I. Overview

A decade of conflict in Nepal has been analyzed by many in terms of number of deaths, abduction and mutilation. The human right violations either by the rebel or security forces may have also been studied. But there are rare cases where involvement of females in conflict and their participation in peace process has been studied. The problem is though the Nepalese government has shown its commitment towards incorporating gender in peace building, the number of women’s participation in the peace building sector is very low. And particularly their representation in higher and decision making level is negligible. A very good example is absence of women in six member peace negotiation committee (three from the government and three from the rebel side) that produced the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Nepal (Mishra, Oct 2009). There is a vast gap between the policies of including woman in peace building and the implementation of these policies on the ground.

II. Objectives of the study

1. To assess the gender policy of Nepal by addressing International Commitments as well as the provision made in the ‘Comprehensive Peace Agreement 2006’ of Nepal.
2. To assess the quantitative representation of women in peace building by listing their numbers in different governmental and non governmental sector.
3. To assess the qualitative representation of women by focusing on their role and influence in decision making level

III. Women’s participation in peace building: an international scenario

Internationally, women are facing two problems. Firstly, under representation that deals with the number of woman participating in peace building. To date there has not been a single peace process where women have been represented to anywhere near the same level as men. Research
by the UN shows that less than 3% of signatories and 8% of representatives to peace talks since 1992 have been women. (Daily Star, Oct 2010).

Secondly, lack of women’s participation in decision making level. This I refer as quantitative representation of women. The contributions of women peacemakers in Africa, from Somalia to South Africa, have gone largely unnoticed. Dismissed by governments and rebel movements who consider making war and peace to be men’s work -- and often relegated to the role of "victim" by well-intentioned diplomats and aid agencies -- women have had to fight their own battles for a seat at the peace table. (Fleshman, 2003).

However, there are much of the work to do on ground Betty Bigombe, who was chief mediator in the Ugandan peace process with the Lord's Resistance Army, or Graca Machel, who was one of the three mediators that successfully mediated the Kenyan election crisis in 2008 (Daily Star, Oct 2010) should be cherished and replicated in practice.

IV. Participation of women in peace building in Nepal from scholarly perception

Anju Chhetri, Samera Paudel, and Ashild Falch are some of the scholars that write about women and peace building in Nepal. Paudel (2010) calls the Nepalese to achieve inclusive peace whereby Nepalese women can become an actor rather than a factor in politics—the politics of decision-making about peace, peace keeping and peace building. She even lists the name of the local and National organizations that work on the behalf of the woman in Nepal. It shows that there is a growing women’s movement in Nepal, which if encouraged to build links between national and local level organisations. There is a great potential in grassroots movement to mobilise support around the issues of women’s participation and decision-making in peace negotiations, gender training in peacekeeping operations, impact studies on gender and small arms, the security of IDPs, gender and early warning which has so far been neglected in the practise. Åshild Falch (2010) brings out the quantity versus quality debate about on Beijing + 15. The writer demonstrates in the recent election of Constitution Assembly in Nepal, 33% percent of female holds seat in the parliament of Nepal. However explains that the increase in women’s representation was primarily a response to legal requirements and not the result of political parties’ determination to improve gender equality in political structures and decision-making.
V Methodology

Descriptive, Comparative and analytical method was then used to analyze the gathered information during the course of research to bring out the objective and conclusion. The data collected was the ‘secondary data’ published in various articles, newspapers, government publications and reports.

VI. Findings

International Commitments

1. The Beijing Platform for Action Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995
2. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

National Commitments

1. Provision in Comprehensive Peace Agreement
2. Provision in Nepal Army

Quantitative and Qualitative Representation of women in Peace building in Nepal

1. Number and Role of females in Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation and its structure - There are altogether 59 members in the ministry out of which only 6 are female i.e 10%. Participation of female starts at the level of section officer, computer officers and training officers only. They are not in the top hierarchical position or decision making level.
2. Number and Role of Females in Ministry of Defense - There are altogether 38 employees in the ministry where 12 are the officers and 26 are other ranks. Among those 12 none are the female officers. This is the first time in the history of Nepal that Ministry of Defense was headed by a woman politician (Ms Bidhya Devi Bhandari). But before she could do significant work for women the government changed.
3. Number and Role of females in combat (the Nepalese Army and the Maoist combatants) - According to UNMIN, there are 3,846 i.e.19.6% women in the Moist cantonments. It is believed that during the height of the insurgency, the participation of the female combatants were up to 40% but as the conflict end, these females went back to the community and did not come to the forefront because of the fear being rejected by the family. The
role of female combatants challenged the traditional social structure and gave woman a role in leadership. However, the top hierarchical role was not given to them. Even after the ceasefire and peace agreement there is absence of woman in upper position in the cantonment.

In Nepalese Army there are total of 1070 female all ranks which make 1.2% of the total army strength. Among total officers of Nepalese Army female officers occupy 6.44%. Junior Commission and Non-Commission Female Officer occupy 18.87% and 9.62% respectively in total female strength. (official website of NA). The career planning of female soldiers in combat service and combat support service is still not very clear. The participation of female soldiers in peace keeping mission, especially as technical personnel, signaler or Military Police, is appreciated by the international Community. Also there is increasing participation of the female officers as logistic and liaison officer. However, there is no special encouragement or positive discrimination for the participation of female soldier in the peace keeping mission.

VII. Conclusion

Participation and representation of women in peace building sector is the concern of national as well as international community. To make the laws and policies influential quantity as well as the quality of the women’s representation in decision making level must be ensured. Nepal is in the transition phase and trying to reshape the structure of the society. Thus it’s a golden opportunity to implement these laws in practice. The newly constructed Peace and Reconstruction Ministry in Nepal and introduction of female combatants (either in Nepalese Army or in the People’s Liberation Army) has added a new dimension to the peace building in Nepal.

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