



Research Article

Light in the Dark: Thick and Thin Development during the Rana Period in Nepal

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Article Information

Received: 07 December 2024
Revised version received: 05 January 2025
Accepted: 06 January 2025
Published: 09 January 2025

Cite this article as:

R.M. Nepal (2025) *Int. J. Soc. Sc. Manage.* 12(1): xxx-xxx. DOI: [10.3126/ijssm.v12i1.73493](https://doi.org/10.3126/ijssm.v12i1.73493)

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Peer reviewed under authority of IJSSM
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Keywords: development; thick development; thin development; Mulki Ain; Nepal; Nepal-UK Peace, Friendship Treaty 1923

Abstract

In Nepalese political history, the Rana period (1846-1950) is characterized as a "dark age" representing the state of skimpy social, economic, and political changes. This article examines the period through modern development perspectives and explores if the politically dark period endured developmental lights. This objective is based on the assumption that development is a necessary as well as sufficient condition of any society in any historical context and, therefore, embedded in its social, economic, and political processes. This article applies a historical and analytical-interpretative approach to examine archival records obtained from various sources, including the TU-Central Library, Gorkhapatra Sansthan, CNAS-TU, and Department of Archeology, Nepal Government, and online databases. Collation of the documentary evidence reveals that the Rana period commenced and endured glimpses of development in perspectives and patterns. The era instituted a foundation of some significant socio-economic development in Nepal. Two concepts can better represent the trends in the period, namely, thick development and thin development. The thick development appears in reform initiatives undertaken by the Rana Regime while grassroots mobilizations represent thin development. This article concludes that in a combination of thick and thin developments, several flashlights qualified the Rana period, the so-called "dark age." The finding of this article also qualifies the term development. It implies that development transcends history, meaning that development is a historical concept. Any attempt to bracket development in timelines is questionable. It also reveals that development is primarily local, embedded in the specific ecological, social, economic and political contexts of a society.

Introduction

At least until a decade before, the concept of development used to hold very specific meanings such as 'a process that creates economic growth... a process of change towards positive direction' (Peet and Hartwick, 2009: 21). Nowadays, development appears as a multi-dimensional concept that is too complex to comprehend and understand. This deceptive concept explains most, if not all, of the events or activities in a society. It connotes many things,

e.g., the presidential election held in the United States of America, the restoration of peace in the Middle East, the operation of a factory in a city, a community gathering for forest management, a hospital, an education centre, etc. Any elite at any moment can ask: What is a new development going on? This tends to imply that development has become a common parlance of people and organizations. It stands for a new culture that guides people's worldviews as well as their acts and aspirations. In many instances, the concept

development becomes a connector, which links diverse social, economic, political and natural processes.

While the concept development appears common, it varies in form and practice (Ranis, 2004). There are varieties of development in academic as well as practical applications, such as mainstream development, alternative development, post-development, and post-post development (Pieterse, 2010). Besides these broad theoretical and conceptual categories, there are other forms of development depending upon contexts, usage, and ownership. Some common forms are modernization, dependent development, participatory development, sustainable development, human development, right-based development, regional development, rural development, and urban development (Pieterse, 2010).

This article does not intend to re-elaborate these developmental variations, nevertheless, it attempts to explain two concepts, namely, thick and thin development. These concepts are thematic representations of development patterns during the Rana Period (1846-1950) in Nepal, which I have explained below. Thus, thick and thin developments are the outcome of this study, which I would like to introduce here. I suppose these two concepts could incorporate explanations of development by the above-stated concepts and, at the same time, accommodate the ecological, social, economic, and political practices that they genuinely overlooked.

Thick Development

While analyzing social, economic, and political changes during the Rana Period, a distinct pattern emerges, which I call thick development. A thick development pattern represents organized state initiatives responding to foreign exposure and domestic grassroots pressures. These actions often reflect diverse policies, institutions and processes that are new and 'modern' to a society as well as embedded in some level of conceptual and theoretical explanations. The initiatives involve external resources, both human and physical, and attempt to meet society's long-term needs. Thick development represents technical and economic dimensions in a society. It reconstructs existing social and political dimensions in view of modifying them thus making them more and more complex. Thick development is deliberately planned change towards social, economic and political complexities. The more the integration across societies the thicker development pops up. Technology is the major factor in this process.

Thin Development

I explain a thin development as those social, economic, and political processes that are autonomous, spontaneous, and emerge out of a specific context in a course of social, economic, and political adaptation and change. Thin developments do not represent complex concepts, models, and theories; they are neither typically endogenous nor

exogenous. It seeks self-reliance in all aspects and aspires to meet livelihood requirements, individual freedom, and self-respect.

Development Studies in Nepal

Before exploring the thick and thin development during the Rana Period in Nepal, I would argue that the scope of development discourse transcends history, more specifically, the timeline of mainstream development. For this I would present a brief review of development studies in Nepal (Table 1).

The infancy of development studies in Nepal means that it merely lacks a systematic and coherent disciplinary analysis. As such, studies on trends and approaches in development thinking are significantly few. There are historical perspectives; however, they are contested and, in many instances, incomplete. A dominant view regarding developmental inception in Nepal is that it began with the formulation of the first periodic development plan in 1956 (Khanal, 2017). Even though the first plan succumbed to political transition and, unfortunately, was not implemented in a full-fledged manner, it marked a milestone in the history of economic development. Only after 1960, periodic plans were entirely operated. Yet, few studies trace development history from the era of democratic change in the 1950s (Pyakuryal, 2013). It was when Nepal first experienced democracy by ousting the Rana regime, and a new constitutional, social, and political order was set up. One of the outcomes of the change was the country's engagement with the international development system by receiving financial, advisory, and technical aid from foreign countries.

Recent trends in development studies projected that the eras in development thinking could go beyond 1950s. Their arguments vary with the frameworks of explanation being adopted. Taking capitalism as the conceptual outline, Mishra (2013) argued that Nepal's exposure to the capitalism paralleled the expansion of world's capitalistic system at the end of the nineteenth century in Europe. He opines that in connection to the British led world capitalist system Nepal benefitted much for its social and economic changes often not in linearity but with several vicissitudes. Some other studies (e.g. Regmi, 1999; Thapa *et al.*, 1997) tend to argue that development can also be tracked in ancient Nepal, specifically, before the country's unification in 1768. Some prospective contexts of the unification period have also been discussed. However, these explanations are merely economic and talk less about the modern concept of development in its totality.

Some other studies indicate that Nepal's political economy witnessed visible upturns in the middle of the nineteenth century. Drawing on the economic history of the period, Regmi (1999), Thapa (1995), and Thapa *et al.* (1994) explain that Nepal's economy flourished collectively after

the inception of the Rana regime in 1846. Pandey (2009) and Mishra (2013) argued that the Rana period could be a potential period while it is studied from social and economic perspectives. Yet, these studies do not reveal what perspectives and trends could be observed in the period.

Similar to Nepal, there are contested views of developmental inception in other parts of the world. Cowen and Shenton (1996) believed that development took its feet in the middle of the nineteenth century in the European soil. Authors argue that not economic but social doctrines of change were coming up from around the continents at the same time. Rist (2008) observes the birth of modern development in the middle of the twentieth century while tracing its antecedents back to ancient Greek society. Gasper (2004) visits even further past and finds 'development' in the context of the rise of man. He explains the time 1950 as the beginning of the global development era.

In this background, this study assumes that development is a necessary as well as sufficient condition of any society in any historical context. This is because development represents a concerted thick as well as thin ecological, social, economic, and political processes that aim to meet long term as well as short-term needs of society. Given this and given the infant state of development studies in Nepal, this article aims to explore patterns of social and economic change during the Rana Period (1846-1950).

Methods and Materials

This article applies historical as well as interpretative approaches to examine archival records obtained from various sources. The sources include TU-Central Library, Gorkhapatra Sansthan, CNAS-TU, and the Department of Archeology, Nepal Government. Online databases have also been accessed. The historical approach is meant to assess development in its multiple timelines, including the Rana Period (1846-1950), and the interpretative approach is meant to analyze social, economic, and political processes during the period in view of broad development trends.

The obtained documents were read multiple times, highlighting the keywords before line-by-line coding. This process was further complemented by line-by-line coding of the most useful sections of the documents. By aligning the codes, middle-level categories were developed, which included education, health, infrastructures, energy, social reforms, economic reforms, political reforms, law and order, policies, industrialization, inequality, gender, participation, etc. These categories were further aligned and re-aligned to generate higher-level themes, namely, thick development and thin development. In the end, the themes were analyzed descriptively and juxtaposed relevant literature wherever necessary.

Results and Discussion

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Nepal submitted itself to an authoritarian family rule based on a hereditary succession of the Prime Minister following the rise of the Rana regime in 1846. One of the soldiers serving in the state army, but from a noble family, Janga Bahadur Rana, consolidated the regime following bloodshed known as the Kot massacre. He set a hereditary succession of his family as powerful executive head of the country keeping the Shah Kings as rubber-stamp. The family rule survived until the middle of the twentieth century before it lost the battle against the first wave of democratization in 1950.

For this study, I examined the social, economic, and political processes in the Rana Period through modern developmental outlooks such as mainstream and alternative development. The result was that the change process in the period represented both paradigms, though disproportionately. Further gauging and practicing coding and re-coding of the information multiple times, I concluded that rather than adopting the existing concepts, themes such as thick development and thin development could better represent the social, economic and political processes of the period. I characterized both developmental initiatives as flash lights which I explain in detail below.

Thick Development in the Rana Period

Examining the coded information, a thick development pattern represents organized state initiatives, reflects diverse state policies and institutions, represents some level of conceptual and theoretical explanations, involves external resources, attempts to meet long-term needs, and technical and economic progress infused from external dimension. Introduction of Mulki Ain, modern education and health system, social policies, economic policies, infrastructure setup, foreign connection, and regional administration setup are the thick development patterns that appear in the Rana Period.

Mulki Ain: A Doctrine of Law and Order:

This thick light came up in the political maneuvering of the regime's initiator, Janga Bahadur Rana. In history, he represented a chequered personality for his bravery, nationalist sentiment, and despotic character. In terms of foreign relations, he solidified personal and national connections with the British regime through occasional friendship visits. Janga was the first to visit Europe as a Prince from South Asian subcontinent in 1850-51. Whelpton (1991) mentioned that purposes of his visit were to experience 'the law and order, progress, the revenue collection system' among others. It is believed that Junga's visit was also a compromise between the two countries that ensured, though un-written, British non-intervention, neither political nor economic and Nepal's military support for her upon demand. Yet, what he learned in Europe during the visit turned into thick development dimensions in Nepal.

In 1854, after eight years of his regime and two years after Europe's visit, Janga Bahadur Rana introduced Mulki Ain, a national civic code. The code was an outcome of the Law Council (Ain Kausal), a new legal institution founded with the aim of reviewing old laws and drafting new ones. The code was primarily intended to maintain an integrated order in the governance of plural culture. The original code had 163 chapters and covered about 1400 pages.

It is argued that the promulgation of the code by Janga Bahadur had an influence on his exposure to Europe in 1850-51, where he experienced the popularity of codes in Britain and France's governance. Dahal (2011) argued that he 'received an opportunity to examine the Napoleonic Code and the same Napoleonic Code closely was used as a prototype for drafting the Muluki Ain, 1854'. The code held significance due to its religious orientation that it was an intervention of Hindu orthodoxy into the religiously heterogeneous society and articulation of rigid caste hierarchy (Messerschmidt, 1981; Pradhan, 2005; Dahal, 2011). The provisions in the code further deepened the existing social division of labor based on caste hierarchy and patriarchy.

To its strength, Mulki Ain was the first politico-legal code to deal with day-to-day governance complementing religious doctrines, known as Shastras. It tends to imply that the society was changing from religiosity to a socio-political community. It resembled the arguments as discussed by the development historians that the advent of the idea of development was a transformation from God-centric perspectives to human-centric (Theories of Development). Broadly, Mulki Ain dealt with the civil and criminal procedures of rewards and punishment. Moreover, provisions such as land tenure, land survey, inheritance, and inter- and intra-caste relationships, among others, were also mentioned. Rules related to marriage, gambling, sexual intercourse, ammunition, looting, riot, dissent with the state, cheating, and killing of cows were part of the Ain.

Unlike Dibyopadesh¹, the Mulki Ain remained silent about the issues of the economy. Regarding land, its social dimensions, such as ownership and transfer, were nevertheless discussed with emphasis rather than its economic aspects, such as the generation of revenue in kind. It mentioned neither the importance of trade nor local production. It discussed less about foreign relations. The doctrine was also indifferent to the combined role of the people, society, and the state for any cause. It merely tended to be laws governing the state's role in maintaining proper legal order in society.

In its dimensions, Mulki Ain evolved as a legal instrument, creating social classes, hierarchies, and relationships. The

code institutionalized the unequal land tenure system by its provisions of rewards and punishment. The social groups, often closer to the Ranas, could get land in rewards. They could also get jobs in state institutions. It set a tradition of nepotism and favoritism in legal and administrative bodies. With reference to the code's provisions, the wealthier could subordinate the poor marginal social groups in terms of occupation, social practices, and occupancy of economic units. The code could affect gender inequality. Its orientation to orthodox Hindu belief in terms of pursuing marriage, labor, social practices, and economic assets was discriminatory to the female community. The provisions on marriage yielded power to the males, who could treat their female counterparts as subordinate partners.

In many respects, the code evolved as a religious means to legitimize the Rana regime. To its wider implications, it turned into a doctrine that instituted nepotism, favoritism, and sycophancy and discouraged entrepreneurialism in Nepali society.

Education and Health System:

Besides the legal code, education was the potential area of intervention. With this, the Sanskrit dominated domestic culture encountered English education. Janga established Durbar High School (an English School, 1853) and the Department of Education (1858), the first educational enterprise created by the state. Though education in the school was restricted to the Royal family members, it extended to society through the armies and employees who served in the palaces.

Blaikie, Cameroon, and Seddon (2007) admitted that in its development history the 1920s stands for the preliminary initiatives taken by Nepalese rulers to develop the productive potential of their situation by purchasing foreign expertise. There are some significant examples. Chandra Shamsher inaugurated the first-ever college in 1918 in Kathmandu, named Tri-Chandra College. Outside Kathmandu, English schools were established in Siraha, the Eastern region, and Bara, a Middle region, in 1915 and 1927, respectively.

In the fourth decade of the twentieth century, a notable reformist, Rana Prime Minister Juddha Shamsher, announced that he would make primary education universal and free and that schools could be run privately. It paved the way for establishing the first international board under the St. Xavier's School. By the end of Rana rule, primary schools, high schools, religious schools, and colleges were 310, 11, 40, and 2, respectively, in numbers (Thapa, 1995, p. 96). A weekly newspaper, Gorkhapatra, which is still a government-controlled media, began in the first year of the new millennium, 1901. A number of Bhasha Pathshalas

¹ Divyopadesh is a set of instructions, which King P.N. Shah, the Last King of the Gorkha Kingdom and the First

of the Kingdom of Nepal, delivered orally to his ministers and officials in Nuwakot before his death in 1775

(Sanskrit Schools) were opened up, which were meant for the public. The acts of state interventions continued and expanded in the periods of Janga's successors. In 1889, a modern hospital, named Bir Hospital (1889) was established in the heart of Kathmandu valley.

Industrial and Trade Policies:

In economic sectors, major initiatives in industrial development were taken during the third decade of the twentieth century. Earlier, no notable initiatives can be seen to mobilize local resources and get higher production. However, some preliminary steps were taken since the middle of the nineteenth century. A tea plantation scheme was designed in 1861 by Janga Bahadur Rana in the far eastern village of the present-day Ilam district. Prime Minister Bir Shamsheer loosened the policy of youth recruitment in the colonial British Army in pursuit of receiving financial benefits. Thousands of rupees had been accumulated by the Rana prime ministers by allowing youths to work compulsorily in 'colonial-war-industry' (KC, 2005). The act was also instrumental in mobilizing the migration of the people from the hills to convenient locations in the Hills, Tarai, and Valleys.

Some gradual shifts in the economy from mere units in the primary sector to power, service, and trade units were taking place in the first decade of the twentieth century. The country witnessed first hydropower scheme, one of the oldest in Asia. It was Pharping Hydropower (1911) with the capacity 500 KW, located 21 KM. from Kathmandu. The construction of Singh Durbar, the largest palace in Asia; irrigation channels, hospitals were other some significant plans carried out. These interventions were Prime Minister Chandra Shamsheer's purposeful actions undertaken after his return from his visit to Great Britain in 1908 (Joshi and Rose, 2006).

One such action with significant future implications in terms of trade was the Peace and Friendship Treaty (1923) signed between Nepal and Great Britain. The treaty, among others, allowed the country to import goods from British India free of customs duty. Article 6 of the treaty reads:

No Customs Duty shall be levied at British Indian Ports on goods imported on behalf of the Nepal Government for immediate transport to that country provided that a certificate from such authority as may from time to time be determined by the two Governments shall be presented at the time of importation to the Chief Customs Officer at the Port of import setting forth that the goods are the property of the Nepal Government, are required for the public services of the Nepal Government, are not for the purpose of any State monopoly or State trade, and are being sent to Nepal under orders of the Nepal Government.

Despite having this historic treaty in operation, the Rana governments were bound to the principle of inward-looking

independent policies. There was no evidence of technical or financial support from the British side. The Nepali government did not ask for such cooperation. It believed that foreign cooperation in the economy could mean a loosening of political independence. Nonetheless, it is believed that, of the various impacts, the treaty kept Nepal under the 'semi-colony' zone of British India, which prevails still today (Bhattarai, 2003; Mishra, 2013). Yet, for the first time in her history, the treaty recognized a sovereign and independent country.

The treaty could affect the country's predominantly agrarian economy. Thapa (1995, p. 119-120) maintained that the country's trade was in its favor until the first two decades of the twentieth century. It gradually faded as the import of luxurious goods surpassed the export of raw materials and local goods produced by cottage industries. The import of construction materials such as tin and bricks accompanied by modern housing architecture and the Indian construction workers were prominent in the Kathmandu valley after the historic earthquake of 1933. The imported items were in demand by the ruling class and home-return Gurkhas (Pande, 2008, p. 25).

Presumably, Nepal experienced expansionary industrial policies in response to the economic problems resulting from the 1923 treaty. Responding to the decreasing productivity of local industries, Juddha Shamsheer stimulated expansionary industrial policies in some pocket towns. A few notable ones were Biratnagar Jute Factory, Juddha Match Factory, Nepal Chemical Industries Limited, Nepal Oil Mills Limited, Morang Hydroelectric Company, Sundarijal Hydropower (750 KW), Technical Training Centers, and Agriculture Development Centers (Thapa *et al.*, 1997, p. 92). In commerce, the private sector was duly encouraged and involved. The mixed economic system was favored while pursuing reform policies. It was believed that the private sector could be helpful to control the business and maintain economic independence (Pande, 2008). In this direction, some students were sent to India and Japan to receive technical training in multiple subjects.

In Juddha Shamsheer's tenure (1932-1945), some prospective institutional measures of social and economic significance were undertaken, name a few were; Nepal Trading Corporation (NTC, 1932), Chamber of Industry (1935, initially Development Board, 1932), Nepal Bank Limited (1937), Language Translation Committee, and Pension Fund as employee's social security. Additionally, development institutions for the delivery of public goods and services were also established. Department of Agriculture, Department of Mines, Department of Cottage Industry, Department of Botany, Department of Forest, Technical School, Industrial Survey, and Co-operative Society were purposively founded to trigger the development process (Pande, 2008, p. 103-110). A

significant objective behind these institutional formulations was to promote internal trade by prohibiting the penetration of foreign businesses.

In 1933, a strong earthquake measuring 8.1 on the Richter scale hit the country, killing 29,454 people; some 6,420 were wounded (Pande, 2008, p. 22). In order to rehabilitate the damage caused by the quake, the government constituted a 'Relief Fund for Earthquake Victims'. The official organization was supported in cash worth Rs. 29, 82,316. Notably, the country aimed to initiate planned development in the fourth decade of the twentieth century.

To execute planned development, the 'Industrial and Co-operative Society' was formed in 1942. Two young scholars, namely Lieutenant General Bijaya Shamsheer and Prof. Bhim Bahadur Pande, were appointed as manager of the society. They were deeply influenced by the first Indian Planning Commission's report. In consistent with the spirit of the Prime Minister, the society recommended some significant reform measures in the areas of infrastructure, industry, and agriculture. In their report, preliminary report of the economic survey, schemes for relieving farmers from indebtedness and establishment of Cottage Training Center were included with greater significance (Pande, 2008). The process gained a momentum with the first Industrial Exhibition in 1943, organized to encourage local production and consumption. Later, the successor government of Juddha Shamsheer retreated from its decision.

Regional Development Administration:

In the Rana period, the country witnessed regional development schemes in the form of administrative divisions. Initially, 35 districts were constituted, 12 in the Tarai and 23 in the hills. Later, separating Morang into Biratnagar and Jhapa, 36 districts were maintained (Gautam, 2004, p. 61). These regional units were deprived of the power to exercise decentralized governance. However, they played a crucial role as land administration to generate revenue to sustain the Rana regime.

Regarding developmental implications, the districts in the regions could embody certain areas, the administrative offices, including revenue, and the office of *Bada Hakim*. These initiatives would give rise to the foundations for basic development infrastructures such as roads, government offices, and the provision of basic utilities such as water and electricity.

Yet, these initiatives failed to be institutionalized. Of the various reasons, Rana's policies to keep people's uprising down and maintain their political supremacy intact have

been primarily discussed (Blakie *et al.*, 2007). It meant that the regime was skeptical that if economic opportunities were created people could rise against their regime. However, they were more afraid of the departure of British colonialism that could engulf Nepal as it had other peripheral countries in Asia.

Their initiatives revealed that Ranas were taught by King P.N. Shah's *Divyopadesh*. Beyond the doctrine's spirit, yet, they maintained a cordial relationship with Britain for regime interest. Otherwise, they could have utilized the friendship to favor the country's economy and trade. It could have harnessed the industrial gain in Europe since the middle of the nineteenth century. The opportunity was even higher in the second decade of the twentieth century when 'Peace and Friendship Treaty, 1923' was signed. The attempts by Juddha Shamsheer also suffered from Rana's policy of keeping the country strategically insulated from the winds of progress. It can be concluded that during the Rana period, Nepal's economic transformation was sacrificed to the higher cause of political independence.

Social Policies:

Interventions in the social sector were also noteworthy. As a reflection of the slave emancipation in Africa and the West Indies (Thapa, 1995, p. 25), Chandra Shamsheer issued directives to abolish the long-rooted slavery system in 1925. The freed slaves were supported by some level of financial and social rights, such as economic and land compensation. Not the least, he ended the Sati System in 1929, which was an orthodox Hindu practice.

Setting Up Modern Laws:

In the mid-1940s, the country witnessed some prospective development outcomes in the form of laws and political organizations. The promulgation of the Government of Nepal Act (1948), known as the country's first constitution, was a major achievement in the direction of thin development. Some prominent liberal values were enshrined in the Act, which could direct the society into democratization. 'In terms of development standard, Nepal would uplift to the level of advanced countries' reads the statute's preamble. It ensured fundamental human rights such as the right to free speech, publication, and religion, the right to vote (for those who meet the legal age requirement), and free education for all citizens. Unprecedentedly, it guaranteed that women could form organizations for their welfare. For its magnitude and depth in terms of incorporating citizen's politics and the spirit of the state, the constitutional measures stand as a solid development foundation.

Table 1: Patterns of Thick and Thin Development in the Rana Period in Nepal (1846-1950)

Development	Initiatives	Development Patterns	Agency
Thick Development	Mulki Ain Education and Health System Industrial and Trade Policies Regional Development Administration Social policies Promulgation of Government of Nepal Act (1948)	Law and order Institutional set up Infrastructural foundation Decentralization Pursuit of economic growth State-people face-in Inward looking	State
Thin Development	Decentralized and ethnic governance (e.g. initiatives by Lakhan Thapa) Progressive teachings (e.g. Mass sensitization (e.g. initiatives by Aarya Samaj) Women's right and self-respect (e.g. initiatives by Yogmaya, Mahila Samiti) Rational organizations (e.g. Gorkha League, Modern Political Parties) Self-help organizations (e.g. initiatives by Dhikur, Guthi)	Social and cultural Local Human rights and freedom Self-respect and self-reliance Adaption Progressive and prospective	People/ community

Source: present study data

Thin Development in the Rana Period

The thin development patterns represent grassroots movements organized by people at the individual and collective levels. These initiatives reflect people's aspirations for freedom from social and political control, self-reliance, self-respect, and sustainable livelihood. A review of the period demonstrates that purposeful thick development preceded prospective thin development represented in various social struggles and movements.

Decentralized Governance:

In 1876, a young man called Lakhan Thapa, a resident of Gorkhas, now a district in the North-West of Kathmandu valley, claiming to be a 'king', gathered a group of followers and staged an unsuccessful revolt against the Rana regime. Pradhan (2006, p.14-16) stated that under Thapa's leadership, people prepared a written memorandum in which they aspired to end the regime. Portrayed as the 'champion of Magar's' interest and also Nepalese nationalism' (Lecomte-Teliuone, 2003), his organized demands meant a search for a dignified life within a framework of the ethnic regime, a supplementary system to the centralized Rana rule (Joshi and Rose, 2006, p. 43-44). It was the first of its kind: a collective, conscious. He had directed people's mobilization in pursuit of meaningful change. In the campaign, an aspiration of decentralized governance can be smelt. The movement was hastily stopped by kidnapping Thapa and some of his followers.

Mass Sensitization:

Since the middle of the nineteenth century, the national independence movement was shaking the British Raj in India. It influenced a small fraction of Nepali youths who had been there for educational purposes and as pilgrims. They 'received training in the new ideology non-violent method of mass movements initiated by Gandhi' (Joshi and

Rose, 2006, p. 50). Gandhi's principles of nationalism, independence, and self-reliance became learning tools for the youths. This was the case comparable to emerging societies worldwide, where young people tended to migrate to the new industrial hub, being lured by the facilities and opportunities and propagandizing the images of what could be achieved in their home country with hopes and aspirations (Barren, 1952). Similar activism was organized in Kathmandu by initiating associations and imagining facets of a good life. Publication of weeklies, magazines, and periodicals on either side of the country contributed to this mass sensitization.

Among the initial campaigns, *Aarya Samaj* (Aryan Society) significantly influenced the literate youths. Actually, it was a society in India led by a popular sage known as Swami Dayananda Saraswati. He mobilized youths through progressive religious teachings in parallel to the independence movement. Its rays penetrated Kathmandu's religiously orthodox society around 1893. According to Joshi and Rose (2006), the major agendas raised were to hit the dogmatic Brahman priests and the Hindu base of the Rana regime. It mobilized some cross-cutting social issues, such as the abolition of caste-based hierarchy, child marriage, and permission to widow marriage.

Women's Right and Self-Respect:

Women's issues were vocally raised by *Mahila Samiti* (Women Group) constituted a bit later in 1917. With the initiation of Krishna Prasad Koirala, a merchant turned rebel during the Rana rule, who also had contacts in some Indian towns, e.g., Kolkata, Patna, and the *Mahila Samiti* had a membership of Yogamaya, the first female revolutionary and feminist. The direct objectives of the Samiti were to reform women's poor status concerning social, political, and economic rights. Strategically, the political mobilization of women was aimed at the pursuit of

liberal social and religious values. Yogmaya Neupane appealed to a large group of women in the eastern region against oppression under discriminatory social and religious values and organized a campaign up to the capital city, Kathmandu. Through poetry symposiums and meetings in several places, she advocated equal property right, widow marriage, education, and the abolition of child marriage (Hutt, 2014).

These social movements were primarily concerned with religious reform for social modernization. The impacts were mainly on women and children, resulting in their discrimination in the question of marriage and property. These issues were raised in the civic movements, yet economic issues barely came to the front.

Rational Organizations:

In a neighborhood city, Dehradun, in India, the Gorkhas League (1921) was formed, possibly the first modern organization of Nepali people. The association was instrumental in developing Nepali rationalism along modern lines (Sharma 2006, p. 21). Around the period, a number of political and social groups came up, such as Satyacharan Malami Guthi (1919), Charkha Prachar Sangh (1920), Prachanda Gorkhas (1930), Praja Parishad (1935), and Nagarik Adhikar Samiti (Citizens Rights Forum, 1936). These groups were coherent with the aim and objectives in that they targeted social and political doctrines in their attempts to overthrow the Rana regime and guarantee citizen's rights.

Similarly, a group of educated youths, including some established writers, initiated a failed attempt by opening up a public library (1925), and a few of them published satirical verses criticizing Rana's governance. In the agrarian country, it was only in the middle of the twentieth century that farmers demanded their rights (Raj, 2010).

Among the associations, Praja Parishad, the first political party, was an organization of intellectual youths who were born middle-class elites in Kathmandu, socialized in Banaras and a few other educational hubs in India and participated in India's independence movement. Conscious and thoroughly convinced of democratic values and believing that only the responsible government could ensure people's aspirations of quality life, the party organized some significant campaigns that motivated people toward democratic reforms (Gautam, 2013). The movements spread values of the political organization, free society, and public life with dignity. According to Pande (2008), youths in various towns were deeply influenced by the values, engaging themselves later in various social and political mobilizations.

The desire for the formation of political parties continued. In the middle of the twentieth century, following the wind of independence in the neighborhood and the

democratization across Asia, Nepali society witnessed the formation of two political parties, the Nepali Congress (NC, 1946) and the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN, 1949). The youths involved before in various associations were in the leading positions of both wings. They reacted strongly to the Rana regime in a language combat. In their objectives, both parties echoed democracy and social and economic justice. Their ultimate objective was all-round development through people's participation. This way, people's long-cherished dreams of progress were synchronized with the policies and strategies of the political parties. Nevertheless, the parties differed concerning the fundamental values and strategic preferences.

NC believed in liberal political values, a socialist economy with justice, and a constitutional monarchy. Having been associated with Indian socialists and indoctrinated by Western liberalism, its leaders set social democracy as an operational strategy. Popular participation, decentralization, and industrialization were the party's action programs. It believed in the union of state and private sector for the noble goal of democracy and justice. CPN, on the other hand, principally followed the Soviet and Chinese governance model. Its cherished dream was communism, a classless, conflict-less, and just society. To achieve socialism, the party envisaged a need to wage armed struggle with the involvement of farmers, women, and other scheduled groups. It reiterated that people's needs of employment, education, and justice, among others, should be freely ensured by the state. CPN's economic policies embraced socialism, believing that all means of production are owned and controlled by the state.

Conclusion

This article aimed to examine the Rana period (1846-1950) through development perspectives and explore if the politically dark period endured developmental lights. Drawing upon archival documents and applying historical as well as analytical-interpretative methods, it found that the Rana period bore necessary development schemes concerning global as well as local adaptation. The deliberate and spontaneous processes of ecological, social, economic and political change during the period represent thick and thin development patterns. Thin development often precedes thick development, yet reciprocity occurs between the two patterns, which further 'develops' society.

The findings of this article also qualify the term development. It implies that development transcends history, meaning that development is a historical concept. Any attempt to bracket development in timelines and administrative systems is questionable. It also reveals that development is primarily local and contextual, embedded in the specific ecological, social, economic, and political contexts of a society. Because society is intrinsically a dynamic concept that bores development as a necessary

condition to 'leap forward' and a sufficient condition to 'develop.' Society cannot remain static because of its inherent tendency to 'change' with the growth of consciousness and technological evolution. Connectivity or integration seems to be the primary catalyst that helps collective learning among the agencies which adds complexity to a society enduring thin development. Finally, thick development ultimately succeeds.

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