Educational (R) Evolution and Achievement through Economic and Political Change in Nepal

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Abstract

Poor and developing countries have been found more vulnerable to violent conflicts due to inequality in distribution of resources and opportunities, inadequate service delivery system, injustice to identities, educational opportunities and beliefs, ineffective governance and administration, inefficient educational transformation and intolerant leadership. The main objective of this study is to explore and analyze the educational transformation's impact and affect on democratic movement and Nepalese People's changing pattern of beliefs on democracy. Research has been carried out in academic arena to find out logical answers of certain problems and it demands systematic process. All the data were gathered by different tools and then it was classified on qualitative basis. The researcher checked and analyzed through quantitative analysis, chart, bar diagram, interpretation and presentation. Qualitative data or information was analyzed in descriptive ways. It has been estimated that Nepali political institutions lie fully on the majoritarian cluster in the two-dimensional map. A regional government representing marginalized socio-cultural groups would be able to formulate educational policies beneficial to their people. Even ethnic minorities living in their own area would benefit through federalism, as they would constitute a relative majority in a region as compared the entire state.

Key Words: Majoritarian, Restoration, Democracy, (R)evolution, Exclusion, Socio-economic Change

Background

After the end of Second World War, the regional, ethnic, linguistic, resource, geo-political, and religious issues began to have more importance in human welfare. Whenever a state failed toproperly address these problems, the latent conflicts turned into political movement. Poor anddeveloping countries have been found more vulnerable to violent conflicts due toinequality in distribution of resources and opportunities, inadequate service delivery system, injustice to identities and beliefs, ineffective governance and administration, inefficient socio-political transformation and intolerant leadership. He further added that most of the political changes of the twentieth century were waged betweenthe states, almost all the major conflicts around the world that took place in the1990s were fought within the state(Pathak, 2005). According to Dahal (2001) as a result, the frequency and intensity of thevolatile internal conflicts are significantly increasing in number around the world.

The first people's movement initiated in Nepal in 1991 is considered as the creation ofinterwoven and complex web of socioeconomic, legal and politico-ideological problems.The People's movement has strong connection with socioeconomic variables suchas caste/ethnicity, sex, occupation, education, employment, income and so forth(Pathak, 2005). He further added that lower castes, Dalits, marginal ethnic communities and poor people in rural areaswere discriminated against in the previous Panchayat regime. However, social discrimination and economic discrepancy between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' are continuing and most of the resources have been centralized towards urban areas anda few elite families even after the restoration of democracy (Dryzek, 1996). Consequently, thepoor, disadvantaged and marginalized people have fuelled in the hope of socialjustice, equity, security, freedom and dignity in a republican state.

Objectivesand Methodology

The main objective of this study isto explore and analyze the socio economic transformation's impact and affect on democratic movement and Nepalese People's changing pattern of beliefs on democracy.

Research has been carried out in academic arena to find out logical answers of certain problems and it demands systematic process. The study has adopted the general political science research approach or methods.The entire process of research based on the research philosophies, principles and mechanisms of research. Researcher attempts to solve problems or searchers answers of the questions based on research philosophies. Research philosophy is concerned with the nature of reality (ontology), the way of knowing the reality (epistemology) and the method through which the reality could be known(Cresswell, 2009). A research needs to be well planned and well designed before doing it .It has been noted that some writers use the term methodology and method interchangeably(Hussey & Hussey, 1997).

The following tools and techniques of the data collection from the study area will be adopted. The open- end questions were developed for the interview schedule and with the help of that structured guidelines .The respondents were asked to give their responses regarding the questions supplied. An informal interview with some key informants will be conducted. Focus group discussion was organized in this research study to share the issues that were emerged during the in-depth interview to dig up reality. A standard questionnaire was prepared that may assist to conduct the attitude survey and help understand the perceptions of the respondents.

All the data were gathered by different tools and then it will be classified on qualitative basis. The data were analyzed in the descriptive and statistical way. The researcher checked and analyzed through quantitative analysis, chart, bar diagram, interpretation and presentation. Qualitative data or information was analyzed in descriptive ways.

Utility of the Research

In every country and society, we can see and hear lots of micro and macro socio, economic changes. These kinds of changes do not always bring positive result. Sometime result could be worsethen we predicted. This study explore and analyze socio economic transformation's effect on democratic movement, which help Politician, Government officer, Policy maker to understand the real situation of Nepal's socio economic and educational development. It helps them to formulate proper policy.

Democracy is not only a form of the government but also a participation of people. Only under democracy, people can live free and respectable life and they can enjoy the atmosphere of being master of themselves. This study increase inclusive participation of people in government, motivate more people to join the government activities, which helps continuous improvement on governance.

People's more participation on government's activities and continuous improvement of governance means increase the accountability and transparency of government , which help policy maker to minimize all kind of social tolerance included political , economic and cultural.

Democracy Mapping of Different Countries

The position of Nepal in the two dimensional map of democracy has been demonstrated in the following figure. As (Lawati, 2005) described, the addition of Nepal to Lijphart's thirty-six established democracies did not make any significant difference to the factor loadings. Nepali political institutions lie fully on the majoritarian cluster in the two-dimensional map: it is majoritarian in both the federal – unitary and executives - parties' dimensions.

Nepal's Position in Two Dimensional Conceptual Map of Democracy
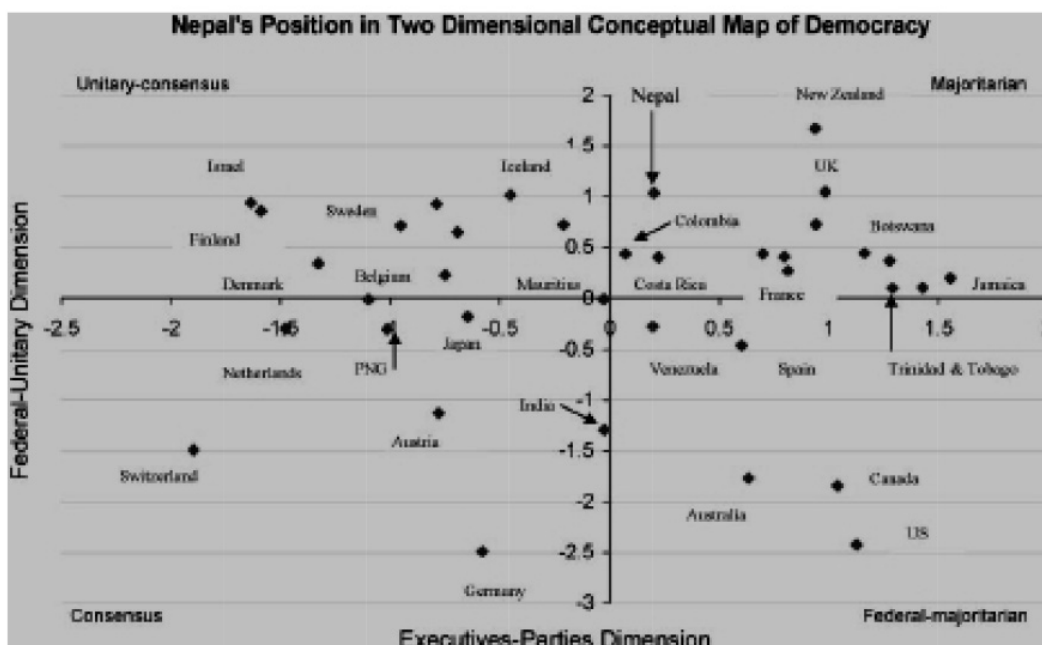
Source: (Lawoti, 2007)

Inemerging multicultural democracies, consolidation of democracy maybe cometricky if the question of the state (appropriate institutions) isnotsettled (Linz & Stepan, 1996).Holding period icelections may not be sufficientin multicultural societies to consolidate democracies.Accom-modativepolitical institution sarerequired to address the cultural cleavages (Reynolds, 2002).

Exclusion as the Catalytic Force of People's Movement

Nepal has been exclusionary since its birth as a modern nation-state. This is not a novel assertion. The contentious politics of the Maoist People's War and the second People's Movement fundamentally questioned this order of things- the 'univocal vision of the Nepali nation' (Saideman, Lanoue, Campanni, & Stanton, 2002). Many justified the constitution's phrasing as having symbolic import meant to preserve social harmony. If the current constituent assembly is capable of creating the critical juncture necessary to depart from the homogenizing vision of the Nepali nation, this constitutional body may break the institutional continuity and redefine national unity in a way that foregrounds Nepal's diversity (Malagodi, 2013).

The multi-party governments in Nepal did not provide opportunities to the marginalized sections of the society such as the Janjaties (ethnic nationalities), Muslims, Women, Dalits, and Madhesis (people from Nepal's Plains) that constitute two-thirds of the state's population. There was predominance of the dominating communities (Thapaliya, 2013). She further added that federalism is another formula for the state to be restructured based on socio-cultural identities of the groups. A regional government representing marginalized socio-cultural groups would be able to formulate policies beneficial to their people. Even ethnic minorities living in their own area would benefit through federalism, as they would constitute a relative majority in a region as compared the entire state (Lawoti & Guneratne, 2013).

Restoration of Democracy

With its enormous geo-ethnic diversity, unique history, and strategic location, Nepal has undergone drastic changes following the democratic restoration of 1990(Hachhethu, 2012). Sadly, despite the proliferation of media and information technology; rapid urbanization, interconnectivity with the outside world, implementation of democratic constitution, and open and regular elections, the new experiments

have just been another rerun of our collective failures(Gurr, 2000). He further explains that it has really been a wild and bumpy democratic ride.Insurgency, deaths, devastation, economic exploitation, social disparities, political lacuna, and uncertainty have made our present day life. Who can tell what the future has in store for us?

According to CBS (2011), in economic sector, Nepal has 91.15 per cent of the active population engaged in agriculture. Among the active population involved in economic development, 54.45% are in Mountain region, 48.82% are in hill and 40.32% are in Terai region. The percentage of economically active population among males and females in Nepal is 58.22 and 33.36 respectively (CBS, 2011). And another source of employment in Nepal has been remittance, manufacturing, trade and commerce. The working age population (aged 15 to 59 years) has increased from 54 percent (12,310,968) in 2001 to about 57 Percent (15,091,848) in 2011 showing the population structure is shifting for enjoying demographic dividend in the country.Overall literacy rate (for population aged 5 years and above) has increased from 54.1 percent in 2001 to 65.9 percent in 2011. Male literacy rate is 75.1% compared to female literacy rate of 57.4%. The highest literacy rate is reported in Kathmandu district (86.3 %) and lowest in Rautahat (41.7%).

Looking back to the History

The successful Indian movement for independencestimulated democratic sentiment in Nepal (Pathak, 2005). The newly formed Congress Party of Nepal precipitated a revolt in 1950 that forced the autocratic Ranas to share power in a newcabinet.

In 1959 a democratic constitution was promulgated, and parliamentary elections gave the Congress party a clear majority. The following year, however, the King cited alleged inefficiency and corruption in government as evidence that Nepal was not ready for Western-style democracy (Dahal, 2001). He dissolved parliament, detained many political leaders, and in 1962 inaugurated a system of "basic democracy," based on the elected village council (Panchayat) and working up to district and zonal Panchayats and an indirectly elected national Panchayat. Political parties were banned, and the king was advised by a council of appointed ministers. During the time, land reform was carried out that distributed large holdings to landless families, and he instituted a law removing the legal sanctions for caste discrimination (Thapa & Sijapati, 2005).

Prior to 1989, Nepal maintained a position of nonalignment in foreign affairs, carefully balancing relationships withChina, the USSR, the United States, and India. In 1989, the Indian government closedits borders with Nepal to all economic traffic, bringing Nepal's economy to a standstill. During the early Weeks of street protests and general strikes forced King Birenda to proclaim (1990) a new constitution thatlegalized political parties, asserted human rights, abolished the panchayat system, and vastly reduced the king'spowers in a constitutional monarchy (Shaha, 2001).

Saha(2001) further explained that in the 1991 parliamentary elections, the centrist Nepali Congress party won aslim majority and formed a government, which collapsed in 1994. Following a succession of failed coalitiongovernments, the Congress party once again won a majority in the 1999 legislative elections. Meanwhile, a Maoist insurgency began in rural Nepal during the mid-1990s.

The Royal massacre was the drastic event of changing political scenario in Nepal. The undertaking of political power by the King and following banning of political parties made the rise of people's movement in 2006 (Fugikura, 2013). The negotiations with the Maoist rebels broke down and serious fighting began; the rebels won control of asignificant portion of Nepal. Neither the army nor the Maoists gained full control of the countryside; parliament remaineddissolved, and there were increasing public protests against the king. The King appointed parliamentarian party leaders one after another but stability further worsened. Despite government offensives against the rebels, they remained strong enough to enforce their will. The rebels again called successful blockades of the capital; they also began forcing the closure of a number of businesses (Shrestha, 2014).

Role of Political Parties

Nepal's two largest parties, the Congress and the Communist (United Marxist-Leninist), subsequently ended theirsupport for a constitutional monarchy, and the Maoist rebels declared a three-month cease-fire. Nepal'sopposition parties and the rebels agreed in 2005, jointly to support the re-establishment of constitutionaldemocracy in the country. When the king offered to restore a democratic government, the situation in the country had become even moretroubled, with the prodemocracy demonstrations and the government response to them increasingly confrontationaland violent (Praksash, 2008).

The reinstatement of parliament in 2006 ushered in a rapid series of governmental changes. Themonarchy was stripped of its powers and privileges, although not abolished, and Nepal was declared a secularnation. The government began talks with the rebels, who in June agreed in principle to join an interim government. Some 16,000 people believed to have died in the country's decade-long civil war.A 2006 accord called for the rebels to join the government and assemble in camps and place their weaponsunder UN supervision, and the following month an interim constitution under which the monarch was not head of statewas agreed to (Dahal, 2001).

Also in January, long-simmering resentment of the native peoples of theTerai, known as Madhesis, led to protests and violence as the Madhesis pressed their demands forautonomy for the Terai. Although the government subsequently reached an agreement with the Madhesis, violence inthe region continued throughout the year (Muni, 2007).

The government and the Maoists agreed to hold elections for the assembly in 2007, and parliament passed a constitutional amendment giving it the power to abolish the monarchy. The government latervoted to nationalize the royal palaces and other royal property. The rebels withdrew from the government in 2007, demanding the monarchy be abolished before any elections, and the assembly elections were subsequentlypostponed into 2008. The parliament voted to abolish the monarchy and establish a republic in 2008 (Fugikura, 2013).

Democracy in Transition

The different party leaders led the government during the time of constitution making and peace processes. However, the constitutional assembly could not come with the agreement of new constitution. Ultimately in 2012, the assembly was dissolved.

In 2013, an interim election government headed by the Supreme Court's chief judge was established to build consensus among the parties. The constituent assembly elections were finally held in 2013 andresulted in significant gains for the Congress and Communist parties; with the shed back of the Maoists (Bhattarai, 2014). The movement is unrest and still the constitution making is under the pressure of different stakeholders.

Nepal began the transition from the fourteenth century absolute monarchy to a twentieth century multiparty democracy and constitutional monarchy in 1990. During the brief parliamentary period that followed as many as nineteen different Communist parties appeared. Frustrated with government policies the largest the Communist Party of Nepal withdrew from the political process in 1994 and then in 1996 launched a People's War hoping to install a Maoist government (Mishra, 2009). Like Thailand and Cambodia, the monarchy in Nepal had been an anchor for the transition and the murdered King Birendra had helped hold the country together through the collapse of ten governments in ten years combined with a growing Maoist insurgency(Reynolds, 2002). The unpopularity of the governing parties with an economic crisis in an already desperately poor country suggested that Nepal's democratic transition would face further trials in coming years.

Socio Economic Change

Another aspect of socio economic change is migration and globalization that are gradually breaking down the age-old boundaries between the countries (Gartaula, 2009). It has been rapidly changing the

traditional spheres of human activity. The concept of 'global village' has become a reality. The isolated towns and villages in the countryside of Asia have become closer to New York or London than to the capital of their own country. However, the situation of poverty that forced rural inhabitants to migrate in the first place still exists in their places of origin and continues to influence their lives and prospects in their "new countries", as well as those of the people they left behind.

Political movements, based on ethnicity, caste, language, religion and regional identity, have become increasingly significant in Nepal, reshaping debates on the definition of the nation, nationalism and the structure of the state. Based on the literature review, the following conceptual framework has been proposed to carry out the present research study.

Framework for (R)evolution
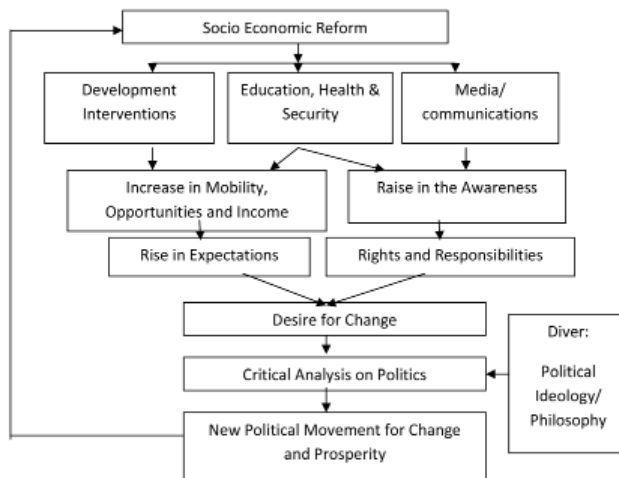
The interventions on these areas may increase in mobility, opportunity and income of the people and in the same time, increase awareness through media influence. As a result, the expectations may arise and people think about their rights and responsibilities. The change of desire may arise and people start thinking critically on politics based on different political ideologies or philosophies as back up driving force. The new political movement for change and prosperity may happen and it further leads to the socio economic reform in new height.

Conclusion

The study explores the socio economic status of Nepalese Society. It analyzes the effect of socio economic transformation on Democratic movement. The study mainly focuses on the Nepalese People's changing pattern of beliefs on democracy. Research mainly focused on ring road belt. Like Kirtipur, Balaju, Gorkho and some badly affected areas like Bhaktapur. These places were badly affected during the democratic movement.Democracy is not only a form of the government but also a participation of people. Only under democracy, people can live free and respectable life and they can enjoy the atmosphere of being master of themselves. This study claimed that it has increased inclusive participation of people in government, motivate more people to join the government activities, which helps continuous improvement on governance.People's more participation on government's activities and continuous improvement of governance means increase the accountability and transparency of government , which help policy maker to minimize all kind of social tolerance included political , economic and cultural.

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