REINTEGRATION CHALLENGES OF 'EX-PLA WOMEN' IN POST-MAOIST INSURGENCY (2052-2062), NEPAL

A Thesis

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This thesis entitled **"Reintegration Challenges of 'Ex-PLA Women' in Post-Maoist Insurgency (2052-2062), Nepal"** has been prepared by Nirmala Kumari Neupane under my guidance and supervision. I hereby recommend this thesis for examination by the thesis committee as a partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in Sociology.

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ABSTRACT

The study identified several weaknesses, complications and consequent suffering of the ex- combatants in general and ex-PLA women in particular as well it also provides information on their actual status of socio-economic integration, their actual and short term livelihood, health, psycho-social and disabilities and other special needs for further planning and implementation of activities to support them by the Government. One of the unique characteristics of Maoist insurgency in Nepal was the central role women played in the PLA. Before the Maoist insurgency women's participation in the political domain was extremely limited. The insurgency mobilized a surprisingly large number of Nepalese women into taking up arms.

Social integration demands the repair of relations between combatants and families and communities potentially transformed by the conflict. Conservative and traditional restriction on women's freedom, caste discrimination, forced marriages and limited decision making roles in the public and the private spheres, women saw the Maoist as egalitarian compared to their patriarchal communities. Decade long armed insurgency's biggest success was women's involvement in the PLA to change the social political system through a revolutionary ideology.

Under the research, challenges in reintegration process and involvement of entrepreneurship of ex-PLA women were examined briefly. Under the methodology, descriptive and exploratory research designs were used for achieving the desired objectives. Different 351 respondents were identified for both qualitative as well as quantitative analysis. Reintegration is itself a misnomer for many of the PLA who have spent their entire adulthood and in some case half their lives within the Maoist movement.

The findings have been that although most of the ex-PLA women are living outside of the place of their origin, their social status in the new host communities seems satisfactory and most of ex- PLA have utilize their money on small business. Some of them are unemployed and work as daily laborers when they get opportunity.

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ABBREVIATION

CA	:	Constitution Assembly
CPA	:	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CPN (M)	:	Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
DDR	:	Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration
KII	:	Key Information Interview
MACs	:	Mapping of socio-economic condition of ex-combatants
MOPR	:	Ministry of peace and Reconstruction
NC	:	Nepali Congress
PLA	:	People's Liberation Army
PPW	:	Protracted People's war
RIM	:	Revolutionary Internationalist Movement
SSR	:	Security Sector Reform
ULF	:	Unified Left Front
UML	:	Unified Marxist Leninist
UN	:	United Nation
UNMIN	:	United Nations Mission in Nepal
UNPF	:	United National People's Front
NGO	:	Non-Government Organization
INGO	:	International Non-Government Organization
UNIRP	:	UN Inter-Agency Rehabilitation Program
IPAS	:	Inter-party Society Nepal

CHAPTER: ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

A revolutionary war is never confined within the bounds of military action. Because its purpose is to destroy an existing society and its institutional and to replace them with a completely new state structure, any revolutionary war is a unity of which the constituent parts in varying importance are military, political, economic, social and psychological. For this reason, it is endowed with a dynamic quality and a dimension in depth that orthodox wars, whatever their scale lack. This is particularly true of revolutionary guerrilla war, which is not susceptible to the type of superficial military treatment frequently advocated by antediluvian doctrinaires. It is often said that guerrilla warfare is primitive. This generalization is dangerously misleading and true only in the technological sense if one considers the picture as a whole, a paradox is immediately apparent and the primitive form is understood to be in fact more sophisticated then nuclear war or atomic war or war as it was waged by conventional armies, navies and air forces. Guerrilla war is not dependent for success on the efficient operation of complex mechanical devices, highly organized logistical systems or the accuracy of electronic computers. It can be conducted in any terrain, in any climate, in any weather; in swamps in mountains, in farmed fields. Its basic element is man, and man is more complex than any of his machines. (Griffith, 1989:12-18)

In February 1996, Baburam Bhattarai and Pampha Bhusal from the Maoist party delivered a forty-point declaration to the then Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba. The primary grievances of the Maoists included widespread poverty, the monarchical structure of the government and the discrimination and marginalization of indigenous people, lower castes and women. The ‘people’ war began two weeks later with attacks on a police post after the government refused to meet the demands. The Maoists mobilized the marginalized sectors of society, including women, Dalits (members of the former untouchable castes), youth and people living in rural areas into the people’s Liberation Army. In addition to young men and women, the PLA recruited children. During the ten-year conflict over 13,000 people were killed, thousands of

people were victims of enforced disappearances and an estimated 200,000 people were displaced by the PLA and government forces. (Thapa, 2018:7-15)

The ceasefire, which was followed by comprehensive peace Agreement (CPA) signed by the Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala and the chairman of the CPN (Maoist) Puspa kamal Dahal (Prachanda) on 21 November 2006, finally ended the insurgency. The CPA, among various other provisions, had laid a road map for the integration and rehabilitation of Maoist ex-combatants and the election of a constitution Assembly (CA) to formulate a new constitution. Election for CA was held on 10 April 2008 but the CA couldn't draft and promulgate the constitution within the stipulated timeline. The CA was dissolved on 27 May 2012. However, the second CA was constituted after a fresh mandate through another election on 19 November 2013. Efforts are being made to complete the pending task of the formulation of new constitution for the federal democratic republic of Nepal (IPAS Nepal 2015: 12-13).

Nepal's program for the integration of ex- combatants into the Nepalese Army was somewhat unconventional. It followed a so called context- specific model which was exclusively led by national actors of the 19,602 UN verified Maoist combatants, only 1,441 (including 71 officers) were selected for integration into the Nepalese Army. Key decision regarding the process and modality of their integration took place at a higher political level and combatants themselves were not consulted on the matter. One of the key features of the comprehensive peace Agreement (CPA), signed in 2006 by the Maoists and seven other major political parties, was the integration and rehabilitation of the Maoist combatants. Initially, most Maoist combatants intended to join the Army to continue serving their country. However, these aspirations soured in the six years that followed, during which time little progress was made in carrying out the long- awaited political processes that lay at the heart of the CPA. After year of discussion on the written agreements and their interpretations, which were designed to facilitated the decision- making process regarding the fate of Maoist combatants, the situation of having two armies in one country finally came to an end in 2013 (Berghoof Foundation, 2015:1-15).

Women and men play different roles as social actors and also have different needs and interests. In three phases of a conflict (before, during and after), women can play different roles and work proactively to secure peace. The various conflicts phases

often overlap, which makes peace making measures very complex. Women have offered practical support for male combatants, and sacrificed their virtues as mothers, sisters and wives which have been used in symbolic representations of nationhood and motherhood. But in contrast, women have been shown themselves brave fighters also like those in Latin America and South Asia. In the 20th century, women played not only active but vital roles in liberation struggles against foreign domination in many countries such as civil war of Vietnam. They fought along with men, got some physical military and technical trainings i.e. map reading, engineering etc. and wore combat dresses like their male counter parts. Primarily though, women and girls supported male combatants sometimes voluntarily. Otherwise compulsively Even though, they did not engage in combat, they carried supplies, cooked food, washed clothes and passed information (Khadka 2012:1-18).

The protracted people's war (PPW) is a military political strategy conceptualized by Mao-zedong. The Maoists use this term for their strategy of long-term armed revolutionary struggle. The basic concept behind PPW is to maintain armed struggle in the form of rural guerrilla warfare to contrast a mass base building so as to create guerrilla fronts to encircle the cities from the country side (HDN, 2005). It generates a massive support from the population and launches a rebellion against the enemy through a combined strategy of mobile warfare and guerrilla warfare.

The Maoists in Nepal also declared the PPW in 1996, which continued up to one decade. The sources and reasons for escalation of conflict that led to the decade long PPW in Nepal can be well attributed to the four clusters identified by Edward Azar. Azar's theory of protracted social conflict (PSC) represents the prolonged and often violent struggle by communal groups for such basic needs as security, recognition and acceptance, fair access to political institution and economic participation (Miall et al, 2005: 186).

The Nepalese civil war from 1996 to 2006 left in its wake an awareness that the involvement of women in every sector of society is fundamentally important. The resulting changes in law and the creation of new legislation demonstrated this awareness and reflected a growing appreciation of need for gender equality. However, challenges remain in the lack of authenticated data on conflict- affected women, in the lack of access to appropriate services and compensation and in the way that ex-PLA

women are treated and reintegrated. Recommendations include data disaggregation, effective management of conflict-affected women, modifications to existing laws on disappeared person, provision of vital support services and the establishment of vital support services and the establishment of formal network for conflict- affected women that can advocate on their behalf (Thapa, 2017).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study intends to examine many discharged and demobilized ex-PLA women' situation. The focus will be on their place as non-militant citizens in a largely conservative society. The actual links between reintegration into communities as "lived Spaces" and communities as "imagined spaces" based on political ideology of commonalities. Ex-PLA women seem to be facing stigma in their families and the society at large because of the country's traditionally patriarchal nature, the persistent caste system, ethnic discrimination; and geographic location may aggravate their struggle and legitimize continued subordination.

Reintegration, in this study means the return back of ex combatants to their own or new society and culture. This addresses the gender complexities as a reflection of the deep rooted gender notion that they have crossed the social and moral boundary which is considered acceptable for women. During their time as soldiers, many women married outside their caste and ethnic tradition, partly due to the encouragement or order of their party leaders and commanders, without their family consent. This has made their current and future acceptance more difficult in the community life. The study intends to give some attention to the situation and experiences of ex- female combatants in different districts of the country. This study is particularly interested in investigating reintegration process of ex- female combatants and their entrepreneurship. Women ex-combatants seem to be facing stigma in their families and in the society at large because of the country's traditionally patriarchal nature, the persistent caste system, ethnic discrimination and geographic location which may aggravate their struggle and legitimize continued subordination. Many women in Nepal are facing the problems of lacking nutrition, education, employment and good health because resources are scarce.

Traditional social structures deny them the power to make basic decisions about the course of their lives. Low levels of education form a vicious cycle with a lack of

decision-making power, each reinforcing the other to depress the social position of rural women.

There have been a number of valuable studies on reintegration process or challenges and entrepreneurship in abroad but very few researches have done on it in Nepal. There are few published articles about ex- combatants and their entrepreneurship after post war. Also sociologically none of such study has been carried out yet. This research is essential because it provides valuable information for the policy maker and legislative system as well as for the women rights related government mechanism and non-government organizations. It sociologically raises the issues like their current livelihood pattern and their struggle within the society and issues related to the financial packages.

This research is also important from the point of view of entrepreneurship. An entrepreneurship is the process of designing, launching a new business which is often initially a small business on what role does entrepreneur play in ex- PLA women's life.

However, the study is carried out to find the way out of the following question:

- What are the socio-economic characteristics of women involved in PLA?
- What are the motivational factors of women's involved in PLA?
- What are major problems faced by PLA- Women?
- What types of discrimination faced by ex-PLA women during war time?
- What are the decision making roles of women in their family as well as outside matter?

1.3 Research Questions

This topic appears very interesting and worthy of study. In order to cast some new light on this topic the following research questions have been the base for this empirical study.

1. What are the challenges and re-integration process of ex-PLA women in the study area?
2. What is the current socio-economic status of female ex- combatants?
3. Why did these ex-PLA women choose to join PLA in their early ages?

4. What kinds of roles and formative experiences did they have during war-time?
5. How have the emerging new gendered roles and experiences influenced the early stages of social reintegration into local communities and into families?
6. Are discharged young women PLA facing social stigmatization approval and recognition within their own families and local communities?
7. What is the overall impact of armed-conflict on women?
8. What are the challenges and political reintegration process of ex-PLA women?
9. What is the current mechanism of state to manage the socio-economic status of ex-PLA women?
10. Do ex-PLA women integrated/involved in political party?
11. How were the PLA women organized in the war?
12. How was the structure of participation of PLA women in leadership and operation process in war?
13. Was there difference of participation between married or single PLA women in war?
14. What was the unique strategy to increase the member of PLA women for schooling and management of them?
15. What was the strategy of management of PLA women after post war and its effect on them?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to find out female ex-combatant's reintegration and entrepreneurship process. Besides, the specific objectives of the study are as follows:

a) To analyze the challenges and reintegration process of ex-PLA women in the study area.
b) To find out the current involvement in entrepreneurship of ex- PLA women.

1.5 Justification of the Study

Study areas like Kathmandu, Chitwan, Rupandehi, Dang, Banke, Bardiya Gorkha, Tanahun and Kaski are selected based on their majority of geographical location where they are living. The main purpose of this research study is to find out the challenges and reintegration of ex-PLA women and their current involvement in entrepreneurship. Why the women have become guerrillas and soldiers, and have emerged as agents of political and social change, conflict resolution and social transformation. It also analyzes all kinds of conflicts and tendency in these male dominated societies of pushing leading women activists back into the private sphere in the aftermaths of war. It also focuses on their struggle to find their place as non-militant citizens in a largely conservative society.

This research also provides some insights of more general use for gender-aware reintegration efforts in post-war countries with considerable gender inequalities. This research will be a good resource for all those people who want to know about current situation of ex-PLA women's in Nepal.

Till the date is no research has been made regarding the challenges and reintegration process of ex-PLA women and their entrepreneurship. Therefore, the research is essential to carry out reintegration and challenges process of ex-PLA women and their entrepreneurship.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

The study is undertaken with an academic purpose. It intends to document and understand the role and status of ex-PLA women of decade long people's war and how it affects their further reintegration process in the society and in communities. Every research work has its own limitation due to the lack of time, budget, resources and knowledge. The study is conducted within the boundaries of limited time, budget and other resources. So without any exception, this study will be done as a case study of ex-PLA women of Nepal. Data were collected both from hilly and plain (tarai) locations as well as from rural and urban areas, in order to present a rather diverse and reasonable representative situation of societal attitudes towards female ex-combatants. With the objectives of partial fulfillment of master degree requirement of humanities and social sciences with many situations to be faced in the study will be

basically relying on primary information gathered from study area. Selection of the study areas (Kathmandu, Chitwan, Rupandehi, Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Gorkha, Tanahun and Kaski) were based on their majority of geographical location where they were living. This study also used limited tools and techniques.

1.7 Organization of the Study

This study has been divided into seven chapters. The first chapter is introduction and it discusses the Background of the Study, Statement of Problem, Research Objectives, Justification, Significance, Limitation and Organization of the study. The chapter focuses on the introduction of the research subject matters which can be easy to know about the basic information of research. The second chapter presents the review of literature. This chapter gives theoretical review history conceptual framework and relevant theories.

The third chapter presents the methodology adopted for the study. Under this chapter Research design, Rational selection of the study area, Nature and sources of data, Universe and Sampling procedure, Interview Schedule, Observation method, Data analysis and presentation, Focus group discussion, key informant's information (KII) and reliability and validity of tools are described.

The fourth chapter presents the socio-demographic profile of respondents. In this chapter, socio-economic status of the respondents is analyzed to find out the existing social and cultural practices of ex-PLA women. It also tries to find out the challenges in integration process and involvement in entrepreneurship of ex-PLA women. In this chapter demographic characteristic of respondents, challenges in reintegration in their native communities are analyzed. To explore about the challenges in reintegration in fifth chapter, the researcher has developed number of subheadings. Likewise, to examine the involvement in entrepreneurship, in Sixth chapter, the researcher has tried to know about the past and present perception of society towards the ex- PLA women, vocational skill, trainings and financial support of the government. Finally, in the last chapter summary, major findings and conclusion are drawn effectively.

CHAPTER: TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Generally, this part deals with the literature relevant to the study, to the deepest knowledge and understanding about the subject of field work. Reviewing literature will help to learn how others have defined and measured key concepts to identity data sources that other researchers have used. The purpose of literature review is to find out what research studies have been conducted in the chosen field of study:

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Marxist Conflict Theory

Marxist conflict theory is rooted in the 19th century writings of Karl Marx. Marx's concern with understanding and changing the social organization of unequal and unjust social relations led him beyond the boundaries of existing social theory.

The conflict theory has been used to explain a wide range of social phenomena, including wars and revolutions, wealth and poverty, discrimination and domestic violence. It ascribes most of the fundamental development in human history, such as democracy and civil rights, to capitalistic attempts to control the masses rather than to a desire for social order. The theory revolves around concepts of social inequality in the division of resources and focuses on the conflicts that exist between classes. (Marx,1967: 17).

Marx emphasized the importance of the dominant social forms by which we humans economically secure our material existence in the world. These social forms, or modes of production, were said to permeate all other aspects of human social life.

Marx's theorization has been of great practical and theoretical importance. Practically, Marx spent much of his life as a political activist struggling against the material inequalities of 19th century capitalist economic relations. Theoretically, he labored to show the historical and social basis for systematic inequalities of the capitalism, as well as to identify economic, political and cultural contradictions which might (dialectically) undermine capitalist exploitation. The Marxist interpretation of history stresses the impact of relative equality or inequality in economic life on the entire

social life. It has contributed greatly to sociological insights into inequality and the uses\misuses of legal power. (Marx & Engels 1848:98-137).

The conflict theory suggested by Karl Marx claims that society is in a state of perpetual conflict because of competition for limited resources. It holds that social order is maintained by domination and power, rather than consensus and conformity. According to conflict theory, those with wealth and power try to hold on to it by any possible means, chiefly by suppressing the poor and powerless. A basic premise of conflict theory is that individuals and groups within society will work to maximize their own benefits. Similarly, in the Maoist movement women have become guerrillas and soldiers by participating in mass-based political nationalist anti-colonial struggles to break the male dominated social system where pushing women back into the private sphere. Women and girls were facing stigma in their families and society at large because of country's traditionally patriarchal nature. Marxism regard the economic position of power as crucial to their oppression. This oppression starts in the family where women are seen as unpaid workers, low salary given in office, low status and part time jobs. Marxist believes that the interest of women lies with the liberation of working class and overthrow of capitalism. The theory provides an adequate explanation for the subordination and exploitation of women in capitalist societies.

2.1.2 Feminist Theory

The theory emerged in the early years of the 20th century particularly from Alexandra Kollonati in Russia 1977, Clara Zethkin in Germany and Emrna Goldman properly described as anarchist feminist in the United States. The influence of Marxism is still of immense importance within feminist theory. Marxist feminists regard the economic position of power as unpaid workers, low salary given in office, low status and part time jobs. Marxist feminists believe that the interest of women lies with the liberation of the working class and the overthrow of capitalism. The theory provides an adequate explanation for the subordination and exploitation of women in capitalist societies. They give priority to class struggle. According to them economic exploitation, dependency and powerless relationship with husbands and fathers should be reduced to strengthen their status. Gender relations are placed at the center of its analysis (Paudel, 2002:34-39).

Women have offered practical support for male combatants and sacrificed their virtues as mothers, sisters and wives which have been used in symbolic representation of nationhood and motherhood. Women have been shown themselves as brave fighter also. They fought along with men, got same physical military and technical trainings. Women and girls supported male combatants sometimes voluntarily otherwise compulsively. Even though they are always marginalized and devalued their activism. Many ex-PLA women experienced a set back during the peace process when they were reintegrated back into a poverty. Feminism is a perspective that encourages willingness to understand and explain social realities from the vantage point of women. Hitherto the realities have largely been understood from the perspective of a few economically, politically and culturally powerful people of their times mostly men. It was only after the feminist movement that gained strength in the 1950s received momentum in the 1960s that voices of women became louder and began to receive attention worldwide (K.C.2019:434-453).

2.2 A Social History of People's Movement of Nepal

2.2.1 Nepal before the End of the Rana Regime in 1951

Absolute Monarchy was the political System of Nepal after world war II until 1990 when King Birendra bowed down owing to the pressure from a coalition parties and social movements that established a constitutional monarchy (Whelpton, 2005). The landlord group had prominent position in Nepal along with king. His political representative, main administrators and advisors were mostly from high-caste Brahmin and Chhetri people. Until 1950, all of the land in Nepal was considered to be the property of the state, which was controlled by the Hindu kingship. The state partitioned of land out to government officials and other allied individuals and group.

These had the advantages of both securing political allies, and increasing tax income for the state, that also imposed heavy taxes on the common rural population. This class of landlords opposed attempts of land reform and changes in power structure of Nepal. Brahmins also have over-represented in the state administration. Since the end of the Rana regime in 1951, there have been several attempts to challenge the hegemony of the monarchism and the landlordism. Later, during a ceasefire between the Maoist and the parties in 2003, the demand for the constituent assembly was the main issue of the CPN (M).

For the landlords, an election to a new constitution could mean a loss of power, both in terms of reduced influence in the state and reduced landownership resulting from an eventual land reform (Upreti, 2009:107-109).

2.2.2 Formation of the Modern Nepali State

The modern Nepali state was formed in 1768, when Prithvi Narayan Shah from the state of Gorkha conquered small kingdoms and ancient Newari states in the Kathmandu valley and claimed the throne of Nepal for the Shah dynasty and their descendants. In 1846, well-known military leader in Nepal's history, Jung Bahadur Rana challenged the Shah family's hold on power. Shah Queen Rajendra Lakshmi Devi with her supporters plotted to remove Jang Bahadur, but the plot was discovered and there was a bloody massacre between advisers and ministers who were chiefs of the army at that time. This famous event is known as 'Kot Parva'. As a result, Rana family gained supreme power in Nepal, entrenched itself through hereditary prime ministers and reduced the monarchy to a figure head. The Rana regime was a highly centralized autocracy. These historical events marked a change of leadership in the power structure in Nepal, but did not bring about substantial change in Nepali society.

The era of Rana rule lasted up to 1950, when the King Tribhuvan Bir Bikram Shah (of the reigning Shah family) fled to India. The Nepali Congress Party, with the help of sympathizers in India started a series of armed attack against Rana autocracy in different parts of Nepal. India wanted a stable Nepal, in order to secure their northern border and make Nepal more resistant to Chinese influence. The last years of Rana rule had been characterized by factionalism and infighting within the Rana family. At the same time, growth of democratic opposition movement in Indian soil was evident. After World- War II, the Nepali Congress (NC) party was formed in 1947 and the communist party of Nepal (CPN) came into existence in 1949. The British; however, were satisfied with Rana regime in Nepal and supported a policy of keeping King Tribhuvan in power as a figurehead for Rana regime, while setting up a constituent assembly. This policy hindered the great movement of 1950. King Tribhuvan came back to Nepal from India and a cabinet was set up consisting of Rana and representatives of the Nepali Congress. Thus, the NC and Shah King managed to break the Rana monopoly on state power with Indian support. Meanwhile, it guaranteed the sovereignty of the King. Three main political parties controlled the

Nepali state after the 1951 agreement. King Tribhuvan announced, in February 1951 that, 'The governance of the nation shall be in pursuance to a democratic constitution as framed by the constituent assembly elected by the people'. The constituent assembly; however, did not come into existence in that era.

During the struggle against Rana rulers especially from 1947 to 1952, several women's organizations were established to raise the political and social consciousness among women in Nepal influenced by India's freedom struggle against British colonial rule. These gains were secured in the interim constitution of 1951, which was to function until a constituent assembly could be held. But in 1954 the communist Party of Nepal (CPN) held its first convention and agreed on conducting election for a constituent assembly and establishing a republic set-up as their most important goals. The CPN leadership accepted constitutional monarchy in order to get political recognition from the palace after two years. On the 1st of February 1958 king Mahendra announced general elections to the parliament. Both the NC and the CPN protested and held that any elections should be to a constitution assembly. Elections to parliament were held, with both parties participating but with several tensions inside the CPN, due to disagreement concerning whether one should boycott the elections or not. The NC won the election with majority. In 1960 King Mahendra used the emergency powers given to him in the constitution of 1951. He dismissed the parliament and gained supreme powers. At the same time, the communist movement was bitterly into those who wanted to work within the new regime in order to change it from the top and those who wanted to uphold the revolutionary demands for a constituent assembly (Burghart1984:101-125).

2.2.3 The Panchayat Era

In 1959, King Mahendra declared a new constitution for the country. That constitution was not made by constitution assembly as written in the interim constitution of 1951; but that constitution of 1959 lasted up to 1962 when King Mahendra decided that country was not still ready for multiparty democracy; as a result, he declared another constitution in 1962. That new constitution endowed full authority to the King to be the head of the state, head of both cabinet and parliament. The political parties were banned and political movements were forbidden. He introduced Panchayat System which in practice resembled a one-party state, with the king and his circle of advisors

as the ruling party. Representatives to the national assembly were elected indirectly, with the people voting for representatives to the local councils, which then elected representatives to the national assembly. Nepal was declared a Hindu kingdom and Nepali was the official language. 'One nation, one language' became the motto for national unity. In Nepal, there were more than 60 ethnic groups, more than 100 different languages and followers of different religions. Declared motto "one nation, one language" was a mode of suppression of minority groups by elite groups. Ethnic diversity became an important aspect of Maoist rhetoric and mobilization. Women were also politically active against the Panchayat system. A group of women openly waved black flags as a symbol of bad luck for monarchy and it was protest but these people, involved in public demonstration, were imprisoned (Baral 2012:200-203).

In 1970_s first communist movement took effect in the eastern district of Jhapa, in Nepal. The CPN Regional Department in Jhapa raised arms in their own initiative, but was soon suppressed by the king's armed force. The movement was inspired by the Naxalite movement in India, as well as the cultural Revolution in China. King announced referendum in 1980 over the question of multiparty democratic system in Nepal. That referendum gave result for the continuation of the Old Panchayat system. But still, political parties and social democracy was banned. During this king's autocratic rule, one faction of the Communists organized Fourth Convention but after some years of operation it was divided into two groups. The latter formed the CPN (Masal), led by Mohan B. Singh. In 1985 CPN (Masal) split into two parties; Masal (Patalo) and Mashal (Moto). In the leadership of the latter was Prachanda, who later became the chairman of the CPN-M (Khadka,1986:429-454).

2.2.4 The People's Movement of 1990

During the period of 1980s political opposition against the Panchayat regime became more outspoken. In 1989, at the end of the Cold War, the Nepali Congress party and Marxist Leninists together presented King Birendra with an ultimatum; for removing ban on political parties by $18^{th}$of January 1990 with a peaceful movement. The King did not respond to the ultimatum from the parties. So massive protest took place all over the country. It was organized by the coalition of Nepali Congress, United Leftist Front and other several Marxist parties. like; CPN (ML), United National People's Front (UNPF).

The protest heightened and reached to its climax between the 6th and 9th of April 1990, when the UNPF called a nationwide strike. King's control over protest was over. Then compelled by people's movement, King Birendra became ready to negotiate with the politicians and promised to abolish Panchayat system. As a result, People's Movement I was called off. During May, an interim government was formed under the premiership of Krishna Prasad Bhattarai with a responsibility to draft constitution. The interim government faced a number of problems while drafting and promulgating constitution The new constitution was announced which provided women with equal political rights, voting rights and freedom to compete in local and national election, involve in political parties and support and adopt any political ideology. The composition of the interim government was not the result of democratic process. It was full of traditional men from especially Kathmandu, who were Brahmin already privileged groups, mainly from the Nepali Congress, United Left Front, Royal Nominees and Independents neglecting various classes and groups in Nepalese society. There were no women, no representative from the countryside, none from the suppressed ethnic minorities of Nepal. Among these representatives there were neither women nor all the parties who protested against the King. In 1991 there emerged a number of tensions in between the NC and the ULF. The parties forming the ULF merged and formed the communist party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) (UML). The result of elections was a clear majority for NC with 53% of the total seats, while the UML became the second largest party in the parliament. The electoral front of the smaller Maoist parties, the United National People's Front, became the third largest party (Thapa, 2004:24-29).

2.2.5 Years of Multiparty Democracy, 1990-1996

Nepali Congress party remained in power for the first three years from 2048 to 2051. The then majority government announced mid-term elections. Then CPN (UML) came as the largest party and formed minority government which lasted for only nine months.

In 1991, the two most dominant caste groups in Nepal, the Brahman and the Chettris who make up 29% of the total population, had 55% of the representatives in congress. After eight years of democracy, this percentage rose to sixty-three. Another example of this biased representation is evident when 69% of candidates entered into civil

service as bureaucrats. In 2001 this percentage had raised to ninety percent. In other words, there was a monopoly of Brahmin and Chettri in bureaucracy of Nepal (Bragtvedt, 2007:23-25). After the election in 1991, the CPN (Unity Centre) made a clear declaration that NC and King are the main enemies of the nation and people and US imperialism as main international enemy. Unity Centre had the link to the Revolutionary International Movement (RIM). The RIM was an international network of communist organizations, who agitates armed uprising based on Marxist principles. In 1994, the Unity center split again, with one faction led by Prachanda. The electoral front, the UNPF also split. One faction led by Bhattarai, joined Prachanda's faction one year later and they formed the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) which did not participate in elections. They also passed the document Plan for the ***Historic Initiation of the People's war***. This document outlined the strategy and reasons for an armed uprising in Nepal, with the aim of establishing "New people's Democracy". On the 13th of February 1996 the CPN (M) launched the guerrilla war in six districts of Nepal, which marked the start of nearly eleven years of civil war in Nepal (Bragtvedt, 2007:26-32).

2.2.6 Maoist Insurgency, 1996-2006

During the early years of the people's War, Maoist owned very few weapons. Its military arsenal was limited to a few Lee Enfield 303 rifles, along with homemade socket bombs and homemade gunpowder. Maoists had a strong grass-root organizational base after many years of political activism in Nepal's countryside. They got strong support from the people in Mid-Western Nepal, in the districts of Rukum and Rolpa. They gained control in most of the Nepal's countryside after few years. One of the strong reason for Maoist success was the frustration among people owing to the long regional and national elite monopoly. Politicians were seen as corrupt and only interested in themselves and their relatives not in people and nation. People outside Kathmandu experienced inequality and exclusion from mainstream politics (Uprety, 2009:53-68).

Maoist party succeeded to catch the frustration of people in country side of Nepal. State force had brutally suppressed many anti-government movements. In November of 1995, the police launched an operation which had code name Romeo in Rolpa district. The official reason for the operation was to fight criminal activities, but the

government in reality sought to reduce Maoist activity in the area. Hundreds of members of leftist parties were arrested, executed or 'disappeared' (Human Right Watch (Oct 2004). Also women and girls were subjected to harassment, torture and sexual violence. These suppression and brutality of government helped to increase number of Maoist activists that supported Maoist movement in Nepal.

The insurgency on the go in the Mid-Western hills of Nepal, which is characterized both by economic inequality and several ethnic minorities had bitter grievances from state exploitation. The Maoist agenda was of land reform and rights for ethnic minorities and women that helped gain large support of people. They benefited from the history of communist activism in Nepal. The division between urban centers and countryside periphery were evident and significance in terms of economic opportunities and infrastructure. The police operation in 1995 in the areas of Rolpa and Rukum in Mid-Western Nepal played a huge role in creating frustration with the state among the population and strengthened the Maoists. Most people were sympathetic towards the demands of Maoists and disillusioned with the politicians. Still there were many people that were apprehensive towards the methods of the Maoists (Bragtvedt, 2007:11-15).

2.2.7 The Military Doctrine of the Maoists

Maoist applied the strategy of "protracted People's War" to achieve their goals. This strategy follows the path of Mao Zedong on guerrilla warfare, based on the experiences from the revolution in China. These strategies were based on taking control of the rural areas and encircle the city from countryside. The Maoists had favorable geographic location for waging guerrilla war. Since the state had weak control in countryside, Maoist got good chance to exercise their control. Their struggle gradually took place in mainly three stages; strategic defensive, strategic stalemate and strategic offensive. The first stage was the start of the war, where guerrilla tactics of hit and run were the most important. In the second stage, the enemy were forced to defend in urban centers and the Maoists had control over most of the countryside. In the third stage, the Maoists were strong enough to wage a conventional war against the enemy, and attack fortified urban centers.

This strategy got massive support from peasant population which provided strong resource for recruiting people in Maoist army. These people supported Maoist

providing manpower, information, shelter, food and so on. This support was gained by linking the war effort to questions farmers' better future agenda like land reform and so on. These kinds of agenda made the war "Peoples War" (Bragtvedt, 2007:33-35).

2.3 Previous Studies

According to Mishra, (2015) on 'what led to the 2006 Democratic Revolution in Nepal', for Marxists of almost all hues, a valid handle on class and class contradiction and struggle has remained the key to the innards of a society. This was also the handle which was effectively utilized both by comparative historical and cross-sectional studies of democratization. Of the authors reviewed here, lipset, collier, Acemogle and Robinson all make use of this handle. So on mare and Engels, Moore, Skocpol, O' Donnell and RSS: RSS believe that social class is a master key to understanding the social structuring of interest is constitutive of major collective actors. This was the general class background to the 1990 democratic movement as also to' the 1996-2006 'People's War'. It is invalid to attribute a specific class position to those youths who mobilized themselves for the 1990 democratic movement and an entirely different class position to those who supported the Maoists. The class basis of the two political movements was very similar if not the same. Despite professions that a semi-feudal agricultural based economy like Nepal, the new democratic revolution means basically an agrarian revolution and the main policy of the revolution would be to confiscate (take away) the land that has been in the hands of feudal and to hand them over to progressive forces (Bhattarai, 2003:155-158). The Maoist movement was not an agrarian movement. Even in the early years of the movement, agrarian questions received so low a priority that a CPN-Maoist review in 1998 found that the emphasis remains only on paper CPN-Maoist 2013. The emphasis had shifted to 'poor peasants and not to agrarian relations as such by the end of 2001. The exhortation on behalf of 'poor peasants' in the 2001 document was serious. But it remained no more than a paper exhortation (Mishra, 2015:48-53).

The research conducted by Yami (2006) on 'People's War and Women's Liberation in Nepal' shows that Nepalese poor women were the poorest of all poor women in the world, who were struggling against poverty, rugged geography without basic infrastructure, discriminatory Hindu feudal state. So they participated in people's war

led by communist party of Nepal (Maoist) since February 1996. Their multi-participation in PW greatly helped in sustaining, expanding and consolidating PW. Their level of sacrifice, dedication and commitment despite being tortured, maimed, raped and killed greatly impressed the party and the society. Their role in mass mobilization by establishing a close relation as that of nail and flesh has been well acknowledged. However, their political maturity still has a long way to go (Yami, 2006:111-115).

K.C. Luna (2017) conducted a research on 'Changing Gender Role: women's livelihoods, conflicts and post-conflict security in Nepal' shows that women ex-combatants have faced re-marginalization with regards to gender division of power in the post conflict context. This is due to Masculine, oriented market and untransformed gender order of the society, which still demanded women to be in secondary position to men. Many of these women have to depend upon their husband for income, which has limited their role of doing household chores and looking after livestock. Gender division of labor in the post-conflict setting, the failure of Nepal government to offer proper-integration package that addressed the needs of women ex-combatants created a sense of isolation among these women and sense of isolation among these women and limited their mobility in the public sphere (K.C.2017:175-195).

According to Bhandari, et al., (2016) almost all ex-combatants believe that the ultimate goals of the people's war have not been met, the PLA played a crucial role in removing the king and in advancing Nepal's democracy. Many gave example of dramatic changes seen in terms of reducing discrimination on the basis of caste, gender and ethnicity as well as improvement in the representation of minorities. This study offers the opportunity to evaluate the reintegration of ex-PLA fighters from the perspective of ex-fighters themselves. It is concerned not with adherence to any eternally defined template, but is entirely driven by the satisfaction or otherwise of fighters with reference to social, economic and political integration. The ex-PLA clearly has a lot to contribute to an understanding of the conflict and to the writing of a comprehensive peace agreement of those times. In Nepal, most PLA fighters had left lives of rural poverty and saw the Maoists movement as a route to both challenging poverty and social exclusion in their communities, and to giving themselves opportunities beyond subsistence farming or migration to work in India or the gulf (Bhandari, et al, 2016:56-61).

The study conducted by Sigdel, (2010) on 'Imperialism and Proletarian Revolution in the 21st century' shows light on the issues that include the process of development of imperialism since the WW II, the world situation, the question of defense, application and development of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, party building, building of a new type of international, political and military line of proletarian revolution and democracy and dictatorship in the 21st century. It is also related to politics which are based on the experiences of Peru and Nicaragua. The peace process in Nepal is becoming very complex. In this process, the polarization between revolutionary and counter revolutionary forces is intensifying. The development of people's war in Nepal to a new height of strategic offensive, the growing strength of Maoists and new advances acquired in the people's war in India and persistent efforts of Maoist parties of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to initiate and develop people's wars justify this fact. The new democratic revolution in Nepal, which developed in the form of people's war, is an inseparable part of the world proletarian revolution. And various revolutionary forces, organizations, progressive institutions and the masses the world over have been showing solidarity to it. It is a matter of pleasure and glory for the new democratic revolution in Nepal. It carries special importance in Nepalese new democratic revolution and Nepalese communist movement as well. Nepalese people's revolution is at a threshold of great victory and a serious setback. No revolutionary in the world wants the fate of revolution of Peru and Nicaragua to repeat in Nepal (Sigdel, 2010:152-154).

The research conducted by Piya and Maharjan (2009) on Protracted People's War of Nepal: An analysis from the perspective of Azar's theory of protracted social conflict shows that the Maoists-led PPW in Nepal from the perspective of four clusters of variable identified by Azar as the major source underlined PSC, Viz, communal identity, needs deprivation, governance and state roles, and international linkages. In a developing country like Nepal, where the growing rate of population growth was coupled with high poverty incidence and limited resources base, the rural masses had high expectations from the states, especially after the success of people's movement in 1990. The Bahuns and Chhetri still dominated the bureaucracy and politics there by further marginalizing the ethnic groups and the Dalits. In fact, the history of the suppression of ethnic minorities by the Bahuns-Chhetris can be traced back to the very formation of Nepal and civil code in 18thcentury, but its discrimination with

modern means of written constitution, laws and practice in bureaucracy that further strengthened the discrimination and structural deprivation started from the Panchayat era and beyond where in the name of nationalism one language. (i.e. Nepali), one religion (i.e. Hinduism), and one culture was promoted. In the background of growing frustrations among the people due to this discriminatory practice of the state, the Maoists declared the PPW in February 1996, after their forty points demands submitted to the then Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuwa was not taken seriously. The Maoists effectively raised the issues of poverty, inclusion, rights to self-determination of the minorities, and other issues pertaining to gender, and nationalism in their manifesto (Piya and Maharjan, 2009).

The research conducted by Sapkota, (2010) on 'Ten Years of Upheavel: Reportage of the decade long Maoist People's War in Nepal' shows that Maoist people's war is the most revolutionary event of the history of Nepal that brought a number of significant changes in the Nepalese society. The turbulence of people's war did not only remain local or national matter. It was the ray of hope for the oppressed, the suppressed and the marginalized people around the world. Not only the Nepalese people but also the people outside Nepal are seeking authentic and realistic information about the armed struggle of Maoist revolution. It is the account of uprisings in Nepal, how Maoist came to the conclusion to initiate the people's war, how they built their organization, build its own army and most significant an alternative state power, how they took forward the war and how they operated and governed must of the countryside. The people's war became the matter of central concern and debates both within Nepal and abroad. It inspired all the oppressed and justice. Loving people of the world, and threatened all the capitalist and imperialist powers (Sapkota, 2010: 245-249).

The research conducted on (Gjeisvik, I.M., 2010) on 'Women War and Empowerment: a case study of ex-PLA women in Colombia' shows an alternative way of looking at women's experiences in war by using at women's experiences in war by using the concept of empowerment rather than the dominating discourse of victims. The context in the guerrilla groups also facilitates a larger gender equality where women are liberated from their traditional roles and become equal to men. Women experiences as combatants are complex and not be define as either good or bad, but rather as a mix of negative and positive experiences, that for some amounts to be overall positive and for some opposite. This is likely to be connected with the

women's socio-economic background and reasons for joining. Women who join due to poverty, lack of opportunities or who come from rural areas and join on false promises or to search for a better life seems is more likely to be disappointed when they join guerrilla groups as their expectations are rarely fulfill in the groups (Gjeisvik, 2010:81-86).

According to Dahl, M.M.R (2015) the Sandinista revolution's strategy of mass mobilization meant that social actors from marginalized sectors made up a significant part of their forces. As a group they fought to change political system and unequal social organization of Nicaragua. Women mobilized for the same reasons as men to fight the regime and the intrinsic patterns of inequality of the Nicaragua society. The new social, economic and political realities they entered, allowed them to redefine gender relations and negotiate what a woman could be or do, at least within the context of the revolution. The ex-PLA women indeed gained something from their participations. May be it cannot be measured in material assets but rather should be seen as a force of agency that always interacts actively with its opportunity structure. These women all built capacities, self-esteem and confidence during their participation in the revolutionary forces (Dahl, 2015:64-73).

Ramadhani, C. (2018). This study was conducted to explore the perceptions and experiences of ex-combatant's women towards the current practice of climate change mitigation and adaptation programs in Arch. The study was also conducted to explore ex-combatant's women's positionalities in the society through their specific identities and situated reality in the post conflict of Arch. Perception and attitudes of ex-combatant's women demonstrated reluctance, the loss of interest, and lack of excitement towards women's empowerment and aid or humanitarian program in general. The systematic non-acknowledgement of ex-combatant's women's specific identities and needs, which is reflected in the women's program options limited for women, has made it difficult for ex-combatants to access aid and humanitarian programs that would be in accordance with their interests and aspirations as former women combatants. Exploration of participant's specific experiences and roles during the conflict as women combatants and the interpretation of those experiences in the post conflict era, revealed more dimensions of the spectrum of self-identification. The multifaceted identities and realities of participants have challenged conventional gender identities and normative social positions (Ramadhani, 2018:38-52).

According to Restrepo, S. (2016). the literature on women's participation in various armed conflicts around the world, as well as some of the most influential works written on Colombia's armed conflict realize that scholars and policymakers have traditionally portrayed women and girls as the inevitable victims of war. Although it is true that women are often disproportionately at risk during armed conflict and suffer uniquely from numerous forms of sexual violence, their active roles as female fighters should not be considered or portrayed as anomalies. It shows that efforts to achieve sustainable demilitarization and peace-building are contingent upon the ability of reintegration programs and Colombian society in general, to embrace the new and hybrid gender identities that emerge out of women's active participation in war (Restrepo, 2016:111-123).

According to Fieseleret, al, (2014). The literature on 'Gendering combat: military women's status in Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union during WW II.' The militarization of women during the second world war, unprecedented in both quantitative and qualitative terms, has been accounted for variously, though unsatisfactorily, with regard to the impact on the warring nations' gender order. Using national variations in the accessibility of combat functions to women, the degree of pressure exerted on a given war-time society's gender order is explored by comparing Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union, which differ markedly regarding both the military exigencies placed upon them and the degree of female militarization adopted. In Britain, the degree of women's integration into the male service to which they were attached proved to be highly contentious. In Britain, it did become enmeshed with combat, though in a way that enabled the officially non-combatant, status of these women to be upheld. In the Soviet Union, women turned combatants so unequivocally as to be perceived as having lost their femininity. Gender in which masculinity and femininity are defined by their relation to combat proved to be more powerful than patriotism (Fieseleret, 2014: 115-126).

2.4 Historical Sketch of Female Warrior in Socio-political Movement of Nepal

Yogmaya was a revolutionary woman in Nepal who challenged corruption and dictatorship of her time through poetry, to the potential and capacity of rural women and to the role of religious experience in political leadership. In Nepal it is widely

believed that in 1941 Yogmaya, a female religious ascetic and 60 of her disciples drowned themselves in the Arun river. The mass suicide is now interpreted as an act of protest at the Ranas' failure to meet this demand. Her poems are set around the time when Nepal was ruled by the Rana regime and when India was ruled under the British. In her later time, her activities were heavily monitored by the government and her works were banned by the authorities under the command of the Rana rulers and despite the persecution of her group she is notable for opting to remain in Nepal and spending her last days around her birth place in eastern Nepal. It is also regarded that Yogmaya founded the first organization of Nepali women. The qualities and circumstances of this Nepali women's life are inspiring to men and women alike foreigners as well as Nepalese (Hutt, 2013:382-397).

Women's position in sedentary and hierarchical societies, as far as we know from gender research into historical and pre-historical state formations, has been the position of subordination under male authority within the household, family, clan, community and state. With notable exceptions, women in many societies have been confined to domestic domain, a sphere of care and nurture of children and gray population, and sexual reproduction. Since the industrial revolution and entry of the bourgeoisie as a ruling class, a new kind of distinction between the private and the public has been emerged. The concept of Men as free citizen and breadwinners is established in the political and public domain. Men thus became identified as "public" while women got associated with family and private. This gendered opposition has remained remarkably unchallenged in industrialized state-base societies. While sexual ideologies and stereotypes vary greatly in modern societies, certain symbolic associations between gender and many other aspects of cultural life occur across a wide range of societies. Man is associated with up, right, high, culture and strength while women are associated with their opposite, down, low, nature and weakness. These values are not biologically inherited but culturally constructed. Women are always dependent in access to resources, the condition of work and the distribution of the products of their labor (Moore, 2000).

From history, it is evident that women have taken active participation in wars not only as camp followers, care-givers, providers but also as combatants and also top commanders. At the time of Prophet, 14th centuries ago, both the majority Sunni Muslims and the minority Shiias had historical famous female warriors who are still

remembered in the scriptures and traditions (Afshar, H., 2004). In early history of modern Nepal, Queen Rajendra Laxmi Devi Shah fought with different state king for the expansion of modern Nepal (Gautam, S., 2001). In the time of Rana regime Yogmaya Neupane from eastern Nepal fought against child marriage and social injustice.

- **Motherhood and Martyrdom**

The cult of motherhood has been exploited as an instrument of nationalist leaders who need powerful imagery in order to mobilize support for wars, in which it is depicted as a defense force for the mother nation and party. In other words, imageries and ideas of motherhood in many parts and current societies were politicized by political leaders for legitimizing war and mobilizing the population to send their sons to fight at the front. They use art of language to honor women for their ability to give birth to child which is the only thing men can't do. Women are considered as core-stones of the nation's future by raising brave man in their laps. In Fascisms, Christianity and Islam also, motherhood is depicted as the central and glorified contribution of women during wars. These political war-mobilizing ideologies and rhetoric elaborates women's sacrificing nature and their duty as wives of soldiers, as sisters of soldiers, as mothers and grandmothers of the brave soldiers who actively support war efforts. By sacrificing young sons and husbands, women are made heroines of the expansionist nation. They were used as an example for the next generation to encourage them to sacrifice their loved ones in the name of nation. There is long standing belief that giving one's life for a just cause is a noble act that is rewarded in heaven. Such a way, religious interpretation is used for using women's emotions in the battlefield (Afshar, 2004:85-106).

During times of war, there is often a dramatic increase in the number of women heads of households and they bear additional responsibilities for meeting the needs of children and ageing relatives, since the male family members have either joined the war group or been captured or died. Women face demands in providing for themselves and their children, with increased workloads and limited access to and control over the benefits of goods and services. Furthermore, as a result of conflict and the breakdown in law and order, women and girls face increased risks of sexual

violence and abuse. They become targets for deliberate attacks by the opposing for purposes of revenge.

- **The Female Soldier as Symbolic Power**

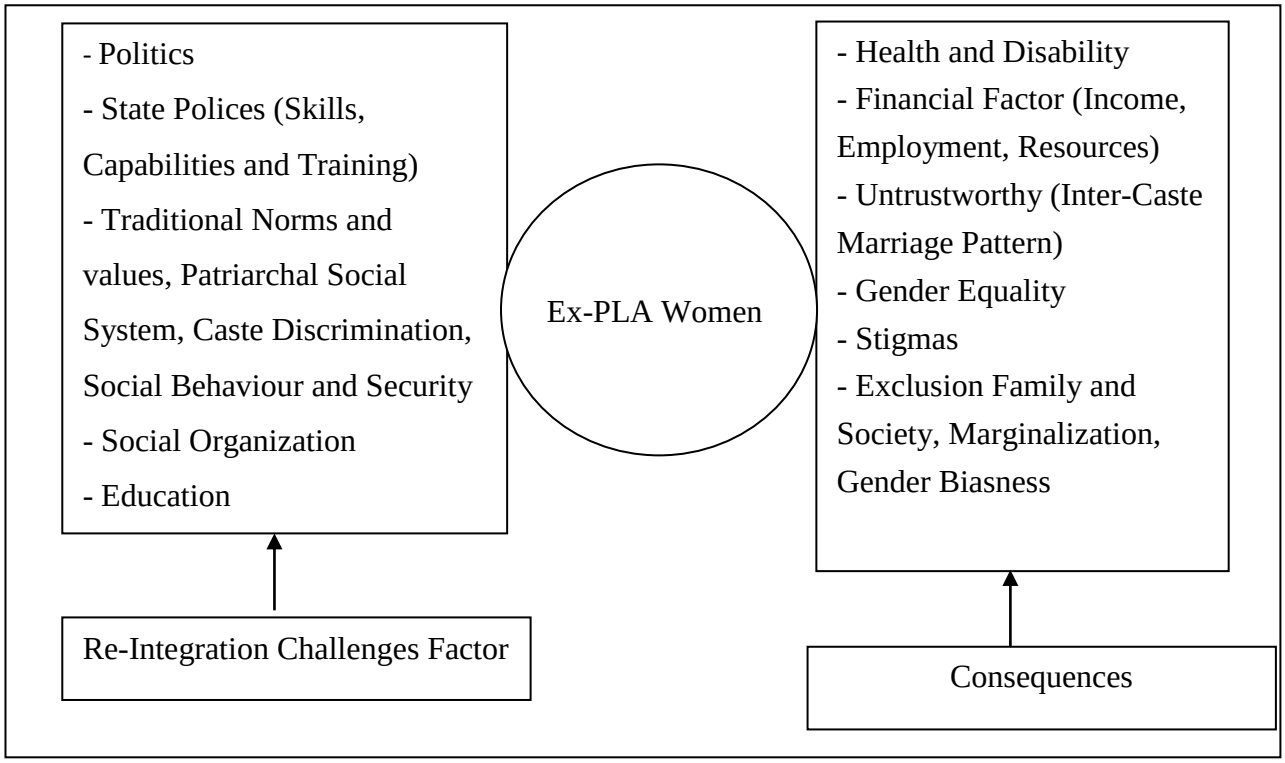
There were and are female soldiers in most parts of the world and in most of the times. In Africa, for example, we can read cases where women fought bravely as guerrilla armies in liberation movements in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, South Africa and Algeria. In such cases, the role of women has been both to increase the number of soldiers in general and to serve roles that were unique to women. Women may have been important not only because they increase the number of soldiers but also because they add legitimacy or symbolic power to the warfare. First of all, female soldiers symbolize a unity in the movement. Such symbolic power is expressed when movements use pictures of female soldiers for propaganda reasons to convey the message that they want to get through. This message might be that ideologies are also further justified by women's participation. In this way, women are used symbolically, as an argument to the outside world. This struggle deserves support and obviously even women sympathize with it. Ideological support from outside has been important for the survival of many liberation armies. The message of the unity of the group is conveyed to the enemy as a deterrent and to the outside world in order to gather sympathy and support. The female fighters' symbol has been proved to be very important both in Eritrea and in several other guerrilla wars. As one historian puts it, 'indeed, so noteworthy was women's courage that women partisans performed more bravely than men (Barth, 2002:45-63).

Stefanie Kurg, a German Anthropologist, has done fieldwork among long-term women fighters in Tigray, Ethiopia. She describes how women were used as a symbol to strengthen the guerrillas. Female fighters were turned into shining examples of liberation of the people from feudal structure and oppression (Kurg, S., 1999). In the contemporary Maoist Movement in Nepal, both men and women have been regarded as oppressed by feudal regime and the emphasis has been given on unity through class struggle. It is most important reason why pictures of armed women frequently appear in revolutionary guerrilla movement, be that in China or Nepal. There appear to be a contradiction between the ideas of using women and femininity as religious and political symbols and making their actual contributions during war time invisible, it

seems also true that imageries of female combatants are important symbolic elements in guerrilla wars. What can be presumed is that the importance of the struggle and the very goal of the war justify exploitation of whatever symbolic means which are assumed to be efficient in reaching the goal (Barth, 2002:77-98).

2.5 Conceptual Framework

Reintegration of ex-combatants is an important element in any disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) program. This is a long term transformative process by which ex- combatants gain sustainable employment and income and gradually acquire civilian status (UN, 2006). Reintegration has two dimensions economic and social. In economic integration, ex-PLA women are provided with skills to enable them to take up viable economic opportunities and options needed for developing a sustainable livelihood. Social integration, on the other hand involves formal as well as informal processes and mechanisms that aim to provide emotional and psycho-social supports to ex-PLA combatant and thereby enable them to build relationships with their families and communities where they return. War and other violent conflicts greatly degrade a country's economic, social and marketing system.



Reintegration challenges of ex-PLA women post-insurgency, Nepal. Entrepreneurial business practices help them reintegrate peacefully into civil society. Women fighters who spent much of their adult lives in the Maoist movement face the challenges of reintegration into civilian life.

Economic and Social dimensions of reintegration are not mutually exclusive but mutually reinforcing at times they become interdependent. The elements of an economic reintegration program are circumstantial and cannot be generalized as they depend on the causes of preceding conflict, the need and capacities of ex-combatants themselves and overall economic conditions in the post conflict society. If reintegration program provides ex-combatants with marketable skills and knowledge, it could contribute to human capital which in return can have positive effects for post conflict, economic recovery, development and peace building. It is believed that reintegration can help a community to collectively recover from effects of armed conflict and promote social cohesion.

Reintegration is a long-term process. Ex-PLA women lack resources, skills and jobs and former women PLA are seen as having experienced independence, sexual freedom and equality with men. So, reintegration of women ex-combatants is complicated by the expectation that they return to traditional roles and that marriages made during conflict are often not acknowledged by the community.

The elements of entrepreneurship are skills, training, economic and human capital, opportunity structure, education and gender biasness and untrustworthy. Similarly, the elements of social, economic integration are income, politics, social organization, social behavior, patriarchal social system, social security, traditional norms values, health disability, Biasness (from family, and society) caste discrimination, inter-caste marriage pattern.

CHAPTER: THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research methods of the study. It includes rational of the study area, Research Design, Study population, Sample Size and Sampling Procedure, Method of data collection, Selection of the Respondents and Method of data Collection, Selection of the Respondents and Method of data Analysis.

3.1 Rational Selection of the Study Area

Figure 1: Map of Nepal showing districts in which the research was performed

This research will be helpful for policy maker to make plans for women rights in relating organizations. It will also increase awareness in our community and society about the current situation of ex-PLA women who are being neglected by various social groups in our community. It will be helpful to reintegration of ex-PLA women in their local communities. In future it will be helpful for the young generation especially female youth to have inspiration by reading the war experience and achievement of ex-PLA women. It will also be valuable to find out changes in women before and after war and their working capabilities. In present situation ex-female combatant's participation, position in their local communities, their reintegration

challenges and earning patterns should be researched, discussed put forward which can be beneficial to women empowerment. Similarly, it will support to find out supportive factors that inspired ex-female combatants to reintegrate in their own locality and analysis may also provide some insights of more general use for gender aware reintegration efforts in post-insurgency countries with considerable gender inequalities.

Woman in combat is not a new concept. By looking at historical examples specifically, the Soviet Union mobilized a million women during WW II with approximately half of them serving on the front line. These women performed in every job. They received the same training as men and proved themselves as capable as their male comrades.

Ex-PLA women also face the challenge of dealing with rejection from their communities while struggling to return to traditional subordinate female roles after being treated as equals in the PLA. Women ex- combatants not only face a challenge from lack of skills but also the brunt of social discrimination for inter-caste and inter-ethnic marriages that took place during the insurgency. There are many accounts of couples being forced to move away from the traditional support networks provided by their families and communities. The integration of ex-PLA women into society became increasingly complicated facing numerous difficulties such as resistance to inter-caste marriage. Women were ostracized for more than men for these forms of marriage.

In addition to the difficulty of social re-integration women ex-combatants also faced challenges in terms of income generation activities. They were mainly nominal financially because their major priority became caring for and rearing their children, given the lack of social support networks. Essentially women ex- combatants returned to a condition of domestic servitude. Though, the PLA women are scattered all over Nepal, this study is mainly concerned with places like Kathmandu, Chitwan, Rupandehi, Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Gorkha, Tanahun and Kaski.

Therefore, this research is essential to acknowledge several weaknesses, complications and consequent suffering of the ex-combatants in general and ex-PLA women in particular. The main study areas are Kathmandu, Chitwan, Rupandehi, Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Gorkha, Tanahun and Kaski.

This site has been chosen keeping in consideration the time and cost constraints of the researcher. The areas which are selected are in access and many ex-PLA women were recruited from there. Also none of such study has been carried out yet.

- Kathmandu, Nepal's capital where many ex-PLA who have not returned to their communities live.
- Chitwan and Dang was the location of the central region cantonment. They hosted the cantonment for their respective regions around which ex-PLA communities grew.
- In these areas large numbers of ex-PLA women settled their post-cantonment life.

3.2 Research Design

In the current study exploratory research design has been carried out to understand various aspects of the problems or issues related to ex-PLA women. While descriptive research design is used to describe the several weaknesses, complications and consequent suffering of the ex-combatants. Here the descriptive design is helped in discovering overlooked aspect of the social, economic and political status of female ex-combatants and social integration including, gender and caste relations. This design also makes us understand the journey that combatants have made from home communities to where they now live.

The major emphasis in exploratory study is on the discovery of ideas and insights. As such research design is appropriate for considering different aspects of a problem under study.

3.3 Nature and Sources of Data

Primary as well as secondary data have been incorporated in this study. Secondary data has been collected by adopting various secondary means. Beyond other means it is collected from previous studies, published and other unpublished documents from related literatures.

As per the need of the study more primary and secondary data have been collected but priorities have given to the selection of primary data which are both qualitative as well quantitative. Primary data has been collected by employing various primary hand

data collection techniques. Mainly the interview with semi-structured questionnaire and field observation has been for primary data collection.

Secondary information is helpful enough in checking the validity and reliability of empirical field data. It may either be published data or unpublished data. The main sources of secondary data for the present purpose are metropolitan profile, CBS report previous researcher's dissertation, related books, websites and published article and journals as well.

3.4 Universe and Sampling Procedure

In the absence of comprehensive lists of ex-PLA women, the sampling approach was driven by the local personal and political networks of the peer researchers. Peer researchers were asked to collect lists of ex-PLA women in their district as sampling frame and to select from these representative individuals to interview. Even the government has no data about them where they are what they are doing, how their relations with society are.

The study is mainly concerned with the ex-PLA woman of Kathmandu, Chitwan, Rupandehi, Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Gorkha, Tanahun and Kaski. According to the UNMIN there are altogether 3786 ex-PLA women and according to statistical table the total number of ex-PLA women of 3786 is 351 sample sizes. The researcher has adopted the sample model of Krejeie and Morgan (1970) to select 351 sample sizes by looking at statistical table. By using of snowball sampling the researcher has selected 351 ex-PLA women as its sample size.

Ex-PLA women are understood as anyone who had been a part of PLA, including medical staff, cultural troupes and those who had left prior to the peace process. Representatively in the sample ultimately interviewed as in terms of age, caste, ethnicity, gender and nature of engagement with the Maoist movement.

Quantitatively, the UN Inter- Agency Rehabilitation Program (UNIRP) appears to have been a limited success: this study will probe the qualitative nature of its impact on ex-combatants as one element of reintegration to which ex-fighters were exposed.

Registration and verification process	Total
Total number of registered ex-combatants	32,250
Total number of ex-combatants verified by UNMIN	19,602
Absentees, automatically considered as disqualified combatants, during the verification process	8,640
Retired Ex-PLA women (Who received the package)	3,786
Disqualified combatants	
Under the age of 18 as of 25 May 2006	2,973
Late recruits	1,035
Total disqualified	4,009
Outcome of categorization process	
Number of ex-combatants absent	2,456
Total number of ex-combatants present	17,052
Dead, suspended and deserters	94
Total number of ex-combatants selected/ opting for integration	1,421
Total number of ex-combatants opting for voluntary retirement	15,624

Report of UNIRP (2013)

3.5 Method and Instruments of Primary Data Collection

The instrument adopted in the study to generate relevant data that are guided by research objectives, research questions and the type of data required for the study. Following techniques were being adopted to collect primary data.

Name of method/tools	**No. of participation**
Interview	61
Observation method	200
Focus group discussions	40 (Three groups)
Case Study	50
Total	351
Key informants information	25

Source: Field survey, 2019

3.5.1 Interview Schedule

For the primary data collection, semi-structured questions were included in the interview schedule. From this interview schedule, basic social demographic, economic and combat-related information regarding women ex-combatants, their family background, psychological and physical health needs and other condition during cantonment life, their war time experiences, their current needs and barriers for reintegration into the society were gathered. Oral interview method has been espoused for collecting first hand data. Interview schedule has been prepared on the basis of objectives of the research study containing both closed as well as open ended. Both structured and unstructured interviews were conducted with the respondents.

3.5.2 Observation Method

For this study, direct participant observation overt method has been used to collect relevant data. Participant observation included establishing rapport with the people and direct collection of primary data from the field. In this study, personal observations were administrated in the field with certain behavior of respondents especially concerning with the (ex-PLA) challenges of reintegration process and current involvement of entrepreneurship of ex-PLA women. At the same time indirect non participant method has been used for the collection of requisite data.

3.5.3 Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)

The FGDs and interactions were organized on 20 December 2019 in the National Convention of ex-PLA in Kathmandu which focused on the status of reintegration and rehabilitation of ex- combatants participated by male and ex-PLA women, knowledgeable civil society, key persons at local level (such as lawyers, teachers, ex-VDC representatives, local NGO personnel etc.). Each of the field level FGDs was started informally while the closing was done formally after presentation of the products by FGDs groups. Three focus group discussions were conducted; one with female combatants who were living in their own native society, another with those who were living outside of their native society after taking packages and one with those who are in Maoist party (Nekapa). During the discussion, mainly three phases are covered role and experience during the war time in the group with male counterpart, their experiences in the cantonment and their challenges for reintegration in the societies and families.

3.5.4 Case Study/ In-depth Life History Interview

These life story interviews were conducted to know the information which the interview schedule did not cover. There were three such case studies, in order to depict the psychological, economic and social aspects of the life carrier of the women ex-combatants, if and how they were/are stigmatized or empowered in the society as well as in the Maoist party; their personal experiences and perspectives of Maoist armed struggle; their dignity as shaped by patriarchal and caste conscious society; their present living condition; and their expectations and aspirations for the future. In-depth life history interview had been taken with some of ex-PLA women.

3.5.5 Key Informants Information (KII)

Separate interview was carried out with the key informant of the districts to collect qualitative data on the socio-economic and political status of the ex- combatants. These key informants were: District Administrative Officer, District and local Government Chiefs, Local Development Officers, NGO/INGO personnel, local lawyers, teachers, journalists, local civil society leaders etc. Data were obtained through participatory observations and in-depth interview.

3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation

Collected Data have been analyzed both qualitatively as well as quantitatively. Quantifiable raw data were analyzed statistically. While presenting the data, simple statistical tools like frequency and percentage have been used. Likewise, tabulations were made according to the objectives. The non-quantifiable qualitative data have been managed manually and analyzed descriptively.

3.7 Reliability and Validity of Tool

The reliability of the data depended primarily upon the respondents. To overcome the limitation of the interview the clarity of the purpose and implication of the study was presented. The clear and short questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire was prepared under the rigorous supervision of guide and co-guides. The questionnaire was translated into Nepali version retranslated to English version and necessary correction was made. Still the data from household survey and secondary sources were verified by various methods of crosschecking and triangulation to each-other.

CHAPTER: FOUR

SOCIO - DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

This chapter is devoted to analyze the relevant research questions and certain objectives that divided in various sub headings. The chapter, outline of the study area and socio- economic status of the respondent's family, contains the essence or finding of the study in table formats and some figures generated for the data analysis. The study focused on presenting social as well as economic aspects of selected PLA women's job and occupation. The specific subheading of the chapters are physical setting of study area, population composition, religion structure, gender/sex distribution, education status of loan, family income and expenditure have been analyzed with the help of primary data. All the concerning variable were developed and analyzed to know the socio-economic condition of ex-PLA women.

4.1 Age Composition

Age is important demographic characteristic playing a major role in any population analysis. Age structure is the product of past trends in fertility, mortality and migration and determines in turn the current levels of birth, death and migration rates. Moreover, the age composition of the population has significant implications for the productive potential, manpower supply, status and role and responsibility of individual in family and society.

Table No. 4.1: Age Composition of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
10-20 years	165	47.0
20-30years	77	21.9
30-40years	52	14.8
40-50 years	37	10.6
Above 50 years	20	5.7
Total	351	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table no.4.1 shows the age composition of ex-PLA women in the study area. Among the total respondents based on age, majority of population were from between 10-20

years i.e. 47.0 percent, between 20-30 years were 21.9 percent and between 30-40 years were 14.8 percent, similarly between 40-50 years were 10.6 percent and above 50 were 5.7 percent.

The above table clarifies that majority of ex-PLA women were between 10-20 years because it is the age of teenage who mostly influenced by the Maoist ideology.

4.2 Marital Status

Marriage is universal phenomenon. In general, marriage can be described as a commitment between a woman and a man, which is strongly connected with love, support, tolerance and harmony. A marriage is one of the most important decisions in everybody's life. Sociologist define marriage as 'A socially recognized union between two or more people with the notion of permanence and a legal contract between two or more people that establishes certain rights and obligations' (Open Education Sociology Dictionary 2017). It is the most important institution of human society and backbone of human civilization. It creates new social relationship and reciprocal rights between the spouses.

Table No. 4.2: Marital Status of Respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Unmarried	35	9.9
Married	173	49.8
Widow	75	21.3
Divorce	68	19.3
Total	351	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table no.4.2 shows the marital status of respondents. In CPN-M Party there was a system of marrying the female combatant with male combatant. The table shows that 49.8 percent were married and 9.9 percent were single. Similarly, 21.3 percent were widow and 19.3 percent were divorce because of their involvement in people's war to death and inter-caste marriage respectively.

The above table shows the bitter reality of conservative society where majority of women have to live in society as being widow after the death of their husband and being divorced because of the unfair treatment of inter-caste marriage.

4.3 Religious Composition

Scott (1999) has defined religion in the dictionary of sociology as a system of belief, practice and philosophical values concerned with the definition of the sacred, the comprehension of life and salvation from the problem of human existence. But an alternative approach to the study of religion was first formulated by Durkheim in 1912, although it had been propounded earlier in a less coherent form by Fustel De Coulanges in early nineteenth century. The concept of religion is more related to emotion and sentiments of the people that drives people towards some benevolent doings. Thus it is incredibly imperative to trace the religious structure of an area to know about the level of development and progressive attitude of the people as claimed by Max Weber (1978), in Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism.

Table No. 4.3: Religious Composition of Respondents

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Hindu	190	54.1
Buddhist	97	27.6
Others	66	18.8
Total	351	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

The above table explores the religious structure of ex- PLA women in the study area are complex and diverse with 54 percent of population are following Hinduism while 27.6 percent of the total population are following Buddhism and the rest 18.8 percent of population are following other religion which includes Bon God, Christianity, Islamism. The religious pattern shows that there is less impression of Christianity than Hinduism and Buddhism.

4.4 Education Status

Academic qualification plays a key role in determining life chances. Equal enrollment and Completion rates have been seen as important indicators of gender equity in education which in turn should contribute the gender equality in society. Education attainment is more worked for the younger age groups than for the older age groups. It is shown that the higher level of literacy rate can positively effect in decision making in family resource management and equal distribution of resources for their children.

In the study the researcher has tried to find out the literacy rate of the respondents and its effect on decision making role in family.

Table No. 4.4: Education Status of the Respondent

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	51	14.5
Literate	251	71.5
Primary	24	6.8
Secondary	20	5.6
Higher Secondary	5	1.4
Total	351	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

With respect to education status of respondents, the above table indicates that 14.5 percent of ex-PLA women were illiterate, followed by primary education that shows 6.8 percent, 5.6 percent completed their secondary education and 71.5 percent belong to the respondent who were literate and very few respondents completed their higher education. The existing scenario of the educational structure clarifies that majority of the people were illiterate which of course decreased the chance of being employed and getting better jobs. On the other hand, the data reveal the difficult situation of the women in the society to get education.

4.5 Family Types

In human context a family (from Latin: familiare) is a group of people affiliated by consanguinity, affinity or co-residence. In most societies, it is the principal institution for the socialization of children. Extended from the human "family unit" by biological-cultural affinity, marriage, economy, culture, tradition, honor and friendship are concepts of family that are physical and metaphorical or that grow increasingly inclusive extending to community, village, city, region, nation, global village and humanism. A family group consists of a father, mother and their children is called nuclear family. This term can be contrasted with an extended family.

Sociologists and Anthropologist distinguish between conjugal families (relatively independent of the kindred of the parents and of other families general) and nuclear families (which maintain relatively close ties with their kindred). First it serves as a

synonym of ‘consanguine family’. Second, in societies dominated by the conjugal family, it refers to ‘kindred’ (an egocentric networks of relatives that extends beyond the domestic group) who do not belong to the conjugal family. These types refer to ideal or normative structures found in particular societies. Any society will exhibit some variation in the actual composition and conception of families.

Table no.4.5: Family Types of Respondents

Family Types	Frequency	Percentage
Nuclear Family	253	72.1
Joint	98	27.9
Total	351	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

When the women were in active war, they did not care about the caste, classes and they were encouraged by their party to have inter-caste marriages. Once they came out of cantonment, however they faced severe difficulties as society did not easily accept them. In many cases even their parents and relatives did not accept such marriages. Hence it became quite difficult for the ex-PLA women in society. Therefore, they often moved away from their native places and bound to live in t the nuclear family. Here in the context of the study area 72.1 percent belong to nuclear family and the rest 27.9 were from joint family.

4.6 Caste/Ethnic Composition

The most striking thing of Nepal is its ethnic feature. There are many groups that live together in the same area but it is not without hierarchy. The maximum numbers of people are Tagathari, Janajati, Dalit and others.

Table No. 4.6: Caste/Ethnic Composition of Respondents

Caste/Ethnic Group	Frequency	Percentage
Tagadhari	171	48.7
Janajati	68	19.3
Dalit	77	21.9
Other	35	9.9
Total	351	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table no.4.6 clarifies about the Caste/Ethnic distribution of the study area. Based on Caste/Ethnicity, majority of the respondents were from upper caste Tagadhari that is 48.7 percent which include the Castes like Subedi, Devkota, Pandaya, Bhattarai, Sharma, Poudel, Baniya, Neupane etc. Similarly, 19.3 percent were Janajati (Gurung, Magar, Tamang, Rai, Newar, Tharu etc.) and 21.9 were Dalits (Bishowkarma, Pariyar, Nepali, Rasaili, Cenchury etc.) And the rest were other i.e. 9.9 percent. Castes like Muslim, Madhesi come under other caste group.

CHAPTER: FIVE

CHALLENGES AND RE-INTEGRATION PROCESS OF 'EX-PLA WOMEN'

• The Struggle for Social and Political Empowerment

To gain social and political empowerment was one of the major motivations of joining Maoist PLA for discharged women. Almost all the discharged female combatants, who were interviewed from lower socio-economic community background, reported that they felt oppressed by the state and excluded economically from the mainstream national development agendas. Many of the total informants were from hilly areas of Nepal, where people are suffering from a vicious cycle of poverty over many generations were excluded from political activities. The respondents belonged to marginalized and ethnic group like: Tamang, Rai, Magar, Gurung, Tharu and Dalits. 99 percent of respondents expressed the main reason of joining the Maoist PLA was to change existing discriminative social and political system of the nation which had created unfair distribution of resources between social classes. Some respondents mentioned more than one reason of joining party. Here is the expression of one participant.

Case A: *I belong to a marginalized group and poor family. My family has to work for rich people for more than 16 hours a day but still we do not have enough food at home. We never get access to resources in community as well as state. My family never sees the face of school and hospital. I thought it's all because of the system and to establish new state with equal distribution of all resources to all. (B, B1)*

• To Take Revenge with State Security Force

One-third of the total respondents mentioned that they had to join the Maoist party because it was their last option in order to remain alive from state security force: Nepal police, Nepal Army and Unified Command. State security force used to raid their houses randomly, give physical torture to the members of family, rapid old women and young and torture. Some respondents said that they joined CPN Maoist party after being tortured by state force for the reason that one of their family members was Maoists. They even got physical tortures for supporting Maoists when

they were underground by giving them shelter. Regarding this, one of the former combatants shared.

- **Struggling for Gender Equality**

To gain gender equality is one of the most important and motivating reasons for all former and current female combatants to join Maoist PLA. In rural societies of Nepal, women were always subordinated in the family as well as in all the spheres of social, political, economic and cultural life. The patriarchal structure of Nepali society is the main reason behind the suppression of women especially in rural society is the main reason behind the suppression of women especially in rural societies.

Nearly thirty-five percent of female combatants explained that political ideology of Maoist party promotes equality and empowerment of women. The party's agenda for women's emancipation was quite fascinating for all the women who joined PLA.

- **Attraction towards PLA**

Thirty-seven percent of the informants emphasized that one of the main reasons of joining the PLA was Maoist ideology. They had found Maoist political ideology and Marxist-Maoist doctrines relevant and practical for addressing the plight of poor people of Nepal. One of the Maoist political agendas was: class struggle is necessary for women's emancipation also which they seem to believe was scientific, visionary and based on people's interests.

Another motivating dynamics of Maoist party was their cultural programs. Many young boys and girls used to come to villages with different kinds of musical instruments and cultural programs as a part of their recruitment campaigns. One of discharged PLA women said:

Case B: "*In my village, Maoists used to come to show their cultural programs like dancing and singings. They used to sing revolutionary songs about social discrimination, injustice and poverty which were heart-touching. I liked their programs so I joined party. Later, I got training as a fighter and moved to PLA." (D, D)*

- **New Socialization Process**

After joining Maoist PLA, women experienced a new socialization process in the Maoist party. During interview, most of the informants told that they were young when they left home to join party. In the party, they encountered a military structure and a new ideology. Whole purpose of that was to fight against all kinds of social discriminations. It was totally different from their previous life. They were taught new political ideology and introduced to a new gender role as fighter. Many of respondents changed their old names and got new revolutionary name to hide their old identity.

Case C: *"When I joined party, I was just 15. I worked as a political mobilizer for 1 years and then I was shifted to PLA. I did not have any contact with my family for 1.5 years. Then after, I sent a letter to my family to inform that I was still alive. After four years, for the first time, I got permission to visit my family. I had almost forgotten my family during that period. Friends and party was everything for me." (G, G)*

- **Gender Equality during warfare**

All the PLA women who were interviewed stated that there was an equal division of labor between men and women. Women and men did the same work.

Case D: "*Party followed the ideology of communism and equality. When man was put on guard's duty, a woman was also asked to do the same. We, man and women, carry same size of gun and other necessary things while we were in training and other times. Just because you are a woman does not mean that you should carry less than a man or work less than a man." (K, K1)*

Unity in number of groups of soldiers was very important for Maoists. To achieve targeted goal party, it was essential to create "We- Group", a group with a common identity. Equality must be emphasized at all expense of individuality. It is not important group. As a step in this direction, uniform dress and appearance was encouraged and group achievements were rewarded. Therefore, female fighters experienced new gender role. Another former combatant asserted:

Case E: *"Both men and women cooked and both washed their clothes themselves. When I was in PLA it was totally different from home. When you are in home you have to do different works than men do. At my home, my father and my brother never cook food, wash clothes, clean home; rather they work in the field, carry woods and do heavy works. Household work is just for women. But in PLA, it is different because women and men are equal. The women do the same work as the men with the same equipment." (K, K2)*

- **Rank**

To some extent, the rank gained by women also indicates gender equality and empowerment in the Maoist PLA. Most of the informants claimed that to get higher rank, they had to work hard and prove to be capable of that position. It did not depend on gender. One of the discharged combatants said:

Case F: "*In my platoon, we had women commander. All male and women comrades were under her command. There was no difference between male and female. Who was more discipline and active, higher rank used to be awarded to him or her." (C, C)*

Among all respondents, one informant was Vice-Brigade Commander and two other informants were Platoon Commanders. One of discharged combatants explained me that there were four levels of rank: Even though both men and women equally had to compete to get their rank in Maoist PLA, there were few women that achieved higher ranks.

- **Reintegration Process of EX-PLA Women**

Reintegration is the process where by former combatant are assimilated into the social and economic life of communities. It demands the repair of relations between combatants and families and communities potentially transformed by the conflict. It demands that ex-fighters adjust their expectations and potentially status and communities accept that returnees may appear to have been rewarded for their violence. In some contexts, communities have been incentivized to accept ex-combatants with development projects and other assistance. Reintegration of former combatants is one the most contentious issues facing post conflict Nepal. Developing a national mechanism and local political ownership helped move the process forward.

The UN Inter-Agency Rehabilitation Program (UNIRP)

The UNIRP was established in February 2010 and tasked with managing the implementation of rehabilitation packages for the discharged combatants. UNIRP has been providing Vocational Skill Training, Micro and small-Enterprise Development, Education support, Health Service Training and so on. Unemployment rate is very high in a postwar society of Nepal.

- ## Success Story of Ex-PLA women

Ex-PLA women faced so many challenges in their life. Some of them have succeed in their life to make their life better by achieving many opportunities but many of them are still under the stigmas which make them oppressed. But these two ex-PLA women inspired so many other women who were or not involved in PLA.

Onsari Gharti Magar

Onsari Gharti Magar was one of the combatants who involved in the first attack against the state during the Holeri incident when the then CPN-Maoist introduced armed conflict in the country. She had begun her political journey from the student wing of the CPN (Unity Centre). She was involved in the attack by her party on a police post at Holeri and other many difficult wars. She is a Nepal communist politician and current parliamentarian. She was the first female speaker of the parliament of Nepal, she was selected unopposed as speaker on October 16, 2015. She served as Deputy speaker of parliament and was Minister of Youth and sports in the cabinet of Jhalanath Khanal. She was elected to the constituent Assembly from Rolpa constituency-2 in the second CA election. She was elected to the House of Representatives in 2017 under party list. Her journey from PLA to parliament is quoted and referred as a success story. With her devotion and determination, she proved that nothing is impossible if we do something sincerely, and the women are no less than their male counterparts.

Mira Rai

Rai story is one full of optimism. She joined the Maoist revolution as a teenager not to take sides but for a better life than other women in her village were afforded. When

the war ended, Rai wanted to stay in the army but she was denied because at it, she was still a minor. Her new career presented itself in 2014, after a chance encounter with two runners. Her family struggling financially due to the Nepalese civil war, at the age of 15, Mira decided to join the communist party insurgents as a child solider, in order to support her family and escape traditionalist barriers surrounding the role of women in Nepali society. It was during her time training as a child solider that she found her passion for running a passion that saw her go on to not only became one of the world's best female ultra-runners but become a symbol of hope for the country. Gender inequality is rife in Nepal, with most Nepali girls not educated beyond primary school. She decided to join the Maoist party because both genders were treated equally and women were given the opportunity to learn and thrive. She moved to different locations every few days or weeks. When the army grew larger, more permanent army camps and building were built in the jungle for the different divisions. In her view women and men were treated equally with the same training and work. However, there was prejudice against former female Maoist soldiers like herself. Yet Nepali customs and culture often place more value on men.

5.1 Inspiring Factor to Join the PLA

Decade long armed insurgency's biggest success was women's involvement in the PLA to change the socio-political system through a revolutionary ideology. Inspiration is something that makes us want to make a change in our life for the better or someone who pushes us or sets an example. We are all inspired by different things and in different ways. Every ex –PLA women have their own inspiration to join the PLA.

Table No. 5.1: Inspiration to Join the PLA

Inspiration	Frequency	Percentage
Economic excess	182	51.8
Family torture	38	10.9
Linkage of Friends	90	25.7
Self-motivated	41	11.6
Total	351	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

According to table no.5.1, among the total respondents 51.8 percent of them have joined the PLA because of economic excess, 10.9 percent due to family torture and 25.7 percent because of linkages of friends and relatives and 11.6 percent joined by their self-interest as well as self-motivated. From the above table economic excess is the only most common reason to join the PLA. Women joined the movement due to simple poverty and their expectation to drastic change the economic condition of individual. People to become involved in Maoist politics was direct experience of operation based on caste, ethnicity or gender.

5.2 Security Issue of the Respondents

Almost all ex-PLA women are struggling to secure their livelihoods. Some of the female ex- combatants organized and formed a 'Former PLA women Foundation' to fight for their livelihood security.

Table No. 5.2: Security Issue of the Respondents

Security Issue	Frequency	Percentage
Sexual harassment	35	9.9
Unfair treatment	251	71.5
Physical incapability	38	10.8
Other (sometimes, Biasness)	26	7.4
Total	351	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table no.5.2 represents the security issues of ex-PLA women, majority of the respondent said they were treated biasedly that is 71.5 percent and 9.9 percent said they were sexually harassed and 10.8 percent said physical incapability were another reason for unfair treatment and 7.4 percent of them said sometimes they were unfairly treated and sometimes they were equally treated. Above table suggest that although many women or transformed by their experiences participating in armed resistance they rarely gain equality through this engagement. They equally participated with male counterpart in the war time. They leaded the war by themselves.

5.3 Circumstances of Moving towards Urban Centers of Respondents

Ex-PLA women have to face the most difficult situation than male PLA because of their inter caste marriage, widowhood and divorced status of women as well as patriarchal domination. Nepalese society does not easily accept this. In this case ex-PLA women were unable to cope with the situations and had to leave, moving to urban centers or other town. There are several reasons behind their movement like social status, better opportunity, good education for child, social security etc.

Table No. 5.3: Respondents' Circumstances of moving towards Urban Centers

Circumstances of Mobile	Frequency	Percentage
Social Status	76	21.6
Better opportunity	189	53.8
Good education for child	35	9.9
Other (social security, behavior)	51	14.5
Total	351	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table no. 5.3 represents the factors of moving toward urban places. Out of total respondents 53.8 percent of them shifted for better opportunity, 21.6 percent for social status, 9.9 percent for good education for their children and 14.5 percent of them have other reason as they have mentioned. Other reason here included the social behavior, social security. Female PLA faced most difficult situation when they returned to their communities of origin because of social rejection of inter-caste marriage. Therefore, they often moved away from their native places.

5.4 Safety Feelings of Respondents

Safety is the state of being ‘safe’ and the condition of being protected from harm or other non- desirable outcomes. It can also refer to the control of recognized hazards in order to achieve an acceptable level of risk. This research actually provides the socio-economic, political and physical status of ex-PLA women as they are living outside of the place of their origin, their social status in the new host communities.

Table No. 5.4 Safety Feelings of Respondents

Safety Issue	Frequency	Percentage
Financially strong	90	25.6
Financially weak	24	6.8
Socially strong	25	7.1
Socially weak	50	14.2
Politically strong	20	5.6
Politically weak	51	14.5
Physically strong	70	19.9
Physically weak	21	5.9
Total	351	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table no. 5.4 represents the safety of ex-PLA women. These women are facing the common problems related to ensuring their livelihoods, lack of resources for the investment for their children's health and education and better reintegration in their communities and society. Above table shows 25.6 percent were financially strong whereas 6.8 were financially weak, 19.9 percent of them were physically strong and 5.9 were physically weak as they shared that some of them still have bullets in their bodies, many of them are disabled or wounded and struggling to secure their livelihood. Similarly, 7.1 percent were socially strong and 14.2 were socially weak Likewise 5.6 percent were politically strong and 14.5 percent were politically weak.

The above table shows that most PLA women are financially strong because they got the package after their comprehensive peace process and they utilized their money for good deeds. Similarly, the above table also shows the socially and politically weak condition of the ex-PLA women because of ignorance of the native society and state.

5.5 Support of Organization

Organizations are systems created to achieve common goals through people to people to work relationships. It creates the framework needed to reach a company's objectives and goals. The support of organization also helps them for reintegrating in society where they are living now.

Table No. 5.5: Support of Organization

Support of organization	Frequency	Percentage
Local Government	173	49.2
Aama Samuha	35	9.9
Tole bikash Sastha	75	21.3
Other (NGO,INGO, Youth club)	68	19.3
Total	351	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Above table verifies that support of local government is 49.2 percent, 21.3 percent is from Tole Biskash Sastha, 9.9 percent is from Aama Samuha and 19.3 percent is from other which include the NGO, INGO and Youth club etc. The ex-PLA women were viewed negatively by their native people of the society as a result they are staying in a new area.

5.6 Involvement of Local Level Group

Those ex-PLA women who are more actively participating or involving in social activities and in local group, they are more accepted in society but those who are alone, passive and frustrated are left alone and less accepted by society. Their involvement in any local group like water user committees, community forest user's groups, local sports clubs, school management committees, ward citizen forums and youth clubs help them in social integration into their communities.

Table No. 5.6: Involvement of Local Level Group

Involvement of local communities	Frequency	Percentage
Social Club	139	39.6
Community Forest	63	17.9
Aama Samuha	36	10.2
Other (school/water community)	113	32.1
Total	351	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Ex-PLA women's involvement of local level group also helps them in reintegration in new place. Though they were completely rejected by their native society, they are welcomed in new place.

Table no.5.6 shows the involvement of ex- PLA women in local level, where 39.6 percent of them are involved in social club, 17.9 percent are in community forest, 10.2 percent are in Aama Samuha and 32.1 percent are involved in other i.e. school, water user committees. In-terms of social integration into their community, those ex-PLA women who are more actively participating in social activities and taking membership in social clubs, community forest, Aama Samuha, Youth clubs are more accepted in society.

5.7 Friendliness and Helpfulness of Major Political Parties

A friendly and helpful society is necessary for their livelihood. There are many accounts of couples being forced to move away from the traditional support networks provided by their families and communities because of unfavorable treatment of society towards ex-PLA women. The more they have mutual connection with their party, the more they get benefits. It helps them to adjust in the new society where they are living.

Table No. 5.7: Friendliness and Helpfulness of Major Political Parties

Mutual connection	Frequency	Percentage
CPN (Nekapa)	121	34.47
Nepali Congress	21	5.99
National Democratic Party	51	14.5
Others (socialist/social cadres)	158	45.1
Total	351	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table no.5.7 represents the friendliness and helpfulness of major political parties. Their relations with such political parties help them for their livelihood security. Above table shows that 34.47 percent of respondents are helped by CPN (Nekapa), 5.99 percent are helped by Nepali Congress, 14.5 percent are by Raprapa and 45.1 percent are by Other i.e. by Socialist/ social cedars. They are largely ignored by the government as well as their mother party- the CPN-M.

5.8 Behavior of Communities towards the Ex-PLA Women

Individual qualities matter more when choosing a new place to settle. Surrounding of the society and perception of people in it play great role. In case of Nepal as it is the

traditional society it does not easily digest changes that occur after the war because of their inter-caste marriages, widow marriage and also their past violent and coercive activities. The insurgency did not fulfill the political, social and economic transformations they had promised, community members.

Table No. 5.8: Behavior of Communities towards the Ex-PLA Women

Behavior of community	Frequency	Percentage
Joyfully	61	17.3
Hatefully	126	35.8
Excitedly	87	24.7
Other(fearfully, humiliatingly)	77	21.9
Total	351	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

The above table verifies that the community does not accept them as their member of the society. 35.8 percent treat them hatefully, 17.3 percent with joyfully, 24.7 percent with excitedly and 21.9 percent with other like fearfully, humiliatingly.

The ex-PLA women shared that they are vulnerable and experiencing exclusion, hate, marginalization and disempowerment. Women ex-combatants not only face a challenge from lack of skills but also the brunt of social discrimination for inter-caste and inter-ethnic marriages that took place during the insurgency.

5.9 Perception of Community towards Ex-PLA Women

Perception is defined as how we look at others and the world around us. Perception affects the way people communicate with others and individual's pattern of thinking can affect their perception of others. As Nepal is a patriarchal society, inter-caste marriages, widowhood or the divorced status of women ex-combatants have to face social rejection. Ex-PLA women are viewed negatively and rejection rate of female ex-combatant are higher than male combatants. Ex-PLA perceives themselves not as victims but very much as agents of change.

Table No. 5.9: Perception of Community towards Ex-PLA Women

Perception of community	Frequency	Percentage
Equal	97	27.6
Partiality	176	50.1
Other (depends on situations/circumstances)	78	22.2
Total	351	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

According to the table no 5.9 most of the ex-PLA women have faced social discrimination by their own community. Above table shows that only 27.6 percent are treated equally and 22.2 percent of them said being experienced of both. Sometimes they are equally treated and sometimes they don't. It depends on the circumstances and more than half of ex-PLA women are neglected i.e. 50 percent. The society didn't accept inter-caste marriages, widowhood or the divorced status of PLA women. It was very difficult to demolish the patriarchal thought pattern though it was well articulated at the time of insurgency.

5.10 Help or Support from Local Government

Help or support make a life a little easier for people who are struggling and need some assistance. Ex- PLA women do not have strong support systems and social networks as they are often staying in new area. Especially ex-PLA women need some sort of help from local government because they are living in exclusion, they are not able to integrate into society, they had no strong social backing, no proper economic support and no psychological counseling to reconcile and rebuild their lives.

Table No.5.10: Help or Support from Local Government

Help or Support	Frequency	Percentage
Financial	87	24.7
Emotional	111	31.6
Political	83	23.6
Other(skill, training)	70	19.9
Total	351	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Help or support from local government is very essential for the livelihood of ex-PLA women. Local government should help them by providing financial and emotional support. The table no.5.10 shows the help and support from local government. 31.6 percent of respondents said that they get emotional support, 24.7 percent said they get financial support, 23.6 percent said they get political support and 19.9 of them said they get other support like employment and vocational and skill training.

CHAPTER: SIX

CURRENT SETTLEMENT OF 'EX-PLA WOMEN' IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The economic integration of ex-PLA women is understood to have two principle components.

- Improving employability, typically through skills training and support to entrepreneurial activities.
- Strengthening the environment in communities receiving ex-combatants for job creation and private sector development.

Selected Cases of Entrepreneurship of Ex-PLA women

Case I: MTM was an ex-PLA woman who got RS. Five lakhs while taking retirement from the PLA. Her husband is a primary school teacher. She herself is an intermediate certificate holder. She seems physically strong and was interested to join Nepal Army but because of hearing weakness during insurgency was not commissioned in the Army. She started collecting vegetables in and around Chitwan and began to supply to major cities of Nepal. She invested all her funds for this purpose. Her husband also helps in her work. She earns about Rs. Twenty-Five thousand per month. She thinks that with some additional funds at hand, she would be able to expand her business by employing more persons.

Case II: FBK and her husband, also an ex-Maoist combatant and worked at the medical unit of PLA. She started a Hotel in Dang district out of the funds. She remarried with TP after her previous husband was killed in the action. Now, both of them have altogether three children. They have purchased two kattha of land and build huts to run the highway restaurant targeted for truck drivers and also one hut separately to stay with parents. As she has medical education, she is also running small pharmacy. Both of them work in the hotel as well as she is also given her time in the pharmacy when people come for medical services. Their income from the hotel and pharmacy meets the monthly needs of to take care of the family. There future plans are to take the training of cooking and expand the hotel if they get financial assistance.

Case III: Ex-Maoist Battalion commander RS is also an ex-combatant who started a fancy store business out of the funds she received at the time of retirement. She got Rs five lakhs and invested in the store. They took additional informal loan of Rs three lakhs at thirty-six percent of interest rate per year for the store. Also took loan of Rs three lakhs at the interest rate of thirteen percent from bank under women entrepreneurship and Rs ninety thousand from co-operative of Dang under youth self-Employment Fund.

Case IV: Ex-PLA woman H has been successfully operating a dairy farm in Banke for last three years. They had invested all of their retirement funds to begin the enterprise. They have leased in one hectare of land for Rs. ninety thousand per year and has made modern cowshed with attached room for her husband S and his family members. Her husband is the manager and of the farm. He had taken three months training also. At present they have three Holstein and four Jersey cows brought from Tikuligadh of Bhairawa. They invested Rs. six lakhs and fifty thousand to purchase the cows, which produce 40 liters of milk per day. They sell at Rs. forty-five per liter. They have employed four additional persons to assist them. Apart from diary, the remaining land is being used for organic vegetable production recently as the manures of the cows could be used as best organic fertilizers. No loans have been borrowed till now. They are planning to insure the cows in near future. They are keen to expand the farm by adding eight more cows which can be easily managed by present four employees.

Case V: Similarly, MP and her husband got Rs. five lakhs as the retirement fund with which they started piggery with forty-five sow (female pig) and one bore (male pig) They used to sell 300 to 500 piglets per year at the rate up to Rs. 5000 per piglet. They had employed four assistants to manage the piggery with monthly salary per head of Rs. 8000 plus lunch, tea and dinner to each-every day. They have become an expert in piggery can be a good trainer on piggeries also. They have kept good relations with all political parties and gets invitation from all parties in their events. They are interested to expand the piggery and poultry into an integrated farm with the addition of fishery, buffaloes, goats and turkey etc. with selling outlets in major cities.

They say that many ex-combatants used the retirement funds on petrol pumps or in restaurants but all of them could not stay in the business. The problem with ex-combatants is that most of them do show impatience, they want benefits as soon as possible and become frustrated with even with slight delay. But they also found some of the ex-combatants started selling clothes in weekly markets and doing good business now.

6.1 Initial Work of Respondents

Work is at the root of a meaning life, the path to individual independence and a necessity for human for human survival and flourishing. It is essential and inseparable part of the human experience and people are what they do for living. Profession is part of your identity, whether you are a doctor a journalist or a professor. All these terms are used to identify people of certain occupations, interests and lifestyle. Human beings differ in terms of many characteristics such as intelligence, talents, academic level etc. Therefore, depending on human potential and the specific working environment, work can be equally beneficial to the human flourish or demeaning. Our personality traits also tend to develop in compliance with the type of work we are associated with over a period of time and help us tackle with similar matters throughout our life.

Table No. 6.1: Initial Work of Respondents

Initial work	Frequency	Percentage
Farming	116	33.1
Business	45	12.8
Job	93	26.4
Other (school duties)	97	27.6
Total	351	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

According to the data presented in table no. 6.1 cleared that majority of respondent i.e. 33.1 percent were involved in farming as we know Nepal is an agricultural country and it is not surprising. While 27.6 percent were in other. In other occupation there come the students who were at the teenage group who have to do school duties.

Similarly, 26.4 were doing job according to their ability and 12.8 percent were involved in job.

6.2 Post or Position of Respondent

Post and Position of respondents refers to the position of an individual in a PLA. These post/position influences social status. Social positions an individual may hold fall into the categories of occupation (medical doctor, academic lecturer, soldier, cook etc.). An individual is likely to create a personal hierarchy of such position, where one will be a central position while the rest are peripheral positions.

Table No. 6.2: Post or Position of Respondent

Post/Position	Frequency	Percentage
Soldier	113	32.1
Cook	87	24.7
Medical/ Paramedical	68	19.3
Other (messenger)	83	23.6
Total	351	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table no. 6.2 presents the post or position of respondents. Ex- PLA women were serving the country according to their skills and capabilities in the war. The above table shows 32.1 percent were soldiers, 24.7 percent were cook, 19.3 percent were medical/Paramedical and 23.6 percent were other. In other there includes the messenger who inform the information/news to their combatants. The above table shows the majority of ex-PLA women in post of soldiers because women were equally treated and had given same responsibilities.

6.3 Usefulness of Fund

In a simple form we can define fund as a pool of money that is allocated for a specific purpose.

Table No. 6.3: Usefulness of Fund

Usefulness of fund	Frequency	Percentage
House and land	68	19.3
Bank Deposit	50	14.2
Child education	77	21.9
Business	85	24.2
Other(luxury goods)	71	20.2
Total	351	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Financial package in some extent ensure their livelihood and security and help them to integrate into their community. The above table shows that majority of respondents save the fund for their Business i.e. 24.2 percent, 21.9 percent and 19.3invested their money in child education and house/land respectively. Similarly, 14.2 percent deposit their money in bank and 20.2 percent invested in other like luxury goods, expensive mobiles etc.

6.4 Income Level of Respondents

Income is the sum of all the wages, salaries, profits, rents and other forms of earnings received in a given period of time. Family income is also important variable. It is the duty of every family to fulfill the needs of its family members and provides them all the comforts and facilities. Human needs are of three types: Necessities, Comforts and Luxuries. It is not possible to meet these needs without resources. Money is an important resource to meet these needs. Standard of living depends on the income. More income leads to higher standards of living and less income to lower one. Therefore, it is very essential to earn money in order to meet the needs of the family, discharge the family responsibilities and maintain the standard of living. In modern times, money management is an important problem for families because money is a limited resource. It is very difficult to maintain a balance between income and expenditure with the limited income.

Table No. 6.4: Income Level of Respondents

Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage
10000	107	30.4
10000-15000	94	26.7
15000-20000	78	22.2
<20000	72	20.5

Source: Field Survey, 2019

According to the data presented in table no. 6.4 cleared that the monthly income of the respondents categorized into four categories where 30.4 percent belongs to the category of >10000, 26.7 percent were from 1000-15000, 22.2 percent were from 15000-20000 and last 20.5 percent belong to <20000.

6.5 Income Sources of Respondents

The main characteristic of economic development is the process towards an increasingly intricate pattern of labor specialization. In communities at the earliest stages of economic activities particularly all goods and services are produced and consumed within the family group, but with economic development more and more people become specialized in particular tasks and the economic autarky of the family group is superseded by the exchange of goods and services (Boserup, 1970).

Here in the study area, the researcher has tried to find the major sources of family income on the basis of occupational specialization. The researcher has categories different occupations to know about the statement of family income.

Table No. 6.5: Income Sources of Respondents

Income Sources	Frequency	Percentage
Farming	86	24.5
Business	117	33.3
Job	53	15.1
Bank interest	43	12.2
Other(daily wages)	52	14.8
Total	351	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Ex- PLA women have different sources of income. According to above table 33.3 percent of respondent said they have source of business, 24.5 percent have farming, 15.1 percent have job, 12.2 percent have bank interest and 14.8 percent have other sources like daily wages, commercial vegetables selling etc.

6.6 Expenditure of Respondents

Expenditure is the process of living within the family which depends on income. Here in the context of the study area, having the modern technology and modern opportunity, the sources of income and its expenditure are various.

Table No. 6.6: Expenditure of Respondents

Expenditure	Frequency	Percentage
Health	110	31.3
Education	96	27.3
Transportation	68	19.3
Other (entertainment)	77	21.9
Total	351	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

The above table shows the expenditure of respondents. 31.3 percent have reported that, they expense on health of the family, 27.3 percent on education, 19.3 percent on transportation and 21.9 percent on other like entertainment, clothing etc. They have further expresses that, major source of money is business and foreign employment. On the other hand, the major means of expenditure is for health, education and transportation.

6.7 Training Received by Respondents before Joining the PLA

Training is an organized procedure for increasing the knowledge and skill of people for a specific purpose. The trainees acquire new skill, technical knowledge, problem-solving ability etc. It also gives an awareness of the rules and procedures to guide their behaviors. It improves the performance of employees on present jobs and prepares them for taking up new assignments in future.

Table No. 6.7: Training Received by Respondents before Joining the PLA

Training	Frequency	Percentage
Physical training	187	53.2
Vocational education	71	20.2
Other (self-defense training)	93	26.4
Total	351	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

It is important to have proper skill, sufficient educational background, training as a soldier. According to table no.6.7, most of the respondents i.e. 53.2 percent have received the physical training, 20.2 percent have the knowledge of vocational education and 26.4 percent have received other trainings like self -defense training, practical knowledge and awareness about women empowerment.

CHAPTER: SEVEN

SUMMARY, MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Summary of the Study

Reintegration is understood as having economic, political and social components, ensuring that ex-fighters have a livelihood are a part of decision making processes and can again become a part of communities. The process of integration and reintegration emphasizing the role of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) and the national mechanism that took over from it in 2011. Nepal has moved forward in reintegrating its former combatants, many other countries have failed to carry out successfully. It demonstrates that Nepal's approach to reintegration was unique and unorthodox but in some ways effective. Nevertheless, there were problems and some of them persist, especially to do with social reintegration in particular, gender and caste relations.

Ex-PLA women are understood as part of the PLA including medical staff, cultural troupes and those who had left prior to the peace process. The research is mainly concerned with the PLA women and their reintegration and entrepreneurship process in the society. Therefore, to find out the journey that ex-PLA women have made from home communities to where they now live, this topic is chosen for research.

To collect the desired information, the researcher has applied mixed method for data collection. The questionnaires and checklist are used. According to the report of UNMIN there are altogether 3786 ex-PLA women and by applying snowball sampling its sample size is 351.

For this purpose, with the identified respondents, the interview schedule was prepared carefully; instruction of supervisor was included and refined the question in the interview schedule. Both structured and unstructured observation were made from time to time while in field work process.

Observation, interview and focus group discussion have yielded qualitative data while interview schedule has yielded both types of data. The collected data have been arranged manually and analyzed descriptively. Results of quantitative data analysis have been shown by using various tables.

7.2 Major Findings

During the field survey, it has been explored and examined the different aspects regarding the integration and entrepreneurship process of ex-PLA women. The major findings of the study are listed below:

1) Firstly, woman combatant's reasons for joining Maoist PLA is found to be the result of many factors including socio-economic background, family relation, social discrimination, gendered sexuality (also as victims of sexual violence), forced recruitment and self-defense. The findings of the study clearly indicate that although most of the ex-PLA women are living outside the place of their origin, their social status in the new host communities seems satisfactory. However, their level of participation in local community works does not seem to be at the desirable level.

2) Secondly, this study confirms that most of ex-PLA women who took the financial packages have used it positively, mostly invested their money in small business especially shops, hotels, tea shops and stationary shops. A small number of them had collectively invested in vegetable, fish and mushroom, farming or rearing cows, goats and buffaloes.

3) Thirdly, a significant number of ex-PLA women who opted for voluntary retirement have migrated to seek better opportunities and another reason for their leaving is discrimination. The ex-PLA women were also viewed negatively by people and members of other political parties.

4) Fourthly, the study reveals that when the women were in active war, they did not care about the caste classes and they were encouraged by their party to have inter-caste marriages. Once they came out of cantonment, however they faced severe difficulties as society did not easily accept them. In many cases even their parents and relatives did not accept such marriages. Hence it has become quite difficult for the ex-PLA women specially having inter-caste marriage in society. The rejection rate of ex-PLA women is higher than male counter parts.

5) Fifthly, their communities were not welcoming because of patriarchal structures of society. The insurgency was instrumental to bring changes in the political system but failed to fulfill the political, social and economic transformations as envisioned and promised. Instead the war time rebel leaders were reported to be engaged in

parliamentary politics in forming and deforming governments. They failed to address the issues of class-conflict.

6) Sixthly while the ultimate goals of the people's war have not been met, the PLA women played a crucial role in removing the king and in advancing Nepal's democracy. Many respondents gave examples of dramatic changes seen in terms of reducing discrimination on the basis of caste, gender and ethnicity as well as improvement in the representation of minorities.

7) Seventhly most of the ex-PLA women opine that their engagement in the insurgency, their feeling toward their party leaders were regretful, they felt they had wasted their productive lives in the war. Though the civil war was for a good cause the Maoist leaders created a crisis. Ultimately they remain frustrated with the Maoist leaders, as if they were disposed of, without proper care. The Maoist Movement couldn't remain unified as a result dissatisfaction and frustration could be seen in some ex-PLAs.

7.3 Conclusion

Age long gender discrimination, poverty, domestic violence, state domination and exploitation encouraged woman to be involved in Maoist insurgency as they saw the movement as a means to end long established feudal state. However, the situation of ex-PLA women in Nepal remained quite difficult in terms of social integration, economic stability and livelihood security. The paradox of the process is that the ones who fought for state restructuring, justice and equality became victims of the same process. The Study reveals ex-PLA women's situation and experiences during the war and during their early social reintegration process into both the big society of political and social participation and into the small society of local communities, families and households. From the above study, it is concluded that most of the ex-PLA women are engaged in income generation. Ex-PLA women who received financial packages utilized the money to create legal and sustainable livelihood and only a small number misused their package. They invested their money productively as a provisional success at least in terms of the economic reintegration of ex-PLA women. Most of the ex-PLA women are living outside of their original places. For this reason, there is no family support for their living contrarily to traditional family system of Nepal. They have to live by their own earning. Most of them lack the skills for their livelihood.

They now primarily taking care of their families while their male counter parts earn, this indicates that even after participating in the insurgency many women returned to the traditional gender roles.

Some ex-PLA women are frustrated, reactive and majority of them are hopeless because the role of CPN-M in addressing the issues and concerns of ex-PLA women were not constructive and forgot their commitment as promised. These women are facing exclusion, hate, marginalization and disempowerment. Marriage has become another area of difficulty for them, particularly when they have an inter-caste marriage, as patriarchal society has strong social stigmas associated with such a marriage. Most of the common problems faced by these women are related to ensuring their livelihood, lack of resources for the investment for their children's health and better reintegration in their communities and society. Gender equality, equity. education, social justice, socio-political and economic empowerment of the women can be effective tools for social transformation otherwise, the seeds of dissatisfaction persist and durable peace and stability become the matter of far cry.

Similarly, government formed then after failed to address the genuine issue of the ex-PLA women as a result they were again the victim of marginalization, discrimination, domination, exploitation and so on.

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ANNEX I: Questionnaire Schedule

Reintegration Challenges of Ex-PLA Women in Post War, Nepal

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Namaskar! I am a research student of MA sociology at Prithvi Narayan Campus. As a course requirement, I am doing a sociological research on Reintegration Challenges of ex-PLA women in post war, Nepal.

I would like to ask you some questions related to this topic which are not for professional purpose but it is for the academic purpose only. Your co-operation will be highly appreciable. You can refuse to answer any question at any time of the study. Your information and experience sharing will make my research successful. Whatever information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and shown to other persons.

Section A:

Demographic Details

1. Name of respondent (ex-PLA women):
   …….
2. Age: ……..
3. Sex: M….☐ F
4. Marital status: a) single b) Married c) Divorced
   d) Separated e) other
5. Religion:
6. Educational Background
   a) Illiterate b) literate c) Primary
   d) Secondary e) Higher Secondary f) Bachelor or a above
7. Do you have children?
   a) Yes b) No
   c) If Yes i) 1 ii) 2 iii) 3 iv) above
8. How many members in your family?
   i) 1 ii) 2 iii) 3 iv) 4 v) above
9. Permanent Address:
   a) Village /town: ……
   b) Permanent Address: ……..

10. Current Address:

a) District: ……..

b) Village / Town…….

Section B: Social and political integration

11. If married

a) Where is Your Spouse? .....

b) What does he do? ……..

12. If separated

a) What are the causes? .....

13. If widower / widow

a) How did spouse died? .....

14. Since how long have you been here?

…….(put in number)

15. What are you doing here?

i) Business ii) job iii) child education iv) Other

16. Who inspired you to join the PLA?

i) Family ii) Friends iii) Self iv) War

17 Were there any relatives in PLA?

a) Yes b) No

18. Do you feel secure working with male PLA?

a) Yes b) No

19. Do you feel you were equally treated among the other male PLA in the same position in war?

a) Yes b) No

20. Do you feel proud or regret to be ex-PLA women?

a) Yes b) No

21. When did you join and how were you recruit of clarify if it was voluntarily or forced?

.....

22. Do you want to go back your original home?

a) Yes b) No

23. If Yes, in which circumstances

i) Social Status ii) Better opportunity

iii) Good education for child iv) other

24. What is your plan for?

a) Next 2 years ……..

b) Next 5 years ……..

25. Do you have sound sleep in the night?

a) Yes b) No

c) If yes, specify ……

26. Are you feeling Safe?

QN	No	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	yes
Financially					
Socially					
Politically					
Physical					

27. If you could choice where would you want to establish yourself (in your native community or in a new place in Nepal or abroad?

.....…….....

28. Are there any organizations in your locality that are helping for the integration process?

a) Yes No

b) If yes, i) social ii) Ingo iii) Ngo

iv) Donner funded v) others…….

29. Are you involved in any local level user group or committees?

a) Yes No

b) If yes, i) social club ii) Tole sudhar samiti iii) social organization

iv) School / water community forest v) other

c) What is your position in the user group or communities?

.....……

d) What are the activities of the user group or communities?

.....

30. Are the members of major political Parties friendlier and helpful to you?

QN	No	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Yes
Cpn (nekapa)					
Nepali congress					
Socialist					
Raprapa					
others					

31. What is your expectation from your party/ government for the ex-PLA'S integration?

.....

32. How the local communities are behaving with you?

QN	No	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Yes
Excitement					
Joy					
Anxiety and sorrow					
Fear					
Anger					

33. In your opinion what is the level following condition with local people?

QN	Low	Medium	Neutral	High	Very high
Integration					
Assimilation					

34. What are your present pressing needs?

.....

35.What could be your needs for immediate future for up to 5 years

…….....

36. What sort of assistances (exception) you seek from the government?

.....

37. How do people perceive ex-PLA women and other women in the community?

a) Equal b) partiality c) I don't know d) others

38. If you compare your life in terms of freedom and respect while you were a combatant, while in the camp and now when did you enjoy the greatest freedom and respect?

……

39. What kind of responsibilities do you have and are you an elected cadre?

……

40. What kind of help or support do you get from your local government?

a) Yes No

b) If yes, specify……..

Section C: Economic

41.What did you do before joining the PLA?

a) Farming b) job c) Business d) Student e) other

42. Did you receive any training before joining the PLA?

a) Yes No

b) If yes specify……..

43. What type of work you carried out in the PLA?

a) soldier b) cook c) orderly/messenger

d) Medical/paramedical e) other

44. How much fund you receive at the time of your voluntary retirement?

…….....

45. How you used the fund?

a) House and land b) Bank Deposit c) Vehicle

d) Child Education e) Foreign employment f) Other

46. Have you taken any skill training and vocational education?

a) Yes No

b) If yes, i)When…… ii) Duration….. iii) Any use or benefit,

where…….

47. How much you earn monthly?

a) Below 10000 b) 10000-15000 c) 15000-20000 d) above 20000

48. What are the income sources?

a) Business b) Job c) Bank interest

d) Daily wages e) other……..

49. How much you spent monthly?

a) Below 5000 b) 5000-10000 c) 10000-15000 d) above 15000

50. Where do you spent and how much?

a) Food and Accommodation……. b) Health ……

c) Education…… d) Entertainment …… e) Other

51. What sort of income generating skill you may need for your future living?

…….

52. At this stage, please tell me if this UN program so far is really helpful for giving you a socio-economic foundation for establishing you as a civilian in the society?

……..

Section D: Health and Disability

53. Are you suffering from any disease?

a) Yes No

b) If yes, specify……

54. Taking any medicine?

a) Yes No

b) If yes, specify…….

55. Do you have any disability?

a) Yes No

b) If yes, specify……

56. Do you any assistance as concern your health status?

a) Yes No

b) If yes, specify……..

57. What kind of difficulties do you face cause of your disability?

……..

<u>Checklists for KII interview in the study area.</u>

- What are the government plans that concern reintegration of war displaced population in specific area?
- What are the new policies and programs that facilitate economic development and employment?
- What are the appropriate trainings and skills for the targeted group to improve rural survival and entrepreneurial skills?
- What changes can be seen in the life of ex-PLA women through local government programs?

- What are the difference between ex-PLA women and general women? (Livelihood earning pattern)
- How Society treat to ex-PLA women?
- If you were in decision making level, what type of integration policy would you formulate for ex-PLA women?
- What was the master plan of management of PLA women and what perception developing on them after comprehensive peace agreement?