



The Maoist Insurgency and Peace Process In Nepal

Ishwori Prasad Kandel

Central Department of Political science, Tribhuvan University, Nepal

Email: isworikandel2026@gmail.com

Abstract

The Nepalese civil war, or People's War, was the result of stalled peace negotiations between the democratic government and the paramilitary wing of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). Nepal's first decade of democracy is considered turbulent due to frequent government changes, internal party battles and corruption. Politics continued to be dominated by the Brahmin and Chhetri castes with an underrepresentation of ethnic minorities and women. Nepal Communist Party Maoist said that the insurgency began to fight against the 250 years long monarchy, deeply rooted economic & social discrimination & prejudices, Feudal system and against all kinds of injustices & inequalities prevalent in the society.

Key words: Restoration, Insurgency, Aspirations, Disparities, Operation

Introduction

Maoist Movement involves only a small minority of the country's population as active participants. Most of the participants are members of the underground who perform their normal functions within the society along with their clandestine and covert activities. However, Ideology has been an important factor in unifying the many divergent interests and goals that exists among the Maoist Movement's membership. Nepal, previously recognized as a peaceful country, faced severe violent conflict since 1996 due to the Maoist insurgency. The Maoist conflict cost the unbearable loss to the Nepalese society in terms of human casualty and loss of life (Dabas, 2010, p. 66). Furthermore the Maoist Movement in Nepal grew out of imbalance within the society resulting into poverty, unemployment and frustration among the youths. Inaccessible hills, Lack of communication and illiterate people, who could easily be misguided by interested elements, had further created an environment where insurgency could easily take its roots. First Constituent Assembly, 2008–2012 In the 2008 Constituent Assembly elections, the CPN (Maoist) won 220 seats and an additional 9 members were nominated from the party giving them a strength of 229 seats and making them the largest party in the 1st Constituent Assembly. Second Constituent Assembly 2 in the 2013 Constituent Assembly election, held on 19 November 2013, the UCPN (Maoist) won just 80 seats and an additional 3 seats were nominated from the party. The result meant that the Maoists were dropped to be the third largest party in the Constituent Assembly from first in past. The party rejected the results and blamed it on an "international and national" conspiracy and warned that the party would sit out of the newly elected Constituent Assembly. The party later agreed to join the new constituent assembly

Literature review

Since then their influence has been spread across the country and later were virtually present in all 77 districts from rural to urban and hills to Teri areas. Mid-Western, Far Western Regions and remote areas suffer from widespread poverty, disparity in resource distribution and structural inequality, injustice and discrimination had heavily fuelled the Maoists conflict. Hence, the Maoist insurgency was first started from Mid-Western Region, (Hills, 2009, p. 45). The geographical expansion and growth of the Maoist insurgency was sharp and everywhere mainly because of two reasons. First, they effectively and successfully utilized media, opinion leaders,

frustrated masses and poor, marginalized and underprivileged groups (Acharya, 2008, p. 43). They also created fear of terror that help them to expand their activities. Second, complete failure of the government to address geographical inequalities and provide regionally balance development opportunities and infrastructures. All the governments have neglected remote areas. In the past the government's decision to increase allowance to police force working in the Maoist affected areas helped to expand Maoists when the police force acted unlawfully to prove that Maoists are active in their working area. Romeo Operation, Kilo Shera-2 (Acharya, 2008, p. 40) and Jungle Search Operations (1998-99) and Silent Kilo Shera-3, Delta and Chakrabihu Operations (2000-May 2001) (Dahal, 2003, p. 21) did not prove effective. Instead they helped to escalate conflict from certain geographical areas to across the country. Large numbers of innocent people were victims of these operations, which developed further resentment and feeling of revenge. The government was completely failed to recognize the gravity of the problem of geographically neglected areas (Acharya, 2008, p. 50). Many people think that many women join the insurgency to take revenge because they were tortured, raped and victimized by the security forces. Many of them from lower caste (especially untouchables) joined the ranks of Maoist insurgency with the hope of their emancipation. Political instability in the country after restoration of multi-party democracy and failure of political leaders to respond to the hopes of mass population had further attributed to the rise of Maoist movement (Donnison, 1956, p. 33).

Rationale

The reason for the government being unable to combat Maoist was its failure to gain support of the people because of political upheaval, repressive tactics, and failure to solve social issues among the different groups at the initial period of insurgency and in the later stage failing to establish a democratic government to recognize its move in the international arena. The government was extremely weak in early warning and early response measures in remote backward areas. Furthermore, the rebels were able to give the impression to the general public that they truly represent the interests, needs and aspirations of geographically isolated poor rural population who have been excluded from the economic, political and social opportunities mainly because of staying in geographically remote and backward areas. The following problems are raised in this study:

- a. What are root causes of Maoist Movement in Nepal?
- b. what were the consequences of Maoist Movement and peace process in Nepal?

Objective

Generally, in a broad front, the aim of this research work is to highlight the cause of the Maoist insurgency, experiences of the Nepalese during Counter Insurgency Operation and its impact and its management via peace process. The study also identifies lessons learnt during the Counter Insurgency Operation and the Peace Process. The specific objectives identified are as follows;

- a. To analyze the Maoist Movement in Nepal and its root causes.
- b. To explore the peace process and consequences.

Research Methodology

Being the historical and descriptive nature of research, it is qualitative in approaches. For the policies provision, the personnel of Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) and Security organizations were interacted with as key informants. Secondary data were obtained through the published sources like reports, articles, journals, official publications, booklets, books, souvenirs, newspaper articles, research papers, plans, policies and strategies of disaster risk reduction and national planning commission. All the research papers of different organizations like central bureau of statistics, ministries were reviewed which are directly related to the study area as major source of information for the secondary data source. The data collected at first from the primary and secondary information were filtered and sorted to remove unnecessary information and used MS Office (MS-Excel and MS Word) for the data entry and analysis.

Maoist Movement

There has been considerable political instability since the inception of democracy in the country. The performance of parliamentary democracy for years had repeatedly failed by its frequent shifting of alliances, changing stands with the alternative governments and seeks for fresh elections (Khanal, 2007, p. 32). This trend created an unhindered and favorable environment for the Maoist to widen their influence, the government being unable to take any bold steps for the economic as well as social uplift of the people (Acharya, 2008, p. 40). The people who had great expectations from the political leaders after the restoration of democracy, were disheartened by their irresponsible acts like engaging themselves in internal wrangling (Upreti, 2004, p. 45). The splitting of major parties created a weaker government which inspired the rampage corruption in the administrative sector. The nepotism and favoritism made people feel the class discrimination (Dahal, 2003, p. 12). Such conditions decreased the faith towards the government and the Maoist has been successful in exploiting the discontented group to gain passive or active support. Absolute poverty, lack of access to resources and failure of political structures to address these issues made the Nepalese society extremely vulnerable to conflict and mass movements like the Maoists' 'people's war. Deep rooted social cleavages in terms of caste, ethnicity, gender and regional, cultural, linguistic and religious forms of discrimination provided fertile ground to escalate the conflict (Acharya, 2008, p. 67). Maoists successfully capitalized the widely discernible disillusionment

of people towards poor performance of political structure. Dominance of certain groups in all social, political and economic sectors promoted feeling of injustice and revenge as lower caste people strongly believe that they have been excluded from opportunities and resources. Maoists tactically utilized this feeling. The emergence of ethnic interest groups, awareness on social exclusion and ethnic inequalities and governance failure fueled the conflict (Dabas, 2010, p. 90).

Nepal falls among the poorest countries of the world. With no major industries for earning foreign currency and deteriorating tourism industry, the economic condition of the country decreasing each day (Dabas, 2010, p. 33). Apart from whatever amount we receive from foreign aid had not been utilized properly. No economic program had been implemented effectively in the remote area where 85 percent of the populations were in acute poverty. Such lack of "Economic Engagement" (Thapa, 2004, p. 34). Small-scale projects, cottage industries and its provision for proper market has been one of the major factor contributing to the Maoist to conduct "People War" in remote areas of the country. As a common set of interrelated beliefs, values and norms the ideology has been used to manipulate and influence the behavior of individuals with in the communities and societies. Such strategy of the Maoist Movement has directly or indirectly motivated and attracted many innocent citizens of the country (Gyawali, 2005, p. 45). Nepal's Functional literacy remains low, even though official statistics show that the literate population numbers at around 60 percent (Acharya, 2008, p. 56). Because the numbers are based on participation of people on training programs, many of the newly literates forget their skill once they get back to "normal" lives. Most of the literate or educated are again concentrated in the cities and often it is the illiterate majority that remains back in the villages where the Maoists are active with organization building. Those without proper education are unable to distinguish between promises and practical goals and because they are "unaware" or not "critically conscious" about what they are told, they are more likely to be influenced. Inability of the people to differentiate between what is told to them and what is achievable is reason for the increase in support to the Maoists (Acharya, 2008, p. 48). Low literacy and lack of effective information and communication mechanisms in rural areas provided the Maoists the space to persuade locals to support their politics and at the same time failure of democracy to deliver up to the expectations of the people contributed to the frustrations of the poor and to the growth of the insurgency. The poor and the marginalized had dreamt that democracy would bring them better lives. But the efforts by both government and non-governmental organizations were not helping them realize their dreams fast enough (Derry, 1948, p. 111). Not only were the efforts inadequate, even the approaches were questionable, especially with all the reports on corruption and nepotism there was in the media. As a result, the gap between the haves and have-nots continued to widen and so did the frustrations. Even though successive democratic government did not articulate plans to address the concerns of the poor, very few of their actions matched the rhetoric. Meanwhile, the infrastructures that were built-especially roads linking the district headquarters had many people from the villages travelling to Kathmandu where they could see for themselves the luxury at the centre, very little of which was trickling down to their villages, where agriculture remained the major source of livelihood for more than 80 percent of the population. Poverty is widespread in the

rural areas, where nearly 90 percent of the people live (Acharya, 2008, p. 40). The poor, and in the context of Nepal the land poor, uneducated and the oppressed masses, were excluded from getting a share of benefits they thought democracy would bring (Gyawali, 2005, p. 75). . The political grievances included governance and constitutional issues; the issues related to economics included land reforms, access to opportunities and jobs and the questions about exclusions were related to deprivations resulting from regional disparities and class, caste, ethnicity and gender.

Social Impact

The conflict in Nepal had resulted into life of approximately 1000 over life in a year either from the Maoist or the Security Forces, many more have been impaired for life and thousands more have been displaced from their homes (Upreti, 2004, p. 78). There were fighting almost every day after November 2001, except during seven months' truce between last of January and August 2003. The conflict between the Security Forces and the Maoist in the past had far-reaching effects on any society, in terms of destruction, disruption, diversion and disserving. Besides destruction of material the conflict also disrupted the normal walk of life of the people causing social and economic losses, many of which were difficult to measure. Some of them being the pain of an individuals or groups that had lost their dear and near ones, anguish of bereaved widows, orphans and friends and families of those killed in the conflict either of Security force, civilians or the Maoist combatant. Besides, there is other aspect of the socio-cultural impact which includes displacement of people resulting to homeless, Human Rights violations, educational shutdown, detainees and disappearance, psychological and mental problems in Children and women, degradation in environmental protection are some of the experienced faced by the Nepalese during the counter insurgency operations (Gyawali, 2005, p. 45). Following paragraphs discuss the socio-cultural impacts of the conflict, based on the findings from the study of various books and literatures (Acharya, 2008, p. 76). In countries like Nepal where the health services are poor, women often end up finding difficulties to get necessary help during pregnancy and child birth or when their children become sick that too in the context of conflict one can easily imagine the impact of it (Thapa, 2005, p. 23). There was also incidence of security forces misbehaving with the women often the ones that were in the village after their male counterpart had either migrated in search of work or those who had joined the Maoist (Gyawali, 2005, p. 45). Apart from these incidents there were numerous incidence were Maoist cadre would come to the village and forcefully order the women at villages for food and shelter. Overall, women had been adversely affected during the counter insurgency operations, whether as daughters, mothers, sisters or wives of both the personnel of the Security forces and the Maoist (Dahal, 2003, p. 56). Despite a national campaign "Children as Zone of Peace", it was the children who were caught up in the Maoist conflict mainly as victims. Many had been killed in the Maoist – Government conflict of which they were no part. According to the INSEC, over 260 children under the age of 18 were killed in the conflict between 1996 till 2004. Many others were wounded and many had lost either both or one of their parents. According to other estimate, at least 2,000 children have lost one parent and more than 4,000 had been displaced. However it has been clear that the displacement had been both voluntary and forced (Gyawali, 2005, p. 45). . Those who left the village voluntary

did so fearing they could be attacked by the Maoist, even though they were not threatened by the Maoist (Derry, 1948, p. 101).. Most of the voluntarily migrants include members of the politician, local landlords, money lenders and the ones who were involved in illegal activities. The bitter experience of the displaced people can be understood easily since any individual that are forced to move from his/her place of residence faces multiple problems. Operation Romeo was the major pushing factor for the displacement of people right before the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) declared People's War on 13 Feb 1996 with an aim to overthrow the constitutional Monarchy and establish New Republican State (Dahal, 2003, p. 86). Later it was followed by the government launched Operation Kilo Sierra Two which also fuelled the displacement problem. The rate of internal displacement was further intensified after the Government actual Counter Insurgency operation started which resulted into displaced of large numbers of peoples, most of those displaced have moved to the district headquarters or to the cities that are considered safe. However, there are no any definite statistics of the displaced people and the one available also shows the variations regarding the numbers of Internally Displaced People (IDP). The Numbers of IDP however does not include the displaced people due to the threat of the government and security forces (Upreti, 2004, p. 21). The problem families 'face includes paying for the upkeep of the family members, schooling of children and finding reliable source of income. Resulting to either his/her involvement into illegal activities or further displaced into neighboring state of India for work.

Where ever there is a conflict children and women are often the worst sufferers in the conflicts, it is no doubt that many have appreciated Maoist for empowering women into their party but there are many more who blames Maoist for victimizing them as well. Though recruitment of women alongside of the men in the militia/guerilla has been termed as empowerment but at the same time the ignorance of the hardship that the women had to undergo during the conflict has always been neglected. There are various ways women were victimized during the counter insurgency operations, including forceful recruitment as combatant and human shields. They were victims of rape and torture and often end up being forced to raise their children on their own, especially after their male partner were killed or captured. There were incidents where the young women /girls within Maoist had suffered from sexual abuse and exploitation, there was an interview in the national TV that I still recall, a 19 year old women Maoist cadre had claimed that she and many in their party had to fulfill the sexual desire of their own level Maoist cadre and she further notified that sometimes she even had to fulfill sexual desire of more than dozen per night. Women experienced conflict differently than men, there were numerous cases regarding gendered form of violence during counter insurgency operations such as rape, slavery, deprivation of food, teen age widow and eviction from the family. Women suffer more because their household work becomes more difficult to perform without their male counterpart, be it in terms of husband or relatives.

The Maoist at one hand had been using children as child soldier by either using them for combatant, cultural groups or as informants. At the same time the security forces have also used children in various ways such as guides, couriers and porters. Children nationwide have also experienced school disruptions because of Maoist attack on schools, forced closures and strikes

at schools (Derry, 1948, p. 11). The Maoist always use to see school going children as their potential future combatant or child combatant resulting into abduction of entire class of student. Besides there were numerous experience of children being killed in the counter insurgency operations especially due to Maoist Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) made from crude and unstable device such as simple bucket, pressure cooker and ordinary civilian items. According to the reports collected by Nepal Campaign to Ban Landmines (NCBL), in 2004 there were 720 casualties (202 deaths and 518 injuries) caused by landmines, IEDs and other explosive devices. NCBL further writes in its reports that total of the above mentioned data 177 were civilians and out of them 92 were children, the reports further states that the children are injured and killed mainly of Maoist's careless use of IEDs. The victims of mines and unexploded ordinance tend to be concentrated among the poorest sector of society, where people face danger every day when cultivating their fields, herding their animals or searching for firewood. In many cultures, these are the very tasks carried out by children.

Though many people had experienced death as a direct result of fighting from knife wounds, bullet, bombs and landmines, but many more died from malnutrition and disease due to Maoist insurgency. The interruption of food supplies by the security forces, the destruction of agricultural and health services infrastructures by the Maoist, resulted into diminished food intake and severe malnutrition/infections, the target always being children and the older peoples in the society. The people living in the rural area of Nepal experienced serious cutback in local food production, caused by the migration of the merchants from the rural areas, lack of access to markets due to restriction imposed by the Maoist cadres and the displacement of able human resources from the villages (Dabas, 2010, p. 23). According to the report compiled by the Community Study and Welfare Centre (CSWC) during 2004, Rolpa district suffered from transport blockade for nearly a year, similarly four village in Acham district faced movement restriction for over year and the Doti district faced blockade of food transportation for more than 6 months, all of them were enforced by the Maoist activists. On the other hand, in order to prevent food from falling into the hands of the Maoists, the security forces had also imposed small weekly quotas on private traders of food in some district. In some cases these amounts were so small that it was not worth for merchants to long risky journey to sell it. The quotas impacted civilians more than intended Maoist force because the Maoist regularly forced the villagers to provide them with meals, leaving very little food left for feeding families including growing children (Acharya, 2008, p. 43). Alike in all other societal paradigm the Maoist armed conflict and the government response to it as counter insurgency operation had severely affected the educational system of the country especially those at the rural areas where the schools were targeted for attacks and used as ground for child recruitment and abduction, and with teachers targeted for intimidation, taxation and violence. Many schools in the district HQ were crowded with the students displaced from rural areas, while schools in the rural areas were under attended by the students and the teachers due to fear, insecurity and displacement (Upreti, 2004, p. 65). People living in the rural areas had experienced the sense of insecurity to walk to and from school due to fear of being caught in violence and cross fire between the security forces and the Maoist. Following attacks on schools, children often cite

fear about returning to their classes. According to the Global IDP Project, since the onset of armed conflict in 1996, several hundred schools had been shut down, affecting at more than 100,000 students. Besides, after the government counter insurgency operations the maoist had conducted numerous bandh/shutdown of schools and colleges, some includes shutdown up to 15 days continuously. People living in the rural areas had especially experienced things like forceful closure of hundreds of private schools, threatened the teacher to make 10 percent of their salary for donations, brutally slaughtering of the teachers in front of their students and students taken from the school compound and forced to listen their speech, cultural programs or any communist revolutionary events in many district across country. Compound of the schools in the rural areas were fully of trenches which the Maoist had constructed to fight against the security force by coercing the teachers, students and their parents to participate in digging. As for the security forces, they also had misused schools during counter insurgency operation by utilizing schools that were located along the ridge tops with wide and open area to use it as temporary FOB (Upreti, 2004, p. 87). Trafficking of women and girls to India and other countries is a long standing problem in Nepal. Anecdotal evidence indicates that this situation had been worst during the armed conflict in Nepal. The hypothetical analysis that one can make from this is, the traffickers who previously preyed directly on women and girls in their communities were later easily accessible in the cities because lots of people living in the rural area fled their community and started living in the urban area after they experienced harassment from both Maoist and the security forces, initially at the start of Maoist insurgency and later due to government counter insurgency operation. Besides, the fear of getting stranded between the Maoist and the Security forces clash in counter insurgency operation, fear of abduction or recruitment or in search of functioning school in the major cities most of the young men and women ended up in the situation where they had to work in as a cabin girls/sex workers to survive, resulting into unprotected sex and ultimately transmission of HIV/AIDS (Li, 2007, p.120-142). The conservation of wildlife and forest in Nepal began in 1973 after the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) established several protected areas (PA) which include nine National Parks, three Conservation Areas, three Wildlife Reserves, and one Hunting Reserve (Karki, 2003, p. 21). In addition to these sixteen PAs, six National Parks had established Buffer Zones where resource use by local peoples is regulated to promote sustainability. After the DNPWC was established, the Nepalese Army was positioned within the PAs to protect valuable natural resources and to limit biodiversity loss (Derry, 1948, p. 81).. These units served as a strong psychological deterrent to poachers and illegal dealers in wildlife species and their products. But after the Maoist insurgency and more over after Nepalese Army involvement in the counter insurgency operations, Nepalese Army units deployed at various areas to guard the illegal activities along the protected area had largely withdrawn from extensive portions of PAs and limited its patrolling areas close to PA Headquarters (Karki, 2003, p. 21).

Safeguarding of PAs began to deteriorate after November 2001, when the Nepalese Army became engaged with fighting the Maoists under government counter insurgency operation. For units stationed within PAs, their mandate changed from patrolling and protecting PAs to combating Maoist forces as

well (Karki, 2003, p. 21). This, in turn, made PAs and the military units within them a target for Maoist attack. The Maoists began their assault on PA infrastructure by striking and destroying outlying PA guard posts that were extremely vulnerable. This largely succeeded in pushing the Nepalese Army and PA staff into PA headquarters which helped the Maoist to use rural PA as training grounds. Timber extraction and poaching also allegedly continued without any hindrance in the absence of security forces. Timber smuggling in Maoist influenced areas became dependent on local cadre leadership (Derry, 1948, p. 41). Maoists in some areas even established their safe haven or temporary camps, and in other areas took over community forests and used the profits made from timber to finance their activities affecting directly in the livelihood of the local people. The Maoists sabotaged made 1,903 village development committee buildings unusable, damaged municipality and DDC buildings, caused telecommunication disruptions in over 14 districts, and also caused five hydropower plants to temporarily stop production. The Maoists also targeted and damaged several airstrips, some of which like Dunai of Dolpa district had not been brought back in operation even years after the attack (Karki, 2003, p. 25). Others have put the cost of the conflict as 8-10 percent of the Gross Domestic Product, or about NRs 40 billion based on the overall GDP. An estimate conducted by the NPC (National Planning Commission) indicates that the rebuilding of the infrastructures damaged in the conflict could cost upto NRs 30 billion (Kantipur, 2007, p.3). Sabotage attacks have been central to the Maoist's strategy and both the number and value of the infrastructures damaged were at rise during the fighting /counter insurgency operations. The Maoist had attacked and damaged hydroelectricity installations and several rural micro hydro plants nationwide. They had also attacked and damaged grid transmission lines and substations. Airports were also targeted, they attacked and substantially damaged 14 airstrips, mainly in rural areas and also attacked and damaged more than 300 government offices, including health posts, post offices, forest range post and agricultural training centers. It is difficult to calculate the costs of any war. Therefore, the overall cost of the Nepali conflict is also almost incalculable. Every war has losses in terms on money and material, and also those that cannot be monetized. Telecommunication towers became targets because they were located away from urban centers and were poorly guarded. The other reasons could have been strategic as well. In many instances, the security forces also ordered closing down of local public telephone booths on the presumption that the Maoist may use the phones to communicate (NP, 2015). The Nepal Telecommunication Corporation reported damages to 112 telephone stations and substations in 45 district at different point of time, resulting into disruption of services to 8,898 subscribers. The telephone services were affected in 276 places at different time. The total direct cost in terms of restoration and maintenance of damaged system was estimated as NRs 5.7 million in early 2003. Maoist had attacked and destroyed 5 district post office, 174 Ilaka post office and additional 328 post offices. The cost of getting the system working again would cost about 37.7 million (NP, 2015). The Maoist also attacked and destroyed the infrastructure of the Nepal TV Transmission station worth NRs 1.9 million. The travel industry witnessed a steady decline in arrivals since 1999 after the bad publicity of the conflict in Nepal at international press after the violence escalated.

Political Impacts and Peace Process

It was the political instability and lapses in governance, Nepal's Maoist insurgency, which began in a handful of districts in February 1996, spread rapidly to other parts of the country. Political groups in Nepal have a history of division and mistrust, and have been accused of failing to put the interests of the country ahead of their own ethnic or regional interests. Increasing corruption, bad governance and the inability of governments to meet popular aspirations meant the Maoists' manifesto of a communist utopia was easy to sell to Nepali who felt cheated by their leaders (Derry, 1948, p. 11). The civil administration does not have the factual competence to implement reform agenda. Instead, they are widely perceived to be corrupt, inefficient and useless. The main political parties absurdly using bureaucracy to fulfill their personal and party interests, which are often contradictory to the will of general public. The bureaucracy is using the political intervention as an opportunity to collect illicit revenue through corruption. The Maoists were clever enough to realize that ideology alone would not win them popular support, and began to take up issues close to the hearts of most rural Nepal-exploitation, discrimination, poverty, corruption and inequality (Acharya, 2008, p. 55). According to a recent study, Brahmins constitute only 16 percent of the population; they represent 57 percent of parliament and 89 percent of the judiciary. This pattern of exclusion is repeated at the local government level, in occupying this position of marginalization and disempowerment, Dalits was quickly identified as a base of ready support for the Maoist insurgency. As a result Maoist insurgents capitalized on caste and gender discrimination in Nepal as a means of legitimizing and recruiting for their armed revolution (Rawal, 2007, p. 11-14).

Security forces under the lead role of the Nepalese Army faced numerous setbacks during Counter Insurgency Operations but the reality is that the security forces despite limited support from its political master and peoples support deed suppressed the Maoist insurgency, in terms of forcing them to discard their military aim. Security forces, especially the military is only a simple tool for the state to deal with insurgency. A correct approach of state helps in elimination of grievances is through reforms; and action of the security forces eliminates the insurgent (Acharya, 2008, p. 55). The Security Force provides the protection necessary for the restoration of the government presence and control. Security Forces, sent into an area to engage in counterinsurgency were to perform strategically as a shield for carrying out reform, operationally restore government control and tactically eliminate insurgent leadership, combatants and cadres so that local population is secure and able to engage in normal activities. In case of dealing with the Maoist insurgency, the mobilization of the army was one of the most contentious issues in the initial phase of the problem especially before the emergency was declared. Being the most important element of national power, the Nepalese Army was actively operational against the Maoist guerrillas during counter insurgency operations launched by the government (Dabas, 2010, p. 54). Hence we can say it was a tactical victory for the military or security force but was strategic loss. The reason for which is the government lack of vision to mobilize all the elements of national power to combat Maoist insurgency which can also be termed as a blunder of the military counter insurgency operation strategy. The conflict also had some "positive" aspects, i.e. if one discounts and pretends to

temporarily forget the losses. These positive aspects are the social reforms initiated by the government after the Maoists began rattling the status quo by forcibly correcting some long-standing social cultural inequities. Some of those reforms were in the plans and programs of the government and political parties but had never really been implemented. The Maoists have effectively challenged the discriminatory and exploitative caste system and have taken the debate on ethnicity and identity to the level of discussion or regional autonomy and self-determination (Thapa, 2005, p. 76). In the village the Maoists are also said to have forcefully ended polygamy, by shaming or even killing those found guilty of the offense, which is something every woman would support. They also advocate equality of the sexes, and have been able to portray that they are at least better than the state on gender equality. According to published information, about one third of the Maoists militia comprises women, which is symbolically a better mix, compared to the status of women in State institutions (Dabas, 2010, p. 54). Furthermore, in the Maoists “base areas” – places where they claim to have complete control – they are said to trying out different development models. Some examples are, cooperatives, restoration of the tenancy rights of tillers and the setting up of “model” primary schools. The Maoists also seemed to want to occasionally demonstrate their presence by carrying out activities around the district headquarters (Acharya, 2008, p. 43). Tactically, this may have been done to ensure that the security forces remained concentrated in and around the district center in order to ensure that they had freedom to carry out their activities in the interiors. In other words, the Maoists also wanted to use such areas as a protective layer to prevent security forces from entering the core activity areas. The villages near the district headquarters also served them as watch posts to keep track of the activities of the security forces. They did not trust all the locals of such villages, suspecting that some could also be keeping watch on Maoists activities for the government forces. Such villages were easy for the security forces to patrol in a day’s trip. The government however failed to agree a consensus on the drafting of the new constitution and on 28 May 2012, Baburam Bhattarai requested President Ram Baran Yadav to dissolve the Constituent Assembly and call for fresh elections. On 18 June 2012, party vice-chairman Mohan Baidya split the party and formed the Communist Party of Nepal—Maoist. He accused the party of being filled with opportunists and the leadership of destroying the achievements of the People’s War. He also termed accepting the line of “democratic republic” in 2005 and signing the Comprehensive Peace Accord in 2006 as major mistakes by the Maoist leadership. Baburam Bhattarai resigned as prime minister and on 14 March 2013, Chief Justice Khil Raj Regmi was appointed as an interim prime minister to hold the elections.

Conclusions

People living in particular geographical areas seemed more likely to face ill treatment than those living elsewhere. People living in the periphery of the district headquarters were likely to be victimized by both the sides because they suspected the

locals could be potential informants for the other side. The security forces mostly concentrated at the district headquarters and the Maoist activities were concentrated in the far-flung villages. The security forces generally patrolled areas around the district center, travelling to distances from where they could return to camp before darkness. The Maoists advocate regional autonomy, promising nationalities and geographically specific regions the right to self-determination. Locally, Maoists women have enforced bans on alcohol production and distribution, which they claim had helped reduce social evils and also to improve food security by ensuring that food grains are not used for brewing alcohol. The anti-alcohol drive, however also has another side. Many of the ethnic populations need alcohol for religious ceremony and cultural events, and the industry is also a major employers. It is difficult to calculate the costs of any war. Therefore, the overall cost of the Nepali conflict is also almost incalculable. Every war has losses in terms on money and material, and also those that cannot be monetized. The socio-cultural costs tend to have longer impacts than the physical damages, both at the individual level and in society at large. Even the direct economic costs are difficult to account for especially in countries like Nepal where record keeping remains primitive.

References

- Acharya, Y. (2008, October 4), Is Integration Possible in four and half Months. *The Kathmandu Post*, 4.
- Dabas, A. S. (2010), *Command Challenges at Unit Level*. New Delhi: Natraj Publishers.
- Dahal, P. K. (2003), Inside the revolution in Nepal. In A. Karki, & D. Seddon (Eds.), *Peoples' War in Nepal* (p. 75-116). Delhi: Adroit Publishers.
- David & Rothchildin, (1996), *Ethnic Fears and Global Engagement: The International Spread and Management of Ethnic Conflict*. Research Paper.
- Deery, P. (2002). *Malaya, 1948: Britain's Asian Cold War*. New York: International Center for Advance Studies.
- Derry, P. (1948), *Asian Cold War: The Communist Uprising in Malaya*. Malasia: Sage Publication.
- Li, O. (2007), The evolution of the Maoist Revolution in Nepal in adverse International Environment in M. Lawoti (Ed.) *Contentious Politics and Democratization in Nepal* (p. 120-142). Los Angeles: SAGE Publication.
- Rawal, B. (2007), *The Communist Movement in Nepal: Origin and Development*. Kathmandu: Achham Kathmandu contact Forum, CPN (UML)
- Thapa, D. (2004), Radicalism and the Emergence of the Maoists. In *Himalayan 'People's War: Nepal's Maoist Rebellion'* (p. 21-37). London: Hurst & Company.
- Thapa, G. (2005), *Role of Police Force in Internal Security*. Kathmandu: NIPS.
- Upreti, B. R. (2004), Causes of Internal Conflicts and Means to Resolve Them: Case Study of Nepal. *Graduate Insittute International Studies*, 29-35.