

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Relatively viewing, women's partaking in Nepali politics has increased quantitatively as well as qualitatively during the last seventeen years. Especially, after the general election of 1991 and by the time Nepal held CA (CA) election in 2008 changes are noteworthy. Women's participation in all rank of party politics has increased. All major political parties have women in their central leadership. The number of women is being better than before in policy making processes.

Political awareness and sensitization activities in a formal and organized level pertaining to the women go back to the time before Rana regime in Nepal. Women's participation in political and public life in the past was minimal and sporadic in nature. The first women's organization that came into being was the Mahila Samiti. It came into existence in Chandragunj, Siraha in around 1917-18(Pradhan, 1979:4). Divya Koirala the wife of Krishna Koirala had initiated the risk.

Then, in 1947, under the chairpersonship of Rebanta Kumari Acharya – the wife of Tanka Prasad Acharya, Adarsha Mahila Sangh was founded in Janakpur with the main objectives of bringing about social and political consciousness and to do away with practices of child marriage and child widow. Meanwhile, Nepal Mahila Sangh was founded under the leadership of Mangala Devi and it had lobbied for the voting rights for women. Under its pressure the then Rana prime minister Padma Shamsher had given voting rights for women.

Overthrowing of Rana regime in 1950 developed the sense of politics among the women. Hence, departing from the ideological frame of Mangala Devi, Punya Prava Dhungana formed another women's organization named Akhil Mahila Sangathan. .Punya Prabha Dhungana was the daughter of well-known poet Lekha Nath Poudyal. Dwarikadevi Thakurani who was the single woman in the parliament of 2015 BS hailing from Dadeldhura was followed by seven women in the parliament of 1991.

The parliament of 1994 which was formed by the mid-term poll didn't see more than seven women again. But, as a numerical move, the parliament of 1999 had 12 women that would make only six percent women in the parliament

Within this period, as a result of women's incessant movements, some additional mechanisms relating to women's empowerment have been provisioned. To name some of them are National Women's Commission and Gender Focal Point in each ministry. Women have also been appointed and nominated in different policy making and monitoring mechanisms such as National Planning Commission, National Human Rights Commission, National Dalit Commission and Public Service Commission during this period. One of the discernible achievements in this regard is the fact that women have been able to be elected as the Deputy President of the Constituent Assembly (CA).

Women's equal participation in political life plays a pivotal role in the general process of the advancement of women. Women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but also a necessary provision for women's interest to be taken into account. A critical mass of women is indispensable within a given institution of national mechanism if real change is to take place, but it is important to understand that "critical" refers not just to the sufficient numerical presence of women in the legislative body but also to women having an active stake in decision-making through legitimate influence of numerical leadership.

There was obviously a very low representation of women in policy making level of the political parties too. Civil Society organizations' continuous movements for women empowerment agreed that one of the main reasons for women lagging behind was the negligible number of women in the policy making and low representation of women in the key posts of the political parties. After the restoration of democracy in 1990, there were only 32 women members of parliament through election and nomination. The 1999 general election, which was the third general election held after the restoration of democracy had only 12 women out of 205 seats. At that time 6 per cent women were elected as members of the total population of Nepal. The set provisions for women were discriminatory. Not more than 20 per cent seats were reserved for women.

After 13 February 1996 when Maoist declared to have started *just people's war* with the endeavor to forcibly oust the then *imperialist serving reactionary state* then there

started a two-pronged women's activism – one was already started by the political parties' women's wings and NGOs especially after the restoration of democracy with the reformist ideologies and background. Maoist's people's war also put forward the *empowerment and emancipation through armed revolution*, adding another branch, for socio-economic and political empowerment of women in general.

The war continued for ten years. One of the most reported and debated aspects of the Maoist *people's war* in Nepal had been its high levels of female participation, with some observers estimating that up to 40 percent of all combatant and civilian political supporters were women. Striking photos of young, gun-toting guerrilla women were prominently displayed on the *official* website of CPN (Maoist) and distributed from New York to London to Peru in materials produced by the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM). But now even after the CA election of 2008, overtaking other parties in term of female representation too, it seems, Maoist party has affirmed its claim that females are with better position in the party. At this juncture this thesis has tried to find out answers to the following central questions:

- i. Relating with previous general elections that took place after 1991, on what fashion is the representation of women different in the CA?
- ii. Why could the revolutionary wing of women activists in Nepal garner leading seats in CA election?
- iii. Was the CPN (Maoist) - led revolution gender conscious?
- iv. What supports the women to achieve success in the elections?

After the investigation and analysis of the data attempts will be made to draw the answers as regards whether or not the structure of CA, viewing women separately, has been formed as per the issues raised by Maoist led revolutionary women's activism. Similarly, ensuing chapters will also assess whether or not the armed-revolutionary-women's gender-conscious politics, as the proponents of the party believed, was to accredit for propelling the leading victory of Maoist women candidates in the CA election especially in the first-past-the –post system.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study generally aims to look at the CA election in Nepal from women's perspective categorizing women's activism, after 1990, into reformist and revolutionary wings. Leading electoral result of revolution- based women's activism and the reasons behind it will be analyzed. CPN (Maoist)-led revolutionary women's

gender based activisms will be analyzed so as to get the answers whether or not they were sufficiently gender- conscious to provide with such electoral success they have achieved in the CA. The specific objectives of the study are, however, as follows:

- i. To analyze from women's angle how the CA and its election is different from earlier elections in Nepal.
- ii. To find out perception of political parties about women and women's perception about politics.
- iii. To analyze the factors behind electoral success of the Maoist women in the CA.
- iv. To find out the ways of increasing number of women in the legislative bodies in Nepal.

1.3 Significance of the Study

Very few countries hold CA election. Though the issue of CA was raised almost sixty years back in Nepalese politics, one of the five points of the Delhi Tripartite Agreement was to hold CA election but it has been materialized in 2008 only. CA has been taken in Nepal as the panacea for all problems so almost all problems together with that of women are anticipated to be solved in Nepal after its election. So as to solve the problems of women, but it doesn't mean that they will concentrate only on women's issues only. One hundred ninety seven women have been elected in the CA.

Viewing them all from degree of political radicalism they represent reformist and revolutionary socio-political milieu. But, overtaking the reformist activism of women having long practice in Nepal, Maoist section of women are more in number in the CA against the conjecture of many. Concerning the reasons behind this some political and professional investigations might have been carried out. But, most probably, no academic researches have been done connecting radical women's feminist activism with leading election performance in Nepal. So, it can be hoped that this thesis will certainly add noteworthy literature in the associated field.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Constituent assembly (CA) election was held in Nepal in 2008. Generally CA election is historical to every country. It was historical to Nepal as well. After the holding of CA election a complete year has elapsed. The CA is yet to be studied from the women's and gender perspective. Ample studies have been carried out in Nepal on women. These write ups encompass backwardness, social disparity, superstition regarding women and their contribution as well. Equally raised, vibrant and studied issues on women are equality, patrimonial property rights, violence against women and others. There are very scanty empirical works putting women, revolution and electoral success of women in the centre of analysis, comparing CA with earlier elections in Nepal and listening to stories of success of women. Most of the literatures on CA are on political and constitution making issues, one party's rout due to another parties' power dynamics. Much of the available literature centers on power politics, ideological prominence and blurring, party dynamics and the like.

2.1 Women in Politics: Global Scenario

Many significant studies and analysis of women in parliament, politics and election have been compiled over the last few decades. Researchers have also studied this area from variety of angles. Thus far, most of the work has focused on an extremely important dimension: that of studying and assessing the ways and means by which women can enter parliament and legislative bodies. The emphases have been directed towards equality in opportunity to achieve parliamentary power and the obstacles and hindrances faced in the process.

Nadez Shvedova (1998) is very realistic and chronological regarding women's status in vote politics. She writes: "As we approach the beginning of twenty first century, over 95 per cent of all countries have granted women the right to vote and the right to stand for elections. New Zealand was the first country to give women the right to vote in 1893; and Finland was the first country to adopt both fundamental democratic rights in 1906. There are still a few countries like Kuwait, United Arab Emirates that deny women both the right to vote and the right to stand for elections."

In the cases of women's representation of women in the parliaments too some critics are skeptic on the encompassing of women's agendas and all spectrums of women. Dr Frazana(1997) of Pakistan argues: "...it can be said that women's presence in formal politics will not bring a qualitative change by putting social issues on the national agenda. It can be argued that women, because of their gender alone, will not place gender issues in the national agenda... women in the upper echelons of politics are more likely to become an elite group among women and develop their own vested interests."

In many countries of South Asia women have played a very significant role during the democratic movement, but their involvement in the diverse spheres of public life has continued to remain minimal in relationship to their male counterparts. In many countries of South Asia special provisions have been made to boost women's political participation, yet the percentage of women in the higher levels of the political power structure has not risen. There are various factors that have discouraged women from taking a lively part in politics. Ghimire(2007) says: "The main reasons are due to the amount of violence, corruption and manipulations, which are present in South Asian context. Many women, having excellent leading qualities, are unwilling to participate in politics because of these factors."

She continues that it is therefore indispensable to make politics clean and green so that the surge of women into the political arena is enlarged.

Most of the women representatives in south Asian countries are from well-to-do family. India, having supposedly largest democracy of the world is also not an exception in the case of type of women representation in the parliament. Shirin Rai (1997) comments: "the majority of women in the Indian parliament are elite women. While their public roles challenges some stereotypes, their class position often allows them a far greater range of options than are available to poorer women."

In our region women are not only denied rightful place in the democratic polity, but also their tone remain unheard. Though the situation has improved in some of those countries with the espousal of quotas and reservation for women, especially in the field of local government, yet their participation in the national level has not increased significantly.

In Nepal, women were proactive participants in all the recent major political movements. Their participation in the people's movement in 1989 was outstanding. However, despite all the constitutional assurances and the florid words expressed by the leaders, women's participation in the political process is negligible. The constitution of 1990 has proclaimed gender equality and it has made compulsory provision for the political parties to have at least 5% women candidate in parliament election. Likewise, three seats have been reserved for women in the upper house out of 60 members. The parliament of 1991, 1995 and 1999 had 3.9, 3.41 and 5.08 percent women's representation respectively.

In between the election of 1999 and CA election of 2008 the issue of women's representation got vibrant. Women demanded 33 per cent reservation and guarantee of it. But, some sociologists saw weakness in demanding 33 percent mainly because demographically women occupy 50 per cent of total population in Nepal. Dilli Ram Dahal and Krishna Bahadur Bhattachan write: "Women make exact half of total population of Nepal. If proportional representation system is adopted even the demand of 50 percent reservation is valid on their part but women's movement in Nepal is demanding only 33 percent reservation."

2.2 Women in Conflict and Electoral Results

After peace agreement, in a post-war election of a country whether a force of women for moderation or the revolutionaries win is a debatable issue. There are the beliefs that if electoral opportunity is presented after war and conflicts, women's representation increases. Catalina Rojas (2004) sees the rise of peace loving women in the election. She views: "elsewhere from Colombia to Cambodia, Iran and Afghanistan, through turbulent times, when opportunities were presented, women have been at the front lines, supporting women candidates who stood for moderation, reforms and peace. Peschard counters her and states that "the women involved in the turbulence are forwarder." More women are seen in electoral politics to represent a democratic normalization. As an incentive after turbulent years conflicting women are to the forefront (Peschard, 2003). Sanam Naraghi Anderlini (2007) views in tune with Peschard that conflicts give rise to new perspectives and previously excluded sectors of society expect and demand role in decision making. She continues: "For many a

warlord, Maoist rebels or armed faction of political parties the election and postwar period are pay back time.”

A report of UNIFEM (2004) also doesn't have doubt that post conflict elections uplift the women candidates involved in the conflicts. It just hints at the non-cooperation women face afterwards. It states: “During conflict, women often gain valuable and relevant leadership and organizing skills, which can be translated into policy-making roles in the post-conflict period. However, women and men have differential access to resources, education, formal political parties and the media. As a result, women candidates face particular challenges when running for elected office.”

To some critics it is not the matter whether conflicting women win or moderating women win. Some see the situation differently. In the post-conflict election women have to face challenges. The Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women and the Department of Political Affairs in a report on Enhancing Women's Participation in Electoral Processes in Post-Conflict Countries, 20 February 2004, states that some factors are likely to impact negatively on women's participation in electoral processes in post-conflict situations. In the situations where people are given options to cast vote, war affected countries and the people there prefer more women in the policy making level.

A USAID report (2005) about Cambodia quotes a local political leader preferring women in the election to vote for. “We want more Khmer women to be candidates because women don't solve problems by force and gunpoint” says the interviewee. Some critics have related the election, women and the electoral success as value judgment. Numerical rise is not the end. The changes engendered by the elected women are more significant. Post-war recovery as well as adoption of peaceful path equally contributes for the increased number of women in the election in a war affected country. “As Rwanda shows, where extremist politics leads to violence of such magnitude, the importance of a relatively peaceful path to reconstruction can't be underestimated. The women make up 49 percent of legislature is by no means the Rwanda's recovery, but that women are active and involved in all aspects of public

life at all levels and in all arenas, including reconciliation despite their general lack of education and skills and a history of exclusion”(Anderlini, 2007:133).

Women’s overall office holding is impeded by either due to absence of women in the parliament or because of low representation of women in the parliament, when fewer women run the election; the process of empowering women is impeded. R Darcy, Susan Welch and Clark (1994:174) comment: “If more women run, more women will be elected. And as more women begin gaining tenure in legislatures, the pool of women candidates for higher office will also increase. The problem remains why the process has been so slow.”

Anderlini is very apt apropos how women were stirred and got effervescent during the war. While demanding changes through extremism by the women there are the births of many women leaders. Simultaneously, the women’s rights activists who demand for peace also stand as women leaders. Moderating demands also have the chances of developing leadership. Anderlini(1997) further illustrates: “it is striking not altogether surprising that woman leaders are emerging at the local, provincial and national levels in countries affected by violence, oppression and division. Whether war pushes women into the public domain as breadwinners and single parent, propel them into activism to cope with personal tragedy, or mobilizes them for a cause, it quickly politicizes them. So, post conflict situation and election favors them”

Some commentaries are also there that when women and election are thought of electoral system has to be taken into consideration. Their view is that to increase the pool of women in the legislative body election system has direct role. Vis-à-vis how the proportional system is rewarding for the women, Matland(1997) writes: “Party gatekeepers see balance as a way of attracting voters. Rather than having to look for a single candidate who can appeal to a broad range of voters, party gatekeepers think in terms of different candidates appealing to specific sectors and sex of voters. Candidates tied with different groups and sectors of society may help attract voters to their party.”

Different electoral systems lead to different outcomes. Throughout the developed world in the 1960s and 1970s we saw a wave of what was called ‘second generation feminism’ - women demanding equal rights in a whole array of issues,

among them greater representation in political bodies . In the countries with PR systems, women were able to translate those demands into greater representation. Matland (1997:54) further continues “In majoritarian system, on the other hand, the same demands were made but they were largely fruitless or only very modestly successful”

One of the most hinted issues on why women can't practice politics and win in the election is criminalization of politics and corruption. It is very germane to blame corruption and criminalized politics in inhibiting and prohibiting women to emerge as the legislative member and opting political career despite the fact that many women are enticed by. To be underdeveloped country has something to do with corruption and criminalization of politics. Similarly, not to have better situation of women in politics and legislature has also direct relation with male-friendly political struggle. Shvedova(1998:36) - a leading researcher in Canada and the USA says: “Corruption inevitably results in the creation of favorable conditions and opportunities for the existence of the most negative manifestation of organized crimes.”

According to Transparency International Report of 1997, countries such as Nigeria, Pakistan, Kenya, Bangladesh and others are perceived to be the most corrupt. Women's representation in parliaments in these countries is very low- only three to nine percent are women MPs whereas Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark and New Zealand are perceived as the least corrupt and in these countries women MPs comprise from 30 percent to 40 percent – in other words, five to ten times more.

The Times of India report (February ,1998) corroborates much of what has been tried to elaborate: namely that domestic responsibilities, lack of financial clout ,rising criminalization of politics and the threat of character assassination are making it increasingly difficult for women to be part of the political framework. Moreover, women politicians point out that even within the political parties, women are rarely found in leadership positions.

No particular scholastic literatures were availed that directly related with objectives in this research. This situation has affirmed relevance of my research and meaningfulness of objectives and problems raised.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This research is based on descriptive and explorative research design. Data and facts are analyzed in terms of politics, women, election and conflict. Elections held so far in Nepal including the CA have been analyzed. Factors for Maoist women's lead in the CA elections are analyzed together with suggestions for the further betterment of women's representation in the legislative body in Nepal. The context of the CA and leading position of the revolutionary wing of women in it will be analyzed and described on the basis of available literature and information being guided by the objectives set.

3.2 Selection of Research Site

Women members of the CA are at the center of this thesis. CA election held in Nepal in 2008 constitutes 197 women members through first-past-the-post ballot and proportional system inclusive of the women members nominated by the government of Nepal as provisioned in the interim constitution of Nepal 2007. Of them, 30 women represent under FPTP.

Parliamentary representation of women starting from single woman of 2015 B.S has reached to the 197 persons in the CA by 2008. The interim constitution of Nepal 2007 has provisioned 33 per cent women in the legislative as stipulated by the women in Nepal. CA is platform of discussion for drafting constitution and it also involves in general process of formulating rules and regulation needed for a state. So the women in the CA can have longer-term significance. Numbers of women, to have better representation and not to have ample number, in the CA can have far- fetching implication in the nation. Especially women are directly affected by this issue.

Following are the reasons for the selection of women member in this research.

- I Being my area of interest and curiosity.
- II Having the assumption that increased number of women in the legislative body can positively affect the over all problems endured by women for long.
- III Being fascinated by the fact that the women represented by the Maoist party in the CA are 80 per cent.

3.3 Sampling

For this research, of the 197 women members of the CA 15 members elected under first-past-the post (FPTP) are selected. In the case of the parties not having more than 2 women members under FPTP ballot, women members of the CA elected under proportional system have been interviewed. Four political parties viz. CPN (Maoist), NC, CPN (UML) and MJF and their members have been interviewed for the purpose. Similarly other 15 district and local level women cadres of the same 4 political parties have been interviewed. They are interviewed depending on the link and support provided by the 15 women members of the selected parties. The numbers of women members of each party interviewed are in proportion with the women elected in the CA under FPTP ballot. The same proportionality applies in the case of 15 women cadres of the parties as well. So sampling has been random and it is simple random sampling. While choosing 15 women members of the CA the total names of the women members have been taken as the universe and chosen through lottery. Similarly, in the case of 15 women district cadres of the political parties 75 districts were taken as the universe and chosen using lottery.

3.4 Sources and Nature of Data

For this research both the primary and secondary sources have been used. This research has been carried out on the basis of interviews with the women members of CA. At the same time, anecdote related with struggles of the women and political struggles of theirs, during war period as well, are tried to be included. Different academic writings, reports, newspaper articles, discussion papers, governmental and

non-governmental reports related with women, electoral politics, elections and CA have been used as the secondary source of this research. Data are qualitative as well as quantitative in their nature.

3.5 Techniques of Data Collection

Data collection techniques are really with pivotal role for any research to reach to the proximity of fact and truth. In its absence it is difficult to achieve the goal of a research. Following are the techniques used in this research.

3.5.1 Interviews

This research basically has been the outcome of interviews taken from women members of the CA. Questions regarding causes of Maoist women's leading victory in the CA election, post-war election and suggestions for women's numerical betterment in election will be asked. In this research interview has been the primary source of data. The women members of CA and women political cadres of different districts have been interviewed. From the main political parties in the CA- CPN (Maoist), NC, CPN (UML) and MJF, 15 women members are interviewed. Similarly, 15 women cadres of the same political parties from different districts have also been interviewed.

3.5.2 Observation

Whatever could be observed during the interview period with the women members of the CA and the district committee women members of the selected parties have also been the techniques of data collection. Especially, observation has focused on life style, household situation and outwardly seen nature of the selected women

3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data availed in the form of quantity and quality will be presented through graphs, charts and tables and analyzed remaining within the objectives of the study. Attempts are also there to be analytical regarding the collected quantitative and qualitative data.

3.7 Limitation of the Study

This is an academic study on why revolutionary women could obtain leading electoral result in the CA election. It also tries to analyze the result of CA election comparatively from the point of view of electoral success of one party over another. Going beyond such objectives the researcher doesn't have any party based political prejudices and interest. The result of the research won't have any reference and effect going beyond academic purpose. Due to time, economy and being an academic study, in- depth analysis may not be possible.

CHAPTER IV

ELECTIONS IN NEPAL: CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY (CA) AND BEFORE

4.1 Introduction to CA

Very few countries hold CA election. The issue of CA was raised almost half a century back in Nepalese politics. One of the five points of the Delhi Tripartite Agreement of 1950 was to hold CA election but it has been materialized in 2008 only. CA has been taken in Nepal as the panacea for all problems. So, almost all problems, together with that of women, are anticipated to be solved in Nepal after its election. CA comprises of 601 members. Mixed electoral system comprising -first-past-the – post ballot, proportional system and nomination by the government had been used. Accordingly, 601 members have been elected and nominated from across the country.

The 601 members of the CA who have been elected to make a new constitution face a task that may be daunting, but could be inspiring. The task, as described in the interim constitution 2007, is that of making a new constitution ‘by the people of Nepal themselves’, through the constituent assembly. And, the process is envisaged as involving the restructuring of the state (of which a major part is the adoption of federal system): ‘to bring an end to discrimination based on class, caste, language, gender culture, religion and region’ (Article 138, Constitution of Nepal 2007). But, the interim constitution of Nepal doesn’t mention a clear roadmap for the process; it doesn’t even mention the principles to guide the making of new constitution. There can be no doubt that process should be embarked by initiating to write a constitution that really reflects the needs and the concerns of women in general in Nepal.

4.2 Women in CA

There is increased number of women in the CA. “Some of these members are women with great knowledge, experiences and understanding of the possibilities that the constituent assembly opens up for women” (Cottrell, 2008:3). Some of the others may have the clear ideas of what a constitution is and how they can, through this process; contribute to the improvement of position of women. So as to solve the problems of

women, but it doesn't mean that they will concentrate on women's issues only; one hundred ninety seven women have been elected in the CA.

Viewing them all from degree of political radicalism they represent reformist and revolutionary socio-political milieu. But, overtaking the reformist activism of women having long practice in Nepal, Maoist section of women are more in number in the CA against the conjecture of many. Nepal's April election significantly increased the number of women representatives in the country. The assembly now has 197 women – 185 persons more than what the parliament had in the parliamentary election of 1994. This also means the target of 33 percent women provisioned in the interim constitution 2007 has been met. Women were most successful in the proportional representation part of the ballot where they won 165 seats and additional 29 won through the first-past the –post. As well as benefiting partly proportional system, Nepalese women have received greater inclusion from political parties. The CPN (Maoist) party has been particularly instrumental in increasing the number of women candidates.

In the first-past-the-post elections, as opposed to 3577 men candidates, there were 369 women candidates from 55 political parties. And 30 women were elected which makes 12.5 percent of the total 240 constituencies. PR election produced a total of 161 women elected (nearly 48 per cent seat of 335 seats, whereas six women were nominated from the cabinet resulting in 197 women or 32.77 percent of women in CA. of these women). 18 women have been members of parliament in the past, mainly since the expansion of parliament in January 2007, when the interim constitution was adopted.

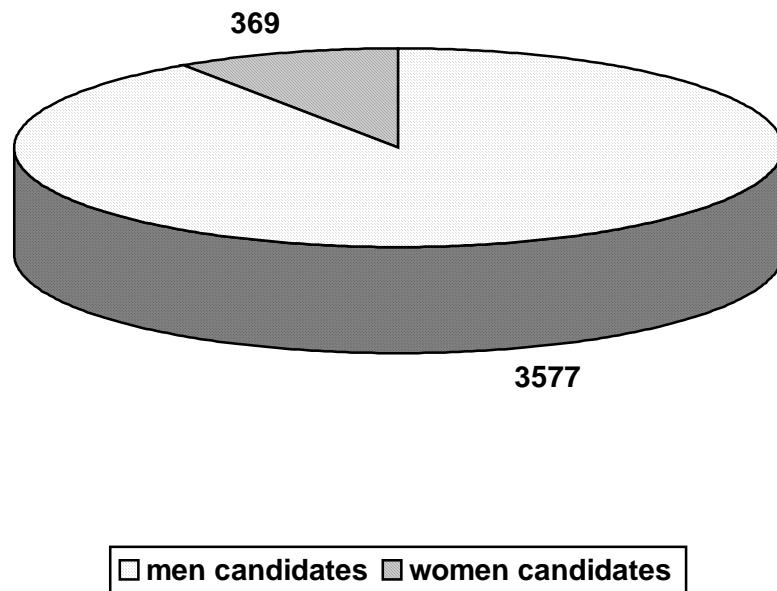
The table given below shows the type of election system adopted in the CA and male female representation.

Table 1 Member in the CA: Sex Based Facts

SEX	FPTP	PR	NOMINATED BY GOVERNMENT	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Men	210	174	20	404	66.23
Women	30	161	6	197	32.77
Total	240	335	26	601	100.00

To have only 369 candidates as opposed to 3577 men candidates (Figure 1) in election is too low a representation for the candidacy. Expecting higher numerical representation in the CA was itself a great problem. To have only 9 percent candidacy as opposed to 3577 men candidates reveals the political status of women in Nepal.

Figure 1 Candidacy in the CA Election: Sex Based Facts

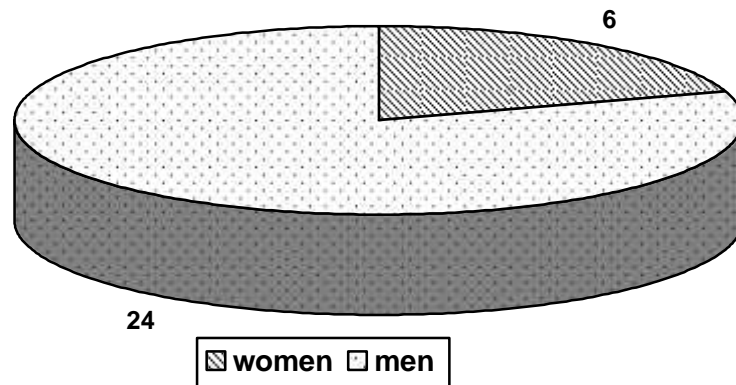


Under FPTP also women's representation seems numerically satisfactory as compared to the earlier parliamentary practices and women's position in the parliaments. But, to

have 30 women out of 240 seats is not satisfactory situation as compared to the vibrant pre –election women’s demands and activism.

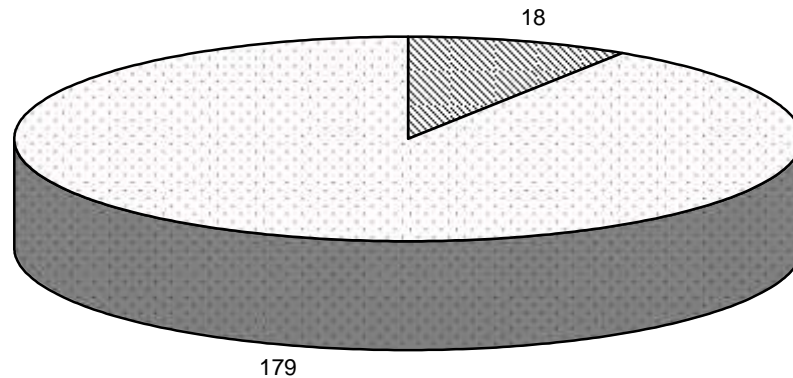
It seems that parties were under compulsion to take the women to the level to 33 per cent. Not going beyond 33 percent despite the fact that 33 per cent was not the maximum limit, shows that male interest also couldn’t facilitate the women’s further numerical rise. Nominating 6 women and 24 men was directed towards meeting the 33 per cent limit as provisioned in the constitution rather than showing promotional attribute of the parties. Nominating only six women was solely calculating to touch the basic limit.

Figure 2 Nomination of members by the Government in the CA



Numerically viewing, 179 women are the new faces as the legislative members (Figure 3). 18 women are there in the CA having worked in parliaments before Jan 2007 when there was the expansion of the parliament. In reality it doesn’t indicate that many new faces are in the CA. 18 women having earlier experiences in the parliament is better number mainly because in the parliamentary election of 1991, 1994 and 1999, only 7, 7 and 12 women were there in the parliamentary election respectively.

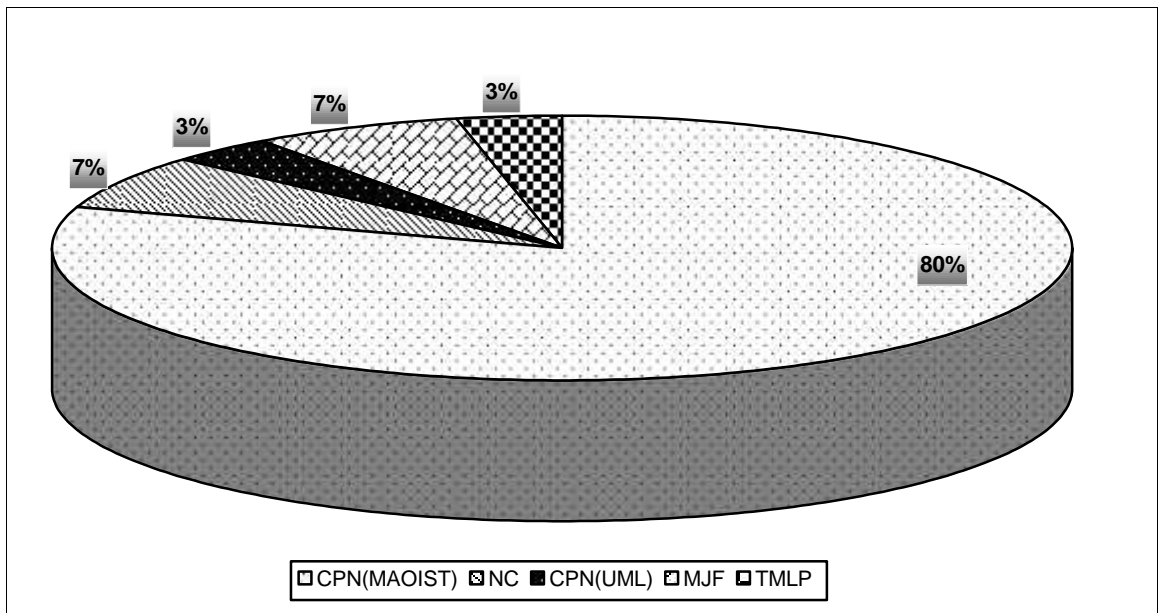
Figure 3 Earlier Experiences of CA Women Members in the Parliament



▨ women having earlier experience in the parliament □ women not having earlier experience in the parliament

Party wise viewing, women’s representation is quite imbalanced as shown in figure 4. Under FPTP Maoist women are far ahead numerically. Under FPTP 80 per cent women are of Maoist affiliation. As opposed to them MJF and NC have 7 percent women and CPN (UML) and TMLP have 3 per cent women’s representation.

Figure 4: Inter- party Women’s Percentage in the CA under First-Past –the –Post Ballot.



Party wise viewing,(Table 2) Maoist party has 19.5 per cent women as compared to the second largest party in the CA-NC has only 5.6 per cent women in the CA. TMLP seems comparatively better to elect women. CPN (UML) has nominal percentage- 3

per cent women. CPN (UML) has been the party having least percentage of women members under FPTP ballot.

Table 2: Intra- Party Women's Percentage in the CA

Name of the party	percentage
CPN(MAOIST)	19.5
Nepali Congress	5.6
CPN(UML)	3
MJF	7
TMLP	11

There was a time when only women from high caste could be MPs. This election has changed that trend and now there are 197 women of various castes, groups and ethnicities in the CA to ensure that the rights of 12.5 million diverse Nepali women are protected. Some have had direct involvement with the past political strife of Nepal. Equal number of professional women is also there in the CA. but, it has been blamed that many women represent in the CA not because they had independent contribution in the socio- economic and political life but because they are the relatives, wives and daughters of senior leaders of different political parties.

4.3 Women's Representation in Parliament in between 1991 and CA Election

Very few women attained positions of office in *Panchayat* institutions. Of the 140 members in the outgoing national *Panchayat*, eight (5.7 per cent) were women. In the 25-member *Panchayat* cabinet that was dissolved on 8 April 1990, there was only one female minister, who held the health portfolio. In Nepal, after the first general election of 1991 and the first local elections of 1992, women activist organizations began raising the issue of the need to increase women's participation in politics. Various workshops and seminars were organized. Alongside, regional initiatives and establishment of regional networks on issues relating to women in politics were put forward. Analyzing numerical part of women in the cabinet, in the case of Nepal, women's access to positions of power in executive bodies was limited. In the May 1991 election to the House of Representatives, final list of 1,345 candidates included only 81 women (6.4 per cent), as shown in Table 1. In the case of two leading parties, the Nepali Congress Party had 11 women among its 204 candidates, while the United

Marxist-Leninist (UML) party included only nine women among its 177 candidates. At the district and village level, percentage of women candidates was a dismal 0.3 per cent and 0.9 per cent respectively.

As the part of increasing women’s electoral representation at local level, new ordinance of 1997, which ensured a 20 per cent reservation of seats for women, was a breakthrough. It had contributed to the increased participation of women in local elected bodies. One seat was reserved for women in each ward of Village Development Committee. The new ordinance forced all political parties to support at least one female candidate. This fact encouraged women to get more involved in political activities in Nepal. About 40,000 female candidates were elected in the local elections of 1997. This provision increased numerical involvement of women in the local government units.

4.4 Imbalanced Representation of Women: Past and Present

The result declared after 1991 election showed that of the 205 candidates elected, seven were women(Table 4) where five persons were from the Nepali Congress Party and two were from the Communist Party of Nepal United Marxist and Leninist CPN(UML). (Table 4) Since the then constitution required that women made up five per cent of the upper house, three women were also nominated to fill the quota. Comparing Tables 3 and 4 to ascertain the percentage of women candidates returned in the elections, an interesting picture emerges. At the national level, 10 per cent of women candidates were elected. At the district level, although women constituted a negligible percentage of candidates, there was a 100 per cent victory for women, with all seven women winning. At the village level, 25 per cent of those women who stood for elections won (Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3: Nepal 1991 General Election: Number of Candidates

	<i>National</i>	Percentage	District	Percentage	Village	Percentage
Male	1264	93.6	2112	99.7	101,546	99.1
Female	81	6.4	7	0.3	956	0.9
Total	1345	100	2119	100	102502	100

Source: Enabling State Program (ESP), 2000/DFID

The table below indicates imbalanced representation of women in the election of 1991.

Table 4: Nepal 1991 Election: Number of Candidates Elected

	<i>National</i>	Percentage	District	Percentage	Village	Percentage
Male	198	96.5	1067	99.4	44,421	99.5
Female	7	3.5	7	0.6	241	0.5
Total	205	100	1074	100	44,662	100

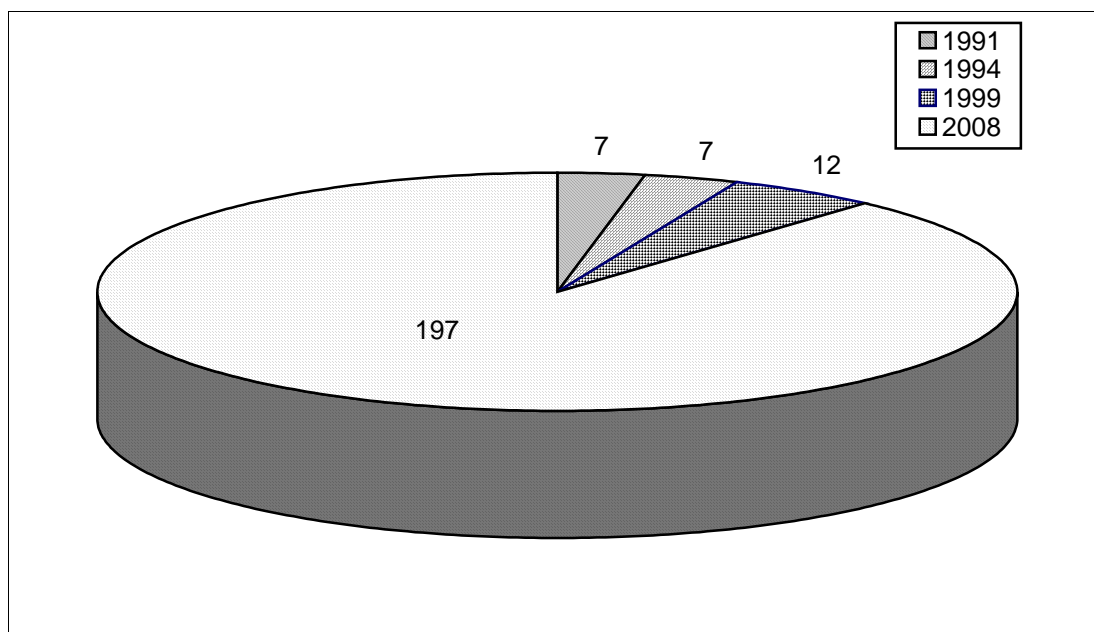
Source: Enabling State Program (ESP), 2001/DFID

Of the total women in the CA, 80 percent is Maoist women. This is the largest slice of pie and other women’s percentage ranging from 3 to 7 is very imbalanced (Figure 4).

Some phenomenal changes have been observed in the involvement of women in politics. The pattern of numerical swing of women legislative members in the Nepalese politics is unprecedented. (Figure 5)

It shows that the trend is not gradual and such shift and increase doubted to be maintained in the future too. (Figure 5) Abrupt increment has hinted at the fact that women’s issues got vibrant during war period in Nepal.

Figure 5: Numbers of Women in the Parliament since 1991



CHAPTER V

MAOIST WOMEN'S NUMERICAL PRECEDENCE OVER NON-MAOIST GROUP OF WOMEN: THE DECISIVE FACTORS

The CA election held in 2008 after the initiation of peace process elevated women's number in rule making body of Nepal. Viewing the number of women from revolutionary and reformist angles, as discussed in earlier chapters, Maoist affiliated women are many more in number as compared to the non Maoist group of women. In the CA, inclusive of nominated women, there are 80 percent Maoist women. But the non Maoist group of women is only 20 per cent. As stipulated in the objective of this research, the causes behind the imbalanced representation of these two different political- ideology guided groups of women is appraised.

5.1 Women as Perceived by Parties

All political parties contesting in the CA had women's wings with them .Non -Maoist political parties like CPN(UML), Nepali Congress, Rastriya Prajatantra party and Sadbhavana party had earlier experiences of contesting elections and having won in different legislative bodies. Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF), Tarai Madhesh Loktantrik Party (TMLP) and the Maoists were having the first experience when the CA election took place. By the time it was 1999 and there took place the third parliamentary election for 205 seats, there were only 12 women members in the House of Representatives. But, when the Maoist party waged armed conflict in Nepal for *just* society, it claimed to have better position of women and sufficiently gender conscious .As the party was in an under-ground violent political activism, its claim couldn't be affirmed and falsified independently. Whatever experiences and the claims political parties had, when the historical CA approached the parties publicized their authentic perception towards women through election manifestos and commitment papers. The manifestos of the parties viewed women, their problems and policies of uplift as follows:

Table 5: Matrix of Women Issues Addressed by the Manifestos of Selected Political parties, Nepal

CPN(Maoist)	Nepali Congress	CPN(UML)
<p>Women’s participation with special rights in all sectors of national lives like economy, society and paternal properties will be guaranteed, policy to proportional participation in legislative, executive and judiciary together with police and army will be adopted. A provision to write the names of both the males and females on the land certificate and citizenship certificate will be adopted. There will be the provision of child care centers for the women to involve in professions undisturbed. Women court will be established. Reproduction and divorce will be the prerogative rights of the women.</p>	<p>The women who occupy more than half portion of the total population will be assured of inclusive and proportional representation in political, administrative and legislative levels. All the discriminatory laws against women will be eliminated. All forms of violence against women will be eliminated. Safe maternity and right to reproductive health will be guaranteed. Campaign for free- of –cost reproductive health check up campaign will be initiated. Safeguarding women’s rights will be the main duty of the state.</p>	<p>All kinds of discriminations, exploitations and oppressions against women will be eliminated. At least 33 percent participation of women will be ensured in all sectors of national life. Daughters and sons will have an equal right of inheritance. Women will have the prerogative right to reproductive health and divorce, and will get special priority in relation to education and health. A special plan will be adopted to women’s employment in the labor sector where women’s participation is low. An equitable society will be established by eliminating all forms of discriminatory laws, and social practices against woman equal rights of inheritance will be ensured</p>

In their words and commitments the major three political parties of Nepal didn’t depart substantially. Women members interviewed also didn’t depart fundamentally except trying to accredit their corresponding parties as the first one to initiate women’s issues in political life and public debate. Of the thirty women interviewed seventeen of them said that property ownership of a woman was focused on the commitment paper of their parties, it really had excited women as they are committed to implement it when the time is favorable for them and they did possess power to implement it. Thirteen of the women couldn’t be specific regarding what made their party distinct from other parties regarding women’s issues in the CA. Rather; they had the view that all political parties had raised the common issues of Nepalese women that had been the national debate for some years back in Nepal.

Twenty seven of them expressed commonality of women issues and said that guaranteeing reproduction rights; proportional representation, inclusion and elimination of all forms of discriminatory laws of the countries were the priorities of the parties.’ The Maoist party and CPN (UML) are seen a bit particularistic in their words whereas Nepali Congress (NC) seems generalist. Parties put forward

manifestos and commitment papers for the popular votes. If the voters are really affected and attracted by the manifestos, win and defeat in election is determined by them. The similar commitments of the three parties didn't seem to have roles to decide imbalanced representation of Maoist and non- Maoist women candidates in the CA election.

5.2 Criminalization of Politics and Corruption

One of the most hinted issues on why women can't practice politics and be triumphant in the election is criminalization of politics and corruption. It is very germane to blame corruption and criminalized politics of Nepal. 'Corruption inhibits and prohibits women to emerge as the legislative member and opting political career despite the fact that many women are enticed by': twelve of the non-Maoist women asserted it. To be underdeveloped country has something to do with corruption and criminalization of politics. Similarly not to have enhanced situation of women in politics and legislature has also direct relation with male-friendly political struggle. 'To go against such trends there needed daring actions and voices at the same time and we were to some extent capable enough in this matter'' almost all the Maoist women interviewed agreed on it. Theoretical aspects also agree with such affirmations of the interviewees. Nadezhda Shvedova- a leading researcher in Canada and the USA says: "Corruption inevitably results in the creation of favorable conditions and opportunities for the existence of the most negative manifestation of organized crimes" (Shdevoda, 1998:36).

According to Transparency International Report of 1997, countries such as Nigeria, Pakistan, Kenya, Bangladesh and others are perceived to be the most corrupt. Women's representation in parliaments in these countries is very low- only three to nine percent are women MPs. whereas Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark and New Zealand are perceived as the least corrupt and in these countries women MPs comprise from 30 percent to 40 percent – in other words, five to ten times more (Transparency International, 1997). Eight of the Maoist women member's opinion that 'corruption didn't badly affect Maoist affiliated women' is worth analyzing. Being a women candidate of an economically backward country too, the assertion that 'corruption and criminalization of politics didn't affect us' has something to do with power of Maoist women to resist and counter them. Seven of the Maoist women

expounded and clarified that whenever womanly traits and attitudes were denounced and war time schooling gave confidence to fight against any men-netted tangles and even plots, it was not any problem for them to face election against criminalization of politics and corruption'. Thirteen of the non-Maoist women also related the immediate past of the Maoist affiliated women candidates. Their generalized views mean that Maoist women could strongly criminalize politics and interweave any sort of corruption. It has something to do with effectual role of Maoist women to do away with criminalized politics for the electoral success.

The Times of India report (February, 1998) corroborates much of what has been tried to elaborate. 'Namely that domestic responsibility, lack of financial clout, rise in criminalization of politics and the threat of character assassination are making it increasingly difficult for women to be part of the political framework'. Moreover, women politicians point out that even within the political parties, women are rarely found in leadership positions.

Regarding the relation of women and corruption twelve women expressed that corruption and criminalization of politics always had the downbeat effects on women's representation. Males' view that they contribute in politics so they have to be paid from and live on politics makes politics prerogative of men. So they can't be altruistic there. Twelve of the non-Maoist women also had the affirmation that corruption also shaded the partaking, freedom and genuine issues of women and they got defeated in many constituencies manly because corrupted and criminalized politics debarred them.

20 of the women members had the generalized view that criminalization of politics and corruptions are the main problems of women in politics. It has pushed women back. No parties including the Madhesh based parties are blameless in this matter. In the country like Nepal women can't struggle against them. If economical status of women in Nepal is not good, competing in the election is almost impossible for women in Nepal. Media also align with such corrupt males."

Four of the Maoist members opined in such a way that even the Maoists women who possessed weapons earlier and were together with the male partners in the election

had been negatively affected by corruption and criminalization of politics. In such cases women tended to be hesitant to opt for politics. Two of them hinted at the instance of regional politics in Nepal that having been, comparatively, over criminalized situation of the political parties in the Tarai, very few women were involved in the parties there.

Fourteen non-Maoist members answered that under criminalization of politics the cultural aspects, morality, sex issues, bigamy, boldness and self-esteem matters are adversely affected. Going against, eight of the Maoist women members expressed that Maoist women were bold enough in that matter. Twenty of the interviewees have the opinion that corruption prevents the women in politics. Paraphrasing them it means that even if women are recruited to fulfill a certain allocated quota, they are slotted into such positions by corrupt forces that their presence becomes merely physical and insignificant since they are not a part of decision making process, it was quite applicable in the case of non-Maoist women in the CA election. Recruitment of women under such circumstances does not serve the interest of subversive forces as it may threaten the hegemony and status quo.

Primarily, non-Maoist women were the victims of such thought. Due to lack of radical thought and programs to go against assigned roles was almost impossible for them. They understood politics as *male's games*, *old boys club* and *dirty game*. Dismantling the complicated and corrupt net work of politics and daring to challenge it was beyond their capacity. They couldn't do so because they lacked radical voices, they couldn't deny social order and mores as defined and guided, basically, by Hinduism.

Under corrupted political atmosphere, money is the essential aspect. Money decides winning and losing election. But, the reformist group of women could never have the networking with the fund providers- opined nine of the Maoist members. Equal number of women also said that Maoist women were not the victims of this problem as they had communal and one-for-all and all-for-one type of electoral practice as they were striving for the better result in the CA.

The selection and nomination process within political party is also biased against women. This process desires male characteristics. Nadezhda Shavedova(1997:36) – a leading researcher at the USA and Canada Studies at the Russian Academy of

Sciences in Moscow, Russia states: “*An old boy’s club* atmosphere and prejudices inhibit and prohibit politically inclined women from integrating themselves in their party works. These result in an underestimation of women as politicians. Money providers for election campaigns, further hinder women from being nominated.”

The Maoist women had different situation regarding these issues. Maoist women were also influenced by crime and corruption but they were comparatively capable of tackling such issues. ‘We were offensive both in terms of voices and actions’ were the answer of eight Maoist women and they also stated that their political schooling and the war time experiences taught them to fight against bureaucratic and male netted complications in politics.

Hisila Yami(2003) who was believed to be the leading women activist in the party during the war time wrote: “It is interesting to observe that revolutionary communist women have always been on the offensive when they are fighting against the revisionists. The reason may be because they are painfully aware that revisionism breeds bureaucratization, which in turn strengthens patriarchal values, ultimately negating women in politics.”

Her word ‘offensive’ refers to bold action against male netted bureaucratic stratagem. Yami expounds how boldly and heretically the women in the party were trained effacing ‘womanly’ traits and culture. She further writes: “... All Nepalese Women’s Association (Revolutionary)-[ANWA(R)] dared to organize a seminar (amidst strong speculation that they all would be arrested) and to voice the need for overall revolution to solve women’s oppression. It was after that bold step that other mass organizations started giving their own programs. Dalit [lowest caste - ed.] women in Kalikot district in western Nepal were the first to snatch rifles from reactionary armed forces and hand them over to the local Party, thus accelerating PW in that district. The first daring historical jailbreak from the heavily fortified Gorkha district jail in March 2001 by six Maoist women is one of the rarest events, perhaps even in world history. (2003).

If the women were as amazingly bold and active in the war as mentioned by Yami those very warrior-turned-candidates of the election had courage to fight against any possible male threats and obstructions of corruption inhibiting them to succeed.

Similarly, they all had the experiences of leaving home. And, social mores and norms practiced against women were no longer the practices for them.

The Maoist women leader possessed weapons in the immediate past and were involved in war so had the confidence that possible plot and male framed crimes could be offended and foiled. They were never isolated. 'Contesting in the election was not the issue of women only it was integrated with party's position after election and war's issue' Shakya maintains. *Sex, caste, region, religion, Dalit, Madhes, and Aadibasi* cliché of war time had to be materialized. So women in the election were not women alone. They were with the whole party organization and structure whereas it was very difficult for the non –Maoist women to compete and win election.

Darcy, Welch and Clark (1994:101) have sufficient logic to back this idea: "Tackling such criminalization and corruption existing under the male shield and patronage is a great challenge to the women politicians. But, ideological schooling and experiences determines whether or not to offend and defend such practices to compete in the election and politics."

The Afghanistani senior women leader and the first female member of President Hamid Karzai's government - Minister for Women Affairs Massouda Jalal says: "as things stand, odds are stacked heavily against any female candidate. You have to face age old prejudice, constant threatening and gun- trotting warlords"¹. Reformist groups of Nepalese women could never overcome the difficulties created by male politicians being "manly". Going against socially and traditionally assigned roles and flouting the social taboos of family was not as easy to the non-Maoist groups of women as it was for the Maoist groups of women politicians.

Whenever the politics is criminalized, fund providers of election compel the leaders to involve in corruption. Reformist groups can't dare to involve in fund politics. After 1991 the reformist groups of women in Nepal couldn't emerge as the influential leaders and their voices were never counted. Corruption had hindered them. For Anderlini(1997) this results in an underestimation of women as politicians by those who provide money for election campaigns, thus further hindering women from being nominated.

¹ As interviewed by The Kathmandu Post

5.3 Conflict and Political Corollary

Conflicts and prolonged wars are sometimes consequential and resulting too. They also have the chances of opening up avenues to those who are marginalized and are at depth of social strata. “Conflicts give rise to new perspectives, and previously excluded sectors of society expect and demand a role in decision-making. They may be among sectors that agitated for conflict or those who emerged as voice of moderation. But when compromises are reached [...] a settlement is matched by their expectations of power and influence in the aftermath of war. In other words, for many a warlord, Maoist rebel, or armed faction of political party, the negotiations and postwar period are, effectively, pay back time”(Anderlini,1997: 125).

Anderlini is very apt apropos how women were stirred and got effervescent during the war and before the CA election. Fifteen of the women agreed the view that Maoist women were with the background of armed conflict. They believed- for the people it was not the matter who were going to be elected this time in election. Peace was at the center of any voter in Nepal. It was not because Maoist women were the most conscious women in Nepal in women’s issues but because the women had warring history in the immediate past and peace process would be affected by the numerical differences of the Maoist party.

Six of the Maoist members had different says and different issue to raise. They felt- the victory was reward for women for the involvement of them in war. Gender problem in their party was not with them as impending problem. Allowing them candidacy in the election by the party was not the matter of mercy and kindness. They responded they had emerged as the political figures as men had. They were not taken as women of Maoist affiliation in the election, rather, were taken as the representative of the party so got elected by popular vote accordingly. While demanding changes through extremism by the Maoist women there were the births of many women leaders. Simultaneously, the women’s rights activists who demanded for peace also stood as women leaders. Moderating demands also had the chances of developing leadership. So, through the Maoist led war women’s activism was rapidly increased. It is striking not altogether surprising that women leaders are emerging at the local, provincial and national levels in countries affected by violence, oppression and division. Whether war pushes women into the public domain as breadwinners and

single parent, propel them into activism to cope with personal tragedy, or mobilizes them for a cause, it quickly politicizes them too. (Anderlini, 1997: 118)

Hisila Yami's anecdote is very relevant here to quote on how oppression and offences propel women in general into activism to cope with personal tragedy: "Take the case of Sangeeta Budha, a resident of Rolpa. Her husband was killed by police force in the year 1997. According to her it was she who worked in her father's house when her father was arrested. Today after the killing of her husband she has taken to jungle to join guerrilla warfare to avenge her husband's killers ...collective farming has particularly helped those de-facto single parent households where husbands are either away to serve PW or have gone away to work in remote urban centers. In some places it has even managed to win the heart of such families whose male members are serving the reactionary military and police forces" (Yami, 2003).

Maoist women's involvement was, quite debatably, voluntary and was not intermittent. Being away from social mainstream and having left home and houses for uncertain times, they were the full fledged women activists. But, in the cases of non-Maoist women only the certain days, events, accidents and issues would call for their activism and participation. Twelve of the non-Maoist women members agreed on the view their offences, defenses, assault ,marriage, love matters, inability to rehabilitate back, party's doting rules and many other circumstances compelled the Maoist women to be the full-fledged women activists resulting in better position of women in the election'

After the peace process started, the women couldn't divert back to the previous lives so it helped the Maoist women intensify their agenda and propagate accordingly for the electoral success. Anderlini affirms the above statements that: "The tenacity of women who join up voluntarily can't be underestimated. In Srilanka, Nepal and elsewhere women who joined opposition movements as the means of existing traditional life are often more reluctant to lay down their weapons than the male fighters. Coming from societies in which women are often heavily discriminated against and have personal experiences of violence, they view the weapon they hold as the direct source of respect, empowerment and protection" (Anderlini, 1997:124)

Relating armed conflict and electoral success of Maoist women, of the 15 interviewees nine of the non-Maoist women viewed that numerical abundance of Maoist women members in election and candidacy resulted in comparatively better position of women in the CA. Similarly, all of them had to say that the promises given by party during war had to be materialized in the beginning phase of electoral practice of the party. For that they needed to elect women in the party. Twelve women viewed- they didn't get opportunities and time to be full fledged political and election campaigner. Their intentions were orientated towards the fact that cultural norms and values stood as the barrier for the purpose. But, seven of the Maoist women had to say that they were not mindful about the problems arising from social mores and traditions' illustrates the fact that non Maoist women were hindered by such norms, dos and don'ts as prescribed and proscribed by society.

CHAPTER VI

WHAT CAN BE DONE FOR THE FURTHER NUMERICAL RISE OF WOMEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE BODY?

Nepalese women have enjoyed 33 per cent women representation in the CA. This is a great success for the Nepalese women. Past is not satisfactory for the Nepalese women viewing from the point of view of women's representation in the parliament. More than 50 per cent representation of women can be a very apt and valid demand of women as they occupy more than half portion of total population. One of the issues raised by this research was also to find out the ways of increasing the number of women parliamentarian. Vis-à-vis the interviewees were also asked questions. Depending on the respondent's answers and internationally accepted instruments some ways have been dealt in the ensuing paragraphs.

6.1 Get Organized Inside and Outside Political Parties

Being organized in interest groups both inside and outside political parties provides valuable experience for women and gives them a power base on which to build if they aspire for office (Richard E. Matland: 83). Twenty six of the women had to say, to paraphrase them, that unlike the men, non-political sphere is not affected by political consciousness in the cases of women.' Political groups as well as professional groups, such as women doctors and women lawyers' associations, women teachers' groups, can play an important role as a recruiting ground for women candidates. She says that 'political awareness should go side by side' with profession. Being organized also increases visibility and legitimacy. In addition, in political parties where women commonly do a considerable amount of party work, it is important to be organized into a woman's caucus that can lobby for improved representation.

Regarding the need of political consciousness among women nine of the interviewed members had to say- if full-fledged women party cadres are not organized well, male interest always take the women as the tool to be deployed for the election so women's

network, at least party wise, is necessary. Ten of the women had similar focus-professional women see the political women differently. To be professional is to be apolitical for them. But, they always forget that politicizing professions are advantageous for them.' So, for the better representation, political and professional women should work in unison.

6.2 Proportional System and Women's Representation

Single- member district majoritarian system has consistently proven to be unfruitful for the women to increase the pool of theirs in the parliament and any other legislative bodies. 'Of the 10 highest ranking countries in terms of women's representation, all utilize proportional representation electoral system' (Matland: 83). This shows that traditionally adopted majoritarian system could never be women-friendly. Giving the instance of constituent assembly and its fruitful result for women nineteen of the women focused on proportional system. If PR system was not there, women were very few in the CA. This system compelled the party leaders to allocate seats for the women too. Their expression specified the fact that women would be towards the bottom of parliamentary numerical scale provided that there was not the adoption of proportional system to hold CA election.

Proportional system also constitutes inclusive type of legislative. Twenty two women's reasons of proportional system either referred to represents the diverse structure of Nepalese women, empowering the women as it provides with an opportunity for the women to be involved in the rules making body or accepted as an example that diverse background of women and their representations have been materialized in the CA basically by dint of PR system.

Fifteen of them justified the importance of proportional system saying that proportional system, if had been adopted in the earlier election of Nepal too, women's status would be quite high by now. Nine women seemed contradictory on themselves in viewing that women needed to be elected independently competing in the direct vote but incapability of doing this in the Nepalese political milieu proportional system uplifted women to the level of policy making. Supporters of PR further elaborated the fact that leaders in Tarai too had been counted women as the leader because including women was provisioned in the interim constitution and it was mandatory or else

situation would be quite different but traditional. All the 30 women interviewed didn't depart in their opinions fundamentally. Although theoretical perception of proportional system world wide is that it is not normally suitable in the developing countries and PR only pays in the long run, the interviewee took PR system for granted. Used for the first time in Nepal, it could increase the number of women in the CA.

6.3 Party Support and Neglected Womanly Traits

By 'party' women generally understand *men's club*. They have the perception that implicitly or explicitly they see the undeclared rule of male game. To be in the party or to hold some post of significance is not commonly natural for them. Party doesn't have support for them. To have womanly traits and not to be bold is with impact in under representation. Shvedova (1998:24) writes: '*In fact, the more authoritative and "manly" a woman is, the more she corresponds to the undeclared males rules of the game. That is why woman politicians in general and women MPs in particular, have to overcome this difficulty of feeling uncomfortable in the political field.*

Whenever the political life of a woman doesn't depict the manly traits, nineteen members agreed 'men dominate the political arena, men formulate the rules of the political game and men define the standards for evaluation. Similarly twelve women believed that the existence of male dominated model results in either woman rejecting politics altogether or rejecting male-style politics. In the Nepalese case the first option always ruled. Their views matched perfectly with the political philosophy that 'political life is organized according to male norms and values, and in some cases, even male life styles'. (Shevedova, 1998: 22)

Twenty three of the women accepted money as factor for election. They have to say that under criminalized political culture money is at the center of any elections. Funding determines winning and losing. Being women is viewed as the deficiency of courage to compete against male counterpart. This results in an underestimation of women as politicians by those who provide money for election campaigns, thus further hindering women from being selected as a candidate in elections.

Eighteen of the women accepted the restriction of women at the time of candidacy selection. They opined- whenever the candidacy itself is restricted and selectively provided the pool of women in the parliament or any legislative bodies cant be expected as desired' lack of party support is the common issue almost all the women raised during interviews. Parties possess resources for election campaigns but very nominal amount reaches to the women. Most often women are deprived of such resources for the election campaigns. Political men are the deprivors of such resources. To Mrs. Pant '*Men's club* atmosphere of politics inhibits and prohibits politically inclined women from integrating themselves into party works. Despite this women are shown as the hook for attracting voters.'

CHAPTER VII

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Findings

This research basically raised three issues as the problems. Finding out trend shift of Nepalese legislative body relating to women and answering why the Maoist women could get victory over non-Maoist women in the CA election were the issues. Similarly, finding out the ways for the further numerical rise of women in the legislative body was one more issue raised.

Arithmetical abundance of women, inclusiveness, and representations of the grass-root level women are the markers of the CA of Nepal. Nepal's April election significantly increased the number of female representatives in the country. The assembly now has 197 women – 185 persons more than what the parliament had in the parliamentary election of 1994. This also means the goal of 33 percent women stipulated in the interim constitution 2007 has been met. Women were most successful in the proportional representation part of the ballot where they won 165 seats and additional 29 won through the first-past the –post. Nepalese women have received greater inclusion from political parties. The communist party of Nepal (Maoist) has been particularly instrumental in increasing the number of female candidates.

Many of the Maoist women in the CA come from unconventional background, widening political participation to lower caste women and the working classes. Patriarchal ruling system of post -1990 political milieus denied the easy access to political main streaming of women. Electoral systems were generally constructed so as to favor the elite and well-to –do families. Such systems were favored by a number of undemocratic measures in different electoral systems. In the first-past-the-post single member constituency system, constituencies were unequally sized.

On how the revolutionary group of women had been able to precede dramatically, Maoist women's relation with gun in the immediate past, labor force structure of Nepalese women, corruption and criminalized politics of Nepal, conflict and use of women by the Maoist party and the promises given to them have been found out as

the decisive factors. And, in the election, the labor power of women seems to be sustaining the Maoist women candidate primarily in the rural areas and hinterland of Nepal where at one time, during the warring period, those very women candidates spent politicizing- days as the safe haven. If the voters are really affected and fascinated by the manifestos, and winning and losing election is determined by them, the similar commitments of the three parties didn't seem to have roles to decide the imbalanced representation of Maoist and non- Maoist women candidates in the CA. Programs and policies of the parties didn't depart on the basic issues of the women.

Non-Maoist women lacked radical thought and programs to go against assigned roles and mores. They, due to lack of radical thought and actions, were constrained to understand politics as male's games, old boys club and dirty game. Dismantling the knotty and corrupt net work of politics and daring to dispute it was afar their capacity. They couldn't do so because they lacked drastic voices, they couldn't refute social order and mores as defined and guided, basically, by Hinduism. They didn't have the familiarity of using weapons for the rights neither were they involved in the physical assault against males and patriarchal bond for social changes.

Maoist women had different situation as regards these issues. Maoist women were also influenced by the crime and corruption but they were comparatively capable of tackling such issues. They were offensive both in terms of voices and actions. Their political schooling and the war time experiences taught them to fight against bureaucratic and male netted complications in politics. In the same way, they all had the experiences of leaving home and social mores. The norms practiced against women were no longer the practices for them. They possessed armaments in the instant past and were involved in wars. So, they had the self-reliance that the possible stratagem and male framed crimes could be offended and foiled. They were never isolated. Contesting in the election was not the issue of women only it was integrated with party's position after election and war's issue. *Sex, caste, region, religion, Dalit, Madhes, and Aadibasi* truism of the war time had to be materialized. So women in the election were not women alone. They were with the whole party organization and structure whereas it was very difficult for the non –Maoist women to race and win the election.

Conflicts give rise to new perspectives, and formerly debarred sectors of society anticipate and demand a role in decision-making. They may be among sectors that agitated for conflict or those who emerged as voice of moderation. Voices of confrontation and moderation both intensify women's activism. But when compromises are reached, new players replace old ones. New players' willingness to negotiate a resolution is matched by their expectations of power and influence in the aftermath of war. Maoist women's numerical precedence is also the result of this fact.

Internationally accepted decisive instruments for the women's back-up don't apply in the Maoist case. Women are roused for the war. This takes place internationally. They are targeted because they are likely to be easily provoked. The promises given to them have to be kept so in the initial phase of electoral practice their positions seem better. It seems the women's issues were seriously taken by the Maoist party. The promises given to the women during wartime had to be kept so in the preliminary phase of electoral practice their positions seemed better in Nepal as well. The whole party line was there to back them. But, non-Maoist women didn't get that.

Election for the Maoist women was not personal but a communal concern. But, definitely, the lobbying of Maoist women for *equal representation* had the contagion effect on the other political parties. That helped the women to guarantee 33 percent constitutional stipulation, take on proportional representation (PR) system in election -that had direct effect on the women in general in Nepal. In the ensuing elections too if the number and percentage is maintained by the Maoist women activists in the legislative bodies it can be affirmed that Maoist interest group was quite gender conscious to provide with leading electoral success for the women affiliated to them.

7.2 Conclusions

Numerical profusion, comprehensiveness, and representations of the grass-root level of women are the markers of the CA of Nepal. The communist party of Nepal (Maoist) has been predominantly influential in increasing the number of female members in the CA. During the prolonged warring period, if women in general alone are taken into account, only the Maoists women were there in the immediacy with women labor force of Nepal. In the prior elections of the CA election, very apparently, criminalized politics would turn women listless towards politics and this had involved only the selected women in the electoral politics. Non-Maoist women

couldn't be free from this factor this time too. Maoist women were also influenced by the crime and corruption but they were comparatively proficient of tackling such issues. They were offensive both in terms of voices and actions. Their political schooling and the war time experiences trained them to fight against bureaucratic and male netted complications in politics. They possessed weaponry in the instant past and were involved in war so had the self-reliance that the probable stratagem and male framed crimes could be offended and foiled.

Above all, the promises given by the male dominated party composition of the Maoist party during the warring phase had to be kept at least on the onset of electoral practice of the party. This factor was solely accountable for the increased women in the CA. Maoist people's war was gender friendly rather than gender conscious. Internationally customary crucial instruments for the women's backing don't apply in the Maoist case. In the ensuing elections too if the number and percentage is kept up by the Maoist women activists in the lawmaking bodies, it can be avowed that Maoist interest group was reasonably gender alert to provide with foremost electoral accomplishment for the women allied to it.

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ADDENDUM

THE CA WOMEN MEMBERS INTERVIEWED

S.N	Name of the CA Member	Party of Affiliation	District/constituency
1	Samita Karki	CPN(Maoist)	Khotang-2
2	Devi Khadga	CPN(Maoist)	Dolakha-1
3	Bimala Subedi	CPN(Maoist)	Nuwakot-1
4	Parbati Thapa	CPN(Maoist)	Gorkha-1
5	Durga Kumari B.K	CPN(Maoist)	Kaski-4
6	Lila Kumari Bhandari	CPN(Maoist)	Kailali-6
7	Puspa Bhusal	NC	Arghakhanchi-2
8	Kamala Pant	NC	Nominated
9	Uma Adhikari	NC	Proportional
10	Urmila Aryal	NC	proportional
11	Shanta Chaudhary	CPN(UML)	Proportional
12	Kamala Sharma	CPN(UML)	Surkhet-1
13	Shanti Adhikari	CPN(UML)	Proportional
14	Karima Begam	MJF	Parsa-1
15	Renu Kumari Yadav	MJF	Saptari-4

SN	Name of the Party Cadre	Party of Affiliation	District
1	Maina Rawal	CPN(Maoist)	Dadeldhura
2	Karma Rasaili	CPN(Maoist)	Surkhet
3	Anita Tamang	CPN(Maoist)	Kavre
4	Binita Ghimire	CPN(Maoist)	Mornag
5	Sushila Simkhada	CPN(Maoist)	Kaski
6	Durga Dhami	CPN(Maoist)	Doti
7	Ramkumari Rai	NC	Khotang
8	Safala Pokhrel	NC	Sunsari
9	Sashi Acharya	NC	Tanahun
10	Surya Kumari K C	NC	Dailekh
11	Laxmi Gautam	CPN(UML)	Sunsari
12	Bhagawati Neupane	CPN(UML)	Tanahun
13	Radha Thami	CPN(UML)	Sindhupalchok
14	Aarati Jha	MJF	Morang
15	Mausami Pal	MJF	Morang