

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, poverty, hunger 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. 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. In the post conflict era of Nepal brought a lot of positive changes which brought remarkable impacts in the life of Nepalese people.

Key Words: social exclusion, popular participation, sustainable development, proportional representation

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Introduction

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, levels of 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.

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.

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 find the root cause of conflict in Nepal and its impacts
- To review critically the prospect of problem of emerging new challenges, cultural dialogues, impacts on globalization and transformation of conflicts.

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

Critical evaluations state that the constitution-writing process has been elite-led, and that in spite of the formal presence of marginalized groups there is still a lack of substantial representation. It is also evident that the parties internally are not sufficient democratic so they do not promote a democratic culture. There is no room for the parliament members to take decision of their own because only 12-13 top leaders dominate the scene. They control the parties, the parliament, and the executive and subordinated the judiciary. They do it partly because they are reunited. They built a syndicate system. There is no room for the people in the Constituent Assembly negotiations even in decision making levels.

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.

Research methodology

This study adopts a 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 Maoist conflict was launched by the CPN Maoist on 13 February 1996 with the stated purpose of over throwing 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 Madhabi Bhatta. (Wikipedia)

"Nepal has experienced a decade-long Maoist conflict started in February 1996 in the name of people's war. More than 13,000 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 are to be planned and prioritized with a short run and long run focus and implemented effectively. Projects and programmes for reconstruction and rehabilitation are to be 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 to be ensured. This 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)

To conduct this research, all the important books, documents, and other research data and journals have been used which reflect the socio-economic exclusion and discrimination that created conflict in Nepal, even to flash a light on the resolution of socio-economic conflict. Conflict resolution requires "the authentic inclusion of different groups and categories for which formal political equality can hide continued exclusion and oppression." (Dryzek 1996, 475, cited in Lawoti 2007c, 58).

Since the 1990s, the international community has also seen the building of liberal political and economic institutions as a recipe for resolving conflict (Stokke 2011, 323). Research related to it shows that Elite group of Brahmin, and Chhetries representation has been increased while hill ethnic groups, madhesi and janjatis representation decreased in House of Representatives election in 1994, 1996 and 1999 respectively which led the dissatisfaction to these groups. The violent conflict was created in the society and the Maoist started people's war in 1996 raised the issue related to caste, ethnicity, gender, religion and language and demanded ethnic and regional autonomy, inclusive representation in all sectors (Pyakurel, 2013). Political inclusion thus means effective and equal participation of different groups in the governance of public affairs.

The feature of class struggle in Nepal in recent years is similar to that of Europe in past. Class structure of Europe in industrial society was the rich occupied high status while the workers had very low which exaggerated extreme claims of inequality. Women status carries many disadvantages compared with that of man (Perkin, 1971: 13-25).

A basic problem of nation building is socio-economic inequalities. The problem with regard to language and dialects of Nepal is as to their extant number of 53 mother tongue recorded in population census 1952/54 (Gurung, 1998). There are differences of class, gender, castes, ethnicity, region, religion, etc. to cause conflict in the society. Conflict is caused even due to poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, distrust, exploitation, unequal distribution of resources, social economic and Political disparity (Shivakoti, 2070: 300).

In recent years, however the awareness created by the process of modernization and democracy have made various ethnic groups, civil society, political parties move assertive with regard to establishing scientific and secular policy in Nepal. The so-called concept of homogeneity is being challenged on the ground of demanding plural rights of society (Azam, 2001: 72).

The contradictory character of Nepali society is the major source of conflict. The state never tries to pursue policy of accommodating all groups on its own through the mechanism developed within the constitution and other legal framework and failed to adopt the policy of inclusiveness and empowerment to satisfy the diverse community (Pyakurel and Adhikari, 2013: 39). 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
- Permanent peace was established
- Republican system started in Nepal
- Monarchical system of governance was abolished
- Nepal became federal democratic republic
- 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, tharu, madhesi etc. 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

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, administration and 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 (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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