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# SHWETA SHARDUL

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# English Literature



**Visual Rhetoric in Contemporary Mithila Painting**  
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**Abstract**

*This article examines how geometric and organic forms interplay to create visual rhetoric in Mithila painting. The regular form creates an altar where biological shape interplays to create cultural meaning of the visual text. On the one hand, Mithila folk art culminates using lines and on the other it exploits colour to express themselves. But to know the inherent meanings of the paintings we apply semiotic analysis as a tool to know exactly what the local folks mean by the particular symbol used in the visual text. Despite knowing multiple realities operates in the painting the above mentioned tool happens to reveal both logonomic and polysemous characteristic of Mithila art as an exemplar of the duality of the spiritual and the secular—a harmony brought about by the feminine principle underpinning the art. It is this very principle which still leavens the more recent commercial art-forms, which engage with contemporary cultural-political issues. Logonomic system reveals which ideology is into play while interpreting the visual texts; complex sort of ideology whereas the term 'polysemous' means the difficulty one has while separating threads from the tapestry of meaning.*

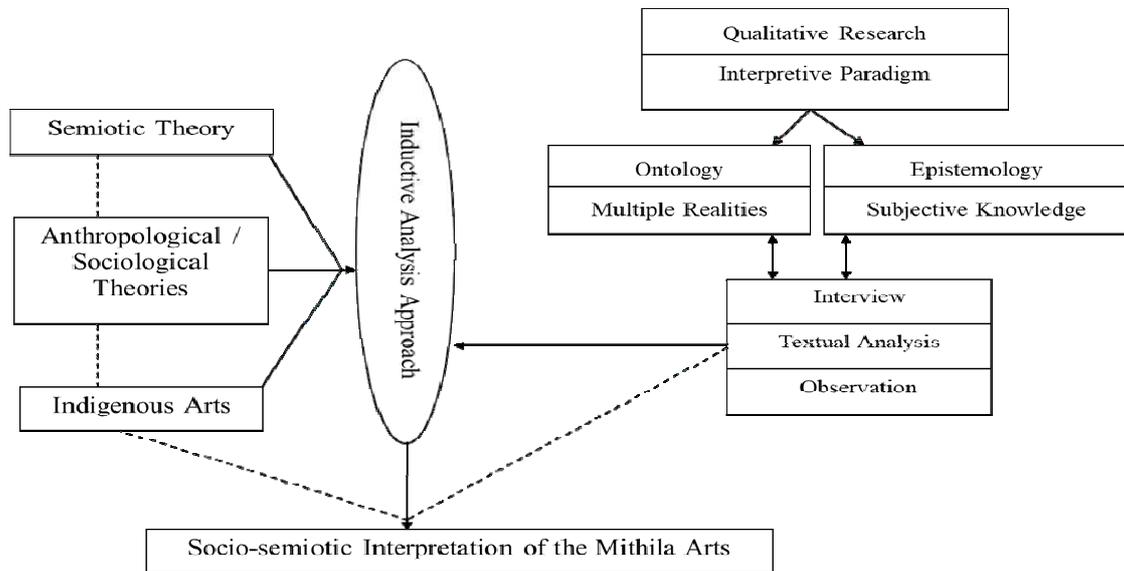
**Keywords:** Geometric, Organic, Semiotic, Logonomic and Polysemous

**Introduction**

Mithila painting, like many pieces of artwork, strikes a dexterous poise between a concrete shape and its abstract meaning. Visual rhetoric in Mithila painting begins from a dot and ends in a very complex configuration. And each point carries certain meaning in it. A shape is, however, not the only thing that remains fundamental to the meaning-making of a piece of painting. Other important visual elements are: colours and the range of values they embody, lines that help make up a shape, the space that dynamically-visually interacts with the lines, shapes and colours of a work of art to give them definition. Geometric shapes not only generate secular surroundings of the art work but also the spiritual ones of the local folks.

**Methodology**

This study will use Inductive Analysis Approach using Semiotic Theory, Anthropological sociological theories and Indigenous Arts theory for socio-semiotic Interpretation of the Maithili painting. The data for this qualitative research is collected through interview, textual analysis and observation. It further incorporates Ontology (multiple realities) and Epistemology (subjective knowledge) for Interpretive Paradigm. The following conceptual framework reveals the methodology clearly.



**Discussion/Analysis**

A line is a path traced by a moving point, for example, moving the point of a pencil along the surface of a sheet of paper. An artist falls back upon line drawing for coming up with an image that consists of distinct straight or curved lines placed against a usually plain background, without gradations in shade—darkness or hue—colour—to represent two-dimensional or three-dimensional objects. Line art emphasizes form and outline. For instance, in Mithila painting, artists from the Kayastha community makes use of kachni (lines) in which double lines are used to depict the outlines with the fine pattern created by means of hatching and stippling rather than a generous use of colours. Mani Sekhar Singh remarks in this connection: “The Kayastha artists utilize the potentiality of line as a pictorial element for shading required areas of image-sign and in the process convey some sense of volume . . . *kachani* . . . , which comes close to ‘incising,’ says a lot about the nature of the line utilized in shading as well as the

pictorial tool or implement” (436). Let us have a look at the following Mithila artwork (*Fig. 1*) of a dancing peacock in which lines rather than colours are symbolically expressive:



*Fig. 1: Dancing Peacock*; source: Madhubani Painting Collection.

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/472103973414185692/>

The artist captures the beauty of the dancing peacock more through the lines that depict the elegant plumage and less through the use of colours. In most of Mithila paintings, a double line is drawn as border and the gap is filled with small horizontal lines or sometimes with small dots.

After finishing the line work with a pencil, Mithila artists make the outline with a black marker pen. With the fine-tip pen, the inner outline is made. There is a double inner line throughout a piece of Mithila artwork as in the above figure of the dancing peacock. Dotted lines in interaction with the double lines help create the contours, which are the boundaries that mark three-dimensional forms. Circle-like lines trace the contours of the peacock's plumage so skillfully that they suggest fully rounded forms. Women of the Kayastha caste have earned their name for their elaborate style of Mithila paintings that use plenty of lines, outlines and contours.

Through a deft combination of lines, outlines and contours, a skilful artist comes up with an eye-catching shape. A shape, created when a line is enclosed, helps contribute to the balance within a work. A shape is a two-dimensional form of length and width. It occupies an area with identifiable boundaries. It is often contrasted with a mass, which is a three-dimensional form that occupies a volume of space. We speak of a mass of clay, the mass of a mountain, the masses of a work of architecture. Shapes and masses can be divided into two broad categories: geometric and organic. Geometric shapes and masses approximate the regular, named shapes and volumes of geometry such as square, triangle, circle, cube, pyramid, and sphere. Organic shapes and masses are irregular and evoke the living forms of nature. Let us have a look at the following artwork titled "A Brahmin" by Mahalaxmi Karn:



Fig. 2: MahalaxmiKarn's *A Brahmin*; source: Mithila Painting.  
<http://peterzirniss.com/post/126443962447/mahalaxmi-and-shantanu-das>

Here is a figure of a Brahmin with a personality—the well-fed and satisfied Pandit so commonly seen on the streets in Mithila. What help imitate the typical personality are the large almond shaped eye, the round chin, the mouth and nose, the soft curve of the arms and the hands holding a folded umbrella and a bottle-gourd amidst a background filled with shapes of branches and flowers.

A well-lined shape imparts a definite direction and movement to an artwork so that a spectator's eyes may “follow lines to see where they are going, like a train following a track. Artists can use this tendency to direct our eyes around an image and

to suggest movement” (Getlein 78). In the following painting titled “The Curses Begin” by Amrita Jha, the lines that a spectator’s eyes follow most readily are vertical and horizontal lines related to his or her experience of gravity:



*Fig. 3: Amrita Jha's "The Curses Begin"; source: Mithila Painting.*  
<http://peterzirniss.com/post/157257601742/the-vernacular-on-the-ground-in-madhubani>

Jha’s choice of the vertical gives the boy child’s mother a height and authority denied to the mother holding the daughter. Similarly, the vertical rows of lotus flowers continue up to the heavens, while the horizontal lines of snakes create a visual field that surrounds and entraps this mother and her future daughter. What lends definiteness to the direction and movement in an artwork is the artist’s choice of the colour. For

example, in the above painting by Amrita Jha, the sex of the child also reflects back onto the mother where the darker, contrasting colour of the figure cradling the boy gives that figure, a presence, a self-assurance that is lacking in the mother-daughter figure with its slightly anemic colour.

Colour as a semiotic mode contains multifold meanings. On the one hand, it seems natural whereas on the other hand, it looks personal. The conventional meaning of colour appears rampant where the art is performed as a social phenomenon but it becomes anarchic when the artists practice it to project their individual feelings. However, idiosyncratic use of colour adheres to its grammar; that basic pattern consciously extracted from the natural flow of colour in the surrounding. The deviation from the socially established colour norm obviously suggests that the artists have used colour for their own purpose. In this regard, viewers of the paintings base their understanding both on social convention and the natural surrounding—while making the particular piece of art.

Basically nature provides the sense of colour harmony to the artists and they form common consent to fix its meaning and the resultant meaning springs from the positive or negative attributes human beings seek out of it. That is, its meaning refers us to socially established and maintained convention and either to adherence or deviation from that. Adherence to it helps the artist use colour to communicate social message whereas deviation brings unpredictable meaning on the part of viewers. Nevertheless, artists follow certain grammatical rules like linguistic even in the dimension of colour

use. For example, they replace the golden colour of wheat into the blue one either to challenge the society by questioning it or to put forward their own point of view to shape the society. Otherwise, local artists use colour according to their own social values and norms. In this context, Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen assert:

If the resource is sufficiently developed for sign-making we will call it a mode; similarly with the question of grammar, specific groups' interests in colour shape the signs of colour; and to understand what general principles of semiosis and of the specific semiosis of colour emerge from this that might provide a principled understanding of all uses of colour in all social-cultural domains.

(345)

The form of activity, conduct, or process that involves signs, including the production of meaning depends on the common interest of people in the society and that mutual understanding reverberates in all the ritual practices. Moreover, any society provides the attributes to the sign on the basis of natural quality useful for the community. For example, Maithili society takes the colour red as a sign of progress or vitality because it finds the rays of Sun like that colour which is also the universal emblem of life on earth. Besides it, the colour of menstrual blood which revives life in the community makes this sign ever auspicious in the region.

Colour also plays crucial role in shaping the mood of people psychologically. Colour provides pleasure and affects a wide range of psychological and physiological responses. Restaurants decorated in red believed to increase appetite and therefore food

consumption. Blue surroundings will significantly lower a person's blood pressure, pulse, and respiration rate. There can be no doubt that colour works on the human brain and body in powerful ways. And colour is a function of light. In fact, all colours are dependent on light and no object possesses colour intrinsically. A red shirt does not have its own colour rather it is the reflected light rays. When light strikes the red shirt, for example, the shirt absorbs all the colour rays except the red ones, which are reflected, so our eyes perceive red. The rainbow consists of seven different colours which are refracted from the ray of sun light. They are divided into primary colours (red, yellow and blue); which cannot be made after mixing any two colours, secondary colours (orange, green and violet); which can be made mixing any two primary colours and tertiary colours (mixing a primary colour and an adjacent secondary colour). Moreover, a colour has three properties. They are called hue, value and intensity. Hue is the name of the colour according to the categories of the colour wheel—green or red or violet-blue.

Value refers to relative lightness or darkness. Most colours are recognizable in a full range of values; for instance, we identify as “red” everything from palest pink to darkest maroon. In addition, all hues have what is known as a normal value—the value at which we expect to find that hue. We think of yellow as a “light” colour and violet as a “dark” colour, for example, even though each has a full range of values. A colour lighter than the hue's normal value is known as a tint; for example, pink is a tint of red. A colour darker than the hue's normal value is called a shade; maroon is a shade of red.

Likewise, intensity is also called chroma or saturation—refers to the relative purity of a colour. Colours may be pure and saturated or they may be grayed and softened to some degree. The purest colours are said to have high intensity; grayer colours, lower intensity. To lower the intensity of a colour when mixing paints or dyes, the artist may add a combination of black and white (gray) or may add a little of the colour's complement. Likewise, colours behave differently depending on whether an artist is working with light or pigment. For instance, red and green light mix to produce yellow light, and blue light to the mix and the result is white. Similarly, pigments, like any other object in the world, have to our eyes the colour that they reflect. A red pigment, for example, absorbs all the colours in the spectrum except red. When pigments of different hues are mixed, the resulting colour is darker and duller; because together they absorb still more colours from the spectrum. Mixing pigments is thus known as a subtractive process.

Whether subtracting or adding, colour affects us on such a basic level that we have a direct emotional response to it. Blue is often associated with freedom because it is also the colour of the sky and the ocean. It is a cool colour and has been shown to have a calming effect. In Hinduism, blue is the colour of the god Vishnu, the god of order and stability, but it is also associated with the dark and disturbing power of the goddess Kali (Figure 4) in the following piece of painting:



Fig. 4: Devendra Jha's Goddess Kali; source: Novica in association with National Geographic.  
<https://www.novica.com/p/madhubani-painting-angry-goddess-kali/105519/>

Through poise between blue and black colours, the artwork presents violently subversive power of both Kali (black) and Tara (blue). Kali and Tara are similar in appearance. They both are described as standing upon a supine Shiva in an inert or corpse-like form.

As an example of a superb balance of colour and line, let us have a look at the following artwork “Fisherman and Boy” by two Mithila artists, Mahalaxmi Karn and Shantanu Das:

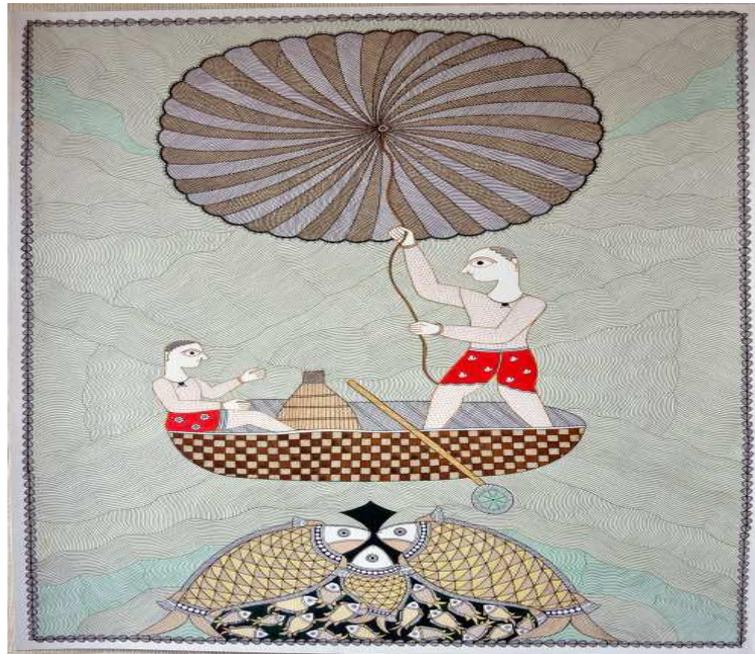


Fig. 5: Mahalaxmi Karn and Shantanu Das's "Fisherman and Boy"; source: Mithila Painting. <http://peterzirnis.com/post/126443962447/mahalaxmi-and-shantanu-das>

The two fishermen in the center and the group of fish below complete the painting, which shows how well the colour complements the line. The darker colours of the net and the grouped yellow fish set against the black depths of the water, the reddish brown checkerboard pattern of the boat, and the vibrant red dhotis of the fisherman all vie for our attention and all afford visual pleasure. Though the colours attract us first, the line work is marvelous and contributes as much to the success of the painting as does the colour choice as well as direction and movement. The flow and movement of the background water between the bottom of the net and the head of the boy sitting in the boat is quite noticeable. We clearly see the crest and the trough of the waves, while elsewhere the water appears as a smoothly rolling wave or as a current temporarily stopped in its flow by the movement of other waves. The tiny threads that come off the

edges of the open net add a nearly imperceptible decorative element to that already attractive design, or the light reddish stippling on the fishermen, barely noticeable, yet the colour complements their dhotis and softens their forms against the pale green background that fills in the space.

The space in and around a work of art is not a void, but a dynamic visual element that interacts with the lines and shapes and colours and textures of a work of art to give them definition. An art form with mass exists in three-dimensional space—that is, the actual space in which our bodies also stand. Aesthetic works of art take their character from the ways in which they carve out volumes of space within and around them. In the above painting—“Fisherman and Boy”—all the major icons occupy the central space of the painting. All are approximately the same size, and almost equidistantly spaced from the edges of the painting. The fisherman stands tall in the boat, feet spread, hands holding the rope as he casts the circular net which opens wide in the sky over the huddled fish at the bottom of the water. The water—a Mithila style patchwork of nearly invisible, finely drawn lines—fills in the void, thereby giving a uniform background that lifts the figures off the paper into their own space and time. The artists have chosen the moment when the net is tossed. They have pared that moment down to three elements and spaced the whole in a minimalist fashion, producing an extraordinarily maximum effect of what it means to be a fisherman. The lightness of colour of the water surface, which occupies a much greater space than the darker colour of the fisherman’s dhotis and the fishing net, creates the visual tone of a

rather frozen action, which appears to be separate from this transitory world, producing a timeless Mithila hieroglyph of fishermen at work.

The visual element of tone defines the lightness or darkness of a colour and has a bearing on its expressive character. Tone can be used to create a contrast of light and dark, the illusion of form, a dramatic or tranquil atmosphere, a sense of depth and distance, and a rhythm or pattern within a composition. As another example, let us have a look at the following painting, by Mahalaxmi Karn, of Hanuman flying back from the Himalayas carrying the Dronagiri Mountain that has the Sanjivani herb to revive the dying Lakshman:



*Fig. 6: Mahalaxmi Karn's Hanuman; source: Mithila Painting.*  
<http://peterziris.com/post/126443962447/mahalaxmi-and-shantanu-das>

In what is all line—a wonder of hatching and stippling—colour is kept to a minimum, just enough to identify the actors in the drama. Yet the colour contrast sets a tone of life and death. While the red colour denotes life and blood, the black counterpart is associated with death and power. The landscape has four clearly delineated areas: a

triangle at the centre with its repetitive iconic blades of grass coloured in black and laid out as a carpet for the dying Lakshman and grieving Rama. A tree on each side rises to the top of the painting. One with graceful boughs bends under the weight of large red fruit while the other stands tall with dense, small leaves repeated in such patterns that the whole tree appears to quiver with life, responding to every slight breeze. Hanuman himself, magnificent in contrasted red and black dress, appears high in the sky. Balancing the Dronagiri mountain with its life giving herbs on his right hand while his left holds his black, iron tipped mace, he arrives in time to revive Lakshman and save the war against the demon king Ravana.

To streamline the main point here, Mahalaxmi's "Hanuman" painting strikes a clever balance between what we see in abstract terms and what we eventually realize is represented. But colours and shapes are not the only things that our eyes take in as we try to make sense of the painting. We get to know the tone of life and death through the colour contrast. We notice that line work predominates in this painting with an almost intoxicating effect: the dashes creating the never completed circles of swirling air, the tree leaves moving in all directions, the lines of the shawl flowing gracefully, their red colour contrasting with the black swirls of the air. Similarly, other visual elements, including shape, mass and space are the ingredients available for an artist have semiotic significance in the process of making an artwork.

The analytical framework re-orient mainstream semiotic analyses of sign systems towards inclusion in discourse and social change in what is called the method of social

semiotics. Social semiotics embraces meaning-making as a social practice, that is to say, it studies signifying practices in specific socio-cultural circumstances. In other words, Jay Lemke defines socio-semiotics as:

a synthesis of several modern approaches to the study of social meaning and social action. One of them, obviously is semiotics itself: the study of our social resources for communicating meanings. . . . Formal semiotics is mainly interested in the systematic study of the systems of signs themselves. Social semiotics includes formal semiotics and goes on to ask how people use signs to construct the life of a community. (183)

As every community is unique, the signs used by one community are likely to be unlike those used by another, for instance, in much of Asia, including South Asia, red is the traditional colour for a wedding dress (symbolizing joy and reproduction) whereas it is a mourning dress for people in Ivory Coast. Signs have diverse meanings in diverse social and cultural contexts. Thus, socio-semiotics is socio-centered, going from context to text, not from text to context.

Social semiotics investigates the social dimensions of meaning which are shaped by relations of power. So any cultural products, including literary works and artworks, are not merely media of social meaning but also of power dynamics. It is the contestation of the power relationships from which evolves ideology. About such an evolution of ideology, Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress observe:

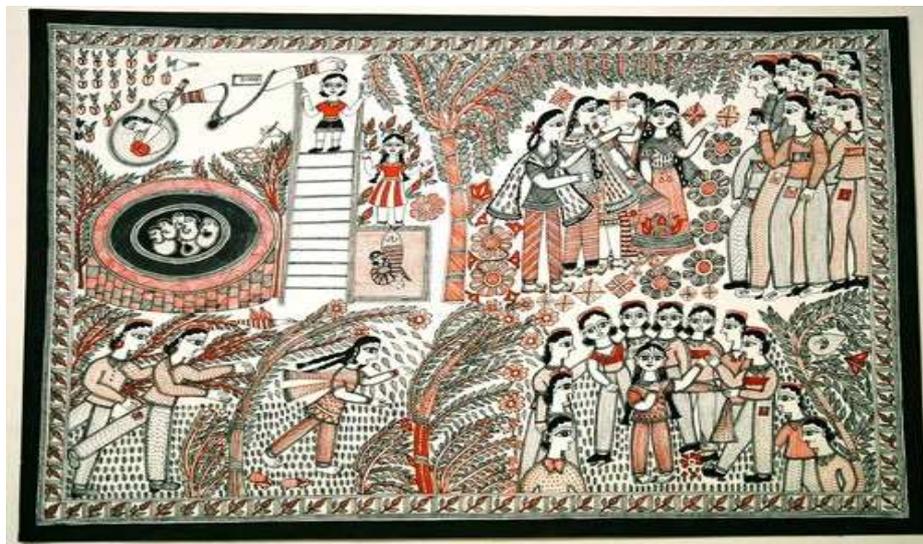
Ideology viewed as false consciousness represents the world ‘upside down’ and in inverted form. But it also displays an image of the world as it ought to be, as seen from the vantage point of the dominant, or as it is from the vantage point of the dominated group. To capture the contradiction characteristic of ideological forms, we will talk of ideological complexes, a functionally related set of contradictory versions of the world, coercively imposed by one social group on another on behalf of its own distinctive interests or subversively offered by another social group in attempts at resistance in its own interests. An ideological complex exists to sustain relationships of both power and solidarity, and it represents the social order as simultaneously serving the interests of both dominant and subordinate. (3)

Social semiotics supports a dialectically mediated approach that calls for a multidimensional and complex understanding of the interplay between agency and structure, between lived human experience and the social power relations to which literary works or artworks are linked. It aims at elaborating a new mode of analysis that places more emphasis on the roles of socio-cultural contexts and the accosting power conflict and resistance which not only define the identity of the community but which ultimately point toward a transformation of the society.

Processes of struggle and resistance, which shape the transformation of a society, have a bearing on every level of semiotic systems, at the smallest level of which “power is put to the test in very exchange, and the logonomic system is typically a

record of this” (Hodge and Kress 8). The logonomic system—a set of rules prescribing the conditions for production and reception of meanings—is integral part of an ideological complex as it specifies ‘who’ claims to initiate or know meanings about ‘what’ topic ‘under what circumstances’ and ‘with what modalities’. Logonomic systems as ideological complexes “reflect contradictions and conflicts in the social formations” (5). When a logonomic system tolerates, for instance, a statement insulting to women to be read as a joke, it refers to a male-dominated structure of the society.

Similarly, if a society, as does Mithila, puts up with female infanticide, this means, it is a male-dominated society and a female writer or artist may be highly critical of it. Let us have a basic illustration of the above-outlined account of socio-semiotics by analyzing the following painting (“Female Infanticide”) by a contemporary Madhubani painter, Rani Jha:



*Fig. 7: Rani Jha's Female Infanticide; source: Mithila Painting.*

<http://peterzirnis.com/post/58303202722/rani-jha-feminist-perspectives-in-mithila-art>

Rani Jha's "Female Infanticide" painting, displayed on a tableau on a large scale, evokes more a theatrical scene rather than a naturalistic illustration. The choice of the tableau immediately points to one set of logonomic rules: the dramatic-ironic intensity of the unnatural behaviour. With this rule underway, the societal precedence of a boy (shown on a ladder) over a girl (depicted by the cobra coiled around her feet) also turns out to be unnatural. Visually, this text receives two intense degrees of illegitimation: the Maithili society's oppression of the female and a grotesque deconstruction of the Maithili marriage ritual of *matkor* in which water from the well and soils near it are used to sanctify the marriage *mandap* so that longevity of conjugal life is ensured through regular fertility. Fertility is repulsively distorted through an ironic dumping of the female fetus in the same well. The whole procreation that is supposed to ensure matrimonial and familial bliss through legitimatization of sex via the system of marriage looks obnoxiously abnormal due to female infanticide, which is so strongly suggested by the cobra out to bite the infant-girl to death. Such a production and appearance of the text have direct impact on reception. The viewers are placed as audience in a drama and, like them, are directly hit by the intensity of the monstrosity of the illegitimate action. The patriarchal ideology at work in female infanticide and the reverse ideology remains in ironic collision, so to say, with the latter winning out as the monstrous unnaturalness of the action is conveyed to the audience with dramatic intensity.

The socio-semiotic approach to the analysis of Mithila painting gains in legitimacy from the central argument of a book like *Reading Images: The Grammar of*

*Visual Design* by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen. The book makes the point that the visual is an organized and structured message, connected to the verbal text but not dependent on it. This contention marks a departure from Roland Barthes's argument in "Rhetoric of the Image" that the meanings of images are too polysemous to be deciphered separately from the verbal text. The duo—Kress and Leeuwen—repeatedly stress the social and ideological components of sign making, interpretation, and valuation. Decoding visuals requires attention to the reading pattern and other cultural aspects of a particular country: "The place of visual communication in a given society can only be understood in the context of, on the one hand, the range of forms or modes of public communication available in that society and, on the other hand, their uses and valuations" (35). The authors take this kind of understanding visual images as figuring out what they call the "semiotic landscape"—"the features of a landscape (a field, a wood, a clump of trees, a house, a group of buildings) only make sense in the context of their whole environment and of the history of its development" (35).

### **Conclusion**

Semiotic forms and styles are fashioned as much by the essential uniqueness and distinctiveness of the medium as by the tangibles and intangibles of a culture: its histories, its values, and its worldviews. For example, the square in Maithili culture represents a sacred enclosure-like piece of land (*devchawk*) on which rituals are performed. While the *devchawk* resembles Nature or Mother Goddess, the ritual-place represents the performance-site for all the rites associated with Mother Goddess. As

such, the square is considered divine for its perfection and as symbolic of knowledge and human thought, while circle is looked upon as earthly, human and observed in everyday life—moon, sun, horizon, water drop, rainbow, etc. Triangles, which resemble mountains or trees, are associated with an ancient worship of the female divinity. This association of the feminine principle with triangles is deeply embodied in the Maithili consciousness so that the Devi's worship is performed through her *yantra*—a triangle through which She is invoked. Although the Goddess has no image once conjured, she may be seen in that likeness. The *tantric* elaborations of the forms of the goddess are explicit: her supremacy in the *tantras* rest on her felt presence in trees, in plants and animals who contribute to her shape or that of her incarnations as clan or community deities.

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**Revisiting English History in J.K. Rowling's Novel *The Casual Vacancy***

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**Abstract**

*This paper analyzes J.K. Rowling's novel The Casual Vacancy as a narrative that fictionalizes the hypocrisy and self-centeredness of Middle-Class Britons and emphasizes the realities of the lower class and their treatment into the hands of the richer people in the beginning of the twenty first century. The novel presents social hierarchy and the superiority complex of the members of the middle class which is the main obstacle in uniting the British people for balanced socio-economic prosperity of the nation. Engaging the voice of the lower class not represented in official history books, Rowling highlights the troubles and difficulties of the underprivileged people in order to help them to be heard. Official history presents only an account of social and economic realities and there can be other multiple accounts of society depending on whose voice the historian represents. A work of fiction also deals with historical realities and presents an alternative version of history giving space to the people ignored in official history books. This supports the idea of histories and not history with capital 'H'. Every account of history is constructed and there can be many narratives of the same historical events and realities. The paper uses the ideas of Stephen Greenblatt, Michel Foucault and Nietzsche to support the claim.*

**Keywords:** history, fiction, multiplicity construction, alternative

## **Introduction**

*The Casual Vacancy* contextualizes the discourse of self-centeredness and superiority of the middle class and its impact on the lower-class people in modern day British society. The sense of hierarchy between the two classes and its internalization by the middle class has made them irresponsible towards the deprivation and misery of the lower-class people. By foregrounding the snobbery and pretensions of the rich and marginalization of the poor the novel gives voice to the voiceless and in a way rewrites and offers an alternative to the official history of present-day Britain. This nation is globally known as an economically prosperous democratic society as well as very civilized but the novel negates that version of official history through a depiction of the chilling poverty of the lower-class people who have been ignored and marginalized within their own country. There is an exposure of the hypocrisy of the so called affluent and civilized middle class Britons. There is something not recognized and acknowledged by the mainstream history of Britain.

The entire novel is set in the fictional city of Pagford which is dominated by its middle-class residents. Fields is its local estate most of whose residents are downtrodden and economically deprived. The people and leaders of the rich English town want to avoid the Fields as the latter is full of miserable people and their situation demands that something must be done to uplift them. This deliberate detachment of the Pagfordians is guided by the desire to keep their own prosperity and stability intact and

not be concerned and disturbed by the problems of Fields. The poverty of these people is a fact and their existence is a part of reality in British society. The rich may take the poverty and deprivation of the Fields as a blot on their civilization and consequently the official history erases it from its pages and their existence can't be acknowledged. To write about them is to give them a voice and rewrite the history from a different point of view.

The people of Pagford portray the residents of Fields as uncivilized, miserable, lazy and irresponsible. They are afraid that their relation with the poor can endanger the glorious civilization and sophistication of their own city. They create and employ this discourse in order to hide their own selfishness, egoism and snobbery. By exposing this reality, the author has enabled us to listen to plurality of voices in Twenty-first century Britain. The story of the marginalized people is missing from the pages of the official history of Britain. Through realistic plot and setting the novelist brings to light the shadowy part of British society which can be regarded as an alternative version of history. The narrative of the novel presents the discourse of the middle-class superiority and their indifference to and unsympathetic treatment of the economically disadvantaged and poverty-stricken people of the Fields. The novel is one of the plural histories of modern-day Britain as the text is a product of writer's subjectivity that is shaped by the context in which she has been immersed.

### **Theory and Textual Analysis**

This paper argues that the narrative of *The Casual Vacancy* is the representation of present-day Britain with the discourse of middle-class superiority at the center of the story and the misrepresentation as well as the under-representation of the lower-class Britain through the same discourse. This representation is the result of Britain's present context and networks of institutions, beliefs and power relations. By closely examining the novel, we come to hear the plurality of voices of contemporary Britain. Through new historicist approach, this paper analyzes the historicity of the discourse of middle-class superiority. New Historicism studies literature in relation to history and social context and tries to establish the fictionality of history and historicity of what is generally counted as fictional. History is not objective and universal and is to a certain extent shaped by subjective forces. As a result, there can be multiple versions of history as per the view of the person or institution who writes it.

Stephen Greenblatt is a new historicist who writes about the relation between history and literature. He means to claim that history is a kind of representation and no representation is adequate. "Literary criticism has a familiar set of terms for the relationship between a work of art and the historical events to which it refers. We speak of allusions, symbolization, . . . representation, and above all mimesis" (11). History cannot objectively capture the social and political realities with universal implications but it simply alludes to or symbolizes the historical events and the view that emerges is always incomplete and partial. Every work of art also reflects historical events no matter

how partially or insufficiently. In this sense, a literary text offers an interpretation of history as Tyson remarks that, "Literary text, through its representation of human experience at a given time and place is an interpretation of history" (295).

In *The Casual Vacancy* the city of Pagford and the people there represent Britain and British middle class respectively. The middle class Pagfordians consider themselves more civilized, sophisticated and self-reliant than the whole world not only the other people there in Britain itself. The people of Fields represent the poor people in Britain and symbolically the other poor nations in the world for whom Britain doesn't have any sense of responsibility. Rowling's depiction of the contemporary Britain in the novel can be seen as "history not in terms of discreet episodes, forming a homogeneous whole but as fractured, subjective and above all textual [and thus it is] contingent, unstable and partial" (Green 112). Rowling seems to favor the marginal people over the middle class Pagfordians. The novel minutely observes the structure of class conflict, marginalization and miserable poverty of the lower-class people of Fields. The following lines show the dismal reality of the poor people:

The Fields were not improved by sunshine, which merely showed up the dirt and the damage, the cracks in the concrete walls, the boarded windows and the litter . . . The square in the Pagford looked freshly painted whenever the sun shone . . . Nobody has ever wanted to hold Krystal's hand. Fats had told them all that she had fleas. (437)

These lines present a miserable picture of the Fields. It is poverty stricken, dirty, neglected and not maintained properly. Krystal is a victim of rape and is molested and tortured from time to time by the rich people. The people of this ruined estate are portrayed as loud, promiscuous, treacherous and squalid. Terrie Weldon adopts prostitution out of sheer compulsion in order to tackle destitution and poverty. She is a whimsical junkie irresponsible towards her son Robbie and daughter Krystal due to poverty and society's hatred towards her. This is a mockery of mainstream history that presents Britain as a civilized and prosperous nation.

The narrative of the novel contradicts the British authorities' claim that Britain is a highly civilized and developed country and it is in the age of post-scarcity. The novel gives a lie to the claims made by the official history of Britain by historicizing the pathetic condition of the economically disadvantaged people who are the victims of socio-economic disparity and discrimination. The claim that there is full respect of human rights in Britain is also false. Rape of Krystal, her mother's adoption of prostitution as compulsion, death of her brother Robbie and her own suicide challenges Britain's claim as a nation that respects human rights and has reached post-scarcity phase. How can Britain make such claims when so many people are languishing in corners due to hunger, disease, frustration and poverty? The claim for prosperity is a hoax and a lie told by the official history to hide the unpalatable realities inside the nation.

The official history is a kind of discourse created by the ruling class and the authorities to veil the unpleasant realities and serve the interests of the ruling class. This discourse doesn't reflect pre-existing truths but creates its own truths through discursive manipulation. For Foucault, power is the source of knowledge and it creates its own truth which is constructed discursively and it changes when the system of power changes. He views, "Power is relation, power is not a thing, it is a relationship between two individuals, a relationship which is such that one can direct the behaviour of another" (410). In this way, the official history of Britain is also a discourse created by the self-serving rulers and aristocrats who deliberately ignore the destiny and condition of the lower-class people. The discourse of prosperity hides the reality of the people in the Fields. ". . . wetts, sores, gashes, burns, tarnblack, bruises, scabies and nits; babies lying on the carpet covered in dog shit . . ." (81) This sheds light on the destitution and misery of the people living in the Fields. The poverty of this estate is a taint on the Pagfordians who boast of prosperity, civilization and sophistication.

The residents of the Fields have sunk into the quagmire of poverty and deprivation. The condition of their houses reflects their ruined economic state. The novel describes Krystal's house as "it [kitchen] was almost as dirty as the bathroom. Other than the fridge, cooker, and washing machine, there were no gadgets; the counters carried only dirty plates . . . rubbish had overflowed the bins . . ." (71). Life expectancy of the people of Fields is very low and they are dogged by the problem of drug addiction and many other problems.

The middle-class people have constructed a discourse of their own superiority and use this discourse to wield power. However, it is the same discourse that provokes opposition to itself. The discourse claims that middle-class people are superior, generous, ethical, responsible and civilized than the lower-class people. It denies the historical reality that middle class Britons are trapped into rampant snobbery, narcissism, pedophile, child abuse and poverty. Howard Mollison and his family is happy in the death of Barry Fairbrother and in the exposure of the defamatory posts about other councilors on the official website of Pagford Parish Council. The death of a person who was concerned about the estate makes them happy inwardly but they pretend to be sad. “Howard must be as brimful of ecstasy as she [Shirley] was; but to express these feelings out loud; when the news of death was still fresh in the air would have been tantamount to dancing naked” (17).

Simon Price, another member of middle class in Pagford, buys stolen computer at night because of its low price. But his own son discloses this on the official website by uploading post that reads, “. . . he saves money at home by furnishing it with stolen goods – recently a PC . . .” (241). The lies, thefts and the hypocrisies of the parents and adults are exposed by the children which bring to light the reality of their lives and the falsity of their claims. In this way, the novel offers an alternative history in which the misery of the lower class is unveiled and the pretensions and empty morality of the middle class is brought under the gaze of the public.

On the Pagford Parish Council all the councilors are from the Pagford though the Fields is also within the jurisdiction of the council. All the middle class Pagfordians consider the state and the Bellchapel Addiction clinic as the 'drains and blots on Pagford: One faction led by Howard Mollison advocates for the exclusion of the Fields from Pagford and closing of Bellchapel clinic. For Howard, the Pagford town is "an ideal, a way of being, a micro-civilization that stood firmly against the national decline" (61). Another group comprising Parminder Jawanda Collinwall and Simon Price is trying to represent the Fields but actually it has given consent to Howard's line.

The character Kay Bawden in the novel raises the issue of the Fields which has not been recognized in the meetings with Pagford councilors. She openly criticizes the narcissistic attitude of the middle class Pagfordians and counters their discourse of superiority. She lobbies for not closing the Bellchapel clinic stating that when the clinic is closed "some very vulnerable people [of the Fields] will be left without support" (310). Kay is a visionary and independent intellectual who challenges established institutions and official power of the middle class Pagfordians because according to Nietzsche "truth is a mobile army of metaphors, metonymy and anthropomorphism" (814). What we call truth is human centric and suffers from bias. Truth for Nietzsche is "nothing more than the expediency of certain race of species – their utility alone is truth" (qtd in Barker 47).

## **Conclusion**

In this way, the narrative of the novel presents two discourses. One is the discourse of middle-class superiority and the other is the marginalization of the lower class. The novel exposes the pretensions and hypocrisies of the middle class Pagfordians and their detachment from and irresponsibility toward the under-privileged people of the Fields which is also under the jurisdiction of the Pagford. Britain is presented as a land of prosperity and sophistication by the discourse of official history but it veils or hides the underbelly of English society that challenges the claims for advancement and civilization. The novel puts the situation and reality of the underprivileged lower class at the center and criticizes the self-centered attitude of the middle class. This is a rewriting or revision of the official history and presentation of alternative histories that counter the legitimacy and authenticity of the mainstream history.

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### **Buddhist Ideology in T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays**

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#### **Abstract**

*The Hindu and Buddhist sources were the most significant contents to shape the mind and heart of T. S. Eliot. When Eliot was studying at Harvard University, a popular academic place for oriental studies, he had a close contact with his scholarly teachers Charles R. Lanman and James H. Woods. Herbert Howarth mentions that these teachers were at that time working on books on Hinduism and Buddhism. Their readings had a good influence on Eliot's writing. The thoughts of Irving Babbitt, an authority on Buddhism, must have affected Eliot with the Buddhist ideology. In company of the Oriental scholars, Eliot had a good influence for the study of Hindu and Buddhist ideology through the Oriental scriptures and philosophical books. He himself turned to be a philosopher poet and playwright. He had read a number of authors and books on Hinduism and Buddhism and got influenced by them and this study reflects in his own poetry and plays. The present paper explores and analyses particularly the Buddhist influence in Eliot's poetry and plays.*

**Keywords:** Oriental Philosophy, Buddhism, Noble Truths, Ten Commandments, Salvation

**Introduction**

Buddhism occupies an important place in the eastern and western religions and philosophy. Buddhism was founded by Siddhartha Gautama, who later became “The Buddha” after attaining “Enlightenment”. He is also known as “the Light of Asia”. He was the son of Shakya king Suddhodana and Maya Devi. He was born Kapilwastu, Nepal. Since his childhood, Siddhartha was a thoughtful and pensive child. Despite the best efforts of his father to bind Siddhartha's heart to the palace, to the interests of the kingdom and to the heart of the Shakya people, the young prince broke all the ties of worldly life after seeing the sights of old age, sickness and death. He renounced the world and left his home to seek the path of salvation. As an ascetic, he wanted to know the real source of suffering and a possible way of complete deliverance from it. At first, he sought the help of some eminent religious scholars of the day who failed to give proper satisfaction to the inquisitive and restless mind and heart of the young prince. Restless to attain perfect Enlightenment, he practised severe penance, gave himself up to meditative thought and rigorous mortification of the body. But he could not find the true wisdom. Therefore, he left that extreme path and followed the middle path of self-discipline. After thinking over the issue for a long time, he came to the conclusion that the physical mortification would not extinguish the fire of desire nor would afford *Enlightenment*. He directed his foot-steps to Gaya where he sat under the blessed Bodhi tree and eventually got *Enlightenment*. Since then, Sidhartha has been honoured with the title *The Buddha or the Enlightened One*.

Buddha discovered the *Four Noble Truths* which point out the path to Nirvana. This is the Dharma; this is the truth; this is the real religion. After being enlightened, Buddha returned to the world of suffering humanity to preach his Dharma. He said to his disciples, "Let the wheel of Dharma rotate." And, thus began the long and noble work of spreading the teachings of the Buddha which, in due course of time spread to Ceylon, Burma and Siam in the south and to Tibet, China, Japan and Korea in the north. Buddhism spread widely in Nepal, India and abroad and eventually grew into a world religion. It contains the teachings of Lord Buddha, "What is known as Buddhism is a part of the common heritage of wisdom by which men have succeeded in overcoming this world and in gaining immortality or a deathless life" (Conze 11). After devoting the last forty-five years of his life to this great task, Lord Buddha breathed his last at the age of eighty. At the moment of his death, *the Blessed One* addressed the priests in the following words:

“And now, O priests, I take my leave of you; all the constituents of being are transitory; work out your salvation with diligence.” (Warren 109)

The Buddha was always pragmatic and never aimed at discussing theoretical questions or metaphysical subtleties. He declared that such discussions were unprofitable and confusing and that they would not pave the path for cessation of suffering. Therefore, he always kept a mum whenever he was asked about God or life hereafter. Such questions therefore have come to be known as ‘avyakatani’ (Davids 187) (indeterminate questions) in Buddhist literature. Instead of wasting time in such

discussions, Lord Buddha always tried to enlighten the people on the most urgent and important problem of human life, i.e. suffering. Buddha who recognized the existence of suffering, its cause, its remedy, its cessation, has known the Four Noble Truths (arya-satya). These *Four Noble Truths* form the kernel of the teachings of Lord Buddha. They preach that his first three of these truths are theoretical and the last one is practical. The *First Noble Truth* of the Buddhism is that “All is suffering” (sarvam dukham). Suffering predominates human and animal life. Birth is attended with pain; decay is painful; disease is painful; death is painful; union, separation, sorrow, despair, wish and all bodily conditions which spring from attachment are painful. The text of the Buddha's first sermon given in Samyotta Nikaya reads as follows:

And this the Noble Truth of sorrow. Birth is sorrow, age is sorrow, disease is sorrow, death is sorrow, contact from the pleasant is sorrow every wish unfulfilled is sorrow-in short all the five components of individually are sorrow.

(Duiker & Spielvogel 55)

This kind of pessimism that life is full of suffering and that its pleasures are transitory and fraught with sorrow is fundamental not only to the teachings of Lord Buddha but to most of the Hindu thinkers. By emphasizing the dark side of life, Lord Buddha is not giving way to despair, but he points to the way leading to the destruction of sorrow. He teaches how, instead of being a victim of misery, man can become its victor.

The *Second Noble Truth* is the cause of suffering. According to the law of natural causation, every event is the effect or result of some cause. Therefore, the

sorrow which is prevailing everywhere and in everything has a cause. There is a chain of causes and effects that leads to suffering in the world. This chain of suffering has twelve connections which are : ignorance (avidya), action (samskara), consciousness (vijñana), name and form (name-rupa), the six fields viz. the five senses and mind together with their objects (sadayatana) contact between the senses and the object (sparsa), sensation (vedana), being (bhava), rebirth (jati), old age and death (jaramarana), desire (trishna), and clinging to existence (upadana) (Vipan Kumar 16).

This chain involves present life, previous life and future life. The present life is the effect of the past and the cause of the future life. Ignorance is the root cause of man's existence. All the other connections spring from this root-cause of the vicious cycle of the world, generally called 'the bhavachakra' or the wheel of existence. The Buddha says in his first sermon:

And this is the Noble Truth of the Arising of Sorrow. It arises from thirst, which leads to rebirth, which brings delight and passion, and seeks pleasure now here, now there – the thirst for sensual pleasure, the thirst for continued life, the thirst for power. (Mrs. Davids 166)

Lord Buddha, in his discourses, not only dwells upon the fact of evil, but also points the way out of it. He says, "Just this have I taught and do I teach, ill, and the ending of ill". The Noble Truth about the cessation of suffering follows from the second Truth. The removal of the cause removes the effect too. When ignorance, which is the root-cause of all sufferings, is removed by right knowledge, the other connections of the chain break

one after the other automatically. Thus, liberation from sorrow can be achieved in this very life if the right path is followed.

The fourth Noble Truth about the way to remove suffering is laid down by Lord Buddha:

And this is the noble truth of the way which leads to the stopping of Sorrow. It is the Noble Eightfold Path- Right Views, Right Resolve, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Livelihood, Right Efforts, Right Recollection and Right Meditation. (Westmann 80)

This Path consists of eight steps which are called the eight fold paths (astangika-marga): Right Views (Samyak Dristi), Right Resolve (Samyak Sankalp), Right Speech (Samyak Vak), Right conduct (Samyak Karma), Right Living (Samyak Jevika), Right Effort (Samyak Dhyana), Right Recollection (Samyak Dharana), and Right Meditation (Samyak Samadhi).

The exposition of the Aryan eightfold path forms the basic theme of the celebrated first discourse of the Buddha. It is also widely known as the Middle path, the path between materialism and spiritualism and also the path between eternalism and nihilism. It avoids the two extremes and strikes a balanced approach to life, that is believing neither in Being nor in Non-Being, but in Becoming. This path does not preach its devotees a life of self-indulgence, which is the harbinger of pain, nor that of self-mortification, which is itself pain. It is only this middle path which can lead the spiritual aspirant to "Nirvana". "Having put an end forever" to 'dukkha', it enables him

to enjoy "peace, serenity and rapture". According to the Buddha, 'Nirvana' stops rebirth. So it means the extinction of all misery and of the conditions which cause rebirth. It is the relinquishment of all worldly ties, cessation of the effects of past actions, end of all desires and attachment to this world. The Nikayas sometimes describe it as the blissful reward of a long ascetic course – a heaven of peace and rest, eternal. This can be attained in this life itself.

### **Buddhist Ideology**

The enlightened Buddha was a great thinker and philosopher. His contributions to the religious philosophy are unique and substantial. The fundamental concept of Buddhism is that all is non-eternal or is momentary. Every object in this world is in a state of 'flux'. In other words, whatever is real is momentary or 'dynamic', and whatever is not momentary is not real. According to Mrs. Rhys Davids:

Buddhists concentrated their attention not on a cause or mover of the other of things physical and moral, but on the order of things. They held that this order was one of constant universal changes, organically conceived i.e. as growth and decay and conceived as proceeding by cause and effect. Things become, as the sequels of certain assignable other things having become. (11)

For the concept Vodism (shunavada) or Dynamics, a very practical and simple approach is in Buddhism. The dynamism of Buddhist philosophy (i.e. *everything is in a state of flux*) inspired an entirely different outlook about the world. Even the believers in 'soul' or eternalists were willing to accept the external world as changeable, but they believed

in an eternal existence within it. They call it 'Atman' or 'Brahman'. The Buddhists deny the existence of such soul. They say that, if we look inside the trunk of banana tree, we will get layers within layers, one covering peeling off after the other but no substance inside it. Similarly, all the things in the universe do not contain any eternal substance. 'Ataman' or 'Brahman', or the world, is void of any eternal element. Another example which is often cited to explain this concept of Voidism is that of the clouds or the flame of the lamp. Just as the clouds go on changing each moment, so does this world. Even the most solid diamond or iron goes on changing every moment. There is no similarity or sameness in their previous and subsequent forms. The similarity, if any, is in their organisation. The effect is always similar to the cause, and, hence, there is an illusion of oneness. The flame of the lamp is changing every moment, but the new flame born out of the old one is similar to it. Therefore, we are in haste to conclude that it is the same flame. Similarly, the end-state of this life may cause the beginning of the next. Rebirth is, therefore, not transmigration of the same soul into another body. It is the causation of the next life by the present. (Warren 234)

Having accepted the entire inner and outer world as non-eternal, Buddhism propounds its theory of causality, which is generally known as “Dependent Origination”. It says that nothing exists by itself and that nothing is absolute. Everything depends on something else. Everything is the effect of some cause. As long as the cause exists, the effect also exists. When the cause ceases to be, the effect also vanishes.

Everything is relative, cause and effect are interrelated. One thing flows from the other.

Buddha called this theory 'Dhamma'. He said, in his very first discourse at Varanasi,:

Let us set aside such unprofitable and unsolvable questions (Avyaktani) as the questions of beginning and end. I will teach you Dharma. That being thus, this comes to be. From the coming to be of that, this arises. That being absent, this does not happen. From the cessation of that, this ceases. This is the Dharma.

Whoever accepts Dharma, accepts the law of patichha samuppada (dependent origination). (Davids 210)

His theory of "Karma" is connected with "dependent origination". Theory of "Karma" suggests that the present existence of an individual is the effect of his or her past, and his/her future will be the effect of his/her present. Thus, the law of Karma is only a special aspect of the law of causation. Lord Buddha held that this world is an endless process. Every minute we see thousands of causes and effects. The transformation of the cause into effect and vice-versa is an endless process.

Lord Buddha always laid emphasis on the right conduct. He prescribed *Ten Commandments* which were binding commands upon the 'Bhikshus' or the monks. They were emphatically asked to avoid the ten evils. These are: the three evils of the body (murder, theft, and adultery), the four evils of the tongue (lying, slander, abuse, and idle talk), and the three evils of the mind (covetousness, hatred and error). (Coomaraswamy 130)

**Buddhist Ideology in Eliot's Poetry and Plays**

Of all the sources that affected and shaped the mind and heart of T. S. Eliot, the Hindu and Buddhist sources are the most significant ones. When Eliot was a student at Harvard University, he had a close contact with his scholarly teachers Charles R. Lanman and James H. Woods. Herbert Howarth writes that these scholars were at that time studying and exploring the Hinduism. Irving Babbitt, a Buddhist scholar, also must have affected Eliot's mind and heart. Eliot was a scholar and a number of authors and books of Hinduism and Buddhism had a great influence on his poetry and plays. Some of the prominent influences were from different authors of different periods in history of literature. Some of them were: John Donne and other Metaphysical poets, the dramas of the Jacobean, the French Symbolists (Dante, Santayana Babbitt, Josiah Royce, Bradley, and Bergson), German philosophers (Ezra Pound, T. E. Hulme, Windham Lewis, Middleton Murry, Remy de Gourmont), primitive ritual anthropology, Christianity and the Hindu scriptures. William T. Harris, who had a fairly good knowledge of the Bhagwad-Gita, had also a good influence on him.

One needs to read the notes of T.S Eliot appended to *The Waste Land* (1922) to understand his indebtedness to Buddhism. One of the poem's sections titled *The Fire Sermon* is based directly on the Buddha's teachings at Samath (Varanasi). The notes tell us that Eliot had read Henry Clarke Warren's *Buddhism in Translation*. He had also studied Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*, a monumental work on Lord Buddha and his gospel. It is quite possible that Eliot had heard his teacher Irving Babbitt, repeating the

words of the dying Buddha to his disciples in the classroom... “work out your Salvation with diligence”. The echo of these words is clearly heard in *The Cocktail Party* (1950). On the testimony of William Chase Green, we can confidently say that, at the time of writing *The Waste Land*, Eliot seriously considered becoming a Buddhist. Eliot was then “able and witty.....aloof and silent. I used to tell him he reminded me of a smiling and quizzical figure of Buddha” (Howarth 95).

In 1913 Eliot withdrew himself from the Buddhist and Sanskrit sources. Speaking of his courtship with the Orient (while delivering the Barbour lectures in 1933 at the University of Virginia), Eliot writes as follows:

Two years spent in the study of Sanskrit under Charles Lanman and a year in the Mazes of Patanjali's metaphysics under the Guidance of James Woods left me in a state of enlightened mystification. (Eliot 40)

This confessional statement shows, in unequivocal terms, Eliot's close contact with and fondness for Hindu holy texts and philosophical system. At this juncture, a question arises as to why Eliot gave up the pursuit of Oriental studies. Eliot has very clearly indicated in *After Strange Gods* that he was not prepared to forget “how to think and feel as an American or a European”. Hence, for practical and sentimental reasons, he gave up his pursuit of Oriental studies.

Like Hinduism, Buddhism also exercised a deep influence on mind and heart of T.S. Eliot. It was so because Eliot was a sober student of philosophy and because he had a moral and spiritual bend of mind. His family background was that of a Unitarian

practicing a storm sum of Christianity. Temperamentally, Eliot was a reserved man. Such a perceptive man could hardly ignore the rich heritage of Hindu religions and philosophies. Eliot was deeply in love with Buddhistic and Hindu scriptures, and he made use of them when he came to writing his creative works. *The Waste Land*, *Four Quartets*, and the small poem *To the Indians who Died in Africa*, and his poetic plays bear witness to the fact. We need to analyse some of the Buddhist ideas in Eliot's poetry and plays.

Right from his early poetic career, Eliot started giving room to pessimism and suffering in his writing, and this truth creates the impression that he was working under the inescapable impact of Buddhism. Eliot's poetry up to *Sweeney Agonistes* is unquestionably the poetry of pessimism and suffering. The general atmosphere pervading this kind of poetry is one of glooms and disgust.

Edmund Wilson thinks that it is due to the – “dark marking of provinces inhibits”. Not only Eliot's themes are pessimist and gloomy, but his characters are also pessimist and gloomy. They are usually middle aged persons, restless lovers, lost sailors, and haunted souls. Examples are: Prufrock, Gerontion, Phlebas, Tiresias, Harry, Cella, etc. This attitude of the poet-cum-playwright cannot be explained away as something sudden and accidental, it is rather due to his sober temper and well-conceived design. It seems Eliot deliberately adopted this stance in order to lodge his protest against the facile “cheerfulness, optimism, and hopefulness” (Eliot 223) of the nineteenth century. He adopted this stance to cope with the immediate situation– to

depict effectively the fallen condition of modern civilization which he found to be morally sterile and purposeless, chaotic and directionless. Modern civilization, as Eliot saw, has fallen upon evil days, and the overall picture of human life has been blurred with rampant corruption and lustfulness. This is what we find in many Eliot's poems and plays including *The Waste Land* and *The Cocktail party*.

Eliot's early poems are contained in *Prufrock and other Observations* (1917), which express, according to Eliot, the "boredom, the horror and the glory" (Smidt 135) of the modern world. J. Alfred Prufrock is a prematurely middle aged who is constantly assailed by doubts and distrust. Apparently he is ill-at-ease in the midst of beautiful women who 'come and go / talking of Michelangelo'. Prufrock is incapable of decision and action. He is acutely conscious of his being a misfit of his immediate surroundings, and in a mood of frustration and dejection he blurts out –

I grew old ..... I grow old .....

I shall bear the bottoms of my Trousers rolled.

It suggests about his approaching old age effects, his capacity of action and decision at a crucial moment.

Another poem, *Portrait of a Lady*, reverses the situation of *The Love Song*..... by portraying a middle aged woman in the presence of a young man. The woman is fully conscious of her futility and loneliness, and hence she declares: "I shall sit here, serving tea to friends ....."

*The Poems* published in 1920 are also of a serious nature: they are mainly pessimistic. In them, Eliot “stresses the ugliness and corruption of our age.....” (Nuhsa 133). One such poem is *Gerontion* (1919) which depicts an old man called Gerontion, who is afflicted with the memory of his past and who is in a vortex of moral and spiritual crisis. In utter desperation, he says:

Think  
 Neither fear nor courage saves us.  
 Unnatural vices  
 Are feathered by our heroism. Virtues  
 Are forced upon us by our impudent crimes.

Clearly, Gerontion is a person from whom hope and grace are totally withdrawn. He is a soul groping in the dark and feeling the weakness of old age.

*The Waste Land* (1922) also points the picture of a devitalized and dehumanized society. The shadow of World War I looms over it. The very air and the seasons seem to have got rotten. Moral and spiritual values seem to have touched the rock bottom. The representative of entire humanity, Tiresias meets failure in his search for spiritual regeneration, and hence he has rightly been called “a mock-hero” (Smidt 224).

Getting disillusioned with the world around him, he looks to the east, for the moral and spiritual redemption of mankind.

*The Hollow Men* (1925), which continues the tone and the mood of *The Waste Land*, explores further miserable conditions of modern man. This poem portrays modern

men as 'hollow men' and as 'stuffed men' having 'head piece filled with straw'. These men are truly the denizens of Dante's *Inferno*; they suffer greatly under fear and illusion. They do not have 'eyes' to peep through the dark and to emerge on a sunny atmosphere. The poem ends on a note a complete sorrow and dejection:

This is the way the world ends

Not with a bang but a whimper

The prevailing mood does not offer a ray of hope to modern man. The poem *Sweeney Agonistes* (1926-27) effectively portrays sexual abuse of modern man in a 'burning' world. Sweeney is the man of gross nature, and for him life is only 'Birth and copulation and death'.

The poems written since 1927 are slightly different in mood and tone. The horrors of the 'unreal city', the note of dejection and suffering, to be found in the earliest poems now disappear. *Ash Wednesday* is a poem in point. For his moral anchorage and spiritual solace, the poet goes to Christianity- to Anglo-Catholicism, newly discovered religion of Eliot. Virgin Mary is involved here. She is the mother of Christ and giver of peace and harmony to the human world.

The tone of religious servitude is found in *The Rock* (1934) too, though it has echoes of religious pessimism. Mark the following passage in this regard:

The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries

Bring us farther from God and nearer

to the Dust.

The poet is speaking here of the suffering and destruction that man has to undergo in the present day world.

*Four Quartets* (1943), which is primarily a philosophical poem, is not entirely free from the pangs and tortures of man. In the poem, "Burnt Norton" mentions the wind blowing in and out of unwholesome lungs (section III); "East cooker" offers the following advice: "You must go by a way where in there is no ecstasy" (Social III). "The Dry Salvages" emphatically suggests that there is no end of 'soundless wailing' and 'withering of withered flowers' and 'movement of pain' (section III); and "Little Gidding" gives us 'Dust in the air suspended' (section II). These references create the impression that the atmosphere in which modern man is living is non-too-happy and non-too-healthy.

The protagonists in Eliot's poems and plays are generally sufferers in life. They remind us of what is often said of the characters found in Hardy's novels – 'Happiness is but an occasional episode on the general drama of pain'. For Eliot's protagonists- Prufrock, Gerontion, Tiresias, Becket, Harry, Celia, Colby, and others, the very air that they breathe seems to be polluted. They are ill-at-ease in their given citations. They suffer inescapably because of Eliot's pessimistic outlook upon life. In this connection, Prof. Kristian Smidt has aptly remarked,

His (*Eliot's*) early pessimism, connected with the general disillusionment of our epoch, found support both in a certain aspect of Christianity and in the philosophies of Hinduism and Buddhism. His later acceptance of suffering and

askesis as ways to blissful perfection is in agreement both with Protestant and Catholic Christianity and with the religions of the East.” (Smidt 224)

Eliot's sense of pervading sorrow in the human world is something born of his innate temperament. He was actually searching for love and light in a jealous and selfish world; he wanted the support of ethics and spirituality in a world 'burning' in desire and lust. So, he became a pessimist in his poetry and plays.

Of Eliot's plays, *Murder in the Cathedral* offers us Thomas-a-Becket who exemplifies the idea that 'action is suffering/And suffering is action'. Eliot equates here 'action' and 'suffering', and in this matter he echoes Milton's following lines in

*Paradise Lost*:

Fallen Cherub, to be weak is miserable,

Doing or suffering .....(Book I, II)

Like Buddha, Eliot believes that 'suffering' (or dukkha) is omnipresent and omnipotent. For its recurring, universal character, suffering has been symbolized by 'the wheel' in Eliot's poetry and plays.

This symbol is found in *Gerontion*, *The Waste Land*, *Ash Wednesday*, *Burnt Norton*, *Murder in the Cathedral*, and *The Family Reunion*, and it stands for "the temporal world of unending suffering" (Dwivedi 185). The noted English author, E. M. Forster remarks that Eliot belongs to the group of those who "continue to suffer". In this respect, he is not different from the Buddha. To both, desire (tanha, in Buddhist terminology) is the root cause of all sufferings.

Another doctrine of Buddhism which attracted Eliot was that of Nirvana (or Nibbana) and death-wish. Nirvana is a state of existence in which man is freed from all worldly desires and sense-perceptions. We have repeated references to this doctrine in the form of death-wish in Eliot's poetry and plays. Thus, the Sybil says in the epigraph to *The Waste Land*: 'I wish to die'. In "Journey of the Magi", the speaker declares; 'I should be glad of another death'. Sybil in a poem after him observes thus; 'My life is light, waiting for the death wind'. And Sweeney thinks that 'Life is death'. The Poem *Lines to a Persian Cat* beautifully expresses the idea of death-wish and Nirvana:

There is no relief but in grief.

O when will the creaking heart cease?

Being afflicted with grief, the speaker wants 'peace of mind, all passion spent' in death and Nirvana. The doctrine of Nirvana finds an excellent expression in the poem "Gerontion", where the person speaks of losing his passion and sense-perceptions:

I have lost my passion; why should I need to keep it.

Since what is kept must be adulterated?

I have lost my sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch:

How should I use them for your closer contact?

All the objects of sense-perception are being negated here. The passage lays great emphasis on the negation of the objects of sensual pleasure as well as on the cultivation of spiritual discipline. In doing so, the poet is deeply indebted to the teachings of Lord Buddha. Likewise, the speaker in the poem *Ash Wednesday* expresses his desire to be

fired from the endless cycle of birth and death (Dwivedi 172). He wishes to have peace in oblivion, as is evident in the following lines:

Because I do not hope to turn again  
Because I do not hope  
Because I do not hope to turn  
Desiring this man's gift and that man's scope  
I no longer strive to strive towards such things.

Here, the speaker certainly hints at 'dispossessing' himself from all gifts and scope, and thereby attaining Nirvana. In *Four Quartets*, the poem *The Dry Salvages* gives us striking image of the lines moving 'between the hither and the farther shore'. Through this image, the poet reminds us of the two 'shores' of desire and 'Nirvana' – the two 'shores' mentioned by the Buddha himself. Eliot tacitly suggests Nirvana in his play, *The Cocktail Party* (1950), where Sir Henry warns Edward of letting 'the genie out of the bottle'. For salvation of the soul (jiva) the burden of the body has to be thrown aside. This what Sir Henry suggests obliquely.

Eliot was also fascinated with the doctrine of Karma which is referred to as 'Right Conduct' in the Eightfold path to be practiced by a Buddhist. The monks were commanded to abstain from the ten evils. Eliot also believes that "life must be an ascetic discipline akin to the mystic discipline of the East" (Smidt 199). Numerous instances can be cited from his poetry and plays:

- (a) The lot of man is careless labour (*The Rock*, I Chorus)

- (b) Of all that was done in the past, You eat the fruit, either rotten or ripe.  
For every ill deed in the past we suffer the consequences. (*The Rock*, II Chorus)
- (c) And do not think of the fruit of action, Fare forward. (*The Dry Salvages*)
- (d) And right action is freedom from past and future also. (*The Dry Salvages*)
- (e) .....neither you nor we know until the judgment after death, what is the fruit of action?

(*To the Indians who Died in Africa*)

In *The Waste Land*, “right action” is indicated by “What The Thunder Said”: “data” dayadhyam, damyata (*Give, Sympathises, Control*). “The significance of these words is that one should subdue oneself and give oneself to others, and to the Brahman, who is in all things: and this is how Eliot uses them in *The Waste Land*” (Smidt 188).

Also in his plays, there are preferences to the doctrine of ‘karma’. In *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935), Becket’s struggle to avoid temptations without putting physical resistance to killers, and his final decision of martyrdom is an example of right action and conduct. Kristian Smidt says, “Right Action is an internal as well as an external affair; in fact, it is chiefly a matter of making ‘perfect the will’. It demands renunciation. Becket has to resist temptation of youth, popularity, temporal and spiritual power”.

(Smidt 199)

In *The Family Reunion* (1930), Harry is also worried about his good conduct, and thereby to purge the sinuous action and evil deeds of his father. Ultimately the path

of redemption is shown to him by the Furies. This path of redemption is actually the path of right action or the path of good conduct.

Celia, in *The Cocktail Party* (1950), wants to disentangle herself from the coils of worldly serpent, the charms and comforts of physical life, and gladly accepts the path of renunciation. Her choice for the life of disinterested person detached from sensual pursuits actually makes her choose the life of a saint. She chooses this saintly life because of her disinterestedness in and detachment from the ensnaring world. In fact, her choice is the choice of good conduct.

Eliot's next play, *The Confidential Clerk* (1955) is concerned with the problem of self-identify. It is only by the Knowledge of the self that one can be truly happy and thereby put an end to one's pains and miseries. According to Buddhism, suffering can be removed by following the Eightfold Path of righteousness which includes Right views, Right resolve, and Right conduct, etc. In this play, Mr. Claude wants to make young Colby his confidential clerk after the retirement of Eggerson. Both Claude and his wife Elizabeth are suffering not only from the official desire of appointing a loyal clerk, but also from the wish of finding out their illegitimate lost son. Both of them claim Colby to be their son. But, ironically enough, Colby is proved by Mrs. Guzzard, to be the son of her dead husband- an obscure and disappointed musician called Herbert Guzzard. Thus, Colby gains self-knowledge through this revelation. So, he takes a Right Resolve not to follow Sir Claude, and finally decides to become an organist for which

he was having natural aptitude. He is helped by Eggerson, to the utter surprises of Claude. This choice is his Right Conduct.

Lord Buddha holds that man's present life is the effect of his past actions, and the future is the effect of the present. Eliot also believes that man must eat the fruits of his actions in this life only. His last play, *The Elder Statesman* (1959), presents the predicament of Lord Claverton who is ill-at-case with his present, and hence prematurely ageing. His mind is constantly haunted by the fearful memories of his evil action in the past. He is also reminded of his past by Gomez, who suddenly reappears in London after pursuing a career of forgery, crime and punishment in a foreign land. To escape his unpleasant past, he goes to Badgley Court to live in solitude, and gets mental peace and rest there. But instead of recovering, he is much and more preoccupied with the past and broods over the evil consequences springing from it. Here, he is faced with another agonizing visitor Mrs. Carghill, his forsaken beloved in his youth, and also with Gomez again who was an eye-witness to the incident of killing an old man by his van. Thus, he finds himself in a tight corner. Much against his will, he discloses his guilty past to his daughter Monica, who is carrying a love-affair with Charles, and to his son Michael who wants to go abroad to start life afresh under the patronage of Gomez. By confessing his mistakes openly, Claverton is relieved from the burden of the dead past. This confession is his 'Right Action', which enables him to tread the path of 'Good Conduct'. He becomes free from his guilty conscience and enjoys inward peace and

happiness. He reposes trust in Gomez and Mrs. Carghill and sets his son and daughter to lead a happy life independently.

Eliot was drawn to Buddhism and Hinduism for their emphasis on rigorous spiritual practice. He was of the firm view that a man could “accomplish anything of value by discipline, ethical and political” (Eliot 381). Eliot thought that the ultimate aim of man’s life is the perfection of individually and the attainment of sainthood” (Eliot 78). In one of his commentaries published in *The Criterion* (1934), Eliot remarked as follows:

What ultimately matters is the Salvation of the individual soul. You may not like this principle; but if you abjure it, you will probably in the end get something that you like less. (Eliot 454)

It was the lack of the prospect of individual salvation that made Eliot despondent and pessimistic in his early poetry, such as in *The Love Song*, *Portrait of a Lady*, *Gerontion*, *The Waste Land* and *Hollow Men*. It was the absence of the spiritual practice that rendered the inhabitants of *The Waste Land* look to the some other land. That’s why, the fifth part of *The Waste Land*, “what the Thunder Said” assumes additional significance. Here, the teachings of Prajapati to his disciples- men, demons, and gods- are for the latter’s moral and spiritual edification. For the same reason, in *The Waste Land*, Eliot had earlier collocated the Buddha and St. Augustine. These two representatives of the East and the West were brought together in order to lay great stress on their exemplary asceticism, which is the need of the time. Asceticism alone can check the drive of desire

and the naked display of sex in humanity. It may be mentioned here that the collocation is not incidental but deliberate and intentional.

### **Conclusion**

Eliot's use of some of the thoughts or teachings of Buddhism strikes a reader as soon as he opens the pages of his poetry and plays. These thoughts or teachings are harnessed to a creative use in a systematic manner. In fact, there was a time when Eliot thought seriously to become a Buddhist; that was when he was writing *The Waste Land*. The systematic use of Buddhist thoughts or teachings by Eliot in his writings convinces us that he was a serious student of philosophy and had a deep love of the philosophical and religious treasures of Hinduism and Buddhism.

T. S. Eliot makes use of Buddhist ideas in his poetry and plays. Some of these ideas are: death-wish and nirvana, impermanence of the soul (anicca/doctrine of anatta), life and death as 'the two shores' of the world (Samsara), importance of the killing of 'desire' (Tanha), prevalence of passion (or, 'burning') in human life, etc. Eliot also applies certain Hindu ideas in his works. If *The Waste Land* is based on the Buddhist learning of the poet, *The Dry Salvages* (One of the four Quartets), *To the Indians who died in Africa* and fifth section of *The Waste Land* go to the Hindu scriptures and thoughts for their content. However, a consistent application of Buddhism in his writings prompts us to believe that he worked as a writer under the active influence of Buddhist religion.

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## **Hailing the Individual in Marquez's *No One Writes to the Colonel***

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### **Abstract**

*An individual is hailed by state mechanism. This is something that applied to every state, and especially more, when there is a change in the state policies. The old Colonel in No One Writes to the Colonel is a major victim of shift in the state's ideology after the civil strife of the 1950s in Colombia. The post-civil war era was influenced and controlled by military regime in Colombia. Hence, new state forces and ideologies were forwarded and implemented. As a result, the old Colonel, a mechanism of the old regime, becomes the victim of social and legal injustice. The state uses its power in a systematic manner to render the old colonel's life a misery. The use of state apparatus is rampant and the Colonel is denied the pension that is due to him. Martial law and censorship are used to control and silence the people and to force them to follow the dictates of the state. This makes his life hard and is left in the lurch. This is the intention of the system that uses various state machineries for the interpellation of individuals. Through the use of state apparatus and ideology an individual is reduced to a non entity before the power of the state.*

**Keywords:** Hailing, Interpellation, State Machinery, Individuals, Ideology

## **Introduction**

Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *No One Writes to the Colonel* portrays the loneliness and sufferings of an old colonel who has been forced into retirement promising a pension by the military regime. However, it has been fifteen years the colonel has been waiting for the pension and within this period his life has been reduced to almost tatters. During these years, the colonel and his wife are subjected to harsh psychological treatment, courtesy of military rulers. In this context, the present paper analyzes the notion of ideology which is used by the state for the interpellation of an individual based on the sufferings of the retired colonel.

Ideology is a way of looking at and interpreting life in society. It is conveyed as a general system of ideas, values and beliefs, either true or false. It is a term that embodies all the problems associated with socio-cultural, economic and political complexities of a society. An ideology is composed of components, including acceptance by those in power, must be capable of guiding one's evaluations, provide guidance towards actions and is logical. As such, an ideology should be in contrast with different issues of utopia and historical myth. It also has a rich history, during which it has taken various, sometimes-contradictory meanings.

Terry Eagleton in *Ideology* remarks that ideology has wide range of historical meanings and relates it with the interest of ruling class. He opines that ideologies are shaped and developed in line with the ideas and interests developed by the ruling class. They tune it in line with their interest, supposedly guided from historical perspective.

Eagleton remarks, "The term 'ideology' has a wide range of historical meaning, all the way from the unworkably broader sense of social determination of thoughts to the suspiciously narrow idea of the development of false ideas in the direct interest of a ruling class"(221).

Eagleton is of the view that ideology is a product of discourse rather than the product of language. As such, there is a fundamental relationship of ideology with that of power. It is the latter that gives validity and authenticity to the prior concept. A form of social life is set up when there is a change in the power politics, as is the case of the retired Colonel. The Colonel was serving the power interest of the previous rulers and when it was overthrown, he became its immediate victim. This concept of penultimate condition of the Colonel was hesitatingly presented by Marquez. The success of this fiction has to do with the certain level of historical set up that determines the ideological ways of leading a nation and the society, backed by power. So, ideology is something between an utterance and its material position brought to social form by use of power. For Eagleton:

[I]deology represents the points where power impacts up on certain utterances and inscribes it tacitly within them. But it is not therefore to be equated with just and any form of any discursive partisanship, interested speech or theoretical bias; rather, the concept of ideology aims to disclose something of the relation between an utterance and its material conditions of possibility. When those

conditions of possibility are viewed in the light of certain power-struggle central to the reproduction, it represents the whole form of social life. (223)

In this form of power, ideology determines the fate of individuals. S/he becomes the apparent victim who has to change and adjust to the changes occurred in the name of change of system and power-politics.

The pain of the retired Colonel is an inborn of this ideological shift in the power politics. When the old regime was thrown a new system with new values took over the state mechanisms. Thus, political ideology has two dimensions: how society should work; and the most appropriate ways to which the ideas are arranged. On the face of changes, the rulers often opt to appear neutral, refraining themselves from the woes of the supporters of the previous supporters. However, in this shift and twist of power and politics, it is the general people who are victimized.

Meanwhile, all other ideologies that differ from the ruling ideology are seen as radical and threat to the existing ideologies. The system in power imposes the ideology, as if it is the most ideal ways of life for society. Eagleton states:

Ruling ideology can actively shape the wants and desires of those subjected to them, but they must also engage significantly with the wants and desires that people already have, catching up genuine hopes and needs, re-inflecting them in their own peculiar idiom, and feelings them back to their subjects in ways which render those ideologies plausible and attractive. (14-15)

The way of living and ideas are imposed on the way of thinking and living a life of an individual. Anyone who does not assemble to the ideas set by the ruling class is left behind in the human race and, is often made a victim by the state machineries.

Ruling class use power through a systematic use of dominance on an individual or groups of persons to flourish ideological pattern set up by them. It is often exercised by the person or group in authority over the inferior class and groups of persons. As such, the retired Colonel who was once a part of the previous regime is the victim of the new military regime. Besides, the systematic use of force by an organized body and individuals to control and influence the behavior of persons makes the individuals' life more horrible, as in the case of the colonel.

Garcia Marquez is one of the most popular novelists and short story writers from Colombia and of the Caribbean. He is widely regarded as a pioneer in the use of magic realism and fantasy in his fictions. First published in 1958, *No One Writes to the Colonel* is the depiction of the atrocity of state politics and its impact in the life of a retired Colonel who is waiting for the release of pension after his forced retirement. The aftermath of the post-civil war was marked by the shift in power ideologies which takes the Colonel as the successor of the previous system and is determined to ruin his and his family's life.

Marquez's *No One Writes to the Colonel* depicts post-civil war Colombian public atrocities through the sufferings of the retired military Colonel. The text reflects incidents regarding declining situation of Civil rights and manipulation of military in

almost all the sectors of socio-political intervention in Colombia. The Colonel was forced to go into voluntary retirement and promised for a rightful pension. However, the pension is not released even after fifteen years making his life miserable and pathetic.

### **Theory and Textual Analysis**

In the novel the narrator primarily talks on the pathetic condition of the retired Colonel who is victimized by the dictatorial regime. Expressing his sympathies towards the retired hero the narrator says, "But in reality, his hoping for the letter barely sustained him. It exhausted, his bones aching from sleeplessness, he couldn't attend to his needs and the rooster is at the same time" (31). Thus, the retired Colonel is merely hoping against hope on the basis of the false assurance given to him by the Military regime. This futile hope is the only way for the Colonel to lead his life. However, the regime has no intention to sanction any financial support for the veteran general.

This dualist approach of the state has to do with the SA and ISA that is set up for the systematic repression of an individual in support of the state force. Althusser mentions that there are two models of ideology advanced in this regard: the "mechanistic type" (162) in which ideology is a distorted mirror held up to the (economic) Real (this would be part of the Base-Superstructure model of the social formation), and the "hermeneutic interpretation" (162) in which the (economic) Real is the essence which manifests itself through the dross of ideological phenomena which must be peeled away, as it were, to arrive at the kernel of truth (this would correspond to the expressive totality schema).

However, the question arises why “men ‘need’ this imaginary transposition of their real conditions of existence in order to ‘represent to themselves’ their real conditions of existence?” (183). One argument often advanced is that a certain clique or minority, “Priests or Despots are responsible. They ‘forged’ the Beautiful Lies” (163). In other words, a “falsified representation of the world” (163) designed to “enslave other minds by dominating their imaginations” (163) and on which they “base their domination and exploitation of the ‘people’” (163).

These are state driven tactics institutionally supported in aid of the government by the Military depicting the picture of atrocity of the post-civil war military rulers. When the Colonel is still waiting for the pension to come, even after one and half decades, his wife is indifferent, and aggressive towards the regime. The old man’s optimism is inborn of the institutional training provided to him. The Colonel still has a faith of respect and confidence towards the regime and particularly towards the high military command of Colombian Army. During the post-civil war period it is believed that several personnel like old man and common individuals were personally and impersonally deceived and tortured by the dictatorial authority.

Many people like the Colonel whose mentality is shaped by traditional belief that state is the guardian and the savior of all its citizens is strongly rooted in his behavior. Althusser’s claim that it is not the ‘real conditions of existence’ which men represent to themselves by means of ideologies (albeit in distorted or at least concealed

form) but, rather, their relationship to these conditions of existence. Althusser's ideology "has a material existence" (165).

As such, Althusser argues that "'ideas' or 'representations', etc. do not have an ideal or spiritual existence, but a material existence" (165). Althusser contends that each ISA is the "realization of an ideology" (166) as a result of which an ideology "always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices. This existence is material" (166). Arguing that the "material existence of the ideology is an apparatus and its practices does not have the same modality as the material existence of a paving-stone or a rifle" (166), Althusser suggests that an individual's beliefs are derived "from the ideas of the individual concerned, i.e., from him as a subject with a consciousness which contains the ideas of his beliefs" (167).

The individual in question behaves in such and such a way, adopts such and such a practical attitude, and participates in certain regular practices which are those of the ideological apparatus on which 'depend' the ideas which he has in all consciousness freely chosen as a subject. If he believes in God, he goes to church to attend Mass, kneels, prays, confesses, does penance and naturally repents and so on. Althusser explains these ideals as subjugation, in the following manner:

Every 'subject' endowed with a 'consciousness' and believing in the 'ideas' that his 'consciousness' inspires in him and freely accepts, must '*act according to his ideas*', must therefore inscribe his own ideas as a free subject in the actions of his material practice. Even if he does not do what his beliefs tell him he ought to

do, he merely ends up doing something else which are equally the form which his beliefs take. (168-69)

Althusser opines the distinction between 'theory' (the putative realm of ideas) and 'praxis' (the realm of human actions and behavior), arguing that the ideas of a human subject exist in his actions. Contending that consciousness is inseparable from the behavior in which humans engage, Althusser is of the view that a human being's "actions are inserted into practices" (168) which are in turn "governed by the *rituals* in which these practices are inscribed, within the *material existence of an ideological apparatus*, be it only a small part of that apparatus: a small mass in a small church, a funeral" (168), etc. To put this another way, ideas are "inscribed in the actions of practices governed by rituals defined in the last instance by an ideological apparatus" (170).

Historical study of Latin America illustrated both the levels of power domination and corruption, that have taken place at the national level particularly originated by the contemporary rulers. Consequently, it is quite difficult to combat against these evils for common welfare because coercion and corruption are fueled by some internal agencies particularly higher political authorities and commanding military forces to fulfill their vested interests as such. These state driven atrocities and corruption cases through misappropriation of power can be studied and analyzed from the legal proceedings and actions taken against authorities in this region. Presenting a sharp comment upon this dictatorial Latin American power imposition on common people, an

English critic Camron G. Thies, in his article “War, Rivalry and State Building in Latin America” opines:

The common argument is that internal violence overwhelmed the Latin American state in the absence of countervailing pressure that would typically be supplied by the fear of external violence. Further, the preoccupation with the “enemy within” also prevented states from engaging in external violence. As a result, Latin America states are relatively weak entities that exist in a precarious position relative to both domestic society and other states in a region characterized by a violent peace. (451)

Aforementioned statement exposes the harmful impacts of contemporary Latin American internal conflicts in its socio-economy and politics, since the conflict in 1950s. Consequently, the direct victims of this ideological power create a situation which interpellates common individuals.

Imposition of ideological means the use of various state apparatus like the Military and its gun power to make the life of an individual worse like the Colonel who was promised of his legitimate pension by the regime but never implemented. Fifteen years long wait is almost certain to wear down an individual to his/her feet. In this period, his condition has deteriorated from bad to worse with no food grain neither money left for feeding and medicating his ailing wife. The military has simply forgotten the old man and his life-long service to the nation and the military. The retired colonel is one of the worst victims of misuse of institutional powers implemented by the state.

The fall of the Colonel to the present state of hopelessness is the example of manipulation of power against a law-abiding government worker.

As in the text *No One Writes to the Colonel*, there are plenty of examples of systematic upheaval of difficulties imposed on common citizens. The retired Colonel, of the Colombian Army is depicted as the most dominated figure in socio-economic and psychological levels. After fifteen years of fruitless wait for the pension, the colonel almost hopelessly says, "In fifty years, we will be peacefully six feet under, while that poor man will be killing himself every Friday waiting for his retirement pension" (42). Surprisingly, the old protagonist has been able to drag his feet against the institutional forces for all those years.

This is just a glimpse of a debate between the retired colonel and his sick wife on the issue of the tricky and false policy of the contemporary Colombian regime under which large number of Colombian soldiers were forced to wait for the false assurance of the then government. This tragic socio-economic position of the common individuals is directly caused by the internal war and use of power to crush the existence of others since the conflict era in Colombia.

This is the glimpse of brief history of the application of ideological imposition of the state on its subject. In the Colombian context, this study moves on the issue of abuse of power by the military in Colombia. The old couple represents the burning example of how life turns when someone is thrown from power to the world of misery. The wife of the colonel, everyday pretends that they are still burning fire and cooking

food; however, it is she or her husband who knows of the reality that there is merely water or cold stone to cook. Nevertheless, she tries to maintain her old standard, as:

She assumed an energetic attitude. That morning she had put the house in order and was dressed very strangely, in her husband's old shoes, and oilcloth apron and a rag tied around her head with two knots at the ears. 'You haven't the slightest sense for business.' She said. 'When you go to sell something, you have to put on the same face as when you go to buy.' (50)

Despite the fact that almost everything is finished in the house, the attitude to show that things are normal still rules their life. The act of pretention is not as easy, as have been but they are on it, almost in a habitual manner.

The pathetic condition of such common individuals, determined by the atrocities of rivals at power is ruling the fate of the old couple. The politically strong elites often overlap social and economic elites. This group shows a marked ability to hold on to the authority of power, effectively excluding other groups and social institutions, such as the common public and the military, from significant participation in or control over the political process. Members of the lower classes find it difficult, although not impossible, to challenge or join the established elite in the political and economic areas.

Colombia has an exceptional history for Latin America because the country has been dominated more by civilian than by military rule. The strategy behind it was military forces have denied political power; the civilian elites have had only themselves, divided into rival groups, to compete with in the political ground. Quite contrary to this

in Peruvian history, there is an unbeatable interference of military authorities as such. During and after the Civil War, the armed forces underestimated the democratic procedures and frequently captured the power in their hands. In the 1960s, throughout Latin America, communist movements inspired by the Cuban Revolution, tried to gain power through rebellion. The Revolutionary Left Movement in contemporary Colombia, launched a revolution that had been crushed by 1965, but Peru's internal conflict continued until its climax in the 1990s. Talking on this issue of Cuban revolution Walter D. Mignolo in his book *The Idea of Latin America* puts his views, "Dreams of modernization in Latin America crumbled as the welfare state economy ended in the 1970s. Instead, dictatorial regimes took hold and inaugurated the new Political-economic model of neo-liberalism: a political theory combined with political economy that makes the marked the main principle of the organization of society" (98).

The intervention of military regime has been prominent in Peruvian history. Coups have frequently interrupted Civilian constitutional government. Thus, the collapse of the welfare state at the end of the 1970s led to privatization and marked drives state regulation.

In the 1960s, because of the ongoing Civil War, Colombia and other Latin American nations naturally diminished the energy of revolutionary forces. But on the contrary, they continued waging war against each other until the last degree of their strength. As a result, the resistance power of these war mongering nations to defend

themselves from external attacks reached into the marginal position. This is the reason that the colonial rule of Spain and Russia extended here up to many decades.

The increased frequency of the internal use of force reduced the capability of the military to wage war against outer enemies. The frequent deployment of the military to control internal conflicts in Latin America may have limited the military's ability to properly settle the Civil Wars (Thies 458). The time, equipment and organization directed towards cooling down the internal rivals naturally divert the attention of forces from the pursuit of external rivals. In addition to this during the Civil War, the coercive use of the military within the state detracts from national solidarity and public readiness to support the military and the state more generally through either symbolic or material means.

This picture is drawn when we see the wife of the Colonel curses the Colombian regime. She especially locates her attacks against the military that killed her only son in an attack accusing him for his secret involvement with revolutionary forces for the liberation of Colombians. The subject acts insofar as he is acted upon by the following system (set out in the real order of determination): ideology existing in a material ideological apparatus, prescribing material practices governed by a material ritual, which practices exist in the material actions of a subject acting in all consciousness according to this belief (170). The key concept in all this, Althusser declares as his central concern is the "notion of the subject" (170).

Therefore, Althusser turns his attention to the “category of the subject (which may function under other names: e.g., as the soul of Plato, as God, etc.)” (170-71). He contends that the subject is the “constitutive category of all ideology, whatever its determination (regional or class) and whatever its historical date – since ideology has no history” (171) in so far as “all ideology has the function (which defines it) of ‘constituting’ concrete individuals as subjects” (171). Arguing that ideology performs the two-fold function of “recognition” (172) and “misrecognition” (172), he contends that “you and I are always already subjects, and as such constantly practice the rituals of ideological recognition, which guarantee for us that we are indeed concrete individuals, distinguished and (naturally) irreplaceable subjects” (172-73). In a famous assertion, Althusser argues that “all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects” (173). The major thrust of all these quotes is that individuals don’t have independent existence and they are hailed or confined within a fixed slot by an ideology and they don’t exist as free individuals in their own right.

### **Conclusion**

In *No One Writes to the Colonel* Marquez tells the pathetic story of the retired colonel of the Colombian army during the post-civil war time. The colonel and his sick wife represent the voiceless common people of the time. During the civil war the colonel enjoyed power to dominate the rebels but he did in the name of prevailing system and order. He was just a part of the system and following its order. Even after the political change the colonel is a victim of the system which state mechanism to

interpellate individuals like him. The state does not care about fulfilling the rightful demands of the colonel. The ISA has hegemonized the individual as a part of the state policy. The retired colonel is regarded as the enemy of the new regime which shows the power of the state in hailing the individuals with the help of its ideological mechanism.

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**Reasserting Female Subjectivity in Rich's *Aunt Jennifer's Tigers* and *Diving into the Wreck***

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**Abstract:**

*This research work deals with Adrienne Rich's "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers" and "Diving into the Wreck" from feminist perspective. Feminism deals with undoing the historical injustice made over female and setting a new subjectivity of the female in the society. By means of art work the female persona likes to be bold and chivalric like the tiger figure in "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers" which is against grain of patriarchy. Similarly in "Diving into the Wreck" the audacious female narrator ventures to dive into the wreck to expose the gender injustice imposed by myth (history) thereby explores her new role in the society where earlier she was nameless. This is how both of the poems delve into creating a new position of the female by asserting their voice and caliber and defying the myth.*

**Keywords:** patriarchy, myth, subjectivity hegemony, normativity

Adrienne Rich (1929-2012) is a radical feminist poet, critic and thinker who has distinguished herself as a poet of ideas among contemporary women writers of the United States. She resurfaces the issue of female subjectivity in her poetry. In addition she strives for freedom from patriarchal dominance. Emboldened by Yeatsian writings

she also 'mixes politics with art.' In so doing, she challenges the established norms of the society in terms of gender and sex disparity and occupies her independent position. By and large, she questions on the patriarchal normativity that shapes the subjectivity of the female. This study examines Adrienne Rich's "Diving into the Wreck" (1973) and "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers" (1951) from the lens of feminist criticism where I would explore the struggle of the narrator to assert her position by berating the traditional patriarchal norms. To her patriarchal hegemony has created imbalance of power between sexes and it zapped the female into a relegated nonexistence position. In these poems she likes to fight against the patriarchal normativity and ensures her 'self' made identity. It leads her to attack the myth related to the power of male that keeps the female under the canopy.

Having given a perusal of the myth used by patriarchy to rule over the other, Rich ensures to excavate the wreck it has piled over the female since the advent of human civilization. The injustice over female in the myth sparks on her to delve into it and expose the wreckage of the male to show the lower subjectivity of the female. With the androgynous narrator in the poem "I", Rich moves beyond the limits of gender and sexes to give room to form female subjectivity. The narrative persona in the poem starts to explore and express her feminine identity and sexuality by figuratively "diving" into a wreck and exploring an underwater world. The persona escapes to nature, because she finds affinity both in nature and women who are exploited by dominant destructive forces of patriarchal myth.

The narrator is a lonely scuba diver to dig out the myth full of misogynist culture. It is known that myth is a classical narrative that carries the religious, philosophical, moral, and political values of a culture. To make it more sensible and plausible, gods and supernatural characters are used. To mythologist Joseph Campbell, as summed up by Kirszner and Mandell, myths contain truths that link people together whether they live today or lived in the past (765). Many myths from western and eastern worlds like Greek, Christian, and Hindu expound the phenomenon that human beings care about. For instance, Orpheus's arrival at Hade to bring back his wife Eurydice reveals the longing for unprecedented power and vested desire of male to outwit death and own the female. Mostly the mythical stories highlight the power of male characters and denounce the female. Hercules, Prometheus, Adam, Sisyphus, and many others have been glorified whereas Pandora, Echo, and Eve are stereotyped as bad. Feminism makes a bird's eye view on human civilization from its beginning and flays the imbalance of power between the sexes. Largely, feminists denounce the perspective of the males to looking down the female. The book of Genesis blames Eve for the loss of paradise and explains female has been made out of the ribs of the male, hence she is a parasite. Shakespeare in *Hamlet* denounces female as: "Frailty thy name is woman" (1:2, 146). Hinting at the second wedding of his mother, Hamlet accuses her as the lady full of weakness. Likewise Alexander Pope asserts: "Most women have no character at all" (qtd. in Dobie 103). This is an outright bullying of male over female because the male

has the sovereignty. Aforementioned quotes mirror the culture of regarding the female as inferior creature whose social position is secondary and relegated.

Bizarre fact is that the dominance of one sex over the other has been accepted for long due to the mythic discourse that created the 'regime of truth' which the female has to abide by. The narrators of Rich in both of the poems question over the subjugated position of the female and their subjectivization. As a result, like the determined feminist, the androgynous narrator of "Diving into the Wreck" sheds much light on the 'disparity' that exists between the male and female members of the human species. It has been found that behind the empirical notions regarding differences a number of fallacious impressions and beliefs exist which may be traced back in history. All the so-called authorities who are invariably men seem to have raised their voice with an end to silencing women and relegating them to subjugated positions. Rousseau inscribes misogynistic covert view on women. He "dedicates woman to husband and to maternity and declared that she was made just for the purpose of yielding to man and to put up with his injustice" (qtd. in Saccarelli 488). Likewise, Horace Walpole bitterly remarks female as: "hyena in petticoats" (qtd. in Dobbie 104). His remark points out the mean animalization of female; hence, non-human is in the gaze of male.

In this way, religion and politics have always catered to the interests of the dominant masculine group to perpetuate the notion of feminine subjugation. No matter to which religion a woman may belong, she is denied opportunities for growth and the development of her selfhood and is excluded from many spheres of life. In the Christian

ethics woman was always the temptress and in the interests of society it was considered best to curtail her opportunities. W.E.H. Lecky's *History of European Morals* bears testimony to this:

Woman was represented as the door of hell, as the mother of all human ills. She should be ashamed at the very thought that she is a woman. She should live in continual penance, on account of the curses she has brought upon the world. She should be ashamed of her dress, for it is the memorial of her fall. She should be especially ashamed of her beauty, for it is the most potent instrument of the daemon. . . . Women were even forbidden by a provincial Council, in the sixth century, on account of their impurity, to receive the Eucharist into their naked hands. Their essentially subordinate position was continually maintained. (35)

Here, Russell sums up the whole European misogynist civilization genealogically while reading Lecky's polemical book that decries the gender based injustice in western culture.

Provided that Rich's narrator finds the most compelling evidence of discrimination made over female is remapped by Simon de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex*. To her, woman lacks her history and is always 'secondary or nonexistent' thereby the male enjoys the immanence of power. She brings the graphic history of gender disparity. In Christian churches women's freedom of speech is curtailed. This is in keeping with the dictum of St. Paul who exhorts woman to keep silent in churches, for, as he insists "they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says"

(Cor. 14 :34). Likewise, Thomas Aquinas defines woman as "a misbegotten male" and the Catholic law which decrees that women are "unfit matter" for ordination still reflects this view. Allegedly, Muslim women enjoy very little freedom of movement and are even forbidden to enter mosques. Some sects still insist on women wearing purdahs when they appear before strangers or move out of their homes.

First thing to remember is that female has been thoroughly relegated in western and eastern civilizations in the past. The Sanskrit *sloka* also mirrors the 'under erasure' the position of the female by glorifying the status of the male:

“अमंत्रमक्षरं नास्ति नास्ति मूलमनौषधम् । अयोग्यः पुरुषो नास्तियोजकस्तत्र दुर्लभः ॥ (Literal meaning is; there is no letter that is not a *mantra* (panacea), no plant that has no medicinal quality, there is no unworthy male but what lacks is an 'enabler, or a coordinator). Further, dismaying fact is that Hindu texts bring instances of polygamy system that justify the slave like position of the female.

Moreover, Judaism which delegates quasi-priestly authority to the male parent curses the man who teaches his daughter the Torah. According to Sir Henry Maine, in the Roman patriarchal family, the eldest male parent is absolutely supreme in his household. His dominion extends to life and death and is as unqualified over his children and their houses as over his slaves (qtd. in Millett 46). His is the concern on the top position of male in family stratification who can hold the life and death of the rest of the members.

Repeatedly Beauvoir records that, during the Revolution, women in France enjoyed more freedom than women of other countries. But unfortunately for the French woman, her status was decided and her lot fixed for a century during the dictatorship of Napoleon and this had the effect of postponing her emancipation. Radical differences between male and female were 'recognized' and woman was declared "made for the family." Femininity was considered as a kind of "prolonged infancy" (*The Second Sex* 142). The words of Balzac may be taken to be representative of the attitude of the anti-feminist middle class of France during the nineteenth century: "The destiny of woman and her sole glory are to make beat the hearts of men ... She is a chattel and properly speaking only a subsidiary to man." He exhorts husbands to keep a firm reign, deny their wives education and keep them as unattractive as possible. According to him, the married woman is "a slave whom one must be able to set on a throne." (qtd. in Titus 3). The wife must be yielded to in trifles, given first place, relieved of painful tasks and cares but should be kept away from responsibility. This unjust depiction of woman is due to the male supremacy.

With this in mind, Beauvoir narrates how this proved to be disastrous for the middle class woman: "Most bourgeois women accepted this gilded confinement and the few who complained were unheard ... The middle class woman clung to her chains, because she clung to the privileges of her class. Freed from the male, she would have to work for a living; she felt no solidarity with working women . . ." (*The Second Sex* 142). Here she shows the dismay of the female that is lack of female bondage to outwit the male bondage over them. Exactly the androgynous narrator feel alike in "Diving into the Wreck":

I am having to do this  
notlike with his  
assiduous team  
aborded the sun flooded sooner  
but here alone (8-12).

Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1970) undercuts the repressive stereotyping of women by delving into the differences of biological and cultural identities. Her focus lies on the power held by male both in domestic and public domains. *The Female Eunuch* (1970) by Germaine Greer attempts to liberate female from mental slavery that goes with the 'regime of truth' set by patriarchy. Finally all attempts in feminist movement were made to undo the stereotyping misogynistic portrayal of the female that dominates her and gives the subsidiary position.

At this backdrop Adrienne Rich emerges in American literature with a new insight of groping the social position of the female. According to P. Williams in "Four poets on patriarchy: Levertov, Sexton, Rich, Plath": "Modern American poetry is generally characterized by tones of personal expression and confession" (117). Hinting to her personal marital discord and linking herself with the social issues of 1960s and 1970s, Rich has raised more often or more resoundingly women's rights, Williams adds: "from the call for greater justice and equality for women in American society to the protest against the patriarchal traditions that have oppressed women from the recorded history" (117), questioning the male-centered society of misdirection. The

debate on male authority versus the right of a female to control her own life and to be free of male domination is the everlasting theme in feminist literature that Rich encapsulates in her poems. Lacey Okonski analysis of the poem, "Diving into the Wreck," by Adrienne Rich, describes a scuba diver going down to explore a wrecked ship. Although the poem describes the diverse, specific actions, it also invites an allegorical interpretation in which the investigation of a wrecked ship symbolically represents one person's look back at a past failed romantic relationship.

By the same token, Xi Zhang reads it from Rich's personal traumatic note; Rich's marriage collapsed a few years before she wrote "Diving into the Wreck." Sadly, her ex-husband also committed suicide not long after that. So one could hardly ignore all these sufferings Rich was experiencing when she wrote the poem. The title "Diving into the Wreck" suggests a lot of things. The sad scene of "the wreck" and the horrifying dead bodies remind the reader of any experience where one plunges into a disaster, where things change suddenly for the worse, or in other words, any human suffering like a divorce or a death in the family, which Rich herself had encountered. The feeling of "loneliness" is also emphasized three times as "but here alone" (12), "there is no one to tell me when the ocean will begin" (33) and "I have to learn alone to turn my body without force in the deep element" (41-43), giving a sense of choking melancholy. Moreover, the significant symbol "book of myths" (1) refers to any lies, made-up stories, or statements recorded or passed down in a male-dominated culture, or in other words, "his story" rather than "her story". By the last few lines "a book of

myths in which our names do not appear" (92-94). This outrageous remark is against the glorification of males that kept the female always under their umbrella whereby the identity of the female is 'under erasure.' Rich shows her disappointment on the oppression of female in history that silenced the voices of women whereas most men have been glamorized or portrayed to be what history is all about.

In "Diving into the Wreck" quest of a different nature is found where the scuba diver goes down into water: "I came to explore the wreck . . . to see the damage that was done /and the treasures that prevail" (52-56). This voyage into the sea is of multilayered. The narrator explores inward and outward both. In both domains she finds herself as alienated and helpless. Rather she finds the "drowned face sleeps with open eyes/ whose breast still bears the stress" (78-79) which figuratively is the nonexistent identity of the female being absorbed in family caring and household chores. On the other hand, it is the nude exposure of 'his (story)' that pressurized the female to follow the 'regime of truth' despite the trauma female bore in their bosom.

As Ostriker suggests, it can be the poet's personal past, her subconscious or the ethnic consciousness. It is her "element," her identity, which she does not have to combat. As she strokes the beam of her lamp slowly along, she finds herself facing "something more permanent / than fish or weed / the thing I came for" which is nothing other than the wreck the thing itself (59-63). By now Rich has reached the maturity of outlook which emboldens her to be assertive. After awoken from the gender injustice she demands the change in gender perception along with new outlook. Modern female

are smart enough to cope with both of the role of male and female like the mutability of the sex of “mermaid and merman.” That’s why equipped with tools the androgynous narrator dives into the unfathomable depth of sea; metaphorically the immense domain of history, to trace out her subjectivity by which she can uncover her “drowned face” (64) and engrave the female identity with relentless toil where their position has been ignored; “our names do not appear” (94). Her epic journey into the alien world is full of risk and suffocating yet by means of her dauntless attempts she ignores “my flippers cripple me” (29) the difficulties enroute to her destination.

Similarly in “Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers” Rich attempts to escape into the world of freedom by means of creativity. The embroidery the narrator is knitting is impeded by “uncle’s wedding band” (7) yet the narrator is determined to overcome “with ordeals” (10) to reach to her destined freedom like the “the tigersprance across a screen”(1). Further the narrator takes the veil of dauntless persona like the tapestry tigers: “They donot fear the men beneath the trees;/ they pace in sleek chivalric certainty” (3-4) to show her personal courage to undo the tyranny of the men that has been engraved in the history as gender violence. The docile and domestic life contrasts with the artistic embroidery of the tiger which is so powerful that it outwits the domestic boundary set for the women. The needle work tiger is the innovation of the female that symbolically represents what the female wants in life; freedom and fearlessness. On the other hand the society governed by patriarchy still likes to perpetuate the classical model to dominate the female. The knitting though is the performative traditional job of female,

here the female virago narrator appropriates it to expose her inner wish; to be dauntless and free like the tiger. This is how the hidden motive the female narrator resurfaces through her tapestry.

To sum up, social engineers opine that identity is formed by the culture. Undoubtedly, culture is fluid. Hence the female subjectivity and identity the myth has castrated also must alter as per the passage of time which is the urge of the poet. Rich's strikingly demands to undo the traditional 'cultural mind-set' that undermines the females and their status. In both of the poems, to destroy the myth, that rectified the male's 'regime of truth' that valorizes male myth which is filled with patriarchal mechanism. Through her scuba diving and tiger figure, Rich reasserts her subjectivity denied by 'his (story).' Like Nora in Ibsen's *Doll's House*, the narrators are on the path of creating new identity. Thus they strive for freedom by means of creative journey to confirm their independent subjectivity by denying the hegemony fortified by myth.

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# Nepali Literature



## सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठका प्रारम्भिक चरणका कवितामा प्रकृति चित्रण

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त्रिभुवन विश्वविद्यालय

### लेखसार

प्रस्तुत शोधलेखमा सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठद्वारा लिखित प्रारम्भिक चरणका कवितामा स्वच्छन्दतावादी प्रकृतिचित्रणका विविध रूप पाइने निष्कर्ष निकालिएको छ । यहाँ कवितासम्बन्धी सैद्धान्तिक विश्लेषणात्मक विधिको अवलम्बन गरी स्वच्छन्दतावादले आत्मसात् गरेको प्रकृतिचित्रणसम्बन्धी मान्यतालाई आधार मानी विषयको विश्लेषण गरिएको छ । श्रेष्ठका प्रारम्भिक चरणका कवितामा सरल, शान्त र स्निग्ध प्रकृतिप्रयोगको बहुलता रहेको मूल निष्कर्ष प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । विशेषतः प्रकृतिको मानवीकरणका साथै प्रकृतिमा पाइने सङ्घर्षशील पक्षलाई समेत उजागर गरिएको र प्रकृतिजगत्का फूल, भ्रमर, पुतली, कोइली, हिमाल, वर्षा आदिले गरेको मानवीय क्रियाकलापलाई समेत आरोपित गरिएको छ । यस्तै प्रकृति हरबखत सङ्घर्षशील रहेकाले त्यसमा क्रान्तिकारीपनको आभास पाइने कुरालाई पनि प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । यसै गरी सुख, शान्ति, सम्पन्नता, सौन्दर्य जस्ता कुराका साथै दिव्यता, अमरता एवम् मित्रभाव पनि प्रकृतिमा पाइने उल्लेख गरिएको छ । स्वच्छन्दतावादी कवि सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठले प्रकृतिमा विश्वात्माको आभास पाइने र प्रकृतिलाई सभ्यताको स्रोतका रूपमा पनि उल्लेख गरेका छन् भनी प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । कविबाट प्रकृतिचित्रण गर्ने क्रममा आफूभित्रको प्रकृतिप्रतिको सौन्दर्य वृत्तिलाई सहज संवेदनाका प्रवाहमा भावगत सघनता र अनुभूतिको तीव्रताका साथ आफूलाई समाहित गर्दै प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । सरल,

सहज एवम् लालित्यमय र सुकुमार पदावलीहरू तथा विभिन्न प्राकृतिक भाव बिम्बहरूका माध्यमबाट जीवनजगत्का यथार्थता, क्रूरता, कठोरता, वास्तविकता, निराशा, पलायन जस्ता पक्षलाई उजागर गर्नमा यस चरणका कविता केन्द्रित रहेका छन् भनी निष्कर्ष पनि निकालिएको छ । अतः यस चरणका कविताहरूमा प्रकृतिको सूक्ष्म र गम्भीर निरीक्षण गरिएको छ र श्रेष्ठद्वारा यस चरणका कवितामा स्वच्छन्दतावादी तथा छायावादी प्रकृतिदर्शनलाई आत्मसात् गरी कविता सिर्जना गरेको कुरा उल्लेख गरिएको छ । यसरी यस चरणका कवितामा प्रकृतिका विविध रूपहरू प्रयोग गरिएका र यो कवि सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठको महत्त्वपूर्ण प्राप्ति भएको निष्कर्ष पनि निकालिएको छ ।

**शब्दकुञ्जी :** निराशा, प्रकृतिदर्शन, मानवीकरण, विश्वात्मा, सौन्दर्य, संवेदना ।

## १. विषय परिचय

राणाकालीन एकतन्त्रीय शासनको चरम अवस्थामा पूर्वी नेपालको ओखलढुङ्गामा १९६९ मा जन्मी नेपाली र नेपाल भाषामा समान रूपमा कलम चलाएका सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठ कवि, कथाकार, नाटककार, निबन्धकार, समीक्षकका रूपमा परिचित रहेका पाइन्छन् । स्वच्छन्दतावादी काव्यधाराका प्रवर्तक तथा उन्नायक श्रेष्ठ पन्ध्र/सोह्र वर्षको उमेरदेखि काव्य सिर्जनामा आजीवन संलग्न रहेका देखिन्छन् । नब्बेको दशकपूर्व नेपाली साहित्यमा शास्त्रीयतावादी धाराको प्रभावकारी रूपमा अधि बढिरहेको थियो भने त्यसपछि स्वच्छन्दतावादी काव्यधाराको प्रारम्भ भएको पाइन्छ । आधुनिक शिक्षाको विस्तार, भारतीय स्वतन्त्रता सङ्ग्राम र त्यसले नेपाली जनमानसमा पारेको प्रभाव तथा नेपालभित्रै भएका राजनीतिक, साहित्यिक आदि आन्दोलनको प्रभावस्वरूप नेपाली कवितामा स्वच्छन्दतावादी काव्यधाराको प्रारम्भ भएको देखिन्छ । विशेषतः उन्नाइसौं शताब्दीमा जर्मनी, फ्रान्स

तथा बेलायतजस्ता देशहरूबाट विकसित भएको स्वच्छन्दतावादी साहित्यिक लेखनका प्रवृत्तिहरूलाई बङ्गाली साहित्यका रवीन्द्रनाथ ठाकुर तथा हिन्दी साहित्यका पन्त, प्रसाद र निरालाले भारतीय संस्करणमा रूपान्तरित गरिसकेपछि नेपाली साहित्यमा प्रतिभाहरूमा महाकवि लक्ष्मीप्रसाद देवकोटा ( १९६६-२०१६) र सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठ (१९६९-२०४९) देखा पर्दछन् । कव्यजगत्मा यी दुई व्यक्तित्वहरूको उदयसँगै नेपाली कविता साहित्य स्वच्छन्दतावादी प्रवृत्तिबाट प्रभावित हुन पुगेको पाइन्छ । शास्त्रीयतावादका विरोधमा देखापरेको स्वच्छन्दतावादले भावना, कल्पना, प्रेम, आदर्श, सहज तथा स्वतःस्फूर्त अभिव्यक्ति, देशप्रेम, प्रकृतिप्रेम आदि मान्यतालाई अँगालेको पाइन्छ । यही स्वच्छन्दतावादी काव्यमान्यताभिन्न पर्ने प्रकृतिचित्रणलाई सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठका प्रारम्भिक कवितामा के कस्तो रूपमा प्रयोग भएको छ भन्ने यस शोधको समस्या हो भने प्रारम्भिक चरणका कवितामा प्रयुक्त प्रकृतिका अनेक पक्षहरूको अनुशीलन गर्नु यस शोधकार्यको उद्देश्य हो । शोधकार्यको उद्देश्यअनुरूप सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठले काव्ययात्राको प्रारम्भिक चरणमा प्रयुक्त प्रकृतिका विविध रूपलाई स्वच्छन्दतावादी सैद्धान्तिक मान्यताका आधारमा विश्लेषण गरिएकाले यो अध्ययन औचित्यपूर्ण छ । प्रकृतिचित्रण स्वच्छन्दतावादको मूलभूत तत्त्व मानिन्छ । त्यसैले यसमा उठाइएका प्राज्ञिक समस्याको समाधानका लागि कवितायात्राको प्रारम्भिक चरणका कविताको सङ्क्षिप्त रूपमा चर्चाका साथै स्वच्छन्दतावादी अभिलक्षणका आधारमा सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठका प्रारम्भिक चरण कविताको विश्लेषण गर्नु नै यस शोधकार्यको सीमा हो ।

## २. अध्ययन विधि

प्रस्तुत अध्ययनमा साहित्यको सबभन्दा जेठो विधाका रूपमा स्थापित कविता विधाले सैद्धान्तिक मान्यता र विधागत पहिचानसमेत स्थापित गरिसकेका सन्दर्भमा सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठका

प्रारम्भिक चरणका कवितामा स्वच्छन्दतावादले आत्मसात् गरेका प्रकृतिचित्रणसम्बन्धी मान्यतालाई आधार मानी विश्लेषण गर्दा, मूलतः स्वच्छन्दतावादका मूलभूत मान्यतालाई सैद्धान्तिक ढाँचा मानेर शोधय समस्याको प्राज्ञिक निष्कर्ष निकालिएको छ । यस क्रममा पुस्तकालयबाट सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठका प्रारम्भिक चरणका कवितालाई प्राथमिक सामग्रीका रूपमा उपयोग गर्दै प्राप्त सामग्रीको विश्लेषणका लागि स्वच्छन्दतावादी सैद्धान्तिक मान्यताका आधारमा कविताहरूको विश्लेषण र मूल्याङ्कन गरिएको छ । साथै विश्लेषण र मूल्याङ्कनका सन्दर्भमा यथास्थानमा विवरणात्मक वा वर्णनात्मक र उद्देश्यपूर्ण छनोट विधि तथा गुणात्मक ढाँचाको समेत उपयोग गरिएको छ ।

### ३. कविता विश्लेषणको प्रारूप

लयात्मक भाषाका माध्यमबाट जीवनजगतको सौन्दर्यपूर्ण एवम् कलात्मक अभिव्यक्ति नै कविता हो । यसका अनेक रूप (लघुतम, लघु मध्यम र बृहत्) हुन्छन् । लघु अर्थात् फुटकर कविताका रूपमा अत्यन्त लोकप्रिय मानिएको यस रूपको संरचनामा कविताकै तत्त्वहरूको आवश्यकता पर्दछ । यसका साथै कविहरूले अनेक मान्यता अँगाली कविताको सिर्जना गरेको पाइन्छ । यीमध्ये स्वच्छन्दतावादका आधारमा काव्यसिर्जना गरिने एउटा महत्त्वपूर्ण मान्यता हो । वियषयवस्तु, भावविधान, लयविधान, विम्बप्रतीक, भाषाशैली आदि कविताका आधारभूत तत्त्व हुन् भने कल्पना, संवेदना, अनुभूति, भावको सघनता आदि पनि कविताका उपकरण मानिन्छन् । यिनै कविता विधाले आत्मसात् गरेका मान्यताहरू अँगाली कवि सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठले कविता सिर्जना गरेको पाइन्छ, तापनि यस लेखमा स्वच्छन्दतावादी प्रकृतिदर्शनसम्बन्धी सैद्धान्तिक मान्यतालाई पर्याधारका रूपमा स्वीकार गरी श्रेष्ठका कविताको विश्लेषण गरिएको छ ।

## ४. स्वच्छन्दतावादी मान्यताका सन्दर्भहरू

शास्त्रीयतावादी शैलीशिल्पका विपरीत सहज एवम् स्वस्फूर्त रूपमा साहित्य सिर्जना गरिने कर्मलाई स्वच्छन्दतावाद भनिन्छ । स्वतःस्फूर्त अभिव्यक्तिका साथै काल्पनिकता, सहज अभिव्यक्तिको प्रबलता, काव्यत्मकता, अनुभूतिको सहजता, देशप्रेम, प्रकृतिप्रेम, अतीतप्रति मोह आदि स्वच्छन्दतावादका प्रमुख विशेषता हुन् । सामान्यतया कवितामा कविले भाव वा विचारको सम्प्रेषण कलात्मक रूपमा गरेको हुन्छ । स्वच्छन्दतावादी कविहरू समाजगत वस्तुता र वास्तविकताभन्दा आत्मपरक अभिव्यक्तिमा जोड दिने गर्छन् । यिनीहरू प्रकृतिलाई विषयवस्तु प्रस्ततिको प्रमुख आधार मान्दछन् ।

मानवजीवन प्रकृतिको सुन्दर उपहार हो । प्रकृतिका अनेक पक्ष विद्यमान छन् । प्रकृतिको सुन्दर उपजका रूपमा रहेको मानवजीवनको उत्पत्तिसँगै यी दुई त्रिच मानवको चिरन्तन सम्बन्ध स्थापित भएको मानिन्छ । मानवमा अरू जीवधारीहरूका तुलनामा सहज जिज्ञासा वृत्ति तथा सौन्दर्यानुभूतिको विशेषता रहेको पाइन्छ । त्यसकारण प्रकृति आफ्नो रहस्यपूर्ण क्रियाव्यापार तथा रमणीय रूप वैविध्यका कारण अनादिकालदेखि नै मानवका निम्ति रागात्मक वृत्तिको मूल आधार बन्दै आएको छ । प्रकृतिभिन्नका रहस्यमय पक्षहरूका बारेमा जिज्ञासु बन्दै आएको मानवले त्यहाँ थुप्रै कुराहरू पाएको छ । प्रकृतिका गर्भमा मानवले विविधतायुक्त तथा प्रतिदिन चिर नवीन लाग्ने मनोहर रूप प्राप्त गरेको र त्यहाँ सौन्दर्यानुभूतिको भावना विकास गरेर उसले आफ्नो जीवनचक्रलाई कलात्मक बनाएको देखिन्छ । चेतनायुक्त प्राणीका रूपमा चिनिएको मानवले प्राकृतिक संसारमा पाइने मनोहर रूपलाई कलात्मक र सौन्दर्यपूर्ण अभिव्यक्तिका माध्यमबाट जीवनमा आनन्दको सञ्चार गराउन सकेको पाइन्छ । यसप्रकार मानवसँग चिरन्तन वा चिर नूतन सम्बन्ध राख्ने यो प्रकृति मानवविकासको मूल प्रेरकका रूपमा रहेको पाइन्छ । कालान्तरमा वास्तु,

नृत्य , सङ्गीत, चित्र तथा काव्यकलाहरूको उद्गम एवम् विकास यही रहस्यमयी र रमणीय प्रकृतिकै कारण भएको मानिएको छ (सिंह, १९६५: पृ. ८६) । वस्तुतः कला-साहित्यमा प्रकृतिलाई सौन्दर्यसृष्टि र अनेक प्रयोजनका लागि पनि उपयुक्त स्थान दिएको देखिन्छ (जोशी, २०५३: पृ.१०) भन्ने भनाइ यस सन्दर्भमा बढी औचित्यपूर्ण र सान्दर्भिक रहेको कुरा स्पष्ट हुन्छ । विशेषतः स्वच्छन्दतावादी कविहरूले प्रकृतिलाई अनन्त सौन्दर्यको भण्डार मानेका हुनाले उनीहरूले आफ्ना सूक्ष्म इन्द्रिय ग्राह्य चेतना तथा संवेदनशील भावनाका आधारमा प्रकृतिका रूप, गन्ध, स्पर्श, रस र ध्वनि जस्ता ऐन्द्रिक अनुभूतिजन्य सौन्दर्यलाई काव्यात्मक स्वरूप प्रदान गरेका हुन्छन् (भारद्वाज, सन् १९८८: पृ. २०७) । वर्डस्वर्थले दिव्य क्रियाव्यापार सम्पन्न प्रकृतिको ढुकढुकी छाम्न सक्ने शक्ति कविमा रहेको हुन्छ भन्दै कविले प्रकृतिको यसै ढुकढुकीलाई आफ्नो अनुभूतिद्वारा मानवीय आत्मासित सम्बद्ध गरिदिन्छ (शर्मा, सन् १९९०: पृ. ४०) भनेका छन् । कलाकारले प्रकृतिलाई वास्तविक प्रकृतिभन्दा पनि सुन्दर रूपमा पाठकसामु प्रस्तुत गर्दछ (चौधरी र गुप्ता, सन् १९९३: पृ. २८४) भन्ने विचार अघि सारेका छन् । प्रस्तुत शोध सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठका प्रारम्भिक चरणका कवितामा स्वच्छन्दतावादी प्रकृतिचित्रणका के कस्ता रूप प्रयुक्त छन् भन्ने अध्ययनमा केन्द्रित छ ।

#### ५. सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठका प्रारम्भिक चरणका कविताको अन्तर्वस्तु

कवि सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठको कवितायात्रालाई विद्वान्हरूबाट अनेक हिसाबले चर्चा परिचर्चा गरिएको पाइन्छ । यिनले १९८४ देखि आफ्नो काव्ययात्राको थालनी गरेका हुन् (कोइराला, २०३७: पृ. ७२) । सुरुदेखि तीव्रताका साथ आफ्नो सिर्जनाकर्मलाई अघि बढाएका श्रेष्ठ राणाहरूको कोपभाजनको सिकार भए । फलतः १९९७ मा यिनी पक्राउ परी कठोर जेलजीवन बिताउन बाध्य भए । यिनले जेल पर्नुपूर्व लेखेका कविताहरूलाई धेरै विद्वान्हरूले प्रारम्भिक चरणका भनी स्वीकार गरेका हुनाले यसै अवधिमा प्रकाशित कवितालाई यस शोधमा विश्लेषण गरिएको छ । यिनका त्यस

अवधिका कविताहरू फाट्टफुट्ट रूपमा 'शारदा', 'उदय', 'नेबुला' आदि पत्रपत्रिकाहरूमा प्रकाशित भए पनि सर्वप्रथम सङ्कलित रूपमा २०२१ सालमा *कोपिला* शीर्षकका नामबाट प्रकाशित भएको पाइन्छ। यसमा १९८४ देखि १९९७ सम्म लेखिएका अधिकांश फुटकर कविताहरू सङ्कलित रहेका छन्। यिनको नेपाली भषामा लेखिएको प्रथम पुस्तकाकारका रूपमा प्रकाशित कृति *कोपिला* भए पनि नेवारी भषामा लेखिएका सीस्वाँ (२००७) र फूस्वाँ (१०१७) जस्ता कवितासङ्ग्रहहरू प्रकाशित भइसकेका देखिन्छन्। औपचारिक रूपमा १९९० मा 'भूकम्प पीडितोद्धारक ऋण-संस्था' कविता कविता लिएर उदाए पनि कवि सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठले १९८४ सालदेखि नै आफ्नो काव्ययात्रा प्रारम्भ गरेको पाइन्छ (निरौला, २०७१: पृ. १२८)। त्यसैले १९८४ देखि १९९७ सालसम्म लेखिएका कविताहरूको सँगालोका रूपमा *कोपिला* देखापर्छ। यस सङ्ग्रहमा जम्मा चौसठ्ठीओटा कविताहरू सङ्कलित रहेका छन्। यीमध्ये छब्विसओटा कविताहरू १९९१ पूर्वका रहेका छन् र बाँकी बयालिसओटा कविताहरू यिनले त्यसपछि सिर्जना गरेका देखिन्छ।

यस चरणका 'कोपिला', 'जुनेली रातमा निर्भर', 'साँभमा हिमालयको दृश्य', 'प्रातः कालीन किरण', 'ओखलढुङ्गा', 'पत्रोत्तर', 'जूनकीरी', 'सपनामा देखेँ तिनलाई', 'वर्षा', 'तारक दल', 'दीप', 'सुन्दरीजल', 'हिमाल', 'वर्षा', 'पुतली', 'शिशिरको चिसो बतास' 'आश्वासन', 'नकालीमा', 'अज्ञात चरी', 'धोबिनी चरी', 'गोमा', 'सुकेको खोला', 'सन्ध्या', 'भ्रमरप्रति', 'वसन्त', 'पुतली', 'गुलाब', 'निर्भर', 'कोकिल' जस्ता कविताहरूमा प्रकृतिलाई मुख्य विषयवस्तु बनाएर प्रस्तुत गरेको पाइन्छ। 'कोपिला' कवितामा प्रकृतिलाई मानवीकरण गर्दै कविले कोपिलाका माध्यमबाट संसारमा सुवासको धार बहाउने, सौन्दर्यको सार खन्याउने र ढकमक्क फुल्दै अपार आनन्द खन्याउने विचार प्रस्तुत गरेको पाइन्छ। यस्तै 'जुनेली रातमा निर्भर' कवितामा भरनाको सौन्दर्यगान गर्दै जुनेली रातमा

भरनाको दृश्यले कविका मनमा पारेको आल्हादकारी स्थितिको चर्चा गरिएको छ भने 'साँभुमा हिमालयको दृश्य' कवितामा सूर्यास्तका समयको मनोहर दृश्यलाई अनेक दृष्टान्तका माध्यमबाट प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । यस कवितामा प्रकृतिलाई सुन्दर, अखण्ड र अविनाशी रूपमा वर्णन गर्दै प्रकृतिलाई पढ्न र त्यहाँ धेरै कुरा प्राप्त गर्न सकिने रहस्यवादी विचार प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । 'प्रातः कालीन किरण' शीर्षकको कवितामा सूर्यको किरणले धर्तीलाई ढपकै ढाकेपछिको उत्पन्न स्थितिलाई प्रकृतिको अलौकिक, शान्त र सुकालको सुखद एवम् सुन्दर रूप देख्न पाइने कुरा बताएको छ । यस्तै 'ओखलढुङ्गा' शीर्षकको कवितामा आफ्नो जन्मस्थलप्रतिको मुग्धकारी सुखमयस्थितिको सुन्दर अभिव्यक्ति पाइन्छ भने 'पत्रोत्तर' र 'जूनकीरी' जस्ता कवितामा प्रकृतिमा पाइने रात, दिन, फूल, अन्धकार, चन्द्र, नदी, बाग आदिको चर्चा गर्दै सांसारिक जटिलताका बीचमा बाँच्नु परेको पीडा र त्यसको अन्त्यका लागि आह्वान गरिएको छ । यसैगरी 'सपनामा देखें तिनलाई' कवितामा झलझल मुहार र मधुर स्वर भएकी सुरपुरकी रानीलाई प्रकृतिका हरेक क्षणमा देख्न पाउँदा अत्यन्त खुसी भएको विचार प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । यस्तै 'पागल' कवितामा सांसारिक दुःख र सन्तापबाट विह्वल बनेका कविले प्रकृतिको पागलपन र विह्वलतामा आफू पनि समाहित हुन खोजेको पाइन्छ भने 'वर्षा' कवितामा वर्षाको मनोहारी दृश्य प्रस्तुत गर्नुका साथै हरेक कृषकलाई दङ्गा पार्ने, सुखमय जीवन प्रदान गरी क्षणक्षण बिजुली बाली संसारमा उज्यालो गर्ने र सुरिलो गाना गाउँदै अभय र सुखका साथ स्वतन्त्र रूपमा यसवेला खोला पनि गतिमान् भइरहेको विचार प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । यसै गरी 'तारकदल' कवितामा रातको समयमा प्रकाश छरी आकाश र धर्तीलाई उज्यालो पार्ने तारागणको मुक्तकण्ठले प्रशंसा गरिएको छ भने सौन्दर्य, प्रेम, विद्रोह, शिक्षा र सभ्यताको स्रोतका रूपमा 'दीप', 'सुन्दरीजल' तथा 'हिमाल' जस्ता कवितामा प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । 'वर्षा' नामक अर्को

कवितामा प्रकृतिको मानवीकरण गर्दै वर्षाले आफूलाई धर्ती सिँगार्ने र सौन्दर्यका उपाषकहरूलाई सौन्दर्यको स्वादको वैभवमा भुलाउने अनि संसारमा घोर क्रान्ति गरी शान्ति ल्याउने विचार व्यक्त गरिएको छ । 'पुतली' नामक कवितामा कवि पुतलीको नर्तन देखेर मोहित हुँदै यिनी 'तेरो नर्तन कति मनमोहन' भन्दै प्रश्न गर्छन् र तुरुन्तै स्वप्नमय संसारमा मुग्ध हुँदै आफ्नो जीवनरथको चपलता र स्फूर्तिलाई पुतलीसँग एकाकार भएको पाउँछन् । प्रकृतिको सुन्दर सहचर पुतलीमा परिवर्तित भइसकेपछि कविले आफ्नो जीवन सार्थक भएको अनुभूति गरेको पाइन्छ, भने 'शिशिरको चिसो बतास' कवितामा प्रकृतिको मानवीकरण गर्दै शिशिर ऋतुले निम्त्याएको उराठलाग्दो अवस्थालाई समाप्त पार्ने सामर्थ्य प्रकृतिमै रहेको कुरा प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । यसैगरी 'आश्वासन' कवितामा प्रकृतिको काखमा गएर अतीतका पीडा समाप्त गरी सुन्दर, सुखमय र प्रेमपूर्ण जीवन प्राप्त गर्न सकिने कुरा बताइएको छ । 'वनकालीमा' र 'अज्ञात चरी' जस्ता कवितामा सौन्दर्य र त्यसले जीवनलाई सुन्दर एवम् रसमय बनाएको भाव प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । 'धोबिनी चरी' कवितामा प्रकृतिमा अपार सुन्दरता, सुख, शान्ति र सम्पन्नता पाइने हुनाले कवि त्यसैमा समाहित हुने चाहना वा पिर तथा बाधा बिसाउने गीत गाउन आह्वान गरिएको छ भने 'गोमा' कवितामा सांसारिक तापबाट मुक्त हुन प्राकृतिक सुन्दरताले भरिपूर्ण ठाउँमा मात्र प्राप्त गर्न सकिने कुरा उल्लेख गरिएको छ । 'सुकेको खोला' कवितामा प्रकृतिमा आइलागेको उराठलाग्दो अवस्था भए पनि कुनैबेला त्यसले पूर्णता पाउने विश्वास प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ भने 'सन्ध्या' कवितामा प्रकृतिको मानवीकरण गर्दै सन्ध्याकालीन प्राकृतिक सुन्दरताका साथै मानवजीवनको क्षणिकता मात्र होइन, प्रकृतिमा पनि क्षणिकता, विनाश र सन्ताप पाइने विचार प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । यस्तै 'भ्रमरप्रति' कवितामा भ्रमरलाई सम्बोधन गर्दै उसको प्रेममय जीवनप्रति जिज्ञासा र सम्पूर्ण कुरा नक्कल गर्ने

वीर जादुवालका रूपमा चित्रण गरिएको छ । 'वसन्त' कवितामा वसन्त ऋतुको प्राकृतिक सौन्दर्यको महिमागानका साथै नीरस मानवजीवनमा उमड्ग र उत्साह ल्याइदिने विचार व्यक्त गरिएको छ । 'पुतली' कवितामा प्रकृतिको मानवीकरण गर्दै पुतली रविको दूत, फूलको कोपिला जाँच्ने जाँचकी भएको र उसलाई प्राकृतिक गतिविधिमा रमाउने प्राणीका रूपमा चर्चा गरिएको छ भने 'उपवनमा' नामक कवितामा निराशा र पीडाले तप्त भएको मनमा उपवनबाट निस्किएको सुवासले जीवनदायी प्रेरणा प्रदान गरेको कुरा उल्लेख गरिएको छ । यस्तै 'गुलाब' कवितामा गुलाबको सौन्दर्य र त्यसले प्रेमको उच्च भाव जगाएको कुरा प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । 'निर्भर' र 'कोकिल' जस्ता कवितामा पनि प्राकृतिक सौन्दर्यको गायनका साथै आफूभित्र रहेको सन्तापलाई दूर गर्न प्रकृतिलाई आह्वान गरिएको छ ।

यसरी चरणका अधिकांश कविता प्रकृतिपरक रहेका छन् र अन्य विषयवस्तु प्रयोग भएका कविताहरूमा पनि प्रकृतिको प्रशस्त उपयोग गरिएको छ । मूलतः कवि यस चरणका कवितामा प्रकृतिगायककै रूपमा देखा पर्छन् र अन्य विषयवस्तु प्रकृतिप्रयोगका तुलनामा गौणजस्तै बनेका छन् ।

#### ६. सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठका प्रारम्भिक कवितामा प्रकृतिका विविध रूप

सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठका प्रारम्भिक चरणका कवितामा चराहरूको बोली, पुतली, रूखहरू, फलफूलहरू, पात, भरना, ढुङ्गा, खोला, कुञ्ज, बगर, रवि, शशी, तारा, मेघ, दिन, रात, साँझ, बिहान, हिमाल, वर्षा, विभिन्न ऋतुहरू, वनपाखा, खोला-नाला आदि प्रकृतिमा पाइने धेरै पक्षलाई समेटिएको पाइन्छ । कविको जन्म प्रकृतिको सुरम्य काख ओखलढुङ्गामा भएको र उनले कवितायात्राको प्रारम्भ पनि प्रकृतिकै मनोरम वर्णनबाट गरेको पाइन्छ । यस चरणका अधिकांश

कविताहरू प्रकृतिपरक रहे पनि 'कोपिला', 'सन्ध्या', 'भ्रमरप्रति', 'पागल', 'साँझमा हिमालयको दृश्य', 'सुन्दरीजल', 'पुतली', 'धोबिनी चरी', 'गुलाब', 'वर्षा', 'शिशिरको चिसो बतास', 'ओखलढुङ्गा', 'सन्ध्या', 'हिमाल', 'सुकेको खाला' आदि कविता प्रकृतिचित्रणका दृष्टिले प्रतिनिधिमूलक रहेका छन् । प्रकृतिका विविध रूपको विश्लेषण गर्दा कोपिला (२०२१) कवितासङ्ग्रहमा प्रकाशित कवितालाई मुख्य आधार मानिएको छ । अतः श्रेष्ठका प्रारम्भिक चरणका कवितामा पाइने प्रकृतिसम्बन्धी विविध रूपको निम्नानुसारका उपशीर्षकहरूमा उल्लेख गरिएको छः

#### ६.१ प्रकृतिको मानवीकरण

कवि सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठले 'कोपिला' कवितासङ्ग्रहमा सङ्कलित प्रकृतिपरक कविताहरूमा प्रकृतिको मानवीकरण गरी प्रस्तुत गरेका छन् । 'कोपिला' 'वर्षा', 'वनकालीमा', 'पागल', 'सुदरीजल', 'हिमाल', 'शिशिरको चिसो बतास', 'सन्ध्या' 'भ्रमरप्रति' 'पुतली' जस्ता कविताहरूमा प्रकृतिको मानवीकरण गरिएको छ । प्रकृतिकै सुकुमार तथा सुन्दर शीर्षकको नामबाट प्रकाशित यो कृति मूलतः प्रकृतिपरक रहेको स्पष्ट हुन्छ । सुवासको धार बहाउने अनि सौन्दर्यको सार र अपार आनन्द खन्याउने कोपिलाको भनाइ निकै हृदयस्पर्शी रहेको छ । यसमा कोपिलाले आफ्नो रूप, जवानी र सौन्दर्यको बयान गरेको पाइन्छ । कवि भन्छन् :

सुवासको धार बहाउनेछु,

सौन्दर्यको सार खनाउनेछु,

फूलनेछु, खुल्नेछु म ढक्कमक्क,

अपार आनन्द खन्याउनेछु ।

(कोपिला: पृ. १)

कविले प्रकृतिलाई चेतनशील र सुखदुःख पोख्ने अनन्य मित्रका रूपमा प्रस्तुत गरेका छन् । उनको प्रकृति कतै आदर्श र नैतिकताको शिक्षा दिने र कतै कविको वियोगमा विरहका गीत गाउन पछि पर्दैन । यौवनावस्थामा सौन्दर्यप्रति मोहित हुने र मग्नमस्त भई जीवन बिताउने मानवीय प्रवृत्ति प्रकृतिमा देखिने कुरालाई कवि यसरी प्रस्तुत गर्दछन् :

रसपूर्ण पिई यौवन प्याला ,  
मत्त भई सब खोलानाला  
सागरसित समता माग्न भनी  
क्षणक्षण बढ्छन् नाचीगाई

(वर्षा : पृ. १२)

प्राकृतिक सौन्दर्यमा लट्ठ भई आफूलाई प्रकृतिकै अभिन्न अङ्ग सम्झने कवि श्रेष्ठले सुन्दरीजलको कलकल गरी निस्कने आवाजलाई प्रतिभाशाली स्वरलहरी निकाल्न सक्ने मानवीय क्षमताका रूपमा प्रस्तुत गरेका छन् । सभ्यता र संस्कृतिको मुहान मानिएको हिमाललाई मानवीय चेतनायुक्त प्राणीका रूपमा प्रस्तुत गर्दै सत्य र प्रेमको पाठ सिकाउने तत्त्वका रूपमा लिएका छन् । फूल तथा बगैँचामा नाच्ने पुतलीको नृत्यमा कविलाई अलौकिक सौन्दर्यको अनुभव हुन्छ र उनी सौन्दर्यमा लट्ठिई चञ्चला बनी नाचेकी बालिकाका रूपमा प्रकृतिलाई लिन्छन् । यिनी प्रकृतिमा अविरल गायन र रोदन सुनिने अनि प्रतिपल नृत्य र परिवर्तनको आभास पाइने यो कस्तो सिर्जना हो भनी आश्चर्य प्रकट गर्दै उनी भन्छन्:

अविरल गायन अविरल रोदन ,  
प्रतिपल पलपल नित एक गमन,  
क्षण क्षण नर्तन रे परिवर्तन,  
जीवनभर यो केको परिवर्तन,

(वनकालीमा : पृ. ३६)

कवि मानवजीवनमा जस्तै प्रकृतिमा पनि आपत्विपत् आइलाग्ने कुरो गर्दछन् । सन्ध्याकालीन समयमा दिनको प्रचण्ड सूर्यको प्रकाशमा विपत् आइलागेको स्वीकार गर्दै मानवजीवनमा सुखदुःखको सहयोगी बनेर बाँच्नु पर्ने र घमण्ड गर्नु नहुने यस्तो अभिव्यक्ति दिन्छन् :

कस्तो थियो अधि प्रताप कहाँ गयो त्यो ?

श्री सूर्यमा अब पच्यो कसरी विपत् यो ?

नाता घनिष्ठ सुखदुःखविषे छ हेर,

तस्मात् घमण्ड किन हूँ म सुखी भनेर ।

(सन्ध्या: पृ. ६६)

कविका विचारमा भ्रमर फुलेका फूलसँग प्रेम गर्न सिपालु हुन्छ । त्यस्तो प्रेम गर्ने मन्त्र कस्तो छ मलाई पनि सिकाउन भनी मित्रका रूपमा भ्रमरलाई सम्बोधन गर्दै संसारमा स्वार्थता भए भैं कोमल फूलका पत्रमा पर्दा समेत भ्रमर प्रेममा मग्न भई चुपचाप बसेर प्रेमको दृष्टान्त प्रस्तुत गर्दछ भन्ने विचार कवि यसरी व्यक्त गर्दछन् :

जगत हुन त हो यो स्वार्थताको विछ्यौना,

तर पनि कम छैनन् प्रेम बालिष्ठ नाना,

कमल फूलहरूका पत्रमाहाँ परेका

जलसरी बुझ प्रेम स्वार्थदेखिन् अलग्का ।

(भ्रमरप्रति: पृ. ६८)

पुतलीलाई कवि चकचके बालक र सूर्यले पठाएको दूतका रूपमा चित्रण गर्दछन् । फूल तथा कोपिला सबैको परीक्षण गर्ने तुच्छ प्राणी भए पनि कवि भैं आफू पनि काल विताउने गर्छु भनी

पुतलीले स्विकारेको छ । दिनहुँ फूलका थुंगालाई गएर सूर्यका कुरा सुनाउने र फूल तथा फललाई प्रेमका साथ चुस्ने आफ्नो बानी भएको कुरा पुतली व्यक्त गर्छ । सूर्यको करुणा आफूमाथि रहेको र त्यो कुरा मानिसलाई थाहा छ भनी पुतलीले स्विकारेको पाइन्छ । सूर्यकै करुणाका कारण कलि चित्र शशिको भयङ्कर साम्राज्यमा पनि बाँच्न सफल भएको भाव यसरी व्यक्त गरिएको छ :

शशिको भयङ्कर राज्यमा

म लुकी रहन्छु कलीमहाँ,

रवि पूर्ववाट जलेपछि

अनि घम्दछु म जगत्महाँ ।

(पुतली : पृ. ८३)

## ६.२ सङ्घर्षशील प्रकृति

प्रकृतिजगत्मा पाइने सङ्घर्षशीलतालाई 'पागल', 'सुदरीजल', 'वर्षा' जस्ता कविताहरूमा प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । कविका विचारमा प्रकृतिजगत्मा प्रतिपल सङ्घर्षशीलता देखिन्छ । प्रकृतिले आफ्नो पाइलैपिच्छेको ठक्करलाई बिसेर नवनव सिर्जना गर्दै र जीवनलाई सिर्जनशील तथा मधुमय पाउँदै अगाडि बढिरहेको हुन्छ । प्रकृतिमा भरना प्रतिपल ठक्कर खाँदै अगाडि बढेको कुरा कवि यसरी व्यक्त गर्दछन् :

पत्थरहरूसँग अन्तिम चुम्बन,

कसरी अन्तिम यो प्रथम मिलन !

पगला बुझिदैन तेरो चाला

छमछम बजने नूपुर भार ।

(पागल: :पृ. १५)

भरनाको यस किसिमको गतिविधि र सङ्घर्षशीलतालाई देखेर कवि पनि आफू पागल बनी पछिलाग्न खोज्दा जीवन पटककै मिल्न नसक्ने पाउँछन् । उनी प्रकृति र मानवजीवनमा यसरी स्पष्ट भिन्नता रहेको पत्ता लगाउँछन् :

पछि लाग्दा पनि तेरो लयमा

पगली मेरो पागल मनमा

क्षण-क्षण उठ्दछ कसरी कसरी

यी अनियन्त्रित विचार भमरी ।

आखिर म त हुँ सभ्य जगत्कै

घुम्दछु वन वन तर हुँ घरकै

रोदन ल्याउँछ निर्वल मनले

गाउँ पगली, विहवल लयले ।

(पागल: पृ.: १६)

सभ्यता एवम् जीवनगतिका कारण मानवजीवन र प्रकृति विलकुल भिन्न देखिन्छन् र यी संगसंगै हिँड्न सम्भव देखिँदैन । वास्तवमा प्रकृतिको लक्ष्य नै सिर्जनशीलता र गतिशीलता हो । त्यसकारण कुनै पनि ढुङ्गा, मुढा, आँधी, हुरी, बतास आदि केही कुराले पनि प्राकृतिक जीवनमा व्यवधान ल्याउन सक्दैन । सङ्घर्षशीलता नै प्रकृतिको जीवन हो र यही शिक्षा प्रकृतिले मानवलाई प्रतिफल दिइरहेको हुन्छ । यसलाई मानवले ग्रहण गर्न सके वा नसके पनि आफ्नो धर्म पूरा गरिरहेको हुन्छ, भन्ने कुरालाई कवि यसरी स्पष्ट पाउँछन् :

“बढ, बढ क्षण प्रतिक्षण बढ

सुख सागरतिर नित बढ,

सुख, सुख, सब सुखमय गर,

सुखसङ्ग लिइ दगुर, दगुर

कलकल, छलछल, खलखल । ”

(सुन्दरीजल: पृ. २१)

कविका विचारमा कठिन वा सङ्घर्षशीलता भए पनि प्रकृतिको शब्दकोशमा कठिन वा सङ्घर्षशीलता भन्ने शब्द कतै पाइन्छ । जस्तोसुकै कठिनाइ वा अप्प्यारोपन पार गरी अधि बढ्दै जानु प्रकृतिको नियमभित्र पर्दछ ।

‘कठिन अहो, जीवन गिरि’ भन्ने अभिव्यक्ति सुनेर सुन्दरीजल कविलाई यसरी सम्झाउँछन् :

“नभन कठिन जीवन गिरि”

“सुख होइन सब दुःख दुःख”

“यो केको कोहाहल

जगमा कतिको हलचल

म गएँ अब घर सागर

हिम वनको फुल फेनिल

न लेऊ, लौ लललल

कलकल, छलछल खलखल”

(सुन्दरीजलः:पृ. २२)

कविका विचारमा प्रकृति आफ्नो हक हितको सुरक्षा गर्न सधैं सचेत देखिन्छ । आफ्नो अधिकार खोज्न खोलाले समेत सङ्घर्ष गर्दै अधि बढिरहेको हुन्छ । ग्रीष्मले सुकाए पनि वर्षाले पानी भरिदिएपछि उक्त खोला आफ्नो समानताको अधिकार माग्न समुद्रसम्म चुल्बुलाउँदै र उर्लदै जाने गर्छ । स्वतन्त्रता र समानताको खोजीमा सङ्घर्षरत कवि प्रकृतिमा पनि त्यस्तै समानताको खोजी भइरहको पाउँछन् र आफ्नो अधिकार, न्याय र समानताको लागि लड्ने र खोजी गर्ने उमेर यौवन काल हो भन्ने विचार व्यक्त गर्दछन् :

रसपूर्ण पिई यौवन प्याला

मत्त भई सब खोला नाला

सागरसित समता माग्न भनी

क्षण क्षण बढ्दछन् नाची गाई ।

(वर्षा: पृ. १३)

कविका अनुसार प्रकृति सधैं न्यायका लागि प्रयत्नशील रहेको पाइन्छ । जूनकीरीजस्तो सानो जीव पनि आफ्नो टिमटिमे प्रकाश चूक घोप्ट्याएको जस्तो अन्धकार चिर्न लागि रहेको हुन्छ । यस्तै अन्याय, अत्याचार एवम् असमानताजस्ता समाजका विसङ्कति र विकृति हटाउन प्रकृति सधैं तत्पर देखिन्छ । वर्षा आफ्नो प्रचण्ड हुङ्कार लिएर सधैं अधि बढिरहेकै हुन्छ । वर्षाले आफ्नो उद्देश्यलाई यसरी प्रस्तुत गरेको छ :

अन्यायरूप हरि घाम धुलो प्रचण्ड

सारा म पार्दछु ! यहाँ अब खण्ड खण्ड

यो भू गरीब यसमा उति वस्तु के छ

छोड्दीन रम्य नगरी म तथापि जे छ

सौन्दर्यको -शुभ - उपासक वृन्दलाई

सौन्दर्य-स्वाद-भव- वैभवले भुलाई ।

हुंकार्छु खूब रिसले जगलाई हाँकी

मास्दै सबै अशुभ वस्तु कुनै नराखी

(वर्षा पृ. २५)

शिशिरको चिसो बतासमा पनि कवि क्रान्तिको छाया प्रतिबिम्बित भएको पाउँछन् । विजनमा हाहाका हुनु, खोला नाला सुक्नु, शिशिरको चिसो साम्राज्य चल्नु पनि परिवर्तनको सूचना हो भन्ने कविलाई लाग्दछ । शिशिरलाई नाश गर्न मधुऋतु अवश्य आइपुग्छ भन्ने कविलाई विश्वास छ । जस्तै :

यो मधु ऋतुको हो आभास,  
 फेरि हुनेछ नयाँ विकास,  
 बहनेछ यहो हास विकास  
 फर्क शिशिरको चिसो बतास ।

(शिशिरको चिसो बतास: पृ. ३१)

कवि प्रकृतिको उमङ्गमा पनि आफ्नो क्रान्तिको भावना प्रस्तुत गर्दछन् । उनी हिमाललाई आफ्नो वाणी दिएर विश्व थर्काउन चाहन्छन् :

बोलिदे मेरो पियारो हे हिमाल,  
 विश्व थर्कोस्, चूर्ण होस्, वास्ता नराख,  
 नासिने यो विश्वको गिन्ती छ के र !  
 उच्चताको, स्वच्छताको स्रोत छाड ।

(हिमाल: पृ. २३)

### ६.३ सुख, शान्ति र सम्पन्नताका रूपमा प्रकृति

सुख, शान्ति र सम्पन्नताको सुन्दर अभिव्यक्ति 'धोबिनी चरी' नामक कवितामा पाइन्छ । कवि प्रकृतिमा अपार सुख र शान्ति पाउँछन् । प्राकृतिक रङ्गमञ्चमा परम्परमा प्रेम र सहयोगको भावना छ । यही प्रेम र सहयोगले गर्दा प्रकृतिमा देखिने विपन्नता पनि अति क्षणिक हुन्छ । आपसी सहयोगका कारण प्रकृतिमा अनन्त सम्पन्नता रहेको छ । प्रकृतिको यो अपार सम्पन्नता र शान्तिमा कवि स्वयम् सहभागी हुन चाहन्छन् र आफ्नो दुःख प्रकृतिको शान्तिसुधा लिएर एकछिनका लागि भए पनि बिसर्न चाहन्छन् । कवि सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठ आफ्नो थकित र दुःखित जीवनमा सुधारस बर्साउने प्रकृतिसँग समाहित हुन खोज्दै भन्छन् :

एकबाजी फेरि गाऊ  
गीत यसै धोबिनी,  
यो सुकेको प्राण मेरो  
लौ रसाऊ धोबिनी,  
स्वर सुरीलो खूब मीठो  
सुन्न देऊ धोबिनी,  
छुन नदेऊ पीर बल्दो  
फेरि गाऊ धोबिनी ।

(धोबिनी चरी: ४०)

प्रकृतिको सान्निध्यबाट कविले पीर त केवल मानवजीवनमा मात्र रहेछ, प्रकृतिमा कहिल्यै दुःख र सन्ताप नहुने रहेछ भन्ने थाहा पाएको देखिन्छ । यो ज्ञान कविलाई प्रकृतिकै सन्निकताबाट प्राप्त भएको हो र सो कुरा उनी प्रकृतिबाट प्राप्त भएको हो भनी सहर्ष यसरी स्विकार्छन् :

धोबिनी जानैँ बुझे लौ  
धन्य तिम्रो हृद्दल  
विश्वको त्यो रङ्गीचङ्गी  
दाग लाग्ने होइन,  
कागको कालो केशद्वारा  
मोडिएको छातिमा  
घुस्न नैँ सक्दैन कैले  
पीर बाधा वेदना ।

(धोबिनी चरी: पृ. ४१)

## ६.४ दिव्यता र अमरताका रूपमा प्रकृति

‘पागल’ र ‘सुकेको खोला’ जस्ता कविताहरूमा प्रकृतिलाई दिव्यता र अमरताका रूपमा प्रस्तुत गरेका छन् । कविका अनुसार प्रकृतिमा दिव्यता र अमरता छ तर यसका सदस्यमा भने क्षणभुङ्गुरता विद्यमान छ । निश्चित रूपमा आजको प्रकृतिको सुन्दर फूल भोलि गएर ओइलाउँछ अनि भर्छ । आजको प्रचण्ड ग्रीष्मलाई वर्षाले समाप्त गरिदिन्छ तर यही क्षणिकतामा दिव्यता प्राप्त गर्ने प्रकृतिको धोको हुन्छ, भन्ने कविलाई पूर्ण विश्वास छ । जस्तै :

ठीक हो यहि छ जीवन-सार,  
बोक्छ को क्षणिकमा अभिभार ।  
वासना मधुर, सुन्दर रूप,  
उच्च भाव शुभ प्रेम लिएर,  
कुञ्जमा यसरी फुल्नु छ धन्य !  
जन्म-सार यहि हे फूल रत्न !

(गुलाब: पृ. ८९)

सांसारिक वस्तुहरू वास्तविक हुन् । ती कुनै बेला नाश हुन्छन् र कुनै बेला प्रकट हुन्छन् । त्यस्तै खोला कुनै बेला आफू सुकेर सबै प्रकृतिजगत्लाई हाहाकार बनाउँछ, तापनि एक दिन आनन्द आउने र बुझिनसक्नु रहस्य देखापर्ने विचार कवि यसरी व्यक्त गर्छन् :

संसारका जति कुरा तर स्वप्न हैन,  
तिम्रो कुनै दिन परन्तु हुनेछ चैन,  
होला यहाँ बुझि नसक्नु कुनै रहस्य,  
तिम्रो सफा सुदिन फिर्छ अझै अवश्य ।

(सुकेको खोला: पृ. ५२)

## ६.६ मित्रभावका रूपमा प्रकृति

कवि सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठ प्रकृतिमा प्रगाढ मित्रभाव पाउँछन् । 'ओखलढुङ्गा' कवितामा कवि प्रकृतिको अति निकट पुग्दछन्, प्रकृतिसँगको विछोडको आफू मात्र होइन, स्वयम् प्रकृति पनि दुःखले विह्वल भएर आफैँलाई खोजिरहेको अनुभव कवि गर्छन् । प्रकृतिको सान्निध्यमा मानिस मात्र सुखी हुने होइन, प्रकृतिको हर्षको सीमारेखा रहन्न र त्यस्तै विछोडले पनि अति दुःखी गराउने कार्य गर्छ । वसन्तु ऋतु कोइली चरी पर्दावाल र सुन्दर वृक्ष खोपीमा बसेर प्रकृति र कविको विछोडको विरह गीत विरहकै मीठो भाका गाइरहेको हुन्छ :

पर्दावाल सुन्दर पल्लवित

वृक्ष खोपीमा कालो कोकिल

उनको यो वियोग प्रिय कविको

कति मृदु विरह गीत रच्यो हो ।

(ओखलढुङ्गा: पृ. ७)

कवि आफूलाई पागल ठान्दै प्रकृतिमा पनि पागलपन भेट्टाउँछन् । त्यस्तो पागल प्रकृतिसँग मित्रले भैं मिली एकै स्वर र एकै लयमा गीत गाउन कवि प्रकृतिलाई आग्रह गर्छन् :

म त पागल हूँ तँ पनि त पगली

पागल पगली दुई साथ मिली

एकै स्वरमा, एकै लयमा

गाऔँ वनको यो अभिनयमा ।

(पागल: पृ. १५)

## ६.६ विश्वात्माका रूपमा प्रकृति

कवि सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठ प्रकृतिवाटै विश्वात्माको परिचय पाउँछन् । प्रकृतिको अखण्ड तथा सक्षय चेतनाको प्रकाशनबाट अभिप्रेरित भएर नै उक्त परमतत्त्वको आभास पाइन्छ, प्रकृतिको त्यही सुन्दर, अखण्ड र अविनाशी रूप देखेर प्रकृतिको रहस्यमय भावमा गहिरिँदै प्रकृतिमा मिहिन सौन्दर्य देखेपछि त्यस्तो रचना गर्न महान् स्वरूपको कवि कल्पना गर्छन् र विश्व नै उक्त सृष्टिकर्ताको सङ्गीत भूमि हो भन्ने उनी निष्कर्षमा पुग्दै भन्छन् :

*सौन्दर्यको मसी लिएर विशालतामा*

*लेखीरहेछ विधिले रसपूर्ण गाना ।*

*(साँभमा हिमालयको दृश्य: पृ. ४)*

## ७. प्राकृतिक बिम्ब

कवि सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठको काव्ययात्राको प्रारम्भिक चरणका कवितामा युवासुलभ सहज संवेदनाका प्रवाहका साथै भावगत सघनता र अनुभूतिको तीव्रता प्राप्त गर्न सकिन्छ । यिनले यस यस चरणका कवितामा सरल, सहज एवम् लालित्यमय र सुकुमार पदावलीको प्रयोग गरेका छन् । यो लेख प्रारम्भिक चरणका कविताहरूमध्ये प्रकृति प्रयोग भएका कविताहरूको मात्र अध्ययनमा केन्द्रित भएकाले यहाँ प्रतिनिधिमूलक कविताहरूको भाषाशैलीगत विशिष्टतालाई उल्लेख गरिएको छ । शास्त्रीय, वार्णिक र गद्यलयमा संरचित यस चरणका प्रकृतिपरक कवितामा विभिन्न क्षेत्रबाट सरल एवम् सहज बिम्बहरू टिपेर भावलाई संवेदनशील र तीव्र बनाउने काम गरिएको छ । राती जून चुहेर शीत बन्नु, कोपिलाले संसारलाई सजाउनु (कोपिला), मानिसलाई निर्भरले सरस तथा

शान्ति सुधारस पियाउनु (निर्भर), हिमाललाई आकाशले सुविशाल भालका रूपमा चित्रित गर्नु (साँभमा हिमालको दृश्य), कोइलीले कविको विरहमा मृदु गीत रच्नु (ओखलढुङ्गा), वर्षालाई जन-मन हर्ने र सुख-शान्ति छर्ने आनन्ददायी वस्तुका रूपमा चित्रण गर्नु (वर्षा), सुन्दरीजलको कलकल ध्वनिलाई विधिको प्रतिभाको स्वर भनी प्रशंसा गर्नु (सुन्दरीजल), वसन्त ऋतुमा चञ्चल कोकिलले मन हर्नु (वसन्त), जस्ता प्रकृतिपरक बिम्बहरू प्रशस्त मात्रामा प्रयोग गरिएका छन्। प्रकृतिका विविध रूप अनि सामाजिक, राजनीतिक असङ्गतिप्रति व्यङ्ग्य-विद्रोह प्रस्तुत गर्ने क्रममा र राष्ट्र एवम् राष्ट्रियताको गौरवगान एवम् निराशा, पलायन जस्ता कुराहरूलाई प्रस्तुत गर्ने सन्दर्भमा पनि कविले प्रकृतिबाट विभिन्न बिम्बहरू टिपेर भावलाई सघन र तीव्र पार्ने कोसिस गरेका छन्। प्रकृतिबाट टिपिएका अनुप्रासीय शब्दहरूको सुन्दर संयोजनका कारण पनि प्रकृतिपरक अभिव्यक्ति बढी संवेदनशील र तीव्र बनेको पाइन्छ। सुमधुर तत्सम, तद्भव र भर्ना नेपाली शब्दहरूको बाहुल्य रहेका कारण प्रकृतिपरक कविताहरू अझ बढी मार्मिक बनेका छन्। प्रकृतिलाई कतै आलम्बन, कतै उद्दीपन, कतै साख्य तथा वात्सल्य, सुख, सम्पन्नता र दिव्यताका रूपमा पनि प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ। खास गरी प्रकृतिपरक अनुप्रासीय शब्द संयोजनले गर्दा कवितामा सौन्दर्य सृष्टि उत्पन्न भएका कारण यसमा सङ्कलित कविताहरू सहज, संवेद्य र मार्मिक बनेका छन्। प्रकृतिपरक अनुप्रासीय शब्द संयोजनले सौन्दर्य सृष्टि उत्पन्न भएको कुरा तलका केही उदाहरणहरूबाट स्पष्ट हुन्छ:

सुवासको धार बहाउनेछु,

सौन्दर्यको सार खनाउनेछु।

(कोपिला: पृ. १)

सौन्दर्यको मसि लिएर विशालतामा,

लेखीरहेछ विधिले रसपूर्ण गाना ।

साँझमा हिमालयको दृश्य : ४

तिम्रै सुन्दर हरियालीमा,

तिम्रै सुन्दर वक्षस्थलमा ।

(ओखलढुङ्गा: पृ. ६)

मीठु चराको नौलो गाना,

स्वर्ण किरणको स्वच्छ बिछ्यौना ।

(पागल: पृ. १५)

स्वरमा सुख स्वर जीवन,

गर कलकल स्वर सुन्दर ।

(सुन्दरीजल: पृ. २१)

तेरो नर्तन कति मनमोहन,

पुतली, सार्थक तेरो जीवन ।

(पुतली: पृ. २६)

स्वरमा सुख,

स्वर जीवन,

गर कलकल

स्वर सुन्दर !

(निर्भर: पृ. ९०)

## ८. निष्कर्ष

काव्यसाधनाको प्रारम्भिक अवस्थाका रूपमा रहेका कवि सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठका कवितामा प्रकृतिका विविध रूपको प्रयोग गरिएको पाइन्छ । प्रायः यहाँ सरल, शान्त र स्निग्ध प्रकृतिप्रयोगको बहुलता रहेको छ । खास गरी प्रकृतिपरक कविताहरूमा प्रकृतिको मानवीकरणका साथै प्रकृतिमा पाइने सङ्घर्षशील पक्षलाई समेत उजागर गरेको पाइन्छ । प्रकृतिमा पाइने फूल, भ्रमर, पुतली, कोइली, हिमाल, वर्षा आदिले गरेको मानवीय क्रियाकलापलाई एकातिर सहज र स्वाभाविकताका साथ प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ भने अर्कातिर प्रकृति हरबखत सङ्घर्षशील रहेकाले त्यसमा क्रान्तिकारीपनको आभास पाइने कुराको सङ्केत पनि गरिएको छ । यस्तै सुख, शान्ति,सम्पन्नता,सौन्दर्य जस्ता कुराका साथै दिव्यता,अमरता एवम् मित्रभाव पनि प्रकृतिमा पाइने उल्लेख गरिएको छ । यिनी स्वच्छन्दतावादी कवि भएको हुनाले यसमा प्रकृतिमा विश्वात्माको आभास पाइने कुराका साथै प्रकृतिलाई सभ्यताको स्रोतका रूपमा पनि उल्लेख गरिएको पाइन्छ । कविले प्रकृतिको चित्रण गर्ने क्रममा आफूभित्रको प्रकृतिप्रतिको सौन्दर्य वृत्तिलाई सहज संवेदनाका प्रवाहमा भावगत सघनता र अनुभूतिको तीव्रताका साथ आफूलाई समाहित गर्दै प्रस्तुत गरेको पाइन्छ । सरल,सहज एवम् लालित्यमय र सुकुमार पदावलीहरू तथा विभिन्न भाव विम्बहरूका माध्यमबाट जीवनजगत्का यथार्थता, क्रूरता, कठोरता, वास्तविकता, निराशा, पलायन जस्ता कुराहरूलाई पनि आत्मसात् गरेको पाइन्छ । यसरी यस कवितासङ्ग्रहअन्तर्गतका कविताहरूमा प्रकृतिको जति पनि प्रयोग गरिएको छ, तिनमा यिनले प्रकृतिको सूक्ष्म र गम्भीर निरीक्षण गर्ने कोसिस गरेको भने अवश्य देखिन्छ । यसरी प्रारम्भिक चरणका प्रकृतिकपरक कवितामा कवि सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठले प्रकृतिका विविध रूपको प्रयोग गरेका छन् भन्ने कुरा स्पष्ट हुन्छ । प्रकृतिवर्णनकै क्रममा पनि यिनी

सामाजिक, आर्थिक र मानवीय संवेदनामा समेत केन्द्रित भएकाले यिनको प्रकृतिवर्णन अपेक्षाकृत परिष्कार र परिमार्जनका साथ आउन सकेका छैनन् । यद्यपि कवि सिद्धिचरण श्रेष्ठ यस चरणका कवितामा स्वच्छन्दतावादी तथा छायावादी प्रकृतिदर्शनलाई आत्मसात् गरेको पाइन्छ ।

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लेखसार

प्रस्तुत लेखमा दामोदर पुडासैनी 'किशोर' द्वारा लिखित मायालु हुम्ला नियात्राकृतिमा अभिव्यक्त पर्यावरणीय चेतना सफल रूपमा प्रयोग गरिएको निष्कर्ष निकालिएको छ । नियात्राकारले हुम्लाका विविध सन्दर्भहरू जोडेर नियात्रा तयार पारेका छन् । आर्थिक, सामाजिक तथा संस्कृतिक सन्दर्भलाई छामेर नियात्राको शैली रचना गर्ने क्रममा उनले त्यस इलाकाको पर्यावरणलाई कृतिमा विशेष स्थान दिएका छन् । पुडासैनीले नियात्रामा उठान गरेको पर्यावरणीय चेतनालाई प्रस्तुत अध्ययनमा विश्लेषण तथा मूल्याङ्कन गरिएको छ । हुम्लाको प्रकृतिका माध्यमबाट प्रकृतिको अपरिहार्यतामाथि बहस गरी लेखकले प्रकृतिलाई मानवीय स्वभावमा नियालेका छन् । मानव र प्रकृतिका बीचको सम्बन्ध चिनाएर उनले प्रकृतिको विनाशमा उत्रिरहेको मानवसमाजलाई प्रकृतिको मूल्यबोध गराएका छन् । प्रकृतिको अवलोकन तथा संरक्षणमा अग्रसर पुडासैनीको सचेत प्रस्तुतिलाई यस अध्ययनमा पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनका सैद्धान्तिक धरातलमा रहेर नियालिएको छ । हुम्लामा विकसित पर्यावरणीय राजनीतिक संस्कृतिलाई विश्लेषण गर्दै पुडासैनीको लेखनी अधि सरेको छ । हुम्लाको प्राकृतिक सौन्दर्य र यसको अस्तित्वसँग जोडिएको प्रश्नलाई चेतनाका तहमा रहेर मायालु हुम्ला नियात्राकृतिले मानवसमाजमा सचेतनाको सन्देश प्रवाहित गर्न सफल भएको निष्कर्ष प्रस्तुत अध्ययनले सार्वजनिक गरेको छ ।

शब्दकुञ्जी: काव्यशास्त्रीय, चेतना, पर्यावरण, भौतिक, संस्कृति ।

## १. पृष्ठभूमि

नियात्राकार दामोदर पुडासैनी 'किशोर' (२०१३) नेपाली साहित्यमा कविता र नियात्रा फाँटका क्रियाशील स्रष्टा हुन् । उनले नेपाली साहित्यमा कविता विधाबाट प्रवेश गरी नियात्रामा सफलता प्राप्त गरेका छन् । *यात्राका प्रेमिल तरङ्गहरू* (२०६५), *नमेटिएका चित्रहरू* (२०७०), *मायालु हुम्ला* (२०७१), *सिमानाका रङ्ग : सिमानाका तरङ्ग* (२०७२) र *पर्खालभित्रको राजधानी* (२०७३) उनका हालसम्म प्रकाशित नियात्राकृतिहरू हुन् । आधा दर्जन कवितासङ्ग्रह प्रकाशित गरिसकेका नियात्राकार पुडासैनीको रुचिक्षेत्र भने नियात्रा नै हो भन्ने कुरा उनका नियात्राकृतिहरूले प्राप्त गरेको क्रमिक सफलताले प्रस्ट्याएको छ । नियात्राको शैली समाउने क्रममा पुडासैनीले *मायालु हुम्ला* नियात्राकृति तयार पारेका छन् । प्रकृतिका नजिकमा पुगी प्रकृतिलाई विविध दृष्टिकोणले नियाली उनले निबन्धको संरचना तयार पारेको देखिन्छ । उनको यस कृतिलाई लिएर कृतिले समेटेको पर्यावरणलाई चेतनाका तहमा अवलोकन गर्न प्रस्तुत अध्ययन अधि सरेको छ । प्रकृतिसँग रहेको मानवीय सम्बन्धको अवस्थाको निरीक्षणबाट पर्यावरणीय संस्कृति तथा पर्यावरणीय राजनीतिको अवस्था मूल्याङ्कन गर्न सकिन्छ । प्रकृति र मानिसका बीचको सम्बन्ध अवलोकनबाट मानिसमा रहेको पर्यावरणीय चेतनाको स्तर मापन हुने भएकाले यस अध्ययनमा पुडासैनीकृत प्रस्तुत नियात्राकृतिलाई पृष्ठभूमिमा राखेर प्रकृतिसँग मानिसको सम्बन्ध अवलोकन तथा मूल्याङ्कन गरी पर्यावरणीय राजनीतिक संस्कृतिको विश्लेषण गरिएको छ । यसलाई पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनका सैद्धान्तिक पृष्ठाधारमा विकसित समालोचनाको शैलीका रूपमा लिन सकिन्छ ।

२. समस्याकथन

मायालु हुम्ला नियात्राकृतिमा चित्रित पर्यावरणीय चेतना नै यस अध्ययनको समस्या हो जसलाई निम्नानुसार प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ :

मायालु हुम्ला नियात्राकृतिले पर्यावरणीय चेतनालाई के-कसरी समेटेको छ ?

३. उद्देश्य

पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनको सैद्धान्तिक धरातलमा रहेर मायालु हुम्ला नियात्राकृतिले समेटेको पर्यावरणलाई चेतनाका तहमा निरूपण गर्नु नै यस अध्ययनको उद्देश्य हो, जसलाई निम्नानुसार प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ :

मायालु हुम्ला नियात्राकृतिमा पर्यावरणीय चेतना निरूपण गर्नु ।

४. सीमाङ्कन

प्रस्तुत अध्ययनमा दामोदर पुडासैनीका अन्य नियात्राकृतिका नियात्राहरू समावेश भएका छैनन् । यस अध्ययनमा उनको मायालु हुम्ला नियात्राकृतिमा रहेका नियात्राहरूलाई पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनका सैद्धान्तिक धरातलमा रहेर ती नियात्राहरूले चित्रण गरेको पर्यावरणीय चेतनाको पक्ष अवलोकन गरिएको छ । नियात्रामा प्रकृति र मानिसका बीचको सम्बन्ध केलाएर पर्यावरणको राजनैतिक तथा सांस्कृतिक अवस्था विश्लेषणमा सीमित हुनु नै यस अध्ययनको सीमा हो ।

५. अध्ययनविधि

यस अध्ययनलाई पूर्णता दिन निम्नानुसारको अध्ययनविधि अवलम्बन गरिएको छ :

### ५.१. सामग्रीसङ्कलनको विधि

यस अध्ययनमा निबन्धकार दामोदर पुडासैनी 'किशोर' को नियात्राकृति *मायालु हुम्ला*लाई प्राथमिक सामग्रीका रूपमा प्रयोग गरिएको छ। पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनको सैद्धान्तिक धरातलमा रहेर तयार पारिएका शोधप्रबन्ध, अनुसन्धानमूलक ग्रन्थ, लेखरचना, कृतिसमीक्षा तथा टिप्पणीहरूका साथै पुडासैनीकृत अन्य नियात्राकृति र उनका अन्य कृतिमाथि भएका शोधहरूलाई द्वितीयक सामग्रीका रूपमा प्रयोग गरिएको छ। यस्ता सामग्रीहरू सङ्कलनको माध्यम पुस्तकालयलाई बनाइएको छ।

### ५.२. नियात्राविश्लेषणको विधि

प्रस्तुत अध्ययनमा पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनको सैद्धान्तिक धरातलमा रहेर यसअघिका अध्ययनहरूमा विकसित कृतिविश्लेषणको आधारलाई नै मुख्य आधार बनाइएको छ। यस अध्ययनमा निगमनात्मक विधिको प्रयोग गरी नियात्रामा समेटिएको पर्यावरणीय चेतनाको अवस्था मूल्याङ्कन गरिएको छ। यसका साथै यस अध्ययनले नियात्राविश्लेषणका लागि विश्लेषणात्मक पद्धतिसमेत अनुसरण गरेको छ।

### ६. पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनको सैद्धान्तिक पर्याधार

वातावरण र जीवनको अन्तर्सम्बन्धलाई पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनले हेर्दछ। जीव तथा वनस्पति प्रकृतिप्रदत्त विषय हुन्। जीव वनस्पतिको आश्रयमा बाँचेको हुन्छ। वनस्पतिहरूको रक्षक र भक्षक दुवै रूपमा हामी जीवलाई लिन सक्दछौं। आफ्ना लागि अपरिहार्य हो भने त्यसलाई बचाउनुपर्छ। 'किन बचाउनुपर्छ?' भनी उठ्ने प्रश्नको उचित समाधान खोज्नलाई चेतनाको उच्चतम तहको अपेक्षा गरिन्छ। प्रणीहरूमा चेतनाको यो तहमा मानव मात्र रहेको छ। यस्तो चेतना मानवलाई मात्र प्राप्त छ, अन्य प्राणीलाई छैन। त्यसैले पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनमा प्रकृतिसँग सबैभन्दा धेरै मानिस

नै जोडिन्छ । पर्यावरणीय चेतनाले प्रकृतिसम्बन्धी मानिसको चेतनाको व्यख्या गर्ने हुँदा कृतिमा यस्तो चेतनाको खोजी नै साहित्यमा पर्यावरणीय चेतनाको अध्ययनको आधार हो (ढकाल ५३) । पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनलाई प्रस्ट्याउने क्रममा *सांस्कृतिक अध्ययन र नेपाली साहित्य* कृतिमा राजेन्द्र सुवेदीले यसो भनेका छन् :

पर्यावरणीय समालोचना चिन्तनले जीवन र प्रकृतिका बीचको सम्बन्धलाई निरूपण गर्दछ । यसले जीवन र प्रकृतिबीचको अनुकूलन र प्रतिकूलनका आधारमा प्रकृति र जीवनका मूल्यको निरूपण गर्दछ । यसले प्रकृतिका भौतिक तत्त्व र सोसँगको प्राकृतिक सम्बन्धको सापेक्षित अध्ययन गर्दछ । ... यसले परिवेशका समग्र पक्षलाई साहित्यको अनिवार्य सत्यका रूपमा ग्रहण गर्दछ । ... यस समालोचनाको प्रारूप सन् १९६० र सन् १९७० को दुई दशकमा आविर्भाव भएको हो । अमेरिकी पर्यावरण चिन्तक लियो मार्क्स नामक व्यक्तिले लेखेको *द मेसिन इन द गार्डेन : टेक्नोलोजी एन्ड दि प्यास्टोरल आइडियल इन अमेरिका* (सन् १९६४) कृतिलाई पर्यावरणीय समालोचनाको सङ्केतप्राप्त प्रथम कृति मानिएको छ (१३८) ।

पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनले प्रकृतिसँग मानिसलाई प्रकृतिको अपरिहार्यताका तहमा जोडेर हेर्छ । साहित्यिक कृतिमा समेटिएको पर्यावरणको भौतिक उपस्थितिका साथै चेतनाका तहमा कृतिले उठान गरेको पर्यावरणलाई यसले अवलोकन तथा विश्लेषण गर्छ । वर्तमान समयमा मानवीय आवश्यकताले गर्दा साहित्यमा पर्यावरणीय समालोचनाको जन्म भएको हो किनभने यसले साहित्यिक कृतिमा विज्ञानको भौतिक यथार्थ, मानवतावादी चिन्तन र प्रयोगात्मक आकाङ्क्षा कसरी प्रतिबिम्बित भएको छ, भनी मूल्याङ्कन गर्दछ (एटम ८) । पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनलाई थप प्रस्ट्याउने क्रममा गोविन्दराज भट्टराईले *उत्तरआधुनिक विमर्श*मा यसो भनेका छन् :

मानिसले गरेको अन्ध प्रगति र उसको विवेकहीन उपभोगलिप्साले भूमण्डल नै बिग्रिन थालेको छ । यसै कारणले विगत दुई दशकदेखि विश्वभरि वातावरणीय लेखन (इकोराइटिड) चलिरहेको छ । यस्तो लेखनलाई समालोचना गर्ने नयाँ समालोचना पद्धति इकोक्रिटिसिजम (परिवृत्तीय समालोचना) पनि हुर्किरहेको छ । इकोलोजी (पर्यावरण) लाई ध्यानमा राखेर लेखिएका साहित्यिक कृतिको समालोचना गर्नु नै यसको लक्ष्य हो । तसर्थ, एउटा वातावरणविद्का दृष्टिले गरिएको साहित्यिक एवं सांस्कृतिक समालोचना नै परिवृत्तीय समालोचना (इकोक्रिटिसिजम) हो (२००) ।

‘इकोक्रिटिसिजम’ शब्दको पहिलो प्रयोग अमेरिकाका अध्येता विलियम रुकर्टले सन् १९६७ मा प्रकाशित *लिटरेचर यान्ड इकोलोजी : यान एक्सपेरिमेन्ट इन इकोक्रिटिसिजम* शीर्षकको लेखमा गरेका हुन् । उनले उक्त लेखमा जीवमण्डलमा साहित्यको स्थानबारे महत्त्वपूर्ण प्रश्नहरू उठाउँदै उदारता एवं पर्यावरणीय विवेकका हिसाबले वाल्ट ट्विटमन, विलियम फकनर, हेनरी डेभिड थोरो आदि लेखकप्रति समर्पणको भाव अभिव्यक्त गरेका छन् (एटम ३१३) । पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनले साहित्यका माध्यमबाट पर्यावरण संरक्षणको अभियान अघि बढ्नुपर्ने मान्यता राखेको छ ।

पर्यावरणीय समालोचना स्वच्छन्दतावादसँग नजिक देखिन्छ, तर यसले विशेष उद्देश्यसहित प्रकृतिलाई कृतिमा उतार्ने मान्यता अघि सार्दछ । स्वच्छन्दतावादको केन्द्रक लेखक र पर्यावरणीय समालोचनाको केन्द्रक विश्वप्रकृति भएको हुँदा यी दुईबीच तात्त्विक रूपमा नै अन्तर पाइन्छ । परम्परागत समालोचनामा ‘के : सार’ र ‘कसरी : रूप’ ले मात्र महत्त्व पाइरहेको स्थितिमा पर्यावरणीय समालोचनाले ‘कहाँ : स्थान’ लाई केन्द्रमा ल्याउने काम गरेको छ (एटम ३२०) । पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनले कृतिविश्लेषणका सन्दर्भमा कृतिले देखाएको वैज्ञानिक खोजको सम्भावना,

मानवीय अनुभूतिहरूको पर्यावरणीय सन्दर्भमा विश्लेषण, वातावरणप्रतिको नैतिकता, भौतिक वातावरणको साहित्यिक उपस्थिति काव्यशास्त्रीय अध्ययन, पर्यावरणमैत्री भाषिक प्रयोगको अवस्था आदि पक्षलाई नियाल्ने प्रयत्न गर्दछ। कृतिविश्लेषकहरूले पर्यावरणीय समालोचना, पर्यावरणीय अध्ययन, पर्यावरणीय चेतना, इको क्रिटिसिजम आदि शब्दावली प्रयोग गरी यसलाई अर्थ्याउने गरेको पाइन्छ।

### ७. पर्यावरणीय चेतनाका तहमा मायालु हुम्ला नियान्नाकृतिमा पर्यावरणको अवस्था

पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनले प्रकृति र जीवनलाई जोडेर हेर्दछ। हावा, पानी, माटो, वनस्पति आदि प्राकृतिक विषय हुन्। जीव पनि प्राकृतिक विषय नै हो तथापि जीवचाहिँ उल्लिखित प्राकृतिक पक्षमाथि आश्रित हुन्छ। चेतनाका हिसाबले हेर्ने हो भने मानिसलाई यी सबैबाट अलग राखेर अध्ययन गर्नुपर्ने हुन्छ। मानिसबाहेक अन्य सबै प्राकृतिक विषयलाई पर्यावरणका घटक मानेर मानिससँग तिनीहरूको सम्बन्धका साथै तिनीहरूको संरक्षण र भक्षणमा देखिने मानिसका कृत्यहरूलाई पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनले नजिकबाट नियाल्छ। कृतिमा प्रकृतिको परम्परागत खोजीका माध्यमबाट पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनको अभीष्ट पूरा हुन सक्दैन। कृतिमा देखा पर्ने पर्यावरणलाई मानवीय चेतनाका तहमा निरूपण नगरी पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनको औचित्य पुष्टि गर्न सकिन्न। प्रकृतिलाई केन्द्रमा राखी मानवीय चेतनाको अवलोकन गर्ने व्यावहारिक प्रयास नै पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनको मुख्य मान्यता हो। यस मान्यतासँग जोडिँदै प्रस्तुत अध्ययनलाई निम्न उपशीर्षकहरूमा विस्तार गरिएको छ।

#### ७.१. प्रकृति र मानिसका बीचको सम्बन्ध

मानिसको जीवन प्रकृतिका कारणले सम्भव भएको हो। प्रस्तुत नियान्नाकृतिमा यस तथ्यलाई नियान्नाकारले राम्ररी देखाएर यसको पुष्टिको प्रयाससमेत गरेका छन्। नियान्नाले देखाएको प्रकृति र

मानिसका बीचको अन्तरसम्बन्धलाई यस अध्ययनमा खोज्ने प्रयत्न गरिएको छ । हुम्लाको यात्रामा निस्किएका नियात्राकार नेपालगञ्जमा केही दिन रोकिन्छन् । त्यहाँ, हुम्लाको उडानमा जानपहिचानबाहेकका मानिसलाई सामेल गर्ने कि नगर्ने भन्ने विषयमा ठूलो राजनीति हुन्छ । त्यसैका मारमा परेका नियात्राकारमा अनुभूतिका अलग-अलग पाटाहरू जोडिन पुग्छन् । त्यसै क्रममा सङ्कलित अनुभूतिले परिवेशको पर्यावरणीय परिदृश्य नियात्रामा यसरी फुकाएको छ :

टाढा-टाढा हेर्छु । फाँटमा धान बयेली खेतिरहेछ । बीचबीचमा आँप, गुलमोहर र सिसौका हाँगाहरू छहारी छाडिरहेछन् । अशोक वृक्ष, खजुर र बोटलपम्पका वृक्षहरूले राँभा राँकिएको छ, हरियाली सौन्दर्यमा । ‘भदौरे घाममा हरियाली नभए के हुन्थ्यो होला’ मनमनै सोचें मैले । होटलको कोठाको जालीदार भ्यालबाट बाहिर देखें, सर्लक्क सुकेको सिसौको रुख, जहाँ पात छैन । मसिना हाँगाहरू मक्किएर भरिसकेका छन् । त्यहाँ चरा बस्दैनन् । किराफट्याङ्गा उक्लदैनन् । मान्छेहरू रुख ढाल्ने कुरा गरिरहेछन् । हो, त्यही हुन्थ्यो जिन्दगीमा पनि रङ्ग नभए, हरियाली नभए (१४) ।

यहाँ, नियात्राकारले धानवारी, फलफूलका बोटहरू, भदौरे हरियाली र सबैलाई सूर्यको उज्यालो तथा तापको आवश्यकताको वर्णन गरी मानवलाई प्रकृतिसँग जोडेर हेरेका छन् । यी सबै मानिसका लागि अपरिहार्य रहेको तथ्य बोध गराएका छन् । सुकेको रुखलाई चराहरूले छोडेको विषय जोडेर उनले प्रकृति र जीवनको सम्बन्ध पनि अर्थ्याएका छन् ।

नियात्राकार हुम्लाको सदरमुकाम सीमकोटमा रहेको विमानस्थलमा उत्रिएर त्यहाँको प्रकृतिलाई हेर्दछन् । उनले त्यहाँ यस्तो प्राकृतिक दृश्य नियाल्न पाएका छन् : “जतासुकै भरभुट्ट स्याउ, पाटामा चिनो, कागुनी, लट्टे भुलेर पहुँलो, कलेजी र रातो रङ्को रमिता, पाखामा तितेफापर र मिठेफापरका गुलाबी दाना, पर कतैबाट आइरहने देउडाको भाका । पाटामा उड्ने लागेका

प्याँखजस्ता पहुँला सूर्यमुखी फूलहरूको सरगर्मी । माटाले ढाकेका छानामा ढकमक्क फत्रेका सयपत्रीको सोलोडोलो” (२४) । मानिसको सक्रिय सहभागितामा हलक्क हुर्किएका तरकारी, अन्न र फूलका बोटहरू, जसलाई आफ्नै निजी प्रयोजनका स्वार्थले भए पनि मानिसले हुर्काएको छ । मानिससँग निकटस्थ यही प्राकृतिक अवस्थाको वर्णन प्रस्तुत प्रसङ्गले अधि सारेको छ, जसमा मानिस र प्रकृतिलाई जोडेर हेरिएको छ । मानिसका लागि प्रकृति कति र किन अपरिहार्य छ ? भन्ने प्रश्नको सही जवाफका रूपमा पनि उद्धृतांशलाई लिन सकिन्छ ।

हुम्लाको चर्चित तीर्थस्थल खार्पुनाथ जाँदा नियान्नाकारले बाटामा नल्ला गाउँ भेट्दछन् । त्यहाँ उनले देखेको प्राकृतिक दृश्यावलीमा मानिस र प्रकृतिका बीचको अन्योन्याश्रित सम्बन्धलाई नियान्नाले ज्यादै सुन्दर ढङ्गले टिपेको छ :

पारिपटि माउ र चल्लाहरू छरिबरि भएभैँ नल्ला गाउँ टाँसिरहेछ भिरमै । कर्णाली नदीको हावाले बेस्सरी बताउँदोरहेछ नल्ला गाउँका दश घरहरूलाई । गाउँवरिपरि मकै फलिरहेका थिए, कोदो भुलिरहेका थिए, राताम्य लट्टेको लहर थियो, बीचबीचमा सूर्यमुखी फुलिरहेका थिए । गाउँमा मान्छेको भने छायाँसम्म देखिएन । परपर तीनचार गोठालाहरू गीत गाउँदै थे । उनीहरूको आवाजसँगै कर्णाली सुसाइरियो । साँच्चै सुन्दर थियो नल्ला । नल्ला हिमाली परिवेशको गाउँजस्तो देखिएन । कोदोमकै भुलेको तनहुँको भिमादवरिपरि वा काभ्रेको फूलबारी डाँडागाउँतिरको

भक्तिको दिइरियो नल्लाले (४०) ।

यहाँ नियान्नाकारले, कृषिपरम्पराका माभमा हुर्किएको सुन्दर गाउँ नल्लाको चित्रण जीवन्त उतारेका छन् । यसले प्रकृतिमा आश्रित मानवलाई प्रकृतिसँग जोडेर प्रस्तुत गरेको छ । खार्पुनाथ

मन्दिरका आँगनमा पुगेका नियात्राकारले त्यहाँबाट हुम्लाको अर्को सौन्दर्य अनुभूत गर्दछन् । प्राकृतिक परिदृश्यको चित्रणमा यसरी बगेका छन् उनका शब्दहरू :

निलो आकाश, सेता हिमालहरू र हरिया पहाडहरू हुँदै ओर्लिएको छ खार्पुनाथमा । जताततै हरियाली फैलिरहेछ । परपर डाँडाहरूमा गाईवस्तुहरू चरिरहेछन् । धेरै समय आँखा घुमाएपछि मात्र कतैकतै छायाँजस्तै देखिन्छन् मान्छेहरू । अनवरत मूर्च्छना निकालिरहेछन् कर्णाली र दोज्यामहरूले । चराहरू खेलिरहेछन् खोलाहरूसँग जुहारी । अर्धमुदित रूपमा हेर्ने र चिम्लने गर्दै छन् बादल छोडेर घामका आँखाहरूले । निर्वाङ्ग प्रकृतिको अन्वितिमा भित्रैदेखि फक्रिएको छु म । उद्याम आनन्द वर्षिरहेछ हावासँगै । खार्पुनाथ प्राकृतिक बगैँचा बनेर व्युँभिरहेछ । मसिना फूलहरूको रङ्गीबिरङ्गीले महक छरिरहेछन् अनन्तसम्म । फगत त्यो स्वाद लिने मान्छेहरूको कमी छ त्यहाँ । त्यहाँका जल, जमिन, आकाश र जीवजन्तुले कविता लेखाइरहे मलाई (४९) ।

मनोरम प्रकृतिका प्रभावले लेखकमा निःसृत सुन्दर मनोभावना, नदीकिनारमा विकसित ग्रामीण सौन्दर्य, प्रकृतिका काखमा स्वच्छन्द विचरण गरिरहेका गाई तथा अन्य जनावरहरूको क्रियाकलाप आदिलाई सुन्दर प्रस्तुतिका माध्यमबाट विश्लेषण गरेर प्रस्तुत प्रसङ्गले जीवन र प्रकृतिको अन्तरसम्बन्ध छर्लङ्ग पारेको छ ।

सरकारी कार्य सम्पादनका लागि हुम्ला पुगेका नियात्राकार हुम्लाको सदरमुकाम सीमकोटको बसाइ अवधिभर समय र स्वास्थ्यले साथ दिएसम्म प्रातःभ्रमणमा निस्कन्छन् । त्यहाँको हुमाने खोलासम्म उनको यात्रा रहने गर्दछ । त्यसै सिलसिलामा पर्यावरणीय दृश्यहरू पनि बटुलिन छोड्दैनन् । उनले बटुलिएका तिनै अनुभूतिहरूलाई नियात्राको विषय बनाई शैलीको सौन्दर्य निर्माणमा यसरी खर्च गरेका छन् :

बिहानै बाटामा खच्चर र गधाका ताँती भेटिन्छन् । वरिपरि पहाडमा रुदिलो फुलिरहेछ । नामै थाहा नपाएका कयौँ फूलहरू ढकमक्क छन् । हुमाने खोला तर्नेबित्तिकै डालेचुकका हरिया रुखहरूले ढकमक्क ढाकेका । धेरैले बताए, 'डालेचुक अत्यन्त स्वास्थ्यवर्धक छ, अत्यन्त पोसिलो छ, साँच्चै भन्ने हो भने यारचागुन्भुको रसभन्दा पनि छ, गुणकारी ।' बाटाभरि लटरम्म डालेचुक फुलेका छन् । भन्डै निलकाँडाका गोडाजस्ता लाग्ने डालेचुक पाकेपछि, राता हुन्छन् घँघारुका दानाजस्ता । म हरेक दिन हुमाने खोलामा हात चोपेर शिर सिञ्चन गर्छु र दुईचार गोडा डालेचुक चपाउँछु । डाँडाभरि घँघारु पाकेर राताम्य छ, फूलहरूको जुलुस छ जतासुकै (८२) ।

उद्धृतांशले प्रकृति कसका लागि ? भन्ने प्रश्नको जवाफ निर्माण गरेको छ । बहुगुणी वनस्पतिदेखि लिएर दैनिक भोजनका लागि समेत प्रयोग हुने सम्पूर्ण अन्न तथा फलफूल आदि दिएर धरतीका प्राणीलाई प्रकृतिले बचाएको छ । यही तथ्य हामी यहाँ पनि सुरक्षित रहेको पाउन सक्छौँ ।

हुम्लाको हिमपातलाई नियान्त्राकारले अवलोकन मात्र गरेनन्, उनले त त्यसको प्रभावलाई कृतिमा विश्लेषण पनि गरेका छन् । प्रकृतिमा आउने उतारचढावसँगै प्राणीहरू कसरी सङ्घर्ष गरेर जोगिन्छन् भन्ने विषयको विश्लेषण उनले नियान्त्रामा यसरी गरेका छन् :

हिउँ खन्निरहेछ, भरीको लहरा छुटिरहेछ । पाउबाडा, लादेबाडा, सीमकोट, तल्लोगाउँ, हेल्दुङ, बुराउँसे सबै गाउँहरूले धुवाँ ओकलिरहेछन् । बेलाबेलामा कुहिरोले सबै कुरा पूरै ढाक्छ र केही देखिँदैन । एकै क्षणमा कुहिरो फाट्छ । लहरहरूमा सेताम्य समुद्र लडिबुडी खेलेजस्तो लाग्छ । अस्तित्व अस्तित्व कल्याङकुलुङ गर्ने चराका जमात रातारात श्रीनगर वा कालिका गाउँका समथरतिर वसाइँ सरे कि ! कसैको केही चहलपहल छैन । घोर्ले कागहरू भने भोटेकुकुर भुकेभैँ हिउँ प्रलयसँग धावा बोल्दै बस्तीबस्ती चहारिरहेछन् (९४) ।

प्रकृतिमा आउने परिवर्तन र त्यसको जीवनमा देखिने सकारात्मक तथा नकारात्मक दुवै प्रभावलाई यहाँ देखाइएको छ । प्रकृतिका काखमा प्रकृतिसँगै आश्रित भएर जीवन कसरी बगेको छ, भन्ने यथार्थलाई पनि यस प्रसङ्गले राम्ररी बुझाएको छ । हिमवर्षाकै प्रसङ्ग फुकाएर नियान्नाकारले यसले हुम्लाको जनजीवनलाई पारेको प्रभावको विश्लेषण र मूल्याङ्कन गरेका छन् :

एयरपोर्टको पूर्वी कुनामा भुमा र भोपाहरू चरिरहेछन् । हिमालभरि हिउँले ढाकेको पाँचछ, महिनाअघिदेखि । हिमालका खर्क र पाटनका चरनहरूमा चराउन छोडिएका भोपा, भुमा, घोडा, खच्चर र गदाहरूलाई गाउँलेहरूले घरबस्तीतिर ल्याएकाले एक्कासि सीमकोट वस्तुभाउमय बनिरहेछ । वस्तुभाउको सिलिडिमिलिड छ, डुवाँ-डुवाँ र डुँ-डुँ छ । डाँडाकाँडा, पाटा, खोल्सा, उकालो, ओरालो जतासुकै वस्तुभाउ सल्बलाइरहेछन् । हिउँमा भिज्दै हिउँमाथि चल्मलाउने वस्तुभाउ हिउँलाई जित्दै जवानी प्रस्तुत गरिरहेछन् । 'चिसोतातो त बहाना मात्र हो, अवरोध होइन' यही बुझिँदै छ वस्तुभाउका बुरुक-बुरुकवाट (९७) ।

यहाँ, हिमपात प्रकृतिमा आएको परिवर्तन हो । प्राकृतिक परिवर्तनलाई जीवहरू आत्मसात् गर्दछन् । नियान्नाकार यसैको व्यावहारिक उदाहरण यस इलाकामा भेट्टाउँदछन् । प्रकृति र जीवनका बीचको सम्बन्ध, प्राणीहरूले प्रकृतिमा आएको परिवर्तनलाई गरेको स्वव्यवस्थापनबाट सजिलै बुझ्न सकिन्छ । हुमाने खोला तरेपछि, नियान्नाकारको यात्रा बुराउँसे गाउँ हुँदै रल्लिड हिमालतर्फ अघि बढेको छ । त्यस यात्रामा उनी जीवन र प्रकृतिको सम्बन्ध यस्तो देख्छन् :

पञ्चमुखी हिमालको आसपासबाट सेतो सर्प हामफालेभैँ ओर्लिरहेछ, हेल्दुड नदी । हेल्दुडले आफू खोँचमा कुलकुलाएर पहाडलाई दुई फ्याकमा बाँडेको छ । बुराउँसे र हेल्दुडको पारिपटि अजड्गको पहाड उभिएको छ । पहाडको मध्यभागमा तेह्र घर मात्र टाँसिएको लाडदुक गाउँ छ ।

मोडबाट हेल्दुड खोला, पहाडहरू, हिमालहरू, रानीवनमा रहेको रणसुर गुल्मका चिटिक्क परेका घरहरू, आदिअन्त्य र तलमाथि तथा बेसीमा बगिरहेकी कर्णाली सबै आँखाका छेवैमा आउँथे (१०६) ।

मानवजीवन प्रकृतिका काखमा कसरी बाँचेको छ, भन्ने विषयलाई यस प्रसङ्गले राम्ररी चिरफार गरेर बुझाएको छ । मानिसलाई प्रकृतिको आश्रय कसरी प्राप्त भएको छ ? यस प्रश्नको चित्तबुभदो जवाफ यस प्रसङ्गबाट मिल्दछ ।

पर्यावरणसँग मानिसको अन्तरसम्बन्ध नियात्राकारले यात्राका विविध तहमा भेट्टाएका छन् । रल्लिङ हिमालतर्फको यात्राका सिलसिलामा यस्तो सम्बन्ध विविध अवस्थामा प्रस्टिएका छन् । यसै यात्रामा हेल्दुड खोला नाघेपछि नियात्राकारले भेटेको प्रकृति र मानिसको सम्बन्धलाई उनले नियात्रामा यसरी उतारेका छन् : “दृश्य र स्पर्शले हाम्रो थकाइ टिकेन । हामी हिँडिरहेको पाखाभरि कुइयाँसु फलेका थिए । धुपीका बोटहरू सुसाइरहेथे । प्रकृति आफ्नै तालमा मस्त थियो । हामी बेग्लै तालमा मख्ख थियौं । पारि देखिने सीमकोट, हेल्दुड र बुराउँसेका घरहरूबाट बत्तीको उज्यालो उम्र्रदै थियो । त्यसबेला लाडदुक गाउँ छोडिसकेका थिए हाम्रा पाइलाहरूले” (११०) । प्रकृतिसँग सहसम्बन्ध विकास गरेर मानिस जीवनको यात्रामा सामेल हुन्छ । बुझे पनि नबुझे पनि मानिसको जीवन प्रकृतिकै काखमा हुर्किरहेको हुन्छ । मानिस जतिसुकै प्रकृतिका विरुद्धमा उत्रिए पनि प्रकृति भने सधैं मानिसका साथमै हुन्छ र मानिसलाई जीवन दिएर अस्तित्वमा उभ्याउँदछ । हुम्लाको प्रकृतिलाई पढेर नियात्राकार पुडासैनीले यस्तो निष्कर्ष पटक-पटक निकालेका छन् । उल्लिखित प्रसङ्गले पनि यही निष्कर्ष बोलेको छ ।

रल्लिङकै यात्राका क्रममा नियात्राकार तोर्पा गाउँलाई छिलोलेर अघि बढ्दछन् । त्यस यात्रामा भेटिएको पर्यावरणीय चित्रलाई नियात्रामा यसरी उतारिएको छ : “बस्तीका वरिपरि फाट्टफुट्ट

बारीहरू छन् । पाकेको फापरले राताम्य देखिँदै छन् बारीका पाटाहरू । भिराला पहाडहरूमा भीरजस्तै पाटाहरू छन् । मान्छेहरू फापर थन्क्याउन तथा चौँरी, भेडा र घोडाहरू चराउनमै मस्त छन् । खोलाहरू सुसाइरहेछन् । परपर बारीमा काम गर्ने खेतालाहरूले गाएका गीतको ध्वनि खोलासँगै मिलेर बगिरहेछ" (१२५) । यहाँ, बस्तीमा बितिरहेको मानिसको जीवनलाई देखाइएको छ । 'प्रकृति छ, त्यसैले मानिसको जीवन पनि छ' यस अभिव्यक्तिलाई उद्धृतांशले चरितार्थ गरेको छ ।

मायालु हुम्ला नियात्राकृतिले समेटेको यात्रा नियात्राकारको हुम्लाको यात्रा हो । हुम्लाभिन्न पनि उनले अन्य उपयात्राहरू तय गरेका छन् । तिनैमध्ये रल्लिङ हिमालतर्फको यात्रा सबैभन्दा लामो र महत्त्वपूर्ण उपयात्रा हो । यस यात्रामा उनले प्रकृति र जीवनको सम्बन्धलाई ज्यादै नजिकबाट नियाल्ने अवसर पाएका छन् । रल्लिङयात्रा निरन्तर बढिरहँदा भेटिएको लिमटाङ गाउँका आसपासमा प्रकृतिसँग मानिसको जीवन कसरी सहयात्रा गर्दै छ ? यस प्रश्नको जवाफ उनले राम्ररी खोज्ने अवसर पाएका छन् । नियात्राकारको अनुभूति नियात्रामा मिठासको नमुना बनेर प्रकट भएको छ :

टङ्कारो घाम चम्किरहेछ, तर घामको तेजलाई हराएको छ हिउँको हावाले । क्षणक्षणमा पत्यौल पहाड बनेर फैलिन्छ कुहिरो, पहाडका शृङ्खलाहरूमा । क्षणमै कुहिरो हराएपछि सुकिलो, सफा र सुन्दर बनेर सल्लुलाउँछन् गाउँहरू । हावाको भोक्कासँगै गाउन थाल्छन् हिमालहरूले, गाउँछन् कुहिरो र बादलका भुल्काहरूले, सुसेलिरहन्छन् चट्टानमाथिका नलधाराहरूले । लिमटाङ गाउँ छोडेपछि भेटिएको छ फापर बारी । बारी पूरै रङ्गिएको छ फापर रङ्गले (१४५) ।

घाम, हावा, पानी, माटो आदिका आश्रयमा वनस्पतिहरू हुर्किन्छन् अनि त्यही वनस्पतिका आश्रयमा मानव र अन्य जीवहरू हुर्किन्छन् । घाम, पानी, हावाको अपरिहार्यता समस्त प्राणीहरूलाई छ । प्रस्तुत प्रसङ्गले यस विषयमा विमर्श गरेको बुझिन्छ ।

लिमटाडकै सेरोफेरो छिचोलेर अधि बढिरहँदा नियात्राकार यस्तो पर्यावरणीय परिदृश्यमा अल्भिन्छन् : “हामी हिँडिरहेकोभन्दा पूर्वपटिको डाँडामा छतीस वटा नाउरहरू घाम तापै देखिए । ठाडो भीरमा छरिएर चरिरहेका ती भेडाहरूको चल्मलाहट असाध्यै आनन्ददायक देखियो । अलिकति सन्तुलन बिग्रियो भने तिनीहरू खुर्मुलिएर पाताल पुग्ने डर थियो । तिनीहरूमा कुनै डर थिएन । एउटा निष्फिक्री जिन्दगीमा रमाइरहेको भान हुन्थ्यो तिनीहरूलाई देख्दा” (१४७) । यहाँ, प्रकृतिमा जोडिएको जीवनको सुन्दर तस्वीरलाई नियात्राकारले उतारेका छन् ।

रल्लिङ पुग्न आधा घण्टा बाँकी छ भनी बाटामा भेटिएका स्थानीय दोर्जे लामा नियात्राकारको टोलीलाई बताउँछन् । उनी काठमाडौँको सहरी परिवेश र अवस्थसँग ग्रामीण परिवेशको तुलनात्मक दृष्टिकोण राख्दछन् । दोर्जे लामाको विश्लेषणात्मक बोलीलाई नियात्राकारले यसरी उठाएका छन् :

खानामा विष र औषधी हालेर रोगाण भन्ने सुन्छु । यहाँ त बढी खानु पनि छैन । रोगाउनु पनि छैन । यी ढुङ्ग्यान, बुट्यान र बुच्काहरू नै साथी छन् । यी चौँरी र भेडाहरू नै सल्लाहसाउतीका साथी छन् । चिसोमै जन्म्यो, चिसो नै ओढ्यो, चिसो नै ओछ्यायो । यिनै हिमाल जुलुस, यिनै हिमाल जात्रा, यिनै हिमाल मेला, यिनै हिमाल पर्व, यिनै हिमाल खेतीपाती, यिनै हिमाल नेता, यिनै हिमाल जनता । यहाँ कसैले कसैलाई पछार्नु छैन, कसैले कसैलाई उचाल्नु छैन । जो हिमालसँग कुम जोरेर हिमालभन्दा अग्लिएर हिँड्न सक्यो ऊ सूर्य बन्यो । जो हिमालको विरुद्धमा बहकियो ऊ खोलाको बालुवाभैँ ढल्यो । प्रकृतिसँग मितेरी लगाउन सक्नेलाई कुनै देवताको आवश्यकता पर्दैन (१४९) ।

लेखकद्वारा उठाइएको प्रस्तुत दोर्जे लामाको आवाज, सीमान्त आवाजको उदाहरण हो ।

यसमा राज्यको बेवास्ताका प्रति चर्को आक्रोश पोखिएको छ । पर्यावरण प्रदूषणको विषयलाई चासोका साथ हेरिएको छ । ‘ग्रामीण जनजीवनमा पर्यावरण संरक्षणको चेतना कसरी सुरक्षित छ ?’ यस विषयलाई पनि यस आवाजले सुस्पष्ट व्याख्या गरेको छ । यसलाई ग्रामीण पर्यावरणीय चेतनाको उत्तम नमुनाका रूपमा लिन सकिन्छ ।

हुम्ला बसाइको आखिरी चरणमा लेखकमा हुम्लाप्रति विशेष दृष्टिकोण बनेको पाइन्छ । उनी कृतिमा समेटिएका नियान्नाभरि सचेतनाको आवाज बोकेर प्रशस्तै उत्रिएका छन् । उनको हिमाली सभ्यताप्रतिको सचेत दृष्टिकोण यसरी प्रकट भएको छ : “हिमालमा हिँड्न पाउनु मान्छेहरूले सोच्ने स्वर्गमा विचरण गर्न पाउनु नै हो । ताप्लेजुडदेखि दार्चुलासम्म फैलिएका हाम्रा हिमालहरूमा असङ्ख्य कैलाशहरू छन्, असङ्ख्य मानसरोवरहरू छन् र छन् असङ्ख्य हिमनदी, हिमशिला, हिमागर, हिमानी, हिमताल र हिमगुफाहरू” (१८९) । यहाँ नियान्नाकारले, हाम्रो पर्यावरणीय अवस्थामा भेटिएको पर्यटकीय शक्ति र सांस्कृतिक मौलिकताको परिचर्चा गरेका छन् । यसलाई पर्यावरणचिन्तनको सकारात्मक अवधारणाका रूपमा लिन सकिन्छ, जसले जीवन र प्रकृतिलाई सम्बन्धको अपरिहार्यताका तहमा जोडेर हेर्दछ ।

हाम्रो शक्तिको परिचर्चाका अन्य तहहरूमा पनि नियान्नाकार खरो उत्रिएका छन् । उनको बुझाइ छ : “हाम्रै हुम्लाको पृष्ठमा रहेको कैलाश पर्वतको एक सय दश किलोमिटर अर्धव्यासको गोलाइभित्र एसियाका ठूला नदीहरू सिन्धु, यार्लुङ, साङ्पो, अथवा ब्रह्मपुत्र, कर्णाली तथा सतलजका मुहानहरू छन् । भारतीय उपमहाद्वीपका करोडौँ बासिन्दाको जीवन धानेका छन् तिनीहरूले” (१९०) । एकातिर पानी हाम्रो शक्ति हो, अर्कातिर पानीमा आश्रित जीवहरूको जीवनको निरन्तरता

पनि हाम्रो पर्यावरणमा प्राप्त ठूलो सम्पत्ति हो । यहाँ, नदीकिनारमा विकसित मानवसभ्यता तथा नदीमा आश्रित मानवजीवनलाई पनि हेर्न सकिन्छ । नियान्नाकारले नेपाली भूमिमा रहेको पर्यावरणीय सौन्दर्यको स्रोत पनि खोजेका छन् । जीवनको आधार प्रकृति नै हो भन्ने पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनको आदर्शलाई पनि यस प्रसङ्गले सप्रमाण प्रस्ट पारेको छ ।

अन्ततः नियान्नाकार हुम्ला भ्रमणको उद्देश्य पूर्ण गरी फर्किन्छन् । फर्किँदै गर्दा हवाईमार्गमा पनि अनुभूतिहरू जन्मिरहन्छन् । आकशबाट सुर्खेत उपत्यका देखिन्छ । उनलाई सुर्खेतको सुन्दर प्रकृतिले भन्-भन् नजिक पुऱ्याउँदछ । यस्तो अनुभूतिलाई उनले नियान्नाको शिल्पमा यसरी सजाएका छन् : “सुर्खेतको हरिती देखा जीवन सधैं बास्नादार लाग्छ मलाई । काँक्रेविहारमा पुगेर मैले कयौँपटक शान्तिको आदिम रहस्य खोतल्ने प्रयास गरेको छु । बाबियो चौरमा बसेर कयौँ रात सुर्खेतीहरूसँग गीतका गेडाहरूमा बाँच्नुको मजा उत्खनन गरेको छु” (२१९) । मानिस प्रकृतिको सुन्दर उपहार हो । ऊ प्रकृतिबाट कहिल्यै टाढा छैन र रहन पनि सक्दैन । मानिस प्रकृतिका काखमा सधैं रमाइरहने प्राणी हो । प्रकृतिको अनुपस्थितिमा उसको अस्तित्वको समाप्ति निश्चित छ । उल्लिखित प्रसङ्गमा यसैको व्यापक परिचर्चा देखिन्छ । यहाँ, प्रकृति र मानवलाई एकैसाथ राखेर नियान्नाकारले गम्भीर अवलोकन गरी यिनीहरूको अन्तरसम्बन्ध पनि राम्ररी केलाएका छन् ।

## ७.२. काव्यशास्त्रीय अध्ययन

प्रकृति जीवनसँग हरेक तहमा जोडिन्छ । प्रकृतिलाई केन्द्रमा राखेर चेतनधर्मी मानिसले आफ्ना अनेक सिर्जनामा चेतनाको विस्तार गरेको पाइन्छ । मानिसको यस्तो चेतना सकारात्मक तथा नकारात्मक दुवै दिशामा दौडिने गर्दछ । सामाजिक, राजनैतिक, आर्थिक परिवृत्तमा मानिसले प्रकृतिलाई जोडेर विमर्श गर्ने गरेको छ । यी समग्र पक्षहरूको सकारात्मक तथा नकारात्मक

प्रभावको मूल्याङ्कन पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनले गर्दछ । पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनले अध्ययनको यस्तो परिपाटीलाई काव्यशास्त्रीय अध्ययन भनेको छ ।

कृतिमा अभिव्यक्त लैङ्गिकता, जाति, राजनीति आदि वैचारिकताको सङ्कथनलाई काव्यशास्त्रीय अध्ययनले हेर्दछ । यसो गर्दा प्राज्ञिकतालाई नाघेर समसामयिक जनताको अवधारणा, आमसञ्चार, सामाजिक संस्कृति, राजनैतिक व्यवस्था, वातावरणीय आन्दोलन, सरकारी संस्थाहरू, व्यावहारिक समस्या आदिमा विमर्श हुन सके त्यसले समालोचनालाई सफलतातिर लैजान्छ (एटम ३२७) । काव्यशास्त्रीय अध्ययनले पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनको व्यावहारिक सन्दर्भमा सशक्त उपस्थिति जनाउँदै महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका निर्वाह गर्दछ ।

हुम्ला भ्रमणमा रहेका नियन्त्राकार मुलुकमा विद्यमान आन्तरिक द्वन्द्वको तस्वीर देख्दछन् । द्वन्द्वका कारणले हुम्लामा सरकारी कर्मचारीहरू सदरमुकाममा जम्मा भएका छन् । वनसंरक्षक कर्मचारीहरू पनि त्यहीं जम्मा भएका छन् । साँझको समय छ । सबै तहका कर्मचारीहरू त्यहाँ प्रसिद्ध साहुनीको होटलमा कोचिएर रक्सीमा भुम्मिन पुग्दछन् । उनीहरू एकअर्कालाई चर्को दोषारोपण गर्दछन् । स्थानीय एक कर्मचारी वनविभागका कर्मचारीहरूको पोल खोल्न थाल्दछन् । नियन्त्राकारले तिनीहरूबीच भएको वादविवादको शैलीलाई नियन्त्राको शैलीमा यसरी मिसाएका छन् : “यारचागुन्भु, पाँचऔँले, कुटकी, पदमचाल, जटामसी, नीरजस्ता जडीबुटीहरूले छपक्क ढाकिएको हुम्ला । वर्षेनी व्यापारीहरूले करोडौँको जडीबुटी ओसार्दछन् तलतिर र तिब्बततिर । उनीहरूसँग मिलेर तिमीहरू नै तस्कर गर्छौं जडीबुटीको तर वर्षभरमा राजस्व देखाउँछौं पन्ध्रवीस हजार” (२०४) । यहाँ नियन्त्राकारले आक्रोशित कर्मचारीको बोलीलाई टपक्कै टिपेका छन् । उनले, सरकारी संयन्त्रहरू नै प्रलोभनमा फसेर प्रकृति विनाशमा कसरी अग्रसर बनेका छन् भन्ने तथ्यलाई सप्रमाण

पेस गरेका छन् । हाम्रो प्राकृतिक सम्पत्तिको दुरुपयोगको स्पष्ट विवरण यहाँ आएको छ । राजनैतिक समस्याले पर्यावरणीय सम्बन्धका विषयहरूमा समस्या विस्तार गरेको तथ्यगत तर्क उद्धृतांशले पेस गरेको छ ।

हुम्लालाई छोडेपछि नियान्त्राकारमा हुम्लाको प्राकृतिक सौन्दर्य संरक्षणका विषयमा चिन्ता थपिएको छ । नियान्त्राकार हुम्लाको प्राकृतिक स्वरूपलाई उही रूपमा सदाकाल बचाइराख्नु हाम्रो परम कर्तव्य हो भन्ने निष्कर्षमा पुगेका छन् । उनको यो धारणा नियान्त्रामा यसरी अभिव्यक्त भएको छ :

प्रकृतिबाट प्रकृति चलेको हेर्न चाहन्थेँ म । प्रकृतिबाट प्रकृति नमासेको हेर्न चाहन्थेँ म । तिम्रो माया हिउँजस्तै सेतो होस्, विनादाग र विनास्वार्थको । मान्छेहरू मान्छेजस्तै होऊन् । जीव र वनस्पतिहरू जस्तो हुनुपर्ने त्यस्तै होऊन् । हावा, पानी, माटो, घाम, आगो, आकाश सबै सबै स्वरूपमै होऊन् । अरू-अरू त बिटुलिइसके सबैतिर । तिमी भने निखर । तिमी मात्र भेटूँ, यही अभिप्राय थियो तिमीतिर अधि बढ्दा (२२१) ।

अव्यवस्थाका कारणले निम्तिने राजनैतिक अवस्था प्रकृति विनाशको कारण बन्न सक्ने सम्भाव्य खतरनाक परिस्थितिप्रति नियान्त्राकारले यहाँ सचेतनाको बुलन्द आवाज उठाएका छन् । राजनैतिक स्वार्थपूर्तिका लागि इतिहासदेखि नै हामीकहाँ प्रकृति विनाशका परिघटनाहरू उत्पन्न नभएका होइनन् र यस्तो फेरि पनि नहोला भन्न सकिन्न भन्दै लेखकले यहाँ सबैलाई सचेत बन्नुपर्ने सन्देश दिएका छन् ।

भेडा चराउने निहुँमा धामीसँग भगडा परेकाले धामीले मस्टो देवताका सहायताले सारा परिवार, घरबारी, भेडा, चौरीलगायतका सबै नष्ट गराइदिने धम्की दिएपछि प्रमुख जिल्ला

अधिकारीका कार्यकक्षमा उपस्थित भई आफ्नो गुनासो पोख्दै गरेका एक पीडित किसानलाई नियात्राकार देख्दछन् । उनले त्यस दिन सङ्कलन गरेको त्यहाँको परिदृश्यलाई नियात्रामा यसरी उतारेका छन् :

ढोकाबाट एउटा मान्छे चार हातखुट्टा टेक्दै भित्रियो । मान्छे कम जनावर बढी देखिँदैथ्यो ऊ । उसले मुखमा घाँस च्यापिरहेथ्यो र पिठ्युँमा बडेमानको ढुङ्गो बोकिरहेथ्यो । उसका आडमा भेडाको भुत्लाजस्तो कपडा र सुरुवाल थिए । ती दुवै यति टालिएका थिए कि खास कपडा कुन हो चिन्नै मुस्किल पर्थ्यो । अन्दाजी सत्तरी वर्षको लागेको थियो ऊ मलाई । वास्तविक उमेर चालीस बतायो उसले । उसले जन्मेदेखि नै ननुहाएको जस्तो देखिन्थ्यो, शरीरमा जमेका फोहोरका टाटा देख्दा । कपाल पनि जीवनभर काटेको जस्तो लाग्दैनथ्यो । लट्टा परेको कपाल हुरीपछिको सिरुपाखोजस्तो देखिन्थ्यो । अनिद्राका धब्बाहरूले चुसेको जस्तो देखिन्थ्यो उसको अनुहार (१९९) ।

यस प्रसङ्गमा विवादका केन्द्रमा प्रकृतिलाई देख्न सकिन्छ । प्राकृतिक विषयलाई सामाजिक व्यवहारसँग जोडेर हेरिएको प्रस्तुत प्रसङ्गले मानिसका विविध व्यावहारिक विषय र अवस्थालाई पर्यावरणसापेक्ष व्याख्या गरेको छ । साथै, लल्लिखित प्रसङ्गले प्रकृति र जीवनको अन्तरसम्बन्धभित्र प्रकटित व्यावहारिक मर्मलाई विश्लेषण गर्ने प्रयास पनि गरेको छ ।

रल्लिङको यात्राबाट फर्किँदै गर्दा नियात्राकारलाई स्थानीय भेडा गोठालाहरूले भेडा चोरीको विवाद टुङ्ग्याइदिन आग्रह गर्दछन् । उनी यस विवादित विषयबाट पन्छिन खोज्दछन् तथापि उनीहरूको अनुनयविनयका अधि उनको केही जोड चल्दैन । अन्ततः नियात्राकार बाल्यकालमा आफ्नै पारिवारिक परिवेशमा घटित घटनाको स्मरण गरी प्राकृतिक न्यायको सिद्धान्त छनोट गर्दछन् । उनको यस प्रयासले समस्या समाधान हुन्छ । पीडित किसानले न्याय पाउँछन् । समस्या समाधानका

चरणमा प्रवेश गर्नुअघि आन्तरिक विचारमन्थनबाट निस्किएको समाधान र घटनाको व्यावहारिक निष्कर्ष निकाल्नुअघि आफैँभित्र चर्किएको वैचारिक द्वन्द्वलाई उनले अभिव्यक्तिका तहमा यसरी उतारेका छन् :

पशुको पनि आफ्नै संसार हुन्छ । उसले पनि आफ्नो र अर्काको चिन्छ । सानो छँदा नुवाकोटको लच्याङमाथि तामाङ दाइले लगेको हाम्रो रातुगाई बाह्रौँ रातमा आफ्नै गोठ जितपुरफेदीमा फर्केर बाँ बाँ गरेको अस्ति जस्तो लाग्छ मलाई । भेडा भेडासित, बाखा बाखासित त पुरानो कहावत हो, तर भेडा भेडाभित्र पनि त हुँदो हो नि आफ्नो र अर्को । कम से कम भेडाका पनि त आमा छन्, छोराछोरी छन्, संगै चर्ने साथीसँगाती छन्, त्यति भएपछि त छुट्टिन्छ होला नि आआफ्नो समूह (१६७) ।

उद्धृतांशले सामाजिक जनजीवन र व्यवहारलाई प्रकृतिसँग जोडेर हेरेको छ । सामाजिक जनजीवनको हरेक व्यावहारिक पक्ष मानवीय चेतनाले निर्धारण गर्दछ । यसलाई जीवनका रूपमा बुझ्न सकिन्छ । जीवनको सम्बन्ध प्रकृतिसँग हुन्छ । यहाँ, जनजीविकाको सवाललाई प्रकृतिसँग जोडेर प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ ।

#### ८. निष्कर्ष

पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनले जीवन र प्रकृतिको सम्बन्धलाई अवलोकन गर्दछ । यो कृतिविश्लेषणको पृथक् र आधुनिक अवधारणा हो । यसले प्रकृति संरक्षणका पक्षमा कृतिलाई चेतनाका तहमा मूल्याङ्कन गर्दछ । प्राणीहरूमा पनि चेतनासहितको मानव जातिलाई प्रकृतिको समानान्तर राखी यसले प्रकृतिका लागि मानवद्वारा सिर्जित सकारात्मक तथा नकारात्मक दुवै घटनाक्रमको अध्ययन गर्दछ । विश्वमा आज दिनप्रतिदिन प्रकृतिका लागि बहूँदै गएका खतराहरूको

न्यूनीकरणका लागि सचेतना अभिवृद्धिको उद्देश्यसहित पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनले साहित्य समालोचनामा आफ्नो महत्त्वपूर्ण उपस्थिति जनाएको छ ।

मायालु हुम्ला नियत्राकार दामोदर पुडासैनी 'किशोर'को सुन्दर नियत्राकृति हो ।

निजात्मकताको प्रचुरतामा नियत्राकारले प्रस्तुत नियत्राकृतिमा कवितात्मक अभिव्यक्तिसहितको उत्कृष्ट शैली पेस गरेका छन् । कृतिभित्र काठमाडौँबाट नेपालगञ्ज हुँदै हुम्लासम्म अनि हुम्लाका विविध स्थलहरूको भ्रमण गरी आफ्नो जिम्मेवारीमा आएको कार्यभारलाई सुन्दर ढङ्गले सम्पादन गरेर नियत्राकार काठमाडौँ फर्किदासम्मका अनुभूति र परिघटनाहरूको सिलसिलेवार प्रस्तुति देखिन्छ । उनले आदिअन्त्यका यिनै समग्र गतिविधिका विवरणहरूलाई नियत्राका रूपमा उतारेका छन् । आद्योपान्त पद्दता उपन्यासको स्वाद पाइने यस नियत्राकृतिमा हुम्ली जनजीवन र पर्यावरणलाई नियत्राकारले जीवन्त शैलीसंयोजनमा सजाएका छन् । प्रकृति र जीवनको सम्बन्धलाई नजिकबाट अवलोकन गरी यसको महत्त्व दर्शाउँदै उनले कृतिभित्र पटक-पटक पर्यावरण संरक्षणका पक्षमा आवाज बुलन्द गरेका छन् ।

प्रकृति जीवनको आधार हो । प्रकृतिविना जीवन अकल्पनीय छ । यसको संरक्षणका लागि हरेक सचेत व्यक्ति अधि सन्तु आजको आवश्यकता हो । कृतिको सामाजिक उपादेयतासँग पनि यसलाई जोडेर हेर्न सकिन्छ । प्रकृतिको सौन्दर्य वर्णन पूर्वीय तथा पाश्चात्य साहित्यमा आदिकालदेखि नै कृतिको सौन्दर्यका रूपमा नआएको होइन । वर्तमान युगले पनि प्रकृतिलाई साहित्यको अभिन्न विषयकै रूपमा आत्मसात् गरेको पाइन्छ । हाल आएर थुप्रै कृतिहरूले प्रकृतिको सौन्दर्य वर्णन मात्रै नगरी यसको संरक्षण गर्ने उपायसहित सिर्जना विस्तार गरेर जनचेतना

अभिवृद्धिका पक्षमा प्रशस्तै कार्य अधि बढाएका छन् । प्रस्तुत मायालु हुम्ला नियामाकृतिलाई यसको राम्रो उदाहरण मान्न सकिन्छ ।

मायालु हुम्ला नियामाकृतिले पर्यावरणचिन्तनलाई केन्द्रमा राखेको छ । प्रकृतिको सही सदुपयोग गरी जीवन र प्रकृति दुवैको संरक्षण गर्नुपर्ने महत्त्वपूर्ण मान्यता अधि सारी प्रकृतिसंरक्षणको उचित उपायसमेत यस कृतिले प्रस्तुत गरेको छ । यसले विविध सामाजिक तथा राजनैतिक व्यवहारका केन्द्रमा मिसिन आइपुग्ने वातावरणीय विषयलाई कुशलतापूर्वक नियाल्नुका साथै, समय र समाजको चित्र खिची पर्यावरणीय सौन्दर्यका काखमा खेलेरहेको हिमसंस्कृतिलाई राम्ररी चिनाएको छ । पर्यावरणचिन्तनको अभिलक्षणका विविधतामा प्रवेश गरी कृतिले जनजीवनको अवस्थालाई प्रकृतिसँग जोडेर हेरेको छ । यिनै विशेषताहरू बोकेर आफ्नो भौतिक आकृति विस्तार गर्न सफल यस नियामाकृतिलाई पर्यावरण र जीवनको सम्बन्ध विश्लेषणमा उपस्थित नेपाली साहित्यको विशेष कृतिका कोटिमा उभ्याउन सकिन्छ । अतः पर्यावरणीय अध्ययनको रुचिक्षेत्रमा समेटिएको प्रस्तुत मायालु हुम्ला नियामाकृति 'प्रकृति र जीवन' को अध्ययनबाट सिर्जित नेपाली साहित्याकाशलाई प्राप्त एक सफल र सबल नियामाकृति हो ।

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# **Anthropology**



**Newari Divine Marriage: Ihi and Barhah Tayegu**

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**Abstract**

*This paper aims to analyze the Newari rituals of marriage through which a Newari girl passes. The divine marriage such as Ihi is with Suvarna kumar. Barhah tayegu or second marriage is with sun god or Surdyah. Ihi is termed as primary marriage and barhah tayegu is the second marriage that a girl has to pass through. It is believed that once a Newari girl is ihi rite she will not suffer from the stigma of widowhood. Ihi practices are also said to protect girls from child marriage and widowhood since the girl is already married with bel fruit. Before Ihi a girl is considered to be a kumari. It marks the transition of the girl from one stage to another. The second marriage that a Newari girl passes through is barhah tayegu or marriage to Surdyah . It is a ritual mock menarche and marriage to sun god. The basic meaning of this ritual is living within confinement for a definite period of time. It is conducted before actual menstruation occurs. The girl is considered to be impure during the time of confinement and such practices are both for purification and protection from child marriage or the stigma of widowhood.*

**Keywords:** Divine Marriage, Ihi, Barhah Tayegu, Marriage Ritual, Child Marriage, Stigma, Widowhood.

### **Introduction**

The Newars are the indigenous inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley but they are also spread in different parts of Nepal and India. The Newars speak Nepalbhasa, a Tibto-Burman language with a rich ancient and modern literature going back to the fourteenth century. Newars are known for their rich tradition of art and architecture, ritual and culture, which is rare in Nepal's other caste and ethnic groups. Little is known about the origin of Newari culture and society. Many rituals and beliefs of Newars appear to be indigenous yet they were influenced by Buddhism and Hinduism in different periods of history. Hinduism among the Newar group was started by Malla kings. Newars are religiously divided into Buddhist and Hindus. Today, Newars are also found to divide into hierarchy both in Buddhist and Hindus and the whole social structure of a *Newar* community is built on this caste system.

The Newars are rich in culture and religion and the best example of that are the numerous festivals (jattras), religious rituals, worship (pujas), and ritual observations related to person, family, kinship, and even nature worship and homages to supernatural beings. Some of the festivals and ceremonies that are observed by Newars include *Ihi* (or *Bel Bibaha*), 'Bara Tayegu' (Gufa Rakhne), 'Mha Puja' (self worship), *Bisket Jatra*, *Gunhu Punh*, *Yanya Punhi* (*Indra Jatra*), and *Janku* etc. *One of the fascinating aspects of Newari cultural*

*and traditional rituals includes divine marriages. Newar girls marry twice with divine gods before menarche irrespective of whether they are Buddhist or Hindus. This is a unique cultural practice of the Newars.*

**Objectives:**

1. To describe the divine marriage practices among the Newars
2. To examine Ihi practice and its significance
3. To describe the barhah tayegu as divine marriage

**Research Methodology**

For description and interpretation of the present topic, a documentary research method is applied. Documentary method has different connotations in social sciences and also relate with ethno-methodology. However, it is also used in larger context in social sciences with both quantitative and qualitative approach. In the present project, documentary method is used both as systematic review method of the preexisting documented materials in conceptualizing the idea stated in the objective through the reliable sources of evidence found in the document about the social world related to Newars. With evidences found in the documents, an attempt will be made to categorize, investigate and identify the core ideas related to the present topic.

Since there is no extensive information available for this particular topic, a systematic review of primarily two sources will be examined. Both are PhD dissertations conducted with Newars in different time period and dealt somewhat extensively with marriage system and Lakhamari. Lakhamari, a kind of sweet, is used

on special occasion and rituals among the Newar ethnic groups. Some related information will also be collected as primary data from traditional Newari sweet shops to collect the information on Lakhamari along with information from websites.

While Garfinkel's documentary method is more related to individual's application of psychological process to identify patterns and order in the social world, the present use of documentary method is concerned more with the close examination of document as well as analysis of the content. Thus, the term documentary method is used in generic term as widely used in social sciences. It is related to academic works.

## **Analysis**

### **Marriage practices among the Newars**

A Newar girl passes through three rituals of marriage. First with *ihi* or bel fruit marriage, the second *barhah tayegu* ritual with sun-god (surdyah) and the third is to a man. The first two are regarded as divine marriage and is believed to protect from broken secular marriage. Divinity is a part of Newars' religious life and some girls are also transformed into divinity or semi-divine being when Newars select a girl as 'living goddess'. Kathmandu valley and the Newars live in myth and legends and each type of marriage is linked to myth. *Ihi* is regarded as divine marriage and *barhah tayegu* is mock-menarche. However, it is noted that not all Newars observe *ihi* rites and *barhah tayegu*. It is said that only *ju pim* (pure castes) celebrate *ihi* not by *ma ju pim* like Khadgi, Kapali, Pode, Kulu, and Halahulu because of lack of priests to officiate the ritual.

### **Divine marriage practices**

Newars regard that divine marriage such as *Ihi* is with Suvarna Kumar and *barhah tayegu* or second divine marriage is with the Sun God or *surdyah*. *Ihi* or divine marriage is sometimes also labeled as primary marriage. The word *Ihi* in Sanskrit text means marriage (Allen 1990:189) and most Newars believe *Ihi* as true or real marriage rite. It is also believed that once you have *ih*i rite you will not suffer from stigma of widowhood. Newari widow is called *bhata madumha misa* or ‘a woman without husband’. No Newari word for widow is found and *vidhava* which is recently used term in Newari is used in Hindi and Nepali. Yet some scholars state that there is discrimination among Newars towards widows. However, *Ihi* practices are said to protect Newari girls from child marriage and being widow since the girl is already married to *Bel fruit*.

### ***Ihi***

*Ihi* is a divine marriage with divine spouse (Suvarna Kumar aka Lord Vishnu). Prior to *Ihi* marriage, a Newari girl is considered *Kumari* or virgin goddess. *Ihi* is the first divine elaborate marriage ritual of a Newar girl. It is an elaborate marriage because it follows the orthodox Hindu marriage procedure such as *kanyadan* or ‘gift of a virgin’. After *Ihi* Newari girls are regarded as Parvati, the consort of Lord Shiva. *Ihi* is mostly done in group when the Newar girl reaches the age of 5 or 7. The *Ihi* marriage of Hindu Newars has two types of explanation. Anil M. Shakya states that some Hindu Newars state that *Ihi* is a marriage to Suvarna Kumar, the son of Lord Shiva, while others

believe that, after *Ihi*, the Newari girl becomes divine spouse of Narayana aka Lord Vishnu. Buddhist Newars have different explanation. Majority of the non-Newars believe that *Ihi* is a marriage with bel fruit (*Aegle marmelos*) which Gopal Man Singh states as erroneous. He writes that, while marriage occurs with picture of Narayan, the bel-fruit is a necessary accompaniment, a witness but not itself an object with which a Newar girl marries. However, *Ihi* as a girl's life ritual is observed by Newar irrespective of their religion and variation in their explanation.

### ***Ihi*: Day one ceremony**

According to Gopal Singh Nepali, *Ihi* marriage is highly venerated as a meticulous, sacred marriage that identifies and separates Newars from other Hindu caste groups as having distinct cultural traditions. The marriage ceremony is usually held at Chaitya or Ganesh temple. Since the ceremony is expensive, it is conducted en masse. An auspicious day is selected by consulting a *Joshi* and relatives are invited. Preparation is done by purifying the house, rooms, floors, etc. Family members have to go through the purification ritual called 'ni-si-ya-ye-gu'. The ceremony starts early in the morning and the Newar girl observes fast until the ceremony is over. The ceremony begins with the sacrifice of a duck or a goat to Ganesh. The Buddhist Newar's *Ihi* process is slightly different from Hindu Newar in relation to sacrificial ceremony. After animal and bird sacrifice, 'pitha puja' where eight flags representing different 'pithas' or goddesses is performed. Then 'Nandi-mukh-sradha' or offering to ancestors to appease them is conducted. Such offering is made to three generations of both paternal and maternal

sides. After 'Nandi-mukh-sradh' the girl is brought to the initiation place conducting 'lassa-kussa' ritual for 'Sat-Brindika' ritual. The girl stands before the sacred fire to perform 'sat-brindika' ceremony. In 'sat-brindika' the girl is measured for 108 times with a yellow thread from head to foot. After measuring, 'thakali-kani' is performed with 'pathi-lai-gu' ritual. Then the bride is showered with rice and flowers. After completion of this ritual, 'thai-bhu' ritual follows which is regarded as important part of *Ihi*,

In 'thai-bhu' 84 kinds of food dishes are presented to the girl and she performs ritual eating 'pancha-grass. The Newar girl going through the *Ihi* rituals of 'thai-bhu' first puts little part of the food on a leaf for the ancestral spirits and throws some at the 'Chhwasa', then using each tip of right fingers, she tastes the food. With such eating, the day's ceremony ends.

#### *Ihi* Day two Ceremony

The next day, the girl goes through 'nasi-ya-ye-gu' ritual in which 'nauni' cleans and prepares nails and toes of the girl. The nails are collected in a copper dish by father's sister. This is a purification process. The girl then goes through 'lassa-kussa' ritual after which she is presented new clothes and ornaments. When she is dressed, a garland 'sat-brindika' is put around her neck. With this she is well prepared. Then the ritual ceremony of applying vermilion on her foreheads occurs. This vermilion ceremony is called 'sincho-phaye-gu'. It is the most important and has great significance in Hindu marriage. Then, afterwards, the girl is taken to another place for

the ceremony of 'phali-bajee' in which the girl eats 'taye', curd, milk and fruits. When eating process completes, next ceremony begins. This is called 'kanya dan'. Kanya dan in general is a process of handing a virgin girl to the groom. In *Ihi*, the virgin girl is offered to lord Narayan. During this ceremony, the family members and relatives wash the feet of the girl and offer gift to the girls. The process of washing and gifting go through ordered form from closet to outsiders. The gift usually consists of clothes and coins. The priest is also worshiped as the ceremony comes to the end. He is presented with gifts and coins. Afterwards, feast is held.

*Ihi* is elaborated divine marriage and almost imitates all the rites of real marriage offering that the girl now is transiting from one stage and status to another. Even if it is regarded as mock-marriage by some anthropologists, it has a distinctive identity and bears a cultural significance in the Newar community and is one of the best cultural homages paid to Newar woman. Some anthropologists have mentioned that similar marriage practices exist in some cultures; yet it bears a notable social and cultural significance for the Newar group against *pahadiya* Hindus whose rituals appear to be carbon copy of Indian Hindus. Since it is a symbolically elaborated marriage ritual with Lord Narayan and genuine offering of virgin bride in the form of divine marriage, the girl is regarded a part of divine world and symbolically married to divine god. Thus, theoretically she is bestowed with power to make her own decisions in social and cultural passage of life.

Apart from *Ihi*, she again goes through second divine marriage called *barhah tayegu*. A Newar girl, in this sense or theoretically, has much more independence in her marital status especially when her secular marriage ends with the death of her husband.

Barhah Tayegu

Newari girls go through three marriage rituals, first two are regarded as divine marriages and the third secular marriage or marriage to a man. First, as described above, is *ihī*, the second with the sun god (*Surdyah*), and finally with human (secular marriage). In *Ihi* marriage, a young Hindu Newari girl is symbolically married to Suvarna Kumar, a form of (Lord) Vishnu Narayan. In *Barhahtayegu* ritual, a Newari girl marries for the second time with sun-god or *Surdyah* (a form of Lord Vishnu). Both are divine marriage to god but one is called *Ihi* or marriage to Suvarna Kumar and the other is called as *barhah tayegu* (mock-menarche) or marriage to *Surdyah*. These three marriage rituals are linked to social and cultural passage of life of the Newari girl. Here we will examine the *Barhah tayegu*, a ritual of mock-menarche and marriage to sun-god (*surdyah*).

Anthropologists have found that not all Newars observe and go through these rituals which are not unusual considering the hierarchy of caste system and rigid observation of purity and pollution these caste groups place in their daily functioning. The ritual observation and its symbolic link to the divine also differ among Newar Hindu and Newar Buddhist. Yet, it offers an insight that both Hindu and Buddhist Newars observe these divine marriages and differ from Hindu *parbate*.

*Barhah tayegu* is a Newar word meaning 'placing the barrier' or 'living within a barrier' for some definite days as ritual (observation). It is a confinement inside a room before actual menarche starts and it is one of the major life-cycle rituals of a Newari girl. Newars consider it as second divine marriage. However, the major focus is on confinement. Such practices are Hindu in origin, yet Newari rituals and practices are different from Non-newari rituals. Parbatiya or especially *Barmu* and *Khe* (high caste Brahmin and Chhetriya) also observe such rituals but the difference is that the high caste group calls it '*gufa basne*' (literally confinement in a cave) and practice during actual menarche and for Hindus or Buddhist Newar it is practiced before menarche. Thus, some anthropologists call it mock-menstruation (menarche).

The days of confinement within the room during such ritual observation varies among the different high caste parbatiyas, Hindu Newars and Buddhist Newars. Again, such place of confinement is determined by geographical location and its influence on household structure. For example, in the Western part of Nepal, there is a practice of *Chhaupadi*, a tradition where, in the past, menstruating or menarche girls were kept in a room adjoining to cowshed.

It is believed that a girl, when confined in a room should not come out in the sun, should not look at male species and so on. The menarche girl or menstruating woman is regarded as impure during menstruating period since in Hindu religion blood is one of the impure elements that should be avoided by Hindu male.

When Newari girl crosses late childhood or reaches the age of 11, *Barhah tayegu* ritual is conducted but it is also conducted at the age of 13 or before a girl reaches puberty period or menarche starts. Newari girls during *Barhah tayegu* are kept for 12 days in confinement in the room. At the end of the 12 days, the girl is blindfolded, taken to the rooftop or courtyard and with ritual process shown to the sun god. This process is called *barhah pikayegu* or ‘taking out of 12 days confinement’. During the ritual process, *sindur* or vermilion is placed on the mid parting of the hair of the girl which is done in marriage ceremony to symbolize as married and being the wife of the groom. Newars believe this ritual as the second marriage to the sun god, the first being the *Ihi*. Sun god is worshipped as one of the forms of Lord Vishnu. With this ritual, the *Barhah tayegu* ceremony ends. *Sindur* rite also means that girl is now physiologically and sexually matured to engage in reproduction. In the *Barhah tayegu*, there is no male or groom and marriage is conducted with sun god. Thus, a divine marriage, *Barhah tayegu*, has two important rites, one confining inside a room for 12 days as observation of being transformed from girl to woman and the second is marriage to sun-god (*surdyah*)

Anthropologically important aspect of *barhah tayegu* is the interpretation of meaning and practice lies in such rite. The most debated argument is related to divine marriage (some also call it as mock-marriage and mock-menarche) to first with Lord Vishnu and second with *surdyah* or sun god. I did not find the satisfying anthropological explanation though anthropologists have their version of explanations

from their ethnographic study. The views are different and probably the version will change in intergenerational exploration. For example, Anil M Sakya (2000) citing Levy (1992:666) forwarded a legend as follows: 'Parvati was the daughter of Himavan, the deity of the Himalayas. When she was to be married to Shiva, Himavan gave Nepal (that is, the present Kathmandu Valley) to her as her dowry. One day as Parvati was walking through the Valley she heard an old woman crying. Parvati asked her why she was crying. "My husband is dead' was the reply of the woman. A husband is necessary for a woman; without a husband a woman's life is terrible. "Parvati pitied her and asked Shiva for a boon."Can you do something for the women of my natal home so that they will not become widows? "Shiva answered, "Narayan and I will arrange it so that there will no longer be any widows in Nepal." Thus the Newars were given the Ihi ceremony. *Narayan was the groom, and Shiva the Witness* (emphasis added)."

Yet the focus is female girl, rituals and practices which are about female fertility, sexuality, social maturity, and preparedness to enter the adult world to fulfill the social and cultural roles as well as biological goal. The variation in ritual can be observed but it is a social and cultural recognition of the womanhood and distinctive homage paid to women and a Newari traditional system of being a Newar group irrespective of Hindu or Buddhist.

In Hindu culture, anything related to death, excrement (urine, sweat, spit, etc), blood, saliva, is regarded as impure. Even the feet are not regarded as pure because they touch the ground. All Hindus should maintain the purity in their body and behavior.

Like body, the outside world also contains pure or impure (sacred and profane) objects (e.g., gold is regarded pure by its inherent nature) and event and that also should be maintained. The higher the caste level, the higher the purity level required. The Brahmins are regarded as born with inherent purity. Similarly, a Brahmin who ritually takes purification bath is purer than other Brahmins who don't. In this pretext, low caste Newars do not partake in *ihi* or *barhah tayegu*.

### **Conclusion**

Within this cultural and religious context of purity and pollution, women who go through menstruation cycle each month are impure and especially during menstruation period regarded as 'untouchable'. In the same way, a girl after menarche is not pure. Offering impure things to god is offensive. Newari girls before menarche are considered a replica of goddess. Thus, some who maintain purity are worshiped as pure living goddess. Kumari is an example of living goddess. Until this stage a divine marriage to divine god is possible. Since menarche ends the concept of goddess and purity among the Newar girls, the marriage with divine god with impure girl due to menstruation is not possible. To end this conflict and also to make the possibility of marriage with divine god, a mock-menarche (*barhah tayegu*), or in which an act of entering the world of sexual maturity and reproduction is symbolically created. It is symbolically interpreted that a girl has transited to womanhood and eligible to get married with divine god. These two divine marriages are unique Newari cultural practices. With

menarche or menstruation cycles, a Newar girl is eligible to marriage with a Newar man and this is secular marriage.

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# **Economics/Rural Development**



**Implication of Value Added Tax (VAT) System of Nepal: Examination of the  
Contribution to Government Revenue**

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**Abstract**

*This paper attempts to examine the implication of Value added tax (VAT) and its contribution to national total revenue. VAT is an improved and modified form of sales tax, which is levied on value added of goods and services in the process of production and distribution chains. Nepal launched VAT system after 1997. By analyzing the primary data, it is concluded that billing system is one of the main parts of VAT for successful revenue implementation. The exemption facilities provided by VAT are satisfactory but major problems of VAT are billing, accounting, and registration. In our country where businesses have been running in a traditional fashion, the implementation of VAT would enforce additional burden of issuing invoices, paying and collecting taxes and the additional responsibility of maintaining accurate accounts and presenting it to the tax office. Descriptive statistics has been used to analyze the existing data and correlation and linear regression have been applied to examine the contribution of VAT to total revenue. There is a positive relationship between VAT and total revenue during the study period.*

**Keywords:** *VAT, Implication, Contribution, Total Revenue, Descriptive Statistics*

## **Introduction**

Value added tax (VAT) is the latest tax system which was first introduced by Willem Von Siemens in Germany in 1919 A.D. Though it was applied first in France in 1954 A. D. VAT has been spreading rapidly since the 1960s and now this has become one of the main tax systems all over the world, covering around 166 countries.

In Nepal, VAT has come into consideration to replace indirect taxes like Sales Tax. For this purpose, a mission was established in 1993 for study, suggestion and implementation process about VAT. Then the process of VAT started from 1995, when the parliament passed VAT act and declared its enactment from November, 1997. Value Added Tax is also called a goods and service tax [GST] because it is charged on goods and services. VAT with single rate of 10% had been decided to implement with effective from November, 1997, but due to some problem it was only implemented from January, 1998 in Nepal. The government planned to register the potential taxpayers in VAT from that period. The government had decided to rationalize the tax structure by reducing the rate of income tax, sales tax and custom duties in advance.

VAT was to replace the hotel tax, the entertainment tax and the contract tax. For this purpose, the VAT tax force prepared its work in accordance with schedule. Meanwhile, the private sector of the business field opposed the government's policy to adopt VAT. In March, 1998, the government and the private sector reached to an agreement regarding the modalities of implementation VAT. Exemption of industrial machinery and tractors, and acceptance of the bill value in import point, a committee

set-up in order to review VAT law and establishment of permanent revenue board were mentioned in the main agreement. A series of discussion took place before the presentation of the FY 1998/99 budget. The demand of businessmen was increasing considering the volatile situation of the political parties. However, the government addressed few issues which were asked by the businessmen.

There is a global trend of tax reforms which encouraged Nepal to reform its tax system for meeting the worldwide scenario. So the government tried to reform tax policy and strategy. Nepal also had changed its policy and strategy to achieve more internal resources by replacing sales tax in to Value Added Tax (VAT). It was the tax imposed on value added by business firms on goods and services at the successive stages of production and distribution, value is added to such production and distribution in successive stages. Value addition to a commodity or services is simply the excess of sale value over business purchases. By a business entity, during the successive stage of production and distribution processes, business enterprises add value to their purchase by processing handling them by their own machinery, building or other capital goods.

### **Literature Review**

Government revenue is the backbone of financial strength of a country. Tax revenue is the main source of government revenue to government of Nepal. The revenues on the other hand come basically from two sources: tax and non-tax. Non-Tax sources include different revenues like gifts, grants, revenues from public enterprises (*ICAN: 2008*). Tax is computed and paid as prescribed in the law. If a person defrays the

tax payment, he may be punished in the court of law. A taxpayer is not entitled to compel the government, while paying taxes, to give something to him in return of the amount he has paid. Taxation can be considered as a convenient method of rising revenue which in turn is linked with the welfare of the people directly or indirectly. Different persons have defined taxation in different ways (Bhattarai & Koirala, 2011).

Chowdhury & Lalarukh (2013) concluded VAT has a positive relationship with gross domestic product and it's contributing to the economic growth of the country. In the economy of Bangladesh, where there was a presence of large informal sectors due to its characteristics. VAT can lead to rise in welfare which can contribute to the growth of the economy to a greater extent.

Impact of VAT revenue in major states of India was that introduction of state level VAT was the most significant tax reform measure at state level. Utter Pradesh was the latest state which had introduced VAT on Jan 1, 2008. The main reasons for this to increase were better tax compliances, stronger performance measures and steps taken by the state government to identify and plug the gap leading to revenue loss (Khan & Shadab, 2014).

Koirala (2010) remarks that improving compliance behavior of taxpayer has been a utopia in Nepal. The registered taxpayers are not effective and instrumental to the tax generation. The self pricing and catch-up effect of VAT has turned out to be like an oasis in a far-off desert. Taxpayers were barely interested in observance of law in regards to issuing tax invoices in market prices. The government has encouraged using

fiscal printers, electronic cash machines, to address the issues of tax invoices, but taxpayers are adamant to such initiatives.

By reviewing the research related documents, it has been identified that tax system depends on legal provision and tax paying capacity of people. Researchers had conducted research on VAT in different ways. The present study deems necessary to analyze the VAT provisions and implications and examine the contribution of VAT to total revenue. This study will be a comprehensive source for researchers and policy makers.

### **Research Questions and Objectives**

This study basically focuses the theoretical implication of VAT in Nepal. The successful implication of VAT system is hindered by different components. This study has tried to address the following research issues: (i) What is the present position of VAT in Nepal? (ii) What is the impact of VAT on total revenue?

The general objective of this study is to analyze the theoretical knowledge of VAT and its implementation in Nepalese economy. The specific objective of the study is to examine the present provision of VAT and analyze the contribution of VAT to total revenue in Nepal.

### **Research Method**

This study is based on both the descriptive as well as analytical method. After collection of opinions and views and some data, this study analyzes and describes the system. The primary data were collected from the focus group discussion from various

sectors conducting VAT. Purposive sampling technique has been used to collect the response from the focus group discussion with 10 tax experts, 10 tax officials, 15 taxpayers, and 15 Consumers. The secondary data were collected through books, research journal articles, magazines, newspaper and reports. Necessary information has been collected from Economic Surveys published by Ministry of Finance, published documents from Nepal Rastra Bank, Inland Revenue Department, Publication of VAT project, Budget speeches and economic survey of various fiscal years and various Websites etc.

This study is based on descriptive and analytical methods for the presentation and analysis of data. At the time of presentation and analysis of primary and secondary sources data were edited and processed. Table, graph and diagram are used for the purpose of presentation and analysis of data. To show the relationship between total revenue and VAT, correlation and simple linear regression model has been applied.

### **Results and Discussion**

Generally, internal sources of revenue are tax revenue and non-tax revenue. Tax is the major source of the government revenue. It covers nearly 80 % of total revenue. Besides this, non-tax revenue is only limited to 20 %. Tax revenue can be classified in to two groups: one is direct tax and another is indirect tax. Average trend of these two taxes is that indirect tax covers 75 % and direct tax covers only 25 % of total tax revenue. VAT, custom duty, excise duty are the main sources of indirect tax. In this section, basically VAT is analyzed in various angles. This tax had significant

contribution to the total revenue collection. In 1997, these taxes had been replaced by VAT. So VAT, of course, has more accountability in Nepalese tax system and revenue generation.

### **Revenue Structure of Nepal**

Nepalese tax revenue structure is composed of VAT, income tax, excise duty and custom duty. The total revenue is composed of tax revenue and not tax revenue.

**Table 1:** Structure of Government Revenue of Nepal from 1998/99 -2019/20\*. (Rs in Crore)

<b>Year</b>	<b>Tax Revenue</b>	<b>Non-tax Revenue</b>	<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>VAT</b>
1998/99	2875.29	849.84	3725.13	876.59
1999/00	3315.21	974.16	4289.37	1025.97
2000/01	3886.50	1002.88	4889.38	1238.24
2001/02	3933.06	1111.60	5044.66	1226.73
2002/03	4089.60	1364.29	5453.89	1345.97
2003/04	4817.30	1415.80	6233.10	1447.89
2004/05	5410.47	1601.80	7012.27	1888.54
2005/06	5743.04	1485.15	7228.19	2161.07
2006/07	7112.67	1658.54	8771.21	2609.56
2007/08	8515.55	2246.70	10762.25	2981.57
2008/09	11705.19	2642.26	14347.45	3970.09
2009/10	15629.49	2365.09	17994.58	5492.09
2010/11	17722.72	2114.87	19837.59	6166.36
2011/12	21172.18	3265.12	24437.30	7093.04

2012/13	25921.49	3680.62	29602.31	8341.84
2013/14	31244.13	4417.95	35662.08	10110.46
2014/15	35595.57	4991.07	40586.64	11252.18
2015/16	42109.66	6086.50	48196.16	12241.19
2016/17	55386.65	5531.34	60917.99	16106.83
2017/18	65949.15	6722.60	72671.75	20680.98
2018/19	73860.40	8558.20	82418.60	24012.13
2019/20*	49754.40	4676.58	54430.98	16638.12

**Source:** *Economic Survey 2010/11, 2014/15 and 2019/20.*

Table-1 depicts structure of total revenue from 1998/99 to 2019/20\*. VAT is one of the major sources of government revenue. The structure of tax revenue, non-tax revenue, total revenue and VAT, in the academic aera, is an increasing trend.

**Figure-1:** *Structure of Government Revenue of Nepal*

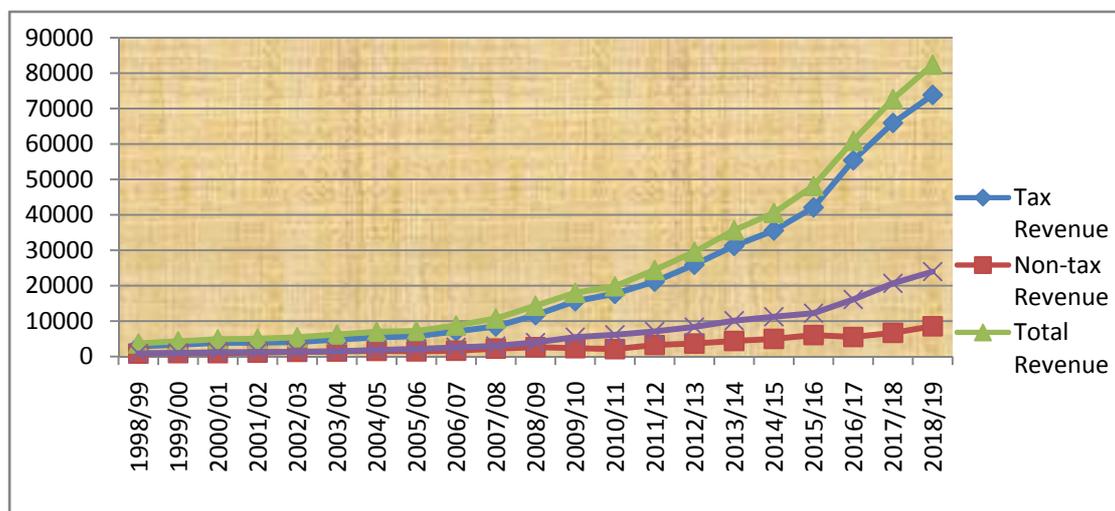


Figure-1 depicts the tax revenue, non-tax revenue, VAT and total revenue from 1998/99 to 2018/19. All these variables are increasing trends.

**Growth Trend Rate of Total Revenue and VAT and VAT Ratio to Total Revenue**

Government revenue comprises the financial health of the country. Tax revenue is the major source of government revenue which covers more than 75 percent. Under tax revenue, the contribution of VAT signifies more than 30 percent. There is significant ratio of VAT to total revenue. The growth trend rate of total revenue and VAT seem to be in satisfactory level. Table 2 presents the growth trend of total revenue and VAT as well ratio of VAT to total revenue from 1998/99 to 2018/19.

**Table-2:** Growth Trend Rate of Total Revenue and VAT and VAT Ratio to Total Revenue from 1998/99-2019/20. (Rs in Crore)

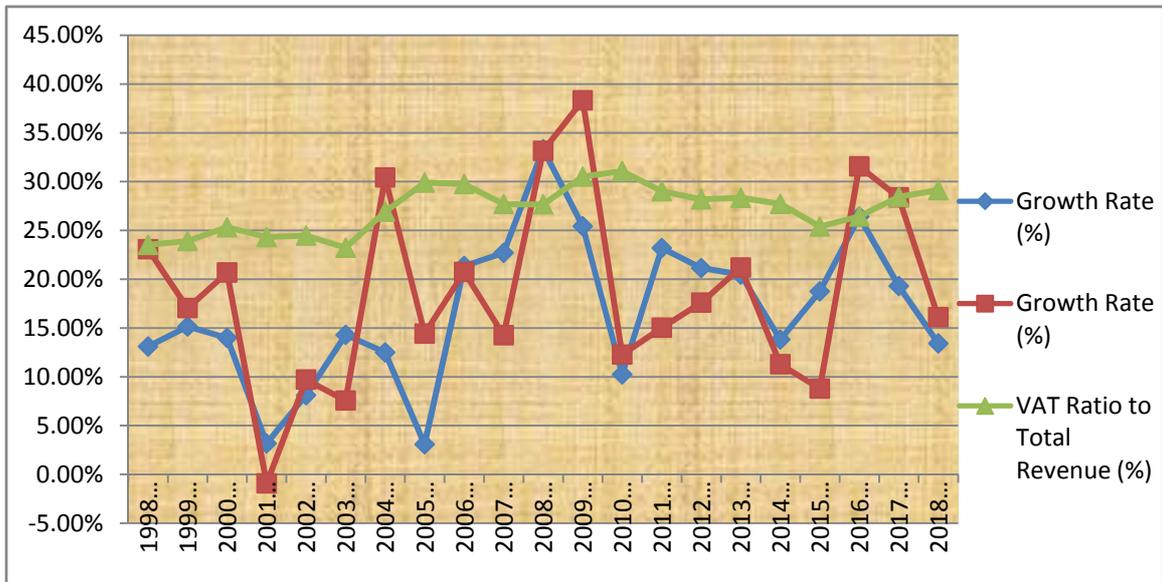
Year	Total Revenue	Growth Rate (%)	VAT	Growth Rate (%)	VAT Ratio to Total Revenue (%)
1998/99	3725.13	13.10%	876.59	23.07%	23.53%
1999/00	4289.37	15.15%	1025.97	17.04%	23.92%
2000/01	4889.38	13.99%	1238.24	20.69%	25.32%
2001/02	5044.66	3.17%	1226.73	-0.93%	24.32%
2002/03	5453.89	8.11%	1345.97	9.72%	24.47%
2003/04	6233.10	14.29%	1447.89	7.57%	23.23%
2004/05	7012.27	12.50%	1888.54	30.43%	26.93%
2005/06	7228.19	3.08%	2161.07	14.43%	29.90%
2006/07	8771.21	21.35%	2609.56	20.75%	29.75%
2007/08	10762.25	22.70%	2981.57	14.26%	27.70%
2008/09	14347.45	33.31%	3970.09	33.15%	27.67%
2009/10	17994.58	25.42%	5492.09	38.34%	30.52%
2010/11	19837.59	10.24%	6166.36	12.28%	31.08%

2011/12	24437.30	23.19%	7093.04	15.03%	29.02%
2012/13	29602.31	21.14%	8341.84	17.60%	28.18%
2013/14	35662.08	20.47%	10110.46	21.20%	28.35%
2014/15	40586.64	13.81%	11252.18	11.29%	27.72%
2015/16	48196.16	18.75%	12241.19	8.79%	25.40%
2016/17	60917.99	26.40%	16106.83	31.57%	26.44%
2017/18	72671.75	19.30%	20680.98	28.39%	28.45%
2018/19	82418.60	13.41%	24012.13	16.11%	29.13%

Source: Economic Survey (2010/11, 2014/15 and 2019/20).

Figure-2 shows that the growth trend of total revenue and VAT revenue collection and VAT ratio to total revenue from 1998/99 to 2018/19. Most of the years, total revenue and VAT revenue are increasing trends.

**Figure-2:** Growth Trend Rate of Total Revenue and VAT and Ratio of VAT to Total Revenue



**Contribution of VAT to Total Revenue**

VAT is the major source of total revenue. It contributes around 23 to 30 percent. There has been a significant contribution of VAT to total revenue.

**Table 3:** Correlation between VAT and Total Revenue

Correlations			
		Total Revenue	Value Added Tax
Total Revenue	Pearson Correlation	1	.998 <sup>**</sup>
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	21	21
Value Added Tax	Pearson Correlation	.998 <sup>**</sup>	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	21	21
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

**Source:** Calculated by Author based on Table 2.

There is significant contribution of VAT to total revenue. It means, VAT and total revenue are highly correlated with each other.

**Results from Focus Group Discussion**

In this study, focus group was conducted by using Zoom meeting with tax experts, tax officials, tax payers and consumers. The respondents were participated for discussion on different issues toward the implication of VAT system. Finally, information received from the respondents was analyzed.

**Toward Structure of VAT Rate**

In the focus group discussion, 55 % tax experts, 48 % tax officials, 45 % taxpayers, 35 % consumers suggested for establishing two or three rates such as 5% (for basic goods), 10 % and 15% (for luxurious goods). Though 25 % tax officials, 20 % tax payers and 30 % consumers suggested that present VAT rate should be decreased. Besides these, 50 % tax experts, 30 % tax officials, 21 % tax payers and 25 % consumers support the present VAT rate. The conclusion can be drawn as to enhance tax base, to increase VAT revenue, to establish a VAT as major source of national revenue and to make effective VAT system, multiple rates of VAT are compulsory.

**Toward Billing System of VAT**

VAT is based on billing system. So issuance of proper bill is necessary for the successful implementation of VAT. In Nepal, the billing system has been one of the main burning problems. The result from the focus group discussion, 80 % tax experts, 85 % tax officials, 25 % tax payers, 35 % consumers advocated for the possibility of billing system in VAT. Similarly, 15 % tax payers and 19 % consumers claimed that billing system is not possible. Similarly, 10 % tax officials 50 % tax payers and 42 % consumers said that billing system is costly. Lack of proper account was also the problem of VAT effectiveness. Likewise, 55 % tax experts, 43 % tax officials, 28 % tax payers and 35 % consumers viewed that lack of proper billing system was main problem of VAT implementation.

### **Toward VAT Administration**

An effective and efficient administration is crucial for the proper implementation of VAT. The tax administration should be strengthened significantly. The VAT is modern and complex tax. It was reported that there have been various weaknesses in the administration for the implementation of VAT system. The focus group discussion showed that there are several problems in VAT administration. 20 % tax experts, 15 % tax officials, 23 % tax payers and 27 % consumers claimed that lack of expertise is the main problem and others reported that weak economics was the major problem of VAT administration.

### **Future of VAT System**

Corruption and illegal business are prevailing in the country. The business sectors are not well organized. The vendors are illegal. The VAT is advantageous for the revenue mobilization observing the international experiences. The result from focus group discussion showed that 90 % tax experts, 88 % tax officials, 79 % tax payers and 70 % consumers have been found optimistic about the future of VAT.

### **Toward Tax Evasion**

Tax evasion is the great challenge to our country. Tax evasion not only loses the revenue but also creates distortions, market imperfection, encourage illegal business, and helps in decline of business ethics etc. The result from focus group discussion showed that 40 % Tax experts, 45 % Tax officials, 15 % Tax payers and 56 % consumers as well 35 % in total respondents said that business enterprises are the most

responsible for tax evasion under VAT system. From focus group discussion, it can be concluded that tax administration and business enterprises are mainly accountable for tax evasion. They are top ranked by most respondents for tax evasion. In fact, both of them are responsible and can't escape by giving blame to another group. In practical field, all of them are responsible for tax evasion.

### **Effective Implementation of VAT**

The contribution of income tax is seemed to be very low because income level of Nepalese people is very poor and unequal. Likewise, revenue from custom duty is not satisfactory because of low range of collection of VAT. Nepalese industrial development scenario is just at the primary phase to grow up that leads low revenue collection from excise duty. In this context, broad-based VAT has great potential to mobilize required fund for nation development. Thus, there is no doubt that effective implementation of VAT should be GoN's prime target. From the focus group discussion, 28 % tax experts, 18% tax officials, 22 % tax payers and 30 % consumers suggested that skilled and trained manpower is essential. Many of them suggested that there should be proper billing and account system.

### **Effect of VAT on Investment Sector**

Taxation and investment are closely related to each other. Every tax system affects the investment sector; however, the extent of the impact depends on tax rate, structure, coverage, given facilities, administrative procedure, etc. Generally it has positive impact because of its unique attributes. The focus group discussion shows that

most of the respondents find the positive impact of VAT. While others' view was negative and some of them think that the effect is normal. Most of tax experts, tax officials, tax payers and consumers were found positive whereas a few respondents were negative.

### **Conclusion**

Value added tax is the modified sales tax on goods and service which is found as the best tax system for collecting the internal revenue for government in Nepal. For collecting and effective implication of VAT system, poor management and ineffective internal resource mobilization, lack of transparency in business activities, proper regulating mechanism and controlling mechanism for manipulation practices conclude that many potential tax payers are still out of VAT net. There is also increasing problem on statement; no submission of tax even though the registrants are already registered in IRD.

By analyzing the data, it can be concluded that billing system is one of the main parts of VAT system for successful implementation of VAT. The exemption facilities provided by the VAT system were satisfactory; billing system, accounting system and registration are the major problems for the implication of VAT in Nepal. There is lack of well-managed channel of distribution due to small and family run business. Thus, the conclusion is that the prospects of VAT entirely depend on its implementation aspect. VAT has bright prospect in Nepal only when it can be implemented in a successful way. Further, the successful featuring depends upon the strong, fair, capable, honesty,

taxpayer friendly and efficient administration. Effective implementation of VAT helps other taxes, such as income tax, import duties. So many beautiful aspects of VAT make it popular.

To sum up, in the initial period of VAT implementation, most of the business community and consumers were strongly opposing it. They had developed a kind of wrong concept regarding VAT. There have been several studies done before and after VAT implementation. Provisions of rules and regulation have been amended to make it tax payer friendly. In addition, the administrative procedures have also been simplified. They have realized the relative worth of VAT among other taxes that were replaced by VAT. It is claimed that this system of VAT has not been implemented effectively but situation is not so bad. Reform programs are launched to solve upcoming problems.

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# **Sociology**



**Federalism and Ethnic Conflict Management in Multiethnic Country**  
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**Abstract**

*Ethnic conflict is the product of a particular kind of socially, historically-shaped condition of specific country. Unequal access to resources, feeling of exclusion and hatred against each other on the basis of historical memories are main sources of the conflict. On the basis of the nature of the condition and sources of the conflict, different kinds of conflict-solving means are to be adopted. Federalism, the non-centralized form of government and division of sovereignty, in general and multinational federalism in particular is one among many. Since it assures self-rule and autonomy of minorities and excluded ethnic groups, it manages ethnic conflict so as to hold the country together.*

**Keywords:** ethnic conflict, federalism, exclusion, autonomy, inclusion

**Context**

The ethnic diversity is a reality of the world, today. There are only handfuls of states which are ethnically homogenous. The world-wide prevalence of ethnic diversity like about 6000 languages (Grimes 1988) and somewhere between 900 (Murdock, 1967) and 1600 (Levinson, 1993) major cultural groupings are its example. There are different factors like migration, state-building process, and democratization process to be so, in general.

Diversity in terms of ethnicity, language, may become both a boon and a curse for a country. It depends on how the state deals with it. It may become a boon and beautiful like a multi-colored garland and source of attraction and prosperity if it is accommodated and managed well but a curse, since it may become as a seed of conflict and violence so that source of backwardness of the country, if they are not accommodated and managed. There are many heterogenous countries facing severe problem of ethnic conflict because of their exclusion and feeling of marginalization in the state.

Generally, ethnic conflict is between two or more contending ethnic groups. Actually, the source of the conflict is not ethnicity as such but may be political, social, economic or religious. In an unaccommodated condition of the diversity in terms of ethnicity or language becomes hostile to each another since one becomes dominant and another dominated or one is included and another excluded (Mohammadzadeh, 2016). Like, Canadian social life was disrupted in the late 1960 and early 1970 by the violence of French-Canadian separatist. Mexico has experience violent uprising by indigenous population in southern state of Chiapas and descendants of the indigenous people of central and south and South America continue to be violently subjugate and continue to fight back (Williams, 1994). Thus, multiethnic countries must accommodate and manage such diversity for preventing conflict and promoting peace and prosperity.

There are many kinds of institutional mechanisms to accommodate such diversities practiced in the world to prevent and manage conflict. Ethnic autonomy, confederation, right to self-determination, etc. are some of them. And, federalism is one,

though not penance, perhaps, pervasively applied throughout the world in multiethnic countries in recent decades. There are many multiethnic/national countries like Switzerland, Canada, India adopting federal form of government and have addressed more or less ethnic demands so as to prevent conflict though some of them are not fully successful.

Federalism/Federation<sup>1</sup> is one of the forms of government. The form of government is primarily determined by social and historical conditions. And, it is a non-centralized form of government. In political perspective, federalism is as multi-tiered government combining "self-rule" and "shared rule" (Elazar, 1987). Shared rule is for some purposes and regional "self-rule" for others. Self and shared-rule is for purpose of combining unity and diversity: It is, basically, based on the objective of combining unity and diversity: i.e. of accommodating, preserving and promoting distinct identities within a larger political union (Buhler, Hanns, Luther, Susanne, Siegner, Michael, eds. 2017). Therefore, Livingston is right to say that Federal government is a device by which the federal qualities of the society are articulated and protected (1956, 1-2). And, Federal institutions are merely the instrumentalities or expressions of federal societies (ibid). Thus, the relationships between a society, its constitution, and its political institutions and processes are dynamic and involve continual mutual interaction (Watts, 2007).

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<sup>1</sup> Federalism and federation have different essence. Federalism ( King, 1982), considers as an ideological disposition particularly with overtures of valance between self-rule and shared-rule (Elazar 1979) whereas federation is an institutional arrangement where the general government incorporates its sub-national units into its decision procedure on a constitutionally entrenched basis. But, here, I use them interchangeably.

Federal form of government is argued to be better for accommodating ethnic diversity in multiethnic countries. But there are federalisms of different kinds in its nature and structure. Some are national and other are multinational / ethnic on the basis of its composition of states/ province. Symmetrical and asymmetrical on the basis of power division among states.

Social and economic diversity as the reason for adopting federal political institution, rather than seeing these institutions are the cause of diversity (Proudho in Erk, 2007). But, different multiethnic countries in the world have adopted federalism of its particular kind to address their own problems and secure prospects. It depends on the nature and feature of the society. In this context, some countries are successful to address their ethnic problem through this form of government whereas others are not. It may be because whether federal institutions became expression of federal society or not as Livingston (1956) argued.

In this context, I, in general, in this paper deal with a question: what are the causes of ethnic conflict? And, can federalism serve as an effective instrument to manage ethnic conflict so as to build national unity and maintaining political integration in a multi-ethnic society? And, if yes, I, in specific, deal with another question how does it do so? I make some arguments that federalism may accommodate ethnic diversities. But all kinds of federalism may not accommodate diversities. For this, multinational federalism/ federation is to be adopted. Nepal, a multi-national country, may adopt multinational federalism to accommodate her diversities so as to prevent ethnic conflict and enhances national unity.

**Perspectives on Federalism**

The term "federalism" originates from the Latin word *foedus*, i.e. compact/agreement. The term represented a political compact between groups which have come together in an association, if it is studied historically. But understanding about it has been changed along with the time. Broadly, there are two distinct school of thoughts to study and understand what federalism really is. First school of thought understands federalism as institutional arrangement and legal management of power. They understand federalism as a useful instrument of power sharing creating the provinces (Burgess, 2017:46). They understand it merely from a legal and political perspective. They do not see its relationship with ethnicity and minority. But, the second is the sociological view which understands and interprets it in relation to society and social relationship. They study and understand federalism as a structural response and reaction in post-conflict new era of world politics. They interpret federalism in reference with ethnicity and minority, either. It is a form of government that reflects the federal quality of society (Livingston, 1956).

Largely, federalism is studied and understood as a kind of particular set of institutions established based on treaty or agreement. Definitely, federal arrangement/federation is one of partnership, established and regulated by a covenant. But more than that its internal relationship reflects (should reflect) the special kind of sharing that must prevail among the partners, based on a mutual recognition of the integrity of each partner and the attempt to foster a special unity among them (Elazar, 1991: 5). It is the combination of self-rule and shared rule. The self-rule is given to the local or state level

whereas the shared rule is practiced in federal level. Therefore, it is not simply a particular set of institutions but rather it is an institutionalization of particular relationship among the participants in political life (ibid:6) since federal structure of the state is a device by which the federal qualities of the society are articulated and protected (Livingston 1956: 1-2). And, therefore, federal institutions are merely the instrumentalities or expressions of federal societies (ibid). Hence, it is socio-historically constructed and determined form of government to address the particular kind of socio-historical condition.

Burgess (2009) takes federalism as in essence a multidimensional concept. He argues that it is a particular kind of liberal democratic state, which is characterized both by the formal written constitutional entrenchment and legal recognition of difference and diversity enshrined in various forms and levels of autonomy. In his view, the recognition of diversity and autonomy are inherent part of federalism.

What Watts (1966), explains about federalism is it is formal distribution of legislative and executive authority, the allocation of sufficient revenues to ensure the autonomy of each order of government, the representation of regional views in the central legislature, a constitutional amendment procedure requiring a substantial degree of regional consent, and an enforcement mechanism that included courts, referendums or a special role for the upper chamber. Together he further reasonably argues that federal systems are a function not only of constitutions, but also of governments, and fundamentally of societies. Consequently, federalism is not only the distribution of legislative and executive power or non-centralizing the power but, along with this, it is

also an articulation of federal qualities of the society. Understanding federalism from legalistic and center-periphery polity is a serious problem.

Generally, federalism/ federations come about in two ways, either through the aggregation of independent state like that of American federation or the devolution of power to sub-national units like that of Spain (Burris, 2001; Duchacek 1970; Weinstock, 2001). Federation through aggregation is a result of a constitutional pact between two or more independent political entities whereas federation through devolution comes restructuring unitary state into federal. Urwin (1982:11) calls these processes organic and mechanical federalism. Alfred Stepan calls these two processes as coming together and holding together. Stepan (1999:23) adds one more category observing the limitation of these two is putting together. According to him, coming together federation is almost synonymous with notion of federal integration and unions. But, holding together federation refers to those multi-ethnic federations established through a process of democratic bargaining (ibid). Such federalism implies the primacy of maintaining the unity of the nation. It must adopt asymmetric characteristic because, in order to hold the country together, the center makes a special deal with one group or subunit, and this special deal carries with it the asymmetrical distribution of power and rights with regard to the rest of the country (He, 2017:16). Asymmetric federalism<sup>2</sup>, so that, can be employed as a means of conflict resolution to deal with secessionism and ethnic division (ibid). The Flemish in Belgium or Quebecois in Canada are some examples of

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<sup>2</sup> In asymmetric federalism ethnic minorities are given special rights to protect their identity like language opposite to symmetric federalism where there is equal devolution of power to all ethnic groups.

it. In contrast to this, putting together federations like the former Soviet Union established through a “heavily coercive effort by a non-democratic centralizing power to put together a multinational state” (ibid).

It is true that federalism is a result of unique historical and political circumstances. But it emerged as an important instrument of nation/ state building after the collapse of European colonial empires in the immediate post World War II period (Watt 1994:2). In this respect, many post-colonial multi-ethnic countries of Asia and Africa have adopted federalism. The role of federalism in balancing the competing and perhaps conflicting demands for autonomy and unity in such countries as India, Malaysia and Nigeria could not be doubted (Rothchild, 1966).

Elazar (1991:6), argues that in the 'modern and postmodern epochs federalism has emerged as a major means of accommodating the spreading desire of people to preserve or revive the advantages of small societies with the growing necessity for larger combinations to employ common resources or to maintain or strengthen their cultural distinctiveness within more extensive polities'.

Kymlicka (2005:269), argues that there is the value of federalism in accommodating national minorities. He further says that it respects the desire of groups to remain autonomous, and to retain their cultural distinctiveness. That's why, multinational countries should adopt federal system.

Federal states that comprise what are now frequently called 'internal nations'-and whose justification of existence- is the protection, preservation and promotion of these

nations as nations (Burgess, 2007). May be, because of this, federalism is supposed to be an engine of prosperity (Filippov, Ordeshook, Shventova, 2004).

Thus, there are different kinds perspectives on the nature and kinds of federalism formed through different processes in different historical epochs. The difference in kind and process are basically pinned in history/historical condition and nature of society. For example, the historical condition of forming American federalism is different from the historical condition of Spain and Nepal.

### **Federalism: National or Multinational**

Federalism can be classified on the basis of whether it has recognized the ethnic and linguistic diversities or not. It also is related with its ideology and structures. In this respect, there are mainly two models of federalism: national (regional/ territorial) and multinational (non-territorial).

National or regional or territorial federalism can be characterized as the universal protection of individual rights, the neutrality of the state with regard to different ethnic groups, the absence of an internal boundary for ethnic groups, the division and diffusion of power within a single national community, and region rather than ethnicity being the basic unit of federal polity (He, 2007:10). American and Australian federations are some examples of such type. The origin of non-territorial federalism as a solution to persistent sub-state national and ethnic conflicts within a single democratic state framework can be traced back to late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Burgess, 2007).

Opposite to regional federalism, multinational federalism accommodates concentrated ethnic groups; internal boundary is drawn to enable minorities to exercise minority rights and self-determination, and achieve an ethnonational homeland (He, 2007:10). Kymlicka (2006: 64-5), argues that those countries 'in which internal boundaries have been drawn and powers distributed in such a way as to ensure that each national group is able to maintain itself as a distinct and self-governing society and culture' as multinational federation. He (2007:44), further defines 'multinational federalism' as 'creating a federal or quasi-federal sub-unit in which the minority group form a local majority, and so can exercise meaningful form of self-government', and where 'the group's language is typically recognized as an official state language, at least within their federal subunit, and perhaps throughout the country as a whole'(Kymlicka and Baogan, 2005, 23-24; Kymlicka, 2006). Canada, Spain, and Belgium can be seen as examples of multinational federalism.

National or territorial federalism is a process of devolution of power to regional/local level. It is symmetrical in nature. But multinational federalism emerges in response to the assertion of substate national identities, but it also tends to reinforce and institutionalize those identities, and to reinforce the sense of boundaries (geographical and cultural) between groups (Kymlicka, 2007:44).

In this way of thinking, multinational federation corresponds to the state and multinational federalism corresponds to society.

The question of which model of federalism to be adopted is based on the nature of the society since federalism is an institutionalization of the social nature and character as Livingston said it is a reflection of federal quality of society. Largely, multinational kind of federalism is adopted by multinational / multiethnic country to address the demands of self-rule and autonomy.

### **Sociology of ethnic conflict and its management**

Ethnic conflict has got its own certain and unique social, historical contexts. There is not a single but numerous social and historical causes behind ethnic conflict in different parts of the world in different time of the history. Some causes are more prominent than the others. Like in Rwanda, one of the causes of ethnic conflict was Tutsis were favored in terms of education and employment over the Hutus who were neglected (Batware, 2012). And, such a conflict has got an unlike democratic way of resolution like provision of ethnic autonomy, inclusion, self-rule, etc., either based on the socio-historical condition of the country. Federal form of government is among them.

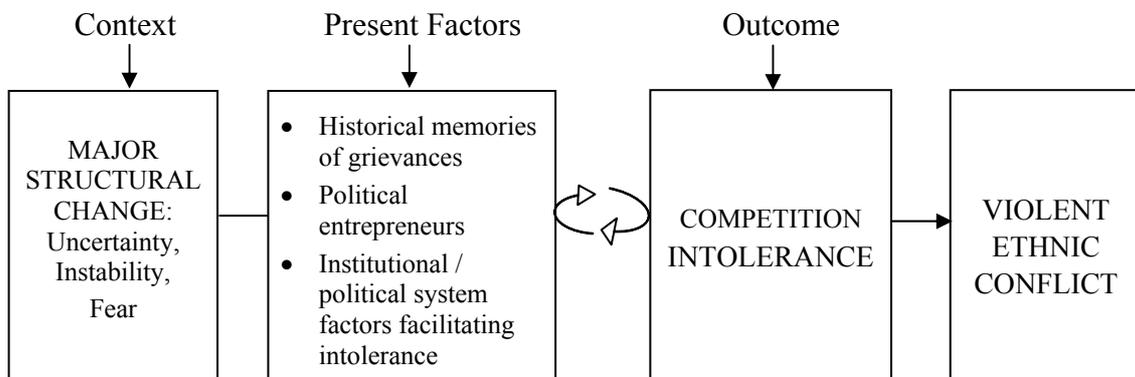
Ethnic conflict is between two or more contending ethnic groups. Ethnic diverse societies carry various degrees of conflict potential. Blagojevic (2009) argues that ethnic emotions, rooted in historical memories of grievances, are at the core of conflict potential. Since WW II ethnic conflicts have been facilitated by the rise in the number of new multiethnic states, by state-building activities, increased resources for mobilization, mass communication, diffusion of ideologies and by external

interventions, too. Particularly, the failure to recognize an ethnic group or deny the right of a group has often resulted in ethnic strife (Fessha, 2010).

There are different theories and approaches of ethnic conflict: primordialist, institutional, political entrepreneurs, and competition over resources. They have primarily focused upon intra-societal processes: split labor market (Bonacich 1976), economic competition (Banton 1983), internal colonization (Hechter 1975), and assimilation (Gordon 1964; Hirschman 1983). Yet such domestic processes manifestly are strongly affected by economic and political rivalries among national states and by many other transnational and international influences.

According to the primordialist approach, biological factors, the emotions are responsible for ethnic conflict. Since primordial approach deals with the things as static, biological, and natural, it explains the role of emotions and the conflict potential of ethnicity (Blagojevic, 2009). Unlike this approach, the institutional, political entrepreneurs and competition over resources approaches give attention on how the interaction of institutional and political factors with ethnic emotions lead to ethnification, ethnic intolerance, competition, and eventually – violent ethnic conflict since ethnic conflict is not because of the biological factors but because of the competition over resources or unequal access to resources. Thus, ethnic conflict should be studied in multidimensional approach.

Bojana Blagojevic (2009) proposes the following multidimensional framework for ethnic conflict.



According to him, in the context of structural change which causes uncertainty, instability, and fear there are historical memories of grievances, political entrepreneurs, and institutional / political factors facilitating intolerance results competition intolerance that causes violent ethnic conflict.

Actually, ethnicity results from interethnic relations, whenever two different groups or societies come into contact and establish various modes of spatial, political-economic, cultural and social relations (Tepfenhart, 2013). Essentially, discriminatory kind of social relation among the ethnic groups may create conflict. Some (Tepfenhart, 2013, Williams, 1994, He, 2006) argue that the root causes of ethnic conflict do not involve ethnicity but rather institutional, political, and economic factors. More than that, ethnic is a different culture and a core for conflict is discrimination politics. The primary factors in ethnic conflict are unequal access to resource, or competition over resource, or state actions, or internal colonization, or economic inequalities, or social strains and anomie- and so on (Williams, 1994). Such processes may raise antagonistic feeling against one another among the ethnic groups. Among these factors, particular country may have particular primary factor and other secondary for the conflict.

There are many other causes as well of the conflict. Usually, there may be high chance of conflict in fragile states where there is a kind of situation of anomie in Durkheim's term. The state can be fragile because of rapid population growth in the less-industrialized country where there is pervasive poverty and economic inequality. But still the primary conditions for ethnic conflict are ethnic distinctiveness, geographic concentration, interethnic inequality, "alien" state penetration (and fear of exclusion), ethnic organization, and external support (Williams, 1994). Along many other political centralizations, different narratives of grievances are the causes of ethnic conflict in the case of Indonesia (Sukma, 2006). In Thailand, because of the assimilation and selective integration process taken by the state was the root causes of ethnic conflict (Vaddhanaphuti, 2006). Among these conditions primary and cotangential condition may vary in different countries. Some of the conflicts are ethno-regional, either. Such conflicts are directed against the state in efforts to gain or restore to control over a homeland: as in Quebec, Scotland, Southern Sudan, Tamil Eelam (Sri Lanka) Kosovo (India), etc. It may be an outcome of seeking autonomy and self-rule because of their feeling of exclusion and exploitation of the state.

Therefore, ethnic distinctiveness and geographical concentration only are not the causes of conflict rather the special intensive so evident in many ethnic conflicts frequently arises from a sense of victimization (Zaslavsky 1992), arising from loss of autonomy, loss of historically claimed territory, infringement of prior rights, or generally, treatment thought to be unfairly discriminatory (Williams, 1994). Cultural and

economic causes are other factors of ethnic rivalry. What Esman (1990: 58-59) argues that ethnic rivalries include participation in political decisions, cultural status, economic opportunities. Likewise, Gurr (1993) insists that ethnic grievance is main cause of conflict. The notion of grievance is often conflated with related concepts of dissatisfaction or deprivation. Ethnic grievances are created by poverty and political and economic differentials among groups, and that restricted political access and a history of lost autonomy. Restriction on political access and loss of autonomy, it is against the spirit of democratic principle, are in the core of other discriminatory process and grievances. Such grievances, in a long run, create the conditions for not only rebellion and conflict but also for separatist demand. Therefore, such grievances should be addressed so as to hold the country together.

Since 1990s and early 2000s confirmed the 'new awakening' of identity politics, federalism became a structural response and reaction (Burgess, 2017:45) in a new age of post-conflict management and resolution of ethnic conflict. It is because it may provide an opportunity of self-rule or autonomy to minorities in their own land making their population a majority (Kymlicka, 2007:44). Also, such federalism (multi-national federalism) assures the protection of their identity and allows groups to create 'parallel societies', coexisting alongside the dominant society. Such federalism promotes inter-group equality so as to minimize inter-group conflict (ibid.). Such federalism is based on the principle of ethnic autonomy and self-rule which reduces the separatist demand, either (Ghai, 2000). Also, Baogang (2006) argues that federation is the mechanism to

solve ethnic conflict. Countries such as Switzerland and Canada use different methods to prevent ethnic conflict and achieve equality: democracy, such as power sharing; greater autonomy for certain regions; and veto power for all communities (Tepfenhart, 2013).

### **Federalism and Demand of Self-rule in Nepal**

Nepal, one of the multi-ethnic and multi-lingual countries, has got one hundred twenty-five caste/ethnic groups, one hundred and twenty-three languages, and ten religious' communities (Census, 2011). Though Nepal is multi-ethnic and multi-lingual country, the nation-building process adopted encroachment and the policy of assimilation so as to create a single national identity through national language, national uniform, national animal, etc. Such a process not only made susceptible the identity of different ethnic groups but also escalated their exclusion and marginalization.

Federalism in Nepal is inseparably linked to resist against political and economic exclusion on the basis of caste, ethnicity and regional identity. The different ethnic groups of Nepal have been demanding self-rule and autonomy for a long period of time. For them, it is a political system of inclusive democracy. Their voices were more vocal after democratic change in Nepal in 2046. It became louder during the democratic struggle of 2062-63 under the slogan of 'identity politics'. It was raised under the broader context of restructuring of the old unitary state into new one. Since the old 'Kathmandu-centered' unitary state, according to them, became exclusionary, hegemonic, could not address their demand and desire of self-rule and autonomy, it

should be changed into new inclusive democratic state (Sherchan, 2014, Tamang, 2068, Sundar, 2008)). They demanded their democratic right of self-rule in broader of theme of identity politics. In this context, they raised voice for federalism based on their identity as a means to establish inclusive state.

In point of fact, voice for federalism was first raised in early 1950s along with the advent of democracy overthrowing the century-old family oligarchy (Khanal, 2014). It shows that it has come along with the democratization process of the country. Some of the Tarai elite who felt excluded in the new power structure had formed a party called Tarai Congress on the regional basis claiming to represent the Tarai region, the southern part of Nepal bordering India, which is now popularly called a "Madhes", and demanded for a separate province comprising that region as "autonomous Tarai state" comprising the part of southern Nepal below the *Chure* hills (Devakota, 1959; Yadav, 2003). About the same time, the Limbu reform activists in the eastern hills also demanded for "Limbuwan Autonomous Province" (Baral and Tigela Limbu, 2064 in Khanal, 2014). Their demand was not in the form of federal state but autonomy of Limbu nation. Likewise, some of the political parties formed after 1990 such as Sadbhawana Party, Rashtriya Janamukti Party and raised the voice for federal state. However, it was Janajati (ethnic nationalities) who were the most vocal in engaging the federal state in their demand for federalism (Thapaliya, 2010). Ethnic and regional demands were important parts of the Maoist agenda during the civil war. And, so that state restructuring became a central component of the 2006 peace deal.

The decade-long Moist insurgency, in the background, provided fertile ground for federalism though they might have instrumentalized it. The interim constitution 2007, guaranteed federalism through its first amendment responding the agitation of ethnic-regional forces particularly, Madhesh mobilization. But the different levels and kinds of mobilizations took place and compelled the government to amend the constitution to include federalism were immediate cause. The genuine and compelling causes of federalism were the democratic rhetoric of participatory democracy, inclusive state, social relationship based on equality on which the ethnic and regional mobilization was based (Khanal, 2014, Gurung, 2012, Mabuhang, 2012, Shrestha, 2012). Provision of self-rule and autonomy may be a mechanism for political inclusion and participation of excluded groups.

### **Conclusion**

Federal form of government is not an end but means. It may be a means to solve the problem like ethnic conflict appeared in the context of particular kind of socio-historical context in particular country. As Livingston (1956) precisely argues that federal institutions are merely the instrumentalities or expression of federal society, multi-national federalism can manage ethnic conflict providing opportunity of self-rule, autonomy to minorities in their own land making their population a majority and promotes inter-group equality as Kimlicka (2007) argues so as to minimize inter-group conflict. Such federalism (multi-national federalism) assures the protection of their identity and allows groups to create 'parallel societies', coexisting alongside the

dominant society. Likewise, Burgess (2009) and Watt (1966) argue that autonomy is inherent part of federalism which may be the mechanism to manage ethnic conflict. Provision of autonomy and self-rule reduces the separatist demand, either (Ghai, 2000).

Federalism in Nepal is inseparably linked to resist against political and economic exclusion on the basis of caste, ethnicity and regional identity. As different ethnic groups of Nepal who have felt to be excluded in the state, have been demanding self-rule and autonomy for inclusion for a long period of time, federalism was supposed to be an appropriate form of government to achieve the same. Federation based on identity (multinational) was their aspiration for inclusive state.

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## **Assessing Federalism through Social Capital: A Sociological Inquiry**

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### **Abstract**

*Despite of several doubts, dawdle and confusion, Nepal has trodden quicker in embracing federal practice. This paper synchronizes the importance of trust, network and collaboration in elevating and sustaining the federalism. This paper primarily accounts functional theory of federalism, which applauds for partnership, interaction and interdependence among central provinces and local level bodies. This paper further, argues that federalism as system should initiate the 'holding together' approach in the country like Nepal. Moreover, paper explains federalism as a form of localism, which implies local practices and identities into consideration, which in absence of social capital remains isolated. This study overall uses qualitative method as core methodological analysis to substantiate its argument. Furthermore, interviews, key informant interviews are also carried as per the requirement of the paper. Finally, this study prescribes that government performance and delivery of services as important phenomena in evaluating the functionality of federalism, which sum total the sustainability of federalism. Also, this study asks to strengthen the majoritarian and minoritarian relation through the use of social capital, which otherwise could backlash the federal system.*

**Keywords:** Federalism, Social capital, holding together approach, economic dimension, backlash

## **I. Introduction**

The freshly held elections of local, federal parliament and provinces level in Nepal opened pathway to federalism undauntedly. Federalism as an institutional practice is basically considered to transcend the local, regional as well as national level ambiguities by building mechanism which could address all other disparities, inequalities and identity crisis. As Nepal has just marked in federal practice, it's in a way to rekindle the existing state practices from wider spectrum, more importantly through federal imagination. Thus, we can say it's a new beginning for Nepal from state rearrangement perspective. Riker (1975) defines federalism as "a political organization in which the activities of government are divided between regional governments and a central government in such a way that each kind of government has some activities on which it makes final decisions". Riker places federalism as an organizational structure which delivers quality services efficiently. Despite of various functions to be carried by federalism, delivery of services at effective level is crucial part of it.

On the other hand, basically, the work of Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1990) had conceptualized the notion of social capital as a collective possession of individuals connected through social ties. In the words of Bourdieu (1986: 248), ' Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance

and recognition- or in other words, to membership in a group.’ Emphasizing the role of network in the utilization of given resources they accommodated role played by relationships. The overall method applied in this study is qualitative in nature. As, study primarily discusses the importance of social capital in accessing the federalism, it combines both the variables (federalism and social capital) into its consideration. Data gathering included interview, key informant interviews, direct observations and systematic data collection methods to know the information at individual, institutional and general community levels. Key informant embraces an intense conversation between informant and interviewer which could help to build strong rapport with informant. Predominantly, this study takes *network, connection, collaboration* and *information flow* as basic components of social capital, which has been later on presented in the table to demonstrate its prominence in different federal bodies from local to central. Similarly, social capital has also been divided into two levels, at individual level and at institutional level. Further, trust, is additionally assessed in four basic parameters- *performance, accountability, capability* and *administrative work*. The magnitude and tendency of social capital as well as trust were evaluated by scaling both the terms in different levels. Social capital was scaled into four ranges – *strong, very strong, weak* and *very weak*. Also, trust was scaled into five ranges - *strong, very strong, moderate, weak, and very weak*. Validity had been maintained by consulting with supervisor, experts and concerned persons. Extra emphasis had been given to maintain the objective of the data and avoid data error by comparing them with different data

collected from different sources. Likewise, reliability of the data was guaranteed by the careful planning of the questions in the interview schedule. Correspondingly, three wards were visited from three districts: Kathmandu (ward no.4), Lalitpur (ward no.3) and Bhaktapur (ward no.6). Purposive sampling was used for this purpose. Additionally, three key informants' interviews were carried from the respective wards along with interviews with fifteen respondents. Unlike other readings, this study looks in assessing the implication of federalism rather than its origin or inquiry.

Thus, the aim of this paper is to underline the importance of social capital in connecting the federalism. Further, this paper primarily focuses on the implications of federalism in its core concern rather than discussing on what led and how federalism did come into existence. Though, this paper underlies the theoretical arguments that direct the establishment of federalism along with its historical context. The rest of the paper is structured in the following ways: The *first* section provides general overview of the paper. The *second* section describes the concept of federalism through theoretical description. Similarly, the *third* section delves in assessing the federalism through the social capital approach. Further, this section accentuates the importance of trust, collaboration and network in explaining the federalism. The *next* section provides some perspective on making the federalism work better. Finally, the *last* section concludes the overall argument of this paper.

## II. Conceptualizing federalism through theoretical underpinnings

This section looks in addressing various approaches and notion associated with federalism. Also, it dissects the theoretical underpinnings of federalism along with its characteristics and criticisms. Despite appealing in its meaning and interpretation, federalism offers an enormous arena of study which surrounds various disciplines into its alignment. Generally, thatched and scored within the model of political organization predominantly, this practice however, also connotes with numerous other social sciences adherents. At the basic ground, two general schools of thoughts are commonly heard amongst its practitioners. The first is *federalization as decentralization school* and the latter is *federalization as alliance school*. The former school of thought argues for set of practices in which both political and economic power is spatially decentralized in any national territory, whereas the latter thought stands closely with *league, covenant* and *alliance* (more precisely used in the Latin meaning of term federalism as - *foedus*). However, the concept of its federalization repairs over the period of time (Gibson, 2004). In word of Elazar (1991, adopted from Gibson 2004), federal principles are concerned with the combination of *self-ruled* and *shared-ruled*. Federalism involves the linkage of individuals, groups, and politics in lasting but limited union. However, in 20<sup>th</sup> century, it has been known for its flexibility which was widely seen in political systems. Thus, such federal ideas were associated within the political organizations with various arrangements from sovereign countries to federation and many more. Thus, federalism can be explained as “*A national polity with dual (or multiple) levels of government,*

*each exercising exclusive authority over constitutionally determined policy areas, but in which only one level of government- central government – is internationally sovereign. (Gibson, 2004)*

Historically, federalism as a practice has under passed various phases which could weaken its own origin and appeal. Scholars like K.C Wheare continuously argue for the failure of federalism, as the setting of war and economic crises during 1945 threaten the federal principle. Despite such arguments, the new nations which were formed after Second World War showed federalism as means of political unity among them.

**Table 1: Accounting federalism on Theoretical ground:**

Theories	Characteristics	Critics
<b>Classical Theory of federalism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chiefly concerns to define what is federalism</li> <li>• Attempts to explain federalism in juristic terms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This theory explains the nature of federalism on legal ground.</li> <li>• Too much legalistic in nature.</li> <li>• The use of term ‘independent’ between general government and regional government.</li> </ul>

<p><b>The origin theory of federalism</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on circumstantial factors and forces for the establishment of federal system.</li> <li>• Three categories of definitions provided by this theory.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a) The sociological Theory.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Federal nature of society, which gives rise to federal political system.</li> <li>- Social make-up of territorial based groups.</li> <li>-</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>b) The multiple factor theory.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Looks for both sufficient and necessary causes for federalism.</li> <li>- Emphasis on the combination of several factors.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All diversities may not necessarily lead to federal political system.</li> <li>• Cannot explain about the desire for among diversities for the establishment of federal framework.</li> <li>• Does not provide proper indices through which federal can be distinguished with non-federal society.</li> <li>• The multiple theory remains absent about the creation of federal system.</li> </ul>
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	<p><b>c) The political theory</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explains federalism as solution to political problem.</li> <li>- Recognize political motive.</li> <li>- Talk politics as dominant role in the origin of federal system.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>The functional theory of federalism</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This theory focuses on social services as the basic function of modern society.</li> <li>• Federal and State governments as co-share of common goals and objectives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not talk much about financial commitment.</li> </ul>

*Source: (Rath, 1978)*

The above table explains the basic theoretical understanding of federalism from different contexts.

### **III. Federalism and Social Capital**

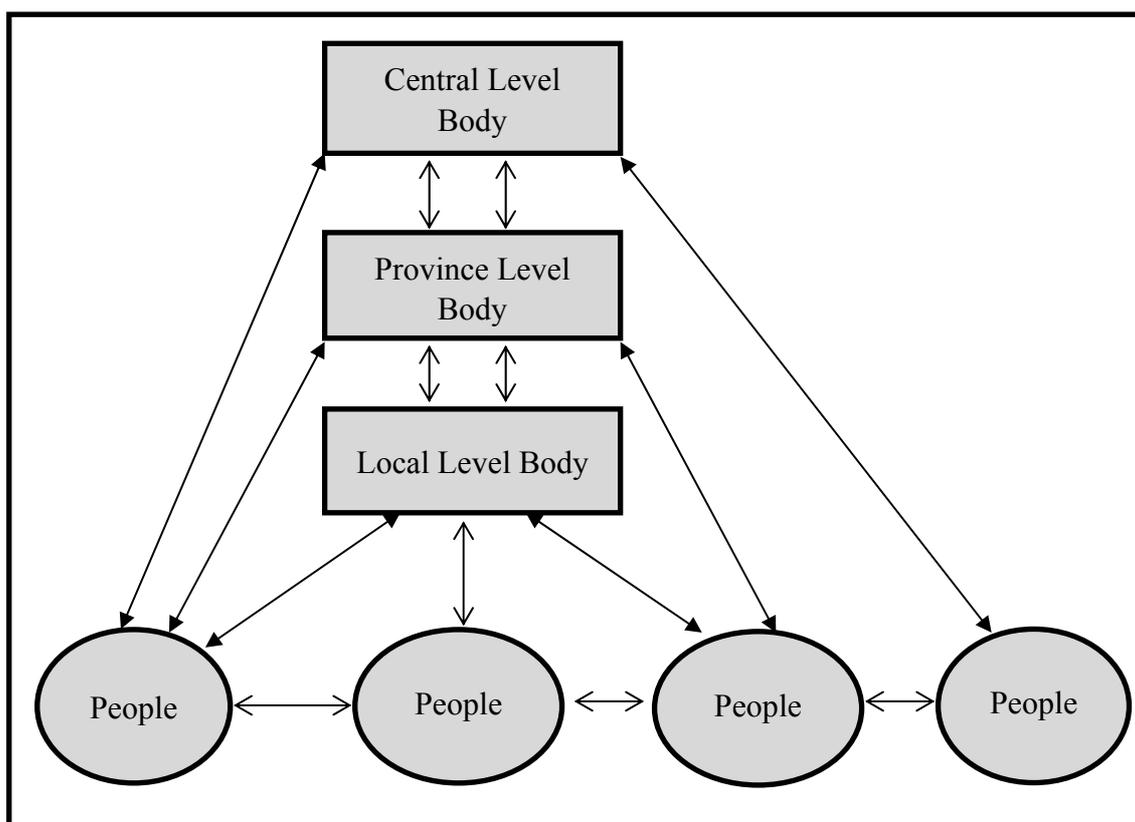
#### ***a. Dissecting Social capital***

This sub-section primarily focuses in addressing the theoretical underpinnings associated with social capital. However, in doing so, this sub-section articulates social capital as a form of societal resources which is constantly built through network, trust, connection and collaboration among the members of society.

Bourdieu and Coleman hold the conception that social capital is a collective possession of individuals connected through social ties. In the words of Bourdieu (1986: 248), "social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition- or in other words, to membership in a group". Similarly, Coleman (1990) defines social capital as a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common: social structure and actions of individuals. These entities include obligations, expectations, trust, and information flows (adopted from Robison et.al, 2002:2). Similarly, Portes (1995: 12), on the other hand, defined social capital as capacity of individuals to control the resources through the means of their membership in networks or in broader social structures. Similarly, Mazzone (2001:62) argues that 'federalism promotes social capital because dividing power between the national government and the states provides greater opportunities for citizen groups to influence politics and for individual citizens to participate in public life. Therefore, federalism provides a healthy political environment for social capital, leading to important

individual and collective benefits'. It further argues that federalism also promotes the kinds of social relationships that allow citizens to overcome collective action barriers and to get things done (*ibid*, 1).

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Federalism and social capital**



**Index:** = social capital<sup>3</sup>      **Fig: Federalism and Social Capital**

<sup>3</sup>This study takes network, *connection*, *collaboration* and *information flow* as basic components of social capital, which has been later on presented in the table to demonstrate its prominence in different federal bodies from local to central. Further, trust has been described in relation to political relation, which is important factor in defining the context of social capital.

**b. *Holding together approach of federalism and social capital***

This sub-section delves in explaining *holding together* approach as a form of federalism to be adopted in Nepal's context. Further, it stresses the importance of social capital as a fabric in attaching this particular approach into consideration.

Breen (2017) argues that holding together approach was chief means of reducing the risk of being secession, which otherwise would lead to secession of the nation. Pouring down the cases from Nepal, Myanmar and Srilanka, he articulates holding together approach as a means to consolidate the multiethnic countries like Nepal, Myanmar and Srilanka. This form of federation is in the countries with ample amount of diversification. He further stipulates, 'Holding-together alliances are based on value creation, rather than the zero-sum game that is generally seen as characterizing federalization' (26). Breen (2017) argues that a moderate secession risk, together with a substantive peripheral infrastructural capacity, is necessary conditions for the establishment of holding-together federalism. Drawing more on secession risk, he adds, 'A secession risk exists when one or more key actors advocate or canvass secession. It is moderate when two of the three elements exist— secessionism is supported by armed groups that control territory, it relates to an area that is relatively ethnically homogenous, and there is a conducive international environment. If all the three elements exist simultaneously, the secession risk is high and federalism will be resisted'. However, his arguments fail to rectify the societal context as well as social fabrication of the place.

Recording the historical context for the rise of federalism in Asian context, Breen (2017) argues, 'Federalism was initially introduced to Asia as a means of *holding-together* states following the decolonization of large areas of the region. This first generation of Asian federalism occurred in India, Malaysia, and Pakistan and has largely been sustained despite significant internal heterogeneity and some early secession events. Elsewhere, modern Asian states attempted to hold together via nation-building in a unitary state. Between Malaysia's 1963 federation and Nepal's 2015 constitution, no new federations were established (28). However, this article remains inaudible in calculating the tools for the joining such diversification. Instead, I argue in this article each society posits a standard form of societal ties which is capable in establishing the federalism and its forms in alignment with the given society. For me, federalism is a system which survives and sustains in connection with both majoritarian and minoritarian populace.

Holding together approach genuinely looks for the power differentiation between constituent states and national government. However, I argue such powerful achievement of central government should be delved into social capital categories in redefining its contours. Further, the subjugation of power mentality by central government should transform its understanding with creating strong relation and matured connection with similar provincial and local bodies. Similarly, the pooling and retaining of the identity and sovereignty should be captured by allowing freedom, in doing their respective chores. The central government should not act with authoritarian

intentions of suppressing the underneath local bodies instead of enriching the level of social capital, which could strengthen the level of conviction, sustainability and durability of federalism much more.

The following table demonstrates the context of social capital at different local bodies with their magnitude and tendency. The social capital is scaled into different parameters along with its differentiation, at individual level and institutional level.

**Table 2: Accessing social capital at different federal bodies at individual and institutional level\*<sup>4</sup>.**

	<b>Social capital</b>	<b>Local Level Body</b>	<b>Province Level Body</b>	<b>Central Level Body</b>
<b>Individual Level (I)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Network</li> <li>• Connection</li> <li>• Information Flow</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> </ul>	<p><b>VS</b></p> <p><b>VS</b></p> <p><b>S</b></p> <p><b>W</b></p>	<p><b>W</b></p> <p><b>W</b></p> <p><b>VW</b></p> <p><b>W</b></p>	<p><b>VW</b></p> <p><b>VW</b></p> <p><b>VW</b></p> <p><b>VW</b></p>

<sup>4</sup>S = Strong I = Individual Level

VS= Very Strong      I'= Institutional Level

W = Weak

VW= Very Weak

<b>Institutional</b>	• Network	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>VS</b>
<b>Level (I')</b>	• Connection	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>VS</b>
	• Information Flow	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>
	• Collaboration	<b>W</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>VS</b>

### **Field study (2018)**

The findings show that the level of social capital at individual level gradually decreases commencing from local to central level. Individual seems to be more intact with the personal of local level bodies compared to provinces and central bodies. On contrary to this, the level of social capital at institutional level is more together at province and central level rather than at local level. Similarly, the connections with province and central level are more often compared to local bodies, as province and central related to policy making and practices. The regular contact is more at regular tendency by individual with local level professionals, compared to province and central level personnels. Similarly, the interconnectedness, flow of information, is subjected to higher tendency with local to local bodies. On contrary to the above articulations, the institutional level bodies are found to have more closed connection, network and flow of information akin to the provinces and central level. Moreover, the accessibility of institutional bodies is in improved level, may it be in communication, social media, groups and other closer groups compared to individual. The findings replicate that, social capital is important resource in assessing the federalism as form of practice to

adhere with the individual, community, institution and nation as whole. Indeed, social capital is a collective possession of individuals connected through social ties. Also, the risk of secession and armed conflict can be reduced by the implicating the degree and ideas of social capital to the greater amount.

**c. *Trust, political affairs and federalism***

This sub-section chiefly presents the importance of trust in political affairs, which is closely connected in general people's life. Further, it expresses that the association of federalism as system of practice is vital in counting the trust of local populace. Trust plays a central role, perhaps the main one, in this constellation of concepts, for as Simmel (1950: 326) writes, "trust is one of the most important synthetic forces within society." Trust is probably the main component of social capital, and social capital is a necessary condition of social integration, economic efficiency, and democratic stability (Arrow, 1972: 357; Coleman, 1988: 306; Ostrom, 1990; Putnam, 1993; Fukuyama, 1995). Adding to it, Robert Putnam (2000) argues that "a society that relies on generalized reciprocity is more efficient than a distrustful society, for the same reason that money is more efficient than barter. Honesty and trust lubricate the inevitable frictions of social life (p. 135)." Putnam focuses the importance of mutuality as important component for society in accessing its tasks. In spite of this, conceptions of trust found in the literature can be categorized along three analytically distinct dimensions concerned with *how to trust*, *whom to trust*, and *what to trust* another to do (Robins, 2016: 973).

Similarly, the political attribution of particular party is fairly deal with the amount of trust to be invested or promoted in the given society. Like social trust, political trust is important phenomenon to be attested in carrying the federalism as system of practice. Moreover, while we are looking in implicating the federalism in general people lives, it's very customary to promote the level of trust among the populace. Different measures are there for political trust. It usually includes civic-mindedness and participation, citizenship, political interest and involvement, a concern with the public interest/public good, political tolerance, the ability to compromise, and confidence in political institutions (Newton, 2001; 205). The availability of participation, civic goodness, and political tolerance usually assembles the level of political trust. However, such political measures should be widely associated in daily outcomes and practices of general people. The greater the reliability shown by political measures, the higher the level of effectiveness can be felt at local doors of the people. The following table illustrates the level of trust accepted by the individual and institutions at three tiers of governance.

**Table 3: Accessing the trust at different federal bodies at individual and institutional level\*<sup>5</sup>**

	<b>Trust</b>	<b>Local Level Body</b>	<b>Province Level Body</b>	<b>Central Level Body</b>
<b>Individual Level (I)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance</li> <li>• Accountability</li> <li>• Capability</li> <li>• Administrative Work</li> </ul>	<p><b>S</b></p> <p><b>W</b></p> <p><b>W</b></p> <p><b>M</b></p>	<p><b>M</b></p> <p><b>M</b></p> <p><b>M</b></p> <p><b>W</b></p>	<p><b>VW</b></p> <p><b>VW</b></p> <p><b>VW</b></p> <p><b>VW</b></p>
<b>Institutional Level (I')</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance</li> <li>• Accountability</li> <li>• Capability</li> <li>• Administrative Work</li> </ul>	<p><b>S</b></p> <p><b>M</b></p> <p><b>M</b></p> <p><b>S</b></p>	<p><b>S</b></p> <p><b>S</b></p> <p><b>S</b></p> <p><b>S</b></p>	<p><b>S</b></p> <p><b>S</b></p> <p><b>S</b></p> <p><b>S</b></p>

**Field study (2018)**

Most of the respondents replied to increase the level of trust with the idea of discussing, meetings, sharing the achieved tasks with locals more. Most of the locals

<sup>5</sup>S = Strong

I = Individual Level

VS= Very Strong

I'= Institutional Level

W = Weak

VW= Very Weak

M = Moderate

followed the rules, regulations, systems as well as practices construed by the governance bodies. However, they don't state that they have trusted the government in full-fledged style. On opposing to this, institutional level trust rested in somewhat strong perception. The assurance and adaptability of institutional bodies, in relation to performance, accountability and other components seem to be higher compared to individuals. The locals are found to be cautious and alert in taking deep inner inside the fact the three tiers of government performance and carries its activities generously and compatibly. Thus, study found that political affairs and activities need to be competent enough to show the amount of trust to higher degrees through performance, administrative work, and coordination. Thus, manifestation of trustworthiness is crucial in making federalism as a system to perform or to sustain.

#### **IV. Making Federalism Works**

This section looks into finding the ways out in making the federalism works better in its premises. Also, it puts downsome basic arguments in the study of federalism, which else was missing as numerous studies concisely put the origin and establishment of federalism but remains absent in defining the implicative orientations of federalism.

What counts federalism? What appearances of federalism general matters? Is federalism a mere a political carcass, which simply practices less fuctionability and delivery approach, instead by caging in its own political armor? For me, federalism is more towards a system which connects the local populace life with broader, wide and

vivid spectrum of delivery, social services, connectivity, better mechanism and opportunity. Federalism works only better, if we focus in its functional approach into considerations. Federalism succinctly puts down partnership, interaction and interdependence among each other, between the local bodies. Also it undertakes interdependence and co-operation as basic characteristics features between any given two governments which could add the sustainability and durability to federalism in Nepal's context. Political system, may it be attempted in any shield or framing (naming) the important of any such system is the delivery of the services. Similarly, federalism should be broadly associated with network nexus, amongst the three tiers of governance. The stronger the nexus, the better is the outcome which can only be assured by enhancing the trustiness with locals and government. The delivery approach, of federalism should profoundly focus the mechanism which follows the better and proper nexus of all three tiers unequivocally. Another, crucial point for its appellation is trustiness between government and locals the most. The doings should be carried transparently and clearly, without any disturbances leading to the issue. Similarly, the accomplishments of the tasks should be replicated to the greater crowds of the community. Correspondingly, regular meetings, regular dissemination of ongoing projects in the locals (community), information about ongoing future projects for the region and also timely dissemination of result that ward has achieved in the years should be presented timely. Also, federalism can exercise more widely only if we increase the frequency of connection, contact and dealings with locals. Federalism simply is

recognition as a form of union; union literally includes the connection, contacts, dealings, flow of information etc.

Further, defining federalism as practice through only political lens is not enough. It is political agenda, no doubt but while discussing in its attributes and implications, it's important to emphasize the internal dynamics of it. Nevertheless, politics basically highlights delivery, participation, and identity preservation, preservation of each state or community uniqueness. It typically holds the notion of guiding the society, institutions, ideas, and orders. Thus, federalism should be distinctly put within the wide purview of society. The better the society hold its practices and ideas, the longer the system will run.

## **V. Conclusion**

After a long run of discussion as mentioned earlier, there is no doubt that the idea of federalism is socially endorsed outcome. Despite of peculiarities, characteristics and establishment guided by federalism, it is crucial for the society to adopt this system as a part of life. Thus, the *first idea* we can generate from this study is, federalism must be the form of practice where each and every local's faith, trust, perception should be manifested in their daily lives. The generic value of federalism should be established in everyone's mentality and activities. Further, such mentalities should construe a better tie-up with local populace and government. The *second idea* is, federalism as a part of governing system should look into the performance, delivery as its central theme. As we already have adopted federalism as form of practice, it's better to minutely look into the

implicative approach of it, rather than *why*, *where* and *how* this practice came into existence? Gone are those days, where the debate and rational fights over its discourse were common phenomena in academia. Thus, it's better to screw-up in reasoning, articulating and preserving the essential underlining of federalism as form of practice. The *third idea* of this study is that federalism is basically a system that looks for partnership, within the *state-provinces* and *local-local provinces* and *locals-state level*. Enhancement of social capital with local to local, local to state, local to central is crucial in implementing the right line of federalism. This paper synchronizes the importance of trust, network and collaboration in elevating and sustaining the federalism. Likewise, federalism is the system, which survives in connection with both *majoritarian* and *minoritarian* populace. Neither, majoritarian nor the minoritarian populace can enjoy the full-fledged federal practices if we lack mutual trust, network, collaboration and connection. Along the side, the debate of aligning federalism only through the discourse of multiethnic, minoritarian movement, right based movement or identity based movement would certainly prolong to concretize and matured this federal system. There is no doubt that this system as part continuously came through the discourse of multiethnic, minoritarian movement, right based movement or identity based movement. Nevertheless, government should be capable to preserve the identity as well as multiethnic sentiments in respective local bodies. Thus, both the majoritarian and minoritarian need to be combined through bond, love, participation with the use of social capital; if not carried, it would backlash the federal system. However, the *fourth*

*idea* underlined by this study is, federalism should be approached and advanced through delivery, participation approach which rarely became a matter of discussion in academia. Undeniably, federalism as a context rose for addressing the arguments of multiethnic dimensions, multi diversity difficulties. But, considering and defining this as a core reality may mislead to attribute and sketch the whole truth of federalism as well. Federalism as form of practice was more demanded for the better delivery, better advanced mechanism, better functional approach of system to be filled by local public. Moreover, federalism was manifested as system to endorse better institutional programming along the side of preserving the identity, addressing the multiethnic concern as well. Thus, federalism as part of system connotes basically with the delivery mechanisms, participation, balanced development etc. Such activities can flourish only through considering functional approach of federalism. *Finally*, this paper looks for functional theory of federalism as important means which applauds for partnership, interaction and interdependence among central, provinces and local level bodies. This paper further, argues that federalism as system should initiate the ‘holding together’ approach in the country like Nepal which has just trodden in embracing the federal practice into its attention. Thus, this study concludes that, gradual and continuous activation of social capital can enhance the performance of federalism.

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## **Practice of Junk Food Consumption among Educated People: A Sociological Study of Governmental Job Holders**

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### **Abstract**

*As sociology of health, Bruce and Phelan (1995) state that health is a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living. This study concentrates on the practice of food consumption as a source of long life; and also believes that educated people generally consume hygienic food. Therefore, hypothesis of this study is developed as "higher the education, lower the junk food consumption practices."*

*Junk food is a term for the food that is of little nutritional value and often high in fat, sugar, salt, and calories. Common junk food consists noodles, pizza, burger, chips, mo:mo, candy, gum, sweet desserts, corn flakes, sugary carbonated beverages as well as alcoholic beverages. These junk foods have poor nutritional values and considered as unhealthy by the educated people. Exploratory research design was carried out to assess the practices regarding junk food consumption that remains highly a qualitative data based explanation. Total 50 respondents including both husband and wife were enrolled in the study. Data were collected using telephone and informal discussions by self-administered method that convenient sampling technique became non-optimal because of covid-19 pandemic. This study reveals that around half of the educated people (especially governmental job holders) have poor knowledge about the effects of*

*junk food; and almost all of the governmental job holders consume junk food. There is also a significant association of junk food with their jobs because what they learn from their offices, implement in their family and family members adapt it as their daily food practice. Only hand-countable households supervise their family members on the use of junk food. But, they also occasionally let their family members use junk food without restriction. Surprisingly it is found that except diseased people, all feel free to use junk food and even diseased ones take a bit in their plates to accept the offers of 'givers.'*

*Most of them are originally from outside the valley, especially remote zones of the nation; therefore, they easily welcome all city foods thinking that all those available foods would be known to them for their better prestige. In the long run, taste and habit both have reached the households and it has become a part of life. Thus, higher the education could not lower the trend and practice of junk food; this study disseminates on the basis of its fact.*

**Keywords:** Health, Junk Food, Nutritional Value, Food Consumption, Junk Food Effects

### **1.1 Introduction**

Junk food is defined as “those commercial products including pizza, burger, noodles, candy, bakery goods, ice cream, salty snacks, packaged flakes, cheese-balls, soft drinks and alcoholic and carbonated beverage, which have little or no nutritional value; but do have plenty of calories, salt, and fats. While not all fast foods are junk foods, most are. Fast foods are ready to eat foods served promptly after ordering. Some

fast foods are high in calories and low in nutritional value, while other fast foods, such as salads, may be low in calories and high in nutritional values. Michael Jacobson, director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, invented this term and used it first in 1972. Although we eat unhealthy food for centuries, most types of junk food appeared in 20th century as a result of mechanization, electricity and labor-saving devices that were used for preparing food. It was a time when a processed food appeared and manufacturers started making food with cheaper ingredients with less nutritional value and using fast preparation methods further lessened healthiness of food. Snack food, gum, candy, and sweet desserts are even older and none healthier. But the term “junk food” is not strictly defined; and depends on personal tastes and social status. Junk food affects the brain in the similar matter as addictive drugs do (Kenny and Johnson, 2008).

Excess consumption of junk food leads rise to wide variety of physical disorders. School canteen, various restaurants and fast food centers are offering food high in fat and sugar which are actually contributing in the youth weight gain along with other problem like infection, food poisoning and dental diseases. Consuming junk food might stop the children from taking healthy meals either in school or at home. In spite of causing health problems, many people in this modern age consume junk food as their daily habitual diet. Now, some countries try to curb down consumption of junk food by increasing junk food taxes but it is too late.

In 1893 at the World's Fair in Chicago, when two brothers Frederick and Louis Rueckheim made a concoction of popcorn, peanuts, and molasses that was wildly popular. Their sweet invention went on a big sale commercially as Cracker Jack a few years later. In 1896, Cracker Jack became the best-selling sweet in the world twenty years after it was created. Now the junk food is popular around the world. It seems almost impossible to stop it but can be controlled. As cultural anthropologists argue that culture is changeable, food habits can be changed applying various remedies.

## **1.2 Statement**

Rapid population growth in underdeveloped society and urbanization are challenging to maintain food security. As Julian Steward stated, "environment determines the culture", the environment of office and seminar, where the junk foods are common, has determined the food consumption practices of people. Busy life and imitation of life practices are the factors that are attracting people towards industrial packaged food. In this context, large multinational companies are coming forward to supply food to the whole world. They are supplying junk food items that have a good taste with attractive packaging. They are getting popular due to time factor, taste factor and appealing advertisements. Specially, school aged children are getting addicted to these foods which is hampering their growth and development. But people who are not educated but good in income easily permit their children to consume junk foods; and they themselves feel proud to have those types of tasty foods. But in spite of being educated, many people permit their family members to consume such types of food. A

survey of government of Nepal has shown that gazette officials hardly live more than ten years after their retirement. Thus, this study has tried to explore the food habits and practice of food consumptions among the educated people especially governmental job holders. To find out the situation of consumption of junk food among those people and their households, under-given questions are raised:

1. What is the situation of junk food consumption among educated people especially within the households of governmental job holders?
2. How do educated people perceive and practise junk food within their households?

### **1.3 Methods**

Exploratory research design is applied for this study whereas the data are collected through informal group discussion and telephone conversation because the time of data collection was affected by corona virus pandemic. Mainly qualitative data are collected from twenty five households of governmental job holders in Kathmandu. Convenient sampling method is applied to select the households and its respondents. Respondents are considered as educated on the basis of their position of job not on the basis of their qualification/education they have acquired from the college or universities.

### **1.4 Conceptualization**

How we produce and consume food is the biggest threat to nature today. It is a major driver of the emergence of infectious diseases. Unhealthy diets are the biggest cause of non-communicable diseases and 1.9 billion people are obese or overweight

(WWF, 2020). At the same time, we waste one third of all the food produced, and all the natural resources that went into its production, but nearly 700 million people go hungry every day. The problems are clear. All people need to eat but our current food systems are putting an impossible strain on the planet as well as in society. It is needed to make radical changes in the practice of food consumption. By changing consumption patterns and providing access to nutritious food for all, the world can tackle all forms of malnutrition fatal diseases. By tackling food loss and waste, all people of the world can ensure that every calorie counts, making a real difference to damaging and protecting life on the earth.

As Jamuna Prakash describes practice of food in South Asian Countries is traditional and ethnic communities, many people in multi-communities of Nepal practise their traditional food as their daily food in their households. But the *khaja* (foods which are generally taken in between two scheduled meals) is the most important daily food, and is almost all junk food in the households of Kathmandu valley. Instead of decreasing the trend of this food consumption, people are extending its items and areas within and outside the households of valley people such as foods in birthday party, foods in short and long family trip, foods in official meeting, foods in other get-togethers etc.

Therefore, data has been collected from the people of different castes, religion, previous residential backgrounds, educational backgrounds, gender and many other social aspects, which show frequencies, and are different but the tendencies are more or

less same in the practice of junk food consumption among the educated people's households and their family members. It also comprises some facts about their normal diseases by which, they feel, they have been affecting.

Caste based interpretation on the practice of junk food consumption is allocated as follows:

**Table no. 1**

Ethnicity of the Respondents

<b>Particulars</b>	<b>No of Couples</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Brahman	14	56
Chhetri	5	20
Janjati	3	12
Dalit	1	4
Madheshi and Muslim	2	8
Total	25	100

*Source: Field survey, 2020*

Table 1 reveals ethnicity of the respondents, who are educated but practice junk food within and outside their households. Data shows more than half (56) of them are Brahman and they usually practise junk food in their meals. Other rest people who are from different ethnicity holding government jobs also usually practise junk food although they have knowledge that junk food is harmful for their health. Therefore, this data shows that food consumption practice is beyond the limitation of traditional

ethnic/caste perimeter due to the impact of modern consumption pattern of packaged food. As Luhmann argues, what unites us in modern society is common acceptance of schematized contingency, junk food consumption is a common practice among the educated people in Kathmandu which has united diversified cultural groups in single consumption practice. There are not any boundaries for the consumption of junk food among various caste/ethnic people although there are still food taboos in the consumption pattern of local native foods.

**Table no. 2**

Religion based interpretation on the practice of junk food consumption is allocated as follows:

Particulars	No of couples	Percentage (%)
Hindu	20	80
Christian	1	4
Buddhist	3	12
Muslim	1	4
Total	25	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2020*

Table 2 shows religion of the respondents where majority (80%) are Hindu. Likewise, Buddhists are found as second largest in religion as like as the data shown in Census of 2058 within governmental job holders in Kathmandu. Christians and Muslims are found same but very low in number. Like the numbers of religion, junk

food consumption patterns of governmental job holders and their family members are not fluctuated. In spite of having distinct religious beliefs, they are found same in many aspects and more integrated in the patterns of industrial and fast food consumption. As Durkheim argues that religion as a practice contributes to the harmony and stability of society (CSJ, 2004), many distinctly different religious people are being harmonized and gathered together via junk food consumption practice. Almost they do not let each other share their home made foods but they easily share fast and junk food in banquet, restaurant, canteen and other fast food centers. Although there are food taboos with the concept of purity and pollution in the consumption and sharing of foods among those distinctly different religious groups of people from one household to another even in the case of living in the same community; they consume fast and junk food sharing each other's plate without hesitation in their comfortable zones. Most of their children also follow this practice but it is merely in canteen, banquet and restaurants. As innovation is described as a factor of social change, industrial packaged foods have played a vital role to transform the food consumption practice within and outside diversified religious groups. Muslims are found a bit more rigid than other religious group of people because they do not eat non-vegetarian items in restaurants and canteen except at their own communities'. But just opposite to the explanation of religion as a means of social control, educated people from different religious beliefs are making themselves free to consume junk and fast food in many ways and areas.

A healthy varied diet is essential for health, growth and development. Many religions include guidance on what is appropriate to eat in order to demonstrate faith. Data from the 2011 census shows that the five most common religious affiliations are Hindu (81.34%), Buddha (9.04), Muslim (4.38%), Kirant (3.04) and Christian (1.42%). Due to the diversity in religions, cultures and individual beliefs vary from one to another, but one good thing found always to know is very low restriction on the consumption practice of junk and fast food.

Hinduism is a diverse religion, with no central authority and with multiple scriptures and holy texts. Hindus believe that all living things have a soul, and believe in the concept of reincarnation, making Hindus reluctant to kill any living creature in some context. The majority of Hindu Brahmans are lacto-vegetarian (avoiding meat and eggs) among Hindus, although many of them may eat chicken, mutton, buff and fish. Beef is always avoided because the cow is considered a holy animal, but dairy products are eaten and considered as holy foods. Animal-derived fats such as lard and dripping are not permitted.

Some Hindus from high caste do not eat onions, eggs, lentils, garlic, chicken, pork etc. Alcohol is generally avoided. There is still a system of touchability and untouchability among the members of Hindu on the basis of caste.

Generally there are no dietary restrictions in Christianity. Individuals may choose to forgo alcohol and may choose whether or not to eat meat. During Lent Christians may stop eating certain foods.

Muslims eat *halal* (lawful) foods, which include fruit, vegetables and eggs. Any meat and meat products they consume must be from a *halal* slaughtered animal. Milk and dairy foods are *halal*, cheese may be *halal* depending on ingredients. There are concerns that not all meat sold as *halal* actually is, so careful sourcing is important. Prohibited foods include pork, crustaceans, blood, *non-halal* animal-derived additives such as gelatin or suet, alcohol and any foods containing alcohol as an ingredient.

Fasting is required during Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, when Muslims must refrain from consuming food, liquids and medication between sunrise and sunset. Some individuals are exempt from fasting, including pregnant, breastfeeding or menstruating women, children under 12 years, older people and chronically or acutely ill people.

Michael Marmot argues that the world is better than it was ever been in health sectors. Extreme poverty rates have been cut in half in the past 25 years. People are living longer and healthier life, child and maternal mortality rates plunging, and life expectancy at birth has substantially increased; it is just because of the improvement in the social determinants of health all over the world. But just opposite to his argument, almost all people, even educated, are neglecting their consumption pattern today. Many people from different religions, caste, creed and lineage are freely consuming fast and junk food in the same manner. Many people in Hindu religion do not eat meat and eggs but consume packaged noodles and other refined foods which consist eggs and meat as its ingredients. Muslim people, who do not consume meat items from the other

community, easily consume those packaged foods. Buddhists, who are considered more reluctant in the consumption of food varieties and are almost always against animal sacrifice, consume those packaged and fast food in restaurants and in their own programs. These evidences show that the consumption pattern, which is one of the social determinants of health, is declining people's health day by day that may threat the community health in near future.

**Table: 3**

Allocation of people on the basis of level of knowledge regarding Junk and fast food

Particulars	No of respondents	Percentage (%)
Adequate Knowledge	21	42.0
Average Knowledge	17	34.0
Poor knowledge	12	24.0
Total	50	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2020*

Above table shows the number of respondents not the number of couples as described in previous table because level of knowledge regarding junk and fast food varies between husband and wife.

This table (Table 3) reveals that 42% of respondents had adequate level of knowledge about the harmfulness of junk and fast food consumption. Only 24% of respondents had poor knowledge about it, where average data follows by 34%. This data points out that around half of the educated people are consuming junk and fast food

in spite of having adequate knowledge regarding harmful effects of junk food consumption. Average knowledge gaining people have heard about its harmfulness but do not know exactly how it affects health. People with poor knowledge just consume them because of their easy availability and instant service for satisfying the hunger.

As Bruce and Phelan describe both individual and social risk factors of ill health, fast and junk food consumption is individual risk factor for individual's health. It has not more nutrients as required by our body, it has only taste, cholesterol, saturated fat with full of spices.

### **1.5. Conclusion**

The world is better than it had ever been. Extreme poverty rates have been cut in half in the past 25 years as stated by Marmot. People are living longer and healthier life, child and maternal mortality rates plunging, and life expectancy at birth has substantially increased but educated people are still practicing junk food consumption as per their need and availability without hesitation.

Many volumes of research have identified social factors at the root of much of health inequalities on the basis of their social determinants such as education and others. Likewise, betterment in all of those social determinants are the causes for changes of health status and education is one of those social determinants of the health but it found oppositely that educated people could not get benefit from their education for their health promotion. It also found that the situation of junk and fast food consumption is devastatingly increasing from their work place to the households among the

governmental job holders in Kathmandu valley. Most but not all of them perceive fast and junk food consumption as fascinating aspect of urban life and practice it as a prestigious behavior. As opposite to the hypothesis of this study, 'higher the education, lower the junk food consumption'; this study found unexpectedly that many educated people practise junk and fast food consumption in many ways that may hamper their health status in the coming days.

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# Political Science



## **An Overview on Political Situation of Modern Nepal**

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### **Abstract**

*Modern political history of Nepal constitutes various changes in the system of governance, revolts, massacre, downfalls as well as rise of the governments. Because of the geopolitics, Nepal has faced different changes time and again regarding the protection of national sovereignty; however, Nepal has always been an independent nation up till this period. Nepalese modern political history comprises the events mainly from the unification campaign led by King Prithvi Narayan Shah followed by the expansion of the Nepalese territory. After while, aroused the Ranarchical system that resulted in the democratic revolts and thus the restoration of democracy, after which different political reformations have taken place along with changes in the political system. Political study of Nepal provides the image of socio-cultural history, geological diversities and various economical and social reforms of the Nepalese society.*

**Keywords:** Political Change, Parties, Democracy, Movement, Conflict, Republic, Constitution

**Background**

Gopals and Mahispals are believed to have been the earliest rulers of Nepal. The first political rulers of Nepal were Kirats who ruled for about 1500 years with total 29 kings ruling over the period (SuchanaBibhag, 2069 BS). The 29 Kirat kings were Yalamber, Pavi, Skandhar, Balamba, Hriti, Humati, Jitedasti, Galinja, Pushka, Suyarma, Papa, Bunka, Swananda, Sthunko, Jinghri, Nane, Luka, Thor, Thoko, Verma, Guja, Pushkar, Keshu, Suja, Sansa, Gunam, Khimbu, Patuka and Gasti (Cheena Nepal, 2009 AD). As the last Kirat king, Gasti was defeated by Lichhivis, the Lichhivi period started in Nepal which is the first documented period in the history of Nepal. From the rise of Amsuvarma in 602 AD, Thakuri dynasty started the ruling after which Malla dynasty ruled the Nepal. The Malla period is considered as glorious era in the history of Nepal (Nepal Mother House, 2010 AD) as various achievements in the fields of art and architecture along with different social reforms took place during the ruling of Malla dynasty. During their 550 year rule, the Mallas built numerous temples and splendid palaces with picturesque squares. It was also during their rule that society and the cities became well organized; religious festivals were introduced and literature, music and art were encouraged. After the death of Yaksha Malla, the valley was divided into three kingdoms. Around this time, the Nepal as we know it today was divided into about 46 independent principalities. One among these was the kingdom of Gorkha with a Shah ruler. Much of Kathmandu Valley's history around this time was recorded by Capuchin friars who lived in the valley on their way in and out of Tibet (MOFA, 2020 AD).

Unifying those principalities, Shah dynasty came in the power and ruled over the unified Nepal from when the Modern Nepal's political history initiated. Nepal was divided into many small kingdoms before the unification. There were 22 states in Karnali Region. There were AtbisGotamm, Bajura, Biskot, Chilli, Dailekh, Dang, Darnar, Doti, Dullu, Duryal, Gajur, Gurnakot, Jajarkot, Jehari, Jumla, Majal, Malneta, Musikot, Phalawagh, Rukum, Salyana and Thalahara. Likewise, 24 states were in Gandaki Region. There were Gorkha, Lamjung, Tanahun, Kaski, Nuwakot, Dhor, Satahun, Garahun, Rishing, Ghiring, Paiyun, Parbat, Galkot, Palpa, Gulmi, Argha, Khanchi, Musikot, Isma, Dhurkot, Galkot, Bhirkot, Piuthan and Butwal. Similarly, there were 3 Mallakingdoms in Kathmandu valley (Kantipur, Patan and Bhadgaun). In the east of Kathmandu valley, there was Sen kingdom. Due to internal rivalry and frequent battles among these states, they were getting weaker. Meantime Prithvi Narayan Shah started the unification campaign of Nepal. With the conquest over Nuwakot, Dahachowk, Makawanpur, Kirtipur, Kantipur, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur and towards the eastern side, Nepal was thus unified, which was further expanded by sons and daughter-in-law of Prithvi Narayan Shah. Nepal was forged out of the conquests by the principality of Gorkha, and Nepalese historians often view this process as consisting of 'national unification' (Whelpton, 2009 AD).

**Shah and Rana Dynasty**

Shah dynasty enthroned for 264 years in Nepal from 1742 (Prithvi Narayan Shah) to 2006 AD (Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah). During the time, some became the ceremonial kings only. The Anglo-Nepal war in between 1814 to 1816 AD (Britannica, 2020 AD) caused Nepal to sign Sugauli treaty and loss its one third part of the land. From the rule of Surendra Bir Bikram Shah up till Tribhuvan Bir Bikram Shah, the Shah king became powerless as all the powers were exercised by Rana Prime ministers. After the end of Rana regime, the first democracy, Shah kings got their executive ruling power in their hands.

Rana dynasty ruled Nepal from 1846 AD until 1951 AD that reduced the Shah monarchs to a figure head and led prime minister and other government positions held by the Ranas hereditary. Kot Parva initiated the Rana regime in Nepal giving rise to Jung Bahadur Rana to power. Eleven Rana prime ministers rules the country in their Prime-ministership (Singh, 2004 AD). Rana prime ministers were Jung Bahadur Rana, Bam Bahadur Kunwar, Ranodip Singh Kunwar, Bir Shumsher Jang Bahadur Rana, Dev

**Kings of Modern Nepal**

- Prithvi Narayan Shah
- Pratap Singh Shah
- Rana Bahadur Shah
- Girvan Yuddha Bikram Shah
- Rajendra Bikram Shah
- Surendra Bikram Shah
- Prithvi Bir Bikram Shah
- Tribhuvan Bir Bikram Shah (*1st reign*)
- Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah (*1st reign*)
- Tribhuvan Bir Bikram Shah (*2nd reign*)
- Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah
- Birendra Bir Bikram Shah
- Dipendra Bir Bikram Shah
- Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah (*2nd reign*)

Shumsher Jang Bahadur Rana, Chandra Shumsher Jang Bahadur Rana, Bhim Shumsher Jung Bahadur Rana, Juddha Shumsher Jang Bahadur Rana, Padma Shumsher Jang Bahadur Rana and Mohan Shumsher Jang Bahadur Rana. Rana rule was the ironfisted rule thus got abolished by the opposing movements of the general public. However, various social reforms also took place Rana regime.

### **Multi-Party and Zero-Party Systems in Nepal**

Dissatisfaction against the family rule of Ranas caused the people's movement in 1951 led by few of the educated people and the people who were exiled by Ranas. The few Nepali people who actively took part in Indian independence struggle wanted to liberate Nepal from the autocratic Rana Rule. The Members of Praja Parishad Party – Dharma Bhakta Mathema, Shukraraj Shastri, Gangalal Shrestha and Dasharath Chand who voiced against Rana rule were arrested and executed by the people against them. Nepali Congress Party also was already formed. The revolt ended 104 years of long Rana rule and returned the Shah family to power with the appointment of Non-Rana as prime minister according to the tripartite agreement signed in Delhi, India.

Quasi-constitutional rule got started in Nepal where monarch assisted by the leaders of fledging political parties governed the country. Nepal had its first election in 1959 AD, but just one year later in 1960 AD, the cabinet was dismissed and the parliament was dissolved by King Mahendra. He put ban on the political parties.

King Mahendra carried out the royal coup declaring parliamentary democracy a failure and started partyless system with the promulgation of new constitution of 1962.

December 1960 AD. Non-party Panchayat system of government continued for the entire 29 years period under Kings Mahendra and Birendra. King Birendra called for national referendum in May 1980 to decide the nature of government either to continue Panchayat system along with democratic reforms or to establish multiparty system. Panchayat system won the victory with small margin. However selection of prime minister by the Rastriya Panchayat started.

In April 1990, the opposition formed on interim government as King Birendra had dissolved the Panchayat parliament. Keeping constitutional monarchy and bicameral legislature, a new constitution was drafted that came into account from 9 November 1990. The house of representative consisted of 205 members whereas national council has 60 members. Multiparty legislature election was held in May 1991 and the Nepali Congress Party won the election. From the midterm election 1994 AD, Nepali congress lost its parliamentary vote so that first communist (CPN-UML) led monarchy in Asia under the prime ministership of Manamohan Adhikari was formed. Disputes in Nepali Congress party during 1994 AD caused the dissolution of parliament and in another election no party got the majority due to which unstable coalition government was formed.

### **Royal Massacre and King Gyanendra's Rule**

Prince Dipendra on 1 June 2001 assassinated eleven members of the Royal family including his father King Birendra, mother Queen Aishwarya, brother Prince Nirajan, sister Princess Shruti, uncle (Prince) Dhirendra, Princess Shanti, Princess

Sharada, Kumar Khadga, Princess Jayanti, before shooting himself (Nepal, 2015 AD).

After the death of Dipendra, Gyanendra became the king of Nepal for second time.

1st June 2001, a horrific tragedy wiped out the entire royal family including King Birendra and Queen Aishwarya with many of their closest relatives. With only King Birendra's brother, Gyanendra and his family surviving, he was crowned the king. King Gyanendra abided by the elected government for some time and then dismissed the elected Parliament to wield absolute power (MOFA, 2020 AD). As rebellion rose at the meantime, in October 2002 King Gyanendra dismissed the government, suspended the parliament and assumed full executive power, declaring the "State of Emergency" to suppress the revolution. A coalition called Seven Party Alliance (SPA) was formed to oppose the Royal takeover. Disillusionment with the results grew throughout the 1990s and, since the royal take-over the system has been effectively in a coma. Argument still continues over whether it should be resuscitated or declared dead and a completely new beginning made but, after Gyanendra's even more complete assumption of power in February 2005 and suspension of freedom of speech and assembly, a fresh start looks the more likely eventual outcome (Whelpton, 2003 AD).

### **Maoist Insurgency and End of Monarchy**

The Samyukta Janamorcha Nepal (Nepal Communist Party- Maoist) in 4<sup>th</sup> February, 1996 underwent revolution in order to replace parliamentary monarchy and people's new democratic republic. Led by Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' along Dr.

Baburam Bhattari, the insurgency first began from five districts – Rolpa, Rukum, Jajarkot, Gorkha and Sindhuli of Nepal.

UPF (United People's Front) submitted a 40-point demand to the Prime Minister Ser Bahadur Deuba of the Nepali Congress government. They declared that they would wage a 'people's war' if the government did not respond to these demands within 15 days. Unfortunately, the Deuba government did not take the demands seriously. Prime Minister Deuba went to India on an official visit, ignoring the deadline. The UPF (Maoist) started a people's war on 13th February 1996, three days before the given deadline, attacking police post at Holeri (Rolpa) and Thibsikot (Rukum). Since then Nepal has been facing an unprecedented crisis. The armed conflict in Nepal has had enormous impacts on politics, democracy, governing practices, state's security structures, demographic features, culture and tradition, national economy, social system, thinking and behavioural patterns of the Nepalese people, livelihoods of poor and marginalized groups, development interventions and international relations.

Estimated about 17 thousands security persons, civilians and insurgents had been killed in the conflict. "Provisional Government" was also established by Maoist at district level in various locations of Nepal. Twelve-point memorandum of understanding (MOU) for peace and democracy between Maoist and SPA was signed on 22 November, 2005 in New Delhi, India. People's movement II started on April, 2006 that lasted for 19 days which forced the king to reinstate the parliament. The parliament gained the legislative power with executive power provided to the

government of Nepal. On 24 December, 2007 the agreement among SPA, former Maoist rebels and ruling party to abolish the monarchy and make the country a federal republic with prime minister as the head of the state was signed. Election of 10 April, 2008 was won by the Maoist party. Nepal became federal republic in 28 May, 2008 ending 240 years of Royal Empire.

### **Federal Nepal and Way Forward**

Dr. Ram Baran Yadhav of Nepali Congress Party became the first president of the federal democratic republic of Nepal on 23 July, 2008, whereas Pushpa Kamal Dahal of the Maoist Party was elected the first republican prime minister by constituent assembly on 15 August, 2008. The recent NCP (UML) leader Madhav Kumar Nepal was named the new prime minister. But under Maoist pressure, Nepal also resigned the prime minister ending a seven months stalemate. Prime minister Jhala Nath Khanal resigned and the parliament elected Dr. Baburam Bhattarai of Maoist Party as prime minister. After Bhattarai led another coalition government, the term of the Constituent Assembly was further extended but it could not make a constitution due to lack of national consensus. Finally it was dissolved on 28 May, 2012. A non-political government under the chairmanship of incumbent Chief Justice Khilraj Regmi was then formed on 14 March, 2013 which held second constituent assembly elections successfully on 1 November, 2013. In the election, the Nepali Congress won the largest share of votes but could not get the majority. So consensus government of Nepali

Congress and CPN (UML) party was formed with Sushil Koirala elected as the prime minister from coalition support of 10 February, 2014.

A consensus was reached among the political parties on the fundamental elements of the constitution after the hitting of the massive earthquake in Nepal. The long awaited constitution was thus promulgated of 20 September, 2015 (MOFA, 2020 AD) a federal state with three levels of government: federal, provincial and local. This was intended to decentralize power from Kathmandu to the newly-created seven provinces and local government units. One-third of the seats have been reserved for women, at all three levels of government. The PR system aims to ensure the representation of Dalits, Janajati (indigenous) groups and minorities in the governing structures (Khalid and Chughtai, 2017 AD). The constituent assembly was converted into legislative parliament. CPN (UML) chairman Khadga Prasad Oli was appointed the prime minister. Defeating Kul Bahadur Gurung, Bidhya Devi Bhandari, the vice chairperson of CPN (UML), was elected the president of Nepal on 28 October, 2015. Later on 26 November and 7 December, 2017, elections of 753 local level units, 7 provinces and federal legislature were held in Nepal. Following the announcement of election's final result by the Election Commission of Nepal, KP Oli of CPN (UML) got sworn in as prime minister on 15 February, 2018 by the president.

State institutions including civil service are grossly politicized. The overreach in constitutional and judicial bodies has blurred the lines of separation of powers. Subordination of democratic values and ideals threatens democratic pluralism and leads

to authoritarianism, emboldening radical and centrifugal elements with immediate and imminent costs to the nation (Bhattarai, 2019 AD). Nepali leaders need both guts and wisdom to absolve this nation from the Hobbesian Trap and punch geopolitical determinism, a concept which erodes the national freedom of man oeuvre and defies national interest-oriented policy. The harmony of whole gamut of foreign policy issues with any power cuts the liberty to defy, differ and create choice of development partners and make it inapt for national self-determination which has been historically prized by Nepalese (Dahal, 2015 AD).

### **Conclusion**

Nepalese political history has undergone through various challenges, changes and reforms. Nepal was struggling hard to maintain political stability due to the changing governments occurred as the result of conflicts between various political parties. Recently, Nepal has got a stable political ruling but many more reforms and development in the economy, socio-culture, and the fields of education, health and other different infrastructures of progress are needed. The political situation of Nepal is not substantially different from the situation that has been prevailing since the advent of multi-party democracy almost 30 years back. When Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala had the majority in the first elected lower house in 1990, he could have done wonders but blew it badly and did not last the full term. About two third majority's Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli has dissolved the lower house on 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2020. The governments, political parties and leadership usually have done work in their

interest. They have hardly worked for the nation and the people. Nepalese people are desperate for seeking the development that political parties have promised through their manifesto to provide for the people.

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# **International Relations and Diplomacy**



## **Nepali Patient Treatment in India: Motivation and Experience**

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### **Abstract**

*Nepali patients' visit to India for medical treatment is increasing for a few years than earlier. The recently coined term named "medical tourism" and its growth and expansion in India may take a prominent factor in this process, but other aspects are also prevalent in this procedure. This research is basically focused on the Nepali patients' motivations and experiences to travel to India for treatment. A qualitative method was applied for this study through in-depth interviews, key informant interviews (KII), and observation. This paper shows that culture, language, easy and affordable travel access, advanced technology, and specialized health professionals are some of the prime motivating factors for Nepali people traveling to India for treatment. They have mixed experiences while doing treatment in India. Additionally, Nepali migrants are considered as one of the important assets or driving factors for their family, friends, relatives, and occasionally for their neighbors to travel to India for treatment.*

**Keywords:** Nepali Patients, Medical Tourism, Health Institutions, India

**Introduction**

Seeking healthcare abroad is not a new phenomenon. The report, published by The United Nations and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP, 2007) titled “Patients Without Borders”, shows that the people traveled to various places for their treatment back to thousands of years ago. For example, pilgrims from the Mediterranean region traveled to a small territory in the Saronic Gulf to visit the sanctuary of the healing god, Asklepios. As part of health treatment, they relaxed in the waters, enjoyed the wines of the regions, and traveled within the area. The ancient Greeks and Romans often traveled throughout the Mediterranean to participate in rituals and healing practices on a yearly basis. In the 17th century, Europeans from France, Britain, Ireland, and Italy traveled to spas in Germany as well as made tracks to the Egyptian Nile River from the benefits of hot mineral water baths and rituals. And the 18th century saw Europeans increasingly traveled to spas, both in and outside of Europe. But as with much within the context of globalization, medical travel has become far more widespread and more accessible to people across class in recent decades.

Since the 1970s, health tourism primarily consisted of wealthy individuals from developing countries who traveled to industrialized countries like the United States (US), United Kingdom (UK), and other European countries to get specialized medical treatment at internationally renowned health care centers (UNESCAP 2007). But at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s, this phenomenon had almost ended; the citizens of the

developed country started enjoying the privileges of traveling to developing nations for health care in low cost. The trend of individuals seeking quality medical care in developing countries sparked off globally with the initiative of the Cuban government promoting health tourism as an industry. The Cuban government offered a wide range of affordable medical services to international patients targeting other countries. The global growth in the flow of patients and health professionals, as well as medical technology, capital funding, and regulatory regimes across national borders have given rise to new patterns of consumption and production of healthcare services over recent decades. As health care is predominantly a service industry, this has made health services more tradable global commodities. A significant new element of this trade has involved the movement of patients across borders in the pursuit of medical treatment and health care, a phenomenon commonly termed ‘medical tourism’, where patients from highly developed nations travel to less developed countries, bypassing costly medical care that is offered in their own community.

Individuals seeking care for illness are usually pragmatic; they turn to different health care systems according to their subjective assessment of the problem and of the most suitable type of help (Leeson 1974). In doing so, they test their decisions. If one remedy does not work, they will turn to another. The more severe and prolonged the ailment, the more likely is that individuals will seek alternative health services when a previously chosen option fails (Heggen- hougen 1980).

Along with these experiences, Nepali people also travel to various places for their treatment within and outside countries. The poor health care system of Nepal seems one of the major reasons for this. Centralized health care facilities make it very difficult to get quality health care for the poor, marginalized, and remote people. Some people never visited the Capital city Kathmandu, but traveled to various major cities of India such as New Delhi, Bangalore, Mumbai, or Calcutta for their treatment as well as work (Bashyal 2020). With the rising focus on specialized medical treatment (with high technology), Nepali people are also aware and seek to get high-quality health care which is very limited and sometimes could be more expensive in their home country than in Indian hospitals.

India is one of the developing countries and an emerging hub for medical tourism in South Asia, where large numbers of people come from various countries for medical treatment. It is estimated that medical tourism in Asia generated \$4.4 billion in 2012, with approximately half of this revenue went to India. Medical services in India are particularly much affordable, with prices as low as 10% of those in the United States. Because of the low capacity of income level, Nepali people cannot afford huge money for medical treatment abroad. So, India is becoming the medical destination for a large number of Nepali people. Till now, no study has been done for Nepali patients and their treatment in India. This study will try to find out the comparative advantages and difficulties faced by Nepali patients from their narratives during or after medical treatment in India.

**Methodology:**

This study has adopted a qualitative method by using semi-structured interviews, key informant interviews, in-depth interviews, and observations at different levels. The respondent was selected through snowball sampling. About 50 interviews/narratives were conducted with different individuals. Both private and public hospitals were chosen for the fieldwork in India and Nepal. Medanta Hospital, Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Hospital, AIIMS and Safdarjung Hospitals in Delhi and Bir Hospital, Norvic and Grande Hospital in Nepal were selected for fieldwork. Apart from the patients, interviews also conducted with doctors/health professionals and family members of the patients. Fieldwork has been carried out from May 2017 to April 2018.

**Conceptualization of the Study**

Traveling to various places for health care is not a new phenomenon. Even Nepali people visited Indian hospitals for a very long time, but the numbers were very limited than from a few years from now. There is no exact data on how many people visit India for treatment on a daily, monthly, or yearly basis, but it is well known that the middle class (the term Middle Class defines here is not only on the economic term but also in a cultural context defined by the anthropologist Mark Liechty) often visit Indian hospitals, which was not common few years before. This trend raises the question about the motive, process, challenges, and advantage to visit Indian health care institutions.

The emergence of medical tourism and its expansion is indicating one of the major reasons to visit foreign places for health care. However, medical tourism focused on both national and international patients. Medical tourism-focused primarily on bio-medical or allopathic medicine procedures, combined with travel and tourism (Connell 2006). Several factors have influenced the growth of medical tourism, including the high cost of medical procedures, long waiting lists and aging populations in the 'rich world countries', greater affordability of flights and travel, and a shift in medical care away from the public sector, such that people are more comfortable with paying for medical services offered by private bodies or companies (Laing and Weiler 2008).

Investing in the medical industry is a way to increase Gross domestic product (GDP), improve services, generate foreign exchange, creates a more favorable balance of trade, and boost tourism. Hence, it is proven that medical tourism helps in boosting tourism (Arrelano 2007).

To date, the literature on medical tourism has focused almost exclusively on international medical tourism. However, there are a growing number of patients who travel for medical care within their own country. Whittaker (2008) has said that opening up of the health sector trade under the General Agreement on Trade in services (GATS) and increased corporatization of medicine with Asian countries are considered primary reasons for the growth of medical and health tourism in Asian countries.

Mukherjee and Mookerji (2004) mentioned that, after Singapore and Thailand, India might be the next multimillion-dollar Asian medical industry. Apollo hospitals

group, Wockhardt, Escorts, Fortis, Hinduja, and Breach Candy are some of the names in healthcare that have come forward to tie up with tourism industry players like Hyatt, Kuoni, Indian Airlines, and Bangladeshi carrier GMC offer discount-laced customized packages to international medical tourists to India.

Rao et al. (2005) describes that a substantial number of foreigners visit India to gain quality medical treatment at a much lower cost than that of other countries of the world. This applies, particularly in the field of cardiology, cardiac surgery, joint replacement, ophthalmology, pathology and Indian systems of medicine, etc. Mohanty and Madhav (2006) are of the opinion that the Indian health care industry began to recently emerge as a prime destination for medical tourists by upgrading its technology, gaining greater familiarity with western medical practices, and improving its image in terms of quality and cost.

India has a number of hospitals, a large pool of doctors, nurses & supporting staff with required specialization and expertise, and the advantage of language (English speaking skills) servicing patients. Many of these doctors after having specialized and practiced in the Western countries have returned home to set up impressive state of the art facilities with the latest in equipment, technology, and service levels in all major metros in India.

### **Status of Nepali Patients in India**

India is becoming one of the destination hubs for medical treatment among Nepali people for a few years. The earlier visit was limited to elite people and

referral cases for the complicated diseases. But the recent trend is different than earlier, where middle and lower-middle-class people often visit Indian hospitals for their treatment even without any referral case. In this section, we have tried to explore the motivation and compulsion of Nepali patients to visit Indian hospitals.

Motivations play a fundamental role in destination choices. In the Case Study on “Movement of patients across Borders and its Impact on the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Region”, some of the push and pull factors were determined. It describes how individuals are pushed by motivation into making travel decisions and how they are pulled or attracted by destination elements. The push factors encouraging people to travel for health care include the increasing popularity of cosmetic surgery, non-coverage of certain procedures by health insurance schemes; increased waiting in lines for surgical procedures under national health schemes; and the availability of comprehensive information on the Internet.

The pull factors include the emergence state-of-the-art medical facilities; significant cost difference for the same procedures and aftercare with no difference in quality position as a place service provider, improved airline connectivity and linkages with vacation packages, tie-ups with foreign insurance providers for wider insurance coverage, increased accreditation of hospitals likes International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and Joint Commission International (JCI 2014).

India has introduced a special visa category – an M visa – to cater to the growing number of medical tourists (Chinai and Goswami 2007) as well as allowing tax breaks

to providers. But Nepali people don't need visas to travel to India on the basis of the 1950's treaty, so it is very easy to travel back and forth. A Nepali woman who traveled to Delhi, India for her treatment told:

Treatment in Delhi is easy for us because my husband is there for a long time. I often travel by bus as my hometown is also nearby the Indian border. I mostly prefer the train, but it's very hard to get the ticket within a short span of time (30-years Female).

There is a variation in terms of traveling to India by Nepali people on the basis of their class and space where they live. The people who travel from Kathmandu often use flights than those who live in the mid and western regions of Nepal. Because of the open border, people can easily enter both countries. There is a long history of Nepali migration to India, which is one of the profound reasons to go to India for treatment shown clearly through the fieldwork. One respondent says,

My sister lives in Delhi, so it's easy for me to go there for visit and treatment.

We went to Delhi last year because of my husband's stomach problem. My sister made the required arrangements for the treatment (42 years Female).

There is not only migrant's own relative, but they also occasionally visit their origin countries' neighbors. One visitor says,

Last year I went to Delhi for treatment. Initially, I did not have any plan to go to India. . One day I met my neighbor who recently came back from Delhi. We talked about my condition and he advised me to visit Delhi for treatment.

Despite his entire busy schedule, he managed to take me to the hospital. The doctor suggested physiotherapy and provided some medicine and asked me to visit after 6 months (51-year male patient)

Poor quality health services, negligence and unfavorable behavior of doctors, and unavailability of proper technology to diagnose the health problem are some of the prominent pushing factors for Nepali patients. One patient complained,

I was suffering from body pain. Despite frequent consultations with a doctor in Pokhara, I was not feeling well. Then I went to Kathmandu for further treatment, but didn't get any sign of improvement. I had heard a lot about Medanta hospital, so I went there. I diagnosed with thyroid and started taking the medicine. The doctor suggested me to visit after 3 months by providing the required medicine (46-year male patient).

### **Communication and Languages**

Language services, particularly interpreter services can improve communication between physicians and patients who speak different languages. Some patients expressed that the language is a prominent factor of anxieties in their treatment process, particularly if the patients come from Hilly and mountainous areas,

When we (me and my brother) went to Delhi for treatment, the language was the main problem because we didn't understand Hindi. Because of heavy bleeding, I visited doctors in Butwal, [Nepal], who gave me some medicine. That medicine didn't improve my problem and finally, the doctor suggested me to remove the

Uterus. Before making the decision to go to Delhi, we consulted with several people, and most of them suggested me to go to Delhi for surgery. We spent more than two lakhs Indian currency in Apollo hospital. Later we got to know that we could reduce the surgery charge if we made proper communication with the administration (60-year Female).

### **Hospitality, Culture and Social Environment**

Along with the ability to communicate effectively with the people in different countries, whether their culture is warm, hospitable, inviting or distant and uninviting, also play a main role in attracting travelers. Hospitality is all about serving the guests to provide them with a feel-good-effect.

At first, we tried our effort to get better treatment in Nepal. When we were not succeeded then went to India for better option. We got a homely environment there due to the similar cultural and social environment. I didn't feel like an outsider in India, but felt lonely and weird in western countries (55 years

### **Climate**

There is no climate difference in India and Nepal; hence, Nepali people express their willingness to visit Indian hospitals for treatment. But they try to choose the best atmosphere due to the hot and humid climate.

### **Travel Distance**

People often choose to use their time more efficiently, and unlikely to travel long distances for something of equal that is available in closer region or countries for medical services. One patient remarks,

A short distance is one of the major reasons to go to India for treatment. It takes about 1 hour and 20 minutes by flight from Kathmandu to Delhi. We also can manage low-cost flight tickets according to the season. The patient can do up and down easily for their follow up treatment (49 Year Female patient).

### **Quality Services and Facilities**

The standards of medical facilities are becoming increasingly transparent to the consumer through internationally recognized accreditation and certification schemes such as the JCI and ISO or by their local accrediting organizations, as well as through international partnerships. Despite the shortage of health professional, the specialist doctor is gradually increasing in the capital city of Nepal. Facility Hospitals are established by the private sector and trying to fix all the necessary equipments but have been inadequate till now.

It is obvious that Indian Hospitals have more technology and equipment than Nepal. But we are also progressing and trying to establish the high technology to provide better services to the patients. If we get success then we can prevent patients to go abroad for expensive treatment. Overall, only 5 percent of complicated cases refer to India by Nepali doctors, especially the cases like cancer, knee surgery, bypass surgery, etc. Most of the patients visit Indian hospitals to make sure about their health problems or for diagnosis. Most patients visit to the Indian hospital for kidney transplant not because of low quality and inadequacy of health facilities in Nepal but patients can get a kidney from other

people by making an illegal document, such practice is not allowed in Nepal. Nepali patients, mostly visit South India, Calcutta, and Delhi's hospitals for treatment. Nepali patients who return after treatment from India never complain about the quality issues with me. They may suffer from various other difficulties during the treatment. The untrusted environment towards doctors is still high in Nepal. Yes, doctors have their own compulsion to work in multiple places but it affects seriousness and dedication towards their profession. (Doctor, Kathmandu).

#### Affordable and Cost Alternatives

Medical care is a provision in Asian Pacific countries that comes at a significantly lower cost due to the disparity in the level of economic development with the developed countries. The table below shows the comparisons of various medical procedure costs between developed countries like the US, UK, and Few Asian Countries.

Cost of Treatment in Different Countries (US\$)					
Medical Procedure	USA	India	Thailand	Malaysia	Singapore
Heart Bypass	123,000	7900	15000	12100	17200
Angioplasty	28200	5700	4200	8000	13400
Heart Valve Replace	170,000	9500	17200	13500	16900
Dental Implant	2500	900	1720	1500	2700
Gastric Bypass	25,000	7000	16800	9900	13700
Breast Implant	6400	3000	3500	3800	8400
Cost is excluded transport, accomodation and other expenses					

*Source: Qadeer and Reddy(2010)*

But the cost affordability may not exactly apply to Nepali patients who visit Indian hospitals. One patient stated that:

We paid around 2 lakh Indian currency for the uterus surgery in Delhi, but my friend spent only 2 lakh Nepali currency for the same case in Kathmandu. (40-year Female patient)

### **Specialization in Medical Services**

International patients in need of specialized treatment are more likely to visit a destination that is well known for specialization. Some hospitals in Singapore also focus on complex cases such as the separation of conjoined twins in order to give them an edge and a sound reputation. Thailand has established a position for cosmetic surgery and dental procedures as well as sex change operations (UNESCAP 2007).

In the medical sector, India has a longer history than Nepal. India has a huge population, which gives many chances the doctors to do more practice. As ‘Practice makes perfect’, Indian doctors practice and make their work perfectly, it also builds up their confidence level. Some of the doctors in India are better than in Nepal. Nepal is improving rapidly in the medical field too, but because of the late emergence in the medical field, poor economy, and political instability. Nepal couldn’t achieve the target goal. We refer patients to India for complicated cases. A doctor like me, who studied and got training in India, has good knowledge about the quality, technology, and health facilities of Indian hospitals. Hence we refer a patient in India for quality treatment if he or she can

afford it. Yes, it is the fact that India is more costly than Nepal. Nepal is lacking behind on medical research. Patients are not getting health facilities like Pet scan in Nepal. Last year one of the private diagnostic centers started pet scan services in Lazimpat. Technology like pet scans is so expensive in Nepal (around 50 crores) that the government should take initiation for this work but it is not happening because of various reasons. Discussion on this issue started from last 7 to 8 years but nothing has happened till date (Doctor, Kathmandu).

**Conclusion:**

India ranks second among world countries next to Thailand in Foreign medical tourist arrivals. This is mainly due to the specialized doctors and English speaking and quality facilities available in hospitals. Nepali patients travel to the Indian hospital with different motives such as quality treatment, easy access travel, open border, similar culture, and social environment. The trusting factor is the most dominant factor for choosing the Indian hospitals for Nepali patients in Nepal. They think most of the medical persons in India are much educated and skilled. This research clearly shows that the untrusted situation towards Nepali doctors and lack of diagnostic technology push patients to visit Indian hospitals. High-quality hospitals are gradually increasing in Nepal but a lot has to be done to give good health care to the Nepali people.

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# Journalism



## **The Effect of Excessive Internet use on Student's Academic Achievements**

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### **Abstract**

Over the last decades, the internet insurgency greatly affected student's life. Education, economics, politics, and social fields are greatly influenced by the internet. The internet dependency has a positive and negative impact on people. For students, the teaching and learning have become easier compared to the old days as nowadays information is at their fingertips. Despite its benefits, over use of internet may negatively impact the students' life such as on their emotional instability, depression, poor time management, and poor academic performance. Therefore, the aim of the present study is to determine the excessive use of internet to students' academic performance. The study analysis is on the academic performance. This study was conducted among 150 college students of Tribhuvan University in the Kathmandu valley.

Then, the students' academic instability translated to a poor academic performance and the internet addiction also has a negative relationship with the students' performance.

**Keywords:** *Excessive Internet, Academic Performance, Internet use, Student*

**Background of the Study**

This study explores and identifies the effect of excessive internet use on student life. Along, Internet users are rapidly increasing and it has become one of the most important topics for the research that appears to users due to the extensive use of the Internet. Unfortunately, this rapid development of the Internet has a detrimental impact in our life, which leads to various phenomena such as social activities, social functioning, also in culture as well as in our daily lives.

The internet becomes essential part of people's daily lives; internet connectivity has improved tremendously and is available everywhere such as homes, offices, travels and schools. However, studies on internet use among bachelor degree students are limited in the TU. Hence, this study investigates the internet use and its impact on students' careers. The data were collected using a questionnaire and then analyzed using descriptive and analytical method. Results found to have a positive influence on their academic performance. However, different uses of the internet among students do not influence their academic performance. The study concludes that availability of different internet sources to students does not grant all of them immediate access. This is relevant because provision of internet infrastructure in college level may be a key strategy to promoting academic performance.

Internet addiction is a major problem in the student's life and causes the psychological, social, educational, or occupational problems for the people. Students need the internet more than other people due to their educational or research needs. The rate and type of the internet use may affect their information-seeking behavior too. This

study aims to investigate the effect of the internet addiction on the information-seeking behavior of the postgraduate students. The evolution of digital era affected almost every aspect of modern life. The internet becomes an essential tool for people and plays a significant role in our daily life socially, politically, economically, and even emotionally.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study is to analyse the excessive internet use and its effect on the performance of college students in TU.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study of the conceptual framework is from Katz and Lazarsfeld (1940). They say internet affects the audience behavior, which also means students' behavior. Media doesn't always alter attitudes and behaviors; instead, social relationships have a strong influence on people, from mass media to students, then to more students, (Direct flow - Multi-Step Flow). Students pay close attention to the media, then pass on their own interpretations in addition to the actual media content. They influence others to change their attitudes and behavior, which impact their academic performance.

### **Reviews of the study**

This study was conducted to determine the effect of internet use on academic achievement through questionnaire technique and studies some related available journals. Most of the journal's findings are directly proportional to each other while inversely proportional to students' social life.

As discussed earlier, internet addiction causes emotional instability among students. Emotional instability often associated with poor academic performance (Duchesne et al., 2008). The individual who experiences emotional instability is unable to handle stress well (John & Srivastava, 1999). Students who are unable to handle their stress effectively perform badly in their exam (Khan, Altaf & Kausar, 2013). The students often have difficulties in balancing classes, tests, assignments, extra-curricular activities, and social life. Inability to handle these challenges can affect the students' physical, mental, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral functions; thus, their academic performance is negatively affected. The students with emotional instability showed anxiety and stress; therefore, they lost their motivation to engage in their studies (Noftle & Robins, 2007). Consequently, their academic performance deteriorated (Moldasheva & Mahmood, 2014).

Although the internet has made a significant contribution to our daily life, using too much of it will lead to addiction, which will negatively affect our life. Internet addiction is defined as the inability to control one's urge to use the internet, which eventually causes psychological, social, school, and/or work difficulties in one's life (Spada, 2014).

Internet addiction among Asian students was detected to be between 2.4% to 37.9% (Alam et al., 2014). In Malaysia, a research conducted by a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Dr. Norharlina Bahar, revealed that males under the age of 24 have the highest internet addiction (The Star, 2016). Students, especially the undergraduates aged

between 19 and 24 years old are deemed to be more susceptible to internet addiction (Lee, 2010; Thatcher & Goolam, 2005). People who are using the internet excessively are mostly playing online games and browsing social media. The side effects of the excessiveness led to anxiety, depression, health problems, school absenteeism, lying, fatigue, unemployment, decreased job productivity, and social isolation. The addiction to the internet also could translate to low self-esteem, depression, boredom, and attention-deficit hyperactive disorder (Norharlina, 2016).

Nowadays, university students are highly depending on the internet to search for information, social networking, entertainment, online shopping, and online gaming, among others. Universities around the world are using the internet to enhance teaching and learning inside or outside the classroom. Using the internet wisely for the right purpose is beneficial to the students, such as researching tool, seeking knowledge, enhancing their soft skills, exchanging experience and knowledge with international students and other parties. While the internet has many advantages and proves to increase efficiency, it could also be harmful to the students if they become addicted to it. It may cause emotional instability (Oskenbay et al., 2015) and low academic performance (Yeap et al., 2016). Therefore, the objectives of this study were threefold: to examine the effect of internet addiction on emotional stability, to investigate the effect of emotional instability to academic performance, and to examine the effect of internet addiction to academic performance.

The internet is the key information and communication technology that led to a worldwide revolutionary change in the information scenario (Siraj, *et al.*, 2015). The internet is a pool of knowledge and any country that fails to provide her youth access to the internet is unseating the country from her throne of dignity among other dignitaries (Olatokun, 2008). It is developed to serve as a platform for various activities for all age groups in society (Akin-Adaeamola, 2014). The internet is a technology that has become an enormous part of people's daily lives. Through its ability to act as a support medium in different functions for which people use it, the internet was introduced to academic institutions as a tool to enhance student's academic experience in the mid-1990s (Ngoumandjoka, 2012).

Over the last decades, internet connectivity has improved tremendously and is available everywhere such as homes, offices, travels and schools (Ellore *et al.*, 2014). From the beginning of the human civilization, information and the ways people use it, it has been one of the main issues in the societies. Nowadays, many intellectuals consider the information as a powerful source. Producing and disseminating the information in a wide variety of fields has been one of the main reasons for calling the contemporary era as the age of the information and, therefore, knowledge has become as one of the most significant elements of human progress and civilization.

Addiction towards the internet is caused by the lack of attention given to an individual that causes them to avoid it by seeking attention from the internet (Ozturk *et al.*, 2013). An individual who spent more time on the internet lacks in an offline social

interaction that leads to alienation and poor relationship with friends and family (Sanders et al., 2000). As a result, they tend to be more depressed (Liang et al., 2016).

The internet has become an integral part of student's life. Many students use the internet mainly for educational activities; however, a number of students wasted their time by visiting inappropriate sites, unrelated to education. The studies on the effect of internet addiction on academic performance have been consistently reported on negative associations. In other words, if the students are addicted to the internet, their academic performance decreased; their study habit declined, increased in absenteeism, and skipped exams (Yeap et al., 2016).

This study conducted at TU in Nepal found that the longer the time spend on the internet the lower the Grade Point Average (GPA) of the students (Mishra et al., 2014). In contrast, a lower academic achievement was associated with the misuse of the internet for a social and recreational purpose (Kim, 2011). Findings from a research done to see the correlation of internet addiction to academic performance have shown that adolescents often missed their classes and had low social skills due to the misuse of the internet (Leung & Lee, 2012). The use of internet grants its users great awareness of the importance of the world around them. The internet is a platform for several types of information. It is used by students including secondary students (Akin-Adaeamola, 2014). Internet usage will continue to grow as long as its users are not denied easy access (Olatokun, 2008).

Recent statistics indicate that the internet gives people the option to access information sites as well as other sites such as social media sites, internet games, and cyber-sex (Siraj *et al.* 2015). A study by Ellore *et al.* (2014) on the influence of internet usage on academic performance and face to face communication revealed that, as a result of the availability of internet, most students have had access to internet on their cell phones. This helps students to broaden their academic knowledge (Siraj, *et al.*, 2015). Use of computer and access to online resources according to Akende and Bamise (2017) are comparatively important to students.

Students' demographic variables are believed to have an influence on internet use and hence academic performance. Demographic analysis revealed that males had higher frequency of internet use in general than females (Akende and Bamise, 2017). Subsequent comparative analysis revealed that male college students spend more time on the internet compared to female college students (Elloree *et al.*, 2014). Rabiou *et al.* (2016) identified the mobile phone as one of the gadgets used in accessing the internet which impacts on academic performance.

It has been recently reported that adolescents today spend a significant amount of their time on the internet for multiple purposes (Olatokun, 2008; Krischne and Karpinski, 2009; Ogedebe, 2012; Singh *et al.*, 2013; Bragdon and Dowler, 2016). Evidence abounds that excessive internet use has been associated with problems of maintaining daily routines, school performance, and family relationships (Rickert, 2001). The study was conducted on university students who use the Internet, not users who already show dependent symptoms. (Yeh *et al.* 2012).

### **Research Design**

To achieve the objectives of the studies, a survey type of research was carried out because the study is concerned with the collection of data for the purpose of describing and interpreting existing conditions, prevailing practices and attitudes among other things through questionnaire. Nowadays, university students are highly depending on the internet to search for information and are busy in internet. Its impact on their life or academic performance may be positive or negative. It is the major issue for research and discussion.

### **Methodology**

More than 185 respondents fill up the online form and study covers only 150 respondents for the research survey in the study. Sample collection was from December 1<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> December 2019. The sample was selected from college students of TU for the study. A total of 150 respondents were selected from online questionnaire which was posted as monkey survey through a website link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NZKNZQN>. The sampling technique used in this study was a convenient sampling.

### **Result**

This study helped to improve our understanding of the reasons of the deterioration of students' academic performance. This study provided the foundation for future research that would help educators to understand the users of internet to academic performance. It provided a guideline to develop potential strategies that would enhance the students' performance by understanding their emotional state and the excessive internet users.

Most of the students agreed on Internet as one of the most important tools for information transfer and it plays a key role in disseminating and developing the knowledge boundaries. The importance of internet technology in the process of education and research cannot be ignored, although the excessive use of the internet may lead to the virtual addiction or internet addiction that has the behavioral and psychological effects on the users. In the questionnaire, most of the students expressed their views of excessive use of internet and spending the time on Internet, which had impact on their studies. The study's findings strongly support the generated hypothesis and determined the impact of internet addiction on academic performance. Although the study showed a strong significant result, there are improvements that could be applied by future researchers. Noted that the respondents are students within the institution; hence, future research can expand this study by obtaining access to other institutions so as to gain a wider perspective.

The main issues considered included a description of the background characteristics of the respondents, access to internet and how internet use influences students' academic performance. The findings of this study will be of great significance to the lecturers and university can utilize the findings as guidelines to formulate new policy regarding internet use on campus. The results of this study can serve as a reminder and create awareness to the parents, to better control their children's internet access such as cutting the budget for broadband allowance and continuous monitoring, and can serve as an eye opener to students on negative effects of internet excessive use. Thus, the students need to wisely use the internet for educational purposes.

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