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**Decision Making Position of Elected Women in Local Bodies: A Case Study of  
Locally Elected Women Representatives of Ilam Municipality, Ilam**

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**Abstract**

This paper aims to assess the decision-making position of elected women of local bodies of Ilam Municipality. The study attempts to explore whatever women's position has changed as expects in household decision making, participation in local development women rights and empowerment and in socio-economic condition after the new constitution and declaration of Nepal as Republications state. The researcher and has selected 15 households and semi structure interviews and quasi-experimental methods was adopted for the data collections. The study is based on the qualitative nature of data and the major findings were drawn that women's position in decision making has changed in terms of women's rights, participation in socio-economic and political sectors and women empowerment as compared in the past socio-economic structure of the male dominated society. The research findings indicated that women at local bodies have both challenges and opportunities and there is high potential that they can gradually transfer the existing patriarchal frameworks through education, awareness, involvement and empowerment.

*Keywords:* decision making, rural development, constitution, women empowerment

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## **Introduction**

More than half of Nepal's population is female, and they play an essential role in all aspects of development. However, patriarchal culture still governs the majority of Nepalese homes. This has resulted in a restriction of women's freedom and liberty, which has been in place since childhood, with social and cultural behaviors having a negative impact on women in a variety of ways. Women's access to resources and role in society have been harmed by the unfavourable circumstances, with women having little representation in governmental mechanisms and other decision-making bodies. Women's participation, empowerment, and inclusion in politics and governance were emphasized in the 2006 People's Movement-II.

Nepalese women are behind than men in many areas, such as educational attainment, participation in decision-making and health service utilization, all of which have an impact on reproductive health outcomes. If women's role in home decision-making can be preserved and enhanced, the family's general well-being can be maintained and enhanced. Women have been significantly participating in the cultural and social development of the mankind throughout the history despite their roles often been seen as secondary to those of men. Women played important roles in the advancement of civilization since the pre-historic period by their unique character in accepting the coexistence of all living beings, which perhaps, led to the domestication of animals and the system of agriculture cultivation in the family or community unit. Female participation has been important from the dawn of humanity, whether in the home or in the outside world. Women's participation in economic, social, and political arenas has remained crucial even in this postmodern era.

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Concerns over women's rights, empowerment, and economic status have grown in recent years. With the growing recognition that women's growth is critical to society's overall development, the literature on women and their socioeconomic condition has developed. Women work for two-thirds of the world's working hours, yet they earn only ten percent of the money and own less than one percent of the land. (1980, United Nations). Women and men have different roles and obligations in every society. Due to different socio-economic limitations, women typically have limited access to resources and benefits. This is especially noticeable in developing countries, where rules and responsibilities are clearly defined, and male dominance is more dominant. Women in undeveloped countries are seen as second-class citizens. Women are reliant on their husbands because they do not own land and have no other means of income. Women have access to land resources, but when it comes to benefit control, men still have the upper hand because our culture is still dominated by men, with male family heads making the majority of choices. In Nepal, unequal rank and power in decision making and benefits are legitimized by traditional social norms. The women's role on household decision making is a strong predictor among many other predictors of Nepal. Women's decision-making power appear to be the most powerful predictors among many. As a result, in order to achieve the MDG objective of 2022, ongoing actions to empower women should be sustained and enlarged to encompass all women. The findings of the study also imply that policies that improve women's participation in home decision-making may be useful in ensuring institutional delivery. Official delivery will increase and the family's general well-being will be maintained and enhanced if programs focus on strengthening women's decision-making power.

Following the declaration of Nepal as a Federal Republic Nation. The Nepalese Constitution of 2072 is clearly stated. Women's participation in every area, as well as a right and quota system for marginalized, marginalized, women, and sexual

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minorities, as well as other inclusively deprived groups, in various activities such as elections and so on. Women's quotas have boosted the number of women in executive positions. Despite the large number of women who participate, they still fall behind men in terms of participatory decision-making and voice.

The study's major objective is to look into the status of women in decision-making activities, to compare the effectiveness of inside and outside working women in the decision-making process, and to investigate into the issues that they meet in Ilam Municipality.

### **Method and Materials**

The study has adopted carrying mixed methods design. The study focuses on investigating the status of women and their decision-making process in activities of Municipality. The primary data were collected through household survey questionnaire, focus group discussion, case study and observation techniques. Similarly secondary data were collected from the published books, articles as well as published and unpublished reports related to research issues.

### **Results and Discussion**

Much of the research on women and politics has had quantitative focus, describing the number elected, the political environment and the factors that help and hinder women's ability to be involved. In more recent years, however, there has been growing recognition of the impact that women have on political institutions and agendas as well as on approaches to governance. It has become clear that while a small number of women have attained the highest political positions in their countries, a critical mass of women is still to be elected and there is no place in which women hold

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the same number of seats as men. Nevertheless, it is also clear that many of the women who have succeeded have transformed the way in which politics is practiced and they have changed the political agenda to include that improve women's lives

Inequality between men and women is a prominent issue in Nepalese society. "Women's natural job is to be a pillar of the family," Grace Kelly said. If a family's mother has been educated, she is capable of teaching the entire family the truth. In contemporary society, a woman is expected to be an ideal mother, a respectful wife, and a responsible daughter. However, in actuality, the male-dominated society's expectations have either directly or indirectly hampered or limited their freedom; freedom to live, thrive, fly high, or become an independent entity. The belief that having a son will assist them make their journey to heaven gently is still common in our society; it is believed that having a daughter will not allow them to do so, which is the most horrible thing. There is nothing a woman can't accomplish in today's world; she may be a mother while still serving the country as a responsible citizen with expertise in fields such as education, health, finance, and politics. Inequality between men and women is still a major issue in our society. One of these is domestic violence, which is the leading cause of injury among Nepalese women. Even in urban regions, women from well-educated families face similar issues and are unwilling to speak up because they are afraid of losing their family prestige in society. In rural communities, where women lack access to education and financial freedom, the situation is far worse. Similarly, sexual abuse is one of the most significant issues. There are numerous examples like this that are kept hidden owing to a lack of understanding about their legal rights as well as a lack of family support.

### **Conclusion**

In the fields of health, education, financial independence, and politics, the status of Nepalese women is significantly changing compared to the past. While women's right action has been beneficial, the nation still needs to work harder to achieve the optimal goal for women empowerment, development, and decision-making. In comparison to males, women are equally the pillars of the family and the nation; equal rights, freedom, security, and participation are the essence of the current situation, breaking all stereotypes from the past and leading society ahead. Women in Nepal are in a similar situation, with a literacy rate of 30% compared to 66 percent for men, a low health status (70 to 80 percent of women are anemic), and high baby and maternal mortality rates. The patriarchal framework in this country prioritizes the male child because he will provide for the family's livelihood, be responsible for older parents, and ultimately make decisions. Because girls are restricted to the inside world of the family and lack access to the outside world of information, knowledge, and resources, they are taught to be gentle. Assertiveness and decision-making skills are not valued. The quote was made in Nepal, a country rife with socioeconomic and cultural bias. Because it was believed that women have political rights and that allocated seats would secure their involvement, it was implemented.

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