

**NEPALI CONGRESS AND ITS ROLE IN THE DEMOCRATIC  
MOVEMENTS, 1990 – 2009**

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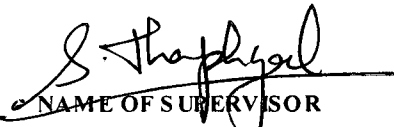
I declare that the dissertation entitled “NEPALI CONGRESS AND ITS ROLE IN THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENTS, 1990-2009” submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

  
Pankaj Kumar

**CERTIFICATE**

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

  
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*Pankaj Kumar*  
**Pankaj Kumar**



*DEDICATED TO*

**MY PARENTS**







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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

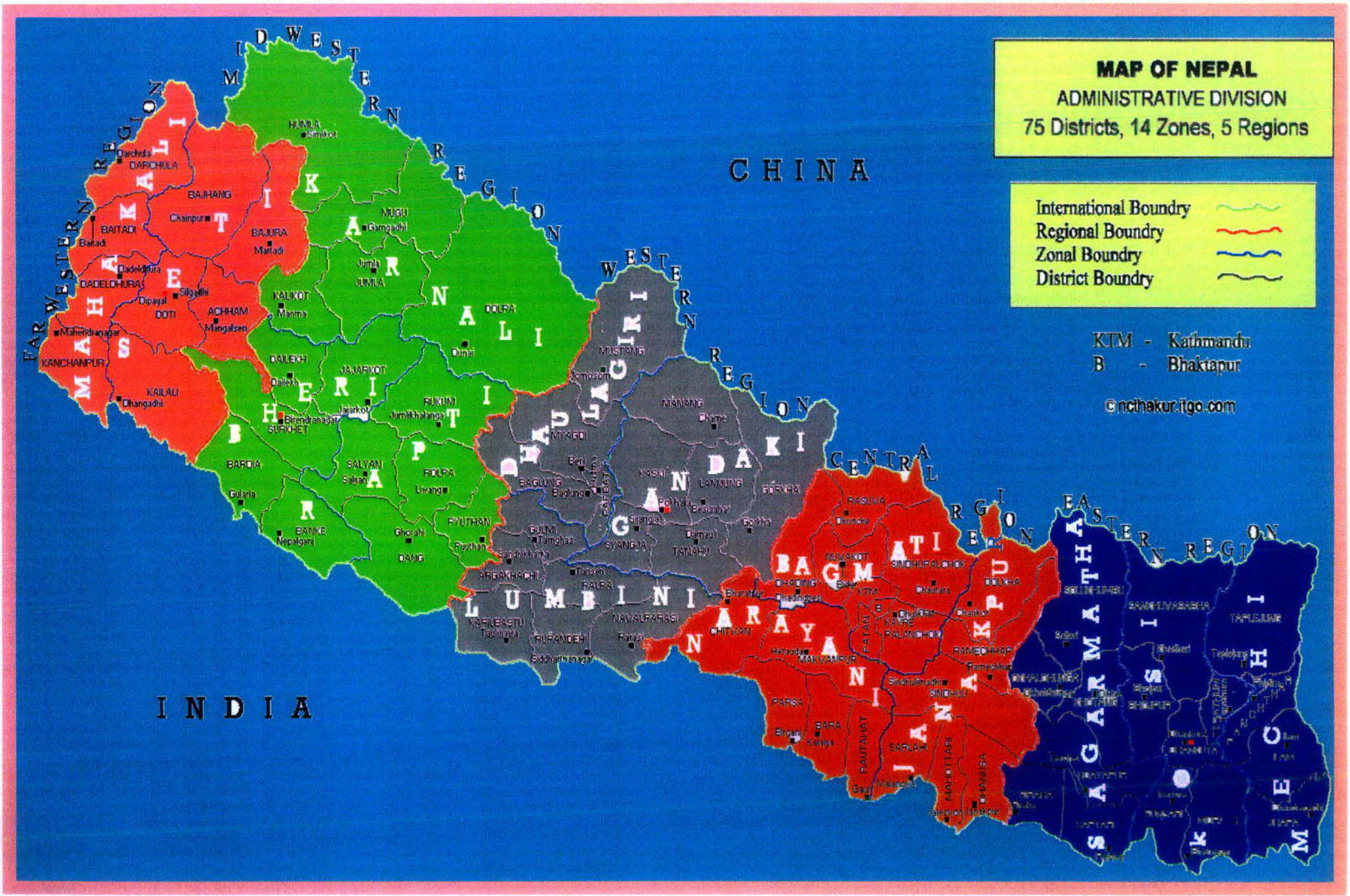
PRIO	Peace Research Institute, Oslo
CC	Central Committee
CCM	Central Committee Members
CPN-ML	Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist-Leninist)
CPN-UML	Communist Party of Nepal, Unified Marxist- Leninist
CRC	Constitutional Recommendation Commission
DCM	District Committee Members
DDCM	District Development Committee Members
HOR	House of Representatives
MP	Member of Parliament
MJF	Madhesi Janadhikar Forum
NC	Nepali Congress
NDP	National Democratic Party
NPC	Nepali Prajatantra Congress
NRC	Nepal Rashtriya Congress
NSP	Nepal Sadbhabana Party
NSP (A)	Nepal Sadbhabana Party (Amatya)
PM	Prime Minister
RPP	Rastriya Prajatantra Party
RJP	Rastriya Janashakti Party
RJP	Rastriya Jansakti Party
SP	Sadbhavana Party
TMLP	Tarai Madhesh Loktantrik Party
ULF	United Left Front
VDC	Village Development Committee

**MAP OF NEPAL**  
ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION  
75 Districts, 14 Zones, 5 Regions

International Boundry   
Regional Boundry   
Zonal Boundry   
District Boundry 

KTM - Kathmandu  
B - Bhaktapur

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Political parties are important for the functioning of any country's democratic political system. E.E. Schattschneider claim that 'political parties created democracy'.<sup>1</sup> To be truly democratic it is necessary for the leadership of any country to be harnessed to fulfil public desires and aspiration, which comes through political parties. In a democratic country political parties pursue their programmes through peaceful and constitutional means. They enable the masses to choose their ruler in democracy. The party whose ideology and programmes secure the approval of the voters at the election forms the government and the party in the opposition keeps check on the government's policies.<sup>2</sup>

The political parties have also performed the similar kinds of functions in Nepal. Even though the political parties in Nepal are of recent origin. Their historical roots may be traced back, at the most, to the past five decades. During the last five decades Nepal has experienced not one but many form of political system. Starting from Ranacracy it moved to what may be termed as the period of protective monarchy with unstable coalition government. It experimented with one and a half years of multiparty democratic system before entering in to roughly thirty years of partyless panchayat system. Finally in 1990, consequent upon a popular mass base movement it adopted multiparty system. Here the description of the Nepal historical development provides to understand the political situation.<sup>3</sup>

Nepal is a small landlocked Himalayan Kingdom sandwiched between India and China, the two demographic and spatial giants of the world. The landscape of that country is characterized by extreme diversity, with elevations ranging from 65 meters above sea level in

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<sup>1</sup> Frymer, Paul (2010), *Uneasy Alliances Race and Party Competition in America*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press: 13.

<sup>2</sup> Mitra, Subrata K. et al. (2004), *Political Parties in South Asia*, Westport: Praeger Publishers: 276-77.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid: 277-81.



the south to 8848 meters above sea level in the north, all within a distance of a slightly over 150,000 metres.<sup>4</sup> The population is generally poor, and Nepal has limited communication and infrastructure. The gross national product per head of household is about \$220.<sup>5</sup>

Nepal is an "independent sovereign country. Situated on the Southern slopes of the Mid – Himalayas in central area, it is located between 26°22' and 30° 27' North latitudes and 80°4' and 88° 12' East longitudes. It covers an area of 147'181 sq. Km. the Mechi River separated the country from Sikkim and state of West Bengal in India and the Mahakali river separated it from Utter Pradesh of India. Nepal is a land locked country. The country can be divided into three main geographical regions – (a) Himalayan Region (b) Mountain Region and (c) Tarai Region. Total population of the country according to census 2001 is 23.2 million, which comprises of 11.59 millions males and 11.63 million females and population density in 2001 is 125.4 per sq. km.<sup>6</sup>

The official language is Nepali, which was spoken by 58.5% of the population in 1981. Other languages include Maithili 11.1%, Bhojpuri 7.8%, Tharu 6%, Tamang 5%, and Awadhi 2%, 80.6% of the population professes Hindu, 10.7% are Buddhist and 4.2% Muslim and the Christian number about 50,000.<sup>7</sup>

The foundation of the modern state of Nepal was laid by King Prithvinarayan Shah of Gurkha in 1769.<sup>8</sup> The Shah of Gurkha established a political system in Nepal which was essentially military and despotic in character. As sovereign, the King wielded supreme authority in both civil and military affairs of the state. For the purpose of administration, the King employed ministers and Bharadars from higher caste noble families with whom he had intimate contacts. These ministers and Bharadars were given lands called Jagirs and Birtas in

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<sup>4</sup> Subedi, B. P. (2003), *Customary image and contemporary realities: the activities of older people in Nepal*, Oxford Institute of Ageing.

<sup>5</sup> World Bank (2002), World Development Report 2002, 'Building Institution for market', Oxford University Press: Washington. DC.

<sup>6</sup> His Majesty's Government (2002), *Central Bureau of Statistics Population Census 2001*, National Planning Commission Secretariat, Kathmandu.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Kumar, Satish (1962), *Rana Polity in Nepal origin and growth*, New York: Asia Publishing House: 10.

“payment” of the services they rendered to the king. The Birta lands were mostly granted in the form of reward to military chiefs and others who had distinguished themselves in war, and these lands were not taxed by the government. As these grants, excepting a few cases, were granted to the chiefs and noble on a hereditary basis, this system raised, in course of time, a feudal oligarchy which became the strongest political force in the country next only to the monarch.<sup>9</sup>

The prevalence of powerful feudal nobility side by side the hereditary monarchy brought new complications and tensions in Nepalese political life. When the king was a minor or proved to be a weak king the nobility grew to powerful. The context began during the minority of King Rana Bahadur when his uncle Bahadur Shah and mother, Queen Rajendra Laxmi raised for the possession of the regency. As they clashed with one another, the nobles also got divided into two parties to the support of their respective leaders. But the untimely death of the queen in 1786, left Bahadur Shah unchallenged in the field. With the help of his associates, Damodar Pande, Abhiman Singh and Gajraj Mishra – a *Rajguru* (royal teacher), Bahadur Shah sought to become the actual ruler of Nepal. But this is as far as Rana Bahadur Shah could go, for in 1806, he was murdered and, from then on, there ensued a frantic struggle for power among various factions of the nobility led mainly by the Pandes and the Thapas. Finally Bhimsen Thapa emerged as the strongest man of the kingdom and dominated the arena of politics for the next thirty years (1806-37) as *Mukhtiyar* (Prime Minister) of Nepal.<sup>10</sup>

Bhimsen established a political system in which the monarch was reduced in to a figure-head while all real power belonged to the Prime Minister. But a section of the army and even certain members of the Bhimsen Thapa family got dissatisfied with the manner in which

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<sup>9</sup> Gupta, Anirudha (1993), *Politics in Nepal: A study of Post Rana Political Developments and Party Politics*, Delhi: Kalinga Publications: 6.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid: 7-8.

Bhimsen conducted his office. The combined efforts of all these factions and parties led to the downfall of Bhimsen in 1837.<sup>11</sup>

But Bhimsen's fall only set in motion the forces of political disintegration. Almost immediately old family disputes, dissension and violence returned to politics. In view of the ambitious of rival factions of the nobility, King Rajendra Bikram Shah failed to reassert the authority of the crown. On the other hand, none of the families or their chiefs proved strong enough to restore the stability in the administration.<sup>12</sup>

For a time though the process of disintegration was checked by Matabar Singh Thapa, Bhimsen's nephew, who was made Mukhtiyar and commander – in - chief by the King in November 1843. The end came soon when 17 May 1845, Matabar Singh was treacherously murdered by his nephew, Jang Bahadur. After the death of Matabar Singh, a coalition ministry was formed with Fateh Jang Chautaria at the head. Finally the house of Jang Bahadur, later known as the Rana's, replaced the noble family of old.<sup>13</sup>

### **Political Administration under the Rana's**

Like the Bhimsen Thapa, Jang Bahadur also proceeded to crush his opponents at the beginning. By massacring, hounding and exiling them out of the country he crushed for all time their chances of recovery. At that time, Jang Bahadur realised that without securing the goodwill of the British government of India, it would not be possible for him to consolidate his position. To this end he soon secured British recognition of the new arrangement he had effected after the massacre. Another event favoured Jang Bahadur's fortune at this stage. In 1847, he forced King Rajendra Bikram Shah to abdicate in favour of his son Surendra Bikram Shah, a fact which was endorsed by 370 officers and Bhardars created by Jang Bahadur himself.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Kumar (1962): 28-29.

<sup>12</sup> Gupta (1993): 10, Kumar (1962): 28-29.

<sup>13</sup> Gupta (1993): 10.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid: 12.

The two important objectives, with which Jang Bahadur began his office were, first, to entrench himself in power as permanently as possible and second to pass on the Prime Ministership as well as other important offices of the state to his brothers and descendants in perpetuity. In order to achieve these goals, he forced the monarch to retire in to his palace and take as little part in the administration as possible. Secondly, he procured from king Surendra Bikram Shah, in 1856, a Lal Mohar (Royal Order) granting him the title of the Maharaja and the ruler ship of Kaski and Lumjung which was to pass from him “to his offspring to offspring”.<sup>15</sup> He was further invested with powers to exercise rights over life and death of the Nepalese subjects throughout the domain, to appoint or dismiss all public servants, to declare war or conclude peace or sign treaty with foreign power, to inflict punishment on offenders and to repeal or amend or frame laws of the country.<sup>16</sup> By the same Lal Mohar it was fixed that the succession to Mukhtiyari would pass from Jang Bahadur to his brothers and then to his son Jagat Jung. These extraordinary powers were reaffirmed, in 1857, by another Lal Mohar and copy of it, attested by four brothers of Jang Bahadur, was sent to the Governor – General of India.<sup>17</sup>

Thus by obtaining the highest legal sanction of the country, Jang Bahadur avoided the mistake which has cost Bhimsen Thapa, his life. He also raised the social status of his family by securing from the King the elevated “cast of the Ranas” and later, he began the policy of contracting marriages with members of the royal family which none of his predecessors had thought of doing. These marriages with members of the royal family which none of his predecessors had thought of doing. These marriages, as his own son suggests, “Were downright political treaties”,<sup>18</sup> which raised the social standing of the Ranas at par with the member of the Shah family. The Rana’s continue to preserve older institutions like the

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<sup>15</sup> Agarwal, Satish Kumar (1961), *Political System under the Rana's, 1846 – 1901* (Thesis Indian School of International Studies, New Delhi: 236-8.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid: 237.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid: 238.

<sup>18</sup> General Padma Jung Bahadur Rana (1909), *Life of Maharaja Sir Jung Bahadur of Nepal*, Allahabad: 171.

granting of Jagirs and the practice of Pajani by which the services of all officers of the state from the downward was reviewed, renewed or terminated.<sup>19</sup>

The event of the Rana regime did not usher in an era of revolutionary change in the social and political life of the country. The administration was made hereditary property of the Ranas whose rank and positions were determined on the basis of their seniority of birth. At the head of the family was the Maharaja's Prime Minister, who centralised in himself all civil and military powers. The scope of his jurisdiction, executive or legislative, remained mostly undefined and he ruled the country more or less like an absolute despot.<sup>20</sup>

Below the Prime Minister was the commander in – chief who was the next senior most General of the Army holding both civil and military authority in four different parts of the country. The appointments to other successive posts were made on the basis of seniority among the various families of the Rana's, in the army, also the Ranas who military titles from the very moments of their birth filled top officers. Apart from getting their regular salaries, the Rana's also received grants of Birtas, commissions on revenue collection, Nazarana and other feudal dues from their tenants.<sup>21</sup>

As a result of the Rana rule the incessant struggle for power among important Rana's reduced the government to a state of perpetual flux and anxiety. In the view of the uncertainty about the future, every person, from the Maharaja's to the petty officers, got busy in accumulating for himself as much wealth as he could. As a result in later stages, the Rana administration became an instrument of systemic loot and oppression. The system of granting Birtas to the Rana's and their dependants, on the other hand, raised a class of big landowner who represented the ruling aristocracy of the country. Between them and the masses, consisting mainly of the peasantry, there was hardly anything in common. The only intermediary class which grew up under the Rana's consisted of merchants, Zamidars, Small

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid: 172.

<sup>20</sup> Kumar (1962): 90-91.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid: 90-91, Gupta, (1993): 14.

Birta owners,<sup>22</sup> priests and petty officials who remained completely dependent on their feudal benefactors. As servants of the Rana's the fate of these men was closely interlinked with that of their patrons. As such they adopted in politics an attitude which only helped in preserving the Rana rule.

Thus, the survival of the Rana rule mainly depended on its capacity to suppress the growth of political awakening in the country. Yet, notwithstanding the oppressive character of the regime and social and economic backwardness of the country, the urge for change began to gain momentum in a section of the people. Some families in Nepal Tarai, who came in greater contact with India than with Kathmandu, got imbued with ideas of social and political reforms as generated by the Indian nationalist movement. Similarly some members of the lower class civil servant left Kathmandu to settle permanently in India. At a still large stage, some 'C' class Rana migrated to India where they received higher education and such knowledge as could allow them to participate in commercial enterprises. It was from these three types of émigré Nepalese families that opposition to the Rana rule came in the shape of political movement.<sup>23</sup>

### **The Anti Rana Movement**

Anti Rana Movement started against to oppose the Rana atrocities. By the thirties, some young men who drew inspiration from the activities from radical groups in India began to form secret political society in Nepal. When the secret societies failed, the Nepalese residing in India began to make preparation for fighting the Rana's from outside. In 1947, they launched an organised non – violent movement in Nepal Tarai which forced the Rana ruler to declare a limited measure of constitutional and political reforms. But in view of the growing popular disaffection against the rule and especially in the context of great political changes in India, these reforms failed to make any impression. Finally, the anti – Rana forces led by the

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<sup>22</sup> Regmi, Mahesh Chandra (1950), *Some aspects of land Reform in Nepal*, Kathmandu: 2-4.

<sup>23</sup> Shaha, Rishikesh (1990), *Politics in Nepal 1980-1990: Referendum, Stalemate and Triumph of People Power*, New Delhi: Manohar: 21-24, Gautam, Rajesh (2005), *Nepali Congress*, New Delhi: Adroit Publishers: 38-40.

Nepali Congress decided to enter their country with a liberation army which culminated in the revolt of 1950 and the fall of the Rana. A number of young men who escaped to India to receive higher education returned to Nepal by the end of the thirties and started social and education movements of new lines. Nepali Congress is important which played an important role in overthrowing the Rana regime.<sup>24</sup>

The Nepali Congress was originally born in foreign soil; it accomplished the biggest revolution in Nepalese history by overthrowing the family rule of the Rana's. Among all the political parties, the Nepali Congress alone played an important role in influencing the development of Nepal during the post – Rana period. Nepali Congress was formally founded in Calcutta on 9 April 1950; its origin goes back to the eventful years preceding the attainment of Indian independence.<sup>25</sup>

### **Origin and Development of the Nepali Congress**

The origin of Nepali Congress can be traced back as a movement against the autocratic Rana regime. At the initial stage the movement started with the formation of "Praja Parishad Party" with the help of King Tribhuvan in 1940.<sup>26</sup> The founding members of the party were Dharma Bhakta Mathema, Dashrath Chand, Sukra Raj Shastri, Gangalal Shrestha, and Tanak Prasad Acharya, with the latter as its Chairman. Among them, the former four members were given death sentences for their activities by the Ranas and being a Brahmin Chairman of the party, Tanak P. Acharya escaped from the death sentence but was imprisoned for life. Seeing the difficulties in organising party structure in Nepal, Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala started to mobilize politically conscious Nepalese scattered in different parts of India, particularly in Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong, Calcutta, Patna, Banaras and Lucknow to form a political party for the envisaged democratic movement. On 1 October 1946, the Benares conference

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<sup>24</sup> Dahal, Ram Kumar (2001), *Constitutional and Political Development in Nepal (till 1994)*, Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar: 17-19, Gupta (1964): 19-20.

<sup>25</sup> Parmanad (1982), *The Nepali Congress since Its Inception A Critical Assessment*, Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation: 14-30.

<sup>26</sup> Gupta (1993): 26-27.

formed the “Akhil Bhartiya Nepali Rastriya Congress” under the chairmanship of Devi Prasad Sapkota with Krishna Prasad Bhattarai as General Secretary.<sup>27</sup>

To strengthen the party, B.P. Koirala tried to use his efforts as much as he could. For this, he met Ganesh Man Singh, a member of the Praja Prashid on 25-26 January 1947, and convinced him in joining to form the Nepali Rastriya Congress party. Ganesh Man Singh insisted on removing the words Akhil Bhartiya” from the name of the party. He also insisted that the party should be called “Praja Parishad”. Bisheshwar Prasad Koirala agree to remove the words “Akhil Bhartiya” from the name of the party, but convinced Ganesh Man that the name of the party should be called Nepali Rastriya Congress due to external political environment. The conference then chose Tanka Prasad Acharya as its chairman who was then in jail, with B. P. Koirala as acting Chairman.<sup>28</sup> This party inter merged with the Nepal Democratic Congress Party formed by the dissident Ranas in a conference at Tiger Hall in Calcutta on April 1950 and became known as Nepali Congress.<sup>29</sup>

### **The Nepali Congress in the Democratic Movement**

Before the emergence of the Nepali Congress, the Jogbani conference of the Nepali Rastriya Congress in 13 April 1947 onwards. The movement started from the Biratnagar Jute Mill under the leadership of Girija Prasad Koirala. Later, the movement picked up momentum in different parts of the country such as Janakpur, Birganj, Ilam, Bhaktpur, Lalitpur, Kathmandu, Sarlahi, Parasi, Bhutwal, Bhagbanpur, and Nepalgunj.<sup>30</sup>

Following the formation of the Nepali Congress, the democratic struggle thus assumed rapid momentum. On 7 November 1950, king Tribhuvan sought political asylum in India for his own security after supporting the democratic movement in the country. The Ranas declared

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<sup>27</sup> Gautam, Rajesh (2005), Nepali Congress, New Delhi: Adroit Publishers: 42-43.

<sup>28</sup> Parmanad (1982): 14-19.

<sup>29</sup> Dharamdasni, Murlidhar (1984), Political Participation and Change in South Asia in the Context of Nepal, Varanasi: Shalimar Publishing House: 2-4.

<sup>30</sup> Dahal (2001): 18-20.



Gyanendra, a grandson of king Tribhuvan, as successor. Two days later, the NC called an emergency meeting at the residence of Subarna Shamsher in Calcutta, and Nepalgunj decided to launch a nation-wide armed struggle in Nepal.<sup>31</sup> Consequently, the Democratic forces captured Birganj and established a people's government in that city.<sup>32</sup> While the autocratic regime failed to march of the democratic forces, the presence of the King in India made it difficult for the Ranas for it deprived them of the legitimacy to rule the country. Eventually, in the famous Delhi agreement signed between the King the Rana Prime Minister and the Nepali Congress, the Ranas agree to hand over power to the King and the democratic forces. On 18 February 1951, King Tribhuvan formed a Rana Congress Coalition government after returning to Nepal and proclaimed his desire to govern through a democratic constitution to be framed by the elected representatives of the people themselves.<sup>33</sup> This watershed event was called "dawn of democracy" in Nepal.<sup>34</sup>

### **The Nepali Congress and Consolidation of Democracy**

The desire of the King, however, could not be fulfilled due to ensuing conflicts between three forces in the country – the King, the Ranas, and the Parties who represented the people. The King desired to be an absolute monarchy, while the Ranas wanted to regain their lost power, and the political parties remained committed in wanting to see neither an absolute monarch in power, nor the re-emergence of the Ranas. On the other hand, some leaders of the party started to show their tilt towards the King, which provided the King enough grounds to neglect the democratic process and allowed him the leverage to change government eight times replacing political leaders who were not in line with his thinking. During his period, the NC had to struggle against policies of not only the King and the Ranas, but also of the opportunist leaders of the small parties. Eventually, by the late 1950s, King Mahendra had to proclaim a date for the first general election in Nepal.

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<sup>31</sup> Parmanad (1982): 34-38.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid: 49.

<sup>33</sup> Joshi, Bhuwan Lal and Leo E Rose (1966), *Democratic Innovations in Nepal*, Berkeley: University of California Press: 87-93.

<sup>34</sup> Mitra (2004): 280.

As all the political parties were engaged in the electoral preparations, the NC held an annual conference to boost the morale of the workers of the party and to prepare to platform for the elections. The election manifesto of the Nepali Congress contained the following provisions.<sup>35</sup>

- To strive to form a democratic socialist state under a constitutional monarch,
- To develop villages,
- To nationalise forests, to abolish the *Birta* system and the zamindari land tenure system and pay due to compensation in case of land acquisitions,
- To set up agriculture banks and to bring stability in currency value,
- To establish key industries under the public sector,
- To adopt a labour act, and
- To maintain friendly relations with neighbouring countries.

Accordingly, elections were held on 18 February 1959, for 109 seats of the House of Representatives. The election recognised only 9 political parties<sup>36</sup> as national parties under election rules. Altogether, 786 candidates contested the elections, out of which the NC received an overwhelming majority in the elections.

For the first time in Nepalese history, the general elections were held with wide participation of the people. But King Mahendra showed disregard for the democratic path by not inviting the popular leader B.P. Koirala to form a new government. He wanted Subarna Shamsheer to be the Prime Minister instead of B.P. Koirala.<sup>37</sup> B.P. Koirala had called the monarchy the irrelevant institution and had viewed to put both Lord Pasupati Nath and the Crown in the museum.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, recognition of the emerging personality of B.P. Koirala by the world

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<sup>35</sup> Chauhan, R. S. (1971), *The Political Development in Nepal 1950-70*, New Delhi: Associated Publishing House: 100.

<sup>36</sup> The Nepali Congress, the Gorkha Parishad, the Nepali Communist Party, the Samyukta Prajatantra Party, the Praja Parishad, the (T.P. Acharya), the Praja Parishad (B.K. Mishra's group), the Tarai Congress, the Nepali Rastriya Congress, and the Praja Tantrik Mahashbha.

<sup>37</sup> Gupta (1993): 148.

<sup>38</sup> Chauhan (1971): 115.

leaders also threatened to marginalize the image of the King thus making him uneasy with Koirala's growing influence in the Nepalese political scene. However, in spite of his own personal reservations, King Mahendra had to call B.P. Koirala to form Nepal's first elected parliamentary government after the elections.

As part of the NC's campaign promises, B.P. Koirala reorganized the state's administration from top to the bottom. Such crucial measures such as nationalisation of forests land reform, abolition of the *Birta* land Zamindari system, fixation of the land ceiling, the protection of peasants' rights progressive land tax, et cetra, were taken. The ruling elites as well as the oppositional parties heavily opposed these measures. Similarly nominated members of the *Maha Sabha* (Upper House) also slowly sided with the big land owners against the land reform programme of the NC government. Outside the Parliament, K.I. Singh openly called for a civil disobedience movement through out the country in November 1959.<sup>39</sup> These crucial measures became suicidal for the NC government.

On discovering its weakness the opposition parties began to demand the resignation of the government. In September, Gorkha Parishad, Praja Parishad, Tarai Congress and Karmvir Mahamandala decided to form a new party known as the National Democratic Front.<sup>40</sup> The opportunists and reactionary leaders of the small party, both from the left and the right, who were in search for weaknesses of the new government joined forces in their diatribe against the Koirala government. Among the defeated leader K.I. Singh, Rang Nath Sharma and Tanak Prasad Acharya declared open war by forming the National Democratic Front. The communist also lined up with the front, and it was later successful in gaining the support of the land owing group in continuing disturbance in different pockets of the country. At the same time a group of former Nepali Congress members led by M.P. Koirala joined the opposition and called on the King to intervene in order to save the country. King Mahendra

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<sup>39</sup> Gupta (1993): 153.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid: 159.

on 15 December 1960, ordered the arrest of the Prime Minister and other ministers, dismissed the government and dissolved the Parliament politics in the country.<sup>41</sup>

After ending the parliamentary democracy in Nepal, King Mahendra took the entire executive, legislative and judiciary powers in his hands and ruled directly by himself. The King adopted all policies that had been followed by The NC. In order to further consolidate the hold of the palace, the special Circumstances control act was imposed in 1961, which not only restricted the activities of Nepalese citizens but also imposed restrictions on the press. After suspension of the parliamentary system, King Mahendra imposed direct rule for two years and proclaimed the monocratic Panchayat system in 1962, calling it an indigenous system suitable to native soil and climate.<sup>42</sup>

Nepali Congress's struggles for democracy further intensified after King Mahendra's autocracy. In 1962, King Mahendra replaced the limited democratic system existing under the 1959, constitution with a new governing system based on the traditional Nepalese village councils, known as *panchayat*.<sup>43</sup> However, the panchayat system was only to boost the legitimacy of the monarchy as the new constitution which came at that time gave the king broad discretionary authority to suspend the basic law and take over cabinet post and suspended the party. The Nepali Congress went into exile in India and started its movement to restore democracy in Nepal B.P. Koirala gave call for the restoration of democracy even by violent means if non-violent methods would not work on 12 February 1969. Subsequently three pronged approach of Nepali Congress emerged for restoration of democracy. Subarna Shamsher tried to work through dialogue and cooperation with the King, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai through non-violent and non-cooperative means at home and B.P. Koirala by armed struggle from exile in India.<sup>44</sup> King Birendra proclaimed to hold a National Referendum

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<sup>41</sup> Parmanad (1982): 289-90.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid: 46-55.

<sup>43</sup> Joshi, and Rose (1966): 395-400.

<sup>44</sup> Hachhethu, Krishna (2002), *Party Building in Nepal: Organization, Leadership and people, A Comparative Study of Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist)*, Kathmandu: Mandala book Point: 53-58.

following student's revolt against Panchayat's repressive measures and Nepali Congress participated at the referendum. On 23 May 1985, Nepali Congress organized a nationwide civil disobedience movement against the Panchayat System in which more than 12000 party workers and sympathizers voluntarily went to jail for several months. On 18 February 1990, it started a nation-wide movement for the restoration of democracy. As a result on 18 April 1990, an interim government was formed under the Prime Ministership of Nepali Congress acting President Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, representing the three forces – King, Nepali Congress, and the Communist party to prepare and enact the Constitution of 1990, to safeguard the Constitutional Monarchy and people's sovereignty with multi-party democratic set-up and hold elections accordingly.<sup>45</sup>

The royal proclamation of 8 April 1990, inaugurated a new era on political parties and allowed a multiparty democratic political system, lifted ban on, political parties and allows a multiparty democratic system to operate.<sup>46</sup> On Friday 9 November 1990, King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah “using power inherent in our selves”, proclaimed Nepal’s fourth constitution in three decades. The constitution of 1990, marks a watershed in the political history of Nepal. The sovereignty has been transferred from the crown to the people and constitutional monarchy together with parliamentary government has been provided. A multiparty system has been guaranteed. Elections were held in April 1991, in July 1994 and again in 1999 and 2008 constitutional assembly election. A popularly elected government is in office at present. The establishment of parliamentary democracy in Nepal is something to be rejoiced as it has been the result of prolonged struggle spread over decades. It brought to an end of 30 years of authoritarian panchayat rule.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Baral, Lok Raj (1994). “The Return of Party Politics in Nepal” *Journal of Democracy*, 5 (1): 123-124.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid: 125-126.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, Bohra, Alok Kumar (2006), “Opportunity, Democracy, and the Exchange of Political Violence: A Subnational Analysis of Conflict in Nepal”, *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 50 (1): 108-128, Dixit, Kanak Mani (2005), “Absolute Monarchy to Absolute Democracy”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40 (15): 1506-1510.

In the post 1990 period, the Nepali Congress appeared successful in expanding their support bases among different sections of society. Nepali Congress's active members increased from approximately 30,000 - 32,000 in the early 1990s to around 250,000 at the end of 1995.<sup>48</sup> With the realization of organizational growth and role multiplication, it has diversified its organizational structures based on division of labour and functional specialization. In addition to the party's main structure and affiliated organizations, it has variety of sub-structures i.e. party in public office composed of the party's elected representatives, coordination committee constituted by a mixture of the party office bearers and the party's elected representatives, several area based departments/committees, each dealing with areas of their own jurisdiction i.e. party organization, research, training, publicity, foreign affairs. This can strengthen struggle for Nepal's political development. However, in the constituent election of 2008, Nepali Congress could not get majority but its role in the peace and nation building is no less significant.<sup>49</sup>

In this study the role of the Nepali congress is the focus. The review of literature gives to an understanding on nature of discourse available on the subject.

### **Review of literature:**

Political party is the least developed area in the study of the Nepali politics. Most of the scholarly works concentrates on the description of political development and analysis of major events and trends in the Nepali politics where in political parties' figure just as a part in the whole. The pioneer authors Chatterji, Gupta, Joshi and Rose and Chauhan have briefly touched upon the background of the successful anti- Rana revolution in 1950-51, and gave comprehensive picture of Nepal's first experience of Democracy in 1951-60. They analyse and explained all the major events and trends of the post- Rana politics relating to constitutional development, formation and change of governments, intra-party and inter-party

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<sup>48</sup> Hachhethu (2002): 74.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid: 73-84.

relations reorganization in administration, economic reform and foreign policy. There are various studies by the experts about democratic movement and political history in Nepal and a few have dealt specifically on the political parties.

### **Nepali Congress and the socio-economic needs of the people of Nepal**

Gupta has thoroughly studied about the democratic development in South Asia and more particularly that of in Nepal. He noted that the fruits of democracy could not reach to the needy sections of the society in Nepal. This is due to the failure of ruling parties to address various socio-economic problems in its totality. He further shows an interesting angle to think about the special demographic structure of Nepal's society which pre-dominantly Hindu. This dominance leaves no chance to communal-based politics and very little chance to ethnic and religious-based politics. On the face of it, the upsurge of various regional political parties in Nepal's soil confirms the fact that the pre-dominance of Nepali Congress in ruling sovereign Nepal has not been much succeed. In this regard, whichever party comes into government needs to address these very basic socio-economic problems. Thus the writer says that the Nepali Congress and various avatars of Nepali Communists may be political rival but not in the sense of class-war between reactionaries and revolutionaries.<sup>50</sup> Khadka gave more or less undue importance to monarch irrespective of its façade form.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, Khadka states that the democratic political development depends on how strong and structured political parties become in establishing sound links between electorates and legislators. Political parties are also instruments of facilitating political transition successfully and peacefully when the government of a particular party fails to perform satisfactorily and another party gets elected. (It is notable here that the dominance of Nepali Congress in Nepali politics under the patronage of sometimes semi-authoritarian and sometimes of constitutional monarch has been proved quite detrimental for the development of a healthy democracy in Nepal.) In this

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<sup>50</sup> Gupta, Anirudha (2000), "Building Democracy in South Asia", *Economic & Political Weekly*, 35 (13): 1071-1074.

<sup>51</sup> Khadka, Narayan (1986), "Crisis in Nepal's Partyless Panchayat System: The Case for More Democracy", *Pacific Affairs*, 59 (3): 429-454.

regard, he states that the political parties in Nepal should be structured and developed along healthy political cultures and traditions. This healthy culture according to him can be developed and enriched only by providing sufficient space to each voice to be raised. Meanwhile, he does not talk about the unrestrained power to opposition in the name of democracy. He suggests that the Communist party or parties in opposition should set up an upper limit for opposing the ruling party and a lower limit for compromise. The upper and lower limits should be determined by the parameters of democracy. In this way he seems to give the dual role to democracy: democracy as a means and as an end. He further argued for the internal democracy in the parties and more of in Nepali Congress so that party-politics could not become a family business. By this way the article tends to attract the attention of political parties to the disease of politics as a family business which is now a common phenomenon in the countries of South Asia.<sup>52</sup>

### **Nepali Congress amid the wave of factionalism**

Gupta argued that the widening gap between the pro- and anti- Koirala factions in Nepali Congress shows that the 'troika' system on the basis of which the party has functioned has become an obstacle to the growth of democracy in Nepal. Instead of keeping control over warring factions at various levels the troika has sown the seeds of dissension. This is the source of Nepal's political instability.<sup>53</sup> Parmanad explains how Nepali Congress functioned during its formative years such as in when it formed government during November 1951- August 1952 and when it was in opposition from May 1952 to November 1958. Nepali Congress's tenure as a caretaker government from 15 May 1958 to 27 May 1959 is also dealt with and it can give us an insight into how it functioned in critical times. The book also analyses Nepali Congress's mandate, its performance and defections within the party. The book argued that the wave of factionalism in the form of pro- and anti- Koirala sentiments

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<sup>52</sup> Khadka, Narayan (1993), "Democracy and Development in Nepal: Prospects and Challenges" *Pacific Affairs*, 66 (1): 44-71.

<sup>53</sup> (1994), "Nepali Congress and Post Panchayat Politics", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 29 (43): 2798-2801.



has a strong effect on the Nepal's politics. This factionalism in Nepali Congress has fomented the wave of separatism and factionalism in various parts of the country. This situation has proven as a major reason behind the long-run unrest in Nepal's politics and society. Further the prevalence of the forces of factionalism loosened the clutch of Nepali Congress over Nepal's politics.<sup>54</sup>

## **Party Building in Nepal**

Hachhethu has based on both archival research and field study who critically examines the party building process, especially that of the Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal, United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) in the post 1990 period, following the changes in the parties goal and activities. The book concentrates on expansion, system, harmony and dynamism – four inter-related components as indicators of party building and expands on how the components interplay in the Party building process. It also attempts to find answers that relate to party building of the Nepali Congress and CPN-UML and why they have relatively been more successful than other political parties in expanding their support bases. The above mentioned components of party-building in a country are not complete without incorporating another component of political awareness among the common people of the country. Thus, the book missed a useful component to be incorporated to gives true meaning of existence of a party.<sup>55</sup> Gupta gives the historical background of the political process in Nepal. He analyses the constitutional changes in Nepal between 1950 and 1960. The study analyses why despite the success of democracy in the initial period it could not sustain the process. His book explains that the political unawareness was the major reason behind the sluggish pace of democracy in Nepal. The lack of political awareness along with expansion, system, harmony and dynamism of a political party may not be helpful for the all

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<sup>54</sup> Permanad (1982), *The Nepali Congress since Its Inception A Critical Assessment*, Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation.

<sup>55</sup> Hachhethu, Krishna (2002), *Party Building in Nepal: Organization, Leadership and people, A Comparative Study of Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist)*, Kathmandu: Mandala book Point

comprehensive and sustainable democratic development in the country. It also promotes the centralization of power in a few hands and thus hinders the path for an inclusive participation. The appendices of the book provides good information to further study as it compile various information adopted by the leaders and latter written by them.<sup>56</sup> Further, Bajracharya *et al.* presents a detailed political history of Nepal. How Prithvinarayan Shah and Rana's came to power has been dealt with. The book also deals with how the people's movement started in Nepal and helped to form democratic government. India's role in Nepal's political development has been critically examined. The book states that the presence of India's interest has attracted the attention of extra-regional forces in the very politics of Nepal. India and China have their direct rival interest in this landlocked country. In this regard the politics of Nepal is affected by the involvement of these two powerful neighbours.<sup>57</sup>

### **Nepali Congress and leadership challenges**

Chatterji gives another perspective in understanding the development of the Nepali Congress (NC) from the time of its inception to the post referendum period. Based on his interviews with B.P. Koirala, Chatterji unfolds many inside stories of high politics that had developed around the personality of B.P. Koirala. The author also covers a wide spectrum of Nepali politics, i.e. internal politics of the NC, its ideology of democracy and socialism, its changing strategies from confrontation to national reconciliation, and conflict between the NC and the King.<sup>58</sup> Gellner and Hachhethu give an idea about the democratic process in the grass roots level in Nepal. The role of the leadership for Nepali Democracy is getting focus in some articles of the book. This book provides a useful insight to compare Nepali Congress with

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<sup>56</sup> Gupta, Anirudha (1993), *Politics in Nepal: A study of Post Rana Political Developments and Party Politics*, Bombay: Allied Publishers.

<sup>57</sup> Bajracharya, B.R. et al. (1993), *Political Development in Nepal*, New Delhi: Anmol Publication Pvt Ltd.

<sup>58</sup> Chatterji, Bhola (1977), *Nepal's Experiment with Democracy*, New Delhi: Ankur Publishing House.

India's Congress in the initial periods of their independence.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, Gautam has analysed the party's existence in Nepal's political system and provides information on how the party fought for the democratic rights against the Rana regime and establishment of the people oriented government. The nature of the struggle led by the Nepali Congress has focused in the book. This book also analyse India's link with the Nepali Congress. It demonstrates that unlike India, Nepal had fought two consecutive wars one with the British Colonialism and second with the Rana regime to protect the democratic interests of the people of Nepal. In the initial decades of the emergence of Nepali Congress in its fight against Rana regime, some leaders of the Nepali Congress got much prominence but that was not sufficient to fulfil the demanding aspirations of the people which can be better done by a charismatic personality. But the main focus remains up to the 1950 Delhi conference.<sup>60</sup>

### **Nepali politics in the era of Panchayat System**

Shaha analyses a wide spectrum of Nepali politics from the inception of the panchayat system to its demise. Shaha mainly focussed on the inside of the politics of the Panchayat regime, which he treated as a patrimonial system. His most remarkable contribution is the exploration of authority system and composition of elites in the panchayat system. Shaha identifies the groups and individuals in the framework of the patrimonial elite of Nepal with the King at the apex. He elaborates the nature of authority system characterized as personality and informal based and determined by the proximity to the centre of power.<sup>61</sup> Likewise Baral (1977/1983), analyses Nepali politics from the time of expiry of parliamentary system to the post-referendum period in the framework of the centrality of oppositional roles of political parties. The author classifies political forces into three groups: the palace and pancha, the Nepali Congress, and the communists each confronting the others. He examines the overall role of

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<sup>59</sup> Gellener, David N. and Krishna Hachhethu (eds.) (2008), *Local Democracy in South Asia: Micro-process of Democratization in Nepal and Its Neighbors*, New Delhi: Sage Publications.

<sup>60</sup> Gautam, Rajesh (2005), *Nepali Congress*, New Delhi: Adroit Publishers.

<sup>61</sup> Shaha, Rishikesh (1978), *Nepali Politics: Retrospect and Prospect*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, Shaha (1982), *Essays in the Practice of Government in Nepal*, Delhi: Manohar Publications.

banned political parties against the panchayat system in the theoretical perspective of systematic and extra-systemic opposition. His view is that both the NC and communists used the system of graduate constituency and student politics as means for systemic opposition through their own front organizations. He find out that the larger part of the parties' activities, characterized as extra systemic opposition, suffered because of factionalism in the communist movement and the lack of internal and external support to the struggles being launched by the Nepali Congress. Why and how the Nepali Congress changed its strategies from confrontation to cooperation to re-confrontation and, finally to reconciliation has analysed by the author.

### **Nepal's Democracy at a crossroads**

Upreti analyses the transition of the Nepal's political system to the democratic republic. The democracy and the institutionalism came in Nepal's Politics is the main theme of the book. In the book he analyses the 2008 Constituent Assembly Election as transition to democratic republic.<sup>62</sup> Baral analyses the election and Governance in Nepal theoretically and empirically. The latest developments in Nepal, sacking of the Coalition Governments and the declaration of emergency have been dealt in this study.<sup>63</sup> Upreti analysed Democratic movement in Nepal in the post 1990's period. To him in the post 1990's sustenance of democracy has been a major issue of the Nepali Politics. The People are aspiring for a new phase of democracy and the leadership is passing through a testing time. So the leadership of political party at the local level have helped in the democratic process.<sup>64</sup>

We have witnessed transition of politics in Nepal since 1990's. The multi-party democracy, constitutional monarchy, people's war led by the Maoists and the abolition of monarchy and

<sup>62</sup> Upreti, B.C. (2010), *Nepal: Transition to Democratic Republican State (2008 Constituent Assembly Election)*, New Delhi: Kalpaz Publication.

<sup>63</sup> Baral, Lok Raj (2005), *Election and Governance in Nepal*, New Delhi: Manohar Publications.

<sup>64</sup> Upreti, B. C. (2007), *Nepal Democracy at Cross Roads (Post 1990 Dynamics Issues and Challenges)*, New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, Distributors.



the constituent assembly election all happened during this period. In such a politically volatile environment, the roles of different political parties having different ideologies and different interests, have gained much prominence. Notably, the prevailing international as well as domestic situation in terms of the emerging regional political parties in Nepal demands a more representative political regime. Nepal can no longer be in the lap of semi-authoritarian or constitutional monarchy regime which is detrimental to the political aspiration of the people of Nepal. On the face of it, the study will examine the role of Nepali Congress in bringing about democratic movement in a cohesive and comprehensive way in pursuance of the aspirations of the marginalized people in terms of emerging regional political parties.

Political parties as representatives of diverse socio-political and economic views are the life blood of democracy in a country. They ensure the participation of different class and walks of life in the nation- building and decision making process. In this regard political parties are the integral part for bringing democracy in any country. The present study therefore will focus on the role of Nepali Congress in Nepal's democratic movement. The chosen period 1990-2009 of the study is quite appropriate to study the procedural furtherance of the effort by pro-democracy propagator. By the late 1980s the banned parties, notably the Nepali Congress and the communist party of Nepal (CPN) and its offspring, took the lead in imposing the hollowness of the royal regime. For the first time in the year 1990, communist parties had formed a United Left Front (ULF) to show solidarity with the Nepali Congress initiated movement for the restoration of democracy. Furthermore, the emergences of many regional and local parties show the level of politicization of people in Nepal for their democratic rights. The need of the hour is to accommodate the varying interests of the emerging regional political parties into a more cohesive arrangement so that process of constitution building could be smoothed.

Nepal is a unique case of study whereupon the transition from constitutional monarchy to democracy has begun very recently. The emergence of different regional political parties in

Nepal has revealed the inappropriateness of the system of constitutional monarchy and so called nationalist party. Notably, it is a great challenge before Nepali Congress to build a constitution based on consensus. To tackle the major ideological differences between mainstream parties and Maoist along with covering the political aspirations of regional political parties would be a major hurdle to build constitution based on consensus. Given this background, to examine the role of Nepali Congress in the democratic movement in Nepal presents an interesting case to see the democratic movement in the country consisting of different ideologies based political parties.

Following from the rationale and scope of the study, the research seeks to answer some pertinent questions. Has Nepali Congress been able to spread the democratic culture in the Nepali society? What was the role of Nepali Congress in the peace process in Nepal? How has Nepali Congress contributed in the Foreign Policy of Nepal during the period of its rule? Is Nepali Congress an inclusive party consisting of people from hills and plains? Is Nepali Congress representative of peoples and communities of Nepal such as Tribes, Madhesh, Dalits and Women? The research also addresses the some basic objectives such as the role of Nepali Congress in the democratic process of Nepal from 1990 to 2009. The organization, structure and leadership of Nepali Congress.

Taking into consideration of the above mentioned research question and objectives the research attempts to find out three hypotheses. Firstly the democratic movement in Nepal were primarily led by the Nepali Congress. Secondly Intra Party feud led to the weakening of the party and third one is The exclusion of marginalized communities has narrowed the political base of the Nepali Congress.

The methodology of proposed study would utilize the primary and the secondary sources and their interpretation making the research question amply clear. It would be analytical in nature define the approaches forwarded so far on the related topic. Variables would be refined and all the efforts for their explanatory sustenance will be made. The study would

look at the political history, Democratic movement and the role of party in Nepali's political system with special reference to Nepali congress and would critically analyse its role in over all democratic development in Nepal. The primary data would include documents of the government agencies, party manifesto, press release, and organizational report. The secondary source of data will include books, news reports, various journal articles, newspaper clipping, and various academic papers. The study will also use information and data collected through various seminars, symposium, and think tank analysis of worldwide organization interviews and internet sources and document for relevant websites would also be used.

This chapter begin with discussing in the Nepali Congress: Organizational Structure and Leadership. This would analyse the organisational structure and the role of leadership of NC. The third chapter about the Democratic Movements 1990 and 2005, the role of Nepali Congress's in the establishment of the multiparty democracy in 1990 and 2005 will be the main focus of the chapter. And the fourth one basically deals with Nepali Congress and its relations with the other Political Actors such as monarchy, CPN (UML), Maoists. It also focuses on Nepali Congress role in government and opposition from 1990 to 2009. Finally the research concludes by seeking to draw answers through the analysis under taken in the proceeding chapters. It would review the hypothesis based on the analysis undertaken in the chapters.

## Chapter 2

### Nepali Congress: Organizational Structure and Leadership

The origin of Nepali congress is traced back as a movement against the autocratic Rana regime. At the initial stage the first political party formed in Nepal was the "Prajā Parishad Party"<sup>65</sup> with the help of King Tribhuvan in 1935. Some leading members of the Parishad were Tanaka Prasad Acharya, Dashrath Chandra, Ram Hari Sharma and Dharma Bhakta. The Parishad's aim was end to Rana government and establish a democratic government under the aegis of the monarch. Therefore, in 1937-38, Tanka Prasad and few others visited India, Burma and some other places to learn more about the methods of secret terrorist activities to overthrow Rana regime.<sup>66</sup>

B. P. Koirala call for the united struggle against the Ranas and for this purpose *Akhil Bhartiya Nepali Rastriya Congress* was formed in Varanasi on 31 October 1946. The first convention of the party was held in Calcutta from the 24 to 26 January 1947 in which the word Akhil Bhartiya was dropped and it was renamed as 'Nepali Rastriya Congress'. The party aimed at establishing a democratic and responsible government in Nepal after overthrowing the autocratic rule of the Ranas.<sup>67</sup> The party also decided to launch a movement against the Ranas but it was suppressed.<sup>68</sup>

In August 1948 a new party called 'Nepal Democratic Congress' was formed in Calcutta under the leadership of two exiled 'C' class Ranas<sup>69</sup> namely Mahavir Shamsheer and Subarna Shamsheer Rana. This party also aimed at overthrowing the Rana rule in Nepal. On 19 April 1950, both the

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<sup>65</sup> Parmanad (1982), *The Nepali Congress since Its Inception A Critical Assessment*, Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation: 8.

<sup>66</sup> Gupta, Anirudha (1993), *Politics in Nepal: A study of Post Rana Political Developments and Party Politics*, Delhi: Kalinga Publications: 10, Kumar, Satish (1962), *Rana Polity in Nepal origin and growth*, New York: Asia Publishing House: 26-27.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid: 165-167.

<sup>68</sup> Chatterji, Bhola (1967), *A Study of Recent Nepalese Politics*, Calcutta, Majumdar, Kanchan M. (1975), *Nepal and the Indian Nationalist Movement*, Calcutta.

<sup>69</sup> "A" class Ranas were the direct, legitimate offspring of Ranas, who could dine with any high-caste Chhetri family; "B" class Ranas usually were born of second wives and could take part in all forms of social interaction with high-caste Chhetris except the sharing of boiled rice; and "C" class Ranas were the offspring of wives and concubines of lower status with whom interdining was forbidden. The "A" class Ranas could fill the highest positions in the army or civil administration, but "B" or "C" class Ranas at that time could only reach the level of colonels in the army and could never become prime ministers. (<http://countrystudies.us/nepal/15.htm> accessed on 10.7.11).



Nepali Rastriya Congress and the Nepal Democratic Congress merged in to one to form the Nepali Congress.<sup>70</sup>

The formation of the Nepali Congress party was mainly due to the atrocities of the Rana rulers of Nepal. Therefore, its chief aim was to overthrow the Ranacracy. The party came into existence due to the efforts of those young, educated Nepalese who were living in exile in India and who had some sort of political training by participating in the Indian National Movement. It was therefore, natural that they were inspired by nationalistic inspiration. As in the Indian National Congress, western liberal political philosophy became a focal point of their political activities and aspirations. They were also committed to the establishment of parliamentary democracy.<sup>71</sup>

The leaders of the Indian National movement became their ideal. Under the influence of socialist leader of India, the Nepali Congress leader adopted socialistic orientation, and its stalwarts like Late Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala, Nepali Congress supreme Ganesh Man Singh, G. P. Koirala, and K. P. Bhattarai remained committed to the ideal of socialism. The party that was born in India and started its activities on Indian soil in the initial phase could not be otherwise. Hence, the Nepali Congress leaders always looked towards India for their support and sympathy. On the other hand, Indian political leaders have shown interest in the activities of the Nepali Congress first in the anti Rana movement of the 1950, and later in the movement for the restoration of democracy in 1990.<sup>72</sup>

Till half-way through of its three-decades long struggle again the authoritarian Panchayat system, the NC had no formal organization except its central committee that operated from exile in India until 1968 and thereafter in the home country. Most of its prominent leaders and workers were either in prison or in exile creating a situation of nonexistence of its activists inside the country. Particularly in the hill areas, the NC was eliminated by two factors one was the repressive character of the Panchayat regime. While pursuing its policy of suppression against the NC, the

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<sup>70</sup> Parmanand (1982): 27-28.

<sup>71</sup> Gupta (1993): 164-166.

<sup>72</sup> Parmanand (1982): 17.

Panchayat, in its initial phase, used traditional rural elites (Zamindars, Talukdars, Keepatwalas, Zimmawalas, Patwaris) instructing them to hand over the 'anti-national' people to the police.<sup>73</sup> Their role was replaced by the Pancha and the administration, which harassed the Congress branded people, particularly in the rural area of hill district in every possible way. The other reason for the diminishing NC presence in the hill areas was migration of the Congress activists. Besides the Panchayat regime's deliberate attempt at clearing the NC from rural areas by all possible means, economic factors were also behind the migration of most of the bona fide Congress workers from the hills to adjoining Tarai districts and cities. This tendency almost eliminated the NC in many parts of the country, particularly in the eastern and far-western hills.<sup>74</sup> The case of Dhankuta, hill district of eastern Nepal, represented a pattern of declining strength of the NC in most parts of the country, but the pattern was not universal. However, Dhanusha, a Tarai district, could be a good example to show how the NC had, time and again, showed its effective presence, at least in some parts of the country, despite the Panchayat's repression. The NC, Dhanusha had actively participated in different forms and stages of democratic struggle: unsuccessful attempt to assassinate King Mahendra in 1962, participation in the students' nationwide agitation in 1971 against the Panchayat, new education plan leading to the loss of life of two local pro-Congress students (Kameshwar and Kusheshwar), successful campaign for multiparty during the 1980 referendum, arrest of several workers in the 1985 Satyagraha, effective people's mobilization in the 1990 mass movement, with the loss of lives of six local people etc.<sup>75</sup> The NC Dhanusha's sustained struggle against the authoritarian Panchayat system suggested that the party retained some influence in urban areas and the Tarai districts.<sup>76</sup> Because of the geographical proximity of the Nepali Tarai to India and the presence of several Congress leaders in exile just across the border the party retained its influence in the Tarai areas to a

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<sup>73</sup> Baral, Lok Raj (1977), *Oppositional Politics in Nepal*, New Delhi: Abhinav Publications: 59.

<sup>74</sup> Parmanand (1982): 325-30.

<sup>75</sup> Hachhethu, Krishna (2002), *Party Building in Nepal: Organization, Leadership and people, A Comparative Study of Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist)*, Kathmandu: Mandala book Point: 45-46.

<sup>76</sup> The Terai incorporates 20 of Nepal's 75 districts, includes close to half the population of Nepal's 26 million citizens, and houses well over half of Nepal's agriculture and industry sector outputs.

greater extent than in other parts of the country.<sup>77</sup>

The growth of education in the country this curtailed the number of students going to India for studies, the people of the Tarai had easy access to Indian colleges to study, particularly science, medicine and engineering which were not available in their home town. Most of these students were influenced by the NC leaders in exile and returned as supporters of the party. Another reason why the NC's influence was concentrated in urban areas and the Tarai districts was that the new generation of the NC was a product of educational institutes and most high schools and almost all campus are located in the headquarters of the districts.<sup>78</sup>

The ups and down in organizational development of the NC were conditioned by the pre vailing political situation and events. Its membership reached the number 600 thousand<sup>79</sup> when it opened membership to the people of over 15 years of age during the experiment of democracy in the 1950s.<sup>80</sup> The influence of this biggest party, which had two-thirds majority in the parliament,<sup>81</sup> went down massively after king Mahendra dismantled democracy and imposed ban on parties. After the NC abandoned its armed struggle in 1962 and adopted the line of 'loyal cooperation' in 1968 the tendency of old Congress men deserting the party accelerated.<sup>82</sup>

In the late 1970s, when the Suverna group disassociated from it, the NC had only thirty member of the dissolved parliament in its fold.<sup>83</sup> The NC, therefore, relied on new cadres the product of the post 1960 period – for its organizational survival. In the early 1970s, this new generation was attracted to B. P. Koirala's idea of armed struggle to topple the panchayat system. The NC attempt of reorganising the party mostly by its young Turks could not become effective because B. P. Koirala's plan of launching full-flagged armed revolution was cancelled forever after the

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<sup>77</sup> Hachhethu (2002): 46.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Gupta (1993): 176.

<sup>80</sup> *Text of the constitution of Nepali Congress, 1952.*

<sup>81</sup> General elections were held in Nepal on 18 February 1959. The result was a victory for the Nepali Congress, which won 74 of the 109 seats. (Joshi, Bhuwan Lal and Leo E Rose (1966), *Democratic Innovations in Nepal*, Berkeley: University of California Press: 295-96).

<sup>82</sup> Hachhethu (2002): 46.

<sup>83</sup> Hoftun, et al. (1999), *People Politics and Ideology: Democracy and Social Change in Nepal*, Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point: 91.

failure of an armed uprising in 1975. Hence, the NC along the different course with its policy of national reconciliation with the King, which did not have much appeal to the new generation. However, the proclamation of referendum gave renewed strength to the position of the NC. There was an influx into the Congress of both the old and new activist. Most of its old cadres who had joined the panchayat came back into the party. Consequently in 1981 “the NC had strength of 5000 active and 50000 thousands ordinary members” according to its president.<sup>84</sup> But following the defeat of multiparty camp there was a reversal, as in the past after the coup of December 1960, and a substantial number of people left the party.<sup>85</sup> The potential of reviving its organizational strength was there as a consequence of the development of the favourable national and international environment in the late 1980s, for the democratic movement in Nepal.<sup>86</sup>

The NC leadership realised the need of its local branches since its Patna (India) convention in 1977, which constituted ad hoc district committees in 25 out of 75.<sup>87</sup> It expanded to around 55 districts during the last days of the panchayat system. The initial for the revival of the party organization down to the district level was accompanied by the return of B. P. Koirala from exile in December 1976, with his policy of national reconciliation with the King. As a result of this reconciliation policy, the party leaders and workers were allowed to leave as peaceful citizens while retaining the party identity. They indeed openly involved themselves in political activities in the relatively relaxed political atmosphere after the 1980 referendum. But the NC had several constraints since it operated as an open party despite the ban under the panchayat regime. An open party has its own limitation in developing its organizational network. Since the NC rank and file leaders were identified, their activities were always under surveillance of the administration. Besides the NC had long relied on its charismatic leader B. P. Koirala. In a charismatic party the workers would be naturally oriented to towards the leadership rather than the organization. Moreover, the party organization had no role in the NC’s long pursued national

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<sup>84</sup> Baral (1983), *Nepal's Politics of Referendum: A Study of Groups, Personalities and Trends*, New Delhi: Vikash Publishing House: 176.

<sup>85</sup> Parmanand (1982): 329.

<sup>86</sup> Hachhethu (2002): 47.

<sup>87</sup> D. P. Kumar (1980), *Nepal: Year of Decision*, New Delhi: Vikash Publishing House: 48.

reconciliation policy, which was exclusively confined to a dialogue between B. P. Koirala and king Birendra. One hard reality was that the NC never actively gave any priority for building its organization effectively in the changed context.<sup>88</sup>

### **Composition: Rank and Leadership**

The Nepali Congress was a pluralist party. Its rank and leadership was composed of such diverse sector and elements as wealthy Ranas, big and small landowners, poor peasants, intellectuals, student and small businessmen in towns. To some extent, this plurality of the Congress was caused by the fact that during the pre-revolution period, its recruitment came from all sundry elements who wanted to end the Rana system. This mutual sharing of a common goal brought students, ex-soldiers and later an influential section of the exiled Ranas and their followers in the party. After the revolution, for a long time, the Nepali congress depended on the peasantry of eastern Tarai especially of Biratnagar, Saptari, Mohattari and Rantahat, for active support. During this period, it worked more or less as a regional party. But after 1956, it made resolute efforts to enlist new members from other groups and regions to become more national in composition. Congress also represent a heterogeneous combination of different castes, communities and occupational groups like the Brahmans, Newars, Muslims, Limbus, the Rai and so on.<sup>89</sup>

The different problems which came for discussion at the seventh conference made the Congress leadership well aware of the need to build a strong organised party. For the first time, great stress was laid on the observance of discipline by the ranks and proposals was made to evolve a method of promoting or demoting party members according to the merits of their work. A disciplinary committee was also set up “to vitalise the party and compile a comprehensive code of conduct for party members. Similarly, in order to co-ordinate the works of parliament and mass wings of

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<sup>88</sup> Hachhethu (2002): 48.

<sup>89</sup> Kumar, D. P. (1980), *Nepal: Year of Decision*, New Delhi: Vikash: 185-86.

the party, a parliamentary committee was elected with the Prime Minister as Chairman. The Congress legislature wing was controlled by a secretary and a chief whip.<sup>90</sup>

Nevertheless, in a party such as Nepali Congress, certain amount of tension and conflict was unavoidable at both levels of the ranks and the leadership. Sometimes regional groups or factions became too powerful for the party leader to control. Thus during 1951-52, many Congress workers in western Tarai supported K. I. Singh's revolt because they resented the control of the party organisation by men who mostly belonged to Eastern Tarai. At other times, some factions or group leaders opposed the "Big Four" leadership to cause splits in the party. Among many such splits, those led by D. R. Regmi and M. P. Koirala were outstanding.<sup>91</sup>

Again, this kind of factional rivalries and threats to party-unity often forced the Congress leaders to make compromises with principles and, to that extent they did so. The Nepali Congress failed to evolve ideological clarity in its programme. Some considerations forced the leadership to take every care to have all caste, classes and geographic areas represented at the time of screening the candidates for the election the tendency towards caste and regional affiliations grew stronger in the party. This was made evident at the seventh conference where members from the hill areas charged the leadership with showing favouritism towards the Tarai people. In his presidential address to the conference, B. P. Koirala himself admitted that "Parochialism" had gained "added vitality" in the party which had been responsible for impeding the constructive programmes undertaken by the government.<sup>92</sup>

The leadership of the party like its rank and file also appeared to be pluralistic, in so far as three of the Big four leaders – B. P. Koirala, Suvarna Shamsheer, S. P. Upadhyay and Ganesh Man Singh – who largely lived in exile, although differing from one another at times, had a cordial

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<sup>90</sup> Gupta, Anirudha (1993), *Politics in Nepal 1950-1960*, Delhi: Kalinga Publication: 183-84.

<sup>91</sup> Gupta (1993): 186.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid: 187.

and workable equation among themselves. They kept on meeting and sorting out their differences.<sup>93</sup>

In 1970, after the death of Suvarna Shamsher some visible changes appeared in the state of party. Immediately before his death, Suvarna Shamsher had handed over the presidency of the party to B. P. Koirala. Observers had expected that B. P. Koirala, the undisputed leader of the party would be carrying the entire rank and file with him. But because of various factors, the Nepali Congress split in to various factions. People having faith in democracy and the deals of the Nepali Congress still to believe that Koirala would find some workable solution to bring the entire rank and file of the party under his leadership. This was not a difficult task in view of the impending referendum. What was needed, was a bit of accommodation and understanding, for there was no difference between the two factions – one led by Koirala and the other led by S. P. Upadhyay – over the importance of, and the issues involved in the proposed referendum.<sup>94</sup>

In 1980, leaders of both factions of the Nepali Congress have been touring various parts of the Kingdom and complaining for the multi-party system in the proposed referendum. Despite persistent bickering among the leaders of the two factions, the efforts of all are directed towards the victory of the multi-party system. Immediately after B. P. Koirala's death, Girija Prasad Koirala, his brother and the general secretary of the party, said that the out-law Nepali Congress would continue with the departed leader's reconciliation policy, but might adopt some new tactics including Satyagraha, when appropriate.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> B. P. Koirala is by caste a Brahman, who received his educational and political training in India. His early association with Indian socialist leaders shaped his later radical ideas about socialism. Subarna Shamsher is a wealthy Rana whose liberal views wielded respect among the Congress ranks. He was also educated in India and is considered to be an expert on economic matters. Ganesh Man Singh belongs to be a respectable official family of the Newar community in Kathmandu. He has little school education and his connections with India are minimal. In early youth he had joined the Praja Parishad and probably, his unsophisticated views were responsible for his uncompromising attitudes and fiery temper. In the party he was known to be the leader of the most radical wing. S. P. Upadhyay is a well educated Brahman of the priestly family attached to the family of Subarna Shamsher. In politics he was more conservative than liberal, but his organising capacity gave him a unique position in the party. Gupta (1993): 186.

<sup>94</sup> Gupta, Anirudha (1994), "Nepali Congress and Post Panchayat Politics", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 29 (43): 2798-2801. Parmanad (1982): 414 - 415.

<sup>95</sup> Phadnis, Urmila (1981), "Nepal the Politics of Referendum", *Pacific Affairs*, 54 (3): 431-454.

**Table 2:1**

**Result of the Referendum, May 1980**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage of total</b>
Total Electorate	7,192,451	
Total Votes Polled	4,813,486	66.9
Invalid Votes	372,069	7.3
Votes for Panchayat System	2,433,452	54.8
Votes For Multi-Party System	2,007,965	45.2

Source "Nepal the Politics of Referendum"<sup>96</sup>

**Table: 2:2**

**District by Percentage of Voters Turnout**

<b>Percentage of voters Turnout</b>	<b>Number of Districts</b>
More than 90 %	2
80%-89%	6
70%-79%	24
60%-69%	20
50%-59%	18
40%-49%	4
30%-39%	1
<b>Total Number of Districts</b>	<b>75</b>

Source "Nepal the Politics of Referendum"<sup>97</sup>

After the referendum panchayat partyless system option got a majority in 54 out of the 75 district of Nepal. The highest percentage of pro-Panchayat votes was recorded in Dolpo (96.4%), the lowest in Bhaktpur (34.4%). The highest scores for the multiparty system options were recorded

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.



in Bhaktpur (65.6%), Udaipur (65.1%), Sirha (64%) and Bardiya (62.1%). In general multiparty system option performed better in areas with higher literacy levels.<sup>98</sup>

After the referendum general election were held in Nepal on 12 May 1986. As political parties were banned at the time, all 1,548 candidates ran as independents.<sup>99</sup> This period was very crucial for party system, in this time Nepali Congress or other political parties struggled for survival. In this period a lots of NC workers left the party and contested the party less panchayat system.<sup>100</sup>

In the 1986 election to the national panchayat, the Nepali Congress, despite strong resentment among the cadres, continue to the policy of electoral boycott. On the other hand many of the outlawed political parties participated in the elections and registered a satisfactory performance. For instance, communist secured 16 seats. Actually the Nepali Congress leadership was strongly divided over the issue of contesting the 1986 election. One group was in favoured of reconciliation with the king and believed that certain reforms could be introduced before the election. But the other did not. As a result the party could not take a concrete decision early and a situation of indecisiveness and confusion prevailed for some time. The Nepali Congress leaders were invited by the government to discuss the issue of freedom of speech, impartial atmosphere in election, ban on political parties, etc., raised by it but talks failed. The party's belated decision to keep itself away from the elections had resulted in revolt among its cadres who were in favour of participating the elections. A number of party members had contested the election independently. The party were more frustrated because initially they had been instructed to prepare themselves for elections. Later on, the party could not launch a nationwide complain to convince the people about its stand. The decision to boycott the elections could not exert much influence on voters as on an average the voters turnout was 60 percent.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Shaha, Rishikesh (1990), *Politics in Nepal: 1980-1991*, Delhi: Manohar Publications: 69-70.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid: 136.

<sup>100</sup> Baral, Lok Raj (1987), "Nepal in 1986: Problems of Political Management", *Asian Survey*, 27 (2): 173-180.

<sup>101</sup> Baral, Lok Raj (1987), "Nepal in 1986: Problem of Political Management", *Asian Survey*, 27 (2): 173-180.

On the country the Nepali Congress policy to boycott elections had in a way provided strength to the panchayat system. It was clear that the party lacked a clearer cut policy. It also became certain that there were differences among its leaders. There was no proper assessment of the strength and weakness of the party. It was feared that in the context of the growing dissatisfaction among the cadres the party would further lose its support base. Keeping these developments in view the party decided to participate in the 1987 local panchayat elections. But its performance was quite dismal.<sup>102</sup>

After the 1991, election, the Nepali Congress parliamentary party elected G. P. Koirala as its leader and question of forming the council of ministers again arose. With the formation of new ministry K. P. Bhattarai expressed his doubts about the and supremacy of Koirala by saying that “if popular leader Ganeshman Singh was able to context the election he would have been the Prime Minister according to people’s like”. When the Koirala tried to function as supreme of government, conflict between Prime Minister and other Ministers belonging to other groups became so intense that Koirala dropped six Ministers from his council of ministers. These were supporters of Ganesh Man Singh and Bhattarai Ganesh Man Singh charged that Koirala was following the path of Matrika Prasad Koirala and not of Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala. After the criticism and counter criticism became the order of day in Nepali Congress, his own party members charged Koirala to be uneducated, uncultured and follower of Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman. They demanded to change the leadership of parliamentary party.<sup>103</sup>

The by election in two constituencies which were held on 7 February 1994, deeply affected the politics of Nepal and also intensified grouping in Nepali Congress and clearly divided into groups led by Prime Minister Koirala and party President Bhattarai. Bhattarai was a candidate in this by-election from Kathmandu valley constituency and was defeated for the second time by

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Pramod Tiwari (1996), “Prime Minister of Nepal Constitutional and Political Dimension, in P. K. Kaushik (ed.), *New Dimension of Government and Politics of Nepal*, South Asian Publisher, New Delhi: 68-70.

CPN (UML) candidate Vidya Bhandari. After this defeat Bhattarai and his supporters openly accused Koirala of 'Sabotaging the party president's election campaign'.<sup>104</sup>

Koirala was fully prepared to face the challenges of Bhattarai faction or dissident of his party. In the meeting of Central Working Committee held 19 February 1994, Bhattarai joined others demanding of Koirala's resignation. Koirala replied "I would rather face the house – then resign at the behest of the some members of the CWC who have been mounting pressure on me".<sup>105</sup>

According to the party central committee member, it was Koirala who was responsible for Bhattarai's defeat in the 1994 by elections. Koirala's supporters in the faction ridden Nepali Congress held Bhattarai responsible for pulling down the Koirala government, which was installed in 1991 leading to the November 1994 midterm polls, in which no party secured a majority. Besides factional rivalry, which has almost split the party several times, differences between Bhattarai and Koirala were believed to have been responsible for the Nepali Congress losing the 1994 election.<sup>106</sup>

## **Organizational Base**

Expansion of social base of the NC has proceeded in parallel with their organizational development. In the past before 1990, they had minimal organization that was designed in line with their ideological goal with its objective to over through the partyless panchayat system and its professed goal *Naulo Janbad*. But the party structure framed in the pre-democracy era had become inadequate to meet the challenges of new roles and responsibilities they are undertaking as competitive parties after the restoration of democracy. Thus, following the transformation of the NC from movement and underground organizations respectively into mass based parties, they were put under pressure to device a new system to regulate, coordinate and integrate their overall

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<sup>104</sup> Upreti, B. C. (1993), *The Nepali Congress: An Analysis of the Party's Performance in the General Election and its Aftermath*, New Delhi: Nirala Publications: 65-67.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid: 69.

<sup>106</sup> Upreti, B. C. (1993), *The Nepali Congress: An Analysis of the Party's Performance in the General Election and its Aftermath*, New Delhi: Nirala Publications: 64-73.

activities. Devising a new system here means constituting and reconstituting the party's organizational units, structural diversification, functional specialization etc. so as to match the demands of the post 1990-competitive politics.<sup>107</sup>

Participation in the post-1990 competitive politics by the NC helped them in restructuring and diversifying their party organization. The extension of that organizational network down to the grassroots-level all-over the country is a post-1990 development. Besides, their party organization at higher levels, which was previously devised in line with the struggle against the partyless system, was later restructured in accordance with the administrative and electoral divisions of the country. Taking electoral interests as its top priority, the NC felt need for the reactivation of the parliamentary Constituency Committee as envisaged by its own constitution. It shows a correlation between participation in competitive electoral politics and the intensification party organization along spatial lines.<sup>108</sup>

Participation in the NC in the parliamentary process and other state affair indeed helped their organizational development and diversification. Since they have their representatives in parliament, NC has created new structures i.e. parliamentary party, leader, whip, executive committee, and constitution to look after the parliamentary business of the party. The party's fraction in both municipality and district levels was constituted by a small group of 5-7 members. At the district level, NC had separate structures, formally called 'Development Committee' or 'Department of Local Elected bodies' consisting of a few members from the party's elected representatives and the party office bearers, to coordinate between organizational and elected wings of the party.<sup>109</sup>

NC has enlarged their domain through their participation in the post-1990 parliamentary process. As roles have multiplied, the NC have diversified their organizational structures introducing a

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<sup>107</sup> Khatri, Shridhar (1992). "Political Parties and the Parliamentary Process in Nepal: A Study of the Traditional Phase", in POLSAN, *Political Parties and the Parliamentary Process in Nepal: A Study of the Transitional Phase*, Kathmandu: POLSAN: 20.

<sup>108</sup> Hachhethu (2002): 121.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid: 122.

system of departments or subject committees which open up new avenues to involve the greater number of their own leaders and workers in line with the principle of division of labour and functional specialization. The NC realised the need of such functional structures later in 1992 constituting 10 'subject committees' at the central level<sup>110</sup> - each under the convenership of one Central Committee Member – which was later reduced to six departments: organization, coordination, publicity, training, parliamentary affairs, and foreign affairs. Starting in early 1995, the NC expanded the department of subject committees system in organizational structure down to the district level also. So, the party District Committee in all the sample districts have set up six subject committees to carry out the party work in six different fields: organization, coordination, finance, education, development and administration.<sup>111</sup>

With organizational growth and development, NC has turned into complex systems. The NC have complex structures comprising four types of organizational units – one, *core governing body* known as committee and organised on territorial basis; two, *department* formed in line with division of labour and functional specialization; three, *party in public office* consisting of parties elected representatives; and four, *ancillary and affiliated organizations*. These four organizational units could be categorized into two types: the core organization and sub – organizations.<sup>112</sup>

## **Core Organization**

The core organization of NC is pyramidal and hierarchical in structure. It can be broadly categorized into three levels – central, middle, and grass roots.

Theoretically, the legislative body of the party at all level perform three major functions: election of the party executive, evaluation of the party executive performance and formation of the party

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<sup>110</sup> The name of the ten subject committees are as follows: Political, Social, Economic, Foreign Affairs, Principle, Policy and Programme, Development, Youth, Land Planning, Discipline, and publicity.

<sup>111</sup> Hachhethu (2002): 123.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

policy and programme. The executive body at all levels is constituted by a small number of party office bearers, which carry out decisions taken by the party conference and convention.<sup>113</sup>

**Table No. 2:3**  
**Hierarchical Structure of Nepali Congress**

Level	Legislative	Governing
Central	National convention National Council	General Executive committee Central committee
Middle	District Convention Constituency Convention	District Committee Constituency committee
Grass Roots	Village/ Town Convention	Village town/Committee

Sources: *Party Building in Nepal: Organization, Leadership and people, A Comparative Study of Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist)*,<sup>114</sup>

The NC Village/Town convention is composed of all active members of the party. They will be directly elected by the party's 'active members' in the concerned VDC/municipality through the party's Village/Town Convention. According to the NC's amended constitution, its Village/Town committee is constituted by (1) an elected president, (2) vice – president, secretary and treasurer appointed by the president from among the committee members, (3) several elected members, including one representative from each ward, (4) president's nominees and (5) the party MP of concerned VDC/municipality as ex-officio member.<sup>115</sup>

In the formation of upper level, the NC had adopted a system of indirect elections. The NC's district convention is composed of seven elected members from each of the parliamentary constituencies of the district and the convention is supposed to be held at intervals of three years to elect the office bearers of the party district executive body, the District Committee (DC). According to the NC's amended constitution, the party DC is constituted by (1) an elected president, (2) vice-president, secretary, joint-secretary, and treasurer appointed by the president

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid: 124.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid: 123.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

from among the DCMs, (3) some elected members, one from each parliamentary constituency, and (4) president's nominees not exceeding fifteen in number.<sup>116</sup>

The NC's national convention is constituted by 1435 elected representatives (seven from each of 205 parliamentary constituencies), 15 nominated by the president, and ex-presidents and former Central Committee Members (CCMs) as ex-officio members. Below the national convention there is a national council of 615 elected members (three from each of 205 parliamentary constituencies), five president nominees, and ex-president's and ex-CCMs.<sup>117</sup> The national convention is scheduled to be held every three years whereas the meeting of the national council is supposed to be held every three years whereas the meeting of the national council is supposed to be held every year to carry out all functions entrusted to the national convention, except the election of central leaders. According to the NC's amended constitution, its Central Committee (CC) consists of (1) president elected by a majority of not less than 50 percent from the total members of the national convention, (2) Vice-President, General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary, Treasurer appointed by the President from among CCMs, (3) five elected members – one from each of the five development regions – voted by the delegates of the concerned region to the National Convention, and (4) Presidential, nominees not exceeding 25 in number. Above the CC, the NC has a central executive committee consisting of a small number of the party top leaders which exercises all power on behalf of the CC. Both the CC and the central executive committee are responsible to the party's National Convention, the sovereign body of the party.<sup>118</sup>

The NC is the largest and most broad based party having its organizational network down to the grass-roots level throughout the country. The party's village and city level committees were said to be largely defunct, except at the time of elections within the party and elections to parliament and local bodies. Even in its major strong holds e.g. Janakpur and Damauli, meeting of the party committee had not been called since their formation. Most of the party office bearers of the

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid: 125.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

sample villages and cities said that they had been contacted by the party district leaders mostly at times when the party needed crowds gathering for rallies, mass meetings, demonstrations etc.<sup>119</sup>

Further, understanding the NC Executive Committees power and functions the table on the next page is presented.

In the conclusion it could be said that the Nepali Congress is a national party and has its influence all over the country. At present Sushil Kumar Koirala is the Party President.

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<sup>119</sup> Hachhethu, Krishna (1992), "Nepali Congress Issue of Inner – Party Democracy" in Lok Raj Baral, ed., *South Asia Democracy and the Road Ahead*, Kathmandu: POLSAN, 99.



**Table No. 2:4**  
**Power and Functions of NC's Executive Committees**

<b>Village/ City Committee</b>	<b>District Committee</b>	<b>Central Committee</b>
<b>Organizational Management</b>	<b>Organizational Management</b>	<b>Organizational Management</b>
form Ward Committee and a Coordination Committee	Publicity of party's goal, policy, programme, manifesto and other party literature	Take important decisions subjects to approval of National Convention and National Council
assistance to and coordination of ancillary organizations	Conduct training and workshop	Submits reports and proposals to National Convention and National Council
build contact and cooperation with adjoining similar committee	<b>Public Relations</b>	Constitute Commission, sub-committees with assigned jobs and refer their reports to concerned party central departments to make such reports effective
conduct meeting, training, workshop among the party activist	Articulate district's problem and their resolution through building linkage with party's front organizations, elected local bodies, government and non government institutions	Direction to and evaluation of ancillary organizations
<b>Public Relations</b>	Be involved in creative activities e.g. forestation, cleaning, blood donation etc.	Work as link between the National Convention/National Council and the Parliamentary Party
articulate people's needs and problems to concerned VDC/Municipality	<b>Vertical Relation</b>	Evaluation of party's position in election and submission of reports to National Council
preserve religious/cultural and historical monuments and other public places related with tourism parks	assistance to and direction for coordination of constituency Committees	Promote party's international relations and linkage with fraternal parties
create conducive atmosphere for environment, forestation, sanitation, health, education and drinking water	implement and get implemented centre's decision and direction	<b>Party Finance</b>

be involved in development activities through proper coordination with governmental and nongovernmental organizations		Constitute financial sub- committee and enrich party fund
build public awareness against social evils i. e. Gambling, smoking, drug, alcohol drinking		manage auditing of party at all levels
promote the welfare of disabled, orphan children, old-men, and protect interest of women, peasants, workers and other disadvantage groups		<b>Vertical Relations</b> implement and get implemented decision taken by National Convention and National Council monitoring to subordinate Committees in this regard
be involved in creative works i.e. sports, cultural activity, library and help to genius persons		conform active membership by president or general secretary
Mobilization of people's participation for local development and assistance to user groups.		selection of candidates for the post of MP and the heads of DDC and Municipality by parliamentary board at the centre and may delegate authority of candidate selection to lower post to party's local units
<b>Vertical Relations</b>		take disciplinary actions on the basis of recommendation made by Disciplinary Committee at the centre
implement programmes and instructions received from higher committee		dissolve the party units if proved ineffective or in violation of the party constitution
evaluation of performance of the party active members and submission reports to Constituency Committee		

Source: Hachhethu (2002): 218-20

## Chapter 3

### The Democratic Movements of 1990 and 2005

The prodemocracy movement that arose in Nepal in 1990 was the first peaceful mass movement in the history of that country. Although its roots can be traced back since 1960's, its success was sudden and dramatic. Even the initiators of the movement were not as confident as they appeared to be about the direction of the rapidly moving course of events. Indeed, the swift collapse of Nepal's seemingly stable authoritarian monarchy surprised most observers. With an annual per capita income of \$180 and an adult literacy rate of no more than 40 percent,<sup>1</sup> Nepal is among the world's least-developed countries. Its history, moreover, did not seem to give cause for much hope about a transition to democracy. Although an elected democratic government came to power for the first time in 1959 under the Nepali Congress with B.P. Koirala as prime minister, King Mahendra (1955-72) had little inclination to tolerate it. In December 1960, the king dismissed the new government, jailed its leaders, banned political parties, suspended the constitution, and restored the autocratic power of the throne.<sup>2</sup>

The movement for the establishment of democracy in Nepal is of recent origin. In the middle of the twentieth century (in 1950) a feeble attempt was made in that direction when the Rana political system came to an end. Another attempt was made after 40 years (in 1990) when the panchayat system was abrogated. Another historical decisive attempt was made after 16 years (in April 2006) when Nepal declared a democratic republic, movement for the restoration of democracy was an outcome of

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<sup>1</sup> Khadka, Narayan (1993). "Democracy and Development in Nepal: Prospects and Challenges", *Pacific Affairs*, 66 (1): 44-71.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

these developments. The movement not only open doors for the restoration of democracy but the Maoist also gave up insurgency and joined the mainstream politics to work for a establishment of a new democracy in the country. It would be useful here to discuss in brief the emergence of Nepali Congress and other political parties and their collective quest for the establishment of a democratic political system in Nepal.

The events of political upsurge began to take shape in Nepal in the early twentieth century, particularly during the Prime Ministership of Chandra Shamsher Rana.<sup>3</sup> The young Nepalese, who were studying in various educational institutions in India and those Nepalese who had fled to India because of the suppressive polices of the Rana's were greatly inspired by the western liberal democratic ideas, and the changes taking place in various parts of the world. Many of these young Nepalese identified themselves with the Indian National Movement and they were deeply influenced by the socialist ideas of leaders like Ram Manohar Lohia, Jai Prakash Naryan, Achrya Narendra Deo and others. There was a fast growing discontent among them against the Rana tyranny in Nepal.<sup>4</sup>

The process of growth of Nationalist ideas among the young educated Nepalese ultimately resulted in the formation of a number of organizations such as, *Nagrik Adhikar Samiti*, *Prachanda Gorkha*, to fight for the cause of the Nepalese people.<sup>5</sup> After 1935 Praja Parishad movement began in Nepal which, though suppressed by the Rana government, gave new encouragement and confidence to the people of Nepal who were determined to bring an end to the Rana autocracy. The nationalist movement and the quest for democracy which had become primary characteristics of

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<sup>3</sup> Appadorai, Arjun and L. S. Baral (1960), "The new Constitution of Nepal", *International Studies*, 1 (3): 218.

<sup>4</sup> Gupta, Anirudha (1993), *Politics in Nepal: A study of Post Rana Political Developments and Party Politics*, Delhi: Kalinga Publications: 164-68.

<sup>5</sup> Gupta, Anirudha (1993), *Politics in Nepal*, Delhi: Kalinga Publications, Joshi, Bhuwan Lal and Leo E. Rose, *Democratic Innovation in Nepal, A Case of political Acculturation*, California.

Asia and Africa in the post-second World War also influenced the Nepalese. In October 1946 B. P. Koirala, a young Nepali who had been actively participating in the Indian National Movement and who was greatly influenced by the socialist leaders of the Indian National Congress, gave a call to build up a movement against the Rana's and launch a democratic government in the kingdom.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Nepali Congress and the Democratic Experiment**

The Nepali Congress played a dominant role in overthrowing the Rana system in 1950. Afterwards it became a party to the coalition government that came into being following the New Delhi agreement of February 1951.<sup>7</sup> However the later political development proved that the Nepali Congress acceptance of the New Delhi agreement was a half-way success. But it heralded a process of democracy, modernisation and development in Nepal. The party politics which was initiated in the Kingdom after 1950 gave rise to a new class of politicians which played a significant role in the political development of the country in the following years. It is true that the monarchy still remained the ultimate seat of the political power and the traditional elite remained dominant and it not only hampered the process of democratization but also down the process of modernization and development. Yet the Nepali Congress for the first time in the political history of the kingdom, initiated struggle against the political oppression, economic exploitation and social discrimination, particularly after 1959 when the party formed the democratically elected government.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Gupta, Anirudha (1993), *Politics in Nepal: A study of Post Rana Political Developments and Party Politics*, Delhi: Kalinga Publications: 165-66.

<sup>7</sup> Gautam, Rajesh (2005), *Nepali Congress*, New Delhi: Adroit Publishers: 469.

<sup>8</sup> Baral, Lok Raj (1994), "The Return of Party Politics in Nepal", *Journal of Democracy*, 5 (1): 121-133.

The Nepali Congress – Rana coalition government was not unexpectedly short-lived. “Between” November 1951 – August 1952 it formed government on its own and “between” August 1952 – May 1958 it played the role of an opposition party. On 15 May 1958 it was invited by the King to form a care taker government.<sup>9</sup>

After 1955 when King Mahendra ascended to the throne, monarchy became much more assertive. Mahendra had a personal dislike for the party politics and Democracy. He was more interested in the concentration of political power. His moves raised apprehensions about the future of democracy in Nepal. Nevertheless, the political parties continued their demand for the establishment of the parliamentary democracy in the Kingdom. In December 1957, the Nepali Congress launched the country wide civil disobedient movement demanding early election to facilitate the formation of a popularly elected government in the Kingdom.<sup>10</sup>

The Nepali Congress under the leadership of B. P. Koirala secured a massive victory in the 1959 general election.<sup>11</sup> His government initiated major reform aimed at social upliftment of down trodden people and distributive justice.<sup>12</sup> The party had indeed demonstrated determination in implementing its democratic socialist programme.<sup>13</sup> Also, it took steps to abolish Birta land system;<sup>14</sup> introduced land reforms and guaranteed tenancy right to the cultivators. The government also took up the task of codifying the Mulki ain and started levying taxes in the socialistic order. It nationalised the fallow land and forests owned by feudals. Thus, the Nepali Congress

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<sup>9</sup> See for details, Gupta, Anirudha (1993).

<sup>10</sup> Baral, Lok Raj (1994), “The Return of Party Politics in Nepal”, *Journal of Democracy*, 5 (1): 121-133.

<sup>11</sup> The Nepali Congress won 74 out of 109 seats in the House of Representatives.

<sup>12</sup> Rose, Leo E. Margret W. Fisher (1970), *Politics in Nepal, Persistence and change in an Asian Monarchy*, Ithaca: Cornell University: 31.

<sup>13</sup> Baral, L. S. (1971), “Nepal’s Apprenticeship in Democracy 1951-60” *India quarterly*, 27 (3): 200-201.

<sup>14</sup> Birta was the feudal owning rent free land.

party after coming to power took up the task of bringing economic equality and social justice by implementing various development programmes.<sup>15</sup>

### **Abrogation of the Parliamentary System**

The Nepali Congress Government although adopted a socialistic posture and aimed at complete socio – economic transformation of the Nepalese society, did not lose long for obvious reasons. Its policies had hit hard the interest of the feudal class that had traditionally enjoyed social prestige and economic and political power. This influential class was against the parliamentary democracy in the kingdom, its perception had coincided with the perception of the king; hence it received royal protection. In fact King Mahendra himself was not happy with the constitutional status of the monarchy and wanted to play an important role in politics.<sup>16</sup> Earlier he thought that since the political parties were highly divided and fragmented and people hardly politically conscious, none of the political parties would be able to gain majority. Hence the king himself would remain the centre of power. But when no alternative was left, King Mahendra abrogated the parliamentary system after 18 month of its existence in December 1960.<sup>17</sup>

The action of the King came as a serious jolt to the Nepali Congress. The party wanted to take direct action in order to restore democracy in the Kingdom. But the repressive measures adopted by King Mahendra and arrests of top leaders of the party compelled it to take exile in India. Nevertheless, the party continued its struggle against the King but had to withdraw it because of Chinese attack over India in 1962. There can be no doubt that the Kings action was complete reversal of the process of

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<sup>15</sup> Mitra, Subrata K. et al. (2004), *Political Parties in South Asia*, Westport: Praeger Publishers: 288-290.

<sup>16</sup> Shaha, Rishikesh (1990), *Politics in Nepal: 1980-1991*, Delhi: Manohar Publications: 23-47.

<sup>17</sup> Baral, Lok Raj (1994), "The Return of Party Politics in Nepal", *Journal of Democracy*, 5 (1): 121-133.

democratization which was initiated after the 1950 revolution. It also underlines the fact that the traditional values and the elite were still dominant and the people at large were indifferent to political aspirations and the democratic consciousness was yet to take roots.<sup>18</sup>

### **The Nepali Congress and the Panchayat System**

The Panchayat system introduced in Nepal in 1962 as an alternative to the western democracy actually institutionalised the absolutist and the authoritarian power of monarchy. It established a close political system and strengthened the traditional values and elite structure.<sup>19</sup>

The Nepali Congress party did not accept the panchayat System on the ground that: (1) the panchayat system had not allowed the political parties to function and all types of organised political activities were band, (2) it had denied political rights and freedom, (3) the concept of popular sovereignty was totally missing (and instead the sovereignty of with the monarchy). Also the system was not broad based and there was no scope for popular participation. The Nepali Congress on the other hand demanded the reintroduction of parliamentary system and resolved to continue its struggle. However, the party lacked a clear cut policy and strategy in order to achieve this objective.<sup>20</sup>

On 30 October 1968 B. P. Koirala was released. Two month later Suvarna Shmsher went to Nepal. It was then believed that some new ground would be found to achieve the objective of Nepali Congress. An impression was that created that B. P. Koirala

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<sup>18</sup> Shaha (1990): 23-47, Chatterji, Bhola (1980), *People and Politics: Nepal in Perspective*, New Delhi: Ankur Publishing House.

<sup>19</sup> Khadka, Narayan (1986), "Crisis in Nepal's Partyless Panchayat System: The Case for More Democracy", *Pacific Affairs*, 59 (3): 429-454.

<sup>20</sup> Permanad (1982), *The Nepali Congress since Its Inception A Critical Assessment*, Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation: 371-373.



and the king would come to an understanding in this regard. The policy was reconciliation was being talked of, which mean that an understanding would be arrived at for the restoration of democracy in a gradual way and through constitutional means. But the reconciliation approach failed because the king did not agree to the view of the Nepali Congress leaders. Nevertheless, the reconciliation approach was not totally given up, even after B. P. Koirala's death. A section of the Nepali Congress leadership was identified with this approach, although it could never bear its fruits.<sup>21</sup>

After 1968 the party seemed to follow a twofold strategy in order to achieve this objective of restabilising the parliamentary democracy in the Kingdom. In the first phase, attempts were being made to infiltrate in the panchayat system by contesting election to various panchayat on individual basis particularly through graduate constituency of the National Panchayat. The idea was weaken the panchayat system from inside. Secondly, it was being realised that changes in the panchayat system could be brought through violent means. Therefore, a number of Nepali Congress members, particularly the younger elements, were involved in various terrorist activities "between" 1972-74. This drove the king to further consolidate the panchayat system and take repressive measures.<sup>22</sup>

The party workers felt highly encouraged by the return of B. P. Koirala to Nepal on 30 December 1976, after his long exile in India. Soon they got a clear-cut direction and a dynamic leadership. B. P. Koirala retired that the Nepali Congress would continue its struggle for the restoration of democracy in Nepal. The Nepali Congress presented its demand for constitutional reforms i.e. direct election based on universal adult franchise and political right and freedom to the people of Nepal. It gave full

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<sup>21</sup> Rose, Leo E. (1964), "Nepal: The Quiet Monarchy", *Asian Survey*, 4 (2): 723-728.

<sup>22</sup> Gupta, Anirudha (1994), "Nepali Congress and Post Panchayat Politics", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 29 (43): 2798-2801.

support and took active part in the student movement which broke out in the Kingdom towards the end of the seventies.<sup>23</sup>

## Referendum

Many hopes were pinned on the May 1980 referendum which the country was to hold in order to decide whether to continue with the panchayat system or to change over to a multi-party system. The Nepali Congress and other parties of the Kingdom were much hopeful that the result of the referendum would go in their favour. The Nepali Congress were indeed was overenthusiastic about its performance and thought that it alone would be able to form the government after the result of referendum goes in favour of the multi-party system.<sup>24</sup> It was for this reason that the Nepali Congress refused to a communist proposal to form a joint front and stressed that every party should complain for multi-party system independently. However, to its great dismay the result of the referendum went in favour of the continuation of the panchayat system. Thus, the possibility to abandon the panchayat system through constitutional means got frustrated.<sup>25</sup>

The attitude of the Nepali Congress towards the subsequent constitutional reforms, which provided for direct election to the national panchayat, was that they did not contain any practical measures for the restoration of democracy in the Kingdom. The party along with other political parties did not participate in the 1981 election on the plea that the political system did not provide congenial atmosphere for popular

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<sup>23</sup> See for details of events, Kumar, D. P. (1980), *Nepal: A Year of Decision*, New Delhi.

<sup>24</sup> Upreti, B. C. (1984). "The Politics of Referendum" in M. D. Dharmdarshni (ed.), *Political Participation and Change in South Asia*, Varanasi: 24-63.

<sup>25</sup> Phadnis, Urmila (1981), "Nepal the Politics of Referendum", *Pacific Affairs*, 54 (3): 431-454.

participation and political freedom and that the ban on political parties had continued.<sup>26</sup>

In the 1986 election to the national panchayat, the Nepali Congress, despite strong resentment among the cadres, continue to the policy of electoral boycott. On the other hand many of the outlawed political parties participated in the elections and registered a satisfactory performance. For instance, communist secured 16 seats. Actually the Nepali Congress leadership was strongly divided over the issue of contesting the 1986 election. One group was in favoured of reconciliation with the king and believed that certain reforms could be introduced before the election. But the other did not. As a result the party could not take a concrete decision early and a situation of indecisiveness and confusion prevailed for some time.<sup>27</sup> The Nepali Congress leaders were invited by the government to discuss the issue of freedom of speech, impartial atmosphere in election, ban on political parties, etc., raised by it but talks failed. The party's belated decision to keep itself away from the elections had resulted in revolt among its cadres who were in favour of participating the elections.<sup>28</sup> A number of party members had contested the election independently. The party were more frustrated because initially they had been instructed to prepare themselves for elections. Later on, the party could not launch a nationwide complain to convince the people about its stand. The decision to boycott the elections could not exert much influence on voters as on an average the voters turnout was 60 percent.<sup>29</sup>

On the country the Nepali Congress policy to boycott elections had in a way provided strength to the panchayat system. It was clear that the party lacked a clearer cut policy. It also became certain that there were differences among its leaders. There

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<sup>26</sup> Khadka, Narayan (1986), "Crisis in Nepal's Partyless Panchayat System: The Case for More Democracy", *Pacific Affairs*, 59 (3): 429-454.

<sup>27</sup> Shaha, Rishikesh (1990), *Politics in Nepal: 1980-1991*, Delhi: Manohar Publications: 69-70.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid: 87.

was no proper assessment of the strength and weakness of the party. It was feared that in the context of the growing dissatisfaction among the cadres the party would further lose its support base. Keeping these developments in view the party decided to participate in the 1987 local panchayat elections. But its performance was quite dismal.<sup>30</sup>

## **1990 Movement for Democracy**

The Nepali Congress played a decisive role in the 1990 movement for democracy in the kingdom, which brought an end to the Panchayat system. After 1987 there was a growing realisation that changes in the Panchayat system through constitutional means was not possible. Which proclaiming democracy and resentment about panchayat system NC articulated

“Today a new wave of democracy and freedom is sweeping the world. Despotise and dictatorial regimes have become islands in the ocean of the free world and their days are numbered. This is true of Nepal as well. Even senior leaders of Panchayat system are now admitting publically that the system has achieved nothing. The impact of the deadlock in Indo-Nepal relations has proved how the claims of development made by the Panchayat system are.” .....“The Nepali Congress remains committed to the goal of full democracy and human rights in Nepal. We have convened this conference to decide on the character and date of a nation-wide peaceful movement aimed at the liquidation of the present partyless or one party system.”<sup>31</sup>

So the NC was firm believers for democratic movement. The movement for the restoration was of democracy was launched soon after the convention of the Nepali Congress was held in 1989. Soon it gained momentum and widespread support.<sup>32</sup> The

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<sup>30</sup> Baral, Lok Raj (1988), “Nepal in 1987: Politics without Power”, *Asian Survey*, 28 (2):172-179.

<sup>31</sup> Gupta, Anirudha (1994), “Nepali Congress and Post Panchayat Politics”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 29 (43): 2798-2801.

<sup>32</sup> The movement was supported by the following main organisation: Nepali National Congress, Democratic National Unity Forum, Nepali Student Federation,; All Nepal National Independent Students Federation; Ex-Servicemen of the British and Indian Armies; Nepali Goodwill Council;

most significant of the launching of the democratic movement was an understanding between the seven factions of the communists and the Nepali Congress to form a joint front against the Panchayat system.<sup>33</sup> In fact it was that front which provided strength to the movement. It may be interesting to note that in the 1980 referendum of Nepali Congress had declined the communist proposal of forming a joint front. However the situation had changed drastically since then. While there was a determination to launch a movement against the Panchayat system, its success was considered doubtful unless it was fought and supported by all sections of the society and by all important political organizations. The Nepali Congress changed its attitude and adopted a realistic approach. The illusion that it alone could change the political fate of the kingdom was no more there. The Congress had already faced a humiliating defeat in the 1987 Panchayat elections. The formation of the joint front and the launching of the movement were contextual in the sense that it was encouraged and activated by the developments taking place both at the global and at the regional level. The changes which were taking place in the communist countries particularly in the Eastern Europe and the process of liberalisation in these countries encouraged democratic elements of the kingdom. It was believed that an environment building up at the global level in favour of democracy led to the decline of regimented societies all over the world. At the regional level, changes in the domestic political scenario of various South Asian states also prompted the democratic forces in Nepal to launch a movement. The support and encouragement given by some of the Indian leaders who had also attended the national convention encouraged the Nepali Congress leaders to

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Peoples front, National Workers Organisation of Nepal; Nepal Trade Union Centre and SETA MAGURALI (Sherpa, Tamang, Magar, Gurung, Rai, Limbu Organisations).

<sup>33</sup> The Communist front which was called as United Left Front consisted of Nepal Communist Party (Manadhar) Nepal Communist Party (Varma) Nepal Communist Party (Amatya) Forth Convention, Nepal Workers and Peasants Organisation (Rohit).

launch the movement. But as stated earlier, it was not merely a spontaneous reaction; rather, political parties have been aspiring for it.<sup>34</sup>

The government adopted a tough attitude towards the movement and took certain repressive measures. There was loss immense loss of life and property. The movement spread all over the Kingdom and political parties and professional organizations (like that of teachers, doctors) also joined it. On 6 April 1990 the King appointed Lokendra Bahadur Chand as the new prime minister of Nepal. The King said:<sup>35</sup>

“It has always been our tradition to regard democratic ideals as the main basis of the system. We had accordingly held a referendum in 1980 in order to ascertain which type of political change the people desired in our political system. The present council have failed to understand this tradition of public consent and maintain order and security; hence there has been loss of life and property.”<sup>36</sup>

But the situation took a sudden turn when on 8 April King Birendra agreed to concede the demand of the movement and declared abolition of the Panchayat system.

The movement for democracy in Nepal came to an end after King Birendra declared abrogation of the Panchayat system and formed a constitution committee on 8 April 1990, to prepare a new constitution for the Kingdom.<sup>37</sup>

In the process of democratisation the Nepali Congress party played a dominant role. In fact, the party was born in order to fight for democracy in Nepal. In the anti-Rana movement it had played a leading role. Afterwards, it became a primary organisation

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<sup>34</sup> Baral, Lok Raj (1994), “The Return of Party Politics in Nepal”, *Journal of Democracy*, 5 (1): 121-133.

<sup>35</sup> Dahal, Ram Kumar (2001), *Constitutional and Political Development in Nepal (till 1994)*, Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar: 17-19, Gupta (1964): 64-68.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 72-73.

to fight for political freedom and rights of the people of Nepal. However, it appears that the early enthusiasm of the party to establish parliamentary democracy in the Kingdom was lost soon after it joined the coalition government. Diversion, factions within the party weakened it from inside. The intra-party and inter-party conflicts were responsible to a large extent for the re-emergence of traditional forces, and the monarchy took advantage of it. Nevertheless, the party tried to implement its socialist programme when it came to power in 1959 after securing massive victory in the election.<sup>38</sup>

Nevertheless, one may state that the party leadership became more realistic towards the beginning of 1990 and then followed a clear-cut strategy and it eminently succeeded in her objectives.<sup>39</sup>

The need for a united struggle was felt by both the Nepali Congress and the United Left Front. The efforts of the Nepali democratic forces were highly encouraged by the world wide resurgence of democracy<sup>40</sup>.

The main objective of the movement was to replace the panchayat system by a multi - party democracy. The Nepali Congress convention of January 1990 was the beginning of the movement. The most significant thing about the movement was that most of the political parties, professional organizations, associations and students joined it. And it was for this reason that despite atrocities of the panchayat government it took up a nationwide shape. The intensity of the movement was realized when even the government officials began to join the movement in a big way. King Birendra ultimately decided on 8 April 1990 to

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<sup>38</sup> Baral, Lok Raj (1994), "The Return of Party Politics in Nepal", *Journal of Democracy*, 5 (1): 121-133.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Upreti, B. C. (1993), *The Nepali Congress, A Study of Party's Performance in 1991 General Elections and Its Aftermath*, New Delhi: Nirala, 1993.

dissolve the panchayat government and withdraw ban from the political parties. On 16 April the King declared withdrawal of the panchayat system and declared to replace it by a multi - party democracy. The democratic forces accepted it and the movement ended.<sup>41</sup>

After the abrogation of the Panchayat system an interim government was constituted under the leadership of K.P. Bhattarai of Nepali Congress in which other political parties were also given representation. The first general elections to the 205 - seated House of Representatives took place on 12 May 1991. The radical communist forces of the country decided to boycott the constitution under the banner of Nepal Communist Party (Unity Centre). They were demanding for the abolition of the constitutional monarchy and declaring Nepal a republic. 43 political parties participated in the general elections. The Nepali Congress and the United Marxist-Leninist Party (UML) were the largest among them.<sup>42</sup> They also had the advantage of being at the forefront of the movement for the restoration of democracy in the country. The National Democratic Party (NDP) constituted by the earlier panchayat stalwarts had an image of being a traditionalist party, although it also advocated for multi party democracy in the changed situation. The various political parties focused on strengthening democracy, development and an independent foreign policy but they were not free from internal dissensions and leadership conflicts.<sup>43</sup> The Nepali congress formed the first elected government under the Prime Ministership of G.P. Koirala. K.P. Bhattarai the Prime Minister of the interim' government lost the election and as a result his claims as the leader of the elected government

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<sup>41</sup> Thapa, Bhekh B. (1992), "Nepal in 1991: A Consolidation of Democratic Pluralism", *Asian Survey*, 32 (2): 175-183.

<sup>42</sup> Gupta, Anirudha (1994), "Nepali Congress and Post-Panchayat Politics", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 29 (43): 2798-2801.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.



narrowed down severally.<sup>44</sup>

The new government was supposed to work for the realization of the aspirations of the people and also the objectives of the 1990 democratic movement. Not only that there was the task to lay down a strong foundation of democracy but it was also essential to activate the developmental process in the Kingdom in order to realize popular needs and aspirations.<sup>45</sup>

Towards the middle of 1994 there were also rumors regarding the non-confidence motion being tabled against the government. Taking these developments into consideration, Koirala resigned in August 1994 before the motion could have been actually registered. The parliament was dissolved on his recommendation and fresh elections were declared. Thus came to an end to the first elected government.<sup>46</sup>

The working of the first elected government was largely constrained due to leadership clashes, oppositional politics and it resulted in instability and non-performance. It is a fact that some sincere efforts should have been made by the government towards the strengthening of democracy but the functioning of the government resulted in political instability and disorder.<sup>47</sup> In the mid-term elections no political party could secure a majority. The UML emerged as the largest party with 88 seats and the Nepali Congress remained number two with 83 seats. The government was unstable and later.<sup>48</sup>

Nepali Congress once again began to search possibilities for the formation of a new

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<sup>44</sup> Regmi, Girish Chandra (1993), "Nepal in 1992: Exercising Parliamentary Politics", *Asian Survey*, 33 (2): 145-149.

<sup>45</sup> Baral, Lok Raj (2001), "NEPAL IN 2000 Discourse of Democratic Consolidation", *Asian Survey*, 41(1): 138-142.

<sup>46</sup> Gupta, Anirudha (1994), "Nepali Congress and Post-Panchayat Politics", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 29 (43): 2798-2801

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Hachhethu, Krishna (1997), "Nepal in 1996: Experimenting with a Coalition Government", *Asian Survey*, 37 (2): 149-154.

coalition government. Incidentally towards the end of 1997 after the local bodies elections, the UML had splitted with 40 MPs under the leadership of Bam Deo Gautam and C.P. Mainali to form a new political party, called Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist-Leninist) (CPN-ML). The Nepali Congress and ML reached to an understanding to form a coalition government.<sup>49</sup> In 1999 election The Nepali Congress emerged as the majority party in the elections with 110 seats. However due to the internal dissection the party could not hold strong for spreading of democracy. Meanwhile during 2001 the Maoist insurgency also spreading and he constitutional government had fall and the Koirala had to resign in July 2001 and Sher Bahadur Deuba took over as the Prime Minister of the Nepali Congress government. Deuba was serious about the resolution of the Maoist problem.<sup>50</sup>

Earlier also he had headed a committee constituted during the tenure of Prime Minister Bhattarai for the resolution of the Maoist problem. However, since December 1999 Koirala group began to oppose the Bhattarai government. They started to pressurize K.P. Bhattarai to resign from the government. Koirala group became so impatient that it ultimately threatened that if Bhattarai would not tender his resignation a non-confidence motion would be tabled in the parliament against the government. Bhattarai resigned in February 2000.<sup>51</sup> Thus the pressure tactics of Koirala proved fruit bearing. But the things were not smooth for Koirala as well. Infact, Sher Bahadur Deuba had also claimed for the leadership of the parliamentary party. The tangle between Koirala and Deuba had to be resolved through voting in which Koirala won by 69 votes against 43 in favour of Deuba. G.P. Koirala became Prime Minister in March 2000. Koirala's second phase of Prime Ministership was marked by a number of developments. His government was charged for widespread

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Bhattarai, Baburam (2002), "Triangular Balance of Forces", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 37 (46): 4606-4610.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

corruption. The Maoist problem had aggravated by this time. Koirala government could not take any concrete steps towards the resolution of the problem. On June 1, 2000 King Birendra and his whole family was assassinated. The Koirala government was accused for being cool on this issue. He was also being targeted by the opposition political parties. Koirala had to resign in July 2001, and Sher Bahadur Deuba took over as the Prime Minister of the Nepali Congress government.<sup>52</sup> Deuba was serious about the resolution of the Maoist problem. Earlier also he had headed a committee constituted during the tenure of Prime Minister Bhattarai for the resolution of the Maoist problem. Prime Minister Deuba persuaded the Maoists for a ceasefire and peace talks with the government. Three rounds of talks were held between the government and the Maoist leaders between August-November 2001. However, the Maoists did not agree to anything less than the formation of a Constituent Assembly, a republican state and a new constitution for Nepal. The government was however, not prepared to accept any of these demands. The talks failed and the Maoists again resorted to violence.<sup>53</sup> On 26 November 2001, a state of emergency was declared in Nepal. The army was deployed in order to bring the Maoists under control. The emergency was extended in February and May 2002. Deuba had no doubt made sincere efforts towards the resolution of the Maoist problem, but there was no agreement on the basic issues. None of the parties were prepared to compromise. In May 2002 Deuba resigned and the parliament was dissolved.<sup>54</sup> It was decided to hold fresh elections in November 2002 on a phased basis. Before the fresh elections could be held king Gyanendra dismissed the Deuba government in October 2002. Deuba had suggested that due to the Maoist insurgency it was not possible to hold general elections in time. But the king did not agree to his suggestion and dismissed his government. The king himself

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<sup>52</sup> Baral, Lok Raj (2002), "Nepal in 2001: The Strained Monarchy", *Asian Survey*, 42 (1):198-203.

<sup>53</sup> Baral, Lok Raj (2001), "Nepal in 2000 Discourse of Democratic Consolidation", *Asian Survey*, 41(1): 138-142.

<sup>54</sup> Krämer, Karl-Heinz (2003), "Nepal in 2002: Emergency and Resurrection of Royal Power", *Asian Survey*, 43 (1): 208-214.

wanted to play an active role in politics. After the dismissal of the elected government, king Gyanendra nominated Lokendra Bahadur Chand of National Democratic Party (NDP) as Prime Minister with a small cabinet. The larger parties like Nepali Congress and CPN-UML did not join the government.<sup>55</sup> In Mid 2003 Chand was replaced by Surya Bahadur Thapa. But Thapa also failed in resolving the Problems posed due to the Maoist insurgency. The Pressure was mounting on king to return back to the democratic process. In mid 2004 he again appointed Sher Bahadur Deuba as the Prime Minister of Nepal. Deuba had been dismissed in 2002 and now by appointing he as Prime Minister King wanted to show that he was concerned towards the restoration of democracy. But actually king Gyanendra just wanted to pacify the international pressure.<sup>56</sup>

Though the Deuba government was there till 2005, King Gyanendra took a drastic step in February 2005 by dismissing the Deuba government and himself assuming all political powers. Gyanendra's decision was a setback to democracy in Nepal Nevertheless, it opened doors for the polarizations of Maoists and the political parties. In fact the royal coup of 2001 led to three major political developments in Nepal : the Maoist ceasefire, alliance between major political parties and understanding between political parties and the Maoists.<sup>57</sup>

From the study it is found that on 26 November 2001, a state of emergency was declared in Nepal. The army was deployed in order to bring the Maoists under control. The emergency was extended in February and May 2002. Deuba had no doubt made sincere efforts towards the resolution of the Maoist problem, but there was no agreement on the basic issues. None of the parties were prepared to compromise. In May 2002, Deuba resigned and the parliament was dissolved. On 2002, the

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Dixit, Kanak Mani (2005), "Absolute Monarchy to Absolute Democracy", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40 (15):1506-1510.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

government was dismissed by Gyanendra and emergency declared and takeover the power.<sup>58</sup> So again the democracy killed. In this state the role of restoration of democracy of NC was minimal. The king was criticised by the International community and pressure has been put on him which as a result declared constitutional change in 2005. The April 2006 movement for the restoration of democracy was an outcome of Seven Party Alliance (SPA).<sup>59</sup> The movement not only opened doors for the restoration of democracy but the Maoists also gave up insurgency and joined the mainstream politics to work for the establishment of a new democracy in the country.

After 2006, restoration of democracy in the April 2008 Constituent Assembly election were held which provided a convincing victory for the Maoists but left them short of an outright majority. A coalition government of CPN (UML) was formed.

This chapter can be concluded that the instability of the political parties and major differences on the integration of the Maoist army remained large and the peace process in the post 2006 did not fully succeed. As a result, the constitution writing has not completed.

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<sup>58</sup> Muni, S.D. (2005), "'Royal Coup' in Nepal: Why and What Now?", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40 (7): 617-618.

<sup>59</sup> The name of (SPA) Nepali Congress, Nepali Congress (Democratic), Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), Nepal Workers and Peasants Party, Nepal Goodwill Party (Anandi Devi), United Left Front, People's Front.

## Chapter 4

### **Nepali Congress and its Relations with other Political Actors**

Development of political parties in Nepal over the last six decades can be traced along three stages: Party formation, party survival and party building. The years “between” 1930-60 could be considered as the formative phase of political parties in Nepal. Unlike the evolution of political parties in the West as a consequence of the extension of popular suffrage and the rise of parliament, Nepali political parties were rather suddenly created by the educated middle class as an instrument for bringing in democracy. So the genesis of political parties in Nepal was bound up with the democratic movement.<sup>60</sup> In such situation political parties has some relation on the major issues, such as restoration of democracy. In this chapter Nepali Congress’ relations with other political parties such as CPN (UML) or on ideology and its performance on government are in major focus.

Nepali political parties originated in the early-1930s and 1940s against the background of Asian resurgence and in opposition to the Rana oligarchy in the country. Except the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) – formed in 1949- which borrowed the ready-made ideology of Marxism and Leninism,<sup>61</sup> NC including other political parties, at the time of their formation, did not appear as ideological groups though they had a clear mission – to overthrow the despotic Rana rule and to establish a democratic system. The Nepali Congress party a, dominating party at that time, proclaimed its ideology of “Democratic Socialism” only in 1956, ten years after its foundation. With the lack of clear policies, principals and programmes in regard to social change and economic development, the activities of Nepali Congress, in the

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<sup>60</sup> Hachhethu, Krishna (2002), *Party Building in Nepal: Organization, Leadership and people, A Comparative Study of Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist)*, Kathmandu: Mandala book Poin: 25-29.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 34-35.

post Rana-regime were largely concentrated in Kathmandu – the Capital of the Country and were manifestly for power politics.<sup>62</sup>

Between 1960 and 1990 under the partyless panchayat system, Nepali Congress faced the problem of their survival. Party politics was legally prohibited and the panchayat establishment exerted all sorts of suppressive measures against political parties. It was, therefore, forced to recast its roles in the original format as movement organizations working in exile or underground. There was risk of imprisonment, loss of properties or even death for those who overtly involved themselves in party activities. Consequently, out of the eleven political parties registered for the 1959 general elections, only two- the NC and some splinter groups of the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) - were able to demonstrate their existence by their activities against the partyless panchayat system.<sup>63</sup>

The NC made its presence felt by launching struggle for democracy, sometimes peacefully and at times violently. Major political parties like the NC and the CPN – UML have transformed themselves from cadre based movement organizations in to mass-based parties. During the panchayat regime, NC had a single role to oppose partyless system through launching political struggle.<sup>64</sup>

After the restoration of democracy NC functions and responsibilities multiplied, covering the whole range of society's interest in the governance of the country. Before 1990, the only mission of the NC was to over through the partyless panchayat system. The restoration of multiparty system was considered by communist parties as their immediate objective, notwithstanding their long – term goal was beyond the multiparty system. In the post *Jana Andolan* period, to win power had become the

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<sup>62</sup> Permanad (1982), *The Nepali Congress since Its Inception A Critical Assessment*, Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation: 14-30.

<sup>63</sup> Hachhethu, (2002), 2-4.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

main objective of the major parties, the NC and the CPN-UML. The changes after the reinstatement of democracy have opened up and paved new ways for party building activities.<sup>65</sup>

The CPN had mainly attack the NC and India together on the issue of nationalism, branding the Congress as “pro Indian” and India as “expansionist”. The CPNs extreme anti- India posture was more than adequate to build up its “ultra nationalist” image. But the oppositional politics of the CPN being “mainly concentrated on urban and elite oriented nationalist issues” did not substantially help to expand its support bases in the rural areas.<sup>66</sup>

In the late 1994 when the unity, cohesion and discipline in the NC party was completely disrupted, a small group of people left the party and formed a separate political platform in the name of *Jana Jagaran Abhiyan* under the inspiration and patronage of late Ganesh Man Singh, one of the founding leaders of the NC.<sup>67</sup> This split was a culmination of a series of internal power conflicts among the party troika leaders (the then prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala, party President Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and party Supremo Ganesh Man Singh) and factions led by each leader. The internal crisis of the NC was a prelude to differences that arose among its top leaders in regard to political appointments in the early phase of the NC government. It was later aggravated one after another by subsequent developments i.e. cabinet reshuffle in December 1991 by prime minister Koirala solely on his own discretion, candidacy of the then party president Bhattarai in the February 1994 by-elections aiming to dislodge Koirala from his position as prime minister, defeat of Bhattarai as a consequence of *antarghat* (sabotaging) by the Koirala faction, the

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Khadka, Naryan (1995), “Factionalism in the Communist Movement in Nepal”, *Pacific Affairs*, 68 (1): 55-76.

<sup>67</sup> Shrestha, Ram Bahadur (1970), “Nepali Congress Splits Too”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 5 (47): 1871.



absence of NC' 35 members of House of Representatives (HOR) at the time of voting on the government's annual policy and programmes leading to the collapse of the Koirala government, dissolution of the HOR abruptly and the call for mid-term poll by prime minister Koirala completely ignoring party leaders, and the contest in mid-term polls by rebel Congress candidates in several numbers against the party's official candidates.<sup>68</sup> After restoration of democracy in 1990 NC came in to power. But party was not able to hold strong hood due to leadership problem or in other world internal conflict so government was not survive for long time. Though CPN-UML minority government came after NC government, it was it was voted out in 1995.<sup>69</sup>

The 1994 election were conspicuous by the absence of both national and international issues. In 1991 both the communists and the RPP used almost the same slogans and denunciatory language to stigmatize the NC, but in 1994 most national parties were bereft of issues and were not confident of faring well in the polls. As the ruling NC was facing its worst internal conflict accentuated by the rebel candidates as well as by former dissidents who were still uncertain about one another's roles during the elections, Prime Minister Koirala's confidence of returning to power with a comfortable majority had produced mixed interpretations. Koirala's confidence was presumably based on the NC's performance in the 1992 local elections in which the party won 60% of the village, town, and district posts.<sup>70</sup> The issues raised by the national parties were similar. All were committed to the four pillars of the Constitution: sovereignty of the people, multiparty system, constitutional monarchy, and basic freedoms. However, the RPP wanted to change the composition of the National Assembly

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<sup>68</sup> Poudyal, Ananta Raj (1995), "Nepal in 1994: The Hung Parliament!", *Asian Survey*, 35 (2): 160-165.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Baral, Lok Raj (1995), "The 1994 Nepal Elections: Emerging Trends in Party Politics", *Asian Survey*, 35 (5): 426-440.

(Upper House), while the Nepal Sadbhabana Party (NSP) favoured a federal system along with a provision of 50% reservation of jobs for the people of the Tarai and 30% for various ethnic groups.<sup>71</sup>

So throughout 1996 there was speculation about a mid-term poll or change in the coalition government that consists of the Nepali Congress (NC), Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), and Nepal Sadbhabana Party (NSP). But by year's end the tripartite government headed by the NC parliamentary party leader, Sher Bahadur Deuba, had completed 15 months in office and had a record of success in negotiating the important Mahakali River Treaty with India and then steering its ratification through Parliament.<sup>72</sup> Of the total 205 seats in the House of Representatives, the combined strange the coalition parties won 108 (NC-85, RPP-19, and NSP-2), including two independent ministers.<sup>73</sup> The opposition bench has 92 communist legislator including 87 from the Communist Party of Nepal, Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML) and one Nepal Sadbhawana Party (NSP) dissident. The coalition government was formed after the nine-month old CPN-UML minority government was voted out of office in September 1995. In its efforts to regain power in 1996, the CPN-UML tried to split the Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) by exploiting differences between the Surya Bahadur Thapa and Lokendra Bahadur Chand factions. It made a secret alliance with the RPP-Chand faction in order to bring down the incumbent government, and repeatedly offered the post of prime minister to Lokendra Bahadur Chand in a proposed alternative coalition. This "alliance" was a threat to the NC-RPP-NSP government throughout the year, and Prime Minister Deuba was forced to

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Hachhethu, Krishna (1996), "Experimenting with a coalition Government", *Asian Survey*, 37 (2): 149-154.

<sup>73</sup> Baral, Lok Raj (1994), "The Return of Party Politics in Nepal", *Journal of Democracy*, 5 (1): 121-133.

concentrate his energies on sustaining his fragile coalition.<sup>74</sup>

Nepali politics entered into the second phase of transition towards consolidating democracy. But contrary to expectations, democracy in its functional attributes, overwhelmed by power centric intra-party and inter-party conflicts, was widely perceived as eroding. It had manifested in the instability of the government since the emergence of a hung parliament after the 1994 mid – term elections. From November 1994- May 1999, Nepal had experienced eight governments of different types of which NC has for example NC led Centre – Right coalition government with RPP and Nepal Sadbhavana Party (NSP) (September 1995-March 1997), RPP led Right-Centre government with NC and NSP (October 1997-April 1998), NC' minority government (April-August 1998), NC led Centre-Left government with Communist Party of Nepal, Marxist-Leninist (ML), a new splinter party out of the UML, and NSP (August-December 1998), NC' minority government (December 1998) and NC led Centre-Left government with UML and NSP (December 1998 - May 1999).<sup>75</sup>

Incidentally, the United Marxist Leninist Party considered the Nepali Congress to be its arch enemy from the time of its formation. K. P. Bhattarai, the interim Prime Minister, was somehow able to win over their friendship and cooperation because of his saintly and unblemished image. Soon the Communists turned to bitter rivalry against the Nepali Congress during the May 1991 elections and thereafter. In fact, some of the Communists'<sup>76</sup> were believed to have infiltrated the panchayat system with the goal of supporting the banned Communist parties in their efforts to overthrow the system. Some of the members of the dissolved panchayat system were so concerned about the

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>75</sup> Hachhethu, Krishna (1996), "Experimenting with a coalition Government", *Asian Survey*, 37 (2): 149-154.

<sup>76</sup> For example, the last prime minister of the previous system, Mr. Marich Man Shrestha, was a "former high school teacher from a peasant background and former communist. (Eastern Economic Review, Asia 1991 Year Book, Hongkong).

growing influence of the Communist faction that they "established a Democratic Panchayat Forum" to "counter the growing influence of the communist faction" in the Rastriya Panchayat (the national legislature). G. P. Koirala, the prime minister, was considered to be the most outspoken anti-Communist leader of the Nepali Congress. He, however, preferred to be a pragmatist and took an accommodative posture towards the Communists immediately after becoming prime minister. He hoped that "the opposition would accept the harsh realities of the country and provide active support to the government in the day-to-day administration of the country, in institutionalizing the development of democracy and in eliminating poverty from the country. "But the UML and other Communist parties were bent upon ousting Koirala from power as early as possible. Mr. Madan Bhandari, the general secretary of the UML Party - a man who rose from obscurity to popularity because of his election victory over K.P. Bhattarai has stated repeatedly that his party will do everything to oust the Nepali Congress government as soon as possible. The UML party's opinion was divided on the extent of the opposition, but a large section of the young and radical members are determined to dislodge the government and replace it with a Communist regime.<sup>77</sup>

Transformation of parties from symbols of opposition to the power centres after the restoration of democracy brought a marked change in the party system. The decline of ideology was the most noteworthy. Though the NC and the CPN-UML originated along ideological lines - the former stood for democratic socialism and the later professed *Naulo Janbad* - their ideological component appears to have become a less important factor in their behaviour in the aftermath of the 1990 Jana Andolan. The quest for power has become the single most determining factor in shaping the behaviour of the parties' leaders and workers, and thus,

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid. 55-56.

factionalism has become distinctive character of both the NC and the CPN-UML.<sup>78</sup> Therefore, Nepali politics was seen in a state of transitional flux. The initial transition phase, backed by the spirit of the 1990 popular movements and restoration of multi-party system in April 1990, promulgation of a new Constitution in November 1990, general elections 1991 and local elections 1992, was smooth in demolishing partyless panchayat structures and setting up democratic institutions. The stability of the obtaining democratic structures was ensured by the Constitution providing for popular sovereignty, constitutional monarchy, multi-party parliamentary system, and fundamental rights of citizens as unamendable (Constitution, 1990). The avowed commitment to the fundamental principles of the Constitution by both the rightist Rashtriya Prajatantra splinter groups, irrespective of their different ideological stands in the past, showed how the first phase of transition was successful in setting up democratic structure and in assimilating major ideological and political forces into the mainstream of parliamentary process. The first phase of transition came to an abrupt end with the defeat of the ruling Nepali Congress (NC) in the 1994 mid-term elections.<sup>79</sup>

The Congress schisms surfaced after Ganesh Man Singh's demand that the prime minister resign because of his failure to maintain an ethnic balance in appointments to some key posts, his alleged connivance with the Palace, and charges of corruption and nepotism. During the NC's Maha Adhibeshan (general assembly) meeting in February 1992, Singh threatened to quit the party if Koirala did not resign or if the party president failed to satisfy his demands within three months.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Gupta, Anirudha (2003), "Review Democracy in Nepal", *Economic and Political weekly*, 38 (40): 4233-4235.

<sup>79</sup> Gupta, Anirudha (1994), "Nepali Congress and Post-Panchayat Politics", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 29 (43): 2798-2801.

<sup>80</sup> Baral, Lok Raj (1994), "The 1994 Nepal Election: Emerging Trends in Party Politics", *Asian Survey*, 35 (5): 426-427.

Thus, neither the ruling party nor the government projected good images before the people, but neither did the mainline opposition parties such as the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) or CPN (UML). The opposition, during the three years of NC rule, resorted to violent forms of agitation politics, even on small pre-texts, that claimed both lives and property, sending some disturbing signals for the future of democracy.<sup>81</sup>

Denouncing the royal decision as outrageous, some NC leaders, especially Ganesh Man Singh, and the Left parties both shifted their strategy to anti-king and anti-Koirala agitations, demanding the reinstatement of the dissolved House. Singh went so far as to call the royal step a "rape of democracy" and Prime Minister Koirala a "traitor" who deserved expulsion from the NC. Hoping for an NC split in the wake of the dissolution issue, the CPN (UML) demanded restoration of the dissolved House in five days and also sought to forge an alliance with the anti-Koirala NC leaders. The role of the monarchy also came in for a fresh review, provoking the CPN (UML) leaders to declare that the king "should come out of the Royal Palace" if he wants to engage in politics.<sup>82</sup>

The developments that unfolded in quick succession after the royal decision were not only anarchical in nature but involved an unprecedented alliance between senior NC leaders and the communists, whose ultimate objective was to put pressure on the king to reinstate the House and remove Koirala as the caretaker prime minister. The political drama reached both a climax and anticlimax on July 27, with NC President Bhattarai formally joining the anti-king and anti-Koirala alliance by issuing a joint statement with the president of

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 426-427.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 428.

the CPN (UML) demanding an immediate resolution of the crisis accentuated by the "wrong advice" of the prime minister.<sup>83</sup>

On the economic agenda, the NC was committed to continuing its policy of privatization, while the CPN (UML) approach was to end the privatization policy of the NC government but to encourage the expansion and development of private enterprises. The RPP's position was somewhat different, saying that it would curb monopolistic tendencies by encouraging investment in social sectors. If investment in developing certain categories of industries by both indigenous and foreign investors was the NC program, the CPN (UML) was committed to ending foreign monopoly in such areas. The RPP manifesto underlined the use of the private sector for industrialization.<sup>84</sup>

In general, the major parties accepted the guiding principles of Nepal's foreign policy but differed from each other on specifics. The NC opted for reforming the multidimensional relations with India on the basis of reality and objectivity but the CPN (UML), committed to developing relations with both India and China on the basis of equality, added that it would review all "unequal treaties and agreements" including the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship with India. Moreover, on the issue of the work permit system for foreign workers, the CPN (UML) was more categorical about making such arrangements while the RPP simply said that it would take appropriate steps to curbing the inflow of foreigners. But the NSP was committed to developing more special relations

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<sup>83</sup> Gupta, Anirudha (1994). "Nepali Congress and Post-Panchayat Politics", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 29 (43): 2798-2801.

<sup>84</sup> Baral, Lok Raj (1994), "The 1994 Nepal Election: Emerging Trends in Party Politics", *Asian Survey*, 35 (5): 433-434.

with India, a sharp contrast to the CPN (UML)'s vociferous criticism of the NC's alleged "tilt toward India".<sup>85</sup>

The NC government introduced the eighth five year plan (1992-97) and the ninth five year plan (1997-2002) with the formation of National Development Council and Environment policy council. At the political front, it made efforts to institutionalise multiparty parliamentary democracy at the national level and local – self government both at urban and rural level through elections. The government promoted freedom of expression, independent judiciary, economic liberalization, international peace and cooperation, and administrative, educational, taxation and fiscal reforms.<sup>86</sup>

In the Political front, most outstanding landmark of the party was the initiation by the party leader G.P. Koirala to open a dialogue with the Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) with a view to bringing them to constitutional and peaceful politics. It was under his leadership a peace accord was signed with the Maoist which brought the more than a decade old Maoist violence insurgency to an end. He successfully brought other major constitutional parties also together on a common programme. The common programme outlined the political process which involved the management of the Maoist arms and their combatants, declaration of an interim constitution, an interim parliament and the election to the constituent assembly which will draft a new constitution for the country.<sup>87</sup>

As, Nepal tried to enter in to new political era and improve the political system after the Janaandolan I; A new constitution was drafted and promulgated though it was a negotiated document of the major political forces, the Nepali Congress, the United

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<sup>85</sup> Gyawali, Dipak and Ajay Dixit (1999), "Mahakali Impasses and Indo-Nepal Water Conflict", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 34 (9): 553-564.

<sup>86</sup> Khadka, Narayan (1993), "Democracy and Development in Nepal: Prospects and Challenges", *Pacific Affairs*, 66 (1): 44-71.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.



Left Front (ULF) and the monarchy; General and local elections were held, which helped democracy to take root at the grassroots level. However, the “pseudo” democracy did not perform well in the country. In between the royal massacre happened in June 2000 which helped to emerge more ambitious but undemocratic man, the then crown prince Gyanendra as the king of the country.<sup>88</sup> As Gyanendra had negative opinion about 1990s’ political change from the beginning, he accelerated the conspiracy against the ongoing multi-party democracy when he received the crown formally. Though he was, according to the 1990’s constitution, a constitutional head of the country, his initial attempts were to destroy the elected bodies formed under the constitution and to weaken the main parties. He got a great success when the parliament was dissolved in May 22, 2002 and Nepali Congress split in June 2002. It is said that there was king’s strong backing to the then Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba for making both the incidents a success.<sup>89</sup>

The conspiracy against the democracy was formally started by 22 May 2002 when the king, “on the recommendation of Prime Minister,” dissolved the parliament. The next step against the democratization process was the postponement of the elections of local bodies, which had to be held by July 2002. As there was lack of constitutionally elected institutions at the local as well as at the central level, there was political vacuum which helped king Gyanendra to interrupt the remaining democratic institutions. Then, he dismissed the then Deuba government on 4 October 2002. The charge against the Deuba government was its incompetence in not holding elections. The move of the king to discharge Deuba government gave a birth of a new era of struggle.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Kramer, Karl Heinz (2003), “Nepal in 2002: Emergency and Resurrection of Royal Power”, *Asian Survey*, 43 (1): 208-214.

<sup>89</sup> Bhattarai, Baburam (2005), “Royal Regression and the Question of a Democratic Republic in Nepal”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40 (15): 1510-1513.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

The king's move on 1 February 2005, again gave a new shape of political polarization; the situation can be termed as king vs. all other people. The move not only affected the parliamentary parties but also the civil society, professional organizations and even the common people. Within 11 months of king's direct rule (from 1 February 2005 to 22 November 2005), about 6112 political activists and human rights defenders were arrested. Analyzing the severe situation of the country's democracy, all major political parties including those who were together with king until 1 February 2005 assembled together, formed an alliance called the Seven Parties Alliance (SPA) and decided to begin the nation-wide protest against "the king's autocratic regime." The SPA was new formation of the earlier mentioned Five Parties Alliance (FPA), Deuba headed Nepali Congress (democratic) and the United Left Front was the new comers, and the UML had rejoined the alliance. When mainstream political parties showed their unity to go against the king's move, The SPA, after it got positive response from civil society and other professional organizations, also announced a nationwide peaceful protest program calling it as Janaandolan. The joint movement was started from 22 May 2005.<sup>91</sup>

Nepali Congress came up for restoration of democracy assume in 2006. When Seven Party Alliance formed against king autocracy, on 19 March 2006, representatives of the seven allied opposition political parties and the Maoists announced an agreement to launch another uprising on April 6 against the King. They issued a public Memorandum of Understanding detailing their common stance, which paved the way for future developments. The Maoists also decided to lift the indefinite blockades that had been in place since 14 March. On 3 April, the Maoists announced a unilateral ceasefire. On 6 April the uprising led by the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) began and was initially planned to include a four-day general strike and civil disobedience

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<sup>91</sup> PRIO (2008), *Post Conflict Power Sharing: The Case of Nepal*, South Asia Briefing Paper (2), Oslo.

movement, as well as a large public rally in the Kathmandu on 8 April.<sup>92</sup>

However, the movement continued to gather momentum and resulted, on 24 April 2006 in the King relinquishing his strangle-hold on absolute power and in his reinstating the House of Representatives that had been dissolved on 4 October 2002. This can be seen as one of the most important days in the country's recent history. So, the NC comes up with other political parties and relation in common ideology for restoration of democracy seen. So it can say NC work with other political parties for restoration of democracy.<sup>93</sup>

Until recently, NC strongly supported the institution of constitutional monarchy for the country, together with parliamentary democracy. But after the royal takeover 1 February 2004, its attitude towards monarchy started to change. Since the present Monarchy showed no sign of his commitment to popular sovereignty, the eleventh party general convention passed a resolution which stated that it is no longer committed to constitutional Monarchy and will remain open on the issue. In foreign policy, Nepali Congress is committed for close ties of friendship and cooperation with Nepal's immediate neighbours India and China and advocates productive interaction with all SAARC nations. The party always stand against the use of any part of the country by any person or organization in activities prejudicial to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the neighbouring and friendly countries, and, in its turn, expects these attitudes towards Nepal from the international communities. The party also believes in the principles of the United Nations as guiding elements for the regulation of international relations. NC wants to further strengthen Nepal's role, as a democratic nation, in fostering greater understanding and friendship with all nations of the world. NC also is grateful to those nations who have contributed in

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

Nepal's socioeconomic development efforts.<sup>94</sup>

After 2006, restoration of democracy in the April 2008 Constituent Assembly held which provided a convincing victory for the Maoists but left them short of an outright majority. A coalition government of CPN (UML) was formed. However, within the governing coalition and beyond believed that the Maoists are still an illegitimate force – either because of their incomplete democratic transformation, because they “stole” the election or because, in the words of Congress leader G.P. Koirala, theirs is only a “caretaker government” with no brief to shape longer term policies. Of course, the NC was less quick to question the unelected post April 2006 interim government, which it led.<sup>95</sup> In contrast to that transitional administration, this government is both mandated by a popular vote and constitutionally empowered and required to act as a normal government at the same time as providing leadership to the constitutional process, just as the CA is entrusted with the dual functions of drafting body and legislature. Criticism of the Maoists tends to fail to distinguish between their role leading a coalition government and the bigger questions of their party's position in the peace process. However, the NC has not made up its mind as to whether it is in or out of the peace process. Adopting the easy route of spoiling for its own sake, party leaders have not decided whether to use their considerable leverage to win specific concessions in return for cooperation or whether to devote all their effort to wrecking the government and hoping to supplant it upon its collapse. In the meantime, the party is less democratic than ever. It has made no moves towards more representative or accountable leadership, rather the reverse. Party president G.P. Koirala declared himself parliamentary party leader without any debate, let alone a vote. He then adjourned discussions on the appointment of a deputy leader in order to avoid the

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<sup>94</sup> Upreti, B. C. (2009), “Challenges in the Post-Election Scenario in Nepal”, *Economic & Political Weekly*, 44 (11): 23-25.

<sup>95</sup> PRIO (2008), *Post Conflict Power Sharing: The Case of Nepal*, South Asia Briefing Paper (2), Oslo.

possibility of an election for that position.<sup>96</sup> The mute acceptance of his high-handedness (with only Narahari Acharya voicing dissent within the Central Working Committee) is indicative of the weakness of the NC's second-rank leaders, whom Koirala has reduced, in the words of one journalist, to "subservient subjects". Even usually supportive media outlets have become restive in the face of the party's wilful resistance to serve its own interests by reform. Koirala's insistence on remaining parliamentary leader does not extend to an immediate interest in parliamentary functioning. The NC has repeatedly boycotted the CA; following the opening sitting, Koirala himself has not attended a single CA session and his main internal rival, Sher Bahadur Deuba, has only shown up twice. The delay in finalising the parliamentary party's statute, which was eventually agreed on 4 February 2009, affected the Constitutional Council, which makes appointments to important bodies such as the Public Service Commission and Election Commission, as it required the participation of the leader of the opposition. Party organisation is also in disarray. Despite his autocratic hold on the party, Koirala has only visited the NC headquarters eight times in the last four years.<sup>97</sup> In October 2008 he promised to reinvigorate the party within three months and launched an "awareness campaign" to rebuild its electoral base and, more importantly, to continue the still incomplete reunification of the party following its 2002 split. Results have been mixed at best. The party remain rival, with the unseemly public tussles between its two main wings even extending overseas. Since its refusal to join the government means that senior figures cannot be pacified with ministerial office, the succession battle has become more intense and more complex, with smaller factions coalescing around leaders including Sushil Koirala, Ramchandra Poudel and K.B. Gurung.<sup>98</sup> The NC has, however, taken to its opposition role with vigour, harrying the government with all weapons available to it. Its choice of targets has sometimes been ill-advised or disingenuous and its language never dispassionate,

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> International Crisis Group (2009), "Nepal's Faltering Peace Process", Asia Report (163).

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

but it has kept the government on its toes. Koirala, still energised by his sense of betrayal at having been denied the presidency, confidently predicts the imminent collapse of the government. “The prime minister must have the guts to step down”, threatens one CA member. “We are ready to run the government”.<sup>99</sup> Others, such as Ramchandra Poudel, are only slightly more circumspect, saying that the Maoists working “under the guardianship of Koirala” are the only way forward: “We don’t have any intention to pull down this government. This government will collapse because of their own contradictions”. The Maoists should take these warning shots seriously. Verdicts on the NC’s own stints in power have been mixed but none can deny that Koirala is an experienced wrecker of governments. Since throwing away his own absolute majority in 1994, he has had a hand in the fall of most administrations, including those of his own party under rival leaders Sher Bahadur Deuba and Krishna Prasad Bhattarai. But unless the NC can show that its criticism is constructive it risks tarnishing its name further. Nepali voters delivered a damning electoral verdict. Internationally, the NC’s reputation has sunk to new depths. Formerly sympathetic observers despair at its undemocratic behaviour and shambolic apparatus.<sup>100</sup> If it does not pull itself together, an unreformed NC will continue doing a serious disservice to the sizeable section of the population that would like to be represented by a competent, committed liberal democratic party.

Over the time in the constituent assembly election, emergence of new parties, such as Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), Madhesi Jana Adhikar Forum (MJAF), Tarai Madhesh Loktantrik Party (TMLP) and Sadbhavana Party (SP) marks the relative decline of old parties, such as Nepali Congress (NC), Communist Party of Nepal Marxist Leninist (CPN- UML), Nepal Sadbhavana Party (A), Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), RPP-Nepal and Rastriya Janashakti Party (RJP). Decline of old

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Crisis group Interviews, New Delhi, Washington DC and London, November 2008-January 2009.

parties is largely caused by the anti-systemic social movements, demand of various social strata, such as women, Madhesis, Dalits, youth, indigenous people and ethnic groups for wider representation in political structure and their inability to include them in party framework.<sup>101</sup> So, in such situation the single dominant role of NC has reduced. It is due to the inner political crisis and unable to deal with the ethnic aspiration of the people. So Nepali Congress not remains sole party of Nepal. The constituent assembly election itself indicates the trends.<sup>102</sup>

Though, the major parties promised to continue working together with the government but the NC, which came second, refused to join the government that was eventually installed in August 2008. For all its weaknesses, this government is Nepal's best hope but it is not living up to its promise and there are no viable alternatives.

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<sup>101</sup> Dahal, Devraj (2008), "Democracy Building and Party System in Nepal", Contribution to a Debate, *Readings in Governance and Development*, 11 unpublished paper.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

The Nepali Congress party formed on 9 April 1950 has completed 60 years of its existence this year. The party has been a symbol of democracy in Nepal. On the whole, after the restoration of democracy, successive governments in general and the NC party in particular failed to deliver good governance to the people in every field, including qualitative and cheap education, better health services, employment control of corruption, security of the people (especially with regard to the Maoist War), fulfilment of demands of different nationalities, free and fair elections, etc. However, over the time basically in post 2000 it failed to maintain the relationship with the opposition parties and even failed to consolidate its own part in a real sense. The main cause of this failure is the conflict between leadership and undemocratic culture of the party leaders. As a result, the NC is caught in a series of deadlocks: with rebellious Maoists, with the main opposition party in the parliament, and, on social issues, such as women or property rights, on the aspirations of ethnic and minority religious groups, on the question of a secular state and of language, on the question of the uplifting of Dalits and on the demands of professional groupings for special privileges. This had made the NC a “stalemate machine” unable to move forward in both governance and development processes. In order to become both an adoptive and integrative force of society, the NC needs to establish a culture of democracy in the party legitimate succession of leadership, a system of dialogue and the ability to serve as a transmission belt between the society and the polity.

But when it was in power, it contributed significantly to the modernization and democratization of the country. It was the first political party in Nepal to arouse



public consciousness against the then Rana regime through the length and breadth of the country and it was this party which succeeded in launching an armed struggle against the Ranas successfully. Besides, the party introduced Nepal to the world in the real sense of the term after the success of the revolution in February 1961. It was this party which emancipated the King from the clutches of the Ranas who held King Tribhuvan and his forefather's virtual prisoners for more than a century. The Nepali Congress brought about significant changes in the otherwise feudal society of Nepal. As early as September 1951, it had succeeded in making the cabinet agree to the abolition of the *Birta* system, an instrument of exploitation during the Rana regime. It took significant steps towards the decentralisation of political power in the country. It succeeded in significantly reducing the Privy Purse of the King. It concluded a number of treaties and agreements with other countries to the benefit of Nepal. It established diplomatic relations with a large number of countries. It tried to make the relations of Nepal with its neighbours more cordial.

Though its hold declined, it had always been and still is a strong political force in the country. Its importance has always been recognised, either publically or privately, both by the ruling King and the small political parties, whose existence had in the past entirely depended on opposition to the Nepali Congress in every possible manner. Eventually, when King Mahendra found the Nepali Congress strengthening its rule among the masses, he decided to do away with the parliamentary democracy itself. The Panchayat emerged as a device to rule the country directly while at the same time creating a facade of democracy and decentralization. It is true to a great extent that the Nepali Congress was forced to go into exile and also lost contact with the masses, but the existing regime in Kathmandu tried to work out a compromise with the Nepali Congress several times, even though the terms for the party were not honourable. This suggests that the Nepali Congress out of power and even outside the country has always been a formidable force. It is remarkable that the current regime is also

advocating many programmes and policies drawn up by the Nepali Congress.

The Nepali Congress has been quite opposed to the panchayat system is undemocratic and has even tried to overthrow it by force. But strategically, the party had in the past tried to capture the panchayat system, though half heartedly. Two cases can be cited in support of this. When Ram Raja Prasad Singh contested election for a seat in the National Panchayat from the Graduates' Constituency with the avowed and stated objective of bringing about radical changes in the existing system, the Nepali Congress took up his cause. Also when a leader of the Nepali Congress in exile sought the advice of Suvarna Shamsher and B. P. Koirala, two top leaders of the party – he was given inkling by both of them that the party should try and capture various posts in the existing polity. Besides, one of the top leaders of the party, Surya Prasad Upadhyay, had joined the panchayat system in 1966 with a view to making it more democratic.

The NC government introduced the eighth five year plan (1992-97) and the ninth five year plan (1997-2002) with formation of National Development Council and Environment policy council. At the political front, it made efforts to institutionalise multiparty parliamentary democracy at the national level and local – self government both at urban and rural level through elections. The government promoted freedom of expression, independent judiciary, economic liberalization, international peace and cooperation, and administrative, educational, taxation and fiscal reforms.

Intra party feud affected the performance of Nepali Congress the party had leadership tussle between the party supreme leader Ganesh Man Singh the President K. P. Bhattarai and the General Secretary G. P. Koirala. For example in the personalise politics of Nepal, there were often clashes within a party with those in the party organization opposing their own party colleagues in government. For example, in

1994; Koirala did not get support from the Bhattarai faction of NC on the Tanakpur issue.

The Nepali Congress supported the restoration of democracy in 2006 when Seven Party Alliance was formed against King Autocracy. On 19 March 2006 representatives of the seven allied opposition political parties and the Maoists announced an agreement to launch another uprising on April 6 against the King. They issued a public Memorandum of Understanding detailing their common stance, which paved the way for future developments. The NC has repeatedly boycotted the Constituent Assembly (CA); following the opening sitting, Koirala himself has not attended a single CA session and his main internal rival, Sher Bahadur Deuba, has only shown up twice. The delay in finalising the parliamentary party's statute, which was eventually agreed on 4 February 2009 affected the Constitutional Council, which makes appointments to important bodies such as the Public Service Commission and Election Commission, as it required the participation of the leader of the opposition.

Though NC has fought for democratic movement, its rival on leadership and other internal conflict has reduced its influence. Moreover, many new parties emerged in Nepal challenging the NC, such as Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), Madhesi Janaadhikar Forum (MJF), Tarai Madhesh Loktantrik Party (TMLP) and Sadbhavana Party (SP) marks the relative decline of old parties, such as Nepali Congress (NC), Communist Party of Nepal, Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN- UML), Nepal Sadbhavana Party (A), Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), RPP – Nepal and Rastriya Janashakti Party (RJP). Their influence was further decreased by the anti-systemic social movements, such as women, Madhesis, Dalits, youth, indigenous people and ethnic groups for wider representation in the political structure and the party's inability to include them in the party framework. So, in such a situation the single dominant role of NC has been reduced. It is due to the inner

political crisis and inability to deal with the rising aspirations of the people that the influence of NC has been reduced. The constituent assembly election itself indicates the trends.

The lack of concerns to the ethnic issues and marginalisation group demand reduces its influence among these people. It is setback to the NC. NC has to think for social justice and should gain peoples support. If all the communities' support is not garnered, it will not succeed in representing the large masses of the country.

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