

Role and Contribution of Political Parties in the Political Movement of 2006

Oleh:

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Abstract

The 2006 Nepalese political movement marked a significant shift in the country's democratic history, with political parties playing a crucial role in garnering support and influencing public expectations. The democratic revolution in 2006 brought multiparty democracy back to Nepal, and this article explores the tactics, difficulties, and success of political parties in launching and maintaining the movement. Using historical narratives, primary materials, and academic examinations, the study explores how political parties evolved into catalysts for transformation, galvanized the populace, and engaged in negotiations with the king to initiate a new phase of democracy in Nepal. The movement's success was driven by complex dynamics influenced by social, political, and economic elements. The study uses historical research and political mobilization theories to investigate the role and contribution of political parties in the 2006 movement, examining their role as change agents, tactics, and influence on democratic transitions. The results provide insights into how political parties affect democratic processes, highlighting their role as uniting factors within movements.

Keywords: *Political parties, authoritarianism, totalitarian states, violent conflict, and democratic movement.*

Abstrak

Gerakan politik Nepal tahun 2006 menandai pergeseran yang signifikan dalam sejarah demokrasi negara ini, dengan partai-partai politik memainkan peran penting dalam menggalang dukungan dan mempengaruhi ekspektasi publik. Revolusi demokrasi pada tahun 2006 membawa demokrasi multipartai kembali ke Nepal, dan artikel ini mengeksplorasi taktik, kesulitan, dan keberhasilan partai-partai politik dalam meluncurkan dan mempertahankan gerakan tersebut. Dengan menggunakan narasi sejarah, materi primer, dan kajian akademis, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana partai-partai politik berevolusi menjadi katalisator transformasi, menggembleng rakyat, dan terlibat dalam negosiasi dengan raja untuk memulai fase baru demokrasi di Nepal. Keberhasilan gerakan ini didorong oleh dinamika yang kompleks yang dipengaruhi oleh elemen-elemen sosial, politik, dan ekonomi. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian sejarah dan teori mobilisasi politik untuk menyelidiki peran dan kontribusi partai politik dalam gerakan 2006, mengkaji peran mereka sebagai agen perubahan, taktik, dan pengaruhnya terhadap transisi demokrasi. Hasilnya memberikan wawasan tentang bagaimana partai politik mempengaruhi proses demokrasi, dengan menyoroti peran mereka sebagai faktor pemersatu dalam gerakan.

Kata Kunci: Partai politik, otoritarianisme, negara totaliter, konflik kekerasan, dan gerakan demokrasi.

1. INTRODUCTION

Political movements are a crucial aspect of societal transformation, characterized by mass mobilization, public demonstrations, and efforts to influence political decision-making processes. They often involve organized entities like political parties, which play a central role in these movements (Tilly, 1978). These parties are structured groups that contest elections and represent diverse societal interests, and their activities extend beyond traditional electoral functions. They provide the necessary organizational structure and leadership to sustain movements, ensuring their demands resonate with both the populace and governing elites (Gautam, 1989).

Parties act as mobilizers, using their existing networks and resources to rally support for a cause. They also serve as intermediaries, bridging the gap between grassroots activists and political institutions. They often lend legitimacy to movements by framing their demands within a broader ideological or constitutional framework. This is a task that political parties are uniquely equipped to perform (Sartori, 1976).

Organizational capacity is another critical contribution of political parties to political movements. They are often

equipped with pre-existing infrastructure, such as communication channels, logistical support, and platforms for political education, which enable them to coordinate large-scale mobilizations and sustain long-term campaigns. This allows them to articulate the demands of movements in ways that resonate with both the public and policymakers, elevating the grievances of marginalized groups to the national stage (Adhikari, 1999).

The strategic framing of grievances is another area where political parties excel. By constructing narratives that resonate with diverse audiences, parties can unify disparate groups under a common cause. This framing process involves linking individual experiences of injustice to broader societal issues, thereby creating a sense of shared purpose. Snow et al. (1986) argue that effective framing not only mobilizes support but also enhances the legitimacy of a movement's demands. In the case of Nepal, the SPA (Seven Party Alliance) successfully framed the call for a democratic constitution as a collective struggle for sovereignty and human rights, garnering widespread support from various societal sectors (Gurung, 2022).

However, the involvement of political parties in political movements is

not without challenges. Internal conflicts, ideological differences, and the potential for co-optation by elites can undermine the cohesion of movements. Carothers (2006) highlights that while parties can act as unifying forces, they also risk prioritizing partisan interests over collective goals, leading to fragmentation and loss of momentum. This dual nature of political parties underscores the need for strategic leadership and coordination to balance the competing demands of movement participants (Karki,2022).

The political movement of 2006 provides a rich context for analyzing the role and contributions of political parties. From Nepal's Jana Andolan (peoples Movement), which challenged autocratic monarchy. The political parties acted as catalysts for change, leveraging their organizational resources, framing capabilities, and institutional legitimacy to advance democratic transitions.

In Nepal, the SPA united diverse political ideologies against the common enemy of monarchical autocracy. Their ability to coordinate protests, negotiate with civil society organizations, and articulate a vision for democratic governance was instrumental in achieving the movement's goals. Similarly, in public demonstrations and media campaigns

highlighted attention to the movement's demands and reinforcing the importance of transparency in democratic processes (Karki,2022).

This paper seeks to explore these dynamics in greater detail, analyzing how political parties contributed to the success of the 2006 movements through their organizational capacity, framing strategies, and ability to foster collective action. By examining the interplay between parties and grassroots movements, the study aims to provide insights into the broader implications of these interactions for democratic governance. Furthermore, it highlights the challenges and limitations faced by political parties in navigating the complex terrain of political movements, offering lessons for future activism and policy-making Democratic movements, as studied in the fields of sociology, psychology, and political science, are social phenomena that involve the collective participation of a large number of individuals in public politics. Traditionally, sociological perspectives have focused on the social aspects of movements, examining the dynamics of collective action, social mobilization, and the formation of collective identities. However, a newer perspective emerging in movement studies



emphasizes that mass movements reflect the aspirations of people and their engagement in public politics (Hobsbawn, 2009).

Scholars have highlighted the role of political parties as both mobilizers and representatives. Levitsky and Way (2010) argue that parties' ability to mobilize grassroots support often determines the success of democratic movements. In Nepal, the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) effectively united disparate political ideologies against the monarchy, demonstrating the unifying power of parties. Political parties played a crucial role in articulating demands during the 2006 movements, such as the call for constitutional reforms in Nepal. While parties can unify movements, they also face challenges, including factionalism and co-optation. According to Carothers (2006), political parties often struggle to maintain cohesion in the face of diverse demands, potentially undermining the movement's goals. According to Locke, men live as equals among themselves, free to act and dispose of their possessions as they see fit (<https://www.google.com>).

According to Marx, there will be class conflict until and unless there is uniformity. Many studies have been conducted by native and foreign scholars

such as Samuel P. Huntington (1993), Uddahav Pyakurel and Indra Adhikari (2015), Surya Mani Adhikari (1999), Rajesh Gautam (1989), T.N. Manandhar, and Niranjan Sharma (1999) on various aspects of the democratic movement. Neither the native nor foreign authors have focused on role of political parties in Nepal's democratic movement. Samuel Huntington (1993), an American political scientist, identified three major waves of democratization. The first occurred from 1826 to 1926, the second (1943-62) occurred at the end of World War II, and the third (1974) began with the overthrow of the military regime in Portugal. Over the next 25 years, democracy expanded dramatically around the world.

*Uddahv Pyalurel and Indra Adhikari (2015) are successful in taking into account a wide range of issues that occurred in Nepal, particularly after the establishment of democracy in the 1950s, in their book *State of Conflict and Democratic Movement in Nepal*. The book attempted to bridge the gap between the past and the present by examining the present through the lens of historical realities. Surya Mani Adhikari (1999) attempted the entire democratic movement of 1990 in his book *History of Democratic Movement in Nepal*. He had covered all*

incidents, participants, and the entire scenario of the time, but had failed to address the people's contribution on the democratic movement.

*Rajesh Gautam (1989) attempted to address the 1950 democratic movement through the lens of Praja Parishad in his book *Role of Praja Parishad in Democratic Movement of Nepal*. His contribution to understanding the 1950 democratic movement is commendable. His writing focuses on Praja Parisad and the Nepali Congress party ignoring other stakeholders in Nepal's democratic movement. He hasn't addressed the role of other parties in his book. The book *Political History of Modern Nepal (2007-2019)*, published by CNAS in 1997, is a significant contribution to understanding Nepal's democratic movement since 1990. T.N. Manadhar and Niranjan Sharma, the authors, are both Tribhuvan University scholars. They have attempted to address the entire situation but have failed to address the role of political parties in the democratic movement. This article is aimed to focus on the role and contribution of the Political parties in the democratic movement of 2006. Previous literature in the area has only mentioned the democratic movement of Nepal but the role of political parties in the democratic*

movement was not addressed by the previous studies. Although some articles, writings, books, newspapers have been published on the subject and are not complete. No one has done in-depth study and research on this area yet.

This article intends to find the answer of following questions:

- 1. To trace the democratic movement of 2006 of Nepal*
- 2. To evaluate the role of political parties in the democratic movement of 2006.*

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Political movements are traditionally analyzed through theories of collective action and resource mobilization. Olson's (1965) theory of collective action highlights the challenge of motivating individuals to participate in movements when benefits can be shared collectively. Political parties mitigate this issue by providing leadership, resources, and organizational structure.

Additionally, Tilly's (1978) resource mobilization theory emphasizes the role of networks, alliances, and material resources in sustaining movements. Political parties, with their established infrastructure and ideological frameworks, are well-positioned to serve

as vehicles for resource mobilization. Moreover, the framing theory (Snow & Benford, 1988) illustrates how parties construct narratives that resonate with the public, thereby enhancing participation and legitimacy.

3. METHOD

This article is a qualitative study on the role and contribution of the Political parties in the democratic movement of Nepal. It is a historical study based on descriptive and analytical method. This article focuses on primary as well as secondary sources. For the purpose of primary data in-depth interview (with open ended questionnaire) has been taken from the respondent of University Professors and experts. In addition, secondary sources such as - research articles, published newspapers, unpublished documents, and un-published thesis has been used as reference materials in this research.

In particular, an attempt has been made to present the role of Political parties in the democratic movement of Nepal through analysis. Generalization of the finding of this study can be applicable in the greater context. Frame work for analyzing political movement is studied on the basis of Political Mobilization Theory.

This article is limited to the role and contribution of Political on the democratic movement of from 2006. Contribution of other stakeholders of democratic movement has not been discussed in this article.

4. DISCUSSION

Nepal's Jana Andolan (Peoples Movement of 2006) was a mass uprising against King Gyanendra's direct rule. The SPA, comprising major political parties, played a central role in orchestrating protests, negotiating with civil society organizations, and framing the demand for a democratic constitution. Their ability to mobilize rural and urban populations was instrumental in the movement's success (Pyakurel,2015).

Nepal, once ruled by an absolute monarchy after the Royal Massacre, has experienced growing demands for political rights and representation due to frustration with the authoritarian rule. In the late 21th century, the democratic movement gained significant impetus, with political groups like the Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal including Maoist parties organizing rallies, strikes, and demonstrations against the monarchy during the 2006 (Karki,2022) People's Movement. This



event led to the foundation of a secular, inclusive, federal and republican Nepal.

Key actors and movements in the 2006 movement included SPA, Maoist Party civil society organizations, student groups, and marginalized communities. Political parties played a crucial role in mobilizing diverse segments of society, including students, intellectuals, workers, and peasants, in support of the democratic movement. Their ability to adapt to changing circumstances, forge alliances, and sustain momentum proved instrumental in keeping the movement alive (Gurung, 2022).

As the democratic movement gained momentum, decade long insurgency and the direct rule of King Gyanendra has been abolished and formed inclusive, federal democratic Nepal.

When it comes to organizing people and resources, political parties are crucial. They offer a well-established organizational structure that movements may use to further their goals. This involves having access to the membership bases, networks, and logistical assistance required to plan campaigns, rallies, and events. Political parties frequently have the means to organize grassroots initiatives, mobilize voters during elections, and distribute information

through media outlets (Kitschelt, 2006). Furthermore, effective decision-making and resource allocation are made possible by the hierarchical structures inside parties, which are essential for maintaining advocacy efforts over the long term.

Parties, as acknowledged political organizations, provide social movements legitimacy by bringing them into line with accepted democratic institutions and norms. This connection aids movements in gaining wider acceptability and public confidence. Due to their historical involvement in governance and legal legitimacy, political parties serve as a bridge that converts popular demands into official political discourse (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967).

When political parties embrace movements calling for policy changes, their demands are frequently magnified. This mutually beneficial connection raises the movement's perceived legitimacy and improves the likelihood that it will have an impact on policy decisions. Parties can also serve as spokespeople of underrepresented or marginalized groups, directing their complaints through formal channels.

Political parties are adept at presenting topics in a way that appeals to

a wide range of voters. Parties create narratives that unite disparate interest groups by utilizing ideological message, symbolic language, and strategic communication. For movements to be sustained, this framing cultivates a feeling of communal identity and common purpose (Snow & Benford, 1988).

Political parties, for instance, were crucial in the civil rights campaigns because they presented justice and equality as universally advantageous, appealing to both minority groups and larger societal sectors. Additionally, by simplifying complicated topics, strategic framing makes them actionable within the political system and understandable to the broader public.

However, the findings also underscore the limitations of political parties, including internal conflicts and the potential for prioritizing partisan interests over collective goals.

5. CONCLUSION

The 2006 political movement highlights the crucial role of political parties in facilitating democratic change. They utilized their organizational resources, such as networks, logistical infrastructure to mobilize widespread participation and coordinate large-scale

protests. Their ability to unify and direct collective action was crucial in maintaining the movement's momentum and ensuring its objectives were clearly articulated and pursued.

Political parties also played a pivotal role in framing public discourse during the movement, crafting narratives that resonated with diverse segments of the population, transforming fragmented grievances into a cohesive demand for democratic reforms. Their strategic messaging helped bridge divides among various social groups, fostering a sense of shared purpose that transcended ideological or class differences.

Political parties also functioned as representatives of collective demands, providing institutional channels through which the aspirations of the populace could be voiced and acted upon. By integrating these demands into their platforms and negotiating with governing bodies, parties served as conduits for political transformation, translating the movement's goals into actionable policy proposals. Future research should explore the interplay between political parties and other social actors, such as civil society organizations, advocacy groups, and grassroots movements, to fully understand the dynamics of democratic change. This



would provide a more nuanced understanding of how these entities collaborate, compete, and influence one another in the pursuit of shared goals.

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