



# Assessing Affirmative Action Practices in Nepal's Federal Civil Service: Current Achievements and Future Reform Needs

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## Abstract

Nepal has implemented an affirmative action policy in the federal civil service since 2007 to address historical injustices and inequalities and promote the representation of marginalized people, such as women, ethnic minorities, and underprivileged castes, in public sector employment. This move has contributed to empowering disadvantaged people, mainstreaming minorities, and promoting social justice by strengthening inclusion within the bureaucratic structure. A qualitative research methodology is applied to perform a scoping review of 87 scholarly articles and a media review of 45 news articles to reveal the reasons behind the reforms made by policy enterprises in Nepal. The findings scrutinize both the constructive and critical facets of affirmative action practices in Nepal's public service from 2007 to 2024. Besides some positive results leading to cultural competencies, such as the increased representation of women, Dalits, and ethnic minorities, there are still substantial inequalities in equal opportunities for empowerment and active participation in decision-making processes. The main reasons for such negative situations are complex social, ideological, and legal barriers, narrow-minded and deeply established prejudices, the lack of sufficient financial and human resources to undertake the programs, patriarchal organizational culture, and ultimately inadequate political commitment. The paper recommends continued reforms, timely review, preventing elite capture, adaptation to changing needs, a focus on the inadequate representation of marginalized groups, and the promotion of affirmative action policies that will result in the ending of these hurdles and, eventually, a more representative and all-inclusive Nepalese civil service.

**Keywords:** social justice, social inclusion, meritocracy versus inclusivity, diversity, civil service

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# नेपालको सङ्घीय निजामती सेवामा सकारात्मक विभेदका अभ्यासहरूको मूल्याङ्कन: वर्तमान उपलब्धि र आगामी दिनमा सुधारका आवश्यकताहरू

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## सार

नेपालले ऐतिहासिक अन्याय र असमानतालाई सम्बोधन गर्न र सार्वजनिक क्षेत्रको रोजगारीमा महिला, जातीय अल्पसङ्ख्यक र पिछडिएका जातिहरू जस्ता सीमान्तकृत मानिसहरूको प्रतिनिधित्वलाई प्रवर्द्धन गर्न वि.सं. २०६४ सालदेखि संघीय निजामती सेवामा सकारात्मक विभेद (आरक्षण) नीति लागू गरेको हो। यस कदमले पिछडिएका जनतालाई सशक्त बनाउन, अल्पसङ्ख्यकलाई मुलधारमा ल्याउन र निजामती सेवाको संरचनामा समावेशीकरणलाई मजबुत बनाउँदै सामाजिक न्यायको प्रवर्द्धन गर्न महत्वपूर्ण योगदान पुऱ्याएको छ। नेपालका यस नीति सुधारका कारकहरू पत्ता लगाउन गुणात्मक अनुसन्धान पद्धति प्रयोग गरेर ८७ अनुसन्धानात्मक लेखहरूको स्कोपिङ समीक्षा र ४५ अनलाइन पत्रिकाका लेखहरूको मिडिया समीक्षा गरिएको छ। यस अध्ययनले सन् २००७ देखि २०२४ सम्म नेपालको निजामती सेवामा सकारात्मक विभेद नीतिका सकारात्मक र आलोचनात्मक पक्षहरूको मूल्याङ्कन गर्दछ। नेपालको निजामती सेवामा महिला, दलित, आदिवासी जनजाति, मधेसी, अपाङ्ग र पिछडिएका क्षेत्रका अल्पसङ्ख्यकहरूको बढ्दो प्रतिनिधित्व जस्ता सांस्कृतिक सक्षमता (cultural competencies) बढाएको लगायत केही सकारात्मक उपलब्धिहरू भएको देखिन्छ, तर सशक्तिकरणका लागि समान अवसर र निर्णय प्रक्रियामा सक्रिय सहभागिताका सम्बन्धमा अझै धेरै असमानताहरू विद्यमान देखिन्छन्। यस्ता नकारात्मक अवस्थाहरूको मुख्य कारणहरूमा जटिल सामाजिक, मनोवृत्तिगत र कानूनी अवरोधहरू, सङ्कीर्ण र गहिरो पूर्वाग्रह, कार्यक्रम सञ्चालनका लागि पर्याप्त आर्थिक स्रोत र जनशक्ति अभाव, पितृसत्तात्मक सङ्गठनात्मक संस्कृति र अन्ततः राजनीतिक प्रतिबद्धताको अपर्याप्तता हुन्। यस अध्ययनले निरन्तर सुधार, समयमै मूल्याङ्कन, सम्भ्रान्त वर्गको कब्जा हुनबाट रोक्नु, बदलिँदो आवश्यकताअनुसार अनुकूलन, सीमान्तकृत समूहहरूको अर्थपूर्ण प्रतिनिधित्वमा ध्यान केन्द्रित गर्ने र यी अवरोधहरूको अन्त्य गर्न सकारात्मक विभेद नीतिको प्रवर्द्धनको आवश्यकता औँल्याउँछ, जसले अन्ततः नेपालको निजामती सेवा बढी प्रतिनिधिमूलक र समावेशी बन्ने कुरा सुनिश्चित गर्दछ।

**शब्दकुञ्जी:** सामाजिक न्याय, सामाजिक समावेशीकरण, योग्यता प्रणाली र समावेशिता, विविधता, निजामती सेवा

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## 1. Background

Affirmative action is a widely debated issue in the field of public administration. Affirmative action involves a group of policies and procedures designed to eradicate discrimination at work against women and ethnic minorities and compensate for the effects of discrimination suffered in history (Kovacs et al., 2014). However, in the broader sense, it can include all policies and actions to promote opportunities for disadvantaged (or minority) groups to give them equal access to the majority population within a society (Sowell, 2004). The term “affirmative action” originated in the US in the sixties and was firmly used in President John F Kennedy’s Executive Order No. 10925, which directed federal contractors “to take affirmative action to ensure that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin” (Kennedy, 1961; Graham, 1992). The concept of positive measures is generally referred to in international law as ‘special measures.’ The most widely known terms for this are: affirmative action or affirmative measures; positive action; preferential treatment; special measures; specific action; reverse discrimination; and positive discrimination (The Council of Europe, 2000; European Institute of Gender Equality, 2002).

The purpose of affirmative action, or reservation, as it is used in South Asia, is to support underprivileged people in order to level the playing field, notably in the fields of politics, employment, and education. Reservations have traditionally been supported by Nepal’s socio-ethnic organizations and social activists (Gurung, 2006). Some significant policies on social inclusion are the outcome of discussions about social exclusion and affirmative action that intensified during and after the Maoists’ “People’s War” (Druzca, 2016). The interim constitution of Nepal, which was constructed in the wake of the 2007 People’s Movement, established the system of reservations. In 2007, the Government of Nepal amended the Civil Service Act of 1993 (Second Amendment) to add what is known as the Reserve Clause. The amendment introduced an affirmative action policy, which mandated that eligible applicants from underrepresented groups would have priority in open competitions to fill 45 percent of the available seats. The reserved seats were allocated as follows: 33 percent for women, 27 percent for Adivasi-Janajatis, 22 percent for Madhesis, 9 percent for Dalits, 5 percent for differently abled people and 4 percent for backward areas. In Nepal, a regular bureaucrat has traditionally been a male Khas-Arya (Jamil and Dangal 2009). This is no longer the case, though Khas-Arya men continue to dominate top positions in the bureaucracy. While Nepal’s bureaucracy remains a highly exclusive institution, with approximately 80 percent men and 70 percent Brahmans, Chhetris, and Newars represented, it has become more inclusive in recent years due to unprecedented inclusionary politics and affirmative action. After

fourteen years of application, 14,956 out of 39,979 candidates are employed by marginalized groups in the civil service of Nepal, and 88,568 people are working in the civil service (National Inclusion Commission, 2022).

In Nepal, the Hindu caste system and caste, also known as Jaat, play a significant part in a person's status in the social hierarchy and the decisions regarding their profession (Jamil, 2019). Jamil and Baniamin (2020) examined the impact of the affirmative action implemented in Nepal's civil service since 2007. They found that it has led to increased representation and inclusivity, reflecting the country's gender, caste, ethnic, regional, and demographic diversity within the bureaucracy, thereby making it more representative and inclusive to the country and citizens as a whole (Bhul, 2023). The study examines Nepal's affirmative action in public service using related literature to investigate the foundation of representative bureaucracy. The representative bureaucracy theory has been applied to the setting examined by a number of Nepalese social situations, particularly in areas like job challenges and resources. After analyzing the literature, this study examined its findings and made a number of recommendations on how to increase the policy benefits of gender and other minorities' representation in Nepalese public service.

## **2. Balancing Social Justice and Meritocracy in Bureaucracy**

Affirmative action remains a contentious and multifaceted concept, lacking a universally accepted definition and sparking debate worldwide (Crosby et al., 2006; Holzer & Neumark, 2006; Leslie et al., 2014; Sowell, 2004). Proponents argue that affirmative action is crucial for combating prejudice and dismantling systemic discrimination, particularly against minorities and women (Rosen, 1974; Braun, 1995). They maintain that such policies promote social justice and equality by redistributing resources to historically marginalized groups (Gibelman, 2000; Gu et al., 2014; Premdas, 2016). Despite criticisms, affirmative action remains a vital tool for addressing historical injustices and ensuring the inclusion of disadvantaged groups (Premdas, 2016).

Opponents of affirmative action, such as Pojman (1998), raise several objections. They argue that affirmative action results in reverse discrimination, disadvantaging certain groups and suggesting that significant progress has already been made in combating discrimination (Seldon, 2006). Additionally, critics contend that affirmative action can promote mediocrity and incompetence by prioritizing race or ethnicity over merit, potentially undermining workplace performance (Pojman, 1998). Furthermore, they assert that affirmative action contradicts the principle of merit-based selection, noting the lack of such policies in domains where certain groups

dominate, like basketball (Pojman, 1998). In contrast, Edigheji (2007) and the World Bank (2004) argue that when implemented correctly, affirmative action policies can enhance government capacity by preventing nepotism and employing qualified individuals. Effective implementation of affirmative action involves overcoming significant challenges, as highlighted by Haider (2011), who notes that it may take time for quotas to positively impact minorities as they acquire the necessary skills and societal attitudes shift. Browne (2013) suggests that long-term and complementary special measures are essential for the success of reservation policies.

Affirmative action is critical for historically marginalized groups seeking official recognition (Moodie, 2013; Middleton, 2013). Success criteria include establishing proportional representation, which may lead to challenges in retention and advancement. Korten (2011) emphasizes that reservation policies provide minority populations with a rightful share of power, resources, and opportunities. However, they can also exacerbate societal prejudice and affect merit-based selection (Pojman, 2010; Chalam, 1990; Rai, 2022). Previous research highlights the lack of minority representation in Nepalese bureaucracy (Gurung, 2006; DFID & World Bank, 2007; Bhatta et al., 2008; Onta et al., 2008; Sunam & Shrestha, 2019; Bhul, 2021; Rai, 2022). Pradhan (2014) underscores the complex interplay of class, gender, caste, and geographic factors in social inclusions and exclusions. Dhakal (2013) notes some positive representation outcomes from the Civil Services' affirmative action but acknowledges ongoing controversies, including elite dominance within excluded groups. Paudel (2016) concludes that the government struggles to attract marginalized community members, with trends favoring elite families with prior civil service connections.

In Nepal, the necessity of affirmative action is underscored by historical social exclusion and marginalization perpetuated by the state and its institutions (Middleton & Shneiderman, 2008; Sunam & Shrestha, 2019). Khas-Aryas and Newars have historically dominated Nepalese bureaucracy, while Dalits have faced near-total exclusion (Lawoti, 2005; Sunam & Shrestha, 2019). This dominance influences power dynamics and access to state resources and perpetuates social, political, and economic hegemony. Reservation policies can yield positive societal outcomes when implemented with an understanding of intersectionality and the specific needs of excluded groups. However, improper implementation can exacerbate inequality and social conflict (Bhul, 2021). While reservations aim to transform the socio-demographics of the bureaucracy and create an inclusive nation-state, they face harsh criticism for allegedly violating equality, benefiting economic elites within excluded groups, and undermining meritocracy (Subedi, 2014; Sunam, 2018; Sunam & Shrestha, 2019).

### 3. Objectives and Method of the Study

The study aims to examine the impact of affirmative action policies in Nepal’s civil service since 2007, focusing on the representation and inclusion of women, Dalits, and ethnic minorities. It also explores the challenges individuals face in gaining empowerment and participation in decision-making within the civil service. I used three approaches to collect data for analysis: a scoping review of the academic literature, a scoping review of the popular Nepali media, and the study of the statistics related to the presence of disadvantaged social groups in civil service in Nepal.

For the academic literature review, I searched Google Scholar and NepJol database for studies on affirmative action in Nepal between 2007 and 2024. For the scoping review of the popular media, I used Google search to collect news related to affirmative action in Nepal from Nepali media in Nepali and English between 2022 and 2024. Finally, I collected data associated with hiring from the inclusion category from the Public Service Commission of Nepal Service for the last 10 years. Information from the academic literature and the popular media was qualitatively categorized based on issues and then analyzed to draw conclusions. The statistics on the result of affirmative action in employment are presented in the table, and charts and conclusions were drawn.

### 4. Results

#### 4.1 Scoping Review of Scholarly and Popular Media Articles

I searched Google Scholar and NepJol database for studies on affirmative action in Nepal between 2007 and 2024. From the initial 6088 articles, I selected 86 studies based on criteria related to civil service, reservation or affirmative action, minority and disadvantaged social groups, and representation. Then I analyzed the content and generated a matrix with nine thematic issues, studies and the major conclusions of the studies as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Scholarly literature review matrix

Issues	Authors	Year	Major Conclusions
Affirmative Action and Inclusion in Nepal	Dhakai (2013); Druzca (2016); Gurung (2006); Bhul (2021); National Inclusion Commission (2022); Paudel (2016); Pyakurel (2011); Rai (2022); Sunam (2018); Sunam et al. (2021); Thapa (2017)	2007-2023	Affirmative action in Nepal has advanced social inclusion but faces significant challenges in implementation. Political resistance, bureaucratic inefficiency, and limited resources undermine its success, preventing full inclusion of marginalized groups. Political patronage and vested interests further hinder progress.

Issues	Authors	Year	Major Conclusions
Affirmative Action and Social Justice	Bolick (1996); Borooah (2010); Bradbury & Kellough (2011); Braun (1995); Crosby et al. (2006); Deshpande (2013); Gibelman (2000); Gu et al. (2004); Holzer & Neumark (2006); Kramon & Posner (2016); Kovacs et al. (2014); Leonard (1984); Leslie et al. (2014); Louis (2005); Marion (2009); Meier (2019); Meier & Capers (2014); Meier & Nigro (1976); Middleton (2013); Moodie (2013); Premdas (2016); Pojman (1998); Rosen (1974); Selden (2006); Shah (1991); Sowell (2004); World Bank (2004)	1974-2021	Affirmative action policies show mixed results. They have improved access to education and employment for marginalized groups but have also caused backlash and unintended consequences such as stigma, social tension, and resentment. The policies often lead to divisions within society, highlighting the challenges in achieving social justice. Gender inequalities persist in terms of political influence, and while quotas address numerical representation, they do not fully resolve underlying gendered power imbalances.
Representative Bureaucracy	Anzia & Berry (2011); Bradbury & Kellough (2011); Edigheji (2007); Ferreira & Gyourko (2014); Haider (2011); Jamil (2020); Jamil & Baniamin (2020); Jamil (2021), Jamil & Dungal (2009); Kingsley (1944); Krislov (2012); Meier (2021); Meier & Capers (2014); Meier & Nigro (1976); Rasool & Rogger (2015); Riccucci et al. (2014); Selden (2006); Tsai (2007)	1944-2020	Diverse and inclusive bureaucracies enhance policy outcomes and public trust. However, achieving true diversity remains a challenge due to systemic barriers, resistance to change, and structural inequalities. Despite efforts to improve representation, diversity in bureaucratic roles is still not fully achieved.
Social Exclusion and Jobs Reservation	Borooah (2010); Chalam (1990); Lawoti (2005); Lewis (1997); Lott (2000); Shah (1991); Shneiderman (2008); Subedi (2014)	1990-2015	Reservation policies improve access for marginalized groups but these policies also provoke social tension and stigma, especially among non-reserved groups.
Gender and Political Representation	Anzia & Berry (2011); Dee (2005); Ferreira & Gyourko (2014); Haider (2011); Kasara (2007)	2005-2016	Gender quotas increase female representation but gender disparities in political performance remain.

Issues	Authors	Year	Major Conclusions
Social Inclusion in Education	Bista (1991); Bhatta et al. (2024); Chalam (1990); Crosby et al. (2006); Jencks (1998); Leonard (1984); O’Neill (2023); Pradhan (2014); Subedi (2014)	1991-2023	Affirmative action improves educational access, but cultural and resource barriers hinder full inclusion.
Ethnic Minority Public Sector Employment	Browne (2013); Jamil & Baniamin (2020); Jamil (2020), Jamil & Dangal (2020); Kramon & Posner (2016); Lawoti (2005); Riccucci et al. (2014); Selden (2006)	2007-2020	Ethnic minorities face significant barriers in public sector employment like gender and ethnic discrimination, underrepresentation in decision-making roles continue to hinder full inclusion in the public sector.
Civil Service and Governance	Bradbury & Kellough (2011); Government of Nepal (2007); Johnson (2015); Jamil & Baniamin (2020); Jamil & Dangal (2020); Krislov (2012); Meier (2021); Public Service Commission (2023); Rasul & Rogger (2015); Riccucci et al. (2014); Rosen (1974); Selden (2006)	1993-2023	Civil service reforms have improved inclusivity, but political patronage, political influence in appointments and promotions diminishes meritocracy, limiting governance quality and reducing public trust in government institutions.
Cultural and Social Dynamics in Nepal	Bista (1991); Dahal (2003); Ghimire (2020); Bhul (2021); Korten (2011); Lawoti (2005); Onta et al. (2008); Pyakurel (2011); Sunam (2018); Tsai (2007)	1991-2020	Historical inequalities persist, limiting the effectiveness of social inclusion and governance reforms in Nepal.

The major conclusions of major thematic issues identified in the Scholarly literature review matrix above have been elaborated in conjunction with the conclusions from the media review.

A Google search for the news and op-ed related to affirmative action in civil service published in Nepalese media in English and Nepali between 2022 to 2024 yielded 978 items. I selected 45 articles from them based on the criteria similar to that applied in the review of the scholarly articles. The title and content of these news and op-eds and the major conclusion is presented in Table 2.



Table 2. Popular Media Coverage of the Issues Related to Affirmative Action in Nepal

Media/ Newspaper	Authors	Date	Title and Major Content	Major Conclusions
<b>English language media</b>				
Nepali Times	Dhanu Bishwakarma	2024 September 7	“Reaffirming Affirmative Action”: Discusses Nepal’s civil service reservation policy, the progress it has enabled, and the continued underrepresentation of certain groups.	While the reservation system has increased diversity in civil service, marginalized groups like Madhesi Dalits remain underrepresented due to socio-economic and educational barriers. The system requires further refinement.
Nepali Times		2024 May 12	“Who cares?” - Discusses a report by Amnesty International highlighting systemic caste-based discrimination against Dalits, especially women.	The report emphasizes a culture of impunity, detailing pervasive casteism and institutional discrimination. It calls for more effective measures to protect Dalits and access to justice, as current efforts are largely ineffective and insufficient.
Nepali Times	Sonia Awale	2023 March 16	Discusses the concentration of power among high-caste men in Nepal, despite constitutional provisions for inclusion of women, Indigenous people, and Dalits in governance.	Despite quotas for representation, women and marginalized groups remain underrepresented in political roles. The article argues that more effort is needed to ensure effective participation of these groups in governance beyond mere tokenism.
Annapurna Express	Jeetendra Dev	2024 June 20	“The issue of inclusion in politics”: Discusses inclusion in Nepal’s politics, comparing India and Nepal’s progress on affirmative action and representation.	While India shows significant inclusion in its cabinet, Nepal’s remains less inclusive, especially with no Dalit representation. Despite legal frameworks, implementation is lacking.

Media/ Newspaper	Authors	Date	Title and Major Content	Major Conclusions
The Annapurna Express	Jivesh Jha	2023 September 14	“Implement the constitution in true sense.” This article discusses Nepal’s 2015 constitution, its progressive provisions, and the challenges of its implementation.	The constitution mandates affirmative action for marginalized groups, including women, transgender individuals, and disabled persons, but implementation remains weak.
Ratopati	Mim Bahadur Pariyar, Tirupati Pariyar	2023 April 26	Unheard voices of Dalit representatives - The article highlights caste-based discrimination faced by Dalit representatives in politics. It describes incidents of abuse, exclusion, and the systematic barriers that limit their participation.	Dalit representatives face discrimination during campaigns and in office, including derogatory comments, social exclusion, and limited decision-making power. Structural caste systems and biased political parties prevent meaningful Dalit representation in governance.
The Himalayan Times	Ram Kumar Kamat	2023 February 8	“Supreme Court directs to add quota for Tharus in govt jobs”: The Supreme Court ordered the government to allocate quotas for the Tharu community in public jobs.	The court mandated changes to laws ensuring proportional representation for Tharus, highlighting the lack of enforcement of previous rulings on inclusive policies.
The Kathmandu Post	Samiksha Baral	2024 January 28	“Dalit women: empowered or imperilled?” Discusses the challenges faced by Dalit women in politics, despite affirmative action and electoral quotas.	Quotas have helped Dalit women gain political positions, but social prejudices, casteism, and resource disparities limit their effectiveness and influence.
The Kathmandu Post	Sajhana Tolange	2024 May 4	“Dalit women in local governance”: Discusses the challenges and discrimination faced by Dalit women in Nepal’s local governance, despite quotas.	Dalit women are underrepresented in decision-making positions. Caste-based and patriarchal barriers hinder meaningful participation, even with affirmative action.

<b>Media/ Newspaper</b>	<b>Authors</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Title and Major Content</b>	<b>Major Conclusions</b>
The Kathmandu Post	Shalupa Khanal, Srijan Poudel	2023 May 22	“Point, Counter-Point: Should affirmative action be based on caste not class?” This article debates whether affirmative action should prioritize caste or class.	Khanal supports caste-based affirmative action due to historical injustices, while Poudel argues for class-based systems to tackle broader economic inequalities.
Kathmandu Post	Pradip Pariyar	2023 February 5	The article critiques the political landscape in Nepal, arguing that it hinders social justice, particularly for marginalized groups like Dalits. It discusses electoral representation and systemic discrimination.	Pariyar argues that despite constitutional provisions for social justice, actual representation of Dalits is minimal. The political parties fail to nominate Dalit candidates, and systemic barriers perpetuate inequality, reflecting a regression in social justice efforts.
The Kathmandu Post	Deepak Thapa	2024 April 3	“Of women and strongmen” discusses the challenges and perceptions around women’s empowerment in Nepal, highlighting resistance from some male officials and the progress made since the introduction of quotas for women in government roles. It also examines public sentiment towards female leadership.	Despite improvements, women still face significant barriers in civil service. Resistance to women in power persists, with calls for greater representation and support.
The Rising Nepal	Umesh Raj Regmi and Rup Sunar	2024 June 9	“Legal Education Empowers Dalits”: Discusses the role of legal education in empowering Dalits to fight against caste-based discrimination.	Legal education is crucial for Dalit empowerment and access to justice. Dalit representation in legal fields remains low, and more support is needed for Dalit students.

Media/ Newspaper	Authors	Date	Title and Major Content	Major Conclusions
The Rising Nepal	Bini Dahal	2024 August 9	“Review Reservation” - Discusses the importance of Nepal’s reservation system for marginalized communities and the need for reforms to address its shortcomings.	The article highlights that while the reservation system has aided women and marginalized groups, issues like the “creamy layer” challenge its effectiveness. It emphasizes the need for a balance between reservation and meritocracy, suggesting that reforms should focus on economic status for better inclusivity.
The Rising Nepal	Babita Basnet	2024 September 19	Secure Gains Made In Women Empowerment	Highlights the constitutional provisions for women’s rights and representation, noting that women hold 28% of civil service roles. Emphasizes the need for effective implementation of laws and concerns over potential regressions in women’s rights amid ongoing constitutional debates.
The Rising Nepal	Meena Bhatta	2024 September 10	The article discusses the political upheaval in Bangladesh, focusing on the student protests against the job quota system. It draws parallels to Nepal’s political instability and public discontent over governance, jobs, and corruption.	The situation in Bangladesh serves as a cautionary tale for Nepal, highlighting the need for politicians to address public grievances to avoid similar unrest.
The Rising Nepal	Narayan Upadhyay	2024 August 16	The article discusses the recent political turmoil in Bangladesh that led to the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, drawing parallels to	The article emphasizes that while student protests have historically been powerful in Bangladesh, similar movements are unlikely to emerge in Nepal due to its

<b>Media/ Newspaper</b>	<b>Authors</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Title and Major Content</b>	<b>Major Conclusions</b>
			Nepal’s political climate. It highlights the protests against the quota system in Bangladesh, the role of various political parties, and contrasts the political stability in Nepal with the chaotic history of its neighbor.	different political dynamics, the absence of intense political rivalry, and a relatively stable economic situation.
My Republica	Ritesh Panthee	2024 January 18	Reform in reservation is necessary - The article discusses the ongoing need for reservation in Nepal and the necessity to review and reform the system for marginalized communities.	The National Inclusion Commission suggests reforming the reservation system, stressing that it is essential for marginalized groups. The Supreme Court highlighted misuse of reservations by privileged groups. Recommendations include periodic reviews, preventing repeated beneficiaries, and expanding the criteria for reservation to improve inclusivity.
My Republica	Subash Ghimire	2023 March 28	“Review the Reservation System” - Discusses the need for a periodic review of Nepal’s ethnic-based reservation system, with suggestions for reform.	Proposals include limiting repeated benefits, shifting to class-based over ethnicity-based reservations, and balancing the system to avoid reverse discrimination.
My Republica	Bhuvan Sharma	2024 July 30	The article discusses the persistent misuse of reservation quotas in Nepal’s civil service, which have not been updated in 17 years.	The lack of revision in reservation quotas leads to affluent groups benefiting disproportionately, while deserving individuals are neglected. Recommendations include barring high-income families from accessing these quotas to curb misuse.

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<b>Nepali language media</b>				
<b>पत्रिका</b>	<b>लेखकहरू</b>	<b>मिति</b>	<b>शीर्षक र प्रमुख विषयवस्तु</b>	<b>निष्कर्षहरू</b>
गोरखापत्र	रमेश घिमिरे	२०८० माघ ५	निजामतीमा आरक्षण र 'ब्रेन ड्रेन' - निजामती सेवाको प्रभाव र सुधार आवश्यकताहरूको चर्चा गरिएको छ ।	आरक्षणले कर्मचारी सेवामा समावेशीकरणको सुनिश्चितता गर्दछ; तर, दक्ष जनशक्ति विदेश जानु र प्रभावकारी सेवा गर्न असमर्थता प्रमुख समस्या हो ।
गोरखापत्र	तारा वारले	२०८१ साउन २३	निजामतीमा महिलाको सहभागिता र नेतृत्वको स्तरमा भएका परिवर्तनहरू	महिलाले निजामती सेवामा उच्च स्तरमा नेतृत्व गर्न थालेका छन्, आरक्षणले महिला सहभागिता बढाएको छ, तर अभै धेरै चुनौतीहरू बाँकी छन् ।
गोरखापत्र	डा. खगेन्द्रप्रसाद सुवेदी	२०७९ चैत २९	आरक्षणमा परिमार्जन - निजामती सेवा, कर्मचारीको पदोन्नति, र आरक्षणको आवश्यकता ।	कर्मचारीको कार्यसम्पादनमा ध्यान दिनु आवश्यक छ । आरक्षण र सेवामा सुधारका लागि नियमहरू परिमार्जन गर्नुपर्ने कुरामा जोड दिइएको छ ।
गोरखापत्र	प्रतिभा सुवेदी	२०७९ जेठ १५	निर्णायक पदमा महिला आरक्षण - महिलाको राजनीतिक सहभागिता र आरक्षणको महत्त्व ।	महिलाको भागीदारी बढाउन आरक्षण अनिवार्य छ; यसले राजनीतिक र सामाजिक समावेशिता सुनिश्चित गर्न मद्दत गर्नेछ । विभिन्न देशहरूमा महिलाको लागि आरक्षणको सफलताको उदाहरण दिइएको छ ।

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गोरखापत्र	भरतप्रसाद कोइराला	२०७९ जेठ ११	आरक्षणमा पुनरवलोकन - आरक्षणको उद्देश्य र यसका पक्ष र विपक्षमा चर्चा ।	आरक्षणले केवल विशेष वर्गलाई मात्र लाभ दिएको छ; यसको कार्यान्वयनमा सुधार आवश्यक छ । आरक्षणलाई आवश्यकताका आधारमा पुनरावलोकन गर्नुपर्ने र सरकारलाई सीमित प्रविष्टि सुनिश्चित गर्न सुझाव दिइएको छ ।
गोरखापत्र	तारानाथ पनेरू	२०७९ मंसिर ६	कर्मचारी प्रशासनमा आरक्षण - आरक्षणको प्रयोग, यसका प्रभाव र चुनौतिहरू ।	आरक्षणले सकारात्मक र नकारात्मक दुवै प्रभावहरू पारेको छ । विशेष गरी, यसले सामाजिक समावेशिता बढाएको छ, तर सिफारिसमा योग्यता प्रणाली कमजोर बनाउने जोखिम पनि उठेको छ । आरक्षणको उचित प्रयोग गर्दै दुष्प्रभावहरू न्यूनीकरण गर्नुपर्ने आवश्यकता छ ।
हिमालखबर	धनु विश्वकर्मा	२०८० असोज २३	आरक्षण खारेजी होइन परिस्कार - आरक्षणको महत्त्व र यसको प्रभावका बारेमा चर्चा गरिएको छ, जसले दलित र पिछडिएका समुदायलाई सरकारी सेवामा अवसर दिन्छ ।	आरक्षण खारेजीको माग न्यायोचित छैन; यसले समाजमा प्रतिनिधित्व र समानताको सुनिश्चितता गर्दछ ।
मार्टिन चौतारी	जेबी विश्वकर्मा	२०८१ जेठ १	आरक्षणको संघर्ष र षड्यन्त्र - आरक्षणको आवश्यकताका बारेमा बहस, उत्पीडित समुदाय र खसआर्य	आरक्षण एउटा सहायक कार्यक्रम हो; यद्यपि खसआर्य समुदायको वर्चस्व र आरक्षणको विरोधमा षड्यन्त्रहरू छन्, जसले

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			समुदायबीचको संघर्षको चित्रण गरिएको छ ।	समावेशीकरणमा बाधा पुऱ्याउँछ ।
रातोपाटी	रितेश पन्थी	२०८१ असोज २२	आरक्षणले उब्जाएको प्रश्न - विभिन्न आयोगहरूको अध्ययन र आरक्षणको प्रभाव र आवश्यकताको बारेमा चर्चा गरिएको छ ।	आरक्षणको उद्देश्य समानुपातिक समावेशीकरण हो; यद्यपि मौजुदा आरक्षण प्रणालीले विविध समुदायको प्रतिनिधित्वलाई सुनिश्चित गर्न चुनौतीहरू छन् ।
अन्नपूर्ण पोस्ट	दामोदर रेग्मी	२०८१ असोज २०	सामाजिक विविधताको व्यवस्थापन - नेपालमा विविधता र यसको महत्त्व, र समावेशी नीतिहरूको बारेमा चर्चा गरिएको छ ।	विविधता व्यवस्थापनले सामाजिक सद्भाव र समावेशीकरणलाई सुनिश्चित गर्दै, विभिन्न समुदायहरूको अधिकारको सम्मानमा ध्यान दिन आवश्यक छ ।
कान्तिपुर	जेवी विश्वकर्मा	२०८१ भाद्र ७	निजामतीमा तरमारा कै एकाधिकार- विगत केही वर्षदेखि नेपालमा आरक्षणको पक्ष र विपक्षमा बहस चलिरहेको छ आरक्षण महिला र उत्पीडित समुदायको मुक्तिको राजनीतिक कार्यक्रम होइन । वास्तवमा राज्यले नियोजित रूपमा विभेद र बहिष्करणमा पारिएका समुदायलाई राज्य सञ्चालनमा विस्तारै समावेश गर्दै जाने र राज्यको चरित्रलाई	२०७६ मा लोक सेवा आयोगले ९ हजार १ सय ६१ कर्मचारीको भर्नाका लागि आवेदन खुलाउँदा समावेशिताको अवधारणालाई लत्यायो । स्वाभाविक रूपमा प्रभुत्वशाली खस-आर्य नेपालका ऐतिहासिक तरमारा वर्ग हुन्, अहिले पनि यही समूहले राज्यसत्ताको दोहनलाई निरन्तरता दिइरहेको छ भने आरक्षणको विरोध गरेर एकाधिकारवादी लुटको स्वार्थ रक्षा गर्न लागि रहेको छ ।



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			समावेशी बनाउने एउटा विधि मात्रै हो ।	
कान्तिपुर	इन्द्र अधिकारी	२०८१ आश्विन ६	आरक्षण - तथ्यांकबिनाको रजाइँ	नेपालमा आरक्षणको अवधारणात्मक अस्पष्टताको बारेमा छलफल गर्दछ । यसले आरक्षण नीतिहरूको इतिहास र उद्देश्यको विवरण दिन्छ, 'अवैध' को श्रेणी अन्तर्गत कुन समूह समावेश गर्नुपर्छ भन्ने बारेमा असहमति र वर्तमान नीतिहरू लक्षित रूपमा लागू नभएको बारेमा प्रकाश पार्छ ।
कान्तिपुर	जेबी विश्वकर्मा	२०८१ जेष्ठ ४	आरक्षणको संघर्ष र षड्यन्त्र -  आरक्षण उत्पीडित समुदायको समग्र मुक्तिको कार्यक्रम होइन, सुधारका लागि सहयोगी भने पक्कै हो । राज्यले त्यस्ता समुदायमाथि गरेको ऐतिहासिक विभेदको क्षतिपूर्तिस्वरूप आरक्षण दिने भएको हुदा यो अन्य जात वा समुदायको अधिकार कटौती होइन ।	निजामती क्षेत्रमा प्रवेश गर्न व्यक्ति निश्चित शैक्षिक योग्यता हासिल गरेको नै हुन्छ । आरक्षणबाट नियुक्ति पाउने व्यक्तिले त अध्ययन मात्रै होइन, अनुभवजन्य ज्ञानसमेत प्राप्त गरेको हुन्छ । जुन ज्ञान कार्यक्षेत्रमा प्रभावकारी हुन सक्छ । जस्तो, थारू समुदायकै नीति निर्मातालाई थारूको भाषा, संस्कृति र मनोविज्ञान थाहा हुन्छ, त्यो समाजका लागि थारू समाज र संस्कृति बुझ्ने कर्मचारी नै सबैभन्दा उपयुक्त पात्र हुन्छ । त्यसैले आरक्षणबाट प्रवेश गर्ने व्यक्ति कमजोर हुन्छ भन्ने भ्रमबाट मुक्त हुन जरुरी छ ।

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कान्तिपुर	तारा वाग्ले	२०८१ आश्विन २	संविधानमै सीमित समावेशिता- सङ्घीय, प्रादेशिक तथा स्थानीय सरकारले महिलाविरुद्धका विभेदको अन्त्य गर्दै आवश्यक कानून, नीति, निर्देशिका तथा मापदण्डहरूको प्रभावकारी कार्यान्वयनमा जोड दिनुपर्छ ।	महिला सहभागिता बढाउन आरक्षणको व्यवस्था गरे पनि त्यो सम्पन्न महिलामुखी भएको आरोप पनि लाग्ने गरेको छ । विशेष व्यवस्थाको अवधारणाअनुरूप पिछडिएको वर्गलाई उत्थान गराउने विषय भने चुनौतीपूर्ण बन्दै गएको छ । राज्यका विभिन्न निकायको उच्च तहमा पुगेका महिलाको अवस्था हेर्दा महिलालाई आरक्षण मात्र नभई उचित शिक्षासँगै अवसर र क्षमता विकासका तालिमको खाँचो देखिन्छ ।
कान्तिपुर	भोला पासवान	२०८० श्रावण ८	प्रस्तावित सङ्घीय निजामती ऐन: आरक्षण र मधेशी दलित - १४ प्रतिशत जनसङ्ख्या रहेका दलितको निजामती सेवामा प्रतिनिधित्व भने ५ प्रतिशतमात्रै भइरहेको छ । अझ दलितभित्र पनि मधेशी दलित र महिलाको अवस्था दयनीय छ ।	संविधानको धारा ४० (७) ले दलितहरूका लागि प्राप्त सेवा, सुविधा र अवसरमा दलित महिला र दलितभित्रका कमजोर दलितहरूले पनि समान रूपमा पाउने सुनिश्चित गरेको छ । तसर्थ संविधानको मर्म र १५ वर्षको आरक्षण कोटा कार्यान्वयनको अनुभवका आधारमा भन्नुपर्दा अब दलितभित्र मधेशी दलितको कोटा आरक्षित गर्नुको विकल्प छैन ।
अनलाइन खबर	लक्ष्मी विलास कोइराला	२०७६ पुष २७	निजामती सेवामा आरक्षण र सकारात्मक विभेदको बहस - आरक्षण र	निजामती सेवामा आरक्षणको खाँचो छ, तर योग्यता र विभेदको सवाल उठ्दछ । सकारात्मक विभेदले मात्र

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			समावेशीकरणको महत्त्व र चुनौतीहरू ।	सजिलो बनाउन सक्छ, त्यसैले व्यवस्थामा सुधार आवश्यक छ ।
अनलाइन खबर	डा. मानबहादुर वीके	२०८० वैशाख ४	निजामती सेवा ऐन, आरक्षण र अन्तरनिहित मनोविज्ञान - निजामती सेवामा दलित समुदायको प्रतिनिधित्व र आरक्षणको प्रभाव ।	नेपालको आरक्षण व्यवस्था असफल र निष्क्रिय रहेको छ; यो संरचनात्मक परिवर्तनको अभावमा छ । जातीय विभेदले मानव विकासमा ठूलो प्रभाव पारिरहेको छ, र आरक्षणको प्रभावकारी कार्यान्वयन आवश्यक छ ।
अनलाइन खबर	डा. मानबहादुर वीके	२०७९ जेठ १७	सार्वजनिक प्रशासनमा समावेशीकरण - सार्वजनिक प्रशासनमा समावेशीकरणको महत्त्व र चुनौती ।	समावेशीकरणको प्रक्रियामा सामाजिक विविधताको समावेशले लोकतन्त्र र सुशासनमा सुधार ल्याउँछ । ऐतिहासिक जातीय विभेदका कारण भएका असमानताहरूलाई सम्बोधन गर्न विशेष व्यवस्थाहरू आवश्यक छन् ।
अनलाइन खबर	ज्ञानेन्द्र गिरी	२०७९ माघ २३	सङ्घीय निजामती सेवा ऐनमा खुम्चौँदै सीमान्तकृत समुदायको आरक्षण कोटा - आरक्षणको दुरुपयोग र कोटाको लाभ ।	समावेशी समूहका लागि कोटा खुम्च्याइएपछि, समावेशीकरणको अवसरमा सीमितता आएको छ । ऐनले सीमान्तकृत समुदायका हकमा प्रतिगामी प्रावधानहरू प्रस्ताव गरेको छ । प्रशासनमा यथार्थवादी पहुँचको लागि सशक्तीकरण र वास्तविक प्रतिनिधित्व आवश्यक छ ।

Media/ Newspaper	Authors	Date	Title and Major Content	Major Conclusions
नयाँ पत्रिका	सुवास भट्ट, कमलराज भट्ट	२०८१ भदौ १	राज्यसंयन्त्रमा महिला - निजामती सेवामा महिला सहभागिता र यसको अवस्थाबारे ।	संविधानले महिलाको ३३% प्रतिनिधित्व सुनिश्चित गरे पनि, शीर्ष तहमा सहभागिता कम छ । हाल निजामती सेवामा २८.१७% महिला काम गर्दैछन् । आरक्षणको व्यवस्था र सामाजिक चेतनाले महिलाको सहभागिता बढाउन सहयोग गरेको छ ।
नयाँ पत्रिका	सुवास भट्ट	२०७६ श्रावण ११	इतिहास रच्यै लीलादेवी बनिन् पहिलो महिला मुख्यसचिव - लीलादेवी गड्तौला, पहिलो महिला मुख्यसचिवको रूपमा नियुक्त ।	गड्तौला महिला प्रतिनिधित्वको वृद्धि र समावेशीकरणको प्रतीक हो, तर उनी ३८ दिन मात्र मुख्यसचिवका रूपमा रहनेछन् ।
नयाँ पत्रिका	सुवास भट्ट	२०७७ भदौ ३	सरकारी सेवामा आरक्षण प्रणालीको लिइँदै छ हुर्मत - आरक्षणको दुरुपयोग र कोटाको लाभ ।	आरक्षण प्रणालीको लक्ष्य कमजोर वर्गको पहुँच हो, तर एकै व्यक्तिले पटक-पटक कोटा उपयोग गर्दा नयाँ पात्रहरूलाई रोकिएको छ । आरक्षणको उचित कार्यान्वयन र पुनरावलोकनको आवश्यकता छ ।
नयाँ पत्रिका	शिवहरि ज्ञवाली	२०७८ माघ १५	सरकारको जात - दलित समुदायको भेदभाव, सामाजिक न्याय र सरकारी संरचनामा जातीय भेदभावको प्रभाव ।	सार्वजनिक संस्थाहरू दलितमैत्री छैनन्, र दलितहरूको पहुँचमा बाधा पुऱ्याउँछन् । कानूनी र नैतिक दायित्वहरूमा सुधार आवश्यक छ ।

Media/ Newspaper	Authors	Date	Title and Major Content	Major Conclusions
नागरिक समाचार	भुवन शर्मा	२०८१ श्रावण १४	आरक्षण कोटामा दुरुपयोग - आरक्षण कोटा पुनरवलोकनमा ढिलाइ र यसको प्रभाव ।	आरक्षण कोटामा पुनरवलोकन १७ वर्षसम्म नगरेकोले वास्तविक लक्षित वर्गसम्म पहुँच छैन । धनी र सहरका समुदायले मात्र यसबाट लाभ उठाइरहेका छन् । आयोगले आरक्षण व्यवस्थामा सुधारको लागि सरकारलाई सिफारिस गरेको छ ।

#### 4.2 Major Landscapes of the Affirmative Action in Nepal

Based on the scholarly studies and the popular media reporting the following landscapes of the affirmative action in Nepal's civil service and the impact on Nepali society emerge. So, affirmative action has played an important role in increasing social inclusion among the underprivileged populace in Nepal for better access to improved educational and economic opportunities. However, these landscapes are facing vital challenges like political resistance, bureaucratic inefficiency, combined with deep-seated power relations in society. More often than not, political patronage disrupts equitable distribution and damages the influence of such programs of inclusion. Moreover, affirmative action provides significant opportunities, though lack of resources and political will impede its complete realization (National Inclusion Commission, 2022; Bhul, 2023). While such policies have opened up avenues of educational and job opportunities, the backlash of non-beneficiaries has given rise to social unrest and defaming those who are beneficiaries (Bolick, 1996; Sowell, 2004). Given that diversified civil services have been proven to enhance the public's trust and produce inclusive outcomes, representational bureaucracy is still indispensable within the public sector (Anzia & Berry, 2011; Selden, 2006).

However, due to recruiting biases and resistance from entrenched powers, the processes have been slow. Similarly, in education, affirmative action has indeed opened the doors, but there is still a way to go regarding true access because of cultural biases, lack of infrastructure, and social stigma. Bhatta et al., 2024; O'Neill, 2023). Additionally, ethnic minorities still face discrimination in recruitment and promotion within the public sector, requiring further reforms to remove systemic

barriers and ensure equity (Browne, 2013; Lawoti, 2005). These challenges are compounded by deeply rooted cultural and social dynamics in Nepal, where historical divisions based on caste, ethnicity, and geography persist, making it difficult to achieve true social justice (Bista, 1991; Ghimire, 2020).

Therefore, affirmative action policies in Nepal’s civil service have come a long way in improving women’s participation and making amends for historical injustices; however, quite a few challenges remain. Criticisms about the effectiveness of the reservation system, abuses of quotas, and the broader economic impact of ineffective policies form the base for urgent, comprehensive reform. As it is currently practiced, affirmative action has thus far failed in altering entrenched power relations or ushering in equitable and fair representation for all underrepresented groups. For such policies to be moved toward achieving their intended outputs, a more proactive approach to policies will be required that is transformative both in intent and character. The necessary structural reforms regarding caste-based and class-based inequalities are interlinked and fundamental to creating an inclusive, representative civil service representative of Nepal’s diverse elements. Equally cardinal would be increased legal education and empowerment programs, which equip the marginalized groups to effectively handle the system for their benefit and plead their cause. Only through such comprehensive changes will affirmative action achieve its objective of a more just and equal society.

### **4.3 Current Implementation Achievement of Affirmative Action in Nepal**

The Government of Nepal implemented affirmative action in 2007 by revising the Civil Service Act 1993 in response to the long-standing struggles of marginalized communities as well as left-wing political organizations. According to the Civil Service Act of 1993, qualified candidates from underprivileged groups will be given first preference in an open competition to fill 45 percent of the total seats. Total number of reserved seats, 33 percent are allocated for women, 27 percent for Adivasi-Janajatis, 22 percent for Madhesis, 9 percent for Dalits, 5 percent for differently abled people, and 4 percent are allocated for backward regions (GoN, 2007).

Table 3. Cluster-wise Hiring for Civil Service in two periods (F/Y 2074/75 and 2079/80)

S.N.	Cluster	2074/75			2079/080		
		Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
1.	Women	1088	0	1088	500	0	500
2.	Adivasi-Janajati	212	646	858	260	479	739

S.N.	Cluster	2074/75			2079/080		
		Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
3.	Madhesi	112	599	711	125	508	633
4.	Dalit	57	235	292	39	156	195
5.	Disables	28	135	163	23	100	123
6.	Remote Area	19	113	132	47	282	329
Grand Total		1516	1728	3244	994	1525	2519

Source: Public Service Commission, 2075 and 2080 Reports

Table 3 shows comparative data on hiring different marginalized groups in Nepal’s civil service between 2074/75 and 2079/80. Figure 1 shows a comparison in numbers as well as gender parity in each category. The data shows a decrease in hiring from 2074/75 to 2079/80 in all categories except the Remote area. The decrease is most prominent in case of women. The gender parity is low in all groups (value range: 0.2 – 0.5). Regarding change, the gender parity has increased in Adivasi-Janajati and Madhesi groups and has remained more or less unchanged for Dalit, Differently able and remote area groups.

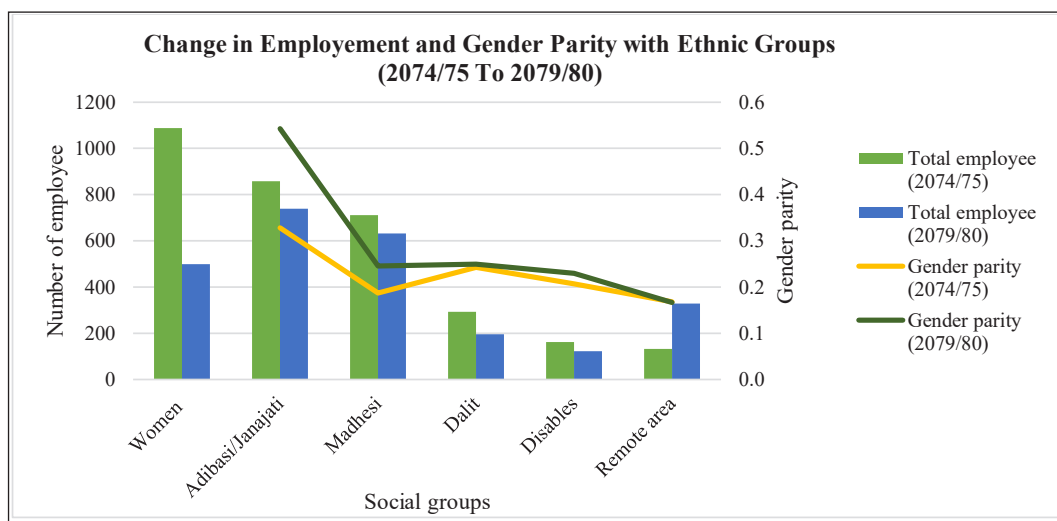


Figure 1. Five Year Change in Employment and Gender Parity among Disadvantaged Groups (Data source: Public Service Commission)

Table 4 shows gender composition of all civil servants in last 11 years starting from the year 2072/73 to 2080/81. The same data is presented in chart in Figure 2 to show the trend of gender parity.

Table 4 Gender Composition of Civil Servants for the period 2072/73-2080/81.

Year	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total
2080/81	61369	71.76%	24143	28.23%	85512
2079/80	61423	71.82%	24094	28.18%	85520
2078/79	62482	72.49%	23712	27.51%	86194
2077/78	64979	73.41%	23532	26.59%	88511
2076/77	65461	74.00%	22999	26.00%	88460
2075/76	66335	75.13%	21963	24.87%	88298
2074/75	68558	76.40%	21169	23.60%	89727
2073/74	67682	77.85%	19260	22.15%	86942
2072/73	67231	80.76%	16014	19.24%	83245
2071/72	67226	82.33%	14424	17.67%	81650
2070/71	67381	84.03%	12806	15.97%	80187

Source: Department of National Personnel Records (Civil), MoFAGA

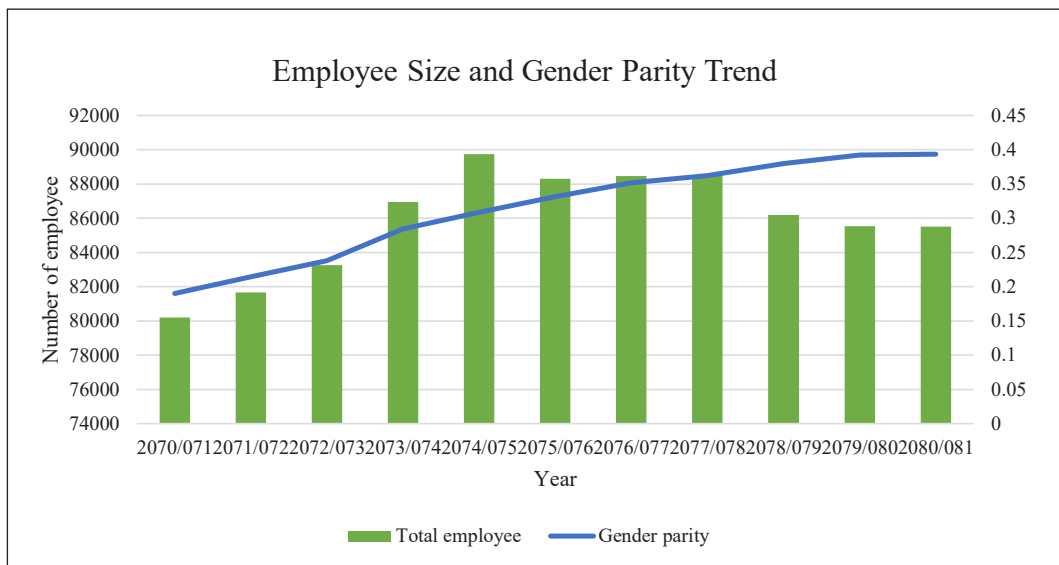


Figure 2. 10 Year Trend in Gender Parity in Civil Service in Nepal. Date Source: Department of National Personnel Records (Civil), MoFAGA

The data shows that the gender parity among total civil service is low. However it is steadily improving (Gender parity: 1.9 in 2070/71 and 3.9 in 2080/81). It indicates



a steady decrease in the share percentage of male civil servants from 84.03% in 2070/71 to 71.76% in 2080/81, with a corresponding increase in the share percentage of female civil servants from 15.97% to 28.23%. At a level of around 0.2 to 0.4, gender parity also improved over the last decade. This is an encouraging trend towards better gender balance in the civil service.

Table 5 and Figure 3 exhibit gender parity throughout the various service areas of the Nepalese public service. Despite the wide variations in the total number of workers across different organizations, the gender parity index reveals several interesting trends. For instance, the health sector has the highest employment rate and a gender parity rating of 1.0, indicating equal representation of both sexes. This contrasts with fields such as engineering and forestry, which have a lower gender equality index than the male-dominated workforce. The administrative sector scores poorly on gender equality, although there is a huge workforce. From these research results, therefore, specific actions must be taken to promote gender equality in various services, especially in the professions with low gender equality in the federal civil service of Nepal.

**Table 5 Service-wise Gender Composition in Civil Service of Nepal**

S.N.	Services	Male	Female	Total	Male %	Female %
1	Nepal Economic Planning and Statistics Service	327	54	381	85.8	14.2
2	Nepal Agriculture Service	2865	785	3650	78.5	21.5
3	Nepal Administrative Service	23691	5137	28828	82.2	17.8
4	Nepal Forestry Service	3978	605	4583	86.8	13.5
5	Nepal Education Service	1495	498	1993	75.0	25.0
6	Nepal Health Service	12596	12457	25053	50.3	49.7
7	Nepal Miscellaneous Service	2253	1556	3809	59.1	40.9
8	Nepal Engineering Service	9174	1734	10908	84.1	15.9
9	Nepal Justice Service	3446	1059	4505	76.5	23.5
10	Nepal Foreign Service	211	64	275	76.7	23.3
11	Nepal Audit Service	358	86	444	80.6	19.4
12	Nepal Parliament Service	188	58	246	76.4	23.6
		60582	24093	84675	71.54	28.45

*Source: Ministry of Finance, Economic Survey Reports, 2080*

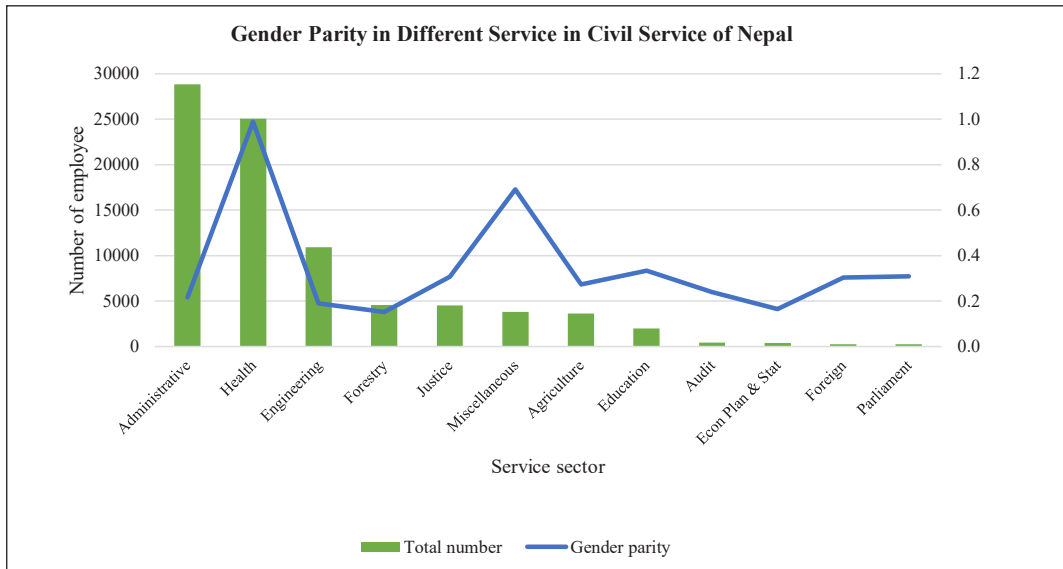


Figure 3. Gender Parity in Different Service in Civil Service of Nepal

Table 6 shows regional caste representation in Nepal’s civil service. There are large differences in terms of the extent to which different caste groups are represented. The Hill Brahmins and Hill Chhetris (Khas-Arya) dominate with 39.00% and 22.30%, respectively, both achieving an index close to or at 1.00, thus their proportional representation rate as compared to their population. In sharp contrast, the Hill Dalits, Terai Dalits, and Muslims are grossly underrepresented, with indices ranging between 0.0978 and 0.2474, pointing to their relative negligibility in the civil service. The Terai Indigenous and Newars are underrepresented but to a lesser degree. What it does indicate, more generally, is that there is a need for more inclusive policies to bridge gaps and to better represent groups that have been underrepresented and marginalized in the civil service.

Table 6. Regional Representation of Caste in Civil Service (cited in Gurung, 2009)

SN	Caste	Percentage	Index
1	Hill Brahmin	39.00%	1.0000
2	Hill Chhetri	22.30%	0.9719
3	Terai Brahmin, Chhetri	3.30%	1.0000
4	Terai others	9.70%	0.3851
5	Hill Dalit	0.90%	0.0978
6	Terai Dalit	0.50%	0.2474

SN	Caste	Percentage	Index
7	Newar	9.00%	0.4227
8	Hill Indigenous	9.00%	0.4382
9	Terai Indigenous	4.60%	0.4227
10	Muslim	0.70%	0.1574
11	Others	0.4%	0.6073

## 5. Discussion

The review of the scholarly articles and media reports regarding affirmative action in Nepal and the analysis of the data on the diversity in civil service in Nepal have highlight the following major features and discussion on the benefits and challenges of affirmative action in civil service in Nepal.

### 5.1 Media Discussion

The media review highlights the critical role of media coverage in shaping public perceptions and understanding of women and other minorities' representation and systemic issues within Nepal's civil service. Analyzing these narratives, the media review underscores the importance of accurate and balanced reporting in addressing gender equality, systemic inequities, and the broader economic implications of ineffective affirmative action policies in Nepal. Major opinions are discussed as follows;

#### 5.1.1 Gender Representation and Enactment Encounters

Though, even though the representative tendencies of some of the most marginalized groups-such as women-have increased within Nepal's civil service, equal representations remain very limited for Madhesi, Dalits and women from so-called marginalized castes. Recent reports show that, as of October 2024, women's representations in civil service have drastically increased to 28.45%, in accordance with policy guaranteeing 33% female representation in state appointments (Bhatta & Bhatta, 2024). However, the appointment of Leeladevi Gadtoula as the first woman Chief Secretary marked a milestone in women representation at higher levels of administration. The marginalized groups, however-most particularly the Dalit women and Madhesi-are still finding it hard to get meaningful representations in civil and political roles. Bishwakarma (2024) mentioned that while the reservation system improves overall representation, it has done little to overcome socio-economic inequalities impeding proper representation by the most marginalized. Baral (2024) says that even though quotas guarantee Dalit women a political

position, their prospects for effective participation remain muddled by persistent social bias and resource deprivations.

According to Jha (2023), though the Constitution of Nepal in 2015 had various progressive provisions to empower subaltern groups, its weak enforcement mechanisms had made little change in the power dynamics. The reservation policies under the Civil Service Act are termed passive in their operations and effect little change in the pattern of entrenched powers. BK (2023) identifies even after these provisions, most of the posts in civil services continue to be held by Khas-Aryaa, and hence, the reservation system has not yielded substantive alteration in power distribution, as Vishwakarma (2024) expressed. It has also failed to transform the structural inequalities in most political and civil systems, as greater representation of most marginalized communities is absent from positions of power. These critiques brought into sharp focus the gap between policy on paper and actual implementation and stressed the need for more substantial and more proactive measures that guarantee actual representation.

### 5.1.2 Systemic Discrimination and Glass Ceiling Effects

Regarding discrimination, “Who cares?” (2024) said that the Amnesty International Nepal report has noted that discrimination based on caste continues and has called for more stringent measures of protection against what has proved to be entrenched. What has happened is that this impunity of culture has legitimized the dominant groups to turn the systems of affirmative action to their advantage and limited benefits accruing to genuinely marginalized people. According to Panthee (2024), privileged groups will actually manipulate the reservation system by creating more disparity. More precisely, manipulating reservation quotas serving the most disadvantaged sections of society provides higher-income people from those very groups various ways to benefit from it. Sharma (2024) comments that the manipulations make affirmative action less effective, and the increased disparity is encouraged. Equivalence and sufficiency of prevailing policies are seriously questioned. Bhul (2023) argues that the glass ceiling effect in Nepal’s civil service persists, hindering the upward mobility of marginalized groups despite affirmative action policies. It is evident that while affirmative action ensures entry-level positions for underrepresented groups, individuals from these groups often face significant barriers to socialization and advancement. Studies and reports indicate that employees from marginalized backgrounds in the civil service encounter institutional biases, limited access to professional development opportunities, and a lack of mentorship from senior officials, which restricts their ability to rise through the ranks. Drucza (2016) further justifies this argument by pointing to the poor

representation of lower-caste individuals in leadership positions within the civil service despite the introduction of quotas. This demonstrates how entrenched cultural and institutional biases continue to limit the effectiveness of affirmative action in providing real opportunities for marginalized groups to excel and attain leadership roles.

### 5.1.3 Disagreement and Area of Adjustment in Affirmative Action in Nepal

Another critical strand to the debate is whether the reservation policy has to focus on caste or class; this thread of debate has also been shaping the affirmative action discourse in Nepal. Khanal and Poudel (2023) have discussed this, indicating that as much as caste-based reservations try to address historical injustices, class-based reservations might be more effective in tackling contemporary socio-economic disparities. BK (2023) also argued that these reservations by the Civil Service Act of 1993 are unsuccessful in bringing structural change because the influential positions have been reserved by the dominant groups themselves. According to Vishwakarma (2023), the fact that continued debate goes on to prove that affirmative action policies in Nepal must be designed and accommodating in addressing caste-based and class-based disparities. The subtler the approach, the better it will work its way into the intricately connected socioeconomic challenges these underprivileged communities face.

Education, especially legal education, has a critical role it can play in empowering marginalized communities where fighting against entrenched systemic barriers mandates integrating inclusive policies. Regmi and Sunar (2024) emphasize that legal education is important in empowering Dalits and other marginalized groups regarding their representation in civil service machinery, which will help them transcend entrenched discriminatory practices. This will give them access to legal education, knowledge, and tools for better realizing their rights among the marginalized sections; thus, they can participate fully in governance and civil service. This is important in light of the persistent misuse and manipulation of affirmative action policies. Sharma (2024) points out that this quota system is utilized to benefit influential sections within the marginalized group by getting a promotion to higher levels of governance, hence diluting the benefits aimed at truly disadvantaged people. A quality legal education would open up avenues for opportunities for the marginalized people of Nepal to enter the civil service and political world that truly should be representative in asserting their rights and fighting against discriminatory practices. These issues underline the need for periodical review in the reservation system and a more stringent oversight

mechanism to ensure that the scheme reaches out to the most disadvantaged of all groups

## **5.2 Meritocracy versus Inclusion Dichotomy**

A common argument against affirmative action policies in Nepal's civil service is that they undermine meritocracy, potentially resulting in diminished public service quality. However, this argument lacks robust evidence. Despite the absence of systematic research exploring the direct impact of bureaucratic affirmative action on meritocracy and public service quality, the available evidence suggests otherwise. The policy has been successful in fostering inclusivity, increasing the representation of historically marginalized groups, including women, Dalits, Madhesis, and Adivasi-Janajatis. This increase in diversity has helped create a civil service workforce that mirrors the social fabric of Nepal (Sunam et al., 2021). As a result, the inclusion of diverse groups has brought valuable contextual knowledge, experience, and multicultural skills to the bureaucracy. These elements are crucial for enhancing problem-solving abilities, policy-making, and service delivery outcomes. Moreover, the greater cultural competencies resulting from this diversity have improved communication and understanding between civil servants and citizens, especially those from marginalized communities, thanks to language skills and cultural insights (Sunam & Shrestha, 2019; Sunam et al., 2021; Bhul, 2023). This fosters more effective engagement with communities and facilitates better public service delivery.

This enhanced connection has led to greater trust and cooperation between the public and bureaucratic organizations (Ricucci et al., 2014; Sunam et al., 2021). These positive outcomes challenge the assertion that affirmative action leads to diminished government services and instead highlights its broader benefits. Sunam (2018) argues that the beneficiaries of affirmative action, such as women, Dalits, Madhesis, and Janajatis, have contributed to a more diverse civil service that enhances policy-making and problem-solving by bringing varied expertise and experiences. The participation of officials from marginalized groups has also been essential in ensuring justice for those facing caste- or gender-based discrimination, as they can relate to and advocate for the concerns of their communities. Despite the positive effects of affirmative action, there are criticisms regarding its impact on meritocracy and bureaucratic efficiency. They argue this approach devalues competence, demoralizes highly qualified individuals, and enforces reverse discrimination against wealthier groups. Research on the effectiveness of affirmative action presents mixed findings. Some studies suggest these policies lower recruitment standards and harm organizational performance, while others show that

hires from marginalized groups can perform as well or even outperform their peers (Paudel, 2016). The complexity of assessing affirmative action's impact is further compounded by biases in meritocratic exams and the correlation between socioeconomic status and exam scores. Ultimately, striking a balance between inclusivity, equality of opportunity, and maintaining meritocratic standards remains crucial for ensuring societal progress.

### **5.3 Myth vs. Reality: Affirmative Action is not just about Quotas**

One prevalent myth about affirmative action is that women no longer need such policies. However, despite gains over the last 15 years, women remain significantly underrepresented in key sectors like revenue, foreign affairs, and auditing. The Public Service Commission Report (2023) reveals that men hold 80 percent of senior positions in Nepal's civil service, while women occupy just 20 percent. Women's representation has increased from 12.5 percent in 2007 to 28.5 percent in 2024 among all 88,568 civil service professionals, yet men still represent 71.5 percent (Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens, 2024). The second myth is that affirmative action is equivalent to quotas. In reality, affirmative action sets goals to enhance the representation of underrepresented groups, ensuring fair access to opportunities. These goals are meant to be achieved through effort and are distinct from rigid quotas, which are only imposed by judicial mandate as a last resort.

Another myth is that affirmative action causes "reverse discrimination." In contrast, these policies ensure the fair evaluation of all applicants based on job-related criteria, without disadvantaging individuals based on caste, gender, or geography. A further myth claims that affirmative action compromises merit-based hiring. However, legislation such as the Civil Service Act of 1993 prioritizes qualifications over demographics, emphasizing merit while fostering inclusivity. Lastly, the myth that affirmative action undermines the self-esteem of women and marginalized groups is based on prejudice rather than the policies themselves. Affirmative action aims to promote inclusivity and diversity, which are essential for organizational success. Affirmative action in Nepal's bureaucracy is proactive, preventing discrimination before it arises and reducing reliance on costly, long-term legal processes (Marion, 2009). Nepal is recognized itself as a multilingual, multicultural, and multi-religious state (Constitution of Nepal, 2007; 2015; Gautam & Poudel, 2022). The deeply ingrained caste system, which has traditionally shaped societal hierarchies and roles, is one of the main obstacles (Thapa, 2017). The goal of affirmative action laws is to undermine these systems by giving historically marginalized and underprivileged castes chances. This may incite resistance from

those who stand to gain from current privileges (Bhul, 2021). BK (2023) mentioned that emphasis on social justice values, equitable opportunity, and inclusive development can remove cultural barriers, while Bhul (2021) argues fundamental changes with strict criteria are necessary for the dismantling of public service due to established casteism in society and its descendant's discrimination. Nepal must implement these strategies to make its affirmative action measures more effective and promote inclusion and social justice in its bureaucracy.

#### **5.4 Major Obstacles of Affirmative Action Implementation in Nepal**

Affirmative action in the past has favored exclusion, not inclusion, in Nepal (Druzca, 2016). The first challenge is the language barrier, which still poses a major obstacle even in the presence of inclusive policies and is frequently disregarded by detractors of the inclusion policy, even though scores are frequently employed to undermine it (Gurung, 2009). The civil service exams are primarily administered in Nepali and English. This is a significant obstacle for citizens of a country where there are over 124 different languages spoken out of 142 ethnic communities. Looking back, it's obvious that underprivileged communities have had challenges ever since they started schooling. The second challenge is gender inequality, where the overall percentage of female civil servants has increased from 15% in 2010 to 28.45% in 2024. The growth in female participation in Nepal's decision-making positions, particularly among secretaries and joint secretaries, it is 88 percent Khas-Arya women, or seven out of eight, under-secretaries include 90 percent Khas-Arya women or 28 of the 31, section officers also comprise 80 percent Khas-Arya women, or 2,029 out of 2,459 (National Inclusion Commission, 2023). On the other hand, various disadvantaged identities and minority groups face severe under-representation. For example, only 0.6 percent of Muslims and 2.5 percent of the Dalit population are represented in the civil service, while the actual population of Nepal comprises 4.4 percent Muslim and 12.6 percent Dalit.

Intersectionality allows for reflection on the inequities within each category of the quota system. It highlights the need to recognize intersectional complexities to revise and form more nuanced categories based on actual ground realities (Bhul, 2023). For example, women are not a homogenous category, and treating them as one entity is an inherent systemic flaw. Similarly, treating other complex structural identities like caste or ethnicity as a homogenous identity is also questionable. The assumption of homogeneity problematically comes to the fore through the flawed quota system, which has allowed specific ethnic clusters to reap the benefit of the reserved seats. For instance, Rajput, Kayastha, Yadav, and Brahmin-Tarai from the Madheshi cluster, and Newar from the Adivasi-Janajati clusters are currently over-



represented (National Inclusion Commission, 2023). This trend explains the complexity within each cluster, which should be better understood to deal equitably with quotas given to large and often diverse clusters. Furthermore, other representation issues, such as double or even triple-marginalization, for instance, Madheshi Dalit, Muslim women, or minorities with disabilities from rural settings, must be addressed to strengthen the existing affirmative action.

Research on Dalit government employees reveals that those who entered through affirmative action feel isolated and are perceived as incapable and untrustworthy (Sunam et al., 2019). Discrimination has transformed from untouchability to preventing people from accessing numerous opportunities, benefits, support, and guidance. The quota policy does not address other forms of structural bias and discrimination, nor has it resulted in marginalized communities gaining positions of power, at least those capable of making policy decisions. However, none of the state's initiatives have been successful if we were to aim for dramatic, overnight changes. On that basis, practically every policy of the state needs to be rethought. Affirmative action has, at the very least, resulted in some increased participation. Nepal has to move toward inclusion, but any concept of inclusion that requires participation in the government mechanism is unfair. A certain level of intervention and anti-discrimination measures will be necessary when citizens start unfairly. Recognizing that members of the privileged class are the ones who create affirmative action rather than doing away with them is the solution. For the ultimate justice and inclusion, there should be pivotal reform; otherwise, the fact that such policies do not address the de facto exclusion.

### **5.5 Issues and Effects of Affirmative Action on Nepalese Bureaucracy**

Based on the above facts, there have been a few positive notes to the affirmative action policy in Nepal. This is evident from the high number of women (28.45 %) and minorities entering civil service, hence trying to break the male-dominated culture of the Nepalese bureaucracy. Such representation has not only given opportunities to the marginalized. Still, it has also empowered such people to become active, prominent agents of public service, hence elevating their self-esteem and giving them better status in society (Bhul, 2021). In addition, the civil service contains a broad spectrum of caste, tribe, and gender identities, which generate diverse perspectives and have been instrumental in enhancing service delivery concerning caste and gender discrimination through better policy formulation and problem-solving. Cultural competencies have also played a crucial role in this process, helping individuals from marginalized groups navigate complex societal

structures while contributing to the overall progress in addressing social disparities in civil service system (Bhul, 2023).

Despite few achievements, the National Inclusion Commission (2023) claimed that major positions in public service are held by those from a range of majority communities. The inaction has caused some of the reserved quota positions to remain vacant, and the quotas do not represent the groups in full. The Public Service Commission (2023) has been called for a review in its annual reports, but over the years, the government has failed to amend the Civil Services Act or bring in a new Federal Civil Service Act, hence sorting out deficiencies in the existing reservation system will continue to exist. Therefore, it has also been highly criticized that the reservation system in Nepal has failed to serve the interests of economically disadvantaged people and is being utilized as an opportunity by the rich and upper classes. The misallocations are caused by unreviewed quotas, and descendants of high-ranking officials and the rich continue to exploit this privilege at the cost of genuinely marginalized communities. The manipulation of disability and residency claims, fraudulent surname changes, and abuse of Non-Resident of remote area status for accessing reservations were pointed out by the Nepal Inclusion Commission (2023). Similarly, inconsistency in the criteria for defining disability allowed people with minor impairments to access quotas that were meant for the severely disabled. Findings like these underscore the terrible need for comprehensive reforms that rid the system of such discrepancies to serve the underprivileged, for which it was intended, and not be exploited by persons who do not fit the criteria. These findings bring out the imperative urgency for comprehensive reforms to the reservation policies to rectify these discrepancies and ensure that the system works effectively for the marginalized sections of society.

## **6. Summary and Conclusions**

Since the second amendment of the Civil Service Act in 2007, affirmative action has significantly increased the participation of underprivileged groups in Nepal's civil service. The policy was designed to address historical inequalities and promote social justice by ensuring that women, Dalits, Madhesis, Janajatis, differently-abled individuals, and people from remote areas are represented in civil service positions. This has led to a more diverse bureaucracy that better reflects the social and cultural makeup of the country. Such increased representation brings valuable contextual knowledge, experiences, and multicultural skills into the civil service, improving communication and understanding between civil servants and marginalized communities. The inclusive nature of the policy has strengthened the state-citizen relationship, fostering trust and cooperation between citizens and bureaucratic

organizations in Nepal. On the positive side, affirmative action has achieved notable milestones, including a 28.45% representation of women in the civil service and appointing Leeladevi Gattoula as the first female Chief Secretary. However, critics argue that the reservation system has been passive and insufficient in redressing systemic inequalities despite these advances. Moreover, while affirmative action has yielded some positive results, such as fostering cultural competencies through the increased representation of women, Dalits, and ethnic minorities, substantial inequalities persist, particularly regarding equal opportunities for empowerment and active participation in decision-making processes.

Furthermore, concerns have been raised about the misuse of quotas, where influential groups within marginalized communities disproportionately benefit, limiting the system's overall effectiveness. The economic implications of ineffective affirmative action are clear, highlighting the need for more transformative policies to address human development and productivity losses. Comprehensive reforms are necessary to ensure that affirmative action in Nepal's civil service fosters genuine inclusivity and leads to equitable representation across all sectors.

While affirmative action has brought positive changes, it has also faced criticism for undermining meritocracy. Critics argue that hiring underrepresented groups without adequately considering qualifications diminishes the merit-based appointment process and could lead to reverse discrimination. Despite these criticisms, affirmative action has injected much-needed diversity into the bureaucracy, which is expected to have contributed to improved problem-solving, policymaking, and service delivery. Symbolically, the inclusion of previously excluded groups, such as Dalits, Madhesis, and Tharus, has played a crucial role in advancing social and economic mobility. The reservation system, however, reflects the deep social cleavages in Nepal, with dominant groups fearing that the policy might deprive them of opportunities. For marginalized communities, the reservation policy is seen as a fundamental democratic right and a necessary compensation for historical injustices. Despite its good intentions, the current system faces misuse and inefficiencies, as evidenced by the ongoing debates. Lessons from countries like Bangladesh stress the importance of reforming the reservation system to better align with the needs of all segments of society. Effective affirmative action policies should prioritize proportional representation and inclusion, drawing on the strengths and weaknesses of the existing system. The Federal Civil Service Bill must incorporate provisions for equitable representation, ensuring that it reflects the diverse and evolving makeup of the country. To enhance affirmative action, the policy must also expand to include underrepresented groups such as sexual minorities, as seen in Koshi Province in 2023. Moving forward, Nepal must focus

on improving and refining affirmative action, rather than discarding it altogether, to build a civil service that is truly representative and inclusive. Through continuous reform, Nepal can create a more equitable and harmonious society that contributes to the nation’s overall growth and stability.

## **7. Policy Recommendation**

Drawing from these research findings and based on a wide array of studies and reviews regarding affirmative action and its execution in Nepal’s civil service, it’s imperative to remember the following policy recommendations. The most crucial of these would be the need for a thorough review and necessary readjustments of existing quotas to correct imbalances in representation, such as overrepresentations found in particular gender, ethnic clusters, and other groups in which representation is lacking. That would involve revising the criteria of reservations to account for the added complexity that intersectionality brings in, such as double or triple marginalization vis-à-vis Madheshi Dalits or disabled minorities from rural areas. Second, much more investment is needed in education and capacity-building programs so that the beneficiaries under affirmative action are built with capacity and thereby have improved merit-based evaluations within the quota system. The need for more transparency in the recruitment and promotion process will further reduce perceptions about reverse discrimination and compromised merit. Any perception that diversity is instrumentally good for organizational performance must be aired. Efforts at creating awareness and imparting education on affirmative action will go a long way in dispelling myths against it and thus help build up an appreciating and supportive environment. This will, therefore, require recurrent dialogue with various stakeholders, including the marginalized communities, so that affirmative action can be relevant to changing Nepal’s civil service into one imbued with sustained inclusiveness.

## **8. Applicable Course of Action**

Based on the above findings, here are the major eight recommendations:

<b>S.N.</b>	<b>Reform Activities</b>	<b>Responsible Agencies</b>	<b>Desired Results</b>	<b>M&amp;E Indicators</b>
1	Conduct a comprehensive review of existing quotas and representation criteria	Civil Service Commission, Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration	Equitable distribution of representation across diverse ethnic and marginalized groups	Report on revised quotas; Data on representation distribution

S.N.	Reform Activities	Responsible Agencies	Desired Results	M&E Indicators
2	Revise reservation criteria to address intersectionality, including multiple marginalization	Civil Service Commission, Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration	Improved support for individuals facing double or triple marginalization	New criteria documentation; Data on beneficiary demographics
3	Implement education and capacity-building programs for beneficiaries	Ministry of Education, Training Institutions	Enhanced skills and career advancement for individuals benefiting from affirmative action, fostering cultural competencies	Number of training programs conducted; Participant skill improvement assessments
4	Increase transparency in recruitment and promotion processes	Civil Service Commission, HR Departments	Reduced perceptions of reverse discrimination; Increased trust in the recruitment process	Transparency reports; Surveys on perception of fairness
5	Promote awareness and education about affirmative action policies	Ministry of Education, Media Agencies	Greater understanding and support for affirmative action policies among the public	Number of awareness campaigns; Public knowledge surveys
6	Engage stakeholders, including marginalized communities, in policy refinement	Civil Service Commission, Relevant NGOs, Community Organizations	Policy measures that are more responsive to the needs of marginalized communities	Stakeholder feedback reports; Adjustments to policies based on consultations
7	Strengthen monitoring and compliance mechanisms	Civil Service Commission, National Human Rights Commission	Enhanced adherence to reservation policies and reduction of quota misuse	Compliance audit reports; Tracking of corrective measures
8	Strengthen legal and policy frameworks to prevent quota misuse	Ministry of Law and Justice, Civil Service Commission	Prevention of quota misuse and increased accountability	Legal reforms documentation; Reports on quota misuse cases

It provides, in tabular form, a summary of key recommendations, responsible agencies, desired outcomes, and monitoring and evaluation indicators for improving affirmative action in Nepal’s civil service.

## Conflict of Interest Statement

The author has no conflict of interest to declare.

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