



## Forum of Election Management Bodies of South Asia

Report on Consultation Meeting to Consolidate Research on  
Determinants of Voter's Choice and Ways to Facilitate Women's  
Participation in Elective Offices  
(14<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> of October 2014)

Paro, Bhutan



**Report on Consultation Meeting to Consolidate  
Research on  
Determinants of Voter's Choice and Ways to  
Facilitate Women's Participation in Elective  
Offices**

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## Acknowledgement



The Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB) is happy that it could host the Consultative Meeting on *Determinants of Voter's Choice and Ways to Facilitate Women's Participation in Elective Office* of the Forum of Election Management Bodies of South Asia (FEMBoSA) from 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> of October 2014, in Kichu Resort at Paro, Bhutan, a follow-up to the Resolution of the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the FEMBoSA wherein it was decided a detailed and scientific study of the determinants of voter's choice and explore ways to facilitate women in their political participation in South Asia and respective countries be undertaken.

The presentations were made by Ms. Fahmida Sultana from the Election Commission of Bangladesh, Ms. Padma Angmo from the Election Commission of India, Shri Yuba Raj Guragain from the Election Commission of Nepal, Mr. J.A.S.P Jayasinghe from the Department of Elections of Sri Lanka and Mr. Kibu Zangpo, Mr. Tshewang Penjor, and Mr. Namgay Tshering of the ECB.

Afghanistan, Maldives and Pakistan could not attend the Meeting.

The ECB would like to thank the Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD), UN Women, New Delhi, and the Royal Government of Bhutan for their support to the Study in Bhutan and the Consultation Meetings. I would also like to commend the ECB's team of officials for their enthusiasm and hard work in conduct of the Study in Bhutan and organization of the Meeting making it to be a successful event. We hope this research of the FEMBoSA will give us a deeper understanding and insight as to the Way Forward in facilitating women's political empowerment.

Kunzang Wangdi  
Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan  
Chairman, FEMBoSA  
Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 2014



## Table of Contents

Acknowledgement.....	i
A. Background.....	1
B. More Women in Elective Offices in South Asia .....	2
Consolidated Report of the Current Situation, Challenges and Proposed Way Forward from the Paro Consultation Meeting.....	2
1. Current Status .....	2
2. Challenges.....	5
3. Recommendations/Way Forward .....	8
C. Detailed Report of the Consultative Meeting .....	15
Agenda of the Consultative Meeting .....	15
Inaugural Session.....	15
Welcome Address .....	15
Opening Statement by Hon’ble Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan .....	15
D. Technical Session I: Country-wise Presentation .....	17
Curriculum Vitae of the Presenters of the Consultative .....	17
1. Bangladesh Presentation .....	17
Synopsis .....	17
Discussion.....	19
2. India Presentation.....	21
Synopsis .....	21
Discussion.....	22
3. Nepal Presentation.....	25
Synopsis .....	25
Discussion.....	25
4. Sri Lanka Presentation .....	28
Synopsis .....	28
Discussion.....	29
5. Bhutan Presentation.....	31

Synopsis .....	31
Discussion .....	32
E. Technical Session II.....	36
Country-wise Summary Report .....	36
1. Bangladesh.....	36
2. India .....	39
3. Nepal.....	42
4. Sri Lanka.....	49
5. Bhutan.....	51
F. Annexures .....	56
Annexure 1: Agenda of the Consultative Meeting .....	56
Annexure 2: Opening Statement by Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan .....	59
Annexure 3: Curriculum Vitae of the presenters of the Meeting .....	62
Annexure 4: Presentation by Bangladesh .....	66
Annexure 5: Presentation by India .....	73
Annexure 6: Presentation by Nepal .....	84
Annexure 7: Presentation by Sri Lanka .....	95
Annexure 8: Presentation by Bhutan .....	104
Annexure 9: Closing Remarks at the Consultation Meeting to Consolidate Research on Women in Elective Offices .....	141

## **A. Background**

The two days Consultative Meeting on *Determinants of Voter's Choice and Ways to Facilitate Women's Participation in Elective Office* held in Kichu Resort, Paro, Bhutan from 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> of October 2014 was a follow-up to the Resolution No. 11 taken of the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Forum of the Election Management Bodies of South Asia (FEMBoSA), held in October 2013 in Thimphu, Bhutan.

During the 4<sup>th</sup> Forum Meeting, women's political participation and representation in all aspects of decision-making processes, especially in elective offices and institutions was discussed as an area of shared concern and importance. As such, a unanimous decision was taken to undertake a scientific study in respective countries. The objective is to generate reliable data to better understand the situation and issues concerning low number of women participating in the political sphere and to take appropriate action by the respective EMBs and other stakeholders to ensure fuller and better representation of women.

The Consultative Meeting was planned mainly to share ideas and common challenges faced by the EMBs of South Asian democracies on women participation in politics and elective offices. The representatives from member countries presented their findings from the study conducted either by the EMB or by other agencies and primarily focused on the current status and challenges faced by women in the region. The findings were deliberated in detail and each member presenter made recommendations for the Way Forward to improve the situation of women's participation in elective offices for their respective countries.

The Meeting was also attended by other stakeholders (People's Democratic Party, Bhutan Kuen-Nyam Party, Gross National Happiness Commission, National Commission for Women and Children, UN Women, and KCD Production) from Bhutan who participated actively during the discussion. The Meeting concluded with the finding and recommendations from the two days Consultative Meeting and the report will be submitted to the upcoming 5<sup>th</sup> FEMBoSA Meeting in Nepal.

## **B. More Women in Elective Offices in South Asia**

### **Consolidated Report of the Current Situation, Challenges and Proposed Way Forward from the Paro Consultation Meeting**

The Forum of Election Management Bodies of South Asia, in its 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting held in October 2013 discussed at length the issue of women's political participation in the region and acknowledged the need for enhanced and increased women's political participation and representation in all aspects of decision making processes, particularly in elective offices and institutions in the South Asia region. As such, the Resolution No. 11 specifically was to undertake "individually a detailed and a scientific study of the determinants of voter's choice and explore ways to facilitate women in their political participation in South Asia or respective countries".

In the course of the period after the adoption of the Resolution, the member EMBs of the FEMBoSA embarked or considered undertaking the studies in respective countries. Five out of eight member EMBs, namely the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka presented the findings and recommendations. In the Consultation Meeting held in Paro, Bhutan from 14-15<sup>th</sup> of October 2014.

This Report is a consolidation of (1) current status, (2) Challenges, and (3) recommendations for the way forward as presented in the Consultation Meeting by the respective participants:

#### **1. Current Status**

##### **a. Bangladesh**

Women in Bangladesh have made some advancement in many fields, but a career in politics is not one of them. The reasons and obstacles why few Bangladeshi women are involved in politics can be attributed to the social biases, enormous campaign costs, financial dependency, social and political violence, religious problems, lack of education and political knowledge, and situational barriers and attitudes based on gender roles and stereotypes that persist even now. The recruitment and nomination process of parties in the national elections also explains women's continued under-representation in the Bangladesh Parliament.

##### **b. India**

According to the *Inter-Parliamentary Union* data of 2014, the world's largest democracy lags behind the world average with 11.65% women representation in the Parliament. Some of its neighbours fair better in terms of women's

representation in Parliaments amounting to 29.9% in Nepal, 27.6% in Afghanistan, 23.4% in China, 19.7% in Bangladesh and 18.5% in Pakistan. Although the number of women in the Indian Parliament shows an upward trend, it is seen that women remain dismally represented in the political decision making.

As per the 2011 Census of India, women make up 48.46% of India's population. There is immense diversity of demographics—geographically, culturally, socially, economically and linguistically. Getting women across the diverse socio-political, economic and cultural landscape of the country to register and vote without any hassles is a mammoth task. A large number of eligible women are not registered on the electoral rolls. In case of registered women electors, not all exercise their right to vote. Therefore, the country's democratic process loses on its representative character.

In the last 2009 Lok Sabha elections in India, 417 million voters turned up to vote. 717 million were registered as electors and 300 million electors did not turn out to vote in the last Lok Sabha elections, of which 150 million were women.

The women has a greater share in the credit for highest ever turnout ever recorded in General Election 2014. For, the surge in female voter turnout in 2014 over 2009 has been higher than the corresponding rise in male turnout. While in 2009 gender composition in total voters lagged behind gender composition in total electorate, in 2014 the gender composition in voter and electors was similar.

### **c. Nepal**

As per the essence and significant sentiment of the Constitution and various legal provisions, in order to make the election process gender friendly and inclusive, the Election Commission has been improving the electoral management process. Making improvements in the past system of registration of voters' roll with photograph, it was implemented at the local level such that all women, Dalit, Adibasi, Janajati, Madhesi, backward and minority community, etc. are represented. Different voter education and voter registration strategies have made the voter registration more gender friendly and inclusive, based on target communities. In this course, approximately 51 percent of woman voters have been registered including 155 third gender. Likewise, for the participation of all groups, areas and gender, the Commission has been formulating new policies and directives. One of the milestones in this process has been the Gender and Social Inclusion Policy, 2013.

#### **d. Sri Lanka**

Sri Lankan women have been enjoying the right to exercise the universal franchise from 1931. Sri Lanka is the first country to achieve that bench mark among Asian countries. The two figures Sirimavo Bandaranayake and Chandrika Kumaratunga have become emblematic of women's representation in Sri Lanka. In 1960, Bandaranaike gained global renown as the first democratically elected woman Prime Minister in the modern world.

Also Mass media engaged in promoting socio-political change and raising the political consciousness of citizens, for Sri Lankan women have also spanned in action, by the Women's Franchise Union in 1927, the Eksath Kantha Peramuna (United Women's Front) in the late 1940s, the Northern and Southern Mothers' Fronts in the 1980s. In 1981, Sri Lanka ratified the United Nations' Convention on the elimination of all Forms of discrimination against women. In 2003 and 2006, women's organizations engaged with the Parliamentary Select Committee on Electoral Reform by making written submission and giving oral evidence before the Select Committee on a quota for women at the level of Parliamentary election.

#### **e. Bhutan**

In Bhutan, although the Constitution and the Electoral Laws provide equal civil and political rights to all interested Bhutanese women to take part in all aspects of electoral and political processes, the number of women coming forward to contest elections is not encouraging at all as the total number of women elected to the National Assembly, the National Council and the Local Governments is currently at less than 8 percent.

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

In 2008, of the total of 96 candidates nominated by the 2 political parties for the General Elections, only 8 women out of 10 nominated were elected to Parliament. In 2013, of the total 94 candidates nominated in the General Elections, including the bye-election in *Nanong Shumar* National Assembly *Demkhong* in Pema Gatsel Dzongkhag, only 11 women contested the elections with only 4 being elected.

Similarly, in 2011 the First ever Local Governments election, only 7 candidates out of the total 34 contestants nominated for the post of *Thromde Tshogpa* were women with only a single woman candidate being nominated, out of the total of 10, for the post of *Thrompon*. Only a single woman was elected for the post of *Gup* and 12 of them to the post of *Mangmi* in the Local Government Elections. Likewise, 159 women out of the total of 1,443 candidates were nominated for



the post of *Gewog Tshogpa* and only 3 candidates were nominated for the post of *Thromde Thuemi*.

It is therefore clear from these data that the number of women nominated and elected are very low and women are underrepresented in the elective offices and it is clearly demonstrated that there is need to target this issue on a priority basis. Bhutanese women's participation in elective offices in the Local Governments is rightly being advocated by numerous individuals, interest groups, and agencies.

## **2. Challenges**

### **a. Bangladesh**

#### **Political Challenges:**

1. The prevalence of the "masculine model" of political life and of elected governmental bodies.
2. The lack of party support, such as limited financial support for women candidates; limited access to political networks; and the prevalence of double standards.
3. The lack of contact and co-operation with other public organizations such as trade unions and women's groups.
4. The absence of well-developed education and training systems for women's leadership in general, and for orienting young women toward political life in particular.

#### **Ideological and Psychological challenges:**

1. Gender ideology and cultural patterns, as well as pre-determined social roles assigned to women and men.
2. Women's lack of confidence to run for elections.
3. Women's perception of politics.

#### **Socio-economic challenges:**

1. Poverty and unemployment.
2. Lack of adequate financial resources;
3. Illiteracy and limited access to education and choice of professions;
4. The dual burden of domestic tasks and professional obligations.
5. Women's inadequate access to and integration into political institutions as the tailoring of many of these institutions is according to male standards and political attitudes.

6. Women's low self-esteem and self-confidence, supported by certain cultural patterns which do not facilitate women's access to political careers.

#### **b. India**

Women's poor representation in Parliament and State Assemblies, though an area of concern, has not been formally deliberated upon by the ECI, as the issue is already widely being debated and discussed by political parties and also in parliament.

There is one-third reservation for women in the local self-governing bodies (panchayats and municipalities) which has been constitutionally mandated by the 73rd and 74th Amendment of the Indian Constitution, which came into effect in 1994.

ECI has actively worked towards bridging the gender gap in electoral participation (as voters/electors) by focusing on enhancing women's participation in registration and voting in elections through its comprehensive programme called SVEEP- Systematic Voters' Education & Electoral Participation since 2009.

#### **c. Nepal**

For gender and inclusion related issues for the election, the following problems and challenges exist:

1. Lack of effective implementation of provision for gender proportionality and principle of inclusiveness made by the Constitution and Law.
2. Gender and proportionality policy is not followed properly by political parties participating in the election.
3. Cultural and social discrimination has led to minimum participation of women in politics.
4. Lack of gender friendly infrastructures and lack of participative environment created in societies.

#### **d. Sri Lanka**

The 1972 Constitution was drafted to pacify the Sinhala Buddhist forces, for instance, by repealing Section 29 of the previous Soulbury Constitution. The First Republican Constitution therefore combined ethnic nationalist ideas with a socialist ideology. The 1978 Constitution was intended to revise the perceived excesses of the existing electoral and governance system to bring a degree of stability through the inclusion of the proportional representation scheme, a mechanism that was felt would reflect the wishes of the majority of voters. Article 12(2) goes on to specify that there should be no discrimination on

grounds of race, religion, language, caste, gender, political opinion, and place of birth, thereby recognizing categories that may be open to disadvantage and discrimination. As well as to nominate women as representatives of a sex/gender. Also there are provisions for potential candidates are selected on their capacity to command votes – irrespective of their gender. Rational and impartial women’s organizations and political activists have continually expressed their demands on electoral reforms and a women’s quota.

#### **e. Bhutan**

It is found that fewer women, compared to men, express interest in participating in elections as candidates. This is the fundamental challenge facing women representation in elective offices. There are a number of reasons and causes underlying this situation of supply scarcity and even fewer being elected. The main challenges related there in are:

1. Women’s family responsibilities relating to the double/triple burden, lack of self-confidence and fear of incompetence in decision making.
2. Gender stereotype is a serious issue and challenge that needs to be addressed, as it restricts women’s participation in the electoral processes. This is evidenced by the Study finding that majority of the respondents feel that women are best suited to be teachers and very few see women being suited for elective and top positions in governance.
3. Entrenched and prejudiced perceptions of women leadership is a challenge as it is found that a significant 30.8% of the voters believe that men are better leaders and only 5.9% believe that women make good leaders. The silver lining is that 63% of the total respondents believe both men and women could make good leaders.
4. There is direct relationship between level of education and perceptions related to women leadership as well as in the level of education in the 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. For more women candidates to come forward and more women candidates to be elected, the general level of education as well as level of education particularly of rural voters is the biggest challenge.

### **3. Recommendations/Way Forward**

#### **a. Bangladesh**

##### **For Government:**

1. Political and lawful rights of women should be included in the education syllabus.
2. Initiate programme for economic empowerment and earnings for women.
3. Increase the number of seats reserved for women as well as to hold direct elections for those seats.
4. Reduce political violence
5. Educate women thus they should aware of their political rights

##### **For Election Commission:**

1. Provide training for women in politics.
2. Introduce provision in Representation of the People Order (RPO) to the political party should create and election fund for women candidates' campaigns.
3. Engage with relevant stakeholders working with political parties in order to fulfill the 33% goal of women's participation and support women's nomination process.
4. Recruit/appoint, support and train more women election officials around the country
5. Run Voter Education Programme frequently.
6. Engage NGOs, CSO, media and other stakeholders working with awareness programme for increase the women participation in electoral process.
7. Ensure women should registered in enrollment process.

##### **For CSOs and NGOs:**

1. Awareness programme to encourage women to participate more and more in politics and claim their rightful place in politics.
2. Social attitude towards men and women should be changed. Through social movement. Along with political parties women organisation's should come forward along for this.

##### **For Media:**

1. Print and electronic media should involve in voter education programme.

## **b. India**

The study to understand the underlying reasons for poor representation of women in Parliament and State Assemblies have not yet been undertaken. Any recommendation on the subject would accrue after undertaking such a study and deliberating on the findings of such a study.

Regarding women's role as electors and voters, although there has been a significant rise in women turnout (from 55.82% in 2009 Lok Sabha election to 65.63% in 2014), it also means that nearly 35% of the women electors could not exercise their right to vote. Millions of women yet remain unregistered in the electoral rolls, many of them from the younger and newly eligible lot. Thus ECI is undertaking further measures in this direction:

1. Intensified measures are required to register them as eligible voters, and bring them to the polling stations.
2. Voter education is a critical factor in enhancing women's participation in elections, especially in developing democracies. Women need to be made much more aware and educated about their voting rights, importance of voting, registration procedures as well as specific information on where and how to vote. Programme encouraging women to vote, with campaigns targeted specifically at women as well as at men and women together. Interventions for women's participation have to be properly linked to their life situations and as such, specially designed. At the same time, varying demographical, socio-cultural, economic and linguistic factors are taken into account.
3. Facilitation is one of the most important interventions to be undertaken, as experienced in the India experience of the recent elections. Facilitation in terms of simplifying the process and procedures for registration, access to polling stations, access to information, facilitation in terms of polling hours and location of polling stations, etc. all affect the level of participation of women in voting.
4. Voter information and education is a collective responsibility of the EMBs, civil society, development agencies, NGOs and media. Various sectorial Ministries and Departments of both federal and state Governments have their own reasons and ways to reach out to women and take up programme and activities in this regard, from time to time.
5. Hence, combined efforts by the EMBs, Governments, expert groups and organisations, think tanks, social scientists, CSOs as well as the corporate sector are required for making right to vote accessible to all women and also for helping them to exercise their right.

6. In this regard, India's SVEEP programme can be studied as one of the best practices for enhancing people's participation in elections and possible replication in other countries having similar challenges in the field of electoral participation.

**c. Nepal**

**Role of EMB (ECN)**

1. Implement the Gender and Social Inclusion Policy, 2013.
2. Implement Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GISI), Strategy 2014 - 2019.
3. Include provisions of Gender and Social Inclusion in the Strategic Plan II.
4. Further focus on voter and electoral education with outreach programme.
5. Further focus on women in electoral trainings for empowerment.
6. Make necessary coordination with related organizations to keep gender and inclusion issues in the curriculums of educational institutions.
7. Orient all the divisions and sections of the organization to use gender perspective as a primary approach of analysis in planning, budgeting, executing programme, monitoring, evaluating and reporting.
8. Sustain the available women human resource in the organization and further increase their number.
9. Frame election management cell of women officials in the organization.
10. Organize interactions and meetings with different women's groups and women in parliament to expand the networking and relations with the media, civil society and other organizations of women.
11. Develop woman-friendly infrastructures in polling centers.

**Role of State**

1. Certain laws and acts relating to elections to have some provisions (at least speak) regarding women.
2. Consideration might be given on the FPTP system to have the requirements of at least 33 percent women candidacy.
3. Consideration might be given on the arrangement of a certain number of women constituencies on a rotational basis for the FPTP system.
4. Provisions of providing security to all candidates, especially women and other vulnerable groups during election period.

5. Make provisions to have a certain percent of women in the executive position of political parties in their party structures.
6. Encourage the registration of property in women's names and promote the concept of personal property of women.
7. Create an election fund for women candidates.
8. Increase investment in education by providing fellowships and scholarships to girl children.
9. Initiate programme for economic empowerment and earnings for women.
10. Create an environment to set women physically and psychologically free in terms of their thoughts, feelings, and expressions and in mobility, ensure inner freedom.
11. Include gender education in school and college curriculums.
12. Increase the public sphere responsibilities of women reducing the private sphere responsibilities such as in family.

#### **For the Political Parties**

1. Push for access to decision making levels within the party.
2. More opportunities and exposure for women politicians.
3. Compulsory representation of women at all levels of the party from the grassroots to the decision making level.
4. Women have to be given special priority, especially at the executive positions of the parties.
5. Increased political training and awareness programme.
6. Create gender and social equity within the party.

#### **For the Women Politicians**

1. There needs to be an effort to be updated on all current issues.
2. There needs to be efforts to better use the media to further one's agenda.
3. There needs to be an understanding of the potential of social media.

#### **d. Sri Lanka**

##### **On Policy level**

1. Policy should be formulated to increase women representation in elective offices in all level
2. Training institute should be implemented to facilitate women who are coming from non-elite groups.

### **On EMB's level**

1. Comparable sex disaggregate data must be collected to monitor men's and women's participation at Electoral process. A voter's political literacy plays a significant role, therefore educating women on the way of accepted voting is a must. Ex: Programme like mock polls, Dummy mobile polling stations. Electoral process should be adjusted and supported for free and effective voting. Ex: Free publicity for each candidate.

### **On the basis of other stakeholders**

1. Feminist groups have to run media campaigns asking for votes for women, based on a women's rights discourse.
2. Also media should treat fairly for men and women in election campaigns.

### **e. Bhutan**

1. Educating women is found as being key to political empowerment.
2. While it appears that many barriers to women's participation for elective offices can be overcome only through social engineering with major cultural and political changes, appropriate training and education of female candidates and disseminating information about the electoral environment and women's success stories can help to narrow the gender gap and increase women's representation.
3. It is recommended that voter education and information dissemination on women's participation should be undertaken to highlight the importance of participation and electing more women, and 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.
4. The political parties have a critical role in determining the political and electoral prospects for women in elective offices.
5. 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.
6. A change in cultural attitude and perception is required for which the study recommends:
  - 1) Incorporation of responsible and societal value based educational programme in the curriculums in schools, NFE centers and vocational institutes to promote growth of democratically responsible female leaders.



- 2) Implement additional support measures in education and training by designing special programme and promoting leadership skills for women.
- 3) Promote creation of special support mechanisms for women to share information and knowledge.
- 4) Sensitization and awareness building through multi-pronged strategy and on an aggressive footing.
- 5) Carry out in-depth study in the country every 5 years for reliable gender disaggregated data and monitoring of the trends.

Specifically, the **Election Commission of Bhutan** could take up:

1. Voter and civic education including gender sensitization programme on a continuous basis with efforts to reach every community as much as possible.
2. Engagement of and by Political Parties and candidates during election period and non-election period is an important medium to be encouraged.
3. Coordinators of Democracy Clubs in schools to play an active role to further disseminate information on electoral systems and democracy with particular focus on the young people and the leaders of tomorrow.
4. Training programme 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.
5. Common forums, found to have played a critical role in enabling more voters to understand about the Political Parties and candidates, to be continued and be conducted at *Chiwog* level in future elections.
6. Create women enabling /conducive political environment.

### **Other Stakeholders**

1. Relevant agencies to formulate policies to support women and to increase awareness of the roles and responsibilities of women as elected leaders.
2. Training programme to target women as well as men, to expose them to the complexities of gender discrimination and change their perception towards women.
3. Support and promote public awareness-raising campaigns to combat negative stereotypes.
4. Increase the remuneration package for the Local Government elective posts to attract qualified registered voters to contest election of *Tshogpas*.
5. Initiate innovative programme to strengthen women's political skills.

6. Women who are interested to contest elections should be properly guided and trained to enable them to effectively contest elections.
7. Provide training in key areas such as leadership training, confidence building, lobbying and networking skills to strengthen political skills.
8. Women who are interested to contest elections should be properly guided and trained to enable them to effectively contest elections.
9. 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.
10. Media to provide gender-sensitive coverage of elections, avoiding negative stereotypes and presenting positive images of women as leaders, should focus attention on issues of special concern to women in news programming.

The Consolidated Report will be presented in the next 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of FEMBoSA in Nepal in November 2013 by the Hon'ble Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan as the Chair of the FEMBoSA.

## **C. Detailed Report of the Consultative Meeting**

### **Agenda of the Consultative Meeting**

The Agenda of the Consultative Meeting is as presented in **Annexure 1**.

### **Inaugural Session**

Hon'ble Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan with Delegates and Guests at the Consultative Meeting

The Facilitator of the meeting, Sonam Tobgyal, Chief Electoral Registration and Boundary Delimitation Officer welcomed and thanked the participants for making it to the meeting despite their busy schedule. He invited the Meeting Coordinator, Ms. Chimi Yuden to deliver the Welcome Address and also brief on the Agenda of the meeting.

### **Welcome Address**

The Meeting Coordinator, Ms. Chimi Yuden welcomed the participants and highlighted the main theme of the meeting being to better understand “Why women do not come forward and even when they participate they are not elected” and what can be done to improve the situation. She also highlighted the detailed programme for the two days to the floor.

### **Opening Statement by Hon'ble Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan**

The Hon'ble Chairperson (Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan) extended a warm welcome to the distinguished participants from the FEMBoSA member countries, guests and representatives from the National Council, Political Parties, and Civil Society Organisations for the two days consultative meeting to consolidate research on women in Elective Offices.

He regretted that participants from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Maldives could not make it but was happy to acknowledge the presence of representatives from other member countries. The Keynote Address is presented in **Annexure – 2**.



**FEMBoSA Consultative Meeting Group Photo**

## **D. Technical Session I: Country-wise Presentation**

Curriculum Vitae of the Presenters of the Consultative Meeting are presented in **Annexure 3**.

### **1. Bangladesh Presentation**

**Presented by Ms. Fahmida Sultana, Assistant Secretary**



#### **Synopsis**

She thanked all and presented her presentation the topic “*Determinants of Voter's Choice and Ways to Facilitate Women's Participation in Elective Office: A Regional Outlook*”. The presentation is in **Annexure 4**.

She highlighted that in Bangladesh is that women comprise nearly half of the total population and without ensuring women’s development, the national development cannot be achieved. The active participation of the women in overall electoral process of Bangladesh is the only way to enhance the quality of their democratic up-liftment.

As resolved in the FEMBoSA’s 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting, Election Commission of Bangladesh has started the study of the ‘determinants of voter’s choice and explored appropriate ways to facilitate women’s political participation’ which is not yet completed. This paper is an attempt to explore the status of women’s participation and to identify the factors that hinder women’s participation

through various reports and findings of studies/researches undertaken by various agencies.

The government, political parties, election commission, international agencies and stakeholder groups concerned with increasing women's representation have advocated a range of initiatives to break through the barriers for women in elected offices, including using rhetorical strategies, equal opportunity, and affirmative action policies.

She mentioned that the constitutional provisions for equal representation of women in all spheres of national life including participation in elections.

In order to increase women's participation in politics the Election Commission Bangladesh (ECB) took several measures, including incorporation of provisions in the Representation of the People Order (RPO) (Amendment) Act, 2009 (Act. No. 13 of 2009) that aims to increase the number of women representatives in the committees of all political parties to 33 percent by the year 2020.

However, many Women's development policies have been adopted but no major changes have been achieved as women in governance and decision making is still very low particularly in national level. She informed that general seat won by women never exceeded 5% in the parliament although 50% of the total voters are women. Local Government institutions have better representation of women as there is mandatory provision for one-third reserve seats for women.

She said that the introduction of quotas at both local and national level has influenced women's decisions to run for office. However, Local Level elections are more assessable to women because these are less influenced by parties than at the National Level which has influence of dynasty relation, access to social capital, party loyalty and meritocracy.

She presented that the major obstacles to women's political participation is it being the men dominated political arena. She said that in theory, the right to stand for elections, to become a candidate, and to get elected, is based on the right to vote. In reality, she said that women's right to vote remains restricted as the only candidates to vote for are male. She highlighted some of the political obstacles faced by women of Bangladesh such as prevalence of the "masculine model" lack of party support, absence of well-developed education and training systems, and nature of the electoral system.

She also highlighted ideological and psychological hindrances and Socio-economic Obstacles.

Some of the recommendations presented are as follows:

1. Provide training for women in politics.
2. Provide access to funding for women candidates' campaigns.

3. Engage with relevant stakeholders working with political parties in order to fulfill the 33% goal of women's participation and support women's nomination process.
4. Recruit/appoint, support and train more women election officials around the country.
5. Women should participate more and more in politics to establish their rights in politics.
6. Social attitude towards men and women should be changed. Through social movement. Along with political parties women organization's should come forward along for this.
7. Political and lawful rights of women should be included in the education syllabus.

She concluded that despite the guarantee provided in the Constitution women have not enjoyed the same rights as men. Women still remain considerably under-represented at both the local and national level of politics and general consensus among women's organizations and groups and those concerned over the need to increase the number of seats reserved for women as well as to hold direct elections for those seats. Despite the fact that top leaders of the two major political parties (BNP and AL) are women leaders, politics in Bangladesh continue to remain a male monopoly.

## **Discussion**

Hon'ble Chairperson thanked her presentation and said that there are a lot of useful information even though it is not based on the research done by the Election Commission of Bangladesh as study is not completed yet. He then opened the floor for question and answer session.

The Director General of National Commission for Women and Children asked why the participation of women in Local Level election is more accessible to women than at the national level.

Mrs. Fahmida Sultana said that in Bangladesh politics is male dominated and political condition is not suitable for women. She said that parties do not support women candidate. However, the Election Commission of Bangladesh recommends that the political parties must have 33% of women candidates by 2020.

Workshop Facilitator Sonam Tobgyal asked why nature of electoral system does not favour women participation.

The answer was that because of the FPTP system.

BNEW Coordinator inquired why even after introduction of many electoral instruments there is no change in women's participation.

She said that voter education programme and security services are planned to increase the women's participation.

Election Commissioner, Chogyal Dago Rigdzin reported that almost a year ago similar paper was presented by the Chief Election Commissioner of Bangladesh. He said that respect and legitimacy of Members of Parliaments elected through quota system is not at par with those elected directly and the elected members based on quotas are silent whereas directly elected are more powerful. He also mentioned that the political parties cannot take risk of losing. Therefore, the parties preferred winning candidates who are mostly men.

Hon'ble Chairperson said that the election in Bangladesh is well managed and done, more women were encouraged to go and vote. Voter registration was done in all nooks and corners with the help of military and international organizations, media and CSOs. Education is basic key and voter information is the solution.



## 2. India Presentation

**Presented by Ms. Padma Angmo, Deputy Secretary**



### **Synopsis**

Ms. Angmo, the second speaker made her presentation which is in **Annexure 5**. She highlighted how women participation is very difficult issue to take up as it is a political issue. She reported that an extensive study could not be taken up so far with the big elections in the past year and it is possible that it could be taken up in future. She said that Election Commission has done study in women as voters but not as candidates. For last 50 years there was only one woman as Election Commissioner and at present there are only 3 women out of the 35 Chief Election Officers in States and Union Territories.

She presented on the Systematic Voter Electoral Education and Participation (SVEEP) which was conceptualised to understand and mitigate the gaps in registration of citizens as voters and the more glaring gap in turnout from election to election. She reported that Phase I of SVEEP spread broadly from end of 2009 to March 2013 covering 17 General Elections to State Assemblies and three Revisions of the Electoral Rolls.

She said that Phase-II of SVEEP carried forward and further strengthened the initiatives taken in SVEEP Phase-I and it involved a planned strategy for a targeted approach towards meeting the various gaps in registration and voting besides spreading awareness about informed, un-intimidated and inducement free voting under the broader framework of civic education. The Lok Sabha 2014 elections have been the major focus of SVEEP II.

She highlighted that the objective of such study is to foster greater participation and informed and induce free participation and continuous democratic education.

She said that the strategies adopted for the study are situation analysis, targeted intervention and monitoring and review.

She highlighted that Central Awareness Observers were first appointed for the Assembly Elections in 2013 and further strengthened in Lok Sabha Elections 2014. The Awareness Observers observe SVEEP preparedness in the State nearly a month ahead of polls, implementation of directions of ECI at ground level and mechanism for positive and productive communication with the public through Media during the election period.

She said that Campus Ambassadors are appointed from among the students in recognised Colleges and Universities to bridge the gap in youth electoral participation.

She reported that 58,398 voters signed pledges in single day in Narmada district has been awarded the status of a Guinness World Record of “Most Pledges to Vote in an Election”. Valsad district also created Guinness record posting postcards to 10.96 lakh voters. These postcards were painted/written by students, CSOs and NGOs, etc. with the message “Thank you for voting”

She highlighted the challenges as bridging gender gap, overcoming Urban Apathy, Engaging Youth, Migration and change of residence, Weather conditions, Poll Boycott and Political neutrality. She said most importantly behavioural change of men is needed for better representation.

She also said that SVEEP having achieved increased participation now aspires for complete and enlightened participation.

## **Discussion**

Hon’ble Chairperson thanked the presenter for informative and educative presentation and appreciated the work done by the Election Commission of India.

Ms. Rinzi Pem, UN-Women, UNDP, thanked the presenter and asked how India really did focus on lowest women voter turnout in one of the polling stations and if so to kindly elaborate on that.



Ms. Padma said that there are lots of physical and social barriers and cited the example of tribal communities in Gujarat who did not participate in the electoral process. A village in Rajasthan where women did not vote at all as men did not allow them. The Local Election Office had taken efforts and the women voted this time. In general, the education can narrow down the gap between the male and female participation in the electoral process.

Ms. Phuntsho Choden, Director General, National Commission for Women and Children, asked why women voters do not vote for women candidates. She also asked as to how it can be ensured that the stakeholders (NGOs & CSOs) only engage in educating the voters and not indulge in politicization.

Ms. Padma Angmo said that India had to bridge the gap between the men and women voters and after this the logical step could be towards looking at Candidates and gender representation. She expressed the view that while reservation may not be the ideal but it is the best option available as of now. As regards the partnership with CSOs etc, they have a set of norms which they have to follow. In the event of violating the rules, the partnership will be dropped and also these partnerships are engaged in the early stages of election preparation such as during registration but not near or during the Election Period.

Election Commissioner, Chogyal Dago Rigdzin shared his view that main key is to empower candidates and education qualification for candidates. In Bhutan most of the participants have not gone for formal education and those who have attended Non-Formal Education are also allowed to take part in the Functional Literacy Test (FLT) conducted by the Election Commission of Bhutan. It is a land mark achievement and more than 4,000 persons are given FLT certificate. If you give them opportunity they take it positively. He also highlighted that BNEW and KCD Productions have been actively taking part in women

participation in elections. He also cited the example of Paro, where woman candidate won because of women voters voted for her. It is not true or cannot be concluded that women voters do not vote for women. He further said that in fact ECB has been accused of being feminist and it is even accused so by the people. He said that during the pre-transition to democracy women participation in the National Assembly was higher (25) due to the issuance of the Royal Decree which had unfortunately subject to mistranslation which may somewhat restricted the effect of the Decree.

### **3. Nepal Presentation**

**Presented by Mr. Yub Raj Guragain, Section Officer**



#### **Synopsis**

Mr. Yub Raj Guragain presented his paper on the “Status and Findings on Political Participation of Women in Nepal: An Electoral Perspective”. He explained the Background, Objectives, Methodology, Facts and Status of Political Participation of Women in Nepal, Constitutional and Policy Framework for Gender, Initiatives of the ECN for Political Participation of Women, Findings on the Political Participation of Women in Nepal, Strategies and Recommendations for promoting Political Participation of Women in Nepal. The presentation is in **Annexure 6**.

#### **Discussion**

Hon’ble Chairperson thanked the presenter, and opened the floor for Q & A.

Director General, NCWC inquired how education and training is not reflected as barriers for women’s participation in politics yet they are being recommended.



He said that these are recommended for better women participation in politics as training and education build confidence in them.

Hon'ble Chairperson mentioned that by law there is no specific requirement of academic qualification for candidates in other member countries. However, in Bhutan the candidates for Parliamentary Elections are required to have formal university degree and Local Government to have Functional Literacy Test Certificate as per the Electoral Laws.

Further, he said that let the findings speak for itself, we as EMBs we will do what is within our mandate and the other stake holders can play a part.

Ms. Chandrika Pradhan, Representative of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), said leadership and capability of a candidate versus the relationship with the party leader. She also asked what makes proportional representation system favourable to women in participation.



The response was that capability of women candidates for elective posts is important as voters cast their votes based on such qualities. He also explained the electoral systems such as First Past the Post (FPTP) and Proportional Representation (PR) and thus the system that Nepal follows is the mixed mode.

Hon'ble Chairperson further explained that all systems have its own merits and demerits. In Bhutan whether system changes or not is up to Parliament.

Ms. Padma Angmo said that women not voting for women cannot be simply generalized. In India we have women who are Chief Ministers in the States and in fact South Asian Region has had many elected women heads of government.

Ms. Rinzi Pem, added that the inheritance of ancestral properties in the Bhutanese context makes women folk to be responsible for and bond to the home and family holdings which bars them from participating in politics.

Ms. Phuntshok Chhoden, from BNEW pointed out that the conclusive that women do not win against charismatic and popular candidates do not work in case of Bhutan. She cited that a fresh graduate lady candidate won against a candidate who was a former minister.

Mr. Sonam Tobgyal, the Facilitator asked how the overwhelming workload of a woman could be addressed in terms of social and economic front by an EMB.

The presenter said that the recommendations are general and from the EMBs prospective to intervene in voter registration and poll booth management so that in these areas it could be penetrated for the further problems.

Hon'ble Chairperson said that most of the countries are involved in coming out with policy as to how these burdens could be shared and reduced. Provisions of such facility to women at every level have been looked into.

#### 4. Sri Lanka Presentation

**Presented by Mr. Samantha Jayasinsinghe, Assistant Commissioner**



##### **Synopsis**

Mr. Jayasinghe presented his paper on “Factors that affect women to elect and to be elected in Sri Lankan context” which is presented in **Annexure 7**.

He began by citing provision relating to Human Rights and the representation of both the genders in the governance of the country from Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, the participation of women in the politics has been not so encouraging due to certain inherent qualitative traits such as humanity, inclusiveness, relationship building and caring nature of women.

As such the Department of Elections, Sri Lanka felt the need to find out the factors that affect women to cast their vote freely and effectively in Parliamentary Elections and the critical factors associated with contesting and electing women in Parliamentary Elections.

He also shared the methods of the study that focuses on three Electoral districts (Colombo, Gampaha, Kaluthara) which had lowest percentage of population below the poverty line and three Electoral districts, (Nuwara Eliya, Moneragala and Rathnapura) that recorded highest percentage of population below the poverty line during the last decade.

The voter turnout, percentage of spoilt vote to be considered based on the official calculation done by the Department of Elections on the basis of Electoral Districts after each election.



He said that Secondary data were cross examined to find out whether there is a distinct relationship between the rate of literacy, level of poverty with the voter turnout and percentage of spoilt vote.

The key findings of the research as stated were that the average voter turnout of last three Parliament Elections in Electoral districts which had lowest percentage of low income people was 74.32% while in other Electoral Districts which had a highest percentage of low income group was 74.99%, and there is no significant difference between two groups.

However, there was significantly a higher voter turnout in Electoral districts of Gampaha, Kaluthara, Nuwara Eliya which had higher percentage of female electors, that was 75.80% compared to 73.53% of voter turn over in male dominant Electoral districts (Colombo, Moneragala, Rathanapura).

He concluded that when there is women's rate of literacy higher, the percentage of spoilt vote goes down and that leads to effective voting. Level of education is critical for voting in this context.

There is a clamor for at least 30% of feminine representation in the Parliament of Sri Lanka.

Absence of gender based quota system, existing proportional representation system with preferential voting, lack of institutional and party support lack of financial support for women especially during Election campaigns, lead to a lesser women representation in elective offices.

The recommendation of the study is that the comparable sex disaggregated data must be collected to monitor men's and women's participation at Electoral process.

A voter's political literacy plays a significant role, and therefore educating women on the way of accepted voting is a must.

Electoral mechanism should be adjusted and supported for free and effective voting. Gender based quota system should be a pre requisite. Women's civil societal advocacy on politics should be supported.

## **Discussion**

Hon'ble Chairperson thanked the speaker and opened the floor for Q & A session.

Ms. Padma Angmo said that even in India some of the women Political Leader have come to politics and high positions in the aftermath of strategies and deaths of male family members who were political leaders.

Ms. Phuntshok Chhoden of BNEW remarked that Sri Lanka and Bhutan seem to have similar respect for women. When it comes to participation of women in

politics she enquired whether there any proposal to the government to create a quota system for women participation?

He said that there was discussion but could not enforce it due to various reasons.

## 5. Bhutan Presentation

**Presented by Mr. Tshewang Penjor, Fund Manager; Mr. Kibu Zangpo, Election Officer; and Mr. Namgay Tshering, Sr. ICT Officer**



### Synopsis

Mr. Tshewang Penjor said that there are three of them making presentation on Determinants of Voters' Choice and Facilitating Bhutanese Women's Political Participation. He said that he would be presenting the introductory part of the presentation.

He mentioned the provisions in the Constitution and Electoral Laws of Bhutan which are Gender Neutral yet women's participation is comparatively low in the region. Therefore, it was discussed and resolved in the 4<sup>th</sup> FEMBoSA Meeting to undertake a study to understand the Determinants of Voter's Choice in Elections and identify the factors and common problems to explore ways to facilitate women's political participation.

He further highlighted on the methods used as follows:

1. Field Questionnaire Survey (FQS);
2. Focus Group Discussion (FGD);
3. Social Media Survey (SoMS); and
4. Literature Review.

The results and findings of the study were presented by Mr. Kibu Zangpo who is the lead researcher. He briefed the house on the background characteristics of questionnaire survey and respondents. He also highlighted sources of voter

information to make informed choices and the sources of information for different categories of voters such as rural, urban, educated and uneducated and regions and male and female.

He also presented the Perceptions and Beliefs Affecting Women's Participation in Elective Offices. The belief and perceptions exist in different degrees in the various social economic back grounds. Such beliefs are stronger in the rural communities where level of education is low. Most of his presentation and findings are in the form of graphical representations backed by facts and figures.

From his presentation he has concluded with some of the following findings:

1. More educated in urban areas than in rural areas Basis of voting- Common Forum & Public Debates in general, and friends and relatives had more influence on women;
2. Information and choice – women dependent and men independent – campaigns, sources and effectiveness ;
3. Choice – Credible, competent & better representation = “*cho-drup*”;
4. Degree of control over decisions- voting;
5. Perception of men as better leaders and more capable;
6. Men more qualified, experienced and preferred; and
7. Belief and trust in women leadership with more education and experience.

The Bhutan study presentation is in **Annexure 8**.

## **Discussion**

Hon'ble Chairperson thanked the presenters and remarked that he had in fact heard the comprehensive report for the first time and opened the floor for comments and discussion.

Ms. Kesang Chuki, KCD Productions, said that after observing last two elections and following female candidates wrote a book for schools hoping that girls would aspire to stand as candidates. She expressed that more female candidates to be injected into electoral/politics such as through quota, reserved seats.



Ms. Padma Angmo thanked for the interesting comments and said that in India the reserved seats are being opposed but it is worth trying in Bhutan as it will have easier acceptance.

Director General, NCWC said that the study comes out with such notions that women are more suitable to be a teacher for them being caring but because of different needs for access, there is no level playing field as the family and social responsibilities are not equally shared by both men and women. She also expressed her doubts on the findings that electoral process/paper/documentation was not such a big problem. There seems to be conclusive statements about “inferiority” and “incompetence” of women which is perpetuating the situation which is negative for women. Further the last slide on ECB’s position on quota is not supportive of the affirmative actions required.

Coordinator of BNEW shared the concern of women having to attend domestic chores that deter women to participate in electoral process. Therefore, there should be facilities such as day care, etc. She also expressed her satisfaction in learning from the studies that the notion of men are nine lives superior to women is diminishing with the access to modern education and looks forward that these will not be a determinant in our children’s time. However, she was disappointed with the last slide that did not encourage the quota system in the electoral process.



Ms. Padma Angmo requested to share the study with the Election Commission of India who may be taking up such a study too.

Chairperson said that soft copy will be shared as finalization of the study report is yet to be completed.

Election Commissioner Deki Pema thanked all the presenters of all five EMBs and the discussion thereof. With regard to the Bhutan Study, the full report has not yet been finalized. Thus only the slides showing the data as collected are being shared. She highlighted the complex nature of the issue and pointed out that efforts had to take these complex factors into account highlighting examples of the host of reasons received while probing at focus group discussions. This is also the reason why national and international stake holders were invited to this meeting for wider discussions before finalizing the report. It was categorically stated that this study was designed with close technical collaboration of NSB to ensure that it is representative and probability sampling techniques were used to ensure that it is statically sound as a representative study and nothing extra has been added in the tables or anything subtracted other than what has been generated by the study. The point about the language and statements is well taken and will be reviewed and revised to ensure clarity e.g. study found that majority believe teacher as being the most appropriate position for women not that study is concluding that women are most suited to be teachers. Given the findings and the complexities of the reality, a word of caution was offered on posing and promoting quota as the end-all and be-all solution to low women representation as affirmative actions can and must be wider, comprehensive and requires taking up at a footing and coverage similar to the SVEEP II of India and other EMBs. It was also reminded that the study data is a reliable bench mark of gender disaggregated data and in fact it is a mine of information that can inform and guide future actions. For example from the answers to a single

question, Kibu Zangpo has already written a paper on EVM based on his own take of the data collected. Basically this study is a takeoff point rather than the end destination. Most of the ECB officials were involved in the study and everybody involved have found it professionally educative and personally enriching.

Ms. Rinzi Pem also shared her own experience of involving in the questionnaire survey and how she found that the process was educative and raised awareness and sensitize on gender related issues in elections.

Hon'ble Chairperson said that it has to be practical, if it were a straight forward we would have done it long time but it requires true and collective efforts.

For the next day's presentation, Election Commissioner Deki Pema said that the participants could prepare a brief on their presentation to be included in consolidated report for the Chairperson of the FEMBPSA to present to the next FEMBoSA as is the Resolution of the last FEMBoSA.

Hon'ble Chairperson informed the participants that draft paper could be submitted tomorrow because problems may be common even though it could vary in degrees. This could be added in the report and after the field visit, we will look at them.

## **E. Technical Session II**

The representatives of the 5 EMBs of Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bhutan prepared and submitted individual brief to the Rapporteur Team to be included in the Meeting Consolidate Report.

The delegates visited Thimphu on a field visit and the session resumed at the end of the day with viewing of the draft Consolidated Report. It was decided that the Report would be reviewed for correct use of words “gender” and “sex” as well as editing of the language. Abbreviations are to be reviewed and reduced and statistics to be added to the Nepal portion.

The representatives of Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka individually expressed their happiness at the fruitful meeting which was also illuminating and also most useful for them. The representative of the DIPD/BNEW also conveyed the message of congratulations from DIPD Head Office for the completion of the study.

Further, the data could now be confidently used and referred by all stake holders as a valuable source and thanked ECB for this initiative.

## **Country-wise Summary Report**

### **1. Bangladesh**

#### **Introduction**

Although women have made some advancement in many fields in Bangladesh, a career in politics is not one of them. The reasons and obstacles why few Bangladeshi women are involved in politics can be attributed to the social biases, enormous campaign costs, financial dependency, social and political violence, religious problems, lack of education and political knowledge, and situational barriers and attitudes based on gender roles and stereotypes that persist even now. The recruitment and nomination process of parties in the national elections also explains women’s continued under-representation in the Bangladesh Parliament.

#### **Challenges: Bangladesh context**

##### ***Political Challenges:***

1. The prevalence of the "masculine model" of political life and of elected governmental bodies;



2. The lack of party support, such as limited financial support for women candidates; limited access to political networks; and the prevalence of double standards;
3. The lack of contact and co-operation with other public organizations such as trade unions and women's groups; and
4. The absence of well-developed education and training systems for women's leadership in general, and for orienting young women toward political life in particular.

***Ideological and Psychological challenges:***

1. Gender ideology and cultural patterns, as well as pre-determined social roles assigned to women and men;
2. Women's lack of confidence to run for elections; and
3. Women's perception of politics.

***Socio-economic challenges:***

1. Poverty and unemployment;
2. Lack of adequate financial resources;
3. Illiteracy and limited access to education and choice of professions;
4. The dual burden of domestic tasks and professional obligations.
5. Women's inadequate access to and integration into political institutions as the tailoring of many of these institutions is according to male standards and political attitudes; and
6. Women's low self-esteem and self-confidence, supported by certain cultural patterns which do not facilitate women's access to political careers.

**Recommendations:**

***For Government:***

1. Political and lawful rights of women should be included in the education syllabus.
2. Initiate programme for economic empowerment and earnings for women.
3. Increase the number of seats reserved for women as well as to hold direct elections for those seats.
4. Reduce political violence
5. Educate women thus they should aware of their political rights

### ***For Election Commission:***

1. Provide training for women in politics.
2. Introduce provision in Representation of the People Order (RPO) to the political party should create and election fund for women candidates' campaigns.
3. Engage with relevant stakeholders working with political parties in order to fulfill the 33% goal of women's participation and support women's nomination process.
4. Recruit/appoint, support and train more women election officials around the country
5. Run Voter Education Programme frequently.
6. Engage NGOs, CSO, media and other stakeholders working with awareness programme for increase the women participation in electoral process.
7. Ensure women should registered in enrollment process.

### ***For CSOs and NGOs:***

1. Take awareness programme that women should participate more and more in politics to establish their rights in politics.
2. Social attitude towards men and women should be changed. Through social movement. Along with political parties women organization's should come forward along for this

### ***For Media:***

1. Print and electronic media should involve in voter education programme.

In sum, this study suggests that in order to give Bangladeshi women a place in the decision-making process, there is a need to increase the number of women holding political office at both the local and national level. However, any substantial increase in women's representation in public life depends on the mainstream changes within the major political parties; the strong support and campaigning by women's groups, NGOs, and the media; the removal of structural impediments, traditional mindsets, biases and attitudes based on gender roles, and access to financial resources. It is likely that in the national parliament of Bangladesh as well as in the local level politics, women's representation will remain insignificant in the near future despite their enthusiasm to provide political leadership.

However, in order to improve the situation of women, governments of almost all countries and different national and international NGOs are taking different steps. The Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees certain rights and privileges to women fundamental rights. Moreover, to safeguard the various constitutional rights, the government has enacted various women-specific and women-related legislation. As a result, gender gap is closing day by day, though much is left to achieve.

## 2. India

### I. Status:

A. According to the *Inter-Parliamentary Union* data of 2014, the world's largest democracy lags behind the world average with 11.65% women representation in the Parliament. Some of its neighbours fair better in terms of women's representation in Parliaments amounting to 29.9% in Nepal, 27.6% in Afghanistan, 23.4% in China, 19.7% in Bangladesh and 18.5% in Pakistan. Although the number of women in the Indian Parliament shows an upward trend, it is seen that women remain dismally represented in the political decision making.

Parliament	Members	
	Women	Total
Lok Sabha (Lower House)	62	539
Rajya Sabha (Upper House)	30	241

*Source: loksabha.nic.in & rajyasabha.nic.in*

B. As per the 2011 Census of India, women make up 48.46% of India's population. There is immense diversity of demographics—geographically, culturally, socially, economically and linguistically. Getting women across the diverse socio-political, economic and cultural landscape of the country to register and vote without any hassles is a mammoth task. A large number of eligible women are not registered on the electoral rolls. In case of registered women electors, not all exercise their right to vote. Therefore, the country's democratic process loses on its representative character.

In the last 2009 Lok Sabha elections in India, 417 million voters turned up to vote. 717 million were registered as electors and 300 million electors did not turn out to vote in the last Lok Sabha elections, of which 150 million were women.

The women has a greater share in the credit for highest ever turnout ever recorded in General Election 2014. For, the surge in female voter turnout

in 2014 over 2009 has been higher than the corresponding rise in male turnout. While in 2009 gender composition in total voters lagged behind gender composition in total electorate, in 2014 the gender composition in voter and electors was similar.

### **Gender Break-up of Electors and Voters**

<b>Electorate %</b>				<b>Voters %</b>			
<b>2009</b>		<b>2014</b>		<b>2009</b>		<b>2014</b>	
<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
52.3	47.7	52.5	47.5	<b>54</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>47</b>

## **II. Challenges:**

- A. Women's' poor representation in Parliament and State Assemblies, though an area of concern, has not been formally deliberated upon by the ECI, as the issue is already widely being debated and discussed by political parties and also in parliament.

There is one-third reservation for women in the local self-governing bodies (panchayats and municipalities) which has been constitutionally mandated by the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the Indian Constitution, which came into effect in 1994.

- B. ECI has actively worked towards bridging the gender gap in electoral participation (as voters/electors) by focusing on enhancing women's' participation in registration and voting in elections through its comprehensive programme called SVEEP since 2009.

## **III. Recommendations: Towards greater women's' participation**

- A. The study to understand the underlying reasons for poor representation of women in Parliament and State Assemblies have not yet been undertaken. Any recommendation on the subject would accrue after undertaking such a study and deliberating on the findings of such a study.
- B. Regarding women's' role as electors and voters, although there has been a significant rise in women turnout (from 55.82% in 2009 Lok Sabha election to 65.63% in 2014), it also means that nearly 35% of the women electors could not exercise their right to vote. Millions of women yet remain unregistered in the electoral rolls, many of them from the younger and newly eligible lot. Thus ECI is undertaking further measures in this direction:
1. Intensified measures are required to register them as eligible voters, and bring them to the polling stations.

2. The literacy rate of women has gone up during the last few years. Voter education is a critical factor in enhancing women's participation in elections, especially in developing democracies. Women need to be made much more aware and educated about their voting rights, importance of voting, registration procedures as well as specific information on where and how to vote. Programme encouraging women to vote, with campaigns targeted specifically at women as well as at men and women together. Interventions for women's participation have to be properly linked to their life situations and as such, specially designed. At the same time, varying demographical, socio-cultural, economic and linguistic factors are taken into account.
3. Facilitation is one of the most important interventions to be undertaken, as experienced in the India experience of the recent elections. Facilitation in terms of simplifying the process and procedures for registration, access to polling stations, access to information, facilitation in terms of polling hours and location of polling stations, etc. all affect the level of participation of women in voting.
4. Voter information and education is a collective responsibility of the EMBs, civil society, development agencies, NGOs and media. Various sectorial Ministries and Departments of both federal and state Governments have their own reasons and ways to reach out to women and take up programme and activities in this regard, from time to time.
5. Govt. agencies, CSOs and media, all have a critical role in deepening democracy by engaging the marginalized segments, such as women and youth to participate in the electoral process. They can act as bridges between the divided groups by promoting spaces for open discussion and debates. They are uniquely placed and have the flexibility to bring the issues and concerns of citizens related to democracy to the forefront in a productive manner; strengthen key partnerships and engage communities in a productive and responsible manner.
6. Hence, combined efforts by the EMBs, Governments, expert groups and organisations, think tanks, social scientists, CSOs as well as the corporate sector are required for making right to vote accessible to all women and also for helping them to exercise their right, by acting against multifarious barriers that exist in way of their participation in both political and electoral processes. This would make the

exercise of electoral democracy in the country more equal and meaningful.

7. In this regard, India's SVEEP programme can be studied as one of the best practices for enhancing people's participation in elections and possible replication in other countries having similar challenges in the field of electoral participation.

### **3. Nepal**

#### **Background**

Nepali women have been at the forefront of all the political changes in Nepal, with a more than active participation. However, when it comes to the politics of being elected, the politics of being represented and the politics at a decision making level, the figures are low. One thing is clear, Nepali people do have the appetite for change and development. Yet, in all these systems, women continue to remain at the periphery of direct and visible politics. Thus, it is imperative, especially in these times of change and hopes to ensure that not only responsibilities, but also opportunities are afforded to women as well.

While talking of the opportunities, the Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007, article 12 ensures the right to freedom of citizens, article 13 ensures the rights to equality and further states that special legal provisions shall be made for the protection, improvement and development of women, Dalit, Adibasi, Janajati, Madhesi and socially, economically and culturally marginalized people and communities. Article 21 states, based on the right to social justice that there shall be participation of women in the state structure, following the principle of inclusiveness and article 33 (D1) supports the policy of participation of Madhesi, Dalit, Adibasi, Janajati, women and people from the backward region, etc in all sectors of the state structure. Similarly, article 142 states that, in order, for political parties to be recognized to participate in the election, they are required to ensure the membership of women, Dalit, and backward group etc in their layer-wise executive committees.

#### **Past Efforts**

Although women were given the right to vote according to Nepal's Constitutional Law-1947, they only had the opportunity to participate as a voter in the Parliamentary Election of 1958. When the Election Commission managed the CA election 2008 and implemented its policies and programme for the purpose, it also tried to follow the principle of gender and social inclusion. As per the gender-based provision made under the voter education policy of CA election 2008, there was a focus on the gender aspect when deploying required voter education human resources and in publication of materials. In the

directives for the CA election 2008 and election code of conduct, any information that could have negative impact concerning gender equality and social inclusion principles was prohibited. In order to conduct special programme for voter education and in deploying enumerators, women were given the first priority. For polling, separate queues for male and female voters were set up and the responsibility of marking finger with indelible ink was given to women officials.

### **Present Situation/Status**

As per the essence and significant sentiment of the Constitution and various legal provisions, in order to make the election process gender friendly and inclusive, the Election Commission has been improving the electoral management process. Making improvements in the past system of registration of voters' roll with photograph, it was implemented at the local level such that all women, Dalit, Adibasi, Janajati, Madhesi, backward and minority community etc are represented. The voter education and voter registration strategy has made the voter registration more gender friendly and inclusive, based on target communities. Likewise, for the participation of all groups, areas and genders, the Commission has been formulating new policies and law, and developing and amending directives.

The present status of women's political participation in Nepal can be given as follows:

#### **I. Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007**

- **Article 13, Right to Equality** but especial provisions can be made for the empowerment of women and other minority groups,
- **Article 20, Right of Women** that includes right to reproductive health, reproduction and equal rights to ancestral property,
- **Article 21, Right to Social Justice** that ensures the proportional inclusion of women and other minorities in the state structure,

#### **II. Current 13<sup>th</sup> Three Year Plan**

- **Two objectives under the head "Gender Equality, Inclusion and Mainstreaming"**
  - Promote gender role for the economic, political and social empowerment of women and
  - End gender violence and gender based discrimination

#### **III. Representation in Constituent Assembly**

Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007 ensured mixed parallel electoral system (FPTP +PR: 240 + 335+26 = 601 seats). In the two Constituent Assembly

Elections: 2008 and 2013, at least 33 percent women of the total candidates in the closed list was/is required as provisioned by law.

<b>Election Year</b>	<b>Women Elected from FPTP</b>	<b>Women Elected from PR</b>	<b>Nominated by the Cabinet</b>	<b>Total Women Elected</b>	<b>Total Seats</b>	<b>Percent in Total Seats</b>
CAE, 2008	30	161	6	197	601	32.7
CAE, 2013	10	162	2	174	601	28.9

#### **IV. Registered Voters**

<b>Man</b>	<b>Woman</b>	<b>Third Gender</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of Woman</b>
5980881	6166829	155	12147865	50.76

#### **Gender and social inclusion policy, 2013**

- Objectives:
  1. To mainstream gender in all the electoral processes,
  2. To incorporate inclusive vision in all the stages of the electoral process,
  3. To develop the Election Commission, Nepal as a gender sensitive and inclusive institution.

#### **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), Strategy 2014 -2019,**

- Objective:
 

To implement the gender and social inclusion policy, 2013 for building ECN as an institution sensitive to GESI issues,

#### **Gender and Inclusion Institutional Mechanisms:**

1. Gender and Inclusion Coordination Committee,
2. Gender Unit and Gender Focal Point,
3. Voter Education Volunteers in all 10,013 polling locations: 50 percent women,
4. Gender and BRIDGE (Building Resource in Democracy, Governance and Elections) Trainings,



5. Gender friendly voter education through human, cultural, technological and media interfaces,
6. Gender Monitoring of the CAE, 2013 by National Women's Commission,
7. 120 polling centers managed by women officials alone,
8. Gender equality sought in trainings as far as possible,
9. In each of 18,775 polling centers, women volunteers to manage the line/queue of women, and
10. In each of 18,775 polling centers, women deployed to apply the indelible ink on the finger,

### **Problems:**

For gender and inclusion related issues for the election, the following problems exist:

1. Lack of effective implementation of provision for gender proportionality and principle of inclusiveness made by the Constitution and Law,
2. Gender and proportionality policy is not followed properly by political parties participating in the election,
2. Cultural and social discrimination has led to minimum participation of women in polling,
3. Lack of gender friendly infrastructure and materials in the electoral process, and
4. Women voters do not have the environment created for a free and secret vote.

### **Challenges:**

In the light of the principles of the gender and inclusion the following challenges exist in order to have a free, impartial and transparent election:

1. Election related policies and law should be gender sensitive and inclusive,
2. Effective implementation of gender and inclusion policy in the electoral process,
3. Outreach of gender and inclusion policies towards the target group and increase in public awareness, and
4. Compile necessary resources and equipment to provide services and facilities as per the gender and inclusion policy for the election.

## **Way Ahead**

### **1. Role of EMB (ECN)**

1. Implement the Gender and Social Inclusion Policy, 2013,
2. Implement Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GISI), Strategy 2014 -2019,
3. Include provisions of Gender and Social Inclusion in the Strategic Plan II,
4. Further focus on voter and electoral education with outreach programme,
5. Further focus on women in electoral trainings for empowerment,
6. Make necessary coordination with related organizations to keep gender and inclusion issues in the curriculums of educational institutions,
7. Orient all the divisions and sections of the organization to use gender perspective as a primary approach of analysis in planning, budgeting, executing programme, monitoring, evaluating and reporting,
8. Sustain the available women human resource in the organization and further increase their number,
9. Frame election management cell of women officials in the organization,
10. Organize interactions and meetings with different women's groups and women in parliament to expand the networking and relations with the media, civil society and other organizations of women, and
11. Develop woman-friendly infrastructures in polling centers.

### **2. Role of State**

1. Certain laws and acts relating to elections to have some provisions (at least speak) regarding women,
2. The FPTP system to have the requirements of at least 33 percent women candidacy,
3. Arrangement of a certain number of women constituencies on a rotational basis for the FPTP system,
4. Provisions of providing security to all candidates, especially women and other vulnerable groups during election period,

5. Make provisions to have a certain percent of women in the executive position of political parties in their party structures,
6. Encourage the registration of property in women's names and promote the concept of personal property of women,
7. Create an election fund for women candidates,
8. Increase investment in education by providing fellowships and scholarships to girl children,
9. Initiate programme for economic empowerment and earnings for women,
10. Create an environment to set women physically and psychologically free in terms of their thoughts, feelings, expressions and in mobility, ensure inner freedom,
11. Include gender education in school and college curriculums, and
12. Increase the public sphere responsibilities of women reducing the private sphere responsibilities such as in family.

### **3. For the Political Parties**

1. There needs to be access to decision making levels within the party,
2. There have to be more opportunities and exposure for women politicians,
3. There has to be compulsory representation of women at all levels of the party from the grassroots to the decision making level,
4. Women have to be given special priority, especially at the executive positions of the local level,
5. There needs to be increased political training and awareness, and
6. There has to be gender and social equity within the party.

### **4. For the Women Politicians**

1. There needs to be an effort to be updated on all current issues.
2. There needs to be efforts to better use the media to further one's agenda.
3. There needs to be an understanding of the potential of social media.

### **5. Media**

Similarly, the interaction with the media showed that the mainstream media houses wanted to disassociate themselves from the other media houses. This divide is most visible in the way character assassination of women politicians is

covered in the media. Mainstream media tries to refrain from covering such issues, in contrast to media houses which seem to thrive on sensationalist headlines. Media does try and cover women, but there seems to be a problem with access. It seems that women politicians are not connected to the media and do not share the same kind of rapport with them, as shared by male politicians. Media seems to look at agenda, capability and the position within the party with regards to election coverage. Thus, they prefer strong candidates and rarely focus on the weaker candidates, unless something in their campaign stands out. In their analysis, this becomes the cause of low coverage by the media of a lot of women candidates, who seem to be token candidates. Women politicians need to be more confident and aware of their agendas, and should be willing to talk to the media. In addition, they should be more active and possess required information. They need to be adept at using the media as well to further their agendas. This would help in their interaction with the media, as they would be valuable to the media as well. This would help them get media exposure.

It is not often possible, due to the societal structure and family responsibilities, for women politicians to have informal get together with the journalists, as done by male politicians. This seems to hamper their interactions and subsequently coverage with the media. As women politicians and Constituent Assembly members get less opportunities to shine, they are naturally covered less by the media. Sometimes, there is a lack of positive stories of women politicians, especially post elections. This makes it difficult as media houses do not want to show negative stories to hamper the self-confidence and belief of women politicians.

The media is also not so interested in looking for issues, as reporting often happens on a surface level. So, the women politicians need to be aware of this fact, and try and engage the media with their activities and achievements. The media accepts that journalism in Nepal is on the surface level. It is not up to the level expected. There is a lack of investigative journalism, such as in issues of campaign finance where despite knowing that male politicians usually outspend female politicians in election campaign, they lack the proof to write so.

The media itself suffers from a lack of inclusion, especially at the policy level. Coverage would definitely improve with inclusion. In addition, the media, as a part of society is affected by the patriarchal structure prevalent in society, which can be the cause for lower coverage.

## **6. Civil Society Organisations**

Similarly, the interaction with the CSOs showed that it is wrong to treat all women within the same basket. There is a need to differentiate between women with access and women without access, and perhaps need for a sector wise discussion. Most CSOs seem to have loose affiliation with political parties.

Thus, they do have interactions with women politicians from their respective party units. There is an entrenched psychology within the society, as well as the bureaucracy and party units which seems uninterested in bringing forth women. Even if they do, they seem to be bring compliant women who might be related to the decision makers in one way or the other.

The CSOs have their own agendas and they mostly work on those agendas, instead of focusing solely on the increase of the political participation of women in politics. However, the CSOs have been active in advocacy and lobbying at both the grassroots and central level.<sup>1</sup> In addition, there have been capacity building programme as well as ongoing programme on ways to bring women into the decision making level. The State and the ECN should invest in raising the awareness and capacity building of women throughout the country and also make them aware of the electoral issues and laws. There needs to be a women friendly political environment, along with economic and social strengthening, provision of security and access to education for women. The ECN should be strong to monitor the violations of electoral laws and should be able to take appropriate actions.

#### **4. Sri Lanka**

Sri Lankan women have been enjoying the right to exercise the universal franchise from 1931. Sri Lanka is the first country to achieve that bench mark among Asian countries. The two figures Sirimavo Bandaranaike and Chandrika Kumaratunga have become emblematic of women's representation in Sri Lanka. In 1960, Bandaranaike gained global renown as the first democratically elected woman Prime Minister in the modern world.

Also Mass media engaged in promoting socio-political change and raising the political consciousness of citizens, for Sri Lankan women have also spanned in action, by the Women's Franchise Union in 1927, the Eksath Kantha Peramunain the late 1940s, the Northern and Southern Mothers' Fronts in the 1980s. In 1981, Sri Lanka ratified the United Nations' Convention on the elimination of all Forms of discrimination against women. In 2003 and 2006, women's organisations engaged with the Parliamentary Select Committee on Electoral Reform by making written submissions and giving oral evidence before the Select Committee on a quota for women at the level of Parliamentary elections.

1. Political parties should include provisions in their policies to ensure nominations of women candidates in order to guarantee better representation of women in Parliament, Provincial Councils, and local government bodies, and
2. Necessary legal provisions be formulated to make it mandatory that every one third candidate nominated by a party secretary from the National List to be a woman candidate.

### **Constitutional Supports and Challenges**

The 1972 Constitution was drafted to pacify the Sinhala Buddhist forces, for instance, by repealing Section 29 of the previous Soul bury Constitution. The First Republican Constitution therefore combined ethnic nationalist ideas with a socialist ideology. The 1978 Constitution was intended to revise the perceived excesses of the existing electoral and governance system to bring a degree of stability through the inclusion of the proportional representation scheme, a mechanism that was felt would reflect the wishes of the majority of voters. Article 12(2) goes

on to specify that there should be no discrimination on grounds of race, religion, language, caste, sex, political opinion, and place of birth, thereby recognizing categories that may be open to disadvantage and discrimination. As well as to nominate women as representatives of a sex/gender. Also there are provisions for potential candidates are selected on their capacity to command votes – irrespective of their sex. Even this seems a rational and impartial Women’s organizations and political activists have continually expressed their demands on electoral reforms and a women’s quota.

### **Need to address**

The role of Sri Lankan women in electoral process and the representation of the political arena is marginal. 2.34% of all political representatives, represent women as a collective sex/gender that constitutes 52% of the Sri Lankan population. Therefore we have to bridge this gap.

### **Recommendations**

#### **On Policy level**

Policy should be formulated to increase women representation in elective offices in all level

Training institute should be implemented to facilitate women who are coming from non-elite groups.

### **On EMB's level**

Comparable sex disaggregate data must be collected to monitor men's and women's participation at Electoral process. A voter's political literacy plays a significant role, therefore educating women on the way of accepted voting is a must. Ex: Programme like mock polls, Dummy mobile polling stations. Electoral process should be adjusted and supported for free and effective voting. Ex: Free publicity for each candidate.

### **On social services organization level**

Feminist groups have to run media campaigns asking for votes for women, based on a women's rights discourse.

Also media should treat fairly for men and women in election campaigns.

## **5. Bhutan**

The study in Bhutan was conducted by the Election Commission of Bhutan, with support from the Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIDP), UN Women, and Royal Government of Bhutan. The study included a questionnaire survey that is representative and used probability sampling techniques based on the up-to-date national Electoral Roll maintained by the ECB and designed with the technical support of the NSB for the statistical aspect and consultation with other stakeholders on the questionnaire itself. Qualitative information was probed and collected through focus group discussions in all 20 Dzongkhags. Further, a social media survey was also conducted to supplement the information gathered.

The findings fundamentally indicate:

1. While majority of voters have a high degree of control over the decision as to whom to vote in an elections, 59% of the female respondents said that they were either influenced or inspired by their family members and friends.
2. In terms of perceptions, 63% of the total 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.
3. 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 being suited for elective and top positions in governance. However, the majority of respondents – both men and

women – feel that there should be more women representation in the elective offices.

4. The civic and voter education programme, media and the Common Forums and Public Debates are the three most effective sources of information. The least effective means of campaigning was either through campaign rallies or campaigning through posters, banners and leaflets.
5. The data indicate that as compared to females, many more males are willing, have the interest and are preparing to run in future elections.
6. “*Chogdrup*” or competence of a Candidate is the main factor that influence majority of the voters’ decision.
7. There is direct relationship between level of education and perceptions related to women leadership as well as in the level of education in the 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.
8. Family responsibilities, lack of self-confidence and fears of incompetence in decision making were the highest quoted perceived obstacles in women standing as candidates.
9. 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.
10. 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 (23.8%) and the reserved seats for women (13.1%) for an effective in increasing the number of women representation in parliament and local governments. 12.3% feel that having simpler and straight forward electoral process and requirements will enable more women participation.
11. It is found that fewer women, compared to men, express interest in participating in elections as candidates.



## Way Forward

In terms of the Way Forward, the meeting resolved that common as well as country-specific measures would be proposed at the next FEMBoSA including interventions and activities that the EMBs could take up as relevant and appropriate to its mandate and others that would be put up to the States, CSOs, media and other related agencies to take up as found appropriate with a focus on sharing of best practices.

Specifically for Bhutan, the recommendations are:

1. While many barriers to women's participation for elective offices can be overcome only through social engineering with major cultural and political changes, appropriate training and education of female candidates and disseminating information about the electoral environment and women's success stories can help narrow the gender gap and increase women's representation. 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. Educating women is found as being key to political empowerment.
2. The political parties have a critical role in determining the political and electoral prospects for women in elective offices.
3. 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.
4. A change in cultural attitude and perception is required for which the study recommends:
  1. Incorporation of responsible and societal value based educational programme in the curriculums in schools, NFE centers and vocational institutes to promote growth of democratically responsible female leaders.
  2. Implement additional support measures in education and training by designing special programme and promoting leadership skills for women.
  3. Promote creation of special support mechanisms for women to share information and knowledge.

4. Sensitization and awareness building through multi-pronged strategy and on an aggressive footing.
5. Carry out similar in-depth study in the country every 5 years for reliable gender disaggregated data and monitoring of the trends.

Specifically, the **Election Commission of Bhutan** could take up:

1. Provide voter and civic education including gender sensitization programme on a continuous basis with efforts to reach every community as much as possible.
2. Common forums, found to have played a critical role in enabling more voters to understand about the Political Parties and candidates to be continued and be conducted at *Chiwog* level in future elections.
3. The engagement by Political Parties and candidates during election period and non-election period is an important medium and should be encouraged.
4. Coordinators of Democracy Clubs in schools to play an active role to further disseminate information on electoral systems and democracy with particular focus on the young people and the leaders of tomorrow.
5. Training programme 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.
6. Create women enabling /conducive political environment.

### **Stakeholders**

1. Relevant agencies to formulate policies to support women and to increase awareness of the roles and responsibilities of women as elected leader.
2. Training programme to target women as well as men, to expose them to the complexities of gender discrimination and change their perception towards women
3. Support and promote public awareness-raising campaigns to combat negative stereotype
4. Increase the remuneration package for the elective post
5. Initiate innovative programme to strengthen women's political skills
6. Women who are interested to contest elections should be properly guided and trained to enable them to effectively contest elections

7. Provide training in key areas such as leadership training, confidence building, lobbying and networking skills to strengthen political skills
8. Women who are interested to contest elections should be properly guided and trained to enable them to effectively contest elections
9. 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
10. Media to provide gender-sensitive coverage of elections, avoiding negative stereotypes and presenting positive images of women as leaders, should focus attention on issues of special concern to women in news programming.

The closing remarks of the Hon'ble Chairperson is presented in **Annexure 9**.

## **F. Annexures**

### **Annexure 1: Agenda of the Consultative Meeting**



### **Forum of Election Management Bodies of South Asia (FEMBoSA)**

#### *Agenda*

### **Determinants of Voter's Choice and Ways to Facilitate Women's Participation in Elective office**

#### **Consultation Meeting to Consolidate Research on Women in Elective Offices (14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of October 2014)**

**FEMBoSA Consultation Meeting to Consolidate Research on  
Women in Elective Offices**

**Determinants of Voter's Choice and Ways to Facilitate Women's  
Participation in Elective office**

*Venue: Kyichu Resort, Paro*

**13<sup>th</sup> of October 2014**

Arrival of Researchers/Representatives from member EMBs

**14<sup>th</sup> of October 2014**

**(1) *Introductory Session***

0845hrs	:	Registration of Participants
0910hrs	:	All participants to be seated
0920hrs	:	Welcome and meeting schedule by Coordinator, ECB
0930hrs	:	Keynote Address by Hon'ble Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan
1000hrs	:	<i>Group Photo</i>

**(2) *Technical Session 1: Country-wise Presentation***

1045hrs:

1. Bangladesh
2. India
3. Nepal
4. Sri Lanka
5. Bhutan
  - (1) Introduction
  - (2) Objectives
  - (3) Research Methodology
  - (4) Results/Findings
  - (5) Way Forward

1015hrs : *Tea and Refreshments*

1300hrs : *Lunch Break*

1530hrs : Tea Break  
1830hrs : Dinner by Hon'ble CEC, Election  
Commission of Bhutan

**15<sup>th</sup> of October 2014**

**(3) Technical Session 2: Consolidation Process**

0900hrs : Recap  
0910hrs : Summary Presentation by each Country for  
the Consolidated Report  
(1) Current Position  
(2) Way Forward

1045hrs : Tea Break  
1100hrs : Field visit to Thimphu

**(4) Concluding Session**

1600hrs : Review the Meeting Report and the Overall  
South Asian Outlook Document  
1630hrs : Closing Remarks by the Chief Election  
Commissioner of Bhutan

**16<sup>th</sup> of October 2014**

Departure from Paro Airport

## **Annexure 2: Opening Statement by Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan**

### **Keynote Address by Hon'ble Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan at the Consultation Meeting to Consolidate Research on Women in Elective Offices**

(Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> of October, 2014 Kyichu Resort, Paro)

**Distinguished Participants from the Election Commission of Bangladesh,  
Election Commission of India, Election Commission of Nepal and Sri  
Lanka;**

**Honoured Guests and Representatives of the National Assembly and the  
National Council, Political Parties (BKP, DCT, DNT, PDP), GNHC,  
NCWC, CBS, IGNH Studies of RUB, UN Women, UNDP, BNEW,  
RENEW, BCMD and KCD Productions;**

**My friends from ECB; and**

**Ladies and Gentleman**

Good Morning! It is a great honour and a great pleasure to welcome all of you to this Two Days Consultative Meeting to Consolidate Research on Women in Elective Offices.

We regret that our colleagues from Afghanistan, Maldives and Pakistan could not make it. We shall definitely miss their valuable presence and contribution. However, I am very happy to acknowledge the presence of representatives from the EMBs of Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. I am also happy and would like to extend a warm welcome to the officials, the dignitaries and stakeholders in Bhutan who have spared their valuable time to be here to participate in the discussions, demonstrate their support, and commitment to a very important area of concern which is essentially for better understanding and improvement of the situation of women to assume leadership in elective offices.

The Forum of Election Management Bodies of South Asia which was established with the aim of fostering cooperation and exchanges amongst the EMBs of the South Asian Democracies on common issues and challenges. The concern over women's political participation in particular and enhancing women's participation in the voting, election management and the decision making fora was expressed and recognized by the Forum of Election

Management Bodies of South Asia (FEMBoSA) in its 4<sup>th</sup> meeting held in Thimphu in October 2013. During that meeting it was resolved the usefulness of each member of EMB to individually undertake a detailed and scientific study of the determinants of voter's choice and explore appropriate ways to facilitate women's political participation and election management in the respective countries.

The Election Commission of Bhutan with support from Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD), UN Women, New Delhi and Royal Government of Bhutan has undertaken the study in Bhutan. We may in fact have other partners participating in this study for the necessary additional support as is being explored by the Gross National Happiness Commission.

The work on Bhutan Study started soon after the FEMBoSA Meeting with the Literature Review and we decided that it would be necessary to generate both quantitative data qualitative data and information. Therefore, a Field Questionnaire Survey, Focus Group Discussion and Social Media Survey was planned with Regional Programme for info-exchange in line with the FEMBoSA ideals. This Meeting commencing from this venue today is the Regional Programme.

The main objective of the study in our respective countries is to provide hard and reliable data to better understand the phenomenon, situation, challenges and issue of the lesser number of women coming forward to stand as Candidates and being elected as holders of elective offices. The main goal is to throw light on relevant and appropriate affirmative action that can be taken up by the member countries of EMBs as well as other relevant entities to ensure fuller participation and better representation of women as it lies at the very core of Vibrant Democracy in our Nations and the Region.

We hope that findings of Bhutan Study that will be presented during the course of the day would be able to add to the works that are found being undertaken in many of the member countries. The feedback from our officers and staff engaged in the Study from the Head Office and the twenty Dzongkhags of their experiences has been reported as very encouraging in terms of deepening their understandings and knowledge as well as stimulating interest and thinking beyond the process and procedure.

The data generated from this Study is a crucial benchmark for reliable data in Bhutan and we would be looking to institutionalize a mechanism to have such surveys done periodically in the future to better understand trends in the electoral system, ensure reliable, gender disaggregated database and thereby better inform the decision-making process.

This Two Days Consultative Meeting is planned to share the findings of the individual Country Reports to help consolidate the Research Findings to



formulate on overall South Asian Report for consideration by the Fifth Meeting of FEMBoSA tentatively scheduled for 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> of November 2014 immediately on the heels of the SAARC Summit.

The Election Commission of Bhutan looks forward to a meaningful outcome which would contribute towards understanding why we have not only lesser number of women Candidates and but even where there are Candidates for elective offices, women are not being voted in. This would be the grounds to look at viable measures to encourage women to actively participate in the political arena in our respective countries and our region that will ultimately promote the well-being of our People.

Lastly, I would like to once again welcome you to Bhutan and to this Meeting. Together let us have free and frank session that could ensure greater women participation in our democratic process.

**Tashi Deleg!**

### **Annexure 3: Curriculum Vitae of the presenters of the Meeting**

#### **Bangladesh**

##### **Ms. Fahmida Sultana**

Assistant Secretary

Election Commission Secretariat

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Fahmida Sultana is an Assistant Secretary of Election Commission Bangladesh with more than three years of experience. She has a Master's degree in Mathematics from the Bangladesh National University. In her career, she maintains international communications for ECB (Election Commission Bangladesh) and is the focal point of CEN (Commonwealth Electoral Network) and AAEA (Association of Asian Election Authorities). Her experience also include administrative, human resource development, welfare of staff etc. She is an Accredited Workshop Facilitator of BRIDGE (Building Resources in Democracy Governance and Elections) module in Bangladesh.

## **India**

**Ms. Padma Angmo**

**Deputy Secretary,**

Election Commission of India,

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Ms. Padma Angmo was born in December 02, 1970 in Ladakh, India. She has a Bachelor Degree of Technology in Electronics & Communication from National Institute of Technology, Kurukshetra in Haryana. Currently she has been working as the Deputy Secretary for 3 years.

She is responsible for looking after the Media Division related with all legal provisions during and after the election. She also looks after the Training Division, responsible for coordinating and planning for workshops and training for officials of ECI and Election Management Bodies of various countries, mainly the southern nation.

## **Nepal**

### **Mr. Yuba Raj Guragain**

Section Officer,

Planning, Monitoring and Foreign Relation Section,

Election Commission of Nepal,

Kathmandu, Nepal

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Mr. Yuba Raj Guragain was born in eastern Nepal in 1983. He has a Bachelor's Degree in English Literature and Master's Degree in Anthropology from Tribhuvan University of Nepal. He has published books and articles in the fields of development, management and election administration. He has experience in teaching, training, administration and election management.

Currently he has been working as a section officer of the Government of Nepal in the Election Commission of Nepal for four years. He has involved in trainings for voter education, election management, gender and election and for media and election.

During the Constituent Assembly Elections, 2013, in Nepal he has contributed in planning for the election, election monitoring, media relations and for drafting gender and inclusion policy, 2013 of the Election Commission of Nepal.

## **Sri Lanka**

### **Mr. Samantha Priyaleel Jayasinghe**

Assistant Commissioner of Elections (Parliamentary Elections)

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Sri Lanka

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Mr. Samantha Priyaleel Jayasinghe is the Assistant Commissioner in the Elections Secretariat of Sri Lanka. He has a Degree in Business Studies from University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. Previously he worked as an Assistant Commissioner of Elections in Hambantota and Assistant Secretary to Ministry of Cooperatives and Internal Trade.

In Sri Lanka, he is in charge of carrying out the Annual Revision of Electoral Register and Inclusive Elections Programme and submits the periodic assessments/tests on prevention of multiple registrations using Automated Electoral Registration System.

He was involved in organizing the programme to celebrate the Voter's Day in Sri Lanka starting in 2013, to encourage the public to register their name in Electoral the Register.

## **Annexure 4: Presentation by Bangladesh**

### **Determinants of Voter's Choice and Ways to Facilitate Women's Participation in Elective Office: A Regional Outlook**

#### **Introduction**

Empowering women, to strengthen their own capacities is a main objective of development, and that empowerment requires the full participation of people in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of decisions determining the functioning and well-being of societies. In Bangladesh women comprise nearly half of the total population and without ensuring women development, the national development cannot be achieved. The active participation of the women in overall electoral process of Bangladesh is the only way to enhance the quality of their democratic upliftment. Democracy strives towards equality and representation of women and men in all political and decision-making processes. What is now often questioned is how to increase the numbers of women in democratic institutions like parliament, and other important political premises. Many significant studies and analyses of women in parliament have been compiled over the last few years. Researchers have also studied this area from a variety of angles. Thus far, most of the work has focused on an extremely important dimension: that of studying and assessing the ways and means by which women can enter parliament. The emphasis has been directed towards equality in opportunity to achieve parliamentary power and the obstacles and hindrances faced in this process.

As resolved in the FEMBoSA's 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting, Election Commission Bangladesh has started the study of the 'determinants of voter's choice and explore appropriate ways to facilitate women's political participation' which is not yet completed. This paper is an attempt to explore the status of women's participation and to identify the factors that hinder women's participation through various reports and findings of studies/researches undertaken by various agencies.

#### **Initiatives to increase women's representation in Bangladesh**

The governments, political parties, election commission, international agencies and stakeholder groups concerned with increasing women's representation have advocated a range of initiatives to break through the barriers for women in elected office, including using rhetorical strategies, equal opportunity, and affirmative action policies. Some of the major options that are available include basic reform of majoritarian electoral systems by moving towards combined or proportionate arrangements, as well as the use of reserved seats for women, the

implementation of statutory gender quotas by law, and the adoption of voluntary gender quotas within particular parties.

Since 1972 the Constitution and the legal system of Bangladesh have guaranteed equal rights for women to participate in all aspects of public life. Article 10 of the Constitution ensures participation of women in all spheres of national life (Bangladesh constitutional amendment, 1979, article 10). Article 65(3) provides for reserved seats for women in the parliament. Now the reserve seats of the women members in the Parliament has been raised from 15 to 50 by amending Article 65(3) of the Constitution. Article 9 promotes the special representation of women in local government (Bangladesh constitutional amendment, 1979, article 65). This reservation of seats in favour of women did not disqualify them from being candidates in the general election

In order to increase women's participation in politics the Election Commission Bangladesh (ECB) took several measures, including incorporation of provisions in the Representation of the People Order (RPO) (Amendment) Act, 2009 (Act. No. 13 of 2009) that aims to increase the number of women representatives in the committees of all political parties to 33 percent by the year 2020.

### **Women's Participation in Politics and Decision Making Political Representation and the Electoral Process in Bangladesh**

Although women's development policies have been adopted but no major changes have been achieved through these policies either. The involvement of women in governance and decision making, although incremental, still remains very low particularly at the national level. Women's participation in electoral and legislative politics is less than 2 percent of the overall candidates and percentage of women won in general seats never exceeded 5 percent in the parliamentary elections. It is unusual that were about 50 percent of total voters are women but their representation in the legislature is only 5 percent. Table 1 below provides the position of elected women members to the Bangladesh Jatiyo Sangsad (National Parliament) during 1991-2014.

**Table 1:** Elected Women's Members to the Bangladesh Parliament (1991-2014)

YEAR OF ELECTION	NUMBER OF WOMEN CANDIDATES	TOTAL ELECTED WOMEN	RESERVED SEATS	% OF WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT
1991	46	4	30	10.30 (out of 330 seats)
1996	11	5	30	10.60 (out of 330 seats)

2001	41	13	45	16.81 (out of 345 seats)
2008	59	19	50	19.71 (out of 345 seats)
2014	30	19	50	19.71 (out of 350 seats)

Source: Election Commission Bangladesh

There is mandatory provision for one-third reserve seats for women in each local level institution like Upazilla, City Corporation, Paurashava, Union Parishad etc. At the upazilla level, one post of vice-chairman has been kept reserved for women. They are elected by the voters directly. But at the local level, women's representation is also insignificant. In the 4th Upazilla Parishad Election, 1615 women submitted their candidatures for the post of vice-chairman of 480 Upazilla. Other than the quota for vice chairman, the numbers of women candidates of chairman post are 49 out of 482 Upazilla where only 3 women are elected. At present there are above 15000 (fifteen thousand) women representation in the local bodies.

A recent study on Women and Election in Bangladesh that was performed by indevelop and tana and commissioned by the Embassy of Sweden in Bangladesh provides findings on women and elections within four broad themes; women's participation as voters, candidates, party members and elected representatives.

### **Women as voters**

Women's voting behavior varies according to class, where women from the lower classes are more active as voters in elections than wealthier women. There are also indications that women in general are more active in local elections than the national election. Voter education programme had a very positive impact for the big turnout at election time. Economic empowerment and more women entering the work-force in the garments factory industry and women mobilized through credit supply might also have contributed to a higher turnout. The way the election management is undertaken also affects women's voting behavior such as easily accessible polling stations, the presence of women electoral staff at polling stations, law and order conducted around elections positively contributed to a higher turn-out of female voters.

### **Women running for office**

The introduction of quotas at both local and national level has influenced women's decisions to run for office, both in National Parliament and Union



Parishads. Compared to national elections, local level elections are more accessible to women because these are less influenced by parties, election campaigning costs less, candidates can directly connect with the people. The four aspects have been very important to successful female candidates in today's political context; dynastic relations, access to social capital, party loyalty and meritocracy.

### **Women as members of political parties**

Though the enforcement of a party quota system of registration has had a major positive effect on the number women on all party committees, women's participation is not looked at in terms of democratic practice. In general, there are women on very senior posts, but women are not represented in a balanced and representative way throughout the party structure. The selection process of candidates to run for political office is handled by party brokers. Gender norms and attitudes seem to influence their work and have a negative effect on selection of female candidates.

### **Women as elected representatives**

The existing quota system has both enabling and constraining effects on the quantitative and qualitative aspects on women as elected representatives. The mode of selection of women candidates in reserved Parliamentary seat goes in favour of the majority party as the candidates are indirectly elected by the MPs and make the reserved seat women Parliamentarians remain under the grip of party leadership. They have no direct constituency and are reliant on their reputation and support within their Party for any influence. It can be concluded that reserved seats has not led to more power in the parliament, e.g. posts in standing committees, and that only few women MPs from reserved seats have been actively involved in law-making activities.

Women holding open seats differ from women in reserved seats by having previous political experience or party backing campaigning. They have been political activists or had other previous public exposure.

### **Major Obstacles to Women's Political Participation in Bangladesh**

The findings of major obstacles to women's political participation which is showed another study done by Democracywatch are:

#### **Political Obstacles**

It is argued that men dominate the political arena; men formulate the rules of the political game; and men define the standards for evaluation. The existence of this male-dominated model results in either women rejecting politics altogether or rejecting male-style politics. By now, over 95 per cent of all countries in the world have granted women the two most fundamental democratic rights: the right to vote and the right to stand for elections.

In theory, the right to stand for elections, to become a candidate, and to get elected, is based on the right to vote. The reality is, however, that women's right to vote remains restricted: principally because the only candidates to vote for are male. This is true not only for partial and developing democracies, but for established democracies as well. Research findings further indicate that political structures rather than social factors play a more significant role in women's parliamentary recruitment.

Among the political obstacles that women face, the following features are the dominant ones:

1. The prevalence of the "masculine model" of political life and of elected governmental bodies;
2. The lack of party support, such as limited financial support for women candidates; limited access to political networks; and the prevalence of double standards;
3. The lack of contact and co-operation with other public organizations such as trade unions and women's groups;
4. The absence of well-developed education and training systems for women's leadership in general, and for orienting young women toward political life in particular;
5. The nature of the electoral system, which may or may not be favourable to women candidates.

### **Ideological and Psychological Hindrances**

Ideological and psychological hindrances for women in entering parliament include the following:

1. Gender ideology and cultural patterns, as well as pre-determined social roles assigned to women and men;
2. Women's lack of confidence to run for elections;
3. Women's perception of politics as a "dirty" game and also as 'corrupt';
4. The way in which women are portrayed in the mass media.

### **Socio-economic Obstacles**

The socio-economic obstacles impacting on women's participation in parliament could be further classified as follows:

1. Poverty and unemployment;
2. Lack of adequate financial resources;

3. Illiteracy and limited access to education and choice of professions;
4. The dual burden of domestic tasks and professional obligations.

Various factors can complicate women's entry into parliament, such as:

1. Women's inadequate access to and integration into political institutions as the tailoring of many of these institutions is according to male standards and political attitudes;
2. Lack of party support, including money and other resources to fund women's campaigns and boost their political, social and economic credibility;
3. Women's low self-esteem and self-confidence, supported by certain cultural patterns which do not facilitate women's access to political careers; and,
4. The type of electoral system as well as the lack of quota reservations.

### **Recommendations**

1. Provide training for women in politics.
2. Provide access to funding for women candidates' campaigns.
3. Engage with relevant stakeholders working with political parties in order to fulfill the 33% goal of women's participation and support women's nomination process.
4. Recruit/appoint, support and train more women election officials around the country
5. Women should participate more and more in politics to establish their rights in politics.
6. Social attitude towards men and women should be changed. Through social movement. Along with political parties women organization's should come forward along for this
7. Political and lawful rights of women should be included in the education syllabus.

### **Conclusions**

In spite of constitutional guarantees, women have not enjoyed the same equal rights as men as accorded to them. Women still remain considerably under-represented at both the local and national level of politics. There is now a general consensus among women's organizations and groups and those concerned over the need to increase the number of seats reserved for women as well as to hold direct elections for those seats. Despite the fact that top leaders of the two major political parties (BNP and AL) are women leaders, politics in Bangladesh

continue to remain a male monopoly. At the onset of the new millennium, the percentage of female representation at both the local and national level has remained low compared to global standards.

Although women have made some advancement in many fields that were previously dominated by men, a career in politics is not one of them. The reasons and obstacles why few Bangladeshi women are involved in politics can be attributed to the social biases, enormous campaign costs, financial dependency, social and political violence, religious problems, lack of education and political knowledge, and situational barriers and attitudes based on gender roles and stereotypes that persist even now. The recruitment and nomination process of parties in the national elections also explains women's continued under-representation in the Bangladesh Parliament.

In sum, this study suggests that in order to give Bangladeshi women a place in the decision-making process, there is a need to increase the number of women holding political office at both the local and national level. However, any substantial increase in women's representation in public life depends on the mainstream changes within the major political parties; the strong support and campaigning by women's groups, NGOs, and the media; the removal of structural impediments, traditional mindsets, biases and attitudes based on gender roles, and access to financial resources. It is likely that in the national parliament of Bangladesh as well as in the local level politics, women's representation will remain insignificant in the near future despite their enthusiasm to provide political leadership.

However, in order to improve the situation of women, governments of almost all countries and different national and international NGOs are taking different steps. The Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees certain rights and privileges to women fundamental rights. Moreover, to safeguard the various constitutional rights, the government has enacted various women-specific and women-related legislation. As a result, gender gap is closing day by day, though much is left to achieve.

## **Annexure 5: Presentation by India**

### **Determinants of Voter's Choice and Ways to Facilitate Women's Participation in Elective Office**

By  
**Padma Angmo,**  
**Deputy Secretary**  
**Election Commission of India**

### **Structure of Presentation**

- Introduction to SVEEP programme of ECI
- Strategies used in SVEEP
- Outcomes
- The Way Forward

## Background

- SVEEP was conceptualised to understand and mitigate the gaps in registration of citizens as voters and the more glaring gap in turnout from election to election.
- In India, the turnout had historically stagnated around 55-60 per cent, thus leaving out the choices of millions of eligible citizens.
- There was a small beginning under the banner of IEC after the national election 2009.
- Phase - I of SVEEP spread broadly from end 2009 to March 2013 covering 17 General Elections to State Assemblies and three Revisions of the Electoral Rolls.

## Evolution

- Phase-II of SVEEP carried forward and further strengthened the initiatives taken in SVEEP Phase-I.
- SVEEP II involved a planned strategy for a targeted approach towards meeting the various gaps in registration and voting besides spreading awareness about informed, un-intimidated and inducement free voting under the broader framework of civic education.
- The Lok Sabha 2014 elections have been the major focus of SVEEP II.

## Objective

**Greater participation**

**Informed and inducement free participation**

**Continuous democracy education**

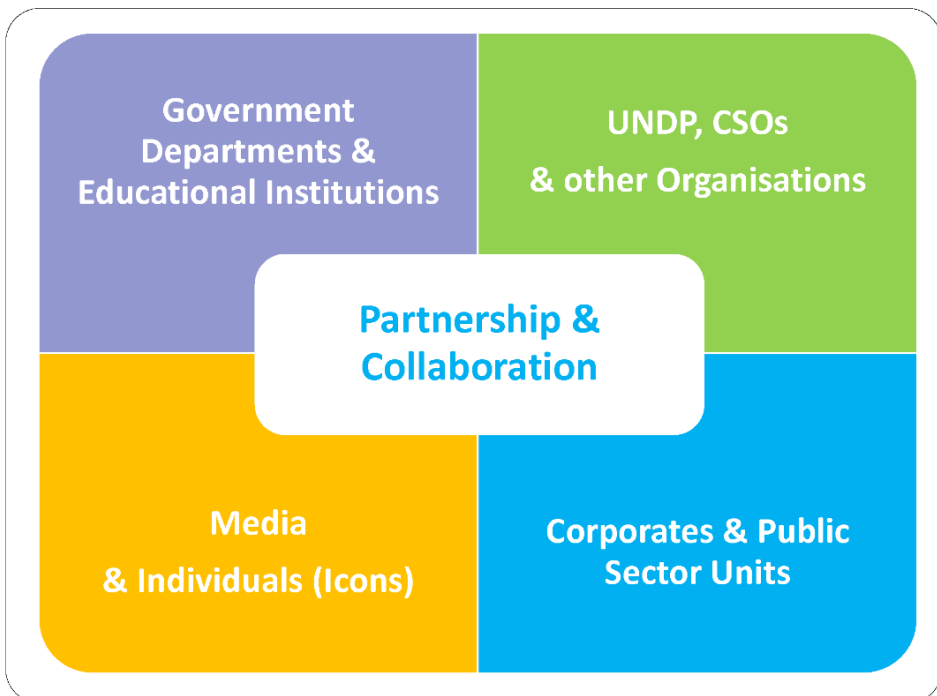
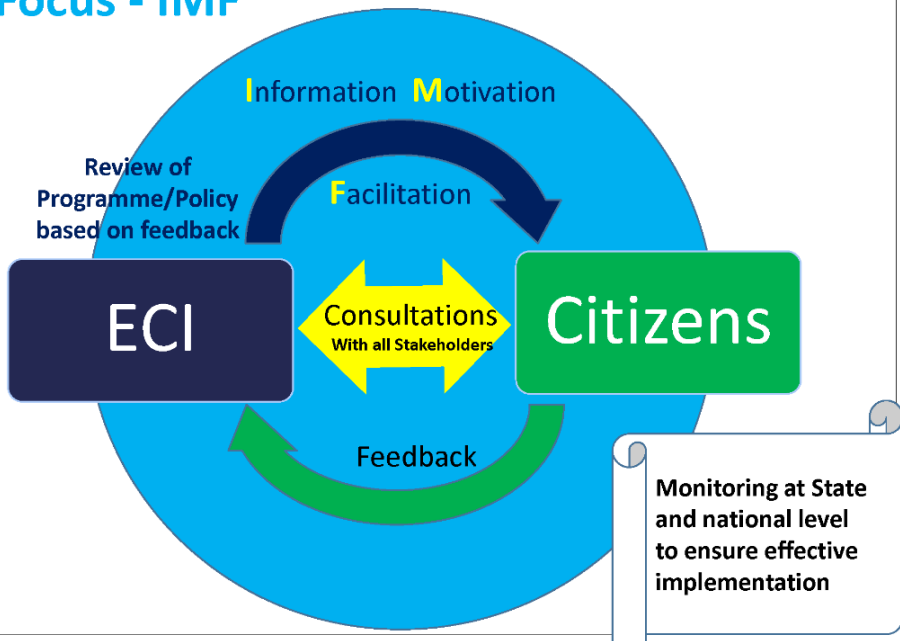
## Strategy

**Situation Analysis**

**Targeted Intervention**

**Monitoring and Review**

## Focus - IMF





## Campus Ambassadors

- Campus Ambassadors are appointed from among the students in recognised Colleges and Universities to bridge the gap in youth electoral participation
- Around 9000 Campus Ambassadors were in position when the country went to the national elections
- Campus Ambassadors use creative endeavours to inform, encourage and motivate students to register on the electoral rolls and to vote

## Awareness Observers

- Central Awareness Observers were first appointed for the Assembly Elections in 2013. This was further strengthened in LS 2014. The Awareness Observers observe:
  - SVEEP preparedness in the State nearly a month ahead of polls
  - Implementation of directions of ECI at ground level
  - Mechanism for positive and productive communication with the public through Media during the election period

## Facilitation Measures

- Online registration; Name search facility on Electoral Roll on the CEO's website and also on the ECI website
- SMS based service for searching name and polling booth
- Various registration forms made available at prominent places including banks and post offices, colleges and universities
- Special registration camps in weekly *haats*, during festivals and through *mobile vans* ahead of elections
- Special registration camp on 9th March 2014, in each of the PS across the country
- Voters' Helplines at national, State and district levels
- Poll hours extended to 11 hours in LS 2014
- Basic Minimum Facilities (BMF); Model Polling Stations (MPS)
- Voter slips are delivered at the residence
- Polling day reminders through SMS alerts and also on radio and television and through public address systems

## Innovative activities

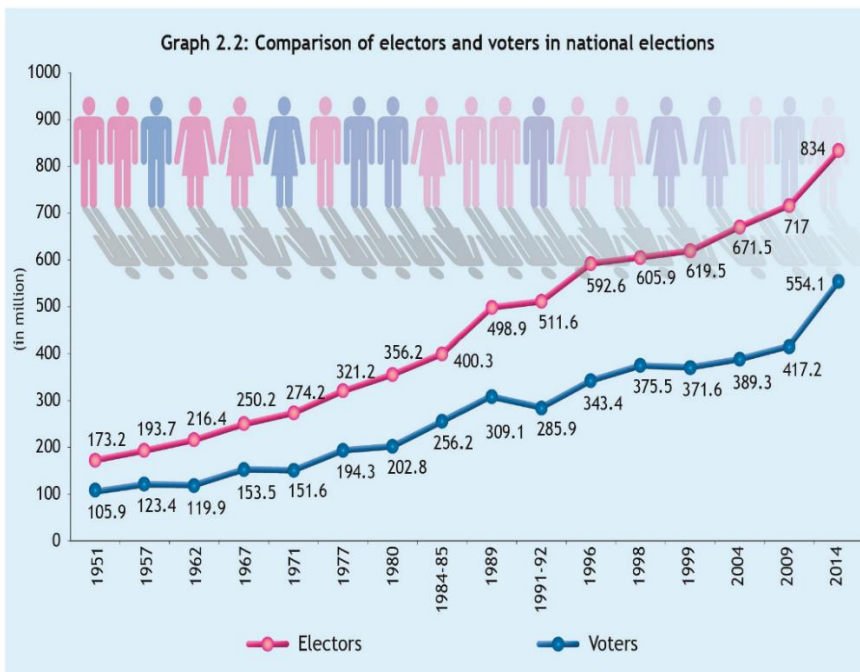
- **High on VQ -** CEO, UP conceived the idea of Voter Quotient to engage the voters. Termed "Know your VQ" quiz, it was launched months ahead of the polls, and garnered a lot of attention. "**Know your VQ**" was made more engaging by giving mementos (T-shirts, caps and mugs) to the winners, ensuring enthusiastic participation. A gala ceremony was organised to felicitate the VQ winners.



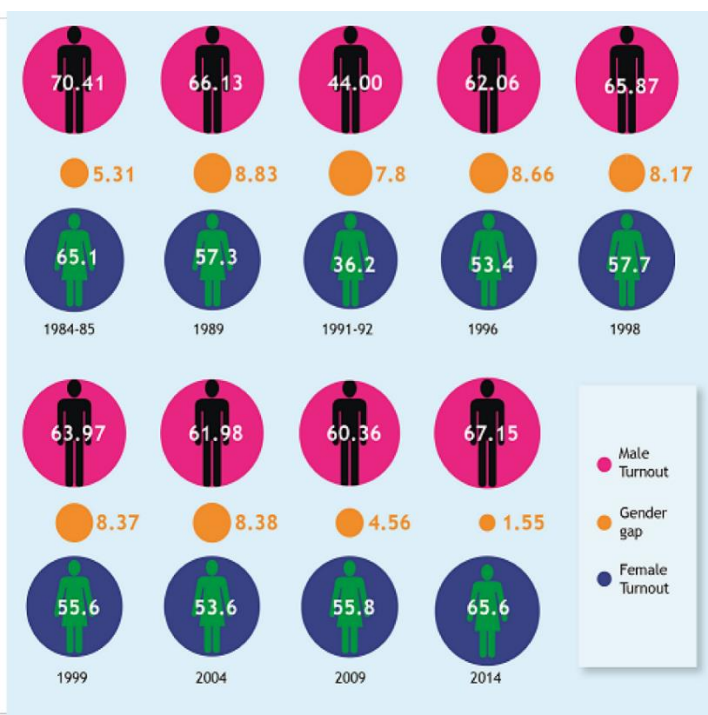
In Rajasthan voter awareness programme “Colours of Democracy” and popularly called “Rainbow Week” was planned on the various themes related to the seven colours of the rainbow, each colour conveying a particular aspect of the value of voting in the vibrant Indian democracy.

- World’s Largest rangoli, 190,000 sq ft in Bulandshahr to motivate people to vote in the elections. Feminisation of the voter education campaign was taken up to target the traditionally low women participation

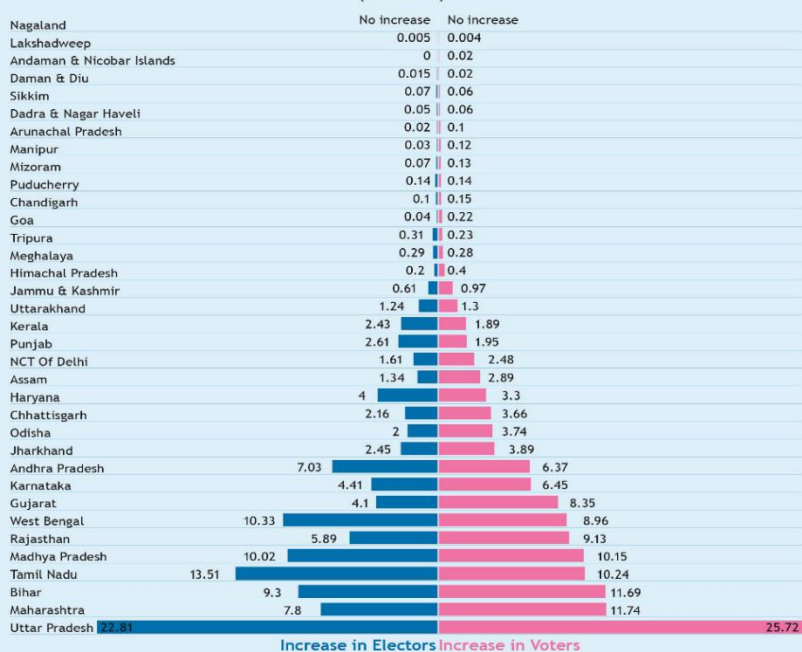
- 58,398 signed pledges in single day in Narmada district has been awarded the status of a Guinness World Record of “Most Pledges to Vote in an Election”
- Valsad district also created Guinness record posting postcards to 10.96 lakh voters. These postcards were painted/written by students, CSOs and NGOs, etc. with the message “Thank you for voting”



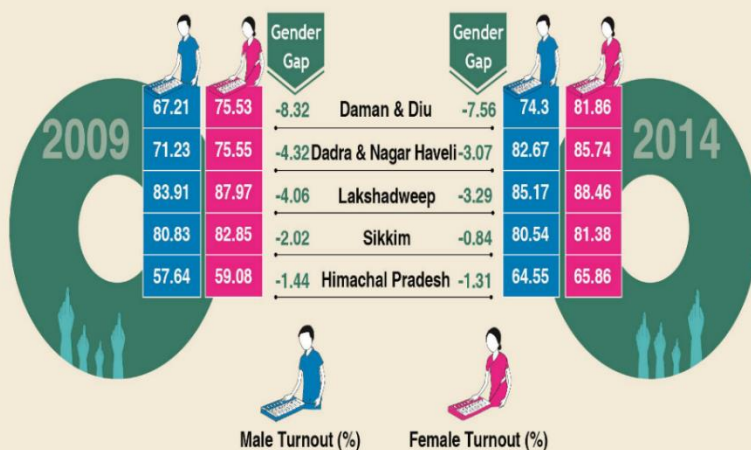
## Gender Gap in Lok Sabha Elections



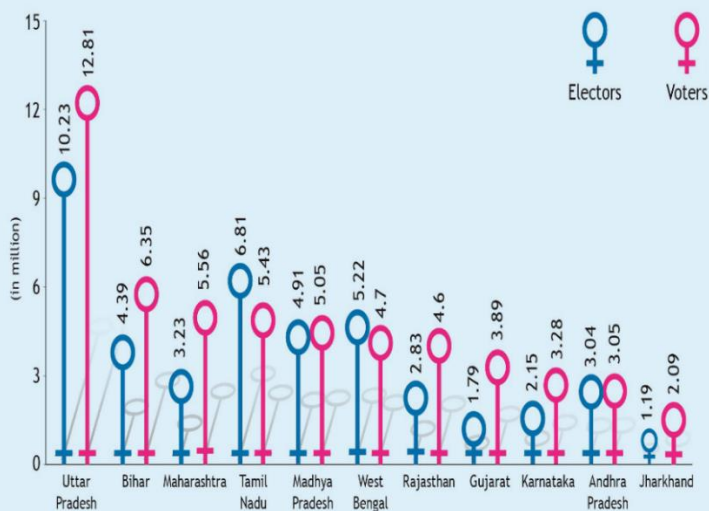
Graph 2.3: Increase in the number of voters/electors in States/UTs over Lok Sabha election 2009 (in million)



Graph 2.10: Comparative gender gap in States/UTs where women turnout rate was higher than men in LS 2009



Graph 2.9 Increase in women electors & voters in LS 2014 over 2009  
(voter increase > 2 million)



## Challenges & Opportunities

- Bridging gender gap
- Overcoming Urban Apathy
- Engaging Youth
- Migration and change of residence
- Weather conditions
- Poll Boycott
- Political neutrality

## Way Forward

- Evidence based interventions
- Better surveys
- CSR Linkages
- Optimising Social Media
- Dialogues and Debates
- Innovations
- Documentation

*SVEEP having achieved increased participation now aspires for complete and enlightened participation*



## Annexure 6: Presentation by Nepal



निर्वाचन आयोग, नेपाल  
ELECTION COMMISSION, NEPAL

### Status and Findings on Political Participation of Women in Nepal: An Electoral Perspective



1



निर्वाचन आयोग, नेपाल  
ELECTION COMMISSION, NEPAL

## Outline

- Background,
- Objectives,
- Methodology,
- Facts and Status of Political Participation of Women in Nepal,
- Constitutional and Policy Framework for Gender,
- Initiatives of the ECN for Political Participation of Women,
- Findings on the Political Participation of Women in Nepal,
- Strategies and Recommendations for promoting Political Participation of Women in Nepal,





## Background

- Study as per the Resolution no.11 of the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of FEMBoSA to explore the appropriate ways to facilitate women in their political participation,
- Study carried out by the ECN with support of UNDP/ESP,
- Study from the electoral perspective in the key areas of voting, candidacy, campaigning, representation, election management and roles of women in policy decisions,



## Objectives

- To analyse and identify reasons and barriers for low political participation of women,
- To identify strategies and procedures to increase women's political participation



## Methodology

- Legal Analysis and Literature Review,
- Focus Group Discussion with Political Parties, Civil Society and Media Houses,
- Interview with politicians and voters,
- Use of both primary and secondary data as well as qualitative and quantitative data,
- Use of both qualitative and quantitative modes of analysis



## Facts and Status of Political Participation of Women

- Nepali citizens first got the right to vote under the Government of Nepal Act, 1948,
- Beginning of the multiparty democratic system, 1950
- First general election, 1959:
  - FPTP electoral system,
  - 15 women candidates,
  - 1 women elected,
- Panchayat System, 1962 – 1990
  - Absence of political parties,
  - Participation in movements for multiparty democracy,



## Facts and Status of Political Participation of Women

- Restoration of Multiparty Democracy, 1990,
- Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal, 1990, mandated at least five percent of the candidates contesting elections had to be women,
- General Elections from 1990 to 2000,

Election year	Women's Candidacy	Elected Women	Total Seats	Percent in total Seats
1991	81	7	205	3.41
1994	86	7	205	3.41
1999	143	12	205	5.85



## Facts and Status of Political Participation of Women

- **Post Conflict Period from 2006 –**
  - Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007 ensured mixed parallel electoral system (FPTP +PR: 240 + 335+26 = 601 seats),
  - Two Constituent Assembly Elections: 2008 and 2013,
  - At least 33 percent women of the total candidates in the closed list required,

Election year	Women elected from FPTP	Women elected from PR	Nominated by the Cabinet	Total women elected	Total Seats	Percent in total seats
CAE, 2008	30	161	6	197	601	32.7
CAE, 2013	10	162	2	174	601	28.9



## Constitutional and Policy Framework for Gender

### ▪ Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007

- **Article 13, Right to Equality** but especial provisions can be made for the empowerment of women and other minority groups,
- **Article 20, Right of Women** that includes right to reproductive health, reproduction and equal rights to ancestral property,
- **Article 21, Right to Social Justice** that ensures the proportional inclusion of women and other minorities in the state structure,

### ▪ Current 13th Three Year Plan

- **Two objectives under the head “Gender Equality, Inclusion and Mainstreaming”**
  - Promote gender role for the economic, political and social empowerment of women and
  - End gender violence and gender based discrimination



## Initiatives of the ECN for Political Participation of Women

### ▪ Gender and social inclusion policy, 2013

#### • Objectives:

1. To mainstream gender in all the electoral processes,
2. To incorporate inclusive vision in all the stages of the electoral process,
3. To develop the Election Commission, Nepal as a gender sensitive and inclusive institution.

### ▪ Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), Strategy 2014 -2019,

#### • Objective:

To implement the gender and social inclusion policy, 2013 for building ECN as an institution sensitive to GESI issues,

### ▪ Gender and Inclusion Institutional Mechanisms:

- Gender and Inclusion Coordination Committee
- Gender Unit and Gender Focal Point



निर्वाचन आयोग, नेपाल  
ELECTION COMMISSION, NEPAL

## Initiatives of the ECN for Political Participation of Women .....

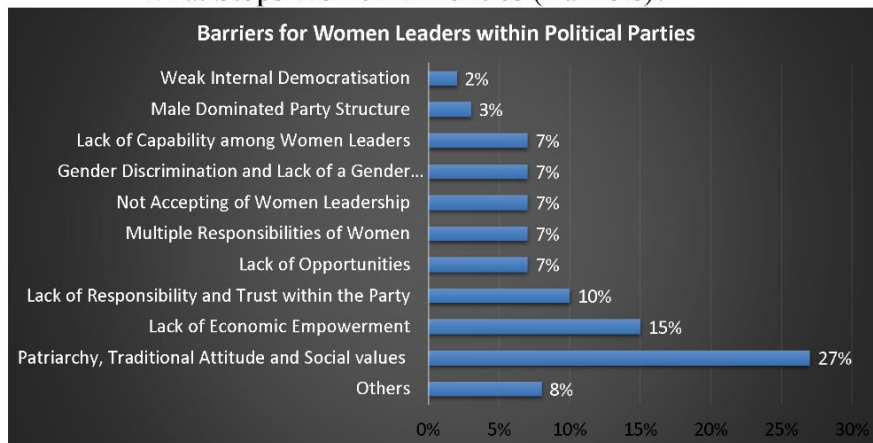
- Voter Education Volunteers in all 10,013 polling locations: 50 percent women,
- Gender and BRIDGE (Building Resource in Democracy, Governance and Elections) Trainings,
- Gender friendly voter education and education materials,
- Gender Monitoring of the CAE, 2013 by National Women's Commission
- 120 polling centers managed by women officials alone,
- Gender equality sought in trainings as far as possible,
- In each of 18,775 polling centers, women volunteers to manage the line/queue of women,
- In each of 18,775 polling centers, women deployed to apply the indelible ink on the finger,



निर्वाचन आयोग, नेपाल  
ELECTION COMMISSION, NEPAL

## Findings on the Political Participation of Women

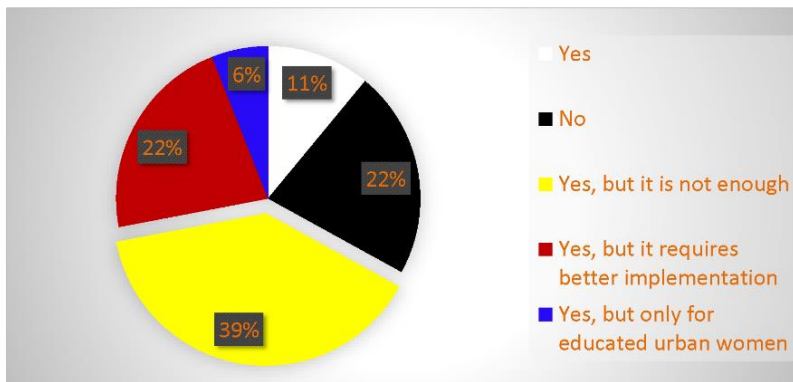
- What Stops Women in Politics (Barriers)?





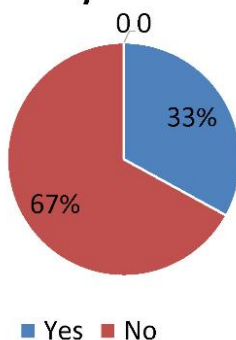
## Findings on the Political Participation of Women

- Are the current legal provisions supportive for increasing the participation of women?



## Findings on the Political Participation of Women

Has the PR system discouraged women from contesting elections in the FPTP system?



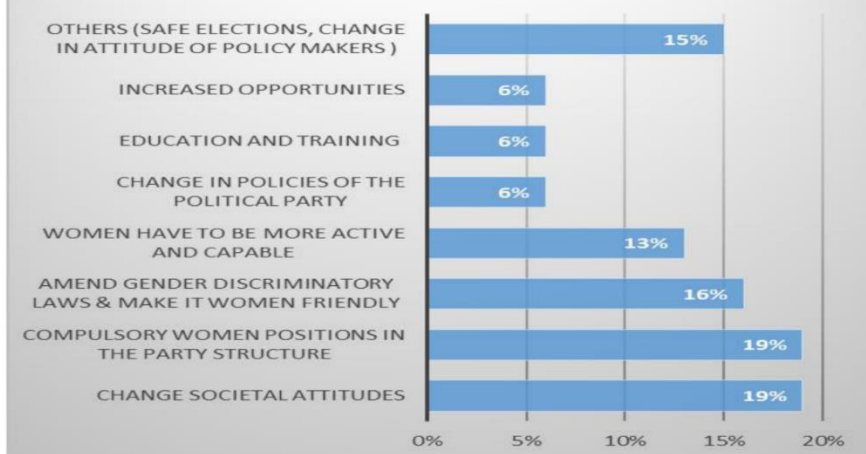




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ELECTION COMMISSION, NEPAL

## Findings on the Political Participation of Women

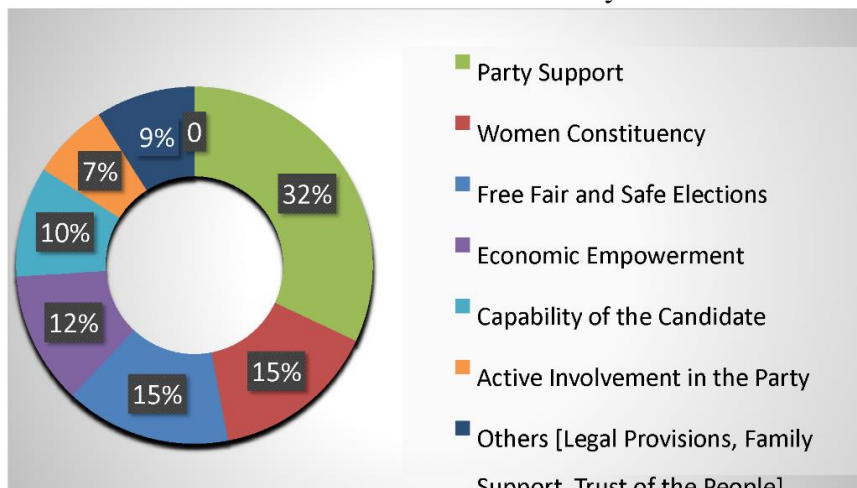
### Removal of Barriers



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ELECTION COMMISSION, NEPAL

## Findings on the Political Participation of Women

What makes women successful in FPTP system?

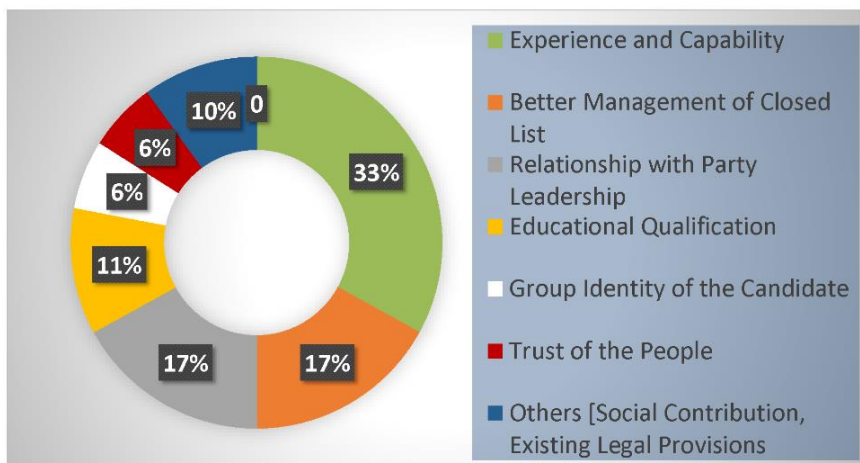




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ELECTION COMMISSION, NEPAL

## Findings on the Political Participation of Women

What makes women successful in PR system?



निर्वाचन आयोग, नेपाल  
ELECTION COMMISSION, NEPAL

## Findings on the Determinants of Voter's Choice

- **Party Identification (Party based):** One third of the voters surveyed reported that they voted on party lines,
- **Candidate Appeal (Candidate based):** 44% of the voters voted on the basis of candidates rather than on party lines, 60% voters among the interviewed voted as per the capability of the candidate,
- **Women voting for women:** Though respondents were positive, 65% responded that gender did not matter with regards to being a good leader, capacity first,





## Strategies and Recommendations for promoting Political Participation of Women

### ▪ Legal Front

- Certain laws and acts relating to elections should have some provisions (at least speak) regarding women.
- The FPTP system should have the requirements of at least 33 percent women candidacy,
- There needs to be a certain number of women constituencies on a rotational basis for the FPTP system,
- Closed list under the PR has to be really closed, no change on the on the order once submitted,
- Provisions of providing security to all candidates, especially women and other vulnerable groups during election period



## Strategies and Recommendations for promoting Political Participation of Women

### ▪ Political Front

- Party constitution should be amended to include requirements of women and their participation,
- Parties should provide training to women politicians on issues of political thought, national and international issues,
- Programs for political participation targeted at younger women and rural women,
- Women politicians at the top should encourage other women leaders to rise in the party structure,
- Provide candidacy for women in winnable constituencies,
- Gender sensitization programs and change in male centric psychology in party



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ELECTION COMMISSION, NEPAL

## Strategies and Recommendations for promoting Political Participation of Women

### ▪ Economic Front

- Encourage the registration of property in women's names and promote the concept of personal property of women,
- Strictly monitor the spending in election campaigns,
- Create an election fund for women candidates,
- Increase investment in education by providing fellowships and scholarships to girl children,
- Initiate programs for economic empowerment and earnings for women,



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ELECTION COMMISSION, NEPAL

## Strategies and Recommendations for promoting Political Participation of Women

### ▪ Socio-Cultural Front

- Create an environment to set women physically and psychologically free in terms of their thoughts, feelings, expressions and in mobility, ensure inner freedom,
- Include gender education in school and college curriculums,
- Increase the public sphere responsibilities of women reducing the private sphere responsibilities such as in family,
- Expand the networking and relations with the media, civil society and other organizations,
- Parties to provide more opportunities to women politicians, women cannot be declared as incompetent without actually giving them rights, roles and opportunities,

## Annexure 7: Presentation by Sri Lanka

# Factors that affect women to elect and to be elected in Sri Lankan context.

A case study in relation to 2001, 2004 and 2010  
Parliamentary Elections of Sri Lanka.

Samantha Jayasinghe  
Senior Assistant Commissioner  
Department of Elections- Sri Lanka

## Introduction

- Article No. 21 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, states that everyone has the right to take part in government of his /her country directly or through freely chosen representatives. The right of equal access to public service in his/her country. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of the Government.
- By the mid of the 20th century 95% of the countries granted women the most fundamental rights such as right to vote and right to stand for elections without any type of discrimination on the basis gender, race or religion.

## Research Problem

- Sri Lankan women have been enjoying the right to exercise the universal franchise from 1931. Sri Lanka is the first country to achieve that benchmark among Asian countries.
- Sri Lanka produced the first woman Prime Minister in the World in 1960.
- In 1981, Sri Lanka ratified the United Nations' Convention on the elimination of all Forms of discrimination against women.
- There is a clamor for reasonable female representation in the management and country politics due to certain inherent qualitative traits such as humanity, inclusiveness, relationship building and caring nature of women.
- The role of Sri Lankan women in electoral process and the representation of the political arena is marginal.

## Objectives

Adequate studies have to be carried out,

- To find out the factors that affect women to cast their vote freely and effectively in Parliamentary Elections.
- To find out the critical factors associated with contesting and electing women in Parliamentary Elections.



## Country profile



## Population by district , sex, sex ratio

Population by district, sex, sex ratio and population density

Entity	Total	Male	Female	Sex ratio	Population density (persons per km <sup>2</sup> )
<b>India</b>	<b>16,797,257</b>	<b>8,308,148</b>	<b>8,489,109</b>	<b>98.1</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Total - by country</b>	<b>16,939,488</b>	<b>8,425,877</b>	<b>8,513,611</b>	<b>98.1</b>	<b>34</b>
Algeria	2,281,274	1,151,413	1,129,861	98.7	3.58
Angola	2,084,525	1,075,782	1,008,743	106.7	1.9
Armenia	1,054,235	528,281	525,954	101.6	6.1
Azerbaijan	1,000,000	500,000	500,000	100.0	1.0
Bahamas	441,528	220,764	220,764	100.0	22.0
Bangladesh	149,851,261	74,925,630	74,925,630	100.0	149.85
Barbados	286,750	143,375	143,375	100.0	286.75
Belize	441,528	220,764	220,764	100.0	22.0
Bhutan	751,210	375,605	375,605	100.0	7.51
Bolivia	9,512,715	4,756,357	4,756,358	100.0	9.51
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3,871,000	1,935,500	1,935,500	100.0	38.71
Brazil	184,243,000	92,121,500	92,121,500	100.0	184.24
Bulgaria	7,512,715	3,756,357	3,756,358	100.0	75.12
Burkina Faso	11,261,000	5,630,500	5,630,500	100.0	112.61
Burundi	10,763,000	5,381,500	5,381,500	100.0	107.63
Cameroon	16,797,257	8,308,148	8,489,109	98.1	167.97
Canada	31,657,000	15,828,500	15,828,500	100.0	316.57
Chad	10,763,000	5,381,500	5,381,500	100.0	107.63
Chile	16,797,257	8,308,148	8,489,109	98.1	167.97
China	1,357,697,000	678,848,500	678,848,500	100.0	135.76
Colombia	31,657,000	15,828,500	15,828,500	100.0	316.57
Congo	10,763,000	5,381,500	5,381,500	100.0	107.63
Croatia	4,415,280	2,207,640	2,207,640	100.0	44.15
Cuba	11,261,000	5,630,500	5,630,500	100.0	112.61
Cyprus	751,210	375,605	375,605	100.0	75.12
Czechia	10,763,000	5,381,500	5,381,500	100.0	107.63
Dominican Republic	751,210	375,605	375,605	100.0	75.12
Dominica	751,210	375,605	375,605	100.0	75.12
DRC	10,763,000	5,381,500	5,381,500	100.0	107.63
Egypt	10,763,000	5,381,500	5,381,500	100.0	107.63
El Salvador	6,381,500	3,190,750	3,190,750	100.0	63.81
Equatorial Guinea	10,763,000	5,381,500	5,381,500	100.0	107.63
Ethiopia	10,763,000	5,381,500	5,381,500	100.0	107.63
Fiji	751,210	375,605	375,605	100.0	75.12
Finland	5,381,500	2,690,750	2,690,750	100.0	53.81
France	10,763,000	5,381,500	5,381,500	100.0	107.63
Ghana	10,763,000	5,381,500	5,381,500	100.0	107.63
Guatemala	10,763,000	5,381,500	5,381,500	100.0	107.63
Honduras	10,763,000	5,381,500	5,381,500	100.0	107.63
Hungary	10,763,000	5,381,500	5,381,500	100.0	107.63
Iceland	316,570	158,285	158,285	100.0	31.65
India	16,797,257	8,308,148	8,489,109	98.1	167.97
Indonesia	10,763,000	5,381,500	5,381,500	100.0	107.63
Iran	10,763,000	5,381,500	5,381,500	100.0	107.63
Ireland	4,415,280	2,207,640	2,207,640	100.0	44.15
Israel	7,512,715	3,756,357	3,756,358	100.0	75.12
Italy	10,763,000	5,381,500	5,381,500	100.0	107.63
Jamaica	2,207,640	1,103,820	1,103,820	100.0	22.07
Japan	126,100,000	63,050,000	63,050,000	100.0	1261.0
Jordan	6,38				

Note: Out of the 5 Districts in the Northern Province, Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Batticaloa were not covered during Preliminary and Final Census. Vavuniya, Mannar and Pannai were covered partially in the Eastern Province. Ampara was covered completely and Trincomalee and Batticaloa were covered partially. As such, estimates for the Districts and which were not covered or partially covered, are based on the information collected during the Listing and Mapping operation of the Census 2007, wherever possible, whereas the Listing and Mapping operation was not possible, we also compile the Resident General's Estimates based on the registration of Deaths and Deaths have been used.

## Methodology-

To find out the factors that affect women to cast their vote freely and effectively in Parliamentary elections.

- This study focuses on three Electoral districts (Colombo, Gampaha, Kaluthara) had lowest percentage of population below the poverty line and three Electoral districts, (Nuwara Eliya, Moneragala and Rathnapura) that recorded highest percentage of population below the poverty line during the last decade.
- The voter turnout, percentage of spoilt vote to be considered based on the official calculation done by the Department of Elections on the basis of Electoral Districts after each election.
- Secondary data were cross examined to find out whether there is a distinct relationship between the rate of literacy, level of poverty with the voter turnout and percentage of spoilt vote.
- Data from the Department of Elections and Department of Census and statistics were used analyzed using “t” Statistical test

## Methodology-

To find out the critical factors associated with contesting and electing women in Parliamentary Elections

- Gathering of secondary data on female representation from the data sources of Department of elections and The Parliament of Sri Lanka.
- Public sector employee perception on contesting and electing women in Parliamentary elections was taken as a case study with the participation of non executive grade employees of the Department of Elections.
- There are more than 400 non executive grade employees in which 53% males and 47% females.

## Methodology-

To find out the critical factors associated with contesting and electing women in Parliamentary Elections (Contd..)

- Primary data were collected through a cross sectional survey using a questionnaire and focus group interviews. A sample of 50 employees was randomly selected to represent more than 10% of the total non executive employee-population by ensuring, that they were from all 22 Electoral Districts of the Island.
- A ranking system from 9 to 1 was adapted in the questionnaire to rank critical factors. Data were analyzed using “SAS “ Statistical software.

## Theoretical foundation of the study

Theory	Description
<b>Self-determination theory (SDT)</b>	It is concerned with the motivation behind the choices that people make, without any external influence and interference. (Edward L. Deci and R.M.Ryan)
<b>Voter turnout</b>	It is the number of ballots cast during an election divided by the total number of electors registered according to the Registration of Electors Act No. 44 of 1980, for a given Electoral District.
<b>Rejection of ballots/Spoilt vote</b>	Leaving sections of the ballot unmarked, or marking nothing at all or completing the ballot in an illogical or unapproved manner.
<b>Literate Person</b>	A person who can, with understanding, read and write a short simple statement on his/her everyday life.
<b>Rate of literacy</b>	The number of literate persons aged ten years and above as a percentage of the total population in that given age group.



## Key findings-Research Problem 1

### Findings through Secondary data analysis.

- Average voter turnout of last three Parliament Elections in Electoral districts which had lowest percentage of low income people was 74.32% while in other Electoral Districts which had a highest percentage of low income group was 74.99%, there is no significant difference between two groups.
- There was significantly a higher voter turnout in Electoral districts(Gampaha, Kaluthara, Nuwara Eliya) which had higher percentage of female electors, that was 75.80% compared to 73.53% of voter turn over in male dominant Electoral districts(Colombo, Moneragala, Rathnapura).

## Key findings

### Findings through Secondary data analysis.

- Rate of literacy of men was 89% in Poorest cluster of Electoral districts while 94% in Richest cluster of Electoral districts.
- When considering women,

Type of Electoral Districts on income	Rate of Literacy of women(%)	% Spoilt Vote
Lowest percentage of low income population (Colombo,Kaluthara,Gampaha)	93.36	4.71
Highest percentage of low income population (Nuwara Eliya,Moneragala, Rathnapura)	82.73	7.38

There was an inverse relationship between the percentage of spoilt ballot papers with the rate of literacy of women.

- In Nuwara Eliya( Dominancy of Female Electors and one of the three districts which had higher percentage below the poverty line) Average women's rate of Literacy was 74.80 while the percentage of spoilt ballot was 9.16.
- There were no incidents recorded on gender based violence during the election period.



## Key findings-Research Problem 2

Number of the Parliament	Term	Women Representation	Total	% of Women Representation
14th	2001-2004	10	225	4.4%
15th	2004-2010	14	225	6.2%
16th	2010-2016	13	225	5.7%

- Over the last decade women's representation in the Parliament of Sri Lanka was equal or less than 6.2%
- Male to female candidate's proportion in the nominations was 6.5: 1

## Key findings

### Findings through the survey data and Focused Group Interviews

- 45% of the public sector employees are not satisfied with the current representation of females at the parliament. Out of that employees lot , 65% are males.
- 30% of employees have been satisfied with male dominant Parliament and their performance , while 25 % is not interested in this topic.
- 38% of the public sector employees are willing to see a reasonable female representation at the parliament while implementing a system which enables at least 30% of female members at the Parliament.

## Key findings

Significant mean value and ranking of obstacles for the women to contest and represent for relative offices

S. No	Obstacle	Mean Value	Ranking
1	Lack of coordination with women's organizations	4.54	5
2	Women prioritize family matters	4.5	6
3	Proportional representation and preferential voting system leads to violence against women	5.52	4
4	Lack of financial support for women	6.04	2
5	Women's low self esteem and low in confidence	4.3	7
6	Low rate of literacy pertaining with women	4.1	8
7	No gender based quotas and reservation for women	6.22	1
8	Lack of institutional and party support	5.66	3
9	Lower mobilization of women on party politics	3.8	9

## Conclusions

- When there is women's rate of literacy higher, the percentage of spoilt vote goes down and that leads to effective voting.
- Level of education is critical for voting in this context.
- There is a clamor at least for 30% of feminine representation in the Parliament of Sri Lanka.
- Absence of gender based quota system, existing proportional representation system with preferential voting, lack of institutional and party support, lack of financial support for women specially during Election campaigns, lead to a lower women representation in elective offices.

## Implications

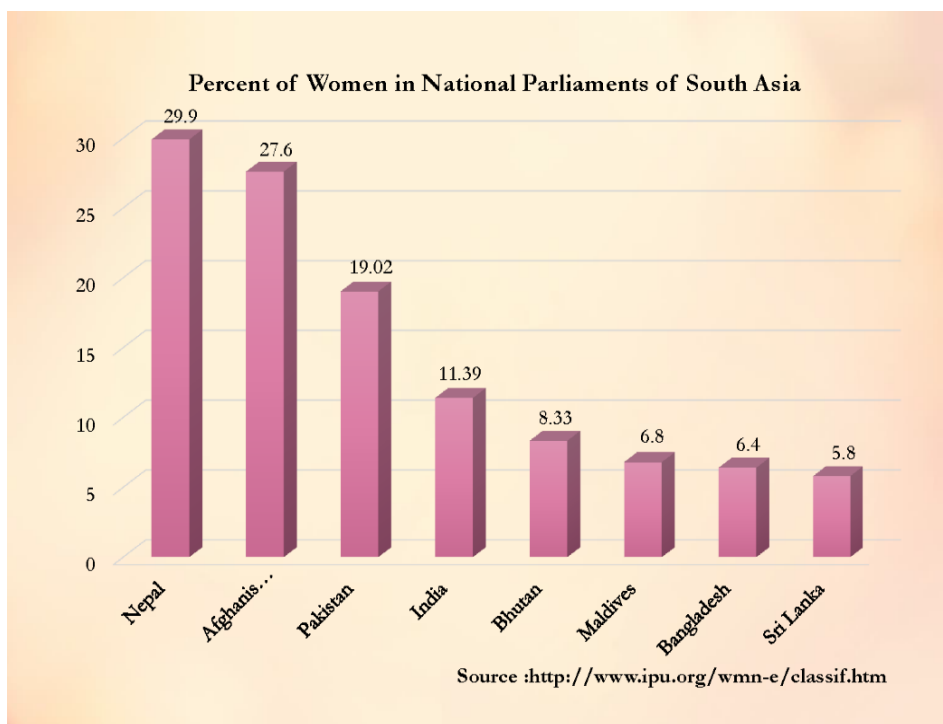
- Comparable sex disaggregate data must be collected to monitor men's and women's participation at Electoral process.
- A voter's political literacy plays a significant role, Therefore educating women on the way of accepted voting is a must.
- Electoral mechanism should be adjusted and supported for free and effective voting.
- Gender based quota system should be a pre requisite.
- Women's civil societal advocacy on politics should be supported.

## Annexure 8: Presentation by Bhutan



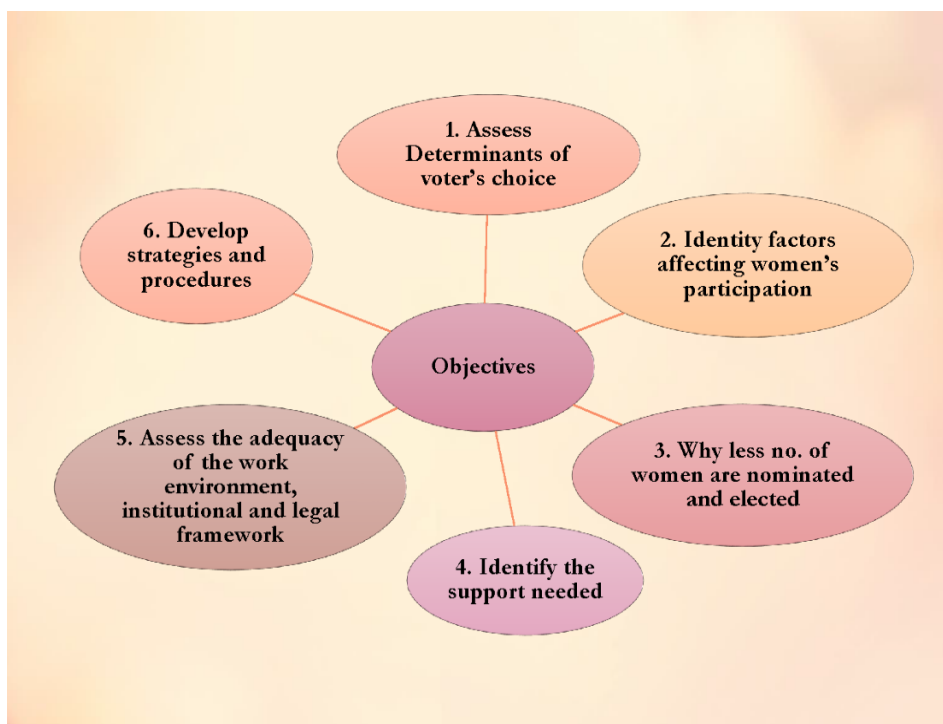
### Overview

1. Introduction
2. Objectives
3. Methodology
4. Results & Findings
5. Conclusion



## Introduction

1. **Constitution and Electoral Laws of Bhutan are Gender Neutral**
2. **Women's political and electoral participation enhancement - 4<sup>th</sup> FEMBoSA Meeting Resolution**
3. **Understand the Determinants of Voter's Choice in Elections**
4. **Identify the factors and common problems**
5. **Explore ways to facilitate women's political participation**



## **Research Methodology**

- 1. Field Questionnaire Survey (FQS)**
- 2. Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**
- 3. Social Media Survey (SoMS)**
- 4. Literature Review**



## Field Questionnaire Survey

1. **Conducted in the month of July 2014**
2. **Sample size: 1600 (1546) general voters in the 20 Dzongkhags**
3. **Covered all the 47 NA Constituencies**
  - Male Respondents: 51%
  - Female Respondents: 49%
4. **Sampling technique:**
  - Probability Proportional Size (PPS): 160 Chiwogs/towns
  - Simple Random Sampling: 10 households
5. **Survey Questionnaire was developed and shared with the NSB, NCWC, UNDP and IMS for their comments.**

## Focus Group Discussions

1. **Setting:** Closed room setting with moderator and participants
2. **Participants:** 3 groups in every Dzongkhag
  - General Voters
  - Professional Women Civil Servants
  - Contested/Elected Women Candidates
3. **Duration:** 1½ to 2 hrs for each group
4. **Format:** Prearranged questions and follow ups

5. **Topics:** Perception Women and Elections, sources of information, Basis of voting, Electoral Laws, Parties and Candidates, Barriers to women participation.
6. **Total Participants:** 821
  - Females: 687
  - Males: 134

### **Social Media Service**

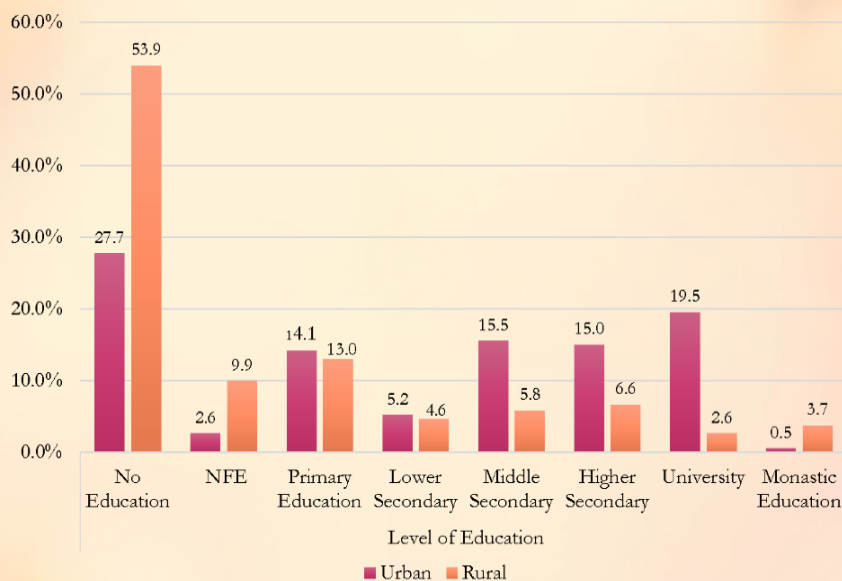
1. Opinions sought from the users of social media and social networking sites
2. Conducted through Facebook & Twitter & ECB website and with help of some popular and well-known Bloggers - Google Forms Questionnaire
3. Total respondents - 648 (641 completed)



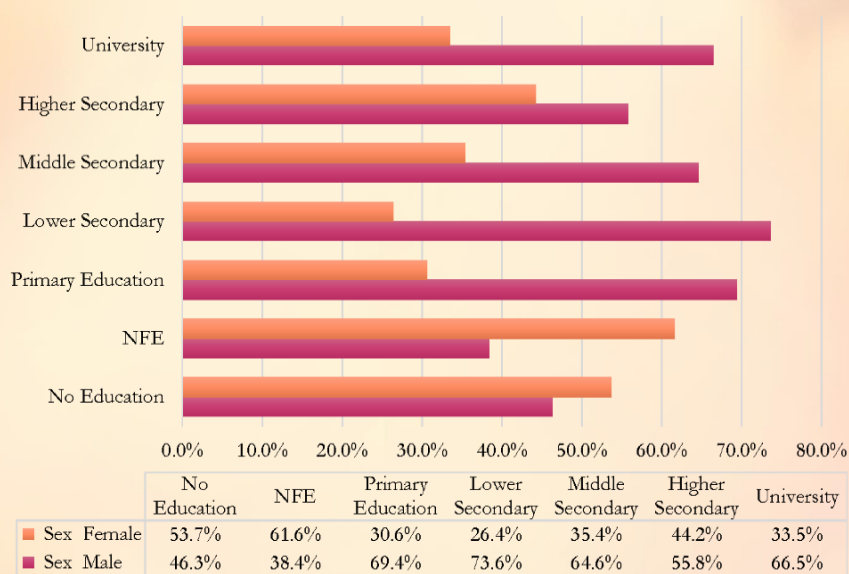
## **Results and Findings**

### **Background Characteristics of Questionnaire Survey Respondents**

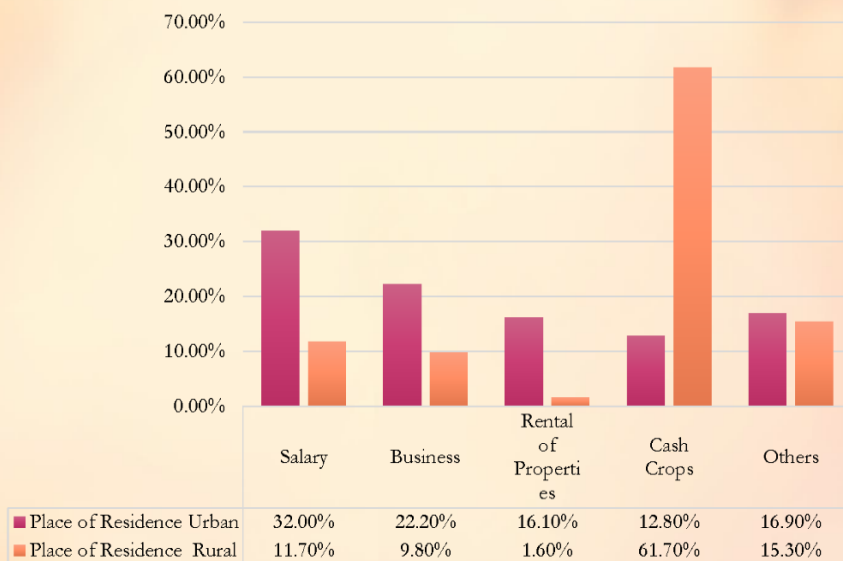
**Figure 2.2: Percence Distribution of Education by Place of Residence**



**Figure 2.4: Distribution of Level of Education by Sex**



**Figure 2.6: Distribution of Source of Income by Place of Residence**



**Figure 2.8: Distribution of Region**

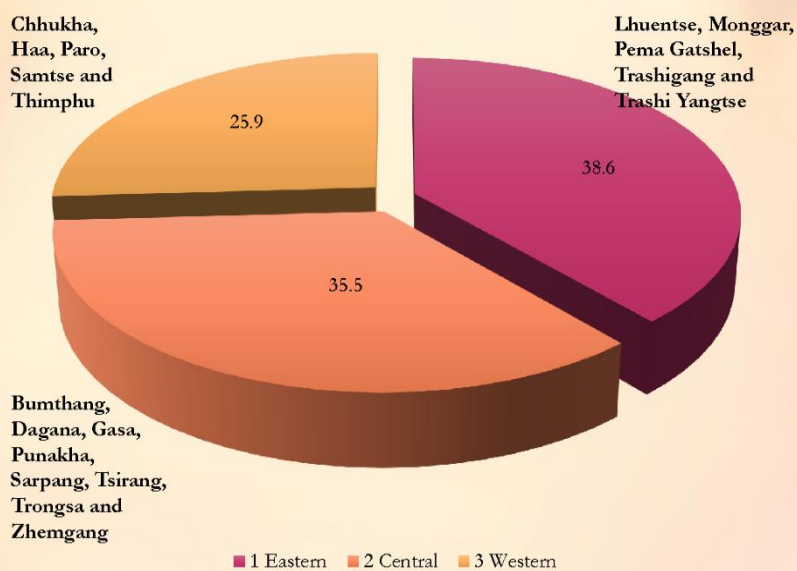
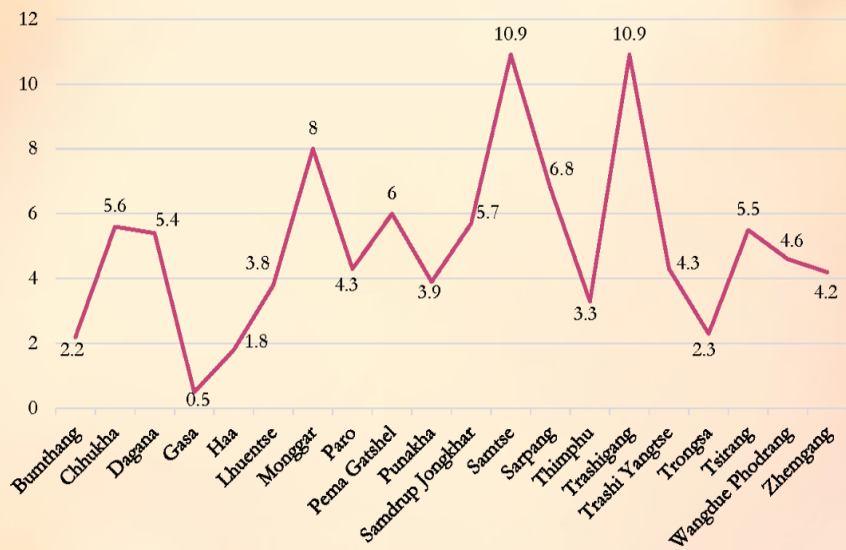


Figure 2.9: Percent Distribution of Registered Voters in 20 Dzongkhag



## Univariate Analysis

## Determinants of Voter's Choice

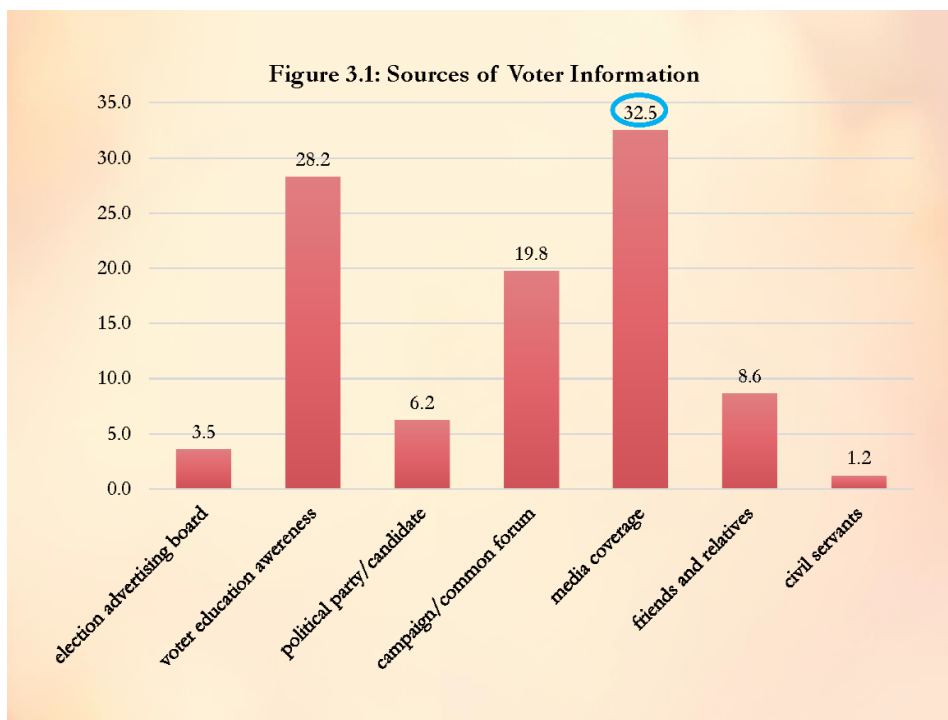


Table 3.1: Sources of Information by Region							
Region	Sources of Information						
	Election Ad. Board	Voter Education Awareness	Political Party/ Candidate	Campaign/ Common forum	Media	Friends and Relative	Civil Servant
Eastern	3.1%	33.5%	7.4%	18.7%	27.8%	8.6%	1.0%
Central	3.7%	31.3%	3.9%	18.0%	35.0%	7.5%	0.6%
Western	4.0%	16.2%	7.6%	23.7%	36.1%	10.1%	2.3%

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

Figure 3.2: Effectiveness of Voter Information

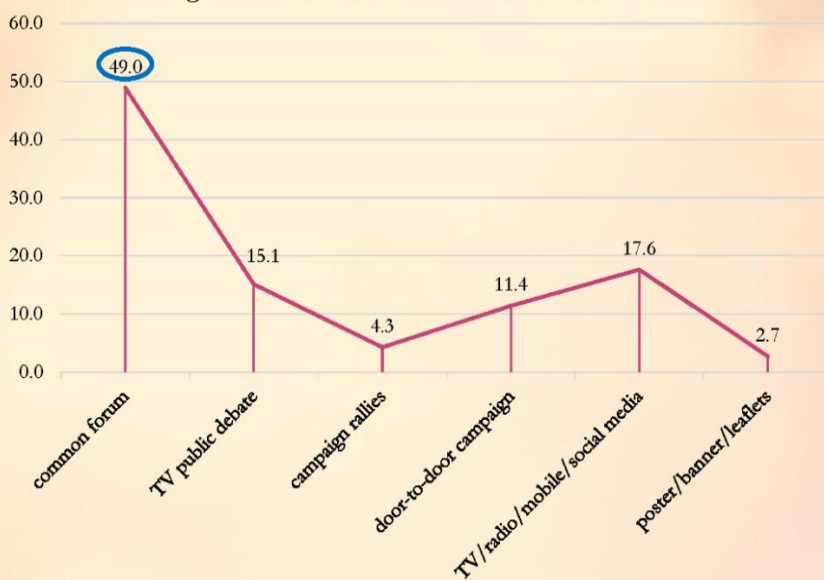
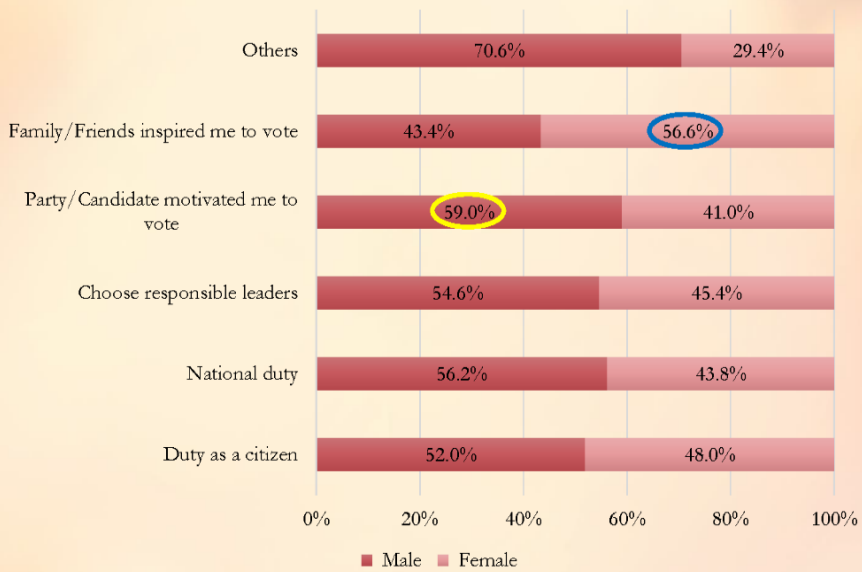


Table 3.3: Effectiveness of Election Campaigns by Region

Region	Effectiveness of Election Campaigns					
	Common Forums	TV Public Debate	Campaign Rallies	Door-to-Door Campaign	TV/ Radio/ Mobile/ Social media	Poster/ Banner/ Leaflets
Eastern	48.50%	14.80%	5.60%	10.40%	17.30%	3.40%
Central	51.20%	14.80%	0.90%	12.80%	18.00%	2.40%
Western	46.50%	16.10%	6.80%	11.10%	17.50%	2.00%

**Figure 3.4: Motivation to Vote by Sex**



**Figure 3.5: Reasons for Not Voting**

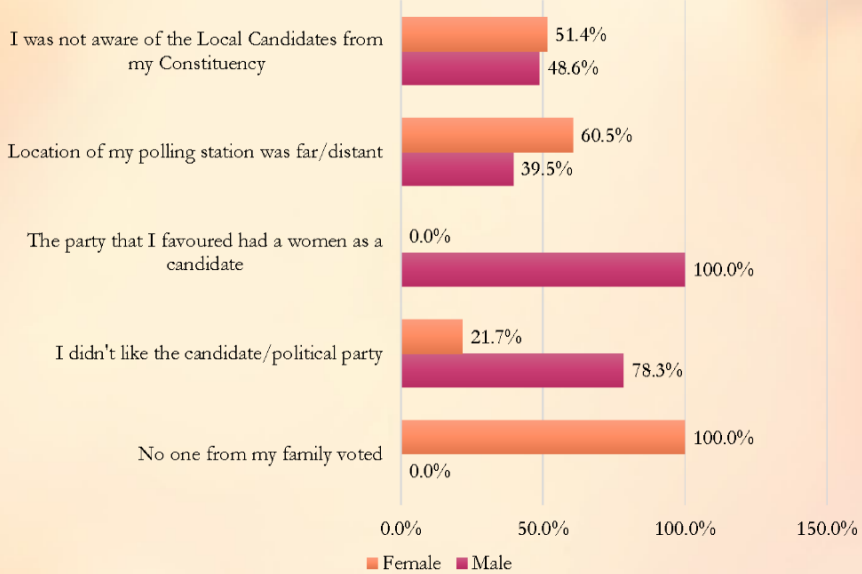




Table 3.7: Choice of Candidate		
Choice of Candidate	Frequency	Percent
Personality	51978	13.6
Better representation	238141	62.4
Better condition for constituency	89067	23.3
Gender/Religion	2605	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>381790</b>	<b>100</b>

**Figure 3.6: Voter's Choice by Sex (Decision to Vote)**

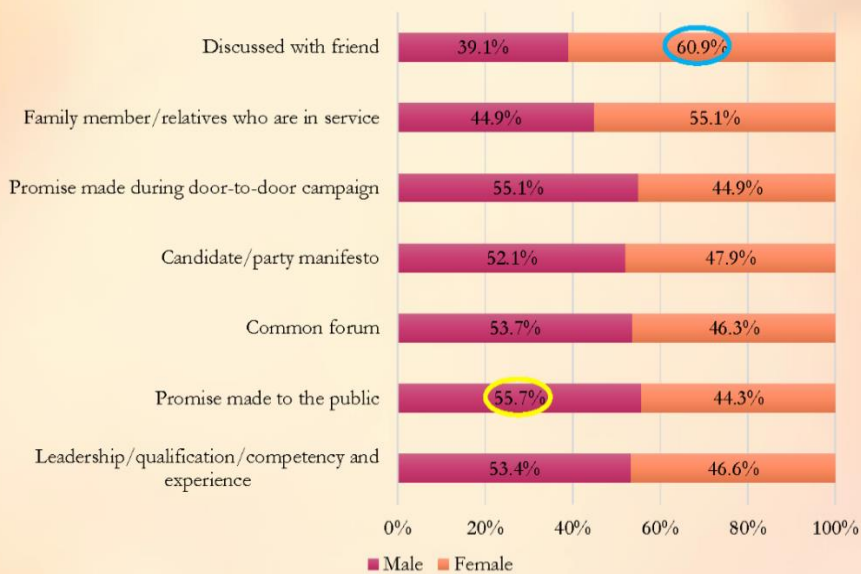
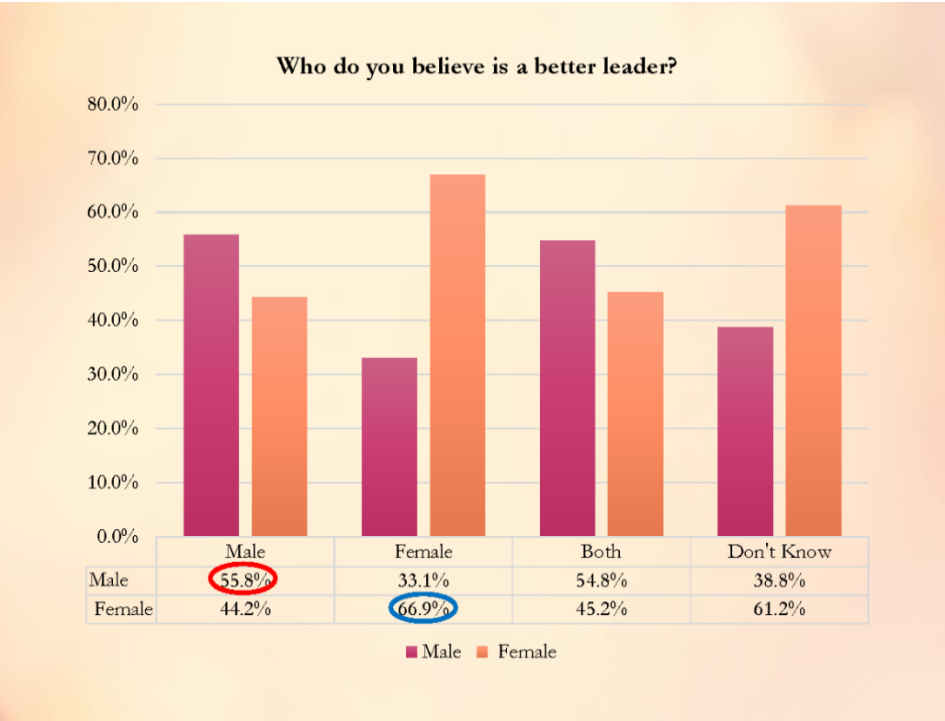


Table 8: Control over One's Decision to Vote		
Decision to Vote	Frequency	Percent
Very high degree	223194	58.5
High degree	132421	34.7
Small degree	17574	4.6
Not at all	8601	2.3
Total	381790	100

## Perceptions and Beliefs Affecting Women's Participation in Elective Offices

Table 4.1: Belief in Better Leader	
Better Leader	Percent (%)
Male	30.8
Female	5.9
Both	59.1
Don't Know	4.2
Total	100

Table 4.2: More Capable	
More capable	Percent (%)
Male	35.8
Female	4.8
Both	55.7
Don't Know	3.7
Total	100



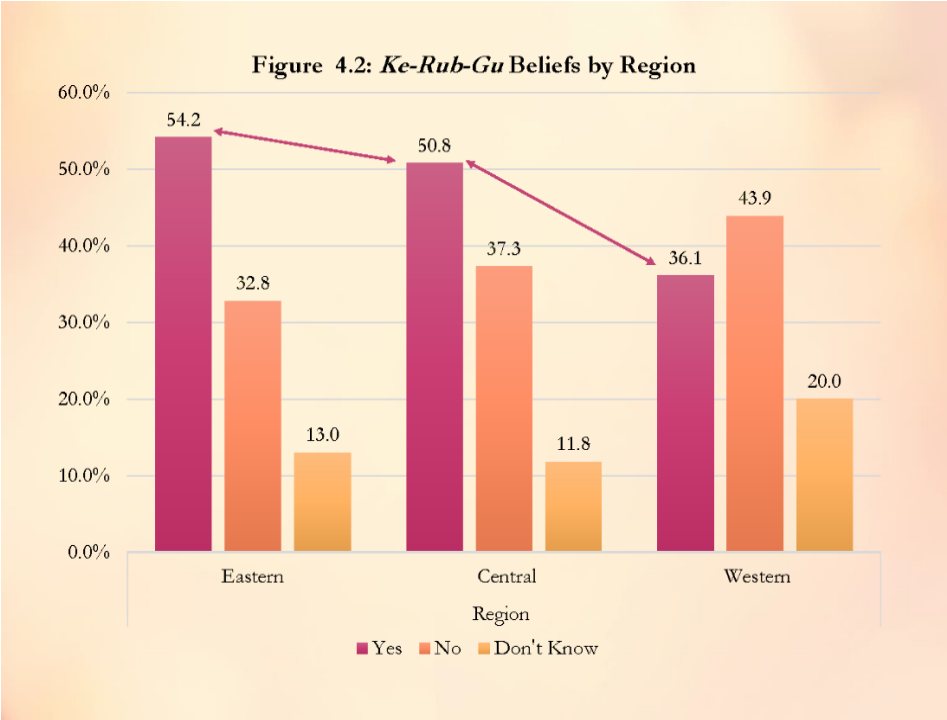
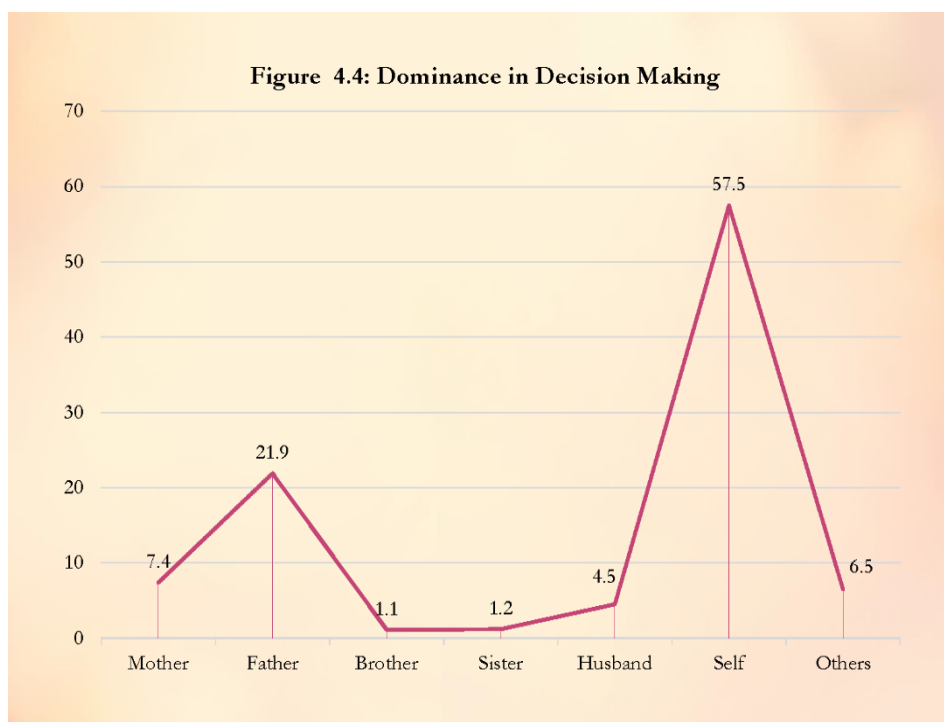
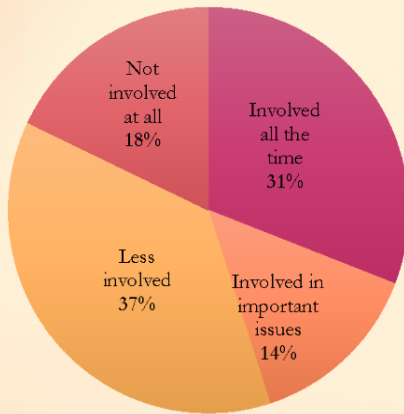


Table 4.5: Women Inferior to Men by Region			
Woman Inferior to Men	Region		
	Eastern	Central	Western
Decision Making	30.9%	34.4%	34.7%
Dealing with Govt. Officials	43.0%	32.1%	24.9%
Representing the Public	53.1%	19.0%	27.9%
Taking part in Election	38.9%	29.1%	32.0%
Business	33.6%	30.6%	35.7%
Field Works/Labour Force Participation	38.2%	42.3%	19.5%



**Figure 4.5: Women's Involvement in Elections**



**Figure 4.6: How are Women Involved**

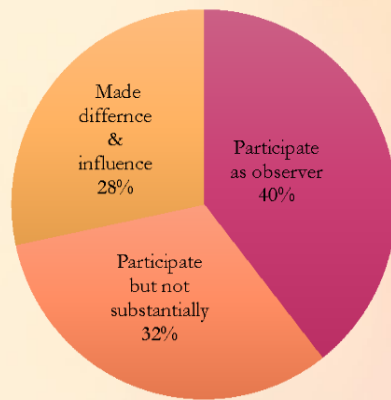
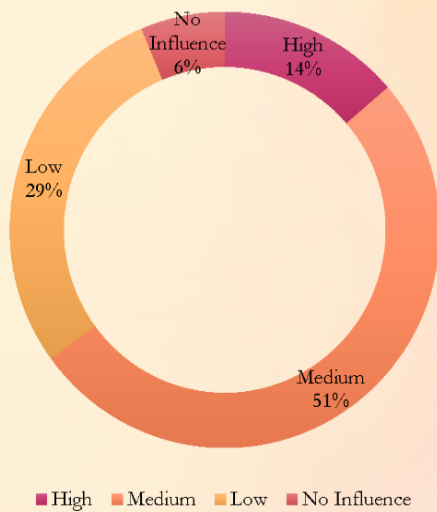
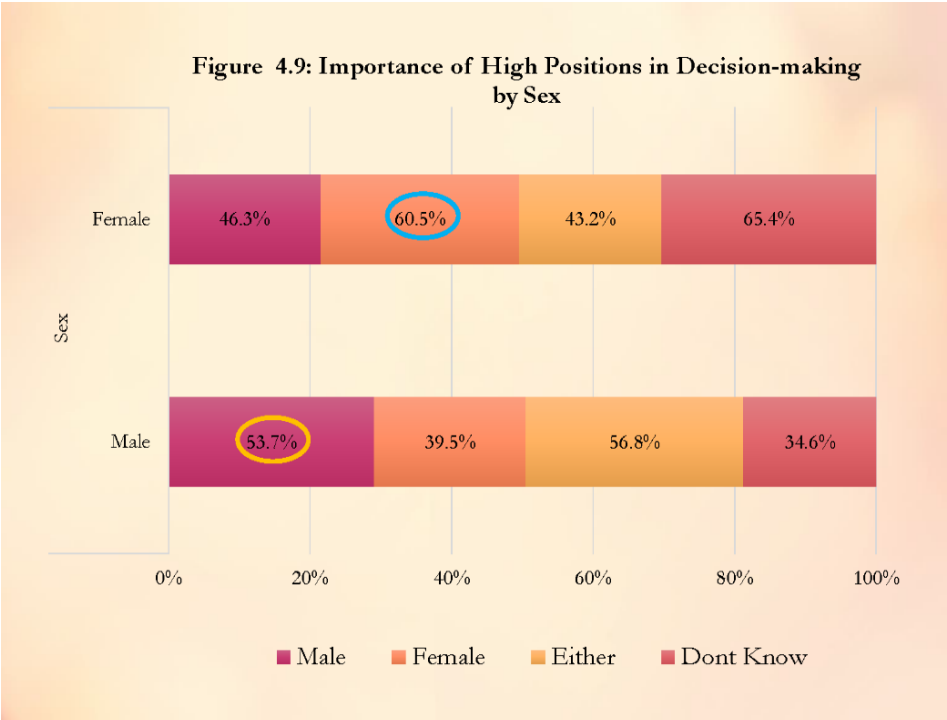
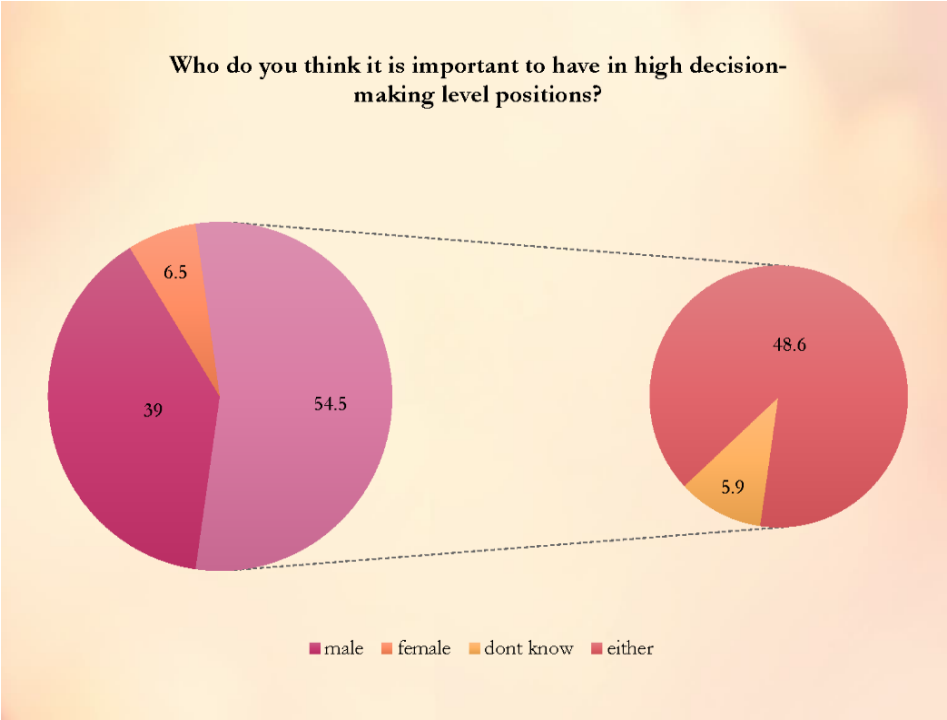
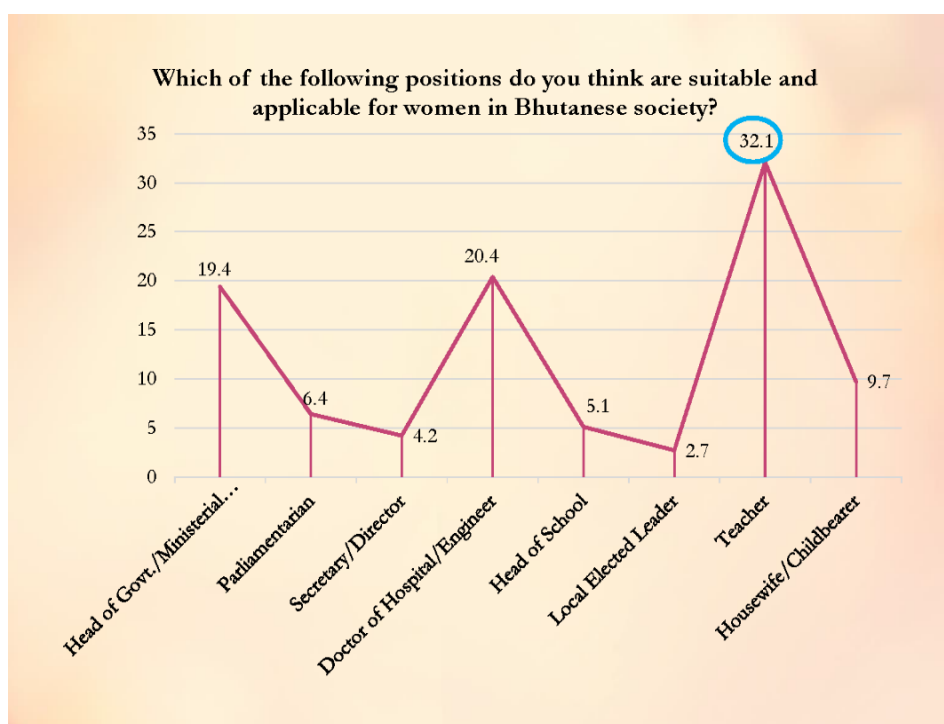
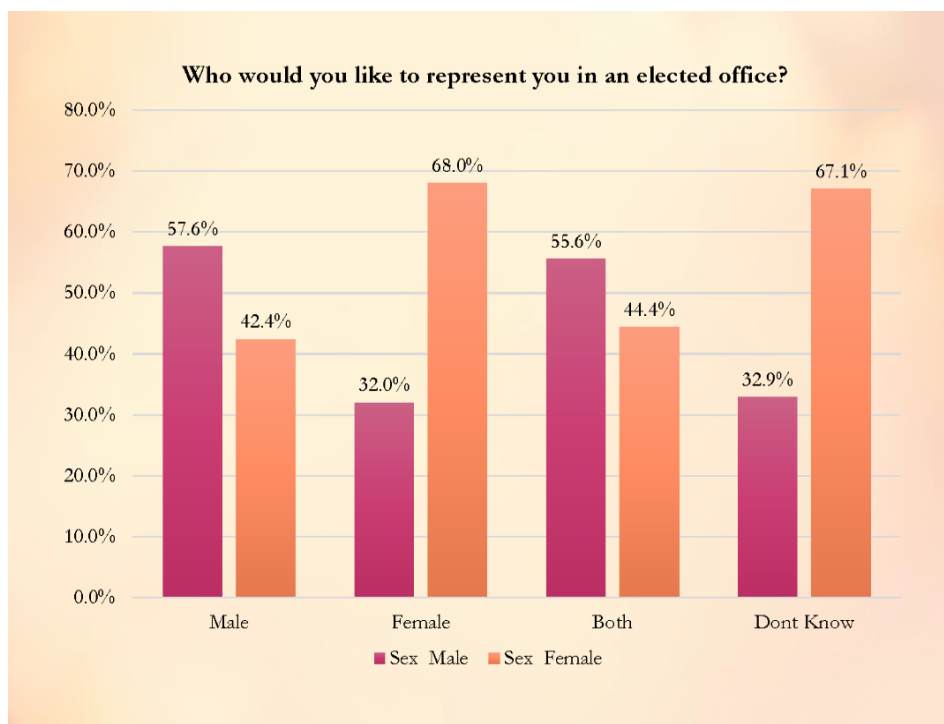


Table 4.6: Reasons for Less Involvement	
Reasons	(%)
Socio-Cultural Discrimination	14.6
Long Distance to Walk	11.3
Family Responsibilities	45.1
Less Competence/Men are more Experienced	29
Total	100

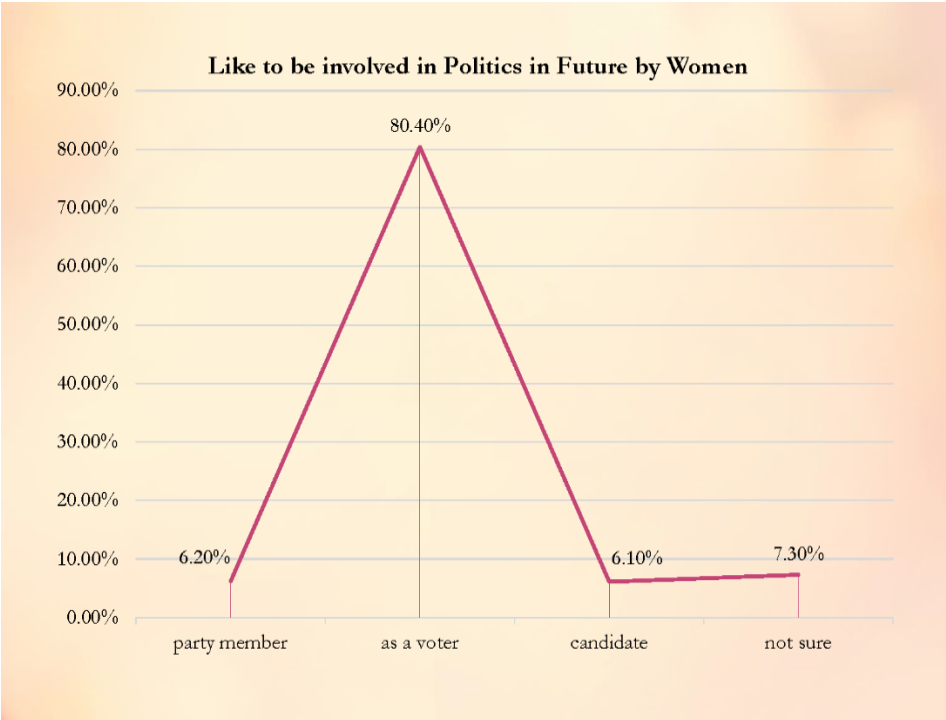
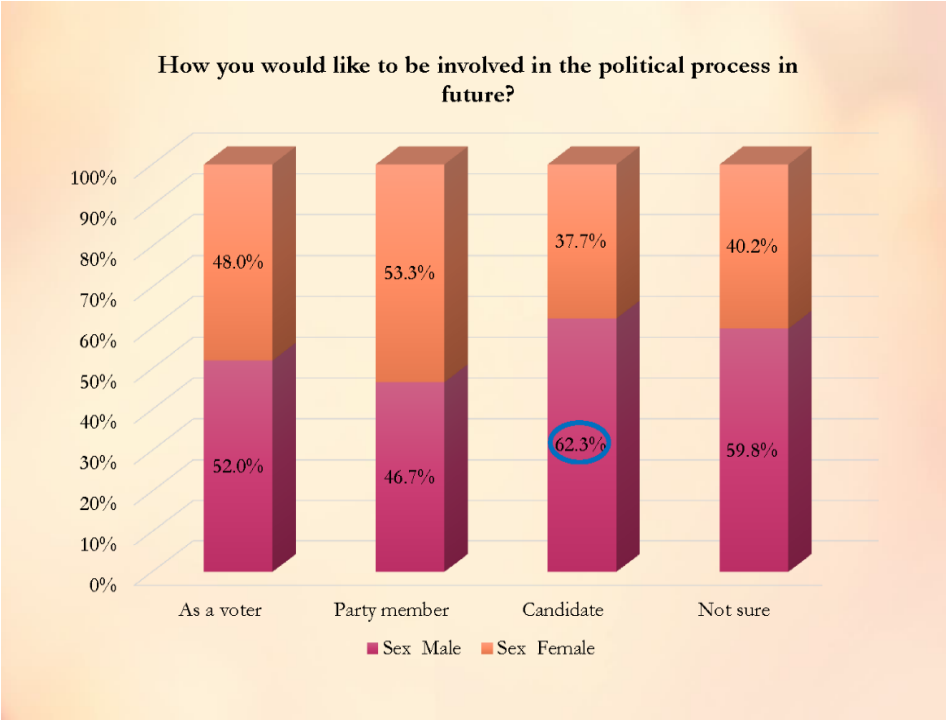
**Figure 4.7: Influence of Women in Decision Making**

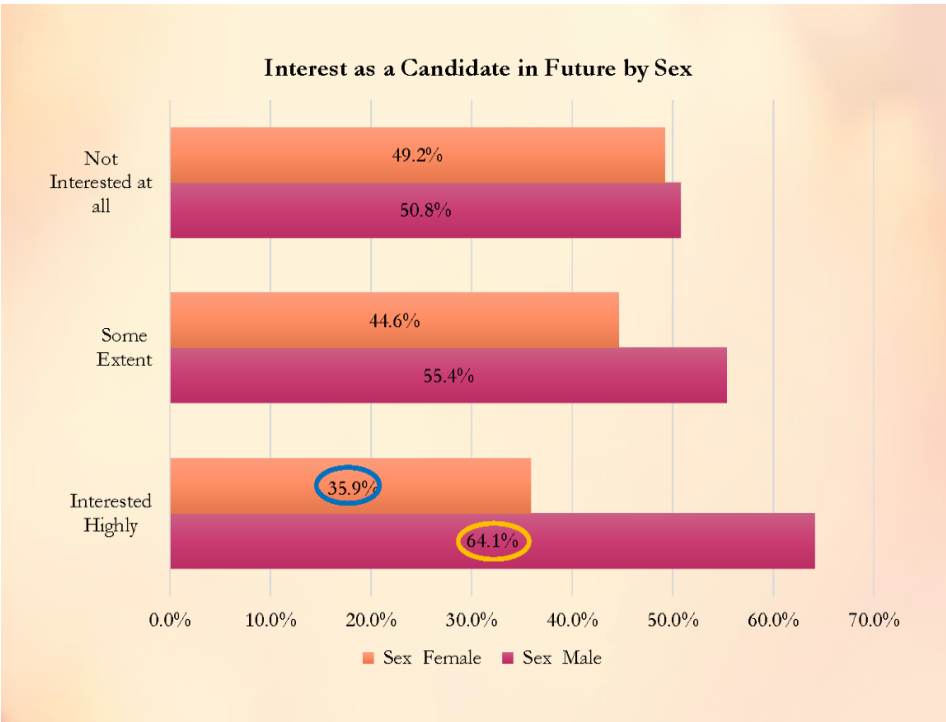
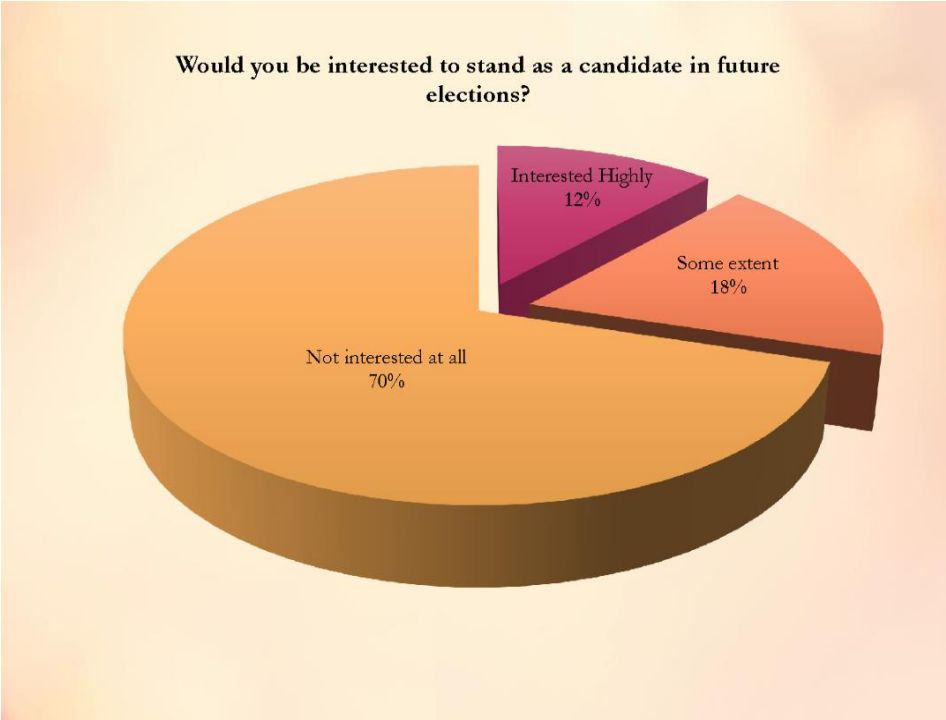


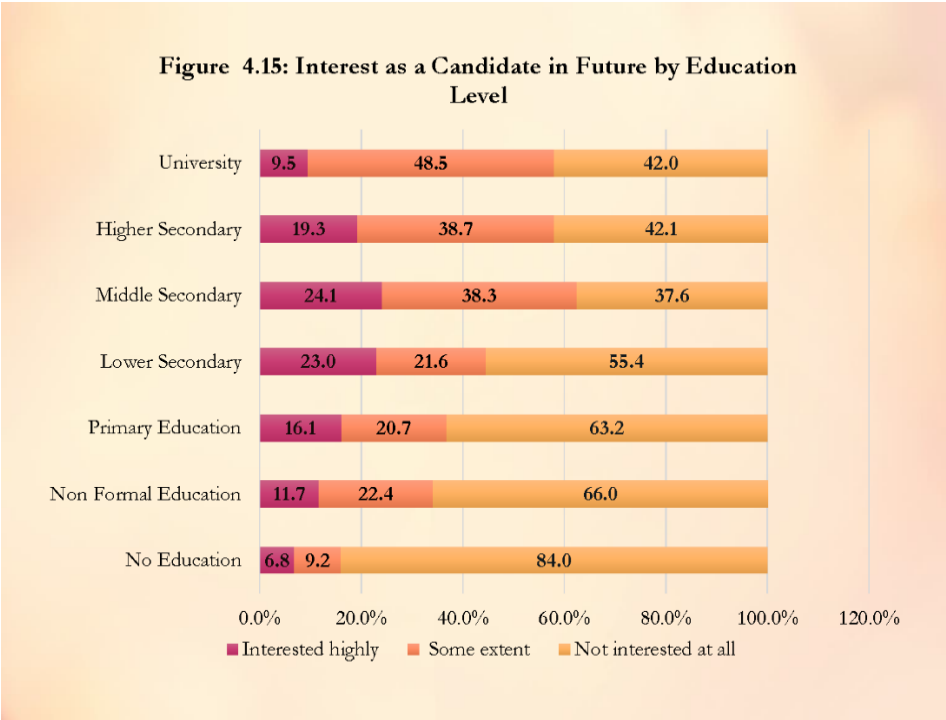
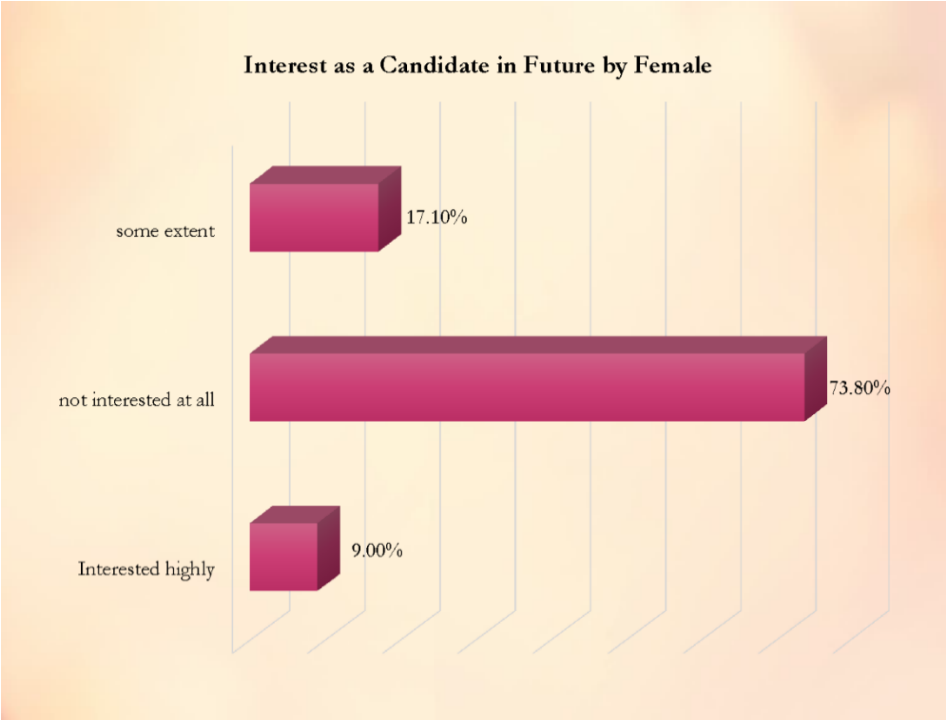




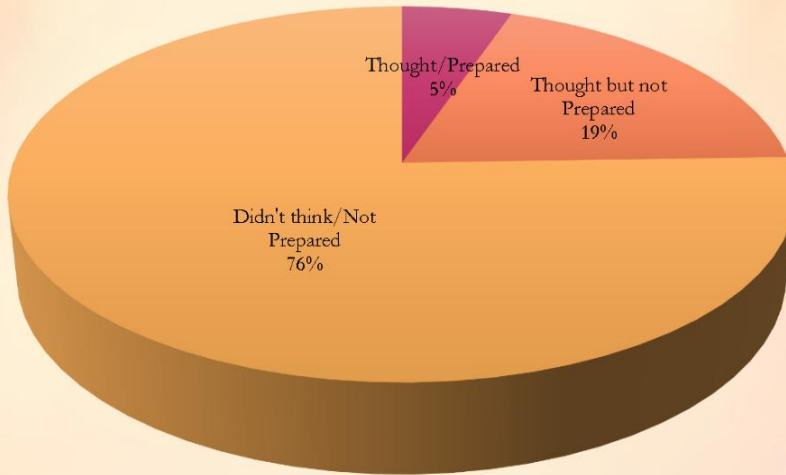




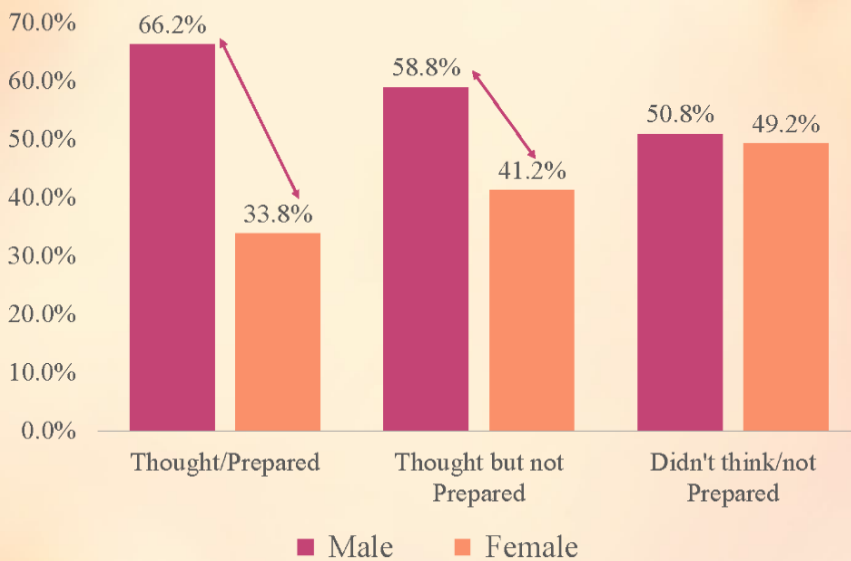


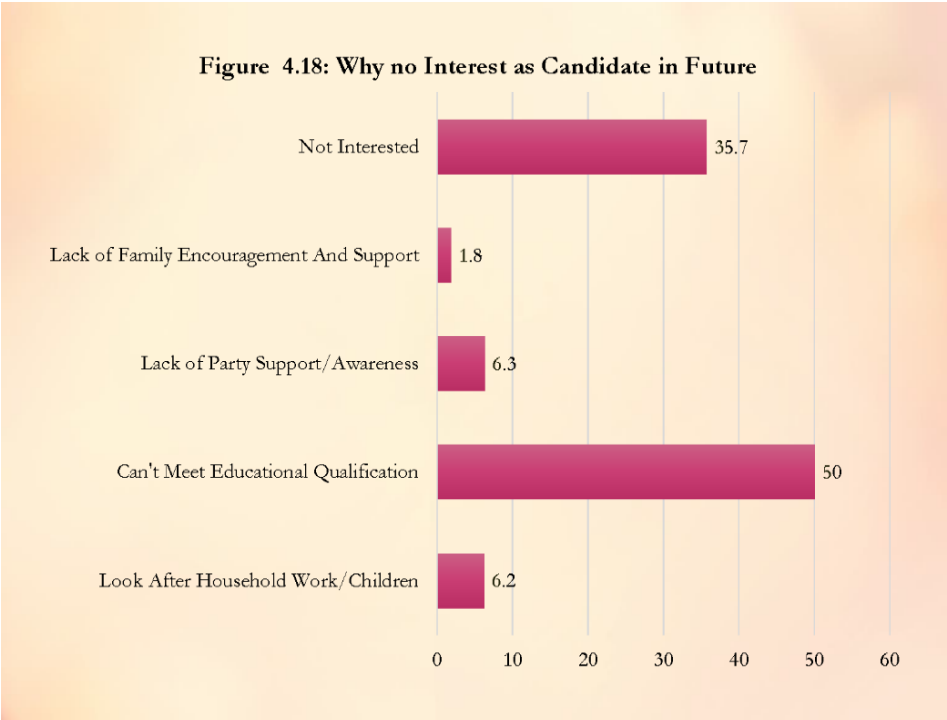
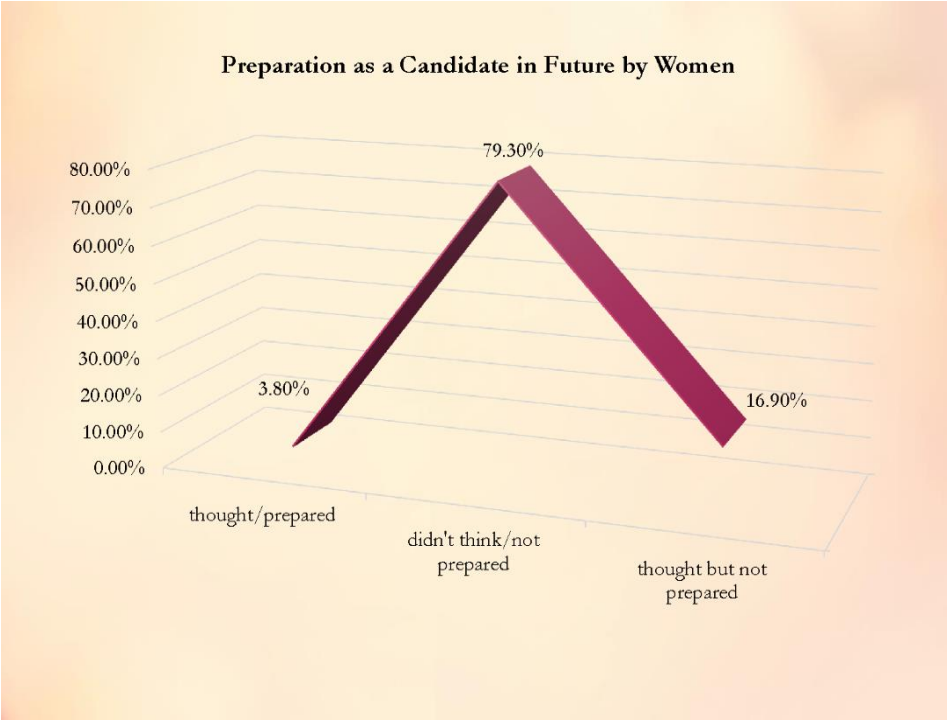


**Figure 4.16: Preparation as a Candidate in future**



**Figure 4.17: Preparation as a Candidate in Future by Sex**

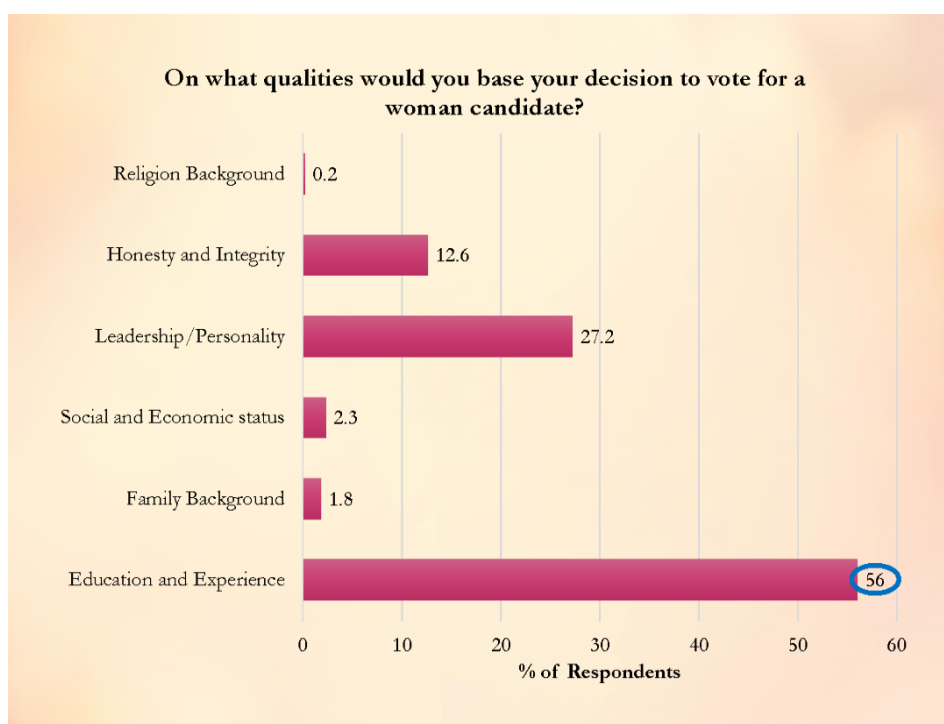




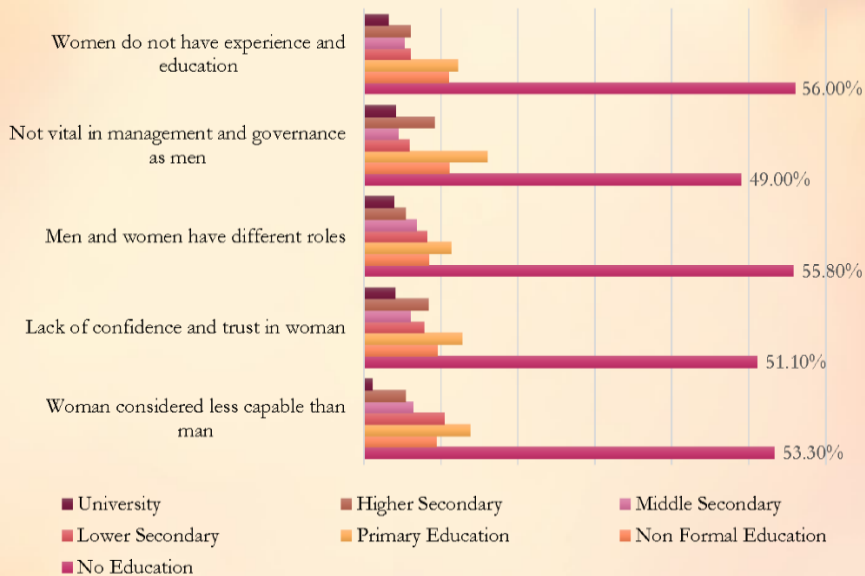
Do you think there will be more female candidates to participate in future elections?		Should there be more elected women representatives (MPs) in future elections?	
More Female Candidates in Future	Percent	More Woman MPs in Parliament	Percent
Yes	54.2	Yes	71.2
Some extent	31.9	No	9.6
Don't Know	13.8	Don't Know	19.2
Total	100.0	Total	100.0

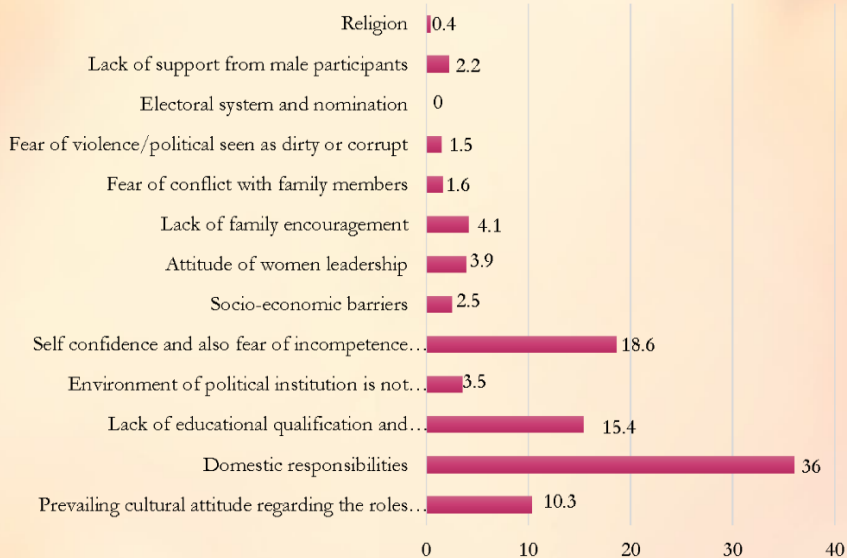
As a voter, how likely is it that you will vote for a female candidate in future elections?	
Vote for Female Candidate in Future	Percent
Not going to vote	11.2
Will vote	43.5
Sex doesn't matter	35.9
Not sure	9.3
Total	100.0



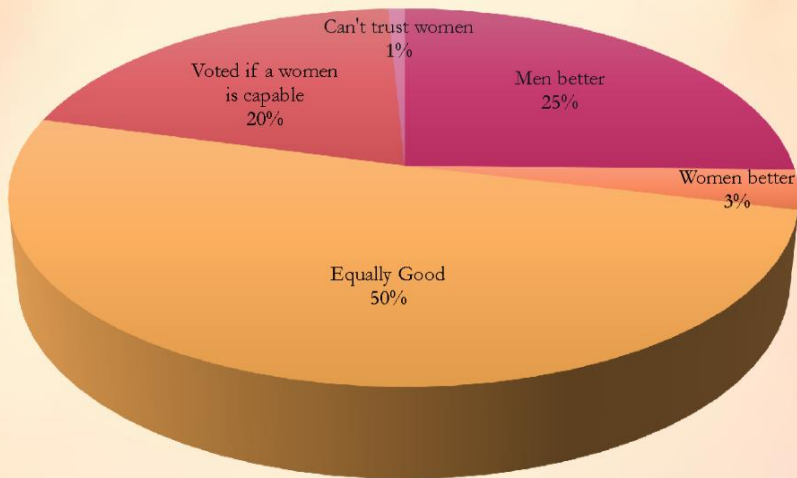
**Figure 4.20: Perceptions & Views related to Women by Education Level**



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



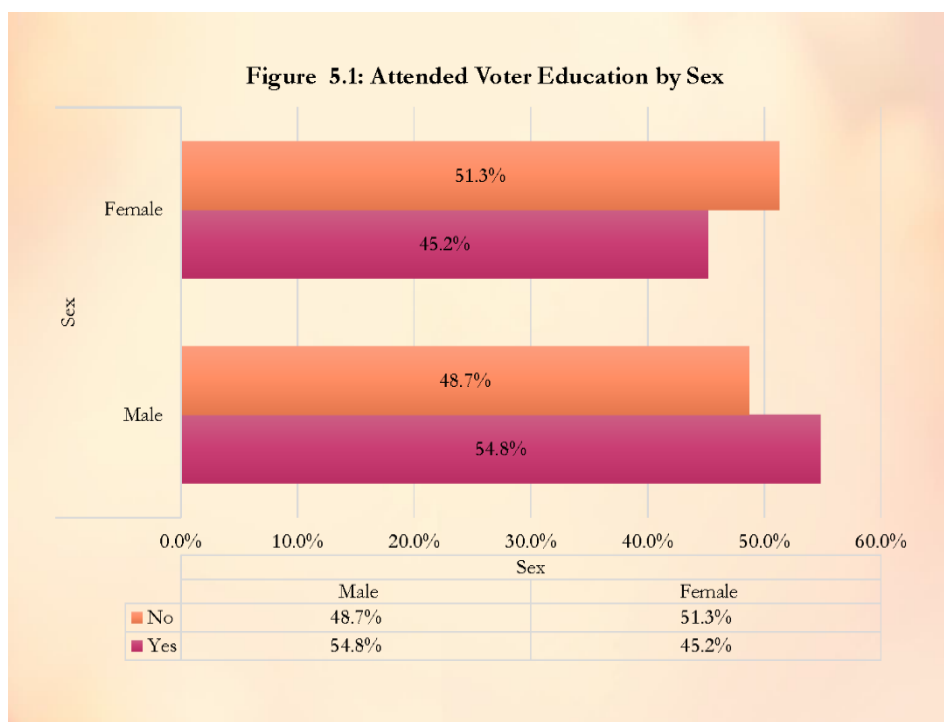
**Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion about men and women as political leaders?**



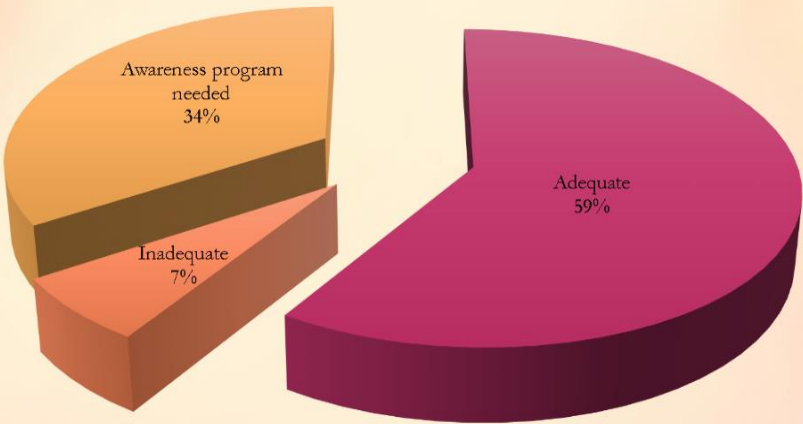
**Overall Views on Electoral Process**



Table 5.3: Main Difficulties in the Nomination Process for Women Candidates	
Three main difficulties	Percent (%)
Nomination form	8
Affidavit	2.5
Asset declaration	1
Tax clearance certificate	0.9
Audit clearance certificate	0.3
Security clearance certificate	1.2
Attestation by RUB	2.1
Declaration(not member of political party)	0.4
Distance to travel	31.8
Security problem	1.9



**Figure 5.2: Conduct of Voter Education**



**Figure 5.4: Access to Media Based on Voter Education by Sex**

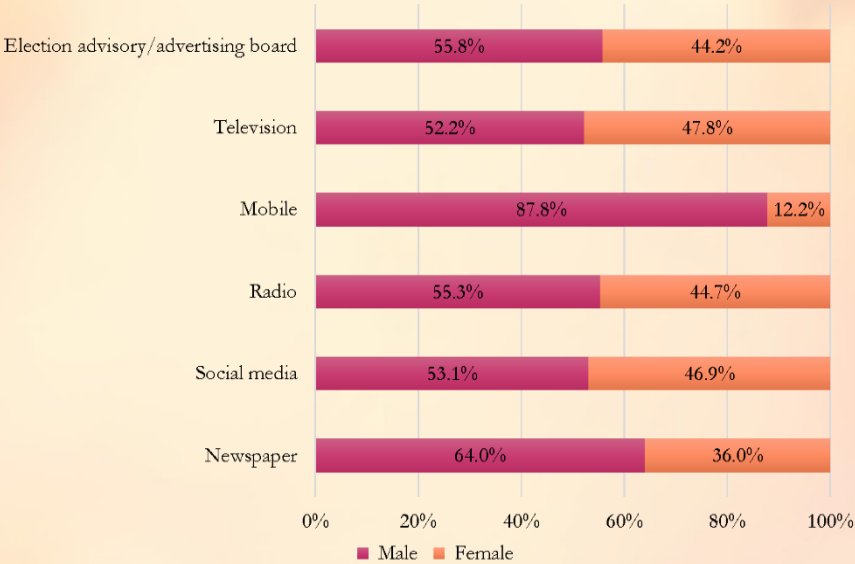
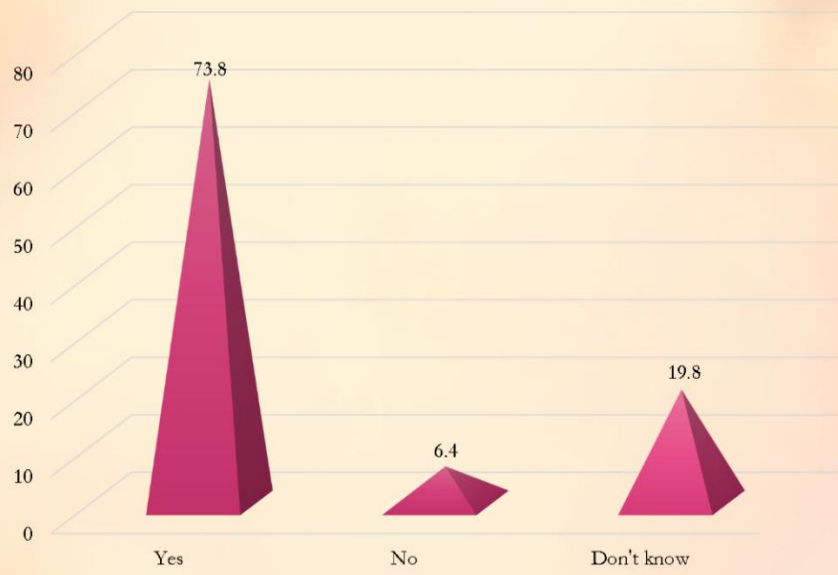
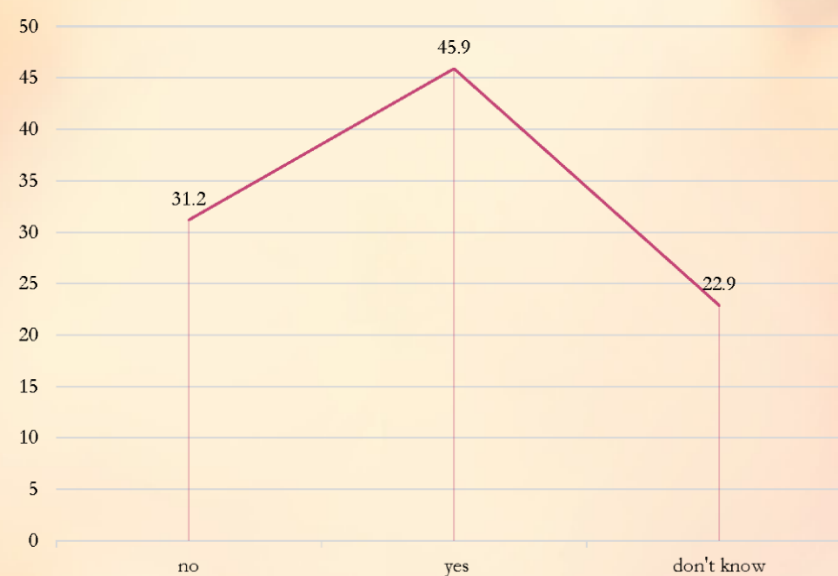


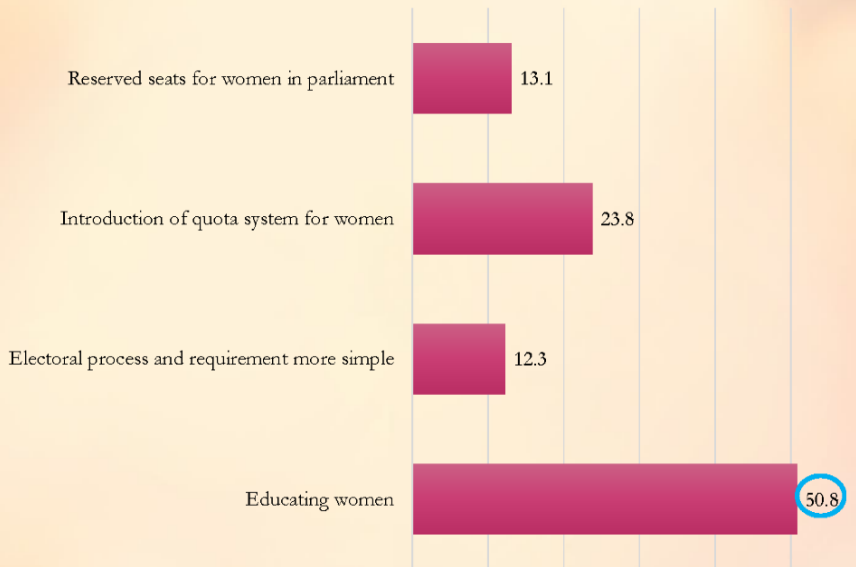
Figure 5.5: Fairness of Media on Election Coverage



Reform or change to current practices



**Figure 5.7: Most Appropriate to Reform or Change**



## Conclusion

- More educated in urban areas than in rural areas
- Basis of voting- Common forum & Public Debates in general, and friends and relatives had more influence on women
- Information and choice – women dependent and men independent – campaigns, sources and effectiveness
- Choice – Credible, competent & better representation = “*cho-drup*”
- Degree of control over decisions- voting
- Perception of men as better leaders and more capable
- Men more qualified, experienced and preferred
- Belief and trust in women leadership with more education and experience

## Conti...

- Roles – men and women – biased and stereotyped
- Men in higher labour force participation
- Inhibiting cultural beliefs and norms more in eastern and central Bhutan
- Gender beliefs differs with education
- Higher educated are more interested to become candidates
- Women declare they will vote in future elections and vote for women (but it is not themselves as candidates but others)
- More men are prepared than women
- Party and family support
- Women- domestic and family responsibilities, lack of confidence

## Conti...

- Women participation factors-campaign, facilities, systems and processes
- Women candidates- nominations and support structure
- Low level of women's engagement or involvement – observers and insignificant
- Change in current practice- educating women

## Recommendations

- Need 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.
- 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.
- 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.

## Conti...

- Efforts 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.
- 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.
- 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.

## Conti...

- 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.
- Major mindset changes should be brought about to view and to acknowledge the Bhutanese women's equal political rights as being important.
- 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.
- All Bhutanese women who have political and electoral aspirations to be supported through incentives (including livelihood options).

## Conti...

- 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.
- The interested women candidates should be encourage 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.
- 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.

## Conti...

- 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.
- Quota or any form of reserved representation should not be viewed as the ultimate solution to enhance political participation and representation. Better to directly deal with core issues relating to social, cultural and economic factors that ultimately affront the Bhutanese women's political participation.



## **Annexure 9: Closing Remarks at the Consultation Meeting to Consolidate Research on Women in Elective Offices**

**By Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan**

Representatives of the Election Management Bodies of Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka,

Representatives from National and International stakeholders in Bhutan,

Election Commissioners and Officials of the Election Commission of Bhutan,

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Welcome to the Concluding Session of our meeting.

The Election Commission of Bhutan would like to thank the representatives of the EMB of Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka as well as our guest participants from the National Council, political parties, NCWC, RENEW, BNEW, and KCD Productions for your presence and participation in the meeting, including the representatives of DIPD and UN Women for the valued participation as well as the crucial financial support. I offer my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you for your hard work and active participation which ensured that we had a successful meeting.

We now have a Consolidated Report, our collaborative output from this meeting that I, as the current Chair of the FEMBoSA will be honoured and happy to present to the Heads of the South Asian EMBs at the 5<sup>th</sup> FEMBoSA Meeting in 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2014. I sincerely hope that it would provide reliable grounds for better understanding the important issue of women electing and being elected and throw light on relevant and appropriate affirmative actions that can be taken up by the member EMBs as well as other relevant entities. It is, as I mentioned yesterday at the Inaugural Session, ultimately to ensure fuller participation and better representation of women as this lies at the very core of a Vibrant Democracy in our Countries and Region.

On another track, I would also like to put on record that this is the very first collaborative activity, under the aegis of the FEMBoSA, taken up at this level of detail and research with a consolidated output to be put up to the next FEMBoSA Meeting. The Election Commission of Bhutan takes great satisfaction in being able to work on this collaborative effort on an issue of such great relevance and importance. I will take great pride personally in presenting this meeting's output.

Thank you once again and wish you all a safe and pleasant return home. Ms, Sultana, Ms. Angmo, Mr, Gurogain and Mr. Jayasinghe, I hope you will carry back with you not only our good wishes but also some good memories of our brief stay together in Bhutan.

**Tashi Deleg!**



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