

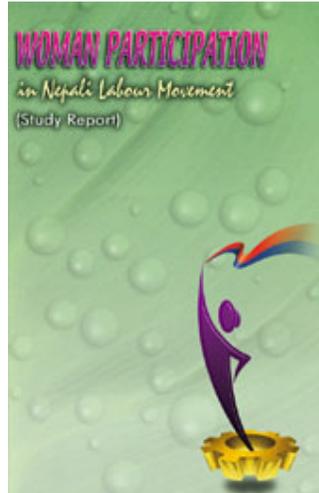
Women Participation in Nepali Labour Movement

(Study Report)

The Relationship between women and man in a patriarchal society is like that of a "Slave and master". Such a society considers women as the property of men.

And, no matter how much the man is exploited by the feudal class, he expresses his supremacy by ruling over the women.

The same is reflected in the writing of history. the contribution of women has been overarched.



Prepared by : Binda Pandey

Editing : Bishnu Rimal

Translation : Mukunda Kattel

Total Pages : 120 + 4 pages

Design/Lay-out : Mahendra Shrestha
M's Mouse, Putali Sadak, Ph. No. 977-1-265944

Published By : GEFONT-Nepal

Price : Nrs: 150.00

ISBN: 99933-329-2-5

More: visit us at www.gefont.org

Also available in GEFONT: Hard copy

PREFACE

As the title shows, Women Participation in Nepali Labour Movement is a record of women's participation in historical events in Nepal. This is not, however, a description of history, but an analysis of both the bright and dim sides that have supported as well as hindered the activities of women. The ninth chapter truly summarises the fact.

What is noteworthy about the study is its message that history should not be limited to the prayer of kings, nobles and aristocrats, it should rather be an analytical exposition of the deeds of the working class people, who genuinely write history out of their sweat and tear. And the study is just a beginning; a number of events are yet to dig out, as the 'limitation of the study' warns. We all need to realise that it is not a duty of an individual, not of a research team alone. It is a common responsibility of us all.

This study is devoted to clarifying such vibrant issues as 'gender, sex, gender discrimination, patriarchy' and the 'liberation of women.' Amidst the discussion of historical events, the study also reflects the vision of GEFONT on many pertinent issues. The study also deals with other labour-related issues in the context of labour practices. A discussion on the present day trade union movement and women's participation in it, problems facing workingwomen, gender and the policies of key labour organisations on women is obviously contextual, timely and educative not only for women but for everybody concerned with labour as well as social movement.

Comrade Binda Pandey deserves special thanks for her hard labour to lead the team that undertook the study. Thanks are also due to other members of GEFONT family who have been involved in this study one way or the other. I should not let this opportunity pass without expressing my sincere thanks to the Committee for Asian Woman, Bangkok for supporting this timely study.

Mukunda Neupane
Chairman
National Committee

PART -ONE

INTRODUCTION

Rationale and Objective of the Study

Women have played a significant role in every movement of historical importance in Nepal. They have duly fulfilled their civic duties and responsibilities. But the role and contribution of women find a little mention in the written history of the movements. So happens with the case of the contribution of women to the trade union movement. Their courageous deeds have been unnoticed and their sacrifices have not been recorded. The objective of this study is to highlight those contributions made by Nepali women, which have so far fallen into oblivion. To put in specific terms, the study aims to gather live information about the activities of the living personalities who are legend in their own lifetime thereby ending the tradition of neglecting the contribution of women to the history of the working class movement, as it is seen in other socio-political sectors.

Existing gender discrimination in our society is an obstacle to the recognition of contribution made by women. Labour movement of Nepal has also been affected by this trend. General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) is committed to eliminating this tendency. The study is an effort to that end- an utmost effort to honour the role of women in the Nepali working class movement, an effort to salute the courageous women and regard them as a source of education and inspiration to the future generation. This study is therefore to challenge the patriarchal attitude that women are good grihalaxmis (housewives) and that the house is their world. The report of historical events that built along with women, and which have a strong bearing on the present-day Nepali society, do clarify that there is nothing women have not done, and nothing they cannot do.

The study report has been divided into nine main parts: Introduction of the study, the state of women's participation in the labour sector, women's participation in democratic movement, women's participation in labour movement, women in present trade union movement, problems of women workers, gender policy of labour organisations and conclusion. Some materials supplementing the study have been included in the annex.

The Scope of the Study and Research Methodology

The study, in the beginning, was supposed to give brief information on the entire women movement, and then to concentrate on manufacturing and industrial sectors. However, on the basis of various discussions held and recommendations received at the initial stage of the research, the scope of the study had to be expanded further. As a result, it was decided to include the history of the peasants' movement as a part of the study.

The work began with interviews with the leaders of the Nepali Labour Movement of 1947, who are the senior most personalities of the entire Trade Union Movement, late Man Mohan Adhikari and Nepali Congress President Mr. Girija Prasad Koirala. On the basis of information received through interviews and visit of Biratnagar Mills Area, a numbers of facts could be dug-out. Discussions were held with the activists of the Labour Movement. Interviews were held with such activists as Anasanni Bajei, who staged a 27-day hunger strike in 1950, and Hadtaliki Ma, who gave birth

to a child while taking part in the strike. Many other activists both women and men supplied a numbers of information in this regard. In an effort to collect further information, Balram Giri, one of the leaders of the movement, was also interviewed.

"We never thought that people would come some day to enquire about these women. Therefore, no effort was made to safeguard the information," said Balram Giri, whose words reflect the attitude towards women in our society.

Information received through meetings with the courageous women activists, who participated in the jute mill struggle in Biratnagar Mills Area in 1951, and other leaders and cadres, inspired and enriched the research work. Information was also collected from leaders and activists of several movements in Balaju, Hetauda, Pokhara and other industrial districts and cities.

The research concentrated in areas like education, civil service, and public enterprises including banks. It was also an effort to collect at a time the information about the role of women in agriculture, production and service sector movements.

In the final phase of the study, women activists involved in democratic movement of the country were interviewed. These women activists uncovered much information shadowed over times. Besides personal meeting and discussion with former leaders and workers of the manufacturing, agriculture and service sectors, group discussions were organized on a regional basis as the other method of the research. Articles from various newspapers and publications, conversation with various trade union leaders, information from their offices and publication, and information from national and international trade union organisations have also been the sources of this study.

Limitation of the Study

Very little literature is available on the Peasants' Movement although it is a pioneering movement, which produced a large number of political activists and leaders. It is a real challenge to locate them out, however. As a result of various obstructions, the study has not been able to collect information on incidents as much as it had to in this sector. The study has, however, reached to a conclusion that there is quite a lot to be searched and identified.

The study had to be completed a year ago. However, it was not possible due to various reasons. The study raises an honest question as to how the information based on limited resources, and collected from the personalities linked up with the historical events of agriculture, manufacturing and service sector would represent courageous movements in the remaining sectors.

It also needs to be mentioned that no effort was made to incorporate the movement of the working women in domestic, rural, informal and self-employed sectors.

As a large number of women involved in the movement are illiterate, it was their memories to furnish information. It is, therefore, obvious that many important facts about many incidents have gone missing as the memory power declines, as one gets older and older.

PART - TWO

Women Participation in Labour Sector

Nepal is one of the least developed countries in South Asia. According to a report of International Labour Organisation (ILO), 50.2 percent of the total population of our country is below the poverty line. As women constitute more than 50 percent of the 22 million population in Nepal, development of the country is not possible without proper participation and mobilisation of the working women.

According to the report of the National Labour Force Survey (NLFS) 1998/99, 54 percent of the total population is economically active. Of the total female population, fifty-six percent are economically active, where as only 53 per cent of the male population have been found economically active. It indicates that the participation of women is larger than that of men in economic activities of the entire society.

Even though women participation in labour force is increasing, women labour in the income generating activity is undervalued, unseen and discriminated due to our social norms, values, culture and the lack of opportunity for education.

The entire labour force involved in economic activities can be divided into three categories: paid, unpaid and self-employed. Thirteen percent of them are paid, 40.64 percent self-employed and the largest 43.33 percent involved in domestic and household works are unpaid.

Paid workers receive remuneration either in cash or kind. Women participation in this sector is 7.72 percent of the total women labour force. Self-employed labour force is involved in production or service sectors on their own investment. Women participation in this sector is 28.89 percent. Women participation is at maximum in unpaid family work (specially domestic work). Nearly, two-third of the total women labour is involved in this kind of work. All this has developed a wrong perception in the society that women are weak and thus dependent upon others' income.

Table 1: Women Participation by the Type of Labour (in thousands)

Type of Work	Total		Men		Women	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Labour Force	9,473	100.0	4,736	100.0	4,727	100.00
Paid	1,517	16.0	1,153	24.3	365	7.7
Unpaid	4,100	43.3	1,103	23.3	2,997	63.4
Self-employed	3,846	40.7	2,440	52.4	1,377	28.9

Source: NLFS 1998

Agriculture has been one of the worst working sectors, which has nothing to provide as incentives and facilities. It is one of the worst sectors also in terms of working conditions. According to NLFS, the largest number (85.19 percent) of women labour force, above 15 years of age, involved in income generating activities are in this sector. The percentage of women working in non-agriculture informal sector on a daily wage basis and without any kind of other facilities is 12.80 percent. The construction sector such as buildings, road, water and electricity as well as other works operating under a contract or a piece-meal fashion fall under

this category. Areas of work with regular remuneration plus other privileges have been grouped as the non-agriculture formal sector. This also includes women working in public offices, corporations, factories and other private offices. The survey shows the women labour at the lowest (1.99 percent) in this sector.

Table 2: Women Participation by Sectors of work (in '000)

Sector of Work	Total	Percent	Men	Percent	Women	Percent
Total Labour Force	9,476	100	4,736	100	4,727	100
Agriculture	7,203	76	3,176	67.06	4,027	85.19
Non-Agriculture Informal Sector	1,657	17.5	1,052	22.21	605	12.80
Non-Agriculture Formal Sector	603	6.5	509	10.75	94	1.99

Source: NLFS 1998/99

Women in Monthly Paid Work

[TOP](#)

Any work providing monthly remuneration can be taken as regular employment. It has been mentioned as institutionalised or regular employment. Workers in regular employment are enjoying the right to collective bargaining as per labour law. On an ownership basis, industry, business, non-government organisations and other institutions in the state, public and private sector are the major categories.

Among these, the government service is the most secured area of work in terms of job security, services and benefits. Women participation in this sector is just 13.47 percent. The second safe sector is public enterprises. Women participation in public enterprises like telecommunications, electricity authority, water supply, food corporations, dairy development corporation etc. is 14.29 percent. Most of them work in the lower level. Only a very few women are in policy-making levels.

Non-Government Organisations have flooded into the country after the restoration of democracy. NGOs have, ever since, been developed as one of the main areas of employment. According to statistics, more than 26,000 people are working in this sector. The number of labourers working in private industries and trade is 385,000. The remuneration for workers in the sector is arranged on the basis of the labour law. Around 19 percent women participate in both these sectors. .

The highest number of workers is found in small industries, trade and unregistered companies, which are being run in an organised way . Most of these workers are unskilled or semi-skilled. The number involved in this sector is 791,000, where the percentage of women is 30.72 percent.

Table 3: Women Participation in Organised Sector (in '000)

Total Labour Force	Total	Men	Percent	Women	Percent
Total Labour force	1,517	1,153	76.01	365	24.06
Government Service	245	212	86.53	33	13.47
Public Enterprises	70	60	85.71	10	14.29
Non-Government Organisations	26	21	80.77	5	19.23
Private Companies	385	311	80.78	75	19.48

Others	791	549	69.41	243	30.72
--------	-----	-----	-------	-----	-------

Source: NLFS 1998/99

Classification of the work is made on the basis of responsibility, efficiency and qualification in any institution. Workers are classified as technicians and the workers in the service sector, police and arm force, agriculture, cottage industry, small business and other sectors. Of the total 1,517,000 workers in all these sectors, 365,000 (24 percent) are women. Majority of them are however in junior levels identified as unskilled workers.

Technical: Works related to specific technology, technical skill and qualification: artisan, carpentry, overseer, engineer, doctor etc are technical workers.

Vocational: Works related to business with skills and efficiencies to meet the requirement for a businessperson, manager, etc.

Service-Oriented: Service-oriented works such as communication, education, health, transport, hotel, electricity, drinking water, banking etc.

Production-oriented industry: Manufacturing and processing industries, such as factories producing food items, clothes, building materials, electronic goods etc.

Cottage Industry: Income generating and home based small industries and businesses operating with locally available means and resources

Other Sectors: Works that require more physical labour than any specific skills

Women participation in senior posts in terms of power, prestige and good salary is quite low in the organised sectors of works. The number of women is high in low paid works, which do not require any kind of skill or qualification, but irritating physical labour.

Table 4: Women in workforce based on skill and position (in '000)

Type of Work	Total	Men	in %	Women	in %
Total Labour Force	1,517	1,153	76.00	365	24.00
Senior officers	6	5	83.33	0	0.00
Professionals	33	29	87.88	4	12.12
Technicians	171	133	77.78	39	22.81
Low Paid Officials	105	94	89.52	11	10.48
Service Sector Workers	55	49	89.09	6	10.91
Vocational Agriculture	11	10	90.91	1	9.09
Subsistence Agriculture	33	19	57.58	14	42.42
Cottage Industries	193	169	87.56	24	12.44
Operators	67	66	98.51	1	1.49
Other Occupations	838	574	68.50	264	31.50
Army	5	5	100.00	0	0.00

Source: NLFS 1998/99

The Labour Sector: Education, Skills and Opportunity

Participation of women in labour sector is directly associated with education, skill and opportunity they get. Nepali women have to face social discrimination from their birth. Nearly 75.4 percent of women above 15 years of age have never been to school. The number of women getting the opportunity of education up to secondary level is only 4.6 percent while that of men is 13.2 percent.

This statistics explains that even if there is an equal opportunity between men and women, only one-fourths (25 percent) of women are able to compete for employment due to the low level of education and qualification. The patriarchal attitude and culture prevailing in the society has been another hurdle for the women who are able and opting for employment. Given this, an equal opportunity for women is still a far cry.

Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a tradition under which the supremacy of men prevails in every aspect of society and family-life. In such society, one-sided ruling of men exists in economic, political and social issues. Only men are recognized as the guardian and family authority. In patriarchy, women are kept under the rule and command of men.

*Table 5: Women Participation in Education
(the population in percentage above 15 years of age)*

Completed Education Level	Total	Among Men	Among Women
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
Never Attended Schools	60.3	43.7	75.4
Below Primary Level	9.7	13.5	6.3
Primary Level	11.8	16.1	7.9
Lower Secondary Level	9.3	13.1	5.9
Secondary Level	5.6	8.3	3.2
Higher Secondary Level	1.9	3.1	0.8
Masters Level	1.1	2	0.4
Masters Plus	0.2	0.2	0.2

Source: NLFS 1998

Skill Oriented and Vocational Training

According to the report of National Labour Force Survey (NLFS), 287,000 persons in the country have received vocational training. Among them, 145,000 are women. The participation of women in the sectors like sewing, knitting and general health volunteers is nearly 95 percent. However, either only men or their absolute majority is found in technology-related works such as driving, computer, electricity etc.

Table 6: Vocational and Professional Training (in '000)

Main areas of Training	Total	(%)	Men	Men (%)	Women	Women (%)
Total Number	287	100	142	49.48	145	50.52
Knitting and tailoring	93	32.40	5	5.38	88	94.62
Health	53	18.47	24	45.28	29	54.72
Agriculture and Livestock	40	13.94	35	87.50	5	12.50
Computer Operation	29	10.10	20	68.97	9	31.03
Teaching	26	9.06	20	76.92	6	23.04
Driving	17	5.92	17	100	0	0.00
Typing/Secretarial	15	5.23	7	46.67	8	53.33
Electrical	14	5.23	14	100	0	0.00

Source: NLFS 1998

On the other side, women participation is high in agriculture sector, but the participation of men is higher in agro-related training such as farming and animal husbandry. Therefore, the practical utilisation of such training provided by different organisations should be evaluated.

Discrimination in Employment and Wages

As mentioned above, there is a majority of men in high paid jobs. Women participation is high in low paid jobs. But, there is a marked difference in wages and facilities for men and women even in similar type of work. Viewing in general, the average wage received by women is only 57.26 percent of the average wage of men. The discrimination of its kind can be found in every sector. It is quite maximum in agriculture, cottage industry, machine operating and low-level works. The survey also shows that the wage received by women in agriculture is only one-third of those received by men.

Likewise, the wages women get is only 46.86 percent of what men receive in cottage industries, and 62.29 percent in other works.

Table 7: Average Monthly Income (in Rupees)

Work	Average Income	Men	Women	Percentage of What Men Receive
Average in Totality	2,143	2,389	1,368	57.26
High Level Administrative Job	8,037	8,068	7,525	93.27
Vocational	5,079	5,141	4,631	90.08
Technical	2,971	3,057	2,678	87.60
Low Paid Employees	2,832	2,836	2,805	98.91
Service Sector	2,507	2,506	2,525	100.76
Agriculture	2,109	2,756	9,57	34.72

Cottage Industry	2,773	2,973	1,393	46.86
Machine Operator	2,981	2,995	2,037	68.01
Other Professions	1,491	1,692	1,054	62.29
Army	3,306	3,258	4,250	130.45

Source: NLFS 1998/99

PART: THREE

Women Participation in Democratic Movement

The courageous battle of Nalapani cannot be forgotten while talking of Nepali Women Movement. Nepali women had fought bravely against British Imperialism in Nalapani. Even when the British army blocked the sources of water, they fought bravely, hand-in-hand with men, carrying babies on their back and khukhuris in their hands. The British rulers themselves have mentioned of the courageous battle the women fought with them.

Following this event, the participation of women has noticeably increased in series of historical events. Nepali history has recorded how Queen Rajendra Laxmi Devi Shah took power in her hands and gave rise to such incidents as kot parba and bhandarkhal parba, both killed a large number of top officials and other people. History also witnesses how Jung Bahadur Rana assumed power and consolidated it with the help of Royal-maids, who informed him of the conspiracies being hatched against him. Such historical incidents created pressure to abolish the sati pratha, a social practice in which a wife was burned alive on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband. Rana Prime Minister Chandra Shumsher was compelled to abolish the system in 1920.

To revenge a man in feudal society, his wife or daughter is tortured and misbehaved. Due to their enmity with Bhimsen Thapa, the then Nepali rulers dragged his wife nude two way round from Borlang to Kathmandu. Unable to bear this insult and the hurt & agony it created, Bhimsen Thapa committed suicide in prison.

There have been many such incidents in Nepali history where women have a considerable participation. The participation of women in democratic movement can be classified as below:

A. Participation in the movement between 1918-1950

Women started an organised effort to fight oppression from 1918. The first organisation of Nepali women nari samiti (women committee) was founded under the chairpersonship of Yogmaya Neupane in 1918. Equality and freedom were the main objectives of the committee. Nari Samiti worked to create awareness and organise women through the medium of religious functions and songs.

Yogmaya Neupane

Born in 1860 in Dingla of Bhojpur District, Yogmaya was married at an early age. She became a widow within 3 years of her marriage. She then returned back to her maternal home after being harassed by her in-laws as a Poi-tokuwi. After a few years, she remarried and left for Assam in India. She thus courageously challenged the cultural hypocrisy developed under male chauvinism. She returned back Nepal with a daughter in 1903 and became involved in various religious activities in different places. She was also a poetess. She protested against injustice, corruption and blasphemous through the medium of hymns, religious songs and poems. In course of time, the number of her disciples reached more than 2000. She was held

in prison and tortured by the then Rana rulers. But still she did not give up the path. She struggled until her last breath.

In a meeting with the wife of Rana Prime Minister Juddha Shumsher, Yogmaya was offered a plate full of gold coins. She refused the offer stating that she would be more satisfied if a religious and humane state could be established. She then left for Dingla chanting hymns all the way. As the rulers recklessly killed for their demands of justice, Yogmaya, with her elder brother, his wife and daughter plus other 68 disciples, committed suicide by jumping into the Arun River.

from "Leader of Social Movement and Poet Yogmaya"

Yogmaya was a child widow. She had experienced inhuman and tortuous life of a widow in a conservative society. The committee constituted under the leadership of Yogmaya concentrated its activities on the exploitation against women in the name of religion and tradition, particularly the widow marriage, child marriage and polygamy. Within a few years of its activity, the committee submitted a 24-point petition of demands stating the problems facing women to the Prime Minister Chandra Shumsher. Following the death of Chandra Shumsher, Yogmaya and her disciples came to Kathmandu and met and discussed the matter with Juddha Shumsher and his wife. After receiving assurance of reform in religion they returned back to Bhojpur. But, instead of working on the letter of demand, the government killed four revolutionaries in 1940. Yogmaya's group lost hope. Finally with a firm statement that "it is better to die than to live in the lawless state", Yogmaya and her disciples collectively sacrificed their lives in protests by jumping into the Arun River in 1941.

Rammaya Nepali

Rammaya Nepali, who began working in Singha Durbar at an early age of 15 years in 1935, retired after a 45-year long service. She did not have any children but raised her niece as her own daughter. She presently lives with the family of her niece at Maitedevi, Kathmandu. Her Father was a Tamang and Husband a Chyame. She is quite sad to read newspapers mentioning her a Poda.

Rammaya used to live near the house of Nepali Martyr Ganga Lal. Her mother used to work as a house- maid of Ganesh Man Singh. When Ganga Lal, Ganesh Man Singh and other leaders were imprisoned in Singha Durbar, Rammaya used to carry letters for them from their relatives.

Ganga Lal and others used to leave their letters in the toilet and give her a signal stating "Rammaya! There is a spider web, please clean it". Rammaya was not that familiar with politics, but she knew that the exchange of letters was dangerous and important too. She was ready, however, to take the risk. This was really a great help to the political movement of the period.

"Everyone has their family in Kathmandu, but if I am killed here, there is nobody to cry for me. Ram Maya, you cry for me, OK", Dasarath Chand had said once to Ram Maya. When the Rana rulers killed the four revolutionary leaders in 1937, this has a serious hurt to Her.

People contribute to movements not merely through political consciousness, but

their feelings also work well. Ram Maya is a living example.

As conversed with Ram Maya Nepali, June 2000

In 1993, Chandrakanta Mathema set up a Women's School at Makhan, Kathmandu. Along with literacy classes, the school provided training on sewing and knitting. Women became involved in political as well as educational movements through the school. For the first time, co-education school was established at Naghal in 1944. These schools encouraged women to participate in political movement. Most of the women taking part in the movement were from these schools.

Labour Movement began from Biratnagar in 1947. Women also took part in the movement. Some of them, including Nalini Upadhyaya, Kamini Giri, Indira Acharya and Dibya Koirala, were arrested for this. But, they were not labourers.

For the first time in the history of Nepal, women took part in the procession of "civic rights movement" held in 1947. The procession began from Padmodaya High School. Thirty-nine people, including four women: Sadhana Adhikari, Sahana Pradhan, Kanaklata Bajracharya and Snehalata Shrestha, were arrested. All of them were imprisoned together inside Singha Durbar and were released after a week.

During the same year, on first week of August, a gathering of women at Mhepi founded Nepal Womens' Association. Mangala Devi Singh was not present on the occasion. However, as Ganesh Man Singh was in prison, the gathering decided that his wife should be the President. A committee was constituted with Kamaksha Devi as the Vice-President and Snehalata Shrestha as the General Secretary. Under the leadership of this Association, a delegation met Prime Minister Padma Shumsher demanding education, employment and voting rights for women.

Another movement took place in 1948 in the name of National Congress. Eleven persons including six women were arrested in this movement.

Nanimaiya Nakarmi

We took part in the satyagraha movement when Tulsi Lal Amatya and Madhav Joshi came to our house and asked us to fight against injustice. Uma Devi Shrestha, Jagdiswori, Kesari Pradhan and myself from Bhaktapur, and Devnani Tuladhar and Laxmi Manandhar from Indra Chowk were arrested in course of the Satyagraha. Jagdiswori, Umadevi and Kesari were released after two-months in prison and the remaining three of us were freed only after eight-months.

Asked about torture following the arrest, Nanimaiya says " Let's not talk about it. It was then I knew the pain a hunter causes."

A procession of women took to the street in Kathmandu on the day of ShreePanchami in 1951. The procession began from Bangemudha and concluded at Swayambhu. It had a good participation of peasant women. Pamphlets on the rights of women were also distributed in the procession. During the same year, King Tribhuvan went to India. The Rana rulers coroneted Prince Gyanendra, but the public protested it. A British Mission from India came to Nepal to seek public support for Gyanendra as the King of the country. The Mission was also denounced by showing black flag at the airport. Police responded it with lathi-charge the protesters were dispersed. Despite police suppression, a procession led by Shanta

Shrestha was quite successful in showing black flags to the Mission. Everyone praised her courage. Nepali women also took part in other anti-Rana activities.

At the same time, autocrat Basnet families murdered the family of Danti Bhoteni of Solu and confiscated their property. But Danti Bhoteni did not lose hope. She came to Kathmandu on foot disguised as a man wearing Daura Suruwal. She then began asking for justice at the Royal Palace but later, on her return back to the village, she was murdered.

This phase of the women's movement concentrated on such issues as the recognition for widow marriage, abolition of child marriage and polygamy, end of the exploitation of women in the name of religion and tradition, equal opportunity of education and employment for women, voting rights for women and so on. The movement brought about some reforms in the education system and some flexibility in the traditional value system.

Sadhana Adhikari

We had accompanied our father who used to do business in Bhutan. After the World War II, we came back to Nepal from Bhutan following a two months trek. During the period, women in Nepal were quite hesitant to come out of their homes. In 1948, a procession began from Padmodaya School in the name of civic society. Four women, Sahana, Snehalata, Kanaklata and myself and many men were arrested. Everyone was locked at a single place inside Singha Durbar. Policemen threatened us that we would be hanged. Regardless of the threat, we started hunger strike. We were released after seven days of imprisonment. Our family was scared that the society would reject us following the release. We also did not know what would happen. But as soon as we came out, the public welcomed us jubilantly. This provided us with further encouragement. Our family was very happy at our courage.

Nepal Women's Association was set up in 1947 and we sent a delegation to the Prime Minister demanding voting rights for women. In 1949, we organised a procession demanding for education. Women peasants also took part in the procession, but not the middle-class women. We were mixed-up with the family of peasants, live there, talk to them and generate awareness in them.

A conference of peasants was held in 1949 in the house of Nati Dai. Among the 3000 peasant participants, more than 20 women participated in the conference.

Participation of women peasants was considerably high in the women procession organised on Sripanchami in 1951. We were given voting rights in 1952. When I stood for elections, women peasants helped me in publicity and were actively involved to ensure my victory. Political activities were not affected even after my marriage in 1954. I gave birth to a child in 1958 and was responsible for his upbringing. It compelled me to take up teaching, thus could not make politics my career. I, however, prepared an atmosphere congenial for Man Mohan comrade to become completely involved in politics. In a way, my role was that of an assistant to him.

I was in Biratnagar during the Teachers Movement in 1979. I assisted the movement from there. I retired in 1992 after 33 years in teaching. Still I don't reject anyone for the work I am able to do. I have assisted from my side, so will do in future as well.

As talked to Sadhana Adhikari, June, 2000

B. Participation in the movement between 1951-1978

With the end of the autocratic Rana Rule, social movements continued taking up various issues in the changed circumstances. On the other side, internal disputes began to rise in different organisations. This also affected the women's' association. Politically, Mangala Devi Singh and Punya Prabha Dhungana had no differences. But as a result of personal conflict, Punya Prabha Dhungana constituted All Nepal Women's' Association in 1951. This association, along with other points, demanded for the recruitment of women into the police force. As a result, 18 women were recruited into police service.

The new government constituted a 35-member advisory committee. The committee represented people only from the Nepali Congress. Protesting this, Nepal Women's Association organised a protest rally at Bhugol Park. Eight women were arrested from the rally. Policewomen behaved more inhumanly than policemen did with them in custody they were released after a week.

Shanta Shrestha

The newly constituted coalition government in 1951, appointed people only from the Nepali Congress Party. Nepal Women's' Association protested this activity organising a protest meet at Bhugol Park. Police intervened into this gathering arresting eight women including Sahana Pradhan, Kokila Baidya, Krishna Kumari Guvaju, Ram Laxmi, Mitthu Devi and myself. We were released after a week. The recruitment of women in police service was started at the time. The Policewomen were quite hostile on us than their male counterpart.

As talked with Shanta Shrestha, August, 2000

In 1952, political parties and peoples'organisations started debating over the issue that the Delhi Agreement was a betrayal. The debate also reflected the differences in political thinking. Mangala Devi led a faction, which believed that women's rights could be attained through the reform. Kamaksha Devi led the other side with the belief that only a radical change could provide women with their rights. While this debate was going on, the Indian Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru came to Nepal. Nepal Women's Association decided formally to protest him with black flags at the airport. Eight women including Sabitra Shrestha were arrested and were released after a week. Mangala Devi Singh did not support the decision and conflict were intensified in the organisation. Finally, Nepal Women's Association was divided into two different Associations.

Sabitri Shrestha

Before going to the airport to display black flags we went to the house of Mangala Devi. "You all go, I have to attend a meeting", she said. We went through the jungle of Guheswori. Eight of us including Shrimaya Shrestha, Bishnu Kesari Shrestha, Silbandi Shah, Janaki Shrestha, Renuka Shrestha, Kanchi Didi, Sabitri Poudel and myself were arrested. We were kept in custody, close to a toilet, at Hanuman Dhoka. We were shifted to the upper storey after we staged a hunger strike for three days demanding to shift us from there. We were tortured by both policemen and policewomen. They pulled Sri Maya by her hair. Among us, she was the one most severely tortured.

Based on conversation held in September 2000

Women continued their participation in movements despite tortures and harassment. As a result in 1952, women received the right to vote and also began to take part in parliamentary politics. In 1953, Sadhana Adhikari contested for Kathmandu Municipality elections. She was the first elected woman in the Municipality. Thus, women also began to enter in government bodies.

Snehalata Shrestha

Nepal Women's Association had officially decided in 1952 to show black flags to Jawahar Lal Nehru. The women protesters led by Kamachcha Devi had to face police suppression while going for it. Some were arrested. But, Nepal Women's Association President Mangala Devi Singh went to welcome Nehru against the decision.

Her return created a dispute in the association. As she was the President she took with her the sign board of the association and set up a separate office. We changed the leadership of Nepal Women's Association and made Kamaksha Devi the President and set up the office at its original place.

I was the general secretary from the time of establishment of the women's association till 1953. Due to personal reasons, I resigned in 1953. Kamaksha Devi carried out all office works in my absence although my resignation was not accepted. The women association was banned in 1960.

Asked why she became a communist, Mrs. Shrestha says, "I was a member of the national congress. One morning, I met Home Minister Bisheshwar Prasad Koirala and told him that the Ranas are taking away national property, we should stop them and nationalise the property and invest it into national industry. But he counter-questioned, "Snehalata, have you also become a communist?" This question filled me with a consciousness that only the communists can protect national property. Thus I became a communist".

Based on conversation in September 2000

From 1952 to 1958, peasants' movements concentrated on protests against feudallords and Jamindars in different parts of the country. In these movements, mentionable is the action against autocratic Badahakim Santbir Lama of Ilam. A woman activist Dulalni Bajei pulled Santbir off his horse and garlanded him with shoes. Many brave women like Dulalni Bajei are however not mentioned in history, their deeds have not come to public attention.

Fifty-First International Women's Day

Nepali women celebrated the International Womens' Day (March 8) for the first time in 1961. On the occasion, ANWA and WVS organised a function in Kathmandu. Teachers and Students from Kanya Mandir High School also celebrated the occasion participating in the function. Women in Colleges and Schools in Dhankuta also celebrated the day by organising seminars and holding processions. The government, later, decided to observe the Day as a paid leave for women employees.

from Mahilamukti- Vol. 3

A section of an ultra feminist movement had also developed in the Nepali Women's Movement. It has been mentioned in Matritwa (1995) and Mahila Mukti (Volume 5). The demands were limited to education for women, participation of women in the interim government, skill development for women etc. They had also stated that "men are our enemy, we have to keep them under our control. We don't need men, nor are we concerned about them."

The Declaration (1951) of All Nepal Women's Association (ANWA) put up the following demands

- Equal wages for equal works.
- Equal rights in all walks of national life.
- Special facility for women in post-delivery period and childcare facilities
- Free education for children.
- Withdrawal of husbands and sons from the arm-force of foreign imperialist countries
- Independent Nepal and people's democracy in Nepal

from "A Brief History of Communist Movement in Nepal"

The women movement that voiced for radical changes held that women could achieve independence along with others only through struggle against feudalism and imperialism.

Dwarika Devi Thakurani was elected from Dadeldhura district in the first general elections in 1958. She was also appointed as the first women Minister- the minister of state for health.

In 1960, King Mahendra forcibly replaced multiparty democratic system by Panchayat System. Women came to the streets in protest of this reactionary move of the King. Shailaja Acharya, Umadevi and Gauri Rana were in the forefront protesting with black flags on February 18, 1961. They were arrested.

All women organizations were banned along with the declaration of the Panchayat system. But women participation continued in the movements carried out by workers, peasants and students. They continued organising themselves in an underground existence. A large number of women participated in the movement organised by students demanding Free Student Union in 1965 and the movement against DIG Narayan Singh (who tried to harass sexually the woman artist at Rastriya Nachghar in 1966).

The armed struggle of Jhapa in 1971, which is renowned as "Jhapa Bidroha" also, had women Participation. Lila Kattel, Gaura Prasain and Sita Khadka were among the notable women who fought fearlessly in this movement. All three of them served jail terms for this. Among them, Lila Kattel died in a rickshaw accident, unfortunately after a few years of release.

During these movements, women were responsible for providing shelter to the underground leaders, changing their places of living and exchanging news and information. Sharada Mainali is one of the bravest women who have played a significant role in this regard.

In order to keep the public under their clutches, the Panchayat rulers had set up different class organisations. Nepal Women's Organisation was one of them founded under the leadership of the women from the palace and aristocrat family. Established in 1962, a handful of women under the banner of this organisation reaped benefits in the name of women in general. It is noteworthy, however, that the aristocrat women had started celebrating International Womens' Year and International Working Women Day (March 8) in the name of "womens' day" since 1975. The organisation has been gone astray along with the fall of the Panchayat.

C. Participation in Anti-Panchyat movement between 1979-90

All Nepal Women's' Association dissolved after the coup of 1960 was re-constituted in 1978 under the convenorship of Parijat. But, this could not carry out any programmes immediately. Therefore, on February 1980, a seven-member All Nepal Women's Association Central Preparatory Committee was constituted under the convenorship of Shanta Manawi with Swasti Bajracharya, Jaya Ghimire, Radha Gyawali, Sanjita Giri, Sharada Mainali and Kamala Rai as its members. From the year, the International Working Womens' Day (March 8) was celebrated at the people's level as an important day of women's movement. It was, thereafter established as the Working Women Day.

Namita and Sunita- Murder case

Residents of Lazimpat, two sisters Namita and Sunita were admitted to College following the results of School Leaving Certificate (SLC) Examinations, 1981. Next year, they went on a tour to Pokhara. After a few days in Pokhara, the two sisters were raped and murdered by some hooligans. Their dead-body were found at the bank of the Seti River. Women then waged a nation-wide movement demanding action against the culprit involved in the crime.

From Ghosana issue -1

Following the murder of Namita and Sunita in 1981, ANWA led a nation-wide protest programme. A grand procession was organised on June in Kathmandu. The procession submitted a letter of protest to the Prime Minister at Singha Durbar and converged into a mass meeting in the premises of Tri-Chandra College. Students, peasants, workers and people from all walks of life, men and women, took part in the programmes organised and led by ANWA demanding stern actions against the culprit and protection for women. The nation witnessed procession and rallies, wall painting, postering and distribution of pamphlets all around the country.

Not only March 8, the Teej, a cultural festival of Nepali women, also became an occasion for women activists to carry out a lot of programmes. Led by ANWA, women throughout the nation utilised the day as an awareness-oriented cultural festival. In 1985, police charged Lathi on the women gathered to celebrate the Teej at Butwal.

The multi-party system was declared on April 9, 1990 (Chaitra 26, 2046 Bikram Era). Even after this, none of the culprits of the Panchayati regime were punished. Instead, insecurity of women increased. In June the same year, four hooligans raped 11-year-old girl Asali Maya Tamang at Dillibazaar, Kathmandu.

In 1988, women immediately took to the streets in protest against inhuman Bhurjungkhola Rape case. Taking up this issue, some members of the Rastriya Panchayat obstructed the parliament, while the people revolted in the streets. Women revolt against this incident expanded throughout the country.

Bhurjungkhola Rape Case

In 1988, four local hooligans raped Durga Devi Acharya at Bhurjungkhola, Pokhara. Panchayati rulers had planned the incident because she was an ANWA activist, hence against the Panchayat system. ANWA staged a big protest in Pokhara against the crime. It later expanded all over the country. As a result of the pressure from women, four of the culprits including Amar Bahadur Gurung were arrested and jailed for two years. As they were Panchayat sponsored hooligans, the rulers released them before their term of imprisonment was over.

Protests were organised against girl trafficking, rape, dowry, and domestic violence and so on while equal rights for women were the main demands of all movements organised during this period. Major voices raised surrounding the movements were for equal rights in socio-economic, political and cultural sectors, guarantee of social security to women; stern legal provisions against social crimes such as murder, rape, girl trafficking and domestic violence; and the abolishment of the dowry system.

D. Participation in various activities between 1990-91

Women played an important role in the 1990 popular movement. ANWA had constituted a Central Action Committee in Kathmandu in support of the movement. Other struggle committees of women at different levels were also constituted outside the valley. March 8 of this year was jointly celebrated by different women's organisations giving the public a message about a unified movement. A large number of women were arrested from Kathmandu and other places for participating in the programme. The women introduced a variety of protest events. They covered up their mouths with black bands, held torch processions, corner meetings and mass meetings and moved around the city striking dinner plates. Like their male counterparts, women in the movement also faced lathi charges, kicks, warrants and arrests from police. They also suffered other forms of mental, physical, psychological torture and sexual harassment at police custody.

At the outset of the movement, Janaki Devi Yadav, Muneswori Yadav and Sonawati Yadav attained martyrdom. Shobha Bajracharya, Pampha Khadgi lost their lives in course of the movement. Bidhya Devi Joshi, Sita Bidari and others were also injured by bullet. The news of police attack and barbaric torture of Laxmi Karki in Pokhara further enraged the people to protest against the Panchayat. Around 500 women were arrested in connection with the movement.

Home Minister's Advice: The most irresponsible statement

Demanding stern actions against the rapists of Asali Maya Tamang, a 70-member delegation of women led by ANWA president Asta Laxmi Shakya met home Minister Yog Prasad Upadhyaya on July 17, 1990. In reply to the demands, the Home Minister said, "women walk in the street in sexy clothes and make up. This attracts men and such incidents do take place. Women are also guilty of this. Therefore, for their security they should grow long nails and carry chilly dust in their bags, scratch

the rapists with nails and throw chilly dust in their eyes and run away." Such an irresponsible statement of the Home Minister enraged the women. On July 20, ANWA further organised a protest rally near the site of the incident at Dilli Bazaar demanding action against the culprits and resignation of the irresponsible Home Minister.

The hooligans were however left scot-free. ANWA delegated a fact-finding mission about the incident and continued other forms of movements to pressurise the concerned authority. The association also pressurised the Home Minister to forward the case to the council of ministers. Instead of considering this issue with due austerity, the Home Minister accused the women of their carelessness for their insecurity, and made such silly suggestions as to grow nails, scratch the men who attempt to misbehave and throw chilly dust in their eyes. The women enraged at this remark, organised a mass meeting at Dilli Bazaar against the rape case and the negligence of the Home Minister. The meeting was coordinated by ANWA.

Some recommendations presented by ANWA to the Constitution Reform Recommendation Commission.

- Equal rights for daughters in Inheritance property.
- Guarantee of social security and protection of women.
- A provision similar to that for men in the case of citizenship acquirement for a Nepali woman who marries a foreign man.
- Guarantee of free and compulsory education for women.
- Provision of representation of women in constitutional bodies.
- Special provision for economic self-reliance.
- Fifty percent women representation in the upper house.
- Constitutional provision for constituting a family court against women violence.

(From the recommendation letter submitted to the Constitution Reform Recommendation Commission)

On the occasion of Teej-1990, ANWA organised a cultural programme at Pashupati. For the first time after thirty years of the autocratic rule, the women expressed their feelings in an open atmosphere. They sang songs of their sorrow, rights and struggle. In the evening, they returned back to their homes. As usual in the evening, the queen was on her way to Pashupati Nath Temple. The people who had hatred against the Palace expressed their anger by pelting the queen's vehicle with stones. For this, ANWA was held responsible. In this incident, arrest warrants were issued against Binda Pandey, Pampha Bhusal, Laxmi Karki, Hisila Yami and others, and their houses raided. Bachaspati Devkota, Raju Nepal, Toyanath Thapaliya and other men were also arrested and tortured. In the same year, some hooligans attacked a Teej programme in Arghakhanchi. Demanding action against the hooligans, the women in Arghakhanchi staged a 20-day relay strike and five-day hunger strike.

Demands put up by Nepali Women with the Advent of Democracy

- Representation of women in the constitution formulating commission
- Inheritance property rights to daughters
- Special provision of employment
- Women participation in policy decision level
- Social protection and guarantee of security of women.

- Action against the culprits from the Panchayat time who committed murder, rape and other inhuman behaviour against women.
- Return of the girls sold abroad and arrangement of employment for them.
- Effective prohibition of dowry
- Two-month maternity leave for working women, and allowances for education to the children
- Proper arrangement for child-care centre and health care for babies.
- Proper arrangement of housing and care for the orphan, helpless, disabled and elderly women.
- No Night-shift work for women
- Compulsory and free education up to the secondary level and encouragement & opportunity for women in higher education.
- Abolishment of child marriage, abduction marriage, exchange marriage and pandav bibaha.
- Easy and effective measures to obtain divorce and strong legal mechanisms to check forcible divorce.
- Nationwide campaign for women literacy
- Public holiday for all women on March 8.
- Complete prohibition of drugs and control of liquors

(From, Mahilamukti Vol. 4)

In 1990, the Constitution Reform Recommendation Commission was preparing the draft for a new constitution. As it came to public, that the constitution is discriminating against women, who played an equal role in the movement, women protested against the possible conspiracy and submitted their suggestions for the "complete civic rights of women".

Landmarks in Nepali Women Movement

1917	Formation of <i>nari samiti</i> , the first women's organisation
1941	Suicide by Yogmaya and 68 of her disciples by jumping into the Arun river.
1946	Formation of <i>adarsha</i> women's association.
1947	First participation of women in a political rally, four women were arrested, held in custody and released after a week.
	Formation of the Nepal Women's Association
1951	Women participation in the anti-Rana movement.
	Disputes and division in Nepal Women's Association
1960-79	Women participation in underground movement.
1980	Reconstitution of ANWA, celebration of International Working Women's Day at the people's level.
1979-90	Development and expansion of women's organisations with emphasis on women's participation in all sectors of the movement.
1981	Movement against the Namita-Sunita murder case.
1988	Movement against Bhurjungkhola rape case.
1990	First National Conference of ANWA

1991 Women participation in the popular movement.
Movement against the Dilli Bazaar rape case.
Demand for the formulation of equality-based constitution.

Part-Four

Women Participation in Nepali Labour Movement

I. Participation in 1947-60

Trade Union movement in Nepal began from Biratnagar in the form of united movement of Nepali labourers on March 4, 1947. The movement was led by comrade Man Mohan Adhikari and Mr. Girija Prasad Koirala. Expressing his views (in a conversation on January 1998 on the labour movement, Man Mohan Adhikari said, "Union activities began in Biratnagar with a little experience gained while working in unions in Banaras. Efforts were made from the very beginning to raise the movement politically rather than making it an issue associated only with labourers. The movement raised demands for the matters concerning daily life of the labourers. Bonuses, salary increments, health check up, holidays, quarters, maternity leave and other benefits for women, child care centres, equal wages for equal work etc. were the main issues raised."

Commenting on women's participation in the movement, Mr Adhikari said, "Women were always in the forefront of the movement. The number of women workers was maximum in Cotton Mills and slightly lower in Jute Mills. They were very responsive. Women coming from Burma and living in the Burmeli Tole were more enthusiastic than others were. But there were no women in policy-making body of the union. I cannot remember the names of the women who took part in the 1951 movement but if a search is made in Biratnagar Mills Area, one can find more information on this."

Likewise, in a conversation in January 1998 with the present Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, Mr. Koirala said "I started to work at Biratnagar Cotton Mills not because of political reasons but due to financial problems. I accepted the condition that I would not participate in politics. But, as the management started to harass and suppress, we setup a union and organised strikes. In the beginning, we put forward a number of, necessary as well as unnecessary, demands. But, later, with the advice from B.P. Koirala, specific demands such as the increase of salary by half a paisa, quarters for labourers, health treatment, holidays etc. were put forward."

On women participation, Mr Koirala says, "A separate list of demand for women was not raised in the movement. But still, women fully and bravely participated in the movement. However, I cannot remember the name of any of the women who took part in the movement. One of them had come to meet me two years ago when I was in Biratnagar. But, I don't remember her name too. If you go to Biratnagar Mills Area and ask for them, may be, someone can tell more about them."

With a number of ups and downs of various kinds, the movement gradually moved ahead with increasing participation of women from their respective sectors. In 1951 anti-Rana movement, workerers in Biratnagar used a tractor as "tank". Biratnagar Jute Mills was locked at the end of the Rana Regime. Labourers were expelled from their work, but they did not stop waging protests. Three of the women labourers working in the Jute Mills-Nanda Devi Nepal, Rukmani Acharya and Radha Devi Poudel- staged a hunger strike for 27 days. It forced the management to reopen the factory. Everyone returned back to work following a decision to reinstate all the expelled labourers.

Ansanni Bajei: Nanda Nepal

As the work on this report was progressing, Nanda Nepal, renowned as Ansanni Bajai, was fighting a final battle for life at the Barmeli Tole in Biratnagar. Just a few months ago, she passed away at the age of 87. Born in 1913 in Okhaldhunga, Nanda Nepal began to work as a cook, in 1936, in the house of Krishna Prasad Koirala, the father of Girija Prasad Koirala. While she was working, Krishna Prasad Koirala arranged her marriage to a Pandit from Taplejung. As they could not maintain good relations, she returned back to Krishna Prasad Koirala's house and resumed the cooking. She used to get one rupee a month for her work.

After knowing that one can earn three rupees a week at Biratnagar Jute Mills, she joined a job in the Mills in 1948. The Factory was closed in 1951. Labourers lost their employment. They staged a number of protest and other programmes, but the problem was not solved. Finally, they decided to go for a hunger strike. Nanda Nepal was also one of them. They were then successful in opening the factory after a continuous hunger strike for 27 days.

Nanda Nepal took retirement in 1972 but did not stop taking part in various movements. Dozens of women suffered head injuries in the labour movement in Biratnagar in 1975. Nanda was arrested and kept in custody for a week at Biratnagar DSP Office. She was released as she prepared to stage a hunger strike there too.

During the Referendum of 1980, Nanda Nepal, who contributed significantly to the earlier struggles against injustices, was in the hospital-bed waiting for her turn to undergo a uterus surgery. Even from the hospital bed, she urged all to vote for the multiparty system.

Conversation with her on December 1998

Devi Paswan, who worked at Biratnagar Jute Mills from 1950-1986, said, "Women participated in 1951 movement carrying kitchen utensils with them. They also participated in other forms of the movement, including donation collection. Devi Paswan gave birth to a son while she was on a strike. She is thus known as the "Hadtaliki Ma," because the son was named Hadtali

Mangalmaya Bajracharya is another revolutionary of the Cotton Mills. Born in 1915 at Tangal, Kathmandu, Bajracharya reached Biratnagar with her husband in 1948 and started working at Ganapati Cotton Mills from 1950. Mrs. Bajracharya worked for 11 years at the cotton mill and shifted to the Jute mill from 1961.

Hadtali ki Ma: Devi Paswan

Devi Paswan, an Indian by birth, is an inspiring personality to Nepali workers. Born in 1918, Mrs. Paswan worked for 37 years, from 1949-1986, in Biratnagar Jute Mills. In this period she actively participated in many movements. She is presently known better by hadtaliki ma, than by her name, Devi Paswan. Mrs. Paswan, who presently lives at Tikule, Jogbani, says that during her 35-year working life, she took part in many movements and faced the suppression of reactionaries.

Although she is presently facing a hard time to survive, she is proud of her past. When the research team identified itself as the representatives of GEFONT, she

stood up raised her closed fist and shook hands firmly and said, "This is how we welcome".

Based on a conversation on January 1999

Mrs Bajracharya who retired after 28 years of service at the Jute Mills says she was severely beaten up by police during the 1981 Labour Movement. Mangalamaya Bajracharya, who was always active in the labour movement, while she worked in the factory, is still active.

Yashoda Rana Magar is a Comrade-in-arm of Mangalmaya Bajracharya. Yashoda began working at Ganapati Cotton Mills and was involved in Nepal's Labour Movement from the beginning. She took part in the 1951 Labour Movement and continued even after she lost her employment when the factory was closed. After 1951, she was actively involved in the 1975-80 Labour Movement of Biratnagar. Presently 56-year-old, Yashoda cannot even walk properly because of injury on her legs. She is currently living with her youngest son at Barmeli Tole near Hulas Metal Company in Biratnagar.

Besides the movements held in the industrial area of Biratnagar, movements carried out in other areas are also worth noting. Active workers in the public sector constituted All Nepal Low Paid Employees Organisation. The Organisation mobilised more than 17,000 employees in the movement held in May 1951. The movement came to an end after their demand was fulfilled. It is also learnt that the organisation also had women involved in its movements. What kind of role the women had in the movement is however still a matter of further research.

Another section of the Nepali Labour Movement is the Peasants' Movement. Women peasants took to the streets in the anti-rana movement in Kathmandu, Sadhana Adhikari recalls. The Peasants' Movement carried out in different parts of the country from 1951-60 is also important. Women actively participated in all these movements. Particularly, the movements held in Parsa, Bara, Nawalparasi and Bardia are notable ones in this area.

Peasant Movement of Western Nepal

Bhim Datta Panta, who served jail sentence for taking part in the Independence Movement in India, came to Nepal in 1949 and involved himself in uniting peasants in Dadeldhura and Baitadi to fight against the Ranas. After the fall of the Rana Regime in 1950, a Peace Volunteers Group was constituted in his initiation. Mr. Panta gradually distanced from Nepali Congress due to its pro-Indian inclination and came under the influence of Marxism. Demanding land for the landless, he led a movement, in 1953 among the peasants, tillers and cattle herders in Bajhang, Bajura, Kailali, Baitadi, Kanchanpur and other adjoining areas. He was arrested in 1953. Women who were involved in the Peace Volunteers Group led the public pressure standing in the forefront. As a result, Mr. Panta was released on June 25, 1953. He was beheaded on July 25, 1953 by the government. The authorities however refused to handover the corpse of Panta to his wife. Instead, it was hanged in a public place. This kind of inhuman murder did not stop revolutionaries, specifically the peasants, from taking up the movement with ideals. Pant had passed on to them.

Beluwa Banjari Peasant Movement:

In December 1959, a movement against landlords began in Dang District with the participation of the Tharus, the indigenous people in the locality. The movement took a new height in 1960. In an effort to contain the movement, the then Nepali Congress government murdered peasant Gumraha Chaudhary. Women had an important role in this movement in which Lahani Chaudhary and Somati Chaudhary had a leading role. Police arrested Ratna, Kalu and Lahani and released them after a weeklong torture.

"When the landlords came to loot mustard in 1959, all of us except old and children, went out to defend the land-lord atrocity with sticks in our hand. Lahani suffered injuries on her back. But we were not hopeless, we did not left the ground for the landlords. Rather, we could chase away their servants. They came again, next morning, we chased them again", says Somati Chaudhary.

Commenting on the movement, she adds, "They came back to fight again in 1960. The fight continued throughout the month of June/July. Police assisted the landlords, they haunted regularly to look for our people. One day, Ratna and Kalu were arrested. Gumraha was murdered. We had to struggle hard to save the village people from the Jamindars and police."

Lahani Chaudhary

Lahani Chaudhary is a personality whose name should not be left out while talking about the Beluwa Banjari Peasants' Movement. In December 1959, landlords and their muscle men, in total around 150, came at mid-night to loot mustard. All the peasants in Beluwa Banjari resisted collectively and were successful in chasing them away. Clever and fearless, Lahani Chaudhary led the women in this struggle. Mukhiya of Gairhe Khatte arrested her and tortured for two days. In July 1960, the landlords prohibited the peasants to plough the fields. Once again, a movement was organised. The peasants chased the autocratic Landlords away from the fields again although the police and administration supported the landlords. Lahani had a leading role even in this movement. For this, she was arrested, brutally tortured and released after seven days.

From Menaka Pokhrel

Besides this, women activists have played decisive roles in many other movements held during this period. The peasants' movements, which had notable participation of women, can be listed as follows:

B. Participation in 1960-1979

Labour unions were banned with the enforcement of Panchayati system in 1960. But, the workers, who were aware that the movement was the only way to fight against injustice, did not stay quiet for long time. After the enforcement of the land reform programme in 1964, peasants started to revolt against landlords in many places. Some of such movements can be stated as below:

1. Chisapani Peasants' Movement

The people who were homeless due to heavy floods and landslides in 1954 began to clear out jungles for settlement near Chisapani of the Hetauda Municipality. In 1964, the land was tried to confiscate as ordered by Badahakim and the tussle mounted. In 1965, police arrested many of the revolutionaries, including three women. They were kept in custody for three days and were released.

The peasants' movements

1952	Movement of peasants, tillers and cattle herders in Bardia, 9 were killed and 27 injured by police. : Procession with slogans in Birgunj, 5 killed and 125 injured : Movement demanding tenancy rights in Bhojpur
1956	:Movement of burning fake bond papers in Tanahu
1953	Peasants' movement of Rautahat and the murder of Asarfi Saha
1958	Peasants' movement of Saptari and the murder of Aghori Yadav

In 1968, a delegation of 115 peasants went to the Royal Palace. The delegation had an equal participation of men and women. Gurud Acharya, Ram Bahadur Giri, Hari Prasad Subedi, Ram Prasad Dahal, Netra Bahadur Chettri, Bir Bahadur Awale, Kesari Maiya Khadka, Laxmi Magar and Kunti Devi Manandhar were in the delegation. After a 15-day Dharna in front of the gate of the Narayanhiti Royal Palace, two of the representatives of the delegation were called by the Palace. "If the representatives are telling the truth, it will be responded accordingly, " said the King. The delegation then returned back to Hetauda.

Pran Maya Bajracharya

Born in 1985 in Jhinbahal, Lalitpur, Pran Maya says "I married Mohan Bajracharya after I came to know that my parents were about to get me married with another person. We started the married life at Bhimphedi, Makwanpur from 1948."

"I came to know about politics after we arrived in Bhimphedi. I was more involved in politics after my husband was arrested in Parwanipur in 1951. Due to the floods and landslides of 1954, we shifted to Chisapani. Living here, we became fully involved in the Satyagraha movement of 1957. Here, I came close to the Communist Party.

After 1964, police administration came to snatch the ownership of our land. This was a question of living affecting both men and women. Everyone became united to participate in the movement. In connection with this struggle, three women, including Kunti Devi and other men, were arrested and released after three days in custody at Chisapani Gadiya. When Badahakim came, women gathered together and told that they would sacrifice their lives but not the land, " Prana Maya accounted.

"We had a prolonged fight with police on May 1969. I was beaten unconscious. A Red Cross team came to take me to hospital but the procession refused. Only the

next day, I was taken to the hospital amidst a procession", Prana Maya added.

Mohan Bajracharya was in prison, Pran Maya in hospital. Only four of their children were at home. As her brother's wife offered her to look after their children she replied the children would grow up with peasants, and fight for their cause hand-in-hand with peasants.

This courageous woman of the 1969 movement involved herself in helping underground leaders and workers of the party. Because of the injury she suffered on her backbone as a result of lathi charge by police in 1969 she gradually lost her speech and hearing capacity.

Based on conversation of February, 2000

But, the order of the King was not enforced. As a result the movement continued. On April 1969, 17 peasants, including Mohan Bajracharya, Krishna Hari Rizal and Kunti Devi, Kangali Deaula, Laxmi Magar, Kesari Maiya and other women were arrested in this movement. Following the arrest the movement further intensified. On May 1969, the land administration came with police force to survey the land. Thousands of people gathered there. A tussle arose between the two groups again. Pran Maya Bajracharya, an active participant of the movement, was beaten unconscious by police. Protesting peasants retread this by tying 18 policemen to trees. The fight lasted throughout the night. Pranmaya was not sent to hospital even when the Red Cross team came. She remained unconscious.

Next morning, a procession was organised with the slogan that "Land to the tillers!" The procession took Pranmaya to hospital for treatment. After medical check-up, she was brought back and kept at a chowk. The police force came again, but was chased away by the people. The people stayed awake the whole night guarding the market, which was completely closed.

Additional police and army forces from Kathmandu were brought to suppress the movement. Hundreds of peasants were manhandled. Next day, Damodar Shumsher came to inspect the action and ordered that Pran Maya would not be held. She was released from hospital. Following the release, she went to the police station and said, "I have not run away. I will be at home, will come out to fight if called for."

2. Labour Movement of Biratnagar

The Labour Movement of Biratnagar in 1965 can be taken as a major one among the movements that took place during this period. Women working in Biratnagar Jute Mills actively participated in this movement.

Durga Devi Rana Magar

Durga Devi was born in Burma in 1997 and was brought to Nepal when she was two-year-old. She used to live at Burmeli Tole and worked for about 40 years at Biratnagar Jute Mills. She was actively involved in Labour Movement held during the Panchayat Regime. She suffered head injuries in the 1975 movement, which disturbed her memory. "I participated in the movement carrying my six-months-old baby in encounter with with police. I was hit hard on my head I fell down spilling blood all over the road. After my husband noticed it, he took me out from the crowd and provided me with medical treatment. Otherwise I would have dead,"

she thus gives an account of the movement. On women participation, she says, "Women were in the forefront in the 1975 movement, for which they were sacked from the factory jobs. But, another movement reinstated them."

Showing a scar on her leg, she suffered in the movement, Durga Devi says, "Many women fought a life and death battle in the movement." Coincidentally, she took part in the Eastern Regional Women Labourers Training Program of GEFONT held in Biratnagar. She helped a lot in finding out other women of her time. She is still working in the Biratnagar Jute Mills.

Based on a conversation on December 1999

Because of involvement in the movements, Ramjan Ansari, Jayanti Devi Upadhyaya, Ram Maya Biswokarma, Padma Kumari Giri, Saraswati Devi, Kamal Maya and many other women were ousted from their jobs in the factory. Expressing his view on women participation in the movement, Balram Giri says, "Women were more active than men in the movement during the period. They were not represented in the executive posts of the union they were only advisors. Although women agreed to stay in committees, we requested them not to do so account of the social attitude and behaviour towards them. "

3. Peasant Movement of Dang

In 1979, the farmers of Dang began a district-wide revolt against landlords under the leadership of Netralal Poudel. The movement made the landlords started to leave the villages for District and Zonal headquarters for security reasons. One of the leading revolutionaries of this movement was Asma Chaudhary. Sharing her experience, she said, "I was encouraged to fight against injustice by my parents and the political education I received from Netralal Poudel. This inspiration led me to join the 1979 movement." Stating that this was the first time she took part in the movement, Mrs Chaudhary said, "while there was a meeting inside the house, 16 policemen came to arrest. Six Jamindar, including Shreedhar Gopal of Guruwa village, Yagya Bahadur of Fachakpur and others, had informed the police. In order to protect their friends, who were discussing about the movement, the villagers encountered with the policem. They could not withstand the villagers and ran away. This boosted our morale and we were more encouraged to participate in the movement."

Netralal Poudel

Netralal Poudel worked as Headmaster of the Secondary School from 1965. He taught school children for eight years in Arghakhanchi and Dang. Born in a lower middle-class peasant family, he went underground in 1973 and was affiliated to the CPN Coordination Centre through the Shandesh Group. He was very popular among the masses. He died of high blood pressure in a jungle while he was on his way to take part in CPN-ML Central Committee Meeting.

Recalling the incident, Asma says, "Jamindars from Karjahi started troubling the tenants. In 1980, they came to loot the house of a peasant. Informed of this, all the villagers united and chased away the offenders. A policeman was injured in the incident. Another day, on the night of April 1980, the Janmindars, backed by police and army, looted the house of Sundar Chaudhary. During this period, such

incidents were usual, but the administration used to accuse all the revolutionary peasants as "dacoits".

Shedding light on her participation in the movement, she further added, "I took part in the movement unable to tolerate injustice and oppression by police administration and Jamindars. If we had not taken part in the movement, many of our houses would have been looted." She never felt scared to fight against the Jamindar. As Asma says, she has been involved in politics from 1980, and will continue it.

Women participation was at maximum in the Karjahi Peasant Movement, one of the most renowned movements in Dang. Laxmi Chaudhary, Asma Kumari Chaudhary, Patharkali Chaudhary, Maiya Chaudhary, Shanti Chaudhary, Indra Chaudhary, Kewala Chaudhary, Surajkali Chaudhary, Shyamkali Chaudhary, Sukanya Chaudhary, Kalika Chaudhary, Belkesari Chaudhary, Sauni Chaudhary and Kali Chaudhary were amongst those who fought against Jamindars. Among them, Patharkali Chaudhary was a bit aggressive even, the reactionaries named her as Indira Gandhi of Nepal.

Women were in the forefront resisting the landlords in the Karjahi in 1980. Whenever police came to surround the village, all the villagers used to gather and resist them with sticks in their hands. Once when, Netralal was in the village, the villagers disguised him as a Tharu come to the place to look for horses, and helped him escape away.

In the repressive situation, Pattharkali got her-self actively involved in the movement with the belief that death is inevitable and that she would be honoured as a martyr if killed.

Some renowned Peasant Movements

1965	Movement of Parasi in Nawalparasi, and Ajagar in Rupandehi
1967-69	Jhora Movement of Mechi-Koshi
1975	Peasant Movement of Tilmal, Chukha, Malpi and Taukhal of Kavre : Anti-interest movement of Myagdi
1976	Chitwan Jugedi Peasant Movement

4. The Teachers' Movement

From 1975, teachers set up Welfare Trust depositing two percent of their salary. The Trust was to be used by teachers in difficult circumstances. After three years in 1979, the teachers started thinking towards the institutionalisation of the Trust. Later, a demand was put forward to develop the Welfare Trust into the Provident Fund.

This demand raised by teachers of Balsewa Secondary School of Kathmandu. Women Teachers Meera Dwanju, Astalaxmi Shakya, Purna Sobha Chitrakar and others actively participated in the movement that ensued. In this context, a nationwide signature campaign was carried out. Signatures of all the teachers from 78 schools were submitted to His Majesty's Government. Side by side an underground exercise was made to set up a teachers' organisation so that it would raise professional and other issues collectively and institutionally. To foster the

campaign, Astalaxmi Shankya and Krishna Bhakta Manandhar left Kathmandu for the Eastern Region while Meera Dwanju and Purna Shobha Chitrakar headed towards Nuwakot. In course of the movement, they met Kamala Amatya, Narayani Rana, Bindabasini Shrestha, Renu Thapa, Manju, Santosh Pyakurel, Kunta Sharma and Bindabasini Karmacharya. They all participated in the movement.

C. Participation between 1979-1990

When People's movement was taking a nationwide momentum in 1979, the labour movement emerged from industrial districts of the country. The major ones carried out by workers in between 1979-90 can be summarised as follows:

1. Balaju Industrial District

A larger number of women actively participated in the strike of 1979 Nebico Biscuit Factory in Balaju. Sulochana Manandhar, Kamala Shrestha, Sharada Koirala, Purna Shobha Chitrakar organised the women working. Giving a background to this movement, one of the activists-Kabindra Shekhar recalls, "a study group was set up in Kathmandu in 1974 which included 30 to 40 women. Matters relating to politics and ideology and self-reliance were taught in the study classes."

Padma Manandhar

The labour movement was going on in Balaju and everyone used to participate. I had to take pamphlets about the movement to Balaju. I was afraid that police would suspect me if I travelled without any reason. I had my two children with me. I kept the pamphlets inside their school bags and went ahead as if I were taking my children to school. As soon as I reached the place where the workers had gathered, police attacked me before I could hand over the pamphlets. Police snatched and threw away the bags of my children and pushed them away. Since the police did not look into the bags minutely my children were not harmed.

From gathering of elderly women workers on December 1999

Members of that group later involved in organisational works in the industrial area in 1979. Women participation in the 1979-82 movement was encouraging. They took part with special interest in the May Day programs. In 1979, the workers in Balaju staged a strike along with a 27-point demand. A large number of women took part in the Sit-in programme that took place for 45 days inside the Balaju Industrial District. During the strike, police tried to arrest Laxmi Bahadur Karanjit but a group of women foiled the attempt. Meena Kafle however was arrested and released after an hour following enormous pressure from workers outside.

The movement was called off with an agreement following 45-days of continuous sit-in. However, immediately after that, 10 workers, including 8 women, were expelled from the Nebico.

Sharada Lama

Talking of the Balaju Workers Movement, the name of Sharada Lama comes at the top as a fighter woman of the movement. In 1980, Sharada used to work in Crystal Woollen Factory. She was an active member of Nepal Independant Workers' Union since its inception. The first National Gathering of the Union appointed Ms Lama as

a member of its Central Preparatory Committee. She was expelled from the factory in 1983.

Working in the union, Lama learned to read and write. She continued her involvement in the labour movement even after her expulsion from the factory. She says that she had to struggle many times with Village Panchas while launching anti-Panchayat awareness programmes through cultural programmes in the villages.

There was a compulsion to keep women active in most of the movements but not to involve in the executive responsibilities. According to Ms Lama as the society would take it otherwise if male friends were accompanied to home, she had to carry a Khukhuri as her friend. "During that time I had to return home alone at night. I always used to carry a Khukhuri in my right hand and a torch light in my left hand while walking at night. I always used to walk on the left side so that I could see on the right if anything was to be defended."

"On my way to Thapathali, I happened to attend a seminar on Equal Rights in Constitution organised by ANWA. As I came to know about the legal provision for property rights for daughters, I took property from my father immediately," she courageously put her points.

Lama is presently living at Raniban VDC on the land and property she got from her father.

As talked to her in February 2000

A gathering held on January 1980 in Kathmandu, which founded the Nepal Independent Worker's Union.

Workers in Balaju staged a strike with a 34-point demand again in 1981. Women were in a greater number than their male counterpart while protecting the union's flag from police, who tried to pull it out from where it was installed by the strikers. The workers protected their flag but police arrested Menaka Maharjan and released her after four days in custody.

The movement resumed at Nebico in 1983. A delegation of the workers met the Labour Minister Bhadra Ghale. Four members of the delegation, Rupa Shrestha, Jamuna Malakar, Bimala Thapa and her child were arrested from Singha Durbar. Bimala Thapa was held in custody with her baby. The movement was responded by the government relieving 316 workers of their job from the Balaju Industrial District. Among them, 70 percent were women including Menaka Maharjan, Reena Bajracharya, Anju Shrestha and Nisha Shrestha. Following this another strike was organised at Spinning Mill in Balaju. This also had a leading participation of women.

2. Garbage Cleaning Sector

Another centre of Labour Movement in Kathmandu was the community of Garbage Cleaners. The Garbage Cleaners had helped the movement advance in the Industrial District by distributing pamphlets and posters and taking part in protest rally. In 1980, the Garbage cleaners of Kathmandu Municipality staged a strike putting forth their demands. For the first time in 1980, the Garbage Cleaners, who were regarded as untouchables throughout their life, held talks with the Panchayat administration sitting together round the same table. After this movement, the

organisational activities, which had begun in Kathmandu, spread out gradually to Lalitpur, Bhaktapur and Kirtipur.

Purna Sobha Chitrakar and Surendra Tuladhar have initiated the union formation among the Garbage Cleaners. Prakash Nepali, Dilkumari Poda, Basu Nepali, Maiya Poda, Junu Poda and others led the workers in the union. Sharing her experience about the union formation and its works Dil Kumari Poda says, "During that time, we used to work with a feeling that revolution should begin from homes and special emphasis should be given to make our family members aware of what we are doing and why so that their support could be gained. As the garbage cleaners were mostly illiterate, we had to encourage to fight injustices by showing Chinese and Korean films. After watching the movies, our mothers wished to see their daughters as brave fighters like the ones seen in the movies."

Along with other works related to the movement, garbage cleaners had a big role to provide shelter to the underground leaders, collect and pass their letters and documents from one place to another.

They also had to make contact the revolutionaries in custody and exchange information with them. Women workers Basu Nepali, Tulsimaya Nepali and Junu Nepali were among those responsible for the risky work of information exchange with Sabitri Bohra and Betrawati Poudel, who were arrested in the Piskar Incident while men workers were responsible for the work in the men's prison.

In connection with the movement, Prakash Nepali was arrested, but a group of people that including elderly women rescued Prakash from police immediately.

3. Other movements in Kathmandu

Besides this, union movement spread out in other sectors in Kathmandu. Women working in garment factories also initiated the organisational work in 1983. Srijana Devkota and Rubi Rana were involved in the formation of Nepal Independent Garment Workers Union. Champa Shrestha and Ratna Nepal were also actively involved in it.

Pro-People Rastriya Panchayat Members

Following a decision to expose & protest the Panchayat system from its own forum, the Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist-Leninist) forwarded its candidates in the 1985 Rastriya Panchayat elections in 1985 and the local body elections in 1986. Candidates elected were identified as pro-people representatives. Padma Ratna Tuladhar, Dronacharya Chhettri, Jagrit Prasad Bhetwal, Noble K. Rai and Som Nath Pyasi were the winners of the Rastriya Panchayat Election.

During the period women participated in union movement in a numbers of ways. The demands forwarded by the union for women workers included 60-day maternity leave, provision for child care, no night shift work for women and strong legal provision to end all kind of gender discrimination. On Jan 1988, the representatives of Nepal Independent Workers Union, along with Pro-people members of the Rastriya Panchayat, submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister.

Likewise, on August 1988, a 45-day strike was staged in all the textile industries in Kathmandu valley. Obviously, many women participated in the strike.

4. Hetauda Industrial District

Labourers in Hetauda staged a strike in 1979 where women were in the forefront. In 1979, Sita Dhungana represented the NIWU-Makwanpur District Committee while Shubhadra Regmi, Meena Poudel, Sabitri and other were active members of the Committee. Since 1983, women workers in Hetauda had begun celebrating the International Women Workers Day. In 1983, the workers of Hetauda Textile Factory put a charter of demands including a 60-day maternity leave, child-care facility and paid-leave for women on March 8. As a result of this movement, women in Hetauda received paid-leave on March 8. Union members Goma Timilsina, Bishnu Ojha and others led the movement. Bal Kumari Thapa was active in the rural sector. It is noteworthy that women in Hetauda have always been in the fore-front of every national movements.

5. Teachers' Movement

Nepali teachers launched a nation-wide "pen-down" for the first time on May, 1979. About 20 to 25 teachers, including Nila Bajracharya, Sharada Koirala, Pran Tara Shakya, Lalita Manandhar, Purna Shobha Chitrakar and Bindabasini Karmacharya were arrested while they tried to gherao Kathmandu District Education Office. They were released after a week. Following this, a valley level gathering of women teachers was held in August. Altogether 81 women teachers took part in the gathering.

After this, the first national gathering of teachers was held in September at Bhutandevi Secondary School, Hetauda. Police tried to terrorise the gathering and warned to shoot in case anyone came out. Even in such a tense situation, women teachers kept up the spirit of the participants by singing such inspiring songs as "struggle is life, life is struggle, let's not therefore be afraid of death." The gathering successfully held its programmes. However, It was quite ironic that not a single women teacher was represented in the Central Organisation Committee constituted by the gathering.

In 1982, teachers organised a dharna at Bhadrakali. Women had an active participation. Similarly, in the "Let's go Kathmandu" Programme of 1984, women teachers had a good participation. In the preparation leading up to the movement, many women teachers in Sunsari were arrested under the "fill up prison" programme. Women expressed their utmost courage by breaking the police circle and continued their active participation in the days that followed.

Meera Dwaju

We had been organising teachers since 1975. A gathering of only women teachers was also held in Kathmandu. In 1982, the teachers staged a sit-in programme at Bhadrakali, around 68 teachers, including Kamala Amatya, Narayani Rana, Krishna, Bindawasini Shrestha, Nirmala, Jagatlaxmi and myself, were arrested. We were released from the Dilli Bazaar jail after three weeks.

Although women actively participated in the movements held during this time, their participation in policy decision level was seen only after restoration of democracy in

the country. Currently, the teachers' organisation has been carrying out a number of activities for women under a separate department of women.

The overall picture of the movement shows that women were always in the forefront of the movement carried out in the earlier days when organisations were not systemic. Unfortunately, women were pushed behind as the organisations were institutionalised and the movement got strengthened.

6. Nursing Sector

The movement in the Nursing sector began from 1985, and proceeded through the movement in 1985 making its unique identity. The sector was quite vibrant and strong in the popular movement of 1990. A statement by Nurse Meena Poudel that "crores of amount has been deposited in a Swiss Bank in the name Pampha Devi" and that the pillage of its kind be revolted strongly encouraged not only the nurses but also to all others. Two activists were shot dead by police in Kirtipur on April 1990. Their dead bodies were brought to Teaching Hospital, where nurses Jyoti, Iswori, Wakila Chudal, Radha Devkota, Shubadhra Koirala and others played a highly acclaimed role and they did not allow the police force to enter the hospital and take away the dead bodies. They even tried to snatch guns from the police hands as they were resisting. The same year, nurses organised a strike against Tribuvan University decision of expelling 25 assistant nurses from Teaching Hospital. They staged a sit-in program in front of the office of Vice-Chancellor. The movement concluded only after permanent appointment of those 25.

7. University Teacher

Many Indian Teachers used to work in Nepal during the Rana rule. There was a big difference between the facilities enjoyed by Nepali and Indian Teachers. In 1952, the University Teachers gave an ultimatum to the government demanding equal services and facilities. Their demands were timely fulfilled.

Nepal University Teachers Association (NUTA) was founded in 1962. Later, King Mahendra could turn the association in his favour. In 1979, anti-Panchayat professors took hold of the association and continued the movement for their professional rights and academic independence. Women were also involved in the process although they had a little role in decision making. By then a practice of electing at least one woman member in every central election has been established.

University Teachers also had an important participation in and contribution to the 1990 popular movement. In the name of a professional solidarity they were always active and willing to abolish the Panchayat system.

Women have a good participation in banking and telecommunications. Even in terms of education, women working in the sectors are better compared to those in other sectors. However not a single movement was carried out in the banking and telecommunication sector to support what was proceeded until the restoration of democracy.

8. Establishment of GEFONT and Popular Movement of 1990

General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) was founded on 20 July 1989. Women were not present during the foundation of the federation although they had an active participation as members in the GEFONT Member Unions.

The 1990 popular movement began after a few months of the establishment of GEFONT. The entire strength of GEFONT was mobilized for this movement. Women workers throughout the country took part in the movement amidst batons, boots and bullets of the police.

On February 18, 1990, Sita Bidari of the Hetauda Textile Factory sustained a bullet injury. Sita Bhujel, another woman activist, was arrested as the movement mounted. She was released only after the restoration of democracy. Other active women workers in the movement were Goma Timilsina, Bishnu Ojha, Juneli Shrestha and Sita Maharjan.

In support of the popular movement workers across the country organised strikes, and protested against Panchayat tying black bands around the arm and setting up black flags in different industrial districts. Trade union activities were freely launched following the restoration of democracy in the country.

Immediately after the restoration of democracy, altogether 316 workers were ousted from their jobs from Balaju and a relay hunger strike was organised demanding their reinstatement. Women had a greater participation in the strikes carried out.

Women participation in labour movement: The major landmarks

1947	Women began participating in the movement.
1951	Three women staged a hunger strike at Biratnagar Jute Mills.
1951	Participation of women in various processions. Women participation in peasant movements carried out in various parts of the country
1954	Movement protesting fake <i>tamsuks</i> in Tanahu
1960	Movement in Beluwa of Dang
1966-9	Chisapani Movement of Hetauda
1966	Movement of Nawalparasi and Rupandehi
1968	Jhoda Movement of Mechi-Koshi
1975	Jute Mill movement of Biratnagar
1979	Peasant Movement in Karjahi, Dang
1079-80	Labour movement in Balaju and other sectors of Kathmandu
1981-82	Movement at Hetauda Textile Factory
1975-84	Teachers' movement in various phases.
1989	Movement in textile factories in Kathmandu Participation in the popular movement; suffer bullets, imprisonment and torture
1990	Movement for the reinstatement of the labourers dismissed from their

PART - FIVE

Women participation in Present Trade Union Movement

A. Present trade union movement and women

The registration of unions accelerated following the introduction of Trade Union Act, 1992. According to the Department of Labour, three trade union confederations have been registered so far. They are- General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT), Nepal Trade Union Congress (NTUC) and Democratic Confederation of Nepalese Trade Unions (DECONT).

In total, Seventy-one Trade Union Federations have been registered so far. Among them, 6 federations are not affiliated with any of the centre. Altogether 50 trade union federations are in operation now. The number of unions registered at local level is 1,840. Among them, 876 are affiliated with GEFONT, 651 with NTUC and 322 with other federations. Official sources do not confirm any local unions affiliated with DECONT.

Of the 3.5 million wage earners, around 621,000 have been unionised. The number is just 17.77 percent of the total workforce. Of the unionised workforce, 49.94 percent is associated with GEFONT, 31.19 with NTUC, 2.84 with DECONT.

Table 8: **Trade Union Confederation Affiliates and Membership**

Confederation	No. of Affiliates		Membership in	
	Enterprise level unions	National Federations	Number	Percentage
GEFONT	867	15	310,575	49.94
NTUC	651	18	194,000	31.19
DECONT	-	11	17,670	2.84
Others	322	6	100,000	16.08
Total	1840	50	621,845	100

Source: Number of Unions from DOL; Membership from the-concerned confederations

Women participation in our trade union movement is still not satisfactory. The presence of women in the leadership level of all Confederations is only 12.6 percent, while their presence is 11.95 percent in national affiliates. Women participation is rising in comparison to the past, but equal representation is far off.

Confederations differ in views on the participation of women in trade union movement. The policy of GEFONT is Not Mere Representation but Equal Participation in this connection. This means that the physical presence alone does not produce expected results. According to GEFONT policy, mere representation will just encourage the 'Cosmetic personality' instead of developing real women leadership. Thus, development of willingness and a sense of competition among women are necessary to foster the participation of women in all levels so that expected results could be achieved. A "separate and special programme" for skill development of women is the first priority of GEFONT.

NTUC is placing emphasis on the quantitative participation of women advocating for at least 30 percent quota for women in every committee. The GEFONT slogan --Not Mere Representation but Equal Participation--also asserts that women should not only be provided with a fixed number of seats but they should be enabled to participate in high level committees and activities. This also means that efforts should be made to upgrade the capabilities of women for equal participation in every sector and assign responsibility as per their ability.

Table 9: Women in Policy Making for Trade Union Movements

Name of the Confederations	Number of National Committee Members			Member Unions and Central Leadership			
	Total	Women	Men	National Federations	Central Members	Women	Men
GEFONT	35	3	32	15	206	13	192
NTUC	21	5	16	18	239	35	
DECONT	21	2	19	11	141	22	119
Total	87	11	66	44	586	70	516
Percentage	100	12.6	87.4	68	100	11.95	88.05

Source: Office of the Concerned Federations

The number of unions and committees affiliated with the 15 federations and CWWD affiliated with GEFONT is 1,123. The total number of organised members in these unions is 9,202. Of them, 1,066 (11.58 percent) are women. GEFONT has been launching leadership development programmes for women workers from the central to district level with the establishment of a separate women's department. Federations affiliated with GEFONT have also set up separate departments to run women development programmes. It has significant impact to increase women participation in Union movement. The table below presents women's participation in GEFONT affiliates.

Table 10: Women in Committees under GEFONT affiliates

SN	Name of Union	No. of Unions/ Committees	Total No. of Organised Members in Committees			Women in %	Mechanism
			Total	Women	Men		
1	NIWU	46	550	200	350	36.36	Valley Dept.
2	ITGWUN	104	852	107	745	12.56	(Negligible Women in the Workforce)
3	ITWAN	109	1247	4	1243	0.32	Central and Local Department.
4	NICWU	82	225	52	176	23.11	Central and Valley Department.
5	NIHWU	115	765	25	740	3.27	(Negligible Women in the Workforce)
6	UNITRAV	55	425	1	424	0.24	(Negligible Women in the Workforce)
7	IPWUN	14	132	1	131	0.76	Central and Local Department.
8	ITPWUN	53	279	69	210	24.73	(Negligible Women in

							the Workforce)
9	NATU	30	275	1	274	0.36	Valley and District Dept.
10	CUUPEC-Nepal	75	539	14	525	2.60	Valley Department.
11	IGCUN	16	135	26	109	19.26	Valley Department
12	NIFBWU	56	627	45	582	7.18	Valley Department.
13	NICIWU	75	714	32	682	4.48	No Women
14	NRPU	60	395	0	395	0.00	District Departments .
15	FAWN	192	1743	190	1553	10.90	
16	CWWD	41	299	299	---	100.00	41 dept. & 299 members up to district level
	Total	1123	9202	1066	8139	11.58	

Source: Concerned Union Offices

Establishment of Trade unions with workers working in different sectors accelerated from 1990. But the participation of women at leadership level could not increase. Mindful of this, GEFONT and ANWA jointly organised a national seminar on "Women Workers: Problems and Solutions" on the occasion of International Working Women Day (8 March) in 1991. The seminar suggested that a separate unit should be set up within GEFONT to exclusively work among women workers. Accordingly the Central Women Workers Department (CWWD) was established on May 5, 1992 as a women's department in GEFONT. The Department was constituted under the conensorship of Swasti Bajracharya. It included Goma Timilsina, Nisha Shrestha, Maina Thapa, Parbati B.K. and Lila Bhattarai as members.

CWWD has a dual affiliation as far as the movement is concerned. It is active as a special department of GEFONT in terms of union movement while it is affiliated with All Nepal Women's Association in terms of general women's movement.

Following its establishment, the CWWD has been carrying out various programmes for the enhancement of women's participation and leadership development on a regular basis. It is also contributing as much as possible to the national women's movement.

B. Union Activities in the Service Sector

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, 1990, drawn after the success of the popular movement, provides for the right to organisation in service sector. As workers organised themselves in various organisations, unions and federations thereafter, the struggle for workers' rights have become consolidated in various sectors of works.

The Banking Sector:

Unionisation in this sector began in 1990 from Nepal Bank Ltd., Agriculture Development Bank and Rastra Bank. Around 15 percent of the 25,000 employees

working in the banking sector are women, among them 20 percent work in Nepal Bank Ltd. The number of women in other banks is near about 10 percent. Women participation in concerned unions is rather low compared to their presence in the workforce. Women employees have still not been represented in Inter Bank Employees Federation.

Even though women with a certain level of education are working in this sector their level of awareness about professional rights and welfare is not encouraging. To address this gap, a union has been formed amidst banking employees with a specific department that deals with women's issues including the participation of women in the union activities.

Other Public Enterprises:

Out of 24 Public Enterprises in Nepal, unions have been formed in 22.. Union activities in this sector also began after 1990. Women are also actively involved in professional movement the union has been taking up since its establishment.

The number of women in this sector is about 10 percent of the total 35,000 workers. Women are in large number in Nepal Telecommunication Corporation. Women participation was quite encouraging in the movement against the government bid to privatise telecommunications in 1990. In terms of responsibilities majority of women working in the NTC are operators. As in other sectors, some of which mentioned above, women have not yet been represented in the Telcom Employees Association of Nepal - the union of telecommunication employees.

The Nursing Sector:

Many nurses were self-inspired to participate in the socio-political movements while providing medical treatment to those who were tortured and injured by police for their participation in the movement for social justice. In a number of ways the nurses in Nepal have expressed their support to the movement. In 1991, they obstructed the police team who had interfered in the movement of civil servants staging a Hunger strike as part of their programme. As police took the hunger strikers to Teaching Hospital to force them to eat, the nurses resisted bravely ignoring Lathi charge of police and did not allow the police to take the hunger strikers in to the hospital. It is just an example of many encouraging experiences.

The Civil Service:

In 1990, employees from the civil service and corporation moved together under a single banner to picket the Royal Nepal Academy to force to resign the then so-called interim government. This unity later gave rise to the nation-wide movement, which began in August 1991. Women actively participated in the movement for which 98 women were punished. Shobha Gautam was jailed for a month and was later dismissed from her job.

Table 11: Participation by the Area of Works (In '000)

Area of Work	Total	Men	Percent	Women	Percent
Total Workers	9,463	4,736	50.05	4,727	49.95
Agriculture and Forest	7,190	3,164	44.01	4,026	55.99

Fishery	13	12	92.31	1	7.69
Minerals	8	6	75.00	2	25.00
Manufacturing	553	366	66.18	186	33.63
Electricity, Gas and Drinking Water	24	24	100	2	8.33
Construction	344	292	84.88	52	15.12
Wholesale, Retail and Small Trade	408	283	69.36	125	30.64
Hotel and Restaurant	114	63	55.26	52	45.61
Transport and Communications	135	130	96.30	6	18.75
Finance	19	17	89.47	2	10.53
Real Estate Business	32	25	78.13	6	18.75
General Administration and Security	70	64	91.43	6	8.57
Education	164	126	76.83	37	22.56
Health and Social Services	34	26	76.87	8	23.53
Community Services	57	51	89.47	6	10.53
Private and Domestic Work	289	80	26.68	209	72.32
Others	8	6	75.00	1	12.50

Women were in the forefront in hunger strikes, and other protests including dharna (sit-in) during this movement. Police charged lathis on the organisers, manhandled them and tore off the clothes. In some cases women had to buy some clothes at nearby shops to cover themselves, one such incident occurred in Jhapa. Altogether 25,000 employees faced different types of administrative action and some of them also lost their jobs because of their participation in such movements. Five hundred of them were women.

The Communication Sector:

The Communication Sector is one of the strongest sectors today. The number of newspapers edited by woman has crossed 40 now. The first newspaper edited by women was the mahila (woman) published in 1952 under the editorship of Sadhana Adhikari. The other one was Sankalpa published in 1985. Most of these newspapers discontinued after some time.

During Panchayat Autocracy, only a few women could be found involved in mass media as news readers for radio and television. Women participation in the sector increased after the end of Panchayat. This increasing participation of women in journalism itself marks a revolution. This has naturally given more focus on exploitation, injustice and discrimination against women, and has helped communicate various news and views on gender equality to the public. On the other hand, their participation has also helped the communication sector to become gender-sensitive.

In earlier days, most of the women entered this sector as columnists. Nowadays, women are involved in every kind of work. The women willing to work in challenging sectors to bring changes in the society as a role model in the areas of work have joined the communication sector. According to the statistics of 1997, women participation in mass media is 9.16 percent. Of this, 12.3 percent are in the government sector and 5.84 percent in the private sector. However, women are still not in policy making level in both the sectors.

Electricity Authority:

Women participation in this sector is seen right from its inception. In 1986, a demand was put forward to make permanent to those working on contract. A movement was organised in 1990 to make all the workers in the sector permanent. Basically, women were in the forefront. Shashi Ghimire was also represented in the CBA team to negotiate with the government. When the CBA failed, Shashi Ghimire quarrelled with the Minister for Water Resources. This was responded by dismissing Shashi Ghimire from her duty.

Three hundred out of nearly 9,000 employees in Nepal Electricity Authority are women. They are also actively involved in union activity.

University Teachers:

Nepal University Teachers' Association- the Association of University Teachers, joined the movement along with the advent of democracy. In 1991 elections, Suprabha Ghimire was elected as the first woman president. This was the first instance a woman was elected to the highest post of the University Teacher's apex body. Around 20 percent of 6000 university teachers are women at present.

PART - SIX

Problems Facing Women Workers in Nepal

Sex is a biological factor. Physically, woman and man are different by nature. But Gender is a social role assigned to a woman by the society she lives in. The roles are changed, reshaped and challenged as per the level of the development of the society.

Our society is not fully aware of gender and social discrimination issues. The adversities in the whole social scenario are reflected in every sector of the society. Even though women participation is rising in labour sector, women have not yet been able to participate in union activities of the decision-making and leadership level. Nepali society is largely patrilineal by tradition. Nepali cultural norms and values are still not women friendly. Trade union movement has also been influenced by this attitude that is dominant in the society. The traditional responsibility of women has not changed, nor the patrilineal psychology. All these factors create a barrier to foster women's effective participation in the union movement. Problems facing Nepali women can be classified and listed as follows:

1. Problems in the Society

- Existence of the dominant psychology as well as the practice that women are solely responsible for all household works including the care of babies, the aged and disabled.
- Exploitation and oppression of women on grounds of feudal traditions, superstitions, and conservative beliefs.
- Legal discrimination, deprivation of the right to property and the denial of women as the guardian of the family.
- Little access of women to literacy, education and skill/vocational training.
- Prevalence of girl trafficking, rape & sexual harassment and the lack of effective measures to take action against the culprit.
- No guarantee of social protection and security of women.
- Lack of competition among women for leadership.
- Lack of gender sensitivity in policy formulation and programme setting and implementation & monitoring at all levels in government, non-government and other sectors.
- The lack of gender sensitive leadership, policies and programs in political parties as well as organisations of social movement.

2. Problems in the Workplace

- Discrimination against women in employment opportunity, services and benefits.
- Absence of women in management and policy making of employment related issues. Lack of gender-sensitive labour policies
- Inadequate labour laws non-compliant with existing provisions.
- Inadequate law on maternity protection and child-care.
- Sexual harassment, abuse & ill-treatment of women and the lack of legal provisions to deal with such issues
- Unequal wage practices for the same work.
- Family obstruction on women to find employment of their interest.

- Lack of awareness about occupational safety and health as well as reproductive health.
- Compulsion to work in the night shift.
- Unsafe working conditions and social and attitudinal bias against women.

3. Problems in the Union Movement

- Lack of gender-sensitive union leadership, union policy and programmes.
- Low priority on women specific issues in collective bargaining agreement.
- Less importance on women development, leadership building, and the continuity of women's participation in the union movement.
- Domination of patriarchal environment in the union.
- Sexual harassment of women even in the union.
- Lack of cooperation, encouragement and support to women in union works; no major responsibility for women.
- No change in the mindset for the institutionalisation of the "representation" of women in the union life; dominant focus on "participation" alone
- Lack of gender-sensitivity in fixing union activities, time, venue and nitty-gritty matters.

The problems are not only related to women, they are the problems of the society as a whole. This calls for the entire social movement to be serious to resolve the problems. The labour movement, which is the vanguard of social change, should pay special attention to this aspect.

Women issues should be one of the major issues for collective bargaining in the trade union movement. Although some of the issues have been taken up, they are not a priority. Women-related demands that have been raised so far include maternity leave, trained mid-wives, proper arrangement for child-care, separate toilets for men and women, equal wages for the same work and paid-leave on March 8.

These demands are surely genuine and relevant, but not sufficient. In the days ahead, the union movement should focus on gender sensitive labour policies, laws and planning; women friendly and healthy workplaces, proper maternity protection, family responsibility benefits, equal employment opportunities, legal actions against all kinds of harassment and awareness raising activities in their demands.

PART - SEVEN

Gender Policies of Labour Organisations

A. General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT)

The General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) initiated women activities by holding a National Seminar in 1991. In light of the Seminar recommendations, the first National Congress held in 1992 decided to set up a separate women department with the status on a par with national affiliates. Special activities on women began with the establishment of Central Women Workers Department (CWWD) on May 5, 1992. The department has consolidated itself over times. Its Second National Congress adopted a special programme entitled 'Women Workers Campaign.

The National Congress has adopted following policies:

- The Co-ordinator of CWWD will be an ex-officio member of the GEFONT National Executive Committee.
- CWWD's representation in the national council will be equal to that of national affiliates.
- Twenty-five percent women participation in every activity of GEFONT, and 25 percent male participation in women programs.

Special programmes on women through a separate department in each affiliate.

The Third National Congress held on 1-3 May 2000, adopted the following policy on women:

- CWWD will act as a special department of GEFONT.
- Women delegates in the National Congress will elect a Co-ordinator of CWWD; the chief will be an ex-officio member of the National Executive Committee.
- CWWD will be formed by organizing the women leaders of Central Committees of GEFONT affiliates.
- 10 Zonal Women Workers Department (ZWWD) will be formed. The chief of the ZWWD will be an ex-officio member of the National Council, CWWD and the Zonal Committee.
- CWWD representatives in National Council will have an equal status to that of the national affiliates.
- Twenty-five percent women should participate in every GEFONT activity and 25 percent men in every women activity CWWD members will not exceed 25 persons.
- CWWD will be subordinate to the National Executive Committee; ZWWD to the Zonal Committee and affiliates to women departments in the concerned affiliate.

On the basis of the above policies, CWWD has developed following objectives

- Conduct various activities to develop the leadership of women in the labour movement.

- Do research, survey and collect information about women in work and labour movement, and publicise the findings.
- Identify women/gender problems at the workplace and launch campaigns to resolve them.
- Conduct various activities to make the union movement gender-sensitive.
- Foster co-ordination and co-operation between the labour movement and national women's movement on women issues.

B. Nepal Trade Union Congress (NTUC)

Nepal Trade Union Congress is another trade union centre in the country. NTUC has the following policies:

- Thirty percent reservation for women in every union committee and activity.
- Formation of women committees in order to run activities for women.
- Run separate activities to develop women leadership.

C. Democratic Confederation of Nepalese Trade Unions (DECONT)

Democratic Confederation of Nepalese Trade Unions (DECONT) has adopted the following policy on women workers:

- Formation of women departments from central to district levels.
- Provision of elected woman vice- president in the central committee.
- Run credible and sustainable activities to develop women leadership.

D. ITUC Gender Policy:

"Pro-Worker Trade Unionism and Women Workers"

GEFONT in cooperation with Asia Pacific Workers Solidarity Link (APWSL) organised an International Conference of Trade Unions in Kathmandu in 1994. Altogether 63 representatives of 38 trade unions and labour organisations from 15 countries took part in the Conference.

The Conference adopted a Kathmandu Declaration of International Trade Union Conference (ITUC). The Declaration states that pro-worker trade unionism recognises the double oppression of women, the rapidly increasing proportion of women in the new global workforce and the difficulty that women are facing to achieve leadership positions in trade unions. The Declaration is committed to eliminating discrimination, sexual harassment, trafficking of women and other women issues and problems in the society.

The ITUC has set the following action plan to promote the interests of women.

We acknowledge the double burden facing the working women. They are oppressed both as workers and as women in the societies. We also acknowledge that modern industrialisation is highly increasing the proportion of women in industrial services and other forms of employment. We recognise that the economic liberalisation and privatisation policies have specific effects on women workers, which must be taken up by the trade union movement.

In order to address this situation and to strengthen the participation of women in trade unions we specifically agree to:

- Create or strengthen women's departments in our respective unions and centres.
- Develop education and awareness campaigns specifically for women workers.
- Educate male trade unionists, husbands and family members to assist greater participation of women in trade unions by taking responsibility for household and other family work.
- Build confidence in women by providing them with training on social and political issues.

We specifically agree to campaign on issues that affect workingwomen:

- I. Equal wages and job opportunities for women
- II. Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women
- III. Free child care for women
- IV. Paid parental leave
- V. Eliminate sexual harassment at work and in society
- VI. Ensure decent residential and housing facilities
- VII. Guarantee social security
- VIII. Defeat oppressive fundamentalist forces
- IX. Fight patriarchal values and the gender division of labour.

Promote international networking, organisation building and women leadership of garment workers, where a large number of women are working.

Celebrate 8 March as the international workingwomen's' day by organising joint-union actions to draw the attention of the concerned to the long neglected plight of female workers.

E. National Labour Policy and Working Women

General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) began working effectively towards the formulation of a concrete labour policy from 1996. The confederation developed its agenda through the discussion with workers working in different sectors and persons at national policy decision level and labour- organisations. The Second National Congress, held on March 1996, approved the concept document. The first National Labour Conference of Nepal held in 1997 reaffirmed the document.

His Majesty's Government has declared a National Labour Policy in late 1999. The Labour Policy that includes many recommendations forwarded by GEFONT has following policies on women.

- Encourage various sectors of work and organisation to employ women and disabled in their organisation.
- Encourage social programs for women and disabled in employment promotion, training and human resource development.
- Provide tax exemption for enterprises as an encouragement for providing employment opportunities for women.

This labour policy is seemingly concentrated on increasing employment for women workers. As expected by the GEFONT, the policy is not committed to eliminating social and gender discrimination against women. It has also not been able to reflect the spirit of the First National Labour Conference. Speakers, in a seminar on the National Labour Policy organised jointly by International Labour Organisation (ILO) and GEFONT in December 1999, were of the view that the Labour Policy should give high priority to matters relating to gender and women labour and that all should continue their effort to establish a proper place for women labour in the Labour Policy.

PART - EIGHT

Conclusion

The history of Nepal is focused mainly on the royal family, feudal lords and high-class aristocrats. It does not mention anything specific about the working class people who are the genuine history makers. The main reason behind this is the domination of feudalistic attitude and culture in the society. As in every society divided into the rich and poor, Nepali history has always been in the favour of the former.

The relationship between woman and man in a patriarchal society is like that of a "slave and master". Such a society considers women as the property of men. And, no matter how much the man is exploited by the feudal class, he expresses his supremacy by ruling over the woman. The same is reflected in the writing of history. The contribution of women has been overarched. Against this reality, conclusions of this research can be drawn as follows:

- Household labour has not so far been counted as an economic activity. Of whatever is counted, women labour (56 percent) constitutes higher than that of men (53 percent).
- A major portion of women labour is involved in unpaid works. That means women do not get paid despite hard and terrifying works they do both inside and outside the houses. This has created unfortunately a social attitude that considers women as dependent on men's income.
- Women are kept behind from skill generation and qualification promotion right from their birth. It is thus essential that any practice discriminating between men and women be wiped out. In every sector, an environment for equal opportunity needs to be guaranteed.
- Gender discrimination prevails very much everywhere, even in identifying training programmes. Nothing should be labelled as 'for men' and 'women'. The traditional attitude of separating men and women by work should come to an end; the principle of "equal employment opportunity for everybody" should be introduced. It may call for special measures to initiate to increase the participation of women in areas where their involvement is minimum. Similar should be done to involve men in household works.
- Although women participation is maximum in agriculture and animal husbandry, their participation in training provided in these sectors is quite minimum. Women do the actual work but men go for training, which in turn is useless. Therefore, due attention should be given towards providing training opportunities to those who are involved in the related-work.
- The influence of patriarchy is visible in government, NGOs and other functionaries. Women participation is minimum in policy-making and planning & programming. To address this, special provisions and arrangement needs to be worked out, such as quota system or reservation mechanism in order to improve the participation of women in all sectors.
- The increase in number does not justify that gender discrimination has been wiped out. It rather calls for gender-sensitive policies, programs and leadership in every kind of socio-political functioning.
- Responsibility of motherhood is more social than individual. But it is rather taken in a reverse manner and as a factor that marks the weakness of women. This backward social attitude has a strong bearing to justify that

equal opportunity is not possible as there are inherent physical deformities with women. This attitude, which prevails everywhere and at all conditions, should be challenged and changed.

- There is a marked difference in the remuneration provided to woman and man for the work similar and of equal value. The average remuneration of women is just 57 percent of that of the men. The amount differs depending on the areas of work, specifically in agriculture, cottage industry, machine operation and other areas of work that requires manual labour. This needs an immediate change.
- Women have not been able to take up leadership in any movement for their rights, even in service sector where educated women are involved. This situation calls for a massive awareness campaign, at various levels. Trade union movement should not thus be confined to informal education alone.
- Women have a notable participation in democratic movement in the country. They have always been in the forefront to fight imperialist forces as well as despotic elements. They have also been hailed for their participation in the struggle for educational, political, economic and social reforms. Unfortunately, no space has been given in the pages of history to account for the deeds of women. It is therefore necessary that Nepali history be re-written with righteous judgment.
- The working class people in Nepal began their movement from 1947. Women participation also began from the very beginning. Their roles are highlighted in various movements, in Biratnagar Jute Mills. Their movement also continued in a number of clashes with police, giving a slap to the mentality visualising women to be weaker.
- Whatever rights women have gained are because of their own organised efforts and struggles. Women should thus be organised to achieve further.
- The movement of women is diverse in terms of ideologies, practices and objectives. Reformist, feminist and revolutionary trends do exist in Nepal. All these trends need to be considered as part of women's movement.
- Women's movement and the working class struggle are complementary to each other. In a number of movements, women and the working class people have walked hand in hand, and have gained achievements. This fact should be well internalised in any movements to come.
- Labour movement is inseparable from social and political movement. Not only in their professional issues, workers have equally been active in any struggle meant for social change since 1947.
- Although women have participated in the working class struggle, their quality participation is yet unseen. It is therefore essential to carry out effective measures to enhance equal and quality participation of women at every level. Gender sensitive union leadership should be developed at all levels.
- Grassroot level unions and organisations are the base of labour movement. Unless quality participation of women is enhanced at every level of union movement, no women specific issues can be reflected in policy formulation. Local unions and national federations should pay appropriate attention towards this end. Quality involvement of women should be ensured right from the primary level of union activities.
- Training and skill development programs should be carried to address the needs of working women. Responsibility should be entrusted to them accordingly. Such congenial atmosphere should be developed in which cooperation is extended, responsibilities are shared and men and women jointly fight obstructions emanating from social norms and traditions. Workers in service sector are ahead of those working in production and agriculture sector in terms of qualifications and skills. But in terms of the

participation in the movement that means in the accumulation of experiences, reverse is the case. Any genuine movement should therefore build in internalising the value of education, class-consciousness and experiences.

- Nepali labour policies, labour laws and other labour-related issues and areas are not gender-sensitive. Labour laws have raised very little issues concerning women. Furthermore, the matters relating to child-care are confined to women alone. Compassionate leaves are granted only for men. Labour laws are silent on family responsibility issues, sexual harassment and so on. Unless the leadership is sensitive towards such issues, it is useless to hope gender sensitive policies.
- The issues raised by union movement on gender equality for collective bargaining is good, but not sufficient. Fostering quality participation of women requires proper attention and action to such issues.
- It is encouraging that trade unions have initiated works towards the development of gender policies and special programs. Its implementation, monitoring and assessment tools should also be effective. Policies and programme should be time and again reviewed, modified if necessary and be effectively implemented with the participation of women.
- Co-operatives movement should progress ahead as an income generating activity for women workers.
- Studies should be undertaken about the peasant movements as well, which have long history, but not recorded well.
- Research work should further be continued even in the area this study has been made, as there may have been a number of facts left behind.

Annexes

Annex -1

Women in Politics (House of Representatives)

S. No	Name of the Political Party	1 st Election - 1991		2nd Election - 1994		3rd Election - 1999	
		Total	Women	Total	Women	Total	Women
1	Nepali Congress	110	4	83	3	114	4
2	Communist Party of Nepal (UML)	69	4	8	4	69	6
3	Rastriya Prajatantra Party	4	0	20	0	11	1
4	Others	22	0	14	0	12	0
	Total	205	7	205	7	205	11

Annex-2

[TOP](#)

Women in the Central Leadership of Political Parties in Parliament

S. No	Name of the Political Party	Women in Central Leadership (1995)		Women in Central Leadership (2000)	
		Total	Women	Total	Women
1	Nepali Congress	31	3	31	3
2	Communist Party of Nepal (UML)	41	2	42	3
3	Rastriya Prajatantra Party	41	2	41	3
4	Samyukta Janamorcha, Nepal	15	1	11	0
5	Rastriya Janamorcha, Nepal	It was not established		21	1
6	Nepal Sadbhavana Party				2
7	Nepal Peasant Workers Party	15	1	11	1

Annex-3

Gender policy of ILO (Based on information available in Internet)

[TOP](#)

The ILO must articulate a gender perspective on the world of work. Building on current activities to promote equality of women, the aim will be to examine the economic and social roles of both women and men, and to identify the forces, which lead to inequality in different domains. It will involve broadening the focus of attention from the de jure achievement of equality for women to the de facto

results of economic policies, legislative measures and labour market outcomes for different groups of women and men.

One of the most important tools at the disposal of the ILO is gender mainstreaming. Although an established policy of the United Nations system and a methodology that is widely used in other organisations and programmes, gender mainstreaming is still at an incipient stage in the ILO.

An integrated gender policy requires action at three levels in the ILO: at the political level, within technical programmes, and at the institutional level.

First, political support for gender mainstreaming requires far greater representation of women in the tripartite decision-making structures of the Organisation, within governments, and in employers' and workers' organisations.

The constituents must redouble their efforts to ensure the presence of women within the structures of the Organisation and within their own bodies.

Second, the Office will take systematic steps to mainstream gender considerations into ILO programmes and technical co-operation. This will require gender impact assessment, supported by empirical research on key issues such as gender aspects of globalisation and the changing nature of work. Gender concerns will also have to be reflected much more systematically in ILO information systems and statistical databases.

Third, institutional mainstreaming within the ILO must include gender-sensitive programming and monitoring systems, a strategically located and strengthened focal point system, and appropriate training and personnel policies, which enhance career opportunities for women.

Related ILO Conventions on Women Labour

- 3, 103 :Maternity Protection
- 14 :Weekly Rest
- 29, 105 :Prohibition of Forced Labour
- 87, 98 :Freedom of Association & CBA
- 89, 171 :Night Work
- 100 :Equal Remuneration
- 111 :Discrimination (Employment & Occupation)
- 138, 182 :Minimum Age
- 156 :Family Responsibilities

Annex-4

Promoting Women Leadership: An Experience of South Africa

[TOP](#)

Annual Southern African Trade Unions Forum (ASATUF) has been a good example of an initiative that aims to empower women in South Africa ASATUF- meets every year to discuss common issues and make relevant recommendations. All networks are responsible to implement the recommendations in their organisation life and

activities. The Forum has provided the sub-region women a meeting-place where they learn from each other's experiences and built a network for a regular contact.

The principal aim of the Forum is to foster mutual cooperation amongst women to develop and implement effective and result-oriented programmes. It has identified the following priorities.

- Encourage the backward countries such as Angola and Lesotho to participate in the Forum.
- Implementation of trade union education with women and capability development programmes for women so that women participation is ably increased in trade union leadership.
- Production, through broad-based discussions, of concrete conceptual and policy recommendations on women issues for national level trade union conferences.
- Inclusion of women issues and problems in the policies and programmes of unions
- Develop the Forum into a centre that helps to form consolidated organisations, maintain a regular communication flow and establish a strong contact network.

The Forum has identified mainly two areas to concentrate its programmes.

The first area is the women education in trade unions and gender issues. The Forum policies on this area follow:

- Women participation in labour education in general
- Separate education campaign for women workers
- Inclusion of gender issues in the regular curriculum of trade union education

The second area is to increase the participation of women in leadership. The Forum has following to adopt in this respect.

Positive Action: Awareness raising, specific programmes for the development of women leadership through a separate organisational set up, and establishment of capable women into leadership
The following strategies have been developed to implement the policies stated above.

- Appropriate responsibility to meet the qualification of the women developed through the Positive Action.
- Regular support to women in leadership positions for some time to come. They need so because patrimonial hindrances obstruct the women to carryout their responsibilities.

Annex 5 International Chemical, Energy, Mining and General Workers Federation (ICEM)

International Chemical, Energy, Mining and General Workers Federation (ICEM) is one of the International Trade Secretariates of National Federation related to

chemical, electricity and mining works. GEFONT's one of the affiliates, Nepal Independent Chemical and Iron Worker's Union, is affiliated with ICEM. It has adopted the following programmes in order to develop the participation of women.

- Formation of women departments under its organisational structures
- Chairperson and vice chairperson of international department will be ex-officio members of the international executive committee
- Each regional women department chairpersons (it has 9 regional committees) will be ex-officio members of executive committees. In the international executive committee will be 11 women ex-officio members.
- Thirty percent women involvement in regional committees
- Thirty percent women participation in every programme the ICEM holds
- Encourage the affiliated member unions to implement this policy.

ICEM has its own mechanism to implement the policy. Every four years, women's conference is organised to form the international department. The conference elects chairperson and vice-chairperson. Regional department chairpersons are ex-officio members of this department.

Regional conferences assess the programmes launched amidst women annually. These conferences also worked out plans for the next year. The programmes in the international level are evaluated through the department meetings.

Annex- 6

International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)

International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) is one of the Confederations of National Trade Union Centres.

It has following strategies regarding women participation.

- Formation of women departments from regional to international level under its structures.
- The chief of international women's department to become the vice chairperson of the executive committee
- Five women members in the executive committee representing regional departments, at least one woman from a department
- Thirty percent women to participate in ICFTU held programmes
- Member unions to compulsorily implement the policies

ICFTU launches separate programmes for women in every sector. Through these programmes, the centre aims to inculcate self-respect into women, it provides training on technology-related issues and hopes to foster the competitive participation of women in union movement. It will launch programmes with women under "positive steps and actions."

ICFTU and PAP Policy

Much remains to be done: some union practices and structures effectively discourage women's participation; resistance to women holding positions of power remains common and issues such as sexual harassment are not addressed

seriously; and even though most unions now have policy on equal rights, they still have to develop activities and services, to educate and campaign to turn that policy into practice. Passing resolutions and adopting policies on paper doesn't accomplish much if they are not applied. One of our greatest challenges is to change attitudes on issues of equality. That's why, in 1992, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) Executive Board- on which sit elected union leaders from all regions of the world-adopted the Positive Action Programme for Women in Development Co-operation (PAP) as a policy for the ICFTU and its affiliates at the international, regional, national and local levels.

PAP means more than "equal treatment" or measures "against discrimination." Positive or affirmative action is dynamic. It includes active measures- to redress the effects of past discrimination- to eliminate discrimination that is happening now- and to promote equality overall.

The PAP is a tool for the use of the ICFTU, its affiliates and regional organisations, International Trade Secretariats (ITS) and co-operating organisations to make sure that:

- gender perspectives are incorporated into the work of trade unions;
- women are a target group of projects and programmes;
- projects and programmes truly help to empower women, leading to their full participation in trade unions, the world of work and society as a whole;
- there is effective communication and feedback which links general projects and women's projects. This especially important in the areas of education, training, research and vocational training. By doing this, women's and equality issues become an integral part of the mainstream of trade union policy and practice;
- women's representatives are actively involved in all decision making at every stage of the project - planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- women are positively affected by any development co-operation activity.

Mentioned name in the report

Acharya, Durga Devi	Acharya, Indira	Acharya, Rukmini
Acharya, Shailaja	Amatya, Kamala	Ansari, Bikau Ramjan
Baidhya, Kokila	Bajracharya Mangalmaya	Bajracharya, Gyani Shova
Bajracharya, Nila	Bajracharya, Pranmaya	Bajracharya, Reena
Bajracharya, Swasti	Basnet, Kunti	Bhandari, Krishna Kumari
Bhandari, Namita	Bhandari, Sunita	Bhoteni, Dati
Bhusal, Pampha	Bidari, Sita	Bishwakarma, Rammaya
Bohara, Sabitri	Chaudhari, Asma Kumari	Chaudhari, Indra
Chaudhari, Kali	Chaudhari, Kalika	Chaudhari, Kebala
Chaudhari, Lahani	Chaudhari, Laxmi	Chaudhari, Maiya
Chaudhari, Pattharkali	Chaudhari, Sauni	Chaudhari, Shanti
Chaudhari, Shyamkali	Chaudhari, Somati	Chaudhari, Sukanya
Chaudhari, Surajkali	Chitrakar, Purnashova	Choudhari, Belkeshari
Chundal, Wakila	Devkota, Radha	Devkota, Shrijana

Dhungana, Punyaprabha Devi	Dhungana, Sita	Dhyaula, Kanggali
Dulalni Bajai	Gautam, Shova	Ghimire, Jaya
Ghimire, Shashi	Ghimire, Suprabha	Ghimire, Yamuna
Giri, Padma Kumari	Giri, Sanjita	Giri, Kamini
Ghale, Bhadra	Gubhaju, Krishnu Kumari	Gyawali, Radha
Iswari	Jagat Laxmi	Joshi, Bidhya Devi
Kamaksha Devi	Kanchi Didi	Karki, Dhana Maya
Karki, Laxmi	Karmacharya, Bindabashini	Kattel, Lila
Khadgi, Pampha	Khadka, Keshari Maiya	Khadka, Sita
Koirala, Dibya	Koirala, Sharada	Koirala, Shubhadra
Lama, Sharada	Magar, Laxmi	Maharjan, Menaka
Mainali, Sharada	Malakar, Jamuna	Manabi, Shanta
Manandhar, Kunti Devi	Manandhar, Lalita	Manandhar, Laxmi
Manandhar, Padma	Manandhar, Sulochana	Mathema, Chandra Kanta
Mitthu Devi	Nakarmi, Nani Maiya	Nepal, Nanda Devi
Nepal, Ratna	Nepali, Basu	Nepali, Ram Maya
Nepali, Tulsi Maya	Neupane, Yog Maya	Nirmala
Ojha, Bishnu	Pandey, Binda	Pasawan, Devi
Paudel, Meena	Paudel, Radha Devi	Paudel, Sabitri
Poda, Maiya	Pode, Dil Kumari	Pode, Junu
Paudel, Betrabeti	Pradhan, Keshari	Pradhan, Sadhana
Pradhan, Sahana	Prasai, Gaura	Pyakurel, Santosh
Rai, Kamala	Ramlaxmi	Rana, Gauri
Rana, Narayani	Rana, Rubi	Rana, Sanu
Ranamagar, Yeshoda	Regmi, Shubhadra	Saraswati Devi
Shah, Rajendralaxmi	Shah, Silbandi	Shakya, Pran Tara
Shakya, Asta Laxmi	Shakya, Nani Shova	Sharma, Kunta
Shestha, Anju	Shestha, Kamala	Shestha, Kanaklata
Shestha, Snehalata	Shrestha, Uma Devi	Shrestha, Bindabashini
Shrestha, Bishnu Keshari	Shrestha, Champa	Shrestha, Jadiswari
Shrestha, Juneli	Shrestha, Renuka	Shrestha, Rupa
Shrestha, Sabitri	Shrestha, Shanta	Shrestha, Nisha
Singh, Mangala Devi	Tamang, Ashali Maya	Thakurani, Dwarika Devi
Thapa, Bal Kumari	Thapa, Bimala	Thapa, Renu
Timilsina, Ambika	Timilsina, Goma	Tuladhar, Devnani
Umadevi	Upadhyaya, Jayanti	Upadhyaya, Nalini
Yadav, Janaki Devi	Yadav, Muneswari	Yadav, Sonabati
Yami, Hisila		

Interviewees:

Adhikari, Manmohan	January, 1998
Adhikari, Sadhana	June, 2000
Bajracharya, Mangal Maya	December. 1998
Bajracharya, Pranmaya	March, 2000
Dwanju, Meera	March, 1999
Koirala, Girija Prasad	January, 1998
Lama, Sharada	March, 1999
Nakarmi, Nanimaiya	September, 2000
Nepal, Nanda	December. 1998
Nepali, Ram Maya	June, 2000
Pasawan, Devi	December. 1998
Ranamagar, Durgadevi	December. 1998
Ranamagar, Yeshoda	December. 1998
Shrestha, Sabitri	August, 2000
Shrestha, Shanta	August, 2000
Shrestha, Snehalata	August, 2000

Acknowledgement

Koirala, Om	Yadav, Yogilal
Yadav, Yogendra	Giri, Balaram
Munnial Shakya,	Astalazxmi
Bhandari, Bidhyadevi	Manandhar, Sulochana
Pokharel, Menaka	Friends from GEFONT's affiliates

Reference cited

Author	Materials	Publisher/Date
... ..	Mahila Mukti	ANWA, 1984-94
... ..	Mulyngkan (back issues)	Mulyangkan Pariwar
... ..	Nepalko Communist Andolanko Sangkshipta Itihas	Pushpa Lal Memorial Foundation, 1997
... ..	Asmita (back issues)	Asmita Prakashan Griha
... ..	Samajik Andolaki agrani tatha	Adhyayan Kendra, 2000, Kabi Yogmaya
... ..	Shahid	Madan-ashrit Memorial foundation, 1995
Subedi , Pratibha	Bibidh Pakshama Nepali Nari	Sasha Prakashan, 1994
... ..	Netritwama Mahila	Insec, 1997
Prabhat, Bishnu	Matritwa	Insec, 1997
... ..	Kisan Jagaran	ANPA, 1987
Ojha, Ghananath	Nepalma Mahila	Pairabi Prakashan, 2000
... ..	GEFONT's Publications	GEFONT

Abbreviation & Acronym

ANWA	: All Nepal Women's Association
APWSL	: Asia Pacific Workers' Solidarity Links
ASATUF	: Annual Southern African Trade Unions Forum
CBA	: Collective Bargaining agreement
CPN	: Communist Party of Nepal
CPN-ML	: Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist-Leninist)
CWWD	: Central Women Worker's Department (of GEFONT)
DECONT	: Democratic Confederation of Nepalese Trade Unions
DIG	: Deputy Inspector General of Police
DSP	: Deputy Superintendent of Police
GEFONT	: General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions
ICEM	: International Chemical, Energy, Mining and General Workers Federation
ICFTU	: International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ILO	: International Labour Organisation
ITS	: International Trade Secretariates
ITUC	: International Trade Union Conference
NGO	: Non-Government Organisation
NLFS	: National Labour Force Survey
NTUC	: Nepal Trade Union Congress
NUTA	: Nepal University Teachers' Association
PAP	: Positive Action Programme for Women in Development Co-operation
VDC	: Village Development Committee
WVS :	
ZWWD	: Zonal Women Worker's Department of GEFONT

Glossary

Adarsha women's Association	: A name of Women's Association
Anasanni Bajei	: Nanda Nepal, the old women of Brahmin community in hunger strike
Arun	: One of the big rivers of eastern Nepal
Badahakim	: Chief Administrator of the district
Basnet	: A landlord family having top position in state machinery
Beluwa Banjari	: A place of Dang-Nepal
Bhimsen Thapa	: The first Prime Minister of Nepal
Bhujungkhola	: A small river in western Nepal
Brahmin	: Upper caste in Hindu Caste Hierarchy
Burmeli Tole	: A place in Biratnagar
Chisapani	: A place of Makwanpur-Nepal
Chyame & Pode	: Caste of Garbage Cleaners in Newar community in Kathmandu Valley
Danti Bhoteni	: A woman from poor indigenous family

Daura Suruwal	: Nepali National dress for Male
Delhi Agreement	: A tri-party negotiation facilitated by Jawahar Lal Neharu in New Delhi among King, Rana Prime Minister and Nepali Congress in order to smash people's uprising against Rana Oligarchy
Dharna	: sit-in programme
Dingla	: A place of Eastern-hills of Nepal
Dulalni Bajei	: A Brahmin woman leading the revolt against tyranny of Badahakim in eastern Nepal
Gairhe Khatte	: A place of Dang-Nepal
Gherao	: Picketing
Grihalaxmis	: Housewives
Guheswori	: A temple of Hindu goddess located in Kathmandu
Hadtaliki Ma	: Devi Paswan, the mother of a boy named hadtali (Striker) as he was born while the mother was in strike
Jamindar	: Landlord
Jhapa Bidroha	: Arm revolt of peasants in Eastern Nepal started from the district of Jhapa in early 1970's
Jhora	New settlements made by the landless after clearing out forest
Kanya Mandir	: Girl High School
Karjahi	: Peasant Movement of Dang
Khukhuris	: Nepali Knife specially used by army
Kot parba and Bhandarkhal parba	: The infamous incident reflecting the conspiratorial massacre of officials and nobles in the eve of Rana Regime
Lathi-charge	: Police oppression of demonstrator using wooden stick
Mahila Mukti	: Women liberation- a journal published by ANWA
Matritwa	: Motherhood-a book written by Bishnu Prabhat
Mukhiya	: Chief of the Village appointed by jamindar in feudal system
Narayanhiti	: Royal Palace of Nepal
Nari samiti	: Committee of women
Nati Dai	: Nati Kazi- the famous musician
Nebico	: Nepal Biscuit Company
Newar	: One of the business castes in Hindu Caste Hierarchy termed as Vaisya
Panchas	: Psycho-fan Political workers of absolute monarchy under Panchayat system
Panchayat System	: A party-less dictatorial system under absolute monarchy in Nepal
Pandav Bibaha	: Polyandry
Pandit	: Priest in Hindu religion

Parijat	:A renowned woman writer in Nepali literature
Pashupati Nath	: A Hindu God, whose temple is situated in Kathmandu
Piskar	: A place of Sidhupalchowk-Nepal
Poi-tokuwi	: A superstition of the feudal society to harass widows by blaming them as the killer of their own husband
Rajendra Laxmi Devi Shah	A queen who exercised dictatorial power during 1840s
Rana	: An oligarchy of Rana family, who ruled Nepal for 104 years as Prime Minister
Rastra bank	: Central Bank of Nepal
Rastriya Nachghar	: National Theatre
Rastriya Panchayat	: National assembly under Panchayat system
Sandesh	: A group of revolutionaries especially active in Dang, Nepal
Sati pratha	: An ancient Hindu traditional social practice of burning wife with the dead body of her husband
Satyagraha	: Political movement of peaceful sit-in and diobeying
Seti River	: One of big rivers in western Nepal
ShreePanchami	: The day of worshipping goddess of Educaation in Hindu religion
Singha Durbar	: Prime Ministerial Residence and administrative palace during Rana oligarchy
SLC	: School Leaving Certificate
Tamang	: Mongolite caste of hilly region in Nepal
Tamsuk	: Bond paper imposed by lanlord on poors
Teej	: Women's festival
Tharu	:An indigenou community of terai districts of Nepal
Tikule, Jogbani	: A broder side place of India close to Biratnagar
Tri-Chandra College	: The Colloge of Nepal