
	Ugyen Tenzin	Dzongkhag Staff
Samdrup Jongkhar	Norbu Wangdi	Dz. EO
	Tshering Sonam	Dz.ERO
Trashigang	Tshering Phuntsho	Dz. EO
	Sonam Wangyel	Dz.ERO
	Sangay Phuntsho	Asst. Dz.EO
Trashi Yangtse	Chencho Gyeltshen	Dz. EO
	Loday Jamtsho	SA

2. Enumerators for the Conduct of Survey

Dzongkhag	Name
Chhukha	Ugyen Pelmo
	Tshering Lhamo
Haa	Pema Thinley
	Kesang Namgay
Paro	Pema Namgay
	Thinley Tenzin
Samtse	Tilal Rupa Ghalley
	Sonam Yuden
Thimphu	Singye Wangchuk
	Sithup
Gasa	Sherub Tenzin
Sarpang	Chali Maya Shingdan
	Sonam Yuden
Punakha	Namgay
	Sonam Wangmo
Tsirang	Rinchen Dendup
	Kesang Jigme
Bumthang	Tenzin Jamtsho
	Sonam Tenzin
Trongsa	Sonam
	Tashi Dorji
Lhuentse	Sonam Chopel
	Tashi Wangdi
Monggar	Tandin Dorji

	Dhan Kr. Subha
Samdrup Jongkhar	Yeshey Pelden
	Jigme Lhaden
Trashigang	Tashi Phuntsho
	Passing Tshering
Trashi Yangtse	Ugyen Wangchuk
	Yeshey Dorji

3. Regional Coordinators

Dzongkhags	Name & Designation
Haa	Tenzin Namgyel, Election Officer
Paro	
Thimphu	Dema, Electoral Registration Officer
Chhukha	
Samtse	
Gasa	Namgay Tshering, Sr. ICT Officer
Punakha	
Wangdue Phodrang	
Dagana	
Sarpang	
Tsirang	Tshewang Penjor, Fund Manager
Bumthang	
Trongsa	
Zhemgang	Mani Galley, Sr. Planning Officer
Samdrup Jongkhar	
Lhuentse	Phub Dorji, Chief Election Officer
Trashigang	
Trashi Yangtse	
Pema Gatshel	
Monggar	
	Garjaman Bishwa, ICT Officer

4. The Data Analysis and Writing up of the Findings

Name	Designation
Kibu Zangpo	Election Officer
Namgay Tshering	Sr. ICT Officer
Tshewang Penjor	Fund Manager
Tshering Dorji	Sr. Planning Officer

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

SURVEY ON VOTER'S CHOICE AND WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIVE OFFICES, 2014

We are from the Election Commission of Bhutan. We are conducting this Survey with the overall objective to collect information so as to understand the relationships and factors that affect voter's choice and participation of women in elections in Bhutan.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this Survey. Now, we would like to ask you some questions. Your responses will help us to understand and appropriately address the significant obstacles to enhance and ensure the complete and full participation of women in all aspects of elections in Bhutan.

The information we obtain from this Survey shall be strictly *CONFIDENTIAL* and your identity, as a respondent, will not be disclosed. Therefore, we would like to request you to kindly provide your honest and unbiased responses on the following questions.

This Survey for a research study is conducted by the Election Commission of Bhutan with the funding from Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD).

SUMMARY ON THE CONDUCT OF SURVEY

- | | | |
|---|-------------|---|
| 1 | Section - A | Location Details |
| 2 | Section - B | Demographic and Economic Data |
| 3 | Section - C | Determinants of Voter's Choice |
| 4 | Section - D | Women's Participation in Elective Offices |
| 5 | Section - E | Overall Views on Electoral Process |
| 6 | Section - F | Scale Question |

Confidential



VOTER'S CHOICE AND WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIVE OFFICES
2014

SECTION A: HOUSEHOLD IDENTIFICATION

A1.	Dzongkhag:		<input type="text"/>
A2.	NA Constituency:		<input type="text"/>
A3.	Gewog/Town:		<input type="text"/>
A4.	Chiwog/Block:		<input type="text"/>

A5. Household serial number:

A6. Name of Household head:

A7. Name of the Respondent:

Name of Enumerator:	<input type="text"/>	Enumerator signature:	<input type="text"/>
Supervisor's Name:	<input type="text"/>	Supervisor's Signature:	<input type="text"/>

Date of interview:	Day/Moth/Year:...../...../.....
Record the time at start of interview:	<input type="text"/>

Status of Questionnaire:

1	Completed	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Not completed due to refusal	
3	Not completed, voter not found	
4	Incomplete	

SECTION B : DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC

B1. Sex of respondent

1	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Female	

B2. Age :

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
----------------------	----------------------	----------------------

B3. Marital Status :

1	Single	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Married	
3	Separated/ Divorced	
4	Living together	
5	Widowed	

B4. How many children do you have :

1	1-2 children	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	3-4 children	
3	5 or more	
4	None	

B5. How long have you lived here :

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Years
----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	-------

B6. Number of family members

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
----------------------	----------------------

B7. Highest level of education completed :

1	No Education	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Non-Formal Education	
3	Primary Education	
4	Lower Secondary	
5	Middle Secondary	
6	Higher Secondary	
7	University	
8	Monastic Education	

B8. What is your current occupation?

01	Parliamentarian	<input type="text"/>
02	Civil Servant	
03	Armed Force	
04	Politician	
05	Corporate Employee	
06	Private Sector	
07	Self Employed	
08	Local Elected Leader	
09	Trainee/ Student	
10	Farmer	
11	Other [<i>Specify</i>]	

B9. What was your previous occupation?

01	Parliamentarian	<input type="text"/>
02	Civil Servant	
03	Armed Force	
04	Politician	
05	Corporate Employee	
06	Private Sector	
07	Self Employed	
08	Local Elected Leader	
09	Trainee/ Student	
10	Farmer	
11	Other [<i>Specify</i>]	

B10. Monthly approximate income (in Nu.)

1	Less than 3,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	3,000 - 4,999	
3	5,000 - 9,999	
4	10,000 - 14,999	
5	15,000 - 19,999	
6	20,000 - 24,999	
7	25,000 - 29,999	
8	Over 30,000	

B11. Main source of income

1	Salary	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Business	
3	Dividends/Interests	
4	Rental of Properties	
5	Cash crops	
6	Other (<i>Specify</i>) _____	

B12. How do you consider your economic status as compared to your neighbour ?

1	More comfortable	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Equal	
3	Less Comfortable	

B13. What is your religion?

1	Buddhism	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Hinduism	
3	Christianity	
4	Other (specify)	

SECTION C: DETERMINATION OF VOTER'S CHOICE

C1. Which of the following do you think provides voters with most information and is the most effective source of information?

1	Election Advertising Board	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Voter education and awareness programme	
3	Political party/ candidates/ party members	
4	Campaign/ Common Forum	
5	Media coverage (TV/ Radio/ Social Media)	
6	Friends and relatives	
7	Civil servants	

C2. Did you personally attend any of the following election campaign of the political parties and the candidates?

1	Common Forum	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	TV Public Debates	
3	Campaign Rallies	
4	Door-to-Door Campaigns	
5	Social Media Campaigns	

C3. In your opinion, which of the following means of election campaigns was found effective?

1	Common Forum	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	TV Public Debates	
3	Campaign Rallies	
4	Door-to-Door Campaigns	
5	TV/Radios/Mobile/ Social Media	
6	Posters/ Banners/ Leaflets	

C4. Have you ever run as a candidate in an election?

1	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	No	

C5. Did you vote in the 2011 Local Government elections?

1	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	No	
3	Can't Remember	

C6. Did you vote in the 2013 Parliamentary elections?

1	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	No	
3	Can't Remember	

If No in both C5 & C6, Go To Question C9.

C7. List at least one campaign promise that you consider important

1	
2	
3	

C8. What motivated you to vote in the elections?

1	It's my duty as a citizen	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	It is a national duty	
3	I voted to choose responsible leaders	
4	Party/ candidate motivated me to vote	
5	Family/ friends inspired me to vote	
6	Others.....	

C9. The reason for not voting:

1	My name was not reflected on the Voter's List	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	I didn't have Voter Photo Identity Card (VPIC)	
3	No one from my family voted	
4	I didn't like the candidate/ political party	
5	The party that I favoured had a woman as a candidate	
6	Location of my polling station was far/distant	
7	I was not aware of the Local Candidates from my constituency	

C10. What was the most important factor in your choice of a political party?

1	Election Manifesto	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Party leadership	
3	Candidates	
4	Sentimental affinity	

C11. What was the most important factor in your choice of candidate?

1	Personality and charisma	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Better representation of the electorate in Parliament	
3	Get better conditions for constituency/election campaigns	
4	Gender/ religion	

C12. To what degree do you have control over decisions regarding your choice for whom to cast your vote during an election?

1	Very high degree	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	High degree	
3	Small degree	
4	Not at all	

C13. How did you decide for whom to vote?

1	Leadership/ qualification/ competency and experience	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Promises made to the public	
3	Common forum/ public debates	
4	Candidate/ party manifestos	
5	Agreed to promises made during door-to-door campaign	
6	Followed the advice of family members/ relatives who are in service.	
7	I discussed with my friends	

D3. Do you believe or not that a woman is behind a man by nine lives (*Ke-rab Gu*)?

1	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	No	
3	Don't know	

D4. Have you ever experienced or witnessed women being inferior to men in:

1	Decision making	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Dealing with Government Officials	
3	Representing the Public	
4	Taking Part in Election	
5	Business	
6	Field works/ Labour Force Participation	

SECTION D: WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIVE OFFICES IN BHUTAN

(Why aren't there more women in elective offices?)

D1. Who do you believe is a better leader?

1	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Female	
3	Both	
4	Don't know	

D5. In general, who is the more dominant member in your family in terms of decision-making related to elections?

1	Mother	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Father	
3	Brother	
4	Sister	
5	Husband	
6	Self	
7	Others/Specify	

D2. Who do you consider to be more capable?

1	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Female	
3	Both	
4	Don't know	

D6. Are women involved in the activities related to elections such as awareness and campaign in your community?

1	Involved all the time	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Involved in important issues only	
3	Less involved	
4	Not involved at all	

D10. Who do you think it is important to have in high decision-making level positions

1	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Female	
3	Either	
4	Don't know	

D7. If involved, how are they involved?

1	Participate as Observers (not given importance)	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Participating but not substantially	
3	Participating and makes a Difference and influences decisions	

D11. Who would you like to represent you in an elected office?

1	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Female	
3	Both	
4	Don't know	

D8. If less involved, this is because of:

1	Socio-cultural discrimination	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Long distance to walk	
3	Family responsibilities	
4	Less competence/ Men are educated and have more experience	

D12. Which of the following positions do you think are suitable and applicable for women in Bhutanese society?

1	Head of Government/ Ministerial position	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Parliamentarian	
3	Secretary/ Director	
4	Doctor of hospital/ engineer	
5	Head of Schools	
6	Local Elected Leaders	
7	Teachers	
8	Housewife/ childbearer	

D9. How much influence do you feel, women have in community level decision-making processes?

1	High	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Medium	
3	Low	
4	No influence	

D13. How you would like to be involved in the political process in future?

1	As a voter	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Party member	
3	Candidate	
4	Not sure	

D17. In your opinion, do you think there will be more female candidates to participate in future elections?

1	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Some extent	
3	Don't know	

D14. Would you be interested to stand as a candidate in future elections?

1	Interested highly	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Some extent	
3	Not interested at all	

D18. Should there be more elected women representatives (MPs) in Parliament?

1	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	No	
3	Don't know	

D15. Are you working or doing anything to participate as a candidate in future elections?

1	Thought/ prepared	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Thought but not prepared	
3	Did not think/ not prepared	

D19. As a voter, how likely is it that you will vote for a female candidate in future elections?

1	I am not going to vote	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	I will vote	
3	Candidate's sex doesn't matter	
4	I don't know if I am going to vote or not	

D16. Why are you not interested to participate in elections as candidate?

1	Have to look after household work/ children	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Can't meet educational qualification requirements	
3	Lack of party support/ awareness	
4	Lack of family encouragement and support	
5	Not interested at all	

D20. On what qualities would you base your decision to vote for a woman candidate?

1	Education and experience	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Family background and status	
3	Social and Economic status	
4	Leadership/ Personality	
5	Honesty and integrity	
6	Religious background	

D21. In your opinion, which of the following considerations do you think is important?

1	Woman is considered less capable than man	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Lack of confidence and trust in women leadership	
3	Age-old belief that men and women have different roles to play	
4	Not vital in management and governance as compared to man	
5	Women do not have enough experience and education	

D22. Do you think there are any obstacles to women participating as candidate in elections?

1	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Yes	
3	Don't know	

D23. What do you think are the obstacles to women's participating as candidate in elections in Bhutan?

1	Prevailing cultural attitudes regarding the roles of women in society	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Domestic responsibilities	
3	Lack of educational qualifications and experience in representative function.	
4	Environment of political institutions is not gender-friendly	
5	Self-confidence and also fear of incompetence in decision-making	
6	Socio-economic barriers	
7	Attitudes on women leadership	
8	Lack of family encouragement and support	
9	Fear of conflicts with family members	
10	Fear of violence/ Politics seen as "dirty" or corrupt	
11	Electoral system and nomination processes	
12	The lack of support from male politicians	
13	Religion	

D24. Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion about men and women as political leaders?

1	Men generally make better political leaders than women	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Women generally make better political leaders than men	
3	In general, men and women make equally good political leaders	
4	I would vote for a woman if she has the capabilities	
5	Can't trust women's capabilities, and don't vote for them	

D25. Do you think social issues are important?

1	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	No	
3	Don't know	

D26. In your opinion, who do you think is more aware and recognizes the importance of social issues?

1	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Female	
3	Both	

**SECTION E:
OVERALL VIEWS ON
ELECTORAL PROCESS**

E1. Do you think men and women have equal rights under the laws in Bhutan?

1	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	No	
3	Don't Know	

E2. Do nomination and other electoral processes pose difficulties for women candidates?

1	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	No	
3	Don't Know	

E3. If yes, what are three main difficulties women candidates face in such processes?

1	
2	
3	

D24. Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion about men and women as political leaders?

1	Men generally make better political leaders than women	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Women generally make better political leaders than men	
3	In general, men and women make equally good political leaders	
4	I would vote for a woman if she has the capabilities	
5	Can't trust women's capabilities, and don't vote for them	

D25. Do you think social issues are important?

1	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	No	
3	Don't know	

D26. In your opinion, who do you think is more aware and recognizes the importance of social issues?

1	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Female	
3	Both	

**SECTION E:
OVERALL VIEWS ON
ELECTORAL PROCESS**

E1. Do you think men and women have equal rights under the laws in Bhutan?

1	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	No	
3	Don't Know	

E2. Do nomination and other electoral processes pose difficulties for women candidates?

1	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	No	
3	Don't Know	

E3. If yes, what are three main difficulties women candidates face in such processes?

1	
2	
3	

E12. Do you think the media is fair and neutral in its dissemination of information, reporting and coverage of the election?

1	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	No	
3	Don't know	

E13. Do you think that male and female candidates have equal access to media election campaigns?

1	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	No	
3	Don't know	

E14. Do you think there is a need for reform/change in the current practices or for new reforms to enhance women's representation in elected offices?

1	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	No	
3	Don't know	

E15. If yes, from the following, in your opinion which one would be the most appropriate?

1	Educating women	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Making Electoral Processes and requirements more easier and simpler	
3	Introduction of a Quota System for women's candidature by Political Parties	
4	Reserved Seats for Women in Parliament	

SECTION F: Using the scale below, indicate the degree to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements. Mark (✓) against each statement.

F1. OPINIONS ON THE DETERMINANTS OF VOTER'S CHOICE

Sl. No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Common forums and public debates are very advantageous to the political party, candidates and voters.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Civic and voter education played a critical role for awareness of political party and candidates.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Media played a fair role in dissemination of adequate information about parties, policies, candidates and the election process helping to make informed choices.	1	2	3	4	5
4	The engagement by political parties and candidates during election campaign and non-election period is an important medium.	1	2	3	4	5
5	The elected candidate had always been a strong and positive leader in the country/community.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I thought about the candidate's past work on development issues.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I tried to assess whether or not the candidate would be accessible to me and my family.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I considered the history of the candidate on corrupt or illegal activities.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I decided based on the realistic/practicality of candidate and party manifestos.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I decided to vote based on the qualification, competency, experience and leadership.	1	2	3	4	5

11	Door-to-door campaign provided ample opportunity to meet candidate and know about his/ her commitments/promises made.	1	2	3	4	5
12	I discussed my vote with my family members/ relative in the public service.	1	2	3	4	5
13	I discussed my vote with my friends and followed their advice.	1	2	3	4	5
14	My family had always voted for that party/ candidate because of his/her family history and standing in the locality.	1	2	3	4	5

F2. OPINIONS ON WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIVE OFFICES

Sl. No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Male candidates are preferred over female candidates.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I am not ready to elect women as fewer women are literate than men in the country.	1	2	3	4	5
3	There has not been a real effort to attract a wider spectrum of women into politics.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Many women lack qualification and relevant skills necessary to perform well in politics.	1	2	3	4	5
5	A woman would not be able to handle national issues such as law and order, combat corruption, improve the economic situation of the country, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Women are less likely to bring anything new to politics/ decision making process as compared to men.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Politics is a masculine activity and involves violence.	1	2	3	4	5

8	Fewer role-models for women in high positions to inspire.	1	2	3	4	5
9	The need to possess a formal university has restricted many women's candidates from elections.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Women lack support from political party.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Women's participation in local politics is affected by the salary and incentives they get.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Women in power would not be able to obtain international aid for the country.	1	2	3	4	5
13	A woman would not have sufficient time to deal with legislative issues because of family responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5
14	The prevailing traditional beliefs discourage voting for women.	1	2	3	4	5

F3. CIVIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Sl. No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Civic and voter education should be provided on continuous basis.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Civic and voter education and training and information dissemination should be taken to most of the rural communities and voters.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Gender sensitization programme and more awareness campaign should be conducted for women voters.	1	2	3	4	5
4	There should be adequate information on women candidates' qualifications and platforms, and disseminated further in advance of elections so voters can make informed choices.	1	2	3	4	5

5	Political leadership trainings to be arranged for interested women to encourage joining politics.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Increase awareness of the roles and responsibilities of women as elected members.	1	2	3	4	5

F4. OPINIONS ON EXISTING RULES AND REGULATIONS

Sl. No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Common Forums played critical role in enabling more voters to understand about political parties and candidates.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Need specific laws or policies for political and economic empowerment of women.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Need testing centres in every <i>Ge-wog</i> to take Functional Literacy Test.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Obtaining various documents and clearances for nomination process is not easy for a woman.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Obtaining various documents and clearances for nomination process is not easy for a man.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Party <i>Godenpas</i> and <i>Leyjapas</i> are the cause of communal discord during elections.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Political parties and candidates should be restricted from making unrealistic electoral promises.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Door-to-door campaign provided ample opportunities for the candidates or party workers to move freely.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Quota system is necessary to improve representation of women in Parliament.	1	2	3	4	5

F5. OPINIONS ON WHAT MAKES A GOOD POLITICAL LEADER

Sl. No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Inclusive decision makers	1	2	3	4	5
2	Approachable and involved in community activities	1	2	3	4	5
3	Good communicator/ listener	1	2	3	4	5
4	Honest/ truthful and committed	1	2	3	4	5
5	More action than words	1	2	3	4	5
6	Strong focus on education/ health and family	1	2	3	4	5
7	Well educated/ wise/ good manager/ experience	1	2	3	4	5
8	Considerate/ concerned/ care for people and resources	1	2	3	4	5
9	Family with good reputation	1	2	3	4	5
10	Understand/ respect and preserve culture and traditional values	1	2	3	4	5
11	Other.....(please specify)	1	2	3	4	5

Thank him/her for taking time to answer this questionnaire and reassure him/her about the confidentiality of the information collected.

REPORT OF THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS IN 20 DZONGKHAGS

A. Trongsa Dzongkhag, 5th of August 2014

The Focus Group Discussions with the voters, the elected women local government representatives, the nominated women candidates and the women civil servants of the Trongsa Dzongkhag was held on 5th of August 2014 at the Conference Hall, Tashi Ninjay Guesthouse.

The first Focus Group Discussion was held with the voters and the elected women local government representatives and the nominated women candidates.

The second Focus Group Discussion was held with the women civil servants of the Trongsa Dzongkhag Administration and the school teachers from Sherubling Higher Secondary School and Trongsa Lower Secondary School.

Focus Group Discussion with Voters

1. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. All of the voters for the FGD said that they voted in the last parliamentary elections held in 2013.
- b. They said that they voted for a political party or a candidate who, without bias, will benefit the people and the country.
- c. Most of them expressed the view that a competent and/or capable candidate is one who can speak, listen and benefit the people and be able to effectively serve as the crucial link between the people and the government.
- d. Most of them said that political parties with good leaders and candidate who are competent should be supported and voted for in elections.

2. Elections and Information Dissemination

- a. Many of them said that they received adequate information on the political parties and the candidates to know about them to help make decisions on Poll Days.
- b. A majority of them said that they preferred the Common Forums for election campaigns to be the most effective form of conducting election campaigns which allowed voters to question to know more about the political parties and the candidates, and said that door-to-

door election campaigns be not allowed to be conducted because there are opportunities for the political parties and the candidates to engage in unwanted and undesirable practices of influencing and inducing voters in unfair manners.

- c. Some of them said that the conduct of door-to-door election campaigns are better because the political parties and the candidates can conduct election campaigns with personal touch and help voters understand more about who they should vote for.
- d. Some of them who have access to TV said that they found the media coverage of election campaigns and media advertisements enough to inform them about the political parties and the candidates.
- e. Most of the participants said that it is important to vote in elections because they know that it is their right to vote and the opportunity to elect the best candidate or political party should not be missed.

3. Women in Elections and as Candidates

- a. Most of them agreed that there needs to be more women elected leaders if Parliament and the local governments to ensure that women's needs are better addressed in policies and decisions at all levels.
- b. The women voters said that they will support and ensure to have women candidates elected in elections should they be equally competent and qualified as the men candidates, but will also base their decisions to support on whether the candidates have the right *Sampa Semkye* (attitude).
- c. Most of them agreed that it is important that women should be given opportunity to be represented to gain the experience and confidence to ensure women's active political participation.
- d. Most of them said that women can be equally competent and have the same opportunity to be elected as the men.
- e. Most of the men voters said that they will look forward to support women candidates in elections if they demonstrate and are found to be capable to represent them.
- f. Most of the women voters said that they will all support and vote for women candidates in future elections, but a few of them said that they are not interested to do so as it would be shameful to lose if they are not supported while others said that they simply do not have much time and effort to devote to taking part in elections having to take care of household chores and others.

4. Why no Women Candidates

- a. Most of the participants said that women are not bold enough to come forward to take active part in politics believing that politics is a dirty game in which only men can take part.
- b. They acknowledge the commonly believed fact that a woman's place is in home, taking care of household chores and raising children.
- c. The majority of the participants said that women have lagged behind men in many of the life's opportunities, including education, which have limited their political participation and engagement in public spheres.
- d. Most of the participants said that there have not been many women leaders in the past and as such women have not been seen to be capable of taking on leadership positions.
- e. Most of the participants said even if there are women candidates, they are not generally supported by voters which have dissuaded many other women from standing as candidates in elections.
- f. Most of the participants said that some of the cultural beliefs and stereotypes that relate to women's roles in the Bhutanese society have limited women's political participation and will continue to do so since some of the beliefs are to be simply believed, notwithstanding the modernization of the Bhutanese society.
- g. Even the women participants themselves though that some of the traditional and cultural roles assigned to women are to be continued since such defined gender roles have been there for long and served their purposes of organizing their lives and communities and the society in general.

5. Environment for Women's Empowerment and Political Participation

- a. Most of the participants acknowledged that the Bhutanese laws and systems are non-discriminatory and recognize and treat women and men equally.
- b. Some of the participants said that the requirement of functional literacy for local government positions and the conduct of the Functional Literacy Test is an important tool to enable more women to contest in local government elections since they are the ones who are beneficiaries of the Non-Formal Education system.

6. Way Forward

- a. The participants said that despite the strong influence of the traditions and culture, some aspects could be changed to enable more women to come forward to take active part politics and public spheres.
- b. The participants said that there needs to be systemic changes in education to bring about changes in how the Bhutanese society view and see women to encourage their active political participation.
- c. The participants said that there needs to be more women in leadership positions to enhance their image of being able to take up important positions and serve as role models for other women to follow.
- d. The participants said that there needs to be more trainings conducted to build up competencies of interested women so that they are able to effectively contest elections, while advocacy and information dissemination be carried out to encourage women to support women in elections.
- e. The participants expressed the need for media to carry timely and right information on many aspects of elections and democracy to enhance better understanding and encourage women to better participate in future elections and other decision making processes and systems.

Focus Group Discussion with Women Civil Servants

- a. All of the participants said that they voted in the last parliamentary elections held in 2013, and have also taken part as electoral officers.

1. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. Most of the participants said that political parties should have good leaders and their candidates should be capable and competent.
- b. They said that to be capable and competent, the candidates should have the required educational qualifications, should have adequate experience, be able to perform and undertake important tasks and, above all, be able serve the people and the country with *Tha-Dham-Tsi*.

2. Elections and Information Dissemination

- a. The participants said that they got most of their information on political parties and candidates from the TV coverage of the Public Debates and the Common Forums, while some of them also

accessed information from the internet connected to the various social media.

- b. The participants expressed the view that election campaigns meetings in small groups of voters should be more often conducted to enable voters to know more about the various political parties and the candidates contesting elections, while the conduct of door-to-door election campaigns, although is effective with personal touch, should not be encouraged or allowed since such practice is susceptible to unfair means of influencing voters.
- c. The participants said that familiarization tours focused on informing about the ideologies and the election manifestoes (to the civil servants who otherwise do not get to meet with the political parties and the candidates) should be conducted by the political parties and the candidates to enable them to know more and make proper informed decisions.

3. Women in Elections and as Candidates

- a. Some of the participants said that it is not necessary that women should be just elected to give them the opportunity to be represented, but women should seek to compete and be elected on equal footing and on their own merits. They said that the women candidates should be equally competent as the men candidates.
- b. Some of the participants said that they will vote for women candidates in elections if they are equally competent since the Bhutanese women need to be represented and time has come for women to be given the opportunity.
- c. Some, however, were of the opinion that the Bhutanese women will need to be given opportunity to gain the necessary experience and competence to represent the Bhutanese people, particularly the women.
- d. Most of them said they are not interested themselves to stand as candidates in elections seeing themselves to be presently incompetent, while the elected local government women representatives and the contested candidates said that they will look forward to participating again in the next local government elections in 2016.
- e. Those participants (mostly women civil servants) who said that they will not stand as candidates in elections said they are unwilling to lose their current employment and economic opportunities to the uncertainty of being elected, having too much to do with taking care

of their families and raising children and some of the being too young presently to think of standing as candidates in elections and be involved in political participation.

- f. A few of them expressed that they would like to stand as candidates in elections provided that they are given enough financial security and necessary support in the event they are not elected.

4. Why no Women Candidates

- a. The participants were of the opinion that there being not many women coming forward for political participation can be attributed to women being seen as incompetent or lacking confidence to take important leadership positions and cannot do as the men have done.
- b. Some of them expressed the view that women candidates who are competent enough are also not supported generally by the voters, while women voters themselves have not confidence in supporting women candidates in elections.
- c. The participants said that cultural stereotypes and defined gender roles as taught and learned have been that men were seen to be superior to women in the Bhutanese society which all had influenced the Bhutanese voters to see and support men candidates over women even if some of the women candidates are more than equally competent.
- d. Some of the participants said that some of the traditional and cultural beliefs may be seen to be true as they have been passed down the generations and have had influenced the Bhutanese society to be more male oriented and therefore the active public participation of men in all aspects, while women's roles have been seen to be in homes.
- e. Some of them expressed that they previously believed that women were weak and cannot do as men can do which, however, is not the case anymore with more and more women being educated and living independent lives which will allow for more educated and competent women to come forward to stand as candidates in elections and be elected.
- f. They said that men are strong, which is a biological trait with obvious advantage over women, but standing in elections and being elected do not depend on physical strength as long as women candidates are capable and competent.

- g. Some of them said that women show themselves to be weak and servile even if they are educated and competent enough to be independent.

5. Decision Making Process

- a. Some of the participants said that they make joint family decisions where and when they are married and have their own families.
- b. Most of the participants said that they are the ones who make decisions in their households, while a few of them said that they have left the decision making process within their families and/or households to their male counterparts or by their parents.
- c. In elections, some of them said that they voted for the candidates who will best represent them and the people, some voted because they found the political parties possessed good leaders and the candidates were competent, some said they voted because the candidates were related to them, and some said they voted based on the election manifestoes and campaigns. One of the participants said that in her constituency there was a woman candidate which she found to be incompetent and inexperienced compared to the man candidate compelling her to vote for the man.

6. Environment for Women's Empowerment and Political Participation

- a. The majority of the participants said that feel that the laws recognize men and women to be equals. However, they said that empowerment of women as may be practiced is low and there is a need felt to enhance women's opportunities in public spheres, including in elective offices.
- b. Some of them said that the conduct of Functional Literacy Test should not be made mandatory for interested and capable women candidates, while other participants said that FLT has facilitated more women to come forward, including standing as candidates in elections.
- c. Many of them recognized that fact that there are more educated men than there are women in the Bhutanese society because of the unequal access to education and economic opportunities in the recent past, but the situation is now changing with more and more women being educated and other empowerment efforts being made.
- d. They expressed their hope that there will be more women candidates contesting elections and being elected.

7. Way Forward

- a. The participants said that there should be proper guidance, support, trainings, etc. provided to ensure that interested Bhutanese women can equally stand as candidates and contest elections.
- b. Some of them said that there should be appropriate institutional and systems arrangements to support women's active participation in elections as candidates so as to ensure their success in elections or economic security should they be not elected having taken the risks.
- c. Some said that women's political participation should be enhanced and encouraged to make the otherwise "dirty politics" clean so that more women are enthused to participate.
- d. Some said that there need to be systems and mindset changes made through information dissemination and advocacy and education, while some said that there need to be more women role models and examples to follow on, and some of them said the political parties need to do more to have and nominate more women candidates.
- e. The participants said that quota or reserved representation could be one of the ways to enable more women to be represented in Parliament or the local government, which, however, may acknowledge that the Bhutanese women are not equal to the Bhutanese men and not being able to compete based on merits.
- f. Some of the participants said that all political parties and candidates should be compulsorily required to conduct election campaigns through Common Forums and to organize the more Common Forums so that the voters really get to know more about the political parties and the candidates rather than have to base their decisions on short media advertisements and coverages.

The following are some general points noted during the session:

- a. On being prompted with the questionnaire survey finding that women are best suited to be teachers, the participants said that women are more caring and know to raise children (supposedly relating to the fact that a woman's place is in home) which is an added advantage should they become teachers.
- b. The participants said that women will need to be represented in Parliament and other important decision making institutions because women will understand women's needs and priorities better in policies and decisions and to enact gender sensitive laws taking into consideration the needs and sensitivities of the women. However,

some of them said that it is uncertain that women representatives can bring about changes as espoused.

- c. Some of them said that the Bhutanese women will need to be given more time to ensure that they can equally participate and be represented in all aspects of the Bhutanese democracy while the legacies of the past in the present situation do not allow for more women to be represented in elective offices and institutions.
- d. They said that the women civil servants should be allowed to contest in elections and return to their civil service positions if not elected to ensure continuation of their livelihood, while some of them said that although they are interested to join politics after resignation or superannuation, but they do not possess the required qualifications, and for those who are midway through their career, but with the required qualifications, they have other priorities in their lives.
- e. They also said that women should be encouraged to participate in all aspects of decision making processes and in public and elective offices, starting from schools and communities through to national affairs and institutions.

B. Zhemgang, 8th of August 2014

The Focus Group Discussions with the voters, the elected women local government representatives, the nominated women candidates and the women civil servants of the Zhemgang Dzongkhag was held on 8th of August 2014 at the Rural Development Training Centre.

The first Focus Group Discussion was held with the voters and was attended by 20 voters and an elected Tshogpa from and around nearby *Chiwogs*, mostly representing the Trong Gewog.

The second Focus Group Discussion was held with 23 women civil servants comprising of Dzongkhag Administration staff and the school teachers from the Zhemgang Higher Secondary School and the Zhemgang Lower Secondary School.

Focus Group Discussion with Voters

1. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. All of the voters present for the FGD said that they voted in the last parliamentary elections held in 2013.
- b. They based their decision to vote for a candidate or a political party based on comparison of the competency and capability of each candidate or political party.
- c. Most of them agreed that a competent and/or capable candidate or a political party is one which will best represent the people to articulate their common aspirations and needs, as well as work for the betterment of the nation.
- d. Most of them agreed that their decision to support a political party is based on the quality of candidates, the leadership it possessed and the election campaigns conducted (relating to the election campaign promises which would directly be beneficial to their constituency).

2. Elections and Information Dissemination

- a. Most of the them said that the election campaigns conducted during the last parliamentary elections helped them to know and understand more about the candidates and the political parties contesting the elections, and found the organization of the Common Forums for election campaigns to be very effective, followed by media advertisements and media coverage of election campaigns.
- b. While the conduct of the door-to-door election campaigns was said to be generally also effective, it was suggested that such a practice be not allowed anymore in the future elections since such practice

was agreed to be distasteful for communal harmony and peace and to be susceptible to unlawful means of election campaigning.

- c. They said that the information passed on through word of mouth also helped them to know more and understand about the candidates and the political parties as well as get other important election related information.
- d. The participants said that since they had access to TV and radio they also got to know more about the political parties and the candidates.
- e. Most of the participants agreed that there are enough information on candidates and political parties as well as election campaign information.

3. Women in Elections and as Candidates

- a. The men voters present initially said that they will not vote for women candidates in elections even if they were equally competent and qualified as the men candidates.
- b. The women voters said that they will support and ensure to have women candidates elected in elections should they be equally competent and qualified as the men candidates.
- c. Some of them were of the opinion that they will support and vote for the best candidate in the elections, not considering whether the candidate is a man or a woman.
- d. Most of the women were of the opinion that women have lagged behind men in political arena because of there not being any educated women which, however, will not be the case anymore in the future since there are more women being educated.
- e. Most of the women voters said that in politics and elections women can also equally participate since such participation does not hinge on physical strength unlike other defined gender roles.
- f. Most of the women voters said that men voters should also look to support and encourage women candidates in elections if they are more competent and capable than the men candidates to ensure that the best candidates represent then people.
- g. Most of the participants agreed that women's political participation should be encouraged, especially of the young educated and competent women, starting from within households, communities and through to the national level.

- h. Most of the participants said that more women should come forward to contest elections to be supported and be elected, which has not been the case in the previous elections.
- i. Most of the women voters said that they will be willing to stand as candidates and contest elections in the future (preferably, the next local government elections) provided that they are supported, and the men voters said that they will be willing to support their women candidates if they are competent and capable.

4. Why no Women Candidates

- a. Most of the participants expressed the opinion that women physically weak to take on the arduous physical challenges which are even physically demanding on men in undertaking many of the ways of living. However, the women voters said that women can also do as much as the men can even though they may be physically weaker.
- b. The majority of the participants said that women have lagged behind men in many of the life's opportunities thus far which have hampered on their current level of political participation and engagement in public spheres.
- c. Even the women voters were of the opinion that women did not have many roles to play publicly, except to be confined within homes as homemakers and looking after the needs of family and household.
- d. Many of the women voters said that they do not have the requisite educational qualifications or were not educated to enable them to take part in electoral process, even if they wished they had participated.
- e. Many of the women voters said that men are bold enough to take risks while women cannot do the same which otherwise would compromise on taking care of the family and household.
- f. Most of the women voters said that there are not many elected women representatives on whom they could look up to as role models even though there was a woman elected representative in the first National Council.
- g. Most of the participants said that some of the cultural beliefs and stereotypes that relate to women's roles in the Bhutanese society have limited women's political participation and will continue to do so since they said that some of the beliefs are to be believed and the associated practices should be continued, notwithstanding the modernization of the Bhutanese society.

5. Environment for Women’s Empowerment and Political Participation

- a. Some of the participants expressed the opinion that there are too many requirements to be fulfilled and documents to be processed to seek nominations to contest elections which at times may hamper women’s political interests since they have to also take care of the family and household.

6. Way Forward

- a. Most of the participants agreed that women should be encouraged to partake actively in politics and elections and those women who are interested to contest elections should be properly guided and trained to enable them to effectively contest elections.

Focus Group Discussion with Women Civil Servants

- a. All of the participants said that they voted in the last parliamentary elections held in 2013, and most of them voted by post since they were eligible to do so as civil servants.
- b. Most of them had participated in the conduct of the last parliamentary elections as election officials.

1. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. Most of the participants said that they looked for the leadership of a political party; the quality of the candidates in terms of education qualifications, experience, credibility and competence; and the election campaigns to base their decision to vote for a party or a candidate.
- b. They agreed that a political party or a candidate should be able to best represent the constituents and be able to provide stable and steady governance, be able to articulate the needs of the people and be willing to work for the larger interest of the people and the nation.

2. Elections and Information Dissemination

- a. The participants said that they got most of their information on political parties and candidates from the conventional media, while some of them said that their having had access to internet enabled them to get information on social media.
- b. The participants said that since they, as civil servants, were not allowed to attend election campaign meetings personally and physically, they were not able to really get to know the political parties and the candidates better than make do with what was

reported in media and what was on the media election campaign advertisements.

- c. The participants were of the opinion that the media covered the entire conduct of the last parliamentary elections in an unbiased manner.
- d. The participants expressed the view that civil servants should be allowed better access to the political parties and the candidates in terms of attending election campaign meetings and others to be able to make better decisions on the poll days.

3. Women in Elections and as Candidates

- a. All of the participants expressed the view that there are not many qualified women to stand as candidates and contest elections on equal footing as the Bhutanese men.
- b. They said that there being not many women to stand as candidates and contest elections is to be attributed to there being not many opportunities given to Bhutanese women in terms of social and developmental engagements, economic empowerment, and low level of support.
- c. They also said that there are not many women candidates coming forward to be even supported in elections, leaving them with no option but to vote for men candidates.
- d. They agreed that even if there were women candidates, they found them not equally competent as the men candidates. As such, they had to vote for the men candidates who were seen to be better and competent candidates compared to the women candidates.
- e. A few of them said that they have, however, voted for their women candidates in the last parliamentary election in 2013 hoping to give them to give an opportunity to be elected and represent them.
- f. They said that they will vote for women candidates in the future elections provided that the women candidates are equally competent as the men candidates. Otherwise it would only amount to token representation.
- g. While most of them (women civil servants with high school education) said that they have not thought about standing in any election as candidates, a few of them (with university education) said that they may take the chance, but only if they are well supported and encouraged to do so.

4. Why no Women Candidates

- a. The participants said that the cultural stereotypes and the defined gender roles have had played into Bhutanese women's low level of participation in public spheres and for that reason have had hampered political participation.
- b. Some of them (older women participants) said that the traditional beliefs and systems should be carried on as have been done all throughout to ensure that tradition(s) and culture(s) remain intact while some such beliefs and traditions should not be undermined for the sake of women's empowerment.
- c. They said that some of the beliefs should be taken to be true and actually believed since they have been inculcated and taught as such.
- d. They, however, said that women should not be seen to be incapable of doing many of the things than men did since times have changed and there are more and more opportunities for women to stand on equal footing as the men – in areas such as standing as candidates and contesting elections, and taking up leadership roles.
- e. In areas where physical strength is demanded, the participants conceded that women will not measure up to the men which is a naturally and biologically made difference.
- f. They said that girl children should be brought along the right track right from when they are in schools unlike in the past when most girl children got distracted as they got older.
- g. They said that the belief that women are better suited to become teachers is because women can understand and relate to students since they (married women with children) are seen to be gentle and caring.

5. Decision Making Process

- a. Most of the participants said that they make joint family decisions where and when they are married and have their own families.
- b. Some of them said that they have left the decision making process within their families and/or households to their male counterparts since their men are thought to be more dominant or competent, while a few of them (unmarried women civil servants) said that they have been able to do as they desired (which may remain so or change should they ever have their own families). One of them said that they have to still listen to their parents (mostly fathers) on major and important decisions, whether or not they are independently living.

- c. A few of them said that in their families and/or households, they are the ones who take most of the important decisions.

6. Environment for Women's Empowerment and Political Participation

- a. The majority of the participants said that they feel that the laws, the systems and the environment now for women participation in public life and politics are open and based on providing equal opportunities, which, however, have not been case because the Bhutanese women have missed opportunities when the country was developing and modernizing some years ago.
- b. They said that they are of the opinion that the Bhutanese women are not discriminated in present day Bhutan.

7. Way Forward

- a. The participants said that there should be proper guidance, support, trainings, etc. provided to ensure that interested Bhutanese women can equally stand as candidates and contest elections.
- b. They said that there should be concerted information dissemination and educational efforts made to get Bhutanese women enthused to come forward, especially those who can and are qualified and competent.
- c. Some of them said that, as a temporary measure to enhance women's political participation, competent women civil servants should be allowed to seek nominations and contest elections and be allowed to return to their jobs if not successful in either, since allowing them to do so will enable more women into the fold of enhance political participation as well as ensure risks of being economically dependent on their males counterparts are reduced.
- d. Additionally, women civil servants who seek to pursue higher educational qualifications through up-gradation and continuing education should be allowed to do so without having to resign from their jobs.
- e. They also expressed that there need to be more women role models to help encourage other women to become interested.

C. Bumthang Dzongkhag, 11th of August 2014

The Focus Group Discussions with the voters, the elected women local government representatives, the nominated women candidates and the women civil servants of the Bumthang Dzongkhag was held on 11th of August 2014 at the Conference Hall, Kaila Guesthouse.

The first Focus Group Discussion was held with the voters of Chhoekor Gewog and the elected women local government representatives and the nominated women candidates.

The second Focus Group Discussion was held with the women civil servants of the Bumthang Dzongkhag Administration and the regional offices of the various agencies, and the school teachers from the Jakar Higher Secondary School.

Focus Group Discussion with Voters

1. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. The participants said that they voted in the past elections, except for a few of them who did not vote since they could not be present to vote in their polling stations on poll days or did not reach the voting age then.
- b. Most of the participants said that they voted for the political parties and the candidates whom they thought were the best and competent to represent them.
- c. Most of them expressed the view that a competent and/or capable candidate (or a political party) is one who will best represent the people, has the right attitude and can realize the hopes and aspirations of the people. They said that anyone who is elected must be able to serve the country and the people in the best way that they could.
- d. Most of them said that candidates for elections must be educated and qualified to be able to represent them and be able to make decision on their behalf in national and local decision making institutions and processes without biases.

2. Elections and Information Dissemination

- a. Most of the participants said that they got information on elections, the political parties and the candidates from the various media's coverages of electoral events and the election campaign meetings of the political parties and the candidates and through media advertisements because they had access to media such as TV, radio or the newspapers.

- b. A majority of the participants said that they preferred the Common Forums for election campaigns to be the most effective form of conducting election campaigns, saying that Common Forums should be continued and coverage enhanced.
- c. Most of the participants said that door-to-door election campaigns are not preferred because there are opportunities for the political parties and the candidates to engage in unwanted and undesirable practices of influencing and inducing voters in unfair manners.
- d. Some of the participants said that there are too many unregulated election campaign meetings conducted by the political parties and the candidates at odd times and when people were most busy (the election period in the last parliamentary elections in 2013 fell during farming season) which they thought were quite bothersome, and suggested that there should be effective and adequate monitoring of election campaign activities.
- e. As candidates, the elected women leaders and the nominated and contested women candidates said that for local government elections, they have not been able to effectively conduct election campaigns since they (local government candidates) were not given campaign finance even to cover certain basic expenses required of conducting election campaigns; while a few of them said that they did not campaign because they found there were no needs felt to conduct election campaigns or they had other priorities of taking care of their families or their household chores and farm works.

3. Women in Elections and as Candidates

- a. The participants said that more women need to be elected and represented in Parliament and the local governments. One of them said that there is no elected woman representative in the National Council which is indicative of the fact that women have not been supported.
- b. Most of the participants said that women candidates were seen to be incompetent compared to men candidates.
- c. The participants (local elected representatives and the nominated and contested candidates) said that women candidates have not been able to effectively conduct election campaigns.
- d. They said that the women candidates must be competent and capable as the men candidates to be supported in elections by the voters, especially by the women voters.

- e. Some of them said that it is important to understand that incompetent women candidates should not be simply supported and elected simply to empower women.
- f. Most of them said that they will look forward to support and elect women candidates in elections, including encouraging other interested and competent women to stand as candidates in elections.
- g. Most of the men participants said that women themselves should come forward so that men voters will be able to support and vote for the women candidates.
- h. One of the elected local government representatives (Tang *Mangmi*) said that she will look forward to contesting in the next local government elections.

4. Why no Women Candidates

- a. The participants said that the low level of women's engagement in elections as candidates and in politics is because women are not bold or confident enough to come forward to stand as candidates in elections.
- b. The participants acknowledged that women have lagged behind men in availing of educational and socio-economic opportunities in the past which have not resulted in there being not many qualified and competent women to stand as candidates in elections. However, they also said that the same situation will not continue for long in the future since there are now more and more educated and competent women who can equally contest alongside the men.
- c. In the case of the local governments, the participants said that elected leaders are required to have immediate and close interactions with the people within their respective *Gewogs* and communities which the women have not been able and refrained to do so because they were not able to articulate views and opinions properly which, therefore, resulted in there being not many women contesting the last local government elections.
- d. The women participants said that there needs to be adequate support given to women to stand as candidates in elections to give them the opportunity and be able to gain experiences.
- e. The men participants said that they women must come forward and stand as candidates in elections to be supported by men voters.
- f. Most of them acknowledged that people generally believe that women's place to be in homes taking care of families and household

chores, while men are believed to be more capable and suited for public life and be chosen or elected as leaders.

- g. Many of them said that men are thought to be better decision makers and better in doing things than women.
- h. They also said that traditions and culture as have been passed down from the past have strong influence on the people and permeate every level of the Bhutanese society to obvious disadvantage of the Bhutanese women. However, they expressed the view that such a case may not be in the future with more and more women being educated and equipped with skills and competencies.
- i. While most of the participants said that independent and single women are better suited to take on important leadership roles without distractions than those who are married and with children, but even such women have not been able to make any headway to assume leadership positions because women generally have not been supported.

5. Environment for Women’s Empowerment and Political Participation

- a. Most of the participants acknowledged that the Bhutanese laws and systems are non-discriminatory and recognize and treat women equal to the men, with some of them (male participants) even suggesting that women have been given undue preference over men in many aspects.
- b. The participants said that the electoral laws and system are not discriminatory to the Bhutanese women with them being allowed to compete on equal footing alongside the Bhutanese men and on their own merits.

6. Way Forward

- a. The participants said that more information dissemination and education should be undertaken to encourage and support women’s active political and electoral participation.
- b. The women participants expressed that the authorities should explore the possibility of candidates for local government elections to be provided with election campaign funds to encourage more women to stand as candidates in elections. Some even suggested that the campaign advertisement posters of the nominated women candidates be allowed to have bigger dimensions than those of men candidates and to be displayed prominently.

- c. The participants said that the political parties and the candidates should not be allowed to conduct door-to-door election campaigns since such means of campaigning could also undermine women candidates' electoral prospects since they may not be able to undertake such election campaigns unlike the men candidates (have the advantages of physical strength and confidence).
- d. The participants suggested that the number of party workers and supporters be reduced and their roles regulated as to the election or non-election periods. The party workers and the supporters were seen and thought to be the ones who created many of the problems and electoral disputes.

Focus Group Discussion with Women Civil Servants

- a. Most of the participants said that they voted in the last parliamentary elections held in 2013, and have also taken part as electoral officers in the conduct of the elections. Some could not vote in the elections because they could not avail of postal voting facility being not registered or their application rejected.

1. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. The participants said that they voted in the elections to choose the best and competent candidates and political parties who would best represent them and the Bhutanese people in many of the important decisions that will affect their lives.
- b. The participants said that they looked at the competencies of the candidates and the political parties to vote in the elections.
- c. The participants said that a competent candidate or a political party is one who/which will benefit the country and the people without biases.
- d. In terms of choosing which candidate to support in elections, they said candidates should be qualified and experienced, while a political party should have good leadership, good candidates and have good and realistic election manifesto.

2. Elections and Information Dissemination

- a. The participants said that their being civil servants did not allow them to personally attend the election campaign meetings conducted by the political parties and the candidates, but they have nonetheless been informed through media's coverages of the electoral events and election campaigns and through media advertisements.

- b. The participants said that they got most of their information on political parties and candidates from the TV coverage of the Public Debates and the Common Forums, while some of them also accessed information from the internet connected to the various social media.
- c. Some of the participants said that they had no access to information on the political parties and the candidates which dissuaded them from voting in elections.
- d. Most of them expressed the view that door-to-door election campaigns should not be allowed to be conducted because such election campaigning is susceptible to corrupt practices and undue influencing of voters.
- e. A few of the participants said that they observed some of the media were biased in their coverage of the election campaigns.

3. Women in Elections and as Candidates

- a. The participants expressed the view that it is important that Bhutanese women are well represented in Parliament and the local governments since only women will understand and acknowledge women's needs, hopes and aspirations in policies and decision and laws to ensure and enhance their status as Bhutanese people without any discriminations.
- b. The participants acknowledged that women candidates are not generally supported by both men and women voters, seeing them to be incapable and incompetent to hold leadership positions.
- c. The participants said that they felt that voters will not vote for women candidates in elections even if they are competent and qualified enough to be elected and represent the people.
- d. Most of them said that they do not look forward to themselves becoming candidates in elections, but will support other women who are interested to give them the opportunity to be elected which have not been the case in many of the constituencies in the past elections. However, some of them said that they will vote for men candidates over women candidates since they said that women will not be able to perform as the men could since women have other responsibilities and priorities which will hamper in their undertaking important decision making tasks.
- e. Some of them said that, since the elected women representatives in the past have been ineffective, the voters must not have found

women candidates in the last parliamentary elections worthwhile to be supported and elected as their representatives.

- f. Most of the participants said that there should be economic security to sustain their livelihood to enable them (women civil servants) to come forward and stand as candidates in elections should they be not elected having resigned to be candidates.

4. Why no Women Candidates

- a. The participants were of the opinion women are not bold and confident enough to come forward and stand as candidates in elections since they cannot take the risks and (supposed) shame of losing, while some said that, as is, there are not many qualified, competent and capable women's voter base (even if their number is more than men in the country) owing to women having had less access to educational and socio-economic opportunities in the past compared to present situation.
- b. Many of them acknowledge the fact that there are so few women roles models or examples to encourage or persuade more women to come forward in public life and also stand as candidates in elections.
- c. The participants said that traditions and cultures have stereotyped women and certain defined gender roles as taught, inculcated and learned have made women to be seen as inferior to men in every aspect of their lives in homes, communities and the Bhutanese society which all had influenced the Bhutanese voters to see and support men candidates over women even if some of the women candidates are more than equally competent.
- d. A few of them said that they do not see themselves standing as candidates in elections since they are not educated and qualified enough or have the experiences to think of contesting elections in the future.

5. Decision Making Process

- a. The participants said that important decisions are mostly made by men or left to the men to decide, although there will be some discussions, while some of them said that they also make decisions independent of their male counterparts depending on what needs to be done.
- b. In voting in elections, most of them said that they voted for a candidate for a political party based on the information that they had received and by considering who they (political parties or candidates) are and how they would best represent the people.

Therefore, they said that voting in elections (being secret) for a political party or a candidate were their own decisions, except in one or two cases where and when the candidates were related to them.

6. Environment for Women's Empowerment and Political Participation

- a. The majority of the participants said that feel that the laws recognize men and women to be equals and given the same equal opportunities to stand as candidates in elections and be elected.
- b. They expressed their hope that there will be more women candidates contesting elections and being elected in the future with more and more women being educated and qualified, and being willing to take the chances.

7. Way Forward

- a. The participants said that there should be more information disseminated and electoral education and trainings conducted to encourage women political and electoral participation.
- b. Since educated and qualified women are to be found in the civil service (but are least interested and bothered to stand as candidates in elections), the participants said that women civil servants will need to be encouraged through advocacy and education, as well as through policies and decisions, to come forward and stand as candidates in elections.
- c. Most of the participants said that there needs to be more women role models and examples to follow on, for which women candidates will need to be supported and elected in elections.
- d. It was generally acknowledged by all participants that women will need to be encouraged and supported starting from the next elections to make a head start to ensure more and more women to come forward and stand as candidates in elections some years hence.

Lastly, on being informed of the questionnaire survey finding that a woman's best job is to be a teacher, the participants said that women will be able to care and guide children as mothers. They said that women teachers have performed well to be thought and acknowledged as such, while some of them said that women being teachers allow them to have more time for the family and to take care of their families, including raising children with proper guidance and counselling.

D. Monggar Dzongkhag, 14th of August 2014

The Focus Group Discussions with the voters, the elected women local government representatives, the nominated women candidates and the women civil servants of the Monggar Dzongkhag was held on 14th of August 2014 at the Conference Hall, Druk Zhongar Hotel.

The first Focus Group Discussion was held with the voters and the elected women local government representatives and the nominated women candidates.

The second Focus Group Discussion was held with the women civil servants of the Monggar Dzongkhag Administration and the school teachers from Monggar Higher Secondary School and Monggar Lower Secondary School.

Focus Group Discussion with Voters

1. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. All of the voters of the FGD said that they voted in the last parliamentary elections held in 2013.
- b. They voted in the elections to elect the best and competent political parties and candidates to represent them and work for the people and the country.
- c. Many of them said that they voted because they understand that it is important for them to vote in elections to exercise their right to choose their own government and the representatives.
- d. They said that a competent and/or capable candidate is one who can benefit the people and the country and is experienced and qualified to take the important roles and tasks, while a political party should have good leadership, capable and competent candidates and sound election manifesto which can be delivered.

2. Elections and Information Dissemination

- a. Many of them said that they have been adequately informed of the political parties and the candidates from the conduct of familiarization and/or introductory tours and from the conduct of election campaigns.
- b. Many of them also said that, since they have access to TV and radio, they have been informed of the political parties and the candidates from media's coverage of electoral events and from election campaign advertisements in media. However, such means of acquiring information are limited to only those places with access, with most of them having to rely on conventional and new ways of

conducting election campaigns such as Common Forums and door-to-door election campaigns.

- c. Many of them said that the Common Forums are effective since the political parties and the candidates can better present themselves to the voters in close proximity which enable the voters to know more. It was suggested that all local government election candidates be made to conduct election campaigns only through Common Forums.
- d. Some of them said that door-to-door election campaigns have been informative and should be allowed to be conducted but should be regulated and controlled for unlawful practices and undue influencing of voters using unfair means. However, some even suggested that door-to-door election campaigns should not be allowed at all.
- e. Many of them expressed that conducting election campaigns in local government elections is expensive without campaign finance since they have to also incur expenditures. They said that only financially well-endowed candidates could participate in local government elections
- f. For most of the women local government election candidates, they said that having to conduct election campaigns in different *Chiwogs* and villages is not as easy for them as for the men candidates since women candidates have to also look after homes and families and household chores and other farm works (in rural areas) which all do not allow women candidates to effectively conduct election campaigns.

3. Women in Elections and as Candidates

- a. The participants acknowledge the need that more Bhutanese women need to come forward and stand as candidates in elections and be elected as national and local leaders.
- b. They said that women in the past did not have access to education and socio-economic opportunities unlike the men, and they have generally shied away from taking active part in public spheres, which have seemingly discouraged women to come forward and stand as candidates in elections.
- c. Many of them said that women candidates in elections are not generally supported by the voters even if they are competent and capable to shoulder responsibilities of being elected leaders, while some women are not even supported by their own families and communities to come forward to stand as candidates in elections.

- d. One of the women participants (nominated candidate but not elected) said that, since she was not known by many of the voters in her *Gewog* having then recently returned to contest in the local government elections, she found it difficult to make the voters support her no matter what.
- e. Some of them said that even when women are elected people generally do not support them in undertaking their roles and tasks of being elected representatives with most people not taking them seriously, which makes interested women candidates to shy away from coming forward.
- f. Many of them expressed the hope that with more and more women being educated there will be more women coming forward to stand as candidates in elections in the future.
- g. Most of the men participants said that they will support women if they come forward to stand as candidates and contest elections.

4. Why no Women Candidates

- a. The participants said that most of the voters do not see women candidates to be capable and competent to be elected.
- b. Many of them believed that there are not many educated and qualified women coming forward to stand as candidates in elections, with even the educated and qualified and competent women not interested to come forward.
- c. Many of them said that they did not support the women candidates in the past elections since they were found to be inexperienced.
- d. The participants said that people see a woman's place to be in homes, taking care of the family and household chores.
- e. The majority of the participants said that women have lagged behind men in many of the life's opportunities, including education, which have limited their political participation and engagement in public spheres.
- f. Most of the participants said that there have not been many women leaders in the past and as such women have not been seen to be capable of taking on leadership positions.
- g. Most of the participants said even if there are women candidates, they are not generally supported by voters which have dissuaded many other women from standing as candidates in elections.

- h. Most of the participants said that traditions and cultures have defined women's place in the Bhutanese society to their disadvantage in modern Bhutan.

5. Decision Making Process

- a. Most of them said that they make decisions themselves based on what needs to be done for their families and households.
- b. Some of them believed that in most cases the men make the decisions as they are seen to be better decision makers and even to influence women and other family members to vote for a particular political party or a candidate in elections.

6. Environment for Women's Empowerment and Political Participation

- a. Most of the participants acknowledged that the Bhutanese laws and systems are non-discriminatory and recognize and treat women and men as equals.

7. Way Forward

- a. The participants said that there needs to be more women role models and examples to show the way forward for women's enhanced political and electoral participation.
- b. Many of them said that the party workers and supporters need to be regulated and controlled, while some said that no party workers or supporters be allowed to conduct election campaigns.
- c. Many of them said that candidates for local government elections will need to be given financial support to conduct election campaigns.
- d. They said that interested women candidates should be trained, educated, informed and mentored to contest in elections.

Focus Group Discussion with Women Civil Servants

- a. All of the participants said that they voted in the last parliamentary elections held in 2013, and have also taken part as electoral officers in conduct of the elections.
- b. Most of them said that they voted in the elections because it was important for them to exercise their right to vote.

1. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. The participants said that they voted for the political party or the candidate that they thought would best represent them.

- b. Most of the participants said it is important for them to vote for the right political party and candidate having thoroughly scrutinized each one.
- c. Many of them said that the ideologies and the election campaign manifestoes of the political parties helped them make decisions to vote.
- d. Some of them said that they voted to bring about change in government in the last parliamentary elections.
- e. They said that to be seen as capable and competent, the candidates should be qualified and experienced and have the motivation to serve the people and the country, as well as be credible.
- f. Many of them said that the political parties and the candidates will need to deliver on their campaign promises once elected or they should only be made to conduct election campaigns based on realistic and doable campaign promises.

2. Elections and Information Dissemination

- a. The participants said that they got most of their information on political parties and candidates from the media's coverage of the electoral events and election campaigns of the political parties and the candidates, as well as from the media advertisements.

3. Women in Elections and as Candidates

- a. The participants said that women should come forward and stand as candidates in elections and be elected to represent the Bhutanese women in policies and decisions that will equally have impacts on their lives and future.
- b. The participants said that women candidates in elections should contest elections on their own merits and be able to perform roles and tasks of being elected representatives and leaders.
- c. Many of them said that employed women and women civil servants should be encouraged and supported to stand as candidates in elections when they are interested to stand as candidates and contest elections rather than them not wanting to take risks of being unelected and without economic security.
- d. The participants said that there are not many educated and qualified women candidates owing to lack of education and socio-economic opportunities in the past which will not be the case anymore with equal and more opportunities being given to women.

- e. The participants said that even when there are competent and capable women contesting elections, the general voters do not support them which could dissuade other interested women to come forward in the future.
- f. Given the past participation of women in elections, the participants said that women candidates have been unable to perform as the men candidates did (when conducting election campaigns through Common Forums and TV Debates or speaking out or voicing opinions in Parliament and local governments).
- g. Many of them thought that family responsibilities and obligations (for married women) have dissuaded many qualified and competent women to stand as candidates in elections.
- h. Some of them said that women candidates while conducting election campaigns like door-to-door election campaigns cannot travel or be open enough to confidently meet with people as much as the men candidates.
- i. A few of them said that even women voters do not support women candidates no matter if the women candidates are capable and competent.
- j. Many of them said that while they themselves are not interested to stand as candidates in elections, they will support other women candidates to be given the opportunity to be elected and represented and to ensure that women's needs are articulated in policies and decisions.

4. Why no Women Candidates

- a. The participants said that traditions and cultures have defined Bhutanese women's place in the society and the communities which are entrenched by stereotyping and upbringing, despite the modernization of Bhutan in last few decades.
- b. Many of them said that politics is dirty and only men are best suited to partake in politics, while women are suited for gentler roles and tasks.
- c. They also said that it is believed that only men can take leadership roles and positions since there were no or not many women leaders in the past.
- d. They said that the defined gender roles such as seeing a woman's place to be in home and taking care of the family and the household

chores have limited women's public engagement and life in Bhutanese society.

- e. Some of them said that women are not as ambitious as the men are or be as daring to take risks of contesting elections.

5. Decision Making Process

- a. Most of the participants said that they are the ones who make decisions in their households, while a few of them said that they have left the decision making process within their families and/or households to their male counterparts or by their parents.

6. Environment for Women's Empowerment and Political Participation

- a. The majority of the participants said that feel that the laws recognize men and women to be equals. However, they said that empowerment of women as may be practiced is low.

7. Way Forward

- a. The participants said that women candidates should be provided financial and economic incentives to take the risk of contesting in elections. In cases where women candidates (fresh university graduate candidates) are unsuccessful in their contest of elections, the "cooling period" should be reduced to enable them to get opportunities to be employed in the civil service, while employed women resigning to contest elections may be allowed back to their old jobs.
- b. Some of them said that women's reserved representation or quota should be introduced until women are able to contest elections on their own merits.
- c. They said that there should be more role models for other young and upcoming women leaders to follow on.
- d. One of the participants said that to enhance a woman candidate's electoral prospects, election campaigns should be allowed to be conducted in local dialects so that voters get to fully know and understand the woman candidate.
- e. The participants said that civil servants should be allowed to attend election campaign meetings of the political parties and the candidates, instead of them having to rely only on media's coverage of election campaigns and media advertisements which may not allow them to fully know and understand the political parties and the candidates.

- f. To encourage more women to stand as candidates in elections, the participants said that there should be information dissemination and advocacy and education programmes conducted, while the interested women candidates should be properly trained, mentored and guided.

E. Lhuentse Dzongkhag, 18th of August 2014

The Focus Group Discussions with the voters, the elected women local government representatives, the nominated women candidates and the women civil servants of the Lhuentse Dzongkhag was held on 18th of August 2014 at the Conference Hall, Dzongkhag Administration.

The first Focus Group Discussion was held with the voters and the elected women local government representatives and the nominated women candidates.

The second Focus Group Discussion was held with the women civil servants of the Lhuentse Dzongkhag Administration and regional offices, and the school teachers of Phuyum Higher Secondary School.

Focus Group Discussion with Voters

1. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. The majority of the participants said that they voted in the last parliamentary elections held in 2013, except for a few of them who did not because they were underage to vote in the elections.
- b. Most of them voted in the elections to ensure that a good *Gothrip* is elected who will represent the people to benefit them and will also work for the overall development of the country.
- c. Most of them said that candidates should be competent, qualified and experienced to represent the people in decision making, while a political party should have capable leadership and competent candidates to be supported.
- d. Many of them expressed the view that there were too many party workers and supporters who were thought to be nuisances and created problems such as unduly influencing and forcing voters to vote for one or other political party or candidate in the elections.
- e. Most of them know that there are 5 registered political parties and 4 of them contested the last Primary Round of Elections to the National Assembly, and said that most of them thought that the two political parties with women as party presidents were not supported because of their leaderships (and supposedly did not believe their ability to govern the country)

2. Elections and Information Dissemination

- a. Many of them said that there were too many election campaign meetings conducted by the political parties and the candidates which often disturbed their farm works and others, although it was said that

election campaigns are necessary for the political parties and the candidates to help voters make the choice.

- b. Most of them said that the conduct of Common Forums for election campaigns was most preferred by the voters since such election campaigns allowed the voters to hear and know about all of the political parties and the candidates better and suggested that the Common Forums be conducted at *Chiwog* level for more coverage of voters.
- c. Most of them said that, owing to the election period for the last parliamentary elections being in the summer, election campaigns such as campaign meetings of the political parties and the candidates should be allowed to be conducted only on *Dhue-zangs* (auspicious days) when most people will not be engaged in farm works.
- d. Many of them said that, while the media's coverage of the election campaigns including broadcasting of Common Forums and TV Debates would help them know more about the political parties and the candidates, they would still prefer that the political parties and the candidates to conduct the door-to-door election campaigns, although such election campaigns will need to be properly regulated and monitored. They pointed out that their access to media is limited and the coverage is restricted by time limits which do not allow them to know more about the political parties and the candidates.
- e. Most of the women participants pointed out that women candidates have not been able to conduct election campaigns effectively since they have to walk long distances in some of the areas within Lheuntse Dzongkhag.

3. Women in Elections and as Candidates

- a. The majority of the participants said that women are generally not supported to stand as candidates in elections by their families and communities believing them to be incapable and incompetent to serve and function as elected representatives and leaders.
- b. Most of them acknowledged that women will need to be given the opportunity to stand as candidates in election and be elected to represent the people on equal footing with the men for them to gain the necessary experience and be able to make decisions that will impact the Bhutanese women and women in their communities equally.

- c. Most of them said that competent and capable women will need to come forward to stand as candidates in elections to be supported and be elected.
- d. Some of them said that women candidates and elected representatives have additional burdens of taking care of families and homes for them to be seen as capable, competent and effective candidates in elections and elected representatives. (They related that Aum Dorji Choden was seen taking care of household chores even though she is an elected representative and Minister)
- e. Most of the men participants said that they will vote for men candidates so long as they see the women candidates to be incompetent compared to the men candidates, while the women participants said that they will support women candidates in elections.
- f. Most of the participants articulated that need that women candidates to be competent and experienced to stand as candidates in elections and be elected.
- g. A former member (*Chimi*) of the erstwhile National Assembly said that there were a few elected women *Chimis* who did not perform well to be recognized by the people that women will make good leaders which hampered women's participation as candidates in elections such that even women voters prefer men candidates over women candidates, notwithstanding their competencies and capabilities.
- h. Most of the women participants said that while they themselves do not expect to stand as candidates in future elections, they will support women candidates in elections, including supporting and encouraging other qualified and educated women.

4. Why no Women Candidates

- a. Most of the participants said that there were not many qualified and educated women to stand as candidates in elections because of their limited access to educational and other socio-economic opportunities, while those women who are educated do not want to come forward to stand as candidates in elections.
- b. Most of them said that women generally are not seen to be capable of being elected representatives and leaders believing men to be better suited since there always have been more and only men in the past who were leaders.

- c. Many of them said that traditions and culture have influenced and dictated that women's place to be in homes taking care of raising children and doing household chores. They said that traditions and belief systems have been passed down from the past and are to be believed to be true, despite the modern efforts to uplift women's social status and their empowerment through increased and enhanced access to socio-economic opportunities.
- d. Most of women participants themselves said that they believe that men are much better than women in many of things, including being leaders and standing in elections as candidates.

5. Decision Making Process

- a. Most of them said that they are responsible for making decisions for their households and families having considered what needs to be decided or done, while some of them said that their male counterparts generally make all the decisions as heads of households.
- b. Most of them said that more and more women now make decisions unlike in the past when men mostly made the decisions.

6. Environment for Women's Empowerment and Political Participation

- a. Most of the participants acknowledged that the Bhutanese laws and systems are non-discriminatory and recognize and treat women and men as equals.

7. Way Forward

- a. The participants said that women need to be equally given opportunities in all aspects of social-economic and political opportunities which must be undertaken through information dissemination and advocacy and through education.
- b. Many of them said that there is a need felt to limit the number of party workers and supporters of the political parties and the candidates during elections to reduce their unwanted and undue influencing of voters.
- c. Many of the also said that there needs to be more women given the opportunity to be elected so that there are role models for other women to follow on later.
- d. Most of them also said that interested women should be encouraged to, supported and trained to stand as candidates in elections while others could be encouraged enroll for non-formal education (which itself could be improved and enhanced to enable better learning).

They said that all Bhutanese girls should have adequate access and opportunity to school education.

- e. Most of them said that there needs to be more civic and electoral education programmes held to encourage and support women's participation in all aspects of political and electoral process.

Focus Group Discussion with Women Civil Servants

- a. The majority of the participants said that they voted in the last parliamentary elections held in 2013, and have also taken part as electoral officers in conduct of the elections.
- b. Most of them said that they voted in the elections because it was important for them to exercise their right to vote.

1. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. The majority of the participants said that they voted in the last parliamentary elections in 2013 to choose the right persons to represent the people and serve the country, while some of them voted for change in the government (for experience) and some of them said to have better leaders to govern the country and most of them based their options on the quality of the candidates of and the political parties.
- b. Most of them said that it is important to elect the right candidate who is capable, competed, qualified, experienced and credible and should also be able to articulate the needs of the people in decisions and policies.
- c. While most of the participants were know that four political parties contested the Primary Round of Elections to the National Assembly, a few of them were a little unsure that there are 5 registered political parties.
- d. The participants said that their decisions to vote for a political party or a candidate is mostly their own based on what they know about the political parties and the candidates contesting the elections.

2. Elections and Information Dissemination

- a. The participants said that they being civil servants did not have any opportunity to attend any of the election campaign meetings of the political parties and the candidates which they said has limited their understanding of the political parties and the candidates to make better judgement.

- b. Most of them said that they only got basic information on the political parties and the candidates from the media's coverage of the electoral events and election campaigns and media advertisements of the political parties and the candidates, which also they could not access much because of their household chores and other priorities.

3. Women in Elections and as Candidates

- a. The participants acknowledged the need to have more women represented in decision making process and institutions to better articulate the needs of the women.
- b. Most of them said that most women are fearful of standing as candidates in elections since there were not many women elected leaders in the past and that they were generally not supported even by the women voters.
- c. Most of them agreed that men do not generally believe women can make better candidates than men in elections and as such the women's status in social and public spheres as leaders, for which they have not been given opportunities thus far.
- d. Most of them also agreed that women are not so confident and forthcoming as the men to stand as candidates in elections because of the uncertainty of electoral outcomes having participated and/or contested in elections.
- e. Most of them said that women have obligations of taking care of homes and families which do not allow for women to participate actively in elections as candidates, even though women now are more independent and equal to men in many aspects and they can equally stand as candidates in elections.
- f. Most of the generally agreed that there were not many qualified and educated women in the past to allow for more women to seek nominations to contest elections to Parliament or the local governments, while the political parties have had generally fielded more men candidates than women to contest elections in the past two parliamentary elections.
- g. Most of them said that they will generally support women candidates in elections if they are competent enough since they said that women candidates need to be elected on their own merits, while some of them said that they will support women candidates in elections to give more women the opportunity to be elected and gain the necessary experience so that more and more women follow.

- h. Most of them expressed their frustration that many of the women candidates nominated to contest elections in the last parliamentary elections were quite very young and inexperienced to be even supported by women voters.
- i. Most of them said that they themselves will not look forward to stand as candidates in elections in the future because they have their career and family priorities and as such cannot take the risk of economic uncertainty or instability of resigning and contesting elections.
- j. As such, they said that there are not enough financial and economic incentives for women to stand as candidates in elections.

4. Why no Women Candidates

- a. Most of them said that it is generally understood and believed that men have generally occupied the majority of the elected and important positions in the past, with very less number of women have ever assumed important positions of political and national significance.
- b. The participants said that it has been generally believed that women's place is in homes in the traditional male dominated society.
- c. They said that traditions and culture have beliefs and systems which have played into the mindset of the people that women cannot make better leaders than men and generally looked down from taking any important roles in families, communities and the Bhutanese society.
- d. They said that the gender roles as have been defined and set by traditions and culture have limited women's public life and engagement.
- e. They also said that people believe that women cannot multitask as the men can do which have hampered women's support in elections and others.
- f. Most of them said that women themselves feel inferior compared to men and not wanting to show that they are so, they do not come forward to take active part in social and political life.
- g. Generally, most of them said that women view politics to be dirty and only for men to engage in.

5. Decision Making Process

- a. Most of the participants said that as to who make decisions will depend on what needs to be decided and needs to be done, but they make independent decisions when it comes to who they should vote for in elections.

6. Environment for Women's Empowerment and Political Participation

- a. Most of them acknowledged that the laws, including the electoral laws, recognize and treat women to be equal to men.
- b. Most of them said that while quota or reserved representation will increase the number of women elected in Parliament and the local governments, there will be incapable and incompetent women elected, while such a measure would indirectly discriminate Bhutanese women and see them to be incapable of being elected on their own merits

7. Way Forward

- a. The participants said that men should be sensitized and educated to support women's participation in elections.
- b. They said that civil servants should be allowed to attend election campaigns of the political parties and the candidates to get to know the political parties and the candidates more and better to help them make informed and better decisions, such as supporting and voting for women candidates in elections.
- c. Most of them said that there needs to be mindset change brought about through education and advocacy (for a generation of Bhutanese) to hope for more natural increase in the number of women coming forward to contest as candidates in elections. As such, they said that the education system should tackle some of the basic problems with regard to Bhutanese women's social and political status, which can be done through enhanced civic education.
- d. Some of them said that there should be more women role models for other interested women to follow on, while those interested women should be properly trained and encouraged to come forward and stand as candidates in elections.
- e. A few of them suggested that quota or reserved representation be implemented whereby capable and competent women are directly nominated like in the case of eminent women persons nominated by His Majesty the King to the National Council.

- f. Most of them said that women civil servants who are interested to stand as candidates in elections should be allowed to return to their jobs to ensure their livelihoods and economic security which they do not want to risk otherwise.

F. Trashigang Dzongkhag, 20th of August 2014

The Focus Group Discussions with the voters, the elected women local government representatives, the nominated women candidates and the women civil servants of the Trashigang Dzongkhag was held on 20th of August 2014 at the KC Hotel.

The first Focus Group Discussion was held with the voters and the elected women local government representatives and the nominated women candidates.

The second Focus Group Discussion was held with the women civil servants of the Trashigang Dzongkhag Administration, the regional offices and the school teachers from Trashigang Lower Secondary School.

The third Focus Group Discussion was held with the female students of the Sherubtse College.

Focus Group Discussion with Voters

1. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. All of the participants said that they voted in the last parliamentary elections in 2013 and the local government elections in 2011.
- b. Most of them said that they voted to elect the best or the most competent candidates who will best represent them and serve both the government and the people.
- c. Most of them acknowledged that it is their right to vote in elections and knows it is important for them to vote in elections.
- d. Some of them said that with the changes made now through socio-economic opportunities, there will be more women candidates contesting in elections in the future.
- e. Most of them said that a competent and good candidate is one who is well educated and qualified, will work for the country and the people, knows and understands the needs of the people and can best serve the with *Tha-Dham-Tsi*,
- f. Most of them said that their choice of political parties was based on which political party will best represent the people and form the government that will benefit the people.
- g. Most of them know that there are 5 registered political parties and 4 of them contested in the Primary Round of Elections to the National Assembly in the last parliamentary elections.

2. Elections and Information Dissemination

- a. Most of them said that the conduct of elections campaigns by the political parties and the candidates were socially and communally divisive with the different political parties and the candidates engaged in negative election campaigns, while the need to attend too many election campaign meetings were thought to be bothersome to the rural voters with their farm works and others.
- b. Most of them said that Common Forums should be organized for all purposes of election campaigns by the political parties and the candidates since Common Forums allowed voters to adequately know and make their judgements.
- c. Most of them expressed the view that door-to-door election campaigns are not preferred and that the party workers and the supporters should not be allowed to conduct election campaigns except for them to work as guides to the political parties and the candidates.

3. Women in Elections and as Candidates

- a. Most of the women participants agreed that women will better understand and articulate women's needs in policies and decisions and as such it is important that women are adequately represented in the decision making process and institutions.
- b. Most of them said that women candidates are generally not supported because women are seen to be weak in making decisions and incompetent by men, while the women voters do not support women candidates out of jealousy, even if the women candidates are competent.
- c. Most of them acknowledged that women in the past lacked access to socio-economic opportunities, including education, which negatively impacted their social and political engagements now.
- d. Most of them said that women are hesitant and not confident to come forward to stand as candidates in elections from fears of being backlashed and being shamed.
- e. Most of the women who are now elected local representatives or contested the local government elections said that their spouses did not support their participation since they were thought not to be able to do as the men candidates in the elections.

- f. Most of the men participants said that there should be more women standing in elections to be supported and that they should also be competent enough to be supported.
- g. Most of the women said that they cannot take the risks of losing out on economic opportunities of not being elected having made the decision to contest elections, unless there are economic and financial incentives given.
- h. Some of them said that all candidates, men or women, should be known to the people of the *Demkhongs* to be supported in elections (since most of the capable and competent candidates are those who live and stay away from *Demkhongs* and only seen when seeking nominations to contest elections).
- i. Most of women participants said that women will need to be given the opportunity to gain the experience and to function as role models for other women to look up to and follow on.
- j. Some of them said that they are willing to come forward to stand as candidates in the next local government elections while some of them will support other women candidates in the elections in 2016 and 2018.
- k. Some of the participants (elected women representatives and contestants of local government elections) said that women candidates cannot conduct election campaigns unlike their male counterparts owing to their physiological differences in having to walk long distances over mountains and crossing rivers and jungles and having to take care of families and household chores.
- l. Some of them expressed the view that even some women voters will not vote for a woman candidate no matter how very competent if a man candidate, even if he is incompetent, is related to the women voters.
- m. One of the participants said that she contested elections and even got elected only for her election results to be cancelled since she was found to be ineligible being underage to stand as a candidate in the last local government elections about which she felt not only ashamed but also might have discouraged the voters who supported her in the elections.

4. Why no Women Candidates

- a. The participants said that women were believed to be incompetent compared to men since women have always been confined to homes

and taking care of families and household chores, while men have always been engaged in public affairs and in making decisions.

- b. Most of them said that there were not many women in leadership positions in the past and as such women have been seen as not made to be leaders, and men generally do not accept women in leadership positions.
- c. Most of the women themselves see that women are not capable to become elected leaders since they have been made to believe as such because of traditions and culture.
- d. They said that age old beliefs and systems which have defined women's place and social status may have been true in organizing the Bhutanese society, such archaic notions and systems do not have any significance now with more and more educated and independent women in important positions leading the way for other women.

5. Decision Making Process

- a. Most of them said that they make decisions themselves based on what needs to be done for their families and households.
- b. Some of them said that in most cases the men make the decisions as they are seen to be better decision makers.

6. Environment for Women's Empowerment and Political Participation

- a. Most of the participants acknowledged that the Bhutanese laws and systems are non-discriminatory and recognize and treat women and men as equals.
- b. They also said that there are equal opportunities given to women now than ever before so as to encourage more women to come forward to stand as candidates in elections.

7. Way Forward

- a. The participants agreed that there should be more concerted education and information dissemination to encourage women to take active part in politics and elections and to get the opportunity to be elected.
- b. They said that interested women should be encouraged and supported all throughout to enhance their long term chances of being elected in elections.
- c. They suggested that women candidates should be supported through trainings and mentoring to equip them with and enhance their skills and competencies such as public speaking.

- d. Some of them said that there should be more of such and similar discussions and meetings as the present FGD to help women to be informed and encouraged to come forward.
- e. Some of them suggested that there should be laws or policies which will discourage or denounce men from discriminating women or speaking against women in belittling ways, especially in public spheres and forums.

Focus Group Discussion with Women Civil Servants

- a. All of the participants said that they voted in the last parliamentary elections held in 2013, and have also taken part as electoral officers in conduct of the elections.
- b. Most of them said that they voted in the elections because it was important for them to exercise their right to vote and be responsible citizens.

1. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. The participants said that they voted for the right political parties and the candidates to be elected to represent them.
- b. Most of them said they based their decisions on the experiences of the candidates, while some of them wanted new and fresh candidates to represent them for a change.
- c. They said that a right candidate is one who they think will be beneficial to the people, will be able to perform as spoken, is educated and qualified and experienced, and has the right attitude.
- d. They said that they will also look for candidates who would be able to translate the people's hopes and aspirations in policies and decisions.
- e. Most of them said that they voted for the political parties having considered the leadership and the qualities and experiences of the candidates.
- f. Most of them said that elected leaders and the political parties should be effective, capable and competent to govern the country and benefit the people.

2. Elections and Information Dissemination

- a. Most of them said that they did not attend the election campaign meetings of the political parties and the candidates since they were not allowed being civil servants.

- b. Most of them said that they accessed information on the political parties and the candidates from the media's coverage of the electoral events and the election campaigns and the media advertisements of the political parties and the candidates, including from the social media.
- c. They said that civil servants will need to be allowed to attend election campaign meetings to get to know more and better about the political parties and the candidates to make better decisions, including even supporting and voting for women candidates.

3. Women in Elections and as Candidates

- a. The participants said that women should come forward and stand as candidates in elections and be elected at all levels to represent the Bhutanese women needs in policies and decisions.
- b. They said that they want to see more women to come forward and stand as candidates in elections and will look to support women candidates in elections to be them the opportunity to be represented and gain experiences, while some said that women candidates will need to be capable and competent to be supported.
- c. Most of them said that women have household and family obligations that prevent them from effectively and actively participating in elections as candidates and as such women candidates are generally not well supported by voters, including women voters.
- d. They acknowledged that there are less women who are educated and qualified who will come forward to contest elections because women in the past lacked access to education and other socio-economic opportunities.
- e. Some of them said that women are less confident and daring than men to come forward to stand as candidates in elections, with there being not many women in leadership positions in the past on whom other women could look up to and follow on in their footsteps.

4. Why no Women Candidates

- a. Most of them said that gender stereotypes and roles as defined by traditions and culture have had limited women's social and political status and participation, with some even believing and practicing the age old beliefs and systems.

- b. Most of them said that women's place is in homes taking care of families and household chores while men will represent in public spheres and make decisions.
- c. Some of them said that a girl child is meek and submissive and is encourage by parenting and education to be so. Therefore, women are not confident and daring enough to come forward.
- d. Some of them said that women are more soft and emotional thereby not being able to make better decisions compared to men, which can be attributed to women's low support in being elected.

5. Decision Making Process

- a. Most of the participants said that they are the ones who make decisions in their households, while a few of them said that they have left the decision making process within their families and/or households to their male counterparts or by their parents.
- b. They said that as to who makes the decisions will depend on what needs to be decided or what needs to be done, although there will be some discussions and consensus reached on the decisions to be made. Therefore, women are also seen to be equal partners in most of the decisions made.
- c. Some of them said that men are generally seen to be more capable of making decisions without emotions unlike women who are considerate and thoughtful. Therefore, they said that women are better decision makers.

6. Environment for Women's Empowerment and Political Participation

- a. The majority of the participants said that feel that the laws recognize men and women to be equals.

7. Way Forward

- a. The participants said that women should be educated and informed to be independent and forward thinking to encourage them to come forward and stand as candidates in elections.
- b. They said that it is important to secure women's economic stability to enable them to actively participate in political and electoral process by making them able to take the risks to being unelected.
- c. They said that quota or reserved representation could be explored to be implemented, though not at the cost of being it being seen as discriminatory or acknowledging women's incompetency or incapability of being elected on their own merits.

- d. They suggested that civil servants should be allowed to attend election campaign meetings to enable them to know more and better about the political parties and the candidates.
- e. They said that there needs to be more women elected in leadership positions and serve as role models for other women to look up to and follow on.

Session with Female Students of Sherubtse College

A session was also held at Sherubtse College with about 20 female students to gather their views and opinions on women's political participation.

Most of the students said that they voted in the last parliamentary elections in 2013, except for a few of them who could not avail postal voting or did not reach the voting age. Some of them chose not to vote because they had no adequate information on the political parties and the candidates. And one of them said she did not vote because she did not like any of the political parties or the candidates.

1. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. The participants who voted in the last elections said that they voted to make differences as in electing the right political parties and the candidates to represent them and the people in making the right decisions and policies for the country and the people.
- b. Most of them said that they voted to ensure that their votes are counted in ensuring that the best and right candidates and political parties are elected.
- c. They said that the political parties and the candidates should be capable and competent of realizing the election campaign promises and be able to perform and deliver as have spoken.
- d. They said that a right candidate is one who is qualified and experienced to take on the roles and responsibilities of being elected representatives.

2. Elections and Information Dissemination

- a. They said that many of them did not attend any of the election campaign meetings of the political parties and the candidates since such activities were not allowed to be conducted in their educational institution as any other educational institutions in the country.
- b. Most of them said that they have inadequate access to information on political parties and the candidates, while the kinds of information that they have been able to access, especially on social media were quite negative and discouraging.

3. Women in Elections and as Candidates

- a. They said that women are generally not supported by families, communities and the society to be leaders and represent people in decision making process and institutions.
- b. They said that there are not many women interested in politics seeing politics to be dirty and to be only engaged in by men.
- c. They said that women lack self-belief and faith in themselves to come forward and stand as candidates in elections, while social and economic barriers and lack of opportunities have hampered women from actively taking part in politics.
- d. They said that women have to compete with men and men are generally preferred over women by voters, especially women voters who believe and find men candidates to be more able and competent than women candidates.
- e. They said that women have to balance their political participation with their family and/or household chores and priorities.
- f. They said that they themselves believe that men make better leaders and are able to make better decisions unlike women who are seen to be very fussy in making decisions.
- g. They said that there are not many examples of women in decision making and leadership positions which have discouraged other women from coming forward because of unequal access to socio-economic opportunities and opportunities of being elected.
- h. They said that women will need to balance economic stability with political participation, unless economic stability to contest elections is ensured.
- i. They acknowledged that there needs to be women elected and represented in making policies and decisions that articulate and address women's needs or be gender sensitive.
- j. They also acknowledged that women have to support women so that women are elected and represented.

4. Why no Women Candidates

- a. They said that traditions and culture have defined women's status in Bhutanese society and thus in politics too with such impact that the women are seen to be inferior compared to the men.

- b. They said that the gender stereotypes and roles have placed women to be incapable and incompetent to be leaders which have influenced men not to accept women leaders.
- c. They said gender stereotypes and roles have made men more willing to take active part in public spheres, while women have been confined to homes taking care of families and household chores.
- d. They said women in public spheres is seen as a taboo (dictated by social and cultural norms).
- e. They said that women are seen to be emotionally different than men, thus being at the risk of compromising in making decisions and policies, and as such society do not support women to come forward and stand as candidates in elections.

5. Environment for Women's Empowerment and Political Participation

- a. They said that women are recognized to be equal to men under the laws and systems, but the equal status in terms of socio-economic and political opportunities and in practice will take time, especially political opportunities since political maturity to accept more women in elected leadership positions will certainly take time.
- b. One of them said that the proposed bill to require parliamentary candidates (especially in the National Council) to have 10 years of experience will hinder and discourage many educated and qualified young women to come forward and stand as candidates.

6. Way Forward

- a. They said quota or reserved representation is one of the ways to have more women represented, but it will at the risk of indirectly discriminating the women as being incapable and incompetent to compete on their own merits.
- b. They said more women should be encourage through information and education, and be elected to have more role models for future women to look up to and follow on.
- c. They said that media coverage needs to be regulated and controlled, esp. social media, from biased coverages, and the media tasked to do more to inform and educate rather than engage in propaganda and false and biased reporting and coverage.
- d. They said that the political parties and the candidates should be allowed to introduce to students in educational institutions so that students are better able to know more about the political parties and the candidates to make better and informed decisions.

G. Trashi Yangtse Dzongkhag, 22nd of August 2014

The Focus Group Discussions with the voters, the elected women local government representatives, the nominated women candidates and the women civil servants of the Trashi Yangtse Dzongkhag was held on 22nd of August 2014 at the Dzongkhag Tshogdu Hall.

The first Focus Group Discussion was held with the voters and the elected women local government representatives and the nominated women candidates.

The second Focus Group Discussion was held with the women civil servants of the Trashi Yangtse Dzongkhag Administration and the school teachers from Bayling Higher Higher Secondary School, Tshenkarla Middle Secondary School and Trashi Yangtse Lower Secondary School.

Focus Group Discussion with Voters

1. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. All of the voters of the FGD said that they voted in the last parliamentary elections held in 2013, except for two of them who were then underage.
- b. They voted in the elections to elect the best and competent political parties and candidates to represent them and work for the people and the country and serve as the link to the government.
- c. They said that they voted to ensure the peace and security of the country by ensuring that they voted for the right political parties and candidates.
- d. Some of them voted based on what the political parties and the candidates promised to them during the election campaigns as in what will be done to directly benefit the voters of their particular *Demkhongs*.
- e. Some of them claimed that they voted to strengthen the Bhutanese democracy.
- f. They said a competent candidate is one who is qualified, is able to maintain *Tha-Dham-Tsig*, has the right attitude, and knows and understands the needs of the people.
- g. They said there are 5 registered political parties and 4 contested the Primary Round of Elections in 2013.
- h. They said they voted for the political parties based on the leadership and the qualities of the candidates, while they also voted for change for a different experience.

2. Information Dissemination and Election Campaigns

- a. They said that Common Forums are preferred form of election campaigns over others.
- b. They said that door-to-door election campaigns are not preferable, except where there is no or limited access to mass and conventional media, since such form of election campaigns are susceptible to undue influencing of voters and other corrupt practices.

3. Women in Elections and as Candidates

- a. They said that women have family and household responsibilities which do not allow for women to come forward to stand as candidates in elections.
- b. They said that women had less access to educational and other socio-economic opportunities which resulted in there being very less women who are educated and qualified enough to seek nominations to contest elections, unlike the situation now where there are more women educated there to be more women candidates in the future.
- c. They said that women are thought to be less capable and competent compared to men to be supported in elections, even by women voters themselves.
- d. They said that there were not many women who were in leadership positions since they were not given opportunities and as such there are not many women willing to come forward to stand as candidates in elections.
- e. They said that there are not many women in leadership positions in the civil service to be thought that women can also become elected leaders and to be supported as such.
- f. They said that even when there are competent women candidates, the party workers and supporters play around to exert undue influences against the women candidates.
- g. They acknowledged that there needs to be more women elected and represented in all levels to represent and address women's needs in policies and decisions.
- h. They said that, notwithstanding competency, voting in elections also depend on relations which might hamper women candidates' electoral prospects at times. However, they said that they will look forward to support women candidates if there are women candidates in elections, except some men participants who said that they will only vote for men candidates over women candidates.

- i. They said that women will need to be given opportunities to be elected and represent in Parliament and the local governments to encourage other women to become to come forward. As such, most of them said that they will either stand as candidates themselves or support other women to stand as candidates and vote for them in elections.

4. Why no Women Candidates

- a. They said that it is generally believed and understood that women's place is in homes raising children and taking care of household chores.
- b. They said that women are generally seen to be emotionally and physiologically weaker to take on leadership positions and make decisions.
- c. They said traditions and culture have stereotyped women and defined their roles within households, communities and at large in the Bhutanese society to their disadvantage.
- d. They said that beliefs and systems which have not allowed women to come forward have been dictated by cultural and social norms in the past and continued to be believed and practiced even today.
- e. The women participants themselves said that they feel comfortable to be confined within homes. As such, there are not many women who come forward to contest in elections.

5. Decision Making Process

- a. They said that they are mostly independent in decision making, but would also choose to discuss and decide based on what needs to be done with their spouses and families.
- b. In elections, they said that they make their own independent decisions as to which political party or candidate to support, but at there have been instances when the party workers and supported have exerted undue influences to vote for a particular party or a candidate.
- c. They said it is generally seen and believed that men make better decisions than women and as such some of the said that they leave decisions to be made by their men.
- d. They also said that since majority of the household heads are men, men take precedence in decision making over and compared to women.

6. Environment for Women’s Empowerment and Political Participation

- a. Most of the participants acknowledged that the Bhutanese laws and systems are non-discriminatory and recognize and treat women and men as equals.

7. Way Forward

- a. They said that women need to be encouraged through education and information dissemination.
- b. They said educated and competent women should be supported and encourage to visit and stay in their *Demkhongs* in order to let voters know more about them to be supported in elections.
- c. They said there needs to be more women role models to be there and women who are capable and competent to be supported to be in leadership positions.
- d. They said that more women candidates needs to be encouraged to be nominated by the political parties or by the communities and thereafter supported in elections.
- e. They suggested that the coverage of NFE be expanded by taking such facility closer to villages and more women to be encouraged to avail education through NFE system.
- f. They suggested that Common Forums should be organized in villages and *Chiwogs* while the door-to-door election campaigns be not allowed to be conducted by the party workers and supporters.
- g. They also suggested that it should be made mandatory that all voters attend electoral education sessions and the Common Forums for election campaigns, not just one or two voters from each household.
- h. They said that it is important to limit the number of party workers and supporters and their roles and responsibilities to be defined and regulated.
- i. They said that women will need to be provided exposures and trained in better ways of taking part in politics and elections.

Focus Group Discussion with Women Civil Servants

All of the participants said that they voted in the last parliamentary elections held in 2013, and have also taken part as electoral officers in conduct of the elections.

1. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. They said they voted to elect capable candidates and looked at the qualities and experiences of the candidates as well the leadership when voting for political parties.
- b. They said that a competent and capable candidate should be effective and efficient, forward looking as in making decisions and policies to benefit the people and the country and should be qualified, experienced and credible.

2. Elections and Information Dissemination

- a. They said they did not attend election campaigns meetings of the political parties and candidates.
- b. They said that the media's coverage of the electoral events and election campaigns of the political parties and the candidates are inadequate or are not able to access information timely.

3. Women in Elections and as Candidates

- a. They said that women have had less experience and opportunity to be in leadership positions in the past which have dictated women's low interest in public and political spheres in modern Bhutan.
- b. They said that not there are not many educated and qualified women to come forward to stand as candidates in elections because they are generally not supported by voters, believing them to be incompetent compared to men candidates.
- c. They said that they are forced to vote for men candidates mostly in elections even if they want and will support women candidates in elections, and they will look forward to support women candidates in the future. However some said that they will only vote for women candidates if they are competent and capable compared to the men candidates.
- d. They said that it is important that there are women elected and represented to ensure that women's needs are articulated and addressed in policies and decisions.
- e. Some of the said that they will look forward to stand as candidates in elections provided they are able to equip themselves with skills and competencies, as well as enhance their educational qualifications. For others, they said that they will support other women candidates in elections even though they are not interested to stand as candidates in elections.

- f. They said that women with qualifications and leadership qualities will need to be encouraged to come forward to stand as candidates in elections. However, some said that there needs to be political maturity to ensure that women naturally see themselves as being able to equally come forward to stand as candidates in elections.
- g. Most of them said that women candidates should be encourage with financial and economic incentives to ensure their livelihood and economic stability to participate in elections without worrying about the risks and loss economic opportunities.

4. Why no Women Candidates

- a. They said women's place to be in homes and bound to household chores, while men thought to be best suited to be leaders and making decisions and working outside of homes.
- b. Gender stereotypes and roles as have been dictated by social and cultural norms still hold sway over people, which have led to women being seen as incapable and incompetent to be elected leaders even by women themselves. Such beliefs and systems have generally dictated women to be inferior to men.
- c. They said that certain beliefs and systems are to be held and practiced even today since they believe doing otherwise would be distasteful and disparaging to women's image and name.
- d. They said that men are more dominant and authoritative in every aspect of Bhutanese society and as such people do not see women to be worthy of being vested with power and authority to be leaders and rule.
- e. They also said that parenting and gender stereotyping have their biases as to define men and women's roles in homes, communities and the society at large.

5. Decision Making Process

- a. They said that they agree that men make better decisions in most cases, but women can also make decisions with careful consideration and thought.
- b. They said that men make better financial decisions and women are careful decision makers.
- c. Most said that their men make most of the decisions, however they also make decisions based on discussions and on what needs to be done.

- d. They that women will be more independent in making decisions with education and enhanced access to socio-economic opportunities.

6. Way Forward

- a. They said there must be efforts made to change people's mindset through education and information, and encouragement and enabling more and more women to come forward to take active part in politics and elections.
- b. They said that women will need to be given more exposure and confidence building measures taken to encourage them to come forward.
- c. They said that political education and sensitization should be allowed in schools and educational institutions to help young minds understand and recognize the need for women to be represented.
- d. They said civil servants should be allowed to attend election campaign meetings to enable them to know more and better about the political parties and the candidates to make better decisions as well as be able to help and guide rural voters who otherwise might be misguided and misinformed.

H. Pema Gatshel Dzongkhag, 26th of August 2014

The Focus Group Discussions with the voters, the elected women local government representatives, the nominated women candidates and the women civil servants of the Pema Gatshel Dzongkhag was held on 26th of August 2014 at the Pema Gatshel Middle Secondary School.

The first Focus Group Discussion was held with the voters and the elected women local government representatives and the nominated women candidates.

The second Focus Group Discussion was held with the women civil servants of the Pema Gatshel Dzongkhag Administration and the school teachers from Pema Gatshel Middle Secondary School.

Focus Group Discussion with Voters

1. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. Majority of them said they voted in the last parliamentary elections in 2013. One of them did not vote because he was sick and hospitalized.
- b. They voted to elect the right political party and the best candidates to represent them and will be beneficial to them.
- c. They said that they also voted based on election campaigns of the political parties and the candidates.
- d. They said they voted because it is their rightful duty to vote in elections since they feel empowered to choose the right political parties and candidates who will best represent them and will work to benefit the country and the people in general.
- e. Most of them are aware that there are 5 registered political parties and that 4 contest in the last parliamentary elections' Primary Round.

2. Information Dissemination and Election Campaigns

- a. They said that the party workers and the supporters campaigning on behalf of the political parties and the candidates were thought to be bothersome and problematic mostly since they were the ones who exerted undue influences on voters which in some cases brought about electoral disputes.

3. Women in Elections and as Candidates

- a. They said that women are not confident to come forward to stand as candidates in elections because they see themselves to be inferior and incapable (*Ngo-chung*).

- b. They said that there is no support even if women candidates in elections are competent since most voters are made to believe that women cannot perform and take on responsibilities like the men can.
- c. They said that women candidates in elections are incapable to conducting election campaigns and contest elections unlike the men candidates who can do everything to win.
- d. They said that women are often blamed and talked about (*kha-tang*) more than the men by other women, and are generally jealous of other women getting ahead of them socially and/or politically.
- e. They said that there are not many educated and qualified women to come forward to stand as candidates in elections owing to there being not many women who availed education in the past and their general lack of access to socio-economic opportunities.
- f. Most of the men participants said that they will support women candidates if there are women candidates who are capable and competent, and the women participants also said that they will support women candidates in elections. However, some women said that they will support women candidates only if they are capable and competent otherwise they will vote for men candidates since men are believed to be better leaders and can made better decisions.
- g. Those women participants who said that they will vote for women candidates said they believe it is important that women should be represented since women understand women's needs and issue better, while other believed that women can equally make better decisions as men can (since elected and public offices are not about physical strength).
- h. Most of the women participants acknowledged that women need to be given the opportunity and to help them gain the experience so that more and more women can come forward to stand as candidates in elections and be elected in the future.
- i. They said that women's social status have been suppressed and the concomitant beliefs and systems have not allowed women to come to the fore in the Bhutanese society thus hampering and limiting their political and electoral participation.

4. Why no Women Candidates

- a. They said that there are not many examples of women in leadership positions in Bhutan in the past which have influenced the Bhutanese voters to only believe that leadership positions are to be generally held by men.

- b. They said that traditions and culture have played and dictated very negative roles in suppressing women's social and political status through very rigid and structured social and cultural norms – to make women be seen as inferior to men.
- c. They said that they believed that women have more roles and responsibilities inside and be in homes.
- d. A few of them said that much of the differences between men and women only relate to their biological differences with obvious disadvantage to the women, which should not be seen as weaknesses to limit women from coming forward.

5. Decision Making Process

- a. Most of them said that they make decisions themselves based on what needs to be done for their families and households, while they as women are independent to make decisions themselves.

6. Environment for Women's Empowerment and Political Participation

- a. Most of the participants acknowledged that the Bhutanese laws and systems are non-discriminatory and recognize and treat women and men to be as equals, but practices have made women to lag behind in terms of access to socio-economic and political opportunities.
- b. They said that there will not be significant increase in the number of women coming forward to take active political participation given the current level of engagement of women in political process.
- c. They said that since laws and systems have been made to recognize and treat women equal to the men, women's political participation should thus be supported and encouraged.

7. Way Forward

- a. They said that there needs to be more women in leaderships positions through encouragement, information and education to that there are more role models and examples of women in leadership positions to encourage and interest other women in the future.
- b. They said that information dissemination and education should be enhanced to help more women to come to the fore to stand as candidates in elections and be elected.
- c. They said the number of the party workers and the supported need to be regulated and controlled, while not allowing anyone to simply and easily become party workers and supporters.

- d. They said that there needs to be mindset change made in the people to help them see and support women in general and as candidates in particular through information, advocacy and education.

Focus Group Discussion with Women Civil Servants

All of the participants said that they voted in the last parliamentary elections held in 2013.

1. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. They said that they voted based on the capabilities of the political parties to properly government, as well as the qualities and the experiences of the candidates nominated.
- b. Some of them said that they voted because the candidates in their *Demkhongs* were related to them.
- c. Some said that they considered the leadership of the political parties to vote for the political parties.
- d. They said that political parties and the candidates should be capable and competent, while the candidates should be qualified and experienced.
- e. Most of them were quite unsure there are 5 registered political parties and 4 of them contested the Primary Round of Elections to the National Assembly in the last parliamentary elections held in 2013, with one of them even suggesting that one of the political parties was dissolved.

2. Elections and Information Dissemination

- a. They said they were not allowed to attend election campaign meetings to be able to know more about the political parties and the candidates.
- b. They said that they only got basic information from what little information they could access from the media's coverage of elections and the election campaigns and the media advertisements of the political parties and the candidates.

3. Women in Elections and as Candidates

- a. They said that women lack courage and confidence to stand as candidates in elections, while women are also generally not supported to come forward as candidates.
- b. They said that there is some kind of social stigma attached to women's active social and political participation and to stand as

candidates in elections is seen as taboo which relates from gender stereotypes and roles assigned to women and women's lack of socio-economic and political opportunities in the past.

- c. They said that existing discrimination against women arising from development practices such as access to educational and socio-economic opportunities have limited women's active political and electoral participation.
- d. Some of them said that fears of shame of not being elected have driven women to not come forward to stand as candidates in elections.
- e. They said that there were not many women leaders in the past and without examples, women are less inclined or interested to come forward.
- f. They acknowledged that it is important that women are elected and represented to articulate and address women's needs and issued in policies and decisions at all levels, including making the laws gender sensitive.
- g. They said that they will support women candidates in elections and as such there should be more capable and competent women contesting in elections. They said that they will simply not support women to be represented without being competent and capable to be represented on their own merits.
- h. The majority of them said they are not interested to stand as candidates in elections, but will support other women who will, since they themselves are not competent enough to stand as candidates.
- i. For those competent women without adequate economic stability, they said that uncertainties of electoral prospects would not encourage such women to come forward risking their steady livelihood and economic stability if they have careers which guarantee steady employment.
- j. They said that the society generally lack faith and confidence in women to become elected leaders.

4. Why no Women Candidates

- a. The participants said that traditions and culture have defined Bhutanese women's place in the society and in political arenas to their obvious disadvantage compared to men.

- b. They said women's place to be in homes and to be taking care of raising family and doing household chores as have been gender stereotyped since olden times.
- c. They said that women are generally seen to be inferior to men, and are often blamed and talked about should they come to the fore, which have played into the mindset of the voters that they would be better off without supporting women candidates.

5. Decision Making Process

- a. Most of the participants said that both men and women now have equal opportunities to make decisions, since women are more independent now than ever before when only made decisions.
- b. Most of them said that they make decisions themselves having discussed and consulted their spouses, but generally as to what decisions are made depend on what need to be done or decided.
- c. Some of them said that women are better at making considerate and thoughtful decisions compared to men who often make hasty decisions.

6. Environment for Women's Empowerment and Political Participation

- b. The majority of the participants said that feel that the laws recognize men and women to be equals.

7. Way Forward

- a. They said that systemic changes and improvements must be made through advocacy and education to alter the mindset so that more women can be accommodated and supported in politics and elections compared to present situation.
- b. They said that interested and potential women candidates should be trained and supported to acquire competencies and skills to enhance their electoral prospects.
- c. They suggested that there should be financial and economic incentives to encourage and support currently employed and educated women to take the risk of contesting elections.
- d. They said that young voters should be groomed and educated to support women's political and electoral participation.
- e. They said civil servants should be allowed to attend election campaign meetings and Common Forums to know more about the political parties and the candidates.

- f. They said that quota or reserved representation should be implemented to bring more women in Parliament and the local governments as a temporary measure until women are able to contest and be elected on their own merits.

I. Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag, 29th of August 2014

The Focus Group Discussions with the voters, the elected women local government representatives, the nominated women candidates and the women civil servants of the Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag was held on 29th of August 2014 at the Conference Hall, Tashi Gatshel Lodge.

The first Focus Group Discussion was held with the voters from the Gewogs and the elected women local government representatives and the nominated women candidates.

The second Focus Group Discussion was held with the women civil servants of the Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag Administration, the Dzongkhag Thromde and the regional offices, the school teachers from nearby schools and the lecturers from the Jigme Namgyel Polytechnic, Dewathang.

Focus Group Discussion with Voters

1. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. They said that they voted in the last parliamentary elections held in 2013 with the hope that they will be able to choose the right political parties and the candidates to represent them, and serve and benefit the people and the country.
- b. They said that they voted to elect people who will bring about changes that will benefit the people and can take care of the people's needs.
- c. They said that they also based their decisions on the election campaigns and promises to support all sections the Bhutanese society.
- d. They said that they know there are 5 registered political parties and one of them was not allowed to contest the elections, while a few of them are still unsure as to how many registered political parties are there.

2. Elections and Information Dissemination

- a. They said that election campaigns create social and communal disharmony since the party workers and the supporters are the one who conducts election campaigns on behalf of the candidates and the political parties and they often resort to unlawful and undue influencing of voters to vote for particular candidates or political parties.
- b. They said that women candidates are not able to do as much to conduct election campaigns as the men candidates are able to do.

- c. They said that they preferred Common Forums to be ideal way of conducting election campaigns without the voters required to attend often too many election campaign meetings of the political parties and the candidates, and suggested that more Common Forums be organized.

3. Women in Elections and as Candidates

- a. They said that there were not many women educated in the past and even educated women have disadvantages unlike the men which results in there being not many women candidates in elections.
- b. They said that election campaigns are expensive and women from relatively poor economic backgrounds cannot hope to stand as candidates in elections.
- c. They said that there is no or low level of support, including faith and confidence, to allow women to stand as candidates in elections and be elected, since women lack social relationship and status.
- d. They said that there being not many women candidates and women elected in the first local government elections can be attributed to there being not many women in leadership positions in the past, including in the past local governments.
- e. They said that women lack experience of having represented and being elected leaders which hinders other women from coming forward.
- f. They said that women have had lacked access to educational and other socio-economic opportunities to become independent and be able to stand as candidates in elections.
- g. They said that the Bhutanese democracy is still immature and not adequately informed to support and encourage women's political and electoral participation.
- h. They said that they will look forward to supporting women in future elections, however they said women candidates should be capable and competent since they acknowledge that it is important to articulate and address women's needs and issues in policies and decisions at all levels.
- i. A few of them said that they are interested to stand as candidates in future elections, especially local government elections; while some of them said that they are not interested to contest elections nor support their spouses, men or women, to avoid the hassles and risks of functioning as elected representatives.

- j. Majority of them said that they will support other women in elections and more women should come forward to stand as candidates in elections to have any chance of being elected.

4. Why no Women Candidates

- a. They said that women's place is believed to be in homes taking care of raising families and doing household chores.
- b. They said that they believe that women cannot perform as well as the men since there have never been women in leadership positions in the past, while traditions and culture have dictated that women are inferior to men in many aspects.
- c. They said that it is said that women should not be in front of men but always behind men, as have been told by elders and brought up to believe which have impacted and encouraged women's low social and political engagement.
- d. They said that women often shy away from taking active part in public life and as such there are not many women willing to come to the fore to stand as candidates in elections.
- e. They said that there are beliefs and systems dictated by social and cultural norms that only men should come to the forefront of social and political arenas, believing that men can do better than women.

5. Decision Making Process

- a. Most of them said that they as women also make decisions themselves based on what needs to be done for their families and households.
- b. Some of them believed that in most cases the men make the decisions as they are seen to be better decision makers.
- c. They said that modern young and educated women who are independent are better off being able to make decisions.

6. Environment for Women's Empowerment and Political Participation

- a. Most of the participants acknowledged that the Bhutanese laws and systems are non-discriminatory and recognize and treat women and men as equals, but practices have lead women to have unequal access to opportunities compared to men.

7. Way Forward

- a. They said that the party workers and supported should be regulated and their numbers limited, as well as their roles regulated.

- b. They said that interested women candidates should be trained, educated, informed and mentored to encourage and come forward to contest in elections.

Focus Group Discussion with Women Civil Servants

All of the participants said that they voted in the last parliamentary elections held in 2013, and have also taken part as electoral officers in conduct of the elections.

1. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. They said that they voted in the last parliamentary elections held in 2013, and most of them have also participated in the elections as election officials with one or other responsibility of conducting elections.
- b. They said that they voted to elect the best political parties and the candidates in the elections.
- c. They said that they based their decisions on the capabilities of the candidates, the election manifestoes and campaigns, the experience and maturity of the candidates, etc.,
- d. Some of them said that they voted for change in government and the elected representatives.
- e. A few of them said that they voted in the elections to ensure that the candidates related and known to them were elected.
- f. Most of them were unsure as to how many registered political parties are there or how many of them contest in the last parliamentary elections.

2. Elections and Information Dissemination

- a. They said that they did not attend the election campaign meetings of the political parties and the candidates.
- b. They said that they got their information on the political parties and the candidates from the media's coverage of the elections and from the media advertisements of the political parties and the candidates.
- c. Some of them said that they also accessed information online and on social media to know about the political parties and the candidates.
- d. They said that it is equally important that civil servants get to know well about the political parties and the candidates in elections to make better decisions on the poll days.

3. Women in Elections and as Candidates

- a. They said that women lack exposure and experience of being elected as representatives and leaders which keep other women from coming forward to stand as candidates in elections.
- b. They said that women have lacked educational and other opportunities that would otherwise stood them in better positions now in elected and leadership positions.
- c. They said that women generally lack support to take active part in politics and elections being confined to homes and not given the opportunity to come to the fore.
- d. They said that married women, when they are educated and qualified, have more responsibilities which keep them away from taking active part in politics and elections.
- e. They said that most women who are qualified and competent do not want to take the risks of losing out on economic stability and opportunities by standing as candidates in elections unless they are economically and financially sound to take risks.
- f. They said that support in elections is gender biased since men are supported more than women by even women themselves, discouraging other interested women from coming forward.
- g. They said that people generally think that women are incapable and incompetent to shoulder responsibilities of being elected leaders and to make decisions, since there were not many women in the past who were leaders.
- h. They said that it is important to have women represented in decision making process and in important decisions to acknowledge women's needs and issues, since women constitute an equal or so part of the Bhutanese population.
- i. They said that most of the educated women live and work in places away from their constituencies which distances them from their voters who may not be keen to vote for women candidates whom they do not really know. They said that interested and potential women candidates will need to often visit their constituencies and to be supported to do so without restrictions.
- j. They said that there should be adequate financial and economic incentives provided for women to come forward and stand as candidates in elections to ensure that they can actively and

meaningfully participate, without having to worry about livelihood and loss of economic security.

- k. They said that they will support women candidates in future elections if they are capable and competent, but they also said that women will need to be given the opportunity to be elected and represented.

4. Why no Women Candidates

- a. They said that women are themselves feel inferior and are not so confident enough to come forward to stand as candidates in elections.
- b. They said that women's social and political statuses have been defined by gender stereotypes and roles which have been dictated by social and cultural norms and traditions and have been inculcated to believe that women's place is in homes taking care of families and the household chores, limiting their social and political engagement.
- c. The participants said that traditions and cultures have defined Bhutanese women's place in the society which are entrenched by stereotyping and upbringing, despite the modernization of Bhutan in last few decades.
- d. They said because of the gender stereotypes and assigned roles, women have been thought to be incapable of being elected leaders.
- e. They said that since Bhutan has been a male dominated society, women do not come to the fore of Bhutanese society.
- f. They said that it is believed that women are more often blamed and talked about than men which discourages women from coming forward.
- g. They said that politics is generally for men, and for women who have better public profiles and with adequate economical and financial resources.
- h. They said that men are believed to be better suited take on jobs outside of homes, including elected leadership positions, while women should be confined to homes and doing household chores.
- i. They said that women bosses are not preferred by most women, let alone men.

5. Decision Making Process

- a. They said that men are generally the ones who makes the decisions and seen as having been so always.
- b. They said that women now are independent enough to make their own decisions even where they are married.
- c. Some of the said that in the past they have been told to vote for based on the decisions made by their parents, which they will make on their own in the future.
- d. They said that as to who makes decisions depends on what needs to be done or decided, which is indicative of the fact that women also make decisions.
- e. They said that working women are better represented in decision making that those who stay at homes and are illiterate.

6. Environment for Women's Empowerment and Political Participation

- a. The majority of the participants said that feel that the laws recognize men and women to be equals.

7. Way Forward

- a. They said that information, advocacy and education should be enhanced for incremental changes in mindset.
- b. They said that women should be encouraged through educational and training opportunities to come forward to stand as candidates in elections.
- c. They said that interested and potential women should be properly guided and mentored to support their coming forward, as well as by providing financial and economic incentives.
- d. They said that concerted civic and voter education programmes should be delivered for very long in to the future so as to encourage and support women's political and electoral participation on an enhanced level.

J. Paro Dzongkhag, 5th of August 2014

1. Election and Information

- a. The participants said that they all voted in the previous two Parliamentary elections held in 2008 and 2013 and the local government elections in 2011.
- b. The common forum and public debates aired by BBS (Bhutan Board Casting Service) and organised by the ECB (Election Commission of Bhutan) were taken positively and helped avoid voter inconveniences in having to attend multiple meeting organized by the Party representatives and Candidates.
- c. They said the common forum provides platform for equality and opportunities for all Political Parties and Candidates and suggested ECB to continue for future elections as well.
- d. The forum also provides an opportunity for the general voters to identify and recognize the capacity, competency and potentiality of the parties and Candidates.
- e. The television and radio also played an important role in information dissemination about the Political Parties and Candidates.
- f. The election advertising board also provides information of the Political Parties and Candidates contesting the elections.
- g. Their family members, relatives, friends and the neighbors also provided much information about the Political Parties and Candidates in their respective *Demkhongs*.
- h. Most of the participants agreed that there are enough information on Candidates and Political Parties and elections; however, some of them expressed that they were not able to make a sound political decision since they do not know how to analyse the information they received from various sources.

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. The participants strongly agreed that the Candidates or Political Parties should be refrained from making any unrealistic or fake electoral promises during the election campaigning.
- b. They said in the previous elections many of them voted for a Candidate or a Party based on the electoral promises promised to the general voters. They said with two Parliamentary elections many of the electoral promises were not achieved.

- c. They said that they should elect a Candidate or Party who is capable, efficient and credible.
- d. Some of them also expressed that in addition to being capable and credible; the Candidate or a Party should represent their electorates in the best possible ways and should articulate the need and issues in the parliament.

3. Women and Elections

- a. A male participant said that women Candidates are not competent enough to or have the potential to shoulder the responsibilities if elected as a Prime Minister. He said that based on traditional beliefs women are considered as the weaker section in the community and are always considered less inferior to men in decision making.
- b. The female participants however, argued and expressed that given the opportunity both men and women can be a better leader. They said that women are equally capable and competent and can shoulder any responsibilities.
- c. The participants felt that the opportunities for women compared to 10 years back has improved in terms of educational qualification and confidence. They said, women at present are equally competent and can compete with the male Candidates on equal level footing.
- d. The female participants are of the view that few role-models for women in high positions would help inspire more women participation.
- e. Many of the female participants said that they have less interest or lack qualification to stand as Candidates and contest in the future Local Government Elections.
- f. The male participants said that they are willing to support and encourage women Candidates if they are competent and potential.
- g. A few of them said that they have elected a women Candidate in the last Parliamentary election in 2013 and provided an opportunity to represent them.
- h. Regard to decision making process, the participants in general said that they usually take a combined decision and consult each other (Husband and Wife) related to elections and on other important things.
- i. Some male participants expressed that women normally don't step forward or have very less influence in community level decision making processes.

4. Obstacles to women participation

- a. The participants expressed that though women and men enjoy or have equal rights under the Laws; however, the age-old belief where women were considered less capable than men and the prevailing cultural attitudes regarding the roles of women in the society posed obstacle to women's participation. According to them the traditional belief still exist in most of the rural areas and to greater extend this has even discouraged voting for women Candidates.
- b. They said that many women lack confidence and fears often prevent them from expressing their need and voice their opinion in the crowd.
- c. Further, the participants said that family and domestic responsibility (household/children), less political interest, less support and encouragement from families and relatives and other limiting factors have discouraged women's participation.
- d. Most of the participants said that some of the cultural beliefs and stereotypes that relate to women's roles in the Bhutanese society still exists and have limited women's political participation.

5. Electoral Laws, Rules and Regulation and guidelines

- a. The participants proposed to do away with door-to-door campaigning, and appointing of political Party *Jabchorpas* (supporters) at the local level during elections. They said Party *Jabchorpas* and supporters are the cause of disharmony and communal discord during the elections.
- b. They also said that while door-to-door campaigning may help in information dissemination, it however, provided an opportunity for the parties and Candidates to engage or influence voters through unlawful means.

6. Way forward

- a. A voter and civic education should be provided on continuous basis and should reach every community as much as possible.
- b. Encourage any meetings at the community level to be represented by those who can further educate or disseminate information to the family members and more women should be encouraged to participate in discussions at community level.
- c. Common forums played critical role in enabling more voters to understand about the Political Parties and Candidates and was

strongly recommended to be continued and be conducted at *Chiwog* level in future elections.

- d. Do away with Door-to-door campaign and appointment of Party *Jabchorpas*.
- e. The engagement by Political Parties and Candidates during election period and non-election period is an important medium and should be encouraged.
- f. The participant also expressed a desire to vote from where they lived. Travelling to one's own constituency from one's current place of residence was a financial burden.

Women Civil Servants

1. Campaign and Information

- a. Many of the participant said that they voted in the past elections and few of them who didn't vote said they were not able to send the postal ballot application on time.
- b. The participants said that it is a civic and national duty to vote in the elections to choose a right Candidate or a Party to represent their need.
- c. Participants in general expressed that the media can play a more active role in furthering the understanding of democracy. Social media like face book and twitter, television and newspapers provided much relevant information required by the voters.
- d. The Election Advertising Board nearby school premises also provided information and helped them identify the Political Parties and Candidates.
- e. The common forum and public debates aired on BBs television played an important role in disseminating information about the ideologies and electoral promises of the Candidates and Political Parties. However, the participants expressed that since they were not allowed to participate in such forums they were not able to make better and informed choice.
- f. The participants said that with the conduct of two Parliamentary elections they now have more understanding about the roles and responsibilities of the elected Candidates in the Parliament.
- g. Few of them even expressed that for the first Parliamentary election their vote was purely based on the information they gathered from their parents and relatives. They either voted for the Candidate or a

Party whom they knew or had link or voted for their parents and relatives choice. They didn't much analyze the information they received to make an informed choice.

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. The Party ideology and the manifestos didn't matter much to the civil servant participants.
- b. The credibility and competency of the Candidates and leadership quality of the political Party are the two main factors that influenced their decision.
- c. Few of the participants expressed that the Candidates who are vocal, who frequently visits their constituency, has greater network with the influential people in the community, who closely knows voters well has more chances of getting elected.
- d. They said that a political Party or a Candidate should be able to provide stable and steady governance, be able to articulate the needs of the people and be willing to work for the larger interest of the people and the nation.
- e. They also expressed a strong need to monitor the electoral promises of the parties and Candidates said only doable and achievable promises should be made.
- f. They said that the activities and the plan of action should benefit all people in the community and be made within the available government resources and be achievable.

3. Women and Elections

- a. They said that though the Political Parties provides equal opportunities for women to stand as a Candidate as to men, many women do not step forward to contest elections.
- b. The participants in general expressed that there are not many qualified and confident women to stand as a Candidate and contest elections.
- c. When asked as to whether they would be interested to contest future elections, many of them said that they have not thought about standing as Candidate, while few of them said they may take a chance only if supported and approached by their local community people.
- d. The gender of the Candidates or the Party leader is not a subject of contention among the participants. They strongly expressed that

given the ability and credibility both male and female can be equally competent. However, the cultural partialities are still at play when voting or supporting for Candidates.

- e. Some female participants conveyed that men are better than women in politics whereas other participants' preferred female Candidate if both a male and female Candidate were capable. They said that capable women Candidates should be supported and encouraged.
- f. In general, when asked as to why many preferred women as teachers or women are better suited to become teacher, they said it's because women as a mother are caring and can best understand the students.

4. Obstacles to Women's Participation

- a. The social barriers and old aged traditional biases and the cultural belief of women having different roles to play had contributed to less women participation in politics.
- b. They said that the women in general face daunting social, economic and political challenges in the rural areas.
- c. Lack of confidence and motivation, difficulty in balancing family and public life, less political skills, women's primary roles as mothers and housewives including gender stereotypes were also seen as an obstacle and restricts women's participation in electoral processes.
- d. The fear of losing the current job if not elected and the responsibility to look after the family members were also seen as a barrier to women's participation.

5. Way forward

- a. Coordinators of Democracy Club in schools to play an active role to further disseminate information on electoral systems and democracy.
- b. The participants were not in support of the quota system and instead suggested for a Political leadership and confidence building trainings for interested women.
- c. Continuous civic and voter education including gender sensitization programme to be conducted at *Chiwog levels*.
- d. Allow civil servants to participate in the political activities or discussions to make better and informed choice.
- e. Better day care facilities to be provided to encourage more women participation

- f. Allow competent women civil servants to seek nominations and contest elections and be allowed to return to their jobs if not successful.
- g. They also expressed that there need to be more women role models to help encourage other women to become interested.

Elected/contested Candidates

1. Campaign and Information

- a. Most of the participants said that it is important to vote in elections. They said that every single vote counts and can make a difference.
- b. They also said that its their responsibility and duty to vote to elect the best Candidate or a political Party
- c. Many of them said that the common forum was very effective in providing information about the Political Parties and Candidates. They said it provided a platform for them to question the Candidates and parties about their ideologies, objectives and the plan of action.
- d. Their choices of a Candidate or a Party were mostly based on the information gathered from their relatives, friends, public debates and common forum, newspapers and Television and radio.
- e. Some of them who have access to TV said that they found the media coverage of election campaigns and media advertisements enough to inform them about the Political Parties and the Candidates.
- f. While some of them expressed that there were not able to analyse the information they received and make a sound political decision.
- g. The election advertising board also helped them identify and provided information about the Political Parties and Candidates.
- h. A majority of them said that door-to-door election campaigns should not be allowed for future elections because there are opportunities for the Political Parties and the Candidates to engage in unwanted and undesirable practices of influencing and inducing voters in unfair manners.

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. They said that the engagement by Political Parties and Candidates during election period and non-election period is an important medium and should be continuous. Many of them agreed that the Candidates are only seen during the election and after that they have never visited nor came to discuss the issues or needs of the constituents.

- b. All of the participants voted in the previous elections and said they voted for a Candidate whom they thought would best represent them and bring developmental activities in the community.
- c. It is observed that the assessment of the personal characteristics of the Candidates, evaluations of past working performance and integrity were the primary determinants of Candidate choice.
- d. The credibility, capability and competency of the Candidate or Representative of a Political Party also strongly influence voters' decision.
- e. The competency, capacity and credibility of the Candidate and Party leadership also strongly influenced voters' choice during the Primary Round of election. The Party Ideology did not matter much to the participants. Most of them said that Political Parties with good leaders and Candidate who are competent should be supported and voted for in elections
- f. The participants expressed that the capable and credible Candidate is one who can well communicate with voters, knows the voters closely and their problems, which can benefit the people in the community and be able to serve effectively and bridge the gap between people and government.
- g. The participants in the group unanimously expressed concerns related to the unrealistic and fake promises made by the contestants during the campaigning period. They said that with two Parliamentary elections lots of electoral promises were made but they haven't done anything yet. They also felt that the electoral campaigning is not necessary if any of the promises were not to be implemented and put into service.
- h. They expressed that the electoral promises should be realistic, doable and achievable and should be developed depending on the need and nature of their respective constituencies.

3. Women and Elections

- a. They said that there should be more women representation in the parliament to ensure that women's issue and challenges are well addressed and discussed.
- b. They expressed that woman as a leader can equally be competent and capable as men. Given the opportunity they said women can be more honest and effective in running a government.

- c. They said that many women lack qualification and should be given opportunity to gain experiences and confidence.
- d. They said that majority of the participants in the *Gewog Zomdus* are always female but the fear and lack of confidence stops them from taking an active role in decision process.
- e. Many of them said that they would consider contesting the future elections, but few of them said that they are not interested since they are not able to balance time between work and family/domestic responsibilities.
- f. Most of them said that in politics and elections women can also participate and equally compete with men since such participation does not require any physical strength unlike other defined gender roles.
- g. They said that the current elected women representatives should be encouraged to discuss common or relevant issues with the electorates.

4. Obstacles to Women Participation

- a. The participants said that the gender ideology or the age old belief of women being considered inferior to men, cultural patterns, and the predetermined social roles assigned to women and men still exists in rural areas and were seen as the hurdle to women's participation.
- b. Many of them said that men are bold enough to take risks while women cannot do the same and their roles are very much confined to taking care of the family and household works.
- c. The participants strongly expressed that the negative campaigning by their male counterpart has a strong impact and this has even discouraged voting for women Candidates.
- d. Lack of confidence and support, difficulty in balancing family and public life, less political skills, women's primary roles as mothers and housewives including gender stereotypes were also seen as an obstacle and restricts women's participation in electoral processes.

5. Electoral laws and Government Policies

- a. It was a general consensus among the participants that a country's constitutional and legal framework guarantees equal civil and political rights to every person on a non-discriminatory basis and also the Electoral systems are gender-neutral.

- b. They were satisfied with the process of getting the various documents and clearances for their nomination and acknowledged the need and importance of having to process such documents. The nomination and other electoral processes did not pose any difficulty for women Candidates.

6. Way Forward

- a. The participants said that there should be proper guidance, support, trainings, etc. provided to ensure that interested Bhutanese women can equally stand as Candidates and contest elections.
- b. Door-to-door election campaigns to be done away as it creates opportunities for the Political Parties, Candidates and their representatives to engage in activities that distorts free and clean elections.
- c. A voter and civic education should be provided on continuous basis.
- d. The activities and functions of the Party *Jabchorpas* should be studied and reviewed.
- e. Common forums to be continued and should be conducted at *Chiwog* levels for future elections.
- f. Encourage more women to participate in decision making processes at all levels including local discussions and *Zomdus*.
- g. Support and promote public awareness-raising campaigns to combat negative stereotypes.

K. Haa Dzongkhag, 8th of August 2014

Women Civil Servants

1. Campaign and Information

- a. The participants were of the views that to further better understanding of the values and principles of democracy and to fully engage in the electoral process, civic and voter education is of critical importance and should be on continuous basis.
- b. The common forum and media (television and radio) played an important role in disseminating information about the ideologies and electoral promises of the Candidates and Political Parties. Family, relatives, friends and neighbors also provided much of the information preferred by the people.
- c. The election advertising board also provided information to the electorates of their Candidates and Parties, however they said many of the advertising board needs repaired and fixed.
- d. The participants said that they talk about politics within their family, friends and even in offices. They also actively interact in political discussion on social networks like face book and twitter.
- e. The participants said that their being civil servants did not allow them to personally attend the election campaign meetings conducted by the Political Parties and the Candidates. They said they should also be allowed to participate to question and see the potentiality of the Candidates.
- f. Most of them expressed the view that door-to-door election campaigns should not be allowed to be conducted because such election campaigning is susceptible to corrupt practices and undue influencing of voters

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. The Participant said that they voted in the past elections to choose the best and competent Candidates and Political Parties.
- b. The credibility and competency of the Candidate or Representative of a Political Party also strongly influence voters' decision.
- c. However, they said that the Candidates from better family back ground and who has greater network with influential people in the community has greater chances of being elected. To some degree they said that the Civil servants also played an important role in

influencing their relatives and families to choice of their Candidate or a Political Party.

- d. In terms of choosing Candidate in elections, they said Candidates should be qualified and experienced, while a political Party should have good leadership, good Candidates and have good and realistic election manifesto.
- e. They submitted that the ECB as an independent electoral management body should assess and closely monitor the electoral promises of the Candidates and the Parties.
- f. When asked as to what really the electoral promises of a Candidate or a Party should comprise, the Participants raised concerns related to economy and paid much attention to the specific difficulties like black topping of the road, better health and education facilities etc.
- g. They said that the electoral promises should be doable and achievable.
- h. The Party *Jabchorpas* they said were the main actors who brought all dirty politics into the field and were the key reasons for causing segregation within the communities and disputes within the family and members of the community. The participants strongly expressed the need to review the functions or the responsibilities of Party *Jabchorpas*.

3. Women and Election

- a. The participants said that the women should be given equal chance, support and should be encouraged to participate at various stages of engagement in the political process, including at local levels.
- b. They said women should be more encouraged to take part in local discussion including the public offices.
- c. They strongly expressed the need for continuous voter and civic education to empower more women in decision making processes.
- d. Given the opportunity and chance to serve, the female participants strongly expressed that women as a leader can equally perform if not more better than men.
- e. They said that the women's experiences are different from men's and need to be represented in discussions that result in policy-making and implementation. These different experiences mean that women 'do politics' differently from men.

- f. They said with relevant trainings women can be a better campaigner, support-mobilizer and good politician.
- g. The participants also expressed that the interests of men and women are different and even conflicting and therefore women are needed in representative institutions to articulate the interests of women. They also said that more women can be attracted to political life if they have women role models in the political arena.
- h. Most of them said that they do not look forward to becoming Candidates in elections, but will support other women who are interested which have not been the case in many of the constituencies in the past elections.

4. Obstacles to women participation

- a. It was a general consensus among the participants that a country's constitutional and legal framework guarantees equal civil and political rights to every person on a non-discriminatory basis and also the Electoral systems are gender-neutral.
- b. The gender ideology and the predetermined social roles assigned to women and men were seen as the main barrier to women's participation.
- c. Lack of confidence and motivation, difficulty in balancing family and public life, including gender stereotypes restricts women's participation in electoral processes.
- d. The participants said that though each of these may pose significant challenges for women but, if properly managed, may also provide opportunities to facilitate and expand women's involvement.
- e. They said that the politics has traditionally been a male domain that many women have found unwelcoming or even unfriendly.

5. Women and Decision Making

- a. The participants agreed that the equal presence of women and men in decision-making processes is important, but they noted that there is a need to assess the contexts and conditions in which their equal presence can become effective in empowering women and men, and thereby sustain democracy.
- b. Lack of confidence, education and communication skills were seen as the main reasons for women's under-representation in decision making processes.

- c. They said that the women should be encouraged to seek greater involvement in the decision-making processes at all levels including local discussions and *Zomdus* to provide a systematic significant influence on decision-making processes and policy outcomes.
- d. The participants said that many men as the head of the family important decisions are mostly made by men or left to the men to decide, while some of them said that they also make decisions independent of their male counterparts depending on what needs to be done.
- e. In voting in elections, most of them said that they made their own decision except in one or two cases where and when the Candidates were related to them.

6. Way Forward

- a. A voter and civic education should be provided on continuous basis.
- b. The activities and functions of the Party *Jabchorpas* should be studied and reviewed.
- c. Door-to-door election campaigns to be strictly monitored.
- d. Common forums to be continued and should be conducted at *Chiwog* levels for future elections.
- e. Encourage more women to participate in decision making processes at all levels including local discussions and *Zomdus*.
- f. Relevant agencies to formulate policies to support women and to increase awareness of the roles and responsibilities of women as elected leader.
- g. Gender sensitization programme and more awareness campaign should be conducted.
- h. Support and promote public awareness-raising campaigns to combat negative stereotype.

General Voters and Contestant/Elected

1. Campaign and information

- a. Majority of the participants said that they have gained a tremendous knowledge and experiences from the conduct of two Parliamentary elections.
- b. The participants said that as a Bhutanese citizen it is an individual responsibility and a national duty to participate in elections to choose a right leader and Candidate.

- c. The voter and civic education, common forum, friends and family members provided much information needed by the voters.
- d. The participants said that since they had access to TV and radio they also got to know more about the Political Parties and the Candidates.
- e. The participants found the organization of the Common Forums for election campaigns to be very effective.
- f. The election advertising board also helped them to know more and understand about the Candidates and the Political Parties as well as gets other important election related information.
- g. Most of the participants agreed that there are enough information on Candidates and Political Parties as well as election campaign information.
- h. However, some participants expressed that they were not able to make a sound political decision since they did not know what information to consider received from various sources.

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. Most of them agreed that their decision to support a political Party is based on the quality of Candidates, the leadership it possessed and the election campaigns conducted.
- b. The credibility and competency of the Candidates and the Representatives of the Political Parties strongly influence voters' decision. The other factors include personality, popularity, presentation, past working experience, who knows voter closely and who can articulate and deliberate on the issues concerning the voters in their respective *Demkhongs*.
- c. The elderly family members and people with popular figure in the community to some extent also influenced voters' decision.
- d. They said that the door-to-door campaigning and the activities of the Party *Jabchorpas* were not effective and it provided an opportunity for unlawful means of election campaigning.
- e. The participants also raised concerns in regard to the unrealistic promises made by the Candidates or parties. They said that the electoral promises were made just to garner votes or influence voter through unlawful means.

3. Women in elections and obstacles

- a. The participants agreed that the men and women under the laws have equal rights and independence and there are no formal legal barriers

to women's participation in electoral processes. In practice, however, they said there were often formidable obstacles to women's active participation as Candidate to an election.

- b. Most of the participants expressed that women are physically weak and always considered inferior to men in decision making.
- c. Many of the female participants said that they have less political interest or lack education to stand as Candidates and contest in the future Local Government Elections.
- d. However, the male voters said that they will be willing to support and encourage women Candidates if they are competent and potential.
- e. They said that they elected a women Candidate in 2013 Parliamentary election hoping to give an opportunity and for the next election voting would be based on her performance.
- f. They said that the women generally lack the political networks necessary for electoral success and the fear of losing the current job position were the hurdles to women participation.
- g. The female participants said that many women have little experience and lacks self-confidence, including lack of support from their families.
- h. The negative campaigning against the female Candidate has also discouraged voting for women Candidates in an election.
- i. The participants said that because of the prevailing cultural stereotypes and the defined gender roles, the general voters have very less faith and hardly supports women Candidates.

4. Way forward

- a. Initiate innovative programs to strengthen women's political skills, emphasize how women are impacted by public policy, and improve the perception of women in political life.
- b. Training programs to also target men, to expose them to the complexities of gender discrimination and the necessity of and mechanisms for promoting women in political process.
- c. They said that there should be concerted information dissemination and educational efforts made to get Bhutanese women enthused to come forward, especially those who can and are qualified and competent.

- d. Women who are interested to contest elections should be properly guided and trained to enable them to effectively contest elections.
- e. To have more experienced and qualified Candidate for the post of *Gup* the participants suggested increasing the age qualification.

L. Chhukha Dzongkhag, 11th of August, 2014

Women Civil Servants

1. Campaign and Information

- a. The participants said that it is an individual responsibility and a national duty to participate in elections to choose a right leader and Candidate. The voter and civic education, common forum, friends and family members and media (television, newspapers and radio) provided much information needed by the voters.
- b. The common forum initiated by the ECB was well received and the participants requested the same to be conducted for future elections as well.
- c. However, the majority of the participants submitted that since they are not allowed to actively participate in the common forums and public debates they said that the information they receive through media, friend and families are not enough to make an informed choice or sound political decision.
- d. Some of the participants said that they also actively discuss and participate in social media like face book and twitter during elections.
- e. Television (BBs) was also found to be very effective source in providing information about the Political Parties and Candidates. Many of them watch television after work hours and said it provides room for family members to debate and discuss on the politics, Candidates and Political Parties.
- f. The election of school captains in schools with support of the Dzongkhag Electoral Offices also enabled students to better understand the principles of democracy.

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. It was also a general consensus among the participants that the electoral promises by the Parties and Candidates be closely monitored and scrutinized. The participants said that lots of unrealistic promises were made to gain votes from the rural individuals who had a very little knowledge or lack sound political decision.
- b. They strongly suggested for a continuous voter and civic education to be conducted at *Chiwog* levels and also suggested to make it compulsory for every individual who attends 18 years to participate in the education programme.

- c. Their ideal Candidate or the important qualities they consider in their choice of a Candidate or a representative of the political Party are:
 - Credibility and capability
 - Highly qualified with good working experiences
 - Who have a sound knowledge about the government policies
 - Who knows voters closely and can bridge the gap between government and people
 - Who can well deliberate on the issues and bring developmental activities in the community
- d. However, most of the participants said that the Candidate who has greater network with the influential people in the locality and who frequently visit their constituencies have greater chances of getting elected.

3. Women and Elections

- a. The participants agreed that the men and women under the laws have equal rights and there are no formal legal barriers to women's participation in electoral processes.
- b. Some of the participants also said that the government laws and policies are more favorable to women than to men.
- c. However, they said that empowerment of women as may be practiced is low and there is a need felt to enhance women's opportunities in public spheres, including in elective offices.
- d. Some of the participants also expressed that the Electoral rule of appointing Electoral Officers (Presiding and Returning Officers) has not been fair and they said many male Candidates are preferred and appointed during the election period.
- e. The Participants also expressed the fact that there are more educated men than there are women in the Bhutanese society because of the unequal access to education and economic opportunities in the recent past, but the situation is now changing with more and more women being educated and other empowerment efforts being made.
- f. The gender of the Candidates or the Party leader is not a subject of disputation among the participants. They strongly expressed that given the ability and credibility both male and female can be equally competent. However, the cultural partialities are still at play when voting or supporting for Candidates. Some female participants

conveyed that men are better than women in politics whereas other participants' preferred female Candidate if both a male and female Candidate were capable.

- g. Majority of them said that the nature and job activity of elected electorates do not require any physical strength or are of masculine in nature. They said given the opportunity they can very well perform up to the expectations of the general voters.
- h. The participants said that there should be equal representation of women in the parliament to discuss and articulate the issues and need of women.
- i. The participants expressed that even when women possess the characteristics that make for good Candidates, they often are not encouraged to step forward to become Candidates. Women are also less likely to present themselves as Candidates, often seeing themselves as lacking the skills necessary to perform well in politics.

4. Obstacles

- a. They said that the politics has traditionally been a male domain that many women have found unwelcoming or even unfriendly.
- b. In addition to dealing with unfavourable cultural preference, women are often more likely than men to face practical barriers to entering politics, including lower levels of education, less access to information, greater family responsibilities, lack of confidence and motivation with fewer opportunities to acquire political experience.
- c. They said that the women generally lack confidence and the political networks necessary for electoral success and the fear of losing the current job position were seen as hurdles to women's participation.
- d. They said that the age-old belief where women are considered less capable than men still exists in rural areas and this has discouraged women for participation in election.
- e. They also belied that in general women normally don't support women because of jealousy, lack of trust and confidence.
- f. The participants also pointed that the structure and organization of Political Parties can be an obstacle to the participation of women. They said that the Political Parties have bigger role in determining who will be Candidates in elected office and plays critical role in advancing or obstructing women's participation in decision-making bodies.

- g. They said men are often viewed as more viable and better Candidates and may be preference to female Candidates and the pool from which Political Parties search for Candidates tend to be dominated by men.

5. Decision making

- a. Women in general are considered inferior to men in decision making and they said that in order to know the issues and challenges being faced by women, the women should be equally included at all decision making processes and should be given priority
- b. Most of them who are married said that they make a joint family decision at home and on election matters they make their own decision based on the information they receive from various sources.
- c. Some of them expressed that women takes and has full responsibility to decide on the household and domestic activity, while few others said that as many men are considered as head of the family they usually consult with their male counterparts on every matters or in some cases they have left the decision making process to their parents.

6. Media and women Candidates

- a. The female participants in general said that the media, and particularly newspapers and television, play a crucial role in shaping voter interest and attitudes about an election. The way the media portray women, how they deal with issues of special concern to women, and whether they convey effectual voter education messages can have a major impact on women's participation in an election.
- b. They suggested that the media to provide or focus on gender-sensitive coverage of elections, avoiding negative stereotypes and presenting positive images of women as leaders; and should focus attention on issues of special concern to women in news programming.

7. Quota system

- a. When asked as to whether the quota system should be initiated, the female participants submitted that it would not be wise to do so since they said it creates room for corruption favoring women of their choice even they are not capable and competent enough.

8. Way forward

- a. Given that many women have had little experience and lacks self-confidence, they said it is of utmost importance that training be made readily available to allow women to develop and fine-tune their political skills and confidence.
- b. They said training programs should also target men, to expose them to the complexities of gender discrimination and change the general perception or attitude towards women particularly considering that child-rearing responsibilities tend to fall disproportionately on women.
- c. Few female participants noted that Political Parties may develop incentives to attract women to the Party such as providing relevant positions if they fail to get elect or, providing access to networks, training and skills development for women Candidates to stand for election.
- d. Seek to achieve gender parity in all decision-making bodies and encourage more women's participation in decision-making.
- e. The relevant agencies to ensure that the political Party laws and other related election legislation do not indirectly disadvantage women.
- f. Advocate improved media coverage of women's issues and women Candidates.

Contestant/Elected Candidates

1. Campaign and Information

- a. The common forum and public debates were taken positively and helped avoid voter's inconveniences in having to attend multiple meeting organized by the Party representatives and Candidates.
- b. The participant suggested conducting common forum at *Chiwog* level for future elections.
- c. Family members, relatives and friends also provided much information required by the general voters.
- d. The election advertising board also provided information on election matters and helped voter identify the Political Parties and Candidates.
- e. They said that the television and radio played a critical role in information dissemination about the Political Parties and Candidates.

- f. The participants expressed that election campaigns in small groups of voters should be more often conducted to enable voters to know more about the various Political Parties and the Candidates contesting elections, while the conduct of door-to-door election campaigns, although is effective should not be encouraged since such practice is susceptible to unfair means of influencing voters.
- g. While few voters said that the door-to-door campaigning can be effective if monitored strictly. They said it provided an opportunity for the voters to closely interact with the parties and Candidates who have missed the chance of attending the common forum.

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. Majority of the participants said that they voted for a Party or Candidate based on the leadership quality, competency and credibility of the Candidate.
- b. They expressed that their ideal Candidate should be one who can well communicate and listen, knows voters well and who can benefit and represent the entire people in the community.
- c. The Party manifesto or the ideology didn't matter much to the general voters.
- d. Some participants expressed the view that the activities of Party *Jabchorpas* were not favorable and said that such appointment by the parties and Candidates should not be allowed.
- e. Few participants suggested that the Party should consider appointing or should be allowed to appoint only female members of the Political Party as Party *Jabchorpas*. Females, they said being considered more emotional and weaker section of the society would help reduce problems and would also further more women participation in electoral processes.
- f. The participants expressed the view that the Political Parties and Candidates be allowed to make only realistic and doable electoral promises.

3. Women and elections

- a. They said that given the opportunity women can equally be competent and can shoulder greater responsibilities.
- b. The participants said that women should be supported and encouraged to step forward to contest in the elections.

- c. Some of the participants said that they will vote for women Candidates in elections if they are equally competent. They said that there should be more women representation at local and in the parliament.
- d. Some of them said that the Bhutanese women will need to be given opportunity to gain the necessary experience and competence to represent the Bhutanese people, particularly the women.
- e. Few of the participants said that they are not willing to contest future elections since they are not able to balance their work life with the family and domestic responsibilities.

4. Obstacles to women Participation

- a. They said that in remote or rural areas women are still considered inferior and less capable and this has even discouraged voting for women Candidates
- b. Lack of confidence and courage to step forward and contest election as a Candidate.
- c. Lack of family support and motivation
- d. They said that the child-rearing responsibilities tend to fall on women and they are not able to balance between the political life and family responsibility.
- e. Low levels of education, less access to information and greater family responsibilities were also seen as an obstacle for women's participation.
- f. The negative campaigning against women by their male counterparts saying that women are incapable, incompetent and are not potential has also restricted women's participation.
- g. They said that the male Candidates are preferred over female Candidates since many female Candidates are less vocal and lacks necessary skills to perform well in politics.
- h. Some participants also expressed that their participation in local politics is affected by the salary and incentives they get.
- i. A female participant also expressed that the electoral campaigning often requires communicating and interacting with various male voters at different times and has caused much inconveniences. She said the people in the community even started talking awful things about her involvement in unfair relationships.

5. Electoral laws, rules and Regulations

- a. The participants expressed that the electoral laws are gender neutral and it didn't post any difficulty for them to contest in the elections.
- b. Majority of them said that the common forum played critical role in enabling more voters to understand about the Political Parties and Candidates and suggested to be conducted at *Chiwog* levels for future elections.
- c. They said that the functional literacy testing centre should be introduced in every *Gewog* to enable more women participation.
- d. They said that the head of the family has greater influence in terms of voting through the Postal ballot. In most cases they said men as the head of the family normally decides and fills the postal ballot forms.
- e. The participants felt that the quota system is not necessary and said more women should be trained and encouraged instead.

6. Decision Making

- a. The participants said that important decisions are mostly made by men or left to the men to decide, although there will be some discussions, while some of them said that they also make decisions independent of their male counterparts depending on what needs to be done.
- b. In voting in elections, most of them said that they voted for a Candidate for a political Party based on the information that they had received and by considering who they thought would best represent the people.

7. Way forward

- a. ECB to undertake voter and civic education programmes aimed specifically for women.
- b. Training programs to target men, to expose them to the complexities of gender discrimination and change their perception towards women.
- c. Review the postal ballot system and the procedure involved.

General Voters

1. Campaign and Information

- a. The participants strongly agreed that the common forum and public debates are very advantageous to the Political Parties and

Candidates and provided platform for the general voters to judge and base their decision to vote.

- b. The civic and voter education also provided much information about the Political Parties and Candidates.
- c. In General they said television played a critical role in providing more information about the parties and Candidates and in places where they are not accessible to television, radio played an important role in information dissemination.

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. The participants expressed that the engagement by the Political Parties and Candidates during the election period and non-election period is important and should be continuous.
- b. They said that the elected Candidates should interact with the general voters at various intervals and should discuss about the government policies and issues. They said that the elected Candidate had always been a strong and positive leader in the community.
- c. Some participants said that they considered the history of the Candidate on corrupt or illegal activities and they assessed whether or not the Candidate would be accessible to the people in the community and also considered Candidates past work experiences on the developmental issues.
- d. Some participants said that they decided based on the realistic/practicability of Candidate and Party manifestos.
- e. However, in general the participant expressed that a credible and competent, qualified and leadership Candidate should be elected to represent them.

3. Women and election and obstacles

- a. Many of the participants agreed that there should be equal representation of women in local and national level.
- b. They said women should equally be involved in the decision making processes so that the women's issues are well deliberated and included in the policies.
- c. They said that women as compared to past years very much enjoy equal rights and have equal accesses and opportunity in terms of education, decision making processes and information.
- d. The gender of the Candidates or the Party leader is not a subject of disputation among the participants. They strongly expressed that

given the ability and credibility both male and female can be equally competent. However, the cultural partialities are still at play when voting or supporting for Candidates.

- e. Some female participants conveyed that men are better than women in politics whereas other participants' preferred female Candidate if both a male and female Candidate were capable.
- f. The participants are of the view that there has not been real effort to attract a wider spectrum of women into politics.
- g. They said many women lack confidence, education qualification and necessary networks in the community and lacks political skills.
- h. The prevailing traditional beliefs have also discouraged voting for women Candidates.

4. Electoral Laws and existing Rules and Regulation

- a. The participants were of the general consensus that the constitutional and legal framework and the Electoral Laws guarantees equal civil and political rights to every person on a non-discriminatory basis and are gender-neutral.
- b. The common forum to be conducted at *Chiwog* level for future elections.
- c. The door-to-door campaigning and the activities of the Party *Japchorpas* should be dis-continued and should be reviewed.
- d. Facilitate functional literacy test at *Gewog* level to increase women participation at local levels.
- e. Increase qualification criteria for the Candidates contesting the Local Government Elections especially at *Gup* level.

5. Way Forward

- a. Seek to achieve gender parity in all decision-making bodies and encourage more women's participation in decision-making.
- b. Training be made readily available to allow women to develop and fine-tune their political skills.
- c. Training programs to target men, to expose them to the complexities of gender discrimination and change their perception towards women.
- d. Support and promote public awareness-raising campaigns to combat negative stereotypes.

- e. To Develop and promote gender-sensitive curriculum in schools and teacher training on civic education for men and women.

M. Samtse Dzongkhag, 14th of August, 2014

Women Civil Servants

1. Campaign and Information

- a. Most of them said that the election campaigns conducted during the last two Parliamentary elections helped them to know and understand more about the Candidates and the Political Parties contesting the elections.
- b. They found the organization of the Common Forums for election campaigns to be very effective, followed by media advertisements and media coverage of election campaigns.
- c. They said that the information they received from their parents, friends and relatives also helped them to know more and understand about the Candidates and the Political Parties as well as get other important election related information.
- d. The participants said that since they had access to TV and social media they also got to know more about the Political Parties and the Candidates.
- e. Most of the participants agreed that there are enough information on Candidates and Political Parties as well as election campaign information.

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. They said that all of them voted in the Parliamentary election in 2013.
- b. The participants strongly expressed that to have a vibrant and viable democratic culture it is of paramount importance to participate in the electoral process and voice their opinion.
- c. And with the conduct of three elections (Two Parliamentary Elections and Local Government Elections) they said that they have gained tremendous knowledge on the electoral processes, the form and the nature of the government. They now have an idea as to how and on what they should base their decision to vote.
- d. They expressed that they voted for a credible and competent Candidate or for a Party whom they thought would best benefit them and who can bridge a gap between government and people.
- e. Most of them agreed that a competent and/or capable Candidate or a political Party is one which will best represent the people to

articulate their common aspirations and needs, as well as work for the betterment of the nation.

- f. The Participants also expressed the view that lots of electoral promises made were not achieved and they now can understand and differentiate the electoral promises and make a wise judgment.

3. Women and Elections.

- a. The participants said that they were not able to make a sound political decision since they were not allowed to participate to question or raise issues concerning them as an electorate. They requested if the civil servants also be allowed to participate to voice their opinion and question to see and judge the performance of the contesting Candidates.
- b. The participants said that they will support and ensure to have women Candidates elected in elections should they be equally competent and qualified as the men Candidates.
- c. Some of them were of the opinion that they will support and vote for the best Candidate in the elections, not considering whether the Candidate is a man or a woman.
- d. They said that the women as a leader can equally be competent and capable and can enable in prompting corrupt free and honest government. They said women are more particular, honest and approachable.
- e. Most of them said that there are not many elected women representatives on whom they could look up to as role models.
- f. They said that capable and potential women should step forward and contest the elections.
- g. They also said that there are not many women Candidates coming forward to be even supported in elections, leaving them with no option but to vote for men Candidates.
- h. They agreed that even if there were women Candidates, they found them not equally competent as the men Candidates. As such, they had to vote for the men Candidates who were seen to be better and competent Candidates compared to the women Candidates.
- i. While most of them said that they have not thought about standing in any election as Candidates, a few of them said that they may take the chance, but only if they are well supported and encouraged to do so.

- j. When asked as to why people in general thought that women are best suited to be as teacher the participants said that women in general are more compassionate, caring and can best guide and educate the students.

4. Obstacles to women participation

- a. The old age belief of men and women having different roles, family and domestic responsibility, lack of confidence and relevant skills, low level of education or qualification and the cultural attitude of men towards women were seen as some of the hurdles to women's participation in election.
- b. It is observed that the lack of trust and confidence in women leadership is one of the main reasons for women's under-representation. They said that with confidence and determination they said women can reach the highest levels in the political process and local government bodies.
- c. Most of the participants said that there have not been many women leaders in the past and as such women have not been seen to be capable of taking on leadership positions.
- d. The female participants expressed that women often face a triple burden when participating in politics. They have a responsibility to their work or profession, to their family, and if they become involved in politics they are effectively taking on a third full-time job. They said that the child-rearing and family responsibilities tend to fall disproportionately on women.

5. Decision Making

- a. The participants said that important decisions are mostly made by men or left to the men to decide. Where not married they said their parents normally make the decision.
- b. A few (female participant) of them said that in their families and/or households, they are the ones who take most of the important decisions.
- c. Some of the participants who are married expressed that they make a combined decision in the family.

6. Electoral Laws, rules and regulations and Guidelines

- a. They said that the constitution and electoral laws are gender neutral and provided equal opportunity for both male and female Candidates.

- b. They said that the civil servants should also be allowed to actively participate in campaign programmes of the parties and Candidates to make a better informed choice.
- c. The door-to-door campaigning and activities of the Party *Jabchorpas* were seen as cause of communal discord and be discontinued for future elections.

7. Way forward

- a. Given that many women lack self-confidence, they said it is of utmost important to provide training for women to develop and fine-tune their political skills and confidence.
- b. They said the awareness campaign programme should also target men to expose them to the complexities of gender discrimination.
- c. They said women must be trained, encouraged and empowered to become strong politicians, community leaders and activists.
- d. Civic and voter education played a critical role for awareness of political Party and Candidates. They said that the Election Commission should consider providing such education on continuous basis including gender sensitization programme and information dissemination to most of the rural communities and voters to combat negative stereotypes.
- e. Develop and promote gender-sensitive curriculum in schools and teacher training on civic education for men and women.

General Voters

1. Campaign and Information

- a. The participants said that they all voted in the previous two Parliamentary elections held in 2008 and 2013 and local government elections in 2011.
- b. The common forum and public were taken positively and helped avoid voter's inconveniences in having to attend multiple meeting organized by the Party representatives and Candidates.
- c. The forum provided an opportunity for the general voters to identify and recognize the capacity, competency and potentiality of the parties and Candidates.
- d. Television and radio also played an important role in information dissemination about the Political Parties and Candidates.

- e. The election advertising board also helped them recognize and identify the Political Parties and Candidates contesting the elections.

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. Most of the participants said that Political Parties should have good leaders and their Candidates should be capable and competent.
- b. They said that to be capable and competent, the Candidates should have education qualifications, good *Sampa Semkay (trustworthy)*, should have good working experience, be able to bridge the gap between people and government perform and be able serve the people and the country and *Tsa-Wa-Sum*.

3. Women and Elections

- a. Many of the participants expressed the view that there are not many qualified women to stand as Candidates and contest elections along with men. However, some of them said that this will not be the case anymore in the future since there are more women being educated.
- b. Given the opportunity they expressed that women are equally competent and have the potential to shoulder greater responsibilities.
- c. They expressed that given the capability and competency of women Candidates they can also serve as a Prime Minister and equally perform well.
- d. They also said that there are not many women Candidates coming forward to be even supported in elections and many of them lack educational qualification to contest in elections.
- e. They said that they will vote for women Candidates in the future elections provided that the women Candidates are equally competent as the men Candidates. They said women should be encouraged and supported.
- c. The participants strongly agreed that women's political participation should be encouraged, especially of the young educated and competent women, starting from within households, communities and through to the national level.

4. Obstacles to women participation

- a. The female participants expressed that women are not able to come forward to contest the elections because they either lack confidence or communication skills.

- b. They said women have the responsibility to look after their family members and the child-rearing responsibilities tend to fall disproportionately on women.
- c. The social barriers and the traditional beliefs which still exist in many rural areas also restrict women participation as a Candidate to an election.

5. Electoral Laws, Rules and Regulations

- a. Many of them said the government policies and the electoral laws provide equal opportunities to both men and women to participate in the electoral process.
- b. They however, said that the activities of the Party *Jabchorpas* should be reviewed to enable more conducive environment for voter.

6. Decision Making

- a. They said that in general women do not take active part in decision making process. They said in the local community *Zomdus* (meetings) though many of the participants would generally be female, the discussion would basically be dominated by male participants.
- b. They said that the lack of confidence and fear discourages women to stand and raise their voice or prevents them from speaking in crowd or in meetings.
- c. They said women should step forward and equally participate in the *Zomdus* and meetings.
- d. In terms of making decision to vote in elections they said they have the right to vote for their choice of a Candidate or a political Party.
- e. Many of them said they make a joint decision at home.

7. Way forward

- a. The participants said that there should be proper guidance, support, trainings, etc. provided to ensure that interested Bhutanese women can equally stand as Candidates and contest elections.
- b. Some of them said that there should be appropriate institutional and systems arrangements to support women's active participation in elections as Candidates.

- c. They said that women will need to be encouraged and supported starting from the next elections to ensure more women to come forward and stand as Candidates in elections.

Contestants/elected Candidates

1. Campaign and Information

- a. The participants strongly agreed that the common forum and public debates are very advantageous to the Political Parties and Candidates and provided platform for the Candidates to well interact with the voters.
- b. The civic and voter education also provided much information about the Political Parties and Candidates.
- c. They said television and media (radio and newspapers) also played a critical role in providing more information about the parties and Candidates
- d. Their family members, relatives and friends also supplied much information needed by the voters on the Political Parties and Candidates.

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. Many of them said that they voted in the past election to choose or elect a right and capable Candidate and a political Party with strong leadership.
- b. They said that in general the voters need lot of education especially on democracy as culture and said Political Parties and Candidate have an important role to play to educate and disseminate information.
- c. Few participants also said that they do not properly understand much of what is being communicated to them by the Political Parties and Candidates.
- d. Some of them also expressed that they hear lots of things during the campaign but they don't understand clearly even when they go to vote.
- e. It was also observed that the credibility of the Candidate or Member of Parliament strongly influence voter decisions.
- f. They said those credible Candidates are those who understands voter problems and can address them during the Parliamentary deliberations. They should closely interact with voters and should act as a bridge between the government and citizens.

- g. Most of the participants are not satisfied with the performance of their MPs (Member of Parliament). They expected their MPs to visit their constituencies more often and want that their elected leaders take a committed responsibility in satisfying the concerns of the voters. They said they have not heard from them since the election period.

3. Women and Elections

- a. They said that there should be more women representation in the parliament to ensure that women's issue and challenges are well addressed and discussed.
- b. They expressed that woman as a leader can equally be competent and capable as men.
- c. They said that many women lack qualification and are not very encouraged to step forward to contest election. They said women should be given opportunity to gain experiences and confidence.
- d. It was observed that the lack of trust and confidence in women leadership is one of the main reasons for women's under-representation. With confidence and determination they said women can reach the highest levels in the political process and local government bodies.
- e. Many of them said that they would consider contesting future elections, but few of them said that they will not be able to since they are not able to balance time between their work and family responsibilities. As a woman they said the household work and child-rearing responsibility tend to fall disproportionately on women.
- f. The gender of a Candidates or the Party leader is not a subject of contention to the participants. However, they said that the cultural and traditional preconceived notions are still at play when voting for Candidates.
- g. Majority of the participants quoted in preferring the female Candidates if both a male and female Candidates were capable and equally credible.

4. Obstacles to women participation

- a. The social barriers and cultural biases are still at play when voting for Candidates. Many voter preferred male Candidates over female.
- b. They said that women lack confidence and necessary political skills to come forward and contest the elections.

- c. They said that women are still considered less capable to men and this has even discouraged for women Candidates.
- d. During campaign the participants also expressed that as women they face difficulty travelling to far flung areas that are not easily accessible by road.
- e. The negative campaign against the women also posed difficulty in getting elected as a Candidate.
- f. Women's primary roles as mothers and housewives including gender stereotypes restricts women's participation in electoral processes

5. Electoral Laws, Rules and Regulations and Guidelines

- a. The participant are of general consensus that the Electoral laws and legal framework provide equal rights and pose no barriers to women's equal participation in electoral processes.
- b. A participant expressed that she faced slight difficulty in getting the forms for the functional literacy test and was in fact discouraged to participate as a Candidate. The participant suggested that the functional literacy testing centre be introduced in all *Gewogs* to enhance more women participation.
- c. The participant also expressed to do away with the door-to-door campaigning as it provided room for Candidates or Parties to influence voter through unlawful manners.

6. Way Forward

- a. The female participants strongly expressed that women should believe in themselves and should do away with the widespread perception that women *are* nine lives behind men (*Ke-rab Gu*). With necessary training, they said women can be as well good activist or campaigner, manager and support-mobilizers,
- b. They said that it is of utmost important to provide training for women to develop and fine-tune their political skills and confidence. They said the awareness campaign programme should also target men to expose them to the complexities of gender discrimination.
- c. They said women must be trained, encouraged and empowered to become strong politicians, community leaders and activists.
- d. They said the Election Commission should consider providing voter and civic education on continuous basis including gender

sensitization programme and information dissemination to most of the rural communities and voters to combat negative stereotypes.

- e. Many of the participants were not in support to the quota system or the reserved seats which was seen as a gateway to enhance the women's representation. They said that with quota system the incompetent female Candidate also stand fair chances of getting elected. This they said would tear down the image of women and will make it even harder for women Candidates to gain trust or garner votes for any future elections.
- f. Instead, they said women should be more supported and trained and the Election management bodies should develop a clear policy on advancing women's electoral participation.

N. Gasa Dzongkhag, 18th of August 2014

General Voters and Elected/ Contestants

1. Campaign and Information

- a. The participants said that it is an individual responsibility and a national duty to participate in elections.
- b. Majority of the participants said that they have gained a tremendous knowledge and experiences from the conduct of two Parliamentary elections.
- c. The common forum and public debates were the two most effective source of information on Political Parties and Candidates.
- d. The television and radio also played a critical role in information dissemination on the Party ideologies and manifestos, and electoral promises of Candidates.
- e. They said that the door-to-door campaign can be beneficial in monitored strictly.

It provided opportunity for the voters who failed to attend common forum and public debates to understand and closely interact with the Candidates and parties.

- f. However, the participants expressed that several meetings by the Candidates and Political Parties in addition to the common forum already organized caused much inconveniences to the voter and was found not necessary.
- g. They also discuss within their family members on the choice of their Party or a Candidate.

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. Majority of the participants said that they voted in the past elections and have actively participated in the electoral processes as voter.
- b. They said that they voted for a Party or Candidate whom they believed in and whom they thought would best represent them and articulate their needs in the parliament discussions.
- c. They based their decision to vote for a Candidate or a political Party based on comparison of the competency and capability of each Candidate or political Party.
- d. Most of them agreed that their decision to support a political Party is based on the quality of Candidates, the Party leadership, the

election campaigns conducted and electoral promises promised. The Party ideology didn't matter much to the voter.

3. Women and Election

- a. The men voters present said that they will vote for women Candidates in elections if they were equally competent and qualified as the men Candidates. They said at present there is less women representation at local and national level and should be supported.
- b. Some of them were of the opinion that they will support and vote for the best Candidate in the elections, not considering whether the Candidate is a man or a woman.
- c. Most of them said that it is important that women should be given opportunity to be represented to gain the experience and confidence to ensure women's active political participation.
- d. Most of them said that women can be equally competent and have the same opportunity to be elected as the men.
- e. Some of the female participants said that they would like to contest future elections given the education qualification and support from the community.
- f. Few of them said they are not interested themselves to stand as Candidates in elections seeing themselves to be presently incompetent.

4. Obstacles to women participation

- a. The participants expressed that the lack of confidence and education restrict women from contesting an election.
- b. They said women in Bhutan grow up shouldering household responsibility as a child. The parenting pattern of the girl child as home maker and care giver to family had strong influence to the mindsets of the women and has strongly remained as barrier for women to step forward.
- c. They said most of the Bhutanese family are claimed to be headed by men and many women are not aware of their own rights and most women even though they are potential and competent seems to live by the beliefs and the social norms.
- d. The participants also expressed that by cultural biases women are quite often pressurized by the parents to fulfill the needs of the family and demands to sacrifice their aspirations. They said that the

girl child is treated separately from the boy child and had very less opportunities in terms of education and other information.

5. Decision making

- a. Lack of confidence, education and communication skills were seen as the main reasons for women's under-representation in decision making processes.
- b. The participants said that many important decisions are mostly made by men since they claim to be the head of the family or left to the men to decide, while some of them said that they also make decisions independent of their male counterparts depending on what needs to be done.
- c. In voting in elections, most of them said that they made their own decision except in one or two cases where and when the Candidates were related to them.

6. Opinion on Electoral Laws

- a. The participants expressed that the electoral laws are gender neutral and provides equal opportunity for women Candidates.
- b. The participants who contested the previous local government election said that the processing of nomination documents was necessary and should be required and they said it did not pose any difficulty for women's participation.
- c. The group expressed that the participants who attended the voter and civic education are generally the old and aged people or either attended by those who lack communication skills who will not be able to further disseminate information to their family members. They said that the ECB should target all individuals in the community and should be conducted at *Chiwog* levels on continuous basis.

7. Way Forward

- a. Provide training in key areas such as leadership training, confidence building, lobbying and networking skills to strengthen political skills.
- b. Conduct awareness programme or find specific ways to change stereotypical negative attitude towards women.
- c. Continuous civic and voter education including gender sensitization programme at *Chiwog* level.

8. Women Civil Servants

1. Campaign and Information

- a. The participants said that voting for a person or a Party who represents their visions and goals for the new democratic constitutional monarchy is an opportunity to become part of the process.
- b. They said it is a national and civic duty of every citizen in a democratic country to vote in elections and make a difference in the outcome.
- c. They also said it is of vital importance and an individual duty as a democratic citizen to participate in the electoral process.
- d. The participants agreed that a stable peace and prosperity in the country can only be achieved when institutions are democratic and representative of all groups of society including choosing a credible Candidate and capable political Party in the parliament.
- e. Some participants said that they gathered information about the Candidates and Party from television, media (newspapers) and social media, while few of them voted for a Candidate or a Party of their parent's choice.
- f. Many of them said that they couldn't make an informed choice since they didn't know much about the Political Parties or the Candidates. They consulted their parents or relatives for which Party or a Candidate to support and vote in an election.
- g. They said that civil servants as apolitical are not allowed to participate in Party/Candidate meetings or the campaign programme and couldn't gather much information required to make a better decision and informed choice.

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. The participants said that their choice of a Party or a Candidate is one who is credible, capable and who can benefit and are willing to work and serve at a larger interest of the nation and people.
- b. The participants said that the credible Candidate would be one who can best represent the need and aspirations of their constituents, who can speak, listen and articulate the issues, amiable personality and who are approachable.

3. Women and Election

- a. They said at present there are more qualified and potential women who can equally compete with men. However they said, women lack confidence and fear stops them from taking risk to step forward and compete with men.
- b. The participants said that more women need to be elected and represented in Parliament and the local governments. One of them said that there is very less elected women at local governance which is indicative of the fact that women have not been supported.
- c. They said women should be more encouraged to take part in local discussion including the public offices.
- d. They strongly expressed the need for continuous voter and civic education to empower more women in decision making processes.
- e. Most of the participants said that women themselves should come forward so that voters will be able to support and vote for the women Candidates.
- f. Most of them said that they do not look forward to contest in elections as Candidates, but will support other women who are interested to give them the opportunity to be elected.

4. Obstacles to women participation

- a. Many of them said women grew shouldering household and domestic responsibilities as a girl child. They said parents generally train girl child to carry out the order of the male members in the family and the trend continues to exist in many families. Because of these, they said many men don't support and encourage women to step forward.
- b. The participants were of the view that not many women are courageous and confident enough to come forward and stand as Candidates in elections since they cannot take the risks and, while some said that, as is, there are not many qualified, and capable women's voter base who actually had less access to educational and socio-economic opportunities in the past compared to present situation.
- c. Many of them acknowledge the fact that there are so few women roles models or examples to encourage or persuade more women to come forward in public life and also stand as Candidates in elections.
- d. They also said that the girls have lived by the myths of the age old tradition as inferior bred and cannot do things as men does. They

also said that women are restricted from entering special alter in many monasteries and the certain defined gender roles as taught and inculcated have made women to be seen as inferior to men in every aspect of their lives in homes and communities.

5. Way Forward

- a. The participants said that there should be more information disseminated and civic and voter education to be conducted to encourage women political and electoral participation.
- b. They said many educated women are least interested and bothered to stand as Candidates in elections. The participants said that women civil servants will need to be encouraged through advocacy and education, as well as through policies and decisions, to come forward and stand as Candidates in elections.
- c. They said women should be trained to develop their political and communication skills and gender awareness programme should be initiated to change the perception and attitude of men towards women

O. Punakha Dzongkhag, 20th of August, 2014

General Voters

1. Campaign and information

- a. Majority of the participants said that they have gained a tremendous knowledge and experiences in terms of voting and electoral processes by participation in the previous two Parliamentary elections.
- b. The participants said that as a Bhutanese citizen it is an individual responsibility and a national duty to participate in elections to choose a right leader and Candidate.
- c. The voter and civic education, common forum, friends and family members provided much information needed by the voters.
- d. The participants said that the common forum and television (BBs) were the most effective source of information dissemination and they suggested continuing conducting common forums at *Chiwog* level for future elections.
- e. The election advertising board also helped them to identify and understands about the Candidates and the Political Parties as well as gets other important election related information.
- f. Most of the participants agreed that there are enough information on Candidates and Political Parties as well as election campaign information.

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. The participants said that they looked at the competencies of the Candidates and the Political Parties to vote in the elections.
- b. The participants said that a competent Candidate or a political Party is one who are willing to work at larger interest or can work for the benefit of the country and the people without biases.
- c. In terms of choosing which Candidate to support in elections, they said Candidates should be qualified and experienced, trust worthy (*Sampa Semkay*), while a political Party should have good leadership, good Candidates and have good and realistic election manifesto.
- d. The participants strongly expressed that they considered about the Candidate's past working experience on developmental issues and considered the history of the Candidate on corrupt or illegal activities.

- e. Some of the participants said that there are too many unregulated election campaign meetings conducted by the Political Parties and the Candidates at odd times and when people were most busy which they thought were quite bothersome and caused much inconveniences.
- f. The participants said that the engagement by the Candidates and Political Parties during election campaign and non-election period is an important medium to interact and discuss the government policies, issues and challenges.

3. Women and Election

- a. Some men voters present primarily said that they will vote for women Candidates in elections even if they were equally competent and qualified as the men Candidates.
- b. The women voters said that more women Candidate should be supported to ensure equal women representation at local and national level.
- c. Some of them were of the opinion that they will support and vote for the best Candidate in the elections, not considering whether the Candidate is a man or a woman.
- d. The participants acknowledged that women Candidates are not generally supported by both men and women voters, seeing them to be incapable and incompetent to hold leadership positions.
- e. Most of them said they are not interested themselves to stand as Candidates in elections seeing themselves to be presently incompetent and less qualified. While few of them said that they are interested to contest if supported and encouraged.

4. Obstacle to women participation

- a. Lack of confidence and motivation, difficulty in balancing family and public life, less political skills, women's primary roles as mothers and housewives including gender stereotypes were also seen as an obstacle and restrict women's participation in electoral processes.
- b. It is observed that the lack of trust and confidence in women leadership is one of the main reasons for women's under-representation.
- c. The female participants also said that women are generally not very supported and encouraged by their male counterparts.

- d. The participants said that women have lagged behind men in availing educational and socio-economic opportunities in the past which have resulted in having less qualified and competent women to stand as Candidates in elections.

5. Decision making

- a. The participants agreed that the equal presence of women and men in decision-making processes is important and said women should step forward and take active part in decision making.
- b. Most of them who are married said that they make a joint family decision at home and but they take full responsibility to decide on election matters.
- c. Some of them expressed that women takes and has full responsibility to decide on the household and domestic activity, while few of them said that important decisions are mostly made by men or left to the men to decide.

6. Electoral Laws, Rules and Regulations

- a. The participants said that the Electoral Laws and legal framework guarantees equal civil and political rights to every person on a non-discriminatory basis.
- b. Some of the participants said that there are too many unregulated election campaign meetings conducted by the Political Parties and the Candidates at odd times, and suggested that there should be effective and adequate monitoring of election campaign activities.
- c. The participants proposed to do away with door-to-door campaigning, and appointing of political Party *Jabchorpas* (supporters) at the local level during elections. They said Party *Jabchorpas* and supporters are the cause of disharmony and communal discord during the elections.
- a. They said door-to-door provides opportunities for the Political Parties and the Candidates to engage in unwanted and undesirable practices of influencing and inducing voters in unfair manners.

7. Way Forward

- a. The participants said that more information dissemination and education should be undertaken to encourage and support women's active political and electoral participation.
- b. Do away with door-to-door campaigning and appointment of Party *Jabchorpas* by the Party.

- c. The participants said that there should be proper guidance, support, trainings, etc. provided to ensure that interested Bhutanese women can equally stand as Candidates and contest elections.
- d. Training programs should also target men, to expose them to the complexities of gender discrimination and the necessity of and mechanisms for promoting women in elections.

Women Civil Servants

1. Campaign and Information

- a. Most of the participants said that they voted in the last Parliamentary elections held in 2013, and have also taken part as electoral officers in the conduct of the elections. Some could not vote in the elections because they could not avail of postal voting facility being not registered or their application rejected.
- b. The participants said that their being civil servants did not allow them to personally attend the election campaign meetings conducted by the Political Parties and the Candidates. However, they said they got informed through media's coverage's of the electoral events and election campaigns and through media advertisements.
- c. The participants said that they got most of their information on Political Parties and Candidates from the TV coverage of the Public Debates and the Common Forums, while some of them also accessed information from the internet connected to the various social media.

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. The participants said that they should vote to choose the best and competent Candidates and Political Parties who would best represent them and the Bhutanese people in many of the important decisions that will affect their lives.
- b. In terms of choosing which Candidate to support in elections, they said Candidates should be credible, qualified and experienced, while a political Party should have good leadership, good Candidates and have good and realistic election manifesto.
- c. In the past elections, some of them said that they voted for the Candidates who were credible and competent, some voted because they found the Political Parties possessed good leaders and the Candidates were competent, some said they voted because the Candidates were related to them, and some said they voted based on the election manifestoes and campaigns.

3. Women and Election

- a. Many of the participants said that women Candidates should be supported and given opportunity to gain confidence and experience. They said equal women representations are required in the parliament to deliberate on the issues and challenges faced by women.
- b. However, some of the participants said that it is not necessary that women should be just elected to give them the opportunity to be represented, but women should seek to compete and be elected on equal footing and on their own merits.
- c. The gender of the Candidates or the Party leader is not a subject of contention among the participants. They strongly expressed that given the ability and credibility both male and female can be equally competent. However, the cultural partialities are still at play when voting or supporting for Candidates.
- d. Majority of the participants said that they will vote for women Candidates in elections if both male and female are equally capable.
- e. In terms of contesting future elections, many of them said that they have not thought about standing as Candidate, while few of them said they may take a chance if supported and approached by their local community people.

4. Obstacle to women Participation

- a. The participants said that the social norms, beliefs and values in many ways have discouraged women from contesting or getting elected in elections. They said as a child, girls are always protected by their parents and were not given opportunities to explore the potential within to develop leadership skills.
- b. Most of them said that people generally believe that women's place to be in homes taking care of families and household chores, while men are believed to be more capable and suited for public life and be chosen or elected as leaders.
- c. Many of them said that men are thought to be better decision makers and better in doing things than women.
- d. They also said that women will not be able to perform or do an effective election campaigning as the men could since women have other responsibilities and priorities which will hamper in their undertaking important decision making tasks.

- e. Most of them said that the fear of losing their current employment and economic opportunities to the uncertainty of being elected, having too much to do with taking care of their families and raising children possess difficulty from contesting elections.

5. The Electoral Laws, Rules and Regulation

- a. They said that the electoral laws and legal framework are gender neutral and recognize men and women to be equals and given the same equal opportunities to stand as Candidates in elections and be elected.
- b. They suggested that ECB should consider appointing more female electoral officers during the election. This they said would help in enhancing more women participation

6. Way forward

- a. Most of the participants agreed that women should be encouraged to partake actively in politics and elections and those women who are interested to contest elections should be properly guided and trained to enable them to effectively contest elections.
- b. The participants expressed the need for media to carry timely and right information on many aspects of elections and democracy to enhance better understanding and encourage women to better participate in future elections.
- c. Most of the participants said that there should be economic security to sustain their livelihood to enable them (women civil servants) to come forward and stand as Candidates in elections should they be not elected having resigned to be Candidates.
- d. The participants said that there should be proper guidance, support, trainings, etc. provided to ensure that interested Bhutanese women can equally stand as Candidates and contest elections.
- e. Training programs should also target men, to expose them to the complexities of gender discrimination and the necessity of and mechanisms for promoting women in elections.

Contestant/Elected Candidates

1. Campaign and Information

- a. The participants said that they got most of their information on Political Parties and Candidates from the common forum and TV coverage of the Public Debates, while some of them also gathered information from their parents, friends and radio.

- b. Some of the participants said that they had no access to information on the Political Parties and the Candidates which discouraged them from voting in elections.

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. Most of them said that for the first Parliamentary elections they vote for a Candidate or a Party of their parents or relatives choice, some voted for a relative or were influenced by elder people in the community.
- b. And during the second Parliamentary election they said they voted for Party with good and capable leadership, with strong and competent Candidates in all constituencies and during the general election they voted for a Candidate whom they thought would best serve and benefit the nation, and whom they thought would best bridge the gap between the government and people.

3. Women and election

- a. They said that though the Political Parties provides equal opportunities for women to stand as a Candidate as to men, many women do not step forward to contest elections.
- b. The participants in general expressed that there are not many qualified and confident women to stand as a Candidate and contest elections.
- c. They said even women are equally capable and competent, they said men are mostly preferred over women.
- d. The participants expressed that even when women possess the characteristics that make for good Candidates, they often are not encouraged to step forward to become Candidates. Women are also less likely to present themselves as Candidates, often seeing themselves as lacking the skills necessary to perform well in politics.
- e. Majority of them said that the nature and job activity of elected electorates do not require any physical strength or are of masculine in nature. They said given the opportunity they can very well perform up to the expectations of the general voters.
- f. The participants said that there should be equal representation of women in the parliament to discuss and articulate the issues and need of women.
- g. Most of them said that they do not look forward to themselves becoming Candidates again in elections, but will support and give opportunity for other women who are interested to be elected. They

said the salary and incentives have not been very attractive and also said that it was difficult for them to manage time between the professional work and family responsibilities.

4. Obstacles to women participation

- a. They said women in general are shy, weak and lack self-confidence to step forward.
- b. The participants said that the gender ideology or the prevailing cultural patterns, and the predetermined social roles assigned to women and men still exists in rural areas and were seen as the hurdle to women's participation.
- c. The negative campaigning against women contestants.
- d. The salary and incentives for elected contestant at local level are not attractive or sufficient.

5. Decision making

- a. The participants who are married said that important decisions are made jointly or otherwise left to the men to decide.
- b. Those who are not married and staying with their parents, they said their father as a head of the family makes the decision.
- c. On voting to an election though they discuss within families, friends and relatives they said they make their own choice in terms of choosing a Party or a Candidate.

6. Electoral Laws and Rules and Regulations

- a. They said that the electoral laws are gender neutral and provides equal participation to both men and women without any biases.
- b. Do away with door-to-door campaigning and appointment of Party *Jabcorpas*.
- c. Strictly regulate the election campaigning to combat negative campaigning by male counterparts against women.
- d. The ECB to monitor the electoral promises of a Party or a Candidate.

7. Way Forward

- a. Provide training to interested women to develop political and campaigning skills.
- b. Gender awareness programme to be initiated to change the attitude of men towards women.

- c. Do away with door-to-door campaigning and appointment of Party *Jabchorpas*.
- d. Continuous voter and civic education targeting all individual at *Chiwog* level.

P. Wangdue Phodrang Dzongkhag, 22nd of August 2014

General Voters and Contestant/Elected Candidates

1. Campaign and Information

- a. They said it is a national and individual duty of every citizen in a democratic country to vote in elections and make a difference in the outcome.
- b. They said common forum and public debates organised provided much information required about the Political Parties and Candidates.
- c. The broadcast of the public debates in television and the election advertising board also helped voters recognize and identify the Party representatives or Candidate in their constituency.
- d. They also gathered information of the Candidate or a Party from their parents, relatives and friends.
- e. Most of the participants agreed that there are enough information on Candidates and Political Parties as well as election campaign information.
- f. Majority of the participants said that they have not read or seen a political Party manifesto.

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. Many of them said that they voted in the past elections to choose the best and competent Candidates and reliable and efficient Political Parties.
- b. Most of them said credibility and competency of the Candidate or Representative of a Political Party strongly influence voters' decision.
- c. However, they said that the Candidates from better family background and who has greater network with influential people in the community has greater chances of being elected.
- d. In voting in elections, most of them said that they voted for a Candidate or a political Party based on the information that they had received and by considering who they (Political Parties or Candidates) are and how they would best represent the people.
- e. However, some of them also said that they would vote for a new Party or a Candidate in order to give a different Party or a Candidate the opportunity to lead the country.

- f. Majority of them also said that they would make their next voting decision by judging the present government's performance.
- g. Most of the participants they said are not happy with the performance of the Candidates in the parliament. They expect their MPs to visit their constituencies more often and satisfy the concerns of the voters.

3. Women and elections

- a. The female participants generally felt that they are equally opportunities for women to participate in electoral process.
- b. However, they felt that Bhutanese women need to be empowered and educated in order to take advantage of these opportunities.
- c. They added that women can equally compete with men in politics.
- d. They revealed that they were most inspired by Bhutanese women who have succeeded in politics. (Dasho Aum Neten Zangmo and Lyonpo Dorji Choden) and said that there should be more women role models to inspire more women participation.
- e. They said that at present there are more women who are well qualified and equally competent as men to lead the country.

4. Obstacles to women participation

- a. Low level of educated women in rural areas or less educated women voter base.
- b. Lack of confidence and the fear to equally compete with men.
- c. Many of them said that men are bold enough to take risks while women cannot do the same and their roles are very much confined to taking care of the family and household works.
- d. One of the contestants (Tshogpa) said that women often face a triple burden when participating in politics. They have a responsibility to their work or profession, to their family, and if they become involved in politics they are effectively taking on a third full-time job.
- e. A female participant also said that most of the women contestant who got elected are either divorced or not married which is indicative of the fact that women coming forward to contest elections have not been supported by their husband and men in the community.

5. Decision making

- a. Most of them said that women are considered inferior to men in decision making and this has very much discouraged women coming forward to take active part in decision making processes.
- b. Some of them said that they make a joint decision at home and always consult each other when making an important decision. While some of them said that they leave to their husband to decide.
- c. All participants said that they have the right and make their own choice when voting for a Candidate or a Party.

6. Electoral Laws and Rules and regulations

- a. They said that the electoral laws are gender neutral and treats men and women equally.
- b. The participants strongly agreed and suggested to do away with door-to-door campaign and appointment of Party *Jabchorpas* by the Political Parties.
- c. Ensure continuous engagement by the Political Parties and Candidates.
- d. Ensure strict monitoring of electoral promises and said only doable and realistic promises should be allowed to be made.

7. Way Forward

- a. They said that because of the prevailing traditional or cultural belief men are often viewed as more viable and better Candidates and are given preference to female Candidates. They said women should be equally given an opportunity to experience and built confidence.
- b. Women representatives must have access to decision making process and their views must be taken seriously and incorporated into decisions.
- c. Find specific ways to change stereotypical negative attitude towards women.
- d. Provide training in key areas such as leadership training, confidence building, lobbying and networking skills to strengthen political skills.
- e. Continuous civic and voter education including gender sensitization programme at *Chiwog* level.
- f. Create closer link with the electorate, to keep in touch with the local needs and aspirations.

Women Civil Servants

1. Campaign and Information

- a. The participants said that media (newspapers and television) plays a critical role in information dissemination and should ensure that Political Parties and Candidates are provided equal space and time.
- b. Majority of them said that they got information about the Political Parties and Candidates from newspapers and television coverage of the Public Debates and the Common Forums, while some of them also accessed information from the internet connected to the various social media like face book and twitter.
- c. Some of them said that their being civil servant did not allow them to personally attend the campaign programmes of a political Party or a Candidate and said they are not able to gather much information required in making a better informed choices.
- d. Their parents, family members, relatives and friends also provided information of a Party or a Candidate.

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. The participant said that it is important to participate in the electoral processes to choose a right capable Candidate and to choose a Party which is capable and potential enough to form an accountable, transparent and efficient government.
- b. In elections, some of them said that they voted for the Candidates who are credible and competent and who will best represent them and the people, some voted because they found the Political Parties had good leaders and the Candidates were competent, some said they voted because the Candidates were related to them, and some said they voted based on the election manifestoes and campaigns.
- c. When asked as to what credible and competent means, many of them said that the Candidate or a Party leader should have a convincing factor including better work ethics, highly qualified with sound knowledge of government policies, corrupt free, who can communicate well and should have an amiable personality.
- d. While voting some of them said that they thought about the Candidate's past work on development issues and considered the history of the Candidate or a Party leader on corrupt or illegal activities.
- e. The participants also said that the electoral promises of the Party or a Candidate should be doable, achievable and realistic. They said

with two Parliamentary elections, lots of unrealistic electoral promises were made to manipulate the general voters.

3. Women and elections

- a. Majority of them said that there should be more women representation in the parliament and local governments since only women will understand and acknowledge women's needs, hopes and aspirations in policies and decision and laws to ensure and enhance their status as Bhutanese people without any discrimination.
- b. Most of the participants said that women Candidates were seen to be incompetent compared to men Candidates and are preferred over women in elections.
- c. The participants acknowledged that women Candidates are not generally supported by both men and women voters, seeing them to be incapable and incompetent to hold leadership positions.
- d. The participants also said that more women are now equally qualified and educated compared to past recent years and are equally capable and have the leadership qualities as that of men.
- e. However, the participants acknowledged that women themselves should come forward so that men and women voters will be able to support and vote for the women Candidates.
- f. The participants also said that more women role model in higher positions can help inspire and persuade more women participation in electoral processes.
- g. Most of them said that they do not look forward to themselves becoming Candidates in elections, but will support other women who are interested to give them the opportunity to be elected.
- h. While most of the participants said that independent and single women are better suited to take on important leadership roles or contest elections without distractions than those who are married and with children.

4. Obstacles to women participation

- a. The participants said that the gender ideology or the age old belief of women being considered inferior to men, cultural patterns, and the predetermined social roles assigned to women and men still exists in rural areas and were seen as the hurdle to women's participation.

- b. Many of them said that men are bold enough to take risks while women cannot do the same and their roles are very much confined to taking care of the family and household works.
- c. Lack of confidence and courage to step forward and contest election as a Candidate. Lacks necessary support from their family members and poor network or less connection with influential people in the community
- d. Low levels of education and less access to information in past recent years were also seen as an obstacle for women's participation.
- e. Lacks communication skills and necessary skills to perform well in politics.
- f. Fear of losing the current job or position if not elected in an election.
- g. Less women roles models or examples to encourage or persuade more women to come forward in public life and also stand as Candidates in elections.

5. Electoral Laws, Rules and Regulations

- a. Most of the participants acknowledged that the Bhutanese laws and systems are non-discriminatory and recognize and treat women equal to the men, with some of them (male participants) even suggesting that women have been given undue preference over men in many aspects.
- b. The participants said that the electoral laws and system are not discriminatory to the Bhutanese women with them being allowed to compete on equal footing alongside the Bhutanese men and on their own merits.
- c. The participant also suggested appointing more women as electoral officers (Returning, Presiding and Polling Officials) during election period.

6. Way Forward

- a. Develop and promote gender-sensitive curriculum in schools and teacher training on civic education for both men and women.
- b. The media to provide gender-sensitive coverage of elections, avoiding negative stereotypes and presenting positive images of women as leaders.
- c. Provide training to interested women to develop their political and campaigning skills.

- d. Gender awareness programme to be initiated to change the attitude of men towards women.
- e. Democracy club in school to play an active role in education and information dissemination.

Q. Dagana Dzongkhag, 26th of August 2014

General Voter and Contestant or Elected Representative

1. Campaign and Information

- a. Many of them said that they have gained great experiences from attending the campaign meetings of the Political Parties and Candidates during the first and the second Parliamentary elections. The conduct of campaign and the information received through various media advertisement and media coverage on election campaigns helped them to know and understand more about the Candidates and the Political Parties contesting the elections.
- b. The participants said that the organization of the Common Forums for election campaigns was very effective.
- c. While the conduct of the door-to-door election campaigns was also useful in getting information about the Political Parties and Candidate, they said there are opportunities for the parties and Candidates to engage in activities which do not conform to the accepted standards of conducting election campaign.
- d. They said that the information received from their family members, friends and neighbours also helped them to know more and understand about the Candidates and the Political Parties.
- e. The posters on the election advertising board also helped voters in identifying the parties and Candidates as well as provided other important election related information.
- f. The participants said that since they had access to TV and radio they also got to know more about the Political Parties and the Candidates.
- g. Most of the participants agreed that there are enough information on Candidates and Political Parties as well as election campaign information.

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. All of the participants said that they voted in the last Parliamentary elections held in 2008 and 2013.
- b. They said they voted for a Party based on the leadership it possessed and the quality of the Candidates filled in all 47 constituencies.
- c. And while voting for the Candidate, they based their decision on comparison of the competency and capability of each Candidate.

- d. Most of them agreed that a competent and/or capable Candidate or a political Party is one which will best represent the people, and who are willing to work at the larger interest of the people and the nation.
- e. Some participants said that they considered the history of the Candidate on corrupt or illegal activities and they assessed whether or not the Candidate would be accessible to the people in the community.
- f. Some participants said that they also considered Candidates past work experiences on the developmental issues.

3. Women and Elections

- a. The participants said that they will support women Candidates should they be equally competent and qualified as the men Candidates.
- b. Some of them were of the opinion that they will support and vote for the best Candidate in the elections, not considering whether the Candidate is a man or a woman.
- c. The female participants said that the men should also look forward to support women Candidates if they are equally capable and competent.
- d. Most of the participants agreed that women's political participation should be encouraged and supported. They said women should be more encouraged to take part in local discussion including the public offices.
- e. They strongly expressed the need for continuous voter and civic education to empower more women in decision making processes.
- f. Given the opportunity and chance to serve, the female participants strongly expressed that women can equally perform if not more better than men.
- g. Most of the female participants said that they are not looking forward to contest the future elections, while some of them have not given a thought to stand as a Candidate.
- h. Most of the men voters said that many competent and capable women are not willing to step forward to stand as Candidates and contest elections.

4. Obstacles to women participation

- a. The majority of the participants said that women have lagged behind men in many of the life's opportunities thus far which have hindered

on their current level of political participation and engagement in public area.

- b. The social barriers and cultural biases are still at play when voting for Candidates. Many voter preferred male Candidates over female.
- c. They said even when women possessed the qualities of a good leadership they are not encouraged and supported.
- d. They said that women lack confidence and necessary political skills to come forward and contest the elections.
- e. They said that women are still considered less capable to men and this has even discouraged voting for capable women Candidates.
- f. The negative campaign against the women and their primary roles as mothers and housewives including gender stereotypes restricts women's participation in electoral processes.
- g. Many of the women voters said that they do not have the requisite educational qualifications or were not educated to enable them to take part in electoral process, even if they wished they had participated.
- h. Most of the women voters said that there are not many elected women representatives on whom they could look up to as role models.

5. Electoral laws, Rules and Regulations.

- a. All of the participants said that the electoral laws are gender neutral and provides equal opportunities for both men and women to contest and participate in an election
- b. The door-to-door campaign and appointment of Party *Jabchorpas* by the Party should be discontinued.

6. Way Forward

- a. Most of the participants agreed that capable and competent women should be encouraged to actively participate in politics and elections.
- b. They said that those women who are interested to contest elections should be properly guided and trained to enable them to effectively contest elections.
- c. Conduct Gender awareness programme to change the attitude of men towards women.

- d. Conduct Civic and voter education at *Chiwog* level on continuous basis.

Women Civil Servants

1. Elections and Information

- a. The participants said that they got most of their information on Political Parties and Candidates from the media coverage on election campaign, while some of them gathered information from social media.
- b. The participants said that since they, as civil servants, were not allowed to attend election campaign meetings personally and physically, they were not able to really get to know the Political Parties and the Candidates then what was reported in media.
- c. The participants expressed the view that civil servants should be allowed better access to the Political Parties and the Candidates in terms of attending election campaign meetings and others to be able to make better decisions on the poll days.

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. Most of the participants said that their decision to vote was based on the leadership of a political Party; the quality of the Candidates in terms of qualifications and work experience, and the electoral campaign promises and manifestos of a Party or a Candidate.
- b. They said that a political Party or a Candidate should be able to best represent the constituents and be able to deliver the pledges or the electoral promises and be able to articulate the needs of the people.

3. Women and Elections

- a. All of the participants expressed the view that there are not many qualified women to stand as Candidates and contest elections.
- b. Some participants said that even if there were women Candidates, they found them not equally competent as the men Candidates.
- c. Majority of the participants said that they will vote for women Candidates in the future elections provided that the women Candidates are equally competent as the men Candidates.
- d. They said that the women Candidates must be competent and capable as the men Candidates to be supported in elections by the voters, especially by the women voters.

- e. Some of them said that it is important to understand that incompetent women Candidates should not be simply supported and elected simply to empower women.
- f. While most of them said that they have not thought about standing in any election as Candidates, a few of them said that they may take the chance, but only if they are well supported and encouraged to do so.

4. Obstacles to Women Participation

- a. They said that women are seen as incapable of doing many of the things as men and often considered inferior to men in decision making.
- b. They said that girl children in past recent years were treated and brought up differently than the boy child or when they are in schools and most girl children got distracted as they got older.
- c. Many of them said women grew shouldering household and domestic responsibilities as a girl child. They said parents generally train girl child to carry out the order of the male members in the family and the trend continues to exist in many families. Because of these, they said many men don't support and encourage women to step forward.
- d. The participants were of the view that not many women are courageous and confident enough to come forward and stand as Candidates in elections since they cannot take the risks and, while some said that, as is, there are not many qualified, and capable women's voter base who actually had less access to educational and socio-economic opportunities in the past compared to present situation.
- e. The participants also said that the social norms, beliefs and values in many ways have discouraged women from contesting or getting elected in elections. They said as a child, girls are always protected by their parents and were not given opportunities to explore the potential within to develop leadership skills.
- f. Lack of confidence, fear, lack of proper education, not able to take risk and lack of communication skills and political skills were also seen as an obstacle or barrier to women's participation in electoral processes.
- g. They said that the belief that women are better suited to become teachers is because women can understand and relate to students since they are seen to be gentle and caring.

5. Decision Making Process

- a. Most of the married participants said that they make joint family decision while a few of them (unmarried women civil servants) said that they have been able to do as they desired and or sometimes discuss with or consult their parents.
- b. A few of them said that in their families and/or households, they are the ones who take most of the important decisions.

6. Electoral Laws, Rules and Regulations

- a. The majority of the participants said that they feel that the laws and the systems now for women participation in public life and politics are open and equal, which have not been the cases in the past recent years.
- b. They said that the Bhutanese women are not discriminated in present day Bhutan.
- c. They expressed that at present there are more educated and qualified women and are hopeful that there will be more women Candidates contesting elections and being elected in the future.

7. Way Forward

- a. The participants said that there should be proper guidance, support, trainings, etc. provided to interested women contestants.
- b. They said that there should be concerted information dissemination and educational efforts made to get Bhutanese women inspired to come forward, especially those who can and are qualified and competent.
- c. some of them also said that in order to enable more competent and qualified women to come forward, they said women civil servants should be allowed to seek be allowed to return to their jobs if not successful in either, Additionally, women civil servants who seek to pursue higher educational qualifications through up-gradation and continuing education should be allowed to do so without having to resign from their jobs.
- d. Encourage more women to participate in decision making processes at all levels including local discussions and *Zomdus*.
- e. Relevant agencies to formulate policies to support women and to increase awareness of the roles and responsibilities of women as elected leader.

- f. Gender sensitization programme and more awareness campaign should be conducted.
- g. They also expressed that there need to be more women role models to help encourage other women to become interested.

R. Tsirang Dzongkhag, 28th of August 2014

Contestant/Elected Candidates

1. Campaign and information

- a. Many of the participants said that they got information about the Political Parties and Candidates from the campaign meeting and campaign programme of the parties and Candidates, common forum and public debates organised by the ECB, and campaign coverage on television (BBs).
- b. They said they were able to judge the performance of the Candidate or a Party during the common forum meetings or public debates between the Party president and between the Candidates of the different Political Parties.
- c. The election advertising board in the Dzongkhags also helped them identify the parties and Candidates and as well provided other information related to elections.
- d. They also discuss about the Party or a Candidate representing their constituency with their parents, relatives and friends.

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. Majority of them voted in the past elections and said it's their duty and responsibility to elect a capable and credible Candidate and a Party which is capable and has the potential to form a responsive and transparent government.
- b. They strongly agreed that a Candidate should not only be credible and capable but should best represent their electorates and should be selfless and willing to work at the larger interest of the nation and people.
- c. They said their ideal Candidate should be one who knows the voter closely, who frequently visits the constituencies and discuss issues related, fulfills the electoral promises and performs the responsibility and duty up to the expectation of the general voters.
- d. Most of them agreed that their decision to support a political Party is based on the quality of Candidates, the leadership it possessed and the manifestos and election campaigns conducted

3. Women and Elections

- a. They strongly agreed and said that there should be more women representation in the parliament and at local government to ensure that women's issue and challenges are well addressed and discussed.

- b. They expressed that at present there are more woman who are equally qualified, well-educated and capable as men.
- c. However, they said women are not very encouraged and supported to step forward to contest election. They said women should be given opportunity to gain experiences and self-confidence.
- d. Many of them said that they would consider contesting future elections and participate equally on same level footing with men. They said as a contestant or as an elected member in the local government they have gained tremendous knowledge and valuable experiences from the past election.
- e. They said there are now more confident in terms electoral campaigning, public speaking and also have the support and network with various people in the community.

4. Obstacles to women participation

- a. Many of them said they women in general lack confidence and fear often stops them from speaking in public or take active part in local discussions or meetings.
- b. As an elected member they said they are not able to balance time between their work and family life. They said as a woman they have the responsibility to cook and wash at home and also the child-rearing responsibility tend to fall disproportionately to women.
- c. They said in rural areas women are still considered inferior and less capable to men in many ways and they said even when women are equally competent and capable, they are not very encouraged and supported. Male Candidates are more preferred than women.
- d. They said that even women themselves tend to live by the beliefs and social norms and are not aware of their own rights and potentials.
- e. They also said that women being very much family oriented and committed to home, they are attached to family and the home environment which discourages women to get away from the comfort zone and actively participate in electoral process.
- f. They said women also live by the myths of old tradition as inferior bred and they normally tend to belief that they cannot do things as men does.

5. Electoral Laws, Rules and Regulations

- a. The participants said that the electoral laws are gender neutral and they were able to do the election campaigns effectively and at par with the male contestants.
- b. They could also process and file their nomination documents on time and are given equally opportunity as to the male Candidates.
- c. They suggested doing away with the door-to-door campaigning as it provided ample of time for Candidates to move freely which they said offers opportunities for them to involve in unlawful practices of influencing voter.

6. Way forward

- a. To conduct voter and civic education including gender sensitization programmes at *Chiwog* level on continuous basis.
- b. Training programme for interested women contestants to build their confidence, communication and campaigning skills.

Women Civil Servants

1. Campaign and information

- a. Most of them said that they voted in the past elections, while some of them who couldn't vote were either in the college studying or some couldn't avail the postal ballot facilities.
- b. Many of them who voted said that their voting was purely based on the decision of their parents since they didn't know much or hear about the Political Parties or Candidates. While some of them voted for Candidate who was either related or was linked to their family members, relatives or friends.
- c. The participants said that they get the information of the Political Parties or Candidates through media coverage on television, newspapers and media advertisement.
- d. Some of them said that they also partake in social media (face book) discussion with their friends and colleagues.
- e. They said that the media coverage on election campaign, common forum and public debates were not very adequate to make a better informed choice. The information provided was mostly about the Candidate's qualification, electoral promises and their manifestos. There were of the opinion that most of the Candidates were either young or fresh graduates or were those who hardly lived in their constituency.

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. The participants said that they have gained tremendous knowledge and greater experiences from the two Parliamentary elections and are of the view that it is of vital importance to participate in the electoral processes to elect a right and capable Candidate or a political Party. They felt that it's their responsibility as a Bhutanese citizen or an individual duty to vote for a Party which is not only proficient but capable enough to form an effective and accountable government.
- b. Majority of them said that for the future elections they will vote for a Candidate or Party who is highly qualified with good working experiences, who possess good leadership quality, who/which will not only benefit the community but who are willing to work and serve at a larger interest of the people and the nation.
- c. Some of them said that while making a decision, it is also important to consider the history of the Candidate or a Party on corrupt or illegal activities and see whether they are approachable or not.
- d. They are of the opinion that the Political Parties or Candidates should continuously visit and interact with their electorates.
- e. Many of them said that they hear about the Political Parties or Candidates only during the election period when they are in need of the vote. They said that the engagement by the Political Parties and Candidates during the election period and non-election period is an important medium.

3. Women and elections

- a. Majority of them said that there should be more women representation in the parliament and local government. They said that women's experiences are different from men's and need to be represented in discussions that result in policy-making and implementation.
- b. The participants also expressed that the interests of men and women are different and even conflicting and therefore women are needed in representative institutions to articulate the interests of women. They said that women can best understand women problems and issues.
- c. They also said that more women can be attracted to political life if they have more women role models in the political arena.

- d. The participants said that they will vote for women Candidates in future elections to give them the opportunity to gain the necessary experience and competence to represent the Bhutanese people.
- e. Many of them said that there are equal or if not more number of women who are educated and possess the qualification required to contest the election. However, they said women are less supported and encouraged.
- f. The participants said that capable and competent women should be supported and encouraged to step forward to contest the elections.
- g. Most of them said they are not interested to stand as Candidates, seeing themselves to be presently incompetent and unconfident or some of them being too young presently to think of standing as Candidates in elections.
- i. A few of them expressed that they would like to stand as Candidates in future elections provided that they are given enough financial security and necessary support in the event they are not elected.
- j. The participants strongly expressed that women are not only capable or best suited to be teachers but given the opportunity they can carry any responsibilities and serve the nation or people with enthusiasm and loyalty.

4. Obstacles to women participation

- a. Many of them said that women are not courageous or have the fear to equally partake and compete with men.
- b. Lack of confidence, less political skills and lack of support were also seen as an obstacle to women's participation.
- c. The participants expressed that women often face more burden when participating in politics. In addition to their professional life, they have a responsibility to look after their kids and family members.
- d. The social norms or cultural belief also restricts women from participating in an election. They said that many people are still of a belief that women's work are very confined to household and kitchen and still considers women as less capable than men.
- e. They also said that many capable and competent women civil servants are not willing to take risk or are unwilling to lose their current employment and economic opportunities to the uncertainty of being elected.

5. Electoral Laws

- a. The participants said they feel that the laws provide equal opportunities to both men and women and treats equal. However, they said that empowerment of women as is experienced is generally low and there is a need felt to enhance women's opportunities in elective offices and political arena.
- b. The participants said that the electoral promises of the Political Parties should be monitored and only the realistic and doable ones be allowed.

6. Way forward

- a. The participants said that there should be appropriate guidance, support, leadership trainings, etc. provided to ensure that interested women can equally stand as Candidates and contest elections.
- b. The participants said that quota or reserved seat could be one of the means to allow more women to be represented in Parliament or the local government, however, it would then basically mean that women themselves accept being less capable to men and not being able to compete based on qualities or merits.
- c. They said education awareness programme on gender sensitization or agenda to combat the stereotypes should be initiated.

General Voters

1. Campaign and information

- a. Majority of the participants said that the common forum, public debates and election campaign of the Political Parties and Candidates, and media coverage on election provided adequate information about the Political Parties and Candidates.
- b. Many of them participated in the common forum campaign and found it very effective and avoided the parties and Candidates from conducting several meetings which in fact saved time and resources.
- c. Their parents, friend and relatives also provided information or helped them gather necessary information which enabled them to understand more about the Candidate or a Party to make a sound political decision.
- d. The posters of the Political Parties or Candidates on the election advertising board including the election posters helped them identity the different parties or the Candidates representing their

constituency and also received various information related to elections.

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. Most of them voted in the past election and said they voted for a Party or a Candidate who is capable, competent and whom they thought would best represent and is found beneficial to the community.
- b. Most of the participants said that Political Parties should have a good and visionary Party leader with competent Candidates/representatives in all the constituencies.
- c. Most of them agreed that a competent and/or capable Candidate or a political Party is one which will best represent the people to articulate their common aspirations and needs, as well as work for the betterment of the nation.

3. Women and Elections

- a. Many of the participants said that women are not very confident and bold to take higher responsibilities or step forward to contest an election.
- b. They said that there are always more women participating in local meetings or discussion but there are hardly any women making an active participation or are willing to step forward to voice their opinion. They said men always dominate the discussion.
- c. Some of them said that at present there are more educated and qualified women who are equally competent and capable as men. With support, motivation and given the opportunity they said women can reach the highest levels in the political process and local government bodies.
- d. Few female participants said that they would support the male Candidate even if women are equally capable and competent. They said women are weak and will not be able to take a bold decision. They even said that women as a leader will not be able to handle national issues or combat corruption and are less likely to bring anything new to decision making process as compared to men.
- e. The male participants however, said that they are willing to support if capable and competent women steps forward to contest an election. They said they should be given an opportunity to represent, built confidence and gain experiences.

- f. Some of them said that the work of a representative or a member of parliament or at the local government can equally be handled by women since it does not involve any masculine activity or require physical strength. They said women should be encouraged and supported.

4. Obstacles to Women Participation

- a. Women are generally considered less capable than men and Male Candidates are preferred over female Candidates.
- b. There are also many women who still beliefs that women are lesser literate and learned than men and supports male Candidates.
- c. Some participants still agree that many women lack qualification, confidence and relevant skills necessary to perform well in politics.
- d. The cultural belief of men and women having different roles and traditional beliefs discourage voting for women.
- e. Women are also not able to do an effective campaigning or carry out the door-to-door campaigning due to family and domestic responsibilities including child-rearing responsibility. They said it also undermine women Candidates' electoral prospects since they may not be able to undertake such election campaigns unlike the men Candidates.

5. Electoral Laws, Rules and Regulations and Guide lines

- a. The participants agreed that the men and women under the laws have equal rights and there are no formal legal barriers to women's participation in electoral processes.
- b. They suggested doing away with the door-to-door campaign as it caused much inconvenience to the voters.

6. Way Forward

- a. Programmes to strengthen women's political skills and emphasize how women are impacted by public policy, and improve the perception of women in political life.
- b. Training programs to also target men, to expose them to the complexities of gender discrimination and the necessity of and mechanisms for promoting women in political process.
- c. There should be intensive information dissemination and educational efforts made to get Bhutanese women inspired to come forward, especially those who can and are qualified and competent.

- d. Women who are interested to contest elections should be properly guided and trained to enable them to effectively contest elections.
- e. Better child care facilities for women with children to do an effective campaigning.

S. Sarpang Dzongkhag, 2nd of September, 2014

Women Civil Servants

1. Campaign and information

- a. The participants said that the media (newspapers and television) plays a critical role in information dissemination. They found the media coverage on elections campaigns and broadcast of public debates and common forum very effective, followed by media advertisements.
- b. Social media like face book and twitter also provided much relevant information required by the voters.
- c. Their parents, relatives and friends also provided information about the Political Parties and Candidates and enabled them to know more and understand about the Candidates and the Political Parties.
- d. Most of the participants agreed that there are enough information on Candidates and Political Parties as well as election campaign information.

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. Most of them said that they voted in the Parliamentary election in 2013 except for a few of them who did not vote since they could not be present to vote in their polling stations or did not reach the voting age then or could not sent the postal ballot application on time .
- b. The participants strongly expressed that to have a viable democratic culture it is of paramount importance to participate in the electoral process and voice their opinion including choosing a right, capable and competent Candidate or a Party.
- c. Some of them expressed that they voted for a credible and competent Candidate or for a Party whom they thought would best benefit them and who can bridge a gap between the government and people. While, few others voted for a Candidate or Party of their parent's choice. They said their parents or relatives have been quite influential.
- d. Most of them agreed that a competent and/or capable Candidate or a political Party is one which will best represent the people, as well as work for the betterment of the nation.

3. Women and Elections.

- a. Most of them said that since they were not allowed to personally attend any of the election campaign or Party meetings, they were not

able to make a sound political decision or make a better informed choice.

- b. They requested the civil servants to also be allowed to participate to voice their opinion and question to see and judge the performance of the contesting Candidates.
- c. All the participants said that they will support and ensure to have women Candidates elected in elections should they be equally competent and qualified as the men Candidates.
- d. They said that the social barriers and cultural biases are still at play when voting for Candidates. Many voter preferred male Candidates over female.
- e. Some of them were of the opinion that they will support and vote for the best Candidate in the elections, not considering whether the Candidate is a man or a woman.
- f. They also said that there are not many competent and capable women Candidates coming forward to be even supported in elections, leaving them with no option but to vote for men Candidates.
- g. They agreed that even if there were women Candidates, they found them not equally competent as the men Candidates. As such, they had to vote for the men Candidates who were seen to be better and competent Candidates compared to the women Candidates.
- h. While most of them said that they have not thought about standing in any election as Candidates, a few of them said that they may take the chance, but only if they are well supported and encouraged to do so.
- i. When asked as to why people in general thought that women are best suited to be as teacher the participants said that women in general are more compassionate, caring and can best guide and educate the students.

4. Obstacles to women participation

- a. It is observed that the lack of trust and confidence in women leadership is one of the main reasons for women's under-representation. They said that with confidence and determination they said women can reach the highest levels public spheres and political arena.
- b. The female participants expressed that women often face a triple burden when participating in politics. They have a responsibility to

their work or profession, to their family, and the child-rearing and family responsibilities tend to fall disproportionately on women.

- c. Many of them acknowledge the fact that there are so few women roles models or examples to encourage or persuade more women to come forward in public life and also stand as Candidates in elections.
- d. They also said that the girls have lived by the myths of the age old tradition as inferior bred and cannot do things as men does. They also said that women are restricted from entering special alter in many monasteries and the certain defined gender roles as taught and inculcated have made women to be seen as inferior to men in every aspect of their lives in homes and communities

5. Decision Making

- a. The participants who are married said that they make a joint decision and always consult each other in terms of making an important decision. Where not married they said they make an independent decision, while some consult their parents.
- b. A few (female participant) of them said that in their families and/or households, they are the ones who take most of the important decisions.

6. Electoral Laws, rules and regulations and Guidelines

- a. They said that the constitution and electoral laws are gender neutral and provided equal opportunity for both male and female Candidates.
- b. They said that the civil servants be allowed to actively participate in campaign programmes or meetings of the parties and Candidates to make a better informed choice.
- c. The door-to-door campaigning and activities/ appointment of the Party *Jabchorpas* need to be strictly regulated and monitored.

7. Way forward

- a. Provide training for interested women to develop and fine-tune their political skills and confidence.
- b. The awareness campaign programme targeting men to expose them to the complexities of gender discrimination.
- c. Interested women should be trained, encouraged and empowered to become strong politicians, community leaders and activists.

- d. Consider providing voter and civic education on continuous basis including gender sensitization programme and information dissemination to most of the rural communities and grass root level to combat negative stereotypes.
- e. Develop and promote gender-sensitive curriculum in schools and teacher training on civic education for men and women.
- f. As a onetime measure to enhance women's political participation, competent women civil servants should be allowed to seek nominations and contest elections and be allowed to return to their jobs in the event of not being elected.

General Voters/contestant/Elected Candidates

1. Campaign and information

- a. The common forum and public debates organized were found effective in information dissemination and helped avoid voter's inconveniences in having to attend multiple meeting organized by the Party representatives and Candidates.
- b. The participant suggested conducting common forum at *Chiwog* level for future elections.
- c. The election advertising board also provided information on election matters and helped voters' identify the Political Parties and Candidates.
- d. They said that the television and radio also played a critical role in providing information about the Political Parties and Candidates.
- e. Some of the participants who contested the previous LG election said that door-to-door election campaigns are not preferred because there are opportunities for the Political Parties and the Candidates to engage in unwanted and undesirable practices of influencing voters in unfair manners.
- f. While some of the participants said that it was beneficial since it provided an opportunity for all members of the household to closely interact with the parties or Candidates and gave them adequate information to base their decision to vote. The participants agreed that the door-to-door campaigning should be strictly monitored and should not be allowed during the odd hrs.
- g. Most of the participants said that there are too many unregulated election campaign meetings conducted by the Political Parties and the Candidates at odd times and when people were most busy (farming season) which they thought were quite bothersome

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. The participants said that they looked at the competencies of the Candidates and the Political Parties to vote in the elections.
- b. The participants said that a competent Candidate or a political Party is one who are willing to work at larger interest or can work for the benefit of the country and the people without biases.
- c. In terms of choosing which Candidate to support in elections, they said Candidates should be qualified and experienced, trust worthy and honest (*Sampa Semkay*), while a political Party should have good leadership, good Candidates and have good and realistic election manifesto.
- d. The participants strongly expressed that they considered about the Candidate's past working experience on developmental issues and considered the history of the Candidate on corrupt or illegal activities.
- e. The participants said that the engagement by the Candidates and Political Parties during election campaign and non-election period is an important medium to interact and discuss the government policies, issues and challenges and should be encouraged.
- f. The participants strongly agreed that the Candidates or Political Parties should be refrained from making any unrealistic or fake electoral promises during the election campaigning.

3. Women and Elections

- a. Many of them felt that there should be more women representation in the parliament to ensure that women's issue and challenges are well addressed and discussed.
- b. They expressed that woman as a leader can equally be competent and capable as men.
- c. They said that many women lack qualification and are not very encouraged to step forward to contest election. They said women should be given opportunity to gain experiences and confidence. With confidence and determination they said women can reach the highest levels in the political arena and local government.
- d. Many of them said that they would consider contesting future elections, while few of them said that they have less interest or lack self-confidence or qualification to contest the elections.

- e. The gender of a Candidates or the Party leader is not a subject of contention to the participants. Majority of the participants quoted in preferring the female Candidates if both a male and female Candidates were capable and equally credible.

4. Obstacles to Women Participation

- a. The participants expressed that the lack of confidence and necessary political and communication skills restrict women from contesting an election.
- b. They said women in Bhutan grow up shouldering household responsibility as a child and continues to live within the four corners of the kitchen walls. Not many women are bold and have the courage to speak in the crowd or willing to step forward to take active participation in the local meetings.
- c. They said most of the Bhutanese family are claimed to be headed by men and many women are not aware of their own rights. Most women even though they are capable and competent they seem to live by the traditional beliefs and the social norms and consider themselves inferior and less capable than men.
- d. Many of them acknowledge the fact that there are so few women roles models or examples to encourage or persuade more women to come forward in public life and also stand as Candidates in elections.
- e. Some of them said that men are often viewed as more viable and better Candidates than women Candidates and the pool from which Political Parties search for Candidates tend to be dominated by men.

5. Electoral Laws, Rules and Regulation and Guidelines

- a. They said that the Electoral Laws are gender neutral and provides equally opportunities for both men and women Candidates to contest an election.
- b. Strictly monitor and regulate the door-to-door campaign and also suggested reducing the number *Jabchorpas* to be appointed by the Parties.
- c. Common forum played a critical role in enabling more voters to understand about the Political Parties and Candidates. They suggested conducting the same for future elections and at *Chiwog* Level.
- d. The contested Candidates also expressed that obtaining various documents clearance for nomination process was easy and didn't pose any difficulty for women Candidates.

6. Way Forward

- a. There should be proper guidance, support, trainings, etc. provided to ensure that interested Bhutanese women can equally stand as Candidates and contest elections.
- b. A voter and civic education should be provided on continuous basis.
- c. The activities or the appointment of Party *Jabchorpas* should be studied and reviewed.
- d. Common forums to be continued and be conducted at *Chiwog* levels for future elections.
- e. Support and promote public awareness-raising campaigns to combat negative stereotypes

T. Thimphu Dzongkhag, 1st and 2nd of August 2014

The Focus Group Discussions with the voters, the elected women local government representatives, the nominated women candidates and the women civil servants of the Thimphu Dzongkhag was held on 1st and 2nd of August 2014 at the Conference Hall, Hotel Migmar.

The first and second Focus Group Discussions were held with the general voters representing the nearby Gewogs and the Thimphu Thromde, and with the elected women leaders of the local governments and the women candidates who contested in the last local government elections in 2011 and the parliamentary elections in 2013

The second Focus Group Discussion was held with the women civil servants of the Thimphu Dzongkhag Administration and the ministries and agencies, school teachers from schools in and around Thimphu.

General Voters and Elected LG Leaders

1. Campaign and Information

- a. Most of the participants said that it is important to vote in elections. They said it is only through participation in the electoral process that they can voice out their opinion and needs.
- b. They said that as a Bhutanese citizen it is their responsibility and duty to vote to elect the best Candidate or a Political Party
- c. Many of them said that the common forum was very effective in providing information about the Political Parties and Candidates. It helped avoid voter inconveniences in having to attend multiple campaigns meeting organized by the Party representatives and Candidates.
- d. Some of them who have access to TV and radio said that they found the media coverage of election campaigns and media advertisements enough to inform them about the Political Parties and the Candidates.
- e. While some of them expressed that there were not able to analyse the information they received and make a sound political decision.
- f. The election advertising board also helped them identify and provided information about the Political Parties and Candidates.
- g. A majority of them suggested doing away with the door-to-door election campaigns and appointment of Party *Jabchorpas* at local level during elections. They said Party *Jabchorpas* and supporters

are the cause of disharmony and communal discord during the elections.

- h. They said that while door-to-door campaigning may help information dissemination, it however, provided an opportunity for the parties and Candidates to engage in undesirable practices of influencing and inducing voters in unfair manners.

2. Political Parties and Candidates

- a. Majority of them said they voted in the previous elections and said they voted for a Candidate whom they thought would best represent them and bring developmental activities in the community, while few of them voted based on parents decision.
- b. Most of them said that their choice of a candidate is one who is trust worthy, reliable and who are better representation of the electorates in the Parliament. They also said that the personality of the candidate is an important factor.
- c. It is observed that the credibility, competency and integrity are the primary determinants of Candidate choice to an election.
- d. In terms of choosing a party, most of them said that the capability and credibility of the Candidates in the constituencies is a deciding factor, while few participants indicated party leadership as another important factor.
- e. They also expressed that the electoral promises of the political parties should be realistic, doable and achievable.

3. Women and Elections

- a. Many of them agreed that there should be equal representation of women in elective offices to ensure that women needs are well addressed in policies.
- b. Most of them said that women can be equally competent and have the same opportunity to be elected as the men. They felt that capable women should be supported and encouraged to contest the elections and be given opportunity to gain experiences and confidence.
- c. Most of the female and male voters said that they will all support and vote for women candidates in future elections, but a few of them said that they will support male candidates. They said male are generally better and more capable than women. They also are of the opinion that women will not be able to perform or shoulder the responsibilities effectively if elected as the men could since women

have other responsibilities and priorities which will hamper in their undertaking important decision.

- d. Most of them said they are not interested themselves to stand as candidates in elections seeing themselves to be presently incompetent, while few of them said that they may take a chance and participate in the next local government elections in 2016.
- e. The participants are of the view that there are not many women willing to stand as candidates in elections since they are unwilling to lose their current employment and economic opportunities.
- f. Few of the participants said that the current women representatives in the Parliament and Local Government should set good examples to inspire more women participation in future elections.

4. Obstacles to Women Participation

- a. The lack of confidence, education and less political skills were seen as some of the reasons for less women participation in elections.
- b. They said that women are not bold enough and fear that they would not be able to equally compete with men.
- c. They are also of the opinion that women will not be able to perform effectively as the men could since women have other responsibilities and priorities which will hamper in their undertaking important decision if elected.
- d. Many of them said that there are so few women roles models to encourage more women to come forward in public life and also stand as Candidates in elections.

5. Electoral Laws, Rules and Regulations

- a. The participants said that the Electoral Laws treats both men and women equally and are gender neutral.
- b. The participants suggested doing away with door-to-door campaign as it seems to provide opportunities for the Political Parties and the Candidates to engage in unwanted and undesirable practices of influencing voters.
- c. They also suggested reviewing the appointment of Party *Jabchorpas* by the political parties during the election period.

6. Way Forward

- a. Participants said that interested women willing to contest elections should be properly guided and trained to enable them to effectively contest elections.
- b. The participants suggested for a continuous voter education at *Chiwog* levels and more gender information dissemination to encourage and support women's active political and electoral participation.
- c. Do away with door-to-door campaigning and streamline the appointment of Party *Jabchorpas* by the Party.

Women Civil Servants and BNEW

1. Campaign and Information

- a. Many of the participants said that they gathered information about the political parties and candidates from the media coverage on television and newspapers, the TV Public Debates, the door-to-door election campaigns, and the media advertisements of election campaigns.
- b. The participants also actively participated in the social media forum like face book, twitter and others.
- c. The participants also found the conducts of civic education and electoral education effective in disseminating electoral information and knowledge.
- d. Most of the participants agreed that there are enough information on Candidates and Political Parties as well as election campaign information.
- e. Some of the participants argued that the civil servants be also be allowed to attend the campaign forums, meetings and rallies of the Political Parties and Candidates. They said most of the Parties or Candidates in Common forum or Public debates comes with a prepared speech and they said it's important to participate to voice out and ask questions to enable them to make a better informed choice.

2. Political Parties and candidates

- a. Majority of the participants said that they voted in the past election to elect a capable and good leader and competent Candidates.
- b. They said that it is a civic and national duty to vote for a right candidate or choose a right party who is efficient and approachable.

- c. The participants said that they would want political parties and candidates who are capable and competent to represent them and form a responsible government that will best serve the interest of the people and the country.
- d. In voting for political parties to the National Assembly, voters generally based their decisions on the leadership and the qualities and competencies of the candidates, while the election manifestoes and campaigns also helped in making decisions.
- e. They said that candidates should possess the right attitude and ethics and integrity to be elected as representatives, notwithstanding their capabilities and competencies.
- f. Most of the participants believed that the political parties should not be allowed to make false electoral promises simply to persuade voters, but contest the elections on real and doable agenda.

3. Women and Elections

- a. Most of them said that women candidates were believed to be not capable and competent as the men candidates.
- b. They also felt that majority of the women candidates who contested the past elections were said to be young and inexperienced, even if they met the requirements to stand as candidates.
- c. Generally, the participants said that there are too few capable and competent women coming forward to stand as candidates in elections.
- d. In general, the participants agreed that there should be more Bhutanese women in elective offices to better address in policies the needs of the Bhutanese women.
- e. Most of the participants said that they are not interested to stand as candidates in elections now or in the near future since they have other priorities to take care of and to be economically and socially stable. They said that they are more than willing to support other interested women to stand as candidates in elections.

4. Obstacles to Women Participation

- a. The participants said that women in general lack confidence and certainty in their own selves to come forward and take active part in the politics to stand as candidates.
- b. Further the gender biases based on beliefs, roles and statuses arising from traditions, social and cultural norms propagated through the

generations have discouraged women's participation or even discouraged voting for women candidates.

- c. In few cases, women voters themselves do not see the women to be competent enough to stand as candidates in elections and be elected on merit. Men are most of the time considered capable and preferred than women candidates.
- d. There are very less capable and interested women coming forward to stand as candidates in elections as they have priorities other than to come forward to stand as candidates in elections.
- e. Most of the participants said that they would not want to take the risks of losing their present job position to stand as candidates in elections.
- f. They said that the politics has traditionally been a male domain that many women have found unwelcoming or even unfriendly.

5. Electoral Laws, Rules and Regulations and Guidelines

- a. Majority of the participant said that the constitution of Bhutan and Electoral Laws guarantees equal civil and political rights to all Bhutanese citizens on a non-discriminatory basis in exercising their right to political participation.
- b. They expressed that in any election to parliament and the local governments, a Bhutanese woman has an equal opportunity to stand as a candidate and be elected.
- c. They suggested allowing the civil servants to actively participate in the meetings and forums of the political parties and candidates to make an informed choice.

6. Decision Making

- a. Lack of confidence, education and communication skills were seen as the main reasons for women's under-representation in decision making processes.
- b. Some male participants expressed that women normally don't step forward or have very less influence in community level decision making processes.
- c. Regard to decision making process, the participants in general said that they usually take a combined decision and consult each other (Husband and Wife) related to elections and on other important things.

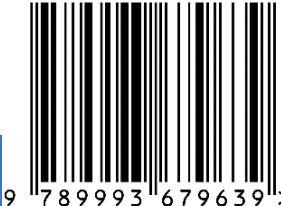
- d. Majority of the participants said that they have high degree of control over the decision regarding their choice for whom to vote during elections.

7. Way Forward

- a. Leadership trainings for interested women.
- b. Develop incentives to attract women to the Party such as providing relevant positions if they fail to get elect or, providing access to networks, training and skills development for women Candidates to stand for election.

This Study on Determinants of Voter's Choice and Women's Participation in Elective Offices in Bhutan was undertaken by the Election Commission of Bhutan as per the Resolution No. 11 of the 4th Meeting of the FEMBoSA held in Thimphu, Bhutan in 2013.

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