

Damak Campus Journal 2024, 13 (1): 1-14

ISSN : 2565-4772 (Print)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/dcj.v13i1.74668>

Progress of Diversity and Inclusion in Nepal

Govinda Prasad Guragain

Department of Political Science

Padma Kanya Multiple Campus, Kathmandu

Tribhuvan University

Email: guragaingovinda@gmail.com

Abstract

Nepal is a country with a rich tapestry of diversity, with its population varying across caste, region, religion, race, and ethnicity. This diversity has historically led to significant social exclusion, contributing to political, social, and economic inequalities. The 2063 Interim Constitution of Nepal aimed to address this by ensuring the inclusion of marginalized and minority communities, giving them a platform to influence national policy. This paper seeks to examine the current state of inclusivity for diverse groups in Nepal and analyze its impact on society from economic, political, and social perspectives. Both primary and secondary sources were utilized for this study. The research focuses primarily on the issue of diversity and inclusion in Nepal. The 2007 Interim Constitution further enshrined the principle of equality, stating in Article 13, Clause 3 that no law should prevent the creation of special provisions for the protection, empowerment, or advancement of women, Dalits, ethnic nationalities (Adivasi-Janajati), Madhesis, farmers, laborers, or any class that is economically, socially, or culturally disadvantaged, as well as children, the elderly, disabled individuals, or those with physical or mental impairments. These constitutional guarantees paved the way for the introduction of the reservation system in Nepal's political and civil service sectors.

Keywords: Exclusion, identity, inclusive representation, underprivileged, quota.

Introduction

Nepal is home to a diverse population composed of various castes and ethnic groups. Understanding the demographic makeup of these communities is essential for several reasons, including the development of targeted programs, efficient resource distribution, and the creation of policies that address the specific needs and concerns of different caste and ethnic groups. Recognizing Nepal's religious diversity is equally important, as it reflects the nation's rich cultural and religious landscape, where people of various faiths live harmoniously which has been managed well as Adhikari et al (2022) have disclosed the harmony of global natural system as the Nepalese have been dwelling. The Nepalese constitution guarantees religious freedom, allowing individuals to practice any religion of their choice. This constitutional right underscores the importance of the country's multiple

religious traditions, which have played a key role in shaping Nepal's unique cultural and historical identity.

The 2021 Census Report provides comprehensive data on the population of Nepal, including details about gender ratios, household distribution, and both rural and urban areas. It also highlights the diversity in castes, ethnic groups, cultures, languages, and religions that characterize the country. The focus of the study was on the key aspects of the progress of diversity and their representation in Nepal. According to the 2021 census, there were 142 caste/ethnic groups identified, with 125 of them remaining unchanged from the 2011 census, and 17 new groups being recognized and added (NPHC National Report 2021, p. 31). In the 2011 census, the country reported 10 religious groups, 123 languages, and 125 caste and ethnic groups. Hinduism was practiced by 81% of the population, and while there was no dominant ethnic group, numerous minority communities were identified (CBS, Census Report, 2011). In the 2021 census, 111 of the 124 mother tongues recorded in 2011 were also included, along with 13 newly identified languages. Twelve foreign languages from the 2011 census were reclassified under "other languages," and the same 10 religious groups as in 2011 were counted again in the 2021 census (NPHC National Report 2021, p. 32-35).

Nepal continues to exhibit significant diversity both among its various groups and regions. In the 1990s, Nepal was one of the most unequal nations in South Asia. Many groups, despite their large populations, were denied the opportunity to directly participate in politics, while political power remained in the hands of traditional elites (Gurung, 1998). The country's population is composed of several distinct groups, including indigenous nationalities, the Madhesi people of the southern Terai, and Dalits (the low-caste or untouchables), along with the general populace. Together, these three groups constitute more than two-thirds of Nepal's population. While ethnic tensions have not been a major issue in Nepal, the politicization of ethnic identities has only emerged in recent times. Nepal is a multilingual, multiethnic, multireligious, and multicultural country, where many groups—such as indigenous peoples, women, Madhesis, Dalits, and Janajatis—have historically been excluded from mainstream politics. Although inclusion initiatives have been introduced in recent years, there remain significant challenges with their implementation. The fear of its implementation in practical field has become as fearful as Adhikari (DOI: <http://doi.org/10.25058/179400x.1709>) has explored the real condition of adjusting the position of life by the person who has converted from one religion to another. The aim of this research is to explore pathways for more effective inclusion of these marginalized groups, not only in politics but also in the socio-economic sector. This study seeks to assess the impacts of inclusive representation on political institutions and offer recommendations for improving its implementation across all sectors.

Statement of Problem

Nepal faces significant inequality, particularly between different groups and regions. Previous efforts at democratization in the country, which is culturally and ethnically diverse, have often been dominated by elites, resulting in processes that continue to marginalize and exclude various groups. These elite-led initiatives have tended to reinforce existing power structures rather than expand popular participation. A key goal for the Maoist party in Nepal has been the establishment of a democratically elected constituent assembly, which they advocated for since the start of their insurgency in 1996. The Maoists have centered their mobilization around ethnic grievances against the state, playing a pivotal role in addressing the concerns of marginalized communities by advocating for inclusion and the right to political self-determination.

The 1990 Constitution of Nepal recognized the country as "a multiethnic, multilingual, democratic, independent, indivisible, sovereign, Hindu and Constitutional Monarchical Kingdom," while also declaring that "the Nepalese people, irrespective of religion, race, caste, or tribe, collectively constitute the nation" (Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, 1990). Since then, Nepal has undergone significant changes. After the first People's Movement, the country was declared secular, with inclusive representation becoming a political objective, and a federal republic was established. The new vision emphasized equality for all citizens, regardless of caste, ethnicity, religion, or community affiliation. However, the question remains: has this vision been effectively implemented in practice? Have recent political changes in Nepal led to greater inclusion? How have political institutions in Nepal addressed issues of political, economic, and social inclusion over time? Have the policies aimed at promoting inclusion been successful? And, to what extent have these issues been resolved or addressed in the current constitution ?

- A) What is the progress of diversity and inclusion in Nepal and the constitutional provisions to accommodate the diversity ?
- B) How is the inclusiveness addressed in Nepal ?

Objectives of the Research

The primary focus of this research is to highlight the vital role of political institutions in ensuring inclusive representation.

These institutions are key to promoting good governance, lasting peace, and sustainable development, all of which require inclusive representation to create long-term, positive impacts on Nepalese society.

Some of the specific objectives are:

- A) To describe the diversity of Nepal and the constitutional provisions to accommodate

the diversity

B) To explore the progress of inclusiveness in Nepal

Significance of study

An analysis of the representation of various socio-cultural groups in key government and societal positions reveals the marginalization of these groups. The study found that the Caste Hill Hindu Elite (CHHE) dominated several sectors, including politics, academia, industry, commerce, the judiciary, parliament, civil administration, civil society, local government, and cultural and educational leadership. Despite comprising 36.37% of the population, the CHHE (30.89%) and Newar (5.48%) together held over 80% of the leadership roles in governance by 1999. Even in more liberal fields like politics, civil society, and media, historically marginalized groups were largely excluded. Women's representation in public office, particularly CHHE women, remained minimal, with women's participation in the House of Representatives (HOR) not exceeding six percent in the elections of 1991, 1994, and 1999, and some cabinets having no women at all. In 1997, women represented only five percent of the gazetted civil service and four percent of the judiciary. The exclusion of Dalits further exemplifies the systemic inequality; only one Dalit was elected to the HOR, and no Dalit was appointed to the cabinet between 1990 and 2002.

The Interim Constitution of Nepal, enacted in 2007, was the first to guarantee special rights and protections for marginalized and minority communities (Constituent Assembly Secretariat 2010, 18-19). This provision was also a contentious issue during the drafting of Nepal's new constitution. Both the Interim Constitution and the Constitution of Nepal (2072) include inclusive features aimed at addressing inequality, such as the right to proportional representation for ethnic minorities, Dalits, women, and marginalized groups in state institutions. However, it is now crucial to assess whether the implementation of inclusive representation has been effective. Are these constitutional provisions being translated into real policy and practice, or are they merely symbolic?

Materials and Methods

This study employs a descriptive and analytical methodology. The data utilized in this research are primarily sourced from secondary materials. Information will be gathered from library books, online resources, and published works related to the topics of inclusion, policy-making, and representation in political institutions. Relevant data, statistical information, and historical evidence will be collected from reliable and credible sources. Authentic theories and concepts will be explored through reputable websites and external links.

Limitations of the study

The scope of this research is clearly defined. It specifically concentrates on the impact of inclusive representation. The study will focus on how inclusive representation is reflected

in the state's policies. The research primarily examines the effects of inclusive representation in Nepal, particularly as the country transitions into a federal structure.

Literature Review

Democratization is an ongoing process that requires "the genuine political inclusion of diverse groups, as formal political equality can still mask continued exclusion and oppression" (Dryzek 1996, 475, cited in Lawoti 2007c, 58). It involves extending the goals and values of democracy to incorporate citizens previously excluded or political institutions that were not under public control (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986, 8). Democracy can be defined as "popular control of public affairs based on political equality" (Beetham 1999 in Törnquist 2013, 1). Critical assessments indicate that the constitution-writing process has been dominated by elites, and despite the formal inclusion of marginalized groups, their substantive representation remains lacking. Moreover, inequality is often a product of social policy, rather than inherent human traits or intelligence. The only viable solution to improving the status of disadvantaged groups in Nepal is the adoption of affirmative action grounded in egalitarian principles (Gurung, 1998). It is essential to raise awareness among policymakers to create a discrimination-free society.

Since the 1990s, identity politics have gained momentum, with the rise of various ethnic-based political parties and movements. One of the key players in this shift is the Madhesi movement, which began in 2007 as a broad coalition of civil society groups advocating for the inclusion and rights of the Madhesi people in the Terai region of southern Nepal. Over the years, Nepal's democratization process has seen substantial progress, particularly in terms of the political mobilization of historically excluded groups. But it has become as complicated as Adhikari (2020) has discussed about the complexity of conserving the ecology and environment.

Studying the political communities that parties have built requires an analysis of the nature of representation between elected officials and the people they represent. This goes beyond the method of representation, focusing instead on the content of what is represented. It has become as challenging as Adhikari (2024) has revealed the fact of the political condition of Nepal.

Since 2006, the inclusion of historically marginalized groups has been a central political priority. In 2007, an interim constitution was enacted with the aim of restructuring the Nepali state into an inclusive, federal democratic republic. Ensuring proper inclusive representation in the new constitution was crucial for effective policymaking, and research on this issue remains necessary. The preamble of Nepal's current Constitution states: "Embracing multi-ethnicities, multilingualism, multiculturalism, and diverse geographical features... ending discrimination on any basis... to protect and promote unity in diversity and tolerance... we express our commitment to create an egalitarian society based on the principle of proportional representation and participation..."

Recent decades of "ethnicization" in politics and identity movements are closely linked to various studies on popular participation and political inclusion in Nepal. Several studies on the Maoist insurgency contribute to this understanding (Hutt 2004a; Thapa 2002; Thapa and Sijapati 2004). Anthropological research on other ethnic movements in Nepal (Hangen 2010; Gellner 2008; Gellner, Pfaff-Czarnecka, and Whelpton 1997) and the 2007 Madhesi uprising (Hachhethu 2007a; Hatlebakk 2007) also offer valuable insights.

Policy Review

The present constitution of Nepal has managed the following policy reviews:

Part 1 (Article 3); Nation: Having multi – ethnic, multi – religious, multi – lingual and multi – cultural features with common aspirations..., united the bond of allegiance to national independence, integrity, national interest and prosperity of Nepal, all the Nepalese people collectively constitute the nation.

Part 1 (Article 4); State: Nepal is an independent, indivisible, sovereign, secular, inclusive, socialism – oriented, federal democratic republic state.

Part 1 (Article 6, Sub – Article 3); Language of the Nation: All the mother tongues (Languages) spoken in Nepal shall be treated as the language of the nation.

Part 3 (Article 18, Sub – Article 3 and 4); Right to Equality: The state shall not discriminate among citizen on any ground of origin, race, gender, religion, language, geographical location, ideological conviction or any other matters....

Part 3 (Article 24, Sub – Article 1); Right against Untouchability and Racial Discrimination: no person shall, on any ground of caste, ethnicity, descent, origin community or occupation, be subject to racial discrimination and untouchability in any form....

Part 3 (Article 40, Sub – Article 1); Right of Dalits: Equal participation of dalits will be guaranteed on the basis of proportional inclusion.

Part 3 (Article 42); Right to social Justice: women, Dalits, Indigenous ethnic groups (Adiwasi / Janajati), Madhesi communities, oppressed groups, Poor farmers and labours, who are economically, socially or educationally backward, shall have the right to participate in state structures on the basis of principles of proportional inclusion.

Part 8 (Article 84, Sub – Article 2); Formation of the Representative Assembly: Political parties have to give proper consideration upon the principles of inclusiveness while selecting their candidates...

Part 8 (Article 86); Formation of Federal Parliament and National Assembly: Of the total number of candidates elected from each party in the Federal Parliament, at least one – third must be women....

Result and Discussion

Progress of diversity in Nepal

Nepal covers an area of 147,516 square kilometers and has a population of 29,164,578, according to the 2021 census, with 14,253,551 men and 14,911,027 women. The country's diversity is shaped by factors such as gender, caste, ethnicity, religion, language, unique communities, minorities, and differently-abled groups. Nepal is a nation where people from diverse ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic backgrounds live together in harmony, much like the seven colors of a rainbow. Despite sharing the same religion, there are a variety of cultural practices within Nepal, reflecting the country's rich cultural differences. These differences manifest in distinct customs and traditions, which vary across regions, from east to west and north to south, depending on factors such as caste, region, religion, and culture.

Political parties in Nepal are not fully democratic and fail to foster a democratic culture. The political landscape is dominated by just 12-13 top leaders, leaving no space for other members in the cabinet. These leaders control the parties, the parliament, and the executive, while also exerting influence over the judiciary. This dominance is partly due to their strong unity and the creation of a syndicate system, which excludes the general public from participating in fair politics.

The Progress of diversity of Nepal according to the census day 25 November 2021.

Population

According to the 2021 census, Nepal's total population stands at 29,164,578, with 14,253,551 men (48.87%) and 14,911,027 women (51.13%). This results in a sex ratio of 95.59 males for every 100 females, while 2,928 individuals (0.01% of the total population) are classified as "other gender." The population growth rate in 2021 was 0.92% annually. In comparison, the 2011 census recorded a population of 26,494,504, with a sex ratio of 94.16 males per 100 females, and a growth rate of 1.35%. The population density increased from 180 people per square kilometer in 2011 to 198 in 2021. The Tarai region has the highest population density at 460 people per square kilometer, while the Mountain region has the lowest at 34. District 5 in Kathmandu has the highest population density, while District 3 in Manang has the lowest. As of 2021, 53.61% of the population resides in the Tarai, 40.31% in the Hill region, and 6.08% in the Mountain region. In the 2011 census, the distribution was 50.27% in the Tarai, 43.01% in the Hill region, and 6.73% in the Mountain region (NPHC National Report 2021, p. 1).

Caste/ Ethnicity

The National Population and Housing Census of 2021 in Nepal identifies 142 distinct castes and ethnic groups. Of these, 125 were also listed in the 2011 census, while 17 new groups

were specifically recognized in the 2021 census. There were no significant changes in the caste/ethnicity data between the 2011 and 2021 censuses. The newly included groups are Ranatharu, Bhumihar, Bankariya, Surel, Chumba/Nubri, Phree, Mugal/Mugum, Pun, Rauniyar, Baniyan, Gondh/Gond, Karmarong, Khak, Beldar, Chai/Khulaut, Done, and Kewarat (NPHC National Report 2021, Caste/ethnicity, language & religion p. 31).

Language(s)

The National Population and Housing Census 2021 in Nepal records 124 mother tongues, with 111 of these also listed in the 2011 census, and 13 new languages identified in the 2021 census. The newly added languages include Bhote, Lowa, Chum/Nubri, Baragunwa, Nar-Phu, Ranatharu, Karmarong, Mugali, Tichhurong Poike, Sadri, Done, Munda/Mudiyari, and Kewarat. Additionally, 12 foreign languages previously listed in the 2011 census as mother tongues have been grouped under "Other languages" in the 2021 census due to the low number of speakers. The 2021 census also highlights that over 10,000 people speak 25 different languages as a second language, a notable increase compared to the 18 second languages recorded in the 2011 census (NPHC National Report 2021, Caste/ethnicity, language & religion, p. 32-33).

Religion(s):

The 2021 census of Nepal reported ten religious categories, consistent with the 2011 census. Although Hinduism remains the dominant religion, its percentage declined by 0.15% from 2011 to 2021. Similarly, Buddhism, the second-largest religion, saw a decrease of 0.83%. In contrast, the number of people practicing Islam, Kirat, and Christianity increased by 0.75%, 0.12%, and 0.34%, respectively. Other religions with less than 0.5% of the population include Baha'i, Sikh, Jain, Bon, and Prakriti (NPHC National Report 2021, Caste/ethnicity, language & religion, p. 34-35).

The rise of democracy in Nepal, triggered by the 1950 revolution led by the Nepali Congress to dismantle the Rana regime, marked the start of the nation's shift from exclusion to inclusion. The 1950s and 1960s witnessed significant political changes, including the establishment of a new governance system, the drafting of a constitution, the division of powers, the guarantee of fundamental rights, the emergence of political parties advocating for equality under the law, and the call for the formation of a Constituent Assembly to draft the constitution.

The principle of equal rights was first introduced in Nepal's 1950 constitution, marking the beginning of efforts to include all citizens in public life. Over the span of 60 years, Nepal adopted six different constitutions, with the seventh, ratified in 2015, incorporating provisions for inclusiveness to reflect the country's diverse population. Although these constitutions aimed to integrate various groups of Nepalese into state affairs, discrimination continued despite constitutional provisions and government initiatives. The Interim

Constitution of Nepal 2007 also enshrined the right to equality. Article 13, Clause 3, stipulates that "nothing shall be deemed to prevent the making of special provisions by law for the protection, empowerment or advancement of women, Dalits, ethnic nationalities (Adibasi-janajati), Madhesi or farmers, laborers or those who belong to a class which is economically, socially or culturally backward or children, the aged, disabled or those who are physically or mentally incapacitated." This and other similar provisions paved the way for the establishment of a Reservation system in Nepal's civil service. To enhance representation, the Civil Service Act was amended in 1991 to ensure that 45 percent of civil service positions were filled through inclusive recruitment. Of this, 33 percent was reserved for women, 27 percent for Adibasi-janajatis (ethnic nationalities), 22 percent for Madhesi (Terai people), 9 percent for Dalits, 5 percent for disabled individuals, and the remaining 4 percent for those from backward areas (Dhakal, 2013).

The data above highlights the constitutional provisions for inclusive representation across various sectors. In addition to these, there are other constitutional provisions aimed at eliminating all forms of discrimination and ensuring equality for all citizens, regardless of their differences. Some relevant articles from the constitution are outlined here for reference.

The constitution guaranteed equal rights for all citizens, as outlined in various articles, but there was considerable debate regarding the allocation of quotas. The Brahmin and Chhetri communities opposed the proposed quotas and advocated for their representation as Khas Chhetri from the Karnali region. After extensive discussions, the government reduced the quotas for other ethnic communities to accommodate the demands of the Khas Arya (Khas Chhetri).

Lawmakers from both the ruling and opposition parties voiced their objections to the Federal Civil Servants Bill proposed by the central government in the House of Representatives. They argued that the bill reduced the reservation quotas for their ethnic groups and communities, which they believed contradicted the spirit of the constitution. Their dissatisfaction stemmed not only from the cuts in their reservation quotas but also from their demand for the quotas to be based on the population of their specific caste or ethnicity during the thematic discussions in the House. The bill proposed a reservation system in eight categories: women (33%), Indigenous/Janajati (24%), Madhesi (20%), Dalit (9%), Tharu (4%), Muslim (3%), differently-abled individuals (3%), and those from backward areas (4%). For civil service posts, 45% were set aside for inclusive categories, and 55% for open competition. Of the 45% reserved for inclusion, a separate competition would be held for candidates within the relevant reservation clusters. According to Suresh Adhikari, the government reduced the reservation for Madhesi by 2% (from 22% to 20%), for Indigenous/Janajati by 3% (from 27% to 24%), and for differently-abled individuals by 2%

(from 5% to 3%). He explained that since the government could not exceed 45%, they adjusted the quotas to fit within that limit (Pandey, 2019).

Inclusiveness has brought significant changes to Nepalese society, offering opportunities for minority, disadvantaged, and marginalized groups to access higher education, government employment, and participate in politics. While representation at the decision-making level, particularly in the cabinet, remains limited, the positive effects of inclusive representation are noticeable. However, constitutional provisions guaranteeing inclusive rights alone are not enough. Both the government and citizens must actively engage in implementing these provisions. The government must enforce the constitutional guarantees and create better opportunities in education, healthcare, and employment, ensuring legal and social justice for all. Merely ensuring inclusiveness and proportional representation through constitutional clauses is insufficient to address the disparities within Nepal's population. A more thoughtful distribution of resources and services, especially for the elderly, differently-abled, underprivileged, and marginalized groups, should be prioritized, recognizing the identity of all citizens. It is essential for individuals to remain supportive and committed to the rights of marginalized communities, as this will foster good governance in Nepal and help realize the aspirations of the Nepalese people.

Conclusion

Inclusiveness refers to the principle of ensuring that all individuals have a role in the nation's affairs. It is the process of integrating people from disadvantaged, marginalized, or underrepresented communities into the broader political, social, and economic spheres of the country. The idea of inclusiveness is relatively recent in Nepal, gaining prominence during the Maoist insurgency, which brought the issue of proportional representation to the forefront. This was later guaranteed in the Interim Constitution of Nepal, promulgated on 1st Magh 2063. Nepal is characterized by its rich diversity in cultures, religions, and traditions, and inclusiveness encompasses the participation of various groups including different classes, castes, ethnicities, genders, and language communities. However, members of the constitutional commission have pointed out that political parties do not genuinely strive to implement the constitution's provisions on proportional representation in a fair and effective manner. In essence, they comply with these requirements only because they are legally obligated to do so. The parties do not actively support the inclusion of women, Madhesis, Dalits, disabled individuals, or other marginalized communities. Moreover, they resist relinquishing control over their positions and fail to advocate for the rights of these minority groups.

Many communities in Nepal, such as women, Muslims, Dalits from the Terai, and the Chepang and Raute of the Hills, are still far from achieving inclusive representation. In a diverse society like Nepal, proportional representation is both essential and just. But it has become as difficult as Adhikari et al (2020) have pointed out the complexity of conserving

the eco-condition of the world. It plays a crucial role in ensuring that various groups based on caste, gender, ethnicity, region, and religion are represented, fostering a sense of equality and enabling their participation in the country's social, political, and economic life. This can help reduce conflicts arising from identity and recognition based on these differences. A key issue raised by the Khas Arya was their demand for a higher quota following the introduction of inclusive representation. As the government could not exceed the 45% quota limit, it decided to reduce the quotas for certain ethnic groups in the civil service and redistribute them to others. This led to a reduction of 2% in the Madhesi reservation (from 22% to 20%), 3% in the Adiwasi/Janajati reservation (from 27% to 24%), and 2% in the reservation for differently abled individuals (from 5% to 3%).

Nepal's current constitution recognizes the country as a multicultural, multilingual, multiethnic, and multireligious nation. However, several groups, including women, Madhesis, Janajatis, Dalits (from lower castes), indigenous people, and others, remain marginalized and excluded from mainstream politics. While inclusiveness, through the representation of diverse groups in politics, has been introduced, its implementation has faced numerous challenges. The concept of inclusive representation ensures the participation of all people in national affairs, aiming to integrate marginalized, disadvantaged, and historically excluded communities into the nation's political and social life.

Despite this, public support for the participation of marginalized and minority groups remains low. Political parties, which lack true democratic practices, fail to promote a culture of democracy. Power is largely concentrated in the hands of a small group of 12-13 top leaders, leaving no room for broader representation within the cabinet. These leaders control the political parties, parliament, and executive branches, often undermining the judiciary as well. Their unified control is maintained through a syndicate system, where there is little space for the general public in fair politics. Nonetheless, the move toward inclusivity has brought about significant positive changes in the nation and improved the lives of many people.

Recommendations

If the state disregards inclusiveness, which has been attained through significant struggle, Nepal cannot expect good governance, sustainable development, or a true realization of democracy. Therefore, it is essential for the governing authorities to ensure inclusiveness in all aspects of the nation's affairs. Beyond the quota system of representation, there is a need to further reinforce and institutionalize inclusiveness by focusing on the following key areas:

For Federal Government

Reinforce policies and legal frameworks

All disadvantaged and marginalized groups must be granted equal rights and protections through laws that the government must enact and rigorously enforce. This includes strengthening anti-discrimination laws, upholding affirmative action policies, and ensuring the protection of the rights of women, minorities, Dalits, indigenous communities, and individuals with disabilities in every aspect of society.

Economic Empowerment Initiative

The government should implement targeted economic programs aimed at empowering marginalized communities. This may involve offering financial assistance, training, and entrepreneurial opportunities to women, minorities, and disadvantaged groups. Ensuring equitable access to markets, credit, and land can help create a more level playing field.

Participation and Representation in Politics

It is essential to ensure that marginalized groups have fair and significant representation in political decision-making processes. The government should promote the participation of women, Dalits, indigenous peoples, and other marginalized communities in local, provincial, and national governance. Quotas or reserved seats in key institutions could be implemented to support this:

For Provincial Government

Programs for Inclusive Education and Awareness

The initial step in fostering inclusivity is through education. Everyone should have equal access to quality education offered by the government, with curricula that highlight diversity and social justice. Gradually, targeted programs designed to educate the public on the advantages of inclusivity can help shape societal attitudes.

For Local Government

Enhance Decentralization and Local Governance

Decentralization empowers local governments to address the specific needs of their communities, promoting inclusivity. By prioritizing participatory development planning, where all citizens are involved in decision-making, the government should ensure that local institutions are equipped to make decisions that reflect the diverse needs of various groups. These actions can help foster a more inclusive society where individuals from all backgrounds can actively participate in and benefit from Nepal's development.

References

- Adhikari, B. S. (2020). *Exotic Fearology*. Xlibris.
- Adhikari, B. S. (2024). *The House on the Banyan Street*. Amazon.com.
- Adhikari, B. S., Kalu, O. K., & Subba, D. (2020). *Eco-Fearism: Burning prospects & issues*. Xlibris.
- Adhikari, B. S., Steel, H., Guragain, G. P., & Sharma, B. (2020). *Yarshagumbaism*. Xlibris.
- Central Bureau of Statistics. (2011). *Census report 2011*.
- Constitution of Nepal. (2072).
- Dhakal, D. (2013). Analyzing reservation policies in Civil Service of Nepal. Professor Nobuhiro Hiwatari as a requirement for the course on International Political Economy (Case Study) at GraSPP, The University of Tokyo. Available at: http://www.pp.utokyo.ac.jp/courses/2013/documents/5140143_10a.pdf.
- Gellner, D. N. (2008). *Resistance and the state: Nepalese experiences*. Social Science Press.
- Gellner, D. N., Pfaff-Czarnecka, J., & Whelpton, J. (1997). *Nationalism and ethnicity in a Hindu kingdom: The politics of culture in contemporary Nepal*. Harwood Academic.
- Gurung, H. (1998). *Nepal social demography and expressions*. New ERA.
- Hachhethu, K. (2007a). Madhesi nationalism and restructuring the Nepali state. Paper presented at *Constitutionalism and diversity in Nepal*, Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, 22–24 August 2007.
- Hangen, S. I. (2010). *The rise of ethnic politics in Nepal: Democracy in the margins*. Routledge.
- Hatlebakk, M. (2007). Economic and social structures that may explain the recent conflicts in the Terai of Nepal. Chr. Michelsen Institute.
- Hutt, M. (2004a). *Himalayan "people's war": Nepal's Maoist rebellion*. Hurst.
- Lawoti, M. (2007c). Political exclusion and the lack of democratization: Cross-national evaluation of Nepali institutions using a majoritarian-consensus framework. *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 45(1), 57-77. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14662040601135755>.
- Mansfield, E. D., & Snyder, J. (2007). The sequencing "fallacy." *Journal of Democracy*, 18(3), 5. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2007.0047>.
- Mouzelis, N. (1998). Modernity, late development and civil society. In L. Rudebeck, O. Törnquist, & V. Rojas (Eds.), *Democratization in the Third World: Concrete cases in comparative and theoretical perspective* (pp. 57-82). Macmillan.
- National Population and Housing Census 2021 National Report. (2021). Government of Nepal Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, National Statistics Office.
- National Population and Housing Census 2021 National Report on Caste/Ethnicity, Language, and Religion. (2021). Government of Nepal Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, National Statistics Office.
- O'Donnell, G., & Schmitter, P. C. (1986). *Transitions from authoritarian rule: Tentative conclusions about uncertain democracies*. The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Pandey, J. (2019, May 8). More reservation quotas sought for ethnic groups. *The Himalayan Times*.
- Pyakurel, U. P., & Adhikari, I. (2013). *State of conflict and democratic movement of Nepal*. Vij Publication.

- Slavu, C. (2012). The 2008 Constituent Assembly election. In S. von Einsiedel, D. M. Malone, & S. Pradhan (Eds.), *Nepal in transition: From people's war to fragile peace* (pp. 232-254). Cambridge University Press.
- Stokke, K. (2011). Questioning liberal peace. In N. Shanmugaratnam, D. J. Kjosavik, & P. Vedeld (Eds.), *The political economy of environment and development in a globalized world: Exploring the frontiers: Essays in honour of Nadarajah Shanmugaratnam* (pp. 321-342).
- Thapa, D. (2002). The Maobadi of Nepal. In K. M. Dixit & S. Ramachandaran (Eds.), *State of Nepal* (pp. 77-99). Himal Books.
- Thapa, D., & Sijapati, B. (2004). *A kingdom under siege: Nepal's Maoist insurgency, 1996 to 2004*. Printhouse.
- Törnquist, O. (2002). *Popular development and democracy: Case studies with rural dimensions in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Kerala* (Vol. 3). Oslo: SUM.
- Törnquist, O. (2013). *Assessing dynamics of democratization: Transformative politics, new institutions, and the case of Indonesia*. Palgrave Macmillan.