

## Analysis of Political History of Nepal

### Abstract

This research paper examined the political condition of Nepal in the different time periods. In this research paper, the researcher has collected various qualitative data from two books. They are *Nepalese Society and Politics* and *The Challenge to Democracy in Nepal* written by Dr. Dol Raj Kafle, Bashu Dev Dhungel, Mohan Prasad Ghimire and T. Louise Brown respectively. The researcher has selected only those data which are relevant to the particular topic. The researcher has tried to provide detail information about the political history of Nepal during different time periods. The researcher came into conclusion that Nepalese Politics is slowly and gradually changing into positive direction. After a long period of time, political rights have been hand over from single hand to public. For the collection of quantitative data, researcher has used secondary data source through Library Genesis website. Researcher has carefully reviewed each books and he has drawn conclusion on the research topic in his own perspective.

### Introduction

#### Background of the Study

The present political, economic and socio-cultural condition of any country is the result of past activities. Therefore, in order to understand the political, economic, socio-cultural condition of present Nepal, we have to deeply understand the history of Nepal. The word 'history' is derived from Greek word 'iotopeia' which means 'Enquiry'. History is divided in two parts on the basis of sources and finding materials. They are pre-history and proto-history (Kafle, Dhungel & Ghimire, 2018, p.13). This study helps to know much more about the formation of Nepal and its political structure. The history of Nepal has its proven records of as long as 5,000 years (Kafle, Dhungel & Ghimire, 2018, p.2). Nepal's history has been under researched and the nation's past has been distorted by powerful and politically inspired myths (Brown, 1996, p.1).

According to different historians, the word 'Nepal' has been formed on the three basis. They are chronicle, language and caste. It is said that the first chronicle of Nepal is 'Gopalraj Bansawali' and they had a captain shepherd named 'Nepa' and the word 'Nepal' has been derived from his name. Similarly, some researchers and historians have also told that the word 'Nepal' has been derived from Tibetan, Newari, Kirat, Sanskrit and Lepcha language. According to Tibetan language, 'Ne' means house and 'Pala' means wool. Likewise, according to Newari language, 'Ne' means middle and 'Pa' means country. Similarly, according to

Lepcha language, 'Ne' means holy and 'Pala' means cave or settlement. Furthermore, according to Sanskrit language, 'Nipa' means slope land and 'Ala' means place. Likewise, according to Kirat language, 'Neytha' means cattle and 'Pa' means people. It is believed that the word 'Nepal' has been originated from the word 'Nyarba'. The Nyarba caste was originated from Newar and Tamang caste. It is also argued that the word 'Nepal' has been derived from 'Nipa' caste of Gopal and Mahishapala dynasties.

At present, Nepal is a country of Asia. It lies along with the southern slopes of the Himalayan mountain ranges. It is a land locked country located between India to the east, west, south and the Tibet Autonomous Region of China to the north. Nepal is divided in to three geographical regions. They are Mountain region to north, Hilly region in middle and Terai region to the south. The total area of Nepal is 1,47, 516 sq.km. Nepal covers 0.03% of the total land of the earth and 0.3% of the total land of Asia. Nepal is a federal democratic republic country. Nepal is secular and semi-feudal country. Prime minister is the head of government of Nepal. Kathmandu is the capital of Nepal. President is the head of state of Nepal. Nepal is regarded as multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-linguistic country. There is practice of unity in diversity.

## Research Questions

- i. How was the political condition of Nepal during ancient period?
- ii. How was the political condition of Nepal during medieval period?
- iii. How was the political condition of Nepal during modern period?
- iv. How was the political condition of Nepal during post-modern period?

## Objectives of the study

- i. To identify political condition of Nepal during ancient period.
- ii. To investigate political condition of Nepal during medieval period.
- iii. To find out political condition of Nepal during modern period.
- iv. To depict political condition of Nepal during post-modern period.

## Method & Materials

This research is descriptive in nature. The researcher used qualitative data from secondary source of data. In this research, the researcher's philosophical stance is interpretivist. The researcher preferred to use two books as reference to deeply understand political history of

Nepal. The books are '*Nepalese Society and Politics*' and '*The Challenge to Democracy in Nepal*' written by Dr. Dol Raj Kafle, Bashu Dev Dhungel, Mohan Prasad Ghimire and T. Louise Brown respectively.

## Results and Discussion

The political history of Nepal has been divided mainly in to four types. They are ancient period, medieval period, modern period and post-modern period. These periods are further divided in to various types on the basis of dynasty that ruled over Nepal in different time period and in different geographical location of Nepal. During ancient period of Nepal, six dynasties ruled over Nepal. They are Gopal Dynasty, Mahishapala Dynasty, Kirat Dynasty and Lichchhavi Dynasty, Videha Dynasty and Shakya Dynasty. Similarly, during medieval period of Nepal, at first, the present Nepal was divided in to three states. They are Doya State, Khas Malla State of Western Nepal and Malla State of Kathmandu Valley. Later on they were further divided in to Baise, Chaubise and Sen states in eastern Nepal. Likewise, during modern period of Nepal, two dynasties ruled over Nepal. They are Shah Dynasty and Rana Dynasty. Furthermore, during post-modern period of Nepal, at first, Nepal was ruled under the coalition of king, the head of state from Shah Dynasty and mainly Nepali Congress political party and later on after the declaration of Nepal as a republic state, mainly three political parties have ruled over Nepal. The political parties are Nepali Congress, UML CPN and Maoist Party.

### Ancient Period

#### i. Gopal Dynasty

Gopals came from the city Mathura of India with lord Krishna to the Kathmandu valley and they established settlement inside the valley. Gopal ruled Nepal for near about 500 years (Kafle, Dhungel & Ghimire, 2018, p.13). The first ruler of Kathmandu Valley from Gopal Dynasty was Bhumi Ghupta. At that time, Gopals used to do animal husbandry for the survival of their life. They used to rare cows. The major achievement of Gopal dynasty were: the origin of name 'Nepal', building the Pashupatinath temple, begining of settlement in Balambhu, Kritipur, Thankot, Kishipidi, Tistung, Palung etc (Kafle, Dhungel & Ghimire, 2018, p.13).

#### ii. Mahishapala Dynasty

After the downfall of Gopal dynasty, Mahishapala dynasty started to rule over the Kathmandu valley. Mahishapalas came from India and they established settlement inside the valley. According to the Historian Kirkpatrick they ruled over Nepal only for 111 years. Some other historians explained that they ruled near about 161 years (Kafle, Dhungel & Ghimire, 2018, p.14). At that time, Mahishapalas used to do animal husbandry for the survival of their life. They used to rear buffalo. The kingdom of Nepal was extended to Dudhkoshi river in the east, Trishuli in the west and Nilakantha hill in the north and Chitlang in the south during Mahishapala dynasty (Kafle, Dhungel & Ghimire, 2018, p.14).

### iii. Kirat Dynasty

After the downfall of Mahishapala dynasty, Kirat dynasty started to rule over the Kathmandu valley. There is no any strong documents which can prove that from where the Kirats came in to the Kathmandu valley. Yalambar was the first ruler from the Kirat dynasty. Kirats were much more powerful as compared with Gopals and Mahishapalas. Kirats ruled from Sikkim in east to Gandak in west. It is said that about 32 Kirats rulers ruled over Nepal for about 800 years. It is believed that the society of Kirat period was open. There was no caste system. They followed hereditary monarchical system. There were different administrative units for daily administration and to collect revenue and taxes. Their main occupation was animal husbandry, agriculture, trade and commerce. Cottage industries were also flourished (Kafle, Dhungel & Ghimire, 2018, p.16).

### iv. Lichchhavi Dynasty

After the downfall of Kirat dynasty, Lichchhavi dynasty started to rule over the Kathmandu valley. Lichchhavi came to Kathmandu from Baisali of India. Jaya Deva-I was the first king from the Lichchhavi dynasty who ruled over the Kathmandu valley. They were Surya clan. Mana Deva was the most famous king of Lichchhavi dynasty. At that time, Nepal was the trade route to India, Tibet and China. Woolen blankets were popular in both Tibet and India. Sanskrit was the national language. So, inscriptions and national documents were written in Sanskrit language. Peace and prosperity were prevailed in the society of Lichchhavi period. The economy, trade and commerce, foreign relation, religious harmony were also

in the top position. People got good justice from Panchali, which was the local judicial unit. The people were happy under Lichchhavis. Due to all these reasons Lichchhavi period is regarded as the Golden Age of Nepalese history.

Three kings of Lichchhavi dynasty are famous kings. They are Mana Deva, Amshuverma and Narendra Deva. His best architecture was 'Managriha palace'. He also introduced Mananka, the first coin ever brought into circulation in the history of Nepal (Kafle, Dhungel & Ghimire, 2018, p.18). Similarly, the next famous king is Amshuverma. He decentralized the country from central to local level and the administrative power was given to the head of local village. The local administrative parts (villages) were also divided into small, greater and developed villages. The names were Grama, Tala and Dranga (Kafle, Dhungel & Ghimire, 2018, p.19). He built Kailaskut palace. One of his daughters, Bhrikuti got married to Tibetan ruler Tsrong-tsong-Gompo. This relation was instrumental for him in order to spread trade relationship with Tibet and China. Likewise, the next king is Narendra Deva. According to the Bhansarchok inscription, when he took over the power, he declared the rights of people and promised to work in favor of People. He equally respected human rights (Kafle, Dhungel & Ghimire, 2018, p.21)

#### v. Videha of Janakpur

Videha of Janakpur had a great importance in the study of ancient history of Nepal. It was one of the origin or centers of Hindu culture and religion. It was developed in the vedic period (Kafle, Dhungel & Ghimire, 2018, p.22). At that time, the place was called Mithila but at present, it is known as Janakpur. The name of the place is given after the rule of saint king, Janak. This place is the birthplace of goddess Sita of Ramayana. Many scholars like; Maitrei, Gargi, Aruni, Astabakra, Swetketu, Yagnabalka used to live in this place.

#### vi. Shakyas of Kapilvastu

Tilaurakot was the capital city of ancient Kapilvastu. It lies in the western terai of modern Nepal. It was 5 km far from Taulihawa municipality, the district headquarter of modern Kapilvastu district. It was founded in the Vedic period. It was fully developed till of 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. The Shakyas were the rulers of ancient

Kapilvastu. They were Surya dynasty. Suddhodhan was the most famous king of Kapilvastu. Siddhartha Gautam was his son. Later he became Gautam Buddha (Kafle, Dhungel & Ghimire, 2018, p.23). At that time, the social, economic, political and cultural situation of the city was very strong.

## Medieval Period

### i. Doya State

The state was founded in 1154 BS (Kafle, Dhungel & Ghimire, 2018, p.24). Simroungad was the capital of eastern terai state of medieval period of Nepal. Nanya Deva was the founder of that state and he declared the independence of the state. That state was strong and rich in education, art and culture. Doya state attacked Kathmandu valley in several times whenever the valley faced trouble. At that time, Malla state of Kathmandu valley was weaker than the Doya state.

### ii. Khas Kingdom

During medieval period, Khas kingdom was located in the western part of Nepal. Khas kingdom was extended Trisuli river in the east, Kumau in the west, Tibet in the north and Terai in the south (Kafle, Dhungel & Ghimire, 2018, p.26). Nagraj was the founder of Khas kingdom. Khas are related to chhetri of Arya race. Khas come from Khari state of Tibet. At the beginning, Khas Malla state was powerful. Khas Malla ruler also involved in attacking over Kathmandu valley. Abhaya Malla was the last king of united Khas Malla state. After him, at first khas kingdom was divided into five feudal state and they further divided into 22 states in Karnali zone and 24 in Gandaki Zone (Kafle, Dhungel & Ghimire, 2018, p.26). They also used to collect tax and revenue from the valley states of they own.

### iii. Malla Kingdom of Kathmandu valley

In Nepalmandal, Malla and Deva became king alternatively in pre-medieval period. They had clash and competition to capture the throne. Sometime, there were dual and three king. It made the state weaker. Ari Malla was the first Malla ruler of Kathmandu valley. He became the king in 1257 BS (Kafle, Dhungel & Ghimire,

2018, p.26). At that time, two Malla kings were the most famous kings of the Kathmandu valley. They are Jayasthiti Malla and Yakshya Malla. Jayasthiti Malla was a brave, perfect, strong and powerful king. He divided the entire land into four categories. They are Abal, Doyam, Shim and Chahar based upon the quality and the situation of land. The next famous king of Malla dynasty is Yakshya Malla. He was the last king of the united Kathmandu valley. He made many temples in Kathmandu valley like Dattatreya and Yakshyaswor temples in Bhaktapur (Kafle, Dhungel & Ghimire, 2018, p.29).

During Medieval period, Pratap Malla built Hanuman Dhoka, Kal Bhairab, Guheswari temple, Rani Pokhari, Bajrayogini temples, Budhanilakantha temples etc. Jaya Prakash Malla lost his kingdom when Prithvi Narayan Shah captured Kntipur in 1825 BS. Siddhi Narasingh Malla was the first king of Patan. He built Krishna Mandir, Taleju Bhawani Temple, Buddha Bihars, Ponds, Taps. Bhupatindra Malla 55 windows palace, Nyatapal temple, images of Bhairab, Ugrachandi, Siddhilaxmi, Kumari, Barahi, Baishnavi and other various art, architecture and sculpture in the Kathmandu valley.

#### iv. Sen State of Eastern Nepal

After the death of King Mukunda Sen of Palpa, the palpa state was divided into many small states. Lohang Sen, the youngest son of Mukunda Sen, established a new state in eastern Nepal. The name of the state was Makwanpur. After Subha Sen, the Sen state divided into two parts. Later, the Sen Kingdom divided into three states. They were Mekanpur (Wollo Kirat), Chaudandi (Majh Kirat) and Vijayapur (Pallo Kirat) (Kafle, Dhungel & Ghimire, 2018, p.33).

## Modern Period

### i. Shah Period

Kulmandan Shah was the first king of Shah dynasty. Drabya Shah, at first he became the king of Ligligkot. The state was prized when he stood first in an annual race competition organized to choose the right king for Ligligkot of Gorkha. So, he became the first king of Shah dynasty in Gorkha state (Kafle, Dhungel & Ghimire, 2018, p.33). Ram Shah was very famous king of Gorkha. He reformed mana, Pathi, Muri, Dhak and Taraju. He made the provision of 'Pancha Valadmi' to solve the local disputes. The actual modern history of Nepal begins from 1825 BS. This is the date when king Prithvi Narayan Shah conquered Kathmandu. Unification campaign was started by Prithivi Narayan Shah and it was continued by Pratapsing Shah, Rajendra Laxmi, Bahadur Shah, Ran Bahadur Shah and Girwan Shah.

Political instability started in Nepal after the death of Prithivi Narayan Shah. Consequently, the Rana regime began in Nepal. Indo-Nepal war broke out during primeministership of Bhimsen Thapa. Nepal had to sign Sugauli treaty because of which Nepal lost its one-third territory to British East India Company. The first Sipahi mutiny held in Nepal during the modern period before Rana regime. (Kafle, Dhungel & Ghimire, 2018, p.38).

## ii. Rana Period

Jung Bahadur Rana came into the political power after conducting Kot Massacre, Bhandarkhal Parva and Alau Parva. Rana era started from 1846 to 1951 AD. Jung Bahadur gave the hereditary title of Rana. Under the Ranas, Nepal maintained relations with the British. Various social, administrative and economic reforms were taken place during the Rana regime. Slavery and Sati system were abolished by Chandra Shumsher during rana period. Darbar High School, Bir Hospital, Bir Pustakalaya, Ghantaghar, Tri-chandra College, Provision of 10-5 office time, establishment of SLC Board are some of the social reforms that was taken place during Rana period. The taxes paid by the people was used by Ranas as their personal property (Kafle, Dhungel & Ghimire, 2018, p.44). The provision of ropeway, telephone, electricity and railway system were started for the economic development of nation. Juddha Shumsher made Nepali cloth industry, Nepal Company Act, skills developed offices and many cottage companies (Kafle, Dhungel & Ghimire, 2018, p.44).



## Post-Modern Period

Rana regime collapsed from Nepal in 2007 BS. During the Rana period, all the power of the nation was under the ranas. People and king became powerless. So, Nepalese people actively participated in the revolution of anti-rana movement in 2007 BS. People from all kind of background participated in the anti-rana movement. People having literature background published poems and articles that can raise voice against ranas. The anti rana movement started from the labor strike in Biratnagar Jute Factory. B.P. Koirala commanded the liberation army from Biratnagar. A tripartite pact was made between the king, Nepali Congress and the Ranis in Delhi in 2007 BS. Cabinet formed by the coliation of Ranis and the Nepali Congress passed the first democratic constitution 'The Interim Constitution' on 17<sup>th</sup> Chaitra 2007 BS. On 22<sup>nd</sup> 2017 BS. King Mahendra dissolved the elected government, suspended parliament imprisoned prime minister and banned political parties and started partyless Panchayat system. Referendum was declared on 10<sup>th</sup> Baishakh 2037 BS in which Panchayat system got 54.79% vote and Multi-party democratic system got 45.21% vote. The First People's Movement started on 7<sup>th</sup> Falgun 2046 BS. Maoist insurgency started in 2052 BS. On 19 Jestha 2058 BS Royal Massacre was taken place and Gyanandra became king of Nepal. Interim Constitution was formulated in 2063 BS after the end of Second People's Movement and then after Dr. Ram Baran Yadav became the first president of republic of Nepal. On Ashwin 3<sup>rd</sup> 2072 BS, the constitute assembly formulated the Constitution of Nepal 2072.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, in order to know the present state of any country it is essential for us to review the past political, economic, socio-cultural condition of the country. In the context of Nepal, different dynasties, kings and parties have ruled in different time periods. The characteristics of all most all rulers are same except King Prithivi Narayan Shah. The meaning of the word 'Nepal' is different according to different languages. Since, past Nepal has been important trade route between India and China. Since the beginning of political history of Nepal, conspiracy has played vital role to create political instable government. Most of the rulers used political for their personal benefit rather than the benefit of people. Different rulers of Kathmandu valley constructed different monuments and cultural sites for their personal satisfaction. Establishment of new empire or system after killing huge people is the common characteristic in Nepalese political history. None of the rulers had formulated proper socio-

economic development plan for the development of the country. Various socio-economic developmental activities were conducted during Rana regime as compared with earlier time period of Nepal but the developmental activities were insufficient and only limited people used to enjoy the facilities provided by the ruler. Most of the constitutions were formulated after the downfall of the primitive system. Since the beginning of Nepalese political history there is great importance of geo-political situation. Indian government has directly influenced to change the political system of Nepal.

## Reference

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