

Envisioning Leadership Studies in Social Sciences : A Perspective for the 21st Century

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This research article attempts to envision studies on leadership in social sciences in Nepal and around the World. The 21st century world seeks to investigate and invent new fields in social sciences to make it competitive. Based on secondary data, the work is completed by descriptive and analytic design. The article has focused in the Scientific study of ethnographic studies in Nepal, theoretical processing of leadership in the simple societies and production of knowledge and dissemination. The article explains the recent political development and leadership issues in Nepal. Conclusions are drawn from the discussion for the burning issues of leadership in social sciences.

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1. Introduction

Research is still in young stage in Nepal. Despite of incipient stage of growth, the field of study covers various aspects of Nepalese

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society culture. Nepal is a country of unique nature, culture, and people. Unity in diversity characterized as national and local culture has attracted many foreign and native scholars for the investigation, interpretation and analysis of the various aspects Nepali culture and society.

The change of B. S. 1950's opened gate to foreigners. And the flow of foreign aid has accelerated the process of modernization in Nepal, this period is also marked the systematic exploration of studies in Nepal by foreign scholars such as Furer-Haemendorf and John T. Hitchcock. Pioneering work was done by Bista (1967) by exploring various ethnic groups in Nepal in his famous book entitled, *People of Nepal*. Thereafter, various descriptive ethnographic studies appeared through rigorous attempts by various Nepalese Scholars. Some of them focused on general descriptive ethnographic studies such as Shrestha (1972). Regmi (1978), Rai (1976) and Dahal (1979); as well as many others were interested in the study of custom and behaviour of Nepalese Society and culture. Typical examples in this respect are Singh (1972), Sharma (1976), Gautam (1978), Ghimire (1973) and Malla (1975).

Some scholars have given their attention for the development of archaeological Anthropology and Sociology in Nepal. They include Joshi (1962), Hotchis (1980), Cornivus (1985) and Dangol (1984). Journals such as *Kailash, Contributions to Nepalese Studies, Himalayan Culture* and *Occasional Papers in Sociology and Anthropology* have encouraged and provided a forum to Nepalese scholars to publish their works on Nepal Society and Culture.

Descriptive Ethnographic Studies have been concentrated in societies especially analysis of institutions such as Marriage, Family, Caste systems, economic, political and religious institution. They explain the socio-economic behaviour through group's structure and institution. Notable studies in this respect are : Furer-Haimendorf (1956). Hitchok (1966), Gaborieu (1976), Pignede (1970), Nepali (1965), Messerschidt (1976) and Macfarlane (1950). Studies on social change in social institution focus upon inter-relationship between group and their socio-economic consequences due to change in land holdings, political and economic structural transformations. Typical examples of such studies are those of Caplan (1970, 1972) and Rosser (1955).

Social change has been the prime focus of study for social scientists in the modern era. Importance is given in a different approach from the various philosophers. Caplan (1972) has stressed

on change in the landholding system due to *Birta unmulan* (Abolishment of landlord system) has ensured the new type of leadership emerging since 1960s in Nepal. The new system prompted the change in power equation and transformations.

Some thinkers propose the great man theory at the turning point of history. Others argue that modern progress is due to the effective contribution of a statesman. But remaining ones argue that the positive and creative actions by leaders undergo goal achievement through rationality.

Collectivity, following, and goal achievement are seen the vital elements in leadership development. Philosophy for practice and action by the actors in sociological structures are very important vehicles for achieving goals. Power and politics are of an utmost integral part of the growth of leadership in small groups or in the global group of nations. The recent conflict between Russia and Ukraine has exemplified the trends developing types of leadership and consequences.

There is a great debate about sustaining democracy and the type of leadership. In this approach, Georg Simmel viewed that a leader becomes superior to the masses starts to lead and control at his will and people become passive supporters. To solve the great debate Max Weber (1922) projected has three types of leadership in post-industrial Europe.

Max Weber theorized that a charismatic leader could be a deciding factor for change in society. But such type of personal stakes engulfs the democratic by the magical power. The residual system of monarchy is the second type in which caste, class, and heredity ensure leadership. This though a stable system is a primitive one. Weber's most important contribution is seen as his third type of leadership which is bureaucracy. For Weber, this type is a competitive, legal, and technical one.

T. A. Pinto (2019) has used a mixed method of social research to address the emergence of leadership in higher education. In the foreign land inequality and alienation makes it difficult for a student to establish leadership.

2. Method

Research design is of descriptive and exploratory type. Analysis is mainly based on secondary data.

3. Discussion

A very large proportion of the research in leadership has made use of the socio-metric method. This technique was developed by Moreno (1934) and then by Jennings (1947). Parson (1952) and Hollander (1961) have given great importance on socio-metric method of explaining leadership. According to Gibb (1953) interaction theory, leadership can be divided into three categories :

1. Patriarchal leadership,
2. Tyrannical leadership and
3. Ideal or charismatic leadership

Gibb has traced major aspects of general interaction theory on leadership. These aspects are as follows :

1. Group interaction,
2. Role orientation and
3. Leadership concept.

Research done by Fielder (1964) has revealed that 'the prediction of group performance based on these leaders attributes is contingent upon the specific situational context in which the leader operates. Fielder and Meuwesse (1963) have also shown that a leader's ability scores correlate highly with group performance only if the leader is psychometrically accepted or liked and this finding contains the essence of their theory. Socio-cultural phenomenon along with political implications plays vital role in enhancement of the country. Our society relies greatly upon social function, social control, socio-cultural change. Our progress is measured in the basis of development of communication, transport, industries, ecological balance and political stability. Leadership more or less shapes the pace of society. It directs the political, social and economic life of its country.

After re-establishment of democracy, study of leadership in political anthropology has become very important. In the growth of leadership studies in Nepal, nominal works mentionable has been done. In descriptive ethnographic studies, the case of local leadership and headman ship have been realized in the least developed societies of the Nepalese Communities.

Caplan (1970), in his book, *Land and Social Change in East Nepal*, has sufficiently described the political context of interdependence

among the Brahmin and Subbas of Ilam District. Recent changes in social life and land holdings have made Hindu-tribal relationship readjustable, Brahmin leaders have become the important men in the settlements of Indreni. Limbu headmen (subbas) have lost their traditional political power and only upon the Brahmin leader. The Brahmins to attain leadership. Hierarchical framework of leadership has changed within the Limbus because of land reform policy of the government. Nowadays, leadership is attained within the Limbu communities not because of the dynasty but from wealth and status earned from the military service (Caplan, 1970). However, Caplan has focused a very little on the various facts of local politics and leadership development among the communities covered by his study.

Regmi studied the community of Dhimals of Jhapa district. In his book entitled *Cultural Patterns and Economic Change : Anthropological study of Dhimals of Nepal* (1985). Regmi has traced out some of the important facets of religion, politics and modernization among the Dhimial family, Disputes were solved through Majhi. Majhi was the headman (leader) of Dhimals. Such system is gradually collapsing due to change in transport, communication, and education in Jhapa. Even then the Majhi decides simple cases like JARI, RAPE and other disputes (Regmi, 1985).

Hitchcock (1966) did important ethnographic study on *Magars of Banyan Hill* situated 3/4 days walk from Kathmandu Valley near Annapurna Himal. Political election, education and employment as a whole has contributed to change of Magars families in Banyan Hill. Before 1905, it was impossible to compete with the dominant Brahmin chieftain for leadership by the Magars. After democracy, one of the Magar attained the prestigious leadership post of chairman in the Banyan hill (Hitchcock, 1966).

G. S. Nepali is a well-known socio-anthropologist of our time in Nepal. He has carried out descriptive ethnographic study on Newar Community of Kathmandu Valley. Structural-functional approach in systems of Newars have been clearly described. Beliefs, social celebrations, caste systems, economics and material life, Guthi systems have been described in *The Newars : An Ethno-Sociological Study of a Himalayan Community* (1965). The new political set up and sudden opening of the valley to the outsiders have altered the old, existing relationships (Nepali, 1965). Political aspect of society of Newars and leadership context is not studied though the study is a mile-stone.

Other researchers such as Ganesh Gurung, studied Chepang tribes in the perspectives of changing outer world and their primitive traditional continuity. Sherry Otner (1978) studied the Sherpa community. Pashupati Shamser Rana has written a book named *A Study Report of the Pattern of Emerging Panchayat leadership* (1971). Mohammed Mohshin also was the collaborator of this study. Mathema advocated of the development of leadership through Panchayat training in his work entitled, *Growth of Local Leadership through Training* (Mathema, 1970).

Blaikie, Cameron and Seddon (1980) wrote a very important book in this respect entitled, *Nepal in Crisis : Growth and stagnation at the Periphery*. They have studied extensively on the recent development of Nepal and its impact upon western- central region. The peasants of the region are forced to new culture because of the road construction which brought about several disbalance upon the ecological aspect of the nature. At that time, Panchayat System was a stagnant political system. Instead of development, brave recruitment of bureaucracy doubled. West- central region became periphery of the Kathmandu valley.

Caplan (1976) is one of the pioneers of anthropologists who studied political anthropology in Nepal. Caplan focuses upon how the development policies of the government affected town people of a small administrative and market center and nearby peasantry of western Nepal. The study also highlights in the various micro-level political concession and conflicts arising out of the social action as well as interaction taking place in the hill community of mid-western region (*Administration and Policies in a Nepalese Town*, 1976).

Furer-Haimendorf (1981) has edited a volume *Asian Highland Societies in Anthropological Perspective* in which recent development of Sherpas in the region has greatly affected the traditional and tribal community. But these works draw little attention to provide in depths sketch of the political structures of the Sherpa community.

MacFarlane (1976) has surveyed the Gurung Communities extensively. He has utilized the tools of social anthropology and population studies in an attempt to see some of the causes and consequences of populations growth and some of the effects of change on natural resources. The demographic and economic effects of foreign mercenary labour are among the topics examined by him. He observed that the life style of the Gurungs is changing. The

economic development has changed in arable land. Almost all Gurung families are against using contraceptives for birth control. Only Pradhan Pancha, the headmaster and ex-military persons accepted family planning technique (MacFarlane, 1976 : 243). It must be mentioned that the Gurungs are famous as recruits to the Gurkha regiments of the British and Indian armies.

Khadka (1991) has raised some important issues in his book *Politics and Development in Nepal : Some Issues*. By using mixed methods in social science, T. A. Pinto, (2019) has researched on the understanding that the system of higher education. He concludes that it is flawed and, specifically, can create environments where not everyone is equal nor, at times, welcomed. The results confirmed the persistence and pervasiveness of racism on campus, impacting and necessitating the work of today's student affairs professionals.

4. Perspective for the 21st Century

Many urgent and natural issues and problems have still been coped and elaborated by the western world. Environmental problems of Nepal have been touched by Eckholm (1976), Blaikie (1980), Poffenberger (1980) etc. There are many other urgent issues left pending for further explorations. The challenge is left over to the present generations.

Nepal has experienced great peaceful transition from violence to peace. In 2006 AD, 330 MPs from different political parties have sworn in. After election of constitutional assembly, 605 MPs were elected. So emerging pattern of leadership of sociological importance was be studied. Nepal faced violence for 10 years. After establishment of Democracy in 1990 A. D., we had thought that political problem was solved. We started for economic reform through new system, But Nepal Communist Party Maoist (NCP Maoist) started the so-called 'peoples' war to uproot the system by violent means. About 17,000 people have been killed. Ten times more people have been displaced. Democracy was in hibernation in Nepal. Nowadays peoples' representatives in about 753 local bodies are going to be elected June 2022. Parliamentary elections for Federal and Provincial level is to be completed at the end of 2022 AD.

Civic society can be the major partner for enhancement of democracy. For that we should address conditions of most vulnerable people and improve capacity to look after them. We should examine root cause of conflict, identify consensus, address

the root causes and sustain peaceful relations. Poverty, inequality, and exclusion are the major factors for conflict.

Displacement, destruction and depressed economy are the by-products of violence. To enhance democratic process at local level, we should address local level conflict. NGO and GO should work together for democracy. Participatory method of development should be promoted.

Alteneiji (2015) has studied leadership in the United Arab Emirates. He found that there is a gap between the older and younger generation on value system and approach to leadership attainment. Inequality of gender, class, and clan was seen among the respondents. Among the female type of leadership, quality of life and political power was the central issue. But for the younger ones, individualism and a conservative system were seen face to face. Long-term goals achievement in the pretext of short-term gains was observed as a contradiction in practice.

5. Conclusion

From these observations, we think that the research in leadership studies is of urgent need. Social Science can deal with the study of law, social control, political and administrative process, socio-political conflicts, and leadership development. Collaboration with political scientists is advisable particularly in the study of structure and function of political parties and their relationship with other institutions. The rapidity with which traditional political systems are being superseded in favour of or combined with those of more complex societies makes this all the more urgent.

Our society relies greatly upon social function, social control, socio-cultural change. Our progress is measured in the basis of development of communication, transport, industries, ecological balance, and political stability. Leadership more or less shapes the pace of society. It directs the political, social and economic life of its country. After re-establishment of democracy, study of leadership in Social Science has become very important.

Social Sciences encompasses important fields of subjects that have been emerging from historic periods to the 21st century. Leadership studies of society and culture should be given a special field in social sciences because it has wider scope and implications. Nepal is practicing a federal model of the democratic system in

which more than 50,000 elected office bearers are working for the people. Political problems, conflicts, and peace should be systematized through the lens of leadership perspectives.

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