Supremacy of Bigger Political Parties in the CA

Dhurba Simkhada

Published date: 29 September 2010

http://www.asd.org.np/en/transition/constitution/analytical/86-supremacy-of-bigger-political-parties

The big three political parties, UCPN(M), Nepali Congress and CPN (UML), are not taking into consideration the role of smaller political parties. That they do not seek the role of smaller political parties in the constitution-drafting process is proved by formation of the *High- Level Political Mechanism*. Even the smaller political parties in the coalition government revealed their disappointments on the bigger political parties' activities. While bigger political parties have formed a *high-level political mechanism* without consultation of smaller parties, the Deputy Prime Minister Bijaya Kumar Gachhadar criticised the *high-level political mechanism* saying this is not capable to do anything, and smaller political parties started to demand their participation in the high-level political mechanism. Up till now, neither smaller political parties' participation has been ensured nor is the mechanism itself working effectively.

In the CA, UCPN(M), Nepali Congress and CPN(UML) have 238, 114 and 109 members respectively. Out of 52 members of Madhesi Janadhikar Forum, more lawmakers are in Bijaya Kumar Gachhadar-led Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (Loktantrik) than Upendra Yadav-led mother party. The number of CA members is 28 in Gachhadar-led party and only 25 in Yadav's camp. Tarai Madhes Loktantrik Party has only 21 members. Considering the numbers, UCPN(M), Nepali Congress and UML are the bigger political parties in the CA.

With the fourth round of amendment in the Interim Constitution on 28th May, 2008, consensus politics became defunct, and the decision-making system began on the basis of majority and minority. The role of smaller political parties turned ineffective while a mathematical game started in the CA. Thus, the role and presentation of smaller political parties can be analysed through two perspectives.

First, a number of CA members of smaller political parties have presented their opinions on logical and practical manner. The CA members Chitra Bahadur K. C. of the Rastriya Janamorcha Party, Dr. Prakash Chandra Lohani of Rastriya Janashakti Party, C. P. Mainali of CPN(ML), Narayan Man Bijukchhe and Lila Nyaichyai of Nepal Workers and Peasant Party, Jaya Prakash Gupta of Madhesi

Janadhikar Forum, Pari Thapa of CPN(United), Law Minister Prem Bahadur Singh are found in this category owing to their logical and focused arguments in the discussions. However, the logical statements of smaller political parties' leaders are not getting meaning and value in the CA. at the same time, the participation of other CA members of smaller political parties is not effective.

Out of fourteen committees in the CA, only four chairpersons are from the smaller political parties. Only the chairpersons of the Committee for Determining the Structure of Constitutional Bodies and the Committee for Determining the Base of Cultural and Social Solidarity are from the smaller political parties. Gobinda Chaudhary and Navodita Chaudhary respectively got opportunity to work as the chairperson in the Committee for Determining Constitutional Unit and Infrastructure and in the Committee for Determining the Base of Cultural and Social Solidarity.

Pramod Gupta and Mrigendra Singh Yadav of Madhesi Janadhikar Forum are the chairpersons in the Public Opinion Collection and Coordination Committee and Capacity Building and Source Management Committee respectively. These two committees have no authority to draft the new constitution, and they were formed to manage the administrative system with the responsibility of assisting other thematic committees.

Prior to Ram Kumar Sharma of Tarai Madhes Loktantrik party joining the UCPN(M), the initial structure of smaller parties in the CA was 133 members, including 52 members from Madhesi Janadhikar Forum, 2 from Tarai Madhes Loktantrik Party, 9 from Sadbhawana (Mahato), 8 from CPN (ML), 8 from Rastriya Prajatantra Party, 5 from CPN (United), 4 from Rastriya Prajatantra Party-Nepal, 4 from Rastriya Janamorcha, 4 from Nepal Workers and Peasants Party, 3 from Rastriya Janashakti Party, 2 from Rastriya Janamukti Party, 2 from CPN (Unified), 2 from Sadbhawana (Anandidevi), 2 from Nepal Janata Dal, 2 from Federal Democratic National Forum, and 1 each from Socialist Democratic People's Party, Dalit Janajati Party, Nepal Pariwar Dal, Nepa: Rastriya Party, Nepal Loktantrik Samajbadi Dal, Chure Bhawar Rastriya Ekata Party Nepal.

The role of 132 CA members of the smaller political parties was sidelined in the constitution-drafting process though the CA has not proceeded effectively. The CA suffered through the passivity of major three political parties and their senior leaders' inefficiency to resolve the differences on the fundamental issues on time. There has been no consensus on major decisions on governance system, federalism, PLA management, and the issue of inclusiveness. The senior political leaders are

not making sufficient efforts to reach a consensus, but only repeating the word 'consensus' everywhere.

Within the three minutes of beginning, the ninety-seventh meeting of the CA was over by completing the work of leave approval of absent CA members. The agenda of the highly ambitious working schedule amendment has been removed with the tenth amendment in the third week of March. This was done as the last alternative. The CA meeting of 22nd March, 2009, has endorsed the sympathy proposal of Girija Prasad Koirala, a member of high-level political mechanism, and was postponed for uncertain time due to lack of business.