

## Social Character in Politics of Nepali Communist Parties

Prof. Rajkumar Pokhrel, Ph.D.

Former Head of the Department. T.U.

### **Abstract**

*The paper analyses the social character in the politics of Nepali communists' pastries particularly of the Nepal Communist Party (Unified Marxist and Leninist) and the Communist party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) by applying marxist perspective. It brings into light the essential causes and consequences of the rise and fall of communist movement in Nepal. The paper argues that every communist party has adopted appropriate social policies in their inception, but in course of their development, being deviated from their early stage became fascinated towards consumerist capitalist culture in their practical life. There are various reasons for this deviation. First, communist parties have failed to analyse the character of Nepali society properly as they have changed their analyses very often. Second, the leaders have been found double faced: they say one thing but do another as they are inherently guided by feudal psychology, comprador capitalist mentality and behaviour. Third, they have not been able to bring about socio-economic change as they have been engaged in the imbroglio of parliamentary politics. While trying to justify these issues, this paper incorporates the evidences from political documents and leaders' statements. The paper is presented inductively and choice of methodology is qualitative.*

**Keywords:** communists, feudal, comprador, social. Behaviour.

### **Background**

Social character refers to the knowledge of formulation of the shared character structure of any human being of a society or a social class in the destination of achieving the aim of life and the socially typical expectations and functional requirements regarding socially adaptive behavior. Social character is essentially to dominate the mode of production in a society from the perspective of Marxism (Jensen, 2017). Therefore, the formulations of social relations emerging from sociology and other disciplines, challenging to the opportunities as well as politics by providing innovative efforts to compare social relations across nations, and more analyses that integrate the cultural and institutional dimensions of social relations into common frameworks, is social character in politics. Everybody can think that the results are likely to improve our understanding from the social character of how to clarify to the political outcomes. The social character traits may be positive or negative, depending on the situation.

The Communist Party of Nepal was founded in 1949. It started to be divided into several factions in the decade of 1960. In the beginning of 1970, a communist revolt was started in Jhapa. As divided communist party of Nepal, *Purva Koshi Prantiya Committee* (East Provincial Committee) was separated from the mainstream of Nepal Communist Party and established as next independent center of the communists of Nepal. After some time of its establishment, next group got separated from this *Purva Koshi Prantiya Committee* in Jhapa District (Far East of Nepal) and started a revolt against existing political system being influenced by the revolt of Naxalbari of India and the Cultural Revolution of China. The Cultural Revolution in China was started from 1966. As the result of Jhapa revolt, a faction of the Nepali communists came into existence, which was known as The Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist- Leninist) or in short CPN (ML).

Every political party formulates its policy on socio-cultural ground mainly guided by its political programme to achieve the vision and mission of the then CPN(ML), one of the factions of the divided communist movement of Nepal, was not exceptional from this programme. The first manifesto and policies by Puspahal Shrestha, the founder leader (General Secretary) of the CPN, seems to have been the groundwork of its socio-cultural policy in which he has defined as “New Democratic Socio-cultural Programme”(it was formulated by Mao Tse tung in China during the Chinese communist revolution), ran till 1993 in Nepal. In this document, Pushpalal puts down:

The way to Nepali national movement, which educates us that the capitalist class in Nepal cannot lead the anti-feudalist and anti-imperialist in the new historical era whereas the communist party, the party of working class, which is well equipped with the scientific outlook of Marxism and Leninism can. The working class in an alliance with the peasantry shall direct the revolution to its grand final under the leadership of communist party. The New Democratic Revolution roots out the feudalism and imperialism from Nepal in our age, in the age of fall of imperialism and in the historical universal age of socialism, thereupon, there will be a capitalist democratic revolution of new type, lacking all old forms owing to its new character. A socialist transition will be prepared for setting up the feudalism and imperialism or semi feudalist and semi colonial phase of Nepal (Puspslal, 2054 B.S.).

It can be argued that the communist movement in Nepal has been guided by this policy till the very latter time. The then CPN (ML) also did not change the basic policy forwarded by Pushpalal. But in present time, the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist and Leninist) or CPN-UML is running under the guided policy of “People’s Multiparty Democracy”, which is alleged to have abandoned Pushpalal’s policy. Likewise, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Center) or CPM (MC) has also proclaimed in its 7<sup>th</sup> Congress that communists should go ahead by organizing the competitive political force within the constitutional limitations of democratic reign against feudalism and imperialism (CPN-MC,2069 B.S.). Therefore, it seems that CPN(MC)also has followed similar view of People’s Multiparty Democracy” of the CPN (UML). The revolutionary party, in latter phase, chose to take the rightist path (as its previous view) of deviation following the path of CPN (UML) from its 7<sup>th</sup> congress by accepting that the socio-economic character of Nepali society has changed in present time. Moreover, the CPN(MC) has tried to prove that its latter policy is right by quoting the version of Lenin as “Marxism is not a life loss dogma not a completed readymade immutable doctrine but a living guide to action” in its party document, which has shown that it is also following the policy of CPN (UML) which was passed by this party’s 5<sup>th</sup> congress before twenty years of CPN(MC)’s decision.

### **Objective**

The objective of this study is to make an analysis on the social character and views of the major two largest communist parties of Nepal from the political perspective.

### **Methodology**

From the study of the previous works, almost researchers and writers have raised, examined and analysed the political and historical issues in their studies. I have found no serious academic research made on the social, cultural and diplomatic issues in this study area. Therefore, it is attempted to bring out the data and facts on the issue of socio politics and analyse them critically. The philosophy of this article is interpretivism and the socio-political character of Nepali communists is as its ontology and the knowledge about their direction and destination is epistemology. It is prepared by using primary and secondary data sources as historical writing. When the real fact could not be found from the secondary sources, the primary sources are used to complete the documents. The methodological design of this paper is qualitative.

## **Discussion**

### **Socio-political concept of the party**

According to the first pamphlet of the CPN dated April 1949, the Nepali society was analyzed to be feudalistic, but the party manifesto reads that the feudal system had been exploiting the people since 1385. At that time, the foundation of feudalism had been made strong and well established. However, Nepal has already seen many changes, but feudal system is still surviving (PMF 2052 B.S.). These annals reveal how Nepal has been under the grip of feudal system. A draft document of the first congress of CPN evinced the existence of some such classes in Nepali society as feudal, landlord, liberal landlord, big capitalist, petty capitalist, rich farmer, middle class farmer, landless peasants and labours (CPN (ML), 2035 B.S.).

The CPN had proclaimed its vision and mission of attaining drastic changes in society since its inception. It adopted basically the principles of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tse tung Thoughts. Some political analysts examine that one of the make-ups of Nepali society is its classlessness and the aim of the CPN is to make society “classless” (Upadhyaya, 7<sup>th</sup> September 1997).

In the communist movement of Nepal, after the Jhapa Revolt a sign of rashness was seen in the communist movement to social change as radical but the then society did not digest it. Therefore, it could not launch ahead. According to C.P. Mainali, the leader of Jhapa Revolt, it was natural that the Cultural Revolution of China impressed the movement. He adds, however, some ultra-leftist activities were there in the movement, yet it gained some achievements that could play vital role in society to bring change (Mainali, 1<sup>st</sup> November 1991). On one side, the Jhapa Revolt has been criticized by its founders that it was an ultra-leftist mistake but on the other hand, in the latter time, some communist leaders appeared to support with a brief analysis of the Jhapa Revolt and as expressed by them that it has created a strong feeling and encouragement for change- the change from traditional concept to modern, feudalistic to capitalistic and exploitation to liberation (Prachanda, 2052 B.S.). The leader expressed his opinion that the movement was very significant for the country politically, socially, economically and culturally. In spite of the fact that some mistakes were committed during the movement, it left on the whole an important sense of change in Nepali society as well as people (Shrestha, 31 August 1998). The concept of the Maoist faction, which had been waging people’s war to bring change since 1996, is similar to that of the Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist) or CPN (ML) in its initial phase. While the CPN (ML) was expanding for the enlargement of its activities all over the nation, it issued a document postulating its views as follows:

The revisionist of “National Democracy” argued that the capitalist class leads the capitalist democratic revolution and proletariat can move peacefully to the socialism using the parliament and completing the peaceful democratic revolution. This has been criticized widely at international level. Then, ‘so-called Maoist’ of our country are explaining the group struggle for state power as envisioned by Nepali Congress. The old so-called democratic powers are presenting untested bookish theory and supporting by paying lip service to the idea of armed struggle and a long people’s war while such revolution has not been possible since the rule of Chandra Shamsheer or, they are writing the column as counter revolutionary theory of transformation from ‘old’ to ‘new’ democracy participating and leading in old democratic revolution. Beware of them! if we could not be alert from this danger it may be old democratic revolution. Here, thus, they are falling down the principle of ‘New Democratic Revolution’ in the name of ‘National Democracy’ misinterpreting the principle of Nepali revolution (CPN (ML), Poush 2035 B.S.).

Applying to the aforesaid view, it can be said that the CPN (ML) was in favour of armed struggle in its initial period; it longed to change society through armed revolution. In order to achieve this aim, a study and

analysis were made on different social classes and it was concluded that it was proletariat class on which the New Democratic Revolution should depend for force (CPN (ML), Poush 2035 B.S).

Towards the 6<sup>th</sup> decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the CPN segmented, but all the parts acknowledged the semi-feudal and semi-colonial characters of Nepali society. According to almost all factions of CPN including CPN (ML), had a view that feudalism and comprador bureaucratic capitalism were the leading enemies of Nepali society and its people. The character of Nepali society interpreted by CPN (ML) was:

... our society is characterized as semi-feudal and semi-colonial not being independent of feudalism or capitalism. There is basic contradiction between Nepali society, people on the one side and feudalism, capitalism, imperialism, expansionism on the other hand. In the status quo, only our New Democratic Revolution can work out the problematic contradiction (CPN (ML), Poush 2035 B.S).

From the study of the above-mentioned lines, it can be understood that the CPN(ML) also accepting Pushpalal's portrayal of the character of Nepali society, sought to make more obvious views. The views forwarded by CPN (ML) about classes in Nepali society are mentioned as:

1. Proletariat class: it is comprised of the people from blue-collar class, i.e., the workers, rickshaw pullers, drivers, carters, wage-owners, sweepers, cowboys, house servants, skivvies, labourers, attendants, drudges' lackeys, colliers, grass cutters, wood cutters. Of these people, labourers working in industries working in industries are the leading proletariat.
2. Peasant class: these are Agro-labours, the poor peasant, the middle peasant and rich peasant class.
3. Lower capital class: low level government's employees, technicians, artists, lower-level shopkeepers, students, teachers of general schools, teachers of campus with low designation, journalists are included within this class.
4. Poor urban class: this class consists of semi-proletariats, gate keepers, peons, serving offices employees at the shops, artisan who do not have workshop of their own, mechanics working on the wages at other garages, small artists, the retailers, vendors and fruit sellers.
5. National capitalist: national basis industry runners, businessmen, white collar workers, i.e., dons of high ranks, civil servants of high and middle levels, chiefs of high departments and offices, rich farmer, artists, journalists, head teachers of the secondary schools, lecturers, professors are in the national capitalist class.
6. Reactionary class: this class includes landlords, comprador and bureaucrats of other times, eggheads with reactionary mind (CPN (ML), Poush 2035 B.S).

This analysis of social class is done about 45 years ago. The society has changed in a large scale. However, not any communist faction of Nepal has attempted to study about the class of Nepali society. Scanning the list mentioned above thoroughly, it is clear that the working class and peasant classes seem to be the most dependable force for the "New Democratic Revolution" to accomplish its task. It is said that national capitalists shall be kept neutral during the revolution period and all kinds of hits shall be centralized upon "reactionary class" cruelly.

No organization can, therefore, bring change in society without making study on its factors and neither party can achieve its aim. On the other hand, the party ran with the concept of a long time ago while the socio- cultural as well as economic situation of the people and society has changed rapidly. It will be the mainspring for failure; it may be a danger for deviation from the right course: the party may be responsible for the people, society and nation in the days to come (Amatya, 27 November 1991). An old cadre of CPN (ML) says that it was a wrong analysis on social factors and dubious (uncertain) direction that led the CPN

(UML) party to rightist opportunism (Shrestha, 30 August 2000). Therefore, the party forgot its responsibility for the people, society and the nation.

The class analysis of the party did not prove to be correct and practical. The civil employers of almost all departments and offices, though they belong to middle or low level, can earn higher than school teachers, lecturers, or honest intellectuals by taking bribes and committing corruption within their office hours. But the party document reads that teacher, lecturers are national capitalists. So, a corrupted government employer can never be a friend of revolution simply because of his money-making interest. Therefore, the class analysis of the party seems wrong. In other place, it is written in the party document that the intellectuals may not be dependable force for the revolution owing to their unstable character (CPN (ML), Poush 2035 B.S). The party organized the intellectuals in the party after proclamation of national referendum of 1979 and it seemed stronger than it was before. It means, the party, then, started to be dependent more on ‘petty bourgeoisie class’ than on the basic class (proletariat) for revolution. It was a symbol that the party was leaving the path of communist revolution. The way taken by the party was going to lead the bourgeoisie revolution but not communist one and the 1990’s peoples’ movement proved this. Consequently, the party caught the rightist path.

Ghanashyam Bhusal, known as a Nepali communist leader as well as communist thinker, presented a view, that is very different than that of others. As he said that the character of Nepali society is not semi-feudal and semi-colonial because of domination of the comprador capital in Nepali economy. On the one hand, the national industries are on the verge of collapse from the conditions (a kind of pressure) put by foreign donors by giving the name of economic liberalism and on the other, the feudalism is in tottering situation. He stresses; therefore, the comprador capitalist class has dominated all the national capital (Bhusal, 2059 B.S.). This analysis seems not only new but also right looking the present situation. However, he could not put forward what the revolutionary way is for Nepali communists.

On the other side, in the initial period of the Maoist insurgency, the Maoist party of Nepal had launched a movement to change the activities of the then society, which was known as *Bhate karbahi* and it had become famous and popular among the oppressive people. From which the party got a large-scale support of the masses from the Nepali society. At that time, the party was not thinking for a compromise with other “rightist and reactionary forces” (Shrestha, 31 August 1991). Another Maoist activist, an elected member of constituent assembly of Nepal of 2007, Dharma Ghimire has observed that from which style the deviation has appeared in Maoist party now a days; it can fall in failure to lead the society and nation recently because of its unsustainability to construct the political and social concept in the party (Ghimire, 25 November,2008).In the context of the study of the character of Nepali society, during the ten years’ revolt of Maoist faction of Nepali communist, it never attempted to study about it. It brought a concept of state restructure including inclusiveness and federalism to change the society as well as election of constituent assembly, formation of interim government and roundtable talk with the state authority and other political forces as a solution of the then insurgency (CPN-Maoist 2057B.S.).When the party came to the peaceful process of the politics brought the view through party’s 7<sup>th</sup>Congress (2013) that the character of Nepali society has changed from semi feudal to capital CPN-MC (2069 B.S.). It seems, in many portions, similar to the view of Bhusal. Here, Ghanashyam Bhusal seems as the guide of Maoist Party from the perspective of theory building. A survey was taken before the different sectors of people of eastern part of Nepal after the end of Maoist insurgency, the almost people used to say comparing the social behaviour and schooling between the cadres and leaders of the then CPN (ML) and Maoist that CPN (ML) had better quality than Maoist (Field survey, 2001). Dharma Ghimire, elder brother of a martyr Netra Ghimire (who was killed by Panchayat rulers in 1973 at Sukhani, Jhapa) had become the member of constituent assembly elected from Maoist party in 2008 has also accepted the above-mentioned view (Ghimire, 25 November,2008). Next, the

Maoist party 's view about the federalism and its effect on communist politics as well as to change the social character from traditional to revolutionary can be analyzed from different perspectives. Kanu Sanyal, a leader of Indian communists, puts his experience that among the other causes one is a most vital cause is federalism in India from which an obstacle has been created against the communist revolution in India. He stresses; therefore, the federalism never can be the communist demand of the politics and who are demanding the federalism in Nepal have been tools of capitalist powers as unseen. It is the way to be failure or to go to rightist deviation. The federalism was a most cause of failure of Soviet Union (Sanyal 22 January 1998). Likewise, the Maoist Party of Nepal raised the agenda of inclusiveness for Nepali society in the base of different races or caste leaving the agenda of class struggle. Class struggle is a strong part of Marxism. Some of the Indian writers also have written analyzing different issues of India that the concept of inclusiveness is a tool of western imperialism. The ideas of Caste based inclusiveness have come from western European as academic construction but to lead to violence (Malhotra and Neelakandan 2016). From this study it can be said that the view inclusiveness, which the Maoist Party of Nepal has been clamming until now that it is the party's own, is an agenda of western imperialism. Another writer says through his work as:

Ideas of inclusivization is generated as an anti-thesis of the society evolution process, which stands against the scientific theory of dialectical and historical materialism and class struggle. Such hypothesis is composed by the western capitalists as a great tortuous trick to make blunt to the razor-sharp thinking power of proletariat class and to bend the concentration of revolutionary socialists from their philosophical and theoretical aim to other side. The production of 'Inclusive Democracy', produced by a machine of conspiratorial mind of European capitalists, is used as slow poison against Marxist philosophy to make deprave Marxism (Diemitrachov, April 2010).

From this point of view, the Maoist party of Nepal is going to be tool of European capitalists from philosophical perspective. The party is running in the name of communist but its destination seems different than that of the Maoist principle. It started *Bhate karbahi* in its initial period to change the society as well as to be popular among the masses but in course of time it followed the rightist opportunism. Likewise, in the initial phase of the CPN (ML) attempted to study and carry out research into the socio-economic and cultural situation and infra structure of society keeping in tune with political movement but later it could not become responsible for society and people. From this study, it can be said that the communist movement will not be successful without an appropriate study of Nepali society and socio-economic, cultural structure of the nation.

### **Social policy among the people**

Tulasi Lal Amatya, once became the General Secretary of the CPN, shows that relation with peasants and worker is the identity of the communists. The CPN focus was on the peasant movement because they came to a realization that the communist movement could succeed only by decisive participation of this class. Thereupon, several movements were launched highlighting some contemporary problems of the peasants to make the party popular in Nepali society. (Amatya, 27 November, 1997). But unfortunately, the CPN split with the break of world's communists' movement. Madan Bhandari accused that Khrushchev and after Brezhnev (in Soviet Russia) sought to bring the revolution by intervening the military force to other countries (Bhandari, 21 February 1993). The above fact shows that Nepali communists have not understood and reached the real ground of the people till this day.

The CPN (ML) was very careful of its social behaviour among the people because it was urgent to establish and sustain in course of the period of underground (during the period of Panchayat system). On the basis of some interviews of some leaders and cadres, a scholar has written in his work that their cadres and leaders

used to work touching the will of people when they were at the house of shelter provider even if they were respected guest (Pokhrel, 2007). Similarly, the communist cadres were taught by the party leaders that they should be loyal towards the lower-class people i.e., cowboys, cultivators, grasscutter and driver and so on (ANCRC (ML), 1975). The three rules and eight points of attention matters drawn by Mao Tsetung were a set of formula to establish the party being an “important” hymn for social behaviour to mention social discipline (Ashrit, 14 January, 1991). Although the three rules - eight points formulated by Mao Tse tung were for Chinese Red Army to maintain discipline in society and to make them popular among the Chinese people, it was issued as a popular set of rules among the communist cadres. The three rules and eight points are:

**1. The three rules of the discipline are as follows:**

a) Obey orders in all actions, b) Do not take a single needle or piece of thread from the masses, and c) return everything captured.

**2. Eight points for attention**

a) Speak politely, b) pay fairly for what you buy, c) return everything you borrow, d) pay everything you damage, e) don't beat and abuse the people, f) don't damage crops, g) Don't take libertine with women and h) Don't ill-treat captives. (Mao, 1967).

The above rules were attempted to follow by the cadres of CPN (ML) (but not of UML) up to 1989 but the cadres of Maoist Party did not follow such discipline during ten years' insurgency period (Ghimire, 16 June 2013). The first point of the rules instruct the cadres or Red Army to obey every order that the organization gives to them for action of all kinds; the second point orders not to take anything from the people except what they give themselves with honour and the third order focuses that the cadres should not use anything as personal property and return everything into the party that are captured from the enemy. The then Party leader of CPN (ML) also asserted that their cadres were very much sincere and honest in obeying the three -eight rules and this made the cadres to become different from other bourgeoisie parties (Ashrit, 14 January 1991). Had the rules not been followed honestly, the party would take the action against the cadres. The action would be taken to the cadres but the leaders were safe from such action. Therefore, the party started to go to the deviation latter due to the cause of leaders (Pokhrel, 2007). Another part, it remained unsaid whether there was equal justice for all in the party or not, because the organizers were very powerful. They used to be the most powerful in the committee. If anyone complained against his organizer, he/she might be victim because it was the organizer who would himself forward such charge sheet before the upper committees. So, the political carrier of complainer would depend on honesty of his organizer. If an organizer wishes to play a conspiratorial role, the complainer could easily be victimized. For example, Sitaram Pokhrel, the then vice-chairman of central committee, Tikaraj Dhakal and Govinda Karki of Eastern Regional Committee of All Nepal National Free Student Union were victimized due to the conflict with Madan Bhandari (Pokhrel, 22, September 2001). After then such types of problem continuously appeared within the CPN (ML) and UML). Such character is known as feudal mentality in the word of communist, which has been following by all communist leaders till now. There are the consequences of the feudal character of leaders, it can be taught whether any communist cadre want to go against feudalism as well as imperialism s/he must be able to criticize against the feudal mentality of his/her leader. Such feudal mentality played a significant role for the failure of Nepali communist movement.

The then CPN (ML) (recently UML) had distributed a paper among the cadres named *janataka bich jane karyakartale siknalayak kehikura* (some learnable matters for the cadres who go among the people). According to the circular, the cadres, who will be among the masses, have to adopt good character, credulous, capable, equipped with the feeling of self-sacrifice and developed a proletariat character (Pokhrel, 2007). This circular has attempted to make the leader responsible for cadres and the society.

All these show that the party either CPN (ML) or CPN (MC) tried their best to be established among the people. It shows that the communists of Nepal were people oriented as well as socially responsible up to the period of having revolutionary mindset. When they started to enjoy the parliamentary politics, they started to be fascinated by Rightist principles and fell into the mud of anti-social activities of politics. Therefore, it can be said that parliamentary system will not be appropriate for the communist revolution.

### **Conclusion**

It is not a debatable question that Nepali society is dominated by comprador and bureaucratic capitalism at present time. But not any communists of Nepal have attempted to study about the structure of Nepali society. In the initial period of the CPN either ML/UML or Maoist faction had taken revolutionary programme known as “New Democracy” as their guiding principle to complete the revolution. The CPN (ML) adopted people oriented social behaviour, and devoted to people and society-oriented nature. Therefore, it became popular as well as got success to make strong organization in the short period. But, due to the feudal mentality and comprador bureaucratic activities of the leaders, the party went to be a parliamentary political party known as CPN (UML) and it fell down into the mud of hostile deep hole. Likewise, CPN (MC) is also following the same path to be a parliamentary party putting through the agenda of the election of Constituent Assembly abandoning the revolutionary politics. Moreover, from the above-mentioned facts and agenda setting, the Maoist party has apparently seemed that it has become an agency of European capitalists being as its tool in Nepal. However, the communists of Nepal tried to change the Nepali society and the structure of the nation and put forwarded the revolutionary agenda as well adopted the suitable activities in the initial period but latter, going to adopt the parliamentary practice in politics and followed so-called inclusiveness federal system, the communists of Nepal are losing their social character and revolutionary spirit. Their involvement in capitalist practice taking the feudal character is appearing as an obstacle in changing society. Therefore, it can be said that the political system which is running in Nepal has been proved as unsuitable for bringing radical changes in every aspect of the nation. Present strategies of Nepali Communist parties seem to be like slow poison for the communist movement. The communist leaders have been proved to be the wolves in sheep's clothing.

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