

DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATION IN SOUTH ASIA: EMERGING TRENDS

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work embodied in this dissertation entitled “DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATION IN SOUTH ASIA: EMERGING TRENDS” has been prepared by me under the guidance of Dr. Bawa Singh, Assistant Professor, Centre for South and Central Asian Studies, School of Global Relations, Central University of Punjab. No part of this dissertation has formed the basis for the award of any degree or fellowship previously.

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I certify that the work entitled “DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATION IN SOUTH ASIA: EMERGING TRENDS” was carried out by Mr. Mudasir Gulam for the award of M.Phil. Degree under my supervision and guidance at the Centre for South & Central Asian Studies, School of Global Relations, Central University of Punjab, Bathinda.

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ABSTRACT

DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATION IN SOUTH ASIA: EMERGING TRENDS

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The South Asian region has experienced authoritarian and autocratic rule since its inception. India is the only country in South Asia to become a successful democratic country after independence. Sri Lanka has also adopted the similar model with presidential type of government. While the other countries of the region like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan have experienced ups and downs in their political systems. Pakistan after attaining its independence witnessed a rapid erosion of hopes to move the new nation to a democracy. The general elections held on 11 May, 2013 in Pakistan brought the first transition between civilian governments in a country which clearly shows the transformation of democracy in the country. Bangladesh came into existence in 1971 and since then many pro-democracy movements were observed in the country. These movements led to the multi-party democracy since 1991 till late 2006. It is evident that after 2009 the country has moved towards marginal political stability in its political affairs. Nepal, a kingdom, had monarchy which kept on flip-flopping between absolute and constitutional monarchy and vice-versa for many years. Democratic regimes proved to be short lived and unstable. The Nepalese movement in 2007 created a history in the country and moved ahead towards the consolidation of the democracy and General Election 2008 was the first step towards democratic transition. This way the Constitutional Republic was adopted in Nepal with the

collapse of monarchy rule. Bhutan has transitioned from an absolute monarchy to a multi-party democracy. The growth of Bhutanese democracy has been marked since 1950s. The first democratic elections in Bhutan began in 2007, and all levels of government had been democratically elected by 2011. All this explains the transformation from an absolute monarchy to democracy in the Kingdom of Bhutan. It is now clear that the South Asian region has experienced a democratic resurgence in the recent past. All the South Asian countries now have a democratic system but this transition to democracy is still fragile and susceptible.

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Mudasir Gulam

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Sr. No.	Full form	Abbreviation
1	Aam Admi Party	AAP
2	Awami League	AL
3	Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League	BAKSAL
4	Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy	BCMD
5	Bangladesh National Party	BNP
6	Constituent Assembly	CA
7	Civil Society Organisation	CSO
8	Care Taker Government	CTG
9	Druk Chirwang Tshogpa	DCT
10	Election Commission	EC
11	Election Commission of Pakistan	ECP
12	European Union	EU
13	Human Development Index	HDI
14	Indian National Congress	INC
15	Legal Framework Order	LFO
16	Liberation Tigras of Tamil Elam	LTTE
17	Members of Parliament	MPs
18	Nepali Congress	NC
19	Non-Governmental Organisation	NGO
20	Official Development Assistance	ODA
21	Pakistan People's Party	PPP
22	Provincial Constitutional Order	PCO
23	People's Democratic Party	PDP
24	Pakistan Muslim League	PML

25	Right to Information	RTI
26	Royal Nepal Army	RNA
27	Sri Lankan Freedom Party	SLFP
28	Unified Communist Party of Nepal	UCPN
29	United Nations	UN
30	United Left Front	ULF
31	United National Party	UNP
32	Unified-Marxist-Leninist	UML
33	United National Democratic Fund	UNDEF
34	United National Development Programme	UNDP

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Great thinkers of the Enlightenment, such as Rousseau and Kant ostracized democracy because it put the legislative and executive powers in the same hands and they feared it would lead only to popular despotism, civil war and a breakdown of society, and yet they become strong advocates of democracy (Urbinati, 2006). Today, it is often seen as the only legitimate way of running a country, even in regions and states generally labelled autocratic. Irony is that, despite its popular form of government, still it is not practiced in most of the countries in general and South Asia in particular. Except India and Sri Lanka, rest of the South Asian countries are still not mature enough to adopt democracy. They are half way. Authoritarian and dictatorial regimes have curtailed the liberties of the people, media is under restriction, and judiciary is not enjoying full freedom. People of these countries are loaded with socio-economic problems in such conditions; people are aspiring for democratic transition. But there is a question mark on democracy itself as India and Sri Lanka are democratic countries since their independence but socio-economic problems of these countries are as these are in the non-democratic countries of the region. Large parts of the world seem to consider democracy as the ideal and the only acceptable form of governance in theory if not in practice.

Democracy means “rule by people”. It is that system of government in which people elect their rulers by voting them in an election (Ober, 2007). The Greeks are regarded as the first people in the history of mankind as they were the people who initiated to create states as communities of citizens. During those days every citizen had equal opportunity of having in turn a share in the government. Those were the democratic conditions of Greece at that time. The Athenian democracy from the middle of the fifth century was a remarkable system, unprecedented and unparalleled in world history (Raaflaub *et al.*, 2008). With the passage of time, democracy has been adopted by many countries of the world and some countries are under the process of transitioning to democratic form of government.

Democracy in England has started in the 9th century. That time it was ruled by Anglo-Saxon tribes.¹ They ruled in consultation with the people. King Alfred formed a Consultative Council, known as the 'Witenagemot' (meeting of wise men) which was composed of several, learned men. It laid the seeds of democracy in England and also considered as the mother of democratic form of governments all over the world. In the 11th century the Normans conquered England. They established a monarchical form of government.² In 1215, the democratisation took place with the writing influence of Magna Carta.³ The struggle between the king and the Parliament increased tremendously during the Stuart period.⁴ However, the Bill of Rights (1689), The Representation of the People Act (1918) and The Representation of the People Act (1928) extended the powers of Parliament and gave everyone equal rights which lead to overthrow of monarchy into active democracy.⁵

The strong revolutions were witnessed against the monarchy rule throughout the world. African continent experienced colonial rule since 19th century. Authoritarian regimes established in most of the countries after the end of the colonialism. These authoritarian regimes have been challenged by individuals and

¹ Anglo-Saxon tribes are Germanic tribes that came from East and South of Britain and began in the 5th century. Anglo-Saxon's are a cultural group of White (Caucasus) people who trace their heritage to the island of England. Retrieved from <http://www.ask.com/answers/127587701/where-did-the-anglo-saxon-tribe-came-from>. Accessed On 29/05/2013.

² "*The Impact of Norman Conquest*". Retrieved from <http://www.ling.upenn.edu/~kroch/courses/lx310/Readings/norman-conquest.pdf>. Accessed on 10/04/2013.

³ Magna Carta is Latin and means "Great Charter". The Magna Carta was signed in 1215 between the Barons of Medieval England and King John. It was an attempt by the Baron to stop the king abusing his power with the people of England suffering and to limit his powers by law. Retrieved from <http://www.xtimeline.com/evt/view.aspx?id=303173>. (Accessed on 27/05/2013).

⁴The Stuart Period of English and Britain history refers to the period between 1603 and 1714. The Stuart era experienced many changes- the gun-powder plot, civil and foreign wars, a republic, the Great Fire of London and the Glorious revolution. Retrieved from <http://www.freebase.com/m/02qnh6d>. (Accessed On 25/05/2013).

⁵ "*Parliament Limits the English Monarchy*". Retrieved from http://www.eurowebonline.com/world_cultures/Parliament%20Limits%20the%20English%20Monarchy%2021%205.pdf, Accessed on 14/04/2013.

movements in search for more democratic forms of governance. The African people were showing remarkable persistence in forcing their leaders to comply with popular demands for political pluralism to replace the common one-party regimes. Calls for open and democratic governance, characterized by popular participation, competitive elections, and free flow of information can be heard in many African countries. This new disposition toward democratization in Africa is a consequence of pressures both internal and external to African societies. Internal protest and pro-democracy movements from within Africa have resulted in more and more countries embracing multi-party elections, at least, since 2000 (Kpundeh, 1992). Similarly, South Africa has been transitioned from traditional monarchies to constitutional democracy and presently traditional monarchs remained as symbolic figureheads with little political power, although they still preside over hearings to resolve tribal disputes.

After making the proper analysis of democratic transition of some thirty countries in the late twentieth century, Samuel Huntington wrote a book entitled "The Third Wave". In the tide of global demarcation, Asia came out as a substantial player which begun with the defeat of the military dictatorship in Portugal in 1974 and culminated in Germany's democratic revolution (and peaceful reunification) in 1989/90. After facing the extensive and strong authoritarian rule, the countries like India, the Philippines, Korea, Taiwan and Pakistan embraced or adopted the democratic governance (Meinardus, 2004). Most of the thinkers have pointed out that in some Asian democracies; substantial portions of the population are not convinced of the virtues of democratic rule. Ironically, the political leaders are not always the best advocates of democratic values. Recently, the democratically elected Prime Minister of Thailand Thaksin Shinawatra caused a stir, when he said, "Democracy is not a priority. "Democracy is a good and beautiful thing, but it's not the ultimate goal as far as administering the country is concerned" (Meinardus, 2004).

Democratic Transformation in South Asia

Soon after the end of the colonialism, the South Asia has adopted various forms of government. Democracy in India has remained as successful and stable since its independence. As the world's largest democracy, India needs to act as a

role model for newly emerging democratic countries (Benhart *et al.*, 2005). Till now, it has conducted 15 general elections successfully. Sri Lanka gained its independence from British in 1948 and after that the country observed the strong rivalry between the Sinhalese and Tamils over the issues of language, education and job preferences (Nubin, 2002). Sri Lanka has also followed the same pattern with Presidential type of Government whereas Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal have undergone military and authoritarian rule respectively. The various states of South Asia do not have similar type of political system. Only Sri Lanka and India have been able to operate democracy successfully since their independence. Though democracy does have its limitations, both India and Sri Lanka have been able to preserve it for nearly six decades. While Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives have seen ups and downs in their political systems. South Asia happened to be one of those regions in the world that has witnessed numerous intra state and interstate conflicts and because of this environment democracy is being used and misused for individual political gains time and again. (Jalal, 1995).

After its independence, Pakistan witnessed a rapid erosion of hopes to move the new nation to a democracy. The conflict between the state and democracy has been stark in Pakistan. It was argued that democracy has been crushed because Pakistan's armed forces could not live with the instability of party politics (Chadda, 2000). Soon after the drafting of constitution, Pakistan saw the rule of Military Generals from General Ayub Khan to General Zia-ul-Haq till 1988 when an elected government came to fore front under Be-Nazir Bhutto. After that there was competitive democracy in Pakistan between Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Muslim League till 1999. In 1999, there was another military coup led by General Pervez Musharraf with the overthrow of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. In 2001, Musharraf got himself elected as President. In 2008, elections were held in Pakistan and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) formed its government with Yusuf Raja Gilani as Premier. Powerful pressure from all sides led to President Musharraf's resignation. His popularity has reached its lowest ebb with the mounting demand for the restoration of democracy (Alam, 2012). In late 2008 as the President Musharraf resigned, Zardari was elected as the President. Pakistan has completed its tenure of five years successfully. The general elections held on

11 May, 2013 in Pakistan, in which 86 million people were eligible to vote, brought the first transition between civilian governments in a country that has been ruled by the military for more than half of its turbulent history clearly shows the transformation of democracy. Musharraf being banned from the participation and was detained for the treason. Former Pakistani Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif who belongs to Pakistan Muslim League (PML) being elected in 2013 general elections⁶ but some worry as to how long can Sharif continue because he does not enjoy the goodwill of the military.

Democratic crisis in Pakistan gave birth to Bangladesh in 1971. When Bangladesh came into existence in 1971, the Constituent Assembly was formed to formulate a constitution and most of the members of the constituent assembly belonged to Awami League. Constituent Assembly embodied the basic tenets of the Awami League known as the Mujibism which were nationalism, socialism, secularism and democracy (Grover, 2000). Bangladesh adopted a Presidential system of government in 1975. After that all other parties, besides Awami League were abolished. It led to tensions and a military uprising led by General Zia-ur-Rehman. Sheikh Rehman was assassinated. However, Lt. Gen. E.M. Ershad forced another coup in 1979. Pro-democracy movements forced him to give up power in 1991 (Mohotti, 2011). Elections were held in 1991. Since then till late 2006, Bangladesh has had multi-party democracy. However, growing political instability led emergency in early 2007. The interim government is being led by the military which has raised doubts about the restoration of democracy. In 2009, the interim government finally held elections in which Sheikh Hasina of Awami League has won landslide majority and become Premier marking the return of democracy in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has moved towards marginal stability in its political affairs after 2009.

Nepal, a Hindu Kingdom, had experienced various political and social phases since long. Since the formation of Nepali Congress Party (a representative

⁶ “*Pakistan Election Result 2013: Nawaz Sharif’s Party PML-N bagged 126 seats*”. (May 14, 2013). Retrieved from <http://www.jagranjosh.com/current-affairs/pakistan-election-result-2013-nawaz-sharifs-party-pmln-bagged-123-seats-1368534125-1> Accessed On 12/7/13.

party of Nepalese people based on the principles of nationalism, democracy and socialism), the party has struggled a lot to bring democracy in the nation and to overthrow the hereditary Rana Regime and autocratic Panchayat System. The party has played an important role in formation of multiparty democracy and protection of human rights, freedom, equality and justice. The Party has struggled a lot to establish and strengthen democracy by leading the 1950 and 1990 revolutions successfully.⁷

For long, the king with the help of army, retained absolute control and limited the expansion of democracy. However, in response to the pro-democracy movements, the king accepted the demand for a new democratic constitution in 1990. The Nepal practices the formalities of representative parliamentary democracy but the rights and freedoms yet to be realized by the people and political parties (Brown, 2002). Democratic regimes proved to be short lived and unstable. There were power conflicts among three groups: king, Maoists and Democrats. In 2002, the king dismissed the elected government and implemented absolute monarchy citing internal strife as the reason. It led to a massive pro-democracy movement in April 2006. This ultimately crystallised into a battle between monarchists and republicans.⁸ Nepal's shift to democracy has not been complete. It was a historical moment for Nepal in 2007 when it took more steps for the consolidation of the democracy and General Election 2008 was the first step in which even the Maoists not only participated but led the country from front line. This is how monarchy in Nepal has been abolished with a constitutional Republic.

Bhutan has transitioned from an absolute monarchy to a multi-party democracy. Since the first half of the 20th century, the country experienced democratic evolution of the kingdom of Bhutan, though the country was ruled by the monarchy since long period. Democracy was not so easy to cultivate in Bhutan as people of the country were against the system. The democratic development of

⁷ “*The Nepali Congress Manifesto: Highlights*”. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.nepaldemocracy.org/civic_education/election_manifesto_nc.htm. Accessed on 19/12/2013.

⁸ “*In Nepal, Time to Press the Poll Button*”. The Hindu, (August 5, 2013). Retrieved from <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/in-nepal-time-to-press-the-poll-button/article4990263.ece>. Accessed on 19/12/2013.

the country took place since 2nd half of 20th century. The democracy got fuelled in the country during the reign of Jigme Dorji Wangchuck (1952- 1972), the third king of Bhutan. His son Jigme Singye Wangchuck succeeded him in 1972 and laid emphasis on the countries democratic development. In 2005, the 49 year old king announced a plan to abdicate the throne in favour of his eldest son, Prince Jigme khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, fifth and current king of Bhutan. In 2005, the king announced a new constitution that would establish a democratic constitutional monarchy which would be provided to the people for approval in a referendum. The new system was scheduled to come into effect in 2008 (Cavendish, 2007). His reign has seen the enactment of the constitution of 2008, as well as the democratic elections of both houses of Parliament and three levels of local government.⁹ The tiny Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan held its national council election on the April 23, 2013, for the second time in its history. It marks the beginning of the national parliamentary election process, which will be conducted at the end of June 2013.¹⁰ The national assembly was dissolved on April 20 and has to be re- elected within 90 days. All this explains the recent political regime transformation from an absolute monarchy to democracy in the Kingdom of Bhutan.

Role of Civil Society

Civil society groups in the South Asian countries played an important role in ongoing process of democratic consolidation and have continued its active role in deepening and strengthening democracy in the region.¹¹ The civil societies in these countries established ties to political parties and the state. The first and most basic role of these civil societies was to channelize the powers of government as well as to put some control on the authoritarianism. They often raised public concern about

⁹ Dzhongkhog is an administrative and judicial district of Bhutan. A Gewog refers to a group of villages in Bhutan. Under the local government act of 2009, each Gewog is administered by a Gewog Council, subordinate to the Dzongkhog. A Thromde is a third-level administration division in Bhutan. The role of Thromdes in elections in Bhutan was defined in the election act of 2008.

¹⁰ "In photos: Elections in Bhutan". Daily Maverick,(April 23, 2013). Retrieved from <http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2013-04-23-in-photos-elections-in-bhutan/#.UxAMqfldVSR>. Accessed on 05/05/2013.

¹¹ Amitabh Behar, Nov 2009. "Re-imagining civil society". Retrieved from <http://infochangeindia.org/agenda/role-of-civil-society/re-imagining-civil-society.html>. Accessed on 05/06/2013.

any abuse of power. The civil society tried their level best to promote political participation and NGOs did this by educating people about their rights and obligations as democratic citizens, and encouraging them to listen to election campaigns and vote in elections. NGOs also helped to develop citizen's skills to work with one another to solve common problems, to debate public issues, and express their views. NGOs and other groups identified and trained new types of leaders who have dealt with important public issues and can be recruited to run political offices at all levels and will serve in provincial and national cabinets. Experiences from these countries have shown that civil society is an important factor which has groomed many people to become great leaders in these countries.

Objectives of the Study

All the people of South Asian countries aspire for establishment of democratic consolidation in these countries. People from all walks of life support the idea of representative democracy. They think democracy to be the most suitable form of government for their countries. So the main objectives of my study are:

- To analyse the historical democratic experience of the region.
- To analyse the imperatives responsible for the failure of democratic transformation as well as to explain and analyse the role of civil society in this process.
- To assess the foreign aid as a factor for democratic transformation.
- To assess the see-saw practice of democracy in South Asia.

Methodology

This research is primarily secondary data based; hence methodology for this study will be descriptive and analytical. The data for the research will be collected mainly from the primary and secondary sources. Primary sources will be comprised of foreign policy documents, official statements and published interviews of leaders of some South Asian states. Secondary sources will be collected from books, journals and articles and internet sources and unpublished thesis.

CHAPTER SCHEME

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1.1. A General Overview on the democracy in South Asia

1.2. Objectives of the Study

1.3. Methodology of the Study

1.4. Significance of the Research

CHAPTER 2: Review of Literature

This chapter contains review of literature and knowledge gap of the topic.

CHAPTER 3: Democratic Experience in South Asia: Historical Moorings

In this chapter, the democratic experience of South Asian countries would be discussed.

CHAPTER 4: Problems and Prospects of Democratic Transformation: Contextualizing Imperatives

This chapter will focus on Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Pakistan and will try to analyse as to why democracy has been used and misused in these countries. In the process, it will highlight the major political crisis and the growth of civil society that has shaped the countries respective character. A part of the chapter would also focus upon the foreign aid in promoting democracy in the respective countries.

CHAPTER 5: Democratic Transition in South Asia: Emerging Trends

This chapter will cover all the aspects which emerged during the military dictatorship and democratic transition of Pakistan and Bangladesh and will also cover the authoritarian and democratic regimes in Nepal and Bhutan.

CHAPTER 6: Summary and Conclusion

This chapter contains the summary and the conclusion of the topic.

Significance of the Topic

As we know that South Asian countries are covered by the turmoil, strife and riots. Among all the regions of the world, South Asia is considered as the hub of terrorism and also authoritarian rule was being prevailed in most of the South Asian states. In the entire South Asia, political instability is found which has given rise to chaos and anarchical condition. The whole region is lagging behind in every respect. All this is because the absence of proper democratic setup in some South Asian countries. In the 20th and early part of 21st century, some of the South Asian countries like- Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh were ruled by either military dictators or the monarchs. Democracy was totally absent in these countries. In the early 21st century, democracy is found in some of the countries. All the worsened conditions would be eradicated only if democracy is properly established and implemented in these countries. The monarchical or the authoritarian regime in one country directly or indirectly affects the other countries of the region. Political stability in south Asian countries is possible only if the authoritarian regime is completely abolished and democracy is adopted in a plenary form.

Significance of the topic can be well established from the fact that the recent general elections in Pakistan have brought back democracy in the country. There has emerged some hope not only for the country but also for the south Asian region as a whole. It has considerably increased the prospects of regional security and peace in the region thereby increasing the chances of India Pakistan talks and cooperation in dealing with terrorism.

India being a democratic country encounters political, economic and diplomatic hindrances if immediate vicinity there is lack of democracy. India in the past has encountered diplomatic problems while dealing with Pakistan and Bangladesh when their respective governments functioned against the basic spirit of democracy. Also, any political crisis can lead to an influx of refugees on the border that can have consequences for the law and order situation in India. Thus India has to retain its past glory in its neighbourhood; it becomes imperative that its neighbouring countries have fully functional democracy.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

From the last few decades many books, research papers and articles have been written about how the South Asian states witnessed a change in their political setup and how was democracy established in some authoritarian states in South Asia. Countries like India and Sri Lanka have attained their democracy soon after the independence. Despite some of the internal conflicts in these countries, both the countries have successfully adopted well established democracy. But it was hard to think for Pakistan to establish democracy as military regime has always prevailed in the country. But for the first time Pakistan government has completed its tenure after the elections held in 2008 which is an indication of transformation of democracy from a military rule to people's representative. Bangladesh has witnessed ups and downs blended from civilian to military regimes. Bangladesh remained a democracy in the post- cold war period but internal strife has forced the interim government to be run by the military rulers. In 2009 democracy returned to Bangladesh after fresh election and the victory of Sheikh Hasina as Premier. In Nepal also, a popular uprising in 2006 led to overthrow of monarchy and restoration of democracy. Nepal has even seen the signing of a deal between Maoist rebels and other political parties for power sharing. In fact, in 2008, monarchy was abolished in Nepal as it became a republic with Maoist Chief Prachanda being elected as Premier. Like Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh, Bhutan, one of the smallest states of South Asia has also started initiated transition towards democracy. Though Bhutan has monarchy, its king has announced plans for transition to a multi-party democracy. Some of the books and articles which I reviewed are as follows:

Mathew Joseph C, in his article "*Political Transition in Bhutan*", has discussed that the consequent struggle and pro-democracy movement under the banner of political parties have led to a high degree of politicisation in Bhutan, cutting across ethnic lines. He says that the draft for the Bhutanese constitution and the proposed democratic set-up was brought out by the government of Bhutan in March 2005. It is regarded as a gift to the people of Bhutan by their monarch. But the fact is that

these are the achievements of the struggles and sacrifices carried out by the people of Bhutan at various movements of the history of Bhutan. The main focus of this article is that the speed less but clear transformation of Bhutan into a constitutional monarchy is the result of only struggles waged by the people of the country since late 1920s onwards. It is actually the ethnic assertion of the people of Nepali origin in Bhutan which stimulated democratisation of the Bhutanese polity and society (Joseph, 2006).

Ravi Kalia, in the book *“Pakistan-From the Rhetoric of Democracy to the Rise of Militancy”* has charted out the Pakistan’s struggle from its very inception provided by both civilian and military leaders for democracy, liberalism and secularism. The civilian government which was formed after the elections of February 2008 brought to an end the nine year military rule initiated by the October 1999 bloodless coup against the elected, civilian government of Nawaz Sharif. The democracy is going to require sustenance should be evident from President Zardari’s observation that “our transitional Pakistani democracy is still restructuring after decades of episodic dictatorship.” The culture and the political system in Pakistan are entirely undemocratic. The rulers only used the democracy as a slogan to accomplish power as they never truly believed in democracy and they turned out to be authoritarians. Although democracy seems to be far away from Pakistan, but the emergence of lawyers movement supported by the strong media and on emerging popular movement has given birth to a new hope for democracy. In Pakistan the absence of democracy has made it increasingly unfit for democracy. Since the 2008 elections, Pakistan is no longer formally a military dictatorship but it is only a democratic façade. The nature of the military role and its impact on the democratic future of the country is still controversial and largely misunderstood (Kalia, 2011).

Shafqat Munir, in the article *“Pakistan’s Transition to Democracy: A Synthesis of Studies on Democracy and Electioneering”*, has mentioned that there are some external and internal factors which are responsible for the spoiling of democracy in Pakistan. He focuses on the point that elections were held in Pakistan since long both at national and local level and people have shown their enough maturity in voting and has showed their liking for democracy. The people participated in an efficient manner in the elections held many times in Pakistan. No doubt government has been dissolved many times by their disliking of the successive

Presidents with the successive Prime Ministers, but it had not created any disruption to the democracy because it was followed by the fresh elections during 1988-1999. The two military dictators General Zia and General Musharraf introduced their versions of civil-military democracies. General Musharraf was more liberal than General Zia as he is blamed to be behind the crisis which created hurdle in the transition of democracy. General Musharraf started democracy at the village level. He introduced a legal framework order (LFO) which lowered the age of voters from 21 to 18 years and increased the seats of assemblies which shows that despite being a military ruler he had some likings with the democratic set up of the country (Munir, 2009).

The author **Haris Gazdar** in his article *“Democracy in Pakistan: The Chasm”*, 2010 says that the 18th amendment in the constitution on April 10, 2010 had led to political stability and democracy in Pakistan. He agrees that the amendment not only removed various distortions in the constitution which were made by the military dictators from time to time, but also gave the full executive powers to the Prime Minister, sovereignty was granted to the parliament and the provinces were granted the right and autonomy which they had lost. The amendment led to the expansion of constitutional rights, cleansing and safeguarding the constitution and provincial concerns. So far as expansions of the constitutional rights are concerned, it involves the expansion of rights to information, association and education. The constitutional amendment also led to the withdrawal of extra protection for order and laws passed by the military dictators. But it is said that in Pakistan the written constitution does not guarantee of individual rights or political stability. It would be silly for anybody to think that the 18th amendment can act as a foil to future interruptions of the democratic process (Haris, 2010).

Jayadava Uyangada, in his article *“Pakistan and Nepal: Concerns of a South Asia”*, 2008 has mentioned that the democratic and political instability is found in both the countries Pakistan and Nepal. The transition to democracy in these countries is from the long past. They are going through the worst or grievous transition. There were pro- democracy movements in Nepal. Monarchy has been abolished in Nepal with a constitutional monarchy. The case is similar with the Pakistan. Pro-democracy movements were seen which were initiated by the middle classes. In 2008, elections were held and Pakistan’s people’s party (PPP) has the

government with Gilani as Premier. President Musharraf bowing to public pressure resigned. The democratic failure has made the military strong making democratic government a puppet in army's hands. So far as the democratic transition in Nepal is concerned, it has transformed into the new ruling stratum of a democratic republic (Uyangoda, 2008).

S.D. Muni, in the article, "*The New Democratic Wave and Regional Cooperation in South Asia*", 2009 addresses that in the recent past a democratic resurgence has been marked in South Asia. This wave of democracy is important for the development of the entire region but it is still easily broken or damaged. Almost the entire South Asian region now has a democratic system. Bhutan in 2008 elected a legislative and a representative government in 2008 as it had started its transition in 2004. In Nepal people led a massive pro- democracy movement in April 2006 which abolished monarchy in Nepal and established a constitutional republic. In Pakistan also, General Parvez Musharraf was replaced as President and PPP has formed the government with Gilani as premier. In Bangladesh, the Awami League has formed its government in January 2009 after two year of strife. In the Maldives in November 2008, President was elected popularly, who replaced the former President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom who had been in office for 30 years. All these five countries have witnessed to democratic transition; India and Sri Lanka have already established democracy in the past (Muni, 2009).

Shah Alam, in his book "*Pakistan Military's Role in Governance*", 2012 traces the genesis of Pakistan military rule in the governance of the country. Governance in Pakistan is a complicated balancing act between the elected civilian leaders and the military chiefs. The generals like Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan, Zia-ul-Haq and Parvez Musharraf ruled directly as Presidents or chief Martial administrators. The army ensured that Pakistan's inexperienced democracy was never allowed to flourish. The roots of authoritarianism in Pakistan can be traced back to Ayub Khan who promoted the idea of guided or controlled democracy. The political militarism of the Pakistan's army imposed structural constraints on the institutionalisation of democratic norms in the civil society. Alam laid emphasis on the Post Zia era in which the successive governments of Bhutto and Sharif did try their best to eradicate the military's dominance over public life, but it was of no use. They tried their best to set up democratic conditions in Pakistan. But it was the military that

played the crucial and decisive role in determining the country's internal and external security policies, as is clearly proved by Musharraf's intervention (Alam, 2012).

Mayhew et. al. in the book "*Bhutan Ediz. Inglese*" says that there was monarchy in the Bhutan during the reign of third king of Bhutan Jigme Dorji Wangchuk. He was succeeded by his son, Jigme Singye Wangchuk. He guaranteed to continue his father's program of modernisation. In 2005, the king announced a plan to abdicate the throne in favour of his eldest son, Prince Jigme Khasar Nangyal Wangchuk to move the country from an absolute monarchy to a democratic constitutional monarchy in 2008. He made it possible to circulate a draft, 34 point constitution around the country. The constitution strengthens the king's idea of having a democratic government. Bhutan's well-planned journey to democracy rests on the constitution's acceptance (Mayhew et al., 2007).

Kanak Mani Dixit, in his article "*Absolute Monarchy to Absolute Democracy*", 2005 says that the regime of king Gyanendra has completely ruined the people of Nepal. Dixit clearly says that monarchy in Nepal was the property of the Nepali people. In the present century in Nepal bloodline or dynastic contribution cannot determine a person's decision making power. The Nepali monarch can no longer rule and any other suggestion must be understood as a slur on the people. Nine years of insurgency have weakened the Nepali state and society. It was the Maobaadi who brought the ceremonial army out of the barracks to become active countrywide for the first time in the modern era. The rebellion has retarded the economy and hit the development activities. The long term prospects of the Maobaadi rebellion are dim because of the anger of the people. The Maobaadi can possibly be defeated by the Royal Nepal Army (RNA). The political crisis and the Maobaadi challenge is a return to absolute democracy. The battle for restoration of democracy must now gather steam within Nepal. While constitutional evolution is of utmost importance, however the immediate task is to rescue democracy as the 1990 constitution defines it. The rapid descent to an authoritarian state requires political parties to take immediate action to return the people from absolute monarchy to absolute democracy (Dixit, 2005).

Michael Hutt, in his article *“Nepal and Bhutan in 2005 Monarchy and democracy, can they co-exist?”* 2006 has mentioned a key question, whether monarchy and democracy can coexist in both Nepal and Bhutan during 2005. Two developments in Nepal will be most important factors in determining the survival of the Shah dynasty and, in the longer period, whether the Nepalese nation-state survives as a sovereign body at all. These were “royal coup” of February 1 and the agreement between the communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and seven parliamentary political parties announced on November 22. In Bhutan, a new constitution is out for consultation on March 26, 2005 and declares Bhutan to be a “democratic constitutional monarchy” that would establish a two-party democracy and reduce the powers of the king (Hutt, 2006).

Sisirakumara Mohotti, in his article *“On the March toward Representative Democracy: Pakistan and Bangladesh”* 2011 says that Pakistan and Bangladesh march toward representative democracy, by carrying between parliamentary governments and military dictatorships. The main focus of the elected governments was mostly poverty and development issues, while as military rulers remained stressing national security and religion. It gives in detail how Pakistan and Bangladesh have fared toward becoming representative democracies. In Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah died on 11 September, 1948 and Iskander Mirza was appointed as the next Governor General of Pakistan. The Dominion status of Pakistan was dissolved with the creation of the “Islamic Republic of Pakistan” in 1956. Iskander Mirza became the first President of the Republic. In 1958, General Ayub Khan got himself elected and ruled the country during its internal instability. He got replaced by general Yahya Khan in 1969 and his military rule came to an end in 1971 with a parliamentary government formed by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan People’s Party. He got replaced by a military coup led by Zia-ul-Haq in 1977 and he faced pro-democracy movements since 1982 and his unexpected death led to the civilian rule of Benazir Bhutto in 1988. Pakistan is currently ruled by a democratically elected government. However, the government faces the armed attacks of the fundamentalist terrorist groups and risks and uncertainties of a potential military dictatorship. East Pakistan separated and formed the new Modern State of Bangladesh in 1971. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman became the first prime minister of the country and is known as the father of the country and

Bangladesh became a Parliamentary democracy under a constitution, adopted on 11 January, 1972. The constitution based state policy of the Awami League contains four basic principles of nationalism, secularism, socialism, and democracy. In August 1975, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family members were assassinated by mid-level army officers. Successive military coups resulted in the emergence of Army Chief of Staff Gen. Zia-ur Rahman as strongman. In November 1976, Zia became Chief Martial Law Administrator and assumed the presidency by promising national elections in 1978 (Mohotti, 2011.)

Surendra Bhandari in his article *“the king versus the people: the abolition of monarchy and constitution making in Nepal”* 2012 has mentioned that the country has been ruled by the autocratic monarchs since its long. In its history, Junga Bahadur is considered the most powerful and strong Prime Minister ever. His rise strengthened the conflict between the Kings and Ranas, which was then settled only after 104 years of dictatorial rule by the Ranas, ending after the revolution in 1951. During 150s, the country observed two important political developments which were held both at the regional and domestic levels that finally lead to the end of Rana regime. The educated youth of Nepalese got their first strong inspiration from the liberation movement in India who later organized themselves and fought for the cause of democracy in Nepal. Thus, the countries first political party was formed in Deharadun, India in 1927 and was called Prachanda Gorkha. On March 30, 1951, following the 1950 revolution, King Tribhuvan propagated an Interim Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal on the advice of the Council of Ministers that came into force on April 11, 1951. The 1950 revolution was the starting point for the institutionalization of democracy in the country despite the serious challenges ahead. On April 16, 1990, the King restored multi-party democracy and agreed to be a constitutional monarch. On November 9, 1990, a new constitution was promulgated that legitimized democracy and modestly brought the absolute monarchy into the limits of the constitution (Bhandari, 2012).

Knowledge Gap of the Literature

The South Asian countries have met the very brutal rule before the establishment of democracy. The main point of this research would be to trace out whether these countries have got some degree of transformation of democracy or

not. The recent democratic trends in the South Asia is lacking in the available literature. The available literature mostly speaks about the authoritarian and monarchic regimes. How does the recent democratic transition changed the entire political scenario of the respective countries is missing. Thus, my research would be a humble attempt to find out the recent democratic developments in the individual countries of South Asia.

CHAPTER 3

Democratic Experience in South Asia:

Historical Moorings

The word democracy is a wide term and it has different interpretations throughout the world. It is a Greek word derived from *demos* (people) and *Kratos* (power) which means power of the people. Democracy is the most popular form of government in which people govern themselves. It means a system of election of rulers in which people elect them as their representatives to govern the country (Ober, 2008). Democratic system is the best form, among all procedures for selection of administrators of countries, which have until today been experimented within the world. The majority of the political thinkers of the world between Thucydides and Machiavelli viewed democracy as an enormous imposing model of government, but the concept has changed now and it has become the great engine of peace. The great thinkers like Thucydides, Rousseau, Kant and Schumpeter are the ardent advocates of democratic republican government (Cox *et al.*, 2000). Democracy is a type of regime in which citizens, who are united for giving law, rule themselves.

The democracy started in Athens in fifth century with an astonishing, unique and had no parallel in the world history and it took the best shape in the fourth century, after a comprehensive revision of laws between 410 and 399 (Raaflaub *et al.*, 2008). During that period, it became more common and appeared all across the Greek world. The defeat of Athens by the Sparta led to the overthrow of many democratic regimes but it continued to flourish in the fourth century (Robinson, 2008). The democracy during the period gained good reputation and influence. The beginning of Athenian democracy in Athens became an inspiration for the world and as time passes it spread to other countries of the world. Most of the western countries adopted the democratic form of governance very soon but some of the regions especially South Asian region still saw the tyrannical rule of military and monarchs for a long time. Now the region has mostly dethroned the authoritarian regime and pursued the democratic system for last few decades.

Genesis of Democracy in Modern World

British parliamentary is known as the mother of the world's parliamentary system of governments. The democratic rule was started by Anglo-Saxon tribes in 9th century. In the 11th century, England was conquered by the Normans¹² which resulted into transformation of old English aristocracy by establishing a monarchical form of government.¹³ The Magna Carta written in 1215 opened the door of a democratic system in England. It has special importance because the people came together and forced the king publicly to accept their demand.¹⁴ The charter laid the foundation of democracy in England which put restrictions on the absolute and despotic powers of the king. Same way, the Bill of Rights (1689), has imposed many restrictions on the royal power and could not rule without the consent of parliament and the parliament became supreme¹⁵. The Representation of the People Act (1918) was a milestone piece of legislation and allowed all adult males over the age of twenty one to vote. A large step, however, was given to some women over 30 to vote in parliamentary elections. The Representation of the People Act (1928) was the measure that finally put women on the same level as men in terms of elections in the United Kingdom and the First Past the Post-system was confirmed (Johnston, 2013). This way, the monarchy was transformed into matured democracy in country.

In the history of democracy, the American Revolution is an important step in this direction. Declaration of Independence in 1776 became the first step in the

¹² The Normans ruled England after the famous Battle of Hastings in 1066. The conquest was a pivotal event in English history. "Norman Conquest of England". Retrieved from https://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Norman_conquest_of_England.html. Accessed on 10/04/2013.

¹³ "*The Impact of Norman Conquest*". Retrieved from <http://www.ling.upenn.edu/~kroch/courses/lx310/Readings/norman-conquest.pdf>. Accessed on 10/04/2013.

¹⁴ "*History of Democracy*". Oracle' Think Quest. Retrieved from http://library.thinkquest.org/26466/history_of_democracy.html. Accessed on 10/4/2013

¹⁵ "*Parliament Limits the English Monarchy*". Retrieved from http://www.euro-webonline.com/world_cultures/Parliament%20Limits%20the%20English%20Monarchy%2021%205.pdf, Accessed on 14/04/2013.

pursuit of democracy in America.¹⁶ The constitution of the United States was drawn up by the convention (an assembly) that met at Philadelphia in May 1787 and was officially adopted on 4th March, 1789.¹⁷ The colonists were compelled to leave the colonies and they themselves set a fair political system *i.e.*, democratic form of government where the people had more say in the rule of the country. The United States became a sovereign nation in 1776 and adopted a representative democracy based on several fundamental rights with checks and balances.¹⁸ The three branches such as Executive, Legislative, and Judiciary of the government were kept in check to achieve the goal of fair and peaceful government. No branch contains absolute power rather; each branch is balanced off of the others creating a system of checks and balances to protect the principles of democracy.

All over the world, strong revolutions with great enthusiasm began to spring up against monarchies which led the development of democratic form of government.¹⁹ The Second French Empire was an imperial regime of Napoleon III from 1852 and came to an end in 1870. He was the last monarch of France and his war with Prussia, causing Emperor Napoleon III to lose his throne and since then France had been enjoying the fruits of democracy.²⁰ The Spanish monarchy was abolished by the first Spanish Republic from 1873 to 1874. It was then proclaimed by second the Spanish Republic in 1931. The transition to Spanish democracy period was seen when Spain moved from the dictatorship of Francisco Franco to restoration of the Spanish Monarchy. In Brazil, monarchy was overthrown in November 1889, when Emperor Dom Pedro II was overthrown by a republican military coup and created a federal republic (Haber, 2007). Brazil held a plebiscite

¹⁶ “*History of Democracy*”. Oracle’ Think Quest. Retrieved from http://library.thinkquest.org/26466/history_of_democracy.html Accessed On 10/4/2013

¹⁷ “*The Constitution: An Enduring Document*”. Retrieved from <http://countrystudies.us/united-states/government-2.htm>. Accessed on 10/04/2013.

¹⁸ “The Consent of the Governed: Essential Principles”. Retrieved from <http://www.democracyweb.org/consent/principles.php>. Accessed on 09/04/2013.

¹⁹ “*History of Democracy*”. Oracle’ Think Quest. Retrieved from http://library.thinkquest.org/26466/history_of_democracy.html Accessed On 10/4/2013.

²⁰ Ananyomous (1998). France History-Second French Empire. Bonjour La France. Retrieved from <http://www.bonjourlafrance.com/france-history/second-french-empire.htm>. Accessed on 15-10-13.

in 1993 and got the status of republic when voters had a choice to vote for either a presidential, parliamentary or a constitutional monarchy system and they willingly chose a presidential form of government (Wagenen *et al.*, 2003).

African continent remained under colonialism during the 19th & 20th century. After the end of the colonialism, most of the world countries came under the authoritarian regime that was then challenged by many revolutionary movements for developing the significant democratic form of government. In order to replace the single party rule, the people of Africa with stiff zeal demanded the political pluralism. Many African countries observed the calls for open and democratic governance, characterized by popular participation, competitive elections, and free flow of information (Kpundeh, 1992). The move towards democracy in Africa is the result of internal and external pressure to the African societies. The struggle and pro-democracy movements observed within Africa helped so many countries to adopt multi-party elections for more than one decade. Also, Africa's democratization as part of what Samuel Huntington (1993) calls the third wave of democracy, which apparently began in the 1970s in Europe and spread to Africa in the 1990s (Gylfason, 2013). A few countries have become milestone for authoritarian and dictatorial countries such as Mauritius- is a parliamentary republic and has two major political parties. The transition of constitutional democracy from the traditional monarchy in post-colonial Africa has led in the curtailment of the traditional rule but they can discharge some forms of traditional rule only if peace and order to be restored in the country (Owusu, 2006).

Republics in Ancient India

In ancient India, a number of kingdoms known as Mahajanapadas emerged during the 6th century BC that were spread across the Indo-Gangetic plain,²¹ having most of them the republican form of government. Out of all these kingdoms, 16 of them were regarded as the greatest of all and were also known as the Mahajanapadas. The Vedic texts do not throw much light on the political history of the period which elapsed from the fall of the Videhan monarchy to the rise of

²¹ Indo-Gangetic Plain, also called North Indian Plain, is a large and fertile plain irrigated by the Ganges, Indus and Brahmaputra. It is encompassing most of northern and eastern India. The region is named after the Indus and the Ganga, the twin river systems that drain it.

Kosala under Mahakosala, the father-in-law of Bimbisara. But we know from the Buddhist Anguttara Nikaya that during this period there were sixteen states of considerable extent and power known as Solasa Mahajanapadas (Raychaudhuri, 2006). These were the actually ancient Indian kingdoms that prevailed between the sixth and third century BC. These kingdoms were Kasi, Kosala, Anga, Magadha, Vajji, Malla, Chedi, Vatsa, Kuru, Panchala, Machcha, Surasena, Assaka, Avanti, Gandhara, and Kamboja. The majority of these kingdoms were dominated by monarchies which were positioned mostly in the Gargetic Plains with great, marvellous capital cities, thriving economies, and glowing and developed administrative systems (Schmidt, 1995). Among all the sixteen kingdoms the largest were Magadha, Kosala, Kuru, and Gandhara. The Mahajanapadas gave way to the Persian Empire, Alexander's invasion, and finally to the Indian empire known as Magadha. As time passes, the kingdoms of sixteen states were reduced to only four chief kingdoms like: Magadha, Vatsa, Avanti, Kashala. The king unanimously ruled these states with the help of his Council of Ministers and other officers (Mahamatras) (Higham, 2009).

In the later Vedic age, the Gargetic valley or Aryavarttha became the hub of political activity. Many kingdoms came into existence during the period and were governed by the kings. The position of king was high and supreme and used to maintain his influence throughout the kingdom and he had the charges of defence for maintaining law and order of the kingdom.²² The Panchalas were originally monarchical in nature and later transformed to the republican form of government during the 5th Century B.C. Among all sixteen Mahajanapadas, Kasi was certainly the most powerful which had a significant role in the sedition of Videhan monarchy. (Raychaudhuri, 2006). The kingdom Kamboja was said to have been placed on either sides of the Hindukush. The Kuru tribe was also an important tribe and its origin can be traced to the Puru-Bharata family. The clan sprang up to republic form of government from monarchy during 5th century B.C. The Magadhas are referred to in the Atharva Veda. According to the early scriptures, the Magadhas

²² "Ancient Indian Political system". Classle. Retrieved from <https://www.classle.net/node/39535#>. Accessed on 28/12/2013.

were not fully Brahmins. Except for King Pramaganda, no other ruler is mentioned in the Vedas. It was one of the chief empires of India during those times.²³

Democratic Structure in Ancient India

Since the recorded history, India had enjoyed the highest form of democracy. Primarily, the evidence of republican form of government was found in the Rig Veda along with the monarchical form of government. In the Vedic period, Raja (a King), Maharaja (a Great King), and Samrat (an Emperor) the different terms had been used to designate kings according to their power and prestige (Altekar, 2002). But at the same time, the elements of democracy were found even in the monarchical form of administration. The people in the early Vedic age did not lead a settled life. It was actually with the agricultural development that stirred people to settle down in groups. The people in the Vedic age formed organisations which were mainly tribal and the head of the tribe was supposed to be the Raja or the King. The kings had been guided by some organizations which included Sabha and Samiti.

Role of Sabha and Samiti

During the Vedic period, several assemblies such as Sabha, Samiti, Vidhata and Gana are mentioned in the Rig Veda. These assemblies simultaneously discharged the deliberative functions of the age. The Sabha and Samiti played a substantial role in the affairs of Vedic state, but the Rig Veda period has observed Vidhata assembly where the participation of both men and women was allowed as more powerful than Sabha or Samiti. The Sabha and Samiti were the two popular assemblies of ancient India. The Sabha was the assembly of elders and virtuous ones mainly comprised of Brahmans and the nobles and represent the upper house. The Sabha was known as an advisory council with its lord or speaker as Sabhapati.²⁴ The members of Sabha were nominated by the king. The Sabha

²³ Retrieved from <http://www.iloveindia.com/history/ancient-india/16-mahajanapadas.html>. Accessed on 16-09-2013.

²⁴ Mamta Aggarwal. "Evolution of Political Institutions in India during Vedic Period". Available at <http://www.historydiscussion.net/politics/evolution-of-political-institutions-in-india-during-vedic-period/555>. Accessed on 20/01/2014.

functions as a parliament for the disposal of public business by debate and discussions.

The Samiti was known as the lower house presided over by the king. The assembly comprising the common people and peoples representatives in which everyone was allowed to participate in the assembly. It was by nature a folk assembly in which people gathered for business transaction. The election of king was the most important function of the lower house and its members were known as Vishah who pointed out grievances of the people to the king. They were the true representatives of the king and the king was known as their lord. Samiti gained importance towards the end of the rig Vedic period.²⁵

The institutions of popular assemblies played an important role in the early Vedic Polity. As monarchy was the prevailing form of the government in the early Vedic age, it was the duty of the king to look after and safeguard the entire tribe. The kingship during the early Vedic period was hereditary and the king was known as the head of the people as well as the whole kingdom (Mishra, 2000). During the Later Vedic Age popular assemblies lost much of their importance and royal power increased at their cost. In other words, chiefdom gave way to kingdom. Formation of large kingdoms made the king more powerful. For all practical purposes, kingship became hereditary.²⁶

The Maurya period (321 BC) was seen as a democratic and people oriented period and covered far the greater part of India, right up to Kabul in the North. The term 'Maurya' is derived from Moriya (skt. Maurya) or peacock.²⁷ According to a Jain tradition, the founder of the empire, Chandragupta, came from a clan of peacock- tamers who owed allegiance to the kingdom of Magadha. He was the first

²⁵ "Samiti in Ancient India", IndiaNet zone. Available at http://www.indianetzone.com/57/samiti_ancient_india.htm. Accessed on 20/01/2014.

²⁶ "Ancient India- The Pre-historic Period". (2010). Retrieved from <http://www.jeywin.com/:http://www.jeywin.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Indian-History-1-Ancient-India.pdf>. Accessed on 07/11/2013.

²⁷ Mauryas derive their name from the word 'Moriya' which meant peacock that was the symbol of the Mauryan clan. They were the Peacock-tamers and Chandragupta Maurya was raised by those peacock-tamers. Buddhist tradition describes him as the son of the chief of the peacock clan, while as Jain tradition refers to him as the maternal grandson of the headman of the village of peacock tamers.

true great emperor of India and is always known as Chandragupta Maurya. He assumed power in 321 B.C. and reduced the kingdoms and republics of north India to importance (Avari, 2007).

At the local level, people elected the representatives in the towns and villages who looked on different affairs of the government. Both the civil and military officials existed during the Maurya period. The officials were appointed for the maintenance of records of government. The important feature of Mauryan administration was the spy system who could contact the king at any time.²⁸ The Mauryan Empire had many provinces and each province was governed by a Governor and Council of Ministers. The village committees were autonomous during the Mauryan period. Like the present Indian constitution, there was Chanakya's Arthashastra, which provided a variety of subjects and covered almost every aspect of the theory and practise of the government and had defined the duties of the King of his Council of Ministers and Councillors etc. So, the Mauryan Empire reminds one of the most successful states on the scores of people's welfare.²⁹

In 320 CE, a new empire was created by the ruler named Chandragupta (not related to the Chandragupta who founded the Maurya Empire) took the charge of the whole Magadha area, the former centre of the Maurya Empire. The empire was merged into the Gupta Empire by his son, Samudragupta, and grandson, Chandragupta II as they extended their sway in the northern territories (Momigliano, 1990). The ruler on his own dint and strength rejuvenated some of the principles of Mauryan government and paved the way for his son, Samudragupta, to develop an extensive empire. Despite being a large empire the administrative structure in Gupta period was extremely good. Also the administration during the Gupta period was more or less like the Mauryas. The

²⁸ Retrieved from [Http://Www.Culturalindia.Net/Indian-History/Ancient-India/Ancient-Government.Html](http://www.Culturalindia.Net/Indian-History/Ancient-India/Ancient-Government.Html). Accessed on 13/09/2013.

²⁹ "*Concept of Welfare State During Mauryan Empire vis-a-vis Neoliberal Economic Policy in the present Democracy*", Retrieved from: [Http://Kksingh1.Blogspot.In/2012/12/Concept-Of-Welfare-State-During-Mauryan.Html](http://Kksingh1.Blogspot.In/2012/12/Concept-Of-Welfare-State-During-Mauryan.Html). Accessed on 13/09/2013).

most important difference which was observed between the two known administration (Gupta and Mauryan) was centralization and decentralization of administration. In the Gupta administration, the administration was entirely decentralised and the governors of the provinces were more independent as compared to the Mauryans, where the administration was highly centralized.³⁰

Under the Mughal period, the earlier democratic set up in India up got rude shock. The Muslim rulers were absolute dictators who did not believe in the principles of democracy. The Mughals had a very strong army, as every officer of the Mughal state was a member of army, which clearly had shown that the empire was basically military in nature. The emperor was an autocrat, showed his tyranny in the entire empire and used his limitless freedom in discharging functions and making laws. Even though, the king appointed his Council of Ministers, but they had no power to discharge functions and the emperor was not even bound to consult them, and his word was law.³¹

Some of the Mughal Kings showed their great generosity towards the subjects described as benevolent despots, who ruled fairly and justly and never used any means of unjust laws. They allowed and implicated their ministers in decision making. The empire was administered by a number of departments with officers assigned to each of them. The Wazir (Chief Minister) was the highest officer in the Mughal period, followed by Bakshi who was held responsible for the salaries of all the employees of the state. Finally, the Mughal Empire in India also presents us with some fascinating developments and institutions. Built by Central Asian conquerors that swept into India in 1526, the Mughals presided over an empire, between the mid-sixteenth to the early eighteenth centuries, was culturally grand, politically inclusive, and intellectually vibrant. The Mughal rule was marked by a tolerance, political inclusiveness, and cultural excellence that was both impressive and surprising (Ahmad, 2003).

³⁰ “*The Gupta Period of India*”. Ancient Civilisations, 1992. Retrieved from <http://www.ushistory.org/civ/8e.asp>. Accessed on 10/12/2013.

³¹ “*The Mughal Empire-Government*”. Library.ThinkQuest. Available at <http://library.thinkquest.org/C006203/cgi-bin/stories.cgi?article=government§ion=history/mughals&frame=story>. Accessed on 14/12/2013.

The governmental institutions of the Mughal Empire were spread to British authority through the acquisition of the Diwan. But with the passage of time and condition, these have been transformed beyond recognition now. The Mughal administrative structure is still found in some parts of our administration as the provincial and district administrations are almost derived from Mughal proto-types (Sharma, 1999).

Democratization under the British rule in India

For a long time, the Britishers ruled India and their rule enthused and moved the country towards a colony in the pre-independence period and the same took the country towards the completely democratic state after India achieved independence. The impact of great British rule on India clearly signifies the influence of their rule on Indian administration. The presence of East India Company in India had expanded its influence and to large extent had started repression and despotic rule in India but it was only during the British period that the concept of democracy was encouraged (Ganguly, 2011). India was introduced to the parliamentary form of government that was practiced in Britain at that point of time. Morley Minto Reforms (1909), Government of India Act (1919) and above all Government of India Act (1935) acted as guiding principles for democratic set up in India.

In 1908 a royal announcement was issued to develop the principle of representative institutions. These reforms resulted into the participation of Indians into the administration of the country. It was expected that these reforms would help in introducing in parliamentary democracy but these reforms ended up in creating a vague promise of democracy. Many developments took place in the field of Indian democracy during the British rule with the introduction of political and constitutional reforms. Both the acts especially government of India act 1909 and 1919 resulted into a lot of changes in the system and functions of the central and provincial legislatures and executives, redefining the federal relations between the central and provincial governments (Hoveyda, 2010). The British government in 1909 introduced the Minto Morley reforms which proved to be very significant and in these reforms the members of legislative councils were increased. The Indian

National Congress was established in 1885 which proved to be milestone for the emergence of political systems in the India.

The Government of India Act 1935 had been passed which has provided for an all India Federation consisting of his Majesty, represented by the Governor-General and two chambers known as the Council Of State and the House Of Assembly (Misra, 1987). The act gave a considerable opportunity to the Indian National Congress by introducing the election of provincial legislatures to establish firmly their authority to speak as a truly representative Indian political force. It provided for setting up autonomous provinces in British India. The Congress contested elections and assumed the federation office (Muldoon, 2009).

Democratic Transition Post-Independence in South Asia

South Asia, a dynamic and complex region is another name for the Indian sub-continent. It is a recent concept of just six decades old. The most basic conceptualization of South Asia is as a geographic region, with the fundamental motivation being geopolitics (Nazneen, 2005). The South Asian region mainly comprises of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives. However, the region was further extended in 2005 by including one more country in the SAARC namely Afghanistan. Some also incorporates Burma (Myanmar) as a part of the region as it was a British province till 1937 during the British India. South Asia is a British colonial tradition, overlaid on culture and history, which defines the basic concept of South Asia in various methods. Due to the long dealings among the South Asian countries, the people of the region particularly from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal share common social, cultural, linguistic and religious practices across national boundaries.

The South Asian countries had gone through the monarchical and dictatorial regimes. The Monarchs and Military rulers throughout their governance ruled the different countries of region with full strength and might but the system has gone through a giant change after democratic set up in South Asia. South Asia since the 20th century has seen the emergence of many political parties in the region. It is now regarded as a trend to set up a political party so as to make the representation of their particular society. There are varieties of political parties in South Asia based on region, religion, caste, language, ethnicity etc and all this guaranteed a strong

competition in the entire region. There are various major problems of democratization in South Asian countries which has deteriorated the democratic structure of the region. The problems like fundamentalism, terrorism, military dictatorship, political sector, illiteracy, poverty, corruption and many more are equally responsible for its democratic failure. However, military rule along with the political sector are the major obstacles for democratization in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan.

Pakistan

Pakistan after its creation has badly gone through the cruel military rule. After 1950, the country witnessed both the military and elected governments and had desired for a new model of democracy (Chadda, 2000). Iskander Mirza was appointed as the Governor General of Pakistan after the death of Muhammad Ali Jinnah on September 1948 and later on he became the first President of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The constitution was framed in 1956 with a federal parliament based on unicameral legislature but it did not guarantee political stability. After the framing of its constitutions, General Ayub Khan got himself elected in 1958. During his rule, there were much internal instability in Pakistan and he had to leave office after a nationwide uprising in 1969 (Mohotti, 2011). During his regime, the government was run by the bureaucrats and the political parties were significantly banned in the country. Ayub Khan was replaced by General Yahya Khan with a military coup. The discredited regime of Yahya Khan was replaced by an elected ruler Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1971. He assured the country for promoting a peaceful and restoring order and he had a great vision for Pakistan. But the unrest and chaos led to another military rule in 1977 by General Zia-ul-Haq (Wynbrandt, 2009). Since 1982, General Zia faced a pro-democracy movement and his unexpected death in 1988 lead to establishment of a civilian rule under Benazir Bhutto in 1988. There was a rivalry between the two political parties: PPP led by Benazir Bhutto and PML led by Nawaz Sharif till 1999. There was competitive democracy in Pakistan between Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Muslim League till 1999 (Wynbrandt, 2009). In October 1999, the elected Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was overthrown by General Pervez Musharraf with a military coup who blamed Nawaz Sharif for his corrupt and bad governance

(Tatic *et al.*, 2006). The military coups has always destabilised the countries efforts of democratic consolidation.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh came into existence in 1971 after the partition of Pakistan. After achieving independence in 1971, the requirement for making a constitution was felt which led to the formulation of a Constituent Assembly. The majority of its members were from the Awami League and constitution based state policy of Awami League contains four basic principles of nationalism, socialism, secularism and democracy (Grover, 2000). In 1972, Shiekh Mujib became the Prime Minister of Bangladesh. The Awami League, the major political party that had carried on the nationalist movement in Bangladesh in the name of democracy and self-determination of the people itself turned into an autocratic institution when in 1975 it declared BAKSAL³² and Shiekh Mujib characterized it as a 'second revolution. All political parties were banned and the country adopted a one party system. The rules of BAKSAL required all other parties and associations to join the party and work untidily in fighting coercive force. Bangladesh adopted a Presidential system of government in 1975 and in August 1975 BAKSAL ended when Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and some of his family members were assassinated by some military officers.³³ After this chaos, self-governing proclaimed country faced the strict dictatorship.

Islamization of Bangladesh politics started taking place after 1976. General Zia-Ur-Rehman became the chief martial law administrator of Bangladesh in November 1976 and assumed Presidency in 1977. In the same year Islam was adopted in the constitution of Bangladesh (Ahamed *et al.*, 1990). The new military commander formed the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) and democracy was established with new parliamentary elections which were held in February 1979. In the same year Lt. Gen. E.M Ershad led a military coup in the country which

³² Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami league (BAKSAL). BAKSAL formed in 1975 was regarded as a revolution in Bangladesh. "National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh". Retrieved from http://www.bpedia.org/B_0207.php. Accessed on 15/12/2013.

³³ "National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh". Retrieved from http://www.banglapedia.org/HT/B_0228.htm. Accessed on 12/12/2013.

resulted into strong protests for the democratic stability of the country. Gen. Ershad suspended the constitution and political parties in 1982, assumed the Presidency in 1983 and imposed the martial law on the Bangladeshi people. When a lot of pressure was built on Ershad, then he assured the people for democracy with the establishment of his own political party (Jatiya Party) (Mohotti, 2011). In 1991, Ershad convicted and jailed for corruption and illegal possession of weapons. Pro-democracy movements forced him to resign in 1991. A strong democracy emerged in Bangladesh with the General Elections of 1991. Begum Khalida Zia, widow of President Zia-ur-Rehman became the Prime Minister.³⁴ Since then till 2006 Bangladesh has had multi-party democracy with a prolonged political deadlock. The party differences created the political the personal animosity between Shiekh Hasina and Begum Khalida Zia.

Nepal

Nepal, a Hindu kingdom, had monarchy which kept on flip-flopping between absolute and constitutional monarchy and vice-versa for many years. The country since its inception has gone through the several stages of political and social circumstances from at least early twelfth century. It was through the military conquest of the Gorkha ruler Prithvi Narayan shah (1743-1775) who through a military conquest made Nepal a Political state. Nepal has been ruled by the monarchy since 18th century. The shah dynasty did not pay much attention towards democracy and their rule was military and despotic in character and they centered their whole power over the king himself (Bhandari, 2012). It was only in the first half of 20th century that Nepal stepped on the path of constitutionalism and democracy. At that time it was the effort of two political parties of Nepal, the Nepali congress and the communist party of Nepal who raised demand for a constituent assembly but still the monarchic rule in the country remained a powerful political institution (Pathak *et al.*, 2009). The monarchic rule in Nepal is themselves responsible for the downfall of their kingdom by paying no attention towards democracy, their

³⁴ "*Washington, D.C., Bangladesh, and South Korea*". Carter center, (July 31, 2001).

Retrieved from

<http://www.cartercenter.org/news/documents/doc444.html?printerFriendly=true>. Accessed on 12/11/2013.

deliberate attack on the prerogatives and sovereignty of the people, and disregarding constitutionalism.

In the first half of 19th century (1846), the country took a different turn when Junga Bahadur Rana an army commander ruthlessly killed many supporters of the king and grabbed the state power and other privileges and became the Chief Minister of Nepal. Junga bahadur was a powerful person and with his strength made the kings of Shah dynasty as the nominal head of the kingdom completely controlled the government and made the king a puppet. The Rana rulers strengthened the accessible socio-cultural order of the country and followed the policy of the patronization and punishment. The rule had also survived on tyranny, revenge and persecution (Upreti, 2010). The relation between the kings and Ranas was further strained which was ultimately resolved after 104 years tyrannical rule by the Ranas in 1951.

Nepal had gone through its first general election in 1958-59 which resulted into the massive win of Nepali congress. BP Koirala of Nepali Congress became the first Prime Minister of a representative government (Guthman, 1997). For long, the king with the help of army, retained absolute control and limited the growth of democracy. However, in response to the pro-democracy movements, the king accepted the demand for a new democratic constitution in 1990.

Bhutan

Bhutan has also remained under monarchy since long back. The development of Bhutanese democracy has been marked by the active encouragement and participation of reigning Bhutanese monarch since the 1950s. The process of democratization was initiated by the third king of Bhutan Jigme Dorji Wangchuck (1952-1972) during the increasing internal and external political complexity. The work for democratisation started in 1952, when the king established the country's legislature to promote more democratic form of governance. After the death of third king of Bhutan in 1972, he was succeeded by his 16 year old son and fourth king of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck. He pledged to continue his father's program of democratization of the politics of the country. He planned many of the political and legal reforms that have shaped the constitutional monarchy and democracy in Bhutan (Sinha, 2001). During the reign

of Bhutanese fourth king, Jigme Singme Wangchuck, the country has undergone various political changes and also introduced a programme of administrative and political decentralisation in his dynasty.³⁵ In the early 1990s, there were no legal political parties, local government was divided into zones, districts, sub districts and village groups and then he got the unanimous support for hereditary monarchy at the 1992 session of the national assembly³⁶. The transition from an absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy started in 2004 and in 2008 the procedure was fulfilled by electing a legislature and representative government in the Himalayan country.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is one of Asia's oldest democracies with domestic political autonomy granted to the people of Ceylon in 1931 by the British. The political model of Sri Lanka was styled according to the British parliamentary system, with an executive Prime Minister and cabinet responsible to parliament. And from that moment onwards, including the independence in 1948, the country becoming a republic in 1972, civil society institutions have remained strong, vibrant and independent (Pieris, 2012). At independence, Sri Lanka inherited its democratic system from the Britain. The main pillars of this system were universal adult franchise introduced in 1931, emergence of competitive and multi-party system, a bi-cameral Parliament with a house of representatives was set up, the cabinet system of government with responsible to the elected legislature and establishment of independence of judiciary (Lakshman *et al.*, 2002) After independence of Sri Lanka, the United National Party (UNP) formed its government in the country. Its policies were liberal and secular. A new party Sri Lankan Freedom Party (SLFP) was formed in 1951 under Solomon Bandaranaike's leadership. From that period, Sri Lankan politics took a new turn. However, the real start of the country's democratic crisis started in 1977 when Jayawardene's United National Party (UNP) defeated the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) in the elections and the new Prime Minister J.R. Jayewardene assumed power on becoming the country's first

³⁵ "Bhutan". Asia cooperation Dialogue. Retrieved from <http://www.acddialogue.com/about/member/bhutan.php>. Accessed on 12/12/2013.

³⁶ "*Bhutan Introduction*". Retrieved from <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-1438.html>. Accessed on 12/12/2013.

executive President. Within months, Jayewardene had assumed office as the first executive President of Sri Lanka wielding unprecedented and unchecked political power (Krishna, 1996). However, Jayewardene was re-elected for the second term in 1982 and UNP became the leading opposition party. Since then the country observed the long term crisis between two major communities- Sinhalese and Tamils.

India

The democracy in India is the world's biggest and vibrant democracy, having a population of over one billion people. India, a union of states, with a Parliamentary system of government is a sovereign socialist, secular, democratic, republic. The republic is governed in terms of the Constitution, which was adopted on 26 November, 1949 and came into force on 26 January, 1950 and democracy is regarded as one of the basic features of Indian constitution. Since independence there have been regular elections to the Parliament and state legislatures.³⁷ Elections are key to Indian democracy and are the most important feature of democracy which is held at regular intervals. The elections should be free and fair Free and fair elections are indispensable for a healthy and successful democracy.

This reflects the understanding, maturity and wisdom of the Indian electorate, in whom the ultimate power and sovereignty rests. As time passes, the Indian people have shown their confidence and have become more active as regards their participation in the process of democracy. During the earlier elections, the number of voters has considerably increased. During the Lok Sabha elections of 1952, the percentage of voters who participated in elections was 52 which were increased to 64 in the 9th Lok Sabha elections of 1989. Similarly during the last elections for Parliament, the voter's turnout has been quite encouraging.³⁸ For the free and fair elections, many electoral reforms were made by the Indian election commission. The electronic machine began to be used which results in more

³⁷ "*Constitution of India*". India.gov.in. Retrieved from <http://india.gov.in/my-government/constitution-india/constitution-india-full-text>. Accessed on 16/12/2013.

³⁸ "*History of Lok Sabha Elections*" SME TIMES. Retrieved from <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:http://www.smetimes.in/smetimes/general-elections-2009/miscellaneous/2009/Mar/23/history-of-lok-sabha-elections5584.html>. Accessed on 16/12/2013.

transparency and credibility in the election process. Also the 61st amendment took place in 1988 which reduced the age of voters from 21 to 18 years and anti-defection law came into existence which curtails the criminals from taking tickets of various political parties and also bestows on them the right to extract the contesting candidates' profile.³⁹

There are a number of national and regional political parties, like Indian National Congress, Bharathiya Janata Party, Janata Dal, C.P.I, Bahaman Samaj Party, C.P.M., Samajvadi Party, Telugu Demas, Muslim League, Shiv Sena, Kerala Congress, National Conference, and Alkali Dal, etc. These parties considerably play an important role in the elections held in the state and also these parties are the very life-blood of Indian democracy. These parties also play a significant role in the smooth functioning of the democracy. So far as the spirit of democracy in India is concerned, it is deep-rooted and all- pervading.⁴⁰ It has faced many challenges and is strong enough to face new challenges also.

In the very ancient time, democracy had been originated in Greece. With the passage of time, it had covered many regions of the world. After Greece, England became the first country to experiment with it and since then it has been working successfully. In the present time, it has been said that the Britain Parliament is the mother of Parliamentary type system of the government. The concept of democracy then moved to America after it was declared independent in 1776. The democracy got stimulated in other parts of the world with powerful revolutions which led to the overthrow of authoritarian regime. The subsequent development in most countries of the world had shown the way and became an inspiration for the non-democratic regions of the world and South Asian region has not been left untouched. With the end of colonialism, India and Sri Lanka adopted parliamentary type of governmental systems which needs further electoral and governance reforms. Remaining South Asian countries have been governing by the

³⁹ Megha Shankar. "An Essay on Electoral Reforms in India". Retrieved from http://www.academia.edu/1982828/An_essay_on_Electoral_Reforms_in_India. Accessed on 18/12/2013.

⁴⁰ Neha Pansare. "1330 Words Essay on Democracy in India". Retrieved from <http://www.shareyouressays.com/966/1330-words-essay-on-democracy-in-india>. Accessed on 18/12/2013.

authoritarian regimes. However, these authoritarian regimes are undergoing some drastic changes and even some countries like Nepal and Bhutan adopted constitutional monarchy. Pakistan and Bangladesh are flip-flopping between democratic to autocratic regimes.

MALDIVES

In Maldives, the authoritarian regime remained dominant for a long time. For the majority of its history, the Maldives has been an independent polity except a considerable period under the external powers. The island gained independence from the British in 1965 and it became a republic country in 1968 ruled by a President and an authoritarian government, thus ending the 853 year old monarchy, which was replaced by a republic under the Presidency of Ibrahim Nasir. In 1978, a two time President of Maldives Ibrahim Nasir decided his retirement and passed on the throne to Maumoon Abdul Gayoom. Gayoom began his 30-year role as President in 1978, winning six consecutive elections without opposition.

As time passes President Abdul Gayoom worked a lot to gradually strengthen his position at nascent Maldivian civil society. In August 2007, some changes were made in the constitution which brought announcement for democratic elections to be held within the next year. In August 2008, a new constitution of Maldives was enacted to foresee a modern democratic country. This new constitution conferred the people of Maldives a Presidential system of government, the separation of powers and protection of fundamental rights and liberties. With the establishment of new constitution, the country has seen tremendous development in political aspect and has strengthened the democracy and freedoms of the country. The first ever multi- party Presidential elections of the country took place on October 28, 2008. These elections were labelled as free and fair elections which led to the victory of Mohammad Anni Nasheed and ended the 30 year rule of corrupt and absolute ruler Maumoon Abdul Gayoom. After the new President took his office, he got popularity and took various steps which were essential for the countries democratic stability. The elected government also made some efforts to curtail the cruel punishment which were under process during Gayoom's rule. The country also has suffered political turmoil since 2008 when Nasheed became the country's first democratically elected President.

As per the constitution, the elections took place in Maldives on May 9, 2009. These elections resulted into formation of a coalition government by DRP and smaller parties to act as a majority in the peoples Majlis (Parliament). Again Maldives held its first multi-party local council elections on 5 February, 2011. The President Nasheed resigned from President Ship of the country in February 2012 due to the undergoing violence and gave the power to the Vice President Mohammad Waheed Hassan. Hassan said that he will hold elections in July 2013, the earliest time permitted by the constitution.

The Presidential elections then took place in the country in two rounds. The voting of the first round which was held on 7 September, 2013 was cancelled by the Supreme Court. The election was then repeated on 9 November, 2013. The elections were again held on 16 November with the Supreme Court order as no candidate got majority support. This resulted in the victory of progressive party of Maldives (PPM) candidate Abdullah Yameen narrowly edging former President Mohamed Nasheed of the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) and thus he became the President of Maldives. He has been inaugurated the sixth President of the Maldives at a people's Majlis sitting today (Robinson 2013).

AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan has a government which can be described as an Islamic republic. Afghanistan is a nation comprised of many different nationalities and it has a link between central Asia, Middle East and the Indian sub-continent. The country had witnessed the rule of various Persian, Greek and Central Asian empires. After that, Islam was brought to the country during the 8th and 9th century by the Arabs. The internal affairs of the country were intervened by the two imperialist powers namely the British Empire and Czarist Russia. It would remain a British colony until 1919. The country was then ruled by Muhammad Nadir Shah after the crisis took place, but he was very soon assassinated and was succeeded by Muhammad zahir Shah who ruled the country for 40 years and was the most autocratic ruler, the country had ever witnessed.⁴¹ His word was the word of law but his monarchy was overthrown by Mohammad Daud khan in 1973 and

⁴¹ Adam Ritscher. "A Brief History of Afghanistan", Retrieved from <http://www.afghangovernment.com/briefhistory.htm>, Accessed on 26, July, 2014.

Afghanistan was declared republic and Daud Khan discharged the functions of President from 1973 to 1978. He was assassinated in 1978 in a coup that brought to power a communist government under Nur Mohammad Taraki.⁴² In Afghanistan, the fundamental principles of the democratic republic were made law under the rule of Babrak Karmal in April 1980. The constitution laid emphasis on independence, Islam and liberal democracy and also religion was to be respected. The 1990 constitution stated that Afghanistan was an Islamic state, and the last references to communism were removed. Article 1 of the 1990 constitution said that Afghanistan was an "independent, unitary and Islamic state."⁴³

After the Taliban regime in 2001, Hamid Karzai became a main political figure of Afghanistan. He was chosen for a two year term as interim President during the 2002 grand assembly that was held in Kabul, Afghanistan. Karzai was declared as winner after 2004 Presidential elections and became the President of Islamic republic of Afghanistan. He won a second term in 2009 Presidential elections. Hamid karzai became the elected ruler of the country. The recent elections of 2014 in the country proved controversial to some extent. Abdullah and Ghani contested the election for the Presidential seat who has expressed their desire to chop out a deal that could resolve the long drawn out impasse in the country. The Afghan Presidential candidate Ashraf Ghani was declared the victorious by the countries election commission with 56.44 percent of vote. The outgoing President Hamid Karzai held talks with both the candidates who are expected to be fruitful but some people in Afghanistan also hold the outgoing President responsible for the current crisis who actually has engineered the disarray to extend his stay in power. The Prime Minister of Afghanistan is a non-operational post in the Afghan Government. The Prime Ministerial post was actually formed in 1927, and was appointed by the king, mostly as an advisor, until the end of the monarchy in 1973. During the Communist Era, the position was the head of

⁴² Encyclopedia Britannica. "*Mohammad Daud Khan*", Retrieved from <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/152332/Mohammad-Daud-Khan>, Accessed on 26 July, 2014.

⁴³ "*1978-1992: Democratic Republic of Afghanistan*", Retrieved from <http://www.afghandocproject.org/index.php/english/24-1978to1992>, Accessed on 28 July, 2014.

government. After the collapse of Mohammad Najibullah's Presidency, a transitional state was created. Thus, the office of Prime Minister once again played an important role in the history of the nation. Hamid Karzai was sometimes called the Prime Minister by the international media during the first years of his Presidency.

CHAPTER 4

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATION: CONTEXTUALIZING IMPERATIVES

South Asia is one of the largest democratic regions of the world but this democratic system is engulfed by many problems, which are inhibiting the successful functioning of the system. South Asia has been confronting with the decaying democratic institutions.⁴⁴ The cornerstone of successful democratic system lies in a well-established socio-economic and political ethos. Literacy, fair elections, universal free education and ongoing educational opportunities for adults are some of the important dynamics to make this system more successful. The problems and challenges being faced by these countries are innumerable. Major obstacles in the path of a successful consolidation of democratic institutions in these countries are widespread poverty, unemployment, massive inequalities in income and wealth, rapid inflation, and low or negative rates of economic growth. These problems are proving the major stumbling blocks for either transitioning from autocratic to democratic or converting democracy to participatory democracy.

Theorising Problems of Democracy

Many liberal and elite political thinkers have given their views about the system of democracy. Some of the thinkers were strong believers of democracy whereas some were opposed to the system. Democratization is a process of transition as a country attempts to move from an authoritarian form of government to a democratic one (Berry *et al.*, 2008). Democracy according to Aristotle is the rule of the majority which must be non-virtuous as the majority can never be virtuous which means that the rule of poor, as majority is always of poor does not help the city-states to accomplish good life for its citizens (Lintott, 1992). If liberty

⁴⁴ Harsh V Pant, (December 21, 2007). "*South Asia: Dangerous democracy deficit*". Retrieved from <http://isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Articles/Detail/?ots783=4888caa0-b3db-1461-98b9-e20e7b9c13d4&lng=en&id=53957>. Accessed on 12/01/2014.

and equality are chiefly to be found in democracy, they will be best attained when all persons alike share in the government to the utmost. He said that “there must be as many forms of government as there are modes of arranging the offices. Aristotle identifies three kinds of ideal constitution- The three kinds of constitution, both ideal and perverted, are differentiated by the number of persons they allow to rule. Aristotle proposed a connection between the ideas of democracy and liberty that would be strongly emphasized by all later advocates of democracy (Duignan, 2013).

However, Locke was a crystal-clear adherent of political equality, individual liberty, democracy and majority rule. Although Philosophers like Plato and Hobbes opposed the idea of democracy and supported monarchy for different reasons. For Plato, democracy was unworkable because it needed true knowledge for each man to vote. Locke says that the political society or government stands for a social contract among those who have consented to make one Community or Government wherein the majority have a right to act and conclude the rest.”⁴⁵ These two ideas—the consent of the governed and majority rule—became central to all subsequent theories of democracy. Thus no government is legitimate unless it enjoys the consent of the governed, and that consent cannot be rendered except through majority rule.

Jean Jacques Rousseau sometimes seems the more radical democrat and takes into account the modern principle of the election on the level of the government and maintains with the traditional design of the democracy but his conception of democracy is narrower than Locke's. Rousseau asserts that democracy is incompatible with representative institutions, a position that renders it all but irrelevant to nation states (Duignan, 2013). The sovereignty of the people, he argues, can be neither alienated nor represented. An American philosopher John Dewey has said that democracy is more than a form of government which grants all kinds of freedom that is necessary for the self-development and growth of an individual. This concept provides the freedom of exchange ideas and opinions

⁴⁵ Chen Sheng, (September 14, 2010). “*Grassroots Associations, Popular Literature, Future Interests, and Limited Government*”. Retrieved from <http://www.independent.org/students/essay/essay.asp?id=2864>. Accessed on 12/02/2014.

with others, the freedom to form associations with others to pursue common goals.⁴⁶

According to Schumpeter, an elite theorist, the classical doctrine of democracy is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions which realizes the common good by making the people itself decide issues through the election of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its will (Mackie, 2009). He further added that the people should first elect their representatives and then the decision for the better policy would be taken by the elected representatives. Schumpeter said that the representatives would compete for the votes of the voters like firms compete for customers.

Degeneration of democracy in the South Asian region is manifested in almost all fields of life. Corruption is spreading extensively and seems to be uncontrolled. There are various prevailing factors responsible for the decaying of democracy in South Asia which includes corruption, selfishness, moral decay, communalism etc. The corruption generates selfishness is the basic attribute which raised competition for the political power and is blamed for the failure of democratic governance in the region. The worst factor in South Asia is selfishness among individuals and its symptoms like corruption and communal schism has given birth to democratic decay throughout South Asia. One of the main causes of corruption in the region is the insurrection of the political party system and electoral process. Moreover, corruption in these countries is expanding like cancer which is actually eating the heart of democratic political system.⁴⁷ The failure in democratization of South Asian countries is also due to breakdown of political parties and other leading institutions. The perverted political system of the region which is basically flawed promotes opportunistic and sycophantic political leadership hierarchy and breeds favouritism in the region, mainly generates the political incompetence and instability which identifies the cause of degeneration itself. Communalism is also a

⁴⁶ “*Democracy*”. Retrieved from <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/157129/democracy/233866/Mill>. Accessed on 12/02/2013.

⁴⁷ “*The Politics of Corruption*”. (October, 2011). Retrieved from <http://infochangeindia.org/governance/worldview/the-politics-of-corruption.html>. Accessed on 12/01/2014.

major obstruction in development of South Asian democracy particularly Indian democracy. It is portrayed as an instrument to mobilize people on communal grounds and causes rivalry, unrest and violence among communities. It is seditious to Indian democratic political stability. It had traditionally been associated with the Hindu-Muslim relations.⁴⁸ The incompetent and inhuman leadership has caused the moral decay to the society and has labelled all the institutions in corruption which has consequently affected the pace of democratization.

Countries at low levels of economic development also usually lacked a large middle class and a well-educated population. Most of the South Asian countries are loaded with lot of diversities. The division of the population into antagonistic ethnic, racial, religious, or linguistic groups made it more difficult for the existing government to manage political differences peacefully. Lack of an effective legal system in South Asian countries is also affecting the pace of democratization. The political culture of these countries did not inculcate in citizens the kinds of beliefs and values that could support democratic institutions and practices during crisis or even during the ordinary conflicts of political life. In light of these circumstances, it is quite possible that the extraordinary pace of democratization begun in the 20th century will not continue long into the 21st century. In some countries, authoritarian systems probably will remain in place. In some countries that have made the transition to democracy, new democratic institutions probably will remain weak and fragile. Other countries might lose their democratic governments and revert to some form of authoritarian rule.

Problems of Democratic Transition in South Asia

It is well thought-out that South Asia is one of the most unstable and unpredictable regions in the world and is considered as the world's most unstable region (Malhotra, 1998). Though, the region has perceived some significant progress in the very first decade of twenty first century which has given some hope to look carefully into the future of South Asia. As Pakistan has mostly experienced the authoritarian and military rule since its independence, the elections held in 2008 resulted into the re-establishment of civilian rule, Bhutan also experienced its

⁴⁸ Nasir Sadia,(oct, 2004). "*Rise of extremism in South Asia*". Retrieved from <http://ipripak.org/papers/riseofextremism.shtml>. Accessed on 10/01/2014.

first ever elections in the same year. In Nepal also the monarchy was abolished and a constituent assembly was elected which led to the declaration of a secular republic for Nepal. Moreover, the caretaker government in Bangladesh has declared its policy to hold elections at the end of the year. In democracy, people acquire full chance to participate in the democratic process of the country and guarantees domestic security of that country.

Military Regime: Transition, Consolidation, Breakdown of Democracy

Pakistan

It is vivid that Pakistan's democracy did not take deep roots since its independence. There are many major causes behind the failure and problems of democracy in the country. It mainly lies in the socio-political sector of the country. The poverty, illiteracy, fundamentalism, terrorism, apathetic people, self-imposed leaders and inherited politics are some of the main causes responsible for the political instability and non-democracy in Pakistan. In Pakistan, political leaders are from feudal background and have made their recognition as political leaders. So Pakistan is a feudal state and feudalism has been leading towards the traditions of inherited politics.⁴⁹ It is thus crystal clear that people in such a feudal state are poor and they don't have their own land. They in reality live in acute poverty. It is thus herculean for such marginalized and economically deprived people to have their say in democratic process of the country. The general will of common masses is the indication towards successful democracy and such deprived community is not worth to show their own will but they are bound to follow the will of the feudal lords. This is the main reason that democracy in Pakistan got diminished towards oligarchy and aristocracy (Haq, 2010). Democracy and feudalism are two different norms. In feudalism people are being oppressed and dominated by their feudal lords. Slavery and bondage are common and there is no public participation at all, whereas democracy is known for its best features of participation, fundamental freedoms, freedom of expression, respect for human rights, equality and peace. Due to the feudalism in Pakistan, the nature of parliament and political parties has

⁴⁹ "*Future of Democracy in Pakistan*". (November 15, 2012). Retrieved from <http://cssexam2013.blogspot.in/2012/11/essay-future-of-democracy-in-pakistan.html>. Accessed on 12/01/2014.

remained non-democratic as they did not abolish this system from its very inception as India did. So, feudalism is considered as a main barrier in breakdown of democracy (Junejo, 2010).

The main root cause of democratic problems in Pakistan is illiteracy. The education and literacy are imperative for democratic and political stability of the country. Pakistan's literacy rate is said to be 56 per cent and despite the rows of educational plans, policies, conferences and five-year plans, its literacy rate could not increase much. Democracy will not work out in Pakistan till they educate their people. The illiteracy is the major problem behind the democratic failure in Pakistan.⁵⁰ The literacy rate of rural areas of Pakistan is far below than the urban areas and it is not feasible for such under developed community to have their participation and contribution towards the development of such country. As illiteracy leads to poverty, such economically and literally deprived community cannot follow the true spirit of democracy. When the common people are deprived, marginalized and their will would be diminished, it would definitely lead to incompetent, indolent and corrupt leadership and sometimes it may lead to chaos and anarchy.

Pakistan's failure to develop a stable constitutional regime is the fault of both Pakistan's military and civilian leadership (Oldenburg, 2010). Since the independence, the military dictators have mostly ruled the country and the country had larger belief in military rule than the elected governments. The military generals of the country grabbed the whole power themselves and they left the power only due to firm mass movements. Many times parliamentary democracy was given a chance to establish but the intervention of military dictators always prevailed and its influence is the greatest impediment to democratic and political stability in Pakistan. Pakistan since its independence has seen democracy only in intervals before the next military general comes to the scene. The rulers of Pakistan from 1948 to 1958 made several efforts towards the development of parliamentary government but were not successful in building democracy. After the first martial law announced by the Ayub Khan in 1958, the country was governed by various

⁵⁰ "*Failure of Democracy In Pakistan*". Retrieved 01 07, 2014, from The Frontier Post: <http://www.thefrontierpost.com/article/59882/Failure-of-democracy-in-Pakistan>.

rulers. Ayub Kahan also failed to develop the indirect form of democracy (Kapur, 1991). The collapse of elected democracy was due to mismanagement and the unending political desires by the army generals. Ian Talbot terms Pakistan's political history as "a fruitless search for stability with frequent changes of Government and regime (Kamran, 2008). The strong mass movements were often witnessed against the military governance which they could not properly resist and transferred power to their successors. Then democracy was experienced by the country under Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif for at least 10 years. Once again in the country, a military coup by General Parvez Musharraf annexed the throne who led a military backed regime in Pakistan. This clearly shows that military rule has completely ruined the state structure of Pakistan and failure in achieving liberal democracy in the country can be labelled as the ascendancy of democracy.

The role of fundamentalist's in Pakistan is the biggest factor in creating obstruction in democratic transition of the country. Islamic fundamentalism is actually a religio-political movement which means to follow the basic rules and roots of Islam. It is even considered as the movement of militants and aggressors. Violence is an essential aspect of this ideology. These fundamentalists have dedication towards the fact that they are the real exponents of Islam and nobody is even allowed to express any un-Islamic view. They believe that democracy and secularism are un-Islamic (Bahadur, 1998). The rise and rule of Islamic fundamentalism began in the late 1980s in Pakistan. It was seen that during the dictatorship of General Zia-ul-Haq, he used the religion to justify his rule and made rules and laws for the state according to Shariah. This situation dampens the prospects of democracy and the masses started keeping faith towards theocracy rather than democracy. The roots of fundamentalism were found in the backwardness of the society, social deprivation, poverty, ignorance and a very low level of consciousness. It was during the military rule of general Zia-ul-Haq when the process of Shariah and Islamization was fully utilized and made Islamization the social and political order of the country and cornerstone of his government. General Zia established the Shariat court and weakened the secular forces (Tariq, 2011). It is a fact that the struggle for democracy was undertaken for long time in Pakistan and every time it has been failed due to one or the other reasons. People only blame that military rule in Pakistan is utterly responsible for the crisis of

democratic set up in the country but the fact lies in other aspects also as the people were not provided with basic necessities of life, security, uproot poverty, corruption, employment and other basic rights.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh got independence from Pakistan in 1971 and the Bangladesh government openly opted for the right way and adopted secularism in its initial stage during Mujib-ur-Rehmans period unlike Pakistan who preferred the path of Islamic republic. During the initial period of Mujib government he adopted democratic system of government in the country and a new constitution was adopted by its constituent assembly on 4 November, 1972 and promulgated on 16 December of the same year. In order to strengthen the established democratic system by the newly promulgated constitution, he introduced many economic measures and also started nationalizing the industries of the entire country to assure the people of the country for their betterment (Jalal, 1995). The basic objective behind this was to give a progressive foundation to the emerging nation. But this parliamentary government was firmly opposed by a section of fundamentalists who were in support of revolutionary government and hence criticized Mujib's Awami League and unfortunately the assassination of Sheikh Mujib on 15 August, 1975 marked the end of the infant democracy.

The struggle between Bengali nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism has created political instability and chaos in Bangladesh. The changed political system resulted in the removal of secularism from the constitution and socialism in turn was redefined. Islamic identity seems to be having an upper hand. This has caused a shadow on the future of democracy in Bangladesh, though it has been observed that the country has received a reprieve with the coming to power of the Sheikh Hasina led Awami League government (Kumar, 2012). She laid stress on the curtailment and reduction of communalism and religious favouritism and also laid the emphasis on the removal of discrimination and abusing religion for any political purpose. The fundamentalism that prevailed during Ershad's era gave much more importance to Madrasses and Maktabas than modern education. The main Islamic fundamentalist political party in Bangladesh is Jamaat-i-Islami. The ultimate objective of this party is to adopt the Islamic laws and rules in the state.

The party is open critic and opposed to Parliamentary democracy, NGOS and other type of modern development (Kumar, 2012).

The people of Bangladesh anticipated a distinctive form of government to come into existence as the Parliamentary democracy was once again re-established and carried on in Bangladesh during 1990. It is a fact that the democratic government was not successful to act upon or to carry out the fundamental functions of a polity as they have not restored law, order and justice. The people of the country are befuddled and are disillusioned with the rule of democratically elected governments and their incapability to manage and discharge the functions properly. Bangladesh no doubt had been helped openhandedly by the world communities, institutions and many other governments since its very inception so that it could emerge as an independent and self-righteous nation. The country could have adopted electoral democracy through free and fair elections but unfortunately its desire to be a liberal democracy has been a distant dream.

With the passage of time Bangladesh has agreed and conceded outstanding progress in socio-economic field with deteriorated law and order and uncontrolled corruption continued as the hallmarks of post nineties governments in Bangladesh. Due to susceptibility of brutal internal conflicts in Bangladesh, it has been ranked 17th among 60 weak and failing states. However, this points to the underperformance and many failings of Bangladesh, as a nascent democracy.

What are the impediments that stand the way of Bangladesh to become a liberal democratic nation? Like fundamentalism and terrorism, poverty, illiteracy, corruption, ignorance and the socio-cultural life of Bangladesh are the basic things which create hurdle in attaining democracy in the country. More illiteracy and poverty led to the democratic instability in Bangladesh. The illiteracy in the country makes the success of democracy more difficult because the citizens can attain democracy only when they are fully aware about the benefits of democracy. Without education it is not possible for the people to politically awaken (Monir *et al.*, 2008). There was no political awakening among the people of Bangladesh which led to the democratic problems in the country. The country could not achieve the success of democracy because of its failure of maintaining law and order. Also the

economic condition of Bangladesh was not favourable which weakened the democratic institutions because the economic security of the country is an essential element towards the democracy of the country. The political volatility has broken its security apprehension and spread the illegal destructive elements like arms and other explosive throughout the country which created a major threat to the consolidation of Parliamentary democracy.

In Bangladesh corruption has become institutionalized in its social life in the form of nepotism, favouritism and bribery and has become so unchecked and uncontrolled that Bangladesh has been recognized as the most corrupt state by the intelligibility international for the consecutive four years (Rahman, 2005). A selected group of elite persons who are entangled with one another contribute the fruit of corruption among themselves at the cost of national advancement. The people of Bangladesh are not satisfy and are more puzzled by the performance of the members of Parliament (MPS) in the law making and discharging of government functions and hence they have lost their faith on the Parliamentary democracy. The Parliament also has the constant and unending problem of quorum crisis. Also the opposition is not allowed to criticize the government in the house and hence cannot express their grievances and because of this the main opposition parties has been boycotting Parliamentary sessions for long. The country has made lot of effort in order to carry out liberal democracy by promoting the transparency in the entire system of Bangladesh. But Bangladesh is suffering from the power conflict between the two prevailing internal political parties and this power struggle in the country largely resulted in destabilizing the democratic system of the country (Parnini, 2012).

It is now clear that due to the fundamentalist forces and other terrorist groups, the people mostly the rural people of Bangladesh were kept aloof from the modern education and other jobs which entirely kept them ignorant about the benefits of democracy that led to the failure of parliamentary democracy in the country. Also the illiteracy in the country is the cause of democratic failure as the common uneducated masses were not fully capable to differentiate between right and wrong and could not use their vote properly. As illiteracy lead to poverty, the politicians by paying a very few amount of money to the poor people and compelled them to cast their vote in their favour. This largely led to the misuse of

democracy and people completely lost the faith on the political parties and so called democracy (Rahman, 2006). The political leaders and other elites were to large extent corrupt which destructed the whole system of the country and people got confused and were not able to trust on their leaders and completely lost faith on the existence of democratic conditions.

In Bangladesh there are so many political parties which are weak and incompetent. Most of the political parties lack the ideology on which their party stands. Only few major political parties in Bangladesh have specific ideology which is acceptable to the general masses. Other parties are only based on their self-interest and power-expectation. The greed of these political parties has definitely led to the discouraging democracy in the country. To establish democracy in short period is not so easy but the above reasons do not let the consolidation of democratic structure in the country. All these things were by and large responsible for the failure of democratic government in the country.

Monarchy to Marring Democracy

Nepal:

Nepal had been a kingdom for a long period of about fifteen hundred years and had been under the control of autocrats and authoritarian rulers. Nepal's journey from a constitutional monarchy to a republican state has been full of ups and downs. There are five different conflicts that swayed the democratic transition of Nepal and its cause of failure. The first conflict was between the state of Gorkha and other states which came to an end with the integration and foundation of the modern Nepal. The second conflict was observed for a long time and it was between the Shah dynasty and the Rana dynasty. This conflict ended up after a long time with the collapse of Rana dynasty. The third conflict was between the king (monarchy) and the people which came to an end with the ending of monarchy in May 2008. The fourth conflict was between the Maoist and democratic political parties or between the two ideologies- communism and democracy. It is seen that this conflict has strained the country into the socio-political conflict. It is now anticipated that this conflict would finish off with the creation of a new democratic constitution that will incorporate the Maoists into a democratic framework. The fifth conflict in the country has emerged on ethnic identity which is

regarded as the most serious conflict that has ever seen in the country (Bhandari, 2012).

The Nepalese people became politically aware and got some encouragement by different political movements established in India and the educated youth of Nepal started fighting for the cause of democracy in Nepal. Also the educated youth of Nepal was inspired when India gained independence from British. This was a great message and an enthusiasm for the Nepalese people to fight for their cause. These factors played an important role in shaping of the political landscape in Nepal and a strong movement was started for the cause of democracy in Nepal by the Nepali congress and the communist party (Urpreti, 2010). This movement, known as the People's Revolution of 1951, finally finished the despotic rule of the Rana Dynasty. Ultimately the controversy between the Ranas and the Shah Dynasty came to an end by the movement of 1950 and 1951 which resulted in the collapse of Rana regime and Shah Dynasty once again came to its full-fledged power. This people's revolution was the beginning of the democratization in Nepal. But the king was not able to establish democratic government because the political parties who made many efforts and played an active role in the bringing down the Rana regime and who promised for the consolidation of the democratic system of Nepal totally failed in taking the Nepalese political system to a right direction. The working system of political parties was declared undemocratic by the king as they got opportunity to label the political parties down. After the revolution of 1950, the provisional constitution of the country was adopted by the king Tribhuvan on the recommendation of the Council Of Ministers on 30 March, 1951. It was only for a stipulated period till a republican constitution could be prepared by a constitution assembly. The interim constitution which came into force on April 11, 1951 continued for eight years because the constitution was never established which was assured by the king. In 1955 king Tribhuvan died and Mahendra became the king of Nepal (Bhandari, 2012).

With the change of regime, the Parliamentary democracy got a rude shock. The king Mahendra with the support of Royal Nepal Army played havoc with this system. He took all the state power into his hands and the democratic aspirations of the people were once again killed. The king introduced a new party less system

known as the Panchayati Constitution which was promulgated on December 16, 1962 and according to this, the position of king declared the supreme among all authorities. After 30 years of the Panchayat Raj, the two political parties, the Nepali congress (NC) and the United Left Front (ULF) in 1990 jointly started a new movement in order to restore democracy in the country (Hachhethu, 1994). This movement was very successful and it completed only after restoring the multiparty system in Nepal. The multi-party system was restored in 1990 but it has been failed to provide political stability to the country rather it has created some extra hurdles for the governance. The major political parties of the country like the Nepali Congress and the Communist Party lost their faith and reputation and the group rivalry almost demolished their organizational capability.⁵¹

In 1994, the 2nd general elections of the parliament were held in Nepal. The opposition political parties in May 1995 moved a no-confidence motion against the Unified-Marxist-Leninist (UML) government. Prime Minister Man Mohan Adhikari resigned and recommended the dissolution of parliament. So the king dissolved the Parliament and made the announcement of fresh elections.⁵² But the decision was challenged by the Supreme Court and the court ordered re- establishment of the Parliament and the Parliament was revived in September 1995. On 3rd and 17th May 1999, the third general elections to the House of Representatives were held in two phases. The Nepali party emerged as the majority party in the elections and K.P. Bhattarai won the first election and he became the leader of the Parliamentary party (Upreti, 2010). In 2002 the Deuba government was dismissed by the king Gyanendra, accusing Deuba of being an incompetent Prime Minister. As there was a bi-polar conflict in Nepal till 2002 which turned into tri-polar conflict after 2002 among the king, parliamentary parties and Maoists.⁵³ This conflict became a major problem of the country. It not only slowed down the peace of the country but also

⁵¹ C.K. LAL, (Jun. 23 - Jul. 06, 2001). "A Test on Society". Retrieved from <http://www.frontline.in/static/html/fl1813/18130200.htm>. Accessed on 10/09/2013.

⁵² "Her Majesty Queen Komal Rajya Laxmi Devi Shah." Retrieved from <http://www.nepalroyal.com/the-royal-family/her-majesty-queen-komal-rajya-laxmi-devi-shah/>. Accessed on 10/09/2013.

⁵³ "Nepal's political crisis continues unabated". The Washington Times, (April 16, 2004). Retrieved from <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2004/apr/16/20040416-105358-8630r/?page=all>. Accessed on 20/12/2013.

destroyed the democratic structure and weakened the constitutional system of the country. The conflict also deteriorated the legislative system of Nepal which leads to the situation of chaos and anarchy. The internal conflict of Nepal resulted into the poverty and unemployment which is a multi-dimensional and complex problem which not only affected the economy of the country but also resulted in social and technological backwardness among the people. This also led to the migration of Nepali people to foreign countries. This thing had a serious impact on the democratic system of the country. Like poverty, corruption is also a major factor for political instability in Nepal. Corruption was at its peak and has been remaining a vital problem of Nepali society for a long time. Nepal lags behind due to the corruption and poor infrastructure which resulted into political instability.⁵⁴ It was more eminent in administrative system which increased the dissatisfactions of the large masses of the people. Due to fuelled corruption, the people's aspirations were completely tarnished. The old feudal monarchy was abolished in 2000 and Nepal had become a democratic republic in the first session of CA in 2008.⁵⁵

Since 2008, Nepal has undergone through various circumstances which has created problems in democratic consolidation and lead to the failure of political and democratic stability. The most important cause of democratic failure was that the political parties of Nepal got divided because of their ideological differences due to which the constituent assembly of the country got affected.

First there has to be a balance in the power play in Nepali politics. For this, it is essential that democrats across different parties should unite to safeguard democratic values and institutions. Second, both the Parliament and the Constituent Assembly are democratic institutions and they cannot be bypassed at any level. Bypassing such institutions will set a negative precedent in the future discourse of Nepali politics. It will only work to weaken democratic ethos, values and practices. Last, the international community has an influential role to play in

⁵⁴ "*Nepal*". Retrieved from <http://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/countries/NP/>. Accessed on 15/01/2014.

⁵⁵ "*Democracy in class struggle*". (December 31, 2008). Retrieved from http://democracyandclasstruggle.blogspot.in/2008_12_01_archive.html. Accessed on 15/01/2014.

Nepali politics. However, it has to be sincere about what sort of democracy it wishes to see in Nepal and work accordingly.

Bhutan

Politically experience of Bhutan had been divided into three different periods, the theocratic era from 1616 to 1907; secondly- 100 years monarchy rule under Wangchuk Dynasty and the period third since 2008. In the same year Bhutan has held its first general elections for the national assembly and after passing a new constitution, Bhutan became the world's youngest democracy (Wolf, 2013). There has been a very close relation between monarchy and the people of Bhutan since long back. A Tibetan native ruler, Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal (1594-1651) who was very charismatic priest type and noble ruler is considered the originator, the first ruler and the first great historical figure of the modern Bhutan state. He ruled the country till 1651 for 35 years and after him his successors ruled Bhutan till 1907. The death of Ngawang Namgyal left a power vacuum that was gradually filled by the Je Khenpo, Druk Desis, and the Penlops, all of them becoming more powerful over time. Since 1907, Bhutan was ruled by absolute monarchy for 100 years and after that Parliamentary democracy with Constitutional monarchy was established (Sinpeng, 2007). Bhutan never came under British rule and thus, was able to maintain firmly its administrative system and Buddhist culture.

The decades prior to the introduction of hereditary monarchy, Bhutan has been overwhelmed by political instability, war, and civil unrest. From the 1870s onwards, the regional leaders worked for the unification of Bhutan but civil wars and rebellions failed the efforts of previous rulers to unite the country. It became clear that the dual political system was superseded and ineffective. During this political instability and chaos, Ugyen Wangchuk crushed all his opponents and became a great and competent leader of Bhutan. He controlled all the administrative functions and discharged them very actively. The new leader also gained the British support and developed very close relations with them in 1904. In 1907, the mighty king forced the last Druk Desi to give up his throne. Ugyen Wangchuk in order to gain power and authority, he made some promises with the Bhutanese people that he would left no stone unturned in ending the civil war and

re-uniting the country. He was chosen unanimously as the hereditary king of Bhutan in 1907, by the assembly consisting of some Buddhist monks, government officials and heads of some important families (Gallenkamp, 2010). After the death of king Wangchuk's in 1926, his son Jigme Wangchuk ascended the throne. He followed the policy of his father by devoting his much time to centralize the administration of the country. Bhutan successfully maintained its distinct path of development as it mostly remained cut off from the rest of world. Jigme Wangchuk died in 1952 and the crown of the Dragon Kingdom was passed on to his son Jigme Dorji Wangchuk.⁵⁶

As far as the democratic transition in Bhutan is concerned, it is going up in a positive direction. As in Bhutan, democracy is considered an act of grafting which obstructs the growth of democracy due to absence of political culture. The royal rule was in one sense the choice of Bhutanese people and they always supported it and never led any kind of movement against the dominance of kings. The popularity of royal rule and the favour they gained among the people resulted into the failure of democracy in Bhutan. The constitution is imperative for the establishment of Parliamentary democracy of a country and it must be drafted by the constituent assembly, but in Bhutan, constitution was drafted by the experts and not by a duly- elected Constituent Assembly. The Bhutanese people did not think much about the democracy of the country as they realized that it was not much profitable to them. Another development which was not favourable to the growth of democracy is that Bhutan's territory is being used by Indian insurgent outfits like the ULFA, Maoists etc. All these led to the non- democracy and political instability in Bhutan and on account of this, the people of Bhutan wanted strong monarchy instead of democracy. In order to make successful democracy in the country, there is a need to change the way of thinking of people of Bhutan to accept and understand the merits of democracy (Mahapatra, 2008).

⁵⁶ "*Bhutan useful information*". Retrieved from <http://royalmt.com.np/destinations/bhutan/bhutan-useful-information/>. Accessed on 16/01/2014.

Problems of Indian Democracy

India after attaining its independence from British has been carrying out a responsible democracy. The country has very smoothly modified the challenging situations from time to time. The country has observed the free and fair elections for last six decades and power has been transferred from one political party to another very smoothly. But country has been still facing the political instability and crisis. There are many reasons responsible which create hurdles in smooth functioning of democracy. These are the communalism, widespread poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, economic inequality etc.

India is divided on the communal basis which has played a vital role to separate the people on religion basis and hinders the proper functioning of democracy. The illiteracy has been a serious issue for the development of democracy in India. The educational growth is the main aspect for the successful functioning of democracy. The literacy rate of India was 18.33 in 1951 and among women it was only 8.9. However some sort of improvement has been witnessed and the literacy rate of the country according to 2011 census has risen to 74.04 percent and it was 65.46 per cent in females which is still lagging. The prevailing illiteracy in the country is entirely responsible for the increase in poverty which is the utmost curse of democracy. Poverty is the biggest challenge for the countries democratic development and growth. It is the main cause of all kinds of deprivations. It is also related with the concept of Human Development Index (HDI) as championed by Mabud-ul-Haq and Amartya Sen.⁵⁷ The poor and marginalized people does not show their full interest in democratic elections because despite their role in formation of government, they are being discriminated and does not enjoy the goodwill of democratic government. As the illiteracy gives rise to poverty, in the same way poverty gives rise to unemployment which is continuously spreading day by day in India. It has created a great gap between rich and poor. It is a serious cause of income inequality among Indians which led to exploitation of the poor people by the rich due to which political rights lose their importance and

⁵⁷ "*Challenges to Indian Democracy*". Retrieved from <http://www.nios.ac.in/media/documents/SecSocSciCour/English/Lesson-23.pdf>. Accessed on 04/12/2013.

poses a great set back to countries democracy. Because of this, poverty has been a great challenge to Indian democracy.

Also the democracy of the country suffered a lot due to the political instability in the country. As compared to other South Asian countries, Indian political system maintained its stability to some extent but the various crises were experienced by the country time by time which was grave concern for the successful democracy of the country. The country had gone through the emergency many times. However, the Indian emergency of 25th June 1975-21st March 1977, under article 352 of the Indian constitution imposed a state of emergency by the President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed upon the advice of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi who was holding the office of Prime Minister at that time.⁵⁸ A large number of people were arrested on 26 June under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act. Under the emergency, all the fundamental rights and legal remedies were suspended which brought the Indian democracy to a grinding halt.⁵⁹ The emergency was proclaimed because of internal disturbances in the country and it continued for two years which saw the guiltless people being jailed by draconian sedition laws. The emergency declared by Indira Gandhi was criticized deeply throughout the country and is considered as the most controversial period of the Indian democratic history. The proclamation of emergency which led to the suspension of constitutional provisions failed the democracy and people lost their faith in the rule of law. Emergency did damage the Indian democratic roots very badly. It was the day when India lost its democracy and is known as the darkest day in Indian history.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ "1975 Indira Gandhi establishes emergency rule in india". Vande India, (June 25, 2009). Retrieved from <http://www.vandeindia.com/1975-indira-gandhi-establishes-emergency-rule-in-india.html>. Accessed on 04/12/2013.

⁵⁹ "India's Most Infamous Day - 25Th June, 1975, The Emergency". Andhrafriends, (June 25, 2012). Retrieved from <http://www.andhrafriends.com/topic/306939-indias-most-infamous-day-25th-june-1975-the-emergency/>. Accessed on 04/12/2013.

⁶⁰ Pramela, R. "National Emergency in Nayantara Saghals Rich Like Us." Retrieved from <http://www.languageinindia.com/may2013/pramelarichlikeus.pdf>. Accessed on 20/12/2013.

Problems of Democracy in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is one of the oldest democracies of South Asia. The country was granted political; economy by the British in 1931. The country got independence from the colonial rule in 1948 and since that enjoying the fruits of democracy. However, Sri Lanka became republic in 1972.⁶¹ In Pre-independence period, Sri Lanka was considered as the best country among the third world countries. It was looked upon as one of the best examples for its social and economic policies till 1970's. Sri Lanka was regarded as a social welfare state for its best social and economic policies. All this suddenly came to an end when ethnic conflict broke out between the two Sri Lankan communities -Sinhalese and Tamils.

The Sinhalese are in majority in Sri Lanka and they discriminate the Tamilians in every field and they were denied from the rights which were enjoyed by the Sinhalese. From 1970's onwards Sri Lankan government became ruthless and started harassment and oppression against Tamils. In order to get rid of such discrimination and harassment, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was founded by Velupillai Prabhakaran in May 1976 (Pieris, 2012). It waged a violent secessionist and nationalist campaign to create an independent state in which the Tamilians could enjoy liberty and equality which became a great challenge for the successful democracy. This conflict between the two major communities of the country has put the democratic system of the country in great danger. In the 1980s up to now, Sri Lanka has undergone the actual death of democracy at the functional level. Besides the death of democracy in the 1980s, the world also observed huge amount of deaths of democratic faithful which were trapped in the political ideologies of Sinhala and nationalisms and military cross fire. Also at the grass-roots level, there is a cry in the country for democratic freedoms and a democratic political process.

Imperatives for Democratic Transformation

South Asian countries have witnessed political turmoil most of the time since their independence. Sometimes this has resulted in loss of man and material of

⁶¹ Saliya pieris. "*Sri Lanka's Ongoing Struggle for Democracy*". Retrieved from <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Articles/Detail/?lng=en&id=154127>. Accessed on 09-02-14).

million rupees due to riots, curfews etc. Nepal and Bhutan remained under monarchy for many centuries. The people of these countries felt suffocation not only because of authoritarian political system but lack of bare minimum needs of the life also. Most of people from democratic countries are enjoying liberty and good standards of life. In this view, both the military and authoritarian rulers from this region witnessed pro-democracy movements because of the internal socio-economic problem of these countries. Under these regimes people could not get rid of poverty in the South Asian countries. Rather the people from this region were deprived of bare minimum needs. Despite the enormous and abundance resources these countries were lacking finance while community resources dried up and quality plummeted. Overall economic performance in these countries was not satisfactory. In countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh, a one-man dictatorship will be red-hot on getting things done, but he may be doing the wrong things. One man cannot know everything about everything, and even with advisers, he simply cannot learn enough about most issues to make an informed decision. They also tend to waste resources pursuing several courses at once.

There are so many imperatives that are fruitful for changing the whole democratic and political scenario of South Asia. The democratic justice comprises Human Rights based issues, social justice, participation and economic citizenship. These approaches help in reducing poverty and deepening democracy of the country and help in protecting the basic democratic infrastructure. These imperatives are meant for invigorating democracy of the South Asian region. Human rights envisage the rights as the instruments for accomplishing the substantial development goals and democratization. This approach has brought in progress the democratic transition of the South Asian region. In short, human rights emphasis on development to social justice and building democracy has worked in the South Asian region.

The participatory governance can act as an important factor strengthened the democratic structure of South Asia. It is a process through which rights are exercised and citizenship and political agency enacted. The participation is an important element of rights based approaches that facilitates political participation. It helps to enrich the institutional landscape of democracy in ways that empower citizens and deepens democracy by addressing democratic deficits in legitimacy,

accountability and responsiveness. It provides citizens with more opportunities for participation in decision making. The participation democracy is helpful in comparing levels of democracy among countries or in determining when a regime has completed a transition to democracy. Economic citizenship refers to the substantive aim of making economic security and social justice entitlements of democratic citizenship. It is of crucial importance for rich and poor countries. Democracy requires effective citizenship, which is built on the twin pillars of economic and political citizenship. Economic citizenship demands the participation of citizens in defining their interests and making crucial social and economic decisions which is a key to democratic freedom and sustainability of development. In short we can say that economic citizenship is an imperative complement to political citizenship.

Role of Civil Society in Democracy Building

Civil societies are playing vital roles in addressing the challenges of democracy related to inequality and injustice, basic human rights, marginalization, corruption, under-representation in the South Asian countries. The civil society is generating social basis of democracy, social capital and network, shared values and trust, creating and promoting political alternatives, supporting the rights of citizens and concept of citizenship (Alagappa, 2004). They can also mobilise social actors, which represent the interests of various different groups of society ensuring that the majority rule cannot ignore minority interests. Inclusive decision-making and the space for discussion of public affairs are necessary in all democratic system. Civil society can play roles of advocacy, watchdog and service provider. It contributes towards both the substances and process of democracy.

As it is known, there are many civil societies working in the South Asian countries, for example, the Right to Information (RTI) movement in India; the lawyers' movement in Pakistan; the peace movements in Sri Lanka, led often by women; the environmental movements; and the various women's movements in Bangladesh – ranging from those which attempt to secure rights for women workers to those which aim for the consolidation of Parliamentary democracy. In addition, a fairly broad consensus exists in the academic and policy community in South Asia that democracy and development are inseparable goals that both

require power relations to be addressed seriously. Within this tradition, civil society is seen as one of the main pillars of modern political life, and although the idea of civil society as the heart of democracy may not be fully compatible with the generally strong emphasis on individual rights in liberal thought, both its proponents and critics tend to accept that civil society theory is an integral part of a liberal political theory. Civil society and their movements in South Asian countries has contributed very significantly in the transformation and expansion of the practice of democracy by making the democratic institutions and actors of governance accountable to the people and empowers the society to articulate the democratization of human existence (Berglund, 2009). But on the other hand, South Asian countries are facing many problems such as economic and social inequality. Majority of the citizens of South Asian countries are denied social justice. Experience these kinds of problems, in order to strengthen the democracy, the policy makers and planners are required to adopt a developmental approach to democracy building from the local level through the democratization of economic, political and social structures. Same kind of strategies at both the regional and the national levels will also be adopted maximizing the synergies between these levels.

These Civil Societies helped in the collapse of autocratic regimes in Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh. The civil society played an important role in eliminating the authoritarian rule in the region. These institutions raised public concern about any abuse of power and have engaged the masses in policy making decisions of their respective countries. These institutions made large effort in promoting political participation. Experiences from these countries have shown that civil society is an important factor which has groomed many people to become great leaders in these countries and it is now clear that the South Asian countries are being ruled by the parliamentary democracy since 2008.

Many organizations like NGOS are working in Bangladesh for the betterment of rural people and increase their living standard. A number of NGOS are working for democracy of the country. The NGOs have clearly enhanced democratic participation and legal awareness in rural areas of the country. They have started many programmes to give proper education to masses which led to the awareness of common masses towards democracy (Stiles 2002). The labour unions, chambers of commerce, professional groups, bar associations, student groups and

even small local clubs and NGOs have played a significant role in its democratic consolidation. Bangladesh have been suffering from its worst as some effective practices like corruption, nepotism and patronage are prevalent in the country. These practices are not only found among top political executives and bureaucrats but also among local government and informal institutions of Bangladesh. Civil societies have been playing very significant role in Bangladesh in order to get rid of all these problems (Sabbih, 2011).

The associations and organizations are considered as an essential part of Bhutanese society. These societies are making the people aware about participation in taking decisions related to various fields. The concept of democracy in Bhutan has yet not attained its proper maturity as it is quiet new and its democracy is youngest in the world. In Bhutanese modern democratic society, a suitable democratic needs to be developed as some people are still unaware and have not understood the basics of it properly. The civil societies of Bhutan were enough free and form a substantial part of traditional farming society in rural Bhutan. The foundation of civil society is enshrined in the Constitution of Bhutan in section 3 of Article 9, which states, “endeavor to create a civil society free of oppression, discrimination and violence, based on rule of law, protection of human rights and dignity.”⁶² Prior to the adoption of the Constitution, the National Assembly had passed the Civil Society Organization Act on July 31, 2007. In Bhutan civil society played an important role and led the country towards the real democracy. The Bhutanese civil society made people aware about the ideals of parliamentary democracy and further strengthen the political institutions of the country.

In 1970s, the failure of Nepalese government led to the demand for a fresh debate on governance which resulted into the increased drift of civil society and their collaboration with the public, non-profit and the profit-oriented organizations. The role of civil society is considered as substantial in eliminating the authoritarian political regime as it became the sphere of freedom for Nepal. The autocratic and brutal rule was not only weakened by the Nepalese leader’s capability but also

⁶² Neten Sherub, (October 10, 2013). “*Civil Society and its role in strengthening Bhutanese democracy*”. Retrieved from <http://www.kuenselonline.com/civil-society-and-its-role-in-strengthening-bhutanese-democracy/>. Accessed on 12/12/2013.

because of the firm determination and strength of civil society organizations who tried their best in consolidating the Nepalese democracy. There are some important points which Nepalese civil society should carry out. One of the important points is that these civil societies need to give some recommendation to political parties to give up the violence and negotiate a constitution that ensures national security and rule of law (Dahal, 2012).

The role of civil society in Pakistan politics has been observed when military rule was at the highest point in the country. Although civil society is considered as weak and fragile in Pakistan but these institutions especially the existence of NGOs in the country gained popularity during the reign of military dictator Zia ul Haq and these NGO movements took on fervour and strong protests were held in some main cities of Pakistan. The reason for these movements was actually the criticizing laws that were made against human rights. The civil society in Pakistan was determinedly criticized by military rulers and the elected governments and made some restrictions on their freedom.

The people of Pakistan in 1980s faced lot of discrimination that led to the growth of many civil society organizations and movements. In the same year, the movements were started by the women's and various strikes and protests prevailed in the country led by many organizations, institutions and female activists. It was anticipated that civil society would largely get improved after the Pakistani lawyers movement was succeeded in 2007. The media also got the big flow and freedom which made a hope for civil society to substantially reduce the antagonism, violence and extremist ideologies of the country. Several Non- Government Organizations and some other groups also looked forward for the same but unluckily all the efforts made by these civil societies and groups failed due to one reason or the other (Sattar, 2011).

Some of the famous and well known NGO activists, who had fought with firmness for the countries democracy under General Zia, joined Musharraf's cabinet. He was greatly seen as a saviour of Pakistan from instability and other strife's. Pakistan has witnessed many mass movements started by the political parties and various civil societies which led to the resignation of General Parvez Musharraf, formed a way for the democratic consolidation of the country. The credit

goes to the cooperative effort by civil society and political parties to set up a general consensus among the people to move towards a proper representative governance in the country (Fruman, 2011). The civil society are meant to criticize the state and redress the grievances of people wherever necessary but in Pakistan the expectations are not so high because many civil society associations are state's partners and are attaining the profits from the various sides. Human rights activists and other groups have gained the opportunities to have partnership with the state government. The essence of Pakistan's politics – very broadly defined – is one of compromise not confrontation. Civil society in Pakistan is very much part of that political tradition (Zaidi, 2006).

The role of civil society in South Asian countries is different and each country of the region established Parliamentary democracy with the active participation of civil society organizations and institutions. The participation of women as activists in Nepal and India is more than their participation in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Their role in both the former countries is active and visible in politics and socio- cultural activities. Civil society in the South Asian region is known struggle which it made in consolidating democracy in these countries and these SCOS has been part of the independence movement. The awareness, maximum literacy, living standard, strong democratic governments in the region is because of the high influence of civil society.

External Aid to South Asia

South Asian countries have received foreign aid and support in various fields for their internal development. It is considered a kind of encouraging and constructive factor which an underdeveloped country receives from different foreign countries and organizations. Foreign aid supports the political stability of a country. The more foreign aid a government receives, the easier it is to counter negative shocks and to accumulate surplus resources. The President Truman during his epoch- making address highlighted that the economic development and promotion of democracy were the major themes for the underdeveloped countries especially South Asian countries (Ali, 2009).

Nepal has been receiving its foreign aid since 1947 after the establishment of diplomatic relations with United States. The first foreign aid that Nepal received

from United States was through the Marshal plan. The US has provided (Nepal rupees, NPR) 268 billion including an NPR 159 billion loan and NPR 109 billion to the national expenditure of Nepal. The funds country received from US helped Nepal to build trust, mutual respect, spread education, reduced the percentage of people below poverty line which motivated the general public to be free from the absolute monarchy (Hachhethu, 2009). Nepal has implemented a non-aligned foreign policy after the 1950's democratic movement. The internal political circumstances of Nepal changed for five decades but the guiding principles of its foreign policy did not change. The state's foreign policy was expected to be based on the principles of the UN Charter, Panchsheel, and Non-alignment keeping national interest on the top (Prajapati, 2011).

Even if the Nepal and various European member states have been the development partners since long, but the diplomatic relations between the European commission and Nepal were started only in 1975. The EC- Nepal cooperation agreement was held in 1996 which laid emphasis on the respect for human rights and democracy. The EC played an important role in the promotion of democracy in Nepal when on March 2002; a delegation office of European commission was opened in Kathmandu. In order to promote democratic stability in Nepal, the Development Projects Were suspended by the EU and its member countries. The suspension of development projects was only to put some sort of pressure on king to restore democracy. The peace building and the education were the two main areas which were supported by the EC in its 2007–13 strategy. The support on these two areas serves Nepal's national goal of restructuring the country as a federal, democratic and inclusive republic. The strengthening of democratic system of Nepal was always given highest priority by the European Union. The organization in the post- CA election transition period (2008) has intervened in the constitution making, peace building and inclusive democracy of Nepal (Hachhethu, 2009b).

The adoption of democratic system of Nepal became a substantial concern for the government to take some solid steps through successfully conducting the constituent assembly elections and establishing their national constitution. In order to attain the said purpose, Nepal asked Japan to provide some funds so that the former could purchase the material for elections used in polling booths scheduled

on November 19, 2013. The request was fulfilled by the Japan and provided a grant aid to Nepal worth JPY149 million for the assistance to the Constituent Assembly of Nepal.⁶³ The voting was implemented without any disturbance in the entire country and the election material images were broadly highlighted by the media. It was highly expected successful implementation of voting result in the promotion of Nepali democracy in the future.

Pakistan has been among the top recipient of US aid since 1948. This aid from US has been considered for the military assistance and development of political institutions of Pakistan. During the cold war period, the democratic system of countries like Pakistan was overwhelmed by foreign policy goals and containment of communism. During most of the cold war period, democracy promotion was devastating by foreign policy goals and the containment of communism, especially in geo-strategically important countries like Pakistan. As the US is providing Pakistan with economic and military aid and their main focus to do so is to eliminate poverty, to promote human rights and democratic system in the country. The US also included a democracy promotion agenda in 1990s and democracy promotion after 1990 has become a key ingredient of US foreign policy. Pakistan has received foreign aid in abundance from the United States but it was more during the autocratic rule of military dictators than the democratic governments in Pakistan. On an average, Pakistan received 382.9 million from US under the military regimes while as under the civilian leadership the country received only 178.9 million. The main motive of US is to care about its own national interest, to contain communism and keep Pakistan from joining the communist bloc (Ali, 2009). The UK government has offered to work closely with Pakistan's new President, Asif Ali Zardari, to fight with and strengthen democracy in his country. The foreign office said that they would work with full devotion for promotion and strengthening of democracy in the country.⁶⁴ The US aid to Pakistan was provided in intervals and had some ups and downs over the past few decades. There are

⁶³ “*Nepal Ballot boxes and other election materials procured by JICS were utilized in the Second Constituent Assembly Election*”. Japan International cooperation System, (January 07, 2014). Retrieved from www.jics.or.jp/jics_html-e/activities/grant/conflict/nepal2013.html. Accessed on 15/01.2014.

⁶⁴ “*UK eyes stronger Pakistan links*”. BBC News, (September 6, 2008). Retrieved from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/7602095.stm. Accessed on 18/12/2013.

various reasons behind the turning on and off the US aid to Pakistan. The US provided aid to Pakistan during the time of containment of communism in the region and the aid was denied to country because of suspected nuclear weapons proliferation and lack of democratization gains (Epstein *et al.*, 2011).

Regarding the economic and security aid to Pakistan, the Obama government has asked to the US congress for sharp reduction of this aid for the year 2014. The FY 2014 budget demand indicates the level of importance the Obama Administration places on a secure, democratic, and flourishing Pakistan because of its “critical role” in the region with respect to U.S. counter-terrorism efforts, nuclear non-proliferation, and regional stability, the peace process in Afghanistan, and regional economic integration and development.⁶⁵ The civil assistance for 2014 will give more importance to some areas like: energy, stabilization, social services, economic growth and improving governance. Moreover, Europe could play a greater role in Pakistan. The EU is Pakistan’s largest trade partner, a major provider of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and hosts a large Pakistani expatriate community. Moreover, the EU’s support for democracy has given it some political credibility in Pakistan.

Pakistan goes to the polls in 2013. Successful elections would boost Pakistan’s fragile democratic transition, while failure could result in violence and a return to military rule. Since military rule ended in 2008 Pakistan has made some progress in strengthening democratic institutions and processes. However, space for political debate is shrinking and the religious right is increasing its control over public discourse. Meanwhile Pakistan’s party politics continues to be messy, corrupt and at times violent (Castillejo, 2011).

A strong, functioning democracy is widely accepted as the foremost enabler of good governance, poverty reduction, grassroots empowerment, gender equality, conflict prevention and counter-terrorism available to any state today. It is not yet a system that has been perfected, but as John Dewey memorably said, ‘the cure for the evils of democracy is more democracy’. ‘The European Union believes that

⁶⁵ “*US seeks sharp cut in aid to Pakistan: report*”. The Nation, (July 04, 2013). Retrieved from <http://www.nation.com.pk/national/04-Jul-2013/us-seeks-sharp-cut-in-aid-to-pakistan-report>. Accessed on 18/12/2013.

democracy and human rights are universal values that should be vigorously promoted around the world (Sobhan, 2009). The EU's ultimate objective in promoting good governance lies in alleviating poverty— nearly 40 per cent of Bangladeshis live below the poverty line and need access to basic human amenities, the strengthening of democratic values and the reinforcement of a more just and equitable society. The EU supports the Bangladeshi Government's agenda through a comprehensive, integrated reform programme. All of these interventions are intended to establish a strong, service-delivery oriented public sector alongside a government that is fully accountable to a people represented effectively in a fully functioning Parliament. Although democracy has been restored, it is still a fragile one, and will require consolidation and nurturing in order to entrench itself. The December 2008 elections were held in an atmosphere of hope and expectations that this time the experience with democracy would prove a far more fruitful one (Sobhan, 2009).

United States humanitarian assistance and development support to Bangladesh includes a focus on “stabilizing population growth, protecting human health, encouraging broad-based economic growth, and building democracy.” American foreign assistance to Bangladesh in FY 2010 is estimated to total \$168.5 million. American support for developing democracy in Bangladesh has taken on renewed importance with the return of democratic government. American foreign assistance for governing justly and democratically goes to rule of law and human rights, good governance, political competition and consensus building, and civil society programs. Chairman David Price of the House Democracy Partnership led a congressional delegation to Bangladesh in March 2010 to work with Bangladesh to help it strengthen its democratic institutions and processes (Vaughn, 2011). Bangladesh-U.S. trade has been expanding in recent years, and the United States is Bangladesh's largest trading partner. Bilateral trade grew from \$1 billion in 1992 to \$4 billion in 2009. U.S. policy toward Bangladesh emphasizes support for political stability and democracy, development, and human rights. The United States has long-standing supportive relations with Bangladesh and views Bangladesh as a moderate voice in the Islamic world. The U.S. offers considerable economic assistance to Bangladesh, and has substantial military-to-military ties that include cooperation in multilateral peacekeeping (Vaughn, 2011).

The US has remained very attentive and has shown his activeness for the development in its political sphere. The US for countries democratic progress wants to end up the animosity prevailing for a long time between two political parties of Bangladesh has laid much emphasis on the accord between the two political parties. For the political developments of Bangladesh, the US Secretary of State John Kerry has uttered to Sheikh Hasina and Khalida Zia and has sent separate letters to both of them for a productive dialogue to be held which would push the country towards unprecedented change and to make it free from the future worries.⁶⁶

The Bhutan centre for media and democracy BCMD is being supported by United Nation Democracy Fund UNDEF through the project titled “strengthening media and civic education to enhance democracy in Bhutan”. The main objective of the project is to educate media, youth, officials and civil society on the concepts of democracy to strengthen the foundation of Bhutanese democracy through training and resource materials. Further the project helps in introducing concepts like access to information and the elements of democracy.⁶⁷ The US Ambassador arrived in the Country on 21 October, 2012 on a six day official visit. Ms. Nancy Powell was accompanied by a four member delegation. Welcoming the Ambassador, Lyonchhen said that relations between the two countries have grown and blossomed in many ways, especially the collaboration with various American universities. Lyonchhen also thanked the Ambassador for the US\$ 97,786 grant to Bhutan foundation for documentation of the 19th century Wangduechholing Palace in Bumthang. Ambassador Powell spoke of strengthening relations between the two countries, identifying regional programs to support in the area of women empowerment, and to talk to the many stakeholders in the democratic evolution in

⁶⁶ “*John Kerry urges Sheikh Hasina and Khalida Zia to Engage in Talks Now*”. The Bangladesh Today. Retrieved from . <http://thebangladeshtoday.com/news/2013/09/john-kerry-urges-sheikh-hasina-khaleda-zia-to-engage-in-talks/>. Accessed on 20-12-13).

⁶⁷ “*support to Bhutan centre for media and democracy*”. United Nations Development programme Bhutan. Retrieved from <http://www2.undp.org.bt/Support-to-Bhutan-Centre-for-Media-and-Democracy.htm>. Accessed on 17/12/2013.

Bhutan to see specific areas where the US may be able to assist.⁶⁸ Bhutan has been assisted by the UNDP and various UN agencies to bring about the changes in governance of Bhutan by developing the capacity of constitutional bodies and local governments. The United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) provided financial assistance of 203,972 USD to Bhutan Center for media and democracy (BCMD) for strengthening capacity of key institutions to support Parliamentary democracy.

Bhutan has expressed its interest in continuing EC Support in the Renewable Natural Resource Sector. The focus of EC support (2007-2013) would go towards areas of capacity building and governance issues in the Renewable Natural Resources sector at the Central, Dzongkhag and Gewog level, in order to strengthen Bhutan's development policy and programmes to reduce rural poverty through the creation of income generating activities at the rural level and improved farm to market access, with implementation modalities to be worked out at a later stage.

The EC is currently supporting good governance at both Dzongkhag and Gewog levels in current ongoing Development Co-operation, through budget support projects. This can be further enhanced by focussing on dialogues and cooperation with the Royal Government of Bhutan along cross cutting themes such as the supply of services, accessibility of services, and transparency of 17 governments at all levels, predictability and rule of law. The EC will focus on best practices in good governance, decentralised decision-making and best practices in development, including innovative methods to improve delivery of services to address poverty, gender issues, institutional reforms and public sector management. This assistance could come in the form of budgetary support.⁶⁹

The South Asian countries have got a tremendous support from the civil society which gave a big blow to the political stability throughout whole region. It

⁶⁸ “*The Bhutanese US Ambassador Meets PM Jigme Y Thinley*”. Retrieved from <http://www.thebhutanese.bt/us-ambassador-meets-pm-jigme-y-thinley/>. Accessed on 17/12/2013.

⁶⁹ “*Bhutan*”. Country Strategy Paper 2007. Retrieved from http://eeas.europa.eu/bhutan/csp/07_13_en.pdf. Accessed on 17-12-2013.

has enthused and motivated the general public to move towards the democratisation. Also the foreign aid which these countries received for the democratic development has a considerable role in transition towards democracy.

Prospects of Democracy in South Asia

The prospect for democracy in South Asia in the second half of twentieth century did not appear very promising. The Pakistan and Bangladesh military dictators had disguised their regimes with civilian apparel and appeared well established even if their mission for legitimacy had evaded them. The hereditary monarchs of Nepal and Bhutan did not compromise with the demands for popular participation despite the political discontent in both the countries. However, a remarkable change has been observed in the South Asian region in the very starting years of 21st century. Most of the countries of the region brought in the successful democratic system and their democratic transformation is noteworthy. Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal put an end to the autocratic rule of military and monarchs and established parliamentary democracy. However, India and Sri Lanka despite lot of political unrest and chaos and stimulating terrorism continued their long lost democratic governance. To promote the political stability in the region, it is essential to enjoy the goodwill of military and monarchs.

The country has gone through democratic decay soon after its creation. It has observed the deterioration because of the little development which has destabilized the previous attempt to consolidate democracy. The 2013 elections created Sanguinity that Pakistan can possibly overcome military rule and political instability that has been observed till 2008 general elections. However, military rule has broken in 2008 but the political instability still exists in the country. The 2008 and 2013 elections which led to the successful democratic transition in the country have generated a dedicated hope that country could be free from the protests and violence which has been observed since the inception of the country. The present Prime Minister of the country Nawaz Sharif has assured people of Pakistan that he would leave no stone unturned for its democratic consolidation, but the future of the country is still uncertain. Among all the regimes and elections of Pakistan, the current election and regime is one of the most encouraging democratic paths. The 2013 elections showed a propensity towards the democratic rule and hopes of

lasting peace had been aroused. If the current regime is to be successful, the country in the future would experience a new path of democratic strength and internal stability and will be free from all derogatory and antagonism which it has been facing. But taking into consideration the other prevailing aspects of the country like terrorism, idle economy and its policy towards its neighbouring countries especially India, Pakistan can face a dark future filled with violence, turmoil, political instability and chaos.

As we know Bhutan had gone through the hereditary rule since long past. With the passage of time, Bhutan took a bold step and largely succeeded in democratizing its political system. Now the people of Bhutan are the ardent believers of democratization and would never let any kind of mischievous activity indulge in countries development as the new model of democracy has empowered the people of Bhutan. It seems that the new model in Bhutan has been governing in a better way than the earlier monarchic rule and the speculations are high that the country would move forward without any problem. The general public of Bhutan seems to have gained more interest towards the democratic system of the country. This could be strengthened by increasing the representation of the minority groups' in the future political system of the country. The Bhutan has a bright democratic future because people of the country are dedicated towards the new model of democracy. Bhutan has proven to itself and the world that despite difficulties, disputes and detours, democracy has been a success story for the country. The formation of new government will play a larger role for future democratic stability which will help in kingdoms development and in alleviating poverty. The democracy has bright future in Bhutan because people are committed to constitutional monarchy.

Bangladesh has practised the democratic form of government with see- saw transition since 1971. The see-saw factor in its democratic transition is due to the rivalry between the major political parties of the country. The recent democratic elections in Bangladesh clearly indicates the process of democratization but the country is not free from the threat of the internal instability and opposition of political parties which can definitely down the democratic future of Bangladesh. The future of democracy in Bangladesh can be expected bright in the sense that a Muslim country with strong Islamic ideology is controlled by the two women's who

are being legally elected by the adult franchise. The women rule in the country shows the faith of people on the democratic system of the country. The active role of civil society and other student organizations in the country is remarkable as they have been struggling against injustices and made great sacrifices for the fundamental freedoms of the country. They can play an ardent role in consolidating the democratic system in the future by actively participating in countries political system.⁷⁰ Despite the election boycott of some major political parties in 2014 elections, the crowd of voters in the polling booths has shown their interest and excitement towards the politics of the country. The media is also enjoying the democratic trends and has been working for maintaining the same zeal among the general public. People are showing more eagerness towards the democratization of the country which is a ray of hope for the future democratic prosperity of the country.

Nepal established its first parliamentary democracy in 2008 which proved very fatal for the monarchy and Nepal witnessed valuable progress throughout the country. The successful 2013 National Assembly Elections in Nepal was an aspiration for the Nepali people to bring about the positive change in the political and administrative structure of the country. The country saw a big change through the victory of NC and UML, and the defeat of Maoist which gave a big blow to the victorious parties. So, the expectations are high that the new government would create the suitable environment to promote peace and order in its coming days. The Nepali people and other active organizations of the country including media and NGO fully support the country's political development as seen in recent elections which is an indication towards the successful democratic governance in the future of Nepal. But on the other side the defeat of Maoists in the elections can act as a hurdle in promoting good governance as they have already created some derogatory and folly activities during the recent elections. There would be some sort of obstruction from the strong opposition of Nepali Maoists in formulating the new constitution but the new government need to draft the new constitution before

⁷⁰ Sreerem Chaulia, (January 8, 2014). "*Democracy at risk in Bangladesh*". The new Indian express. Retrieved from <Http://Www.Newindianexpress.Com/Opinion/Democracy-At-Risk-In-Bangladesh/2014/01/08/Article1988217.Ece..> Accessed ON 23-1-14.

2014 is out so that the country could enjoy the fruits of democracy in the future. It is now the responsibility of elected leaders that they should make sure the transparency in the days ahead.

Yet, despite these adversities, the odds are great that in the foreseeable future a very large share of the world's population, in a very large share of the world's countries, will live under democratic forms of government that continue to evolve in order to meet challenges both old and new.

CHAPTER 5

DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION IN SOUTH ASIA:

EMERGING TRENDS

Francis Fukuyama wrote- *The End of History and the Last Man* in which he has argued that the rise of liberal democracy is the final form of human government (Fukuyama, 2006). More than thirty countries in Southern Europe, Latin America, East Asia, and Eastern Europe have shifted from authoritarian to democratic systems of government between 1974 and 1990. This democratic transition is considered as the most important political trend in the late twentieth century. Samuel P. Huntington wrote- *The Third Wave* in which he analyzed the causes and nature of these democratic transitions. The first one brought democracy to Western Europe and Northern America in the 19th century. It was followed by a rise of dictatorships during the Interwar period. The second wave began after World War II, but lost steam between 1962 and the mid-1970s. The latest wave began in 1974 and is still ongoing. Democratization of Latin America and the former Eastern Bloc is part of this third wave. He has also postulates the prospects for stability of the existing democracies and there will be more possibility for more countries becoming democratic (Huntington, 2012).

Democratic transitions, however, has been slow, but surely taking place throughout the length and breadth of the globe, marked by frequent reversal. If we look back, we can find many examples in history in this regard. The Civil War (1642–1651) and the Glorious Revolution (1688) of Great Britain helped in the establishment of a strong Parliament.⁷¹ Under the Bill of Rights 1689, which is an act of Parliament of England, rights of Parliament and rules for freedom of speech in Parliament were decided. It had also limited the power of the Monarch.⁷² The

⁷¹ "The English Civil War". Retrieved from <http://www.the-orb.net/textbooks/westciv/englishwar.html>. Accessed on 05/01/2014.

⁷² "Bill of Rights 1689". Retrieved from https://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Bill_of_Rights_1689.html. Accessed on 05/01/2014.

Representation of the People Act 1884 has provided right to vote to the majority of the people. The American Revolution (1765–1783) provided a new constitution to the USA and under that constitution; a true republic was established in 1789.⁷³ Slavery was abolished with the American Civil War (1861–1865), and Civil Rights given to African-Americans achieved in the 1960s.

The democratic transitioning trends have also been affecting the Asia since the end of colonialism. Tom Ginsburg has argued in one of his papers that the emergence of consolidated new democracies in Asia is very surprising. In the eyes of the West, Asia has long been viewed as possessing an inherently authoritarian political culture. In this context, Hegel argued in his work, *Philosophy of History*: the history of the world travels from East to West, for Europe is absolutely the end of history, Asia is the beginning. The East knew and to the present day knows that no one is free; the Greek and Roman world, that some are free; the German world knows that all are free. The first political form, therefore, which we observe in history, is despotism, the second democracy and aristocracy, the third monarchy (Hegel, 2004). In this statement, he pointed to the lack of an indigenous history of democracy and a long history of authoritarian, hierarchical political thought in Asia.

Democratic Transformation in South Asia

South Asia is politically and economically an underdeveloped region with all its countries at the risk of military and monarchical governments and terrorism. The majority of the world countries have since long established democratic form of government but the south Asian region was lagging behind. The fragile governance by non- democratic regimes in the region made the countries progress stagnant in all the fields and its democracy has always remained tense. Taking into consideration the negative impacts of authoritarian regimes, the countries of the region with a tremendous effort made a move towards the democratic system and finally succeeded in attaining the democratic structure. The electoral reforms and the recent elections in some of the South Asian countries created a long history of multiparty electoral democracy. All the south Asian countries are now covered with

⁷³ *"American Revolution"*. Retrieved from http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/American_Revolution. Accessed on 05/01/2014.

the blanket of democracy and the region has observed various structural changes with the emergence of democratic rule.

State of Democracy in South Asia

The state of democracy in South Asia is very critical. Despite many movements for democratic transition, still it has not deeply embedded in the minds of the people. In Nepal, after overthrowing monarchy the people's democracy has been instituted. Bangladesh's efforts for elections, the trust and credibility of its institutions and democratic processes are being challenged by the opposition parties and fundamentalist groups. However, Sri Lanka has a credit of long democratic set up but still it has not been able to resolve a role and status for its minorities and on account of this a vast portion of the people has been not enjoying the benefits of the democracy. Although, the Pakistan government under the stewardship of Asif Ali Zardari has completed its first term as an elected government, but the influence of military has not decreased yet and continues to overshadow politics giving little room for autonomous political development. India is the first South Asian country which has long democracy to its credit but even this long history of democracy was plagued by National Emergency and some constitutional amendments. Moreover, with increasing economic and social inequality and disparity, democracy is facing many problems. The democratic and semi-democratic governments were failed to provide the basic necessities to their peoples notwithstanding holding natural sources and the best bounties of the nature.

Emerging Democratic Trends in South Asia

Nepal and Bhutan have remained under monarchy since long back. The people of these countries were facing many economic and social problems. The people of Nepal were of the opinion that monarchy is only a single factor which is responsible for their problems. In order to get rid of these problems, many mass movements were launched in Nepal. Ultimately, monarchy was abolished in this country. Similarly, Bhutan has also decided to convert monarchy into democracy; however, it was peacefully completed. However, democracy in these countries still lacks substance unless the electoral process is coupled with the supremacy of the constitution, the rule of law, and civil and political rights and freedoms for the

people. The state must practice the principle of equal citizenship irrespective of religion, caste, ethnicity and regional background. It must also ensure equality of opportunity to all for advancement in social, economic and political domains and guarantee security of life and property of its citizens.

Converting Monarchy in Progressive Democracy

During the beginning of the 1950s, Nepal has started moving in the direction of democracy. During the rule of Rana dynasty, a new constitution was adopted under the Government of Nepal Act, 1948. However, it could not provide substantially to the people in the terms of democracy but it was a good beginning. The constitution does not provide any chance for the general public to participate in the constitution making process. The civil liberties mentioned in the constitution were limited and were only marked in the constitution. The citizens of Nepal did not enjoy the fruits of democracy and civil liberty (Thapa, 2010).

The political transformation took place in the 1990s in Nepal Which changed from a non-democratic regime to a democratic one, should be carefully examined for its implications for the complex process of the interaction between the external and internal forces in other non-democratic societies undergoing democratic transition. Democratic transition in Nepal involved two distinct phases: structural transformation and democratic consolidation. During the phase of structural transformation, pro-democracy agitation co-ordinated by Nepali Congress and Leftist groups and on account of this movement King Birendra bowed to pressure and constituted a new Constitution providing multi-party democracy under constitutional monarchy. The new constitution was introduced in November 1990 and the Article 45 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal provided direct elections by way of universal adult franchise based on "one person one vote" and secret ballots (Thapa 1992). In 1991, general election took place and Nepali Congress won the first democratic elections. Girija Prasad Koirala became the Prime Minister of Nepal.

New wave of Democracy in Nepal

In order to strengthen democracy in Nepal, many electoral reforms were introduced in Nepal. Electoral laws provide for only one electoral roll system in the

country which is published prior to the election. This provides them the chance to inclusion of genuine voters' name and exclusion of those non-voters. The EC updates voter's list every year. Several acts and laws govern the election management process, such as Parliament has passed the Election Commission Act 1990, Member of the House of Representatives Election Act 1990, Election Constituencies Delimitation Act 1990, Election Offense and Punishment Act 1990, Local Bodies Election Process Act 1991, the Voters Identity Provision Act 1997 and Anti-Defection Act 1997. These acts are the important legislative instruments in terms of governing election process (Joshi *et al.*, 1966).

Nepalese Civil War for Transition

People were fed up with the family rule of monarchy. The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) was fighting for replacement of the parliamentary monarchy In February 1996.⁷⁴ Prince Gyanendra (Birendra's brother) inherited the throne in June 1, 2001 after the assassination of the royal family- King Birendra and Queen Aishwarya. The new king took the complete control of the country after deposing the government however, another government was appointed very shortly after two weeks. This incident gave a very strong shock to the monarchy and in August 2004, popular support for the monarchy began started to diminish (whelpton, 2005). However, King Gyanendra became very aggressive and again in February 1, 2005, dismissed the entire government, ruined the life of people and assumed full executive powers, declaring a "state of emergency" to quash the revolution. Politicians were placed under house arrest, phone and internet lines were cut, and freedom of the press was severely curtailed. During this political instability, strikes and street protests captured Kathmandu. These protests forced the king to reinstate the parliament (Dixit, 2005). These movements made a very good beginning for the establishment of democracy in Nepal. A seven-party coalition government was constituted which resumed control of the government and

⁷⁴ This movement was led by Dr. Baburam Bhattarai and Pushpa Kamal Dahal (also known as "Prachanda"). The Maoist insurgency engulfed the five districts in Nepal: Rolpa, Rukum, Jajarkot, Gorkha, and Sindhuli. The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) established a provisional "people's government" at the district level in several locations.

stripped the king of most of his powers.⁷⁵ A promotion of a new democratic government was observed after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was held between the Maoist party and the government in November 2006. The interim constitution repealed the constitution of the kingdom of Nepal 1990 on 15 January, 2007 and was approved to provide for transitional government. The agreement ended a 10 year civil war resulted into the election of the first constituent assembly election in 2008.

Establishment of Federal Democratic Republic

The newly elected Constituent Assembly introduced drastic political and administrative framework and declared Nepal as a Federal Democratic Republic, abolishing the 240-year-old monarchy in May 28, 2008. The motion for abolition of monarchy was passed in the Parliament by a huge majority; out of 564 members present in the assembly, 560 voted for the motion while 4 members voted against it. Ram Baran Yadav of the Nepali Congress declared as the first President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal on July 23, 2008 (Malagodi, 2011). Pushpa Kamal Dahal, (Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) was appointed as the first Prime Minister on August 15, 2008, defeating Sher Bahadur Deuba of the Nepali Congress Party. With this new changes such as the signing of CPA, creation of a new provisional constitution, ending of monarchy, the election to a Constituent Assembly and the declaration of a federal Republic has been important milestones in the political history of Nepal (Hachhethu, 2009a).

The second constituent assembly elections which were free and fair led to the victory of the Nepali congress. The party assured that the new constitution would be finalized within one year of forming government. NC General Secretary Prakash Man Singh said that "Drafting a new constitution is our priority rather than electing a new President. There is no provision of electing a new President in the Interim Constitution before the new constitution is promulgated. This free and fair election brought the micro-institutions of governance closer to the people. People

⁷⁵ An unicameral legislature under an interim constitution started ruling Nepal As of 15 January 2007, On December 24, 2007, seven parties, including the former Maoist rebels and the ruling party, agreed to abolish the monarchy and declare Nepal a Federal Republic

as stakeholders of democracy are subject to the authority of elected leadership and, therefore, can claim to share direct control over them. The political meaning of the citizenship involves the right to participate in the exercise of political power (Bhattarai, 2010).

The constituent assembly of Nepal was dissolved by Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai on 28 May, 2012 and left the country without a legislative body. In the absence of a legislative body, the main political leaders of the country clamoured the President to make the appointment of Justice Khil Raj Regmi as the head of government (Rizvi, 2011). The elections which were anticipated to be held on 22 November, 2012 were delayed by the Constituent Assembly as the political leaders of Nepal planned to form a temporary government to eradicate the political impasse brought a different pattern in the country. Despite lot of criticism by the UCPN-Maoist, Chief Justice Khil Raj Regmi was appointed as Prime Minister of Nepal to watch over the fresh elections to a new Constituent Assembly. Regmi 63 years old was sworn on 14th of March 2013 amidst a function held at President's office in Shital Niwas in the capital of Kathmandu and he became the 36th Prime Minister of the country (McDonald *et al.*, 2013). However, Chief Justice Regmi has sought time only till November 2013.

In Nepal a constant political turbulence has been viewed till the November 2013 elections conducted by the Khil Raj Regmi and his technocratic ministers with full back of Nepal's bureaucracy which helped him to fulfil the needs of people he had assured to them (Felbab-Brown, 2013). The 2013 which observed the fluctuations to some extent was also an auspicious year for Nepal. Despite the democracy promotion in the country, there were no speculations or plans regarding the government formation and new constitution of Nepal for early 2014.

Liberal democratic parties of Nepal (centrist Nepali congress and communist party of Nepal) became victorious in the November 2013 elections and the Maoists who formed dominant political wing in the previous constituent assembly have been relegated to third place.⁷⁶ The speculation that the political chaos of Nepal

⁷⁶ Bikash Sangraula, (Dec 01, 2013). "*Liberal parties win Nepal's election as Maoist vote crumbles*". Retrieved from <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-South-Central/2013/1201/Liberal-parties-win-Nepal-s-election-as-Maoist-vote-crumbles>. Accessed on 22/11/2013.

would come to an end after the CA elections but seems to be hard as no single party of the country attained majority of seats in the CA elections.

The second constituent assembly election which was held on November 19, 2013 proved to be very effective and strengthened the delivery mechanism for Nepali democracy. Despite a boycott calls and threats and given by Maoists, the election is termed as free and fair. More than 50% of the voters cast their votes till noon and more than 70% electorates turned out in elections to the country's second CA election.⁷⁷ The Nepali Maoists who was a victorious party in 2008 elections emerged the third in 2013 CA elections with only 80 seats gave a deep surprise to the Nepali Maoists. The defeat of Maoists does not indicate the popularity of the NC or UML but it was all because of the unfamiliarity of Moaists party who had shown some incompetence during their rule since 2008 (Adhikari *et al.*, 2013). The formation of new government and new constitution are the leading challenges for the Nepal and the new assembly of the country is assigned to formulate a new constitution within a year. The new CA will then discharge its functions till the next general elections.

The new constituent assembly of Nepal convened on 22nd of January two months after November 19 elections and is expected to begin its task of drafting a constitution. This constituent assembly of 601 seats will write a new constitution and also function as a Parliament (Gurubacharya, 2014). The Nepali congress who emerged as the major political party in November 2013 elections securing 196 seats in the 601-member constituent assembly started asking other 30 parties to form a coalition government and to end the prolonged political conflict.⁷⁸ Sushil Koirala, a senior leader of Nepali Congress which emerged as a largest party in 2013 elections was elected as the President of the party and became favourite and

⁷⁷ "*Nepal elections pass off peacefully*", The Times of India,(November 20, 2013), Retrieved from <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/south-asia/Nepal-elections-pass-off-peacefully/articleshow/26059218.cms>, Accessed on 22/11/2013.

⁷⁸ "*Nepal political parties initiate talks to form consensus government*", Zee News, (January 28, 2014), Retrieved from: http://zeenews.india.com/news/south-asia/nepal-political-parties-initiate-talks-to-form-consensus-govt_907509.html , Accessed on: 29/01/2014.

sole candidate to be the country's new Prime Minister.⁷⁹ Finally, after years of deadlock, on 10th February 2014, the newly elected President of NC, Sushil Koirala was elected as the Prime Minister of Nepal by the Nepal's Parliament and completes an important chapter arising out of the 2013 elections. Koirala, 74, is the 37th Prime Minister of the country. He belongs to the famous clan of late Prime Minister Girja Prasad Koirala.⁸⁰ The newly elected executive head gave a time period of one year to formulate a federal democratic constitution and assured for the country's political and economic development. Soon after the formation of new government, Khil Raj Regmi handed over the reins of governance to newly elected Prime Minister Sushil Koirala and also tendered his resignation to President Ram Prasad Yadav from the post of Supreme Court Chief Justice.⁸¹

Bhutan: Deepening Democracy

In 2005, the 49 year old king announced a plan to abdicate the throne in favour of his eldest son, Prince Jigme khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, fifth and current king of Bhutan. On March 26, 2005, the king announced a new constitution that would establish a democratic constitutional monarchy which would be provided to the people for approval in a referendum (Hutt, 2006). The new system was scheduled to come into effect in 2008 and his reign has seen the enactment of the 2008 constitution as well as the democratic elections of both houses of Parliament and three levels of local government. Bhutan witnessed its first democratic election on 24 March 2008, (Kaul, 2008). The Kingdom of Bhutan held its National Council Election on the April 23, 2013, for the second time in its history. It marks the

⁷⁹ "Nepal to hold PM's election on February 10", The Times of India, (February 04, 2014). Retrieved from <file:///C:/Users/wellcome/Desktop/LITERATURE/NewNEPALCUIRRENT/NepaltoholdPMselectiononFebruary2010TimesOfIndia.htm>, Accessed on 07/02/2014.

⁸⁰ "Sushil Koirala is Nepal's new Prime Minister". India.com Zee News. February 10, 2014. Retrieved from <file:///C:/Users/wellcome/Desktop/LITERATURE/NewNEPALCUIRRENT/SushilKoiralaisNepalsnewPrimeMinisterLatestNews&UpdatesatDNAIndia.com.htm>. Accessed on 12/02/2014.

⁸¹ "Nepal's interim government hands over power to new PM Sushil Koirala". February 11, 2014. Retrieved from <file:///C:/Users/wellcome/Desktop/LITERATURE/NewNEPALCUIRRENT/NepalEsinterimgovernmenthandsoverpowertoneewPMSushilKoiralaMicrofinanceMonitor.htm>, Accessed on 12/02/2014.

beginning of the national Parliamentary election process, which will be conducted at the end of June this year. The National Assembly was dissolved on April 20 and has to be re- elected within 90 days. All this explains the recent political transformation from an absolute monarchy to democracy in the Kingdom of Bhutan (Wolf, 2013).

Abdication of Throne

The growth of democratic transition in Bhutan has been noticed by the active participation of monarchs of Bhutan since 1950s. It was marked by the creation of some legal reforms like abolition of feudalism and slavery and culminating in the enactment of Bhutan's constitution. The intended nature of Bhutan's democracy is the direct outcome of the decision by Bhutan's fourth king, King Jigme Singye Wangchuck's decision to voluntarily hand over power to his people, and this is what makes it so very special. The country has engaged in democratic participation through voting and representation through the vision and leadership of the Fourth and Fifth Kings of Bhutan (Cavendish, 2007). The Bhutanese people have been zealous to shape a new democracy especially for Bhutan.

Constitutional Democratic Monarchy

The tiny Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan started its constitutional draft on 30 November, 2001 as its fourth King Jigme Singye Wangchuck desires strongly to promote its governance into constitutional democratic monarchy. A new constitution came into existence in 2005. The new Constitution defined the Kingdom of Bhutan as a democratic constitutional monarchy belonging to the people of the Kingdom (Joseph, 2006). This Constitution became the law of the land. It led to the inauguration of its electoral commission. The political parties were allowed to face the elections in June 2007 by lifting up the ban which had been put on them. Jigme Khesar Namgyel became the head of state and the country transformed into a constitutional monarchy. In the new constitution of Bhutan, the article 35 declares the democratic norms of the country and the most part of the constitution differs from other constitutional monarchies. The new constitution of Bhutan became the supreme law of land and declares that the form of government shall be that of a democratic constitutional monarchy. The new constitution was a source of hope for

the constitutional democracy of the kingdom and it became a path of progress for countries democratic promotion. The constitution declares that sovereign power belongs to the people of Bhutan under section 1 of article 1. The constitution adopted a deliberative democracy with a democratic executive for stable government and responsible executive (Hutt, 2006).

Establishment of Parliament

The biggest requirement of democracy, the current Parliamentary framework replaced the unicameral Tshogdu by the bicameral Parliament comprising of an Upper House, the National Council and a Lower House, the National Assembly including the king in 2007. The Constitution sets forth the procedure of the formation of the government including the post of Prime Minister and executive branch and ministries according to Parliamentary electoral results with a stipulated term of five years.

Elections

The democratic transition of Bhutan to large extent has been quiet calm and prosperous since last few years with some thrust provided by the monarch of the kingdom. The 2008 Bhutan general elections were followed by the successful transition of power from one democratic government to another in the 2013 elections. Bhutan also came up with the second National Election Council on 23 April, 2013. It led to the National Parliamentary Elections which were scheduled to be held in June 2013. The National Assembly Election of Bhutan was then held on 31 May and 13 July, 2013 and people of Bhutan voted in the nation's second parliamentary election. The four political parties of Bhutan contested elections, namely, the DPT, the PDP, the Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa (DNT) and the Druk Chirwang Tshogpa (DCT). These elections were much more interesting, unpredictable and controversial as compared to other elections. Despite some tense situation prevailed in Bhutan, the country in a successful manner achieved the designed democratic transition. The people's Democratic Party (PDP) became the victorious party and beat the ruling Druk Phuensum Tshogpa (DPT). The PDP led by Tshering Tobgay won 32 of the country's 47 seats in the Parliamentary elections (Bisht *et al.*, 2013). Tshering Tobgay, the leader of PDP became the Bhutan's second democratically elected Prime Minister. Tobgay, who became

Prime Minister of Bhutan in 2013, said that the democratic transition in Bhutan has taken solid roots and people of Bhutan are well educated and aware about the electoral process of the country (Kantha, 2013).

Despite many observers' and analysts' skepticism about the prospects of a successful transition and the sincerity of the monarchy's intentions and support for democracy, Bhutan continued steadfastly on its path towards democratic consolidation. Bhutan's second Parliamentary election and the resulting peaceful change of government mark a successful end of its democratic transition and a big leap on the country's path towards consolidation (Gallenkamp,).

Establishment of Supreme Court

The Bhutanese new constitution of 23 July, 2008 describes the entire kingdom as a democratic constitutional monarchy. It is the country's first democratic constitution. The new constitution establishes a Supreme Court, which will serve as the highest court of appeal. With the adoption of constitution in March 2008, the Supreme Court was established as the highest court of Bhutan although, other courts like high court, the Dzongkhag Courts, the Dungkhag Courts, and such other Courts and Tribunals has been established from time to time.⁸² Prior to 2008, the High Court was the highest court of appeal which was established in 1968. The Supreme Court of Bhutan is the protector and final interpreter of the constitution. Supreme Court is the highest court of law in Bhutan presided over by the Chief Justice of Bhutan. It comprises the Chief Justice and four Drangpons. The Supreme Court shall exercise appeal, advisory and extra-territorial jurisdiction.⁸³

Fundamental rights and Duties

The 2008 constitution of Bhutan clearly describes the fundamental rights for all Bhutanese citizens. The constitution guaranteed the fundamental rights to Bhutanese people under article 7 which includes the freedoms of speech, opinion

⁸² "*Royal Commission to establish Supreme Court of Bhutan*". (November 22, 2009). Retrieved from <http://www.bhutanmajestictravel.com/news/2009/royal-commission-to-establish-the-first-supreme-court-of-bhutan.html>. Accessed on 10/02/2014.

⁸³ "Structure of the Royal Court of Justice". Judiciary of Bhutan. Retrieved from <http://www.judiciary.gov.bt/html/judiciary/structure.php>. Accessed on 09/01/2014.

and expression as well as the right to vote and the exercise of adult franchise. These constitutional fundamental rights also provide a great opportunity for appropriate proceedings in the Supreme Court or High Court under article 7 of the constitution (Rabten, 2009). The article also gives citizens the right to freedom of movement and residence within Bhutan. It also guaranteed that a person shall not be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention.

Along with the fundamental rights, some fundamental duties under article 8 of the constitution were also imposed on the citizens: duty to preserve, protect and defend the sovereignty, integrity and security of the country. Under this article, every person shall have the responsibility to respect and abide by the provisions of this Constitution (Kinga, 2010). The constitution also lay emphasis on the state that it must provide free education to all children of school going age and made the technical and professional education available to them.

The Local Government Act of Bhutan 2009 is the latest legislation on local governments. It also provides that all governments be elected by single-member constituencies, called chiwogs. The members of each level of local government – Dzongkhag, Gewog, and Thromde– must meet requirements and follow procedures defined by the Constitution, election laws, and rules of the Election Commission. These local government elections of 2011 were originally scheduled to be held in 2008 but due to some hurdles, democratic problems, and legal questions passed by the election commission, the constitutionality of laws on local governments delayed elections until 2011. On 20 January, 2011, the local government elections started and out of 20 districts, polling was observed only in 3 districts- Thimpu, Chukha district and Samdrup Jongkhar as per the election schedule. The polling was closed on 27 June, 2011 (Nyaupane *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, the election of local governments in the country shows that Bhutan has adopted the path of democratisation permanently.

Pakistan: Military Dictatorship to Democracy

The democratic transition started taking place in Pakistan in post of coup d'état of 1999. His capture of power in 1999 started carrying out the unfolding of a blueprint developed by the earlier military regimes and ratified by the superior courts. In Pakistan, the rulers, political parties, leaders and the civil society groups

supported democracy at the normative or conceptual level. The politically active circles demand representative governance and participatory decision making in the political and economic fields. They highlighted free and fair electoral process, the rule of law, socio-economic justice and accountability of those exercising state power as the pre-requisites for a political system. Pakistan has had a disturbed constitutional history since its very inception as a nation state and has been pushed into a Constitutional crisis.

Pervez Musharraf carefully customized the transition to constitutional and civilian rule in 2002. The underlying consideration was his staying on as an effective President in the post-military rule period and the continuation of the policy measures adopted by his military regime. The transition process was deigned to share power with a section of the political leaders rather than transfer power to civilian political leaders. In January 2000, when the Supreme Court entertained a challenge to the military coup, the judges of the superior courts were compelled to take a new oath of office pledging to serve under the Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO). Six out of a total of thirteen judges of the Supreme Court refused to take the oath and resigned from the bench, including then Chief Justice Saeduzzaman Siddiqui and Justice (R) Wajih-ud-Din Ahmad, who was a candidate in the 2007 Presidential Elections.⁸⁴ The court granted virtually unlimited powers to the military regime, including the power to amend the constitution. Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry was appointed the Chief Justice of Pakistan in 2005 and soon after his appointment; he began to exercise the court's Suo Moto judicial review powers. But Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry was suspended by General Musharraf in March 9, 2007 who raised a strong voice against such ill conceived mechanism of Pervaiz Musharraf to suppress democracy. Pakistan's people launch an anti-Musharraf campaign and came onto the roads against his suspension. In order to stop the unrest in the country, General Muharraf declared a state of emergency on 3rd November, 2007 and at the same time suspended the nation's constitution and Parliament (Fruman, 2011). Justice Chaudhry was then

⁸⁴ Moeen Cheema, (October 18, 2007). "*Supreme Challenge: Pakistan's Presidential Election Goes to Court*". Retrieved from <http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/forumy/2007/10/supreme-challenge-pakistans.php>. Accessed on 10/01/2014.

released only after the General Elections of 2008 on the very first day of PM Yousuf Raza Gilani.

18th Constitutional Amendment

The constitutional amendments made from time to time proved beneficial for the democratic transition of Pakistan. In Pakistan, the Parliament passed 18th constitutional amendment act on April 20, 2010 which aimed to bring changes in the pattern of governmental functions and to restore the constitution according to its original plan which was thought and visualized in 1956 and 1973 constitutions. The 18th amendment was the primary step in Pakistan to reform the multi-order public governance system in Pakistan (Nishtar *et al.*, 2013). The progressive modification in the country was observed after long time of dictator and tyrannical rule. The fundamental rights were suspended in the country in 1973 during the enactment of a new constitution in 1973 and the whole country came under military- cum- democratic regime till 1977. The amendment has to large extent resulted into the democratic consolidation, good government and peace and order has been restored in the country (Rao *et al.*, 2009).

This constitutional amendment gave Parliament and the Prime Minister greater authority and raised their position as the federal governments and transferred the position of Chief Executive to Prime Minister in place of President. The amendment led to the expansion of constitutional rights, cleansing and safeguarding the constitution and provincial concerns (Haris, 2010). Before the 18th amendment act, the Prime Minister was bound to seek the advice of President and keep him informed about the policy matters but this amendment diminishes the Prime Ministers obligation to inform the President of policy matters. The amendment made a lot of changes in the constitution of the country. It eradicated and removed various loopholes and distortions in the constitution and on the other hand it gave greater autonomy to Prime Minister, Parliament and the Judiciary and strengthening the governing system of Pakistan. The provincial governments received greater autonomy which they had lost. The amendment led to the expansion of constitutional rights, cleansing and safeguarding the constitution and provincial concerns.

19th Constitutional Amendment Act

The Pakistan Parliament approved another amendment known as 19th Constitutional Amendment Act, July 2010 which gained its success in achieving all the aspects which are important for achieving democracy. This amendment significantly reduces the position and powers of powerful President in Pakistan and on the other side it increases the power of senate. This amendment gave senate a great importance by making the Prime Minister and the cabinet responsible to both the senate and the National Assembly and they use their will in all important matters of the government. Before the 18th and 19th amendments, the President enjoyed enormous powers and position, but after the approval of these amendments he lost most of his authority (Sattar, 2012). During the session of senate, the President cannot now enjoy his ordinance as he was enjoying it before. All the provisions under 19th amendment act were removed which were made by Musharraf regarding to the President elections. Also the discretionary powers of President to dissolve the National Assembly have been removed. This amendment also brought changes in the judiciary of Pakistan. The 19th Amendment bill, 2010 led to the change in the appointment of judges of Supreme Court. Under this amendment, the strength of judicial commission of Pakistan has been raised from seven to nine.⁸⁵

The 20th constitutional amendment was made by the Pakistan Parliament in the constitution of Islamic republic of Pakistan (Khan, 2012). The Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani while speaking in the National Assembly after the unanimous approval of 20th constitutional amendment said that the amendment is another feather in the cap, it has increased dignity of the Parliament and strengthened democracy. It will ensure free, fair and transparent elections and an independent election commission. As the amendment was unanimously adopted by the Parliament of Pakistan, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani said that the 20th amendment in the constitution will not allow an outsider to lead the interim government as a Prime Minister. The amendment ensures that the Prime Minister should be from the house with a support of 180 million people of Pakistan. He said

⁸⁵ Naveed Butt, (December 23, 2010). "*National Assembly passes 19th Amendment Bill*". Retrieved from www.brecorder.com/top-stories/single/595/0/1137287/. Accessed on 10/12/2013.

the 20th amendment would be more fruitful for the future perspective and would benefit the future generations and the passing of 20th amendment is made with a futuristic and innovative approach to meet the requirement of holding free and fair elections.⁸⁶ The Prime Minister Gilani said that more steps will be taken to strengthen democracy in the country.

Electoral Reforms

It was considered a positive chance for the electoral reforms in Pakistan at the approaching of 2013 general elections. It worked a lot but at the same time posed some risk. Many reforms were made by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for the upcoming elections. They set up an innovative device for the maintenance of the electoral roll and to provide for universal suffrage. In order to announce immediate results of all the polling station, the ECP establishes working transparency mechanism. It helps its publication on the ECP website also. ECP laid emphasis for the participation of women voters and made the recruitment and training of female polling staff possible.

First Landmark Democratic Transition

Pakistan is considered as the world's fifth largest democracy and the world's second largest Muslim democracy after Indonesia. However, it is facing many problems from inside such as military, extremism, poverty, unemployment and many more. The first civilian transfer of power following the successful completion of a five-year term by a democratically elected government under General Election 2013 has proved as a milestone in the democratic history of Pakistan, as it was the first time since Pakistan achieved independence from British Raj in 1947 that a Parliamentary elected government completes its first term in office and relinquishes power to another civilian government.

Despite the poor governance of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) led government since March 2008- March 2013, the Parliament in turn achieved great progress in many fields and the party also restored constitutionalism and

⁸⁶ *"20th amendment strengthens democracy, to ensure free, fair elections: Gilani"*. Associated Press of Pakistan. Retrieved from http://app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=179705&Itemid=129. Accessed on 11/12/2013.

Parliamentary democracy. The establishment of the democratic stability in the country is the outcome of strive of two famous political parties, the PPP and PML-N who mutually worked hard to restore democracy. The first successful democratic regime in Pakistan came to an end on March 17, 2013 which indicates the changing milestone in Pakistani history. The elections held on 11 May, 2013 are considered an essential point in Pakistan's history. With the great transition, the country has obtained a healthier position than ever to begin a lasting and representative democracy.⁸⁷

The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) government during their term faced lot of hardships and even though the government prepared a strong democratic structure than it started with. This full term democratic rule made the Parliament, judiciary and the media more independent as they were. During this five year civilian rule, lots of changes were observed in the country so that peace and order could be restored. Many amendments were made during the period which proved beneficial for the entire country. The government passed the 18th amendment which re-established the federal Parliamentary character of the 1973 and introduced the rights to information and education. This was the key achievement of the thirteenth National Assembly passed unanimously in April 2010.

The Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) with Nawaz Sharif as the head leads the Parliament after a great victory in 14th election May 11, 2013. The PML-N overpowered the Pakistan's People's Party in the lower house of parliament. The 63- year old Nawaz Sharif after his victory became the 18th Prime Minister of Pakistan for an unprecedented third time.⁸⁸ The future of democracy is looking bright and politicians and other institutions are very keen towards the peaceful transition of power to give strength the countries democracy.

⁸⁷ "*Progress in Pakistan: Report from the 2013 Elections*". National Endowment for democracy, (June 12, 2013). Retrieved from <http://www.ned.org/for-reporters/progress-in-pakistan-report-from-the-2013-elections>. Accessed on 07/01/2014.

⁸⁸ Ayaz Gul, (June 01, 2013). "*Pakistan Marks First Peaceful Democratic Transition*". Retrieved from <http://www.voanews.com/content/pakistan-marks-first-peaceful-democratic-transition/1673338.html>. Accessed on 11/10/2013.

Bangladesh: The See-Saw of Democracy

After the attainment of its independence, Bangladesh has gone through the democratic and military rule with some dramatic changes during last few years. The elections that were contested in Bangladesh to change the political landscape have been welcomed by the violence irregularities and boycott of the opposition activists. Bangladesh was directly or indirectly ruled by the military authoritarians from 1975 to 1990 and in 1991 Parliamentary democracy had been restored after 15 years of vibrant military rule (Kumar, 2012). After the promotion of elected government since 1991, five general elections were held in the country and in most cases there have been allegations of irregularities by the election commission. After a number of reforms passed by the election commission to make the ongoing process of elections very comfortable, Bangladesh has been working for increasing public confidence. For the democratic transformation from one elected government to another, the country has taken a big step to constitutional reforms to make Bangladesh democracy more strong.

The Bangladesh constitution proclaims nationalism, democracy, socialism and secularity as the national ideals of the Bangladeshi republic. It was considered as one of the most liberal constitutions at the time of adoption in 1972 (Jalal, 1995). In order to make democracy stronger, many constitutional reforms and amendments were introduced in Bangladesh. The 12th Amendment passed in 1991 was the most important step in the history of constitutional development of Bangladesh.⁸⁹ Under this amendment most of the changes reverted which were put in place under the 4th Amendment in 1975. The Twelfth Amendment brought about a fundamental change to Bangladesh's constitutional arrangements and it has provided re-introduction of Parliamentary form of government; the President as a constitutional head of the state; the Prime Minister as a head of the executive

⁸⁹ Nazir Ahmad. *Eleventh and Twelfth Amendments of the Bangladesh constitution: Example of National Unity*. Retrieved from <http://www.kaagoj.com/details?id=344>. Accessed on 10/01/2014.

and the Cabinet headed by the Prime Minister became responsible to the Jatiya Sangsad.⁹⁰

Bangladeshi Political Crisis 2006–08: A Blow to Democracy

In 1990, all the major parties of Bangladesh, discussed for a better environment for elections. All the parties agreed on a mechanism known as Caretaker Government (CTG) to look after the election. Under this provision, Chief Justice is to be nominated to as the advisor of the caretaker. CTG ruled for the period of 1990-91 with the cooperation of the major political party alliances. Since 1996, a CTG has managed the elections and transitions of 1996, 2001 and 2006. Under the 13th amendment this consensus was formalized. This system worked very well and CTGs were formed within the constitutional framework in 1996, 2001 and 2006. Bangladesh National Party (BNP)'s ruled over Bangladesh for the period 2001-2006.

The Bangladesh government under the stewardship of Khalida Zia came to an end in 2006. Soon after the end of the term of the BNP's rule, political crisis began in Bangladesh. Selection of the candidate for the post of advisor caused political conflict, a role which devolved to the President, Dr. Iajuddin Ahmed, because of the failure by the major parties to agree on a candidate from among five considered. This period of the CTG was marked from the beginning by violent protests involving the Awami League whereas on the other hand, the Bangladesh National Party had its own complaints about the process and the opposition (Kumar, 2014). In order to get rid of this political crisis, extensive negotiations were organized by the CTG to bring all the political parties to the table and had agreement for a scheduled election, on 3 January, 2007. The major political party the Awami League, its Grand Alliance boycotted the general election to be held in 2007 on account of the lack of an accurate voters list.

Widespread violence and political riots engulfed the whole of Bangladesh. In order to control this turmoil, the military intervened to support the caretaker government of President Iajuddin in January 11, 2007. Emergency was proclaimed.

⁹⁰ K M A. Malik, . "Changes of Bangladesh Constitution: What the government is up to?". Retrieved from <http://www.freechoudhury.com/images/Changes.htm>. Accessed on 10/01/2014.

The government started working on to suppress political conflict in order to restore stability, initiated the investigation of corruption cases of 160 persons, including both party leaders, other politicians, civil servants and businessmen for actions going back to the late 1990s.

General Election of 2008

Finally, the 9th parliamentary elections were held on 29 December, 2008. These elections mark the turning point in the management and conduct of elections in Bangladesh. The general elections which were held in December 2008 resulted into victory of Awami League. The leader of victorious party Sheikh Hasina became the Prime Minister of Bangladesh and formed coalition with the Jatiya Party (Mohotti, 2011). The elections were highly free and fair which resulted into democratic transition of the country. The contest of election and change of elected governments in Bangladesh does not assure that country has achieved democratic stability. However, there might be some priority for such consolidation to be achieved in future prospects.

Constitutional Reforms for Making Democracy Stronger

In order to make democracy stronger, many constitutional reforms were introduced in Bangladesh. The constitution of Bangladesh was enacted by the Constituent Assembly and it came into force on 16 December, 1972. Since then the constitution has been changed at least 15 times.⁹¹ The 15th amendment of the Bangladesh constitution is perhaps the most debatable one in the post democratic era that follows the 1990 public upsurge against autocracy. The Parliament of Bangladesh, the Jatiyo Sangsad, passed the Constitution (15th Amendment) Bill, 2011 on 30, June 2011 to amend its constitution under which the caretaker government system for holding general elections was scrap. The bill which contained 15 proposals was passed by division vote with a majority of 291-1.⁹² The

⁹¹ Nazir Ahmad. "*Eleventh and Twelfth Amendments of the Bangladesh constitution: Example of National Unity*". Retrieved from <http://www.kaagoj.com/details?id=344>. Accessed on 10/01/2014.

⁹² Barrister Nazir Ahmed, (January 29, 2014). "*Fifteenth Amendment of the Constitution of Bangladesh*". Retrieved from <http://www.parisvisionnews.com/bangladesh-news/96-political-news/9476-fifteenth-amendment-of-the-constitution-of-bangladesh.html>. Accessed on 05/02/2014.

Constitutional amendments incorporate strict provisions against military takeover. It treats military takeovers as deceit and a seditious act. Parliament has been given power to hand down maximum penalty to those usurping state power.

Its negative impact has created frustration among many people of Bangladesh. It has also destabilized the strength of democracy by snatching the right of people's participation and curtailed such right of their elected representative in amending constitution. The amendment replaces almost 51 articles of the constitution. The supreme court of Bangladesh recently has declared all the changes illegal which were made by the martial law regime under 5th and 7th amendments. The Constitution can only be amended in the manner prescribed in the Constitution itself.

General Election 2014-Democracy in Peril

The General Election 2014 of Bangladesh became very controversial as it did not held according to the constitutional requirement- the election must take place within the 90-day period before the expiration of the term of the Jatiyo Sangshad on 24 January, 2014. But these elections were not held according to the constitutional requirements.⁹³ The opposition BNP and several other regional political parties demanded to install a neutral, non-party caretaker regime to conduct elections but the ruling government did not conceded to the genuine demand of these opposition parties. Even despite the warning of boycott of the election by most of the parties, the ruling party did not budge. Strikes and blockades became order of the day and brought the entire country to the entire halt. These dynamics gave a rude shock to the democracy.

On the voting day, 5th January 2014, the country observed election boycott in some Parliament seats as the opposition did not contest many seats. Violence and turmoil fuelled the whole country and many innocent people succumbed to violence by the anti-election activists on the day of election which kept many voters

⁹³ "What to expect from new cabinet". The daily people's time, 2014. Retrieved from <http://dailypeoplestime.com/2014/01/expect-new-cabinet/>. Accessed on 15/01/2014.

away from casting their vote.⁹⁴ The situation in the entire country has got worse off on the said day. The violence saw the killings of people and also torching of more than 100 polling stations and damage of ballot boxes by opposition activists which led to the very less percentage of voting throughout the country.

Awami League won a clear majority of 232 seats and became victorious party in the 10th parliamentary elections despite the violence and the election boycott by the opposition parties. Sheikh Hasina, the leader of Awami League became the Prime Minister for a third and second consecutive time after winning an absolute majority in the January 5 Parliamentary Elections. She has also ruled the country from 1996 to 2001 and then defeated Zia in the 2008 elections.⁹⁵ President Abdul Hamid of Bangladesh sworn Sheikh Hasina as the Prime Minister and after being sworn in, Hasina said that she would work to maintain democracy of the country.⁹⁶

The 10th Parliamentary elections in Bangladesh led to the formation of a democratic government but these elections were without any substance of democracy. It is said that these elections were held by the governments for their own sake which do not ensure the democratic system of the country. No doubt the country has formed its Parliamentary government once again but the political conflict between the major political parties of the country is at the peak. The formation of elected government does not mean the country has consolidated its democracy but the fact lies in its internal instability which has been creating obstruction in establishing political and democratic stability properly. The Daily Star in its editorial highlighted the election the deadliest in the country's history and that the Awami League won "a predictable and hollow victory, which gives it neither a

⁹⁴ " *Election 2014: Awami League vs. Awami League*". BD Chronicle, 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.bdchronicle.com/detail/news/31/3508>. Accessed on 15/01/2014.

⁹⁵ " *Sheikh Hasina becomes Bangladesh PM for third time*". Indiatoday.in, 2014. Retrieved from <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/sheikh-hasina-becomes-bangladesh-pm-third-time/1/335852.html>. Accessed on 22/01/2014.

⁹⁶ " *Sheikh Hasina sworn in for 3rd time as Bangladesh PM*". The Times of India, Jan 12, 2014. Retrieved from <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/south-asia/Sheikh-Hasina-sworn-in-for-3rd-time-as-Bangladesh-PM/articleshow/28707571.cms>. Accessed on 20/01/2014.

mandate nor an ethical standing to govern effectively."⁹⁷ In similarly criticising the opposition, the editorial mentioned that "political parties have the right to boycott elections. They also have the right to motivate people to side with their position. But what is unacceptable is using violence and intimidation to thwart an election."⁹⁸

India: Moving Towards Participatory Democracy

Indian democracy is based on adult franchise and a healthy and competitive party-system. There are a number of national and regional political parties, like Indian National Congress, Bharathiya Janata Party, Janata Dal, C.P.I, Bahaman Samaj Party, C.P.M., Samajvadi Party, Telugu Demas, Muslim League, Shiv Sena, Kerala Congress, National Conference, and Alkali Dal, etc. These parties considerably play an important role in the elections held in the state and also these parties are the very life-blood of Indian democracy. These parties also play a significant role in the smooth functioning of the democracy. So far as the spirit of democracy in India is concerned, it is deep-rooted and all- pervading. It has faced many challenges and is strong enough to face new challenges also.

In order to deepen the democracy to grass root level, the 73rd Constitutional Amendment of 1993 was passed in India. A number of reforms were such as reservations of seats for marginal groups, women, Dalits, and Adivasis; creation of a decentralized planning mechanism; establishment of state election commissions to oversee local elections and state finance commissions to prepare a blueprint for sharing of state revenues; and institutionalization of the village assembly (gram sabha). In order to provide the common framework for urban local bodies and help to strengthen the functioning of the local bodies as effective democratic units of self government,^{1/5} Pratham Delhi Education Initiative Parliament amended the constitution (74th Amendment Act 1992) and provided constitutional status to "municipalities" which are of 3 types: Nagar Panchayat-for transitional area (an

⁹⁷ "A Predicted and Hollow Victory". An Editorial, the Daily Star,(January 6, 2014). Retrieved from <http://www.thedailystar.net/election-1-5597>. Accessed on 05/02/2014.

⁹⁸ "Bangladesh Election Violence throws Country Deeper into Turmoil". The Guardian, (January 7, 2014). Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/06/bangladesh-election-violence-awami-league>. Accessed on 12/02/2014.

area which is being transformed from rural to urban area); Municipal Council for a smaller urban area; Municipal Corporation for a larger urban area (Sharma, 2007).

The civil society in India figures the most complicated connection between state and society. The various social movements in India have emerged as major manifestations of civil society to protect and enlarge democracy. The social movements witnessed a decade ago focused on the interests, guarantee of political participation, and aspirations of tribal's, dalits and women have gained ascendancy (Tandon *et al.*, 2002). The struggle by NGOs to make governments more accountable to citizens is an ongoing struggle in India and on account of NGOs lobbying, the right to information has been passed in 2005 (Singh, 2012).

The civil society in India has been significantly playing an important role in building of living and participatory democracy in India. It acts as an important character in intensifying the Indian democracy and creating the situation to allow the women and deprived communities to participate in the democratization of the country especially at the levels of local governance.⁹⁹ The attempt started by Anna Hazare has taken the civil society movement into a new phase. His movement based on a solid model highly attracted the attention of the people as his movement represents an attraction in the India's history of civil society. His entire movement was erected on the concern of Lokpal Bill which was a solid model in order to check the corruption cancer and make the government responsible to the people of the country. Baba Ramdev has also started a movement against corruption; however the movement started by Baba Ramdev could not ripe and ended up before accomplishing its maturity.¹⁰⁰ Aam admi party (AAP), a civil

⁹⁹ Debika Goswami and Rajesh Tandon. "*Civil Society in Changing India: Emerging Roles, Relationships and Strategies*". Retrieved from http://www.pria.org/docs/Civil%20_Society_India.pdf..Accessed on 01-01-14.

¹⁰⁰ "*Challenges to Civil Society in India*". Mainstream, Vol. XLIX, No 29, July 9, 2011. Available at <file:///C:/Users/wellcome/Desktop/ChallengestoCivilSocietyinIndiaMainstreamWeekly.htm>. Accessed on 02-01-14.

society by birth has prolonged it in scope and in terms of electoral process which is a new turn in the civil society's journey on electoral path.¹⁰¹

Indian democracy is by and large stable and has always gone through successful changes after achieving independence from British rule. But the problem prevails in the system as poor and weak people still suffer in this representative form of government. However, the country has gone through remarkable changes in 2013 when the younger generation and middle class of the country held mass movements and came onto streets which were a dawn for the new democratic phenomenon of the country. The local assembly elections which were held in Delhi in December 2013 enormously gave an unprecedented surprise when Aam Admi Party won 28 seats out of 70. The leader of AAP Arvind Kejriwal formed his government in Delhi, ended the 15 year old rule of the Indian national congress (INC) and took his oath at the Ramlila grounds in Delhi and became the 7th chief minister of Delhi on December 28, 2013.¹⁰² AAP was originally a civil society and an anti corruption movement and later on it changed to a political organization in 2012 and its victory in the 2013 elections is regarded as a turning point for Indian democracy. This is regarded a historical movement in India where the first civil society movement that gave a big challenge to the established political parties and led to the establishment of the real democracy in the country.¹⁰³ The movement led by the masses underwent the defeat of old corrupt Parliamentary rule and the people got the chance to put forth their demands freely.

India, the world's largest and a stable democracy has been successful since its establishment as a democratic society. The belief and self- confidence shown by the people of India in promoting democratic governance and their desire for achieving it is noteworthy. However, as expected in every system there are

¹⁰¹ Mahapatra Richard, (December 27, 2013). "*AAP gives a new turn to civil society movement*". Retrieved from <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/content/aap-gives-new-turn-civil-society-movement>. Accessed on 30/01/2014.

¹⁰² "*Arvind Kejriwal becomes Delhi's youngest Chief Minister*". IBN Live, 2013. Retrieved from <http://ibnlive.in.com/news/arvind-kejriwal-becomes-delhis-youngest-chief-minister/442008-80-258.html>. Accessed on 22/01/2014

¹⁰³ Sanjay kumar, 2014. "*The diplomat- Aam Admi Party: A turning point for Indian Democracy*"? Retrieved from <http://thedi diplomat.com/2014/01/aam-aadmi-party-a-turning-point-for-indian-democracy/>. Accessed on 22/01/2014.

some loopholes and Indian democracy is also not free from them. So, there is a need to make the democratic system of governance stronger. To move the country towards such a system, various methods have been discovered to make democracy more participatory. Aruna Roy, a political and social activist said that the future of participatory democracy lies in educating the people and recognizing their rights to food. The success of participatory democracy is certain when political and social movements work with political parties as they are connected to each other.¹⁰⁴ The Aam Aadmi Party which formed its government in Delhi has passed from participatory democracy to participatory governance which is inter-connected to each other. In participatory democracy the people have their say in decision making, so Kejriwal wants that decisions be taken with the people at local level and they will take law in their own hands to sustain transparency in the system. The participatory democracy by the AAP will affect civil servants who according to Kejriwal are supposed to work fundamentally and honestly (Bhattacharya, 2014). The victory of AAP and its formation of government in Delhi have increased the interest of whole world to watch the change in the Indian governing system. This is first time in the history of Indian democracy that the entry of a new political party to the seat of power offered a participatory government. The party is certain to pass the Jan Lokpal bill in its unadulterated form and to bring government close to the people (Saraswathi, 2013).

It is anticipated that this path towards participatory democracy may bring in prosperity and all those significant factors which the country have been lacking. Despite its internal instability, poverty, corruption and contradictions in the context of the development of democracy, it has been considered that India has a good record of democracy.

¹⁰⁴ “*People Focal Point in Participatory Democracy, Says Aruna Roy*”. The New Indian Express, (January 20, 2014). Retrieved from http://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/thiruvananthapuram/People-Focal-Point-in-Participatory-Democracy-Says-Aruna-Roy/2014/01/20/article2008993.ece#.UxKL4_IdVSQ. Accessed on 30/01/2014.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion and Recommendations

South Asia is a dynamic regional entity and is characterized by large population, growing poverty and inequality, weak governing system, pathetic democratic institutions and increasing traditional and non-traditional security concerns. Most of the South Asian countries had been ruled by the colonial powers before becoming independent sovereign states. The period since the second half of twentieth century was auspicious as it blessed the entire South Asia with new-fangled model of democracy. Most of the period since independence, some of the countries were under the military rule and some of them under the monarchy. On account of these dynamics, people of this region are aspiring for democracy in their respective countries.

The South Asia has adopted various forms of government. Democracy in India has remained as successful and stable since its independence. Till now, it has conducted 15 general elections successfully. Similarly, Sri Lanka has also followed the same pattern with Presidential type of Government whereas Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal have undergone military and authoritarian rule respectively. Only Sri Lanka and India have been able to operate democracy successfully since their independence whereas on the other hand Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives have been seeing ups and downs in their political systems. South Asia happened to be one of those regions in the world that has witnessed numerous intra state and interstate conflicts and because of this environment democracy is being used and misused for individual political gains time and gain.

The democracy demands the transparency, prosperity and internal stability but the quality and attribute of democracy in South Asian countries is thin. South Asia since the 20th century has seen the emergence of many political parties in the region. It is now regarded as a trend to set up a political party so as to make the representation of their particular society. There are varieties of political parties in South Asia based on region, religion, caste, language, ethnicity etc and all this guaranteed a strong competition in the entire region. There are various major

problems of democratization in South Asian countries which has deteriorated the democratic structure of the region. The problems like fundamentalism, terrorism, military dictatorship, political sector, illiteracy, poverty, corruption and many more are equally responsible for its democratic failure. However, the military rule along with the monarchy is the major obstacles for democratization in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan.

The early years of Pakistan and Bangladesh has been dominated by the authoritarian rule which resulted into political instability in governing system of both the countries. Both the countries have been witnessing strong revolts against the mighty military rule which sometimes gave chances to electoral democracy. Both the countries have undergone several military coups that have brought the Parliamentary democratic governments down. By the time of the military coups of 1975, Bangladesh had a quasi-authoritarian regime. Pakistan has witnessed the extensive rule of four military dictators since its independence and almost eighteen years of democratic rule. The growth of Pakistan as a democratic state remains weak. Despite that the country has widely transited to the elected government and till 1999, the country observed the strong rivalry between Bhutto's Pakistan people's Party and Pakistan Muslim League (N). However, the country has successfully completed its first tenure of five years in 2013 when Nawaz Sharif was elected as the Prime Minister of the country. Similarly, Bangladesh has conducted its 10th General Election successfully after completing its previous tenure under the Awami League. This transition proved very peaceful and successful in Bangladesh.

Nepal and Bhutan had practiced monarchical regime since the long past and have also gone through dynamic political transformation. Monarchy rule has dominated Nepal since 18th century and is considered the most substantial factor for the downfall of democracy in the country. In the second half of twentieth century, the citizens and political leaders of both Nepal and Bhutan had struggled for the representative system of government. In Nepal, the political transformation took place in the 1990s. The first general election was held in accordance with the new constitution on May 12, 1991. Since then, Nepal is following the representative Parliamentary democracy but the rights and freedoms yet to be realized by the people and political parties. Democratic regimes proved to be short lived and unstable as it is being faced by many problems. In order to strengthen democracy,

the country witnessed various mass movements. The democracy movement in April 2006 was a strong and powerful movement and the country had never gone before through such a unique movement. The movement resulted into many positive effects in terms of consolidation of democratic transformation. It was a historical moment for Nepal in 2007 when it took more steps for the consolidation of the democracy and general election 2008 was the first step in which the Maoists not only participated but led the country from front line. In this way monarchy in Nepal has been abolished with a constitutional republic.

The process for the democratization in Bhutan started in 1952 with the emergence of King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck to throne. Since then there had been various changes in the political sector of the country with the efforts of kingdoms hereditary rulers. The 2004 year saw the transition to constitutional monarchy which was followed by the declaration of new constitution in 2005. With the formation of 2005 constitution, Bhutan was conferred as a democratic constitutional monarchy. Bhutan set the pace for democracy in 2008 and has witnessed an evolutionary democratic phase. The first democratic elections in Bhutan began in 2007, and all levels of government had been democratically elected by 2011. These elections included Bhutan's first ever partisan National Assembly election. The period since 2000 proved to be noteworthy for Bhutan for achieving tremendous progress in its democratic development. The year 2013 saw the electing of a new government in July which came as a surprise to all across the world with the victory of People's Democratic Party with Tshering Tobgay as its Prime Minister.

Democracy in developing societies has taken many shapes and forms under varied circumstances and conditions. Among the South Asian countries, India and Sri Lanka have been electoral democracies for a long time but because of the persisting problems in the political sectors they have failed to transform themselves successfully to liberal and advanced stages of democratization. A landmark achievement for the country was accomplished with the victory of Aam Admi Party led by Arvind Kejriwal who formed his government in Delhi. India would possibly be remembered for the emergence of a new political phenomenon in 2013 that may prove a major turning point in country's politics. Growing disillusionment of the growing urban middle class, urban youth and some sections of the lower strata of

society with the established political parties during the last few years contributed to the birth of this new phenomenon. The civil society have been playing commendable role in the movement and transformation of democracy in almost all the South Asian countries.

At the last, it can be summarized that, South Asia is moving towards democratic transformation. Many new trends are emerging in this region. Military autocratic rule came to an end in Pakistan and Bangladesh. The very first time, Pakistan has completed its first five year term and following the same trend, Bangladesh has also completed its full term. The foremost important feature which would be counted as the historical movement in South Asian history is end of the monarchy in Nepal and Bhutan. Both the countries are moving towards prospective democracy. However, India and Sri Lanka have been enjoying democracy since their independence and civil societies are emerging very strongly not only in these countries but throughout the length and breadth of the region. Because of their role and mass movements led by them, many new reforms and facilities have been provided to the citizens in most of the countries making democratic set up stronger in the region.

Recommendations

- The political sector can play an important role in democratic development. So in order to sustain democracy in South Asian countries, political leaders need to maintain solid commitments to prop up it in right direction.
- Pakistan and Bangladesh government should appoint apolitical people in various administrative and constitutional positions so that the legislatures and other government offices would practice proactive functioning to consolidate the democratization of country.
- South Asian countries at the very first should settle down the political differences with the opposition and work towards restoring democratic stability in the region.
- The current elected governments should restraint the highly personalized nature of politics and create a political environment which would lead to participatory democracy.

- It is an urgent need to establish local government to give more political choices for electorates and to move towards a more liberal democracy.
- Military rule is a greatest threat to democracy, so Pakistan needs a combination of political parties and should minimize the role of military interference.
- There should be open electoral debates in the South Asian countries which will enhance the democratization process in the region.
- Without proper educational system, it is not possible to reach a grown-up democracy, so, in order to consolidate the democracy of the region, there is a need to educate the rural and marginalized people of the region so that they would get their share to promote democracy of the country.
- The civil society and political parties must work to eradicate the corruption which is spreading like a disease and is a great stumbling block in democratization of the region.

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