

Expenditure on CA

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The Constituent Assembly spent Rs. 1 billion, 446 million and five hundred thousand in the period from May 28, 2008 to December 15, 2009. This amount is only from the side of the Government of Nepal, and includes salary of CA members, meeting allowances, fuel expenditures, etc. This is also the expenditure of both CA and the parliament and this does not include the amount provided by the various donor agencies and other physical facilities.

The working schedule of the CA is not only ambitious, its expenditure is also enormous. Considering the population of Nepal, 601 members in the Constituent Assembly is a big number. It is clear that even the Constituent Assembly is dependent on the donor agencies to manage its furniture and computers for the fourteen committees and meeting hall. In addition, India has supported the CA by providing buses to transport CA members from Singha Durbar to the CA building at Baneshwor. In the beginning, that bus support was criticised on the use of Nepali and Indian flag and India's support mentioned on the sides of the vehicles, but later these vehicles are used by erasing the mention of the Indian support.

To fulfil the need for a large building, donor agencies had proposed to build a National Panchayat building in the Panchayat era, but the project could not be completed and still that has not been finalised due to the stand that major law- and policy-making building should not be built under donor assistance.

Nevertheless, a large amount is being spent on the CA, but CA members and political leaders are not found serious on their responsibilities and that has created dissatisfaction among the larger public. CA members are disparaged and blamed for just receiving allowances. The country cannot sustain such a large CA for a long time.

This is only the description of expenditure through the formal system. A big amount is being spent outside the Assembly in the context of constitution drafting on expensive seminars and the awareness-raising programmes.

On the one hand, the deadline for new constitution drafting is nearing and on the other hand, expenditure is also increasing, but there is no minimum common understanding between the major political parties. Due to that reality, the one-hundred-and-first meeting of the CA was postponed for an uncertain period by declaring the vacant seat of late Girija Prasad Koirala.

On top of the CA members getting regular salary, vehicles facility is provided to the leaders of 25 political parties represented in the CA. In addition, CA members receive transport allowances for the meetings, and chairpersons of the fourteen CA committees are provided vehicles.

Furthermore, CA has rented its secretariat in Birendra International Conference Centre (BICC) in Baneshwor to conduct its meeting, which is leased at Rs. 30 millions for the first year and there is a provision to pay Rs. 50 million in the second year. This contract is signed between the CA secretariat and the BICC. Information centre at the BICC was established with the support USAID.

On the constitution-drafting process of Nepal, various donor agencies have invested on media, ethnic organisations, CA members, women CA members, CA members from the indigenous nationalities with the aim of making them aware about constitution and its drafting process, but there is uncertainty on how long they will continue to invest in this process.