



निर्वाचन आयोग, नेपाल
ELECTION COMMISSION, NEPAL



AN ASSESSMENT OF THE VOTER EDUCATION PROGRAMME, NEPAL

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FOREWORD

The role of voter education in any election is very important. Generally, high voters' turnout with minimal invalid votes are considered as a successful election, where voter education plays a significant role. Considering the significance of voter education, Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) developed and implemented voter education policy, strategy, materials and conducted massive voter education programme during the Constituent Assembly (CA) Elections 2013 and By Elections 2014. For this, Election Education Workers and Voter Education Volunteers were mobilized for voter education at grassroots level.

ECN produced and distributed 88 types of voter education materials which includes posters, pamphlets, FAQs (frequently ask questionnaires), flip charts, 28 different languages PSAs (public service announcements), SMS, and TV and Radio programmes/dramas. In addition, mock polling, street drama and interaction programmes were also conducted at different levels. Taking into consideration of outreach for all groups and regions, ECN also conducted special voter education programme targeting marginalized groups for those districts where invalid votes were high in the CA Elections 2008.

Because of ECN's efforts, voters' turnout in the CA elections 2013 was more than 78%. Despite the high voters' turnout in the elections invalid votes did not decrease significantly as compared to the previous CA Elections. Due to this reason, ECN and UNDP/ESP jointly carried out an assessment to see the effectiveness of the voter education programme.

The assessment report is useful and has covered broader aspects of voter education in terms of identifying key gaps and their ways-forward. The findings and recommendations can be used for developing future voter education policy and strategy, and developing materials.

Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation to UNDP/ESP for providing technical and financial support to conduct this study. I would also like to extend my special thanks to the study team for conducting and preparing this report. Last but not least, I would like to thank ECN and UNDP/ESP officials who directly and indirectly contributed to make this study successful.

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Dolakh Bahadur Gurung
Officiating Chief Election Commissioner
Election Commission, Nepal

कान्तिपथ, काठमाडौं, नेपाल, फोन नं. (९७७-१) ४२२८६६३ । फ्याक्स: (९७७-१) ४२२९२२७

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“फोटो सहितको मतदाता नामावलीमा नाम दर्ता गरौं।”

FOREWORD

Voter Education (VE) motivates voters to exercise their voting rights and express their political will through an electoral process. This has been proved in the Constitution Assembly (CA) Elections-2013 of Nepal. In Nepalese history, the election was a grand success where more than 78 percent voters participated in the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) and more than 79 percent of voters in the Proportional Representation (PR) systems. The credit goes to Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) for its massive efforts for conducting VE activities before the Election Day.

This assessment was however done to ascertain the effectiveness of the VE programme on the CA elections-2013 and subsequent by-elections in the ground reality. The assessment proves that due to massive voter education programme conducted before the election inspired voters to fully participate in the CA elections-2013. Besides, Voter Identity (ID) card distribution also played a vital role to make the election more successful and fair. Nevertheless, an independent review on the VE with reference to the contents, types of materials, mode of dissemination, and timing of implementation can be felt necessary to make the VE more effective in future.

The assessment was done by UNDP/Electoral Support Project (ESP) officials with assistance from ECN and District Election Offices. The findings and recommendations of this assessment will be useful in developing VE strategy and policy for future elections.

This assessment was not possible without support of the ECN. I would therefore like to thank Chief Election Commissioner, Commissioners, Secretary and all ECN officials for their cooperation to successfully complete the assessment. My special thanks goes to the key informants: Electoral Education Workers, Voter Education Volunteers, Supervisors, Coordinators and Voters who provided their information and valuable suggestions during the Focus Group Discussion. Similarly, I would also like to thank Chief District Officers, Local Development Officers, Women Development Officers, and District Education Officers for their cooperation and inputs during the assessment.

I would like to thank the UNDP/ESP regional teams for their coordination during the assessment. Similarly, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Ms. Silvana Puizina, Civic and Voter Education Adviser, for conceptualizing the VE assessment and also for her technical supports to the study team. Last but not the least, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Mr. Kundan Das Shrestha, Deputy Project Manager, for his technical inputs and feedbacks in finalizing this assessment report. Finally, my special thanks goes to Ms. Sita Gurung, Civic and Voter Education Officer and Ms. Nikila Shrestha, National Electoral Education Information Center Coordinator who successfully conducted this study and prepared this assessment report.



Andres del Castillo
Chief Technical Advisor
UNDP/ESP



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2013 (2070 BS) Constituent Assembly elections were successfully conducted with a historic participation of voters, i.e. 78.34 percent in the First-Past-the-Post and 79.82 percent in the Proportional Representation systems*. To make the Constituent Assembly elections successful, the Election Commission of Nepal invested significant effort and resources in security and operations; media; the formation of policies/directives/codes of conduct; trainings, monitoring and supervision; as well as massive voter education activities. For voter education, the Election Commission of Nepal formed committees at the central, district and local levels, including a central-level voter education unit at the Election Commission of Nepal Secretariat.

During the Constituent Assembly elections, the Election Commission of Nepal mobilised 4,721 Electoral Education Workers and 10,013 Voter Education Volunteers at the local level for door-to-door and other voter education activities. Bed-sides, mock polling, street drama, interaction programmes, Television/Radio Programmes/Dramas/Public Service Announcements, voter education information through SMS, local cable & cinema hall, bill board etc. were other voter education activities and Election Commission of Nepal also launched special voter education programme in specific districts where invalid votes were more than 6 percent in 2008 Constituent Assembly elections). The Election Commission of Nepal trained these volunteers and relevant staff on voter education through a cascade model. For massive voter education outreach, the Election Commission of Nepal also produced and distributed 88 different types of voter education materials. With the support of the United Nations Development Programme/Electoral Support Project, the Election Commission of Nepal developed and aired public service announcements in Nepali and 28 other languages and broadcasted television and radio programmes through 14 national TV channels and 360 Radio/FM partners.

Although the Constituent Assembly elections were a milestone in terms of voter participation, the level of invalid votes did not decrease significantly as compared to the 2008 (2064 BS) Constituent Assembly elections. According to the Election Commission of Nepal, the amount of invalid votes for the 2013 Constituent Assembly elections was 4.96 percent in First-Past-the-Post and 3.20 percent in Proportionate Representation, whereas in the 2008 Constituent Assembly elections, the invalid vote was 5.15 percent in First-Past-the-Post and 3.66 percent in Proportional Representation. In this context, the Election Commission of Nepal and the United Nations Development Programme/Electoral Support Project decided to conduct an assessment on the effectiveness of Village Development Committee and district-level voter education efforts with a broader perspective and assessment of the voter education materials as well. Therefore, this study was conducted to ascertain the effectiveness of the voter education programme.

* The By-elections were conducted in four constituencies in Kathmandu-2, Chitwan-4, Bardia-1 and Kailali-6 on 22 June, 2014 and in Baglung-1 on 11 April, 2015.

This is a rapid assessment on the voter education programme carried out for the 2013 Constituent Assembly elections. For this study, the voter education policy, directives, training manuals and other Constituent Assembly election documents were reviewed as desk work followed by field work. Altogether, 43 districts from five development regions were selected for the assessment. More focus was given to those districts which had a high rate of invalid votes in the past Constituent Assembly elections.

Key Findings

- Due to the massive voter education activities through different national and local media, and the mobilisation of Electoral Education Workers and Voter Education Volunteers at the local level, voters were able to get information on voter education. In addition, the voter registration and voter identification card distribution processes played an important role in building the confidence level of voters, resulting in their historic participation in the 2013 Constituent Assembly elections.
- The Election Commission of Nepal formed voter education coordination committees at the central, district, local (Village Development Committee/Municipality) and polling location levels for the effective implementation of the voter education programmes. In addition, a voter education unit was established at the Secretariat of the Election Commission of Nepal for the elections. Overall, the committees at all levels were well-structured with the involvement of Commissioners, senior government staff and grassroots-level Voter Education Volunteers. However, it was noted that less coordination and information-sharing between the Supervisors/Coordinators and Electoral Education Workers/Voter Education Volunteers was noticed.
- Two days of voter education training for Electoral Education Workers and Voter Education Volunteers was conducted one month or six weeks before the elections. Most of the Electoral Education Workers and Voter Education Volunteers said that two days of voter education training was not sufficient in terms of the duration and suggested that at least one more day be added so that they could receive in-depth knowledge and information about voter education including a practical session. It was also found that the same voter education training materials were used for the Master Training of Trainers, the Regional Training of Trainers and the District Training of Trainers. This created difficulties in understanding between the different levels of training participants.
- The delay in arrival of voter education materials hampered the entire working schedule of the Electoral Education Workers and Voter Education Volunteers. In many places, the voter education materials were received by the Electoral Education Workers and Voter Education Volunteers nearly three weeks before the Election Day. In some cases, the trainings were conducted even without voter education materials. Because of this, they could not start the voter education activities in the field on time. Furthermore, voter education activities were also affected by festivals and bandhs (strikes).
- Role played by the political parties during the election was inadequate in providing voter

education to their voters. In the discussion, the key informants told that the parties were mainly found campaigning on their own election agendas. The impact has been seen in the ballot paper. For example: slogan of one political party like, “Euta Vote Dai lai, Arko to Vote Gai lai (one vote for brother and another vote for cow)”, created confusion among the voters. It led to double voting on the same ballot paper (Source: discussion with informants). Besides, the political parties were seen less interested to make the message clear that the light blue ballot paper was for in First-Past-the-Post and the red one was for the Proportional Representation. The key informants also told that some of the political parties were intentionally teaching the voters to mark two stamps on one ballot paper. This kind of activity was carried out in those areas where the political party realised that it would not get substantial votes. (Source: discussion with key informants)

- There was a lack of a clear monitoring and evaluation mechanism for both the district and local levels, although the main role of the chairperson of the polling location-level committee, who was also a supervisor, was monitoring. It was found that they did less monitoring of the voter education activities. Moreover, little monitoring was undertaken by the Supervisors and Coordinators. The main reasons cited were due to time and geographical constraints and a lack of funding for travel.
- However, in a short span of time, the Electoral Education Workers and Voter Education Volunteers visited door-to-door and organised cluster-based meetings/interaction programmes with the local people. The group interaction programmes through Ward Citizen Forums, Citizen Awareness Centre, Women’s Groups, schools, and different cooperatives and networks appeared more effective than door-to-door programmes, as it was often difficult to find voters in their homes during that short period of time. If the duration of voter education activities was longer-term, door-to-door activities could also be an effective programme.
- Among the voter education materials, flipcharts and local FM radio/media with local language materials were found to be more useful and illustrious among local communities than other media. Through flip charts and posters, the pictorial voter education materials on valid and invalid votes in particular were the most useful and informative.
- It was claimed that the voter turnout could have been much higher and the amount of invalid votes could have significantly decreased if political parties were oriented on voter education, as they are the major stakeholders to directly meet the voters during the election campaign.
- The procedures on Election Day created confusion, as voters were asked to vote for in First-Past-the-Post first and then for the Proportional Representation. In some cases, voters stamped twice on the same ballot. This has raised the question: should people get both ballots at the same time? Similarly, one of the highest tendencies for invalid votes was due to double stamped single ballot papers; another tendency for invalid

votes was through the use of a thumb mark (source: observation during votes counting). Key informants shared that the reason for this happening was that the voting process message was not clear. Another reason was due to the use of a stamp pad for thumb marking before issuing the ballot paper.

Key Recommendations

- The remuneration and job descriptions of Supervisors/Coordinators and Electoral Education Workers/Voter Education Volunteers should be reviewed for the effective implementation of voter education in the future, as most of the Coordinators/Supervisors/Voter Education Volunteers were not satisfied with their remuneration and the distribution of working areas.
- Two months duration for voter education, particularly in the Nepalese context, is not sufficient. To make voter education more effective and for wider coverage in terms of areas and voters, it is therefore recommended that the voter education programme should start at least four to five months before the Election Day, as per the suggestions provided by the informants.
- Due to the late arrival of educational material in polling locations, Electoral Education Workers/Voter Education Volunteers could not start voter education activities on time nor had sufficient time to effectively explain the materials to the voters. This created confusion, and voters believed the posters were for parties' campaigns, as the voter education and campaigning periods overlapped. Similarly, Electoral Education Workers/Voter Education Volunteers could not widely distribute the materials due to time constraints. It is therefore necessary that the education materials are received before voter education begins or at least provided before starting the voter education training. To save time and make the process more cost-effective, the Election Commission of Nepal could provide the contents and types of materials, which the District Election Office could print and distribute at the district level.
- More education on the voting process is a means in minimising the amount of invalid votes. The contents of the voter education materials should therefore be clear and concise, display uniformity, and contain more pictures/graphics in different languages. These materials should also target marginalised groups, first-time voters (youth), the illiterate or blind, Dalits, women, etc. In this regard, a plan and mechanism for the production and distribution of voter education materials should be developed.
- The role of political parties is crucial in making elections successful in terms of voter participation with minimal invalid votes. The Political parties at the local level should be oriented in voter education, as they meet the voters more at the local level.
- The Election Commission of Nepal created different layers of committees (from the central to the polling location level) for the implementation of voter education activities for the 2013 Constituent Assembly elections, which was well-structured. However, it

could have been more effective and participatory and also increased voter participation in the 2013 Constituent Assembly elections if these structures had included business chambers, the private sector, health workers, civil society, local non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, and local government bodies. These stakeholders could play an effective role and support voter education activities. It is therefore suggested to prepare operational guidelines for the committees.

- The monitoring mechanism should be strengthened to allow Supervisors and Coordinators to physically monitor the work of Electoral Education Workers/Voter Education Volunteers. For the monitoring, almost all informants in most of the districts suggested that there should be an allocation of a separate fund. To make the monitoring effective and productive, a clear monitoring/evaluation and reporting mechanism at different levels should be developed.
- The Election Commission of Nepal should have a voter education strategy with clear objectives and an action plan that results in outputs by covering more voters. The strategy should also be clear on how to reach remote and urban areas and how to target marginalised and minority groups, first-time voters (youth), women, disabled people including the blind, and those who are illiterate. An option could be that the Election Commission of Nepal form a partnership with different local non-governmental organisations or such networks/organisations working in this area.
- Voter education activities should be continual rather than seasonal. For this, there are options that could be considered. Firstly, the Election Commission of Nepal could coordinate with the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development to internalise voter education activities in the regular activities of Village Development Committees (i.e. social mobilisation programmes). Similarly, it could be continual by incorporating voter education in the curriculum of secondary and higher secondary school. Civic and voter education could also be integrated with informal education programmes initiated recently by the Government of Nepal. It could also be integrated with the voter registration programme. Above all, this would be a cost-effective approach.
- Voter education materials played a crucial role in making the 2013 Constituent Assembly elections successful. However, the rate of invalid votes was not significantly reduced as compared to the 2008 Constituent Assembly elections. Based on the information provided by the informants and the rapid assessment, it is therefore recommended to assess the contents and types of voter education materials in depth, as well as their distribution modality.
- Voter registration awareness, electoral education including voter education should be continued through Electoral Education Information Centre. Besides, awareness can also be raised by updating school curriculum and training to social studies teachers, and incorporating the content in informal education programme. Similarly, since involvement of media is crucial, a long strategic partnership is also recommended.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Background	1
Rationale of the Study	3
Objectives of the Study	3
Limitation of the Study	3
Organisation of the Report	3
Methodology	4
Literature Review	4
Study Areas	4
Study Team Composition	5
Informants	5
Coordination with District Election Office	6
Questionnaires	6
Data Collection	6
Data Analysis	6
Findings	7
Voter Education Structures and Management	7
Voter Education Activities	10
Voter Education Materials	13
Other Findings/Issues	16
Conclusion and Recommendations	17
Conclusion	17
Recommendations	18
Annexes	
Annex 1: ECN Voter Education Programme Implementation Structure	23
Annex 2: Voter Education Training Modality	24
Annex 3: Voter Education Activities carried out by ECN	25
Annex 4: Name of districts Selected for the assessment	26
Annex 5: Study Team Composition	27
Annex 6: Size of the informants	29
Annex 7: Checklists and Questionnaires	32



ABBREVIATION

CA	Constituency Assembly
CAC	Citizen Awareness Centre
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDO	Chief District Office/r
DCMC	District Coordination and Monitoring Committee
DDC	District Development Committee
DEO	District Election Office/Officer
DEO	District Education Officer
DTOT	District Training of Trainers
ECN	Election Commission of Nepal
EEIC	Electoral Education Information Center
EEWs	Electoral Education Workers
ESP	Electoral Support Project
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questionnaires
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FPTP	First Past The Post
LDO	Local Development Officer
MTOT	Master Training of Trainers
PLVECC	Polling Location Voter Education Coordination Committee
PR	Proportionate Representation
PSA	Public Service Announcement
RTOT	Regional Training of Trainers
SM	Social Mobiliser
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VDC	Village Development Committee
VE	Voter Education
VEDCC	Voter Education District Coordination Committee
VELCC	Voter Education Local Coordination Committee
VEVs	Voter Education Volunteers
WCF	Ward Citizen Forum
WDO	Women Development Office/r



INTRODUCTION

Background

When Nepal's internal armed conflict was concluded with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord in 2006, one of the primary commitments was to convene an election to the Constituent Assembly (CA) in free, fair and credible and inclusive fashion to promulgate a new Constitution for a New Nepal. In this regard, the 2008 (2064 BS) CA elections legitimised the formation of a CA. However, the CA failed to promulgate a Constitution and the Assembly was dissolved on 28 May 2012.

To ensure political stability in the country, the second CA elections were declared and successfully conducted on 19 November 2013 (4 Mangsir 2070) with a historic participation of voters. The voter participation was 78.34 percent in the First Past The Post (FPTP) and 79.82 percent in the Proportionate Representation (PR) systems*. This achievement was comparatively more than in the 2008 CA elections. There was also an increase in the participation of political parties.



Glimpse of E-Day, 2013 CA Elections

In total, 122 political parties participated in the 2013 CA elections; 68 more political parties participated in the FPTP and 67 more in the PR systems compared to the 2008 CA elections.

To make the 2013 CA elections successful, the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) prepared various policies and directives. Of the policies and directives, the Commission more specifically prepared the Voter Education (VE) Policy and Directive 2070 to implement its VE programme. As per the VE Directive, and for the overall implementation of the VE programme, different layers of committees were formed – central, district, local and polling location levels – where the central-level committee, Voter Education Committee (VEC), was headed by a Commissioner and comprised of members (secretaries, joint secretaries and under-secretaries). Similarly, Voter Education District Coordination Committee (VEDCCs) were established at the district level and headed by the Chief District Officer (CDO) and comprised of Local Development Officer (LDO), District Education Officer (DEO), Municipality Executive Officer, Women Development Officer (WDO), Chairpersons of district journalist federations, and District Election Officer (DEO). The Voter Education Local Coordination Committees (VELCCs) were formed under the coordination of the VDC/Municipality Ward

* The By-elections were conducted in four constituencies in Kathmandu-2, Chitwan-4, Bardia-1 and Kailali-6 on 22 June, 2014 and in Baglung-1 on 11 April, 2015.

Chairperson and comprised of Village Development Committee (VDC)/Municipality Ward VE Supervisors, political party representatives, civil society representatives, women's groups' representatives, Voter Education Volunteers (VEVs) and Electoral Education Workers (EEWs). Lastly, for the very local level monitoring, Polling Location Voter Education Coordination Committees (PLVECCs) were formed and headed by a Supervisor (school principal) and comprised of EEWs, VEVs and political party representatives from those polling locations. In addition, a VE unit, headed by the Joint Secretary of the Election Management Department, was established in the Secretariat during the elections. In this way, the ECN established a VE Programme Implementation Structure for the 2013 CA elections, and as a result, there was a historic participation of voters. Please see committee structures in Annex 1.

The UNDP/ESP provided significant effort and resources in terms of electoral processes, operations, media coverage, code of conduct, trainings, monitoring and supervision, voter registration, as well as massive VE activities through the ECN. For the VE programme, the ECN mobilised nearly 4,721 EEWs (social mobilisers from each VDC/Municipality) and 10,013 VEVs (school teachers/health volunteers) for every polling location. For the trainings, the ECN developed the Training Policy and Directives for the 2013 CA elections as well. As per the Policy and Directive, and to make VE effective in the field, the ECN organised two days of VE training at the centre, regional and district levels using the cascade model. At the central level, a Master Training of Trainers (MTotT) was held. The MTotT trainers then facilitated the Regional Training of Trainers (RTotT), followed by the District Training of Trainers (DTotT) in each district for EEWs and VEVs. The training detail modality is in Annex 2.



Posters produced for CA elections 2013

The ECN produced 88 types of VE materials like posters, flipcharts, Frequently Asked Questionnaires (FAQ), pamphlets, TV/radio dramas, and TV/radio Public Service Announcements (PSAs) in the Nepali language and 28 different local languages, which were distributed in all 75 districts through different channels for more outreach (See annex 3 for details activities carried by ECN). Out of 88 different VE materials, the UNDP/ESP supported the production and distribution in 28 different languages of TV/radio PSAs along with one Nepali language PSA and TV/radio programme, as well as supporting the production and distribution of a PSA for the physically disabled. These TV and radio materials were broadcasted through 12 national TV channels and 360 FM radio partners. Due to these efforts, there was the highest voter participation in the 2013 CA elections.

Rationale of the Study

In every election, voter and civic education are necessary to ensure that voters understand their rights and responsibilities, their political system, the contests they are being asked to decide, and how and where to vote. Voter and civic education strengthens voters' knowledge and encourages them to participate meaningfully in the voting process. This results in an increase in voter participation and a decrease in invalid votes. Therefore, the VE campaign was exclusively conducted throughout the country.

Although the 2013 CA elections were a milestone in terms of voter participation, the level of invalid votes did not decrease significantly as compared to the 2008 CA elections. The invalid votes for the 2013 CA elections was 4.96 percent in the FPTP and 3.20 percent in the PR systems, whereas in the 2008 CA elections, the invalid vote was 5.15 percent in FPTP and 3.66 percent in PR.

In this context, the ECN and the UNDP/ESP decided to conduct an assessment on the effectiveness of the VDC and district-level VE programme with a broader perspective. An assessment of the VE programme for the 2013 CA elections was therefore undertaken to provide recommendations to the ECN in relation to future VE activities. The VE assessment report could be a starting point as well as a reference to the ECN for its upcoming study on invalid voting tendencies and a new strategy paper. The findings of the assessment will also help the ECN to develop future strategies on VE and its performance in upcoming electoral processes.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to ascertain the effectiveness of the VE programme for the 2013 CA elections. The specific objectives were:

- To ascertain the effectiveness of VE programme for 2013 CA elections
- To assess the effectiveness of the VE materials.
- To provide a reference material to the ECN in preparing a VE-related strategy in future

Limitation of the Study

This assessment is a rapid assessment covering only VE and providing preliminary results. This assessment completely followed a qualitative approach; the information is based on the perceptions and judgments of the informants and therefore might not cover all aspects of the VE programme. This assessment will provide preliminary information for the further studies on VE if there is required.

Organisation of the Report

This report contains four sections. The first section is the introduction which provides the background, rationale, and objectives of the assessment. The second section offers information about the methodology of the assessment. The third section provides the findings of the assessment. The fourth section offers a conclusion and recommendations.

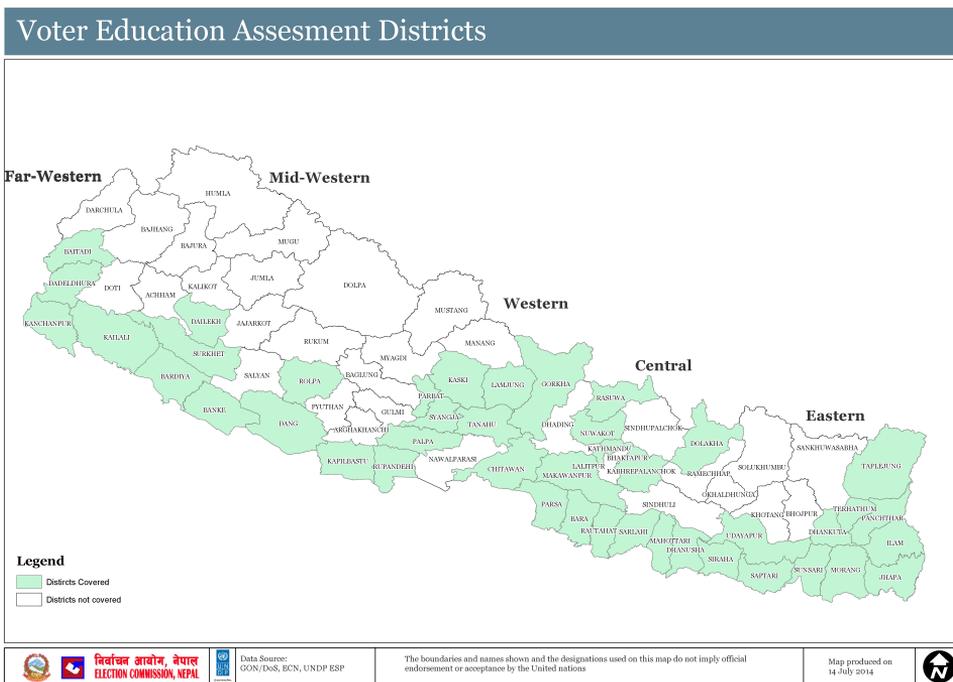
METHODOLOGY

Literature Review

Prior to the assessment, various documents related to VE policies, directives and training manuals were reviewed. Other manuals and documents related to polling and counting for the CA elections were also examined. Similarly, the documents related to the 2008 CA elections were reviewed. During the assessment in the districts, the comparative data on voter turnout and ballot invalidity between the 2008 and 2013 elections at the constituency level was also appraised.

Study Areas

For the assessment, 43 districts covering five development regions were selected. The main reason in selecting 43 districts was to make the information more realistic and credible. The district selection was based on the amount of invalid votes both in the FPTP and PR systems.



The focus was given primarily to those districts with the highest rates of invalid votes for both FPTP and PR in each region. A few districts with lower rates of invalid votes were also selected to make a comparative assessment. In the case of the Terai, 18 districts were selected as districts in that part of the country had the highest amount of invalid votes. The list of the 43 districts is presented in Annex 4.



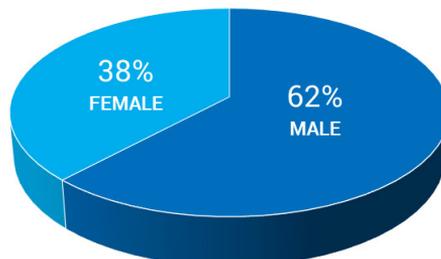
During Focus Group Discussion with EEWs/VEVs in Dhankuta District

Study Team Composition

Primarily, the ESP personnel from the Centre led the study. Two teams were formed, headed by Sita Gurung (Civic and Voter Education Officer) in Team 1 and Nikila Shrestha (National EEIC Coordinator) in Team 2. Each team included representatives from the ESP regional offices. The regional personnel were also oriented on the rationale, objectives, and methodology of the assessment. The first assessment was conducted and completed in the central region, followed by the western region. The names of the other team members and the duration are presented in Annex 5.

Informants

As this was a rapid assessment, only limited informants were selected. However, the major informants were EEWs, VEVs and Supervisors/Coordinators who were on the front lines during the 2013 elections in carrying out VE. Other informants were both central and field-level ECN-staff, including DEOs, VEDCC members, CDOs, Assistant CDOs, LDOs, WDOs, EDOs, and others members. Voters and members of CWFs were also informants. The gender and number of the informants are presented below. Similarly, the details are given in Annex 6.



Focus Group Discussion Participants

SNo	Participants	Gender		Total	%
		Male (M)	Female (F)		
1	EEWs/VEVs	154	281	435	38
2	Supervisors and Coordinators	344	52	396	34
3	District Coordination Committee Members	92	7	99	9
4	Voters/CWF	129	100	229	20
Total		719	440	1,159	100
%		62	38		

Coordination with District Election Office

The study team coordinated with the DEO, a district-level office of the ECN, before starting the assessment in each district. The DEO supported the team in inviting informants, organising the interactions and meetings, finding a venue, and other logistics.

Questionnaires

The team prepared checklists and questionnaires to be discussed with the informants. These checklists and questionnaires were finalised after consultation with the senior management of the ESP. Similarly, they were also shared with the ECN officials. The checklists and questionnaires are reflected in Annex7.

Data Collection

Primary and secondary information were the main sources of the data collection. To collect this information, the following methods were adopted:

- FGDs with EEWs (social mobilisers) and VEVs;
- FGDs with Coordinators and Supervisors (VELCC members, VDC/Municipality level);
- FGDs with voters (WCF members and voters); and
- Meetings with CDOs/Chairpersons or VEDCC members.

In each FGD and meeting, there were approximately 10 to 12 persons who participated as respondents. During the interactions and meetings, the checklists and questionnaires were used to obtain information from the informants. At the outset, the informants were also briefed about the objectives of the assessment. The modality of the discussion, however, was two-way.

Data Analysis

This was a subjective assessment. Therefore, the perceptions and judgments of the informants on the effectiveness of the VE programme were noted during the discussion with them. At the desk work, this first-hand information was refined. To make the findings more specific, the information was further sorted and classified into different categories



Women participating in 2070 CA Elections Voter Education Programme in Birgunj

with the following headings:

- Voter Education Structures and Management
- Voter Education Activities
- Voter Education Materials
- Others Findings/Issues

FINDINGS

The findings as mentioned below are completely based on what the informants shared with the study team during the discussions. Almost all informants provided similar information. However, only the most relevant and useful information for the future are projected here.

Voter Education Structures and Management

- The ECN formed VE coordination committees at the central, district, local (VDC/Municipality), and polling location level for the effective implementation of the VE programme. In addition, a VE unit was established at the ECN's Secretariat for the elections. The central-level VE committee was headed by a Commissioner as a coordinator, and its members were secretaries, joint secretaries, and under-secretaries of the ECN. Similarly, the district-level committee was headed by a CDO, the VDC/Municipality-level committee was headed by the VDC/Municipality, and the polling location-level committee was headed by a Supervisor (school principal of the polling location). Overall, committees at all levels were well-structured with the involvement of the Commissioner, senior government staff and grassroots-level VEVs. However, it

was noted that less coordination and information-sharing between the Supervisors/ Coordinators and EEWs/VEVs was found. Similarly, coordination and cooperation with other stakeholders was inadequate.

- The Supervisors, Coordinators, EEWs and VEVs were usually employees of government organisations. Supervisors were school principals/teachers, coordinators were VDC/ Ward Secretaries, EEWs were social mobilisers (each VDC), and VEVs were school teachers and health volunteers. They were temporarily hired by the ECN for VE for two months during the CA elections. In addition, Supervisors and Coordinators were also appointed as polling officials and moved to a district with high needs at critical times; some of the Coordinators were responsible for more than two VDCs. Similarly, most of the schools did not allow VEVs to partake in full-time VE, and they therefore had to carry out VE activities during off-hours, for only two to three hours a day either in the morning or evening. But in some of the districts (ie. Palpa), VEVs were able to work full-time on VE activities.
- The distribution of the working areas was uneven for some VEVs and even unfair in some VDCs. Each volunteer had to cover one polling location, with a minimum of three and a maximum of nine wards. In addition, some of the polling locations in mountain and hill districts were remote and inaccessible. The VEVs from these areas shared that it was unfair for them to work for such unevenly distributed work at such a low payment. For example, one volunteer was receiving only Rs 15,000 for two months including tax. It was discovered that there was no equal distribution of the work among the VEVs with the same amount of remuneration. Furthermore, Supervisors and Coordinators were also unsatisfied with their remuneration.

One of the VDCs of Udayapur, named Beltar, has only one polling location with nine wards. The volunteer alone had to cover all nine wards by household. The volunteer explained that *“We are getting the same amount of money as compared to those who are covering smaller locations and less households. It is not fair. The work division should be as per the geographic area and the number of households.”*

Sharmila BK, VEV from Udayapur
- Keeping VEDCCs under the leadership of CDOs was found to be practical. However, they could not function at a high level and could not assume a decisive role in VE activities during the elections. It was explained that this happened as the committees had not been given the authority to implement reward and punishment provisions. Similarly, VEDCCs were found to be less involved in monitoring activities in the field as they were consumed with resolving security issues and the recruitment process for social mobilisers and volunteers.
- There was a lack of a clear monitoring and evaluation mechanism at both the VEDCC

(district) and VELCC (local) levels, although the main role of the Chairperson of the polling location-level committee, who was also a Supervisor, was monitoring. It was found that they did less monitoring of VE activities, and that little monitoring was also undertaken by the Supervisors and Coordinators. The main reasons cited were due to time and geographical constraints as well as a lack of funding for travel. However, they managed to monitor and follow-up by telephone.

- In the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the EEWs and VEVs, it was clearly written that they needed to submit their reports to their Coordinators and Supervisors before submitting them to the DEO for payment. Those people who received their reports did not verify them properly, as the officials at the DEO office were busy with election-related administrative programmes/activities. Similarly, it was also found that most of the Supervisors, Coordinators and even volunteers were less clear about their roles and responsibilities.

"The VEDCC was busy with security and the transportation management of election materials. There were no provisions in the funds for the monitoring of voter education activities as well."

CDO, Dhankuta

- Although the ECN had clear guidelines and criteria for the recruitment of the EEWs and VEVs, at several places, the effectiveness of using those guidelines was lacking. It was therefore found that the competency level of some volunteers and trainers were not matched against the given criteria. This in turn hampered

An EEW from Sunsari shared that she had to deliver sessions in the most CACs, WCFs and other group meetings because the volunteer (ECD teacher/health worker) was not able to provide the classes. She believes the ECN should strictly follow the norms and guidelines in selecting the volunteers for voter education.

EEW, Sunsari

- the quality of information delivery. The Supervisors and Coordinators described the quality of the trainers as "not up to the mark" in local-level VE training, which hindered the quality of the training. For example, some VEVs were not qualified enough to provide VE to the voters. In that case, Supervisors or EEWs had to deliver sessions in those areas.
- Most of the Supervisors were unsatisfied with the remuneration of Rs. 3,000 which was provided to them. Those Supervisors who coordinated and worked closely on the VE programme shared that it was unfair and the remuneration was not sufficient for them, as the volunteers were receiving Rs 15,000 for the same duration of work.
- Some of the Supervisors' (principals/headmasters) designation was higher than

that of the Coordinators (VDC/Municipality secretaries) although the Supervisors had to work under the Coordinators of the VE coordination committees, which made them uncomfortable. This was one of the reasons for having less coordination and information-sharing between the Supervisors/Coordinators and EEWs/VEVs during VE activities, and another reason was that some of the Supervisors/Coordinators were unaware of their roles and responsibilities during VE.

- The informants also raised a serious issue of “gender balance” while mobilising Supervisors/Coordinators and volunteers/mobilisers, as the number of female Supervisors/Coordinators and EEWs/VEVs was less.

Voter Education Activities

- The ECN used all means for its massive VE programme for the CA elections. The ECN mobilised EEWs and VEVs for VE at the local level. The grassroots-level VE activities were designed for a two-month period. The ECN started its VE activities with trainings, door-to-door activities and group interactions through EEWs and VEVs. Similarly, there was a large use of national and local media mobilisation for VE through national and local print, electronic media, and national TV/radio and local radio. As a result, a historic participation of voters in the 2013 CA elections was witnessed and the amount of invalid votes decreased to a minimum percentage as compared to the 2008 CA elections.
- People were confused whether the elections would be held on the declared date. At the outset, there was a lack of political awareness and motivation among the voters. In this context, the widespread VE programme assisted in clearing those doubts about the elections, as they had an opportunity to interact with EEWs and VEVs at their doors. Moreover, political parties including VEVs were able to get the voters’ attention and support in making the elections a success.
- A two-day VE training for EEWs and VEVs was conducted one month to six weeks before the elections. Most of the EEWs and VEVs shared that two days of VE training was insufficient in terms of duration and suggested that at least one more day be added so that they could receive in-depth knowledge and information about VE, including a practical session and a facilitation-skills training as well. It was also found that using the same VE training materials for the MToT, RToT and DToT created difficulties in understanding due to the different levels of the participants.
- The ECN organised several trainings for various stakeholders – the media, security forces, polling officers, etc. However, the training did not cover marginalised communities targeting youth, the illiterate or the elderly. For example, one of the FGD participants from Gorkha shared that there was no such training/programme conducted nor VE materials for blind people in Gorkha district. This created problems as they were unable to teach blind people.
- A delay in the arrival of VE materials hampered the entire working schedule of the



During Interaction with EEWs/VEVs in Dailekh District

EEWs and VEVs. In many places, the VE materials were received by the EEWs and VEVs nearly three weeks before Election Day. In some cases, the trainings were conducted without VE materials. As per the VE plan, EEWs and VEVs were supposed to provide VE materials during trainings and before the start of VE activities in the field, however, most of them did not receive the materials in the training. As a result, they could not start VE activities in the field on time, and the EEWs/VEVs only had a maximum of two to three weeks to conduct their VE work in the field. VE activities were also affected by festivals and bandhs. However, EEWs/VEVs claimed that they started early at the local level even without VE materials.

- Within a short time span, the EEWs and VEVs visited door-to-door and organised cluster-based meetings/interaction programmes with the voters. Most of the EEWs and VEVs were from the same local areas. As they were familiar with the local context, they succeeded in effectively mobilising the CACs, WCFs, local CBOs, women's groups, cooperatives and schools. They managed to deliver the necessary VE-related information within 45 minutes to two hours in each cluster to their best ability. However, due to scattered households, the migration of voters to other areas, a large number of households within the working area, remoteness, and harvesting/agriculture schedules, the EEWs and VEVs had difficulties in finding people at home during the day. It was therefore explained that group interactions were more effective than visiting door-to-door during a short VE period.
- Most of the EEWs and VEVs received one set of sample ballot papers, while some were given extra sets. Nobody received the sample stamp (Swastika Chhap) to demonstrate how to stamp correctly on the ballot paper. This was unanimously identified as the



Aarohan Theatre Artists Performing Street Drama on Voter Education in Sindhupalchowk

key activity which should be the central aspect of all VE activities. However, kits with sample ballots and stamps, as well as specific training on that issue, were lacking.

- The EEWs and VEVs explained that the VE programme in cities was more difficult than in villages, as people in cities appeared more educated and “pretended to know everything”, and were found to be busier and less interested as well. This explains why there were more invalid votes in the cities. For example, in Sunsari district, most of the constituencies have city areas and had a high amount of invalid votes.
- The ECN allocated funding for local FM radio, which transmitted VE information and awareness programmes. In many cases, the DEO was unaware of the information that was broadcasted, and a lack of coordination between the respective DEO and radio stations in the district was revealed. This demonstrates that radio and other local media VE programmes were not monitored by the DEO and committee members.
- Some I/NGOs conducted VE activities like street dramas, mock polling, and group interaction programmes in the districts without coordinating with the DEO in some districts in the earlier stages. At later stages, some NGOs did coordinate with the DEO for VE activities, such as street dramas. Most of the EEWs and VEVs monitored the street drama programme conducted in their area.
- It was found that one of the best VE activities was group interactions with different communities in the VDC by mobilising CACs, WCFs, cooperatives, clubs and women’s groups. Another effective field-level activity was the street drama which was able to draw the attention of and educate voters as one of the best VE tools. However, it was explained that the coverage was limited to constituencies only.

- The Maoist Party (Baidya faction) and its alliance of opposition parties, which was against the elections, not only threatened but also looted VE materials. Due to the threat, EEWs and VEVs could not carry out VE activities smoothly in some places.
- Role played by the political parties during the election was inadequate in providing VE to their voters. In the discussion, the key informants told that the parties were mainly found campaigning on their own election agendas. The impact has been seen in the ballot paper. For example: slogan of one political party like, “Euta Vote Dai lai, Arko to Vote Gai lai (one vote for brother and another vote for cow)”, created confusion among the voters. It led to double voting on the same ballot paper (Source: discussion with informants. Besides, the political parties were seen less interested to make the message clear that the light blue ballot paper was for FPTP and the red one was for PR. The key informants also told that some of the political parties were intentionally teaching the voters to mark two stamps on one ballot paper. This kind of activity was carried out in those areas where the political party realised that it would not get substantial votes. (Source: discussion with key informants)

Voter Education Materials

- TV and radio programmes, PSAs, and print media that provided election information helped to build confidence among the people that there would be elections on the stated date.



Voter Education Materials in 28 different languages developed during CA Elections

- The ECN made various types of VE materials for the 2013 CA elections. Out of 88 types of VE materials, flipcharts, posters, a VE handbook, FAQ, billboards, TV/radio programmes, dramas, songs, PSAs, and jingles were the major types. Among the materials, it was said that the flipchart was the most effective as it had every information required for educating people. Among the contents of the flipchart, the page with pictures of the valid and invalid ballots was the most noticed and appreciated by the voters.
- Similarly, the posters were well-designed. Three of the posters -- on how to vote correctly, the election date and voting hours, and the voting process -- were found useful as they had more pictures on them. During the discussion, it was explained that the posters were put in public places and open spaces so that all could have easy access to them. It

was also shared that the posters were not durable long-term and only lasted one to two days, or even hours. Similarly, the placement of the billboards was not convenient for the local public who cannot read or see easily. Moreover, the content in the billboards and posters appeared over-crowded with too much writing and too few pictures, such as the billboard with the full code of conduct.

- Radio messages were the most popular among the local communities, especially in remote areas during the election period, as 90 percent of the population has access to radio rather than TV or print/electronic media, and it is also more cost effective. Radio can be listened to even when there is no electricity, and people were seen using their mobile phones to listen to radio as well. The ECN therefore used national and local radio for broadcasting its VE messages through PSAs/jingles, dramas and talk programmes. However, it was expressed that the use of local radio was late and that nobody monitored the content of the programmes produced and broadcasted. Similarly, there was no such monitoring of the materials produced and broadcasted or printed by NGOs or civil society organisations (CSOs). It was found that people were more concerned about the election date and voting hours rather than the actual voting process.
- The ECN disseminated VE information and awareness programmes through various TV channels. The TV talk shows about the CA elections were the most prominent, despite the fact that talk shows have limited audiences. While TV was a major instrument in delivering VE information to people who regularly watch it, these TV channels seemed less effective compared to the dominance of Indian and international channels watched by the majority of people. It was revealed that the TV programmes were more effective in cities than rural areas.
- It was expressed that visual and audio PSAs in the early stages of the VE programme were developed without focus on the voting process. The TV and radio PSAs featured on artists' (Rajesh Hamal and Deepashri Niraula) and cultural shows, such as the PSA with "Tihar", were often cited as those people remembered. Similarly, another PSA with singing and dancing was often watched; however, people could not remember the messages of the PSAs, as they were unclear, lacking in uniformity, and unfocused on the clear elements of the voting process (ie. type/colour of ballot papers).
- VE information was easy to explain but required more clarity on the messages regarding the voting process, the type/colour of ballot papers, and how to mark them accordingly. It was revealed that the majority of invalidated votes had two stamps on the same ballot paper and/or a thumb mark. Moreover, the slogans of some political parties might have created confusion among the voters.
- The informants clearly mentioned that the VE materials were not targeted to youth, the illiterate, disabled voters (ie. the blind), etc. It has been recorded that voters from these groups were less involved in VE activities.

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निर्वाचन अभियान

भाग १
सविधान सभा र यसको महत्व

भाग २
निर्वाचन प्रणाली

भाग ३
मतदाता र मताधिकार

भाग ४
निर्वाचनको स्वच्छता



प्रसारण क्यानल : नेपाल टेलिभिजन
प्रसारण मिति : २०७०/०७/०९, १०, १६, १७

TV and Radio Programmes developed on Voter Education for CA Elections 2013

- It was difficult for some voters to identify the symbols on the PR ballot paper, as there was an abundance of symbols and often with similar appearance. The ballot paper was large, however, the ballot box was small, which created problems in casting votes, especially for the elderly and the illiterate.
- VE materials, such as FAQ, handbooks, sample ballot papers and posters, were insufficient in number for distribution as per the need of local areas. Due to this insufficiency of VE materials in the early days, the EEWs/VEVs were unable to provide one set of the VE materials to each household, although they received additional materials in the final hours of the election period. Furthermore, EEWs/VEVs did not have sample ballot papers to teach the voters practically in the early stages of the VE programme. At a later stage, they received a limited number of sample ballot papers, which was still inadequate for practical teaching. This negatively affected VE activities.
- Due to the inadequate preparation of the production and distribution of VE materials, and the lack of a timely decision on the number of CA seats (external factor), the materials reached the districts late. As a result of the delay in receiving the materials by the EEWs/VEVs, they could not start their VE activities on time and could only work for a maximum of two to three weeks rather than a full two months. They could therefore not reach all households nor repeat the VE activities in their areas. The volume of the materials was inadequate for the VE activities, and the VE materials in different

languages were also insufficient as per the district demand. If the development and distribution of the materials were on time and target-oriented, EEWs/VEVs could have started their work early and even repeated VE activities covering all households before Election Day. This could have resulted in the anticipated decrease in the amount of invalid votes.

Other Findings/Issues

- Voter registration played a crucial role in accommodating eligible voters for the elections. The voter ID card also built confidence of the people believing there would be less chance of irregularities in the voting process. This encouraged them to participate in the elections and was one of the reasons for having a high level of voter participation.
- In most of the FGDs, it was expressed that the voter turnout could have been higher and VE programme can be more outreached if political parties had been oriented on VE as they are the major stakeholder in directly meeting the voters during the election campaign.
- Election Day procedures created confusion, as voters were asked to vote for FPTP first and then for PR. In some cases, voters stamped twice on the same ballot. This has raised the question: should people get both ballots at the same time? Similarly, one of the highest tendencies for invalid votes was due to double stamped single ballot papers; another tendency for invalid votes was through the use of a thumb mark (Source; observation during the vote counting). The key informants shared that the reason for this happening was that the voting process message was not clear. Another reason was due to the use of a stamp pad for thumb marking before issuing the ballot paper.
- It was said that training for polling officers and assistant polling officers was insufficient. It has resulted less efficiency in their performance on the polling day (Source; discussion with key informants in Baitadi district). For example: during the discussion, it was told that ballot papers were found issued without tearing the counterfoils which leads to increase the invalid votes.
- It was explained that there were no reward or punishment provisions during the VE programme. Staff who performed well during the VE activities were not rewarded, and as a consequence, it affected their motivation. Meanwhile, those who did not work effectively on VE activities were not punished.
- During the discussion with informants in Baitadi district it was noted that the majority of elder people did not participate in these elections, as their attitude towards political party leaders was not positive. Furthermore, there were potential voters who wanted to cast a vote but were unable to register during the voter registration process due to a lack of citizenship or migration.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The next CA elections were successfully conducted on 19 November 2013 (4 Mangsir 2070). The UNDP/ESP provided technical assistance through the ECN. Although the 2013 CA elections were a milestone in terms of voter turnout, the level of invalid votes did not significantly decrease as compared to the 2008 CA elections. In this context, the ECN and the UNDP/ESP agreed to conduct an assessment on the effectiveness of the VDC and district-level VE programme. From this assessment, the ECN can improve its policies and strategies in conducting future elections.



Glimse of counting during CA Elections 2070

VE intends to increase voter participation and decrease the amount of invalid votes. In that sense, VE is necessary to ensure that voters understand their rights and responsibilities, the political system, the electoral contestants they have to choose from, as well as how and where to vote. In the case of the 2013 CA elections, VE played a crucial role. The percentage of voter participation was 78.4 percent, which is an outstanding achievement as compared to the 2008 CA elections. Therefore, it can be said that one of the causes of such high voter turnout was due to the VE programme and voter registration and ID distribution. .

This assessment provides several findings, the most prominent of which was the voters expressing that the two-month duration for VE was insufficient. There is no such international standard for the duration of VE activities; it is entirely based on the political awareness and literacy levels among the voters, the social and economic context, and the geographical conditions of the country. In the case of Nepal, where all of these factors play a crucial role, the two-month duration was inadequate. This created insufficient time for the

social mobilisers and volunteers to disseminate the election message to voters. Among the VE activities, voter education by using flip charts in group (interaction programme at community level), the street drama and more visual based activities (source key informants during FGD in many places) were extremely effective in disseminating the election message to the general population, however, the method could not cover rural areas.



Recommendations

The informants shared their views on areas requiring improvement. Based on the findings, discussions with the informants and the literature review, the following recommendations are suggested. These recommendations, based on implementation, are presented in two categories -- short-term and long-term.

Short-Term

- The remuneration and job descriptions of Supervisors/Coordinators and EEWs/VEVs should be reviewed for the effective implementation of VE in the future, as most of these informants were unsatisfied with their remuneration and the distribution of their working areas. Similarly, funding should be allocated to monitor field work to ensure that the VEVs are doing their work effectively and imparting the correct information to voters.
- The number of volunteers should be increased, as one volunteer per polling location is insufficient for in-depth VE programming for a short period of time. Likewise, the distribution of assignments for the volunteers should be as per the number of

households and geographical locations. In this regard, VEDCCs should have the authority to appoint and increase the number of volunteers as per the district's needs. However, the selection of VEVs and EEWs should be done carefully, and only eligible candidates should be given those responsibilities, as it was found that few volunteers were not inexperienced and unprofessional to conduct the VE programme in the field.

- VE training for EEWs/VEVs should be more than two days so that the participants have a practical session on how to conduct door-to-door meetings, a group session on facilitation skills, and an opportunity to clarify their queries. Similarly, the training package for the EEWs/VEVs should be more elaborate and in concise language. In addition, there is a need to develop specialised training for those who are working with marginalised groups.
- A two-month duration of VE, particularly in the Nepalese context, is inadequate. To make VE effective and for wider coverage in terms of areas and voters, it is therefore recommended that the VE programme should be started at least four to five months before the election date, as per the suggestions provided by the informants.
- The more visual-based activities should be promoted for field-based VE activities; in the FGDs, most informants recommended that street drama, mock polling, and a documentary on the voting process should be continued.
- Two samples of the ballot paper was insufficient for display and teaching, as well as a practical demonstration for VEVs. EEWs/VEVs had to deliver the VE content effectively by group and/or individual basis. In some cases, they had to repeat the demonstration several times to make voters understand. The “swastika stamp” and sample ballot papers should also be provided for the practical session during VE activities. Similarly, it is also suggested that the rate of invalid votes could be minimised if the self-ink “swastika stamp” is provided rather than using a stamp pad, as the invalid vote tendency is usually caused by using a thumb mark.
- Due to the late arrival of educational materials in polling locations, EEWs/VEVs could not start their VE activities on time and did not have sufficient time to explain and convince the voters on the materials. This created confusion, and voters thought they were parties' campaign posters, as the VE period and election campaign overlapped. Similarly, EEWs/VEVs could not widely distribute the materials due to time constraints. It is therefore necessary that the education materials be received before starting the VE programme or at least provided before starting the VE training. To save time and be more cost-effective, the ECN could provide the contents and type of materials and the DEO could print and distribute the materials at the district level, wherever it is possible.
- More education on the voting process is a means in minimising the amount of invalid votes. The contents of the VE materials should therefore be clear and concise, have uniformity, and include more pictures/graphs in different languages. These materials

should also target marginalised groups, such as first-time voters (youth), the illiterate and blind, *Dalits*, women, etc. In this regard, a plan for the production and distribution mechanism of VE materials should be developed.

- The role of political parties is crucial in making an election successful in terms of voter participation with a minimum level of invalid votes. Therefore, local political party leaders should be oriented in VE, as they meet the voters at the local level.

Long-Term

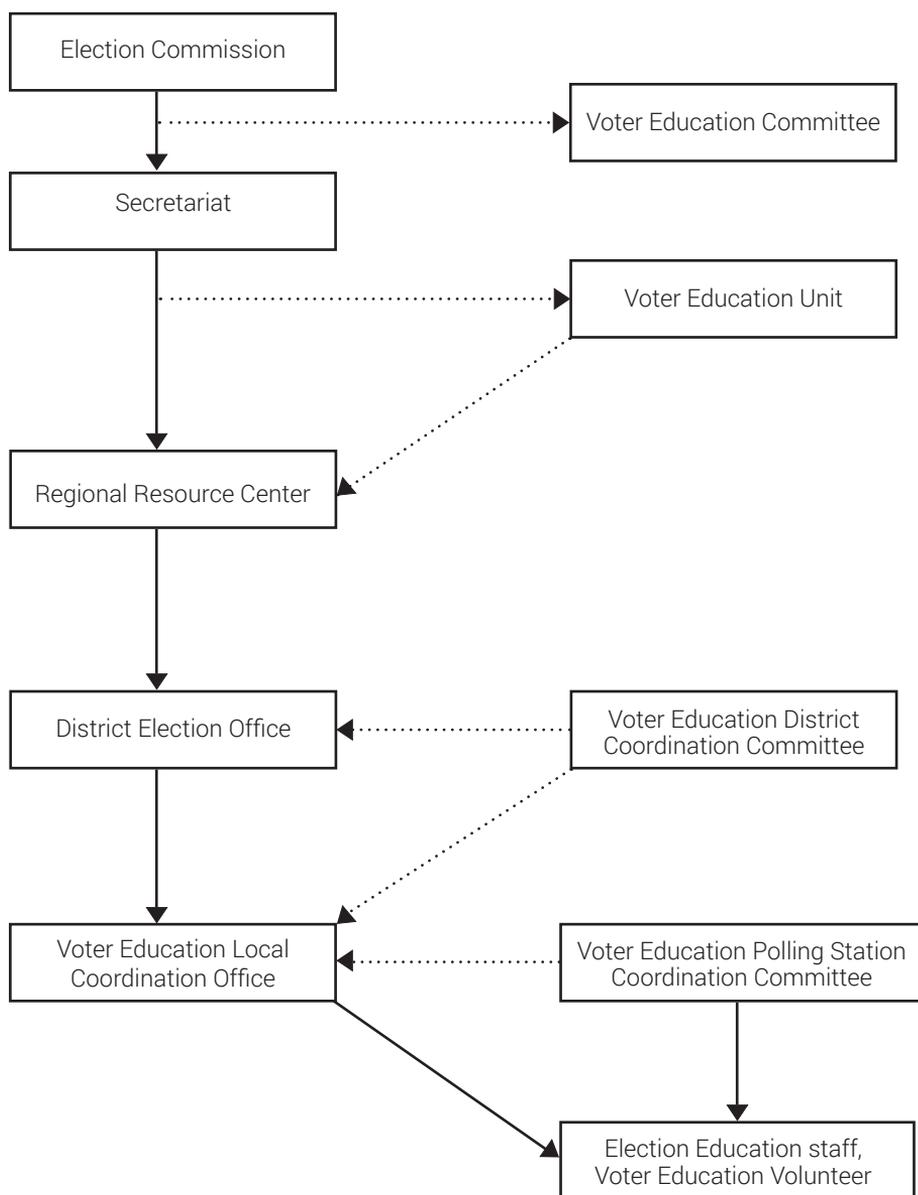
- The ECN created different layers of committees for the implementation of its VE activities for the 2013 CA elections, from central to polling location-level, which was well-structured. However, it could have been more effective and participatory and also increased voter participation if these structure had included business chambers, the private sector, health workers, civil society, local NGOs, CBOs, and local government bodies. These stakeholders could play an effective role and support VE activities. It is therefore suggested to prepare operational guidelines for the committees.
- VEVs were school teachers and were found taking on two roles: working for the CA elections and working for their school at the usual time. School teachers, if they are hired as VEVs for elections, should be provided free time or this role must be modified so that they can focus more on election activities. As an option, higher secondary school students could be mobilised, as they can easily influence their families and neighbours in their respective local areas. Another option would be to have an active local group, women's group or youth club be mobilised for the election/VE. Available youth could also be used for VE activities.
- The monitoring mechanism should be strengthened to allow Supervisors and Coordinators to physically monitor the work of EEWs/VEVs. For the monitoring, almost all informants in most of the districts suggested that there should be an allocation of a separate fund. To make the monitoring effective and productive, a clear monitoring/evaluation and reporting mechanism at different levels should be developed. Besides, ECN should also monitor the VE activities from centre level as well.
- The ECN should have a VE strategy with clear objectives and an action plan that results in outputs by covering more voters. The strategy should also be clear on how to reach remote and urban areas and how to target marginalised and minority groups, first-time voters (youth), women, disabled people including the blind, and those who are illiterate. An option could be that the ECN form a partnership with different NGOs or such networks/organisations working in this area.
- VE activities should be continual rather than seasonal. For this, there are options that could be considered. Firstly, the ECN could coordinate with the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development to internalise VE activities in the regular activities of VDCs (ie. social mobilisation programmes). Similarly, it could be continual by incorporating VE in

the curriculum of secondary and higher secondary school. Civic and voter education could also be integrated with informal education programmes initiated recently by the GoN. It could also be integrated with the voter registration programme. Above all, this would be a cost-effective approach.

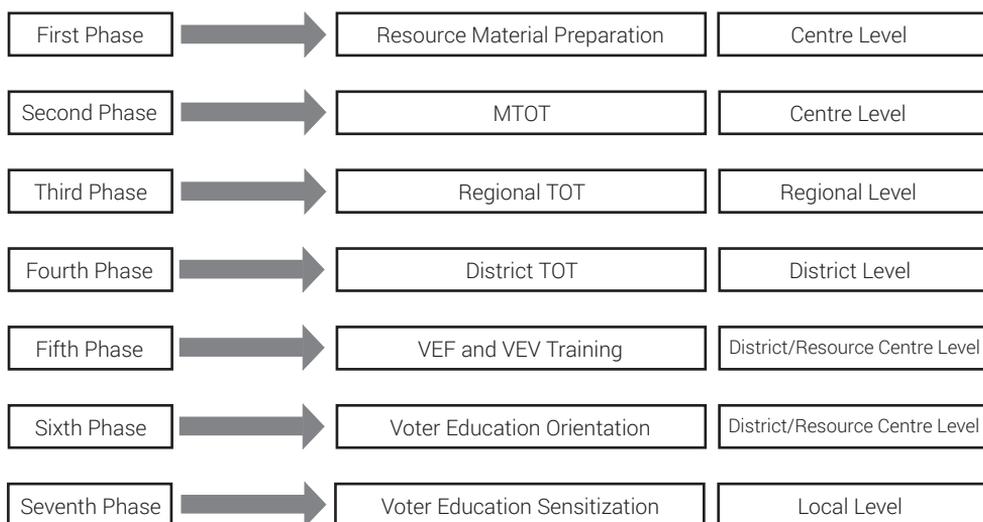
- The role of the media, especially of local TV and radio, is essential in disseminating VE information. Coordination with different media associations/groups, cable TV networks, and radio associations is recommended so that these stakeholders could play an important role in VE as an element of corporate social responsibility.
- VE materials played a crucial role in making the 2013 CA elections successful. However, the rate of invalid votes was not significantly reduced as compared to the 2008 CA elections as there might be other reasons such as political confusion, frustration towards political leaders, illiteracy etc.. Based on the information provided by the informants and the rapid assessment, it is therefore recommended to assess the contents and types of VE materials in depth, as well as their distribution modality.
- The use of existing institutions, such as *ama samuha* (mothers' groups), primary health workers and community leaders, should be encouraged. Similarly, CSOs/CBOs/NGOs should be involved in VE activities to increase outreach to target groups.
- Voter registration awareness, electoral education including voter education should be continued through Electoral Education Information Centre. Besides, awareness can also be raised by updating school curriculum and training to social studies teachers, and incorporating the content in informal education programme. Similarly, since involvement of media is crucial, a long strategic partnership is also recommended.



Annex 1: Voter education Program Implementation Structure



Annex 2: Voter Education Training Modality



Annex 3: Voter Education (VE) Activities carried out by ECN for CA Elections 2013

SN	Voter Education Activities
1.	VE Policy and Directive Developed
2.	VE Committee form for different levels (Centre, District and VDC/Municipality level)
3.	88 types of Voter Education Materials Development: Flip chart, posters in different languages, billboard, FAQ, sample ballot papers, TV/Radio programmes, TV/Radio PSAs/Jingles including 28 different languages, Tele/Radio dramas, Handbook, use of hoarding board, TV PSAs for deaf people
4.	MTOT, RTOT and DTOT for Voter education
5.	Training for Media houses/Journalists on Voter education
6.	Training for EEWs and VEVs, Supervisors, Coordinators
7.	Mobilization of 4721 EEWs and 9978 VEVs for Voter education in grassroots level
8.	Door to door VE programme by EEWs and VEVs for two months
9.	Interaction programme in the community by EEWs and VEVs
10.	VE programme through all 14 national TV channels and 366 national/community Radio/FM partners
11.	TV and Radio PSAs in 28 different languages and Nepali through 14 national TV channels and 366 national/community Radio/RM partners
12.	Voter Information through SMS, ECN Website, ECN Facebook
13.	Street Drama in 240 constituencies covering 75 districts, altogether in 1400 places
14.	Mock Polling
15.	Use of Mobile Van vehicle in the regions
16.	Continues Electoral and Voter education through EEIC
17.	Monitoring of the VE Programme from ECN Centre and Local level
18.	Message/information through local TV cable, Cinema hall (scrolling)
19.	Massive voter education materials production and distribution in all levels
20.	Establishment of Call Centre and operated during the Elections
21.	Establishment of Media Centre for regular updates during CA Elections 2013
22.	Voter Education and Information through national and local press media
23.	Special voter education programme launched for marginalized group in selected districts

Annex 4: Name of districts selected for the assessment

SN	Districts	Region
1	Dhankuta	Eastern Region
2	Tehrathum	
3	Siraha	
4	Saptari	
5	Udayapur	
6	Sunsari	
7	Morang	
8	Jhapa	
9	Ilam	
10	Panchther	
11	Taplejung	
12	Dolakha	Centre Region
13	Kavrepalanchowk	
14	Rasuwa	
15	Nuwakot	
16	Makhwanpur	
17	Kathmandu	
18	Parsa	
19	Bara	
20	Chitwan	
21	Sarlahi	
22	Dhanusa	
23	Mahottari	
24	Rautahat	
25	Kaski	Western Region
26	Parbat	
27	Tanahu	
28	Lamjung	
29	Gurkha	
30	Shyaja	
31	Palpa	
32	Kapilvastu	
33	Rupendehi	
34	Banke	Mid-Western Region
35	Bardiya	
36	Dailekh	
37	Surkhet	
38	Dang	
39	Rolpa	Far Western Region
40	Kailali	
41	Dadeldhura	
42	Baitadi	
43	Kanchanpur	

Annex 5: Study team composition

Regions	Team 1		Team 2	
	Team members	Districts	Team members	Districts
Western	1. Ms. Sita Gurung 2. Ms. Florence K. Kebbie 3. Ms. Ojaswi Shah	Kaski Parbat Tanahu Lamjung Gorkha	1. Ms. Nikila Shrestha 2. Ms. Silvana Puizina 3. Mr. Sudip Aryal	Syangja Palpa Kapilbastu Rupendehi Nawalparasi
Eastern	1. Ms. Sita Gurung 2. Ms. Tanja Hollstein 3. Mr. Durga Shrestha	Dhakuta Tehrathum Siraha Saptari Udayapur Sunsari	1. Ms. Nikila Shrestha 2. Ms. Silvana Puizina 3. Ms. Madhavi Nepal	Morang Jhapa Ilam Panchther Taplejung
Mid-western	1. Ms. Sita Gurung 2. Mr. Elijah Rubvuta 3. Ms. Basudev Bhandari 4. Ms. Trishna Bantawa 5. Ms. Pratistha Singh	Banke Bardiya Dailekh Surkhet Dang Rolpa		

Regions	Team 1		Team 2	
	Team members	Districts	Team members	Districts
Far-Western			1. Ms. Nikila Shrestha 2. Ms. Deeva Yonzan Lama 3. Mr. Ishwor P. Marahatta 4. Mr. Liladhar Upadhyaya	Kailali Kanchanpur Baitadi Dadeldhura
Center	1. Ms. Sita Gurung 2. Mr. Ashok Shrestha	Dolakha Kavrepalanchowk Rasuwa Nuwakot Makwanpur Kathmandu	1. Ms. Nikila Shrestha 2. Mr. Naresh Kumar Bhatta 3. Mr. Suneel Lama 4. Ms. Trishna Bantawa	Parsa Bara Chitwan Sarlahi Dhanusa Mahottari

Note: Team 1 lead by Sita Gurung, Civic and Voter Education Officer and Team 2 lead by Nikila Shrestha, National EEIC Coordinator. ESP Regional team supported for the coordination in the districts during the study

Annex 6: Participants information for Post Voter Education Assessment on CA Election 2013

SN	Region	District		Voter Education Worker/Volunteer			Supervisor/ Coordinators			District Coordination Committee members/CDO or Chairperson/ Asst.CDO/ LDO/DEO			Voters/Citizen Ward Forum			Grand Total		
				M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
1	Western Region	1	Kaski	1	7	8	6	0	6	4	0	4	0	0	0	11	7	18
		2	Parbat	1	7	8	5	0	5	1	0	1	0	0	0	7	7	14
		3	Tanahu	3	8	11	8	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	8	19
		4	Lamjung	1	7	8	7	1	8	1	0	1	0	0	0	9	8	17
		5	Gurkha	4	6	10	9	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	7	20
		6	Syanja	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	1	7	6	1	7
		7	Palpa	0	7	7	6	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	7	13
		8	Kapilvastu	4	4	8	5	0	5	4	1	5	0	0	0	13	5	18
		9	Rupendehi	2	7	9	9	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	7	18
		10	Nawalparasi	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Western Region Total				15	46	61	49	2	51	7	1	8	6	1	7	77	50	127
2	Eastern Region	11	Dhankuta	15	10	25	9	0	9	1	0	1	0	0	0	25	10	35
		12	Tehrathum	9	4	13	10	1	11	1	0	1	0	0	0	20	5	25
		13	Siraha	4	9	13	9	3	12	1	0	1	0	0	0	14	12	26
		14	Saptari	0	13	13	9	2	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	15	24
		15	Udayapur	3	9	12	12	0	12	4	0	4	0	0	0	19	9	28
		16	Sunsari	7	3	10	10	1	11	4	0	4	0	0	0	21	4	25
		17	Morang	7	4	11	3	2	5	5	0	5	0	0	0	15	6	21

SN	Region	District		Voter Education Worker/Volunteer			Supervisor/ Coordinators			District Coordination Committee members/CDO or Chairperson/ Asst.CDO/ LDO/DEO			Voters/Citizen Ward Forum			Grand Total		
				M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
		18	Jhapa	9	3	12	8	4	12	1	0	1	0	0	0	18	7	25
		19	Ilam	8	2	10	7	2	9	1	0	1	0	0	0	16	4	20
		20	Panchther	0	13	13	11	2	13	1	0	1	0	0	0	12	15	27
		21	Taplejung	7	5		7	4	11	1	0	1	0	0	0	15	9	24
Eastern Region Total				69	75	144	95	21	116	20	0	20	0	0	0	184	96	280
3	Mid-Western Region	22	Banke	3	5	8	11	2	13	0	0	0	7	1	8	21	8	29
		23	Bardiya	2	9	11	7	0	7	1	0	1	4	4	8	14	13	27
		24	Dailekh	2	9	11	12	0	12	7	1	8	5	6	11	26	16	42
		25	Surkhet	4	8	12	8	4	12	2	0	2	7	6	13	21	18	39
		26	Dang	2	9	11	11	0	11	0	0	0	5	5	10	18	14	32
		27	Rolpa	1	8	9	5	2	7	3	0	3	5	2	7	14	12	26
Mid-Western Region Total				14	48	62	54	8	62	13	1	14	33	24	57	114	81	195
4	Far Western Region	28	Kailali	0	10	10	10	2	12	7	0	7	7	2	9	24	14	38
		29	Dadeldhura	6	6	12	9	0	9	7	1	8	2	1	3	24	8	32
		30	Baitadi	3	9	12	5	0	5	5	0	5	6	2	8	19	11	30
		31	Kanchanpur	3	7	10	7	2	9	5	1	6	6	6	12	21	16	37
Far Western Region Total				12	32	44	31	4	35	24	2	26	21	11	32	88	49	137

SN	Region	District		Voter Education Worker/Volunteer			Supervisor/ Coordinators			District Coordination Committee members/CDO or Chairperson/ Asst.CDO/ LDO/DEO			Voters/Citizen Ward Forum			Grand Total		
				M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
5	Centre Region	32	Dolakha	0	2	2	11	1	12	1	0	1	3	5	8	15	8	23
		33	Kavrepalanchowk	1	12	13	12	0	12	4	1	5	6	6	12	23	19	42
		34	Rasuwa	5	7	12	12	0	12	5	2	7	3	7	10	25	16	41
		35	Nuwakot	2	9	11	10	3	13	0	0	0	6	7	13	18	19	37
		36	Makhwanpur	1	11	12	9	3	12	0	0	0	6	8	14	16	22	38
		37	Kathmandu	4	8	12	9	3	12	0	0	0	8	5	13	21	16	37
		38	Mahottari	5	5	10	10	0	10	8	0	8	5	5	10	28	10	38
		39	Dhanusa	3	7	10	5	0	5	0	0	0	4	4	8	12	11	23
		40	Sarlahi	8	7	15	10	2	12	10	0	10	7	7	14	35	16	51
		41	Rautahat	11	2	13	13	1	14	0	0	0	10	2	12	34	5	39
		42	Bara	3	6	9	6	1	7	0	0	0	4	4	8	13	11	24
		43	Chitwan	1	4	5	8	3	11	0	0	0	7	4	11	16	11	27
Centre Region Total				44	80	124	115	17	132	28	3	31	69	64	133	256	164	420
Grand Total				154	281	435	344	52	396	92	7	99	129	100	229	719	440	1159

Annex 7: Checklists and Questionnaires

Management and Supervision

- Training provided/received and its effectiveness
- Supervision and monitoring – who provided this support and how was it done (reporting, meetings, monitoring through participation in activities)?
- What do you understand was the role (in VE) of: DEO, DVEC, VDC, Volunteers, Mobilisers, and Political Parties?
- Did you take part in any regular information sharing meetings held with other volunteers? Supervisors?
- Reporting – what reporting did you need to do and to whom?

Activities Undertaken

- How long were you in the field? Did you continue even if all places had already been covered once? i.e. did you make return visits?
- Activities – what sort of voter activities did you do and what information was imparted at these activities.
- Target audiences – did you tailor activities to audience (women, youth, rural, urban, disabled, political campaign people, CBO, media, security). Examples to be provided.
- How did you inform voters about your planned activities?
- Did you see the street theatre? Opinions/assessment?
- Did you participate/conduct any mock polling activity? Views/opinions?
- Were you aware of an NGO/CBO activities?
- Did you do any special activities for women or people with special needs?
- Did you do any activities for education political parties or observe parties educating voters?
- Did you use social leaders in any of your VE activities

Materials

- Comment on materials – what was most popular/useful etc.?
- Were messages clear in the materials? Did Voters understand them?
- Did they hear/see ECN PSAs and programmes – any comments on these? How many different ones did they see/hear?

The Future

- How could things be done better for the future in terms of the whole programme?
- What do you see as the future role of volunteers in VE activities (between events and for the next event)?

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