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Ever since the General election results were known, both the Madhesi groups have been in talks with the UML leaders for joining the government provided their basic bottom line demand of amending the constitution is accepted. We had also in the updates said that it is in the interest of the Madhesis and in the larger interest of stability of the country that the two groups join the government.

The final results of the elections in the Parliament showed that though the UML- Maoist Centre had a comfortable majority, it did not have the magic number for a two third majority to make suitable amendments to the constitution.

The present federal constitution had many good points (see another paper on this) but it failed to be an “inclusive’ one and had not done justice either to the Madhesis or to other marginalised “janajathi” communities.

Going by the numbers, the present position of various parties in the recently held elections is-(this included both first past the post and proportional systems)

CPN (UML) ----- 121 (80+41) direct and proportional respectively

Maoist Centre----- 53 (36+170) —do—

Nepali Congress ----- 63 (23+40) -do-

RJP N. (Madhesi Group) ----- 17 (11+6) -do-

SSF N (Madhesi Group) ----- 16 (10+6) -do-

It could be seen that the Grand Alliance combine (UML and MC) can get a two third majority only with either of the Madhesi groups - the one led by Upendra Yadav of SSF-N or the one led by Mahant Thakur- RJP to make any constitutional amendment, leave alone doing justice to the Madhesis.

The Madhesi Groups were fully aware that their strength lay in being united in contesting the elections and in demanding the rights of the Madhesis. They learnt a lesson by the debacle they experienced in the elections earlier to the present one and it was thought that they will be guided by the fact that the Madhesis can get justice only if they are united.

It is now seen that the groups SSF-N led by Upendra Yadav is independently negotiating with K.P.Oli for some power sharing arrangements and an “assurance” that the constitution will be amended, for joining the government.

It is said that Upendra Yadav and his two colleagues Rajendra Shrestha and Ram Sahay Yadav are demanding three ministerial posts- the foreign ministry and two development oriented ministries - the Ministry of infra structure and Planning and that of Ministry of Health. In addition they are said to be demanding the post of Vice President, Dy. Speaker of the assembly and not surprisingly the post of Deputy Prime Minister for Upendra Yadav himself!

For all the above concessions, it is believed that Upendra Yadav will be willing to ditch his alliance partner- the RJP (Rashtriya Janata Party) and join the government!

The UML has not conceded any amendment to the constitution but only has accepted in principle of a constitutional amendment and that too with a caveat- “if the need is justified:!

The UML has offered two ministerial berths and an assurance to amend the constitution and nothing else. From their point of view it makes eminent sense to take on board the Upendra Yadav’s group for many reasons. These include

- * It will be easy to deal with Terai once the leadership is split.
- * It is also easier to deal with one leader like Upendra Yadav in SSF -N rather than with many leaders in RJP.
- * It will be also easier to deal with India with a person of Indian origin as Foreign Minister after all that has happened including the elections

that pushed the UML to victory on an anti Indian platform! The UML is also perhaps aware that in India, institutional memory is short and can be ignored!

* Upendra Yadav has in the past been the fore runner in demanding justice for the Madhesis. He won the election on a Madhesi platform and he is aware that in the agitation that followed the promulgation of the constitution, over 50 innocent lives were lost because of the political leaders like him and Rajendra Mahatao.

* Province number 2 led by the Upendra Yadav's group will also be now part of the government both at the central and provincial levels.

It is now noticed that one of the members of his party has declared that the party has a "socialist ideology" and that it has nothing to do with the Madhesis as such. This was not the case when they contested the elections. This position ideally suits the left oriented UML group.

It would be better both for the stability of the regime and the country that both the Madhesi groups bargain together to get their rights rather than getting split on being offered a few crumbs!

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