

Civic Education: The Role of the Youth in the Making of a Modern State
Seminar
Organizer- NEFAS
In Co-operation With
FES, Nepal
September 8, 2009
At Gajuri, Dhading
Number of Participants- 85 (35% Female)

Introduction

Nepal Foundation for Advanced Studies (NEFAS) in co-operation with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) organized a one day seminar on “Civic Education: The Role of the Youth in the Making of a Modern State” at Gajuri, Dhading district. Eighty-five participants belonging to different fields of life participated in the seminar. Thirty-five per cent of the participants were female. Young social scientist Shiva Raj Dahal presented a paper titled ‘Civic Education for the Youth’ and professor of political science Mr. Ram Kumar Dahal shed further light on various aspects of civic education and on the fundamental principles of democracy. The discussion that followed was stimulating and gave a reflection of the evolving public opinion at the grass-roots level. The participants were also provided with the booklet ‘Handouts on Democracy’.

Paper Presentation and Discussion

Shiva Raj Dahal- Mr. Ananda Shrestha, director of Nepal Foundation for Advanced Studies, (NEFAS), Professor Dr. Ram Kumar Dahal, FES, Nepal program-chief Chandra Dev Bhatta, lecturers and participants please take your seats. Mr. Ananda Shrestha will deliver a welcome address.

Ananda Shrestha-I would like to welcome you all on behalf of NEFAS. I would like to apologize for being late due to unavoidable circumstances. NEFAS was established in 1990. It holds seminar all over the country on political, economic and social issues having a bearing on the national interest. NEFAS does not limit itself to Kathmandu. It has held seminars on the topic ‘Civic Education for the Youth’ all over the country. This is its main aim.

You are all aware of the country’s situation. This, I believe, is due to the lack of civic education and the absence of the representatives of the youth in the decision making loop. The proceedings of the seminar are published in a book-form and we hope it will be of help for those who are responsible for making decisions. The conclusions drawn from discussions on the paper are refined and printed in a book-form. NEFAS is not a political organization; it is purely an educational organization. The paper presenter, Mr. Shiva Raj Dahal, and Professor Ram Kumar Dahal will both shed light on the topic of discussion. Please provide suggestions and point out the weaknesses so that the paper can be further refined and be made fit for publication. I would like to thank you all for the chance to welcome you all.

Shiva Raj Dahal- I would like to request Mr. Chandra Dev Bhatta to give an introduction of FES.

Chandra Dev Bhatta-I am from Baitidi district. I will take a short time to provide an introduction of FES. The full form of FES is Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. It is a political foundation. It was established in 1925 by Friedrich Ebert. He was a labor leader who later became the President. He was concerned about the issue of how to provide education to the children of

laborers. He established a scholarship program for them. He had requested that after his death the mourners should not bring bouquets to the funeral but should donate the amount of cash needed to buy the bouquet to the scholarship fund. The guiding principles of FES are freedom, peace, justice, and solidarity. It is dedicated to helping the weak and to protect them. It believes that a state should be constituted for that purpose and that the function of democracy is to provide access to the deprived sections. An atmosphere that guarantees the basic rights of the people should be created.

In 1995 FES opened a small office in Kathmandu staffed by a few people. Its budget is not big. It is working in the field of education. It has already held seminars in sixty districts. Topics such as civic education and the up-coming constitution are discussed in the seminars. The suggestions collected during the debate are documented. This helps to fill the gaps in knowledge. The documents can be accessed from our website.

What is the difference between civic education and political education? Why do we need civic education? Many movements have taken place in favor of democracy, but democracy has still not been able to come out of the vortex. Wherein lays the problem? The aim of civic education is to create a critical mass that is responsible towards the society, family, nation and ultimately helps in the humanization of society. People have multiple identities. The question is how to create a forge a national identity out of these multiple identities. Until this task is accomplished the problem will not be solved. The eighteen to thirty-five age group makes up the largest segment of the voters. But they are not adequately represented within the state structure and the political system. The challenge is how to socialize this group, enhance their participation, increase their national feelings and ultimately humanize them. This will happen when this age-group increase their participation in the political and economic life of the country. Democracy will not flourish until they are given a correct interpretation of it, otherwise they will misinterpret the principle. They should be made aware.

Democracy will only flourish when stake-holders feel a sense of ownership. The state is at present divided. There is no specific policy articulated for the youth. Every sector has been politicized and divided along party lines. The state has not been able to provide opportunities. The focus at present is on making the constitution. Nepal is beset with constitutional instability, every ten years the constitution has been changed. Discussions have to be held to make the constitution last once it is promulgated. We have to move towards federalism but unless there is economic development it will have no meaning. The society at large has to be made aware and this society has to apply pressure on the state. Pressure has to be applied in a civilized manner and the tendency of indulging in throwing stones should be discouraged. Willy Brandt had said 'Peace is not everything, but without peace nothing is possible'. Shiva Raj Dahal and senior scholar Professor Ram Kumar Dahal will shed further light on this subject.

Shiva Raj Dahal- The seminar will consist of two parts. In the first session Mr. Shiva Raj Dahal will present his paper. Mr. Dahal will shed light on various aspects of civil education. I would like to request Mr. Purshottam Das Shrestha, the former chairman of the village development committee, to take the chair.

Since 1996 NEFAS have been running such programs to make the people conscious. Civic education is taught under the subject 'Current Nepalese Society' at the ten plus two level in the Arts and Humanities stream. We are presently engaged in the task of drafting the constitution. There are three principal aims of this program. Firstly, to see that civic education plays a role in ensuring that the national agenda finds a prominent place in the up-coming constitution. Secondly the youth of the country are migrating in record numbers; thought has to be given on how to rectify this problem. Thirdly to ensure that civic education plays a role in ensuring that the prominent leaders do not stray from the correct path.

Paper presented by Mr. Shiva Raj Dahal

Shiva Raj Dahal: 'Civic Education: The Role of the Youth in the Building of a Modern State.' (Excerpts).

- 1) Meaning of civic education-Civic education is teachings concerned with self-governance. In addition to promoting constitutionalism and good governance it helps create a public consensus concerning the drafting of the new constitution.
- 2) The importance of civic education in the present context-As per the directive of the people's movement of 2062/063 a constituent assembly to draft the new constitution has been formed. This period is a transitional one. It is necessary to ensure the widest possible participation of the citizens and to move forward by collecting suggestions and soliciting advice from them. But due to the unhealthy competition among the parties for power the spirit of co-operation necessary to implement the comprehensive peace agreement is being disturbed. As a consequence, the suspicion that nationalism might be endangered due to dependency created by foreign meddling is being aroused.
- 3) The state, nationalism and civic education-Only when the citizens are ready to contribute through whatever means for the sake of the motherland, will the state be able to take a leap forward in the structural development. We are the sovereign citizens of an independent and sovereign country. That is why in order to promote the feelings of patriotism among us it is necessary to have civic knowledge, civic skills and civic virtue. This will help safeguard the pluralistic society and promote nationalism.
- 4) *Loktantra* and civic education- *Loktantra* and civic education have a solid relationship. *Loktantra* is a system that relies on consensus and co-operation for its functioning and its permanence depends on the behavior, rationality, co-operation and culture of individuals. Since *loktantra* is a system based on facts it has acquired legitimacy at the international level.

What is the meaning of *loktantra*? According to Abraham Lincoln democracy is the government of the people, for the people and by the people. Democracy acquires two forms-direct and representative. In the representative form of democracy the ordinary people and the state do not directly participate in governance and in formulation of policies and laws but entrust the entire responsibility for this to the people's representative elected in a free and fair election.

Why democracy? (a) Democracy besides being a political system has become a way of life of the citizens. (b) Democracy establishes equality. (c) Democracy protects plurality. (d) Democracy is an established system in which political decisions reached on the basis of the participation of the people. (e) Democracy ensures the legitimacy of governance process. (f) The democratic system ensures the right of the citizen to enjoy the fundamental rights and adheres to the directive principles provided by the country's constitution.

- 5) The qualities citizens must possess in a democratic system-
 - (a) Civic Knowledge- Since the governing power is vested in the sovereign people of Nepal, it is essential that the Nepalese people have knowledge about civic education. After the peoples movement of 2046 and 2063 many changes have already taken place in the Nepalese society. The present education system of Nepal is unsystematic, faulty and profit oriented. This has lead to the weakening and destabilization of the present social landscape and the whole democratic system itself.
 - (b) Civic Virtue- In a democratic system the state grants its citizens economic, social, political and cultural rights. The individual has to assume certain duties and responsibilities towards the family, society and country as a free citizen. The following are the virtues that a good citizen should possess in a democratic system- reasoned commitment, honesty, civic mindedness, civility, open mindedness, courage, patriotism, and the ability to think critically.

- (c) Civic Skill-A citizen needs intellectual and participatory skills in order to correctly distinguish one's rights and duties and to be aware and vigilant about one's rights, duties and responsibilities.
- 6) Democracy and democratic culture- It is not only the constitution but constitutional behavior that helps develop democratic way of life and culture. There is a difference between a person who is a democrat and a one who has internalized democratic culture.
 - 7) Democracy and political parties- Political parties are the collective property, basis and life of democracy. In democracy the opposition is esteemed because they serve as the ears and eyes of the government. The following are the tasks of the political parties in democracy-1) to make the people politically conscious and to provide the kind of leadership that reflects the peoples aspirations, 2) to take part in elections and to govern, 3) to manage social and cultural activities and to hand over the political values, mores and system to the next generation, 4) to act as a bridge between the people and the government, and 5) to help in the creation of a egalitarian society.
 - 8) The youth and the present situation-The term youth does not only denote a person of a certain age but is also implies the possession of enthusiasm and certain type of thinking. At present the middle class youth, who should play an important role in our society, are becoming alienated with nationalism and politics and are migrating and becoming citizens of other countries. On the other hand considerable numbers of youths from the lower and lower middle-class families, after spending a long time underground, are living in temporary cantonments. The implications of these developments must be assessed. Otherwise the whole political and economic system of the country might become crisis ridden and invite appalling consequences.
 - 8) (a) The youth and politics-We tend to pay more attention to the negative aspects of politics rather than the positive. The political field represents the power of the people. That is why national and constructive politics should be the common concern of all conscious citizens.
 - 9) Leadership and civic education-Honest and competent politicians are the treasure of the nation. But on examining the record of selection of leaders until the present, it is clear that the criteria for selection are the ability to carry the party's baggage, time spent in jails and the ability rebel. Such people are given tickets in election and are given representation in the policy making level.
 - 10) Social justice and civic education-Social justice is the main essence of a democratic system. But in our society the state discriminates in the provision of medical treatment education facilities.
 - 11) Civil society and civic education-Civil society engages in communicating, interacting, mediating and jointly acting on issues of common interest. But civil society is not an alternative to the state and it must not concern itself with personal profit. Usually civil society is based on three values. These values are independence, equality and co-operative spirit.
 - 12) Civic education and other subjects-An intense debate is taking place in the country on whether technical education is the key necessity of the country. This supposition is true but not the whole truth. The knowledge of civic education along with that of other subjects makes the democratic lifestyle productive and effective.
 - 13) Conclusion-Nepal is passing through the transitional stage. On the one hand since Nepal is a land-locked country, she has to bear with foreign economic, political and religious influence and on the other hand because of globalization and the conditionality imposed by the WTO the principles of democracy and social justice are being restricted. A constitution drafted to reflect the aspirations of the people will ensure the participation and identity of all and will generate a sense of ownership. The task of restructuring a country is a multi-dimensional, sensitive and difficult subject. To accomplish this task it

is necessary to rise above party, ethnic or narrow communal thinking and bring about a transformation in culture, tradition and mentality. The competition, alliances and political polarization taking place among the political parties for the sake of power only is deepening differences among them. The responsibility not to let the national concerns be eclipsed and to sensitively carry forward the task of civic empowerment has now fallen on the shoulders of the youth.

Shiva Raj Dahal-The paper is incomplete. We can forward your suggestions to the relevant place. After lunch, Professor Ram Kumar Dahal will shed light on civic education and the upcoming constitution.

Second Session

Constitution-Making, Role of Civic Education

Professor Ram Kumar Dahal-Dr. Chandra Dev Bhatt and sociologist Shiva Raj Dahal have discussed thoroughly the issue of civic education. It is not necessary to talk once more at length about it as you are all aware of it and it is not a new subject. Why is civic education necessary? What is the difference between political science and civic education? The necessity for civic education is greater. The political parties also run classes on this subject but they tend to impart their own party ideology. Civic education seeks to rise above party politics and equip citizens with the ability to correctly analyze political developments. For this reason civic education is important. It is a challenge to institutionalize *loktantra*. This booklet sheds light on the concepts that helps to strengthen *loktantra*.

- 1) Human Rights- The state of human rights has to be good. The state has to ensure the constitutional rights of her citizens. If the human rights situation is not good democracy cannot be institutionalized. This concept is the base.
- 2) Rule of Law- There has to rule of law. If the constitution is not scrupulously adhered to democracy might not be sustained. The youth and other citizens must be aware of what the rule of law means and must scrutinize the behavior of various actors on this basis.
- 3) Separation of Power- The constituent assembly has one work. It has to make a legal definition of the fundamental question of citizenship. The citizens must understand how the judiciary, the legislative and the executive are to function in the new constitution. The youth must be aware of this concept.
- 4) Multiparty system
- 5) Local government-To know what needs to be done to make the foundations of democracy strong is necessary. The village development committee needs to be institutionalized. To make the foundations strong the youth must participate in local democracy. The right to education is guaranteed but it also entails some obligations. In some countries the state provides education but not in Nepal. Civic education teaches about constitutions but not in a comprehensive manner. It is not necessary to know everything. In political science only some particular constitutions are studied. Civic education needs to give some idea of this. NEFAS does this work to some extent.
- 6) Free and fair elections-To institutionalize democracy free and fair elections needs to be held on a regular basis. Only if the elections are fair will it acquire legitimacy. A national election commission is required for free and fair election. This makes *loktantra* strong.
- 7) Political parties
- 8) Civil society-If the civil society is not strong there will be no-one to caution the state. Cadres of political parties do not criticize their leaders. The civic society needs to be further developed. Professional civic society was started in '46. Civil society has a very important role to play in strengthening *loktantra*.

- 9) Good Governance-In the absence of good governance *loktantra* will not move in the right direction. Only good governance will make *loktantra* strong. The youth must understand and be aware of this fact.
- 10) Service delivery- Everyone is aware to what extent the state has been able to provide services. Service delivery has to be speedy so as to ensure that the people do not suffer.
- 11) Political culture-Political culture cannot be developed overnight. But only if the process is initiated now will it have a strong basis. The youth must understand the meaning of political culture. Multi-party democracy is not a one-party rule. It is governing through consensus. The youth must comprehend what is needed to develop this type of culture. Civic education has a big role to play in this regard because without conscious citizens this is not possible. The up-coming constitution must be democratic and according to the aspirations of the citizens. The youth have a responsibility to ensure this. Civic education is therefore important.

Your ideas are necessary to make this paper complete. So please provide comments on this paper.

Shiva Raj Dahal-When you provide suggestion and ideas and express your curiosity, please give your name. How did you find the program? We will share your ideas with people in other places as well.

Tirtha Raj Dawadi-This program was held at short notice. It should have given priority to the participation of youth, not to that of the aged. The youth had contributed greatly to the success of the political parties. We are displeased with the infighting among the political parties. Please convey the hopes of the people at the local level. The parties are engaged in bargaining among themselves. We are moving in the direction of becoming a failed state. Please convey our feelings to the people at the top.

Shiva Raj Dahal- If the people are conscious the leaders will improve their behavior. The leaders had gone to the grassroots level to get the questionnaire filled. We have to inquire whether the suggestions given have been implemented or not. We have to apply pressure on our representatives. The suggestions you have provided have been praiseworthy. The suggestions provided through newspapers and those given by the children might also influence those at the top. It is not enough to draft the constitution, implementation is necessary. A strong organization is necessary to ensure this. We will forward your suggestions.

Rudra Danai-I teach in this school. I am convinced that citizens have responsibilities. In Nepal's there used to be a sense of *nagarik dharma* (citizen's religion). It disappeared after '46. Many are now affiliated to one or another political party. Politics of creating illusion exists. They are trying to give the impression that politics is only for a definite class, that only that particular group has the right to exist. Conflict exists due to absence of humanistic education. The division started with the multi-party system. The society is now divided and has forgotten its religion (*dharma*). Many ills of society can be traced to the political divisions and the weakening of *dharma*.

In classes six to ten civic education is taught as a small part of Social Studies. It is not taught as part of the political education. Cadres are taught about street agitation as the political parties are interested in making them foot soldiers. The schools only give brief lessons. Curriculum should be developed. This issue should have been included in the presentation. Then the students cannot be easily deceived and there will be less social conflict. Civic education as presently taught is not complete. Issues such as the political role

of citizens, introduction to political parties etc. must be included in the curriculum. These ideas can help your paper.

Shiva Raj Dahal-I agree completely with your ideas. Militant culture has developed because of the belief that only my party is right. This type of thinking will lead to perpetual conflict. Only the state has the right to maintain an army. If all the parties create their own armies what will happen to the state? The role of the state in providing social services is narrowing. After liberalization the role of MNC, NGOs and INGOs is increasing. There are now twenty thousand NGOs and two hundred NGOs. Some of them have a vested interest in stoking conflict. Some of them are creating religious controversies, supporting free-Tibet activities, smuggling herbs etc. Many expatriates find Europe expensive and prefer to live in Nepal. They earn money in their home countries, save a part of it and come to live here.

Social rights have been eroded. Neo-liberals argue that as we live in a competitive age it is necessary to remove subsidies. This creates the opportunities to outside forces to engage in various activities. The old values are being eroded. This happens not because of *loktantra* but due to lack of it. The values associated with democracy have not yet been established. This is the best system and there is no alternative to it. Two hundred years ago Marx had stated that the rich exploit the poor. Exploitation reached its zenith during the early phase of the industrialization. But at present the intellectuals are also considered as part of the labor force even though they earn lakhs of rupees. It is necessary to change with the times.

Sunder Shrestha- It is necessary to teach civic education in schools. One class of citizens says that if we move towards the federal system the country will break up. Will it? Please throw further light on this subject; why we need this system, where will it lead? If this concept is defined it would be helpful.

Bhavani Sharma- I am a teacher. After the political change the citizens have become more undisciplined. This had happened after the change of '46 and also after the recent change. There is a tendency not to tolerate the existence of other parties. Factions have formed and even social work is viewed from the perspective of political bias. The youth do not respect the elders. Society needs to be civilized but the youth are not like the older generation. People over forty are more sober and disciplined. The youths are restless. All must move ahead together and programs must involve all segments of the population. If the government provides this type of education it would be better for the society.

Govinda Khanal-I am a teacher. Civic education is very necessary. There is no discipline at present and people are not dutiful. To make these types of qualities more widespread civic education is necessary. It is also necessary to teach the leaders civic education. The country should come first and then the people. There should be consensus on national issues. The leaders come to an agreement when their personal interest is at stake but cannot come to a consensus on national issues. The people are the most important element. If the people become strong the country becomes strong. There needs to be a consensus on issues of major importance. It is necessary to educate the political parties.

Dhana Thapaliya-It is good this program was held at the local level. We have listened and it has helped to educate us. This is praiseworthy effort. Through you we would like to send a message to the **six** hundred and one constituent assembly members. Should the female and male members work for the people or disrupt the proceedings of the assembly? The allowances, paid for by our tax-money, are being misused by the members. They are obstructing the constituent assembly. It is two years since the constituent assembly has been constituted but no significant work has taken place. Murders are being committed and prices

are rising. Should not the members speak for the people? They should be given training. The wife of Madav Kumar Nepal taught here. He became prime minister even after losing in two places. They need to be educated. Prachandra and Babu Ram Bhattarai used to meet and urge us to put pressure on the administration during the insurgency. The local member of the constituent assembly used to solicit suggestions.

If the water is wasted at the head, people living lower down will not get water. I make it a point to close the taps when I see water being wasted. I consider this to be a citizen's duty. Some amount of awareness is already there. The youth, women and Janajatis must be given lessons, shouting only will not help. It is necessary to make the citizens aware. This issue must be included in the curriculum and seminars must be organized in different places to raise awareness. If we go to the *lekh* (higher altitude) area and ask for direction people run away. Some male members of parliament misused their privilege by claiming money for medicines only prescribed for women. It is my hope that they will be made aware. The parties are exploiting local people. I am willing to join any demonstration against them.

Shiva Raj Dahal-We can offer suggestions but the power to implement them lies with the others. The power belongs to the political parties. If the people are aware, pressure can be applied on the leaders.

Dhana Thapaliya- It is hard to convince people who act as if they are asleep. We cannot wake them up.

Shiva Raj Dahal-At present only those who carry the bags of their seniors can become leaders. But true leaders are those with vision and the ability to see ten years ahead. Only civic education can help produce such leaders.

Tika Ram Giri- Are the intellectuals of Nepal providing good quality advice?

Shiva Raj Dahal-Most of the intellectuals of Nepal are not independent. Those who do not have party connections are not in the limelight. If we had requested TV channels to cover this program they would not have come here. The media does not cover positive events. They do not highlight the good work of the communities. This is a transitional period. During the Panchayat period, some people were Congress and some were communists. They would not help the government. During the period of Maoist government also the same thing happened. Intellectuals have to raise awareness. Intellectuals should rise above party lines and be able to independently sketch out a certain vision. They should be able to fearlessly tell the government with whom they sympathize whether its actions are right or wrong. But at present if they are requested to raise certain issues with the party they reply that the suggestions given are not practical.

Tika Ram Giri-It is necessary to provide civic education to those persons who are members of political parties.

Shiva Raj Dahal-In foreign countries it is compulsory to teach civic education. The government and the NGOs should give stress to this subject. The political parties should decide how to provide training on this issue. The first priority is that civic education should find a place in the manifestos of all political parties. At present all parties tend to stress that only their parties are right. Many people do not know the duties and responsibilities that come with citizenship. They tend to view politics as a dirty game. Politics will give better results if it is properly handled.

We have learnt many things from you. We will take these issues to other people. We have spent some money on this program. If important leaders had come here a big crowd would have gathered. They could then have provided some lessons on civic education. Civic education can succeed if it is started from the ward level.

Tika Ram Giri-Do you hold programs only in places which are connected to the road-network? Do you hold programs in places where there are no roads?

Shiva Raj Dahal- This institution was established in 1990. Professors of Tribhuvan University, who have spent time writing and thinking of the problems of the country, take time off their busy schedule to participate in this program. Prior to '46 only Indian books on this subject could be found. To some extent books published by NEFAS has been able to replace the Indian books. Thirty-five books have been included in the MA curriculum. This organization is staffed by volunteers. Money is raised through the sale of books. This organization is not run with a profit motive. We will incorporate your ideas in the book and convey them to responsible people. This organization was formed to institutionalize *loktantra*.

Professor Ram Kumar Dahal-As you all know this program has been organized by NEFAS. Both Ananda Shrestha and I are professors. The chief of NEFAS Mr. Ananda Shrestha does not receive any pay. Others also do not receive pay. I found that twenty-five books published by NEFAS were kept in one of Europe's main library. They are referred to in text-books recommended in European universities. I have been to all the seventy-five districts of Nepal. I have been to places where one needs to walk for two to three days to reach the destination. I came here today because it is a holiday and I do not have to teach. I do not receive any pay. This is a non-political organization. It does not have capital, we provide our labor. The Director does not receive any pay. Its source of income comes from books. Some books had to be reprinted. It has a small office. It has reached forty districts. This organization is engaged in purely intellectual endeavor and no foreign money is involved.

Bina Parajuli- If your income comes from limited source, why do you provide food to the participants? The money saved could be invested in something useful. It could be utilized to support an orphanage.

Shuva Raj Dahal-Every institution has its own perspective. FES depends on funds generated by levying entry fees on those visiting a museum. Fifty seminars can be held outside Kathmandu for the cost of organizing a single seminar in Kathmandu. People come to participate in the seminars by traveling for two to three hours. We thought it necessary to provide them with a simple meal.

Bina Parajuli-We have to travel for seven hours to reach some schools and come back. Please use the money for some other purpose.

Shiva Raj Dahal- Nobody here asked us how much we get. In other places this is the first question we are queried about. If an environment is created in which people do not expect inducements, we would be glad to run programs on the basis of small amounts donated by the local people. Civic education is needed to create such an environment. This will then reduce the culture of dependency.

Professor Ram Kumar Dahal-In some places people have even told us they would provide the food but in return the leaders should be given lessons on civic education.

Shiva Raj Dahal-The leaders will not come to Dhading if invited for the seminar. If they come they will do so by helicopter. The intellectuals should exercise freedom of judgment even if they are affiliated to a particular political party. But if they feel they do not need to listen to other viewpoints they are only being deceitful. Thought should be given on how the culture of stone-throwing has developed (*dhunge sanskriti*). We have to ponder how to discourage any tendency towards balkanization when the country becomes a federal state. The federal system has both good and bad aspects. Many people at present do not know what a constituent assembly is. Eighteen lakh citizens living outside the country do not have a say in what is being decided. Agencies take five lakh rupees for sending people to Japan, U.S.A. and U.K. The impact of the eighteen lakh is not felt in the constituent assembly. It would be a positive thing if we move to the federal system without breaking up the country. If we are not able to fight for our encroached lands we have to think about how to internationalize the issue.

The leaders and intellectuals must give attention to the negative aspects. In some parts of Terai the Pahadis cannot show their face. In the hills Janajatis issues are coming to the fore. Nepal is a multi-ethnic country. Everyone must be able to live with dignity. *Dhunge Sanskriti* may lead to trouble. During the first and second world war large number of youths left to fight. We call them brave people. The Ranas encouraged this exodus to minimize the chances of trouble in Nepal and this helped prolong their rule.

Sundas Shrestha-How can you convince others that the country will not disintegrate once it becomes a federal state? Some countries have not broken down by adopting the federal system. But here the flag and the constitution of the country are being burnt. How are we to provide a guarantee that the country will not disintegrate? The police are not able to ensure law and order. There are courts but their role is questioned. Threats of impeachment are made. The administration apparatus is there but good governance is absent in general. The CDOs can be transferred at will. Civic education is the remedy. In any discussions as this, we have to ask the experts for answers to these questions.

Ram Kumar Dahal-You have asked a difficult question. It is hard to convince people that the federal system will not disintegrate the country. The major parties support this move while the others are against it. Opinion has divided into two sides. The present constitution has already said that Nepal is a federal state. The train has thus already left the platform. Only the small parties are against it. We have to try to identify the defects of the federal system and then try to minimize it. This is the most we can do since the train has already left the station. Those who speak against the system are labeled as reactionaries by the Maoists. The only alternative is to minimize its negative effects.

Shiva Raj Dahal- We are at present living in global village. Our export sector is small and we have budget deficits. We are surrounded by two big neighbors. What will happen if the country is divided at a time when we need to be competitive? We have been cheated our claims to patent rights of some products. An American company sought to register Basmati rice as Taxmati rice. India opposed this move and the process was stopped. We have not been able to register our herbs with the patent office. We all need to move forward together.

Chairman Purshottam Das Shrestha- We would like to thank you all for listening and participating with patience. It has become late. The ladies can now leave.

Shiva Raj Dahal- For the implementation part to be effective a strong organization is needed. One man used to ferry sand on his bicycle along the Nepal-India border right past the

police post. This routine went on for four years. One day he treated the security officials with sweets. When they asked him the reason for the celebration the cyclist replied that they had been kind to him. He told them that they noticed him ferrying sand but his real business was smuggling cycles into Nepal. I have built a house with that earning he further explained. It is necessary to staff organizations with competent people not relatives. Sierra Leone is rich in diamonds but it is not strong while Japan is poor in terms of resources but it is rich. Nepal is rich in natural resources but she is poor. We exchanged views, if you have additional suggestions sir will provide the telephone number.

Chairman Purshottam Das Shrestha- Today NEFAS has organized this program to understand what the people feel about the current problems. I would like to thank them for organizing the program. We have been able to understand the feelings to some extent. Our country is the main thing. The different systems are only the means. We have been through hundred and three years of Rana rule, thirty years of the Panchyat system, multiparty system and a major political change in '63. We are now passing through a transitional stage. A constituent assembly has been elected. We have not reached a conclusion on what sort of constitution would be useful for the people. The people are confused.

The question of civilian supremacy has raised difficult questions. The people are not able to speak against the wrongs committed by the political parties because of political pressure. The expenses incurred in the constituent assembly must be scrutinized. An independent media is a must. They must be able to print abuses committed by any party. Until then the situation in the country will not improve. Ways to correct the wrong moves of the political parties must be found. It seems every citizen is affiliated to a political party. They do not speak even if their party commits a wrong. Every citizen must become aware and be able to voice his opinion. In my opinion the adoption of a federal system with the right to self-determination will lead to the break-up of the country. If the Terai imposes a blockade we will not be able to get vegetables. What will happen to the hill people? People are working against the constitution. The parties and everybody else must be sincere. Until then the constitution will not be worth the paper it is written on. The law and the constitution must be adhered to sincerely. Otherwise the law will not be strong even after the constitution is made.

People freely and in a definite manner expressed their opinion. Please ask the leadership why six hundred and one constituent assembly members are required for around thirty million people. It seems the party is bigger than the country. The parties are proceeding in a wrong direction. The parties need to work for the country. Even though we are not important people, the thoughts expressed here reflect the people's feelings. We would like to thank you for the trouble you took to come here. May you succeed in the goal you have set for yourself.

Shiva Raj Dahal-I would like to thank Navaraj Adhikari for his help. We hope to meet again next time.

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