

CIVICS IN NEPAL



Grade 12 Textbook
Contemporary Society Course

CIVICS
in
NEPAL

Distributed
FREE OF CHARGE
to Students
And Teachers

Grade 12 Textbook
Contemporary Society Course

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INTRODUCTION

This book is designed in accordance with the Higher Secondary Education Board curriculum for the 12th grade course Contemporary Society. It includes the units required by the curriculum: An Introduction to Society, Challenges to the Nepali Society, Civic Education, Rights and Justice, Environment and Sustainable Development and Women in Society. Within the units are pictures, charts, questions, essays and numerous activities that will assist you in understanding the material as well as in evaluating and practicing the lessons. Within each unit you will find key words, which are important to the subject of the lesson and which will help you in understanding the information. Each unit begins with a brief introduction, a description of the purpose, an outline of the structure and key words. Each unit ends with activities and a conclusion, which summarizes the key points of the lesson. At the end of the book you will find a glossary of terms. The glossary provides you with definitions of some important words used in the text.

This book informs readers of many topics ranging from social change, human rights, women's empowerment and the environment, but its primary objective is to help readers develop the necessary knowledge and skills needed to be effective citizens in our democracy. By the time you finish this course you should be well informed about how our government works, the complexity of the challenges our government faces and how we, as citizens in a democracy, can become involved in the political process to make governing more effective.

As citizens, we retain the ultimate right to control how our government uses the authority we have delegated to it. We exert this control by exercising our right to vote, by participating in the political process, and by ensuring that our government leaders adhere to the limitations of the Constitution. Being a citizen includes responsibilities. We must NOT simply demand that our government respond to our needs, but rather work with our representatives to give them the information and incentive to respond to us effectively.

As we learn about democracy, let us remember that democracy is new to Nepal. Some countries have had democracy for hundreds of years and have had time to strengthen and improve it. Nepal's democracy is still in its infancy and needs time to develop. We must be PATIENT and REALISTIC about our expectations and the timeframe of change. We must also be PERSISTENT and DEDICATED to making positive changes within our government in an effort to strengthen its effectiveness.

AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIETY

UNIT 1

INTRODUCTION

Nepal is filled with many different types of people with unique lifestyles. Some of us live in cold climates in the mountains, others in hot climates in the Terai. Some of us work as farmers and others in offices. We speak dozens of languages and are from various ethnic backgrounds. Given that our country is so diverse, we need a government that respects the rights and needs of the many different people throughout the country, no matter their ethnicity, caste, gender, economic background, age or marital status. We need a government that allows everyone in the country to believe what they wish, practice any religion they want and express their own political opinions. We need a government that does not put the preferences of one group of people over another.

Democratic institutions can provide for this type of government. Democracy provides opportunities for the participation of citizens in the political process. Citizens of all backgrounds are encouraged to speak their minds and make demands on their government. Within a democracy, the citizens of the country are encouraged to help shape government policy.

PURPOSE OF UNIT

This unit reminds students that our Kingdom is extremely diverse, consisting of people from a broad range of ethnic groups with different lifestyles and facing unique challenges in their daily lives. **The main purpose of this unit, however, is to help students develop ideas about the purpose of government and the type of political system that can be most effective in representing the needs of our diverse citizenry.**

After studying this unit you should be able to:

- Describe how Nepal became so diverse;
- Explain how our country has changed over the years and how the various ethnic groups have helped shape Nepali society;
- Evaluate the responsibilities government fulfills and why government is needed;
- Identify key aspects of a democratic government that can benefit a country as diverse as Nepal; and
- Become familiar with the skills necessary to participate in democratic governance.

STRUCTURE OF UNIT

This unit is divided into the following sub-units:

- Meaning of Society
- Types of Society
 - Hunting and Gathering
 - Agricultural
 - Herding
 - Industrial and Information Societies
- Process of Social Change and Social Integration
- Elements of a Good Society
- Activities
- Conclusion

TERMS TO KNOW

Please pay attention to the key words listed below. Become familiar with their definitions and how they are used in the text. You will need to understand these terms to answer the questions at the end of the unit.

Nepali Society

Social Change

Social Integration

Government

Authoritarian Government

Democratic Government

MEANING OF SOCIETY

Our country is filled with many different types of people with unique lifestyles and different opinions about how our country should be run. Democratic government attempts to incorporate all our voices to allow all of us to have a say in our political process. The basis of democracy is difference, which is why democracy is so appropriate for our country. Before we discuss the characteristics of democracy, let's first examine the many differences between the people who live in Nepal.

Opposite are pictures of Nepalis from different parts of the country, with different jobs and unique traditional practices. Look at these pictures and see if you can identify which group of people each picture represents.



Some of us live in cold climates in the mountains, others in hot climates in the Terai. Some of us work as farmers and others in offices. We speak dozens of languages and are from various ethnic backgrounds. Although most of us practice Hinduism or Buddhism, we also practice Shamanism, Christianity, Islam and other religions. Some of us live in villages, others in the mountains, near rivers or in the cities. Many of us work inside our homes or on farms. We walk to work, take buses, ride our bicycles or drive cars. Some of us are rich and others are not, and some of us can read and write while others cannot.

Can you think of other ways in which we differ from each other? Come up with at least 8 examples and write these examples in your copy.

Although we are all different, we manage to live together and share our resources. On a daily basis we divide available food, land and water. We go to school together, share the same water pipes and travel on the same roads.

These interactions create trends in behavior, thought patterns and relationships that form our traditions and ways of life. Our different traditions, languages, religions and lifestyles make up what we call **Nepali society**.

Our society is complex and incorporates thousands of different traditions handed down by our ancestors during ancient periods when they settled in Nepal and began to live together and trade among themselves. Some examples of shared traditions are our habits of eating dal bhat or our ways of greeting each other.

The more information people from different parts of the country share, the more likely we are to adapt to each other's traditions and practices and the more likely we are to become increasingly similar.

Write down in your copy at least 8 examples of different types of traditions and behaviors that characterize Nepali society.

TYPES OF SOCIETY

The economic basis of any society is the system through which the members acquire needed basic resources. These resources include food and water. How we survive is defined as a subsistence system. All over Nepal, we obtain essential resources in different ways. Some of us herd animals, others of us farm and still others of us work in factories or sell different services to earn money to pay for food and other essentials.

Hunting and Gathering, Agricultural, Herding, Industrial and Information Societies

As you read the descriptions and stories below see if you can identify which type of subsistence system each scenario refers to. Your choices are: Information, Agricultural, Herding, Horticultural, Hunting and Gathering, Industrial and Artisan. Write your answers down in your copy.

Scenario 1

Ambika and Raghav live in the middle hills of Nepal and are Chepangs. They are married and have 3 children, Tachen, Shree and Mala. They live in the mountains with 10 other families. To get food for the family Ambika and Mala walk in the nearby forest looking for wild fruits, nuts, leaves and roots to pick. Occasionally, someone in their group hunts animals for food.

Scenario 2

Other families survive by breeding animals and selling their milk, cheese, meat and fur. On a seasonal basis, they move their animals to different places according to how much fodder is available.

Scenario 3

Krishna lives in western Nepal and farms his land using hand tools such as digging sticks and wooden hoes. He plants millet, rice and potatoes. He can't grow very much food because it takes a lot of work to farm with the tools he uses. Krishna produces just enough food to feed his family.

Scenario 4

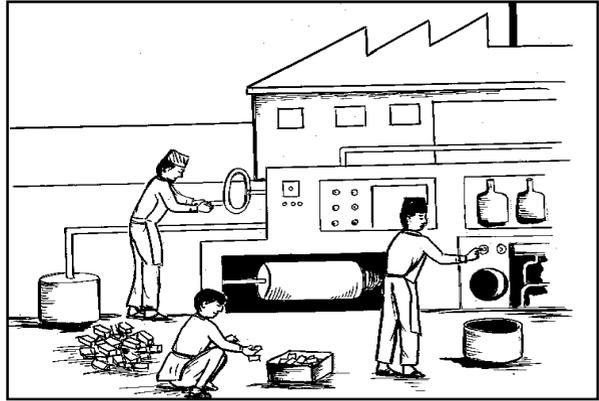
Harka and Uma farm their land in the Terai using ploughs, spades and other animal driven machinery. Harka and Uma can produce enough food for their family and extra to sell at the local market. Each year they sell so much food that they are able to build a big house and send their sons and daughters to private schools.

Scenario 5

In the market, weavers, cobblers and blacksmiths sell their products and services.

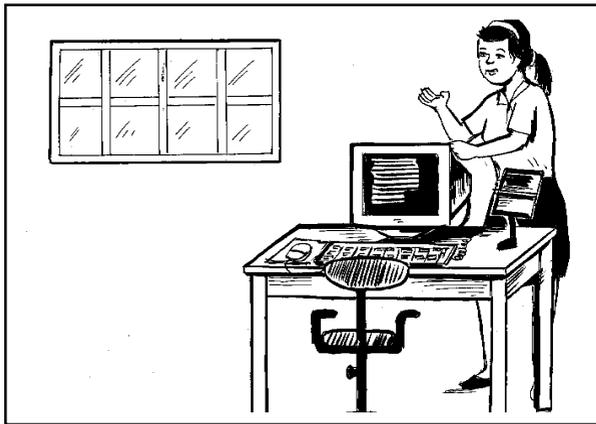
Scenario 6

Other Nepalis work in factories and run power-driven machinery. They work long hours in poor working conditions. The factories produce carpets, bottled drinking water, canned food products and furniture. The Nepalis working in the factories use their wages to buy food and other household items.



Scenario 7

Sushmita works at a computer company. She helps develop computer software that can be used by companies to manage their money. Sushmita writes messages to her friends using a computer. Once she types a message into the computer she can send this message all the way across the world within a matter of minutes.



Scenario 8

Sushmita's friends work at the phone company, radio and television stations as well as at the local newspaper. Her friends work in jobs that help people communicate faster. Joshee, the friend who works at the newspaper, writes articles about recent events in Nepal. The paper is distributed all over the country.

Within our national borders our means of acquiring food and other essential resources vary dramatically. They vary from herding animals to farming, to working as sales people to writing articles for national newspapers.

PROCESS OF SOCIAL CHANGE AND INTEGRATION

Society is always **changing**. Through time a society changes its attitudes, beliefs and perceptions of the world. Customs of societies alter as inventions are discovered and applied. Environmental changes lead to new practices and political conflicts result in a redistribution of governing power.

Often new groups of people with unique lifestyles and traditions join a society and share their beliefs and behaviors. The result is a mixing of cultures: some beliefs and traditions are absorbed and used, while others are abandoned. We call this process **social integration**.

Some say that social change and social integration advance a society: that people within the society become more skilled. As people share ideas and practices, they create new ways to more effectively manage their natural resources, feed themselves, educate their children and maintain their health to allow them to live longer and have happier lives.

Are we better off today than we were thousands of years ago?

The history of our country is very long and rich. As you read our country's history, summarized below, you will see how different ethnic groups mixed, governments formed, fell and then new governments formed again. People have always shared ideas about how to grow food from the land, how to clean water to make it safe to drink and how to make tools. Our ancestors shared religious ideas and ideas about how to care for our sick ones. They also shared ideas about different styles of government. Our ancestors did all this in an effort to develop the best way of dealing with the challenges of daily life.

Activity

As you read through the summary opposite see if you can identify where in our history our ancestors shared information and skills with each other. During each of these periods, which people or groups traded information, and what types of information was most likely shared or imposed?

1. Some believe that people may have begun living in Nepal as long as 10,000 years ago.
2. King Ashok introduced Buddhism into Nepal in the first century AD and it rapidly spread.
3. In the 4th century, the Hindu Licchavis came from North India and gained power. They established a flourishing dynasty, made relationships with surrounding nations and conducted a large amount of trade.
4. In the 12th century, Mallas from the west, came to power, and firmly established the caste system.
5. Meanwhile in the 16th century, the Moguls conquered North India and established a great empire where science, art and architecture prospered. These cultural influences, though not direct, would have reached Nepal, which at the time was divided into over 40 small kingdoms. The kingdoms continually fought amongst themselves over land issues.
6. Because people were able to grow crops they could become sedentary, enabling the people of Nepal to develop arts, crafts and architecture in their own style.
7. In the past, migration throughout Nepal was easy as there was enough land for newcomers to settle and setup farms. Many people established large tracts of land where they needed people to work for them. Landowners encouraged migrant workers to settle permanently on their land. People came from neighboring regions to settle near the landowners and work on their farms.
8. Because of so much migration, various ethnic groups living in Nepal intermingled to create new ethnic groups.
9. It was only in the 18th century that individuals from different ethnic groups created a more unified political state under the Shah dynasty.

10. In 1816, the Sugauli Treaty was signed with the British East India Company, which defined the boundaries of present day Nepal.
11. After the Kot massacre in 1846, Jang Bahadur Rana established hereditary rule over the Kingdom, which lasted until 1950.
12. In the later 1950s and early 1960s, Nepal again struggled to gain its own identity and the people established a democratic government. Unfortunately democracy only lasted a short time.
13. The Panchayat governmental system replaced the democratic institutions. Within the Panchayat system, small councils, consisting of government officials, made the major decisions for the country.
14. After the eradication of malaria, the geography of the Terai favored the development of an extensive system of roads. This system combined with its proximity to the Indian railroad and the plentiful supply of labor encouraged Nepali industry to develop in the Terai. Nepal's agricultural wealth as well as its industrial capacity are centered in the Terai. ¹

This brief summary of our country's history demonstrates that the Kingdom has changed dramatically since ancient times.

Here are some recent changes: in the past, it could take weeks to get from one part of the Kingdom to another, now we can travel by bus and arrive in a few days. We can fly by airplane to the other side of the country in an hour.

In the past, people needed to walk great distances to tell others that a fire had occurred in their village and that they needed food. Now, through the radio, news about what is happening in different parts of the country can reach the rest of the country within a few minutes. Newspapers can also quickly communicate information.

Through the development of roads, airplanes and communication systems like radio, newspapers and television, Nepalis from all over the country are increasingly sharing information and ideas with each other.

The more information people from different parts of the country share, the more likely we are to adapt to each other's traditions and practices and the more likely we are to become increasingly similar.

Social change and social integration forces our government to deal with different types of issues. For example, when there were many small kingdoms in Nepal, the leaders of each kingdom fought with each other over territories. Now that our country has a defined border, our government has other concerns. Our government must now work to develop the country economically, educate all citizens and manage national elections. It must also monitor population flows across borders and check what items are brought into and out of the country.

Can you think of other challenges that our government must face as a result of social change and social integration? Discuss this question with your class and write at least 5 examples in your copy.

Unlike in the past, our current government must establish systems that take into account all the country's traditions, religions and practices. Democracy is well suited to incorporate the various voices that make up our country, and democracy works best when all citizens participate in the governing process.

ELEMENTS OF A GOOD SOCIETY

A government can play an important role in creating a good society. In addition, an active and informed citizenry can play an important role in creating a good government. To decide on the type of governmental system that best fits the needs of our society, let's first examine the role a government should play within a country.

What is government and what does it do?

Government is the people and groups within a society with the authority to make, carry out and enforce laws and manage disputes among individuals.

We probably notice the existence of government in different parts of our daily lives. Some bodies of government include the Parliament, the Village Development Council and the Ward Committee. Other bodies of government include the police. We notice government when we pay taxes and when we go to school. Government helps support public schools and some private schools as well. Our government pays for much of the cost for our health clinics and our military. It also helps to protect us.

The government's primary responsibilities are to:

- ❑ Make laws. (Such as those that establish schools, provide for health services and require licenses for drivers.)
- ❑ Implement laws.
- ❑ Enforce laws. (Such as those that punish wrongdoers.)
- ❑ Make sure that disputes between people are settled peacefully.
- ❑ Provide for the defense of the nation.

To get a better idea of what the government is responsible for, let's examine how government works in our communities. In many ways, our local and national government serves many of the same purposes as our parents, principals and teachers.

Activity

Within the family, it is likely that parents or other adults in the household make rules that govern the behavior of children. Parents or other adults also are responsible for enforcing these rules and for settling disputes when conflicts arise over the rules.

1. Give 5 examples of the rules that your parents or other adults have made to govern you or your sisters' and brothers' behavior.
2. Explain how your parents or other adults enforce these rules.
3. What happens when you and your brother and/or sister fight? Do your parents or another family member help resolve the dispute?
4. What would happen if you did not have parents or another adult to look out for you? Do you think you would have grown up the way you have? If yes, why? If not, why not?

In schools, teachers and principals make, carry out and enforce rules and laws and manage disputes among students.

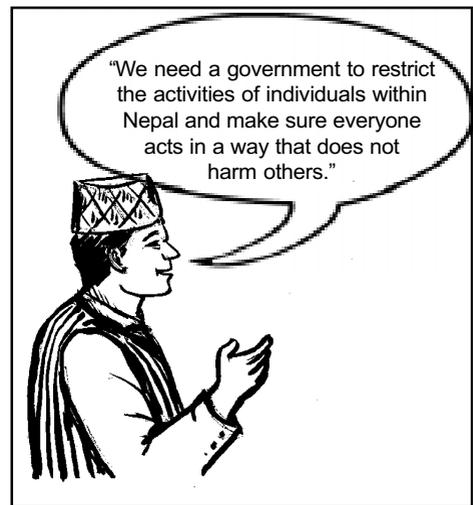
1. Give 5 examples of the rules that your teachers and principals make to control students' behavior.



2. Explain how your teachers and principals enforce these rules.
3. What happens if there is a fight on the school yard or within the classroom? Do the teachers and principals help to resolve the dispute?
4. What would happen if you did not have teachers or principals to look out for you while you were at school? Do you think students would sit in class for the whole day? Who would relay the lessons to the students? Give 5 examples of what would happen if teachers and principals were not around.
5. What purpose do you think the teachers and principals serve at school?

Can you think of any similarities between the roles your parents, teachers and principals play and that of our local and national government? Discuss with your classmates the answer to this question, and write in your copy at least 6 examples.

Many people have argued that life without government would be dangerous and miserable.





What would happen if we did not have a government? After discussing this question with your classmates write at least 6 examples in your copy.

If we agree that government is necessary, what kind of government do we want?

Given that our country is so diverse, with people who have different lifestyles, speak different languages and practice different religions, it seems reasonable to conclude that we need a government that respects all the people in the country; a government that does not put the preferences of one group of people above another. We could conclude that we need a government that treats everyone fairly and protects everyone equally; a government that allows everyone in the country to believe what they wish, practice any religion they want and express their own political opinions; a government that allows all the citizens, no matter their ethnicity, caste, gender, economic background, age or marital status, to organize and make demands on the political leaders. We need a government that allows everyone to participate in the political process.

Different types of governments exist all over the world. Some countries have authoritarian style governments, where power is concentrated with one person or a small group of people and the citizens in the country do not help shape government policy. Authoritarian leaders can act any way they please, often in a way that harms

the people. Other countries, like Nepal, have democratic governments. Democratic leaders are restricted in their behavior by the laws of the country. Forcing our leaders to abide by laws, helps to better ensure that the people of the country are protected and that the government acts for the welfare of all people and not just a limited few.

Read the following descriptions of authoritarian and democratic governments and then do the exercises below.

Authoritarian Governments

An authoritarian government means that the leaders, either alone or in small groups, are able to decide how they want to rule the country. If the leaders decide to arrest citizens who speak publicly against the government, then the leaders are free to do so.

Authoritarian governments often forbid citizens to organize into political, social or religious groups.

There are no established procedures that the government must follow, so leaders are free to make random choices. People are not sure what to expect from government policy because the policy is decided by the leaders and not formalized into law.

Leaders can decide to protect some individuals and oppress others, and authoritarian leaders cannot easily be removed from office through legal means.

What would it be like to live under an authoritarian government?

The following example is fictional.

- The dictator decides that the citizens of Pagar cannot leave the country.



- The dictator does not like the article written about him in the national newspaper so he closes down the paper.
- All the citizens of Pagar decide to protest in the central square against the government's policy to not allow for education in the country. All the protesters are arrested.
- Some citizens of Pagar decide not to practice the national religion but rather another religion. The citizens are arrested.
- Although the law of Pagar allows citizens to speak any language they want, the dictator decides that the people of the country should speak only Pagarese. They follow his orders.
- The dictator passes a decree that all people with orange hair are allowed to control the government's money. Those with blue hair must abide by the orders of those with orange hair.

Looking at the description of authoritarian style government described above, come up with at least 5 other examples of what life would be like for the citizens of Pagar under an authoritarian government. Write these in your copy.

Democratic Government

Democratic government means that the powers of government are limited to ensure that people in positions of authority fulfill the responsibilities they have been assigned, work for the good of the people and do not misuse or abuse the power they have been given.

Everyone in the country, including all the people in positions of authority, must obey the laws. This even includes government officials.

The laws are designed to protect the rights of the people and to ensure that the government acts to promote the welfare of all people in the country, no matter their gender, caste, ethnicity, age, economic class or marital status.

Democratic laws include laws designed to:

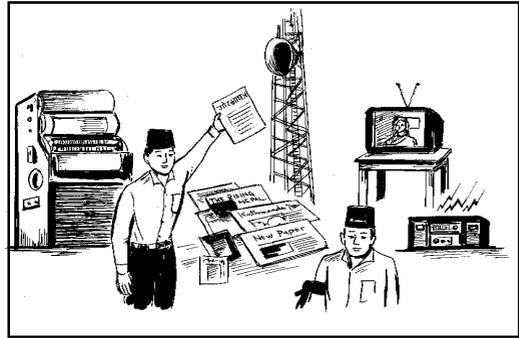
- ❑ Prohibit the government from jailing individuals for publicly criticizing the government;
- ❑ Protect citizens from murder or crime;
- ❑ Prohibit the government from oppressing people because of their religious or political beliefs;
- ❑ Ensure free and fair elections;
- ❑ Limit corruption within the government to make sure that government money is spent on the welfare of the country rather than for the leaders' personal well-being;
- ❑ Allow for citizens to organize and put pressure on the government to adhere to citizens' demands;
- ❑ Encourage citizens to get involved in the political decision making processes of government officials;
- ❑ Ensure that no single person or small group of people have too much authority over how the country is run. Instead democratic laws divide power among different parts of the government structure; and
- ❑ Ensure freedom of speech for all people.

Within a democracy, people are encouraged to participate in their government. We are encouraged to help design government policy by:

1. Praising government officials when they do good work;

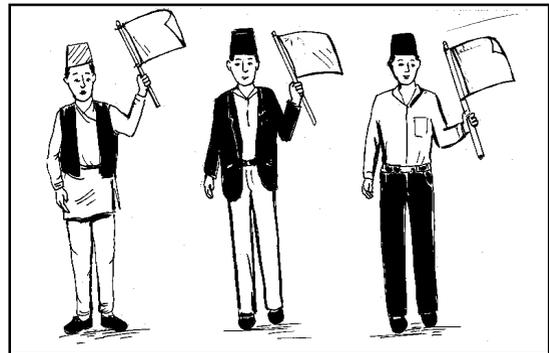


2. Criticizing our officials or calling for reform in newspapers or through the radio or television;



3. Forming a youth group;

4. Joining civic groups or political organizations;



5. Conducting or attending training courses on how to solve societal problems;

6. Marching in peaceful demonstrations;



7. Working with government officials to solve social problems;



8. Participating in boycotts;



9. Signing petitions; and

10. Voting for candidates who will address the issues with which we are concerned.



Democratic government is important for the protection of individual rights.

A democratic society allows us to:

- Express our opinions
- Enjoy the privacy of our home
- Practice the religion we choose
- Express our own opinions
- Vote
- Meet or associate with whomever we choose
- Ask our government to change laws we think are unfair
- Choose the kind of work we please
- Own our own property

Activity

Your teacher will divide the class into groups. Each group should make up a drama about what life would be like under an authoritarian government or what life would be like under a democratic government. Everyone in each group should be assigned a part. Perform the dramas in front of the class. After each drama, your teacher will ask the class to identify which aspects of each story made it obvious that the story took place under a democratic or an authoritarian government.

In 1990, through demonstrations and protests, Nepalis encouraged the King to reestablish democracy in Nepal. They succeeded and our new government structure is designed to adhere to democratic principles and traditions. However, democracy alone cannot improve our lives. We need an effective democracy to really make a difference in our country.

For democracy to be effective, we, as citizens, must fulfill our responsibilities to participate in government and help shape government policy.

Strengthening our democracy takes time and we need to be patient and not expect too much right away. Other countries have had democracy for hundreds of years. Nepal has only had democracy for a short time and more time is needed for our new democracy to be effective in solving our social problems. We need patience and we need to work with our officials to strengthen our government processes.

If we want our government to be effective then we need to get involved in the political process.

Answer the questions below in your copy.

1. What are the primary responsibilities of government?
2. How is the government's role similar to the role that our teachers, principals and parents play?
3. List 3 examples of what life would be like without a government.
4. What are the primary characteristics of authoritarian government?
5. What are the primary characteristics of democratic government?
6. List 3 examples of democratic style laws.
7. List 3 examples of what citizens within a democracy are encouraged to do to participate in government.
8. List 4 examples of the rights democratic governments try to ensure.

ACTIVITIES

For individual and group work:

1. Your identity is who you think you are and where you belong in the world. Take a clean page of your copy and draw yourself in the middle.

Now think of all the groups that you belong to. Include all levels of groups such as your family, friends, school, town, caste, ethnicity, country, etc. Draw circles near to yourself, or further away, to show the relationship. Label each circle. Think of as many groups as possible. Take ideas from the text and also from your partner.

When you've finished, exchange drawings with your friend and read and discuss each other's, noticing and questioning similarities and differences.

2. Demonstrate some of the hand movements made by Nepali people when talking. Are these used and understood a) by most Nepalis, no matter their background? b) by tourists? What does this tell you about Nepali society? How does our society compare with others? Give at least one example. Describe what is different about the various societies?

3. Do a class or school survey to learn more about the differences between you and your classmates and/or schoolmates. You can measure one or more of the following:
 - a) Mother tongue
 - b) Ethnic group
 - c) Favorite music
 - d) Father's occupation
 - e) Favorite radio or TV program
 - f) Ambition for the future

Are your classmates different from you? If so, how? Are the differences good or bad or not either?

4. After dividing the class into groups, each group should choose one aspect of democracy listed above. Design with your group a poster that explains this aspect to a village audience. The class as a whole should make posters for all the different aspects of democracy.

Medium Answer Questions:

Whenever appropriate, write 2 short paragraphs to respond to the following statements or questions.

1. What is a society?
2. Name some of the religions practiced in Nepal. What makes each religion different? Why are they different?
3. Describe social change and social integration. How can these concepts help us understand Nepali society?
4. Very early societies were hunters and gatherers. Describe briefly how they lived.
5. In what ways are the lifestyles of herding and agricultural societies different from those of hunters and gatherers?
6. Give examples of herding and agricultural societies from Nepal or worldwide.
7. Developed countries all have an industrial aspect to their society. Explain.
8. Describe different modern ways of communicating. How do people in different parts of our country acquire information?

9. The Ranas are sometimes described as prime ministers. In what ways were they different from our present post of prime minister?
10. What are 3 important jobs of a democratic government?
11. How does a democratic government do these 3 jobs?
12. In a democracy, in which ways do the people govern the country and in which ways do elected and un-elected representatives govern?
13. Describe the government of your school. Is it authoritarian or democratic, or a combination? Give reasons for your answer.
14. Choose 5 contrasting Asian countries and say very briefly what sort of government they have. As best you can, explain the difference between the different types of governments.
15. What things happen in Nepal that are undemocratic? What makes them undemocratic?
16. What things happen in Nepal that are democratic? What makes them democratic?

Long Answer Question:

Write 1 page essays to support the following statements.

1. There is no single Nepali society, it is a mixture of different kinds of people and traditions and is always changing.
2. An authoritarian style government limits people's freedoms.
3. A democracy tries to give everyone equality.
4. An election is an opportunity to help determine how our country is governed.

CONCLUSION

In this unit you have learned that:

- ❑ Our country is filled with individuals from different ethnicities, who speak different languages and have unique traditions and lifestyles.
- ❑ Nepali society incorporates thousands of different traditions handed down from our ancestors during ancient periods when they settled in Nepal and began to live together and trade among themselves.
- ❑ Social change and social integration allowed for our society to become more complex and the people more skilled.
- ❑ As people share ideas and practices, they gain insight into better ways to more effectively manage their natural resources, feed themselves, educate their children and maintain their health.
- ❑ Through the development of roads, airplanes and communication systems like the radio, newspapers and television, Nepalis from all over the country are increasingly sharing information and ideas with each other.
- ❑ Due to social change and social integration, our government must address different problems today than it did in the past.
- ❑ The government's primary responsibilities are to:
 - Make laws
 - Implement laws
 - Enforce laws
 - Make sure that disputes between people are settled peacefully
 - Provide for the defense of the nation
- ❑ The responsibilities our government has are similar to those of our parents, teachers and principals.

- ❑ Authoritarian government is where power is concentrated with one person or a small group of people and individuals within the country do not help shape government policies. Authoritarian leaders can act any way they please, often in a way that harms the people.
- ❑ Other countries, like Nepal, have democratic governments. Democratic leaders are restricted in their behaviors by the laws of the country in an effort to better ensure that the people are protected and that the government acts for the welfare of all people and not just a few.
- ❑ Within a democracy, people are encouraged to participate in their government. We are encouraged to help design government policy by:
 1. Praising government officials when they do good work;
 2. Criticizing the government or calling for reform in newspapers or through the radio or television;
 3. Forming a youth group;
 4. Joining civic groups or political organizations;
 5. Conducting or attending training courses on how to solve societal problems;
 6. Marching in peaceful demonstrations;
 7. Working with government officials to solve social problems;
 8. Participating in boycotts;
 9. Signing petitions; and
 10. Voting for candidates who will address the issues with which we are concerned.
- ❑ Democratic government is important for the protection of individual rights.
- ❑ To have an effective democracy, people must participate in the political process.
- ❑ Strengthening our democracy takes time and we need be patient.

CHALLENGES TO NEPALI SOCIETY

UNIT 2

INTRODUCTION

The problems facing Nepal are similar to those facing many other countries around the world. Issues such as poverty, unemployment, a history of authoritarianism, violence, crime, drug peddling, girl trafficking and environmental pollution are common in many developing countries. For instance, severe poverty can be seen in many parts of Asia as well as all over Africa, and even in developed countries like the United States. Violence is endemic in many countries in Latin America such as Columbia, Guatemala and Brazil. Girl trafficking is becoming a growing problem in Eastern Europe as the industry is becoming more and more profitable and former communist countries struggle to improve their economies and strengthen their policing efforts.

Just as these social ills are common in many countries, the causes of such problems are common as well. Often a lack of economic opportunities leads citizens towards violence, drug peddling and girl trafficking. Other causes relate to the tendency for people to satisfy their immediate needs rather than consider the long-term consequences of their actions. A lack of resources, government efficiency and education among the populace also contribute to social problems.

Solving these problems is not easy to do. Determining solutions is challenging, and once decided upon, the solutions are often even more difficult to implement. In many cases, individuals are so concerned about how to find food to eat and clean water to drink that they do not have time or energy to spend working to improve their government. In other cases, people expect the government to improve their lives, and think that they are helpless in changing their environment. This feeling that people are victims of their surroundings rather than active members in their communities perpetuates social ills and makes problem solving difficult.

PURPOSE OF UNIT

This unit describes some of the various challenges the Nepali government and we, the Nepali people, face in our efforts to improve the quality of life for citizens. **The main focus of this unit is not to describe the problems but rather to focus on how citizens of Nepal, including us, can become active participants in our communities and government and play key roles in solving some of our social ills.** As mentioned in the last unit, democracy alone cannot bring development to Nepal. However, democratic government offers a variety of opportunities that other types of government do not offer. For instance, democracy allows citizens to speak their minds, make demands on their officials and monitor government actions.

After studying this unit you should be able to:

- Identify some of the social challenges facing Nepali society.
- Determine ways in which we as citizens can effectively respond to these challenges and improve our lives and the lives of others in our communities.

STRUCTURE OF UNIT

The unit is divided into the following sub-units:

- Poverty, Underdevelopment and Unemployment
- Authoritarianism
- Violence
- Crime
- Drug Peddling
- Girl Trafficking
- Environmental Pollution
- Solutions to These Challenges
- Activities
- Conclusion

TERMS TO KNOW

Please pay attention to the key words listed below. Become familiar with their definitions and how they are used in the text. You will need to understand these terms to answer the questions at the end of this unit.

Poverty

Underdevelopment

Unemployment

Malnutrition

Authoritarianism

Crime

Drug Peddling

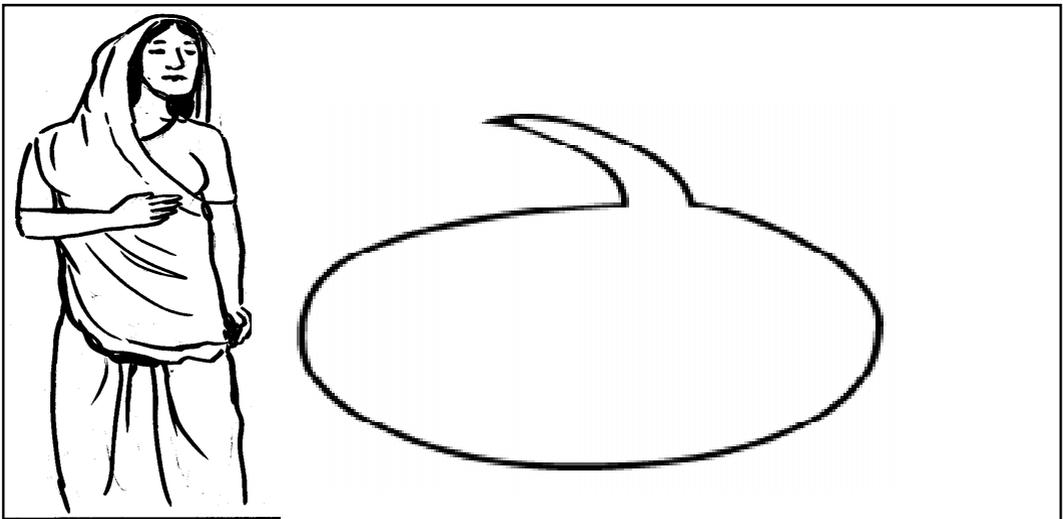
HIV/AIDS

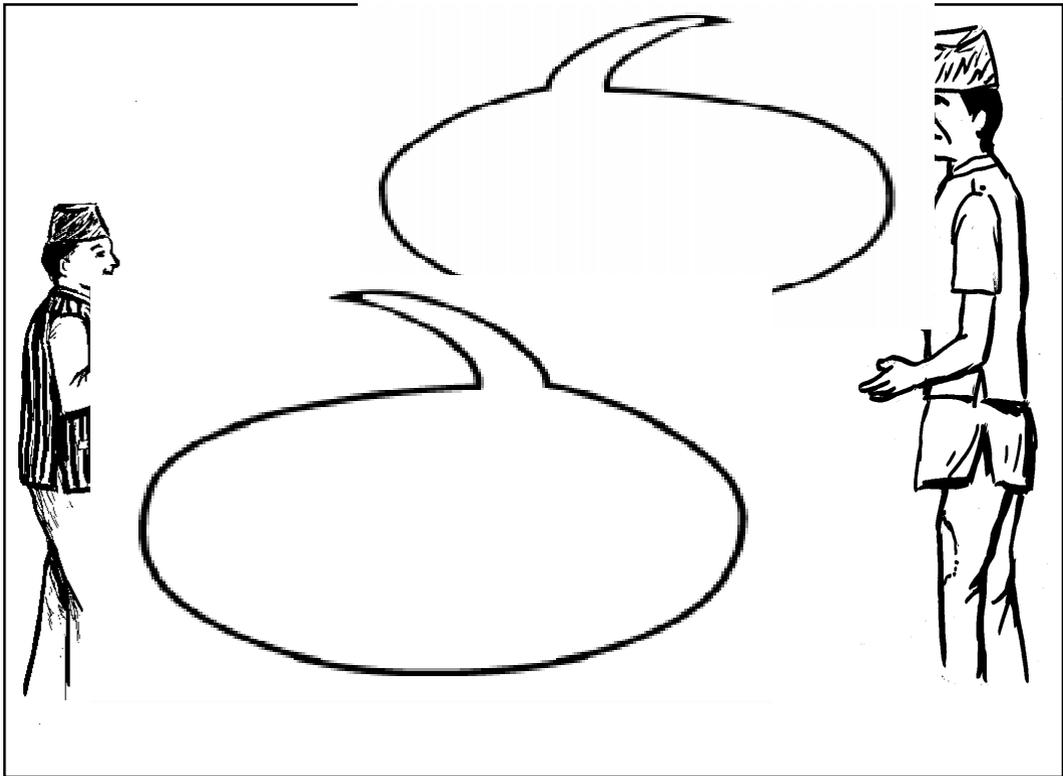
Prostitution

POVERTY, UNDERDEVELOPMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

As in many other developing countries, Nepal has a high poverty rate. Large numbers of Nepalis lack adequate health and sanitation facilities and are malnourished and illiterate. Many people either have jobs that do not pay enough to survive or are unemployed. Death rates are high among children and people often cannot find adequate housing. The country as a whole is struggling to develop economically. This means that the country needs appropriate and sustainable productive activities or more industry to provide jobs for the people.

To better understand how poverty affects people, it is helpful to hear the voices of some people in Nepal who experience poverty. Below are quotes from different people who describe how poverty affects them personally.





Lack of economic opportunities sometimes leads parents to send their children to work and not to school. The parents need money and in some cases feel they have no other choice but to have their children work and help support the family. When children work rather than go to school they often miss out on the opportunity to learn how to read and write.

In some cases, people work but don't make money. Kamaiyas are bonded laborers. They work on farms and in households in Nepal but do not receive a salary. Kamaiyas are sometimes afraid to leave their work for fear their landlord will be angry with them and hurt them physically. Other Kamaiyas have nowhere else to go and so they stay with their landlord. In the year 2000 (2058 B.S.), His Majesty's Government of Nepal abolished the bonded labor system and freed Kamaiyas from bondage to their landlords. The government is now attempting to help some Kamaiyas find shelter and work.

Read the news article below and answer the following questions.

Proceed Work to Rehabilitate Kamaiyas: Ojha

The Rising Nepal, Tuesday, November 14, 2000

Dhangadhi, Nov. 13 (RSS), Minister for Land Reforms and Management Sidha Raj Ojha has instructed the Freed Kamaiya Identification and Rehabilitation Monitoring and Coordination Committee, Kailali in the district to proceed with the rehabilitation work by leaving no room for complaints and disputes. The minister was speaking at a meeting of the committee here on Nov. 12. The meeting chaired by chairman of the committee and Kailali DDC Narayan Datta Mishra reviewed the progress made so far in the rehabilitation of the freed Kamaiyas and discussed future actions. In course of rehabilitating the former Kamaiyas, the committee has already distributed identification cards to 257- freed Kamaiyas at Dhangadi town area, Malakheti, Geta and Beladevipur Chaumala VDCs. Distribution of such identification cards to other freed Kamaiyas in other areas is under way, according to member secretary of the committee and head of the Kailali land reforms office Maheshwor Neupane. Likewise, the committee has identified 17 bighas of land at Malakheti and 26 bighas at Shripur VDC for distribution to the former Kamaiyas. The committee is continuing to explore such land in other areas as well. The freed Kamaiyas are taking shelter in 17 make shift camps at Pathariya, Baliya, Dododhara, Masuriya, Chaumala, Pratappur, Malakheti, Geta, Dhangadhi and Urma. According to the committee, 2,688 of the freed Kamaiyas in the district are landless, while 108 others are living on unregistered land and 533 families have their own land.

At the time this article was written:

1. What government committee was working to rehabilitate the Kamaiyas?
2. Did any of the Kamaiyas have land? If so, how many?
3. Had the government found additional land to give to the Kamaiyas?
4. What types of help was the government trying to provide for the Kamaiyas?
5. Do you think this help was sufficient? If not, what else do you think needed to be done?

Many government initiatives as well as non-governmental organizations have helped to minimize poverty in Nepal and have made a huge difference in improving the quality of life for many people. More people have found jobs, literacy rates have increased and health care and nutrition have improved greatly. A person born in Nepal can now expect to live almost twice as long as someone born 50 years ago.

The charts below describe the indicators that demonstrate that Nepal has made dramatic improvements in the areas of economic production, jobs, education, health and nutritional care.

Look carefully at the statistics in the charts below related to changes in employment, education, health and nutrition in Nepal and answer the questions that follow.

(Note: Gross National Product per capita (GNP p.c.) is the average yearly earning of everybody in the country. It is a common way to measure all the money generated by a country.)

Nepal						
Year	Population (millions)	Life expectancy (years)	Infant mortality (per 1000 births)	Adult Literacy rate	Children in Primary School (thousands)	GNP p.c. US\$
1971	12	37	172	13%	450	
1981	14.5	50	117		1070	30
1991	18	54	108		2790	105
1996	21	57	98		3200	190
1998	22	58	72	38%	3590	210

Sources: Various United Nations' Publications.

1. How much did the population increase between 1971-1981 (10 years), 1981 - 1991 (10 years) and between 1991 - 1998 (7 years)? Write a sentence summarizing what this shows about population increase. (Do not use numbers in your summary.)
2. What is the connection between infant mortality and life expectancy? What do both sets of figures show happened between 1971 and 1998? How can you explain these big changes?
3. How many more children were in school in 1998 than in 1971? What other factors makes this achievement slightly less than it appears? What problems has this increase caused?
4. What is meant by a 38% literacy rate? Calculate the number of literate people over 6 in 1971 and again for 1998.
5. It is difficult to compare per capita GNP's as the buying value has changed so much. Given that GNP values for Norway = \$34,000 (US), Thailand = \$2,100 (US) and Ethiopia = \$100 (US), what can you say about Nepal's economy?

Although Nepal is developing as a country, we still have a lot more to accomplish to improve the quality of lives for our citizens. Compared with other countries around the world, Nepal is **underdeveloped**. There are many ways to define underdevelopment. Simply it means that in comparison to Nepal, other countries have stronger economies, higher industrial output, larger amounts of trade and a better quality of life for their citizens. Although much improvement has been made in Nepal since 1960, still much more needs

to be done. Not just by government, but we, as citizens of Nepal, need to work to improve our lives and those of our neighbors. There are many ways in which we can take an active role in our communities and villages to help improve the quality of life in our country.

AUTHORITARIANISM

Although there may be more than one way to define authoritarianism, for our purposes we will use the following definition. **Authoritarianism** is the tendency for individuals in positions of power to govern, make decisions and policies, without consulting the recipients of those decisions or policies.

For instance, dictators rule countries where the citizens of the country have no say in policy decisions. Dictators tend to govern by imposing laws on the people rather than including the people in the making of the laws.

A single person or small groups of people make decisions about government for the whole country and all its citizens. When making policies they do not ask for advice or input from the people, they determine alone what is needed for the country. As a result, the policies that they impose on the people are not as beneficial for the country as they could be.



For democracy to be an effective form of government in Nepal, citizens must participate in their political process. They must help to inform their political officials about the problems in their villages, monitor their officials' actions and demand that government representatives act in the best interest of the majority of citizens. Democracy is very new in Nepal, and it takes time for people to realize that they too are not only allowed to have a say in what happens in their communities, but also encouraged to do so.

Because democracy is so new, and people have not yet begun participating in their government, a culture of authoritarianism often persists throughout many aspects of society.

You may find that some people in positions of authority abuse their power. They take advantage of their role in government, the police force, the school or the family and act in ways that do not consider the needs or rights of others. As we examine authoritarianism, it is important for us to remember that there is a difference between exercising your legitimate right to determine others' actions and abusing that right. You may have been in situations where someone used their authority to force you to do something against your will. Sometimes that person may have had the right to do so; other times he or she may not have had the right.

As you read the following passages keep in mind that authoritarianism is not just found in government but can sometimes also be found at work, in your community organizations, schools and families.

Read the sentences below to try and determine by yourself or with your classmates who is using their position of power appropriately and who is not.

1. Police officers in Nepal can be seen rescuing girls who have been kidnapped from their homes to be sold into prostitution.



2. Police officers in Nepal can sometimes be seen demanding money from community members or threatening to hurt people who live in the villages.
3. Teachers can be seen in Nepal spending time on their lessons and helping students to learn math, science and social studies.

4. Teachers can be seen in Nepal preaching his or her personal political beliefs to a classroom full of students who have no choice but to listen.
5. Government workers in Nepal can be seen asking for bribes before performing a task that is the citizen's right to receive.
6. Government workers can be seen in Nepal spending extra time on their tasks to make sure that a citizen receives a fair and satisfactory service.
7. A factory manager can be seen in Nepal demanding that the company employee work in the manager's home without pay.

8. A factory manager can be seen in Nepal paying all the staff on time and using the company's resources and money only for company purposes.



After completing the exercise above:

1. Write down on a piece of paper 5 ways in which you have seen people use their position of power fairly.

2. Now write down 5 ways in which you have personally experienced someone using their position of power unfairly.

If you find that someone is abusing his or her right to control your behavior, there are opportunities available to you within your governing system to protest this behavior. Some examples include:

- Writing a letter to the media or to a public official informing them about your experience
- Telling the police
- Joining a protest group or political organization
- Participating peacefully in demonstrations

- ❑ Participating in boycotts
- ❑ Signing petitions
- ❑ Voting for candidates who will address the issues with which you are concerned

These types of activities can be used to protest many social problems including the other problems that will be discussed in this unit such as violence, crime, drug peddling, girl trafficking and environmental pollution.

VIOLENCE

Violence can be defined in multiple ways. For our purposes, we define it as the use of physical force to injure somebody or damage something. Violence is common in many countries all over the world. In Nepal, the most common types of violence are:

- ❑ Political violence
- ❑ Violence against women and children
- ❑ Violent fights within families or between friends or strangers.
- ❑ Violence against the government
- ❑ Violence by the government administration towards the people

Political violence may occur between members of different political parties who differ over ideology, who was rightly elected to a constituency or which party can seek support in a village. Violence against women may occur because new husbands are angry that their dowries are too small, and against children because parent become impatient with them. At times, citizens in Nepal feel that the government and its officials act unfairly and do not serve the people's interests. Instead of protesting peacefully, they become violent against government members and may kill elected officials or the police. Sometimes violence occurs during *bandhs* when buses are burned or people throw stones. Police brutality is another form of violence, where police harass innocent people or where people are killed in police custody.

The widespread availability of cheap country liquor makes it accessible for people from all economic classes to drink regularly. The fact that alcohol is addictive increases people's desire to drink. Sometimes alcoholism can cause people to commit violence. Sometimes the violence is directed towards their own family members.



Read the story below and answer the questions that follow. You can break up into groups to answer the questions.

Sita had been married for five years. At the beginning of her marriage, she was happy with her husband. But as years passed her husband began drinking heavily. Every night he drank and their marriage changed. Because he drank so much, he lost his job and could not find another one. He became less accepting of problems in the home. He objected that the food wasn't ready on time or that the house was dirty. He stopped wanting Sita to go out of the house or visit friends. He then began to direct his frustration towards Sita through harming her physically. Sita became a victim of domestic violence.



- 1 How common are incidents such as these?
- 2 What do you think is the cause of Sita's husband's frustration? Why did he become violent?
- 3 Do you think Sita's husband is treating her fairly?
- 4 What should Sita do? Should she stay with her husband or should she leave?
- 5 Has something like this happened to someone you know? If so, have you or someone else you know done anything to help?
- 6 If you think Sita is being treated unfairly, what can be done to prevent other such incidents?

Women or children or anyone else who is a victim of violence can report the incident to the police. They can also seek out a nongovernmental organization working to stop violence and ask for assistance. Physical abuse against anyone, including women and children, is illegal in Nepal and punishable by arrest and imprisonment.

CRIME

Crime can be defined in many ways, for our purposes we define it as an act punishable by law. It can take many forms, such as organized crime like girl trafficking, dacoity, gold smuggling and terrorism; and smaller-scale crime, like stealing, prostitution, bribery, murder, pick pocketing and rape. As is generally the case in countries around the world, there are higher crime rates in cities in Nepal than there are in rural areas. Although certain types of crime, such as the violence described in the previous section, is just as common in villages as it is in cities.

Crime is a problem that many countries face. Many governments are challenged with deciding what types of policies to implement to prevent crime. Sometimes governments approach crime by imposing strict laws and strong punishments against wrongdoers. Other governments address crime as a social problem. They try to address the causes of crime, such as low education levels, poor family structures, poverty and low moral values. Sometimes governments use a combination of both strategies, they implement strict laws and harsh punishments and conduct a variety of social programs targeted at the populations who commit most of the crimes. Before any government can make a good decision on what types of policies and social programs to implement, officials must understand the reasons for crime.

Can you help your government come up with a general strategy for decreasing crime in Nepal?

Listed opposite are three columns. The first column lists different types of crimes, the second describes various causes of crime and the third describes some prevention methods. The prevention methods listed are methods that various governments around the world have taken in an attempt to limit crime. None of these lists are complete and there are a number of other types of crimes, causes and prevention methods that are not written here.

Draw lines between the words in the three columns that best go together. (Hint, there may be multiple causes and prevention methods for each crime and so you will need to draw many lines that connect with each word.) As you do the exercise below, talk with your classmates about what causes crime and what are good ways to prevent it.

Crime	Causes	Prevention
Bribery	Lack of Ethical Standards	Increasing police patrols in areas where crimes occur
Blackmail	Despair	Strengthening anti-crime laws
Dacoity	Lack of Money	Imposing harsh punishments on people who commit crimes
Robbery	Desire for Revenge	Conducting a public awareness campaign about how to protect yourself from crime
Smuggling	Greed	Increasing the level of education in communities with high numbers of individuals who commit crimes
Murder	Anger	Conducting social programs to promote better family structures
Kidnapping	Drug Addiction/Alcoholism	Conducting public awareness campaigns about the effects of alcoholism and drug peddling
Rape	Lack of Education	Conducting rehabilitation programs for individuals convicted of a crime
	Poor Upbringing	
	Untreated Mental Illness	

Break up into groups and discuss with your classmates the following questions:

1. Can you think of other causes for crime that are not listed above?
2. Can you think of other prevention methods?
3. What types of policies would you recommend your government take to limit crime in Nepal?
4. Would you focus on policies that restrict and punish wrongdoers? Would you focus on social programs? Would you try and implement both types of strategies?

An act that is punishable by law can be debatable. Sometimes people believe that things that are considered crimes by the government SHOULD NOT be punishable by law. For instance, in an effort to keep Singapore clean, Singapore's government has made chewing

gum illegal. If the police catch a citizen chewing gum that person will be fined (he or she will need to pay money to the government as a punishment.) Some people think that the citizens of Singapore should be allowed to chew gum, others do not. *What do you think?*

Sometimes we believe that acts not considered to be crimes in our country SHOULD indeed BE punishable by law. For instance, in other countries, littering (throwing rubbish and other items on the streets and not in a specified rubbish area) is illegal. If caught by the police, that person will have to pay a fine as a penalty. Some people believe that littering in Nepal should be considered illegal and others do not. *What do you think?*

Discuss with your classmates the following questions.

1. Are there crimes that you can think of that ARE now punishable by law in Nepal, but you DO NOT believe should be?
2. Are there crimes that you can think of that are now NOT punishable by law in Nepal, but you believe should be?

DRUG PEDDLING

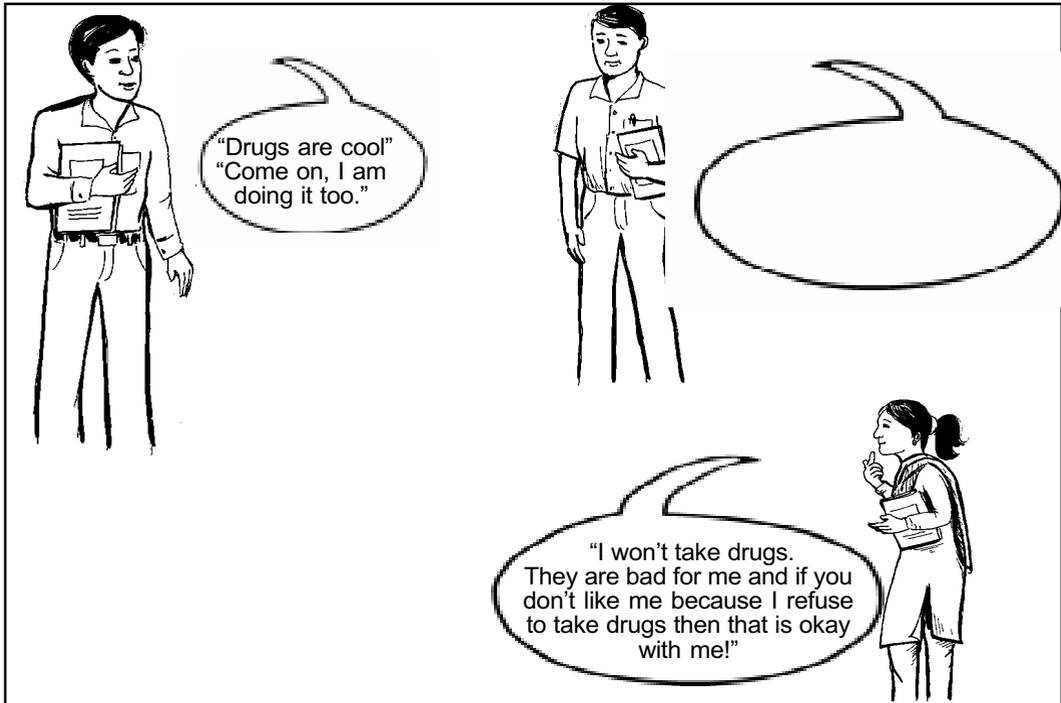
There is a difference between a drug and a medicine. Medicines are meant to help you and can help cure many illnesses. Drugs, in contrast, can be addictive and harmful to you and those around you. You can tell if you are taking a drug because it affects your mind and emotions and also damages your body. Because drugs can be so addictive, once people start taking them it is difficult to stop.

Some examples of drugs that can be harmful include:

- Ganja/Cannabis
- Heroin
- Smack
- Cocaine
- Alcohol
- Glue Solvents
- Opium



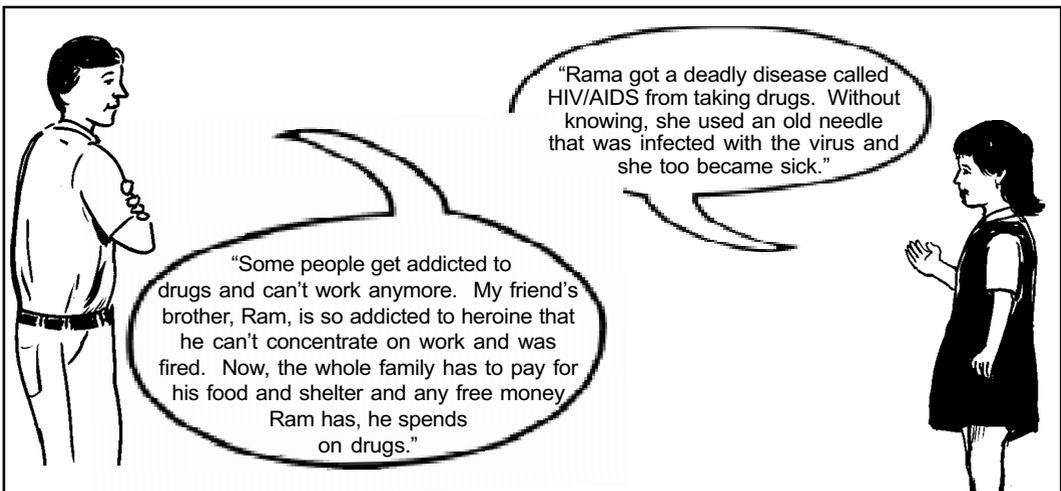
Can you identify the names of the different drugs in the pictures?

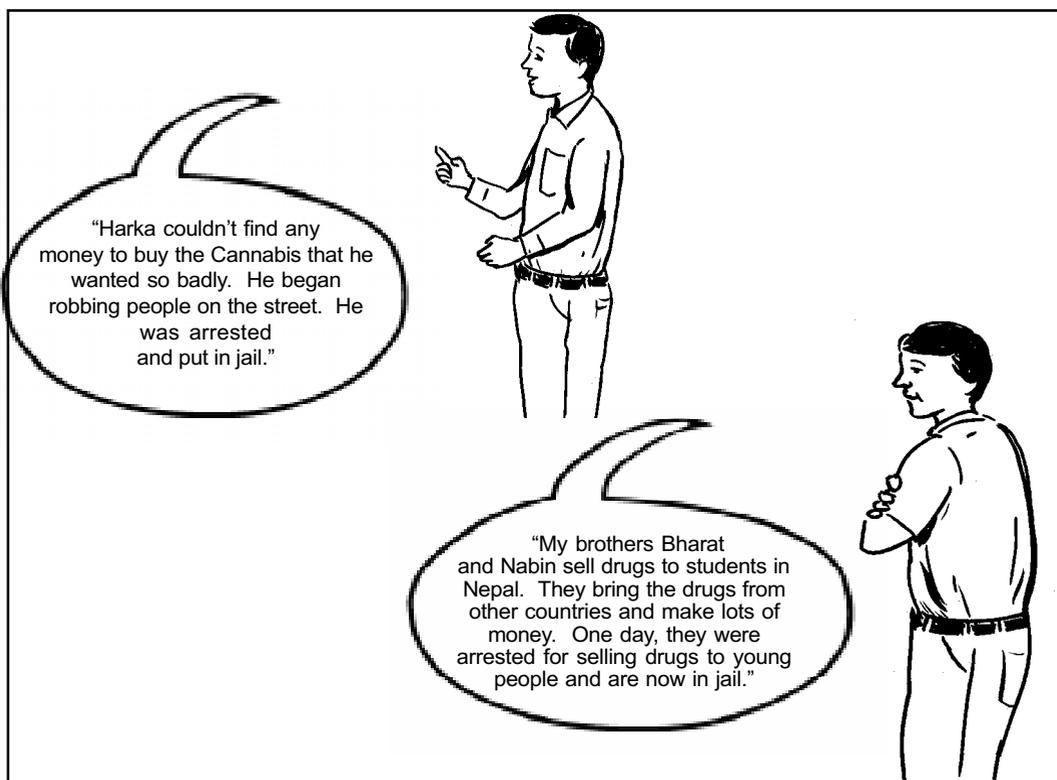


Sometimes people begin taking drugs because they feel depressed and want something to make them feel better. Other times people take drugs because they feel pressure from their friends. Being young can mean experimenting with a lot of things, but young people all over the world are rejecting drugs, knowing that drugs are bad for them.

Reasons not to take drugs

Last August, a group of students gathered together in the courtyard in a plus 2 school in Sunshine District. Dipendra sat with the students and asked them: “What happens to people when they take drugs?” The students responded by saying the following:





Most drugs, excluding alcohol, are illegal in Nepal. That means that if you sell them or are caught taking them, you can be arrested. Despite the fact that they are illegal, many people sell drugs to make money. This is called **drug peddling**. Sometimes they grow or make the drugs in Nepal and other times they bring them into the country from outside.

Discuss the following questions with your classmates and write in your copy the answers to the questions:

1. Can you list some types of medicines?
2. What is the difference between drugs and medicines?
3. Why do people take drugs?
4. Can you avoid taking drugs?
5. What often happens to people when they become addicted to drugs?
6. Are drugs legal?
7. Why does drug peddling occur?
8. Can you list 3 ways to decrease drug peddling?

GIRL TRAFFICKING

Girl trafficking is one of the major challenges facing Nepal. Innocent Nepali women and girls of different castes and communities from different regions of Nepal are taken out of the country and forced into prostitution. **Prostitution** is defined as providing sex for money. The girls are either bought from their parents or brothers, deceived, threatened or pushed into leaving their homes. When they arrive in distant places they are forced into involuntary servitude, usually as domestic workers or prostitutes. Most of the women and girls who are trafficked are from poor families in rural areas. All these girls are someone's sister or daughter. They leave their homes in search of a better life. A family member or other individual may promise them a job in a distant place or a man may come to the village and marry the girl only to sell her later into slavery. This happens to over 5,000 girls a year, some of them only 10 years old. It is cruel to take their life from them and enslave them.

Many women and girls who are trafficked contract a deadly virus called **HIV/AIDS**. Many people have never heard of HIV/AIDS and do not know what it is or how they can contract the illness. Although girls who are trafficked have a very high likelihood of getting this disease through sexual intercourse, they are not the only ones at risk. Some people who get the virus may not feel or look sick and they may not know they have the virus. This makes the disease difficult to detect and easy to spread.



The three ways you can get HIV/AIDS are:

1. Through sexual intercourse with someone who already has the HIV virus.
2. Through blood or dirty needles infected with the virus.
3. Through mothers who pass the virus to their babies in their womb.

So, if you follow the next three rules, you won't get the virus.

1. Only have sexual intercourse when you are married and then only with your husband or wife. If you do have sexual intercourse with someone who is not your husband or wife, use a condom.
2. Be careful of using needles that have been used by other people. Make sure the doctor or nurse use only NEW needles when caring for you. If you are unsure if the needle has been used before, then ASK!!!
3. If you need a blood transfusion, make sure the blood has been tested for HIV/AIDS.¹

Read the following story and try and answer the questions below.

Ravi seemed like an ideal man to have as a friend or a person to know. He used to come to Meena's village and meet her daily, so no one was surprised when he asked her to marry him. Meena was very happy and so was her family. They had a ceremonial marriage in the village. Then Ravi told her that they would go to India for their honeymoon and so they went. Once in Mumbai, India, Ravi said that he wanted Meena to meet a friend of his. When they met with the friend, Ravi spoke with her in another room and Meena couldn't hear their conversation. Then Ravi said that he had to go out to get something and that Meena should wait for him there. Once Ravi left the house, the woman told Meena that she had bought her from Ravi and that Meena would have to work for her in the brothel. Meena was shocked and couldn't believe that the man she trusted and married would sell her into prostitution. She wanted to go home but didn't have any money to get back. She was scared and alone in a city she had never been to before. The brothel owner was cruel to her and forced Meena, against her will, to work. After a year, Meena found out that she had contracted HIV/AIDS. As Meena became noticeably sick, the brothel owner no longer wanted to keep her and turned Meena onto the streets. She was frightened and starving. Meena began begging and eventually made enough money to go back to her village where she thought she would be safe and where she thought her family would help her and give her shelter and care. After she returned, her family rejected her. All the members of the village also turned her away and refused to shelter, feed or help her. They treated her as an outcast. She found that she had nowhere to go; she became a beggar and died from HIV/AIDS.



1. Do you think this type of incident is common in Nepal?
2. Can you think of any way that Meena might have been able to escape from her bondage at the brothel?
3. How did she get HIV/AIDS?
4. Is there any way for her to have prevented it? Can you prevent yourself from getting HIV/AIDS? If so, how?
5. What do you think about the attitude of Meena's family towards her after she returned to her village?
6. What would you have done if you had been Meena?
7. What would you have done if you were Meena's parents?
8. What do you think are the reasons for girl trafficking?
9. How do you think such incidences can be prevented?

ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

Another of the major challenges facing Nepal is environmental pollution. Pollution takes many forms including air, noise and water pollution. People interact with their environment and destroy the essential resources that we need to survive. Fortunately, environmental problems are no longer considered inevitable. The more community organizations, citizens and government leaders take responsibility for their own communities and country's natural resources, the more our resources have a chance of lasting. Unit 5 of this book discusses in greater detail the various types of environmental pollution that affect Nepal and ways to prevent the continued destruction of our natural environment.

SOLUTIONS TO THESE CHALLENGES

This unit has reviewed a variety of social problems facing the Nepali people and government. We have discussed poverty, underemployment, unemployment, authoritarianism, violence, crime, drug peddling and girl trafficking. These social problems are not unique to Nepal but rather common in many countries around the world.

Different governments have different ways of trying to deal with these problems. In dictatorships, a single person or small groups of people make decisions about how to solve these problems for the whole country and all its citizens. When making policies they do not ask for advice or input from the citizenry, but instead they determine alone what is needed for the country. As a result, the policies they impose are often not as effective as they could be in solving social issues.

In contrast, democracies like Nepal's, give citizens the opportunity to complain about their government's policies. It also gives citizens an opportunity to praise their officials when they do good work that helps address the social problems. Citizens have a say in how policies are designed and implemented. In this way, the policymaking process is a debate between citizens and government officials. The resulting decisions are often more effective in solving social problems. Without citizen participation in the democratic process, democracy is ineffective. People need to be active in their communities and try and improve their social problems.

Opportunities for citizen participation include:

1. Forming a youth club
2. Writing a letter to the media or to a public official informing them about your bad experience
3. Conducting or attending training courses on how to solve some of these issues
4. Telling the police
5. Joining a protest group or political organization
6. Marching in demonstrations
7. Forming a neighborhood watch to better protect each other from crime
8. Participating in boycotts
9. Signing petitions
10. Cleaning up our environment
11. Voting for candidates who will address the issues with which you are concerned

Can you think of other opportunities in which you can become active in your community and help improve these social problems?

ACTIVITIES

For group and individual work:

1. "It's a very poor country," says a visitor. Make a list of 12 features of a country, which would make someone say this. There are 9 in the text, you should add 3 more.
2. Complete:
An indicator is an average annual statistic for one aspect of a country. It is useful for comparing _____ and providing the country with a helpful measure of _____.

3. Choose one of the people pictured in this unit on pages 26 or 27 and give an imaginary description of their history, family, home and daily life bringing out the real meaning of poverty.
4. Distinguish between “a poor person” and “a poor country”.
5. If the adult literacy rate in a municipality of 200,000 people is 38%, how many adults can’t read? What is the connection, if any, between poverty and illiteracy?
6. Switzerland is a small, mountainous, land-locked country, one of the richest in the world. Yet Nepal is among the poorest. What reasons can you find to explain Nepal’s poverty? (You could think geographically, economically, historically...).
7. Finding a solution to poverty is not easy.
 - a) Will any of the methods mentioned on page 43 help?
 - b) Can you suggest any solutions?
 - c) Is there any answer to unemployment?
 - d) What employment opportunities do you hope for?
8. Authoritarian vs. Democratic Government
 - a) What are the differences between an authoritarian and a democratic government? Give specific examples.
 - b) Which kind of government do you think is likely to be most efficient? Why?
 - c) Which kind of government do you prefer to live under? Why?
 - d) Does a democratic government have authority?
9. On page 33 there are five kinds of violence listed. Give real life examples of each kind.
10. Why does society punish wrongdoers? Can you think of at least 4 reasons? What do you consider to be the primary point of punishing wrongdoers?
11. Is crime a problem in mainly poor countries?

12. Should drug-users be punished? Is using drugs a crime?
13. What is the prevalence of drug-use in your school or locality? Have you any ideas how to deal with this problem ?
16. Do a role-play in which several people are offered drugs for the first time. Pretend that four or five of you already smoke and are trying to get new members of your gang to smoke. Also pretend that four of you have not smoked before: one is eager to start, one is doubtful but weak, one doesn't want to and is finally bullied into trying and one is able to say no.
17. Collect several newspaper reports about girl trafficking and make a display.
18. Write a poem or make a short drama about a young girl from Trisuli who eventually is sold to a brothel but manages to escape.
19. Why do families sell their daughters or allow them to leave home? What are the underlying causes? Having thought about this, suggest at least 3 different approaches that could help protect daughters from being sold.
20. Let each group take a problem:

Poverty, drugs, pollution, crime or violence

Discuss in detail if there is anything you personally, or your class acting together, can do to help alleviate the problem in your district. To do this you will need to:

- a) Identify if the problem exists, and to what extent. This may involve some research.
- b) Think of as many possible ways of helping as you can, and what would be the results of trying them.
- c) Decide which way is possible and likely to be most effective.

Choose one way that you will actually be able to implement. Make a realistic plan that considers the group members' time restrictions and other responsibilities and then implement the plan.

Short Answer Question:

1. What is meant by infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births?
2. What are Kamaiyas, and what has the government done for some of them?
3. Why do authoritarian regimes either suppress education or control it very rigidly? If your rights have been abused, describe two actions that you could do to protest.
4. What is meant by domestic violence?
5. Name 2 crimes usually carried out by organized groups of criminals.
6. What is blackmail?
7. Why are many people so willing to risk imprisonment by bringing drugs into the country?
8. Distinguish between a drug and a medicine.
9. Why should all donated blood be tested before being given to a patient?
10. What is prostitution?
11. Why are many women forced to become prostitutes?
12. Is a person with AIDS a danger to his or her community?
13. Why is injecting drugs particularly dangerous?
14. What do you understand by the term 'social problem'?
15. Suicide is quite common in Nepal. Is this a social problem? Explain your answer.

Medium Answer Questions:

In pairs, choose one or more of the following topics, then plan and write a good, clear paragraph. Remember to give reasons and examples to support your ideas.

1. Poverty is a person's own fault. For example, you could start:
It is a dreadful thing to say that a person is poor through his or her own fault.
OR
Poor people only have themselves to blame for their poverty.
2. Developing industry should be the government's priority.
3. Police violence increases violence throughout the country.
4. The availability of drugs in Kathmandu must be rigorously controlled.
5. Street children and girls in factories are oppressed and abused and need support.
6. Every citizen can do something to help solve our social problems.
7. There is no such thing as a problem, only a challenge to be met.

CONCLUSION

In this unit you have learned that:

- ❑ Many of the social problems facing Nepal are common in numerous countries around the world.
- ❑ Social problems, including poverty, authoritarianism, violence, crime, drug peddling, girl trafficking and environmental pollution, have multiple causes and are difficult to solve.

- ❑ There have been dramatic improvements in the areas of economic production, job creation, education and health in Nepal since 1960.
- ❑ For democracy to help improve the lives of Nepalis, we, as citizens, must take an active role in our communities and government.
- ❑ There are many different types of violence including: political violence, violence against women and children, violent fights within families or between friends or strangers, violence against the government and violence by the government administration towards the people. All these types of violence are harmful to people.
- ❑ Alcoholism is one cause of violence.
- ❑ Governments attempt to solve crime in different ways. They often combine approaches, using strategies that punish criminals and strategies that attempt to improve the social conditions that lead to crime.
- ❑ Drugs are harmful. By taking drugs, people can hurt themselves and those around them. Drugs are very addictive and once you start them, it is difficult to stop.
- ❑ Often people take drugs as a response to pressure from friends.
- ❑ Girl trafficking occurs in many parts of Nepal. Girl trafficking is when young girls are taken from their homes and forced to work as domestic laborers or prostitutes.
- ❑ Many girls who are trafficked contract a deadly virus called HIV/AIDS. Other people also contract HIV/AIDS through sexual intercourse, infected blood or needles and through mothers who pass the virus on to their babies in their womb.
- ❑ There are three ways you can avoid getting HIV/AIDS: 1) only have sexual intercourse when you are married and then only with your husband or wife. If you do have sexual intercourse with someone who is not your husband or wife, use a condom. 2) Do not use needles that have been used by other people. 3) If you need a blood transfusion, make sure the blood has been tested for HIV/AIDS.

- Democracy alone cannot solve social problems. However, unlike other forms of government, democracy allows people to get involved in the decision-making processes of their communities. People have the opportunities to:
 1. Form a youth club
 2. Write a letter to the media or to a public official informing them about your bad experience
 3. Conduct or attend training courses on how to solve some of these issues
 4. Tell the police
 5. Join a protest group or political organization
 6. March in demonstrations
 7. Form a neighborhood watch to better protect each other from crime
 8. Participate in boycotts
 9. Sign petitions

CIVIC EDUCATION

UNIT 3

INTRODUCTION

Within democracies, the people exercise political control. Citizens become involved in their government through meeting with political officials to express their concerns and desires, petitioning and demonstrating peacefully. They vote for candidates who make realistic promises to improve their lives and actually fulfill those promises when they get elected. Media groups are free to write as they please about government activities including corruption and the mishandling of public resources. In addition, the court system and police enforce the rule of law.

To make government officials responsive to citizens' needs, the people of the country must get involved in their governing process. Without the active involvement of citizens in political life, the power of government officials can go unchecked and citizens can suffer from unrepresentative political decisions. But citizen involvement in government doesn't happen over night. It takes time for people to realize that they not only have a role to play in their government but within a democracy, they are encouraged to get involved in their political process.

Without knowing how the government works, it is difficult to get involved in the political process. We need skills and the confidence to voice our concerns to hold public officials accountable. We must learn our rights and responsibilities and acquire the necessary skills to make informed choices.

PURPOSE OF UNIT

This unit intends to explain the meaning of democratic governance. It also describes how our government works and how we, as citizens, can get involved in the political process to make a difference in improving our lives and our quality of government.

After studying this unit you should be able to:

- Identify the key aspects of democracy
- Know where in the political process people can make a difference in the decisions elected officials make
- Identify ways people can monitor and influence decisions and actions in our political process

STRUCTURE OF UNIT

This unit is divided into the following sub-units:

- Meaning of Civic Education (Importance, Scope and Components)
- Civic Knowledge
- Civic Skills
- Civic Dispositions
- Relationship Between Citizenship, Civic Education and Character Building
- Fundamental Rights under the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, 1990
- Activities
- Conclusion

TERMS TO KNOW

Please pay attention to the key words listed below. Become familiar with their definitions and how they are used in the text. You will need to understand these terms to answer the questions at the end of this unit.

Citizen

Democracy

Political Tolerance

Accountability

Transparency

Multi-Party System

Rule of Law

Civic Education

Civic Disposition

Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal

Representative Government

Parliament: National Assembly and House of Representatives

District Development Committee (DDC)

Village Development Committee (VDC)

Ward Committee

Fundamental Rights

MEANING OF CIVIC EDUCATION (IMPORTANCE, SCOPE AND COMPONENTS)

*A. What is **Democracy**?*

To understand the role civic education plays in democracy, we must first understand what democracy is. In its ideal form, democracy is a form of government, which ensures that:

- ❑ All people are treated equally
- ❑ People with different political views are accepted and allowed to participate in government
- ❑ Elected and appointed officials are responsive to citizens' needs (**Citizens** are people within a state who have full rights either by birth or by gaining these rights)
- ❑ People are aware of what their government is doing and how it is making decisions
- ❑ Elections are held regularly, freely and fairly
- ❑ Losers in elections accept the election results
- ❑ Citizens are allowed to own property and businesses
- ❑ Elected and appointed officials and other groups of people do not abuse their power
- ❑ Certain rights and freedoms are guaranteed for all people in the country
- ❑ Every human being's right to life and dignity is respected
- ❑ More than one political party is allowed to participate in government
- ❑ Everyone must obey the law and be held accountable if they violate it

Equality

Democratic societies emphasize the principle that all people are equal. Equality means that all individuals are valued equally, have equal opportunities and may not be discriminated against because of their race, religion, ethnic group, caste, gender or sexual preference. In a democracy, individuals and groups still maintain their right to have different cultures, personalities, languages and beliefs.

Political Tolerance

Democratic societies are **politically tolerant**. This means that while the majority of people rule in a democracy, the rights of the minority must be protected. People who are not in power must be allowed to organize and speak out. Minorities are sometimes referred to as the opposition because they may have ideas that are different from the

majority. Individual citizens must also learn to be tolerant of each other. A democratic society is often composed of people from different cultures, racial, religious, and ethnic and caste groups. A democratic society is enriched by diversity. If the majority deny rights to, and destroy their opposition, then they also destroy democracy. One goal of democracy is to make the best possible decisions for everyone in society. To achieve this, respect for all people and their points of view is needed. Public decisions are more likely to be accepted, even by those who oppose them, if all citizens are allowed to discuss, debate and question them.

Accountability

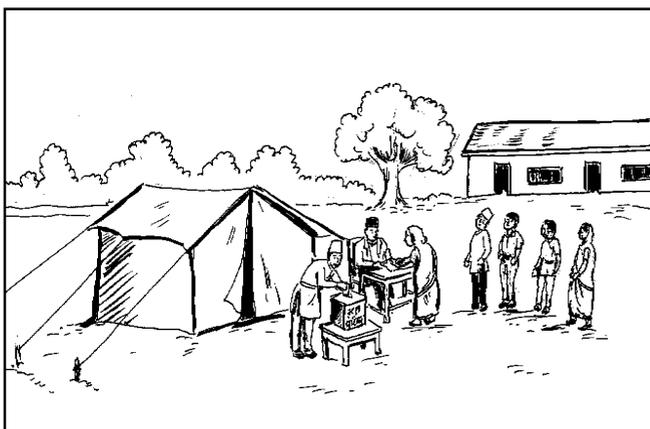
In a democracy, elected and appointed officials have to be **accountable** to the people. This means that officials must make decisions and perform their duties according to the will and wishes of the people, not for themselves. They are responsible for their actions.

Transparency

For government to be accountable the people must be aware of what is happening in the country. This is referred to as **transparency** in government. A transparent government holds public meetings and allows citizens to attend. In a democracy, the press and the people are able to get information about what decisions are being made, by whom and why.

Regular, Free and Fair Elections

One way citizens of the country express their will is by electing officials to represent them in government. Democracy insists that these elected officials are chosen and peacefully removed from office in a free and fair manner. Intimidation, corruption and threats to citizens during or before an election are against the principles of democracy. In Nepal's democracy, local and national elections are held regularly every 5 years. Participation in elections should not be based on a citizen's wealth. For free and fair elections to occur, most adult citizens should have the right to stand for government office. Additionally, obstacles should not exist which make it difficult for people to vote.



Accepting the Results of Elections

In democratic elections, there are winners and losers. Often the losers in an election believe so strongly that their party or candidate is the best one, that they refuse to accept the results of the election. This is against democratic principles. The consequences of not accepting the result of an election may be a government that is ineffective and cannot make decisions. It may even result in violence and threaten democracy.

Economic Freedom

People in a democracy must have some form of economic freedom. This means that the government allows some private ownership of property and businesses, and that the people are allowed to choose their own work and join labor unions. The role the government should play in the economy is debatable, but it is generally accepted that markets should exist in a democracy and the state should not totally control the economy. However, market economies do create some inequalities and a balance needs to be achieved between the good and bad aspects of such an economy. Some argue that the state should play a stronger role in countries where great inequality of wealth exists due to past discrimination or other unfair practices.

Control of the Abuse of Power

Democratic societies try to prevent any elected official or group of people from misusing or abusing their power. One of the most common abuses of power is corruption. Corruption occurs when government officials use public funds for their own benefit or exercise power in an illegal manner. Various methods have been used in different countries to protect against these abuses. Frequently the government is structured to limit the powers of the branches of government: to have independent courts and agencies with power to act against any illegal action by an elected official or branch of government; to allow for citizen participation and elections; and to check for police abuse of power.

Bill of Rights

Many democratic countries also choose to have a bill of rights to protect people against abuse of power. A bill of rights is a list of rights and freedoms guaranteed to all people in the country. When a bill of rights becomes part of a country's constitution, the courts have the power to enforce these rights. A bill of rights limits the power of government and may also impose duties on individuals and organizations.

Human Rights

All democracies strive to respect and protect the human rights of citizens. Human rights mean those values that reflect respect for human life and human dignity. Democracy emphasizes the value of every human being. Examples of human rights include freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of assembly, the right to equality and the right to education.

Multi-Party System

To have a **multi-party system**, more than one political party must participate in elections and play a role in government. A multi-party system allows for opposition to the party that wins the majority in the election. This helps provide the government with different viewpoints on issues. Additionally, a multi-party system provides voters with a choice of candidates, parties and policies to vote for. Historically, when a country only has one party, the result has been a dictatorship or another form of authoritarian government.

The Rule of Law

In a democracy, no one is above the law, not even an elected Prime Minister. This is called the **rule of law**. It means that everyone must obey the law and be held accountable if they violate it. Democracy also insists that the law be equally, fairly and consistently enforced. This is sometimes referred to as “due process of law.”¹

In contrast to what we have described as democracy, in an authoritarian form of government, the principles mentioned above do not necessarily apply. The rights that citizens have to speak freely, participate in political decision-making, receive information about government activities, have their vote count in an election and receive equal treatment from the government is severely limited.

Read through the following statements and decide whether the situation is taking place in a democracy or an authoritarian style government. Refer to what we learned in unit 1 about authoritarian government. Write down in your copy your opinions and give reasons for your answers. Discuss the answers with your classmates.

1. Sushmita collects signatures on a petition demanding that the government provide to the public information about its activities over the past year. Once over 1,000 people have signed the petition, Sushmita gives the petition to her elected representative. The government encourages such behavior.
2. The Constitution requires a parliamentary election every five years where many parties compete.
3. A group of people form a community-based organization to help protect girls from being sold into prostitution. They conduct education programs around the country and are encouraged by the government.
4. Teachers in Sunshine School think their salaries are too low and their working conditions too poor. They decide to go on strike. Striking is legal in this country.
5. Instead of arresting a criminal, the police shoot him. The criminal was not resisting arrest but had killed other people. The policemen are not punished for their action.
6. A law allows for citizens to march in the streets and protest peacefully against government policies.
7. Citizens meet with their local officials to complain about the lack of rubbish collection in their villages. They tell the official that if he or she does not arrange for the rubbish to be picked up, they will not vote for the official again.
8. Citizens organize to protest child labor in the country. They march through the capital and hang posters throughout different parts of the country.
9. The political party that loses the election demands that another election be held immediately.
10. The Prime Minister is required to give a report to the people every year explaining what he or she has done and announces plans for the upcoming year.
11. Without consulting other people in government, the Prime Minister determines what the price of oil sold in the country should be.

B. What is Civic Education? Why is it Important?

In some of the examples described above, citizens take an active role in pressuring government officials to respond to their demands. Teachers decide to go on strike because they are unhappy with their salaries and working conditions. Sushmita collects signatures on a petition to give to her elected representative to encourage the government to provide information to the public. Citizens meet with their local officials to insist that rubbish be collected in their villages. All these examples demonstrate how citizens can participate in their political process and help shape political outcomes.

To make democracy effective, citizens must be involved. It is not only our right, but it is our duty to participate in our political process. By participating we can help improve the quality of government. But improvements take time and we need to be patient and not expect too much from our government right away. Other countries have had democracy for hundreds of years. Nepal has only had democracy for a little over a decade and more time is needed for our new democracy to be effective in solving our social problems.

If we want our government to be effective then we need to get involved in the political process. **Civic education** helps people get involved in their political system by informing people about how their government works, what government officials' responsibilities are, what areas of the political process are most open to citizen involvement and what kinds of things citizens can do to affect political outcomes.

If citizens want their views to be considered, they must become active participants in the political process.

CIVIC KNOWLEDGE

Democracy can be defined as a government run by the people and working on behalf of the people. This means that the people, the citizens of the country, have the right to control the activities of government. However, we are often busy making enough money to live on. We have to wash our clothes, cook our food and have some extra time to meet with friends. This means that we don't have time to make all the political decisions of government ourselves. For this reason we have created what is called **representative government**. This means that we elect government officials to make many of the political decisions of the nation on our behalf. We have a system of government in which power is held by the people and exercised indirectly through elected representatives.

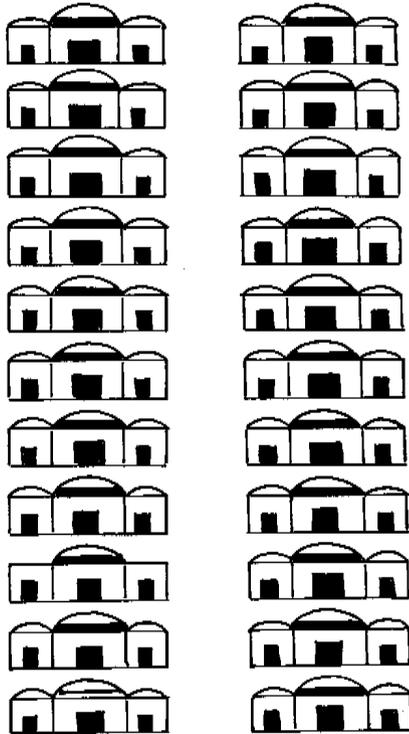
Let us examine some of the key structures of our government system. As we examine them, look to see how our system has provided for elected representatives to be in decision-making positions. Also, take note of what decisions each representative is responsible for making.

Branches of Government

Executive



Council of Ministries



Judiciary



Supreme Court



Appelate Court



District Court

Legislative



Parliament House



District Development Committee/District Council



Village Council/ Municipal Council



Village Development Committee/ Municipality



Ward Committee

How is Our Government Structured?

The Nepali government is controlled by a Constitution. The **Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal** explains the roles and responsibilities of the government. Every institution and person within the government must abide by the Constitution.

The Constitution provides for a variety of government structures including the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary branches. Each of these branches contains decision-making powers over how the country is run. These branches have sometimes different and other times shared responsibilities. When they have shared responsibilities, for instance, in the making and implementing of laws, the different branches can help ensure that the other branches do not abuse their power and are doing their jobs appropriately. The separation of government into different branches and their shared responsibilities helps to limit the ability of one person or small numbers of people from having a disproportionate amount of political power over what happens in the country.

Some of our government structures are listed below.

NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Executive Branch:

His Majesty of the Kingdom of Nepal and the Council of Ministers

Council of Ministers

The Council of Ministers is composed of the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, Ministers from the different ministries, State Ministers and Assistant Ministers. The Council of Ministers controls and regulates the government administration as well as issues general directives for the government.

The Prime Minister chooses the heads of the different Ministries. For instance, the Prime Minister chooses: the Minister of Defense who designs policies to protect the entire country; the Minister of Education, who creates policies that shape the education system in Nepal; and the Minister of Tourism, who designs policies that regulate the tourist industry in the country. Each Ministry helps in writing those laws that pertain to the ministry and affect the nation as a whole.

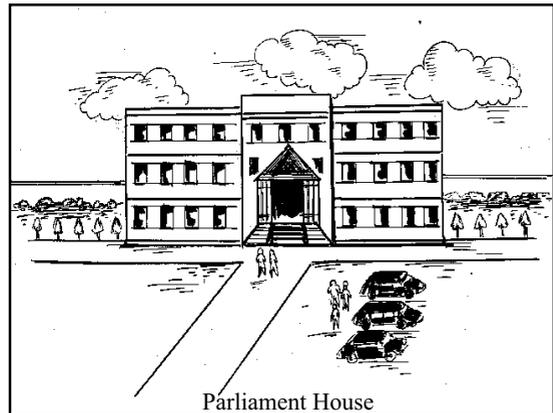
Activity

Do research with your classmates to find out how many ministries there are currently in the country. Write the names down in your copy.

Legislative Branch: The Parliament

Parliament

The **parliament** is the body of government where laws are formulated, discussed, debated and approved. The Parliament is divided into two houses, the upper and lower.



National Assembly (Upper House)

The upper house of parliament, also known as the **National Assembly**, consists of 60 members, each who serve 6-year terms. The primary role of the National Assembly is to vote on proposed legislation. A law can only be approved by the National Assembly when the majority of its members, 50% plus 1, vote in favor of a law.

Every 2 years some 20 members (1/3 of all members) of the National Assembly must leave office; they are replaced either by appointment or through election by members of the lower house of parliament. The 60 members of this body are selected in the following ways:

- ❑ 10 people, who have served the country for many years and who are highly respected, are nominated by His Majesty;
- ❑ 35 members, who must include at least three women, are elected by the lower house of parliament; and
- ❑ 15 members, three from each development region, are elected by the Chief and Deputy Chief of the village and town level local authorities and the Chief, Deputy Chief and the members of the district level local authorities.

(Note : None of these members are directly elected by the citizenry.)

The members of the National Assembly elect, from among the members, a Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson. Part of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson's jobs are to run the assembly meetings of the members. Within the National Assembly, members form committees in which they discuss and amend legislation.

House of Representatives (Lower House)

The lower house of parliament, also known as the **House of Representatives**, consists of 205 elected members who serve 5-year terms. The members come from various constituencies throughout the country. The constituencies are designated based on the population of each district. Some districts have higher numbers of people who live within the district and therefore the district has more constituencies.

The members of the House of Representatives elect, from among its 205 members, a Speaker and a Deputy-Speaker. Part of the Speaker's job is to be the Chairperson of the House of Representatives, and run the meetings within the House as smoothly as possible.

All the members of the House of Representatives are the individuals you directly elect every 5 years during national elections. These individuals are either members of political parties or independents. When they get elected they continue to represent their political party. If a party has an outright majority in the House of Representatives that party gets to choose the Prime Minister.

The role of a member of the House of Representatives is to write, debate and approve laws for the nation as a whole. To do this, members form committees in which they discuss and amend legislation. During these committee sessions, members can meet with individuals from the public to hear their views on proposed legislation.

Members' responsibilities are to make decisions on the national security of the nation and the country's economic development. The House member's role is NOT to solve citizens' personal problems. They are not responsible for finding us a job, getting us accepted into university, managing our health care or solving personal disputes among family members.

Judiciary: The Supreme, Appellate and District Courts

Courts

The judiciary acts as the watchdog of the Constitution and prevents the Executive and Legislative branches of government from disregarding the Constitution. The judicial branch helps to ensure that the words of the Constitution will be obeyed by the government. It does this by settling disagreements over laws.

The Supreme Court is the highest court in the judicial system. All other courts and judicial institutions in Nepal, other than the Military Court, are under the authority of the Supreme Court which can inspect, supervise and give directives to the Appellate and District level courts and other judicial institutions.²

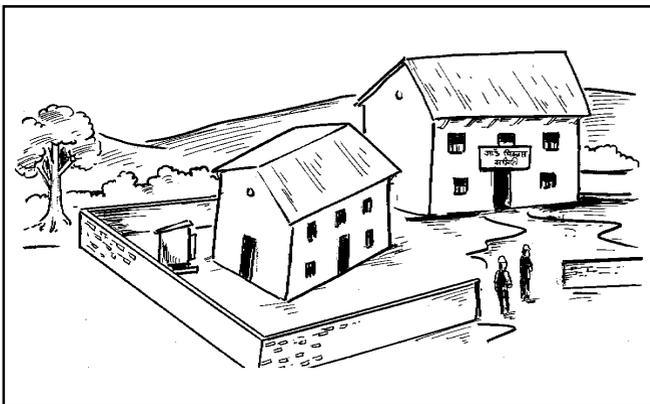
LOCAL GOVERNMENT

District Development Committee (DDC)

The **District Development Committee** is the highest local government structure. Nepal is divided into 75 districts and there is a District Development Committee for each district. The District Development Committee has one Chair, one Vice Chair and members. The number of members in a District Development Committee depends on the size of the district. All these positions are elected, not by direct election from the citizenry, but rather from the Village Council or Municipal Council members. The primary responsibility of the District Development Committee is to manage development money and projects for the district.

Village Council (VC) and Municipal Council (MC)

The Village and Municipal Councils are the second level of local government. Village Councils are in areas where there are no cities and Municipal Councils are in areas with cities. The Municipal Council serves the same functions as the Village



Council. All members of the Village Development Committees (or Municipalities) (discussed below) are also members of the Village Council (or Municipal Council). The Village Development Committee nominates six members, including two women to the Village Council. In the case of the Municipal Council, the municipality nominates six to twenty members depending upon the size of the municipality. The Village Council (or Municipal Council) is responsible for providing direction to the Village Development Committee and electing members to the District Development Committee. The Village Council (or Municipal Council) also approves the projects proposed or completed by the Village Development Committee and Municipality.

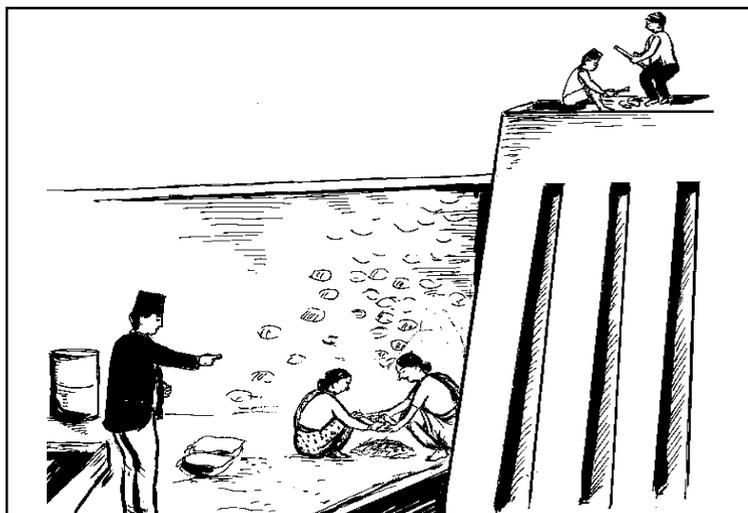
Village Development Committee (VDC) and Municipality

Village Development Committees are in areas where there are no cities. Municipalities are in areas with cities. The Village Development Committee is made up of nine wards; each Ward President is a member of the Village Development Committee. A Municipality may have more than nine wards according to the size of the population of the city, and similar to the VDC each Ward President is a member of the Municipality. Additionally, citizens elect the President and Vice President of the Village Development Committee (or Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the Municipality). The Village Development Committee and Municipality are responsible for all the development projects occurring in the villages or cities under their jurisdiction. For instance, Village Development Committee and Municipality members can help bring clean drinking water and literacy programs to the villages and supervise the collection of rubbish in the villages. The Village Development Committee receives fixed funding from the central government every year through the District Development Committee, while the Municipality gets funding directly from the central government.

Ward Committee (WC)

The **Ward Committee** is the basis of the democratic structure in the Nepali local government. A Ward Committee consists of one President and four members, including one woman. The people directly elect all members of the Ward Committee.

Ward committee members' primary responsibilities are to work with the Village Development Committee members to manage the development projects in the wards.



Read the questions below and write your answers down in your copy. For future reference, keep your answers available as you do the other lessons in this unit.

1. Why is the government divided into different branches? Why is this useful?
2. What is representative government?
3. What are the benefits of representative government?
4. What does the Constitution do?
5. How many houses of parliament are there?
6. How many members are there in each house? Which of these members are directly elected by the people and which are not?
7. What are the primary responsibilities of the parliament?
8. What are the job responsibilities of members of parliament?
9. Knowing these job responsibilities, is it appropriate to ask your member of parliament to help you find a job? To help you get into school? Why or why not?
10. What is appropriate to ask of your members of parliament?
11. What is the role of the judiciary?
12. What are the 4 levels of local government?
13. Who, within the local government bodies, do the people directly elect?
14. What are the responsibilities of the Village Development Committee?
15. What are the responsibilities of the Ward Committee?

What types of decisions do our elected representatives make, and what happens when citizens do not get involved in their decision making processes?

Now that you are familiar with some of the key government structures, let's examine some decisions that national and local level elected representatives make.

Making decisions about national issues is an important job for locally elected government representatives.

Below is a story about a fictional country. The type of political system this fictional country has is similar to our political system in Nepal and the purple people described in the story are immigrants to this imaginary country. Read the story and answer the questions that follow.

In another country, a Ministry drafted legislation making it possible for purple people living in that country to be able to work without having a work permit. As is generally the process, after a Ministry drafts legislation they give it to parliament to review and change the legislation as the parliament sees fit. After reviewing it, the parliament is expected to vote in favor, or against the legislation. 50% plus 1 of the members from each house of parliament, the House of Representatives and the National Assembly, must vote in favor of the law for the law to be approved. As is generally the case, once the parliament received the legislation from the Ministry regarding work permits for purple people, they held meetings in the appropriate committee to discuss whether they agreed or disagreed with the legislation. No one from the public was invited to the committee meetings. Although the majority of citizens in the country did not want to give purple people work permits, they did nothing to express their views. In the end, more than 50% of the members in each house of parliament were in favor of the legislation and the parliament passed the legislation allowing purple people to work in the country without work permits. The proposed legislation was then given to the King for final approval and became the law of the land.

In a parliamentary democracy, members of parliament can discuss their decisions in parliamentary committees with the public before approving legislation. They can also amend the legislation in committee. In many countries members of parliament hold public hearings (meetings where they request the public to attend and express their views on proposed legislation). In the story described above, members of parliament did not seek information from the public before they made their decision about legislation. The people in the country also did not express their opinions directly to their members of the House of Representatives.

Discuss with your classmates the answers to the questions below. Write your answers in your copy.

1. In this fictional country, who initially drafted the legislation to give purple people work permits?
2. After the legislation was drafted, which body of government needed to approve it?
3. How many people in this government body needed to approve the proposed legislation before it could become law?
4. While the members of this body discussed whether to pass the legislation, did they ask the citizens of the country what they thought?
5. Were the people of the country in favor of giving purple people work permits?
6. What was the final vote on the legislation?
7. Since some people in the country opposed giving purple people work permits, what could they have done to express their views? Could they have met with

the members of the House of Representatives? Could they have written newspaper articles? Discussed the issue on national television? Are there other things they could have done? If so, what are they?

8. What could the members of the parliament have done to learn about the preferences of the citizens of the country before they voted on the legislation?
9. Do you think if members of the parliament and the citizens had behaved differently prior to voting on the legislation that the members of parliament would still have voted in favor of the legislation?

Making decisions about community needs is an important job for locally elected government representatives.

Read the story below and answer the following questions.

In Watershed Village Development Committee (VDC), most of the low caste people of the village live in the northern part of the VDC and have very little land. The low caste people's land is not irrigated, and it is very rocky and sandy. The people from the upper caste live in the southern part of the VDC and have nice land for growing rice. Because the land is irrigated, the upper caste people can plant two crops of rice per year. The most influential ward presidents and members, plus the VDC president and vice president, all live in the southern part of Watershed VDC. Two years ago, the leaders talked with some community members and decided that the biggest need in the community was to build small bridges and to install one water pump system. Accordingly, the leaders did so. The leaders also used some of the VDC money to plant trees along part of the irrigation canal that borders the VDC. Almost all of these projects – the bridges, the water pump system and the trees – were placed in the southern part of the VDC. The people there were very happy with the leaders. In the northern part of the VDC, the leaders of those wards did not meet with the people in their area and as a result spent most of their development funds on roads, which connected the parts of the wards where the northern ward leaders lived to the main road. The residents in the northern part of the VDC were too lacking in education and knowledge of what to do, that they did not request their ward presidents and VDC officials to build a water pump for them. As a result, the people in the northern part of the VDC were unhappy with their ward representatives. They would have spent the money differently had they been included in the decision-making process.



1. In Watershed VDC what were the problems of the people?
2. How did the VDC and Ward leaders in the southern part of the VDC decide which programs should be implemented? How did they decide in the northern part of the VDC?
3. Which VDC and Ward leaders properly identified the community's needs? How did they do this?
4. In terms of identifying community needs in Watershed VDC, what were the main problems?
5. Have these kinds of problems ever happened in your VDC? If so, describe what happened.
6. If the people living in the northern part of the VDC met with their leaders and insisted that the leaders use the development money to build a water pump, do you think the outcome would have been different?

What Can Happen When Citizens Get Involved in Their Local Communities?

We see examples in Nepal that show that citizens who get involved in their government see amazing results. For instance, some citizens have helped to bring new development projects to their communities including savings and credit (micro-credit) programs, women's and children's literacy programs, health/sanitation programs,



sewing and cutting programs for women and school construction programs. In one instance, women complained to the Village Development Committee Chair, who was keeping for himself the money given to the VDC meant for the elders in the villages. In response to their complaints, the Village Development Committee Chair distributed the money to the elders.

Write the answer to the following questions in your copy.

1. Do you think it is worthwhile for citizens to get involved in the decision-making processes of their elected officials? Give 2 reasons for your answer.
2. If so, what benefits do you think citizen involvement can bring?

CIVIC SKILLS

If you agree that citizen involvement in the decision-making processes of elected officials can help improve the quality of the decisions officials make, what kinds of activities can citizens do to make a difference?

We have already mentioned some of these ways in previous units. They include:

- Reading information in newspapers and magazines and participating in political discussions
- Voting in local and national elections
- Trying to persuade someone, in a peaceful way, to vote in a certain way
- Creating or signing a petition
- Writing letters to elected representatives
- Contributing money to a party or candidate
- Attending meetings to gain information, discuss issues, or lend support
- Working for a political campaign
- Presenting your views at a parliamentary committee hearing
- Joining a community-based organization that advocates for a particular interest
- Demonstrating peacefully through marches, boycotts or sit-ins
- Running for and holding elected office
- Participating in developmental activities

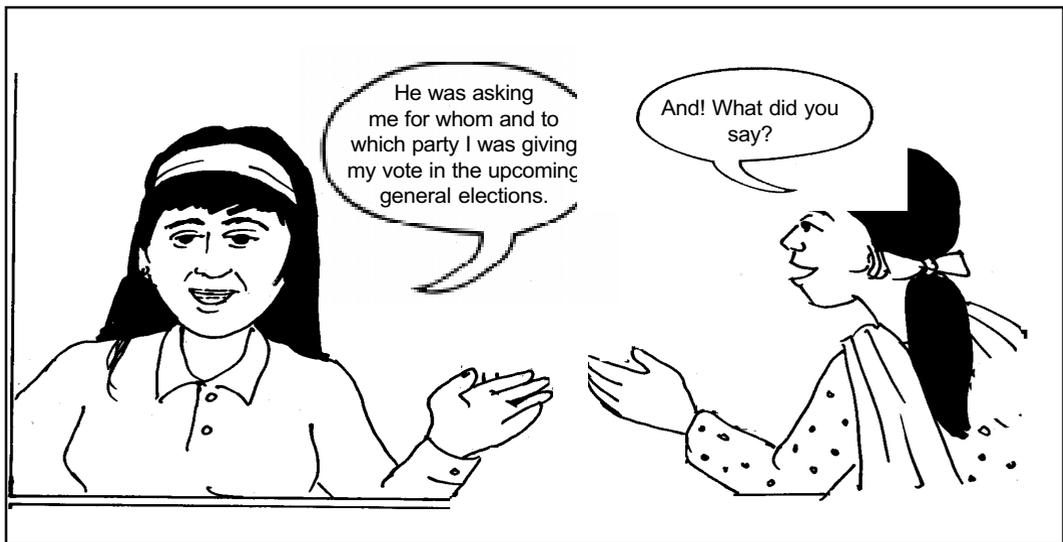
Let's examine in more detail three ways in which citizens can participate in their democracy, namely, voting, participating in political discussions and meeting with elected representatives.

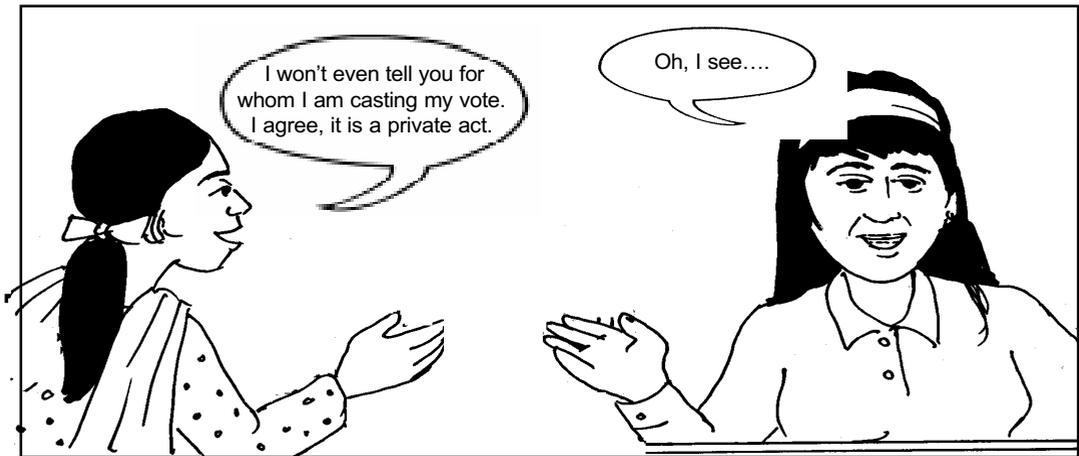
Voting in national and local elections is an important way citizens can affect political outcomes. Elections are important events. They give us an opportunity to elect candidates who will help improve our country. As our government is a Representative Democracy, it is important that we elect leaders who will make the best decisions for the

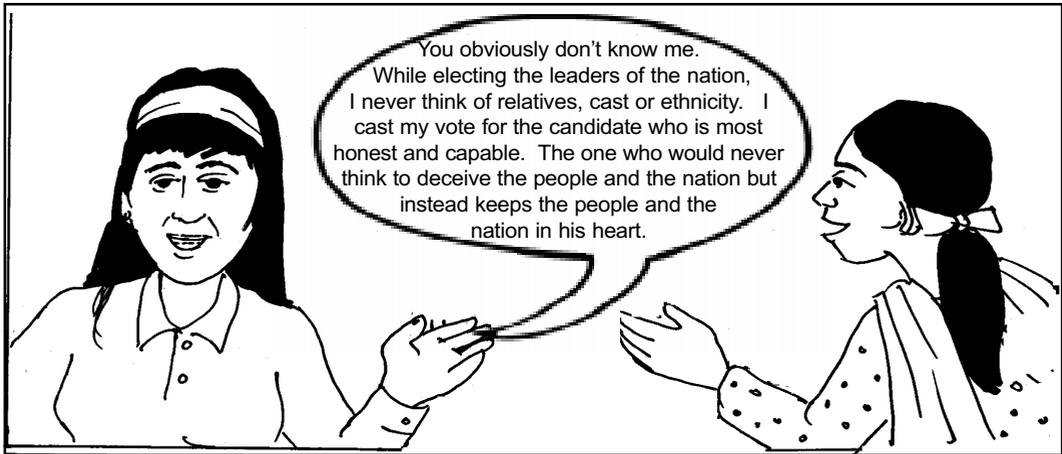


benefit of our communities and the country as a whole. We need to do our best not to elect people who will steal from the government or pursue their own personal

interests. We need to elect people, not because they pay us money, but because they make realistic promises to us about how they will address the problems we face in our communities. When they get elected they should do their best to fulfill those promises. We should elect people who are honest and not corrupt. People who promise to act, not for their personal good, but for the benefit of all the people no matter their caste, class, gender or ethnicity. When you vote, your vote is private; you do not need to tell anyone for whom you voted unless you want to.







Read the words to the song below and come up with a tune for it. You can sing the song with your classmates or with your friends or family members.

The election wave has once again
washed over the villages and cities.

Let us be determined to select clean persons and vote for them.
Let us select trustworthy leaders who have no blemishes.
Let us not sell our votes even if someone offers us money.
Let us vote wisely without succumbing to pressures and threats.

The election wave has once again
washed over the villages and cities.

Those who understand the problems and hardships of rural homes
Will convey this information to the center.
Let us select such persons, recognize them as our leaders,
And vote for them.

The election wave has once again
washed over the villages and cities.

Activity

Organize a mock election within your class and make the election “free and fair.” You should have representatives of at least three parties competing. Their major policy differences are in education. Some classmates should join in representing the different political parties and make presentations to the class on the following issues:

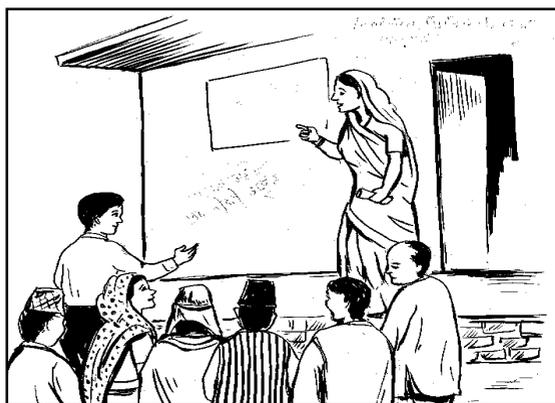
A party - will privatize all government schools selling them to a few companies. All education will be private, but with strict regulations from the government.

B party - will make all education public, nationalizing private schools. It promises a big percentage of the government budget to go for education, which will be free and uniform for everyone.

C party - favors a public-private partnership, so some schools will be private and some public, but with stricter regulations than at present.

Listen to the speeches and make up your own mind on who to vote for. Then arrange the classroom as a voting center, with a supply of voting papers, election officers, police, stamps and an election register. Hold a vote. Your vote must be private so block off the voting station so no one can see for whom each person is voting. When you are through, count and announce the winner.

The people in our government who are directly elected by the people include our members of parliament, Village Development Council members and Ward members. We need to meet with them and find out what they promise to do once they are elected. Then we need to meet with them while they are in office to find out what they have done to fulfill their promises. We also need to praise our officials when they do good work.



The representative is saying, “Your vote is your right. The future of the country lies on the shoulders of the youths. Therefore, young brothers and sisters, take a lead in changing the country. Come forward and vote for honest persons. Let’s vote and insist that others vote, too. I encourage you all to cast your precious votes in a peaceful manner.”

Among many other ways to participate in our democracy, we have mentioned that **Identifying a Problem in Our Community and Meeting with Our Elected Representatives** are important activities that can help shape political outcomes. Discussing the problem and finding out what our representative is doing to address this problem is an important way citizens can affect the decision-making processes of their elected officials.

Activity

1. Identify with your classmates the most important problem in your community. Make sure that the problem you choose could be addressed by the Village Development Committee official. (Remember: the Village Development Committee official is responsible for development projects occurring in the villages or neighborhoods for which it is responsible. For instance, Village Development Committee members can help bring clean drinking water and

literacy programs to the village as well as supervise the collection of rubbish.) The teacher should ask the students for suggestions and then have a class vote on which problem the students most want to address. Examples of such problems could include: the absence of rubbish collection, a lack of clean drinking water, the absence of literacy programs, high levels of crime, etc.

2. After you have identified a problem in your community, arrange for a meeting with your Village Development Committee official. Have the representative either come to your school or take a field trip with your class to your representative's office.
3. Before you meet with the representative assign a person in the class to be the spokesperson for the class and read the passages below so you are prepared for the meeting. The spokesperson can either be a girl or a boy.
4. When you meet with the representative, the spokesperson could say the following: "Honorable _____ we welcome you to our classroom and school." OR "We thank you for letting us come and visit you in your office." You could also add: "We want to compliment you on all the work you have done on behalf of our community. You have made a great effort and we thank you."

If the elected representative is interested to do so, encourage him or her to make a presentation about his or her role in government and what the representative is doing to help improve the community. When the representative is finished speaking and if he or she has not answered the questions below, you can ask the representative the following questions. Write the answers to these questions in your copy.

What are your job responsibilities in government?

What, if anything, are you doing to address the particular problem that our class has identified? This is the time for you to mention the issue that your class is concerned with.

Ask the representative if there is anything we, as students, can do to help solve the problems.

If you have suggestions on what is needed in your community to improve this problem inform your representative at the meeting.

When the discussion is finished, the class spokesperson should thank the representative for taking the time to speak with the class.

After you have met with your local official, your teacher will divide the class into small groups. With your classmates, read the box below. When you have read through the listing, discuss with your group the questions that follow. Write your answers in your copy. One member from each group should present the answers to the class.

Different Ways Citizens Can Participate in the Democratic Process

Reading information in newspapers and magazines and participating in political discussions

Voting in local and national elections

Trying to persuade someone, in a peaceful way, to vote in a certain way

Creating or signing a petition

Writing letters to elected representatives

Contributing money to a party or candidate

Attending meetings to gain information, discuss issues or lend support

Working for a political campaign

Presenting your views at a parliamentary committee hearing

Joining a civil society organization that advocates for a particular interest

Demonstrating peacefully through marches, boycotts or sit-ins

Running for and holding elected office

Participating in developmental activities

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each form of participation?
2. Are all these forms of participation equally important in protecting our basic rights? Why or why not? Which seems the most important?

CIVIC DISPOSITIONS

Certain **civic dispositions** or character traits not only help us become an effective and responsible member of our family, group of friends, school and community organization, but they also help us become a good participant in our democracy.

These character traits include:

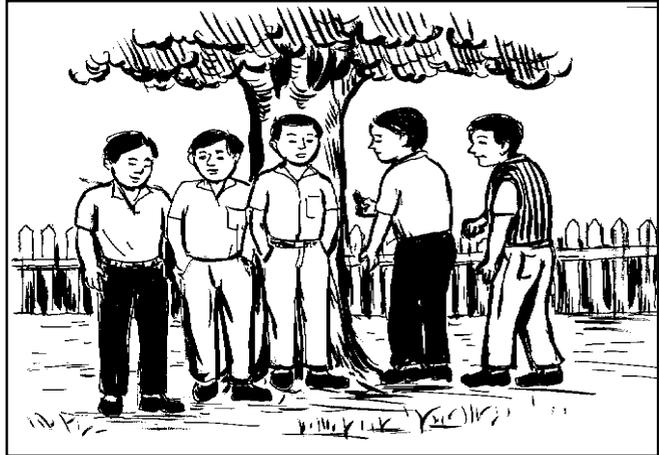
1. **Civility** – treating other people respectfully, regardless of whether or not one agrees with their viewpoints. Being willing to listen to other points of view and avoiding hostile, abusive and emotional arguments.
2. **Respect for the Rights of Other Individuals** – having respect for others’ rights to: an equal voice in government; be equal in the eyes of the law; have different ideas; and join organizations to advance their views.
3. **Respect for the Law** – willingness to abide by laws, even though one may not be in complete agreement with every law; willingness to work through peaceful, legal means to change laws which one thinks to be unwise or unjust.
4. **Honesty** – willingness to seek and express the truth
5. **Open Mindedness** – willingness to consider others' points of view.
6. **Critical Mindedness** – openness to questioning the validity of various positions on issues, including one’s own.
7. **Negotiation and Compromise** – making an effort to come to agreement with those with whom you may differ, when it is reasonable and morally justifiable to do so.
8. **Persistence** – being willing to attempt again and again to accomplish worthwhile goals.
9. **Civic Mindedness** – paying attention to, and having concern for, public affairs.
10. **Compassion** – having concern for the well-being of others, especially for the less fortunate.
11. **Patriotism** – being loyal to the values and principles underlying democracy and your country.
12. **Courage** – the strength to stand up for one’s convictions.
13. **Tolerance of Ambiguity** – the ability to accept uncertainties that arise, e.g. from insufficient knowledge or understanding of complex issues.

Let’s examine more closely what we mean when we say. “These dispositions agree with democratic behavior.”

Read the paragraphs below and answer the questions.

A key ideal of democracy is FREEDOM of EXPRESSION. We must remember that even if we disagree with what other people say, we must let them speak, and we ask that they also let us speak, even if they disagree with us.

Suppose you attend a meeting of students in your school. Everyone in the group needs to suggest rules for the volleyball game happening that afternoon. Think through the following questions and write your answers in your copy.

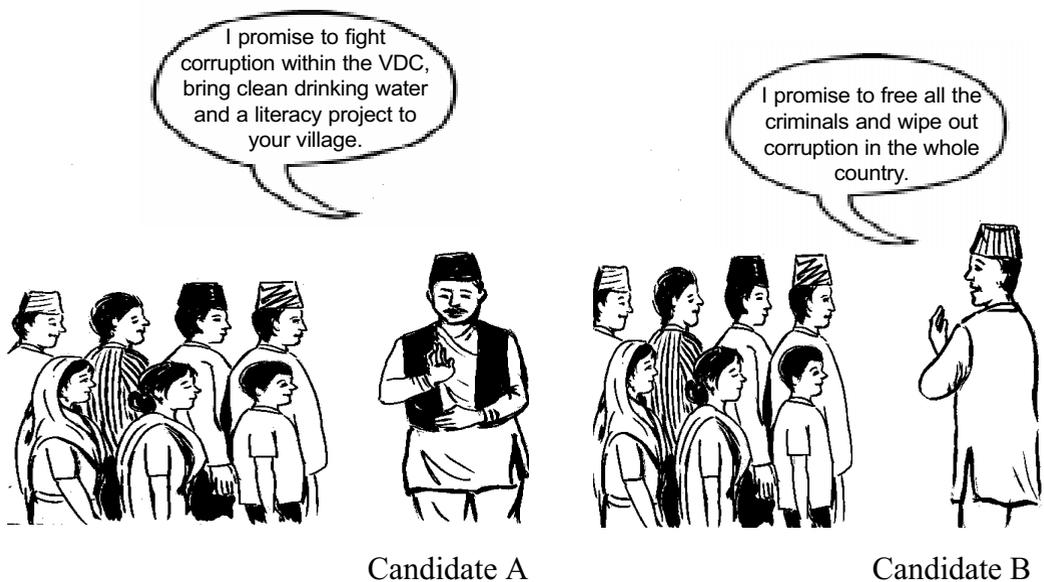


1. You have the right to speak and give your suggestions about the rules of the game. What responsibilities should you have in the way you speak and in what you say? List and explain these responsibilities
2. What responsibilities should other students at the meeting have toward your right to speak? List and explain these responsibilities.
3. What responsibilities should you have toward the other students' right to speak? List and explain these responsibilities.
4. What might happen to the right to FREEDOM of EXPRESSION if no one fulfilled the responsibilities you have discussed?
5. Let's say, Sunil, a student at the meeting came up with a rule that you disagree with. For instance Sunil stated that: "All players who hit the ball with their thumbs facing upward should be disqualified from the game." Should you yell at Sunil and say, "That is stupid, I refuse to play by that rule"? Should you hit Sunil? Would yelling at Sunil or hitting him be fair behavior? Could you agree to negotiate with Sunil and compromise to find common rules that you all agree upon? If yes, explain.

6. Re-look at the list of democratic traits listed above. Can you list in your copy those traits that are needed to work within the student group and come up with suggestions for rules for the volleyball game?

Working with your classmates to make rules for the volleyball game is not so different from members of parliament from different political parties negotiating laws and coming up with compromises. Nor is it that different from people, from different religions and castes, all working together to make fair decisions that help the entire community rather than one group.

Another key ideal of democracy is the RIGHT to VOTE. Suppose you are old enough to vote and there are two candidates, A and B, running for Village Development Council. Each candidate comes to your village to speak about their political views. Being very interested and caring about your democracy, you listen to them.



Candidate's B's promises do not seem very realistic, nor do you necessarily agree that all criminals should be released from jail. So, you decide to vote for Candidate A.

1. Suppose some friends, neighbors and others in your community do not agree with the way you are going to vote. List and explain what responsibilities they have in regard to your right to choose who you voted for.

2. Suppose you do not agree with the way some of your friends, neighbors, and others in your community are going to vote. List and explain what rights and responsibilities you have in regard to their right to choose who they vote for.
3. What might happen to the right to vote if no one fulfilled the responsibilities you discussed?
4. Relook at the list of democratic dispositions above. Can you list in your copy those dispositions that are needed to participate in an election, to choose a qualified candidate for a position and to respect other people's rights to make their own choices about who they will vote for?
5. A variety of democratic activities are listed below. List the civic dispositions mentioned above that are required to perform the following activities. There may be more than one disposition required for each activity.
 - Negotiating with people who think differently from you politically
 - Writing laws
 - Debating public issues
 - Meeting with your elected representatives to express your views
 - Signing a petition
 - Explaining to others your political views
 - Paying taxes
 - Going on strike
 - Walking in demonstrations
 - Abiding by the law
 - Writing a letter to a media group to express your concerns about an issue
 - Being an elected representative and working on behalf of all your constituents

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CITIZENSHIP, CIVIC EDUCATION AND CHARACTER BUILDING

Civic education can improve citizens' participation in government. This benefits the citizen and the country as the more citizens participate in government the stronger their democracy becomes. There are many ways in which we already see citizens participate in their democratic processes in Nepal.

Sometimes, citizens:

- Present their ideas in a parliamentary committee hearings
- Conduct boycotts or labor union strikes
- Hang black flags from their vehicles
- Write newspaper articles
- March peacefully through the streets in large groups
- Meet with their political officials to complain about a problem in their community

These are means of expressing citizens' opinions. People within Nepal have the freedom to protest and praise government action and are taking initiative to do so. When people act in these ways, it means that our democratic system is working, and working well.

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE KINGDOM OF NEPAL, 1990

As specified by the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, being a citizen gives you specific rights and freedoms. These rights are called **fundamental rights** by the Constitution and are listed below.

Right to Equality – The state shall not discriminate on the grounds of religion, race, sex, caste, tribe or ideological belief. No person shall be discriminated against as untouchable, be denied access to any public place or not be allowed to use public utilities.

Right to Freedom – People have individual freedom, freedom of expression, freedom to come together without weapons, freedom to organize in associations, freedom to visit and settle anywhere within the Kingdom of Nepal and the freedom to work in any profession, employment, industry or commerce.

Press and Publication Rights – No news item, article or other reading material shall be censored. No press shall be closed or seized for printing any news item, article or other reading material.

Rights regarding Criminal Justice – No mental or physical torment can be imposed on an individual in detention.

Rights against Detention of the Innocent – No one shall be held in police custody without enough evidence of an offense. If wrongly detained appropriate compensation shall be arranged for the innocent.

Right to be Informed – Every citizen has the right to demand and receive information on any matter of public importance, except on issues related to national security.

Right to Property – All citizens shall, subject to the existing laws, have the right to acquire, own, sell and dispose of property.

Cultural and Education Rights – Each community residing in Nepal shall have the right to preserve and promote its language, script and culture. Each community has the right to operate schools up to the primary level in its own mother tongue for educating its children.

Right to Religion – Every person shall have the freedom to practice his or her own religion.

Right against Exploitation – Traffic in human beings, slavery, serfdom or forced labor in any form is prohibited. No minor shall be employed to work in any factory or mine, or be engaged in any other hazardous work.

Right to Privacy – Except as provided by law, the privacy of a person, house, property, document, correspondence or information about anyone is protected.

Right against Exile – No citizens of Nepal can be forced to leave the country.

Right to Constitutional Remedy – If a citizen feels unjustly treated, the citizen may go to court to legally protest the abuse.³

As a citizen in our democracy, you have the right to protect yourself if your freedoms or rights described above are violated.

Read the story below and see how Sundar protected himself when his rights were violated.

Ram Saran and Bimala used to live in Bahana Nagar. They had a teenage son named Sundar. One day, Sundar, who worked at a soap factory, had a lot of work to do. By the time he finished his work, it was already late in the evening. When he was walking home, a police patrol car pulled up beside him and asked why he was out on the street so late. Sundar replied that he was going home from work. The police said that there have been a lot of robberies in the area and they planned to arrest Sundar, as he may be the robber. They took Sundar to the police station and kept him in jail for three days. Finally, as the police could not find any evidence to convict Sundar, they released him. After he was released, Sundar filed a court case against the police for the violation of his fundamental right against being arrested without proper cause. He argued that the police did not have sufficient evidence to arrest and detain him for so many days. Sundar won his court case and the arresting police officer was suspended from the police force for three months because he arrested someone without cause.



1. Did the police officers have a good reason to arrest Sundar?
2. Should Sundar have filed a court case against the police or should he have ignored his fundamental right against being detained without cause?
3. What happened to the police as a result of Sundar's court case?
4. If a similar situation happened to you, would you have ignored the injustice or tried to correct it?

ACTIVITIES

For individual and group work:

1. Your teacher will divide the class into groups. Can your group remember the twelve features of a democracy mentioned in the text? Have a race to see which group can write all twelve first.
2. If you think about the people in your class, and in your society, would you say that they are all equal? (Think about natural gifts, education, health, finance....etc. Also think about caste, religion, ethnicity and age.) In what sense then, are people in a democracy considered equal?
3. In a certain Western democracy, school attendance is compulsory from Monday to Friday. But some Muslim families want their children to receive religious instruction on Friday, with older boys free to attend mid-day prayers at the mosque. How do you think the government should handle this?
4. In Nepal, our Constitution states that the Monarchy shall exist. Some people feel strongly that we should not have a Monarchy anymore. Should they be allowed to say this publicly, for instance writing to a newspaper or having a peaceful rally?
5. On the radio or television you can hear of “election irregularities” in some countries. What do they mean by this? Write down as many possible “irregularities” as you can think of.
6. Is there anything about our electoral system or social structure that would cause an election in Nepal to be considered not free and unfair?
7. Do you think people should be allowed to own land, or should it all belong to “the state”, to be used by everyone equally?
8. Draw a cartoon or write and perform a short drama about a situation in which:
someone’s human rights are abused OR
someone or group of people do not obey the rule of law OR
political party members do not accept the election results
9. Is the calling of a “bandh” an act that adheres to democratic principles? Or are “bandhs” a violation of the rights of the majority of people to carry out their daily lives in a peaceful way?

10. Which Ministers are currently included in the Council of Ministers?
11. Let each student pretend to be a minister. Each one must stand up, introduce him or herself, and say very briefly what the major issues are with which he or she is dealing at the moment. Have the student discuss the problem and how he or she plans to solve it. Be as realistic as possible. [Example: for the Minister of Tourism: Indian tourism in Nepal is down by 50%, so I'm trying to promote Nepal as a good place to visit for all Indians].
12. Pretend you want to explain to sixth grade students how our government works. Draw a poster with pictures of the different bodies of government and use words as well on the poster to describe what each picture is. Make it simple enough to allow the sixth grade students to understand it.
13. Write a job description for a Member of Parliament.
14. Write a 'fun' job description for a Member of Parliament, which includes everything they shouldn't do.
15. Pretend you are over 18 years old and feel very strongly about protecting girls from trafficking in Nepal. What can you do to help? Write down as many ways as possible.
16. Pretend you are stranded on a desert island a long way from anywhere. There is a fresh water spring and banana and coconut trees. The climate is pleasant. You may have to live here for a long time.
Write down your own list of 8-12 things that you think you need to survive.
With a partner, make a common list of 10 items.
Make groups of 6 and make a common list of 8 articles, and rank them in order of importance.
Write in your copy the civic dispositions necessary to come to an agreement with your other classmates about this final list.
Or
Make groups of 6.
Your class has been given Rs 5,000. Write down how you think it could be best spent. Do not discuss your ideas with anyone.
Now share your ideas in your group, and everyone write down the other suggestions.
Now rank them in order of your preference.
Then discuss and in your group decide on one that you all agree to.
Share these ideas, and finally come to a class decision.

When you are through with this exercise, write in your copy the civic dispositions necessary to come to an agreement with your other classmates about this final decision.

17. Write a letter to a newspaper about something you feel strongly about related to strengthening our democracy.
18. Your teacher will put each of the fundamental rights on a card. As you pick a card from your teacher explain in detail what is involved in that particular right.

Short and Medium answer Questions:

1. How would you describe civic education?
2. Which single word means that those in authority must demonstrate that they have fulfilled their job responsibilities and represented the people in a fair way?
3. What is corruption? Give examples of large-scale and small-scale corruption.
4. Is it possible to have a one-party democracy? Give your reasons.
5. What is the rule of law?
6. Complete: "If citizens want their views to be considered they must _____".
7. How many members make up the House of Representatives?
8. The upper house has 10, 35 and 15 members chosen in different ways. Describe these ways.
9. List 5 ways an ordinary citizen can be involved in the decision-making of his or her representatives.
10. Should it be mandatory that everyone who is eligible must vote? Give your reasons.
11. What is freedom of expression? Do you have this at school? Explain.
12. For someone playing a key role in their democracy, what are the 5 important civic dispositions that person must have?

13. If you wanted to express your opinions to large numbers of people, what would you do? Give 2 ways.
14. Is there anything that you think newspapers do not have the right to publish?
15. What is the right to constitutional remedy?
16. What are two disadvantages of democracy?

Long Answer Questions :

Write 2 or 3 good paragraphs on the following topics.

- a) Democracy only works with political tolerance.
- b) The multi-party system in Nepal.
- c) Civic education is essential to strengthening democracy.
- d) Local government can play a key role in the development of our country.
- e) Can an ordinary citizen affect the affairs of government? Explain.
- f) In Nepal there are ways to become involved in political decisions.
- g) The division of government into different branches is necessary to ensure more effective government.

Write 2 or 3 good paragraphs on one of these topics.

- a) What makes a good citizen?
- b) What are the main elements of the Nepali government?
- c) What kind of government do you think Nepal needs?
- d) "I would prefer a dictatorship."
- e) What should we teach in schools?

CONCLUSION

In this unit you have learned that:

- In its ideal form, democracy ensures that
 - All people are treated equally
 - People with different political views are accepted and allowed to participate in government
 - Elected and appointed officials are responsive to citizens' needs
 - People are aware of what their government is doing and how it is making decisions
 - Elections are held regularly, freely and fairly
 - Citizens are allowed to own property and businesses
 - Elected and appointed officials and other groups of people should not abuse their power
 - Certain rights and freedoms are guaranteed for all people in the country
 - Losers in elections accept the election results
 - Every human being's right to life and dignity are respected
 - More than one party, with different view points, are allowed to participate in government
 - Everyone must obey the law and be held accountable if they violate it
- Improving government takes time and we need to be patient and not expect a perfect government right away. We can work with our officials to improve the governing process.
- Civic education informs people about how their government works and what they can do to affect political outcomes.

- ❑ The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal explains the rules and responsibilities of all bodies of government.
- ❑ The parliament is divided into two houses. The upper house is called the National Assembly and contains 60 members. The lower house is called the House of Representatives and contains 205 members.
- ❑ The people of Nepal directly elect all members of the House of Representatives.
- ❑ The role of a member of parliament is to write, debate and approve laws for the nation. He or she is not responsible for doing personal favors for citizens.
- ❑ Local level government contains the District Development Committee (DDC), the Village Council (VC) or the Municipal Council (MC), the Village Development Committee (VDC) or the Municipality and the Ward Committee (WC).
- ❑ The people directly elect members of the VDCs and the WCs.
- ❑ The VDC and WC members are responsible for managing the development projects occurring in their village. For instance, they can help bring clean drinking water and literacy programs to the village.
- ❑ We see examples in Nepal that show that when citizens get involved in their government they see positive results.
- ❑ Voting in national and local elections is an important way for citizens to control political outcomes. We need to elect people, not because they pay us money, but because they make realistic promises to us about how they will address the problems we face in our communities.
- ❑ Certain dispositions or character traits not only help us become an effective and responsible member of our family, group of friends, school and community organization, but they also help us become a good participant in our democracy. These traits include civility, respect for the rights of other individuals, respect for the law, honesty, open mindedness, critical mindedness, the ability to negotiate and compromise, persistence, civic mindedness, compassion, patriotism, courage and tolerance for ambiguity.

- Being a citizen in our democracy provides us with certain rights and freedoms. These rights include:
 - Right to Equality
 - Right to Freedom
 - Press and Publication Rights
 - Rights Regarding Criminal Justice
 - Rights against Detention of Innocent
 - Right to be Informed
 - Right to Property
 - Cultural and Education Rights
 - Right to Religion
 - Right against Exploitation
 - Right to Privacy
 - Right against Exile
 - Right to Constitutional Remedy

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

UNIT 4

“Any society committed to improving the lives of its people must also be committed to full and equal rights for all.”¹

INTRODUCTION

Full and equal rights for all citizens means that everyone in the country is able to live a long and healthy life, acquire knowledge and have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living. To achieve equal rights, people must also have access to their political system. They must be able to express their views, practice any religion they want and be protected from physical harm. If someone is accused of a crime they need to be given the opportunity to adequately defend themselves. Full and equal rights for all citizens means that any citizen, no matter his or her caste, ethnicity, religion, or age should be treated fairly and given respect.

People around the world have struggled to gain equal rights for all citizens. They have attempted to push their governments to recognize that they, as human beings, deserve the right to just treatment. Nepalis have also joined in this struggle, many were jailed and some even died in their attempts to institute a government that protects the rights of all Nepalis. These courageous individuals succeeded in establishing a more fair government. In 1990, democracy was re-instituted in Nepal and our government leaders began setting up institutions that can now better protect our human rights.

PURPOSE OF UNIT

The main purpose of this unit is to define social justice and human rights and to assist students in determining when these rights are violated, how our government attempts to protect these rights and what we, as citizens, can do to help improve the human rights situation in Nepal.

After studying this unit you should be able to:

- Define Social Justice and Human Rights
- Determine when our human rights are violated
- Recognize the steps taken by our government to protect our human rights
- Identify effective ways of responding to violations of our human rights

STRUCTURE OF UNIT

This unit is divided into the following sub-units:

- Concept of Social Justice
- Concept of Human Rights
- Key Components of Human Rights and Freedoms
- Nepal's Commitment to Human Rights and Freedoms
- Activities
- Conclusion

TERMS TO KNOW

Please pay attention to the key words listed below. Become familiar with their definitions and how they are used in the text. You will need to understand these terms to answer the questions at the end of the unit.

Social Justice

Human Rights

International Human Rights Agreements

Caste Discrimination

Child Labor

Bonded Labor

Human Rights Commission

Human Rights Nongovernmental Organizations

CONCEPT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

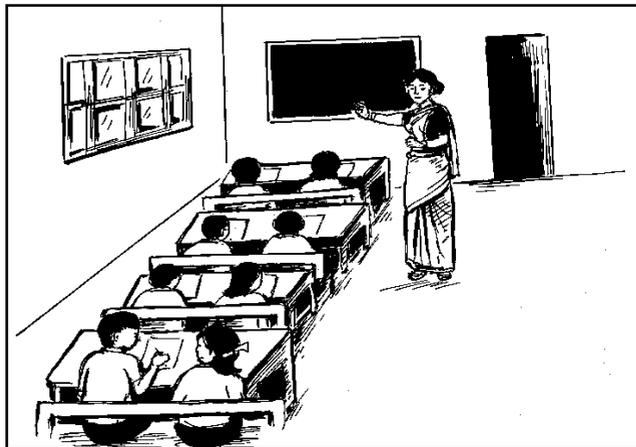
What is social justice?

Social Justice is the practice in which all people are treated equally. That means that everyone in the country has the same opportunities. Women are allowed to go to school and work as doctors, lawyers and teachers. They can make choices about how they want to spend money and what should be done with their family's land or business. Women are not sold into forced labor or



abused physically by their husbands or strangers. Social justice is when women earn equal pay with men for doing equal work.

Just as women have equal opportunities, members of lower castes also have equal opportunities. Dalits, like Biswakarmas and Chamars, can travel anywhere, find any job, go to school and cook and clean in anyone's house without a problem. When they walk down the street people do not look the other way but are happy to shake their hand and let them enter their house.



Social justice means that boy and girl children are not forced to work but rather go to school, are fed well and have time to play with their friends.

Individuals are not arrested without good reason and if they are arrested they are given the time and resources to defend themselves properly in an attempt to prove their innocence.



Social justice means that all citizens are able to participate in their political system, speak their minds, demonstrate peacefully and express their opinions. As long as the individual's actions do not hurt others then that individual should be able to move freely throughout the country and say and do what he or she wants.

Social justice is when everyone in the country is treated fairly, given respect and protected by the law. People have the ability to live long and healthy lives and have access to the information and resources needed for a decent standard of living.



Social justice means fairness, and situations can be fair or unfair in different ways. For instance, someone may or may not get their fair share of something that is distributed, like water, food or fodder. Someone may not get a fair chance to explain his or her side of the story. Maybe someone is arrested and jailed without a fair chance to prove his or her innocence or suffers a punishment that is unfair in relation to his or her conduct.

Activity

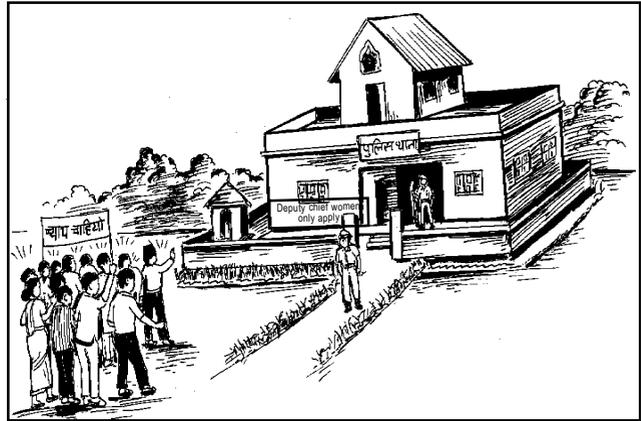
Now that we understand what social justice is, let's see if we can identify when we or someone else we know is being treated unjustly. Read the story below and identify the many ways in which Sunil and Gobinda limit others' opportunities and do not treat everyone fairly.



Sunil works as the police chief in Khushi Shahr. He has some strange ideas about what is fair. One time he needed to hire a deputy chief and hung a sign up that said, "Deputy Police Chief Wanted. Women Only Apply." A number of men said, "Women only? We can do the job too, we are qualified."

Sunil replied, "I don't want men deputies around here. Women work better than men."

Some of the townspeople thought it was unfair that men did not have the chance to be deputy just because they are men. They told Sunil, “You are not fair.”

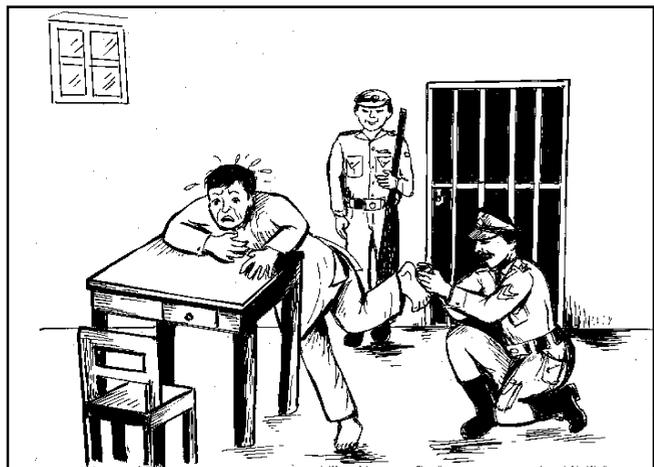


Gobinda was the judge in Khushi Shahar; he too had strange ideas about what is fair. One time Sunil arrested a 10-year old boy for stealing a piece of candy. Gobinda



sentenced him to a year in jail with adult prisoners. Gobinda sentenced a bank robber to pay Rs 3,000 fine because the robber promised never to do it again. “Gobinda doesn’t seem to know how to make an appropriate punishment for the crime!” the villagers complained.

One time Sunil needed to find out who robbed a villager’s home. To find out, Sunil tickled the feet of a prisoner to make him tell who committed the robbery. Sunil tickled so hard and so long the prisoner nearly died laughing.



Later that day, Sunil was speaking to Gobinda in court:

Sunil: Your honor, five witnesses have said that this man was nowhere near the scene of the crime when it happened.

Gobinda: Why did you arrest him, Sunil?

Sunil: Well, he looked like a criminal.



Gobinda: That's not fair, Sunil!

Activity

Write in your copy the answers to the questions below. As you answer the questions, keep in mind what we learned about social justice.

1. What did Sunil do that was unjust? Why was it unjust?
2. What should Sunil have done?
3. What did Gobinda do that was unjust? Why was it unjust?
4. What should Gobinda have done?
5. Examine your list of Sunil and Gobinda's unjust actions. Which are problems of:
 - Fair ways to distribute something among members of a group?
 - Fair ways to correct a wrong or injury?
 - Fair ways to gather information and make decisions?
6. Describe in your copy an experience where either you or someone you know was treated unjustly? What happened and what about the experience was unfair? Also write down in your copy, what, if anything, the person did to protest the injustice.

Activity

Find an article in a newspaper or listen to a program on the radio that demonstrates someone treating another unjustly. Write in your copy a description of this unfair treatment and describe why it is unfair. Also write about what should have taken place in the situation you describe. Your class will break up into groups. Each person in the group should present the situation you have found and discuss with your classmates why the situation describes injustice. Discuss, in your story, what this family or individual can do to defend him or herself from unjust treatment.

CONCEPT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

We, as people of Nepal and as citizens of the world, are entitled to particular rights just because we are born and exist in the world. These rights are called **Human Rights** and include:

- ❑ The right to life
- ❑ The right to live freely
- ❑ The right to a standard of living adequate for our health and well-being
- ❑ The right to protection in times of need
- ❑ The right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health
- ❑ The right to work and to work in just and favorable conditions
- ❑ The right to food and housing
- ❑ The right to privacy and to family life

Human rights also include those rights and freedoms necessary for self respect, creativity and intellectual and spiritual expression, for example they include:

- ❑ The right to education and to access to information
- ❑ The right to practice any religion we choose
- ❑ The right to our own opinions and our public expression of these opinions
- ❑ The right to gather together freely
- ❑ The right to participate in the political process
- ❑ The right to participate in cultural life

Human rights also include those rights necessary for freedom and our physical safety, such as:

- ❑ The right to be free from slavery or servitude
- ❑ The right to personal security
- ❑ The right to be free from arrest or imprisonment without cause
- ❑ The right to be free from torture and cruel, inhuman or humiliating treatment or punishment

These human rights apply to everyone, no matter their race, color, sex, language, religion, political opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or status.²

We can understand these rights as all being equal. In other words, a person cannot have one right but not another. Also, we cannot give up these rights voluntarily; they belong to us.

Now that we are familiar with what human rights are, let's see if we can tell when these rights are violated. Figuring this out can sometimes be difficult to do. Here are some examples.

One of our human rights is our Right to Life. If we, or someone else we know, are killed then our right to life is violated.

Another human right is our Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Physical and Mental Health. If we, or someone we know, are physically abused then our human right is violated.

Read the situations below and see if you can tell which human right is violated in each situation. In some cases more than one human right is violated at a time. When you do this exercise, refer to the list of human rights above. Write your answers down in your copy and give a reason as to why you came up with your answer.

1. At the end of the month, Nirmala received her wages. She received Rs 3,500 for the month. She was upset and angry when she learned that Jitendra received Rs 5,000 for doing the same type and amount of work.



2. While Saran was participating in a peaceful protest, the police arrested him, dragged him to the police station and put him in jail. That night three angry men asked Saran why he participated in the protests. As they were talking to him, another man walked in and said, “You are guilty of rebellion against the government. You will receive 10 years in prison.”



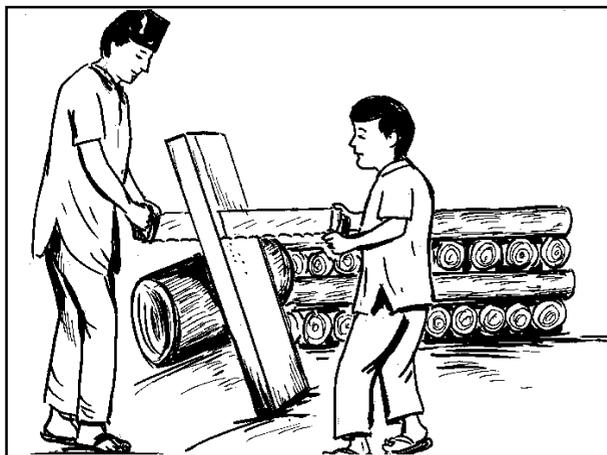
3. A 10-year old girl is born into a poor family. The parents have no money for food and decide to sell their daughter to a man who was visiting the village. The man gave the parents Rs 2,000 and after taking the girl sold her for Rs 6,000 to a brothel.

4. Shyam, a member of the Dalit caste, left his village and tried to find a job as a house worker. No family would hire him because of his low caste and Shyam was forced to work in a metal factory.



5. When Shanti went to the telephone company to request that the company fix her phone line, the phone company's employee demanded, for his personal use, Rs 150 before he promised to put a formal request into the company.
6. When Hari, a member of the Chamar caste, walks down the street, people look away and never meet his eyes. People consider him dirty.

7. An 8-year old child is taken out of school and forced to work 16 hours a day in a saw mill. At the mill, very little food is provided for him and he is not allowed to go outside and play.



8. A VDC official can decide who in the village receives fodder for his or her land. He always gives the fodder to his friends in the village and never to the other villagers.

Write in your copy the answers to these questions.

1. How are the situations described above similar to experiences you have had or seen others have? List at least three examples.
2. What customs, rules or laws do you know of that are designed to promote these types of injustices? List at least three examples.
3. What customs, rules or laws do you know that are designed to promote fairness and just behavior? List at least three examples.

KEY COMPONENTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

Unlike some other governments in the world, Nepal's government recognizes the human rights of all citizens. But despite the government's recognition, our human rights still get violated. This happens, in part, because our government does not have the resources or capacity to change behavior throughout the entire country.

Another important reason why our human rights continue to be violated is because

many of us are not aware of what our rights are or how we can protect them. In many cases, we think we deserve a poor quality of life. If we are forced to work at a young age or if we are discriminated against because we are female or a member of a lower caste then we think we deserve it. We are not aware that we have the right to be treated better or that our human rights are violated.

Although there are many different types of human rights abuses, this section describes some of the most common abuses in Nepal.

Child Labor

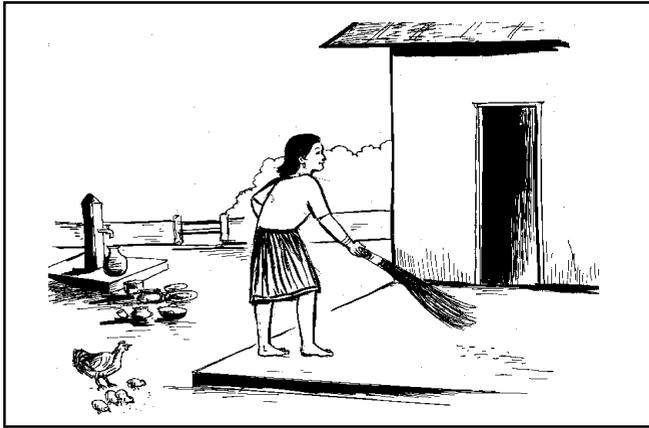
Harish is 10 years old and lives in Jorepati. He has 3 brothers and 3 sisters. Instead of going to school Harish works in a carpet factory. He works 12 hours every day. He almost never spends time outside. Because Harish does not go to school, he will likely spend his life working in the carpet factory. Due to the very poor working conditions in the factory, little light, no sanitation facilities and little food, it is very possible that Harish will get sick at an early age and die a young man.



Harish's life as a **child laborer** is not very different from millions of other children throughout Nepal.

About 2.6 million children in Nepal do not go to school but rather work in agriculture jobs, hotels, restaurants, factories or within the home. Studies show that children between the ages of six and nine work three hours a day, while children between 10 and 14 work five to six hours a day, with girls putting in nearly twice as many hours as boys.

Children work rather than go to school mostly because parents need their children to make money to help support the family. In addition, more than 80 percent of families in Nepal survive through farming. There are many tasks to do every day on the farm and parents need help with the work. Parents often do not believe that going to school will help their children become better farmers.



Another cause of child labor in Nepal is when families have only enough money to support one child in school. They almost always send their boy child rather than their girl child to school. They keep the girl at home to help with the housework or send the girl to another person's home to work.

A typical child worker:

- ❑ Has four to nine members in the family
- ❑ Stays with his or her parents, siblings, aunts and uncles
- ❑ Has low family income so the child is forced to work to help earn money for the family
- ❑ Lacks access to government services
- ❑ Lacks bathing and toilet facilities
- ❑ Is exposed to the sun, rain and cold
- ❑ Is severely malnourished
- ❑ Does not get any medical attention when he or she falls sick
- ❑ Suffers from nutrient deficiencies
- ❑ Has an unsatisfactory physical growth
- ❑ Is constantly exposed to direct smoke pollution and other environmental hazards



Write down the answers to these questions in your copy.

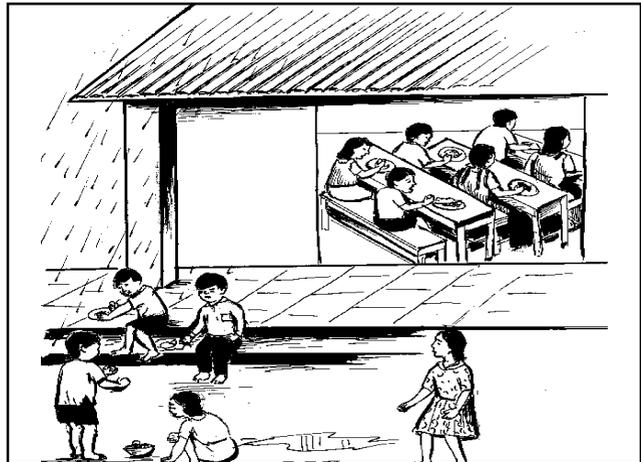
1. Do you know any child workers?
2. If so, what are their family lives like? Do their families have similar lives to what is described above as a "typical child worker"?

Arbitrary Arrest, Jailing and Torture

Another major human rights abuse common in Nepal is the jailing of innocent people as well as physical abuse within jail. Of course, not all people arrested are innocent, but our human rights laws require that any person arrested must be given the right to defend him or herself. They should be allowed to have a lawyer and adequate time and resources to prove their innocence. Before being convicted of a crime, the person is required to have a court hearing and possibly even a jury who can make a decision on his or her case. If arrested, the individual should not be physically harmed in any way. No one within the country, neither the police nor any other individual, has the right to kill or torture anyone. Nor do they have the right to kidnap or rob anyone. When this happens in Nepal, the individuals committing the act are violating our human rights.

Untouchables

Shreeram is 7 years old and a Dalit. He lives with his family in Kalenchok and goes to school in the village. He sits in class with members of all castes and communities including Brahmans, Chhetries and Magars. During lunchtime, his school provides milk powder and biscuits to the students. Shreeram and the other Dalits wait in one queue for their food and the Brahmans, Chhetries and Magars wait in another. The students in the upper caste always eat their food inside the classroom and the students from the lower castes are expected to eat outside. When it is raining and very windy and cold outside, Shreeram and his friends are not allowed in class to eat their food, they are forced by other students to eat in the rain.



Activity

Discuss these questions with your classmates and then write your responses in your copy.

1. Why do you think the students in Kalenchok won't allow Shreeram and his friends to sit inside and eat, even when it is raining?
2. Why do you think the students from the upper castes are acting this way?
3. Do you think they are behaving in accordance with tradition?

4. Are the upper caste students acting in accordance with what we know about social justice and human rights for all people?
5. What would you do if you were in the classroom with the Dalits, Biswakarmas and Chamars? Would you let Shreeram and his friends eat inside? Why or why not?

The experience that Shreeram and his friends have in Kalenchok School still occurs in Nepal.

Dalits are often treated unfairly. Often, lower caste members must get their water from a different tap than members of the upper castes. If a lower caste member earns money while in India, when he or she returns to Nepal he or she must get permission from an upper caste member to spend that money. The Dalits produce milk for sale in the market and others refuse to buy that milk. In one instance, a Dalit joined in a wedding ceremony taking place in Kathmandu. When others at the ceremony realized that a Dalit had joined in, they beat up the man and forced him to leave.

Caste discrimination goes against what we learned about social justice and human rights. These ideals are based on the premise that all people, no matter their race, ethnicity, gender, caste, marital status or age should be treated with respect and given the same opportunities that others receive.

Activity

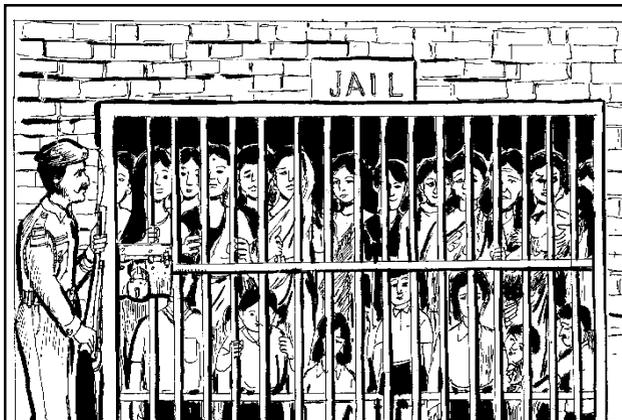
Write in your copy 5 other examples where members of lower castes are treated unfairly.

Bonded Laborers

For more than 150 years, some individuals in Nepal, mostly in the West, worked as **bonded laborers**. These people, called Kamaiyas, worked on farms and did not receive money for their work. They were provided a small amount of food and poor quality shelters and forced to work for many hours each day. The workers' children also were forced to labor on the farm. If a Kamaiya wanted to leave the farm, he was often threatened or beaten by the landowner. To protect the human rights of all citizens, the government of Nepal in 2000 abolished this practice. Now, the government and other independent groups are working to provide the freed laborers with clothing, land and schooling.

Prisoners' Rights

Mala was arrested and jailed for stealing jewelry. Mala has two children, ages 3 and 7. Because the children had nowhere else to go, they went with Mala to jail. The jail used to be a place where people kept horses. It was built about 70 or 80 years ago. The building is old and can fall down at anytime. Mala and her children spend their days in a very small room with 30 people in it. The room is so crowded . During the evening hours, prisoners are not allowed to leave the room and must find a place within the room to use as a toilet. When Mala or her children get sick, there is no doctor at the jail who can treat them.



Activity

As you answer the following questions in your copy, refer to the human rights list above.

1. Which of Mala's human rights are being abused?
2. Which of her children's human rights are being abused?
3. What do you think could be done to improve the living conditions of prisoners in jail?
4. Do you think improving these conditions is important? If so, why? If not, why not?

Women's Rights

Abuses against women and girls are extremely common in Nepal. They include limited access to adequate health care and nutrition, laws that prohibit women from owning property, social practices which limit women's ability to participate in the financial decision making of the family and the forced selling of girls into prostitution. Women's workload is much higher than men and women are discriminated against in the job market, they are not hired for the same kinds of jobs as men nor do they receive equal wages for the same work. A more detailed discussion on these human rights abuses takes place in unit 6.

Activity

Discuss these questions with your classmates and then write your responses in your copy.

1. Are the individuals described above able to protect themselves from having their human rights abused?
2. Is there something we, as citizens, can do to protect them?
3. What would you do if your human rights were abused?

NEPAL'S COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

For many years, Nepalis have struggled to create a government that protects every citizen's human rights. They wanted to have the freedom to speak publicly and organize in political groups. In the late 1950s, democracy was established for the first time in Nepal and Nepalis won their struggle to protect their human rights.

Unfortunately, democracy lasted only a short time. With the introduction of the Panchayat system citizens' rights were greatly limited as only a few people within the government made decisions. Citizens were not allowed to join in political organizations or speak out against the government. Among other rights, we were denied our fundamental right to express our opinions publicly. We were also denied the right to gather freely and participate in the political process. In this way, our human rights were violated.

Nepalis took to the streets to overthrow the Panchayat system and re-institute democracy in Nepal. They understood that democracy better helps to ensure that our human rights are protected. These courageous people who died and were jailed during the struggle succeeded in their efforts and democracy was re-established in 1990.



Only following the reintroduction of democracy in Nepal did our leaders begin to ratify the most important international human rights agreements. (To ratify means to approve and promise to uphold and an **international human rights agreement** is an agreement that could be signed by many countries in the world, whereby each country promises to protect the human rights of its citizens.) Human rights agreements are also known as human rights conventions or treaties.

With the restoration of democracy in 1990, Nepal became a signatory to several international instruments on human rights, including:

- International covenant on civil and political rights
- Optional protocol to international covenant on civil and political rights
- International covenant on economic, social and cultural rights
- Convention on elimination of all forms of discrimination against women
- Convention for suppression of traffic in persons and of exploitation or prostitution of others
- Convention on the rights of the child
- International convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination

- International convention on the suppression and punishment of the crime of apartheid
- Convention on the political rights of women
- Slavery convention of 1926
- Slavery convention of 1926 (amended)
- Supplementary convention on the abolition of slavery, slave trade and institutions and practices similar to slavery
- Convention against apartheid in sports
- Convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide

These conventions are legal documents that protect all citizens' rights to education. They also protect our rights to health services and to practice any cultural traditions we choose. The conventions protect our rights against domestic violence, forced prostitution, bonded labor and child labor. They protect our right against torture and arrest without cause. The conventions protect women's rights and individuals in the lower castes from being excluded from well paying jobs or access to good quality health care and nutrition.

When our democratic leaders ratified these treaties, they promised to do what they could to protect the human rights of their citizens.

In addition to signing international conventions, the founders of our democracy designed a Constitution that guarantees equal rights for everyone.



How Did the Writers of our Constitution Promote Justice?

Activity

Each of the following excerpts from the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 2072 B.S. is designed to protect and promote one or more of our human rights. As you read each selection write in your copy which human right the law means to protect. Each law may protect more than one right. Write your answers down on a piece of paper. When you are through, compare your responses with other classmates.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The right to life
The right to live freely
The right to a standard of living adequate for our health and well being
The right to physical protection in times of need
The right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health
The right to work and to work in just and favorable conditions
The right to food and housing
The right to privacy and to family life
The right to education and to access to information
The right to practice any religion we want
The right to our own opinions and the public expression of these opinions
The right to gather together freely
The right to participate in the political process
The right to participate in any cultural life
The right to freedom from slavery or servitude
The right to our personal security
The right to be free from arrest or imprisonment without cause
The right to freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman or humiliating treatment or punishment

Excerpts from the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal

Part 3: Section 1.2

No discrimination shall be made against any citizen in the application of general laws on grounds of religion, race, sex, caste, tribe or ideological conviction or any of these.

Part 3: Section 13.2

No press shall be closed or seized for printing any news item, article or other reading material.

Part 3: Section 14.5

No person who is arrested shall be detained in custody without being informed of the grounds for such arrest, nor shall he or she be denied the right to consult and be defended by a legal practitioner of his choice.

Part 3: Section 16

Every citizen shall have the right to demand and receive information on any matter of public importance; provided that nothing in this article shall compel any person to provide information on any matter about which secrecy is to be maintained by law.

Part 3: Section 18.1

Each community residing within the Kingdom of Nepal shall have the right to preserve and promote its language, script and culture.

Part 3: Section 19.1

Every person shall have the freedom to profess and practice his own religion as handed down to him from ancient times having due regard for traditional practices

Part 3: Section 20.1

Traffic in human beings, slavery, serfdom or forced labor in any form is prohibited. Any breaking of this provision shall be punishable by law.

Part 3: Section 20.2

No minor shall be employed to work in any factory or mine, or be engaged in any other hazardous work.

Part 8: Section 45.5

Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, election to membership in the House of Representatives shall be held on the basis of one-person-one-vote through secret ballots in accordance with the provisions of law.

Part 8: Section 45.6

Every Nepali citizen who has attained the age of eighteen shall be entitled to vote in one of the election constituencies in accordance with the provision of law.

Part 11: Section 88.2

The Supreme Court shall, for the enforcement of the fundamental rights conferred by this Constitution, for the enforcement of any other legal right for which no other remedy has been provided or for which the remedy even though provided appears to be inadequate or ineffective, or for the settlement of any constitutional or legal question involved in any dispute of public interest or concern, have the extraordinary power to issue necessary and appropriate orders to enforce such rights or settle the dispute.

Part 12: Section 98.1

The Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority may, in accordance with law, conduct or cause to be conducted inquiries into and investigations of, improper conduct or corruption by a person holding any public office.

Part 15: Section 104.1

The Election Commission shall, subject to the provisions of this Constitution and other laws, conduct, supervise, direct and control the elections to Parliament and local authorities at the village, town and district levels.³

In addition to signing international agreements and drafting a Constitution that promotes human rights, our government has taken other actions to protect citizens' rights to justice.

The Human Rights Commission

In 2000 (2058 B.S.), the government formed a **Human Rights Commission** to help address human rights violations within Nepal. The Commission has the power to: inquire into complaints regarding the violation of human rights; advise and assist the government in writing laws and undertaking steps to protect human rights; and make recommendations to the government on how better to follow international human rights agreements.

EVERY PERSON LIVING IN NEPAL has the right to make a complaint to the Commission if he or she suffers from a human rights abuse.



Guaranteeing social rights for all citizens is difficult. Governments must take an active role in designing laws and implementing fair practices. But our government cannot do everything. Citizens must also take an active role in securing their rights and protecting each other from unfair treatment.

Activities by Nongovernmental Organizations

Nepalis have formed **human rights nongovernmental organizations** that work in many parts of Nepal to help improve human rights conditions around the country. They help reduce poverty and inadequate food supplies. They help establish schools



and encourage both boy and girl children to attend. They set up health care facilities and inform Nepalis about safe health practices. Nongovernmental organizations work to limit child labor. They also work to protect girls from trafficking, to improve women's access to health care and access to property rights. These organizations are very active and help protect our human rights.

Unfortunately, although our government has ratified international agreements and drafted a Constitution and other laws that protect our human rights, still more needs to be done by our lawmakers and importantly, by the citizens of our country, to protect our human rights.

How can we respond to human rights abuses in Nepal ?

If we determine that our human rights have been violated, then we can take actions to protect ourselves or someone we know. By protesting the abuse, we may be able to stop the abuse from happening again.

As we live in a democracy, there are many opportunities for us to protest injustice. Some of these opportunities include:

- ❑ Going to the police to complain and requesting that they take steps to correct the wrong;
- ❑ Writing a letter to your government official;
- ❑ Meeting with an individual from a nongovernmental organization working on human rights issues to tell them what happened and ask for their help;
- ❑ Meeting with your Village Development Council official and requesting that he or she take action to correct the wrong;
- ❑ Making a direct complaint to representatives of the Human Rights Commission;
- ❑ Filing a court case against the wrongdoer; and
- ❑ Making a public statement about the event, maybe by writing a newspaper article.

Activity

Talk with your classmates about other opportunities available to you within your democracy to protest human rights abuses. Write down in your copy at least three more ways you can protest.

Write in your copy the answers to the questions below.

1. Which international conventions did our government ratify in 1991?
2. What type of information is included in these conventions?

3. What does it mean when our government ratifies an international convention?
4. What does our Constitution say about freedom of expression?
5. What does our Constitution say about discrimination against women or members of the lower castes?
6. What does our Constitution say about the right of citizens to participate in government decision-making?
7. What does our Constitution say about child labor?
8. Since citizens have the right to vote, as mandated by the Constitution, how can citizens influence political decisions?
9. When was the Human Rights Commission formed?
10. What are the Commission's responsibilities?
11. Who can file complaints with the Commission?
12. Are some Nepalis concerned with protecting citizens' human rights? If so, what are they doing?
13. What steps can we take to protest human rights abuses?

ACTIVITIES

For individual and group work:

1. Brothers and sisters of different ages often feel parents are not 'fair' and do not treat them equally. As you look at your family and other families in your neighborhood, notice how each child is assigned different tasks within the home. Identify what the boy and girl children's responsibilities are within the home. Are these responsibilities different? If so, how? Discuss with your classmates if you think the boy and girl children are already or should be treated equally.
2. In nearly every society, women have been treated unequally in comparison to men. For instance, although men in Britain have received university degrees for hundreds of years, women could not get a university degree until the mid 1900s. Why do you think this was so? Can you describe any present-day societies where women have fewer rights than men?
3. Which of these would you describe as socially just?
 - a) Medicines and medical treatment are available to everyone at a reduced rate because our government helps pay for the medicine and treatment.

- b) Medicines and treatment are free for poor people but are paid for at a profit rate by richer people.
 - c) Everyone pays the same amount for medicine and treatment. The amount covers only the costs of these items and does not allow for a profit to be made.
 - d) No one pays anything when ill, but everyone pays into a special health fund according to his or her income.
 - e) Every year, the government gives everyone a certain fixed amount for free medicine and treatment; above this amount individuals must pay for these services at a profit.
 - f) Women and children receive free treatment, all men pay at cost.
 - g) Treatment is only available at government hospitals for Hindus.
4. There has been a lot of petty stealing in your class - food, books, pens and small amounts of money. A very unpopular boy has just been caught taking money from a bag. The head has given the class captain the task of dealing with the situation. What would you do if you were the class captain?
 5. Have you ever felt unfairly treated at school? In what way? How did you feel? What did you do?
 6. "We are entitled to rights just because we exist". Until modern times, no one would have understood this idea. Why do we have these rights? Who gives them to us? What would you say to persuade someone who believes that these rights must be earned that indeed we are born with these rights.
 7. Many countries have insufficient food and housing for everyone, however, we all agree that everyone has the right to a decent standard of living. Whose duty is it to provide this standard of living?
 8. Child rights can be put under four headings: Survival, Development, Protection and Participation in Public Life. Below are some violations of child rights. Put them under the four headings. Some can fit under more than one.

Children used as soldiers	Extreme poverty	No school provision
Street children	Child marriage	Sexual abuse

Can you think of other violations that can fit under each of these headings?

9. More conflict of rights! Many town families have a household worker who is a poor child from the village. Are the child's rights MORE or LESS respected by living in poverty in the village or as a child laborer within a town family?
10. A person accused of terrorist acts has been formally charged and arrested. How should he be treated? What rights does he have? What rights has he temporarily forfeited?

Long Answer Questions:

Write at least 2-3 paragraph response to the following questions.

1. Does Nepal have laws protecting our human rights?
2. Give at least 3 examples of human rights violations common in Nepal.
3. Give at least 3 reasons why such violations exist if they are illegal.
4. What is social justice?
5. Why do we have human rights?
6. Describe briefly 3 rights concerned with physical survival, three concerned with self-respect and intellect and three concerned with security.
7. On what basis are many people discriminated against?
8. What does the Constitution say about children and work?
9. Why is child labor a bad thing?
10. How much force should the police have the right to use when arresting someone? How much force should the police have the right to use within a prison?
11. What does it mean to be detained in prison without charge?
12. List the minimum standards, which you think should be provided in all jails.
13. Why do you consider the use of torture to be right or wrong?
14. What is meant by a caste system?

15. What does Nepali law say regarding caste?
16. What is a bonded laborer?
17. Which human rights are violated for bonded laborers?
18. What is a convention and what does it mean to ratify a convention?
19. Ratification is easy: implementation is difficult. Explain.

Longer Answer Questions:

Write essays (no more than 2 sides of your copy) on some of the following statements or questions.

1. Describe the problems of eliminating child labor in Nepal.
2. Describe the human rights you consider most important and how they apply to yourself.
3. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of at least 4 different actions you could take to help stop girl trafficking or help a friend who was held by police for 10 days, severely beaten and then released without being charged.
4. Describe and discuss possible solutions to challenges our government faces in granting citizens the right to health, education and a reasonable standard of living.
5. What is the purpose of human rights conventions?
6. In many countries there are terrorists who are fighting for political change. They extort money, take hostages, possibly kill, and claim that this is the only way to have a more just system, with everyone enjoying their rights as humans. Do you think that such terrorism or political warfare is justified in any circumstance?

CONCLUSION

In this unit you have learned that:

- ❑ Social Justice is the practice in which all people, no matter their race, ethnicity, caste, gender, age, marital or economic status, are treated equally.
- ❑ We, as people of Nepal and as citizens of the world, are entitled to particular rights just because we are born and exist in the world. These rights are called human rights.
- ❑ Human rights include rights related to life, freedom, health care, education, working conditions, physical protection, self-respect and intellectual and spiritual expression.
- ❑ The government of Nepal recognizes the human rights of all citizens.
- ❑ Despite the government's recognition, human rights abuses continue in Nepal. The most common of these abuses include: child labor, caste discrimination, arbitrary arrests and jailing, physical abuse as well as abuses against prisoners and women.
- ❑ After becoming a democracy, the government of Nepal signed important international human rights conventions whereby the government promises to protect citizens' human rights.
- ❑ After becoming a democracy, our leaders drafted a Constitution that protects our human rights.
- ❑ Due to a lack of resources and capacity, the government of Nepal is unable to protect the human rights of all people. We, as citizens, must take an active role in protecting others and ourselves from human rights abuses.
- ❑ Citizens in the country have organized into nongovernmental organizations to protect the human rights of Nepalis. They work to reduce poverty and improve health care for all citizens, protect girls from being sold into prostitution and encourage access to education for all children.

- Because we live in a democracy, there are many opportunities for us to protest injustice. Some of these opportunities include:
 1. Going to the police to complain and requesting that they take steps to correct the wrong;
 2. Writing a letter to your government official;
 3. Meeting with an individual from the nongovernmental organization working on human rights issues to tell them what happened and ask for their help;
 4. Meeting with your Village Development Council official and requesting that he or she take action to correct the wrong;
 5. Making a direct complaint to representatives of the Human Rights Commission;
 6. Filing a court case against the wrongdoer;
 7. Making a public statement about the event, maybe by writing a newspaper article.

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

UNIT 5

INTRODUCTION

Wherever there are humans, there is “development.” Wherever there is development, humans are interacting with the environment. People satisfy their basic needs by using the earth’s natural resources - water, air, plants, fish, wildlife and soil. They use these resources for firewood, drinking, bathing water, farming, building furniture and houses, medicine and food. In the process of satisfying human needs, however, people can severely harm or destroy the environment that supplies these resources. Too often, human activity damages the environment’s capacity to satisfy human demands. When this happens, the quality of people’s lives inevitably suffers.¹

Nepal is not different from other countries; every nation around the world faces environmental problems. Fortunately, however, environmental problems are no longer considered inevitable. The more community organizations, citizens and government leaders take responsibility for their own community or country’s natural resources, the more our resources have a chance of lasting. Throughout the world, we are beginning to look for ways to develop our country in a sustainable way. This means we are finding ways to improve the quality of our lives today, using our water, air, soil and plants, without destroying these essential resources to allow our children and our children’s children to one day use these resources to survive.

PURPOSE OF UNIT

This unit intends to help students identify and describe some of the key environmental problems in Nepal. Just as importantly, however, **this unit is designed to help students identify ways in which we, as citizens of a democracy and members of our communities, can take responsible action to address these important environmental problems.**

After studying this unit you should be able to:

- Identify and describe some of the most important environmental problems in Nepal
- Explain why our natural resources are so important to our existence
- Identify how we, as citizens of our country, can help protect our resources to improve the quality of our lives and future generations

STRUCTURE OF UNIT

This unit is divided into the following sub-units:

- Concept of Sustainable Development
- Key Components of Sustainable Development
- Policies of the Nepal Government for Sustainable Development
- Activities
- Conclusion

TERMS TO KNOW

Please pay attention to the key words listed below. Become familiar with their definitions and how they are used in the text. You will need to understand these terms to answer the questions at the end of this unit.

Ecosystem
Development
Sustainable Development
Air Pollution
Noise Pollution
Deforestation
Rubbish
Biodegradable
Recycle
Water Quality

CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Our Ecosystem

The world we live in is a world of interdependence. Animals and plants live together because they need each other. People are part of this system because we depend on animals and plants to live.

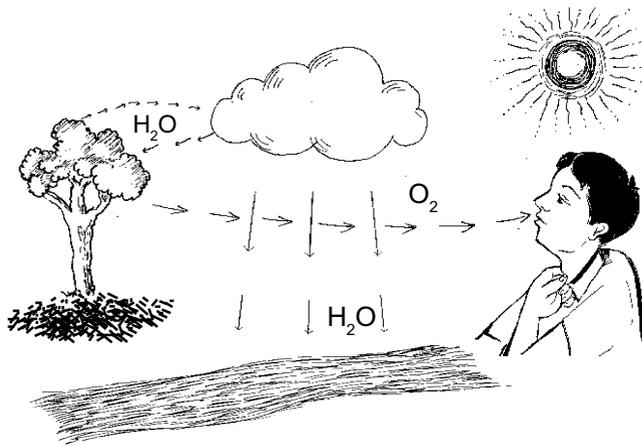
We depend on non-living things like the sun, soil and water to grow our plants. We use plants to eat, preserve our food, and care for our sick. We depend on water to drink. Without clean water we would die.

Everything within our environment is interconnected.

INTERCONNECTION 1

The sun provides the heat and light needed by all living things.

Plants use sunlight, water and soil to grow. Plant leaves give oxygen and water to the air.



The oxygen in the air is inhaled by humans and provides an essential life source.

Water that is released into the air by plants rises into the sky and forms clouds. When it rains, the clouds give back the water to the earth by filling our rivers and watering our soil.

Humans drink and bathe in the water from the rivers. We also eat the millet, grain, mustard, potatoes and other foodstuffs produced from the watered soil.

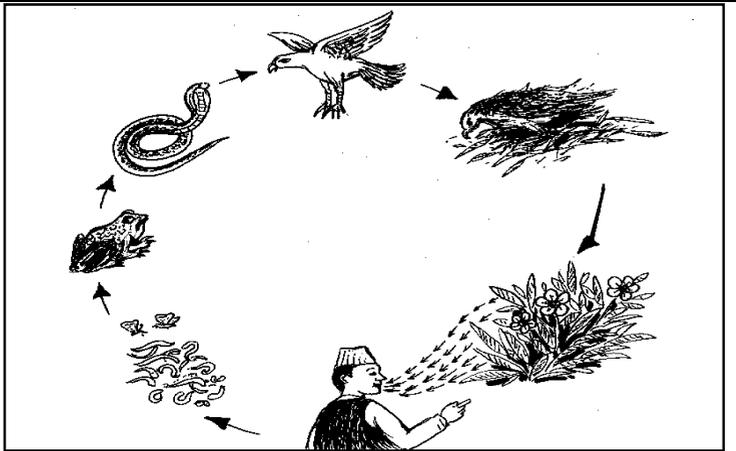
INTERCONNECTION 2

Most insects are plant eaters. Some of them help to return dead plant material to the soil.

Frogs and toads are insect eaters. There would be many more insects that can harm humans without insect eaters.

Snakes eat frogs and toads. Snakes will live where there are frogs and insects to eat.

Hawks hunt for snakes and other small animals. Since hawks can fly, their hunting area is very large.



When an animal like the hawk dies, its body is used by other animals for food. Or the hawk's body is returned to the soil and enriches the soil.

Grain and other food products grow better and stronger in soil rich in nutrients.

Without healthy soil, our food doesn't grow and people and animals don't have food to eat.²

All living things, together with all non-living things, form our **Ecosystem**. People are a part of this ecosystem, and we must take care of the various parts of this system on which we depend to give us what we need to survive and be healthy.

People depend on essential resources like:

- Water
- Sunlight
- Soil
- Air
- Plants

Can you imagine a life without clean water, healthy soil to grow our food or plants to provide oxygen to the air? How would humans survive?

The answer most likely is that humans would not survive.

For this reason we need to do everything we can to protect our natural resources. If humans keep destroying our natural environment at the rate that we are doing today, we will not have any resources remaining for future generations.

Activity

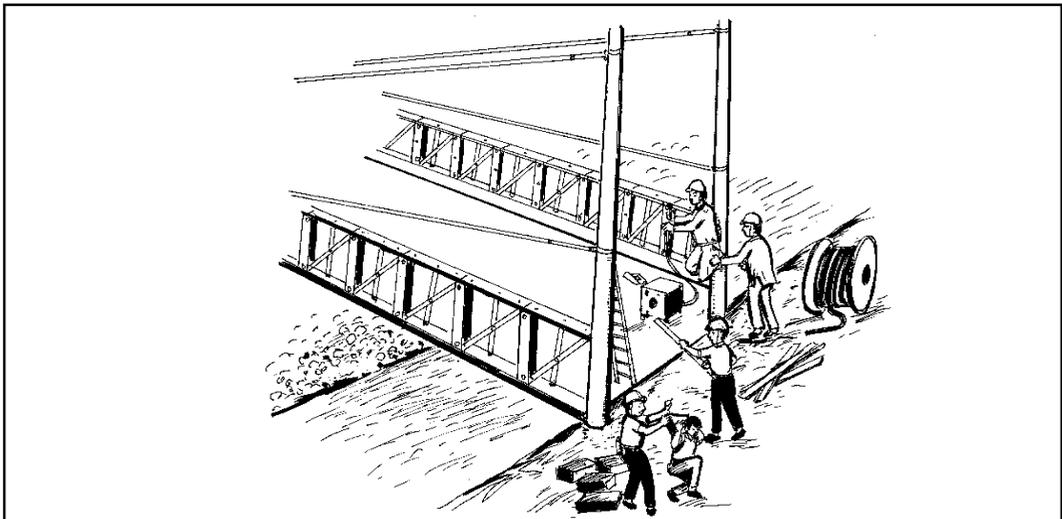
Your teacher will break the class up into groups. Each group should come up with a scenario like the ones described in INTERCONNECTION 1 and 2. Each interconnection should have at least 5 parts and humans should be at the end of the chain of connections. Your group should draw out the interconnections using arrows and pictures. When you are finished, present your interconnection to the class.

Development

Development is when humans interact with the environment, removing natural resources and using these resources for people's well being.

In Nepal, we see our government, the Nepali people and local and international groups attempting to develop our country by building bridges, constructing houses, introducing new techniques to more effectively farm the land, helping to dispose of rubbish in a healthy and safe way, educating our children and creating industries that produce products to sell within and outside of Nepal.

Development projects such as these intend to help us improve the quality of our lives. They try to make our day-to-day activities easier and more productive.



Unfortunately, if development is carried out carelessly, without conscious thought or within communities where the people know little or care little about their environment, then development can do harm to our natural resources.

The same projects that are intended to help improve our country can help destroy the essential resources that we need to survive.

For instance, cars were built to help people travel faster and easier from one place to another. Unfortunately, we do not take care of our cars very well. We add gasoline mixed with other chemicals and we let our engines become old. So, when we use our cars, our cars end up releasing chemicals into the air that pollute the air and make it difficult for us to breathe. The cars create toxins that once in the air, poison our lungs.

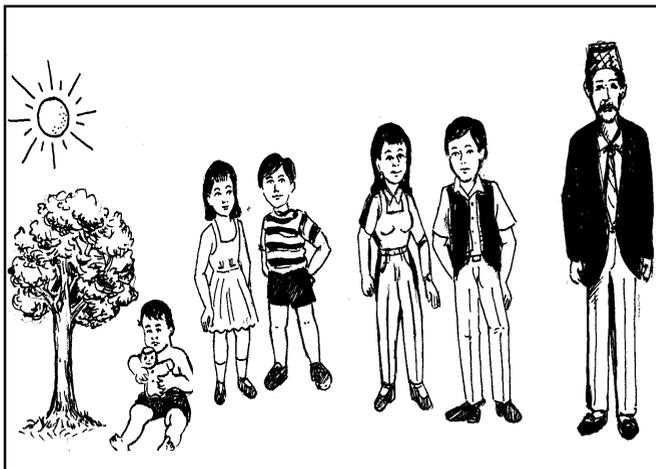
The more people drive cars, especially in the cities, the more cars pollute the air and the more people's bodies become ill from the toxins.

If we took better care of our cars, they would not be so polluting to our vital natural resource, air, and we would protect ourselves, and our children, from all sorts of illness caused from air pollution.

Sustainable Development

The concept of **sustainable development** means that we develop our country in a way that does not harm our essential natural resources.

Sustainable development requires that we improve the quality of our lives today, using our water, air, soil and plants, but not destroying these essential resources so that our children and their children's children will be able to use these resources in the future to survive.



Sustainable development means that we interact with our environment in a way that allows us to live happily and healthily.

Answer the questions below.

1. What is our ecosystem?
2. List some of the natural resources that humans need to survive. Explain how we use these resources to survive.
3. What is development?
4. How can it be helpful for people?
5. What are some potential problems with development?
6. What is sustainable development?
7. Give an example of developing in a sustainable way.

Write a song, either by yourself or in groups of two, about the need to develop our country and the possible problems development can create. Include in the song reasons why it is so important to protect our natural resources. Write the song in your copy and either show it or sing it to your teacher, friends and family members.

KEY COMPONENTS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

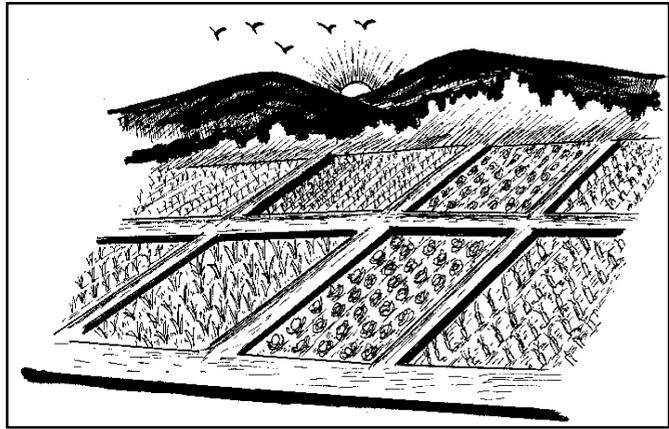
It takes a long time to permanently damage our natural resources. If the destruction we create today through cutting down trees, polluting our water and air and destroying our soil does not harm us directly it most definitely will destroy the quality of life for our children and our children's children.

It is difficult to believe that what we do today has long-term effects for our country. Often we think that our actions matter only for the present. For this reason, we often act carelessly, without conscious thought that we are destroying the most essential resources we need to survive.

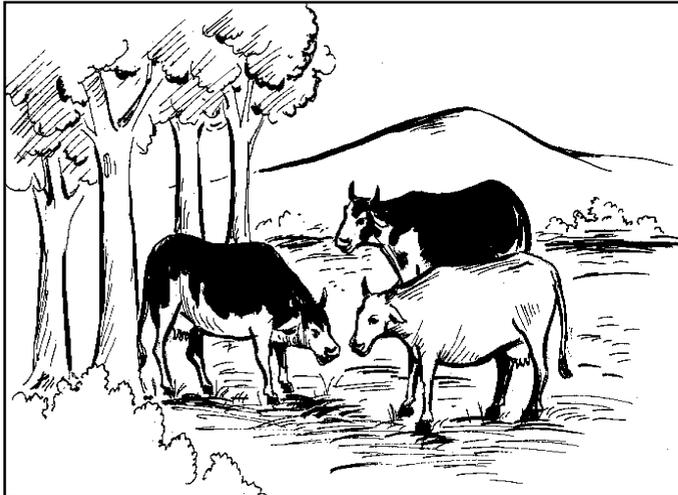
Below is a description of some of the key environmental problems facing Nepal. Not all problems are mentioned. After reading the descriptions see if you can come up with other environmental problems that face your communities.

Our Soil

Good quality soil is essential to allow us to produce healthy, nutritious crops to eat. Healthy soil allows plants to grow that produce oxygen for human consumption.



But humans often destroy the soil by building too many roads.



Another way we destroy the soil is by allowing our animals to graze too much in the same places. Our animals take all the nutrients out of the soil and the soil is not able to grow plants anymore.

We destroy the soil by using bad fertilizers.

We also destroy the soil by planting too many crops year after year on the same land, not allowing the soil to regain its own nutrients.

We destroy the soil by cutting down all the trees. The trees provide the soil with nutrients, just as the soil gives nutrients to the trees, which make the trees grow. Trees soak up the water from the rains. Without trees, the rainy season can lead to landslides and flooding.

As humans overuse the soil without caring for it properly, we destroy it and limit its productivity.

Already in Nepal, it is becoming more and more difficult to find land suitable for agriculture. Increasingly, farmers are forced to clear land on hillsides and other lands that are unproductive. Soon we will run out of good places to plant our crops or feed our animals.

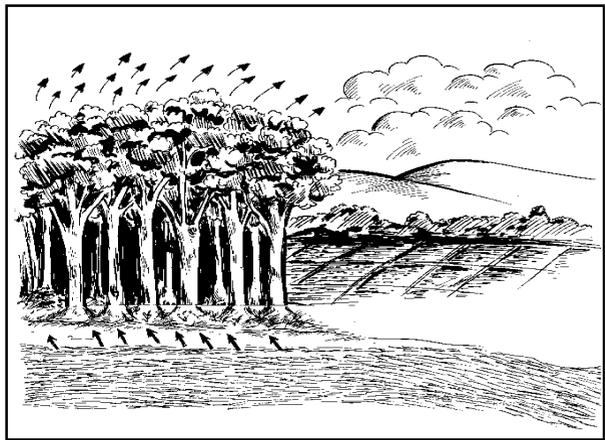
Over time, food, trees and other plants will stop growing on our soil.

Our Forests

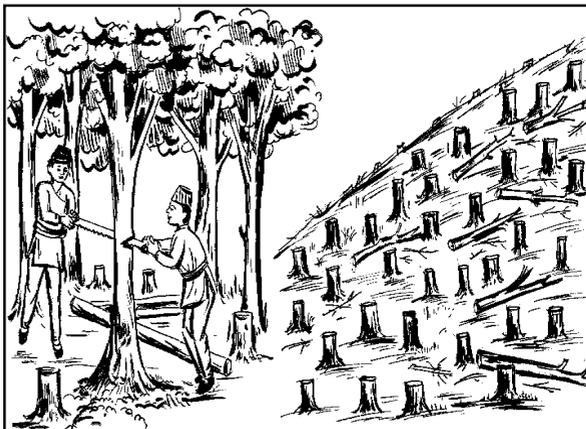
In Nepal, forests ranging from lush tropical jungles to desert scrub provide people with a wide range of valuable products. Nepalis take timber, fruit, nuts, and other foods from the forests. We eat the animals that live in the forests and the plants that grow there.

The plants and trees in our forests produce the oxygen that we breathe.

The forests also soak up the water from the rain to help prevent flooding and landslides throughout the country.



Forests provide recreational opportunities for walking and hiking as well as scenic beauty. Many of our forests are popular tourist attractions, and thus a source of income for our economy.



Unfortunately, throughout Nepal, timber companies and people living in or near the forests cut down the forests and trees far faster than the plants can grow back. This is called **deforestation**.

We take wood from the forest for firewood and to build our houses.

We bring our animals to the forest to eat.

We clear away large plots of land in the forest to make space for villages.

We build roads that cut through the forests.

Because we are overusing our natural resources, if we do not replace them, we may ultimately lose all the forest products that we now use for food, medicine, firewood and planting.

Problems are already beginning. For instance, today a huge wood shortage exists in the Himalayas. Shortages force people to spend an ever-increasing amount of time searching for wood and to take every branch within reach. In some places, not a tree or bush is left standing.



Where wood fuel has been used up, for example in the Terai, people resort to alternatives such as animal dung. Dung is a valuable agricultural fertilizer; but when it is burned rather than plowed into the soil, agricultural productivity suffers.

Our Rubbish

Most of the **rubbish** created by humans are foodstuffs and are **biodegradable**. That means that if left in the soil exposed to air, the foodstuffs would break down and provide nutrients to the soil. Some people in Nepal separate the biodegradable rubbish from the rest of the rubbish to return it to the soil.

Other wastes created by humans can be **recycled** which means it can be made into something else, or used again. These wastes include: plastic, rubber, paper, aluminum and glass. Responsible industries are buying back returned plastic, glass and paper and increasingly citizens are separating these items from the rest of the rubbish for re-use.



Some wastes are neither biodegradable nor recyclable and should be put in places far from humans. Many countries use landfills to store their wastes. Landfills are huge holes in the ground.

In Nepal, almost all the waste, no matter if it is biodegradable or recyclable, gets either thrown on the streets and left there, burned or collected and disposed of in dumping spaces close to cities and water supplies.

Much of this rubbish contains highly toxic chemicals that can be very harmful to humans. Due to a lack of a good alternative, hospital waste, which includes dangerous toxins, is thrown out on the street and mixes in with the city's rubbish.

Leaving rubbish on the streets is unhealthy for humans. Rats and other animals are attracted to the rubbish and catch diseases that they then spread to people.



Putting rubbish near cities or near water supplies pollutes the air and water. The hazardous chemicals contained in the rubbish get transported into the air or water and passed on to people.

Burning rubbish especially in the cities can also be harmful as it creates additional air pollution, making it difficult for us to breathe and making us sick.

In rural areas, however, burning non-toxic rubbish can be a good way to clean up our villages.

What can we do to improve our waste management problem?

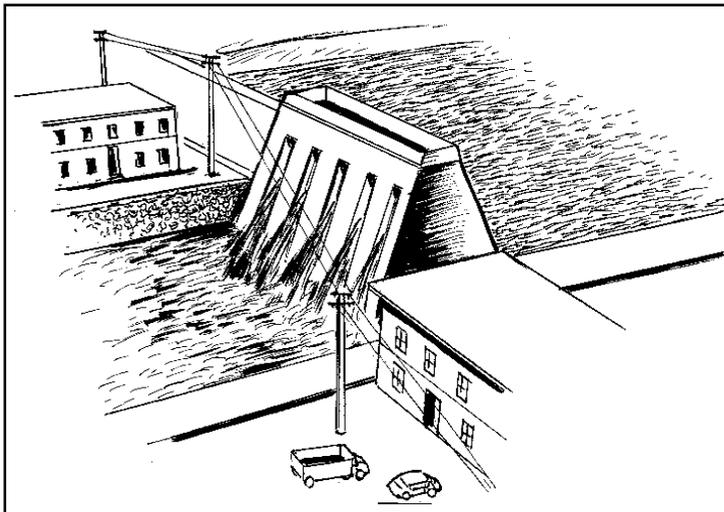
To conserve our natural resources, food wastes should be returned to the soil. This adds both nutrients and organic materials to the soil, increasing its fertility, which we so desperately need.

We should reuse or recycle the wastes that can be reused or recycled.

Wastes that are not biodegradable or recyclable should be disposed of in a landfill. The landfill should be far from the community, either by distance or by a screen of plants. Animals should not be allowed to feed at the site as the diseases they get can spread to people.

Our Water

Water is one of the major natural resources in Nepal. Our country has more than 6,000 rivers.



We use our rivers as a source of water for drinking, bathing and cooking. Water helps our crops grow and our forests thrive. Without water, people would die. Water is the most essential of all our natural resources.

Unfortunately, our **water quality** is often not fit for cooking, drinking or bathing. Drinking water in most rural areas is biologically contaminated. For example, the Bagmati River, which drains into the Kathmandu Valley, is highly polluted even before it reaches the city.

The water flowing through our cities and some rural areas includes various types of bacteria, disease causing agents and organic matter such as sewage and animal waste. This poor quality water makes people sick.

Poor water quality results mostly from a lack of good rubbish disposal and sewage sites. Sewage is the term used for human wastes and it can be properly disposed of by using latrines and cleaning systems. However, most often in Nepal, instead of being processed and cleaned, sewage from households and individuals gets directly released into our river system.



The poor quality of our water harms people's health, ruins our soil and hurts our crop cultivation.

Our Air

Our air is a special combination of gases, which most living things need to survive. About 78% of the air in our atmosphere is nitrogen gas and about 21% is oxygen gas. The remaining one percent is made up of small amounts of other gases, of which carbon dioxide is the most important.³ When our air contains smoke, chemicals like pesticides and exhaust fumes, the air is harmful for us to breathe.

Although our air is an extremely important natural resource, and essential for us to live, we **pollute the air** we breathe in both urban and rural areas.

In the cities, air pollution mostly results from vehicle exhaust, industry fumes and the burning of rubbish and fuels. Vehicles that are poorly maintained and that use poor quality gasoline cause increased pollution in our air.



In the rural areas, women often burn coal or other fuels in their kerosene burners or fire pits. Their houses do not have many windows and the women breathe in the smoke coming from their kitchens. The air they breathe is polluted with poisonous chemicals that are harmful to their health.

Air pollution in urban and rural areas causes illnesses for humans. Bronchitis, pneumonia and other respiratory problems are common in Nepal.

Noise

Although **noise pollution** does not cause any direct damage to people, it can harm us psychologically. We become less efficient, more irritated and more stressed when our surroundings are noisy. The more people in the cities, the more noise they create.



The causes of noise pollution in cities include: cars and tempos, heavy trucks, drivers honking their horns and dogs barking.

If we take better care of our cars, use noise-reducing devices, and honk our car horns only when necessary, we can lower the loud and bothersome sounds in the cities.

The People

Over the years, the size of Nepal's population has increased considerably. As our country continues to grow in population, we need more of our natural resources to provide for everyone in the country. Because we are not using our resources as effectively as we could, the more people we have in our country and on our planet, the more we destroy our environment for ourselves and future generations.

Review the following chart and answer the questions below.

Growth of Population in Nepal

1911-2000		
Year	Population (000)	Growth Rate (% per year)
1911	5639	
1921	5574	- 0.13
1930	5533	- 0.07
1940	6284	1.16
1952/54	8473	2.3
1961	9413	1.65
1971	11556	2.07
1981	15023	2.66
1991	18491	2.08
1996	20832	2.41
1998	21843	2.39
2000	22904	2.43

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics

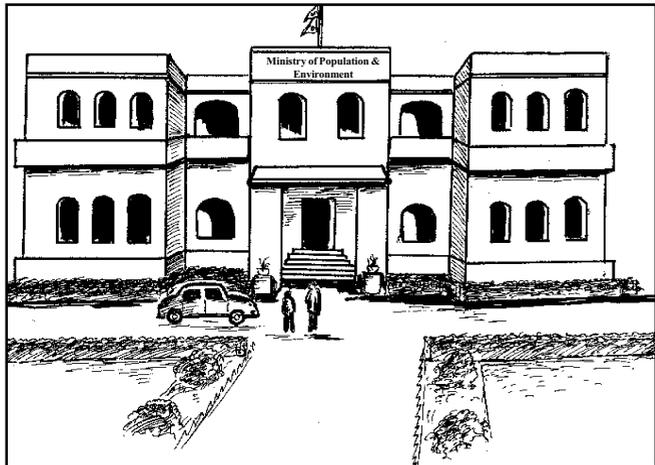
1. Create a graph using the numbers in the chart above. Connect all the points on the graph with a line.
2. What was Nepal's population in 1911?
3. What was the population in 1961 and 1991? Does the chart show an increase between these years?
4. How much has the population increased from 1911 to 2000? If so, what does this mean for Nepal's environmental resources?
5. Noting the expected increase in Nepal's population over the next twenty years, what effect do you think that will have on the quality of our air, our forests, our water and noise in the cities?
6. Can you think of any ways to minimize these harmful effects?
7. Knowing that an increase in population will harm our environment, do you have any ideas of how to control our population?

There are many ways in which we notice environmental damage. In many parts of the country, the water we drink is unhealthy and the air we breathe is not clean.

Look around your community and identify ways in which your community's environment is either damaged now or looks like it will be in the future. Use some of the examples of pollution we mentioned above to help you identify problems. Also see if you can come up with other types of pollution in your communities. Ask people who live in your neighborhood if they notice the types of pollution you identify. Find out if the pollution bothers them and if they feel they can do something to help. If you find someone who does think pollution is a problem ask what types of solutions they propose. After you have interviewed at least five people, write about this entire experience in your copy. Write what you found are the environmental problems in your community and what others had to say about these problems. Write if they, or you have any ideas on how to solve these problems. Add pictures to your story and fill-up at least 2 pages with writing.

POLICIES OF NEPAL'S GOVERNMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In 1990, while writing our democratic constitution, the writers included language that encourages our government to do what it can to protect Nepal's natural resources. The Constitution discusses the importance of preserving our environment, such as land, air, water, plants and the protection of rare wildlife, forests and vegetation. The Constitution also requires development activities to be conducted in a sustainable way, a way that does not harm the country's natural resources.



The Government of Nepal passed the Environment Protection Act of 1997 and other environmental protection rules. The government also established the Environment Protection Council in 1993 to help in the planning and design of environmental policies. In 1995, our government created the Ministry of Population and Environment tasked with the responsibility of helping to design and implement environmental protection laws and policies.

In various government proposals, our democratic lawmakers set priorities for protecting our natural resources. For instance, the government encourages environmental education in all school levels as well as citizen participation in the decision-making of government leaders and development workers. The government created a framework for policies emphasizing the sustainable use of resources giving priority to the safe provision of food, pure drinking water, education, population control and environmental education.

Our democratic government encourages the people of Nepal to get involved in the development of our country. The government supports Nepalis' participation in the decision-making of government leaders, community organizations and development workers.

What can we do in a democracy to develop in a safe way?

ALL PEOPLE within our democracy can help to protect our natural environment:

Community members living in an area where development projects occur

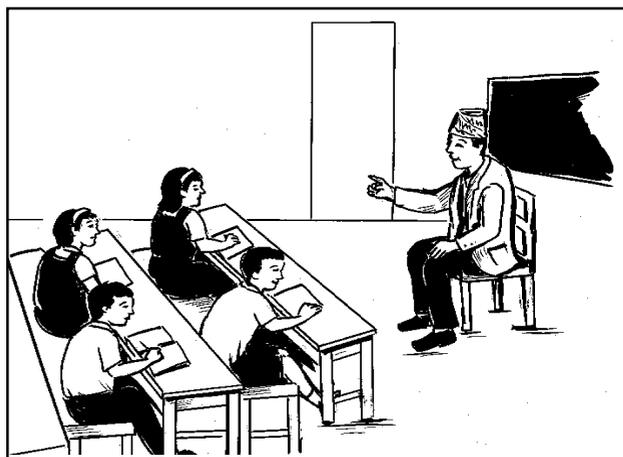
Government leaders supervising or approving projects

Forest workers

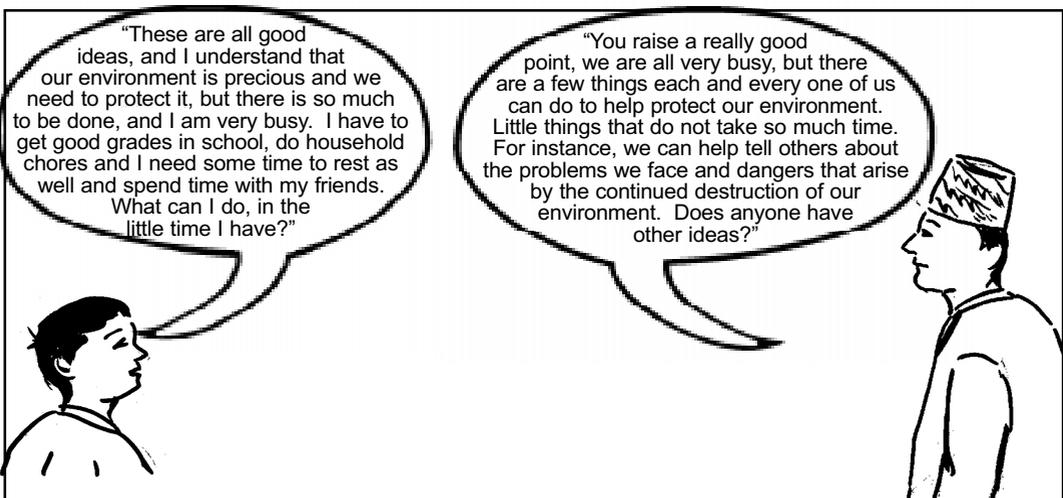
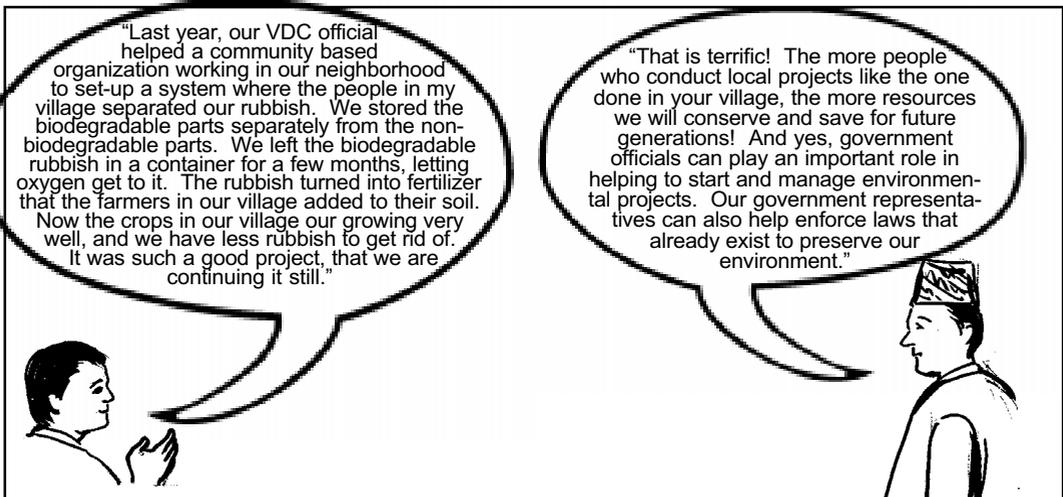
Community based organization leaders

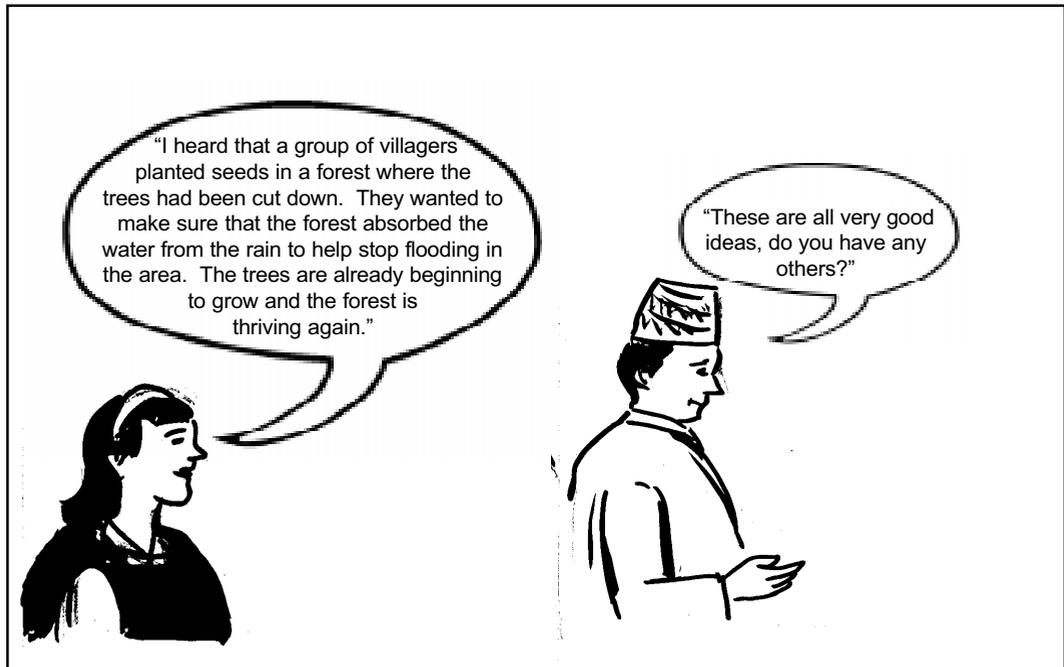
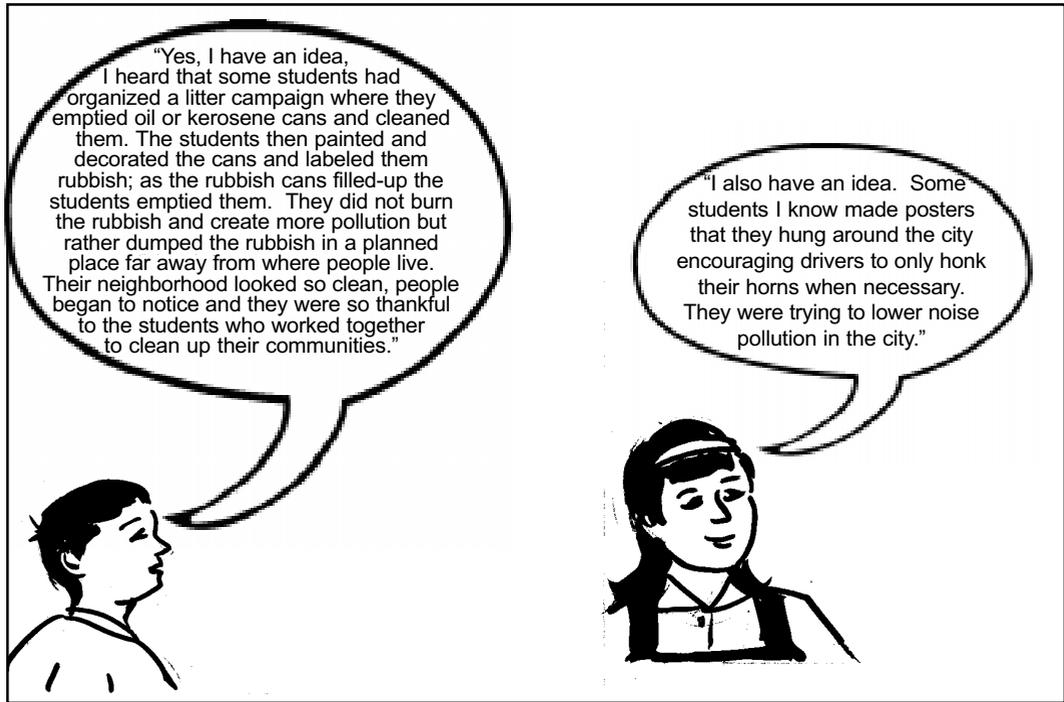
Teachers

Students



Tachen is an environmental teacher; he is talking to some students at a local school. See what they say.





Answer Tachen's question from the previous page in your copy. Come up with at least 4 ideas and explain the ideas in at least 5 sentences each.

Now read the story below and answer the questions following the story.

Some citizens of Nayagoan noticed that the forest near their village was getting smaller every day. They wondered what was happening and one of the villagers went to look at the forest to examine it. While she was there, she saw someone from the nearby village of Purannogoan, cutting down the trees. The villagers from Purannogoan wanted to use the space in the forest to expand their farming land and use the timber from the trees for firewood. Knowing that our forests are so important for the production of oxygen and the prevention of landslides, the villagers from Nayagoan formed a group to stop the destruction of their forest. They called themselves the Nayagoan Forest Protection Group (NFPG). Members of the NFPG decided the best way to protect the forest is to meet with the local VDC member responsible for this particular forest area. They also asked that the foresters and representatives from Purannogoan attend the meeting. At the meeting, the citizens of Nayagoan expressed their concern about the forest and asked that we find an alternative way to satisfy the Purannogoan's need for farmland and timber instead of cutting the trees. At first the representatives from Purannogoan were upset. They did not understand why it was important to keep the forest there at all. For decades individuals from their village had been cutting down the forest without any problems. So, the people of Nayagoan explained to the Purannogoans the value of the forest and the scarcity of this essential resource. They said that forests help to produce oxygen for us to breathe and that we need our trees to prevent landslides and flooding in our villages.

The VDC official agreed with the Nayagoans and helped the NFPG, the foresters and the Purannogoans come up with a good solution. First, the Purannogoans decided that instead of increasing the amount of farmland they have, they would increase the productivity of their farming by using a better fertilizer. So, the VDC official promised to help the Purannogoans get a better fertilizer. All those attending also agreed that if the Purannogoans continued to cut trees, they must then plant 10 saplings for every one tree they cut. So, the decisions were implemented and everyone was satisfied. They came up with a good compromise because they all worked together and the citizens of the villages, the VDC official and the foresters took an active role in satisfying the environmental problems in their community.

1. What was the problem in the forest nearby Nayagoan?
2. Why did the villagers in Nayagoan not want the trees in the forest to be cut down?
3. Why were the Purannogoans cutting the trees? Did they know that they were creating a problem?
4. What did the villagers of Nayagoan do about the problem in the forest? Who did they organize a meeting with?
5. What compromise did everyone decide upon?
6. Do you think it is a good compromise? If so, why?
7. Do you think the citizens of Nayagoan approached the problem in a good way? If so, why? If not, why not?

Democratic governance offers citizens opportunities to protect their environment. Within a democracy, everyone, including government officials, must abide by national laws that protect environmental resources.

As citizens of our country we can help ensure that everyone is following environmental laws. We can:

- SPEAK OUT about a development program's environmental impact, if we think the project is creating a problem;
- INFORM our government representatives of our opinions;
- COLLECT signatures on a petition for or against a project;
- PRAISE public programs that are done in an environmentally safe way;
- REQUEST financial statements and other documentation from our officials or a development organization working on a project;
- ENCOURAGE the government to pass new legislation to protect the environment;
- GATHER community members together to discuss environmental issues, or a specific environmental problem; and
- CONDUCT a publicity campaign to raise public interest on a particular environmental issue.

Can you think of other opportunities within our democracy to do things that help protect the environment? List at least 3 in your copy.

Activity

Research and write a letter to your local official informing him or her of an environmental problem in your area and requesting that he or she work to address the problem. Include in the letter some possible solutions to the problem you find. Remember to praise the official for the work he or she has already done in various areas.

ACTIVITIES

Mainly for individual and group work:

1. Everything around us, living and non-living, is called our environment. All environments are made up of a set of parts, which work together, and depend on each other. Such a working structure is called a system.
 - a) Describe (or act out) a music group, which is giving a concert or performing on TV. What would happen if i) the microphones didn't work ii) the guitarist didn't come iii) the electricity supply went off iv) the singer was ill?
 - b) Can you describe the environment of interconnection 2 in the textbook? Try to picture it, with a pond, fields and so on. What would happen if i) all the snakes were killed ii) spraying killed all insects?
 - c) In what way are a) and b) both systems?
2. What enables rice to grow? List at least 4 things.
3. What is pollution?
4. What kinds of pollution do people produce?
5. What is the name of the Ministry involved with environmental issues?
6. Read the following and answer the questions.

Land clearing, the cutting down of native forests is behind the growth of Australia's devastating salinity (salt) problem, which threatens the livelihood of the same farmers who are clearing the land. Ripping out deep-rooted forest vegetation and planting shallow-rooted crops is causing the ground water to rise to the surface. The salt it brings poisons farmland, pollutes streams and damages roads and buildings. The National Dry and Salinity Programme predicts that by 2050 the area ruined by salt could total 57,000km².

- a) Which country is this about?
- b) Write 2 sentences giving general information about this country.
- c) What is meant by 'native' forest?
- d) What is the difference between forest vegetation and crops?
- e) How does the salt get into the soil?
- f) What are the severe problems facing farmers?
- g) How could this salinity problem be stopped?
- g) Why do you think this is not happening?

7. What source of energy do you use for cooking? Is it a source that one day will be finished, or is it one that will always be there?
8. Name 3 sources of energy, which will always be available and 3 that are being used up. Which source is better for Nepal and the world?
9. Where does your water come from, and how does it reach your home?
10. Keep a record of the amount of water your family uses in a day, and what you use it for.
11. Name 4 ways we can destroy soil.
12. What can forests and jungles provide for humans? Write 2-3 sentences explaining if trees are cut what will result.
13. Make a list of the types of rubbish and approximate amounts that your family throws away each week. Where and how is it disposed of?
14. Classify rubbish into 3 groups.
15. What does it mean to recycle something?
16. Give local examples of recycling.
17. Why is the disposal of sewage such an important issue for any government?
18. What kinds of sanitation/sewage disposal are used in your locality? Are there parts of your community with no access to good sanitation?
19. Why are respiratory (lung) diseases so deadly and widespread in Jumla, Humla and Mugu?
20. What is the difference between development and sustainable development?

21. New roads are being built to all district centers. In pairs, one of you think of all the advantages of such roads, and one of you think of the disadvantages. Be careful to include all environmental issues. Think about the people living in the areas where the roads are being built. What if the roads are built through a forest?
22. Your elected representative has money to conduct a development project in your VDC. What type of project would you want? How can you affect your official's decision of what project he or she chooses? Are there other people in your community who can help?
23. Before a dam is built in Nepal, what should be done? Who should the builders talk to? Who can help to decide where the dam should be built? Who can help decide how the money from the dam should be spent?
24. Let's say all the people in your community decided it was best to begin a sanitation program to improve the health of community members. They decided that it is important to build latrines and make sure people wash their hands with soap after using the latrines and before cooking. How should your community members create such a sanitation program? Make plans that include community organizations, government officials, villagers, members of parliament, schools, the media, etc.
25. What kind of environment would your 'dream city' have? Of course, a perfect place can never be achieved, but we can always work to improve what we have. What do you think could be done to improve your current environment? How would you go about doing it?
26. China and Russia both have poor records of environmental preservation. What kind of governments do they have? Who do you think within these governments make decisions about environmental policy? Do you think a different kind of government may be more effective improving environmental conditions in the country. If so, why? If not, why not?
27. How does democracy make it possible for us to improve the environmental conditions in our country?

CONCLUSION

In this unit you have learned that:

- ❑ All living and non-living things form our ecosystem. People are a part of this ecosystem.
- ❑ People depend on essential resources such as water, sunlight, soil, air and plants. We need to protect these resources or people will not survive.
- ❑ Humans interact with the environment by removing natural resources and using them for people's well being.
- ❑ Sustainable development means that we improve the quality of our lives today, using our water, air, soil and plants, but not destroy these essential resources so future generations can use them.
- ❑ We destroy the soil by building too many roads, allowing animals to graze too much in the same places, using bad fertilizers, planting too many crops year after year on the same land and cutting down trees.
- ❑ Our forests are essential as a source of oxygen for the air and to help prevent flooding and landslides. Cutting down trees for any purpose, over picking timber, fruit, nuts and other food products and letting animals graze too much in the forests destroy this essential resource.
- ❑ Some rubbish created by humans is biodegradable and can be returned to the soil. Other rubbish can be recycled and still other rubbish may be toxic and should be stored far away from humans.
- ❑ Our water is often not fit for drinking, bathing or cooking.
- ❑ Poor water quality results mostly from a lack of good rubbish disposal and sewage sites.
- ❑ Vehicle exhaust, industry fumes, the burning of rubbish and fuel, the burning of coal and the use of kerosene burners and fire pits creates air pollution.
- ❑ Air pollution is very dangerous for our health.

- Noise pollution can harm us psychologically as we become less efficient and more irritated and stressed.
- As the population increases in Nepal, we have the potential to damage our natural resources even more. We can take personal responsibility for cleaning our environment by planting trees, cleaning-up our trash and disposing of it in appropriate ways, taking care of our cars to limit the exhaust they create and not wasting our natural resources.
- All the people within our democracy can help to protect our scarce natural resources. This includes: community members living in an area where development projects occur; government leaders supervising or approving projects; forest workers; community based organization leaders; teachers; and students.
- As citizens in a democracy we can help ensure that everyone is following environmental laws. We can:
 - SPEAK OUT about a development program's environmental impact, if we think the project is creating a problem;
 - INFORM our government representatives of our opinions;
 - COLLECT signatures on a petition for or against a project;
 - PRAISE public programs that are done in an environmentally safe way;
 - REQUEST financial statements and other documentation from our officials or a development organization working on a project;
 - ENCOURAGE the government to pass new legislation to protect the environment;
 - GATHER community members together to discuss environmental issues, or a specific environmental problem; and
 - CONDUCT a publicity campaign to raise public interest on a particular environmental issue.

WOMEN IN SOCIETY

UNIT 6

INTRODUCTION

All over the world, women have played significant roles in their countries' development. They have contributed to the economic growth of their country by taking care of their families and working in and owning businesses. They have worked as doctors, teachers, electricians and artists. Women have even been prime ministers of countries. Unfortunately, not every society values the role women play and the contribution they make to their country's development. Some beliefs and practices create societies in which males play the dominant role. Religious traditions can contribute to making women second-class citizens. Low education levels and the tendency for women to have low self-confidence also contributes. In Nepal, men tend to be the owners of property and the decision makers in the families. Women often stay at home, cleaning, cooking and caring for their children. Although these activities are essential for the well being of the family, women are often not respected for their work. Many times, when women venture out of the home to take part in other types of activities, such as going to school, owning businesses and participating in politics, they are often held back or discouraged. This unit focuses on the challenges women face in improving their lives and their standing in Nepali society. It is important to note, that the challenges women face in Nepal are common around the world. Women in Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and the Americas all face similar difficulties.

PURPOSE OF UNIT

This unit describes how increasing women's political, economic and social influence can have a positive affect on Nepali society as well as the country's overall development. **The main focus of this unit is to outline the common problems that women face within Nepal as well as motivate students to take part in some of the solutions to these problems.** As mentioned in earlier units, although democracy alone cannot bring development to Nepal, democratic government offers a variety of opportunities that other types of government do not offer for women and men to speak their minds, make demands on their government and monitor their leaders' activities.

After studying this unit you should be able to:

- Define the concept of women's empowerment
- Identify some of the common problems women face within Nepal
- Take part in activities necessary to address these problems

STRUCTURE OF THE UNIT

The unit is divided into the following sub-units:

- Concept of Women's Empowerment
- Place of Women in Nepali Society
- Problems of Nepali Women's Participation in Social, Political and Economic Life
- Solutions to the Problems of Women's Empowerment in Nepal
- Activities
- Conclusion

TERMS TO KNOW

Please pay attention to the key words listed below. Become familiar with their definitions and how they are used in the text. You will need to understand these terms to answer the questions at the end of the unit.

Domestic violence

Women's empowerment

Gender discrimination

Malnutrition

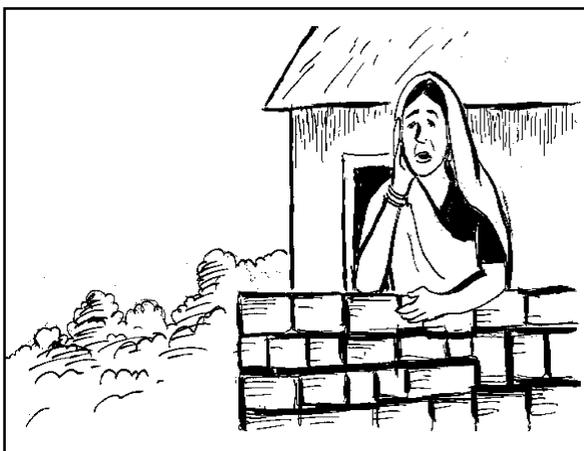
Spacing childbirths

CONCEPT OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Within Nepal, men tend to own the property and make the family decisions. Women generally stay at home doing housework and are limited in their ability to own land or participate in the decision-making of families.

In the pictures below you will see Nepali women speaking about the common problems they face in their efforts to improve their lives and those of their family members. Their feelings of hopelessness and lack of ability to make their own decisions are commonly heard among village and city women all over Nepal.

“ I have limited or no access to my household funds. My husband and other family members make all the decisions about how money is spent in our family. Sometimes my husband spends money on alcohol and gambling and he forgets to give me money for food. My children and I go hungry. Although our chickens lay eggs, my husband will not let me sell them. I don't have any economic rights.”

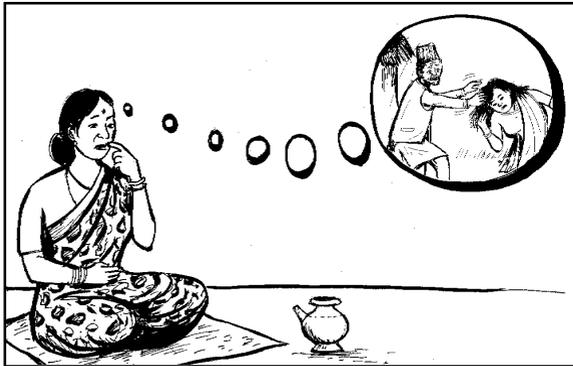


“My role and responsibilities are confined to the household. When I try and do something outside the home, like work, meet with my friends or learn to read, my family and neighbors make fun of me.”

“My low status in society makes life so difficult for me. After I was born, I had to do what my parents said. After marriage, I must do what my husband and his family say. Sometimes my husband beats me and I can do nothing about it. I don't have the skills or knowledge to work and change my life.”



“I wanted my daughter to attend school and have the education that I wasn’t able to have. My husband will not allow her to, and so she stayed home while her younger brother went to school.”



“In the house next to mine, a 74 year old man beats his daughter in law. The girl does nothing to protect herself and I don’t know how to help her”.

The stories these women tell are common in many parts of Nepal. Women often lack the knowledge and skills to improve their ability to control the money meant for the household, protect themselves from physical abuse and take advantage of their legal right to go to school, work and own land. Women’s work is often in the home, conducting essential tasks in preparing food, cleaning and taking care of children.

In addition to work in the home, women can take an active role in other types of activities. Activities that will give them the skills and knowledge necessary to take advantage of their rights to: control the funds of the household, get an education, participate in politics, partake in income earning activities and contribute to the overall development of their communities.

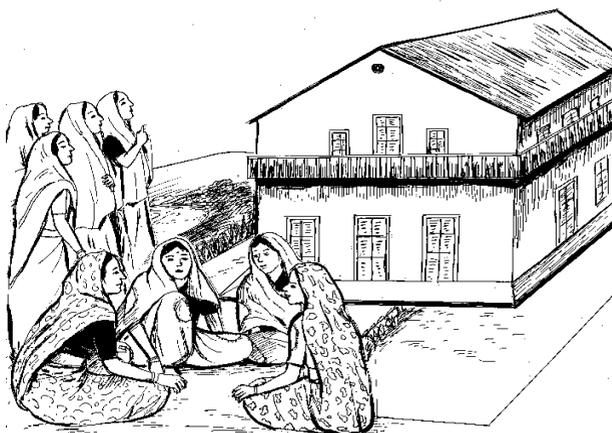
Women’s Empowerment means giving women the skills and knowledge to take advantage of the many opportunities available to them to improve their lives. Providing women with an education, job training and basic services to ease household responsibilities, are ways to empower women.

As women become more knowledgeable and acquire skills, they can accomplish a great deal.

Read the stories below and answer the questions following the stories.

In a village in Nepal, both men and women worked on the land. A male worker received Rs 40 a day for his labor; a female worker received Rs 15 a day. For many years, women accepted their smaller salaries without any complaint. They assumed that their work was valued less than the men and that it was legally accepted that their salary be lower.

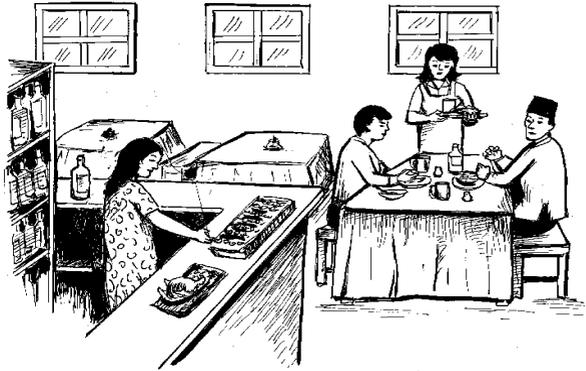
Slowly, women began to realize that they produced as much corn as the men did. They talked among themselves and decided that it was unfair that their salaries were so much lower than their brothers' and husbands' salaries who also work on the farm. As a group of 8, they gathered in front of the landlord's house and demanded their salaries be increased. The men in the village saw them and laughed. They said, "Women deserve a lower salary than men. You should go home and not bother the landlord." When the landlord came out to meet the women, the women reminded the landlord that it is illegal to pay women lower salaries than men.



The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal says that women have a right to receive equal pay to men. By the end of the discussion the landlord agreed to increase the women's wages by Rs 8 bringing their daily wage up to Rs 23. Although the women had wanted higher wages, they accepted the increase and left the landlord's house feeling much happier and more confident. They agreed that their ultimate goal would be to increase their salaries to that of the men working on the farm, but they couldn't change the entire system over night and accepted what they could gain for the moment. With the extra rupees per day, the women purchased additional food and clothing for the family.¹

1. Do you think the landlord's policy to pay the male workers more money than the female workers is fair? Why?
2. Why do you think it took such a long time for the women to decide that the landlord's policy was unfair?
3. What did the women do to make their demands heard?
4. What reasons did they give to convince the landlord to raise their salaries?
5. Do you think their approach was effective?

Meena owns a tea stall in the main Phattepur bazaar in her village. Her tea stall is one of many stalls set up in the center of town where other small shopkeepers, many of whom sell vegetables or dry goods, have also set up shop. In addition to providing her family with the main source of income, Meena's tea stall provides her with a great deal of contact with the public. In front of her shop under a woven grass mat canopy, there are two benches for her customers. She sits on the benches with the people in the village and learns about their needs and concerns. Over the years Meena has become a trusted and wise friend of her customers and the other shopkeepers.



When it was time for one of the political parties in her district to nominate a woman candidate, Meena requested that she be nominated. Her popularity in the community and demonstrated knowledge and trustworthiness led the party members to nominate Meena to ward president and she won the election.

Meena wanted to learn more about elections and the campaign process to train other women candidates in her party. When she was elected, Meena played an active role at Ward Committee meetings and ensured that the funds allocated by the central government for old people in her village were given to the old people and not kept by local officials. She also made sure that girl children in the community were encouraged to go to school. Meena now encourages other women to participate in politics.

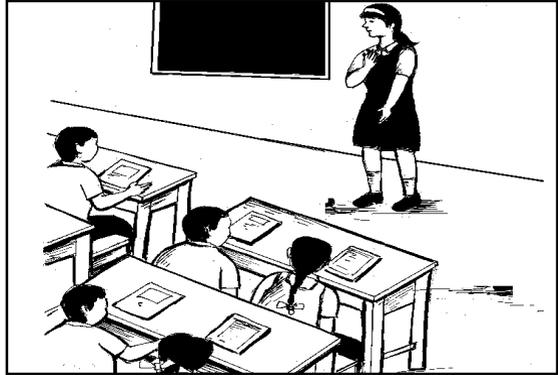
1. Why was Meena so popular among the people in the village?
2. What did she learn from talking with her customers at the teashop?
3. How do you imagine this knowledge helped her to become a good representative of the people?
4. Once Meena was elected, what did she do to help other women in her village?

Meena and the group of 10 women who worked together to get their wages increased were participating in activities to help themselves and their community members improve their lives. They noticed a problem and took action to solve the problem.

In many cases, women don't have the knowledge or skills to act on their aspiration. To take action, women need to be determined, self-confident, know the issues and be prepared to accept failure.

We can practice some of the skills that will assist us in standing up for ourselves and protecting our interests. One of these skills is practicing speaking in front of groups of people. When we practice public speaking, we build confidence in our ideas and we can begin to realize that each of us has something beneficial to contribute to a conversation or decision.

Most people have difficulties expressing their views in front of other people. They worry that others will laugh or make fun of them. Girls especially, have difficulties speaking in front of boys. They tend to believe that they are not as capable or as smart as boys.



Activity

To counter these tendencies, the teacher will break the class up into small groups. Both male and female classmates should participate in this activity and be given an opportunity to make a presentation in front of their group. Each student should choose a topic that you are interested in. Topics could include: democracy in Nepal, your childhood, the development of Nepal, women's role in society or your belief in god. You can discuss environmental conditions or human rights in Nepal. Any topic is fine. When giving your presentation, you should stand in front of your group. The other students in your group should be seated in a circle around you, quiet and listening to your speech. Your presentation should last about 3 or 4 minutes.

Remember when speaking in front of others:

- Speak slowly and LOUDLY
- Look into the eyes of your classmates
- Stand straight and firmly, do not make any large movements
- Share personal stories and examples
- Be relaxed and confident
- Stay focused on the topic

You can also practice making public presentations in front of your friends or family members. The more you practice speaking in front of others, the more confidence you will gain in your ideas and your abilities to present them.

What other activities could you do to practice voicing your opinions and contributing your ideas to group discussions and decision-making?

Think of a few - and list them in your copy.

PLACE OF WOMEN IN NEPALESE SOCIETY

Historically, Nepali laws have favored men over women. This is **gender discrimination**. Men benefit more than women. Until 1963 the Civil Code, which was the principal law regulating human behavior and property rights, forbade women from owning property and participating in the same economic and political activities that men participate in.

In 1963, government officials abolished the former Civil Code and passed a new one, which brought about significant changes in family and property law and the legal status of women. The Code set the legal marriage age for women to sixteen, made polygamy and child marriage illegal, established women's right to divorce and broadened women's capacity to control or inherit property.

More recently government officials have come to realize that women can play a more important role than they already do in making decisions regarding family income, child education, community well-being and the development of the country as a whole. For this reason, the Nepali government has taken legal steps to improve the lives of women throughout the country.

In 1990, when the new Constitution was established, the Constitution guaranteed Nepali women equal rights with men. The Constitution says that there shall be no discrimination against any citizen in the application of laws, or on the grounds of religion, caste, race or sex. It also requires that employers pay women equal wages with men and give women equal access to property. Other laws have also been passed to provide special provisions for women's education, health and employment.

Other countries around the world have written and signed contracts promising to apply equal rights laws for women and men. In 1991, Nepali officials also signed these contracts, promising to introduce equal rights practices within Nepal. For instance, the Nepali government approved an international agreement entitled the **United Nations Declaration against Discrimination of Women**, which required all countries who approved the document to do everything they could to limit the suffering and unfair treatment of women in their countries. The document states that women, on equal terms with men, have the right to:

- ❑ Vote in all the country's elections;
- ❑ Be allowed and encouraged to hold public office and work in all levels of government; and
- ❑ Participate in nongovernmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

Answer the following questions and write your answers down in your copy.

1. What kinds of laws relating to women were contained in the Civil Code PRIOR to 1963?
2. What kinds of laws relating to women were contained in the Civil Code AFTER 1963?
3. What does the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal say about the rights of women?
4. Which international agreement did His Majesty's Government approve related to introducing equal rights practices for women?
5. What rights for women are ensured by this international agreement?

PROBLEMS OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE

Although the government has signed a number of laws to assist in improving the lives of women throughout Nepal, the implementation of laws takes time. It requires efforts on behalf of the government and by the people. Changes are slow and as a result, despite government efforts, women still face a number of challenges to gaining social, political and economic equality with men. Differences in the way women are treated are noticeable throughout Nepal. Differences relate to a women's social background, her ethnicity, caste, location in which she lives and the economy of the area.

Discrimination against girls starts from the moment they are born. Sons are seen as bringing prestige and honor to the family whereas daughters are often considered only another mouth to feed. The girl is treated as inferior to her brother and is often nutritionally deprived because the boy's health and well being is more valued.

At a young age, the girl is expected to perform many of the household chores, such as collecting water and caring for her younger siblings. But boys, without any responsibilities, have the freedom to play.



The girl is expected to collect the fodder and fuel and contribute to household labor while boys are sent to school to get an education so that they will be able to get a good job when they are older.

The girl also often wants to go to school but the family doesn't see education for their daughter as important because she will grow up, marry and go to live with her husband's family. This discrimination leaves the girl with feelings of frustration.

Girls are often forced to marry at a very young age with someone they don't even know. In Nepali society, marriage is seen as compulsory for women.

When a woman gets married she has many responsibilities in her husband's home. She must be responsible for cooking, cleaning, washing, caring for the children, working in the fields, collecting water and collecting the fodder. She works very hard but is given little recognition for her labor.



Soon after marriage, she immediately starts bearing children. She has many children spaced very closely together, which is very damaging to her health. She is left very weak and so gives the oldest daughter the responsibility of cooking. This creates many problems and dissatisfaction within the family.

Having too many children too closely spaced and the overburden of work makes the woman physically weak. The husband's family members become dissatisfied with the woman and the husband increasingly criticizes her. When anyone makes a complaint about the woman, the husband is quick to believe him or her. Without verifying the facts, he begins to quarrel with her.

The husband and wife begin to fight more frequently. The husband does not like the food cooked by his wife and throws it across the room. He also hits his wife when he is upset or drunk. This is called **domestic violence**. She wonders why this is happening and why she has to tolerate such abuse. She wishes she could run away and escape this situation. Her little girl is also confused and frustrated. She does not know why this is happening to her family. The little girl also wants to escape the situation. There is a risk that both the woman and her daughter may run away from home and end up in just another similar situation.

The woman continues to perform all the responsibilities that have been assigned to her but her husband is never content. The woman tries very hard to please him but he only shouts at her and hits her.²

Activities

Write the answer to the following questions in your copy.

1. What are the responsibilities that girls have as they are growing up that boys don't have?
2. Why do you think the responsibilities are different?
3. Do you agree that they should be different? Why?
4. Do you think going to school is important? Why?
5. Do you think it important for both boy and girl children to go to school? Why?
6. Should women have a choice whether to marry or not? Why?
7. Should a husband beat his wife? Why or why not?
8. If a husband is beating his wife, can the wife leave or is she forced to stay with him? Give an example.

For the next three days, pay attention to what the men and women in your neighborhood are doing with their time. Notice that the men and women's activities differ. Watch to see what each person does in the home and what he or she does outside the home. Who is cooking? Who is visiting with friends? Are men and women walking together down the street? What kind of work do the men and women do? How many hours a day do men work? How many hours do women work? Is anyone studying, if so, who? Do boys and girls have the same amount of time to study? Is anyone talking about politics? If so, who? Who goes out in the evenings? Who plays sports? What hobbies do the boys tend to have? What hobbies do the girls have? Discuss with your classmates the other observations that can be made about the different activities conducted by men and women. Over the three days, write your observations in your copy and discuss your findings with your classmates.

Education and Literacy

Not sending or keeping girls in school is a common practice in large parts of South Asia, including Nepal. If families have a choice, they prefer to send their male children to school rather than their female children. This means that males have an increased likelihood that they will learn how to read and write and that they will be able to have careers. They may be doctors, political officials, business people, teachers and other types of professionals. The girls who do not go to school typically carry a

heavier physical work load than men, work longer hours for less pay and have little control over family resources and decisions.

Increasingly, more and more girl children are going to school in Nepal.

See the chart below and answer the questions following the chart.

Literacy and Population Rates in Nepal			
Year	Male Literacy Rate (%)	Female Literacy Rage (%)	Population
1971	23.59	3.91	11,556,000
1981	33.96	12.05	15,023,000
1991	54.10	24.73	18,491,000
1996	52.2	24.4	20,832,000

Source: Population Census, 1971,1981,1991, CBS and CBS – Demographic Sample Survey 1986/87

1. At first glance at the chart above, between what years does it seem that the literacy rate in Nepal seemed to decline?
2. Let’s examine further. In 1991, how many males could read and write? (Hint: multiply the percentage of literate men times the total population of Nepal at the time. Do the same for the female population. Write these numbers down.)
3. In 1996, how many males could read and write? How many females?
4. Compare the numbers you came up with for years 1991 and 1996. Now answer the question, did the literacy rate decline between these years or increase?
- 5 Now find out how many females could read and write in 1971.
6. Compare your numbers for 1971 and 1996, did the literacy rate for females increase or decrease between these years? Why do you think this is the case?
7. How can you help encourage parents to send their girl children to school?

Health Care and Family Planning

In Nepal, many women, especially in the villages, experience health-related discrimination. This means that there are many health practices in Nepal that favor boys over girls.

When families have limited food, parents tend to give their boy children more food than they give their girl children. Also, although girls often prepare the food, they give the food to others in their families before taking for themselves. This means that over a girl's lifetime she will likely eat less and grow up suffering from **malnutrition**, without the proper vitamins and minerals. As a result, girls are more likely than boys to get sick during their lives.

Because girls often suffer from malnutrition as children and tend to eat less throughout their lives, by the time they are pregnant they are usually in poor health. In addition, even though the women are pregnant and not feeling well they are still often responsible to tend to all the household chores, putting additional strain on their bodies. Their poor health often leads to problems during pregnancy and during delivery of their children.

Also, a large majority of deliveries take place without a skilled midwife present. Instead, the woman is assisted by a traditional healer or family member. Other women go to the fields by themselves and deliver their babies alone. Many women die due to complications during birth, because skilled individuals are not assisting during childbirth. If a midwife had been present, in many cases, the midwife could have saved the life of the mother, and as a result, many of the deaths that happen during childbirth are unnecessary and preventable.

When women die during pregnancy, their children are left motherless. These children are 3 to 10 times more likely to die within two years of their mothers' death than children who live with both parents.³

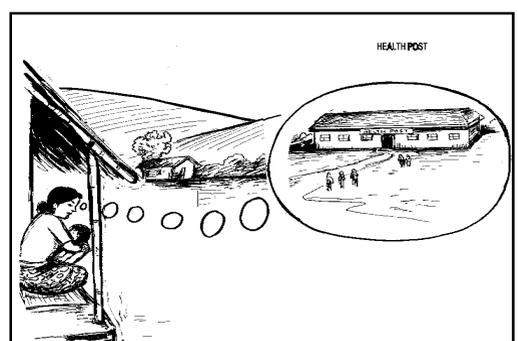
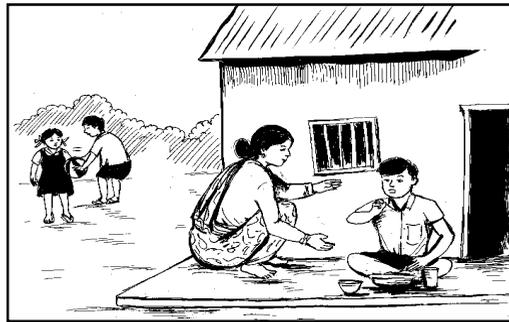
In addition to those who die each year during pregnancy many other women suffer serious health complications during pregnancy and spend the rest of their lives with injuries or infections. Such illnesses include the inability to have more children, a constant weakness and tiredness, a lack of essential vitamins and constant pain.

Many women in Nepal have a lot of children within a year or less of each other. This means that without taking enough time for the women to recover physically from childbirth she has another child almost right away. This leaves her body weak. In addition, having so many young children causes a great deal of work for the woman as she must feed and care for her young children while she takes care of other household chores. Women can stay healthier, if they have children many years apart rather than one after the other.

Unfortunately, often women and men in Nepal do not know how to **plan pregnancies to space them far apart**. Visiting a health post and becoming informed on the different ways of planning pregnancies can be very helpful for women as well as for the family as a whole. There are things that both men and women can do to prevent pregnancies.

As the main caregivers to family members who fall sick, women are more exposed to contagious diseases than other members of the family. Yet, when they do fall ill, they often lack family support, sufficient rest and nutritious food that would allow them a full recovery. Because of the continual neglect of women's health and the embarrassment many women feel when they are sick, sick women often go untreated. This neglect compounds their suffering and humiliation leading to isolation and exclusion from the family and community.

See the pictures below and write down in your copy what is happening in each picture. Also write down the likely results of each of the actions described in the pictures.



Girl Trafficking

A man sees a girl working in her village and he asks, “Why are you working so hard? Your family must really treat you poorly. If you want, I can take you to the city where there are airplanes, cinemas and beautiful buildings. You will have a wonderful life there with lots of luxuries.” She is very tempted to escape the hardships of her life in the village but is confused about whether to go with this stranger or not.

After a lot of discussion, the man manages to convince the girl into going with him to the city. When they arrive, the girl is very overwhelmed by her surroundings; she has never seen so many buildings or people before. Soon after they arrive, the man takes the girl to a brothel, a place where women have sex in exchange for money. He tells the girl to be seated in one room and then collects money from the brothel owner. He earns a lot of money from selling this girl to a brothel. The girl is scared and doesn’t know where the man has taken her.

After the man leaves, the brothel owner begins to beat the girl. The owner tells the girl that she must obey the owner’s wishes or she will not get to eat and continue to be beaten.

Finally, the girl can tolerate the owner’s abuse no longer and agrees to have sex with men and give all the money she earns to the brothel owner. The girl becomes a prostitute. Miserably, she waits for the men in her room. The other girls in the brothel, who have been there for a long time, have become used to the work and are waiting for the customers to arrive.

The girl has no other choice but to accept the work, although she hates it. The customers wait outside her room for their turn.

The girl becomes very ill because she has contracted a deadly disease, HIV/AIDS through having sex without protection. This sickness will eventually kill her. In the meantime, she is too weak to continue working as a prostitute.⁴



The girl in this story represents many girls, all over the country, who work too hard in their villages. They long for a better life and are often fooled by men who approach them, or marry them, promising to bring them to the city and find them a job and a home. The men promise the girls good food, nice clothes and a good life. Girls are often brought from Nepal to the cities outside the country where they are unknowingly sold into prostitution, forced labor, domestic labor or arranged marriages. Only

when it is too late do they realize that they mistakenly trusted the man. The physical and mental abuse girls experience in the cities often damages their health and sometimes even kills them.

Estimates show that thousands and thousands of girls are taken from their homes and forced into labor every year. Some of these girls are as young as 10 years old. Selling girls into forced labor is illegal and punishable by imprisonment.

Participation in Politics

From the first written Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, Nepali women have had the right to vote. Unlike in many other countries around the world, women in Nepal have not had to struggle for their voting rights. Unfortunately, although women have this right, they are disadvantaged in their ability to use it. For instance, women, more than men, have a difficult time getting information about an election process. Studies have shown that women, more than men, are often unsure about when elections occur, who the candidates are, or what the political issues are about. Women find that household chores are so time-consuming that they don't have enough time to leave the home to find out important political information. Men are more likely to have time to speak with their friends within the village and travel outside the village to learn about current events.

In addition, studies have shown that women most often vote according to their husband's wishes. In many cases, the only information women gain about elections is through their husbands and therefore vote like they do. In other cases, women feel they must obey their husbands' wishes. So, if their husband tells them they must vote for a political candidate, they agree. Women often forget that voting is a private issue. When they cast their ballot no one else will know whom they vote for. This privacy enables women to make their own choices about political candidates.

Another problem women face in exercising their right to vote is the high level of illiteracy among women. More women than men cannot read. Therefore, women's ability to read political information produced by political parties is limited. If they don't have information about the candidates or the issues, they may have less confidence in their ability to choose for whom to vote or in their overall desire to vote.

Despite these challenges, an increasing number of women are participating in the political life of the country. In 1997, the government passed a law requiring that at least 20% of all Village Development Committee and Ward Committee representatives be women. Because of this law, about 36,000 women around the country are now serving as locally elected political officials. This is the highest

number of women participating in politics in Nepal's history! In addition, as a result of this law, Nepal has a higher number of women in local politics than in most countries around the world.

At the national level, the King approved a law requiring that at least 5% of candidates from each political party be women. This means that political parties must include at least a small number of women candidates in their campaigns. This regulation is a huge step towards increasing women's political participation at the national level in Nepal.

Why do we care about women becoming political leaders?

Although only a few women occupy high political posts in Nepal, time and time again, these women have raised their voices to promote policies that favor women's rights. These policies encourage girls to go to school, that offer special health care and family planning for women, that increase women's salaries and their rights to own land. Unfortunately, because there are so few women in political office, women's voices often disappear amidst the large numbers of men in political office. The more women get involved politically, the more likely women's voices will be heard within the political institutions and women's issues will be protected by law and in practice.

Rights to Property

Nepali women do not have the same property rights as men. Although the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal gives women the same equal access to property as men, at the time of writing this book the laws within Nepal do not agree with the Constitution. Rather, they discriminate against women. The laws restrict women's rights to receive land or businesses from their husbands or fathers. In practice, males have preference in their right to receive land or businesses. If a father has a choice of giving his small business to one of his family members, he generally gives it to his son rather than his wife or daughter.

These discriminatory practices mean that women's opportunities are very limited. If a woman is uneducated or unable to own a business then she has very few opportunities to make money to support herself or her children. This means that she is totally dependent on her husband's money to pay for her care. She will have difficulty leaving their home if: she is unhappy with her husband because he beats her; or she is unhappy with her husband's family because they force her to do the majority of the housework. If the woman is lucky, her family will allow her to return home. But most women have nowhere else to go and do not have any money to support themselves.

Activity

Who in your household makes the decisions about how money is spent? Is this person a man or a woman?

Record all the class answers together and make one chart for the class to see.

Within your class, did you find that more men or women are responsible for deciding how money is spent in the family? What reasons can you come up with to explain your findings? What do your findings tell you about the different roles women and men play in Nepal?

Write your responses to these questions in your copy. Fill at least 1 page of writing.

SOLUTIONS OF THE PROBLEMS OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN NEPAL

The Nepali government can, and has, taken action to improve the role women play in the social, political and economic life of the country. The government has already drafted a Constitution and other bills that give women equal legal status to men. The government has signed international agreements promising to implement policies that help women. Unfortunately, the government can't change anything alone, it does not have the resources or ability to do so. We, as citizens of our country, can take an active role in improving women's lives. Already, women throughout Nepal have shown remarkable bravery and amazing capacity to identify problems in their communities and work towards solving these problems.

We see women local government officials meeting with individuals from all the households in their constituencies to identify the needs of their community members. This type of activity can help officials make better decisions about the right policies to implement in their villages.

Some women have even compiled the data they collected from the households and presented their findings to VDC officials.



Other women representatives began participating in Ward Committee and Village Council meetings and taking part in the discussions. At the meetings, some women demanded that more literacy programs for women be conducted in their villages and that the budget allocation process be more transparent.

Other women representatives involve themselves in community development projects by helping to plan the time line of the projects, supervising the implementation of the projects (by visiting the sites and talking to the people involved) and evaluating the projects' effectiveness. The projects women representatives have involved themselves in include water supply, road construction, child/adult literacy, school construction and electricity projects.

Yet other women who are not elected representatives bring new development projects to their communities including savings and credit (micro-credit), women and children's literacy, health/sanitation, sewing and cutting training (for women), and school construction programs.

In addition to these achievements, other women are beginning to work in groups to share ideas with each other and pressure others to respond to community demands.

The residents of a small district in Nepal suffered from low electrical voltage problems such that fans and light bulbs did not work at all. Men from the community had unsuccessfully visited the Village Development Committee on numerous occasions to try and rectify the problem. Everyone in the community felt hopeless except the members of two women's groups who decided to take matters into their own hands. These groups gathered to discuss the issue and visit the electricity department's Simtra branch office. The department staff was initially scared by the crowd of women, but were convinced that local power mills loading down the system caused the problem and suggested that the women take up their grievances with the power mills and the head office of the electricity department.

At this point the women declared that they would not be stopped by procedural hassles and a slow bureaucracy, and demanded that the staff call their officials immediately to come and speak with the women. In their words "We have not come here to add on to the existing applications, but to get work done now! Don't test our patience." Within a few hours officials from the head office arrived to meet the women, eventually promising to begin work to increase the capacity of the electrical line the next day. As promised, the following day, laborers arrived to begin the work of expanding electrical capacity to the village. The women in the group felt proud of their achievements.

The members of the women's groups who restored power to their area are now admired and appreciated by others in their villages.⁵

Women's groups and study circles provide an opportunity for women to share their experiences and gain strength through knowing that other women are experiencing similar situations. Also, working in a group can build confidence among the members, giving the group strength and the power to influence others.

Women and men around the country have established nongovernmental organizations that work in all parts of Nepal to help improve the lives of women in the country. They help protect girls from being sold into prostitution, encourage girl children to go to school, advocate for improved legal measures that increase women's rights, encourage women to get involved in politics and provide women with micro-credit to start their own businesses. These organizations are very active and help improve women's status within Nepal.

ACTIVITIES

Mainly for individual and group work:

1. Work within a group to review the life of a typical Nepali village girl. Begin with the moment she is born and describe all the ways in which her upbringing and whole life differ from that of a boy born into the same kind of family. Make sure you consider the family's reaction to her birth, her feeding, the types and amount of household chores she does, her medical care or lack thereof, her education opportunities, her level of freedom within the household and without, her marriage opportunities, her relationships with her husband and in-laws, her work load, her choices related to childbirth, her decision making ability within the household and her control or lack thereof over money issues.

Your class will choose some of these stories to turn into short dramas, suitable for presentation within the community. Do the dramas for the class and school if possible.

2. Read this poem and answer the questions below.

I am born in disappointment A failure to my mother A liability to my father Whom they must closely guard Lest I mar Their family pride and honor I am born in darkness Restrained from learning I stunt under a thatched roof Or suffocate inside city walls That block my view Or obscure my vision Of the limitless blue sky
--

I am born in chains and shackles
Of household chores
Water pails, fodder, fuel wood
Cooking, nursing, tending
I ignore the festering of my heart
And pray I'm born
No more a Girl Child.

- a) Who is saying the poem? Is it one person or more than one?
- b) Find words in the poem that match these meanings.
- to take no notice
 - to cover or cloud
 - to grow small and weak
 - to spoil, ruin
 - a troublesome responsibility
 - slow pain and injury
 - die of lack of air
 - very heavy hand-cleft, leg irons, metal fastenings
- c) Explain the meaning of:
- a liability for my father
 - lest I mar the family honor
 - I stunt under thatched roofs
 - walls that obscure my vision of the limitless blue skies (Does this have a literal meaning and a hidden meaning?)
 - chains and shackles of household chores.
- d) Disappointment, darkness and chains are her lot in life. In your own words, explain the meaning of this statement.
- e) Make a tune (possibly with a guitar, drum, key board, flute etc.) to turn the poem above into a song. Do a painting to go with it.
3. Throughout the whole world, the problem of husbands beating and physically abusing their wives is widespread and often not publicly discussed. In some countries, people believe abusing your wife is the right thing to do. Do you think wife abuse is a problem in Nepal? If so, what do you think should or could be done about it?
4. If a husband and wife both have work (of any sort) outside the house, should the husband take an equal share in cooking, cleaning, washing and caring for children in the home? Would this in fact bring many advantages and blessings to both husband and wife?

5. Do you think that Grade 12 girls and boys have equal opportunities to enjoy leisure activities, to make friends, find time to study, make future plans, travel and play sports?
6. Nepal is the only country in the world where women have a lower life expectancy than man. Explain why so many women die at a young age.
7. Family planning - choosing the number and spacing of children - is vitally important, not only to the country, but also to parents wanting to preserve the mother's health, and have enough resources to give their children a good start in life. There are many methods, both temporary (for delaying pregnancy) and permanent (when no more children are wanted). Find out about these methods and then discuss how husbands and wives in Nepal tend to make decisions about family planning. Could this decision-making process be easier?
8. What is a dowry? Why do people give dowries? Does giving dowries create hardships for individuals or families? Does it violate the human rights of women?
9. What is the current legal position regarding women's right to property? Can you put forward reasons for and against women and men having equal rights to their father's property?
10. At the moment, how many women are Cabinet Ministers in Nepal? Discuss your findings with your classmates.
11. Do research to find the total number of men and women teachers in the primary and secondary schools in your area. Write a good account of your research methods. For instance, write about who you spoke with to find the information, how many people you talked to, what you asked them, how they responded, etc. Create a display of your research methods and results. Include in the display comments on what you have discovered and why you think the results turned out as they did.
12. Invite a woman who is active in public life, education or business to come and speak to your class. Prepare questions to ask her about her career, the problems she faces at home and in her work because she is a woman, how she manages her home responsibilities, how she feels about women's position in society, etc.
13. Is there a difference in the way women are perceived and the role they have in the different ethnic groups, castes and religious groups throughout Nepal? Explain your answer giving at least 5 examples.

14. Will laws that promote equality for women be enough to ensure women a better position in society. If not, how can women and men work together to take action to end discrimination and empower women?
15. Should political parties, VDCs, schools, offices etc. be made to have equal numbers of men and women in positions at all levels? If so, why? If not, why not?
16. Nepal can be proud of the fact that women in the country have the right to vote. How can women be encouraged to use this right? Give at least 5 ways.
17. What cultural traditions limit the freedom of women in Nepal?
18. What cultural traditions help to advance the role of women in Nepal?

Long Answer Questions:

Wherever appropriate, write 2 or 3 good paragraphs on the following topics.

1. What is gender discrimination?
2. What factors stop a woman in a typical village from enjoying the same rights as her husband?
3. In what ways are boys and girls treated differently even from birth?
4. How do laws regarding women and men's wages relate to the actual wages women receive compared to men in Nepal?
5. Why are there fewer women in local politics than men?
6. Are women less likely to study and take leadership responsibilities than men? Explain.
7. Describe your experience of giving a short talk to fellow students.
8. How can women's literacy be increased?
9. What effect does being able to read and write have for a person.
10. Compare the workloads of men and women in villages and towns.

11. Give 3 reasons why women suffer more ill health than men.
12. Explain what is meant by women's empowerment?
13. Give a list of government actions that help empower women.
14. Give another action that you think would improve women's position in society.
15. How do you feel about the position of those of the opposite sex to yourself? Would your life be better if you were of the opposite sex? Do you prefer to stay as you are? Why?

CONCLUSION

In this unit you have learned that:

- ❑ The problems women face in Nepal are similar to those faced by other women around the world.
- ❑ Sometimes boy children in Nepal get fed better than girl children, because boys are preferred over girls.
- ❑ Many women feel trapped, they are unable to go to school and must do what their husbands and his relatives say.
- ❑ To empower women is to give them the skills and knowledge necessary to help them take advantage of the many opportunities available to them to improve their lives.
- ❑ Providing women with an education, job training and basic services to ease household responsibilities, are ways to empower women.
- ❑ Practicing public speaking is one way to give women confidence to speak their minds and contribute to conversations and decision-making within and outside the household.
- ❑ In Nepal and many other parts of the world, gender discrimination favors men. Women are disadvantaged politically, legally, socially and economically.
- ❑ The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal says that women are considered equal to men and should receive equal pay for equal work and that the laws of the nation should be applied equally to both men and women.

- ❑ The Nepali government has signed the United Nations Declaration against Discrimination of Women and therefore has agreed to allow women, on equal terms with men, to vote in all elections, be allowed and encouraged to hold public office, work in all levels of government, and participate in nongovernmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.
- ❑ Although the government has taken action to improve the lives of women in the country, change takes time and we, the people of Nepal, must also take action to improve our lives and the lives of women.
- ❑ The percentage of women who are learning to read and write is increasing in Nepal.
- ❑ Thousands of girls around Nepal are taken from their villages and sold into forced labor as prostitutes and domestic workers, as well as forced into arranged marriages.
- ❑ It is illegal and punishable by law to sell girls into forced labor.
- ❑ Although women have had the legal right to vote since the first Constitution was written in Nepal, women are disadvantaged in their ability to practice this right. Some disadvantages include: not having enough time away from their household chores to learn about political activities, not leaving their villages to acquire political information and not being able to read some literature produced by political parties.
- ❑ As a result of a 1997 law, more women participate in local politics in Nepal than in most countries around the world.
- ❑ Women political leaders, more than men leaders, tend to promote policies and practices that improve other women's lives and the lives of children.
- ❑ The government alone cannot change the country, we as citizens of the country need to act to improve our lives.
- ❑ There are already many women in Nepal who work alone or in groups to improve the lives of women.
- ❑ A number of nongovernmental organizations within Nepal are also working to protect girls from being sold into prostitution. The NGOs also help to encourage girl children to go to school, improve the laws to increase women's rights, encourage women to get involved in politics and provide women with micro-credit to start their own businesses.

COURSE REVIEW

SHORT AND LONG ANSWER ESSAY QUESTIONS

The following essays need careful planning. Write the essays as if you were explaining your ideas to someone who knows nothing about the subject. This means you must use definitions to explain key words, write in simple language and give reasons for your statements. Use examples when appropriate to strengthen your arguments. Each sentence should be planned to say exactly what you mean as clearly as possible.

1. Give a short description of your own particular community and how it is changing.
2. Describe the differences between an authoritarian and democratic government.
3. Describe 1 social problem in your community and discuss how someone could effectively go about solving it.
4. What is civic education and why is it important in Nepal?
5. Describe what is meant by "free and fair" elections.
6. Due to a lack of resources and capacity, the government of Nepal is unable to protect the human rights of all people. We, as citizens, must take an active role in protecting others and ourselves from human rights abuses. Explain this statement.
7. What is sustainable development?
8. Would you like to see more women in political positions in Nepal?
9. Why are there so few women poets and authors in Nepal? Are women less creative than men?

You must write at least 4-6 good paragraphs for the essays below. When you are through with each essay, show them to two different classmates and two people outside of class to ask for suggestions on ways to strengthen the essays to make them more understandable. If you think the suggestions are useful, include them in a revised version of your essays. When you are through, turn your essays in to your teacher.

1. Describe 3 social problems you see in your neighborhood. Explain the causes of these problems and suggest possible local solutions.
2. Describe democracy.
3. How can citizen's involvement in government affect the outcome of political decisions made by our representatives? Include a discussion on the ways citizens can get involved.
4. Describe some good things and some bad things about democracy in Nepal. Discuss ways citizens can work with government officials to help strengthen democracy.
5. Describe some development projects in your community. Explain why they succeeded in some areas and failed in others.
6. What are the root causes of women's unequal position in society?
7. What is justice?

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accountability: The people who exercise political power are held responsible for their actions and are answerable to the people.

Agricultural society: Any society that depends primarily on farming and farm goods as a means of livelihood. It is among the oldest and most basic of societies.

Air pollution: The impurities and harmful substances that are released into the atmosphere by the exhaust from vehicles, factories and burning of fuels and garbage.

Authoritarian: The tendency to centralize power or to dominate others.

Authoritarian government: A government that is ruled by a single person or a small group of persons. All the power is concentrated in their hands, and the ordinary citizens are kept out of the political process. In such governments the rule of law often does not apply and people do not have access to legal remedy.

Biodegradable: An object that breaks down and releases nutrients into the soil when left exposed to the environment.

Bonded labor: The system in which people were made to work for food and shelter instead of being paid wages.

Breadwinner: One who earns a living for the family.

Caste discrimination: To treat people poorly because of their caste. This leads to lower caste people being subjected to humiliations and unfair treatment.

Citizen: Persons who have full rights in a state, either by birth or by gaining those rights.

Civic disposition: Certain character traits that help us become an effective and responsible member of our society and a good participant in our democracy. These traits include civility, honesty, respect for the law and rights of other individuals, compassion and patriotism.

Civic education: Process of teaching the citizens of a country about their political environment, the government and their rights and duties as citizens. It tries to ensure that people are fully aware of and participate in the political process, ensuring a truly functional democracy.

Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal: The legal framework for running the Kingdom of Nepal. It is a written document and explains the roles and responsibilities of the government and the citizens. Every institution and person within the country must abide by the Constitution.

Crime: Any activity that is forbidden and punishable by law.

Deforestation: Large scale cutting down of trees. Does not allow time for the forest to re-grow or make provisions for adequate replanting.

Democratic government: A form of government in which the people exercise political power, either directly or through their elected representatives.

Deterrence: Something that acts to discourage or prevent an undesirable action, usually by invoking a concept of punishment.

Development: The growth of society or a nation through interactions with the environment. Characterized by the exploitation of natural resources for the welfare of human beings.

District Development Committee (DDC): The highest elected local government structure in Nepal. It consists of one Chair, one Vice Chair and some members. Its prime responsibility is to manage development money and projects in the district.

Drug peddling: The illegal selling of addictive drugs and narcotics, like cannabis, heroine and cocaine.

Ecosystem: All living and non-living things, together with the surrounding environment, make up this complex interconnected and interdependent system.

Ethnic group: A race or group of people belonging to a particular region with their own unique language, culture, traditions and lifestyles.

Equal property rights: These ensure that the men and women enjoy the same rights in matters regarding inheritance of common family property.

Fundamental rights: These are those crucial and indispensable rights that ensure a proper functioning of democracy. Usually they include such basic rights like the Right to Life, the Right to Equality, the Right to Freedom and so on.

Gender discrimination: The policy and practice of treating people unfairly on the basis of their sex.

Girl trafficking: The trade of women and girls whereby they are forced into prostitution, arranged marriages or forced labor.

HIV/AIDS: HIV (human immunodeficiency virus)/AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) is a very dangerous and deadly disease that is spread through unprotected sex, blood transfusions, infected needles and from mother to child.

House of Representatives: The lower house of parliament consisting of 205 elected members, each serving a 5-year term. All members of this house are elected by the people.

Hunting and gathering society: This is one of the oldest and most basic forms of society. Here people are engaged in hunting animals and gathering wild produce to meet their worldly needs. Such societies tend to be nomadic in nature.

Human rights: Basic rights and freedoms assumed to belong to all people everywhere. These rights try to ensure that the state or fellow citizens do not encroach upon the dignity and quality of life of a person.

Human Rights Commission: It is a body formed by the government of Nepal to look into and redress human rights violations within the country.

Human Rights NGOs: Organizations formed by civic-minded citizens to work for the implementation and improvement of human rights within the country.

Industrial society: Where the industry and its manufacturing units dominate the economy and the means of livelihood.

Information society: Characterized by the widespread electronic access to information through the use of computer technology.

International human rights agreements: These are Agreements signed by many countries around the world promising to protect the human rights of their citizens. Nepal has recently signed a number of the most important Human Rights Agreements.

Malnutrition: The condition that results due to the absence of balanced diet containing all the necessary vitamins, minerals and proteins in the required proportions. Such a condition leads to poor health or even death.

Matriarchal societies: Societies in which power and property are held by the women and handed down from mother to daughter.

Multi-party system: A form of government where more than one party contests in an election. This ensures that the ruling party has a viable opposition and that the voters have a choice of party candidates.

Municipalities: The second tier of local government in urban areas, consisting of nine or more wards. Each ward president is a member of the municipality. The people of the wards elect a mayor and deputy mayor.

National Assembly: The upper house of parliament, consisting of 60 members, each serving a 6-year term. Of the 60 members, His Majesty nominates 10, 35 including 3 women are elected by the House of Representatives and the remaining 15 are elected by the chiefs of local level authorities.

Noise pollution: The all pervasive sounds and noises that are created by people, vehicles and factories in modern society. It causes stress and damages people psychologically.

Parliament: It is the body of government, which exercises the legislative and executive powers of the country. Its primary responsibilities are to introduce, debate and approve laws for the nation. It also decides on issues of national security and economic development.

Patriarchal societies: Societies in which power and properties are held by men and handed down from father to son

Political tolerance: When the rights and beliefs of the minority are equally respected as those enjoyed by the majority.

Poverty: The state of not having enough money to take care of basic needs like food, clothing or shelter.

Prostitution: The act of indulging in sex for monetary gain.

Recycle: To transform waste into some other useful product.

Reformation: To improve by correcting faults, removing inconsistencies, or imposing better standards.

Restoration: To return to its original condition or position.

Retribution: A punishment or action delivered as a consequence of an earlier action.

Rule of law: Principle that every member of a society, even a ruler, must follow the law.

Rehabilitation: The process that seeks to restore displaced or marginalized sections of society to the mainstream.

Sanitation: Sanitation refers to the proper facilities for collection and disposal of drainage, sewage and garbage for the purpose of maintaining good health and a clean environment.

Social change: Any society always undergoes changes often as a result of contact with other societies. Technological advances, political conflicts or environmental changes can lead to social change and an increasing complexity in society.

Social integration: The process by which the diverse groups of a society come together and share their traditions, languages, cultures, beliefs and unique lifestyles.

Social justice: A concept that refers to the equality of opportunity and justice that exists for everyone in society, irrespective of race, caste, gender, age or social and economic status.

Sustainable development: Development that does not degrade the environment or unnecessarily waste our natural resources. It tries to maintain a balance between our developmental needs and the need to protect the environment.

Transparency: When government decisions and the reasons behind them are clearly visible and explained to citizens.

Underdeveloped Country: Country that lacks the technology and capital to make efficient use of available resources.

Unemployment: When there is a scarcity of jobs even for people who are willing and able to work.

Village Development Committee (VDC): VDCs are the second tier of local government in rural areas. Each VDC consists of the presidents of the constituent nine wards, with a VDC President and Vice President elected by the people. The VDCs are responsible for all development work within the areas of their jurisdiction.

Ward Committee: The Ward Committee is the basic structure of local government. The people of a ward elect a four-member committee, including a woman the committee. They assist the VDC in the development works in their ward.

Water quality: Refers to the purity and suitability of water with regard to human consumption.

Women's empowerment: Refers to the ability of women to strive to achieve the same social, economic and political rights as their male counterparts.

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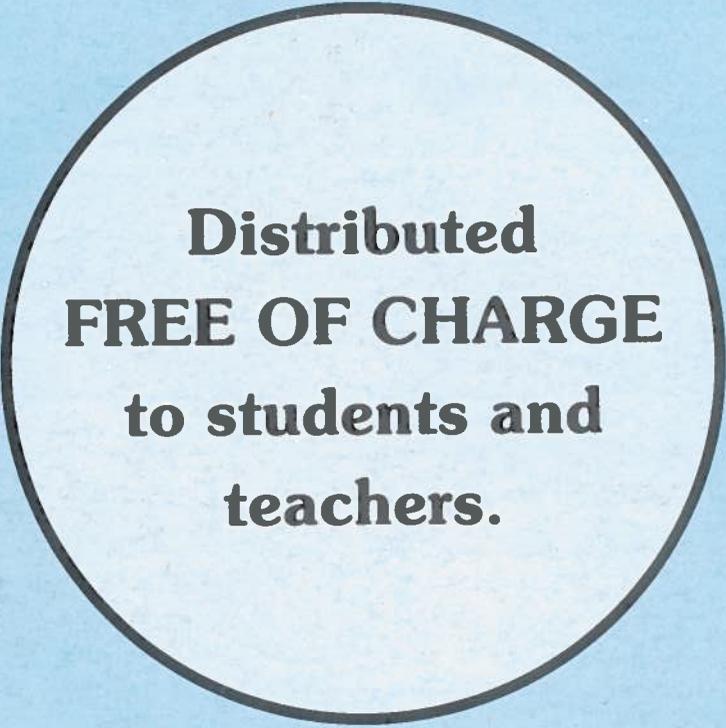
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