Investigating the Underlying Factors and Outcomes of the Madheshi People's Movement in Nepal (2007-2008)

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Abstract

The study focuses on the Madheshi People's Movements in the Tarai region of Nepal during 2007 and 2008. The key issues investigated include the catalysts behind these movements, their influence on Nepalese politics, and the sustained implications for Madheshis and other marginalized communities. The primary aim of this research is to discern the causes of the Madheshi People's Movements, understand their impact on Nepalese politics, and evaluate the lasting effects of the achievements stemming from these uprisings. Utilizing semi-structured interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGD), questionnaire surveys, and an extensive review of secondary data, the research unfolds the transformative nature of the Madheshi People's Movement of 2007. The methods employed provide a comprehensive understanding of the socio-political landscape surrounding these movements. The research identifies three core elements contributing to the initiation of the 2007 and 2008 Movements: perceived discrimination against Madheshis, radicalization of regional and ethnic issues influenced by the Maoist rebellion, and the precedent set by the People's Movement of 2006. The Madheshi People's Movements significantly impacted Nepalese politics, leading to the declaration of Nepal as a federal state and notable electoral success for Madheshi political parties. However, internal divisions emerged within the Madheshi identity, with marginalized communities distancing themselves from the Madheshi label, posing a potential threat to the movements' achievements. While the Madheshi People's Movements brought about crucial changes in Nepal's political landscape, the emergence of internal dissent among Madheshis calls for a strategic repositioning of Madheshi political parties. To preserve their achievements, these parties must transcend identity boundaries and represent the interests of all marginalized communities in Nepal. Failure to do so risks eroding the gains made through the identity politics initiated by the Madheshi parties.

Keywords: Madheshi, Identity politics, federal state, ethnic uprising, Tarai region

Introduction

The Terai region, also spelled Tarai, is a geographical area spanning northern India and southern Nepal, running parallel to the lower Himalayan ranges (Encyclopedia of Britannica, 2004). Comprising a strip of land from the Yamuna River in the west to the Brahmaputra River in the

east, this plain region in southern Nepal is known as Madhesh, encompassing approximately 23 percent of the country's landmass and housing around 48 percent of the Nepalese population. The Terai is demarcated by the Pahad (hills and mountain areas) and the Madyahesh (plain area), colloquially referred to as Madhesh.

Encompassing twenty districts from east to west, including Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari, Saptari, Siraha, Dhanusha, Mahottari, Sarlahi, Rautahat, Bara, Parsa, Chitwan, Nawalparasi, Rupandehi, Kapilbastu, Dang, Banke, Bardia, Kailali, and Kanchanpur, the Terai region holds a rich cultural history. Historical accounts, such as those by Malangia (1997), trace the origins of central Terai back to the kingdom of Videha or Mithila, with significant Hindu historical figures, including Sita and Siddhartha Gautam Buddha, associated with this region.

Madheshi People's Movement of 2007

On January 16, 2007, leaders of the Madheshi Janadhikar Forum (MJF), led by Mr. Upendra Yadhav, were arrested following the symbolic burning of the interim constitution of Nepal. The discontent stemmed from perceived inadequacies in the constitution, particularly its silence on federalism and an inequitable electoral system. Subsequent general strikes were declared in Tarai until the release of the detained leaders. Tragically, during the strike, a teenage MJF activist was killed by Maoists on January 19, and on January 22, five Madheshi protesters were fatally shot by the police, intensifying the movement.

The Madheshi People's Movement challenged the existing pillars of Nepali nationalism, questioning assumptions based on a single language (Nepali) and a specific dress code. Unlike hill people, who are generally considered Nepali, Madhesi citizens faced discrimination due to their geographical, cultural, linguistic, and kinship ties with individuals across the border in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. This movement, distinct from other socio-political movements in Nepal, posed a formidable challenge to established notions of nationalism. The movement compelled the government to amend the interim constitution, making notable adjustments in federalism, proportional representation, and constituency seat distribution in the Terai region (Jha, 2009).

Madheshi Jana Adhikar Forum (MJF):

Established in 1997, the Madheshi Jana Adhikar Forum (MJF) emerged as a grassroots organization dedicated to addressing and promoting Madhesi issues. Functioning at times in collaboration with, and at other times in competition with, the Madhesi Rights Movement (MRM) and the Madhesi Rights and Rastriya Mukti Morcha (MRMM), MJF played a pivotal role in recruiting Madhesis to its cause. With a focus on disseminating information and raising awareness about Madheshi issues, MJF conducted various activities, including publishing research papers and books, organizing seminars, training programs, and engaging with Madheshi intellectuals across disciplines.

MJF's core concerns centered around internal colonization, racial discrimination against Madheshis, and regional bias against the Tarai region. To address these grievances, MJF advocated for a secular federal democratic Nepal, the creation of a single Madhesh province comprising all Tarai districts, the inclusion of Madheshis in all state organs, a proportional

electoral system, citizenship certificates for all Madheshis, and increased investment in the Tarai. Additionally, MJF sought linguistic representation for Madheshis in parliamentary and government proceedings.

However, internal divisions arose within MJF in September 2007, leading to the expulsion of key members who opposed certain agreements with the government. These expelled members formed a new party, Madhesi Janadhikar Forum Madhesh, which contested the 2008 Constituent Assembly elections with limited success.

Exclusion and Discrimination:

The rise of numerous militant ethnic armed groups further fueled the radicalization of Madheshi identity, with 109 such groups identified in the Tarai region. This surge, coupled with counterinsurgency efforts by security forces, intensified the security situation in Tarai. A profound sense of exclusion and discrimination against Madheshis was evident across various sectors, including governance, employment, and media representation.

Madheshis faced underrepresentation in key indices of governance, leading to their exclusion from cultural, academic, and professional leadership. Employment statistics revealed significant disparities, with Madheshis being notably absent from positions of power in the judiciary, civil service, military, and private sector. Media bias against Madheshis was highlighted, with instances of misrepresentation further exacerbating tensions between Madheshis and other communities.

Despite the persistent efforts of a few journalists and scholars to raise awareness about Madheshi issues, systemic discrimination endured. Social and economic exclusion, coupled with the growing influence of ethnic nationalism and armed insurgency, painted a concerning picture for the stability of the Tarai region. Warnings about the potential flashpoint of ethnic violence in Tarai were issued well before the emergence of groups like JTMM and the success of the Madheshi People's Movement in 2007, underscoring the urgency of addressing these deeply rooted issues to prevent further destabilization.

Violence in Tarai: A Decade of Ethnic Tensions

From 1996 to 2006, Nepal experienced widespread violence due to armed conflict between Maoist insurgents and state security forces, with the Tarai plains witnessing an upsurge in ethnic tensions. Post-2002, Nepalese security forces, supported by the government, armed various anti-Maoist groups in the Tarai, leading to massacres, disappearances, and displacements of hill migrants. The clashes between Maoist insurgents and the Madheshi armed group, Madheshi Tigers, intensified after Madheshi Maoist leader Jaya Krishna Goit formed the Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM) in 2004.

The Madheshi People's Movement in 2007 marked a turning point, escalating ethnic violence in the Tarai region. Notably, clashes between Madheshi Jana Adhikar Forum (MJF) activists and Maoist cadres in Gaur resulted in 27 Maoist casualties. Ethnic tensions flared further in Kapilbastu in September 2007 after the assassination of influential politician Mohit

Khan, leading to a deadly communal riot resulting in at least 20 deaths and the displacement of thousands.

The mushrooming of ethnic armed groups in the Tarai, with over 100 groups identified, including the Terai Army and Terai Utthan Sangat, posed a significant threat. The Armed Terai Mukti Morcha (ATMM), formed in 2004, advocated violence, contributing to abductions, extortion, and attacks. JTMM factions, along with political parties like NC and UML, played a major role in organizing the Madhesh People's Movement in 2007.

The rise of these armed groups led to widespread displacement, targeting both Madheshis and Pahadis. The threat of ethnic cleansing became imminent, with extremist groups issuing ultimatums for Pahadhi communities to leave the Tarai. The Tarai region witnessed increased inter-ethnic tension, further displacements, and the formation of anti-Madheshi groups among Pahadis, heightening the risk of polarization and violence.

The complex landscape of ethnic armed groups and their actions underscored the urgent need for addressing deep-rooted grievances and preventing further destabilization in the Tarai region.

Statement of the Problem

Global instances of regional and ethnic identity-based challenges have been prevalent, often leading to severe consequences such as large-scale violence (as witnessed in Sri Lanka) or even the disintegration of nations (as seen in the case of Yugoslavia). The substantial uprising of the ethnic Madheshi community in the Tarai region in 2007 underscored that Nepal, with its diverse ethnic communities, was susceptible to regional and ethnic tensions, marking a departure from historical norms. The Tarai lowlands, housing approximately half of Nepal's 27 million population, became a focal point of ethnic discontent, notably among the Madheshis leading the 2007 uprising. Persistent grievances of marginalization and discrimination by ruling hill communities fueled discontent in this region. Despite the Tarai's strategic importance for Nepal's economy—boasting robust infrastructure, fertile land, industrial development, and convenient access to India via an open border—the escalating ethnicity-based political unrest posed a serious threat to Nepal's political stability and economic prosperity. In light of these developments, it became imperative to delve into the emerging dynamics and trajectory of the Madheshi uprising. This study aimed to decipher the implications of Madheshi identity politics and its correlation with broader social transformations in Nepal. By understanding the root causes and manifestations of this ethnic unrest, policymakers and stakeholders could formulate effective strategies to address grievances and foster inclusive socio-political development in the country.

Research Objectives

- The primary aim of this research was to comprehensively elucidate the causes and repercussions of two significant ethnic uprisings in the Tarai region of Nepal, specifically identified as the Madheshi People's Movements of 2007 and 2008.

- Furthermore, this study sought to analyze the roles played by major organizations and influential actors involved in orchestrating these uprisings.
- The final research objective involved the formulation of a hypothesis regarding the potential future trajectories of the driving forces behind these uprisings and the sustainability of the achievements realized by these movements. This encompassed an evaluative analysis of the enduring consequences and potential developments stemming from the Madheshi People's Movements of 2007 and 2008.

Literature Review

Primordialist viewpoints argue that ethnic/national violence is inevitable in multi-ethnic or multi-identity nations due to natural emotional attachments to one's ethnic/national group. Critics, including Fearon and Laitin, contend that this simplistic view lacks explanatory power for the prevalence of conflict in diverse societies (Fearon and Laitin, 2000).

Social constructivism proposes that the level of ethnic/nationalist violence varies based on the degree of antagonism within an ethnic/national group's identity. Scholars such as Brass (1997), Prunier (1995), and Deng (1995) counter the inherent conflict assumed by primordialists, focusing on factors like ethnic segregation, competition, and stability of boundaries (Brubaker and Laitin, 1998).

The rational choice tradition addresses the manifestation of ethnic/national identity antagonism and violence, integrating these issues with broader themes of violence and exit. Scholars in this tradition assert that individuals within ethnic/national groups make choices based on perceived costs and benefits, with violence chosen for enhanced security and secession pursued for better economic outcomes (Fearon, 1995; Hechter, 1995).

The concept of ethnicity is closely linked to nationalism, serving as the foundation for national identity. Ethnic conflict arises when groups perceive cultural incompatibility and experience heightened awareness of their identity in relation to other groups. Ethnicity becomes politicized when political alliances or access to benefits depend on ethnic identity.

The global context of ethnic issues is emphasized, highlighting that ethnicity-based political parties and conflicts are not exclusive to developing countries. Developed countries in Europe and North America also grapple with ethnicity-based problems and violence.

In the north Indian state of Bihar, caste-based violence between high and low castes has resulted in numerous deaths. Ultra-left armed groups, present in the state, often target people of high caste, prompting the formation of vigilante groups by high-caste individuals. In 1994, the caste war gained momentum when high-caste private armies merged to form Ranvir Sena in Bhojpur district. Since then, ultra-leftwing groups and high-caste vigilante groups, or private armies, have committed numerous caste-related acts of violence, including massacres. Brahmeshwar Singh, the chief of Ranvir Sena, has been implicated in orchestrating massacres, demonstrating a deliberate effort to commit acts of genocide against Dalits (so-called low caste) (Devraj, 2000; Chaudhury, 2002).

Similar to Ranvir Sena, ultra-leftist armed groups in the Bihar state have perpetrated numerous massacres targeting high-caste individuals. On February 12, 1992, the Maoists Communist Centre, according to the Asian Centre for Human Rights, killed 36 people of the upper castes, fueling retaliatory killings and massacres between these armed caste groups, claiming the lives of many civilians.

The emergence of various caste-based armies and their interactions heighten the risk of ethnic conflict. Claims about Bihar's people participating in the movement are debated, with varying opinions among leaders and scholars regarding the external involvement in the uprising. The sensitive nature of ethnic identity, as evident in global cases like Rwanda and Sri Lanka, underscores the importance of addressing ethnic grievances to prevent violence and potential disintegration of a nation, as seen in the former Yugoslavia. Scholarly literature on ethnic identity politics, reports on ethnicity-based politics, and studies on ethnic conflict all highlight the need for proper addressing of ethnicity-related issues to prevent violence and unrest. In Nepal, predictions about the potential for ethnic conflict, especially in the Tarai region, were made well before the Madheshi People's Movement of 2007, emphasizing the rise of ethnic armed groups and government indifference toward Madheshi grievances.

The global context is emphasized, demonstrating that ethnicity-based issues and conflicts are not exclusive to developing countries, with examples from developed nations like those in Europe and North America. The review further extends its analysis to a specific case study in Bihar, India, examining caste-based violence and the formation of private armies, drawing parallels to the potential risks of ethnic conflict in Nepal's Tarai region. Despite the extensive coverage of various perspectives and case studies, the literature review falls short in explicitly addressing the specific gaps or unanswered questions within the existing body of research. While it highlights the need for addressing ethnic grievances to prevent violence, there is a lack of explicit identification of the gaps in understanding the dynamics of ethnic conflict, particularly in the context of the Tarai region and the Madheshi People's Movement of 2007. The review suggests a potential gap in exploring the complexities of external involvement in the movement and its impact on the sensitive nature of ethnic identity in Nepal. Future research should consider these gaps to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of ethnic conflict and its prevention.

Research Methodology

The research concentrated on the examination of identity politics within society, with a specific focus on the evolution of Madheshi identity politics. The research question underwent further refinement through the formulation of sub-questions, aligning with Cohen's operationalization concept. The study adopted an explanatory, descriptive, and exploratory research design, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Qualitative techniques encompassed focus group discussions (FGDs), semi-structured interviews, and non-participant observation, while quantitative data was acquired through a questionnaire survey and analysis of secondary data.

To ensure a diverse representation, the sampling strategy involved judgment or purposive sampling followed by snowball sampling. The research necessitated the collection of both primary and secondary data, with primary data gathered through FGDs, interviews, and

observations, and secondary data sourced from existing literature on identity-based politics and research methodologies.

Focus group discussions were conducted to facilitate participant discussions on pertinent topics, with six sessions held in both Tarai and non-Tarai regions. Key informant semi-structured interviews engaged knowledgeable community members, utilizing open-ended questions to delve into their perspectives. Non-participant observation centered on events, sites, and practices linked to Madheshi identity politics, emphasizing a naturalistic approach.

Additionally, the research incorporated secondary data from scholarly books, research reports, articles, newspapers, and online sources, serving as a complement to primary data for triangulation purposes. Operational definitions were employed to clarify key concepts such as ethnic group, communal conflict, ethnicity, identity, Madheshis, and regionalism.

In short, the research embraced a mixed-methods approach to thoroughly examine the causes and impacts of Madheshi identity politics, highlighting the flexible and comprehensive nature of the qualitative research design.

Limitation of the study

The research faces limitations stemming from two primary factors. Firstly, the absence of an extensive field study, and secondly, the relatively small size of the selected sample population. The researcher conducted field studies in six districts (Kanchanpur, Kailali, Banke, Bardiya, Morang, and Jhapa) out of the twenty districts in Tarai during the research period. Despite this effort, the researcher acknowledges that a comprehensive field visit to all twenty Tarai districts would have significantly benefited the research.

The chosen sample size for the field study, focus group discussions (FGDs), and the number of respondents interviewed is relatively small. With two hundred respondents in the questionnaire survey, a maximum of twenty participants in each of the six FGDs, and 19 interview respondents, the research findings could have been more robust with a larger sample size. Nevertheless, the researcher expresses confidence in the research's value as a sociological report on Madheshi ethnic identity issues and ethnic identity-based politics in general, supported by the utilization of available scholarly literature and interviews with intellectual and political elites of the country.

Findings and Discussion

In 2007, the Madheshi People's Movement emerged in Nepal, initially sparked by the arrest of Madheshi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) leaders. The movement gained momentum after a Maoist cadre killed a student in Lahan, leading to a broader uprising against Maoist actions. Initially diverse, the movement became predominantly Madheshi and anti-Pahadhi, resulting in widespread protests, vandalism, and a Tarai blockade causing national shortages.

The government's harsh response, with over 30 deaths and 800 injuries, fueled public anger. Prime Minister Koirala's invitation for negotiations, promising increased Tarai seats and

federalism, was rejected by MJF. In 2008, Madheshi parties formed the United Democratic Madheshi Front (UDMF) to press for the 22-point agreement's implementation.

The 2008 Madheshi People's Movement saw UDMF demanding a constitutional amendment for an autonomous Madheshi state. Clashes during a Terai-wide strike led to civilian casualties, curfews, and warnings from the government. International organizations expressed concern, urging restraint. The media extensively covered the disruptions, economic losses, and humanitarian crisis. Incidents in various districts resulted in civilian deaths, highlighting Madheshi grievances on representation and autonomy.

Events Leading to the Madheshi People's Movement (2007-2008)

The Madheshi People's Movement of 2007 and 2008 was instigated by the Nepalese government's failure to address Madheshi community grievances, gradually leading to radicalization. Several historical, socio-political, and religious factors contributed to the movement:

1. **Historical Roots of Dissent:**
   - Historical injustices, including land confiscation by the Rana regime and support for feudal lords, fueled Madheshi resentment.
   - Overlooked Madheshi contributions to anti-Rana and democratic movements heightened grievances.
   - Anti-Indian riots in 2000 and events like the forceful seizure of Ramesh Kumar Mahato's body in 2007 intensified discontent.
   - Marginalization during the Maoist insurgency further fueled Madheshi dissatisfaction.
2. **Opposition to Secularism:**
   - Madheshis opposed the secular transformation of Nepal in 2006, perceiving it as an attack on their Hindu identity.
   - The Madheshi People's Movement partially stemmed from cultural disparity sentiments between Pahadhi and Madheshi communities.
   - While not the sole factor, opposition to secularism played a role in igniting Madheshi grievances.
3. **Radicalization through the 'People's War':**
   - The Maoist 'People's War' provided a platform for Madheshi discontent.
   - Ethnic fronts formed by the CPN (Maoist) increased self-consciousness and radicalization among Madheshis.
   - The Madheshi Rashtriya Mukti Morcha, a Maoist ethnic front, played a pivotal role in radicalizing Madheshi politics.

Achievements of the Madheshi People's Movement: Federalism

The movement's most significant achievement was Nepal's establishment as a federal state. The 22-point agreement in 2007, particularly points five and six, emphasized the reconstruction of the state and the transition to federalism. Accusing the government of non-

compliance, Madheshi parties formed the "United Democratic Madheshi Front" in 2008, orchestrating a Terai-wide protest. After extensive demonstrations, a February 28, 2008, eight-point agreement addressed the transformation of Nepal into a federal structure.

Achievements of Madheshi Community Post-2007 Movement

Following the Madheshi People's Movement of 2007, the Madheshi community in Nepal achieved significant milestones that reshaped their political landscape and fostered a sense of dignity. In the Constituent Assembly Election of 2008, the Madheshi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) and the Tarai-Madhesh Loktantrik Party (TMLP), both established to address Madheshi concerns, emerged as the fourth and fifth largest parties, respectively. Utilizing the First Past The Post (FPTP) system, MJF and TMLP secured 29 and 9 seats, respectively. In the Proportional Representation category, where 54 political parties participated, MJF garnered the fourth-largest share with 678,327 votes, and TMLP became the fifth-largest political party with 338,930 votes (Election Commission 2008).

July 2008 marked a historic moment as Dr. Ram Baran Yadav, representing the Nepali Congress, became the first President of the Republic of Nepal. This transformative event occurred nearly two months after the new constituent assembly voted to abolish the centuries-old monarchy. Additionally, Parmananda Jha from the Madheshi Jana Adhikar Forum, Nepal, was elected as the inaugural Vice-President.

Post the Madheshi uprising, wherein Madheshis united, the CPN-Maoist became the largest party in the 2008 Constituent Assembly Election. This led to the formation of a coalition government with the third-largest UML and the fourth-largest MJF party. The coalition resulted in Madheshi individuals assuming key positions in vital ministries, including Foreign Affairs, Agriculture and Cooperatives, Education and Sports, Physical Planning and Works, Local Development, and Commerce and Supply (Central Intelligence Agency 2008).

A primary demand of the Madheshi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) during the Madheshi People's Movement of 2007 was to end the exclusion of marginalized communities. The 22-point agreement signed between the Government of Nepal and MJF in 2007 included provisions for the proportionate representation of excluded communities at all levels of state structures. This encompassed political appointments in sectors such as foreign services and education, as well as the inclusion of the Madheshi community in the media and mass communication sector. Furthermore, the agreement stipulated the formation of a high-level task force to devise policies and laws facilitating the inclusion of marginalized communities in all organs of the state (UNDP 2008).

Post the Madheshi People's Movement, numerous Madheshi cadres and leaders from prominent national political parties chose to align themselves with Madheshi parties such as MJF or TMLP. Prominent leaders, including Mohanta Thakur, Jaya Prasad Gupta, Hirdesh Tripathi, and Sarvendra Nath Sukla, left their respective parties and joined either MJF or TMLP. The sheer scale of the Madheshi People's Movement prompted Madheshi leaders and cadres from various national political parties to perceive affiliating with Madheshi political parties as a rational move, emphasizing the centrality of Madheshi issues to the Tarai region.

Historically excluded from modern Nepali nationalism, Madhesis experienced a shift in perception after the Madheshi People's Movement of 2007. The movement not only fostered a sense of dignity among Madhesis but also contributed to strengthening democracy and the integrity of Nepal by promoting inclusivity and sensitivity toward marginalized communities. The movement played a pivotal role in challenging discriminatory policies that perpetuated psychological distance and internal colonization. Consequently, the interim constitution of Nepal recognized the languages and attire of all ethnic communities, including Madheshis, as national, dismantling cultural dominance.

The international community acknowledged the transformation, with the Tarai region, once a neglected borderland, assuming a central role in Nepal's political landscape (International Crisis Group 2007). Madheshi journalist Prasant Jha (2007) noted that any political entity or individual disregarding Madhesi sentiments faced a risk of becoming obsolete, marking a significant shift in societal attitudes and norms.

Ethnic Dynamics in Tarai: Causes, Impacts, and Future Implications

The Madheshi People's Movement in 2007 marked a significant episode in Nepal, securing rights for the Madheshi community. However, it inadvertently gave rise to ethnic tensions, particularly between Madheshis and non-Madheshis, notably the Pahadhis (hill community). Keshab Mainali and other political figures expressed concerns over the movement adopting a communal trajectory, citing instances of anti-Pahadhi sentiments leading to violence and displacement. The apprehension of communal strife, voiced by Mainali, underscores the urgent need for addressing this emerging ethnic antagonism.

Concerns of Communal Conflict

Despite the gains achieved for Madheshis through the movement, reports surfaced of targeted violence against Pahadhis, raising concerns about an ethnic divide. Instances of anti-Pahadhi slogans and actions hinted at a polarization along ethnic lines. Politician Keshab Mainali's warning of a potential civil war highlighted the severity of communal tensions, emphasizing the necessity for immediate intervention to prevent further escalation.

Warnings of Ethnic War

Constituent Assembly Member Dr. Laxmi Chaudhari sounded alarms about the possibility of an ethnic war between Madheshis and Tharus if the demands of the latter for the Tharuhat province were not addressed. This cautionary note underscores the multifaceted nature of ethnic tensions in Tarai, extending beyond the Madheshi-Pahadhi dynamics to potentially involve other ethnic communities, such as the Tharus.

Causes of Madheshi People's Movement

The research identifies a myriad of causes behind the Madheshi People's Movement, including complexities in citizenship, political exploitation, governmental indifference to Madheshi grievances, disparities in employment opportunities, uneven regional investments,

cultural marginalization, historical Madheshi marginalization, dissatisfaction with the electoral system, resentment stemming from past conflicts, and radicalization fueled by the Maoist People's War.

Impacts of Madheshi People's Movement

While the Madheshi People's Movement achieved significant milestones such as federalism, political success for Madheshi parties, the appointment of the first Madheshi president, and inclusive policies, it also triggered unintended consequences. Ethnic tensions, especially between Madheshis and Tharus, emerged, and identity-based movements within the Madheshi community gained prominence. The research highlights the intricate interplay of these impacts and underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of the evolving ethnic dynamics in the Tarai region.

The Madheshi People's Movements, though instrumental in securing noteworthy achievements, present nuanced challenges that demand careful consideration. This research underscores the potential vulnerability of Madheshi political parties to internal fragmentation, highlighting the divisive nature of identity politics. The risk of losing political coherence within Madheshi parties emerges as a consequence of prioritizing identity-based agendas, necessitating a strategic approach to maintain unity.

Furthermore, the radicalization triggered by these movements has instigated a complex revolt of various identities within the Madheshi community. Groups such as Tharus, Muslims, and Dalits, previously unified in the pursuit of common goals, now exhibit signs of divergence. This internal divergence poses a threat to the unity that was pivotal in achieving the milestones of the Madheshi People's Movements. As Madheshi parties navigate this intricate landscape, there arises a crucial need to address the multifaceted concerns of diverse communities to foster sustainable positive changes.

To ensure the continued positive trajectory initiated by the Madheshi People's Movements, Madheshi political parties must undergo a transformative evolution. This evolution should transcend the narrow boundaries of identity-based politics and embrace a more inclusive platform. By extending their focus beyond Madheshi-centric issues, these parties can effectively engage with the broader spectrum of marginalized Nepalis, incorporating the voices and concerns of all disenfranchised communities.

As a recommendation for future research, this study encourages an exploration of the broader impacts of Madheshi uprisings on other ethnic communities in Nepal. Understanding how these movements have influenced and potentially alienated diverse ethnic groups will contribute to a comprehensive assessment of the overall sociopolitical landscape. Examining the factors contributing to the alienation of these communities is imperative for formulating inclusive policies and strategies that address the diverse needs and aspirations of Nepal's pluralistic society.

In essence, the conclusion emphasizes the imperative for Madheshi political parties to transcend the challenges posed by internal fragmentation and identity-driven radicalization. A

strategic and inclusive approach is essential to not only safeguard the hard-won achievements but also to pave the way for a harmonious and unified political landscape in Nepal.

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