

Mayoral Priorities and Performance from a Gender Perspective in Nepal



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Contributors

Santosh Sharma Poudel, Project Lead

Samridhi Pant, Project Coordinator

Sadikshya Acharya, Research Assistant

Siddhartha Rayamajhi, Research Assistant

Field Researchers

Jeevan Kumar Joshi

Sobita Subedi

Nepal Institute for Policy Research (NIPoRe)

GPO Box 8975 EPC 2273, Lalitpur, Nepal

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For further information, please contact

Santosh Sharma Poudel

Email: info@nipore.org

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Executive Summary

Constitutional and legislative interventions have significantly increased women's political participation in Nepal. From 1959 to 2022, the number of women nominees in elections has increased substantially.

Despite progress, women are often limited to deputy roles. In the 2022 local elections, only 7% of women were nominated for primary executive positions, while 72% were nominated for deputy roles.

This study compared the priorities and performance of 16 mayors/chairpersons (eight female and eight male) across Nepal. The research used a mixed-method approach, including interviews, voter surveys, and an assessment of performance indicators.

Female mayors/chairpersons were elected with an average of 45.67% of the votes, while male mayors/chairpersons were elected with an average of 50.87%. Female mayors/chairpersons faced challenges with smaller public support bases but had higher party presence at the ward level.

Male and female mayors/chairpersons prioritised infrastructure, education, and health. However, in comparison to their male counterparts, female mayors/chairpersons further emphasised social development and social inclusion, more precisely, issues like women's health, education, and marginalised communities.

Although female mayors/chairpersons prioritised social issues and inclusivity, a larger share of the budget was allocated for infrastructure. Despite their focus, social development received minimal budget, indicating potential barriers to budget allocation.

Voters of both genders identified road as their top development need. Female voters focused more on drinking water, employment opportunities, health, and waste management/drainage, whereas male voters focused more on infrastructure.

Based on the indicators, in aggregate, male mayors/chairpersons scored higher in all the indicators. In financial performance, four *palikas* led by female mayors/chairpersons scored higher than their male counterparts and vice versa.

Voters rated female mayors/chairpersons better in infrastructure and drinking water, whereas male mayors/chairpersons better in public safety, education, and health. However, there was no statistically significant difference in voter rating based on the gender of the mayor/chairperson.

Peers rated female mayors/chairpersons higher in communication, accessibility, and social

inclusion, but male mayors were seen as more visionary and having higher integrity. Peers often associated female leaders with qualities like honesty and diligence, while they asserted male leaders with tenacity.

Female mayors/chairpersons faced more challenges securing party tickets and public trust but persevered to avoid looking weak or being viewed as victims. Male mayors/chairpersons were not conscious of their gender privilege.

In aggregate, there was no significant difference in the performance of male and female mayors/chairpersons. However, **prior governance experience improved female mayors/chairpersons' performance, suggesting that experience is crucial for good performance.** This bodes well for the future of female leadership in *palikas* and *palika's* performance, given the high percentage of deputy mayors/vice-chairpersons.

Acknowledgement

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Santosh Sharma Poudel and Research Team

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

Women's political participation in elected office has seen a remarkable growth, with the support of regulatory interventions. From six female nominees in the 1959 national elections (Sharma, 2020) to 55,698 nominations in the 2022 local elections (Election Commission of Nepal, 2023), women's political participation has seen a significant increase. This is a hard-earned progress brought about by years of struggle for inclusion of women in politics, with a slew of constitutional and legislative safeguards put in place.

The Constitution of Nepal (1990) laid the first legal foundation to increase women's involvement in state bodies. Under this constitution, at least 5% of the total number of candidates contesting elections for House of Representatives (HoR) from any political organisation or party were to be women. Similarly, the HoR had to nominate at least three female members in the National Assembly. Likewise, the Local Self-Governance Act 1999 made it mandatory for each local body to induct at least one female ward member, and also induct at least 40% women in the municipal council (Election Commission of Nepal, 2023).

The Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) ensured at least 33% participation of women in legislative bodies. This condition, a first for an inclusive democratic framework in Nepal's history, created space for a significant number of women to participate in the parliamentary sphere, which had been dominated by men. Similarly, it mandated political parties to allocate a minimum of 50% of the Proportional Representation (PR) candidacy to women. Before these requirements were put in place, women's participation in the HoR was only 6% (Democracy Resource Center Nepal, 2024). As a result of the reservation provisions, 197 women were elected in the 601-member constituent assembly in 2008, and 172 in the second constituent assembly in 2013 (Nepal Democratic Institute, 2021).

The constitution mandated at least 33% of the members of federal and provincial parliaments had to be women.

The Constitution of Nepal (2015) specifies the minimum number of women's representation in various state structures under the federal system. It mandates that the federal and provincial parliaments must have a minimum of 33% women. In addition, the constitution guarantees women's representation in municipal councils. In line with the constitutional requirements, the 2017 and 2022 local-level elections resulted in the election of 14,000 women to leadership positions.

Table 1.1 Female representation in Nepal’s 2017 and 2022 elections

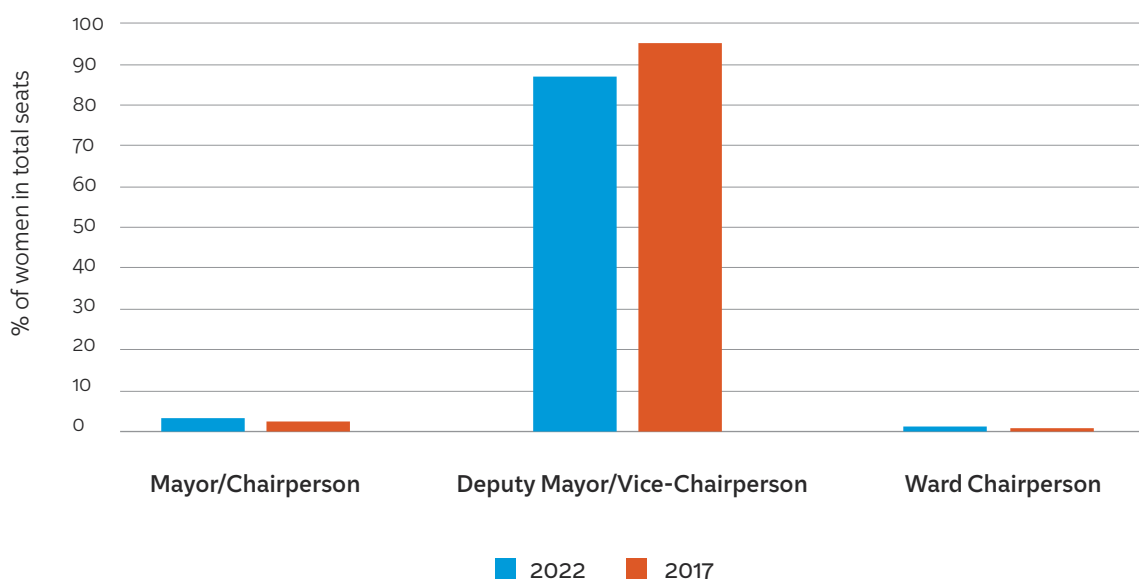
Election year	Position Gender	National Assembly	House of Representatives	Provincial Assembly	Village/ Municipal Assembly
2017	Male	37	185	361	20688
	Female	22	90	189	14353
	Female representation (%)	37%	33%	34%	41%
2022	Male	37	184	350	20631
	Female	22	91	200	14466
	Female representation (%)	37%	33%	36%	41%

Source: Election Commission of Nepal, 2024

The Local Level Election Act (2017) stipulates that parties should nominate at least one female candidate for the top two executive posts (mayor and deputy mayor or chairperson and vice-chairperson) if they field candidates for both posts at the local level. This provision has led to a significant increase in women’s electoral participation at the local level. However, in 2017 and 2022 elections the overwhelming majority of women have been nominated and elected in deputy roles as shown in figure 1.1 below.

Political parties have nominated fewer women for primary leadership positions at the local level. In both elections, political parties provided significantly fewer tickets to women for the

Figure 1.1 Female representation in executive roles at the local level



Source: Election Commission of Nepal, 2024

positions of mayor, chairperson, and ward chairperson and resorted to the 'deputy' roles for women. This highlights the issue of tokenism versus genuine empowerment. In the 2022 elections, only 7% of the candidates for mayor/chairperson were female, while the corresponding number of female nominees for deputy mayor/vice-chairperson was 72%. The nomination of female candidates for ward chairperson was even lower, at almost 3% (Election Commission of Nepal, 2024).

Even in cases where female candidates are nominated for mayor/chairperson, they are nominated in less competitive seats (where they are less likely to win), though female candidates receive almost the same number of votes (NIPoRe, 2023). This results from a flawed nomination process dominated by male leaders who perceive women as less electable. The key criteria include financial backing a candidate brings to the campaign and to the party. Because men own more than three quarters of property (land and home) , the criteria favours the men. (NIPoRe, 2023). The research also concluded that the biases against female candidates do not end with

the nomination. This confirms the findings from research in other advanced countries such as Germany (Holtkamp et al, 2020). Holtkamp found the narrative about women's participation in politics is rife with misperceptions based on explicit or implicit gender biases.

Female candidates also have to face perceptions of party seniors that they cannot perform at the same level as male candidates (NIPoRe, 2023). The perception persists despite experiences around the globe suggesting otherwise. A National Democratic Institute (NDI) research covering over 35 years across 100 countries concluded that women tend to work across party lines, respond to the constituents' concerns, and prioritise health, education, and other key

development indicators more than men (NDI, 2021). At the same time, male and female leaders prioritised different issues in the U.S. Congress (NDI, 2021). While these findings point out that the priorities of men and women political leaders may vary in the case of Nepal, the perception among politicians that female politicians cannot perform to the level of their male counterparts is pervasive despite lack of evidence to support this view.

Therefore, this research aims to measure the priorities and performance of mayors/ chairpersons and compare them by gender to test the existing perceptions. This can help identify the specific area of intervention to ensure genuine gender empowerment. At the same time, the research will help determine any differences in priorities and analyse whether the male or female leaders' priorities align better with those of the voters.

In the 2022 elections, only 7% of the candidates for mayor/ chairperson were female, while the corresponding number of female nominees for deputy mayor/vice-chairperson was 72%.

Local governments are an autonomous sphere of government, with the mandate and functions laid out in the Constitution of Nepal. They have the autonomy and authority to make decisions in the functional areas the constitution assigns, including legislative functions and regulating public life. Their responsibilities include managing public services (health, education, infrastructure), budgeting, and addressing local issues such as poverty, economic growth, and social justice. Local governments have authority over urban and rural planning, taxation, and resource allocation within the framework set by central government policies. They are also empowered to implement national policies at the local level, promoting participatory governance (Nepal Law Commission, 2017). They are at the forefront of development and service delivery, with mayors and chairpersons holding executive roles. At the same time, the local level can develop their own policies within the existing legal framework. Thus, measuring the priorities and performance of leaders at the local level is pertinent to understand the role of gender in political leadership.

1.2 Objectives of the study

- 1) Compare and contrast the priorities of female and male mayors/chairpersons
- 2) Compare the performance of female and male mayors/chairpersons
- 3) Analyse the challenges faced by female and male mayors/chairpersons, primarily the former, during elections and in performing their duties after election

1.3 Literature Review

1.3.1 Nepal's Federal Structure

The Constitution of Nepal envisions a federal system consisting of three levels of government – federal, provincial, and local. At the top is the federal level, which holds authority over issues such as national-level policies, foreign affairs, and defence (The Asia Foundation, 2020). It consists of the president, the prime minister, and a bicameral parliament.

The second tier is the provincial level, with seven provinces. Each province is governed by a chief minister and independently elected provincial assembly. Provincial levels are assigned functions related to, among others, infrastructure development, implementation of development projects, regulation of provincial affairs, and coordination among the local levels within the province (The Asia Foundation, 2020).

The third tier is the local level, with municipalities and rural municipalities. At the local level, there are a total of 753 local units, including metropolitan cities, sub-metropolitan cities,

municipalities and rural municipalities, known collectively as *palikas*. The *palikas* are headed by elected mayors/chairpersons. They are assigned with functions related to, among others, delivery of services, execution of local development works and regulation of local services (The Asia Foundation, 2020). As per the Constitution of Nepal, the relations between the three levels of government shall be based on the principles of cooperation, co-existence, and coordination.

The Constitution of Nepal allows federal, provincial, and local governments to levy taxes and collect revenue on matters falling within their exclusive jurisdiction. For overlapping responsibilities, the jurisdiction is determined by the federal government. The provincial and local governments receive fiscal transfers including equalisation grants, conditional grants, complimentary grants, special grants and revenue transfers as per the recommendations of the National Natural Resources and Fiscal Commission.

The Constitution of Nepal provides 22 exclusive and 15 concurrent powers and responsibilities to the local governments. The Local Government Operation Act (2017) outlines the duties and authority of the local government and sets the framework for the functioning of village/municipal assemblies.

Village/municipal assemblies function as 'local legislatures' to enact local laws. Each assembly comprises a mayor/chairperson, deputy mayor/vice-chairperson, all ward chairpersons, ward members, and five elected members including at least two women and one representative from a marginalised community. Headed by mayor/chairperson, councils play a key role in implementing functions assigned to local levels (Bhusal & Acharya, 2023).

Executive committees function as 'local executives' to execute local laws, implement policies and oversee local administration. Mayors and chairpersons lead the executive boards of their respective local governments. Other members include all the ward chairpersons, four elected members, and two other persons representing Dalit or other marginalised communities.

The mayor/chairperson is responsible for leading the local governments in general, and policy formulation and implementation in particular. A mayor/chairperson is also the chief of the village/municipal assembly and the executive board, and operates as the secretariat of both entities. As such, the mayor/chairperson has the power to call the meeting of the assembly, set agendas to be deliberated in the meetings and the board, and ensure effective implementation of the decisions made in both entities.

The deputy mayor/vice-chairperson leads several policy committees in informal, semi-formal, and formal settings. At the assembly level, the deputy mayor/vice-chairperson functions as the annual budget and programme proposer. The deputy mayor/vice-chairperson leads the judiciary committee, which is the judicial branch of local governments.

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) functions as a key executive position of local government. The CAO is deputed by the federal government and operates as member-secretary of various committees. As administrative coordinator, the CAO must ensure effective mobilisation of local staff in day-to-day operations of local governance.

1.3.2 Global Practices on Performance Measurement of Local Levels

Around the world, the way mayors' performance is evaluated can vary. In the United States, for example, the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) has adopted the 'Manager Evaluations Handbook' for the assessment of the performance of city managers and mayors. The handbook guides the process of performance reviews. New York City also prepares its Mayor's Management Report, which measures the effectiveness of city services across different areas like public safety, education, and infrastructure (ICMA, 2020). In Europe, performance evaluations often focus on service quality, public satisfaction, environmental protection, and overall fiscal health (Basso & Tonin, 2022; Kuhlmann, 2010; Torres et al., 2015). In South Africa, the evaluation of a mayor's performance is primarily based on the municipality's performance management system, which includes the performance indicators, accountability and auditing, and the Integrated Development Plan (IDP). Strong focus is on accountability and the implementation of IDP. Clearly, there are different approaches in assessing a mayor's performance, though the common goal is often transparency and accountability of the office.

Several factors can affect how well a mayor does in office. First, education and experience matter significantly. Research indicates that mayors with higher education and relevant job experience tend to perform better in social services and fiscal management (Avellaneda, 2007). The local economic situation, including crime rates and public-health challenges, also significantly shapes a mayor's performance (Sanger, 2008). Additionally, the structure of the local government – how much power mayors have compared to city councils – impacts their ability to get things done (Savra, 1995). Public perception is another key factor. How the media portrays a mayor can influence public opinion, which, in turn, affects their performance ratings (Arnold & Carnes, 2012). For example, female mayors may face different expectations regarding fiscal management, with some studies suggesting that they focus more on social services.

Voter attitudes towards female leaders have changed, although gendered expectations still shape perceptions. Research shows that voters often associate qualities like assertiveness and decisiveness with male candidates, while female candidates are expected to be more compassionate and collaborative (Hayes, 2011; Marie et al., 2024). This can impact a voters' views of a mayor's effectiveness in handling specific issues, such as social services or public safety (Marie et al., 2024). Meanwhile, studies also show that female candidates do not always face disadvantages in elections. They sometimes have a slight advantage, especially in non-partisan races where party affiliation is not a factor (Mugge & Erzeel, 2016). Over time, voters have become

more accepting of women in leadership roles, although some biases persist (Hill et al., 2016).

Studies show that female mayors tend to be judged more harshly than their male counterparts.

This is partly due to societal expectations for women to uphold higher moral standards and to demonstrate ethical leadership (Courtemanche & Conner, 2020). Research has found that female leaders are often held to double standards, where their leadership style – whether assertive or passive – is criticised depending on how it aligns with traditional gender norms (Johnson et al., 2008). This heightened scrutiny means that even minor mistakes made by female mayors are more likely to be magnified in the public eye (Johnson et al., 2008). While gender biases have slowly diminished, female mayors still face more intense scrutiny than their male counterparts (Hill et al., 2016). Female leaders also say that they experienced gender biases at a significantly higher rate than male mayors (80% compared to 25% respectively) (Belschner & Lukoschat, 2014).

1.3.3 Practices in Nepal

In Nepal, the Local Government Institutional Self-Assessment (LISA) system assesses the effectiveness of local government operations, including mayoral effectiveness, focusing on service delivery, fiscal management, and governance practices. LISA is aligned with Nepal's decentralisation policies and aims to ensure greater accountability and transparency in local governance (Kandel, 2021). However, the indicators used in LISA are more process-oriented than performance-oriented. Similarly, the Fiduciary Risk Assessment framework (FRA) evaluates financial management at the local level, focusing on risks related to corruption and mismanagement of funds (World Bank, 2016). However, both systems face significant challenges. For one, the implementation of LISA is inconsistent across *palikas*, with some local governments lacking the capacity to evaluate performance properly. Meanwhile, while FRA aims to improve financial transparency, its effectiveness is sometimes undermined by political interference and weak institutional frameworks (Khanal, 2022). Additionally, both the reports are based on self-reporting, though supporting evidence must be provided for the self-reports.

Besides the government, some scholars have evaluated the proximate determinants of the capacity of local governments. Pande et al. (2020) identified significant variations in local governments' ability to handle legal, administrative, planning, and budgeting responsibilities. Factors such as geographic location, training of officials, and political dynamics (including party and caste differences) influenced these capacities. The report highlights that rural and mountainous areas tend to perform better and that training local officials boosts legal and budgeting capabilities, while political disputes can hinder effective governance.

1.4 Limitations of the Research

- 1) The report conflates the performance of mayor/chairpersons with the performance of *palikas*, though some indicators identified in the measurement of performance are specific to the mayors, and not the *palikas*.
- 2) The context of performance of mayors/chairpersons/*palikas* is not included in the performance measurement. The administrative and policy systems could vary across *palikas*, prior to the beginning of the term of the current mayors/chairpersons. This research does not account for the state of the *palika* at the beginning of the mayor/chairperson's term. If the *palikas* had well developed systems, then the mayor/chairperson would likely benefit in terms of score.
- 3) Analysing the performance of the mayor/chairperson based on progress of the *palika* during the entire five-year term of the mayor/chairperson would have provided a more comprehensive picture. The priorities/performance is based on the data of FY 2080/81 or FY 2079/80. The single year provides a snapshot, though not the entire result of the performance.

CHAPTER 2

Methodology

NIPoRe adopted a mixed-method research approach to compare the priorities and performance of female and male mayors/chairpersons. The study comprehensively examined the priorities through interviews with mayors/chairpersons, assessing plans and policies, and evaluation of budget allocation. It analysed the performance using a set of 53 indicators and voters' rating of the services delivered by the *palika*. The challenges faced by mayors/chairpersons were analysed through interviews with mayors/chairpersons, with peers and peers' rating of mayors/chairpersons' attributes.

2.1 Selection of *Palikas* for Comparison

Among the 25 elected female mayors/chairpersons in the 2022 elections, NIPoRe identified eight female mayors/chairpersons representing all provinces, geography, rural/urban/metropolitan areas, and various political parties and ethnicities. Male mayors/chairpersons in adjacent regions (with shared borders, except for the metropolitan cities) in the same district were selected for comparison. This helped to minimise the challenges of geography,

Table 2.1 List of sampled *palikas*

Province	District	<i>Palika</i>	<i>Palika</i> Head	Age	Political Affiliation
Koshi	Khotang	Jantedhunga Rural Municipality	Aruna Devi Rai (F)	50	CPN-Maoist
		Barahapokhari Rural Municipality	Shalikaram Banjara (M)	44	Nepali Congress
Madhesh	Rautahat	Ishnath Municipality	Kaushalya Devi (F)	66	Democratic Socialist Party
		Gaur Municipality	Shambhu Sah (M)	50	CPN-Socialist
Bagmati	Chitwan	Bharatpur Metropolitan City	Renu Dahal (F)	45	CPN-Maoist
	Lalitpur	Lalitpur Metropolitan City	Chiribabu Maharjan (M)	65	Nepali Congress

Gandaki	Parbat	Modi Rural Municipality	Hira Devi Sharma (F)	51	CPN-UML
		Mahashila Rural Municipality	Ishwari Prasad Bhusal (M)	56	CPN-UML
Lumbini	Palpa	Baganaskali Rural Municipality	Saraswati Darlami (Chidi) (F)	40	CPN-UML
		Mathagadhi Rural Municipality	Yam Bahadur Chidi (M)	46	CPN-UML
Karnali	Dailekh	Bhairabi Rural Municipality	Rita Kumari Shahi (F)	47	Nepali Congress
		Dullu Municipality	Bharat Prasad Rijal (M)	43	Nepali Congress
	Surkhet	Birendranagar Municipality	Mohanmaya Dhakal (Bhandari) (F)	42	CPN-UML
		Bheriganga Municipality	Yagya Prasad Dhakal (M)	55	CPN-UML
Sudurpashchim	Achham	Panchadewal Binayak Municipality	Ambika Kumari Chalaune (F)	31	Nepali Congress
		Kamalbazar Municipality	Yagya Prasad Dhakal (M)	34	Nepali Congress

development levels, and socio-cultural aspects between the target and reference groups of mayors/chairpersons. The list of the *palikas* identified for the study is presented in Table 2.1.

Annex I provides comparative information about the mayor/chairperson, *palika* and the summary of 2079 local elections results in the *palika*.

In the sampled *palikas*, the female mayors/chairpersons were elected with an average of 45.67% of the votes. Hira Devi Sharma, of Modi, Parbat, won with 55.95% of the votes, the highest, whereas Kaushalya Devi, of Ishnath, Rautahat, won with 32.39% of the votes, the lowest. The corresponding figures for the male mayors/chairpersons were elected with an average of 50.87% of the votes. Shalikaram Banjara, of Barahapokhari, Khotang won with 57.75% of the votes, the highest, whereas Shambhu Sah, of Gaur, Rautahat, won with 43.30% of the votes, the lowest.

In *palikas* with female mayor/chairperson, their party won 47% of the ward chairperson positions in aggregate. Meanwhile, in *palikas* where the mayor/chairperson was male, his party won only 42% of the ward chairperson positions. The CPN-MC won only 10% of the ward chairperson positions in Bharatpur metropolitan city, representing the weakest performance by the mayor's party. Besides, the deputy mayor also belonged to a different party (Nepali

Congress). **Female mayors faced the challenge of having a relatively small public support base but relatively better position of the party at the ward level.**

2.2 Measuring Priorities

The priorities of the 16 mayors/chairpersons were then compared. Priorities of the mayor were summed up from interviews with mayors, their election manifesto (when available), the areas identified in the plan and policies of the *palikas*, and the budget. In doing so, the research compared any convergence or divergence in the priorities of female and male mayors/chairpersons, and whether their priorities corresponded to the needs identified by voters and reflected in the budget. Interviews with 13 mayors were conducted for the research. Three mayors/chairpersons were not available for an interview.

2.3 Measuring Performance

Via indicators: The mayors/chairpersons' performance was based on 60 qualitative and quantitative indices (I), which are detailed in Annex II, and the average rating of the mayor/chairperson by the voters. The indicators were divided into the following categories: financial performance, administrative performance, service delivery, business environment, and probity and transparency.

Each indicator was given a score of 0, 0.5 or 1 based on the qualifying conditions of the indicator. If any *palika* had missing data, it was not considered in the calculations. Those indicators for which data was not available for more than six *palikas* were not included. Thus, only 53 indicators were included in the final performance evaluation. The average of the scores received by the *palikas* on those 53 indicators was calculated.

Survey: A survey of voters in each *palika* was conducted to understand locals' perceptions of the needs of the *palika*, their understanding of the mayor/chairperson's agenda, mayors/chairpersons' performance, their experience when visiting the local government offices, and general perceptions about gender and politics. The households were selected at random from across wards, representing at least five of the wards for each *palika*. The detailed questions for the perception survey are presented in Annex III.

The total number of respondents was 835, with an average of 52 participants per *palika*. With 49 respondents, Gaur had the least respondents, whereas Mathagadhi had the highest number of respondents with 55. The number of respondents was sufficient to result in a 99% confidence interval and a 5% margin of error at the national level. However, the same claim cannot be made at the *palika* level.

The gender of the survey participants was evenly split at 50% each. Because the survey was

meant to identify voters' perceptions of the mayor/chairperson, only voting-aged people were included in the study. Of them, 40% were below 40, and 50% were between 40 and 65. The elderly accounted for 9% of the total respondents.

One-third of the survey respondents had no formal education. A quarter of the respondents received primary education, a third had secondary education, and 1 in 10 had a bachelor's degree or higher. Over a third of the respondents had visited the local office (ward office or *palika* office) in the last two years.

The voters rated the mayor/chairpersons' performance in areas identified as being the responsibility of the *palika* as per the constitution. The voters rated the mayor's performance on a scale of 1 to 5 (very poor to very good). Then, the average of each mayor/chairpersons' rating (\bar{P}) was calculated.

The final performance score (PS) of the mayor/chairperson was the sum of the average score from the indicators and the standardised score from the voter's survey (scored out of 1). The higher the PS, the better the performance of the mayor/chairperson. Mathematically, it can be expressed as:

$$PS = \sum \frac{I_n}{N} + \frac{\bar{P}}{5}$$

Where,

PS = Final Performance Score

I_n = Indicator score (for n indicators)

N = Total number of indicators

P = Average voter rating (out of 5)

2.4 Analysing the Perceptions of Peers and Challenges of Mayors/Chairpersons

The research conducted interviews with the mayor/chairperson's peers, which included deputy mayor/vice-chairperson, CAO, ward chairperson or ward member (at least one of the latter two was female) in addition to the interviews with the mayors/chairpersons. A total of 73 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted. The peers were asked to rate attributes of the mayors, such as their vision for development, integrity, communication and charisma, among others. Besides, they shared their experience of working with the mayor/chairperson and the challenges.

Table 2.2 KIIs status

KIIs	Jantehunga	Barahapokhari	Ishnath	Gaur	Bharatpur	Lalitpur	Modi	Mahashila	Baganaskali	Mathagadhi	Bhairabi	Dullu	Birendranagar	Bheriganga	Panchadewal Binayak	Kamalbazar
Mayor/Chairperson	√	√	√	√	X	X	√	√	√	√	X	√	√	√	√	√
Deputy mayor/Vice-chairperson	√	√	X	√	√	X	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	√
CAO	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Ward Official	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Ward Official	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√	√	√

Remarks: √- Interviewed, X- Not Interviewed

The mayors/chairpersons were asked about their view of development, political career, challenges faced during and after the elections. The mayors/chairpersons were asked about the challenges they faced because of their gender. It would help discern the impact of gender bias/stereotype in the performance of the mayors. The following table summarises the participation of peers in KIIs.

Finally, the indicator score, voting rating score and performance score of the mayors/chairpersons were compared to the shares of votes, party's position, peer's rating and mayor's prior governance experience to assess whether any of the latter factors correlated to the performance score.



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CHAPTER 3

Assessing Mayor/ Chairperson's Priorities

This chapter highlights the development needs identified by voters, and the priorities of the mayors/chairpersons. To assess the priorities of mayors/chairpersons, NIPoRe interviewed them, assessed *palika's* plan and policies, and analysed the *palika's* budget. Then, we assessed whether the needs of voters better align with male or female mayors/chairpersons.

3.1 Development Needs as Identified by Voters

Decentralisation of political systems promotes good governance and public service delivery by offering several benefits, such as enhancement of responsiveness of local needs, accountability and citizen participation (Elliott, 2023). By identifying voters' development needs, we understand the most pressing priorities at a local level, ensuring the adoption of responsive policies.

The top eleven development needs identified by voters in their *palikas* were (in priority order): road, drinking water, employment, health, waste management/drainage, infrastructure (others), education, infrastructure (buildings), social development, poverty reduction and market management. The findings align with the results of *The Survey of the Nepali People (2022)* where the respondents at the national level reported roads and physical infrastructure as their top priorities for local government. This was followed by education, health, drinking water and employment.

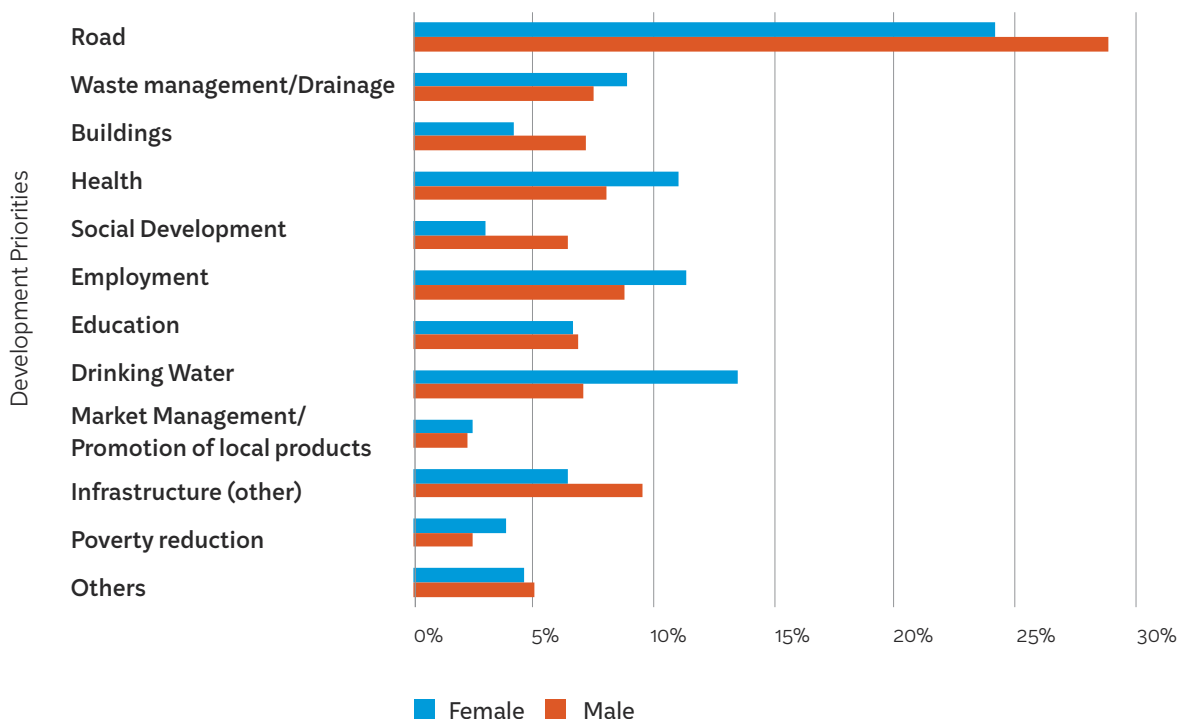
These development needs were then assessed as per the voters' gender, as shown in figure 3.1.

Both genders prioritised road, with 24.1% of female and 28.8% of male voters identifying it as the most pressing development need respectively. Similarly, men and women both regarded market as the least urgent development need with only 2.4% and 2.2% prioritising that aspect respectively.

For female voters, drinking water was the second most important need with 13.4% of respondents prioritising that, followed by employment with 11.3%, health facilities with 10.9% and waste management/drainage with 8.8%. Overall, infrastructure development including roads, infrastructure (buildings) and infrastructure (others) accounted for 34%.

For male voters, infrastructure (others) was the second most important need with 9.5%, followed by employment (8.7%), health facilities (7.9%), and waste management/drainage (7.5%). Overall,

Figure 3.1 Development needs identified by gender of voters



infrastructure development including roads, infrastructure (buildings) and infrastructure (others) accounted for 45%.

Waste management and drinking water were among the top five development needs for both genders, whereas a higher proportion of women prioritised those aspects. As such, it is inferred that women tend to focus more on issues that impact households and men tend to focus more on infrastructural issues.

At *palika* level, voters prioritised similar development needs in nearly all *palikas*, i.e., roads, infrastructure (others), drinking water and employment. Voters in few *palikas* like Jantedhunga, Barahapokhari, Bhairabi, and Dullu, all of which are rural and hill *palikas*, emphasised higher need for roads, employment, drinking water, and health. Meanwhile, voters in metropolitan cities like Bharatpur and Lalitpur emphasised better drinking water and waste management.

In two sets of *palikas*, i.e., Bharatpur and Lalitpur and Modi and Mahashila, the following are the top five development needs identified by voters. (see Figure 3.2)

As shown in table 3.1, the top five development needs identified by voters in two sets of *palikas* included eight needs, namely road, waste management, drinking water, employment, health, education, infrastructure (others) and social development.

Table 3.1 Development needs identified by voters in two sets of *palikas*

Voters' Development Needs	Palikas, led by female		Palikas, led by male	
	Bharatpur	Modi	Lalitpur	Mahashila
1.	Waste management	Road	Drinking water	Road
2.	Employment	Employment	Employment	Health
3.	Health	Health	Waste management	Employment
4.	Education	Infrastructure (others)	Road	Drinking water
5.	Road	Drinking water	Social development	Education

3.2 Priorities Identified By Mayor/Chairpersons

Based on the aggregated responses from mayors/chairpersons of 13 *palikas*, generally mayors/chairpersons focus on common themes whereas some key differences emerge in their priorities when these data are disaggregated.

Based on KIIs, the agendas and priorities set by female mayors/chairpersons and male mayors/chairpersons have some similarity. The common sectors that both male and female mayors/chairpersons prioritised are physical infrastructure, transportation, roads, education, health and drinking water.

However, female mayors/chairpersons repeatedly emphasised that their understanding of development goes beyond infrastructure. They used terms such as 'social development' (KII1A) (KII9A) (KII11A) (KII15A), 'proportional development in all sectors' (KII7A), 'equitable development' (KII7A), 'development for the public service' (KII3A) more than their male counterparts. Female mayors/chairpersons also included priorities like birthing centre, daughter-in-law education program, auto driving and security guard training to women, women friendly city, and reproductive health (KII3A) (KII7A) (KII11A), which were not typically found in the male mayors/chairpersons' KIIs. In saying that, a male chairperson highlighted his works on women's health, including free ambulance and medical services to pregnant women (KII8A). Women mayors/chairpersons also emphasised the upliftment of marginalised communities more. As such, female mayors/chairpersons tended to speak more about women's issues compared to male mayors/chairpersons.

On the other hand, male mayors/chairpersons emphasised on rule of law and good governance more than female counterparts (KII4A, KII12A).

Based on the study of plans and policies of the *palikas*, the common priority sectors largely include infrastructure, education, health, agriculture, tourism, service delivery, and employment. Priorities not identified in the KIIs, but included in the plans and policies of the *palikas* include scientific management of squatters, environment protection, disaster preparedness, handicap friendly local level, and planned settlement. Rural *palikas* tend to focus more on issues like squatter's management and planned settlement whereas urban *palikas* tend to prioritise gender equality and social inclusion. The plans and policies of *palikas* led by men, tend to emphasise digitalisation of services and institutional reform more, for example in Gaur, Mathagadhi, and Kamalbazar whereas the plans and policies of *palikas* led by women tend to specify self-employment through entrepreneurship more, such as in Modi.

Mayor/chairpersons' priorities are reflected in the plans and policies, with few exceptions. Infrastructure development is a key focus in both KIIs and the plans and policies of municipalities like Mahashila, Baganaskali and Kamalbazar. Similarly, health and education are a key focus in both KIIs and the plans and policies of Ishnath, Gaur, and Modi. Meanwhile, while female mayors/chairpersons emphasised women's issues, marginalised communities or inclusivity in their KIIs, which is not reflected in the plans and policies. One caveat to note here is that a lot of factors influence what is or is not included in the priority, thus a mayor/chairperson alone cannot decide the plans and policies (and budget). Having said that, the study of the plans and policies of *palikas* does not indicate a major difference between the priorities of the female and male mayors/chairpersons, in contrast to what is claimed in KIIs.

3.3 Budget and Analysis

Both male and female mayors/chairpersons prioritise infrastructure development, focusing on roads and buildings. Social development, education and health are also a recurring investment area. Health and Education receive significant attention across all municipalities, with spending directed toward improving access, facilities, or service quality. Certain women related issues that women mayors/chairpersons mentioned in their KIIs were reflected in the budget, however, only smaller amounts were allocated to those sectors.

In context of budget allocation, the top five development needs identified by voters in two sets of *palikas*, i.e., Bharatpur and Lalitpur, and Mahashila and Modi (see Table 3.1), were juxtaposed with the respective budget allocation, as follows:

Basic necessities featured prominently in the needs identified by the voters. Those included infrastructure needs (such as roads), social needs (such as education and health), and economic needs (employment). Among them, *palikas*, irrespective of the mayor/chairperson's gender,

Table 3.2 Development needs identified by voters in two sets of *palikas* and the budget allocation

Voter's Development Needs	Palikas, led by female		Palikas, led by male	
	Bharatpur	Modi	Lalitpur	Mahashila
1.	Waste management ¹ (0.47%)	Road (5.36%)	Drinking water (1.54%)	Road (11.23%)
2.	Employment ² (0.79%)	Employment ³ (3.83%)	Employment ³ (0.96%)	Health (0.39%)
3.	Health (0.63%)	Health (9.25%)	Waste management ⁴ (0.51%)	Employment ³ (17.46%)
4.	Education (0.52%)	Infrastructure (others) (6.01%)	Road ⁵ (4.71%)	Drinking water ⁶ (0.18%)
5.	Road ⁷ (0.79%)	Drinking water ⁶ (1.14%)	Social development (1.88%)	Education (3.53%)

1 Landfill site; 2 Combined budget of 'cooperatives and employment' and 'tourism and industry';

3 Economic development; 4 Waste management (Incinerator plant, dumping site management); 5 Infrastructure development ; 6 Drinking water and sanitation; 7 Road (for regular maintenance only)

allocated a significant portion of the budget on building roads. The budget for Bharatpur on road was low, because it included the budget for regular maintenance only.

However, issues such as waste management and drinking water were also identified by the voters as a necessity. Yet, all *palikas*, irrespective of gender, allocated a significantly lower proportion of their budget for those issues. It was less than 2% for all *palikas*. It could be due to water infrastructure and waste management being less costly compared to other infrastructure projects such as roads. Nevertheless, the two metropolitan cities had allocated a budget for landfill site (Bharatpur) and incinerator (Lalitpur).

Besides, health and education were other social development needs identified by voters. Modi, led by a female chairperson, spent a significant percentage of the budget (9.25%) on health, whereas the other *palikas* allocated less than 1% for that sector.

Employment also featured among the needs identified in all *palikas*, yet the budget allocation

specifically for activities promoting employment was low in all *palikas*. Most *palikas* allocated a budget for the issue under the economic development policy, and some did not specifically mention employment generation. Nevertheless, there was significant underinvestment in the area, which was reflected by the public rating of the mayor/chairperson's performance where mayors/chairpersons got low scores on employment (see Chapter 4).

In saying that, the allocated budget in the table above should be taken with caution because of the differing ways budgets are presented across the municipalities. Even if the budget heading is similar, it might compose of different items, as seen above. This was especially the case for Bharatpur where the details in the budget were scant. However, the budget shows that the mayors/chairpersons are largely cognizant of *palika's* needs as the budgeting aligns with the development priorities identified by voters. However, the amount of allocated budget varies significantly.

CHAPTER 4

Assessment of mayor/ chairperson's performance

This chapter assesses the performance of mayors/chairpersons using 53 indices and the scoring system explained in the methodology. Then it will be put together with the voters' rating of the mayor/chairperson's performance to calculate the final performance score (PS).

4.1 Indicators Assessment

Measuring the performance of a *palika* involves looking at several key areas that reflect its management of finances, service delivery, support for businesses, and commitment to transparency. For specific indicators, see Annex II. The research identified 53 indicators, divided into five categories, to measure the performance of *palika*, and thus of the mayor/chairperson.

- a. **Financial performance:** The financial performance focuses on how effectively the *palika* manages its budget and spending. It examines whether budgets are announced and approved on time, how well grants and capital expenditures are used, and whether revenue collection is growing. It also checks if financial systems like SUTRA are in place and if there are any unsettled expenses from the previous year.
- b. **Administrative performance:** Good governance is key to a well-functioning *palika*. This feature measures coordination with other government units, how well policies like Public-Private Partnerships are adopted, how well they are implemented, and how often assemblies and committees meet. It also looks at leadership stability, including how long the CAO retains in office. It further assesses at how efficiently complaints and grievances are addressed.
- c. **Service delivery:** People rely on their local government for essential services, and this section evaluates how well those services are provided. It includes digitalisation efforts like online registration and e-bidding, improvements in education and health (such as school enrollment and vaccination rates), and infrastructure projects like road construction and drinking water expansion. Waste and disaster risk management planning and spending are also considered.

- d. **Business environment:** A strong local economy benefits everyone, so this category looks at how easy it is to start and run a business. It considers the number of registered businesses, how that number changes, how long it takes to register a business, and tax rates on property and rent. Having an economic profile or project bank for investors is another important factor.
- e. **Probity and transparency:** Trust in local government comes from openness and honesty. This section evaluates whether elected officials disclose their financial details on time, whether income and expenditure records are published regularly, and whether updates are shared with provincial and federal authorities. It also tracks the number of public hearings and ensures procurement follows proper guidelines. Some of the indicators in this category were about adopting the plan, and they did not necessarily measure the state of implementing it.

The data has been collected from various sources such as the *palika*'s administrative and financial records, budget speech, auditor general's annual report, annual plan and policies, assembly records, *palika*'s website, and observation during the field-work. Not all *palikas* maintained the records effectively. Ishnath and Baganaskali, for instance, had four data points missing.

Figure 4.1 below shows the overall rating of all *palikas* in the five categories of measurement.

The aggregate score of all *palikas* is around 0.65, with none of the *palikas* scoring below 0.6. Modi and Birendranagar, led by a female mayor and gaur, led by a male mayor, scored the lowest. Meanwhile, Lalitpur, led by a male mayor and Bharatpur, led by a female mayor is the highest. The figure also shows that three *palikas* led by female mayors/chairpersons (Jantedhunga, Baganaskali, Panchadewal Binayak) outscore their corresponding *palikas*, led by male. Similarly, four *palikas*, led by male mayors/chairpersons (Lalitpur, Mahashila, Bheriganga and Dullu) outscore the corresponding *palikas*, led by female. One set of *palika* in Rautahat is virtually tied.

The performance of *palikas* led by female and male mayors/chairpersons is relatively similar across all categories (See Figure 4.2). In aggregate, *palikas* led by male mayors/chairpersons scored higher than their female counterparts on five indicators. When disaggregated, four *palikas*, led by female mayors/chairpersons scored higher than their male counterparts on financial performance and vice versa. Similarly, five *palikas*, led by male mayors/chairpersons scored higher than their female counterparts on administrative performance. On honesty and transparency, five *palikas*, led by male mayors/chairpersons scored higher than their female counterparts, while one pair scored the same. However, the difference is small in all cases.

Figure 4.1 Indicator score of the palikas

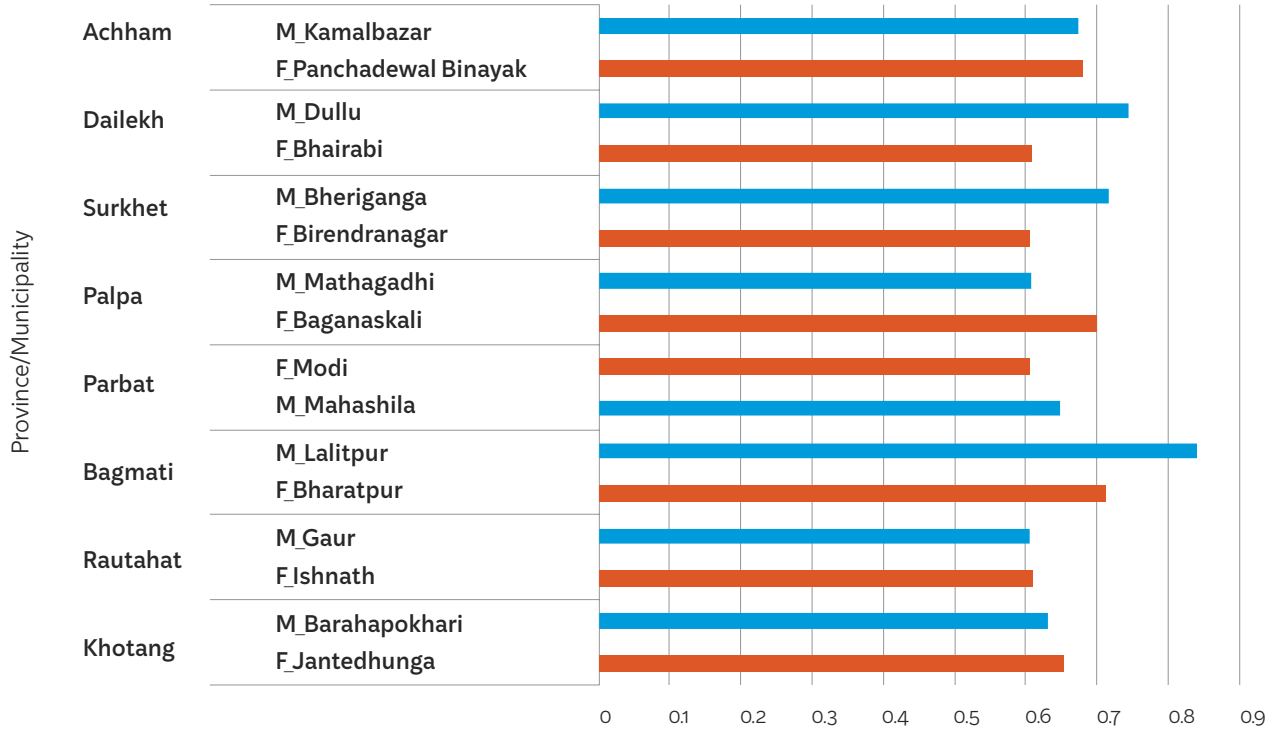
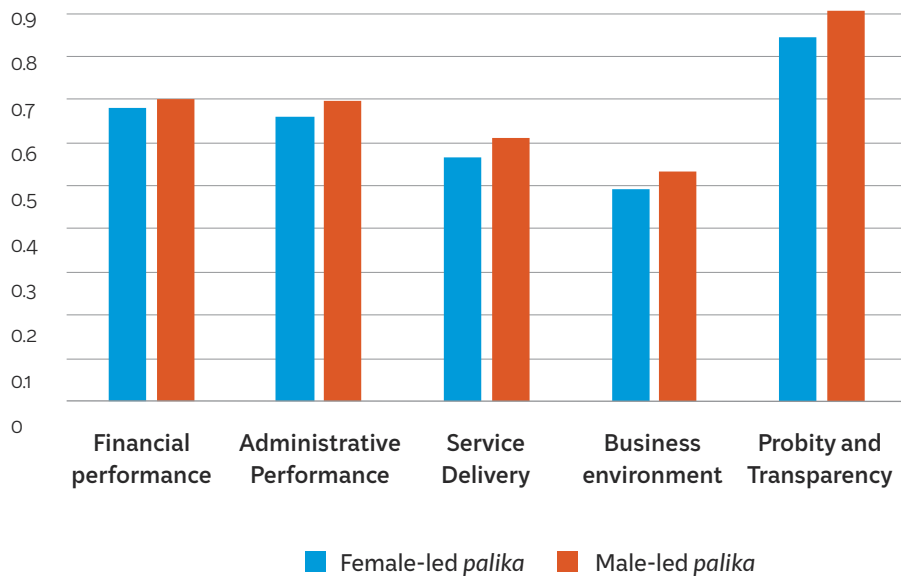


Figure 4.2 Palika's performance by gender of mayor/chairperson



The research compared the score of the palikas with the female mayor/chairperson in each sub-category to the corresponding score of the male mayor/chairperson in the adjoining palika and then conducted a paired t-test to assess the difference between the scores.

The test shows that male mayors/chairpersons scored marginally higher by 0.04 points¹. This difference is statistically significant at a 95% confidence interval and 5% margin of error.

Table 4.1 Paired T-test of female and male mayor/chairperson's score

Pair 1 Female-Male			
Paired Differences		Mean	-0.041395636
		Std. Deviation	0.122862306
		Std. Error Mean	0.019426236
	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Lower	-0.080688907
		Upper	-0.002102364
		t	-2.131
		df	39
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.039

Of the eight pairs of *palikas*, the *palikas* led by female outscored the corresponding *palikas* led by male in five districts (Khotang, Rautahat, Parbat, Palpa and Achham). Baganaskali, led by a female chairperson, outscored its counterpart in Mathagadhi by 0.09 points, the largest difference recorded. Conversely, *palikas* led by males scored better in three sets of *palikas* (Bagmati, Surkhet and Dailekh).

However, the difference in score in those *palikas* was higher (between 0.11 and 0.14). By this measure, the male mayor of Dullu outperformed the female mayor of Bhairabhi by the largest margin (0.14).

Among the sets of *palikas*, the lowest scores were recorded in Rautahat district, where both *palikas* scored around 0.61. On the other end, the two metropolitan cities, Bharatpur and Lalitpur, scored high (0.71 and 0.84). Lalitpur scored the highest among all *palikas* on financial performance and service delivery and was among the top in administrative performance.

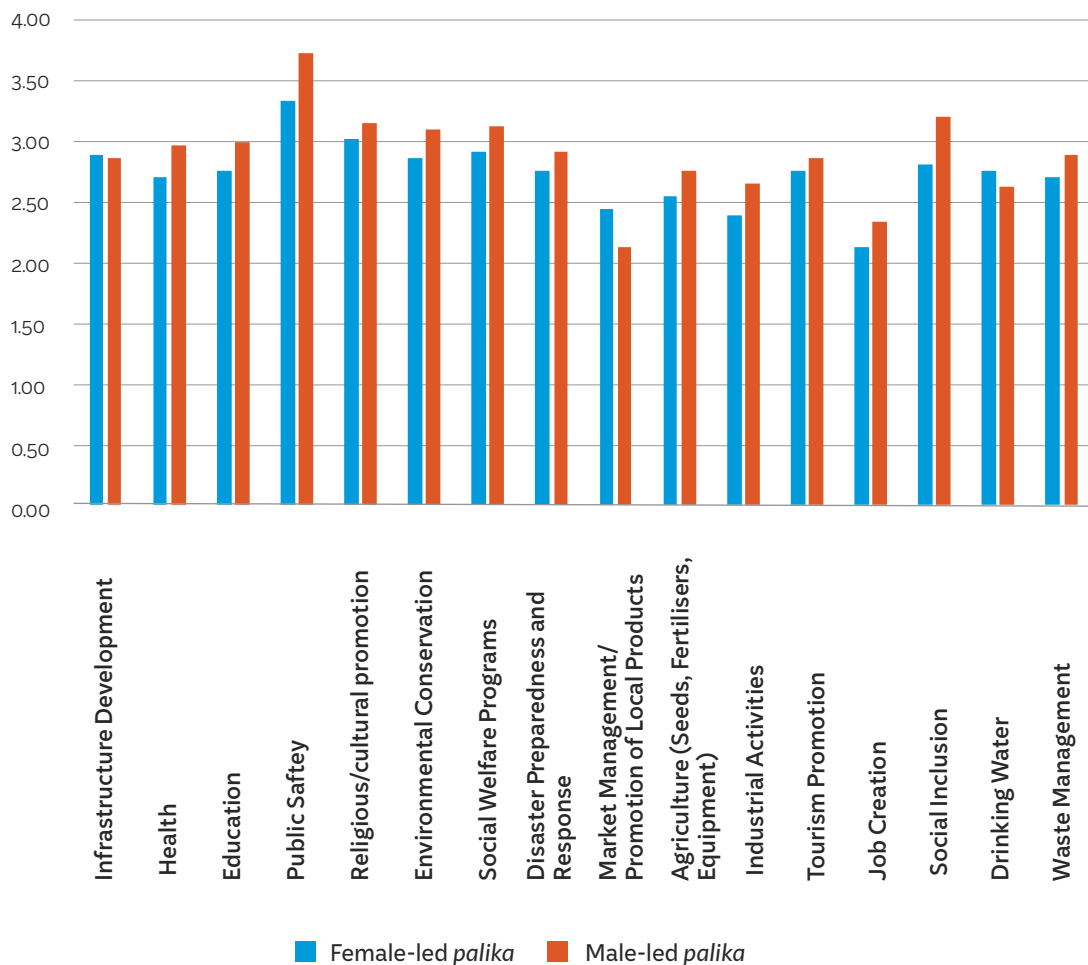
¹ The mean difference is higher than the one calculated in the earlier paragraph. The mean written in the paired t-test takes the average of the averages in each category. The difference was caused by the unavailability of data in some of the indicators for some *palikas* and the sub-categories having different numbers of indicators.

4.2 Voters' Evaluation of Mayor/Chairperson's Performance

Voters' perception of a mayor/chairperson's performance is crucial, too. Regardless of technical metrics, public satisfaction determines trust in leadership and influences future electoral choices. If people feel that essential services like water, roads, education, and healthcare are improving, they are more likely to support the mayor/chairperson. Conversely, negative perceptions can indicate inefficiencies, even if official indicators suggest progress. Since governance is ultimately about serving the people, understanding public sentiment helps to ensure that performance evaluations take into account the community experiences and expectations.

The voters' perception is revelatory for confirming some of the generally held gendered perceptions while challenging others. Male mayors/chairpersons generally scored higher in areas such as public safety (3.73-3.35), education facilities (3.01-2.76), and social inclusion (3.20-2.83). They also outperform in health facilities (2.96-2.71), environmental conservation (3.10-2.87), and

Figure 4.3 Voters' perception of mayor/chairperson's performance



disaster preparedness (2.91-2.77). However, female mayors performed better in infrastructure development (2.91-2.87) as well as in drinking water facilities (2.75-2.64). **However, the data shows there is no statistically significant difference between voters' score of the mayors across genders at a 95% confidence interval and a 5% margin of error.**

The data fundamentally questions some of the stereotypes more concerning female and male mayors. Meanwhile, voters scored female mayors/chairpersons on infrastructure and market management. On the other hand, the male mayors/chairpersons scored better on health, education, public safety, social welfare and even social inclusion, among others. This clearly negates the stereotype of female leaders being better at social issues and male leaders focusing on building physical infrastructure.

In saying that, of the 16 issues identified, the mayors/chairpersons performed rather poorly in most of the indicators. On a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being very good, and 3 being neutral, the mayors/chairpersons scored around 3 or higher in six issue areas. Thus, voters perceive the mayors/chairpersons' performance to be generally poor or between poor and neutral. This is especially the case for issues such as job creation and market management where the voters have rated the performance of mayors/chairpersons as poor.

Among the set of *palikas*, Panchadewal Binayak, led by female mayor, and Kamalbazar, led by male mayor, exhibited the most similar scores across issue areas.

In Rautahat, Gaur, led by male mayor, outscored Ishnath, led by female mayor, in each issue by a significant margin. Gaur's mayor scored 3 out of 5, indicating that the voters considered his performance neither good nor poor. However, the voters disapproved of Ishnath's mayor, giving her a performance score of around 2, indicating poor performance.

Meanwhile, the ratings of Bharatpur, led by a female mayor, and Lalitpur, led by a male mayor, are similar, with Lalitpur scoring slightly higher than Bharatpur. However, there are notable differences in specific sectors. Bharatpur excels in infrastructure development, water management, market management and waste management. Conversely, Lalitpur leads in education, health, public safety, and disaster preparedness.

There was no significant difference in how male and female voters perceived the performance of mayors/chairpersons. Female voters generally tended to score more conservatively. However, they scored female mayors/chairpersons' performance equal or better in half of the sampled pairs of *palikas* compared to *palikas* with male mayors/chairpersons.

Similarly, voters who voted for or against the current mayor/chairperson rated the mayors/chairpersons almost identically. It clearly shows that the voters had no bias based on their voting record while rating the mayor/chairperson's performance. Meanwhile, those who did not vote for the mayor of Bharatpur and the chairpersons from Khotang and Dailekh, have rated

the performance of the elected official better, though marginally, than those who voted for the elected official. In saying that, voters approved the performance of the mayors of metropolises, scoring them around 3.5. They might have benefitted from more developed physiological infrastructure compared to other municipalities. In saying that, both the mayors got re-elected in 2022 local elections, showing that voters backed them strongly, too.

4.3 Final Performance Score

The combination of the indicators and the voters' perception, therefore, provides a complete picture. It is to be noted that the voters' score was scored out of 5 and the indicator score out of 1. To equalise the weight of voters' score and indicator score, the voters' score is divided by five to have the same denomination. Table 5 summarises the mayor/chairperson's score based on voters' rating and indicator score, and the total score which is the sum of the voters' rating (out of 1) and indicator score.

Table 4.2 Voters' scores and Indicators score

S.No.	Palika	Voters' score (out of 5) (P)	Voters score (out of 1)	Indicator score (I)	Total score (PS)
1.	M_Lalitpur	3.25	0.65	0.83	1.48
2.	M_Kamalbazar	3.18	0.64	0.75	1.39
3.	F_Bharatpur	3.12	0.62	0.71	1.33
4.	M_Dullu	3.12	0.62	0.67	1.29
5.	M_Bheriganga	2.94	0.59	0.70	1.29
6.	F_Panchadewal Binayak	3.22	0.64	0.62	1.27
7.	F_Birendranagar	3.05	0.61	0.62	1.23
8.	F_Bhairabi	2.65	0.53	0.70	1.23
9.	M_Gaur	2.84	0.57	0.59	1.16
10.	F_Baganaskali	2.30	0.46	0.69	1.15
11.	F_Modi	2.25	0.45	0.68	1.13
12.	M_Mathagadhi	2.34	0.47	0.63	1.10
13.	M_Mahashila	2.29	0.46	0.63	1.09
14.	F_Jantedhunga	1.93	0.39	0.65	1.04
15.	M_Barahapokhari	1.84	0.37	0.65	1.02
16.	F_Ishnath	1.74	0.35	0.60	0.95

A few things are striking. Firstly, the male mayor of Lalitpur scored the highest based on the indicators, and voters agreed as well. He was also among those who were victorious in the local election with strong popular support. At the other end, the female mayor of Ishnath performed poorly across both indicators and public perception. She was not seen as a strong candidate by the voters even during the elections. She won the election despite winning less than a third of the valid votes.

Secondly, of the six mayors/chairpersons who scored higher than 3 in public perceptions, indicating that the voters generally think the mayors/chairpersons are doing a relatively good job, three were female and three were male mayors/chairpersons. Similarly, of the five mayors/chairpersons who scored higher than 0.70 in the indicators, two were female. In that regard, the female mayors/chairpersons are on par in terms of performance.

Thirdly, according to the above tabulation, the female mayors/chairpersons were clustered in the middle, whereas male mayors/chairpersons had a bigger presence at the top and bottom. Among the top five performers, four were male mayors/chairpersons. At the same time, male mayors/chairpersons occupied three of the bottom five spots. Thus, the data shows that female mayors/chairpersons are not necessarily 'weaker' in aggregate as often perceived. In saying that, some female mayors/chairpersons are doing better than others, as is the case with male mayors/chairpersons.

CHAPTER 5

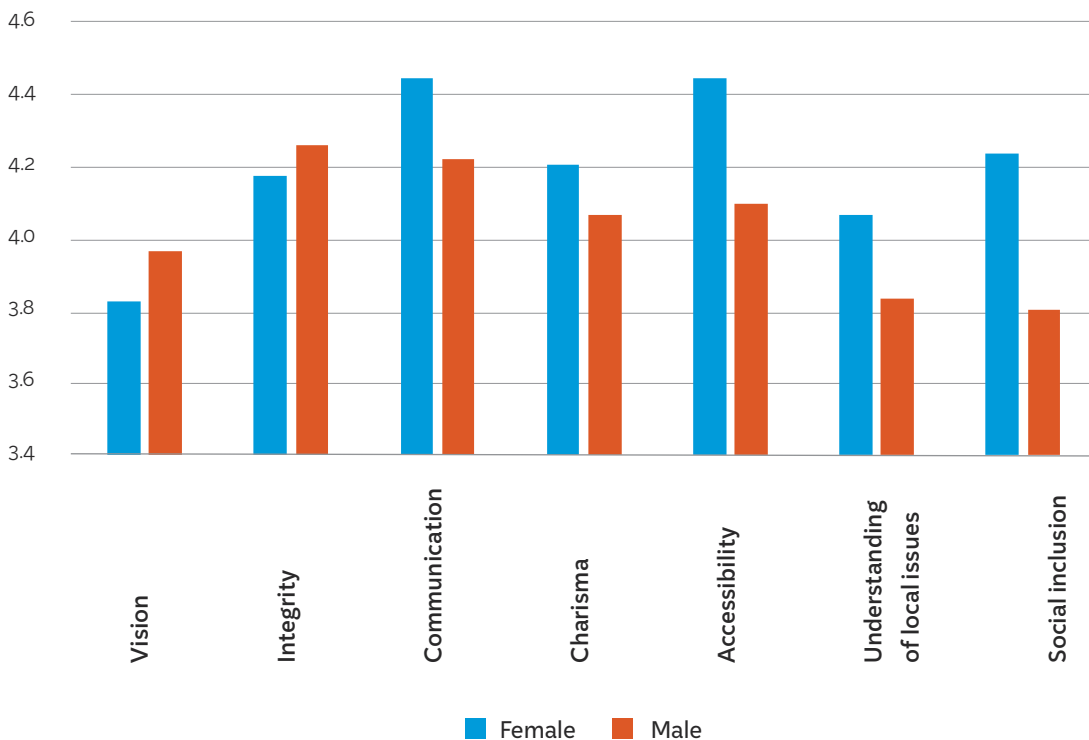
Peers, voters and mayor/ chairpersons’ experience

This chapter highlights experiences of peers, the deputy mayor/vice-chairperson, CAO, and two ward officials working with mayors/chairpersons. The discussion then shifts to the experiences of mayors/chairpersons regarding their electoral journey- office work, and the discrimination (if any) faced.

5.1 Peers’ Rating of Mayor/Chairperson’s Attributes

Peer’s experiences are divided into two aspects: peer’s ratings of mayor/chairperson’s attributes which are quantative, and peer perceptions, which are qualitative. Four peers rated the mayor/ chairperson on a scale of 1-5 (1 being the lowest, 5 being the highest) across seven attributes: vision for the municipality, integrity, communication, charisma, accessibility, understanding of local issues and social inclusion. Figure 5.1 summarises the results of the ratings.

Figure 5.1 Peers’ evaluation of mayors/chairpersons



As shown in Figure 5.1, the peers view the mayor/chairperson's attributes in a positive manner. Female and male mayors/chairpersons' average scores were 4.20 and 4.04, respectively, indicating favourable ratings by their peers.

The female mayors/chairpersons scored better on five indicators, except for vision and integrity. The female mayors/chairpersons were rated higher in communication, accessibility and social inclusion, but relatively lower in vision and integrity. Female mayors/chairpersons were also perceived as more charismatic and having a better understanding of local issues compared to their male counterparts. Although the difference between the ratings was marginal, and not statistically significant, these results could be encouraging for female mayors/chairpersons to enhance their leadership qualities.

Contrary to the general perception that female leaders have more integrity, the male leaders were rated higher on integrity. While studies show that female leaders are more often associated with feminine traits, such as honesty (Erin et al., 2023) and are generally perceived as more honest (see section 5.2 below), they were rated lower than their male counterparts.

**The female mayors/
chairpersons were
rated higher in
communication,
accessibility and
social inclusion, but
relatively lower in
vision and integrity.**

One reason for this could be that integrity in female leaders is often seen as an expected part of their character, making it less striking when they demonstrate it, which may contribute to lower ratings. The public reacts more harshly to corruption allegations of a female mayor/chairperson. Studies indicate that citizens tend to judge female politicians more harshly than their male counterparts (Brown et al., 1993; Erin et al., 2023). This is partly due to politics being a male-dominated space, as well as societal expectations for women to uphold higher moral standards (Courtemanche & Conner, 2020). The expectation was reflected in one of the *palikas*. When an audio was leaked of a female mayor suggesting some

abuse of power, the public reacted by saying they expected a female leader to be less corrupt. The public reaction is indicative of a different standard applied to male and female leaders, with female leaders expected to uphold higher levels of ethical leadership.

A paired sample T-test was carried out to compare the means of score of the peers on each of the seven attributes. The result shows that while female executives' ratings were higher by an average of 0.204 points, however, the difference between the ratings of the female and male mayors/chairpersons was not statistically significant.

Table 5.1 Paired sample t-test of female and male mayors' evaluation by peers

Pair 1 Female-Male			
Paired Differences		Mean	0.2040816325
		Std. Deviation	0.8424028650
		Std. Error Mean	0.1591991775
	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Lower	-0.122568098
		Upper	0.5307313631
		t	1.282
		df	27
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.211

5.2 Peers' Perceptions of Working with Mayors/Chairpersons

Peers generally reported a gender neutral stance on coordination within the office. Several peers noted that the coordination is smooth when a mayor/chairperson is knowledgeable about administrative procedures by way of their governance experience (KII9C, KII11C, KII15C). For instance, a CAO pointed out that coordinating with the mayor during her first tenure was challenging, but became significantly easier in her second term, as she had become well-acquainted with the laws and administrative procedures. Several other peers noted that coordination is enhanced in an environment where the decision-making process is democratic (KII2C, KII8C, KII12B, KII14C). A vice-chairperson noted that 'Since both the chairperson and I are women, it has been easier for us to navigate this male-dominated environment (KII13B)'. While one vice-chairperson focused on gender, the other focused on shared political affiliation (KII7B) as a precondition for smooth coordination within the office. As such, the KIIs with the peers do not indicate that one gender is inherently better at coordination.

Female mayors/chairpersons are characterised as honest, diligent, and innocent. In line with

the broader studies (see Section 5.1), peers associate characteristics like 'honesty, diligence and innocence' with female leadership (KII1B, KII3C, KII7E, KII9E, KII13C). While honesty is also appreciated in male leaders (KII6C), it is a recurring theme in the perception of female mayors/ chairpersons by their peers.

In contrast, male mayors/chairpersons are often recognised for their tenacity (KII2E, KII4E, KII8C, KII12B, KII14B, KII16C). This perception aligns with studies suggesting that male politicians are seen as 'better able to provide leadership' (Brown et al., 1993).

Deputies of both female and male mayors/chairpersons criticised their leaders for exerting dominance over them. Deputies noted that their mayors/chairpersons had a dismissive attitude towards them (KII8B, KII10B, KII15B, KII16B). In this context, a female deputy mayor said, 'He (the mayor) tries to show that the mayor is everything and the deputy mayor is nothing. This is true in other *palikas* as well where the mayor is a man, and the mayor is a woman' (KII16B). Another female vice-chairperson said, 'As a female, I feel like he (the mayor) withholds information from me to keep me at a distant from the decision-making process, especially in matters related to budget' (KII10B). A male vice-chairperson in connection with the male chairperson reported that, 'It seems time and again that he is trying to suppress me' (KII2B). A male deputy mayor noted, 'She (the mayor) tends to centralise power, and has an attitude of 'I am everything' (KII5B). While female deputies tend to think that they are being controlled due to their gender, KII findings suggest that exerting dominance is not inherently tied to gender, but rather to one's position of authority.

Deputies noted that their mayors/ chairpersons had a dismissive attitude towards them.

Female peers find it easier to approach female mayors/chairpersons for issues and agendas concerning women. Several female peers appreciated the ease of having a female mayor/ chairperson to take matters to and discuss with them about women's issues, such as issues concerning single women, pregnant women and women's health (KII7E, KII9E, KII11C, KII13B). They also found it easier to approach them informally, i.e., during late night over phone calls. However, if the female leader is perceived to be dependent upon her husband for making decisions, then there is no such ease. As noted by a female ward official, 'Women are discouraged to take matters to the deputy mayor (female), as she is controlled by her husband' (KII4E). This highlights the issue of proxy female leaders hindering effective participation in governance. Similarly, a male ward official acknowledged the lack of understanding of men regarding women's issues, among others, uterine prolapse or '*Angh Khasne*', causing difficulty for them in taking appropriate action (KII1D).

Further, male peers shared the challenge of communicating with the female mayor/

chairperson in informal settings. Peers broadly referred to the mayor/chairperson's residence, local tea shops, and public restaurants as 'informal settings'. A male ward official highlighted that because the chairperson is a female and a single woman, it is difficult for him and other male representatives to visit her residence for agenda discussions. He noted, 'If she (chairperson) is a woman, especially if she is a single woman, you should think before visiting her residence (KII1D)'. He pointed to the social norms in Nepali society where concerns about their relationship may arise if a male figure visits a single woman. He suggested that it is much easier to approach a male chairperson in an informal setting to discuss agendas outside office premises. Along similar lines, a CAO noted that an advantage for male leaders is that they can connect with the voters, especially male voters including party members in an informal setting, which is difficult for female leaders (KII5C). While it remains unclear how much these informal connections translate into decision-making or performance, female mayors and chairpersons largely agree on these key differences, which are further discussed in Section 5.4.

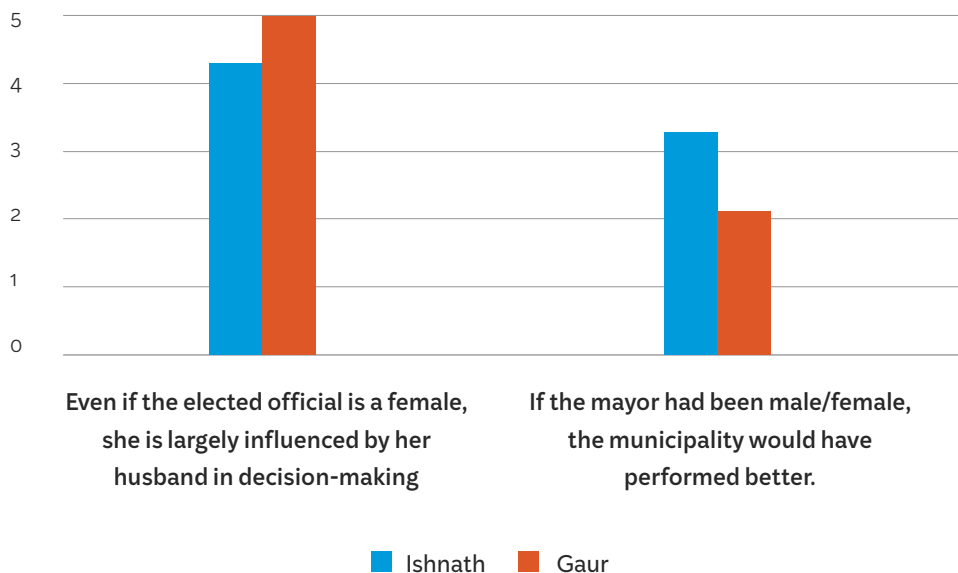
5.3 Understanding Voters' Perception of Gender in Local Leadership

To assess public perception of the leadership, the survey included two gender-based questions: (a) whether respondents believed that the elected female official is largely influenced by her husband in decision-making; and (b) whether the municipality would have performed better if the mayor/chairperson were of the opposite gender.

Palikas led by female mayors/chairpersons were more likely to disagree that female officials are proxies. In relation to question (a), out of the 16 surveyed *palikas*, respondents in seven *palikas* expressed neutral views (average score between 2.1 and 2.74), two disagreed (average score between 1.61 and 1.39) and two strongly agreed (average score between 4.3 and 5). Both *palikas* which disagreed were led by female mayors/chairpersons.

Palikas led by female mayors/chairpersons were less likely to believe that a male mayor would have performed better. In relation to question (b), out of the 16 surveyed *palikas*, respondents in 11 expressed neutral views (average score between 2.05 and 2.93), four *palikas* disagreed (average score between 1.08 and 1.94), and one agreed (average score of 3.29). Three out of four *palikas* led by female mayors/chairpersons disagreed that a male mayor/chairperson would have performed better. This shows that, largely, gender of the leadership is not the deciding factor to vote for a leader. However, it is equally noted that women voters did prefer female leaders owing to the shared gender aspect. So, this indicates that generally women are benefitting from their gender identity rather than looked down upon.

Figure 5.2 Voter’s perception of gender-based questions in Isanath and Gaur



As shown in Figure 5.2, *palikas* Gaur and Isanath strongly agree that the female leaders are proxies of their husbands. Respondents from voters in Gaur and Isanath, both located in Madhesh province, presented differing views from the majority opinion. Despite the strong public opinion that female leaders are proxies in these *palikas*, female leaders disagreed. A deputy mayor noted 'Despite my husband’s presence in the office, I work independently' (KII4B). A male mayor added to this and stated that 'her (deputy mayor) husband accompanies her to work to ensure she does not get trapped in wrong circumstances' (KII4A). Two reasons can be inferred from this: either female leaders are bound by their environment from speaking about it, or the intervention has become normalised. In similar lines, respondents from Isanath agree with the highest average score of 3.29 that a male mayor would have performed better. This points to the lack of trust of voters in the female leadership in Isanath.

5.4. Experiences and Challenges of Mayors/Chairpersons

There are some common challenges faced by mayors/chairpersons irrespective of their gender. These challenges include, among others, limited budget, high public expectations, lack of sufficient staff, and inadequate capacity of employees (KII7A, KII8A, KII9A, KII12A, KII14A, KII15A, KII16A).

Mayors/chairpersons generally acknowledge election as a competitive process. A male chairperson noted 'Election is election; there is always competition' (KII8A). Two male mayors/chairpersons pointed out that running elections was not easy for them (KII14A, KII16A),

particularly due to strong opposition parties. They paid tribute to financial resources, personal influence, and political experience for their election success. They noted that they were able to win the elections as people trusted them over their parties. A male chairperson said, 'Nepal follows the party system rather than an individual-based election system. Because we have a practice of running elections as a political party, there is no difference between a male and female candidate in running elections per se' (KII8A).

In saying that, no male mayor/chairperson discussed their gender-based challenges. This sufficiently highlights that male mayors/chairpersons are not conscious of their gender at the workplace, whereas the opposite is the case for women mayors/chairpersons in the political sphere.

For women, the electoral journey is an uphill battle. Based on KIIs, one of the primary reasons for the distrust towards a female leader is financial resources that stem from the belief that women are not financially stable. A female mayor said that she had to fight within the party to secure a party ticket (KII15A). A female chairperson added, 'Female leaders are not trusted even at the ward level. For instance, no political party put forward a woman candidate for the ward chairperson position in our *palika*' (KII9A). She noted: 'Chunab ma jati sukai bhane pani paisa kai pratisparda hune ho' (No matter what, money matters in the election) (KII9A), alluding to a deep-rooted problem in Nepal's electoral system.

A male mayor highlighted voters' lack of trust in female politicians when he stated: 'I have felt the difference lies in securing votes from the general public' (KII8A). However, contrary to widespread perception, research has shown that electability is not an issue for female candidates (NIPoRe, 2023).

Party alliances have limited women's representation in local government. A female chairperson briefly touched upon the issue of women's representation due to party alliance. She noted: 'Although the Constitution of Nepal requires at least a mayor/chairperson or a deputy mayor/vice-chairperson to be a female, this is not the case in all *palikas*, primarily due to political alliances' (KII9A). This highlights that male candidates are often favoured within political parties, which aligns with the challenges female leaders face in securing trust from political parties to run for elections.

Family members are becoming supportive of women pursuing political careers. A male chairperson noted: 'In the previous local election, our party had decided to nominate a female candidate for the deputy chairperson position, but she could not contest due to a lack of support from family members, although it was certain that she would win' (KII8A). While the lack of family support for women in politics has often dominated the narrative, no female mayors/chairpersons mentioned that they faced such challenges personally. This indicates a positive shift in attitude towards women in politics.

Running for election for the second time is an added pressure, female mayors noted. A female mayor shared: 'As I had already been a deputy mayor once, I had a pressure to win as it would negatively impact my political career had I lost the second election' (KII15A). Another female mayor noted that she was suggested not to run for local election again, but rather to opt for election through PR in the federal parliament. She noted: 'At the time, there was an alliance between the two leading parties, and many people thought that I should not run an election which I would most likely lose.' While we acknowledge that male candidates may also face similar suggestions, it is important to recognise that women often face biased perceptions, such as the issue of electability (NIPoRe 2023). This section aims to shed light on the fact that women are choosing to run for elections despite these varied challenges, which highlights their resilience.

Women in politics are assumed to occupy secondary roles. Female mayors/chairpersons noted that they are frequently mistaken for a deputy mayor/chairperson (KII1A, KII9A). A female chairperson shared that an event organiser called her and said: 'Adaksya sir hunu hunna?' (Could you please pass the phone to the chairperson?) (KII9A). In such cases, they do not take it personally, rather, they feel that the person is ignorant.

A female mayor noted, 'I have not felt any form of discrimination in my office'

Female mayors/chairpersons are often compared to their male counterparts, a chairperson stated. A female chairperson noted when a female leader cannot resolve an issue, the public responds by saying, 'Kei pani garna sakdaina' (She cannot do anything) (KII1A). She also highlighted that the general public thinks that a male mayor is more capable of securing a larger budget for the *palika*. It is important to

note, however, that this perspective represents the voice of a minority, as only one chairperson who comes from a remote area shared this experience.

The social beliefs insinuate personal doubts in women. Female mayors/chairpersons continue to face personal doubts regarding their ability to lead an office. A female chairperson described: 'We, as women, are sceptical about our abilities' (KII1A). Another female chairperson added, 'I was fearful that people might not trust a female candidate (KII7A)'. The fear of securing the trust of voters as a female candidate continues to generate personal doubt. These experiences drive them to work harder to prove their capabilities.

Connecting with voters in an informal setting is a challenge for female mayors/chairpersons. The experiences of the male peers in this regard (see Section 5.2) were echoed by the female mayors/chairpersons. A female mayor explained: 'As a woman, I feel the impact is less when it comes to spreading our message, especially due to not having been engaged with party members in the evening meetings or activities like dinner' (KII15A). It is evident that this creates a mental block for women, where they take it as a challenge to network with male voters or other party

members. While the exact impact on their performance remains unclear, we derive that this should not affect female mayors/chairpersons' performance if we juxtapose the results of peer rating where female leaders obtained higher ratings in accessibility.

Notwithstanding the preceding challenges of women mayors/chairpersons, they face minimal discrimination in their day-to-day administration. A female mayor affirmed, 'I have not felt any form of discrimination in my office' (KII7A). Other female leaders echoed this thought (KII3A, KII9A, KII11A) pointing to a gradual improvement in the local governance regarding inclusive leadership.

Female mayors acknowledged instances of bias and challenges but emphasised their determination to persist. When asked about their response to these challenges, female mayors noted the following: 'I continue to push forward' (KII15A), 'I took it as a challenge and persisted' (KII15A), '[...] but I took up the challenge' (KII11A). The fact that these women have navigated a socially biased electoral process and assumed office demonstrates their perseverance.

In conclusion, women mayors/chairpersons are perceived positively in their workplaces, slightly better than their male counterparts. As noted in Chapter 4, their performance is on par with that of men mayors/chairpersons. As such, political parties are encouraged to trust female leadership and not to hinder women's representation based on party alliances. We also note that while the work environment for women has improved gradually, eliminating gender bias requires collective efforts from everyone within and outside *palika* office.



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CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

The earlier chapters analysed the priorities and performance of mayors/chairpersons, their perceptions and the challenges faced by mayors/chairpersons, especially females. This chapter presents the findings and explanations for the differences in priorities and performances of the mayors.

The following table summarises the total score (see Chapter 4) and shares of votes received by the mayor/chairperson of the *palika*, mayor/chairperson's party, percent of ward chairpersons

Table 6.1 Potential factors affecting performance of *palikas*

Rank	<i>Palika</i>	Total score (PS)	Share of votes received	% of ward chairperson	Governance experience	Political Party
1.	M_Lalitpur	1.48	55.95	37.93	2nd term	NC
2.	M_Kamalbazar	1.39	51.07	20.00	-	NC
3.	F_Bharatpur	1.33	53.93	10.94	2nd term	CPN-MC
4.	M_Dullu	1.29	48.36	23.07	-	NC
5.	M_Bheriganga	1.29	47.64	23.07	-	CPN-UML
6.	F_Panchadewal Binayak	1.27	33.71	66.67	Deputy mayor	NC
7.	F_Birendranagar	1.23	37.79	68.75	Deputy mayor	CPN-UML
8.	F_Bhairabi	1.23	49.55	28.57	-	NC
9.	M_Gaur	1.16	43.30	66.67	-	CPN-US
10.	F_Baganaskali	1.15	49.37	66.67	Vice chair	CPN-UML
11.	F_Modi	1.13	55.95	62.50	-	CPN-UML
12.	M_Mathagadhi	1.10	47.97	50.00	-	CPN-UML
13.	M_Mahashila	1.09	53.93	83.30	Ward chair	CPN-UML
14.	F_Jantedhunga	1.04	52.67	33.33	-	CPN-MC
15.	M_Barahapokhari	1.02	57.72	33.33	2nd term	NC
16.	F_Ishnath	0.95	32.39	44.24	-	LSP
	R score	Score and vote share	0.16			
		Score and political position		0.37		

won by the mayor/chairperson's party, and mayor/chairpersons' governance experience (in a politically elected role in 2017).

This table presents several striking findings. Firstly, there was very weak correlation between the vote shares and the aggregate score of the mayors across genders ($r = 0.16$). Three best performing mayors/chairpersons had won a majority of votes but so did three of the four worst performing mayors/chairpersons. In this respect, the female mayors of *palikas* Panchadewal Binayak and Birendranagar won their respective elections with just over one-third of the votes, yet they performed well. Meanwhile, the mayor of Ishnath had a similarly sized mandate, but her performance was found lacking.

Secondly, the performance of the mayors across genders also correlated weakly (though comparatively better than the vote share of the mayor/chairperson) and was negatively correlated with the mayors' score. The male mayor of Mahashila, for instance, won with almost 54% of the votes, and his party won a significant amount (83%) of the ward chairs, yet his performance was poor. At the other end, the female mayor of Bharatpur performed commendably despite her party's position. It is heartening that the ward chairpersons often work with the mayors, despite them being from different parties.

Third, mayors in their second term or who served as deputies/ward chairperson in the previous election performed better than novices, on aggregate. It was especially a good indicator of female mayor/chairperson's performance. Of the eight female mayors/chairpersons analysed, the bottom three performing female mayors/chairpersons were without prior governance experience. In contrast, among the three of the four better performing female mayors/chairpersons, one was in her second term (Bharatpur), and two others were elected deputy mayors in 2017. This bodes well for the future of female deputies, and the *palika's* performance, who aspire to contest for mayor/chairperson in the future elections. The record suggests that the novice female mayors would benefit greatly from effective training on how to navigate their roles and responsibilities.

Such a link was not as strong among the male mayors/chairpersons. Three out of four male mayors/chairpersons were not part of the local government in 2017. Such differences between the female and male mayor/chairpersons' experience could be a result of the stronger network that male mayors/chairpersons often have, and their longer political engagement in party politics.

Finally, the political party the mayor/chairperson belonged to had little bearing on the rating of the mayor/chairperson, whether male or female, though the mayors/chairpersons of the Nepali

The research identifies that physical infrastructures, such as roads, are among the key priorities of mayors/chairpersons, irrespective of gender of the voters or the elected executives.

Congress performed comparatively better. mayors/Chairpersons of other parties were relatively spread out across the scoring chart. Besides the mayors/chairpersons from the NC and the CPN-UML, other parties had only one or two representatives in the study, making it hard to generalise their performance.

The research identifies that physical infrastructures, such as roads, are among the key priorities of mayors/chairpersons, irrespective of gender of the voters or the elected executives. However, female voters also stressed on the day-to-day necessities such as waste management/drainage, drinking water, and health in larger numbers compared to male voters. This was reflected in the priorities of the female mayors/chairpersons, who stressed social services, in addition to infrastructure. This difference was also reflected in the budget. However, the overall expenditure on these social issues was minimal. Most of the budget went towards physical infrastructure. This could mean that either the female mayors/chairpersons were less effective in marshalling the budget in ways they prioritised, the social issues required less budget, or that the village/municipal assembly is still male-dominated. Even then, the female mayors/chairpersons made a mark in developing a better supply of drinking water, compared to their male counterparts.

Moreover, female mayors/chairpersons' face diverse challenges than their male counterparts. To start with, female mayor/chairperson candidates face a bigger challenge to convince their party seniors that they should get the party ticket, primarily because the female candidates face financial constraints. They also receive comparatively less support from family members. The male candidates, meanwhile, felt such criticism was not true, and pointed instead that the votes seem to favour male candidates more. The male mayors/chairpersons often did not acknowledge their privilege when it came to candidacy and family support.

The challenges continue after elections. Some people often equate males with being the mayor/chairperson and females the deputy mayor/vice-chairperson. Therefore, female mayors/chairpersons sometimes get asked if the mayor/chairperson is in the office. The female mayors/chairpersons seem to have grown a thicker skin regarding such instances of subconscious gender bias. They often downplay such instances of bias, not wanting to be perceived as weak or as a victim.

Women further face double standards. That is, people judge female mayors/chairpersons more harshly. They often evaluate the female mayors/chairpersons with a higher standard, doubling down on criticism if the female mayor/chairperson fails or is perceived to be weak in some tasks. This is reflective of the expectation for women to exhibit 'ethical' leadership, so they are criticised heavily if they are perceived to have engaged in some corruption, whereas male mayors/chairpersons are often met with an attitude of 'men will be men.'

Despite the challenges, female mayors received better ratings by their peers, though this difference was not statistically significant. Predictably, they were characterised as 'honest,

diligent, and innocent' whereas the male mayors were praised for their strong leadership skills with a dominating character.

Therefore, the female representatives found it easier to approach female mayors/chairpersons regarding their issues and agenda, especially concerning women's issues. On the flip side, the male mayors/chairpersons bonded better with elected representatives during informal gatherings, a setting less accessible to female leadership. Yet, when it came to coordination among peers or delegation of authority, gender of the mayor/chairperson was not a critical factor. That is, female leaders did not necessarily delegate more authority to their deputies, as is commonly assumed. Such relations between the mayor/chairperson and their deputy depended more upon the political and personal dynamics shared by the two elected officials.

The gender of the mayor/chairperson did not have a significant impact on the performance.

In summary, female and male mayors/chairpersons prioritised infrastructure, but differed on their focus on women's issues and social inclusion. However, the latter got a scant budget even when it was a priority for female leaders. The gender of the mayor/chairperson did not have a significant impact on the performance. Female mayors/chairpersons performed better when rated by their peers and the voters whereas the male mayors/chairpersons scored better on the indicators. Yet, all those differences were minimal. The winning margins

and the party's position in the *palika* was weakly correlated with the performance of mayors/chairpersons, irrespective of gender. Prior governance experience at local level, such as being the deputy mayor/vice-chairperson or ward chairperson, improved female mayor/chairpersons' performance significantly. This bodes well for the future, with almost 90 percent female deputies and the performance of *palikas*, if they are groomed to take over leadership positions in the upcoming elections.

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Annexes

Annex I: Palika details

Koshi Province

Khotang

Palika's name	F- Jantedhunga	M- Barahapokhari
Population	12,016	11,397
Area (sq km)	143.6	49.38
Chairperson's name	Aruna Devi Rai	Shalikaram Banjara
Gender	Female	Male
Age	50	44
Political party	Maoist Center	Nepali Congress
% of votes received	52.67%	57.72%
Governance Experience	-	Mayor
Deputy chairperson's gender	Male	Male
Deputy chairperson's party	Nepali Congress	CPN (Unified Socialist)
% of ward chair from chairperson's party	33.33%	33.33%

Madhesh Province

Rautahat

Palika's name	F-Ishnath	M-Gaur
Population	51,855	39,846
Area (sq km)	35.17	21.53
Mayor's name	Kaushalya Devi	Shambu Shah
Gender	Female	Male
Age	66	50
Political party	Loktantrik Samajwadi Party	CPN (Unified Socialist)
% of votes received	32.39%	43.30%
Governance experience	-	-
Deputy mayor's gender	Male	Female
Deputy mayor's party	Loktantrik Samajwadi Party	CPN (Unified Socialist)
% of ward chair from mayor's party	44.44%	66.66%

Bagmati Province

Chitwan and Lalitpur

Palika's name	F-Bharatpur	M-Lalitpur
Population	369268	294,098
Area (sq km)	36.12	432.95
Mayor's name	Renu Dahal	Chiri Babu Maharjan
Gender	Female	Male
Age	45	65
Political party	Maoist Center	Nepali Congress
% of votes received	53.93%	55.95%
Governance experience	Mayor	Mayor
Deputy mayor's gender	Male	Female
Deputy mayor's party	Nepali Congress	CPN-UML
% of ward chair from mayor's party	10.34%	37.93%

Gandaki Province

Parbat

Palika's name	F-Modi	M-Mahashila
Population	18,794	8,116
Area (sq km)	143.6	49.38
Chairperson's name	Hira Devi Sharma	Ishwari Prasad Bhusal
Gender	Female	Male
Age	51	56
Political party	CPN-UML	CPN-UML
% of votes received	55.95%	53.93%
Governance Experience	-	Ward Chairperson
Deputy chairperson's gender	Male	Female
Deputy chairperson's party	CPN-UML	CPN-UML
% of ward chair from chairperson's party	62.50%	83.33%

Lumbini Province

Palpa

Palika's name	F-Baganaskali	M-Mathagadhi
Population	18,497	24,053
Area (sq km)	84.17	215.49
Chairperson's name	Saraswoti Darlami Chidi	Yam Bahadur Chidi
Gender	Female	Male
Age	40	46
Political party	CPN-UML	CPN-UML
% of votes received	49.37%	47.97%
Governance Experience	Deputy Chairperson	-
Deputy chairperson's gender	Male	Female
Deputy chairperson's party	CPN-UML	CPN-UML
% of ward chair from chairperson's party	66.66%	50.00%

Karnali Province

Surkhet

Palika's name	F-Birendranagar	M-Bheriganga
Population	1,53,863	48,203
Area (sq km)	245.06	256.2
Mayor's name	Mohan Maya Bhandari	Yagya Prasad Dhakal
Gender	Female	Male
Age	42	55
Political party	CPN-UML	CPN-UML
% of votes received	37.79%	48.64%
Governance experience	Deputy mayor	-
Deputy mayor's gender	Male	Female
Deputy mayor's party	CPN-UML	CPN-UML
% of ward chair from mayor's party	68.75%	23.07%

Karnali Province

Dailekh

Palika's name	F-Birendranagar	M-Bheriganga
Population	F-Bhairabi	M-Dullu
Area (sq km)	18,767	39,143
Mayor/Chairperson's name	110.46	156.77
Gender	Rita Kumari Shahi	Bharat Prasad Rijal
Age	Female	Male
Political party	47	43
% of votes received	Nepali Congress	Nepali Congress
Governance experience	49.55%	48.36%
Deputy mayor/vice-chairperson's gender	-	-
Deputy mayor/vice-chairperson's party	Female	Female
% of ward chair from mayor/chairperson's party	Nepali Congress	CPN-UML
% of ward chairs from mayor/chairperson's party	28.57%	23.07%

Sudurpaschim Province

Achham

Palika's name	F-Panchadewal Binayak	M-Kamalbazar
Population	26,088	21,032
Area (sq km)	14775	120.78
Mayor's name	Ambika Kumari Chalaune	Yagya Prasad Dhakal
Gender	Female	Male
Age	31	50
Political party	Nepali Congress	Nepali Congress
% of votes received	33.71%	51.07%
Governance experience	Deputy Mayor	-
Deputy mayor's gender	Male	Female
Deputy mayor's party	Nepali Congress	CPN-UML
% of ward chair from mayor's party	66.66%	20.00%

Annex II: List of Indicators

Areas	S.N.	Indicator
Financial Performance	1	Budget announced before Asadh 10 and finalized before Asadh 31
	2	Annual plans and programs approved by the assembly before Falgun end
	3	Ratio of budget expenditure to budget received
	4	Use of conditional grant for specified purpose only in the last FY
	5	100% utilization of special and matching grants in the past FY
	6	Percent of utilization of capital expenditure budget
	7	Number of projects less than 5 lakh as a percent of total capital budget
	8	No use of equalization grant for administrative expenditure in the past FY
	9	Unsettled expenses as a percent of total expenditure for the last FY
	10	Internal revenue as a percent of the annual budget
	11	Y-o-y increase in internal revenue growth
	12	Target revenue vs. Actual revenue
	13	Use of SUTRA
Administrative Performance	14	Framework for vertical coordination
	15	MoUs between municipal units
	16	PPP policy implemented in physical infrastructure projects
	17	Number of assembly meetings
	18	Expenditure of percentage of capacity building budget
	19	Number of committees/sub-committees existing and formed
	20	Number of legislations passed since the tenure began
	21	Number of CAO turnover (during current tenure)
	22	Number of days in office - CAO
	23	Percent of grievances resolved
	24	Percent of complaints resolved

Service Delivery	25	Use of tokens, online registration, and computer billing in service delivery
	26	Use of banking system for payments
	27	Use of e-bidding for procurement
	28	Student enrollment rates
	29	Vaccination rates
	30	Road constructed as a percent of the annual target of roadway masterplan
	31	y-o-y growth in new road construction rate
	32	y-o-y growth in road upgradation rate
	33	y-o-y growth in the expansion of drinking water facilities to households
	34	Plans and programs for waste management
	35	Number of open public spaces initiated by municipalities since the tenure started
	36	Operation of Industrial district
	37	DRM plans
	38	budget for disaster risk management as a percent of total capital expenditure budget
Probity and Transparency	39	Digitization of registration procedures for non-vital services
	40	% of elected officials within the local unit who presented details to local units within 60 days of the end of each FY
	41	Quarterly reporting of earnings, expenditures, and progress updates to the province and federal level
	42	Identification of primary sectors and determining the budget ceiling
	43	Publishing records of income and expenditure timely
	44	Number of public hearings per FY
	45	Use of VAT-registered entities for the procurement of materials and services above NPR 20,000

Business Environment	46	Absolute number of firms registered
	47	Increase/decrease in the number of firms in the previous two years
	48	Number of documents required to register a SME/Micro/cottage
	49	Number of days required to register a business
	50	Business tax rate
	51	Property tax rate
	52	Rent tax rate
	53	Economic Profile/project bank for investment

Annex III: Survey questionnaire

समूह १

क्रम संख्या

पालिका _____

वडा _____

१. उमेर

- १८ – ४०
- ४१ – ६४
- ६५ र माथि

२. लिङ्ग

- पुरुष
- महिला
- अन्य वा भन्न नरुचाउने

३. शैक्षिक योग्यता

- औपचारिक शिक्षा नभएको
- प्राथमिक शिक्षा
- माध्यमिक शिक्षा
- स्नातक डिग्री
- मास्टर डिग्री वा उच्च

४. पेशा

- विद्यार्थी
- बेरोजगार

- स्वरोजगार
- सरकारी कर्मचारी
- निजी क्षेत्रका कर्मचारी
- घरको काम
- अन्य -(कृपया निर्दिष्ट गर्नुहोस्)
- अन्य (_____)

५. वार्षिक आमदानी

६. जात/जाति

- क्षेत्री
- ब्राह्मण
- मगर
- थारु
- तामाङ
- विश्वकर्मा
- मुस्लिम
- नेवा
- यादव
- राई
- अन्य
- अन्य (_____)

७. तपाईंको पालिकाको विकास आवश्यकता के छ? (३ वटा सम्म)

- भौतिक पूर्वाधार (सडक)
- भौतिक पूर्वाधार (भवन)
- भौतिक पूर्वाधार (अन्य)
- सामाजिक विकास (अन्य)
- स्वास्थ्य सुविधाहरू
- गरिबी न्यूनीकरण
- शैक्षिक सुविधा
- रोजगारीहरू
- फोहर व्यवस्थापन/नाली
- बजार व्यवस्थापन/स्थानीय उत्पादनको प्रवर्द्धन
- अन्य
- अन्य (_____)

८. के तपाईंलाई आफ्नो वर्तमान मेयरको नाम थाहा छ?

- छ
- छैन

९. के तपाईंलाई वर्तमान मेयरको चुनावी घोषणा र एजेन्डा थाहा छ?

- छ
- छैन
- भन्न नरुचाउने

१०. हालको मेयरको एजेन्डा के थियो ? (३ वटा सम्म)

- भौतिक पूर्वाधार (सडक)
- भौतिक पूर्वाधार (भवन)
- भौतिक पूर्वाधार (अन्य)
- सामाजिक विकास (अन्य)
- स्वास्थ्य सुविधाहरू
- गरिबी न्यूनीकरण
- शैक्षिक सुविधा
- रोजगारीहरू
- फोहर व्यवस्थापन/नाली
- बजार व्यवस्थापन/स्थानीय उत्पादनको प्रवर्द्धन
- अन्य
- अन्य (_____)

११. के तपाईंले वर्तमान मेयरलाई भोट हाल्नु भयो?

- गरेको
- नगरेको
- भन्न नरुचाउने

१२. तपाईंलाई वर्तमान मेयरको बारेमा के मन पर्छ?

(३ वटा सम्म)

- विकास दृष्टिकोण
- निष्ठा
- स्पष्ट वक्ता
- पहुँचयोग्य
- स्थानीय समस्याहरूको बुझाइ
- राजनीतिक इतिहास
- एउटै पार्टी
- एउटै जात
- मैले उहाँलाई/उनलाई चिन्छु; उहाँ/उनी मेरो नातेदार हुनुहुन्छ।
- अन्य
- केही पनि मन पर्दैन
- अन्य (_____)

१३. वर्तमान मेयरलाई किन भोट दिनुभएन ?

- लिङ्ग
- जात
- राजनीतिक दल
- उमेर
- एजेन्डा
- तिनीहरूको बारेमा थाहा थिएन
- मैले अन्य उम्मेदवारलाई मन पराएँ
- अन्य
- मैले भोट हालिन/हाल्ल सकिन।
- अन्य (_____)

समूह २

१४. निम्न मुद्दाहरूलाई सम्बोधन गर्न मेयरको प्रभावकारितालाई तपाईं कसरी मूल्याङ्कन गर्नुहुन्छ?

(१ देखि ५ को स्केलमा प्रत्येकलाई मूल्याङ्कन गर्नुहोस्, जहाँ १ = धेरै खराब, २ = खराब, ३ = ठिकै, ४ = राम्रो र ५ = धेरै राम्रो)

- पूर्वाधार विकास (सडक, पुल, आदि)
- स्वास्थ्यहरू (___)
- शिक्षा सेवाहरू (___)
- सार्वजनिक सुरक्षा (___)
- संस्कृति, परम्परा, भाषा र सम्पदाको संरक्षण (___)
- वातावरण संरक्षण (___)
- सामाजिक कल्याणकारी कार्यक्रमहरू (___)
- विपद् तयारी र कार्य (___)
- बजार व्यवस्थापन (हाट बजार)/स्थानीय उत्पादनको प्रवर्द्धन (___)
- कृषि (बीउ, मल, उपकरण) (___)
- औद्योगिक गतिविधि (___)
- पर्यटन प्रवर्द्धन (___)
- रोजगारी सृजना (___)
- सामाजिक समावेशीकरण (___)
- पिउने पानी (___)
- फोहोर व्यवस्थापन (___)

समूह ३

सेवा वितरण अनुभव

१५. के तपाईंले विगत दुई वर्षमा पालिका/वडा कार्यालय काम विशेषले जानु भएको छ?

- छ
- छैन

१६. विद्युतीय भुक्तानीको उपलब्धता

- छ
- छैन
- उपलब्ध छ तर प्रयोगमा छैन
- थाहा भएन

१७. लाइन प्रणालीको उपलब्धता

- छ
- छैन
- उपलब्ध छ तर प्रयोगमा छैन
- थाहा भएन

१८. सेवाको द्रुतता

- छिटो
- ठिकै
- ढिलो

१९. घूस सम्बन्धी

- तिर्नुपर्ने अवस्था
- भनसुन गर्नु पर्ने
- तिर्नु परेन
- थाहा भएन/भन्न चाहन्न

२०. कर्मचारीहरूको व्यवहार

- राम्रो
- ठिकै
- नराम्रो
- थाहा भएन/भन्न चाहन्न

२१. अर्को चुनावमा मनोनीत भएमा वर्तमान मेयरलाई भोट हाल्नु हुन्छ कि हुदैन?

- हाल्छु
- हाल्दिन
- हेर्न बाकी छ
- भन्न नरुचाउने

समूह ४

सामान्य जनधारणा


निम्न कुराहरूमा कति हदसम्म सहमत हुनुहुन्छ?




२२. मेयर/वडाध्यक्ष/वडासदस्य महिला भए पनि, प्रायः निर्णय उनको श्रीमानले नै गर्ने गर्छन् ।
२३. नगर प्रमुख पुरुष/महिला भए पालिकाले राम्रो प्रदर्शन गर्ने थियो ।




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