



निर्वाचन आयोग, नेपाल
ELECTION COMMISSION, NEPAL

The Constituent Assembly Elections (CA) in Nepal :Some experiences



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Outcome

- **Inclusive & Representative CA**
 - 25 (9 +16) political parties
 - Proportional representation of various groups
 - 33% + women members
- **Results accepted**
- **Republic institutionalized - Peaceful departure of the then King**
- **Bullets to ballots** (Rebels in power through the democratic process)



Context

- **Abnormal situation but expectation of a normal election:**
 - - Poor security situation.
 - - National Army restricted within the barracks
 - - Electoral officials hesitant in accepting their election duties
- **Complexity of the post-conflict situation**
- **Preparation for three elections but one result (June 2007, November 2007 and April 2008)**
- **Gap between verbal commitment and actions of the leaders esp. in providing legal framework and other infrastructure for June election.**



Context...

- **Blame Game** between political stakeholders that contributed to uncertainty thereby crisis of confidence
- **Over ambitious timeline** (Complications of peace process undermined)
- **Wrong assumptions** (bullet culture and violent practices be changed just by signing the CPA)
- **Unequal players** (to ensure fair play)
- **Credibility of the EC at zero level**



Inherent Complexities

- **Post-conflict situation** (in fact still in-conflict)
- **Difficult geographical terrain and diverse climatic condition** (- 40 to +40 Celsius in a particular day in a distance of less than 250 miles)
- **Complex ethnic composition and over 100 languages**
- **Low level of literacy**
- **Elections culture with influence of money and muscles**
- **Striking a delicate balance between the electoral standards and peace process** (Difficult choice- risk of breaking on rigidity or proceed with compromises)



Approach

- **Open & Transparent** (Media was permanent invitee in all deliberations)
- **Broad Consultations** (involvement of stakeholders in all steps - increased the level of ownership of process - ultimately helped accept the election results)
- **At times EC acted beyond established standards and procedures** (EC played a pro-active role as & when necessary. 3 time extension for nominations- beyond the general practices)



Features

- **Encouraging participation**
 - 54 political parties participated out of 74 registered parties (10000 Signature verification for registration a complicated task)
 - Over 9000 candidates
 - Over 60 thousands national & 900 international observers,
 - 63 percent polling and encouraging participation of women.
- **Globally observed election - UN's involvement in the field as well as monitoring through the EEMT**
- **2 \$ cost per voter - one of the cheapest post-conflict elections.**
- **Many unexpected deals/agreements between the major political actors throughout the election process.**



What made the election happen?

- **Electorate's aspiration for peace - peace as dividend** (People's expectation that election will bring peace and stability in the country).
- **Perceived incentives for the key political parties** (We will win the elections so let everything go normally).
- **Strong pressure from the civil society to create conducive environment**
- **Powerful media** (Media permanent invitees in all EC activities)
- **Large presence of national as well as international observers** (they were requested to observe the elections understanding the political context of the country).



What made the election happen?

- **Strong commitment of the major leaders of the key political parties including the Prime Minister** (I want to see the elections in my life time! My health is weak; let us not delay the process)
- **Good wishes and continuing support from the international community** (Eg. President Carter)
- **Professionalism, confidence and commitment of the EC - enhanced credibility - everybody supportive to the Commission** (A large group of allies always backing the EC)
- **The Common and ultimate goal - establishment of a republic**



Challenges ahead!

Nepal has entered into a new phase of transition but transformation to a sustainable peace and development is still a challenge

- **Drafting a new constitution within the limited time and its promulgation**
- **Logical conclusion of peace process including management of the former combatants**
- **Addressing expectations of the people**



Focus of the EC

**To increase trust, confidence and credibility of the EC
for free, fair and impartial election**

the EC will focus on

- **Institutional Strengthening**
- **Professional Development**
- **Voter Registry modernization for a reliable electoral roll and voter Identification**
- **Reforms and integration of Electoral Legislations**
- **Public Outreach and Voter Information/Education**