

# **Gen Z Protest in Nepal: How Youth Made the Government Kneel within 48 Hours**

## **Who are Gen Z?**

In the context of Nepal, Generation Z refers to young people born between 1997 AD and 2012 AD who grew up during the country's political transition and rapid digital expansion. As the first digital-native generation in Nepal, they are highly active on social media and are increasingly vocal in raising their voices against corruption, unemployment, and weak governance through online campaigns and street protests.

## **Background and Causes of the Gen Z Protest in Nepal:**

Political change in Nepal was necessary, but over the last decade, the post of prime minister has become a musical chair among three powerful leaders K.P. Oli, Sher Bahadur Deuba, and Pushpa Kamal Dahal. This political instability was largely a result of Nepal's electoral system. The system is structured in such a way that entrenched political elites, and corrupt individuals often remain protected, making meaningful reform difficult.

The Gen Z protest is not simply an outburst of anger over the recent social media ban. That issue acted only as a spark of fire. The real "fuel" for the protest had been accumulating for years under successive governments. Corruption has penetrated every level of governance from local ward offices to the prime minister's chair. Nepali citizens, especially the youth, see little accountability and no hope of change under the existing leadership.

Another factor fueling resentment is the luxury lifestyle of politicians' children. Many of today's leaders once came to Kathmandu barefoot during their youth, yet now their families live lavishly while ordinary Nepalis struggle with unemployment, inflation, and poverty. These raises pressing questions: How did these leaders acquire such wealth? How do their children afford a lifestyle far beyond the means of ordinary citizens? These concerns are especially powerful for Gen Z, who feel cheated as they see leaders' families enjoy luxuries funded by taxpayers who workday and night.

At its core, the Gen Z protest is a response to systemic corruption, nepotism, and the concentration of power among three dominant leaders. The frustration is not limited to a single event; rather, it reflects years of betrayal, inequality, and lack of accountability.

## **Key Events and Demands of the Gen Z Protest in Nepal:**

The Gen Z protest in Nepal was not organized merely to showcase power against the government. Rather, it was driven by specific demands that the youth wanted the authorities to address. When peaceful appeals are ignored, protest becomes the only tool to push for change and this generation chooses that path out of necessity, not aggression.

Protesters mobilized through social media platforms, gathering in public spaces such as Maitighar Mandala, Koteshwor, and Tinkune. They carried placards, chanted slogans, and live-streamed the events online, ensuring that their voices were amplified both on the streets and across digital platforms. The demonstrations remained largely peaceful, but the sheer energy, determination, and numbers of participants revealed the depth of frustration among Nepal's youth. Importantly, these rallies brought together students, young professionals, and ordinary citizens across political divides proving that this was not a partisan struggle but a generational demand for genuine reform.

The key demands of the Gen Z protesters included:

1. **End to Corruption and Nepotism** – A demand for transparency in governance and accountability from political leaders at all levels.
2. **Political Reform** – An end to the “musical chair” politics dominated by the same three leaders for decades.
3. **Freedom of Expression** – Rejection of the proposed social media restrictions and protection of online rights as part of democratic freedoms.
4. **Economic Opportunities** – Stronger employment policies, encouragement of entrepreneurship, and measures to curb the mass migration of youth seeking work abroad.
5. **Equality and Justice** – Reduction of social inequalities, fair distribution of resources, and improvements in public services such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure.

These demands were not just reactions to immediate policies but reflections of a much deeper desire for systemic change. For Nepal's Gen Z, the protest symbolized a turning point — a declaration that the younger generation will no longer remain silent while political elites continue to misuse power, enrich their families, and ignore the struggles of ordinary citizens.

## **The Protests of 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Bhadra: A Turning Point**

The demonstrations on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Bhadra marked a decisive moment in the Gen Z protest movement. What had begun as scattered gatherings and online campaigns quickly transformed into mass mobilization across Kathmandu. On these two days, the frustration of Nepal's youth was fully visible on the streets.

I personally witnessed the protests at locations such as Maitighar Mandala, Koteshwor, and Tinkune, where thousands of young people carried placards, shouted slogans, and broadcast live on social media. The energy of the crowds was unmistakable peaceful yet determined. It was clear that this was not a symbolic march but a serious demand for accountability and reform. Not only in the Kathmandu valley in the whole nation the protestor has done protest.

**On 23<sup>rd</sup> Bhadra**, I witnessed a significant Gen Z protest in Kathmandu along the route from Maitighar to New Baneshwor. I arrived at Maitighar at 11:00 AM, where a mix of protesters had

already gathered, including groups advocating issues such as sugarcane farmers' rights. The Gen Z protesters ranged from +2 students to master's graduates, with some students in school uniforms, led in a disciplined manner by their school leaders. While not all schools and colleges participated, several had sent students to join the movement.

The crowd began marching toward Baneshwor, and I joined them. This was my first ever protest, and many others were in the same situation. The atmosphere was peaceful yet energetic. Protesters carried posters, banners, and pamphlets, with slogans and messages criticizing corruption and demanding reform. Motorcycles patrolled the march, their loud silencers echoing like a warning to the government. Influencers, volunteers, and social workers were also present, helping participants and ensuring the protest remained organized.

However, as we approached Baneshwor, the situation began to escalate. Some protesters attempted to approach Parliament, while the police tried to control the crowd using tear gas, water cannons, and warning shots. Despite these measures, the protesters' anger and determination were evident. Observing the rising tension, I advised my companions to move to a safer area near Everest Hospital. From there, we could see and hear the chaotic scene: bullets fired into the air, people running to protect themselves, and ambulances arriving to rescue the injured. Many of the wounded were students, highlighting the youth-driven nature of the protest. Witnessing this, I questioned how law enforcement could justify such force against peaceful young citizens.

By late afternoon, around 2:30–4:00 PM, I left the protest and returned home. Social media later revealed reports of injuries and casualties, mostly among youth who had come to demand positive change for Nepal. While the exact number of deaths on that day was under ten, the impact on participants and observers was profound. Many protesters remained in the area into the night, determined not to let fear silence them, and I found it difficult to sleep, haunted by the scenes I had witnessed.

This day was a turning point, showing that Nepal's youth are willing to stand up for their rights, demand systemic change, and challenge entrenched political elites. It was clear that this protest was not merely a demonstration of power but a serious call for accountability, transparency, and reform in Nepal.

**On 24th Bhadra**, the situation was completely different from those of the previous day. While the protest on 23rd Bhadra had largely remained peaceful, the actions of the government perceived as dictatorial and dismissive toward its citizens ignited widespread anger. It was as if the government had provoked a sleeping lion; the frustration and sense of injustice among the protesters and ordinary citizens erupted with force.

On this day, the protests were no longer limited to students or Gen Z. Citizens from across Kathmandu Valley joined the movement, and crowds surrounded the homes of politicians, ministers, and individuals linked to political parties, as well as offices of central, provincial, and

local political institutions. This massive mobilization occurred not only in Kathmandu but also in surrounding areas and in whole nations.

In many locations, protesters targeted corrupt individuals' properties. Houses of politicians and government officials were set on fire, and some police stations were attacked. Reports indicate that in Sher Bahadur Deuba's house, large amounts of money were found, including Nepali rupees and bundles of U.S. dollars, some stored in hidden rooms and tanks. Former minister Deepak Khadka's house reportedly had money thrown into the air during the protest. Branded alcohol, money-counting machines, and other luxury items obtained through corruption were destroyed in the fires. In total, properties belonging to corrupt individuals were burned, erasing years of illegally acquired wealth in a few hours. Politicians, ministers and ex-Prime Ministers were beaten by people.

However, alongside these acts, there were also serious excesses caused by external factors. Some individuals used the protests as an excuse to damage public property and private businesses, which provided livelihoods for thousands of people. Buildings such as Singha Durbar, the Supreme Court, police headquarters, and local government offices were attacked — despite being the property of all citizens. Major commercial centers, including Bhatbhateni, were looted and burned, destroying almost 80% of its outlets and putting thousands out of work. While targeting corrupt individuals could be seen as justified, the destruction of essential public and private property caused unnecessary harm to ordinary Nepalese citizens. The Unnecessary harm was not done by the people who wanted change it was done by the external factors. The real Gen Z couldn't do such activities.

The situation prompted the deployment of the Nepal Army around 10 PM. Although delayed, the army's intervention helped restore order and protect civilians. By this time, weapons had been captured by external actors, and prisoners had escaped from jails. Once the army regained control, the streets became safer, and the public felt relief.

Singha Durbar and other historical government buildings were damaged, but the loss of human life was far more significant. Dozens of citizens were injured or killed in these events — young people who had come to demand change. While government buildings can be rebuilt, lives lost cannot. These two days left the entire country in grief and reflection, highlighting both the passion for justice and the dangers of uncontrolled violence during mass movements.

Together, the events of 23rd and 24th Bhadra demonstrated both the passion and determination of Nepal's youth and the challenges of channeling mass protests in a way that enforces accountability while protecting innocent lives and public property. For Gen Z, these days were not just protests, they were a statement that the younger generation will no longer remain silent in the face of corruption, political stagnation, and social injustice.

### **Party First, Nation Forgotten:**

Nepal today is in deep crisis. From economic struggles to corruption, unemployment to youth migration, every sector is suffering. Prices of basic goods are rising, industries are collapsing, students are living in thousands, hospitals lack proper care, farmers are ignored, and corruption has become normal in government offices. Instead of solving these problems, our politicians and their party members are busy in something else building their parties, not building the nation.

The recent incidents of 23rd and 24th Bhadra proved this reality once again. When thousands of youths came to the streets, raising their voices against corruption, unemployment, and the negligence of leaders, what did the politicians do? They remained silent. Not a single meaningful word came from party members or leaders. Instead of listening to the pain of the people, they were busy protecting their chairs, their posts, and their parties.

From local party workers to ministers in power, everyone is more concerned about defending corruption and pleasing their leaders. They do not accept mistakes, they do not learn from failure, and they continue to close their eyes to the nation's suffering. Their voices are loud only inside party meetings, but completely silent when the streets are filled with young citizens demanding change.

What is even more painful is that they misuse the names of great leaders like B.P. Koirala and Madan Bhandari. These two visionaries had clear ideologies and worked for the people, but today's politicians only use their names during elections to collect votes. Their principles of justice, socialism, democracy, and equality are forgotten. In reality, no one is following ideology they are only hungry for power.

This hunger for power has blinded them. While the country is facing unemployment, poverty, corruption, poor education, weak health system, lack of industries, and a mass brain-drain of youth, our leaders are fighting only for positions.

From the grassroots to the central level, the story is the same. Party members follow the same culture of defending wrong instead of standing for the right. They do not question corruption inside their own party. They do not speak against injustice. For them, protecting the party is more important than protecting Nepal.

This culture must end. If we really want to save the country, we must bring change from the grassroots level. Parties cannot be bigger than the nation. Leaders and members must learn to admit mistakes, follow ideology, and put the people first. Otherwise, history will remember today's politicians not as nation-builders, but as the very people who betrayed Nepal in its time of greatest need.

The Gen Z protests of 23rd and 24th Bhadra are proof that young Nepalis will not remain silent forever. The youth are already questioning this broken system. If politicians do not change, the new generation will force change. It is time to stop building only party offices and start building the nation of Nepal.

## **Way Forward: Building a Nation Beyond Parties:**

The protests of **23rd and 24th Bhadra** have already shown us that Nepal cannot continue the same path. Criticism alone is not enough; the nation now needs a clear way forward. If the interim government and future leadership truly want to respect the sacrifices of the people and meet the demands of Gen Z, they must commit to real reforms in every sector of national life.

### **1. Good Governance and Rule of Law**

The fight against corruption must begin immediately. Every corrupted leader, government officer, and businessperson involved in misuse of public money should face transparent investigation. Nepal has enough laws what is missing is implementation. Strong enforcement, independent institutions, and strict punishment will show that no one is above the law.

### **2. Ending Corruption from the Ground Level**

Corruption is not only at the top; it exists from local offices to ministries. Bribes for basic services, political interference in local development, and favoritism in every sector have destroyed trust in the system. Ending corruption from the grassroots level must be the priority. Digital governance, transparency in public spending, and citizen monitoring can break this cycle.

### **3. Economic Reform and Job Creation**

Unemployment and inflation are forcing thousands of youths to leave Nepal every day. This brain-drain cannot continue. The government must support local industries, promote entrepreneurship, and create jobs in agriculture, technology, tourism, and manufacturing. A stable economy is the only way to give youth a reason to stay in their own country.

### **4. Education and Health as National Priorities**

No nation can progress without strong schools and hospitals. Public education must be reformed so that every child, not only the rich, can access quality learning. Similarly, the health system must be equipped with medicines, trained staff, and infrastructure so that Nepalis do not have to fly abroad even for basic treatment.

### **5. Youth Inclusion in Policy and Leadership**

The Gen Z protests have made one thing very clear: the youth are not just the future; they are the present. Their voices, ideas, and energy must be included in decision-making at all levels. From local governments to national policy bodies, youth representation is not a demand — it is a necessity for survival of democracy.

### **6. Transparency and Accountability in Government**

The interim government must set an example by making its activities transparent. Budgets, spending, and projects must be open to public review. Leaders should be accountable not only

during elections but every day in their service. This is how trust between citizens and government can be rebuilt.

## **7. National Unity Above Party Politics**

Finally, leaders and party members must understand that no party is bigger than the nation. Misusing the names of B.P. Koirala or Madan Bhandari while ignoring their ideology is an insult to history. If Nepal is to move forward, parties must put aside selfish competition and unite for the national interest.

## **8. Directly Elected Prime Minister**

One of the biggest weaknesses of Nepal's current political system is the instability caused by coalition governments. Prime Ministers change frequently, not because of the people's will, but because of internal party games and bargaining. This has made governance weak and short-sighted.

To end this cycle, Nepal should move towards a Directly Elected Prime Minister system, where citizens themselves choose their executive leader. A directly elected PM will have a clear mandate from the people, not from party deals. This will ensure stability, accountability, and stronger leadership. When the Prime Minister is directly answerable to the voters, not party chiefs, the focus will shift from pleasing party members to serving the nation.

## **Conclusion: A Call for Real Change:**

The incidents of 23rd and 24th Bhadra have left a clear message for Nepal's political class: the people, especially the youth, will no longer remain silent. The anger, the protests, and the sacrifices made in these days should not be forgotten or wasted. At a time when politicians were hiding behind their parties, it was the Nepali Army who stepped forward and handled the situation with maturity and discipline. For this, the army deserves the gratitude of every Nepali citizen.

We also extend our congratulations to Sushila Karki and other ministers for becoming members of the interim government. The nation now looks at them with hope, expecting them to act not as party representatives but as true servants of the people. Their responsibility is history: to restore trust in governance, to unite the country, and to bring long-awaited reforms.

The Gen Z movement has already shown direction. Their demands are not unreasonable they are simply asking for good governance, justice, opportunities, and a future in their own country. These demands must be fulfilled, not ignored. If the leaders truly care about Nepal, they must listen to this generation, not suppress it.

Most importantly, the sacrifices of the people who came to the streets must not go in vain. Their courage, their blood, and their hope for a better future must guide this nation forward. Nepal has suffered for decades under selfish politics, but the spark of change has been lit.

There is still hope. Hope that this time, mistakes will be admitted. Hope that this time, leaders will choose the nation over their parties. Hope that this time, justice will defeat corruption. And hope that this time, the sacrifices of ordinary Nepalis will give birth to an extraordinary Nepal.

It is now up to the interim government, the leaders, and the citizens to decide: will Nepal remain trapped in the same cycle, or will we finally rise together and build the nation that B.P. Koirala, Madan Bhandari, and the people themselves once dreamed of?

Note: "All the data and information are taken from internet research and different websites. So there may be some errors. If there are any errors or misinformation I apologize for my mistake."