

UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL AWARENESS IN WOMEN

Ushnata Shrestha Thapa

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This dissertation entitled *Understanding Political Awareness in Women* was presented by *Ushnata Shrestha Thapa* on June 18, 2021, and approved by

..... June 18, 2021  
Sajal Paudel  
Thesis Supervisor

..... June 18, 2021  
External Examiner

..... June 18, 2021  
External Examiner

..... June 18, 2021  
Sr. Stella Davis  
Head of the Department, BSW

..... June 18, 2021  
Fr. Jiju Vergese, SJ  
SXC Director

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June 18, 2021

Ushnata Shrestha Thapa,

Degree Candidate

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## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my research paper to the all the people working for the government and women who inspire to participate in politics and wants to understand politics. Also, I would dedicate my research to my parents, Mr. Mani Chandra Thapa and Ms. Ranjana Shrestha, without them I wouldn't have had been able to complete my research.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation has not been submitted for the candidature of any other degree.

.....

June 18, 2021

Ushnata Shrestha Thapa

Degree Candidate

## AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

*Ushnata Shrestha Thapa* for the degree of *Bachelor of Social Work* presented on June 18, 2021.

Title: *Understanding Political Awareness in Women*

Abstract Approved

.....

Sajal Paudel

Dissertation Supervisor

Nepal is a developing country whose half of the population is represented by women. Although, women's population is half her representation in the government is far less. Political awareness among women is crucial for the functioning of a society. The major objective of the research was to understand why women are not politically aware. A systematic literature review was conducted to find out the reasons for the challenges faced by women to be politically aware. The research has also addressed the theories such as social learning theory and feminist political theory. The research includes women participants both housewives and working women currently living in Kathmandu Valley. This study is based on Explanatory research design where the participants were selected through convenient and nonprobability sampling methods. The analysis was done with the help of thematic analysis and the major themes generated from the collected data according to the experiences of women are: a) interconnected conditions b) less representations, c) social media, d) patriarchy, e) fake news, f) ashamed to ask, g) why politics is important, h) practical education, i) common group with same ideologies. The results are more based on the response of the women and their challenges.

*Keywords:* Politics, Awareness, Challenges

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## ABBREVIATIONS

UN: United Nations

CEDAW: The Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women

CPN Maoist: Communist Party of Nepal, Maoist

CPN-UML: Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist)

PLA: People's Liberation Army

NPCS: National Planning Commission Secretariat

UNDP: United Nations Development Projects

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

OSCE: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

ODIHR: Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

IDEA: Institute for Democracy And Electoral Assistance

USIP: United States Institute of Peace

IPU: Inter-Parliamentary Union

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background**

Women are defined as adult females who represent half of the population of our country, the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. They are mostly treated inferior to men and have less educational status compared to men. According to Nepal Census 2011, the literacy rates of men and women in Nepal differ by 17.7. They are limited to household chores and unable to come out of the barrier that has been created by society. Simultaneously, political awareness is known to be the knowledge of how politics and government runs in a country. Political awareness of women is less than that of men. According to the 2011 census held by Central Bureau of Statistics Nepal, under National Planning Commission Secretariat (NPCS) of Nepal, the total population of Nepal is 26,494,504 with 12,849,041 male population and 13,645,463 female population. With more than half of the population represented by women, it is of the utmost importance that women are politically aware.

The status of women in a patriarchal society like ours has been lower than that of men. Sons are preferred over daughters with various sayings such as “nativayovani swarga janapahincha” which translates to, "if a grandson is born then the grandparents are allowed in heaven". This saying shows the status of a female or a woman in our society compared to that of men. Daughters are considered foreign and a burden, where their roles are predetermined as housewives or future mothers to the children. And, when in their in-law's house, they are treated as maids who are expected to complete every chores of the household. Even if the wife is a working woman, she is only expected to complete the chores. Women aren't involved in any decision-making process and are always made to believe that they are dependent beings.

Women in politics and their awareness about its importance has come a long way. Queen Rajendra Laxmi Devi Shah ruled in place of her son, who was very young to be a King, which in my view allowed women to be seen in a different light. The battle of Nalapani which was the first battle of Anglo-Nepalese War in 1814, brave women reportedly shielded the bullets and cannonballs with their bodies and actively took part to protect the peace of their country. But even with these involvements, women were often regarded as a catalyst in developing a relationship with another nation. They were married off to other kings who entertained multiple wives and were not allowed any say in political matters. The best example could be that of The Licchavi princess Bhirkuti Devi. Despite having political awareness or the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, their involvement in politics was indirect.

Yogmaya Neupane has been a prominent figure in providing voice to women during the Rana Regime (1860 - 1941), and even after that. Under her leadership, women began participating in peaceful political movements as well as armed insurgency. Plus, engaged in competition for a parliamentary seat with another fellow male. Mangal Devi and Sahana Pradhan are other females who came together and formed various organizations to raise their voice against various suppressions representing the women population of the country as a whole. In 1948, women participated in the first Civil Rights Movement. Dwarika Devi Thakurani made history in 1959 by being elected as the first female minister of Nepal in the general election. With these accomplishments too, women's role in politics was limited and not quite recognized. Then, when the Panchayat system (1960 - 1991) came, which eradicated the multiparty system, women's movement was suppressed. In protest against the undemocratic royal proclamation of 1960, a group of women organizations openly waved black flags in a public procession and were imprisoned (Smriti, 2019). Later, in the people's movement of 1990, women actively

participated to get rid of the autocratic Panchayat system and to usher in a multiparty democratic system (Kiran Dangol, 2008).

The collective efforts of many women indicate a history of women's movement activity in Nepal. The 21-member women's organization, the Nepal Mahila Sangh led by Mangala Devi Singh 8 August 1947, to fight for women's equality through a single platform (Sellars-Shrestha & Tamang, 2015). Regarding women's involvement in the armed conflict, Manchanda (2010) argues that the role of women during the Maoists insurgency helped to redefine women's roles and paved their way to the Constituent Assembly. Referring to the female Maoist leader Hisila Yami, Rita Machanda indicated that during the period of the Maoist insurgency, women constituted more than 30 per cent of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), both as political commissars and fighting militia (Manchanda, 2010).

As a result, the new constitution of Nepal in 2015 guaranteed 33% of seats to the women along with provision of alternative seats for President/ Vice President, Chief/ Deputy Chief of parliament (upper and lower house), Mayor/ Deputy Mayor where one must be female and another male. This has allowed the national and local election of 2017 - 2018 with women occupying 41.8% of political positions across the country.

The women that I have observed in my surroundings are based on two categories according to me, the ones who are employed and the other housewives. Their level of political awareness varies accordingly. When at home or any public gathering, men talk about politics all the time. They present their ideas, perspectives, logics to each other and continue the topic with a certain level of awareness. And, in that conversation, if a woman adds her perception it is most likely to be a working woman. Housewives' level of political awareness comes from either unauthentic medium or little knowledge which can be dangerous. When a political turmoil goes

on in the country, I observe men discussing the problems which led to the turmoil, future and present context, where a working woman can add their ideas too. But, a housewife is either silently listening or her perspective is too vague with little information which cannot be acknowledged. These problems that women face in their journey to be politically aware is what this research tries to understand.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In the 21st century, where women and men are fighting for equal rights, it is of utmost importance to understand if there is any equity in political awareness. When a woman is involved in a household boundary, she is compelled to know what is happening inside the boundary she is in. But the outside world where she also has a say in, she isn't participating in it or isn't seen, which in return makes her voice limited. Her dreams, aspirations, aims and wants will just be inside the boundary and never fulfilled outside it.

Women aren't aware about the happenings in our country which makes them indifferent to the problems caused by it, as they only participate in blame games and not in logic. Women in Nepal hold more population than that of male and in any sphere of governance if they aren't there then a large number of people aren't considered. And, if women aren't politically aware, they aren't going to vote for the right people or the right party which is very important for a country's development. Studies show higher numbers of women in parliament generally contribute to stronger attention to women's issues which thereby, facilitates women's direct engagement in public decision-making and is a means of ensuring better accountability to women. (Shrestha, 2019)

When political matters are talked about, it includes and influences all works of life. 33% inclusion of women, rights of women, laws that protect women, governance, etc. This all is necessary for a woman to understand her voice to be heard and included in every sphere of life.

### **Objective**

- i. To understand why women aren't politically aware.
- ii. To understand the challenges that are lining up to understand politics.

### **Rationale of the Study**

This research is conducted to understand the level of political awareness of women in Nepal, age group between 20 to 50. This research mainly focuses on exploring the level of awareness of working women and housewives and their level of awareness about political matters. Working women often have the liberty of going out and engaging with various people where productive conversations are held. Whereas, on the other hand, housewives' information gathering tools are limited to other housewives and inauthentic social media.

Through this study, the various factors that influence the level of political awareness among these two categories of women will be understood. Along with that, their current level of political awareness which will be measured by: knowledge of law and order, political cognitive information, ideologies and current political scenario.

One of the reasons why I was drawn to this topic was, whenever political conversations happened in my family, housewives weren't able to put forward a logical perspective but other members of my family who were working outside of the household premises had various views and perspectives that were unique. And, it made me wonder what are the major influences that are causing these women who have the same level of educational background to have such

stratification in their perspective about something basic as politics and current political matters which influences everyone.

### **Limitations of the Study**

As the research is qualitative research the findings cannot be generalized but it can answer the question why and how. The research is only done on women living in Kathmandu valley so this research might not be valid for women living outside Kathmandu valley. The research was conducted during the Covid 19 pandemic so convenient sampling was used instead of purposive.

### **Proposed Research Questions**

- i. What are the factors influencing the political awareness of working women and housewives?
- ii. What are the limitations faced by women while understanding politics?

## **Operational Definitions**

**Women.** An adult female human being (Cambridge dictionary)

**Politics.** The art or science of government or governing, especially the governing of a political entity, such as a nation, and the administration and control of its internal and external affairs (Wordnik).

**Awareness.** The state or condition of being aware; having knowledge; consciousness (Dictionary).

**Political Awareness.** According to Zaller 1992, Political Awareness is understood as “the extent to which an individual pays attention to politics and understands what he or she has encountered”.

**Rights.** Rights are legal, social, or ethical principles of freedom or entitlement; that is, rights are the fundamental normative rules about what is allowed or owed to people, according to some legal system, social convention, or ethical theory (Definationsnet).

**Opportunity.** Fit or convenient time or situation; a time or place permitting or favorable for the execution of a purpose; a suitable combination of conditions; suitable occasion; chance (Definations.net).

**Feminism.** According to Britannica Feminism, the belief in social, economic, and political equality of the sexes.

Belief in and advocacy of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes expressed especially through organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interests (Merriam Webster).

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Rights**

Rights are the entitlements that are given to people for fulfilling their duties. It is the right of individuals, male or female, to take part in the affairs of the State, through the right to vote, to stand as a candidate for election and freedom of speech, press and meeting (Nwapa, 1987). These rights safeguard us from adversities. There are certain rights given to women to keep them safe from all the negative things that might affect them. These are rights that align with human rights that are just given to women. These rights are given so that equal participation of women can be there with equal opportunities provided to them like their male counterparts. Rights to women is a source which says that opportunities will be given to you because you are worthy.

Women's human rights only emerged as a global movement during the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985), when women from many different geographic, cultural, religious, racial and class backgrounds came together and organized to improve the status of women. It was during this decade that the United Nations sponsored several women's conferences — Mexico City in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980 and Nairobi in 1985 — to evaluate the status of women and to formulate strategies for women's advancement (Open text).

The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), an international treaty adapted in the year 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly, is described as an international bill of rights for women (Shrestha, 2019).

Article 1 defines discrimination against women as any distinct exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex, which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equity of men

and women of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural civil or any other field (OHCHR, 2015; Shrestha, 2019).

On the Part 2, Article 7 of the treaty, the states have agreed on as mentioned in the CEDAW, it acknowledges that,

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the following rights:

- i. To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;
- ii. To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;
- iii. To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

“Men and women have roles and their roles are different, but their rights are equal” Hari Hollkeri. Rights give women a chance to speak and voice their opinions out to the world and get necessary help, if needed. Rights act like their safe place at the back of their mind which will protect them when needed. Right to information is also one of the human rights, where a woman has the right to get information about things she wants to know and no one can limit her from it.

### **Opportunity**

Equal opportunity for both women and men is what gender equality stands for. But when we look into the structure of our society, male are seen to have been vested with countless opportunities and women are limited. From education to taking life decisions, men hold the power or greater opportunity to choose their and women's life direction. Even in political

spheres, we see more active participation of men which shows that male are more aware in political matters. Women who want to enter politics find that the political, public, cultural and social environment are often unfriendly or even hostile to them (A. Thanikodi and M. Sugirtha, 2007). Furthermore, since women generally do not possess even a fraction of the wealth men possess, especially those men in the private sector, there are far fewer women who can come up with the funds necessary for campaigning (Nwapa 1987).

Resources aren't just the hindrance but the time that they can allocate in gathering political information. It must be borne in mind here, that it is far more difficult for women to be in a position where they can devote their time to the onerous demands of full-time political campaigning. Women have to look after children and cope with their husbands' demands and many husbands are either opposed to or uncooperative towards their wives' political activities (Nwapa, 1987). Women are expected to fulfill numerous duties with meeting everyone's expectations of care giver, cooking, taking care of the whole home environment, children, in-laws, etc. Even if you are financially independent women who earn money, still you are expected to complete the household chores which isn't expected from the male population. With these duties and limitations, she doesn't have the chance or opportunity to enjoy the possibilities that are there for her.

If a woman has the opportunity for the right to information, she doesn't get the opportunity to voice out her opinions at home or anywhere, as women speaking goes against the "expected role" of females. A silent woman is what society wants, not a woman who is opinionated and can take her own decisions. There are many roles of women: mother, sister, wife, daughter but the most prominent being a mother. By mobilizing we can start pressure

groups capable of influencing the Legislature and the Executive alike. Mother could even engage in quiet diplomacy (Nwapa, 1987).

We women at the present moment are like the Freshman Class at a great college; we are intelligent, we are eager, we are honest in our desire to achieve, but we are uninformed (Corinne Roosevelt Robinson, 1920, p. 3). Women want things harder than men, they are more ardent, more focused, and if they can keep that ardor warm enough in their hearts, and yet sufficiently in check not to forego realizable ideals, they will be of immeasurable value in the future life of our great nation (Corinne Roosevelt Robinson, 1920, p. 3). Women are capable enough to be equal to male but the sad note is, they aren't given enough opportunities like our male counterparts. Their roles are predetermined and even though women have excelled in different fields they are still looked down upon. Equal opportunities should be given and only then can women work together shoulder to shoulder to male. William Clayton observed: "There are not many women here but will sustain all the measures of the authorities better than some of the men do (MacKay, p.11).

### **Men's Role**

We are well acquainted with the hindu saying, women and men are the wheels of a carriage if one wheel gets stuck other won't move as well. When we take a look at this saying, we can come to the conclusion that there is a certain role that is expected from both of them or they both must work together in harmony to move forward. Male's role in home politics is very limited. If the same politics is done at a state level it's called politics but if that's done at home, it becomes a bunch of women bickering about nothing. Too few men take actual part in their home politics, and if the women will take that active part, their example? (Corinne Roosevelt Robinson, 1920, p. 3). When males talk about equality on a state level, it is "feminism", but the

same equality is never served at home. The role of “change-maker” is so limited to talks but not applicable to those closest to women they know.

Men’s roles are very different from that of women. Men are the decision taker and bread earner of the family. The person who is responsible for the whole family. In this way, he governs the household. In a political light, men are typically strong, opinionated, dominating, logical. The prevalence of the "masculine model" of political life and elected governmental Bodies (A. Thanikodi and M. Sugirtha, 2007, p. 4). We are often projected with a “masculine model” as a leader and a male and in the back of our mind, we expect that a leader should possess the exact characteristics. But if a woman is a leader and she is empathetic, giving, caring, loving: the attributes of a “feminine model” then it becomes really hard for us to trust her. As our unconscious and conscious minds, both have already been filled with a certain kind of leader that is a masculine one.

This is the environment that many women face, one in which a certain collective image of women in traditional, apolitical roles continues to dominate. The image of a woman leader requires that she be asexual in her speech and manners, someone who can be identified as a woman through non-sexual consensus. Be open about their feminine nature. In fact, the more authoritative and "manly" a woman is, the more she corresponds to the undeclared male rules of the game. That is why being emotional, it's being intelligent. But women don't have the right to be weak, to cry, to show our emotions - because we live in a time when to be in politics, we have to behave more like a man. The major roles for women are caregiver and companion which are more often expressed in private settings than in public (MacKay, p. 3).

The majority of governing institutions are dominated by men who further their own

interests. Male-dominated political institutions of government do not promote women or women's issues (A. Thanikodi and M. Sugirtha, 2007, p.7). Men often fail to recognize women's pain and suffering and even if they try, they only look at the surface level. And as a result of this, women's suffering is heard less. Men often do not acknowledge their participation in debates and discussions on general subjects (Rai, 2015; Upreti et al., p. 15). When men do not understand women's suffering, they do not even consider their participation on matters that concern them. We can take the example of where all parliament members are male and they passed a women law. There wasn't even one woman to put their opinion about what they feel about the law.

When one gender's role restricts another gender's role, we must take a deep look at it and mend it. Men's role in society is not just being the "macho man" but beyond that. He must carry the role of a human first and foremost which is loving and having humane characteristics. Other roles come later. Men's role in societies has always been that of protector and provider. But, this role later on has developed into a controlling behavior which has heavily impacted the other gender.

### **Policies Adapted**

UNDP supports women's active participation in politics by meeting various objectives.

UNDP does this by:

- i. Promoting women's participation as voters and candidates in electoral processes through training women candidates, awareness campaigns, and promoting gender parity in electoral management bodies.
- ii. Promoting the use of temporary special measures, including gender quotas.
- iii. Facilitating the inclusion of women and women's organizations and networks in constitution-making processes, and helping to address gender discriminatory clauses in constitutions.

- iv. Supporting women's coalitions in political parties and representative bodies.
- v. Encouraging political parties to: remove all barriers to the participation of women, develop their capacity to analyze issues from a gender perspective, and adopt policies and/or quotas to promote women's participation at all levels of decision-making.
- vi. Promoting coalition building and networking among women representatives and decision-makers.
- vii. Supporting gender mainstreaming in parliaments through induction training on gender issues, mainstreaming gender impact reviews into parliamentary committee work, gender analysis of proposed laws, gender-sensitive budgeting, support for cross-party women's caucuses, and women's mentoring programs.

UNDP collaborates with women's networks and academia; and works closely with its sites agencies including UN Women, DPA, OHCHR, UNICEF; and inter-governmental organizations such as OSCE/ODIHR; and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working on women's political participation, including IDEA, USIP and Interpeace, as well as regional and national CSOs (UNDP; Shrestha 2019).

### **Representation of Women in Government**

Women hold half of the population in Nepal. And, it is equally important that we have a good number of women representatives in the government representing our women. If representation is there then women are more eager to understand politics, as their group of people are representative and they feel like they belong in it. This also means that they are heard in the highest forums of the country. Major changes can be made in women suffering if we have women representatives in the government.

The number of female ministers worldwide doubled in the last decade from 3.4 per cent

in 1996 to 6.8 per cent in 2004. In 48 countries, there were no women ministers at all (A. Thanikodi and M. Sugirtha, 2007, p. 3). But it is still not enough. Women are still underrepresented. When women's population is half, it is important that representations must also be half. In the Asia and Pacific region and Eastern Europe, very little progress has been achieved, with the proportion of women ministers being less than 5 percent (A. Thanikodi and M. Sugirtha, 2007, p.3) arena. Women accounted for 10 per cent of the members of legislative bodies in 1995. Today, they make up 15.6 percent of parliamentarians worldwide, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (A. Thanikodi and M. Sugirtha, 2007, p. 3).

Further, some women having political positions belonged to higher class and castes or were close relatives of male politicians and were largely subordinate to the male leaders (Kanel, 2014). Even with the provision of 33 per cent participation of women in the CA, in some cases, the influence of women in the decision-making and constitution-building processes has been found to be limited (Upreti et al 2020, p. 15). During the Panchayat era, only three seats were reserved for women; after the Jana Andolan I of 1990, the quota for women in Parliament was raised to 5%. Women were severely underrepresented in the cabinet and women politicians did not exceed 6% at any time, until 2007 (Lotter, 2017). Though democracy was restored, and the country moved towards a more inclusive State after 1990, "women were denied the right to pass their citizenship to their children" (Haug, Aasland, & Dahal, 2009). For the Constitution of 2015, amendments in the Nepal Citizenship Act, 2006, suggestions were made where one of the key points stated, "A person shall have the right to acquire a citizenship certificate through the name of either parent and shall be allowed to choose among the permanent address of the father or the mother" after which a child can now acquire citizenship in the name of the mother as well (FWLD, 2016). However, Pant, 2014, has stated that a special provision has been made to ensure

children can acquire their citizenship from the name of mother instead of father for the children born out of rape or if fathers are not known. (Rai, 2015; Upreti et al p. 15)

The Constitution of 2015 promised at least 33% of women's participation in all the State operations. At the local level, 41 per cent of newly elected officials were women along with 34 percent of Provincial assembly seats reserved for women. However, despite the promise of including women's representation in the State restructuring, women have been denied political power at the local level. Women candidates have been elected in the Parliament simply to fulfill the quota of including women representatives. As noted above, many operational problems in the daily execution of Parliamentary duties persist due to entrenched discrimination

### **The Dual Role of Female**

Women are expected to complete a number of roles in their daily life. They are the primary caregiver and also the breadwinner. Their dual roles are challenging but compulsory. Women are coming in front in their career and are achieving things that a decade ago was unachievable. But, with this too, we can see that their work in the household area hasn't decreased. Now, they have to do both the dual burden of domestic tasks and professional obligations (A. Thanikodi and M. Sugirtha, 2007, p. 5).

If male was working then no one would be expecting him to complete the "dual role". But, why is it an obligation only for women? Women should only play the role of "working mother", which is generally low-paid (A. Thanikodi and M. Sugirtha, 2007, p. 6). Even though women want to understand or participate in political matters, they don't get enough time for that. They are busy meeting everyone's expectations, and they fail to understand what are the changes that are being made for their gender. Everyone feels that, if a woman is working then she must never discard the role that she was born to do which is caregiving, nurturing, loving, doing

household chores etc. Even if she is ambitious, she should know how to run a home because that's what she is supposed to do.

Those having to do with family, produced an ideology of "a woman's place", which adamantly asserted the sacredness of home and motherhood. A woman's place is at home and she should be inside the box and even if she attempts to step out of the box, she must take care of the box. Aren't male good at caring? Why are we restricting male from the feeling of good feelings like care, love, affection? If they started openly expressing their feelings and accepting them, then they can surely be the primary caregiver too. The dual role of females could be decreased, where both the genders are equally equipped in both providing for the family and being the caregiver.

### **Women for Women**

When a woman stands up for another woman then half of the battle is won there. Women standing up for each other is what is needed right now. Divided women are too vulnerable, but together they are unstoppable. In a political realm too, when a woman is there for another woman, not to diss her but as a support, even though they represent different parties, then women's voices are amplified.

Women used this religious network to mobilize quickly in particular causes or projects and to provide supportive friendships which is very important in women's political action (MacKay, p. 11). Women meet other women in different spheres. When those different spheres are not a form of division but a commonality, it will give birth to a union that is hard to break. When we look at it now, patriarchy is to be blamed for dividing women. A mother in law is always shown squabbling at her daughter in law, and this unconsciously travels to everyone's

mind where we feel, this is normal. This normal puts a woman against a woman. Unity is compromised and hence a woman's support system is weak. Therefore, a woman is weak.

Every woman is fighting their own battles. But, what fuels us to keep going heads-up against the atrocities and daily struggles is the solidarity shown to us by fellow women (Savitri, 2020). Their union amplifies our voice and reaches far and wide. What is more beautiful is a woman supporting their own, as in a mother standing up for her daughter. When you get support, then bringing change is not a huge or hard task and even if you fail, you can restart as you have the support. Discrimination against women, violence, and conscious bias would decrease, if women would stand up with other women and claim that what men are doing is wrong and welcome change.

In the movie and entertainment industry, more often than not, women's relations with each other are projected in a negative light (Savitri, 2020). The typical serial showing mother in law and daughter in law fighting. Stereotyping women that they should look a certain way or else, they are rebellious and rebellious women aren't accepted in society. Women are constantly being body shamed by women. These are some of the examples that a woman faces on a day to day basis. But, what if another woman becomes our voice and speaks for us? Wouldn't that give them courage to stand up for themselves and voice their opinion out aloud.

The cult of true womanhood defined a sphere secluded from public life, where women could demonstrate their moral superiority and power over men (MacKay, p.12). When men aren't around, women exercise their power on another woman which honestly is doing more harm than good. Mother asking her daughter to do the laundry for her big brother, mother in law exercising irrational power on daughter in law, aunties constantly criticising women's choice. There is a cult happening away from the male gaze. Women aren't supporting each other but

feeding their ego which was damaged by a male. This false dispersion of anger again limits a woman in every ground. The result will be women against women.

To show how beautiful the support is, I would like to give you an example of Hadia who lives in Africa ( UNICEF, 2019). From the day of her marriage with her husband, she was prone to domestic abuse by him. Beating, scolding, and mental tension was like a part of her life. She knew she had no escape and with her son she couldn't even sustain her life alone. Hadia will never forget how she was beaten up when protecting her son from her husband's rage (Farren, 2019). Her home had become hell for her and her children. But when her friend, who was working in a UNICEF project, saw how she was living. She immediately asked to come to the center which was made for women like her. She still lives with her husband and goes to the center daily to learn and earn. But now, as her husband is aware that she is supported by a group of females, he is scared to touch her. Her husband has also been getting anger management training by the center.

### **Double Discrimination**

Double discrimination is the point, when one person or group who is vulnerable to be discriminated is again discriminated in some another ground. Women face discrimination for being women and on top of that if they belong to a minority, then again, they are discriminated. This way they face double discrimination, first for being a woman and second for belonging to a minority. Double discrimination makes the group double vulnerable. Recent empirical work supports the idea that individuals often interpret their experiences of mistreatment within the context of multiple inequalities (Harnois, 2015, p. 6).

In America where racism exists, black women face the fear of double discrimination.

Women's gender ideologies may also be intertwined with their beliefs about other systems of inequality (Mansbridge and Morris 2001; Powell et al. 2010; Rein et al 1998; Harnois, 2015,p. 3). African Americans are generally more progressive than whites with respect to some aspects of gender ideology (e.g., beliefs about the extent of gender inequality), but in other ways (e.g., beliefs about gendered roles) African Americans may be more traditional (see also Hamilton et al. 2011; Harnois 2005; Kane 1992; Harnois, 2015, p. 6).

A central tenet of intersectionality is that gender inequality works with and through other inequalities (Baca Zinn and Thornton Dill 1996; Harnois, 2015), meaning that one's experiences with gender inequality, gender-based identity, and gender ideology are all potentially intertwined with race, ethnicity, sexuality, and other inequalities (Harnois, 2015, p. 6). A person's knowledge is shaped from the society s/he lives in. The environment is the major factor in developing their beliefs. Attention to the double discrimination, or "double jeopardy", facing racial ethnic minority women (Harnois, 2015 p. 6).

History shows that, Nepali women have actively participated in the political movement throughout the underground struggle and in mass movement in democracy in 1990 and also during the Panchayat era. But, once the multi-party system was resorted, the bargaining of various male dominated interest groups started to target women's voice and in taking ministerial positions (Acharya,1990;Tiwari, 2013,p. 3). The high positions were never given to women, while male enjoyed high positions and women were left in the same role of a homemaker.

Often feminine character are encouraged in a girl child decision making, ability of self-expression, opinion formulation and assertion of their needs and interests are mostly discouraged (Tiwari, 2013,p. 3). Madhesi women are already marginalized by being a women and on top of that, being from a vulnerable background, they face double discrimination. Madhesi women feel

threatened by the modern Nepali nationality, which has rested on the idea of a monarchy, single nepali language, and a hill centered identity (Tiwari, 2013, p. 3). Madhesi women have participated widely in political movements, but after they were regulated again to the domestic arena and drowned women's voices (Tiwari, 2013,p. 2). When double discrimination is there, women become vulnerable and coming out of it becomes even more harder.

### **Gendered Political Consciousness**

Gendered political consciousness involves perceiving significant gender inequality, viewing this inequality as illegitimate, and supporting collective efforts to bring about greater equality (Gurin 1985; Gurin et al. 1980; Harnois, 2015, p. 3). Drawing from social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1979), existing research argues that women's gendered political consciousness stems from women's identification with the social group "women". Women who perceive themselves as having "ideas, feelings, and interests similar to other women" — that is, women who hold a strong gender-based identity — are thought to be more likely than other women to hold a gendered political consciousness (Gurin 1980:30; Gurin and Townsend 1986; Harnois, 2015, p. 1).

Gendered political consciousness helps identify what are the divisions gender's face in politics. Unlike race, class, and ethnicity, gender inequality is not maintained by geographical segregation, and women's material interests often overlap significantly with men's — particularly in the context of heterosexual relationships (Harnois, 2015, p. 4). Those who support the idea of "separate spheres" for women and men are said to hold a "traditional gender ideology", and those who challenge these gendered roles are said to have a more "egalitarian" or "liberal" gender ideology (Davis and Greenstein 2009; Harnois, 2015, p. 4).

Women who work are more likely to hold a liberal gender ideology and more likely to perceive higher level of gender discrimination harassment (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004; Harris and Firestone 1998). Some evidence suggests that marriage and parenthood reduce women's gender egalitarianism and that divorce liberalizes women's gender ideologies (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004; Hamilton et al. 2011), though the effect of familial arrangements may vary for diverse social groups (Harnois 2005; Vespa 2009; Harnois, 2015, p. 4). Awareness of multiple social inequalities will be negatively associated with women holding a strong political consciousness of gender (Harnois, 2015, p. 6).

Women candidates are given very little space by political parties, party leaders make excuses and say that women are not capable, and then who makes the candidate? Doubts are raised on the victory of the female candidate. Political parties adopt the attitude of apathy towards women (Kumar, 2017,p. 10). Women often have to face sexist questions while running for government. Their capabilities are often questioned, plus even if they run for office, if their leadership is not masculine, then it isn't acceptable.

## **Theories**

**Social Learning Theory.** Social learning theory, proposed by Albert Bandura in 1977, emphasizes the importance of observing, modelling, and imitating the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. Social learning theory considers how both environmental and cognitive factors interact to influence human learning and behavior (McLeod, 2016). Classical Conditioning and Operant Conditioning are the behaviorist learning theories which Albert Bandura agrees with. Here he adds two important ideas:

- i. Mediating processes occur between stimuli & responses.

- ii. Behavior is learned from the environment through the process of observational learning.

We can see that these two ideas support the social learning theory. Two terms Mediating processes and observational learning can be seen.

***Observational learning.*** Children learn through observing their environment. This concept is very dominantly seen in an experiment called “The Bobo Doll” experiment. Here, children are divided into two groups. In one group, the doll is beaten and scolded whereas, in the other group, the doll is loved and cared for. When the same children got the Bobo doll, the first group which had seen violence repeated it with the doll. Whereas, the second group which had seen love repeated it with love. Here, we can see that, what the children observed the adult doing, they replicated it in their own actions. The adults are called the models. Children pay attention to some of these people (models) and encode their behavior. At a later time, they may imitate (i.e., copy) the behavior they have observed (McLeod, 2016).

Children tend to follow their models whom they share similarity with. Usually, one particular gender will follow another gender because they are alike. For example, daughters doing makeup, wearing jewellerys, dresses like their mother. Another thing is, while replicating their models, children often go by reinforcement and punishment. If the things they replicated are properly taken and reinforced then they continue the replication. For example, daughters feeding their baby brother food. But if the replication is followed with punishment, they can stop replicating their models. For example, seeing your father drink and trying out alcoholic beverages.

Children might even learn by seeing someone replicate their observations. For example, a brother seeing his sister feeding his small brother and his mother appreciating her with chocolate.

Here, the big brother feels like if he replicates then he might be rewarded. This is known as vicarious reinforcement. The model isn't limited to their real world like father, mother, sister but can also go to fantasy worlds like actors, cartoon characters. The motivation to identify with a particular model is that they have a quality which the individual would like to possess (McLeod, 2016).

***Mediating processes.*** Social Learning Theory is often described as the 'bridge' between traditional learning theory (i.e., behaviorism) and the cognitive approach (McLeod, 2016). Cognitive process is important for observational learning to take place. Imitation doesn't occur instantly, there is a process that happens. There is some thought prior to imitation, and this consideration is called mediational processes. This occurs between observing the behavior (stimulus) and imitating it or not (response) (McLeod, 2016).

Bandura proposed 4 mediation processes:

i. Attention

The individual needs to pay attention to the behavior and its consequences and form a mental representation of the behavior (McLeod, 2016). On a daily basis, we see many activities but for us to imitate those activities, it is necessary to give attention.

Without attention we won't be able to imitate the model.

ii. Retention

Retention is about how much we have remembered the activity. The behavior may be noticed but is not always remembered which obviously prevents imitation. It is important therefore, that a memory of the behavior is formed to be performed later by the observer (McLeod, 2016).

iii. Reproduction

This is the ability to perform the behavior that the model has just demonstrated (McLeod, 2016). Although there are many activities that we do on a daily basis, we often cannot imitate everything because of physical, environmental, social and different limitations.

#### iv. Motivation

Motivation is the will and interest to imitate the activity done by the model. The rewards and punishment that follows a behavior will be considered by the observer (McLeod, 2016).

**Feminist Political Theory.** Born out of the struggles of the feminist movements of the 20th century, feminist political theory is characterized by its commitment to expanding the boundaries of the political (Tucker 2011). It questions the modern political theory, dominated by universalistic liberalist thought, which claims indifference to gender or other identity differences and has therefore taken its time to open up to such concerns (Vèronique Mottier, 2007; Shrestha 2019). The goal of feminist politics is to end the domination of women through critiquing and transforming institutions and theories that support women's subordination. Feminist political theory is a field within both feminist theory and within political theory that takes a feminist approach to traditional questions within political philosophy, contemporary and historical (Tucker 2011).

There is a normative and methodological core to feminist political theory (Tucker 2011), consisting of one or more of the following:

- i. Concern with power relations, whether these are gendered, physical, racial, class-based, or cultural, etc.
- ii. Openness to question seemingly natural objects, such as the self, the family, the existing modes of political discussion and debate. Feminist political theorists

illuminate and question the power relations embedded in these seemingly natural institutions.

- iii. Critique of the history of political philosophy and its norms and theories.
- iv. Critique of the history of feminist political theory and its norms and theories.
- v. Critique theoretical exclusions, with the goal of understanding the experience and values that are excluded by mainstream political theory and with an eye toward constructing theories that are inclusive.
- vi. Rejection of essentialism, the notion that social categories are unchangeable with essences that map onto given characteristics and inequalities. Although some feminist political philosophers, often called 'difference feminists', have taken up the idea that there is a feminine essence, even these feminists argue that the patriarchal or sexist concept of 'woman' is not the 'essence' of women. On the other side of this debate are those that argue that all social identities are constructed. Others propose that we cannot know what 'women' are or whether there is an essence of women until we remove the barriers to women's empowerment.
- vii. Focus on experience or critical understanding of individual experience; this is sometimes called 'situatedness'.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### **Introduction**

Research methodology is the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process, and analyze information about a topic. In a research paper, the methodology section allows the reader to critically evaluate a study's overall validity and reliability (Libguides, 2021). Research methodology answers the "how" part of the research. It's about how a researcher systematically designs a study to ensure valid and reliable results that address the research aims and objectives.

#### **Area of Study**

The area of study for the research is Kathmandu Valley which includes three districts i.e Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur. The area is based on Kathmandu because higher numbers of working women reside here, also, as it is the center for all the political matters that goes around the country. The area is also easily accessible for the researcher to conduct research in the situation of a pandemic.

#### **Universe and Sample Size**

Population or universe refers to the entire group of people, events, or things or interests that the researcher wishes to investigate (Shrestha, 2019). A sample refers to a smaller, manageable version of a larger group (Investopedia).

The universe of the study were the women of Kathmandu valley between the age of 20 to 50. From the universe, the participants were selected based on the work they were engaged in. The sample size for the research consists of 4 participants where, 2 women are job holders and 2 women are housewives.

The researcher used a non-probability method of sampling to collect the data for the research. The researcher used convenient sampling for selecting the sample size.

### **Research Design**

Research design is the framework of research methods and techniques chosen by a researcher. The design allows researchers to hone in on research methods that are suitable for the subject matter and set their studies up for success (Question pro).

Design in qualitative research is an interactive process that involves “tracking”- back and forth between different components of the design, assessing the implications of purposes, theory, research questions, methodology, and validity threats for one another (Maxwell, 1996; Shrestha, 2019).

The researcher used qualitative research design, which is explanatory in nature, in order to carry out the research process. This research design will help in getting a deeper understanding with rich and explanatory findings.

### **Data Source**

To collect the data, both primary and secondary data collection methods were used. The types of data source are listed below:

#### **Primary Source**

Primary data is the type of data that is collected by researchers directly from main sources without going through any existing sources (Formplus). Primary data is often reliable, authentic, and objective in as much as it was collected with the purpose of addressing a particular research problem.

**Interview.** According to Iedunote (2019) an interview is a procedure designed to obtain information from a person through oral responses to oral inquiries. Semi-structured interview was conducted.

**Observation.** Housewives and working women both were directly observed during the research.

**Secondary Source.** Secondary data refers to data that is collected by someone other than the primary user. According to Form plus secondary data is the data that has already been collected through primary sources and made readily available for researchers to use for their own research. It is a type of data that has already been collected in the past.

- i. Journals
- ii. Articles
- iii. Websites and other materials from internet

### **Data Analysis**

The data that were collected from the data source is primary and secondary. Then the data were analyzed by the researcher using the audio data obtained from the interview. The data were transcribed and themes were generated respectively. The themes were analyzed through the participant's response and the literature review done on the second chapter.

### **Ethical Consideration**

The ethical consideration given in this research is through informed consent where their information is confidential and kept anonymous. The participants were not forced to answer any questions they didn't feel comfortable answering. Their opinions and decisions were respected.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

This chapter includes the analysis of the data collected in the research. The data was collected from 4 participants. The data was collected by asking a set of semi structured questions. The data has been recorded, transcribed, translated and then put in themes. The themes are based on commonality and difference between the participants' answers. Total 7 themes were drafted. The themes are mentioned below:

#### **Interconnected Conditions**

Women in a society are expected to have no or very little opinion. The opinions are not well heard or taken into consideration. If a woman speaks then there is a saying in Nepali that goes "*pothibasyako*", which translates to hen speaking which he doesn't do. In a household setting, she is kept shut by saying "you don't know this", "you haven't studied enough for this", "do what is given to you and keep your mouth shut". And in a work setting she hears things like "leave the technical stuff for us", "it's a man's job" etc.

So why is it that women's opinions aren't taken seriously or even to an extent listened to? Society is a complex blend of various things. Everything is connected to everything and it is messy. For a woman working in a household setting she isn't viewed as an important person. Her efforts aren't appreciated much. If she as an individual isn't respected then how will her views get a platform to be heard? And for a working woman her opinions are taken for granted.

The participant who is a housewife said "*even if I take my interest in politics, who am I supposed to talk to about it? Why will my awareness matter to men?*" This answer shows that women don't feel like their awareness matters. They have accepted that they will never be heard

and their knowledge about politics which is the major change maker in the society doesn't matter. Rather they would stay the way they are.

### **Less Representation**

Women aren't represented well in the government. 33% inclusion of women is stated in our constitution but we see that rarely being achieved. Less representation means that there is less role model for women to look up to. A role model is important because they show to us the potential that could be achieved. When we see people we are similar to us doing something it motivates us to do the same. But in our current scenario women who hold powerful political positions are very few.

One of the participants said *“if women move forward then only other women can step in her shoes and do the same. Not all women are going to be courageous to do something for the first time. Sometimes all we want to do is follow and learn”*. This really shows that if there was a good participation of women in politics then women would be interested in listening to them as they are of the same gender. Also, not all women are informed about how understanding politics is going to help them. All they want is someone they can look up to.

*“We don't know what we being from politics will bring? We are simple housewives and we hold no power against anyone”* one participant said. Nepalese women still think that politics is a male dominated area. They don't have a strong hold in it. They lack the understanding that they have the right to vote and their vote decides the future of the country. They fail to understand that one policy taken against them can change the course of their life.

Representation of women in politics while having a strong role in what is needed. If women's voices are echoed by other women, then women feel like their voices are heard and want to speak for themselves. If a woman who is our representative is nothing but just women

who can fill up the “quota” and not our voices, then women won’t feel the need to scream because they aren’t being heard. When one woman’s issues are addressed it gives motivation to other women to speak up because they have someone in the government to take their side. This in return encourages them to learn more about politics and join politics as it is really bringing change in the society and in their lives.

### **Social Media**

Social media is a computer-based technology that facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and information through the building of virtual networks and communities (Dollarhide, 2021). Social media has been connecting us virtually but dividing us physically. When social media wasn’t there people used to sit together and discuss about how their day went or about things they felt close to. But nowadays all people do talk to their phone instead of living beings.

One of the participants responded in anger” *I stay at home the whole day. I cook clean for them. But my family members have never still now acknowledged me. Conversations with me are limited. When everyone comes back from their school and work. They take out their phone and are busy there. No one has time for me.*” Through this answer we can see that women, especially housewives have limited interaction time. Knowledge comes when we talk and discuss things but if we don’t have anyone to discuss things with then your knowledge is limited.

Another perspective on social media is that people’s knowledge about things is shaped by it. One participant said “*Whatever the social media says is correct about politics. But if i try to go against it and tell my view then they see as if I am an alien*”. The participant is a working woman. When a woman has a different point of view she is excluded. The preconceived notion has taken over us. And our reality is now what social media tells us. It has been easier to target and differentiate people based on their views.

## **Fake News**

There are so many sites nowadays that feed vulnerable people with fake news. If you don't know anything about a topic then even false news seems real to you. Online media, Fake book, Whatsapp and other social media is filled with fake information and fake news which does more harm than good.

*"I know about the current affairs of my country through facebook or youtube "*one participant said. Getting information about your country should come from authentic news outlets not from some random channel or online. These fake news fills the mind of women with negativity which make them seem dumb in front of other people. Also, when they aren't corrected that information becomes their reality. News like that usually have attention grabbing techniques like empathetic, sad storyline, provocative etc which sells the story to prey on vulnerable people.

One of the participants said *"I am educated and working women. But I myself have been a victim of fake news. I saw a news article where it said that women aren't allowed to wear very short dresses in public. That was very provocative. I even shared that story with a huge reply on my facebook. But later my friend pointed out that it was fake news"*. If an educated person can get affected by fake news then we need to understand what brainwashing it is creating on people who are vulnerable to it.

## **Patriarchy**

Patriarchy, a hypothetical social system in which the father or a male elder has absolute authority over the family group; by extension, one or more men (as in a council) exert absolute authority over the community as a whole (Britannica). When a male is the head of a household

then his authority is seen where women are just seen at the back. Her opinions, knowledge, wants, needs aren't much respected. Rather they are suppressed.

According to one of participant "*It isn't like I am dumb or I don't know anything. We can understand things just by listening to it but when I try to speak, the males in my family don't give proper importance. They don't even try to listen to me. My voice just gets lost*". Because of patriarchy we see that male are seen as more knowledgeable because they take necessary decisions in the family. We think male means strong, opinionated, who is always right, whose decisions we must abide by. When directly and indirectly such a thing is being fed to us from childhood, it's likely that women's voices get lost.

Patriarchy is not just seen in household environments. But working women equally have to face its effects too. One of the participants who is a working woman said, "*When some political turmoil is going on in the country, we all start to talk about it. Only male participate and while women who have properly understood the scenario voices out her opinions. All the male gather together to prove her wrong and their opinion right. When so many males are saying this is right it becomes hard for one woman to defend herself*".

In a political realm we do not see women often. There are masculine men ruling the political system. There is little role model for females to look up to. And on top of that women who embrace the feminine character of a woman and are a leader are quite rare. Women leaders who are caring, loving, nurturing, emotional aren't seen in politics. Rather women adopt the masculine virtues in order to be a leader and in a way, there are very few women who can relate to leaders and call them role models. When role models aren't there women don't have anyone to look up to or follow in order to move forward. And in this way they are discouraged to be informed about politics as they don't know anyone of their gender.

The notion that male is stronger and more knowledgeable is hampering women. Their voices are often underrepresented and even if they try to voice out they are casted out through majority. When half of the population isn't politically aware then no proper government can be elected or development of the society can be made.

### **Ashamed to Ask**

People want to belong in a group. They don't want to be different or look clueless while talking to someone. When someone is talking about a topic and you don't know anything about it you are ashamed to ask because you fear being judged. Not only judged but also people will look down upon you and your standing will get lower as people can say "you don't even know this much".

*"Often when political issues are discussed I am clueless as I don't understand communism, moaist ideology, how parliament works in our country, election system. But, I know if I ask other people who know, they are going to say something humiliating and I feel really bad after that. It's like I am ashamed of myself".* When you cannot ask questions about things that you don't know then you will surely have no information regarding it. When you are made to feel small or uncomfortable while asking for information then it fills you up with humiliation and fear that people might see me as a person who doesn't know anything. And because of that fear women don't ask questions about things they don't know.

Male's another important role is managing the resources. The power of resources is with men. And in this way a major role is taken away from women. When male have more resources, they learn more. And the learning is followed by another learning. And in this way, he gets more knowledge about various things. As in politics too men hold a majority of resources. Elaborating it with male role in the journal review. Even if a woman wants to participate in a campaign she

needs money and the money is handled by a man. Here, her major resources are divided where she isn't independent. This leads to male being in charge of a huge resource. While she will not be able to understand finances as she hasn't been in charge.

### **Practical Education**

Educated people are well aware. And awareness directly brings change. According to one of my participants, *"In school we were taught through text books what legislative, executive, judiciary is. But we were never taught about parliament, how voting is counted, the various "isms" like communism, fascism, Maoism, capitalism etc. are. If these were taught then maybe we would have more knowledge about the importance of politics and could build up interest in it"*. If something isn't taught to you then there are very few people who will research and read the topic. If politics was taught from a young age woman would have been interested in politics and aware too.

Along with education its practicality must also must be taken into account. The same participant said, *"It would have been amazing if, like politicians debating in parliament, we were given an opportunity to recreate the same and have a healthy argument. This way our knowledge would also widen and we would understand what politics is and why we must be aware of it"*. The idea is a great way of incorporating how our country functions on a daily basis and informing women and men about politics. Even though they aren't interested in politics, they will be aware of it and can distinguish between what is right and wrong.

### **Why is Politics Important?**

We often hear phrases like "Politics is a dirty game".But the question is how much does a person know about it to make his/her conclusion that way? We often make our conclusion based

on what the media feeds us or what we hear. But not from our own knowledge and research. We nowadays eat what is served but don't focus on cooking it ourselves.

One of the participants said, "I am fed up listening to politics and all these irritating things political parties do." But when I again asked her why politics is important she simply replied, "I don't know. Nothing good I assume". When she has zero knowledge about politics but she still has a negative attitude towards politics this shows that her words aren't from knowledge but conscious bias or what media tells her.

We know politics shapes our country but do we really know why politics is important. Everything we do in our daily activities is affected by politics. Even the price of our vegetables to how much minimum salary we deserve. If only limited women understand politics then bringing change in a major or minor region is impossible. Female quota, female rights, opportunities, right to vote, information all must be enjoyed so that they understand why politics is important and can have constructive criticism and not conscious bias.

### **Common Group**

We are how our group is. If our group consists of knowledgeable people then we have constructive arguments but if our group consists of people who just talk about random things and bake bites about people then that is how we will be. According to one participant, "The friends that I have around me are all housewives. All we do is watch serials and discuss our children and husband. Politics isn't a topic we discuss. Even if it is discussed everyone is angry about it". When our surroundings only talk about provocative things then we too start to talk about those things just to fit in. Also, staying at home the whole day alone and not having a group around is scary. That's why housewives don't tend to act differently in a group.

One of the participants who is working said, "*We often have political arguments in our office. Everyone puts their point and we get to listen to new things everyday. As you know it is not humanly possible to know every news. So, sharing really benefits us*". In her context she has a group which is motivated to talk about it. Even though you don't necessarily follow political affairs just by listening to them you will get information about what is happening. Also, listening to many arguments compels you to think and create a standing for yourself. You will also have many viewpoints of one particular event or information.

## CHAPTER V

### FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter includes the major findings of the research drawn from the analysis. Along with the major findings, it also consists of the conclusion and recommendations of the research.

The major findings are mentioned below:

#### **Right Clashes with Opportunity**

“Rights are powers necessary for the fulfillment of man’s vocation as a moral being.” -T. H. Green (Ghai). And opportunity is a situation in which it is possible for you to do something that you want to do (Collins Dictionary). Rights give us opportunities from which we can strive. Rights is that unknown power we have over anyone which manifests opportunity. Those opportunities in return help us to bring changes in the lives of women. The changes could be major to minor.

There are many rights given to women to enjoy which in return brings many opportunities. Like right to participation brings inclusion of women in various places, right for reproductive right brings women the opportunity to abortion and decide what is best for in reproductive path etc. But when rights and opportunity don't go hand in hand it becomes a hurdle. This creates a loop hole in the development of women as a whole and we remain stagnant.

Women in Kathmandu valley enjoy various rights. Those rights are given to them by the constitution and no one can take it away from them. But when we look at if the opportunities are being given or not, it's very limited. Right to information, speech, education are some of the rights they enjoy. But when we look at the research, the opportunities that it brings aren't there. Women who have the right to information doesn't have the opportunity to get from people who

she is around because either they are busy or the information is in english (a language she doesn't speak).

### **Male and Female Role in The Society**

Male and female are said to be two sides of the same coin. Different but complimenting each other. But while we agree with this term there are roles assigned for both the gender which they are expected to follow. And these roles aren't flexible, they are meant for just one gender. Men are often regarded as the bread earner of the family whereas the women are caregivers. When women take the role of bread earner, she is still the caregiver.

Women fulfilling dual roles at a household are often seen juggling their personal life and professional life. A woman is asked to fulfil so many tasks in a day that she doesn't have enough time to learn about things she is interested in. Working at home and work is a hectic job and is quite demanding. When you are involved in too many things, you have limited time to even learn about things that are happening around you (i.e in politics). You become indifferent because you already have a lot in your plate and you don't want anything extra. And in this way you lose interest in it. Women who take on dual roles are already tired of balancing everything, that is why they do not want any other thing to pile up or understand until it is absolutely necessary.

Women take up many roles in their life but all roles are submissive and agreeable. And it comes in contrast with the stereotype male leader" the alpha male" that what we see. With women's role being caring, nurturing. When we see women whose behaviour is quite different from the stereotypical women we talk negatively about that person. This is a form of jealousy or not being able to accept the woman as she doesn't have what stereotypically is called a female virtue. This often leads to women having a wrong idea of politics. That only people with masculine characteristics or who has masculine roles must be aware and a part of politics.

## **Faith and Its Consequences**

Faith means a complete trust in someone or something. According to my research most housewives are seen being more religious and afraid of God. With religious texts women are asked to take the role of submissive person or else god or higher being will be angry and do this or that. The fear of consequences is there. Women are often seen as the sole protector against God, if the family commits any sins. She is the saviour of her family. The best example we can see is of the Teej festival. If she doesn't participate in saving the family tradition then she is filled with guilt by society or religious texts. Women are constantly seen praying for the health of the family. But they don't actually try to learn the practical things that could bring positive change i.e. politics. Faith in higher beings reduces political participation and in return there is no political awareness as her whole time is gone pleasing god rather than participating in things that could actually bring change.

The social evils that we see in the society are mostly targeted towards women: Child marriage, Dowry, BokshiPratha etc. These all affect women more than men. When women want to have an opinion of their own or take a decision this evil comes to play and strips away her voice. They are victimized for talking and having a different opinion. She could easily be targeted and in fear of that she never speaks up. In this way women are not informed about politics by male. In a fear that they are going to have a voice.

## **Lack of Communication**

Housewives do not have anyone to have a conversation with. They are bound in household chores and the only source of communication is their family members. But when family members' time is taken by social media. She is left alone with her fake news and lack of political ideas. The more you discuss politics the more you understand. As there is no one to

discuss her opinions with she is often left unattained and uninformed. And if time to put her opinions even come, her fake news and old ideas are laughed upon and she is ashamed to learn or ask from the next time.

But for a working woman, her areas for discussions are wide from home to office. And the office is a productive place. Discussions are usually done about politics. Where she gets the opportunity to learn and hear diverse viewpoints, even if she isn't informed about the topic. She is more aware about fake news and right political ideas as she has many people around her to correct her.

### **Recommendation**

The researcher would like to give some recommendations and suggestions to the policy makers, concerned social organizations and different agencies, future researchers and the families living in Kathmandu Valley.

The first recommendation would be to the policy makers. If policies where politics were studied in social studies classes or a seperate classes then students from a young age would know how our country functions. Classes on political ideologies, how our government elections works, 3 bodies of government (executive, leslative, judiciary), parliament system, paralegal, government jobs. If these classes were to be held everyone would be aware about politics and could use their own ideas when political debates are going on.

The second recommendation is to school and local bodies. If in a school model parliament system's program would be held. Then students would have practical knowledge about how our parliament functions and how laws are made. Along with that students would improve their argument skills and knowledge when they are made to participate in programs like

that. Women will also get an opportunity from a young age to be aware and voice out their opinions in a mass without fear.

The third recommendation is to the families. If the families discussed more about the political matters and how it is important to us. Women would be more informed and aware about political things. They would likely be able to participate in political issues and bring a new voice in the issues that are going on in the country. Having a short discussion about what is happening in the country and skipping the social media for a while would surely help women in your respective families to grow and understand the importance of politics and her voice.

### **Conclusion**

Women's political awareness is crucial to the functioning of an inclusive democracy. Women have been far away from political awareness as their role was expected to be that of a only homemaker and a baby maker. But with political participation increasing we can see women are getting interested in understanding what politics is and how it is important for women to bring direct change in the society.

Although, changes are in its way. Women still aren't much aware why politics awareness is needed. Housewives opinions are often not taken into consideration. She is prone to be influenced by fake news as she isn't aware of proper information portals. Discussion on households is limited because of smartphones and social media. Hence, there are less people to discuss your opinions with and if you are wrong you are ashamed to ask. Also, not knowing the importance of politics and patriarchy has surely limited women in attaining political awareness.

Women who work outside their household have more opportunity for meaningful and political discussions as they are surrounded by people who are interested in politics. Even if she doesn't do anything, listening to other people's opinions helps in understanding and developing

an opinion of your own. Common group with similar ideologies helps in creating an environment where you can express your opinions freely.

Political awareness in women helps to bring the half of the population together in a realm which helps in development of the society and country as a whole. Women will be able to voice out their opinions more and learn more about the rights they have and laws that are guaranteed to them. Voting can be done after she analyzes whom she thinks is capable, not whom her family thinks is capable. Radical changes can occur in society if women are aware about politics.

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## ANNEX

**Questionnaire****Objective.**

1. Age:
2. Address:
3. Caste:
4. Family background (Occupation):
5. Educational Attainment:
6. Number of family members:
7. Do you have a job? Specify
8. Do you understand what political awareness means?
9. Are you interested in understanding or knowing about political events in our country?
10. Do you consider yourself politically aware?
11. Where do you get your information about the current political events?
12. Do any of your family members are involved in politics?
13. Are women more politically aware than men?
14. Did you take part in the last election held in our country?

**Subjective.**

1. What do you understand by politics?
2. Why do you think it is important for women to understand politics?
3. Does your daily life get affected by politics? How and why?
4. Does your environment around you have discussions about politics? If they do. What is your participation?

5. Do you think your job affects the level of political awareness you have? How\*\*\*
6. How do you engage in political events? (maybe through comments)
7. Does educational attainment affect the level of political awareness among women? How and what is your level of awareness.
8. What are the hindrances that affect you being aware about politics as a woman? \*\*\*
9. Do you think because women are less aware about politics there is less participation of women in politics?
10. Do you think resources and environment play a role in being aware about politics?
11. Are women more politically aware than men?