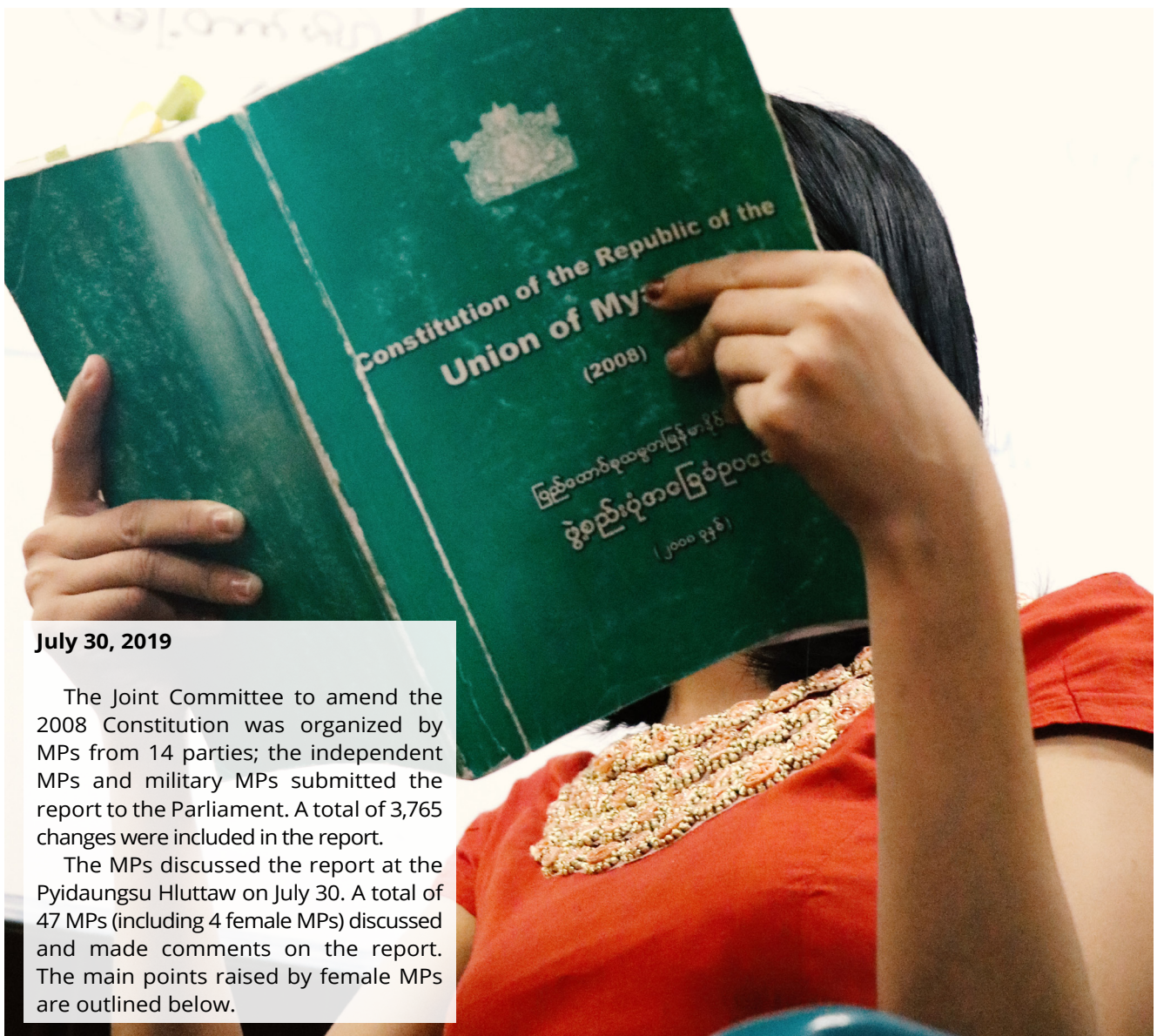


What are Female MPs'

Comments on the Joint Committee about Amending the 2008 Constitution's report?



July 30, 2019

The Joint Committee to amend the 2008 Constitution was organized by MPs from 14 parties; the independent MPs and military MPs submitted the report to the Parliament. A total of 3,765 changes were included in the report.

The MPs discussed the report at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on July 30. A total of 47 MPs (including 4 female MPs) discussed and made comments on the report. The main points raised by female MPs are outlined below.

This monthly newsletter is published with the support of International Development Research Centre (IDRC). Please contact shweshwe.kyinhlaingg@gmail.com for free subscription.



Photo-Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Daw Khin Swe Lwin

Amyotha Hluttaw MP, Chin State Constituency (9)

I strongly support the report because it is emphasizing citizens' rights

The main pillars of democracy are the rights of citizens and equality. Not stated as in the National Anthem, as long as losing justice, freedom, peace, equality; and as long as three main national causes such as non-disintegration of Union, non-disintegration of National Solidarity, and perpetuation of sovereignty have been just words on paper. In practice, there are still ongoing fights among the brothers of home land; and inequality, discrimination, suspicion and lack of tranquility. The principle of a "Union" is to representative of and be inclusiveness of all ethnicities. That is why a joint committee was formed according to the law of the Union Parliament. This law allowed all respective groups within the parliament to be involved in amending the 2008 Constitution. I strongly supported the joint committee's report, as it was submitted to advocate for the rights of citizens, according to the rules of the Union Parliament Law's Section 8(d).

Daw Htu May
 Amyotha Hluttaw MP,
 Rakhine Constituency (11)

We must accept all the needs to amend the Constitution

According to the recommendations of the joint committee on amending the 2008 Constitution, I realized that there have been many gaps in representing people in the Constitution, and this current Constitution is not complete; it still needs to be amended. Our Parliament, Government, and the Military must give preference to people's desire, as well as democratic rule.



Photo-Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

As long as it is challenging to amend the Constitution, the vicious cycle of civil war continues, and we are still losing face in the world

If we want to build a democratic federal state, the constitution must be based on democratic rules and standards representing the values of federalism. If amending the constitution remains difficult, our country could still be trapped in 'under-development' and vicious civil war. Then, we would lose our face in the world.

Considering whether a new Constitution is a better option

We tried to amend the constitution in the first term of Parliament, but it was not accomplished as we wanted. Now in the final years of the second term of Parliament, people placed the responsibility to amend the Constitution on our Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's shoulders. We must think about whether we should have returned our home by taking some actions or just comforting people. Members of Parliament have to implement the Constitution that can fully protect the rights of the next generation. We are trying to amend the Constitution within the Parliament to truly revive the nation's principles, such as justice, freedom, and equality. If amending the current Constitution would not fully guarantee the nation's principles, our Pyidaungsu Hluttaw needs to consider whether drafting a new Constitution would be a better option. We have a way, but if it is not the way to reach the end goal, we should develop a new way. In addition, our Pyidaungsu Hluttaw should also advocate for political negotiation among leaders.

Daw Lwee Zar

Amyotha Hluttaw MP, Kayah Constituency (6)

Let's build the Democracy Federal Union by overwhelmingly approving the report

The Constitution is vital for the country and the State, which was built upon three main pillars, including; the administration, legislature, and the judiciary. Respecting and embracing citizens is extremely important. Now at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, we have an opportunity to raise the voices of our ethnic people who had to be silent for over 60 years. I would like to support the joint committee's report about amending the Constitution and encourage all to establish the Democracy Federal Union together.



Daw Nan Ni Ni Aye

Amyotha Hluttaw MP, Kayin Constituency (6)

The 2008 Constitution did not easily emerge

The 2008 Constitution did not easily emerge, as it was drafted over 16 years. In the first term of Parliament during the previous government, the reform process went smoothly, without any challenges based on the multi-party system. In the second term of Parliament, if the government faces challenges to amend the Constitution, I want to discuss changing the Constitution in accordance with the law. If the 45 members of the committees are the only people amending the Constitution, then it cannot be completed. I would like to prepare a draft law according to Article 23 in the report, and to draft a law which is accepted by all respective parties: authorized persons, departments, organizations, and entities which are signatories to the NCA.

The report was drafted 'beyond the law'

Whether it is the Union of States or one State, the basic principle is that power should be shared between the central government and the regional government. If we study the current 2008 Constitution, it includes three branches which share power and also share power with the State and Regional governments. This power-sharing model is based on the principles of federalism. Laws included in the 2008 Constitution give citizens' rights including: freedom of religion, gender equality, equality, freedom of expression, freedom of association, peaceful assembly, peaceful procession, as well as providing the right to overthrow elected representatives, such as MPs. If people cannot access these rights, it is because people in power are not implementing these laws. Therefore, I oppose the statement that the report was drafted 'beyond the law'.

Risk of sexual harassment in the workplace, regardless of gender

August 15, 2019

All employees, regardless of gender or age, are at risk due to sexual harassment in the workplace highlighted by the "Respectful Workplaces" report.

This report explores bullying in the workplace and sexual harassment in business in Myanmar, as well as its impact. The research findings showed that 15% of employees said they had been sexually harassed, and 21% said that they witnessed someone being sexually harassed. The most commonly witnessed and experienced types of sexual harassment are body shaming, hearing someone telling a joke containing sexual content, and inappropriate hugging. Though a majority of employees recognize sexual harassment as a problem in their workplace, they consider many of behaviors as 'common'.

The report indicated that both men and women experience bullying and sexual harassment at workplaces in Myanmar; but their experiences are different. More women than men have experienced sexual harassment, and more men than women have experienced bullying. The report pointed out that 14% of labor productivity is lost annually due to bullying and sexual harassment.

This research recommends that advice and support for senior management, HR managers, and employees will be critical to create respectful workplace cultures in Myanmar. In order to change social attitudes towards bullying and sexual harassment, and increase positive



Respectful Workplaces

EXPLORING THE COSTS OF BULLYING AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT TO BUSINESSES IN MYANMAR

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

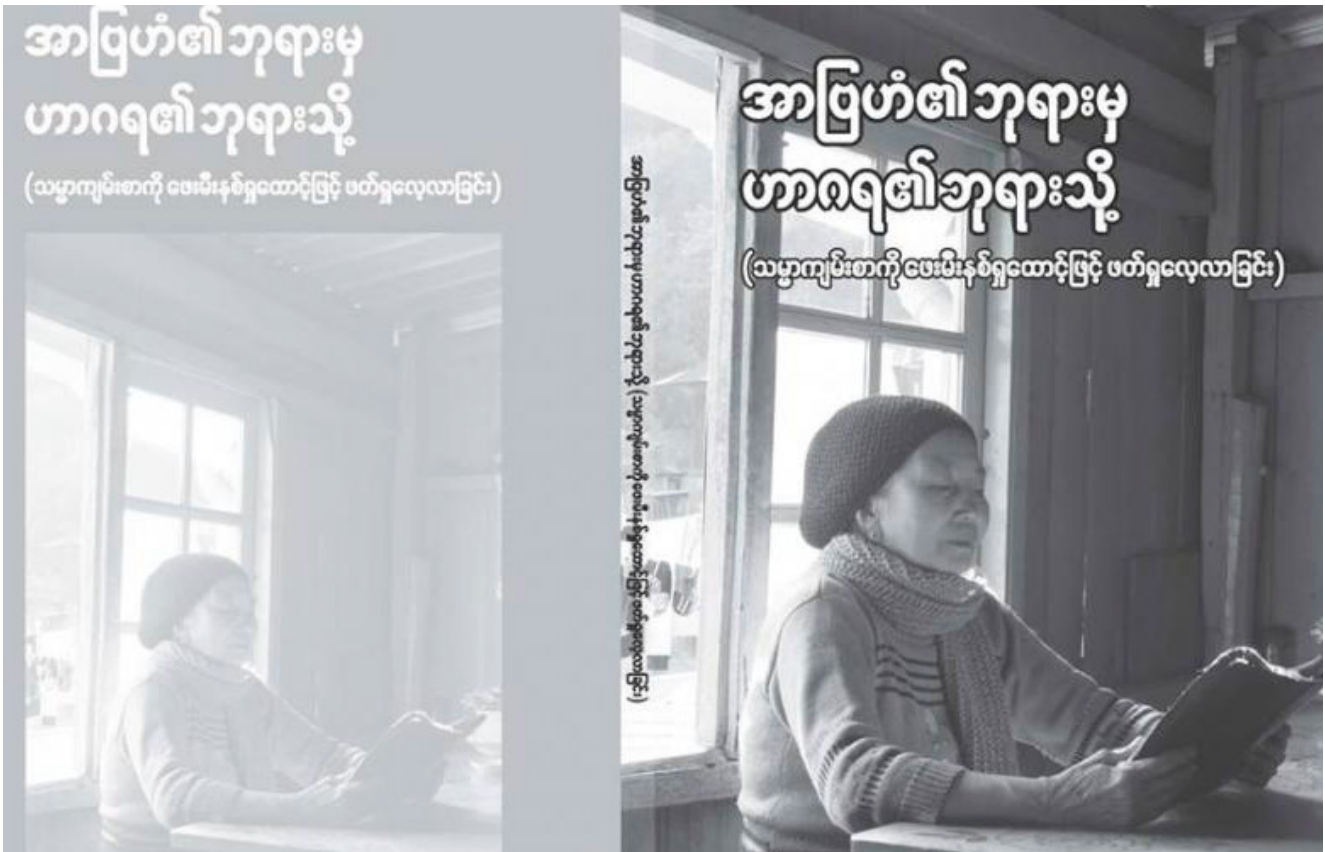


behaviors in workplaces, businesses will require collaborative and combined efforts of other organizations.

This research included a total of 956 employees in four sectors:

agribusiness, finance, retail, and tourism sectors in collaboration with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and DaNa Facility.

Shwe Lay



Reading the Bible from a Feminist Perspective

June 24, 2019

Chin women’s organization published the book “From the God of Abraham to the God of Hagar” (Reading the Bible from a Feminist perspective). The objective of the book, as stated in the introduction, is that all the books of the Bible were written by men, under the influence of patriarchy: therefore reinterpretation is needed for today’s readers – especially for women. During trainings and discussions related to gender within Chin Christian communities, it has been noted that people who argue against gender equality always try to quote certain Bible verses. This book was written in order to help solve this issue.

In this book, there are 20 articles written by the authors, including the Reverend. The Creation of Humankind (Genesis 1 and 2) was placed on the front page and written to represent the true will of God as referenced in the Bible.

In the article “Paul’s teaching on Head Covering”

written by Tial Hliang, “The uncritical use and application of the Bible in family and in church is the most problematic issue for Chin Christians. Therefore, re-defining some biblical texts from women’s perspectives is necessary in order to bring equal rights and value between men and women in the Chin community.”

In the article “Women: the Bearers of God’s Image” written by Tuan Bor, it was indicated; “Only after women understand the true nature of our existence as ‘human beings created in God’s image’, only after accepting and practicing this, would we be able to bring change in our community”.

This book was expected to eliminate discrimination in Chin society and to support social justice – as written in the book’s acknowledgments. The book was released in both English and Myanmar language. The Chin women’s organization (Ninu) was organized by Chin women living in Yangon in 2013, with the aim to promote women’s capacities, and to achieve gender equality among Chin communities in Myanmar.

Shwe Lay



Photo-<https://www.imdb.com>

World Famous Quotes

“I always believed that one woman’s success can only help another woman’s success.”

..... Gloria Vanderbilt (American artist, Author) (1924-2019)

Women’s Participation in Myanmar Politics’ research will be launched by the end of 2020

July 17, 2019

Research regarding women’s participation in Myanmar politics is expected to be launched by the end of 2020, reported by Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation (EMReF).

Daw Aye Lei Tun, Senior Program Manager (Gender and Livelihoods) from EMReF said that “We used to say that women’s participation in politics remains low and women lack the rights to speak out. We have conducted this research, as evidence-based research findings are needed to change policy.”

The research began in 2018, and it includes three stages. The first part of the study focuses on individual interviews with MPs and the gatekeepers of political parties, such as CEC members or township committee members. The second part of the study aims to collect communities’

perspective towards women’s participation in politics. The third part is a comparative study about women’s involvement in politics in Indonesia and Malaysia. Indonesia is a country which has undergone political reforms after military rule, and it is also comprised of diverse ethnicities, like Myanmar.

Daw Aye Lei Tun said, “The first part of the research has already been completed. We found that

some research participants interpreted gender as women. They accepted women’s involvement, but what they realized is that women’s participation must be actively promoted. Strategies to address women’s rights to speak are still lacking.”

Data collection regarding communities’ perspectives towards women’s participation in politics will begin September 2019.

Shwe Lay

Direct Hot Lines (24 hours) for sexual violence cases

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement announced the hot line’s phone number which can be reached if there is violence against women and girls. Anyone can call these phone numbers directly: 067 3404222, 067 3404999 24 hours per day.