

## An Analysis of the Impacts of Maoist Conflict in Nepal

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### Abstract

Conflict is a burning issue in the contemporary world. It creates major threat to world peace. The issues which are closely related to the social and economic condition of any country such as caste, ethnicity, gender, class, religion etc. are the precursor of the conflict. Conflict is the main cause of violence, fight, battle, war or even insurgencies and the terrorism. Human being and the society are greatly affected by conflict and they live under mental tension and terror. The development, peace and prosperity depends the peaceful condition of the society. An analytical and descriptive methodology is used in this study with reference to multicultural and liberal theory which is based on secondary sources of data. For the research, the information is gathered from books in libraries, the internet, and published materials on related topics that are gathered from newspapers, books, magazines, and archives on inclusion. In context of Nepal there are different variables of conflict overlapping on each other such as castes, religion, ethnicity, gender, language, region etc. As Nepal is declared Federal Republic by Interim Constitution of Nepal 2063 and it is in the process of restructuring the states. However, some hurdles on the path of development. This paper deals with the very important issues which are to be addressed for permanent peace. There are a lot of positive changes seen after Maoist conflict that brought remarkable impacts in the life of Nepalese people.

Key Words: *Conflict, Permanent peace, Social exclusion, Proportional representation, Inclusiveness*

### Introduction

In the modern world, conflict is a major concern as it poses a serious threat to international peace. Conflict is frequently sparked by elements that are closely related to a country's social and economic structure, such as caste, ethnicity, gender, class, religion, poverty, and hunger. There are many ways that conflict can appear, such as through violence, conflicts, battles, insurgencies, and terrorism. Conflict has a significant negative influence on people and society as a whole, leaving both under constant stress and anxiety. The creation of peaceful social conditions is necessary for the achievement of development, peace, and prosperity. People's differences in thought, ideology, needs, desires, opinions, and other factors can lead to conflicts. Bringing about change or destroying is an ongoing process. Conflict has existed since the beginning of time and has evolved with human evolution. It is the persistently extending element of violence in the society or the nation that has detrimental effects. The marginalization of ethno-linguistic minorities has been largely attributed to linguistic and ethnic alienation, even though misgovernance is a significant contributing factor. The Maoists capitalized on these grievances by promising different ethnic group's autonomy and self-rule. This

makes sense in light of the formation of the Nepali Janajati group, which calls for the official recognition of their language and culture.

The result of the socio-economic grievances that have built up over time is the Maoist Insurgency in Nepal. Nepalese expectations regarding governance were raised with the reintroduction of democracy in 1990. The parties had less time to focus on issues related to social and economic advancement because of the political unpredictability and frequent changes in power. Even though the government's ability to survive politically remained questionable, administrative corruption and poor management came to define it. Because many of the leaders of the Panchayat regime held key positions in the democratic regime, the Nepalese did not perceive significant changes to the political system. The Maoists took advantage of these complaints and effectively expressed the goals of the populace. In addition, the Maoists instituted "Peoples Government" in numerous regions of Nepal. The people in these underdeveloped areas were drawn to their ideology of a society without classes. With the support of a devoted and powerful cadre, the Maoists continued the violence by dissolving government offices in the regions they controlled. The Maoists' unyielding stance was the reason the talks with the government broke down. Their demands covered a wide range, including foreign policy matters, socioeconomic concerns, and political agendas based on ideologies. This essay explores the reasons behind the political parties' inability to resolve some of the Maoists' complaints.

According to critical assessments, the process of writing the constitution was dominated by the elite, and despite marginalized groups' formal presence, they are still not adequately represented. Furthermore, it is clear that the parties do not sufficiently advance a democratic culture because of their internal lack of democracy. Due to the dominance of just 12–13 elite leaders, there is no room for parliamentarians to make independent decisions. They have subjugated the judiciary and control the parties, parliament, and the executive branch. They act in this way in part due to their reunion. Their system of syndicates was built. Even at the decision-making levels of the Constituent Assembly negotiations, there is no place for the people. Conflict arises in the nation due to state restructuring, power sharing, boundary demarcation, and the problem of a single identity, as the people live in diverse castes, ethnicities, languages, religions, classes, genders, and underprivileged groups. One factor contributing to instability and conflict is social and economic marginalization. Addressing these issues is necessary to bringing about long-term peace and sustainable development.

### **Statement of Problem**

Conflicts arise due to the differences of people, their thought ideology, needs, desire, opinion etc. It is continuous process to bring change or to destroy. Conflict originated from the prehistoric age and gradually developed with the evolution of mankind. It is the long prolonging factor of violence in the society or the country which brings negative effect.

The development, peace and prosperity depends the peaceful condition of the society. In context of Nepal there are different variables of conflict overlapping on each other such as castes, religion, ethnicity, gender, language, region etc. As Nepal is declared Federal Republic by Interim Constitution of Nepal 2063 and Nepal is in the process of restructuring the states. These are major hurdles on the path of development. It is very important to address these differences properly otherwise there may raise the violent conflict again in the future. The process of nation building rose numerous of problems

which brought the questions of single identity by various groups. The restructuring states, sharing power, demarcation of boundary and the issue of single identity causes the conflict in the country as the population share different caste, ethnicity, language, religion, class, gender, underprivileged group. The Social exclusion and economic backwardness is one reason to disturb the peace and raise conflict and to cope with such challenges to bring permanent peace and sustainable development. The study aims to address the following research Questions.

- What are the major tenets of the Maoist conflicts and what are their effects?

### **Objective of study**

The major thrust of this research is to expose the root cause of conflict based on socio-economic structure of the society. Nepal has number of internal as well as external conflicts but the major issue is the internal conflict leading this region to face hunger, poverty, lack of development which exclusively concerns with the violation of human right, political crisis, distrust of people and increasing crimes. It is necessary to find out some measures for social development, permanent peace, economic prosperity so that the conflict may reduce (end).

Some of the specific objectives are:

- To review the causes of Maoist conflict and its impacts in Nepal

### **Significance of study**

The significance of this study lies in the facts that the research will help Nepalese policy makers to search the root cause of conflict areas and find out the measures to achieve the social and economic growth and welfare. Several social evil which arose due to social exclusion can be combated if the people will be aware, literate and enjoy the resources equally. If different backward and excluded communities are integrated into mainstream of social development it would ultimately avoid possible threat of social unrest, civil war and instability of any kind. It is there that the actual significance of the study lies.

### **Limitations of the study**

The limitation of this research is obviously clear. The present research strictly focuses on the structure of Nepalese society and the social and economic cause. The measures to solve the root cause of the conflict based on socio- economic aspects of Nepal will be taken into account. To resolve these conflict the measures to include the various group of people in main stream of representation in all sectors and to study the positive impacts of conflict in Nepal.

### **Literature Review**

The concept of liberal theory is individual rights, liberty, consent of the governed, political equality, the right to private property, and equality before the law are among liberalism's tenets. A political and moral philosophy is liberalism. Libertarianism is a political philosophy that is frequently linked to the ideas of individual liberty, self-ownership, and freedom of choice. It makes the case that citizens should be free to participate in politics of their own choosing, accept personal responsibility for their actions without intervention from the government, and have less power over their lives. In

addition, liberals have developed a number of other concepts that are essential to the formation of their philosophical framework, including equality, pluralism, and tolerance. Liberal political theory's basic premise is that the social environment in which politics is embedded severely restricts the objectives and possibilities of government. Liberal politics is based on individual preferences and how they relate to the larger world.

Multiculturalism is the concept of having diversities in a single unit which have unique customs, cultures, languages, racial and religious groups, and perspectives on tolerance as unity in diversity. Language rights, regional autonomy, political representation, education curricula, land claims, immigration and naturalization policies, and even national symbols like the choice of national anthem or public holidays are just a few of the significant and sometimes contentious questions and issues that arise from diversity. One example of a new idea that emerged quickly in the west over time is multiculturalism, which evolved into western theories whose central tenet is the protection of minorities' rights. Later on, it has an impact on the Asian countries; however, this model is not appropriate for those nations because of their unique historical, cultural, ethnic, religious, demographic, and geographic differences (Kymlicka, 1995; p.10).

In Nepal, conflicts involving caste, religion, ethnicity, gender, language, and regional differences come together to form multiple layers of conflict. Conflict is the situation which arises when there is controversy in thought and mutually exclusive goals or values persuaded by different closely placed parties or groups. People are different in their thought, opinion, and ideology and naturally disagree in those matters. Conflict, as a part of human life always brings a change- either positive or negative in the society (Adhikari & Pyakurel, 2013).

Nepal is struggling with extreme levels of inequality. Particularly, the inequality between groups and between regions within the country are high. In culturally and ethnically diverse Nepal, previous attempts at democratization have resulted in elite-led processes, continuing exclusion and marginalization, serving the purpose of affirming the position of the elite rather than increasing popular participation. If it is not addressed in time it destroys the physical assets and blocks development. It is necessary to find the tractable and intractable conflict and search for possible measures of conflict transformation and permanent peace. Nepal is a multi-ethnic and multicultural country. The 2011 census recorded 126 caste and ethnic groups, 123 languages and 10 religious groups (CBS, Census Report, 2011). About 81 percent of the population is Hindu. In terms of ethnic groups there is no clear majority but numerous minorities. The inequality between groups and between regions has been very high.

Poverty indicators are very high of Janjatis, indigenous and Dalits in Nepal rather than high caste group. Average per capita income is much lower in rural areas than urban areas. The major population of these groups lives in rural areas. Average household and per capita consumption of socially excluded and marginalized group is very low. These facts of economic inequality too raise the conflict in the society (UNDP Report, 2006). Economic and social measures of conflict resolutions are development assistance, economic reform, proportional mobilization of resource, social and economic development, mobilization of agricultural project, increasing the investment of private sector and to end all types of inequalities, disparities and to protect the right of minorities, convention were signed by socio-economic council of the U.N. (Shivakoti, 2070). The examples can be drawn from the conflict of Srilanka which faced the major social inequality.

All significant books, documents, and other research materials as well as journals that highlight the socioeconomic exclusion and discrimination that led to conflict in Nepal were consulted in order to conduct this study, which also sheds light on how socioeconomic conflict is resolved. Conflict resolution calls for "the authentic inclusion of different groups and categories for which formal political equality can hide continued exclusion and oppression." (Lawoti 2007c, 58, citing Dryzek 1996, 475). Class conflict in Nepal has taken on characteristics akin to those of earlier European societies. In Europe's industrial society, the rich held high status and the workers, at the lower end of the class scale, exaggerating the extreme claims of inequality. Compared to a man's status, women's status has numerous disadvantages (Perkin, 1971: 13–25).

Socioeconomic inequality is a fundamental issue in nation building. The issue with Nepal's language and dialects is the 53 mother tongues that were still in use as of the 1952–1954 population census (Gurung, 1998). Disparities in castes, gender, class, ethnicity, geography, religion, and other factors lead to conflict in society. Poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, mistrust, exploitation, unequal resource distribution, and social, economic, and political inequality can all lead to conflict (Shivakoti, 2070: 300). The establishment of liberal political and economic institutions has also been viewed by the international community since the 1990s as a means of resolving disputes (Stokke 2011, 323). According to research on the subject, the representation of the elite Brahmin and Chhetries has increased while that of the hill ethnic groups, the Madhesi and Janjatis, has decreased in the House of Representatives elections held in 1994, 1996, and 1999, respectively. This has caused these groups to become dissatisfied. In 1996, the Maoists launched the People's War, causing violent conflict in society and bringing up issues of caste, ethnicity, gender, religion, and language. They also demanded inclusive representation in all spheres of society as well as ethnic and regional autonomy (Pyakurel, 2013). Therefore, effective and equal participation of various groups in the governance of public affairs is referred to as political inclusion.

But in recent times, as a result of the modernization and democratic processes raising awareness, different political parties, civil society, and ethnic groups have become more assertive in their efforts to establish secular and scientific policies in Nepal. The demand for multiple rights within society is putting the so-called concept of homogeneity under pressure (Azam, 2001: 72).

### **Research Methodology**

This study adopts multicultural and liberal theory along with descriptive and analytical approach. The data that has been used in this paper are based on secondary source. They are accumulated for the research from library books, from the internet, published materials on related issues will be gathered from newspapers, books, magazines and archives on inclusion, policy making and representation in political institutions. The statistical facts and historical evidences are collected from viable and authentic resources. Proper internet websites and related external links are used to explore authentic theories and concepts. In addition, the researcher made use of the shifting trends in the dominant political scenario that have come into contemporary thinking and creative dialogue. Also, the researcher relies upon her own inner insight and perspicacity for the most part.

### **Findings**

The National Population and Housing Census of 2021 shows that there are 29,164,578

people living in Nepal. Of these, 14,253,551 (48.87%) were men and 14,911,027 (51.13%) were women. Consequently, the sex ratio is 95.59 male for every 100 female with 2,928 people (0.01 percent of the total population) classified as "other gender." In 2021, the average annual rate of population growth is 0.92 percent (NPHC National Report 2021, p. 1). Nepal lists 142 castes and ethnic groups, of which 125 were also included in the 2011 census and 17 were discovered specifically for the census of 2021. There has been no change in the caste/ethnicity reported in the censuses of 2011 and 2021. The census reports 124 mother tongues, of which 111 were also included in the 2011 census and 13 were discovered specifically for the census 2021. There are ten religious categories reported in the census 2021 same as 2011 (NPHC National Report 2021, Caste/ ethnicity, language & religion. p. 34-35). The data of census reflects the status of diverse Nepalese society that led to Maoist conflict in Nepal.

The Maoist conflict was launched by the CPN Maoist on 13 February 1996. The main cause of conflict in Nepali society is its contradictory nature. The state failed to implement the policy of inclusivity and empowerment to appease the diverse community and never attempted to pursue the policy of accommodating all groups on its own through the mechanisms established within the constitution and other legal framework (Pyakurel and Adhikari, 2013: 39). With the stated purpose of overthrowing the Nepalese monarchy and establishing a people's republic which ended with the signing of the Comprehensive peace accord on 21 November 2006. After the Peace accord was signed to end Maoist conflict in Nepal UN mission was set up to supervise peace process in the country through UNMIN which continued its efforts to restore permanent peace for four years. Later on the government of Nepal settled the conflict itself permanently by settling the Maoist militia issue under the premiership of Dr. Baburam Bhattarai. The conflict was characterized by murders, massacres, purges, kidnappings, other war crimes and crime against humanity. The insurgency resulted in the deaths of over 17,000 people including civilians, insurgents, police and army personnel. Even the internal displacement of hundreds of thousands of people mostly in rural areas of Nepal took place. The Truth and Reconciliation commission has received about 63,000 complaints as reported by the commissioner. (Wikipedia)

"Nepal has experienced a decade-long Maoist conflict started in February 1996 in the name of people's war. More than 17,000 people killed, and 200,000 people displaced; properties worth millions of dollars lost. However, Nepal enters into an era of post-conflict with the signing of comprehensive peace accord (CPA) on 21 November 2006. Now, there are series of tasks before the government for the operationalisation of agreement, including holding of the constituent assembly election, on the way to long lasting peace in the country. In this process, post conflict activities were planned and prioritized with a short run and long run focus and implemented effectively. Projects and programmes for reconstruction and rehabilitation were implemented to provide immediate relief to victims of conflict, and improve service delivery. The needs of vulnerable groups including internally displaced people, children and their rights are ensured. This progress should be followed with programmes on social and economic inclusion for enhancing capacity building and promoting social inclusion and thereby contributing to the attainment of Millennium Development Goals in the long run" (Tiwari; 4).

Some positive impacts of Maoist conflict which brought the positive changes in Nepal are listed below.

- The constitution was promulgated to safe guard he people's rights and to restore permanent peace
- Republican system was introduced in the country and monarchial system of governance was abolished
- Nepal became federal democratic republic and secularism was introduced
- Inclusive representation was implemented to insure the rights of marginalized and underprivileged groups
- Mixed electoral system (FPTP and PR – closed list) was introduced in CA elections and federal, provincial and local elections
- Nepal was divided in to seven provinces to make smooth administration throughout the country
- People's aspiration and will was respected through the provisions mentioned in the constitution
- Reservation quotas are fixed to make every sector inclusive
- Different commissions are established to ensure the promotion of Women, Indigenous / Janajati, Madhesi, Tharu, Muslim, Inclusive groups
- Many economic activities are set up for the development of the country
- Many efforts are made to end all kinds of discrimination
- Millennium and sustainable goals are set up for all round development of the nation

The constitution guarantees eight clusters of reservation: women (33%). Adiwasi/Janajati (24%) and Madhesi (20%) are the percentages of posts to be filled through open competition; the remaining percentages are reserved for candidates from related reservation clusters and will be filled through separate competition. Dalit (9%) and Tharu (4%), Muslims (3%), people with disabilities (3%), and backward areas (4%). In the civil service, 45 percent of the total is set aside for inclusiveness, and 55 percent is set aside for open competition. To ensure inclusivity in the civil service, forty-five percent of the openly competitive positions will be reserved for candidates from related reservation clusters, who will compete separately for those positions to assure them for their identity rights (Pandey, 2019).

## **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The Maoist conflict ended with Comprehensive peace Accord signed on November 2, 2006 between Nepal government and CPN Maoist under the supervision of UNMIN (United Nations Mission in Nepal). The conflict brought a lot of changes. The overall conclusion of the present study is that there is a need for recovery and reconstruction in all the three dimensions – political, economic and social – and that over emphasis on any one dimension such as the political dimension could further jeopardise the post conflict situation and obstruct the way to long lasting peace. The country moved forward in social, economic and political aspects. The marginalized, backward and underprivileged groups got their representation in education, politics, and administration, even in other sectors. The proportional representation system of election paved the way of ordinary people to get their involvement in the politics at decision making levels especially in parliament and cabinet.

It is necessary to institutionalize the democratic norms among the citizens, so that the country will run its administration smoothly. There will be strong feeling of nationalism and patriotism when the country reflects equality and equity in every field. To achieve this, there must be certain things to be done.

- The norms of constitution should be followed without any disruptions
- The citizens should be aware about their rights and duties
- Equality and equity must be practiced for social and economic prospects
- The activities of the government must be justifiable for the nation
- There must be fair and stable government

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