

A peer-reviewed open-access journal indexed in NepJol

ISSN 2990-7640 (online); ISSN 2542-2596 (print)

Published by Molung Foundation, Kathmandu, Nepal

Article History: Received on January 24, 2023; Accepted on May 1, 2023

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/mef.v13i01.56084>

Experience and Expectation of Socialism: Principle versus Practice in Nepal

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Abstract

This article discusses Nepali people's experience with socialism and their expectations by addressing these questions: What is socialism? Which socialism do Nepali people expect? Why do they expect socialism? How does the principle go against the practice in the context of Nepal? Qualitative secondary sources are critically analyzed as methodological tools to reveal the present experience and expectations of Nepali people. It presents the disparity between principle and practice demonstrated by the Nepali political parties. *The Constitution of Nepal 2015* has formally promised that the guiding political-economic principle of this state is socialism-oriented. However, the sayings and doings of major political parties in Nepal have a big gap. In their doings, they are highly influenced by liberal capitalist principles, and they continue implementing neo-liberal policies. They put forward liberal bourgeois policies and programs that suited the interest of the comprador bourgeoisie. Thus, we have seen a contradiction in their implementation of the socialist principle, which goes against the expectation of the Nepali people. By pointing out this gap, this article highlights the need for serious discussions on achieving socialism as stated in Nepal's constitution and expected by the people while also drawing the attention of the political actors to take immediate and radical actions to correct their behaviors in time in order to achieve the goal of a Socialism Nepal.

Keywords: capitalist, comprador bourgeois, constitution, green-socialism, Marxism, means of production, neo-liberalism

Experience and Expectation of Socialism: Principle versus Practice in Nepal

After a long and glorious history of revolution, Nepal overthrew the autocratic King's rule and established a republic by promulgating a new constitution in 2015 (2072 BS) through a newly elected Constituent Assembly. Nepal is a country of multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-cultural, and diverse geographical features. Regarding all these characteristics, the new constitution of Nepal has promised to end discrimination relating to class, caste, region, language, religion, gender, and all forms of caste untouchability to protect and promote unity in diversity, social and cultural solidarity by ensuring equitable society by way of economic prosperity and social justice. In the preamble, the *Constitution of Nepal 2015* has committed, "Nepal is an independent, indivisible, sovereign, secular, inclusive democratic, socialism-oriented federal democratic republican state" (p.1). This statement shows that all parties of Nepal who were involved in historical people's movements in different periods of the country have embraced socialism in Nepal by adopting democratic norms and values such as good governance, civil liberty, fundamental rights, human rights, complete press freedom and an independent, impartial and competent judiciary and the concept of the rule of law. Theoretically, this constitution has committed to realizing the long-held aspirations and dreams of the Nepali people.

Now, Nepal has become a socialist state as inscribed in the constitution with all-party consensus, although it was the agenda of only Left parties in the past. At the moment, it has become the responsibility of all the political parties, whether they are leftists, centrists, or rightists, to implement the agenda of socialism, especially making a socialist-oriented political-economic system in Nepal. However, the implementation of socialist agenda is not easy. Although it is very challenging, they need dedication and commitment because they have agreed to abide by the constitution. However, despite the documented commitment to a socialism-oriented state, the present constitution of Nepal has not given further

explanation concerning the specific type of socialism that the country expects in its social, political, or economic provisions. It has not been clarified whether the country aims for liberal capitalist socialism or state-sponsored scientific socialism.

Generally speaking, socialism refers to the philosophy and political-economic system aiming at the overall development of humanity by establishing a welfare state. In socialism, the production and distribution of goods and services are the shared responsibility of a group of people or state or government. In such a system, the basic needs, especially food, cloth, housing, education, health, and employment of the citizen are taken as the state's responsibility and regulated by the government. While every government needs to serve the need of the individual citizens, socialism encourages cooperation rather than market competition because its agenda is not private ownership. It encourages collective ownership over means/factors of production, such as any machinery, tools, farms, factories, infrastructures, land, labor, capital, and natural resources. Socialism inspires egalitarian society as stated also by Nepal's constitution: "we also express our determination to create an egalitarian society on the basis of the principles of proportional inclusion and participation" (p.1), in which the governments of different parties in Nepal mean socialism differently. The leftist parties promise a commitment to equal rights and opportunities for all people by equal distribution of goods and services only in their sayings. The centrist and rightist parties superficially take the agenda of equal distribution of goods and services and raise loud voices about human rights to show that they are genuine political actors. Besides, in a socialist state, the government controls the means of production and market price. There is no unfair, biased, and exploitative situation in the distribution of goods and services in the market. In Nepal, the practice is quite the opposite. There are monolithic, unfair, and prohibited business activities in the market. Market monitoring by the government is not meaningful and effective. To

implement the agenda of socialism in Nepal, the government should take radical action. Market prices should be controlled by facilitating the supply system, especially by distributing essential daily commodities through food trading companies. Government officials should analyze the price of goods on the basis of customs gate price and industry gate price. They have to punish the wrong advertisers. However, there is a huge gap between the policies and practices in Nepal. The market price rises, and the government officials visit and say that the work has been well done in every sector, but the customer-people do not get benefits.

In a socialist welfare state, the government makes a central economic and investment plan by collecting and using national capital and national resources to establish various types of industries, including farm and livestock industries. The goal of socialism is to transfer the means of production from private ownership to the ownership of an organized society, i.e., the state. The Socialist system considers every worker as a producer and speaks for their role in the decision of what to produce and how to produce. According to Mishra (2019), “Socialism considers private ownership of property as the root cause of social pollution and evil. To uproot private ownership is essential for establishing socialism” (p. 25). In other words, public ownership of the means of production is the basis for socialism. In a socialist state, the government discourages the practices of share market and remittance because they are not productive, although there is no restriction on importing raw materials. Then any surplus or profit resulting from the citizen-owned means of production should be shared equally with those same citizens.

Historical Features and Models of Socialism

The term ‘socialism’ comes from the Latin word *sociare*, which means to combine or to share. The ideas and principles that underlie socialism have deeper

roots and can be traced back to ancient times. For example, in ancient Greece, the philosopher Plato in his *Republic* around 375 BC, advocated for a society in which resources were shared equally and private property was abolished. His *Republic* “depicts an austere society in which men and women of the ‘guardian’ class share with each other not only their few material goods but also their spouses and children” (as cited in Ball and Dagger, 2023). Similarly, early Christian communities practiced forms of communal ownership and distribution of resources. Utopian socialism developed earlier in both literary and philosophical traditions than the more politically developed system as proposed by social theorists like Pierre Leroux, who presented socialism as an alternative to liberal individualism based on shared ownership of resources. But Karl Marx and Frederick Engels developed socialism as a complete economic and political system. However, there is a big difference between utopian socialism, as stated by Thomas More in *Utopia* (1516), and Marxist socialism, as stated by Marx and Engels in *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848). According to Marx and Engels, “The significance of Critical-Utopian Socialism and Communism bears an inverse relation to historical development” (1848, p. 41). Communism is also called scientific socialism. In this regard, Schumpeter (1994), in *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, argues, “The badge of Scientific Socialism, which according to Marx is to distinguish from Utopian Socialism consists in the proof that socialism is inevitable irrespective of human volition or of desirability” (p. 56). It means that the theory of scientific socialism was first developed by Karl Marx while speaking against capitalism. In a capitalist society, an individual is encouraged to own the means of production privately and is free to make a profit by exploiting the proletariat/workers. Equal distribution of means of production and services is an inevitable part of socialism but “social inequality is an inevitable dimension of the capitalist world system” (Baer, 2016, p. 12). In fact,

evolution is the foundation of socialism. Charles Rappoport, a Russian-French politician, advocates the transformation of present society:

A socialist is a new man who is obliged to live within an old society which he condemns and deplors, if he is a real socialist. From there come many troubled consciences and personal struggles of great sorrow. Sometimes the socialist needs an extraordinary force of character and reason, as well as very favorable external circumstances, to emerge victorious from such a struggle. (as cited in Wright, 2017, p. 30)

It demonstrates that socialism is not in favor of a stagnant society. The central concern of socialism is to understand the struggle in modern culture and society between living in the present and looking to the future. Uprooting private ownership in the process of human evolution is essential for establishing socialism. It demands a strong and all-determining government in the state. In socialism, the state is seen as the most effective vehicle for coordinating and administering all needs.

Communism and Socialism arose in protest against the exploitation of the working class during the age of the industrial revolution (1760 -1840). Both advocate public rather than private ownership, especially of the means of production, distribution, and exchange of goods. Both value the idea of cooperation. However, the distinction between socialism and communism is that socialism aims to only socialize production, while communism aims to socialize both production and consumption. This is summed up in Marx's phrase that "socialism's allocative rule is 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his work' while the more advanced stage of communism was defined as one in which distribution would be not according to work but need" (Roemer, 2008, p. 15). It means that those who work receive more because they need more. Under socialism, all citizens share equally in economic resources as allocated by a

democratically elected government, and people make decisions for the people, whereas under communism, most property and economic resources are owned and controlled by the state rather than individual citizens.

In the first half of the 19th century, early socialist thinkers like Henri de Saint-Simon, Robert Owen, and Charles Fourier presented their own models for reorganizing society along the lines of cooperation and community rather than the competition inherent in capitalism, where the free market controlled the supply and demand of goods. When Marx came up with the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* with his collaborator Engels, he argued, “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle” (1848, p. 9). Following Marxism, democratic socialism was implemented and practiced by Bolsheviks under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin, with the Russian Revolution of 1917 in the Soviet Union until its fall in 1991. Today, democratic socialism exists in China, Cuba, North Korea, Laos, and Vietnam, but real Marxist/communist socialism has never existed till now, as Marx had proposed. Even Lenin could not implement communist socialism in his time because the distribution of skills was extremely heterogeneous, and the need of the people were unlimited.

In Europe, social democratic systems are found in the five Nordic countries: Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Iceland. They have successful capitalist sectors and follow policies of social democracy. There is a difference between a social democratic system and democratic socialism. Social democrats believe in implementing welfare programs through a democratically elected government, while the supporters of democratic socialism believe in the nationalization of the means of production in running the economy through a democratically elected government. According to John E. Roemer:

Social democrats, however, were not primarily concerned with the elimination of capitalist exploitation, but rather with achieving a more

equal distribution of income than was associated with laissez-faire capitalism. The model that was implemented in the Nordic countries, with great success, used taxation rather than nationalization (2008, p. 15).

Similarly, many European and Latin American countries have adopted socialist programs believing that workers should control the majority of the means of production without avoiding the will of the free market and the capitalist classes. They have practiced socialism by democratic process rather than revolution.

One of the main features of socialism is ‘anti-capitalism.’ Anti-capitalists are those who want to replace capitalism, capitalist policies, and ideals with another type of economic system like socialism or communism in that the working class/proletariat would inevitably triumph over the capitalist/bourgeoisie and control the means of production, forever erasing all classes. Marx’s socialism is a revolutionary socialism that originated as a reaction to the industrial revolution. Marxists often refer to socialism as the first necessary phase on the way from capitalism to communism. They want to abolish private property, private ownership over the means of production, competition, etc. They reject individualism and liberalism, which is “the key value in a capitalist society” (Salvadori, 1968, p. 5). In anti-capitalist ideology, competition in economic activities is replaced by cooperation, preferably voluntary but compulsory if need be. International Workers’ Day, also known as Labor Day, is a celebration of laborers and the working classes on May 1 as an anti-capitalist movement every year since 1889. May Day has become an annual event for all Socialist Party Organizations and Trade Unions.

‘Economic, social and political equality’ is the second basic feature of socialism and is identified with justice. According to a British-Italian historian and anti-Fascist writer Massimo Salvadori (1968):

For run-of-the-mill socialists, who count in the socialist movement more than sophisticated intellectuals, equality simply meant uniformity; uniformity in economic standards at the level of practical activities, uniformity in ways of thinking at the level of intellectual activities (p. 6).

It means that there is inequality and discrimination in society because of divergent economic interests that result from private ownership of property. When private ownership is abolished, there may be uniformity in the way of thinking.

The third feature of socialism is 'fraternity.' Socialists' ultimate aim is to establish an affluent society without divisions and hence without tensions composed of happy and contented individuals cooperating voluntarily for the common interest. In socialist eyes, harmony in society can be achieved through the elimination of capitalism. With prosperity, there would no longer be any motives for quarrels, divisions, and conflicts because these are due to scarcity and the greed of the strong exploiting the weak. Brotherhood and pacifism are the dominant socialist themes. Socialism accompanies the triumph of equality, brotherhood, and peace, and the socialists see in the abolition of capitalism the most radical step ever taken in the progressive transformation of mankind.

The fourth feature of socialism is the maximum social 'welfare state.' It means that there is no scope for exploitation of the labor class. The government keeps a close eye on the needs of the poor masses while formulating plans. In a socialist economy, work is according to ability/skill and wage according to need. The socialist government plays a positive role in decision-making. The government has complete control over economic activities like distribution, exchange, consumption, investment, and foreign trade. All types of decisions regarding the central problems of an economy are taken in the economic plans. There is a central planning authority that plans for the economy.

The fifth feature of socialism is ‘no competition but productive social relations on a cooperative basis.’ Gilbert (2020), in *Twenty-First Century Socialism*, argues:

The basic claim of socialism is that the world should not be run by a tiny clique of capitalists who act solely in their own interests, but by all the people on the planet, as they work and think together for the common good (p. 17).

The fact is that humans have only ever survived and prospered in cooperation. Capitalists want workers to compete for jobs because capitalists can offer workers lower wages. Capitalists also compete with each other to maximize those profits. In such a situation, there is exploitation and injustice.

In the world, there are several models of socialism. Different socialist countries have different models based on their geographical location, cultural and ideological inspiration, and economic and political influence. Though there are various models, I have mentioned only the major models in this article.

The first and most well-known is the ‘scientific socialism model.’ This model is also called revolutionary or left-wing socialism and is oriented toward communism. It was predicted by Karl Marx and was attempted to implement initially by Vladimir Lenin in USSR. In this model, working-class struggle and technological change play a central role in the dynamic social change and revolutionary transformation of human society from the domination of the capitalist mode of production. The leading agent of the change is the mass movement of downtrodden heavy-industry-based proletarians.

The second is the ‘democratic socialism model.’ In this model, the means of production are nationalized and under the control of the democratically elected administration. The vital goods and services are distributed through centralized planning, but the free market is used to distribute consumer products. After

Russia's fall, China, Cuba, North Korea, Laos, and Vietnam have tried to implement this model in their countries. However, they have not completely achieved it yet because now democracy has become the pervasive institutional desire and essentiality, at least in developed countries. Moreover, the increasing technical sophistication of the capitalist production process has been expected and accepted by the majority of people to increase and expand their horizons of individual knowledge and power.

The third is the 'social democratic model.' Under this model, the social democrats are not "primarily concerned with the elimination of capitalist exploitation" (Roemer, 2008, p. 15); rather, they refuse to interfere and regulate the free market policy of capitalism. They want to implement social welfare programs to establish a welfare state by the maximum distribution of goods and services to their citizens in order to avoid exploitation and abolish class division. In such a model, the individuals of the free market system decide how resources should be distributed. The individual workers are free to accumulate private property. Such a model is now found in Scandinavian countries like Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, and some other Latin American countries. The fourth model is the 'bourgeois socialism model.' It is also called libertarian or conservative socialism. This model works on the assumption that every individual is always rational, self-determining, and autonomous. The phrase 'bourgeois socialism' was used by Marx and Engels in *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* to rebuke the capitalist economic system. Marx and Engels (1848) say, "The bourgeois has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to mere money relation" (p. 11). This right-wing socialism is compatible with capitalism in which rather than abolishing class divisions, the socialists of this group wish to simply raise everyone up to be a member of the bourgeois class to allow him/her the ability to endlessly accumulate private capital. Free market policy, individualism, market

competition, social hierarchy, etc., are their key economic policies. America, Britain, Canada, Australia, Japan, India, Bangladesh, South Korea, etc., are liked to be called by this model of socialism but not by the name of capitalism because now they have realized that it is only socialist economic and political system that can present welfare state, absence of exploitation, rejection of discrimination, the establishment of justice, equality, human rights, and egalitarian society.

The final and twenty-first-century socialism model that I like to include is the 'green socialism model.' It is also called eco-socialism or environmental socialism. This model motivates the protection of natural resources. Large corporations in such a model are owned and run by the public. Green socialism promotes the development of locally grown food. The production process is focused on ensuring that every member of the community has enough access to basic goods and the public is guaranteed a sustainable wage. According to this model, the present crisis of climate change, ecological and environmental crisis, psychological depression, anxiety, economic pollution, etc., are the causes of capitalism. In such crises, green socialism has twofold advantages. The first is it can weaken the power of capitalists. The second is it can enhance the power of the people as citizens and as workers. The key aim of green socialism is to empower the local people to protect the ecology and environment to get equilibrium in the ecosystem. In this regard, Gilbert (2020) maintains:

Today we need governments to take the lead in organizing the transition to a system of energy production, transportation, city planning and manufacturing that would produce very low or zero carbon emissions, while linking this aim to a broader program of social justice, welfare reform and wealth redistribution (p. 61).

Using the green socialism model, the socialist, progressive governments of this century should actively seek to encourage cooperative models of ownership and

control of enterprises outside of the public sector and the socialization of enterprises and services at local, municipal, and national levels where this is appropriate. They have to prefer small local companies and encourage the cooperatives and local communities to run enterprises on the basis of participatory democracy.

Principle versus Practice in Nepal: Which Socialism?

After the promulgation of the *Constitution of Nepal 2015*, which has guaranteed Nepal as a socialism-oriented democratic republican state, the expectation of the Nepali people is high because the basic character of Nepali society has changed with the end of the feudal monarchy after the seven decades of people's struggle culminating in the peaceful revolution of 2006. Since then, Nepal has changed its course to socialism constitutionally. With the change, people have demanded to implement the true spirit and aspiration of socialism by the elected governments. They have expected to achieve Nepal as a socialism-oriented state through major political parties like the Nepali Congress, Nepal Communist Party (Unified Marxist-Leninist), Nepal Communist Party (Maoist Center), Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Socialist), Janata Samajbadi Party (People's Socialist Party) and many other smaller Leftist, Centrist, and Rightist parties and even from the new emerging Rastriya Swatantra Party (National Independent Party). In their formal documents and election manifestos, they refer to the Nepali constitution and their commitment to implementing socialist agenda because the Constitution is the common document of all parties, and they have all signed it. Even in their formal speech and slogan, they highlight socialism. In the "Nine Point Agreement between the CPN-UML and CPN (Maoist Center)," published in *My Republica* (2023), the two largest Communist Parties promised:

to take initiatives to form a national consensus government with the objective of creating favorable environment to implement the constitution

and for socio-economic transformation and to carry out the tasks of formulating necessary structural and policy works for implementing the constitution (p. 1).

However, It is not clear what type/model of socialism they mean to adopt. The Constitution has not specified it either. Is the model of socialism promised by all parties a common agenda? The people in the country are confused because the major parties' behavior and treatment of common people are contradictory to the principles of socialism. Whereas they have promised to fulfill the basic needs of health, education, and employment, their political and economic characters seem to be contrary to their documents.

It is essential to understand whether the political parties of Nepal are not clear on the model of socialism or if they pretend to implement the programs and policies of socialism. Are they ready to uproot private ownership and transfer the means of production from private ownership to the ownership of an organized society/ state? It is true that public ownership of the means of production, such as land, labor, capital, instruments, infrastructures, machinery, and natural resources, is the soul of socialism. Man, as a social animal, cannot exist without the cooperation of society. Moreover, in this globalized world, every human is entangled economically, culturally, or politically with the other human in the world. In this sense, Albert Einstein, in his essay "Why Socialism?" very clearly expresses the value of society:

It is 'society' which provides man with food, clothing, a home, the tools of work, language, the forms of thought, and most of the content of thought; his life is made possible through the labor and the accomplishments of the many millions past and present who are all hidden behind the small word 'society.' (1949, p. 2)

By this, Einstein means that an individual always depends on society. He cannot abolish it, just as in the case of ants and bees. An egalitarian society is a synonym of socialism.

I argue that the Nepali Communist Parties, large or small, are not ready to follow scientific socialism as assumed by Marx and Engels and later attempted to apply by Lenin. The formal documents of the Nepali communist parties are evidence of this opinion. CPN (UML) changed its course after Madan Bhandari's *Janatako Bahudaliya Janabad* (People's Multiparty Democracy). CPN (Maoist Centre) has also adopted the principle and practice of a multiparty system accepting periodic elections and elected government. In a document of The Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Socialist) published in 2022, the immediate goal of the party is:

to build the foundation of socialism with social justice and democratic values by defending the achievements of the revolution and developing national capital alongside the economic and socio-cultural transformation of the country toward socialism by peaceful and democratic means. (p. 2).

However, the above three large communist parties of Nepal have not clearly said what model of socialism they follow. The non-Communist parties like Nepali Congress are capitalist in their characters even though B. P. Koirala added one agenda as *prajatantrik samajbad* (democratic socialism) in the party's guiding principle by being influenced by the flow of Marxism in Eastern Europe after the Second World War.

After analyzing the documents of all the Communist Parties of Nepal, it can be concluded that theoretically, they have followed the democratic socialism model as many Communist Parties in the world today. The other rightist and region-based parties, like Nepali Congress and Janata Samajbadi Party, have also added a socialist agenda in their principles, policies, and programs. As stated

above, democratic socialism is the mishmash of socialist and capitalist theories in which social justice and welfare state policies of the socialist movement are combined with individual freedom and market competition of the capitalist agenda. It does not abolish private ownership and production profit. In this model of socialism, the capitalists who make large profits out of their investments pay certain taxes to the government, and the tax is used to uplift the status of marginalized and powerless citizens in the nation. Thus, this model is applied in many countries in the world by both leftist and rightist wings. In Nepal, all political parties have compromised in this model and negotiated their agenda in the Nepali Constitution.

We have got a bitter experience with the democratic socialism model in Nepal. In 1959, a democratic government was formed with a two-thirds majority under the premiership of Nepali Congress leader B. P. Koirala. But the government could not implement plans and policies of democratic socialism because the dominant party principle of the Nepali Congress was capitalism. Although this party had theoretical agenda of democratic socialism, practically, it was capitalist. Then the Koirala government was removed from power after one and a half years by the then King Mahendra, and Nepal experienced a partyless *Panchayati* autocratic ruling system for about thirty years.

After thirty years of experiencing the King's autocratic rule, the Nepali people re-established Multi-party democracy with a Constitutional Monarchy in 1990. King Birendra was the head of the kingdom. Then the leftist and rightist parties formally participated in the general election in Nepal. Nepali Congress became the ruling party for many times. Even at that time, this party adopted democratic socialism in its formal documents, but it began to implement the Western capitalist system of individualism, privatization, free market policy, etc., in practice. It ignored its guiding principle of documents and Nepali people's expectations and aspirations.

Nepali people experienced several popular movements for socialism. There was also a people's movement in 1990 led by CPN Maoist that established democracy which lasted for 12 years until 2002. In 2002, King Gyanendra referring to the Maoist uprising in the countryside, began taking over different aspects of the government with the army's assistance. He finally took over as the head of the government in 2005, after which the CPN Maoist joined political parties like Nepali Congress and CPN (UML) with a 12-point agreement to dethrone the king and restore democracy. In 2006, all powers of the 239-year-old monarchy were removed, making Gyanendra a civilian king.

Nepali people also experienced the minority and the majority governments of the Communist Party. The first communist government in Nepal was Mana Mohan Adhikari's government. The first Communist Prime Minister, Man Mohan Adhikari, and his nine-month government from 1994 to 1995 were very hopeful of implementing socialism, but it could not rule for sufficient time because it was the minority communist government of CPN (UML). In the general election held in 2017, the Communist Parties of Nepal brought a majority in Federal Parliament as well as in Provincial Assembly. The alliance of the two largest Communist Parties, CPN (UML) and CPN (Maoist Center), obtained nearly a two-thirds majority in parliament and formed the first majority Communist government under the leadership of K. P. Sharma Oli. They later merged as the largest Communist Party, named as Nepal Communist Party (NCP) in 2018. This left alliance's political and economic documents with 174 seats in the 275-member Parliament also stated the aim of establishing socialism in Nepal. The formal reports of 2018 of the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) clearly specified that establishing socialism through peaceful movement and democratic exercise is possible in the current condition of Nepal as the Nepali constitution has guaranteed it.

On behalf of the Left parties, KP Oli led a nearly two-thirds majority government elected by the erstwhile parliament. Nepali people were hopeful of achieving the goals of socialism in Nepal. They expected that the majority-led government of the Communist Party would implement political and economic socialist agenda, plans, and policies and implement them practically, such as strengthening the circulation of productive national capital and promotion of industrialization to generate and secure high employment, rule of working-class people, end of exploitation of working class, promotion and production of capacity, equal distribution of mode of production, assurance of social justice, government's guarantee on basic needs, health, and education, employment, the commitment of equal rights and opportunities, unfair distribution of goods and services in the market, ecological and environmental protection, control of youths going to the Gulf counties for cheap labor-employment, etc. But their expectations became worthless because the majority-led Communist Party government followed the Western neo-liberalist model of socialism, but it was essentially capitalism which has economic anarchy as Albert Einstein claims, "The economic anarchy of capitalist society, as it exists today, is, in my opinion, the real source of the evil" (1949, p. 3). Moreover, the internal conflict between the prominent leaders became the immediate cause of the dissolution of the largest Communist Party government.

Thus, the people's expectations and aspirations have remained the same till now. Even the Communist government has lost its golden opportunity to implement the agenda of democratic socialism. When the Nepali Communist Parties go far from their roadmap to meet the mission of socialism, what can people expect from other right-wing parties? It is the helplessness of the Nepali communists not to fight against the comprador bureaucratic capitalist economic system. When asked, they confess that there is the domination of comprador capitalism in the Nepali economic system. The comprador capitalists are

supported by powerful politicians and bureaucrats who obstruct the promotion of national capital. A recent example is the adoption of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). In such a situation, how can Nepali people expect socialism in the country and believe that the Nepali political parties follow the trail of socialism promised by the constitution? It is thus important to understand that Nepali people are living in baseless assumptions, empty assurance, unpractical lofty promises, and false beliefs.

Present Positions and Challenges of Nepali Socialist Parties

Socialism is the primary principle and agenda of communist parties. Nepal, as one of the South Asia countries, has some similar problems to South Asian socialist parties, which are inclined to communism. The common problem of socialist parties in South Asia is their existence. The Cold War Period was their flourishing time. The dissolution of the USSR in 1991 was the main cause of the collapse of socialist parties and profoundly changed the geopolitical environment of South Asia. Moreover, there was the rise of Americanism, neo-liberalism, and Western hegemony through economic, political, and cultural globalization by various international institutions and multinational and transnational companies such as IMF, World Bank, Migration Policies, etc. The intense hegemony of the Western technological networks slowly and gradually caused to deviate the communist parties of the Third World countries and then influenced from the communist cadres and made it obligatory to follow their ideological systems. Because of these activities, the communist parties of South Asia transformed from realism to idealism by romanticizing Western imperialism in the fields of communication technology, education, culture, economic support, and much more, such as the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). In such a situation, the scientific application of the Marxist-Leninist ideology, organizational procedure, programs, and policies are the main challenges to the communist parties of Nepal, including all South Asian countries.

From the above-mentioned evidence, we have found that there is a decline in the popularity of the communist parties in South Asian countries, excluding Nepal. In Nepal, more than sixty percent of people support communism, but due to their division and splitting attitude, they seem to be in the minority position. The main reasons for the deteriorating position of communist parties in South Asia are that most of the communist leaders have false consciousness. They do not accept criticism and self-criticism. They romanticize people's problems and lack coordination, integrity/honesty but focus on self-interest. They are unable to change them and solve the common problems such as mass poverty with its attendant evils of ignorance, ill health, and technological backwardness, territorial disputes among the major states, internal polarizations that threaten peace and integrity in almost every state, and the lack of mutual trust among its constituents. In Nepal, the socialist parties and their leaders have a feudal concept and an intense desire to get personal power which is also the other cause of their fall. Even when they reach the leading policy-making position of the government, being head of the state or executive of the government, they misuse the power with bad governance and create unfavorable relationships between themselves and the people. Bad governance encompasses a variety of situations, from corruption, deceit, and to the passing of unfair policy. Moreover, unlike their theory and doctrine, their practical behavior promotes opportunism, factionalism, egoism, nepotism, favoritism, etc. So, they fail in their agenda of equal economic distribution. These all happen because of ideological deviation and their desire for hedonism. A recent example of such a government in Nepal is K. P. Oli led a nearly two-thirds majority of the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) government which was dissolved in 2021 because of the party leaders' characteristics.

Conclusion: A Wide Gap between Principle and Practice in Nepali Politics

Nepali people think and expect positively. But their experiences, as stated above, evidently clarify that even the Communist Parties of Nepal are not able to

fulfill people's expectations and aspirations of socialism, let alone the Nepali Congress, which has been misleading people in the name of democratic socialism. For the establishment of socialism, powerful political leaders should support the abolition of private ownership. But it is found in Nepal that instead of abolishing private ownership, the leaders of communist parties, who have theoretically committed to making the journey of socialism and reaching up to communism, are found to be the owners of huge private enterprises. They know very well that socialism cannot be achieved unless private ownership is stepped down, but they have invested huge amounts in private institutions like hospitals, schools and colleges, industries, land and housing, and many other service sectors being comprador bourgeoisie. The leaders who had to promote socialist culture in society were found to be heavily influenced by capitalist culture. So, it is clearly seen that there is a wide gap between principle and practice in Nepali political character.

True socialists are revolutionists. They are progressive, so they have to believe in objectivism and realism. Their strength is people and social change for human evolution as a long revolution. With the class-consciousness, they have to evaluate who their friends are and who are enemies. They have to think objectively. The future of the socialist parties in Nepal is bright because the Nepali people understand that only socialists can solve the problems of the proletariat, marginalized people, and subalterns. If they correct them in time, looking at other communist countries like China, Cuba, Vietnam, Laos, etc., remodeling their political institutions, economic systems, and social patterns, there is still the possibility of their rise in the days to come in this region.

To sum up, the present Nepali society is fundamentally capitalist in character. When the Nepali Communist Parties are on the road, their slogan for socialism is very high. When they are in the government, they lower their voice and become silent. This is the basic character of the present Nepali Communist

Parties. Thus, the Nepali Communist Parties should be clear about the principle, policy, and program of socialism, whether they are on the road or in the government. They must be able to resist the Western neo-liberal economic policy and fight against the capitalist comprador bureaucratic character. Otherwise, their promise to socialism in the Nepali Constitution will be a false promise to deceive Nepali citizens. If they do not apply their principle in practice, they will not remain communist in the true sense. They will be communists only by name. But Nepal is a fertile land for socialism and communism. The leaders of genuine communist and social democratic parties should minimize their ego, prejudice, and selfish ambition and sacrifice their personal interests by uniting and making a powerful communist force for the country's and its citizens' sake. If they apply their guiding principles of scientific socialism in practice and minimize the gap between theory and practice, their goal is not very far.

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