

NEPAL

GOVERNANCE

Issue 21 | May 27, 2022

Statute of Limitations for Rape Cases Denies Justice to Victims

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Photo by Ashmita Sharma

The #MeToo movement is regaining momentum in Nepal with the victims and their supporters raising their voices against rape and the discriminatory laws of Nepal. As per the records of the Nepal Police, 10,131 rape cases have been registered since July 2018. It makes an average of 6 rape cases reported each day. Among the total, 6,445 (63.61 percent) are cases of child rape. Note that these are only the reported cases. Many cases do not make it to the police due to the victim's silence, cases settled in the communities, fear, threats from the perpetrators, etc.

Despite the alarming number of cases, Nepal's Laws have still failed to consider the gravity of the crime. The definition of "rape" in the National Penal Code, 2017, itself isn't gender-inclusive as it doesn't consider men, minor males, and non-binary as victims and there are varying degrees of punishment based on victim's age. The statute of limitations for rape cases is only 1 year while only 18-weeks of time is given for abortion in case of pregnancy. The time limitation to report the case in Nepal is the lowest in South Asia.

Considering the patriarchal mindset where victim-blaming and pressure of case settlements are high, the time limitation after the crime within which legal action can be taken further lowers the confidence of the victims once they overcome the trauma. The limitation also puts the justice of child rape victims in question as fear of shame, threats from the perpetrators and prolonged trauma is even more common among those. The government has recently promised changes in the statute of limitations for rape cases but we must still collectively play the role of watchdogs and push the government to bring policies that are holistic and ensure quick justice.

Read more: [Naya Patrika](#)

Governance Issues of the Week

1. The Supreme Court has made a historic decision to alter the government's commitment to construct an international airport in Nijgadh, Bara. The environmental and social assessment done in 2017 suggested that 2.4 million small and large trees had to be cut down to construct the airport. The government has nearly spent NRs. 2 billion on the project so far.
Read more: [The Kathmandu Post](#)
2. Among the 55,699 candidacies filed by women in different local-level positions, 14,402 women have won the 2022 elections. In total, 25 local government head positions, 562 deputy heads, and 69 ward chairs are bagged by women. Both the head and deputy head are women in 3 local units. The number of women in key positions has increased to 25 from 18 compared to last elections but has decreased in the deputy positions.
Read more: [Election Commission](#)
3. The government has introduced its policies and programs for the fiscal year 2079/80 amid the weakening economy. The plans include promoting domestic production through import substitution, strengthening agriculture and the private sector for employment generation, promoting green energy, revising the development modality to leverage local and provincial levels, pursuing effective economic diplomacy for aid and investments, etc.
Read more: [Ministry of Finance](#), [The Rising Nepal](#)
4. The monthly trade deficit of Nepal has reached an average of NRs. 143 billion as the import of basic commodities has increased. The trade deficit has risen by 24.94 percent in the first ten months of the fiscal year. The inability to produce quality and competitive goods in the country is cited as a major reason.
Read more: [Kantipur](#)
5. Among the 6 metropolitan and 11 sub-metropolitan cities, the independent candidates have bagged the top position in the four major cities of Nepal; Balendra Shah in Kathmandu, Harka Raj Rai in Dharan, Manoj Kumar Shah Sudi in Janakpur, and Gopal Hamal in Dhangadhi. This signals citizens' lack of trust in established parties and conventional politics.
Read more: [Nepal Times](#)
6. The government has provided 100 percent exemption to the companies that operate international flights at Gautam Buddha International Airport on various fares including the landing fee, communication and aviation fee, security check fee, etc. It will be effective from May 28 and will be revised a year later.
Read more: [Republica](#)

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

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