


DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, Dr. Madhuri Sukhija, 2016 - 17

Chapter - The Election Narrative of Bhutan: Optimistic or Euphoria in Bhutan : Political transition and democratization

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The Election Narrative of Bhutan: Optimistic or Euphoric?

Madhuri Sukhija

Democracy is a great idea and probably the best, but one is unsure whether one has ever achieved it. If that is the dilemma that some of the older and more successful democracies face, then what to talk of Bhutan that has just stepped into the club of democratic nations. Backed by a monarchy as well as an over enthusiastic public, the electoral procedures that Bhutan embraced, did culminate in peaceful democratic elections but the buck does not stop here, challenges are a natural corollary of any nation transiting to a democracy and so, it is with Bhutan.

The year 2008 was indeed a historic year as the political scene was set to change forever. In fact it was on 31st December 2007, that the nation went to the polls for the first time for electing members of the National Council and subsequently for electing members to the National Assembly on 24th March, 2008. The first general elections, i.e. the National Assembly (Lower House) elections took place on 24th March, 2008 with a 79.4% voter turnout and a commitment by state institutions to support the democratic process thus providing a solid foundation for a credible democracy in Bhutan.¹

Constituencies

The Bhutanese electorate is composed solely of single member constituencies at both national and local levels. The National Assembly (Lower House) has a maximum of 55 members that are directly elected by Dangkhaq voters. Each Dangkhaq (District) must have between two and seven



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