
A

GUIDEBOOK

FOR

~~FIRST-TIME~~

VOTERS

IN NEPAL

School of Democracy

A product of [bureaucrazy](#)

INTRODUCTION

What is this guidebook & why do we think it is important?

Following the September 2025 Gen-Z protest, the Parliament's Lower House was dissolved and the general elections were announced for Mar. 5, 2026. While the nation mourns the lives lost in the protests and hopes for systemic change, voter awareness and readiness remains scarily low.

Do you recall the hours spent scrolling excessively through social media and joining Discord channels to make sense of the constitution and the government? Everyone was trying to grasp the situation, looking for as much information as they could. People couldn't find reliable information, and when they did, they struggled to understand it.

In school, we learned the theory of civics – our Social Studies classes taught us the systems in place, but not the skills to navigate them. But political education is beyond memorizing structures. It's learning the actors, the act, the impact and the engagement. It is going beyond the “what” and moving towards the “why” and the “how.”

This guidebook is an attempt to assist you with the “how” and the “why” for the upcoming elections.

How to think about systems? How to engage as an active citizen? How to vote? How to assess leaders? How to analyze manifestos? *How to desh bikas?*

How to read this guidebook

This book is written with the intention of encouraging you to ask questions, think more critically, and be able to engage responsibly with the state. Let this just be a framework to guide your thoughts.

There are multiple chapters in this guidebook. Ideally, read it all. However, feel free to skip to the ones that interest you.

You don't need to agree or be comfortable with everything that's written here. However, we request you to remain open as you proceed. We invite you to reflect as you navigate Nepali elections and the political landscape through this guidebook.

This is not to overwhelm you but to let you know that thinking of Nepal through elections is actually a big deal. Voting is a big deal.

And YOU can shape the outcome of a country by selecting, becoming, or supporting a good leader.

What to expect?

Expect:

Facts, information, analyses, food for thought, and authors' opinions

Don't expect:

Details on candidates or endorsement for any candidate

Authors' Bias & AI Disclosure Statements:

The chapters in this guidebook have been drafted by individuals specializing in their respective fields either through academic pursuits or professional experience or both.

The authors have also reflected on their positionalities while drafting these pieces, and might be subject to their biases, despite the efforts at being neutral.

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AI has been used to summarize literature and identify key points from various sources, and to condense some writing sections.

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GLOSSARY

Abbreviations

- **AI** Artificial Intelligence
- **art.** Article
- **BS** Bikram Sambat (Nepali calendar)
- **CDO** Chief District Officer
- **CEHRD** Center for Education and Human Resource Development
- **CH₄** Methane
- **CO₂** Carbon Dioxide
- **CPA** Comprehensive Peace Accord
(signed in 2006 to end the civil war)
- **DDC** District Development Committee
- **FCGO** Financial Comptroller General Office
- **FPIC** Free Prior and Informed Consent (a right of indigenous people regarding development on their lands)
- **FPTP** First-Past-The-Post.
- **GHGs** Greenhouse Gases
- **GLOF** Glacial Lake Outburst Flood
- **HoR** House of Representatives
- **IT** Information Technology
- **KYC** Know Your Customer
- **LLRC** Local Level Restructuring Commission
- **MoFA** Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **MP** Member of Parliament
- **NA** National Assembly
- **NID** National Identity Card
- **NPR** Nepalese Rupee
- **NRB** Nepal Rastra Bank
- **OTP** One-Time Password
- **PM** Prime Minister
- **PR** Proportional Representation
- **R&D** Research and Development
- **SEE** Secondary Education Examination
- **SOSYS** Social Security Fund's platform
- **ToR** Terms of Responsibilities
- **UN** United Nations
- **UNDP** United Nations Development Programme
- **VDC** Village Development Committee
- **VPN** Virtual Private Network

GLOSSARY

List of Laws

- [Birta Abolition Act, 1959](#)
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- [Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007](#)
- [Land Act, 1964](#)
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- [Land Use Act, 2019](#)
- [Local Government Operation Act, 2017](#)
- [Local Self-Governance Act, 1999](#)
- [National Cyber Security Policy, 2023](#)
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(01)

**The Basics:
Understanding the
Playground (रणमैदान)**

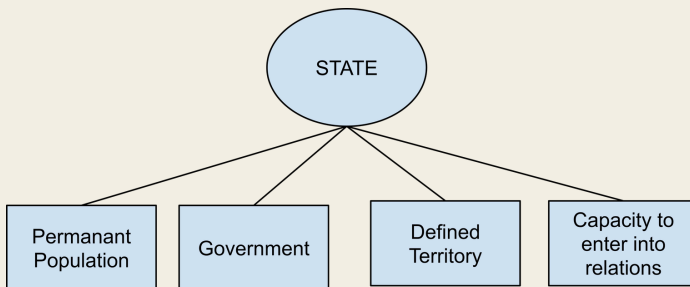
Before we talk about elections, let's understand the basics of what a country is and how it functions.

In simple terms, elections are just a method of collective decision-making to choose “individuals” who do the governance work on our behalf.

Imagine “*jutta lukaune*” in weddings. You send your smartest friend to negotiate with the groom's side so they secure maximum money in exchange for *bhinaju's jutta*. You choose your “smartest friend” among everyone on the bride's side.

Same logic. We choose people who we trust will do good work so our lives become easier.

Just like there is a *mandap* at a wedding, there is a national *mandap* here. Let's dissect that *mandap* or playground or रणमैदान in this chapter.



What is a state & how does it function?

Let's take your house as an example. In your house, you may have many family members and relatives, and your parents/guardians. But you only consult your parents while making any decision. They also pay the utilities (electricity, water) for the house.

Now, imagine your house as a state. Your family members, relatives, and you are the population of the state. Your parents form the government, who makes critical decisions and payments for running the house, aka the state.

Similarly, a state, like Nepal, is an abstract, permanent entity. It only exists if it has four elements (Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States, 1933):

- Population
- Territory
- Capacity to enter into relations
- Government

The state can only function smoothly if it has a government.

The government is the engine. Without it, the state would collapse into chaos. The government provides public goods and maintains order in society, the same way parents oversee the functioning of the house.

While the concept of government is universal, its structure, form, and distribution of power vary across countries. It depends on the law and constitution they have adopted (Dahal, 2018) and their political history.

Let's take example of Nepal, it is a federal democratic republican state with a multiparty, parliamentary system of governance (Constitution of Nepal, 2015, art.74).

Big words, right? Let's break it down. If this confuses you, it's okay. As we proceed, you'll understand.

- **Democratic**

This is like having a TV remote in your hand and you can choose which channel you want to watch on the TV screen. You have the power and you can always change the channel. Likewise, you have the power to change the government if you feel like it's not doing a good job.

In other words: who has the power? you.

- **Republican**

No one gets to be the head of the state just because their father was a king. It is not passed down like a family heirloom. You, as a voter, get to indirectly elect an official (President) for a specific time to become the head of the state for a specific amount of time. When their time is over, they have to leave.

In other words: Who is the head of the state and where is power drawn from? No hereditary transfer of power – people's mandate rules.

- **Federal**

The power you gave to the government is now divided into many people across different tiers because one person can't do everything. You also need to ensure Nepal's diversity is represented and work goes smoothly. Imagine a Kathmandu's local person working to fix a pothole in Darchula, by sitting in their office in Singha Durbar. How can they know how big the pothole is, what material is needed and readily available to fix it, and what it obstructs? They possibly can't. Hence, you divide the work and

make sure a person in Darchula is in a position to decide.

In other words: How is power shared? local experts in local places for local decisions

- **Multiparty**

Imagine going to only one restaurant available in your area that only serves samay baji. Now, even if you want Momo, you have to choose Samay Baji. This is called a one-party system.

In a multiparty system, there's a bunch of dishes you can choose from: sushi, chhoila, chowmein, phaphar ko roti, thenduk, etc. There are many political parties (Nepali Congress, UML, Rashtriya Swatantra Party, etc) to choose from, and these parties compete with each other to gain your trust and ultimately your vote.

In other words: How is political competition structured? Many options to choose from and real competition through elections.

- **Parliamentary form of government**

The executive branch (Prime Minister and Cabinet) is formed from the legislative (Members of Parliament). If the executive does not perform well, the legislature has the power to fire them and form a new one.

In other words: How is the executive formed? From the legislature itself, which also holds them accountable.

However, achieving this form of government definitely was not easy.

A series of pro-democracy movements, peace accords, and constitutional reforms spanning decades made this possible. So, as much as we get angry at the previous generations, we must recognize that their fights have also contributed to securing us this system of governance. We have come a long way to be living in a Nepal where you have the power to choose among many, where local experts are in local places for local decisions, where there is no hereditary transfer of power, where if one messes up, there's another to scold, and where you do you, the government is there to take care of you.

Okay, before you raise your eyebrow and think, “But that’s not entirely true, and we haven’t seen it in practice!!”, you’re right. Let’s clarify – this is the vision, and this is the path we are walking towards. We, however, haven’t fully reached it yet.

Why do you think Nepal adopted this form of government?

If you're curious, look into the Preamble of the Constitution of Nepal, 2015.

How is the Nepali government structured?

The Nepali government has three branches: legislative, executive, and judiciary.

As explained before, the legislative forms the executive under our parliamentary system. What about the judiciary, and why the need for three branches?

Because if you give one person all the keys to the house, they eventually become a tyrant. So, you give everyone specific responsibilities, particularly in a way that they can hold each other accountable. Hence, the state is divided into three branches or pillars. This ensures no single entity holds absolute power. This is the separation of **powers and check and balances**.

GOVERNMENT

Branches	Legislative (the brain)	Executive (the hands)	Judiciary (the eyes)
What do they do?	They represent the people and are responsible for debating and passing laws.	They administer and enforce the laws passed by the legislature and run the day to day operations of the country.	They simply just interpret the laws and declare them void if they seem to be unlawful or unconstitutional. They also can strike down any executive actions if legal principles are not followed.
Members	Members of Parliament	Prime Minister and Ministers (also called the Cabinet)	Judges of all courts
Key Powers	Enacts laws ^[1] and oversees the budget	Implements and executes the laws and policies passed by the legislature	Has the power of Judicial Review to declare laws or executive acts void if unconstitutional
Accountability	Accountable to the voters through periodic elections	Collectively accountable to the respective legislative body	An independent branch; however, judges can be impeached by the legislature for grave misconduct

1. within specific Schedules (5, 6, 7, 8, 9) of the Constitution of Nepal, 2015.

How does the check and balance work?^[2]

BRANCHES	CHECKS
Legislative	<p>To the executive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The House of Representatives can remove the Prime Minister through a vote of no confidence. • Executives cannot spend money without legislative approval of the annual budget. <p>To the judiciary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parliament can remove the Chief Justice or any Supreme Court judge through impeachment for misconduct or incompetence. • They also conduct Parliamentary hearings before any Supreme Court judge is appointed.
Executive	<p>To the legislature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The President has the power of authentication, allowing them to send bills back to Parliament for reconsideration. • In emergencies, the Cabinet can bypass Parliament by issuing ordinances. • The Prime Minister can recommend the dissolution of the House in specific deadlocked situations. <p>To the judiciary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The executive influences the composition of the courts because the PM chairs the Constitutional Council (which picks the Chief Justice) and the Minister of Law sits on the Judicial Council (which picks all other judges). • The President also holds the power to pardon prisoners, which can reduce sentences handed by the courts to prisoners.
Judiciary	<p>To the legislature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Supreme Court can declare void any law passed by Parliament if it contradicts the constitution. <p>To the executive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Supreme Court can exercise judicial review to declare any executive action or decision illegal or unconstitutional.

2. refer to articles, 76,100, 101,113,114, 119, 133, 153, 276, 284, 292 of Constitution of Nepal, 2015 for specific provisions.

However, in practice, Nepal's check-and-balance structure is frequently undermined by a culture of political "*bhagbanda*" (power-sharing deals), which transforms the independent branches of government into tools for elite bargaining and executive convenience. While the constitution mandates that Parliament oversee the executive, PMs often bypass legislative debate by governing through ordinances (Dhakal, 2025), the judiciary's independence is weakened by politically influenced appointments (Paudel, 2024), and the government's frequent refusal to implement court verdicts (Sharma, 2024). Thus, this imbalance in the practice of separation of powers and checks and balances raises questions on the competency, impartiality, and integrity of these institutions.

**Is our culture of
'*bhagbanda*' a political
problem, a socio-cultural
remnant of feudal culture,
an institutional design
fault or a consequence of
our compromised
leadership? How do we
get rid of this?**

Where do YOU fit in within this system of governance?

These three branches are **service providers**, and you as a citizen are the **receiver** of those services. However, you do not vote for all of them. You trust that they will vote for the right candidate.

BRANCHES	YOUR ROLE	THEIR CONNECTION TO YOU
Legislative	You provide the mandate through votes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You vote for them directly. They represent your identity and values. They primarily debate and pass the law.
Executive	You consume the services they provide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You do not vote for them directly. The legislative body you elected picks the PM and President. Their job is to visualize policies and manage the bureaucracy e.g; building roads, providing health, education facilities, etc.
Judiciary	You go and file complaints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You go to the judiciary as a claimant if the other two branches overstep or fail to do what they are supposed to do. It is independent of any political influences or political appointments. The process of appointment is purely bureaucratic. However, as discussed, the appointment of judges in Nepal is often political and the fight for an independent judiciary as envisioned by the preamble is still a struggle .

Since Nepal exists in a federal structure, refer to the next chapter to discover how these branches exist in the Federal Structure.

(02)

Federalism

What does the federal structure of Nepal look like?

As we learned in chapter 1, federalism basically divides and shares power.

In Nepal, federalism has been adopted to divide state powers and it has three tiers. Each tier is a government. The three tiers are:

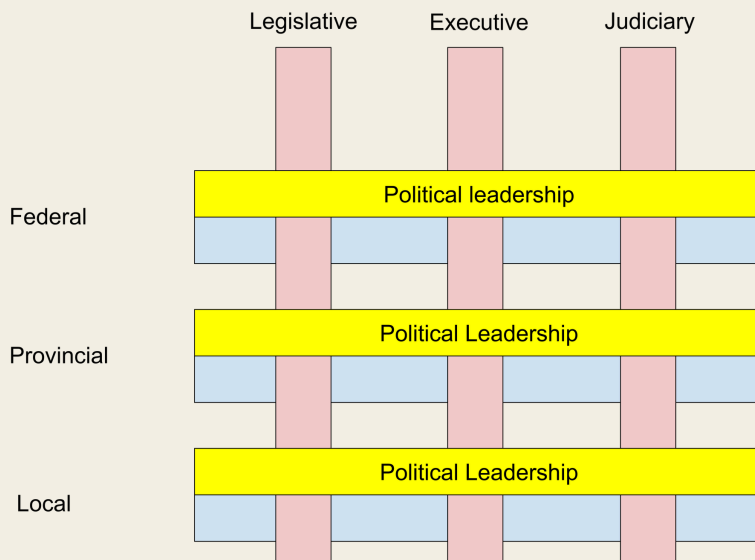
- **Federal** - संघिय (national or central level)
- **Provincial** – प्रदेश (7 units)
- **Local** – स्थानीय (753 units)

Clarification: each tier of government has its three branches (3 tiers of govt x 3 branches of govt)

To run these governments, public representatives are chosen. They are elected and selected through a mix of **direct elections and constitutional appointments**^[3]. The responsibilities at each level of government are clearly divided.

Each tier has political leadership (the public representatives) and an administrative body (the bureaucrats). The two have to work together to make things happen. Political leaders set the vision and the bureaucrats execute them.

3. constitutional appointments: Appointments of individuals made through the mandate of the constitution.



How do public representatives differ from public officials?

BRANCHES	YOUR ROLE	THEIR CONNECTION TO YOU
Source of Power	Your vote (elected people)	Exam/Merit (Lok Sewa) - skill of their own
Duration	Temporary (defined by constitution, law)	Permanent (Until retirement)
Primary Task	Setting the vision	Following the procedure
Accountability	Directly to the people Ex: Ward Chairman, Mayor, MP	To their supervisors and the law Ex: CDO, Ward Secretary

Who are these public representatives playing different government roles across various branches?

TIER\BRANCHES	LEGISLATIVE	EXECUTIVE	JUDICIARY
Federal (1)	Parliament (House of Representatives + National Assembly)	President + PM + Council of Ministers	Supreme Court (21 judges including Chief Justice)
Provincial (7)	Provincial Assembly	Provincial Head (Pradesh Pramukh) + Chief Minister + Council of Ministers	High Court and District Courts under it
Local (753)	Local Assembly	Mayor / Chairperson	Judicial Committee

To understand the differences in election and key responsibilities of the legislative, executive, and judiciary in the three tiers of government, refer to the **Roles and Responsibilities at Federal, Provincial, and Local Level** topic in Chapter 2.5.

Why was this model of federalism envisioned and how did it come about?

1961–1990:

Nepal was governed under the Panchayat system, a party-less political structure introduced by King Mahendra, under which

- local, district, and national councils operated under the king's authority.
- political parties were banned.
- there was limited genuine representation.
- power was centralized despite the appearance of multiple tiers of local councils.

It went on until popular protests and the **1990 People's Movement**:

- restored multiparty democracy.
- led to a constitutional monarchy.
- enabled the creation of locally elected bodies such as Village Development Committees (VDCs), District Development Committees (DDCs), and municipalities.

1990-2015:

- The 1990 People's Movement restored multiparty democracy and ended the Panchayat system; the Constitution of Nepal (1990) reestablished constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy.
- The Local Self-Governance Act (1999) then strengthened decentralization by formally defining local governance roles.
- The Maoist insurgency (1996-2006) intensified demands for state restructuring and federalism (Lawoti, 2012).

- The Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) (2006) ended the civil war and committed Nepal to political transformation and the Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) formally adopted federalism as a state objective.
- In 2008, Nepal was declared a Federal Democratic Republic with the abolition of the monarchy (Constituent Assembly Declaration, 2008).
- Political disputes over identity based vs geography-based federalism delayed constitutional solidification (International Crisis Group, 2012).

● **2015 - 2017:**

The Constitution of Nepal (2015) formally established Nepal as a federal state with three tiers of government and seven provinces, followed by protests in the Madhes region. The 2015

Constitution's adopted federalism:

- restructured Nepal's governance into three levels - federal, provincial, local
- created seven provinces.

The Local Level Restructuring Commission (LLRC) formed in March 2016

- proposed and finalized 753 local units amid political negotiation and Supreme Court input.

Local elections resumed in **2017**, completing the activation of federal, provincial, and local governments under the new system (Iyengar, 2015).

Why do people criticize federalism?

Despite broad constitutional support for federalism, public debate in Nepal increasingly focuses on how the system is **functioning and implemented rather than just its principles**.

- A major criticism concerns overlapping and unclear division of powers, particularly between federal and provincial governments, which has led to delays in lawmaking, policy implementation, and service delivery (UNDP, 2017). Several studies note that while responsibilities are constitutionally devolved, decision-making authority and resources remain **highly centralized** (The Nepali Comment, 2024), especially in fiscal matters (Asia Foundation, 2020).
- Another recurring concern is **fiscal federalism**. Provinces and local governments are responsible for delivering essential services such as education, health, and local infrastructure, yet they remain heavily dependent on federal transfers and lack sufficient own-source revenue authority (Prasad, 2015). This has raised questions about whether Nepal's federal model enables genuine autonomy or merely redistributes administrative burdens without adequate resources.
- Critics also point to capacity gaps at provincial and local levels, including shortages of trained staff, weak institutional memory, and limited technical expertise, particularly in newly created provincial governments (The World Bank, 2019)^[4].

4. This paper also touches upon the gap of weak institutional memory, caused by frequent government changes and the abandonment of complete procedures.

- Issues of **inclusion and representation** persist. While federalism was envisioned to address caste, ethnic, gender, and regional exclusion, scholars argue that elite dominance and party control continue to shape decision-making across all tiers (Aalen & Hatlebakk, 2008).
- Public discourse, reflected in media commentary and civil society analyses, also highlight frustrations with the **cost of federalism**, questioning whether maintaining three tiers of government is financially sustainable given Nepal's economic constraints and small geographical size (Devkota, 2025).

These critiques coexist with recognition that federalism is still a **young system**, and that many challenges stem from incomplete implementation rather than inherent design flaws (International Alert, 2021).

Taken together, research and policy assessments suggest that Nepal's federal system should be understood as a work in progress, shaped by political compromise, historical exclusion, and post-conflict transition, rather than a finished institutional model.

Federalism was adopted not only as an administrative reform but as a **political response to demand for inclusion, identity recognition, and self-rule**, particularly from marginalized regions and communities (Mainali, 2025).

Evidence from Nepal and comparative federal systems shows that **effective federalism depends less on constitutional design alone and more on political practice, intergovernmental coordination, and trust between levels of government.** While early outcomes, such as being able to elect local governments and gain expanded access to local services – such as education access, improved health and sanitation, and better irrigation and road infrastructure – are widely seen as positive changes, long-term success will depend on strengthening fiscal autonomy, clarifying mandates, and investing in provincial and local capacity (Bahl et al., 2020).

What does this mean for you as a voter?

Elections are not simply about choosing leaders, but about shaping how federalism evolves.

Choices made at the ballot box influence whether federalism fails as power centralizes to benefit the few, or federalism succeeds and becomes a tool for **inclusive development, accountable governance, and locally responsive decision-making**.

Understanding both the promises and the criticism of federalism allows voters to engage more critically with candidates' claims, and to ask not whether federalism should exist, but **how it should work better** (Adhikari, 2025).

However, among all these public representatives in all three tiers of our federal government and its three branches, only the ones mandated by law are the ones we vote for. It is very important to understand our electoral module for clarity.

Additional Information

Roles and Responsibilities at Federal, Provincial, and Local Level Table

Federal Level (Central Government)

BRANCHES	POSITIONS	ELECTION/APPOINTMENT	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES (TOR)	CONST. BASIS
Executive	President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected by Electoral College (Federal Parliament + Provincial assembly members) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of State Guardian of Constitution 	Art. 61, 62
	PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointed by the President (Must be a leader of the party with a majority in the House of Representatives) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Govt State Administration 	Art. 76
	Council of Ministers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommended by PM Formed by the President (Council can have max 25 people including PM) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General admin 	Art. 76
Legislative	Parliament (HoR/NA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> House of Representatives (HoR) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 165 via First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) 110 via Proportional Representation. National Assembly (NA): 59 members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 from each province (elected by electoral college) 3 nominated by the President. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lawmaking (schedule 5) and Executive oversight 	Art. 84, 86
Judiciary	Supreme Court (21 judges including Chief Justice)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief Justice: Appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Constitutional Council. Judges: Appointed by President on recommendation of Judicial Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constitutional interpretation 	Art. 129

Provincial Level

BRANCHES	POSITIONS	ELECTION/APPOINTMENT	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES (TOR)	CONST. BASIS
Executive	Provincial Head(Pradesh Pramukh)	Appointed by President	Federal representative in Province	Art. 163
	Chief Minister	Appointed by the Provincial Head (Leader of the majority party in the Provincial Assembly).	Head of Provincial Executive	Art. 168
	Council of Ministers	Appointed by the Province Head on the recommendation of the Chief Minister.	Provincial executive functions	Art. 168
Legislative	Provincial Assembly	Elected via a 60:40 ratio (60% direct, 40% proportional).	Enact provincial laws (Schedule 6)	Art. 176
Judiciary	Supreme Court High Court and District Courts under it.	Appointed by the Chief Justice on the recommendation of the Judicial Council.	Provincial judicial administration	Art. 140, 149

Local Level

BRANCHES	POSITIONS	ELECTION/APPOINTMENT	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES (TOR)	CONST. BASIS
Executive	Mayor / Chairperson	Directly elected by the voters of the municipality or village body.	Local administration & execution	Art. 214, 215
Legislative	Local Assembly	Consists of elected heads, ward chairs, and elected ward members.	Enact local laws (Schedule 8)	Art. 222, 223
Judiciary	Judicial Committee	Coordinated by the Vice-Chair / Deputy Mayor 2 members elected by the local Assembly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settle local disputes (13 types of disputes (property boundaries, wages, crop damage) Mediates 11 others (divorce, minor assaults). 	Art. 217

**If your street has a hole,
do you call the MP or the
Ward Chair?**

(03)

Why vote?

Election is a means to practice democracy. It is a formal, organized process through which citizens select individuals to represent their interests in public office.

Voting is the primary mechanism through which people exercise this power of determining their representatives. This is how you participate in this decision-making process.

Why should you vote?

The right to vote is a protected Constitutional Right under Article 84 (5) of the Constitution of Nepal. This law ensures that the government is chosen by the people, not by force or inheritance.

Remember how we broke down in Chapter 1 what it means for Nepal to be a Federal Democratic Republic with a multi-party Parliamentary system? This means that Nepal is governed by representatives who are chosen through free and fair elections. Through this system, you play a direct role in deciding who leads the country, how it is governed, and what policies and laws are adopted.

During elections, you vote for candidates and entrust the responsibility of shaping the country's government. These elected officials, known as representatives, act on behalf of us, voicing our interests and concerns in legislative bodies. These representatives work together to make decisions and enact laws that impact the nation and us.

In an election, you are making several big decisions at once, including:

- **Legislative Representation:** You select the representatives who will draft the rules and laws everyone has to follow.
- **Executive Leaders:** This legislative body also appoints the executive body. Therefore, you indirectly decide the leaders that will manage the country's affairs and implement major national policies.
- **Policy Direction:** You choose the political party whose ideas and vision will guide how the country is governed in the future.

Who are we voting for in the upcoming elections?

In the upcoming elections, we are voting for the **Members of the House of Representatives of the Federal Parliament of Nepal**.

We often refer to “Members of Parliament” – Members of Parliament can belong to one of two houses. It’s as simple as becoming a House Captain (whether of Blue House or Yellow House).

The Federal Parliament has two houses:

- The Upper House or the National Assembly (NA)
- The Lower House or the House of Representatives (HoR)

Both houses are lawmaking bodies but there are some differences.

FEATURES	HoR (PRATINIDI SABHA)	NA (RASTRIYA SABHA)
Total seats	275	59
Election Type	Direct (FPTP) & Proportional (PR)	Indirect (electoral college) ^[5]
Minimum age	25	35
Tenure	5 years (can be dissolved)	One-third of the members retire every 2 years (staggered) ^[6] 6 years term)
Role	Form government, finance/budget	Represent provinces, review bills ^[7]

In March 2026, we are only voting for 275 seats (the HoR).

5. Electoral college: a body of electors (these electors vary according to the different levels of government)

6. Staggered: arranged in a series of alternating or continually overlapping intervals of time

7. Bill: a proposal for a new law, or a proposal to change an existing law, presented for debate before Parliament

How are these 275 members of the House of Representatives selected or elected?

Election process for HoR^[8]:

There are two ways to enter the House of Representatives:

- **First Past the Post system (FPTP - pratakshya nirwahan pranali): 165 seats**

Nepal is divided into 165 electoral constituencies^[9], determined on the basis of geography and population. From these constituencies, 165 members, about 60% of the total House, are elected through a direct vote (Constitution of Nepal, art.84(1)). Voters cast their vote for an individual candidate, not a political party.

1 electoral constituency = 1 House of Representatives

The candidate who receives the highest number of votes wins the election and represents the constituency in the legislature, even if they do not secure an absolute majority of the votes.

Imagine there are 100 voters in your electoral constituency. In this constituency, four candidates are contesting the election: Rita from the *Sabun Party*, Hari from the *Chiya Party*, Sanumaya from the *Moomin Party*, Nani, who is contesting independently (not from any party).

8. refer to art.84 of the constitution of Nepal,2015

9. electoral constituencies: the electoral district determined by the Constituency Delimitation Commission in accordance with federal law for elections held under the First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) electoral system.

Each voter can vote for only one candidate: either Rita, Hari, Sanumaya, or Nani.

After all the votes are counted:

- Rita gets 35 votes
- Hari gets 30 votes
- Sanumaya gets 20 votes
- Nani gets 15 votes

So, **Rita wins the election** and becomes the Member of Parliament (MP) from that constituency.

Note that even though Rita did not get more than 50 votes (absolute majority), she received the highest number of votes compared to the others, which is why she won the election in that constituency.

- **Proportional Representative (PR - *samanupatik nirwachan pranali*): 110 seats**

Under the proportional representation (PR) system, the entire country is treated as one single electoral constituency. Voters cast their vote for a political party, rather than an individual candidate.

Selection:

Before the election, political parties submit a **closed list**^[10] of candidates to the Election Commission. After the election, the total votes each party receives nationwide are counted and converted into a percentage of seats. Candidates are then selected from each party's list in order of priority, based on the number of seats the party is entitled to.

10. Closed list: Political parties submit a list of candidates representing various groups (such as women, dalit, indigenous groups, etc.), and voters cast their vote for the party. This is known as a closed list because the order of candidates is fixed by the party, and no changes can be made to the list once submitted.

For example:

Hawa Party submits a list of 110 people based on its priority order. Hawa Party wins 31.9001% of total votes under PR.

31.9001% of 110 = 35 seats

Hawa Party secures 35 MPs in the HoR.

Representation:

The Constitution requires that different groups – such as women, Dalits, indigenous nationalities, and other marginalized communities – are fairly represented in Parliament through this system, thus ensuring inclusion and representation of marginalised groups.

REPRESENTATION GROUP	REQUIRED PERCENTAGE
Dalit	13.80%
Indigenous Nationalities (Adivasi Janajati)	28.70%
Khas Arya	31.20%
Madhesi	15.30%
Tharu	6.60%

Table Reference: Anusuchi 1 of the HOR election Act, 2074.

Other considerations:

- At least 50% of the total candidates submitted by a party must be women (HoR Election Act, sec.28).
- Parties must ensure the representation of persons with disabilities (HoR Election Act, sec.28).
- At least one-third (33%) of the total members elected to the Federal Parliament from each political party must be women. For example: *Hawa Party* secured 100 seats total from FPTP(65) and PR(35), from the total seats i.e 100 at least 33% i.e 33 seats must be given to women in the party.

Let's dive into an example:

Imagine there are 1,000 voters across the country. Three political parties are contesting under PR: *Sabun Party*, *Chiya Party*, *Moomin Party*. The entire voting population can vote for one of these parties.

There is also *Nani*, who is contesting independently in your constituency. However, independent candidates cannot be elected under PR, because PR is only for political parties. (Note that only people registered to vote in your constituency can vote for *Nani*.)

After all the votes for PR are counted,

- *Sabun Party* gets 300 votes
- *Chiya Party* gets 500 votes
- *Moomin Party* gets 200 votes

Now, the 110 PR seats in the House of Representatives are divided according to the percentage of votes each party receives.

	SABUN PARTY:	CHIYA PARTY:	MOOMIN PARTY:
Percent of votes	300 out of 1,000 votes = 30%	500 out of 1,000 votes = 50%	200 out of 1,000 votes = 20%
Total seats	30% of 110 = 33 seats	50% of 110 = 55 seats	20% of 110 = 22 seats

Now that we understand how the number of seats are divided, let's understand who gets these seats.

Before the election:

Sabun Party submitted a closed list of 110 potential candidates to the Election Commission in a fixed order of priority.

- 1st: Sabina
- 2nd: Madan
- 3rd: Lhakpa
- 4th: ...
- up to 110 names

After the election:

Since the *Sabun Party* won 33 seats, the first 33 people on its list (starting from Sabina, Madan, Lhakpa, etc.) become Members of Parliament (MPs).

Note:

Voters cannot change this list, this is why it is called a closed list system.

Election process for NA:

The National Assembly, or the Upper House, is also called the House of the Provincial Representation. There are two electoral systems:

1. Indirect Election:

- 8 members are elected from each of the 7 provinces (making a total of 56 members) by the Province-wise Electoral College^[11].
- Each province must ensure that women, Dalit communities, and disability or other minority communities make up 33% of their 8 elected members.

2. Nomination:

- 3 nominations are made by the President.

The NA has no role in forming and removing governments. But the Members of the Upper House can be included in the Cabinet/ Government. Members of NA can be Minister or Deputy Minister, but not the PM.

11. Electoral college comprising Provincial Assembly Members, Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Municipals, and Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of Village Bodies.

Why did Nepal adopt a mixed electoral model with FPTP and PR?

Electoral systems must ensure that the Legislative reflects the population's geographic, social, and cultural diversity while remaining accountable to voters. Nepal's adoption of a mixed electoral system emerged from a prolonged demand to enable a fair representation of the diverse population and its diverse needs (Malik & Pokharel, 2024).

Our newly born democratic republic saw a few iterations in the split between PR and FPTP, and has now landed at a 60-40 split. 60% of the Legislative is elected from FPTP and 40% from PR (Malik & Pokharel, 2024).

The Gen Z protests reignited heated debates around proportional representation (PR), or 'Samanupatik'. Let us examine this issue in detail:

1. Why was this system of PR + FPTP necessary?

FPTP:

It was necessary to maintain constituency–representative relationships where voters of a constituency can directly hold their elected representative accountable.

PR:

It was necessary to correct the structural exclusion and ensure inclusiveness of marginalized groups so that the voices of the marginalized are amplified and their unique needs and challenges addressed.

2. How has the system been criticized?

This electoral system has been engineered to reconcile two democratic goals: enabling the public to hold elected representatives accountable and ensuring equitable representation of marginalized communities. Despite the many iterations and the long-standing demand for addressing both these goals, the system is not yet perfect, and has been criticized in public discourse.

- **Coalitions, Compromises, and Delays**

Some critics blame this split for making it difficult for any party to win by majority (Wainfa, 2024). This eventually leads to the formation of coalition governments. Coalition governments can often be unstable, as it risks government failure when one of the parties in the coalition decides to leave. Execution can also be delayed in coalitions as negotiations between two (or more) parties can be time consuming.

- **The Limits of First-Past-the-Post Representation**

There have also been questions raised against the imbalanced representation of women, Dalits, Janajatis, and Madhesis in FPTP. Additionally, while FPTP representatives can be held accountable due to the voter-representative link, this very link risks MPs focusing only on their constituencies and not on national laws. FPTP MPs might solely allocate budget and resources to their constituencies (Misra, 2019) to keep their voter base happy, but this results in inequitable development across the country.

- **Weak Voter–Representative Link Under PR**

The PR system has been scrutinized for weakening the link between voters and their representatives as PR candidates are chosen by the party and not the people (Koirala, 2025). The PR system has been further criticized to have been misused by parties as senior party leaders elect their kith and kin, charge people for nomination, and elect people who will never oppose party agendas.

- **Low attendance from elected representatives has also been observed (The Kathmandu Post, 2026).**

- **Invalid votes**

The system has also resulted in a high percentage of invalid votes (Malik & Pokharel, 2024) due to it being confusing for marginalized and less educated voters who may find the two ballots (one for PR, one for FPTP) confusing.

- **If the split system is scrutinized for giving rise to unstable coalition governments, would it be ideal to adopt a fully FPTP Legislative or a fully PR Legislative? Do the advantages of fair representation outweigh concerns about government instability?**
- **Does representation of marginalized communities end at getting a seat in Parliament? How can the system ensure representatives are armed with sufficient resources and knowledge to actively participate and amplify the voices of the underserved?**
- **How can we ensure that PR candidates amplify voices of all underserved communities they represent? For example, a candidate elected from the Indigenous Nationalities (Adivasi Janajati) should be able to represent the numerous Adivasi Janajati communities across Nepal, and not just the one they belong to. A candidate from the Madhesi community should represent all Madhesi groups and not just their own.**
- **When we criticize the PR + FPTP system, are we criticizing the system itself, or are we criticizing how the system is practiced?**

And lastly, has the system been stable for long enough for us to truly practice it? Do we need a few more years to practice the system and ensure that its goals of accountability and fair representation are achieved?

(04)

**Assessing a
“good leader”**

To assess whether someone will make a good leader or not, we must first understand what the roles and responsibilities of the leaders are.

4.1

What can an MP actually do?

Here's what a federal level MP can and cannot do.

FEDERAL MP CAN DO	FEDERAL MP CAN'T DO
Advocate or request to the concerned ministries to build roads, bridges	Build roads, bridges
Advocate for policies and programs to generate employment	Create employment
Suggest amendments to fiscal policies ¹² during the budget discussions in Parliament	Increase / decrease federal budget
Propose new bills in the Parliament, draft amendments to bills registered by ministries, and rigorously advocate to change existing laws	Implement existing laws
Raise issues of the public in the Parliament	Solve issues of the public

In short, an MP's role is very law-focused and often takes up advocacy roles.

Now let me break that down further.

12. **Fiscal Policy:** Government's plan for taxes and spending

What does an MP's responsibility look like at the task level and what skills are needed to perform?

I have categorized the responsibilities of an MP into two major categories: **law-making** and **raising issues of the public**. I have also added a bonus responsibility, which is the responsibility towards their parties (This doesn't apply to independent candidates).

RESPONSIBILITIES	TASK-LEVEL	SKILLS NEEDED TO PERFORM
Lawmaking: Introduce a private bill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify issues, conduct a baseline survey • Conduct stakeholder discussions to identify the vision of the bill • Draft the bill and register it • Public speeches to defend the bill in the Parliament 	Research, legal drafting, problem solving, public speeches
Lawmaking: Submit amendments to bills presented in the Parliament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the bills • Identify issues • Consult stakeholders, bureaucrats, policy beneficiaries • Draft amendments • Public speeches • Speaking with the media to influence public discourse 	Critical reading, research, intersectional understanding, legal writing, digital and traditional communications
Lawmaking: Participation in the parliamentary committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in discussions on bills • Join sub-committees to identify solutions to specific issues or to draft legal recommendations 	Problem-solving, teamwork, legal understanding, detail-oriented

RESPONSIBILITIES	TASK-LEVEL	SKILLS NEEDED TO PERFORM
Lawmaking: Budget Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and analyze the budget • Submit amendments • Share views in the Parliament 	Economic analysis, data analysis
Raising public's issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue classification • Drafting letters to concerned authorities • Speeches in the Parliament • Consulting relevant ministries • Keep the public updated • If elected directly, greater accountability to the constituency 	Strategic thinking, writing, public relations, digital communications and media management, accessibility
Party responsibilities (not applicable to independent MPs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct tasks delegated by the party 	Public relations management

While performing all these tasks, depending on how well the MP does, they get invited to speak and participate in events. Or, the MP may choose to be creative and innovative within the given terms of responsibilities (ToR) as well. Thus, the ToR can keep expanding over the years.

So, to truly perform, an MP's ToR, the top skills needed are:

- Research
- Legal drafting
- Problem solving
- Critical and analytical skills: quantitative, qualitative, socio-economic, and intersectional understanding
- Digital and traditional communications
- Teamwork
- Detail-orientedness
- Economic analysis, data analysis
- Strategic thinking
- Public relations management

At the value level, these are also important:

- Having integrity and honesty
- Inclusive leadership
- Accountable towards public and fellow MPs
- Ability to respect diverse perspectives
- Punctual and prompt
- Empathetic

But let me clarify, it is unfair to expect that an individual comes with all this knowledge before being an MP. If that had been the case, we would not have envisioned the PR system.

What we need to look for is evidence that they will be able to fulfill these responsibilities. For instance:

- If they have run grassroots programs and they only have an SEE certificate, their understanding of how policies translate at the grassroots will be important.
- If someone has run an educational project in their constituency, their contextual understanding, ability to manage teams, and produce output is evident.
- If someone holds a PhD in economics or gender studies or climate change from a foreign university, then their global knowledge might be their biggest asset in the parliament.

Forming a parliament is like forming a team - the more diverse voices, the better.

Analyzing a leader will be contextual.

The expectation isn't that everyone must have the same knowledge and the same experiences. The expectation isn't that they've already understood the system – being an MP is on-the-job training.

The question is – are they able to learn and perform quickly?

What does the public expect of an MP?

There is a huge gap between what our bookish information of what an MP must do vs what the public expects. The general Nepali public mostly expects their MPs to do development work like constructing buildings, roads, bridges, etc.

This is because of various reasons:

- the lack of basic physical infrastructure, which makes it the most important need for the public
- the understanding of development as physical and tangible work
- the MPs have always promised that

While it is easier to say that an MP must only focus on policy work, given Nepal's inequitable development, the public is bound to expect that MPs deliver on physical development itself.

Let me elaborate. Humla, one of the most geographically difficult terrains, struggles with irrigation facilities, is not connected to the national grid, and the road infrastructure is extremely poor. Without good roads, connecting to the national grid poses a huge challenge. Hence, an MP who represents Humla residents will have to prioritize building these structures, which often requires heavy lobbying to ensure programs and budgets are allocated for the region.

For MPs who represent such constituencies, spending over 100 hours analyzing social media bills may not be as relevant.

When I say that analyzing certain bills may not be a priority for some MPs, I don't mean that MPs should not focus on policy work. MPs must value national policy work and be accountable to their voters or constituency. But it is important to emphasize that MPs are also

expected to have a diverse set of priorities to ensure people across Nepal have their voices heard and needs met. The needs differ contextually, which demands MPs perform different tasks.

However, this raises two critical questions: is an MP only accountable to their voters and constituency or are they accountable to all Nepalis? How does this differ for an MP who is directly elected vs an MP who is selected through proportional representation?

If Nepal's development framework was inclusive, the MPs could have solely focused on policy work.

Until then, perhaps we could imagine a parliament with multiple agendas, and MPs with different tasks. Some do policy work, some secure development projects, some form governments to redefine Nepal's development framework, some design inclusive economic models. The goal is to center people's aspirations and long term reforms.

But this imagination is short-term problem-solving. For long term reform, our development framework needs to be rethought so that development is equitable.

If not, we will always be caught up in the debate of: "what should an MP do: policy work vs infrastructural development?"

- **How can we envision a model of equitable development so MPs can focus on lawmaking, instead of development work?**
- **Who is an MP accountable to - their constituency or the general Nepali public? Whose issues must they carry? Does this differ between an MP elected directly vs an MP nominated via proportional representation?**
- **Does policy work constitute development?**

What questions should we ask a potential MP candidate?

Now, as you look into your candidates, there might be candidates contesting for the first time or candidates who have run multiple times. Here is a short set of questions that you can ask to extract information on their values, skillsets and knowledgebase.

And if you wish to know who is contesting in your constituency, or compare candidates and their backgrounds, do so at: chunab.org

MP CANDIDATE - BASIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What professional or voluntary or community-based work have they done previously?
 - a. Position(s) held: _____
 - b. Company(ies) worked at: _____
 - c. Demonstrated impact or success: _____
 - d. Skills demonstrated: _____
 - e. Style of work: Individual / team work / collaborative
 - f. How do they take feedback: _____
 - g. Communication style: _____
2. Have they held positions as people's representatives before or worked in bureaucracy? If they have, ask the following:
 - a. Position(s) held: _____
 - b. Institution(s) worked at: _____
 - c. Year(s) worked: _____
 - d. Demonstrated success or impact: _____
 - e. Major criticisms faced: _____
 - f. How did they react to the criticism: _____
 - g. Any corruption allegations: _____
3. Previous criminal records: _____
4. Any complaints regarding caste or gender-based discrimination? _____
5. Any sexual harassment allegations? _____
6. Any corruption allegations? _____
7. Formal or informal educational background: _____

Once you collect these information, ask:

- If given the position of an MP, do they possess the knowledgebase and skillset to perform the duties?
- If they don't have the skillsets now, do they have the humility and capacity to seek help from others and form a team to get the job done?
- Have they demonstrated the values that you want to see in an MP?
- If given the position of an MP, are they likely to abuse that power morally, ethically or financially?
- If they are faced with a heated argument, do they have the capacity to diffuse the situation tactfully, without disrespecting others?
- How do they speak of their competitors?
- What is the difference you see in the personality built on social media vs their ability to deliver work?
- Do you think they would be empathetic and inclusive in their decision-making?

Now that's a basic questionnaire. You can then quantify your data based on a leadership rubric as follows. Feel free to add further criteria to this rubric and quantify it how you see fit.

Leadership rubric:

1 Poor 2 Below avg. 3 Acceptable 4 Strong 5 Excellent

Integrity: Ethical consistency, honesty, and adherence to principles - especially those of the constitution.				
No disclosure of assets; history of misconduct.	Partial disclosures, some conflicts of interest.	Assets disclosed, but inconsistently; mixed ethical record.	Full disclosure, generally respected for ethics.	Full disclosure + independent audits; no ethical violations; model of integrity.
Education, Achievements, and Experience: Combines formal academic qualifications, professional accomplishments, and/or extensive local, indigenous, or experiential knowledge.				
No formal qualifications, no relevant experience, and limited indigenous knowledge.	Basic degree or minimal experience; limited distinction or practical impact.	Relevant qualifications or some experience; some achievements in field or community.	Strong academic record, notable awards, or substantial practical experience; recognized locally or professionally.	Highly educated or relevant experience and organic, local knowledge (रैथाने ज्ञान) in lieu of educational qualification, and nationally/internationally recognised for outstanding leadership.
Collaborative Tendencies: Ability to work with diverse groups and stakeholders.				
None.	Advisory/local roles only.	Some mid-level roles, limited responsibility.	Held senior positions, managed key programs.	Extensive high-level roles, led major reforms or crisis management.

Transparency: Operates openly, shares information, and communicates decisions.

No collaboration. Isn't able to take feedback.	Works in silos, avoids partnerships.	Occasional collaboration, limited inclusivity. Seeks feedback but doesn't implement.	Frequently works across groups, builds consensus. Seeks feedback and demonstrates active listening.	Leads multi-stakeholder coalitions, unites diverse groups effectively. Actively seeks feedback and adopts suggestions.
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Work Accomplished in Limited Time: Ability to set and achieve goals quickly.

Completely opaque.	Rare reports, limited disclosure.	Some reports published, irregular updates.	Regular reporting, data accessible to public.	Full open data, proactive communication, independent verification.
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Legitimacy & Accountability: Accepted by public, accountable to institutions.

No goals achieved.	Few goals set, minimal results.	Some goals met, moderate progress.	Most goals achieved, visible outputs.	Significant measurable achievements in short timeframe (laws, reforms, programs).
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Transition & Long-Term Vision: Ability to create and execute a roadmap for reform and stable transition.

No legitimacy, no accountability.	Weak legitimacy, avoids oversight.	Mixed acceptance, some accountability mechanisms.	Broad acceptance, accountable to institutions.	Broad-based legitimacy, independent oversight, fully accountable.
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Proven Track Record: Track record of sustainable initiatives and policy impact.

No strategy.	Unclear or weak strategy.	Basic roadmap, limited feasibility.	Clear and feasible reform plan.	Comprehensive long-term vision, broad stakeholder buy-in.
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Public Policy Formulation Experience: Experience of working in policy formulation.

No demonstrated policy formulation experience, impractical or arbitrary approaches.	Limited policy formulation exposure, weak consultation or analysis.	Adequate involvement in policy formulation, some reliance on conventional or limited analysis..	Solid policy formulation experience, with mostly evidence-based and consultative approaches.	Demonstrates strong expertise in policy cycle, uses evidence-based analysis, inclusive consultation, and realistic design tailored to fragile contexts.
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Geopolitical Awareness: Clear understanding of regional and global dynamics and how Nepal plays a part in this.

No awareness of international dynamics, decisions undermine foreign relations or national interests..	Limited understanding of geopolitical context, often reactive to external pressures..	Adequate awareness, considers external dynamics but occasionally overlooks key implications.	Strong awareness of regional/international factors, usually integrates them into decisions.	Deeply understands regional and global dynamics; anticipates international implications; balances domestic needs with foreign relations effectively.
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Budget and Resource Management: Has shown a track record in transparently and efficiently using public funds and resources.

Mismanages resources, lacks transparency, undermines fiscal stability and trust.	Limited capacity in resource management, prone to inefficiencies or delays.	Adequate budget management experience, some gaps in accountability or alignment with priorities.	Manages resources responsibly, maintains accountability, and generally aligns spending with priorities; minor inefficiencies.	Ensures transparent, efficient, and accountable use of public funds and resources; aligns budget decisions with national priorities; demonstrates strong fiscal discipline and adaptability under constraints.
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Crisis Management & Adaptability: Effectively handles crises, adapts to change, and maintains stability under pressure.

Fails to manage crises, indecisive or reactive, exacerbates instability.	Limited adaptability, struggles with high-pressure situations, some decisions worsen outcomes.	Adequate crisis response, manages some challenges but occasionally slow or reactive.	Strong ability to handle crises, generally makes timely and effective decisions under uncertainty.	Demonstrates exceptional ability to act decisively under pressure, adapt to rapidly changing situations, and stabilize institutions or processes.
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Stakeholder Engagement & Consensus-Building: Engages diverse actors and builds consensus across groups.

No engagement or collaboration, alienates stakeholders, undermines process.	Minimal engagement, collaboration narrow, overlooks key perspectives.	Adequate engagement, consults stakeholders but scope or inclusivity limited.	Frequently collaborates with key actors, resolves most conflicts constructively.	Actively engages all relevant stakeholders, builds broad coalitions, and achieves consensus even among divergent groups.
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Inclusivity & Representation: Actively promotes diversity and equity, engages marginalized groups, and contributes to balanced representation in leadership and decision-making.

Ignores or undermines inclusivity; no engagement with marginalized groups.	Limited attention to inclusivity; rarely engages marginalized perspectives.	Adequately considers diversity and inclusion in decisions; representation is partial.	Frequently incorporates diverse perspectives and works to reduce inequities; may belong to an underrepresented group.	Actively promotes equity and inclusivity, engages marginalized groups in decision-making, and belongs to an underrepresented group, contributing to balanced representation.
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Intergenerational Responsibility: Prioritizes the well-being of future generations in decisions and policies.

Ignores long-term impacts; decisions harm future generations.	Limited consideration of future impacts; occasional negative consequences.	Some awareness of long-term effects; policies moderately sustainable.	Consistently considers future implications; promotes sustainable policies.	Proactively champions long-term well-being, including climate and youth perspectives; policies designed for lasting positive impact.
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Total Marks: ____ / 75

My special request:

For each candidate in your area, look at their profile and use this leadership rubric to analyze them. See for yourself who stands where.

But, there's another critical part to deciding who to vote for:

What promises have they made? Particularly when voting for the PR – what promises have the party made?

These promises are reflected in documents called “**manifestos**”.

(05)

**Assessing a
manifesto**

A manifesto is like a promise document that political parties release before elections. It tells voters: "If you elect us, here's exactly what we'll do for Nepal."

Think of it as:

A political party's menu of promises. Except instead of food, they're serving policies on education, healthcare, jobs, infrastructure, and more!

What's actually inside a manifesto?

- Vision Statement: The big dream
- Policy Promises: Specific things they promise to do
- Budget Plans: How they'll spend money
- Timeline: When they promise to deliver (rarely specific!)
- Problem Analysis: What they think is wrong with Nepal at present
- Party Philosophy: Their core values and beliefs

Reality Check:

Not all manifestos are created equal. Some are detailed with specific plans and budgets. Others are vague with flowery language but no concrete details. That's where our analysis comes in.

But why should you care?

Manifestos enable you to:

- Hold politicians accountable: Once they're elected, you can check: "Did they keep their promises?"
- Make informed choices: Instead of voting based on rumors or social media posts, you can read exactly what the party intends to do about issues that matter to YOU.
- Understanding party differences: Is aligning to a party really being a "jholey"? Manifestos help you navigate your support.

Bottom line: *Read manifestos = Being a smart empowered voter*

So, how to identify the vision of a manifesto?

A vision statement is not just a slogan, a list of promises, or a moral claim (“prosperous Nepal”, “happy citizens”). A real vision statement answers three questions simultaneously:

- **Diagnosis:** What is fundamentally wrong today?
- **End-state:** What kind of state/society is desired?
- **Governing logic:** How does change happen (markets, state, institutions, people)?

Example structure: “Because X is the core problem, we believe Y kind of state is needed, achieved primarily through Z.”

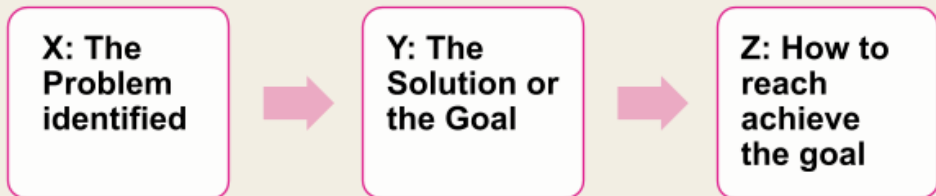
Should a manifesto explicitly contain one?

Yes, technically it SHOULD.

In reality, do manifestos contain one?

Most manifestos do not contain a clean vision statement.

When a manifesto lacks an explicit vision, it is our job to derive one:



Let's look at snippets from a real manifesto (translated) from the 2079 elections.

Question 1: What does the party treat as the main bottleneck to national progress? (The problem identified)

- State capture by political elites
- Systemic corruption
- Institutional decay
- Politics as rent-seeking^[13] rather than service

Question 2: What does the party think the country and governance should look like? (The solution or goal)

- Law-Based State
- Meritocratic Society
- Participatory Democracy
- Strong, Stable Institutions
- Constitutionalist & Progressive

Question 3: How does the party intend to achieve this? (How to achieve the goal, also the governing logic)

- Through Radical Pragmatism^[14] (Ideologically-agnostic, tool-based governance) using
- Constitutionalism^[15] as the Guardrail
- Focus on Deliverables & Problem-Solving
- Moral & Institutional Renewal
- Empowerment Through Direct Participation

13. **Rent-seeking:** When politicians use their position to enrich themselves rather than serve the public (like demanding bribes for basic services)

14. **Radical Pragmatism:** Doing whatever actually works, regardless of ideology (if private sector works better for X, use it; if government works better for Y, use it)

15. **Constitutionalism:** Governing strictly according to the constitution's rules, not personal whims

Let's try writing the derived vision statement:

Here is what I have:

“Because Nepal’s state is captured by a corrupt elite and paralyzed by ideological dogma (X), we must build a lawful, meritocratic, and participatory democracy (Y). This will be achieved through radically pragmatic, tool-based governance, using whatever works within our constitutional framework to deliver real results for the people (Z).”

Once you have the vision statement, you can then move towards critically analysing it. First understand what they are trying to say and then question it using a manifesto analysis framework.

Manifesto Analysis Framework

This framework has six categories, which forms a deck of 20 questions. You can also quantify this by giving each question certain points, based on what you value the most.

1. Clarity & Specificity

Why it matters: Vague promises are impossible to track. "We will develop Nepal" means nothing. "We will build 500km of roads in Karnali by 2027" is verifiable.

- Question 1: Are promises specific or vague?
- Question 2: Are target beneficiaries identified?
- Question 3: Is language accessible?

2. Economic Feasibility

Why it matters: Anyone can promise free everything. But can we afford it? For example, "Free education" without clear cost estimates, funding sources, and trade-offs^[16].

- Question 4: Are cost estimates provided?
- Question 5: Are funding sources identified?
- Question 6: Is the budget realistic for Nepal?
- Fact: Nepal's total budget NPR 1,964.11 billion for 2025/26
- Daily Income/Expenditure Report of Govt. : [FCGO | Daily Budgetary Comparative Analysis](#)
- Question 7: Are trade-offs acknowledged?

16. **Trade-offs:** When choosing one thing means giving up another (more spending on roads might mean less for education)

3. Implementation Timeline

Why it matters: Promises without deadlines are just dreams. Timelines show whether a party has actually planned how to deliver.

- Question 8: Are specific timelines provided?
- Question 9: Is prioritization clear?
- Question 10: Are quick wins vs long-term separated?

4. Youth Impact

Why it matters: These policies directly determine whether you'll find jobs in Nepal or abroad.

- Question 11: Are education policies comprehensive?
- Question 12: Are employment plans specific?
- Question 13: Are they targeting youth governance participation?
- Question 14: Do they have digital/tech vision? What is the vision?

5. Evidence-Based

Why it matters: Shows they've done their homework and understand actual problems.

- Question 15: Are data and statistics used?
- Question 16: Are success models referenced?
- Question 17: Is their problem analysis accurate?

6. Accountability

Why it matters: Accountability mechanisms separate parties who plan to deliver from those who just want your vote and will disappear after elections (Oops!).

- Question 18: Are success metrics defined?
- Question 19: Are monitoring systems proposed?
- Question 20: Are responsible institutions assigned?

Quantify it here:

CATEGORY	POINTS	WEIGHT	WHAT IT MEASURES
Clarity & Specificity		20%	Are promises clear or vague?
Economic Feasibility		20%	Can Nepal afford this?
Implementation Timeline		15%	When will this happen?
Youth Impact		15%	How does this affect young people?
Evidence-Based		15%	Facts or just feelings?
Accountability		15%	How will they be held responsible?

"Red Flags" in a Manifesto

Economic Feasibility

Promises that would cost more than Nepal's entire budget.

Contradiction Detection

Promises that cancel each other out.

Example: "Reduce taxes by 50% AND double government spending on infrastructure"

Blame only, No solutions

Spends 20 pages criticizing opponents, 2 pages on actual plans

Vague Populism

Watch for: "We will make Nepal great", "Prosperity for all", "End corruption forever"

Ask: HOW? WHEN? WITH WHAT MONEY?

No Trade-offs Acknowledged

All gains, no costs mentioned.

“But the manifestos are so long and dense? How do you even start?”

We are right here with you. Start simple. Just pick ONE promise from the manifesto and ask: Is it SPECIFIC? Can we AFFORD it? Do they say WHEN they'll do it? That's already 3 of our 20 questions!

Let us walk through this real manifesto snippet from 2079 elections

<p>The Promise: Establishment of government-operated Food Centers (Khadya Kendra) with a Ration Card distribution system to ensure minimum survival guarantee for citizens.</p>
<p>Specific Components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget Allocated: 5 Arba NPR (~\$37.5 million USD / ~500 crore NPR) but for a Health Fund• Government-run food distribution centers• Ration card enrollment system for targeted beneficiaries• Target: Citizens under the poverty line• Subsidized essential food commodities• Annual verification with organized record-keeping at local levels
<p>The Vision: Part of establishing social security as Nepal's "minimum expectation" - ensuring no citizen goes hungry regardless of their economic circumstances.</p>

Scorecard Breakdown of this manifesto

CATEGORY	SCORE	COMMENTS
Clarity & Specificity	16/20	Clear on what (food centers, ration cards) and for whom (below poverty line)
Economic Feasibility	10/20	5 Arba NPR mentioned, but it's for a Health Fund. No clear budget for food centers. Funding sources? Annual costs? Unclear.
Implementation Timeline	8/15	No deadlines given. "Annual verification" mentioned, but no launch date or phase-out plan.
Youth Impact	10/15	Helps youth from poor families, but no explicit youth employment or digital enrollment mentioned.
Evidence-Based	10/15	Recognizes poverty as a problem. Could cite existing ration systems in other countries. Could use more local data.
Accountability	11/15	"Annual verification" and "local record-keeping" are good, but no specific monitoring body or success metrics are defined.
Total Score	65/100	A decent start, but needs more detail on money and timelines!

There we go! Now let's go and ask our candidates for their manifestos!

Some real life examples of MPs and their promises

As we have already discussed, this election is about choosing our Members of Parliament (MPs). Let us now examine a few real-world examples to understand what promises were made to the public and how those promises compare with the actual outcomes.

Promise 1:

In 1994, a leading party's election campaign announced that if voted to power, their government would wash Kathmandu's streets with water from Melamchi. But, it took more than 30 years for the project to see the light of the day and it is not yet fully completed (Ojha, 2022).

Why did it take 30 years?

While this was a politically attractive promise the institutional, financial, technical, procedural unrealistic hurdles affect quick service delivery. The delay happened due to multiple structural and political reasons. One of the most important reasons for delays is the capacity of a federal MP.

Promise 2:

“Within two years, Nepal will be independent in basic food supplies, and within five years, the country will reach a position where it would export food” - another leading party promised.

But in reality, in the fiscal year 2073/74, Nepal imported Rs 40 billion 150 million worth of food supplies, whereas the import increased to Rs 79 billion 590 million in fiscal 2077/78. From Shrawan to Falgun 2079, the import has reached a total worth of Rs 56 billion 930 million. These statistics show the gap between political promise and actual service delivery (Kumar, 2022).

Why is the service delivery contradictory to the promises?

Because a leader can call for self reliance but cannot magically create infrastructure, logistics, and capacity in a fixed timeframe.

The service delivery requires consistent policy: investment plans, research and development, climate and natural risks mitigation strategy, logistical arrangements, funding for subsidies, and cabinet coordination. However, bureaucratic delays, lack of coordination between the three levels of government, political instability, weak supply chain, lack of skilled manpower, funding issues and many other factors limit and delay the execution of promised services..

Think of all the promises you have heard your MPs make. Ask yourself, did their promise fall within the capacity of a federal level MP?

Which wing do you think is responsible for execution of the above mentioned promises?

(06)

**Analyzing Party
Manifestos
(Elections 2026)**

Let us take a look at what major parties are promising in their manifestos. *Manifesto ma k cha?* is an effort by the following organizations to highlight the key changes promised by leading parties in their manifestos across education and health, labour and employment, social justice, climate change, and and reforms:



Education & Health

शिक्षा & स्वास्थ्य



NEPALI COMMUNIST PARTY

Curriculum/HR to remain under the federal government, while physical infrastructure and operation to be under local governments

Mandate health insurance to achieve 100% coverage by 2088 BS and reduce out-of-pocket spending from 54% to under 35%

पाठ्यक्रम र जनशक्ति व्यवस्थापन संघीय सरकार लाई दिइने, भौतिक पूर्वाधार र विद्यालय सञ्चालन स्थानीय सरकारले गर्ने

२०८८ सम्म १००% नागरिकलाई स्वास्थ्य बीमामा आबद्ध गर्ने र बिर्गामीको खलतीबाट हुने खर्च ५४% बाट ३५% मा झार्ने



PRAGATISHEEL LOKTANTRIK PARTY

Construct "One Local Level, One Library" and operate "The Nepal National Digital Library" for free and easy access to e-books and published research works

A 1,000-bed hospital with a medical college will be established in every province

एक स्थानीय तह, एक पुस्तकालय; निर्माण गर्ने र नेपाल राष्ट्रिय डिजिटल पुस्तकालय सञ्चालन गर्ने

प्रत्येक प्रदेशमा १००० शैयाको अस्पताल सहित मेडिकल कलेजको स्थापना गर्ने



JANATA SAMAJWADI PARTY

Equalize standards for infrastructure, curriculum, teaching, and evaluation processes between rich and the poor, in cities and in villages

At least one state-of-the-art Super-Speciality Hospital in each province and one health science institute and well-equipped hospital at every local level

गाउँ र सहर तथा धनी र गरिबबीचको शिक्षाको विभेद हटाउन पूर्वाधार र पाठ्यक्रममा समान मापदण्ड लागू गर्ने

प्रत्येक प्रदेशमा कम्तिमा एउटा अत्याधुनिक 'सुपर-स्पेशलिटी' अस्पताल र स्वास्थ्य विज्ञान प्रतिष्ठान स्थापना गर्ने



RASHTRIYA PRAJATANTRIK PARTY

Carry out development, construction, reform, and protection of religious schools, including Gurukuls

Under the "Ward Health Card" program, a health profile will be created for every citizen of the ward free of charge

गुरुकुल लगायतका धार्मिक विद्यालयहरूको संरक्षण र विकास गर्ने

'वडा स्वास्थ्य कार्ड' कार्यक्रम अन्तर्गत प्रत्येक नागरिकको स्वास्थ्य प्रोफाइल निशुल्क तयार गर्ने



RASHTRIYA SWATANTRA PARTY

Simplify the process for foreign universities to open physical campuses or run degree programs in Nepal

At least one "State-of-the-Art Disability Rehabilitation Specialized Resource Center" in all provinces for quality and integrated health services for citizens with disabilities

विदेशी विद्यविद्यालयहरूलाई नेपालमा व्यापस खोला वा डिग्री प्रोग्राम चलाउन सहज बनाउने

प्रत्येक प्रदेशमा अग्रजुता भएका नागरिकका लागि अत्याधुनिक पुनर्स्थापना केन्द्र स्थापना गर्ने जहाँ फिजियोथेरापी, स्वीच वेतामी लगायतका सेवा एकै ठाउँमा पाइने



NEPALI CONGRESS

Guarantee one year of free pre-school education and expand Early Childhood Education and Development (ECEd) in rural and urban poor communities

Strict ban on using state treasury funds to subsidize medical treatments abroad for high-profile individuals, labeling violations as policy corruption

एक वर्षको निशुल्क पूर्व-प्राथमिक शिक्षा (Pre-school) ग्यारेन्टी गर्ने ग्रामीण तथा सहरी गरिब समुदायहरूमा बाल शिक्षा र विकास (ECEd) विस्तार गर्ने

पहिले हुनेले सरकारी बजेटबाट उपचारका लागि विदेश जाने कार्यलाई 'नीतिगत भ्रष्टाचार' मान्दै पूर्ण प्रतिबन्ध लगाउने



UJYALO NEPAL PARTY

Allocate 3 percent of the country's capital budget to ensure that outcomes from research are linked to innovation and industrial technologies

Recruit 10,000 health workers, ensure 100 percent fulfillment of vacant positions, and promote provincial decentralisation of health services within 5 years

अनुसन्धान र विकास (R&D) क्षेत्रमा देशको पुँजीगत बजेटको ३ प्रतिशत विनियोजन गर्ने

१ वर्षभित्र १०,००० स्वास्थ्यकर्मी भर्ना गर्ने र स्वास्थ्य सेवाको प्रादेशिक विकेन्द्रीकरण गर्ने



UNIFIED MARXIST LENINIST

Merge small community schools, align teacher positions, and partnerships between universities and industries in higher education

Implement capping system to regulate the fees and quality of private hospitals

विद्यार्थी संख्या न्यून भएका सामुदायिक विद्यालयहरूलाई गाभ्ने (Merge), शिक्षक दरबन्दी मिलान गर्ने र उच्च शिक्षामा विश्वविद्यालय-उद्योग सहकार्य विस्तार गर्ने

निजी अस्पतालको शुल्क र गुणस्तर नियन्त्रणका लागि मापदण्ड र 'क्यापिङ प्रणाली' (Capping System) लागू गर्ने



MANIFESTO मा के छ?

Labour & Employment

श्रम & रोजगारी



NEPALI COMMUNIST PARTY

Labor agreements (G2G) with destination countries to ensure minimum wages, facilities, and rights for workers going abroad

Consolidate small landholdings of farmers to operate large-scale agriculture, livestock, and herbal farms

गनव्य मुलुकहरूसँग श्रम सम्झौता (G2G) गरी कामदारको न्यूनतम पारिश्रमिक, सुविधा र अधिकार सुनिश्चित गर्ने

साना अड्डाहरूलाई एकीकृत गरी ठूलो स्तरको कृषि, पशुपालन र जडिबुटी खेती सञ्चालन गर्ने



PRAGATISHEEL LOKTANTRIK PARTY

100 days employment (or allowance) for youth aged 21–30 Also investment support for youth in productive industries

Encouragement for youth in the sports sector construction of international standard infrastructure, sports tourism development & establishment of sports colleges

२९ देखि ३० वर्षका युवालाई १०० दिनको रोजगारी (वा भत्ता) दिनेउत्सादनशील उद्योगमा युवा लगानीलाई प्रोत्साहन गर्ने

खेलकुद क्षेत्रमा युवालाई प्रोत्साहन, अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय स्तरको पूर्वाधार निर्माण र खेलकुद कलेजको स्थापना गर्ने



JANATA SAMAJWADI PARTY

A free (Free Visa and Free Ticket) employment policy for workers going for foreign employment

To enhance youth employment, capital will be provided at minimum interest rates by keeping projects as collateral

वैदेशिक रोजगारीमा जानेहरूका लागि 'फ्री भिसा, फ्री टिकट' नीति लागू गर्ने

युवा रोजगारी बढाउन परियोजनालाई नै धितो राखी न्यूनतम ब्याजदरमा पूँजी उपलब्ध गराउने



RASHTRIYA PRAJATANTRIK PARTY

For foreign companies providing digital services from Nepal, tax policy will be immediately formed & implemented so Nepal receives appropriate tax revenue

Until full employment is achieved, those going for foreign employment from all provinces will be provided training, skill development, subsidised loans & life insurance

नेपालबाट डिजिटल सेवा दिने विदेशी कम्पनीहरूसँग कर नीति लागू गरी राजस्व सुनिश्चित गर्ने

दश जनशक्ति मात्र विदेश जाने वातावरण बनाउन सार्ने प्रदेशमा सीप विकास तालिम, सहुलियत ऋण र जीवन बीमाको व्यवस्था गर्ने



RASHTRIYA SWATANTRA PARTY

Special ID card will be provided to workers bringing remittance for concessions in health, education, and other social services

Arrangements for free or subsidized legal aid, insurance, social security for informal sector workers without insurance for labour justice

रेमिट्यान्स पठाउने कामदारलाई विशेष परिचयपत्र दिने र त्यसको आधारमा स्वास्थ्य, शिक्षा र सामाजिक सेवामा सहुलियत दिने

अनीपचारिक क्षेत्रका कामदारका लागि नि:शुल्क वा सहुलियतपूर्ण कानूनी सहायता र श्रम न्यायको व्यवस्था गर्ने



NEPALI CONGRESS

Formally test and certify the uncertified skills of returning migrant workers and domestic informal laborers to issue them a "Skilled Passport"

Mandatorily include modern gig-economy workers like ride-sharing drivers (Pathao/InDrive) and food delivery riders in the Social Security Fund

विदेशबाट फर्किएका वरिष्ठ स्वदेशका अनीपचारिक क्षेत्रमा कार्यरत श्रमिकहरूको सीपहरूको औपचारिक परीक्षण र प्रमाणीकरण गरी "सीप पासपोर्ट" जारी गरिने

राइड-सेयरिङ तथा खाद्य डेलिभरी गिडइडजस्ता आधुनिक गिग-अर्थनिका श्रमिकहरूलाई अनिवार्य रूपमा सामाजिक सुरक्षा कोषमा समावेश गरिने



UJJALO NEPAL PARTY

Youth self-employment campaign to make young entrepreneurs self-reliant by providing skill training to 500,000 youth and offering startup subsidized loans of up to Rs 500,000

Concessional loans of up to 25 million rupees will be made available to youth farmer groups for 5 years

५ लाख युवालाई सीप तालिम र ५ लाख रुपैयाँसम्मको स्टार्टअप सहुलियत ऋण दिएर युवा स्वरोजगार अभियान चलाउने

युवा किसान समूहलाई ५ वर्षका लागि २५ लाख रुपैयाँसम्मको सहुलियत ऋण उपलब्ध गराउने



UNIFIED MARXIST LENINIST

Establish research institutions & encourage outstanding youth through programs such as the 'Youth Innovation Award' and 'Entrepreneurship Scholarship'

Dalit communities, persons with disabilities, and conflict-affected individuals engaged in various professions, businesses, and enterprises will receive financial concessions and entrepreneurship training

विश्वविद्यालय र निजी क्षेत्रसँग मिलेर नवप्रवर्तन र अनुसन्धान परियोजना अगाडि बढाउने र 'युवा नवप्रवर्तन पुरस्कार' प्रदान गर्ने

दलित, अपाङ्गता भएका व्यक्ति र द्वन्द्वपीडितहरूलाई उद्यमशीलताका लागि सहुलियत ऋण र अनुदान दिने



MANIFESTO मा के छ?

Governance

शासन प्रणाली



**NEPALI
COMMUNIST PARTY**

Enforce merit-based recruitment and performance-based incentives in civil services; 30% new and capable civil servants introduce in 5 years

Fully implement the agreements and understandings reached during various movements

संवैधानिक तथा सार्वजनिक निकायमा दलगत नियुक्ति तथा भ्रष्टाचार अन्त्य गर्ने रीयतता प्रणाली (meritocracy) लागू गर्दै आउने ५ वर्षमा सरकारी सेवामा ३०% नयाँ र सक्षम जनशक्ति थपिउने

विभिन्न आन्दोलनहरूका क्रममा भएका समझौता र समझदारीहरू पूर्ण रूपमा लागू गर्ने



**PRAGATISHEEL
LOKTANTRIK PARTY**

Provision of directly Elected President and Provincial Chief; also ensure that one person cannot remain in a position for more than two terms

An act which allows citizens to claim compensation in case of negligence by state organs or bodies

प्रत्यक्ष निर्वाचित राष्ट्रपति र प्रदेश प्रमुख हुने प्रणाली लागू गर्ने र एक व्यक्ति एक पदमा दुई कार्यकालभन्दा बढी रहन नपाउने व्यवस्था गर्ने

राज्य अंग वा निकायबाट हुने लापरवाहीले नागरिकलाई दुख र हानि पुग्ना त्यसको क्षतिपूर्ति माग दाबी गर्न एन बनाइने



**JANATA
SAMAJWADI PARTY**

The Police Act will be amended in accordance with the federal governance system

High-Level Commission of constitutional experts will review the Constitution & recommend necessary amendments/rewriting for inclusive democracy

राष्ट्रिय / जातिय पहिचानसंगैको संघियता संस्थागत गर्ने र संघीय शासन प्रणालीअनुसार प्रहरी ऐन संशोधन गरिने

उच्चस्तरीय संविधान पुनरावलोकन आयोग गठन गरी समावेशी लोकतन्त्रलाई संस्थागत गर्न आवश्यक संशोधन वा पुनर्लेखनका लागि सिफारिस गरिने



**RASHTRIYA
PRAJATANTRIK PARTY**

A Hindu State based on Vedic Sanatan Dharma, under the guardianship of the Monarchy including full religious freedom and equal respect for all religions

A Tracking Dashboard will be installed for monitoring the budget for various projects

अभिभावकीय संस्थाको रूपमा राजसंस्था र सर्वथम समाभव पूर्ण धार्मिक स्वतन्त्रता सहितको वैदिक सनातन धर्म सापेक्ष हित्नु राष्ट्र स्थापना गर्ने

बजेट तथा परियोजना अनुगमनका लागि 'ट्र्याकिङ ड्याशबोर्ड' (Tracking Dashboard) स्थापना गर्ने



**RASHTRIYA
SWATANTRA PARTY**

Grant voting rights to Nepalis abroad; uphold "Once a Nepali, Always a Nepali" by supporting dual citizenship, and property rights

National-level political parties to receive annual grants from the public treasury based on their share of the popular vote

विदेशमा रहेका नेपालीहरूलाई मतदानको अधिकार प्रदान गर्ने, दोहोरो नागरिकताको समर्थन गर्ने र सम्पत्तिसम्बन्धी प्रशासनिक इन्टरद्वारलाई तत्काल अन्त्य गर्ने

राष्ट्रिय मान्यता-प्राप्त राजनीतिक दलहरूलाई जनमतका आधारमा सार्वजनिक कोषबाट वार्षिक अनुदान दिने व्यवस्था गर्नेछौं



**NEPALI
CONGRESS**

Make it mandatory for Ministers, MPs, and high-ranking officials to publicly declare assets before taking their oath and immediately after leaving office

Limit terms to one for President, a max. of 2 terms for the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers, 3 terms for Ministers & Proportional Representation (PR) MPs to one term

संवैधानिक आयोग लगायतका नियुक्तिमा राजनीतिक पार्टीको सदस्यका लागि अनिवार्य दुई वर्षको 'कुलिङ अफ पिरियड' लागू गरिने

कार्यकालको सीमा तोक्ने: राष्ट्रपति एक कार्यकाल, प्रधानमन्त्री र मुख्यमन्त्री बढीमा दुई कार्यकाल, मन्त्री बढीमा तीन कार्यकाल र समानुपातिक संसदमा एक पटक मात्र रहन पाउने व्यवस्था



**UJJALO
NEPAL PARTY**

A proposal will be made to maintain the number of House of Representatives members at 201 (down from 275) and reduce the number of Provincial Assembly members to 330 (down from 550)

Corrupt individuals will be banned from holding public office for life, and their property will be nationalized

शामन खर्च घटाउन प्रतिनिधिसभा सदस्य संख्या २७५ बाट २०१ र प्रदेश सभा ५५० बाट ३३० मा कटौती गर्ने - संघीय मन्त्रालय १५ र प्रदेश मन्त्रालय ५ देखि ७ सम्म सिमित गर्ने

भ्रष्टाचारीहरूलाई आजीवन सार्वजनिक पदमा प्रतिबन्ध लगाइनेछ र तिजको सम्पत्ति राष्ट्रियकरण गरिने



**UNIFIED MARXIST
LENINIST**

Bills that were pending in the previous parliament will be passed within three months of the new House

Establishing an Open Data Act to provide public access to all non-sensitive government information while protecting national security, diplomatic confidentiality, and personal privacy

अघिल्लो संसदमा विचाराधीन रहेका विधेयकहरू नयाँ प्रतिनिधि सभा बैठक बसेको तीन महिनाभित्र पारित गरिनेछ

राष्ट्रिय सुरक्षा, कूटनीतिक गोपनीयता र व्यक्तिगत गोपनीयता बाहेकका सबै सरकारी सूचनामा जनताको पूर्ण पुर्चाउन खुला सव्याङ्क ऐन (Open Data Act) तर्जुमा गर्ने

Economy

अर्थतन्त्र



**NEPALI
COMMUNIST PARTY**

The upcoming decade - decade of agricultural investment

AI based smart manufacturing will be developed by attracting both domestic and foreign investment

आगामी दशकलाई 'कृषि लगानीको दशक' घोषणा गरि सरकारी, निजी, सहकारी तथा दातृ निकायको सहभागितामा लगानी वृद्धि गरिनेछ

आयात प्रतिस्थापन र निर्यात प्रवर्द्धनमा केन्द्रित उद्योगहरूलाई विशेष सुविधा दिने र एआई (AI) आधारित 'स्मार्ट म्यानुफ्याक्चरिङ' विकास गर्ने



**PRAGATISHEEL
LOKTANTRIK PARTY**

Make BIPPA agreements effective to attract global investors and providing special facilities for NRNs to invest

Issue 'Project Bonds' to allow investment in special infrastructure projects

बिप्पा (BIPPA) सम्झौतालाई प्रभावकारी बनाएर लगानीकर्ताहरूलाई आकर्षक सुविधा दिने र गैर-आवासीय नेपाली (NRN) हरूका लागि विशेष लगानी सुविधाहरू प्रदान गर्ने

विशेष प्रकारका पूर्वाधार आयोजनाका लागि 'आयोजना ऋणपत्र' (Project Bond) जारी गर्ने



**JANATA
SAMAJWADI PARTY**

Implement integrated rural development plan and highly marginalized areas will be developed as model rural settlements

Collective farming based on cooperatives will be expanded Through the promotion of Vertical Farming, five million (five lakh) jobs will be created within the next 5 years

एकीकृत ग्रामीण विकास योजना लागू गर्ने र अत्यन्त सीमांतकृत क्षेत्रहरूलाई नमुना ग्रामीण वस्तीका रूपमा विकास गर्ने

सहकारीमा आधारित सामूहिक खेती विस्तार गर्ने 'भर्टिकल फार्मिङ' (Vertical Farming) मार्फत ५ वर्षभित्र ५० लाख रोजगारी सिर्जना गर्ने



**RASHTRIYA
PRAJATANTRIK PARTY**

Review and reform necessary legal treaties increase bilateral and multilateral trade (WTO, SAFTA, BIMSTEC, etc)

Obtaining international development assistance or loans solely on the basis of national interest, necessity, and priority

WTO, SAFTA, BIMSTEC लगायतसँग बहुपक्षीय व्यापार अभिवृद्धिका लागि आवश्यक कानुनी सुधार गरिनेछ द्विपक्षीय व्यापार र परवहनमा देखिएका समस्या समाधान गर्न सन्धिहरूको पुनरावलीकन गर्ने

राष्ट्रिय हितलाई ध्यानमा राखी आवश्यकता र प्राथमिकताको आधारमा मात्रै अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय विकास सहायता/ऋण लिने निर्यात गर्ने



**RASHTRIYA
SWATANTRA PARTY**

The fixed exchange rate with the Indian Rupee will be studied and reviewed with international experts

Within 5 years, Nepal will export "Artificial Intelligence" and "Computational Power" Build energy-efficient data centres powered by green energy

भारतीय रुपैयाँसँगको स्थिर विनिमय दरलाई अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय विज्ञहरूसँग मिलेर अध्ययन र पुनरावलीकन गरिने

स्वदेशी स्टार्टअपहरूलाई विश्व बजारसँग जोड्न 'अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय पेमेन्ट गेटवे' का कानुनी र प्राथमिक अवरोधहरू हटाई ५ वर्षभित्र नेपालले एआई (AI) र कम्प्युटेशनल पावर निर्यात गर्ने



**NEPALI
CONGRESS**

Gradually reduce Corporate Tax to 20% (10% for exports, 5% for IT exports, 15% for manufacturing). Reduce VAT to 10% gradually

Build national consensus among major political parties on a minimum common economic agenda (economic charter) to stabilize policies against instability

संस्थागत आयकर क्रमशः २०% मा झार्ने; आईटी (IT) निर्यातमा १०%, अन्य निर्यातमा ५%, र उत्पादनमुखी उद्योगमा १५% आयकर कायम गर्ने

सरकार परिवर्तन हुँदा पनि नीति परिवर्तन नहुनका लागि प्रमुख दलहरूबीच 'न्यूनतम साझा आर्थिक एजेन्डा' (Economic Charter) मा राष्ट्रिय सहमति गर्ने



**UJVALO
NEPAL PARTY**

5 Billion USD in annual revenue generated from electricity export, of which 15 percent will go into a National Prosperity Fund

At least 1,000 shares of hydropower projects will be made available to all households at the initial public offering (IPO) price

छिमेकी देशहरूमा बिजुली निर्यात गरेर वार्षिक ५ अर्ब अमेरिकी डलर राजस्व संकलन गर्नेविद्युत निर्यातबाट प्राप्त रकमको १५ प्रतिशत राष्ट्रिय समृद्धि कोष माँ जम्मा गरिने

'१००० किता शेयर अभियान': सबै घरघरुरीलाई जलविद्युत आयोजनाको आईपीओ (IPO) मा कम्तिमा १००० किता शेयर उपलब्ध गराइने



**UNIFIED MARXIST
LENINIST**

Public loans will only be taken to implement nationally prioritized income-generating projects

The mid-hill (Pushpala) and Koshi-Gandaki-Karnali corridors will be developed as "corridor cities" with clusters for industry, commerce, education, health, tourism, and information technology

राष्ट्रिय प्राथमिकता प्राप्त आयमूलक आयोजनाका लागि मात्र सार्वजनिक ऋण लिइने

मध्यपहाडी (पुष्पलाल) र कोशी-गण्डकी-कर्णाली कोरिडोरहरूलाई उद्योग, वाणिज्य, शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य र पर्यटनको 'कोरिडोर सहर' (Corridor Cities) का रूपमा विकास गरिने



Social Justice

सामाजिक न्याय



**NEPALI
COMMUNIST PARTY**

Formal recognition of Madrasa education and promotion of major mosques as religious tourist sites

Special reservations, education & health programs will be implemented to end double oppression against Dalits, Muslims, Tharus, and women within the Madhesi-Terai community

मदरसा शिक्षालाई औपचारिक मान्यता दिने र ठूला मस्जिदहरूलाई धार्मिक पर्यटकीय स्थलका रूपमा विकास गर्ने

दलित, मुस्लिम, थारु र मधेस - तराई समुदायका महिलामाथिको 'दोहोरो उत्पीडन' अन्त्य गर्ने विशेष आरक्षण, शिक्षा र स्वास्थ्य कार्यक्रम लागू गर्ने



**PRAGATISHEEL
LOKATANTRIK PARTY**

Nutrition allowances for children expanded to ward levels in all 77 districts

Ensure 50% participation of women in parliament decision-making processes, and leadership development of women will be ensured in all state bodies

बालबालिकाको पोषण भन्दा ७७ वटै जिल्लाका वडा तहसम्म विस्तार गर्ने

संसदमा महिलाको ५० प्रतिशत सहभागिता सुनिश्चित गर्ने र सबै राज्यका अंगहरूमा महिला विकास लाई सुनिश्चित गर्ने



**JANATA
SAMAJWADI PARTY**

Systematic expansion of a life-cycle-based social security system & transparent monitoring of social security programs

Guarantee social justice through proportional representation, access to state services, resources & power for marginalized communities

जीवनचक्रमा आधारित सामाजिक सुरक्षा प्रणालीको विस्तार र पारदर्शी अनुगमन गर्ने

मधेसी, आदिवासी जनजाति, थारु, दलित, खस, पिछडिएका वर्ग, मुस्लिम लगायतका सीमानलकृत समुदायको राज्यका सबै अंगमा समानुपातिक पहुँच सुनिश्चित गर्ने



**RASHTRIYA
PRAJATANTRIK PARTY**

Ensure social security, health, and life insurance for workers in both formal and informal sectors according to ILO standards

Operate ration card distribution centers in every municipality to provide basic food supplies to citizens and families living below the poverty line

औपचारिक र अनौपचारिक क्षेत्रका कामदारका लागि आईएलओ (ILO) मापदण्ड अनुसार सामाजिक सुरक्षा, स्वास्थ्य र बीमा सुनिश्चित गर्ने

गरीबीको रेखामुनि रहेका परिवारका लागि प्रत्येक नगरपालिकामा रसन कार्ड वितरण केन्द्र सञ्चालन गर्ने



**RASHTRIYA
SWATANTRA PARTY**

Defining predatory lending (Meter-Bya) and unfair transactions as "economic crimes," legally and structurally dismantle their networks within 5 years

Create a database & redesign the social security system to analyse priority criteria to place the most needy individuals first- preventing double benefits and misuse of the system

मितरव्याजलाई 'आर्थिक अपराध' का रूपमा परिभाषित गरी ५ वर्षभित्र यसको सञ्जाललाई ध्वस्त पार्ने र पीडितको जग्गा र सम्पति फिर्ता गर्ने 'दुर्त न्याय कार्यदल' गठन गर्ने

सामाजिक सुरक्षा प्रणालीलाई लक्षित र पारदर्शी बनाउन तथ्याङ्क भण्डार (Database) निर्माण गर्ने



**NEPALI
CONGRESS**

Design local-level mechanism to ensure the stove doesn't go out for daily wage workers when their work is abruptly halted due to pandemics or natural disasters

'Womb to Tomb' Integrated Framework where every citizen is treated to an integrated, rights-based, life-cycle social security system

महामारी वा प्राकृतिक विपत्तिका कारण काम रोजिको दैनिक ज्यालादारी गर्ने मजदुरको 'चुलो नभित्रै' सुनिश्चित गर्ने न्यायगत तहमा संरक्षण बनाउने

जीवनचक्रमा आधारित "कोख देखि शोख सम्म" (Womb to Tomb) एकीकृत सामाजिक सुरक्षा लागू गर्ने



**UJYALO
NEPAL PARTY**

In case of the accidental death of the main income source of a family, a family protection package will be implemented for education, health, and livelihood after evaluating the condition of the dependent family

A Martyr's Memorial Fund will be established in districts to honor the contributions GenZ martyrs

परिवारको मुख्य आयस्रोत व्यक्तिको दुर्घटनामा मृत्यु भएमा आश्रित परिवारका लागि 'परिवार संरक्षण प्याकेज' लागू गर्ने

जेन-जी शहीदहरूको योगदानको सम्मान गर्न जिल्लाहरूमा 'शहीद स्मारक कोष' स्थापना गर्ने



**UNIFIED MARXIST
LENINIST**

Landless, Sukumbasi, vulnerable, and low-income citizens will be provided secure, accessible, and dignified housing along with basic services

Citizenship shall be ensured in accordance to sexual identity of gender and sexual minority communities

भूमिहीन, सुकुम्बासी, कमजोर तथा न्यून आय भएका नागरिकका लागि आधारभूत सेवासहित सुविधित, सहज र सम्मानजनक आवास उपलब्ध गराउने

यौनिक तथा लैंगिक अल्पसंख्यक समुदायलाई लैंगिक पहिचान अनुसार नागरिकता सुनिश्चित गर्ने



Climate change

जलवायु परिवर्तन



**NEPALI
COMMUNIST PARTY**

"One Community Forest, One Enterprise" to run collective enterprises so that local communities receive maximum benefit from the use of community forests

Develop digital technology and AI-based early warning systems to minimize loss of life & property from natural disaster

सामुदायिक वनको उपयोगबाट स्थानीय समुदायले अधिकतम लाभ पाउन सामूहिक उद्यम सञ्चालन गर्न "एक समुदाय वन, एक उद्यम" कार्यक्रम सञ्चालन गरिने

प्राकृतिक विपत्तिबाट हुने न्यूनतमको क्षति न्यूनिकरण गर्न डिजिटल प्रविधिमा आधारित पूर्वचेतावनी प्रणाली तथा एआईको प्रयोग विकास गरिने



**PRAGATISHEEL
LOKTANTRIK PARTY**

Kilns, factories, and industries that negatively impact the environment will be relocated away from dense settlements

Waste collection centers will be established in every neighborhood (tole) for effective waste management and to generate income from waste

वातावरणमा नकारात्मक प्रभाव भन्दा, कारखाना तथा उद्योगहरूलाई घना बस्तीबाट बाहिर स्थानान्तरण गरिने

फोहोर व्यवस्थापन तथा फोहोरबाट आम्दानी सिर्जना गर्न प्रत्येक टोलमा फोहोर संकलन केन्द्र स्थापना गरिने



**JANATA
SAMAJWADI PARTY**

Climate-resilient agriculture will be promoted, national food storage system will be organized, and emergency food reserves will be developed

Strict controls will be imposed on the extraction of soil, sand, and stone

जलवायु-प्रतिरोधात्मक कृषि प्रवर्द्धन गरिनेछ। राष्ट्रिय खाद्य भण्डारण प्रणाली व्यवस्थित गरिनेछ र आपत्कालीन खाद्य भण्डार विकास गरिने

माटो, बालुवा र ढुंगा निकाल्ने कडा नियन्त्रण गरिने



**RASHTRIYA
PRAJATANTRIK PARTY**

Continue Nepal's Sagarmatha (Everest) Climate Dialogue & treat the potential impacts of climate change & environmental protection as a top national priority

High priority will be given to minimizing human-wildlife conflict by creating and implementing a special action plan

'नेपालको सगरमाथा (सगरमाथा) जलवायु संवादलाई निरन्तरता दिई जलवायु परिवर्तनको सम्भावित असर र हिमाली पर्यावरणलाई अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय सम्न्धको महत्त्वपूर्ण अंगको रूपमा लिने

मानव-वन्यजन्तु द्वन्द्व न्यूनीकरण गर्न विशेष कार्य योजना बनाउने



**RASHTRIYA
SWATANTRA PARTY**

By the year 2087 BS, we will implement "National Open Space Standards" in all major urban centers of Nepal

Immediately simplify the cumbersome processes, laws, and procedures related to EIA, land acquisition, tree cutting permits, and infrastructure construction in protected areas for sustainable development

२०८७ सम्म सबै प्रमुख शहरहरूमा 'राष्ट्रिय खुला क्षेत्र मापदण्ड' लागू गर्ने

पूर्वाधार विकास र वातावरणीय संरक्षणका बीच टिगो सन्तुलन कायम राख्न, वातावरणीय प्रभाव मूल्याङ्कन (EIA), जग्गा अधिग्रहण, रुख काट्ने अनुमति, र संरक्षित क्षेत्रका पूर्वाधार निर्माणसँग सम्बन्धित जटिल प्रक्रिया, कानून र नियमहरू तत्काल सरल बनाइने



**NEPALI
CONGRESS**

Legally commit to redirecting 30% of all mountaineering royalties directly into local climate adaptation and glacial conservation efforts

Specifically issuing "Green Bonds" to mobilize capital and incentivizing banks to invest exclusively in eco-friendly sectors

पर्वतारोहणबाट प्राप्त हुने रोयल्टीको 30 प्रतिशत सिधै स्थानीय जलवायु अनुकूलन र हिमाल संरक्षणमा खर्च गर्ने कानूनी व्यवस्था गर्ने

'ग्रीन बण्ड' (Green Bonds) जारी गर्ने र बैंकहरूलाई पर्यावरणमैत्री क्षेत्रमा लगानी गर्न प्रोत्साहित गर्ने



**UJYALO
NEPAL PARTY**

The use of fossil fuels in the domestic and industrial sectors will be completely replaced by generating 40,000 megawatts of electricity

The concept of risk-informed development will be adopted, and the building code will be strictly implemented

४० हजार मेगावाट विद्युत् उत्पादन गरी घरेलु र औद्योगिक क्षेत्रमा जीवावशेष इन्धनको प्रयोगलाई पूर्ण रूपमा विस्थापित गर्ने

जोखिम-सूचित विकासको अवधारणालाई अंगिकार गरिने र भवन निर्माण कोड कडाइका साथ कार्यान्वयन गरिने



**UNIFIED MARXIST
LENINIST**

Beautification campaigns including greenbelt parks, flower gardens, river buffer zones, and urban tree plantations in urban & residential areas

Minimization and resolution of human-wildlife conflicts caused by encroachment on all habitats, ensuring equitable and just management

शहरी क्षेत्रमा ग्रीनबेल्ट पार्क, नदी किनार संरक्षण र शहरी वृक्षारोपण अभियान चलाउने

मानव-वन्यजन्तु द्वन्द्वको न्यायोचित व्यवस्थापन गर्न र राष्ट्रिय निकुञ्ज, आरक्ष र संरक्षित क्षेत्रमा प्राकृतिक पारिस्थितिकी प्रणाली र जैविक सन्तुलन कायम राख्दै, बफर क्षेत्रका समुदायहरूको आवश्यकता र हितहरूलाई सम्बोधन गरिने



MANIFESTO मा के छ?

Land Reforms

भूमि सुधार



**NEPALI
COMMUNIST PARTY**

Amend land/forest laws in 6 months; implement Integrated Land and Guthi Acts

Prohibit fallow land; use Farmer IDs for grants/loans

6 महिनाभित्र जग्गा र वन सम्बन्धी कानून संशोधन गर्ने र एकीकृत भूमि तथा गुठी ऐन लागू गर्ने

बाँझो जग्गा राख्न नपाइने व्यवस्था गर्ने र किसान परिचयपत्रको आधारमा अनुदान दिने



**PRAGATISHEEL
LOKTANTRIK PARTY**

A Dalit Development Council will be formed for the socio-economic development of the Dalit community & land and housing will be arranged for landless and homeless Dalit communities

Designation of special zones for arable vs industrial/urban development

दलित समुदायको विकासका लागि 'दलित विकास परिषद्' गठन गर्ने र भूमिहीन दलितलाई जग्गा र आवासको व्यवस्था गर्ने

कृषियोग्य जग्गा र औद्योगिक/शहरी क्षेत्रको वर्गीकरण गरी विशेष क्षेत्र तोक्ने



**JANATA
SAMAJWADI PARTY**

The land use implementation capacity of local governments will be strengthened technically and legally

Construction work in areas at risk of floods, landslides, and river erosion will be regulated with strictness

स्थानीय सरकारको भू-उपयोग कार्यान्वयन क्षमतालाई सुदृढ बनाउने

बाढी, पहिरो र नदी कटानको जोखिममा रहेका क्षेत्रमा निर्माण कार्यलाई कडाइका साथ नियमन गर्ने



**RASHTRIYA
PRAJATANTRIK PARTY**

The landless problem will be permanently solved by ensuring the identification of genuine landless people and informal settlers and creating a special action plan.

वास्तविक सुकुम्बासी तथा अव्यवस्थित बसोबासीको पहिचान सुनिश्चित गरी विशेष कार्ययोजना बनाई सुकुम्बासी समस्या स्थायी रूपमा समाधान गरिनेछ ।



**RASHTRIYA
SWATANTRA PARTY**

Develop safe, well-equipped and productive "Integrated Model Settlements" for permanent housing and land ownership (Lalpurja) for the truly landless

"High-Level National Land Rights Authority" formed to scientifically identify real landless people & separate them from "Take" squatters occupying government land through satellite mapping & digital biometric authentication

वास्तविक भूमिहीनका लागि उत्पादनसँग जोडिएका 'एकीकृत नमुना वस्ती' विकास गर्ने र स्थायी लालपुर्जा सुनिश्चित गर्ने

"भू उपग्रह नक्साङ्कन" र "डिजिटल बायोमेट्रिक प्रमाणीकरण" मार्फत वास्तविक भूमिहीन र सरकारी जग्गा कब्जा गर्ने "नक्कली" सुकुम्बासीहरूलाई वैज्ञानिक रूपमा छुट्याउन एक अधिकारसम्मत्र "उच्चस्तरीय राष्ट्रिय भूमि अधिकार प्राधिकरण" गठन गरिने



**NEPALI
CONGRESS**

Instead of just controlling floods, plan to build stable embankments and use the reclaimed outer riverbed lands for agriculture, industry, and housing

Uncontrolled settlements in flood, landslide, or earthquake-prone areas will be compulsorily relocated to planned, safe model settlements

बाढी नियन्त्रण मात्र नभई नदी किनारको उकास जमिनलाई कृषि, उद्योग र आवासका लागि प्रयोग गर्ने

जोखिमपूर्ण क्षेत्रका बस्तीहरूलाई अनिवार्य रूपमा योजनाबद्ध र सुरक्षित नमुना वस्तीमा स्थानान्तरण गर्ने



**UJJALO
NEPAL PARTY**

Government and acquired land will be distributed to landless Dalits, squatters, and poor families, and land ownership certificates (Lalpurja) will be provided

To prioritize organic production, 50 percent of the agricultural area will be declared as organic agricultural zones in the next 5 years

सरकारी तथा अधिग्रहण गरिएको जग्गा भूमिहीन दलित, सुकुम्बासी र गरिब परिवारहरूलाई वितरण गरिने, र लालपुर्जा प्रदान गरिनेभूमि वितरणलाई व्यवस्थित गर्न उच्चस्तरीय भूमि आयोग गठन गरिने

जैविक उत्पादनलाई प्राथमिकता दिन आगामी ५ वर्षभित्र कुल कृषि क्षेत्रफलको ५० प्रतिशतलाई जैविक कृषि क्षेत्र घोषणा गरिने



**UNIFIED MARXIST
LENINIST**

Incentivize private housing developers to develop integrated settlements in appropriate locations

Long-term solutions sought from Land Commission to manage landless Dalits, landless squatters, and unplanned settlements and to end forced evictions

निजी आवास विकासकर्ताहरूलाई एकीकृत वस्ती निर्माणका लागि प्रोत्साहन गर्ने

भूमि आयोग जस्ता संरचना मार्फत भूमिहीन दलित, भूमिहीन सुकुम्बासी र अव्यवस्थित बसोबासीको जबरजस्ती उडिबासको दीर्घकालीन समाधान खोज्ने



(07)

Women in Politics

Overview

Women's political representation refers to the extent to which women are able to participate in, compete for, and hold political office, and to exercise real influence once elected. In Nepal, this issue has been central to democratic reforms since the end of the monarchy and the adoption of the 2015 Constitution. The Constitution explicitly recognizes women as a historically excluded group and mandates mechanisms, most notably gender quotas, to ensure their inclusion in elected bodies.

For voters in the upcoming House of Representatives (HoR) elections, women's representation is not simply a question of fairness or symbolism. It is about how political power is distributed, whose voices shape laws and national priorities, and whether democratic institutions reflect the population they govern. Women make up more than half of Nepal's population, yet their presence in decision-making roles remains limited, especially at higher levels of authority. Understanding why this gap persists, despite constitutional safeguards, is essential for informed voting.

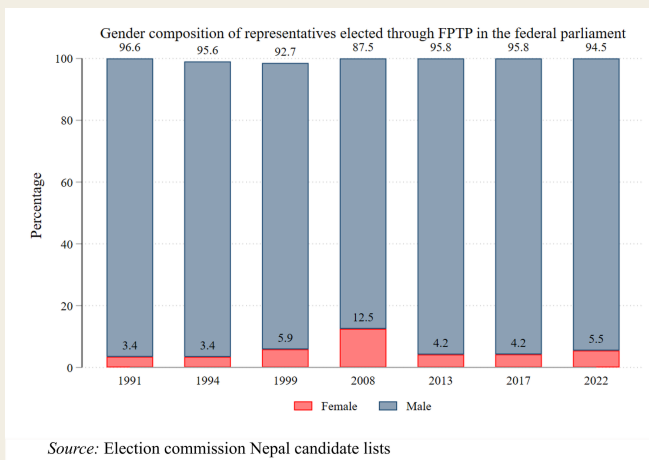
This chapter provides an overview of women's participation in Nepali politics, the current state of representation, why it matters for governance and democracy, and key questions voters may wish to consider when evaluating parties and candidates in the HoR elections.

The Status Quo

- **Women’s representation under Nepal’s constitutional framework:**

Nepal’s 2015 Constitution introduced one of the most ambitious gender quota systems in South Asia. At the federal level, political parties contesting HoR elections are required to ensure that at least one-third of their total elected representatives are women. This requirement is implemented through party lists under the proportional representation (PR) system, while first-past-the-post (FPTP) seats have no direct gender quota.

As a result, women’s representation in the HoR has been driven primarily by the PR tier rather than by direct electoral victories in FPTP constituencies. In recent HoR elections, women have made up roughly one-third of the total chamber, meeting the constitutional minimum but rarely exceeding it. **However, women remain significantly underrepresented among directly elected FPTP members, where they constitute only a small minority of winners.**

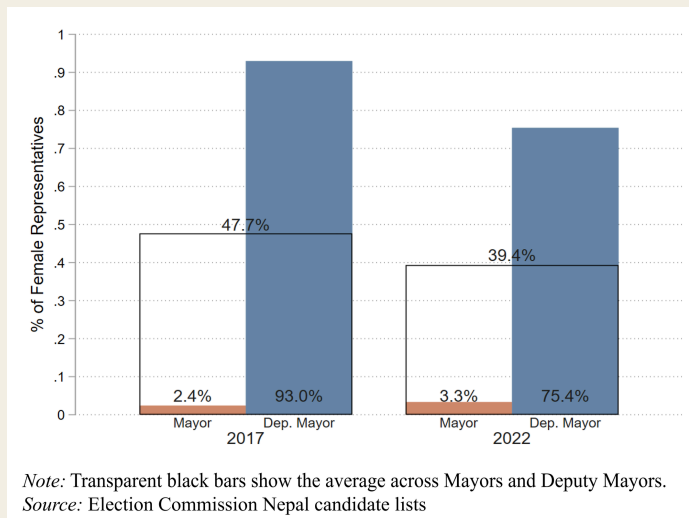


- **Lessons from local elections: participation versus power**

Although this chapter focuses on federal elections, evidence from the 2017 and 2022 local elections is highly instructive for understanding broader political dynamics. Local elections brought tens of thousands of women into office due to strict quotas. In 2017, women held close to 40–50% of elected municipal positions overall (Election Commission of Nepal, n.d), suggesting that quotas can dramatically increase numeric representation.

However, while the numbers suggested higher levels of women’s participation, the reality was still dictated by gender hierarchies. Men overwhelmingly occupied the most powerful roles, such as mayor and ward chair, while women were concentrated in deputy or reserved positions. By 2022, women’s overall representation at the municipal level declined significantly, despite quotas remaining in place. The decline was driven largely by a drop in women holding deputy mayor positions, without a corresponding increase in women becoming mayors.

This pattern highlights a central tension in Nepali politics: women are present in political institutions, but often in roles with less authority, fewer resources, and limited pathways to advancement.



- **Party behavior and Candidate selection**

Research consistently shows that party behavior plays a decisive role in shaping women's political opportunities. Party selection committees in Nepal are heavily male-dominated, even compared to the pool of candidates they choose from (Pande et al., 2022a). Experimental and survey-based evidence indicates that party elites often associate leadership more strongly with men than with women, influencing who is nominated for competitive seats.

At the local level, parties also strategically comply with the letter of quota laws while undermining their true spirit. The rise of pre-election party coalitions in 2022 allowed parties to nominate fewer candidates overall, frequently resulting in men being nominated for the most competitive positions and women being sidelined. Even though the quotas were formally applied on paper, these strategies were associated with significantly lower rates of women's election.

While coalition dynamics differ at the federal level, the underlying lesson is relevant for HoR elections: formal rules alone do not determine outcomes. How parties interpret, implement, or circumvent those rules matter greatly for women's representation.

- **Retention, dropout and political careers**

Another key finding from recent elections is that women are more likely than men to exit politics after a single term (Pande et al, 2022b). Female incumbents have been less likely to recontest elections, less likely to be re-elected when they do, and more likely to drop out of politics entirely. At the same time, fewer women than men enter politics for the first time in subsequent elections.

These patterns suggest that barriers extend beyond initial entry. Structural constraints, unequal access to party support, financial resources, political networks, coupled with the burden of balancing political life with unpaid (yet societally expected) care responsibilities all shape women's political trajectories. For voters, this means that the gender composition of candidates is not accidental – it is the outcome of cumulative advantages and disadvantages over time.

Why does women's representation matter?

- **Democratic legitimacy and inclusion**

A core principle of democracy is that governing institutions should reflect the society they represent. When women are systematically underrepresented in powerful decision-making roles, democratic legitimacy is weakened. **Inclusion is not only about fairness to candidates, but also about citizens seeing themselves represented in the political system.**

In Nepal's context, where exclusion along gender, caste, and ethnic lines has historically fueled political conflict, inclusive representation carries particular significance. **Women's presence in politics signals a break from older hierarchies and reinforces the idea that leadership is open to all citizens.**

- **Policy priorities and perspectives**

Men and women often face different social and economic constraints and may prioritize different policy areas. Evidence from comparable contexts suggests that women in office are more likely to raise issues related to education, health, social protection, gender-based violence, and service delivery (Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2004). This does not mean all women think alike or represent only “women’s issues,” but that diverse life experiences can broaden the range of concerns addressed in policymaking.

At the federal level, where laws shape national budgets, social programs, and institutional reforms, **the absence of women’s perspectives can have long-term consequences for policy design and implementation.**

- **Power, not just presence**

The Nepali experience shows that descriptive representation (numbers of women) does not automatically translate into substantive power (ability to influence decisions). When women are concentrated in less powerful positions or are dependent on party elites for nomination through PR lists, their autonomy may be limited.

For voters, this raises an important distinction: **it is not only how many women are in politics, but where they are positioned, how they are selected, and whether they have meaningful influence within parties and Parliament.**

- **Long-term political change**

Finally, women's representation today shapes political participation tomorrow. Visibility of women leaders can influence voter attitudes, reduce gender bias, and raise political aspirations among younger women. Conversely, high dropout rates and stalled careers may discourage future participation. HoR elections therefore matter not only for immediate outcomes, but for the long-term trajectory of Nepal's democracy.

Questions for voters to consider

As voters evaluate parties and candidates in the upcoming HoR elections, the following questions may help in thinking critically about women's representation:

- **Candidate selection:**

How many women are contesting HoR seats under FPTP from each party? Are women placed in competitive constituencies or primarily in unwinnable ones?

- **Party lists and rankings:**

On PR lists, where are women ranked? Are they positioned to meet only the minimum constitutional requirement, or are parties signaling a commitment beyond compliance?

- **Leadership roles:**

Among a party's leadership and prominent campaign figures, how visible are women? Do women hold decision-making roles within the party structure?

- **Track records:**

How have parties and candidates behaved in past elections regarding women's representation? Have they supported women's political careers over time, or relied on short-term compliance with quotas?

- **Barriers and support:**

Do candidates acknowledge structural barriers faced by women in politics, such as campaign finance, security, or unpaid care burdens? Do they propose ways to address these challenges?

- **Beyond numbers:**

Once elected, how are women MPs likely to exercise influence? Will they have space within their parties to speak, dissent, and shape legislation?

By considering these questions, voters can move beyond headline statistics and engage more deeply with what women's representation in politics actually means.

We haven't touched upon ALL issues. Just a few, but we hope you see how there are a lot of things to consider before casting that ONE VOTE.

Now, we move on to discussing the logistics of casting that vote.

(08)

How to vote

Who can vote?

Citizenship: You must be a legal citizen of Nepal.

Age: You must have reached the age of 18 by the designated cutoff date. For the March 2026 election, the Election Commission has set March 4, 2026, as the cutoff date; anyone turning 18 on or before this day is eligible to vote.

Note: While 16 and 17-year-olds are now permitted to register for a voter card, they cannot actually cast a ballot until they turn 18.

Registration: Your name must be included in the official **Voters' List** maintained by the Election Commission.

Note: According to the Voter List Act of 2016, no new names can be added to the voter list after an election date is announced. However, after the September Gen Z protests that dissolved the House of Representatives and called for a promptly scheduled election, many Gen Z voters were missing from the voter list. To address this, the interim PM Sushila Karki, issued an ordinance extending voter registration until November 21.

Identification: You must possess a **valid Voter ID card** issued by the Election Commission to verify your identity at the polling station.

Residency: You must be a **permanent resident** of the specific electoral constituency where you intend to register and vote.

How to Vote

Before Elections

On election day, you'll cast 2 votes.

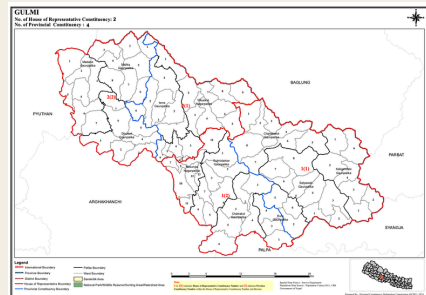
- **One vote is for a local candidate in your constituency:** There are 165 seats elected in the Lower House through the FPTP System, representing 165 constituencies of Nepal. You can identify your respective electoral constituencies through an online portal on the [Election Commission's](#) website.
- **The second vote is for a political party:** There are 110 seats in the Lower House through the PR system – you vote for the party.

An individual can only vote from the constituency where they are a permanent resident and have registered from the specific electoral constituency.

How to know your Constituency?

Step 1: Go to the election commission's website:
<https://election.gov.np/en/page/district-wise-constituency-map>

Step 2: Select your district from the list.
Example: If you are voting from Gulmi district, then select that district from the list. The following will appear:



- Find your local body and ward number. If you are registered in Isma Gaupalika Ward Number 3, you fall under 2(1).
- This means that you are in the House of Representatives Constituency Number 2 and Province Constituency Number (1)
 - Since this is a federal election, you will be voting for a representative from your constituency who will be a member of the Federal Parliament in the House of Representatives. NOT Provincial and Local.
 - **You, as a voter registered in Isma Gaupalika Ward Number 3 are voting as part of Constituency Number 2. If you want to identify the candidates contesting from your constituency, you can find them on chunab.org.**
In this example,
 - Province: Lumbini
 - District: Gulmi
 - Constituency: 1
- On the top left corner of the map, you can see “No. of House of Representative Constituency: 2” - This means that in Gulmi district, there are two House of Representatives Constituencies and 4 Provincial Constituencies.

Additional information about the electoral constituencies:
[https://election.gov.np/admin/public//storage/PL_10756%20\(1\).pdf](https://election.gov.np/admin/public//storage/PL_10756%20(1).pdf)

The First Vote: How to know who you can vote for?

Political parties nominate their representatives in electoral constituencies across 165 constituencies. You can find the list of candidates running from your constituency through an online portal on the [Election Commission's website](#).

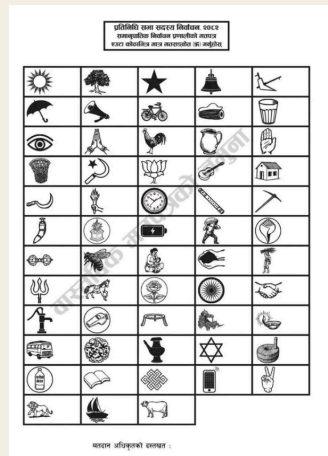
You can vote for **one** individual. Whoever gets the highest votes in your constituency, becomes a Member of Parliament.

The Second Vote: Voting for Proportional Representative

Do these symbols look familiar?

In addition to voting for a local candidate, you will also cast a separate vote for a political party under the Proportional Representation (PR) system.

On the PR ballot paper, you select **one** party symbol. Based on the total number of PR votes received nationwide, parties are allocated seats in the House of Representatives proportionally.



What will your voting day look like?

On Election Day

Voting starts at 7:00 AM and ends at 5:00 PM. Voters must go to their designated polling center with:

- A valid identity card (Citizenship, National Identity Card, Passport, etc.)
- Their Voter ID card (मतदाता परिचय पत्र)

Step-by-Step Voting Process

Step 1: Voters must stand in a queue and wait their turn respectfully.

Step 2: After entering the polling line, a polling official (कर्मचारी) will verify:

- Voter's photograph
- Name
- Voter number

Step 3: These details are matched with the **Voter ID card**.

Step 4: In some cases, officials may conduct **oral verification** by asking:

- Voter's name
- Father's name
- Ward number
- Voter serial number

Step 5: After verification, the voter's name is checked on the official voter list.

Step 6: A **mark/sign (रेखा / चिन्ह)** is placed next to the voter's name to confirm that the person has voted and to prevent duplicate voting.

Step 7: A nearby volunteer (स्वयंसेवक) records the voter's details in a data form.

Step 8: **Separate records** are maintained for:

- Male voters
- Female voters

Step 9: After data recording, election staff apply **indelible ink (मसी)**:

- On the voter's **left-hand thumb**
- Between the **thumb and forefinger joint**

This ensures that a person can vote only once.

Step 10: Another official then takes the voter's **thumb impression** on the ballot paper.

Make sure:

- The ballot paper must contain the **signature of the polling officer**.
- A ballot **without the official signature is invalid**.
- Casting a vote is important, **but it is more important that the vote is not invalid**.

After receiving the ballot paper (मतपत्र), the voter will enter the secret voting compartment (गोप्य मतदान कक्ष).

Inside the booth, you will find:

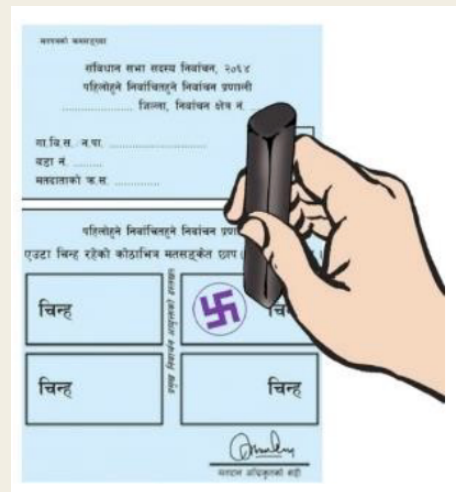
- Swastik stamp (स्वस्तिक छाप)
- Stamp pad (स्ट्याम्पमास्कोप / स्ट्याम्पमात्र)
- These are the official tools used for marking a vote.

How to Stamp the Ballot Paper

Please follow the instructions below carefully while casting your vote:

- **Use only one stamp.** Only a single stamp is allowed on the ballot paper.
- **Use the Swastik stamp provided.** Voters must use the official Swastik stamp supplied at the polling station.
- Do not make any other marks. No other mark, sign, symbol, or stamp of any kind should be made on the ballot paper.
- **Stamp inside the correct box.**
 - Voting for FPTP Candidate: Clearly place the stamp inside the box that contains the election symbol of the party the candidate represents, or in case of independent candidates, the symbol of the candidate.
 - Voting for PR by voting for Party: Clearly place the stamp inside the box that contains the election symbol of the party of your choice.
- **Avoid overlapping.** The stamp must not touch or overlap any other symbol or box on the ballot paper.

Example of ballot pages with symbols where a proper stamp should be placed



When will your vote be INVALID?

Your vote will be considered invalid in any of the following situations:

1. **Stamping outside the box.** If the stamp is placed outside the box containing the election symbol.
2. **Stamping between two boxes.** If the stamp mark appears in between two different boxes.
3. **Using any mark other than the official stamp.** If you use thumbprints, pen marks, signatures, or any symbol other than the provided stamp.
4. **Stamping more than one party or candidate.** If the stamp appears on more than one party's or candidate's symbol.
5. **Unclear or smudged stamp mark.** If the stamp impression is not clear or recognizable.
6. **Using an unauthorized ballot paper.** If the ballot paper is not signed by an authorized election officer.

Important Note:

If you are not careful while casting your vote, your valuable vote may be wasted. Please follow all instructions carefully to ensure your vote is counted.

Let's vote for a candidate who serves public interest, not personal gain! For more information, [click here](#).

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**You voted -
what next?**

So you've voted.

Maybe it was your first time. Maybe you've done this before. You stood in line, showed your citizenship card, put the 'Swastik' stamp, and walked out with ink on your finger. For a few hours or days, it felt meaningful. People were talking, news channels were active, and there was a sense that something important was happening.

The days passed and results were announced. Winners celebrated. Losers protested. Social media moved on. Life continued, classes resumed, offices reopened, buses ran late, and roads were still dusty.

And slowly, a quiet question settles in: Now what?

Is your role as a citizen fulfilled? Was your responsibility limited to that one moment inside a polling booth?

A lot of us grow up believing that voting is the main act of democracy. And it is important. It gives leaders legitimacy. It gives governments authority. It allows peaceful transitions of power. Without voting, democracy weakens.

But democracy does not survive on elections alone.

In fact, most of the decisions that shape your daily life happen *after* the election banners are taken down. Budgets are passed months later. Policies are drafted quietly. Contracts are approved. Local development plans are made. Committees meet. Rules are interpreted.

And these decisions affect things you live with every day:

- The condition of your local school
- The staffing of your nearest health post
- The safety of public transport
- The amount of tax you pay
- The protection of minority rights
- The quality of air you breathe

When we step back completely after voting, we unintentionally create distance between ourselves and these decisions.

Not because leaders are always bad. Not because systems are always corrupt. But because power, if not regularly engaged with, becomes insulated.

Staying engaged does not mean you have to become an activist or policy expert. It doesn't mean arguing online or attending protests every month. Civic engagement after elections can be quiet, steady, and thoughtful.

It can look like:

- Reading news beyond just headlines, trying to understand what a new law actually means
- Following parliamentary discussions when issues you care about are being debated
- Checking what your government is prioritizing in its annual budget
- Attending a public hearing in your ward, even if only once
- Asking your representative a respectful question about a promise they made
- Having informed conversations with friends instead of only expressing frustration

These actions may seem small. But democracy is built on small, consistent acts of attention.

When citizens stay informed, leaders know they are being watched, not in a threatening way, but in a democratic way. It creates a culture where decisions must be explained. Where transparency becomes normal. Where public office feels like public service, not private entitlement.

Technology can support this. Today, there are digital platforms where you can:

- Track what is happening in Parliament
- Raise a petition about a local issue
- Access government notices
- Engage in public discussions

Civic tech makes participation easier and sometimes faster. It allows young people, especially, to organize and communicate in ways that weren't possible before. But it's important to say this clearly: technology is not the solution by itself.

An app cannot replace awareness. A petition cannot replace long-term civic responsibility. A social media post cannot replace sustained engagement. Technology is a tool. The real strength of democracy is an informed, patient, and persistent citizen.

After elections, engagement matters even more. Because that is when power settles in. That is when habits form. That is when promises are either translated into plans or quietly forgotten. **Your vote gave someone a mandate, the authority to act on behalf of the public. Your continued engagement gives that mandate direction.**

It reminds leaders: We are still here. We are paying attention. We care about what happens next.

You don't need to do everything. No one can. But staying curious, staying informed, and speaking up when necessary, these are acts of citizenship.

The real work of democracy begins after the election night noise settles down. And it belongs to all of us.

So when the ink fades from your finger, don't let your interest fade with it.

By now, we hopefully have a clearer sense of how elections work and how to read leaders and their manifestos.

Let's take this a step further. Together, we can now explore a few key lenses and frameworks that help make sense of individuals and political parties beyond the headlines.

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**Technology and
Digital Governance:
What Does It Mean
for You?**

You might be familiar with the term “Digital Nepal”. From the Nagarik App to the National ID card, technology is changing how we interact with the government, consume information, and participate in democracy. But who benefits from this digital shift, and who gets left behind?

This chapter looks at technology through two lenses: you as a user of digital public services, and you as someone navigating social media in a politically charged environment.

You as a user: Digital public services

Think about the last time you visited a government office. The queues, the paperwork, the “bholi aanus.” Digital governance promises to change that.

Nepal has made notable progress. The [Nagarik App](#), launched in 2021, now offers over 62 services from 35 government entities and has surpassed 5.5 million downloads, with over 1.5 million registered citizens (Chaudhary, [2025](#)). Its 2025 “[Nagarik Pahichan Dwar](#)” feature enables digital KYC via QR codes and allows users to open bank accounts without visiting a branch. The National Identity Card (NID) system has registered nearly 20 million citizens (Paudel, [2026](#)). Taken together, these efforts sit within a larger vision: the Digital Framework 2.0 backed by a \$50 million World Bank project approved in February 2026 ([World Bank, 2026](#)).

Beyond these, several other services are part of the push: online e-Passport pre-enrollment, digital tax filing through the Inland Revenue Department, land ownership verification through Mero Kitta, and contribution tracking through the Social Security Fund's SOSYS platform.

But there is a persistent gap between what exists on paper and what works in practice. The NID printing backlog has worsened, with daily output dropping from over 20,000 cards to just 3,000 - 4,000, which has left millions registered but unserved. The Supreme Court initially blocked mandatory NID enforcement in August 2024 but reversed course in January 2025, clearing the way for the NID to become mandatory across 12 service-linked agencies ([The Kathmandu Post, 2025](#)).

On the UN E-Government Development Index ([2024](#)), Nepal rose to 119th out of 193 countries (Fiscal Nepal, 2024), but its E-Participation Index dropped to 152nd, suggesting that while digital tools exist, actual citizen engagement in digital policymaking remains low.

The gap is not limited to the NID: World Bank analysis highlights that while network coverage is nearly universal, a significant 'usage gap' persists. Low digital literacy with adults unable to complete basic digital tasks, high device costs averaging 33% of monthly income, and poor rural connectivity collectively constrain access to digital services ([World Bank, 2025](#)).

The question is not whether Nepal should go digital. It should. The question is: are these systems being built for everyone, or only for those who can afford to get access?

You in the digital space: Social media, misinformation, and elections

Now think about how you get your political information. Chances are, it is through Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, or WhatsApp rather than newspapers or TV.

14.3 Million

Social media users in Nepal as of January 2025
(Data reportal, 2025)

Social media played a critical role during the September 2025 Gen Z protests, where platforms like Discord were used to organize and participate in discussions about the selection of the interim PM. When the government imposed an internet shutdown, [VPN downloads surged by 8,000%](#) (Viedma, 2025) in a few days. These platforms gave voice to people long shut out of formal political conversation.

But the same platform that organized the protests also spread the content that distorts it. A [2024 survey](#) (Acharya, 2024) by the Centre for Media Research Nepal found that 67% of the general population had encountered misinformation in the past week. Among heavy social media users, the exposure is almost certainly higher.

Misinformation persistently distorts how voters understand candidates, policies, and even the electoral process itself, and it disproportionately affects those with lower digital literacy.

As the March 5 elections approach, the Election Commission's Information Integrity Promotion Unit has flagged over 400 instances of online misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech, referring 181 cases to the Nepal Police Cyber Bureau for criminal investigation (Subedi, [2026](#)). These include sophisticated AI-generated deepfakes designed to mislead voters, a threat the Commission is now fighting through an [MoU with TikTok](#) (The Rising Nepal, 2026) signed on February 4, 2026, and an expanded collaboration with Meta. Whether a platform agreement can outpace the technology producing content is an open question.

But all of this assumes you are online in the first place.

The digital divide: Who gets left behind?

Not everyone experiences “Digital Nepal” equally. Nepal's internet penetration stood at **55.8% in early 2025** (Kemp, 2025), but only 39.7% of households have actual internet access. Among those below the poverty line, the figure drops to just **9.5%** (KC, 2025). Women, particularly in rural areas, face additional barriers, from limited access to devices to socio-cultural restrictions on technology use.

When the government digitizes services without addressing these gaps, it risks creating a two-tier system: one for the digitally connected, and another for those left navigating physical offices and bureaucratic delays.

If the NID is required to open a bank account but you live in a district where enrollment has barely started, the policy excludes you, not by design, perhaps, but by neglect.

The divide is not only geographical or economic. Transgender, non-binary, and individuals who identify under Nepal's legally recognized 'third gender' category face additional barriers in digital systems that require gender markers tied to citizenship documents. Although the Supreme Court ruled in 2024 that legal gender recognition should not require medical verification, implementation remains inconsistent, and many individuals report harassment when accessing services that require identity verification ([Human Rights Watch, 2024](#)). Online spaces are no safer: cyberbullying and exclusionary digital practices continue to limit transgender and non-binary individuals' access to information and economic opportunities ([Tamang, 2025](#)).

Digitalization is not inherently inclusive. It has to be designed that way.

Data privacy and cybersecurity: Who protects you online?

As more of your life moves online, a critical question emerges: who has your data, where and how is your data being stored and what are they doing with it?

The NID system collects extensive biometric data, including fingerprints, iris scans, and facial photographs – all stored in a centralized government database. Privacy advocates have raised concerns about Nepal's capacity to protect this data, particularly given that government websites, including the President's Office, have been hacked in the past.

Nepal's primary cybercrime law, the Electronic Transaction Act, was enacted in 2006, nearly two decades before deepfakes, AI-generated scams, or large-scale biometric collection were realities. A replacement, the [Information Technology and Cyber Security Bill](#) (TechPana, 2025), was registered in Parliament in May 2025, though digital rights groups have [raised concerns](#) (Post Report, 2025) about vague provisions that could restrict freedom of expression.

The scale of cybercrime is alarming. The Nepal Police Cyber Bureau recorded [18,926 cases in fiscal year 2024-25](#) (Ray, 2025), averaging 52 per day. Financial scams nearly doubled, and digital abuse against children quadrupled in three years. Yet the Bureau operates with just [106 personnel, only 28 of whom are trained IT professionals](#) (Baranwal, 2025). Nepal has the Individual Privacy Act (2018) and a National Cyber Security Policy (2023), but neither established an independent regulatory body. In July 2025, the government drafted the [Personal Data Protection Policy 2082](#) (Baral, 2025), proposing a dedicated Data Protection Board, and whether it will have real teeth remains to be seen.

AI: Opportunity and risk

Artificial intelligence presents genuine opportunities for Nepal from improving government service delivery to supporting education in remote areas. But without regulation, it also poses serious risks.

The most immediate is automated disinformation. AI tools can now generate convincing video, audio, and text at scale and at low cost. This is not a future threat: deepfakes have already been flagged by the Election Commission as an active concern in the lead-up to March 5 (Ratopati, 2026). A related risk is asymmetry: when political parties with resources use AI to automate outreach, they can saturate the information environment in ways that independent candidates and local community voices cannot match.

The deeper question is regulatory. Nepal has no law specifically governing AI-generated content. The Information Technology and Cyber Security Bill registered in May 2025 does not address it. Until it does, the tools for manufacturing consent are ahead of the tools for challenging it.

For voters, the immediate questions are:

1. When an image of a candidate goes viral, was it real or AI-generated? Can you trust what you see online?
2. When a party's promises are amplified across social media, is it organic support or coordinated manipulation?
3. As AI-generated content becomes indistinguishable from real content, what does "informed voting" even mean?

What to look for in manifestos

When political parties promise “Digital Nepal” or “Smart Nepal,” ask whether their plans are specific or just slogans.

A clear policy sounds like: “We will ensure broadband connectivity reaches all 753 local units by 2028, with an allocated budget of X.”

A vague one sounds like: “We will make Nepal digitally advanced.”

A clear policy sounds like: “We will update the Electronic Transaction Act to address deepfakes, AI-generated fraud, and online harassment.”

A vague one sounds like: “We will strengthen cybersecurity.”

A clear policy sounds like: “We will ensure NID enrollment centers are operational in all 77 districts with trained staff and data protection protocols.”

A vague one sounds like: “We will complete the National ID project.”

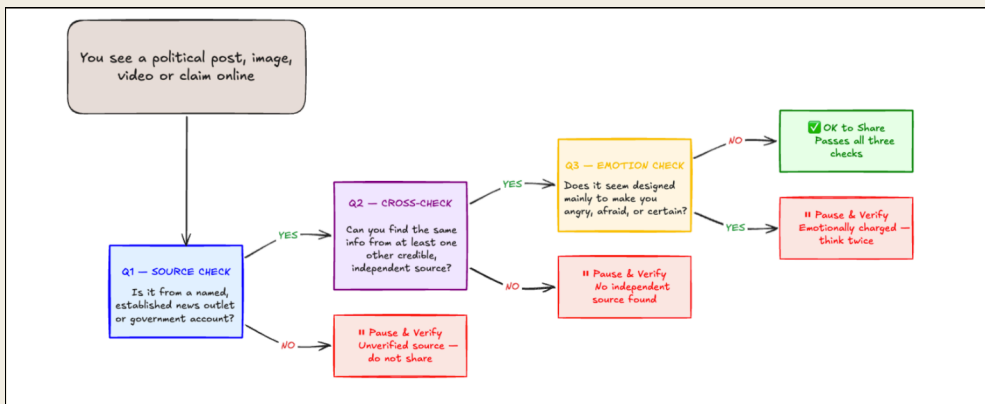
A clear policy answers all four of these:

- Is there a specific deadline?
- Is there a named budget or funding source?
- Which government body is accountable for delivery?
- How will progress be measured and reported publicly?

Beyond voting: What can you do as a digital citizen?

Your role does not end at the ballot box.

- Verify before you share. Before forwarding political content, check it against a valid source.



Picture: A simple three-step decision flowchart for evaluating political content before sharing it online.

- Protect your data. Be cautious about what personal information you share online. Use strong passwords and be skeptical of messages asking for OTPs, personal details, or money.
- Report harmful content. If you encounter misinformation, hate speech, or online harassment, report it to the platform and, if serious, to the Nepal Police Cyber Bureau at cyberbureau@nepalpolice.gov.np. **All 77 district police offices** (Nepali Lawyer, 2026) now accept cybercrime complaints, so you no longer need to travel to Kathmandu.

- Demand accountability. Ask your candidates what their technology and data privacy policies are. Push for updated cybercrime laws, better digital infrastructure in rural areas, and transparent handling of citizens' data.
- Support digital inclusion. If you have digital skills, help someone around you use the NID portal, report a scam, or adjust their privacy settings. Digital literacy is not just a personal asset, it is a civic one.

 **Protect yourself online right now**

- Use a strong, unique password for each account.
- Never share OTPs, no official service will ever ask for them.
- Enable two-factor authentication (2FA) wherever available.
- Report cybercrime: cyberbureau@nepalpolice.gov.np
- All 77 district police offices now accept cybercrime complaints.

- **If nearly half of Nepal's population remains offline, can a government that increasingly delivers services digitally truly be called inclusive?**
- **When the same social media platforms that spread misinformation during elections are also the primary tools for civic organizing and free expression, how should Nepal regulate them without restricting democratic freedoms?**
- **Who should be responsible for protecting your digital identity: the government that collects your biometric data, the private companies that store it, or you?**
- **As AI-generated content becomes indistinguishable from real content, what does “informed voting” even mean?**
- **When political parties use AI to automate their outreach, does that empower the voter with more information, or does it drown out the voices of local community leaders who lack access to these high-tech tools?**

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**Voters' reflection
guide on power,
privilege, and
inclusion**

With the 2026 general elections coming up, I keep returning to the question: how can first-time voters ensure their votes help translate promises on inclusion into practice? If you are thinking the same, follow along.

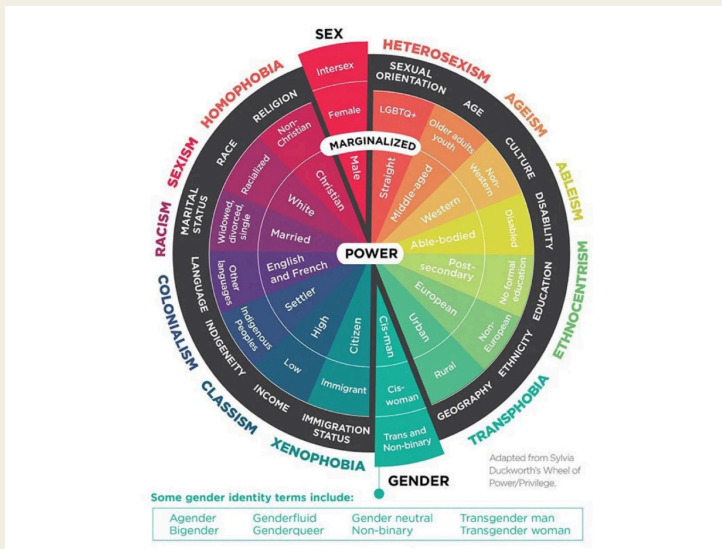
Before we dive right in, let us reflect on what inclusion means through an intersectional lens and understand how overlapping identities influence people's lived experiences.

Understanding Inclusion through an Intersectional Lens

Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality is “a way of thinking about identity and its relationship to power” (UN Women, 2022). It is an understanding that:

- People experience discrimination and opportunity differently depending on how their identities – like caste, gender, class, disability, language, and geography – overlap with one another.
- Intersectionality means experiences are interconnected: Someone’s challenges are not just “added up”. For example, the combination of being a woman and from a marginalized caste creates a compounding, unique lived experience.

To understand this better, let’s look at the wheel of privilege and power.



Picture: Wheel of Power, Privilege, and Marginalization (adapted)

Source: Adapted from “Wheel of Power/Privilege,” Sylvia Duckworth (Women & Leadership Australia n.d.). This wheel needs to be adapted in the context of Nepal.

Why this matters

Understanding power, privilege, and inclusion through an intersectional lens helps first-time voters evaluate whether candidates truly understand structural inequality and whether their policies address real power imbalances and historical marginalization. Inclusive democracy starts with understanding unequal access to power, and choosing candidates who are willing to address it.

How can you use these tools as first-time voters?

Before we evaluate the candidates, it is important to start with ourselves and reflect on our own positionality. The intention is to be honest and recognize that where we sit on the wheel can feel uncomfortable. Recognizing one's own privilege or marginalization may lead to discomfort, but it also helps build empathy for others and sharpens our understanding of why some groups need greater representation, protection, and access to opportunities. Let's start:

- Locate yourself: Using the power, privilege, and marginalization tool, reflect on what advantages or barriers shape your daily life.
- As you reflect on: What issues impact me? What issues does my privilege protect me from? Map who is missing: What does your privilege protect you from but it might impact others' safety, dignity, and access?
- Test policies across standpoints: For any promise made by the party/candidate, ask, would this work for someone with a different lived experience than me?

Bonus-point to remember: When policies work for those facing the greatest barriers, they usually work better for society as a whole. Remember, designing for the most marginalized helps everyone.

Zooming out, let us look into the foundation of systemic inclusion in Nepal: Nepal's 2015 constitution which is rooted in the principles of inclusion and equity?^[19]

Some Key provisions include:

- **Commitment in the Preamble:** The Preamble of the 2015 Constitution commits to building an equitable society by eliminating discrimination and promoting inclusive, proportional, and participatory governance.
- **Right to Social Justice (Article 42):** affirms the right of historically excluded groups, such as women, Dalits, Adiwasi Janajatis, Madheshis, Tharus, and Muslims, to participate in state institutions through an inclusive principle.
- **Proportional Representation in Parliament:** The proportional system requires political parties to submit closed lists that ensure representation of women, Dalits, Indigenous peoples, Khas Arya, Madhesis, Tharus, Muslims, persons with disabilities, and people from backward regions, taking population, geography, and territorial balance into account.
- **Constitutional mandate on gender inclusion for parties:** at least one-third of each party's total representation in the Federal Parliament must be women, with proportional seats used to correct any shortfall.
- **Equality and Affirmative Measures: Article 18 (Right to Equality)** guarantees equality before the law and permits affirmative measures to advance and protect marginalized groups, while explicitly banning untouchability and caste-based discrimination (Article 24).

Analyzing these key provisions, we can easily point out that inclusion in Nepal is constitutionally guaranteed. While choosing a candidate, first-time voters should ask whether the candidates understand and respect the constitutional provisions that underpin inclusion.

Reflect: How does your candidate interpret constitutional inclusion, and can they explain how it should be implemented in their role?

19. Positionality means understanding that who we are and where we come from affects how we see and move through the world. Our social identities are shaped by family, culture, language, gender, and life experiences and these identities shape our thoughts, opinions, and lived experiences. Even when two people see the same event, they might understand it differently because they have different backgrounds. Positionality reminds us that everyone's point of view is shaped by their own life story.

Key Accountability questions to ask

1. What specific policies or actions does the candidate propose to advance inclusion beyond constitutional guarantees?
2. Has the candidate/party delivered on similar commitments before?
3. How will the candidate remain accountable to marginalized communities after being elected?

Let's dig deeper: does your candidate have a plan to transform ideas into measurable outcomes? As a first-time voter, assess party platforms, public statements, and alliances to understand where they stand on inclusion when faced with political trade-offs.

1. Have they supported legislation, budgets, or institutional reforms that expanded inclusion, or resisted them?
2. Can the candidate point to past decisions or clear future commitments that show willingness to defend inclusion when it is politically difficult?

Reflection for First Time Voters

Nepal's constitution was shaped by generations who protested systemic exclusion and marginalization at personal cost. Evaluating candidates through a constitutional and accountability lens allows first-time voters to transform constitution-mandated inclusion provisions into lived democratic practices.

As you reflect and question, be aware of and challenge common “myth” narratives:

- **Myth:** “Equality is already guaranteed by law, so it’s not urgent.”
- **Reality:** Rights on paper do not automatically become reality. Implementation requires budgets, enforcement, and accountability.

- **Myth:** “Focusing on gender distracts from ‘real’ development.”
- **Reality:** Gender is a development accelerator. When half the population faces barriers, growth and governance suffer. Gender-responsive investments often increase workforce participation, improve learning outcomes, and strengthen public trust.

- **Myth:** “Representation alone is enough.”
- **Reality:** Having representation from marginalized communities in office matters, but impact depends on whether leaders have authority, resources, and supportive institutions to deliver on commitments.

Always question whether representation translates to decision-making power and if the candidate you vote for is committed to challenging systemic inequality. Are they putting resources into programs and policies they promised during their campaigns?

Personal Note: How have I, as the author of this chapter, arrived?

As I pen this chapter, I write from my understanding of intersectional feminism. I recognize that my understanding and lived experience may be limited and that I myself operate from social privileges, particularly as a Kathmandu-born and raised, non-disabled, caste-privileged woman. While I may experience gender bias and sexism, I also benefit from and experience protection due to my caste, geographic location, and ability to speak and express in English and Nepali. In this election cycle and beyond, I am committed to learning from and centering the expertise, lived experience, and learning of communities different from mine, particularly from Dalit, indigenous, and marginalized groups. And if this connects with you, I urge you to do the same.

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**Geopolitics and
Foreign Policy**

Neutrality Disclaimer:

This guide is intended solely for voter education and civic literacy. It does not endorse, oppose, or favor any political party, candidate, government, or foreign policy position. The content is based on the Constitution of Nepal and publicly stated foreign policy principles, and aims to help first-time voters understand how to evaluate foreign policy claims during elections. The questions and reflections included are tools to encourage critical thinking, not instructions on how to vote.

How to Read This Section:

This section is not meant to teach diplomacy, international relations theory, or global history.

Its purpose is simple: to help first-time voters judge foreign policy claims made during elections.

Foreign policy is often presented as something distant, technical, or elite-driven. In reality, it affects everyday life, such as prices of goods, job opportunities abroad, border security, and Nepal's ability to make independent decisions.

This guide will:

- Explain foreign policy from Nepal's lived reality
- Show how geopolitics affects daily choices and constraints
- Help readers ask better questions

This guide will not:

- Teach academic theory
- Provide long historical timelines
- Rank countries as "friends" or "adversaries."

Think of this as a thinking toolkit for first-time voters.

What Foreign Policy Means for Nepal

When citizens vote for leaders, we entrust them with the authority to make decisions on Nepal's behalf, including decisions about relations with other countries. The word "geopolitics" can feel intimidating or emotionally loaded. Instead of explaining geopolitics directly, this section explains foreign policy, which is where geopolitics shows up in everyday life. The following are a few core concepts:

- **Foreign Policy:**

How Nepal protects its sovereignty, dignity, security, and economic wellbeing through relations with other countries

- **Geopolitics:**

A way of **understanding foreign policy** by looking at geography, power dynamics, and constraints, especially who Nepal is surrounded by and dependent on

- **National Interest:**

What **matters most for Nepal's survival and prosperity**: sovereignty, economic stability, security, and national dignity

- **Diplomacy:**

How Nepal communicates, negotiates, and manages relationships with other countries to protect national interest without conflict

- **Trade Offs:**

A **strategic decision** where a nation sacrifices one objective to gain another, usually related to security or sovereignty. It often involves balancing competing goals.

How Foreign Policy Shows Up in Everyday Life:

- **Borders:** This impacts how Nepal protects its territory and how it responds when borders are in question and under pressure.
- **Treaties:** These are the agreements Nepal signs with other countries or international forums that shape who Nepal depends on, what it gives up, or what it gains in return
- **Aid and loans:** Development assistance, such as aid and loans, influences national choices because assistance comes with priorities and expectations of the development partner.
- **Jobs and migration:** From tourism to overseas employment, foreign relations directly affect where Nepalis can travel and work, and under what conditions.
- **Remittances:** Diplomatic ties determine the safety, rights, and stability of Nepali workers in foreign countries.
- **National security:** Commitments such as non-alignment, peacekeeping, and not allowing Nepali soil to be used against others determine long-term stability.

Example:

A diplomatic dispute with a major trade partner like India can, within weeks, lead to shortages and price hikes for fuel, cooking gas, food, and medicines in local markets. This has a direct impact on the lives of ordinary Nepali citizens.

Key takeaway: In Nepal, geopolitics shapes real choices and constraints that affect daily life.

Which of these areas: prices of goods, availability of jobs abroad, border issues, or national security affects you or your family most directly? When a candidate talks about foreign policy, do they explain how their decisions would affect these concerns?

Nepal's Core Foreign Policy Principles: The Non-Negotiables

The fundamental objective of Nepal's foreign policy is to enhance the dignity of the nation by safeguarding sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence, and promoting economic wellbeing and prosperity. It is also aimed at contributing to global peace, harmony, and security.

Guiding Principles of Nepal's Foreign Policy ([MoFA, 2022](#))

- Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty
- Non-interference in each other's internal affairs
- Respect for mutual equality
- Non-aggression and peaceful settlement of disputes
- Cooperation for mutual benefit
- Abiding faith in the Charter of the United Nations
- Value of world peace

What the Constitution Says

1. Article 5.1 – National Interest

Safeguarding freedom, sovereignty, territorial integrity, nationality, independence, dignity, border security, economic wellbeing, and prosperity of Nepal.

2. Article 50.4 – Directive Principles

International relations must enhance national dignity while safeguarding sovereignty, independence, and national interest on the basis of sovereign equality (the principle that all states are legally equal in rights and dignity, regardless of size or power).

3. Article 51 – State Policy

Nepal shall conduct an independent foreign policy based on the UN Charter, non-alignment, Panchasheel, international law, and norms of world peace, while safeguarding sovereignty and national interest. Nepal also has the right to review past treaties and make agreements based on equality and mutual interest.

4. Nepal's Long-Standing Commitments (As reflected in the constitution)

- Sovereignty and territorial integrity
- Non-alignment (Maintaining neutrality by not being strategically aligned with any major power or power bloc)
- Panchasheel principles (The five principles of peaceful coexistence (mutual respect for sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference, equality & mutual benefit, peaceful coexistence)
- One-China policy (The diplomatic acknowledgement of China's position that there is only one legitimate Chinese government)
- Not allowing Nepali soil to be used against any country
- Commitment to peace, including UN peacekeeping
- Treaty Review and Equality-Based Agreements
- Nepal has the right to review past treaties to assess whether they continue to protect sovereignty, dignity, and national interest. It is important to understand that 'review' is a neutral process of examination and its outcome could be renegotiation, reaffirmation, or termination, based on evidence and national interest.
- Equality-based agreements mean fair terms and transparency, not denial of power asymmetries.
- Treaty review involves risks and trade-offs that must be explained honestly.
- Reviewing or changing treaties requires a parliamentary process and approval.

Key takeaway: Foreign policy promises must align with constitutional principles, and implementation must match stated commitments.

When a party or leader makes strong foreign policy promises, do they explain how those promises fit within the Constitution and existing commitments, or do they speak as if foreign policy depends only on political will?

Nepal's Position in the World: Geography Is Not Neutral

Nepal's geography comes with constraints that cannot be ignored. It is the starting point of foreign policy.

Landlockedness

- Nepal is landlocked between India and China, which means it is surrounded by land and does not have direct access to the sea.
- India is Nepal's trade and transit reality, not an ideology.
- Complete economic independence is not feasible under current conditions.
- Diplomatic tensions increase vulnerability and require careful negotiation.

Economic Dependence and Trade

- Heavy reliance on imports such as fuel, food, and medicine.
- Trade and transit disruptions affect prices and availability.
- Foreign policy decisions directly affect economic stability.

Jobs and Remittances

- Overseas employment is a pillar of the Nepali economy.
- Diplomatic relations affect worker safety, rights, and income security.

Key takeaway: Foreign policy choices are shaped by geography and economic realities, not only political intention.

When leaders talk about strength, pride, or independence, do they also explain how geography, trade dependence, and remittances shape what Nepal can realistically do?

External Actors: Understanding Nepal's Diplomatic Landscape

Relationship Type	Countries / Regions	Areas of Impact
Primary Relationships	India and China	Trade, transit, borders, infrastructure, and security
Secondary Relationships	United States and European Union	Aid, governance support, development cooperation
Growing Importance	Middle East and Gulf countries	Labour migration and remittances

Clarifications

- *Engagement does not equal allegiance*
- *Balance does not mean weakness*

Key takeaway: Nepal has multifaceted foreign relations. The challenge is managing multiple relationships carefully and not choosing sides.

Does the candidate explain how Nepal can maintain working relations with many countries at once, or do they frame foreign policy as siding with one group against another?

Geopolitics vs Nationalism

How Geopolitics Gets Weaponized

- Blaming foreign actors for domestic failures
- Replacing policy clarity with emotional nationalism
- Reducing complex issues to slogans

What Geopolitics Does Not Explain

- Corruption
- Weak governance
- Poor service delivery
- Political incompetence

Key takeaway: External pressures exist, but internal political choices matter greatly.

When foreign countries are blamed for national problems, does the leader also discuss domestic governance, policy decisions, and accountability?

Treaties, Aid, and Risk: How to Think Clearly

What the Constitution Allows

- Reviewing past treaties
- Signing new agreements based on equality and mutual interest

The Reality

- Every foreign policy decision involves trade-offs
- Assertiveness without planning can increase risk given Nepal's geopolitical realities

Examples

- Border-related diplomatic actions
- Aid and grant debates
- Infrastructure financing choices

The 2015-2016 Indo-Nepal Border Disruption

Following the promulgation of Nepal's new constitution in 2015, protests and blockades at key border crossing points with India led to a severe shortage of essential supplies for months.

- **The Trade-Off & Consequence:**

While the constitutional process was a sovereign internal matter, the diplomatic and humanitarian consequence was a national crisis. The import of fuel, medicines, cooking gas, and construction materials fell significantly. Hospitals scaled back services, factories closed, transportation halted, and the price of everyday goods skyrocketed.

- **The Response & Risk:**

The situation forced Nepal to seek urgent fuel agreements with China and expedite the use of northern border crossings. This demonstrated sovereign choice but also revealed the hard limits of geography and infrastructure. The existing trade and transit routes through India were irreplaceable in the short term, and the northern routes could only provide a fraction of the needed supplies.

- **The Lesson for Voters:**

This episode is a stark lesson in geopolitical risk. It shows that foreign policy is not just about principled stances on sovereignty, but also about the practical management of relationships that directly determine economic stability and public welfare. A responsible foreign policy platform doesn't just promise assertion; it has a credible plan for managing the vulnerabilities that come with Nepal's landlocked reality and economic dependencies.

Key takeaway: Responsible foreign policy weighs benefits, risks, and long-term consequences while having contingency plans for Nepal's specific vulnerabilities.

When treaties, aid, or loans are discussed, do leaders clearly explain both the benefits and the possible risks involved?

Foreign Policy, Fear, and Misinformation

Why Foreign Policy Attracts Misinformation

- Complexity
- Emotional appeal
- Social media amplification

Common Patterns

- Claims of loss of sovereignty without evidence
- Fear-based narratives
- Selective or misleading information
- Deflection

What Voters Can Do

- Compare party manifestos
- Look for written commitments
- Ask questions through media and public forums

Key takeaway: Fear and misinformation weaken informed decision-making.

Before accepting a strong foreign policy claim, do you see evidence and explanation, or mainly fear, rumours, and dramatic warnings?

How to Read a Party's Foreign Policy Before You Vote

What to Look For

- Clear definition of national interest
- Consistency with constitutional principles
- Understanding of trade, jobs, and migration
- Willingness to explain trade-offs
- Calm, non-inflammatory language
- Commitment to transparency

What to Be Cautious About

- Purely emotional appeals
- Vague accusations
- Oversimplified promises

Key takeaway: Clear explanations matter more than loud claims.

When comparing parties, which ones explain their foreign policy positions clearly and calmly, and which rely mostly on slogans? Does the leader or party commit to discussing major agreements in Parliament and making key documents public? Do they support the public's right to information on treaties and aid deals?

Final Takeaway for First-Time Voters

- Foreign policy is not about liking or disliking countries. It is about protecting Nepal's ability to decide for itself over time.
- Foreign policy decisions are slow, cumulative, and difficult to reverse.

Key takeaway: Careful and constitutional foreign policy protects long-term national interest.

As a voter, are you rewarding clarity, responsibility, and realism, or reacting mainly to noise and emotion?

(13)

**Land, Deprivation,
and Landlessness**

At first glance, land might not seem essential to a voter. After all, it is an asset, like any other – anyone who can own land, lease land, and sell land, should be able to. However, due to Nepal’s feudal past, the relationship between citizens and land is deeply entangled and complex.

It is only after the Rana regime was overthrown in 1950 that efforts to devolve land from the capture of the state and its many elites started. Even now, land ownership, the ownership of a laalpurja^[20], remains an unattainable dream for many. The Constitution of Nepal recognises the need for further land reform (art. 25.4), the state’s duty to provide land, particularly to the landless Dalits of Nepal (art. 40.5), and the right of every farmer to have access to land for agricultural activities(art.42.4).

20. Laalpurja (लालपुरजा) is the certificate provided as proof of land ownership.

How are we currently related to land?

Our lives are inextricably tied to land – the food we grow and eat, the homes we live in, and the spaces we share with one another. Since we walked the earth, we have had a special relationship with land, and these relationships have taken various forms. Generally, land tenure is the legal or custom-based relationship of individuals with land: it defines who can use a piece of land, for how long, and on what conditions.

Types of Land Tenure	Definition
Private Ownership (निजि)	Land held by individuals, families, or private entities with a legally registered title under the law
Guthi (गुठि)	Mechanism where land is donated or set aside to support the socio-economic status of their communities
Government (सरकारी)	Land owned and controlled by the state for administrative, infrastructure, security, or development purposes
Public (सार्वजनिक)	Land for shared use by the general public rather than exclusive state operational use
Informal/Unregistered Land	Land occupied or used without formal legal registration or recognised title
Indigenous Land Stewardship	Ancestral practice of care, protection, and management of traditional lands, waters and resources by indigenous peoples

Based on the topography of Nepal, the capacity, use, and necessity of land, the Land Use Act 2075 B.S. recognizes the following types of land: agricultural, residential, corporate, industrial, mining, forest, land, river and pond, public use, and cultural and historical value.

What do we have to gain from land ownership?

Historically, ownership of property has reflected socio-economic status, social power, prestige, pride, dignity, and a symbol of prosperity ([Central Bureau of Statistics, 2006](#)). Land ownership, however, has the following material benefits:

- **Financial Security:** In Nepal, land generally gains value over time, especially in urban centres. As per Nepal Bank, land prices are increasing at a 27.7% per year and doubling every 3.5 years ([NRB, 2021](#)). Land prices rarely decrease, protecting owners against changing economic trends. This makes land a safe and long-term investment as it provides long-term financial security.
- **Access to Loan Collateral and Income Generation:** Banks generally accept land or houses as collateral^[21] for loans ([NRB, 2011](#)). With land as security, you can get loans to start a business, buy machinery, build homes at lower interest rates, or invest in other ventures.

Furthermore, land owners can rent out land or buildings to generate rental income, providing access to credit. Owning your own home and land means you don't pay rent, so you retain more of your income.

21. Collateral are assets or property a borrower offers to a lender as security for a loan

How were reforms made?

Since 1951, various types of land tenures have been abolished through the Land Act and Rules of 1964. This included:

- Imposing a limit to land ownership (land ceiling), acquiring land exceeding this ceiling, allotting land to others, and
- Ensuring that tenants-farmers are secure by regulating their rent, collecting savings, and making arrangements for loans.

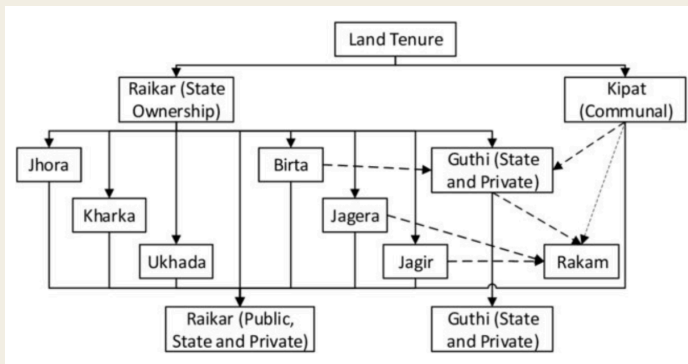


Figure: [Interrelationship among different forms of land tenure practised in Nepal](#) (Subedi, 2016)

To understand the different types of land and changes in land ownership changed over time, refer to the Further Reading section at the end of Chapter 13.

Currently, land tenures include private ownership, public and government ownership, and guthi, as explained in the previous section.

Where have reforms failed?

Failure to redistribute land to the most marginalised

Tenants under these historical systems lived under the constant threat of being evicted^[22] and being exploited due to unregulated rent. The most exploited were landless agricultural workers and temporary tenants, as they worked for daily wages, without any rights or security ([Chalise, 2021](#)). As most land was owned by higher caste members of the society, lack of meaningful socio-economic reformation efforts considering the effect of the caste system, furthered the existing economic disparity, particularly between land owners and farmers ([Chalise, 2021](#))^[23].

Efforts to reform these types of land ownership (Raikar, Rajya, Birta, and Guthi) started after the establishment of democracy. However, efforts were mostly made to transform existing lands to raikar and redistribute land through legal processes. This has led to the deprivation of land for economically marginalised communities.

Exclusion is particularly higher in Dalits and Madhesi Dalits, who have a rate of poverty of approximately 38 to 42% with 36-42% landless ([Ekantipur, 2025](#)). Additionally, for farmers who have not been able to access land rights, the lack of food sovereignty, climate change, and lack of access to credit present significant challenges for economic upliftment ([Adhikari, 2022](#)).

22. Eviction: the legal or forced removal of a person, tenant, or occupant from property or land they are occupying, usually initiated by a landowner, landlord, or authority

23. https://www.nrb.org.np/contents/uploads/2021/09/vol5_art1.pdf

Often, previous tenants who were supposed to have ownership over land struggle to obtain *laalpurjas* due to significant administrative and bureaucratic hurdles, as they lack the required documents or are excluded from ownership due to corruption ([Dahal, 2025](#)) within the bureaucracy and administration.

Failure to honour the relationship of indigenous people with land

Globally, indigenous people are known to guard and steward land, as their livelihoods are inextricably linked to land. It is due to their efforts that the world retains 54% of its remaining forests (Reytar, K. et. al., 2024).

In Nepal, after the abolition of *Kipat*, there have been very few inclusive state-led efforts to provide land to indigenous people. With no legal recognition of their relationship with the territories they steward and rely on for subsistence^[24], indigenous people are unable to protect their territories and their cultural practices. They have been continuously dispossessed^[25] of and displaced from their lands and territories for development projects and conservation efforts ([Shakya, 2025](#)).

Hydropower projects have resulted in eviction ([Sunwar, 2025](#)), industrial expansion has destroyed heritage sites ([Logan, 2024](#)), infrastructural developments have continuously failed to obtain the Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of indigenous people ([Hyolmo, 2025](#)), and even biodiversity conservation efforts have displaced indigenous communities and denied them access to areas they depend on for subsistence ([Amnesty International, 2021](#)). These problems have collectively resulted in the removal of the very people who protect these natural resources. Moreover, their right to land, food and food sovereignty, housing, and property have been affected due to the lack of meaningful participation of indigenous people in national processes for land reform and development [projects](#).

24. Subsistence, generally, is the providing of sustenance or support

25. Dispossessed: a state of having something taken away from you, particularly your home or land.

Failure to connect unaffordability with landlessness

In addition to failed and insufficient land reform efforts, Nepal's current land unaffordability was caused by various social, political, and economic changes. During the ten-year long Maoist insurgency, up to 500,000 individuals have been estimated to have been displaced ([Khatiwada, 2012](#)). This marked the beginning of large-scale migration within the country, putting pressure on available land and housing, and skyrocketing their prices. This was followed by a massive upsurge in investment in real estate – people began to invest in land, expecting economic security in a time of turmoil. Cities felt more protected and promising, so out-of-towners sold assets in rural areas and on the border to buy land in the city.

Banks and financial institutions then began offering low interest rates, leading to more investment in assets, particularly property.

According to Nepal Rastra Bank ([NRB, 2011](#)), land prices are increasing at a 27.7% a year and doubling every 3.5 years. Consequently, urban land prices have increased 300 per cent since 2003, putting housing increasingly out of reach for lower-income residents ([UN-Habitat, 2010](#)).

Generally, 30% of an individual or family's income should go to housing costs ([UN-Habitat, 2020](#)). However, in Nepal's urban centres, housing costs are disproportionately high, with about 45 % of their income going into food, and 18.7% on rent ([Pangeni, 2020](#)).

The consequence: landless and informal settlers.

An estimated one-quarter of the world's poor are landless. Access to land and its resources, along with secure land tenure, ownership, and control over land, are essential for fulfilling fundamental human rights. The social and economic consequences of landlessness, such as hunger, health threats, homelessness, and exploitative labour conditions, exacerbate exploitation by both landowners and states. ([Wickeri, 2011](#))

In Nepal, unaffordable costs of living and housing, rapid internal migration from rural to urban centres, disasters ([Singh et al., 2018](#)), historical inequalities, and ineffective reforms (Acharya, 2024) have led to landlessness and people occupying informal settlements. These groups of people are often referred to as landless and squatters^[26] (भूमिहीन तथा सुकुम्बासी).

Currently, about 1.3 million families are estimated to be landless and informal settlers. These families suffer extreme marginalisation as they lack access to basic services. Additionally, families and individuals settling alongside river banks are prone to diseases and natural disasters ([Singh et al., 2018](#)). Despite raging landlessness, the government has imposed a land ceiling, prohibiting individuals from owning more than 10 Bigha land in terai, 70 ropani in the hilly regions, and 25 ropani in Kathmandu valley^[27]. This indicates the extent of land ownership disparity in the nation.

Nepalese Unit	Smaller Nepalese Unit	In m2	In ft2
1 Bigha	20 Kattha	6772.6	72900
1 Kattha	20 Dhur	338.6	3645
1 Dhur		16.9	182.25
1 Ropani	16 Aana	508.7	5476
1 Aana	4 Paisa	31.08	342.3
1 Paisa	4 Daam	7.95	21.4
1 Daam		2	21.39

Table 2: Popular Nepalese Units of Measurement for Land

*For scale, 1 Bigha equals 213 Aana or 13.31 Ropani.

26. "Squatter" refers to a landless individual (e.g., agricultural laborers, Kamaiyas, Halis, Haruwas, Charuwas, etc.) without any concrete alternative for livelihood. Such individuals do not own or occupy any housing or land under their or their family members' names, nor do they have any means or resources to acquire land or property. It also includes persons and their dependent family members who have been rendered homeless due to natural disasters. (Progress Report of the Squatter Problem Resolution Commission, 2052, Page 3)

27. Land Act 2021 B.S., Section 7.

The Constitution of Nepal, along with the Lands Act of 1964, and the National Land Policy of 2019, set out to recognise the land rights of the landless and informal settlers. To counter the problem of informal settlements, the Right to Housing Act, 2018, was introduced to provide homeless citizens with appropriate and safe housing facilities. However, there have been little to no implementation efforts.

Since 1990, around 16 land reform commissions have been formed to address landlessness and informal settlement issues. According to the commission's records, a total of 1,110,985 applications have been received, most of which were inherited from the previous commission. Of these, 87,844 applications are from landless Dalits, 166,395 from landless squatters, and 856,746 from unmanaged settlers. Despite the large volume of applications, only 4,839 land ownership certificates have been distributed so far, with the majority issued by the previous commission ([Ghimire, 2025](#)).

The current transformation rate is approximately 0.44%, meaning fewer than 5 certificates have been issued for every 1,000 applications received. This extremely low conversion rate highlights the slow pace of formalising land ownership relative to the scale of demand.

Instead, local governments have used less than dignified methods to deal with settlers, without accounting for their needs ([Online Khabar, 2023](#)). "Removal" efforts were made instead of "resettlement", resulting in clashes between city police and squatters. So far, the issue of settlers has been understood as a problem of "legality"; it is assumed that they are illegally occupying land they have no ownership over, instead of understanding landlessness and informal settlements as a result of historical marginalisation and structural problems.

Why should land (ownership /tenureship/access/deprivation) matter to a voter?

Every time a candidate promises “आर्थिक समृद्धि ल्याउछु” (economic prosperity), “गरिब र धनिबीचको असमानता उन्मूलन गर्छु” (erasure of wealth disparity between the rich and the poor), and “नेपाली युवाको विदेश पलायन रोक्छु” (halt foreign employment/brain drain), ask how they will ensure every single Nepali will have access to assets and safety nets that will allow them to have a dignified life.

More particularly, ask them:

- Economic opportunities and affordability:
 - How do you plan to address the affordability crisis in the country?
 - How will you ensure affordable housing for all?
 - How will you ensure land ownership improves access to credit and economic opportunities?
- Removing structural barriers:
 - How will you remove legal, bureaucratic, and political barriers to land ownership?
 - How will you simplify documentation requirements for land ownership?
 - How will you ensure that the process of providing land ownership will take into account indigenous stewardship, customary practices, and exclusion?
 - How will you empower applicants who apply for land ownership?
 - Will you commit to specific targets for distributing land ownership certificates?

- How will you ensure that every citizen has meaningful access to land ownership? Where will the land for redistribution come from: public land, unused government land, ceiling-surplus land, or acquisition?
- Rights of marginalised communities, landless, and informal settlers:
 - Will you prioritise resettlement over eviction?
 - Will you grant ownership rights to long-term informal settlers?
 - What safeguards will prevent forced evictions without alternatives?
 - How will you ensure that farmers have meaningful access to opportunities to own the land they use?
 - How will you ensure land ownership for economically excluded and marginalised groups, particularly for the landless and informal settlers?
 - Will you recognise indigenous land stewardship? If yes, how do you plan to institutionalise this stewardship through policies?
 - How will you ensure that biodiversity conservation efforts will not encroach on indigenous stewardship and entitlement to land?
 - How will you institutionalise FPIC in all developmental and conservation efforts?
- Dignity and Respect:
 - How will you ensure land reform restores dignity to landless communities?
 - How will you address the historical injustices that caused landlessness?
 - How will land reform contribute to reducing poverty and inequality?

Further Reading: Types of land and changes in land ownership changed over time

Before 1951, the following types of land tenureship were prevalent in Nepal (Acharya, 2008):

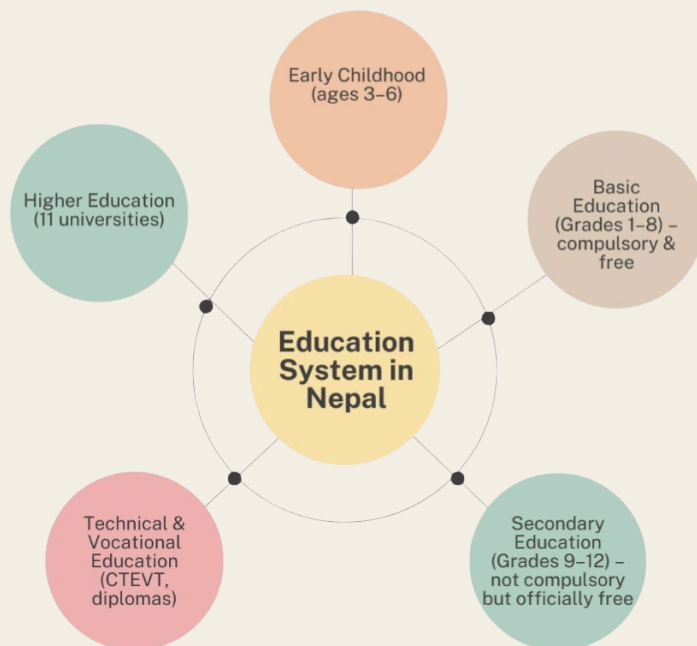
Land Tenure Type	Ownership	Who Used/Cultivated the Land	Features	Legal Status
Raikar	State-owned	Tenants called Mohi cultivated the land	Tenants paid land tax to the state; the relationship resembled a landlord–tenant structure; tenants had use rights but not ownership rights	Became the dominant form of land tenure; continues as the basis of private ownership after reforms
Rajya	Granted by the state to royal family members and military officials (Rajautas)	Cultivated by tenants who paid tax to Rajautas	Rajautas had the authority to collect taxes; it functioned as a state-supported elite landholding system	Eventually abolished during land reform and integrated into state land systems
Birta	Granted by the state to elites, nobles, and officials	Cultivated by tenant farmers	Often tax-exempt (Birta-Abirta) or taxed lightly (Tiro-Birta); symbolized elite status; farmers had little or no ownership rights	Abolished in 1959 through the Birta Abolition Act; converted into Raikar land, though conversion problems persist

Jagir	Provided by the state to civil servants and military officials	Used directly by officials or cultivated by tenants	Functioned as a salary payment; often inheritable; existed for the duration of service or the lifetime	Abolished after the end of the Rana regime; converted into state-owned Raikar land
Rakam	Provided by the state temporarily	Given to labourers such as carpenters, bricklayers, musicians, mail carriers, and caretakers	Temporary, service-based land allocation; not inheritable	Abolished in 1955 and converted into Raikar land
Kipat	Communal ownership by specific indigenous ethnic groups	Used collectively by members of ethnic communities such as Limbu, Yakha, Tamang, Majhiya, Bhote, and Athapriya	Recognised customary indigenous communal ownership and stewardship	Abolished in 1964 and converted into Raikar land, weakening indigenous land rights
Guthi	Held in trust for religious, charitable, or social purposes	Used by communities or institutions for religious and social functions	Included state-managed (Rajguthi), registered (Darta Guthi), and unregistered (Duniya Guthi) lands; supported temples, rituals, and social welfare	Still exists today, though governance and ownership structures have evolved

(14)

**Education in Crisis:
The Politics of Who
Gets Left Behind in
Nepal**

First time voters often feel education is one of the critical issues that needs to be addressed. Every political party promises to invest in education. Every manifesto highlights it. Education in Nepal is officially recognised as a fundamental right where every Nepali citizen is entitled to get compulsory and free education up to the basic level and free education up to the secondary level from the state. This right is guaranteed through the [Constitution of Nepal \(2015\)](#) and the [Education Act \(8th Amendment\)](#), which together establish a national education system from early childhood to higher education.



Picture: The five levels of the education system in Nepal

The reality of education in Nepal

On paper, Nepal looks like a country that is serious about education. The structure appears clean, the laws are in place, and the policies are ambitious. Yet, for millions of students, “free education” exists mostly as a legal concept, not a lived reality. Hidden costs such as uniforms, exam fees, stationery, administrative charges, and extra tuition quietly turn a constitutional right into a household expense. Students from very low-income backgrounds and students with disabilities can, on paper, receive state provided education up to higher levels **without tuition fees**. But in reality, for low-income families, especially in rural areas, it is never really free. It is simply less expensive than a private school.

Nepal does not lack education policies, it lacks the commitment to funding. Nepal has committed, time and again, to allocating 20% of its national budget to education. But in the current fiscal year (BS 2082/83), **the actual allocation is only 10.75%** (Post Report, 2025), barely half of what the country has promised. Most of this money goes into paying salaries, which means schools survive, but they do not improve. There is little left for libraries, labs, teacher training, digital learning, or even basic infrastructure.

So the real question for voters is not “Does your party support education?”. Rather, we must ask “Why is education always promised, but never prioritised?”

When all the agendas point towards equality in education, the mere existence of the unequal public and private schools is a paradox in the system.

In 2023/24, [around 60% of students in Nepal attend public schools\(Koirala, 2025\)](#), which are overcrowded, under-resourced, and often understaffed. Teachers are expected to teach hundreds of students, and on any given day, about one in four teachers is absent. That is the equivalent of [80,000 missing teachers every day\(Joshi, 2022\)](#).

Private schools, on the other hand, serve only about 26% of students, mostly in urban areas. They dominate in exam results, social status, and access to opportunities.

The Secondary Education Examination (SEE) makes this painfully clear. In 2024, more than 52% of students failed. In 2025, the results improved slightly, [with 'only' 38% failing this time\(Ghimire, 2025\)](#). Among those who passed in 2024, around 70% came from private schools, even though they represent a minority of students. This is not just an education gap but a major systemic failure disguised as the schooling system.

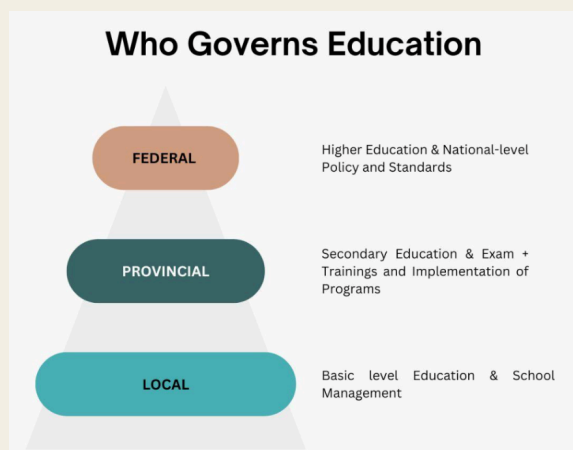
Access to education has improved – however, even though almost all children now start school, survival within the system tells a different story. Out of 100 students who enter Grade 1, only about 70 reach Grade 8. Additionally, the number of students in [Grade 11 is 30% lower than in Grade 10\(CEHRD, 2024/25\)](#). Dropout rates are higher for girls, rural students, and low-income families. Students are not “failing out”. They are being pushed into a system that was never designed for them to succeed within.

Teachers, who are meant to be the backbone of this entire structure, reflect another deeply rooted political problem. While formal qualifications for teacher enrolment have improved, teacher shortages remain severe in rural areas, especially in English, Science, and Mathematics, the very subjects with the highest failure rates. Even more worrying is the politicisation of teachers. [Nearly all public school teachers are affiliated with political parties](#)(The Kathmandu Post, 2023) – rather than basing decisions on student needs, party connections end up influencing transfers, promotions, and school management. Recent education ministers have sought to not only

discourage but actually prevent teachers from being politically affiliated, stoking further political tensions(TRN Online, 2024).

The situation in higher education is also dire. Tribhuvan University has a record of taking up to 400 days to publish results after conducting exams, which are themselves usually delayed anyway(Kaini, 2025). As a result, although students are meant to graduate in three or four years, it often takes them much longer to get their degrees.

Nepal's move to federalism was supposed to improve the state of education.



Picture: The three tiers of the Government in Nepal and their role in Education

On paper, federalism allows local governments to design local curricula, teach in local languages, and hold schools accountable. In reality, there is no legal clarity with respect to the functions of federal, provincial, and local governments in school education. Education funding is poorly coordinated, curriculum decisions are still highly centralised, and local governments still lack real autonomy as they depend on federal budgets.

Federalism was meant to decentralize education and increase access for the Nepali citizen, but what it has delivered is confusion without power.

So what does all this mean for a first-time voter?

The education system in Nepal already has the laws, the policies, and the commitments. What it does not have is the political will to improve the existing system.

How do we identify leaders and parties who have the will and realistic plans to improve the system?

How to Read an Education Promise

If a candidate says, “*Education is my priority,*” ask how their promise translates to actions.

- **Rule number 1: Follow the money**

If education truly matters, ask how they will ensure additional funding than what is currently being allocated?

Nepal has been stuck at around 11% of the national budget for education, despite repeated commitments to 20%. A promise without more money is not a reform; it is a rearrangement of scarcity. Check if they are simply renaming old programmes.

- **Rule number 2: Look for hidden costs**

Students pay a good sum of fees that include admission fees, exams, uniforms, transport, lab charges, extra tuition etc. So, when politicians say “free education,” they rarely mean free for families.

Ask if they can cover all related costs for public education and if they can convince the private sector to waive them. If these costs remain, the burden quietly shifts from the state to households. A policy that looks universal on paper often becomes selective in practice.

- **Rule number 3: Look for equitable policies and outcomes**

Imagine two students.

One belongs to a high income family and studies in a private school in an urban area. They have a personal computer with internet access at home, receive additional tutoring outside of school, and have the support of adults who understand the system.

The other belongs to a low income family and studies in a public school in a rural area. They share textbooks, help at home after school, and access a computer for the first time in Grade 11.

Even if a policy, such as the one mandating basic education for all, benefits both students equally on paper, in reality it ignores the contexts of the two students, and benefits the first student more. We need equitable policies that understand correct gaps stemming from socioeconomic disparities.

In the above example, an equitable policy might mandate free textbooks in public schools, meaning the second student benefits from it and no longer needs to share textbooks. This may be unequal, but is equitable because it aims to close a gap: it allocates resources contextually, addresses the different needs of two groups, and understands the two groups are not at an equal footing.

So ask: Does this leader or party plan to actively support public schools, rural students, girls, students with disabilities, and low-income families, or does it assume everyone starts from the same place? Policies that ignore unequal starting conditions quietly widen the gap.

We must demand implementation, not intention.

Who is responsible for delivering this promise? Is there a timeline? A budget line? An accountable institution? Or does the plan rely on “future coordination,” “gradual reform,” and “long-term vision”? Education in Nepal does not fail because of a lack of ideas, laws, or policies – it fails because of a lack of responsibility. It fails because of political choices about who gets support and whose future is treated as a priority.

Before you support any education-related promise, ask yourself one last question:

Does this policy reduce inequity, or merely manage it more politely?

Once you see that, you begin to understand something crucial as a first-time voter: Your vote chooses which student the system is built for, and which student the system ignores.

(15)

**Climate Change:
What is it and why
should I care?**

What is climate change? What causes it?

Climate change refers to long-term changes in global and regional climate patterns(United Nations, n.d.). While the climate has always changed naturally, **the current crisis is primarily caused by human activities**. It is driven by the release of greenhouse gases (GHGs), such as carbon dioxide and methane, into the atmosphere.

But what does climate change mean for us?

Due to Nepal's terrain and geography, the country is extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. **Even though Nepal contributes less than 0.05% of global carbon emissions, it is the 4th most climate-vulnerable country in the world (International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, n.d.).**^[28]

Let's look at how Nepalis are affected by climate change in their everyday lives.

- **Drying of water sources/water scarcity**

In Nepal, climate change is causing rivers, lakes, and springs to dry up. There is less snowfall in the mountains, while springs in the hills and plains are drying up. Groundwater is becoming harder to access.

This means there isn't enough water for drinking and many people in rural areas now have to travel long distances to collect water. We don't have enough water for irrigation either, which has serious consequences in a country like ours, where a majority of people are still involved in subsistence farming.

No irrigation → decrease in food production → food insecurity and loss of livelihood

As a result, many people and entire communities are being forced to relocate from their villages and migrate elsewhere. [Examples include Samjong and Dhe villages in Mustang](#) (Khadka, 2025).

Water scarcity is also increasing in cities, with growing pressure on already limited water supply systems.

28. Watch: [Climate change and Nepal's dying village in the mountains](#)

- **Frequent disasters**

Nepal is facing more frequent and intense disasters such as floods, landslides, avalanches, and glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs)(UNDP, n.d.).

“The escalating frequency of natural disasters has led to a sharp increase in internal displacement. According to the Global Report on Internal Displacement (2021), 48,000 people were displaced in Nepal between June and September 2020. By 2023, this number had more than doubled to 110,000.” (Dahal, 2024)

- **Heat waves**

Do you feel like every year the summer is getting hotter? With global average temperatures rising, even Nepal’s mountainous regions are warming. Rising temperatures are increasing the risk of:

- Infectious diseases and viral fevers
- Vector-borne diseases such as dengue
- Reduced food production due to pests that are becoming more resilient
- Cities becoming dangerously hot due to a lack of green spaces and shade

These are just some of the ways climate change is directly affecting us. In Nepal, climate change is impacting our most basic needs: food, housing, health, culture, and heritage.

Who is affected?

- **Farmers**

They rely heavily on rain-fed agriculture and local water sources. Droughts, drying springs, erratic rainfall, and floods directly reduce crop yields, threaten food security, and livelihoods.

- **Women and Children**

In rural Nepal, women are primarily responsible for collecting water and firewood. Water scarcity and forest degradation increase their daily burden and exposure to hazards.

- **Indigenous and marginalized communities**

Ethnic groups in remote hills and mountains, including Tharu, Chepang, and other indigenous communities often live in high-risk zones like floodplains, landslide-prone slopes, or near glacial lakes.

- **Low-income families and communities**

People living in informal settlements and low-income urban neighborhoods are more affected by rising temperatures, heatwaves, flooding, poor drainage, and limited green spaces. They also have limited access to cooling, healthcare, and disaster relief.

So, what can we do about such a BIG problem? Can we even do anything?

Yes! And it all begins with actionable policies^[29].

29. Example: [Community Forest Restoration in Nepal | NDC Partnership](#)

Recognizing that Nepal requires contextual solutions to climate change is the first step. Climate change is not only about disasters like floods and landslides. We must focus on **prevention and mitigation**, not just management and response.

- **Agriculture and farmers' protection:**

Policies should support farmers through awareness on climate-resilient crops, irrigation systems, crop insurance, and planning for extreme weather events. Climate-adaptive infrastructure must be prioritised.

- **Urban areas:**

Policies should regulate how cities are built and how land is used. Since climate change is driven by greenhouse gases like CO₂ and CH₄, trees and green spaces can help mitigate its impacts. Requiring minimum green spaces in built areas can help control heat, pollution, and health risks.

- **Prevention-focused policies:**

Many human and economic losses can be reduced if we act early. This includes planned relocation for high-risk communities.

- **Investment in renewable energy and research and development (R&D):**

We must look for and implement local, context-specific solutions.

- **Global climate advocacy:**

As Nepal and Nepalis bear the brunt of climate change, leaders must ensure Nepal's problems are recognized internationally.

What to look for in manifestos?^[30]

- Do political parties treat climate change as a priority?
- Are their policies clear and implementable, or just vague promises?
- Do they understand climate change as an intersectional issue, or only as disasters like floods?
- Do they connect climate change to everyday realities such as food security, migration, health, etc?
- Do they talk about supporting the most vulnerable communities and livelihoods?
- Do they commit to global climate advocacy?

Clear, actionable policies	Unclear, vague
Farmer Protection Act: We will support farmers through irrigation, climate-resilient seeds, and crop insurance.	We will support farmers affected by disasters.
Disaster Preparedness: Local governments will receive budget and technical support for disaster preparedness efforts, for. eg. through early warning disaster systems.	Local governments will be given the responsibility for disaster management.
Environment Protection Act: All new infrastructure projects will include climate risk assessments.	All development projects will be environmentally friendly.
Youth in Climate Action: Climate action will create jobs for youth in renewable energy and local adaptation projects.	We will utilize climate change as an opportunity for development.

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