

An Anthropological Study of the Role of Maoist Insurgency in the Creation of Federal

Chandra Kumar Laksamba *

Nepal Open University, Manbawan, Lalitpur, Nepal.

ABSTRACT

This paper has explored the role of Maoist insurgency in the creation of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. The Maoist insurgency of Nepal that began in 1996 ended in 2006 directly losing more than 13,000 people within a decade. This decade-long civil war was one of the bloodiest conflicts of modern times. The country also spent another decade in the process of peace building. During the peace process, political parties of the country successfully abolished the existing parliament and formed a Constitution Assembly (CA). The CA declared the nation as the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal in 2008 ending 240-year-old, the Hindu Kingdom ruled by monarchism. Finally, the CA promulgated a constitution in 2015. I used qualitative-political-anthropology as a research methodology to explore the contents of highly politicized articles that were published in Himal Khabarpatrika and Mulyankan during the emergence and growth of the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) Maoist insurgency (1995 - 2006). In the past, the oppressed and socially marginalized groups attempted several occasions to bring changes in the socio-political structure without any success. However, the Maoist insurgency that began in February 1996 succeeded in capitalizing them by generating an environment for sociopolitical change. The paper has found substantial changes brought in the structures of the country, such as in the system of governance, politics, social organization, or inter-group relations. However, oppressed, and marginalized populations, war-wounded, and soldiers with disabilities from both sides the former People Liberation Army (PLA) and the state are still living in poverty and miserable condition.

Keywords: Maoist; Insurgency; Oppression; Oppressed; Creation; Public Meaning; New Democracy; Federalism; Nepal

INTRODUCTION

Nepali people have been fighting against oppressions and for their rights since the 1930s. However, the rulers and elites keep aborting and diverting the struggles from reaching their destinations. The first struggle for democracy was aborted in 1951 that transformed power only from the Rana Regime to the monarch. But people were kept in dark by telling them the country achieved democracy. Political leaders again created an illusion in 1990 by interpreting completion of democracy restoration process that was aborted in 1951. Thus, the CPN (Maoist) launched a decade-long civil war in 1996, aiming to bring people's democracy in the country which eventually ended up with the death toll over 13,000 people.

BACKGROUND

This paper, therefore, concentrates on exploring the public meanings that were created in the emergence and growth of insurgency. The exploration is important as these meanings, often created in rather informal settings, particularly by both the normally silent mass and

the critically vocal segments of society, were often undermined by academia and policymakers alike. Before the emergence of conflict, societal discourses, such as social interactions, media, and political reporting, political and non-political deliberations at various levels -micro, meso, and macro, both formally and informally, had seriously highlighted the critical historical, socio-political, and economic problems faced by the country. Exploration of these various formal and informal discourses, including media reporting, indicates that historically Nepal has been the victim of bad governance as the rulers have mostly been self-serving, and grossly lacking in openness, efficiency, and accountability to the people. Similarly, democratically elected successive governments of the 1990s only contributed to the production and reproduction of social inequality and poverty, and to the institutionalisation of corruption. By 1995, the legitimacy of the major political parties was beginning to be undermined and their authority was being questioned. On the political front, the Panchayat politicians held fast to the democratic rule, despite their expulsion by the popular people's movement of 1990 which bore on the sentiment of the

*Correspondence to: Chandra Kumar Laksamba, Nepal Open University, Manbawan, Lalitpur, Nepal. E-mail: claksamba@nou.edu.np

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general public. Although the forces of production - such as poor and socially marginalised groups- have time and again risen to bring about changes in the socio-political structure, their struggles were ignored. However, the Maoist insurgency that began in February 1996 succeeded in capitalising over these social inequalities generating an environment for socio-political change. Various discourses during the conflict have substantially highlighted the relevance of insurgency. They have created and spread the message through micro informal means, which proved to be instrumental in creating a positive environment for expanding and growing the conflict, giving it a momentum.

A public meaning of Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal has been created with the emergence and growth of the CPN (Maoist) insurgency through the analysis of contents of media publications. To explore the public meaning, the paper has been divided into four sections. The first section defines the public meaning in the context of the CPN (Maoist) insurgency. The second section presents a glimpse of the CPN (Maoist) which has provided a brief insight of how and why it emerged and expanded. The third section covers the methodology and methods of data collection. Finally, the fourth section is the exploration and interpretation of the CPN (Maoist) insurgency looking in particular at the causes of the insurgency and creation of public meaning during the period of 1996 - 2006 followed by successful abolishment of the existing parliament and forming up CA and declaration of Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal in 2008, ending 240-year-old the Hindu Kingdom ruled by a monarch. Ultimately, the CA promulgated a constitution of Nepal in 2015. The findings and discussion section has been divided into three phases, such as 1996 - 1999 as the first phase, 2000 - 2006 the second phase, and 2006 - 2020 as the third phase.

PUBLIC MEANING IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CPN (MAOIST'S) EMERGENCE AND GROWTH

People's action that affects people, community, and nation or state is called public meaning. In the context of the CPN (Maoist) insurgency, public meaning is an oppressed people's interest, belonging, voice or action which is directly associated to the socio-political and economic problems of the people of Nepal. When people's voices and actions become recognised as a public meaning, it becomes an integral part of the people's power and movement, which can be both constructive and destructive. But it solely depends on how the power is exercised. The CPN (Maoist) carried out both constructive and destructive actions in the process of establishing of what they term as a 'New Democracy' (*Naya Janabad*).

A GLIMPSE OF THE CPN (MAOIST) INSURGENCY

Initially, there was only one communist party in Nepal, which was founded in 1949 in Calcutta, India, by Pushpa Lal Shrestha. Since its formation, the CPN evolved into the two largest parties of the country, namely CPN (Maoist) and CPN United Marxist Leninist (UML), and another half dozens of small parties. The main cause of division after division of communist parties is differences in ideological interpretation mainly on socio-political and economic issues. Instead of finding ways for unification, they always preferred to split, and this has been developed as a way of life within the communist parties of Nepal. Hence, the culture of division mentality is heavily embedded in all communist parties of Nepal to this day regardless of their shape and size.

As mentioned earlier, over the years of ideological exercises, the CPN (Maoist) emerged in 1995 after many splits and mergers from the original CPN. Regarding the formation of the CPN (Maoist) and its principal guideline 'Maoism', *Mulyankan* [1] commented in the following way:

The CPN (Maoist) has taken 'Maoism' as the principal guideline which has set an ideological discourse as 'Maoism' which is a 'thought' developed by Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung) going beyond the conventional Marxism-Leninism paths. Hence, the 'Maoism' without the Marxism-Leninism is incomplete and it becomes an unscientific guideline.

In contrary to this, Thapa [2] wrote:

The CPN (Unity Centre/renamed Maoist) accepted 'Mao Tse-tung Thought' as the third, new and better phase of Marxism-Leninism and itself as Maoism' and passed the resolution to initiate a 'people's' war to bring about a new democratic revolution in Nepal.

Thapa has further substantiated the notion quoting the Worker, June 1996:

It would be based on the lesson of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism regarding revolutionary violence. On the occasion of formulation of the plan for initiation of the process that will unfold as protracted people's war based on the strategy of encircling the city from the countryside according to the specificities of our country, the Party once again reiterates its eternal commitment to the theory of people's war developed by Mao as the universal and invincible Marxist theory of war.

In this sense, the CPN (Maoist) accepted 'Mao Tse-tung Thought' as 'Maoism' and the party Central Committee announced that the Party would be based on the principle of Marxism, Leninism, and Maoism. It meant a protracted people's war, where a city is normally encircled from the countryside. This is the theory of people's war that was developed by the late Chairman Mao, which is based on the Marxist theory of war, and was used in the liberation of China.

In this context, the CPN (Maoist) had a clear political goal, which was to overthrow the 'semi-feudal and semi-colonial' system led by the king to establish the 'New Democracy' where oppressed, poor, landless and backward indigenous nationalities would be able to exercise the power. Concerning this, the CPN (Maoist) [3] document called 'Plan for the Historic Initiation of the People's War' stated:

This plan would be based on the aim of completing the new democratic revolution after the destruction of feudalism and imperialism, then immediately moving towards socialism, and, by way of cultural revolutions based on the theory of continuous revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, marching to communism - the golden future of the whole humanity. We are firm that it is a crime against the proletariat and the general masses of the people to start an armed struggle without the firm conviction of carrying it through to the end. We shall never allow this struggle to become a mere instrument for introducing partial reforms in the condition of the people or terminating in a simple compromise by exerting pressure on the reactionary classes. Thus, our armed struggle will be totally free of all sorts of petty bourgeois, narrow nationalist, religion-communal and casteist illusions.

Hence, the above glimpse has highlighted the goal of the CPN (Maoist) insurgency. Media played a vital role in the meaning creation process publishing articles and widely covering news on

insurgency and drawing the attention of the general public. To explore this assumption, a research methodology is required which has been covered in the next paragraph.

METHODOLOGY

I used qualitative-political-anthropology as a research methodology to explore the contents of highly politicised articles that have been published in *Himal Khabarpatrika* and *Mulyankan* (Figure 1) during the emergence and growth of the CPN (Maoist) insurgency (1995 - 2006). The basic criteria in choosing the research approach is based on suitability, effectiveness, and representation for the targeted research topic so that research findings would be of high quality. I purposefully selected these two Nepali language magazines which have become highly influential in spreading and shaping people's views due to their overly critical, political, academic, and analytical nature.

Hence, this paper aims to explore these social discourses. It includes the Maoist party documents, and Maoist insurgency-related published literature in general and *Himal Khabarpatrika* and *Mulyankan* published between 1995 and 2006 in particular, which have created public discourse in the context of Maoist insurgency and generated public meaning in Nepal.

EXPLORATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE CPN (MAOIST) INSURGENCY AND PUBLIC MEANING

The emergence of the CPN (Maoist) insurgency in Nepal has been perceived from two different perspectives such as views from the centre of the left (articles and news published in *Mulyankan* monthly) and views from the centre of the right (articles and news published in *Himal Khabarpatrika*). People from the centre of the left perceive that it is a poor, marginalised, oppressed, and indigenous people's uprising because of suppression and marginalization of them by the upper class and social elites. The centre of the right group sees it as a failed development and indigenous people's uprising. A few, especially the royalists, including the former king, have concluded that it was an outcome of bad governance and failed democracy.

According to Upreti [4], the root causes of the emergence of the CPN (Maoist) are:

Rampant poverty, structural inequality, political oppression, social discrimination against certain groups like Kamaya, women, Dalit, etc., failure of the public administration, wide spread corruption and continuous failure of the successive governments to address these structural problems are all root causes of the current conflict in Nepal. The Maoist insurgency is only the manifestation or intermediate result of these problems. Feudal legacy, political instability, dependency syndromes, lack of transparency and the social exclusion are further contributing to fuel the conflict. In addition, the growing awareness of the Nepalese people, awareness about poverty and inequality and the destruction of indigenous social networks in Nepal.

As stated by Upreti above, academics and think-tanks of the country argue that it is a socio-economic and political problem that has been building since the foundation of modern Nepal.

CAUSES OF THE INSURGENCY AND THE CREATION OF PUBLIC MEANING

Since the unification of modern Nepal, middle and elite classes of Brahmins, Chhetris, and Newars were given opportunities to enter the state mechanism. Since then, they have been consolidating their privileges and at the same time, holding the state power. This type of power became dominant due to fear; hope remains intact. Lukes [5] writes, "power as domination is the ability to constrain the choices of others". Almost all political and bureaucratic positions were occupied by people from the middle and elite classes of these three castes that were also very close to the royal power. They were advisors to the king, the country's policymakers, controllers of knowledge, and facilitators to global powers. The CPN (Maoist) called them 'social elites and bureaucratic comprador classes. According to Marxist classification, the majority of these castes form the feudal class in Nepal. The above, middle and elite class of three castes succeeded in settling down in places like Kathmandu, Biratnagar, Birganj, Pokhara, Bhairahawa, and Nepalganj which are economically and politically important places for Nepal, and



Figure 1: HimalKhabarpatrika and Mulyankan

"those inhabiting the backward and oppressed regions are often indigenous people" [6]. Most indigenous nationalities are socially, economically, and politically excluded and marginalised by the dominant elites of Brahmins, Chhetris, and Newars. Thus, Thapa and Sijapati [7] wrote:

Many of Nepal's socio-cultural groups have never had access to the state apparatus. The presence of Dalit (so-called untouchable), Madhesi (people of Terai origin) and Janjati (members of ethnic groups), in the state has been negligible. Because of this polarisation, Nepali civil servants operating from Kathmandu, are oriented to the Kathmandu valley – seen to be the real hub of national life – and the welfare of ethnic villagers in remote places is completely ignored. As a result, the incidence of poverty is higher among ethnic groups ... whilst the other hardest hit has always been Dalits.

The socio-political and economic conditions have remained unchanged in the country regardless of political changes. Considering this, the Maoists started their revolution in the early 1990s from the Magar-occupied areas called Rukum and Rolpa where "Magars, which make up 7.2 per cent of Nepal's population, are the largest ethnic group in the country" [8]. People of this area have been socially, politically, and economically marginalised since the unification of Nepal. Shaha further writes, "and ... this very area of Magarat is now bearing the brunt of the Maoist 'People's War' launched by Mohan Vaidya aka Kiran, Puspa Kamal Dahal aka Prachanda along with Baburam Bhattarai and Pampha Bhusal of the United People's Front (UPF)". Rukum and Rolpa became the safe haven for the CPN (Maoist) insurgency. This is a classic example and indication of public meaning created by the CPN (Maoist)'s insurgency at the early stage as the local people understood the meaning of the Maoist's uprising and started to join the insurgency.

Additional causes that fuelled insurgency are, in the 1990s, Nepal was "... the last second poorest country in the world" [9]. The government statistics have shown that '38% of Nepal's population live under the poverty line'. Prachanda [10] stated, "more than 72% of the Nepali people live below the poverty line" and annual per-capita income was only "US\$210" [11]. However, "per capita income was less than US\$100 in the Maoist stronghold of Rolpa" [12]. Nepal is a country of unfairness. As mentioned above, the feudal class and the social elite are policymakers and the way such policy was made always biased in various ways e.g. donor manipulation, class marginalization, caste exclusion, urban favouritism, etc. About this, Thapa and Sijapati state, "the economy has worked in favour of the urban and rural rich and a handful of elites." As a consequence, policy never matches with reality, never fully transforms into practice and used to end without achieving its objectives. Nepal has suffered from this malady for a long time. This has created the gap between rich and poor, urban and rural, upper caste and lower caste and finally the state has been converted into a puppet, dependent on donor agencies. Bhattarai [13] described:

The present era one of imperialism or monopoly capitalism, unequal and uneven development inherent in capitalism~ is suffering from underdevelopment and poverty. The gap between the rich and the poor has never been so wide in the history of mankind and this gap is growing ever wider.

Besides, the state rulers of Nepal often failed to put people to the centre stage of governance system. Consequently, people suffered from a lack of basic needs such as food, housing, drinking water, health, employment and so on. Moreover, there was social

discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion to poor, Janjatis, Madhesi, and women. Foreign loans and donation from 1951 to date did not bring any changes; instead, the state became much poorer and "this dependence has also been rising over time" [14].

Even after the restoration of democracy in 1990, both the ruling and opposing parties did not take the socio-economic and political issues seriously, rather spending their time on corruption and personal gain than the development of the country. "The national-level politicians and political parties have failed Nepal" [15]. The situation of the major political parties became particularly serious and had got worse by 1995. On the political front, the Panchayat politicians again ruled the country despite their expulsion by the popular people's movement of 1990. Shaha [16] further states, "it is the dismal performance of these mainstream national political groupings so far that has strengthened the Maoist appeal to the people in some areas."

Nepali people's movements against the oppression have been aborted many times without a full achievement. For instance, the revolution of 1950/51 against the Rana rule that aimed to establish a broad-based democracy was terminated with an agreement between the monarch, the Ranas and India. The students' movement to overthrow the Panchayat regime in 1978/79 ended in a referendum in which the government used all available means to retain the status quo. The people's uprising of 1990 was aborted by granting the system of partial democracy. Thus, all these movements have ended without achieving the goals of the Nepali people. Having said that, although there was only a partial democracy in the state, since 1990 people were allowed to organize and express their views openly. There is no doubt that the Maoists took full advantage of those political privileges in different areas of their revolutionary work. In this context, the system itself created an environment where new public meanings favorable to the Maoist insurgency could emerge.

Hence, these structural inequalities created by rulers and elites have made an environment conducive for the emergence of the CPN (Maoist) insurgency as well as highlighting the importance and its meaning to the people of Nepal. At the same time, under the instruction of the multi-party government of 1995, the police forces carried out an operation, code named 'Romeo', to suppress the Maoists of Rukum and Rolpa. Police killed many poor farmers and peasants and raped their mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters. In regard to this, Karki and Seddon [17] wrote:

During Operation Romeo in 1995, the police were particularly violent and even barbaric in operations in the mid-western hills. They treated everyone as a potential Maoist and many innocent people were arrested, ill-treated, tortured and killed almost randomly. (*italics in the original*)

Many poor villagers left their villages for India and young boys and girls joined the CPN (Maoist). The remaining fathers and mothers became supporters and provided shelter to the Maoist fighters. Thus, the local people became more politically aware because of police oppression, rather than the Maoists' education, and joined the CPN (Maoist) insurgency. This gave a clear public meaning to the people.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings and discussion section has been divided into three phases, such as 1996 - 1999 as the first phase, 2000 - 2006 second phase, and 2006 - 2020 as the third phase.

The First Phase 1996 – 1999: Findings and Discussion

In the process of initiating the insurgency, the newly formed CPN (Maoist) declared its People's War to establish a new democracy in the country. On 4th February 1996, the party submitted the 40 point demands to the government with the warning of armed struggle if the government ignored it. However, the government did not take the Maoist demands seriously. Consequently, on 13th of February 1996, the CPN (Maoist) declared 'people's war' and launched attacks with knives and homemade guns, in Sindhuli (eastern Nepal), Gorkha (central Nepal) and Rukum and Rolpa (western Nepal). They attacked the Agriculture Development Bank in Gorkha; seized the loan papers signed by the farmers and the land registration certificates (*lalpurja*) and returned them to the respective farmers. The Maoist attacked police posts in Rukum, Rolpa, and Sindhuli.

In the period between 1996 and 1999, the Maoist carried out several operations throughout the country. They successfully captured weapons from the Nepal Police Forces and established guerrilla zones. The party demonstrated the existence of the central military commission. According to the Nepal National Intellectuals' Organization (NNIO) [18] which analysed the Maoist efforts used for various purposes, "the Maoist carried out 80% publicity, 15% destruction and 5% other activities." The CPN (Maoist) carried out 80% publicity to create public meaning at a local, national, and global level. Besides, a special issue of *Mulyankan* [19] was issued with the front cover "Kasto Rahyo 'Janyuddha' ko Ek Barsa? (How was the One Year of 'People's War'?), Maobadi 'Janayuddha' ko Ek Barsa ko Samikchha (Review of the One Year of Maoist 'People's War')." It had published articles covering all-round activities of the CPN (Maoist). Most of the writers, commenters, and reviewers were leftist political leaders, think tanks, and academics. One or two were from other schools of thought. The editorial of the special issue explained that "this one year of guerrilla warfare movement has achieved to establish the CPN (Maoist) as a distinct and different political entity in the Nepali politics." In the review, General Secretary of the CPN (UML) Madhav Kumar Nepal said, "we do not agree with the current movement of the CPN (Maoist) as this is heading in the opposite direction of the 'New People's Democracy'" [20]. Another renowned communist leader, Comrade Mohan Bikram Singh, the Party General Secretary of CPN (Mashal) commented, "the CPN (Maoist)'s struggle is an immature and childish activity" [21]. Academics, writers, and other political leaders had also expressed their views in a similar way. However, Comrade Prachanda, the General Secretary of the CPN (Maoist) stated, "the first year of the 'People's War' for freedom has remained successful, historical and memorable. More than 70 Nepali mother's sons and daughters have sacrificed their lives since the commencement of the 'People's War' last year". This publicity definitely played a vital role in creating public meaning of insurgency and the speed of the struggle had accelerated. To control the CPN (Maoist) movement, the government decided to table a terrorist bill at the parliament. Regarding this, the editorial of *Mulyankan* [22] wrote:

The government has tabled a new terrorist bill in the parliament to suppress the Maoists but those who have decided for 'do or die' are not affected by this bill. Instead, it will create more terror and people will become fed up with the government and join the Maoist insurgency.

As mentioned above, on the one hand, the government carried out an operation called 'Kilo Sierra Two' across all the Maoist-affected

areas of the country in order to stop Maoists from spreading further. On the other hand, the Maoists revolution had accelerated and the rate of joining into the 'revolution' had jumped. Similarly, local, national and international media reporting had unexpectedly increased to cover the news of the conflict. Talk and tale on the insurgency started to spread across the nation. People became interested in knowing about the insurgency. They were more and more interested, the media coverage became ever more extensive, and knowledge about the Maoists and their insurgency became more widespread. According to DFID [23] "hundreds of innocent civilians were reported killed, tortured and raped by police during 'Kilo Sierra Two' operations". Sharma [24] writes, "the Maoists demonstrated their strength by carrying out simultaneous attacks in twenty-five districts on the night of 22 September 1999." From August until December in 1999, *Himal Khabarpatrika* published a series of articles in relation to the CPN (Maoist)'s insurgency such as "Maobadi and Congress" by Shiva Gaunle [25] "Three questions related to the Maobadi" by Jayaprakash Ananda [26], "Maobadi problem or Solution" by Dr Baburam Bhattarai [27]. Gaunle [28] wrote, "The Nepali Congress Central Committee spent long hours discussing the statement issued by the CPN (Maoist) which says 'historical necessity of the joint revolutionary government of nationalists and communists forces'." In a similar way, Dhakal wrote [29]:

The Maoist insurgency has reached four years of age. During this time more than 1,000 people have been killed. On the one hand, the government is trying to suppress the insurgency by introducing the operation called "The Jungle Search". In the name of this operation, more than dozen people have already been killed. On the other hand, the CPN (Maoist) has recently announced the strategy of the establishment of base areas.

The statement above clearly indicates the CPN (Maoist) insurgency's height and meaning during the periods of the late 1990s. Media, journalists, writers, academia, politicians, and civil society activists started to take even more notice. About this, Sharma [30] wrote:

Prior to 1995, few people were aware that the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) was one of the dozens of communist parties that existed in Nepal. Press releases issued by the Maoist leader Prachanda (a.k.a. Pushpa Kamal Dahal) were largely ignored by the media; even when his statements were printed, they did not enjoy a wide readership. By late 2001, things had changed to such an extent that each and every word that came from Prachanda attracted a tremendous amount of interest and speculation amongst all sections of Nepali society.

Further, the following section explores the public meaning that was created by the insurgency and the role played by the Media in it between the period of 2000 until 2006.

The Second Phase 2000 – 2006- Findings and Discussion

The CPN (Maoist) stepped up the scale of attacks from the year 2000. For example, they overran the headquarters of Dolpa district on the 25th of September 2000. This was the first historic large-scale attack carried out since the declaration of the people's war in 1996.

In the meantime, the Government started debating at the parliament for uses of military force against the Maoist insurgency. In this context, the editorial of *Himal Khabarpatrika* [31] expressed:

On the one hand, the Maoists have accelerated the revolution by spreading their control in one third of the Districts of the country. On the other hand, the Government has started debating on 'the

uses of the existing military force or the formation of a paramilitary force' in order to fight against the Maoists revolution.

There were some in favour and some in opposition to the motion that was debated by the Government. The editorial *Himal Khabarpatrika* [32] argued, "it is undemocratic to say the Government and the Prime Minister do not have authority to use the military force of the state when it is needed."

In regards to the uses of the Army to suppress the Maoists, Jhalanath Khanal, one of the leaders of the CPN (UML) stated his argument in his article published in *Himal Khabarpatrika* [33] in the following way even after the Dolpa attack:

The Royal Nepal Army (RNA) is an integral part of the Government and it comes under the control of the Government. Therefore, on recommendation of the Security Council, the Government can use the RNA when the circumstances arise. In the case of the CPN (Maoist) problem –this is political and needs to be solved by political means such as table talk (negotiation) in order to achieve a productive and healthy solution.

Editorial of *Mulyankan* [34] wrote, "If the Government really wants to solve the Maoist problem, it needs to find the root causes of the insurgency in order to solve the problem by negotiation and roundtable talk." For negotiation "The ball is in the court of the Government" [35]. Sharma [36] writes, "much had changed in the Nepalese political situation since the Dolpa operations of the Maoists". After Dolpa attack, for the first time, there was direct contact between the government and the Maoists. This was a clear indication of the recognition of the CPN (Maoist) power and the creation of public meaning. As regards to this, *Mulyankan* [37] wrote, "the current politics of Nepal are revolving around the issues raised by the Maobadi".

Towards the end of 2000 and during early 2001, "the CPN (Maoist) announced its alternative government in three districts namely: Rukum, Salyan and Jajarkot of West Nepal. This announcement created an upheaval in Nepali mainstream politics" [38]. One after another, on the 25th of February 2001, the CPN (Maoist) announced its new doctrine, 'Prachanda Path', a distinctive Maoist ideology adapted for the context of Nepal. Sharma [39] explained 'Prachanda Path' in the following way:

'Prachanda Path' has the flexibility to provide the CPN (Maoist) with an avenue to escape from becoming mired in communist fundamentalism. ... Keeping in mind the new changes the world is experiencing, none of the proletariat revolutions of the past was deemed to be as appropriate as 'Prachanda Path' in the Nepali context.

The 'Prachanda Path' was a blend of Mao's model of a protracted people's war with the Marx-Lenin's theory of general armed revolution and contextualised into the Nepali context. Gautam [40] argued "there are no ideological, philosophical and political bases to become a Path". In this sense the 'Prachanda Path' only encourages worship of the individual or personality cult (*byaktipuja*). Despite criticism, they had claimed their objective had been adopted in accordance with their new guiding principle, which was 'to consolidate and expand base areas and move forward and toward a people's government in the centre'.

The Maoists demonstrated their power carrying out a half dozen attacks in April 2001 at Rukum, Rukum Kot, Naumule, and Dailekh killed 70 policemen. They abducted 69 police from Holeri, Rolpa on 12 July 2001, as reported by both *Himal Khabarpatrika* and *Mulayankan*.

The government and the Maoists declared a ceasefire on 22 July 2001. The first round of peace talks took place between the government and the Maoists on 30 August 2001, followed by second and third rounds on 14 and 13 November 2001, respectively. The Maoists were dissatisfied with the government and ended the four-month long ceasefire with well coordinated attacks throughout the country including on the Royal Nepal Army (RNA) on 23 and 25 November 2001. About the attack, *Mulyankan* commented, "the CPN (Maoist) made mistake calling off smoothly progressing negotiation, and by attacking Nepal Army camps." Jwala added "The country is suffering from this mistake." The government declared a 'state of emergency', denounced the CPN (Maoist) as a 'terrorist organization' and proclaimed the entry of the RNA into the conflict on 26 November 2001. That meant the Maoist armed force, the People Liberation Army (PLA) had to fight with three different types of government armed forces i.e. RNA, Armed Police Forces (APF) and ordinary Police Forces (PF). Since the government's declaration, most of the nation's development budgets had been channelled into the armed forces for the purpose of arms and ancillaries. Both the Government and Maoists were committed to war. The development process of the nation was completely at a standstill. By that time, more than 8,000 people had already lost their lives. For these very reasons, the battle between the Nepali Armed Forces and CPN (Maoist) PLA had gone beyond the stage of conflict and entered the stage of war i.e. 'Civil War'. In the war, the PLA carried out offensive manoeuvres and the government armed forces were in defensive position. In the course of PLA's offensive manoeuvres, the PLA attacked:

1. Two telecommunication security camps, Ratmate and Kaprukot on 7 and 8 December 2001, respectively.
2. Bhakundebeshi Area Police Office (APO) on 5 February 2002.
3. Sanphebagar Airport on 16 February 2002.
4. Mangalsen, Lalbandi, on 11 April 2002.
5. Satbaria APF and Lamahi, Barpak APOs on 17 April 2002.
6. Army camps namely: Gam, Lisne, Khara, Damachaur and Chainpur in the month of May 2002.

In addition to the above list, the Maoists carried out two attacks in September 2002, one in October 2002, two in November 2002 and one in December 2002. Their targets were police posts to army garrisons and domestic airports to district headquarters. The Inspector General of the Armed Police Force, his wife and bodyguards were shot dead in the capital city, Kathmandu at the beginning of the year 2003. Apart from this, 2003 was mainly occupied by the process of negotiation and was less violent. However, minor battles took place. The government realised that the Maoist problem was not as simple as the incumbent prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba had initially thought, when on 4 February 1996, Dr Bhattarai handed over the 40-point agenda to him. Thus, the Deuba government of 2003 set up a 'High-Level Committee' to provide suggestions to solve the Maoist problem under Sher Bahadur Deuba in early 2003. Deuba had considered the Maoist's 40-point agenda as meaningless back in 1996. However, it succeeded to become meaningful and able to create public meaning at local, national, and global level. In the end, these negotiations also failed.

In March 2004, two consecutive large-scale successful attacks were carried out by the Maoists in Bhojpur and Myagdi. In addition, dozens of small-scale attacks and ambushes were carried out by

the Maoists in different parts of the country. *Himal Khabarpatrika* reported “Moabadi top ranking leaders are freely roaming around in their declared base areas.” The CPN (Maoist) claimed 80 per cent of the country was in their control. They were popular with the mass public. *Mulyankan* stated, “Maobadi do not attack public and friends.” *Himal Khabarpatrika* expressed a different view:

The whole Nepali and world community think the Maoists are a group who are using terror, killing and destructive work to capture the state power. In fact, the majority do not like Maoists’ inhuman activities in the name of the revolution.

Besides positive and negative criticism, Maoists had to face ideological war within the party members. Intra members’ ideological war is sometimes more dangerous than external war. In 2005, “Dr Baburam Bhattarai and other high ranking members were disciplined and kept in the so called ‘People’s Prison’ as they opposed the notion of upgrading ‘Prachanda Path - Prachanda Way’ to ‘Prachandabad -Prachanda-ism’ [41].

The Third Phase 2006 – 2020- Findings and Discussion

The above positive and negative articles, news and views of that time have given a clear indication of the public meaning of the Maoist insurgency. For example, editorial of *Himal Khabarpatrika* wrote about the Maoists telling them to “give up atrocity and take part in the government” and a similar appeal made by the political parties and the people, which was a clear acknowledgement of the CPN (Maoist)’s political power. Taking into consideration of the public recognition, Chairman of the CPN (Maoist) made the party policy public by releasing a press statement about the intention of the Maoist to join and support the Seven Party Alliance (SPA)’s movement to restore democracy, which was seized by the king on 4th of October 2002. Nepali Congress (NC), UML and other democratic forces known as SPA were on the street carrying out the movement. Upreti highlighted the agreement process of SPA and CPN (Maoist) and their further action plan in the following way:

CPN (Maoists) and the SPA leaders reached an agreement in New Delhi on 19 March, 2006 and agreed to coordinate their plan for a nationwide general strike. CPN (Maoists) not only declared unilateral ceasefire on 3rd of April 2006 and called a halt to all offensive operations by it in the district headquarters and ... lifted the indefinite transportation blockade they had imposed on Kathmandu ... these steps were necessary for making the people’s movement successful. Once, the SPA and the CPN (Maoists)

agreed to hold the constituent assembly elections, restructure the state, and to decide the fate of the monarchy by the constituent assembly meeting, public support for the movement suddenly increased and the mass came on to the streets. Prachanda issued several statements against the royal takeover and expressed his commitment to support the political parties to restore democracy.

On joining the CPN (Maoist) with the SPA, the mode of the ‘People’s Uprising – Janaandolan II’ had flared up which made the King step down from the absolute power and later the 240-year-old monarchical institution was abolished by the Peoples’ Parliament. It is clear that the whole Media world including *Himal Khabarpatrika* and *Mulyankan* played a vital role in creating ‘Public Meaning’ of the Maoist insurgency in the emergence and growth. This public meaning became power at the local and national level politics. The SPA and the CPN (Maoist) restored democracy, formed Constitution Assembly (CA), endorsed interim constitution, abolished 240-year-old monarchical rule and the Hindu Kingdom, and declared the secular Federal Republic of Nepal in 2008. The country spent almost a decade in writing an inclusive constitution as per people’s wish was finally promulgated in 2015. The constitution ratification process is in progress, not completed yet.

The constitution of Nepal 2015 divided the country into seven provinces. The province executive head is Chief Minister, elected by the province parliament and the ceremonial head is the governor appointed by the centre. Nepal Communist Party (NCP) is the ruling party winning the 2017 election with a two-thirds majority. The government is endorsing and ratifying the constitution aiming to achieve prosperity and happiness in the country. However, people are not receiving their expectation from the government and are not satisfied with the performance of the government as well. Especially the family members of Maoist fighters who sacrificed their lives (Figure 2) and got injured and disabled are facing miserable life. Party leaders are in power and spending lavish life and forgot their past days, comrades and promises.

CONCLUSION

The civil war launched by the CPN (Maoist) in 1996 to bring people’s democracy ended up in 2006 with the death toll over 13,000 people. It took a similar length of time in the peace process. The CA declared the nation as the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal in 2008, ending 240-year-old the Hindu Kingdom ruled by monarchism. As mentioned earlier, the people upraised against the oppression at first in 1951, and the second time in



Figure 2: A Dead Body of Forgotten Maoist Fighter on the Footrest of a Rickshaw.

1990. However, both uprisings aborted without achieving goals. FTO deconstruct the monopoly, the CPN (Maoist) emerged and launched a war against the monarch, corrupted political parties, and oppressors. The Maoist party committed not to abort the battle, and compromise with the reactionary classes in the middle of the struggle as in the past. Besides, the Maoist stated that the armed struggle would be away from petty-bourgeois, narrow nationalist, religion-communal, caste influence, and interferences. The struggle would not distort until the oppressed and marginalized people capture the state power. There is no question, the people's war led to very substantial changes in the structure of the country, in the system of governance, politics, social organization, and inter-group relations. However, at the end, the struggle ended up as it was in the past, not fully achieving its goals. Besides, oppressed, and marginalized people, war-wounded, and disabled former People Liberation Armies (PLA) are suffering from hands to mouth (bread and butter) problem. Parents and relatives of those were killed in the people's war are suffering from anxiety and psychological trauma. Continue medical treatment of injured PLA soldiers and welfare are beyond imagination as the government and leaders are not interested in these matters.

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