

Political Development in Nepal: A Perspective of Participation and Inclusion

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Abstract

The political development in Nepal is analyzed from the angle of interpretive philosophy and the Inclusive approach. Nepal's practice of inclusive democracy and federal governance is taken into consideration and diverse representation in the constitutional assembly and existing both the houses of parliament is historical achievement. My findings are that inclusive democracy is a suitable form of governance for Nepal where the population is heterogeneous in terms of caste and ethnicity. Delivery of equitable justice and inclusion of marginalized lower-income people is a major challenge for the success of the newly adopted political system. Political development shifts from the nation-state to state-nation, mono-culture to multicultural, unitary to federal, exclusionary to inclusive, absolutism to secularism, monarch to republican, parliamentary to inclusive democracy and parochial to the participatory system.

Keywords: Political Development, Inclusive Democracy, Inclusion, Equitable Justice, federal

Introduction

This article analyses the political development in Nepal along the line of the latest political changes with political participation and inclusion in people. Nepali society is diversified in terms of caste/ethnicity, language, culture, and religion. Nepal had attempted to assimilate ethnicities, minorities, and excluded groups into a national identity. But, after 90's the issue of inclusion took a discourse and it became the mandate for people's movement 062/63, B.S. Post 062 era the state accelerated the process of accommodation of different caste/ethnicities in its structures. The constitution of the kingdom 2047 had recognized the multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic, multi-cultural multi-religious character of the state. But, in absence of proper constitutional provision, the major character of the state remain exclusionary. Madhesi, indigenous, women, Dalits campaign on the backbone of the Maoist movement became possible to legitimize inclusive democracy by the interim constitution and the constitution enacted by the constitutional assembly. Under the new constitutional and legal provisions, the nature of the state became inclusive and participatory. The question is how far the inclusion or participation of excluded minorities at formal political structures from

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local to central level contribute to Nepal's political development? Are different communities proportionately represented from local to central level structures?

Political development is considered as the subject to growth, modernization, and development of the new state or the restructuring of the state. It is a perpetual process for change by which the political system updates itself. Modernization theorists approached political development with two different concepts of what constituted political modernity. The Encyclopedia of Political Science (Kurian G. T. and et al (edit.). 2011) has defined to political development in two different views; the first view of political development as synonymous with democracy. S. M. Lipset identified economic development as a "social requisite of democracy" in an American Political Science Review article of the same title. Daniel Lerner charted what he saw as the ideal development sequence: urbanization, the spread of literacy, growth of mass media, inclusiveness in economic development, and political participation. Democratic development is the final step in Lerner's process of modernization. The second view of political development is advanced by political scientist Samuel P. Huntington who focuses on institutional development. According to him the more developed political systems with proper institutions the more the systems are able to withstand the challenges posed by newly mobilized societies (2011, p. 1050).

Lucian W. Pye suggests that the sign of political development could be traced (sketch) at three different levels; the population as a whole, the level of government, and general systemic performance and respect to the organization of the polity (Pye and Verba, 1969 p.13). He discusses diverse prerequisites for political development as economic development, industrial societies, administrative and legal development, mass mobilization and participation, buildings of democracy, stability. He indicates that there must be continuous process of social change, mobilization of power at national and international affairs. He takes political development and modernization interchangeably. Political modernization involves the rationalization of authority, the differentiation of structures, and the expansion of political participation. Modernization is a multi-faceted process involving changes in all areas of human thought and activity (Huntington, 2006 p.32).

Political Development brings changes over time in political institutions and social values. Fukuyama differentiates shifts in politics or policies. It is the underlying rules by which societies organize themselves that define a political order (Fukuyama, 2014p.25). He argued three basic categories of institutions that constituted a political order: the state, rule of law, and mechanism of accountability. He further says—"political development- the evolution of the state, rule of law, and democratic accountability—is only one aspect of the broader phenomenon of human socio-economic development. Changes in political institutions must be understood in the context of economic growth, social mobilization, and the power of ideas concerning justice and legitimacy (Ibid p.40).

The thought of the nation-state is connected with the rise of the modern system of states as the components such as “independence (sovereignty), sovereign government, fixed territory, and the people” (Poudyal, 2013, p. 69). It means the nation-state is treated as psychological feelings. Mahajan emphasized for political development along with the concept of ‘equality and capacity’ in the state building process (Ibid p. 199). In general, people consider that regime change is the political development. Political scientists remark that political development means all-round development of the society, regulating and affecting the affairs from the cradle to the grave (Ibid p. 50). This idea of development is related to the people’s involvement in political affairs.

The idea of political progress is from a less desirable state to more desirable state, and the conditions that allow it, can be described as political development (Kingsbury, 2007 p.4). Political development assumes a high degree of governance and accountability on the part of representative power holders and economic actors. Material development is not an end in itself, but the creation of material conditions that allow the more complete exploration and satisfaction of social and individual potential. The changes achieved by the peoples’ movement 062/063 (April movement) is a remarkable one in Nepali History. The changes are fundamental and far-reaching consequences (Baral, 2017 p.112, Khanal, 2019 p.30, Hachhethu and Gellner, 2010 p.132, Lawoti, 2010 p.9). The people and parties in conflict themselves were involved in the movement for political development and transformation. Baral says- ‘Minorities are on the rise for both power-sharing and control over resources and representation in various organs of the state so much so the political parties that fail to make democracy inclusive face the challenge of being sidelined by the people (Ibid, p. 112).’ Kathmandu-centric politics witnessed a new class of, mainly rural, non-elites that get entered into the mainstream political domain, heralding a fresh beginning that was expected to reflect a closer dynamic between politics and governance (Khanal, 2019 p.30). Inclusive political participation especially from the ethnic group local to central level became possible. The language, culture, and political economy of the country shifted to inclusive nature. Moreover, the power balance of the state got changed.

In Nepal, there is shift in basic agenda of people and state altogether. Hachhethu and Gellner has outlined the development as the changes in which Nepal is about to embark are radical and comprehensive. The key areas of departure from its past are: from monarchy to republic, from Hindu state to secular state, from the unitary government to federalism, and from the monopoly of political power by high-caste Hindus from the hills to inclusive democracy with guaranteed representation for all segments of Nepali society... three major agendas-peace building, republicanism, and inclusive democracy- that Nepal faces today (2010, p.132).

Most of the political scientists have identified political development with political modernization and modernization with westernization. However, every society has a specific

quality that cannot be easily generalized. Nepali society has a unique quality concerning the value system (Bista, 2001). Nepal's political development depends on mass movement whereas it depends on the concept of parliament system of the UK and the judiciary system of the USA.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study is to shed light on the changes made by different political events of Nepal on the political development and the specific objective is to shed light on the changes made by the people's movement, 2062/063 on political participation and inclusion.

Research philosophy and methodology

My philosophical position is that of interpretivism. In terms of methodological choices, this interpretative philosophy underpins the general approach of qualitative research. The adoption of the qualitative method enables to uncover the causal process. I've followed the inclusive approach. There are multiple ways of acquiring knowledge but for this, the textual and content analysis method is adopted. The data relating to two constitutional assemblies and both houses of parliament are collected through secondary sources and data are presented in tabular form.

Literature Review

The literature of political development in theoretical perspective, as well as Nepali context, has been surveyed. Political development is reflecting as a process of change from archaic political forms and is a more developed or mature political system at the opposite end of the political scale could be typified by being benign, inclusive, participatory, and accountable, accurately reflecting the aspirations of most citizens (Kingsbury, 007 p.17). Kingsbury has adopted a postmodern view and has defined political progress and process. Kingsbury has followed the institutionalism of Huntington (1968) and Fukuyama (2004) with modification criticizing narrowly defined. He intends to adopt the idea of institutions, but expand it to the broader range of social and political institutions, including participatory and representative political processes, public democracy, a political convention the role of civil and political rights, civil society, and so on.

Pye and Verba have studied political development by a political culture approach (Pye and Verba, 2015). Political development strikes at the roots of people's beliefs and sentiments about politics, and hence the process of development must be profoundly affected by the character of the political culture of a society (Pye and Verba, 2015 p.13). They have analyzed elite and mass culture in the political development of different countries examining the relationships between political culture and political development in countries at various

stages of development and have been concerned with working toward a more rigorous generalized theory of political culture (Ibid 14). They find certain common generalizations about the structure of political cultures in 10 different countries. They observe No society is there a single uniform political culture, and in all polities, there is a fundamental distinction between the culture of the rulers or power holders and that of the masses, whether they are merely parochial subjects or participating citizens. Those who must deal with power and have responsibilities for the decisions of government invariably develop outlooks on politics different from those of the people who remain observers or marginal activists (Ibid p. 15). Political culture forms an important link between the events of politics and the behavior of individuals in reaction to those events (p.516).

Higgott has adopted a historiographical approach in the book *Political Development Theory*. The debate of modernization and the radical school has tended to do severe harm to the complexity, and the subsequent study of development and underdevelopment. Further, emphasis on 'competing ideological perspectives', 'competing paradigms', 'bourgeois and radical schools (Higgott, P. x). Binder has said political development was seen as a political system's ability to cope with five crises: legitimacy, identity, participation, penetration, and distribution (Ibid P. 18). The deductive nature of both schools of thought, seated in their Western intellectual tradition, prevented them in the first instances from asking serious questions about local prevailing conditions in the Third World(Ibid p.87).

SP Varma has examined three phases for the search for the theory of political development. The major theoretical debate has taken place in those phases. Lucian Pye among the earlier batch of the writer has analyzed political development by cultural approach. Kenneth Orgensky has focused on economic development and set the four stages for the goals of development as political unification, industrialization, national welfare, and abundance (Varma, 1996 p.337). David Apter in his politics of modernization thinks of two different development sequences for traditional society depending upon the type of government they had and the value system they had inherited (Ibid p.338). Huntington played an important role in liberating political development from socioeconomic modernization by developing institutionalization.

Smith's theoretical book provides a critical introduction to less developed countries. Its central focus is on the issues and controversies that have dominated the social science of Third World politics since the 1950s and in particular on assessing the main theories of political development. Does the book commence with discussions of two topics; Third World? And the colonial backgrounds of most of today's less developed countries (Smith, 1996 p. IX). Theories and controversies of political development in developed and less developed countries are presented with proper examples of different countries.

A distinguishing feature of modern polities is their stress on the mobilization or participation of citizens in the political life of society (Schwenitz, p.530). G. A. Almond had concluded if development precedes growth, political leaders have a margin of “political capital” to draw on in producing political goods. But Karl De Schwenitz concluded if growth precedes development, the polity is trying to fashion the society rather than reflect its preference (Ibid p.540)

Wignaraja has a view of participation in democracy. Representative democracy as now practiced is a very limited form of participation... means a commitment to a more egalitarian society which permits equal access to resources-not only to land-but also to education, health, etc. Where formal power is in the hands of a few and their power is grossly misused, participation means building countervailing power which leads to a healthier democracy (Mascarenhas, 1999 p.39).

Modernizing monarchies is a contradiction in terms. Huntington suggests that “the future of existing traditional monarchies is bleak.” He argues that monarchs have little choice but to attempt modernization (Hayes, 1975 p.618). Hayes has analyzed monarchy as a dichotomous political species to modernization but all the monarchy in the later phase has no alternative to being a part of modernization. Hayes has analyzed Nepal’s monarchy more as a symbol of traditional values and less a modernization agent. In a separate article, He has analyzed Nepal’s political development in Rana and Shaha regime (Hayes, 1976).

Thapa has analyzed different factors of political development since the foundation of modern state in 1769, Nepal has gone through several stages of political, social, and economic changes. Before 1950, it had both hereditary and authoritarian political structures. Thapa has sketched some main events which made Nepal’s political development smooth.

Participatory democracy is interpreted not merely as a representative process but also as an inclusive and substantive system of governance in Nepal. They have tried to conceptualize participatory democracy (inclusive democracy) by putting the people at the center of politics (Barel, 2006). Inclusiveness with the empowerment of all segments of society makes democracy perfect. Further, Baral opines the political development of Nepal as crystallize liberal democratic ideology (Baral, 2012 p. 5) whereas the constitutional provision is to establish socialism oriented inclusive state (Section 4 of the constitution of Nepal). He envisioned Nepal’s political development is often intractable because of the country’s specificity, historical context, and too many external linkages entangled with them (Baral, 2017 p.1).

Thus, popular sovereignty, vibrant civil society, free and questioning media, active intelligentsia, non-government organizations, and trade unions and pressure groups have become an integral part of political development. It is intended to produce the greatest amount

of freedom most equitably shared, in which there is an increased capacity by individuals and social groups to determine their affairs. It characterizes as a dynamic political process rather than an instrumentalist goal. The 2015 Constitution of Nepal did, however, formally shift the country from a centralized and unitary structure of governance to a multi-tiered federalized system, marking a fundamental departure from the past (Khanal, 2019 p.30).

Political events that contributed to political development

Political movements had a major role in political changes in Nepal. Nepal's geopolitical condition is also a determinant factor to certain extent. Nepali Congress alone 2007, congress and Left parties jointly in 2046, and seven-party alliance and Maoist in 062/63 mass movement led the movements. These historical movements have paved the way for political development in Nepal. Dialogue and compromise had become a common character for each mass movement. Rana autocracy and Monarchy were the negative insulators for political development. Constitutional reforms and referendum were tricky steps of monarchy and compulsion for modernization to traditional power. The political change of 2007 is an initial entrance for openness and political freedom but the monarchy with traditional landed aristocracy blocked the democratic practices and started a parochial restricted regime for many years. The mass movement of 046 ended the Panchayat system and restored political freedom. Democracy is itself an inclusive process but in Nepal, it takes an extra course due to its complex social hierarchy. Constitutional and legal provisions made a little provision for inclusive democracy after the 046 mass movement. Maoist insurgency raised the consciousness of the oppressed and discriminated groups. Identity politics became a major agenda of the movement of Madheshi and an indigenous based party on the background of Maoist insurgency. Decade-long (2052-062) Maoist insurgency (initiated with identity) and another decade-long (2062-072) caste/ethnic movement for state restructuring, were marched for the accommodation of discriminated people have shaped inclusive democracy. Both movements inspired the lower class people of each cluster to fight for their rights.

The royal massacre had taken place in 2058. The ambition to be an active king, Gyanendra played a positive role in alliance with seven parties and Maoist. The alliance concluded 12 point agreement for full-fledged democracy and peace process. The process of democratization has been settled by new constitutional practice and some of the tasks of the peace process have remained incomplete yet. The people's movement 062/063 is the history in terms of the transformation of the state into a federal, republic, secular, multicultural, and inclusive democracy. Inclusive political participation is one of the remarkable achievements of this movement.

Inclusive representation in parliament

Constitutional and legal provision has made political participation more inclusive and proportionate. Excluded groups participated around the proportion of their population size during constitutional assembly 2008. Caste/ethnic and gender representation in the constitutional assembly I and II are in table 1.1.

Table 1.1: caste/ ethnic and gender representation in the CA I and II

| Caste/ethnicity | 2008 | | | 2013 | | |
|-----------------|------|-----|-------|------|-----|-------|
| | F | M | Total | F | M | Total |
| Khas Arya | 66 | 138 | 205 | 60 | 191 | 251 |
| Hill Janajati | 49 | 107 | 156 | 40 | 92 | 132 |
| Terai Janajati | 16 | 34 | 50 | 22 | 43 | 65 |
| Madhesi | 35 | 85 | 120 | 30 | 66 | 96 |
| Hill Dalit | 16 | 19 | 35 | 13 | 16 | 29 |
| Terai Dalit | 9 | 7 | 16 | 8 | 5 | 13 |
| Musalman | 6 | 10 | 16 | 4 | 9 | 13 |

Source: Election commission, Nepal

In table 1.1 participation in both constitutional assemblies are most inclusive but not proportionate to the respective population. It takes some time as a transitional period. All communities (in the broad sense) had valuable participation. It is a new beginning for Nepal. The first election under the constitution has inclusive participation of different caste/ethnic groups. Table 1.2 shows the representation of each group as categorized by law in both the houses of parliament.

Table 1.1: caste/ ethnic and gender representation in Parliament 2017

| Caste/ Ethnicity | House | | of Quota In National Assembly | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|-------|-------------------------------|--------|-------|
| | Representative Number | % | PR | Number | % |
| Khas Arya | 151 | 45.21 | 31.20 | 33 | 55.93 |
| Janajati | 75 | 22.46 | 28.70 | 13 | 22.03 |
| Madhesi | 55 | 16.47 | 15.30 | 5 | 8.47 |
| Dalit | 27 | 8.08 | 13.80 | 7 | 11.86 |
| Tharu | 17 | 5.09 | 6.60 | 1 | 1.69 |
| Musalman | 9 | 2.69 | 4.40 | - | - |
| Male | 221 | 66.17 | 50 | 37 | 62.72 |
| Female | 113 | 33.83 | 50 | 22 | 37.28 |

Source: Election Commission, Nepal

Women, Dalits, Janajatis of low-income levels have difficulty competing under the FPTP system and for nomination in the PR system. Capacity has to be developed of these groups for competing equally with other candidates. Table 1.2 shows the caste/ethnic and gender representation in both houses of parliament.

Opportunities and challenges for inclusive representation

Present set-up of the constitution provides both opportunities and challenges. It has taken a form with the constitutional formal procedure without addressing the serious grievances of Madhesi and Janjati groups. The new political system demands favorable political culture and behavior by leadership. It takes a transition for some time. The transition should be utilized for building favorable culture in each partner's communities of the society. It is a challenging task to make an inclusive state, but opportunities are latent in such a challenge in a diverse country like Nepal. Proportional participation for equal sharing and equitable distribution of opportunities is an achievement by which all human resources can be mobilized. Structural adjustment takes place according to social power balances. Inclusive democracy can be a new model as an alternative to a multi-dimensional capitalist crisis.

Nepal's geo-politics, influences of a power center, fiscal dependency, westernization are external challenges whereas discrimination, inequality, poverty, and lack of inclusion (specifically people of lower-income and marginalized groups) are a societal challenge. The major challenges are mistrust and exclusive culture of leadership which determine the future of inclusive democracy in Nepal.

Baral indicates heterogeneity as a challenge and suggests serious home-works for arriving at a solution that needs to be conducted among the concerned groups of the country. Federalism is now a *fait accompli* in the context of today's politics (Baral, 2017 p.112). The enthusiasm did not last all too long since the drawn-out transition and constitution-making process succeeded in diluting that original spirit (Khanal, 2019 p.30).

Hachhethu and others pointed out four challenges as people from the downtrodden strata have not yet got benefit, lack of trust between the parties and the CPN-Maoist, dichotomous opinion between Madheshis and non-Madheshis and communal tension in respect of restructuring (2010, p.94-96). Such challenges have changed to some extent in the course and new challenges have arisen as the institutionalization of federalism and inclusive democracy, functional efficiency, and responsive government and equitable justice.

Since Democracy in Nepal has failed to alter the distribution of power and wealth, it has not been successful to impress the poor and those on the political periphery. Democracy was born out of a compromise between the traditional elite and the professional middle class (Brown, 1996 P.211-212). The culture of leadership has not changed and politicians used

the rhetoric of popular participation. The new political dispensation also has to contend with the challenge of making the federal structure work. Federalism thrives in the context of an objective center-state relationship (Thapa, 2019, p.7). The name and capital of some provinces have not been declared yet. The minorities and marginalized groups, especially the oppressed and lower class people are excluded until the date. Federalism and inclusive democracy both are new practices for Nepal.

Conclusion

Society as well as the state has geared up towards modernity. Behavioral changes in people can be seen. Political development as a nation-state to state-nation, mono-culture to multicultural, unitary to federal, exclusionary to inclusive (to an extent of ethnicity), absolutism to secularism, monarch to republican, nominated to the electorate, parochial to participatory system became possible. These all are an expressive symptom of present political development. The major concern is the systemic institutionalization of inclusive participation and equitable justice. The repetitive mass movement increased consciousness. Inclusive democracy and federalism are new practices for Nepal. The journey of political development from 2007 to date has shaped the political system into an inclusive, federal, secular, democratic republic. Inclusion is the consequence of mass mobilization. The desirability of political progress, in which there is greater public accountability to a citizen without discrimination against minorities, is normatively desirable.

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