



WOMEN'S UNDER-REPRESENTATION IN POLITICS

IN THE NEW DEMOCRACY OF BHUTAN - *the need for new strategies*



by
Drude Dahlerup
International consultant and Professor of Political Science
at Stockholm University

Based on consultations in Bhutan April 2014
organized by the Bhutan Network for Empowering Women, BNEW,
and
the Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy, DIPD.

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Disclaimer:

Views in this report do not necessarily represent the views of DIPD or BNEW, although the report has been produced with the support from both organizations.

SUMMARY

The point of reference for this report is the 11th Five Year Plan for Bhutan, 2013-2018, which states as part of the government's program for 'Good Governance': "draft legislation to ensure quota for women in elected offices including the parliament and local government bodies".

The present report contains, firstly, an analysis of the background for the very low representation of women in the local and national elections after the introduction of democracy, presently 8.9 % in the local councils and 8.5 % in the National Assembly, Bhutan is No 127 on the world rank order in terms of women in parliament. The analysis of the report moves from the representation figures at various levels, to the success rates of women and male candidates in the elections and then further back to the nomination processes. It is concluded that the problem is not that 'women do not vote for women', as it is often said. The main problem is that too few women are nominated for political elections – a question of both lack of demand and lack of supply. In 80 % of the constituencies in the elections to the National Assembly and the National Council, the voters did not have the choice to vote for a woman candidate, since all candidates were men.

Secondly, based on an overview over various types of electoral gender quotas by law found in over 80 countries today, the report presents some options for Bhutan regarding the use of proactive measures in order to increase women's participation and representation in the new Bhutan democracy. The French parité system is an option for the National Assembly election, and the India rotation system might be suited for the local government election in an amended form. A special parity system for the election of Gups and Mangmis was developed together with stakeholders during the mission in Bhutan.

Bhutanese reports have pointed to the general lack of candidates for elections in Bhutan. This report concludes that Bhutan has a large reserve pool of candidates in women.

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is a great honor to be asked to analyze the background for women's under-representation in political assemblies, seen in relation to their share of the population, and to present options for active measures to empower women in the new democracy of Bhutan. After consultations and meetings with important Bhutanese stakeholders and having participated in and addressed the April 1-2 high level *National Consultation Conference on Women in Politics*, it is my clear impression that there is a political will in Bhutan to accelerate the empowerment of women in the new democracy by the introduction of proactive measures. This political will is most clearly expressed in the government's 11th Five Year Plan for Bhutan, 2013-2018, under the programme for 'Good Governance':

"Draft legislation to ensure quota for women in elected offices including the parliament and local government bodies".

This report is written out of great respect for the solemn wish in the Kingdom of Bhutan to develop the country into a modern nation and a full-fledged modern democracy, yet based on its cultural heritage.¹ Based on a narrative of a long historical tradition for cooperation between men and women in civil life in Bhutan, and assessed against international standards and commitments, the first elections in the new democracy of Bhutan were disappointing seen from a gender perspective as they resulted in a gross under-representation of women in the public assemblies, see section 4. The actual decrease in women's representation in the National Council 2013 after the second election under democratic rules came for many as a surprise, proving that gender parity will not necessarily 'come by itself'. This has become a matter of concern within the government, among political parties and civil society organizations, and has led to new commitments to take actions. Women's organizations have strongly advocated proactive strategies. This commitment constitutes the point of reference for the DIPD-mission in April 2014 to Bhutan and for this report.

During the beginning of April, the DIPD-mission² met with the following stakeholders:

- Meeting with women politicians and women's organizations
- Meeting with the Secretary General of the National Assembly
- Meeting with the Election Commission of Bhutan (the Chief Election Commissioner and two Commissioners)
- Meeting with the Minister for Works and Human Settlement, Hon. Ms. Dorji Choden and the National Commission of Women and Children, NCWC
- Participation in and presentation to the 2-days high level conference
- Meeting with representatives of the three political parties, not represented in Parliament (BKP, DNT and DCT).
- Meeting with women's NGOs (Baowe, BCMD and Tarayana).

¹ The internationally well-known Bhutanese Gross National Happiness Index is an expression of these political visions.

² Former Danish government ministers, Lone Dybkjær and Astrid Kragh (MP), and Line Holmung from DIPD were part of the delegation in April 2014.

The objective of this review report is to present, firstly, an analysis of the background for the very low representation of women in national elections and local government elections after the introduction of democracy in Bhutan; and secondly, to develop and present different options regarding the use of proactive measures (parity, temporary special measures, quotas) in the context of Bhutan (context meaning the Constitution of Bhutan, the Election laws of Bhutan and the 11th Five Years Plan for Bhutan), in order to further discussions among stakeholders on how to improve women's political participation and representation, and as a background for the government to take informed decisions in the matter. The report will also give an overview of different types of quota systems and the experiences of various quota systems in other countries, which may be useful for the decision-makers in Bhutan.

2. POINTS OF REFERENCE

The government of Bhutan has taken a clear stand that something has to be done to empower women in political decision-making, and improve the representativeness of the political assemblies, so that they much better reflect the composition of society. The points of reference are both national and international.

Bhutanese reference points³

- The Constitution of Bhutan, Art. 16 states that “All persons are equal before the law and are entitled to equal and effective protection of the law and shall not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, sex, language, religion, politics or other status”.

Further, Art.9 (17) states “The State shall endeavour to take appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination and exploitation against women including trafficking, prostitution, abuse, violence, harassment and intimidation at work in both public and private spheres”.

- The National Plan of Action for Gender (NPAG) for 2007-2013, identified 7 critical areas for action, of which good governance was one. The 10th Five Years Plan, 2008-2013, which was linked to the NPAG, contains strategies to empower women and promote gender equality, including mainstreaming programs and policies and providing sex-disaggregated data as the basis for action.
- The 11th Five Year Plan, 2013-2018 includes evaluations of previous programs, and includes program profiles on among other things civic and voter education for Bhutanese women, developing awareness and information materials on participation by women, youth and marginalized voters, and training political parties, candidates and representatives on electoral roles and responsibilities⁴. Further, the Bhutanese government is introducing



“Draft legislation to ensure quota for women in elected offices including the parliament and local government bodies”.

The 11th Five Years Plan for Bhutan



³ DIPD support for BNEW covers several activities: Representatives from Bhutan/BNEW participated in the 2012 Christiansborg Seminar on Women in Politics (see the background paper *Women in Politics*); the institute hosted a visit by Minister for Works and Human Settlement and Chair of NCWC, Dorji Choden and SG for the NCWC, Phinstho Choeden, in March 2014 to seek inspiration on how to strengthen women's political participation; DIPD has supported the platform since it was established in 2012. DIPD has also supported KCD Productions to produce two documentaries “Yes Madam Prime Minister” (La, Aum Lyonchen) and “Bhutan Women Forward”, as well as the educational resource book *Raise Your Hand. Bhutan's First Elected Women Leaders*. See also the activities in Bhutan of Swiss HELVETAS, for instance *Helvetas-Bhutan Gender Strategy 2010-2013* and *Country Strategy Bhutan 2012-2017*.

⁴ Table 2.5 in the 11th Five Years Plan on the status of the Millennium Development Goals, MDGS in Bhutan is blank concerning goal 3 Promoting Gender Equality and Empower Women. But it should be mentioned, however, that the UN MDG 3 is in itself amazingly vague on the sub goal of women's political empowerment.

modern measures of gender responsive planning and budgeting and gender mainstreaming. Sex-disaggregated data are being collected, on the basis of which several investigations and reports on the status of women in Bhutan society have been conducted.

The most important point of reference for the present report is the following:

“...drafting legislation to ensure quota for women in elected offices” - one of the goals of the 11th Five Years Plan (p.14).

– or as it is expressed in table 4.4 under NKRA's under ‘Promotion of Good Governance, no.13: Gender Friendly Environment for Women's Participation’: “Draft legislation to ensure quota for women in elected offices including the parliament and local government bodies”.

- The Terma Linca Statement on Women in Politics in Bhutan. This is not a government document, but a set of recommendations to capture the will of the two-days *National Consultation Conference on Women in Politics*, organized by BNEW and NCWC, April 1-2, 2014, states as the goals:
 1. Aiming at the 2nd LG Elections of 2016: An Increase in number of elected women through reserved seats by 20-50 percent.
 2. Towards the 3rd national parliamentary elections (NA, NC) in 2018: Increase in number of women elected through reserved seats by 20-50 percent.

The Terma Linca statement contains 14 recommendations for empowering women in politics in order to achieve the above stated goals, adding: “The measures are temporary till elected women representation in local government and national parliament reaches to 30-33 percent”.

International commitments

- The CEDAW convention from 1979 states that “State Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in political and public life of the country” (Art. 7). As the first, this convention mentions the use of ‘temporary special measures’. In 1981 Bhutan ratified the Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), without any reservations.
- UN Beijing Platform for Action 1995 links the inclusion of women in political decision-making to the development of democracy:

“Achieving the goal of equal participation of women and men in decision-making will provide a balance that more accurately reflects the composition of society and is needed in order to strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning.”.... “Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved” (The UN Beijing Platform for Action 1995, Art.181).

Ever since the adoption of the CEDAW Convention in 1979, the UN and its agencies have recommended proactive measures. The terminology has varied: temporary special measures; affirmative action; positive action, gender quotas.

These measures are not totally identical, but they all rest of the same foundation: The recommendation of active measures in order to try to overcome the barriers women meet in political life.

The Platform for Action thus states that *governments* should commit themselves to "Take measures, including, where appropriate, in electoral systems that encourage political parties to integrate women in elective and non-elective public positions in the same proportion and at the same levels as men" (Art.190.b). It is recommended that the world's governments use 'specific targets and implementing measures...if necessary through positive action' (Art. 190.a).

The Platform for Action also states that *political parties* should "Consider examining party structures and procedures to remove all barriers that directly or indirectly discriminate against the participation of women (Art.191.a).

- MDGs. In the 2000 seminal decision on the *Millennium Development Goals*, *MDG*, the United Nations recognized the central role of women in development as one of the measurable goals (MDG3), pointing especially to the number of women in national parliaments, however without any special goal stated.
- CSW. In March 2014, the UN Commission on the status of women, CSW, stated in its agreed conclusion in terms of goals and strategies:

"Ensuring women's participation and leadership at all levels and strengthening accountability.

...through policies and actions such as temporary special measures, as appropriate, and by setting and working to achieve concrete goals, targets and benchmarks."

In conclusion, in today's international discourse the inclusion of women in public life on an equal footing with men is considered one of the key elements in processes of development and democratization. And conversely, the exclusion of women from large parts of public life is seen as a factor that may hinder development. Today, the international community, first and foremost the United Nations, recommends affirmative actions and special measure in order to change historical inequalities.

3. WOMEN'S POLITICAL REPRESENTATION WORLD-WIDE: SOME FACTORS OF IMPORTANCE FOR WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION

Globally, we are witnessing an increase in women's political representation. Today, women occupy 22.3 % of the seats in the world's parliaments, men 77.7 % (both houses combined). However, the increase is slow, and some countries have even experienced backlash. The conclusion from the research on gender and politics is that there is no reason to lean back and trust that women's gender parity in political assemblies will 'come by itself' (Dahlerup & Leyenaar 2013).

Today several countries from the Global South have increased women's parliamentary representation by *fast track measures* such as gender quotas, and consequently, the Scandinavian countries, so well-known for their historical high women's representation, are no longer alone at the top of the world's rank order. Countries such as Rwanda, South Africa and Senegal now match the Scandinavian countries in terms of including women in the political assemblies. Rwanda is No 1 on the world rank order with 64 % women in parliament, while Sweden and South Africa has 45 %, Senegal 43 % and Denmark 39 % women in parliament (www.ipu.org).

Table 1 shows the regional averages in women's parliamentary representation. Countries in North and South America (the Americas), in Europe (OECE) and in Sub-Saharan Africa as a region all above the world average of 22.3 %. Asia is somewhat below, and the Arab and Pacific regions at the bottom.

Table 1
World Averages in Women's Representation in Parliament (single or lower house)

<i>World Average</i>	22.3 %
Nordic countries	42.1 %
Americas	25.7 %
Europe (OSCE), incl. Nordic	24.9 %
Sub-Saharan Africa	22.9 %
Asia	19.3 %
Arab countries	17.8 %
Pacific	13.4 %

Source: www.ipu.org as of April 2014.

Table 2 brings an overview over women's political representation in a selected number of Asian parliaments (single or lower house). Table 2 also adds information on the electoral system and the use of quotas. The table shows that in terms of women's rep-

resentation in the National Assembly of Bhutan is listed as No 127 in the world (www.ipu.org). Many Asian countries today make use of gender quotas of some type, and a few have done so for a long time. It is worth noticing that the countries without quotas have the lowest representation of women.

Table 2
Women's Representation in some Asian Parliaments

Country and rank order	% of women (election year)	Electoral system	Quotas
35. Nepal	29.9 % (2013)	Mixed	Yes (candidate q.)
61. China	23.4 % (2013)	One Party system	NA
72. Pakistan	20.7 % (2013)	Mixed	Yes (R.Seats)
77. Bangladesh	19.3 % (2014)	Majority	Yes (R. Seats)
83. Indonesia	18.3 % (2009)	List PR	Yes (candidate q.)
111. India ^a	11.4 % (2009)	Majority	No
127. Bhutan	8.5 % (2013)	Majority	No
134. Sri Lanka	5.8 % (2010)	List PR	No

Note:

Election Day Results. The numbers refer to the global ranking of the country in terms of women's parliamentary representation by the Inter-parliamentary Union, IPU, www.ipu.org (as of April 2014).

^a*The result of the May 2014 election on women's representation is not available yet. India has a 33% reservation for women for the local councils, the Panchayats, and also reservation for the scheduled castes. A quota law for the national level in India has been discussed over many years, but not adopted.*

Electoral systems: List PR: proportional representation based on party lists; Majority (plurality/majority): single member districts, First-Pass-The-Post, FPTP; Mixed: A combination of PR and majority, for instance 50-50 or 40-60.

Quotas: Candidate quotas regulate the gender composition of the candidate lists; R. Seats (Reserved Seats) regulates the gender composition of those elected by requiring the election of a certain minimum of women or of both genders.

The mounting research on gender and politics has pointed to a number of factors of importance for the level of women's representation in various countries:

- At the country level: political institutions such as the electoral system; social and economic conditions; cultural indicators such as religion and general attitudes towards gender equality. Discourses on women as political leaders.
- At the party level: party ideology, the presence of women's sections in the party organization, recruitment and selections processes
- At the individual level: the support structures, the perception of personal impact, individual ambitions (Dahlerup & Leyenaar 2013, p.4-5).

Two factors will be discussed in the following.

The importance of the electoral system

Research has shown that the electoral system is very important for the level women's representation (Norris 2004). In general, proportional representation electoral systems (PR) are more favorable to change in women's political representation, because it allows party lists with many candidates. In contrast, the plurality/majority electoral system with First-Pass-The Post implies that political parties and other nominating bodies usually only nominate one candidate each for the single-seat constituency – usually a man. In contrast, the party list system allows for a diversity of candidates and today lists will often be composed so that they include a diversity of candidates according to gender, age, occupation, location etc. in order to attract as many voters as possible. This implies that the proportional representation, PR, electoral system based on party lists seems in general to be more open to cultural changes, since a candidate list can include a diversity of candidates and still keeping male candidates, which many more traditional voters seem to prefer (Norris 2004; Kittelson & Schwindt-Bayer 2012; Dahlerup 2013).

Further, it is more difficult to introduce a quota system in single member constituencies than in PR systems, although it is possible as the next sections will show. Consequently, one may expect the difference in women's representation between plurality/majority and party list systems will further increase in the future.

The electoral system of Bhutan is at all levels organized according to the FPTP, single member district system. There might be many good reasons for choosing the FPTP system, but it is nevertheless important in this context to note that the Bhutanese electoral system in itself might constitute a barrier for equal participation and representation of women and men in politics. Several countries which operate the plurality/majority system for national elections, have adopted a PR-system for their local elections, for instance United Kingdom, France and United States. In Asia, however, such a split between the national and the local level is not common.

No gender inequality in Bhutan? - The concept of structural barriers.

Several documents state that Bhutan has a long tradition for power sharing between men and women, and for decision-making based on the principle of consensus. The matrilineal tradition practiced in most parts of the country contributes to this narrative. Thus, it is part of the national narrative of Bhutan that the country has a high level of gender equality compared to countries in South Asia, and Bhutan comes in second among these countries after Sri Lanka, on the Social Institutions and Gender Index, SIGI (Helvetas-Bhutan 2010, p.3). Sometimes one even hears the point of view expressed, that there are no gender inequalities in Bhutan.⁵ This is of course a myth. One of the women politicians expressed the view to the mission, that such narratives may in fact hinder an open discussion about gender inequalities. Some conceptual clarification is needed for this discussion.

⁵ The Helvetas-Bhutan report mentions "that the first gender study also showed that women in Bhutan do not face overt discrimination and that institutionalized forms of discrimination against women does not exist" (p.3, referring to a 2001 pilot study).

In Bhutan, as in most countries in the world today, the previous formal barriers for women's access to various positions in public life have been removed. It would, however, be inaccurate to conclude that gender inequality has been achieved. Even if it should be true that direct discrimination, as some have argued, have been totally removed, there remain in Bhutan as in all other countries in the world, many *structural barriers* which makes it difficult for women (and for minorities etc.) to reach the same positions as men.

Also in political life structural barriers for women exist, implying that the structure and norms of political institutions in many cases favor men, the electoral system being one such barrier, as discussed above. It is simply easier in general for a person of male sex to be nominated and elected than for a person of female sex. But the barriers vary in type and degree between difference countries, and can be broken, as history has showed us (Dahlerup & Leyenaar 2013).

The concept of structural barriers is useful when trying to understand women's political under-representation as well as other inequalities. Seemingly gender-neutral rules should in fact be scrutinized for potential gender bias. This is in fact the idea behind 'gender mainstreaming'.

Some examples from Bhutan: The constitutional requirement that candidates for national elections shall have a university degree, is an example of a structural gender barrier, as long as more men than women from the age groups from which politicians are recruited, have such a degree. When adult literacy rates vary from 2/3 among men to less than half of the women, then a reading ability requirement also represents a gender barrier. Very few countries in the world demand a university degree of a national parliamentarian – and many would consider that discriminatory against poor people, who might have autodidact leaders. In contrast, the literacy requirement might be considered relevant for the ability to function as local politicians, but it nevertheless constitutes a structural barrier for women.⁶


It is the existence of structural barriers for women, which makes proactive measure necessary. If everything was fair in society, no affirmative action or special measures would be necessary.



More controversial is the requirement that *civil servants* have to give up their position if they become politicians, yes, even if they stand for an election without getting elected. This was mentioned by many stakeholders, and it no doubt contributes to the problem in finding sufficient number of candidates for the elections. In the local government election 2011, 370 seats remained vacant (IPCS, p.2). But if the position as civil servant is in reality (not formally, of course, but in reality) a more open or preferred career option for women than positions in private business, then this apparently gender neutral requirement, may contribute to more women than men not coming forward as candidates, because they are afraid of losing their livelihood means.

⁶ Training courses and literacy tests are important programs carried out all over Bhutan to overcome this barrier.

Other structural barriers are the result of social factors, which de facto inhibit many women from participation: From gender stereotypes about women in public life to lack of roads and shelters when campaigning in the mountains. From women's problem with combining work and family responsibilities with political work, over unfair treatment of women in the media to the existence of 'old boys networks' in the recruitment processes. Many structural gender barriers are more or less identical all over the world, but no less important are the variations from country to country and over time. It is an important task for gender research to reveal such barriers.

A survey predominantly from rural areas in Bhutan (*Study Report, table 3.109*) has shown that men as well as women point to the existence of patriarchal norms, especially in South and East Bhutan, as factors constraining women's participation in local government elections. The most important factors, however, mentioned by the respondents were 'education and training' and 'functional language skills'. 'Decision-making' (?) and self-image/self-esteem come no 3 and 4. These results are interesting, because they show how rural voters conceive the society from a gender perspective, even if voter surveys cannot be seen as *the* explanation for women's low representation in Bhutan⁷. It is necessary to proceed to study the electoral processes directly, see the next section.

⁷ *The Study Report* seems to make such a conclusion, see the Executive summary.

4. WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN THE FIRST DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN BHUTAN

– **Why are women under-represented?**

The approach of the following analysis is to go from an overview over the representation of women among *those elected* to political assemblies in Bhutan (4.1), to an analysis of how successful female, respective male *candidates* were in recent elections (4.2.), and finally to move one step further back in the electoral process to the selection and *nomination* of candidates seen from a gender perspective (4.3.).

Research on gender and politics has for long pointed to the importance of the nomination process, the *demand and supply of candidates* (Lovenduski & Norris 1995). Are the voters to blame for the low representation of women? Or is the problem primarily one of lack of women candidates, lack on the supply side? Or is it the lack of demand on the part of political parties and other nominating bodies that causes this problem, i.e. a lack of inclusiveness on the demand side?

Consequently, in order to change women's under-representation the processes of nomination before the actual voting need to be scrutinized. This perspective is further highly relevant for the quota discussion, since one of the main purposes of quotas is to make the political parties and other nominating bodies more seriously search for potential women candidates between the elections.

4.1. Women's representation in elected assemblies in Bhutan

After the first elections under the democratic regime, women remain grossly under-represented in all parts of local government in Bhutan, see table 3 - but with some interesting variations. The lowest representation is among the local chairs, the Gups (0.5%). This result confirms the general thesis that 'the higher up, the fewer women'.

However, table 3 also shows that women's representation among the Mangmis (deputy chairs) did increase somewhat from 2005 to 2011, and among the rank and file councilors, the Tshogpas from 5.9 % and 8.9 %. Given the relatively long span of years between the two elections and the introduction of democracy in 2008, the development must be characterized as slow with no guarantee of a continuous increase, as the national elections revealed.



It is a myth, not supported by any study, that women's under-representation in Bhutan elections is caused by 'women voters not voting for women', a statement often heard in the debate.



Table 3
The Number and Percentage of Women Elected in the Local Government Elections, 2005 and 2011⁸

	2005 election	2011 election
Gups (chair)	1 (0.5%)	1 (0.5%)
Mangmis (vice-chair)	4 (2%)	12 (5.9 %)
Tshogpas (councilors)	60 (5%)	86 (8.9%)

Source: *Study Report, 2012; pp. 10-13; Dorji et al, p.62*

Note: 2011 electoral result includes both the result of the June 27 election and the supplementary election on Dec 26. Tshogpas includes T. of both Gewogs and Thrompon. If the Dzongkhags Thomde Tshogpa are included, the total share of women in local government was 4% in 2005 and 7% in 2011. Several sources refer to a UNHR study, which reports a total increase to 14% women in the 2011 local government elections. This result cannot, however, be substantiated by the electoral statistics.

Table 4
Women's representation in Bhutan's National Assembly and National Council 2008 and 2013 elections

Year	2008			2013		
	Total	Women	Women %	Total	Women	Women %
National Assembly, elected	47	4	8.5%	47	4	8.5%
National Council, elected	20	4	20%	20	0	0
National Council, appointed	5	2	40%	5	2	40%
National Council, total	25	6	24%	25	2	8%

Source: statistics from ECB

It may have come as a shock to many that women's representation actually fell from the first democratic election in 2008 to the next 2013. While women's share of the seat in the general election for the National Assembly remained the same low (8.5% in both elections, 91.5% to the men), women's representation in the National Council actually dropped, since not a single woman was elected. Only the King's appointment of 2

⁸ The 2011 elections was the first local election under the new constitution. Even if the electoral procedures might not have been so different, earlier election were according to Gyambo Sithey "neither public nor based on specific issues". In the 2011 local election the idea of campaign flowed down from parliamentary elections to that of local government" (Sithey, 2013, p.23). One may ask to what extend the old system still lives on, especially in the nomination norms and procedures.

women (and 3 men) prevented the National Council from being 100 percent male, e.g. totally male dominated⁹.

The 2013 result places the new democracy of Bhutan as No. 127 on the world rank order in terms of women's representation (www.ipu.org).

4.2. Success or failure of female and male candidates in the elections

In the discussions during this Mission, many different explanations were brought forward for women's under-representation, seen in relation to their share of the population, structural as well as institutional. A frequently heard argument, also among women's organizations was, however, that the low representation of women is partly caused by the fact that women voters do not vote for women candidates. So let's start the analysis with the voters.

"The reason for women's under-representation is that women do not vote for women"

This argument is frequently heard all over the world, not least in the Arab region following the first elections after the uprisings. Women's under-representation is primarily explaining by pointing to the behavior of women voters. But is this a true? And how can we know actually how the women voters vote?

If the assumption is that all women voters will vote for a woman candidate, then it is easy to see from the overall electoral statistics that often a women candidate receive less votes than the number of women participating in the election. This is, however, an unlikely assumption, since many other considerations than the gender of the candidate determines the voter's cast. And one could just as well ask how many – or how few - male voters actually vote for female candidates?

In a democracy voting is secret, and very few countries count male and female votes separately, even if the polling stations are separated by sex. In general, we need survey data to get this kind of information. In the case of Bhutan, we have no data which can tell us how female and male voters vote when it comes to the gender of the candidates.

Table 5 reveals that most Bhutanese voters did not have the possibility to vote for a women candidate, even if they had wanted to. In 37 constituencies, that is 79% of the electoral constituencies for the National Assembly election, there were only male candidates. In 16 (80%) of the 20 National Council districts, there was not a single woman candidate to vote for.

This implies that it is unjustified to blame the voters, female or male, for women's under-representation. Instead, we have to analyze the nomination process. This finding is also relevant for the quota discussions. One argument against quotas is that it limits the choice of the voters. Table 5, however, shows that the choice of the voters is already in advance been heavily restricted by the parties and those groups who control the nominations. Sometimes this well-known phenomenon is labeled the historical informal 'quota' for men.

⁹ Male dominance is here defined as $\geq 90\%$. Gender balance is defined as no less than 40 % and no more than 60% of either sex.

Table 5

Voters' Possibility to Vote for a Woman Candidate in the 2013 National Elections

	National Assembly	National Council
Constituencies with only female candidates	1 (2%)	0
Constituencies with both female and male candidates	9 (19%)	4 (20%)
Constituencies with only male candidates	37 (79%)	16 (80%)
Total No of Constituencies	47 (100%)	20 (100%)

Source: General election for the N.A. (2nd round). Calculated on the basis of statistics provided by the Electoral Commission of Bhutan. The By-election in Nanong Shumar is included.

The success rates of female and male candidates – surprisingly equal

How did the relatively few women candidates succeed? Was it more difficult for the female candidates to be elected, once nominated, than for the male candidates? Table 6 displays the success rates, e.g. how many of the female versus the male candidates who actually got elected in relation to their share of the candidates.

In general, the success rates, which show the chance of winning an election, were quite high for all candidates in the recent National Assembly and local government elections, simply because of relatively few candidates. Several seats were even left empty and had to be filled, if possible, in by-elections. If only one candidate stands for local government elections in the constituency, the voters are given the possibility to vote yes or no to that person.

Table 6

Success Rates of Female and Male Candidates, Local Election 2011

	Women candidates	Women elected	Success rate W	Male candidates	Male elected	Success rate M	Success rate W-M
Local government, all positions	165	76	46%	2.020	1.028	51%	-5

Source: Study Report, 2011, table 1.11, p.14.

Table 6 shows the interesting and may be surprising result, that there was only a minor difference in electoral success by gender, minus 5 to the advantage of male candidates. So once nominated, the female candidates had almost the same chances of winning as the male candidates. In general, the success rate is the result of several factors such as the votes cast by the voters and the characteristics of the constituency.

However, for the Gup positions, where 22 women and 556 men contested for the 205 seats, the difference was considerable: While 36% of the male candidates for the Gup position succeeded in getting elected, only 5 %, e.g. one woman, got elected out of the 22 female candidates (-31). In conclusion, the extreme under-representation of

women at the highest local position, the Gups, can be explained both by the very few women candidates, and by a lower success rate of those who actually stood for election. In contrast, women were doing considerably better in the Mangmis election (-9), and the differences in success rates for election of Tshgpas, were even smaller (- 7) (Local Report 2011, p.14). The analysis of the local government election clearly depicts the existence of a *glass ceiling*, a metaphor for an invisible barrier that stops women for the highest positions. There is no doubt a need for active measures to break that glass ceiling.

Table 7
Success Rates of Female and Male Candidates, National Elections 2013

	Women candidates	Women elected	Success rate W	Male candidates	Male elected	Success rate M	Success rate W-M
National Assembly	11	4	36	83	43	52	- 16
National Council	5 (6)	0	0	61	20	32	-32

Note: For National Council, only the direct elected are included.

Sources: *Democracy in Bhutan*, p.9, as well as the 11th *Five Years Plan* (p.66) mention 6 women candidates, while the statistics of the Electoral Commission only mentions five, probably since this is the Election Day results, not including by-election.

Table 7 shows the success rates for female and male candidates in the national elections of 2013. In general, one third of the few women candidates for the National Assembly (general election) were elected - in international comparisons a high proportion. However, the gender difference in terms of success rates was minus 16 in favour of the men.

A calculation of votes casts for female and male candidates in the nine constituencies with both female and male candidates give the result that the male candidates received on the average 2.686 votes, while the score for the female candidates was almost the same, 2.633 on the average. In general, there was a swing towards PDP, and of the four female PDP candidates two won over a male candidate from DPT, and of the five PDP male candidates, four won, a higher success rate for the male than for female PDP candidates and also for the male DPT candidates, but the numbers are too small for general conclusions.

Generally speaking, incumbency is an asset when it comes to (re-)nomination and also election. However, in the 2013 election for the National Council of Bhutan, only 6 out of 14 incumbents, who stood for re-election were actually reelected (IPCS 2013, p.2). Of the four women elected in 2008 to the National Council, three stood for re-election and lost. In general, there was in the 2013-election a turn against the incumbents among the voters (Sithey 2014; IPCS 2013).

A high or low success rate reflects not only the number of personal votes cast for women and men candidates. Success rates are also a consequence of the placement by the political parties of female and male candidates, namely in strong or weak constituencies for that party, as was the case in the election to the French National As-

sembly, see later. In Bhutan, however, the 2013-election showed no 'save seats' for one party, and no positive incumbency factor.

We will now move one step further back to the nomination process.

4.3. Focus on the nomination process

When the voters enter the polling station, the names of the candidates whom they can vote for have already been decided. Yet, most voters have no knowledge about the actual nomination process. Therefore, in political science we talk about "the secret garden of nominations". Only in case of open primaries are the voters able to follow the process. But then again, the next question is where the candidates for the primaries emerged from? In order to understand why women are under-represented, it is necessary to scrutinize how the nomination processes take place in Bhutan.

The theoretical position taken here is that we should look at *the dynamics between demand and supply*. It seems to be the case that historically an increasing demand for female candidates also creates a higher supply of women willing to come forward as candidates.¹⁰

We saw in the previous sections that women's under-representation in Bhutan cannot be explained by lack of voter support. This report concludes that the main problem for Bhutan is that very few women candidates are being nominated and stand for election.

But it is not sufficient to look only at the supply side, i.e. to what extent women are willing to stand for election. The analysis should include analysis of the demand side for female candidates by those who decide over the nomination process, the political parties or local community leaders. It seems to be a global tendency that many potential women candidates need an encouragement to come forward, and will hesitate more than potential male candidates in stepping forward on their own. Consequently, the supply is not independent from the demand. Or expressed in another way: an increase in demand may result in an increase in supply, that is, in the willingness of women to come forward as candidates.

Table 8 shows how women are in an overwhelming minority among the candidates at all levels. The highest share for women is among the candidates for the National Assembly, which is party based. It is, however, noticeable that the percentage of female candidates at the local level decreases the higher up, and is lowest at the Gup-level.

With the focus on nomination process new questions arise. Is the nomination process de facto controlled by a smaller group of national and local elites? Are the nomination meetings de facto open or closed for newcomers? It is in the context of the 'secret garden of nomination' that one speaks of an 'old boy's network' or of homo-social recruitment, e.g. do men, who usually control the nomination process, tend to recruit other men? A study of the recruitment process in Thailand has shown the existence of such a family and clan based male recruitment process into politics (Bjarnagård 2010). Has the new democracy of Bhutan been able to change these patterns?

¹⁰ On the other hand, it is questionable to what extend an increased supply of qualified women candidates with experience from civil society organizations or civil servant positions by itself will create an increased demand.

Table 8

Overview over Women's Share of all Candidates in Bhutan's Elections of 2011 and 2013

Level	Total no candidates	Women candidates	Women candidates %
National Assembly	94	11	12%
National Council	67	5	7%
Local government	2185	165	6%
Gup	578	22	4%
Mangmis	584	42	7%
Tshogpas	997	97	10%

Sources: For the national level, ECB, for the local level Study Report, 2011, table 1.11, p. 14.

How are candidates for public elections in Bhutan actually being nominated? More studies are needed of the actual nomination procedures and power distribution. International studies indicate that women would benefit from a *formalization* of the nominations process and from more *transparency* into the nominations process (Norris 2004; Dahlerup 2006).

The National Assembly

Table 9

The National Assembly Election 2013: Women Candidates and Elected by Party

	Candidates		Elected	
	W/total	W%	W/total	W%
PDP	5/47	11%	3/32	9%
DPT	6/47	13%	1/15	7%

Source: Calculated on the basis on statistics from the ECB

Table 9 shows that both parties for the 2013 elections nominated relatively few women, PDP nominated 5 out of 47 (11%), and DPT 6 out of 47 (13%). The two biggest political parties thus share the responsibility for women very low representation in the National Assembly. However, the few women candidates in the winning party, PDP, did well, since 3 out of 5 (60%) were elected. Evidently, in general the candidates of the losing party, DPT, did worse. And in DPT only 1 out of the 6 women candidates were elected, for the men 14 out of 42 (33%).

According to the Election Act of Bhutan, chap.8 on political parties, the nomination of candidates for the National Assembly is done exclusively by political parties, and candidates shall be nominated by secret ballot in the manner prescribed by rules made in this behalf (Art.157 and 206). A candidate from a party, which did not qualify for the second round, is allowed to become member of and stand for election for one of the two contesting parties. This was actually the case for several leading members of the new DNT party, including Dorji Choden, who joined PDP and later became Bhutan's

first woman minister. A candidate cannot stand for more than one type of election at a time.¹¹

Again we have to take one step back and ask how and on whose suggestion did the candidates for election in this secret ballot emerge. What considerations concerning the gender composition of the party's candidate lists are made by party leaderships? Were more women than men outvoted during this selection process?

The National Council

Because candidates nominated for National Council and local government are not allowed to belong to any political party (Art.206), the political parties cannot be made responsible for the lack of selection of female candidates. This feature, specific to the Bhutanese electoral system, makes the scrutinizing of the nomination procedures for the National Council and the local government even more pertinent.

We saw above that women only constitute a minority, 7 %, of all candidates in the National Council election, which takes place in the twenty Dzongkhags as electoral districts. Since the actual nomination of candidates is made locally in the 205 Gewogs all over the country, a scrutinizing of these nomination processes from a gender perspective may give important information of why there are so few women candidates.

The fact that these nominations according to the Electoral Law, Art. 11 takes place at a local forum (Zomdu), called by the local leader, the Gup, may in itself be rather prohibitive for women candidates, who are usually not part of the local leadership, see table 3. Again it could be interesting to know how the candidates are selected before being proposed to the 'Zomdu'.

In many countries in the world, *nomination committees* prepared such nomination meetings, and in Scandinavia women have demanded that the composition of such committees should be based on the principle of gender parity.

Local Government

We have seen from table 3, that only 0,5 % of the local leaders, the *Gups* are women and only 5 % of the deputy-leaders, the *Mangmis*, are women. These two are chosen by direct election. The local development councils, the *Gewog Tshogdes*, consist of 7-10 elected members, including the Gup and the Mangmi. 10 % of the candidates and



The fact, that very few women were actually nominated as candidates by the political parties is the main reason for women very low representation in the National Assembly.



¹¹ Bhutan's 2-rounds electoral systems is special, since only the two biggest parties country-wise are allowed into the second round. This makes it extremely difficult for new parties to enter parliament. Also the very special restrictions on party activities and membership between the elections favour the parties already in parliament. Two of the parties which did make it to the second round in 2013 had a woman leader.

8.9 % of those elected as rank and file members, the Gewog Tshogpas, are women, the highest share among the local posts, yet still relatively low.

Also at this level, the electoral systems is a majority, First-Pass-The-Post system. Gewogs are divided into sub districts, *Chiwogs*, who elect one seat each (Constitution, Art.16). As noted above, such a system tends to favour men, both as candidates and as elected. But in contrast to the selection in open Fora of candidates to the National Council, every voter can register to become a candidate for the positions in local government after having collected a certain number of signatures from voters in the district. This could in principle represent a more open system of nominations, especially if it became possible legally for instance for women's organizations to be active in nominating women candidates and help collecting signatures. *If no political parties and no civil society organizations are allowed to be involved, discussions about whom to nominate will at this level tend to be controlled by traditional local (male) elites.*

In conclusion, it is recommended that the nomination process within the political parties for the National Assembly, and at all other levels as well shall be as formalized and transparent a possible. One option is that nominations at all levels be prepared by a nomination committee, openly elected, and such committees should be based on gender parity.

The political parties should aim at being as inclusive as possible, and work to develop a gender-sensitive organization in order to attract women as party members and as candidates. It seems important to see this as a long process of inclusion, engagement and encouragement, not just one of asking a woman candidate to stand in the last minute before the election.

5. DIFFERENT TYPES OF PARITY/QUOTA SYSTEMS: AN OVERVIEW

More than 80 countries in the world have now adopted electoral gender quotas *by law*, the so-called *legislated quotas*. This is a new world-wide trend. The purpose is to rapidly change an unwanted historical under-representation of women. Quotas are also in use for minorities, sometimes in combination with gender quotas, as is the case for local elections in India.

In addition about 30 countries, individual political parties have introduced quota provisions for their own lists in elections, the so-called *voluntary party quotas*. Many left and green parties in Europe have today adopted such party quotas,. In the party statutes the required gender composition of the party's list can be for instance 'at least 30 % women among the candidates" or – in case of gender neutral provisions - '50-50% female and male candidates', or 'no sex shall have less than 40 % and no more than 60 % of the candidates' (see the global quota website on all electoral gender quota systems, www.quotaproject.org).

The arguments pro et con the adoption of quotas are amazingly identical around the world, including in Bhutan.¹² Many of the arguments have the form of *predictions*: Will there be a shortage of women candidates or will quotas on the contrary bring forward a reserve pool of qualified candidates? Will unqualified women be elected? Will women refuse to be elected under a quota system – do men? However, many of these predictions by both quota opponents and quota proponents can be now be answered by research on the actual results from those many countries, which have used electoral gender quotas through several elections (Dahlerup & Freidenvall 2010; Franceschet et al 2012).

In the following only legislated quota systems, e.g. quotas by law are discussed, since the program of the Bhutan government mentions the intention to adopt quotas *by law*. The advantage of quotas by law is that it is binding for all parties and nominating bodies, and that there can be legal sanctions for non-compliance.

The two main types of gender quotas by law:

- 1.** Candidate quotas – regulates the gender composition of the *candidate* lists (most common in Latin America and Europe)
- 2.** Reserved seats – regulates the gender composition of those *elected* (most common in Asia, the Arab region and Sub-Saharan Africa).

A candidate quota system implies that all candidate lists up for election shall include a certain number of women or a minimum of both sexes, but candidate quotas does not guarantee the election of a specific number of women in the way that reserved seat systems do. Quota systems work differently in different electoral systems, and should always be adapted to the electoral system in place. Here are some examples:

¹² See *The Bhutanese*, March 23, 2012 on arguments brought forward in the Bhutanese discussion on quotas.

Candidate quotas by law in PR electoral systems

Argentina introduced candidate quotas by law already in 1991 as the first country in Latin America. Later most other countries in the region have followed Argentina's example. The Argentinian law prescribes that at least 30 % of the candidates shall be women 'with a real chance of being elected'. Some other Latin American countries operate with 40 or even 50 % (Costa Rica). Many countries around the world use the same principles although with variations, for instance Belgium, Indonesia, Tunisia and South Africa (local level), (see www.quotaproject.org).

To look up for: Without additional regulation of the vertical *rank order* of the candidates on the lists, even a quota of 50 % women and 50 % men can result in very few women elected, if the nominating party places all the women candidates on the bottom of the list. Many rank-order systems are therefore in use. In Belgium the two first candidate candidates cannot be of the same sex. In Spain, at least 2 out of every group of five candidates must be of the opposite sex. A principle of alternation of female and male candidates although the list, as for instance in Costa Rica, is called the *zipper* or the *zebra system* (Freidenvall & Dahlerup 2013).

Candidate quotas by law in majoritarian, FPTP-systems

France was also among the first countries to adopt a gender quota law. The French parité law stipulates that 50 % of all candidates nominated by each party shall be women, and 50 % men. Since this is a single member district system (in 2 rounds), the rules are implemented in the way that 50 % of the all party's candidates in all districts taken together have to be of either sex (Murray 2010, 2012; Sineau 2013).

Reserved seat quotas by law in PR electoral systems

Morocco is an example here. 60 seats are reserved for women candidates on a National List. 30 seats are reserved for youth. In total the parliament has 395 seats. The candidates are nominated by the political parties, who also nominate the candidates for the general district seats. All seats are distributed according to principle of proportional representation. Very few women are, however, being nominated for the district seats (Darhour & Dahlerup 2013). In Rwanda, 2 seats are reserved for women in each province, elected by a special electoral college. In addition Rwanda has candidate quotas for district seats.

Reserved seat quotas by law in a majoritarian, FPTP-system

In *Uganda*, special district seats, for which only women can compete, are added to the general district seats. Voters cast two votes, one for the special women seats, and one for the district seats.

In *Jordan*, 15 seats are reserved for women. The 15 women are selected by those women candidates, who got the highest percentage of votes in their constituency without being elected (the 'best loser system').

India has installed a quota system for the local government elections to the Panchayats. 30 % of the seats are reserved for women. There are also reserved seats for scheduled castes. This system has led to that more than 1 mill women serving as local

councilors, also in strong patriarchal contexts. The reservation of seats for which only women can compete, rotates among the wards (Beamen et al 2012). The Indian system might be of relevant for Bhutan at the local level, see next section.

Too look up for: If the parties place all or most of the female candidates in 'bad' constituencies, where the party uses to be weak in terms of electoral support, then even 50 % women candidates may result in few women elected, as it happened in France in the first election after the adoption of the parité law, where women got only 18 % of the seats, partly because of non-compliance with the rules on behalf of the biggest (and richest) political parties, partly because the political parties tended to nominate their female candidates in weak districts for that particular party (Murray 2010, 2012). Slowly this has increased to today's 26 % women in the French National Assembly (Sineau 2013).

Sanctions for non-compliance might vary, but the two most common are 1) financial sanctions and 2) rejecting by the electoral commission of lists that do not comply with the quota rules. The last type of sanctions has proved to be far the most efficient, also in terms of increasing women's representation, since parties and other nominating groups do not want their lists rejected, and consequently work hard to recruit more women.

6. PARITY OPTIONS FOR THE NEW DEMOCRACY

Based on the intention expressed by the government in the 11th Five Years Plan for Bhutan to draft legislation with quota provisions for both national and local elections, this section develops various options for parity/quotas suited for Bhutan. It is of vital importance that the adopted quota system matches the electoral system for the specific election, and consequently the measures have to be different for the national and the local level.

The premise is the present principles of the electoral systems, even if as mentioned above, the exclusive use of the majoritarian, FPTP-system in Bhutan at all levels, in itself makes the system more favorable to male candidates, especially in traditional areas.

It was concluded in section 4 that the main explanation of women's very low representation in Bhutan is that there are so few women candidates at all levels. Based on this result, a legislated parity/ quota system seems to be the most adequate answer, may be as a temporary measure as suggested by the Terma Linca statement.

The main advantage of quota system in a historical situation like the one in Bhutan is that it makes the political parties and the local nominating bodies act more inclusive towards women, which means, searching more seriously for potential women candidates and creating a gender sensitive political environment that not only will make it possible for women to participate on the same footing as men, but also will make women want to participate¹³. We know from other countries, that an increased demand historically tends to create an increased supply of women coming forward as candidates. In Bhutan, there are no doubt many women qualified from civil society organizations and from civil service, who are potential candidates, especially if the prohibiting rules about civil servants in political life are amended in line with the regulations in other countries.

It is an important lesson from other countries that under any type of quota or parity system, the rules of selection of both female and male candidates in general shall be based on competitive *elections*¹⁴. Real empowerment and the possibilities to perform the jobs as representative depends largely on the legitimacy of the way in which the representatives are selected, nominated and elected.

6.1. Parity Options for the National Assembly

The main problem in the election for the National Assembly was that only few women were nominated as candidates by the political parties. In as many as 79 % of the con-



Bhutan has a large
reserve pool of
candidates in the
women.



¹³ See *Plan for Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments*, a publication by the Inter-parliamentary Union, IPU, 2012.

¹⁴ The quota systems of Pakistan and Bangladesh at the national level are based on appointment, not election, whereas most other reserved seat systems today are based on elections.

stituencies the voters could not vote for a woman candidate, if they had wanted to, since in these districts only men were competing with other man among the candidates in the 2013-election. Only 12 % of the candidates were women, however, the highest percentage of all Bhutanese elections, see Table 8.

This relative lack of female candidates is the responsibility of the political parties.¹⁵ In Bhutan today there are no doubt a sufficient number of engaged and qualified women to fill half the National Assembly's 47 seats. A quota system will make the political parties more seriously look for potential women candidates.

Which option? *The French parité system* seems most suitable for the Bhutan National Assembly election. The French parité law requires that each political party nominates 50 % women and 50 % men as their candidates, when their candidates for all single member districts are added for the whole country. In this system, both genders – and no genders - are on a quota provision! Parity means gender balance, but the system can also be applied with 30 or 40 %.

The problems found in the French system, see above, can be avoided by opting for a more effective system of non-compliance: the rejection of the party list by the Election Commission in case of non-compliance, which is in line with the way the Election Commission of Bhutan works. Further, it is up to the party members, especially its women's caucuses to see to it that the party does not nominate most of the women candidates in its weakest constituencies, if strong and weak constituencies are identifiable at all.

6.2. National Council

It seems rather difficult to construct a quota system for the National Council under the present system of nominations. But an option is to change the present Forum, called by the Gup in each Gewog, which tends to be dominated by local elites as before democratization, into a more open nomination system, see section 4 above.

6.3 Options for parity in local government

Gups and Mangmis¹⁶

Option 1. The Gup and the Mangmi cannot be of the same gender. The voter shall just as today cast two votes, but now one vote for a list of male candidates and one for the list of female candidates. The candidate, who gets the highest number of votes be-



Quotas will make the political parties look more seriously for potential women candidates, also outside their own circles. An increased demand will no doubt increase the supply.



¹⁵ The nomination process within the Bhutanese political parties should be subject to studies from a gender perspective.

¹⁶ This proposal in Option 1 was developed during constructive and intense discussions at the April 1-2, 2014 conference and at meetings with the Hon. Minister for Work and Human Settlement.

comes the Gup, and the candidate with the next highest votes become the Mangmi, provided he or she is of the opposite sex. This implies that all candidates stand for the position of both Gup and Mangmi. The number of votes received by the individual candidates will decide who becomes the Chair (Gup), and who becomes the vice-chair (Mangmi). This system will give women an incitement to stand for leadership positions, but will no doubt require encouragement and leadership training. This option is unique for Bhutan, but the Gup/Mangmi system is also rather unique.

Option 2. An alternative option is that the Gups and the Mangmis are not selected in a direct election as today, but elected by and among the Tshogpas immediately after the election. This is a very common procedure for local government in other parts of the world, that the elected assemblies choose their chairs. In that case the same rule should apply that the two leaders cannot be of the same gender.

Since Gups and Mangmis are both members of the district council, the *Dzongkhag Tshogdus*, this parity system will also make the Dzongkhags more representative for the whole population.

Gewog Tshogpas

Option 1: Full parity. Each Chiwog shall elect one male and one female candidate for the Gewog. The voters shall cast two votes, one for a male and one for a female candidate. The total number of members of the Gewog Tshogdu, today 7-10 according to the constitution, shall be doubled, or, alternatively, two Chiwogs shall together elect one female and one male candidate, in correspondence with the successful 'twinning system' used by the Labour Party in Scotland (Krook 2013). In the Appendix *Figure 1* depicts this electoral system.

Option 2: Rotation. The Chiwog seat in the Gewog Tshogdu is reserved for just women candidates in one or two elections, based on a system of rotation between the Chiwogs. This is in accordance with the electoral system to the local councils, the Panchayats in *India*, where 33 % of the seats are reserved for women to compete for on rotation between the wards. It is, however, a problem with the Indian system that a constituency is reserved for competition among female candidates exclusively for one term only, and then the reservation principle rotates to the neighboring constituency (Rai et al, 2006). Many elected women consequently chose to serve only for one term, which is too little to develop experience. A two term's reservation may be preferable. *Figure 2* in the Appendix depicts the Indian system.

It should be emphasized that a quota system primarily targets women's numerical representation, and cannot be the only measure. Quotas must be accompanied by capacity-building measures and measures to gender-sensitize the political institutions and political norms in general, in order to permanently making political life inclusive for both women and men.

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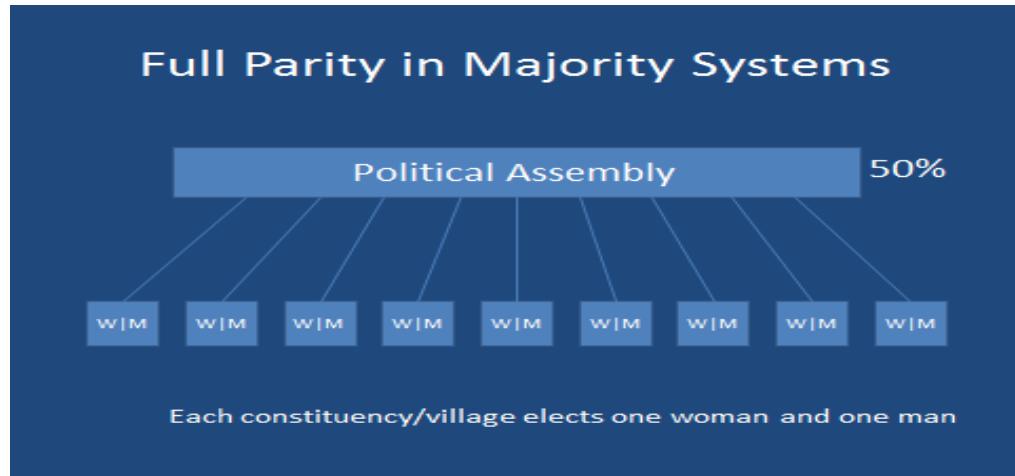
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<http://www.bnew.bt> Web site of the Bhutan Network for Empowering Women.

Appendix

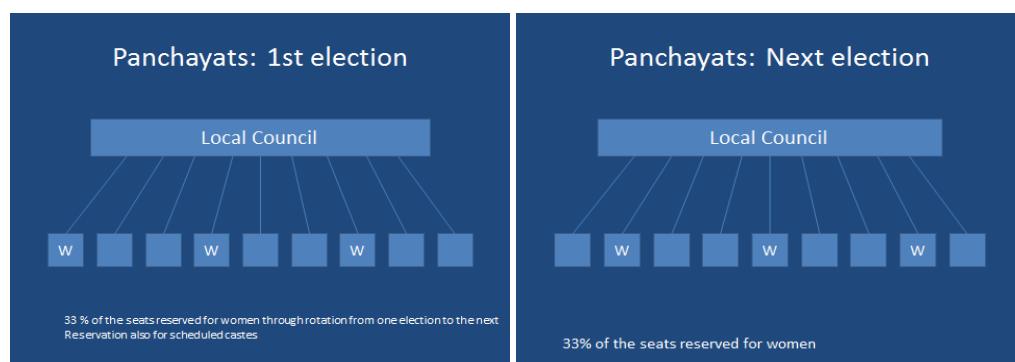
Options for the local government elections in the Gewogs

Figure 1. Option for a Full Parity System



The system works in this way: Each Chiwog (sub districts) shall elect one female and one male candidate for the Gewog. The voters shall cast two votes, one for a male and one for a female candidate. The total number of members of the Gewog Tshogpass, today 7-10 according to the constitution, shall be doubled, or, alternatively, two Chiwogs shall together elect one female and one male candidate, in correspondence with the successful 'twinning system' used by the Labour Party in Scotland (also a FPTP-electoral system).

Figure 2. Option: The Rotation System used for Local Elections to the Panchayats in India



The Indian system works like this: 30 % of the seats are reserved for women candidates only. There are also reserved seats for scheduled castes. This system has led to that more than 1 mill Indian women serving as local councilors, also in strong patriarchal contexts. The reservation of seats for which only women can compete, rotates among the wards (villages) from one election to the next. For Bhutan, however, a reservation for two terms seems more appropriate.