

Rupantaran: A Multidisciplinary Journal
Vol. VIII: PP 74-86, February, 2024
ISSN(Print) : 2091-0061, ISSN (Electronic): 2738-9960
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/rupantaran.v8i01.65203>
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Contribution of Women in Political Movement of Nepal

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Abstract

This article explores the extraordinary contributions made by women to Nepal's political movement, demonstrating their fundamental influence on the political climate of the nation. The study investigates the varied political activism of Nepalese women through an analysis of historical accounts, academic research, and direct testimonies. In Nepal, women have been instrumental in political movements, community mobilization, and advocacy for social and political change. They have actively taken part in protests, rallies, and neighborhood campaigns, pushing back against patriarchal conventions and clamoring for equitable participation in governmental organizations. In order to advance gender equality and women's rights in the political sphere, the article examines the effects of women's organizations, women-led projects, and female activists. It looks at their initiatives to remove social constraints, boost women's political participation, and combat gender-based prejudice. This article also examines the obstacles women have had to overcome while examining the crucial role they have played in Nepal's political movement and their contributions to constitutional changes. The paper offers insights on the empowerment of women within the Nepali political system by a thorough analysis of scholarly research, historical records, and documented experiences.

Keywords: Women, political movement, representation, constitution, empowerment

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Introduction

A political movement is a group's collective endeavour to change government policy or social norms. Political movements are coordinated collective attempts by groups of people to attain certain political goals or effect social change. These movements often rally individuals around shared ideals, values, or grievances with the goal of influencing government policy, public opinion, or societal standards. Social movements, advocacy groups, grassroots initiatives, and political parties are all examples of political movements.

Since decades or even centuries, women have fought for gender parity and fair political participation. But there are many restrictions on women, including unfavorable cultural and traditional attitudes that keep them out of the workforce, politics, and public life. As a result, there are fewer women than men in government, politics, and other important decision-making positions. One issue that needs to be handled, especially among developing countries like Nepal. During these times of political unrest, women have fought for equality and political involvement for more than a century. It is not well known how Nepali women participate in social, economic, and political freedoms. In accordance with this finding, it contends that because men were the ones who wrote the history of Nepal, the history of women's battle for liberation is not properly documented. Many women have made contributions to Nepali literature, art, and politics, including Ambalika Devi, Lok Priya Devi, Chandrakala Devi, Mangaladevi, and Divya Koirala, among many others, yet very few have been mentioned in the official records' narratives.

Women have lesser employment options than men, fewer opportunities for basic and higher education, more safety and health risks, and a lower political representation worldwide. Women's rights and possibilities to fulfill all of their abilities are crucial not just for achieving gender equality, but additionally for achieving an extensive number of global development objectives. Women and girls who are empowered help improve the well-being and efficiency of their families, communities, and countries, creating a virtuous circle that's beneficial to everyone (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2021). Women's political participation and relevance have been debated for generations. Women have long been marginalized in politics, although their presence and impact have expanded significantly in the past few decades. In fact, women's representation in national legislatures has exceeded twofold in the preceding 25 years.

According to research, women contribute distinct views and goals to the political venue, which can lead to more effective laws that are beneficial to all members of our community (Htun & Weldon, 2012). Furthermore, the inclusion of women in politics may function as an indicator of encouragement for the next generation of female leaders, as well as aid in the dismantling of stereotypes regarding gender and obstacles. Notwithstanding these advancements, women continue to encounter numerous obstacles in leadership in politics, such as harassment and discrimination based on sexuality. It is crucial to keep advancing the cause of gender parity in politics and making certain that women have an equal chance to engage and thrive in the political arena.

Throughout Nepal's rich history, women have emerged as indispensable pillars within political movements. Their invaluable participation in the pursuit of political transformation, democratic reforms, social justice, and gender equality has been nothing short of remarkable. Women's contributions have wielded a profound influence over Nepal's political landscape, catalyzing positive changes and propelling the advancement of women's rights in the nation. Their resolute dedication and unwavering commitment serve as a testament to their instrumental role in shaping Nepal's political climate.

Based on the implications of this article, the statement of problem of this research shall be as follows:

1. What are the challenges faced by women in contributing to political movements in Nepal?
2. What are the impacts that have been made by women on Nepal's political landscape?
3. What strategies can be opted to promote women's involvement in political movements in Nepal?

Based on the statement of problems provided, here are three possible objectives of the study:

1. To identify challenges faced by women in contributing to political movements in Nepal.
2. To explore impact of women's contributions on Nepal's political landscape.
3. To evaluate effectiveness of existing strategies for promoting women's involvement in political movements in Nepal.

Methods and Materials

Melnikovas (2018) defines research methodology as a standard research strategy that explains how research should be conducted. The methodology is basically the situation with why, what, where, when, and how the study's data was collected and analyzed (Guba & Lincoln 1994). A well-defined research technique contributes to the validity, dependability, and trustworthiness of study findings.

This study relies on data gathered from secondary sources such as Nepal's many constitutions, journals, papers, books, and so on as references for this work. This study is mostly historical, exploratory, and analytical in character, and it provides a quick overview. This paper makes a brief description and analysis of the contribution of women in political movement of Nepal.

Results and Discussion

Gender refers to the socially assigned roles and obligations that societies assign to men and women. Gender equality implies that men and women have equal monetary autonomy, educational opportunities, and personal development possibilities. The empowering of women is a vital component to achieving gender parity. It includes boosting a woman's self-esteem, decision-making authority, availability of possibilities and assets, authority and authority over her own life both inside and beyond the house, and ability to impact change. Gender difficulties, however, are

not limited to women, but also to the interactions involving men and women in general. Looking into the traditional perspective, there are two genders namely, male and female. Equality is a contextual concept. Inequalities stem from unequal mechanisms which allow one group excessive power over another. Regardless of how much we invest in women, men must also be willing partners in the redistribution of control among both the genders. Gender equality is the concept that all individuals should be regarded with equal respect, irrespective of their gender orientation or expression. It implies that men and women have equal privileges, possibilities, and access to resources, as well as that what they contribute to society are equally appreciated (Siddaraju, 2019). Gender equality necessitates confronting and deconstructing social and cultural conventions that sustain discrimination and injustice. It entails establishing a society in which individuals are not evaluated or constrained on the basis of their gender, and in which everyone has equal possibilities to develop and prosper.

Women also play important roles as community leaders, peace activists, and promoters of both women's and human rights. Studies show that when women are permitted to participate in all facets of planning and decision-making, families, communities, society, and the country as a whole all benefit. It has been demonstrated that peace agreements have a higher likelihood of succeeding in a stable form when women participate in the negotiation process. (Miller & Veneklasen, 2002). The social, economic, cultural, and environmental success of a nation depends on empowering women. As it is the only safe way to empower women, social, economic, and political empowerment is a necessity of the hour, of any area, and of this age. In addition to increasing a woman's ability to defend herself as she gains sociopolitical participation and financial independence, it also strengthens her rational beliefs, self-esteem, and confidence. Need of women in politics

Women's experiences and points of view are neglected to be taken into account when they are left out from the political process, which results in laws that fall short of properly addressing the demands and issues of everyone in society. Due to a substantial section of the population's opinions and points of view not being heard, this not only harms women but also undermines democracy as a whole. The lack of representation of women in politics has significant effects on how democratic societies operate as well as issues of justice and equity. We can develop more open and responsive policies the advantage everyone if we make sure that women's viewpoints and experiences are adequately included in political decision-making. A democratic shortcoming exists when a major section of the population's opinions and experiences are not taken into account when making political decisions (Krook & O'Brien, 2020, p. 2). Women's involvement in politics promotes gender equality and has an impact on the variety of policy concerns that are taken into consideration as well as the different kinds of solutions that are put forth. According to research, a legislator's legislative priorities are significantly influenced by his or her gender. Strong evidence suggests that as more women are elected to power, there is a corresponding rise in policymaking that prioritizes quality of life and takes households, women, and ethno and racial minorities' priorities into account. Additionally, the presence of women in politics might improve social norms and views. It can be challenging to established gender roles and preconceptions when more women

get elected to politics and hold positions of power, and it can advance gender equality as a principle of society. This may result in additional chances for women in various facets of society, such as the workforce and civic groups. In general, increasing the proportion of women in political leadership posts can have significant impacts on societal norms, governance, and policy agendas. Women in politics have the power to advance a more equitable and welcoming society for all by giving problems that have an impact on the lives of women and marginalized populations higher priority. Henceforth, the positive impact of women in politics is undeniable.

Compared to men, women bring distinct views, beliefs, and objectives to politics and are more inclined to place a priority on social welfare, teamwork, and dispute resolution. Their inclusion in the political process may result in more sensible, responsive laws that better serve the interests of all societal groups (Htun & Weldon, 2012, p. 599). The inclusion of more women in politics can result in more sensible and responsive laws that better serve the interests of all societal groups. Political conversations are more likely to benefit from the diverse viewpoints and experiences that women are likely to bring, which can result in more creative and sophisticated policy proposals. Additionally, women in politics can dispel stereotypes regarding gender and pave a path for subsequent generations of women to enter politics by acting as examples and advocates for gender parity. Women can contribute to the development of a society with greater equity and justice by supporting laws which tackle gender inequities, such as those pertaining to equal wage and rights to reproduce. Inclusion in politics is about more than simply numbers; it is also about different points of view and experiences (Reynolds & Lovenduski, 2014, p. 11). Women's political representation can provide fresh and different viewpoints to policy debates, resulting in more equitable and inclusive decision-making process. It is inconceivable to overestimate the importance of diversity in politics. Whenever one group or population dominates political decision-making, the viewpoints of others may be neglected or underrepresented. This might result in laws that do not adequately satisfy all of society's needs and issues, prolonging inequities and strengthening existing power imbalances. Inclusion in politics is about more than simply numbers; it is also about different points of view and experiences. Women's political representation can provide fresh and different viewpoints to policy debates, resulting in more equitable and inclusive decision-making process (Reynolds & Lovenduski, 2014, p. 11). Conversely, when representation in politics is diverse, an array of perspectives and knowledge may be brought to policy deliberations, resulting in more equitable and inclusive decision-making processes. Women's political representation is especially essential since it can bring novel and distinct viewpoints to the conversation.

When women lack representation in political leadership, laws and rules affecting women are frequently adopted without taking their individual needs as well as backgrounds into consideration. As a result, policies that fail to address concerns like as rights to reproduce, violence against women, and economic empowerment, which are essential for fostering women's full involvement in society, may be implemented (Ballington & Karam, 2013, p. 5). Women in politics, on the other hand, can utilize their positions of power to push for laws and regulations that encourage and protect rights for women. Women in politics can utilize their positions of power to spread consciousness about concerns such as gender-based violence, rights related to reproduction,

and financial independence, as well as fight to promote regulations that address these concerns Condition of women in political movement in Nepal.

Nepali women comprise over half of the population. Women are perceived as mothers, housewives, and teachers in the traditional community. Women's political empowerment and independence is a societal process that is fundamental to growth and progress. Generally, women's rank is characterized and judged by their political engagement and empowerment. Women continue to be severely underrepresented and largely absent in leadership positions. They are still discriminated against and considered as second-class citizens as a result of the patriarchy value system's continued domination.

Throughout periods of turmoil in politics, women have fought for justice and political involvement for more than a century. It is not well known how Nepali women participate in economic, social, and political freedoms. In accordance with this finding and citing it is contended that since men were the ones who wrote the history of Nepal, the history of women's battle for liberation is not properly documented. Many women have made contributions to Nepali literature, art, and politics, including Ambalika Devi, Lok Priya Devi, Chandrakala Devi, Mangaladevi, and Divya Koirala, among many others, yet very few have been mentioned in the official records' chronicles. (Dhungana, 2014) In the pages of history, notable figures like Queen Rajendra Laxmi played a significant role in the unification of Nepal. Another remarkable individual, Mrs. Kamala Kunwar, the wife of the warrior Balabhadra Kunwar, actively participated in the Nalapani Fort battle during the Anglo-Nepal war from 1814 to 1816. The presence of women's lifeless bodies within the Nalapani Fort serves as evidence that Nepali women valiantly fought alongside their male counterparts against the British Army's attempted invasion. This historical account highlights the courageous contributions made by Nepali women in defending their homeland. The Nalapani Fort served as a symbol of defiance against British forces during the Anglo-Nepal conflict. Nepali women showed their enduring resolve and unyielding spirit during this crucial struggle by fighting side by side with their male countrymen. The number of dead women found inside the fort indicates how actively involved they were in the defense. Their bravery and sacrifice show that there was no distinction based on gender when defending the sovereignty of their country. The joint efforts of political and educational institutions significantly accelerated the progress of the women's movement in Nepal. Yogmaya Koirala, who was instrumental in founding the first women's group, the "Women's Committee," in 1974, was a significant figure in this regard (Shrestha, 2011). In Nepal, this group laid the groundwork for later initiatives by promoting women's rights and empowerment. Chandrakanta Malla had already made tremendous progress toward ensuring that girls had access to school prior to the formation of the "Women's Committee." She established the Padma Kanya School in 1945 to provide females with access to education so they may continue their academic and intellectual development (Shrestha, 2011).

Nepali women were able to influence policy to some extent and obtain some legal rights thanks to these established groups. One of these was "equality before the law," which was

established in the Nepal Government Act-2004 B.S. and later acknowledged in the 1950 Constitution (Neupane, 2004). Additionally, for political goals, the Nepali Congress Party mobilized female college students. In 1961, a number of politically dissident female students, including Kamaksha Devi Rana, Hira Devi Tuladhar (Yemi), Ram Maya, Sadhana Pradhan Adhikari, and Sahana Pradhan, started to become increasingly active (Shah, 2004, p. 113). Nepali women were actively involved in the fight for their rights even under the autocratic Panchayat political system (Upretiet al., 2018). The pro-democracy movement of 2007 B.S., which resulted in the downfall of the Rana monarchy and the introduction of democracy in Nepal, marked one of the major turning points in the participation of women in political movements. In order to seek political reforms and equitable representation, women actively participated part in a variety of events and protests. They questioned conventional gender roles and customs, breaking down obstacles to become political change makers. Women's involvement in political groups grew during the ensuing years. In the 1980s and 1990s, the women's movement gained strength and pushed for legal changes, gender equality, and an end to unfair practices. Women became leaders and activists, speaking out against problems including child marriage, the dowry system, domestic violence, and women's poor access to healthcare and education.

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People's movement I

The People's Democratic Movement, also known as Jana Andolan I (1990), successfully ended the "party-less Panchayat system" in Nepal after nearly four decades and restored democracy. During this movement, women played a pivotal role and actively participated, attracting a significant portion of the country's population. Their involvement was instrumental in the declaration of the reinstatement of multiparty democracy under a constitutional monarchy. Many women bravely marched and demonstrated, some even sacrificing their lives. Ms. Sahana Pradhan, for instance, fought tirelessly to ensure the inclusion of women in the Democratic Movement's team of negotiators (Srivastava & Sharma, 2010). This was done to exert pressure on the King and push for the restoration of multiparty democracy.

People's movement II

The Second People's Movement in Nepal, also known as Jana Andolan II, saw a substantial contribution from Nepalese women in the fight for political and democratic change. They showed

their dedication to social and political improvement by actively taking part in various forms of action. Nepalese women organized rallies, took part in marches, and rallied their communities, making significant contributions to the revolution. They promoted gender equality, social fairness, and the necessity for democratic reforms through raising public awareness of these issues. Women's organizations and activists were crucial in bringing people together and raising their voices in opposition to King Gyanendra's dictatorial authority (Upreti & Sapkota, 2017). These efforts made by Nepali women during Jana Andolan II showed their tenacity, resolve, and dedication to establishing a more democratic and inclusive society in Nepal. Their participation in the movement brought attention to how crucial gender equality and women's empowerment are to the nation's political environment the current Constitution includes particular provisions to give women with some political backing. Despite the fact that the "Constitution of Nepal (2072)" has offered doors for women empowerment and progression, there are numerous obstacles to putting national as well as global declarations and policies created for the betterment of women into practice. However, this chance could have a distinct impact on how Nepal's systems are developed in terms of women's representation and engagement (Lindsey, 2015). There have been seven consecutive constitutions in Nepal. Every constitution has been more progressive than the one before in terms of include minorities and women. Nepal adopted its current constitution, which is the most progressive one to date, in 2072 B.S. Several fundamental rights that this constitution has established assist feminism and the empowerment of women through both direct and indirect means. The Nepalese Constitution, which was ratified in 2015, has done a lot to advance gender equality and women's political engagement. A number of clauses in the constitution are aimed at ensuring equal representation of women in political entities and fostering their involvement in decision-making. The constitution's demand that women make up at least one-third of the total number of members in both the federal parliament and all provincial assemblies is one of its most important clauses. Women now occupy more than one-third of the seats in the federal parliament and the majority of provincial assemblies, reflecting a significant increase in the representation of women in politics as a result of this provision. Political parties are required by the constitution to ensure that at least one-third of their central committee members and office holders are women. In order to increase their prominence and impact in political life, political parties have been encouraged by this clause to actively seek out and encourage the inclusion of women in their organizations.

In addition, the constitution affirms that women have the same rights as males to engage in all spheres of state governance and public service. Additionally, it protects women's right to exercise authority over and possession of resources, including as land, property, and inheritance, which are essential to their economic and political emancipation. The constitution also includes affirmative action policies to encourage women's involvement in decision-making organs at all levels of government, such as reservations and quotas. This has made it easier for women to access political power despite obstacles including patriarchal standards, social stigma, and a lack of money. Overall, the Nepali Constitution has played a significant role in developing gender equality and women's participation in politics. In order to build a more inclusive and fair society, it is crucial

that women are represented in political entities and encouraged to actively participate in decision-making, besides fundamental rights, it has also included women in state structures and policy making level ensuring at least 33 percentage of women. Along with constitution there are other laws, Acts, statutes like Muluki Criminal Code, Muluki Civil Code, Sexual Harassment at Workplace Prevention Act, 2015, Domestic Violence Act of 2009 etc. work with all efforts to provide a safer and better place for women. Henceforth, women empowerment has enhanced in Nepal comparatively however, we have not met the required goals.

Despite the government's particular steps for women's political engagement, women have received no benefit from such efforts. It has been discovered that practically every party in politics have now been pushed to have at least 33% women represented at all levels of governance. The participation rate of 33% is not a complete success, though, and even more progress can be accomplished if Nepal's top political parties genuinely consider changing the makeup of their own political parties to include more women (Thakur, 2017). Since the 1950s, Nepalese women have been engaged in the political movements, but a number of obstacles have stopped them from taking an active part in both national and local politics. The prevalent patriarchal ideology, male chauvinism, enforcement of laws, absence of equal property rights, limitations on women's movement, and male dominance in all political affiliations are among them. Women have been underrepresented in higher public posts (Collins, 2005). The high number of elected female members in municipal authorities is a positive indicator. This is because there are seat reservations available at this level.

Women's empowerment has long been considered one of the top concerns and has been discussed all across the world. Women have been given meaningful engagement in every political movement throughout Nepal's history, but this participation has taken diverse forms. In Nepal, the position and role of women have seen a significant positive transformation that has lowered the obstacle to gender disparities. The ability of women to participate in the political system and make decisions are viewed as indicators of their overall position within society (Shrestha, 2001). Women haven't been able to enhance their representation in politics at various levels, positions of power, and decision-making despite constitutional provisions on women's representation, extensive engagement in the 1990 movement for democracy, and improved knowledge.

In recent years, women in Nepali politics have made remarkable advancements. During the 2008 elections for the Constituent Assembly and subsequent elections, women actively ran for political office and achieved notable success by winning seats across a wider range of political parties. This inclusive representation has paved the way for influential women leaders to assume prominent positions, including the presidency, speaker of the parliament, and various cabinet posts. Women have played a pivotal and instrumental role in Nepal's political landscape. They have been at the forefront of championing women's rights, advocating for political reform, and challenging traditional gender norms. Their unwavering dedication and contributions have significantly influenced Nepal's political climate and propelled the advancement of gender equality within the country. The continued work of women in politics serves as a continuous source of

inspiration for future generations. Their efforts highlight the profound significance of women's voices in shaping a more inclusive and egalitarian society. By forging ahead and breaking barriers, women have demonstrated the transformative power they hold in creating a more equitable and just Nepal.

Conclusion

In summary, women have always been important players in political movements. Women's activity and involvement have contributed significantly to key social and political transformations, including the promotion of gender equality and the advancement of women's rights. However, there has frequently been opposition to and difficulty with women's involvement in political movements. Societal expectations, institutional discrimination, and disproportionate access to resources have all been challenges for women. However, women are still tearing down obstacles and battling for themselves and the rights of others in political movements. The value of women's views and ideas is being acknowledged with increasing frequency as more women participate in political activities. In order to build a more just and equal society, women's activity and leadership are essential, and their achievements should be recognized and encouraged. We can make politics more inclusive and representative for everyone by encouraging women to participate in political movements and tackling the obstacles they experience. Women's participation in political movements has been hampered by expectations from society, institutional discrimination, and a lack of resources. Women, on the other hand, have consistently overcome these obstacles by pushing for their own and others' rights. Women's thoughts and ideas are more valued, paving the path for greater participation and representation in political activities. Women's contributions to political movements, particularly their participation in Nepal's political movement and constitutional reforms, have been critical for advancement in society and the advancement of gender equality. Women have continually exhibited endurance and persistence in their quest of political emancipation, despite the hurdles they have faced.

As Nepal progresses on its democratic path, it is crucial to recognize and emphasize the achievements of women in political endeavors. Their endurance and dedication have the ability to effect dramatic change, not merely for women's empowerment but also for societal growth. It is time to properly recognize and harness women's political power in order to achieve a more legitimate comparable, and inclusive Nepal.

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