Chapter 3

New Media and Its Role in Stabilizing Nepal: A Geopolitical Context

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ABSTRACT

Most scholars advocate that the people are seeking identity, and for this purpose, they are reinventing ethnicity to establish their ideology. So, they need opponents and create enmities. Among the civilizations, the sectorial powers that represent common ideology within the geography provoke extremism, and through religious and cultural pundits, the extremists are radicalized to disturb the entire world through terrorism.
New Media and Its Role in Stabilizing Nepal

Modern technology is revolutionizing how people receive information. Satellite technology is doing to television what the short-wave did to radio. The trans-national media is helping to shape public opinion and is influencing the decision making of public, business and military leaders in an unprecedented fashion. - Edmund Ghareeb

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the innovation of social media like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and many more other channels like YouTube, Google, Wikipedia and blog have changed our life styles and capacity to communicate each other. Now we can make our own websites and advertise in the cyber world where anybody can reach anytime and from anyplace. The limited sharing of information just a decade ago has now enabled us to communicate a large segment of society with minimum effort and less amount of expenditure. We can just recall the time of Gulf war, as what Edmund Ghareeb¹, during 1998-99 when Americans and British attacked Iraq, Saddam Husayn opted two influential but relatively new measures to counter them as pan-Arab satellite television networks—the Qatar based al-Jazeera and the London based Arab News Networks—to broadcast messages to the outside world. The other televisions used the footage as a part of al-Jazeera’s feed from Bagdad to their audience.

Accordingly, the situation in Nepal during Maoist rebellion was the same up to 2000 when most of the televisions were not satellite connected and internet was limited among the elites in Kathmandu. The situation has dramatically changed after the evolution of social media where people not only share but also post their views and make messages. In one side it has made us vibrant but other side we are becoming more arrogant to each other’s. In absence of sufficient laws and bylaws, and low will power to implement existing laws have deteriorated social tolerance against corruption, intimidation and malpractices. New media has empowered people in terms of transparency- at the other it has encouraged youths to become more violent.

At present, the popular predictions, assumptions, assertions are failing. Sometimes, we tend to forget that all the extremists are radicalized but not all the radicals are extremists. Why the society is becoming more radical? It is a matter of empirical research. But now, we will talk about information technology that has enabled us to reach to mass easily but the way we make messages that are not only leading us to become more radical and faulty but also dragging us into the controversy. Mostly the media messages of public concern are made and disseminated by power centers. The power centers run the media houses for their easy reach to the people. And, these media houses not only carry the commentary part of the incident but also they collate, integrate and synthesize the available information as an intelligence agency.

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