

Country Quota Profile - Nepal

A. Country wise quota profile

1. Status of quotas in each country

According to the 1990 Constitution, at least 5% of the total number of candidates contesting for the Lower House election from any political party or organization must be women candidates and at least 3 seats are reserved for women in the 60 member Upper House. So far, women's share remains 6.4% in the year 2005.

2. Form of quotas

The Lower House of the Parliament consists of 205 elected members, where women had 5% seats and in the 60-member Upper House, 3 seats are reserved for women. There is a constitutional quota for local government. 20% of all village and municipal council seats are reserved for women candidates. Election Commission of Nepal can refuse to register political parties in case of non-compliance of this provision.

3. Positions of Major Political Parties on Quotas

Theoretically, major political parties have reserved 33% seats for women in their manifestoes but it has not been applied in practice. The Election Commission (EC) demands that of a party's state to candidature, 5% must be women. The Interim Constitution of 2006 states that at least one-third of the party's top committee members should be women. A 2006 House of Representatives declaration calls for 33% of civil service jobs to be reserved for women, According to Nepali Congress constitution 10% of the members of each Unit at every level must be women. The Interim Constitution proposes that 33% of the seats in the structure of political parties as well as candidates in the election to the Constituent Assembly should be women.

4. What's in the pipeline / Immediate areas for advocacy

a) The 33% quotas for women is still very difficult to achieve as of now a strong lobbying is required for the implementation of this provision where women should also have equal participation for decision making positions.

b) Another area for advocacy is women's increased role in peace building. Despite a large number of women victims they were not taken any role into negotiating position by any political party.

c) Coalition building of women's organizations can help overcome the problem of collective action.

5. Who's pushing it?

a) Women political leaders

b) NGO's working for Women's issues

c) INGO's &

d) The UN and major donor countries

6. Major Achievements/ Best Practices

a) After sustained and strong lobbying 33 % of quotas for women, there has been a slight achievement. In the recently drafted Interim Constitution, there were 4 women members from different political parties who were nominated by political leaders after strong pressure from women's organizations and movements. Their voice was also respected to some extent.

b) The Supreme Court directed the government to issue citizenship certificate with the reference of mother's name.

c) Nepal Government Endorsed CEDAW.

d) Quota system increased the voice, visibility, representation and identity of women.

e) It helped the democratization of gender politics.

f) It also inspired other institutions of governance to undertake progressive initiatives.

7. What to avoid

a) Ideological accusing of each other

b) Fractionalization

c) Urban biasness

d) Elitism that does not take care the interest of rural women.

8. What helps/ what hinders the effective working of quotas

Hindrances

a) Present political system/social system.

b) Lack of participation of women in local government.

c) Lack of awareness and education of women members of the family.

d) Masculine dynamics of political structure and political culture.

Enabling factors

a) Strong networking/lobbying/advocacy of all women political leaders, women NGO's, and local level women politicians.

b) Building cross-party and international solidarity.

c) Political conscious of women and men generated through the activities of the UN and INGOs.

d) Strong social movement of civil society.