

People's Multiparty Democracy: An Instrument for Social Transformation

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ABSTRACT

Madan Bhandari, then General Secretary of the CPN (UML), critically analyzed the World Communist Movement and the Nepali Communist Movement and formulated the People's Multiparty Democracy (PMPD) to build a just and egalitarian democratic society. It was first approved by the Fifth National General Convention of the CPN (UML) as the party's program in 1993. The Fourth National General Convention of the CPN-ML provided direction for the ideas and perspectives of PMPD in 1989. Based on those ideas, the left-wing parties formed the United Left Front in 1989 and later extended a working alliance with the Nepali Congress Party for the joint movement for the restoration of multiparty parliamentary democracy. When the USSR and the communist regimes in Eastern Europe were falling, the CPN (UML) came to power in Nepal through the election. According to Marxist theory, the source of discrimination, exploitation, and oppression in society is the form of ownership of the means of production and resources and the mode of production. In the early 1990s, Bhandari further explained Marxist political philosophy by stating that plurality results from the diversity existing in nature, which creates differentiation and is an inherent basis of exploitation and oppression. To address this phenomenon in politics, Bhandari added ideas of democratic practices of competition and initiative by redefining Marxist-Leninist philosophy. Bhandari applied the method of democratization in party and leadership development through internal competition, thus making the party popular in the country. Drawing insights from various resource materials, this paper explores the interrelationships between politics and philosophy from PMPD perspectives.

Introduction

Every object in the natural world is constantly changing. The structure and position of the Earth, solar system, and galaxy have created diversity in the physical world. Due to the balance of geography and nature, animals and plants in the universe are always in transitory states. The diversity present in the world has created motion,

with all objects and their courses running in a certain rhythm. Motion has driven constant change. Without motion and rhythm, the existence of life and the world cannot be sustained. An eternal truth of continuous change has triggered the process of the evolution of human civilization, which has gradually developed to reach this point. In particular, the agricultural revolution that took place about 15,000 years ago brought a qualitative

change in the development of civilization. Human beings learned to produce, collect, and control natural resources. They started to settle in fixed places where they began farming. Intensive farming increased the productivity of the land. With increased production, the food supply increased, followed by the growth of inhabitants. In this process, the ever-increasing number of inhabitants led to concerns about the possibility of food scarcity in the future. Such a threat to food security drove individuals to extend their control over the production, collection, and distribution of food and resources. Eventually, people, with their innate impulse to secure their food and resources, indulged in discrimination, inequality, injustice, exploitation, and oppression, which started to be seen in human society. Throughout history, people have raised their voices against these discrepancies to transform the status quo of society. Various principles have been proposed for the establishment of a non-discriminatory and just society with sustainability.

During the evolution of civilization, Nepali society has also reached this point, undergoing distinct phases of social transformation. Like any other society across the world, Nepali society has undergone different political-economic phases, including feudalism, comprador capitalism, and imperialism, which have controlled and regulated society based on their power and strength. Industrial products are not enough to fulfill people's needs and aspirations. Additionally, the national capital has not been fully developed, and a self-reliant industrial national economy is yet to be achieved.

In this light, it is necessary to end the existing semi-feudal, semi-colonial, and comprador capitalist status of Nepali society. Based on physical and social infrastructures, the People's Multiparty Democracy (PMPD) principle has been promulgated to build a just and egalitarian Nepali society. This article discusses the salient features of PMPD within this social-political and

theoretical foundation.

Methodology

This article critically examines Madan Bhandari's "People's Multiparty Democracy: A Program of Nepali Revolution" against the backdrop of international politics using a qualitative research design. I have explored some of the political agendas and historical perspectives about PMPD. Considering this agenda one of the most innovative political models, the Fifth National General Convention of the CPN (UML) adopted PMPD in 1993. After it became popular among party leaders, cadres, and people, this political initiative was adapted to serve as the party's guiding principle for transforming Nepali society, blending the fundamentals of democratic and republican political systems. From this article, readers will gain information about the theoretical foundations of the PMPD. I have examined the Neo-Marxist political philosophy and guiding principles relevant to the Nepali context in post-1990 Nepal, drawing insights and perspectives of politics and history from articles and books. Additionally, I have cited political guidelines and future courses of action reflected in Bhandari's speeches on various occasions. Moreover, I have discussed various stages of the evolution of human civilization and the discrimination that existed in those stages in this research article. Furthermore, this article illustrates the preface of PMPD, which is instrumental in resolving those discriminations. Then, it explores the ideological development of PMPD in light of Marxist philosophy. Following this, the paper critically examines upheavals in the world communist movement, ranging from the establishment of the USSR in 1917 to the disintegration of the Soviet Union, along with the end of the Cold War in 1991. The study observed that the preambles presented by PMPD are effective and decisive in building a just and egalitarian Nepali society.

Results and Discussion

Evolution of human civilization and social relations

About 70,000 years ago, human beings developed the ability to think about things they had never seen, heard, felt, or touched due to a genetic mutation in the biological process (Harari, 2014). More precisely, humans acquired capabilities for imagination and developed abilities to communicate with other individuals. This distinctive accomplishment marked the cognitive revolution in the history of human civilization. Later, as the number of food seekers increased, people increasingly searched for food alternatives. Initially limited to hunting, they persistently sought wild products and grains for food. About 15,000 years ago, humans began farming on riverbanks and seashores for irrigation and fertile land. For farming purposes, they learned to understand the suitability of geography and climate. With their incessant search for fertile land and new food grains, humans accelerated the agricultural revolution, thus advancing human civilization to the next level. At this new height of human civilization, human consciousness transformed.

At first, humans expanded their farmland to increase food grain production. In this sense, they practiced extensive cultivation on riverbanks and seashores. Storing food for the future strengthened their survival strategies. This increase in farm production replaced the process of natural selection with a system of human selection. In the wild age, the entire plains, rivers, forests, and open skies were human habitations.

In the twenty-first century, man's search is not limited to living things. It has extended to the human mind, brain, and body. Currently, scientific research is advancing in human engineering, the development of unusual abilities in humans, and the construction and production of superhumans. The human age has reached the stage of artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and virtual reality (Harari, 2017).

At every stage of civilization, human beings have used the process of change to make a profit. As a result, over time, human beings invented currency (money). People started seeking profit even from the complexity and diversity of currency use. They initiated the practice of service for the use and management of commodities and the multifaceted use of currency. With this departure point of economics and politics, they began to build the concept of the state. When people started accumulating unlimited wealth by indulging in an endless series of mischiefs, they entered the phase of perpetual discrimination in society. There were conflicts and wars between those who had property and those who did not. The strong oppressed and harassed the weak, while the weak resisted. This process of struggle continues today.

Similarly, humans, with their inquisitive minds and cognitive knowledge, enhance the discovery and invention of new things. Scientific inventions led to the widespread development of technologies that changed the essence, form, and production process of goods and services. This tremendous progress in technology laid the foundation for the modern economy. It became a means of acquiring wealth, through which social relations could be maintained.

Initially, there was no discrimination among individuals in primitive communities, as human consciousness was not yet of prime importance. More precisely, people did not feel being discriminated in their communities at a certain period. They were confined to a life cycle focused on safety from predators, searching for food to survive (struggle), reproducing offspring, and taking care of their progeny. Modern humans (*Homo sapiens*) lived in a frail and fragile state like other organisms for about one hundred thousand years. After the cognitive revolution, humans could think about things they had never seen, heard, felt, or touched. This revolution developed the human capability for imagination and the ability to communicate. From this state of human consciousness, social relations were built. A

process of transformation of consciousness was instrumental in forming houses, families, and states. To fulfill human desires and aspirations, the means and resources available in nature were transformed by blending workforce and technology. This process fundamentally changed the form and essence of resources to produce goods. The development of technology was instrumental in the continuous change in social relations and the mode of production. There were also continuous changes in the policy, process, and forms of production, distribution, and consumption of resources.

In all stages of social transformation, property ownership has remained central to human relations. The issue of ownership of resources has prevailed since the agricultural era. This property ownership trend created unequal power relations among individuals on economic, social, and political fronts. These differences made people rich and poor, rulers and the ruled, and producers and workers. The form and essence of this inequality have changed today. However, discrimination, oppression, and harassment still prevail in societies. Conscious initiatives have been underway to resolve these contradictions for the establishment of equality and justice in society. Principles and moral codes have been made for the benefit of humanity. In a constantly changing society, finding a method and process to build a just society is a dynamic approach and working method. It is necessary to find a way to address the inherent contradictions in the economic, social, and political relationships created by human initiative and the contradictions created by the physical conditions and diversity of nature (Darwin, 1859). Additionally, it is imperative to address the contradictions arising from the complexity of economic, social, and political relationships created by human dynamics. PMPD is a well-thought-out initiative to find a solution to all these contradictions. PMPD is the principle of creating a 'Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali' by ending all discrimination in

the economic, social, and political conditions of Nepali society and building an independent and just society (Sharma Oli, 2009).

Background of PMPD

The Earth moves with its own rhythm and motion, and nature follows its own rules. All animals and plants on Earth have reached their current state through a process of natural selection. Competition is a natural law; all animals and plants compete among themselves for their existence. Those with competitive ability advance (Darwin, 1859). Man is trying to interfere with nature's selection process through intelligent design. In that light, humans in the living world face a complex situation. It is necessary to establish ideas and programs to end the discrimination and inequality created by the laws of nature and technological development (Bhandari, 2005).

The struggle of communist parties, aiming to establish communism through socialism by eliminating discrimination and exploitation in society, has reached the present stage after facing multiple adversities and setbacks. Especially, the failure of the Soviet model of socialism, the disintegration of the USSR, and the collapse of socialist regimes in Eastern Europe created major catastrophes in the world's political power balance. The world communist movement is currently in a defensive state after stagnating without a specific direction. The capitalists continuously undermined the future of socialism and the relevance of Marxism with the false prediction of the 'end of history and the death of ideas'. In this situation, it was imperative to search for the causes of failure and to guide the new path of revolution and socialism (Bhandari, 1993). Adhering to the universal truth of Marxism and the inevitability of socialism was essential. It was necessary to establish the idea that it is possible to proceed with radical change in society in a peaceful manner by finding a timely solution to the confusion in the world communist movement in terms of tactics.

There are several mindsets within the communist movement of Nepal: accepting Marxism as a stagnant formula, mechanically accepting the specific experiences of revolutions in other countries, subscribing to the belief that power can only be obtained through the barrel of a gun, and advocating a one-party authoritarian system of governance. Such ideas are dividing the movement in the country. It is imperative to establish the fact that Marxist theory is neither a stagnant formula nor a dogma; it is a universal truth derived from a concrete analysis of the objective situation of society. It is important to identify the existing issues in Nepali society through a careful study of ongoing struggles, the experiences of the people, the objective situations of the people, and the diversity of geography and culture. Equally relevant is finding alternative solutions to protect and develop the communist movement in Nepal (CPN [UML], 1993).

Specific experiences of Nepal's communist and democratic movements include some significant historical events. First, the historical People's Movement of 1990 restored multiparty parliamentary democracy through the formation of the United Left Front and the working alliance with the Nepali Congress (NC). Secondly, the Constitution of Nepal of 1991 was promulgated in collaboration with the Left Front and the NC. The working alliance of the United Left Front and the NC accomplished a common goal to restore democracy, which was a course correction in the political history of Nepal. Against this backdrop, it was crucial for the CPN (UML) to build and operate the party legally in an open space while maintaining direct relations with the people, making the party competitive with other political parties after the formation of the 1991 constitution. Based on this strategy, the CPN (UML) succeeded in becoming the main opposition party with the popular support of the Nepali people in the first parliamentary elections (Thapa, 1999).

It was important to define appropriate policies and programs for the creative use of Marxism

in contexts of geographical diversity and ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity, and to respond to economic, political, and social relations as manifested by those diversities. Based on these backgrounds, PMPD was developed.

People's democracy: Old or new

Human civilization has developed through the effective use of the workforce and technology. Initially, the ruling class increased the production of goods by enhancing productivity through its control of available resources. After claiming ownership of their products, the ruling class accumulated property. The capitalists and those in power increased their profits while the workers continued to live in poverty. The growing disparity between the land workers and property owners led to the rebellion of the former against the latter. Over time, people began to seek the value of their labor and their presence in decision-making. Capitalists and rulers changed the form of governance, allowing for representation from the people's level in state power while maintaining mechanisms to protect their interests. This sparked debates: what will happen with public participation?, whose interests will the state protect? Additional debates emerged about the nature of democracy. Liberals advocated for democracy, promoting the idea of "government of the people, by the people, for the people". To protect their interests, capitalists started labeling democracy with terms such as liberal democracy, parliamentary democracy, democratic socialism, and republican democracy. Despite these catchwords, the important question remains: which class benefits from the state systems (Bhandari, 1991).

Leftists have debated the form of democracy from the perspective of how to empower the people for social transformation and protect their interests. In this context, the system led by the capitalist class, with slogans of justice, equality, and fraternity, is called old democracy. In such a system, the government continued to support imperialism and feudalism, despite being formed

by the people's verdict. In that situation, the comprador capitalists protected their interests through their engagement in the state mechanism. In contrast, in the new democratic system, the government is to be governed in the interest of the people and the nation, after being approved by the people. This system, which aims to fulfill people's aspirations by developing capital and increasing productivity, is called new democracy.

In this light, certain questions remain crucial: what will the governance system look like? which class hinders the benefits of the working-class people when social evils such as discrimination, exploitation, and oppression are abolished by the state? The system to control that class is new democracy. Additionally, which class will operate the government? Who will lead the revolution? These factors will determine who benefits from the state's power. The state system led by the working class, pro-people group, and nationalist class is new democracy. A government led by the bourgeoisie is the old form of democracy. The new democratic government builds foundations toward establishing a socialist system, while the old democratic system works towards establishing the monopoly of capitalism and imperialism (Bhandari, 1991).

PMPD governs according to the new democratic system. In Nepali society, this new system discourages the interests of the feudal class, the comprador-bourgeoisie, and foreign monopolies of capitalism and imperialism. It directs the development of national capital and changes in the basic status of society. This new democratic system will take the initiative to use the labor, skills, and talents of the people in development and use natural resources for national interests (Sharma Oli, 2009).

The theoretical foundations of PMPD

PMPD was developed through the application of the core principles of Marxism to the specific

context of the Nepali revolution. It serves as the guiding principle of the Nepali revolution. This is not only a program aimed at qualitatively transforming Nepali society, but it also provides a framework for designing such a program, formulating strategies, building a dynamic party to implement these strategies, and guiding the daily conduct and behavior of party leaders and cadres. PMPD is the creative application and development of Marxism-Leninism (Bhandari, 1993). The important theoretical bases of PMPD have been formulated as follows:

Application of the sovereign law of conflict in politics

The idea and philosophy of Marxism are rooted in dialectical materialism. Every object, event, or idea is characterized by conflicting interrelationships. Conflict is a fundamental rule. Disputes and conflicts in politics are also natural. If the conflicting realities within any object are suppressed and not allowed to manifest, they can lead to hostility, resulting in an eventual explosion of tension. Conflicts in society or politics are addressed through legal competition. Therefore, existing political viewpoints should be allowed to compete under the constitution in any state system. Diversity in society should be allowed to express itself, which can lead to a truly democratic system.

The pluralistic character of society

It is natural for every person to think, speak, and express their feelings about their people and nation. Society cannot be isolated, closed, or monotonous from the outside world. Diversity in society should be allowed to express itself. Pluralism in society is a natural phenomenon, reflecting the multiplicity and diversity in nature. In nature, flowers of many colors bloom, there are many kinds of living creatures, and various tastes exist. Of course, nature is not uniform; it is multiform. As a reflection of this, society is also diverse. Therefore, the pluralistic character of society is natural.

Development of classes and social transformation

People began using excessive labor and technology to increase productivity on their farms, which led to increased profits and wealth accumulation. This, in turn, developed classes within society. As long as classes exist, it is natural for each class to have different interests, principles, and perspectives. With multiple views and perspectives, it is natural for existing classes to have different political stances. In a class-based society, determined by the ownership of resources, the views and politics of respective classes emerge. Even within the same class, there can be diversity and differences in politics. This diversity in society, politics, and social relations respects plurality. In this light, people should launch campaigns for social transformation, assimilating different views and respecting diversity. PMPD has accepted this pluralistic character of society.

The essence and form of the state

The essence is the substance, inner quality, or true character of an object, underlying its form. Nevertheless, the form cannot change the essence; it is just the visible covering of an object. The cover cannot change the quality of the item but can present it in an effectively attractive manner. This concept applies to politics as well. The essence and the form of the political system involve the notion of what type of society is to be developed and how this phenomenon is to be materialized. The essence of state power is related to the state system, while its form is related to governance. This fact has been accepted by PMPD.

The essence of the state pertains to governing questions such as: What type of society is to be built? Which class's interests should be favored to establish justice and equality in society, and which class should be controlled? What are the interests of different classes in society? What kind of policy should the state adopt towards each class? What policy direction should be adopted for the sovereignty and prosperity of the country

and the greater interests of the people?

The form or the appearance of the state pertains to questions such as: What should the governance system be? How should the leadership of various structures of governance be selected or elected? What will be the method of forming the government? How should daily administration be operated? PMPD agrees that the multiparty system is not the essence but merely the form aspect of the state.

The relative nature of the form of struggle

The path of class struggle is the right way to complete the revolution of socialism, leading to communism. However, the form of the struggle to accomplish the predetermined goal depends on the objective conditions under which people struggle. In Marxism, there is no fixed single form of struggle as the only final model of revolution. Revolutions should help people develop the ability to efficiently conduct all forms and methods of struggle. The process is just a means to accomplish the goals of socialism and communism. The goal is primary, and the means secondary. Struggle is an interaction between two opposite parties or forces and a state of competition. Which form of struggle is decisive is not determined by any classical theories or the speculation of a specific leader, but by the people, the class struggle, and the struggle between two opposing elements. Whether the struggle is violent or peaceful is not decided by one side alone. True Marxism does not prescribe violence for people to secure power.

One debate within the international communist movement is whether to pursue a peaceful parliamentary transition or a revolutionary violent struggle for power. Some leaders and proponents of Marxism advocate for peaceful struggle under all conditions, while others support armed struggle. The idea of being peaceful or violent in all circumstances is an anti-Marxist thought that emerged in the name of Marxism. Any form and method of struggle should be adapted based on

certain objective situations, including internal domestic and external international conditions and the state of class struggle. Any form of struggle should be adopted based on the status, need, compatibility, and compulsion. Physical preparations should be made to mobilize power effectively for any form of class struggle (Paudel, 2008).

Neither struggle nor defense should be imposed from above. Struggle emerges from the ground of class struggle, and the party must adjust, develop, and lead it. The revolution shall neither be rushed by the leaders' haste nor halted by their backwardness. The struggle itself is a combination of attack and defense, and it cannot be conducted by focusing only on one aspect. The victory and priority achieved by the revolutionary forces in the ongoing struggle can provide a decisive direction and turn it into a comprehensive struggle. The path of revolution is a product of objective circumstances. The problem of the path will not be resolved by request in an occult way. Based on every available national-international situation and the state of class struggle, it is necessary to proceed in a way that organizes the masses as much as possible to achieve revolutionary goals.

There are serious differences and problems regarding the path of revolution and forms of struggle. The primary point is the goal. The path of revolution can be relative to the country's situation and world circumstances; however, the form of struggle is absolute and eternal. The form of struggle is determined and should be relative to the current state of the revolutionary forces and struggle, the immediate objective situation, and the role of the opposing party.

Development proceeds quantitatively and qualitatively

Revolution is a necessary objective process. It emerges from the conflict between productive forces and production relations

and develops progressive production relations while increasing productivity. If progressive production relations are not established in society after the revolution, the achievements of such political movements will be at risk. A revolution cannot occur solely through occult urges. If the efforts of occult forces align with the laws of objective development, the revolution can be completed; if not, it will be delayed. Revolution cannot happen without the emergence and development of elements of a new society within the womb of the existing society. In the process of objective development, it is important to displace the old with the new. The idea of prohibiting the law of dialectics is counterproductive.

To change society, we should not only focus on bringing about changes at the base level all at once but also ensure that we take hold of the upper structure and use it to bring about changes at the foundational level of society. A people's democratic system cannot be established without eliminating the semi-feudal and semi-colonial economic base. The party's intervention in the state's upper structure should support the class struggle and revolutionary movement. The extent of intervention by the upper echelons of power should correspond to the extent to which it assists the class struggle.

In other words, the government should be formed through peaceful struggle and legitimate competition and should progressively improve for the benefit of the people, the nation, and democracy. Additionally, under the leadership of the revolutionary political agenda, all kinds of reforms or changes—whether small or large, indirect or direct, parliamentary or non-parliamentary—should be pursued. By maintaining control over the upper structure of society, i.e., the political structure, radical changes can be brought to the foundational level, i.e., the economic system (Bhandari, 2021).

The character of the state power is not always the same

A reactionary state is repressive, whereas a people's state is people-friendly. The term dictatorship is used to describe the decisive work of the state. The word means control and it is an instrument of the state. In this system, one class in power controls the other class and prohibits dissent. In the traditional Marxist interpretation, the working-class dictatorship must forcefully capture state power.

Due to the use of technology and labor power, there has been a major change in the mode of production. On this basis, there has been a change in economic-, political- and socio-cultural relations. Even in a liberal democratic system, the issues of freedom and fundamental rights of the citizen are being raised and the government is formed through competitive elections. In this context, it is not consistent to interpret the nature of the state as authoritarian. As the government in the people's democratic system is formed through competitive elections with the participation of all nationalists, patriots, and justice-loving people, the use of the word 'people's state' is appropriate and objective. Such a government, leading the common people, establishes the concept of development based on public participation and a public welfare state system and provides democratic rights to the public. However, people's democracy suppresses and controls the anti-regressive elements.

There was a practice of rejecting all other groups under the belief that there should be only one revolutionary communist party in a country. The way of competition was also blocked in countries that claimed to accept other parties' existence. PMPD considers it unjustified that the democratic and socialist state governments established under the leadership of communist parties in various countries have remained one-party and based on that, the dictatorship of the proletariat has been presented. PMPD has put forward the recognition that the subject of dictatorship should

be considered as the subject of establishing class leadership in state power and achieving control. For that, it has been concluded that recognition of a one-party system or dictatorship is wrong. No class should be prohibited in the state. Whether they are capitalists, socialists, or communists, they should win the trust of the people and give them a way to move forward. PMPD has accepted the theoretical belief that the communist party can be an alternative to another communist party. The proletarian working class can and should maintain their leadership and control in the state through the method of initiatives and competition.

The qualities of the old are transferred to the new

In people's democracy, the people become the decisive element of politics and should become so. The people become and should be the masters of the country. Politically, this is the basic element of PMPD. There can be diversity in the question of how the people participate in politics and how they play a controlling and decisive role in politics and the political system. PMPD is on the side of real democracy. PMPD stands on the side of giving the people the decisive power of politics and the political system and the only real owner of the country. During the evolution of civilization, humanity has been trying to resolve inherent contradictions to protect its existence. In many cases, written, unwritten, and oral codes of conduct have been created, fundamental rights are defined, and the sources of conflict in many cases have been identified and solutions have been developed. Some methods have been prepared to reflect social dynamism, and methods have been created to deliver justice. These methods are instrumental in maintaining good governance and establishing a just state system in any society. Among such methods are the multiparty system, rule of law, the principle of separation of powers, guarantee of human rights, fundamental rights, periodic elections, majority government, and opposition of minority, etc. They can be accepted and used in all democratic societies. These methods and practices can be transferred from

a liberal state system, a feudal state system, or a liberal democratic capitalist system to a people's democratic system.

Democratization of party, society, and state

Democratization of the communist movement means establishing, maintaining, and developing the dialectical relationship between principles, organizations, and struggles based on the principle of democratic centralism. PMPD has advanced the concepts related to the democratization of the party, the democratization of the movement, and the democratization of society. Democratization of organizational life is an important feature of PMPD. Its concepts have not only democratized the internal life of the CPN (UML), but they have also deeply inspired and influenced the entire political movement and organizational sector of Nepal. PMPD establishes the organization's leadership by developing its competitive ability. A hierarchical system has been established to develop leadership at every level of the party promptly. Through this method, it will be easy to gradually increase the capacity of leadership and be established among the people. The process of democratization has been established as the freedom of the individual. The CPN (UML) has given high importance to the role of people and cadres in building a party. PMPD has put forward the concept that the leaders and cadres of the Communist Party should be periodically approved by the people. Based on the same notion, the system of electing office bearers and members from party conventions and congresses has been established. A system of checks and balances has been established to establish the sovereignty of party cadres in party building. The concept that party members are equal has been deeply assimilated. Naturally, this has deeply established the party members' role in gaining people's confidence and the party's operation. This concept has been considered a very important feature of PMPD. Democratization has made individuals

disciplined and led to the development of maturity in the social system. Similarly, PMPD urges to define norms, criteria, and processes to select the institutional structure and leadership in every institutional setup of the government (Bhandari, 1993).

Bhandari's interpretation of basic elements of social change. Transforming society is a challenging task. When various forms of capitalism and imperialism are controlling politics and governance in general, it is not easy to remove existing discrimination, exploitation, and oppression in society. The central aim of capitalists is to make a profit and acquire wealth, and this is not possible without exploiting the workforce and technology. Naturally, discrimination will arise from this, and people will go through oppression by the acts of capitalists. To increase their profits, the capitalist class uses state power, the constitution, and laws, policies and decisions, administration and security systems, and technology (Bhandari, 1993a). In such a case, it is necessary to define some basic elements to bring about progressive change in society and move forward to protect the interests of the people and to build a just, egalitarian, and sovereign society.

Major contradictions

It is necessary to identify the objective situation of society to make a progressive transformation. To establish a just and egalitarian society by ending discrimination, exploitation, and oppression in Nepali society, it is necessary to study its class structure. There are certain key questions to understand and reflect the status of Nepali society. What are the economic and political foundations of society? What is the mode of production of means and resources? What is the ownership status of the workforce and technology in the production of goods and services? What is the state of ownership of tools, resources, and goods? Which class is controlling the economy? Which class is

controlling or influencing the state? The class that hinders the transformation process of society, this class is the main culprit, and it should be isolated from the control over the economy and the control over the state. This class itself can be decisive, and in many cases, it can maintain its hegemony by getting support from other external forces. This class conflict is the main contradiction in society. In Nepali society, the feudalist and comprador capitalist classes have been the main foes of change. All kinds of workers and farmers in Nepali society are the primary class for change. All kinds of professionals, low and middle-income urban classes, and poor and middle farmers are the major classes for change. Rich farmers and national capitalists are the classes that stand in favor of nationalism and independence and want to make the country prosperous. This class is the supporting class for change. All of them are friendly forces of progressive change in Nepali society. The working class and farmers are the main and decisive forces of transformation. When classes are not recognized in society, there is confusion about what for, who, and how to make changes, movements, and revolutions. PMPD has given a clear explanation of this matter.

The path of revolution and change

The road to revolution entails employing different forms and methods of organization. The party should provide concrete guidance on the revolutionary path, considering experiences from struggles worldwide, the national movement, and its own past movements. Fundamentally, the path of revolution is that of class struggle, not class coordination or agreement. However, the selection of the struggle form depends on objective conditions. Marxism does not view any single form of organization or struggle as decisive or final in revolutionary struggle. Revolutionaries should focus on developing proficiency in handling all forms and methods of struggle effectively. Preparation should be based on a realistic analysis of how class contradictions and relations are evolving and engaging in

existing struggle. The goal of revolution is the mandatory and decisive element. The correct path is to achieve this goal as quickly and easily as possible. How to reach the goal must be utilized in a revolutionary manner. Struggle itself involves a combination of attack and defense. However, focusing solely on attack or defense is inadequate. Struggle is a clash or competition between opposing parties. To overcome the struggle, it is essential to be on equal footing and reciprocate attacks. The dominant and decisive form of struggle is determined by the people, class struggle, and the conflict between opposing elements. Tactics and methods used by opponents should be countered accordingly within set boundaries. The form of struggle, whether violent or peaceful, cannot be unilaterally decided; both parties must engage. Nevertheless, the ruling party retains the decisive initiative. If the ruling party violently suppresses the peaceful and legal political struggles of the people, there is no alternative to a violent struggle against it. Violence is not met with peace, conspiracy is not met with simplicity, and fraud is not met with gentleness. A response should be organized likewise. Mobilization of strength becomes necessary to counter conspiracies and violence against peaceful, political, and professional struggles. This process prepares the way for revolution. Without engaging in this process, no path can be prepared, no struggle can develop, and no hope can be expected for the revolution to succeed. Presently, class contradictions and struggles in Nepali society have not taken on a violent form. Therefore, the current path of change is that of peaceful struggle.

United front, left unity, and party unity

To remove the anti-people class, it is indispensable to unite all the classes/powers that transform. To restore democracy, the United Left Front extended its working alliance with the NC early in the 1990s. A political front should be created for common political struggle against such anti-democratic activities of the feudal-

imperial regime. The Marxist-Leninist theory divides the left and the right political fronts. Leftists accept the guidance of Marxism-Leninism that the right-wing political front opposes. The right-wing supports severing the regime of feudalism-imperialism one way or the other. Contrarily, leftists serve the common downtrodden people and their nation and struggle for the transformation of life. The unity of the communists, the United Left Front, was in operation for the Joint People's Revolution of 1990. At present, three tendencies and currents, including the fundamentalists, the genuine Marxist-Leninist, and submissive forces, have emerged in the communist movement of Nepal. Often driven by emotional cults, the left-fundamentalists look for short-term vested interests. Based on their interest, they are prepared for the left front and unity of the parties. The moment their interests are impeded, they tend to disintegrate the party and system, losing patience. The left party with submissive attitudes is ideologically weak, which aligns with the central right. It is important to consider the ideological and behavioral part while uniting the left parties. The uniformity in the organizational system would add trust to the unity process. Only then can the internal contradictions be resolved, and the unity of the party can be sustained. Therefore, the parties or individuals with similar opinions should be united for theoretical, political, and ideological struggles.

On strategy and tactics

The political strategy of the party is a comprehensive plan to establish a people's democratic state. Determining the goals of the revolution, identifying foes, respecting friends, navigating the forms of struggle and organization, and determining roles such as leadership, the decisive role of the party, cooperation, and opposition in the revolution are the main tasks of strategic importance. The strategy of the party will not change until the

revolutionary goal is achieved. This means the strategy is determined according to the basic objective situation. The leadership of the proletariat-working class, the decisive role of the peasants, the trustworthy role of the lower-middle capitalist class, and the supporting roles of the middle bourgeoisie are strategic subjects. Similarly, hostility to feudalism, crony bureaucratic bourgeoisie, foreign monopolistic capitalism, and imperialism are other strategic matters decided from the synthesis of the objective conditions of society. They remain unchanged throughout the People's Revolution period. During the struggle, the main foe may change. In this case, it is necessary to reorganize the strategic plan of political power distribution between friends and foes.

The tactics of the party should give a practical form to the strategy based on existing situations. To make it successful, the entire work of all sectors of the party should be directed. Under the leadership of the revolutionary political agenda, actions should be carried out for reform or change, small or big actions, indirect or direct works, and parliamentary or non-parliamentary actions. Therefore, the character of tactics is always contemporary, temporary, and changeable. The tactic is not a possibility since it is based on reality. It should serve the party's revolutionary goals and strategies in given circumstances. The tactic should not harm the strategy under any circumstances.

Bhandari on characteristics of people's democracy

Bhandari creatively developed and applied Marxist theory in the Nepali context. He explained the façade of society before reaching socialism and defined policies, methods, and programs to transform Nepali society. Bhandari elucidated the methods and procedures for establishing socialism by ending existing discrimination. While reaffirming the universal truth of Marxist theory, Bhandari added some dimensions. He propounded the principle of

PMPD for the establishment and development of an egalitarian and just society. No country progresses by being tied to classical roots of ideas; dynamism is the basis of progress. In the communist movement, the democratic aspect was often neglected. However, Bhandari successfully applied the Marxist principle creatively, making it compatible with Nepal's originality.

Bhandari was committed to the supremacy of the Constitution, a pluralistic open society, the principle of separation of powers, and the protection and promotion of human rights. He also advocated for a system of multiparty competition, periodic elections according to universal adult franchise, majority government and minority opposition, and the rule of law.

Bhandari presented guiding principles on upholding a strong commitment to strengthening the people's democratic system, an open approach to foreign capital and technology, and a policy of compensation in abolishing feudal land ownership. This included fixing new boundaries by law, implementing revolutionary land reform, and supporting those who back the revolution. Bhandari also upheld the Principles of Panchsheel in foreign policy and stressed fair competition for leading the people. Unlike orthodox Marxism, Bhandari had a strong commitment to plurality, which he named people's multiparty democracy. I have summarized the additional features of PMPD in the following section:

Supremacy of the constitution

No class, person, institution, or party can be above the special constitution. The supreme law of the sovereign people, the constitution accelerates constant progress and prosperity.

A pluralistic open society

Every person should have the freedom to think, speak, and express their feelings. Society should never remain isolated from the outside world.

Principle of separation of powers

Centralization is unacceptable at both the individual and organizational levels. A single

institution should not hold central power to exercise executive, legislative, and judicial powers. There should be separate bodies at the center to exercise various state powers. Moreover, state power should not be monopolized by the ruling party, and there should be a clear demarcation between the state and the ruling party.

Protection of human rights

Communists are and can be the strongest champions of human rights. The protection of human rights should be central to the state and the people.

A system of multiparty competition

The state and its government agencies are the concern of all people and cannot be monopolized by one political party. In a society with many classes, many political parties naturally exist. To establish the decisive role of the people in politics, parties should be free to compete politically according to the constitution. Parties and individuals with a mandate from the people should run the government.

Periodic elections

Leaders and parties should be able to secure mandates to rule through periodic elections. Elections should be based on ideas, programs, and policies.

Majority government and minority opposition

The majority rules with due respect to the minority, which can serve as a strong opposition to the ruling party. Strong democratic opposition should help the government steer in the right direction.

Rule of law

There should be a system where any person can be punished only by a formal decision of an authorized legal body. The government and any person in power should not make arbitrary decisions.

Strengthening the people's democratic system

In establishing a people's democratic system, there is a need to end the negative remnants of the

old system, develop new modes of production, and implement them in all areas. Extensive economic and social infrastructures should be built to enable the transition to socialism.

Foreign capital and technology

The door will not be closed to foreign capital and technology theoretically. The government will invite foreign capital and technology to be invested and protected under the purview of the constitution for the country's best interest and the people's welfare.

Compensation

Positive contributions will be made by everyone to build a new society. A compensation policy shall be devised to abolish feudal land ownership, fix new laws, and implement revolutionary land reform. Those who support the revolution, rich and middle-class peasants, will be allowed to use their land effectively by ending double ownership. However, force will be applied to those who were involved in destruction and do not want to contribute their excess land. The policy of relocating the workforce to industries, trade, and commerce shall be applied to the general populace (Bhandari, 1991).

Foreign Policy

Foreign relations should be guided by the principles of Panchsheel. The state shall gather international support through direct initiatives. Foreign policy should not be defined solely by theoretical insistence, ignoring the concrete practical issues of revolution and construction.

Leadership

Leadership will be chosen through struggle, service, initiative, and competition. The government should be dedicated to the welfare of people in the interest of the country. The democratic state of the people over the dictatorship of the proletariat has been used in PMPD.

PMPD incorporates 14 characteristics along with basic elements of new democracy. In Nepal,

this principle has become an indispensable political philosophy that synthesizes principles of socialism and democracy, deriving insights and experiences from existing national and international political movements.

Conclusion

The question of social transformation has been raised since the advent of human civilization. At every stage of development, struggles have occurred against discrimination and oppression. These struggles were instrumental in improving societies. The outcomes of these improvements have manifested in multiple forms, such as standards and norms, codes of conduct, constitutions, and laws. These doctrines have established a system in human societies. However, humanity continues to seek alternatives and move forward creatively. Bhandari devised a notion for modern technologies to produce goods and services. The mode of production and product relations are becoming increasingly complex. Capitalists have been devising new business strategies and marketing techniques to increase profits. Simultaneously, people have been facing problems such as food shortages, exploitation, and oppression in societies. In the present context, conventional means and strategies are insufficient to resolve such complex problems. Bhandari's PMPD adequately explains the means and strategies to address such issues in changing contexts. It defines the methods and programs for establishing a people's democratic social order by eliminating discrimination, exploitation, and oppression in society.

Knowledge and wisdom provide information about objects and events. They inform on multiple aspects, such as what it is, how it is, and why it is. However, consciousness synthesizes this information in response to pertinent questions: what is wrong and what is right? Is it in the interest of humanity and the world or not? Along with the development of knowledge, when consciousness develops,

people take the initiative for peace. PMPD prioritizes the possibility of a peaceful struggle. In the past, there was no theoretical clarity about violent movements—where and under what conditions people should raise arms against a despotic totalitarian regime. Marxism is a living theory of emancipation for the oppressed, primarily aiming to end corruption, exploitation, and oppression in society. However, people might face shortcomings when applying Marxism dogmatically. Bhandari proposed that Marxism should be applied creatively in statecraft, transcending dogma and dissolution. In this context, PMPD is a concrete initiative to lead the communist movement through a democratic method in leadership building, which was previously considered a capitalist and liberal tool in politics.

Bhandari coined the slogan “Let’s Oppose Fundamentalism and Dissolution, Let’s Make Creative Use of Marxism” to represent his ideas. PMPD produced new hope and momentum while the world communist movement was undergoing tough times. Diversity and plurality in nature and human beings were brought under the scope of Marxist interpretation and explanation.

While Marxist politics underwent debates and parties disintegrated, Bhandari formulated the slogan ‘life is not for principles; rather, principles are for life’ with a clear message that all principles and theories should be for the best interest of mankind. PMPD in Nepal is a new idea born from the Nepali experience of struggle. Standing on the ground reality, it has fundamentally resolved the theoretical and policy questions related to revolutionary change in Nepal. If the communist party and state power are governed by the ever-living ideas of Bhandari, Nepali society can make tremendous progress, leading to people’s prosperity and happiness.

The production system of Nepali society is still semi-feudal and semi-colonial. The means of livelihood, income, and mode of production are in the hands of the feudal class, the comprador

capitalist class, and foreign monopoly capitalists. They have controlled the country’s natural resources through state power, exploiting natives. The exploitation by the feudal class and the comprador capitalist class, along with foreign monopolistic capitalism and imperialism, has become rampant. PMPD is the principle that resolves these contradictions to establish a Nepali society of independence, justice, and equality, thus ending the stagnant and directionless condition of Nepali society. Classes exist in society due to the interests rooted in discrimination and inequality resulting from the ownership of goods and services. The feudal and comprador capitalist classes tend to control state power, exploit, suppress, and oppress the people to maintain their interests, prompting them to control resources. To change this situation, the essence of state power must be changed. This means that state power should be administered under the leadership of people committed to justice, equality, and independence. Such leadership should be chosen from a multiparty democratic competitive governance system. This is the essence of PMPD.

Democracy is a political system and a method of establishing and practicing justice in all spheres of life and state. The practice of democratization within the party, society, and state is the preface of PMPD. PMPD gives direction to the way of life of individuals and contributes to the management of the party.

The root of discrimination and inequality in all stages of human society’s evolution is the ownership of resources. During the evolution of civilization, society’s anomalies have been addressed at different periods. Methods and processes have been developed and formulated on different political and social agendas: the form and structure of the state, the governance system, conduct and behaviors, human consciousness, fair modes of production, an egalitarian political system, social relations, and a fair balance of power between classes. These methods and processes are the achievements obtained during

the class struggle. PMPD has assimilated these achievements.

To end discrimination in society, collective economic and social relations should be developed and encouraged. The leadership and control of the state should be in the hands of progressive and nationalist people. Society and state institutions should be social. Only then can the democratic state be strengthened, and an independent and self-reliant national economy be built. This is the preface of PMPD.

The basis of discrimination and inequality in human society is the economic and political system. This phenomenon is aggravated by the extensive growth and development of technology. The intervention of technology has widened the gap between the haves and have-nots in society, leading to ever-increasing contradictions. Additionally, the risks and fatalities from natural phenomena have exerted pressure on society. PMPD, as a theory and program, sheds light on the solution to societal contradictions and the impacts of natural disasters..

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