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Department of Political Science, Prithvi Narayan Campus, TU, Pokhara, Nepal

*Email:* [polsc@pncampus.edu.np](mailto:polsc@pncampus.edu.np)

## Nepal's Political Trajectory and Challenges to Democratic Stability

Krishna Prasad Timilsina 

Department of Political Science,  
Tribhuvan University, Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara Nepal

*Corresponding Author:* Krishna Prasad Timilsina, Email: [krishna19.timilsina@gmail.com](mailto:krishna19.timilsina@gmail.com).

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### Abstract

Democracy is a constitutional form of government. It consists of popular sovereignty, rights and freedom, democratic values, and fairness in socio-economic opportunities. The elected ruling elites govern the nation in accordance with the constitution, the rule of law, inclusion, and equality. But democracy cannot function efficiently unless it is supported by these factors and a compatible political culture with democracy. Democracy in a changing society faces numerous problems, as seen in Nepal, in developing and sustaining democratic governance. This article aims to critically analyze Nepal's political trajectory, focusing on the structural factors responsible for continued political instability. The paper is based on a desk study, using an ontological, epistemological, and axiological philosophy approach. The paper argues Nepal's political trajectory arises from the interaction of internal and external variables. Internally, an unstable government, polarization and fragmentation in parties and society, poor governance, weak institutional capacity, absence of accountability, constitutional ambiguity, and malpractices contributed to degrading citizens' trust in institutions, making democracy dysfunctional and creating a space for the rise of populist leaders in various forms. Emerging democracies are inherently fragile states, creating an opportunity for external and regional powers' involvement in the internal matters. Externally, Nepal's geo-political location, donor-based policy, global power shift, rivalry of regional and global powers, and the influence of international financial institutions promoted the accountability of the ruling elites toward external powers rather than internal accountability. Taking advantage of a weak state and intergenerational gaps, the youth-led protests forced the resignation of the ruling elites. It concludes that the Gen Z protest has an opportunity for new youth leaders to govern the nation in a democratic way, promoting accountability and transparency, constitutionalism and rule of law, and building trust in

democratic institutions. On the other hand, it can carry political instability, social and political polarization, and economic disruption.

**Keywords:** Democracy, Gen -Z protests, geopolitics, political instability, trajectory

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### Introduction

Democracy as a political system consists of 'rights' and 'virtues' (Hood, 2004). The former comes from the democratic constitution, which creates a broader environment for seizing the opportunities. Better institutions and their functioning tend to enhance citizens' rights over time. But the virtues are social products. Family, educational institutions, political parties, leadership behavior, and overall social behavior are the sources of virtues. They contribute to the development of quality citizens who work on the foundation of a democratic polity. Many countries in the world have undergone democratic transitions but have had poor experiences with democratic stability. Right-oriented systems often lead to conflict among voters (Bao, 2022). It ultimately leads to a democratic breakdown. Hence, the democratic system demands a better combination between 'rights and virtues.

The global trend of democratization process that has started since the 1980s brought the wave of democratic transition, known as the 'third wave of democracy' (Huntington, 1991). Several countries experienced transitions that started in mid-1974 to 1990s. On the other hand, the trend of democratic erosion has greatly increased (Dean, 2024, January 17). Coming to the early twenty-first century has been a period of political unrest. Several factors contributed to startling development in science and technologies, massive migration, ongoing conflict, increasing income inequality between rich and poor countries, and within nations, declining of trust in traditional political parties facilitated the rise of strong men and populism. Globally, the fragile democracy turned into a hybrid political regime. Scholars like Huntington (1996) relate this instability to social change, economic gap, and the gradual decline of traditional institutions. Around the world, populism, driven by anti-establishment sentiment and frustration with leadership, has reshaped political landscapes, from Latin America to Europe, where democratic tension has arisen due to tension between liberal values and far-right movements (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017; Norris & Inglehart, 2019). Such a trend has proved that modern political instability is both a result and a driver for structural change, along with serious consequences. Societies' vulnerable, slow growth, and undermining public trust are the result of weak governments, unreliable institutions, and disengaged political parties (Mulder & Bussière, 1999; Rani & Batool, 2016).

In recent decades, the quality of democracy has degraded. Populism and nationalism, bad governance, corruption, the power-hunger tendency of leader and the growing gap between poor and rich people are the key drivers of degrading public trust in political parties and government institutions (International IDEA, 2025). Uncontrolled media, political activism, geopolitical tension, and cultural rift have further created distrust in the working of democracy and the democratic system. No doubt, the countries have their own ground of democratic trajectory. Many Latin American countries have the problem of the rise of populist and authoritarian leaders, corruption, polarization, and degrading institutional

confidence (Gangotena 2025, February 9). Whereas the democracies in Southeast Asian countries have the problem of geopolitical tension, cyber threat, and socio-economic tension (Hutagalung, 2025, January 23). Democratic systems face challenges in South Asian countries from bad governance, economic disparities, corruption, identity politics, and growing external influences (Adil, 2024, October 13).

Nepal's experience of democracy and its practice commenced with the end of the Rana Regime in 1951. But the democratic system remained in transition for a decade. The Royal coup turned this transition toward autocratic rule in 1960. Democratization was suspended during the party-less Panchayat system (1960-1990). But the people's Movement in 1990 restored multiparty democracy under a constitutional monarchy. Again, the new populist left movement (commonly known as Maoist Armed Revolt) lasted for ten years (1996-2006), obstructing the consolidation of the democratic system. However, the April Movement of 2006 abolished the monarchy and established a federal democratic republic. The Constituent Assembly promulgated the constitution of Nepal in 2015. The country has successfully held three tiers of elections (Local, provincial, and federal) in 2017 and 2022, respectively. The trend of coalition government continued as no party could obtain a majority.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Democracy is a political system. It empowers citizens and establishes justice through democratic norms, values, and the democratic process. Hence, democracy is a way of democratic life and democratic practices. Effective functions of democratic institutions depend on constitutionalism, the rule of law, inclusion, and democratic values, not just constitutional arrangement and selecting the leaders. The recent political transition in Nepal in 2015 aims to establish the rule of law, inclusive and proportional representation in all state affairs, good governance, protection of rights and liberties, equality, and stability (Nepal Law Commission, 2020). Contrary to constitutional commitment, poor governance, corruption, instability, and eroding citizens' trust in elected leaders and institutions led to youth protest (Gen-Z revolt) on 8th and 9th September 2025. This revolt led to the dissolution of the larger party, involved two-third majority government and parliament as well. Dismemberment of the state institutions seems as serious blow to democracy and its stability. Amid constitutional and policy arrangements, periodic elections, long run exercise of the party system, there appears a gradual erosion of democratic faith, weakened institutional capacity, resulting in continued political instability. The wide gap between constitutional commitment and its practice always raises queries in Nepal's democratic system. Hence, the article aims to bridge the gap between this inconsistency.

The article aims to make a critical analysis of Nepal's political trajectory and the factors that have led to continued political instability. It also aims to analyze the key factors, internal and external, that have contributed to creating political unrest and frailty during the last three years.

### **Concept and Literature Review**

“Democracy” is often considered the way of life, i.e., having the features of ‘democratic ideals’, ‘democratic institutions’, and ‘democratic practices’ (Dreze & Sen, 2002) that guide

the attitude and behavior of stakeholders to live in harmony, adopting democratic practice. In a plural society, like Nepal, it requires the feeling of togetherness for the better working of the democratic system. But the world community has a history of democratic upheavals. The rise of populism and authoritarian leaders led to the malfunctioning of the democratic system in the twenty-first century, even in established democracies (Benson, 2025, April 15). Further, Sellgren (2025) states that societal fragmentation, eroding accountability, weakening of democratic institutions, and centralization of power are the principal factors that lead to the erosion of the democratic system. Mostly, newly established democracies are the victims of authoritarian rule that directly undermines the democratic system. The elected leaders are involved in ignoring civil society and disrespecting free media, which appears as democratic backsliding (Meisenheimer, 2025). In the same context, Nepal's democracy has been facing challenges resulting from the political trajectory. This study looks at different types of research that explain the reason for Nepal's political instability and focuses on specific events and issues that occurred in the 2022-2025 period, including the 2025 youth protests. The review is arranged in a logical order from broad, structural reasons behind instability, to agent-driven forces of recent political unrest.

Political instability is a situation in which a country's government or political system is changing frequently or fails to perform its fundamental functions effectively. Political instability shows up with the frequent changes in government, weak policy implementations, corruption, social unrest, and fragile institutions. It occurs due to the deviation in the political culture in elite's level. According to Alesina et al. (1996), political instability is a condition where the government collapses frequently or likely changes in policies that affect economic growth and public confidence. Similarly, Gurr (1970) argues that instability is a situation when political performance is below societal expectations, leading to frustration and protest. In developing countries, instability arises because of weak political culture, favoritism, nepotism, and institutional incapabilities (Lipset, 1959; Huntington, 1968). Huntington (1996) further states that institutionalization helps in political development, the situation where political organizations and processes become stable, valued, and predictable. Otherwise, rapid social mobilization may lead to disorder, shadowing the democracy. This theory is relevant to Nepal's political situation, where society changed faster than the political system, creating disparity between societal expectations and political performance. Coalition politics is often a characteristic of democracy and diversity, but due to the fragmented party system, the same characteristics have been the reason for instability. According to Lijphart (1999), coalition government is an essential component of consensual democracies, but the small party system and its different ideologies weaken decision-making. Frequent government change, fragile coalition, and intra-party fragmentation are popular in South Asian countries (Yadav, 2018). The establishment of a multiparty system, after the 2006 political transformation, was supposed to strengthen democratic governance, but it led to political instability.

Coalition politics is often considered a hallmark of democratic pluralism, but can also be a source of instability when party systems are fragmented and ideologically incoherent. Lijphart (1999) identifies coalition governments as an essential component of consensual democracies but cautions that excessive party fragmentation can weaken decision-making.

In the South Asian context, frequent government turnover is commonly associated with coalition fragility and intra-party factionalism (Yadav, 2018). Scholars (Adhikari 2022; Kharel, 2022) say that coalition governments usually collapse soon as political parties involved have different ideologies, beliefs, and goals. Regmi (2023) highlights the vague constitution regarding the formation and dissolution of government, allowing politicians to play the power game, perpetuating instability. Between 2022 and 2025, the main political parties in Nepal, the Nepali Congress, CPN-UML, and CPN (Maoist Centre), made an alliance, and they kept changing in a short period. These frequent shifts in alliances were based on short-term political tactics rather than programmatic motives, leading to inconsistent government policies and undermining the legitimacy of democratic institutions (Sedai, 2024). From the above discussion, it shows that party fragmentation occurs in emerging societies, like in Nepal, leader-centric politics, external powers' involvement, weakness in electoral representation, etc., are the major reasons of party fragmentation.

Good governance is very important for building trust, protecting rights and civil liberties, and ensuring the durability of democracy. According to Fukunda-Parr and Ponzio, governance is the process by which power and authority are exercised to manage a country's affairs at all levels. Poor governance, characterized by corruption, lack of transparency, and weak accountability, is both a symptom and a cause of future instability (Kaufmann, Kraay, & Zoido-Lobatón, 1999).

In the context of Nepal, corruption is pervasive within political and bureaucratic systems. According to The Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA, 2023), involvement of political leaders and public officials has eroded public trust in governance. Bhattarai (2024) emphasizes that corruption and favoritism create unequal access to opportunities, thereby alienating younger generations and resulting in frustration and rising protests. After realizing that the political elites are manipulating public institutions for their personal benefits, citizens lose their trust and confidence in democracy (Diamond, 2008). This is evidenced by the present Gen-Z uprising, which focuses on anti-corruption, accountability, and transparency. The root cause of governance crisis and corruption is the outcome of weak state institutions, ineffective implementation of rules and regulations, centralization of decision-making power, and nomenclature of democratic accountability and responsiveness.

The democratic system faces challenges when a country is subject to foreign intervention (Dahl, 1998). India and China, Nepal's two neighboring countries, attempt to influence Nepal to serve their interest, making external forces a crucial factor of political instability, as both powers exert significant economic and political influence (Gyawali, 2023). Heavy reliance on foreign aid and remittances also subjects it to the policy preferences of international institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank (Adhikari, 2022). Sharma (2021) notes that such external forces restrict domestic policy formation and implementation, fragmentation of political parties, and weaken sovereignty. India wants Nepal's politics to align with its interests, and China increases its influence through various investments in infrastructure, and party-to-party ties have complicated Nepal's internal politics (Muni, 2020). Weak internal governance, alignments and competition of elites, and strategic importance for global and regional powers have caused deepening polarization and

fractured political parties of Nepal, weakened state institutions, and fragmented foreign policy.

The modern age is characterized by digital technology. Social medias are more common in politics, and the youth's attachment to digital media has led to new civic engagement. Youths who are connected through digital technologies like social media are becoming more active in politics. The Gen-Z protest of 2025 was primarily against corruption, unaccountability, and lack of transparency. The government and media attempted to portray the protest as a reaction to the social media ban, but the movement was about deeper structural grievances. Like Hong Kong and the Arab Spring protests, Nepali youths were organizing themselves using digital platforms rather than relying on party hierarchies (Castells, 2012). According to Tufekci (2017), rapid mobilization is possible through digital activism, but it may not sustain long-term organizational structure. Despite this, the 2025 protest showed that digitally literate citizens can put significant pressure on established political leaders. The protest was decentralized, focusing on transparency on new participatory form of democratic engagement (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013). The Gen-Z uprising is both an opportunity and a threat for Nepali Democracy. It challenged the patronage-based politics and also raised questions about Nepal's institutions' readiness to accept the transformative civic energy.

### **Methodology**

The article is based on ontological, epistemological, and axiological philosophy. Ontologically, diverse factors have influenced Nepal's long-run journey of political development. The knowledge is acquired from various secondary sources. From an axiological point of view, democratic party has certain norms and values that were challenged due to several internal and external factors. Hence, the study adopts a descriptive and analytical design. The secondary sources, such as scholarly articles, journals, books, media accounts, government documents, and academic analysis provide insights into the examination of the pattern and trajectory of Nepal's democratic practices. Document analysis method is employed to analyze the internal and external factors that have influenced the functioning of the democratic institutions.

### **Data Presentation**

The main objective of the paper is to discuss Nepal's political trajectory and the factors that have led to continued political instability. The following data are arranged into two sections: internal and external factors.

#### **Internal Factors**

#### **Culture of Weak Coalition Governments**

A fragmented party system is one of the reasons for Nepal's political instability. Not a single party won by a clear majority in the 2022 election. Therefore, coalition governments comprising parties with different ideologies struggle to unite (Regmi, 2023, pp. 45–62). The coalition was fragile because of disputes over power-sharing and the conflicting policy

agendas, such as economic liberalization versus human rights, and the absence of a shared long-term national vision (Sedai, 2024, pp. 12-28). The lack of a dominant political force, small parties gained too much power and influence the government for political benefits and positions (Gyawali, 2023, pp. 335–357), resulting in disagreement on national priorities, enact consistent public policies, or sustain long-term development programs. Frequent changes in alliances, no-confidence votes, and defections have become the characteristics of Nepal's political system. This political environment has led to short-termism in governance, as leaders are prioritizing coalition to sustain their position in government over national progress. It has weekend investor confidence, slowed down developmental projects, and raised public frustration. Frustrated youth organized a 2025 Gen-Z protest, demanding transparent, stable, and accountable leadership as a response to a year of political dysfunction.

### **Factionalism in Parties**

Power is another source of conflict in politics. Intra-party conflict and power struggles led to frequent changes in government during 2022-2024. Factionalism and fragile coalition government have become the political culture in Nepal (Sedai, 2024, pp. 12-28). Conflicts between leaders, competition over state resources, and politics focused on personal interest weakened the unity and cooperation within political groups (Regmi, 2023, pp.45-62). Fragility comes from the dominance of personality-based leadership over democratic decision-making because decisions were made by elite leaders instead of the collective discussion of the political party (Gyawali, 2023, pp. 335–357). This exclusionary decision-making process creates disappointment, leading to the collapse and fragmentation of parties and finally the downfall of the coalition government. Political parties are not aligning with democratic norms; they often get fragmented under pressure, resulting in instability and discontinuity of policies. The Gen-Z movement emerged as a societal response to political power competition. Frustrated by ongoing Political fights and the concentration of power within the leaders, the youth collectively organized and mobilized to challenge the deep-rooted culture of political patronage and advocate for a generational shift in governance.

### **Constitutional Ambiguity**

Constitutional ambiguities have been fueling Nepal's political instability. The 2015 constitution, though progressive in many aspects, still lacked some provisions regarding government formation and dissolutions open to interpretation (Kharel, 2022, pp. 55-71). Political parties are frequently taking advantage of these loopholes to dissolve parliament or rearrange coalitions where they can get better advantages. The unclear guidelines for the alliance government and minimum majority requirement made the government weak and uncertain in its renegotiation (Sedai, 2024, pp. 12–28). Politicians take advantage of unclear laws, such as horse-trading and floor crossing, eroding the spirit of constitutional stability. The Gen-Z criticized such political manipulations and demanded reforms to clarify and safeguard the principles of political accountability.

## **Misgovernance**

Nepal's politics was even more unstable during 2022-2024 because of the widespread corruption and poor accountability mechanisms. The public loses trust in governance because of deep-rooted corruption across political and bureaucratic institutions (Transparency International, 2023). Injustice and inequality are created from favoritism and nepotism, power conflict, misuse of public resources, and poor monitoring (Upreti, 2023, pp. 512–529). Weak institutions were not able hold politicians accountable and had no fear of being punished (Bhandari, 2022, pp. 215–230). The country is getting poorer, but political elites have grown richer; citizens are aware of the major activities of democratic institutions. This awareness came out as protests, strikes, and mass mobilizations, notably Gen-Z protest 2025, which represented the frustration and anger generated from the years of corruption and depletion of democratic integrity.

## **Socio-economic Challenges**

A strengthened economy favors a better culture and minimized violence that ultimately leads to form extensive democracy. But political crises were driven by fundamental, long-standing social and economic issues. The persistent poverty, unemployment, and the gap and inequality created frustration and hopelessness (Bhattarai, 2024, pp. 123–145). People lose confidence on political system as the government failed to address the widespread structural issues (Gyawali, 2023, pp. 335–357). In this situation, the Gen-Z movement grew out of youth frustration against unemployment, inequality, and governance ignoring public needs. This mobilization indicates a new awareness that economic problems will be solved with political accountability and inclusive governance. The cycle of political instability was created by ongoing corruption, an ambiguous constitution, and economic problems. The Gen-Z movement of 2025 is the result of accumulated frustration and a potential turning point for democracy in Nepal.

### **External Factors**

## **Neighboring Countries Rivalry**

Nepal, situated between India and China, is significantly influenced by their strategic competition, and frequent changes in government between 2022 and 2024 made it easier for this country to increase its influence. Further, Nepal, a landlocked country, became a center of regional influence. Both nations are maintaining strong ties with Nepal through economic, political, and cultural strategies (Gyawali, 2023, pp. 335-357). Competition in infrastructure development, trade agreement and diplomatic initiatives is evidence of their rivalry (Thapa, 2023: pp.73-84). Even the influence of India and China has created internal fragmentation within Nepal's political system and government. Some elites and their followers are perceived as favoring India, whereas some other advocates for closer relations with China. This polarization is the reason for political instability and disagreement on foreign policy issues (Sedai, 2024, pp.12-28). Though Nepal has tried to remain neutral in the geopolitical power struggle between its neighbors, it is still prone to vulnerability and insecurity. The frequent turnover of government is affected by external interference, the pressure from either China or India. Even though there is no strong evidence, the

widespread belief in foreign involvement has increased, and trust in the government has eroded (Baral, 2024, pp.120-135).

### **Donors' Influence**

International donors and financial institutions (IFIs) are another external force contributing to instability from 2022 to 2024. Donations and loans from these institutions have encouraged Nepal to adopt policies according to its own interest (Adhikari, 2022, pp. 445–467). The conditions attached usually range from economic reforms such as privatization and human rights reforms, which often generate internal disagreement in coalition government with diverse opinions on such changes (Gyawali, 2023, pp. 335–357). This is the reason for policy disputes and governmental paralysis and may even cause fragile coalition governments. Along with the policy-making advice, these institutions are influencing on appointing key economic officials, allowing them to shape the country's economic policies that favor them (Sedai, 2024, pp. 12-28). Such interventions can weaken the independence of elected governments and increase public belief that foreign interference leads to instability. Even though international donors and financial institutions aimed to improve Nepal's governance and development, their pressure can cause more internal conflicts, affects government's policy formulation, and the public may not connect with the government, which creates grievances and thus political instability.

### **Global Economic Trends**

Global economic trends, such as slowdowns and recessions, were an important factor for the unstable government in Nepal from 2022 to 2024. Nepal's economy is dependent on remittances, foreign aids and tourism (World Bank, 2022), so during the global downturn, these income sources are adversely affecting Nepal's economic growth and stability (Malla, 2023, pp. 1-12). This economic distress is the triggering factor of public dissatisfaction, leading to the fall of the government and the formation of a new government in the hope of stabilization. Additionally, trade and inflation are also affected by the international economic climate. There is a positive relation between the global commodity price and the cost of imports and inflation, which raises the cost of living for citizens. This further depletes public confidence and contributes to political unrest. Therefore, the effects of volatile global economic trends highlight external threats contributing to the fragile government of Nepal. The dynamic relationship between domestic and external factors creates a complicated political environment. Because of this fragile political environment, the public is frustrated and blames each new government for its failure in protecting the country from global economic shocks.

### **Discussion**

The post-World War-II international system brought substantial change to the political systems of several countries. Nepal, though never colonized by any major power throughout history, introduced democracy through a revolution in 1951. But the system could not last long. It passed through several transitions. The waves and anti-waves of a seven and a half decades old democratic system are still found immature. The second periodic election after the federal democratic system proved to be another symbol of political instability. Since no

party obtained a clear majority in the election, the malpractice of coalition government continued. Contrary to the parliamentary norms, the largest party remained in opposition and was a coalition partner sometimes. Finally, the alliance was made between the two largest parties of the parliament with a nearly two-thirds majority. Despite political stability and the strengthening of democracy, the government has seen as the catalyst for political instability. The issues of corruption, poor service delivery, and bad governance were vibrantly raised. At the same time, the government imposed a ban on social media. The mass protest against the government's decision led to the dissolution of the elected government and the House of Representatives. The incompetence of the two-thirds majority government was evident when it collapsed within 24 hours of the Gen-Z protest in September 2025, highlighting the fragility of Nepal's democratic institutions.

Instability was driven by internal factors, including inter- and intra-party fragmentation, weak alliances, corruption, and ambiguous constitutional provisions, as well as external factors, such as pressures from China and India, and influence from international donors. According to Huntington (1968), a political system erodes when social mobilization is faster than institutional development. In Nepal, though democracy process was expanded in 2015, political institutions are not mature enough to support and stabilize democracy. The frequent collapse of government was driven by the lack of ideological coherence among major parties and the concentration of power. The state was unable to deliver basic services and maintain economic stability because of a weak political structure, resulting in public discontent, especially among youth. This Gen-Z protest directly reflects the dissatisfaction, frustration, and demand for a new structure and policy.

Cornell et al. (2020) argue that poor structure and behavior of political actors affects in the working of newly established democracies. The instability of the 2022-2025 period represents a fragile democracy and weak institutions. According to Lipset's (1959) modernization theory, strong institutions and socio-economic development are needed for sustainable democracy. Political elites have been successful in manipulating and eroding the credibility, accountability, and democratic structure. Even though Nepal made formal progress in improving its constitution and organize election, the governance is weak, reactive, and highly personalized. The fractionalization of the party shows a lack of intra-party democracy. Decision-making has been monopolized by some leaders for years. They are resisting change and sidelining youth, in fear of losing power. Such behaviors create a generational divide that resulted in the Gen-Z movement, demanding structural change, a new political culture, transparency, and inclusion.

The 2025 Gen-Z protest became the turning point in Nepal's democracy. Initially, the movement evolved in demand for transparency, accountability, and generational representation. At the same time, the government's action to ban social media dragged Gen-Z into the streets. The Gen Z movement discontinued the party-oriented protest, marking a significant shift in people's engagement from street-centered, party-controlled activism to digitalized and citizen-centered mobilization. This movement exemplified that the restoration of the principle of democracy and its accountability can be achieved through grassroots pressure rather than negotiation between leaders. According to Bennett and

Segerberg (2013), networked movements often struggle to translate collective mobilization into institutional reform, raising concerns about the sustainability of leaderless structures.

Nepal's instability was not just internal; it was affected by regional geopolitics and global economic stress. Both India and China wanted Nepal to align with their strategic interests, dividing the internal political parties and weakening foreign policy consistency. Similarly, the international financial institutions are also influencing and have limited their ability to act according to national priorities. This external pressure has fueled nationalist and populist narratives, further dividing political actors. Domestic grievances intensified as the global economy weakened due to post pandemic slowdown and rising inflation. The decline in remittance, tourism, and employment opportunities fueled the frustration and created a space for youth-led uprising. Thus, the Gen-Z movement 2025 is not merely a reaction to domestic political disorder but a manifestation of global generational discontent. It has become a local expression of a worldwide demand for accountable, forward-looking governance.

### Conclusion

Despite more than seven decades of practice, Nepal's democracy has not been free from transition. Even after the establishment of a federal democratic republic and unhindered periodic elections, democracy has proven immature. The study reveals that democratic institutions and the behavior of actors play a pivotal role in strengthening democracy. The system anticipates a robust civil society along with adherence to democratic norms and values. The new generation demands better service delivery and new civic engagement through a digital network. The Gen-Z protest, often criticized as externally backed, emerged as a severe blow to systemic failures. The sudden dissolution of the government and alarm in every part of the state has persistent internal weakness and external pressures. Internally, weakening democratic institutions, party fragmentation, intra-party rivalries, and corruption have led to the malfunctioning of the democratic system. The absence of a strong civil society, societal dimensions, has fueled the anti-democratic elements. Constitutional ambiguity still exists towards the formation of a stable and accountable government. Further, Nepal's political system has remained the subject of geopolitical influence. Global power shift, rivalry between immediate neighbors and donors, donor conditionality, and global economic volatility have appeared as external factors causing democratic projector. Though sparked by the government's attempt to restrict digital freedom, it symbolized a deeper societal rupture—a generational demand for honesty, reform, and inclusion in governance. The protests demonstrated the transformative power of youth-led, digitally networked activism, which succeeded in pressuring political elites to concede immediate change. However, the movement's long-term success depends on whether its momentum can be institutionalized into sustained political reform and civic education. Ultimately, the study affirms that democratic consolidation in Nepal requires more than procedural elections. Political instability will persist unless systemic reforms strengthen accountability and reduce the gap between state and society. The Gen Z protest, therefore, represents not the failure of democracy but its reawakening—a reminder that democratic legitimacy rests upon responsiveness, transparency, and generational renewal.

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