

Influential Personality in managing the cultural identity conflict issues in Nepal

(Author's Photo)

Dr. D. R. Upadhyay

Dr. Sunil Kumar Pokhrel is one of the popular names in cultural identity conflict management issue in Nepal. He raised the sensitivity of the caste and cultural identity issues in Nepal. He pleaded that if the caste and cultural identity issues would not address positively and promptly then there will be a danger of turning over into the violent conflicts. Dr. Pokhrel very strongly brought up the issue of identity conflicts and linked it to the natural resources. After mapping the natural resources in each district he, further, proposed the resource based restructuring of the country for the smooth and peaceful transformation from monarchy to federal republic in Nepal.

Nepalese people were dreaming their rights and hope in the new constitution written by the people's representatives in 2008 after the second popular uprising against the monarchy in 2007. During the CA election in 2008, political parties started misleading the Nepalese societies by igniting culture based identity politics. Soft types of communal conflicts started between higher castes and Dalit; Indigenous people and others; language specific separate state demand; Madheshi and Pahadi communities; and demand of new state with regional supremacy. Being a conflict management scholar, Dr. Pokhrel had offered many presentations to all mainstream political parties in Nepal making them aware about the risk of identity based politics and state restructuring. Dr. Pokhrel, with his research findings, gave alternatives to cultural identity based restructuring to resource based. He developed resource and caste- language- cultural mapping of

Nepal and warned the probability of reemergence of armed conflict because of the cultural identity provocations.

(Photos of Dr. Sunil Kumar Pokhrel)

During the first CA election, “The CPN Maoist” was the main provocateurs of the caste and cultural based restructuring followed by “The CPN UML,” and others. This provocation started fueling local level conflicts among various cultural groups. Throughout the First and Second Constitutional Assembly, Dr. Pokhrel continuously gave lectures and presentations to concerned political leaders, Members of CA, Intellectuals, and professionals. He also wrote many articles in news papers, and gave many interviews. I have attended some of his lectures and followed his many articles and interviews. His articles and interviews not only cover about “how to manage identity conflict” but Dr. Pokhrel also conveyed alternative prospective that is “the resource based restructuring.” I had taken notice of many political leaders who referenced Dr. Pokhrel’s Research Data in their political speeches to support their position against the caste-culture-language based restructuring on the country.

Dr. Pokhrel’s expertise on conflict management is still very helpful. After the forceful and unconstitutional dissolution of the current Parliament in December 20, 2020, Nepal is again in the fragile political condition. Streets are full of agitations and “Band” (Strikes). In this situation, we are hoping to get more influencing articles, interviews, and lecturers from Dr. Pokhrel on managing political and cultural conflicts.

Dr. D.R. Upadhyay (Guinness Book of World Record)