



निर्वाचन आयोग, नेपाल
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Electoral Systems: Post Conflict Election Experience of Nepal

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Post Conflict Election Experience of Nepal



Six Decades Long waiting for CAE

The day of the election for the Constituent Assembly finally dawned was a memorable one for the people of Nepal.

They had waited more than six decades for their chance to vote on who should write their Constitution. The arrival of this historic day had not come without challenges and delays but the will of the people had prevailed, setting an example to the world.....



Nepal and Political Process

- ***Nepal a rich country in natural beauty and perhaps in resources too***
- ***Diversity in ethnicity, culture, religion, caste and languages***
- ***Country of just over 28 million people***
- ***First step towards democracy in 1951***
- ***CAE was aspired then but constitution was given without CAE***



Parliamentary Democratic History

- ***First Democratic Election to Parliament in 1959***
- ***King forcefully replaced the multiparty democratic system with Party-less system in 1960***
- ***For 30 years no democratic elections in Nepal***
- ***People's Popular Movement – I in 1990***
- ***King was compelled to accept multiparty democratic process***
- ***Three general elections – 1991, 1994 and 1999***



Maoists Insurgency

- ***New Democratic governments failed to live with people's expectations (Lack of Governance)***
- ***Maoists insurgency launched in 1996 with support of dissatisfied section of society***
- ***For 10 years the country remained under insurgency, conflict and war***



End of Monarchical System

- ***In 2001 King and his whole family was massacred***
- ***The new king dissolved Parliament and took full executive power***
- ***This brought Rebels and Political Parties together***
- ***Priority of agreement was CAE***
- ***People's Popular Movement –II ended King's Autocratic rule***
- ***June 2006 set up pillars for New Nepal***



Democratic Republic of Nepal (Federal)

- ***Parliament reinstated and Nepal announced as a Democratic Republic Country***
- ***CPA signed between Maoists and SPA***
- ***Insurgency ended and negotiations for interim Constitution made***
- ***All Power of the King removed and Parties' government formed***
- ***Peace process began as CAE on the top priority***



Formation of Election Commission

- ***New Election Commission formed even before the interim constitution***
- ***Mid-June 2007 First date for CAE***
- ***Holding CAE after an armed conflict***
- ***CAE date was ambitious***
- ***Blame game among parties was on the increase***



Preparation & Postponement of CAE

- ***Electoral laws and bylaws drafted***
- ***Preparation for CAE began***
- ***Voter Registration Act enacted and Electoral Roll updated***
- ***No agreement on Electoral system until- mid-April – No electoral law***
- ***ECN announced CAE impossible! with disappointment***



Next Date for CAE & the Political Unrest

- ***Constitution amended and CAE date now fixed for 22 November 2007***
- ***Preparation for CAE continued***
- ***Staff trained and deployed and VE launched***
- ***Some parties' demands created unrest and uncertainty to CAE – one of demands was to change the electoral system itself!***



Further Episode of CAE Postponement

- ***One day-before the CN the Government request the ECN to extend a week for CN***
- ***ECN extended 5 days for CN for all parties***
- ***On the 5th of October in the morning of CN the 2nd postponement to CAE was announced***
- ***Great disappointment to all including ECN***
- ***All were ready including international observers on their way to visit the elections!***



Third preparation for CAE

- ***Again interim Constitution amended***
- ***April 10, 2008 was new date set for CAE***
- ***ECN began updating preparation!***
- ***Every one has doubt on CAE happening***
- ***Political parties still compounded debates on CAE system***
- ***How can ECN run education and prepared for elections with no electoral system?***



Violence and Agitation Continued

- ***Voices of groups for representation in the CA***
- ***Situation more violent then before***
- ***Eastern Nepal with different demand***
- ***Southern belt of country with separate agitation***
- ***Shut-down, kidnappings, bomb blasting and even murders were increasing***
- ***Situation worsening for peace and CAE***
- ***People became increasingly pessimistic***



Madhesi Movement closer to CAE

- ***People of southern plain agitating with new demand – better representative system and autonomy***
- ***After the CN date announcement an indefinite strike began by Madhesi in Terai***
- ***CN, VE, training and logistic management becoming impossible***
- ***ECN had to find practical solution for CN and other activities as well***



Big doubt over CAE

- ***Lack of democratic practices and lack of confidence in new political parties***
- ***The parallel mixed electoral system with two ballots added complications for all actors***
- ***Disputes among parties and factions reducing people's confidence***
- ***Will CAE ever happen?***



Doubt over King & his Alliances

- ***Wide spread doubt among some that King and his alliances will disrupt the CAE process***
- ***Issues of caste, ethnicity, class, gender and geographic autonomy constantly rising***
- ***All wanted their demands satisfied before CAE***
- ***Criminal arm groups acting in guise of Political Parties becoming increasingly active closer to CAE***



High Level Meetings: EC Strategies

- ***ECN endeavored to regain the trust and confidence in the people for CAE***
- ***Convened high level meetings with Prime Minister and Ministers, all top brasses of Pol. Parties, Civil Society Leaders and Medias***
- ***The ECN adopted transparent and collaborative approaches to creating environment for CAE***



Voter Education and Support of Media

- ***ECN Continued dissemination of information on CAE***
- ***Media helped build public confidence***
- ***Gradually the environment was improving***
- ***ECN used significant political leverage to encourage various stakeholders***
- ***ECN was managing conflict through building environment for CAE***



EC's Exceptional decision on CN

- ***Doubt still prevailing as date of CAE gets closer***
- ***Madhsi agitation still continued***
- ***Threats and abductions on the increase***
- ***Officials were threatened and asked to abort CAE***
- ***ECN adopted flexible approach to CN***
- ***Deadline for CN was extended twice for parties to participate and end agitations***
- ***Parties joined the electoral process and to the CN***



Election Campaign and Code of Conduct

- ***Election Campaign began, CAE dominated all national agenda***
- ***People curiosity rose but with some doubt!***
- ***An electoral Code of Conduct issued***
- ***Parties breaching code were cautioned of the provisions***
- ***Parties removed wall painting of political slogans and banners, posters etc.***
- ***Controlled on promotional materials and loud speakers created positive impact on voters***



Mammoth task to Managing Logistics

- ***Most intense logistic management***
- ***241 types of 40 million ballot papers in 4 weeks***
- ***Training and deployment of 240,000 staff 150,000 security personnel for poll management***
- ***Material to reach to 22,000 polling centres some polling locations at the altitude of over 4000 meter high mountains***
- ***Electronic Voting Machine introduced on pilot basis***



Election Monitoring and Observation

- ***Over 900 international observers from across world observed CAE of Nepal in 2008***
- ***Over 60,000 domestic observers from 148 institutions closely watched the CAE process***
- ***Election Expert Monitoring Team (EEMT) from UN monitored the process from the beginning***
- ***UN, EU, Carter Centre, ANFREL and others were part of international observers***



E-Day Management – Voter Turnout

- ***E-day was taken as festive day by voters***
- ***10.7 Million out of 17.6 million voted in the CAE***
- ***People from all sections of society participated to exercise their rights to vote***
- ***In spite of the wide spread violence in the run- up to CAE mostly the security situation remained peaceful on the E-day***
- ***Voting completed peacefully as the world watched on with interest.***



Vote Count and Result Processing

- ***Ballot boxes were transported using all types of transportations as required by terrain***
- ***Count of ballot took just over 2 weeks as two elections FPTP and PR were implemented together for one CA house***
- ***Under the watchful eyes of Pol. Parties and observers count was completed and results were declared gradually.***



The outcome of CAE

- *The new Party Maoists won the highest proportion of seats but not majority*
- *The Election result was fully accepted by all stakeholders*
- *Nepali voters gave clear verdict to political parties to work in consensus to writing new Constitution*
- *ECN received accolades and appreciations*
- *Greatest achievement was the proportional representation of groups as specified in the provisions of constitution and the laws.*



What made the election happen?

- ***Electorate's aspiration for peace - peace as dividend***
- ***ECN's Transparent and collaborative approach***
- ***Perceived incentives for the key political parties***
- ***Strong pressure from the civil society to creating conducive environment***
- ***Powerful media***
- ***Large presence of national as well as international observers***



Historical Achievements

- ***All those who were never represented in Parliament have been represented in CA***
- ***Representation of 33 % of women in the CA a historical achievement***
- ***The CAE herald new era in Nepal***
- ***People's expectation-optimism very high!***
- ***ECN, though with challenges, like to remain a guardian for democracy in Nepal***



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Thank You