

Prospects of Middle Caste Politics in Contemporary Nepal

6 June 2019, Thursday

Chudamani Basnet, PhD

Department of Sociology, South Asian University, New Delhi, India

Abstract:

Taking clues from the middle caste and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) politics in north India, scholars have started wondering if Nepal, India's northern neighbor, will see a similar development. The formation of the Federal Socialist Forum (FSF) has been interpreted as an incipient development toward middle caste politics. Others have speculated that Nepal's demography provides a basis for such politics. Drawing on Christophe Jaffrelot's works in India, I investigate the problems and prospects of middle caste politics in Nepal. While accepting that middle caste politics, if successful, would pose the most credible challenge to the political domination of Hill high caste groups, I also argue that the case of Nepal is much more difficult and complex than that of northern India. New political alliances in Nepal and the electoral success of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in north India further adds to the complexity of middle caste politics.