



# **Election Campaign SURVEY REPORT**

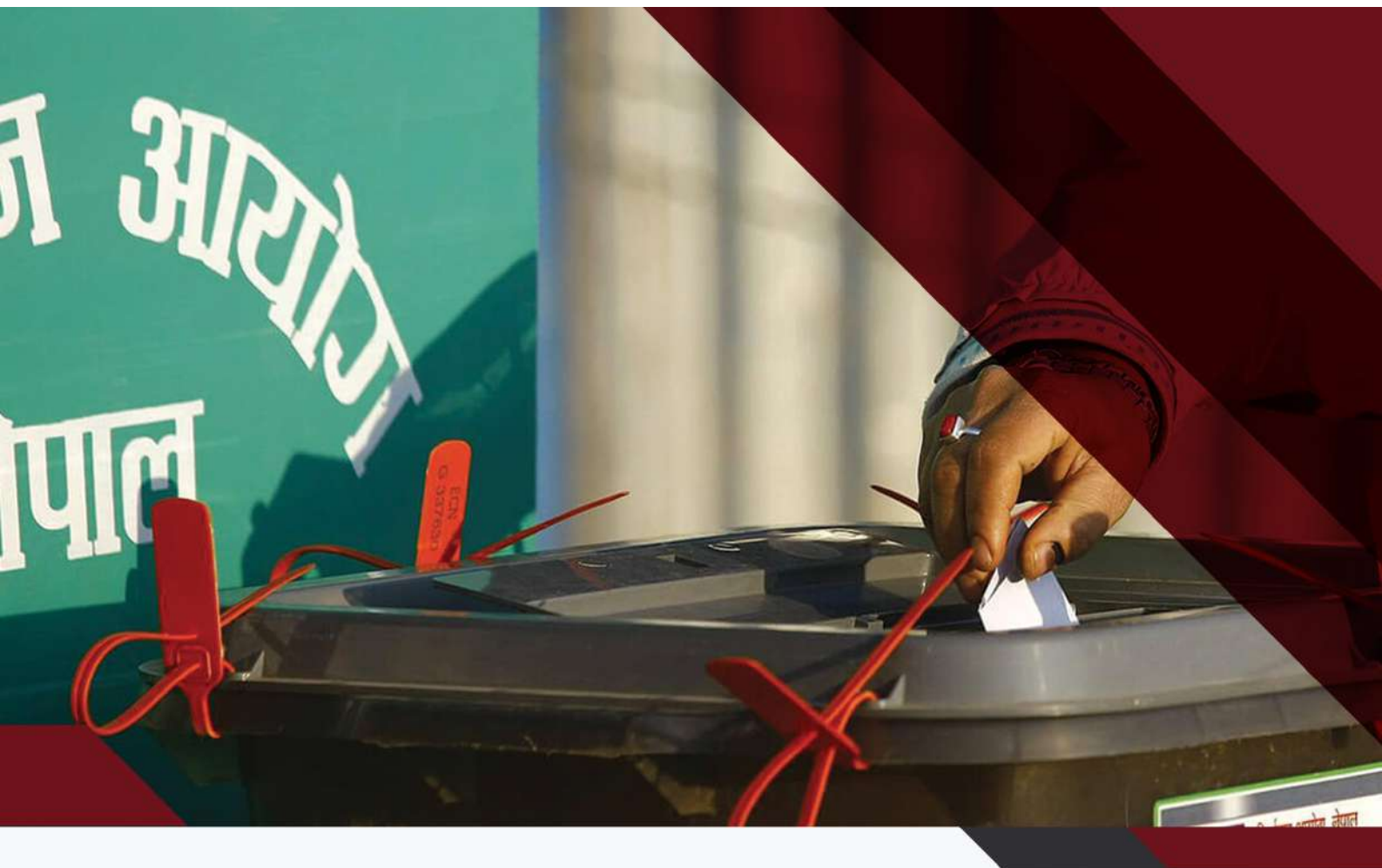
# Introduction



Since 2015, Nepal's constitution has enriched the people with a competitive, multiparty system of democratic governance. This ensures civil liberties, fundamental and human rights, adult suffrage, full press freedom, periodic elections, and a society based on democratic values including an independent, fair and competent judiciary and rule of law. Elections uphold this democracy and serve as one of its most crucial components, without which other rights are seriously undermined. Elections are a means of expressing the people's trust in the state machinery. Therefore, they must be clean, fair, and credible. For this, not only the government but also civil society, media, and businesses must be fully aware and vigilant. Active participation of citizens from diverse communities is required to achieve election goals.

Since the promulgation of constitution of Nepal in 2015, the second round of local elections were held on the 30th of Baishakh 2079 (13th May 2022). The election was held in 6 metropolitan cities, 11 sub-metropolitan cities, 276 municipalities, and 460 rural municipalities. There were 145,010 total candidates, among which 38.40% were women. 17,73,723 voters were registered at the time, (Male: 8,992,010; Female: 8,741,530; Others: 183). Among these voters, 41% were between 21 and 40 years old. The highest age group represented during the election was 41-60 years, at 50.22% populus representation. The remaining 8.69% of voters were 61-80 years old, with 0.07% of voters between 81 and 94 years old. The data indicates a large amount of youths involved during the election, pointing towards high political engagement among youth. With this in mind, the Election Monitoring Campaign was conducted to better understand youth perception relating to the election, as well as to encourage feedback for the election commission to improve the efficiency and competency of upcoming elections based on the recommendations of the participants in the survey.





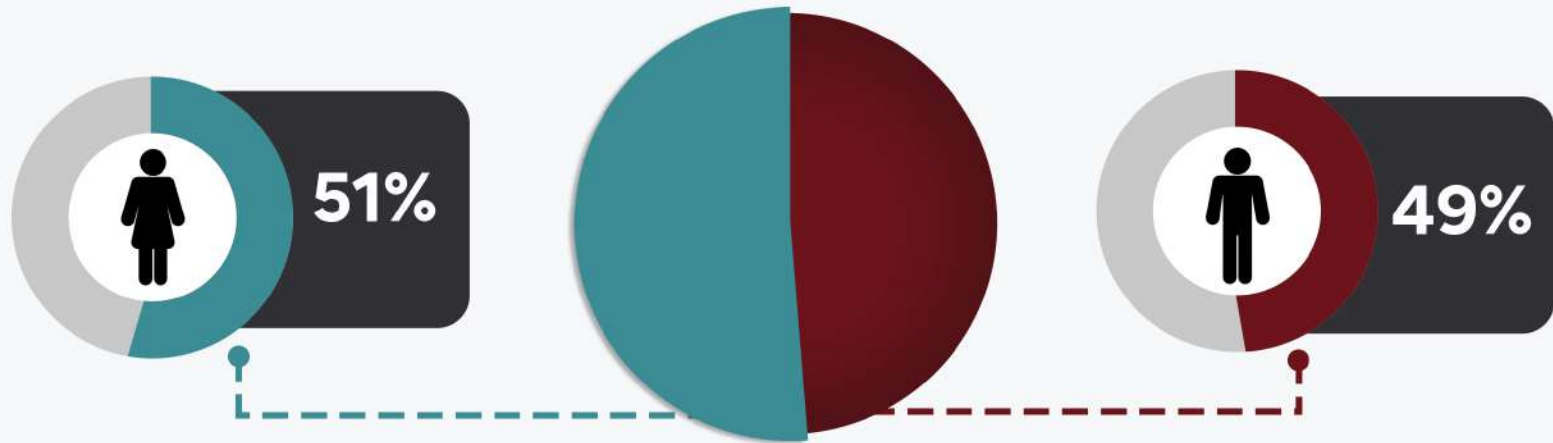
# Methodology & Executive Summary :

The Election Monitoring Campaign Survey was conducted nationwide with a total of 144 participants from all seven provinces of Nepal. Of these, 71 participants were male and 73 were female. The campaign was targeted towards the age group of 15-45 years. Among this, the maximum number of participants (57.63%) were within the age group of 21-25.

The results of the survey indicate hopefulness on the part of the public about local elections, with more youth candidates running for office. However, it also indicates limitations in public awareness about election specifics. 26.37% of survey participants shared that the most significant part about this year's election was youth involvement, and 19.78% shared that the most significant aspect was the increased number of independent candidates. Overall, 63.2% of respondents voted in the elections. 68.8% of respondents felt that there was low awareness on the part of the Election Commission, leading to misconduct from the candidates such as spending above the campaign budget limits. Participants recommended more proper monitoring on the code of conduct from the Election Commission in future elections.

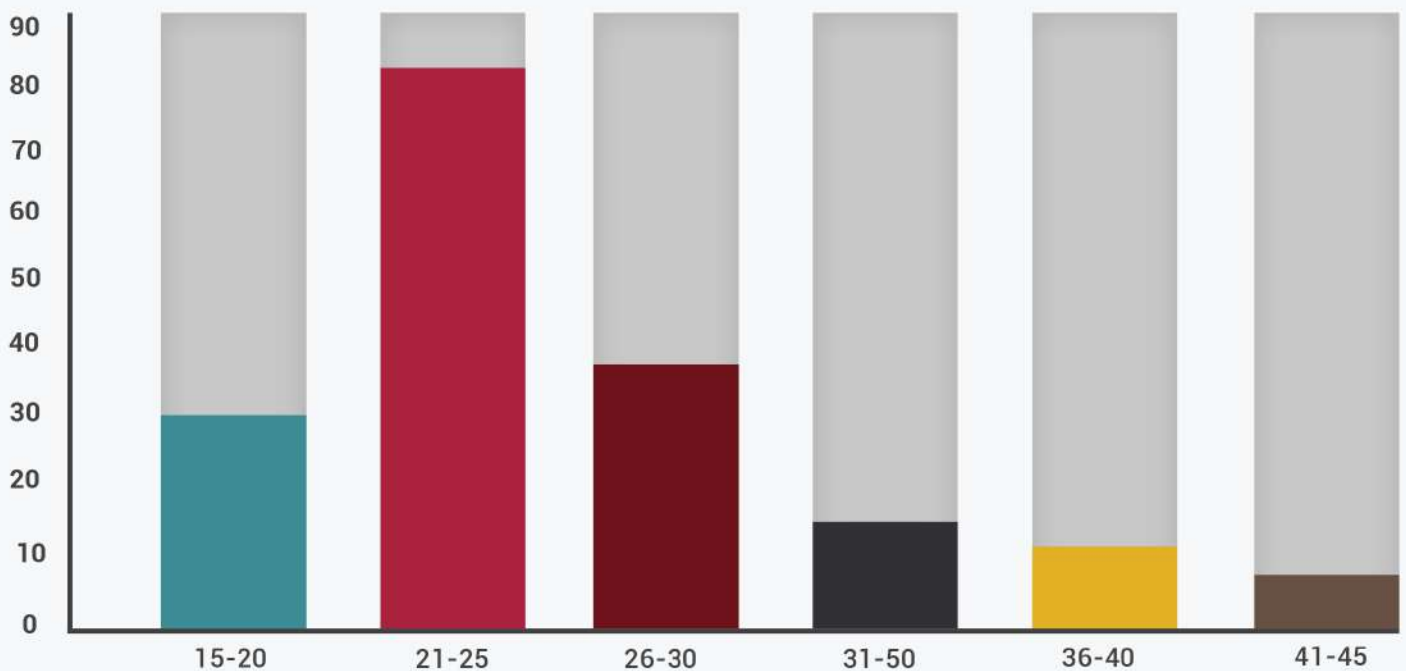
# Demographic Information

## Gender Diversity



There was almost equal participation of male and females in the survey. 71 participants were male and 73 were female.

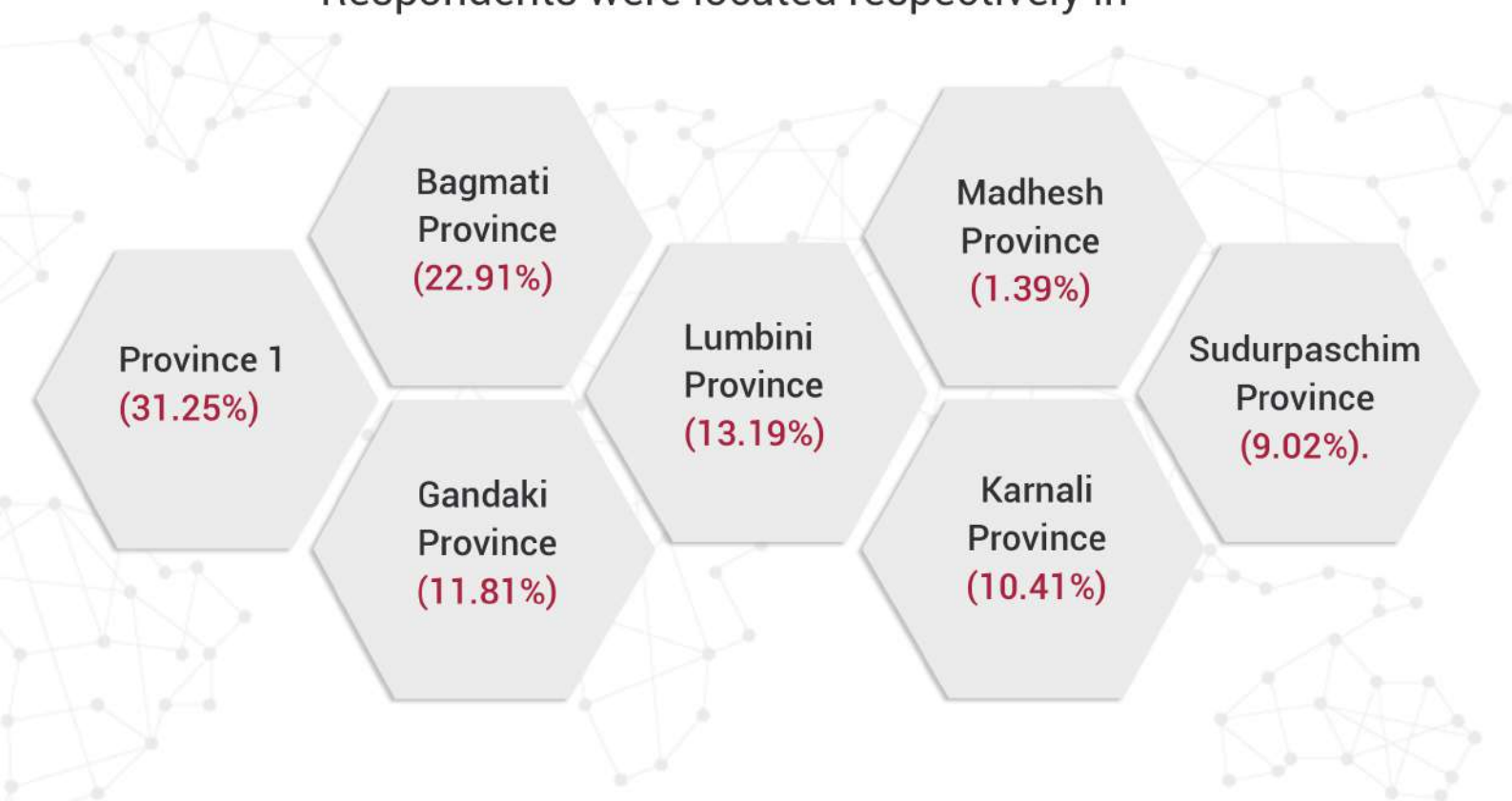
## Age group



Age distribution of Respondents

# Province Representation

Respondents were located respectively in

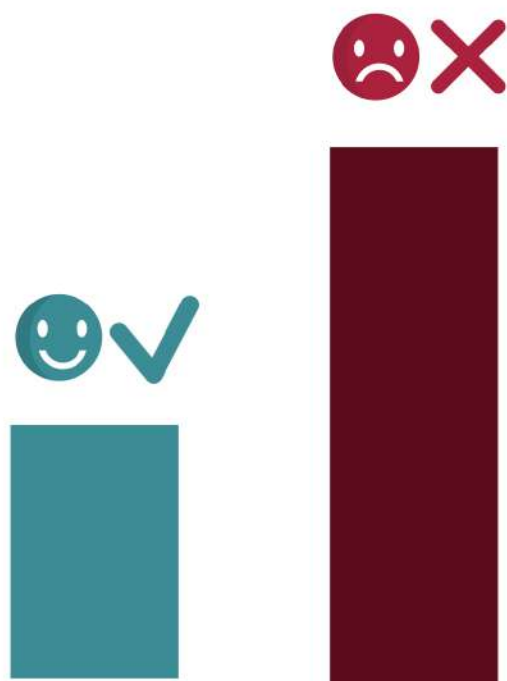


Participants were asked if they had ever voted before. 55 (38.2%) said yes, whereas 89 (61.8%) said no.



## Survey Responses of the participants

### Voting experience among youth participants



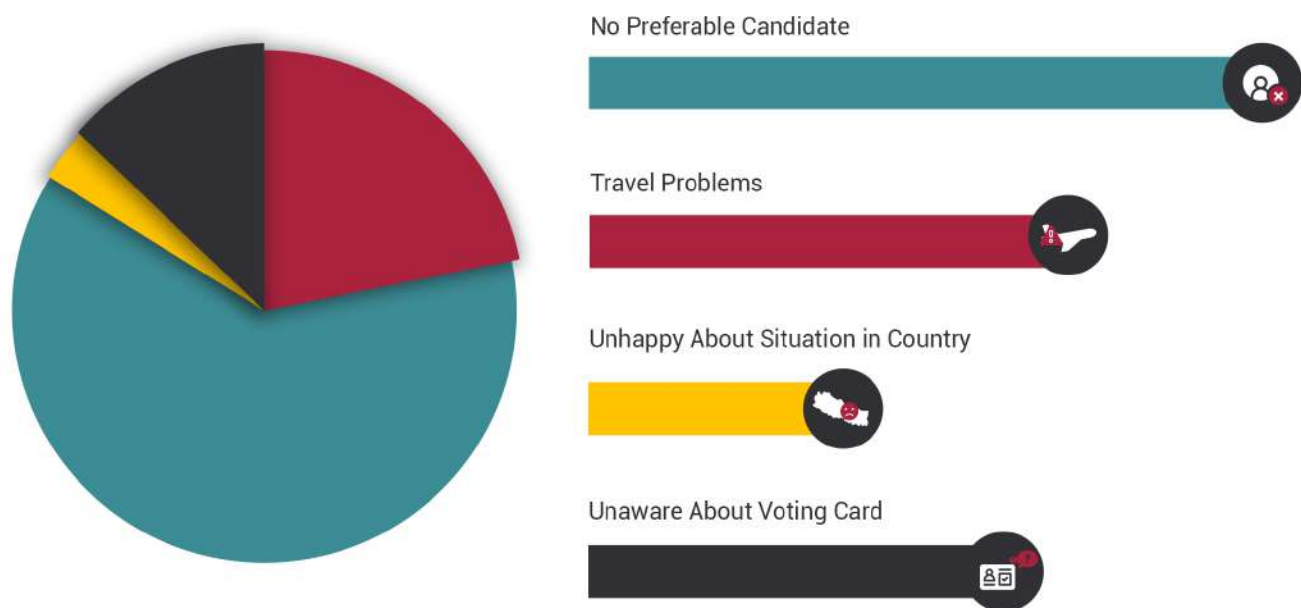
Participants were next asked if they voted in this year's local elections. 91 respondents (63.2%) said yes, whereas 53 (36.8%) said no.

### Voting interest among the participants

63.2% (91) of the respondents voted for the elections whereas 36.8% (53) of the respondents didn't vote in this year's election.



## Reasons for not to vote

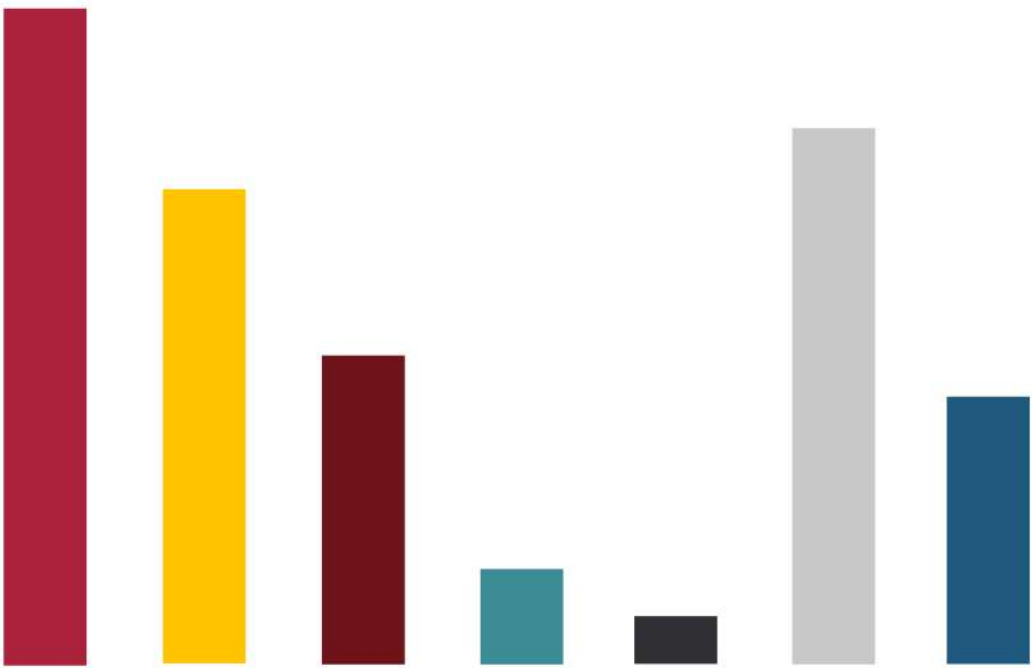


Respondents who didn't vote in this year's local elections were asked why they chose not to vote. For 16.98% of respondents, voting was prohibitive because they lived in Kathmandu and the polling station was too far away. 45.28% of respondents cited a lack of awareness about the necessity of creating a voting card. 3.77% respondents argued that they were irritated about the current situation in Nepal and consequently didn't want to vote. Finally, 9.43% of respondents said that no candidates were preferable and/or focused on the development of the nation. Respondents also cited that previous candidates didn't carry out the work that they had promised politically, so they were reluctant to vote again.



# Uniqueness about this year's election

Survey respondents were next asked what they thought was unique about this year's election. 26.37% of respondents cited youth involvement in the election; 19.78% cited independent candidates, and successful independent campaigns in places like Kathmandu and Dharan. 12.08% cited less advertising when compared with previous years' elections. 4.39% cited diversity and inclusion, both in the candidates and in the campaigns with lower budgets. 2.19% of respondents cited the fact that individuals without voter cards were allowed to vote by proving citizenship, allowing more voters to participate in the elections. 21.97% cited concern about competent candidacies among the voting populace. Finally, 13.18% cited a systematic transparency in the elections.



what was unique about this year's election

- Youth Involvement ■ Independent Candidates ■ Less Promotion ■ Diversity Inclusion ■
- Citizenship as Alternative ■ Diversity Inclusion ■ Transparency ■



## Perception towards voter education

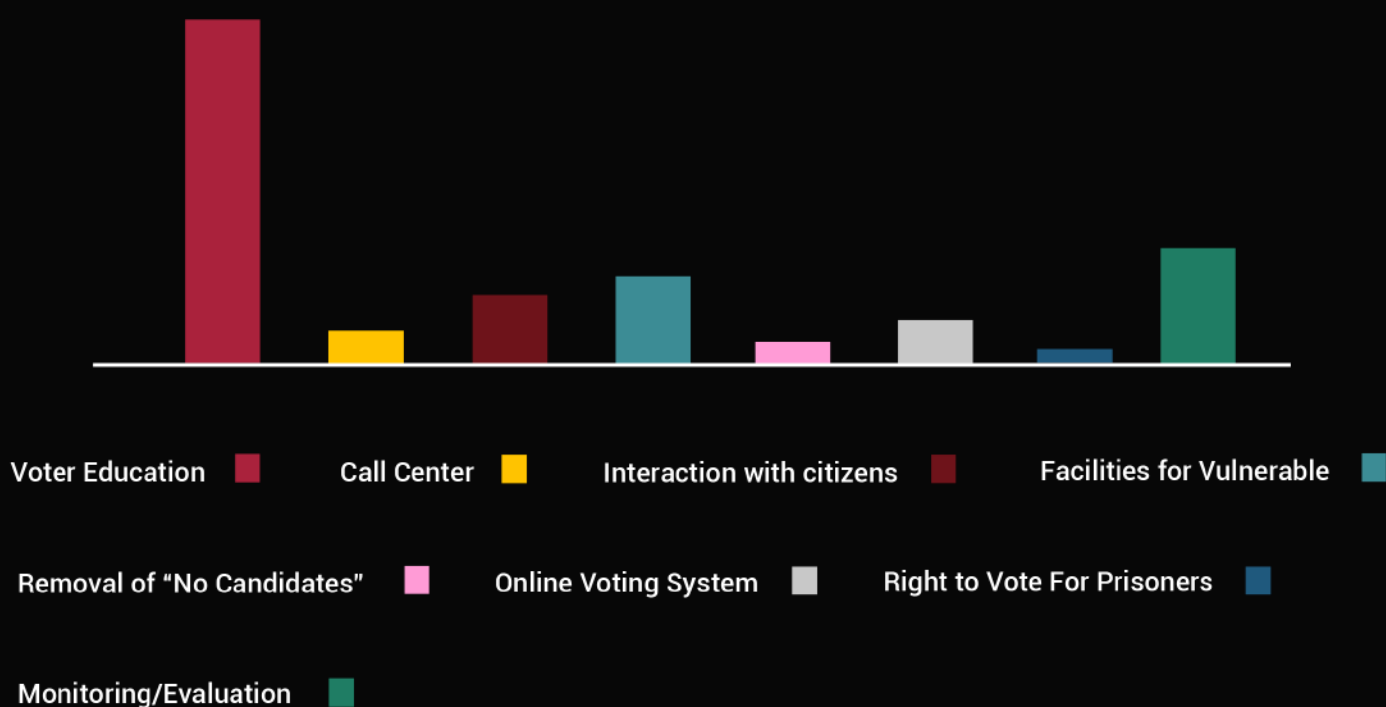


Voters were asked if the information provided by the Election Commission on voter education was enough. 28 respondents (19.4%) said that the information was enough; 99 respondents (68.8%) indicated that the information was not enough; 17 respondents (11.8%) said that they weren't sure. As one of the survey's most lopsided questions, this implies that the Election Commission needs to work on better disseminating voter information



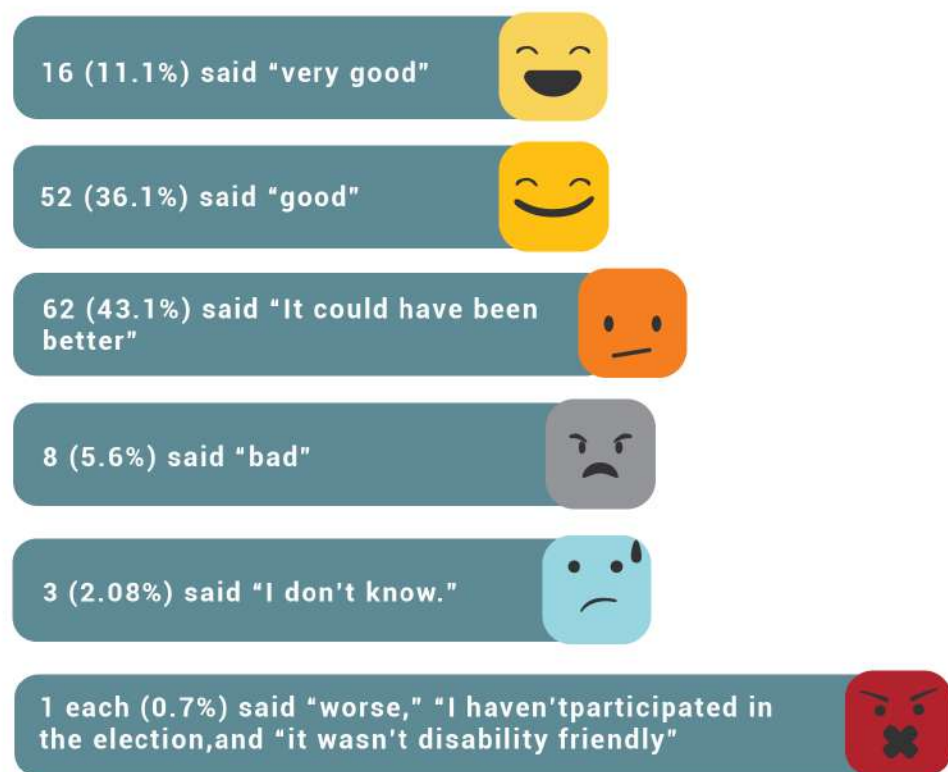
## Government's priority for next elections

Respondents were next asked what they thought the Election Commission should focus on for upcoming elections. Nearly half (49.61%) argued: Voter education is the top priority, best fostered through collaboration with local institutions like schools and colleges. Mock elections should be held and voter information should be disseminated to all groups, especially including marginalized communities. Also cited were more specific messages on voter education, use of local languages, and use of social media to spread information. 3.81% of respondents cited the creation of a call center, since data is not currently available on the EC website. 8.39% of respondents argued that the Election Commission should focus on the timely dissemination of rules, regulations, accessibility, etc. through fostering an open and free conversation with citizens through district heads to figure out what was previously lacking and what top priorities for future elections should be. 11.45% of respondents cited vehicle services for transportation for senior citizens, disabled, infirm and pregnant women. Similarly, respondents argued for health workers and health volunteers to be placed and mobilized in the polling stations. 1.52% of respondents argued that the symbols with No Candidates should be removed. 6.11% of respondents argued that the Commission should focus on E/online voting so that Nepalese from around the world could vote. 0.76% cited the right to vote for prisoners. Finally, 17.55% of respondents cited general increase monitoring and evaluation of elections by the Election Commission.



# Management of Polling Station

Respondents were asked how the management at their polling station was.



## Observations during elections

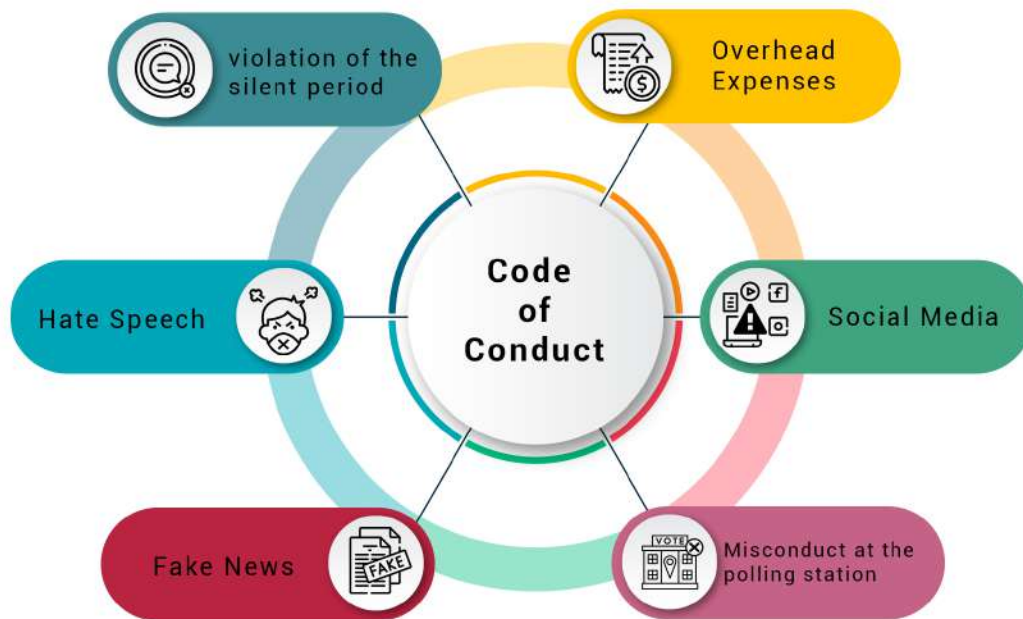
Respondents were next asked if they witnessed or observed any action that was against the election code of conduct.





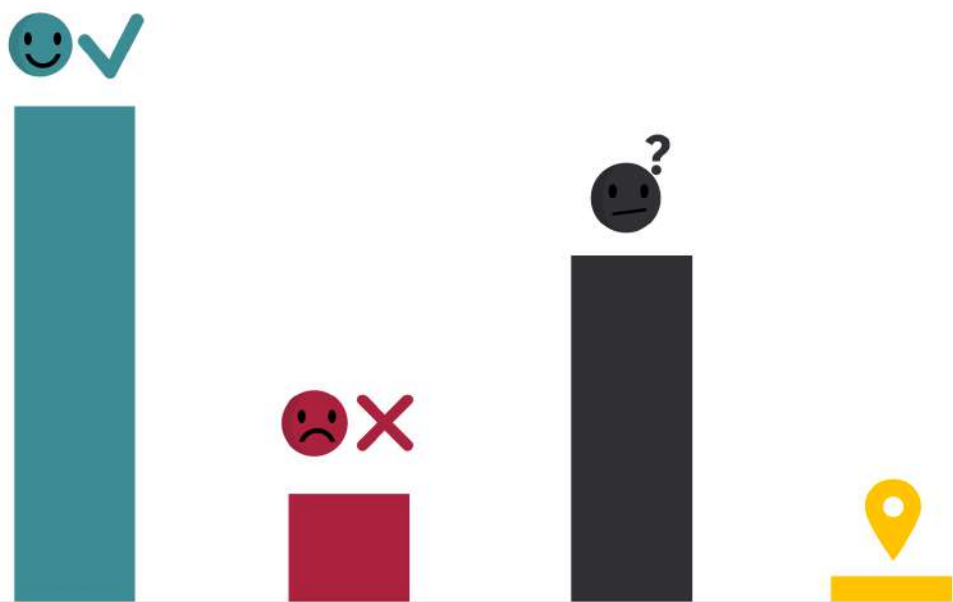
# Violation of Code of Conduct

Of the respondents that noticed action against the code of conduct, 37 reported overhead expenses by the candidates, 29 cited misuse of social media, 26 cited hate speech, 33 cited fake news and misinformation, 36 reported violation of the silent period, and 24 reported misconduct at the polling station.



# Election campaigning and related cost

Asked whether the campaigning of the candidates has crossed the given budget limit, 90 (62.5%) respondents said Yes; 13 (9%) said No; 40 (27.8%) said Don't Know; and 1 (0.7%) said In Some Places.



## Election Campaigning Budget

Of the respondents that agreed that campaigning has crossed the budget limit, 29.23% cited that compared to the type of campaigning the candidates conduct, the budget limit will never be enough; 7.69% cited that there is strong enforcement from the EC, and the EC threshold isn't scientific, indicating that they should raise their limit and conduct effective monitoring to improve transparency on election financing and expenditures; and the majority, at 63.07%, cited spending on useless things like beverages to attract the public and buy the seats before election day by the force of money.





## Election campaigning and related cost

9 respondents (10%) reported submissions of financial reports by the candidates in their localities; 55 (61.1%) reported no submissions; 26 (28.9%) said that they didn't know.



## Perception on inclusion and representation

The final question asked of respondents was:

Based on your observation, what is your take on the inclusion and representation during the nomination and in results of this local level election?

8.43% of respondents argued: there was less women participation and participation from the Dalit community.

1.20% of respondents argued: inclusion and representation can definitely be improved in the results of the local elections. More representation of minorities is always good as they provide a different perspective and they are able to cater to the needs of a different type of population (usually one that's overlooked by the public).

43.37% argued: inclusiveness in the nomination of candidates and election results.

3.61% argued: The political parties were not seen favoring female leadership; However, the voters have shown support for female leadership.

30.12% argued: inclusion was worse than it was during the 2017 local elections. It felt like political parties found a loophole to be less inclusive in nominating their candidates. Therefore, the political parties haven't themselves accepted inclusion and are only doing it for legal obligations.



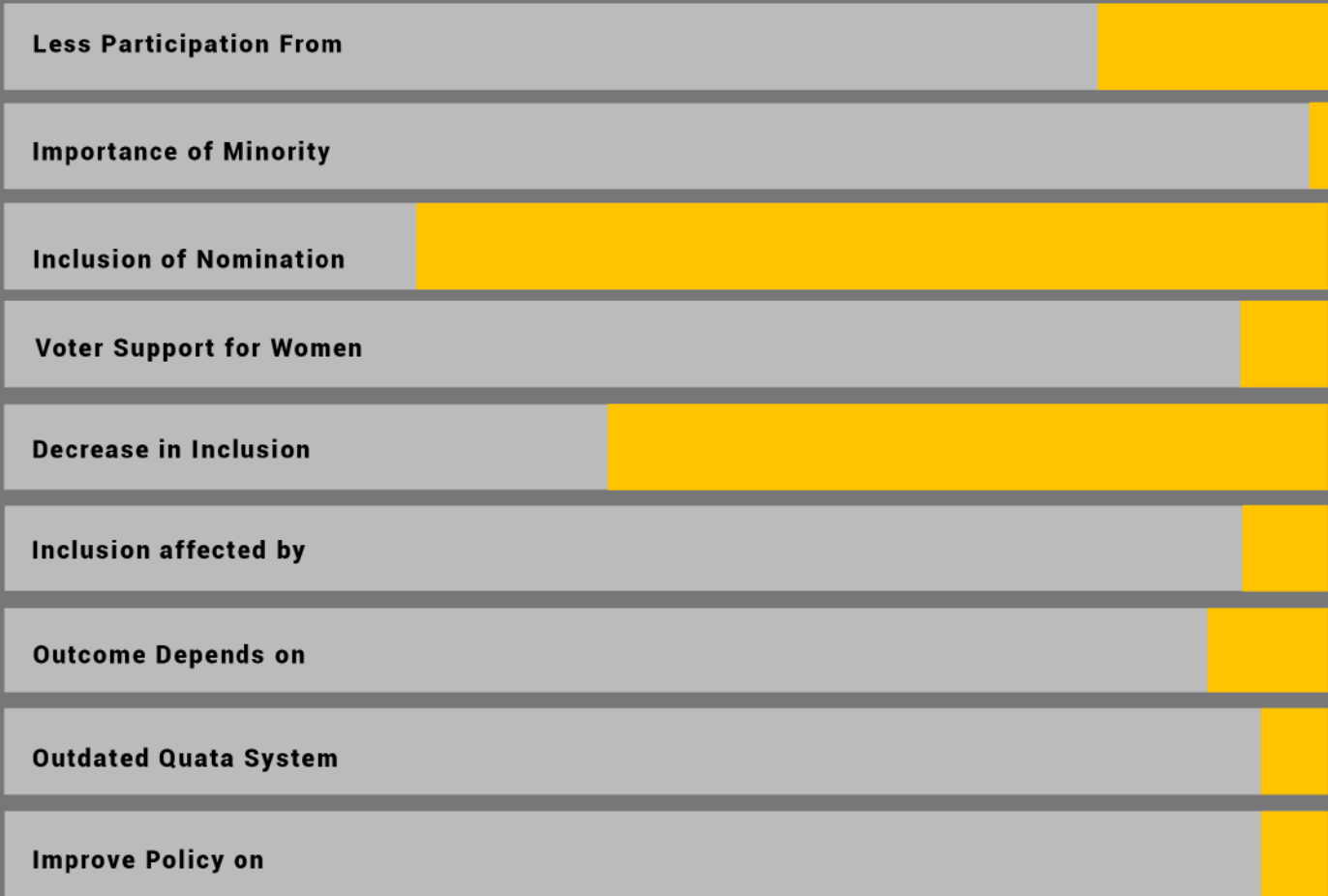
3.61% argued: the correlation between the political parties ended up disregarding the concept of inclusion.

4.81% argued: Candidates were selected on the basis of inclusion but the results were different. We have realized that personal analysis, agenda and presentation made a difference in the results.

2.41% argued: The policy towards maintaining quota for one specific community (particularly Dalits) has a negative impact as not all Dalits in all locations are facing the same discrimination and after long-term inclusive policy, it's time to reframe it targeting different groups of people facing difficulties or that are underrepresented.

Finally, 2.41% argued: The law has prioritized female participation, and many parties have chosen more female candidates than previous elections. It is not fully inclusive but the government has been trying to improve it.

## Public perception on inclusion and representation





# Overall Analysis

The differences in data are largely minimal, but it can be seen that slightly more people (63.2%) had interest in this year's election when compared with previous elections (61.8%). Youth participation has been a major turn of events in this year's local election. Due to the youth candidates, more young voters have become civically engaged, as they have had an opportunity to elect candidates who represent their visions and ideals. Despite this, the survey results indicate that many people did not receive proper information relating to the voting system, while others remained unsatisfied with the candidates in their area. This shows that, even though there was wide promotion and advertisement relating to the campaigns, the Election Commission neglected to disseminate proper information regarding the polling system. It was also mentioned that the campaign promotions and advertisements necessitated increasingly high budgets, which competed with the actual usage of the budget by the government in voting and polling management. Survey respondents have indicated that it would be better to use the budget in training local people in voting rather than using it to advertise candidates. Many people encountered budget misuse by candidates, implying efforts to buy votes. The collaboration with local education institutions, as well as engagement with secondary and high school students, would have been impactful for education on election-related issues. This could also help develop and educate the next generation of voters, making elections more engaging for all demographics. More specific messages on voter education, use of local languages, and use of social media to disseminate information would help considerably.



Finally, survey respondents indicated the need for a call center for proper dissemination of election related information.

One other thing that stood out in the survey was the public perception surrounding independent candidacy. It was seen as effective as many independent candidates in this year's local election won votes. Public perception indicates that people realized they could select independent candidates to work for their communities rather than party candidates who advocate for special interests. It has also been seen that many parties have chosen women as their representatives, normalizing gender equality in the election sphere. It is stated in law that inclusive methods are essential to elections, and the proper implementation of such laws can be seen during the local election. Nonetheless, there remains a need for improvement in the sector of inclusion. There is a need for proper services for senior citizens, disabled people, infirm and pregnant women. Health workers and health volunteers should be mobilized in the polling stations. Necessary arrangements should be made in the polling station considering weather and ability of individual voters. In terms of roadblocks to these inclusive goals, the public perception is that strong correlation between parties lead to the disregard of the overall concept of inclusion.

