

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

**SANKALPA- WOMEN ALLIANCE FOR PEACE,
JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY**



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



It feels a great honor to present to you all the Annual Report of Sankalpa- Women Alliance for Peace, Justice and democracy for the year 2079 B.S. (2020-21 A.D.). Sankalpa since its establishment has already completed a glorious decade of collective voice of women from diverse group. We have been working with different areas to uplift the equal participation of women in the country along with policy advocacy to avoid any kind of discrimination in the society. The achievement we have reached with a continuous effort has no limits and we will carry out the same in future.

This year 2021 was a challenging year for the whole world due to an unexpected heat of pandemic “Covid-19” in the very beginning of the year. Entire world had to shut down their economy and thus go for a full fledged lockdown. In this case a developing country like Nepal had to face many challenges. The light of hope was somewhere in the corner of an uncertain darkness.

Sankalpa did not give up instead looked forward to the opportunities of women through many perspectives which can lead to a capable society. The virtual way had created a platform which helped us gather in other way to look for the possibilities forward for women. This unlimited platform helped us connect to all provinces of Nepal as well as other countries and be each other’s strength in this difficult time. The best part of the year for us was when the vaccine for Covid-19 was made available to the public with age groups division.

The current context in the country after the pandemic has made us realize more importance of transparency and accountability in the country to secure the rights of diverse group of women. Thus, Sankalpa has realized its stand in upcoming days for scrutiny leading to a critical review of its policies, systems and procedures which would address the needs of transforming society and its aspirations. This annual report offers an insight into our work – and into the wide-ranging challenges we, together with our target communities, continue to face. We are thankful and obliged to all our supporters and look forward to everyone’s continued support from donors, national and international I/NGOs, government agencies, political parties, civil society organizations and relevant stakeholders and individuals to obtain better results and new opportunities in the future.

Sangeeta Lama
President

ACRONYMS

DAG Disaster Action Group

FEDO Feminist Dalit Organization

GBV Gender Based Violence

LGBTIQ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Questioning

MO Member Organizations

NDWA Nepal Disabled Women Association

NIWF National Indigenous Women Federation

NGOs Non-Governmental Organizations

RUWDUC Rural Women's Development and Unity Center

WNF Women's NGO Federation

SGBV Sexual and Gender Based Violence

VAW Violence against Women

VDC Village Development Committee

WHR Women for Human Rights, A Single Women group

WNF Women's NGO Federation

WWJ Working Women Journalists

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ABOUT SANKALPA

Sankalpa- Women's Alliance for Peace, Justice and Democracy was founded in June 2011 by women's rights organizations that have worked together in an alliance – Women's Alliance for Peace, Power, Democracy and Constituent Assembly (WAPPDCA) since 2006. Since its formation, Sankalpa as an alliance has demonstrated its effectiveness by undertaking strategic interventions and activities to capture the momentum of inclusiveness in the post conflict Nepal and within the changing political environment to advance women's equal power and equal rights. Sankalpa understands that as a network, its strength comes from the work and learning of each of its member organizations and the influence that these organizations have in national policies. The alliance has worked with the mission captured by the slogan 'mission 50-50', proportionate and representative participation of women at all levels of the peace process and state structures. Sankalpa has adopted four distinct approaches to materialize its vision, 'Peaceful, just, equitable and democratic Nepal where women play a decisive and powerful role in governance and politics', they are: capacity building, movement building, institution building and organization building.



VISION, MISSION, GOAL and PURPOSE

- ❖ **Vision:** A peaceful, just, equitable and democratic Nepal where women play a decisive and powerful role in governance and politics.
- ❖ **Mission:** Alliance with the mission 50 – 50: women will participate equally in all spheres of Nepali life with focus on increasing their role and contribution in the constitutional bodies and state institutions.
- ❖ **Goal:** Increased decisive and powerful role of women in peace, governance and politics.
- ❖ **Purpose:** Leading women's alliance through inclusive participation and equality for peace, justice and democracy

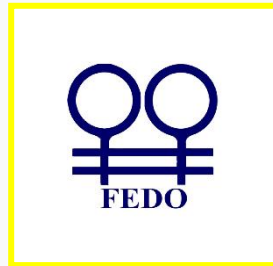
CORE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

- ❖ **Non-discrimination**
- ❖ **Respect and dignity**
- ❖ **Equity for equality**
- ❖ **Justice**
- ❖ **Inclusiveness**
- ❖ **Unity in Diversity**
- ❖ **Cooperation**
- ❖ **Transparency and accountability**

IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIES



- ❖ **Institutional Development**
- ❖ **Advocacy and Lobbying/ Networking**
- ❖ **Research, Documentation and Publication**
- ❖ **Participatory Intervention**
- ❖ **Alliance Building**
- ❖ **Inclusive and respect for Diversity**

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS OF SANKALPA



SANKALPA'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

NAME	DESIGNATION	
Sangeeta Lama	President	
Shobha Basnet	Senior- Vice President	
Chandrika Bhattraï	Vice President	
Kala Swarnakar	General Secretary	
Usha Rawat	Treasurer	
Maimoona Siddiqui	Secretary	

Lily Thapa	Immediate Past President	
Dr. Chhatra Amatya	Member	
Durga Sob	Member	
Amika Rajthala	Member	
Neelam Karn	Member	
Junita Deewan	Member	
Shova Bista	Member	

MILESTONE OF SANKALPA IN 15 YEARS

- Established Sankalpa as a rich feminist resource center in South Asia.
- Established Sankalpa as a strong and powerful base of women's movement in Nepal.
- Supported diverse women to secure various positions into various decision-making positions to federal structures by implementing its policy advocacy.
- Successfully included Sankalpa's priority issues in action plans of Government of Nepal and other INGOs and bilateral organizations.
- Established Sankalpa as an active member at the Regional and Global women's network.
- Sankalpa has well-established and capacitated staffs at the Secretariat, federal regions supported by respective member organizations (MOs).
- Sustainability of movement
- Gender monitoring and election observation in Nepal.
- Formed South Asian regional Network that is now named as "South Asian Women Alliance for Regional- Cooperation"

DISASTER ACTION GROUP (DAG)


The loose network formed in the present year was initiated by Sankalpa. Being an alliance of leading women rights NGOs, Sankalpa created this network to support the survivors of the naturam calamities in every possible way in a collective way.

Previously the team headed to Helambu and Melamchi of Sindhupalchowk district followed by the relief for the survivors of Manang. The disaster then hit the terai plains of the country where the team lead for the relief in Rautahat and Mahottari district which was mostly affected. The relief materials consisted of food items, stationary for children with a pouch of sweets as a gesture of happiness and hope in coming days. Covid safety materials like masks, soap, hygiene kits, dignity kits for women and girls. Since, there is always the rising cases of snake bites during monsoon in terai we also distributed mosquito nets for lactating mother, children, senior citizens and the disabled.

The relief materials were provided in a safe and sound environment by following all the protocols of Covid pandemic. This collective approach of Sankalpa has created a mission of inclusiveness during the disaster at the time of pandemic to the people who have faced this life taking challenge. Sankalpa will be continuing these steps of help in every part of country whenever necessary with its full coordination.

Volume 1

DISASTER ACTION GROUP (DAG)




An Action for Relief

As the country was suffering with the second wave of the pandemic at its peak, The series was followed by the devastating flood and landslide in the Sindhupalchowk and Manang district.

Sankalpa - Woman Alliance for Peace, Justice and Democracy in coordination with many organizations jointly formed an immediate and loose network called "Disaster in action (DAG)", with a common aim of supporting the flood victims through essential relief packages.

The inclusive networks is joined by youths, volunteers, woman and children rights activist and many other individuals to help the affected areas in every possible way. The network through its social media page gathered information to commence its relief programs.

DISASTER ACTION GROUP (DAG) EXPRESSES OUR DEEP SORROW FOR THOSE WHO HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES DUE TO DISASTER AND PANDEMIC.




RELIEF MATERIALS

The relief materials included, dry food items like instant noodles, beaten rice, biscuits, rice packs and other hygiene kits by keeping the pandemic in mind.

It also included the woman hygiene materials. It also consisted of two big tents that can capacitate 200-300 people for both Helambu and Melamchi District of Sindhupalchowk. There was a chain of contributions both from organizations as well as individuals for the package.

The packaging was done by following all the measures of covid 19.

The distribution was done through roadway transportation though the corridors were risky to reach the affected areas.



WEBINAR ON WOMEN IN SDG

Sankalpa- Women Alliance for Peace, Justice and Democracy held a webinar on women in sustainable development goals (sdg). The main objective of the program was to create a dialogue/ discussion on the indicators of sustainable development goals from the perspective of women and to clear any confusion on those topics. There was total participation of 85 participants from diverse group working in different issues, in the program.

The program started with introduction session of all the participants followed by why this discussion was important and their queries. The program was facilitated by our General Secretary Kala Swarnakar followed by the introduction about the topic by Mr. Daya Sagar Shrestha Executive Director of National Campaign for Sustainable Development (NACASUD-Nepal). Later the program was handed over to our resource person Ms. Shanta Laxmi Shrestha and Mr. Gopinath Mainali, experts in this topic. The speakers started with their presentations and finished timely.

The importance of sustainable development goals, the approval of the agendas by over one hundred countries in the world. The thought of “leave no one behind” in the agenda, developed to developing countries, preserving human rights and progressiveness was all gathered in the introduction of the presentation. The presentation on the indicators of sustainable development goals from gender perspectives was also delivered by our presenter thoroughly with PowerPoint slides.

SANKALPA- WOMEN 'S ALLIANCE FOR PEACE, JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY

WEBINAR ON WOMEN IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDG)

Honorable Lily Thapa
National Human Rights Commission

Gopinath Mainali
Former Secretary
Government of Nepal

Prof. Dr. Bindu Pokharel
Head of Central Department, Gender Studies
Tribhuvan University

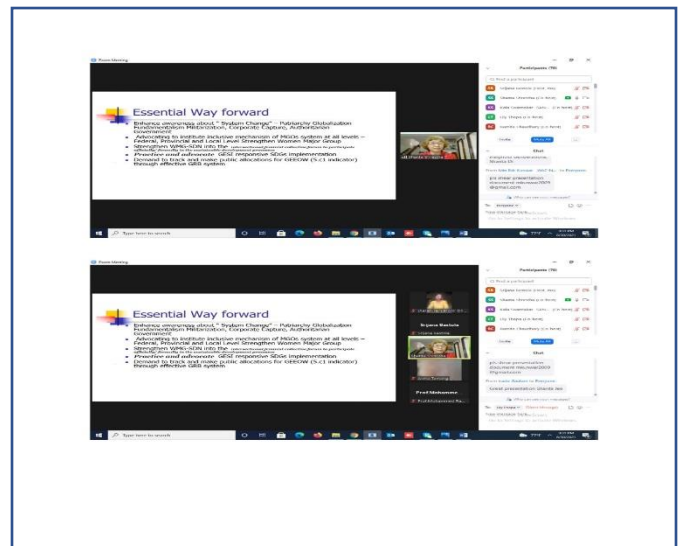
Shanta Laxmi Shrestha
Immediate-Past President &
Honorable Chairperson
Beyond Beijing Committee (BBC), Nepal

Facilitator: Kala Swarnakar
General Secretary
Sankalpa-WA

Date: 30th August'2021, Monday
Time: 2:30p.m. to 4pm

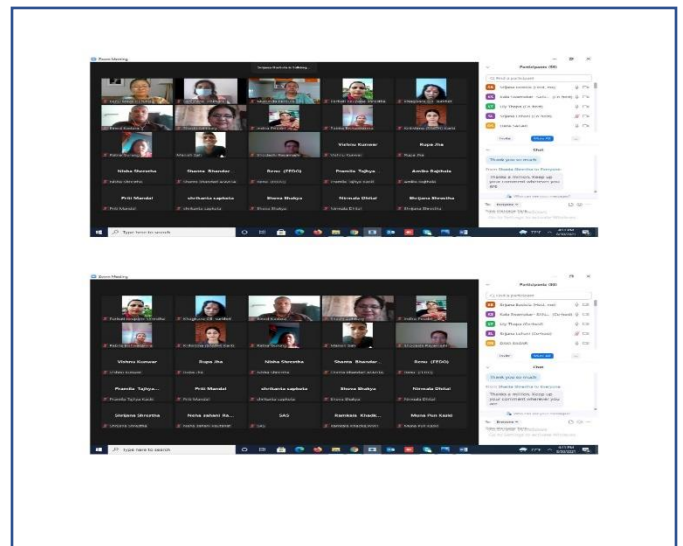
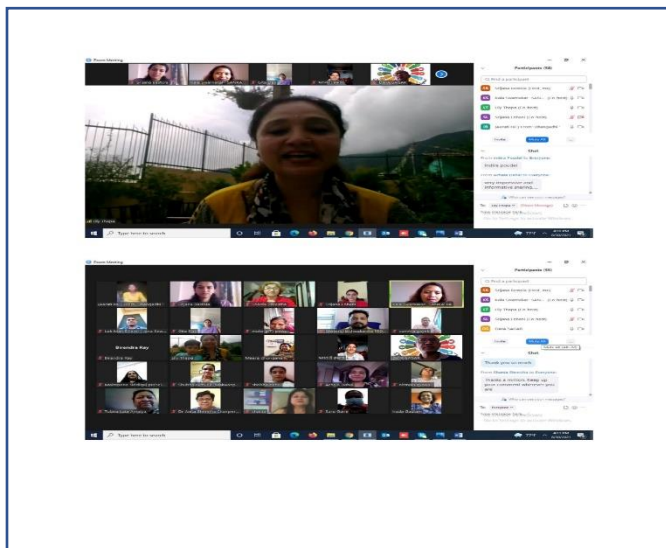
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Password: 114605

For more details: 01-5444612, 9849653923, www.sankalpa.org.np <https://www.facebook.com/sankalpa.wa/>



From our first presenter Ms. Shanta Laxmi Shrestha delivered the history of women in SDG including the Rio Earth Summit 1992, Women’s role at United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Gender equality in Agenda 2030 and SDG, Women’s Major Group (WMG) as an intersectional, feminist collective and an official un participant to sustainable development processes, advocacy of WMG in 2021, SDG goal 5 and the essential ways forward. The essential ways forward included every details from awareness about system change- patriarchy globalization, advocacy for the inclusive mechanism.

Similarly from our second presenter Mr. Gopinath Mainali delivered the aim of SDG, women and SDG with its challenges, details description on goal number 5 of SDG from women perspective, the description on 16 different aims of the SDG, how SDG is related to women, challenges in the implementation of SDG in Nepal, the financial gap for the goal number five in Nepal.



11th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sankalpa Women's Alliance for Peace, Justice and Democracy completed its 11th Annual General Meeting (AGM) at Village Café in Jhamshikhel on 19th September. Sankalpa's board members comprises of its representatives from its member organizations.

Sankalpa team started the meeting with a mourning of one minute in the memory of our beloved Founding member Late. Mohamaddi Siddiqui who is also the founder of Fatima Foundation in Nepalgunj. She passed away due to Covid-19 I the same year. In the AGM the annual report for the fiscal year 2020-21 A.D. was presented by the General Secretary of Sankalpa Ms. Kala Swarnakar. The audit report for the same fiscal year was presented by Ms. Usha Rawat Treasurer of Sankalpa. Sankalpa team felicitated two of its members in the AGM, Dr. Chhatra Amatya for receiving "Life Time Achievement Award" from Nepal Public Health Foundation and Honorable Lily Thapa for being appointed as the member of National Human Rights Council (NHRC) of Nepal.

The team also came up with suggestions and feedback for the upcoming days of Sankalpa and the ways forward to strengthen the organization.



REPORT DISSEMINATION PROGRAM

Sankalpa has always been taking active participation in different women related activities. The 16 days activism is also a mark on our milestone as we have been lobbying for women rights since inception. This year to mark this occasion we had a consultation with our province networks and gained information from them women violence in covid pandemic.

Sankalpa had conducted a research on “Impact of Covid-19 on Women and Girls of Diverse Group”. The research paper was disseminated in the occasion of 16 Days Activism on Violence Against Women. The report was disseminated in the presence of Program’s Chief Guest Chairperson of National Inclusion Commission of Nepal Dr. Ram Krishna Timalisina. The report presentation was done by the researcher Ms. Achala Dahal the Joint Secretary of Nepal Government.

The members of Civil Societies, INGOs and government stakeholders were present at the program.



The study suggest that a strong policy intervention is required to make women and girls more resilient and increase capacity to bounce back from any shock of such crisis. A sustainable way of thinking and intervention for uplifting economic losses, decreasing social inequalities, improving the educational access, removing gender-based violence and sex-based discrimination. The response plans formulated to mitigate the mentioned problem needs to be gender responsive. The pandemic is not only sin it is also an opportunity for women and girls to play a transformative role by implementing solutions that can mitigate risks to their economic security, health, and safety, both during, and beyond the crisis.



5th GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF SANKALPA

Sankalpa held its 5th General Assembly according to its statute and policies. Ms. Lily Thapa completed her second term in Sankalpa and there was re-election held in the presence of Law Officer Advocate Meera Dhungana. In the program General Secretary of Sankalpa Ms. Kala Swarnakar delivered the achievement report of Sankalpa where Ms. Usha Rawat Treasurer of Sankalpa gave the financial report on the activities.

The members then went for the election process and the new committee of board was formed. The new members gave a vote of thanks to the Immediate Past President Ms. Lily Thapa for her time and devotion to the organization with a token of love. The team also welcomed Ms. Sangeeta Lama as the new Chairperson including other members in the board.



INTERGENERATIONAL FEMINIST LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Sankalpa in support of Womankind Worldwide conducted four days of workshop on “Intergenerational Feminist Leadership Training” in Kathmandu, Siraha and Nepalgunj. The program was conducted by combining the participants from other provinces so that there will be cross sharing in their issues which will help them form a network and work together.

The workshop consisted the topics on Inter-generation, intersectionality, communications, leadership, local level laws and policies, feminism and advocacy. Sankalpa comprised participants through its active province networks that included women and girls of diverse groups. The program also included women survivors and also ones from the most marginalized communities. The major aim of the program was to combine participants from diverse groups, territories, cultural backgrounds so that the sharing becomes more interlinked. This also aimed to give women cross sharing on each other’s issues and also the importance of collective power in every approach.

All the resource person had their expertise in the subject matters they delivered, where they made the workshops very interesting. The resource person conducted plays, short group discussions, presentations by participants which made the participants more encouraged towards the subject matter.



With the Movement Strengthening Fund from Womankind Worldwide Sankalpa also created a feminist documentary. The documentary person filmed all the trainings and prepared the documentary including the feminist movement of Sankalpa since its establishment. All the feminist leaders of Nepal and their contribution in ensuring meaningful participation of diverse group of women in the country. The trainings, outcomes of trainings are all included in the documentary where participants from diverse group were interviewed. They stated that the training has enhanced their knowledge in feminism and more over inter-generational approach. The training included participants from different age groups and their experience of working in feminist issues. This helped them to cross share their experiences as deep-rooted and new comer in the sector of women rights.



POLITICAL ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON WOMEN'S MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

The 2022 local elections will be the second in Nepal's history since becoming a federal republic. The five years since the 2017 local elections have shown the importance of local leadership, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic with local leadership providing its citizens with immediate relief. The 2017 election was also deemed a success as it championed women in politics by following and ensuring the 33% women in politics quota outlined in the constitution of Nepal. All parties also endorsed at least one woman for deputy-mayor and mayoral candidacy.

In 2017, close to 41% of local political positions were held by women, but the numbers for 2022 will be much lower as nominations have decreased as well (Kathmandu Post). Additionally, though the percentage of female political representation exceeded 33% in 2017, the vast majority of them were for deputy mayor positions. Only 6% were female mayoral candidates and only 3.3% were for ward chairs, compared to 91% female candidates for deputy-mayor (Election Commission of Nepal 2017). These numbers show that rarely do women receive tickets for mayor or ward chair positions and are rather chosen to take the 'second-in-command' position of deputy-mayor. This can largely be attributed to an overarching patriarchal socialization that played out in the selection and nomination process for the two key leadership positions.

In reaction to these events, Women NGOs Federation and Sankalpa - Women's Alliance for Justice, Peace and Democracy hosted a panel discussion with members of various political parties to gain their perspectives and reactions. We also invited current women vice-chairs and other

candidates who had put their names forward for nomination but were not chosen to be part of the discussion as well. The event was held on April 22, 2022 at Hotel Greenwich.



After listening to and interacting with women within their parties and across parties, the politicians responded through three main discussion points: that it would have been better to have these discussions earlier in the election process; that they are working on this issue with their party's; and, that they are in support of WNF-Nepal, women candidates and representatives across Nepal as they know that a society without women is not a successful society or one that we want to be in.

The representatives did share that we should not lose sight of the progress that we have made for women's representation across sectors. There has been an increase of women in all sectors, and we will ensure that this continues in politics as well. Without the perspectives and opinions of half the population in political leadership positions, laws and policies will not accurately reflect the needs of everyone. In response to the comments of the timing of the event, the event was organized

after the party's announced nominations because only after would we have known the status of women nominees, rather than organizing after the news of the coalition formation.

The event was moderated by Renu Sijapati, treasurer of WNF-Nepal. She began with an introduction of the political representatives that were present, followed by welcoming Ms Tulasa Lata Amatya, vice-president of WNF-Nepal to present the position paper prepared by the organization (see "Press Release"). The position paper argues that the rules set by the election committee and party actions are contradictory to the Nepali constitution that guarantees 33% women's proportionate participation in politics. With this position paper, we have committed to working on ensuring that this violation of a woman's constitutional right does not happen again, especially with the upcoming provincial and federal elections through legal action.

After the position paper was introduced and the political representatives had the chance to review it, Dr. Shashi Adhikary, president of WNF-Nepal, formally welcomed the event attendees and gave a brief introduction of WNF-Nepal. She further elaborated on what was written in the position paper and called on the representatives to reflect on what the constitution says and how has the new election and party actions gone against the constitution?

Honorable Member Lily Thapa, National Human Rights Commission, and patron of WNF-Nepal, was then called to share her thoughts on the issue from a human rights and women's rights perspective. She powerfully said that this is not only a case for women but for all of society, for all of society's strength. She also recalled her experiences in the field, in different districts, and how she would hear girls sharing their dreams about being leaders and specifically about being in

positions like Dr. Dila Sangroula who was also present in the event. Using what she had learned from field experiences, she also noted that women's campaigns are never nearly as funded as men's campaigns, which is why she discussed the importance of campaign funding and supporting women candidates not only with money but also by uplifting women who are already in the political party to higher positions of power (ex. from deputy mayor to mayor).



DIALOGUE WITH WOMEN CANDIDATES FOR LOCAL LEVEL ELECTIONS (MAYOR, DEPUTY MAYOR, WARD CHAIRS)

Nepal has seen an uprising of women in politics today. The government of Nepal has ensured 33% the participation of women in politics, but there are still so many women lagging.

This Election Period of 2079, in collaboration with two alliances of women's organizations- Sankalpa Women's Alliance for Peace, Justice and Democracy and Women's NGO Federation has started a campaign. 'Women win in politics' to support women in politics and increase the number of women participants.

The campaign also included a program recently on May 2 nd with the mayoral and deputy mayoral

candidates of Kathmandu and Lalitpur Metropolitan City. Our women candidates briefly discussed their commitments during their reign, including their support for other fellow candidates.

There were two mayoral candidates of Kathmandu- Sirjana Singh (Nepali Congress) and Samiksha Baskota (Bibeksheel Sajha Party), along with the mayoral candidate of Tokha Municipality- Rajani Thapa (Nepali Congress).

Srijana Singh has a long political background and has indulged in politics directly and indirectly since 2033 B.S. As a mayoral candidate, she emphasized her focus on the upliftment and protection of women.

Women's safety has been a huge issue today, and to mitigate that, she ensured

electricity and CCTV everywhere. Along with that, a scheme to make 'कोसेली घर' where

women would be provided with skill development training to generate employment.

She touched down on the inconvenience caused by earthquakes and covid on low economic women to minimize that. She also forwarded the concept of special allowances. She even ensured the law's implementation to get citizenship under her mother's name.

There had been different aspects regarding the clean and green city, protection of traditions and religious cities, free drinking water, and toilet facilities in the city. She tried to emphasize education, health services, employment opportunities, good governance, and the need to stop the brain drain.



Samikshya Baskota- a lawyer by profession- stepped into politics in 2074 B.S. She is another female mayoral candidate representing Bibeksheel Party. She tried to shed light on the representation of women in politics and her agenda to increase the representation from 33% to 50% and even more.

There have been increasing cases of sexual violence in public transportation, which is a sensitive issue that she wants to address with new provisions. Mrs. Baskota has also given her words to work effectively toward solving the issue of citizenship.

She has ensured that there will be the construction of 50 public toilet facilities in the Kathmandu valley within a year. The unmanaged public drainage system would also be managed, and the protection of the cultural and religious sites is one of her primary concerns.

Rajani Thapa- She is the young and enthusiastic mayoral candidate of Tokha Municipality.

‘There has been a habit of pulling each other’s leg, but as a woman, it’s high time to catch one another’s hand and move forward,’ she said.

She shared her vision of being ‘Ready to fight back. Under this, she shared three central ideas; Women Empowerment Sales, Women Encouragement Sales, and Women Fight Back Sales.

Women Empowerment Sales included creating skills and distributing the products in the local market. Women Encouragement Sales emphasized the importance of awareness regarding the

rule of law. At the same time, Women Fight Back Sale emphasized trying to fight back against the violence faced by women.

The event was participated by Sunita Dongol (CPN-UML), Binita Majhgaiya (Rastriya Prajatantra Party), and Kriti Tuladhar (Bibeksheel Sajha Party), who are the deputy mayoral candidates of Kathmandu.



Sunita Dongol is not only representing UML but also youngsters keen to enter politics. She talked about the zero-tolerance policy for violence against women. She also believes in cultural preservation and using communication for change and empowerment.

Binita Majhgaiya is a conservation architect representing Rastriya Prajatantra Party from Kathmandu. As a working woman, she cited the importance of security for women. The security of women would replace workplace harassment, and inequality is what she plans on doing after her win. The importance of protecting cultural heritage is also one of her primary focuses.

Kriti Tuladhar, representing Bibeksheel Sajha Party, is a candidate for deputy mayor. Her agenda is focused on the empowerment and protection of women, children, differently abled, old age, and LGBTIQ.

Deputy mayoral candidate for Lalitpur Swarnima Shakya represents the Rastriya Prajatantra Party, focusing her importance on the encouragement of women by women. There should be a strong women's community with a representation of women in power from every area. She especially emphasized a violence-free community.

ORIENTATION TO OBSERVERS

Sankalpa Women's Alliance for Peace, Justice and Democracy along with Women's NGO Federation gave a one day training to the observers from Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur Districts on all the necessary techniques to observe the Local Level Elections on the basis of the Election Code of Conduct.

The program started with the welcome and objectives of the program by President of Women's NGO Federation Dr. Shashi Adhikari. The program was chaired by Senior-Vice President of Sankalpa Shobha Basnet.

The program then commenced with introduction round and then the roles, responsibilities, rights and risk factors for the observers during the observation of the pre-election, election day and post-election. They were given a set of questionnaires developed by both the organizations and were oriented on it. The observers were supposed to observe the election on the basis of the questionnaires given to them and then make a complete report on their observation. They were asked to give the final report to Sankalpa by filling all the procedures in the questionnaires.

After the lunch break the Election Code of Conduct for the observers was delivered by Joint-Secretary of Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) Mr. Yagya Bhattarai. All the necessary rules and regulations for an observer was discussed. They were also acknowledged with the SMS tracking codes and about the call centers for any kind of electoral disputes. Moreover the necessity of staying neutral by the observers were also discussed.



The program continued with the questions/answers session where the oriented observers were handed over the floor to discuss openly on any unclear matter of the program. The distribution of Caps and Jackets to the observers and the rules about them were also discussed. This marked the ending of the program. Other observers further from Kathmandu were oriented through zoom about all the procedures, code of conduct and observation materials.



MEETING WITH PARLIAMENTARIANS

The results of the local level elections have all been confirmed. There were many newcomers, incredible wins for independent candidates, and some expected results as well. Though the election period was shrouded in controversy because of the alliance that saw the number of women candidate nominations decrease, the results showed that there has been an increase in mayor and ward chair elected women, especially for Dalit women (25 mayors vs 18 in 2017, and 69 ward chairs vs 61 in 2017) (Election Commission 2022).

However, the most evident statistics that show the effects of this alliance came from the number of deputy mayors and vice-chairs. Compared to 2017, there are 138 less women deputy mayors and vice-chairs in local politics for the next five years (Election Commission 2022). The deputy mayor position as well as the vice-chair position has been socialized to be a female position since the 33% quota of female nominations because of the patriarchal leadership norms that put women in 'second-in-command' positions. This decrease is indicative of the effects of the alliance as fewer female candidates were fielded for positions. Furthermore, it also shows that without quotas such as the 33% quota, the meaningful representation and participation of women in politics has a long way to go.

The political party members were identified and invited for the event through phone calls and messages. Due to the national budget meetings, multiple invitees were unable to attend. A limited number of media personnel were invited as this event was meant to serve as a place for discussion and interaction.

Attendees

The meeting with parliamentarians was held at Indreni Suites Banquet Hall from 8 AM to 11 AM.

The different parties and parliamentarians that attended the event included:

- Mahalaxmi Upadhyay (Dina): Joint General Secretary, Nepali Congress
- Durga Sob: Member of parliament, Janata Samajbadi Party
- Parbati Bisunke: Member of parliament, Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist)
- Maiya Basnet: Member of parliament, Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist)
- Pabitra Timalisina: Member of parliament, Janata Samajbadi Party
- Sarita Neupane: Member of parliament, Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist)
- Shanti Pakhrin: Member of parliament, Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist)
- Nanu Bastola: Member of parliament, Nepali Congress
- Shova Chenlong Palungwa: Member of parliament, Nepali Congress
- Devendra Parajuli: Member of parliament, Nepal Communist Party
- Kalpana Dhamala: Member of parliament, Nepal Communist Party
- Bidya Bhattarai: Member of parliament, Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist)
- Sukuman Tamang: Member of parliament, Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist)
- Binda Pandey: Member of parliament, Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist)

Parliamentarians stated that Nepal is known for its progressive laws and we should aim to keep that notoriety. Having quotas for women candidates written in the constitution was applauded as a win for women in politics and was seen as a progressive step to increase women in decision making powers. That is why parliamentarians have started lobbying for change in the next elections so that the constitutional right of 33% of candidates to go to women candidates is not overlooked again. Furthermore, in the case of the legally binding treaty, parliamentarians were also enthusiastic about putting it forward and starting a call for action to their parties as it is another progressive legislation that Nepal should be known for in South Asia. But, they said, we should not only be doing this for recognition, to be the first, rather it is to uplift women all around the world as these policies will go global and impact every woman.

While there were many invited parliamentarians who were male, 99% of the attendees for the event were female with only one male parliamentarian in attendance. Because of this, the conversation also surrounded the need for male representatives to take on this issue as well. Nothing can be done in isolation and while the voices of women are strong, addressing political representation, importantly electing women leaders and combating violence against women all need the votes of males as well. To create meaningful change, men in different political parties must also be consulted to ensure that there is a stronger movement for the changes. Once we include women, youth, men and other intersectional identities to the dialogue, nobody can say no to a unified voice like that.

As journalists were present at the event, parliamentarians also communicated the importance of media in bringing these issues to mainstream media as well as the significance of their work as shapers of public opinion. The politician expressed that the ways women are portrayed in print media and whose voices are represented in print are topics of concern. They encouraged journalists to bring more women journalists' stories to the front page, to bring more women forward and to also write through a feminist lens especially during election period and while covering candidates. Towards the end of the program, journalists also expressed their point of view and questioned the types of media that they are consuming, whether they were the big newspapers or smaller, independent media, and whether they have worked to share their opinions in them.

Next Steps

The event ended with enthusiasm as there was a joint understanding and excitement for the next steps. As agreed and suggested by the parliamentarians, the next steps for both the legally binding instrument to combat violence against women, and for legal actions against the local level election's treatment of the constitutional right to 33% candidacies included:

- Meetings with constitutional commissioners
- Meetings with senior leaders in political parties to garner support from all levels of party representatives
- Programs with journalists, that commissioners and ministers invite, so that the work that we are doing continues to be highlighted

LESSONS LEARNS AND CHALLENGES

- The Ongoing Threat of Covid 19 in the previous months of the year and breakdown of omicron Virus
- Free and Fair election and women participation in election
- Several programs to increase women's participation in politics from several marginalized communities.
- The challenge of constitutional mark of 33% on women's participation in every sector
- The political scenario for women's participation