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Stabilizing ethno-socio-politico situations in Nepal



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The Great King Prithvi Narayan Shah has rightly said that **"Nepal Char Jat Chhatis Barna Ko Shaja Phulbari Ho."** However, the ethno-socio-politico situation in Nepal has risen to such a dangerous level that every Nepalese needs to pay attention to it. Some political parties apparently have capitalized the ethnic and regional diversity into their political growth and have even fueled ethnic and regional conflicts weakening Nepal's centuries' old ethnic, linguistic, and regional bonds and co-existence. The challenge for every Nepalese is to rise above these ethnic and linguistic politics, as well as regional interests, and embrace Nepal as a nation and move forward to address honestly and intelligently the issues and situations that currently engulf our society and the nation.

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In 2007, the estimated population of Nepal was 26,427,399. According to available literature, Nepal has at least 60 recorded caste and ethnic groups and 70 languages and dialects. According to Nepal's published statistics in 2007, in 2001 the ethnic population in Nepal was Chetri (15.8%) > Brahmin (12.74%) > Magar (7.14%) > Tharu (6.75%) > Tamang (5.64%) > Newar (5.48%) > Muslim (4.27%) > Kami (3.94%) > Yadav (3.94%) > Rai (2.79%) > Gurung (2.39%) > Damai/Dholi (1.72%) > Limbu (1.58%) > Thakuri (1.47%) > Sarki (1.4%) > Teli 1.34%) > Chamar, Harijan, Ram (1.19%) > Kori (1.11%), and Others (19.31%). Similarly, the population by mother tongue in 2001 was Nepali (48.61%) > Maithali (12.30%) > Bhojpuri (7.53%) > Tharu (5.86%) > Tamang (5.19%) > Newar (3.63%) > Magar (3.39%) > Awadhi (2.47%), Bantawa (1.63%) > Gurung (1.49%), > Limbu (1.47%), > Bajjika (1.05%), and Others (5.38%). The total land area of Nepal is 14,748,000 hectares, and the mountains, hills and Terai respectively contain 35, 42, and 23 % of the total area, and 7, 46, and 47 % of the population.

The ethnic and linguistic diversity of Nepal should be considered as an asset for Nepal's economic development as various ethnic groups have developed specific practices for harnessing and utilization of available natural resources, have a wealth of indigenous technology knowledge, and have specific cultural and religious bondages developed with the natural resource base of the nation. Recognition of this asset of ethnic and cultural diversity is important for many development endeavors including tourism, ethno-botanical advancement, and the preservation of indigenous knowledge and technologies. The local indigenous knowledge will be an asset for fast-paced economic transformation of the nation. Education, skill development, health, curtailing migration, and the development of sustainable society are the major challenges. Alleviation of food deficit and poverty and the development of higher education that balances out knowledge, skills, and values are very important for a sustainable society.

Increasing demand for ethnic and regional autonomies, the decline of the feeling of oneness among the Nepalese, and emerging sense of disrespect to national unity and integrity by certain groups of people in recent years are extremely dangerous signs of state failure. While few political parties are adamantly advocating ethnic/linguistic or regional federalism, other political parties are proposing geographic/natural resource based federalism. Is federalism superior to a fully-decentralized Unitary System of governance in Nepal? What is the guarantee that Nepal will not follow the fate of Yugoslavia and other nations that disappeared from the face of the earth due to

Five questions



Both Prachanda and Nepal PM have insulted CA body
Prakash Chandra Lohani, Vice Chairman Rastriya Janashakti Party, Nepal

There is a clash in between the preferences of the people and those of the Maoists and thus this stalemate. If the people demand new constitution then the Maoists want power. The difference lay here. [More..](#)

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Ms. Rukamane Maharjan, Student LLM, Nepal Law Campus, TU

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Editorial

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ethnic/linguistic federalism? In order to cultivate ethnic harmony in Nepal, we must embrace the notion of "co-existence and melting pot" not the notion of "segregation and separation."

Maoists emerging as the largest political party through the Constituent Assembly's election and being in power for nine months then resorting to further agitation, while other 22 political parties forming a coalition government and trying to improve the law and order situation of the nation, fulfilling people's aspirations, and expecting to write a constitution that will be acceptable to all Nepalese people are just mind-boggling political events and commitments. The Nepalese society is currently dealing with the issues of federalism, secularism, and republicanism which are extremely sensitive, tremendously complex, and enormously hard to deal with. The continuous obstruction of parliament by Maoists, even not allowing parliament to pass the budget, and increased frequency of Delhi visits by our political leaders certainly tell a whole lot in terms of the Nepalese fluid political situation. Political leaders have lost their credibility due to various reasons including excessive nepotism, corruption, luxurious life styles, and lack of leadership qualities such as trustworthiness, honesty, loyalty to the public, patriotism, and vision for the nation.

While issues such as national integrity, solidarity, ethnic and communal harmony, nationalism, preservation and development of culture and traditions, and people's welfare have critically been extremely central to national politics, political parties and their leaders have been institutionalizing corruption and exhibiting openly their egoism and selfishness on national issues, and showing their submissiveness to the foreign powers. Those Nepalese who are psychologically terrorized by the caste system deserve empowerment, respect, and equal treatment in the society without any delay. In this context, according to the Telegraph.co.uk, PM Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba told to the Nepal's parliament in 2001 that, "Effective from this day the practice of untouchability and any discrimination based on it will be considered a crime punishable by a severe sentence." How far it has been implemented in the society is a matter of another investigation.

Out of its currently widespread negativism, pessimism, and chaotic environment, the Nepalese society must have to emerge as a successful, all-embracing, and functioning society. To achieve this, we need to foster and cultivate ethnic/linguistic/regional harmonies. We must look for the similarities among us and must unite and fight the evils of our society: the caste system, poverty, exclusion, backwardness, and cultural degeneration. There is an immediate need for the stabilization of the ethno-socio-politico situations in Nepal for prosperity, pride, and national integrity. The following section identifies strategies for ethno-socio-politico stabilization in Nepal.

Strategies for stabilization

1. Developing national unity and identity

Monarchy served as the symbol of national unity in Nepal until the declaration of republican order by Constituent Assembly on May 28, 2008. In the absence of a viable model of governance in the hands of political parties and the lack of foresightedness in the part of political leaders, the nation is currently seriously suffering from the absence of a viable national uniting force. In addition to the declaration of secular Nepal, thus, obliterating the last Hindu nation from the face of the planet by the 7-year old re-instated parliament without any public debate and discussion, the Maoists' proposal for changing national flag and their disregard for Nepalese dress *daura surwal*, the VP's oath-taking episode in Hindi language, and the proposal for removing cow from the list of national animal are some of the major issues and concerns directly impacting national identities of Nepal.

Political parties and their leaders do not seem to be bothered by vanishing national identities in Nepal. National identities help effectively unite diverse communities, cultivate national pride, and transform the country into a prosperous nation. How are we going to preserve and promote our national identities? While certain political parties and their leaders are vehemently against the idea, many Nepalese still feel comfortable with the revival of monarchy, citing it as a unifying force in Nepal. In fact, at least 30 nations across the globe including the United Kingdom, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Spain, Belgium, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Jordan, Bhutan, Thailand, Cambodia, and Japan have monarchies vested with various levels of power. In constitutional monarchy, the legislatures and judiciary have the powers of governance while the King serves as the Head of State, or as a ceremonial figure head. The roles of constitutional monarchies may include serving as the symbol of national unity, contributing to the preservation and development of traditions and culture, helping in strengthening democracy and sovereignty in the nation, and ensuring national integrity, peace, and prosperity. In Nepal, it is important for every Nepalese to emerge out of petty politics, cliques, indoctrinations, and realistically think about the nation as a whole for themselves and for future generations.

2. Ensuring political stability

Dateline

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Political instability in Nepal from 1837 AD to 1846 AD had resulted in the emergence of Jung Bahadur in 1846 AD that eventually culminated into 104-years of Rana rule in Nepal. The political instability that followed 1990 revolution resulted in the Maoist war and the loss of 13,000 lives, loss of property, economic devastation, rise of ethno-socio-political unrests, and recently a threat to national integrity, sovereignty, and independence. Many Nepalese still acknowledge the *Panchayat* System of governance from 1962 AD – 1990 AD for political stability, peace and security, and national development.

We have become the victims of political ideologies and the prevalence of extremely opposing and contradictory thoughts among the political parties and their leaders. Ambitions, egos, and greed on the part of the political leaders are other causes of people's sufferings in Nepal. While our basic principles of brotherhoods and co-existence are deteriorating, the animosity, disrespect, and mistrust among the Nepalese people between different ethnic groups and communities are gradually increasing leading towards breaking of our centuries old community bonds, societies, and eventually the nation. It is obvious that any developmental effort, enforcement of law and order, enhancement of national integrity, and implementation of initiatives for socio-economic transformation of a nation is not possible without political stability. Ensuring the political stability is an immediate need for Nepal.

3. Establishing peace and security

The Home Ministry of Nepal reports that there are 109 armed groups who are fighting with the state for various reasons in Nepal. The Maoists waged war for 10 years. It is mind-boggling to think that what makes so many young people believe on guns, violence, armed struggle, rebellions, etc., and pursue these destructive means for salvation of themselves and their family members as well as the whole nation. While villages are deserted, youths are unemployed, hospitals do not have medicines and staff, households do not have food for their children, the economy is crumbling, and natural disasters are occurring, why can't all Nepalese come together and renounce violence and find the best remedy to effectively handle these maladies of our times? As the deteriorated law and order situation is costing our nation heavily, we must seek for measures for an immediate restoration of peace and security in the nation. Let our youths invest their energies on nation building rather than wasting it and destroying Nepalese society.

4. Safeguarding democracy

The 1990 constitution of Nepal was hailed by many experts as one of the best constitutions in the world. It was accepted by the people peacefully and was implemented successfully. What is the guarantee that a new constitution will be drafted in time, accepted by mass population, and will be implemented peacefully in Nepal while there are extremely important but undemocratically handled issues such as federalism, secularism, and republicanism? How much trust, respect, and value do people have on the CA? The current ethno-socio-politico situation in Nepal is extremely counterproductive for fulfilling people's aspirations, safeguarding democracy, and enhancing the nation's integrity and unity. A nation that is caught in ethno-socio-politico conflict will eventually disintegrate if not handled courageously and correctly before it is too late.

It is certainly a historic and national responsibility for every Nepalese to unite for the stabilization of the current ethno-socio-politico situation, preservation and the development of national unity and identity, guarantee of political stability, establishment of peace and security, and safeguarding democracy in Nepal.

2009-11-11 10:15:55

Comments (5)

political parties like the maoists that want to use ethnic diversity for opportunist gain will not in equalizers like good education. they want to milk the ethnic-friction-cow as much as possible.

Commented by pwpasdl - November 12, 2009 @ 5:05 PM

Indeed, in my evaluation as well, this article bears reality and logical approachment. It may not be unfair to say that the writer of write-up certainly deserve for salutation from all motherland-loving fellows. There is no any doubt about the longivity of great nation as an independent be in existence, is only possible through the real and right implementation of very visioned policy framed by only seen statesman so far been found to-date Mahanayak late B.P. Koirala. The greater and broader policy called " National Unity and Reconciliation adopted by BP, is the only suitable and sustainable policy to keep Nepal as an Independent, United, Multi-cultured, Integrated and stable Nepal. So, hesitating to accept or fully by-passing the Institute of Monarchy, would be suicidal and ultimately a fatal tp nation and its majority of people. The very likely situation either becoming Afghanistan or fate of Sikkim, are developing in its fast track through the very substantial and helpful contributory role played by most influential but notorious leaders of current Nepal. Its a duty of all mother loving loyal son and daughter of Nepal to realize the very bare fact as of above and needs to be fully aware of situation and try everyone's hard and best to save this country from being Afghanistan or Sikkim. Symbol of Unity and role of guardian by protecting its unique multi-culture traditions and pride of nation, to very required institution of Monarchy, is not