

## Causes and impact of Conflict among Magars in Western Nepal

*“Greed is the source of conflict”* Cambodian Proverb.

### Introduction

Conflict does not emerge itself without any reason even inside a single person as well as within a group of people in a society. Different perspectives on life and problems with having own unique history and character in a different ways of socialization, ways of understanding, having differences on values guide the thought of behavior and motivation to take certain actions with acceptance and rejection in working areas, subjects, geographical locations and context and situation leads violent and unstable situation into conflict. Our background with typical socialization process leads us to see things in a difference in a particular ways on a viewpoint are inevitable and often enriching. Besides natural differences, there are other dimensions such as status, power, wealth, age, the role assigned to our gender, belonging to a specific social groups are also a factor of emergences of conflict in society. Needs of different things from different People from same situation forced to fulfill their incompatible goals results conflict<sup>1</sup> in a society. When people’s interest does not meet with other person’s interest, conflict arises between persons, friends, relatives, community and society.

Conflict had spread its wings all over the country disturbing the peaceful environment, hurting feeling and emotions of the people as well as destroying peaceful environment. It was important to recognize that conflict can have positive outcomes because it offers opportunities to address issues. When a conflict is not addressed in time and in effective manner, it can become violent. Violent conflict clearly has a negative impact on the lives of people on the delivery of civil, government and development services<sup>2</sup>.

This violent conflict has brought unstable situation in Nepal. More than sixteen thousands lives have been sacrificed including those incidents which have not been identified (INSEC, 2005). Not only Royal Nepal Army Personnel, Police and insurgents have lost their lives but the lives of the civilian also have been taken with all ages of people from all caste and ethnic groups from all parts of Nepal.

Nepal rich with fifty-nine ethnic groups as identified from the government besides Brahmins and Chhetris, the Magars a largest population among all these indigenous ethnic groups in Nepal, are known as sincere and honest with having less education are very poor in their economic condition in comparison with its numbers, are mostly affected by this conflict since this so-called Maoist Movement was started from Rukum and Rolpa, in the Mid-Western part of Nepal.

Magars are, one of the largest indigenous ethnic group of Nepal, are found all over the hills of Nepal as well as in some Plain area from Eastern to Western and Mid Western part of Nepal where majority numbers are found in Western and Mid-Western part of Nepal than Eastern and Central region. Population of Magars have been dispersed all over the country in the process of unification during the period of King Prithvinarayan Shah which covered, the

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<sup>1</sup> Simon Fisher et.al.2000 in Working with Conflict”

<sup>2</sup> Safe and Development in Conflict. Risk Management Office, GTZ/DFID 2005

third largest population in Nepal and the highest numbers of population among 59 Indigenous/ ethnic groups covering 1622421 including 837593 population of women constituting 7.14 percentage with total population of Nepal.<sup>3</sup> Population of Magars in their Mother tongue shows that only 770116 with percentage of 3.39 can speak their mother tongue<sup>4</sup>. Most Magars from Western part of Nepal speaks Kham Magar languages as their mother tongue. Having dependency on agricultures and less production due to unfertile land, forced Magars migrate to other places in search of work to survive.

Nepal Living Standard Survey II, 2004 quoted by World Bank Summary Draft<sup>5</sup>(2005) clearly shows that Nepal's poverty line has reduced to 31% which used to be 42% before has given the poverty line of Magars covering 34.4% due to the settlement in rural areas with large number of family sizes as well as hills and mountainous regions of Mid and Far Western Development Region of Nepal. Magars who have been settling in western Nepal for many centuries ago, are forced to migrate to other Urban areas of Nepal as well as to cross the border to work for living to fulfill their basic needs, are usually found from Rukum, Rolpa, Dang, Salyan, Mugu, Dolpa etc.

Several questions have been raised by laymen that, "why people's war had started from Rukum and Rolpa but not from other part of Nepal?" The questions have been striking in several peoples' mind made them think and search answers by themselves. This paper will try to clarify the Magars' situation during people's war and its causes and impact in relation with conflict. This paper provides a concise idea of a paper presenter focusing on causes and impact of Conflict among Magars in Western Nepal, especially focusing on Rukum and Rolpa based on those published and unpublished documents of native and foreign scholars available during this paper writing.

### **Conflict in Western Nepal: its Causes and Impact**

Maoist movement has been basically rooted in Mid-Western part of Nepal. People have been raising questions that why this conflict originated from Rukum and Rolpa and why not from other places of Nepal? What are the causes that help to germinate and blossom Maoist movement in this area? These are the questions that people are raising within themselves or with each other or with whom they feel comfortable to discuss.

Various points of view have been given by development worker, lawyers, academician saying that, Maoist movement has been originated from western Nepal due to illiteracy, poverty, excluded from the state in every development work, unemployment etc. The question rises here that is it the only causes that helped to take arms for this movement especially from Magars area? Because Philippe Ramirez<sup>6</sup> has explained that geopolitical condition with external interference, or at least external influence that might be decisive and socio-economic factors are the most commonly invoked causes of Maoist insurgency. Quoting Kierman 1982, Philippe argued that the first creation of Cambodian Communist Movement in the 1950s were originated from Ho Chi Minh's original scheme for an 'Indochinese Federation' of the socialist state and combined interference of Hanoi, Beijing

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<sup>3</sup> CBS 2001

<sup>4</sup> ibid

<sup>5</sup> World Bank. Unequal Citizens: Gender, Caste and Ethnic Exclusion in Nepal(Summary Report, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> Philippe R. in "Towards a Comparative Perspective" in Himalayan People's War

and Washington in Cambodia where crucial ingredients is in the emergence of Khmer Rouge. The Sino-Indian crisis was one major component of the Naxalite phenomenon. The result of state's failure to address the economic grievances of deprived populations is the primary causative factors declared by the insurgents in every nation.

It is clear that Maoist insurgency has been originated from materially distressed areas. Due to secure and established defended area in the hills, dense forest area, easy to practice military tactics, armed struggle have been launched in mountainous and forested areas as the base area which is also supported by Mao Zedong. Naxalite in India are situated in least populated belts of eastern India where the inhabitants are Santhals, Oraon and Rajbansi villages in 1967, Indian populated zones in Peru 1980, Central Luzon in Philippines by New People's Army and shifted to northern Luzon, island of Samar and Mindanao, under the military pressures in 1974, thinly populated zones of Khmer ethnic groups, JVP(Janata Vimukti Peramuna) insurgency of 1971 in Sri Lanka is established in the central and populated area of the island. Communist Party of Nepal has proved that natural environment has been the most advantage for them saying that, geographical situation with mountainous terrain is most favorable for waging guerrilla war(CPN,1996).

Most of the Maoist leader has come from the zamindar family(landlord), such as Charu Mazumdar who was born in zamindar family, established peasant organization in Siliguri and Jalpaiguri, north of Naxalbari area. Jangal Santhal, a peasant member of the Darjeeling district committee of the CPI(M) had important role on promoting Santhals, Babulal Biswakarma was from a landless family of the same region as an exception, Vempatapu Sathyanarayana(Sathyam) was from Andrapradesh and Adibhalta Kailasham was also a son of landlord whereas the Shinning path leaders were from educated gentry of provincial town Ayacucho, in the Peruvian hinterland, developing contract with the surrounding Indian communities which clearly showed that most of the communist leaders have not come from poor family except some who can attract poor people by raising voices in favor of them who are neglected by the state.

Maoist strongly holds Rukum and Rolpa of Mid-western Nepal from the very beginning of the February 1996, established its shelter area openly. The main reason to establish its base areas are the existence of 'autonomous' political networks, and the presence of fairly numerous ethnic minorities especially inhabited by Magars.

### **Maoist Movement in Rukum and Rolpa: Fighting for who's Identity?**

The origin of Magars are commonly known from 12 Magaranth in east and 18 Magaranth in west, used to be 30 Magar states in the past, although there are not any written documents to give emphasis about the truth and facts regarding the history of Magars except oral history<sup>7</sup>. The main intervention among Magar was started after the entrance of *kumai*<sup>8</sup> from India and influence Hinduism to follow was the most affective mechanism to make them subordinate to Kumai based on caste systems. Magars language were suppressed after the establishment of *Bame Taksar*, *Bale Taksar* offices, and made Magars aware about their threat of loosing their language and culture, people from 18 Magaranth now in gulmi, got aware and established Magar Sewa Samiti 1955 A.D to bring all Magars United. '*Khani ka kamdar*'

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<sup>7</sup> Bam Kumari Buda Magar in Samkishya on Lakhya Ethihasma Magarati Bhasako Sabdakosh ( **Kannunlam falgun 206138p**).

<sup>8</sup> Kumai thoughts to be migrated from Kumao in India.

workers in mining from Dhaulagiri zone were forced to leave their language and started to use Nepali khas language as lingua franca and government forced them to use khas language as their common language deteriorated their own Magar language to speak. Magars are placed in a Matwali(alcohol drinkers) in caste systems who's economic systems depended on their agricultural economy besides their remittance from working labors in India, Arab and from British Army.

Magar Basti has been used as present conflict base area bringing upheaval in a society in present situation. Magars were restricted to speak their Kham, Pang Magar language in telephone booth from government side in public, new named has been started giving for those places which was named Magar local names such as such as Bhaluwang to Bhabuwang, Burtiwan to Burtibanga. The majority of Magars are involved in Maoist activities through the thought that Maoist Movement has raised their issues which other political parties.

In 1992 February 13, Maoist movement started as the name of the People's War as the starting process of instability in the country. Ropla of Nuwagaun started people's war in the beginning as the origin place of the conflict.

### **Origin of Maoism in Magar Territory**

King Prithvinarayan Shah called himself “ king of Magarant” and used to be proud to be a king of Magars. Magarant is the place that Magar first settled and have authority since from the beginning. Ridi to Western Karnali Pradesh is known as 18 Magarant and eastern to the present Gandaki region, was commonly known as 12 Magarath. The large numbers of Magar population is covered in Salyan, Rukum, Rolpa, Myagdi, Baglung, Pyuthan, Arghakhanchi, Gulmi, Parbat, Syanja, Palpa, Tanahu and Nawalparasi districts where Maoist autonomous regions has been implied by giving authority to the dominant groups. Due to Geographical topography, financial condition, political situation and socio-economic reason, Magar are attracted with Maoist declaration to give separate autonomous region by establishing every group based autonomous region in the state. Maoist movement started from Nuwa village of Rolpa and gave strength to Maoist when Magar supported them through high numbers of involvement in Maoist movement.

Current local conflict has covered hills and rural areas of Nepal where Magars are mostly affected by this conflict in comparison with other indigenous ethnic groups of Nepal. The ancestral land of Magars have been affected by this conflict by forgetting all traditional and indigenous knowledge, skills and practices from the intervention of the people's war in the name of scientific practices, leaving all traditional cultures that dominates to women and other excluded groups, moved ahead for the mirage of class less communist society. Magars have been displaced to urban area, and also to India to work as a labor. They have been mostly suspected to be Maoist and have been tortured by the government side being a supporter and cadres of Maoist movement. The main reason of high involvement in Maoist activities is not getting access and benefits from the states to fulfill their basic needs<sup>9</sup>. After attracted to be a Moist cadres, most of them are involved in volunteer military squads and

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<sup>9</sup> Sri prasad Budhathoki, Adibaisi Manawasarokar Kendra, joint secretary, in **lisar**, asar,206235p

commandos who are mostly killed in cross fire and attacking to the counter part are assumed to be killed in large numbers without any records and identification contradicts with data of INSEC (2005) which shows very less numbers.

Anne de Sales<sup>10</sup> study in West Nepal has given insights about the Maoist Base area in Rolpa and Rukum where most of the inhabitants are Kham Magars, a Tibeto-Burman Population of Nepal have different knowledge and practices in their localities, dialects in different villages, specific festivals as well as differences in the ways they keep their things, itenary they followed with their flocks and the communal territories they maintained with other villages.

Although several cultural associations have been in active for upliftment of their community, it stands more strongly after 1990 A.D among the tribal groups of Nepal after the restoration of democracy. Before reaching to this situation, the retired British Gurkha people have formed Reform Association of the Magar Society in 1956 A.D. The aim of the Association was focused on 'root(ing) out the evils that existed in Magar society such as over expending money earned form pensions and over drinking in the form of picnics, to avoid the allegation of being communal from the government side. The Nepal Langhalee Association (Nepal Langhalee Sangh) in 1989 A.D was the origin point for the development of the political dimension as preserving the language, culture and identity of Magars to reconsider, customs of spending on eating and drinking at birth to death ritual beyond limitation of one's means and excessive belief in ghost and spirits and the custom of sacrificing animals in the name of gods and goddesses instead of offering just flowers and food (ibid).

The main origin of Maoist Movement from Magar inhabitation area of Western Nepal anticipate different reasons and arguments regarding the conflict saying that, "Magars are the most exploited group from the state who needs to fight for their rights without tolerating any kind of exploitation from the state". After the people's movement (Jan Andolan) of 1990, 61( it was 61 indigenou/ethnic groups before the declaration of 59) indigenou/ethnic groups started to raise their voices against the discriminatory systems in Constitutions of Nepal for their rights. People started to get aware for their own identity as against to the themes of nation building in the name of unification during the period of King Prithvi Narayan Shah using military force to bring all castes, ethnic and indigenou groups under one flag.

The movement brought all grievances of the people into expression which had been suppressed inside them and raised voices on the discrimination by the state and by the high caste and high class people in various field such as in every sphere of socio, economic, political and religious issues. The people's movement was supported by the UN Declaration that, 1993 would be a 'International Year of Indigenou People' helped them to raise their voices against the system in the national policies, rules and regulations in the country<sup>11</sup>.

There are three themes of ethnic movements which are Bhumi, Bhasa and Dharma(land, language and religion),a rituals formula in the activist discourse. Protection of mother tongue, secularization of the state, and local autonomy influenced by Indian system are the

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<sup>10</sup> Anne de Sales, The Kham Magar Country, Nepal Between Ethnic Claims and Maoism in Understanding the Maoist Movement of Nepal. 2004

<sup>11</sup> ibid

main voices that people are raising which are also added by all political parties and some other organizations working for the right of people. The main issues, the activist and political parties raising are that the statement about the country as a 'Hindu Kingdom' and must be declared secular state instead of imposing one religion country, by using their fundamental rights<sup>12</sup>.

As Baburam Bhattarai, decided to stand for election in 1991 to show their existence with their strong hold on people's movement, stood with the nine seats to show their status as a national party. The election showed the domination of the Party in western to eastern Nepal. The domination of communist is clearly seen in east and central region of Nepal whereas; western part of Nepal is dominated by Congress Party. The domination of Maoists Movement was to be found principally strong in Rukum and Rolpa due to the active presence and influence of Burman Buda and his party, which was elected in the Parliament in 1990 A.D. Due to unstable government, people as well as political parties, were not satisfied with election. On 4<sup>th</sup> February, the Sanyukta Jana Morcha(SJM) submitted a list of forty demands to the government, giving two weeks to start people's war criticizing the word and faith of Hindu Kingdom and demanded for the republican constitution drawn up by the constituent assembly elected by universal suffrage. Not giving concern by the government, SJM carried out simultaneous raids against police stations in Holeri(Rolpa), and Athbiskot(Rukum). Fire was set on temple and telephone lines. In 1999 A.D, Maoist fortnightly leftist magazine with cover of Musikot was announced to be the capital of Maoist and declared the total number of death covering 1500.00 people<sup>13</sup>.

### **The Reason of Maoist strong holds in Magar Territory**

The questions have been asked by all national and international agencies, those which are concerned and affected by this conflict during their visit and working in Nepal, showed different views and ideas towards Magars' involvement in conflict. Some expressed their feelings that Magars are naïve people who can be influenced easily focusing on their ideology<sup>14</sup> and strongly expressed that it is the state's disability to bring Magars from Atharamagarnath into its structure inclusively results the present conflict situation in Nepal.

Anne de Sales, wrote in her article about Magars are:

"....a naïve people....easily swayed....but who if they can be enlisted for a task, continued in it or die in the attempt. There is an irony in the fact that as many Magars have been killed by the Maoist as by the police. According to unofficial statistics half of all victims have been Magars"<sup>15</sup>.

It has been common that Magars of any part of Nepal thought to be naïve and innocent, could be used by any one as its mohara(a stamp) by any one in the risk and difficult situation. The main cause or factors of starting Maoist from this areas, commonly analyzed and assume are, the presence of the forest which offers a natural opportunity for guerilla operations, due to poor and economic conditions and finally a local population of Magars who are unemployed

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<sup>12</sup> ibid

<sup>13</sup> ibid

<sup>14</sup> Informal interview with ex. Member of the Parliament, during my field visit to Tanahu District

<sup>15</sup> Anne de Sales quoted Awaj Weekly Chronicle, Vol.23.15 February, 1999.

due to lack of education. Besides given reason, isolation from the other part of Nepal, poverty and local immigrants, who are khas Chettries coming from India, due to having less fertile land, might be a good reason to be an origin of Maoist in western Nepal. I support that, Magars being poor, are always in a situation of poverty, lacking education and access to the basic needs might be a strong point in this situation. Honesty for the work when having in mind might be criteria for Magars to get enroll in Nepal Army, Indian Army and British Army.

The Magars from Rolpa and Rukum have covered thirty compact household villages in the higher parts working as peasants of their own land. Who have their typical type of culture, mostly depended on their shamans, where land has been known as the country of the blind<sup>16</sup>. Thawang the heart of the Kham country was already influenced by communist ideology since from 1957 through the revolutionary movement by Mohan Bikram Singh from Pyuthan District, and Burman Buda who was elected as a mayor of Thawang, imprisoned for burning the portrait of King and Queen, the supreme power of the country which was known as a great crime<sup>17</sup>.

Due to naivety and innocence and their honesty, Magars have been involved in Maoist Movement to fulfill their beautiful mirage to get separate autonomous region to hold power on their hand. Historical events shows that Magars have a revolutionary history against the autocracy rule in the country were hanged in public to send lesion to other people as a result of going against the rule and regulation of the country. A movement initiated by Lakhan Thapa, born in 1981 B.S also showed that, Magars have also been involved in revolution against Rana regime, was controlled by giving death punishment for all those who had involved. Lakhan Thapa and his friend Jai Singh Chumi Magar, who were an ex-soldiers and the follower of Saint Gyani Dildas of Joshmani faith went against Sri 3 Janga Bahadur Rana and his government by bringing awareness to the local people raising the voices of discrimination. Being a Josmani follower, and having knowledge of Tantrism, people believed him to be strong who can go against the autocratic Rana regime showed the germination of revolution seed among the people of Nepal by taking arms in large numbers are ready to give their life in the name of country whether it was against the ruling group. During this revolution, new state was established to train local people by Lakhan Thapa and his friends were suppressed by the Late Bir Samser JBR. Lakhan Thapa including his follower, was arrested by mobilizing Devi Datta Battalion, finishing their bullets, was forced to surrender, and kept in a cage made of bamboo. Case was proceed in Thapathali Palace, were given torture and was hanged in front of Manakamana Temple in Gorkha in 1933 B.S with his friend Jai Singh Chuman Magar including other seven members of a committee but, Kanu Lamsal was excused from Capital Punishment, coming from a Brahman family as a 'bahun' thinking of not taking a sin from Brahman hattya(killing)<sup>18</sup>. Nepal Magar Association and other organization raised the issued of Lakhan Thapa to be the first Martyr in the country was later announced Lakhan Thapa as a Martyr from the government side in 1999 after 1 hundred 23 years back who needs to be announced first martyr of Nepal.

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<sup>16</sup> Michael Oppitz, quoted by Anne de Sales

<sup>17</sup> Anne de Sales

<sup>18</sup> Bishnu Pathak, 2005(9125p) and Lisar 2005(8-9,12-140)

Although Magars are commonly known as honest, sincere and naïve, they are also found to be brave, strong and committed to the work they are given, are involved in Maoist movement in Majority in numbers and have been directly involved either in direct involvement or in indirect ways.

### **Causes of people's war in Nepal with reflection of Magars' involvement**

Several primary, secondary and collateral factors are seen to be related with the origin of the conflict in Nepal which embedded economic, political, ideological, social and cultural isolation as Primary factors, and due to inequality in resource distribution and opportunities, inability of the state to deliver services to people, donor's monopoly and interference in state policies and programs, intolerance among the political parties, culture of impunity and such fundamental limitations as well as indiscriminate killings, torture, arbitrary arrest, incommunicado detentions and involuntary disappearances are seen as secondary and collateral factors in conflict<sup>19</sup>.

The root causes of conflict analyzed by Pathank(2005) showed that the majority of causes covering 32% is economic, 26% is politico-ideology, 25% covering social, 9% covers for the reason of isolation from the other part of Nepal in the sense of developments, and 4% each in cultural and others reasons especially in Rolpa and Rukum Area.

Political Ideology has been one of the driving forces for Magars to get involve in violent conflict with severe impact on the Magars of Thawang. The Thawang, the heart of Rolpa District, has its own history about the origin of communism which is commonly known as base area of Maoist movement before violent conflict with support from Mohan Bikram who spend several years to sow a seed of communism. The local people have been influenced from communism ideology which clearly showed about the people's awareness against the 1979 A.D referendum, did not cast vote by boycotting through opposing it and was repressed by the state after the referendum, forced local people to flee into the jungle for being arrested and getting tortured from the army personnel and those arrested were severely tortured.

To fulfill the needs of strong leadership, Burman Buda was elected as a Pradhan Pancha(chairman) of Thawang Village Panchayat in 1979 and claimed to be 'communist village' and 'communist autonomy' in Thawang, who dare to refuse the government budget by trying to self reliant and self sustainable, as arrested later by the local authority. 1980, the villagers also started to show Karl Marx and Lenin photos during Dashain as a retaliation against the government as well as burning the photos of King and Queen. There was a strict search warrant launched through strong military operation where most of the valuable gold ornaments were taken and people were forced to escape into jungle to avoid the arrest that were labeled as fugitive and fake criminal cases were designed to suppress and harassed them, forced them to live in the jungle till 1990. During this period, they learned some guerrilla training with different tactics which helped them to established guerrilla warfare region, as guerrilla war, a war fought by people against the power excluded them from the

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<sup>19</sup> Bishnu Pathak in Politics of People's War and Human Rights in Nepal. 2005.120



state programme against social discrimination, political, absolutism, economic, deprivation and cultural in toleration.

### **Slow reaction from the government side on Maoist activism**

Due to international influence not accepted by India as a peaceful country, Nepal government could not take any kind of step on controlling the Maoist activities since from 1996 where inexperience, untrained and lack of sufficient arms and ammunition were used which was contrary to the action of the government used in 1971 A.D Jhapa attack and 1974 Okhaldhunga attack. The beginning of Maoist activities in 1996 was only targeted to the low posted government officers, police and some low level party workers which was never seen as a serious issues that might bring serious issues to be returned to affect all aspect of people's life in future. For maintaining image of the country to the tourist in abroad, government never took interest to use police and army forces to control the forthcoming situation of violent conflict in Nepal fuelled the conflict by not taking it seriously as a slow reaction.

### **Geographical locations and lack of development works**

Rolpa and Rukum lacks development works such as road access and fulfillment of basic needs, helped conflict to exacerbate into the present situation with having previous ideological belief in Maoism before Panchayat Period. Thirteen Village Development Committees (VDCs) straddling with other border between northeast Rolpa and eastern Rukum in the middle Hills of Nepal's mid-western region has been affected and claimed to be the heartland of Maoist areas in Nepal to expand these activities depending on the programs targeted, named as Red Zone is located in Rukum, and Thawang as a capital VDC in Rolpa. Heavily forested mountainous areas with maximum altitude of almost 6,900 meters at the northwest corner of Ranmamaikot VDC bordered with Sisne VDC in Rukum, covering 1,600 square kilometers, 1% of Nepal's territory (which is smaller than Luxemburg or than Rhode Island, the smallest U.S. State) is situated as the place of Maoist area. Before, road constructed by Royal Nepal Army to reach Musikot with existing road to Salyan, no road had touched Rukum District where people had to walk two-days along a mule track from Liwang, headquarter of Rolpa District<sup>20</sup>. The first motorable road from Dang to Rolpa was constructed by Royal Nepal Army, was inaugurated in 2002. The fractured terrain and the lack of road access made these districts and the Red Zone in Particular, advantageous for a rural insurgency.

Although Maoist have high activities in this area, there are only about 40,000 thousands people( less than two-tenth of one percent of Nepal's population), with 7000 families with the average rate of 24 persons per square kilometer, most sparsely populated, isolated parts of Rolpa and Rukum District resided here from thousands of year. Due to having less fertile land which is sufficient for one to six months cover 10% of the fertile land forced them to search for other income sources to fulfilled their basic needs such as buying salt, oil, clothes, and educational supplies for their children, mostly depended on their sheep herding considered themselves to think the most deprived in the whole nation. People with less than

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<sup>20</sup> ibid .7

hector land has to depend on their harvested crops whereas the largest land thought to be owned five hector of land in the area, with low quality of grazing land or forest land, with common to have 10-25 sheep owning is a common numbers in this area<sup>21</sup>.

The main cause of this Maoist activism in Nepal gives a clear vision that the most important cause is seen as a political planning of communist party in this area. The main father of communist party in this western Nepal was the Mohan Bikram Singh who stayed in 1955 in Thawang and started and expanded communism which was favorable due to absence of government and other political power and started convincing people that violent conflict is the best mechanism to change the old system of politics and was succeed which was proved through the 1958 and 1991 election where they have won in majority seats which was based on the cultural conflict of China, and influenced on Sining Path of Peru.

### **Sheep Herding:**

Due to rough climate and land, people have to depend on their sheep herding, while taking their sheep to higher altitudes in about 5000 meters in May/August and in northwest Ranmamaikot and other VDCs of northern Rukum, getting local permit to graze their sheep for their living, shepherd together with their family migrate to lower altitude grazing areas in Dang valley and returned with salt on their back of sheep for commercial amounts of salt and rice to sell at their home place, where women weave blankets to sell in Kathmandu.

Besides these, people's interest on sheep herding has declined due to lack of grazing land results young men to go for labor work for their living. The most impact of conflict on sheep herding has severe impact is that Maoist had taken sheep for the consumption harassed the owner of sheep forced to keep only few to fulfill their basic needs<sup>22</sup>.

### **Iron Mining:**

The local occupational cast Kami, Artesanal cast of this areas especially in Jailwang VDC, southern frontiers of red zone area, extracted iron from twenty manually excavated iron mines about six meters deep was closed in 1977 after having agreement by the government to close due to deforestation and lack of forest hardwoods which needs hot burning charcoal that is sold after fashioning the iron into axe, picks and ploughs and sold in neighboring areas. These factors also plays important role to search other access for living, attracted people to join Maoist activities in Nepal where they are trained and convinced to be a martyr, on their death for the country.

### **British Gurkha Service**

British Gurkhas, known as brave, honest, disciplined, tenacity, courageous, loyal and ferocity, were given the most prestigious award for valor, the Victoria Cross are owned by six Magars in the past. Although being in a remote area and not having access to the recruitment in the Kham Magar, only very few people have been involved in British Army especially from Thawang, Iriwant and Janokot. Those ex and present British Army men who have been involved and retired are moving out to Dang, Butwal and Kathmandu for easy life as well as to avoid the trouble of tax payment to Maoist, moved to the other less risks places.

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<sup>21</sup> ibid.9

<sup>22</sup> ibid.10

Some ex-Gurkhas, Indian Army has been thought to be involved voluntarily or coercively<sup>23</sup> in Maoist Activities but there is not a single record to prove this statements although, there is a common saying that retired British and Indian Army personnel have been playing important role on giving training for Maoist Cadres.

### **Hashish banded from the government**

Before 1970s A.D after 1930 A.D, people's economic condition was much better than today's comparison. During that time people had good cash flow for purchasing their basic needs supply such as salt, oil, food grains and clothing as well as good ways of living. Women were adorned with silver-coin necklaces and bracelets, silver as well as gold jewelries and able to stay at home instead of migrating to India for seasonal work.

Due to rough land and suitable climate in sparsely populated northern Rukum and most of Northern part of Rolpa, Marijuana plant grows wild in the forest as well in their surrounding, was renowned in India as the best premium hashish production. The marijuana has different purposes in the life of this area that it's rough bark was traditionally used for rope, rough fiber produced carrying bags, and its fine thread was woven into traditional Magar clothing, seeds were ingredients in chutney and pickling as well as eating as a snacks with lettuce after frying it gives good taste, smell and snacks for bodily warm in winter. Without knowing it illegal to produce, people started to collect during its harvesting season which was transported to Kathmandu in several shops, restaurants up to 1970s. Besides collecting hashish, people started to plant marijuana in their own land. 1976, Government of Nepal enacted the Drug Trafficking and Abuse Act, prohibit the production, sales and distribution of hashish helped to control the trafficking and sale of hashish along on its established trade routes. Small local dealers and traders were arrested and the demand for hashish in the villages were diminished not leaving those local people who came to trade for salt and cooking oil were also arrested. Even after land registration was started, during that period, those private lands with marijuana plantation were all classified as the 'forest land' under the ownership of the government did not helped to control the production.

After 1990s, people have to pay taxes to the local Maoist as the tax and hashish production has also been the engine of the Maoist Movement for good source of income, results poor economic condition of the people who have to sell women's silver and gold jewelries to survive from starvation forced men to searched work leaving their place. Banning hashish, the government has literally taken the food out of their children's mouths. Although king Birendra had visited Takasera by helicopter in 1983 A.D and 1988 A.D and declared the zone as a national development priority with having no action to fulfilled<sup>24</sup>.

### **Yarcha Gumba**

Yarcha Guba is a valuable raw medicine collected in winter, known as half insect and half grass is taken as a source of cash income. In the season, thousands of residents of both northern Rukum and Rolpa (as well as Dang District) flocked to the highland meadow to harvest it which is marketed to China as the medicine of treating impotence. Local Maoist charged entry fee of Nepali Rupees 200 and then tax the agents who purchased the collected

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<sup>23</sup> Robert Gorseni

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.14

material which used to be dealt by Maoist some years ago but now it has been given to the local dealer to do the business<sup>25</sup>.

### **Musikot: Transferring District capital from Rukum-Kot**

Most of the Baise(22 principalities) were brought in one flag during the regime of Prithvinarayan Shah and his successor either persuade by diplomacy to submit to the Central authority of the new king or destroyed by military means whereas, descendants of Jumla and Jajarkot kingdoms to its east, mainly member of the Thakuri caste, remained influential in western Rukum. There were three power lies between powerful feudal. Rukum was governed from its district capital Rukum Kot which was also known as Bahun-thana(Brahmin Hill)VDC. Princess Sobha, a current king's sister, was the survivor of the palace massacre in 2001 June, had visited her husband's birth place, was one of the factor to change its name into Shoba village in her honor. The second power on the Jumli's kings who were just a migrant in this area from neighboring village became leaders and gradually king among from the weak inhabitants support were known as king of Jumli Khalanga. Princess Sarada who got killed in palace massacre was married with Prince Khadka Bikram Shah, descendants of Jumli Royals from Musikot, was also killed in palace massacre. The third power was the descendants of the Jajarkot kings migrated to Baflikot VDC had strong relation with King Mahendra after having their strong political role, was a Dhruva Bikram Shah, with his son, Army General Vivek Shah, a current king Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah's chief military advisor have a powerful position whereas Baflikot and Musikot families ties with marriage<sup>26</sup>.

Having influence in this area with lacking of road access and the development works, feudalism got rooted to the ground. Gajul kingdom in southern-central Rolpa was destroyed by arm, and Khungri Kingdom negotiated for the settlements was getting government allowances and the surviving king do not take any interest to settle in Rolpa after graduating from Bombay has moved other parts of Nepal.

The Magar Communities in both eastern Rukum and throughout Rolpa were, in principals were subordinate to these Thakuris kingdom. Magare were not directly connected or affected by these power triangles of western Rukum and the Magar of Eastern Rukum. Magar Principalities plays important role on gaining support from Gajul and Khungri kingdom. Jankot VDC is said to be the Kalshesh Magar Kingdom before is highly affected by this Maoist activities.

Before 1970s, Eastern Rukum was located as part of Baglung district with 75-90 kilometer distance from its capital across the terrain. In the early 1970s, the palace decided to attach what is today the VDCs of eastern Rukum(now red zone area) to Rukum district which was nearby for Magar who have good relationship with Rukum Kot people and respect social values with each other and using it as the capital.

The innocent Magars were in jolly time celebrating their success, the western side of the power triangle was (Musikot and Baflikot), forced palace to transfer Rukum's capital to Musikot in western Rukum. 1973, Zonal Commissioner, appointed by Palace, based in

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.14

<sup>26</sup> Ibid,16

Tulsipur in Dang District, remove the government's furniture and files to the new capital dispatching police force as well as support from civilians. Rukumkot with wide flat site suitable for expansion and famous for 52 lakes and 53 mountain peaks, reduced on employment opportunities for local residents esp. Chhetris, with no other ways to sales of their fruits from eastern Rukum as well as other products from surrounding farmer.

Local people from Rukum-Kot, was furious with decision given by palace, young men, throughout the eastern Rukum went making aware about their rights and the disagreement of the decision to return the capital Rukum kot for their future 1973, one member from one house recruiting for this protest. On April 13. 1973, people around ten thousands marched to mule trail to Musikot, with sixty shotguns, fifty traditional Nepali Kukuri knives and countless wooden poles arrived Patuwakhola river , between Musikot airport and the town center. Without having notice on the curfew, protester marched ahead and was given warning not to move forward, was not deterred by protester was attacked by local officer as well as local residents, killed one Chhetri man from Rukum Kot, one Magar woman, including two other Sanyasi and Chhetri were wounded. Protesters were dispersed and retreated by local residence as well as with the police occupying higher position, throwing stones.

Thereafter, warrants were given to arrest nine of the procession's key organizers. The Rukum-Kot youths circulated anti-monarchy pamphlets, on the occasions of their procession anniversary. Warrants were issued to arrest the youths from the government, made them flee to India as an underground, where they met Communist Party Activists. The transfer of Capital of Rukum was also included in the 1974 Fourth Communist convention and continued the resentment persistence even today a breach between the Maoist-dominated east and the anti-Maoist west is part of the district's political landscape<sup>27</sup>.

### **Rise and controlled of the Christianity**

In 1969, entrance of David Watters in Taksara, the social center of eastern Rukum, Christianity was emerged when he started to study on language in collaboration with the Government of Nepal, through Tribhuvan University contracting with the Summer Institute of Linguistic (SIL) a sister organization of the Wycliffe Bible Society. Translating New Testament text and hymens, working together with a handful of local Kham-speaking villagers, local Kham Magars were converted into Christianity in 1976 when David Watters left Takasera. In 1980, some Magars translated the hymns of candlelight and started to convert people into few hundred. Conversion of religion was a crime in Nepal during Panchayat period and the government authority hearing this sent men to investigate to the Chief District Officer that Christian Conversion was widespread among Kham Magars of Eastern Rukum. Nine leaders were arrested and sentenced after their confession to a year in prison and denial was charged of proselytizing, which would have carried an additional six-year term. Kham Magars of Rukum both support of Christianity and non Christianity were angry internally on restriction on conversion. Among nine who were in prison, with the talent for music and composition wrote Christian hymn and songs in Kham Magar and passed to

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.18

the Takasera for those who were more interested on Christianity. Among those nine leaders, one of them became Maoist leader even though Maoist has also opposed to the conversion of Christianity by destroying Christian Text<sup>28</sup>.

### **Takasera Water Mill: a new process of Development: a strong commitment of local people**

The Christian organization collected fund to support those Christian prisoners, local people both Christian and non Christian agreed to use those collected money on the social work by establishing water mill to provide services to the local people. They went to Kathmandu to learn and assemble the disassemble water mill machine and decided to bring it to Takasera. With all people's support, disassemble machine and other supportive materials such as cement brought from Kathmandu on the back of the local people. After assembling and fitting it in the village, water mill benefited to villagers by grinding grain such as pressing seeds for oil which saved time and energy of the local people instead of going to the other places. It worked effectively as the community's first economic development project, served both Christian and non-Christian and collected small in kind, a commission for grain processed to pay for its maintenance, each six months the surplus were distributed to the poor. It was built as a two storey building accommodating the water mill below in the ground floor and a church meeting hall above was, heard by the regional office and ordered Takasera community to close the Mill in 1984 and threaten to destroy the mill if it was not closed. The government authority clarifies the intervention objectives of conversing people into Christianity. The Christian did not dare to stand against the order and decided to close but non-Christians, the majority of the Mill's beneficiaries, opposed its closing and stand to protect it by ambushing police men send by office of Regional office by confiscating weapons, making them undress, pulled out their moustache, smeared them dog feces and ashes, putting rope around the necks of those police men were moved around Takasera chanting "Behold of Government" and after some negotiation, mill was allowed to operate continuously. The example of an intervention of the government on the livelihood of the local people as well as the obstruction on the development in the eastern Rukum is clearly seen.

### **Royal Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve**

Royal Dhorpatan Hunting Reserves and conservation area was established due to sparsely populated area especially in Ranmamaikot VDC in the northern sector in 1976. In 1980, Himalayan Blue Mountain sheep was in the extinction position due to the majority of the numbers of Males which needed to be control by hunting, based on the report of the UNESCO. Agreement was made with local people that whatever monetary unit is charged will be given to the local community development, was cancelled, and made local people to have bitter feeling by giving it to the private tourism company. The local people attempted to control hunting by confiscating hunting rifles and is strictly prohibited to hunt by Maoist in this area also in these days made people agree against the government systems.

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<sup>28</sup> ibid 19

### **Migration to Kalapahad in search of Work**

Banned on hashish production, transfer of capital and search warrant for those movement organizer, lack of access to the road and fragmentation of land due to increase of population, people go to Himanchal Pradesh of India as labor which is commonly known as Kalapahad where, people are involved in crushing stone, road construction to fulfill their basic needs such as food grains, salt, oil and clothes and returned home due to not having opportunity to work and earned money is apparently seen as weakness of the government, forced people to get involved in Maoist Movement.

### **Unsuccessful projects: Airport and Hospital construction**

In 1980, one airport and one hospital(Liwang) was felt very important in this area due to lack of road access in the district, government felt to allocate budget to the regional hospital and contract was given to contractor. Work was almost going to finished was stopped for some reason results payment blocked for the contractor and labor seen as an unsuccessful project gave raise questions to the local people. The Airport in Rukum and Rolpa construction was supposed to be benefited to local people was only used for medical evacuation, expedited mail delivery, transportation to administrative officials, commercial travelers, and the elites of the area. Musikot airport was inaugurated in January 1996, a month before a Maoists declared a people's war. Although it is functioning, the control tower and terminal have been destroyed by Maoist. Rukum had to depend on Jajarkot District, which is located in Bijayshwari VDC in western Rukum, close to Jajarkot Capital far distance from Musikot.

### **Rapti Integrated Programme: thought as the source of Conflict**

USAID funded, Rapti Integrated Development Programme has a deep relation with this conflict and has been analyzed from different perspectives. United States Government had provided Nepal over US\$1.3 Billion. About US \$ 50 Million (8%) of the bilateral assistance financed a geographically-targeted development Programme in Dang, Rukum, Rolpa and Salyan known as Rapti River Valley Integrated programme.

Both positive and negative hypothesis about this programme is presented here as a clarification. Some said that it was failure due to not able to cover the whole area, fuelled conflict to bring in this situation. Some said that due to being successful programme, it raised the expectation of people to the future government and gave birth of Conflict. Whatever allegation has been expressed by people, Rapti integrated Development Programme has supported on drinking water, irrigation canal, agricultural road, mule trail, suspension bridges, VDC building, Ghorai to Holeri road and Salyan to Kapurkot Rolpa to Jinwang agricultural road was constructed in first phase in 1989-1994, was completed in second phase, distributed apple plants, loan in low interest rate. The most advantageous of the Rapti Integrated Programme was the agricultural road and the Rolpa- Pyuthan connected 40 meter long bridge which plays important role among the local people. It has been said that wherever road has been accessed, Maoist activities has been seen less in comparison with the non access of road in the rural area.

### **Sija Campaign**

Maoist started consciousness raising and political mobilization campaign in Rukum and Rolpa area during 1994 organized by one of the most senior Magars in the Maoist movement, military commander commonly known as Ram Bahadur Thapa, 'Badal' from Gulmi District. Maoists are skill to use appropriate certain traditional techniques in their strategy for conquering the Kham Magars' territory for use as their insurgency base area, including the use of traditional Kham-Magar symbols, sites and cultural concepts, among them the name SIJA campaigning to boycotted the elections. SIJA activities gave Magars to feel their own campaign and gave energizer to give their support to the Maoist.

### **Operation Romeo**

With coalition Government of Nepali Congress Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, under the supervision of Home Minister Khum Bahadur Khadka, Operation Romeo was started as a Police campaign which was known as full of brutalism, full of human right violation, rape, detention and murder against local people, attracted local people towards Maoist activities due to direct affect of this operation among people. Operation Romeo affected Rolpa District in eleven VDCs as well as some close VDCs of Rukum results some displacement in Salyan and Dang District. Death during this search was known to twelve numbers. Rape case took place severely in this place to make Magars harassed and no perpetrator in those cases was punished. INSEC<sup>29</sup> report said that around 6000.00 people left their villages and majority of them were displaced temporarily and 132 people were arrested without warrant. Valuable jewelries were stolen and fowls and animals esp. goat was confiscated and physical tortures were given to prisoner. After three months of Romeo Operation, Maoist declared their people's war helped them to accelerate the conflict which might have taken a lengthy period of preparation inconsistent with the assertion that Operation Romeo was a core cause.

### **Socioeconomic condition as a root causes of conflict in western Nepal**

Rukum and Rolpa, the least development Districts in Nepal has very less fertile land for the production of subsistence economy where most of the resources(land) have been captured by local landlords, make poor people to work under them as a peasants who have to work whole year in their field to give half of the harvested crops to sustain only 3-4 months hardly, forced male peasants to immigrate to work in India as well as in other parts of the country for searching works for their extra income. People have to depend on their land lords or local feudal for immediate cash when in need in the occasion of festivals, marriages, social functions and religious functions as well as in the death rituals in high interest rate for borrowed money incapable to pay back forced them to give their property, gold and money they have earned. In absence of males, females have to do their all inner and outer household chores to survive. To get some source of income as well as some supports to fight hunger, local poor people has started to join in Maoist activities in any form whether it is a local volunteer or cadres by taking guns<sup>30</sup>. Most of the budget has been distributed for the building of physical infrastructure in those areas where the present ministers have been elected to fulfill their promises while asking for the vote as well as to make sure for the incoming elections, has deprived Rukum and Rolpa where most of the seats were won by United

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<sup>29</sup> INSEC Human Rights Year book for 1995

<sup>30</sup> Bishnu Pathak in Politics of People's War and Human Rights in Nepal. 2005.



People's Front (UPF) 1991<sup>31</sup>. This kind of disparity has helped to fuelled those who do not have any access to the resources to have faith on the UPF for some economic as well as Social Security<sup>32</sup>.

### **Social practice and rituals of Indigenous/ethnic groups**

The largest population in Nepal is covered by Brahmins and Chhetris who are also covering large numbers in the government offices, semi government organizations as well as in non – governmental organization including in the leadership in political parties and the most active political cadres who have access to the resources. Although Maoist has also raising voices on the ethnic rights of self decision as well as ethnic and regional federal system to be followed, attracted people to join in Maoist activities, although some Maoist are not happy to follow the violent activities that is practicing surrender them to the Security forces in near by district. The Magars in Rukuma and Rolpa covering 3% of total percentage in Nepal are excluded from the state activities due to not having access to the roads. The Magars in this area are attracted to the Maoist activities in the slogan of ethnic autonomy, protesting the practices of keeping side for those week class as well as protesting those social evil system in Nepal that has fuelled the villagers of this areas although some practices have been banned by Maoist such as banning the practices of alcohol making and consumption made Magars unhappy. To get favor from Magars, Maoist has started to run weekly and monthly hat bazaar in their location.

### **Shadows behind People's War: Involvement of Magars in People's War**

When returning from outside Kathmandu, every passenger had to get off from the vehicle they are taking ride and had to attend on checking in every checkpoint. I have felt that seeing my face, security personnel check my bag very carefully and keep on checking on those people who have Mongolian face, even for those who looks poor with their dress and their faces. Why only Mongolian faces? Why not other Aryan faces people are questioned and checked in detailed? Why Magars are in Maoist activities in majority in numbers? These are the questions that will be answered by the given explanations.

Onesto<sup>33</sup> explained why Magars are involved large numbers in Maoist Movement by quoting Narendra Budha, a Central Committee Members of the Nepal Magar Association and a member of the All Nationality Association that, 80 per cent of Magar are inhabited in Rolpa and 65 per cent of Magars are inhabited in Rukum whereas, 40 per cent is covered by Magars in Salyan. As a whole, 40-50 per cent of population is covered by Magar.

It has been common that most of the pictures in Samaya<sup>34</sup>, Nepal<sup>35</sup> in its several series, most of the weekly paper showed Maoist with gun with the faces of Mongolian esp. Magar on the cover page. Although there are several Aryan in commandos and in cadres, majority of them seemed Magars with white star red head band on their head caring their child on their back.

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<sup>31</sup> ibid 125

<sup>32</sup> Mandira Sharma and Dinesh Prasai in Gender Dimensions of the People's War, edited by Michael Hutt in The Himalayan 'People's War'.

<sup>33</sup> Li Onesto, 2004, Report from the People's War in Nepal in Understanding Maoist Movement of Nepal.

<sup>34</sup> Samay, year,2.vol77 and Ashoj 21-27 2062

<sup>35</sup> Nepal National weekly, 8August 2004(Vol.5.No1) p.15-31

The origin of Maoist activities started from Rukum, Rolpa and Pyuthan where most of the inhabitants are Magars especially in Thawang, Rolpa.

### **Thawang the origin place of Maoist Activities**

Thawang<sup>36</sup> is a historical settlements which has one thousands and seven hundred years old oral history in every Thawang people's memory, is situated between Korchabang and Marangthan in west, Chirtibang, Kherbang and Funtibang in East, Kuli in South and Nurbang village in North. Thawang Bazaar is situated in Thawang VDC with 2,3,4,6 and 8 Wards which is constituted by three hundred households with wood and stone slate roof. There are 99 percent populations covered by Magars and rests are covered by that occupational cast, where Kham Magar Language is spoken by Magars as well as by non Magars. Potato and maize are the primary food production of this area where most of the people are depended on the food supply from Libang of Rolpa, and Ghorahi of Dang districts. It has been common that women are always keeping themselves busy to make Bhangra( thread) from Bhang(Hemp). The economic condition has fall down than before due to various reason as well as migration of those people who used to bring remittance into the village, working as a British Pensioner and Indian pension holder to Dang and Kathmandu. Thawang is very backward in education status where, there were only three students who were studying Masters level, five people were studying in Bachelors level, twelve people were studying in Proficiency level in this area although, supporting this status, the people's movement has been spread due to poverty connected with lack of education explained by the chief of the 'Magarath Autonomous Region' Santosh Budhamagar. Very few development work had taken place before democracy such as drinking water supply, one health post, one suspension bridge which was built in 1986 and was the most notable Thawang bridge made my Switzerland support in 1987, the government VDC budget had never reached in this VDC which helped to fuelled local people to go against the government through people's war. In this people's war, villagers are becoming the most sufferers when Security Forces and armed police searched in this area. In this area people from 12 years to 60 years old can be seen carrying gun in support of people's war. Being a Magar leader in 'Magar Autonomous Region(MAR)' has given good impact among local Magars to hold gun in support of people's war. Not only this reason, most of the people have suffered from beating from Army Operation in 1981, but also gave birth of Maoist Leader who were educated had gone underground have become the commanding leaders in the present situation. MAR leader said, "Magar have been suppressed and oppressed from decades are becoming aware to fight for their right although Magars from Rukum and Rolpa have died in this peoples' war, there is not a place to bargain inside a party. People sacrificed themselves for the party and party declared them as a martyr, we have to take a pride by all Magars that many Magar have become martyrs in this People's War"<sup>37</sup>.

***" one of the platoon commander pun from Pyuthan had been transfer to eaten Nepal in Oklahdhunga'*** quoted by Nepal weekly<sup>38</sup> shows that most of the fighting commanders are

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<sup>36</sup> ibid.2004

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 2004, 15p.

<sup>38</sup> The Nepal Quarterly Magazine, 2001.(1-15 Chaitra, 2059, vol.3. series 15)

Magar in Maoist movement. This statement shows that Magars have been involve in large numbers in Maoist Movement since the base camp are situated in Magar Basti as well as Communism among Magar had been started from Rolpa. Not only men are seen involved in insurgency, women and girls have also been involved as a cadre who can carry guns. Magars in Maoist activities speak their own Kham Magar Language with their other team members besides their code words which general people cannot understand are distinguished easily from civilians also.

### **Political positions of Magars in Maoist Movement in Nepal**

The introduction of Maoist activities in Magar village is already explained in previous topic that has influenced Magar to attract in Maoist activities. Besides these situation, the question arise here that how many Magar are involved in Maoist Activities? Some people said that it is a myth that Magar are involved in large numbers but there are very few people who are involved and given high position in Maoist polit bureau. Are really Magars are few who are taking part actively in movement? The question will try to explain the existing situation of Magars in Maoist Movement in Nepal.

Most of the resources of the country have been captured by elites in Nepal. In government offices there are very few indigenous/ethnic groups representation esp. Magar could be seen in very few offices which can be count on fingers because Brahmins, Chhetries and Thakuris were privilege to get an opportunity to have education and status due to their family background who captured most of the resources through their brain.

Ram Bahadur Thapa, commonly known as “Badal” has given responsibility in Maoist battalion and Suresh Ale Magar who was given an assistant post on Janajati issues are representing Magar Communities. The questions has tried to be answered here by saying that, since this insurgency has started from Magar village, Thawang, declared as a base area of Maoist movement, how can we think that Magars’ are not involving in Maoist movement by carrying gun and not have been killed than other caste and ethnic groups.

Maoist leaders, who have been taking lead have decided to decentralized the authority to other ethnic groups by including them in the Central Level Committee to get support from them to involve maximum numbers of indigenous/ethnic groups in this peoples’ War which is explain below.

After realizing the caste and indigenous ethnic involvement in this insurgency, Maoist has started to include all indigenous/ethnic and caste groups who are involved actively in this people’s war. Although this People’s War has started to fight for the right of poor, deprived and excluded from the state, Majority of central level committee members are covered by Brahmins and Chhetris with percentage of 31.96 and 14.43 percentage, the third largest percentage is covered by Magars with the percentage of 10.31 percent as well as the first largest percentage of Indigenous/ethnic groups in Nepal. Besides, there are Newar, Kirat, Gurungs, Thakuris, Dalits, Tamang, Madhesies and other which comprises the whole communist party although the data covered 13.40 percent which is not available or maybe not identified. Magars as well as other indigenous/ethnic groups are given responsibility of a district where there is the majority of certain populations which will be a easy ways to bring people in a groups. Magars are given main chairperson of the district where Magars percentages are highest esp. in five district of Nepal.

Table No. 1

S.N	District	Major Caste/ethnic Group	Chairperson
	Magar Autonomous Region	Magar	Santosh Budha Magar
1.	Baglung	Magar(28.2%)	Chandra Bdr. Bura Magar
2.	Palpa	Magar (49.9%)	Kewal Gaha Magar
3.	Rolpa	Magar (44.5%)	Nanda Bdr. Buda Magar
4.	Rolpa (Thawang)	Magar	Tej Man Gharti
5.	Tanahu	Magar(26%)	Hari Bdr.Chuman(Magar)

Source: Pathak,2005

### **The direct affect of Maoist Movement among Magar**

Geographically, financially, educationally, politically, culturally and based on language, Magar are attracted with Maoist declaration to give separate autonomous region with self decision right. Maoist movement started from Rukum and Rolpa and gave strength to Maoist when Magar supported them with involvement of high numbers of Magars. Indigenous/Ethnic groups are the dwellers of the hill and rural areas. So they are economically, socially and politically are deprived to get access to the resource of the country. To get them involved in Maoist activities, it has been very easy to convince them that if they fight for their rights, they will get benefit from this movement directly. Maoist movement is the one which include all indigenous/ethnic groups in Nepal. Most Magars have involved in Maoist activities as volunteers also. Not only the political issues that have attracted Magars to this movement, have they also involved to fulfill their basic needs by getting paid from the party. Due to having poor economic conditions, Magars are working in both in Government and Maoist sides, in infantry line, volunteer or in cadres are killed in large number as well as disabled, orphans and widow suffering heavy casualties. Magars are the largest numbers in Adibasi Janajati group which are mostly involved and affected by the conflict.

Magars are mostly affected by the present conflict. Magars have been suspected to be Maoist and have been tortured by state side during search or traveling inside Nepal encouraged them to run away from village in search of work results lagging behind in education, health facilities, fulfillment of basic needs, freedom of expression, and right over the development, rights to movement.<sup>39</sup>.

According to Pathak, Magars, with 477 numbers including 420 males and 57 females have been killed by state either in encounter or as suspected to be Maoist. Maoists have also not left Magar and have killed from February 1996-June 30, 2004 with the percentage of 7.34 with 201 Magars including 193 males and 8 females.

According to amnesty international, civilian and Maoist insurgents, when not having gun with them, been killed by police and Army during search, although most of the civilians were

<sup>39</sup> Sriprasad Budhathoki, Adibaisi Manawasarokar Kendra, joint secretary, in **lisar**, asar,206235p

the supporter of Nepali Congress. Indiscriminate firing from police killed villagers during attending programme in Accham<sup>40</sup> district and executing unnamed Maoist body was burnt by police were not identified from which group they belonged to showed that most of the Maoist cadres assumed to be Magars or Dalits and Janajati in Majority, thought to be killed unidentified leaving no records behind.

### **Banned on Language**

Most ethnic groups and indigenous people are involved in Maoist Movement to throw Hindu system esp. a feudal system in their area as well as in their villages and communities which have rooted since many centuries. Magars were restricted to speak their Kham(Pang according to Bam Kumari Buda) Magar language in telephone booth from government side in public, new named had been started to given for those local names to get the information of the situation of Maoist by security forces in the District.

### **Confusing death numbers of Magars**

Most of the disappearance and unacknowledged detention has taken place by the Army personnel as well as from police personnel especially from Brahmins and Chhetres groups. There is not a single new information regarding Magar in taking custody and detention and the issues of whereabouts. The question arise here that, if Magars are not taken into custody, detention and the questions of whereabouts, how numbers of death of Magars come into the Third place? Very few Magars have been shot dead by the 'Peoples' court' when they found guilty among them was Amar Budha. Some Magars who have been elected as a VDC Chairman, have record of being tortured and killed in case of keeping guns and not available during search by the Maoist, when their informer send information without checking. The severe punishment of Maoist activities are 'safaya' when having information about being informer of police and Nepal Army, being against Maoist and beating punishment for those who do not obey them to cook food in the village when they visit. Local Magars are sometimes abducted by Maoist to work as volunteers to cook food for Red Army<sup>41</sup>. During cross firing, those Magar volunteers, who have been brought to cook food for them do not have separate records about their death and alive situation.

Focusing the Beni attack where most of the casualties were in Maoist side, Kusum of Banke and Bhalubang where more than 75 cadres were killed, Satbaria in Dang where more than 50 cadres have been killed were bodies of Maoist have been found identified but, there is heartfelt guessing that if Maoist took the dead body of their cadres to burry far away as possible from the front line by their volunteer when bullets hit during crossfire, how come it is possible to know about the exact number of Maoist casualties and identify the dead body where they are from and which cast and ethnic groups they belong to?. Even in Beni attack, most Maoist army with uniform were found to be spoken a language which is not commonly understood, were from Western Nepal guessed that they must be Magar from Rukum and Rolpa who speak their Kham language as well as speaking Hindi who must have been from Tarai. Besides all these casualties, Maoists have been always claiming that they do not have more casualties, do not shows the actual numbers on which we could see the real numbers of

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<sup>40</sup> Amnesty International Report. 2002

<sup>41</sup> Kiyoko Ogura, Realities and Images of Nepal's Maoists after the Attack on Beni.EBHR,2004,vol.27

death toll of Magars. Before leaving the place after attack, it has been said that most of the Maoist dead body have been taken and buried by covering their flag, giving salute in their way. After the encounter, only left over head bodies were counted by Security Personnel were kept as the final numbers.

The discussion about the Causes and Impact of conflict among Magars in Nepal shows that, involving majority of numbers in Maoist Movement have shown no clear information about their situation and position in the Maoist movement. The real study is needed to find out the real numbers and situation and reason that has drives them to get involved in Maoist activities in Nepal.

### **Summary**

Rukum and Rolpa known as Magar people's land is used as base area of Maoist after starting People's War in Nepal where Magars, largest population among indigenous/ethnic groups of Nepal, have been influenced from this war. Due to Socio-economic, Political and Geographical location Magars are easily convinced to involved in Maoist Movement in Nepal and have been involved in large numbers. Magar have been said to be involved directly in Maoist activities although there are 10.31 percent of Magars are in Central Committee of Maoist Polit- bureau and Magar are made district commander where there are majority of Magars in a district making them the district leader focusing on Magar Autonomous Region. Although the INSEC data shows that number of death of Magars are in the third highest after Brahmins and Chhetries, it has been most important to search for the actual death numbers of Magars involvement due to various socio-economic and political reason. .

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