

The Integral Role of Political Parties in the Democratic Movement of 1950

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Abstract

Political scientists differ in the definition of democracy. Some see it as liberal reforms or structural changes brought about by opposition parties, while others see it as the overthrow of an authoritarian administration and the first democratic elections. In Nepal, the definition of democracy and democratic movement varies, starting as an anti-Rana movement against the totalitarian state of one family rule. The anti-Rana campaign in Nepal served as the seed for the democratic movement. Plots and violence entered Nepali politics when people's involvement in politics had decreased, which resulted in Jung Bahadur's foundation of Rana authority in 1846. The democratic system, which was founded on the public's involvement for fundamental rights, started to topple the repressive and authoritarian government. Since 1950, a great number of Nepali heroes have given their lives to bring democracy to their country. The purpose of this study is to uncover the political parties' unacknowledged contributions to Nepal's democracy struggle. This paper examines the multifaceted involvement of the political parties, highlighting the diverse strategies, mobilization techniques, and collaborative efforts that shaped the outcome of the democratic movement. Based on qualitative research method this paper shapes interpretivism utilizing and analyzing political movements and revolt change is Hegel's Dialectical and David Easton's Political System Theory. Hegel's notion of "thesis-antithesis and synthesis," which advances society, describes the conflict between outmoded and progressive concepts. The input-process-output combination that connects political parties and mass mobilization is the focus of Easton's theory. This paper briefly introduces Contextualizing the democratic movement in Nepal and its significance. It also highlights the Nepal's historical and political context, tracing the events leading up to the 1950. Qualitative data about the topic under discussion has been gathered through in-depth interviews and library research. It is restricted to research on the topic's history. The country's democratic movement has been a central force shaping its evolution, with political parties serving as both catalysts and conduits for change. This article delves into the crucial role of political parties in Nepal's democratic movement, highlighting their contributions, challenges, and the ongoing significance they hold in the nation's political landscape.

Keywords : Democratic movement; armed struggle; autocracy; totalitarian state; Political parties

Introduction

Nepal, a nation nestled in the Himalayas, has undergone a remarkable political transformation in recent decades. John Locke believed that people may rule themselves in society in accordance with natural law for the benefit of everyone and with the same degree of virtue, reason, and tranquility as existed in the paradisiacal condition of nature (Marini, 1969). According to another definition, it's a process of group decision-making where all participants are treated fairly. According to some academics, democracy emerges in the interim between the overthrow of an authoritarian regime and the outcome of the first democratic elections. Others refer to it as earlier beginnings, either when structural changes rendered authoritarian governments weak enough for opposition parties to push for democratic reforms, or when authoritarian regimes began liberal reforms. There is no common definition of democracy and democratic movement. In Nepalese context both the definition doesn't suit properly.

Hobsbawm (2009) explains democratic movement, also known as popular movements or mass movements, are collective actions driven by a shared sense of grievance, aspiration, or mobilization for social, political, or economic change. These movements are characterized by the participation of a large number of individuals who come together to challenge existing power structures, demand rights, and bring about transformative shifts in society. People's movements can take various forms, including protests, strikes, demonstrations, sit-ins, boycotts, and civil disobedience

In the later years of the Rana dictatorship, the democratic movement in Nepal started out as an anti-Rana campaign against the authoritarian state of one family rule. Captain Bhotu Singh and Lakhan Thapa rebelled against Jung Bahadur in 1852 (Manandhar, 1992), marking the beginning of it. Conspiracies were developed within the governing clique, which included Badri Narsingh, the brother of Jung Bahadur (Pradhan, 1991). A Magar inhabitant of Gorkha Bunkot started preaching during Jung Bahadur's final days, claiming he had the right to govern Nepal by assassinating Jung Bahadur from Mankamana Bhagwati. He put together a military group with

between fifty and sixty members, including soldiers and citizens. About 1876's Chaitra (Gurung, 2022). During an assault on Lakhan Thapa's monastery, Devidatta platoon took eight prisoners, including him. During the search, sixty weapons and firearms were discovered. Jung Bahadur and his allies hung Lakhan Thapa from a tree in front of the Mankamana shrine (Gurung, 2022). When Sripati Gurung resisted Jung Bahadur in 1852, the Gurung battalion assassinated him. Shukdev Gurung and Supati Gurung proclaimed themselves Buddhist monarchs of nine states in an attempt to overthrow Jung Bahadur (Adhikari, 1999). Nepal's democratic movement, which began as an anti-Rana movement, went through many ups and downs before becoming the current federal democratic republic.

Uprising against Ranas in Nepal got its start under Jung Bahadur and matured into a formal movement under Chandra Shamsher. Political awareness was sparse prior to that time, but some progressive citizens—including Baburam Acharya and Devi Prasad Sharma—made an effort to oppose the Ranas through a number of political organizations (Bajracharya, 1915). But the Ranas repressed these organizations. A democratic campaign to abolish the feudal authoritarian regime was launched by the Nepali Congress in 1950 (Joshi, 1990). Even after democracy was established, however, political stability was not preserved. In 1960, King Mahendra overthrew the democratic administration and instituted a Panchayat system. Political parties were outlawed as well in the 1980 third constitutional amendment (Gautam, 1989). A new constitution granting democratic rights was created in Nepal as a result of the people's movement of 1990.

Democratic movements, as studied in the fields of sociology, psychology, and political science, are social phenomena that involve the collective participation of a large number of individuals in public politics. Traditionally, sociological perspectives have focused on the social aspects of movements, investigating the mechanisms underlying social mobilization, collective action, and identity formation. However, a newer perspective emerging in movement studies emphasizes that mass movements reflect the aspirations of people and their engagement in public politics (Hobsbawm, 2009).

Men live as equals among themselves; free to act and express their ideas anyway they see proper, according to Locke (<https://www.google.com>). Marx argues that class strife will persist until and until there is homogeneity. Numerous domestic and international researchers have studied different facets of the democratic movement, including Samuel P. Huntington (1993), Uddahav Pyakurel and Indra Adhikari (2015), Surya Mani Adhikari (1999), Rajesh Gautam (1989), T.N. Manandhar, and Niranjana Sharma (1999). Political parties' roles in Nepal's democratic revolution have not received much attention from either domestic or international writers. American political philosopher Samuel Huntington distinguished three main stages of democracy in 1993. The first took place between 1826 and 1826, the second (1943–1962) happened at the close of World War II, and the third (1974) started when Portugal's military administration was overthrown. The next 25 years saw a sharp global expansion of democracy. In their book *State of Conflict and Democratic Movement in Nepal* (2015), Uddahav Pyakurel and Indra Adhikari successfully analyze a wide variety of topics that happened in Nepal, notably following the creation of democracy in the 1950s. The book looked at the present through the prism of historical reality in an effort to close the gap between the past and the present. In his book *History of Democratic Movement in Nepal* (1999), Surya Mani Adhikari made an attempt to cover the whole 1990 democratic movement. He had discussed every occurrence, every person involved, and the whole situation at the time, but he had left out the role that the populace played in the democratic struggle. In his book *Role of Praja Parishad in Democratic Movement of Nepal*, Rajesh Gautam (1989) sought to analyze the 1950 democratic movement through the prism of the Praja Parishad. It is admirable that he helped people comprehend the democratic movement of 1950. His article ignores other participants in Nepal's democratic struggle in favor of focusing on Praja Parishad and the Nepali Congress party. In his book, he doesn't discuss the role of other parties. The 1997 publication *Political History of Modern Nepal (2007-2019)* by CNAS is a valuable resource for comprehending Nepal's democratic movement since 1990. The writers, T.N. Manandhar and Niranjana Sharma, are both scholars from Tribhuvan University. They have made an effort

to discuss every aspect of the matter, but they have not talked about the significance political parties' play in the democratic movement.

Many well-known and forgotten martyrs have given their life in the Nepalese democracy fight and achieved martyrdom. Because of the despotic monarchical regime, documenting the history of the nobility was a common activity until 1990. The state itself did not acknowledge the history of the ordinary people. The historians of Nepal were not conversant with subaltern history. It is an honor for the ordinary people to discuss their role in reestablishing democracy, particularly that of ethnic groups. Numerous minority and ethnic groups in Nepal have taken part in the democracy struggle. Gurung are one among them. The goal of this paper is to highlight the Gurung fighters' contribution to the democracy struggle up till 1990. The democratic movement in Nepal has only been acknowledged in prior research in this field; however, the role played by political parties in this movement has not been covered. Despite the fact that a few books, articles, essays, and newspapers have been produced on the subject. To yet, no one has conducted extensive research or study in this field.

This article aims:-

- To track the evolution of Nepal's democratic movement
- To assess the contribution of political parties in the democratic movement

Method and Procedures

This article examines the role that the Gurung freedom warriors played in Nepal's democracy movement from a qualitative standpoint. This historical research uses both analytical and descriptive methods. Both primary and secondary sources are the main topics of this essay. University professors and specialists were the subjects of an in-depth interview (using an open-ended questionnaire) with the goal of gathering primary data. To collect primary data, a sample of six respondents was selected. Three of the six were female and belonged to a different age group. Furthermore, this study employed secondary sources as reference materials, including research

articles, newspapers that have been published, unpublished documents, and unpublished theses. Specifically, an effort has been made to analyze and portray the function of political parties in Nepal's democratic process. The results of this study can be generalized and used in a larger context. David Easton's Political System Theory and Hegel's Dialectical provide the foundation for this analysis of political movement frameworks whereas "haves" do not reflect the common Nepali citizenry, but rather the elites. The focus of this article is on Political contribution to the democratic movement between 1950 and 1990 B.S. The contribution of other democratic movement participants has not been included in this article.

Theoretical Framework

The basis for analyzing political movements and revolt change is Hegel's Dialectical and David Easton's Political System Theory. Hegel's notion of "thesis-antithesis and synthesis," which advances society, describes the conflict between outmoded and progressive concepts. The input-process-output combination that connects civil society and mass mobilization is the focus of Eastons' theory.

Hegel's dialectic theory is a philosophical framework that explores the development and transformation of ideas and concepts through a process of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. According to Hegel, this dialectical process is inherent in human history and thought, where contradictions and conflicts lead to progress and advancement. In Hegel's dialectic, a thesis represents a particular idea or concept. It is inevitably met with its antithesis, which opposes or negates the thesis. The clash between the thesis and antithesis creates a tension or contradiction that leads to a synthesis, a resolution that encompasses elements from both the thesis and antithesis, transcending and integrating them into a higher level of understanding (McTaggart & McTaggart, 1999).

Discussion

Political parties' contributions to a country's growth have not been acknowledged since the Rana era. The educated people were enraged by the political persecution, socioeconomic injustice, and educational bias supported by the ruling Rana

elite. They started spreading the word about the other individuals after realizing their political rights. Ordinary people's education was greatly aided by political parties (Karki, 2022). It was very hard to modify the totalitarian government without an uprising because of the autocratic structure. People took part in the arm struggle that was organized by the Nepali Congress Party. From this angle, the political parties have made a significant contribution to Nepal's democratic struggle.

Historical Context: From Monarchy to Democracy

Throughout much of its history, Nepal was ruled by an absolute monarchy. Demands for political rights and representation, however, have grown as a result of frustration with the authoritarian rule. Later in the 20th century, the democratic movement gathered significant impetus. Political groups, such as the Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal, coordinated rallies, strikes, and demonstrations against the monarchy during the 1990 People's Movement, which was a watershed event. Following the foundation of a constitutional monarchy and the start of a multi-party democratic system, their concerted efforts forced the monarchy to give in to calls for political changes (Gurung,2022).

Catalysts for Change

1. Mobilization of Masses:

Political parties played a pivotal role in mobilizing the masses by organizing rallies, demonstrations, and strikes. These activities not only showed the strength of public sentiment against the monarchy but also brought together people from various walks of life, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose.

2. Representation and Advocacy:

Nepal is characterized by its rich ethnic and cultural diversity. Political parties acted as platforms for marginalized groups to have their voices heard and their interests represented in the political arena. They advocated for policies that addressed the specific concerns of these groups, helping to bridge societal gaps and promote social justice.

3. Negotiation and Compromise:

Political parties demonstrated their ability to negotiate with the monarchy and other stakeholders, leading to critical transitional agreements. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2006, negotiated between political parties and Maoist rebels, brought an end to the decade-long civil conflict and marked a significant step towards peace and stability (Karki, 2022).

Challenges Faced by Political Parties

- 1. Ethnic and Regional Diversity:** The diversity within Nepal's population, with numerous ethnic groups and regional identities, presented a challenge for political parties. Balancing the interests and aspirations of these various groups while maintaining national unity was no easy task, and failures in this regard sometimes led to tensions and conflicts.
- 2. Instability and Fragmentation:** Intra-party disputes and factionalism have often led to the fragmentation of political parties, resulting in frequent changes of government and an unstable political environment. This instability has hindered the continuity of policy implementation and governance.
- 3. Corruption and Governance:** Some political parties have been plagued by allegations of corruption and misuse of power. These instances of malfeasance eroded public trust in the political process and led to disillusionment among citizens, undermining the overall effectiveness of political parties (Gurung, 2022).

Significance

- 1. Policy Formation:** Political parties continue to be instrumental in formulating policies that address the evolving needs of Nepali society. They engage in debates, propose legislation, and contribute to the shaping of the country's development agenda.
- 2. Democratic Culture:** By providing a platform for public discourse and participation, political parties foster a culture of democratic engagement. They encourage citizens to voice

their opinions, participate in elections, and contribute to the decision-making process.

- 3. Checks and Balances:** The multiparty system in Nepal acts as a safeguard against the concentration of power. Different parties holding diverse ideologies and representing various segments of the population ensure that governance is subject to checks and balances, preventing potential abuses of power (Karki, 2022).

Conclusion

This paper endeavors to fill a significant gap in understanding by exploring the specific role and contribution of political parties in the transformative mass movement of 1950 in Nepal. The research aims to shed light on the different dynamics of political parties' engagement and its impact on shaping the trajectory of the movement, ultimately contributing to a more nuanced comprehension of the overall democratization process in the country. The role of political parties in Nepal's democratic movement has been integral to the country's transition from monarchy to a multi-party democracy. These parties have played a critical role in mobilizing citizens, negotiating transitions, and advocating for inclusive policies. Despite the challenges posed by ethnic diversity, internal conflicts, and corruption, political parties remain essential to Nepal's democratic fabric. As Nepal continues to navigate its path forward, the role of political parties in shaping policy, promoting democratic values, and maintaining checks and balances remains vital to the nation's progress.

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