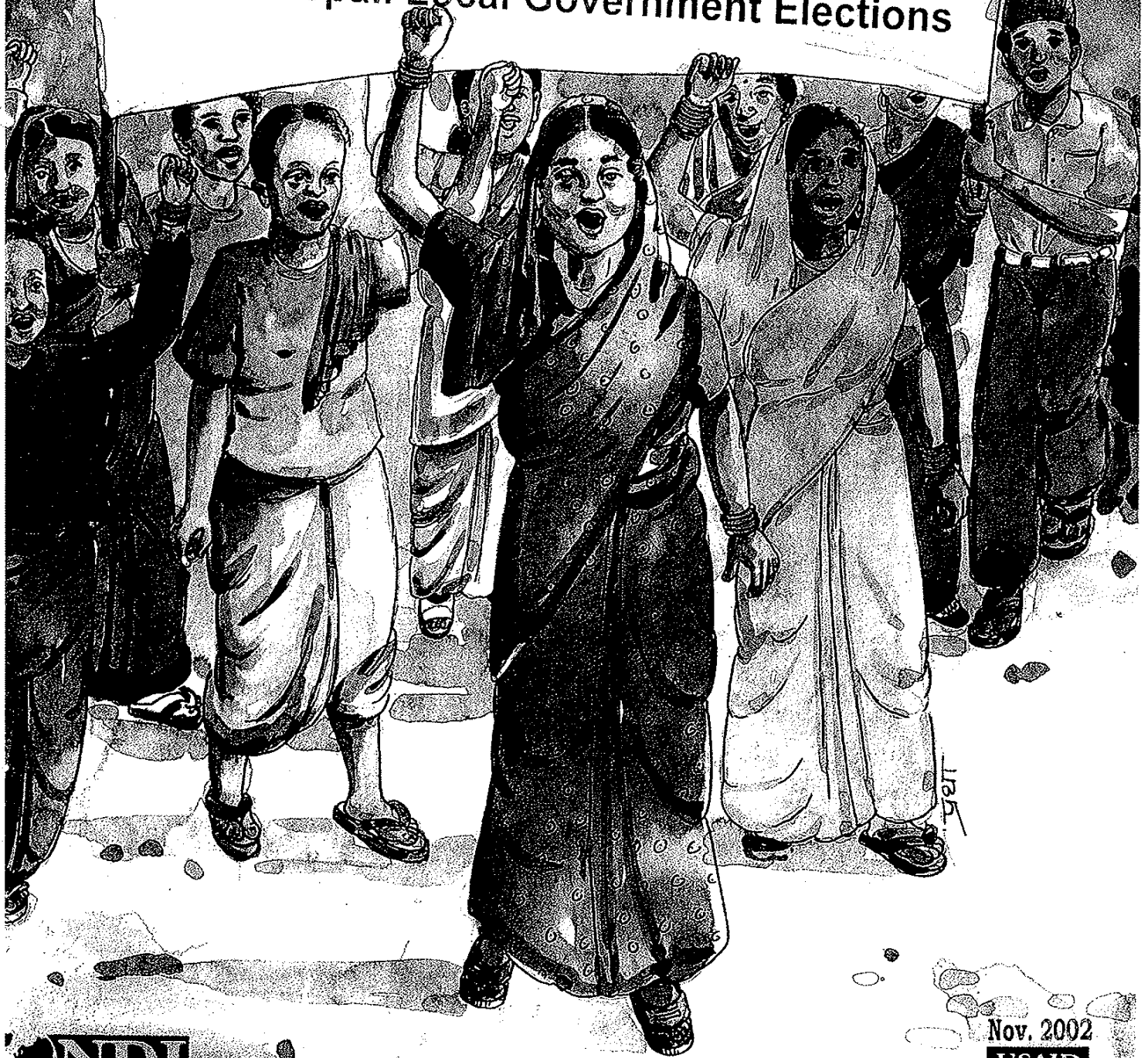


Women Can Win!

A Campaign Manual for Women Candidates
in the Nepali Local Government Elections



NDI
INTERNATIONAL
DEMOCRATIC
INSTITUTE
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

PROMOTING WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION (PWPP)

राजनीतिमा महिला सहभागिताको अभिवृद्धि

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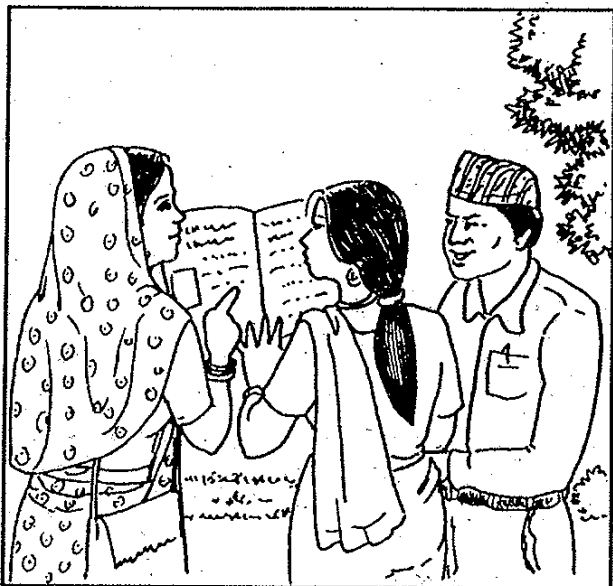
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Women Can Win!

Around the world, women like you are rising up and applying for society's most important job – political office. Before the 1997 local elections, Nepali women held less than one percent of the seats in local government. In 1997, a royal decentralization ordinance was enacted that increased women's participation in government to unprecedented levels in Nepal. This ordinance called for the reservation of 20 percent of local government ward seats for women. The elections



following the passage of this ordinance led to a dramatic increase in the number of women elected representatives. In the next local elections, Nepali men and women must seize the opportunity to join the rest of the world in electing more women leaders. The time for electing women leaders is now.

This manual has been created as a tool to motivate and train Nepali women candidates and representatives. It contains tips for campaigning and winning local elections, as well as information on the roles and responsibilities of elected officials.

For simplicity, we refer to local government as the "VDC" but the information in this manual also applies to municipalities.

Holding public office is a very special duty and Nepali women are qualified to have this responsibility. Through our work in the Terai we have met, trained, and learned from hundreds of honest, hard working women leaders. Although we could not feature all of the women leaders we have met, we have collected a few of their insights and recommendations for you as you initiate work on your campaign. Included in this manual are the interviews of eight women leaders who represent the different parties, districts, and some of the many ethnic groups of the Terai. Their stories are inspirational and educational for women candidates, representatives, and activists in Nepal and throughout the world.

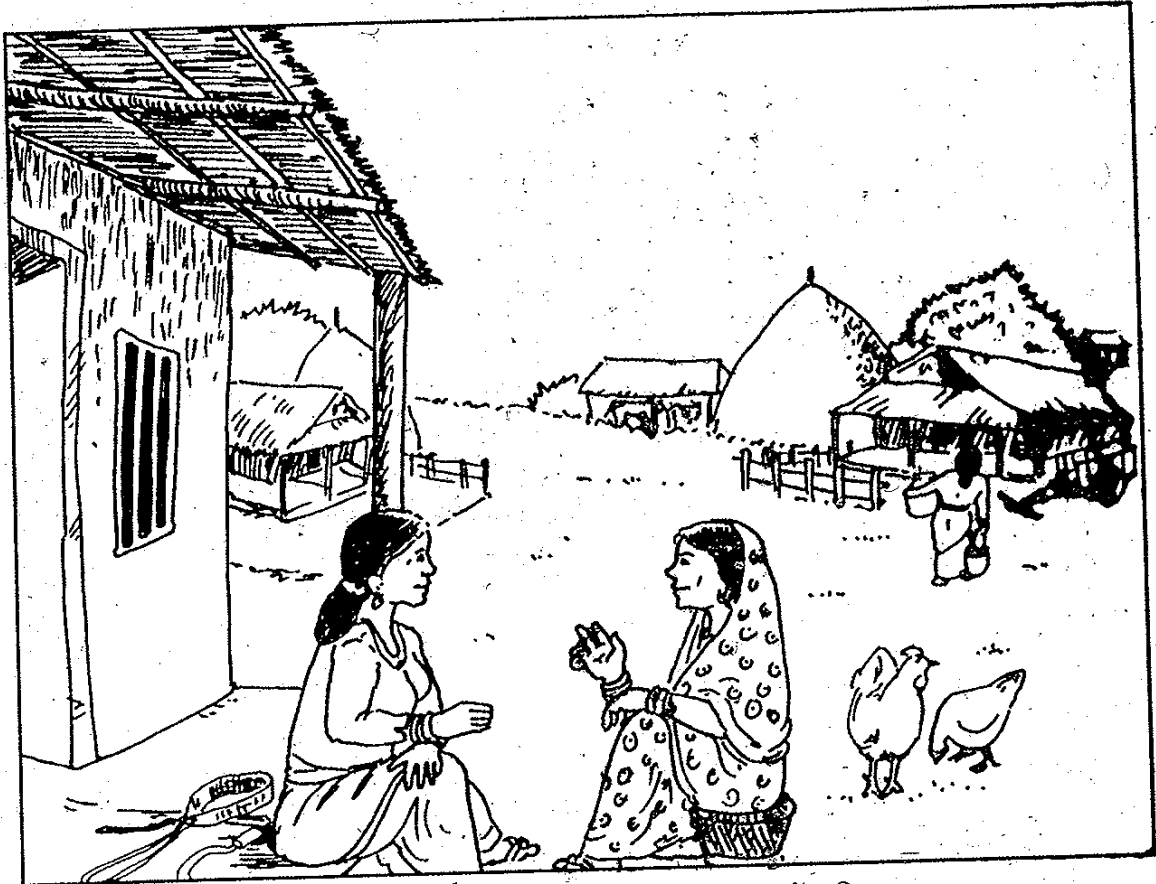
We hope you will enjoy and learn from this manual. Read it, share it, use the worksheet, and refer to it often. Just like Ram Kali, the manual's main character, you must work hard to plan your campaign and gain the support of women and men voters. It is only by working in partnership with men that women can win the elections. We applaud the excellent work that you are doing and wish you all the best of luck. Men and women throughout the world eagerly await the success of Nepali women candidates in the next local elections.

Women Can Win!

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OVERVIEW

Hari Kala: Hello, Ram Kali Didi!

Ram Kali: Hello, How are you doing?



Hari Kala: I am really doing well. Where are you going?

Ram Kali: I just wanted to meet our village sisters.

Hari Kala: Oh! What brings you here to meet with them?

Ram Kali: My term in local office will be ending very soon and the election is nearing so I just wanted to have some interaction with my fellow sisters.

Hari Kala: What are you meeting the village women for?

Ram Kali: During the last elections, I was elected in a reserved seat. In the coming elections I wish to run for a higher post because I now have five

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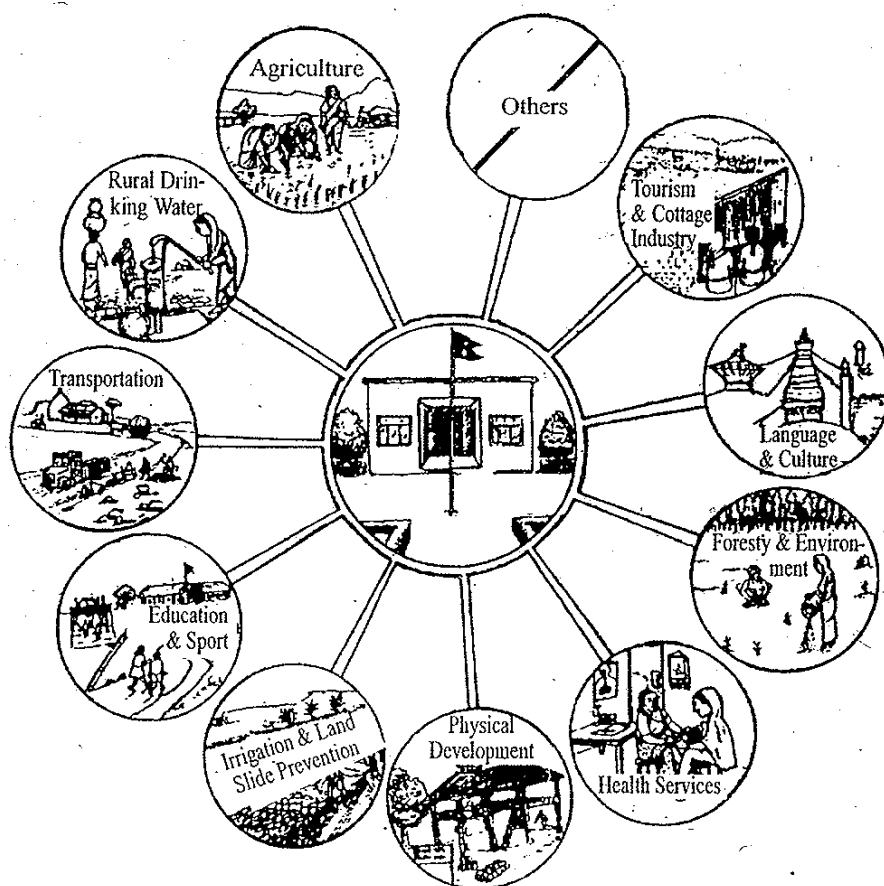
years of experience in government. During my tenure in office, I was trained by government and non-government organizations about local government and the roles and responsibilities of elected representatives. I want to encourage other village women to become more involved in politics and run for various seats in the coming elections. Are you interested in running?

Hari Kala: Well didi (sister), I don't know anything about the Village Development Committee (VDC).

Ram Kali: Don't worry! I will explain the structure of the VDC to you.
(See Appendix 1: Present VDC structure)

Hari Kala: What does the VDC do?

Ram Kali: The VDC uses government money to run the village. The VDC works to improve our village in these areas:



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Hari Kala: I am really inspired by you. I am interested to run in the coming elections. Let's talk with other women too.

Ram Kali: Of course, let's go.

**ASK YOUR VDC MEMBERS AND PARTY LEADERS ABOUT THEIR
JOB RESPONSIBILITIES IN DETAIL**

Mrs. Manju Dhungel



Why should women become involved in politics?

In this male dominated society it is difficult to bring into practice the rights women have been promised in the constitution. Therefore, women should get involved in politics as well as in policy-making positions to advance the community and to bring women's rights into practice.

How did you get the party ticket?

Community members prepared a list of the five women's names after having a meeting in our ward and then presented it to the Party's Village Area Committee. Many male party workers were against this decision but afterwards the party decided to nominate women in all five positions in our ward. In addition, I was involved in the party for a long time and actively participated in all the party's functions/programs. I got full support from the party's women organization in our ward as well. I believe it

Name : Mrs. Manju Dhungel
Home : Lalbandi VDC - 9, Bastipur, Sarlahi
Age : 47
Marital status : Married, three sons, one daughter
Education : School Leaving Certificate
Political Experience : Since 1977 Panchayat Regime (Involved indirectly in party's activities)
Office held : 1997- present: Ward President, Lalbandi-9, Sarlahi
Party : Nepali Congress (NC)

was because of this that I was nominated for the Ward President position.

What challenges/barriers, if any, did you face?

All the male party workers thought that if they supported and helped women candidates during the campaign then they would become objects of derision, so I did not get any support from male party workers. Rather, all the women from our ward worked hard during the campaign.

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How did you organize your campaign?

Once I got the nomination (ticket), I held meetings with party activists. We also had working committee meetings to decide how to mobilize volunteers and party workers during the campaign. With the help of 4-5 male party workers, I made a campaign plan and began campaigning. Since I was involved in community work



from the beginning and was well known throughout the ward, I ran a very simple campaign. I created songs for the campaign and with the help of all the women in my ward, I completed my campaign successfully.

After I was elected, I went to every house to thank the villagers for electing me ward president.

How did you gain the support of men and women?

During the campaign, I mostly got help from women. But when I got elected and started working as Ward President, then I got full support from other male representatives of our Village Development Committee (VDC).

How did you raise your campaign funds?

My party (Nepali Congress) contributed money for the nomination fees so that I did not have to pay for it. The party itself collected donations from all party members to make banners, flags, pamphlets, sample ballots, etc. In other words, the party contributed all campaign expenses. I did not spend anything from my own pocket.

What is the secret of your success?

I believe that courage is the secret of my political success. I asked for the Ward President ticket and some male political workers opposed this. When we (four ward members and I) went together and asked for tickets for all five positions in our ward, we faced many problems at the beginning. Male party workers were not supportive but we never lost heart and repeatedly asked them and at last, the party decided to nominate all five of us. All five of us won the election, and we

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became an example of how women can participate in politics and win elections in a male-dominated society. I was involved with a social organization from the beginning and I always worked for the betterment of women in our village, so I got votes from women in the opposition party as well.

What advice would you give a woman considering entering politics?

All women should be involved in politics. Women who have already entered politics should remain active in politics. We will definitely be successful one day if we continue to struggle. We face many difficulties and barriers when we walk the path of politics but we should never lose heart and never give up hope. Rather, we should encourage other women to be more involved in politics.

When we are in elected positions or simply involved in politics, we cannot always fulfill the promises that we made because of various circumstances. During such a situation, voters or villagers might comment on our work, but we should never give up hope, rather we should work patiently and continue working for the betterment of the community. We will surely get good results in the end.