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Abstract

Democratization of Political Parties in Nepal: Impact on Strengthening the Constitution

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Democracy is a widely accepted system of government. Consolidated institutions and honest behavior are the primary requirements for the successful working of this system. Hence, this article aims to make a critical analysis of the democratization of political parties in Nepal, and impact on strengthening the constitution. Despite three-quarters of a century (almost 75 years) of democratic practice of political parties, Nepal has a bitter experience of fragile democracy. The study concludes that the political party in a democratic system requires a consolidated institution and actors' normative commitment towards the system.

Political parties are central to democracy, which serves as agents of political change, representation, and governance. This article examines the contributions and limitations of different political parties in Nepal in institutionalizing political change at various times, the constitutional provisions, and the problems that arise in the practical implementation of their democratic conduct. Since political parties are agents of change and a synonym for democracy, this article focuses on assessing their democratic condition. This article attempts to identify the bases for the democratization of Nepal's political parties, constitutional provisions, and parties. Using secondary sources and qualitative analysis, this study identifies challenges, including leadership entrenchment, lack of financial transparency, and limited inclusiveness within party structures. The findings of this study clarify how Nepal's political parties played pivotal roles in democratic movements and constitution-making; however, their internal democratization remains incomplete.

Strengthening constitutional compliance, ensuring inclusivity, and promoting transparent party practices are essential for consolidating democracy in Nepal. This study contributes to understanding party

Keywords

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institutionalization in post-conflict democracies and offers practical insights for political reformers and policymakers.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN modern representative democracy are considered essential institutions that mediate between the individual citizen and the state and organize political competition for power. Political parties mobilize public opinion, formulate societal interests, and translate them into public policies and political action. The functioning of democratic governance and the implementation of the constitutional mandates depend on the organization and behavior of political parties. Political parties that directly affect public life through their policies and policy implementation, leadership selection, and policy decisions should conduct themselves according to democratic norms within their own organization. Democratization and democracy cannot be limited to periodic elections but should be reflected in a broader sense of participation, accountability, rule of law and protection of civil liberties, which can be strengthened if political parties themselves conduct themselves according to democratic norms and practices (Sørensen, 2008). As Pokharel (1999) points out, political parties are the lifeline of modern politics and one of the main sources of political consciousness among citizens.

A political party is defined as an organized group of individuals that shares a political program and philosophy with the goal of gaining political power and enacting laws that serve the interests of the country. Political parties encourage citizens to cast ballots, seek offices, establish administrations, and advocate for the interests of the general public within the political system. They also manage the diversity of social, cultural, and intellectual life in society and promote national unity by organizing political competition and discussion. Even in unfavorable political environments, some parties have historically acted as catalysts for democratic transformation and authoritarian regime transition (Fuel, 2018). As a result, the quality of democratic government in a particular nation will be influenced by internal organization, leadership structure, and decision-making process inside parties.

Nepal's constitutional evolution and political party history are very new and intimately related to the nation's democratic efforts. After Prithvi Narayan Shah conducted a drive of unification in the eighteenth century, Nepal came under the Shah monarchy. The Rana oligarchy, which controlled Nepal autocratically for more than a century, was later established by Jung Bahadur Rana thanks to the Kot Massacre (Shrestha, 1999). Although political dissent was repressed during the Rana government, underground activism and intellectual activities led to the emergence of early political consciousness. The establishment of the political organization Praja Parishad in 1936 was one of the earliest concerted efforts to challenge autocratic rule (Acharya, 2017). Subsequently, significant political organizations like the Communist Party of Nepal and the Nepali Congress were established, inspiring large-scale efforts to overthrow the Rana government and install democratic rule.

A number of political and constitutional changes have interspersed Nepal's democratic journey. Although the 1951 democratic movement signaled the end of the Rana regime and the beginning of multiparty politics, the democratic institutions were weak, as demonstrated by King Mahendra's 1960 dismissal of the elected government headed by Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala and the three decades of partyless Panchayat rule that followed (Manandhar & Sharma, 1996). Another turning point in Nepal's democratic history was the return of multiparty democracy following the People's Movement of 1990. Subsequently, a period of political instability and discontent with governance and political processes paved the way for the Maoist insurgency in 1996 which eventually led to the People's Movement of 2006 and the end of absolute monarchy. These political changes are reflected in the Constitution of Nepal 2015, which declares Nepal to be a federal democratic republic.

Nepal has continued to deal with enduring problems of political instability, party factional conflicts, and limited internal democracy despite these constitutional developments. Concerns regarding the operation of political parties have grown to include centralized leadership, opaque candidate selection, delayed party conventions, and a lack of financial transparency. According to the Constitution, inclusiveness, internal democracy, and accountability are critical factors in the organization of political parties for strengthening democracy (Shrestha, 2015). As a result, the study on the democratization process of political parties has become an important indicator of constitutional consolidation and the deepening of democracy. Political parties need to evolve to fit the changing political landscape and demands of the people by ensuring transparency in leadership positions, inclusiveness in participation, and accountability in decisions for sustaining democracy and strengthening constitutional governance (Shivakoti, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

Political parties have been pivotal in Nepal's democratic evolution and the formulation of its constitution. Despite the enduring presence of democratic practices, Nepali political parties encounter significant obstacles, including insufficient internal democratic structures, centralized leadership models, inadequate financial transparency, and limited inclusivity in the decision-making processes. These deficiencies have prompted inquiries into the ability of political parties to function democratically. Therefore, it is necessary to assess the level of democracy in Nepal's political parties and its impact on the successful implementation and consolidation of the constitution.

Objectives and Methods

The purpose of this article is to critically analyze Nepal's democratization of political parties. It focuses on assessing the extent to which major political parties uphold intra-party democracy, especially in issues like internal accountability, financial transparency, candidate nomination, and leadership selection. The study also examines the legislative and constitutional frameworks that govern political parties in Nepal and specify democratic standards for their internal operations.

The study is guided by three philosophical perspectives: ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions. From an ontological perspective, power relations within political parties are considered important factors that influence the broader performance of constitutional governance. Epistemologically, the study relies on secondary sources of information, including academic articles, books, journals, media reports, government publications, and other scholarly analyses. From an axiological standpoint, democratic political parties are expected to operate based on certain values and norms; however, these ideals are often challenged by both internal and external pressures.

Based on these philosophical foundations, the study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design. Document analysis is used as the primary method to examine patterns of intra-party democracy and to identify the factors that influence the functioning of political parties. This approach helps provide a clearer understanding of both the theoretical expectations of democratic parties and the practical realities of their operation in Nepal.

Literature Review

The democratization of the political parties worldwide is acknowledged as being crucial for the stability of the constitution and the government. Political parties also serve as intermediaries between the state and society by converting society's public demands into policy. Political parties guarantee accountability, representation, and certainty of the people (Ware, 1996). In a country, if the

political parties are not institutional and internal democratic parties, the constitutional governance is weak and political instability is high (Mainwaring & Scully, 1995; Sartori, 1976).

Global Perspective on Party Democratization

Financial responsibility, transparent candidate selection, and competitive leadership selection within political parties all depend on intra-party democracy. According to Scarrow (2005, 2015), political parties should concentrate on increasing member participation in order to institutionalize internal democracy. This will promote democratic governance and lessen factionalism inside the party. For constitutional consolidation to take place, political actors must internalize democratic ideals, according to Linz and Stepan (1996); political instability and democratic regression are often caused by parties that are not adequately institutionalized.

To understand how internal party democracy directly contributes to federal and constitutional functionality, comparative studies of countries such as Germany, Portugal, Rwanda, and Senegal are necessary. Political party internal elections, for instance, provide leadership accountability and adherence to constitutional standards in Germany, hence strengthening government stability (Muller, 2011). Portugal's proportional representation system has increased party involvement and brought party structures into line with the constitution's equality mandate (Costa, 2013). Senegal and Rwanda can teach us how to deal with factionalism and party centralization in post-conflict democratic contexts (Reyntjens, 2010; Villalón & Thompson, 2005).

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Nepalese Context

The history of political parties and constitutional development in Nepal, though relatively recent, reflects a trajectory of struggle, reform, and institutional evolution. From the Rana autocracy (1903-2007 B.S.) to contemporary democratic movements, political parties have been central actors in shaping Nepal's governance structures (Shrestha, 1999; Acharya, 2017). While the Nepali Congress and the Nepal Communist Party, created on Indian soil in 2006 B.S., used both violent and peaceful means to attain democracy, the Praja Parishad, founded in 1993 B.S., signaled the start of organized opposition against autocratic rule (Gautam, 1997). A multi-party cabinet was introduced as a result of a tripartite agreement between the Rana administration, the monarchy, and the Nepali Congress during the 2007 B.S. revolution, but political unrest persisted with numerous government failures between 2007 and 2015 B.S.

The post-Panchayat period witnessed recurring patterns of instability, as governments led by the Nepali Congress, CPN-UML, and other parties struggled to maintain longevity, leading to long-term disillusionment and the rise of insurgent movements such as the Maoist People's War (2052–2063 B.S.) (Dahal, 2000; Fuel, 2017). The 12-point agreement of 2062 B.S. between parliamentary

parties and the Maoists paved the way for the 2006 People's Movement (2062/63 B.S.), the Interim Constitution (2063 B.S.), and the Constituent Assembly elections (2064 and 2070 B.S.), culminating in the promulgation of the 2015 Constitution (2072 B.S.) (Fuel, 2018). Recent political developments, including youth-led protests in Bhadra 2082 B.S. and party realignments, underscore the ongoing challenges in achieving internal party democracy, effective governance, and constitutional consolidation (Shrestha, 2015; Shivakoti, 2013).

Scholars claim that the evolution of Nepalese political parties demonstrates the importance of institutionalizing democratic processes, promoting diversity, and ensuring transparency in leadership, strategy, and philosophy (Shrestha, 2015; Shivakoti, 2013). The Nepalese Constitution clearly prioritizes party organization, laws, and conventions while emphasizing inclusivity across social classes, nations, genders, regions, and religions. If democracy is to become a reality, political parties must abandon feudal leadership methods, enhance theoretical clarity about their goals and tactics, and support open, participatory, and people-centered structures. This literature claims that Nepal's democratization of political parties is both historically and currently essential to the nation's democratic governance and constitutional consolidation.

Presentation and Analysis

Concept of Democratization of Political Parties

The process by which political parties match their structures and activities with more general democratic principles by becoming internally democratic, transparent, responsible, and participatory is referred to as "democratization of political parties" (Scarow, 2015; Ware, 1996). It is an expansion of the broader concept of democracy, which prioritizes the development and strengthening of representative government, citizen involvement, and the rule of law. According to Mainwaring and Scully (1995), democracy in the context of political parties refers to the internal systems that govern leadership selection, candidate nomination, decision-making procedures, financial accountability, policy formulation, and internal dispute resolution.

Concept of Political Parties

Political parties are thought to have arisen when new political circumstances replaced established ones. While political parties appeared in Britain during the advent of the parliamentary system in the same century, American political party creation seems to have begun in the 18th century (Kafle 1991). Parties are found to emerge in the course of political change and democratic practice. In today's representative democracy, the party system is seen as a crucial element. Parties must involve as many citizens as possible in government, as experience has demonstrated. The idea is for more citizens to get involved in politics since the voice of the people is now seen as the voice of God. The topic of political parties' involvement in creating a representative government is spreading around the world.

In the recent era political parties are viewed as the blood of politics and the core of the support of democracy. Political parties are viewed as the power and the main theme of the whole political process (Pokharel, 1997). It has significant role in the control and governance of the government. The party is the Life of democracy. Political party is the organized power with ideas, principle and programs. It consider the good of the country, adopts the peaceful or legal means and tries to bring many of the voters on its side to own the power of government (Regmi, 1997). A political party is a group which strengthens the organized voice of the citizen as a political group with similar views and is trying to take the government in their own interest (Shivakoti, 2013). Political parties are viewed as the furnace to produce workers and leaders. Political parties are viewed as the power of the ordinary citizen that is reliable to raise the political leaders, tries to bring them to the

polls in various offices, works with leadership & adopts legal means to further their policies and programs.

A political party is an official organization that adheres to a specific ideology and advances specific goals, strategies, and initiatives. Through their announced manifestos, charters, laws, and commitment letters, political parties are at the forefront of change, educating the public about their social, economic, political, cultural, and other goals and purposes. They are constantly attempting to sway public opinion, and people are also attempting to evaluate them on the basis of their philosophy, leadership abilities, previous commitment letters, etc., in order to either reward or punish them during election season. Political parties engage in multifaceted political activity.

Bases for the Democratization of Political Parties

In the very beginning of the genesis of the state and governance system, the embryos of the political parties existed. The political parties took the formal shape in the Europe and America from the eighteenth century (Fuel, 2018). Near the end of Rana rule, a Nepali Congress was founded on Indian soil in 2006 B.S. The conference of Vaishakh Aswin 9 and 10, 2006 B.S. could have passed the line of armed revolution (Sharma, 1998) and the founding chairman was Matrika Prasad Koirala. A Nepal Communist Party was also founded in Calcutta, India in 2006 B.S. The founding General Secretary was Pushpa Lal Shrestha. These two parties with different ideologies are observed that they should have made vital contributions leading the political movement at different times in Nepal and brought the country to the present federal democratic republican state. To prove their democratic nature, the political parties should observe these tenets:

Comprehensive national perspective. All facets of the nation are governed by political parties. Parties operating in a democratic system must prioritize a thorough national viewpoint. A thorough national perspective is required in this situation, even when a party's representative represents a particular constituency. This is because voters rely their decisions on the policies, plans, and dedication of each political party to the people and the country (Dahal, 2000). Political parties must so operate within the bounds of a broad national perspective. Political parties have an obligation to bring everyone along with them.

Consistency in policy and implementation. The consistency of a political party's ideology, strategy, tactics, programs, words, and deeds is how the general public assesses it. A political party's statute and manifesto serve as the foundation for voting for and trusting it. As a result, a political party must easily and effectively communicate to the public its general policies and programs. The public must be involved in the transparent implementation of the proclaimed policy. Such acts strengthen the party's democratic base and increase public confidence.

Statute, conventions, and formation of working committees. Political parties are the carriers of change and the wellspring of constitutional authority. Political parties are viewed as the manifestation of the development and application of ideas (Khanal, 2007). They are assessed based on whether or whether their law adopts democratic methods for conventions, the creation of work committees at different levels, the basis for membership acquisition, and the basis for modifying the statute.

State of financial transparency. A political party need funding to operate. A party's democratic status is also evaluated by how it raises funds for its operations, whether it discloses information about its revenue sources and expenditures, the status of its audits, etc. Financial discipline, the health of the economy during work proceedings, and cooperation or lack thereof in taking action when a member engages in corruption are the factors used to evaluate them. If a political party presents itself well on issues like public accountability and good administration, it is deemed to have democratic behavior.

Publicly accountable inclination. Politics is service infused with pure social passion rather than a career or business. A person's life in political service is public rather than private. They have to be able to lead as an example. In terms of morality, character, and behavior, they must be able to portray themselves as role models. A political party and its leaders who uphold such values are respected by all.

Democratization of Parties and Constitutional Provisions in Nepal

Political parties, which push for change, are the lifeblood of a democracy. Political parties are taken as an integral part of politics and the foundation of public opinion. As the modern state is a public system approved by the people, it is expected that as many people as possibly are involved in politics and political activities. This implementation is carried out by political parties. In the democracy, political parties are the lifeblood (Pokharel, 2016). Just as industries and factories are the symbols of economic modernity, political parties are the symbols of political modernity. The whole process of politics and political activities are based on political parties. For democracy to undergo a transformation into a way of life, the activities and conduct of political parties have to be healthy and practical. Democracy can only be strengthened and matured in healthy competition. The role of political parties must be visible as a pioneering role in making public opinion unbiased, honest, fraud free, transparent and trustworthy. Political parties should portray themselves in a more responsible manner. Political parties have a fundamental role to play in promoting national unity, national interest, democracy, sovereignty, social harmony. Such roles and responsibilities by political parties are generally defined in the constitution of a country.

- According to Article 21 of the Federal Republic of Germany's Constitution, political parties founded with the intention of undermining democratic principles are unconstitutional; the Constitutional Court determines whether a party is unconstitutional (Dahal, 2009).
- Articles 10-51 of the Constitution of Portugal clearly state that political parties formed on the basis of different religions and sects with the aim of affecting national sovereignty and territorial integrity will not be recognized (Dahal, 2009).
- Article 53 of the Constitution of Suriname mentions the subjects that political parties must adhere to. The internal organization of a political party must be in accordance with democratic values and principles; the annual income and expenditure of the party must be made public; political parties must engage in activities keeping the national interest at the center (Dahal, 2009).
- The Preamble and Articles 52 to 59 of the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda are found to mention the conduct that parties must follow. Political organizations must operate their activities by adopting democratic principles and maintaining national unity, territorial integrity, and the security of the nation; it is clearly stated that political parties cannot be formed on the basis of sect, religion, or gender, etc. (Dahal, 2009).
- The democratization of political parties is mentioned in Article 3 of the Senegalese Constitution. Political parties should not be founded on the grounds of ethnicity, language, religion, sect, or geography, according to a clear statement (Dahal, 2009). As a result, following certain constitutional rules both during and after party creation, as well as exhibiting democratic behavior, are prioritized in many nations.

In constitutional history of Nepal, freedom of assembly and association has been included in the list of rights for citizens in the first written and enacted constitution Part 2, Section 4 of the Nepal Government Legal Code 2004, but this constitution never came into effect. Freedom of speech is

mentioned in the list of rights of Nepali citizens in Part 2, Section 14 to 20 of the Nepal Interim Government Act 2007. After the political change of 2007 B.S., the Nepal Communist Party was banned for some time, but other political parties were open for some time (Dahal and Shrestha, 2000). The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 2015 Part 3, Section 3 to 9 mentioned “freedom of speech and publication” and “freedom to open associations and institutions” under political freedom (Fuel, 2018). In the first general election held on Falgun 7, 2015 B.S. (109 members of the House of Representatives), nine political parties participated

In the first-ever general election possible to be held in Nepal on Falgun 7, 2015 B.S., the Nepali Congress won 74 of the 109 seats. The leader of this party, Bisheshwar Prasad Koirala, was called upon to become the leader of the parliamentary party and Prime Minister. Eighteen months later, after leveling various unfounded accusations against him, King Mahendra deposed the elected government. After the King banned all party activities, political parties in Nepal have been going on only underground since then until the success of the Joint People's Movement of 2046 B.S. Now, after the change of 2046 B.S., it can be seen that for the first time, the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 2047 contains clear and specific provisions relating to the formation and functioning of political parties. The preamble of the constitution, wherein the goal of strengthening the multi-party system, accepting adult franchise, periodic elections, and sovereignty of the people. The provisions of Article 12 on freedom of thought and expression and freedom of association, and Article 23 on the right to constitutional remedies in Part 3, Fundamental Rights, also appear to have internalized an open political environment. Article 112 of the constitution prohibited the ban on political organizations or parties. Article 113 states that for recognition as a political organization or party in the context of elections, registration with the Election Commission is required.

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 2047 seems to have pushed forward the subject that political parties must fulfill the following conditions for election purposes:

- The statute and rules of the political organization must be democratic.
- The party's statute must mandate the election of the organization's or party's officials at least once every five years.
- A compulsory condition to field at least 5 percent women candidates in the House of Representatives election.
- To obtain recognition as a national party, it is necessary to obtain at least three percent of the total valid votes cast in the House of Representatives election.
- The Commission will not grant recognition to political parties that seek to disintegrate the country or incite communalism. Similarly, there is a constitutional provision that the Election Commission will not register a political party that discriminates against Nepali citizens on the grounds of religion, ethnicity, language, gender, sect, etc. Thus, the arrangement made by the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 2047 regarding political parties should be considered to have played a positive role in strengthening the ground for competitive politics.

The Nepal's Second Interim Constitution 2063, being the product of consensus of the then political forces, states in article 2 “that the sovereignty and state authority of Nepal shall be vested in the Nepalese people.” This is first time in Nepal's constitutional history that this fact is stated. It is found that the preamble of the constitution has internalized the fundamental aspects of the democratic values such as competitive democratic governance, civil liberties, fundamental rights, human rights, adult franchise and periodic elections (Fuel, 2018). The provisions relative to the election of the Constituent Assembly, the electoral system and referendums were new subjects in the constitution.

Part 18: Articles 141 and 142 of the Interim Constitution 2063 had provisions for the establishment and functioning of political parties. All political parties were to register with the Election Commission for election purposes; political parties could not be banned. Election of officers of the party at all levels in the party should occur no less frequently than once in five years; the party's statute should be democratic and be prepared with the assurance of inclusiveness in all levels of the working committee. Consensus of political parties was given high priority by the constitution.

The dispute about constitution making has been in Nepal for a very long time. The constitution could be made by the people's representative only when the sovereign power is transferred to the people. The constitution making of the state of Nepal has made the 65 years desire for constitution making through Constituent Assembly come true. In making this constitution, the Nepali people have exercised their sovereign right for the first time. The parties of the political parties of Nepal seem to have agreed unanimously that the federal democratic republic and the competitive multi-party political system are the political basis of the political democratic system of this constitution made by the Constituent Assembly (Shrestha, 2015). The political basis is made clear in the preamble of the constitution, the people's competitive multi-party democratic system of government, civil liberty, human rights, adult franchise, and periodic elections. Part 3, Article 17 of the right to freedom, also mentions the freedom to form associations and organizations and to use political freedom. Articles 269 to 272 of Part 29, constitution of Nepal, deal with political parties.

It is noted that parties may be constituted and operated according to the law and be dedicated to a common political ideology, philosophy, and program. It is noted that they may propagate, cause to be propagated, or carry out any other activity for the purpose of obtaining the support and co-operation of the general public for the ideology, philosophy, and program of the party. Article 269(1) provides that, for election purposes, a political party must have completed the procedure according to the law and register the party with the Election Commission (Article 269(2)). A political party applying for registration of the party with the Election Commission must be mindful of the following matters (Article 269(4)):

- The statute and rules of the political party must be democratic.
- The party's statute must have a provision for the election of each of its federal and provincial-level officials at least once every five years; however, if special circumstances arise and the election of officials cannot be completed within five years, it is mentioned that an additional six months can be added by making provisions in the party's statute.
- It is mentioned that provisions must be made internalizing the principle of inclusive representation, addressing the diversity of Nepal, in the executive committees at various levels of the political party.

In addition to the relevant political party's statute and manifesto, other legally required documents must be included with an application for political party registration (Article 269(3)). According to Article 269(5), a political party cannot be registered if its name, goal, symbol, or flag interferes with the nation's religious or communal unity.

Article 270 of the Constitution prohibits the imposition of bans on political parties. Any law made or any arrangement or decision made to impose restrictions on forming a political party and operating it according to Article 269, and on propagating it to obtain the support and cooperation of the general public for the party's ideology, philosophy, and program, shall be deemed contrary to this constitution and shall be void (Article 270(1)). Any law made or any arrangement or decision made that allows only one political party or person with only one type of political ideology, philosophy, or program to participate in elections, the country's political system, or the operation of the state

structure, shall be deemed contrary to this constitution and shall be void (Article 269(2)). It can be expected that the provisions regarding political parties in the Constitution of Nepal will help in the necessity and democratization of parties. It seems that constitutional provisions have been made to prevent the imposition of bans on political parties, learning from the lessons of past bans on parties. Hence, constitutional provisions have made the democratization of political parties a necessary condition. Since all major and minor political changes in Nepal have had a significant and effective role of political parties, they must keep their past sacrifices in mind and move their character and culture in a time-relevant manner. Since the internal character of a political party influences the nature of national governance, a clear in the party well organized theoretical and operational form is needed. The organizational form of a political party must be inclusive and should advance the national interest by addressing all areas and subjects of the country. Political parties based on caste, communalism and regionalism are fatal for democracy. Hence, the political parties that have sacrificed, shed sweat and blood, for change through revolutions and movements of various forms at various periods in Nepal must internalize national, inclusive, egalitarian, and democratic values and move forward. They must always try to implement the constitutional provisions in practice.

Results

This study evaluates the condition of intrinsic democratization within political parties in Nepal and its impact on the fortification of constitutional governance. The crucial findings of the analysis are presented as follows.

Formality and Practical Limitations of Intra-Party Elections

Although major political parties in Nepal formally provide for conventions and leadership elections within their organizational structures, these processes are not always fully competitive or democratic in practice. In many cases, leadership selection occurs through consensus, factional bargaining, or the influence of top party leaders. This situation weakens the direct participation of party members and limits the practice of internal democracy within political parties.

Centralization in the Candidate Selection Process

The process of selecting candidates for elections is an important indicator of internal party democracy. The study shows that in Nepal, candidate selection is often determined by the central leadership or a limited group of party elites. This practice restricts the role of grassroots party members and local activists and creates challenges for the effective implementation of constitutional values related to representation and inclusiveness.

Lack of Power Decentralization within Organizational Structures

Although political parties maintain organizational structures at various levels, decision-making processes tend to remain highly centralized within the top leadership. This centralization not only limits the autonomy and role of lower-level party organizations but also weakens the institutional development of internal democracy within the parties.

Weakness in Financial Transparency and Accountability

There is a noticeable lack of clear and transparent mechanisms regarding the financial resources, expenditures, and financial management of political parties. The absence of financial transparency raises concerns about the public accountability of political parties and undermines the transparency and trust necessary for a healthy democratic system.

Limited Internal Accountability and Institutional Oversight

Institutional mechanisms within parties designed to ensure leadership accountability appear to be relatively weak. The lack of effective internal monitoring systems has contributed to prolonged leadership dominance, factional competition, and organizational disputes within political parties.

Impact of Internal Democracy on Constitutional Strengthening

The study demonstrates that the level of internal democracy within political parties directly influences the effectiveness of democratic governance. When transparency, participation, and accountability are weak within parties, the implementation of constitutional values—such as inclusiveness, equal representation, and good governance—also becomes weaker.

Conclusion

In Nepal, political parties emerged primarily to end the Rana regime and establish democracy. Since political parties inception, they have played important roles in the revolution against Rana rule in 2007 B.S., the Jhapa uprising of 2028 B.S., the Joint People's Movement of 2046 B.S., the 10-year People's War started by the then CPN (Maoist) from Falgun 1, 2052 B.S., and the Joint People's Movement of 2062/63 B.S., among others. The Constitution of Nepal, created by the Constituent Assembly, can be considered Nepal's latest achievement. In Nepal, although political parties have their own history of formation, background, ideological beliefs, goals, objectives, tactics, strategies, and principles, no fundamental difference is found in their practical working style. As political parties are not entities that work separately from the character and characteristics of society, there may be no originality seen in their working style. Nepal's recent constitutions are found to have guaranteed the right to form a party as a fundamental right. Constitutional limits have ensured the conditions that parties must adhere to. Basically, it can be expected that constitutional and legal provisions, such as the party having a national character, no discrimination of any kind in party formation and membership acquisition, the internal organization of the political party being of an inclusive character in accordance with democratic principles, periodic election of party officials and members, transparent and open management of the party's source of funds and their use, auditing of income and expenditure and official public disclosure of details, and no forced membership will help in the democratization of parties. Political parties must strive for both constitutional provisions and practice.

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