

NEPAL

GOVERNANCE

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A Bleak Picture for Inclusive Democracy in Nepal

WEEKLY

Photo from Kathmandu Post

Nepal has long been striving towards an inclusive democracy, with a population that is 51.04 percent female, but progress in women's leadership has taken a hit in recent years. While 2016 marked a historic year for women's representation in Nepal, with three of the top state positions occupied by women, the situation has since deteriorated.

Fast forward to the present day, and all three top state positions are now occupied by Bahun men. This is a far cry from the hopes for inclusivity that emerged following the landmark events of 2016. Moreover, recent local, provincial, and federal elections have failed to bring about significant progress in women's leadership, with representation limited to just 33.09 percent in the federal parliament and 36.36 percent of the provincial women.

Digging deeper into the numbers, the situation is even more alarming. Directly elected representatives to the federal parliament consist of only nine women, while the provincial parliament has only 12 women. The existing participation of women has only been made possible thanks to mandatory provisions in the constitution. Even these provisions are, unfortunately, often challenged by party coalitions during and after elections that promote the involvement and leadership of male politicians.

It is not just about the numbers, however. The lack of women in decision-making roles also risks the loss of important agendas that women's movements and marginal voices have been advocating for. Outgoing president Bidhya Devi Bhandari was often criticized for her (lack of) objective leadership abilities. However, it can also be argued that she could only do so much because of the ceremonial nature of her office.

The entrenched discrimination against women in Nepal appears to be sanctioned by male-dominated and patriarchal politicians, hindering women's reach into leadership positions. The country must take urgent steps to address this issue and provide greater opportunities for women to take on leadership roles. Only then can Nepal truly become an inclusive democracy that serves all its citizens.

Data gathered from various sources

Governance Issues of the Week

1. Two writ petitions have been filed against Prime Minister and CPN (Maoist Centre) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal at the Supreme Court, based on a statement he made in January 2020 that he would take responsibility for the deaths of 5,000 people as the leader of the decade-long insurgency. The Maoist Centre has, however, criticized the court's registration of the petitions.

Read more: [The Kathmandu Post](#)

2. The Chairman of Bhagwanpur Rural Municipality separated dining choices by caste group during a feast for his mother's death anniversary, which included 5,000 guests, including ministers and MPs in attendance. Dalit activists seek to hold him responsible for violating the Caste-Based Discrimination and Untouchability Act, which criminalizes such acts in public and private spaces.

Read more: [Naya Patrika](#)

3. Former minister Badri Neupane and seven others have been sentenced to prison by the Supreme Court for leasing land to Fun Park without a competitive offer, leading to a revenue loss of NRs 315.21 million. Neupane has been given a 9-year and 6-month prison sentence and an NRs 24.3 million fine. The CIAA initiated a corruption investigation against 14 people on February 4, 2019.

Read more : [The Kathmandu Post](#)

4. The Inland Revenue Department (IRD) has started a full audit of 105 firms, including NCell Axiata and CG Foods Nepal, on suspicion of manipulating filed tax amounts. According to law, taxpayers must pay taxes based on their self-declared income, and the IRD can take them to a full audit based on suspicion. The IRD is set to start an investigation of the financial report of medium taxpayers in the second stage.

Read more: [myRepublica](#)

5. The government's budget for the current fiscal year ending in mid-July is expected to be the worst ever, with revenue falling short of the target. The government aimed to collect NRs. 651 billion by mid-January 2023, but only managed to raise NRs. 500 billion. This is the second year in the last 48 years that revenue has declined in any financial year.

Read more: [Setopati](#)

6. According to Cyber Bureau data, there is a rising trend of online violence against women in Nepal. Facebook Messenger is the most prominent platform for such incidents, followed by Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, WhatsApp, Email, and Twitter. The Bagmati province received the highest number of complaints reported to the police during the fiscal year 2020/21.

Read more: [Online Khabar](#)

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