

NEPAL

# GOVERNANCE

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## Elections and Digital Rights

WEEKLY

Image by Gerd Altmann from Pixabay

Use of Information Technology can be helpful to increase democratic engagement. Whether it be political campaigning through social media to reach the potential voters or voters using social media to gather information about political parties to make informed decisions about whom to vote for, social media can be useful. As technology is now infused into the political processes, there is also an emerging need to regulate its use. Considering this new dimension, Election Commission Nepal (ECN) has also included ICT and internet-related issues in the Election Code of Conduct 2078.

While regulating the use of the ICT, Internet, and social media, the Code of Conduct is seen to have an impact on various civil and political rights, including the freedom of expression. In the name of regulation, states must not restrict the basic rights of citizens including their political rights. It is an individual's right to have freedom of expression and the right to political participation, which are more often relevant in the context of elections and political campaigning. The UN Human Rights Committee interpreted the right to political participation under Article 25 of ICCPR to encompass that "voters should be able to form opinions independently, free of violence or threat of violence, compulsion, inducement or manipulative interference of any kind".

### Governance Issues of the Week

1. Chief Election Commissioner Dinesh Kumar Thapaliya addressing a province-level training of trainers on operation and management of the Local level Elections-2079 BS organized by the Election Commission said telephone and internet facilities were accessible at 10,200 polling booths. He also stressed the need of making the local level election free, fair, and frugal.

Source: [The Annapurna Express](#)

2. Election Commission Nepal, in its press release, has specified that everyone needs to follow the Code of Conduct 2078 where it mentioned that operation or cause to operation of a false site or an account on social media, or to post or share any message, informational propaganda material, solicit votes for or against any political party or candidate on social media, or to publish or share the material published by others on social media spreading opinions for or against anyone, or to make deceptive remarks such as humiliating, insulting, hate speech on social media for the purpose of influencing the election is prohibited. ECN has requested everyone to use social media with ethics and in a proper manner.

Source: [Election Commission Nepal](#)

3. The Election Commission (ECN) uses its website and Facebook page to publish decisions and important notices, and Twitter for general notices. They are committed to the effective implementation of the use of social media in electoral management on different issues. Different strategies and their working policies are made to ensure proper use of social media, to make activities of the Commission transparent and accountable, and to increase the use of social media in election information and voter education. ECN has also listed various programs to implement the policy on using social media in electoral management.

Source: [Policy on the use of social media in Electoral Management 2077](#)

4. In Nepal, everyone who turns 18 before the day of the election, is entitled to cast their vote in the election as stated by Election Commission Nepal's spokesperson Shaligram Sharma Poudel. It is estimated that there will be 17.9 million voters in the local elections. It is also estimated that around 200,000 youths who turn 18 after the update of the voter lists will be able to exercise their voting right. However, there is no clarity about what documentation one needs for voting if one just turns 18 before the elections.

Source: [Nepal News](#)

5. Election Commission Nepal is planning to institute a centralized system to monitor the ballot paper storage and vote-counting process to ensure maximum security. It aims to use a vote counting video management system at the ballot storage and counting centers, and has directed local governments to make the technical arrangements.

Source: [Kathmandu Post](#)

6. The commitment made by the political parties during the first local level election in 2074 BS after federalism has been proved to be false by the time of the second election. Forgetting that, the political parties are sharing the same dream again in the upcoming local election. The only way to discourage this behavior from political leaders is by selecting representatives based on their evaluation of commitments fulfillment and not based on the personal interests by the public.

Source: [eKantipur](#)

Nepal Governance Weekly is an analytical update of Nepal's current affairs based on media and real sources mining, to sensitize the communities on hot news on various governance issues from the perspective of accountability.

Presented by



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