



Graduate School of Development Studies

**Bullets to Ballots:
Participation of Maoist Women
in the Parliament and the Government of Nepal
after the People's Movement 2006.**

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Dedication

For all women who dared to fight for equality.

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List of Acronyms

CA	Constituent Assembly
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CPN-M	Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist
CPN-U	Communist Party of Nepal-United
CPN UF	Communist Party of Nepal-Unified
CPN-UML	Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist and Leninist
DJP	Dalit Janajati Party
FDNF	Federal Democratic National Forum
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FPTP	First Past the Post
INSEC	Informal Sector Service Center
IWDC	International Women's Democracy Center
JN	Janamorcha Nepal
KTM	Kathmandu
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
ML	Marxist and Leninist
MPRF-N	Madhesi People's Rights Forum-Nepal
MQM	Muttahida Qaumi Movement
NC	Nepali Congress
NJD	Nepal Janata Dal
NWP	Nepal Workers and Peasants
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PR	Proportional Representation
RJ	Rastriya Janamorcha
RJM	Rastriya Jana Mukti
RJS	Rastriya Jan Shakti
RPP	Rastriya Prajatantrik Party
RPP-N	Rastriya Prajatantrik Party-Nepal
SA	Sadvawana
S-A	Sadvawana Aanandidevi
SAFHR	South Asian Forum for Human Rights
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SPA	Seven Party Alliance
TMLP	Terai Madhesh Loktantrik Party
WB	World Bank
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Abstract

This study attempts to explore women's political participation in the militant political movement on the basis of agency and emancipation. The analysis is based on Nepal's Maoist movement and women's agency within this. While analyzing, this study also gives special attention to the relationships of agency, emancipation and violence. Many feminist writings in the west challenge the notion of agency and say that it is absent in patriarchal militant movements. Thus, this study attempts to see whether it applies in the Maoist movement. In case of Nepal, the issue of caste, ethnicity, class, region are closely associated with the issue of gender thus this paper draws attention to the intersectionality between these and the issue of women's leadership. This study ultimately aims to add value in the area of women's engagement in the political process within the revolutionary movement in South Asia.

Relevance to Development Studies

Development studies historically focused on economic progress which has been changing towards enlarging human choices. In this changing context, it is essential to enable the capability of the people to be able to enlarge their choices. To achieve this, gender equality and the empowerment of women-who hold half of the population of this earth need to be treated as critical dimensions. Women need to be able to participate in the decisions that affect them; their communities and countries in order to bring a social change that remain a central theme of this paper which opens space for the development studies.

Keywords

[Agency, Militant political movements, emancipation, victimhood, People's War, Maoists]

Chapter 1

Introduction to the Research

1.1 Statement of the Research Problem

The Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) started an armed struggle against the Government in 1996. It went on for a decade and in 2006 a wide protest emerged that, at the end, forced the change in regime, and led to a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the political parties and the Maoists. This meant that an armed Maoist movement had to transform itself into a governing force. The political changes after 2006 opened up space for the Maoists to come up as a legitimate political force. They gained seats in the Parliament as well as in the ministries. They nominated both male and female candidates, with a significant number of women succeeding in elections. An election for the new Constituent Assembly took place in 2008 within which Maoists gained a majority of the Assembly seats. In this research I am interested in looking at the process of Maoist women's participation in the Parliament and the Government after the People's Movement of 2006 also known as People's Movement II. I will especially look at the issues of emancipation and agency in order to understand how women are positioned in the relationship between Maoists armed revolutionary movement and their participation in the peaceful political process.

1.2 Contextual Background

1.2.1 Political Movement in Nepal in the 1990s

The 1990 People's Movement (Jana Aandolan I) of Nepal was a multiparty movement which brought an end to absolute monarchy and the beginning of constitutional democracy. It also eliminated the party less Panchayat system¹ (Dixit, 2006: 17). The movement was marked by a unity between the various political parties. The 1990 movement drafted the Constitution into effect in November 1990. This Constitution forced the Monarchy to hand over decisions of government to the Nepali people.

¹ A 'partyless' political system which governed Nepal from 1962-1990

However, the construction of the Constitution faced many difficulties because of the chasm between elites (high class, upper caste) and the typical voters. The leaders of the most prominent parties are typically upper class citizens and men who are rarely concerned or associated with the larger section of the population such as women, ethnic groups, non-Hindus, lower caste groups, etc. This diversity increased the difficulty of creating a usable system that allowed electoral officials and Nepali citizens to create a new system to provide equal opportunities for all. Thus, the democratic process failed to include women, nationalities, Dalits² and other underprivileged groups into the political mainstream (Dhakal, S. et al., 2004: 6). Similarly, remote and inaccessible areas remained excluded and unaddressed in development planning. Thus it could not meet the expectation of the people who were excluded.

1.2.2 Maoist Movement in Nepal

The Maoist movement gained momentum in Nepal since 1996. After six years of multiparty democracy, the CPN-M started a movement to establish a communist republic in place of the extant constitutional monarchy (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2004: 166). The movement that began from 3 mid-western mountain districts, spread to 75 districts within a decade. This revolt of the CPN-M is a manifestation of ideology intertwined with age-old grievances resulting from inequalities embedded in the Nepali social structure (Dhakal, S. et al., 2004: 54). The hopes raised by changes in the formal political system in 1990, brought no positive change in the lives of people (Karki & Seddon, 2003: 56). Likewise, the structures of political representation and civil society proved no more able to guarantee social justice and basic needs for the mass of Nepali people (Seddon & Hussein, 2002: 43). Furthermore, the stratification based on caste, class, sex, ethnicity, and geography distinctly appeared as the major issues based on which the people are excluded, exploited and discriminated. Meantime, the gap between the people in the villages and in the cities, and between the rich and the poor continued to widen (Dhakal, S. et al., 2004: 19). The Maoists base were the

² Dalit refers to the low caste group people who fall on the bottom of the hierarchy in the caste system and they are also called untouchables.

rural communities where the state presence was very nominal or absent. The Maoists gradually expanded their numbers by attracting the people who were excluded from the mainstream development process.

A decade long Maoist movement brought both positive and negative impacts in different aspects of people's lives. The longest lasting pain from the death of a family member cannot be calculated in terms of economic value. Similarly, multiple sufferings of people from torture, rape, intimidation, abduction, disappearance, displacement, unnecessary inquiries at the security check points, frequent strikes, restriction in the mobility, bombings etc. created discomfort in the people's everyday lives and a breakdown of social and kinship networks. This resulted in fear and uncertainty. Because of fear and lack of trust in the State's ability to ensure security, people in the conflict affected districts are compelled to abide by all unlawful demands and atrocities of the Maoists, such as to give donations, provide free food and shelter, participate in the mass meetings (Dhakal, S. et al., 2004: 111). Frequent state security "cordon and search" operations to find Maoists in the villages filled people with extreme fear. These searches generally involve systematic interrogation, intimidation and beating of villagers where information about Maoist was demanded as "proof of not being a Maoist or Maoist supporter" (Lama Tamang et al., 2003: 54).

The use of force has created sharp divisions in societies, which has further led to hatred and antagonism among the people. Traditional ways of cooperation and coordination are being obliterated. It has adversely affected the social organizations and cultural life. The networks and neighborhood relationships that bound communities are disintegrating because of fear, distrust, and loss of self-confidence. The conflict has sown distrust in relationships affecting the kinship based security networks (Dhakal, S. et al., 2004: 86). My own experience of visiting conflict affected districts in Western Nepal shows that the victims' families are seen and treated differently by the community members and the kinship networks. The community does not support the victims (of either Maoist or security forces) because if they do so they will be either suspected as supporting Maoist or the

security force. Because of fear, people in the community prefer not to interfere in the incident and not to support the victims or their families.

A large number of people from the villages of Nepal were displaced to the urban or semi urban areas (Rai, 2005: 23). Reports from independent research by various organizations have quoted figures that could range from 37,000 to 400,000 excluding those who may have crossed the border into India (Global IDP Report, 2003: 16). This forced resettlement dispersed and fragmented communities, dismantled patterns of social organizations and interpersonal ties; kinship groups became scattered as well. Life sustaining informal networks of reciprocal help, local voluntary associations, and self-organized mutual services are disrupted (World Bank, 2000: 12).

At the same time it has also brought positive changes where the Maoists have strongly raised the issues of caste discrimination and taken action against it. They have raised the issues of women, indigenous and ethnic groups. There are many women in the Maoist movement involved in political and military activities.

The indigenous and the ethnic groups have experienced the conflict differently than others. The movement originated in the Magar (ethnic group) heartland of the mid western region and spread across the country. As mentioned in Dhakal, S. et al., (2004: 19), ethnicity is regarded as one of the major factors in the growth of Maoist influence. The Maoist have argued that systematic exclusion and deprivation of indigenous ethnic groups should be addresses as "primary issues" in equitable national development and national integration, which resulted in the formation of many pro-Maoist ethnic organization (the Kirant Mukti Morcha, Tharuwan Mukti Morcha, Magarat Mukti Morcha etc). Through their sister organizations, Ethnic Liberation Fronts, Maoists have promoted a revival of indigenous people's culture and language at the local level. Similarly, indigenous people have developed a sense of pride in their culture traditions. The Maoists are also fostering use of local languages in education and other written materials. All these changes have contributed to increase awareness about institutional exclusion of indigenous ethnic communities and has encouraged people to question the status quo. Therefore, ethnic autonomy, the right to self-determination and more

decentralized governance are high on the agendas of all ethnic groups (Lama-Tamang et al., 2003: 15).

Though the participation of indigenous and ethnic groups is high in the Maoist cadre, they have not been able to assume higher leadership roles within the party, nor have there been any visible positive changes in the livelihoods of the indigenous populations (Lama-Tamang et al., 2003: 35). Some caste and ethnic groups have become "natural" suspects by the security force in many parts of the country. In Western Nepal, the security has been more hostile towards the Tharus and Magars (ethnic groups) suspecting them as Maoists and harassing them at the security check post. Likewise, Tamangs and Kirants (ethnic groups) were suspects in the central and eastern region (Dhakal, S. et al., 2004: 39). There are also the cases where Maoists themselves have campaigned against traditional cultural ceremonies as economically wasteful and socially unprogressive. Furthermore, there are many incidences where ethnic and indigenous people have been treated as impure, drunkards and unclean by the Maoists (Lama-Tamang et al., 2003: 12).

The Dalit have their own experience in the Maoist movement. It is estimated that more Dalit women than men are involved in the movement, which is a major shift in the Nepal's political history where the participation of women was invisible. As mentioned in Lama-Tamang et al., (2003: 21), the Maoists have initiated a "Dalit Liberation Front" to encourage the Dalits in the movement. Their major agenda is the elimination of caste-based discrimination and provision of services and opportunities for Dalits in Nepal. With a few exceptions Dalit and non-Dalits are treated equally in the Maoist cadre. The practice of untouchability appears to have decreased in public places. Some villages have been declared to be "caste-free villages". In many of the cases the practice of denying Dalit children access to schools has been stopped. The traditional *bista* or *kbala* system whereby occupational Dalit caste received grain annually for the services they provided to higher caste is gradually coming to an end in districts where Maoists have been active (Lama-Tamang et al., 2003: 17). On the other side, Dalits have been suspected by the state of being Maoists or Maoist supporters. During the state of emergency, blacksmiths were not allowed to take cast iron into the villages because the security forces

suspected it could be used to make weapons for the Maoists. No significant changes in the traditional patron-client relationships were observed even though there were reports that caste-based discrimination was diminishing (Dhakal, S. et al., 2004: 126).

1.2.3 Women in the Maoist Movement in Nepal

In 1990, the people of Nepal participated in a mass movement or Jana Aandolan I for the restoration of the democracy. The participation of Nepalese women for the restoration of the democracy is a milestone in the history of popular mass movements (Ghimire, 2001: 190). Since 1990 and the advent of democracy, there has been an exponential growth in the forms and types of activities undertaken for the women of Nepal by state and non-state players. Consequently, the first decade (1990-2000) of democracy appears to have been quiet fruitful for women (Tamang, 2004: 235). However, the participation of women in the politics remained negligible (Ghimire, 2001: 194). Even the Constitutional provisions for integrating women into the various levels of the political power structure failed to increase women's participation (Ghimire, 2001: 196).

The Maoist movement provided opportunities for women to raise their issues. Initially, it attracted mostly the poor peasant women and the women from oppressed ethnic and indigenous groups. The ideological thrust of the movement is oriented towards expanding the rights base of the poor and the marginal including women (Gautam et al., 2001: 225). Its 40 points Charter (initial demand before launching the war) says that patriarchal exploitation and discrimination against women should be stopped and they should have access to property rights (Thapa, 2007: 239).

The majority of the women in the Maoist movement are from the Tibeto-Burman and non-Aryan ethnic groups, but women from upper caste Bahun Chhetri and Newar Buddhist communities have also been attracted to the Maoist movement. For upper caste women, joining the movement holds out the liberating possibility of escaping an oppressive socio cultural milieu sanctified by religion. Going to the forest is for these women a possibility for empowerment (Gautam et al., 2001: 250). The movement attracted women

from different groups through their focused campaign on the issues of banning alcohol production and consumption, discouraging gambling, something that many women have been pleased about. Women are also attracted because of the political space provided in the Maoist cadre as never before in the history. They are also getting directly involved in the movement as propagandist and guerrillas. Many commentators who carried out interviews in the areas of conflict, pointed out that a large number of women have actively participated in the movement because of the traditional gender discrimination and disparities between men and women in social, economic, political, legal and cultural spheres (Gautam et al., 2001: 219).

The Maoist movement is able to bring some positive changes in society. By emphasizing rural women's critical thinking skills, 'empowerment' programme may have paved the way for them to engage with Maoist ideology as fully conscious political subjects (Shneiderman & Turin, 2004: 93). It is believed that women make almost a third of Maoist fighting force (Gautam, 2001: 37). Between 1998 to November 2001, the Maoist organized guided tours for Nepali and foreign journalists through the rural areas under their control. The journalists invariably brought back for public consumptions photographs and stories of a large number of women who carried guns in a matter of fact way, who constituted a large proportion of the participants in Maoist processions, many of them in combat fatigues or wearing red scarves, the symbol of support for communism (Sharma & Pant, 2004: 31). Nepali women have participated in politics through this insurgency as never before in the history of the country.

As far as education is concerned, girls' primary enrolment improved relative to boys during the war years in 14 out of the 18 war affected counties (Stewart & Fitzgerald, 2001: 11). The Maoist movement in Nepal has offered women a chance to escape a situation where their lives would be one of deprivation from education, which would eventually lead to nothing more than marriage and devotion to the family. Joining the Maoist has also been seen as an answer for many women who have been abandoned by their husbands or who have felt the government will not and cannot do anything about the inequality women face (Onesto, 2005: 46).

But there are also narratives of women who are the victims of deliberate gendered forms of violence and prosecution such as rape and sexual slavery (Thapa, 2007: 249). Rape and sexual assaults have been used by security personal as a tool of revenge and harassment. Even within the Maoist militia, there have been reports of sexual harassment of women soldiers (Dhakal, A. et al., 2004: 29). In some of the areas it has been observed that people prefer early marriage of girls because they are in fear of the security forces abusing their daughter or Maoists taking them away.

The death toll of women killed in the first two years of insurgency was six, three by police and three by Maoist. In 1998, the number of women killed by the police rose indicating much higher participation of women and/or the serious targeting of women in police action. More than 13,000 lives were lost in a decade which has left many women as widows at a young age. The majority of the disappearance case is of men, which has left a large numbers of women seeking news of their fate (INSEC, 1999: 56). Likewise the Maoists have kidnapped women forcing them to participate in their celebrations and to support Maoists with food and shelter (Thapa, 2007: 256).

Women took part in the changing politics after the peace agreement between the Maoist and the Seven Political Parties (SPA) in 2006 after an armed war between the Maoist and the government came to an end. The conflict shifted to claims of identity as ethnic minorities and the other identity based groups claiming the right to self-determination, proportional representation in the constituent assembly, restructuring the constituencies based on population, federal system with regional autonomy, legitimate positive discrimination in state mechanism and elimination of all forms of discrimination practiced by the State. The issue of women captured the attention within these ethnic movements, especially elimination of all discrimination and proportional representation. These movements also played a role in strengthening women's participation during Constituent Assembly election process.

1.2.4 Official Positions of Women in the Maoist Movement

The Maoist movement as a whole and women in particular, take Peru's Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) as their model. But they are determined not to replicate the patriarchal structure that characterized male-female relations in the Shining Path (Parvati, 2008: 3). The question of women's leadership became more and more important in Nepal as revolutionary united front of the CPN-M were replacing the state machinery at village and district levels. It was seen that women were joining the movement in unprecedented numbers, showing tremendous endurance, sacrifice and devotion. However they have not been at the leading position in the movement. In order to increase women's participation in all levels of people's councils, their presence has been made mandatory (Yami, 2007: 15). After joining the government in 2006, Maoist nominated more than one third of women in the parliament and one third in the ministry (Janadesh, 2006: 5)

1.2.5 Maoist Women in People's Movement 2006 and the New Government

After the royal coup in 2005, the political scenario of Nepal took a different shape³. Maoists and the seven political parties made a 12 points agreement between them with the aim of ending the absolute monarchy and establishment of full democracy, peace, prosperity, progress and national independence⁴. The three major powers - the king, the parliamentary political parties and the Maoists - turned to bipolar power; king on the one side, and the political parties and the Maoist on the other. Thereafter the people's movement i.e. Jana Andolan-II started in early 2006 led by seven major

³ On February 1, the 11th King of the Shah dynasty sacked the Council of Ministers led by Sher Bahadur Deuba and, as per Article 27(3) of the Constitution, took over state authority for three years. Invoking the Constitution, and the commitment to defend multi-party democracy and preserve the "sovereignty vested in the people", he imposed a state of emergency in the country. The King accused Deuba (Prime Minister) of failing to persuade the Maoists to agree to a January 13 deadline for peace talks and to prepare the ground for general elections in the country. He announced his decision in a speech broadcast on state-owned television.

⁴ 12-point understanding was made on 22 November 2005. The details can be found in <http://www.peace.gov.np/admin/doc/Second%20Understanding.Final.pdf>

political parties with active support from the Maoists, civil society groups and professional associations. Ordinary people, especially the young generations of men and women, participated in peaceful demonstrations throughout the country (Poudyal, 2008: 78).

As a result, the House of Representatives that was dissolved in 2002 was reinstated. Thereafter the newly formed government got the mandate to hold an election for the Constituent Assembly and open negotiations with the Maoists. The Maoists and the government signed a CPA and the armed struggle came to an end. The Maoists agreed to join the elections and the government in 2007 (ICG, 2006: 1). The reinstated Parliament made momentous proclamations such as reduction of royal powers; declaration of Nepal (which was the only Hindu kingdom in the world) as a secular state; and allocation of at least one third of seats for women in all political and state's administrative structures (Poudyal, 2008: 79).

Constituent Assembly election was held in 2008. Women won 33 percent of the seats. The Republic was finally proclaimed on 28 May 2008.

In the Interim Parliament, there were 330 members among which 57 were women. The total numbers of Maoist Parliamentarians were 83, of which 31 were women⁵. There were 30 members in the Council of Ministers, among which six were women. Two of the six Maoist Ministers were women⁶.

In the present legislature Parliament which was formed after the election in 2008, there are 601 Parliamentarians among which 197 are women. The total numbers of Maoists Parliamentarians are 229 among which 74 are women. In the Council of Ministers, there are 24 Ministers among which four are women. Out of nine Maoist Ministers, two are women. The women won 30 seats through direct elections, and 24 were from the Maoists party. These dramatic changes inspired my research.

⁵ <http://www.parliament.gov.np/memberhr.htm> : June 04, 2008.

⁶ <http://www.opmcm.gov.np>: June 04, 2008.

1.3 Research Objectives

- To explore the relationship between the Maoist women's participation in the political process in Nepal since 2006, and Maoists' ideology of gender/femininity.
- To understand the claims and practices of women's emancipation made by Maoist movement, in relation to feminist movement in Nepal and examine Maoist women's own experiences of these claims and practices.
- To compare Maoist concepts of emancipation of women with those in feminist movements in Nepal and contribution of both in the process of women's political participation
- To contribute to the understanding of women's engagement in the political process within revolutionary and militant movements (in South Asia) with focus on Nepal.

1.4 Research Questions

My main research questions are:

1. How do the Maoist women (Parliamentarians and Ministers) see their participation in political process since 2006? and
2. How is Maoist women's participation in national political processes linked to Maoist ideologies and practices of gender/femininity?

My sub research questions are:

3. To what extent do the issue of caste, class and political influence contribute to becoming the Parliamentarians and Ministers for the Maoist women?
4. What are the differences between Maoist women in parliament and other women Parliamentarians regarding perception of Maoist women's agency and emancipation in Nepal?

1.5 Research Methods, Data Collection and Analysis

This research demanded a rigorous exercise in order to collect primary data. The complexity of the work demanded thorough qualitative analysis of the information. There are also some quantitative indicators to verify the collected information. Secondary information is also used either to substantiate or challenge the existing information or to enhance ones understanding of the issue.

For the purpose of empirical field work, the capital city- Kathmandu was selected. It was a potential area because of the availability of the respondents and accessibility of the secondary information sources. The respondents for this research were divided into three categories. First: Maoist women Parliamentarians and Ministers; second: women Parliamentarians from different political parties; and finally the professionals who had in-depth information and contributed to this issue⁷.

Twenty Parliamentarians and one minister from the Maoist party shared their life stories. Initially three of them were contacted through telephone and the rest were approached with the help of the first three respondents on the basis of their availability. The focus was also given to contact top women political leaders among them. The information provided by this group was based on their personal narratives of participation in the Maoist movement and democratic movement that led to their election. In the second group, there were 11 women Parliamentarians from the two leading political parties: four from NC and seven from CPN-UML. They were contacted through an organization called Interparty Women's Alliance. They were selected to help me to understand and contextualize Maoist women's narratives and compare how they perceive the Maoist women who fought an armed war.

⁷ There are 601 (male: 404 and female: 197) members in the current legislative parliament which was formed after the 2008 election. 240 of them have come through First Past the Post (FPTP) contest, 335 are from Proportional Representation (PR) and 26 are from the direct nomination from the council of ministers. The Maoists have 218 members in total and among them 74 are women. Similarly, there are 24 members in the council of ministers among which four are women. In total there are nine ministers from the Maoist and 2 of them are women.

Among these 11, I met six of them and the rest five from CPN-UML in the parliament office during a Focused Group Discussion (FGD). The same interview questions were used as checklist during these discussions. Finally, there were five respondents from the professionals among which one was a female human rights activist and the remaining four were journalists, one of which was a female. For this category, the respondents were chosen purposively by using pre-existing knowledge. They were interviewed in order to get an independent perspective on how they perceive and analyze the political change after 2006.

These interviewees were selected on the basis of their availability, importance and time limitation. In all the three sets of interviews, semi structured questionnaires were used.

Secondary information was collected by visiting different book stores and libraries. It was also collected by visiting the offices of the political parties, parliament office, office of the election commission and by researching the internet.

To borrow from Russell (1995: 35), “*nothing in research is more important than validity*”. In this research various attempts have been made in order to ensure reliability and validity of the information. The interviewees were different in their behavior; the levels of education, socio-economic condition, political orientation, geographical location and culture. So various techniques were used such as observation and verifying the information through triangulation. Similar types of studies done by other national and international researchers and the types of data collection methods and instruments were extensively reviewed for cross checking the information.

This research demanded qualitative analysis of the information. Some of the interview narratives and policy documents have been analyzed through argument analysis. There are also a few quantitative information which have been analyzed and presented through charts and tables.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

There are a few studies done on women’s participation in Nepal’s Maoist movement. But this study specifically focuses on political participation

of women which is a very current issue in the Nepalese political and academic arena. There are a significant number of women in politics after the Maoists signed the CPA and joined the government. 33 percent of the legislatives were women in the interim legislative parliament and even after the Constituent Assembly election held in 2008, the percentage remained unchanged. After the democracy movement of 1990, the number of women in the parliament was less than three percent in the three consecutive elections despite special provisions. Thus, this study can contribute to the understanding of women's participation in the political process within the revolutionary movements in the time of their transition from armed struggle to democratic politics. It may also contribute to the literatures on women's agency and emancipation within the revolutionary movements.

As to the limitation of this study, the selection of the interviewees could have been more comprehensive and inclusive by systematic way of choosing the respondents. They were selected on the basis of their availability thus it may not represent all categories of women (regarding education, caste and ethnic groups, marital status, region, age, roles and responsibilities etc). It also could not include the voices of more women Ministers because the government was being formed as I conducted my research which restricted my interaction with them. Similarly there are no voices from the women Parliamentarians from small political parties who could have had different perspectives.

A significant number (33 percent) of women in the parliament is relatively new in Nepal, with almost 18 months of experience. The parliament formed after the Constituent Assembly election has been made more inclusive in order to bring concerns from different groups of people irrespective of their caste, class, education, region etc. Thus, it is still early to make any conclusion about recent experience of Nepal. It needs deeper evidence of its achievements and supporting policies and provisions to continue and enhance women's leadership roles, which remain subject to further inquiry.

Despite the above limitations, efforts have been made to generate the required information based on the objectives with valid and reliable data. Therefore this study still maintains a quality of generalization to some extent.

Chapter 2

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a brief overview of feminist theorizing of women's participation in militant political movements, vis-à-vis questions of agency and emancipation, with special attention to relationships of agency, emancipation and violence.

Women's involvement in collective violence has been minutely studied in South Asia, where women joined right-wing nationalist and religious movements and took part in violent conflicts. Thus, this literature review starts with South Asian feminist analysis of women's role in these movements, and then goes to reviewing feminist analysis of women in revolutionary movements. The focus of the analysis will be on feminist perceptions on agency and emancipation of women within the movements.

It is worth noting that the early feminist literature on militant movement failed to recognize women's participation. As mentioned by Moser and Clark, political movements and armed conflicts were merely seen as male domains, executed by men in different roles such as armed forces, guerrillas groups, paramilitaries or peace keeping forces whereas women were seen as victims particularly of sexual abuses and forced abductions. Men were portrayed omnipotent, masculine heroes even when they were victims during the time of war. Excluding women from the roles beyond victimhood resulted in insufficient recognition of their involvement and participation in violent conflicts and delinking them from the agency (Moser & Clark, 2001: 3).

There has been a gradual shift from such analysis towards a perspective where women have also played an active role during violence, entering the so called male domain. In this context, Moser has put forward the conceptual framework of the *gendered continuum of violence and conflict* which spells the notions of power and agency where women can also be perpetrators of political violence and the men can be victims (Moser, 2001: 32).

There are many faces of women in the militant movement beyond the icon of Mother Sorrow. Women have negotiated conflict, served as combatants and as political leaders. To borrow from Manchanda, at one end is the women of violence represented by the Armed Virgin and the other end is the Woman of Peace (Manchanda, 2001: 11). She says:

“Historically, women have been excluded from power and decision making processes, fostering ambivalence towards issues of citizenship and nationality. At a more pragmatic level, it is argued that women, because they are excluded from ‘politics’ have less stake in the ideological or political positions on which conflict thrives. It may be less important for women to display appropriate political attitudes. But women are not just passive sites for reproducing community identity. For example in the struggle for an independent Naga nationality based on the cultural and political survival of an exclusivist identity, women are careful not to challenge but to innovate within their traditional identities. Among the Naga mothers agency is manifested through ‘stretched roles’ of women within the Naga social tradition” (2001a: 12-13).

With these conceptual lenses, this study explores the case of Maoist’s women’s political agency and their view on emancipation.

2.2 Women in South Asian Conflicts and Violent Political Movements

Most of the contemporary feminist literatures on South Asian conflicts and violent political movements are seriously questioning relationships between women’s victimhood, agency and empowerment.

Many authors recognize that women have been involved in different social and political movements, including the militant and violent ones. But, Jeffery in her work on agency and activism notes:

“Agency is not wholly encompassed by political activism. Women outside the ambit of high profile activist organizations-whether feminist or not are by no means passive victims, so successfully socialized into obedience that they cannot discern gender inequalities” (Jeffery, 2001: 222).

Thus it is essential to understand how far they can exercise their agency in favor of gender equality. Jeffery presents a comparative framework in the context of South Asia which shows a widespread salience:

“In Pakistan, the Islamization programme included legislation that can perhaps be characterized as attempts to immobilize women and focus their agency within the home, as good Muslim wives and mothers. Yet these efforts fuelled the mobilization of women to resist such developments, and changes in the economy drew more women into paid employment. In India especially since the mid-1980s, Hindu Right movements have mobilized women

beyond their home, while also sustaining images of demure, self sacrificing and vulnerable Hindu women”(Jeffery, 2001: 223).

Banerjee says that during the revolutionary movements, women’s militancy is only one form of agency, among the many others. She recognizes women’s domestic activism as an important aspect of women’s agency during conflict, observed in Kashmir and Nagaland (2001: 135).

Manchanda puts forward the case of Kashmir, where the mothers encouraged their sons to join the militant movement (2001a: 54). There is a similar case in Pakistan in relation to the MQM militant political movement (Haroon 2001 in Emmanuel, 2004: 34). It shows that women’s violent activism stretches from being just a supporter of militant activism to being an active participant in it. Despite women’s active participation in militant movement, Manchanda still argues:

“In Kashmir, women’s activism in the informal space of politics has been depoliticized, for, denied recognition (by men), they have been unable to translate it into authority in the formal sphere of politics”(2001a: 45).

As argued by Emmanuel, the question of violence gets attention in relation to women’s agency and empowerment. Emmanuel concludes that empowerment still falls within a larger nationalist/communalist patriarchal project (2004: 33). This type of activism has been named by some feminists as *accidental activism* where women’s involvement is seen as being instrumental, and instrumentalized, used to fulfill the political goals of others (Manchanda, 2001 & Mukharjee, 2003 in Emmanuel, 2004: 33). The argument is that women are bound to limit their empowerment within the patriarchal domain even when they actively participate in violent movements.

Analyzing gender in national narratives of Sri Lanka, Mel (2001), puts forward some questions that have significant implications for feminist struggle within militant nationalist and/or revolutionary movements. She asks:

“Do women who participate in militant armed struggle enjoy full agency? Does their recruitment to the struggle spell autonomous, individual choice? If so, why and how has there been, historically, an instrumentality with which nationalist/militant patriarchies have enlisted women? How radically have women militants been able to transform societies to ensure greater social justice and gender equality?”(2001: 204-205).

She puts these challenges before feminists in Sri Lanka and in South Asia where recruitment of women in the militant or revolutionary movements

is becoming an organizing principle and ultimately supporting the authoritarian state.

In sum this literature explores women's role in various political and militant movements and proves women's capacity for agency, including violence. But it still argues that women within militant movements have been struggling to fully exercise their agency in the face of patriarchy.

2.3 Women within Right-wing Movements in India

The emergence of the women's right-wing Hindu movements in India depict a different picture while comparing it with the other violent and militant movements of South Asia. They are not fighting against the state but are associated with the legitimate political power. Women have been actively mobilized in fighting against Muslims and have played a key role as supporters and perpetrators of violence. These movements have their own significance because the feminists had to acknowledge the limitation of their conceptual frameworks on agency after analyzing women in the Hindu right-wing. In a way this led to certain assumptions of Western literature about women's relationship with violence and politics. As mentioned by Sarkar:

"the women's movement of the right reveals the political possibilities and resources of the new culture and religion of the middle class" (1995: 182).

These movements have used the image of powerful Hindu goddesses to construct the political activism of the women. They open space for women in a violent or political role within the feminine identity. Basu says:

"Unlike many religions, Hinduism rejects the notion that women are inherently weak and passive; they are often dangerous because they are powerful and vindictive. The varied personalities of female deities in Hinduism may inspire a range of female persona in political life" (1995: 176-177).

In her work on Hindu women's activism in India, Basu puts forward some examples of right-wing Hindu woman leaders who presented themselves through most powerful images in the course of many riots between 1990 and 1993. In these riots, women have also taken hold at the grassroots level besides being spokespersons, instigators and leaders. However, Basu argues that, while these movements clearly show high levels of women's activism and encourage such activism, they seem not to contribute to women achieving lasting social

and political gains, and women's intense identification with the movements is likely to be short lived (Basu, 2001: 182). She cites example of "communalism" and "fundamentalism" which have extremely significant implications for women who join them. And still, within these movements women are treated either as symbols of tradition or mobilized only at times when popular support was needed for the purpose of winning the elections. Basu says:

"Hindu nationalists have turned to women as exemplifications of the contradictory qualities they seek to project: a rootedness in the past and a commitment to a modern India in the future" (Basu, 2001: 183).

As mentioned by Sarkar and Butalia, the space provided by communal parties in these movements is diversified so as to accommodate the varied gendered imagery and actual roles of women (1995: 7-8). Basu gives one example where women boldly stood up and delivered their public speech with vulgar expressions which depicts their ability to address men with familiarity and condescension, transgressing traditional gender roles and expressing both their anger and agency (1995: 164). She further adds:

"Unlike most South Asian women who achieve political prominence because of their relationships with influential men, these three women are relatively independent of men in both their personal and political lives" (Basu, 1995: 178).

However, other authors show that political participation has helped women to advance their personal and political agendas, which do not necessarily provide space for mobilization on a range of issues and expanding the numbers of women leadership (Sarkar & Butalia, 1995: 7). They further add:

"the position occupied by women leaders seem partially to serve their own purposes and also those of the party they belong to" (1995: 8).

Though this has brought up another dimension of women's participation in the right-wing political movements, they have contributed to redefine the concept of women's agency.

2.4 Women's Agency in the Militant Movements

The emancipatory potentials for women in the militant movements have been hotly debated by many feminists, producing different narratives even in the same incidence. Apart from this debate, there is also the contextual difference between the women fighters within the liberation struggle in the

Third World and the women in conventional western militaries. As expressed by Emmanuel, there is a qualitative difference in representation and analysis between the writings on women militants and the women in the militaries and most of the theories produced and influenced by the west state that in most militant movements women are restricted to supportive roles and as result have limited possibilities for agency (2004: 20).

Feminists have expressed that women in the militant movements have taken the masculine roles but are still subordinated under patriarchal militant structures, and are forgotten when the war is over (Yuval Davis, 1997 and Enloe, 1983 in Emmanuel, 2004: 27). African guerrilla movements of Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Angola stress their commitments as part of the socialist program to an agenda for women's emancipation (Naukongo, 2003: 22). Having been influenced by feminism and socialist analysis of the women's question their programmes and strategies were based on the principle of women's emancipation (Waelen, 1996: 75). In these movements the women played different masculine roles as mobilizers, activists, combatants and also feminine roles such as assistants, cooks etc. (Kriger, 1992: 119).

In case of Zimbabwe, women also took the arms of the dead enemies but still considered to be helping their men and not participating in the war (Staunton, 1990 & Helie-Lukas, 1988 in Naukongo, 2003: 23). In Mozambique too women, though they received military and political training, they did not fight at the war front. In order to escape from the stereotypes of women in relation to fighting, a few women were given opportunity to be in the front of Mozambican Liberation Movement which was opposed by men saying that it is against tradition for women to fight (Walen, 1996 & Urdang, 1989 in Naukongo, 2003: 23). Thus there is a space to question the notion of empowerment within militant movements.

Giving the example of Nicaragua, Molyneux says that women neither achieved equality nor emancipation and their interests were denied and marginalized through the operations of 'patriarchy' (2001: 41).

However, other feminist emphasize women's agency within the militant movements. There are many examples where women are able to transform

gender roles extending their participation in the decision making roles. There are guerrilla fighters who have made significant social and political gains in South Africa and Eritrea since the liberation struggle (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 132).

While looking at the Zapatista militant movement of Chiapas, one can see increasing participation of indigenous women which is not the part of their 'traditional' culture or values of the indigenous community and they are treated equally as other male members. As mentioned by Park (2008: 2), this movement developed an egalitarian culture between men and women within their own organization and also promulgated the 'Women's Revolutionary Law' which gives equal rights to women both in society and in the Zapatista Army. This has set the example of women exercising agency in the militant movement within the domain of patriarchal state.

Also in case of Sri Lankan LTTE, there are structural changes taking place during the conflict which opened the possibilities for agency in which the militant women are taking up new roles (Mel, 2001: 208).

The above analysis shows that some authors see emancipatory potentials of women in the militant movement whereas others challenge it. This depends on how the authors view or agency. This analysis set a contextual ground in understanding women's militant activism in the People's War of Nepal.

2.5 Maoist's Militant Agency in Nepal's People's War

There is very little literature related to women's emancipation and the militant agency in the Nepal's People's War. An earlier writing of Gautam et al., (2001), and recent work of Bhadra et al., (2007), provide juxtaposing views. The former provides space for the agency while the later supports the notion of victimhood. Besides, there is a recent writing of Yami (2007), a senior woman leader of the Maoist movement who fully claims women's agency in the Maoists People's War. In this section I analyze their conceptual frameworks and explore militant agency and women's emancipation in Nepal's People's War.

In the People's War of Nepal, women have been visible during and after the armed conflict. Women have participated during the worst days of

conflict, come out into the public sphere, confronted the security forces, dealt with the court system to protect their disappeared husbands and sons and managed homes single handedly while the male members of the family fled from homes and cities. Women also participated in the political and militant wings of the Maoist cadre and in the Parliament and the Government after the war came to an end.

In the writing of Gautam et al., (2001), women's agency can be observed not only in the militancy but also in the domestic spheres where women have become heads of the households, as bread earners, taking care of the families, participating in the community meetings etc. Women are able to exercise their agency also within the Maoist cadre where women's question has been ideologically and programmatically incorporated. It also recognized the importance of women's activism in the People's War (2001: 240).

In the writing of Bhadra et al., (2007: 110), women participate in the polity directly or indirectly during the time of political instability and turmoil. However the notion of nation and state are defined within the sphere of masculinity, where women have been completely excluded. As a result, political conflicts, wars, insurgencies and armed conflict perpetuate the definition of masculinity, where women appear to be 'non-doers' and just remain sufferers and victims.

The Nepalese women have a long history of being involved in political movements such as people's movement in the 1950, 1960, 1979 & 1990. They participated in a large number and took active roles to restore democracy but remained like puppets in the hands of men and were excluded from the political process (Bhadra et al., 2007: 110). They further add giving the example of People's War:

"the whole process of insurgency, counter-insurgency, militarization and the peace initiative, women have been treated only as 'victims of armed conflict' and the women's agencies in the whole nexus have been completely negated. Women are either 'invisible', or they have been completely excluded from the whole process. The only time when women have been highlighted or made visible is as 'women insurgents', especially for daring to break the stereotype" (2007: 132-133).

But this can be challenged in relation to revolutionary militant movement where women have participated in the political process after the

end of the war. There are women who constitute 33 percent of the seats in parliament and they also have participated as Ministers. There are women who are independent of men in their personal and political lives and have also reached in the central leadership level. Yami (2007), in her work claims that women have been exercising their agency in the militant movement. They were the first to break the tensed silence throughout Nepal caused by the first historic strike that marked the initiation of People's War. They were the first to snatch rifles from reactionary armed forces. Women were courageously involved in jailbreak from heavily fortified jail. Women have reached the policy making bodies in the party, Army and the united front, and have won the elections, have joined the government and the parliament in significant numbers (Yami, 2007: 32).

2.6 Theoretical/Analytical Framework

This section establishes the framework in which Maoist women's agency in the militant movement and political processes is being analysed in this research. I rely on the above analysis of the relationship between women's participation in the militant political movements and their agency. This framework is applied to analyze women's emancipation in Nepal's People's War and peaceful political process after 2006.

There are conflicting approaches to the women's agency in the militant movements. They either support or doubt women's emancipatory potential within the patriarchal militant movements. Drawing from the above literature, the most commonly defined and or understood concept of agency is having access to decision making and participation in the public spheres. While looking at the work of Sangari (2002: 66), the conceptualization of agency is profoundly concentrated on the division between the private and the public sphere as emphasized by the Western political thought. This led many feminists to conclude that women do not have agency in the patriarchal militant movements where they are not seen in the decision making levels in the public spheres, and not visible in the state structure during the post conflict (Sangari, 2002: 67). There are many examples in the right-wing political movements where women have demonstrated their activism from within the domestic spheres which has led to debates whether these types of activism

represent agency or not. Manchanda's theoretical framework supports both the public and domestic activism of women.

For the purpose of this study participation of women in the public sphere is more relevant. This study is attempting to analyze women's emancipatory potential within the militant movement at the movement of its transition to democratic politics. I focus on women's agency and emancipation on the basis of their participation in the leadership roles. This looks at whether women are taking up leadership roles, whether they are able to influence the policy decisions, and whether these women are able to challenge the conventional gender roles and position of women. I also look at the number of women in the decision making bodies, whether the party has a long term vision for promoting women's leadership. These elements are the basis for my analysis of women's agency and emancipation within the Maoist movement of Nepal.

Chapter 3

People's War, Maoist Ideology and Women's Political Participation

3.1 Maoist People's War from different Perspectives

Each and every society has to go through painstaking process when a country goes through an armed war. That is what happened in Nepal. During a decade 1996-2006, more than 13000 people lost their lives, thousands disappeared and were seriously injured; millions became homeless. There are thousands of cases of human sufferings which are not directly visible, for instance a widow losing social safety nets after her husband's death; trauma and crisis in the family after losing the bread earner, fear of being killed, attacked or raped by either party of conflict. There are also some direct effect such as damaging public and private property, negative economic growth etc. which created a situation of extreme discomfort in everyday lives.

Despite being cruel to humanity in many aspects, it was a necessity of Nepalese society to go for a struggle, to end age old conflict embedded in its social structure such as inequalities between human beings on the basis of caste, class, religion, ethnicity, gender, region etc. When we reflect back and view Nepalese society, we see a feudal society privileging male, Hills, Hindu, high caste group's domination in the public spheres with power and resources with the capital/city centric development and consumption. In this context, People's War emerged as a struggle to fight against feudal structure, for the interest of proletariat and excluded people. It also captured the interest of the scholars from various disciplines who started analyzing its causes and consequences. They have put forward their own analysis and the common explanation is "revolution of the oppressed".

As shared by different professionals, there are many other actors which played role in order to create this change: peaceful political movements, other social movements, feminist movements and civil society movements have their own significance in the process of awakening people's consciousness. However; People's War played a significant role in mobilizing people and ultimately bringing to an end the monarchy and declaring Nepal a republican

state. The other significance of People's War is a desire of the rural people, including women, to understand the politics behind exclusion, domination, underdevelopment, and being a part of a political discourse. A journalist, an interviewee of this study shared that, a woman who had a small teashop in a village refused to take money for the tea she offered to him and instead showed her interest to be informed about the political debate.

3.2 Maoist Ideology and Women's Emancipation

One of the bases to look at the ideology is the manifesto of the political parties. It is published with a purpose of appealing to the public and showing their commitments. It attempts to show the policy, mission, vision, strategy and future-plans of political parties concerned.

Maoist revolution of Nepal is viewed as an achievement by many with regard to women's participation in the public spheres including the Army. It identifies women as a specific interest group and aims to incorporate them into the epic post-revolutionary development efforts. In the Maoist movement emancipation of women was linked to the idea of liberating women from the constraints of the patriarchal social order. Women's emancipation constituted one of the ideological issues and the women's units both in the political and military wings had a legitimate role in promoting this principle. One can clearly notice that participation of women in the public sphere including the politics was a significant change in the history of Nepal that happened after the revolution.

While having a microscopic view on the Maoist Manifesto, it can be noticed that the party has raised the structural issues such as having equal rights of women as men in all sectors including parental property and has clearly mentioned reproduction and divorce as their prerogative rights. These commitments seem appealing and powerful because they appear under the fundamental rights provision unlike the other parties who have put a separate section on women. NC and CPN-UML have raised the issue of proportional participation of women with at least 33 percent seats at the political, administrative and policy-making levels. Both these parties give emphasis to eliminating all discriminatory laws against women. The CPN-UML (a Left

party), is closer with the Maoist on the issue having access to parental property and exercising reproduction and divorce as prerogative rights. But the congress party is silent on the issue of property rights and right to divorce. Unlike Maoists and CPN-UML, it treats the issue of reproductive rights as merely a health issue saying that state has a duty to provide right to safe motherhood and reproductive health by providing health services hence fails to address the structural causes.

All these parties mention reasons behind the exclusion and discrimination of people on the basis of class, caste, region, religion and sex that is hindering social development and change. They also touch upon the issue of discrimination of women as a result of patriarchal social structure. In these texts, emancipation of women is understood as removal of socially constructed constraints such as opening space and giving opportunities for women in the public sphere from domestic work. They also talk about equality and equal participation with special focus on state agencies including legislature, executive, judiciary and security sector such as the police and the Army. Whether it is in the liberals or revolutionary visions, the emancipation of women is expressed in the same way. However the left parties seem more radical in touching upon the structural causes such as the issue of property and reproductive rights.

However one can raise the question of agency also within the Maoist party. It clearly speaks on equal rights provision but only nominates 16 percent of women for the FPTP contest, have only two women in the Central Committee and two women Ministers out of nine.

As mentioned by Molyneux, in the case of Nicaragua's revolution, the participation of women in the political activity was certainly part of the wider process of popular mobilization, but it was entered into from a distinct social position to men, one crucially shaped by the sexual division of labor which did not ensure women's agency. Despite having official programmes to encourage women's leadership, it failed to achieve emancipation of women (2001: 39). She adds:

“Women in Nicaragua certainly did not achieve equality let alone emancipation. Women’s interests were denied representation or were deliberately marginalized through the operation of ‘patriarchy’ (2001: 41).

In this regard, giving the example of Nepal’s Maoist movement, Yami claims that it is looking towards women’s liberation differently. The issues of women are looked from a broader perspective than dealing only with emotional aspects. It focuses on dealing with the structural causes of the problem, tying up with the state power and developing ideological knowledge for leadership. Thus, women are gradually taking up leadership roles and exercising their agency (Yami, 2007: 90).

Though the Maoists touch upon women’s issues explicitly giving attention to the structural causes, they are silent on how these provisions will be ensured. There is a need to have a clear planning to substantiate these promises.

3.3 Feminist Movement and the Women’s Participation in Politics

The history of women’s movement in Nepal goes back to the formation of women’s organization between 1920-1940 (Shrestha & Hachhethu, 2002: 34). At the initial stage, the movement merely confined in social reforms and was soon banned by autocratic Rana regime in order to discourage social activism. In 1948, the first women’s political organization was formed which condemned lack of voting rights to women. Gradually, this organization allied with different groups of people and political parties to work together on common concerns. They also started demanding for women’s participation in the public spheres. As a result, a token representation of two was made in the parliament in 1959-60, one accommodated in the Council of Ministers and the other elected to the post of Deputy Chairperson to the Upper House (Shrestha & Hachhethu, 2002: 35). The issue of social reform remained a part of political agenda during these movements. Again in the Panchayat system such types of organizations and their movements were prohibited and it promoted only state sponsored organizations. There was a complete absence of an autonomous women’s movement at the local and national level until 1990s. The organizations promoted by the government were confined to defending the regime rather than working for women’s

issues. The only options left to autonomous groups was to raise their voice by participating in opposition politics through banned political parties. They continued their voyage through this option and in the 1990's people's movement, a large numbers of women were visible.

After 1990, many independent organizations emerged to work on women's issues. They promoted participation of women to fight against domestic violence, trafficking, rape and other forms of exploitation. Gradually, they raised the issue of equal inheritance of parental property. Despite the momentum gained in various feminist movements and political movements after the adoption of a new constitution in 1990, participation of women in the public spheres both within the government machinery and outside remained minimal. The Constitution came up with a provision for five percent of all candidates running for parliament to be women and it ensured a special provision for nominating three women in the Upper House. However in the general elections held after the restoration of democracy the number of women candidates increased marginally, from a total of 79 in the 1991 election to 86 in 1994. None of the major parties nominated women candidates over and above the minimum five percent required by the constitution.

As mentioned in Bhadra et al., (2007: 110)

“women's contribution to the reestablishment of democracy in 1990 was tremendous however; they were once again left out of the political process as soon as democracy was re-established. The experience of the two democratic movements of the 1940s and 1980s demonstrated the treatment of women only as 'reserve forces'. Once the political goals were achieved, they were sent back home”.

In the 1999 general election, the major political parties announced 10 percent candidature for women. The actual candidature though remained 6.39 percent, with 5.85 percent women being elected.

According to a research study by Bhadra et al., (2007: 133), highly educated and experienced women who were also holding key positions of power, revealed that they remain powerless within the structures of the state, of organizations and of political power. Women in general were found to identify themselves with personal and concrete experience of family, home and the community at micro level rather than the macro level abstractions of nationhood, national security, responsibility of the country or the political

economy of militarization. But the experiences were different of those who were directly involved as insurgents. They believed in the ideology of class conflict and capturing a state domain to eliminate all forms of inequality and for balancing the power. This is why Maoist People's War is different from any other social movement in Nepal: it believes that women's emancipation and liberation is possible when it is tied with class struggle and the state, rather than raising women's issues in isolation.

Chapter 4

Participation with or without Emancipation: Women's Narratives

4.1 Invisible Citizens to Change Agents: Maoist Women in the Political Process

One of the specific characteristics of the People's War launched and led by the CPN-M is the participation of women and the role played by them in the struggle. These women have closely experienced or observed discriminations and exclusions of the people and also their sufferings. They are brought up in a patriarchal environment and given less opportunities for being a daughter or a sister or a wife or a mother. Except a few, the women didn't have access to education as their brothers and could not continue further. Some of them joined the movement with support from their family members whereas some revolted against discrimination in the households. However, during the interviews they expressed, in a similar spirit that their struggle was for the liberation of the oppressed and the excluded groups, as much as for their personal liberation.

Though they fought for the same cause they had different responsibilities during the war. Some of them were involved in the political wing from the beginning whereas others in the military wing, in the direct armed battle against the state. Those who were in the political wing also had to be ready for fighting anytime in order to protect their lives. These women worked for the party associating themselves with its different bodies, undertook several roles such as formulating policies and programmes, giving a strategic direction, extending the organization, leading the fronts of social struggle, commanding and fighting in the battle fields, providing service and treatment to the injured in war, conveying information, conducting mass meetings etc. Among these, many have worked extensively on women's issues such as violence against women, banning alcohol, against discrimination based on sex, the issue of women's inclusion at all levels, women's liberation from the feudal state power etc.

Some of them were affiliated with the party politics before the People's War. They had the status of primary member, district or central committee member, secretary in the women's organization, in the party or through students' unions especially after 1990s democratic change, and some were involved even before. After the People's War, they served as a central leader, president of all Nepal Women's Association, district committee member, regional member, brigade commissioner in the People's Liberation Army (PLA), some as militia and the other as indirect supporters working as spy, helping to conduct mass meetings, offering food and shelter to population.

Pampha Bhusal, a minister in the present cabinet, and also during the interim government, served in the central leadership from the very beginning of the People's War. She actively continued her work also during the time of red notice⁸ issued by the Interpol. Jayapuri Gharti of Rangsi, Rolpa served as the president of the All Nepal Women's Association within the party. She belongs to excluded ethnic groups representing a very remote district from where the People's War was initiated. Some of them set a new record by leading jail break operation. Samira Karki, who witnessed the ruthless murder of her elder brother and suffered cruel and horrific tortures herself, later took up a serious responsibility in the party. Some of the women have fought during the time when they heard the news of their husband's death. Some of them saw their siblings and friends dying in front of them. Beside these painful moments they have experienced hardships and challenges from their societies which used to perceive women as worse than sex workers if they join the politics. A great many numbers of Maoist woman during interviews say:

“we equally contributed as male members and it was very difficult being a woman competing equally with them”.

⁸ A red notice is a request used by Interpol to request extradition. Certain requests used by Interpol are sent in the form of notices. An Interpol red notice is issued at the request of a country's law enforcement authority. The requesting country asks for a red notice to be issued when a criminal evades arrest and escapes from the country. Interpol's role is to assist the national police forces in identifying or locating those persons with a view to their arrest and extradition. Members of Maoist movement were on the Interpol lists.

They said that it was more challenging task for women to participate in the armed war crossing the boundaries of traditional gender roles. The people used to say that *these women entered into prostitution*. They had to start everything from scratch with no understanding of politics. There were special rights in the organization but in the party and the PLA every woman had to compete with male members. They had to be equally attentive and had to take risk when there was cross-firing. There was no excuse for being a woman when the bullets blew. Many spoke that they didn't see their children and husband for years and years. Some had to walk in an equal footing with men carrying their infants. There were many instances where they had to leave infants alone without any protection; sometimes throwing them away because of not being able to care for them during sickness, and assuming that they are dead.

The Maoist Parliamentarians claim that the issue of women's liberation cannot be viewed in isolation but needs to be tied up with the issue of politics, state power, and class struggle. Thus, People's War is a historical success that could link women's issue with the class struggle, and provide space for the women in the politics and the state. These women in an equal chorus shared that they feel proud to be associated with the People's War that brought change in the lives of millions of people. They say that they have been successful in the political issue and still would work for economic and social revolution by actively contributing from the legislative parliament and the government. They affirm:

"we have got a place where we can bring change in the lives of many who are excluded".

A significant number of women participated in the People's War has proved that women have the potentialities to participate in the public domain which was previously occupied by men.

Many of the women said that they have contributed significantly to the People's War. As a result they can legitimately claim for space to work for excluded people. They shared that people around the world who are working to liberate women have many things to learn from the People's War where a significant number of women developed leadership within a short span of time and participated in the political process. It has proven the capacity of women who can fight for the larger goal of nationality and justice.

A senior leader said that changing the preset patriarchal minds is one of the major achievements of People's War in a society where women's involvement in the politics was seen as worst than being involved in the sex trade. The people have now started respecting these women for fighting and being a part of the politics. She says:

“patriarchy is one of the forms of feudalism that promoted stereotypical thinking such as women should not enter into the politics and she should serve as a good housewife, should abide by the male members. Coming out from this domain was definitely a very challenging task. But we could change that way of thinking. Such type of change was possible only through revolution. The last ten years of People's War has been successful in creating political awareness among women, making them politically conscious and developing leadership within them. It has also created space for those women in the Parliament who had never come out from the household domain”.

She firmly said Nepalese society was in a need for transformation and women could become a part of it. Women, by involving in the political process proved that they can play a crucial role not only in the revolutionary war but also afterwards to reconstruct the society.

4.2 Intersectionality of Caste, Class, Region and the Leadership

The issue of leadership is closely connected with the issue of caste, class, region and their political influence. Some of the women in the Maoist movement have taken leadership roles with the provision of special rights in order to promote participation of the excluded groups, including women, whereas some others have created space for them by getting involved in the political parties and gradually developing their leadership capacity.

People's War started as a class struggle to fight against feudal structure and it also gave an impression to the mass that it was the struggle against injustice based on caste, sex, ethnicity, region etc. Gradually, it gathered momentum and within a few years spread through the country. The Party formulated its plans and policies to appeal the people to participate in the war. While talking about class, the issue of landless farmers became the prime focus that attracted these groups. Related to gender-based injustice, the Party took position to treat men and women equally by giving opportunities to women through proportional representation and special rights provision: providing right to inherit parental property, giving equal wage for equal labor, creating employment opportunities for women etc. Similarly the Party decided to

address the issue of excluded ethnic groups and region by providing them right to self-determination through federal structure of governance. In case of Dalit, the Party decided to provide special rights. As a result, the Party extended its organization with a significant participation from these groups of people within a very short period of time. It not only provided space for participation of women but also to express their potentialities in different capacities such as brigade commissioner, soldier, trainer, mass leader, central committee member etc. in equal competition with their male counterparts. As expressed by many Maoist Parliamentarians during interviews, their roles and responsibilities were equal to those of men and they could also broaden their horizon to achieve national concern to end injustice. As interpreted by the Maoist women, they have gradually developed leadership from the micro sphere of household and family to the macro spheres to end feudal system of governance in an equal footing with men.

These statements challenge the early feminist literatures that militant movements failed to recognize women's participation. To the contrary to what is said by Moser and Clark (2001), Maoist women argue that armed conflict and the militant domain is not only within the men's control, that women are also exercising agency.

As claimed by senior women leaders of the Maoist party, women have participated in all instruments of revolution such as the Party, the PLA and the United Front. As mentioned in Yami (2007: 7), there are about 30-50 percent of women force in PLA, many women occupying important posts in various departments within the Party. The achievement of women can also be judged by their participation in the new state. The Party has given special right of representation in the new state; the ratio to be achieved is 50 percent. While looking at the result of Constituent Assembly election, a large number of women are elected from the Maoist party comprising a significant number in the Constituent Assembly. They have secured 74 seats (24 through FPTP contest and 50 through PR) whereas the leading political parties (NC and CPN-UML) got two and one seats through FPPT, 36 and 37 seats through PR respectively. There are two women Ministers from the Maoist party out of total four. The Maoists have also developed leadership among the excluded groups

of people and as result there is a meaningful representation of these groups in the Constituent Assembly. Out of total of 74, 77 percent are from the hills, four percent from the capital and 19 percent from the Terai. While looking at caste and ethnicity, 43 belong to the high caste, eight from Dalit and 23 are from different ethnicity.

As mentioned by Yami (2007: 17), a Central Committee member of the Maoist party, the specificity of People's war is its success in mobilizing all oppressed masses of the country, particularly women and Dalit. These groups are oppressed structurally and the CPN-M strategically mobilized them under the banner of Dalit Liberation Front, women's organizations by providing space for their agency. The Maoists also have a Dalit department under the central committee of the party to make policy on Dalit issues. The Party has brought important resolutions on the issue of women and Dalit by giving them special right of representation in party, Army and state organizations.

These policies and provisions made it possible to promote leadership at different levels. Within the Party, there is 11 percent representation from Dalit community. The two interviewees in this research were Dalits who were elected through FPTP contest which set a historical record where people voted Dalit women to be represented in the Parliament. Though the number is very small, it holds a greater significance in a patriarchal Hindu society that puts Dalit women at the bottom of the hierarchy. Among these two, one is the youngest female Assembly member elected through the FPTP contest. She said that one of the reasons behind getting candidacy in the election was her identity of being a woman and a Dalit. The other Dalit woman also supported her opinion. Almost all the interviewees touched upon the issue of Dalit as one of the priority within the People's War and they constantly emphasized that the Maoist party worked very seriously against caste- and gender-based discrimination and has given them special rights.

Similarly, the expressions were identical when talking about the issue of other excluded groups based on ethnicity, region and class. None of the interviewees in this study were from the capital and some of them represented

the backward region⁹. A few of them had said that the reason of getting elected was also because of representing backward region and being from an excluded ethnic group. 31 percent of women Constituent Assembly members in the Maoist party belong to the ethnic groups. The other leading parties also maintain this percentage. However, comparing through FPTP their representation is nil, unlike the Maoists who maintained 29 percent. The interviewed women also claimed that there are a good number of ethnic representations among top leaders of the Party, and two women have also become Ministers. There is also a high percentage of regional representation from the backward region in the present Constituent Assembly election.

As expressed by the Maoist women, the heterogeneous nature of participation in the present Constituent Assembly was possible because of adopting the mixed election system with special rights provision for excluded groups, such as Dalit, different ethnicities, women and the people representing different region. However a significant number of people from the Maoist party belonging to these categories were elected also through direct voting system, as never before in Nepal's history. Maoists claimed that they could promote leadership of these excluded groups of people, and this is proved by the Constituent Assembly election. As claimed by many during interviews, the election is only a manifestation of a process, and the process is obviously the People's War. This shows that women, irrespective of their caste, class, and region, are able to develop their capacity and hold influential position in the People's War.

The women from other political parties also gave credit to the Maoists saying that a large share goes to People's War for developing the leadership capacity of the excluded people. As a result, they participated and won the election. It has provided a meaningful space for these groups to participate and contribute differently. However, there should be a focused concentration in the longer term to develop top leadership from this section. At the moment,

⁹ The category "Backward region" refers to nine districts in Nepal: Achham, Kalikot, Jajarkot, Jumla, Dolpa, Bajhang, Bajura, Mugu and Humla. These areas fall at the bottom of the development index for Nepal's 75 districts.

the top and the most senior leaders are the male from the high caste group. There are two women in the circle of the top leadership who are well educated and belong to the high caste and privileged ethnic groups.

Some of the respondents question the notion of agency and emancipation because these groups of people had no other options left than joining the war. Hence it was a forced choice in many of the cases.

The group of professionals also said that one of the significance of People's War is its contribution to dismantling the roots of feudalism from the local to national level and giving power to oppressed people. In the process of dismantling, it has been able to build power of the masses and the excluded people like women, people from backward regions etc.

The changes that war has wrought on women's lives thus gives some indications of emancipation, by showing that women are playing different roles in the political domain and building alliances across caste, ethnic, cultural and regional boundaries. However, one can still raise the question of emancipation of women when very minimal number of them taking up influential positions in the Party.

4.3 Women's Mobilization and Revolutionary Outcomes

It is observed that revolutionary communist movements have always provided space to express women's potentials but have not been very successful in producing women communist leaders. The number of women leaders is always a very few. As Yami says, there are number of reasons why there are less women leaders. Women are the late arrivals in the political arena which puts them behinds men. Women's struggle is more complex than men's because of their roles such as conceiving children and being physically less stronger than men etc. which puts them into the inferior position. Prevailing mode of production is not favorable for women where they are exploited in reproductive and domestic labor and also do not have access to property. They are not in a position to continue their leadership role after they get married. Apart from these, there is a clear manifestation of patriarchal values within the communist parties which view women's role as supportive. Men are found reluctant to accept women's leadership even if they formally accept women's

leadership and believe in the principle of women's liberation (Yami, 2007: 38). But the women in the People's War say that realizing the importance of revolutionary women and their roles in the communist movement, Nepal's Maoists have come forward with some encouraging results.

As emphasized by all interviewees, one of the specific characteristics of the People's War is the participation of women and the role played by them in the movement. The majority of the interviewees reported of joining the People's War as the sole cause of liberating excluded people, including women. They further said that none of the movements can achieve its mission until it goes along with class struggle and thus the People's War was the best choice. These women also claimed that they contributed as well as gained significantly from the People's War. They reported of their changed roles and responsibilities as being equal to those of men giving some evidences of women exercising their agency such as leading the armed battalions and battlefield, serving through high ranking positions in the Party, or Government, or Parliament or in the other sectors. A Maoist woman in her interview expressed that the image of a woman as a second class citizen whose role was confined within the periphery of her households has been transformed into image of dignified fighting woman with gun, parliamentarian, minister, etc. As mentioned in Yami, People's War directed state and domestic violence into class war and as a result, it united women to fight against feudal state ultimately resulting in liberation of women (2007: 11).

A major shift can be observed in the People's War while looking at the issues of women. As shared by Maoist women, unlike any other social, political or feminist movements of the past, People's War could organize a massive number of women from the grassroots, mainly women from the rural areas who were excluded on the basis of sex, region, class, caste and ethnicity. These women today have served in an influential position in the Army, party, government and the parliament. The People's War qualitatively changed the dynamics of feminist movement to a broad based women's movement with class perspective where the broader structural issues such as state repression on women is being addressed.

There are a number of significant events in the People's War where women took lead roles. Some of them set a new record by leading jail break operation. Women dared to organize a seminar to announce the armed revolution in order to liberate them from the feudal state power. Women in a remote village were the first to snatch rifles from reactionary armed force. Women's organizations in the Party were the most active in the forefront of the movement after 2001. Realizing the leadership potentials of women, the Maoists formed a separate women's department under the central committee of the Party in order to develop policies to promote women's leadership in the party, Army and the united front. A senior woman leader says:

"When the Maoists commenced armed struggle, there were hardly 12 women cadres in the Party including myself. However, in the ten-year's time, their participation in the Party reached almost 40 percent which was the result of envisioning policies and programmes for women with the principle of equality. There are a few women in the central committee, more than 30 percent of women at regional, district, area and cell levels in the Party. In the PLA too there are more than 30 percent of women serving in different roles such as commanders in different sections within the brigade, platoons, squads and militia. There is a separate women's section in the brigade. Women's participation in all levels of People's Council has been made mandatory. It is my pride to share that women hold 33 percent seats in the Parliament".

Some of the interviewees from NC and CPN-UML said that it is necessary to provide space for women from the beginning, to expect them in a decision-making role. One of the woman Parliamentarians who was elected through FPTP contest from NC said that the good example is the People's War where women contributed from its inception and hence developed legitimacy to claim leadership positions even after the war. These women interviewees from NC and CPN-UML said that the Maoists promoted women's participation both in the political and military wings. The Maoist party was bound to have a significant number of women in the government and the parliament because of having a large number of women in their cadre. Women actively participated in the battlefield and in the party which resulted in their meaningful participation in the Parliament and the Government. These women said that, a large share goes to the People's War and its ideology that provided special rights provision to women. However, this is not the only factor contributing for this change. The share also goes to 1990s political change that gave space for women to participate in the public sphere.

The Interim Constitution of Nepal came up with special rights provision in case of women. Under the Fundamental Rights, it ensures equal property rights, speaks of ending all types of discrimination, ensures right to participate by one third in each structure of the state on the principle of proportional inclusion and ensures punishment against violence¹⁰. Nepal also became the first country in the region to explicitly recognize woman's reproductive rights as constitutionally protected fundamental rights. In this regard, the Maoist women claim that it is the result of the People's War. Some interviewees from NC and CPN-UML however deny it, saying that the other political parties have also played a significant role in this process. The independent individuals support both the claims giving a large share to the People's War.

There were respondents who expressed that having a numeric representation does ensure women's emancipation, but the most important aspect is having representation in the higher and influential position within the party where policies are formulated. Participation needs to be meaningful and a biggest challenge is institutionalizing this numeric representation. However one should acknowledge the strong positive sides of the People's War that provided space for women to exercise agency also in the political and military spheres in an equal capacity with the men.

4.4 Ideological Synthesis and Women's Emancipation

The question of ideology and its application sometimes gets stuck when people find a different narrative. They find the Maoist's ideology as a complete failure in case of women who have become the victims. Thousands of women have lost their lives, living in their widowhood at a very young age, being restricted from going to the schools to join their cadre, had to live in a constant fear of being raped or tortured, had been forced to undertake extra work in the absence of male members, etc. Thus, women have become the worst-hit people and the equality ended up with additional sufferings of women. The question of ideology can also be confronted on the basis of women who are in the leadership roles. The Party which believes in giving

¹⁰ Nepal's Interim Constitution 2007

equal opportunity to women has merely two members in the Central Committee; only two among the nine ministers are women, 34 percent women in the parliament, etc. Such evidences open space to challenge the Maoist ideology. In this regard, a senior woman leader in the Central Committee says:

“The Maoist is the only Party to implement its policy in practice and there are numbers of examples to substantiate this claim. For examples, the Interim Parliament of 2007 where 54 percent of women were from the Maoist party and 37 percent women while comparing with the male members within the Party, Constituent Assembly election where 24 women were elected through direct voting and proportional representation which provided 50 percent seats to the women. It takes hundreds and thousands of years to end patriarchal attitude within and among the individuals. However as a Party, it is far ahead in implementing policy decisions into practice”.

Answering to the question why there are only two women in the Central Committee of the Party out of 29, she says:

“Party and state are two completely different things. Special rights and proportional rights provisions are made to promote women’s participation within the state domain. Party is the place to have rigorous debate and discussions in order to shape its vision. Thus, there is no special rights provision in the party. Rather it promotes equal competition among the people regardless of their class, region, caste or sex. It is also not true that the policies result in favor of women if the number of women is significant. Rather is the result of the values and principle one believes in. It is also not true that women’s participation is not necessary but it has to come progressively on competitive basis. In the context of Nepal, there is no long history of women’s political participation. While talking about the Maoist, it is a very young Party which expanded only after 1996. Thus, we cannot expect equal participation of women at all levels which comes only through a gradual process. Many women have developed leadership within this 10 years claiming 30-40 percent representation at district level and 25 percent women in mid leadership level”.

Her claims still fail to answer the question of women exercising agency when the numbers remain incomparable with men in the Party. It also makes us think that women have not developed capacity for reasoning in order to contribute to policy formation.

Differing with some of these claims, Shova Gautam, a leading human rights activist, says that it is not easy to verify whether the Maoist have 30-40 percent women’s participation in district committees or whether they have provided equal opportunity for women. The journalists too who had been constantly analyzing the People’s War are not able to exactly figure out the number of women in the leadership roles. Shova Gautam further says:

“the participation [of women] becomes 40 percent only when the militias who were involved in courier service in villages are also counted. The number of topmost leadership is not encouraging in the Maoist party. When we look

critically, there are more women in the PLA and less in the political wing and also there is very small number of women who are educated. Women have also been used as fighters to serve the purpose of the war”.

However, Maoist leader gives her own analysis saying that women in Nepal do not have a long history of participation in the political sphere. It is the People’s War that provided space and environment for women to get involved in the politics and many of them developed leadership capacity within the ten years. Therefore the central concern should be to look at whether it is promoting policies in favor of women, having long term vision to promote leadership capacity, providing special provision etc. than just seeking a numeric participation. Despite engaging in this debates, all agree that whatever the number of women in the Maoist party, it is much larger while comparing with other political parties.

There are numbers of instances where Maoists provided equal status to women. For example never in the history of Nepal, women started leading the military and as a result, the former government announced provision for women’s recruitment in the National Army. The Interim Constitution prepared in coordination with political parties came up with the provision for 33 percent of representation in all the state agencies which was also the result of significant number of women in the Maoist party who could influence others. As agreed by all, despite having some negative effects, People’s War provided ample space for women to participate in the public sphere and develop leadership in them. As shared by Shova Gautam, most importantly, it has been able to raise women’s political consciousness even from the remote villages. A senior journalist says:

“Maoists deserve credit for promoting women’s political participation despite having some negatives effects on them. It didn’t just talk about the principle of social justice but made 30-40 percent of women’s participation in its cadre”.

Although the majority of the Maoist women reported no difference between ideology and practice within the Maoists party, there were a few instances where these women themselves felt underestimated. For example when giving candidacy to women for FPTP contest, the Party did not show its confidence in women’s capacity, and thus hesitated to increase the percentage of women’s candidacy for the direct voting. The women Parliamentarians shared that despite a few instances, the Party is committed towards

implementing its policies into practice. Women did not get candidacy for FPTP in equal number not because the Party is less sensitive on women's issues but because of many other factors (women could not meet the requirements such as minimum age and other basic requirements for being selected). These women also echoed their feelings that the People's War prepared a critical mass of politically conscious and active women which would not have been possible even by years and years of formal education.

4.5 Impact of Women's Political Participation on Society & Women's Agency and Emancipation

Gender inequality continues to pervade many aspects of society in which the political domain remains the most pronounced (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 1997; Nelson & Chowdhury, 1994; Staudt, 1996; United Nations, 1995 in Kenworthy & Malami, 1999: 235). Although women in almost all countries exercise voting rights, their share in the main national legislative body is greater than 30 percent in only a handful of countries. This percentage is commonly considered the critical mass necessary for women to exert a substantial influence on politics (UNDP, 1995: 41). While looking at a worldwide data of 2008, women occupy only 18% of parliamentary seats around the world and the regional averages vary greatly: Nordic countries having 41.4, Americas - 21.8, Europe (excluding Nordic countries) - 19.1, Asia - 17.4, Sub-Saharan Africa - 17.2, Pacific - 13.4 and Arab states - 9.6 percent. Sweden has the highest share of legislators while in Japan it was just five percent, and even lower in a number of less developed countries (IWDC, 2008: 1).

The question of agency and emancipation of women cannot be determined only on the basis of participation. Participation and the access to decision-making levels are two different issues. Participation may or may not lead to women's access to decision-making or influencing roles. Women all over the world have participated widely in political movements in times of crisis but, once the crisis is over, they are relegated again to the domestic arena. Such a situation existed in Nepal too where the women participated widely in the political movements of 1951, throughout the underground struggle for democracy during the Panchayat era (1960-1990) and in the mass movement of 1990. In fact, women were instrumental in revitalizing the mass movement of

1990. But once the multiparty system was restored, women's issues were put aside. Constitutionally, the provision of equality applied partially to women as they were denied equal rights as men in various aspects. In Nepal there was 3.4 percent representation where as in Vietnam 26.2 percent which was the highest in the Asia and the Pacific (Kenworthy & Malami, 1999: 236). The scenario changed significantly after the end of People's War and the democracy movement of 2006. Within a decade, it reached to 33 percent in Nepal's legislative parliament which depicted a huge shift in the political history which crossed the boundaries of "critical mass".

It is still questionable whether women have been able to influence decisions in favor of them even if they represent the number of critical mass. In Nepal's case, one can be very optimistic while seeing their numeric representation in the Parliament. But one cannot count them as a unit which stands together for women's rights. These numbers fail to act as a critical mass when divided into different political ideologies that compel them to depart from each other even if the issues are directly concerned with women's empowerment. For example, the women Parliamentarians could not come to a consensus while nominating a woman for taking up a role of Vice President. They had to obey the decision of their respective parties. Similarly they can be divided on the issue of property rights, reproductive rights, etc. There are also other instances in which women have not been able to use the strength of their numbers. While nominating for the ministerial position, women got only four seats out of 24. They did not get satisfactory number of candidacy for the direct voting system during the Constituent Assembly election, and are holding very small percentage in the Central Committee of the Party. There are incidences also during the process of People's War such as in the peace dialogues, where women's agencies were negated, invisible and excluded. The only time when they were highlighted and made visible was in the role of women insurgents specially for daring to break the stereotype. Women's position of social subordination, gender disparities in education, access to basic services and their structured economic dependency, etc. may hinder their decision making capacity. It is the fact that majority of the women who participated in the People's War represent the excluded groups and

communities which were deprived from the basic services. During the movement, they developed skills to fight armed war, also developed political consciousness. However, only a handful of women, mostly belonging to high caste, are educated and have a long history of political involvement which leaves an enormous gap between the two. Thus, the numeric representation may remain unimportant in the absence of longer term initiatives that sustain and promote women's leadership.

Despite these challenges, a significant number of women in the Legislative Parliament open space for women to exercise their agency. These women expressed that they do not hesitate to speak on women's issues in the Parliament. The situation has been more comfortable comparing it with 10 years back when there was less than five percent women. Then men were not supporting women's agenda, but used to discourage women with their gestures and by saying that a woman has nothing to say except their own problem. The situation has been changed in the present context where men also initiate discussion on women's issues. There are indicators in which women have been gradually creating space for agency as a result of numeric participation in the People's War and in the people's movement II. They formed an Inter-party alliance after the people's movement II in order to build a common consensus on women's issues. The alliance was active while bringing up the issue of 33 percent representation of women. Similarly, within the Parties they are creating space to have a women's separate section to promote their agendas. Though these women could not come to a consensus to elect a woman candidate for the Vice President, it was a wise decision of the Parties to nominate a woman candidate for this position. Apart from this, women's leadership has crossed the boundaries of caste, class, ethnicity and region as never before. There are Dalit women who have won the election from the direct voting system and it means something very significant in a Hindu-dominated society where position of a Dalit woman falls at the bottom of the hierarchy. There are women who represent poor peasant family, excluded ethnicity, excluded regions have won the election. As a result of inclusive participation, women across the boundaries of caste, class and region have got space to exercise their agency.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

In this study, emancipation and agency are defined within the domain of public sphere and participation in the decision-making process, especially leading to influential leadership positions.

While looking at the issue of women's agency and emancipation in the Maoist movement, there are many encouraging results which prove that the women have come out in the public domain and are taking up different roles which were previously occupied by men. These new roles have opened up space for women to exercise their agency. For example; it holds significance in a patriarchal Hindu dominant society where women have held influential position in the political and militant realm. It obviously creates an atmosphere where women can build confidence to speak on behalf of them when they represent one third in the Parliament. During the interviews, the Maoist women said that they have achieved more than men. For many, it was beyond imagination to be a Parliamentarian in a society which treats women as a second class citizen and confines their role within the household domain. But these examples do not suffice the whole notion of agency and emancipation within the Maoist movement. One has to see how this political change has contributed to the process of longer term social change in Nepal.

While looking at women's participation in numbers, it is obviously encouraging to see women holding 33 percent seats in the Legislative Parliament, holding influential positions in the Party, representing in the ministry, representing in the Army etc. These women were found very enthusiastic with the numeric participation. But does this hold significance if there is no longer term positive impact on the lives of millions of Nepali women? The numeric participation has to be linked with their ideology. It depends on how they shape their strategy and vision to promote women's leadership and how they institutionalize this recent change. Otherwise, these numbers fail to act as a critical mass and depart them from each other even if the issues are directly concerned with women's empowerment.

The Maoist women mostly echoed on their opinions while praising the communist ideology and the class struggle. They denied their identity as only the feminist and put them as an agent under the broader issue of class struggle. These women maintained uniformity while giving their opinions on women's issues. For example: nominal representation in the Party and in the highest position, not being able to develop consensus on women's issues in the Parliament, etc. They didn't differ at all in many instances and supported the existing structure of the Party. It also opened space to question whether they are indoctrinated to speak in a particular way or they are emancipated. These doubts can only be resolved when we see indicators of positive impact in the lives of women leading to a social change.

There is a very clear difference on the issue of excluded people on the basis of class, caste, ethnicity and region. These groups of people have got actual chance to participate in the highest level of politics unlike other political and social movements of the past. There is a substantial presence of these people in the Party, Parliament and the Government. Most interestingly, all the seven Dalits (five males and two females) who won the Constituent Assembly election through direct voting system are from the Maoist party and the rest 42 who have come through proportional representation belong to different political parties with Maoist holding the highest number. Similarly, there are more numbers of ethnic population and excluded region in the Maoist party. Other political parties have also recognized the contribution of the Maoists to bringing up the issues of excluded groups but how that participation translates into a social change is a challenge.

Nepal entered into a peaceful political process after 2006 and it completed Constituent Assembly election in April 2008. Thus, it is very early to come out with concrete examples or judgments of direct impact of the political change. The issue of agency and emancipation in terms of numeric representation of women and actual participation of excluded groups of people can be found very positive at this early stage of change. Revolutionary movement in case of Nepal has made a huge change in terms of numeric participation of women in the higher level and thus gives hope for women's emancipation and agency. But the issue of agency and emancipation of women

do not end up only with the numbers rather it is important to see how they impact in a longer term. Some contradictions mentioned above leaves the question of agency and emancipation within the revolutionary movement of Nepal open for further inquiry in order to understand to what extent it makes impact for a social change.

[Word count: 17084]

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Annex I

Profile of the Interviewees

1.1 Maoist Woman Parliamentarians and Minister

The Maoist women represent different caste or ethnic groups, region and class. Out of 21, 10 represent high caste, 9 belong to different ethnic groups and two are from Dalit community. While observing their regional background, 18 are from the hills or mountains and three are from Terai having no representation from the capital. The level of education is also very different, starting from primary to masters level. Four of them have primary education, more than 50 percent have reached 10th-12th standards, the other four have completed Bachelor's level and one of them has completed masters. The age of the women vary from 26 to 53 the average is 33 years. Interestingly, all of the women who were interviewed are from the remote villages. One of them, was elected from Nuwakot district, is the first woman representative to be elected from that place. There are many such cases in other districts too. She was born in a farmer's family as many others, was against the autocratic Panchayat regime, joined the Maoist in 1995 and went underground. She worked as central secretariat member of the CPN-M affiliated All Nepal Women Association-Revolutionary and also served in a district committee in charge of the party. She firmly said that, she will work to ensure provisions to guarantee equal rights of Nepali women in the new Constitution.

Table N. 1: Maoist Women Parliamentarians

S.N	Name	Age	Edn.	Regional category	Caste/ ethnic group	Remarks
1	Kalpana Dhamala	33	Bachelors	Dhading (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Brahmin	Elected
2	Dama Kumari Sharma	36	Bachelors	Dang (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Brahmin	Elected
3	Amrita ThapaMagar	34	Bachelors	Syangja (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
4	Uma Karki	28	SLC	Sankhuwasabha (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Chhetriya	PR
5	Jayapuri Gharti Magar	34	SLC	Rolpa (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	Elected
6	Samita Karki	28	SLC	Khotang (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Chhetriya	Elected
7	Sukdaiya Chaudhary	37	Primary	Kailali (Madhesi)	Terai- Ethnic group	PR

8	Pampha Bhusal- Minister	45	Masters	Arghakhachi (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Brahmin	Elected
9	Dirinda Upadhyaya	29	SLC	Dhading (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Brahmin	PR
10	Maya Chepang	32	Primary	Gorkha (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
11	Devi Khadka	28	Inter	Dolakha (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Chhetriya	Elected
12	Rupa Chaudhary	29	SLC	Kailali (Madhesi)	Terai- Ethnic group	Elected
13	Durga Kumari B.K.	26	Primary	Kaski (Hills/mountains)	Hills- Dalit	Elected
14	Kumari Moktan	28	SLC	Makwanpur (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	Elected
15	Ram Kumari Devi Yadav	53	Primary	Dhanusha (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	Elected
16	Neer Kumari Kunwar Darlami	38	SLC	Sindhuli (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	Elected
17	Bimala Subedi	28	SLC	Nuwakot (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Brahmin	Elected
18	Lila Kumari Bagale Somai	32	SLC	Palpa (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	Elected
19	Sita Devi Baudel	30	SLC	Nawalparasi (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Dalit	Elected
20	Jun Kumari Roka	30	SLC	Rukum (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	Elected
21	Sarala Regmi	38	Bachelors	Bardiya (Madhesi)	Hills- Brahmin	Elected

1.2 NC and CPN-UML Woman Parliamentarians

The interviewees in the NC and CPN-UML parties also represent different regions, caste or ethnic groups and class. Among the 11, six belong to the high caste and five represent different ethnicity. They represent different regions and the three of them are from the capital. The level of education is high compared with the Maoist women. Five of them have completed masters level, the other five have completed bachelor's and one has completed 10th standard. Except a very few, they have established their political identity and recognition. All of the women from the NC have a long history of involvement in the politics. All of them belong to the high caste. Out of four, two have come from the FPTP contest and the rest two from PR. The average age is 54. All seven CPN-UML women have come from the PR and their average age is 42.

Table N. 2: NC and CPN-UML Woman Parliamentarians

S.N.	Name	Age	Edn.	Regional category	Caste/ ethnic group	Remarks
1	Suprabha Ghimire	66	Masters	Kathmandu	Hills-Brahmin	Elected-NC
2	Pushpa Bhusal	46	Masters	Arghakhachi (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Brahmin	Elected-NC
3	Meena Pandey Former Minister	55	Bachelors	Sarlahi (Madhesi)	Hills-Brahmin	PR- NC
4	Kamala Pant Former Minister	49	Bachelors	Kavre Palanchowk (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Brahmin	PR-NC
5	Radha Gyawali	53	Bachelors	Rupandehi (Madhesi)	Hills- Brahmin	PR-CPN-UML
6	Sapana Malla, Pradhan	43	Masters	Kathmandu	Hills-Ethnic group	PR-CPN-UML
7	Lucky Sherpa-UML	33	Masters	Kathmandu	Hills-Ethnic group	PR-CPN-UML
8	Dolma Tamang	36	Class 10	Sindhupalchowk (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR-CPN-UML
9	Shanti Pakhrin	29	Bachelors	Dolakha (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR-CPN-UML
10	Usha Kala Rai	41	Masters	Khotang (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR-CPN-UML
11	Yasodha Adhikari	47	Masters	Jhapa (Hills/mountains)	Hills- Brahmin	PR-CPN-UML

1.3 Professionals

The third category represents a group of professionals. Among the five, two are women and three are men. Four of them are journalists and one is a human rights activist. All of them have been engaged in minutely observing and analyzing the democracy movements and the People's War. All of these respondents are well educated and belong to high caste group.

Table N. 3: Professionals

S.N.	Name	Sex	Profession
1	Shova Gautam	F	Human Right Activist
2	Shiva Gaule	M	Journalist
3	Nirmala Sharma, Journalist	F	Journalist
4	DK Jaisi	M	Journalist
5	Bhoj Raj Bhat	M	Journalist

Annex II

Profile of Women Constituent Assembly Members

Table N. 4: List of Woman Parliamentarians

S.N	Name	Age	Party	Regional category	Caste	Remarks
1	Amrita ThapaMagar	35	Maoist	Syangja (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
2	Anan Dawa Sherpa	38	Maoist	Kathmandu	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
3	Bharat Kumari Regmi, Sharma	33	Maoist	Dailekh (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Brahmin	PR
4	Bimala KC	29	Maoist	Rukum (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Chhetriya	PR
5	Bimala Mijar	54	Maoist	Udayapur (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Dalit	PR
6	Bimala Subedi	28	Maoist	Nuwakot (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Brahmin	Elected
7	Bishnu Kumari Rai	33	Maoist	Ilam (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
8	Budhani Devi Mahato	35	Maoist	Mahottari (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
9	Chanda Devi	28	Maoist	Parsa (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
10	Dama Kumari Sharma	36	Maoist	Dang (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Brahmin	Elected
11	Devi Khadka	28	Maoist	Dolakha (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Chhetriya	Elected
12	Dharma Sila Chapagain	35	Maoist	Jhapa (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Brahmin	Elected
13	Dhirinda Upadhyaya	28	Maoist	Kalikot (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Brahmin	PR
14	Durga Kumari B.K	26	Maoist	Kaski (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Dalit	Elected
15	Durgi Devi Pasawan	35	Maoist	Dhanusha (Madhesi)	Hills-Dalit	PR
16	Ganga Parajuli	32	Maoist	Lalitpur (KTM Valley)	Hills-Brahmin	PR
17	Gita Thagunna	25	Maoist	Darchula (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
18	Goma Pathak	25	Maoist	Syangja (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Brahmin	PR
19	Halinna Khatoon Sokhin	50	Maoist	Sarlahi (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
20	Him Kumari Sunar	46	Maoist	Lamjung (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Dalit	PR
21	Hisila Yami (Bhattarai)	48	Maoist	Kathmandu	Hills-Ethnic group	Elected
22	Indramati Yadav	28	Maoist	Kapilvastu (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR

23	Indrawati Adhikari	40	Maoist	Sindhuli (Hills/mountains)	Hills Brahmin	PR
24	Jayapuri Gharti Magar	34	Maoist	Rolpa (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	Elected
25	Jubba Soren	31	Maoist	Morang (Madhesi)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
26	Jun Kumari Roka (Oli)	30	Maoist	Rukum (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Chhetriya	Elected
27	Jwala Kumari Shah	26	Maoist	Bara (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
28	Kalpna Devi Subedi	48	Maoist	Sindhuli (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Brahmin	PR
29	Kalpna Dhamala	33	Maoist	Dhading (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Brahmin	Elected
30	Kamala Rokka	32	Maoist	Rukum (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Chhetriya	PR
31	Khuma Subedi	35	Maoist	Rolpa (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Brahmin	PR
32	Kumari Moktan	28	Maoist	Makwanpur (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	Elected
33	Lalit Kumari Shah	28	Maoist	Saptari (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
34	Laxmi Gurung Dura	28	Maoist	Ramechhap (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
35	Laxmi Kumari Chaudhary	36	Maoist	Saptari (Madhesi)	Terai- Ethnic group	PR
36	Lila Kumari Bhandari	31	Maoist	Kailali (Madhesi)	Hills-Brahmin	Elected
37	Lila devi Mahata	31	Maoist	Sunsari (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
38	Lila Kumari Bagale Somai	32	Maoist	Palpa (Hills/mountains)		Elected
39	Mahalaxmi Shrestha	63	Maoist	Kathmandu	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
40	Mani Khambu Kirati	30	Maoist	Udayapur (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	Elected
41	Maya Chepang	32	Maoist	Gorkha (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
42	Neer Kumari Kunwar	38	Maoist	Sindhuli (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	Elected
43	Onsari Gharti Magar	30	Maoist	Rolpa (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
44	Pampaha Bhusal	45	Maoist	Lalitpur (KTM Valley)	Hills-Brahmin	Elected
45	Parvati Rasaili	33	Maoist	Ramechhap (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Dalit	PR
46	Parvati ThapaShrestha	29	Maoist	Gorkha (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Chhetriya	Elected
47	Pramila Devi Yadav	38	Maoist	Dhanusha (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
48	Puja Khanal	32	Maoist	Sunsari (Madhesi)	Hills-Brahmin	PR

49	Purna Kumari Subedi	48	Maoist	Banke (Madhesi)	Hills-Brahmin	Elected
50	Ram Kumari Devi Yadav	53	Maoist	Dhanusha (Madhesi)	Terai-high caste	Elected
51	Renu Chand (Bhatt)	27	Maoist	Baitadi (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Chhetriya	Elected
52	Renu Dahal	31	Maoist	Chitwan (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Brahmin	PR
53	Renuka Chaulagain	29	Maoist	Kavre (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Brahmin	PR
54	Rupa B.K.	27	Maoist	Palpa (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Dalit	PR
55	Rupa So. Si. Chaudhary	29	Maoist	Kailali (Madhesi)	Terai- Ethnic group	Elected
56	Sabitra Gurung Dura	30	Maoist	Tanahu (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
57	Samita Karki	28	Maoist	Khotang (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Chhetriya	Elected
58	Shanta Maya Tamang	31	Maoist	Kavre (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
59	Santoshi B. K.	41	Maoist	Rolpa (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Dalit	PR
60	Sarala Regmi	38	Maoist	Bardiya (Madhesi)	Hills-Brahmin	Elected
61	Satya Pahadi	30	Maoist	Dolpa (Hills/mountains)	-	PR
62	Shanta Neupane	50	Maoist	Chitwan (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Brahmin	PR
63	Shanti devi Rajbamshi	47	Maoist	Morang (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
64	Sharada Ghimire	29	Maoist	Rupandehi (Madhesi)	Hills-Brahmin	PR
65	Sita Devi Boudel	30	Maoist	Nawalparasi (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Dalit	Elected
66	Sukdaiya Chaudhary	37	Maoist	Kailali (Madhesi)	Terai- Ethnic group	PR
67	Sunita Kumari Mahato	31	Maoist	Siraha (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
68	Sushila Kandangwa	26	Maoist	Tehrathum (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
69	Sushma Sharma Ghimire	41	Maoist	Dang (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Brahmin	Elected
70	Tara Gharti Magar	32	Maoist	Rolpa (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
71	Uma Bhujel	30	Maoist	Gorkha (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Brahmin	PR
72	Uma Gothe, Kapali	26	Maoist	Bhaktapur (KTM valley)	Hills-High caste	PR
73	Uma Karki, Bista	28	Maoist	Sankhuwasabha (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Chhetriya	PR
74	Yashoda Gurung, Subedi	39	Maoist	Manang (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR

75	Ambika Basnet	58	NC	Kathmandu	Hills-Chhetriya	PR
76	Arju Rana Deuba	45	NC	Kathmandu	Hills-Thakuri	PR
77	Bhutini Devi Khawas	40	NC	Morang(Madhesi)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
78	Bimala Nepali	29	NC	Dang (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Dalit	PR
79	Bina Paudel	48	NC	Kathmandu	Hills-Brahmin	PR
80	Dudh Kumari Hamal	45	NC	Dolpa (Backward region)	Hills-Chhetriya	PR
81	Hira Gurung	39	NC	Khotang (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
82	Ishwori Neupane	48	NC	Kailali (Madhesi)	Hills-Brahmin	PR
83	Kalpana Sop Damai	35	NC	Doti (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Dalit	PR
84	Kalyani Rijal	46	NC	Kathmandu	Hills-Brahmin	PR
85	Kamala Pfaff-Czarnecka	49	NC	Kavre (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Chhetriya	PR
86	Kavita Sardar Bantar	43	NC	Morang (Madhesi)	Terai-Dalit	PR
87	Kiran Yadav	40	NC	Mahottari (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
88	Krishna Amatya	42	NC	Kathmandu	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
89	Krishna Kumari Pariyar	41	NC	Kaski (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Dalit	PR
90	Krishna Thakur	54	NC	Dhanusha (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
91	Lalit Kingring Magar	46	NC	Kavre (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
92	Laxmi Pariyar	30	NC	Udayapur (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Dalit	PR
93	Lila Subba	55	NC	Dhankuta (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
94	Maha Laxmi Aryal	42	NC	Makwanpur (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Brahmin	PR
95	Mina Pandey	55	NC	Sarlahi (Madhesi)	Hills-Brahmin	PR
96	Minaxi Jha	42	NC	Dhanusha (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
97	Mohamadi Sidiqi	49	NC	Banke (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
98	Munni Kumari Gupta	29	NC	Saptari (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
99	Nirmala Prasai	59	NC	Ilam (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Brahmin	PR
100	Parvati Rana Magar	42	NC	Tanahu (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
101	Pramila Rai	44	NC	Udayapur	Hills-Ethnic	PR

				(Hills/mountains)	group	
102	Pushpa Bhusal	46	NC	Arghakhachi (Hills/mountains)	Hills- Brahmin	Elected
103	Rama Guragain	43	NC	Kathmandu	Hills- Brahmin	PR
104	Ramwati Chaudhary	57	NC	Sunsari (Madhesi)	Terai- Ethnic group	PR
105	Ratna Sherchan	51	NC	Baglung (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
106	Saraswoti Chaudhary	48	NC	Dhanusha (Madhesi)	Terai- Ethnic group	PR
107	Savitri Singh	43	NC	Rupandehi (Madhesi)	Hills- Chhetriya	PR
108	Sita Gurung	32	NC	Tehrathum (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
109	Sun Devi Joshi	57	NC	Chitwan (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
110	Suprabha Ghimire	66	NC	Kathmandu	Hills- Brahmin	Elected
111	Uma Adhikary	53	NC	Chitwan (Hills/mountains)	Hills- Brahmin	PR
112	Usha Gurung	38	NC	Jhapa (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
113	Bina Gyawali	48	CPN- UML	Bardiya (Hills/mountains)	Hills-rahmin	PR
114	Binda Pandey	41	CPN- UML	Nuwakot (Hills/mountains)	Hills- Brahmin	PR
115	Bishnu Maya Bishwokarma	34	CPN- UML	Tanahu (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Dalit	PR
116	Biva Kumari Karki	40	CPN- UML	Bara (Madhesi)	Hills- Chhetriya	PR
117	Dolma Tamang	35	CPN- UML	Sindhupalchowk (Hills/mountains)	Ethnic group	PR
118	Durga Pariyar	39	CPN- UML	Udayapur (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Dalit	PR
119	Hasina Miya	57	CPN- UML	Syangja (Hills/mountains)	Terai-High caste	PR
120	Jali Kumari Mahato	27	CPN- UML	Siraha (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
121	Jaya Ghimire	49	CPN- UML	Dhanusha (Madhesi)	Hills- Brahmin	PR
122	Kamala Sharma	47	CPN- UML	Surkhet (Hills/mountains)	Hills- Brahmin	Elected
123	Kiran Kumari Ray	40	CPN- UML	Sarlahi (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
124	Lucky Sherpa	33	CPN- UML	Kathmandu	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
125	Narayani Devi Ghimire	41	CPN- UML	Palpa (Hills/mountains)	Hills- Brahmin	PR
126	Padma Kumari Aryal	40	CPN- UML	Syangja (Hills/mountains)	Hills- Brahmin	PR

127	Radha Gyawali	53	CPN-UML	Rupandehi (Madhesi)	Hills-Brahmin	PR
128	Ramrati Ram	41	CPN-UML	Siraha (Madhesi)	Terai-Dalit	PR
129	Ratna Devi Gurung	44	CPN-UML	Nuwakot (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
130	Rima Kumari Nepali	40	CPN-UML	Rolpa (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Dalit	PR
131	Sakuntala Lepcha	30	CPN-UML	Ilam (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
132	Sapana Malla, Pradhan	43	CPN-UML	Kathmandu	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
133	Sarla Yadav	42	CPN-UML	Rautahat (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
134	Savitra Bhusal	50	CPN-UML	Arghakhachi	Hills-Brahmin	PR
135	Shanta Chaudhary	28	CPN-UML	Dang (Hills/mountains)	Terai- Ethnic group	PR
136	Shanti Basnet, Adhikari	47	CPN-UML	Kathmandu	Hills-Brahmin	PR
137	Shanti Devi Chamar	34	CPN-UML	Nawalparasi (Hills/mountains)	Terai-Dalit	PR
138	Shanti Jirel	34	CPN-UML	Dolakha (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
139	Shanti Maya Tamang	20	CPN-UML	Dolakha (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
140	Sharada Devi Kumal	41	CPN-UML	Chitwan (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
141	Sharada Jha	41	CPN-UML	Dhanusha (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
142	Sita Kumari Paudel	50	CPN-UML	Chitwan (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Brahmin	PR
143	Sonam Chhejung Lama	52	CPN-UML	Mugu (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
144	Tasi Syangbo Gurungseni	42	CPN-UML	Mustang (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
145	Thammaya ThapaMagar	50	CPN-UML	Myagdi (Hills/mountains)	Hills- Ethnic group	PR
146	Urmila Devi Shah	39	CPN-UML	Dhanusha (Madhesi)	Terai- High caste	PR
147	Usha Kala Rai	38	CPN-UML	Khotang (Hills/mountains)	Hills- Ethnic group	PR
148	Yashoda Devi Adhikari	47	CPN-UML	Morang (Madhesi)	Hills-Brahmin	PR
149	Aasha Kumari Sardar	30	MPRF-N	Morang (Madhesi)	Terai-Dalit	PR
150	Durga Devi Mahato	32	MPRF-N	Parsa (Madhesi)	Terai- Ethnic group	PR
151	Kalawati Devi Dusad	46	MPRF-N	Bara (Madhesi)	Terai- Dalit	PR
152	Karima Begam	32	MPRF-	Parsa (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	Elected

			N			
153	Lalita Shah	29	MPRF-N	Sunsari (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
154	Nilam Verma	48	MPRF-N	Rautahat (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
155	Rambha Devi	50	MPRF-N	Rautahat (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
156	Renu Kumari Yadav (Minister)	39	MPRF-N	Saptari (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	Elected
157	Salma Khatoon Mikrani	37	MPRF-N	Sarlahi (Madhesi)	Terai- High caste	PR
158	Savita Devi Yadav	33	MPRF-N	Sunsari (Madhesi)	Terai- High caste	PR
159	Sewaki Devi Das Tatma	36	MPRF-N	Siraha (Madhesi)	Terai- Dalit	PR
160	Srimati Sandhya Devi	42	MPRF-N	Banke (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
161	Surita Kumari Shah	42	MPRF-N	Dhanusha (Madhesi)	Terai- Ethnic group	PR
162	Sumitra Devi Ray Yadav	47	TMLP	Sarlahi (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	Elected
163	Kasi Devi Jha	62	TMLP	Dhanusha (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
164	Urmila Mahato Kairi	44	TLMP	Sarlahi (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
165	Chandan Shah	33	TLMP	Rautahat (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
166	Basanti Jha	52	TLMP	Mahottari (Madhesi)	Terai-High caste	PR
167	Ramani Ram	40	TLMP	Saptari (Madhesi)	Terai- Dalit	PR
168	Gauri Mahto Koiri	48	SA	Sunsari (Madhesi)	Terai- High caste	PR
169	Malamati Devi Rana	47	S-A	Kailali (Madhesi)	Hills-Ethnic group	PR
170	Babita Devi Dhobi	34	RPP	Rupandehi (Madhesi)	Terai- Dalit	PR
171	Dal Kumari Suwar	65	RPP	Ramechhap (Hills/mountains)	Hills- Ethnic group	PR
172	Navodita Chaudhary	30	RPP	Sunsari (Madhesi)	Terai- Ethnic group	PR
173	Pratibha Rana	60	RPP	Bardiya (Madhesi)	Hills- Chhetriya	PR
174	Janak Kumari Chalise	47	ML	Lalitpur (Kathmandu valley)	Hills- Brahmin	PR
175	Nilam K C	44	ML	Jhapa (Hills/mountains)	Hills- Chhetriya	PR
176	Parvati Mahato	29	ML	Chitwan (Hills/mountains)	Hills- Ethnic group	PR
177	Sharada Nepali	42	ML	Bardiya (Madhesi)	Hills-Dalit	PR
178	Durga Jayanti Rai	32	JN	Khotang (Hills/mountains)	Hills- Ethnic group	PR

179	Sita Pokhrel	32	JN	Tanahu (Hills/mountains)	Hills-Brahmin	PR
180	Kalpana Rana	48	CPN-U	Kathmandu	Hills-Brahmin	PR
181	Ramshila Thakur	30	CPN-UF	Mahottari (Madhesi)	Terai- High caste	PR
182	Babina Moktan Tamang	34	RPP-N	Jhapa (Hills/mountains)	Hills- Ethnic group	PR
183	Kunti Shah	30	RPP-N	Dailekh (Hills/mountains)	Hills- Chhetriya	PR
184	Sarita Giri	46	S-A	Siraha (Madhesi)	Terai- High caste	PR
185	Gayatry Shah	26	NJD	Sarlahi (Madhesi)	Terai- High caste	PR
186	Phulmati Devi Chaudhary	46	RJS	Kailali (Madhesi)	Terai- Ethnic group	PR
187	Mina Pun	35	RJM	Baglung (Hills-mountains)	Hills- Ethnic group	PR
188	LilaNyaichai	27	NWP	Bhaktapur (Hills-mountains)	Hills- Ethnic group	PR
189	Chhiyama Rai	64	RJM	Sunsari (Madhesi)	Hills- Ethnic group	PR
190	Radha Devi Timelsena	47	NCP-UF	Kathmandu	Brahmin	PR
191	Rukmini Chaudhary	30	FDNF	Dang (Hills-mountains)	Terai- Ethnic group	PR

Annex III

Women in the Political Process

Never before in the history of Nepal, had women participated in the parliament holding 33 percent of the seats representing different class, caste, ethnicity, region, religion etc. After the Maoist signed the CPA, they joined the government. The interim constitution was drafted on the collective initiatives of Seven Political Parties and the Maoists in the spirit of democratic people's movement II.

Table N. 5
Women CA Members by Regional and Ethnic Category

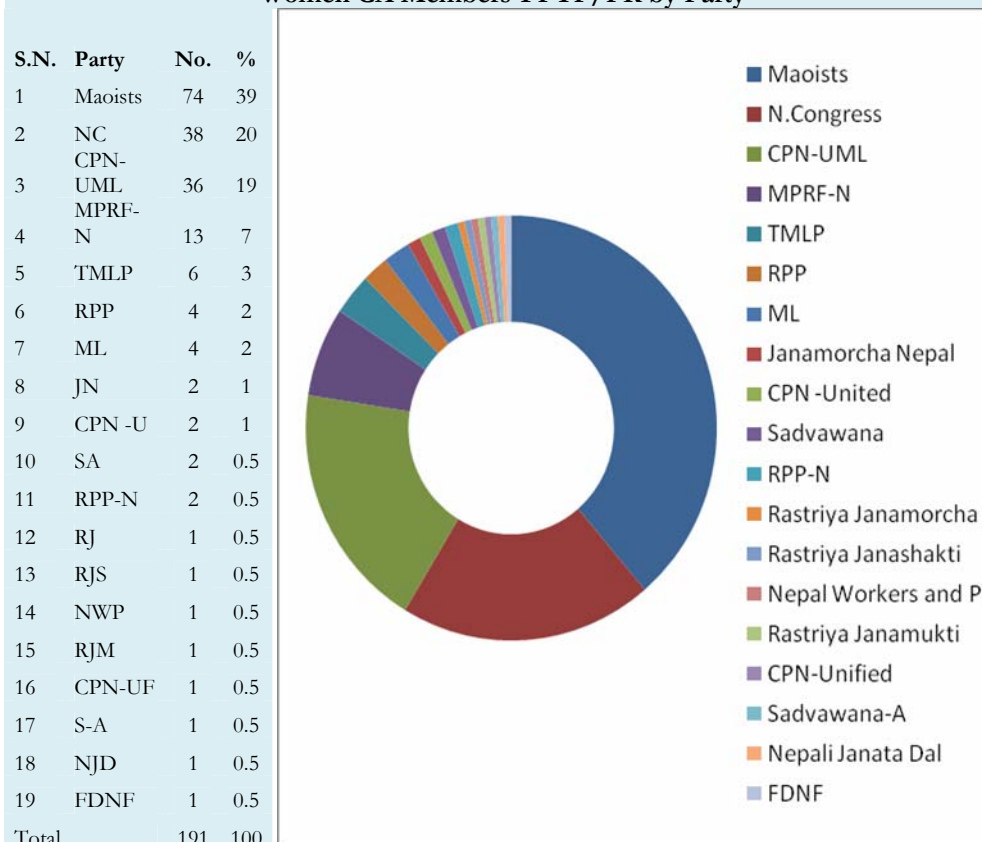
S.N.	Party	Regional category								Caste and ethnic category							
		Hills		KTM valley		Terai		Total		High caste		Dalit		Ethnic Gp		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Maoists	57	77	3	4	14	19	74	100	43	58	8	11	23	31	74	100
2	NC	27	71	4	11	7	18	38	100	20	53	5	13	13	34	38	100
3	CPN-UML	24	67	3	8	9	25	36	100	18	50	5	14	13	36	36	100
4	MPRF-N	0	0	0	0	13	100	13	100	8	62	3	23	2	15	13	100
5	TMLP	0	0	0	0	6	100	6	100	5	83	1	17	0	0	6	100
6	RPP	2	50	0	0	2	50	4	100	1	25	1	25	2	50	4	100
7	ML	3	75	1	25	0	0	4	100	2	50	1	25	1	25	4	100
8	JN	2	100	0	0	0	0	2	100	1	50	0	0	1	50	2	100
9	CPN-U	1	50	0	0	1	50	2	100	2	100	0	0	0	0	2	100
10	SA	1	50	0	0	1	50	2	100	1	50	0	0	1	50	2	100
11	RPP-N	2	100	0	0	0	0	2	100	1	50	0	0	1	50	2	100
12	RJ	1	100	0	0	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0	1	100	1	100
13	RJS	0	0	0	0	1	100	1	100	0	0	0	0	1	100	1	100
14	NWP	1	100	0	0	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0	1	100	1	100
15	RJM	1	100	0	0	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0	1	100	1	100
16	CPN-UF	0	0	1	100	0	0	1	100	1	100	0	0	0	0	1	100
17	S-A	0	0	0	0	1	100	1	100	1	100	0	0	0	0	1	100
18	NJD	0	0	0	0	1	100	1	100	1	100	0	0	0	0	1	100
19	FDNF	0	0	0	0	1	100	1	100	0	0	0	0	1	100	1	100
Total		122	64	12	6	57	30	191	100	105	55	24	13	62	32	191	100

Source: Field Survey, 2008.

There are 197 women Constituent Assembly members in the legislative parliament who constitute 33 percent of the seats. Among the total, 30 have come from FPTP contests, 161 from PR and the rest are from the nominations by the council of Ministers.

Table N. 6 Figure N. 1

Women CA Members-FPTP/PR by Party

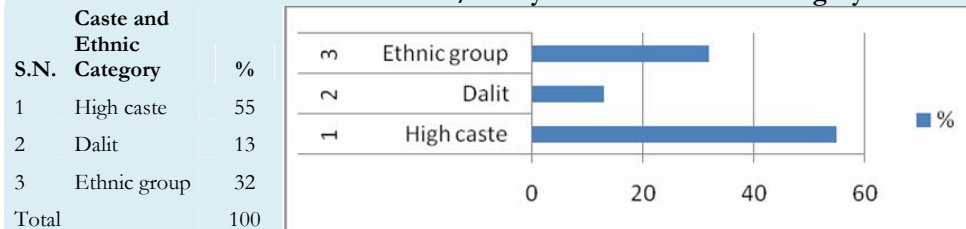


Source: Field Survey, 2008.

A large number of women in the Constituent Assembly are from the Maoist party who hold 39 percent securing 24 seats in FPTP and 50 in PR. The leading political parties NC and CPN-UML got 2 and 1 seats through FPPT, 36 and 37 seats through PR respectively. There is no significant difference within these parties regarding the issues of caste, region and ethnicity.

Table N. 7 Figure N. 2

Women CA Members-FPTP/PR by Caste and Ethnic Category



Source: Field Survey, 2008.

Majority of the women have come through PR which guaranteed representation from different groups of people. The table below shows that

Dalit hold 13 percent of the total seats in the CA (they constitute 13 percent of the total population). Similarly there is also a high representation from the ethnic groups. Even in the FPTP contest, 8 and 29 percent of women from Dalit and ethnic community respectively from the Maoist party have won, a significant change comparing with the last three general elections. Similarly a significant number of women from Hills and Terai have been elected.

Table N. 8
Women CA Members-FPTP by Regional and Caste/Ethnic Category

S.N.	Party	<i>Regional category</i>								<i>Caste and ethnic category</i>							
		Hills		KTM		Terai		Total		High caste		Dalit		Ethnic Gp		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Maoists	21	88	1	4	2	8	24	100	15	63	2	8	7	29	24	100
2	NC	1	50	1	50	0	0	2	100	2	100	0	0	0	0	2	100
3	UML	1	100	0	0	0	0	1	100	1	100	0	0	0	0	1	100
4	MPRF-N	0	0	0	0	2	100	2	100	2	100	0	0	0	0	2	100
5	TMLP	0	0	0	0	1	100	1	100	1	100	0	0	0	0	1	100
	Total	23	77	2	6	5	17	30	100	21	70	2	7	7	23	30	100

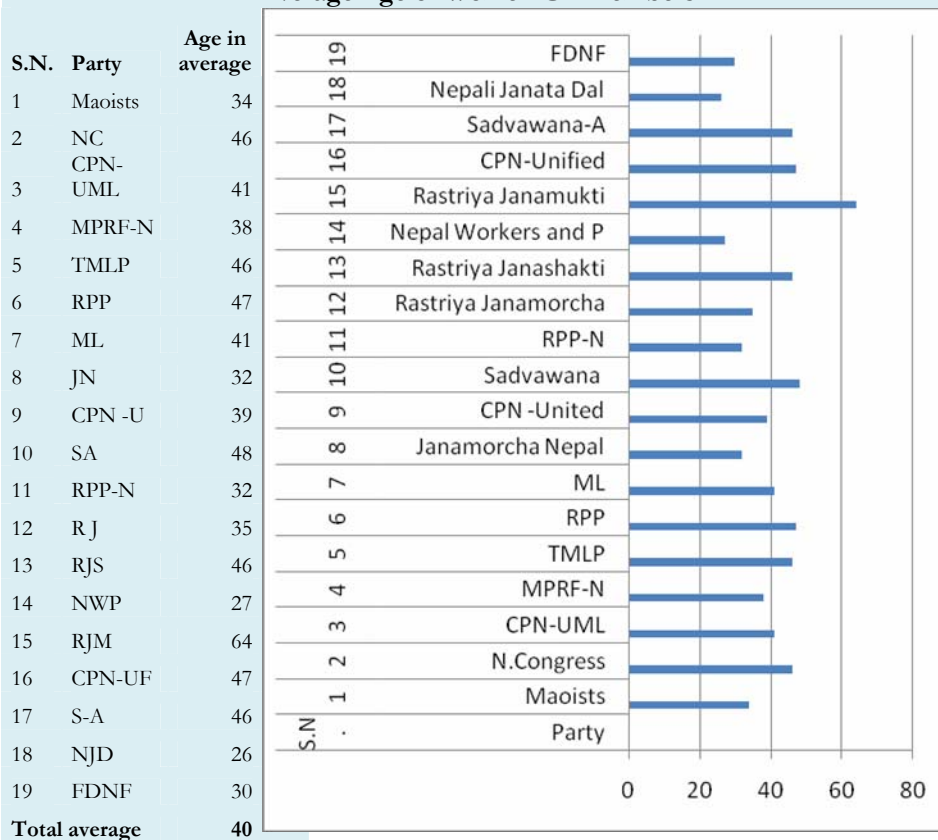
Source: Field Survey, 2008.

While comparing with the male, women constitute 23 percent in the nominations, 12.5 percent in FPTP where as in the PR only 2 percent less than male. In total, as shown below, male are 67 and the female are 33 percent.

Among the top three political parties who represent more than 75 percent women CA members, Maoists women are younger than others. The average age of the Maoist women is 34 comparing it with NC which is 46 and CPN-UML 41. It indicates that Maoist have attracted many young women in their party where as the others still have to promote younger leadership.

Table N. 9 Figure N. 3

Average Age of Women CA Members



Source: Field Survey, 2008.

Table N. 10

Women Candidacy in General Elections and Representation in the House of Representatives

Parties	1991 General Elections						1994 Mid-term Elections					
	Candidates			Elected			Candidates			Elected		
	Total	Women	%	Total	Women	%	Total	Women	%	Total	Women	%
NC	204	11	5.39	110	5	4.54	205	11	5.37	83	4	4.81
CPN-UML	177	9	5.08	69	3	3	196	11	5.81	88	3	3.40
RPP	318	17	5.34	4	0	0	202	13	6.44	20	0	0
Other Parties	646	42	6.50	22	0	0	839	51	6.07	14	0	0
Total	1345	79	5.87	205	8	3.90	1442	86	5.96	205	7	3.41

Source: Election Commission, Kathmandu, 1995.

Annex IV

Description of Political Parties' Manifesto

Table N. 11: Explanation of the Manifesto

CPN-M	NC	CPN-UML
General Background		
<p>The CPN-M party unveils its Constituent Assembly (CA) elections manifesto as “Commitment Paper” with the slogan ‘New Ideology and Leadership for New Nepal’ saying that “We have documented the commitment of our decade-long people’s war in this paper.”The 39-page long document is divided into four parts. The Manifesto, which covers most of the points of the interim constitution, further states that the president will be elected from the first-past-the post electoral system and the prime minister, will be elected through the parliament. The first part gives a <i>historical overview of Democratic movement and CA</i>. The second section focuses on the <i>independent and people centered democratic Republic as the essence of the new constitution</i>. In the third section it comes up with a <i>vision to establish a progressive new republic Nepal</i>. In the last section of the manifesto, the party claims that Maoist Chairman Prachanda should be elected as the first president of a New Nepal.</p>	<p>The NC puts their slogan as “Prosperity, Dignity and Equality, Freedom, Peace and Security.” The document is 32 pages long which starts with an appeal to the whole nation to support them to restore peace in the country and ends with their commitment towards making a new constitution again appealing all the Nepalese to support them. The text is divided into six sections.</p>	<p>The CPN-UML comes up with the slogan “Let’s build Federal Democratic republic! Let’s build strong and prosperous Nepal!” The 35 page long document is divided in several sub sections. The important sections for the analysis are its proposal in the CA and vision towards establishing a strong and prosperous Nepal.</p>
Women’s issues		
<p>In number 7 of section II in the Maoists manifesto, it talks about Fundamental rights. One of the points mentioned there is about women. It says “Women will exercise equal rights as men in all sectors including parental</p>	<p>In 5.1.2 under Federal democracy, the manifesto of the NC party says “at the centre, there will be a bi-cameral legislature while there will be one-cameral legislature at the</p>	<p>In the section Democratic Republic of Nepal: Fundamental Principles of Constitution Making number 5, the CPN-UML party talks about</p>

<p>property and will exercise prerogative rights in reproduction and divorce”. In number 11 of the same section it talks about Proportional Representation and Special Rights where it says “The party will adopt proportional representation policy in all state organs and people centered organizations to include women, Dalit, ethnic groups, people from different region, minorities, people from Terai community in order to end inequality based on class, caste, region, sex etc. and to create effective and people centered democracy. In addition, there will be special rights provision for certain time period to the people who belong to the most exploited groups such as women, Dalits and Muslim communities as compensation”. In Kha-4.3 of section III, it says “the party will go for proportional representation including different caste and ethnic groups, region and women in the national Army”. Gha-3.0 explicitly talks about women and children. It guarantees inheritance rights to women including special privilege in society, economy and all the agencies of State as well as equal participation. It will also adopt policy to ensure proportional representation of women in legislature, executive, judiciary and security sector such as police and Army. It will provide provision to include women along with men in the land deeds and citizenship. It will also manage child care centers in order to promote a conducive environment for women to work outside. It will establish Women, Family and Juvenile Courts”.</p>	<p>provincial level. All provinces will have equal representation in the Upper Chamber. The representation of at least 33 percent women, elected through a mixed system, will be ensured in the Lower Chamber as well as in the Provincial Chambers. Election to the central and provincial legislature will be based on a mixed electoral system. An arrangement will be made for inclusive and proportional representation of all diverse groups including indigenous, Janajati, Madhesi, Dalit, and Women”. In 5.3, there is a section on Ensuring Women’s Rights, Empowerment and Security which says “inclusive and proportional participation of women, who occupy more than half of the population of the country, at the political, administrative and policy-making levels will be ensured. All discriminatory laws against women will be revoked. All kinds of violence against women and girls will be stopped. It will be the duty of the state to campaign to ensure the rights of women including right to safe motherhood and reproductive health. The state will provide free reproductive health check up in a regular basis”.</p>	<p>Rights to equality and says, “no one will be discriminated on grounds of religion, race, sex, caste/ethnicity, origin, language, region and opinion. Any incidence of discrimination on any of these grounds will be redressed with compensation”. In number 23, it explicitly talks about women’s rights and says, “All kinds of discriminations, exploitations and oppressions against women will be eliminated. At least 33 percent participation of women will be ensured in all sectors of national life. Daughters and sons will have an equal right to inheritance. Women will have the prerogative right to reproductive health and divorce, and will get special priority in relation to education and health. A special plan will be adopted for women’s employment in the labor sector where women’s participation is low.”</p>
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Annex V

Interview Questions

These interview questions were designed with the purpose of collecting primary data from different groups of people which ultimately supported in completing MA research paper entitled *Bullets to Ballots: Participation of Maoist Women in the Parliament and the Government of Nepal after the People's Movement 2006*. There were three categories of people responding to these questions. The first group was the Maoist women Parliamentarians and minister, followed by women Parliamentarians from the two leading political parties and finally the professionals who had closely observed and analyzed the political situation of Nepal from the time of People's War - People's movement and the current political settlement. Same set of questions were asked to the respondents in the second and third categories.

The information collected from these groups of people is confidential and their original names are either not mentioned or mentioned with their consents in the process of writing the research report. The objectives and the purpose of this research were shared to each and every respondents and the interview was conducted with their prior consent. In one of the cases, interview was cancelled after sharing the research objectives because the respondent was not willing to speak on this issue.

Group A

General information:

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Caste composition: 1. Brahmin/Chetriya ... 2. Ethnic.....3. Dalit.....
4. Address: Temporary.....Permanent.....
5. Education:

Specific information:

6. Why did you join the people's war and from when?
7. What were your roles and responsibilities in the war?
8. How did you become a parliamentarian or a minister? How did the party decided to give you a ticket for the election? How did it select you as a minister or a parliamentarian? Please explain the process.
9. Did you compete with the male members to become a parliamentarian or a minister?
10. What were the bases to nominate you as a candidate for the election or to select you as a parliamentarian? What were the bases to select you as a minister?
11. How do you look at or evaluate the political change of 2006?
12. Being an active woman participant of the people's war, how do you personally look at this political change?
13. Being a woman socialized in a patriarchal family, fighting an armed war and ultimately becoming a member of parliament or a minister. How do you look at or evaluate this change?
14. What are the impacts of women's political participation towards the people's war?
15. What are the impacts of women's political participation towards the country?
16. Have you worked on the issues of women during war?
17. What is your opinion towards women's issues?
18. Do you like to call yourself a feminist?
19. What are the contributions of People's war towards women's issues?

20. What is the relationship between the Maoists' principle of women's empowerment and its application within the party?

Group B and C

General information:

1. Name:

2. Age:

3. Caste composition: 1. Brahmin/Chetriya 2. Ethnic.....3. Dalit.....

4. Address: Temporary.....Permanent.....

5. Education:

Specific information:

6. How do you evaluate or analyze Maoist's People's war?

7. Is it necessary to have an armed revolutionary movement like Nepal's Maoists for a change?

8. How do you analyze Maoist's People's war and women's political participation?

9. If an armed revolutionary movement is not necessary for a change, why the other social movements did not assure women's political participation? What is your opinion on this?

10. Maoists claim that women's political participation is possible only through the People's war. How do you analyze this statement?

11. Was it possible to have 1/3 participation of women in the parliament in the absence of people's war? How do you feel?

12. Women's political participation was very minimal even after 1990's political change where the political parties could not reach to 5 percent? How do look at this situation?

13. What is your opinion towards Maoists women who participated in the people's war?