

# EMERGENCE AND EXPERIMENTATION OF REPUBLICANISM IN NEPAL'S SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE

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**Abstract.** The transition of Nepal from a centuries-old monarchy to a republican system in 2008 marks a significant turning point in the nation's political history. The study aims to explore the emergence and development of republicanism in Nepal, focusing on the historical and political processes that led to the transition from a monarchy to a republic in 2008. The study employs a qualitative research design, utilizing historical documents, government records, academic publications, and interviews with political analysts and historians. The data were analyzed using an explanatory method to identify key factors and events shaping Nepal's republicanism. The study revealed the transition from monarchy to a republican system was driven by decades of political instability, public discontent, and the rise of the Maoist movement. The results highlight the critical role of the People's Movement of 2006 and the eventual collaboration between Maoists and parliamentary parties in dismantling the 240-year-old Shah dynasty. The study also underscores the need for sustained political reforms, transparent governance, and effective leadership to prevent a recurrence of the instability and disillusionment that fueled past uprisings and conflicts.

**Keywords:** *monarchy, People's Movement, Maoist insurgency, democracy, Shah dynasty, political instability*

## Introduction

The republican form of governance is one of several systems practised globally, shaped by a nation's unique history, traditions, and level of public consciousness. Over time, countries have adopted various political structures, with many transitioning from monarchies to republics (Khanal, 2016). In Nepal, the monarchy was the predominant governance system from the country's inception, alternating between periods of absolute and constitutional rule. A pivotal moment occurred in 1951 when the revolution reinstated power to the king, previously held by the Rana oligarchy (Nepal, 1998). The People's Movement of 1990 marked another significant shift, leading to the establishment of a constitutional monarchy. Despite this change, the royal palace resisted reforms, attempting to retain control. However, these efforts clashed with the growing demand for republicanism, a sentiment that had simmered since 1951. The 2006 People's Movement and the subsequent declaration of Nepal as a republic marked the culmination of decades-long efforts to transition away from monarchy. The term "republic" originates from the Latin phrase *res publica*, where *res* means "thing" or "matter," and *publica* refers to "public" or "people." Thus, a republican system of government is defined by the active participation of the people in political life, with no single ruler or form of government dominating. In a republic, public engagement in governance is essential, and the head of state is elected by the people. Key

characteristics of a republic include sovereignty, federation, autonomy, and the protection of fundamental rights (Baral, 2009).

Scholars have offered diverse interpretations of the concept of a republic. Elmer Demis posited that "cowards can never bring about a republic," emphasizing the need for courage in establishing such a system. Nancy Medford provided a more critical perspective, comparing an autocracy within a republic to "a chicken with its head cut off-neither alive nor still, but dead." Franklin Pearce, on the other hand, argued that "a republic without a party is complete nonsense" (Shikha and Rijal, 2024). These perspectives highlight that, while a republic may take various forms of governance, it consistently ensures that the highest offices are occupied by individuals elected by the people, embodying the principle of popular sovereignty. Nepal transitioned to a republican system of government only in 2008, marking a significant shift in the country's political structure. Despite this change, the concept of republicanism remains relatively novel and is still undergoing a process of adaptation and testing. This study aims to fill a critical gap in the existing literature, as few comprehensive analyses have thoroughly examined republicanism in the Nepali context. For approximately 250 years, Nepal operated under a unitary monarchy, and before that, it was fragmented into smaller principalities. The nation, long accustomed to monarchic governance, did not seriously entertain the idea of a republican system until the late 20th and early 21st centuries. As a result, discussions within Nepali books, newspapers, and social media have not sufficiently communicated the potential advantages of republicanism over the traditional monarchy (Manandhar and Sharma, 1996). This underscores the need for a deeper understanding of the republic's implications for governance and society in Nepal.

The issue of republicanism gained prominence in Nepal following the Maoists' ceasefire in 1995. The political climate further intensified in 2001, after the assassination of King Birendra's family and the subsequent ascension of his brother, Gyanendra Shah, to the throne. Allegations implicating King Gyanendra in the killings fueled public dissatisfaction with the monarchy, contributing to the growing discontent. This dissatisfaction culminated in a stronger push for republicanism, which gained considerable momentum during the People's Movement of 2006 (Basnet, 2019). As a result, republicanism has emerged as a pivotal topic of debate among Nepali citizens. Despite this, there remains a notable lack of in-depth research on the country's transition to republican governance. This study seeks to fill that gap by investigating the rise of republicanism in Nepal and exploring the nation's experiences with this new form of governance.

## **Materials and Methods**

This study utilizes a qualitative research design to explore the emergence and development of republicanism in Nepal's governance system, which transitioned from a monarchy that lasted nearly two millennia to a republic in 2008. The research aims to understand the historical and political processes that led to the establishment of the republican system, with a particular focus on the role of the Maoist political party, which led to a decade-long insurgency and supported the People's Movement of 2006. Data collection was conducted over more than two months, drawing on a variety of secondary sources. These included historical documents, government records, academic publications, and reports from non-governmental organizations, all of which provided

critical insights into the political dynamics, events, and key figures involved in the transition from monarchy to republic. Additionally, interviews were conducted with political analysts, historians, and key participants in the events to gain a deeper understanding of the context and motivations behind the shift. The data were analyzed using an explanatory method, which enabled the interpretation of the causes, processes, and outcomes of Nepal's transition to republicanism. This approach facilitated the exploration of the complex interplay of historical, political, and social factors that influenced the governance shift. The analysis identified patterns, themes, and critical turning points that were pivotal in the establishment of the republican system. All references and in-text citations adhere to the APA 7th edition style, ensuring academic rigour and proper acknowledgement of sources throughout the research.

## Results and Discussion

While the establishment of monarchy in Nepal is believed to date back nearly two thousand years, the concept of republicanism only emerged about fifty years ago. The origin of the term "Nepal" is thought to be derived from the Neep tribe, regarded as the founding dynasty of Nepal. The ancient history of Nepal's monarchy is linked to the Gopal dynasty, whose members bore the surname 'Neep,' indicating that the name 'Nepal' likely evolved from this lineage. In ancient Nepal, various forms of governance and social organization existed among different castes and groups. The Gopalvanshi Neep Ganjatis and Mahishpal Ganjatis inhabited areas such as Tistung, Palung, Thankot, Valambu, Kisipidhi, and Kirtipur, all located around the Kathmandu Valley. Concurrently, the Lichchhavi, Shakya, and Koliya groups, who migrated into the valley from the Madhes region, settled near the Bagmati, Bishnumati, and Rudramati rivers (Nepal, 1998). Nepal's unification has occurred multiple times throughout its history, with notable examples demonstrating elements of federalism and republicanism. King Mandev, for instance, unified Nepal by subjugating conquered territories while allowing them a degree of autonomy, provided they paid taxes. This approach reflected a blend of centralized authority and local independence. Similarly, King Mukunda Sen of Palpa expanded his realm into a vast kingdom. The Kirats of Palpa, located east of the Sen territories, accepted subordination to the Sen kingdom yet retained self-governance. These historical examples suggest that the governance structures in early Nepal were not characterized by the autocratic and dynastic monarchy seen in later periods (Karki, 2012). The absence of hereditary rule among the Kirats further implies the influence of federalism and republicanism in their region.

With the unification of Nepal by King Prithvi Narayan Shah of Gorkha, the fragmented regions of the country were consolidated into a unified, centralized, and unitary state, effectively diminishing the prospects for federalism or a republic. The subsequent rise of the Rana regime in 1846, marked by the Kot Massacre, ushered in an era of autocratic rule. The Ranas' governance was characterized by power struggles and internal scandals, aimed at securing privileges within their regime rather than promoting republicanism or federalism. Prior to 2006, movements in 1951, 1980, and 1990 were not explicitly focused on the establishment of a republic, as the political demands of those periods did not centre on republican governance. However, these movements indirectly paved the way for the eventual republican movement in Nepal. In this context, Ramraja Prasad Singh's claim that the 1985 bomb blast was motivated by the cause of republicanism (Baral, 2009) is validated as part of the broader historical

trajectory towards the eventual establishment of a republic. The autocratic and repressive nature of the Rana regime spurred a significant movement against its rule in 1951. While some aspects of this movement aimed at societal reforms, others were focused on securing political rights. Regardless of their specific goals, these movements played a crucial role in raising political consciousness among the Nepali populace. The 1951 revolution, in particular, can be understood as a pivotal moment aimed at ending the Rana autocracy, restoring the monarchy's authority, and laying the foundation for the establishment of a democratic system of governance.

Before the 1930s, there were sporadic movements against Rana rule in Nepal, but these efforts lacked significant momentum. However, the Nepali Congress took a decisive step by initiating an armed resistance against the Rana regime following the Bairagian Conference (Basnet, 2019). A key moment in this struggle occurred when King Tribhuvan abandoned the royal palace, intensifying the movement. The armed revolution of 1951 soon gained nationwide traction, with significant uprisings including the Muktisena movement, the Biratnagar labour movement, and the movements in the western region, Bhojpur, and the Kathmandu Valley. India played a direct role in the revolution, culminating in the Delhi Agreement a tripartite accord involving the king, the Rana regime, and the Nepali Congress. This agreement marked the end of the armed struggle, ushering in a new political era for Nepal. Following the 1951 revolution, Nepal entered a modern political phase, setting the stage for future democratic developments.

### ***Proclamation of democracy by King Tribhuvan***

The movement against Rana rule culminated in the signing of the Delhi Accord, leading to significant political changes in Nepal. As a result of the accord, King Tribhuvan returned to Nepal in 1951. On February 18, 1951, he made a proclamation that is regarded as a foundational moment in the history of Nepalese democracy. The proclamation stated:

"And since it is our wish and decision now that the government of our people should be by the republican constitution formulated by a constituent assembly elected by them..." (Gautam, 1988)

In the royal proclamation of February 18, 1951, the term "republican constitution" was notably mentioned. The declaration's reference to a republican constitution, which implies governance without a monarchy, invites further research and analysis. Koirala (1983), in his autobiography, provides insights into the context and developments leading to this proclamation, shedding light on the complexities of this historical moment.

"What did someone say when translating 'democracy'? What did they say? I meant to say 'democracy,' but I forgot and said 'republic.' Everyone said, 'Okay, okay,' in that announcement, the translation of 'democracy' became 'republic.' But that 'republic' is not a republic. There is one more thing: it was agreed that the English term should prevail when there is a conflict between the two terms. I remember this"

Some historians have even replaced the word "republic" with "democratic system" in the royal declaration and wrote it as follows:

"In the royal declaration of King Tribhuvan, the word 'republican' is used instead of 'democratic.' However, this word seems to have been mistakenly used by the person preparing the speech. This is evident from using the word 'democratic' in the English translation of the royal declaration" (Manandhar and Sharma, 1996)

The political implications of the royal proclamation of February 18, 1951, are subject to scrutiny. The terminology used in the announcement, including the reference to a "republican constitution," was not likely chosen haphazardly. It is improbable that the term "republic" was used in the Nepali translation of "democracy" by mistake, given the careful deliberation of experts involved in drafting and reviewing the declaration (Thapa, 2015). Moreover, as the King of Nepal issued declarations on behalf of the Nepali people, the document would conventionally have been written in Nepali. The suggestion that the term "republic" was a mere error appears unconvincing. Evidence from the king's subsequent actions indicates that the declaration of a republic was likely a deliberate strategy. This is supported by his actions to gradually consolidate power while weakening the republican aspects of the governance structure. The elections held under the 1959 Constitution were conducted not to establish a republic but to implement an active monarchical democracy with the king at its helm. The removal of the idea of a Constituent Assembly from political discourse further suggests that the notion of a republic was strategically employed to achieve political objectives rather than to initiate genuine republican governance (Manandhar and Sharma, 1996).

### ***Attitudes towards republicanism of political parties***

Following the end of the Rana rule in Nepal, the country embarked on the development of a democratic system of governance. This transition prompted diverse political perspectives regarding the preferred form of government. Various political parties debated whether Nepal should adopt a republican or a monarchical constitution. The viewpoints of these political parties are outlined below.

### ***Republicanism and Nepali congress***

On October 31, 1946, during the movement against the Rana regime, Koirala (1983) led the establishment of an organization known as the 'Akhil Bharatiya Nepali National Congress' in Banaras, with the involvement of several Nepali individuals. Subsequently, Koirala conducted visits to Banaras, Calcutta, Darjeeling, Assam, Dehradun, and other locations to further the organization's objectives. In this context, a significant party convention was held on January 25 and 26, 1947, at Khalsa High School in Bhawanipur, Calcutta. Prominent Indian leaders, extended their best wishes to the convention. During this session, the organization's name was officially changed from 'Akhil Bharatiya Nepali National Congress' to 'Nepali National Congress,' reflecting a shift in its focus and identity. Koirala (1983) led the organization intending to establish a government accountable to the people through peaceful means, under the legitimate leadership of the Maharajadhiraj (Adhikari, 2002). Following the merger of the Nepali National Congress and the Nepali Democracy Congress, Koirala (1983) issued a manifesto outlining the organization's stance. Although the Nepali Congress initially supported armed conflict, its founding manifesto in 1949 articulated the following principles:

"The goal of the Nepali Congress is clear. It will establish the responsible governance of the people under the legitimate leadership of Maharajadhiraj. The autocratic monarchy has deprived Maharajadhiraj of personal freedom like others. We want to free him from the current state of captivity and put him in the position of the head of the state. But even doing this, we do not want to give him more authority than a de facto ruler" (Thapa, 2015)

The Nepali Congress, from its inception, did not align with the republican ideology. This divergence likely influenced the king's decision not to proceed with the Constituent Assembly that had been announced. Instead, he amended the interim constitution and progressively shifted from an active monarchy towards autocracy. The internal conflicts and divisions within the Nepali Congress, along with ineffective programs, impeded the full realization of the Constituent Assembly and democratic principles. King Mahendra, leveraging his political acumen, effectively undermined the calls for a Constituent Assembly and promulgated the 1959 Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal. Following the elections, in which the Nepali Congress won a limited number of seats and formed the government, the king utilized Article 55 of the constitution to imprison the head of government (Adhikari, 2002). Subsequently, the Nepali Congress was banned, and many of the achievements gained in 1951 were effectively reversed. Between 1960 and 1976, the Nepali Congress officially supported a constitutional monarchy. However, the party's actions often contradicted its official position, as evidenced by its antagonistic behaviour towards the monarchy, including instances of bomb attacks. While such actions might be expected from a republican faction, they were at odds with the party's declared stance. Despite this, B.P. Koirala maintained a relationship with the king, even though he was known for his anti-communist views and reluctance to cooperate with the Left. Following Koirala's death, Ganesh Man Singh collaborated with Leftist forces to dismantle the autocratic Panchayat system in 1990 and to establish a constitutional monarchy. Some scholars suggest that had B.P. Koirala lived longer, he might have actively engaged in the republican movement, as he had previously discussed the potential end of the monarchy and the establishment of democracy (Dhakal, 1992).

The 1991 Constitution established Nepal as a constitutional monarchy. However, those who had long benefited from the monarchy's traditional privileges found it challenging to accept this transformation. Political parties also struggled to align with the shifting public sentiments, leading to widespread frustration and growing tensions within the palace. This discontent was exacerbated by dissatisfaction with the political parties' actions. Amidst this volatile environment, the Royal Palace massacre on June 1, 2001, resulted in the elimination of King Birendra's lineage. This tragic event eroded public confidence in the monarchy. In the wake of the massacre, King Gyanendra dissolved the elected government and assumed direct rule (Thapa, 2015). Consequently, even the Nepali Congress, which had historically supported a constitutional monarchy, began to reconsider its position, sparking internal debates about the transition to a republican system. During the Eleventh Congress, held from August 30 to September 2, 2005, the Nepali Congress adopted a strategy to unequivocally oppose the monarchy and advocate for the establishment of a Constituent Assembly. The party removed the provision for a constitutional monarchy from its constitution, signalling a significant shift in its stance. Similarly, at its Congress held from January 5 to 7, 2006, the Nepali Congress (Democratic) declared a neutral position toward the monarchy. This evolution reflects the broader shift in political dynamics, which compelled the Nepali Congress,

historically a proponent of constitutional monarchy and multi-party democracy, to move towards republicanism. Despite this shift, the monarchy was reluctant to accept the change. When Revati Raman Khanal, the king's chief secretary, urged the king to treat all parties equitably, many leaders of the Nepali Congress, including Girija Prasad Koirala, adopted anti-monarchical positions. It is suggested that Girija Prasad Koirala's transition to republicanism was influenced more by political pragmatism and personal ambition than by ideological conviction (Khanal, 2016). His subsequent efforts to become the first president of the Republic further indicate that personal ambition may have played a more significant role than adherence to republican ideals.

### ***Republican and Nepal communist party***

Communist principles were not introduced during the early phases of imperial rule in Nepal. The Communist Party could not establish itself before the Rana regime, as the Communist Manifesto, published in 1848, came into existence only two years after the Kot Massacre. The 104-year autocratic Rana regime was not conducive to the operation of communist ideology (Koirala, 1983). Nevertheless, towards the end of the Rana period, communist literature began to infiltrate Nepal through secret channels. Pamphlets, books, and newspapers from the Russian Communist Party were distributed covertly. Nepali soldiers who served with the British during World War I were instrumental in introducing information about the Communist Party to Nepal. Initially, this information was limited to reports of the proletarian socialist revolution occurring in Russia, but it gradually spread throughout the country. In 1940, the Rana government conducted a raid on Gangalal's residence, resulting in the seizure of communist literature. At the time, Gangalal was a student at Trichandra College. The Koirala family engaged in extensive discussions about the Russian Bolshevik Revolution and Lenin (Koirala, 1983). Additionally, Viharilal of Kathmandu became known for his role in distributing communist literature. Around 1942, the 'Akhil Nepal Varg Mahasabha' was established in Darjeeling, India. This organization aimed to generate revolutionary literature and formed the Second Armed Forces Bloodshed Committee (Upreti, 1984). The Committee was notable for its early advocacy of a republican system in Nepal, referring to it as the "Republic of Nepal Jindawad," and drew inspiration from the British republican leader Cromwell.

Similarly, Prem Bahadur Kansakar, a founding member of the Nepal Democratic Union, identified himself as Nepal's first communist. He contended that genuine liberation for Nepal could only be achieved through a revolutionary party akin to the Russian Bolshevik Party. Driven by communist ideals, various small organizations emerged sporadically. These early Nepali communists were significantly influenced by the Bolshevik Revolution and sought societal transformation. Among these groups were communist workers from the Biratnagar Jute Mills, who initiated movements to secure their rights. Despite their efforts, there was no cohesive program to promote the idea of a republic. The post-World War II era witnessed a global wave of socialist revolutions. The decline of the British Empire in India, the advent of democratic systems, and the socialist revolution in China inspired anti-Rana sentiments in Nepal. Consequently, the Nepal Communist Party was established, and its manifesto was issued on September 15, 1949, in Calcutta, India (Gurung, 2000). The Communist Party's principles included anti-monarchy, advocacy for a republic, and support for a people's republic. The founding declaration included the following statement:

"In active collaboration with the global populist camp, the goal is to completely abolish the existing feudal system and the imperialist capitalist rule in Nepal and to establish a democratic state for the working people under the leadership of the working class. This means creating a state system where the people will own the nation's wealth and develop it for their benefit. The struggles of the victorious socialist countries, such as the Soviet Union, the people's democratic states of Eastern Europe, New China, and North Korea, provide this inspiration".

The political concept of the Communist Party is clear from the above statement. While it calls for the political objectives of the Communist Party, as reflected in its foundational statement, are explicit in advocating for the abolition of the monarchy. While the statement does not explicitly call for the end of the Shah dynasty, it unequivocally supports the dismantling of the feudal system and the eradication of imperialist and capitalist influences in Nepal. The statement affirms the establishment of a republic as an ultimate goal. Despite their theoretical commitment to republicanism, some members of the Communist Party in Nepal deviated from these principles during certain periods. Following the political developments after 1951, which included the failure to hold a Constituent Assembly election, the prohibition of the Communist Party, and increased royal activities, the party began to accommodate political democracy and recognize the legal authority of the king. This shift resulted in the emergence of two distinct factions within the Communist Party: one faction supported a legal monarchy and multi-party democracy, while the other remained steadfast in its commitment to republicanism, aligning with broader global communist movements.

The central debate at the Second Congress of the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) revolved around whether to endorse a constitutional monarchy or a republic. The Royal Proclamation of 1960 and the subsequent establishment of the Panchayat system precipitated a significant rift within the CPN. The lack of consensus on how to address the royal actions led to an inconclusive plenum meeting, resulting in a notable weakening of the party's push for republicanism. Following the 1980 referendum, the Panchayat's purported respect for minority votes was contradicted by its actual policies. Various factions within the Communist Party, including those from the Chautho Mahadhibesan (Fourth Congress), Mashal, and Ekta Kendra, continued to advocate for republicanism. The People's Movement of 1990 culminated in the dissolution of the Panchayat system and the adoption of a multi-party democracy with a constitutional monarchy. However, disagreement persisted within the Left Front, as another faction within the National People's Movement argued for the establishment of a republic and a Constituent Assembly. In 1995, the CPN-Maoists, dissatisfied with the multi-party system, opted for an armed struggle. This movement marked a pivotal shift in Nepali politics, steering the country away from constitutional monarchy towards republicanism.

### ***Massacre of King Birendra's family and declining monarchical support***

Following the People's Movement of 1990, King Birendra adhered to a constitutional monarchy and cooperated with political parties. Despite this, some palace members were dissatisfied and covertly opposed the multi-party system (Subedi, 2012). The June 1, 2001, palace massacre, which resulted in the deaths of King Birendra and his family, intensified scrutiny and debate surrounding the monarchy. This tragedy contributed to a growing decline in public confidence in the institution. After ascending the throne, King



Gyanendra transitioned towards an active monarchy amid declining trust in the palace. On October 4, 2002, he dismissed the elected Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and assumed direct rule. This move deepened the rift between the king and political parties. Gyanendra manipulated the formation and dissolution of governments, showing disregard for political parties while favouring former Panchas such as Lokendra Bahadur Chand, Surya Bahadur Thapa, Kirtinidhi Bista, and Tulsi Giri. With the consolidation of executive power, political repression intensified, leading to the detention of party leaders and activists and fostering an atmosphere of fear.

### ***People's movement of 2006***

Before 1990, Nepal was dominated by three key powers: the Darbar (royal palace), the Nepali Congress, and the Left. The 1990 alliance between the Nepali Congress and the Left led to the establishment of a constitutional monarchy. However, after 1995, the political landscape shifted with the involvement of the king, parliamentarians, and the Maoists. Alliances between any two of these forces typically weakened the third. Until King Gyanendra's ascension, the king and parliamentary parties collaborated to isolate the Maoists. In 2001, as parliamentary parties sought negotiations with the Maoists, the latter insisted on direct talks with the king, bypassing the party system and undermining the parliamentary framework (Thapa, 2012). This strategy allowed the palace to consolidate power. Following the king's regression, parliamentary parties distanced themselves from the palace and engaged more closely with the Maoists. The Maoists, labelled as 'terrorists' both nationally and internationally due to their violent tactics, began to reassess their strategy. Negotiations led by Dharendra Shah (Shah, 2011) were unsuccessful, but over time, the Maoists moved away from the palace and sought rapprochement with other political forces. During this period, parliamentary parties, which had previously considered the Maoists their primary adversary, began to view the king as their main opponent. The Maoists, recognizing this shift, saw an opportunity to align with the parliamentary parties to challenge the monarchy. Consequently, the Maoists and the parliamentary parties started collaborating against the king.

The Maoists articulated several key demands: the formation of an interim government, the scheduling of a Constituent Assembly election, and the convening of the Golmech Conference. These demands were eventually endorsed by the seven-party alliance, leading to a 12-point agreement between the Maoists and the seven parties. As political pressure on the royal palace intensified, the seven parties, initially focused on reforming the king's approach (Fuyal, 2013), expanded their agenda to include the establishment of a republican alternative in collaboration with the Maoists. Sudhir Sharma provides insights into how these developments unfolded:

"When the Maoists began the People's War, they initially aimed to fight alone and revolutionize the entire world. However, as they progressed, they realized that this goal was impractical. Cooperation with the royal palace did not advance as expected, nor did coordination with Delhi continue effectively. Although they occasionally gained tactical advantages from both Delhi and the royal palace, they did not receive the strategic support needed to bring the people's war to a decisive point. The Maoists were unable to capture Kathmandu by military means or to incite a widespread public uprising. They concluded that establishing a republic and achieving power was only possible through cooperation with the parliamentary parties" (Sharma, 2013).

The statement above underscores the profound shift in strategy by the Maoists, who initially opposed the parliamentary forces but eventually recognized the efficacy of political rather than militant solutions. The realization, albeit delayed, that the ballot could be more powerful than the bullet marked a significant turning point. Following the 12-point agreement between the seven parliamentary parties and the Maoists, the stage was set for the 2006 movement. This mass mobilization saw widespread participation from various sectors of society. After 19 days of intense demonstrations, King Gyanendra was compelled to announce on April 24, 2006, the restoration of the dissolved House of Representatives. This development provided a crucial platform for transitioning to a republic (Shah, 2011). Consequently, the monarchy was abolished, a republic was established, and elections for the Constituent Assembly were successfully conducted.

### ***Interim constitution of 2006***

On May 26, 2006, the Drafting Committee of the Interim Constitution was established under the coordination of then-Supreme Court Judge Lakshman Prasad Aryal, following an agreement between the Government of Nepal and the CPN (Maoist). The committee presented the Interim Constitution on August 25, 2006. This interim constitution, which included a House of Representatives with 330 members, was adopted as the first item of business at the inaugural meeting of the Interim Legislature-Parliament, which also included Maoist representatives. The Interim Constitution took effect on January 15, 2007 (Fuyal, 2013), officially declaring Nepal a federal democratic republic. Although the king was not assigned any formal role under the new constitution, all expenses related to him continued to be funded by the state.

### ***Proclamation of the republic***

On May 28, 2008, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala convened the first session of the Constituent Assembly at the Baneshwar International Convention Center at 11:00 AM. Despite initial arrangements, the meeting was delayed and rescheduled multiple times due to various issues, including the late arrival of key figures and security incidents, such as the detonation of two bombs outside the assembly building. The meeting, originally set for 11:00 AM, was eventually held at 9:17 PM. During this session, Home Minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula presented the proposal for the declaration of a republic, which had been submitted by Prime Minister Koirala. The proposal was approved with 560 votes in favour and 4 against (Fuyal, 2013). The swift declaration of the republic was influenced by several factors, including the Maoists' ongoing armed rebellion, Koirala's ambition to become Nepal's first president, and India's strategic interests in ending the monarchy (Shah, 2011). These elements reflect the complex and urgent circumstances surrounding the transition to a republican form of government. After the republic proposal was passed by the Constituent Assembly, the king naturally and peacefully left the Narayanhiti Palace and abdicated the throne, accepting the wishes and desires of the people. The Sri Pech and sceptre, symbols of the Shah dynasty's legacy, were handed over to the Government of Nepal for permanent safekeeping (Statement of King Gyanendra when he left Narayanhiti Palace on June 11, 2008). With the king's departure from the palace, the rule of the republicans continued in the country.

## Conclusion

The governance system of any nation should ideally reflect the will of its people, influenced by public awareness, international relations, and the collective desire for change. Historically, under oppressive regimes such as the brutal feudal system of the Middle Ages, people were dehumanized and commodified. However, rising consciousness and resistance against such oppression have demonstrated the supreme power of the people. In Nepal, political reforms have often been met with disillusionment when leaders failed to align with public expectations, leading to protests and eventual political upheavals. The persistent failure of powers that do not act by the people's wishes eventually paves the way for new leadership. In 1990, democracy was reinstated in Nepal, but political mismanagement by 1995 led to the emergence of the Maoist movement, which pursued an armed struggle for state power. Over the decade-long conflict, political alliances shifted frequently: sometimes the parliamentary parties aligned with the king against the Maoists, and at other times, the Maoists and the king collaborated to undermine the parliamentary system. This volatile period culminated in the end of the 240-year-old Shah dynasty when the Maoists and parliamentary parties united. The transition from monarchy to a republic marked a historic milestone for Nepal's political landscape. This study focuses on the struggle for a republican governance system and the eventual establishment of the republic in Nepal.

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## Conflict of interest

The authors confirm that there is no conflict of interest involve with any parties in this research study.

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