LIFE OF FEMALE COMBATANTS IN POST-CONFLICT NEPAL: THE DENIAL OF WAR TIME TRUTH AND THE STRUGGLE OF REINTEGRATION

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Abstract - Many women contributed to the Nepali armed conflict along-side men having left their place of birth behind. The women joined the war to free themselves from discrimination and inequality. They joined the war to bring their community out from a poor socio-economic condition and to change the disliked political system that hindered the overall development of their community. During the armed conflict, female combatants primarily fought for the villagers and women. The conflict brought some changes at macro level in Nepal. After ending the conflict, women celebrated the victory together with their male counterparts. When the female ex-combatants came back to their home community, many of them did not receive a positive response from the villagers including their family members that they lived with before. As an alternative option, they chose a new place to live. Thus, this paper explores the struggle of female ex-combatants after reintegrating into a new place, living far from their family members and place of birth. Based on in-depth interviews with 23 female ex-combatants, this paper concludes that the role of female ex-combatants which was played out during the 10 year long armed conflict was not recognize by the villagers. The perception of the villagers of the female ex-combatants is not so positive even through the contribution the female ex-combatants made to change the political system in Nepal. This paper reveals that the post-conflict life of the female ex-combatants who lives in the villages is harder than their life at war, even after such a big social and political change in the society.

Key words - Female Ex-Combatants; Armed-Conflict; Reintegration; Nepal