**Impact of Potential Communist Party Merger on Nepal’s Journey towards democratic Consolidation**

**Name**

**Date**

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**Abstract**

Party mergers has been described as an amalgamation of two or more parties into a single party to consolidate for more votes and have new democratic regimes through formation of stable parties. Political parties are very important instruments in expressing political pluralism and offer an equal platform for political participation as well as competition. This paper has used a case study approach in review of literature about what happened before parties merged in Nepal as well as the aftermath. Data obtained was done through reviews of two newspapers and interviews with an academician, a journalist a military officer and Maoist leaders. The data from literature reviewed shows that to have come all that long to form a merger it cost the lives of so many people as well as a lot of property destroyed. However, the revolution did not happen in vain because the merger of small parties to make a bigger party ensured that the rights of the marginalized were taken into consideration as well as all alienation and depression in terms of religion, ethnicity and economic backgrounds came to an end. The insurgence claimed a lot of property and lives but it was worth of it and it brought about democratization which is was the main cause of two world wars.

**ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

CPN Communist Party of Nepal

CRC Constitution Recommendation Commission

MRD Movement for Restoration of Democracy

UK United Kingdom

UH Upper House

KNF Khambuwan National Front

SPA Seven Parliamentary Parties

RNA Royal Nepalese army

**Table of Contents**

Acknowledgements…………………………………………………………………..…………2

Abstract……………………………………………………………………………………….....3

List of acronyms and abbreviations…………………………………………………..………….4

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview………………………………………………………………….…………6

1.1 Background information……………………………………………………….…….8

1.2 Communist parties………………………………………………………………….10

1.3 Objectives ………………………………………………………………………….11

CHAPTER TWO; LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview ..........................................................................................................…....12

2.1 Origin of political parties ….………………………………………………………12

2.2 The Nepal Communist Movement……………….………………………….……..13

2.3 The emergence of Maoists……….………………………………………………...16

2.4 Merger of political parties………………………………………………………….17

2.5 Social Movement theories as Framework ………………………………………....19

CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview ……………………………………………………………………….…21

3.1 Research Approach ……………………………………………………………….21

3.2 Research Population……………………………………………………………….24

CHAPTER FOUR; PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Overview …………………………………………………………………………..27

4.1 Causes & contextual factors that contributed to the emergence of the emergence...27

4.2 Impact of potential communist merger on Nepal’s journey towards consolidation.29

CHAPTER FIVE; DISCUSSION

5.0 Overview…………………………………………………………………….…….35

5.1 Achievements of the Constituent Assemblies ………………………………….…42

5.2 Conclusion…………………………………………………………………………43

References………………………………………………………………………………….….45

**1.0 Introduction**

In any contemporary society political parties are seen as a sign of political maturity as well as maturity in political space. According to Duverger, (1954) they are very important instruments in expressing political pluralism and offer an equal platform for political participation as well as competition. They can be described as universal franchises that are used by citizens to express their political preferences. They normally put together issues, ideologies and interests of citizens by offering a mechanism through which citizens can build their civic competence. Political parties are emerging as strong unique movements in the society as opposed to agents of the state that put a particular country in a path of democratization of the independence of institutions involved in elections. Therefore democracy is likely to thrive in an environment with well-established political parties, anon- obtrusive electoral systems and institutions established by the constitution that enforce practices of the system (Bhattacharya, 2013). Democracy is characterized by its ability to distribute political power and enforce accountability of leaders to their actions and if this does not prevail then we’ll say that it is something that does not exist (Duverger, 1954: Mattern, 2001 & Schumpeter, 1967).

Party mergers has been described as an amalgamation of two or more parties into a single party to consolidate for more votes and have new democratic regimes through formation of stable parties. On the other hand, party mergers have been criticized of reducing and even at times destroying the information value of party labels for voters and in some cases can be an impediment to voter representation (Duverger, 1954). However later on Schumpeter (1967) claimed that mergers may have an effect on the politics of a coalition government in that when the system is fragmented, then the mergers of the incumbent parties will contribute to the governments stability and effectiveness in executing its services and when there is no fusion then it will be very hard to govern and to illustrate this the Poland 1997-2001, and Romania 1996-2000 merger can illustrate that.

Nepal is a mid-sized South Asian nation which neighbors India and China (Bhattacharya, 2013). It is diversified in terms of geography, ethnicity, language, religion and caste and has been governed by a series of hereditary rulers.

In the 1990s, amidst a process of democratic consolidation, Nepal which has been characterized by monarchical and autocratic rule found itself challenged by a Maoist insurgency. This was followed by a civil war that lasted for almost ten years and the war came to an end in November 2006, after signing a peace agreement. Alliances were forged and even broken during the period of the conflict as the main opponents found common political ground. This alliance elevated the Maoists from being a rural rag-tag army to being an equal in the elections and even its leader assuming the position of a Prime Minister (Bhattacharya, 2013).

**1.1 General drivers that lead to development of political parties**

Political parties form key channels for expression of political pluralism as well as political participation and expression. The main driver behind formation of political parties is to aggregate and represent various interests in policy-making and ensure the accountability of a democratic government to voters (Whelpton, 2005).

Some political parties however have emerged based on ideals of some civil society representatives who are rebelling against the injustice of the political parties in power and their aristocracy. Political parties in Nepal were formed on the heritage of political movements, rebellion or leadership split and a common characteristic that cuts across all the parties is that party leaders of every party come either from the middle class or the upper class (Ogura, 2008). However, according to Bhattacharya (2013), from the late 1990’s onwards, there has been a lot of resurgence in the left-wing revolutionary movements in Nepal. Before the mergers, Nepal had 74 registered political parties that were very diverse with different levels of transparency, inclusiveness and members were allowed to participate in decision making on issues of governance from all economic divides (Khadka, 1995).

This paper looks at length the issue of merging of the political parties, what was the motivation behind the merger and what are the implications of the mergers. According to Narayan (1995), some of the communist parties that wanted to merge and have a bigger bargaining include; Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M), Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), Communist Party of Nepal-Marxist Leninist (CPN-ML), People’s Front Nepal (PFN), Communist Party of Nepal-Joint (CPN-J), National People’s Front (NPF), Nepal Worker’s Peasant Party (NWPP), and Communist Party of Nepal-United (CPN-U). It will be guided by research questions and will follow a qualitative approach to answer the research questions.

**1.2 Research questions**

1. What are the causes and contextual factors that contributed to the emergence of the insurgence?
2. What strategies were espoused by the Maoists during and after the insurgency period in pursuit of democracy
3. Why are parties formed, and why do others later on merge?

**1.3 Background Information**

Parties have been described as an improbable source of democratic skills and effective political leadership (Duverger, 1954: Mattern, 2001 & Schumpeter, 1967). Parties ordinarily merge so that they can consolidate their powers and have a higher bargaining power in whatever that they will be executing. In many developing countries for example Indonesia and Peru, parties considered communist have turned into insignificant parties despite them being considered very powerful before a merger. However for the Maoist, despite its change of policy of aiming at capturing state power through insurgency, it has emerged as one of the most potent forces that will shape the political future of Nepal (Brown, 2002). Since the Maoist insurgency in 1996, Nepal has been wrecked politically and this has spread to the economy of the country. The cost of political violence as a result of this has been very destructive and more than 10,000 people have been reported to have passed on. It is projected that the country might be headed for more problems more so ethnic conflicts which might plunge the country into more conflicts.

The genesis of the Maoist insurgency is as a result of the inequalities as well as injustice between ethnic communities. When the political space was opened in the 1990’s the oppressed people got an opportunity to first learn how they had been beleaguered by the ruling class rendering some of them rebellious as well as providing for them an auspicious arena through which they can air their frustrations and aspirations (Kiyoko, 2002). The poor had been alienated due to lack of reforms in the institutions that were constitutionally constituted to help in ruling both the elites and those from middle and low classes. Hence when the Maoists raised a banner of rebellion backed up with evidence of oppression from the ruling class and institutions, they got support from millions of people.

This was a lesson to the ruling class that they can no longer continue to oppress the under-privileged and if the issues that were raised about marginalization were not going to be addressed then trouble was looming. The continuation of the pervasive ethnic discrimination and inequality would have turned very violent if the state was not going to move with speed to avert any ethnic conflicts. The state and the constitutionally set bodies had to eliminate discrimination along ethnic lines alongside inclusion of different socio-cultural groups in governance of the country for Nepal to know peace again.

Comparative worldwide history has proved that exclusion normally results to violence and in a multicultural polity like Nepal, exclusion is likely to be a recipe for violence. The past 15 years have shown that violence in Nepal has been associated with exclusion be it you are looking at the Maoist insurgency, Khambuwan National Front (KNF) insurgency, Madhesi-Parbate riots and even including the Muslim-Hindu conflict (Louse, 2002).

**1.2 Communist parties**

Communist parties have been considered the epitome of suppression of democracy in the political arena. When they were in operation, they were the stereotype of unchanging behemoths, the progenitors of the stolid *bomosovieticus* and political organizations unable to change their bureaucratic and plodding ways (Bhattacharya, 2013). The parties were formed by elites and maintained within their lineage so that they can keep holding to their parties which in most cases they have gained by suppressing others in society. So for them not to be questioned on the source of their resources they have to remain in power. The communist legacies are defined as patterns of behavior, cognition, and organization with roots in the authoritarian regime that persist despite a change in the conditions that gave rise to them (Bhattacharya, 2013). The communist parties captured power after the Second World War.

This study aims at looking at reasons behind the formation of political parties, why at times they do merge, and if at all they are able to gain from the mergers. It will further detail the costs at which political parties are formed and merged in relation to what happened in Nepal and also in other democracies.

**Chapter two; Literature Review**

**2.1 Overview**

This chapter delves in to better understand the research component of the study by undertaking literature review that explains the causal action and reactions, and theoretical anchoring. Scholarly works of other researchers form a core component of the reviewed literature. The issue of communist political parties’ mergers has not received a lot of scholarly attention in communist countries and in Nepal in particular. However, scholars have written on political parties in communist countries, the genesis of political parties, the Nepal communist movement, emergence of the Maoist and the reasons for a merger between the Maoist and SPA. The literature will shed light on the formation of the political parties, why they merged and if they were able to achieve what they had been formed for after the merger.

**2.1 Origins of political parties**

Before political parties emerged, political legitimacy in the world was derived from a divine source and passed on to the first man he created who thereafter decided that it should be hereditary and would pass on the same to the first borne son. Beginning in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries, citizens began to question the legitimacy of this leadership. As demands became stronger, the families holding on to power felt insecure and started retaliatory movements by punishing those who questioned their leadership actions in the most inhuman ways (Bhattacharya, 2013).

As time went by people became more conscious of their rights and to be able to demand for their political rights as well as any other types of rights they have to group together, those who have the same ideology as per a certain issue is concerned. Following the 1688 revolution in England, which established a parliamentary rule, political parties started here. They basically started as people grouping themselves prominent members of their class in order to control the state as well as promotion of their political ideologies. And the first political parties to emerge in England include the Whigs and the Tories each of which had its own supporters from different backgrounds due to differing ideologies.

Today political parties form the central pillars of multiparty political systems in most countries. The main exceptions are some hereditary and religious monarchies such as Saudi Arabia, where there are no legal political parties at all, and the People’s Republic of China which is a communist state. Given the trend and what this paper delves into in Nepal, political parties will continue to dominate political activity and determine the course of political development in most countries and the best example here is Nepal.

**2.2 The Nepal Communist Movement**

The communist party of Nepal was formed in (1949) to be an umbrella body for all the communist and workers parties in Nepal with a goal of bringing about democracy. It was meant to unite farmers, National capitalists, the middle class, intellectuals, youth women, and students bringing about the leadership of the proletariat to foster unity between peasants. At formation it adopted Marx and Lenin’s communist ideologies i.e. class struggle, armed revolution, dictatorship of the proletariat and also some its native components which made it peculiar and this includes reforms in the land sector, instituting a republic, nationalism based on anti-India and anti-west sentiments, as well as non-conformism with the Westminster system (Whelpton, 2005).

In 1951-1960 it started to taste the political waters and as a party participated in the parliamentary elections garnering four seats and it was in conformity with the bourgeois democratic processes while laying strategies for an armed revolution. By early 1970, the party decided to unite with all radical communist groups professing Maoism and this included the Mohan Bikram group, Mohan Vaidya group, and the Unity Centre. In 1999, they participated in the parliamentary election winning only 9 seats out of 205 seats and decided to expose the sham of parliamentary democracy through an antithetical armed revolution (Whelpton, 2005).

At this point there was a fall out between the CPN (Maoist) which made it denounce some of the tenets on which it was formed such as an armed revolution, dictatorship of the proletariat, Nationalization of National resources and commitment to one-party communist rule (Whelpton, 2005). The CPN (UML) originated as a Naxalite group and they championed for a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy. Besides abandoning its previous goal of instituting a one-party communist system in favor of the multiparty system, it also changed its strategy for achieving its political aims from its initial aim of using an armed revolution to one engaging in peaceful political competition.

For the Maoist the armed revolution meant a communist party that would resort to a magic use of three weapons which included creating a disciplined party infused with Marxism and Leninism doctrines, creating a disciplined army that was to receive instructions from the parties leadership and creation of a united front for all parties and groups willing to unite and work under the control of the communist party. In 1995 a faction of leaders thought that time was ripe to have a fully-fledged movement based on the ideaswhich led to a split of the CPN (Maoist) from the CPN (Unity Centre). Those who remained and wanted to work for the parliamentary process inherited the party name CPN (Unity Center) and the armed revolution that opted out named itself the CPN (Maoist) (Whelpton, 2005). This was not the first time there was a fall out in 1970 the Jhapali group had also opted out against the backdrop of the cultural Revolution of China and the Naxalite uprising in India but joined the group again in 1990.However the Maoist had vowed to dismantle the political structure through an armed revolution and replace it with a new political structure. This can also be attributed to their leader Prachanda who led the group to insurgency and had unwavering ideologies on what the group stood for.

The CPN (Maoist) armed insurgency was the most powerful anti-establishment movement that Nepal had ever seen. By 2005 they reportedly had 35,000 members in the army and was one of the largest non-state military formations in the world. They had seized most rural parts in the country and the government was not allowed there neither was its presence felt there. The Maoist believed they were going to win because the geographical situation was favorable for waging a guerilla war, by using peasant revolution as the backbone of the insurgency, by centralizing activities in rural areas and by relying on and uniting with poor peasants.

The Maoists launched the people’s war in the most organized way adopting a uniform plan of action everywhere by seizing the local’s weapons then those accused of being anti-people were maimed and killed in broad daylight. Their strategy was to create a reign of terror. They had some of their members openly wreaking havoc while some were operating underground so that they confuse the government that they were very few. Besides engaging the government in war, they also engaged is development activities like construction of bridges, roads, schools, toilets, water taps farming including arousing political consciousness among its people. This was meant to woe the support of the locals as well as the international community that they were for issues of development and that is why they were fighting for their rights.

**2.3 The emergence of Maoists**

Its origin dates back to 1974 under the leadership of Nirmal Lama when CPN-forth congress was established. After a number of splits, which is a characteristic of political maturity in political parties, in 1994 some of them were in the elections and some pact boycotted the elections. Those who boycotted in 1195 did not have a party to contest and the prachanda-led CPN Unity Centre held a plenum naming evolving to form CPN-Maoist and thereafter began armed insurgency (Whelpton, 2005). Then they came up with a number of demands some of which were good for example the land rights and some of them were wishful demands for example a demand for employment for all.

When the insurgency was launched, a large pool of communists aided in the spread of the Maoists but they did not buy to their political analogues when it came to election time. However the Maoists who were very small, after the launch of the insurgency they were able to dictate the political agenda of the country.

The main aim of the Maoist movement was to establish a peoples republic where the rights of every citizen be it from a poor or affluent background are respected as well as draft a constitution which would guide all in the society. In doing this they adopted a Mao-Tse-Tung’s Strategy to encircle the cities after taking over the villages, and in this the Maoists were able to secure the support from the local people and even control key areas by overtaking the intelligence of the security forces of the state. For the rural areas for the state to feel their presence they frequently attacked barracks, and police posts to get armory and send an overthrow messages as well as banks so that they could be able to fund their operations. In some remote areas they set up their offices to replicate what the state was doing and to whore the local people that they are the only personnel who can be able to reach them and offer support to them hence getting more members. They even set courts to administer justice to those who were defaulters and those who were not singing to their tunes.

At this point the state felt the presence of this group and they declared it a terrorist group and this led to more than 3, 000 people loosing their dear lives. This was condemned by the international community, and the group was gaining mileage. Then the state started engaging the group but still the group was getting oppression from the government through the Royal Nepalese Army (RNA). In 2005, the oppression propelled them to engage the opposition to have a combined force so that they can sanction the King. They engaged in protests and strikes with the opposition and by 2006 the long conflict came to an end with the Maoist given a place in the interim government sharing political power (Ogura, 2008).

**2.4 Merger of political parties**

Political parties are vital indispensible agencies of the democratic system of any country alongside the executive, the judiciary and the electoral body. Schumpter has defined democracy as “an institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of competitive struggle for the peoples votes” (Schumpeter, 1967). So in essence it is expected that political parties are important in promotion of democratic etiquettes, values as well as norms which will bring about economic development. When there is a lot of injustice in the society, the political parties will be forced to shelf their differences and merge so that they can bring to rest whatever issue that they see is affecting them all. Political parties in most cases merge so that they can compete with an autocratic party which may be considered non representative and this is what happened in Nepal.

April 2006 marked the end of monarchical rule in Nepal and gave birth to transformation of the Community Party of Nepal (CPN) or Maoist from a rebellious group to a competitive political party (Khadka, 1995). The reason behind this transformation is to put to an end the 238 year old monarchical institution, which has experienced many political-military incarnations which have been described as autocratic since the 2001 pact flouted the 1990 agreement parliamentary monarch (Ogura, 2008). Even if it invigorates again it is likely to be shot down by the people because the power of sovereignty are vested in the people of Nepal. According to Chaitanya (2007), there is a likelihood that Nepal will become more democratic and inclusive as compared in the past and the policy state is likely to be centralized based on substantive devolution of political power. There is a likelihood of having reforms in the land ownership sector as the pre-capitalist and feudal forms like absentee ownership and *haliya* labor system is likely to be rendered illegal hence bringing about inclusivity and equality of all people.

The coming together of the political parties, that is Seven Parliamentary Parties (SPA) the insurgent Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (CPNM), came up with agreements to distance the king from the army so that the army will only discharge their duties according to the law and not when called to help the king (Ogura, 2008). There was an agreement that the United Nations (UN) should monitor elections to alleviate any courses of alarm as well as ensure that there is transparency in the process. The constitution too was to provide legal basis in the conducting of state affairs during the transitional period and it recognized the prime minister, an elective position as the head of state. The constitution too had to dismantle structures associated with pre-capitalism while promoting capitalism.

Other scholars feel that some of the political agendas that are being proposed by some political parties who were formed from social organizations are disparate. The contradictory interests have threatened to derail the alliance of the seven parties and even bring down the reinstated parliament as has been witnessed by strong challenges by the CPNM who feel that they were shortchanged and are represented in parliament, not even their interests that led the parties to a merger (Khadka, 1995). In spite of that, they have always supported SPA in their quest to have a ceremonial monarch position accorded to the king. There are also internal wars on appointment of state officials with SPA supporting the process while CPNM says the process does not reflect the ethnic face of Nepal. The disparate positions alongside a backlash from reactionary forces may disrupt the path that the parties had agreed to follow when they came together.

**2.5 Social Movement Theories as a framework**

This study will adopt relevant theories of social movements adopting the opportunity structure as developed by (Costain, 1992; Kriesiet. Al., 1992). They fit into this study as they take into consideration the issues that come into play when social movements, emerge, develop, are sustained and in the long run make an impact.

Social movement theorists have defined social movements as collective actions based on common purposes and social solidarities (Ogura, 2008). The Maoists was a political movement based on the ideology of bringing about democracy as well as having a new constitution based on equality. McAdam has brought out the three factors that social studies are based on as political opportunities, mobilizing structures and the framing process (Khadka, 1995).

The proponents of social movements have argued that socioeconomic cleavages, individual motivations and group or organizational capacities, the strategies of the groups, the geographical opportunities and political opportunities will determine the success or failure of a movement. This really oscillates very well with the issues that led to the formation of the Maoists movement and this paper is to follow the social movements theories to find out if the issues that led to the merger of parties are part of the ones raised here and why didn’t the merger succeed.

There is another school of thought proposed by mobilization theorists who argue that actors can begin a movement by mobilizing resources for action, given the universalistic nature of social problems. The Maoists were faced with political problems of being sidelined from decision making and that suppressed them economically. The constitution was not upholding on the basic rights of every citizen in Nepal and the citizens were tired of the suppression.

Although there is no agreement on the factors contributing to the emergence of the Maoist Insurgence in Nepal, it is clear that it was as a result of an intense ideological struggle.

**Chapter three; Methodology**

# **3.0 Overview**

The chapter describes the steps, processes and rationale applied to the study. It discusses in detail how research was conducted from identification of respondents to actual data collection, analysis and presentation. It is a step by step procedural map that ensured the study topic was subjected to academically set standards and norms that govern social science research. In itself, the chapter is an independent indicator of the study’s overall validity and reliability.

The methodology approach adopted was qualitative research. The study explains why the research approach was preferred and the unique characteristics inherent in qualitative research are defined. The research questions are reiterated, data sources explained and the data collection tools and processes. The chapter also singles out data analysis and the presentation method i.e. thematic analysis and narrative presentation of findings.

# **3.1 Research Approach**

Dornyei (2007) defines qualitative research as involving data collection procedures that result primarily in open ended non-numerical data which is then analyzed using non-statistical methods-qualitative content analysis. Content analysis in this study has been done through textual labelling and coding variables.

One advantage for studies that take the qualitative approach is that it does not concentrate on generalizations and reductions but concentrates on achieving an in-depth understanding of meaning. According to Dornyei (2007), qualitative research in the 1930s was mainly for exploratory, preliminary purposes, serving as a basis for more serious quantitative research. However since then the definition has evolved to suite the phenomenon under study. In this study it was preferred due to two reasons. One is the nature of information that the researcher was looking for and two it is only few people who had the opportunity to experience the issue under research first-hand and willing to share information about it for academic purposes.

The research design in qualitative studies is not pre-figured; it is normally prone to changes and depends on the respondent being interviewed. The study uses an open mind frame in that the analytical categories are refined during the process of interviewing and even other questions emerge as the interview goes on to get a deeper understanding of a phenomenon. This study inculcated reports from the media (Kathmandu Post and Rising Nepal), as well as detailed interviews with an academician, a journalist, a high ranking military officer and The Maoist leaders. The primary data obtained has been used in making conclusions for the study in corroboration with literature review and theoretical framework.

This paper will take a qualitative study approach and it uses an open mind frame in that the analytical categories are refined during the process of reviewing literature that has been published on this particular topic. One advantage of studies that take a qualitative approach is that it does not concentrate on generalizations and reductions but concentrates on achieving an in-depth understanding of a meaning or phenomena. Due to the non-predictable nature of the data collection outcome, qualitative research tends to ensure that a phenomenon is looked at from various angles. It’s interpretative and eventual outcome is as a result of the analysis and deductions of the researcher. The outcome of this result therefore will depend on the inclinations of the authors of the literature that is going to be reviewed.

This is a qualitative research that intends to establish if there is an impact on the potential communist party merger on Nepal’s journey towards democratic consolidation. The study will take a case study approach to and the researcher has decided to take that route to have an enlightened record of personal experiences of people who merged and those who were involved in the process as well as the experiences before and after the merger.

This paper will first analyze the composition of the Nepal society and the organization of the Nepal polity to try and answer the first research question. This will in detail look at the congruence or lack of one in state structures within the society structures that were adopted in the 1990 and afterwards when they were revised did they facilitate diversity?

Then the second tier will be looking at if the Nepal citizens are satisfied with the state structures and even policies that were set by the state between 1990 and 2002 when parliamentary democracy was in operation (Ogura, 2008). In this period there were lots of complaints between merger parties who formed the merger mainly because of identity and representation. During this period there were a lot of state institutions established under the constitution that were under criticism of not spreading the agenda for which they were formed. So this paper will be looking at which institutions need to remain and which ones are to be abolished and even the reasons.

**3.2 Research population**

In obtaining information the researcher looked for people considered having first-hand information at the same time would have offered insights on what happened before and after the insurgence. They were divided into two categories, i.e. informants and respondents. Informants were three people who had information about the conflict, the political process and the recommendations that had come up in the process of looking for democracy. I chose one person to represent national acclaimed academician, one journalist and one high ranking military officer. The academician had delved into a lot of literature that was written about the insurgency, what propelled the nation towards that route and what was the aftermath of the violence. The journalists were in the frontline collecting information from the government as well as the Maoists and had first experience with all the sights that can be considered horrible as well as covered the aftermath of the insurgence. The military were directly involved in taming the Maoist movement and had some intelligence on the source of the violence, were involved in peace keeping even after the insurgence hence they were credible sources of data.

The study is based on the actors that were involved in the process and those that were consulted in the coming up with decisions during the conflict, when having consultations and even during the peace process. This formed part of the respondents who were top leaders of the main political parties involved i.e. UCPN (Maoists), the Nepal Congress (NC) and the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN-UML). From this category I interviewed six people, two from each party and they acted as important sources of data as they were there when decisions were being made. At the same time the researcher wanted to validate some of the information obtained from the informants and get more insights on information that they may have missed or they did not have fine details about.

To get in touch with the respondents and the informants, I used contact persons who were close to this people and some of them I got their contacts from the academician. As noted, all the interviews done were to elites in the society as Kiyoko defines elites as “a group of individuals who hold or have held a privileged position in society and as much as far as a political scientist is concerned are likely to have had more influence on political outcome than general members of the public.”(Ogura, 2008). To avoid sample biasand unrepresentative results, having a similar number of respondents from the different parties to the conflict minimizes sample biases in that no party is overrepresented. The chosen representatives were very senior and high ranking in their parties and were directly involved in decision making during the period of the conflict as well as during the conflict resolution.

The researcher employed open ended questions that were arranged according to the thematic areas that were in line with the research questions. Open ended questions demand for more of the interviewer as the interview takes on a more conversational character. To remain on course and ensure that the researcher collected as much data as possible, the researcher had a script and this increases validity of the responses. The researcher also asked for the consent of the interviewees to be recorded so that the information that the researcher would not capture in writing would still be collected verbatim. The researcher also used written notes from the interview to provide fixed material relating to the use of the actors.

Other sources of information include newspapers and in this case I used the Kathmandu Post, and the Rising Nepal which are both written in English and have a wide circulation in Nepal. I Obtained 102 extracts of columns and commentaries of the merging of parties between 1999 and 2006, this was through the academician who had kept most of this literature for his scholarly work. Some of the minutes that the researcher would assess of meetings held by party leaders were not in English but since the researcher had time to interview the party leaders, this part was well taken care of.

**Chapter four; Presentation of Findings, Analysis and Interpretation**

**4.0 Overview**

This part presents findings, analyses and interprets the data that was examined through interview of personalities who were considered to hold vital information as well as review of various literatures on the stated topic. During the analysis the data collected from the interviews as well as document analysis, it was clustered around the recurring themes and the findings presented using the same themes as a guide. The part further presents an analysis of the findings using theoretical underpinnings of the study and presenting excerpts from the review data collected. Finally the writer presents a personal opinion through interpretation of the findings and all is contextualized within the ambit of the study findings.

**4.1 Causes and Contextual Factors that Contributed to the Emergence of the Insurgence**

The civil war in Nepal lasted for ten years between 1996 and 2006 and in this period there were three attempts at negotiation. The first one was in 2001 between a democratically elected government headed by Sher Bahadur and the Maoist, the second one was in 2003 between the Maoist and the kind’s government and the last one was in 2005 between the Seven Party Alliance and the Maoist (Whelpton, 2005). It is the 2005 negotiations that led to a comprehensive peace agreement in 2006 that was hinged on 12 points.

From the data that is reviewed there is a thunderous unanimity that inequality and deprivation is an incentive to political violence. Gurr (1968), conducted a study on 114 countries; Nepal included, and found out relative deprivation which took account of the economic discrimination, political discrimination, potential separatism, dependence on foreign capital, religious cleavages as well as inadequate educational opportunities. More so the issue of delineation in education renders the population ignorant and they will not know what is good for them and what is not, not even their rights and when blanketed with foreign aid they will think they are being helped and they should be dependent the whole of their lives.

Muller & Seligson (1987) have ranked inequality on top of the list of factors that cause political violence based on their analysis of 60 countries. They articulated the political violence to open polities where an aggrieved population normally is cognizant of the sources of their frustrations but do not have a way to express themselves and they do not have representation. The post 1990 epoch in 1990 is such one scenario where people articulated their frustrations openly to the ruling class and when they realized that the ruling class wasn’t any helpful they resulted to use of violence so that they can make their voices heard. This is the explanation behind the Maoist launch and its success in whatever it was meant to achieve. They engaged the state for reforms and they were promised that there will be reforms, when the state failed in their promises, the Maoists gained popularity and membership.

Political violence and protracted civil war tend to be exacerbated in societies where there is separatism (Khadka, 1995). This can be exemplified by the sporadic riots on lines of culture and religion in Nepal since 1990 and this can be explained by the ease with which one can woe supporters in line with ethnic or religious inclinations. After the 1990 the politics of identity has taken centre stage in Nepal, so that whoever that wants to gain any political mileage will look for some inclination towards an ethnic group or a religious group and it will work wonders within a short period of time.

4.2 **The Impact of Potential Communist Party Merger on Nepal’s Journey Towards Consolidation**

Other reviewed literature have identified federalism, proportional representative electoral method, constitutional protection of minority rights, representation in the House of Nationalities and inclusion of all the diverse oppressed social groups in the Nepal as the main course for the political violence in Nepal (Bhattacharya, 2013). However on close examination of these studies, they point to individual institutions. Some of the studies reviewed under this, do not have empirical data to prove what they are trying to put across at the same time do not explain the importance of having all interest groups represented in the institutions that they have put across. However from the interviews done, the journalist stated clearly that there was a lot of infringement on the human rights more so to the minorities. The constitution was there, it was oppressive and at times it was never adhered to, they lacked representation in government and nobody so far was concerned with their rights leave alone what they were advocating for. The respondents also threw their weight behind this and stated that they wanted equality and to be treated like any other citizen in Nepal, and to foster the changes it had to take effect from institutional changes.

It came out that both SPA and Maoist were concerned with peace and democracy in their rural villages. One of the respondents claimed that,

No, the thing is that, first they have a very one way of looking at it, unless you have peace and stability what is the use of democracy? So from that point this peace process, which has been linked, these issues are linked, and we would like to see it interlinked because getting the constitution through seeing it as a strategic as getting peace and they are interrelated. Unless you have peace how can the new thing that you are looking for get established, so the problem is with the parliamentary parties because they are not prepared to be a new person, anew party, new agenda, they still have the hangover from the Panchayat era (Khadka, 1995).

The statement above was echoed from a leader from the Maoist side. It is clear that both of them want peace and democracy but would not agree among themselves what should come first and what should be next. For the SPA peace will come through democracy, and for the Maoist peace is a necessary condition for democracy. However after the signing of the negotiations deal in 2005, peace took precedence over the issue of democracy as reported by the academician,

*Peace was said to be the overriding concern and whatever needed to secure peace, whatever sacrifice should be done. The Maoist sold the idea of peace* (Khadka, 1995).

The Maoist later on bowed to the pressure and decided to work together with the SPA to reach the 12 point agreement that they had sighed. Although in the 12 point agreement there was nothing concerning the peace, the two parties agreed to agitate against the autocratic monarchy and establish peace through putting to an end the civil war. However it’s like the efforts again got a lot of resistance because of the inconsistence of the two parties in the definition of democracy and what they were up to when advocating for a democratic state. SPA in their quest wanted a multi-party democracy together with cessation of violence, while the Maoists wanted parliament to be ousted through violent moves. The Maoists wanted numbers so that wherever they call on violent demonstrations, the state would listen and would bow down because it is masses that were orchestrating the move. With time they were able to be convinced that it not only through violence that people can achieve democracy, through peaceful negotiations democracy can be achieved too. This is what one of the respondents said,

Actually, Maoist are in the process of change, they had no belief in multiparty democracy in the beginning but right now they are in favour of multi-party democracy competition system, so they have entered this democratic way now, I hope that they will accept the basic norms of democracy, the multiparty competition and all other parliamentary rights all other basic principles of democracy because now they do not want to go to the jungle again, they want to stay here they want to work here, without a democratic path they cannot do, so it is their compulsion, and it is their need. And I hope that it is time to think for all political leaders, political parties that it is our duty to transform them and it is our duty to provide them space to move in this path (Bhattacharya, 2013).

From the conversation there are arguments which tend to show that the Maoists were dragged into the agreement by SPA because from the onset they were against multiparty democracy and all they wanted is issues of depression to be raised and institutions like the constitution to be amended so that they are all inclusive. According to the fourth respondent,

The Maoist did not believe in a multiparty democracy and so the idea of the CPNUML was that their idea of democracy was reactionary. But because they said they believe in democracy of the 21st century, which was the same idea as the CPN UML did just after the 1990. They did not have their own special idea about the issue as well. The Maoist believed in the armed force and the CPN UML believed in the people and did not have their own armed force (Bhattacharya, 2013).

They had to converge at one point so that they reap the fruits of what they had started together. The Maoists were forced to disarm themselves so that they could be able to negotiate in a way that can be considered civilized and since they had the numbers, the state bowed to their demands at the end. From the conversation exhibit presented above it is like SPA were the leaders in the process while the Maoists were followers in the process. I raised the issue with the Maoists respondents had a very different view of the same. They claimed that they did not concede for what they wanted but rather the issue of democracy is what was their number one agenda and they did not care which route it took but they wanted it as early as yesterday. They also argued that their party was pro-democracy and therefore multi-party democracy was not imposed on them because as a party they had decided to adopt it and it is the one that made them to lead multitudes of people.

One of the features that also was prominent from the literature under review and the interviews is the leadership of the king whom to both the SPA and the Maoists was considered autocratic and the source of the oppressive and punitive laws that were an infringements on the rights of others. One of the respondents retorted that,

The democracy, peace, prosperity, social advancement and an independent sovereign Nepal is the principal wish of all Nepali people. We fully agreed that the autocratic monarchy is the main hurdle for this, and that these changes can only come about by bringing the absolute monarchy to an end (Bhattacharya, 2013).

There was a common believe among all the respondents that once the king’s position is scrapped off then there would be social advancement, prosperity and independence. SPA did not have an alternative to the King leading Nepal but the Maoists wanted the position to be scrapped and be replaced with a parliamentary system. SPA had proposed that there should be a king leading the old parliament system of governance which was opposed by the Maoists. The Maoists had associated the failure of the democratic system to the leadership by the autocratic king and to replace that then there was need to hold negotiations and go for a democratically elected leader thorough an election. For SPA they advocated for the dissolution of parliament and restoration of the same through peaceful agitation. One of the respondent retorted that

I must be honest, it was their agenda to abolish the monarchy, after the king took over we also realized that the king is against democracy all the time. For example I personally I was imprisoned by Gyanendra’s Father, his brother and himself for questioning about issues of democracy and I had not taken up arms when asking for the same. If you are a true democrat you are imprisoned (Bhattacharya, 2013).

The idea of abolishing the monarchy was first raised by the Maoists and to replace them they came up with the parliamentary system of governance. All respondents were in agreement that Nepal lagged behind in terms of development because of events such as palace massacre of those who were seen as a threat to the repressive regime of governance. There was also a resounding agreement from all the respondents that a monarch could never be democrat or be inclusive when it comes to development projects.

Then the Maoists thought that their issues were not going to be addressed but parliament because some of the members may be compromised and they may not be in position to articulate for the issues that they were elected to address. So they resulted to having Constituent Assemblies to extricate the issue of representation whose genesis was the king. Some members across the political divide complained of the move, but they lacked an option because as at the time, the biggest issue at hand is having the kingship leadership out of the way to pave way for an inclusive democratic society. It was interesting to note that some members from SPA were reluctant to accept the solutions of the Maoists and some of the interviewed respondents claimed that their party was the first one to discuss issues related to Constituent Assemblies.

SPA as a party saw the problem of representation as the source of the problems that they had and the only way to solve it is through peaceful means. In addressing the issue they came up with a status quo with no political agenda and this gave room for the Maoists agenda that there was need to have Constituent Assemblies. CA were the top agenda of the Maoists and they had raised this issue twice with their coalition partners and it failed to go through the negotiation process and when they achieved it, it became the only way in which peace would have been achieved in Nepal.

**Chapter five; Discussion**

The political exclusion of the Maoists during the constitutional making process of 1990 deprived the Maoists the opportunity to representation in the democratic governance of the country. It took the intervention of other exclusionary activities such as repression for them to realize insurgency. From the data presented above it is clear that the Maoists had a plan of incorporating the concepts of peace and democracy in a logic that united their demands for the republic and constituent assembly (Ogura, 2008). In comparison the SPA had a narrow frame focusing on the king’s disbandment and restoring the same with a representative parliament. It is also evident that the Maoists were successful in linking the issues of pace with the need for a republican constitution and with their original demand of a constituent assembly.

It is also evident from the findings that Nepal got to know peace through the civil society, and third party facilitators through solving the problem of representation. This was through connecting the issues of peace and democracy with republic, secularism and constituent assembly elections. It beats logic that this were the issues that the Maoist were advocating for since the beginning of the insurgency and they had been very consistent with their demands and arguing for political and socio-economic changes. This statements were echoed by one of the respondents who was in the forefront in the negotiations process,

Because we had given the slogan, tow, both slogans, the owner of the slogans is our party, the election of the CA and the republican issue, we were the first to raise this question from 2001. In first negotiation period when I came into Kathmandu I give the government, our negotiation point is this: interim government, CA elections and ultimately republican, at that time nobody wants against the king, about the CA they also did not…Sher Bahadur Deuba, Prime Minister say: it is not my power to give you the election to CA, they say all party, UML and NC and other parties also, say this constitution means 1990 constitution they say this is very good democratic constitution we cannot change this, they want to please come in compromise, leave your slogans. So from our party view point of the slogans comes to, from the people’s war the peaceful movement to achieve the slogan this is our gain. So I say it is successful for us (Bhattacharya, 2013).

It is evident from the explanation above, even if the English used is non-grammatical, that the Maoists were very happy when most of their recommendations and what they had been fighting for came to realization. They were propelled by people who felt that they had been oppressed for long enough. The leaders did the right thing because their supporters had fought for democratic change for a long time, some maimed and some killed so the best reward that they would have delivered is to have unwavering stands for what they believed was right. History was going to judge them if they were not going to represent the views of the electorates. In politics it is also important to have unwavering stands and stand by the people who have chosen you to represent them so that should another position appear that requires a person to represent others, then one is up to the task. From my point of view they stood for what they believed was right and in any case it was the right thing because they had been frustrated there before and wanted a complete overhaul of the political system.

The impacts of the insurgency have been felt in Nepal and have negative as well positive impacts. First, since the initiation of the insurgency, every person in Nepal is aware of his/her rights moreso those who are considered marginalized and the poor. Socio-economic depression is a thing of the past because the government institutions that are constitutionally established to give service to the poor do it very well knowing that the people are watching and should they fail they will be held accountable for what they were placed in office to do. This has also put on notice those dominant in the societies who have discriminatory habits to the poor in society and even discrimination in terms of gender that this people know their rights. The Maoists have also been more successful in undermining social inequality and discrimination, especially with regard to women and Dalits, due to their forceful and often coercive fiat (Whelpton, 2005).

Two, the process has mobilized so many women in Nepal that are now making political decisions for the country. It has also propelled youths to respectable positions within society and the state. Formation of ethnic fronts has propelled mobilization to every person, and this has decreased chances of discrimination.

Third there are projects which were started in the rural areas courtesy of the insurgency and they have been executed to completion rendering life in town almost similar to that in the village. This includes health facilities, electricity, water and infrastructure. When people are equipped with this at reasonable prices more so infrastructure, then development is to be realized and discrimination between the rich and poor will have a thin line.

Four, the insurgency has instilled the obligation of the citizen of Nepal to concoct on the social and political structures as well as institutions. As Muller &Seligson (1987) note that the Maoist insurgency received considerable popular support across the country, it has forced the dominant intelligentsia and the civil society to recognize the structural inequality and discrimination within society and polity, including those embraced by the 1990 constitution. The constitution that was in place was directly undermining those who were poor in the society and unrepresented. This acted as a way in which the constitution was amended to reflect the face of Nepal and it became an all-inclusive document.

The insurgency has been a blessing but it came at a heavy cost on the life, liberty as well the security of the citizens of Nepal. The Maoists for example killed thousands of innocent lives and according to RNA the state had killed even more people more especially after the declaration of the state of emergency in November 2001(Bhattacharya, 2013). Revolutions are normally characterized by death and even other inhuman actions but this case stands out as in it is the state that was consuming its own citizens and they were just asking for their rights. The informal Sector Services Center (INSEC) did a survey and reported that the state was responsible for 68% of the deaths while the Maoists are responsible for 32% of the deaths and most of them were reactionary due to the operations of the state.

Apart from the deaths so many people were disabled permanently from the injuries that they sustained and this has incapacitated most of them economically. On top of that there is the trauma that was as a result of the victims watching as their loved ones were hacked to death, raped and even others beaten and left to die. Some of them have fear in them to date that they might be the target of the Maoists or even the security forces.

The Maoists were recruiting young boys to go and fight by force and some of the young boys had to run away from their homes for fear of being recruited and even fear that if they become part of the group then they become targets of the state. Then there were others who were threatened by the Maoists to leave their villages because they were perceived not to hold the political ideologies that the Maoists were advocating for. Some studies have estimated the number of those displaced as a result of the insurgency to be in the realms of 200,000 (Whelpton, 2005).

Infrastructure destruction was also experienced and it is an issue that has scaled down the speed of development. The Maoists destroyed more than 1000 village development committee office buildings, government offices as well as police posts. The attacks did not spared airports, electricity power stations, telecommunication towers as well as grounding of development projects (Khadka, 2005). These entire infrastructures were built from the taxpayers funds and they were supposed to be erected after the period again by taxpayers’ money. This also tail wagged the process of development because the monies that were employed in this projects would have been used in other useful activities and the country’s GDP would be better off than what is at the moment.

There were many INGO and NGO development programs in the rural areas meant to benefit the local community at the same time they were funded by donors and even provided employment for some of the local people. The projects were pulled down at the same time the employees sent away, this has long term effects even to date because people are not willing to go and work there. Some of the locals who had secured jobs before the insurgency are now jobless and some expatriates are no longer willing to set their feet in some local villagers of Nepal to initiate projects that are helpful to the local community.

Yogi (2002), has documented that a total of 380 million rupees is a claim by 6 banks, industries and infrastructure providers as a result vandalism and looting of property. This is to be compensated by the state because institutions like banks are always insured and the money for compensation should have been used for other activities.

During the insurgency people were facing extortion for food and even forcing the locals to pay some taxes. This brought a lot of food insecurity to the locals in the rural areas because one there wasn’t any security for people to work in their farms to empower their food granaries, and for the small amount they produced it was being taken away to take care of the fighting Maoists who needed some ration to keep them on in their daily activities. The process took away the young men and women who are supposed to work in the fields and produce food bringing about food insecurity in the whole of the region.

There was a disruption in the economy and the destroyed industries meant that there were massive job losses for the Nepal people. At the height of the insurgency, the country didn’t have any tourists visiting the country because of fear of the state of insecurity. These led to the GDP of the country going as low as 3.41% from 4.66 % which it will take so many years to get it back there. The disruption in economy and market was felt more in the rural areas where the activities of the Maoists were very active.

The insurgency had it is own benefits and some of this political changes cannot be made minus action but the costs outweigh the benefits. An increase in social awareness cannot be justified for all the property that was destroyed leave alone the number of people who died.

Nepal’s rural life is changing at a very fast rate in terms of gender roles, social stratification and a decline is social production as result of the insurgence. This is because of empowerment of women who at the moment are aware of their rights than before and they know that the only way to get self out of any situation is through a revolution. There has been a decline in agricultural production as every person member of the society want to move to urban areas and fend for self, and they do not want whatever that found them in the village during the Maoist movements.

With the coordination and subsequently coming up with the seven party alliances, the parliamentary bodies were in a position to articulate issues as one voice both to the palace and to the Maoist. After this they were able to reason together and the fruits of this were seen through the reduced hard rhetoric lines against the Maoist and instead directed towards the king and his government. Then the government refrained from use of its SPA in retaliatory attacks towards the Maoists and instead advocated for a negotiated solution so that it would lead to solving of issues that had already been escalated by the Maoists.

The success of the Maoists can be attributed to its collective leadership as well as coordinated actions and innovative slogans adopted during the campaign period. They had blended well with their supporters, understood their problems and were resonating to them. They had also enlightened them on their rights and how the same were being infringed on as well as the best way to demand for them was through armed struggle. According to Gellner (2005), they had developed quite catchy campaign slogans such as ‘*arulaimaukadheraipatak, maobadilaimaukaekpatak’* (others have received opportunity many times, give the Maoists an opportunity this time). This can be considered as inciting however it is the right thing because backed up with evidence presented above on how the political system was oppressive there was need that the government in operation would have been more inclusive.

The Maoists who pushed for the postponement of the 2007 election by resigning from government had done a great thing for themselves and their party because they had not marshaled enough support behind them to win in an election. Therefore they wanted more time to be able to convince most of their supporters as well influence most youths who had not registered to be included in the voting register and they were legible for the process to do so. They were able to attract so many youths as they moved across the country, and this was significant in mobilizing more people to go and vote. This expression is show of their mighty powers that they were able to influence the date that an election took place. In the campaigns they also promised to revolutionize the economy through enhancement of peace, correct economic policies that are all inclusive and putting in place a correct political system (Friedman, 2005). Some of this was achieved because with peace then the economic development of the country gets boosts through foreign as well as local investors who are likely to move the Gross Domestic Product of a country.Many investors had run away during the insurgence for fear of their safety and that of their property so now that peace had made its way to Nepal, they would now come back and engage in economic development activities.

**5.1 Achievements of the Constituent Assemblies**

Constituent Assemblies was an idea that was laid and hatched by the Maoists and it helped to achieve the following for the people of Nepal;

1. Maoists formed a coalition government and when they realized what they were advocating for was not being followed they resigned and decided to launch protests. They failed to capture power but most of their arguments and what they had fought for had been incorporated into the governing structure of Nepal.
2. Maoists refused to accept pluralism and parliamentary system and wanted to establish a people’s republic.
3. The peace process was completed in a violent manner
4. The constituent assemblies experienced their demise without realizing one of their main goals, promulgation of a new constitution. The reasons behind this were disagreements among the member political parties of the merger on issues of federalism.
5. It is politics of identity that led to the merger of political parties and it is the same issue that led to merger not working.

**5.2Conclusion**

Despite the roles played by the Nepalese political parties in bringing about equality to all members in the society, still there are challenges in the democratization process which range between; gaps between ideology and policy, there is a lot of incoherence between the constitution and adhering to the document, there is a gap in enforcement of party laws and lack of mechanisms of solving issues between parties (Khadka1995). There is also an issue in equal representation of different interest groups in parliament and other state jobs in terms of regional representation, gender and religious backing. This is because SPA felt they had been entrapped by the Maoist peace frame because most of the recommendations that were implemented were from the Maoists side and this can be attributed to persistence form their leaders when they were fighting for what they believed was right for them and their people.

The process of democratization starts from the installation of a system that to many can be considered as democratic. The political history of Nepal reveals that even in democratic governments, democratic demise can happen at any time. Normally the democratization process in any country is dependent on the nature, goal as well as the structure of the authority or regime. On the whole, problems in Nepal were consisted with ideology, identity, constitutional monarchy, socioeconomic and political deprivation, interest of donor agencies and global trend have encouraged for making collective identity against the absolutism of monarchy.

There is the issue of violence and peace, it is important to note that in most democracies peace is as a result of violence. Even in countries that were colonized, to get independence they had to enlighten their members and fight the colonizer with all their might and be persistent for what they are fighting for, for them to get independence. This is what happens with the Maoists, they had to enlighten their members on what they were fighting for, believed for what they were fighting and were never swayed from what they believed is right for them. In the end most of their recommendations saw the light of the day and they came to know peace as well as representation when they put in place constituent assemblies.

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