

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a context to the study including a general background as well as the research problems and objectives for the research study.

1.1 Background of the Study

The Maoist guerrilla insurgency or ‘People’s’ War was launched by Communist Party of Nepal (CPN-M) in 13 February 1996 from the remote western hill districts of Nepal. To achieve their goals, children were recruited and used by the Maoists forces throughout the period of War. They were used for military as well as non-military purposes. Many of them were under the age of 18. Young children had faced the risk of death or injury while conducting their tasks (HRW, 2007).

Children of all ages were severely affected by the violence of armed conflict. The situation of children in conflict-prone districts were found to be vulnerable as they faced constant threat from security forces and the Maoists (CWIN, 2007). In her visit to the conflict affected areas of Nepal, Sobha Gautam and her colleagues (2001) found that children been left to work with conflict in absence of the head member of the family. They were also found to witness and commit atrocities, killed, wounded, raped, psychologically traumatized, and deprived of education, health care and a family environment.

With the signing of Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 21 November 2006, the armed-conflict between Government of Nepal and Communist Party of Nepal (CPN-M) officially came to an end. The agreement made an unprecedented commitment to those children who were involved in more than a decade long Maoists War. It stated that those “children who have already been affected (who) would be instantaneously rescued and suitable assistance would be provided for their rehabilitation” (MOPR, 2006). Since then, many NGO’s have been implementing the Community-based reintegration (CBR)

programs for returned children, or children associated with armed forces and armed groups (CAAFAG) at various districts. The program sought to provide educational and psychosocial support to CAAFAG, and to establish and support community-based child protection systems. In addition, there are also vocational/Income generation initiatives (Save the Children, 2007). Such NGO's working for returned armed conflict affected children claim that 'Reintegration into civilian life is the ultimate goal of securing children's release from armed forces' (UNICEF, 2009). Psychosocial Approaches has been adopted by the NGO's, which is rooted in the principle that reintegration is most likely to succeed in the context of community and family supports. Additionally, psychosocial approaches focus on restoring connections to families and communities, recreating social networks, and providing children with greater capacity to deal with challenges they face during reintegration (Betancourt et al, 2008). The coordinators of an implementing agency believe that, an affectively conducted program would contribute to an improved security situation, peace and stability and sense of empowerment to the returned children.

Addressing the needs of returned children has come forward since it has been reported that these children were facing problems after returning and reintegrating into family and communities. According to the report presented by TPO, "Approximate 11,000 children associated with armed forces and armed groups face reintegration difficulties in their homes, communities and new risks including displacement trafficking and re-recruitment into armed or criminal groups (TPO Nepal, 2009). Returnees were finding difficulties while readjusting into normal life. Young girls were targeted by their fellow combatants, criticized by their families, teased by their peers, and marginalized by their community people. Returned girls are now perceived as impure or polluted by Nepali society (CAAFAG WG, 2007). Their present situation can be attributed to the fact that Nepali society is conservative where a Hindu rule of purity and pollution is applied for Nepali girls. According to

Gautam, both boys and girls are rejected and marginalized also because of their adoption of culture of violence during the time of armed civil war (Gautam, 2009). Further, he claims, minor children's have committed brutalities and served as ideological indoctrination 'army' of one party .There have been reports about children showing excessive aggressiveness and violence while leading a normal life. It has been difficult for such children to accept the norms and values of society.

To conduct this research study, I have chosen Nawalparasi district where 'Indreni Samaj Kendra', a Community-based Organization (CBO) is working with returnees, the armed-conflict affected children.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

A Transcultural Psychological Organization (TPO) Report in 2007 found that former children associated with armed forces and armed groups showed significantly more distress (psychosocial problems) than non-affiliated children (TPO Nepal, 2007). Many returnees have experienced considerable problems after going back to their respective communities, such as rejection or marginalization even within their family. This problem is particularly acute with girls who faced sexual abuse either at the hands of fellow combatants or, if captured by the security forces who are now deemed "tainted" or "impure" (U.N. Security Council, 2006).

Returnees have also faced resistance at the community level, with children often being teased by their peers or socially excluded and stigmatized because of their involvement in the Maoists. This situation has been worse in communities which have been severely affected by the CPN-M. Many of them migrated to various cities of Nepal and even neighboring countries in search of work as male labors or female domestic household maids. CAAFAG children were finding awkward to restart their studies and many of them stayed at their place out of fear that they might get re-recruited or mentally tortured by other armed groups or political parties (CAAFAG WG, 2007).

In this context, this research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What were the factors motivating them for joining armed force?
2. After returning to the society, what kinds of difficulties did the returned boys and girls face? Is there any difference in experiences between boys and girls?
3. How did the NGO conduct the program? What was the whole process of reintegration and who were their target groups?
4. After program implementation, what kinds of changes are found in them?
5. How are these children coping with their present and changed situation?

1.3 Objectives

The general objective of this research is to study the reintegration of returned children, who were involved in the Maoists conflict. The specific objectives are to:

1. Describe the motivating factors or causes of joining the Maoists,
2. Explore the problems faced by CAAFAG in reintegrating society after returning from the armed conflict,
3. Examine the changes experienced by CAAFAG after receiving help from NGO.

1.4 Rationale of the Study

Internal armed conflict of such a huge scale had jolted the country for more than a decade. History tells about the involvement of children in various kinds of conflict in Nepal. However, the documentation of children joining the armed conflict was done since the time of Maoists war. There are various reasons for children that compel them to join. They were used for various purposes.

Returned children who were involved in Maoists conflict suffered as they enter their families and community. Reintegrating returnees by providing various kinds of supports including the education support and vocational training/income generation support was believed to be essential. There are very few studies done on how reintegration program for returnees affected by Maoists conflict have been implemented. The present study will help to understand overall program implementation by ISK and its effect to the respondents. The findings of this research will also be useful for child protection agencies who are engaged in protection of child rights. It may also add as literature for researchers, particularly to those who are interested in studying reintegration of returned children affected by Maoists conflict.

1.5 Organization of the Study

The study is divided in seven different chapters. Chapter I is an introduction chapter which contains general background of the study, research problems, objectives of the study. In chapter II, the literature review where various literatures related to reintegration of returned children by community based NGOs have been presented. Next Chapter III provides information on research methods employed to collect data. Chapter IV presents the research site and the information about the sampled respondents together with the information about Indreni Samaj Kendra, a local NGO in Nawalparasi district. Chapter V presents the description on the factors which motivated the returned children to join the Maoists. Information about their roles, their status and their positions while engaged with the Maoists has also been included. Chapter VI is an exploration of returnee's condition together with the strategy adopted by them upon returning to their home and community. Last chapter is chapter VII which contains summary and conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Armed Conflict and its Impact on Children of Nepal

According to a comprehensive Report (2006) on the condition of women and children in Nepal by UNICEF, the armed conflict has affected children of all ages through its impact on their families. It has particularly affected children by disrupting their education and interfering with their access to health care. Some children have been removed from school to help at home as older members of the family have migrated away from their home village to avoid recruitment by the Maoists. Due to the constant fighting their schooling were temporarily suspended or even stopped, their access to healthcare were made more difficult, and their living conditions further deteriorate and become less stable, some children have been pushed into the labor market (UNICEF, 2006). Moreover, the armed conflict in Nepal from 1996 to 2006 claimed more than 13000 lives (INSEC, 2007). According to CWIN, 32,550 children along with their teachers were taken away by CPN-M for a period of time for force participation in program. More than 8000 children have been orphaned, and around 40,000 children have been displaced due to armed conflict (CWIN NEPAL, 2007). Human rights watch further reports that children were repeatedly exploited by the government armed forces and placed in detention to those who were suspected as being Maoists (HRW, 2007).

As in other parts of the country, the activities of Maoists and security forces in Nawalparasi became intense and violent. According to South Asia Analysis Group (2004) the Maoist militant abducted 103 government school teachers from the remote hilly areas of Nawalparasi district. Roadside bomb planted by the Maoist rebels killed a girl. There was one major gun battle between the Maoists and security forces in NP which lasted for hours. Child caught in major clashes in Sunwol. Bomb planted along highway killed minor (Terrorism update, 2006). Nepal OCHA Nepal Situation overview, 2007, reported about

the tensions between MPRF and CPN-M along with the damage done on the CPN-M office in Parasi.

2.2 Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed groups (CAAFAG)

CAAFAG includes all children who have been involved in the armed forces and armed groups in any capacity, e.g., as cook, soldier, fund collector, logistic supporter, artists in cultural group, or those who have been associated and detained on charges of being Maoist, etc. (CAAFAG WG, 2007)

According to the research Report presented by TPO Nepal, CAAFAG have experienced more psychological problems than community children not associated with armed forces or armed groups (TPO Nepal, 2007). Community assessment conducted by CAAFAG working groups in 2007 found that returned boys and girls were suffering from number of problems and that they were targeted by their fellow combatants. The situation of girls was found awful, while majority of boys migrated to foreign countries for jobs girls remained at home (CAAFAG WG, 2007). Moreover, there are high risks of re-recruitment of returned children by CPN-M or political groups operating in hills or Terai region (UN Security Council, 2008).

Despite Nepal's CPA targeting rehabilitation of children from armed group associations, the government has failed to implement satisfactory reintegration (Housden, 2009). Further he states, state's failure to tackle deep rooted inequality and structural problems continues to allow armed movements to recruit marginalized groups including children and continually flourish. He found education program fruitful whereas income generation program as less encouraging.

Children were used as fighters, but also act as messengers and spies. Children have been tortured because of their role with the Maoists and named as traitors in their communities, which makes it impossible for them to return safely to

their homes. Because of cultural norms and attitudes, family reunification might be particularly difficult for girls and women who are perceived to have been raped, sexually abused or engaged in promiscuous behavior (Gautam, 2009).

Search for common ground (SFCG) report and their publications in (2007) mentions about many cases where returnees have been found empowered after the war. They have become more expressive and frank, more analytical about any issues, and some of them have also developed strong leadership qualities in them. They believe that it is their turn to utilize such positive development of theirs by providing them enough support and care. Furthermore it writes, in other conflict affected countries, children were found to be involved in criminal activities after war, so in order to prevent these children should be given psychosocial and social reintegration. Child fighters as well as other children who were indirectly associated with war should be provided rehabilitation and reintegration facilities (SFCG,2007).

The causes of recruitment of child soldiers in three ways-socio-economic factors, policy coercion of CPN-M or community groups or self motivation (Save the Children, 2007).They claim that child soldiers are recruited through abduction or indoctrination, and some children joined because they were influenced by the cultural and political programs, peer pressure, forceful conscription, or because of lack of security. Many children are motivated to join the CPN-M because of the attraction of being involved in cultural programs. Most of the child soldiers entered as cultural program performer or supporters in political activities, and their duties increased from supporter to combatants. The causes of recruitment of child soldiers are multidimensional and not only based on socio economic factor. However there is contradiction between the causation explained by the organization and their program intervention (Aryal, 2008), that is, while most groups claim socio-economic causes are the most important, their programs work in other areas, such as mainly considering the legal factors.

PARIS PRINCIPLE AND GUIDELINES, 2007, have redefined child soldiers as “Children associated with armed forces and armed groups”. The provisions in the principle have restricted all kinds of recruitment and use of children below the age of 18 years in armed forces and armed groups.

2.3 Child Reintegration into Civilian life

Reintegration is a much longer and the most difficult process. This is also the phase wherein psychosocial issues begin to take precedence. Reintegration can be treacherous journey for young people carrying the invisible wounds of the war experiences while facing stigmatization, and lacking livelihoods, education and skills needed to construct a positive role in society. Unsuccessful transition into civilian life leave former child soldiers at increased risk of mental health problem, re-recruitment and other forms of exploitation. Reintegration programs must involve long-term solution, such as skills training and job provision. Unfortunately, many DDR programs have been hampered by inadequate funds and other resources. In addition, despite growing recognition of girl’s involvement in armed conflict, girls are often deliberately or inadvertently excluded from DDR programs. Reintegration programs for children usually contain the following elements:

1. Immediate medical and psychosocial care through interim care centers to support children during transition and prepare them for reintegration into civilian communities.
2. Sensitization of communities via open community discussions regarding the return of ex-CAFF (to promote forgiveness and acceptance).
3. Family tracing, reunification and family reintegration assistance. Such assistance usually involves locating parents or other relatives, helping children readjust to living at home with the family structure.
4. Support to communities to assist them in supporting reintegration, such as through community-based systems of monitoring and problem solving.

5. Provision of initial support for school fees or vocational training.

6. Individual follow-up including efforts to teach conflict resolution skills and ensure that community sensitization events succeed.

Interim care and community follow-up, psychosocial support is commonly provided for some period of time. The focus of such support is to help former child soldiers to carve out new roles for themselves in the community and to construct civilian identities apart from their identities as soldiers (Betancourt et al, 2008)

A field guide provided by Save the Children in (2007) states that, Child reintegration is a process by which children enter into their families and communities as an acceptable member, with meaningful roles, identity and as respected member of the society. Successful reintegration can be achieved when there is a guarantee of political, social, economic and legal bases for children. Among disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the process of reintegration is the most significant and the longest one. Children who are facing the reintegration challenges as well as the vulnerable children must also be assisted evenly. CAAFAG might be treated as perpetrator and there can be chances of resentment among other groups if only the CAAFAGs are treated as concerned individuals. The special support provided to CAAFAG can in turn be as an unjust reward.

The Paris principles and the International Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration standards for engagement in all areas, including programme approaches. It is to be hoped that the Paris Principles and IDDRS modules will form the basis of all processes and programming for the release and reintegration of children (Stolen Futures, 2007). However, the present implementation process in Nepal has not been grouped in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. We have applied term as “Reintegration” for Children Associated with Armed forces and armed groups”(Save the Children, Field guide, 2007)

2.4 Community-based reintegration program

A field manual by save the children (2007) states, in Nepal, Save the Children has given special focus on reintegration of former CAAFAG, moreover, on the Community-based Reintegration (CBR). The training and assistance is received from TPO, save the children.

A collection of Nepali non-governmental organization (NGOs) and international NGOs collaborated to form the children associated with armed forces and armed groups (CAAFAG) working group in 2007, under the coordination of UNICEF, the nitty- gritty of reintegration has been fulfilled by the community-based organization (Housden, 2009). The implementation of intervention by the CBOs started from mid-July 2007 (Securitycouncil, 2008). Before program implementation, CAAFAG working had conducted the community assessment on the situation of returnees in Kailali, dadeldhura, Banke, Surkhet, Baglung and Udaypur (CAAFAG WG, 2007).

Psychology beyond borders, an INGO which is working for CAAFAG in Sierra Leone provides information on UNICEF's "Community-based Reintegration Program". Working with international and local partners, UNICEF created and supported a number of structures while implementing activities to support the healthy reintegration of children. At the community level, the CBR included child welfare committees (CWs), which were commuted groups composed of local leaders, teachers, women, and youth representatives who assisted with family tracing. CWCs also followed up with children's clubs and promoted sensitization on children's rights issues within the community. CWCs were also available to intervene in cases of child abuse and exploitation. At the peer level, children's clubs offered recreational and educational opportunities to all children within the community. At the family level, the CBR provided follow-up and monitoring services in homes and schools. In order to implement this part of the model, social workers monitored formal child soldiers in these

settings first on a monthly basis and then adjusted services based on their need and progresses over time.

Programming is most affected where it is inclusive of other conflict-affected children (Stolen Futures, 2007). This avoids stigmatization of children, and reduces the likelihood of reprisals. However, in a research conducted by Housden, in 2009 found animosity and jealousy from non-CAAFAG towards CAAFAG is still common. Inclusive programming should be prepared to address issues that may be specific to these children, including family tracing and reunification, mediation between individual children and their families, and the provision of care and assistance for children with particular issues such as trauma, disability or sexual abuse. Moreover, those children can access benefits without having to identify themselves as ex-combatants means that many otherwise invisible children associated with armed forces and armed groups are able to access services. Successful reintegration is also dependent, in the longer term, on effective economic regeneration and growth. Education and skill training can make a significant difference to a child's chances of successful reintegration. Even where children are reluctant to go back to formal education, they want to learn skills that will enable them to support themselves. (Save the children, 2007). The report presented by 'Save the Children' Nepal states, the experiences, rights and needs of girls should be considered across all programming for children associated with armed forces and armed groups; there are particular considerations that needed to be addressed, as girls may have faced gender-based discrimination during their recruitment or use and within the communities to which they return. Giving emphasis it adds, it is important to avoid perpetuating any such discrimination during programming. Further, it writes, girls may have joined armed group in-order to avoid gender-based violence or other discrimination at home or in their community. They may be reluctant to return to this negative environment. In their best interests, their experiences and own vision for their future should be incorporated into programming. Furthermore it says, because of many reasons girls are more

likely to end up in hazardous situations such as child prostitutions and sexual exploitation and less likely to access education or training benefits. It is, important, therefore, for programs to address any obstacles that may prevent girls from coming forward; it is beholden on the agencies to make efforts to find and help these girls (Save the Children, 2007).

2.5 Community-Based Reintegration program in Nepal

Community-based organizations (CBOs) or the local NGOs have conducted community-based reintegration (CBR) programs at various districts of Nepal along with the training and assistance from other INGOs such as TPOs, Save the Children Norway, and International Rescue Committee (IRC). As of December 2008, the working group provided cross-community support to 7,500 children and youth across 58 districts affected by the armed conflict (UNMIN, 2008). All member organization followed guidelines defined by the CAAFAG WG. The core components of the program are monitoring and preventing recruitment of children and the discharge, transfer, trace/record and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and armed groups (PAG, 2008). A short overview of community-based reintegration programs (CBR) conducted for “Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed forces and armed groups” by one of the Community-based organization (CBOs) has been presented below.

Human Rights Network and Peace Action Group, Mechi (PAG): Human Rights Network and Peace Action Group, Mechi (PAG) has been working for the reintegration program supported by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Jhapa, Illam, Panchthar, Taplejung and Tehrathum. The programme was initiated for both children associated with armed groups and children affected by the armed conflict. The children got assistance by means of 1) Support to education, 2) Vocational training, 3) Income generation and Psycho-social support. The program was primarily designed for the formal mass release of minors from cantonments of the

Maoist, but in time was actually implemented for the children who left the armed groups by themselves.

PAG and IRC registered 755 children associated with armed groups from February 2007 to July 2008- and the numbers continue to increase. Around 90 percent of them are getting support to education while others are attending vocational training or are involved in income generation activities at home.

PAG identified a number of vulnerable children who could not afford costs for schooling due to their poor economic condition. Although children were provided vocational skills training and given tools in order to start their own business, the outcome was still slow and not effective. According to PAG, vocational training is not enough for the trained children to re-start their lives, unless they have access to finance. Further, those who have completed their vocational training are trying hard to find a job, often leaving their own communities in search of employment as it is not always easy to get employment opportunities in remote areas. In other cases, CAAFAG find it difficult to return to their families because of a lack of support, either financially or emotionally. However material support has given children access to re-start school. Some families members refused to accept their daughters back, accusing them of joining the Maoists, staying at the army camp and walking around with many boys at night. However, some parents responded positively to take care of their children regardless of where they have been. Most community members responded positively towards CAAFAG. Teachers, guardians welcomed re-enrolled CAAFAG. However, some of them still viewed them as perpetrators, and were fearful towards CAAFAG.

Abstracted from booklet published by Human Rights Network and Peace action Group, Mechi (PAG), 2008. "Ownership Matters" Experiences of local actors in the reintegration program of children affected by the armed conflict in Eastern Nepal

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides various research methods employed to complete the study. It basically focuses on study site, research design, sampling process, data collection methods, data analysis and limitations of the study.

3.1 Selection of the Study Area

The study was conducted with the returned children involved in the Maoists activities, who were living in Nawalparasi district and who have been undertaking the reintegration facilities. This place was chosen because Indreni Samaj Kendra, a Community-based Organization (CBO) is providing reintegration facilities for returnees (CAAFAG) since 2007. This district was also one of the most conflict-prone areas.

3.2 Research Design

Both exploratory and descriptive research design has been used for this study. Descriptive design was adopted to describe the reasons of joining the Maoists and the condition faced by returnees (CAAFAG). The qualitative data collected from the returned children have been presented in narrative form. Exploratory research design was adopted to find the roles played by NGO to reintegrate the returned CAAFAG.

3.3 Sampling Procedure

Returnees who were interviewed were the ones who have been receiving the reintegration support from ISK. Purposive sampling method was used to gather information from them. They were selected and interviewed on the visit to their homes or schools during the follow-up sessions. At times, snowball sampling method was also adopted. The whereabouts of returnees were informed by

teachers, students, child club members and parents. A total of 33 returnees were interviewed, out of which 19 of them were boys and 14 were girls.

3.4 Nature and sources of Data

The study is mostly qualitative in nature. However, some quantitative data are also collected. Primary and secondary sources of data are used for the study. Primary data were collected from field work through interaction with participants and interviews with the field staff of the organization. Secondary data were collected from different published sources including books, booklets, articles, research papers, and internet.

3.5 Techniques of Data Collection

A month or more time was spent in the headquarter Parasi. Returnees were met at their homes and their schools as well. Informal talks were held with parents of the returnees, their teachers and the NGO people. The following tools were used to gather most of the information from the informants:

3.5.1 Semi-structured Interview

Formal interviews were taken with 33 returned children. 14 of them were girls. Out of which 4 of them were fighters. Among boys, 19 of them were interviewed. 6 of them are fighters. Returnee's parents, mainly the mothers were interacted while at homes or even in fields while working or in the kitchen. It helped me understand the phenomenon, its effect on the family and children which took place some years back. Likewise, information was also gathered from some of the teachers working in two schools that I have visited. The conversation use to be short, with focus on returnees situation and the changes that they have found. Lastly, three staff members of (ISK), including the program officer was interviewed. Through this interview, much information about the current situation of the reintegration process was discovered.

3.5.2 Case study

A total of six case studies have been presented for this study. Three of them are of returned boys and the other three case studies are of returned girls. It helped understand the details of returnee's motivations to join the Maoists, the roles that they had to perform, the violence they had to face, tensions and the situation that they had to confront upon returning home and community.

3.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data has been presented both in quantitative and qualitative forms. The collected primary data was described and analyzed accordingly, in order to fulfill the set of objectives. Quantitative data was tabulated and interpreted as well.

3.7 Limitation of the Study

The dissertant was unable to interview the returned boys who have received VT/IG support. Most of the boys had left training center whereas some of them migrated to India or foreign country for employment and remaining of them were tried to reach but they were unavailable during the time of follow-up period while making with one of the staffs. So, the findings of VT/IG support should be limited to girls only. In place where there used to be short visits, some of the respondents and their family members, mainly the uneducated family would consider the dissertant as one of the staff of ISK. The result could be observed in their response during the interview. Limited numbers of respondents could be made for interviews due to limited time and resources. Moreover, it was difficult to find the respondents even after informing them about the arrival and sometimes the dissertant had to return empty-handed. Lastly, the study is only limited to return children involved with Maoists and the implementing agency ISK working in Nawalparasi district. Hence, the conclusion drawn from the research in this area and from the particular organization may not be relevant to the other areas.

CHAPTER IV

RETURNEES, INDRENI SAMAJ KENDRA AND NAWALPARASI

This chapter provides information about the study site with the description on the situation and events occurred during the time of Maoists conflict in Nawalparasi district. It also includes the information on background of the sampled respondents, along with detail description about the reintegration programs, their target groups and various steps to program implementation.

4.1 Field site

The Nawalparasi district in Nepal is located in the southern part of the Western Development Region and shares a border with India. It also borders the districts of Chitwan to the east, Tanahun to the north, Palpa to the north-west and Rupandehi to the west. The district headquarter is the small town of Parasi. Geographically, Nawalparasi is quite varied, ranging from Terai plains to hilly areas to interior Terai. Economically, it is a largely agricultural area with over 80 percent of people engaged in agriculture⁽¹⁾. The district is consists of one municipality and 73 VDCs.

It has a heterogeneous population comprising both hill caste and Madhesi caste. The major caste and ethnic group includes Tamangs, Magars, Tharus, Kamis, Gurungs, Kumals, Newars, Harijans and Teli groups. Government offices, hospitals, colleges, financial institutions, police and army posts are mainly located in Parasi bazaar. The field office of Indreni Samaj Kendra, the reintegration facility provider is also situated here. The nearest small town close to the headquarter Parasi is Butwal of Rupandehi district and Bardhghat of Nawalparasi district.

¹ *Security and Justice in Nepal, District assessment findings, March 2010, CICS*

During the period of Maoist insurgency, rural areas as well as towns of Nawalparasi district came under Maoists influence. In various times, there were major attacks and clashes between the Maoists and security forces which were followed by blockades and strikes. The Maoist district in-charge and insurgents were searched and killed by the security forces. Major incidences such as vigilante attacks, disappearances of family members, harassment by security forces, abduction, rebels asking for donations, systemic torture, illegal detention, terrorizing and killings of civilians and children occurred at different periods. Maoists attacked police posts at Rajahar and PLA attack on RNA patrol in Sunwol. There were major clashes between Maoists and the security forces in remote hilly areas of Nawalparasi (SAAG, 2004). Further, it reports, A Maoist-led crowd attacked a village in Somani ward 7, Bargadawa area which near to India border of this district killing eleven people including a 14 year old boy. Furthermore it states, in one incidence, sixteen security force personnel, four Maoists, and civilians were killed at Ramwapur village along the Sunwol-Butwal section on Siddhartha highway. This district was declared as highly sensitive area by the state (OCHA, 2007).

The terror of abductions of teachers and students from school, using of school area as Maoists recruitment and training centers, applying force to vulnerable children to participate in cultural programs were some of the major activities during the period of War.

Further, the political turmoil between the political parties and their youth wings was visible in rural and urban areas by means of constant attacks and clashes. The emergence of new Madheshi party brought another several month of disturbances in the Terai areas including the Nawalparasi district. (INSEC, 2007) Furthermore, the activities of other ethnic groups such as Tharus plagued most of the areas. In many such incidents, children were also caught and severely injured.

With April 2006 ceasefire and subsequent signing of a Peace accord, Maoists agreed to lay down their arms and join a peace process. In the same year, main cantonment Jhyaltungdanda (Division IV) and several satellite cantonments such Parivartan Smriti, Bethan Smriti, Basanta Smriti, Krishna Sen Smriti was set up at different places of Nawalparasi district. Many young boys and girls under the age 18 entered the camp as combatants. The United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) was tasked with managing a verification process. Children who were over 18 years of age were declared eligible for support and later integration into security structure of the state. However, many of the younger combatants informally left before verification and did not enter the cantonment. (world education, 2009)

To reintegrate returned children into their community or society, Indreni Samaj Kendra has been providing reintegration services in total 50 VDCs. Only children who were involved in Maoists are granted reintegration packages by the NGO. Apart from the closest VDCs like Sunwol, Bhutaha, Bardhghat, and Tilakpur, some of the outlying VDCs such as Benimanipur, Kumarworti, Pratappur, Bandevi, Daunnedevi, Dumkibaas were the areas where returned children who have been receiving the support from the organization lived. They are entitled as CAAFAG by the program implementing agencies.

Across the VDCs, there are mixed community populations residing in scattered hamlets. Minimum number of vehicles runs to the remote parts. Apart from the highway, the road that takes to these various settlements is mostly rough and narrow. Most of the rural areas lack good schools, electricity, water, and health and sanitation facilities. There is absence of alternative such as parks and recreation centers, computer training, tuition centers for children. After school children, usually boys may form a group to play cards or caroms. Others may work in fields, fetch water, collect fodder or take their pet animals to jungle. As

compare to remote rural areas, town areas has relatively better opportunities like private schools, colleges, tuition centers, child clubs for social gatherings and events.

4.2 Background of sampled Respondents

4.2.1 Caste/ Ethnic composition of Respondents

Children belonging to various caste/ethnic backgrounds have joined the Maoists forces. However, it is said that low caste and ethnic children's representation is large in number. In the table below, the distribution of the respondents in terms of caste/ethnicity is presented.

Table 1: Caste/Ethnic Background of the Respondents

Caste/Ethnicity	Boys	Girls	Total
Brahmin	7	2	9
Chhetri	---	1	1
Tharu	1	3	4
Hill Dalit (B.K)	7	3	10
Madhesi Dalit (Harijans)	3	2	5
Kumal	1	---	1
Magar	---	2	2
Tamang	---	1	1
Total	19	14	33

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The above table provides information on the respondent's background in terms of caste/ethnicity. Out of total 33 numbers of returnees interviewed 19 of them were boys and 14 were girls. 10 respondents that belonged to Hill Dalit caste group are the highest number joining the Maoist forces. Among the caste groups, hill Dalits are referred to lowest rank in the caste hierarchy and also they lack access to resources therefore it is not unusual for their involvement into the Maoists. 7 boys

and 2 girls belonging to Brahmin caste have joined the Maoists. Poverty is rampant in many areas, so the involvement of all caste/ethnic groups into the Maoists is seen. Similarly, 3 boys and 2 girls of Madhesi Dalit caste and 1 boy and 3 girls of Tharu caste were found to have joined the Maoist forces.

4.2.2 Age at Joining the Maoists

Recruitment of children under the age of 18 is considered unlawful. However, Maoists had recruited number of children of young age in their forces. Joining of Maoists force at the very young age has severe impact upon children's psychological, social or economic aspects. The table presented below shows the age of respondents at the time of joining the Maoist force.

Table 2: Respondents Age at Joining the Maoists

Age Group	Boys	Percent	Girls	Percent	Total	Percentage
10-12	2	10.53	----	---	2	6.06
13-15	12	63.15	12	85.72	24	72.73
16-18	5	26.31	2	14.28	7	21.21
Total	19	100	14	100	33	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

As seen from Table 4, the highest 72.73 percentage of the children fall between the age group of 13-14. Among boys and girls, respectively, 63.15 and 85.72 percentage of the respondents is found to have joined the Maoists when they were between the age group of 13-14. The second largest 21.21 percentage of children have been involved when they were between 16-18 years of age group. Between 10-12 age groups, the lowest 6.06 percentage have joined the Maoist forces. None of them are above 18 years of age at the time of joining the Maoist forces.

4.2.3 Current age of the Respondents

Returnees who were below the age of 18 have been provided reintegration support. Presently, the reintegration support is at its fourth phase. The age of the respondents at the time of interview has been presented in the table below.

Table 3: Respondents' Current Age

Age Group	Boys	Percent	Girls	Percent	Total	Percentage
16-18	8	42.10	8	57.14	16	48.48
18and above	11	57.90	6	42.86	17	51.52
Total	19	100	14	100	33	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The above table shows that the current age of 11 boys and 6 girls are above 18 years of age. Hence, the highest 51.52 percentage of boys and girls are 18 years and above. However, in the girls side 57.14 percentage of girls fall into 16-18 age groups whereas 42.10 percent fall into 16-18 groups. This shows that relatively large number of girls studying in class 9 or 10. One of the reasons is because of culture of keeping girls home to resume household tasks. None of the respondent is below 16 years of age.

4.2.4 Educational Status of the Respondents

School was one of the most influenced areas during the time of Maoists conflict. Due to Maoists activities in school vicinity, children's study often got disrupted. Many times they are compelled to leave studies and made involved in their political activities or are made to read ideological books related to Maoists war. Returnees find difficult to re-start studies because of various reasons they face in society. Therefore, they are provided school support so that they can continue their studies. Provision of education support is one of the main aims of the child

protection agency. The returnees are provided materials needed which is also said to be as need-based. However, some of the children have never been to school or college. In the table given below, the educational status of respondents who have been receiving reintegration facilities has been provided.

Table 4: Educational Background of the Respondents

Class	Boys	Percent	Girls	Percent	Total	Percentage
Below 5	---	---	1	7.14	1	3.03
6 – 8	1	5.26	5	35.72	6	18.18
9 – 11	8	42.10	5	35.72	13	39.39
Up to 12	10	52.64	3	21.42	13	39.39
Total	19	100	14	100	33	100

Source: Field survey, 2010

Table 5 shows that equal percentage 39.39 and 39.39 of the respondents fall in 9-11 and up to 12 categories. Among boys and girls, 52.6 percent of boys are enrolled to class 12 whereas much less 21.2 percent are enrolled in the same category. In fact, 35.72 and 35.72 percent of girls are in between 9-11 and 6-8 category. This shows the educational disparity in enrollment of boys and girls into schools. Early child marriage in some communities like Tharus and Madhesi Dalits is one reason. 1 girl has never been to school, she belongs to Tharu community. The main reason to leave school according to her was that her parents could not afford to pay fees or school materials.

4.2.5 Respondents Representation from Different Areas

The respondents are from the following VDCs. They are also the ones who have received the reintegration support by Indreni Samaj Kendra. Some VDCs such as Bardghat, Bhutaha Sunwol, Tilakpur were near from the headquarter Parasi.

Table 5: Location of the Respondents

VDC	Boys	Girls	Total
Bardghat	---	1	1
Benimanipur	3	3	6
Bhutaha	---	1	1
Daunne Devi	---	1	1
Dumkibaas	2	---	2
Kumarworti	11	---	11
Pratappur	---	1	2
Rupauliya	1	1	1
Ramgram	---	1	1
Somani	2	---	2
Sunwol	---	1	1
Tilakpur	---	4	4

Source: Field survey, 2010

Table 5 shows the highest 11 boys interviewed are from Kumarworti VDC. The second largest number of returnees is from Benimanipur VDC. 1 respondent of Chhetri caste is originally from Gulmi district but she is married and settled in Nawalparasi district and is also the recipient of the reintegration facilities. The data in the above table shows that apart from 1 respondent others are from the same district.

4.2.6 Duration of Joining the Maoist group

Maoists have used children for various purposes. In conducting their duties, children had to spend days, weeks, months or years in the forces. Many of them had to witness or perpetuate crimes as well. It is assumed that the longer one has spent time in the force; higher is the impact of war on child's psychology. Post-war situation can have even deep impact on them. However, the time spent by the children varies from place to place. In the table given below, the respondent's time duration when associated with the Maoists forces has been presented.

Table 6: Time Spent with the Maoists

Time duration	Boys	Percent	Girls	Percent	Total	Percentage
Few days-6months	17	89.47	9	64.28	26	78.79
6months-1 year	---	---	3	21.42	3	9.09
Up to 2 years	2	10.53	1	7.14	3	9.09
More than 2 years	---	---	1	7.14	1	3.03
Total	19		14		33	

Source: Field survey, 2010

As seen from table 6, the highest 78.79 percentage of children spent few days-6 months with the Maoists forces. These children went with the motivators as they were lured by their promises. They were subject to experience various roles and duties. Due to the proximity of cantonment sites, children are easily influenced so they entered and returned back to their homes. 3 girls have spent 6months-1 year with the Maoists whereas 1 girl have spent more than 2 years as fighter in the Maoist forces. One girl of Dalit caste went along with some of her friends but she did not reach the camp. Out of fear from the possible reaction from her parents they spent whole day in the jungle and two days at her relatives place.

4.2.7 Years at Joining the Maoist group

Children have joined the Maoist forces during the Maoists forces and even after the April 2006 ceasefire (see security council report, 2007). After the setup of series of cantonments in 2006, PLA are permitted to visit local communities by their divisional commanders on a daily basis (see CICS, July 2008). Moreover, the Maoists motivators encouraged and enrolled children from various places of this district. Reintegration support is applicable for every returnee irrespective of their age, or time spent within the Maoist force. Despite the national and international protocols ratified by the state and Maoists children's were repeatedly recruited at

different periods. The table presented below shows the distribution of respondents by years.

Table 7: Distribution of Respondents Joining of the Maoists by Years

Year	Boys	Girls	Total	Percentage
2002	---	1	1	3.03
2003-2005	4	3	7	21.21
2006-2008	15	10	25	75.75
2009	---	---	---	---
2010	---	---	---	---
Total	19	14	33	

Source: Field survey, 2010

Table 7 shows that the highest 75.75 percentages of the respondents joined the Maoists force in between (2006-2008) and 21.21 percentages of respondents joined the Maoists force in between (2003-2005). This indicates that the highest number of respondents is recruited after the ceasefire was declared in 2006. The proximity of cantonments and activities of Maoists is also one of the reasons for driving these respondents.

4.3 Indreni Samaj Kendra

Indreni Samaj Kendra (ISK) is a non-government organization (NGO) which was established in 2052 B.S. Since the beginning, it has been operating various programs such as educational support and income generation programs for children, Dalit and the poor communities in many VDCs of Palpa. Their main targets are children, youths, women, Dalit and poor. The head office is situated in Jhirubas, Palpa while the contact office is located in Ramgram Parasi of Nawalparasi district.

4.3.1 Information about the Program

Since October 2007, Indreni Samaj Kendra (ISK), the program implementation agency has been carrying out reintegration support for children associated with the Maoists, also known as (CAAFAG) in about 50 VDC of Nawalparasi District. This district was chosen because “main cantonment as well as many satellite cantonments are situated here, also this place is said to be as sensitive areas and various activities by armed groups has occurred.” The program is funded by “Save the children.” The title of the intervention is “Reintegration of children associated with armed forces and armed groups.” According to the guidelines prepared by agency working for these children, the children get assistance by means of (1) support to education (2) vocational training (3) income generation (4) psycho-social support (5) medical support.

The organization has registered 217 former CAAFAG from October 2007 to 2010. In the first phase (2007), around 100 returned children were identified, registered and supported. Second phase began from July 2008 which lasted for only six months. Subsequently, third phase started in July 2009 and lasted for a year. The total number of children who received education support is 172 or 79.26 percent while 45 of them or 20.74 percentages received vocational training/income generation

Presently, the program is at its fourth phase starting from July 2010. A total of 114 returnees received re-support. Out of which 101 returnees got educational support whereas 13 of them got vocational training/income generation support.

Based on personal interview with Mr. Birendra kr thapa and Nirmala Darnal of ISK

In the initial stage, field staffs included a district Incharge, tracing agent, councilors, community psychosocial worker (CPSW), senior social mobilizer and several social mobilizers, but presently there are 3 staffs, program officer, a community psychosocial worker and social mobilize. Reintegration packages are mainly divided into two broad groupings such as,

(A) Individual Support

Each individual returning boy or girl was entitled to choose any of the following packages.

Education support

The school going boy or girl receives “Material support” which includes notebooks, pens and also school fees for whole year. Other items involve uniform, bags, slippers etc. The primary objectives of such supports are (1) to ensure that all school children are provided education opportunities in order to develop their full potential. (2) To reintegrate back into formal education systems children who dropped out of school for various reasons during the war (Save the children, 2007).

Altogether 28 respondents interviewed have received education support since 2007. Out of them, 19 are boys and 9 are girls. Among boys, 14 of them have received material support for three consecutive years while 11 boys are found receiving support till fourth times or years. However, 2 boys of age 18, and who belong to Dalit caste left school at the first phase or year. He is currently working as an assistant in one of the goldsmiths shop. Another boy of age 20 and of poor family had left school and was preparing to go abroad for employment. He had received support for three years. One boy of age 17 and who was an orphan was found managing for living by working as labor around the border area until six months or more while for the rest of the months he would attend classes. Among girls, 9 of the girls received education support. In the current fourth phase, 6 of them got support. Three of the respondent’s cases were closed as two of them got

married when they were 16 and 17 years old. Two is of Tharu and the other is of hill Dalit caste group.

5 boys of Brahmin caste, 4 boys of hill Dalit caste, 2 boys of Madhesi- Dalit caste, 1 Magar and 1 Tamang boys resumed their studies after returning homes. However, they were identified and assisted by the organization later. Remaining returnees could not resume their studies due to various reasons; later, they were tracked and assisted by the org. Among girls, 1 Brahmin girls, 2 Tharu girls, 1 Madhesi Dalit girl, 1 hill-Dalit and 1 Magar girl resumed their schools after returning to their homes.

3 boys and 4 girls said that they could not re-start their studies as their parents were unable to afford school expenses.

4 boys said that initially they were discriminated by some of their teachers and friends. Some of them still carried their party name. Some teachers said that some of the boys misbehaved with them initially. Boys also said that they found difficult coping with friends and teachers in school but as time passed they become accustomed to school rules. 5 Hill-Dalit boys said that they want to learn driving after passing 10 and find a job. 9 boys and 12 girls stated that they are still nagged or criticized of joining the Maoists

Training/vocational training/income generation:

Apart from the educational support, various kinds of sensitization trainings, orientation classes on child protection rights were conducted. Some of them are as peace building training, child rights orientation, psychosocial training, HIV /AIDS prevention programs, and mother group's orientation, child / youth clubs orientation classes. The main aim of such awareness campaign is to disseminate information as well as to empower CAAFAG and develop healthy relationship within family and communities (save the children, 2007).

For children who were not interested to join school, vocational training was provided which included learning of skills like tailoring, plumbing, driving, electric wirings etc. The aim of offering these skills is to help returnees with learning marketable skills and gaining employment. Basic trainings were for three month on an average however, the length of trainings depended on the nature of occupation. The trainings were provided in the form of apprenticeship in local workshops or in vocational training centers. After the completion of the training the participants are also provided equipments such as sewing machines, tools and technical kits related to their job. Boy's trainee could not be met even after several attempts and also many of them were found to be out of their place looking for job after receiving support.

5 of the girls received vocational training such as tailoring for 3 months and were subsequently provided equipment like sewing machine, table or chairs. 3 girls received support for four years. 2 girls received for three years. As one of them got married and the other left reasoning the training center was far from her home. One girl of Tharu caste is currently working in one of her brothers tailoring shop. She wants to do further courses of embroidery and cutting but she says she cannot do savings as all of the money they earn is spent for household purposes. The girls had completed their basic learning course of tailoring and are provided with sewing machines and tools. However, they are unable to get job or earn money and their equipment were found lying inside their homes. The girls said that they could not open shop as their family is not able to provide them financial support. Besides, all of the girls have received only basic training. Also, tailoring shops are very far away from their homes. A girl said that she had to stop going training classes as training centre was far from her place. She had stayed in Maoist forces for more than a year as cultural performer. A girl of Madhesi Dalit caste earns small amount of money by stitching clothes for her customers. She has opened a small shop in her house compound and she says most of her customers are her

neighbors and family members. On the same day I met her, later she left to the border areas to buy stuffs needed for her job. With the money she earns, she says she is able to purchase materials or can even provide money for her family. She also said that her neighbors and family members attitude towards her has changed now. She wants to re-start her studies as well. 2 Tharu girls said that they had hard times while leaving to attend the training classes as they were criticized of trying to be re-recruited into Maoists and that their girls would get influenced by them. 4 girls said that they are sometimes nagged by their parents for joining the Maoists.

Psychosocial counseling:

Basic or supportive counseling services were provided for returned boys and girls. Such services were provided for family members of CAAFAG as well as the community people through personal visits at homes of returnees and also via psychosocial orientation classes. Psychosocial services were provided strongly during the first phase in 2007, however, counseling is been provided during the follow- up period as well.

After returnees were identified, they were provided counseling services for three days. However, not all of them had chance to attend the psychosocial counseling classes. Only the selected returnees are provided services. From every VDC two returnees were invited to attend classes. According to the organizers, they special focus was boys and girls who were finding hard to reintegrate to the society. Many of the returnees could remember the period when they received psychosocial counseling.

Out of 19 boys interviewed 15 of them said that they had attended the psychosocial counseling classes in Kawasoti, Nawalparasi for four days. Among girls out of 14 interviewed, 13 of them said about attending the psychosocial classes. Besides, returnees who found difficulties reintegrating into communities

were paid special attention and given extra counseling at their place. Some of the children who found difficult struggling with friends and teachers or community members were met and constantly guided. Many of the children said that counseling was the best part to make them release all the negative views and thoughts that they had experienced within them. Some of the girls said that had they not receives counseling at their time of stress, they would not be where they are now. “Trainings of Trainers” was provided for selected groups of boys and girls. 6 boys and 4 girls were also granted peer education trainings and they later worked as peer educators for a year or more. Trainings on awareness of HIV/AIDS and about “gender issues” 20 respondents stated about taking trainings on such programs. They had to remain in selected villages to spread awareness to the villagers or returnees.

Among boys, 2 of them who had worked as fighters and currently studying in class 8 and 9 said that they had still vivid memories of war-related violence. He also said that even today he fills guilty for killing one of his friends when the boy was in pain. Two Madhesi Dalit girls also said about having recurrent thoughts and memories of war. One girl was criticized for staying in the cantonment and living with one of the boy from her village. She said that even today she’s inquired about the person which makes her more nervous.

Medical support:

Health services are provided for the individual returnee to help reintegrate in the society. There is an assumption that returnees might be affected by health-related sickness after staying or experiencing war or by involvement into their political activities

Out of 19 boys, 8 of them said that they had received medical support. 2 boys got treatment from the nearby clinic. They had suffered from jaundice. Out of 14 girls

4 of the girls received medical treatment, two was of serious case. One of the boy said that he did not get response from the agency when he told about the pain in his knees. He was hit by the police while attending one of the rallies of the Maoists.

(B) Structural support:

Apart from individual support, the NGO has also provided support to schools, training centers, mothers group, and child/youth clubs. Schools were provided a financial contribution for each CAAFAG enrolled. Training centers where individual CAAFAGs are enrolled for learning trainings are also provided additional financial support. Furthermore, orientation classes, training, interaction programs was conducted for such support partners or groups. Some of the programs conducted were peace building training (2010); mothers group orientation, child rights orientation, psychosocial trainings, and HIV/AIDS prevention programs. Besides, psychological counseling services were organized to educated community leaders, and the CAAFAGs family on spotting key symptoms and problems which returnees face. As such implementation agencies believe that this support would encourage schools or training centers to make child friendly environment for children and more specifically it would help to successful reintegration process. This would ultimately motivate local stakeholders, political activists, trainers to change their negative attitude towards the former CAAFAG.

2 government schools where CAAFAG are enrolled and where I had visited was located in Kumarwoti, named Saraswoti Uchha Ma Bi and Adarsha Uchha Ma bi of Somani VDC. Around 27 and 2 returnees are enrolled in Saraswoti and Adarsha schools respectively.

4.3.2 Target groups

The educational and reintegration services were provided to four groups of direct beneficiary. (world education, 2009)

1. Children leaving cantonment sites during the second stage verification process
2. Children who have left cantonments or fighting forces, on their own and are back in their communities,
3. Vulnerable children and conflict affected children, orphans or non-CAAFAGs

4.3.3 Steps of program implementation

Sensitization of communities via open community discussions

Community awareness, mobilization and advocacy were the main activity implemented by the organization during the initial phase. Information about the programs was disseminated through local networks such as community people, NGO members, teachers etc. Interaction, discussions and coordination meetings was held with government agencies at VDC or district level. Regular meetings and awareness- raising programs with the local activists, trainers were held to convey information about programs as well as to understand their views and the condition about the former CAAFAG in their communities. Former CAAFAGS were also encouraged and mobilized to participate in awareness raising programs. They were also provided orientation classes on child protection issues.

Identification and registration of CAAFAG (Oct 2007-2008):

In some situations, children do not show up and have access to the package benefits because of the backlash they might experience from family or community people. Therefore, the implementation agency has to enter such places to identify

the beneficiaries prior to providing the assistance. Usually, numbers of field staffs are sent to the armed conflict effected villages or towns. To identify the CAAFAGs, they provide an orientation with village/child protection centers, or child club members, partner NGOS, local political leaders, family, and also with other relevant stakeholders. “Once, people get convinced with the aim of the project, they start to inform us about number of such children’s; their problems, their location, even family members give out the names of these children,” said one social mobilizer. Further, the social mobilizers also visit homes of these children to find out the family situation and the condition of the former CAAFAG boys and girls. School is one such place where the NGO has depended upon identifying of CAAFAG and their priorities. One of the school staff explains, “They would bring piles of filled registration forms and out of these we are asked to pick the CAAFAGs names”

Reintegration support, and follow up, case closure (up to Jan 2010):

After the evaluation of needs and priorities, the implementing organization starts providing reintegration packages for the CAAFAGs. A boy or girl are asked about their interest and informed about the packages. “In this process, as per rule, the child is not revealed about their status of being combatant as a condition for receiving the package” said a field staff. If a child wants to join or continue studies, he/she receives reintegration package “Material support” which consists of books, copies, slippers, bags, admission fee etc.

In the fourth phase of reintegration support and follow up period, one of a Hill Dalit school girl was provided additional “Material support”. She had failed SLC exam in the previous year and now she was taking tuition classes. During one of the previous meeting with the girl and her family, the parents had discussed about their inability of paying fees for four of their children with the social mobilizer. After many months, the day was fixed to meet the girl in her tuition center. A form

was filled by the mobilizer while both the giver and receiver were made to sign the form. Just the day before this girl had submitted the documents with an application letter written by her, reference letter and recommendation letter from school and tuition centers. The girl looked happy and relieved. Next, she was taken to the nearby bazaar and asked her to choose school materials such as few copies, two pens and a guess paper. She held these things in her hand but did not utter any words. From the next shop, a pair of sandals was bought and handed to her. In my next meeting, she told me that she was not hopeful of receiving support this soon since many times they had to wait till long time and in the end either had to borrow money as credit from their neighbors.

Once the child is provided support, the field staff should visit to him/her within a month as a rule. They make visits to their home or school or training centers and meet parents or teachers inquiring about their children's progress. In one of such visits one of the field staff and I had to travel for two hours by foot just to meet two of the children. However, they could not be met as we were told that those school going boys had left to Kathmandu only few months back. On the way back, there were many recipients asking why the staff has not met them for so many months. During the interview many CAAFAGs were trying to know why the field staffs only come and meet them in school why not at homes together with their family members.

CHAPTER V

MOTIVATING FACTORS AND ROLES

This chapter deals with the reasons why children joined the Maoists. It also includes the way how children were used while they joined their forces, what kinds of duties, roles and responsibilities were offered to them, what were their status and positions. A number of push and pull factors has been identified as being responsible for this phenomenon.

5.1 Push Factors

Push factors are those factors that may force children to either join or make vulnerable to exploitation. Poverty, discrimination, government abuses and forced recruitment are identified as prime factors as being responsible for driving the returnees away from their homes.

5.1.1 Poverty

Poverty is the common factor that drove returnees into the Maoists. In most of the rural areas, families are living in poor or extreme poor conditions without proper material well-being, food, housing and land. The situation of Hill Dalits and Madhesi Dalits is even more severe as many of them are landless and also lack job opportunity. Children living in extreme level of poverty and who are as young as thirteen or fourteen were found working first to get food, clothes or money for school as their families cannot afford to provide their needs. Hunger and food insecurity is also major problem in most of the rural areas as large groups do not own land. A Tharu girl of Tilakpur VDC decided to join the Maoists forces because family could not provide her food, school uniform and money for school fees. She said, “My parents work at other peoples farm and bring little money which is not enough for our large families. Often we have food shortage so sometimes I have to work at people’s farm for food and money. I heard that if we go and work with the Maoists we will be fed properly.”

In most of the rural areas of this district, people are engaged in agricultural activities. However, many communities do not have sufficient amount of land to feed their families for the whole year. Further, they have few secondary skills by which they can substitute their livelihood. Due to lack of enough land Madhesi Dalit children have to work in their local landlord farm as agricultural laborers to bring income home. In poor or extreme poor conditions a male child of the family is pressurized by the parents to earn income for the family survival at the very young age. From many rural areas, large numbers of young male members migrate to India seeking job because of lack of opportunity in their areas. It is not unusual for poor Tharu girls to work locally as labors carrying stones, bricks, sand or work in factories and construction sites. Many of these girls were found to have never been to school. Maoists have often targeted such children by promising to offer wage and economic security.

Many families still depend on forests for their living. Boys and girls are found going forests to collect wood, fodder for animals or even for supply and sale of woods. There is a lack of good roads, electricity facilities, hospitals, water facilities, health and sanitation, good schools and colleges in most of the rural and remote areas. Moreover, children have to travel a long way to reach school. Such children were found to be in more risk of joining the Maoists.

5.1.2 Discrimination and Exclusion

Discrimination is another key motivating factor that has pushed young boys and girls into the Maoist forces. Girls, lower class people, ethnic groups and lower caste; Dalit children joined in large numbers as they have been discriminated and deprived of their rights. Children may face discrimination within their family, among friends and also among community people. Siblings rivalry, parents favoring male child, girls confined to homes, early marriage, child abuse were most mentioned discriminatory problems by both boys and girls belonging to all class, caste and ethnic groups. Ethnic children reported about fighting and abuses targeted to them by their alcoholic parents at homes. Dalits and their

children living in rural areas mentioned about denial or restrictions of access to public facilities, education facilities and discrimination in school and public areas. Practice of 'Untouchability' is prevalent mostly in rural areas where children are not allowed to enter non-Dalits homes. Dalit children felt humiliated by this behavior so when they learnt about Maoists rhetoric of fighting for their rights many children joined with the Maoists. Even parents encouraged their sons to join. A Dalit boy who was fourteen years of age at the time of joining said, "My father was influenced by their vision of secular state and provision of political representation to our people. He took me with him to the fighting force"

Ethnic children reported of being discriminated in schools, villages, religious occasion by the high caste Hindus. Maoist's rhetoric on secularism and autonomy attracted ethnic boys and girls as many of them have been suffering from states discriminatory policy towards them and their community. Since ethnic people have been struggling to retain power from the very long time, children felt that this was the time to fight for regaining political power. A Tharu boy who had joined with the Maoists is now a performer in one of the Tharu Organisation, "We have been denied of our cultural rights by the state, Nepali language was made compulsory for us, our language was sidelined, our people have to suffer from such discriminatory behavior, therefore some of my family members including me decided to join the Maoists since they favored our community goals."

Discrimination and exclusion of girls from attaining education, unequal treatment in homes, limited influence and control over resources and important decisions, such as marriage, restrictions on mobility as compare to boys has increased vulnerability for girls joining the Maoists. Girls are married off at very young age even now in rural areas and among communities such as Tharu and Madhesi Dalits. Girl's mobility is controlled mainly by the male members or parents. They are confined to homes or vicinity. Still, many girls face gender discrimination at homes. Boys are sent to good schools whereas girls are kept at homes for household duties. Such practice has encouraged more girls to join the Maoists.

5.1.3 Government abuses

Human rights abuses by government forces have also played a significant role in encouraging youth and children to join the Maoists. Most of the children mentioned abuses such as beatings, unlawful detention, threatening and torture against their family members and community people as an impetus to join. They said that such act committed by the security forces had a deep impact on them. One Tharu girl from Tilakpur VDC of Nawalparasi district said that in one evening she had to run and hide in nearby forests till the army went away. Some others said that they were questioned and ill-treated by army while on their way to home from work. “Army would enter people’s home and threaten or take into custody if they suspect them as a Maoist supporter”, a Dalit boy said. Poor household, lower castes, Dalit, ethnic people and children were the main target.

However, there were also cases where children from upper class and castes have been ill-treated because of their parents affiliation with the Maoists. A Brahmin boy said, “Army would enter our house anytime, we were constantly questioned and harassed, they wouldn’t leave our guest also.” Children also witnessed the violent act perpetrated against their parents, peers, siblings and relatives by the security forces which had immense effect on their mental health. In response, many of them joined the Maoist, seeking to protect their families or to avenge abuses. A Dalit boy witnessed atrocities against his father, and made a decision to join when he was only thirteen years of age. “I wanted to take revenge” he said. Further he explained, “Around two dozens of army came to our house and started beating my father, he was dragged near to the gate put into van and then taken away. My mother cried a lot that day. Father had to remain in the custody for three months, during those periods our family had to suffer a lot”

Tharu girls living in Rupauliya VDC reported that they and their family members were often threatened and tortured by security forces. Many of them said “They would come and search the whole places, every nook and corner; they would pour whole rice grains

from our granary and mix with rice, they would also thrash our parents saying why we fed the Maoist. "

Some girls reported that they were tortured in the custody by security forces. This encouraged more girls to join the Maoist, as they wanted to take revenge for the cruel act. A girl wanted to return remaining explosives which was left with her after an attack to the army camp, but while on the way she was caught by the police and taken into custody. She describes on how she was tortured in the jail, "both my hands and legs were tied with ropes, they would beat me hard on my foot and hands. My whole body turned into red and blue. I was kept in custody for three months. With the help of my relative I managed to flee from the jail. I was hospitalized for three months; I decided to stay at home, everybody knew that I was a Maoist; army also started looking for me again. I felt very bad." She said the whole incident compelled her to re-join with the Maoist.

5.1.4 Forced participation

Children were forcibly recruited by the Maoists into their ranks. They reported of being compelled to go because Maoists would threaten to them, to their parents and siblings. So, to defend their family members they have to go with them. These children were abducted from their homes, villages, work place, from friend's home or relatives place. Many children were found joining with the Maoists without informing their parents. Maoist cadre would visit people's homes asking for food but sometimes they would also ask parents to send their sons or daughters for some purpose. They are made to carry bags filled with explosives or to work as cook. Rural areas were their main target since most household consists of large number of children.

Family members were harassed or threatened to punish if they refuse to send their children. A Tharu girl of Rupauliya VDC had to go with the Maoist activists because her parents were threatened to punish. "Two girls and boys came to our house; they were carrying large bags, after having food, girls told mother that they want to take me just to carry those bags and help cross the forest as there use to be army patrol now and then in

this area. At first, my mother refused but the two girls started pressurizing mother, my mother had to agree because they started to threaten us. I went and stayed there for three months.”

Maoists also conducted campaigns claiming that every family is obligated to provide one person from each household; therefore, young children had to go, sometimes in place of their parents or siblings. A young Dalit boy refused to go with the Maoists at first but the cadres would keep pressurizing him saying one person has to go for “the cause”. Since his brother was physically weak he had to go.

Table 8: Returnees responses for their reasons of joining

Push factors	Boys	Girls	Total	Percentage
Poverty	12	10	22	71
Discrimination and Exclusion	4	6	10	32
Government abuses	4	2	6	19
Forced participation	10	9	19	61

Source: Field survey, 2010

Note: The total percentage is greater than 100 percent due to the overlapping of returnee’s responses.

The above table shows that the highest 71 percent of boys and girls joined Maoists out of poverty. The second highest score indicates the driving away of 61 percent of children into the Maoists forces. Likewise, 32 percent of children went out of discrimination and exclusion whereas 19 percent of them were forced to join because of the harassment caused by police or armies.

5.2 Pull factors

Children are also pulled by the Maoists using various methods of intimidation or enticement and false promises. Family member's involvement in the Maoists groups too has inspired boys and girls to be as part of their activities. The other significant factors such as Ideology, cultural programs, employment, recreation and travel, family and peer pressure or influence are some causes that pulled returnees from both rural and town areas of this district to join the Maoists forces.

5.2.1 Ideology

Returnees have been greatly influenced by political ideology and activities of the Maoists. Basically, they were attracted to the idea of fighting for all kinds of social and economic oppression against girls, class, caste, ethnic groups, fighting for their rights and their freedom. Most of the children reported that they were encouraged by their speeches. Madhesi, Madhesi Dalit and Tharu girls reported that they were personally in school were influenced by the way Maoist cadres spoke about eradication of poverty and provision of employment in future. One Brahmin boy studying in class 11 of Dumkibaas VDC said that he joined the Maoist force when he was barely fourteen years of age, he remained in fighting forces for nearly two years, he replied, "I was impressed by their speeches and very influenced by what they said about fighting against corruption, fighting for economic equality and fighting for change in the country."

Another boy who is now studying in class 10 and who comes from educated family in the same village said that he was inspired by their view on educational system of the country. "They said that that the current education system is a bourgeoisie learning technique and not a practical one, so students should oppose this, I felt the same." This kind of rhetoric had a major impact on many children since they felt that the education they are gaining was impractical as most of them were unable to find jobs.

When Brahmin and Chhetri girls of age 18 from Sunwol VDC were inquired about their knowledge on Maoists view about girls or women, they said that they were encouraged by Maoists idea of liberation, equality and inclusion. "Maoist activists would speak about

equality of boys and girls in a new system, that we would be granted property rights and proper education, security and employment in future”.

Maoist rhetoric of “New Nepal” attracted maximum numbers of the children to join since they felt they were deprived of their rights. Maoist has also listed in their demand about retaining political power to the backward and marginalized people. Their rhetoric had great impact to the children and they felt that change was needed in the country. As one Tharu boy of age 18 reports, “They told us repetitively that we were fighting against the current government so that power would be given back to our people.”

5.2.2 Cultural programs

One of the most influential medium that drove returnees towards the Maoists force is cultural programs. In fact, Maoists organized such programs to entice and enlist boys and girls to their forces. Boys and girls are encouraged to perform songs and dances or deliver speeches in front of masses. Some of them are taught to play musical instruments. They are then taken from place to place to attract more children. Most of the returnees said that they had attended such cultural functions organized in their village area, youth or child clubs during day times or in the evening after school. Their engagement in the cultural groups may last for days, months or even years. During the informal conversation with teachers, parents and with some of the children of Dumkibaas VDC it was found that few children had bunked classes to attend their programs.

Girl child were seen to be attracted more and motivated by the cultural performances, however, boys also mentioned that they were also influenced by the songs and theatrical performances. Usually, Maoist choose poor, rural and places where ethnic, Madhesi, Madhesi Dalit people resided to conduct the programs. Children were their main target as many of them were easily accessible; many children stayed at home or work in fields and very few attended schools.

5.2.3 Employment

Lack of employment opportunity in locality has made returnees vulnerable to join the Maoists. Some of the students of Kawasoti VDC made a decision to join the Maoists group because they were promised to offer salary, job and economic security.

Usually, elder male child is expected to support the family so there is a pressure for him to get a job. Upon interviewing students of hill Dalit origin, studying in class 8 and 9, in Kumarwoti VDC, Dalit boys said that they would look for job after passing class ten. Sometimes, parents also permit their children to go with Maoists in a hope of receiving money from them. A poor Madhesi Dalit boy living near to Indian border areas in Pratappur VDC accepted the offer of getting money and job while working in Maoists camps. He remained there for almost three months; but he did not receive any money despite serving hard day and night. He explains, “I failed sent-up exam, there was no money to take tuition classes so I left school. One day a ‘*dai*’ from nearby village Gochhadatar, apparently a Maoist motivator, came to our place; he told me that I would get money and job if I work with them in the camp. My parents also sent me telling to do well, work hard and send money.

A group of school boys reported that they were offered money for doing wall painting and writing slogans. “They gave us money and a tin of paint and brush. We used to work during night, writing slogans and all that stuffs for several days.”

In a Tharu community, girls at a very young age work as a labor near home or sometimes far away. Some girls living in Rupauliya VDC said that they have been working as laborer since the age of thirteen or fourteen. Girls were found to be taken as domestic servants with their parents consent by the upper class people. Many girls were found to be illiterate, that they have never been to school. These girls are forced to come out of their homes seeking for petty work. Often such children are targeted by the Maoists. There were group of Tharu girls who described about how they were approached and persuaded to join, “They asked us how much money do we earn, we said 70 rupees in a

day, then they said, so little money....., you go with us there, you'll get more money and work.”

5.2.4 Recreation and Travel

Some returnees are attracted to the idea of learning physical training and skills. Maoists have also allured children by saying they will be provided entertainment. After April 2006 ceasefire, Maoist could make frequent trip to their homes and villages. Madhesi Dalit boys residing in Somani VDC reported that they used to travel places, enjoy and had fun with fellow friend while working with the Maoists cadres. Seeing this many boys and girls got attracted to join. One Tharu of Rupauliya VDC boy was attracted to join because the cadres encouraged him by saying, “You can live life like leader, you can get to drive motor cycles and go wherever you like.”

Boys living near the cantonment area reported that since Maoists camps were not far from their places they thought, why not join for sometime to know and learn physical exercises, karate classes. Some boys said they wanted to join because they were told they can make new friends, young girls also joined hoping to have some fun with their friend circle. The lure of learning to make explosives, carry and operate guns, learning Khukuri moving skills has also attracted many youths and children to join.

For some children, travelling gives them an opportunity to explore knowledge. Girls are generally confined to private spheres, therefore, they get to come out if they find an opportunity to travel with an aim to acquire knowledge and see places. Maoist move from place to place conducting programs and doing activities like what they term as giving ‘justice’ to people by intervening and providing increased salary to the workers. A Brahmin girl of Bhutaha VDC said she wanted to see places and their activities therefore she went with one of her cousin. She stayed with them for almost six months, moving from one place to another. She explained, “It was my first time, I got to see many places and meet many people, I could learn how to speak in masses.

5.2.5 Family and Peer pressure

Some children are drawn into armed groups because it is a normal and acceptable tradition in their family's life. When some family members such as parents, siblings or relatives are in the armed forces, it becomes normal and natural for children to become involved as well. Returnees mentioned about their parents involvement with the Maoists since the very beginning saying they were 'kattar Maobadis'. Influenced by their family members involvement with the Maoist children were attracted to join because they could get to hear revolutionary things from them. Moreover, at some places it was found that their parents and party members held meetings at homes or open space where children were let to observe and take participation. Sometimes children also join if their family members put pressure on them. A Dalit boy of Swathi VDC was told by his parents to go and attend programs organized by the Maoists, "There were many congress supporters in our village, my parents told me to go and help support the Maoists to take revenge on them."

Out of peer pressure or influence children tend to join Maoists. They join because they are persuaded by saying they can have exciting life in camps. However, in some situation children are also taken by force, often by group of his friends. A Chhetri boy said, "A group of friends both and unknown came to my house, I was introduced with them, they forced me to go with them, I did not know where they were taking to me."

There were many returnees who reported that they were compelled to join in Bandhs and rallies organized by the Maoists because they were influenced by their friends. A school going Brahmin boy reported that he went in one of the election campaign because one of his friends who was a Maoist supporter could not attend, so he had to go in place of him.

Table 9: Returnees responses for their reasons of joining

Pull factors	Boys	Girls	Total	Percentage
Ideology	4	13	7	22

Cultural programs	5	6	11	35
Employment	13	8	19	61
Recreation and Travel	4	6	10	32
Family and Peer pressure	6	8	14	45

Source: Field survey, 2010

Note: The total percentage is greater than 100 percent due to the overlapping of returnee's responses.

In the above table, it is found that 61 percent of returned boys and girls joined the Maoists for employment opportunities. Due to the unavailability of jobs and poor economic conditions at homes children are forced to follow Maoists activists in the hope of getting money or jobs in future. During interviews, they had revealed about their hope of getting salary and jobs. 45 percent of boys and girls joined due to family or peer pressure or influence. Family member's affiliation to Maoists is quite common in many people and families. Most of the children interviewed were school going children hence peers influence can be considered as one of the reasons to join. Cultural programs attracted 35 percent of boys and girls to be in their groups whereas 32 percent of girls were drawn out of recreation and travel opportunities and 22 percent out of ideological reasons.

Thus, it can be concluded that, several push and pull factors had played a main role to drive or draw the returned children into the Maoists forces or their activities. Most of the returnees were abducted by the Maoists cadres or motivators who used to visit their homes or villages. Returnees either join voluntarily or made involuntary participation. About 71 percentages of the returnees were compelled to go as they faced poverty or extreme poverty conditions. Likewise, 61 percentages of the returnees made a decision to go with the Maoists out of attraction of getting employment opportunity or economic security. The Maoists activists would visit poor people's homes. Tharus, Madhesi-Dalits and hill Dalits were their main target. They would either encourage or force children to

join. Family members and peers affiliation or involvement with the Maoists is also a strong reason for them to join.

5.3 Children's roles and positions

Young returnees had to accomplish various duties and responsibilities during their engagement with the Maoist forces. In course of this period, they also had to go through various situations. Returnees who were interviewed described about their multiple roles and positions at different point of time.

During the time of War, children joining the Maoists were made to indulge in various types of trainings and activities. Among them military training was described as the most difficult and dangerous by most of the boys and girls who had joined the fighting forces. Initially, fighters were given some basic training lesson such as guarding of guns and explosives, cleaning and managing of guns, rifles and bullets. Once boys and girls were selected as fighters for war they were given harder training sessions that includes running by carrying heavy guns, jumping from high cliffs, crawling by carrying guns and explosives. Side by side, political education was provided for fighters and non-fighters, adults and children. They were encouraged to deliver speeches and trained in communication skills to allure children and also to get peoples confidence. Boys and girls as young as thirteen and fourteen during the wartime mentioned about fighting on the frontlines of battle. They also talked about killing government forces that they termed as 'enemy'. Some of the girl fighters also revealed about committing brutal killings in battlefield. A boy said that in one situation he even had to kill his fellow combatant because he was injured in the battle. Some girl fighters were found to have been promoted as section commanders of small armies.

Besides using children as frontline fighters, they were also made to perform non-military roles on a part time basis. Children said that there were lot of hard work and risk while

carrying out their job. Majority of children were found to be engaged in multiple roles. Throughout the time of War, children were assigned to serve as porter, as cook, cultural artist, spies and messengers, social mobilizer, fund raiser, ammunition and small arm supplier. One of the most common tasks assigned to almost every children included serving as sentry. Young boys and girls said that they were given guns or Khukuri and made stand alert and awake during night time. “Every night I have to do four to five hours duty by carrying guns and standing near to the camp gate”, a former male combatant said. Some boys also said that they had to do patrolling for long hours during night time. One chhetri girl interviewed said that staying in the cantonment became unsafe for her because she was constantly tried to harass by one of the male combatant. She said, “He began pressurizing me to marry him.” Some Madhesi girls reported that they were given training on how to convince and make some other children join. After being trained they had to go villages and to people’s home encouraging children to join for the ‘cause’. They served as a motivator inspiring children to participate in their programs. Some children were assigned for the role of cultural artist. They had to move place to place presenting songs and dances which would last for several hours. Before the fighters move for some mission like doing patrolling or to fight with the government security forces, children were send out as spies or messenger to inform about the scenarios, sometimes children were caught and punished harshly by people or the security forces. Three girls interviewed told that they had the role of collecting and supplying small arms from India. They said, “We used to disguise ourselves in such a manner that nobody believed we were carrying arms, often we used to take shortcut routes. It took several days to bring to our areas and there was also a lot of risk but we had many messengers at various places who would inform us about danger, I was never caught.”

The work of recruitment and training of young boys and girls into the Maoists continued even after the April 2006 ceasefire. Children were allured and abducted and taken into Maoists camps and given military trainings as well as non-military roles. Most of the

children received rudimentary military trainings from both male and female commanders. Physical trainings and political education was also made compulsory for newly recruited boys and girls. Sentry duty was the most mentioned roles accomplished by these children. Some children said that they were responsible for the role of cook. Both boys and girls had to cook food in mess for the large number of Maoists combatants. Girls were responsible for buying and bringing food items from the market. Some children were also sent to villages for tempting children to join. Within the few days stay inside the cantonment Maoists began building houses, digging and clearing fields to grow vegetables, rearing of domestic animals such as pigs. Great effort and labor was required to accomplish this task. Children have been used extensively for making houses inside the cantonment, building bridges and roads. In fact, large numbers of children were used for carrying mud and huge stones, for digging pits, fetching water, cleaning and washing purposes. Children had to go to the jungle to bring logs and thick planks for making houses. They said that both boys and girls were made to work equally for long hours. When a Tharu girl was asked about roles and responsibility, she explained about the general activities of most of the children. "We are supposed to wake up at 5'o clock in the morning, then we were made to run for few minutes, and P T for some more hours. We are offered breakfast after that there were division of work for every platoons, some of us had to do cooking or cleaning, some others had to built pig sty, others had to go to the jungle and cut trees and bring logs, separate houses were made for ladies, we had to go long distance to fetch water." Because of the tough labor many children left the camps and returned back to village very soon.

Children were also used exceptionally during election time by the Maoists members. During the election campaign some children were used for painting and writing slogans in walls. Boys were responsible for serving as security guards of local Maoist leaders. A Tharu boy of Rupauliya VDC said, "During day time I had to work as bodyguard for one of the lady Maoist leader and at night I was sent to make gather boys from my village, we used to form a large group and stay the whole night for several days, it was fun."Some

children were also given the task of lookouts and messengers. “Some of us were told to find out what the opposition party members plan was and like, how many of them were present,” a Dalit boy said. When there were rallies or protests, children were put into the frontline and made to walk and shout the slogans. There was majority number of children who said that they were prepared to take participation in the demonstration. They were between thirteen to fourteen years of age during the time they had joined. A school boy of age 19 got hit by police on his knees during one of the street violence, he lost his consciousness, later he found himself in hospital bed. He said that became a night mare for him for many months and even today he feels pain. Boys were used in large number rather than girls. Their situation was vulnerable as there used to be constant fights between the cadres of opposition parties. Children were often given the task of volunteers; hence they had to manage people coming for party’s meetings and programs, food and water supply for crowds. A Dalit boy reports, “My duty was to check the number of people who gets down and enter the bus.” Most of the boys said that they stayed for two or fifteen days with the Maoists. School boys were afraid that they would be caught and questioned by their friends, parents or school teachers and hence went to relatives place for couple of days.

Thus, the cases described above shows that returnees had to serve unique roles while association with the Maoists groups. Most of the returnees had to perform multiple roles. Many of them were made to do sentry roles. Returned girls were also made section commander of the small armies. They were trained to use military weapons and also given non-military roles to perform. Returnees had committed atrocities and also witnessed violence during war. Even after the ceasefire, returned children had to attend Maoists election campaigns and strikes. Newly recruited were given military trainings and non-military roles while staying in their cantonments. Some of them contributed a year or more as fighters as some spent two to six months in the camps. Their roles and positions during association with the Maoists had severe impact on their physical, psychological, social, emotional and mental aspects.

CHAPTER VI

RETURNEES SITUATION AND COPING STRATEGIES

This chapter provides detail information about returnee's condition after returning from the Maoists along with the narration on how they struggled to overcome from the various kinds of situation.

Returning to home or community became a unique experience for many returned young boys and girls as most of them confronted to an unprecedented situation. The perception and attitudes towards these returned children was now altered. They were unwelcomed by their parents and community. Family members and community people repeatedly responded with fear and distrust. The returnees experienced lowered social status as a result of the discrimination and fear from community members. No matter how long these returnees remained with the Maoists, they were often viewed with suspicion and also regarded as dangerous.

Although some children were brought back to home by their parent's or sibling's effort, they were still treated unjustly by their parents, relatives or neighbors. Children were teased and called upon by their designated names. They were frequently referred to as "Jungalee" and also labeled as "jungle boys" or "jungle girls". In response, some children even had to leave their homes to avoid discrimination, embarrassment and rejection. This kind of behavior created the feeling of humiliation and awkwardness for many returned boys and girls. Poor economic state and sickness was mentioned as making their situation more vulnerable. Other reason like frequent target by the Maoists or other political parties

was also found to be equally accountable for the situation. Their attempt to deal in such state put them further in risk of physical, psychological, emotional or mental stress. However, some of the returnees also mentioned about receiving positive response from their parents.

Young boys reported being scolded by their parents while most of them also expressed as being guilt-ridden of not informing parents as spending time with the Maoists. They said that they felt uncomfortable when talking to their friends and teachers. Some school boys who left for election campaigns for some period of time rejoined school whereas some others stayed home feeling embarrassed. Still, some boys belonging to poor families could not afford to go school and hence they had to stay home feeling more distress. When some Madhesi Dalit boys from poor families returned to their homes after years of spending time with the Maoist group, they were behaved differently by their family members. Soon, family started putting on pressure to find job instead of resuming their schoolwork. This caused mental pressure on them and they said that they almost went into depression. With some advice and care from parents some boys said that it became easier for them to continue their studies. They were also quick to regain friends and community member support and confidence. These children belong to Brahmin/Chhetri and educated family living in town areas and also they were as young as sixteen or seventeen by the time. None of the returned boys mentioned about receiving physical abuse at home apart from the scolding. Instead school returned boys reported about getting negative response in schools, like frequent remarks and embarrassment from their teachers. They said about how they used to have argument with some of the teacher when they were constantly questioned and misbehaved. Children who served as fighters and worked as full timer for long period were found having difficult times upon returning. A Dalit boy said, "I was happy that I was finally at home with mother and sisters but you know there were so much of awkward moments, people coming and asking and all, some neighbors saying oh see what he got? It was annoying." To escape from moments of

embarrassment some boys had to flee to Butwal or Bhairahawa where they eventually end up working in the restaurants.

Parents also had to send their children away from home to relative place or some secret areas to keep away from possible threats from the Maoists. Children had to face pressure from Maoists party to involve in strikes and election campaigns. This caused psychological effect on most of the children since they had to decide whether to follow them or not. Some children were hunt down and put pressure on to re-enter the cantonment. A Tharu boy of age fourteen when he joined the Maoists and was in the cantonment ran away from the cantonment as he was fed up with the ongoing situation, he came back home but soon Maoist member tracked him. He said, “There was so much pressure on me, I was back home now but they constantly came to my place and asked to utilize the salary that I get, I thought people would view negatively if I make the decision. However, I went one day but I did not receive except for five hundred rupees, some friends and neighbor heard and soon after they began criticizing me”.

Family members’ attitude and behavior towards girls placed them in vulnerable position in homes. The girls were often criticized, beaten, controlled and confined even more strictly within home areas. Most of the girls interviewed reported that they were physically and verbally abused by their parents and elder siblings. Parents also blamed girls for placing them in dreadful situation while they were away. They would nag girls when they were unable to perform the household tasks. Some school girls were stopped from continuing their studies and instead they were either married off quickly or kept at homes doing household tasks. When the girls had to go through sufferings in their homes they said that they felt guilty and bad for their actions. Although some girl received support from their parents, they complained about getting negative remarks from the community people. “They would criticize and tease by calling us jungle girls or Mao girls. It was humiliating,” a Tharu girl said. It was an embarrassing and stressful moment especially for girls since they were viewed as ‘tainted’ now. One Brahmin girl said, “People would come to house and ask questions like how’s there, we heard about things

like boys and girls live together and all those things.” Community people were fearful and always doubt their action and behavior so girls had to try their greatest to prove them that they are not. “It was a bad time and situation that has compelled us to go with them” a Brahmin school girl retorted. School was one place where school girls had to face pain and humiliation from their friends and teachers. A Chhetri girl who served as combatant for a year became disturbed by the teacher’s misbehavior in school, so she had to argue and complain to the headmaster. She said, the whole school wanted to rusticate me, but I resisted. When the head master found that a Dalit girl was a returnee, she was not allowed to join the school and therefore the girl had to remain home feeling more distress. In turn, she started learning tailoring.

Some girls also narrated about facing harassment from the Maoists activists. A Chhetri girl escaped from the cantonment after she was pressurized to marry one combatant. She said, “That fellow gave me a mental shock every now and then, and now I am married even though he gives me a call and tells me to come over there”.

There were girls who reported of having psychological problems such as anxiety, depression, nightmares and dreams about violence. A Madhesi Dalit girl served as fighting forces for a year or more said, “For several months I had to struggle to overcome my past experiences of fighting in battlefields. I used to have severe headache and also recurring of dreams of carrying guns and killing. To get rid of such thoughts, I used to sing songs, or read.

Upon returning to home and society, returnees did undergo with various psychosocial and economic problems upon returning to their homes and community, which had deep effect on them.

CASE STUDIES

Case study method involves details of people's inner strivings, tensions and motivations that drive them to actions, the barriers that frustrate them and the forces that direct them to adopt a certain pattern of behavior (Kerlinger, 1986). The case studies presented below also shows the respondents experiences after receiving support from the ISK. Three boys and three girls are selected and their case studies are presented. They are also the recipient of the support.

Case study I

The informant is a 19 year girl of a Chhetri caste, who comes originally from Gulmi district. She is now married and settled with her husband in Nawalparasi. She became involved with the Maoists activities at the age of 13 when she was studying in fifth grade. In the family, her uncle and aunt were full time Maoists activists. So, she got inspired from them as well. Furthermore, the girl also happens to witness the torture and killing of one young girl by the army men in her village.

“In 2002, Maoists organized cultural programs in the school and also displayed weapon skills. I did some voluntary work on that day. Later I was taken away by one of the commander to an unknown place which was a cave actually and then they gave me a work of cleaning and guarding of the weapons. I was forced to stay there for nine months. In 2003, the whole family shifted to Nawalparasi where we had to suffer financial crisis. My father often got drunk. One day some Maoists activists came and held small meetings in one of my friend's house. I went with them along with some of my friends. I received military training for several days and months in remote places. After six months of stay and hard work finally I returned home and appeared in the fifth grade exams. But I was continuously in contact with the Maoists. After three months, I rejoined the group and attended

several hours and days of military training sessions. During the heavy training I saw many of my friends dying in front of me. In 2004, I returned back home to appear in sixth grade exams. I was called to join the battalion in far-western districts by one of the commander as the preparation of attacking the army barrack was going on. The fighting that took for 4 long hours made me injured. I lost my consciousness; there were pieces of explosives left in my legs. After 15 days of rest, I was called to attend in next mission of attacking another army barrack of Arghakhanchi district. The battle was successful and I returned back to the village to appear for exams of grade seven. This time I failed the exam. I decided to stay for some more months however I was called to rejoin. I fled from home to Rolpa where I learned to make explosives. Soon after that I was given responsibility of supplying of weapons from India. Next, there was a plan to attack Sunwol army barrack and Butwol police posts of Nawalparasi and Rupandehi districts. After the fighting was over, I returned home but I had some grenades left with me which I later decided to return. But I was caught in Butwol base camp and was interrogated and jailed for three months. While staying in the jail I was tortured, beaten badly. One day I managed to flee. I was hospitalized for 15 days. The community people discovered that I was fighter in the Maoists. I decided to resume my studies.

However, in 2007 I fled to Arghaakhanchi and later the whole brigade returned to Terai where I stayed some months in the cantonment. Soon my parents found me and I came back home and resumed my studies. After some period I was called upon for the first stage verification. During the stay, I was constantly pressurized to marry one of the commanders. I escaped from the cantonment and never returned. Upon returning, I was looked down by the community people, friends and teachers however I never let myself down, I struggled with every thing and with every situation. One day a staff of ISK came to my place, I told her I was interested to study. She used to spend hours of time with me, encouraging me to

be a good person and that I should continue going school. I participated in several of the trainings and worked as peer educator for a year. I was fascinated to learn about child rights and gender issues. Such trainings encouraged me to make a better person and people also started looking me as a changed good girl. They gave me medical support and soon I started walking without any difficulties. Had there not been ISKs support I would not turn into what I am today.”

Case study II

The informant is a 20 years girl of Tharu caste living in Rupauliya VDC. She is unmarried. She was 13 years old when she had joined the Maoists force. Currently, she is working in a tailoring shop which is owned by her brother. She took three months of basic course in tailoring from her brother who was financed by ISK. Her family member consists of parents, a brother and sister. She has never been to school. Like any other child of her village, earlier she used to work as paid labor. In 2007, she was abducted by one of the village person by luring her to pay good amount and grant jobs in future. She went with that person into one of the camps of the Maoists.

“Life out there was different from what I had in the village. The rules should be strictly followed or else they would punish. I had to carry woods and planks from the forest or fetch water. I stayed there for a month. One day the leader of our brigade informed us about the possible arrival of foreign people in our cantonments to check and interrogate us. I became terrified. He helped us flee from that place telling we would be informed about the whole thing and also be called upon as soon as those foreign people return. Only later, I found that they were UNMIN, who had come for the verification of children’s joining the Maoists. Anyway, I would be considered as minor. I was never paid nor did I get a job. To

come out of the camps was such a relief to me. However, I had bad experience upon my return to family and village. As I was the eldest of all the girls who returned, the village people blamed me of taking their daughters. I could not go work for several days, I felt awkward and my parents were also angry with me. They nagged me, scolded and beat me.

Some of the staffs from ISK heard about me and my condition. They came and consoled me and calmed my parents. I chose to do tailoring since I wanted to learn skills and earn money, besides my brother was also in the same business. I learnt 3 months basic training course. ISK granted two sewing equipments, a table and chair. Now I know how to make kurta, shirts and even pants. I spend 6 hours a day in a shop. My family condition has also improved. Villagers do not insult me as usual. I want to learn advance course of tailoring such as embroidery, but I cannot save money. Every penny is spent on family expenditure. Last month there were trainings for embroidery organized by one of the NGOs but I could not go as there was no money.

Case study III

The informant is a Brahmin girl of age 19, who is unmarried and lives in a family of parents, two brothers and a sister. The family source of income is only a small shop. She has studied till grade nine. She left the school and joined the Maoists in 2005. She was basically influenced by one of her relative who used to visit often at her place. Besides, her parents were also the Maoists supporter. Moreover, she wanted to travel and see places and gain confidence. She decided to go right after she failed in grade nine.

“With my parents consent, I went with my relative to one of the place, there I saw a large mass of people, and some of them were as young as me. We had to

travel place to place conducting programs. Some of us had to do the work of mobilizer and fund raiser. I stayed with them for more than six months. They used to give us book about Maoists ideology and also tell us about works of Prachanda. I decided to return home as I became weak and tired of walking. Upon my return, many people inquired about my disappearance. I used to tell them that I had gone to my uncle's place, but later they found that I was not and soon they started criticizing me. My friends ran away from me. Some of the villagers passed bad remarks on me saying that I am impure now. However, my parents did not get angry with me but my brothers were unsupportive. A girl from our village informed me that a staff from ISK would like to see me. Next day, the staff came and inquired about me and my interest. Although I wanted to do beauty parlor course, she said she could offer only the course of tailoring. So I began taking tailoring classes for three months. They gave one sewing machine and some furniture. It's all with me at home. I also worked a month as trainee in one of the tailoring. Since the shop is far I stopped going. I had to go by bus and the bus fare is also high. I wish to open tailoring shop of my own but I am not properly trained at making all kinds of designs. My parents say I am too young to run the shop. Moreover, they cannot afford to open a shop for me. I hope of receiving more financial and material support from the organization.

Case study IV

The informant is a 19 years old boy of Hill Dalit caste. He lives in Kumarwoti VDC. Presently, he is working in one of the FM station. He is also studying in class eleven. The boy joined the Maoists group at the age of 15 and was involved in several of their activities for a year. He comes from a poor family.

“There was a whim once in our village and between our friends that anybody involved in Maoists would get salary and government job, if not now it would be in future. I heard initially they would give salary of seven thousand rupees. The whole bunch of us who used to sit in the front row of the class made a decision and went to one of the camps situated nearby our place. Later, all of us were divided and sent to different camps. There were unfamiliar faces and the rules were strict. We were given military trainings and also ideological trainings by our brigade commanders. I stayed there for three months. Soon I started missing school and my parents the most. I felt guilty to be there. One day I disguised myself and managed to flee. I came straight to home. My parents were happy to see me. I did not feel much change in their attitude towards me. I was more helpful to my sisters while doing cooking. They said they found change in me. But I heard that some community people passed negative remarks about me but it was never at my face. I started going to school. But my teachers would tease me, of course some of them would advise me to concentrate on my studies. Even today, I am asked, who do I support to, when I say noone, they wouldn't believe me. One day I was told that an organization working for children would want to support poor and intelligent students like me. I was told to sign some papers. I did not know the support was meant for the returnees like us. Initially, the staff would visit to our homes but now they come to school only.”

Case study V

The informant is a boy of Brahmin caste, who is 18 years of age and studies in class 12. He was 14 years of age when he had joined the Maoists. His family consists of parents and two sisters. The boy's father is an active Maoists activist. Many times there used to be meetings at his house where he use to take part as a volunteer. Both sisters of his were also involved with the Maoists group. He

became influenced by the ideology of the party as well. In 2006, he went to the Maoist camp with two of the motivators and some of his friends. He stayed there for three months.

“I had to do sentry day and night. There was rigorous military and ideological trainings everyday. I did works like carrying mud and stones. They used to take us into forests to cut trees and made us to carry logs into the camp. Initially, it was fun to work with different people. Soon after, I missed home. I was also sad that I missed the school. I became weak and sick with high fever. One day I got a chance to return home. I suffered from jaundice. After taking one month of rest and medicine I re-joined school. A teacher of my class would insult me in front of the whole class which gave a mental pain to me. I did not go school for several days. But later with the help of my friends and family I managed to go. The counseling by the staffs of ISK has helped me a lot during that period. I chose to have education support. I also participated in many of the trainings which added to improvement of my mental and emotional aspect. Currently, I am taking technical education class in one of the government institution.

Case study VI

The informant is a 19 years old boy of Brahmin caste, who lives with his grandmother in a remote village. His parents died four years back and he does living by working as a seasonal labor in his village and also in India. He spends few months in Nepal while most of the time he spends out of his village but he manages to appear in exams. He is studying in class 10. He is also the member of a child club named “Prativa bal club” . He joined the Maoists in 2006 and also took part in several of their activities.

“I am a single person earning for the survival of my grandmother and myself. I spend four to six months of time working out of the village and sometimes to

India. My studies get affected due to this. Last time, I could not pass sent up because of the same reason. The teachers are supportive; they provided me scholarship for three years. I spent fifteen days with the Maoists group during the period of election. I had attended to their rallies and cultural programs for several days. They use to give me some money. Community people used to tease me for being a Maoist supporter and activist. Initially, school did not about my involvement with the Maoists but later they found out. It became awkward for me to rejoin the class because friends and teachers criticized me saying, how much did you earn? One day I was called upon by the principal where I met one of the staff members. He was supportive. He used to come and stay at my house. I need not have to pay school fees for the whole year. I attended several of the programs which were about child rights. If I am not granted school fess for next year or so I will not be able to continue my school. I wish I could have programs where I can have an opportunity to work, earn and pursue my studies as well.

The above case studies of returnees showed that the various aspects such as economic, social, ideological, cultural, political environment as being responsible for their condition. Returnees have been abducted by the Maoists activists. They were used and abused for their own motive. Both boy and girls were trained in military and non-military activities. Returnees have been ostracized, discriminated and marginalized upon their arrival to their homes and communities. Returnees belonging to poor families and rural areas had to suffer from poverty and marginalization from family members and community people.

Trainings/Vocational trainings gave confidence and helped develop returnee's prosocial attitudes. However, tailoring has not helped returned girls to gain economic security. Returnees from poor families are struggling to meet their ends. Moreover, lack of opportunities in their place has lead returnees to choose an alternative in a very young age.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter offers the summary of findings and the conclusion of the research as well.

7.1 SUMMARY

Reintegration support is provided by ISK to the children associated with armed forces and armed groups (CAAFAG) in Nawalparasi district since October 2007. A total of 217 returnees are granted reintegration facilities in 50 VDC. Out of which 172 returnees received education support and 45 of them received vocational training/income generation support. Among my respondents all 19 boys and 9 girls are provided educational support. 28 returnees received psychosocial counseling services while 12 of them received medical support. In the current (fourth) phase, a total of 100 and 13 returnees are offered education support and VT/IG support respectively. Also in the fourth phase, 11 boys and 6 girl respondent received education support while 3 of the girl respondent received VT/IG support. 8 boys who left schooling are above 16 years of age. Apart from one respondent, others belong to Madhesi Dalit and hill Dalit caste group. Also, they are from poor families and one boy is an orphan. Most of the boys who are studying below class ten stated about their inability to continue studies. 3 girl respondents of Tharu caste aged 15, 18 and 19 left school at the first phase. This indicates that in future the number of children who have been currently studying would decrease. Poverty is also one reason that compelled the returnees to leave school.

A total of five girl respondents received tailoring trainings for three months and materials as well. They have left school and are living with their parents. None of them could get a paid job or start their shop on their own. One Madhesi-Dalit girl

has does work of tailoring in her home and earn little amount of money. Another Tharu girl works at her brother's shop, and she's not paid. Also, the money they earn is spent in household purposes. One ethnic girl could not continue her tailoring training class because of household duties she had to perform, and also that the training center was far from her place. Training period is too short. Financial shortage is also one of the constraints for all the returned girls.

Among caste/ethnic composition of the respondents, 10 respondents are of Hill-Dalit caste followed by 9 of Brahmin caste, 5 of Madhesi-Dalit, 4 of ethnic group and so on. The highest of 72.73 percentage of returnees were aged between 13- 15 at the time of joining the Maoists where the highest 85.72 percentage are girls in comparison to 63.15 percentage of boys. During the time of interview, the respondent's current age was recorded as the highest of 51.52 percent of returnees being 18 and above. Likewise, the same percentage 39.39 and 39.39 percent of respondent's educational status are in between 9-12 and up to 12 respectively. However, in both category boys enrollment in school is the highest. The highest 78.79 percentage of respondents had spent few days- 6months with the Maoists. Similarly, 75.75 percentages of respondents joined with the Maoists group in the year 2006-2008 which is the highest. This shows that most of the returnees had joined the Maoists after the April 2006 ceasefire.

The returned children spoke about various reasons of joining the Maoist group. Based on their interview and also through scholar's research literature, it is categorized into two parts. One is the push factor and the other is pull factor. Push factor is further divided into four parts. They are poverty, discrimination and exclusion, government abuses, forced recruitment. Out of these, the highest of 71 percent of the respondents are drawn out of poverty. Push factor is sub-divided into 5 parts. Ideology, cultural programs, recreation and travel, employment, family and peer pressure. 61 percent of the total respondents claimed of joining

Maoists out of promise of getting employment opportunity. Returnees were involved as fighters; non-military roles included work of porter, cook, cultural performer etc. During the time of conflict, witnessing of atrocities, injuries, violence, abduction, threat, using for arms supplies, killing of people, using in campaigns, money giving, using for various purposes inside the cantonments was common.

The study found that returnees have faced various problems such as being ostracized, discriminated, and stigmatized by the family and community people. Returnees who spent longer times with Maoists had high psychological problems because of lack of education and employment. Also, they were constantly nagged by family and community people. They were also targeted by political activists, even while conducting their trainings at training institution. Fighters, cultural program performer were in bad psychological, social and economic condition. Parents of poor family and who had completed nine or ten were expected to earn by their family. Boys went out in search of jobs to Butwal, Bhairahawa, Kathmandu or India. Girl returnee's situation was bad as they were regarded as "tainted" by the community people.

During the time of fieldwork what I found is that, the program implementation agency chose returnees with the help of school staffs during the identification and registration period. A boy belonging to Brahmin family and who was also the son of one of the teacher working in the same school was also the beneficiary. He comes from a sound family; however, he is also a returnee. One boy of a Dalit caste came to know about the aim of the program much later. Most of the recipients studying in school found their support providers visiting only schools nowadays and not their homes.

Still, returnees recalled their wartime incidences; they feel guilty for their actions. Boys who were involved during party's political activities are still viewed as

suspicious. However, some returnees who were engaged in educational activities and who have received support from their family were found to have developed confidence and prosocial behaviors. Although the prosocial behaviors of returnees of a poor family found to have developed however their level of confidence was discouraging. Psychosocial counseling and orientation classes of HIV/AIDS provided awareness to the returnees. One of the boy returnee and a beneficiary was still carrying the wounds of war; he wants it to get treated and he comes from a poor family. For some of the returnees coming from poor family and who wanted to join school, the re-start of study gave them an opportunity to attend classes for some period of time but it was with much difficulty, one of the reasons was financial problem. They had to work extra time as paid labor to pay school fees or take loans in credit due to irregularity of funds from the agency. Jealousy from non- CAAFAG to CAAFAG was also found while interacting with some members of community. Some of the returnees are still called upon by their designated names used during their attachment with the Maoist party. Due to the proximity of cantonments and their cadres some returnees and beneficiary, mainly the fighters still visit the cantonment.

However, the program implementation agency ISK also has its challenges which at times are beyond its reach. One of them is that the funds are slow and also unpredictable, the “on again, off again” by the donor agencies. Often where few CAAFAGs are enrolled, the financial support for infrastructure is not sufficient enough for the school to develop any meaningful infrastructure project. Despite the rhetoric and legal commitments, several parties have been using returnees for their political cause. The Nepali law for children states that the age of 16 as age of adulthood and the age of recruitment, suffrage and marriage is 18. This also hinders the success of the programs. However, it is impossible for every child to be successfully reintegrated.

7.2 CONCLUSION

There are pre-war risk factors or push factors such as poverty, discrimination and exclusion of various groups, abuses by government forces and forced recruitment which pushed returnees to join the Maoist forces. This kind of socio-economic condition is the main challenge till to the date. Apart from this, the war-time risk factors, mainly as ideology, cultural programs, promise of employment opportunity, recreation and wish of travelling, and family and peers role has influence on returnees to eventually end up to join the Maoist forces. The role that the returnees had to perform did put them in psychological and physical risks. Returnees can still recall the vivid memories of war. Fighters and cultural program performer contributed for long period of time thus the reintegration into normal life is difficult for them.

Upon returning to their community and society, returnees did confront to marginalization, embarrassment from family and friends. Many of the returnees re-start their school although with awkwardness and embarrassment. However, the girl had to face severe problems such as beatings and discrimination. Returnees who spent longer period of time and mainly the girl's situation was bad because they felt awkward to join school besides, they had no employment. Community viewed them as "tainted" girls. The girls did face severe problems in comparison to boys.

Education programs provided for the returned children did give an opportunity for those who wanted to re-start their studies. With material and counseling support returned girls and boys joined school. Consequently, prosocial behaviors and confidence is found. But not all face the same condition, poor children's level of confidence is less. Currently, returnees from sound background and educated family are continuing their studies while poor family such as that of Madhesi-Dalit and hill Dalits are struggling for living while pursuing the study. They have to

borrow cash in credit while waiting for their fees to be paid by the organization. The vocational trainings/income generation program mainly the tailoring program is not encouraging for returned girls. They are still unemployed; some are not paid for work and are still dependent on their parents for finance. These returnees who have learnt tailoring lack confidence in them. Their family are poor, they do not feel their children can run shops and are also unable to send their daughter away from home for work due to the concept that girl should remain at homes.

Counseling services and orientation classes and trainings did give returnees a sense of confidence and encouragement. Medical support has helped returnees to regain the confidence but for a while only. However, returnees could still recall the memories of war and violence that they have committed. Still they are guilt ridden about their actions. Returned girls are often embarrassed by asking about the time they spent with whom and where. Education did offer returnees a sense of confidence and prosocial behavior the same was not realized by poor section of the society. VT/IG or the tailoring program could not offer a sense of economic security to the returned girls. Still, there are many challenges for the returned children as well as the implementing agency. There is a long way to reach the path to successful reintegration.

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QUESTIONNAIRES

Interview Schedule

Age at joining-

Religion-

Current age-

Marital status-

Caste/Ethnicity-

District-

Education-

Years at joining-

1. How did you become associated with the Maoists force?
2. What factor motivated you to join the Maoists?
3. What were your duties, roles or responsibilities?
4. Why did you return?

If Cantonment,

5. What kinds of work did you have to perform?
6. Describe about your experiences there.
7. Why did you decided to return?

Returning family and society

8. How was your experience of returning home?
9. What was your family and friends reaction when you met them?
10. How often did you interact with your family and friends?
11. What kind of changes did you notice in your family members towards you?

12. What kinds of change did you find in your friends, teachers or community people towards you?

13. How often did you meet your fellow combatants/motivators/party members?

14. How did you cope in any situation that came to you?

15. What kinds of risks or challenges did you have to face?

About NGO

16. How did you come to know about the NGO?

17. What kinds of challenges did you face while you were engaged with the NGOs activity?

18. Which program did you choose and why?

Education ()

Vocational Training/Income generation ()

19. What other services did you receive?

Medical support ()

Girls special support ()

Psychosocial Counseling ()

Gender issues ()

20. Trainings

Peace building training ()

HIV/AIDS prevention program ()

Child rights protection orientation () Mothers Group Orientation ()

Psychosocial training ()

Child/Youth club orientation ()

Sensitization or community-awareness ()

21. How long did you take these services?

Once a year (first phase)

three times (first to third phase)

Two times (second phase)

four times (first to fourth phase)

22. How have these supports helped you?

23. Which of the above mention trainings help you improve your situation? If yes, which one?

24. Did you face any kinds of risks or challenges during the program period? If yes, then from whom?

25. How did you cope with the situation?

26. What kinds of challenges are you facing at present?

27 How would you solve it?

VT/IG program

28. Have you make use of the support that you have received?

29. Where do you work? How much are you paid?

30. How do you spend your earning?

31. In future, what would you wish to do?